

Muslim Portraits: *The Anti-Apartheid Struggle*

Goolam Vahed

Compiled for SAMNET

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Nelson Mandela visiting Fatima Meer at her Burnwood Road home, shortly after his release in 1990

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Postcard: Jawaharlal Nehru, Yusuf Dadoo and B.R. Ambedkar

Abbreviations

AAC	All Africa Convention
AAM	Anti-Apartheid Movement
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
APDUSA	African People's Democratic Union of South Africa
APO	African People's Organisation
ASC	Anti-Segregationist Council
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
AZASO	Azanian Student's Organisation
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BPC	Black People's Convention
CAD	Coloured Affairs Department
CODESA	Congress of a Democratic South Africa
COP	Congress of the People
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
FEDSAW	Federation of South African Women
FEDTRAW	Federation of Transvaal Women
LSG	Liberal Studies Group
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MP	Member of Parliament
MSA	Muslim Students Association of South Africa
MYM	Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa
NEC	National Executive Committee
NEUF	Non-European Unity Front
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIYC	Natal Indian Youth Congress
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACOS	South African Council of Sport

SADTU	South African Democratic Teacher's Union
SAHO	South African History Organisation
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SANROC	South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee
SRC	Student Representative Council
SASO	South African Students Organisation
SOYA	Society of Young Africa
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TIC	Transvaal Indian Congress
TICYL	Transvaal Indian Congress Youth League
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDW	University of Durban-Westville
UWC	University of Western Cape
UNISA	University of South Africa
Wits	University of Witwatersrand



Yusuf Dadoo and Monty Naicker during their visit to India, 1947. These two doctors changed the course of Indian politics in South Africa.

Introduction

In compiling this book on Muslim anti-apartheid activists we are aware of potential pitfalls. One of them may be that we are reproducing divisions that we are committed to overcoming. We hope that the message that is inscribed in the lives of those we highlight here mitigates this possibility. At the same time, by focusing on Muslims, we hope to throw a challenge to those within the community who have shown a tendency to withdraw from public life. We hope that these biographies will remind younger Muslims that in the past many of those who mobilised against apartheid and other forms of oppression were comfortable with being both Muslim and South African, and that in the post-apartheid period too, while individuals embrace their religious identities they can and should participate as full citizens in the life of this country.

We believe that unless we shake off this apathy, and produce critical activists who work to make common cause with civil society organisations engaged in addressing such problems as poverty, Aids, xenophobia, the dysfunctional health system, and homelessness, Muslims as a “community” may well become politically marginalised and the ethos of Islam around confronting oppression and exploitation will be lost to the broader South African body politic. Islam teaches Muslims not only to build a cohesive Muslim community, and to faithfully practice their rituals, but also to excel as public citizens and this is the message that we want to convey through this publication.

As the late Imam Gassan Solomon, one time Amir of the Call of Islam, explained on joining the UDF, ‘Muslims should become part of the national struggle for liberation.... The responsibility of leading the struggle does not rest more heavily on anyone else than it does on Muslims’ (*al-Qalam* October 1985). 2010 marked the 150th year since indentured Indians first arrived in Natal. To commemorate this historic landmark newspapers and community organisations arranged various events to recount the community’s history. The anti-apartheid struggle featured prominently in these commemorations and we have been inundated with queries regarding Muslims who participated in the freedom struggle. We were surprised at how few people had heard of such stalwarts as Dawood Seedat, Kader Hassim, and others. Muslims have played an important role throughout the history of our country, not just in politics, but also in economics,

philanthropy, and education, and we hope to cover these aspects of the Muslim contribution to South African society in subsequent volumes. The contributions of a new generation of Muslim South Africans, such as politicians Enver Surtee, Naledi Pandor, Fathima Chohan, and Ismail Vadi; Constitutional Court judge Zac Yakoob; Salim Abdul Karrim and Hoosen “Jerry” Coovadia in the medical field; academics like Adam Habib, Saleem Badat, and Abdulkader Tayob; activists such as Naeem Jeenah; Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman, the Al Imdaad Foundation, and others in philanthropy; Ferial Haffeejee and Ayesha Kajee in media; and sportsman Hashim Amla, amongst many, point to the exceptional contribution that some Muslims are making in post-apartheid South Africa, and the ways in which they are engaging in effective civic participation. But a large number of Muslims remain apathetic. We are aware of the difficulties that Muslim minorities face in many parts of the Western world. South Africa’s Muslims pride themselves on the fact that they are able to practice their religion in an environment that is relatively free of Islamophobia, and we hope that the stories in this book will inspire the younger generation to civic participation to reciprocate this.

Defining ‘Muslim’ is complicated. Some of the activists mentioned in this book were members of the Communist Party or materialists. Yusuf Dadoo was a high ranking member of the Communist Party, yet he went for Hajj and also instructed Zainab Asvat to ensure that he had a ‘proper’ Muslim burial. And he passed away with his sisters sitting around his bedside reciting the Qur’an. Ghadija Christopher was married to Albert Christopher, a Christian, yet arranged with the local Imam to conduct her *janazah* and she was buried in the Browns Avenue Muslim cemetery. We have taken Muslim here to be an identity and not a reflection of the levels of piety of individual activists or the extent to which they observed certain rituals. Those who were born to Muslim families or had what we identify in common-sense as ‘Muslim’ names, or regarded themselves as Muslim (through burial arrangements for example), or were considered by the wider community to be Muslim, or did not openly denounce their being Muslim, or who had at one point in their lives lived as Muslims, have been included in this collection.

In presenting these portraits an attempt is made in many instances to include the treatment of individuals at the hands of the police, the experiences of those who went into exile, the impact of political involvement on families,

and even opinions on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to get a fuller picture of both the individuals concerned and the system of apartheid. With the passing of time, memories of the brutality of the apartheid regime are fading and we want people to remember just how vicious the system was as some of the brutal excesses of the apartheid regime are resurfacing in different ways globally in the post-9/11 world.

This list is by no means exhaustive, nor is it representative in terms of region, race, gender or political affiliation. In some cases we were unable to obtain information on certain individuals while others may have inadvertently escaped our radar. Space also constrained the number of persons whose lives we could cover. The biographies are also uneven. That some activists receive greater coverage is not necessarily a reflection of their relative contribution to the struggle; it is more an indication of the disparity in information available. Where individuals gave interviews or wrote memoirs and autobiographies, their stories are more detailed. The activists covered here belonged to a range of political organisations. While there were deep differences of ideology between political organisations, this is not explored here. Much has been written on that subject and our aim is not to debate the merits of different political tendencies but to record the contributions of activists, no matter the political grouping to which they belonged. In the post-apartheid period certain public figures are lauded and commemorated through statues, books, films, institutes, street naming, and museum exhibitions, while the contribution of others, which may have been equally important, has been marginalised for a variety of reasons. This volume is an attempt to document participation in the anti-apartheid struggle of those whose involvement has not been accorded due recognition. While our focus is on ‘Muslim’ activists, we recognise and pay tribute to the sterling contribution of all who played a part in defeating the vile apartheid regime, irrespective of race, gender, religion or creed.

In an unusual step, we have included two forewords to the book, one by Ahmed Kathrada and the other by Ebrahim Rassool as we wanted to hear the voices of different generations of South African Muslims who were involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. We thank both Mr Kathrada and Mr Rassool for agreeing to write a foreword for this book.

Faisal Suliman
Chairperson
South African Muslim Network (SAMNET)

Foreword

By Ebrahim Rassool
Ambassador of South Africa to the USA

What a wonderful work! *Muslim Portraits* is one of those works that very few of the people portrayed would ask for in order to immortalise their contribution to the struggle against apartheid and for human rights. Almost without exception, they would invoke the injunctions to modesty and humility to make a case why they should not be eulogised or written about.

But they would be wrong. Part of the struggle in South Africa today is the struggle to remember, in order to appreciate the freedoms enjoyed now, and to ensure that we do not repeat any of the division, humiliation, oppression or subjugation of the past. The struggle for memory includes remembering the specifics of those who struggled, sacrificed, and won the battle for humanity.

Muslim Portraits does this job admirably. It does so despite very consciously courting controversy about whether to look specifically at ‘Muslim’ contributions; about whether everyone included would fit anyone else’s definition of a ‘Muslim’; or whether the diversity of perspectives represented by those covered in *Muslim Portraits* were not, at one or other time in the course of struggle, mutually exclusive or intolerant of each other.

But the courage of the work is precisely in its decision to ignore these doubts and to put the higher purpose of *Muslim Portraits* above sectional concerns. History and future generations may one day show, despite the danger of appearing to separate Muslims as a vital thread in the South African tapestry; why it was important now to show that Muslims could recognise the violation of Islam’s values and respond in concert with citizens of other faiths and ideologies. Future generations may marvel at how human beings seemed different in so many ways, but so much the same in crucial ways, when they read *Muslim Portraits*.

One is struck not merely by Muslims’ distinctive identity within the South African diversity, but by the diversity of thought and motivation among Muslims themselves. If anything, the identity ‘Muslim’ emerges as a religious and cultural umbrella within which the oppressive conditions of apartheid fomented a diversity

of politics, ideologies, nuances, actions, shades and fields of activism. In the strange democracy of the struggle for democracy and human rights, this diversity flourished off the basic Islamic and human instinct for dignity, equality, freedom and human rights. This is especially so when these principles and objectives are not overlaid with a desire to totalise interpretations, methodologies, and attitudes.

Muslim Portraits may have stumbled upon the meaning of the verse from the Quran: “Those who struggle in Our way, We will show them the way.” In giving us a glimpse into how over 100 Muslims have contributed to struggle in South Africa, without fully comprehending the outcome, but trusting that when their intentions are good, the path will unfold, we can learn many lessons.

Through their, and many other Muslims’ example, has Allah not shown the way for Muslims in the world today to win trust in the face of mistrust? Can we illustrate that when we cherish our internal diversity, we foster a greater societal diversity that also values our difference? In building equal and inclusive societies do we not help to banish the capriciousness of ever-shifting decisions and definitions of who are insiders and who are outsiders? Do we not see the enhancement of the South African Muslim fabric when such a high proportion (nearly 20 percent) of the portraits are those of women, who were actively engaged in the frontline of struggle!

In an emerging global context, *Muslim Portraits* must guide the millions of Muslims currently asserting their right to be free in the ‘Arab Spring’. It must guide the 25 percent of the Muslim Ummah who live as minorities in the face of many challenges. And it must be a guide to those amongst us who are consumed by righteous anger, but do not possess the tranquility of spirit to harness our emotions constructively.

We must pay tribute to the vision of SAMNET, the research and writing skills of Goolam Vahed, and the foresight of the sponsors for *Muslim Portraits*. Their work will mean that young Muslims can grow up in South Africa, confident that their preceding generations have earned them their place in this country as full and equal citizens. They only have the responsibility to be grateful and to utilise the benefits of freedom and equality to find their own contributions to South Africa.

May they also be inspired to find worth causes to which their souls can respond.

Foreword

By Ahmed Kathrada

Rivonia trialist and long-serving political prisoner

Glen Frankel, in *Rivonia's Children*, makes the following points that are pertinent to the intentions of this book. He writes:

In the end I see two purposes for this book : to tell an important but little known story about moral choice; and to try and rescue from obscurity a group of people and a body of work that deserves our critical attention, admiration and respect. At the end of a harrowing century, we need to collect and retell such stories, if only to remind ourselves from time to time of the need to be vigilant in protecting civil society from police states, large and small.

Frankel goes on to emphasise the importance of preserving history when he writes the following, citing Hannah Arendt, in her book *Eichman in Jerusalem*:

One of the goals of a police state is to establish “holes of oblivion into which all deeds, good and evil, would disappear”. It is our duty, according to Arendt to preserve history by descending into those holes, rescuing those individual deeds and recounting them to ourselves and our children. The political lesson of individual heroism, she writes, is simple: “it is that under conditions of terror most people will comply but some will not.”

In much the same way, by staying true to their cause and themselves, the South African activists profiled in this book, despite any mistakes they may have made, helped to keep hope alive in their country, and pave the hard road to freedom. More importantly, these are all ordinary people who were caught up in an extraordinary environment. When talking about the contributions of Muslim activists, we must be mindful that most, if not all, were part of organisations and campaigns that had people of different races and religions. The common cause of defeating Apartheid required that such cooperation and unity was paramount. This unity is a common thread throughout the history of the Indian community from the time of Mahatma Gandhi's campaigns to that of the 1946 passive resistance. Among Gandhi's close associates were Nagdee, Cachalia, and Naidoo. We can never forget the pioneering work of Doctors Dadoo and Naicker who forged unity of the Indian community across religious and language lines. They took that quest for unity further when,

on behalf of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses respectively, they signed the 1947 Doctors Pact with Dr Xuma from the ANC. We can never forget the contributions of Molvi Cachalia (deputy national volunteer-in-chief) and Nana Sita (president of the Transvaal Indian Congress) in the 1952 Defiance Campaign. Their staunch religious outlooks did not prevent them from transcending religious differences and fighting for a common cause.

The last example I would want to mention is that of Prakash Napier and Yusuf Akhalwaya. Muslim and Christian, yet part of an Umkhonto we Sizwe unit that saw it necessary to play the role of my protectors when I was released in 1989, and who later were killed in a bomb explosion in December of that year. United in struggle, and in death. Many of the activists in this book might not want to be identified as “Muslim” anti apartheid activists but just as activists in the cause of a moral and righteous struggle. While this project is of immense value for historical purposes, let us not forget that these were people who first and foremost understood the value of tolerance and unity. Many of them would have been inspired by the address of Madiba during the Rivonia Trial when he said:

I have cherished the ideal of a democratic society in which persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Madiba further went on to stress the importance of religion in the struggle when, in his address to the Parliament of World Religions in Cape Town in December 1999 he said:

I do appreciate the importance of religion ... you'd have to be in a South African jail under Apartheid where you could see the cruelty of human beings to each other in its naked form. But it was religious institutions, Hindus, Muslims, leaders of the Jewish faith and Christians who gave us hope that we would one day come out. We would return.

Now in the 18th year of our democracy, we still face many challenges in building the society of the Freedom Charter. Poverty, hunger, unemployment, corruption and climate change are amongst the many challenges that the country has to grapple with. It is in how we and future generations respond to these challenges that will determine whether we have learnt the lessons from the activists profiled in this wonderful book.



Ebrahim Rasool



Ahmed Kathrada pictured here at Fathima Meer's funeral

Faried Ahmed Adams

(b. 1933)

Faried Adams was born in India in 1933 and emigrated to South Africa when he was two years old. A classmate of Essop Jassat, he was inclined towards radical nationalist politics from a young age. The impetus for sustained political involvement was the Ghetto Act of 1946, which led to the two year long passive resistance campaign from 1946-48. After the 1949 racial riots in Durban, Adams was involved in collecting funds for victims of the riots. From 1950 he was part of a group of six – the others being Mosie Moolla, Herbie Pillay, Solly Esakjee, Babla Saloojee, and Ahmed Kathrada – who called themselves the Picasso Club and went around Johannesburg distributing political leaflets, painting anti-apartheid slogans on walls, and putting up posters. Ahmed Kathrada recorded in his *Memoirs* that Adams had ‘mastered the art of painting huge letters with clarity and speed.’

Adams was also involved in the 1952 Defiance Campaign against discriminatory apartheid legislation. Barely out of his teens he collected money and food to support the families of bread-winners who were incarcerated as a result of the protests. Together with the likes of Aziz and Essop Pahad, Mosie Moolla, Herbie Pillay, and Essop Jassat, he protested outside the courthouses where political trials were held. Adams worked fulltime for the TIC after completing his schooling and was arrested on a number of occasions. He was convicted in 1955 for painting Freedom Charter slogans. In December 1956 he was among 156 activists arrested for treason and tried for engaging in a ‘conspiracy to overthrow the state’.

Since he was the first accused alphabetically, the Treason Trial is known officially as ‘Regina v. F. Adams and others’. Despite the seriousness of the trial, there were some light moments. In 1960, the defendants felt that they would not get a fair trial during the State of Emergency and decided to draw out proceedings by conducting their own defence. Kathrada recalls in his *Memoirs* that when Adams was leading the testimony of Helen Joseph, ‘he ran out of questions’. Rather than admit this, Faried asked the court for

an adjournment on the grounds that he was “feeling very tired, my Lords”. It didn’t work. Magistrate Rumpff reminded us that we had been warned to think carefully before dismissing our advocates and instructed us to carry on.’ The state emerged as the loser in the trial as all the activists were freed by 1961. The victory was short-lived because the state used bannings and imprisonment without trial to silence activists. Faried Adams was banned in 1960. He suffered from diabetes later in life and died in the 1990s.

Sources: SAHO; Ahmed Kathrada, Memoirs. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004.



Faried Adams

Feroza Adams

(1961 – 1994)

*F*eroza Adams was born on 16 August 1961 and attended Nirvana High in Lenasia. The Soweto 1976 uprising was a spur in her politicisation. She enrolled for a BA degree at Wits where she was drawn to student politics through AZASO. After completing her studies she took up teaching and continued her activism. She was particularly interested in women's issues and joined the FEDTRAW, which became an affiliate of the UDF, and served as its publicity secretary from 1984 to 1990. Along with Jessie Duarte, Sicily Palmer, Benny Manama, Baby Tyawa, and Susan Shabangu she was part of a new cadre of young women leaders.

Adams resigned from teaching in 1988 to become the UDF's national co-ordinator. After the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, she worked in the publicity department of the ANC Women's League and was a founding member of the Women's Coalition: Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging Area, which was established on 9 August 1991. Adams was an ANC MP in South Africa's first non-racial parliament. Her promising political career was cut short when she was fatally injured in a car accident in Cape Town on Women's Day, 9 August 1994. The ANC acknowledged her contribution in the following tribute:

'Mrs Adams entire life was dedicated to the struggle for the liberation of underprivileged South Africans. Her commitment to the struggle led her to serve with distinction in all mass democratic structures.... She was among the youngest to be elected as MP. She will be greatly missed by the ANC and the broad South African society. She was a living embodiment of the struggle that brought about a democratic government in this country.'

The Institute for Gender Studies at Unisa initiated the Feroza Adam Memorial lecture in her memory. The Institute described her as... a woman with enormous courage, commitment and passion. She worked hard [and] had a long history of political activism and advocacy.... Her considerable personal power, ability to communicate, organise and speak with conviction

in public meant that she was a force to be reckoned with. She is identified as a feminist and political activist with pride and an irrepressible optimism. It is with enormous gratitude and humility that UNISA remembers this remarkable woman, who left an indelible mark on every person whose life she touched. Her willingness to speak her mind, to honour her beliefs and live her values made her a very powerful role model for women across all sectors of South African society’.

Source: SAHO; Ahmed Kathrada, Memoirs; ‘Death of Feroza Adams.’ anc.org.za.



Albertina Sisulu, Feroza Adam, Barbara Hogan, Fatima Hajaig, and Rehana Adam, March 1994

Ameen Akhalwaya

(1946 – 1998)

When journalist Ameen Akhalwaya received the Extraordinary Award of the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Southern Africa, Mike Hanna of CNN described him as 'a man who always held up a light to the truth but never sacrificed the professional independence which was the ground on which he stood.' Akhalwaya was born on 4 October 1946 and after matriculating proceeded to the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin to fulfil his ambition of becoming a doctor. The untimely death of his father forced a return home. He studied journalism and joined the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1971, writing mainly on the racial inequities in South African sport. In 1982 he was appointed the newspaper's metropolitan editor. He subsequently founded his own publication, *The Indicator*, and wrote a weekly column for *Post Natal*. He was a founding member of the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (Mwasa) in 1978 and was awarded the prestigious Nieman Fellowship in 1981 to study journalism at Harvard University.

Akhalwaya was an outspoken critic of the Tricameral system implemented in 1983, describing it as 'straight white economic and political domination.' He was a vocal proponent of sanctions against South Africa, particularly in relation to sport and culture, as he believed that the complete isolation of white South Africans would undermine the apartheid system. While the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 and the unbanning of the ANC elated Akhalwaya, he was aware of the enormity of the challenges facing a future ANC government and warned that 'the real fight is going to be on the economic front. And that is where a government is either made or broken. There is the question of housing, education, unemployment. I think those are the three crucial issues in this country.' Two decades into a non-racial democracy and these challenges remain as daunting as ever. Akhalwaya was appointed to the Board of the SABC in 1993 as executive editor for Current Affairs. However, he became frustrated with the slow process of transformation at the SABC and returned to freelancing, working at *The New Nation* and *The Sowetan*.

In 1996 he was appointed media director for South Africa's 2004 Olympic Bid. He passed away on 2 February 1998 after battling cancer for several years. He was survived by his wife Farida, daughter Zaytoon, and sons Zaheer and Zain. In an interview shortly before his death, Akhalwaya listed the Hajj pilgrimage as one of the high points of his life. He also mentioned the Indicator Human Rights Awards, an interview with boxer Muhammad Ali, breaking the story of the unbanning of the liberation movements, and Nelson Mandela singling him out for his 'marvellous contribution to the struggle' as other highlights of his journalistic career. Akhalwaya stood out for his dedication to his craft, fearlessness, and strength of character – even in the face of state bullying and naked repression. He did not consider himself a hero, but many others did. Upon receiving news of his death, the ANC released a statement that Akhalwaya would 'always be remembered as part of that generation of writers, who during the struggle against apartheid, never hesitated to choose the side of democracy, peace and justice, even at the possible cost (of) their own lives.' Akhalwaya's *Comrades and Memsahibs*, written during the last days of his battle with cancer, was published posthumously in May 2010.

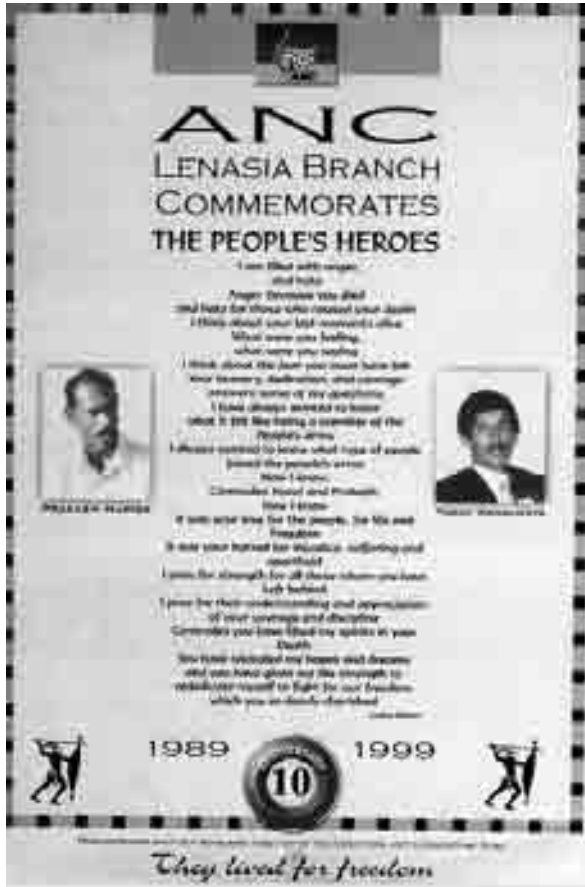


Ameen Akhalwaya was a provincial cricketer



Ameen Akhalwaya and Thabo Mbeki

Yusuf Akhalwaya



Yusuf Akhalwaya and Prakash Napier formed a guerrilla cell in Lenasia. Between 1987 and 1989, they conducted 35 operations as the Ahmed Timol Unit. They were on their way to conduct an operation in December 1989 when their bomb went off and both were killed. 'Ismail' wrote on a website commemorating them: 'My memories of them flash by like a jagged series of blurry movie clips that only I can see. They died so young and had so much more to offer. History may forget or even marginalise their contribution but they will live with those who knew them.'

(<http://yusuf-prakash.blogspot.com/2009/11/dear-friends-and-family-11-th-december.html>)

Cassim Amra

(1919 – 1984)

Cassim Amra took his name from his grandfather Cassim who arrived in South Africa at the turn of the twentieth century with his wife Amina. They had three sons, Ismail, Suleman, and Hoosen who ran a retail store at the corner of Field Street and Commercial Road in Durban. The younger Cassim, the son of Ismail, was born in 1919, attended Sastri College where he represented the senior cricket team with the likes of the legendary MI Yusuf, and came into contact with George Singh and other activists who played a crucial role in charting a more confrontationalist course for the Natal Indian Congress (NIC). After matriculating in 1937, Amra plunged into politics. He joined the Durban-based Liberal Studies Group (LSG) whose members included IC Meer, Dawood Seedat, and Monty Naicker. The LSG's mouthpiece *The Call. For Freedom and Justice* was published from Amra's home in Milton Road and he wrote many of the articles in the paper. Peter Abrahams, one of South Africa's best known poets of this period, dedicated his first collection of poems, *Tell Freedom*, to his 'close friend' Cassim Amra. Amra was a key member of the Anti Segregationist Council (ASC), which ousted the old leadership of the NIC.

He opposed South Africa's participation in World War Two and criticised Indian involvement in the war effort. In *The Call*, Amra asked, 'Why Support the Mayor's Fund?' Why are non-Europeans making such a heroic effort to boost the much-advertised Mayor's Fund?... There really seems no end to the sacrifices which the Indian community will make to help forward this war fund. Is it being waged in their interests, or in the interests of the working people of any country? Indian children are fainting by the dozen every day in Union schools from HUNGER. Why not make this your concern?' When moderate Indian politicians convened a meeting at the Royal Picture Palace on 9 June 1940 and passed a resolution in support of the war, Amra wanted to know 'what "conscience" calls upon you to lick the boot that kicks you?' So-called 'leaders', he wrote, wanted to show the authorities that 'he is a good boy.... He is a coward, without principle or pride.'



*IC Meer, Vera Ponnen, Jackie Arenstein, Cassim Amra, __ ,
AKM Docrat at a picnic during Indira Gandhi's visit in 1941*



*Eid day, 1942, Standing l to r: Beaver Timol, Debi Singh,
Cassim Amra, Yusuf Dadoo, IC Meer; Dawood Seedat.
Sitting: AKM Docrat, El Moolla, __, __*



Cassim Amra addressing an Anti-Pass meeting



October 1945 mass meeting at Curries Fountain where the radical faction of the NIC, led by Monty Naicker, ousted the conservatives

Housewives became involved, Amra added, ‘because.... they heard about European women knitting for soldiers. She reads about Mrs. So-and-so’s war effort to raise so-and-so fund. The subtle propaganda has worked. She who would not lift a hand in time of peace to help the poor and needy suddenly becomes ultra-patriotic and charitable. She forgets that there are as many soldiers – martyrs of the economic system – who are walking the streets.’

The likes of Amra, Dawood Seedat, and IC Meer even shared the stage with future Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, who stopped in Durban on 31 March 1941 en route to India from England where she was studying. According to Pauline Podbrey, a member of the CPSA, ‘this was a great coup for the young guard of the Nationalist Bloc. It turned out to be one of the biggest public gatherings of Durban Indians ever held.’ The meeting was held at the Avalon Cinema on 2 April 1941. Meer, Amra, and Seedat made impassioned anti-war speeches. Amra was involved in the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48. After the campaign he enrolled for a law degree at UCT but was thrown out of the Western Cape because he did not have a permit. This was to get back at him for his political activities. During the 1950s Amra was prominent in both the NIC and SAIC but successive banning orders reduced his public involvement.

Amra was married to Mabel Jacobs whom he met in Cape Town, and who was the principal of Rippon Road School for many years. After his banning, Amra worked in IC Meer’s legal practice in Verulam. Amra was not only an inspiring writer and passionate public speaker but a superb photographer who often lectured at the International Club on photography.

Sources: The Call, various issues 1940; Ismail Meer, A Fortunate Man. Cape Town: Zebra Books, 2002; Pauline Podbrey, White Girl in Search of the Party . Pietermaritzburg: Haded Books, 1993.



Cissie Gool's visit to Durban. She is seated in the middle. Seated on the front left is Cassim Amra; on the right (wearing glasses) is Dawood Seedat; standing behind him is George Ponnen; third from the left standing is H.A. Naidoo; next to him is Beaver Timol; and standing behind Cissie Gool is H.L.E. Dhlomo.



Abdul Kader Asmal

(1934 – 2011)

*K*ader Asmal, prominent in education and water affairs in post-apartheid South Africa, was born on 8 October 1934 in Stanger and has been quoted as saying that his politicisation began when he was exposed to racial injustice as a teenager when a white shop-owner prevented him from purchasing a newspaper at his store. Images of Nazi horrors instilled in him the desire to become a human rights lawyer. Later in life, he said, he could not help but draw parallels between Nazi oppression in Europe and apartheid South Africa. Asmal was in his matric year during the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and organised a school stay away. The presence of the Nobel Peace laureate Albert Luthuli, who lived in nearby Groutville and was a frequent visitor to Stanger, provided additional inspiration. Asmal was an outstanding orator from his earliest days and won the inaugural speech contest organised by the Arabic Study Circle of Durban in 1954. He spoke on ‘The Life of the Prophet Mohammed.’ Asmal completed a teaching diploma at Springfield College and a BA degree through Unisa while teaching from 1955 to 1959. His desire to be a lawyer remained strong and in 1959 he went to the UK where he completed the LLM (LSE) and MA (Dublin) degrees.

He was admitted as barrister at both Lincoln’s Inn, London (1963) and King’s Inn, Dublin (1975). In 1994 he was admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa. Asmal accepted a teaching post at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1963 and spent the next few decades lecturing in human rights, labour, and international law, and eventually became Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He has been a visiting professor at Princeton and Rutgers universities in the US and Christ’s College, Cambridge, and was awarded the Prix Unesco in 1983 for his achievements as a teacher in human rights. Asmal participated actively in the anti-apartheid movement. He was a founder member of the London-based British AAM in 1960 and a key member of the Irish AAM from 1964 to 1990. He was chairperson from 1972. Asmal widened his human rights scope to include injustice in Northern Ireland and Palestine, and has been a member of numerous

international legal commissions. He has written or co-edited eight books, forty chapters in books, and sixty articles on apartheid, decolonisation, labour law and the environment. Asmal was a founder member of the ANC's Constitutional Committee (1986) which included Albie Sachs, Zola Skewyiya, Zingisile Jobodwana, Penuel Maduna, Bridgitte Mabandla, Shadrack Pekane, and Jack Simons. They were mandated to produce an ANC constitution. The committee worked closely with Oliver Tambo and essentially agreed on principles such as multiparty democracy and a Bill of Rights, while leaving room for popular consultation. The Bill of Rights was seen as the answer to the demand for group rights, a major concern of minorities at the time.

Asmal returned to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC in 1990. He took up the position of Professor of Human Rights at UWC, a post he held for four years, was an ANC delegate to Codesa in 1992; a member of the ANC's negotiating team at the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum, 1993; and a member of the NEC of the ANC from 1991 to 2007. In the post-apartheid period he was appointed Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry in May 1994 and Minister of Education in 1999, a post he held until 2004. He was also vice-president of the World Commission on the Oceans (1995-1998) and chairperson of the World Commission on Dams (1997-2001). Asmal has been awarded seven honorary degrees by universities in Ireland and South Africa and is an Honorary Fellow of the London School of Economics and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. His awards included the Stockholm Water Prize (2000); the Gold Medal of the World Wide Fund for Nature-SA (1996); and the Order of Luthuli (2009).

Sources: SAHO; Good Governance Programme, 'Sexual Minority Rights Course, Biography of Presenters,' 12-16 April 2010. http://www.ggp.up.ac.za/sexual_minority_rights/presenters/2010.pdf.

THE 156 ON TRIAL

Into the lives of these men and women is written the history of the freedom campaigns of the people of South Africa. Those on trial form a true cross-section of our people. Let us introduce them to you.

CHIEF ALBERT JOHN LUTULI, President-General of the African National Congress.

Sagor camp former. Born in 1893 at a Swaziland Day Adventist Mission. His father was John B. van Lutuli, second son of Chief Mhabe Lutuli, the Abangobekhweni tribe which elects its chief. Chief Lutuli trained as a teacher and taught Adanya College until 1935. He became president of the World African Teachers' Association, Chairman of the Congregational Churches of the Area



F. Adaw

Ferdinand Ahmed Adaw, Born 1918. Clerk. Joined Defiance Campaign in the 1950s during the anti-"Group" Act campaign. Convicted for violating Freedom Campaign statutes in 1955, but judgment on appeal is pending.



Michael Silemang, Born 1918. Commissioned teacher. During Evaton Day School, was charged with public violence and arrested, as well as other charges, but acquitted on all charges.

(Mrs.) Thina Sotshobeli, Born 1913. Secretary. Organized public meetings in East London in the "One and the Same Language Workers' Club League" later organized for Sotshobeli League.



Hyndle Ernest, Born 1920. Clerk. During the 1950s was arrested when taking part in the anti-apartheid protest in Bloemfontein. Succeeded Secretary of Durban Medical Aid for Russia during the war.



A. Schabane
A. Schabane, Clerk. Joined "General Order Campaign". Born 1920. Lawyer. Member National Council of African National Congress which he joined during the Defiance Campaign.



Isaac Bhebe
Isaac Bhebe, Born 1920 in Mvezo, Johannesburg, where he has been active in African National Congress campaigns since the 1951 Defiance Campaign.

William Bhebe, Born 1918. Clerk. Served term of imprisonment during the first Defiance Campaign. Organized and led Defiance Campaign. Convicted for violating Freedom Campaign statutes in 1955, but judgment on appeal is pending.



Bartholomew Hlophe
Bartholomew Hlophe, Born 1915. Factory worker. Played active part in the African National Congress from the time the Nationalist Government came to power in 1948.



can Board; President of the Natal Missionary Conference; and an active member of the Christian Council of S. Africa. He founded the Natal and Zululand Bantu Cane Growers' Association.

In 1938 the Abasemahloveni tribe elected Chief Lutsi its tribal head and he held that position until 1952 when the government ordered him to choose between his chieftainship and Congress leadership. Chief Lutsi chose death rather than relinquish his political convictions. He was a member of the Native Representatives Council until that Council was abolished by the Nationalists.

In 1938 he went to India as a delegate of the Christian Council to the International Missionary Council; and in 1948 he went to the United States to attend the North American Missionary Conference.



Alfred 'Eugene' Mathewson, born 1904, Truckee and Winn, Virginia. Received Education Department for teaching and serving imprisonment during the U.S. Army Campaign. Fought on staff of the Government Training School established as a discipline for recruits against the Great Atlantic.

Walter Beckwith, born 1915, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Active member of the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado during latter part of the war. Took part in the Silver Master-Hunt in the West. Served in Civil Town, Kalamazoo of the Ford Commission. Higher Park National. Involved in 1950 General Mining Campaign.



Walter Beckwith



Ernest 'Bobby' Reynolds, born 1918, Michigan. Served with the U.S. Army during the Italian Campaign. Among those convicted of assisting in illegal entry of African subjects on the Coast in August, 1942.

Ernest Reynolds

F. J. 'Jack' Hodgson, born 1918, Primary medical secretary of the American Legion. Founding member of the Northern Michigan Mine Workers' Union. Served with the 'United Mine' and discharged with a disability pension. Represented participation of Director of Investigation.



F. J. 'Jack' Hodgson

Mohamed Suleman Asmal

(1923 – 1966)

*M*ohamed Asmal, more familiarly known as ‘Bob’, was born in Piet Retief in 1923. He later settled in Evaton, near Vereeniging, and was a member of the executive council of the TIC, which had a strong presence among the hundred odd Indian families in Evaton. The likes of ‘Bob’ Asmal, Suliman Nathie, Ismail Jada, and Daya Gopal served on the Evaton Congress of the People (COP) committee, and canvassed support in the lead-up to the 1955 COP in Kliptown. They also worked closely with the ANC in Evaton township. Given his involvement in the Defiance Campaign and the COP, it came as no surprise when Asmal was one of the 156 accused in the Treason Trial. As a member of the Evaton People’s Council, he was also involved in the Evaton bus boycotts, for which he was arrested and charged with a multitude of offences, including murder, but was acquitted of all charges in 1957.

1960 marked a turning point in state repression following the 21 March Sharpeville massacre. Both the ANC and PAC were banned and a state of emergency was declared. It was under this measure that Asmal was detained for five months without trial. No charges were laid against him or the other activists swept up in the state’s dragnet. This set a precedent for the 1960s. Asmal was detained again in 1963 under the Ninety-Day Law. A year later, in February 1964, he was banned for five years. He lived in Vereeniging where he ran a butchery. These restrictive measures had a detrimental effect on his business and health and he died in December 1966 at the age of 43 whilst his banning order was still in place.

Source: SAHO.

Abu Baker ‘Hurley’ Asvat

(1942 – 1989)

*A*t the time of his murder in 1989, Dr. Abu Baker ‘Hurley’ Asvat was widely revered as ‘the people’s doctor’ based on almost two decades of medical work in Soweto and over a dozen health projects initiated across the Transvaal as Azanian Peoples’ Organisation’s (Azapo) Secretary of Health. Yet despite his close relationship with leading ANC figures like Albertina Sisulu and his significant role in major political events, Asvat’s name rarely appears in histories of the liberation struggle and his life’s work has been almost completely overshadowed by the controversial circumstances of his death – Jon Soske.

*A*svat was born on 23 February 1942 in Vrededorp, Johannesburg to Abdul Haq and Fatima. He had two brothers, Ebrahim and Mohammed Saeed, and a sister Sakina. Abu Baker and Ebrahim went to study medicine in the Asian sub-continent. Abu Baker qualified as a medical doctor in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1969 while Ebrahim qualified in Karachi in 1967. Abu Baker was struck by the extensive poverty in Bangladesh and became sensitised to the problems of the poor. On his return to South Africa, he worked at Coronation Hospital and lived in Lenasia.

Racial discrimination at the hospital angered him and his raising this with management led to his dismissal by the provincial authorities. He took over Ebrahim’s practice in Soweto. His surgery and crèche were ransacked by police during the 1976 Soweto uprising and he relocated to Rockville, another part of Soweto, where he provided primary health care at minimal cost and rapidly acquired a reputation as the ‘people’s doctor’. He travelled to rural areas with a mobile clinic to provide free basic medical care, vaccination, and medicines. He met Winnie Mandela, who was banished in the Free State town of Brandfort, and drove his medical caravan monthly to provide medical service to the community. Asvat was drawn to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and joined Azapo in 1978. In 1983,

when Albertina Sisulu retired from the Nursing Council, she joined Asvat as a nurse in his surgery. Eyebrows were raised because the president of the UDF was working with the Health Secretary of Azapo, but both were united by a passion to overthrow apartheid and provide proper health care to the poor. Asvat gave Albertina Sisulu time off for her political work and to visit Walter Sisulu in prison in Cape Town. Albertina would tell Elinor Sisulu that her ‘doctor has been wonderful to me. Throughout the months I was in jail in Pietermaritzburg (1985) and throughout my trial, he paid my salary. It must have been a strain for him, because he had to employ someone to take my place and he is not a wealthy man.’ According to Elinor Sisulu, Asvat was like a son to Albertina. She was fond of him because ‘in some ways he was remarkably similar to her husband. Like Walter, he had absolutely no regard for private property and would literally take the clothes off his back to give to the poor. He had dedicated himself to a life of service, and saw the best in everybody. He also believed passionately in the equality of all human beings, regardless of colour, creed or social status.’

Asvat and Albertina established a surgery and installed 20 toilets that were shared by 150 people in McDonald’s Farm (Soweto) where people were living in abandoned cars. Space for a crèche was made in the surgery and approximately 80 children were fed twice a week. This settlement was destroyed in January 1988 when the Soweto Council forcibly evicted the residents. *The Sowetan* featured a regular column by Asvat in which he responded to readers’ medical questions. He also wrote a booklet on primary healthcare and published the results of community medical surveys amongst the poor, the handicapped, hostel dwellers and children. Asvat wrote in the *City Press* (20 September 1987) about the plight of the homeless. ‘The right to a home is one that no government can deny. Until such time that each and every one of us is adequately housed, we should not rest. All the so-called squatter areas have common problems such as overcrowding, structures that become too hot in summer and too cold in winter, lack of clean water, extremely poor sanitation and no electricity. The trials and tribulations of these people are unimaginable.... It is a shame that a country that boasts the world’s first heart transplant, and a second to none standard of living for its privileged class, is unable to look after its own people’. Many South Africans were shocked when two young men entered Asvat’s



Kader and Louise Asmal. On the right is a photo of Kader Asmal opening a water scheme in Groutville at the home of Mrs Luthuli, 1995



Dr Abu Baker Asvat



MS Asmal



The janazah of Dr Asvat

Rockville surgery at 4:00 pm on Friday, 27 January 1989, and shot him twice in the chest at point-blank range. Ebrahim told the TRC in 1997 that he believed that the killing was linked to the alleged reign of terror conducted in Soweto in the late 1980s by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's personal bodyguard, the Mandela Football Club. Ebrahim insisted that the family had never accepted that the motive for the murder was robbery as money had been found in his brother's consulting rooms after the murder and his brother still had his gun strapped to his leg. Zakhele Mbatha and Thulani Dlamini were sentenced to death but this was commuted to life imprisonment when the Asvat family pleaded for clemency because Asvat did not believe in the death penalty. The real motive for the killing, Ebrahim alleged, was a 'volcanic row' between Asvat and Winnie Mandela when he refused to give her a certificate to confirm that some boys, including Stompie Seipei who was later found murdered, had been sodomised by the Rev Paul Verryn.

Asvat was buried at the Avalon cemetery in one of the largest funerals held in Lenasia. He was survived by his wife Zohra and children Hasina, Sulaiman, and Akiel. 'The People's Doctor' was posthumously awarded the Indicator Human Rights Award in 1989.

*Sources: Ebrahim Asvat's testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation committee, 1 December 1997. From <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1997/9712/s971201b.htm>; Jon Soske, 'The Life and Death of Dr. Abu Baker "Hurley" Asvat,' *Wiser Lecture* Jon Soske, 12 May 2010; Elinor Sisulu, Walter & Albertina Sisulu, *In Our Lifetime*. Cape Town: David Philip, 2002*

Zainab Asvat

(1920 –)

Zainab Asvat came under the tutelage of her father Ebrahim Asvat, a contemporary of Gandhi, as a young girl and became politically active in the 1940s as a medical student at Wits where she engaged in vibrant discussions with fellow students Nelson Mandela, JN Singh, and IC Meer. Zainab took time off in 1946 to participate in the passive resistance campaign in Durban. She was part of the first batch of resisters that set up camp at the corner of Umbilo Road and Gale Street on 13 June 1946 in violation of the law and courted arrest. The group also included Zohra Bhayat, Amina Pahad (mother of Essop and Aziz Pahad), and Zubeida Patel of Johannesburg.

Five resisters were beaten unconscious on 23 June and thrown into the gutter by a white mob. Both Zainab and Rabia Docrat, wife of AKM Docrat, were injured in the attack. Zainab told supporters, 'Hooligans or no hooligans, carry on we must, and carry on we shall.' The attacks increased support for resistance, with thousands of supporters visiting the camp each night to show their solidarity. The Reverend Michael Scott recounted that when he and Zainab were pushed by the thugs, she said to him, 'It's not their fault, they don't know what they are doing.' He replied that her religion (Islam) had taught her more than the attackers had found in the story of the Crucifixion. Zainab was a fiery speaker and addressed many rallies. On 28 June she was arrested, warned, and released. After her release she addressed a meeting of 800 women at the Avalon Cinema, which was reported in *The Leader* on 29 June 1946. The meeting was also addressed by Khatija Mayet (who later married GH Vawda), Dr Goonam, and Zohra Meer (later an attorney in Stanger). In July 1946, Zainab's batch of resisters was arrested and imprisoned for three months.

In late 1946 Zainab, Mrs P.K. Naidoo, and Miss Suriakala Patel became the first women elected onto the TIC committee. Zainab completed her studies and married a fellow student Dr Kazi. The arrest of 156 activists in December 1956 led to great hardship for the families of detainees and

she was involved in efforts to distribute food, blankets and clothing to the families of the accused, and organise meals for the accused during the trial which lasted five years. In December 1963, Zainab organised a march of women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against Group Areas relocations and the establishment of a National Council for Indians. By now the state had changed tack. Whereas previous marches were peaceful, the police turned dogs on the women and baton-charged them. Shortly after the march, Zainab was banned for five years. When her banning expired, she and her husband Dr Kazi, who had also been banned, took exit permits and she continues to live in London.



Zainab Asvat (r), Moulvi Cachalia, who was president of the TIC, and Moulvi's daughter Zubeida who was married to Mosie Moolla, during one of Mosie's arrests. Zubeida is carrying her daughter Tasneem

Saleem Badat

(1957 –)

Saleem Badat, born in Durban on 29 August 1957, has been Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University since 2005. Between 1999 and 2006 he was CEO of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), a body that advises the Minister of Education on higher education policy. Prior to his appointment as the first CEO of the CHE, Badat was Director of the Education Policy Unit at UWC. He is a graduate of the universities of Natal (SA), Boston (USA) and York (UK), where he completed a doctorate in Sociology. During the 1980s he occupied leadership positions in local and national student political organisations and was co-ordinator of the *Grassroots* community newspaper from 1983 to 1985, working with the likes of Johnny Issel. Badat had several stints in political detention and was restricted and prohibited from entering any educational institution.

Badat is a keen golfer and soccerite. While studying in England he qualified to coach English FA football! A rigorous, widely published, and internationally respected scholar, he has been the recipient of numerous national and international academic awards and prizes, including the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and British Council Scholarships. In 2004 he was awarded an honorary doctorate in Education from the University of Free State; in July 2008 he received an honorary doctorate in Education from the University of York; at Rhodes, he received the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Community Engagement; in 2008, Badat was the recipient of the Inyathelo Award for Exceptional Philanthropy in recognition of his commitment to bringing about beneficial change in South Africa.

One of his most notable gestures was that on being appointed as VC, Badat decided to relinquish a portion of his salary every month towards a scholarship fund called The Jakes Gerwel Rhodes University Scholarship Fund in honour of the university's chancellor, Dr Jakes Gerwel. Badat's 2010 book, *Black Man, You Are On Your Own*, traces the emergence, ideas and activities of the BCM, and more specifically analyses the ideology and politics of SASO and its contribution to the popular struggle against apartheid education and race, class and gender oppression.

Omar Badsha

(1945 –)

*A*rtist, activist, and passionate historian Omar Badsha has built a reputation through his photography, which has captured significant moments of apartheid history. Badsha's father Ebrahim, a pioneer artist, had a major influence on Badsha: 'I grew up in a typical working-class Indian home, Muslim basically, but an unusual one in that my father was an artist. My uncle (Moosa) was a photographer. So I was always surrounded by images. I started off in high school painting and drawing and only became interested in photography in the late seventies. At a very young age I became part and parcel of the liberation movement. Our main concern was to mobilise people, politicise them, and arm them [with] any medium that we were involved in.... It was logical, as an artist, that I began to draw images of struggle. We used art as part of the struggle, as a weapon in the struggle.'

Born in Durban in 1945, Badsha was drawn into politics as a teenager and was denied a passport for almost 25 years because of his activism. In the 1970s he became involved in the revitalised trade union movement. He helped initiate the Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Council (TUACC) and was secretary of the Chemical Industrial Workers' Union. This was partly why Badsha focused on photography: 'A majority of our members were illiterate. And we had classes every night to train shop stewards. I felt that we could use photographs as a way of illustrating our point, putting across certain ideas. You got lots of people with horrific chemical burns. The idea was to document that and use pictures of the early history of the trade union movement to make people aware of that history and why unions were banned by the government. So I taught myself photography. My camera became a diary for me. I photographed people I met and communities I worked in.... There was very strict censorship, and, self-censorship also. Newspapers would not publish your pictures [as] most were white. We published in the black press ... set up our own newspapers, trade union papers, student newspapers, church newspapers. And our movement outside used our pictures, so we smuggled pictures

out and they were used by the movement for labour publications and propaganda work.’

Badsha was a founding member of Afrapix, formed by progressive photographers to record the social life and political struggle through the medium of photography. Badsha’s first publication, *Letter to Farzanah*, published to commemorate the International Year of the Child, was banned by the state in 1979. *Imijondolo* (1984) documented the lives of people residing in the informal urban settlement of Inanda. He took photographs for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, edited by Francis Wilson, which published a pictorial depiction, *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*. The book had a major impact internationally but Badsha could not attend the exhibitions because the government had withdrawn his passport. Badsha’s powerful images have been seen nationally and internationally and he has received critical acclaim.

He is the recipient of a number of awards including *The Sir Basil Schonland Award*, *The Sir Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Award*, *The Natal Society Of Arts – Annual Award* 1968, and “*Images Of Africa*” First Prize at the African Arts Festival in Denmark, 1993. He travelled to India in 1996 to document life in Tadkeshwar, his grandparents’ ancestral village in Gujarat. His other publications include *Imperial Ghetto* (2001), a study of life in the Grey Street precinct of Durban, and *With Our Own hands* (2002), which focused on the government’s poverty relief programs. Badsha began the Centre of Documentary Photography at UCT in 1987. His passion for history is evident in his setting up South African History Online in 1997, a website dedicated to sharing information on South African history and culture through a combination of visual and written sources.

Sources: SAHO; Omar Badsha interviewed by Mary Marshall Clarke, 7 August 1999. Accessed at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/oral_hist/carnegie/pdfs/omar-badsha.pdf



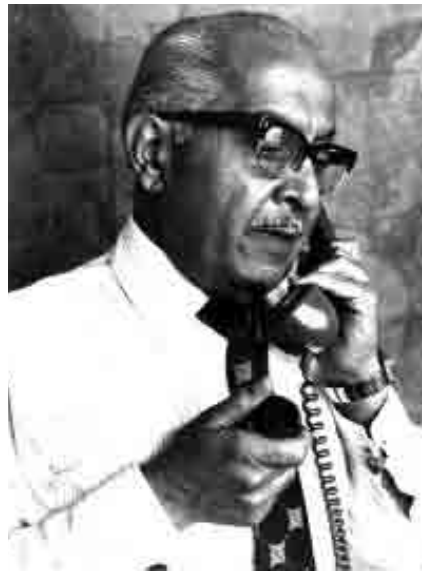
Saleem Badat



Ahmed Bhoola



Omar Badsha, art exhibit, 1971



Cassim Bassa



Communist Party rally, Durban, early 1940s. Dadoo is second from left; to his left is Pauline Podbrey; AKM Docrat is second from the right; behind him is MD Naidoo



*Mphutlane Wa Bofelo
(Credit: Al-Qalam)*

Cassim Mohammed Bassa

(1925 – 1983)

Cassim Bassa, estate agent, community and non-racial sports leader, was born in India on 11 August 1925. He was the eighth of nine children of trader Mohammed Bassa and his wife Fathima and joined his father in South Africa in 1927. Bassa matriculated from Sastri College in 1944. Although his father was keen to send him to India to study medicine, he secured work as a research assistant in the Department of Economics at the University of Natal. Research on the economic position of Indians awakened his political consciousness and Bassa joined the NIC in 1948 and devoted his life to community work and non-racial sport. Bassa's involvement in social welfare work began when the Natal Indian Blind Society requested that he collect and replace collection boxes in public places. His appointment as honorary secretary of the society followed in 1953. His greatest impact was among the visually and hearing impaired.

He was president of the Natal Indian Blind and Deaf Society from 1966 until his death; chairperson of the boards of management of the New Horizon School for the Blind, Durban School for the Indian Deaf and the V.N. Naik School for the Deaf. He also served on the management board of the Spes Nova School for Cerebral Palsied Children and was first chairperson of the Council for the Advancement of Special Education in South Africa. Bassa was a grantee of the Orient and Anjuman schools, secretary of the Indian Centenary Scholarship Trust, and joint secretary of the Orient Islamic Educational Institute. As a sports administrator Bassa played a leading role in promoting non-racial sport while challenging apartheid sport. One of his outstanding achievements was to get the non-racial South African Table Tennis Board to compete at the World Championships in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1957 as South Africa's sole representative. Bassa was president of the SATTB, which was affiliated to the international body. He was a cricket official in various capacities from 1944 until his death. He was also a councillor of the Durban Indian Sports Grounds Association from 1958 to 1971. Bassa attended the founding meeting of SACOS on 17 March 1973, which campaigned vigorously for the boycott of South African sport.

When some officials agreed to participate in matches against the visiting Robins cricket team in 1976, it was Bassa who called up an emergency meeting in Natal where his resolution opposing involvement in the matches was passed. Bassa was also part of the three person team constituted in Natal in 1976 to discuss unity with its white counterparts. *Post Natal* remarked on 12 January 1969 that ‘Natal [cricket] without Bassa would be like a ship without a rudder.’ Bassa's condemnation of apartheid in sport led to the government’s withdrawing his passport for many years. For those who followed the debate about the Springbok emblem in post-apartheid South Africa, it is interesting that Bassa remarked in 1977, when cricket unity was being discussed, that ‘the Springbok has become the symbol of racial discrimination. And, since we are starting off a new lease altogether ... we feel that we can have any colour you like, but not green and gold.’ Bassa was married to Khatija Paruk and they had three children. He passed away in his sleep in Johannesburg on 25 March 1983 where he was attending a meeting of the South African National Council for the Deaf.

Sources: SAHO. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/bassa-cm.htm>; A. Desai et al. *Blacks in Whites. Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2002.*



Cassim Bassa (right)

Ahmed Ismail Bhoola

(1923 – 1997)

Ahmed Bhoola was the son of commercial traveller Ismail (d. 1942) who worked for the clothing firm Lockhat Brothers. Ismail moved back and forth between South Africa and India before deciding to settle permanently in Durban in 1920. Like many activists, the family lived in the Warwick Avenue area, first in Leathern and then Mansfield Road. Ismail's eldest children Fatima and Mehmood were born in India while Ahmed, Ebrahim, and Essop were born in South Africa. Ahmed studied at Sastri College and Adams Mission before completing a law degree at Wits. He was a contemporary of Nelson Mandela, IC Meer, Masla Pather and JN Singh, who were all involved in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Following the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984, Nelson Mandela wrote a letter to IC Meer, dated 29 January 1985, in which he asked Meer to pass on his condolences to Indira Gandhi's family. He began his letter by referring to the discussions that he had with the likes of Ahmed Bhoola at Wits: 'I watch the world aging, scenes from our younger days in Kholvad house and Umgeni Road come back so vividly as if they occurred only the other day – bending endlessly on our textbooks, travelling to and from Milner Park, indulging in a bit of agitation, now on opposite sides and now together, the fruitless polemic with [Ahmed] Bhoola and [Karrim] Essack...'

When Bhoola returned to Durban he opened a practice in Brilliant House in Grey Street. He held numerous official positions in the NIC until his bannings in the 1960s. He was also a well known weekly columnist for *The Leader* with his article 'POLITICUS', which took a satirical look at the state of Indian politics in South Africa, extremely popular.

Mphutlane Wa Bofelo

(1968 –)

Writer-activist Mphutlane wa Bofelo was influenced by the Black Consciousness philosophy articulated by Steve Biko while he was growing up in Zamdela township in Sasolburg. He was arrested and imprisoned by the apartheid government for ‘possession of subversive materials’ shortly before his matric examination in 1983. In prison Bofelo embraced Islam and studied the writings and philosophies of Sufi poet Rumi. After his release, he studied Islam at As-Salaam in Braemar, and between 1990 and 1991 lived in Qwa Qwa where he did Islamic work and was involved in the National Workers Union of South Africa (NAWUSA). In a 2009 interview with *kagablog*, Bofelo explained what Islam meant to him:

'In Islam the ... first step in the journey of the love of The Supreme One is to see beauty in all creations, to behold the work, glory and Grace of the creator in all beings, and to embrace all beings with love. In one of his sayings the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have asked the Almighty to make him die among the poor and to be raised among the poor, as he was born among the poor. This tradition stressed the fact that service to humanity and standing for justice and freedom and taking the side of the poor is an act of journeying towards Allah. My focus is more on advocacy and education and training against racism, sexism and classism, and on peace-building and social justice, youth personal and organisational development'.

In 1999, wa Bofelo enrolled at Free State university where he completed the BA and BA Hons. degrees in Political Science. His poems, stories and essays have appeared in various journals, anthologies and websites. In 2003 he published a Ramadan booklet, *The Journey Within: Reflections in Ramadan*; this was followed by *Remembrance and Salutations: Zikr and Salawat* (2006); *The Heart's Interpreter* (2006); and *Bluesology and Bofelosophy* (2008). His work is inspired by a combination of socialist ideology, black consciousness philosophy, and Islam.

Amina Cachalia

(1930 –)

*A*mina Cachalia, younger sister of Zainab Asvat, was born in Vereeniging on 28 June 1930. The ninth of eleven children, she was inspired by her father's (Ebrahim Asvat) political activities and 'stories about his days in the struggle with Mahatma Gandhi. I would lend an ear and listen to things, not knowing what he was really talking about.' Her views were shaped too by growing up in the mixed-race suburb of Newclare in Johannesburg: 'I had no concept of race. I didn't know I was an Indian. I was just another kid on the block. In fact, I didn't know that the junior school I attended was for Coloureds. It was just a school. I knew I was a Muslim because of being born into a Muslim home, but I really did not know I was Indian until I moved to Fordsburg. It hit me when I had to go to an Indian school.'

An influential figure during her school years was teacher Mervyn Thandray, a member of the CPSA who made his pupils aware of the various injustices in the country. Amina was an 'activist' from an early age: 'At school, we were supposed to stand up and sing 'God Save the King.' I would never do it. The principal called me into his office and I told him I didn't believe in what was going on in South Africa. I thought the national anthem was part of our repression. He said, 'Goodness me, you're 11 years old. You must learn to sing the national anthem.' I said, 'I do know it but I will never stand up and sing it.'

From the late 1940s the struggle became her 'full time work. I never did anything else.' She did not complete matric but did a secretarial course. She joined the Transvaal Indian Congress Youth League (TICYL) and through her political activities met future husband Yusuf Cachalia. Amina volunteered for the Peace Council and was a founding member, in 1948, of the Women's Progressive Union which was affiliated to the Institute of Race Relations. The Union taught women literacy, dress-making, secretarial skills, and basic skills in nursing in order to make them economically independent. Amina was an active participant in the Defiance Campaign

of 1952, distributing literature as well as recruiting volunteers. Along with 28 other women she was involved in a protest march in Germiston. They were arrested and sentenced to two weeks imprisonment in Boksburg Prison. Shortly after the Defiance Campaign ended, Hilda Bernstein and Ray Simons proposed a women's movement which came to fruition with the founding of FEDSAW in 1954. Amina was treasurer and worked with such icons as Helen Joseph and Lillian Ngoyi. FEDSAW organised the historic women's march to Pretoria on 9 August 1955 to protest against the law requiring African women to carry passes. Amina, although pregnant at the time, was one of the 20,000 marchers. She remembers that day clearly:

'We chose that day because it was a Thursday night and that is the day domestic workers had off. We wanted to accommodate them. I was pregnant with my first child so I was taken right up to the amphitheatre to wait for the rest of the women. There were women coming up with colourful blankets, some with babies on their backs and singing. Watching these women coming up through the gardens was so spectacular'.

The child that Amina was carrying was her son Ghaleb and a standing joke in the Cachalia family is that he was the only male marcher that day. During the Treason Trial from 1956 to 1961 Amina was involved in collecting food and money to support the families of those trialists. In the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and banning of the ANC and the PAC, the resistance movement was forced underground. Amina was banned for five years in 1963 while her husband Yusuf was placed under house arrest. Amina was recovering from heart surgery at the time. The Rivonia Trial of 1963, where many political leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment, was a dark period in activists' lives. 'Life imprisonment meant that they could die there, so it was a really very difficult period for all of us. I almost felt that it was the end of our political career in this country, because here were so many of our leaders going for good.' Amina and Yusuf Cachalia visited Mandela at Pollsmoor in the late 1980s.

'I had a million butterflies in my tummy. I was worried and excited – this man I hadn't seen for so many years. The last time I saw him was when he was sentenced... I didn't even know what he looked like anymore.... He

looked so different from what I imagined. We talked about the children, his children and my kids and family and friends.’

Restrictions from 1963 to 1978 and harassment by security forces, she recalled, ‘had a detrimental effect on my children. We decided to send the children to boarding school because of the continuous harassment by security police [who] came to the house on a daily basis, at any time of the day and night. The kids were absolutely beside themselves with fear that either their father or I would be taken away.... We thought if we sent the kids away to boarding school it might save them that terrible life that they were going through with us’.

When her banning order expired in 1978, Amina threw herself into political activism through the TIC and UDF who opposed participation in government created structures. Under the democratically elected government in 1994, Amina Cachalia was elected an MP for the ANC. Her husband and fellow political activist, Yusuf, died in 1995. She described him as ‘a liberated husband. He always let me do exactly what I felt necessary. Now, when I reminisce, I miss him so much.’ Their two children are the well known media figure Coco Cachalia and Ghaleb, Managing Director of Interbrand South Africa. Amina Cachalia has received numerous accolades, including an honorary doctorate in law from Wits (2004). Her response was typically modest: ‘Nobody should be singled out for their contribution to the liberation struggle.’ She was also awarded ‘The Order of the Baobab (Bronze)’ for ‘her lifetime contribution to the struggle for gender equality, non-racialism and a free and democratic South Africa.’

*Sources: SAHO; PBS Frontline. ‘The Long Walk of Nelson Mandela. Interview with Amina Cachalia.’ 1995. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/interviews/cachalia.html>; Karina Turok, *Life and Soul. Portraits of Women who move South Africa.* Double Story Books, 2007.*

Azhar Cachalia

(1956 –)

*A*zhar Cachalia was born in 1956 in Edinburgh, where his father Ismail was studying medicine. Azhar matriculated from Benoni High, where he was a founder member of the Benoni Student Movement, enrolled for a Science degree at UDW but transferred to Wits and completed a Law degree in 1983. At Wits, he was involved in student politics and was elected vice-president of the Black Students Society. As a result of their political activities Azhar and his brother Firoz were served with banning orders and confined to Benoni for two years from 1981 to 1983. Cachalia joined the TIC and was an executive member in 1984 and 1985. He was also a founding member of the UDF and served as its national treasurer. Cachalia became an attorney in 1986, the year in which a state of emergency was declared by PW Botha, and was detained for six weeks and subsequently served with another banning order confining him to Benoni. He was detained twice more and forbidden from further participation in UDF activities. In 1987 he was detained twice under emergency regulations.

Cachalia joined the law firm of Cheadle Thompson and Haysom in 1988 and was a managing partner when he resigned to become an MP in 1996. During the transition to a non-racial democracy, Cachalia served on the interim advisory team for the Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamadi, and was also responsible for convening the team that drafted the new Police Act. In 1996, he was appointed Secretary for Safety and Security, becoming chief policy advisor to the Minister of Safety and Security. He was tasked with implementing the National Crime Prevention Strategy. He returned to the law profession as a judge of the Transvaal Supreme Court in 2001 and was appointed judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) in 2006. Cachalia spent two years at Yale University (1991-92) studying Human Rights Law and is a board member of the Open Society Foundation for South Africa.

Sources: SAHO; 'A Cachalia. Secretary for Safety and Security.' anc.org.za; 'You be the Judge,' City Press, 1 September 2009.



Amina Cachalia protesting peacefully against arrests under the 90-Day Detention Without Trial law, 1963



Amina Cachalia embracing Walter Sisulu during the Rivonia Trial, 1964



Yusuf Cachalia and Nelson Mandela



Amina and Yusuf Cachalia after visiting Nelson Mandela at Polsmoor, 1988



Azhar and Feroz Cachalia

Firoz Cachalia

(1958 –)

*F*iroz Cachalia was born on 22 July 1958 in Benoni where he matriculated from the local high school for Indians. He completed BA and LLB degrees at Wits and a Masters degree in Law at Michigan State University (1985). He served as secretary of the Benoni Student Movement during his high school years, was president of the Black Students' Society at Wits, secretary of the Actionville Rents Action Committee, and vice president of the TIC. During the transition, Cachalia was a delegate to CODESA as a member of the TIC.

In the post-apartheid period he was speaker of the Gauteng provincial legislature (1999-2004); Gauteng Community Safety Minister (2004-2008); and Gauteng Economic Development Minister (2008-). As economic minister Cachalia emphasised that his task was to 'create decent jobs, sustainable livelihoods and a humane, socially just society.' Actions such as cancelling motorsports contracts that saved the province R700 million because it brought no immediate benefit to the masses, and reducing directors' fees for attending Blue IQ board meetings, upset some in government. Cachalia was moved from his important development post to head a new Gauteng planning commission which was created in November 2010.

Ismail Mohamed ‘Moulvi’ Cachalia

(1908 – 2003)

[My] political outlook was influenced by the teachings of the Islamic religion. We believe in the equality of man. [The] Islamic religion imposes upon me as a teacher and a theologian duties in regard to the carrying out of the fundamental tenets of Islam. Equality being one. tolerance, justice and so on should be meted out to all’ – Moulvi Cachalia.

“Moulvi” Cachalia came from a family with a strong tradition of political activism. At the time of his birth in December 1908, his father, AM Cachalia, who was president of the TBIA (which became the TIC in 1927), was serving a prison sentence for his role in the passive resistance campaign under the leadership of Gandhi. Moulvi would later say that his father’s political involvement shaped his own views: 'My father accepted the method of passive resistance as the principal method for the redress of the grievances.... The earliest political influence on me came from my father in the period before I left for India in 1924. In 1924 the Government introduced the Class Areas Bill which was designed to segregate all Indians. The Indian community was very, very agitated, and a lot of meetings were held throughout the country, also demonstrations took place in most of the centres.'

Moulvi enrolled at the Darul Uloom in Deoband, India, in 1924 and completed his studies in 1930. Deoband played a part in moulding his politics as most of his teachers were either members of the Indian National Congress or belonged to the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind*, an organisation of Muslims in India which worked for the liberation of India in alliance with Congress. He also followed the political activities of Gandhi. Returning to South Africa in 1931, Moulvi began a mail order business, called Central Distributing Agency, in partnership with his brother Yusuf. He became formally involved in politics in 1938 when Cissie Gool formed the NEUF to protest proposed segregation legislation. Moulvi was a council member of the Johannesburg committee of the NEUF. They participated in a massive march towards the Houses of Parliament in that year. Moulvi was part of the rising group of Indians who sought common ground with activists

across racial lines. Under Yusuf Dadoo they took over the leadership of the TIC in 1946. Moulvi was a member of the Joint Passive Resistance Committee of 1946 and was arrested for leading a batch of women resisters. He was a member of the executive member of the TIC from 1946, vice-president from 1947, and secretary from 1951. He was also a member of the executive committee of the SAIC from 1947, founding member and secretary of the Transvaal Peace Council in 1950, and vice-president of the South African Peace Council. A banning order in 1954 forced him to relinquish these positions.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the pattern was set for co-operation between the SAIC and the ANC. Moulvi was a member of the National Action Committee and was seconded to Nelson Mandela during the 1952 Defiance Campaign. Along with Moses Kotane, ANC leader and chairman of the CPSA, Moulvi attended as a representative of the South African liberation movement at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in April 1955. He did not have a passport but Indian Prime Minister Nehru arranged their travel to the conference which focused on ending colonialism and bringing about better relations between the countries of Asia and Africa. From Bandung, Moulvi visited Singapore and Thailand before going to India where he spent almost a year.

On his return to South Africa Moulvi immersed himself in protest politics and was arrested and imprisoned for three months in the wake of state repression that followed the Sharpeville massacre (March 1960) and the banning of the ANC and PAC. Moulvi was served with restriction orders in 1963 and placed under house arrest. He escaped into exile in 1964 and established an ANC mission in Botswana. In 1967 he transferred to India where he and Alfred Nzo launched an ANC mission in Delhi. Moulvi's wife, Miriam Bhana, was involved in both the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48 and the Defiance Campaign of 1952, serving prison sentences on both occasions. She died in 1973. In 1977, India bestowed its premier honour, the Padma Shri, upon Moulvi Cachalia. Moulvi returned to South Africa in 1990 and participated in the ANC's election campaign in 1994. He passed away on 8 August 2003.

*Sources: E.S. Reddy, 'Moulvi Ismail Ahmed Cachalia,' 1988. http://www.anc.org.za/people/cachalia_mia.htm; *Witness for the Defence, Treason Trial, June 1960. Pp. 14889-15238 of the trial transcript. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/congress/molvi-ti.html>.**

Yusuf Mohamed Cachalia

(1915 – 1995)

Yusuf Cachalia was born in Johannesburg on 15 January 1915. He joined his brother Moulvi in business but in 1936 went to India to study Islamic philosophy. His eclectic political philosophy was a combination of Islamic thought, Gandhian philosophy, and Marxism. Returning to South Africa in 1941, Cachalia became active in political struggles with the younger members of the TIC who coalesced under Yusuf Dadoo's leadership. Cachalia was the SAIC representative on the Joint Planning Council during the Defiance Campaign of 1952, with Dadoo, Dr. Moroka (Chairman), Walter Sisulu, and JB Marks. Shortly after the campaign, Professor Matthews suggested drawing up a Freedom Charter and a coalition of groups formed the Congress of the People (COP) under the chairmanship of Albert Luthuli. Cachalia was one of its secretaries.

When the Congress Alliance debated the turn to violence in 1960, IC Meer and Nelson Mandela would recall that Cachalia held steadfastly that resorting to violence would undermine the more urgent task of organising the black masses. He held fast to the Gandhian message of satyagraha. Cachalia was banned in 1963 and placed under house arrest for fifteen years. His wife Amina was also banned and the couple found themselves in the peculiar position of having to obtain permission from the state to associate with each other. On his 75th birthday in 1990, Mandela congratulated Yusuf Cachalia from Victor Verster Prison: 'I am more than one thousand kilometers away from you, but I think of you daily. Your contribution to the struggle has been enormous.' Cachalia passed away in 1995.

A blogger named Bilal wrote after attending a memorial function at the Johannesburg Metro Centre in honour of Yusuf Cachalia and Bram Fischer that Cachalia's son Ghaleb 'gave a good talk about his dad's life – said that even though he seemed to have a disregard for rituals and cultural practices of Muslims in this country during apartheid, it was actually Islam that drove him to be so active against the apartheid regime – his desire to implement the essence of Islam, that is against all forms of oppression on all people, Muslim or not!'



Moulvi Cachalia leading a group of Passive Resisters, 1946



Ahmed Kathrada, Dawood Seedat and Moulvi Cachalia, Treason Trial, 1956-61



Moulvi Cachalia (BAHA)

Ameen Mahomed Cajee

(1918 –)

*A*meen Cajee participated in and witnessed some seminal moments of South Africa's twentieth century history. For Cajee, the ANC victory in 1994 was the culmination of a journey in which he experienced imprisonment, torture, banning orders, and the loss of friends and comrades along the way. Born in Schweizer-Reneke on 13 April 1918, Cajee was the second youngest of seven children. He credited his parents with instilling in him the value of charity regardless of race. In Schweizer-Reneke, his family was known as "Nkadimeng", which means 'one who gives'. At thirteen Cajee moved to Fordsburg to school in Newtown where he matriculated in 1942. He was also a keen sportsman and particularly passionate about boxing. Cajee joined the TIC in the late 1930s as a supporter of Dadoo's Nationalist Bloc. He campaigned for the Nationalist Bloc in 1939 against the Nana faction, which Dadoo lost.

During the 1946-48 passive resistance campaign in Natal, Cajee went by train to Durban to court arrest. While he was in jail, he received word that his sister was terminally ill. His supporters raised bail and he saw her shortly before she passed on. Cajee spent two years at Fort Hare but left in 1945 without completing his degree. In 1950 he enrolled at Wits but abandoned his studies to dedicate himself to political work. He began fundraising for the CPSA through the sale of its newspaper, the *Guardian*.

During the 1952 Defiance Campaign, Cajee was tasked with providing food and transport to volunteers. He helped print and distribute leaflets in the build-up to the Congress of the People in 1955. Cajee was recruited by Jack Hodgson into Umkhonto we Sizwe. His unit carried out acts of sabotage, such as cutting telephone wires, in the Alberton area. He also transported key leaders of the movement around the country. For example, he drove Walter Sisulu to Port Elizabeth (for a meeting with Moulvi Cachalia) and to Cape Town (to meet King Sabata Dalindyebo from the Transkei). In 1962, despite a huge manhunt for Mandela, Cajee smuggled him out of the country by driving him to Bechuanaland (Botswana).

Ahmed Kathrada recalls that during the Rivonia Trial of 1963, Aisha, Ameen's wife, 'used to bring me the most delicious food. I can still remember those home-cooked meals. She even brought prawns a couple of times!' On 22 November 1963, Cajee was served with a five-year banning order. Despite this restriction he continued his political activities. While he was banned, for example, Mac Maharaj approached him for assistance to prepare gunpowder for pipe bombs. There were some hairy moments. For example, in order to shorten the period it would take to dry the gunpowder, they foolishly decided to heat the gunpowder on a stove. Cajee was badly burnt in the resulting explosion. On 8 July 1964 Cajee was detained and placed in solitary confinement at Marshall Square. He was only released after three months. Cajee was a close friend of treason trialist Ahmed Kathrada, with whom he shared the common hometown of Schweizer-Reneke.

Kathrada would write of Cajee in *Men of Dynamite*: 'Ameen was a soldier's soldier. Extremely courageous and dedicated he was not one to dabble much with theory. He was par excellence a practical man. I owe a great deal to him. He stayed at 13 Kholvad House for many years. When I was placed under house arrest, I was not allowed to have any visitors. Not even my mother was allowed. In fact I last saw her towards the end of 1962, when I broke my house arrest order by quickly going down to the car to meet her. At that time Ameen was working in Wolmaranstad, and I really needed someone to share the flat. The idea was that he would be allowed to have visitors, and in case of a police raid, he could claim my visitors as his. It took one phone call from me, and Ameen was on the train to Johannesburg, and to Flat 13. A few months later, one day in about March/April 1962, I was given an order from the leadership to go underground in about four hours time! I was to leave the flat that I had occupied since 1947, all the furniture, my car etc. I confided in Ameen, and left everything to him. He gladly accepted the position. But, true to his word, he insisted on keeping it under my name. Even the phone. In many of the letters and messages I received in prison from him, he reiterated that the flat belonged to me. So much so that on the day of our release Ameen came and told me that he had alternate accommodation, and I should move back into Flat 13. But not before his daughter and my godchild, Djamila would allow me.

After a couple of weeks she said I could move in. And what did I find? Djamila had the entire flat re-furnished! Such friendship and loyalty is not easy to find. How many people know that Ameen, at great risk, put his little dry-cleaning shop at the disposal of comrades to have their meetings. These include David Webster, Neil Aggett and others. Fortunately Comrade Winnie Mandela is still alive to bear testimony to this part of Ameen's contribution'.

Cajee returned to active politics when the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee was formed in 1981 to oppose the elections of the SAIC. He was also elected to the executive of the TIC when it was revived on 1 May 1983. During the 1980s, leaders of the UDF used Cajee's shop as a meeting place after the declaration of successive states of emergency. Cajee married Aisha in 1954 and is survived by two children, his son Iqbal and daughter Djamila.

Sources: Men of Dynamite; Interview with Pdraig O'Malley, 10 September 2002. Included in SADET, Vol. 4. <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv03833/05lv03858/06lv03877.htm>



Ameen Cajee, Ahmed Kathrada, and Isaac Makope

Yunus Carrim

(1956 –)

*Y*unus Carrim has engaged in political activity since his teenage years in the turbulent seventies, beginning with the organisation of a demonstration against the Republic Day Festival in Woodlands High School in 1971. He was detained by the security police for questioning, but released after a few hours. A year later he became chairperson of the Pietermaritzburg branch of NYA (National Youth Action). 1976, beginning with the Soweto Revolts which began on June 16th, ushered in a period of significant political activity for Carrim, as it did for many young South Africans. Together with two other students, Lloyd Padayachie and Rashid Meer, Carrim was detained by the security police for organising demonstrations at the University of Durban-Westville in reaction to the heavy-handed action by the state. Carrim was detained from August to December 1976. Following his release, Carrim was awarded a scholarship by the UN Education and Training Project for Southern Africans to study abroad. He spent six years in England where he completed BA Honours and Masters Degrees in Sociology at the University of Warwick, as well as an International Diploma in Journalism from Darlington College of Technology. On his return to South Africa, Carrim remained committed to political activism despite the increasingly brutal nature of the state.

He served as a council member of the UDF in Pietermaritzburg and was elected to the Executive of the NIC at its 1987 conference. Given his political involvement, it came as no surprise that Carrim was held in detention under the 1986 State of Emergency. He was also the Secretary of the Pietermaritzburg Combined Ratepayers and Residents Association (1986-90), and served in numerous community, sports, and educational organisations in the Pietermaritzburg region. Carrim was a senior lecturer in Sociology at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg until May 1994. He was also a freelance journalist during this period. He has published academic articles as well as journalistic pieces on South African Politics, Labour, the “National Question”, and Local Government. He was elected to South Africa’s first non-racial parliament in May 1994 and has held several

parliamentary positions in the past seventeen years. He was Chairperson of the Membership of Legislatures Adhoc Committee (1997); Chairperson: Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee from March 1998 until June 2004; Chairperson, Public Enterprises Portfolio Committee, 2004-2007; and Chairperson of the Justice and Constitutional Development Portfolio Committee from 2007 to April 2009. In May 2009 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. He has persistently expressed the hope that voting patterns would deracialise, signalling a move to true non-racial democracy. This is consistent with Carrim's defining himself as having multiple identities in being Indian, Black, South African and socialist, with his primary identity being that of a South African socialist. He became a socialist in his final year at school and currently serves as a member of the SACP's Central Committee and Politburo, and edits the SACP publications *African Communist* and *Umsebenzi*. He serves in branch and regional structures of the ANC.

Sources: Yunus Carrim CV; 'Yunus Carrim,; MyAfrica. <http://myafrica.allafrica.com/view/people/main/id/091f07CvRNMq6u4z.html>; Yunus Carrim, 'COSATU: towards disciplined alliances,' *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 14, Issue 40 (December 1987): 87-95.



Yunus Carrim (2r), Fred Gona (l, Cosatu), Charm Govender, Cassim Saloojee, and Reggie Vandeyar on a visit to India, 1989

Achmat Cassiem

(1946 –)

The only people in the world who have the sole justification for resorting to armed struggle, to violence, to force, are the oppressed people – nobody else has that right or justification. But more importantly it is immoral, obscene for an oppressor to tell the oppressed how they should respond to oppression. So if there are two principles that we should teach all oppressed people then it is those two principles.... Every human being and animal has the right to self-defence. I am non-violent to non-violent people only – Achmat Cassiem

Cassiem has never been afraid to court controversy because of his political convictions, which he attributes to his strong religious beliefs. He said that he was ‘fortunate enough to have grown up in an Islamic environment where the principles of truth, honesty and sincerity were the most important principles.... I only knew that on the basis of my Islamic principles I had rights which Allah has ordained for us and He had also ordained obligations.’ Cassiem joined the armed struggle at fifteen and in 1963, at the age of seventeen, was one of the youngest activists to be imprisoned on Robben Island. Growing up in a South African township made politicisation inevitable:

‘You can’t go through school without being influenced by political discussions in the classrooms. You read South African literature and there is reference to *Baas* which means boss or the oppressive ruler and teachers will draw your attention to that, or words that were used to insult the Africans, the word ‘Kaffa’, and the teachers will tell us please delete that word and put the word ‘man’ in there instead of referring to humans in the derogatory sense. All of that obviously helped us cope with this indoctrination which was in place of so-called education. When the PAC called for an anti-pass campaign in 1960, Africans marched on to the city, and a friend and I [aged 14] were standing on the main road observing this

scene and all of a sudden we said to each other [that] ‘this is our march’ – because we are opposed to this entire system, so although we were not pass carriers, we joined this campaign. We had not been recruited, we were not signed up members but as a show of solidarity.’ Cassiem was imprisoned on Robben Island twice, for sentences of five and six years respectively. On the first occasion he was imprisoned for helping his science teacher Sadiq Isaacs manufacture explosives and described his experience. Of Robben Island, he said: ‘There were already 1800 prisoners... Robben Island was called Devils Island because it was one of the worst prisons in the world. The psychological tortures were numerous. The humiliation – stripping prisoners naked daily, they were even “felt up” with rubber gloves’.

‘Then of course psychological tortures of the nature where Johnson Molumbo, who eventually became vice-president in the PAC, on a very hot summer’s day he asked for water so they buried him on the beachfront up to his neck in the sand and urinated into his mouth.... Then physical torture – compulsory hard labour was a form of physical torture – if you did not do sufficient work they would punish you, including corporal punishment, but most times they would cut your meals until you produced satisfactorily. I was one of the victims of corporal punishment for trying to expose conditions in prison by smuggling out letters to Amnesty International. We were stripped naked and tied to a contraption that looks like a horse at an incline, then they tie your wrists and ankles and they put a cushion on your kidneys and on your thighs, then they whip you’.

‘The flesh splits open, this is in front of the entire prison staff including the district surgeon of the area, and when the flesh splits open ... they pour iodine into the wound on the pretext that it prevents infection. Then you get dressed and immediately go back to work in that condition.... Solitary confinement is one of the worst tortures that you can impose on a human being – solitary confinement does not lead to torture – it IS torture because there is sensory deprivation, you suffer from hallucinations, etc. The other torture was of course the fact that you only received one visitor every six months and that visit was for half an hour. It was monitored and you were not allowed to discuss anything except family matters. You were only allowed to write one letter every six months and that was censored, and

you were allowed to receive only one letter every six months. So you can imagine the sense of isolation and literally the destruction of the bonding of the family which was part of the psychological torture. What effect did this have on my life? I can only say that because I was so young it tempered me like fire tempers steel and made me more determined that the apartheid regime must be destroyed.’ In between his stints on Robben Island, Cassiem was banned for a total of eleven years. The impact was equally horrendous. He was ‘once arrested for breaking my banning order because I had attended Jummah [Friday congregational prayers] which is a social gathering.’

Around 1980, Cassiem formed Qibla, which had links with the PAC’s armed wing Apla, and whose philosophy was guided by an eclectic mix of BC, political Islam, and class analysis. In 1980, Cassiem was arrested for organising student protests and held in prison for 243 days without being charged. On another occasion he was arrested when ten PAC guerrillas were intercepted at Athens airport on their way from Libya to Harare and one of them had his telephone number on him. He was sentenced in October 1988 to six years on Robben Island. Despite state repression Cassiem has always acted on his beliefs for to do otherwise, he says, would have amounted to capitulation. He adheres to the Gandhian philosophy that ‘if one person is in possession of the truth, he or she will always be a majority of one.’ Cassiem argues that to be regarded as a leader, you must be ‘utterly and totally fearless.’ The Qur’an states, ‘Fear not for Allah is with us.’

Cassiem believes that the negotiated settlement in South Africa accommodated the political and economic elites at the expense of the masses. ‘We have been short-changed because the revolution was aborted. My advice to any oppressed people – Don’t make Maximum Sacrifices for Minimum Gains – if you are going to make Maximum Sacrifices demand Maximum Gains!’

Sources: ‘Open to Question: Imam Achmat Cassiem,’ Innovative Minds,’ <http://www.inminds.co.uk/qa.html>.; Derek Watts, ‘Islam – A South African Perspective,’ M-Net, <http://beta.mnet.co.za/carteblanche/Article.aspx?Id=1808>.

Fatima Ismail Chohan

(1968 –)

*F*atima Chohan was born in Laudium although her family's roots were in Durban where her great-grandparents Mohamed and Amina Chohan lived in Queen Street. She studied Law at Wits and was admitted to the side bar in 1998 and is currently enrolled for a Masters degree at Rhodes. She is a former student activist, as a member of the Muslim Students Association (MSA) and Black Students Society, and is currently a member of the Dullar Omar Branch of the ANC in the Western Cape. She was a member of the TIC, where she served as an alternate representative to CODESA. Chohan has been an MP since 1996 and has served the government in various capacities. She was on the Portfolio Committee for Justice and Constitutional Development from 1996 and was appointed chairperson of the committee when Johnny De Lange moved into cabinet after the 2004 elections. An attorney by profession, she was legal advisor in the Office of the Gauteng Premier, legal advisor in the Gauteng Legislature; and Deputy Head of the Metro Legal Services in the Greater Johannesburg. In 2010 she was appointed Deputy Minister of Home Affairs.

Source: GCIS Profile. http://www.info.gov.za/gol/gcis_profile.jsp?id=6937.



Fatima Chohan

Ghadija Christopher

(1896 – 2001)

Ghadija Christopher, sister of Goolam and Jane Gool, was born in Cape Town on 24 July 1896 to Haleema and Yusuf Gool, at whose home the likes of Mohandas Gandhi and other prominent politicians from Natal and the Transvaal stayed during their visits to the Cape. Ghadija met Albert Christopher during one of his visits to Cape Town and they married in 1923. They spent the next three years in London where Christopher completed his legal studies. Despite Ghadija playing a prominent role in politics and social welfare, little has been written about her and we rely here on a few anecdotes from *IC Meer Remembers*:

‘Some built their hopes on Albert Christopher who returned from England, just prior to the 1928 SAIC Conference, as a fully qualified barrister-at-law. This colonial-born Indian had already made his mark in Indian politics and had tremendous sympathy for Indian workers. He and his wife Ghadija Gool, and his young daughter Zuleikha, were given a rousing welcome at the Durban railway station and at a reception held at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall on January 26, 1928. The NIC held a mass meeting on November 21, 1931, in the Durban Town Hall to discuss the Second Round Table Conference between the governments of India and South Africa which was to take place in Cape Town from 12 January to 4 February 1932’.

‘Among the speakers were two women, both young and in their twenties, coming from well-known families in India and Cape Town. They were Sushila Behn Mashruwala and Ghadija Gool, who had a few years previously become Mrs Manilal Gandhi and Mrs Albert Christopher, respectively. The speeches of these two young ladies, then brides of a few years, were indeed historic for a community which had only 49 students in the entire Mitchell Crescent Girls School. At the fifth anniversary of the Indian Child Welfare Society, held at Durban on September 12, 1932, after Mrs Ghadija Christopher had presented her impressive secretarial report, it was announced amidst thundering applause that the *Kunwarani* had kindly consented to accept the presidency of the society’.

‘And this (1946) was a period when Dr K Goonam played her full role as a top official of the NIC. Zainab Asvat, Radhamonie Padyachee, and Suryakala Patel were some of the women who served on the executives of the Congresses. Women resisters were in the lead and among them Mrs Ghadija Christopher gave a completely new dimension to the role of child and family welfare workers when she joined the rank of resisters. And Amina Pahad redefined the role of the Muslim housewife when she left her sons with relatives and went to prison.’

The Leader, in the *Eid-ul-Fitr* issue of August 24, 1946, gave us a pen-picture of another resistance personality, Mrs Ghadija Christopher, who had come to us from the famous Gool family of Cape Town as the bride of Advocate Albert Christopher, and who had won our hearts as one of the chief organisers of the Child Welfare Society. ‘She was born and bred in Cape Town where her father kept open house and his children had contact with all the people who were fighting for the cause of Indians in South Africa – and people who were fired with the ideal of service to the community.’ In its lengthy article *The Leader* dealt with her work for 17 years in child and family welfare work where she cared for ‘thousands of unfortunate women and children who come to the society year after year.’ She chose prison ‘because she was convinced that the Ghetto Act would destroy the Indian people and would come down with greater harshness on the unfortunate poor.’ ‘She only hopes now that the passive resistance movement will never be allowed to die,’ said *The Leader* and added: ‘She wants it to go on and on until every prison cell in the country is full of resisters.’

The Leader of September 3, 1954, told us that ‘over 100 women representing 16 political, social welfare, cultural and other organisations met on August 24, 1954, to discuss the sentences passed in the Cape Province recently – a European was sentenced to nine months jail for raping an Indian girl and a Coloured man was sentenced to death for raping a European woman.’ The Durban protest meeting was called jointly by Mrs Ghadija Christopher, president of the Indian Child Welfare Society, and the Durban and District Women’s League whose president was Mrs Bertha Mkize and whose secretary was Mrs Fatima Meer.

‘This meeting condemned the inequality of the sentences and unanimously adopted a resolution which declared: ‘While admitting the fact that without having all the evidence before us, it is difficult to determine the factors which led to this inequality in punishment, the disparity is so great that we cannot help but express serious concern over this question. In the administration of justice there can be no room for inequality based on racial consideration, and when such unequal sentences are imposed, they are bound to increase the already mounting tension in our multi-racial society. We express our further concern at the comments made by the learned judge in the East London case of rape to the effect that it was ‘within the knowledge of the court that Indian children married at an early age.’

‘This statement, if correctly reported, seems most irrelevant for it has no bearing on the offence committed and it creates the impression that the judge did not regard the Indian girl concerned giving birth to a child at the age of 12 as an aggravating factor.’ We were proud of the co-ordination of Bertha Mkhize, Ghadija Christopher, Fatima Meer, Ahmed Bhoola, Debi Singh and *The Leader* in exposing these inequalities in sentences whilst we were in the midst of the Freedom Charter campaign to eliminate all racial discrimination in every aspect of South African life.’

Ghadija Christopher played a vital role in the Child Welfare Society and is best remembered for her pioneering social work among Indians at a time when there were no professional social workers. She was also the second Indian woman in Durban to receive her driver’s licence, just as well for Albert Christopher, as he never learnt to drive. Ghadija Christopher died in June 2001. Her *janaza* prayer was performed at the Lodge Grove Mosque and she was buried in the Brown’s Avenue cemetery

Sources: Interview with Kader Hassim; Chris Barron, ‘Obituaries: Activist devoted her life to the destitute,’ Sunday Times, 1 July 2001; I.C. Meer; I Remember: Reminiscences of the Struggle for Liberation and the Role of Indian South Africans, 1924-1958. Edited by Enuga S. Reddy and Fatima Meer. From http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/pdf/I_remember_IC_Meer.pdf.

Zuleika Sarojini Christopher

(1924 – 1992)

Zuleika Christopher, daughter of Ghadija and Albert Christopher, was born in 1924 and matriculated from the girls' high school in Durban. This was an important training ground as the girls engaged in debates with boys from Sastri. Zuleika and Irene Godfrey were often up against IC Meer and JN Singh. Zuleika attended Fort Hare and then Wits where she qualified as a medical doctor. Zuleika's intellectual development continued at Wits through debates between the ANC Youth League, whose members included Nelson Mandela; Federation of Progressive Students (FOPS), which IC Meer joined; and the Progressive Forum (PF), whose members included Zuleika, Errol Vawda, Karrim Essack, and AI Limbada. She became involved with the Unity Movement whilst doing a locum for her uncle Goolam Gool in Cape Town during 1951.

She met future husband Enver Hassim of the Transvaal through the Unity Movement and they married in 1952. When she returned to Durban, Zuleika worked for provincial hospitals. She saw first-hand the terrible fate of children who were dying from want and was among the earliest activists to examine the politics of medicine and argue that it was futile to treat the symptoms of diseases without addressing the underlying socio-economic problems. She subsequently opened a medical practice in Warwick Avenue and it was well known that her husband Enver had to plough money into the practice as Zuleika provided free treatment and medicines to many of her patients.

Zuleika, Enver, and Karrim Essack formed the Durban branch of SOYA in 1955 to train young cadres of the NEUM. Kader Hassim reflected that these sessions 'taught us the absolute need to spend our short time on earth in a manner most useful to society. They proved to us the inhumanity of oppressive systems which are impervious to appeals and moral arguments.... They taught us the oneness of humanity and that there were no races except the human race.... It was from them that we learnt to identify with the workers in the sweatshops, in the bowels of the earth,

in the concentration camps of the White farms and the starving peasantry.’ Cadres also learnt about the ‘struggles of Spartacus, the Maccabees, the American Indians. They stirred our youthful idealism with narratives of the Russian Revolution, the decades-long revolution of the Chinese.’ Zuleika and Enver were banned in 1964 and then detained under the 90-day law.

According to Kader, she ‘emerged from this detention totally transformed. She would not speak of it except in snatches. She was never the same after the vile system laid its filthy hands on a noble but vulnerable person.’ In 1966, Zuleika and Enver were charged with breaching their banning orders by attending a political meeting and were given suspended sentences. The English-dominated Natal Provincial Administration fired Zuleika from her position as Senior Medical Officer. She successfully challenged the dismissal in the Supreme Court. Enver, meantime, detained again under the 180-day detention law, was charged with forging passports to assist political refugees.

They were also subject to surveillance, telephone tapping, anonymous threatening calls, and police raids euphemistically called ‘visits’. In view of this harassment Zuleika and Enver decided to go into exile and sought refuge in Canada to, in Kader’s words, ‘escape the wrath of fascism. They agonised over that fateful decision. We, who remained, viewed such departures as fighters who, after being wounded, take themselves away from the battlefield.’ Zuleika was afflicted with Lupus in Canada and passed away in 1992.

Source: Kader Hassim, ‘Zuleika Christopher,’ Apdusa Views.



Farida Cassiem accepts the Indicator Human Rights Award, 1989, on behalf of her husband Achmat who was in prison at the time



Achmat Cassiem



Zulei Christopher and Enver Hassim



Fatima Chohan



Ghadija Christopher



'Jerry' Coovadia



Ghadija Christopher and Nokukhanya Luthuli, 1994

Hoosen Mahomed “Jerry” Coovadia

(1940 –)

Coovadia was born in Durban in 1940, where his father ran a wholesale business. He matriculated from Sastri College and studied medicine at the Grant Medical College in Bombay. Coovadia’s early experience of racism in South Africa, the international struggle against imperialism, and his student years in India all shaped his political beliefs.

‘The [South African] Communist Party had a major influence in our lives because the people we knew, the best brains, the most genuine whites, all happened to be communist.... We were thrilled by what Karl Marx had said, and what Lenin had done.... And we were also reacting partly emotionally, partly intellectually, to the injustices in South Africa. We knew that apartheid was an evil, that capitalism was the foundation of that apartheid and that there had to be a better social order.... a sort of historical destiny that things even out as time goes on – whether we want it or not. And our job was to make that process of evening out and attaining social and economic justice, quicker. Even the non-aligned nations were less in the camp of capitalism. So you had India, Egypt of Nasser, Indonesia of Sukarno, Tanzania of Nyerere, Kenya and Tom Mboye, Guinea Bissau and Cabral, and if you took writers whom we read, like Franz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, if you look at that global milieu, and which seemed to make brothers of us all, it was a wonderfully seductive period and a wonderfully seductive set of ideas. India allowed the development of that set of ideas because it stood at the very heart of the Non-Aligned Movement and there was a leader like Nehru whom we admired. There were many intellectuals there, like Krishna Menon, and people there who fought for the freedom of India, and it struck parallels with my own life.’

Coovadia qualified in 1965 and returned to South Africa where he took up an appointment at the King Edward Hospital. After a period of relative freedom in India, he was shocked by apartheid: ‘That was the time when I really understood apartheid in its ugliest and most pervasive form.... King Edward was like an ordeal by fire for young doctors. I wanted to

improve myself so I paid a lot of attention to medicine. I put politics aside. I worked and studied and it was awful because people who were not white were all house officers and interns. The hierarchy was entirely white. So that hierarchy in the medical world was another manifestation of apartheid. Now I was a more sentient human being about racial discrimination.'

Coovadia specialised in paediatrics and lectured at the University of Natal Medical School. He combined his medical work with involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle. When the NIC was revived in the 1970s, he joined the Overport branch and was soon addressing rallies and was co-opted to the leadership structures, eventually becoming vice-president. Coovadia worked with the likes of George Sewpersad, Thumba Pillay, Zac Yacoob, Pravin Gordhan, Farouk Meer, and Roy Padayachee. He was also prominent in the UDF when it was formed in 1983, and was on the Executive of NAMDA (National Medical and Dental Association), which was set up by progressive doctors, following revelations of complicity by the medical profession in the security police's torture of Steve Biko and his subsequent death. As the UDF became more powerful Coovadia was subject to police harassment. On one occasion, the security branch placed two limpet mines at his Overport home. His wife Zuby, son Imran and daughter Anushka, who were at home, escaped serious injuries, but the experience 'was really traumatic. It affects things ... like you can't sleep. I remember it happened at 3:20 in the morning. Why should I remember that? [Because] it had a major impact on me. But when I think how they tortured my friends and killed some of my colleagues... To give you a graphic example, I attended the post-mortem of the Mxenges, Griffiths and his wife Victoria [as] the family said they didn't trust the district attorney. I saw what they did. It was dreadful. His throat was cut to the spine and he had multiple stab wounds and so on. That's the extreme. And when I think of the torture that people went through in jail.... [the bomb] was a very, very small price to pay for my involvement in the struggle.'

Coovadia was part of a delegation that met the ANC in Lusaka in 1986 and participated in preliminary negotiations at CODESA after 1990. In the post-CODESA period, he returned to medical research and has become internationally renowned for his groundbreaking work which proved

that the transmission of HIV from mother to child could be significantly reduced through exclusive breastfeeding. Coovadia clashed with prominent government figures when he campaigned for the rollout of antiretroviral therapy during Thabo Mbeki's presidency. Then Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang even suggested that he was not loyal to South Africa. This did not dissuade Coovadia who has never been afraid to speak the truth. In 1999, President Nelson Mandela honoured Coovadia with the Star of South Africa for his contribution to democracy and health. In 2000 he received the International Association of Physicians in AIDS and Care Award; the Heroes in Medicine Award in Toronto, Canada; and the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights.

Sources: SAHO; Coovadia, Hoosen. Oral History Project, Voices of Resistance, University of Durban-Westville, 25 July 2002



The Coovadia's survey the damage to their house after it was bombed

Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo

(1909 – 1982)

*Y*usuf Dadoo, popularly known as ‘Mota’, remains an icon of the anti-apartheid struggle. He was born in September 1909 in Krugersdorp where his father, Mohamed, who came to South Africa from the village of Kholvad in Gujarat in 1896, ran a retail store. As a child, Dadoo travelled daily by train to the Bree Street school in Fordsburg where several of his contemporaries were children of activists who had participated alongside Gandhi during earlier passive resistance campaigns. Dadoo completed matric at Aligarh in India where he was exposed to Indian nationalist ideas and developed a deep hatred of British imperialism. He went to study medicine in London where he joined the India League, was drawn into anti-British political activism and arrested for participating in protests. Concerned about his son’s propensity for involving himself in radical causes, the elder Dadoo insisted that he transfer to Edinburgh. Dadoo obliged but in Scotland he joined the Labour Party as well as the Edinburgh branch of the Indian National Congress, studied Marxist theory and developed a deeper understanding of colonialism and capitalism. Dr Goonam, a classmate of Dadoo at Edinburgh, would recall:

‘[Dadoo] did nothing. I had to take his class cards and put them in class. He didn’t attend lectures [laughs]. How he ever got through, I don’t know because he was busy attending all the political meetings in the streets, in little halls.... He wanted to gather as much information [and] we all took from him. He was a very powerful speaker and a good, wholesome sort of individual. Quite a character in the sense that he enjoyed life and was so serious and went to rock bottom to the workers ... and he was a good-looking man. Women were after him. He had time for that too [laughs].’

After completing his medical studies Dadoo returned to South Africa in 1936 to find black liberation movements on the back foot. The conservative TIC did not seek to forge alliances across racial lines or confront the government through direct action as segregation was intensified. This was a time, Essop Pahad points out, when ‘the struggle in South Africa



Dadoo addressing a Pakistan independence day rally



Moulvi Cachalia (front left) and Yusuf Dadoo, Nationalist Bloc of the TIC, c. 1948

was in need of sincere, courageous revolutionaries who could capture and fire the imagination of the toiling masses, who could speak the language the people understood and were prepared to make the personal sacrifices demanded by a life-and-death struggle. Dadoo was one such revolutionary. He illuminated the political landscape with the sudden clarity of a meteor – but fortunately in a less transitory manner. He grew in stature, political experience and maturity and developed a steel-like resolve never to rest until South Africa was free from the triple scourge of racism, colonialism and capitalism. He bent all his efforts towards building the unity of the national liberation and working class movements in South Africa.’

Dadoo helped to form the NEUF in 1938 as a concrete means of uniting non-racial opposition to the state. However, he gravitated towards the CPSA in 1939. Along with TN Naidoo, PS Joshi and Moulvi Cachalia, Dadoo formed the Nationalist Bloc within the TIC, which mounted a strong challenge against the old elite leadership. Dadoo, a powerful orator, attracted thousands of supporters to his meetings. Dadoo opposed South Africa’s participation in what he termed the “imperialist” Second World War. His decision was based on his opposition to British imperialism as well as racism in the South African armed services which did not allow black men into combat. Dadoo was imprisoned in 1940 for his anti-war stance but acquired celebrity status as a result. He later found himself having to drum up support for the war when the Soviet Union was invaded by Germany.

From 1941 to 1946, as membership of the CPSA and trades unions increased dramatically, Dadoo worked with African leaders such as Moses Kotane, Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and others in carrying out anti-pass campaigns and organising the 1946 strike by African mineworkers and the 1946-48 passive resistance campaign in Natal. Dadoo was imprisoned twice, for a month in July 1946, and in March 1948 when he and Monty Naicker were each sentenced to six months’ imprisonment for illegally crossing the Transvaal-Natal border in breach of the law which prohibited Indians from inter-provincial movement without a permit. Dadoo was a signatory to the 1947 ‘Doctors Pact’ with AB Xuma and Monty Naicker, which formalised an Indian-African political alliance, and visited India with Monty Naicker in 1947 to attend the Asian Conference organised by Nehru.

There they met Gandhi, Nehru, and many influential Indian and international resistance leaders. In 1949, Dadoo spent a year touring the UK, Eastern Europe, and China. He spent the next decade in the forefront of the anti-apartheid resistance movement. He helped organise the highly successful 1 May 1950 countrywide strike by workers in protest against the banning of the CPSA and was on the joint planning committee of the Defiance Campaign of 1952, but was banned shortly thereafter. His movements were increasingly restricted and in 1955 when he was one of three South Africans awarded the African decoration *Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe*, along with Albert Luthuli and Archbishop Huddleston, Dadoo could not attend the ceremony at Kliptown, where the Freedom Charter was adopted. Instead the award was accepted by his ageing mother.

Dadoo was one of 156 people arrested across the country in December 1956 and had to endure the five year treason trial, at the end of which he was acquitted. Dadoo received another five-year ban in 1957. Following the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960, the state imposed a state of emergency and arrested thousands of activists countrywide. Dadoo evaded arrest by going underground and on the instruction of the CPSA and ANC, went into exile. He was based in London but his travels took him to Kenya, Tunisia, Algeria and Ghana in 1963 to encourage the establishment of Peace Committees as a member of the World Peace Council. He and JB Marks undertook a six-week lecture tour of India in 1964 at the invitation of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.

Dadoo attended numerous other international meetings as a globally renowned anti-imperialist leader. On his 70th birthday, he was awarded the Order of the Friendship of the People by the Soviet Union, the Gold Medal of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, and the Scroll of Honour of the World Peace Council. Dadoo held the highest offices in the anti-apartheid movement. At its Morogoro Conference of 1969, the ANC established a Revolutionary Council (RC) to strengthen the structures of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Oliver Tambo was elected its chairman and Dadoo vice-chairman. One source told author Luli Callinicos that Dadoo was very popular with MK cadres because 'he was like an old fashioned revolutionary and people liked it, and felt an integrity there.'

Dadoo was elected chairman of the CPSA when JB Marks died in August 1972. Dadoo married thrice, first to Ilsa, then Maryam (in 1955), and finally Winnie. He had two daughters, Shereen from Ilsa, and Roshan from Winnie. Winnie first met Dadoo in 1948 when she was a journalist for the *Guardian*. She was also involved in protests and was detained for five months during the 1960 state of emergency. When Winnie was released she took an exit permit and made her way to London. By then, Dadoo's marriage to Maryam had ended in divorce and he married Winnie shortly after. In 1982, Dadoo was diagnosed with terminal cancer and passed away a year later. In an ironic postscript, another five-year banning order was imposed on him by the South African state in 1986. Dadoo's wife Winnie recalled his last days in hospital:

‘He lay ill for weeks, periodically going into a coma. We were all there with him, Shereen, Roshan, and I and his family from South Africa – his brother Eboo and his wife Fawzia, his sisters Amina and Julie, and his late brother's wife Gorie. He would periodically emerge from his coma and his face would light up and he would be surprised to see us, and he would chat happily. The friends also came. Joe Slovo, Gill Marcus, Beverly and Tessa, Brian Bunting, Cassim Patel and Zainab Asvat. On the day of his death, his sisters-in-law were at his bedside reciting the Quràn. He called Joe Slovo and talked to him, then he talked to his brother Eboo. I whispered in his ear that Shereen was coming. He was waiting for Shereen, but steadily weakening. His breathing grew shallow and then I realised that he wasn't breathing at all. I called the others. It was 8pm. He had passed away peacefully, in coma or sleep.’

Joe Slovo, fellow member of the CPSA and first Minister of Housing in post-apartheid South Africa, recalled another of Dadoo's many qualities: ‘Yusuf Dadoo had another seminal quality which helped soften the reaction of those in his community who, because of their economic status, were nervous about his unhidden commitment to a socialist future. He was a passionate internationalist, but equally passionate in his pride and regard for his cultural roots. He had the most undeviating respect for his community's languages and religious traditions. He saw no conflict there. Diversity, he understood, was no obstacle to unity; indeed it could enrich the South

African nation in the making. This explains his insistence while in exile in London to make the pilgrimage to Mecca (I'm not sure whether any other Chairperson of a Communist Party can claim the title of *Haji*). I remember meeting him on his return to Heathrow airport in London, head shaven, kettle in hand and white robe. It was with the same genuine respect for his people's beliefs that he expressed the wish to ensure that Muslim rites would also take place at his funeral ceremony. In summary, there are few figures in our history to match Yusuf Dadoo's grasp, in practice, of the very complex relationship in our country between national struggle and class struggle. His contribution was not in the sphere of theoretical treatises, but in the practice of struggle and the personal example of his whole lifestyle. When we landed in Cape Town for the Groote Schuur Talks in May 1990, Yusuf Dadoo was one of those at the very top of my mind. If only he had lived to see how far we had advanced in the centuries-old struggle to destroy this evil system. But even though he was fated not to live to the inevitable future of a free South Africa, he truly lived to make it possible.'

Sources: Essop Pahad, Yusuf Dadoo. A Proud History of Struggle, 'http://www.sacp.org.za/people/dadoo.html.; Joe Slovo, 'A Tribute to Yusuf Dadoo,' http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoos.html; Luli Callinicos, Oliver Tambo. Beyond the Engeli Mountains. Cape Town: David Philip, 2004.



Dadoo was buried in London where he was in exile

Ayesha Dawood

(1927 –)

*I*t does not matter what race you belong to, we must all pull together. We shall not retreat in the face of scare stories of Malan and Donges. They have already lost – Ayesha Dawood

*A*yesha Dawood, the only Indian woman among the 156 arrested for treason in 1956, displayed extraordinary commitment to the liberation struggle in the face of numerous difficulties. She was born in Worcester in the Cape on 31 December 1927. Though she left school in standard eight to assist her parents Maryam and Hadjie Achmat Tambe in their grocery store, she became politically conscious through reading newspapers to her father. She became formally involved in political work from the time that she volunteered as an organiser during a one-day strike on 7 May 1951 to protest attempts to remove Coloureds from the Common Voter's Roll. Meeting Ray Simons of the Food and Canning Workers' Union was the beginning of her political journey. Ayesha became the secretary of the Worcester United Action Committee, which coordinated political action in the area, and was on the local organising committee during the Defiance Campaign of 1952. By 1953 she was a card-carrying member of the ANC.

This was astonishing as non-Africans were excluded from membership of the ANC until the 1980s. Dawood represented South Africa at a conference of the Women's International Democratic Federation in Denmark in 1953, and represented the ANC at the World Peace Conference in Budapest, and the World Youth Congress in Bucharest. When she returned, Dawood addressed her first public meeting of the ANC, and called for unity across racial lines. For telling the meeting, 'We want nothing from the white man, only our right,' she was charged under the Suppression of Communism Act. She was arrested for treason in 1956. Though the charges were eventually dropped the state continued to persecute her and she was

arrested several more times in the 1960s. Ayesha therefore accepted an exit permit and settled in India with her husband Yusuf Mukaddam, who had been imprisoned for entering South Africa illegally. Their marriage was a moving and tragic story. They met in 1953 when she visited her ancestral village of Gondfhar in Gujarat. Yusuf was visiting the village for a cricket match and it was a case of love at first sight when he set eyes on Ayesha. Determined to meet her again, he trained as a cook and committed himself to the Merchant Marine in the hope that his ship would one day berth in a South African harbour. Yusuf arrived in Port Elizabeth in January 1957, a month after Ayesha was arrested on treason charges. He had written to her in advance but she only opened the mail long after he had returned to Bombay.

He thought that she had spurned him until he learnt of her arrest. He next visited South Africa three years later when his ship travelled to Durban in 1960. Ayesha had spent five months in solitary confinement during the 1960 state of emergency. From Durban, Yusuf went AWOL and made his way to Worcester. He proposed to Ayesha who accepted after deliberating with her parents. Two children, Shabiera and Gulzar, were born in Cape Town. When the police discovered that Yusuf was in the country illegally he was arrested. The state threatened to deport him unless Ayesha became an informer. Despite the consequences of not complying (she had an ailing mother and father and two young children), she refused to betray her comrades. Ayesha's application for a passport was declined and she was forced to accept a permanent exit visa, effectively going into exile.

Her mother passed away around this time and she left with the blessing of her ninety-five year old father whom she did not meet again. Ayesha and Yusuf settled in Bombay in May 1968, living what was to be a difficult life. He was forced by economic circumstances to spend the next twenty-two years as a migrant worker in Kuwait, like many people from his village, while she brought up the children. They met every few years. Yusuf returned home in 1990 when he was diagnosed with cancer of the throat which rendered him "useless" as a worker. Ayesha returned to South Africa in 1992. She met fellow treason trialist and then President Nelson Mandela when his Blue Train passed through Worcester.

Ayesha Dawood was awarded 'The Order of Luthuli in Bronze'. The dedication from the State President read: 'Ayesha Dawood could have chosen to remain silent. Instead, she fought against apartheid and paid dearly. She was forced into a harsh life of exile in the impoverished village of Sarwa, near Bombay in India. Her husband was a labour migrant in Kuwait and she had to struggle to fend for their children, also serving her host community in various ways. Dawood's life has been one of selfless dedication to freedom in South Africa. She is a true patriot who paid a huge price for the liberation of this country.'

Sources: Zubeida Jaffer. 'The story of Bibi Dawood Of Worcester,' April 1991. Accessed at <http://www.zubeidajaffer.co.za/docs/bibidawood.doc>; Zubeida Jaffer, Love in the Time of Treason: The Life Story of Ayesha Dawood, Cape Town: Kwela, 2008; 'Profile of Ayesha (Bibi) Dawood (Yusuf Mukadam),' The Presidency. Republic of South Africa. http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders_list.asp?show=431.



*Ayesha Dawood and Yusuf Mukaddam
(Credit: Zubeida Jaffer, Love in the Time of Treason: The Life
Story of Ayesha Dawood)*

Amina Desai

(1919 – 2009)

Amina Desai, one of a family of nine children, aspired to be a nurse but had to leave school at the age of ten to help with the raising of her younger siblings. She remained resolute, however, and completed a course in typing, shorthand, and commerce. Amina and her sister Halima (Gool) regularly wrote letters to the newspaper *Indian Views* under pseudonyms to express their opinions on the political situation in South Africa and gender relations among Muslims. In 1943 Amina married Suleiman Desai, an activist in the TIC, and they had four children, Adela, Bahiya, Hilmi and Zureena. Upon Suleiman's death Amina took over his business, and ran it successfully for 35 years. By the late 1960s Ahmed Timol, a teacher, often came to her house to use her typewriter and car.

Timol used her Roodepoort home to print political pamphlets. When Timol was arrested in 1971 the police discovered 'seditious' literature in the car which belonged to Amina and implicated her. Amina's home was raided and she was detained for questioning at John Vorster Square Prison. She explained the circumstances of her arrest to the TRC: 'On the morning [of] 22nd or 23rd of October 1971, I was awakened at about three o'clock by somebody knocking at the door. I looked through the window and I saw some white men outside, five of them. One of them showed through the window his identity card. I opened my door and he came in and asked me, where is your car now? I said well, one of my relatives, took it because he wanted to go out that evening, so he must have it. They proceeded to search the house up to about eight o'clock [then] they told me, you'd better get dressed because we are going to take you to John Vorster Square. I wasn't particularly worried because I had done nothing wrong. Once I came to John Vorster they started questioning me; was I a member of the Communist Party? and of course I told them no, I have no connection with any political party, and I don't know anything about what you are asking me about. They told me but we are detaining you all the same. So they took me to the cells and from that time they kept on asking me to come back to the John Vorster Square upstairs on the 10th floor.



Amina Desai

‘They had teams of interrogators. There was no rest in-between. They kept that up because as one team went off the other team arrived. Perhaps they would allow you an hour or two to go back to the cell, and then the new team would start interrogating me. This went on for about four days. Sometime, I think it was on the Tuesday, because you lose sense of time because they don’t give you a chance to sleep, they keep on coming back for you, after an hour or two, at about three o’clock I was standing there – you of course have to stand – I heard a terrible commotion.

‘I heard furniture being pushed around. I heard people scampering around and I heard screams. I think it was the most terrible moment of my life, because at that particular instant, I felt as if my heart was actually jumping out of my chest. I don’t think I had ever in my life experienced fear and terror like that. I didn’t of course know what was happening, because we were in an enclosed office. But I could hear these sounds. Shortly after that I saw some officers coming in. They of course never introduced themselves as being so-and-so. They just speak to you and tell you to stand, you stand while we ask you questions. But that particular afternoon at about four o’clock I was taken down. They have a subterranean tunnel through which they take you from John Vorster itself to the cells. I was left there literally for months. The very elderly white wardress would bring me my food and perhaps once a day – because I insisted on it – they take me down to the shower. I was completely alone in the cell.’

‘That’s where I was kept until about March, when they told me that they have to take a statement from me; was I prepared to make a statement? I said yes, of course I am prepared to make a statement. I had been a great reader so I knew what detention was like, what imprisonment was like for political prisoners, because I had read everything that had happened overseas in Europe. I was not afraid for myself although it is a terrible thing to be isolated. But I felt my conscience was clear. I hadn’t done anything wrong. I looked after my business. I looked after my family. I was very aware of what was going on around us. But that didn’t mean to say that I should stand on a public platform and express those opinions. So when I was indicted and had to go to court, I couldn’t believe what was happening to me. When they imprisoned me, for the first couple of months I thought

I was living in a nightmare. I could not believe that this was reality. I just couldn't believe it could happen to somebody like me. One day when I was taken to Barberton and I met two political prisoners, a Ms Van der Heyden, who had been in jail for 10 years and Ms Nyembe, who was back there for the second time, then only did I think that I cannot live in a fantasy world. This was the way to go mad. When you start questioning reality, then life becomes insupportable. Of course, seeing how patient they were, how courageous these women were under the conditions that we were living in, because we had cells in which there were no beds.'

'We only had two blankets and a mat to sleep on. I had never lived a life like that, never. I had never had bread without butter. I think Ms Nyembe was a bit frightened of me because she felt that I may have been put there to observe her. I think she was practically paranoid about informers. But then I told myself, am I less woman than these women? No, I must taste every day as it comes and live for that day. I got accustomed. I had a very sick husband for a very long time. I looked after him. I got accustomed to going without sleep for many hours. The only thing was that in the Pretoria prison, where they took me first, I had never believed that the floor could heave with insects, and that was what I found in my cell. It was around this time that Ahmed Timol died in detention.'

While initially unaware of Timol's death, Amina claimed to have heard sounds of a struggle and screams emanating from the next room which she described to the TRC as the 'most terrible moment of my life.' She learnt of Timol's death at her trial. Accused of aiding the banned ANC and CPSA, Desai was sentenced to five years imprisonment which she served at Kroonstad Prison alongside iconic struggle figures such as Dorothy Nyembe and Winnie Mandela. Upon her release in 1978, she was placed under house arrest for a further five years. Amina told the TRC that it was only after much deliberation that she decided to testify: 'I have never cared for publicity of any kind. I felt that if I can come – at first I was very reluctant. But afterwards I thought I must come and tell people what the ordinary woman, the ordinary middle-class woman, who lived for her family, and who was perhaps aware of the terrible things that were happening in the world, but felt that they really could not contribute excepting in their own

small way, perhaps with their own children. That was the contribution you make to society. You try and foster in your children a care for humanity. That is all that you can do as a human being, that you should care about what happens to people.’

Increasingly plagued by ill health, Amina Desai emigrated to Ireland in 2004 to be with her children. She passed away in Dublin on 10 June 2009 at the age of 89, a few weeks after she attended Freedom Day celebrations hosted by Priscilla Jana, the South African ambassador to Ireland, who had been part of her legal defence team.

*Sources: Amina Desai, Truth and Reconciliation Human Rights Violations Submission, Krugersdorp, 13 November 1996. <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/krugers/desai.htm>; Leila Blacking and Adam Bainbridge, ‘Obituary: Amina Desai,’ *The Guardian*, 22 June 2009.*



The Nagdee sisters: Amina Desai (l), Halima Gool, and Ruqayya Vawda

Shabaan Rissiek ‘Barney’ Desai

(1932 – 1997)

*B*arney Desai was born in April 1932 in Doornfontein, Johannesburg. During the Defiance Campaign of 1952 he edited the newspaper *Spark* and was banned for his outspoken views. Officially regarded as ‘Indian’, Desai was chairperson of the TIYC in the early 1950s, where he worked with the likes of Ahmed Kathrada, Paul Joseph, and Mosie Moolla. In 1957, at the age of 25, he was reclassified as ‘Coloured’ and became vice-president of the South African Coloured People’s Congress. Paul Joseph recalled that because Desai’s ‘father was an Indian and his mother had come from the so-called Malay community, Barney had the dubious position of being an Indian in the Transvaal and a Malay in the Cape so he didn’t have to carry a permit. He could filter across the provinces without being restricted.’ Desai was elected to the Cape Town City Council in 1962 to represent Coloureds but was not permitted to take his seat by the apartheid government. He went into exile to London in 1963 and joined the PAC. In a March 1966 statement Desai and Cardiff Marney rejected the Congress Alliance of the 1950s:

‘This experiment multiplied racialism and entrenched it in the sectional organisations... When, in 1962, the Coloured People’s Congress proposed to the ANC that it should open its doors for all the oppressed groups and that in return the CPC would dissolve, the proposal was flatly rejected.... The ANC leadership made the remarkable assertion that they alone as black Africans can take decisions on behalf of the African people. This is nothing less than inverted Verwoerdian reasoning. As if the Khoi-Khoi (Hottentots) and the Batwa (“Bushmen”) tribes as the forebears of the Cape Coloured people were not Africans who were virtually exterminated in the first battles against the European invaders of South Africa 300 years ago.’

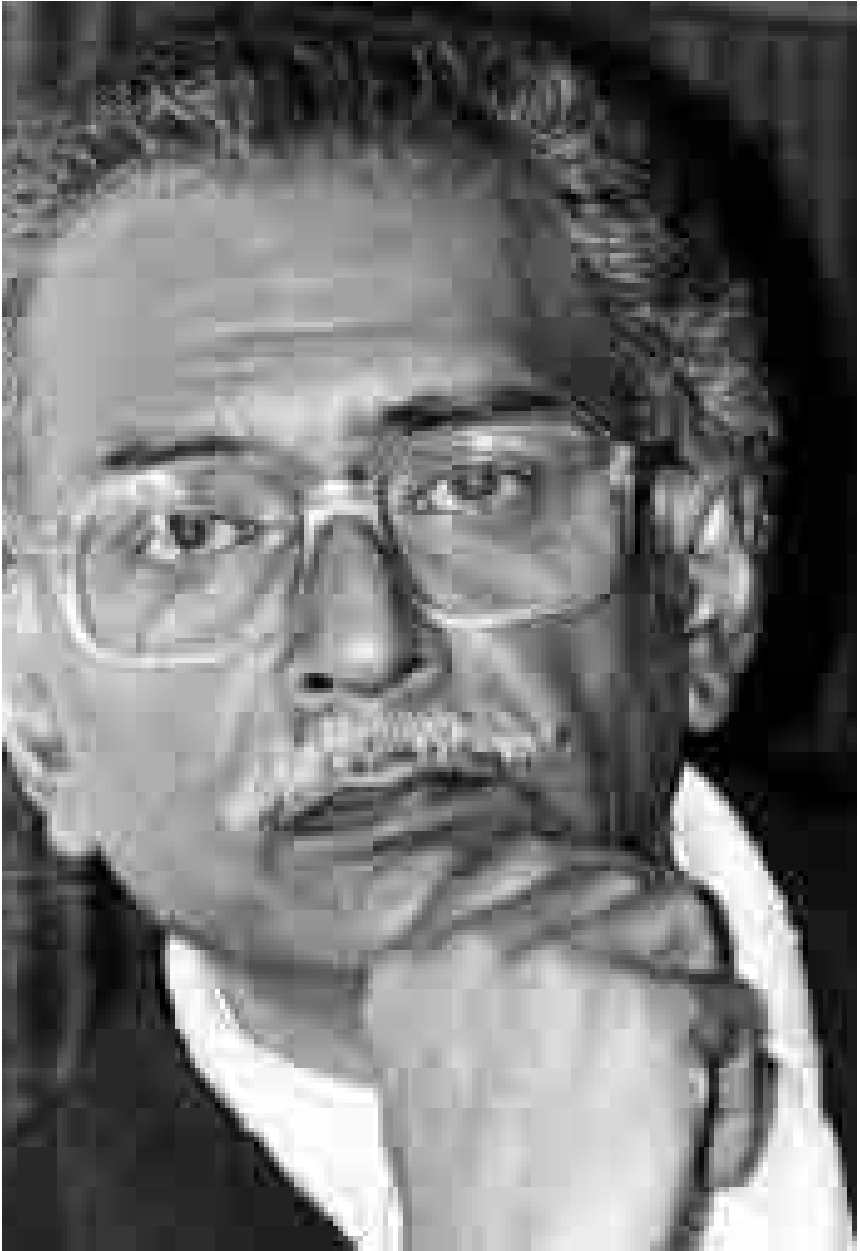
Desai was the PAC’s Secretary for Publicity and Information for many years and in 1990 was one of the first exiles to return to South Africa. He told Pádraig O’Malley in a 1990 interview that then president FW de Klerk aimed to give political power to Blacks so that Whites could retain

economic power: 'The purpose of his exercise is to give us some sops which he'll call democracy and keep his hand firmly on the cash register. And that to us is meaningless when 97% of this land is controlled by White people by law. And in industry only one percent of our people are in any kind of managerial class.' Unless this changed, 'it will mean that everything we've stood for will be compromised...' While the ANC mustered popular support in exile and developed a mass base within South Africa, the PAC was riven by internal conflict and failed to mobilise mass support. Desai attributed this to the fact that funds channelled through the AAM were only provided to the ANC so that its rivals lacked the resources to compete on equal terms. The PAC's woes would continue into the post-apartheid period. Barney Desai had forged a close relationship with Imam Haron in the Cape and co-authored *The Killing of the Imam* in 1978, which focused on the life and murder of Imam Haron by the apartheid regime. Desai's son Rehad produced a film *Born into Struggle* (2004) which is a journey mapped out by the scars etched into his family's life from having a father dedicated to the political struggle. This aspect of the liberation struggle, the human cost of freedom on the family and loved ones, is a neglected part of a painful story. Barney Desai passed away in October 1997.

Source: 'Barney Desai, Interview with Pdraig O' Malley, 10 August 1990,



Barney Desai and Ahmed Kathrada addressing a TIYC rally, early 1950s (BAHA)



Barney Desai, 1990

Abdul Khalek Mohamed Docrat

(1915 – 2003)

*A*nyone who grew up in Durban from the 1960s would have seen the familiar sight of a short, distinguished-looking man with a black beret walking in Victoria Street, as he made his way to or from Flat No. 1, Nirmal Court. AKM Docrat was an elusive and largely unacknowledged figure who played a crucial role in the struggles against white minority rule from the 1940s. ‘Doc’, as he was known, was born on 15 September 1915 in Kathor, Gujarat, to Hafiza and Mohamed Docrat. His grandfather was in business in Burma (Myanmar) and later moved to Natal where he opened a retail store.

Doc joined the family in Natal in 1930. Educated to standard four, he worked for a few years in Hattingspruit near Dundee as a shop assistant. He went back to Kathor to marry Ayesha, and returned to Natal in 1938, this time taking up employment with the Rawat family in Ixopo. Doc moved to Durban in 1939 and opened a little shop in Victoria Street. He was drawn to the LSG whose members included young left wing intellectuals such as IC Meer, Dawood Seedat, Monty Naicker, and Cassim Amra. He made a name for himself as a thoughtful revolutionary and became secretary of the LSG and of the Nationalist Bloc of the NIC in 1943. This was a group of young members who opposed the moderate politics of the existing leadership and wrested control of the NIC in 1945.

Tragedy struck in 1943 when Doc’s wife Ayesha succumbed to tuberculosis. He subsequently married Rabia. Doc and Rabia participated actively in the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48. Rabia was one of five resisters beaten by white hooligans on 23 June 1946. None of the attackers was charged. Rabia was undeterred and courted arrest. She said after her release following a thirty day sentence with hard labour that they were taken across the prison courtyard naked for a cold shower and made to wear uniforms while wet. ‘In searching us and making us run naked in the yard,’ she said, ‘common decency was not observed. The European women wardresses should have some sort of education. From their behaviour in abusing us in the most offensive terms, it was obvious that they did not have any sense



AKM Docrat and his wife Rookeya who was imprisoned during the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign



AKM Docrat had one of the largest collections of political paraphernalia

of decency or finer feelings. The lack of these was most distressing to the Indian women prisoners who are not used to being treated savagely.' Doc was in the sights of the state's repressive apparatus for much of the period from the 1950s to the 1970s. His troubles began in 1950 when he was named under the Suppression of Communism Act. He was jailed for thirty days during the Defiance Campaign (1952). In 1955 he was involved in the Freedom Charter campaign as one of the leaders in Natal and attended the Congress of the People in Kliptown (June 1955) where the Charter was adopted. He was detained for five months under the 1960 state of emergency regulations. Doc was banned for two years in late 1962. His second banning ran from 22 December 1964 to 31 October 1969. He was banned for a third time from 31 October 1969 to 31 October 1974. The terms of his banning orders were extremely severe. They included house arrest of 22 hours per day and complete house arrest from two pm on Friday to ten am on Monday. He served a fourth period of banning from 31 October 1974 to 31 October 1976 and a fifth from 31 October 1976 to 31 October 1978.

From 1978 to 1990 he was bound by the restrictions of his 1950 'listing' as a communist. During these difficult years, Docrat eked out a living selling books. Journalist Vasantha Angamuthu described Doc 'as much a Durban institution as the City Hall. Some would argue that he was just as old, just as solid and just as unshiftable. A familiar sight in Durban, shuffling along the city streets, walking stick only occasionally touching base, Doc was the city's political conscience.' Legend has it that even the dagga peddlers refused to spy on him when the Security Branch offered them bribes. And there were stories of how he would drop off little notes bearing messages with newspaper vendors to pass on to editors and comrades. Journalist Farook Khan recalled the occasions when Doc would visit, during the few hours that he was allowed out, the *Daily News* building in Field Street, followed by two Security Branch policemen, for a cup of tea: 'He would roll a cigarette with strong tobacco, have a "tight smoke", leave his messages with the newspaper street seller and make his way back to his flat.' Doc passed away on 15 February 2003.

Sources: Vasantha Angamuthu, 'A life of truth and honour.' Daily News, 17 February 2003



AKM Docrat's house arrest of 22 hours per day equated to imprisonment



AKM Docrat



Group of passive resisters, 1946



NIC Conference, 1957, Hassen Mall (standing on the left), MS Mayet (seated in the middle), Chota Motala (seated with his back facing the camera)

Cassim Docrat

(1944 –)

Cassim Docrat was born in Johannesburg and as a youngster played cricket in the Malay Union in Vrededorp where he grew up. A good club player, it was really as a committed sports administrator that he has made his mark. His club, Rangers Cricket Club, nominated him to attend meetings while he was still at school. After matriculating he attended Lawrence College in Islamabad, Pakistan, where he completed an MA in Political Science and took up a lecturing position at UDW in 1970. He played for Ottomans in the local league. Docrat was an official of the Durban and District Cricket Union from 1974 and became president in 1979. He was elected president of the Natal Cricket Board in 1989. He was involved in anti-apartheid sports organisations with the likes of Hassan Howa, Morgan Naidoo, and Errol Vawda. Unlike their white counterparts, black officials had to work hard to keep the game alive. They personally put on and took off the covers before matches, cut the grass, served lunch to provincial teams, made their homes available for meetings, shared hotel rooms during travels, and literally had to ‘beg’ the Council for facilities and companies for sponsorship.

After unity talks, Docrat became president and CEO (from 1995) of the Natal Cricket Union, a position that he held for most of the period until September 2009. He managed the national Proteas cricket team during the 1996 World Cup in Pakistan. He was also president of the Durban Sports Ground Association. As a result of turmoil in the province, the Gauteng Cricket Board appointed Docrat as its acting CEO in September 2010 to resolve the disputes and implement transformation in the province. This was an acknowledgement of his massive contribution and immense knowledge of sport, and cricket in particular, in South Africa.



Cassim Docrat (Left) and Krish Mackerdhuj sealing cricket unity in Natal



Jessie Duarte

Jessie Yasmin Duarte

(1953-)

Long time anti-apartheid activist Jessie Duarte was born in Newclare, Johannesburg, on 19 September 1953 to Julie and Ebrahim Dangor. Her brother is Achmat Dangor, the renowned South African writer and CEO of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg. Jessie Duarte was involved in student boycotts in the Western Cape in the late 1970s and was part of a delegation that met with Albertina Sisulu, Greta Ncapayi and others in 1979. After their initial meeting in 1979 Duarte worked alongside Sisulu for over twelve years. Others in their circle included Sicily Palmer, Feroza Adams, Benny Manama, Baby Tyawa, and Susan Shabangu. Duarte was detained without trial in 1988, and placed under restriction orders after her release until the State of Emergency was lifted.

Duarte met Nelson Mandela for the first time at his house in Orlando West about a week after his release in 1990. She recalls being ‘completely shy to even go and shake his hand and he was surrounded by ... all the luminaries ... I was absolutely overawed... My first impression of him was that he was very quiet. He was listening to everybody very carefully. I thought this is a great man. He is very silent but he listens.’ Mandela was looking to build his staff. Frene Ginwala became his researcher and speech writer while Duarte was recruited to establish his office because of her solid community contacts. She became a Personal Assistant to both Mandela and Walter Sisulu until 1994. During negotiations from 1991-1994 Duarte was a member of the Regional Executive Committee of the ANC; she subsequently served as a special assistant to Nelson Mandela (1990-94); was on the ANC National Executive Committee (1997-1999); a member of the provincial cabinet (MEC, Safety and Security) for Gauteng (1994-1998); and was ambassador to Mozambique (1999-2003), before assuming her post as ANC spokesperson. She resigned as President Jacob Zuma’s chief operating officer in February 2010. She is Chief Director, Africa Multi-Lateral, and Management Accountant, Anglo American Properties Limited, and remains an ANC NEC member.

Sources: frontline: the long walk of nelson mandela: interviews: jessie duarte www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/.../duarte.html

Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim

(1937 –)

‘Ebie’, as he is known, was born in Durban on 1 July 1937 and brought up by his grandmother in Effingham as his father, Mohamed Adam Modan, worked in the Transvaal. Ebrahim, like many Indians, found it difficult to gain admission to a school because of the shortage of facilities, and was only admitted to the Hindu Tamil Institute when he was 10 and matriculated from Sastri College in 1959 at the age of 22. His politicisation began during the Defiance Campaign of 1952. He was a regular at political rallies and was ‘hugely inspired’ by Dawood Seedat ‘who moulded my political outlook.’ Seedat sold the *New Age* newspaper and Ebrahim would help him.

On Friday afternoons, he sold the paper at the Victoria Street Bridge and on weekends did so in Clairwood and Overport. He also heard Monty Naicker, IC Meer, and Chota Motala address political rallies. Ebrahim joined the NIYC at 16 and was involved in the Greyville branch of the NIC with Nattoo Babenia, who also spent time on Robben Island, and Ismail Gangat. Ebrahim campaigned vigorously for the Congress of the People by going from house-to-house to collect people’s demands, and was at Kliptown when the Freedom Charter was adopted in 1955.

During the Treason Trial (1956-61) he collected funds on behalf of the Defence Fund and with regular reporter and treason trialist MP Naicker away from the office for long periods, Ebrahim assisted in producing *New Age*. When Umkhonto we Sizwe was formed, Ebrahim was approached by Ronnie Kasrils and had no hesitation in joining. There were 28 attacks in Durban in the period from 22 June 1962 to 21 June 1963 involving amongst others Ebrahim, Steven Dlamini, Billy Nair, Ronnie Kasrils, and Nattoo Babenia. Their most famed attack was on the offices of AS “Kosaan” Kajee in Alice Street because he attended the Republic Day celebrations in 1961. Their cell unravelled within a year. Ebrahim was staying in Kloof with Bruno Mtolo and Ronnie Kasrils. He had gone with Kasrils to Pietermaritzbrug and when he returned he found Kloof station ‘infested

with police.’ He was arrested and beaten but did not utter a word about the attacks. It was Bruno Mtolo who ‘spilt the beans’. Ebrahim was sentenced to fifteen years on Robben Island. Ebrahim’s cellmate on Robben Island for almost ten years was Jacob Zuma whom he taught to read: ‘He had had no formal education. But I have to say that he was exceptional. In six months he was reading Tolstoy. Once, I gave him a cheap thriller but he got bored with that [and] said it was trashy.’ Ebrahim completed his BA and B.Comm degrees through Unisa. He described the years at Robben Island as ‘very rough, hard.’ His abiding memory is of being made to ‘stand naked in the yard in mid-winter’ which was the making of him. Ahmed Kathrada has written of a similar experience:

‘It is July and knife-cold. There’s an open courtyard and showers. The senior police and prison officers are arranged around the courtyard watching, gleeful, mocking. The master race at play. This is the blunt end of the weapon the state brandishes to deprive people of their self-respect.... It is also a critical moment. At stake is the freedom of my mind.... I walk slowly into the shower and stand there under a cold indifferent sky for as long it takes to remove the smirk from their faces and for me to steel my independence.’

Robben Island tried to replicate apartheid society with ‘white and powerful’ warders and ‘defenceless and servile’ inmates. This added to Ebrahim’s anger: ‘we had already been sentenced to many years in jail, yet we had to suffer the additional humiliation and harsh conditions.’ They responded by ‘strengthening ourselves, by solidarity....’ He emerged ‘more dedicated, and determined to destroy the entire system which the prison had exemplified. For fifteen years I was not permitted to see a Muslim religious worker and was not even allowed a copy of the Holy Quràn. If the prison authorities intended to break the backbone of political prisoners, it has in reality achieved the exact opposite.’ Released in 1979 Ebrahim was banned and restricted to Durban. He was prevented from entering any work place, seeking employment in a factory, or entering a place of education and was ‘under constant police harassment.’ Greyville, where Ebrahim had spent a considerable part of his life, had been destroyed by apartheid, ‘my whole history had been laid flat.’

There was no turning back: ‘Life would have no purpose otherwise. I had to continue what I began, whatever the sacrifices.’

This was a time of great political ferment and under instruction from the ANC, he went into exile in 1980 and worked in the frontline states of Swaziland, Mozambique and Angola as a senior ANC organiser with Ronnie Kasrils, Jacob Zuma, and Joe Slovo. He was a member of the Swaziland and Maputo Regional Politico-Military Committee. Ebrahim returned to South Africa in 1985 and briefed underground leaders about the ANC’s strategies. The security police with their network of spies found out, but he managed to escape with the help of Mo Shaik and his family. In December 1986, however, Ebrahim was abducted from Swaziland by the security branch and detained in Pretoria for six months under the Terrorism Act. He points out ruefully that ‘at least I was detained in terms of something – there was a record of me. A lot of my comrades who were abducted simply disappeared.’ Ebrahim described his torture as ‘excruciating.’ His main interrogator, Deetleef, warned that if he did not ‘give us information, “I am going to do something to you – which, if you survive, is going to make me think you’re not human”.’ He was placed in a sealed cell into which noise was piped all day and the light left on. He was ‘cut off for days on end and never allowed to sleep. I almost went mad.’

Ebrahim was charged with treason and sentenced in January 1989 to twenty years on Robben Island. According to the *New York Times*, ‘as the three men [Mandla Maseko and Simon Dladla were the others] left the courtroom in Pretoria’s Palace of Justice, they turned to a packed public gallery and gave clenched-fist salutes while supporters sang anti-apartheid songs.’ The sentencing judge explained that Ebrahim had been given twenty years because ‘clearly your earlier 15 years didn’t do you much good.’ Ebrahim remained defiant: ‘I did not consider myself morally guilty of the acts for which I was convicted... As an oppressed nation, we could never regard our courts as places of justice in the moral sense of the word. We cannot divorce the courts from the apartheid structures for they are a product of an exclusively white racial parliament and are there to enforce laws enacted by this parliament no matter how morally offensive and odious these laws are to the oppressed. Can a basically unjust law be justly applied and can

something morally wrong be made kosher just because it passes through a judicial process?’

Ebrahim was released in 1991 after the Appeal Court ruled that because he was kidnapped in a foreign country, the Court did not have any jurisdiction to try him. He became a member of the NEC of the ANC and was elected to the National Assembly in 1994. From 2002, Ebrahim became then Deputy-President Jacob Zuma’s Senior Political and Economic Advisor. After Zuma became president in April 2009, Ebrahim was appointed Deputy Minister – International Relations and Cooperation. He married Shannon Field at the beginning of 2005 and they have a daughter Sarah.

Sources: In Jeremy Gordin, ‘A quirk of fate stymied struggle hero,’ Sunday Independent, 24 June 2007; Ahmed Kathrada, Simple Freedom; Orkin, “‘Democracy knows No Colour’”, 651; ‘Walking with pride’. Court Statements by ANC Cadres on Trial. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/trials/pride.html#EBRAHIM>; New York Times, 17 January 1989. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DE0>.



Ebrahim Ebrahim (2r) with Isu Chiba (l), Ronnie Kasrils, Ahmed Mehtar, and Shannon Field at a Palestinian Solidarity meeting, 2002

Gora Ebrahim

(1936 – 1999)

Gora Ebrahim, brother of Ebrahim Ebrahim, was born in Durban on 29 May 1936. His politicisation took place at Sastri College, the University of Natal Non-European Section, and Wits. At Natal his contemporaries included Phyllis Naidoo, Amanullah Khan, Kader Hassim, and George Sewpersad and there were intense ideological debates between the ANC Youth League, NIC, and Unity Movement, whose members formed the Durban Students Union under Gora's presidency. Gora, however, switched allegiance and joined Robert Sobukwe's PAC in April 1959. The PAC rejected the Freedom Charter because of its guarantees of minority rights and the clause that the land belonged to all who live in it (they argued that the land had been stolen by settlers).

The PAC also argued for spontaneous resistance from the masses (armed struggle) rather than top down disciplined leadership and launched an armed struggle through Poqo. The arrest of about 2000 members and execution of 110 Poqo members between 1963 and 1967 all but destroyed internal armed resistance. Eleven months after being formed, the PAC was banned and its members began going into exile where the PAC, ANC, and SAIC formed the South Africa United Front, which unravelled within a few years. The main source of the PAC's support was China but the organisation was destroyed by factional conflicts and remained in the diplomatic shadow of the ANC. It is in this context that Gora Ebrahim's contribution must be viewed. As apartheid repression heightened, Gora went into exile in 1963.

For almost 30 years he articulated the policies and vision of the PAC 'with unrivalled eloquence', in Chris Barron's words. Gora was the PAC's chief representative in Egypt, Iraq, China and Zimbabwe, and at the UN in New York. He subsequently became the PAC's secretary of foreign affairs and was based in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. According to Barron: 'It is no great exaggeration to say that for a lot of this time Ebrahim was all that stood between the PAC and extinction. For many years there was a concerted international campaign to withdraw recognition from the organisation as

a liberation movement in favour of the ANC.... Ebrahim fought tooth and nail to maintain recognition for the movement, using his considerable debating skills to argue that it was not for outsiders to choose a liberation movement for the people of South Africa. When the time came, they would choose for themselves, he said. He did this largely through the force of his own personality, intellect, eloquence and sophistication. Before Ebrahim went to Beijing under the auspices of the Afro-Asian Journalists Association in the late '60s, during the Cultural Revolution, China knew little about South Africa and nothing at all about the PAC.

‘His intellectual analysis of the situation and astute marketing of PAC strategy was lapped up by Mao Tse Tung, and opened the doors to aid from China. When frequent internal bickering and power struggles made donor countries doubt the wisdom of their support for the PAC, it was Ebrahim who, working through his impressive network of foreign contacts, contained the damage. In so far as the PAC projected an image to the outside world of unity and purpose, it did so through the person of Ebrahim. In short, he was the PAC’s lifeline to the international community. Ebrahim helped form the South Africa Non Racial Olympic Committee in the early '60s, and became acting president when co-founder Dennis Brutus was jailed. Never were his debating skills put to more effective use than in the way he rallied the international community behind the anti-South African sports boycott.

‘Opposing apartheid was not yet as fashionable as it became, and the early response to the campaign he initiated and pursued for some time virtually single-handed was not welcoming. Eventually the boycott became one of the sharpest thorns in South Africa’s side and succeeded spectacularly in persuading whites to support F W de Klerk’s proposal to negotiate an end to apartheid. [From Tanzania] with his French wife, whom he had met in China while she was working as a translator, and his two Tanzanian-born children, he went to Iraq and became editor of the *Baghdad Observer*. Somewhat improbably, given the reason for his presence there, he became the PAC’s chief representative in the capital and stayed for around five years, raising its profile in Iraq as well as important financial support. The seeds of Ebrahim’s ultimate disillusionment with the PAC were planted shortly after the organisation’s return to South Africa.

His problems were chiefly its refusal to end the armed struggle, ditch its rabble-rousing slogans which he believed had been overtaken by events, and commit to negotiations. Honed by his wide travels, frequent contact with ambassadors around the world and his experience at the UN, his thinking by this time transcended what he increasingly felt was a limited, dogmatic party line out of touch with new realities.... He wanted a broad, open-ended Africanism to replace what he felt was the PAC's narrow, nationalistic version which no longer served the country. Being on the periphery of PAC power play, his attempts to change its thinking led to his marginalisation by more extremist elements in the party until, after the 1999 elections, he lost his seat in Parliament.'

Gora Ebrahim joined the ANC in June 1999. He suffered a fatal heart attack at his Berea, Johannesburg, home on 25 November 1999. He was survived by his wife Xaviere, son Yasir and daughter Zareena.

*Sources: Gora Ebrahim. Interviewed by Tor Sellstrom, Harare, 22 July 1995. <http://www.liberationafrica.se/intervstories/interviews/ebrahim/>; Obituary by Chris Barron, *Sunday Times*, 5 December 1999*



Gora Ebrahim, Dr Matama Sule, Nigerian ambassador to the UN, and PAC chairman John Pokelo, 1982

Farid Esack

(1959 –)

*F*arid Esack was born in Wynburg, Cape Town, in 1959. He was one of six brothers raised by a single mother who had been abandoned by two husbands. His childhood was poverty-stricken with his mother working long hours in a laundry to support her family. Esack's later commitment to social redress and in particular his involvement in gender issues can partly be attributed to his mother's experience: 'She was a woman who was literally – and for me this is not a cliché – under the triple oppression: patriarchy, apartheid, capitalism. She really slogged, and she died at the age of 52. And the only thing that she ever got back was a measly box of chocolates at the end of the year.'

As Bill Moyers put it, 'Esack vividly recalls the hunger and cold of his earliest years, scavenging in the gutters for apple cores and running rather than walking to school to try to stave off frostbite.' Esack's family was forcibly removed from Wynberg to Bonteheuvel under the Group Areas Act. While the streets in Wynberg were 'crowded, dirty and aching poor,' there was 'a strong sense of community' and his mother worked close to home. Townships such as Bonteheuvel were 'human dumping-grounds rather than a community. A mosque had yet to be built and the nearest Muslim neighbours lived some distance away. It was also alienating, dangerous and gang-ridden.'

One traumatic image of Bonteheuvel has stuck with Esack: 'my mother coming into the house covered in blood. She had been raped.' Esack was first detained for political protest at the age of fourteen and was leading the National Youth Action a year later. He also showed great aptitude for religious studies and joined the Tablighi Jamaat in 1968 and was teaching at a *madressa* a year later. The Jamaat, he would say, provided him with security and brotherhood. At fifteen he went to Pakistan where he completed a Bachelors Degree in Islamic Law & Theology at the Jami'ah Alimiyyah al-Islamia and conducted research in Qur'anic Studies at Jami'ah Abu Bakr. He returned to South Africa in 1982 and became involved in the MYM. He established Muslims Against Oppression (MAO) in 1983, along with

Ebrahim Rasool, and they changed the organisation's name to Call of Islam in 1984. They affiliated to the UDF. From 1984 to 1989 Esack was the National Coordinator of Call of Islam. This fulfilled his ambition of uniting the two halves of his personality – the religious with secular activism. He addressed rallies, conducted political funerals, and participated in inter-faith organisations opposed to apartheid. He became an important leader in the World Conference on Religion and Peace. An interesting image is of him marching, Qur'an in hand, under the banner of the CPSA flag.

He saw the two as compatible: 'Every single one of the prophets sent by God came from the marginalised, and they worked with the marginalised. They focus on a theology that meant God's grace for everybody, but where was the essential locus of the activity? And so the essential question for religion is not how do we seek accommodation with power [but] how do I work with marginalised communities on the edges? And so it is a prophetic responsibility. Every single prophet of God, the fundamental question was never, How do I fit in with dominant society? The fundamental question was, How do I challenge power, how do I work with others for the transformation of unjust social economic structures?'

Esack completed a PhD at the University of Birmingham in 1990 and has since been based at Philosophische Theologische Hochschule, Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt am Main; Auburn Theological Seminary, New York; Ohio State University, Athens, Ohio; Harvard Divinity School; and is at present a professor in the Study of Islam at the University of Johannesburg. He has also been involved with the organisation Positive Muslims, which is dedicated to helping HIV-positive Muslims, and he served on South Africa's Gender Commission in the late 1990s. His books include *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism* (1997), *Islam and Politics* (1998), *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (1999), *The Qur'an: A Short Introduction* (2002), and he co-edited with Sarah Chiddy, *Islam, HIV and AIDS: Between Scorn, Pity and Justice* (2008).

Sources: 'Feature Interview: Farid Esack,' with John Cleary. ABC Radio, 11 July 2004. <http://www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s1239023.htm>; Farid Esack interviewed by Bill Moyers, PBS Radio, 18 September 2001. <http://www.racematters.org/faridesack.htm>; Farid Esack, 'Three Islamic Strands in the Struggle for justice, *Third World Quarterly*, 10 (2), 1988, 473-



Farid Esack led from the front during anti-apartheid protests in the 1980s



Suliman Moosa Esakjee

(1928 – 2009)

Suliman Esakjee, popularly known as “Solly”, worked as a clerk but had a far more enduring interest in protest politics as a member of the TIYC and TIC. Esakjee was imprisoned during the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48 against the Ghetto Act. During the Defiance Campaign of 1952, as chairman of the Vrededorp Youth Congress, he was one of 8,000 people arrested countrywide for their protest action, and served thirty days in prison. Esakjee was also involved in the 1955 Congress of the People (COP) as a member of the Johannesburg Regional Committee of COP and secretary of the Transvaal Action Committee, as well as the secretary of the Consultative Committee of COP. The likes of Esakjee were involved in the formulation of the Freedom Charter by going from door-to-door to discuss the grievances of ordinary South Africans, gathering their demands, and recruiting volunteers for the COP.

Serving with Esakjee on the Johannesburg Committee were ‘Mervie’ Thandray, Faried Adams, M Goldberg, June Shabangu, P Mathole, F Morris, Sophie Williams and L Morrison. The COP bulletin *Speaking Together*, described the activities of volunteers in one of its issues: ‘Reggie Vandeyar and Suliman Esakjee, both TIC activists, recounted that ‘extensive work’ was done by the TIC in Fordsburg, Vrededorp, Doornfontein, Alexandra Township, Jeppe, Malay Camp, Asiatic Bazaar/Pretoria, Sophiatown, Newclare, Martindale, Benoni, Nigel, Springs, Germiston, Kliptown, Denver, Newlands, Turfontein, Ophirton, and in Coronationville, Noordgesig and Albertsville.’ Initially groups of volunteers would go out to distribute ‘advanced propaganda’ and to discuss the campaign with residents on a house-to-house basis. Esakjee, along with Ahmed Kathrada, Babla Saloojee, Herbie Pillay, Mosie Moolla and others was a member of the Picasso Club that went around Johannesburg spray painting anti-apartheid slogans in public spaces. For example, on the all-white Johannesburg Public Library they sprayed the poster: “WE BLACK FOLKS WANT TO READ”. When the authorities removed this, they painted “WE BLACK FOLKS AIN’T READING YET”’.

Esakjee was one of the 156 accused appearing at the Treason Trial (1956-61) where the state failed to prove its case. The trial gave Esakjee an opportunity to showcase his cooking skills. Ahmed Kathrada would record in his *Memoirs* that the Muslim prisoners demanded halal food. The state eventually relented and provided a kitchen: ‘Among the chief cooks were Yusuf Cachalia and Suliman Esakjee. It was a case of history repeating itself, since their fathers had been prison cooks during Gandhi’s passive resistance campaign in South Africa in the first decades of the twentieth century.’ Esakjee passed away on 1 February 2009. He was survived by two sons and two daughters.

Sources: SAHO; Ahmed Kathrada, Memoirs (Cape Town: Struik Publishers, 2005), 132; Razia Saleh and Rashid Saleh, Men of Dynamite. Pen Portraits of MK Pioneers, 2009



Defiance Campaign, Boksburg 1952. L to r: Nana Sita, Ebrahim Dadoo, ME Tiney, Babla Saloojee, EM Moola, Paul Joseph, F Kendiar, and S Esakjee (Drum)

Abdool Karrim Essack

(1925 – 1997)

*D*ied in Dar-es-salaam on 29 April 1997. Abdool Karrim Essack – committed revolutionary – fled into exile in 1965. Natal leader of the Unity Movement and Apdusa, writer of numerous books and pamphlets on the oppressed and exploited people, journalist, radio announcer, teacher in Newcastle, Ladysmith, Clairwood, Umzinto. Practised law in Verulam, Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania.... Mourned by freedom fighters, disciples, former pupils and friends.

*S*o ran a notice in the *Daily News* and *Natal Mercury* when Karrim Essack passed away in 1997. He had led a politically intense life that spanned several countries and ideological shifts. His father Ishaq Hashim was an adventurer who left his family in India to make a home in South Africa in the 1920s. He settled for mattress-making, French polishing and the buying and selling of second hand furniture in Dundee. In 1932 his family, then consisting of his wife and four children, joined him in Dundee. Four more children were born in Natal. Hashim made sure that all his children were well educated. While all the brothers were anti-apartheid activists, three in particular are well known: Abdool Karrim Essack, Omar Essack, and Kader Hassim.

Karrim, born in India, was Hashim's third child. He completed his primary education in Dundee and attended Sastri College where he matriculated in 1943 with a distinction in history. Karrim's matric year was important for another reason. During the Natal visit of Cape politicians Goolam and Halima Gool, he got his first public exposure when he addressed a rally in Dundee. He enrolled for a BA degree at Wits. At Wits he helped found the Progressive Forum (PF), which was aligned with the Unity Movement. It included among its ranks AI Limbada, Enver Hassim, Zuleikha Christopher, Errol Vawda, Andrew Lukhele, Fatima Meer, and AKI Vahed.

Financial constraints prevented Karrim from completing a law degree. He transferred to Fort Hare and qualified as a teacher. Here he met African intellectuals from the Eastern Cape who were influential in shaping his thinking. While teaching in Natal he completed his law examination part-time, served articles with Ashwin Choudree, and opened a practice in Verulam in the early 1960s. Karrim was also the Natal leader of the Unity Movement and Apdusa. He drew up pamphlets and leaflets that demonstrated his wide knowledge and provocative style. While the ANC focused on urban targets, Karrim was instrumental in organising, recruiting and transporting activists in rural areas such as Pondoland. He was detained for ninety days in 1964. When the 90 day law was lifted in January 1965, Karrim with the help of his brother Essop and Vishnu Tewary, fled into exile to Botswana and from there to Zambia.

At the age of 55 he returned to India to study journalism. His classmates included future Tanzanian president Benjami Mkapa. When Karrim completed his studies in 1970, he relocated to Tanzania. He excelled as a journalist with his lengthy analytical articles appearing in *News Line*, *Daily News* and *Sunday News*, while his voice was frequently heard on radio. Politically, Karrim became a Pan-Africanist. He thrived in Dar-es-Salaam which was alive with a myriad of political missions, including those of the PLO, ZANU, the ANC and PAC. Karrim was well known in the highest government circles in the DRC, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and Mozambique.

He championed the cause of the PLO; of Yoweri Museveni and the Ugandan struggle; of the Rwandan Patriotic Front; of Laurent Kabila and the struggle in the DRC. His 1997 interview with the DRC's then new leader Kabila was to be his last assignment. He suffered a stroke and was taken to hospital in Dar-es-Salaam where he passed away at the age of 72. Journalist friend Makwaia wa Kuhlenga of *The Express* in Tanzania described Karrim as a man of 'immense energy and stamina.... His mind was in a race, in a hurry. To him, there was so much to do within so little time.' SR Katongele, Ugandan High Commissioner, wrote on 2 May 1997 that the people of Uganda 'have lost a great friend and comrade in the struggle against oppression.'

President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, in his tribute ‘Karrim Essack: A model worth emulating,’ wrote: ‘His hatred against any form of colonialism, oppression, segregation, injustice and despotic rule was legendary.... His adult life was dominated by a strong concern for the genuine freedom of Africa. In the span of almost 30 years, Karim Essack had become a household name among the reading public in Tanzania, and a prolific writer admired and held in high esteem by both professional journalists and lawyers. His regular commentaries were always well researched and very well-informed – the distinctive feature of professional and constructive journalism. It is heartening that such a singular and professional man chose Tanzania as his home during his life, and his place of eternal rest upon his demise. He has left a large void in the Tanzanian literary and intellectual scene.’

Sources: Interview, Kader Hassim; ‘Tribute’ prepared by Kader Hassim, 2008; Benjamin William Mkapa, ‘Karrim Essack: A model worth emulating,’ Tanzanian Daily News, 26 May 1997; Makwaia wa Kuhenga, ‘Karrim Essack: Revolutionary in a hurry,’ The Express, 8 May 1997.



Karrim Esack (centre) at a social gathering with members of the PLO, Tanzania

Omar Essack

(1920 – 1969)

Omar Essack, brother of Karrim Essack and Kader Hassim, studied with Chota Motala at Sastri College and at the Grant Medical School in Bombay where they studied from 1939 to 1947. As their families did not have sufficient money for their travel they worked on a cargo ship, shovelling coal, to earn their fare. Omar and Chota were active in politics in India as members of the Colonial Students Association and Communist Party of India. The Indian struggle against British imperialism was at its height and they participated in the ‘Quit India’ campaign. Omar was an academic Gold Medallist. According to CD Moodley of Pietermaritzburg, Omar ‘was brilliant and got through with flying colours.... You know, Motala once told us that when they graduated in India, the professor told Omar, “just hold on for another two years and you will be inducted as a professor,” but Omar was thinking of his financial circumstances and family.’ Omar opened a practice in central Pietermaritzburg and Chota followed shortly after. Both attended mainly to African patients from surrounding townships and working class Indians. The appalling conditions to which they were exposed drew them into the political sphere. They were initially attracted to the politics of the Unity Movement and in fact addressed several meetings of that organisation.

For example, at a meeting on 23 November 1952 at the Millsite Theatre in Dundee, both men argued that the Defiance Campaign was futile as non-violent resistance would not force the apartheid government to change its policies. Omar argued that passive resistance retarded the interests of black people and had failed in India: ‘Peace and non-violence brings you nowhere.’ By 1945, he told his audience, there were no peace movements in India. Omar and Chota subsequently switched allegiance to the NIC and revived it in Pietermaritzburg with Chota as chairperson. As political repression intensified, and their own political involvement increased, they went into partnership so that one of them could look after the practice if the other was detained. Later, another activist, DV Chetty, joined them. According to CD Moodley, ‘I remember after our meetings ... we used to

have regular meetings, study groups cum political group discussions ... from Pietermaritz Street where [Dr Omar] lived he would walk across to the surgery in Retief Street and sit there till about 2:00am listening to Radio Peking and All-India Radio. It was mostly talks on socialism, communism. Generally, in politics he was a master, absolute master... We used to call him Omar Mamujee. He was a theoretician, brilliant...' Omar married Zohra Hoorsook in 1954 and they had two daughters, Shameema and Shamshad. He was fluent in Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, English and Zulu and during the heady resistance days of the 1950s, compiled many freedom songs which combined several of these languages and were hugely popular among the activists. Sadly, Omar Essack passed away of a diabetic coma in 1969 when he still had much to offer.



Omar Esack, Chota Motala, and MC Meer

Alie Fataar

(1917 – 2005)

*A*lie Fataar was born to Salamudien and Janap Fataar in Claremont in the Cape on 26 March 1917. His father was a tailor by profession who went into liquidation during the Great Depression of the early 1930s. Fataar's early memories concerned the struggles of his parents to provide for the family, an experience that shaped his commitment to the underprivileged. Fataar matriculated from Livingstone High in 1934. He was the first student to achieve a first class pass in matric at Livingstone but could not afford to attend university. Instead he enrolled at Zonnebloem Teacher Training College. EC Roberts, his principal, wrote in a 1936 testimonial: 'At school, he was an ideal student, being hardworking, conscientious, and thoroughly reliable... His subsequent progress at Zonnebloem Training College enhanced these excellent qualities and I have no hesitation in recommending him to any position where a real outstanding leader is required.' Fataar taught English at Livingstone High. According to Alan Wider, he continues to be 'viewed as one of the foundational teachers of Livingstone. [He] was known for his fiery politics but traditional teaching. At meetings of the Teachers League of South Africa, Fataar mixed politics and teaching. He spoke forcefully about government oppression as well as teaching English.'

Fataar described a typical pre-exile day in a 1963 interview: 'Now when we were in the Teachers' League and anti-CAD Unity Movement, all of us worked 24 hours a day. I was studying through UNISA six subjects [he completed the BA degree in 1943]. So early in the morning you get up and make notes, you study and then have a meal, and off down the road to Livingstone and teach till 3 or 4, and then come home and there are political meetings, branch meetings right into the night, and there is writing to be done, then preparation for tomorrow's lessons and books to be marked. Weekends and all, you never have a minute. Weekends you are out to conferences. There was no time for cinema, fun or games. This was done all the time.' Fataar taught at Livingstone for 28 years. According to Omar, he was 'unwavering in his pursuit of academic and political

conscientisation.’ He was a founding member of the NEUM. While less prominent than ideologues such as Bennie Kies and Goolam Gool, he put in the hard yards to ensure that the organisation functioned smoothly. He served as secretary in the 1950s. He was banned in 1961 under the Suppression of Communism Act. His banning order was served in front of his students as he was teaching an English literature class. Fataar went into exile in December 1964. The final straw was when he had to spend the day of his eldest grandson’s graduation ceremony in police interrogation cells. Fataar’s first stop was Botswana where he did odd jobs in Lobatse to eke out a living, but resurrected his teaching career when he joined the Swaneng Hill School in 1966. He moved to Zambia in 1968 as vice-principal of the Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka and participated in the Unity Movement in exile. Fataar moved to Zimbabwe in 1981 and taught until his retirement in 1988. He returned to South Africa after the unbanning of political organisations and passed away on 9 June 2005.

Sources: Alan Wider, Richard Dudley and the Fight for Democracy in South Africa. New York: SUNY Press, 2008; Yunus Omar, ‘A revolutionary to the end,’ Muslim Views, July 2005.



Alie Fataar in his last year of teaching, age 73 (Yunus Omar / Muslim Views)

Fataar participating in an Anti-War coalition march at the age of 86, April 2003 (Yunus Omar / Muslim Views)

Zainunissa “Cissie” Gool

(1897 – 1963)

Cissie Gool was born on 6 November 1897 in Cape Town where her father Dr Abdullah Abdurahman was an important figure in Coloured politics in the early decades of the twentieth-century as head of the APO. He was also a member of the Cape Town City Council – the first black person to achieve this distinction. Cissie Gool was of slave descent. Her great-grandparents had purchased their freedom and ran a successful fruit business. Success meant that they were able to send Abdullah to study at Glasgow where he qualified as a medical doctor in 1893. Cissie and her sister Waradea were the offspring of Abdurahman’s marriage to Hellen Potter, whom he had met in Glasgow. Cissie’s mixed ancestry included an Indian grandfather, Malay grandmother, Scottish mother, and Coloured Muslim father. Cissie was educated at Trafalgar Public School in District Six. Her father was a founding member of the school, the first high school for Coloured pupils in the Cape. In 1919, while studying at UCT, she married Dr Abdul Hamid Gool, from whom she had three children (Rustom, Shaheem, and Marina). Their marriage subsequently failed and she married Sam Kahn.

Cissie Gool was awarded her BA from UCT in 1932 and a year later received her Masters degree in psychology. In recognition of this achievement UCT named a Plaza after her – the ‘Cissie Gool Plaza.’ At UCT she organised a march to Parliament in March 1930 to protest against the Women’s Enfranchisement Bill which gave the vote to white women only. In February 1935 she was one of the founding members of the Anti-Fascist League which protested the growing threat of fascism in Europe. In 1936, she established the National Liberation League (NLL), with prominent writer Alex la Guma as secretary, ‘to struggle for complete social, political and economic equality of Non-Europeans with Europeans in South Africa.’ She forged links with the CPSA and ANC, joining them in a civil disobedience campaign in 1936. She helped form the NEUF in 1938 (later revived as the NEUM). Cissie joined the CPSA in 1939 and sat on its political bureau, the first black woman to achieve this distinction. Cissie Gool was a member of the Cape Town City Council from 1938 to 1960, representing Ward 9, which included District Six, and often found

herself as the sole female voice on the council. She participated in the passive resistance campaign of 1946-1948 in Natal. In 1946 she led a march of 2,000 women who visited traders accused of hoarding foodstuffs during wartime shortages. She was served with a banning order in 1954 due to her association with the CPSA and was also arrested during the 1960 State of Emergency and placed in solitary confinement. Cissie Gool was awarded an LLB from UCT in 1961 and became an advocate in the Supreme Court in 1962. She was the only woman barrister at the time. She passed away a year later in July 1963. Four decades later, in 2003, she was posthumously awarded one of South Africa's highest accolades, the Order of Luthuli in Silver. Playwright Nadia Davids, who wrote and directed the play 'Cissie Gool: Giving Sound to Wound' in 2008, wrote of Cissie Gool's impact on her:

'I was entranced by this woman who transgressed social boundaries in such an era. Cissie takes those twin concepts of memory and performance and offers the audience a different kind of remembrance, tribute and archive to a place and to a woman who called that place home. Gool may have grown up in a highly politicised household where serious political discussions occurred, but they took place through a thread of normal, personal relationships. In the midst of quite tense subject matter she still jokes and loves. People argue about whether she was an atheist or a Muslim, or a communist or a sell-out. There are different stories about who Cissie Gool really was and what she represented. Gool represents the notion of what is possible for one's life and how one can remake these possibilities. This play is an act of gratitude because she [Gool] gave me that. It's the idea of someone from a wealthy, elite home who gave up a comfortable, quiet life and put herself out for criticism that shows how one's possibilities can be changed. It is this courageousness of Gool's that I admire most. The main message is about bearing witness to a place and to a woman who called that place home. It's a story of courage but it's also sad because it's also a story of defeat, but still triumph. This is the paradox we find so captivating in people.'

Sources: SAHO; 'The Jewel of District Six,' <http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/multimediacontent/cissiegool/timeline.swf>; Farzana Rasool, Cissie Gool, Cue Online, Edition 2, 2008. <http://cue.ru.ac.za/theatre/drama/2008/cissie-gool-giving-sound-wound.html>



Cissie Gool's funeral was attended by thousands of sympathisers



Cissie Gool



Goolam and Jainub Gool (Tabata)

Goolam Gool

(1905 – 1962)

Goolam Gool hailed from a family with a long pedigree in political activism. He was the son of Yusuf Gool, who was born in Rander in 1864 and made his way to Cape Town in 1885. Yusuf started out as a hawker but later branched into the spice trade and wholesaled dried snoek. He married a local Malay woman, Wagieda Ta'al and they had two sons, Adbul Hamid and Goolam, and five daughters, Jainub, Zubeida, Mariam, Ghadija, and Amina. Both Jainub and Goolam were active in the political structures of the Unity Movement. Goolam was born on 24 March 1905.

At the age of nine he was sent to study at Aligarh College in India. He returned in 1919 when Gandhi's passive resistance campaign resulted in the closure of Aligarh. He matriculated in London and entered Guy's Medical Training Hospital in 1923. After qualifying as a medical doctor in 1931 he returned to Cape Town and opened a practice in Claremont. Goolam married Marceda Ismael of Cape Town, a fellow medical student in the UK, in 1931. They had a son Reshad but divorced shortly after. He then married Halima Nagdee, an activist in her own right, and they had two children, Selim and Shirin. The six foot plus Goolam cut an imposing figure with his powerful physical presence. South African writer, Peter Abrahams, who lived in Johannesburg, recalled his first meeting with Goolam in Cape Town in the late 1930s: 'The man who was to be my host got out of his car. He was tall and graceful: a light brown, but more Arabic and Malay and Persian than Negro had gone into the brownness. His features were sharply defined. He seemed assuredly relaxed and aloof. He wore his fine clothes with the casualness of those born to wealth. Forget his light brown skin and he could be any successful doctor or businessman anywhere in the land...'

The Russian Revolution, Indian nationalist struggle, and anti-imperialist protest in London and India, all influenced Goolam's politicisation. His and Halima's home in Constantia was a hive of political activity, as their son Selim remembers: 'Our home in Constantia Road, just off the Main Road and opposite the old nursery, became open house to all and sundry of the

movement. Goolam's legendary hospitality, his conspicuous spending and consumption and the inclusive nature of his personality made it the ideal place for parties, get-togethers, card games and serious discussion. Our place then became a centre for the organisational endeavour of the movement.'

When Goolam Gool returned from London he contested Dr. Abdurahman's dominance of Coloured politics. His failure to depose the old war horse did not deter him and he participated in the AAC which was formed in Cape Town in 1935 under the chairmanship of Professor DDT Jabavu. Their activities were moderate, holding with the tradition of negotiation and petitions. Goolam, meanwhile, became president of the National Liberation League, founded by Cissie Gool. He was expelled within a year because of ideological differences. In 1937, he founded the New Era Fellowship (NEF), a socialist debating society, with Ben Kies. They connected imperialism and capitalism with inequality and racism in South Africa. The likes of Jane Gool, Isaac Tabata, and Alie Fataar were members of the NEF. Goolam was also prominent in the founding of the Anti-CAD (Coloured Affairs Department) Movement in 1943 to oppose Smuts' plan to establish a separate organisation for administering Coloureds in the Cape. The Anti-CAD included political bodies, sports clubs, community organisations, and church groups.

It was from the Anti-CAD and All African Convention of 1943 that the NEUM was born. Its Ten-Point Programme included full franchise; free education; freedom of speech, press and movement; the right to own land; penal reform and the rights of workers to organise themselves. Non-collaboration, that is, the refusal to participate in the instruments of their own oppression, was a cardinal feature of the movement. Goolam Gool was president for a while and remained a member until his death in 1962. His political influence waned from the mid-1950s due to a combination of personal and political factors. He was buried in the Muslim Cemetery off the Main Road in Observatory, just below the Groote Schuur Hospital, and next to the tombs of his brother and father.

Sources: SAHO; Selim Gool, E-mail Correspondence; Peter Abrahams, 'Tell Freedom', Faber & Faber, 1954.

Halima Gool

(1916 – 1992)

Halima Gool was born in Pretoria on 30 September 1916, the second of nine children of Fatima Dollie and Mohammed Husein Nagdee, originally from the village of Kachali, Gujarat. The family moved to Fordsburg in 1938. Halima had little formal education but as an elder child oversaw the education of the younger children. She also did bookkeeping and was an avid reader who frequented the Native Library at Dougal Hall in Pretoria. Like many Indian Muslim families of the time, she read *Indian Views* and she and her sisters were contributors to the paper under various pseudonyms. In 1938, at the age of 22, she married Goolam Gool, then a rising star on the political circuit. Goolam and Halima's marriage was a meeting of opposites – he was flamboyant and debonair, an overseas educated medical man who carried enormous prestige in the community, while Halima was reserved but strong willed.

Legend has it that Goolam became interested in her after reading her articles in *Indian Views* under the pseudonym 'Muslim Girl' and 'Hawa Ahmed'. Halima moved to Cape Town and became increasingly involved in Goolam's political life and work. Cape Town opened up new vistas in her political life. She was drawn into the Leftist political struggles as secretary of the National Anti-CAD and NEUM and assisted Goolam in researching for his lectures as he had a busy medical practice.

Her writings reflect the emergence of an independent woman who was prepared to challenge moderate leaders such as Dr Abdurahman and Professor Jabavu of the ANC. Most males refused to believe that 'Hawa Ahmed' was a woman and were convinced that a man was writing under a woman's pseudonym. IC Meer recalled how the Natal public first met 'The Mysterious Columnist': 'The mysterious Hawa H Ahmed, the thought-provoking columnist in *Indian Views* whose identity was kept a well guarded secret by MI Meer created a great deal of speculation in the community which knew all of its small band of writers who could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Her vast knowledge on various topics and her attacks on

the male-dominated society under capitalism made her most popular with the readers of the *Views*. And many males wrote challenging her very existence. ‘No woman could write like that. It was a man parading in a woman’s name, etc. etc.’ was being said and MI Meer kept assuring the readers that such a person existed and that he personally knew this woman writer. To the disbelieving in 1938 the existence of Hawa H Ahmed had not been proved. To them Hawa was a myth, a creation of MI Meer in his zeal to promote the cause of Indian women in South Africa.

‘To them only ‘seeing was believing.’ And on August 19, 1938, they saw. In *Indian Views* of that date a special glossy supplement appeared with the photographs of Dr Goolam Gool and Mrs Gool. The following appeared under the photographs: ‘Readers of the *Indian Views* and a host of other papers will remember Mrs Gool as the brilliant “Muslim Girl” writer, Miss Hawa H Ahmed.’ She was Halima Nagdee of Pretoria, daughter of Mr and Mrs AM Nagdee. She continued to write for *Indian Views*. We welcomed her in Durban at a gathering organised by the Women’s Liberal Group, a sister organisation to the Liberal Study Group.’

After her divorce from Goolam Gool in 1955, Halima focused on her hairdressing salon and on raising her two children. As Selim recalls, she ‘had to struggle to maintain her home and family against many odds in society and became a businesswoman. She had to overcome the many hurdles presented to non-white women in business and commerce, like the biased legal system (our home was later ‘expropriated’ under the Group Areas) and male prejudice and their silent opposition and scorn.’ Halima’s sister’s included Amina Desai, Ruqayya Vawda, who married Dr. Errol Vawda, and Khatija Nagdee, who was the first Indian woman to qualify as a medical doctor at Wits in the 1940s.

Sources: Selim Gool, e-mail correspondence; I.C. Meer, I REMEMBER. Reminiscences of the Struggle for Liberation and the Role of Indian South Africans, 1924-1958. Edited by Enuga S Reddy and Fatima Meer.

Jainub Gool

(1907 – 1996)

Jainub Gool, born in Cape Town on 19 March 1902, was the sister of Goolam Gool and Ghadija Christopher, and related through marriage to Cissie Gool. She was educated by a private tutor and attended Fort Hare where she graduated in 1926 and entered the teaching profession at Muir Street school. She came to prominence in the highly charged radicalism of the 1930s and 1940s. The likes of Jainub and Goolam Gool formed the Workers Party of South Africa, and were involved in the AAC of 1935 which brought together representatives from major black political organisations. Jainub was active in the NEUM (1943), which was an attempt by black political activists – African, Indian and Coloured – to forge common ties and a united opposition to state oppression. Jainub was also involved in the Anti-CAD Movement, the Teachers League of South Africa, and the Cape African Teachers Association. She was also a founding member of the New Era Fellowship and SOYA, which targeted students and the youth. Jainub was married to IB Tabata (1909-1990), a graduate of Fort Hare, who was involved in setting up many of the Unity Movement structures.

Jainub's political activism continued into the 1960s as she and Tabata initiated Apdusa. Her activity as chairperson of Apdusa led to her five year banning in 1961. Two years later she went into exile with Tabata, and they spent most of the rest of their lives in Zambia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. In 1963 she was a member of the delegation to the OAU which presented a memorandum unsuccessfully requesting recognition of the Unity Movement. In 1964 Jainub became the official representative of the Unity Movement in Zambia. She returned to South Africa in 1993 and was elected president of the Unity Movement. In a paper that she read to the conference, she felt vindicated by a life dedicated to struggle: 'Today after more than 40 years of fascism, apartheid's rule has fallen apart, rotten at the core, the people in penury, its economy destroyed, and fraud and corruption reigning supreme. The broederbonders have fallen out and they cannot rule in the old way. And now we, the oppressed, stand at the dawn of building a new life.' Jane Tabata passed away in Cape Town on 6 May 1996.

Sources: Kader Hassim; Norman Traub, 'Obituary: Jane Tabata,' 13 May 1996. *The Independent*.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-jane-tabata-1347152.html>.



The parents of Hoosen Haffejee, Mohamed and Fathima, attending the inquest of the death of their son



Hoosen Haffejee's brother Yusuf (Centre) with Advocate AB Mahomed (R) and instructing attorney Morgan Naidoo at the inquest

Hoosen Mia Haffejee

(1949 – 1977)

*O*ur lives have been shattered. In Hoosen's success we saw the realisation of our forgotten ambitions and looked forward to a life of proud happiness: it was an act of the ultimate cruelty to have forced him away from those who loved him so much.... The hurt remains. You know it's like a scar, the wound has healed but the scar is present to remind you of the injury. The hurt will always be there, more so because of the so many unknowns – Yusuf Haffejee [Brother of Hoosen Haffejee]

*D*r Hoosen Haffejee was a dental intern in Durban in the mid-1970s. The country was in turmoil following the Soweto Revolt of 1976, mass protests, the flight of capital, the exile of young men, and the death of Steve Biko. Active in political resistance he was detained under the Terrorism Act. On 2 August 1977, Haffejee was bundled into an unmarked police vehicle while on his way to work. He was taken to the Brighton Police Station, interrogated for several hours, and put into a police cell shortly after midnight. At 4:00 am on the morning of 3 August 1977, when Constable Naude visited the cell, he claimed to have found Hoosen tied to the bars of the cell with the leg ends of his trousers twisted around his neck. He was dead! Chief state pathologist, Professor Gordon, found 62 wounds on Haffejee's body, some of which were caused by blunt trauma. There were injuries to the neck and scalp.

The official inquest absolved the police of any wrongdoing and accepted their claim that Haffejee committed suicide. The bruising on Haffejee's body was explained by his captors as resulting from his resistance. The official verdict of the inquest was that Haffejee's death was not 'brought by any act of omission or commission or amounting to any offence on the part of any person. Death was consistent with hanging and injuries.' Gordon did not comment on the police explanation of how Hoosen sustained the injuries or the circumstances surrounding his death.

Haffejee paid the ultimate price for his opposition to apartheid – his life. He grew up in Pietermaritzburg, where his father ran a grocery stores. He had two older brothers, Ismail and Yusuf, and a sister, Sarah. Haffejee attended Woodlands High. During his standard nine year the school relocated to Northdale. Students were unhappy about many issues and he was in the thick of protest action. He matriculated in 1966, qualified as a dentist in Nagpur in 1976, and was doing his internship at the King George V Hospital in Durban at the time of his arrest. Yusuf was stunned to learn of his brother's death one Thursday morning:

‘On 3 August 1977, I had just opened the shop [when] two white males came in and asked, ‘do you have a son who’s a dentist?’ I said ‘No, my brother is a dentist.’ ‘Well, we came to tell you that your brother is dead. He committed suicide.’ I was absolutely shocked. I tried to question them further and they said they don’t know any details and gave me the name of the head of Security Police in Durban, Colonel Hanson. I sent for my uncle and a friend. Then I walked up a few doors to call one of my neighbours, I thought she would be the best person to tell my mother [who] used to run a little fruit shop next door. These people told me that a post mortem was going to be performed and if I wanted to know anything I must phone Gordon at the Medical School. I couldn’t get hold of Gordon. I spoke to his secretary and said that I wanted to have a doctor present at the post-mortem. She phoned back saying that Gordon was at the police mortuary in Gale Street, and that if I want to have a doctor present I should hurry because he was about to start. I phoned a friend of mine in Durban, Dr Yusuf Chenia, [and] told him to please be present at the post mortem.’

The Haffejee family was disappointed in Gordon's findings: ‘One of our Counsel was the late Advocate Harry Pitman. While I was in his office he got hold of Gordon, and he started chatting to him about it.... When he concluded the call, he said that Gordon's comment was that ‘this fellow looked like he had been through two rugby matches played on gravel.’[But] at the inquest we discovered that Gordon was actually promoting the evidence of the Security Police ... that he received these injuries during struggles in trying to get him into the car. So he was a terrible disappointment, certainly not a neutral witness.’ There was no point in appealing the decision because the Haffejee family had no witnesses

who had seen something. The only witness was Hoosen himself. And as one policeman told the family at the inquest, ‘dead men tell no tales.’ The inquest, Yusuf remains adamant, ‘served only one purpose ... to exonerate the Security Police.’ Hoosen’s death had a lasting impact on the family. According to Yusuf: ‘It was an excruciating period, you know, the atmosphere at home changed entirely. My mother has never recovered from this. She was always a cheerful person and she became very morose and she is that way until today... She became politically conscious. She became aware of other people who were dying in detention, who were being arrested and tortured by the police. She would cut these articles. So if we have to say what positive thing came out of Hoosen’s death, it is that the whole family became politically conscious.’

Mrs Haffejee wrote to the *Natal Witness* in 1978: ‘The Prime Minister was quoted in the *Natal Mercury*, constantly stating that God will open doors to us so that we can fulfill our destiny. I think the time has arrived for us, the Blacks, to pray that God will open a door to protect our destiny from the cruel injustice of the South African Security Police. I hope our prayers are answered before it’s too late for us all. As a grieving mother I cannot forget this terrible ordeal. My heart will always cry for my son.’

Yusuf joined the Detainee Support Committee in Pietermaritzburg, which had been formed to support prisoners appearing in political trials and the families of detainees. As he points out, the family ‘became aware that we were not alone. There were hundreds of other parents whose children had disappeared. How does a mother cope with the fact that her son has disappeared? In comparison, we got Hoosen’s body; his funeral left this house and whatever healing has taken place started the moment his funeral was over. There are many in this country who haven’t had a funeral. How do they start healing?’ Almost twenty years later, Haffejee’s family has not reconciled with his death. Yusuf, appearing before the TRC in Durban in 1996, was sceptical about the TRC process because ‘justice was missing. You can’t have justice without having the truth, but it’s possible for you to have the truth without having justice. And that’s exactly what happened in the TRC.’ Yusuf believes that his brother’s killers ‘should be hunted down, tried and punished. There can be no amnesty for murderers and torturers.’

Sources: Yusuf Haffejee, Interviewed by Christian De Vos, 25 May 2002. UD-W Documentation Centre, Voices of Resistance Project; Laurel Baldwin, Ambulances of the Wrong Colour: Health Professionals, Human Rights and Ethics in South Africa Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1999.

Fatima Hajaig

(1938 –)

*F*atima Hajaig was born on 10 December 1938. She completed a BA degree from Wits (1963) and an LLB from the University of EotvosLorand, Budapest (1967). In the 1990s, after being elected an MP for the ruling ANC party, she completed a Diploma in Macro-Economics from the National Institute for Economic Policy (1996), Certificate in Conflict Resolution, UCT (1997), and Certificate in Foreign Affairs and the Media, Princeton, USA (1997). Most of Hajaig's work has been with the underprivileged. From 1984 to 1986, she was the director of the Advice Centre and provided information and initiated solutions to the problems of the poor at Sivotrans, Ivory Coast. From 1986 to 1994 she was head of the Department of Development of Women and Youth in poverty stricken areas under the auspices of the Central Islamic Trust.

They organised training workshops in sewing and knitting, bursaries for technical skills training; and feeding schemes in various townships. Hajaig was an executive member of the UDF in the 1980s; has been an executive member of the Call of Islam since 1988; vice-chairperson of the TIC and representative at CODESA (1992-1994); chairperson of the ANCWL in Mayfair (1990-1994); and member of the ANC Women's League (1992-2004). As an MP since 1994, she has been chairperson of the sub-committee on International Affairs, and a member, of the Trade & Industry Portfolio Committee; the Quality of Life & Status of Women; the Pan African Parliament; the SADC Parliamentary Forum; the sub-committee of the African Peer Review Mechanism; and the Joint Rules Committee. In 2008 she was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. She got into trouble when she said at a Cosatu rally in Lenasia on 14 January 2009 that the 'control of America, just like the control of most Western countries, is in the hands of Jewish money.' These remarks were condemned by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies as well as South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma who labelled them contrary to South African policy. Hajaig was forced to apologise for her comments and is now an ordinary MP.

Sources: Fatima Hajaig, GCIS Profile. http://www.gcis.gov.za/gcis/gcis_profile.jsp?id=6077; 'President raps Hajaig's knuckles,' Mail & Guardian, 4 February 2009.



Imam Haron addressing his jamaat, 1966 (Haron family)



Fatima Hajaig

Imam Abdullah Haron

(1924 – 1969)

*A*bdullah Haron, born on 8 February 1924 in Newlands-Claremont, was the youngest in a family of five, and still an infant when his mother Asa passed away. Haron's maternal aunt Maryam, sister of his father Amarien, brought him up. She placed great store on his religious education and took him for Hajj on three occasions. In all, Haron spent six years in Egypt and Makkah. He spoke and read Arabic fluently and was a huffaz by the age of fourteen. He studied Islamic theology as the pupil of a number of Imams and Sheikhs, including Makkah-based Shaykh 'Abdurahman al-'Alawi al-Maliki (d.1986) and Shaykh Ismail Ganief (d.1958) of the Cape. Shaykh Ganief, in addition, implored him to participate fully in community activities.

Imam Haron married Galiema Sadan on 15 March 1950. They had three children, Shamela, Fathima, and Mohammed, who is a lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Botswana. Two events, among many, that politicised Imam Haron were the 21 March 1960 killing of anti-pass protestors and the Group Areas Act which affected him, his mosque, his congregation, and caused untold human suffering. Imam Haron was forcibly moved from Lansdowne to Athlone. While Imam Haron lost his home, the mosque was a different matter. He told a gathering of the Muslim Judicial Council that 'the precincts of the mosque are inviolable and the building sacred forever. No mosque can be sold or destroyed.' Imam Haron's stand was backed by the community and the state eventually capitulated as mosques were exempt from the Group Areas Act. Imam Haron's ideas were also shaped by the intellectual gatherings of the Teacher's League of South Africa and NEUM, which made him aware of the community's socio-political difficulties, and the ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and other anti-colonial movements.

Imam Haron was officially appointed Imam of the Al-Jamia Mosque in Claremont in 1956. The Imam bore great responsibility in the Cape Islamic tradition. As Desai and Marney point out, the Imam was 'a symbol and

custodian of a history and a tradition which he must treasure and pass on to succeeding generations. The lives of the Muslim community are suffused by their traditions.’ Some members of the congregation, though, had doubts about Imam Haron: ‘Haron was a dapper little man who wore his black fez perched at altogether too-fashionable an angle upon a controversially clear-shaven head. Many thought that such a person was not quite suitable to be an Imam..... Haron was a devotee of rugby and had played for the Watsonians Rugby Club. But that is understandable – the game was an obsession with every Muslim. Although religious considerations naturally counted most, had Haron been a great rugby player he might well have won instant and universal support from his congregation. However, he could only manage a place in the second team, where his most notable attribute was found to be his piety. As a result there was much humming and hawing about his candidature for the Imamship. But Abdullah Haron was noted for his simplicity, modesty and piety. He was known as a man of the people, and the working people in particular responded to his clear qualities of leadership. He was their choice.’

Imam Haron initiated adult male and female classes, allowed women to participate on the mosque’s executive, and taught Arabic so that the congregation could comprehend the Qur’an. He organised fetes and picnics to raise funds for the poor. Along with close friends, such as Abu Bakr Fakier, Ismail Saban, Sait Galant, Sedick Galant, Karriem Sadan, Abu Bakr Hattas, and Rashaad Saban, Imam Haron established the progressive Claremont Muslim Youth Association (CMYA) in 1958. The CMYA published a monthly bulletin, the *Islamic Mirror*, from 1959. Imam Haron, Abdul Kays, Gulzar Khan, M. Mukaddam, Abdul-Rashied Sayyid, and Zubayr Sayyid established a monthly newspaper, *Muslim News*, in 1960. Imam Haron was appointed editor and used the widely circulated newspaper to conscientise the community politically. They also maintained close contact with activists such as Alex le Guma and Albie Sachs (CPSA member), and Robert Sobukwe (PAC leader). Imam Haron was in close contact with African migrant workers in Langa, Guguletu, and Nyanga, where he was affectionately called ‘mfundisi’ (priest). During the 1960 state of emergency Imam Haron sent food into the townships and was coopted to a body that raised funds for the defence of political detainees as many

of his close associates were imprisoned. In 1966 Imam Haron undertook a journey to Makkah on Hajj. He met a long time friend from Cape Town, Abraham of the PAC, who persuaded him to visit Cairo where a meeting of the World Islamic Council was being held. Imam Haron went as a guest of the PAC. From Cairo he went to London to meet with Canon John Collins, who was coordinating international funding to assist political detainees and their families in South Africa.

In December 1968, Imam Haron visited Makkah, Cairo, the Netherlands, and London, where he met Barney Desai of the PAC. As state repression intensified many of his friends advised Imam Haron to go into exile but his stock reply was, 'Allah knows best.' The Security Branch made its move by arresting Imam Haron on 28 May 1969 under the Terrorism Act and holding him incommunicado for 123 days at the Maitland Police Station. Despite public focus on his detention, the Special Branch tortured and allegedly murdered Imam Haron on 27 September 1969. They averred that he had 'fallen down the stair-case!' Imam Haron was beaten so severely that on four occasions, 7 July, 10 July, 14 September and 15 September, the police were forced to call a doctor to attend to his injuries.

Dr Schwar, who carried out the post-mortem, found large bruises over his entire body. He also had a broken rib, haematoma, and clots in the deep veins of his calves. Despite overwhelming evidence of assault by the security police, Magistrate Kuhn's shocking judgment read: 'Cause of death: Myocardial Ischaemia: a likely contributing cause being a disturbance of the blood clotting mechanism and blood circulation due to, in part, trauma superimposed on a severe narrowing of a coronary artery.... Whether the death was brought about by any act or omission involving an offence on the part of any person: a substantial part of the trauma was caused by an accidental fall down a flight of stairs.'

Sources: SAHO; Ursula Gunther, 'The Memory of Imam Haron in Consolidating Muslim Resistance in the Apartheid Struggle,' in Gordon Mitchell and Eve Mullen. Eds. Religion and the Political Imagination in a Changing South Africa, 2002: 89-120; Barney Desai and Clifford Marney, The Killing of the Imam. South African Tyranny Defied by Courage and Faith. London: Quartet Books, 1978.

Enver Hassim

(1928 – 1995)

(Extracted from a tribute by Kadir Hassim, originally published in *Apdusa Views*)

Enver Hassim, born in the Transvaal, spoke Afrikaans fluently and was a very good cricketer and a strong swimmer. He completed his BA and LLB degrees at Wits. In the 1940s Johannesburg was a cauldron of political activity and Enver joined the Progressive Forum, an organisation of Marxist intellectuals, many of whom would play a leading role politically in the years to come. Enver also interacted with ANC leaders like Walter Sisulu and trade union officials like Dan Koza and Max Gordon. When Enver attended the Seventh Conference of the Unity Movement in Cape Town in 1951, he met Zuleika Christopher. They married in 1952. A combination of events – his marriage to Zulei and a heart attack suffered by her father Advocate Christopher – brought Enver to Natal as a partner in the well-known firm of A. Christopher and Co.

Enver was a highly cultivated person. He was widely read and very knowledgeable. He could speak impromptu on a variety of subjects. I have a special and fond memory of our trip to Queenstown to attend the 1954 Conference of the All African Convention. We had arranged to go by a covered pick-up truck which came from Dundee. We met Enver at the Ladysmith station, he having travelled by train from Durban. The journey was a long and arduous one. We had to traverse the untarred and treacherous Van Reenen's Pass. Cassim Kikia, Enver and I occupied the rear of the truck. Our journey became a fascinating one with Enver regaling us with story after story. He was an accomplished raconteur and had a fine repertoire of jokes. Not once did he show any uneasiness or discomfort at being at the rear of the truck. From time to time he would produce a covered container and put it to his mouth and take deep swigs. Then he would offer it to us. Liquor? No! It was rich, sweetened and delicious condensed milk! Enver's stay in Natal was only for thirteen years.

During this period he made his biggest impact in the field of law. Being a forceful speaker in both English and Afrikaans, Enver made an immediate impact on the courts. He was competent in both civil and criminal law whether it be in the magistrate's court or Supreme Court. His reputation as a lawyer amongst lawyers of all racial groups soared. The white attorneys, many, if not most, despised black attorneys, but very quickly developed a healthy respect for Enver. Not only was he a formidable opponent in law, he was quite capable of giving them the rough edge of his tongue when occasion demanded it. Enver fought and won a number of law-making cases. When the leatherworkers of Pietermaritzburg went on strike they were all dismissed. Enver was appointed as their attorney.

There were many unique features of this case. What would be a normal consultation turned out to be a mass meeting because the accused numbered 1200. Since there was no prohibition on attendance, many hundreds more came. Radical politics was the hallmark of these meetings. Soon, not only was there a mass of workers who were militant but they had also become politicised. For years after this event the people of Pietermaritzburg talked about that clever and well spoken lawyer, Enver Hassim. Politically, Enver's star in the Unity Movement rose rapidly. He became a member of the executive of the AAC. At the 1956 conference of the AAC, Enver delivered the paper on the Land Question. Although Comrade Zulei was the popular speaker on public platforms, the Security Police knew that the ideologue was Enver. Thus when the State of Emergency was declared in 1960, it was Enver that the police arrested and detained.

Those were days of great excitement. The pre-dawn police raids, the long wait at the gates of Durban Central Prison, the speculation on the fate of the detainees (rumour had it that all the detainees were to be flown out of Durban and imprisoned on Robben Island), the application to the Supreme Court for the release of the detainees on the grounds of the failure of the government to produce the relevant Government Gazette. The atmosphere was one of joy and tension at the release of the detainees. We greeted them at the Prison Gates. There was a hurried meeting of our group in Greenwood Park. A few hours of uneasy sleep and once again the predawn raid and arrests.

Both Enver and Zulei made what they had available to the cause of our struggle. Their home was always open and available for meetings and a place for members to stay overnight. When conferences were held, their car provided transport for those who could not make their way to the conference. The legal office of A. Christopher and Co. was made available to the Unity Movement for its work. Our meetings were held there. We used the office duplicating machine for all our propaganda work. The office typists would do all our political typing in between their office work. 1963 witnessed fascism strike with its nailed fist. It began with the passing of the so-called 90 day law.

Apart from the indefinite solitary confinement, torture was for all practical purposes legalised. 1964 saw a spate of banning and house arrest orders on all sections of the liberatory movement. Enver and Zulei were both served with banning orders. Permission had to be obtained from the authorities for Zulei and Enver to communicate with each other! Enver was detained in connection with activities around the forging of passports. It was under these circumstances that they made the fateful decision to go into exile. It meant escaping from fascism and embracing the opportunity to make a new start of their lives. I know for a fact that Enver was torn by the decision. Exile turned out to be a deadly seductress. Initially all went well. Enver passed the Canadian law exam. Zulei went to work in a hospital.

Then ill-fortune struck. There was one disaster after another. Enver's pancreas had to be operated on. The operation was so delicate that he had to go to the US to have it done. Notwithstanding his tribulations, Enver had time and compassion to take care of Zulei and their son Shaheen. On 16 March 1992, before setting out to work, Enver made Zulei her morning coffee which, together with the morning newspaper, he left at her bedside. When he returned, Zulei was no more. She had died peacefully. Then in June 1995, Shaheen died. Enver was laid low by this latest blow. He lingered for a few months and then he too passed away on 28 November 1995. Those of us who were close to Zulei and Enver record our thanks and gratitude to these kind and generous persons.

Source: For the full version of this tribute, see APDUSA Views. Issue 97, December 2010. www.apdusaviews.co.za.

Kader Hassim

(1934 –2011)

One of the leading lights of the Unity Movement, Kader Hassim, was born in Dundee on 10 November 1934. He began schooling in Dundee but matriculated from Umzinto High in 1951. There were a handful of high schools in Natal and Indian families who wanted to educate their children had to send them to various parts of the province. Kader was politicised at an early age. ‘As a boy you face the oppressive system. You go to buy a [train] ticket, you meet a White man, he is rude to you. You are on the train, the train conductor is rude to you. So at an early age, you feel the whiplash of racial discrimination.’

Kader worked in the leather industry during 1953/54 and became active in the trade union when he found his fellow workers ‘extremely timid’. For Kader, young and without ‘family responsibilities’, and knowing that the leather industry was ‘not going to be our life-long work, we could afford to be militant and outspoken.’ He enrolled at the University of Natal (Non-European Section) in 1955. Kader described the university as follows:

‘The “university” was situated at the back of Sastri College. It consisted of a small office, a well-furnished common room for the lecturers; an ill-furnished, flea-infested common room for the black students. We had a library, which we used to call two-by-two ... a tiny library and there was a prefab building. University only became alive after four ‘o clock when the part-time students, mainly Indian teachers, came from school. We had to wait for the classrooms of Sastri to be evacuated before we could use them as our lecture rooms.... Whites had three universities and the main campus was Howard College. I spent about six years at Natal University. I only went twice to Howard College.’

Black students were not allowed in Howard College generally. Kader was involved in political activism as a member of the Durban Students Union, which organised an annual boycott of segregated graduation ceremonies.

In 1960 they boycotted the university's golden jubilee celebrations where the lavish festivities were restricted to whites. On 22 June 1964 Kader was placed under house arrest for five years. He subsequently served two more five-year terms of house arrest, in 1969 and 1980. Kader described these times as difficult. His home in Newholmes, Pietermaritzburg, he points out, 'was built deep in here and we've got walls there because they used to hurl petrol bombs, ... you were called a Communist, they called me "the short Communist bastard." Those were hard days and people were terrorised ... naked white terror ...' Despite the odd flicker of resistance, the Unity Movement 'was pretty dormant. People were cowed; intimidated....'

Kader was detained on 17 February 1970 under the Terrorism Act, together with Nina Hassim, Sunny Venkatratnam, Armstrong Madoda, Gaby Pillay, Morgam Moodliar, and others in connection with the return from exile of four Unity Movement members for 'organisational work'. By the time of their arrest, the members had already left the country. Kader was taken to Greytown. Being a well-known attorney did not spare him:

'The police go through the whole sick game, make no mistake about it. They make you stand until you are exhausted. They use a lot of psychological torture. Within days of my detention they also detained my wife. And so you now worry about your two children,... left with relatives but strangers in a sense.... I saw my children just after I was arrested. They saw me they couldn't stop crying. They saw me in prison clothes and that was a mistake. All I could show them for my dignity was a pair of very shiny shoes. You know, [in prison] you have got enough time to just keep on shining your shoes ... The police also use obscenities, they degrade you. There was a local chap called Sergeant Naidoo. He always called me 'Mr Essack'. In detention, I suddenly became Essack to him. They had been told: 'You don't call him mister.' So they tried to degrade you, humiliate you, strip you of your dignity. The arch torturer was a man called Swanepoel. He would come very close, sort of start tapping you on your head. You, of course, expect a hard hit from time to time.... you will find these guys coming, you will find about a dozen of them shouting at you, hurling questions... You come almost to the verge of suicide. There were times I reached that stage in detention.'

Kader was taken to Pietermaritzburg prison on 16 June 1971 and formally charged on four counts of terrorism: conspiracy to overthrow the state; recruiting for the armed struggle; falsifying reference books [pass books]; and warning members who had come from Zambia that the police were on their trail. He was sentenced to an effective eight years. He was first taken to Leeukop Prison where ‘twenty-one of us were kept in one cell. It was so tight that if you had to turn, everybody else had to turn as well. It was really a sardine-like thing. We were there for about three months.’ The journey to Robben Island was horrendous as they drove nonstop in the dead of winter through the Karoo. There were no toilet stops and they had to relieve themselves in their pants. In 1973, Kader challenged the authorities around their right to summarily stop a day’s meal for minor offences. Bypassing the normal expectation that prisoners had to ask permission to make complaints, he petitioned the head of Robben Island by writing his complaints on brown cement bags. As soon as he handed the petition over, Kader was placed in solitary confinement for six months in a tiny cell. He spent 23 hours in that tiny cell each day, ‘What do you do with yourself? You slowly start going mad... People who are there for long periods of time do suffer severe mental trauma.’ After another protest, Kader was again placed in solitary confinement. This time, he managed to get word to his lawyer and through an application made by his wife Nina, his case was heard and life on Robben Island changed dramatically after that.

Prisoners were no longer arbitrarily sentenced to solitary confinement. They had to be formally charged and presented with a charge sheet before action could be taken. The Red Cross also negotiated better conditions for prisoners. On the positive side, Kader ‘did things I would never have done outside. I learnt to play the classical guitar, read music, skip properly. You know, the “boxers skip” ... [Terror] Lekota taught me that.’ Robben Island also erased Kader’s fear of prison: ‘When you come out, you are never afraid of going to prison again.... The fear is gone. You come back a stronger man. You learn to take care of yourself..... We also engaged in physical activities. So you come back a stronger person in every sense.’ Kader was struck off the roll of attorneys when he was imprisoned. As a banned person he could not work as a lawyer and made representation to work in his office as a clerk. He did this until 1996 when

the Law Society urged him to apply for re-admission. Kader responded, 'You struck me off, you put me back.' The Law Society's response was that there was no precedent. Kader stuck to his guns and was eventually reinstated. He opposed amnesty for political crimes given through the TRC, which in his view, was 'a mechanism to prevent the architects and the practitioners of apartheid to receive punishment for one of the most heinous crime committed against a section of humanity.' He felt that those responsible for apartheid should have been charged and tried. The TRC Act effectively denied people the civil right to sue for damages. 'Apart from tombstones and maybe a pittance here and there, there is no compensation at all.... You can't eat a tombstone. So they cheated the population.'

Kader Hassim passed away in November 2011

Sources: Kader Hassim, Interviewed by Goolam Vahed, 13 May 2008 and 19 May 2008; Interview with Kader Hassim, 'Voices of Resistance,' UD-W Documentation Centre. Interviewed by D.



Kader and Nina Hassim are known for their simple living. This photo is not reflective of the way they live but they had little choice, given that it was the occasion of their marriage in 1961. Most of the guests in the photo were members of the Unity Movement. L to R: Ahmed Hassim, Karrim Essack, Elma Carolissuen, Minnie Gool, IB Tabata, Nina and Kader Hassim, Enver Hassim, Zulei Christopher, VS Rajah, Shirley Rajah, and Hoosen Hassim

Nina Hassim

(1936 –)

Nina Hassim was born on 27 September 1936 in Cape Town to Hans Friederich and Amina Gool, the sister of Goolam Gool, Jane Tabata, and Ghadija Christopher. Nina attended Trafalgar High, ‘the foremost political school,’ where her contemporaries included Neville Alexander and Dullah Omar. Her maternal family, the Gools, were inspiring role models. ‘We used to meet [during] holidays, we would fight, scrap over dinner tables because the political ideas were being thrown around.’

When Nina was eleven the political newspaper *Torch* faced a libel suit which would have put it out of circulation. She went on a door-to-door campaign to raise money to help keep the paper in business. Nina studied science at UCT, an institution that she described as ‘racist, there is no two ways about it.’ She joined SOYA and later Apdusa. It was through these meetings that she met Kader Hassim and they married in 1961. Nina found her job as a technician unfulfilling and enrolled for a degree in pharmacy at UD-W. Nina was detained in 1971 and held at Hilton police station for around fifty days. She described solitary confinement as ‘torture in itself’:

[‘There was] mental torture and standing for hours on end and lifting your arms and keeping your arms up and not drooping and all that.... Then there is always the fear of physical danger to you. You are a woman but you are all alone with three or four men and the way they do it, you know, the one used to play with pins ... and with their guns and things.’ Self preservation was uppermost in her mind: ‘One of the other most painful things was to blot my mind out to my husband, to my children, to everything. The main thing that I was going to do was preserve myself. It was self-preservation, that when you come out of here, you must be able to walk with your shoulders back, walk tall.’ After her release, Nina stayed with her maternal aunt, Ghadija, in Greenwood Park as Kader was on Robben Island and she was studying at UD-W. There was no time for self-pity as she had to take care of her studies, children, home, and Kader’s defence:

‘I was worried about what was going to happen, and in fact, I slipped out a letter to the exiles saying: ‘Don’t send sympathy, send money for defence.’ Because I was angry, because they had done things in our name that they had no business doing.... Then I started seeing what could be done. We started arranging for defence and that kind of thing.’ Once the trial started, family members visited the court daily for over two years. Nina’s family assisted her as well as the other trialists. For example, a trialist’s mother was bedridden and Nina’s mother took care of her. The wife of another trialist, Fuzani, also stayed with them. After Kader’s sentencing she recalled being pressured by the state through the university:

‘An interesting thing happened after the sentence. One morning when I got to university there was this crowd waiting for me [and] they said to me, all grim-faced: ‘The rector wants you....’ The rector was that Broederbond guy Olivier. The students were stunned. So I said to them: ‘Don’t worry, don’t worry.’ I shall never forget that day. He put me in a chair and he had curtains which he opened where the light struck my eyes. I was interrogated for a [second] time in my life. It was the most appalling thing. He had me almost like the Security Police had me. And he questioned me, but you see I had done so well at university, I could pretend to be an academic. I only bothered about getting through and earning my living. So in the end he had to let me go. He asked me about my politics and what I was going to do now. It was a fishing expedition. I squeezed my way out of that and the students were so relieved when I came out.’

After completing her degree, Nina worked as a pharmacist before opening a small business in 1974. She visited Kader on Robben Island annually, educated the children, paid Kader’s Unisa fees and provided pocket money for him. She is proud of her achievements: ‘I want to say ... that I never got any money. I supported myself throughout, and I am actually very proud that I didn’t get money from anybody ... that independence I am very proud of.’ She is also grateful to her family and community: ‘I was never short of moral and other support. And I am very grateful for that and the actions of the community in Pietermaritzburg, ordinary men and women. Their deep humanity, and their care for me and my family. The caring went beyond just ‘hello how are you?’ It was ‘hello, how are you?’

How is your husband, how's your child?'.... One night my front door broke. I was working and I said to my mother: 'We will lock these doors, we are safe, we will fix it tomorrow.' And two old men came and they had had a drink. The one went to fetch his friend they put up the door. The door was crooked and I was quite mad. And then as I looked at it I said: 'It is crooked and I will remember their kindness with that crookedness for the rest of my life.' There was so much of care. I knew that I was safe, that my children were not alienated, that we were not looked down upon.'



Kader and Nina Hassim with sons Lyova (L) and Enver

Hassan Howa

(1922 – 1992)

*D*espite official state harassment and persecution by the security police who kept a close watch on his movements and activities, Howa never relented on his fundamental purpose and mission. The boycott campaign eventually led to the virtual total isolation of apartheid sport as part of the international political campaign to isolate the apartheid regime. Fiercely independent and unbending in his fundamental belief in a non-racial society, Hassan Howa never gave up his dream that one day all children, whatever their class origin, colour, or creed, would have the same opportunities to play sport and to represent their country. He devoted his life to the attainment of the noble goal of non-racism in sport – Citation, Order of Ikhamanga in Silver (2004).

Hassan Howa was a towering figure in the struggle for non-racial sport in South Africa from the 1960s to the 1990s. His adherence to the principle that there could be no normal sport in an abnormal society resulted in him being victimised by the apartheid regime and despised by most white South Africans, but earned him the respect of the international sporting fraternity. Born in Cape Town in 1922, Howa attended Trafalgar High and thereafter worked in the family business. Howa was passionate about sport, which he saw as a means of asserting oneself in the face of racial discrimination.

He played cricket at an amateur level but his main contribution was as a cricket administrator. He was voted onto the Western Province Cricket executive in 1959 as treasurer; became vice-president in 1961; and president in 1963. He held an executive position until 1987. He was also president of the South African Cricket Board of Control between 1970 and 1974 and subsequently founded the South African Cricket Board, of which he was president from 1977 to 1984. The rise of the apartheid state marginalised black sportsmen and women. More than just an outspoken

critic, Howa was instrumental in uniting the opposition to call for a ban on South Africa's participation in international sport. The sports boycott and alienation of white sports men and women in the international arena, many contend, hastened the end of apartheid. In March 1973 nine non-racial sports organisations came together to establish Sacos. Norman Middleton was president and Howa vice-president. In December 1976, Sacos became a fully fledged member of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa. Howa became Sacos president in 1976 following the removal of Middleton because of his association with the Coloured Labour Party. Howa made it clear that Sacos would not accept anything less than the dismantling of apartheid itself. The struggle to achieve non-racial sport was linked with the struggle for social, political and economic equality, and liberation from apartheid racial oppression and class exploitation.

Sacos called for a moratorium on tours to and from South Africa and the boycott of all official apartheid institutions. Howa was subjected to state harassment and threats but remained undeterred. In 1979, Sacos members received warnings that there was no place for political activists in the sports dispensation from FW de Klerk, then Minister of Sport. Passports for overseas travel were withheld from Howa, MN Pather, Frank Van Der Horst, Errol Vawda, Morgan Naidoo, Krish Mackerdhuj, and other Sacos officials. Howa opposed the unity of South African cricket in August 1991 and the country's entry into the international arena even before the first non-racial election. He said that while he had fought for a single body all his life, the 'unity we are confronted with now is cosmetic. Surely our aim should be to get apartheid removed in all its forms, and to concentrate on development instead of international competition.'

Many feel that the ongoing racial rifts in South African sport show, in hindsight, that the position adopted by Howa was the correct one. Hassen Howa passed away on 10 February 1992. While many disagreed with him over the years, many more had great admiration for him. Ray Bharoochi, a cricket administrator alongside Howa, said:

'I think that it's a great pity that the community – both black and white – who now benefit from the freedom of being a united people, who now benefit

from the freedom of playing international sports, should have forgotten the man who made so many sacrifices and played his part to help bring down apartheid. I knew Hassan in many moods. He was humble in his greatness, joyful in achieving success, very hospitable when entertaining guests and, at times, could be aggressive when people failed to understand him.’

Sources: SAHO; Mogamed Allie, More than a Game. History of the Western Province Cricket Board, 1959-1991. Cape Town: Western Province Cricket Association, 2000.



Hassan Howa and Morgan Naidoo

Mohammed Abdulhai Ismail

(1955 –)

*M*ohammed Abdulhai Ismail, brother of Aboobaker Ismail, was born on 21 November 1955. He grew up in Vrededorp and became politically active during the 1970s when he distributed pamphlets and literature on behalf of the TIC. He and his close friend Mohamed Iqbal Sheik joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in Swaziland during 1982. Ismail received military training and became a member of what was known as the Dolphin Unit. He operated as a member of that unit until mid-1985. He subsequently became involved in ‘above-board politics’ in the TIC and UDF. As a member of the Dolphin Unit, Ismail was involved in fourteen operations, which were carried out jointly with Sheik, and involved explosive devices:

- Lawley substation during December 1982;
- Johannesburg Magistrates’ Court, 31 December 1982;
- Internal Affairs building, Roodepoort, 28 June 1983;
- Ciskeian Embassy, Pretoria, July 1983;
- Ciskeian Embassy, Pretoria, July 1983;
- Temple of Israel Synagogue, Hillbrow, 6 August 1983;
- Ciskeian Consulate offices, Johannesburg, 26 August 1983;
- Warmbaths fuel depot and municipal offices, 10 October 1983;
- Railway line at Lawley, 1984;
- Electricity pylon, Villiers, 1984;
- SADF building in Anderson Street, Johannesburg, 1984;
- National Party offices, Kroonstad, 4 March 1985;
- Water pipeline, Voortrekkerhoogte, 1985;
- Langlaagte Shunting Yard, 1985.

The only operation that resulted in an injury was at the Ciskeian Consulate offices in Johannesburg on 26 August 1983 where one person was injured. The Amnesty Commission of the TRC concluded: 'We have no doubt that the Applicant has given a full explanation of his activities as a member of the Dolphin Unit and that he has disclosed all the relevant facts pertaining hereto. It is also clear from the evidence before us that the applicant was politically motivated in joining MK and carrying out the operations as a member of the Dolphin Unit. We are accordingly satisfied that his application for amnesty satisfies the requirements of the Act.'

Source: <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21003.htm>.

Aboobaker Rashid Ismail

(1954 –)

*A*boobaker was born on 25 December 1954 in Newlands, Johannesburg, the fourth of six children. His grandfather was a tailor while his father and uncles operated a retail store in Vrededorp where the family lived in 12th Street. He described Vrededorp as ‘a mixed area from a race perspective, and it was an area that was well known for its political activism.’ Aboobaker’s father attended rallies addressed by the likes of Dadoo and Ahmed Kathrada at the Red Square in Fordsburg. Mosie Moolla, a treason trialist, lived one street away.

Aboobaker walked past the police station each day on his way to madrassah, and remembers the crowd gathering there the day that Babla Saloojee died in police detention. He credits his father with making him politically conscious: '1961 was the Declaration of the Republic. At school they had given all the children flags, a Republic medallion and also sweets as part of the celebrations. When we came back from school that evening we showed my father what we had been given and he called all the children around and he talked to us about apartheid and what it represented and then he took the medallions, the flags and the sweets and threw them into the fire. He said, "That is what is going to happen to apartheid in the future".'

Aboobaker attended primary school in Vrededorp and high school in Lenasia. By the time he reached high school, the Group Areas Act was taking effect and Indians were removed to Lenasia. He matriculated in 1971, the year in which Ahmed Timol was killed. Aboobaker recalls, ‘at the time when we were writing our matric exams, a call was made to go to the Vrededorp sports ground where there was a small memorial service, we attended Timol’s funeral.’ He enrolled for a BSc degree at UDW in 1972, majoring in Psychology and Microbiology. He met the likes of Yunus Mahomed and Pravin Gordhan on campus and was politically active. The 1974 Pro-Frelimo Rally at Curries Fountain, where protestors were severely beaten up by the police, was the highpoint of political protest during this period. After completing his degree, Aboobaker returned to Johannesburg.

He joined the Human Rights Committee whose members included Prema and Indres Naidoo, Peter Wellman, Sheila Weinberg, Rokaya Saloojee, widow of Babla Saloojee, and Mohammed Timol, brother of Ahmed Timol. 10 December 1974 was a turning point for Aboobaker. He was detained by security police for distributing leaflets, including the Freedom Charter, and beaten during his detention. He was taken to John Vorster Square:

‘They took me up to the 10th floor, beat me up, pushed me to the window and said, ‘Ja, jou coolies like to jump. Why don’t you jump like Timol?.’ He beat me up quite badly. I was bleeding from my ear. I think he cracked a few ribs. 10 December 1974, was the day which to me was a critical turning point in my life. My earlier years of political discussions with friends and activists, we often talked about and said we would go for the armed struggle. That day I wanted to be on my own, and thought this through – either I’m going to be cowed by what was happening or I was going to continue with the armed struggle. That day I made up my mind I would not be cowed. I would go forward.’

On 16 June 1976, when Soweto was burning, his brother called him at work and warned that the security police were looking for him. The family decided that he should go into exile. His family arranged his passport and he left on 12 July. Disaster struck when he got to Heathrow: 'Despite being politically involved I was also very young. When I got there I thought, oh well, free world, so the chap said to me, ‘What are you coming for?’ I said, ‘I’m coming to study.’ I had also applied to a medical school in Nigeria. So he said to me, ‘Have you got a visa for Nigeria?’ I said, ‘No, I’ll get in touch with them. I’m going to a meeting of the IRA.’ That was foolish. So I was refused entry into London.'

He was sent to Brussels. Shanti Naidoo put him in touch with the AAM in Belgium who arranged a refugee passport. He returned to London and Reg September of the ANC organised military training for him in the German Democratic Republic. After completing the training, Aboobaker was sent as a military instructor to an MK training camp at Funda, Angola, where he spent two years training cadres for underground missions. He was appointed senior instructor in February 1979. Towards the end of 1979,

Special Operations was established and he joined its command, which also included Joe Slovo. Reporting directly to ANC president Oliver Tambo, they planned operations and infiltrated equipment into South Africa. During 1983, an MK military headquarters was established in Lusaka with Joe Slovo as chief of staff and Aboobaker as the overall commander of Special Operations. Aboobaker was also the commander of the Dolphin Unit, a special operations unit which operated internally in South Africa. After the ANC suspended the armed struggle in August 1990, Aboobaker returned to South Africa. He remained chief of ordnance until 1994 when MK was integrated into the South African Defence Force. Aboobaker applied for amnesty before the TRC, whose commissioners were of the view that the operations were politically motivated as contemplated by the Act and were directed against legitimate targets to further the struggle against the apartheid system.

Sources: <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21003.htm>; Interview with Pdraig O'Malley, 21 February 2003. Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue. <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv00017/04lv00344/05lv01435/06lv01443.htm>



Zac Yacoob (21) at a UDF meeting. The UDF spearheaded internal opposition to the apartheid regime in the 1980s (Omar Badsha)

Johnny Issel

(1946 – 2011)

Johnny Issel passed away at the Groote Schuur Hospital on 22 January 2011. His *janazah* was performed at the Kensington Mosque and he was buried at the Johnston Road cemetery in Athlone. Hundreds of mourners lined the streets to pay their last respects to a man whom Minister in the presidency for planning, Trevor Manuel, one of Issel's closest comrades, described as 'one of this country's most inspirational freedom fighters. Despite being shot at, detained and tortured, Johnny stood strong and never gave up. He sacrificed so much. We salute a brave man today.' Among the mourners was Deputy international relations minister Marius Fransman; UDF activist and journalist Ryland Fisher; High Court Judge Siraj Desai; and Stellenbosch University Chancellor Professor Russel Botman. ANC Women's League members, wearing green and black, sang struggle songs as his body was carried out of the mosque.

Johnny Issel was born on 17 August 1946 in Worcester to a family of farm labourers. A bright student and dynamic speaker, he attended university and was the first Western Cape chairperson of the BC student movement, SASO. He was later the founding member of the UDF, organiser for the Food and Canning Workers' Union, and helped to establish *Grassroots*, a community newspaper based in Athlone. He spent 12 years in prison for his role in the fight against apartheid. Issel was the first ANC Western Cape Organiser in 1990, after the unbanning of the movement, and served as Member of the Provincial Legislature in the Western Cape from 1994 to 1999. This champion of non-racialism, who was a central figure in so many civic, youth, union, women, religious and student organisations, became disillusioned with what he described as 'graft' among some in government and was very critical of those politicians and public servants who were enriching themselves. In a 2003 interview he blamed this on the market which, he said, 'influences the way we play sports, the way we speak, the way we dress. Our public appearances are carefully choreographed. These are the requirements of the market. Very different from the tenets held and forged during the camaraderie of the eighties. Very different from the values

that inspired the likes of Vuyisile Mini, or Mntuli ka Sezi, or Neil Aggett, or Anton Frans. The new values emerging within our nascent democracy are at the opposite pole of those prevalent during the times of the UDF. We can hardly expect the values, which came with the nineties, to give rise to those selfless deeds seen during the time of the UDF.’

Issel was awarded the ‘Order of Luthuli’ by then president Thabo Mbeki in 2007. He was married to and divorced from both Shahieda Issel and Zubeida Jaffer.

Source: Interview with Zackie [Achmat?], 2003. <http://writingrights.org/2011/01/23/johnny-issel-17-august-1946-23-january-2011-we-will-miss-you>.



Johnny Issel and Zubeida Jaffer (INN)

Shahieda Issel

(1956 –)

Shahieda was born in District Six, Cape Town in February 1956 to Mymoena and Igsack. Among the recollections of her childhood were the warmth of the neighbourhood in which she grew up, eating *koeksisters* on Sunday mornings, her grandfather taking her to *madrasah* every afternoon, and attending the Palm Tree mosque on Thursday evenings. As a teenager the family was forcibly removed from District Six because of the Group Areas Act. This was one factor that led to her political conscientisation. Another was the exploitation of farm workers that she witnessed firsthand. Her father Igsack was from Worcester and when they visited her grandparents she saw the brutal way in which farmworkers were treated. For example, farmers would give alcohol to workers instead of the wages due to them (tot system).

Early in life she also realised that women were additionally oppressed because of their gender and she participated in the United Women's Congress, a Cape-based women's organisation, and the Black Women's Federation, which was founded in 1975 by the likes of Winnie Mandela and Fatima Meer. Involvement in these organisations gave her the confidence to speak up on women's issues. From a young age, Shahieda did intense physical training, including weightlifting and self-defence, which came in handy during her periods of detention. Shahieda did a one year course in community work at UCT and studied accounting through the Technikon in Cape Town in the 1970s.

She joined the UDF in 1983 and was secretary of the Mitchells Plain branch. During the 1985 state of emergency she was arrested twice – for one month and later for three months and was accused of being a commander of a cell in Mitchell's Plain that attacked the homes of Labour Party ministers who participated in the Tricameral dispensation. She also participated in an advice office that counselled people whose rents were in arrears. During one of the marches to the city council's offices in Cape Town, she was

physically assaulted by police and thrown down the stairs which resulted in her breaking a leg. While Shahieda was in prison, the police harassed her children and spread rumours that she was ‘jolling’, wrote letters to her neighbours that she was ‘disturbed’, and made threatening calls to her home. In prison she was humiliated as she was ‘questioned by ten male policemen and subjected to very personal questions, such as the colour of her underwear, and threatened with rape.’

The police, who were often drinking while interrogating her, even threatened to take her to the township to be necklaced. On one occasion they brought a recording of her 13 year old daughter Leila screaming as she was apparently being raped. All of this created a mental strain and Shahieda found it difficult to think clearly. Having children however made her ‘more determined to fight for liberation’ as she did not want them to experience the kind of oppression that she experienced. The story of Shahieda shows how women had to manage their roles as mothers, wives, activists, and sometimes as sole breadwinners.

Compromises had to be made and sometimes children took a back seat with the women later expressing feelings of guilt. Police harassment and house raids in the middle of the night meant that the children were traumatised and unable to live normal lives. Shahieda was married to activist Johnny Issel and they had three children: Leila, Yasser, and Fidel. When that marriage ended, she married Mohamed Faik and had three more children: Raesah, Muammar, and Mayisha. Through all these trials and tribulations, Shahieda said that she found peace within the Quràn.

Sources: Diane EH Russell. Lives of Courage. Women for a New South Africa. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1989; S. Gunn and S. Krwala. Eds. Knocking On. mothers and daughters in struggle in South Africa. Cape Town, 2008.



Shahieda Issel with her children Leila, Yasser and Fidel, Eid 1985



Adli Jacobs, fifth from the left, leads a Call of Islam march, mid-1980s

Adli Jacobs

(1965 –)

*A*dli Jacobs was born to Rugaya (Noordien) and Ebrahim Jacobs in 1965 on the shortest day of the southern hemisphere, 21 June, in District Six, Cape Town. Rugaya, a seamstress, later became a *tukka mani* (washer & preparer of Muslim deceased) and Ebrahim was a bricklayer and one time chair of the District Six social welfare organisation called Al-Jihad. When Adli was five years old, the apartheid government relocated his family to the Cape Flats to an area called Primrose Park, which borders Manenberg. The youngest of seven children (Fuad, Zain, Gadija, Faried, Fatima, and Yasmin being the others), Adli was the only one in his family to complete his matric (Livingstone High School) and enroll for a BA degree in Psychology and English at UCT which he did not complete.

He did later return to his studies by enrolling in the Journalism and Media School at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, where he completed an MA in Media Studies. Adli's political consciousness was sparked during the 1980 national school boycott when he attended Livingstone, a politically minded school with many New Unity Movement members on its teaching staff, including its president, RO Dudley. Ebrahim Rasool, a neighbourhood friend, also attended the school. While at school Adli joined the Muslim Students Association (then an affiliate of the MYM). He decided to further his Islamic knowledge by studying at the As Salaam Institute in Natal. His teachers included the then principal of the institute Farid Esack, as well as Adnan Ebrahim.

When he returned to the Cape in 1984, Farid Esack, Ebrahim Rasool, Shamil Manie and Adil, who were all members of the MYM, formed a halqa group which met at the homes of different members. They decided to embark upon political work to complete their reflection on the Qur'an and Sira. During the UDF's Million Signature Campaign of 1984, when activists tried to get people to sign a petition against apartheid, Adli and his group canvassed from door-to-door in the working class area of Manenberg. It was during this process that they felt that the MYM was too conservative

politically and in 1984, with the help of new-found activist friends within the UDF, they organised the biggest rally against the Tricameral Parliament at the Primrose Park Mosque. On the platform were Imam Gasant Solomons, Sh Gamiel Gabier (senior MJC leader), and others. In the run-up to the rally they produced a pamphlet called the Call of Islam and asked Muslim activists within the UDF to distribute it at various mosques. The positive response to the rally led to supporters prompting the four organisers to form an organisation as a home for Muslims who wanted to play a more active role in the struggle against apartheid.

Thus was born the Call of Islam. As the distribution of pamphlets gathered momentum and more public rallies were held, TIC members such as Yusuf Saloojee invited the Call of Islam to form a branch in the Transvaal. The back quarters of Adli's parents' home in Primrose Park became the headquarters of the Call. Adli produced many of the pamphlets and was involved in education and training. During this period, he was detained twice, once during a march in Manenberg in 1987 and again in 1988 for spraying 'Happy Birthday ANC' on walls in a white suburb.

From 1989 to 1992, Adli was production manager for New Era magazine; during 1993 and 1994 he was project evaluator for the Voter Education & Electoral Training Unit; from 1992 to 2000, he was managing director of Typeface Media which designed the New Constitution booklet for launch in 1997 for the Constitutional Assembly; during 2001 and 2002, he was Deputy Director, Department of Water Affairs & Forestry; in 2003 and 2004 he was communications manager for the Construction Industry Development Board. Adli is currently Head of Department: Print Media Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ). From 2003 to 2005, he was station manager for The Voice 94.7FM, Johannesburg.

Yusuf ‘Joe’ Jacobs

(1940-)

Yusuf Jacobs was born in Cape Town in 1940 to Ismail and Zubeira Jacobs. The family moved to Durban while he was still a child and he grew up in a working class family in the Wills Rd / Beatrice Street area where his father earned a living as a tailor. Yusuf was determined to get an education and attended Bechet College. He was taken up by the politics of, and joined, the Durban Students Union (DSU) which was affiliated to the Unity Movement. He was influenced by the likes of Kader Hassim, Sonny Venkathathnam, and Jeevan Desai to join the Society for Young Africa (SOYA), a leftist oriented political think tank of the Unity Movement and came under the influence of its key leadership in Natal, Enver Hassim, Zuleikha Christopher, and Karriem Essack. He was heavily involved in organising at factories and in working class areas such as the shacklands of Avoca, Merebank, and Bayhead. All through this Yusuf completed his Teacher’s Diploma from Bechet College of Education and initially taught at primary and high school level.

In the early 1960’s, the Apartheid regime resorted to blatant intimidation and violence to suppress resistance. Yusuf, together with Mac Reddy and Clive Vawda, worked almost exclusively with Karriem Essack, organising in rural parts of the Transkei and southern Natal. They made frequent trips into the countryside where meetings were held in the huts of peasants. They were involved in the Pondoland revolt, worked closely with migrant workers from Transkei, and investigated secret routes into Swaziland for those going into exile. According to Yusuf, ‘pressure from the “special branch” intensified, and life became hell, for individuals, and their families.’ The government resorted to bannings and arrests of activists. Yusuf was banned for three years in 1965. He was restricted to the Durban area, could not attend meetings of any sort, and not allowed to enter the premises of any educational institution. This meant, in effect, that he was without a job! Although some political work continued, the disintegration of the leadership diminished it to the barest minimum.

Yusuf married Marlene in 1968, and scraped a living as a clerk in a warehouse. He also completed a BA degree in Economics and Political Science through UNISA. When his banning order expired in 1971, he secured a teaching post, and then a lecturer's post, at Bechet College of Education. He became principal of Bechet High in 1979. He also completed a B Proc degree, even though he had little intention of entering the legal profession. Yusuf became Rector of Bechet College of Education. He was also a founding member and Vice Chairman of the Council of Rectors and Deans of Teacher Education of KwaZulu Natal (CORDTEK), the first non-racial body of its kind. He took early retirement in 1993 but has remained active. He was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Pro Sano Medical Scheme in 1996; is chairman of the KwaZulu Natal Effective Schooling Project (KESP), an NGO aimed at improving management at Black schools; and is Advisor on a charitable project in the Black township of Edendale, which is aimed at building and running crèches for disadvantaged children. Although from a well known cricketing family (his father Ismail and brother Noor were provincial cricketers), Yusuf played little cricket himself. He continues to read widely on economic and social issues, and counts astronomy as one of his interests.



Yusuf Jacobs

Zubeida Jaffer

(1958 –)

Zubeida Jaffer, journalist and independent writer, holds an MSc in journalism from Columbia University in New York and bachelors degrees from UCT and Rhodes (1979). Born on 26 January 1958, she studied journalism at Rhodes in the 1970s and described Grahamstown as ‘a very different place. The only cinema barred all Coloured and African students from its premises. The eating places barred all students of colour. The first day when I visited the town with my parents, my mom and I were unceremoniously asked to leave the Wimpy Bar when we wanted to buy a sandwich. The events of 1978 forced many issues into the public domain.... The government announced that black students could no longer live in residence with their white counterparts. With the final exam looming, we were suddenly embroiled in a political crisis and looked to the Vice-Chancellor and the university administration to defend us.... [Instead] black students ... were forced against our will to go into separate residences. And the Vice-Chancellor knew that we were opposed to the university’s position. When we first heard that we would be without accommodation, we held a series of meetings to discuss what we could do. The number of students affected was about 50. When we marched on the administration and held a meeting with the V-C, there was no acknowledgement of our feelings.’

‘There was no statement of outrage. There was no protest from the highest echelons of the university.... The first I was to hear of the university’s official response to the state’s attack on us was when I received a call from the V-C’s office. I was informed that the university had decided to set up two residences – one for men and one for women – exclusively for students of colour. The request that the V-C was making to me was whether I would take up the offer of being warden of the women’s residence. I knew immediately that this would not be an option. I just could not see myself accepting apartheid accommodation. When we returned to campus the following year, we had our first informal discussion and decided that we did not have an option [as] we had nowhere else to go. We did not ask for it. It was forced upon us.... The university chose to go along with the state, not

with its students. What I cannot understand is why there is this continued pretence that Rhodes University stood up for freedom of association and freedom of speech. Rhodes University did not even defend its own students who were there purely on merit.’

Jaffer started her career at the *Cape Times* in 1980. She fearlessly exposed the atrocities of the apartheid state, including police killings, which led to her own detention for two months in 1980. She experienced first-hand the abuse of human rights routinely meted out to political prisoners – solitary confinement, torture and beatings – and gave a harrowing account of her experiences to the TRC hearings in August 1996: ‘I was detained by Spyker van Wyk.... They started interrogating me virtually immediately and wanted to know anybody that I knew that was vaguely political. Eventually I got to understand that they wanted to get me to the point where I could admit that I was a member of the ANC and also that I could implicate other people. They surround[ed] me with all these men and constantly interrogated me for hours on end and at night when I thought I would be allowed to sleep they would keep me awake. And this went on for two days and then they drove me up to Port Elizabeth, the Sanlam Centre, and when we got there, I thought now they were going to let me sleep, but that didn’t happen. Another team of people came in and they started interrogating me again and by this stage I was getting completely affected. I couldn’t think any more and they didn’t really give me food, they gave me coffee and dry bread.’

‘The whole thing was that I must not be allowed to sleep so that I could lose complete sense of what was going on around me. I was beginning to feel very strange in my head. By the Friday afternoon they suddenly stopped their interrogation and asked me if I wanted some food and I was very relieved and they brought me some curry and rice. I ate that and then this Captain Du Plessis was in charge of the interrogation, he kept on saying to me ‘your heart is going to give in.’ And at a certain point I started thinking, do I know one person that I can tell them because I was really getting beyond myself? I was really so frantic, and then at a certain point he took me to the 6th floor window and he said that he would throw me down there, because that’s where they kill people.’

Jaffer wrote in her autobiography *Our Generation* (2003) that the Qur'an was extremely important to her during her time in detention. An Arabic-English translation 'was my only reading material and my only companion through many lonely hours. The only way I could think of to survive was to tell myself that I had the task of reading the Qur'an from cover to cover, in Arabic and English.' Jaffer's activism earned her a second spell in apartheid's notorious prisons when she was detained, whilst pregnant, in 1986 because of her trade union activities.

She was released just before the birth of the baby, but imprisoned again with her nine week old daughter Rushka. Jaffer's testimony reflects the gendered aspect of interrogation: 'He [Captain Frans Mostert] said that he was going to put so much pressure on me that I would miscarry, that he was going to choke whatever information he wanted out of me and that he'd already assaulted two women at that time which I knew about. He had assaulted June Essau pretty badly and he said he was going to do this to me. And that I was going to lose the baby and that I would never see my husband alive again.'

Jaffer suffered the ill-effects of the interrogations and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome. Zubeida Jaffer has had a distinguished career in print and news media circles. During South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 she served as a member of the Independent Media Commission. After completing her Masters at Columbia she joined *The Daily News* as its political editor. This was followed by a spell as parliamentary editor for *Independent Newspapers* from 1997. Her memoir, *Our Generation* (2003), eloquently tells the story of her journey through the years of South Africa's apartheid turbulence into a new democracy. Jaffer's more recent book, *Love in the Time of Treason* (2009) tells the haunting story of treason trialist Ayesha Dawood and captures the brutal ways in which the apartheid state destroyed the lives of ordinary people.

Sources: 'Zubeida Jaffer,' <http://www.zubeidajaffer.co.za>; Z. Jaffer, 'Rhodes University: A Different Place,' *African Sociological Review*, 9 (1) 2005: 179-183; Zubeida Jaffer, *Testimony to the TRC, August 1996*. <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/helder/ct00776.htm>; Sumaya Mall, *Muslim women before the TRC: A Narrative Analysis*, 'Accessed at http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/religion/documents/ARISA/2004_WR3.pdf.

Mohamed Jajbhay

(1958 – 2010)

Lenasia born Mohamed Jajbhay mobilised the community around social issues, such as housing, poverty, and sport, during the apartheid era, and in the period between 1992 and 1994. He was also a keen cricket player and administrator and served as chairman of the Gauteng Cricket Board and on the general council of the United Cricket Board of SA. In the period after 1994 he was involved in community affairs until his appointment as a judge. His judgments reflected his approach to community politics as he displayed a sensitivity to the less privileged members of the community. He was a constitutional law expert. One of his well known cases was about media freedom in the matter involving the *Sunday Times*, ruling that the newspaper was justified in writing a story about the late health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang's 2005 stay in hospital though he ordered the records to be returned. He said that the 'the publication of the unlawfully obtained controversial information was capable of contributing to a debate in our democratic society relating to a politician in the exercise of her functions.' He added that the need for truth was 'overwhelming' given the minister's 'high position in the eyes of the public.' In 2007, Judge Jajbhay ruled against the City of Johannesburg from evicting tenants from buildings in the inner city until it made alternative accommodation available. He also prohibited publication of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in South Africa on 3 February 2006, deeming it to constitute hate speech.

In his judgments, Judge Jajbhay always upheld the constitutional right of citizens to housing, protection against arbitrary eviction, and right to dignity. Judge Mohamed Jajbhay passed away on 5 May 2010 at the age of 52. Former minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad said that Jajbhay was 'very active in trying to develop [cricket] into a non-racial sport. He was also active in a number of community organisations and his involvement in politics was mobilising the community rather than being part of a political party.' In a message to the family of Judge Jajbhay, Moulana Abdul Khaliq Allie, MJC Secretary General, said that 'throughout his life, your beloved husband and father championed the plight of those who were striving for

justice, peace and personal dignity. He weaved the elements of equality, humanity and compassion within the formal structures of the law to the best of his ability. And his legacy will undoubtedly carry on through his vast accomplishments.’

Source: http://www.mjc.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=198:mjc-offers-its-condolences-to-the-family-of-the-late-judge-mohamed-jajbhay&catid=49:mjc-statements&Itemid=77



Mohamed Jajbhay

Abdulhay Jassat

(1934 -)

*A*bdulhay “Charlie” Jassat was born on 12 June 1934 in Johannesburg where his father made a modest living as a hawker. Abdulhay completed his secondary education in 1952 at the Johannesburg Indian High School. Peppy Rawat, Jassat’s cousin, encouraged him to join the TIYC and his first protest activities came in the form of writing slogans in Newclare and Sophiatown in the early 1950s which brought him into contact with prominent African activists. He helped drum up support for the Congress of the People (1955) by collecting the grievances of ordinary people. He was charged in 1958 for incitement during the treason trial but he and 28 others similarly charged, represented by Harold Wolpe and Ismail Mahomed, were exonerated.

During 1960 Jassat spent five months in solitary confinement at the Fort Prison and joined the ANC’s military wing Umkhonto We Sizwe shortly after his release. One of his first assignments was blowing up a house allocated to TIC leader Nana Sita in Laudium under the Group Areas Act. Jassat recalled his MK activities before the TRC in May 1996: ‘One of the important things was blowing up Nana Sita’s house. He was a Gandhian and a pacifist, he was an elderly man, he played an active role throughout his life. At that stage he must have been about 70 years old. He lived in a place called Hercules in Pretoria and they wanted him to move forcibly to Laudium, and every time he refused he was taken to court, charged and jailed. And a few colleagues and myself felt that it was our duty to do away with the house.’

Jassat was arrested for a second time in 1963. He was subjected to electric shock and psychological torture: ‘They took me into an office on the third floor of a building at Park Station. There were four bulky policemen in uniforms and they asked me to sit down in the chair. They started asking me about Umkhonto, where I got my instructions from, what I had been involved in and various things of that nature. I denied all knowledge of Umkhonto. After about ten minutes of questioning they asked me to stand

up. They moved the chair away from behind me and a hessian bag was put over my head and tied at my knees. I didn't realise what was happening because at that stage one had not heard of torture. They lay me on the floor. They took off my shoes and socks and I could feel them fiddling around with my big toes. I was told I had better start talking otherwise they were going to give me electric shock treatment. They started with 20 volts. They would stop, ask you a question, when you refused to answer they would say we are increasing it from 20 to 50 volts. That went on until eventually they went up to 220 volts. Then they untied the electrodes from my toes and lifted me up, removed the hessian bag and told me to stand on the floor without touching anything. I wasn't able to stand. My body was completely stiff so I tried to lean against the table, and when I did that they came with a ruler and rapped me on my knuckles.'

'I forced myself to stand without any aid. They then took some pencils from the desk and put it between my fingers and pressed my fingers till there was blood oozing from between my fingers. Whilst continuing to question me they asked me if I wanted to escape and I wasn't able to speak. One of the policemen said that he'd give me half a crown if I escaped. I shook my head and he threw the half a crown on the floor and he said you put your thumb onto the half a crown and move around in a circle. Eventually I was crawling on the floor because I couldn't move any further. They then took me to the window, they said, 'jump.' They had fairly large windows, about one metre by one metre wide.'

'Two policemen dragged me to the window. They lifted me physically up and pushed my head out of the window. They were holding me by my ankles. All I could see was a concrete floor at the bottom. We were three floors up and all of a sudden one of them would let go of one foot. And as he's about to catch my foot, the other chap let go, and you thought, 'God, this is the end.' If one of them had missed I would have been dead. They pulled me back into the room and made me do various exercises. They made me run on the spot while a policeman was standing in front of me with his arms outstretched and I had to touch his arms, and every time I missed the palm of his hands he would give me a shot. After approximately an hour, they carried me physically out of the room. At about two in the morning,



The escape of Mosie Moolla (standing) & Abdulhay Jassat is part of resistance history folklore

they carried us down the stairs and they dumped us into the back seat, all five of us, the three injured plus Isoo and myself onto the seat of a Rambler and drove us back to Marshall Square. We were charged for sabotage. Vandeyar, Naidoo and Nanabhai were tried separately and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Isoo and I were moved over to the Fort, which is Johannesburg Central Prison. We stayed there for almost a month awaiting trial. And then the prosecutor said that they were withdrawing the charges and we were free to go. Immediately one of the special branch chaps by the name of Dirker said we are being arrested under the 90 day detention law. It appears that they had been waiting for the 90 detention law to be passed.'

'We had no recourse then. We couldn't speak to our lawyer, we couldn't do anything. They took us back to Marshall Square and put us into two separate cells. That night we heard someone singing and I even became a bit vulgar and said, 'Pastor, is that you Mosie,' and it was Mosie Moolla. He was in between myself and Chiba. We subsequently learnt that there were two comrades, Leon Levy and Wolfie Kodesh in the white section. Mosi, myself and Chiba we had no toilets in our cells or no ablution facilities. So they would come in the morning and take us out to have a wash. Once a week the magistrate came. The magistrate would ask, 'have you got any complaints,' and he would go away, come back the following week and ask you again.'

'We raised our complaints about the fact that we were sleeping on the floor. We had no water in the cells. Eventually we got fed up with the magistrate and told him, 'what's the point in us giving you our complaints because nothing happens.' And he said 'look, the honest truth is that I take your complaints, I take it back to the Special Branch and they are the final arbiters as to what can be done''. Just being in solitary confinement is torture. A lot of people have had relapses. One evening there was an African policeman who was a member of the ANC. He told us that there were two people who had been brought into prison. This was the night of the Rivonia arrests. They had brought Harold Wolpe and Arthur Goldreich to the cells, and the policeman was kind enough to allow us to see them although it was in the white section. During this period there was a young Afrikaner policeman who came to relieve one of the others. One Sunday this policeman came

told me that I should go out for exercise. I walked ahead of him and as we got to the gate – before we got to the metal door he lit a cigarette and asked me ‘Rook jy,’ ‘Do you smoke,’ and I said ‘yes.’ So he said, ‘here, smoke this,’ and he told me, ‘make sure you don’t leave the stompie or the butt anywhere. Throw it into the sink,’ which I did. We became fairly good friends with this policeman. And because he was helpful to us, if we wanted cigarettes he would bring us cigarettes, he would go home and bring food for us. So I thought we needed to reward him and sent him to a friend in Market Street with a note saying, ‘Please give Mr Greeff a pair of Dr Watson shoes.’ Then one day Greeff said that he had to appear in court because apparently there was a drunken man who had been arrested and came into the police station and aggravated him to such an extent that he had given him a smack.’

‘They had charged him for beating up a prisoner and he had to appear in court and didn’t have ‘nuwe pak kleure’ ... he didn’t have a new suit. So we sent him to another firm. This time Mosie wrote a letter and said, ‘please open an account and give Mr Greeff a suit,’ which he got. Incidentally Greeff got off that charge and I don’t think anyone has paid for either of the two, the shoes or the suit. We managed to escape after bribing Greeff. He opened the gates and we got out. Wolpe and Goldreich went to Hillbrow, Mosie and I went to Fordsburg and were in hiding for approximately five weeks. Eventually I got out of the country through Botswana. I went to Tanzania. When I got to Dar-es-Salaam I found that I was suffering from epilepsy. The movement sent me to numerous places for treatment, including Moscow, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Cairo. The report which I got from Moscow was of the opinion that when they used the shock treatment on me a certain portion of my central nervous system had been damaged and that was causing the epilepsy. Its 33 years now and I am still on medication.’

In 1965 Jassat married Harleen. They lived in Dar-es-Salaam, moved to Moscow in 1972, and to London where Jassat worked in the ANC offices. He returned to South Africa in 1993.

Source: Abdulhay Jassat, Testimony to the TRC, 2 May 1996.; <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/methodis/jassat.htm>.

Essop Jassat

(1932 –)

Essop Jassat, brother of Abdulhay, was born on 5 October 1932 to Esak Moosa and Khatija Jassat. Essop was one of three brothers: elder brother Mohammed, who was imprisoned during the 1946-48 passive resistance campaign, joined the retail trade while Abdulhay was the youngest. Jassat attended Johannesburg Indian High School where his classmate was Faried Adams, Treason Trialist No. 1, while RAM Saloojee, was a few years ahead of him. The likes of Adams and Jassat became involved in political activity from a young age. Jassat joined the TIYC in 1947 and after the 1949 race riots in Durban, he and Adams sent out appeals for donations on behalf of the TIC.

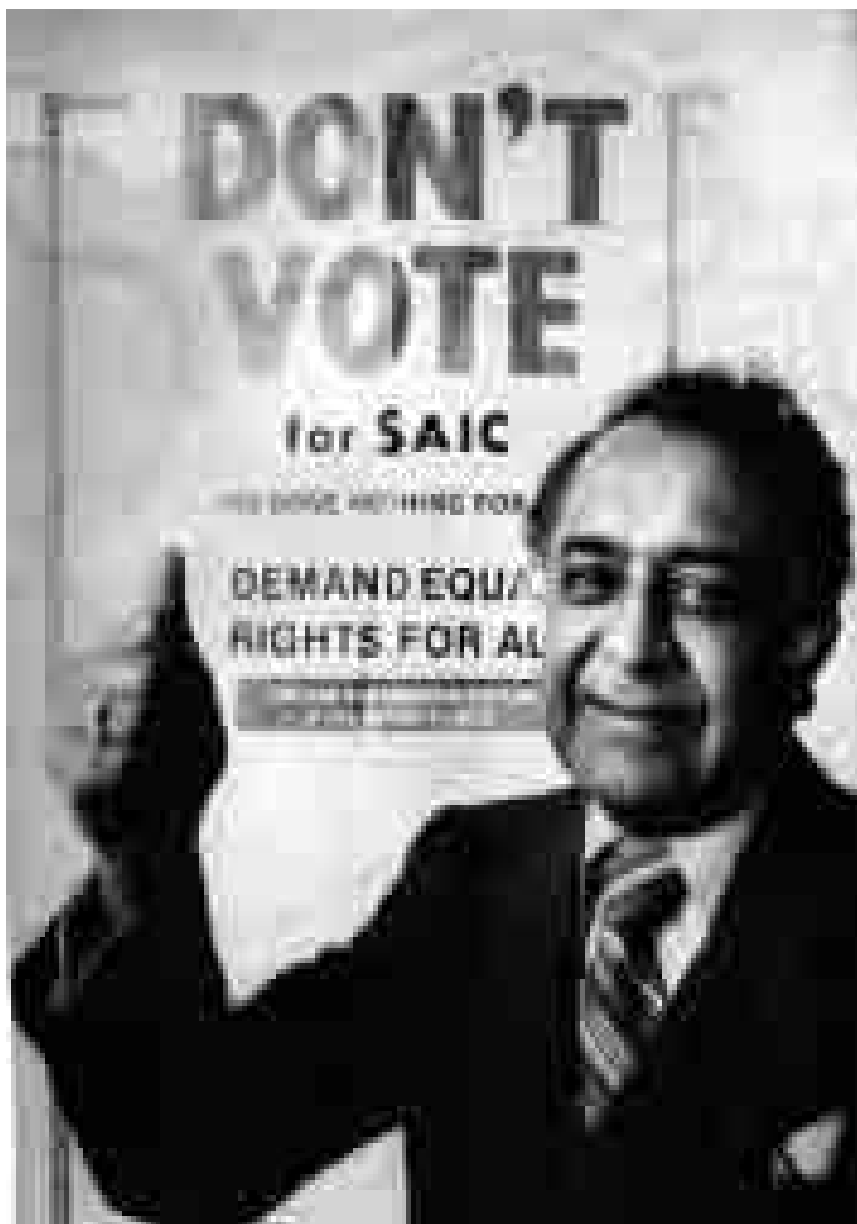
For Jassat, being taunted by white children on his way to school made him realise that there was something intrinsically wrong with the system and it did not require the politicians of the day, inspiring as they were, to politicise him. Jassat learnt the art of silkscreen printing and cutting stencils. He also learnt lettering from Peppy Rawat of Durban and produced many of the TIC's leaflets during the 1940s and 1950s. Jassat was chair of the TIYC from 1951 to 1956; president of the South African Indian Youth Congress from 1951 to 1956; and executive member of the TIC from 1951 to 1956.

He was also secretary of the Youth Action Committee, which was the coordinating body of the youth wings of the ANC, COD, CPC, and SAIC. In his *Memoirs*, Ahmed Kathrada writes of an incident in 1953 when he and Jassat were in Uitenhage to attend a meeting of the executives of the various youth leagues. They were questioned by a Sergeant Minnie as to whether they possessed a permit to be in the Cape (Indians required permits for inter-provincial migration). Kathrada whispered to Jassat to say that he was Malay, which Minnie accepted. He allowed Kathrada to continue with the meeting but he was later charged with being in the Cape illegally and given a three month suspended sentence. Jassat qualified as a medical doctor at Wits where he was a member of the Students' Medical Council in 1959 and chair of the Students Liberal Association during 1959 and 1960.

Jassat did his internship at Baragwananth Hospital in 1961 and opened a surgery in Bree Street, Fordsburg, where he continues to practice half a century later. He was recruited into MK in 1962 to carry out surveillance of potential sabotage targets. His cell members were Naduchewitz, Sydney Shall, and the son of a labour MP whose name he could not recall. Jassat was detained for 90 days in 1964 and immediately upon his release served with a banning order of five years, which was extended by a further five years in 1969.

Jassat married Shireen Patel in 1966. His banning orders made it illegal for him to be with more than two persons and he needed state permission to attend his wedding. They have three children: Adil, Yumna, and Zahira. On one occasion in 1965 Jassat reported late to the police station and was jailed for ten days with hard labour for breaking the terms of his banning orders. Jassat joined social organisations to camouflage his political activities. He became a member of the Johannesburg Indian Social Welfare Association (JISWA) in 1974 and remained a member/chair until 1993. This was an important avenue for anti-SAIC and UDF mobilisation. In 1979 he became chairman of the Southern Transvaal Region of the College of Medicine. During the late 1970s and early 1980s Jassat was active in the campaign to boycott the SAIC and Tricameral elections. He was chair of the Transvaal Anti SAIC Committee which was formed in 1981 and whose vigorous campaign ensured a low poll in the November elections. The TIC was revived on 1 May 1983 with Jassat as president. When the UDF was formed in August 1983, Jassat was elected a patron of the organisation. He was also a founder member of the National Medical & Dental Association in 1983, together with the likes of Jerry Coovadia and Farouk Meer. Following the murder of Steve Biko in 1977 and ill-treatment of political prisoners, black doctors felt that the South African Medical and Dental Association was compromising its ethics and that a counter organisation was required. Jassat gave the keynote address at the inaugural meeting in Durban.

In September 1983, Zac Yacoob and Jassat represented the NIC and TIC respectively at the memorial service for Yusuf Dadoo in London. Jassat was detained with other Leaders in August 1984. This included UDF national president Archie Gumede; UDF national treasurer Mewa Ramgobin; NIC



Essop Jassat was in the forefront of the anti-SAIC campaign

president George Sewpersad; NIC vice-president MJ Naidoo; and NIC member Billy Nair; and national chairman of Apdusa, Kadir Hassim. The detainees challenged their arrests and in early September a judge ruled that the detentions were invalid. Minister of Law and Order Louis Le Grange, issued new detention orders, but on 13 September 1984, six of the detainees – Archie Gumede, Mewa Ramgobin, MJ Naidoo, Billy Nair, George Sewpersad and Paul David – took refuge in the British consulate in Durban. On 10 December, the South African government, in the face of international pressure, withdrew the detention notices and they left the consulate. But a few days later they were charged with treason together with other leaders of the Transvaal UDF and the Release Mandela Committee (RMC). Sixteen people were eventually charged with treason in what became known as the Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial – the first political trial targeting the UDF. Jassat was tried along with Mewa Ramgobin, George Sewpersadh, M.J. Naidoo, Aubrey Mokoena, Curtis Nkondo, Archie Gumede, Paul David, Albertina Sisulu, Frank Chikane, Cas Saloojee, (Prof) Ismail Mohammed, Richard Thozamile Gqweta, Sisa Njikelana, Samuel Kikine and Isaac Ngcobo. The state dropped charges against 12 of the accused, including Jassat, in December 1985. The remaining accused were released in June 1986.

During the transition to a non-racial South Africa, Jassat was the TIC delegate to CODESA (1991–1993). In the post-apartheid period he was an ANC MP from 1994 to 2004. He served on the portfolio committee of health and welfare, and was nominated by President Nelson Mandela to be on the Parliamentary Ethics Committee. He was also the Parliamentary Aids representative to the National Aids Committee. From 1990 to around 2005, Jassat was chair of the Wits Education Committee, which had been formed to raise funds for needy students. He has also served such organisations as Talimul Islam, Central Islamic Trust; Suleiman Nana Memorial Trust; and the Mosques & Madressa Trust. Those who know Essop Jassat will vouch for his sense of justice and fairness, impeccable ethical standards, honesty, and willingness to extend a helping hand to people from all walks of life.

Sources: Telephonic interviews with Dr. Essop Jassat, 10/11 November 2010; Ahmed Kathrada, Memoirs. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004.

Mohseen Jeenah

(1973 – 1994)

*M*ohseen Jeenah, born in Durban in 1973, was the general secretary of the Student Representatives' Council and a leader of the Pan African Students' Organisation (PASO) at the ML Sultan Technikon in Durban, when he was killed by apartheid police four months before South Africa's first democratic election. Mohsin's brother Na'eem recalled that at 5am on the morning of Monday, 17 January 1994, his mother was 'rudely woken by loud banging on the door of her tiny one-bedroom flat. She got out of bed, opened the door and was shoved aside as four policemen with R1 rifles stormed in and ransacked her home without giving her the courtesy of an explanation or without producing a search warrant. They took a jacket and some documents.' The police asked Mrs Jeenah to accompany them to the police station to talk to the commander. They initially refused to say why, but upon her insistence, told her that Mohseen had died and that they were, in fact, taking her to the mortuary to identify his body. When the car stopped at the next set of traffic lights, she jumped out and rushed back to the flat and saw on the television news Mohseen's body lying prone on the pavement in Pine Street in Durban's CBD. There was an AK-47 rifle alongside his body and the concrete pavement was bloodstained. Mrs Jeenah has not fully recovered from that harrowing experience.

Mohseen and three others had been killed, according to police, in the process of attacking the police station in Pine Street. It subsequently emerged that one of those killed was not a 'terrorist' but a security guard at a nearby store. The other two dead men were never identified. The official explanation was riddled with inconsistencies and raised many questions which the police failed to respond to satisfactorily. According to Na'eem, his brother's body was 'unrecognisable. His face and other parts of his body were swollen; both his legs had been torn to shreds by high-velocity bullets; his chest had been punctured by a bullet that had lodged in his lung. In addition, a neat wound at the back of his neck indicated where the pistol bullet that likely ended his life had entered, to lodge in his brain.'

At the time of his killing, Mohseen was also a trainee journalist at the *Sunday Tribune* and colleagues believe that he had received a tip-off of a story that he could cover. This explains why he had his reporter's notebook. This and other conspiracy theories were stated publicly at the memorial meeting at the ML Sultan Technikon which was attended by hundreds of students. According to Na'eem, 'Black people from families that have suffered much more than mine were gracious and generous enough to appear before the TRC in order to allow their persecutors to receive amnesty. They expected only to know the truth.' Sadly, he stated, the truth of his brother's death, and that of thousands of other Black people, has never been explained.

Source: Na'eem Jeenah, 'Martyrs and Reconciliation,' Mail & Guardian online. Accessed at <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/naeemjeenah/2008/01/31/martyrs-and-reconciliation>.



Mohseen Jeenah was President of the student body at the ML Sultan Technikon and President of the MYM when he was arrested and died in police detention

Na'eem Jeenah

(1965 –)

Na'eem Jeenah was born in Durban on 8 August 1965. He had a keen interest in social justice issues from his teenage years and cut his political teeth as a student during the nationwide education boycotts of the 1980s which plunged the country into unceasing protest, with trade unions and communities following the lead given by students to make the country 'ungovernable'. An outstanding student, Jeenah enrolled at the University of Natal's Medical School but did not find medicine to his liking. He subsequently earned an MA with distinction in religious studies at Wits. At university, he was involved in the MSA and MYM. This thrust him headlong into the political struggle as both organisations took a more openly anti-apartheid stand in the 1980s. Jeenah became national general secretary and, later, president of the MYM.

He edited *Al-Qalam*, which was the mouthpiece of the MYM, and was involved in inter-faith activities through the South African chapter of the World Conference of Religion and Peace. Jeenah married Shamima Shaikh, whom he met when they were arrested during a consumer boycott campaign. Shamima was a founding member of the MYM Gender Desk to focus specifically on gender issues. They undertook the hajj pilgrimage in 1997 and co-authored *Journey of Discovery: A South African Hajj*, in which they described the journey and its meaning for them. Soon after their return, they founded 'The Voice', a Johannesburg-based Muslim community radio station that articulated women's rights, inter-religious tolerance, and racism in Islam. Shamima, sadly, passed away in January 1998, four months after the station went on air. In 2005, Jeenah married Melissa Hoole, co-founder of a Brisbane solidarity group Fair Go for Palestine.

Jeenah has worked in the NGO sector, academia, for religious organisations and as a journalist. He lectured in politics at Wits, served as Director: Operations at the Freedom of Expression Institute, and founded the Johannesburg-based Afro-Middle East Centre. He was also a spokesperson for South Africa's Palestinian Solidarity Committee and the Anti-War

Coalition, which was formed after George Bush declared his ‘War on Terror’ in 2001, and is a member of the International Coordinating Network for Palestine. He has been a coordinator of Masjidul Islam in Brixton and has worked hard in promoting inter-faith activities. Jeenah is a columnist for *Al-Qalam* and occasionally for the *Mail & Guardian*. He is regularly called upon by radio and television channels to offer his analysis on issues related to Islam or the Muslim world. Jeenah’s publications include *Religion and Schools* (2005) and numerous journal articles on Islamic feminism, Sudan, Palestine, Rwanda, and a host of other issues. In 2008, the *Mail & Guardian* included him among its ‘100 young people you should take to lunch.’

Sources: ‘About AMEC,’ [http://www.amec.org.za/index.php?option=com_content &view](http://www.amec.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view); ‘Na’eem Jeenah, Wikipedia. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Na'eem_Jeenah.



Na'eem Jeenah

Ahmed Mohamed Kathrada

(1929 –)

Extracts from an address by President Jacob Zuma at the Ahmed Kathrada eightieth birthday celebration dinner, Lenasia, 15 August 2009.

*W*e are here to honour a man who is an inspiration to all South Africans. A man whose life is a chronicle of the struggle against apartheid. A man who belongs to the generation of Sisulu and Mandela, the likes of which this country will not witness again in a very long time. We therefore come together to reflect on his life, to the contribution he has made to the struggle and talk about the values that he would want us to take forward. This celebration comes at an auspicious time as we move closer to the start of the holy month of Ramadan. The month of fasting reminds us of the plight of the poor and hungry in our society. It is a time for reflection on our role in society and the very nature of that society. It is these religious underpinnings that have shaped the character of the man we know as Ahmed Mohamed Kathrada.

His dedication to the cause for freedom is characterised by the high moral, social, and spiritual values which Islam sets for all its followers and which come to the fore during the month of Ramadan. These values have guided Comrade Kathy and placed him on the path that has helped shape the history of this country. Where does one start with Kathy's contribution to the liberation struggle? A communist at the age of 12; jailed at 17 during the Passive Resistance Campaign for defying the Ghetto Act, which compelled Indians to live, trade and own land in specific areas. We are talking about a leader in the Defiance Campaign who helped organise the Congress of the People which drew up the Freedom Charter. He was a treason trialist; a member of Umkhonto who participated in the early days of the armed struggle. Convicted in the Rivonia Trial, he served 26 years in prison, mostly on Robben Island. This is a cadre who became a Member of Parliament in the democratic government of 1994; and Parliamentary Counsellor to President Mandela.

Having suffered many banning orders and house arrests, until his imprisonment, he was intimately involved in every major event that shaped the early years of non-racial opposition to apartheid. His contribution to a free South Africa, like that of many of his contemporaries, was immense. Today we celebrate the 80th birthday of our Comrade. This is no ordinary birthday. We're rejoicing the life of an inspiring revolutionary spanning over 65 years.... On a personal level, he has displayed a life of simplicity, complete humility and honesty. He has maintained a modest lifestyle despite his considerable achievements. His love for children, which stems from the years of deprivation experienced in prison, remains a hallmark of his character and a guiding force in his work, even today.

Comrade Kathrada's profound contribution to our liberation movements is his abiding commitment to non-racialism. Together with leaders like Dadoo and Dr Monty Naicker, they initially forged a principled non-racial relationship with the African political leadership in the late 1940s and 1950s. This was later translated into a firm organisational alliance between the Indian congresses and the ANC. His loyalty to the principle of non-racialism was put to test in famous Treason Trial. When confronted with the prospect of a reduced sentence during the trial, Kathrada opted to be sentenced with Mandela and others, knowing full well that this could be a life sentence or a death sentence.... Comrade Kathy turned his prison cell into a university. Studying by correspondence, he obtained two BA degrees and two honours degrees (in history and African politics).

The prison authorities refused to allow him to pursue postgraduate studies. He is known for his good sense of humour, his soft-naturalness and kindness. He's not one that acts with rancour, divisiveness, conspiracy or opaqueness. His life is an open book for all to see. We are proud and privileged to be living with him and others like him such as Tata Madiba. Having spent 18 years of his life as the occupant of Cell 14, Section B, it is a wonder that this generation of men did not walk out of their 4,5 metre square cells with revenge in their hearts. It is testimony to the enduring spirit of human forgiveness that men like Comrade Kathy chose the high road to a new and prosperous South Africa, rather than let hatred dictate their actions.

This is a lesson we can all learn from. Kathy's contribution both to the liberation struggle and South Africa has been immense. There are several dimensions that I would like to explore. The first is Kathy the freedom fighter. A wide range of influences had inspired him. Gandhi's Satyagraha that was forged in South Africa around the turn of the last century and then taken into the Indian independence struggle was an important influence. So were other liberation struggles in the Third World. Kathy's membership of the South African Communist Party was predicated upon an abhorrence of class exploitation. And he was strongly supportive of the tenets of non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy of the Congress Alliance. Kathy was imbued with an indomitable spirit. When the regime served banning orders on him in 1954, he wrote a letter to the youth of South Africa:

'I have been ordered to resign my positions from various organisations and not to become a member of some 39 bodies. This order comes, not from you, not from the people who elected me, and to whom I am directly responsible, but from a fanatical Minister of State, in the appointment of whom neither I nor the great majority of the people of South Africa had any say. I am not addressing these lines to my friends and comrades as a farewell letter... I wish to assure you that I will be at your disposal to serve you in any manner you wish; as in the past, so at present and in the future. No sacrifice will be too great in the struggle to achieve freedom in our lifetime.'

Kathy's second great act of public service has been his role as a companion of our leaders. We know that Kathy closely interacted with leaders of the Indian Congress such as Yusuf Dadoo, Monty Naicker, Molvi Cachalia, Ismail Meer, Billy Nair and others from an early age. He first met Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, JB Marks and Moses Kotane in the 1940s. He was charged with Madiba on three occasions: the Defiance Campaign Trial, the Treason Trial and the Rivonia Trial. The bonds between Kathy and these leaders run deep. They were forged in struggle, but solidified during their imprisonment. As Kathy said of the Island, after his release: 'While we will not forget the brutality of apartheid, we will not want Robben Island to be a monument of our hardship and suffering. We would want it to be a triumph of the human spirit against the forces of evil.'



Ahmed Kathrada on pilgrimage to Makkah



Ahmed Kathrada was given a hero's welcome when he was freed by the apartheid regime

Kathy's third major act of service to South African society was that of public representative. From 1994 to 1999, he served as an MP and as President Nelson Mandela's Parliamentary Counsellor – a role that he executed with great distinction. We also remember Kathy's passion for Robben Island and his sterling contribution as Chairperson of the Robben Island Museum Council. Kathy is not only a public figure. He is also a private citizen with a host of interests. Kathy is a wonderful storyteller. Many of us have been privy to his interesting dinner recollections and reminiscences. These are always delivered with wit and great sense of humour. Kathy has always stated that the pre-eminent historian of the ANC was the late Walter Sisulu. During the long stay behind bars, Kathy imbibed many of these narratives, and is now a renowned historian and scholar. Publication of several books over the years has deepened our understanding of our history. He published *Letters from Robben Island* in 1999, *Memoirs* in 2004 and *A Simple Freedom* in 2008.

In this final part of my address, I want to talk about the values that Kathy stands for and their relevance to our country today. The first value that I want to talk about is justice, ... the wider idea that encompasses notions of democracy, development, environmental sustainability and constitutional rights. Kathy holds the value of non-racialism very close to his heart.... For the past 97 years of the ANC's existence we have actively promoted this non-racial character of our movement.... These noble ideas were memorably captured by Nelson Mandela in his statement from the dock in 1964, 'During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination.'

I believe that the final value that Kathy would like me to emphasise is that of selfless commitment. This is idea that we all have a common interest in building a better South Africa and a better world for ourselves and our children.... One of Kathy's favourite quotes is a Chinese proverb: 'I grumbled because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet.' It reminded him that while there was hardship and suffering in prison, there was always the knowledge that our comrades on the outside had it worse. This phrase reflects the selfless dedication that has characterised his

commitment to the liberation struggle and a free and democratic South Africa. The Ahmed Kathrada Foundation was established in 2007 to celebrate the life and times of Ahmed Mohamed Kathrada. In his memoirs, Kathrada aptly provides the Foundation with its mission statement: ‘Uppermost in our minds should be the strengthening of our non-racial, non-sexist democracy, and the priority of uplifting the lives of the poorest of the poor. The Centre will provide a perfect venue for South Africans to engage with one another, to discuss how to bring about the ideals articulated in the Freedom Charter. On 21 August Prisoner 468/64 of the Robben Island celebrates his 80th birthday. Let me conclude by wishing Isithwalandwe Ahmed Kathrada a very happy 80th birthday and may he see many more.

Sources: Ahmed Kathrada Biography, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, <http://www.kathradafoundation.org/biography.html>; SAHO; Jacob Zuma, ‘Ahmed Kathrada,’ Issued by The Presidency 15 August 2009. <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za>.



Rivonia Trialists, including Ahmed Kathrada (L), Nelson Mandela (Third Right), and Walter Sisulu (R) visit the site of their arrest

Cassim Kikia And His Illustrious Brothers

Dundee was a hive of political activity in the 1950s, with the Unity Movement holding more sway than the Congress and many families were got caught up in the heated political debates. The following tribute was contributed by Kader Hassim.

One family that joined the Unity Movement was the Kikia family consisting of four brothers – Ahmed, Ebrahim, Cassim and Goolam. Initially, they all bore the surname of Nakhoda. For some reason, their surname changed to Kikia. This family had a tragic past. Their mother had died when Goolam was very young. Without a mother the four brothers spent their childhood in a harsh environment. The Kikia brothers were among the staunchest of the supporters of the Unity Movement. They were activists in the true sense of the word. Any time there was political work to be done they were never absent. The eldest, Ahmed, soon earned the reputation of a cool thinker on whom one could always rely for rational views. Ahmed's eldest daughter Tasneem, wrote of her father: 'Dad had a quiet personality but with strong and decided views on many issues. He was a voracious reader. I always teasingly referred to him as "our communist" for his strong socialist views. I know that he believed in a classless society. Our time with him on earth was all too short. He was only 56 when he died.'

Ebrahim was the firebrand. When there was trouble one could always count on him to be there to counter it. Goolam, the youngest was in school with leadership qualities developing promisingly. The students looked to him for guidance. Goolam was soon put to the test. It happened in this way. Dr Limbada had been financially supporting a bright young African student, Frank Sithole. Frank's studies came to a dead end when he passed Standard Eight. There were no schools in the vicinity for African students to study beyond standard eight. The Unity Movement through Goolam made a call for Frank Sithole to be admitted to Dundee Indian High. The white controlled department stipulated that Frank would be allowed to study provided there was not a single objection from any student from the Standard Nine class which Frank would attend. Goolam and his cohorts swung into action. There followed a period of intense political debate and

discussion until there was unanimity. Thus for the first time in the history of that school, an African was allowed to be one of the students. Frank Sithole went on to become an attorney, a conveyancer and a Notary public. In the 1990s he became president of the Law Society of Natal.

But it was Cassim who blossomed as a leader. He left school before he completed matric and obtained employment as a sales assistant at the largest departmental store in Dundee called 'The White House'. It was owned by the Pandor family. These stores had an army of shop assistants. There was no such thing as "self service" – not even for a box of matches which sold in those days for one penny. Cassim rose rapidly in the store and he began assuming managerial functions. He was highly respected. He, himself, was a serious young man who commanded attention when he spoke. He also developed quickly as a political person. He spoke at mass meetings [and] soon became a trusted lieutenant of Dr Limbada. I recall an incident in the early 1950s when an Indian mineworker in Ballengeigh was accidentally killed by an African worker. The Unity Movement sent a delegation led by Cassim to the funeral. Cassim conveyed the organisation's condolences and urged that the tragedy be not converted into a racial incident. In the early 1960s, the time had arrived for Cassim and Manny to flee the country or face arrest and imprisonment. Both fled to Botswana and sought refugee status. The UN Refugee body assisted them to set up small businesses to earn a living. Manny settled in Lobatsi, while Cassim, perhaps wisely, set up his business in Serowe, some distance from the South African border.

Goolam completed his matric and opted to do nursing. He had seen physical and mental suffering from a young age. He enrolled at Edendale Hospital. Being poor but independent-minded, Goolam chose to live close to the hospital in a room made of wood and iron. He met his wife, Pauline who was a co-worker at the hospital. The couple were frugal and continued living in a wood and iron structure until they could afford to buy a sub-economic house in Northdale. During those times, nurses were strictly prohibited from forming a professional body. Participation in the political struggle meant instant dismissal. Goolam was not deterred. In his quiet deliberate way he carried out his political duties. This included assisting in organising and attending the Conference of the All African Convention

in 1958 which was held in Plessislaer, Edendale Pietermaritzburg. In one of the photographs recording the conference, Goolam is shown covering his face from the photographer. His wife, Pauline is next to him. In front of him are his brother Cassim and Dr Limbada. As the country entered the era of fascism in the 1960s Goolam lay low. We lost contact with each other for almost two decades. Time did not change him. This was shown when the high school students went on a prolonged class boycott over the education policy of the government.

When finally the boycott ended, parents of boycotting students were asked to sign a form which would entitle the Indian education department to impose severe disciplinary measures on students who in future participated in school boycotts. This was in 1980. At a particular school in question, there were a few women present as parents, since the men were at work. Nina Hassim, one of the parents, objected strongly to signing the form. To her pleasant surprise, she was fully supported in her stand by Goolam Kikia who had come to the school as a parent. The decades had not changed Goolam. He pursued his ambition to be a psychiatric nurse and worked at both the Fort Napier and Town Hill mental hospitals. Fate, however, intervened. He died on 6 August 1980 of a heart attack. He was only 46 years old. His death posed a problem about his burial. He had not become fully integrated in any of the communities. His brothers Ebrahim, the firebrand, and Ahmed wasted no time. They drove down from Dundee with a band of relatives and had Goolam buried the same day. All that happened so swiftly that friends and colleagues had not been told of Goolam's passing on the day of his funeral. Goolam died with his dignity and political beliefs fully intact.

Cassim fought on until the very end. He was an activist. Inactivity made him venture into the field of local politics. He joined a party which was in opposition to the ruling party. He even stood for election as an MP which he lost. This is testimony to the extent of his integration with the local population. Cassim Kikia, the confirmed bachelor, at last gave his heart to a local damsel whom he married and with whom raised a family. Cassim, however, was not the only refugee in Serowe. He was joined by another who had originally hailed from Natal. This was Bessie Head,

internationally acclaimed writer. Cassim's little shop was across the road from where Bessie Head lived. They struck a rapport immediately. Apart from a common resistance to oppression, Bessie Head found in Cassim a friend and comrade who was always present to assist in her time of need. Cassim in turn found an additional bond. Bessie Head was extremely grateful to Cassim for their friendship. This is reflected in her dedication of her book "*A Bewitched Crossroad*" to three people who were very special to her. One of them was 'my brother' Cassim Kikia. Cassim had his own problems, mainly medical. He had to have heart bypass surgery and was treated in a hospital in Cape Town. There he came into contact with members of the New Unity Movement which he joined. Cassim's deepest instincts would not allow him to remain aloof from the struggle. He remained political and queued with all the others until the very end to strike his blow against oppression. In early 2009, Cassim Kikia came to the end of his odyssey. He died at Serowe. His remains lie forever in the care and custody of his newly adopted people, the kind and generous people of Botswana.

Source: For a full version of the tribute visit <http://www.apdusaviews.co.za/>



Cassim Kikia

Ahmed Ismail Limbada

(1922 – 1988)

Dundee, a town born out of coal mining in Northern Natal, was rapidly absorbed into the world of radical politics in the 1950s. Until then, like any other town in Natal, Dundee's population was racially divided into various groups. According to Kader Hassim, white superiority was axiomatic and people used derogatory terms to describe each other: 'Natives' / 'Kaffirs' for Africans; 'Coolies' for Indians; and 'Boesman' / 'Hotnots' for Coloured people. In 1951, according to Hassim 'change came to Dundee with a vengeance. Two of Dundee's sons, Karrim Essack and Dr Limbada returned from their studies at Wits. 'They came as politically trained and dedicated members of the Unity Movement. Dundee was hit by a tornado of revolutionary ideas. The people were told for a start that use of derogatory words was wrong politically and morally and were henceforth to be strictly prohibited. People struggled with the new terms but over time the new and progressive terms prevailed. Concepts like Non-European unity, non-collaboration with the rulers, were thrown into the maelstrom of daily debate and discussion. Medical doctors of those times occupied very powerful positions in the small country towns. People literally worshipped them. Dr Limbada was a charismatic leader.'

Limbada's father had a business in the heart of an African reserve near Dundee called Ryno. Limbada studied at Sastri College and Wits where he was a member of the Progressive Forum. IC Meer described him as 'a handsome and charming young doctor.' Zuleika Mayat of the Women's Cultural Group, whose husband Mahomed, was a contemporary of Limbada and IC Meer, concurs that Limbada was 'a really charismatic person.' When Limbada returned to Dundee he started a study group for young activists. He would hand them assignments, and compel them to do research and make oral presentations. Dundee became a hotbed of Unity Movement activity with the likes of Limbada, Ismail Patel, VG Naidoo, and Karrim Essack prominent. Initially, Limbada was part of the NIC. He and Karrim Essack hoped to influence the NIC through the Dundee

branch. However, when Limbada's faction opposed the Defiance Campaign in 1952, the NIC expelled them. Addressing a non-racial audience at the Millsite Theatre in Dundee on 23 November 1952, Limbada criticised the NIC for not accepting their challenge of a debate and said that the Defiance Campaign was 'the same old dirt in a new garbage dust bin.' Limbada moved in the late 1950s to Pomeroy, where he and Karrim Essack were involved in mobilising peasants who took up armed resistance against the state. In the face of state repression in the early 1960s, Limbada went into exile to Botswana, and from there to Zambia. Aside from the struggle to set up a political base in exile, he was struck by personal grief. First, around 1972, his daughter was killed in a motor vehicle accident and he subsequently lost his wife, Bibi Mall. The biggest disillusionment for activists in the Unity Movement was their failure to get recognition from the OAU which severely handicapped their efforts to build a political mission in exile. Limbada, the charismatic figure who took on the leadership of the NIC in toe-to-toe debates and had a large following in Northern Natal, cut an increasingly isolated figure when he died of a heart attack in Zambia in 1988.



Ahmed Limbada and Bibi Mall

Ebrahim Vally Mahomed

(b. 1916)

Ebrahim Vally Mahomed was the son of Vally Mohamed (d. 1947) who arrived in South Africa with his wife Sarah and sons Ebrahim and Osman in 1920. Ebrahim attended Sastri College and thereafter studied bookkeeping. He married Amina Hassim of Sabie in 1936 and they had two children, Yunus (b. 1945) and Mariam (b. 1951). After qualifying as a bookkeeper, Mahomed joined the firm of Amod Mehta and Sons, then the largest wholesalers on the North Coast, but after a few years branched out on his own. He met Chief Luthuli through his work as a bookkeeper. According to Mahomed's son, Yunus, Luthuli was a regular visitor to Stanger where he visited the likes of Chota Kolia, Mohamed Kolia, Dawood Moolla (Planters Garage), Ismail Rawat (IQRA Printers), Ahmed Shaik, Goolam Suleman, and Abdool Ismail (Hibiscus Supermarket).

Mahomed was a member of the NIC but subsequently joined Alan Paton's Liberal Party. He remained close to Luthuli though and his office became Luthuli's headquarters. During the early 1950s Luthuli did not have a motor vehicle and Mahomed drove him to meetings and appointments. Mahomed also facilitated meetings with political leaders, arranged venues for such meetings and functioned as a courier. ANC meetings were held at the Sabha Hall, Ganie's Store in Glendale, Darnall, New Guelderland, San Souci (Moon Ramluckan), Tongaat (Gopalall Hurbans), and Tugela (Gora Jacob). In Stanger, they used the homes of Krish Naidoo and EC Mahomedy.

When American Quaker Louis Hopper came to work with Luthuli in Stanger, she stayed with Mahomed. Mahomed and Gopalall Hurbans led the Natal team from the north coast to Kliptown in 1955. Mahomed, in fact, registered at the ANC desk as Luthuli's official representative. Together with Goolam Suleman and NR Padayachee he helped with fundraising during the Treason Trial (1956-61). When Luthuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1960, the Ratepayers Association of Stanger, of which Mahomed and Goolam Suleman were members, organised a farewell function in his honour.

The government refused permission for Luthuli to address the meeting but thousands attended the farewell at the Jainah Hall. Alan Paton and Fatima Meer were among the speakers, while Zohra Meer presented a scroll to Luthuli's wife Nokukhanya. Mahomed and Suleman also organised the venue for one of the last meetings between Mandela and Luthuli before Mandela's arrest, and they drove Mandela back from Stanger to Fatima and Ismail Meer's home late that night. Mahomed remained a staunch supporter of Luthuli until the latter's death in 1967. The committed work of the likes of Mahomed was critical in keeping the anti-apartheid struggle ticking.

Source: Logan Naidoo, In the Shadows of Chief Albert Luthuli. Kwadukuza: Luthuli Museum, 2010.



EV Mahomed (C) and Reginald Dhlomo congratulating Albert Luthuli on his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Stanger 1961

Ismail Mahomed

(1931 – 2000)

*J*ustice Ismail Mahomed was born in Pretoria on 25 July 1931. He matriculated from Pretoria Indian Boys' High in 1950; completed his BA degree in 1953; BA (Hons.) with a distinction in Political Science in 1954; and Bachelor of Laws in 1957 at Wits. Justice Mahomed was excluded from the Pretoria bar because of the prohibitions against blacks, and had to join the bar in Johannesburg. Group Areas forbade him from renting his own office and so he squatted in the chambers of his associates when they were vacant, or in the law library. According to Henry Cauvin, 'far from succumbing to its restrictions, however, he became one of the country's leading authorities on that law.... Over the years, in spite of everything that stood in the way of his success, he became known as one of the bar's sharpest minds and engaging orators.'

Justice Mahomed was involved in legal work in rural communities, starting with forced removals in Nylstroom in the 1960s, and he built a reputation as an expert on the Group Areas Act and successfully fought many eviction orders. He later involved himself in political trials even though this resulted in personal hardships. As Chris Barron points out, in most places where the trials were held, there was no place for blacks to stay and he 'had to travel great distances to find a bed for the night. Midday meals were often fish and chips consumed in the car. After appearances before the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein, Mahomed would have to ensure he was out of town by dark. He would drive 175 kilometres to Kimberley and be back in court the next morning.' Justice Mahomed worked as a lawyer in several Southern African countries, including Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. He served as a judge in the appeal court in Swaziland as well as Lesotho. When Namibia achieved its independence, he helped to draft its constitution and became the country's Chief Justice. According to Barron, his finest years were as a lawyer when 'the chips were down and the full weight of apartheid was against him.' In the years from 1975 to 1991, he 'did more than anyone else to shape administrative law, public law, human rights law, and constitutional law. He was one of the best of the best.

His achievements changed the law, and he was not the only one who felt he had received less credit than was his due.’ One of Mahomed’s finest hours was when he defended the UDF leadership in the Pietermaritzburg treason trial of 1985. His devastating cross examination of the state’s key witness forced the A-G of Natal, Mike Imber, to stop the prosecution after three days. Barron adds that Justice Mahomed ‘revelled in the performance aspect of the law. He was a great showman and loved grandstanding. His style was flamboyant, his use of English eloquent. . . . He was a formidable judge to appear before. An instinctive cross-examiner, he fired questions from the bench ceaselessly and impatiently. He was ruthless with those who were sloppy in argument or badly prepared.’

In 1991 Justice Mahomed was made the chair of CODESA, which formulated a new constitution for a democratic South Africa. In 1991 he became a judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa and was appointed an acting judge of the Appeal Court in 1993. He became a judge of the Constitutional Court in 1995 and in 1996 President Mandela appointed him Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, a position that he held until he succumbed to pancreatic cancer in 2000. As Chief Justice he was responsible for all the courts of the land. At the posthumous handing over of the Sydney and Felicia Kentridge Award to Chief Justice Ismail Mahomed on 28 July 2000, Sir Sydney Kentridge QC, said:

‘Passion and eloquence, combined with legal logic, were the hallmarks of Ismail Mahomed both as advocate and as judge.... Ismail was an eloquent advocate and an eloquent judge. His eloquence was not mere facility with words – although he was a master of the English language; rather it was part of his deep commitment to individual rights and his real feeling for the law. His life-long goals were freedom and equality, but he always believed that the way to those goals, and their best protection when achieved, were law and the judicial process. The recent history of this country has shown that he was entirely right. Law for Ismail Mahomed was not simply a draft. He truly loved the law and its distortions under the apartheid regime were a matter not only of justified indignation, but of real pain for him. The law was his life. It is not surprising that he was a founding trustee of The Legal Resources Centre.... As a Constitutional Court judge he was



Ismail Mahomed

at his very best. He had a vast knowledge of international constitutional law, and a sensitive appreciation of the balance to be struck between individual rights and the needs of society as a whole. If there is any single judgment which exemplifies that sensitivity, as well as his eloquence and his passionate commitment to the law, it is his judgment in the case on the constitutionality of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That case should be compulsory reading for all students of constitutional law.... It is a great sadness that the award this evening has had to be a posthumous one.'

'But at least Ismail did know of it before his all too early death. There could have been no more appropriate candidate for this first award. Has there ever been a more remarkable legal career than his? The appalling obstacles which he had to overcome, and the humiliations which he had to suffer in his early years at the Bar are well known. He was a sensitive man and felt them deeply. Yet he built up a practice as the country's leading administrative lawyer. Against all the odds he was given silk in 1974, became a judge of the High Court in 1991 and was elevated to the Supreme Court of Appeal two years later. Then, after the new constitution had come into force, he became successively Deputy President of the Constitutional Court and Chief Justice of South Africa. Add to this his judicial appointments in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia, and one may surely say that there has been no comparable career in the law anywhere in the world.'

Sources: Henry E. Cauvin, 'Ismail Mohamed, 68, Led Post-Apartheid Court,' New York Times, 19 June 2000; Chris Barron, Collected South African Obituaries. London: Penguin, 2005; Sydney Kentridge, 28 July 2000. <http://www.sabar.co.za/law-journals/2000-thirdterm-vol013-no3-pp11.pdf>.

Hassen Ebrahim Mall

(1922 – 2000)

*H*assen Mall was the son of Ebrahim and Madagascar-born Mariam Mall. Ebrahim had initially settled in Howick in the KwaZulu Natal midlands but relocated to Durban in the early 1930s where he took up employment as a travelling salesman. Hassen was born in Gujarat on 19 July 1922 and joined his father in South Africa in 1926. The family lived in Ritson Road where neighbours included many who became activists, such as Fatima and IC Meer, and JN Singh. Because of the shortage of schools, Mall only gained entrance to a school at the age of ten. He subsequently attended Sastri College, Adams Mission on the South Coast, Fort Hare, and finally UCT where he completed his law degree in 1951.

Mall was drawn to the NIC as he grew up in the excitement of the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48. In Cape Town he helped to establish the Cape Indian Assembly in opposition to the moderate Cape Indian Congress. He was one of the joint secretaries of the Assembly in 1950. He was also a member of the India League which had been formed to agitate for India's independent struggle. The League had been founded by a fellow student from Natal, Cassim Amra, who was one of Mall's closest friends. Both were deported from the Cape for their political activities but Mall's professor intervened to ensure that he was able to write the final examination.

Mall was also an excellent cricketer who represented Western Province. When Mall returned to Durban, he held several positions on the NIC executive, including being vice-president, and was joint secretary of the SAIC. Following the Treason Trial arrests on 5 December 1956, he established the Civil Liberties Committee on 6 December to raise funds for the defence of activists. Speakers at the launch included Florence Mkhize, Hilda Kuper, and Alan Paton. Mall was a key strategist of the NIC in the 1950s. Surendra Bhana, for example, has recorded that Mall, together with another NIC stalwart Kay Moonsamy, got a proposal passed to implement the M-Plan, which was a strategy to organise ordinary supporters into street



Hassen Mall with (clockwise) wife Sylvia, daughter Marcina and her husband Mohamed, son Enver and his wife Farhana and grandchildren

and area committees at a time of dwindling support following the arrest of the leadership during the Treason Trial. Even when leaders were acquitted, they were usually banned. The NIC was hamstrung by these tactics. During the 1950s and 1960s Mall worked closely with various ratepayer associations to thwart the Group Areas Act. The effects of state bannings took different forms. Mall was banned in 1962 and confined to Durban. As an advocate, most of his cases were fought in Pietermaritzburg. Permission to attend was always declined. 'As a result,' he said, 'it destroyed the little practice I had.' At the time of his banning, Mall was on the executive of the NIC and secretary of the SAIC, and was tasked to send memorandums on the situation in South Africa to India to keep Indians abreast of the political situation. The banning order put an end to this.

Mall's banning notice was served shortly after he appeared in the defence of Rowley Arenstein, a key member of the CPSA who was charged under the Suppression of Communism Act. The marginalisation of people like Mall shows the sinister way in which the government muted organisations. Mall himself observed that by the mid-1960s NIC activity 'had literally died ... because people were banned, scattered all over the show. The NIC and TIC had never been banned. What they [state] did was that they took all the officials and banned them and that effectively silenced the activities of these organisations.' Mall's counsel was widely respected and when the NIC was revived in the 1970s he was called upon to mediate disputes over participation in government structures, such as Local Affairs Committees.

During the 1970s he did not hold any official position in politics but was the chairperson of the Reservoir Hills Ratepayer's Association. He was also the first chairperson of the Democratic Association, the forerunner of the the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL), whose members included Paul David, Ebie Goga, Thumba Pillay, MJ Naidoo, and Selby Baqwa. Mall became South Africa's first black jurist when he was made an acting judge in 1988 and full judge in 1993, and in the post-apartheid period, President Nelson Mandela appointed him to chair the three-person Amnesty Committee of the TRC, which heard some of the vilest atrocities of the apartheid regime and made determinations as to whether amnesty was to be granted.

Deborah Quin, an investigator for the committee, said that Mall ‘approached his work on the amnesty committee in a sober, deliberate manner. He was a very wise man, not cautious, but slow to come to a decision. He was very concerned about hearing all the sides.’ Yasmin Sooka, also a commission member, said that Mall ‘brought a certain independence of spirit. He was not tainted or compromised. He was widely respected among the country’s human rights lawyers as someone who would judge their cases fairly.’ Judge Hassen Mall, who passed away in August 2000, was married to Sylvia and they had three children, Enver, Marcina, and Shereen. He remained an advocate of non-violent resistance and a bust of Gandhi adorned his office to the end.

Sources: Henry Cauvin, ‘Hassen Mall, 78, the First Nonwhite Jurist in South Africa,’ New York Times, 20 August 2000; Paul Trewhela, ‘Obituary: Judge Hassen Mall, The Independent (London), 31 August 2000; Surendra Bhana, Gandhi’s Legacy. The Natal Indian Congress 1894-1994. Scottsburgh: University of Natal Press, 1997



Don Mattera with Ameen Akhalwaya

Omaruddin Francisco Mattera

(1935 –)

Don Mattera, poet, author, and activist, was born in 1935 and grew up in Sophiatown, which he described in his autobiography as ‘picturesque and intimate, like most ghettos. . . . Mansions and quaint cottages stood side by side with rusty wood-and-iron shacks, locked in a fraternal embrace of filth and felony.... The rich and the poor, the exploiters and the exploited, all knitted together in a colourful fabric that ignored race or class structures.’ This ‘multiracial fabric’ did not conform to separatist apartheid policies and Sophiatown was destroyed and its people forcibly removed.

Mattera’s grandfather was an Italian immigrant who married a Xhosa woman from the Eastern Cape. They settled in Johannesburg, where Mattera’s father was born. He was classified ‘Coloured’ under the apartheid system. Mattera was adopted by his grandparents and at the age of eight was sent to St. Theresa’s, a Catholic boarding school in Durban. He returned to Johannesburg when he was 14 and continued his education in Pageview, from where his family was again forcibly moved under the Group Areas Act. During his high school years Mattera became the leader of a criminal gang, the Vultures. In his autobiography, *Memory is the weapon*, he wrote of how the gangsters exterminated each other. He was stabbed and shot at, and has nine scars to attest to this.

The closest that he came to death was when he ‘had a sharpened pipe pushed through my chest – it went four and a half inches into my lung and missed my heart by two centimetres.’ He was charged with the murder of a rival gang member when he was twenty but was acquitted. But Mattera also developed his intellectual side. He was the chief debater for the Western Areas Students Association, which was a conduit of the ANCYL and read the works of Paul Robeson, Richard Wright, and WEB du Bois. The struggles of the 1950s politicised him:

‘The police were riding around with horses and lances and would go for the people in the streets. What we gangsters did, I was 17 years old, was

to take petrol and mix it with oil and throw this on the street. We would take an old blanket, dip it in this concoction and run with it in the street. Many of the commandos would just slide off their horses. The horses would spready and some people would take their 303 rifles away and beat them up. The ANC became a reality in Sophiatown in all of our lives. On several occasions I went to Communist Youth League meetings where I met Ronnie Kasrils and Harold Wolpe and Arthur Goldreich. Later on, all of these things would resonate in my consciousness. Then in 1957 came the birth of my son and the change in my life, but the streets wouldn't let me go. In 1958 one of my gang shot me in the back, the bullet rested in the bottom of my spine. People thought I was dead. It was a dark time in my life and I regret it very much, regret the animal that I'd become.'

The formation of the PAC in December 1959 was met with great excitement but in March 1960, when the PAC organised an anti-pass march, innocent people were murdered by the police. Mattera penned the following lines in response to the killings:

Day of thunder, day of blood
in the dusty streets of Sharpeville.
The thunder roared from Saracen skies,
the blood flowed from black folks eyes
when they met the hail of dum-dum.
The crying, the calling, the running, the falling,
the dying of men, women and children
and the cold stern faces of them
who held the thunder and spat the hail
while my people sang "Return Africa, oh Africa return.
Bitter was that day in the dusty streets of Sharpeville.

The banning of the ANC and PAC led to many activists being imprisoned, house arrested or escaping into exile. Political protest was stunted. In 1964, Mattera became an underground operative of the Azanian People's Liberation Army and was later influenced by Steve Biko and the BCM. Mattera's work affirmed black power.

In 1973 Mattera joined *The Star* as a journalist and felt that white liberal journalists propped up apartheid by sitting in posh areas, while their black counterparts were 'in little dark corners and eating from a different canteen while their white counterparts ate out of porcelain plates.' Black journalists were also paid a lower wage. Together with Bokwe Mafuna, Mattera launched the Union of Black Journalists in 1973. He was the national organiser of what they dubbed 'liberation journalism', a journalism 'that must fight the state at all costs. I was definitely not objective in my writing and in my assessment, because objectivity is a luxury in the pen of the one who is writing.' When black American tennis star Arthur Ashe visited the country in 1973, Mattera opposed the visit. Ashe requested a meeting with black journalists. Mattera set up a meeting for 22 November but was banned on 21 November. He went to the venue but the American consul did not allow him entry. He met with Ashe outside and explained how the banning order restricted his personal and professional life. During the period of his banning the *Star* accommodated Mattera as a copy editor in 1976 as he was prohibited from writing. Later, he became a sub-editor of the newspaper and was involved in training journalists. In 1986 Mattera won the Kurt Tucholsky Award from the Swedish PEN Club and spent several months on a speaking tour informing young Swedes about South Africa. When he returned to South Africa, Mattera edited a business magazine, which was part of *Finance Week*, and used the platform to campaign for stronger black involvement in business. He subsequently joined the *Weekly Mail* as its arts and culture editor.

Mattera, like most black South Africans, was thrilled with the political changes in South Africa but is disappointed in the course South African society has taken: 'We are free and we are not free. Politically we are free, but the proliferation of shacks, this is not what we fought for. The continuing poverty. This is not what we fought for. The fact that the new black elite is now joining hands with the old white elite, is not what we fought for.' Mattera embraced Islam and is deeply involved in community work in Bosmont, Westbury and Newclare. In a September 2004 article in *Al Qalam*, Na'eem Jeenah related a meeting with Mattera where the latter explained why he embraced Islam: 'My first meeting with Don Mattera was when Fuad Hendricks, then editor of *Al-Qalam*, took me to a Black

Consciousness (BC) meeting. And Don was there! A teenager thinking he was engaged in struggle, I couldn't wait to meet him. But it was a let-down. Instead of talking about important things like the meaning of being Black or the implications of being a Muslim and in the BC movement, he talked to us about... compassion. Long story about how he became a Muslim, attracted not by Islam's stand on justice and fighting against oppression (as I had thought) but by the *basmallah*, the fact that the statement that Muslims repeat before doing anything is about the Compassion of Allah. Strange, I thought. This was the '80s, the heady days of struggle, of revolution, of fighting against the oppressor pharaohs of apartheid. And here was this tower of the struggle going all soft. Sad, really.... It took a long time for this 'young angry man always talking about fighting' to truly understand and appreciate what 'Rahmatal lil 'alameen' means. A long time, the inspiration of people like Bra Don Mattera and that 'epitome of compassion', my wife, Shamima Shaikh and, most importantly, the Grace and Compassion of The Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful – *Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim*.

Mattera said that his mission in life was 'to help remove pain and suffering from people's lives, to remove an invisible chain. My work is a shadow of my actions.' Mattera focuses on young people and the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners. His actions are motivated by compassion: 'Compassion is my religion and God is the dispenser of the first compassion. Jesus, peace be on his name, was the mark and hallmark of compassion. Mohammed, peace be on his name, was the hallmark of compassion. God said to him, "Read Mohammed. Read in the name of the Lord who created thee from a congealed clot of blood, read." And you read the Qur'an, God is explicit about compassion.' Mattera is involved in more than a hundred community organisations and is a patron of some 50 trusts. He has published several collections of poems and was awarded an honorary doctorate in Literature from UKZN. He was also the recipient of the South African Order of the Baobab in Gold for his 'Excellent contribution to literature, achievement in the field of journalism and striving for democracy and justice in South Africa.'

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Mattera; Lucille Davie, *Don Mattera: poet of compassion*, 2002. <http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/829/188/>; interviewed by Madi



Don Mattera

Juby Mayet

(1937-)

Juby Mayet, a journalist, writer, and activist, was born in Fietas, Johannesburg, in 1937. While at High school, she came third in a national short story competition run by Ruth First and Joe Slovo in the *New Age* newspaper. It was the story of a white man who, caught under the Immorality Act, commits suicide instead of facing public humiliation over his private life. Being placed third was a major achievement as some of the country's leading writers participated in that competition. Mayet completed a teacher's certificate in 1957 from the Johannesburg Indian Teachers' Training Institute and immediately thereafter began writing for the *Golden City Post* and later worked for *Drum* magazine, writing feature articles, columns and short stories. In 1977 she was appointed Deputy Chief Sub-Editor of *The Voice*. This was a first for black women journalists. Describing herself as a 'freedom writer', Mayet's writing reflected a strong commitment to the struggle against racism and apartheid as well as gender discrimination.

Mayet was a founding member of the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ) and a member of the Writer's Association of South Africa (WASA). She also contributed to the *UBJ Bulletin*, WASA's *Asizuthula* and *The Worker*, which was issued by the Media Workers Support Committee. One of Mayet's harrowing memories was 'Black Wednesday', 19 October 1977, when several newspapers were banned. They included *The World*, *Weekend World* newspapers and *Pro Veritate*, a Christian publication. Journalists such as Thami Mazwai, Joe Latakomo, Percy Qoboza and Phil Mtimkulu were arrested. Mayet was detained for four months and then served with a five year banning order. A widow with eight children at the time, she was subjected to great harassment. She recalled this difficult period of her life:

'They couldn't find me. I wasn't at home. I was at the UBJ office. My sons were worried. One phoned me to tell me. One came to the office with



Juby Mayet

tears in his eyes to tell me that men were looking for me. I told him not to worry. I knew if they wanted to find me they would find me and they did.... I was restricted to the magisterial district of Johannesburg. I couldn't enter newspaper offices, factories, any place where there were people. I could only mix with my immediate family. But it didn't worry me or depress me. The day I was banned I phoned my newspaper buddies and we had a big party. It didn't bother me but not being able to work bothered me. I wasn't able to carry on with my journalism. I wrote a poem though ... 'To freedom' or something like that. It was published in the *UBJ Bulletin*. I wrote under the name of Mmamayetha. *The Voice* paid my salary for a year. But a lot of issues were banned. They folded. I had to find a job. I found a job at a hotel ... They called it 'Floor Supervisor'--a glorified maid. I had to check if the cleaners had done their job properly. I found myself tucking the sheets and bedspreads in a special way ... making sure they were tight and smooth. I was folding triangles into the ends of toilet rolls, emptying ashtrays. I worked there for two and a half months and then left. I couldn't stand it. I went to work for some attorneys. I was typing and answering the switchboard.'

Mayet was the first recipient of the Lifetime Achiever Award for Women in Writing in August 2000. In April 2006 she was one of the first twelve recipients of the 'Memory is Our Heritage' fellowship grants from the Mutloatse Art Heritage Trust. She is a founder member of Sizoya Sibuye Women's Forum, a group of women ex-prisoners of NO. 4 Women's Jail (Old Fort). She is currently serving as the organisation's treasurer and research officer.

Source: Gaele Sobott--Mogwe 'Interview with Juby Mayet, Johannesburg, 29 July 1993,' Journal of Gender Studies, 3:3 (1994): 347-350

Suliman Mohamed Mayet

(1898 – 1974)

SM Mayet was the son of Mohamed Bawa Mayet (d. 1928), who was proprietor of Selwel Cigarette Papers in Leopold Street, a company that supplied paper for cigarette manufacturing to local factories and also manufactured DBD pipes. The family lived in Saville Street and Mayet attended Dartnell Crescent School and thereafter joined the family business. In the 1930s, he moved to 741 Umgeni Road where he opened a grocery store and built his home behind the shop. It would be lost to the Group Areas Act. Mayet was drawn into political and social welfare affairs from a young age.

He was one of the founding members of the Darul Yatama Institute and in fact was on the first committee constituted on 10 September 1934 with Moulana Ahmed Mukhtar Siddiqui as chairman. Other committee members included Sayed Fakroodeen, AKE Bux, Tayob Sacoor, MS Kharwa, and Mehboob Khan. Mayet was also a trustee of the Jumuah Musjid in Grey Street. Mayet joined the NIC in the 1930s and remained loyal to the radical faction of Monty Naicker, Dawood Seedat, IC Meer and others when they ousted the moderate leadership in 1945. He was treasurer for several decades. Mayet's home in Umgeni Road was the site of many clandestine political meetings.

Nelson Mandela and Albert Luthuli were among visitors. In a 1985 letter to IC Meer, Mandela began by referring to the period of their youth: 'I watch the world aging, scenes from our younger days in Kholvad house and Umgeni Road come back so vividly as if they occurred only the other day.' Umgeni Road was the home of the Mayets. Although Mayet kept a low profile, he was a key background organiser and a conduit between the NIC and ANC because of his close relationship with Albert Luthuli. On 21 July 1967, while taking a walk near his Natal home, Nobel Peace Prize winner Chief Albert Luthuli was mysteriously killed when struck by a train. It was SM Mayet, as the most senior member of the NIC, who presented the eulogy to Chief Luthuli on behalf of the Indian community. 'Albert



SM Mayet

John Luthuli was a man of peace, recognised by the world as such, and a believer in the ideal that all South Africans should live in harmony and equality.... Grootville will now become an important shrine.... The Natal North Coast remains steeped in history for a few miles to the north of Grootville is the grave of Shaka, the great Zulu king, and to the south is the historic settlement of Phoenix, founded by Mahatma Gandhi. Chief Luthuli was laid to rest between the two.... As we lay him to rest today in his grave we of the Indian community realise what a significant and vital contribution Chief Luthuli has made for better understanding among South Africans.’

‘We consider his place to be among the great international leaders of the world, such as Mahatma Gandhi, who lived their lives striving for improved human relationship and peaceful coexistence. When he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the world acknowledged what we already knew him personally to be. We already knew that he was a man who stood for goodwill among all men.... The Chief’s greatest opponents could not help but admire his humility, his dignity and his great courage and steadfastness for the cause which he espoused with great personal sacrifice. Albert John Luthuli is no more, yet his place in South African history remains for all times.’

To the very end, Nokhykhanya, the widow of Luthuli, would invite Mayet to every function held to honour the Chief. Mayet held one other distinction. He was registered as a voter in the 1920s before the passing of the law denying the vote to blacks in local elections. By the 1970s Mayet was the only black voter eligible to vote. He was also well known in India and when he visited the country in 1970 he was given a personal audience with then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.’

Source: Interview, Khatija Vawda, 20 December 2010; Leader 4 August 1967.

Ahmed Ismail Meer

(1900 – 1965)

The Meer family traces its origins in South Africa to Mohamed Meer of Surat who was born in 1865, migrated to Natal in 1882 and opened businesses in Dundee and Waschbank. Mohamed was joined by his youngest brother Chota who opened a general dealer's business C.A. Meer, in Dundee in 1893. While Mohamed Meer returned to Surat in 1906, Chota helped his nephews Moosa (MI) and Ahmed (AI), sons of elder brother Ismail, settle in Natal. AI Meer, the children of MI Meer, Fatima and Farouk, and Chota Meer's sons IC Meer and AC Meer were all involved in the anti-apartheid struggle.

IC Meer described Chota Meer's shop in Waschbank as a 'university'. The nineteen Indian males living there, he wrote, met every evening to discuss Indian opposition to British imperialism. MI and AI Meer would read items from overseas and local newspapers or recite and discuss poems. AI Meer did his primary schooling in Ladysmith and went to work for an uncle, Ahmed Variawa, in Douglas, which is near Kimberley. When that business went into liquidation during the depression, he moved to Durban to join his brother MI Meer, who had joined the newspaper *Indian Views*, which belonged to Ismail Jeewa and the Union Printing Works.

The Meers lived in Ritson Road, close to the Botanical Gardens, Curries Fountain, and Sastri College, which was the hub of political activity. Activists such as Dawood Seedat and Cassim Amra resided in the area. Meer initially joined *Indian Views* but started his own printing press in 1937, *The Express Printing Works*. He wrote on a part-time basis for *Indian Views* and became secretary of the Indian Master Printers' Association. After the printing press went into liquidation, Meer joined a lawyer's office as an articled clerk and enrolled at the Non-European Section of Natal University where he completed his BA degree and was also joint secretary of the SRC with MD Naidoo. When younger, leftist leaning activists took control of the NIC in 1945, Meer and MD Naidoo were elected joint secretaries, with Monty Naicker as president. And when the new leadership took control



A.I Meer

of the SAIC, AI Meer became general secretary. From 1946 to 1948, the congresses organised a passive resistance campaign against the Ghetto Act. Meer spoke regularly at public meetings, and wrote reports on the campaign for newspapers in India. In 1947, he represented South African Indians at the UN with Ashwin Choudhree and Sorabjee Rustomjee. They left Johannesburg for New York on 9 September 1947 and met with the likes of Sardar JJ Singh, President of the India League; MAH Ispahani, the Pakistan Ambassador to the USA; Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan, leader of the Pakistan delegation; and members of the Indian delegation, including Nehru's sister, Vijaylakshmi Pandit, and Sir Maharaj Singh.

AI Meer also prepared a pamphlet in New York, *Indian Question in South Africa*, for the Council for Asiatic Rights. In New York, Meer addressed a meeting at Stamford, Connecticut, on how black South Africans viewed the UN. He also spoke at a meeting on the Indian question at Hunter College, New York. After the meeting, a telegram was sent by the students condemning the action of US delegates in not supporting the Indian resolution. He addressed an India League meeting and one organised by the National Association for the Advancement of the Coloured People (NAACP). He also attended a meeting organised by the Progressive Citizens of America, which was addressed by Henry Wallace, Paul Robeson and Lena Horne. From the US, Meer went to London on 4 December 1947 as a representative of the India League.

With Dr Yusuf Motala and Dr Cassim Jadwat, he spoke with newspaper editors, leftist oriented organisations, and MPs. He secured the support of The India League, the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Fabian Society, the National Peace Council, and the University Students Labour Federation for the passive resistance campaign. AI Meer was one of the first people banned under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. He married IC Meer's sister Khatija, and their children include Unus, the dermatologist, and Rashida, who married Farouk Meer.

Sources: Interview with. Unus Meer, 14 December 2008; Report by A.I. Meer to the Joint PRC of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses, 9 January 1948. <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/passive-resistance/International%20support-1948.htm>>.

Farouk Meer

(1938 –)

There's always a tongue-in-cheek guy who will tell you, 'You know what, the guys who collaborated with the apartheid South Africans are better-off today than you are. So didn't you make a mistake?' And I say, 'No. We made a principled stand. That was the correct stand. I think if my organisation today [ANC] is letting me down and promoting collaborators and marginalising people like myself, I'd say, 'well tough.' The correct thing to do at that time was to do exactly what we did [against apartheid]. And if history had to repeat itself, we'll adopt the same attitude, the same strategies as we did in the past – Farouk Meer

Farouk Meer, brother of Fatima Meer and son of *Indian Views* editor MI Meer, was born in Durban on 2 July 1938. He grew up in a household in which there was a great deal of political discussion, both about the struggle against white minority rule in South Africa as well as the broader international struggle against British imperialism. Major activists of the time, such as Yusuf Dadoo and Ahmed Kathrada, regularly visited their home. Meer also grew up in the context of the passive resistance (1946-48) and defiance campaigns. This made him politically conscious and aware of the need to participate in the struggle for social and economic redress in apartheid South Africa.

Meer attended Congress High in Greyville. At the time, the only high school in Durban was Sastri College and the NIC ran a high school on the premises of Greyville Primary to cope with the demand for places. The school was run by volunteer teachers in the afternoons. Meer matriculated from Dundee High in 1955. He qualified as a medical doctor in Dublin in 1962 and did his internship at King Edward. He subsequently trained as an anaesthetist in the US. Farouk Meer became involved in politics with the revival of the NIC in 1971. This followed a period of 'so much repression that all political work came to a virtual standstill.' He credits the BCM with sparking a political revival but was attracted by the Congress philosophy 'which says, "look, believe in non-racialism; believe in democracy; and



Farouk Meer

you can become part of the organisation”.’ He concedes that ‘perhaps we might have misunderstood Black Consciousness’ and, in fact, addressed the crowd at Steve Biko’s funeral in King Williams Town in 1977. Meer was the treasurer and later secretary of the NIC. The NIC became mass-based when the likes of Pravin Gordhan, Yunus Mohamed, Zac Yacoob and others joined the organisation and not only campaigned against the South African Indian Council but also did political work through the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC). Through such work, they gained the support of the masses and mounted a vigorous campaign against the Tricameral Parliament in 1983. African activists trusted the NIC and called on the likes of Farouk Meer and “Jerry” Coovadia to be present when post-mortems were carried out. During the 1980 nationwide education boycott, the NIC rallied the community behind the students and Meer was among those arrested:

‘We were going to have a big rally at Orient. At about six in the evening, they knocked on the door and said, ‘We’ve come to detain you.’ They searched the entire house, took out my clothes and looked through all my pockets to see if there was any incriminating evidence. They went to the library, took a whole lot of literature to find out whether it was subversive. They spent two hours searching the house. And then I was locked up. After two weeks at Brighton, we were incarcerated at Modderbee in Benoni. We spent a period of time over there and were then released. You must find your own way back even though they take you without money.’

Meer was present when the UDF was launched in 1983. Many of the declarations prepared by Zac Yacoob, Jerry Coovadia, Thumba Pillay, and Meer were adopted at a meeting in Johannesburg and presented in Cape Town. George Sewpersad, Mewa Ramgobin, Paul David, Archie Gumede, MJ Naidoo, and Billy Nair made international news when they occupied the British Consulate after being charged for treason in 1984. Meer was tasked to look after their medical needs and was a conduit between them and the outside world. He believes that the occupation ‘was successful beyond our own anticipation. The type of publicity it received abroad was absolutely incredible.’ During 1985, Meer was involved in a campaign to get foreign countries to cut diplomatic ties with South Africa. He helped prepare a memorandum that was presented to the British, Italian, German, and American embassies.

When he returned to Durban, he was detained, interrogated, and taken to Pretoria Central prison where he was kept in solitary confinement for three months. While he was not physically abused, he found the experience intimidating because ‘you have three to four guys interrogating you. They sit at different angles, so you’ve got to turn around and answer the question each time. So, as you’re moving your head, you get disorientated because of the rapid-fire questions, and you go there on the understanding that at any stage you are going to be assaulted.’

Meer and the NIC were involved in negotiations that ushered in the new South Africa. He is pragmatic that, while many activists were ‘most unhappy with the Bantustan crowd, and with the ex-Tricameral Parliament people, it is one of the compromises we had to make, because we did not win a military struggle.’ As far as the TRC process is concerned, he felt that the ‘from the psychological point of view, it did have a lot of healing aspects. The negative aspect is the fact that some very nasty people were given pardons.’ Interviewed in 2002, he expressed concern about the ‘poverty around me. I look at Black empowerment, and I say to myself: “Is there any real Black empowerment? Or is it the same small Black elite that continues to re-empower itself?’

He also took issue with the 2002 anti-Indian song *amaIndya* by Mbongeni Ngema:

‘What he is saying is contrary to the whole question of non-racialism, to the idea that we are all South Africans. That song is inciting people to go against the Indian community. As in Hitler’s Germany, where Jews were held responsible for that country’s ills, Indians are paraded as scapegoats for South African problems.... When you look at the contribution of the Indian community to the wider South Africa, ... in the liberation struggle, it is out of proportion to its numbers, at a time when it was bloody dangerous to function as a political activist, and the same goes in the economic sphere. The Indian community has been more than magnanimous in trying to alleviate poverty, to this day. I mean here is this organisation called Gift of the Givers, its disbursed millions of rands. And that type of attack by Ngema is totally uncalled for.’

Source: ‘Farouk Meer,’ Interviewed by M. Ntsodi, 9 October 2002. Voices of Resistance Project, UKZN Documentation Centre.



AC Meer (cigarette in hand) at the Freedom Fair, Curries Fountain, 1959



Farouk Meer addressing an NIC meeting



Fatima Meer addressing a public meeting



*Fatima Meer founded the Black Women's Federation, 1975.
Behind her is Winnie Mandela*



IC Meer leads a batch of resisters during the Defiance Campaign, 1952



IC Meer was recuperating from an operation and was under police guard for several days before being flown to Pretoria for the Treason Trial, 1956



IC Meer peers through the hole in the front door of his Burnwood Road home which was fired at from a shot gun



IC Meer (R) congratulated by his brother AC Meer and Hassen Mall when charges of treason against him were dropped (BAHA)



(L to R): Yunus Mohamed, Pravin Gordhan, Farouk Meer, Jerry Coovadia, Zac Yacoob, Rabi Bughwandeen



AS Minty with Thami Mahlambiso

Fatima Meer

(1928 – 2010)

On having an honorary degree bestowed upon her from the University of Natal in 1998, Fatima Meer was described as being ‘among the first South Africans to have ever existed, a dutiful citizen before citizenship was enfranchised for her.’ She was born in Durban in the teeming world of the Grey Street casbah in August 1928 to MI and Amina Meer. Her father Moosa Meer had come to South Africa from Surat as a young man to join his paternal uncle Chota (IC Meer’s father) in Waschbank. He went to Surat in the early 1920s and married Khatija. But before she could join him in South Africa, he also married a young woman from Kimberley named Rachel.

Thus Fatima Meer had an unusual upbringing:

'My biological mother [Rachel, who became Amina] was white, being of Jewish and Portuguese descent. My other “mother” was Indian. I never thought of her as a step-mother. I called her Ma and my biological mother Amina-Ma. After her marriage to my father, it was as though her ancestral roots never existed. She was given the Muslim name of Amina, became a dedicated Muslim, spoke fluent Gujarati and affirmed the Indian customs of our home. My father, my two mothers and my eight brothers and sisters, as well as some aunts, uncles and cousins all lived happily together as part of a huge family household.'

Fatima became politicised early in life: ‘As a child I used to ask why I could not sit on certain benches or play on swings reserved for whites. They would reply: “Don’t worry. You will enjoy these things in heaven one day.” That answer did not satisfy me for too long. I wanted the necessities and the good things of life in the here and now.’ Unusually for the time, her father insisted that she acquire a sound education and she attended Durban Indian Girls’ High, Wits, and the University of Natal, where she completed her BA and MA degrees in Sociology. Fatima Meer’s involvement in politics began at the precocious age of sixteen when she assisted in raising funds for

the 1944 Bengali famine in which four-million people died. She addressed rallies as a member of the Student Passive Resistance Committee during the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48. Racial riots between Indians and Africans broke out in 1949 in Durban. The violence underscored the need for black political leaders to work across the racial divide and Fatima joined other women from the ANC and NIC to form the Durban and District Women's League. They started a crèche and milk distributing service in the Cato Manor area which had borne the brunt of the riots. Fatima married IC Meer in 1950 and both played prominent roles in the anti-apartheid struggle. She developed a close friendship with Winnie Mandela, with whom she worked in the Black Women's Federation in the 1970s. The two women were imprisoned together in 1976. Meer was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1954 for two years.

As her husband Ismail was also banned, they had to request special permission to communicate with each other. When the banning order expired, she helped to establish FEDSAW and participated in the women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956 to protest pass laws. In December 1956, IC Meer was arrested in the treason trial and she had to take care of their three children, Shamim, Shanaaz, and Rashid, and run the household, while furthering her academic career. At the time of the arrest, she recalled, 'Rashid was only three months.... His [IC Meer] absence from home affected the children fairly profoundly. It had an effect on our family life.'

During the 1960 State of Emergency, she was one of the organisers of protest vigils outside the Durban Central Prison and a weeklong vigil at the Gandhi Settlement in Phoenix with Gandhi's daughter-in-law Sushila. In the early 1970s she took an interest in the affairs of Tin Town, a shack settlement on the banks of the Umgeni River which was subject to periodic flooding. She initiated a temporary settlement for flood victims, and organised food and clothing relief. She was also a founding member of the Natal Education Trust which raised money from the Indian community to build schools in African townships.

The trust built the Chief Albert Luthuli and Dr Dube Administration Block and Library and the Mohamed Ali Student Centre at Ohlange High

in Inanda. Fatima Meer was served with successive banning orders that lasted from 1971 to 1981. Her academic writings could not be published and her passport was withdrawn in 1975. Several applications to travel abroad, including a request to accept a lecturing fellowship at the London School of Economics in 1976, were declined. She was cavalier about her banning. IC Meer wrote in his autobiography, 'I was careful, she was not only careless, but took deliberate chances and did the things she ought to do regardless of her banning order.' For example, she attended a dinner party on 22 December 1977 at photographer Andrew Verster's home, where other banned persons were present. Security policemen hid in the gardens of the Essenwood Road home and "spied" on them through the window. After three hours they entered the house and took photographs. Rather than accept the penalty, Ismail Mohamed argued, firstly, that the police were aware that the law was about to be violated but did nothing to prevent it and, second, that the concept of a social gathering was so wide that it prevented restricted persons from having any form of social relationship with other persons. Mohamed called for the notice to be declared null and void because it was 'unreasonable on the basis of common law.' Fatima Meer was found guilty on 12 May but when the matter was appealed in the Supreme Court, Judges Didcott and Shearer agreed that the definition of "gathering" was too vague.

Fatima and Ismail Meer's son Rashid, who was a Fine Arts student at UDW, was detained from 8 August to 28 December 1976 and banned after his release. UDW refused him readmission in 1977. UCT granted him entry but the Minister of Indian Affairs declined permission for him study in the Cape. The banning literally amounted to house arrest for Rashid. IC Meer wrote in his autobiography: 'The prospect of spending the next five years without any education appeared far too grim for him, and he went into exile. He remained in exile [in London] for fourteen years, and during that time we had very little contact with him... Andrew Verster put his graphic skills to good use and made him a passport. Rashid permed his hair as some sort of disguise, and he left the country quietly, without saying goodbye.' In England Rashid completed an MA degree. He returned to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC but, tragically, was killed in a motor car accident in 1995. Fatima Meer was detained for six months

in 1976 and served her sentence at the Fort in Johannesburg. After her release, the Meers survived an assassination attempt when their home in Burnwood Road was petrol bombed. She recounted the incident to the TRC on 24 October 1996: 'We were telling stories to my nieces who had been staying with me at the time, when my daughter Shanaaz sounded the alarm that our garage was on fire. This immediately got me rushing to the door. Fortunately for me, staying with us at the time was a friend, Zwelenia Ngoba, and he preceded me to the door. He is a tall man, I am a short woman, as is obvious, and he was shot twice on the shoulder, and when I got to the door, he was already lying there bleeding and he said, 'Please go away, they are calling your name, and they are swearing at you.' Had I been the first to open the door, I would have been shot in the head, and I would not have been here today to tell the story.'

More trouble followed when close friend and colleague Rick Turner was murdered on 9 January 1977. From the description of the car at both scenes it appeared to have been the same vehicle. There were two arson attempts on the Meer home in the 1980s. In addition to her political activism, Meer had an abiding interest in social welfare projects. In 1972 she established the Institute of Black Research (IBR), an NGO with an interest in publishing and education. Through the IBR, tutorials were instituted to improve the low matric pass rate and Phambili High was founded in 1986 for African students.

Fatima Meer joined the Sociology department at the University of Natal in 1956 and held this post until 1988. Her many books and articles gained international recognition. She combined her academic work with that of an activist, becoming an articulate representative of the anti-apartheid struggle in various forums. Post-1994, Meer served in areas as diverse as the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology; the Film and Publication Board; as well as the Board of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). From the late 1990s she became concerned with rising poverty levels in townships, where many residents were unable to pay for water and electricity due to high rates of unemployment. She gave voice to the needs of poor urban residents and in so doing stood out from other former anti-apartheid activists who refused to speak out against

anti-poor policies. She was also involved in protests against the plight of the Palestinians, the US led invasion of Afghanistan, and founded Jubilee 2000 to agitate for the cancellation of the Third World debt. Despite the deaths of her husband and son, as well as her own failing health when she suffered a stroke, she continued her political activism until another stroke in March 2010 led to her own death.

*Sources: SAHO; Fatima Meer, Testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 24 October 1996. <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvdurb3/meer.htm>; Charles Villa-Vicencio, *The Spirit of Freedom. South African Leaders on Religion and Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 176-185.*



Fatima Meer with her son Rashid



Winnie Mandela at the funeral of Fatima Meer



Ismail Chota Meer

(1918 – 2000)

IC Meer played a significant role in the South African resistance movement from the middle decades of the twentieth century. The first impression that Pauline Podbrey, a member of the CPSA, had of him was that of a man who ‘with finely drawn features and beautiful hands, his well modulated voice and air of good breeding, looked like a younger version of Pandit Nehru.’ Waschbank, where IC Meer was born in 1918, provided him with his earliest political education. When his father’s businesses failed during the depression of the early 1930s the family relocated to Ritson Road in Durban, where he linked up with Dawood Seedat, Cassim Amra, Ahmed Bhoola, George Ponnen, and Hassen Mall.

IC Meer was drawn into the left wing Liberal Studies Group, engaged in trade union activity as a founder member and secretary of the Natal Indian Teacher’s Society, and joined the CPSA. He matriculated from Sastri College and studied law at Wits since Natal University denied black students entry to its law faculty because the Natal Law Society wanted to keep the legal profession white. At Wits, his associates included Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and Anton Lembede. Meer’s flat in Kholvad House, Market Street, Johannesburg, was a hive of activity.

Mandela often slept over. Myrtle Berman of the CPSA described the Meer of the student days as ‘very charismatic, very bright, very able. He was a leader who stood out.’ The flat was described as ‘dreary ... badly furnished, bloody depressing, ... [but] just a place to be.’ Most important perhaps, it was ‘awash with activity, always, it was a hive.’ Mary Benson, Mandela’s biographer, wrote that the flat brought together young students who in future years would come to constitute the intelligentsia of the Congress Alliance. ‘Over endless cups of tea and curry meals at any time of the day and night,’ she wrote, ‘they discussed and argued and planned, they studied and they listened to the gramophone.’ Mandela referred to this in a letter to Meer on 29 January 1985. He began his letter thus: ‘I’ve missed you so much these 22 years that there are occasions when I even entertain

the wild hope that one good morning I will be told that you are waiting from me in the consultation rooms downstairs. I watch the world aging, scenes from our younger days in Kholvad house and Umgeni Road come back so vividly as if they occurred only the other day – bending endlessly on our textbooks, travelling to and from Milner Park, indulging in a bit of agitation, now on opposite sides and now together, the fruitless polemic with [Ahmed] Bhoola and [Karrim] Essack.’ Meer was sympathetic to the political leanings of Dadoo and, upon the latter’s accession to the leadership of the TIC, became secretary of that organisation. He was recruited by Dadoo to organise African mine workers during the great strike of 1946.

Ahmed Kathrada was another associate. Meer quickly became Kathrada’s hero and, with Dadoo, was his political mentor. Kathrada wrote in his *Memoirs* that when he was in standard seven he helped volunteers organise relief for victims of the famine in Bengal. They worked in the basement of Moulvi Cachalia’s shop. ‘It was there,’ he writes, ‘that I met one of our community leaders, IC Meer, a student at the University of Witwatersrand, who immediately took his place, along with Dadoo, in my personal gallery of heroes.... In those days there were only a handful of blacks at university, and it was a matter of great pride to know a student. I never lost a chance to be seen to be talking to IC Meer, especially when he was wearing his Wits blazer.’ Others in their circle included Ruth First, Duma Nokwe, Harold Wolpe, Nelson Mandela, and Paul Joseph. Kathrada wrote that IC Meer was ‘more than an individual – he was an institution ... His life was closely interwoven with numerous landmark events in the liberation struggle, and with the leaders and activists connected with those events.’

When he passed away in 2000, Kathrada said that it ‘not only left a vacuum in my life, but left South Africa poorer.’ Meer edited the *Passive Resister*, a weekly publication that disseminated information on the 1946-48 passive resistance campaign. With the likes of Yusuf Cachalia, he helped to foster a closer alliance between Indian and African political activists at a time when African politicians were hesitant about an alliance with Indians. During the Defiance Campaign, Meer led a group of resisters on 29 November 1952, and his batch was sentenced to one month’s imprisonment with hard labour. Part of the Durban Bay near the Bluff and Salisbury Island was being

reclaimed and prisoners were taken there each day to join the labour gang. Meer recorded in his autobiography that they 'worked with wheelbarrows, and spades, digging, loading, depositing.... It left our hands blistered and our backs sunburnt.... We survived the test. We fared well and came out of prison strengthened.' Both IC and Fatima were banned for two years in 1954. After completing his law degree, Meer established a practice in Verulam, where he was an institution for many years. He regularly gave the Jumuah kutbah at the Wick Street mosque and conducted *tafsir* classes at the West Street mosque in the early 1970s.

Meer was among those charged with treason and tried during the Treason Trial of 1956-61. His arrest was unorthodox. He was recovering from an appendectomy and Dr Davidson, who performed the operation, insisted that he could not be moved until the stitches were removed. He was placed under 'house arrest' and when the stitches were removed six days later he was put on the train to Johannesburg, accompanied by three security policemen, two white and one Indian, Freddy Moorgas. IC would remark about Freddy: 'Freddy was a good sort. He had joined the police force but kept his soul to himself. He showed me great respect. He had tipped off someone in the NIC office that I would be travelling by train, and the NIC branches were alerted to be on standby and greet me suitably in the towns where we halted. And it was as he said. There were crowds to greet me at Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, and Newcastle.'

The 1960s and 1970s were especially difficult for Meer. He and Fatima and later their son Rashid were all banned. When Fatima Meer was jailed at the Fort Prison in Johannesburg and Rashid in Benoni for five months in 1976, Meer travelled to Johannesburg every weekend, staying with Yusuf and Amina Cachalia. Being banned, having a son in exile, and a wife who was always 'on the wrong side of the law', was not easy. 1984 marked a special year in the lives of IC and Fatima Meer, as they went on pilgrimage to Makkah. He described their feelings on seeing the Kaabah in person for the first time: 'I had heard so much about it since my childhood. I had seen so many pictures of it reverently hung on people's walls. I had never been impressed by the nondescript black cube. Now I was overcome by its splendour. The reality was nothing like its representations. I nudged

Fathu, still in her Sijda, and said in subdued excitement, as if sharing a charmed secret: “See the Kaabah! See!” She lifted her head and gazed on it and was moved to tears. It was an inspirational moment for both of us. We found ourselves quite unexpectedly sharing a mutual ecstasy. Set on the vast white marble floor against the black sky, the Kaabah was a black gem of ethereal beauty.... From the first floor of the Haram Sharif, we saw the pilgrims whirl around as if impelled by some mechanism. We experienced that glorious sight as we stood at the wall where the first floor Jamat Khana ended, looking across and down. We stood there for half an hour or so, mesmerised by that divine whirling, overpowered by its spirituality and tranquillity.'

In 1990, IC and Fatima Meer were jointly awarded the Imaam Abdullah Haroon Award for Struggle Against Oppression and Racial Discrimination in South Africa at a conference on Islam and Apartheid in Washington. The friendship of IC Meer and Nelson Mandela dated back to the 1940s and it was fitting that Mandela should take his friend along on his international travels when he was released. According to Meer, ‘travelling with Nelson, the world’s most distinguished and popular former prisoner, was perhaps the highlight of all my travels abroad; but it was also very demanding and incredibly tiring.’ They made two trips in 1990 – travelling to the UK, US, Australia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Brunei, Germany, and Italy. Meer was with Mandela 'as his speech writer in a delegation of fourteen, making a fleeting world tour to enable him personally to thank the countries that had supported the ANC during his internment.... Everywhere we went, the leaders of the five continents greeted him with admiration and awe.... in Germany, [there was] a plenary in an august hall. Nelson made a brief comment and then took me by surprise when he announced, “My friend Ismail Meer will speak on my behalf.”... I travelled with Nelson to many cities, but the Calcutta reception was unparalleled. That city paid the highest tribute to Mandela; the entire city and its environs turned out to welcome this international hero. It seemed that millions lined the road a hundred deep all the way from the airport to the vast open meeting ground. Mandela acknowledged the reception with the words, “I greet this city of revolution.” ‘His words were met with delighted roar from the crowds waving thousands of red flags. He went on to recount how, in 1913, Moulana Abdul Kalam

Azad had sent Gandhi a telegram of support in South Africa, and went on to outline the contributions of Subhash Chandra Bose and other Bengali heroes. His speech went down exceedingly well. Rajmohan Gandhi, a grandson of the Mahatma, had travelled with us, remarked to me, "He knows our history better than us." I smiled and accepted the compliment.'

Following South Africa's first non-racial democratic election in April 1994, Meer was nominated to the KwaZulu-Natal Legislative Assembly. He served from 1994 to 1999 and was elected for a second term in 1999. During this period Meer was also instrumental in forming the Sastri College Alumni Association; the Liberation History Foundation; and the Democratic Education Advancement League (DEAL). For many years he contributed a column for *The Leader* ('I Remember') which recalled the involvement of Indians in the social and political life of the country. Shortly before his death, Meer reflected on his 'fortunate' life: 'I am grateful for my life. I thank Allah for my life and the people who have enriched it, both in the family and from the large networks of friends and companions who have walked with me at different stages of my life and, in particular, those who have kept my mind and heart fixed on the goal of human equality and achieving peace in our lifetime.' Ismail Chota Meer passed away on 1 May 2000.

Sources: Ismail Meer, A Fortunate Man. Cape Town: Zebra, 2003; Ahmed Kathrada, Memoirs. Cape Town, Struik, 2005; Donald Pinnock. Writing left. The radical journalism of Ruth First. Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2007; Pauline Podbrey. White Girl In Search of the Party. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993.

Abdul Samad Minty

(1939 –)

AS Minty was born in Johannesburg on 31 October 1939, matriculated from the Central Indian High School and left for Britain in 1958 where he completed a BSc. degree in International Relations in 1968 and an MSc. in 1969 at the University College, London. He was a Research Fellow of the Richardson Institute for Conflict and Peace Research from 1969 to 1975 and during 1994-95 was Senior Research Fellow, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO).

Shortly after his arrival in London, Minty met Father Trevor Huddleston and Canon L. John Collins, who had formed the Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa to raise funds for the treason trialists, and worked with them in anti-apartheid activities over the next few decades. On 26 June 1959, following a meeting addressed by Father Huddleston and Julius Nyerere, a Boycott South Africa Movement (BSAM) was launched in London. Minty attended that meeting and participated in the campaign to boycott South African oranges, wine and other consumer products. After the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960, BSAM changed its name to the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and carried out a sustained campaign against the apartheid regime. Minty was appointed honorary secretary of AAM in 1962 and held this position until 1995. He lobbied parliaments, developed international contacts to promote anti-apartheid activities, and lobbied the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to suspend South Africa.

The release of political prisoners and international sanctions against South Africa were high on AAM's agenda. The world campaign for the release of political prisoners was established on 11 October 1963, following the arrest of Mandela, Kathrada, and others in Rivonia. The boycott campaign started with the consumer boycott of South African products and was eventually extended to sport, arms, business, and the arts. It resulted in many ordinary people and governments changing their attitude towards South Africa. AAM worked closely with the UN special committee against apartheid.

Although the increase in African membership of the UN in the 1960s resulted in widespread criticism of South Africa's policies, the US, Britain, and France vetoed successive UN General Assembly resolutions against South Africa. France, in fact, was one of the major suppliers of sophisticated military equipment to South Africa during the height of apartheid. Minty's 1969 study, *South Africa's Defence Strategy*, provided detailed information on South African military and arms supplies from the West. He also addressed UN conferences and seminars. According to E.S. Reddy, 'the papers he prepared and his contributions to the discussions were always highly valued. He was an effective and persuasive speaker, always meticulous in his research, and his proposals were always sound and practical.' The Security Council imposed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa on 4 November 1977 but had no means to monitor secret arms purchases by South Africa. In 1979, Minty established and was director of the Oslo-based World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa. The World Campaign provided the Security Council with information on violations of the arms embargo. AAM helped to transform anti-apartheid protest into a world-wide effort.

Post-1994, Minty has been chairperson of the South African Council for Space Affairs, 1995-2006; member of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, 2001-2002; president of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference, 2006; chairperson of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, 2007-2008; chairperson of the South African Council for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction since 1995; South African Governor, Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Vienna, since 1995; and Deputy Director-General: Ambassador and Special Representative for Disarmament and NEPAD.

Sources: E.S. Reddy. Ed. Anti-Apartheid Movement and the United Nations. Statements and Papers of A.S. Minty. New Delhi: Sanchar Publishing House, 1994; 'Profile: Abdul S. Minty,' Africa-Asia Confidential, 20 March 2008. <http://www.africa-asia-confidential.com/whos-who-profile/id/3142>.

Sayed Iqbal Mohamed

(1956 –)

*I*qbal was born in Lydenburg in the then Eastern Transvaal in 1956 but as his father worked as a roving sales assistant, the family lived in various parts of Gauteng before settling in Tongaat in KwaZulu-Natal. Iqbal did most of his primary schooling in Waterval-Boven, which ‘shaped my views about things. I went to a school in the so-called location, so my fellow students were predominantly Africans.’ Iqbal became aware of the acute social inequities in South Africa through this exposure to poverty: ‘that was my first real experience of the polarisation of people and the kind of injustice that prevailed.’ Iqbal was denied admission to the local high school which was for whites only.

Relocating to Natal provided another reminder of what being black meant in apartheid South Africa. His father ‘had to apply for a permit. Initially we didn’t get a permit so I wasn’t allowed to study pending the outcome of the permit. I was angry but there was very little that one could do.’ Iqbal matriculated in 1976 and enrolled at UDW. There was no SRC on campus because students did not want to give credibility to an apartheid institution but Iqbal was part of a committee of 12 elected during the boycott of 1980 to coordinate protest on campus and forge links with schools and communities. He described the years from 1979 to 1981 as ‘my turning point in terms of genuine commitment, politically as well as in terms of community issues ... and taking up issues against apartheid.’

Iqbal came into contact with Zac Yacoob, Pravin Gordhan, Yunus Mohamed, and other activists. This prepared him for his subsequent activism. His family was renting a flat in Warwick Avenue. The landlord sold that apartment block to the Group Areas Board and tenants were given eviction notices in February 1984. The residents held a mass meeting, which was attended by Billy Nair who had just been released from Robben Island. Iqbal was co-opted to the Warwick Interim Committee (later the Durban Central Residents Association and then the Organisation of Civic Rights), which included Nair, who provided on-the-job training as a community

activist and motivated Iqbal to apply for funding and get an office for the organisation. Iqbal liaised with local newspapers to keep the issue alive in the public mind. Another important influence was Ebrahim Moolla, an old member of the NIC and CPSA in the 1940s and 1950s, who gave him literature about landlords, tenants, and rent control. This caused him to redirect the organisation from Group Areas evictions to community and civic rights. Iqbal married Shireen in 1982 and they have three children. Involvement in community work has required many sacrifices and the family survived financially in large measure because of Shireen, a teacher. Once Warwick Avenue was secured, Iqbal turned his attention to unfair evictions, exorbitant rentals, poor living conditions, and the unscrupulous behaviour of landlords in the Albert Park area.

Iqbal's commitment to the underclasses was well known and in 1987 he was invited to participate in talks with the ANC in Lusaka, where he met Joe Slovo, Thabo Mbeki, and Joe Modise. Iqbal was so inspired by Modise that he wanted to join Umkhonto but was told that the work of civic activists was just as important. Iqbal's friend, journalist Rafiq Rohan, did join Umkhonto. Seven policemen raided Iqbal's home following Rohan's arrest: 'They came in with their machine guns in the early part of the morning. Shireen and the children were still asleep. They raided the house. The way the guys took out their machine guns was really unnecessary and from there they said, 'right, let's get to your office.' I'd been here for almost 17 years in Salisbury Centre. They couldn't find anything. They were hoping to find some link between myself and the ANC. Around that period I made a trip overseas fundraising and they thought I was raising funds for the ANC. In the post-apartheid period Iqbal joined the ANC and served as a councillor for two years. He has experience at both grassroots and formal political levels and is concerned that civic activists have been either absorbed into the mainstream government framework or private sector. As a councillor, for example, he found it difficult to publicly criticise the lack of service delivery. While Iqbal is concerned about the lack of service delivery, he remains optimistic about South Africa's prospects because, he likes to remind people, it is possible to engage with the government. Iqbal remains committed to the plight of the downtrodden and in particular housing and tenant's issues. Like many activists, Iqbal had 'misgivings' about the

TRC process. He felt that crimes had been committed against humanity and 'therefore they should have been dealt with. One sees that every now and again someone is identified who was involved in atrocities against the Jewish community and that person is put to trial and you say, "look at this guy, he is 80-years and he is still subjected to that," and I think yes, he has to, she has to, pay.' The weakness in the TRC, Iqbal argues, was that criminals were given amnesty without being punished and without any guarantee that everything had been revealed. And if we are willing to forgive such heinous crimes, he asks, 'why do we not do that to the criminals of the day?'

Source: Interviewed by D Shongwe, 18 June 2002. 'Voices of Resistance', University of KwaZulu Natal Documentation Centre.



Sayed Iqbal Mohamed receives an award for community service from Dullah Omar

Yunus Mohamed

(1950 – 2008)

*Y*unus Mohamed, the eldest of five children, was born in Jeppie, Johannesburg, in 1950, where his father Ismail, who was from the village of Baruch in Gujarat, ran a grocery store. Jeppie was a relatively mixed-race area with poor Whites and Coloureds living nearby. Yunus attended high school in Benoni from 1963. This was when his political consciousness began to awaken. He could not attend the local ‘white’ schools and had to get up at five each morning to catch a train to school. He also walked a long distance from home to the station and from the Benoni station to school:

‘The physical environment was bad. When I was in standard six we had snow. We were sitting in this prefabricated class, the windows were broken, it had a cement floor. And when you get to these stations, there’s just cement floors. Trains are not always on time. So you’re standing there, your feet are frozen..... [And] when you were riding back in the afternoon, you know, the railway lines run along all these white suburbs between Johannesburg and Benoni and you see all these kids playing soccer and rugby and cricket in those green fields and you get home by about four, five o’clock; you’re exhausted; and then you’ve just got to get down to eat and start with your homework. It’s the same slog everyday. So, ja, there was no kind of full life ... it was just confined to the study sector.’

By standard nine the travelling had taken its toll and Yunus dropped out and studied through Damelin. He matriculated in 1967 and got a scholarship to study in Pakistan. But when he got there in 1968 students were protesting against the military dictatorship and the universities were closed down. Yunus contracted typhoid and lost about thirty kilograms, and returned to South Africa in June 1969. In 1971 he enrolled for a BA degree at UDW, where his contemporaries included Pravin Gordhan, Zac Yacoob, and Krish Govender. Yunus was drawn into student politics and took the public platform. One of their first actions was to dissolve the SRC because they felt that it was conservative and the members were ‘only interested in advancing their careers.’

Other issues that galvanised them were the death of Abraham Tiro in 1972, which resulted in national student boycotts, and the celebration of Republic day in 1972. Students also protested having to wear a tie to university. Yunus was caught twice without a tie. On the second occasion there was a formal disciplinary hearing and he was warned that a repeat offence would result in his expulsion. Yunus completed his B.Proc degree around 1975 and served articles with Enver Motala. After the 1974 Frelimo rally, Yunus assisted attorney Shun Chetty who was defending ‘Terror’ Lekota, Strini Moodley, Saths Cooper, and others, and joined the practice after qualifying. When Chetty left South Africa in 1979 Yunus took over the practice.

Yunus was elected to the executive of the NIC in 1979. The challenge was to mobilise people politically. With the state clampdown, they focused on the civic movement in Tin Town. After the floods of 1976, they campaigned for housing in Phoenix, and thereafter worked in Phoenix to improve living conditions. Working closely with the working classes helped to transform the NIC’s support base. Together with this was the emergence of a burgeoning student movement. Yunus was detained in 1981 with Pravin Gordhan, Bulelane Ngcuka, Simon Tombela, Barbara Hogan, and Prema Naidoo. When the UDF was formed in 1983, Yunus was elected provincial secretary (KZN region) and on to the NEC. During the state of emergency in July 1985, he was detained for two months with the entire UDF NEC, which included Curnick Ndlovu, Titus Mofolo, “Terror” Lekota, and Popo Molefe.

Yunus was involved in two treason trials. The first concerned the 1984 consulate occupation by Billy Nair and others, and the second followed the arrest of three senior members of the UDF, Frank Chikane, Popo Molefe, and ‘Terror’ Lekota, and 19 others. Yunus was the instructing attorney in what became known as the Delmas treason trial, which ran from 1985 to 1988, with sentences being overturned by the Supreme Court in 1989. The essence of both trials was that the activists were using the UDF platform to propagate ANC views. In 1986, Yunus went underground and remained there until he was caught in 1988. By that time, Govan Mbeki had been released and a few months later Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada were also released.

Yunus was released after a few months but his movement was restricted to Durban. While multi-party negotiations were taking place, Yunus completed an MBA degree in 1993. This left him with little time for politics. He was co-opted to help in the running of the country's first election. Thereafter he served on the board of the Airports Company, and wrote a fishing policy for Pallo Jordan, and chaired the Fisheries Transformation Council until 1999. Yunus Mohamed was also chairperson of the Kagiso Trust, a non-profit organisation established in 1986 to channel funds from the European Community's Special Programme for victims of apartheid. He suddenly fell ill and passed away in January 2008.

Sources: Interviewed by M. Ntsodi, 27 September 2002. "Voices of Resistance Project," University of KwaZulu Natal Documentation Centre.



The likes of AS Minty played an important role in the Anti-Apartheid Movement

Mosie Moolla

(1934 –)

*M*osie Moolla was born in the small Western Transvaal town of Christiana on 12 June 1934 and moved to nearby Bloemhof with his family in the late 1930s and from there to Johannesburg in 1949 to attend high school. His teen years were marked by exciting developments in national and international politics, such as the Second World War, the 1946-48 passive resistance campaign against the Ghetto Act, India's march to independence, and, in Mosie's case, the Indonesian fight for freedom inspired him. Boarding in Johannesburg with Congress stalwart Mrs Omar Bhayat, and surrounded by TIC activists Valabh Jaga, Zainab Asvat, and Abdulhaq Patel, Mosie was drawn into the newly launched TIYC whose first campaign was the 1950 May Day strike against the Suppression of Communism Act.

Mosie, Ahmed Kathrada, Abdulhay Jassat, Babla Saloojee and Faried Adams formed an informal spray painting group called the Picasso Club and went around Johannesburg spray painting graffiti, putting up posters, and distributing leaflets. Mosie was elected to the executive committee, then became joint honorary secretary and, finally, chairman of the TIYC. In his matric year, 1952, Mosie took part in the Defiance Campaign and was imprisoned for a month. He was part of a group of defiers led by Manilal Gandhi (son of Mahatma Gandhi) and Patrick Duncan, son of a former Governor-General of South Africa.

Owing to his detention Mosie was expelled from school. During the Congress of the People campaign that culminated in the adoption of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown in June 1955, Mosie served as full-time secretary of the National Action Council. In December 1956, he was one of 156 activists arrested nationwide on allegations of high treason. He was the youngest of the trialists and was part of the last group of thirty who were only acquitted in 1961. On 10 May 1963 Mosie was detained under the notorious 90 day law. Kept in solitary confinement, he was re-detained for a second 90 day period.

Ninety-days' detainees were not allowed visits by family, friend, lawyer, priest, imam or rabbi. According to Herbstein, Charlie Jassat and Laloo Chiba were also imprisoned and when one of them was being taken to the toilet, Ben, 'a friendly African warder, looked the other way' and allowed the prisoners to speak to each other and harmonise the answers that they would give during their interrogation. Uppermost in their minds was escape. They could not 'think of a way out, until..... one Sunday, a new face appeared on the block. He smiled a lot, talked to his charges as if they were blameless human beings, and spent a lot of time in his hokkie (small office) smoking Texans and gossiping on the phone about girls and cars. It was Johan Greeff. The Afrikaner lad was at ease with people of colour. He and the mature Chiba reminisced about Rustenburg, the platinum-mining town where they both had family. Jassat and Moola were closest to Greeff, and the move would have to come from them. They called him into Moola's cell. It was dangerous work. It was one thing to exchange pleasantries with an Afrikaner, quite another to expect him to rat on his own people. Moola, talking rather too fast, said: 'Look, Johan, what we are about to say is between us, the four walls and God.' Greeff, surprised, smiled. The Indian atheist asked him to put his hand on the only reading matter allowed to prisoners, the Dutch Reformed Church version of the Bible. He took the oath. Greeff picks up the story of those tense minutes. 'Jassat made the approach. He said they had helped me, now I might like to help them. I can see him trailing his finger on the wall – a pound mark and then a thousand – if I helped them to get out. 'That was R2,000. I said I couldn't. It was too dangerous.' Two days later, the offer was doubled. The Studebaker Lark was irresistible. Yes, it would be done on Saturday night, four days hence. Jassat had warned him not to tell anyone that he planned to buy a car, but the fellows at the police hostel knew he was desperate for that auto. He had been talking about cars since long before the escape offer, and he continued to be indiscreet. He even discussed the escape plan with a colleague, and was reassured. 'Take the money, man,' his friend advised. 'Didn't they deport those political prisoners Wolf Kodesh and Leon Levy to England? So why shouldn't these four go too?'

'Greeff allowed the escapers to phone from his office to organise the money. It was supposed to be brought to me at the police station before I let them

out, but they said if I was caught it would be damning evidence for all of us. So we arranged for the money to be collected at Chiba's house in Fordsburg.' On the Saturday evening, Ann Marie was ushered into the cell section by the friendly Ben. She handed over the usual basket of goodies. 'It's tonight,' her husband told her. It was all too easy, really, except for the man who did the springing. At midnight, Greeff would come to Goldreich's cell, be hit over the head and be relieved of his bunch of keys; the doors would open; and the escapers would be whistled off in a waiting car. 'I think they were worried that I'd have the Special Branch waiting outside the walls,' says Greeff. 'But if I make an agreement with someone, I keep it.' Greeff came at 1am. He unlocked the gates to the exercise yard and let the four prisoners out into the detectives' car park. 'Each man touched Greeff in acknowledgement of what he had done for them,' says Wolpe. They threaded through the Volkswagen Beetles and Nash Ramblers and went out of the gate into Main Street. The four men walked with determined casualness, whites in front, Indians behind. The pick-up car was no longer there. They split up, Goldreich and Wolpe heading for the Jewish sanctuary of Hillbrow, Moola and Jassat for the Ferreirasdorp Indian ghetto. Jassat and Moola struck it lucky as they scurried through the threatening streets. They ran into a friend, an Indian waiter on his way home from a late shift. Thereafter, says Jassat, 'The press made such a hullabaloo about the whites that we Indians could get about more comfortably.'

'The two men split up. Then, one day, a beautiful Punjabi woman wearing 'trousers, scarf and lipstick, the bloody works' was driven by a Muslim holy man through three police roadblocks to Mafikeng. The Punjabi thereupon changed into a boiler suit and climbed through the border fence into British Bechuanaland. Charlie Jassat was in exile. Moola was last out, seven weeks after the jailbreak, likewise courtesy of Islam. His Gujarati driver, Babla Salojee, would be dead within a year, 'falling out of a seventh-floor window' at security police headquarters. The 'Great Escape' was a morale booster for liberation movements.'

Mosie made his way to Tanzania where he joined the external mission of the ANC and edited its weekly news journal, *Spotlight on South Africa*, for a number of years before being posted to New Dehli to head the ANC's

Asian Mission. He was the ANC Chief Representative in India from 1972 to 1978 and was then posted to Egypt. He served concurrently on the permanent secretariat of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO). In 1982 Mosie was re-posted to New Delhi and in 1989 was transferred to Finland where he served as the ANC representative on The World Peace Council.

Mosie Moolla returned to South Africa in December 1990 and served on the ANC's Department of International Affairs (DIA) before being appointed by President Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first Ambassador to Iran, where he was based for four years. He was then posted to Pakistan as High Commissioner. Mosie's wife Zubeida, who spent most of her life in exile with him, passed away in 2008. They had two children, Afzal and Tasneem. Johan Greef was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment but let out after two years. He never received the money promised to him and was last (in 2004) running a motor repair shop in Postmasburg, a small conservative town on the edge of the Kalahari desert. He was an elder of the Dutch Reformed Church and supported the conservative Constand Viljoen's Freedom Front. About not being paid, Greef told reporter Denis Herbstein, 'You can't trust a communist. Look how many years of prison I saved them, and they didn't pay me a cent. They buggered up my life. If I'd stayed in the police force, I might have been a general by now.'

Sources: Rashid Seedat and Razia Saleh. Ed. Men of Dynamite. Pen Proraits of MK Pioneers. Johannesburg: Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, 2009. 'An Unsung Hero,' Sutra Magazine. 25 November 2009. Denis Herbstein, 'The Smiling Policeman: Johan Greeff,' The Independent, 17 July 1994. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/the-smiling-policeman-1414485.html>.



Mosie Moolla with Nelson Mandela during the treason trial

Hassen Mahomed 'Ike' Moosa

(1923-)

Dr Ike Moosa was born in Johannesburg on 21 September 1923 to Hajira and Mohamed Moosa. After matriculating he proceeded to the University of Fort Hare where he completed a BSc degree. It was here that he came into contact with leading Black intellectuals and became politicized. He proceeded to the University of Cape Town where he studied medicine. Hassen Mall was a contemporary at UCT. In Cape Town Ike held leadership positions in the Franchise Action Council, the Student Socialist Party, and the Cape Indian Assembly.

When he completed his medical degree, Ike continued his political involvement through the SAIC. In *New Age* (16 February 1956) there is a report of a mass meeting to protest the closure of the Soviet Consulate. The meeting was called by SACTU, the ANC and SAIC. Ike addressed the gathering in his capacity as Joint Secretary of the SAIC. He challenged Minister Louw to 'produce a shred of evidence' in support of the allegation that the Soviet Consulate was inciting anti-apartheid protest. The masses were being incited, he said, 'by the actions of the government.' Ike was arrested on 14 December 1956 in Cape Town and charged with treason with 155 other activists. At the time he was Joint Secretary of the SAIC and President of the SA Indian Youth Congress. He was eventually acquitted on 20 April 1959 but banned for five years in 1959 and, when that expired, for a further five years in 1964. Ike worked at Somerset Hospital, Cape Town, from 1951 to 1960, and at Baragwanath Hospital from 1960-1979. He was married to activist Rahima Ally (Moosa), who was spearheaded the historic women's march to the Union Buildings in 1956. They had two children, Zaheed and Sloheen.

Sources: SAHO; Phyllis Naidoo, 156 Hands that built South Africa.



Dr 'Ike' Moosa



Mosie Moolla, Mloli Msimang, MP Naicker, Zubeida Moolla, India, 1960s

Mohammed Vali Moosa

(1957 –)

Born in Johannesburg on 9 February 1957, Moosa experienced the viciousness of the apartheid state at an early age when he and his family were compelled to move to Lenasia as a result of the Group Areas Act. He was a precocious activist who committed acts of defiance from the age of fourteen. On Republic Day 1971, he burnt the South African flag and refused to sing the national anthem, *Die Stem*, at school. Moosa's sustained foray into politics came at university. He enrolled for a BSc degree at UDW and became a member of the BCM. Moosa became its branch secretary for the university. He also joined the banned SASO.

In 1980 Moosa was placed in detention for participating in protests during the four month long nationwide boycott of the education system. Moosa eventually felt that the concerns of Black Consciousness were too sectarian, and in 1983 was elected to the executive of the TIC and joined the UDF when it was founded later in the year. He became general secretary of the UDF in the Transvaal and a member of the NEC. Moosa became leader of the UDF in 1985 when national general secretary, Popo Molefe, was arrested. Moosa was also a target of state repression. In 1988 he was sentenced to serve 14 months in detention but escaped on 13 September, along with Murphy Morobe (UDF), and Vusi Khanyile of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), and sought refuge in the US Consulate in Johannesburg where they stayed for 37 days.

They made international headlines and caused a diplomatic stir between Washington and Pretoria. They left on 19 October, having succeeded in publicising the plight of 1300 detainees. Moosa was detained again in 1989, and after his release was placed under house arrest. The UDF disbanded in 1991 and Moosa was subsequently elected to the executive committee of the ANC. His role was that of negotiator and he was involved in CODESA, where a non-racial South Africa was mapped out. Moosa was named Deputy Minister of Constitutional and Provincial Affairs in 1994, later replacing Roelf Meyer as Minister of Constitutional and Provincial Affairs.

In 1999 he was appointed Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in Thabo Mbeki's government. He worked hard to raise the awareness of the problem of litter; reduce consumption of plastic shopping bags; and ban 4X4s from beaches. Moosa was elected president of the World Conservation Union in 2004. He left government in 2004 and went into private business.

Sources: Mohammed Valli Moosa, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed_Valli_Moosa; Mohammed Valli Moosa, SAHO, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/moosa-mv.htm>.



Valli Moosa, Cyril Ramaphosa, and Dullah Omar during constitutional negotiations, 1993

Rahima Moosa

(1922 – 1993)

*R*ahima Moosa and her twin sister Fatima Seedat were born in Cape Town in 1922. They attended Trafalgar High and, as teenagers, were set on a similar path to political activism through their firsthand experience of discrimination. Rahima was a labour activist and at the age of 21 was a shop steward for the Cape Town Food and Canning Workers' Union. She married Dr Hassen "Ike" Mohamed Moosa in 1951 and moved to the Transvaal. They had four children. Ike was born in 1923, studied at Fort Hare, where he engaged in political activity, and completed his medical degree at UCT. In Cape Town he was vice-president of the Cape Indian Assembly, whose members included Hassen Mall and Cassim Amra.

In the Transvaal Rahima joined the TIC and was prominent in the Congress of the People, which culminated in the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955. As a founding member of FEDSAW she was one of the four women who led the march by thousands of women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956 to protest against the pass laws. She featured in the iconic photograph of that moment with Helen Joseph, Sophia Williams-DeBruyn, and Lillian Ngoyi. Sophia Williams-De Bruyn takes up the story of that march: 'Those 20 000 women proudly, with dignity, graciously and in a disciplined manner marched up the steps of the Union Buildings.... The multitude of women was truly magnificent, some with babies on their backs, Indian women in their colourful saris, and rural women and others in their traditional garments, displaying myriad colours. And then, of course, there were black, green and gold uniforms, the colours of the ANC. We sang *Nkosi Sikelelâ iAfrika*. Standing with Helen, Lillian and Rahima, with thousands of petitions about to be dispatched to Strijdom's office, I realised we had really entered the belly of the dragon. And then the hour arrived that we had to slay our dragon, namely deliver our demands to the prime minister. First Lillian addressed the women, and then we four marched in a dignified manner to Strijdom's office. But when we arrived at his office ... we were told that Strijdom was not there. We partly handed over, partly dumped, the petitions in his office.... August 9 was a cataclysmic event, for



Twins Rahima Moosa and Fatima Seedat (front) were prominent in the women's movement of the 1950s



Rahima Moosa and other leaders of the women's movement delivering some of the 20,000 petitions collected against the pass laws, 9 August 1956

it burst through all the barriers of race and patriarchy that smothered the hearts, souls and intellects of those women and set them free in one great song. After Lillian told the women that the prime minister had run away, the women instantly and spontaneously broke into singing the famous song that would become the women's struggle anthem, *Wathinta Abafazi Wathinta Imbokodo*, which means *You have Struck a Woman, You Have Struck a Rock.*'

The song was not pre-composed or even rehearsed, but it embodied the strength of the women. Rahima attracted the attention of the authorities, becoming a listed person as state authority tightened control in the wake of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. From the early 1970s she experienced chronic ill-health (diabetes which led to a heart attack) and was slowed down in her political involvement. Rahima Moosa passed away in 1993, just before South Africa's first non-racial democratic election. Although she did not live to see South Africa achieve full democracy, her legacy remains – in her memory, the University of KwaZulu-Natal has initiated an annual 'Rahima Moosa' lecture on Women's Day while the Coronation Hospital in Johannesburg became the Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital in 2008.

Source: SAHO; Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, 'Memories of the great march,' Mail & Guardian online, 8 August 2006. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2006-08-08-memories-of-the-great-march>.

Mahomed “Chota” Motala

(1921 – 2005)

Chota Motala, born in Dundee, was one of the two doctors, the other being Omar Essack, who transformed the NIC in Pietermaritzburg in the 1950s. Like many of his contemporaries he was initiated into radical politics at Sastri College. He matriculated in 1938 and proceeded to Bombay where he studied medicine from 1939 to 1947 at the Grant Medical College. He was accompanied by Omar Essack. They worked on a cargo ship, shovelling coal, to earn their fare. Omar and Chota were active in politics in India as members of the Colonial Students Association and Communist Party of India. The Indian struggle against British imperialism was at its height and they participated in the ‘Quit India’ campaign.

After qualifying they opened practices in Pietermaritzburg and catered mainly for Africans from surrounding townships and working class Indians. In one of Chota’s diaries is a quote in his handwriting which sums up his philosophy: ‘A man’s wealth is judged by the good he does in this world.’ The appalling conditions to which they were exposed daily drew them into the political sphere. They revived the NIC in Pietermaritzburg with Chota as chairperson. When Chota was repeatedly arrested, they decided to go into partnership in Retief Street so that one of them could look after the practice when the other was detained. Later, another activist, DV Chetty, joined the practice. Initially, the two doctors were leaning towards the Unity Movement. This was partly due to the influence of the Dundee connection in the persons of Dr Limbada and Karrim Essack, and partly to their rejection of Gandhi’s passive resistance as a method of struggle because of their Indian experience. They addressed Unity Movement meetings during 1950 and 1951. CD Moodley recalls that Chota started study groups at his Boom Street home, and gradually drew in old time communists, younger members of the student society, as well as radical factions of the Congress. These included SB Mangal, Gary Maharaj, LP Ramdhin, Goolam Rassool, and Bobby Pillay. The CPSA had existed from the 1940s and organised mass meetings at the “People’s Hall” at the corner of Thomas and Longmarket Streets. It was here that they received

Memorandum of 20.5.57
Re: Dr. Madan Mohan
 Introduction of Kripka at ITC
 National Plan (Kripka)
 Doctor Gupta - (Kripka)
 7/11 - Sallishat
 Since 1947 - at ITC
 Kripka had (Kripka - Kripka)
 ITC
 I spent 10 days in Kripka
 in the house in June 1952
 Here I saw many in Kripka
 Government party Kripka
 Kripka of Kripka
 Kripka, Kripka, Kripka
 Kripka - Kripka Kripka
 Kripka - ITC - Kripka

<p> In 1950 November attended meeting at Purbi of COT He was Chairman of National Hindustani Council of COT (i) G. Harbans Leader of NIC at Kripka present at one session Leader mention addresses meeting of NIC speaks authoritatively that is why I presume he is a leader (ii) D. C. Hery (134) a member & leader of NIC </p>	<p> I have known him since Defiance Campaign in 1942 (iv) Keshal Moonsamy 137 a leader of NIC. often heard him address meeting of NIC especially at Purbi (v) Dr. M. H. MOTALA (138) he was in Purbi leader of NIC in Purbi also addressed meeting of COT He also was introduced as Chairman of COT together with Dr. D. Conico </p>
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Chota Motala kept a diary in which he recorded proceedings during the Treason Trial.



Chota Motala (left) addressing a rally at Fitzsimmons Park, Pietermaritzburg, 1950s



Memorial Service for Chota Motala. Essop Pahad is in the front (middle)

literature from the Soviet Union and published their own material which they distributed all over Pietermaritzburg. Others gradually drawn into the movement included Naren Ghela, Soko Moodley, Ebrahim "Bhai Gora" Haffjee, Aru Manikam, AS Chetty, Hoosen Hassim, Ismail Vahed, and Pat Thumboo, who formed the core of the NIC in Pietermaritzburg. CD Moodley remains in awe of Chota: 'Chota was the orator, very forceful on the platform. He was unafraid of the cops. If they came to arrest him, he said, "under what section are you going to arrest me?" The guys were not able to answer. "You go and bring your station commander. If he is well versed in the sections under which people can be arrested, bring him here." "That used to work. [Chota was] a man of action and guts too, you know.' Teddy Chetty, a prominent activist and future Mayor of Pietermaritzburg, wrote that it was a special treat when the likes of Nelson Mandela, Albert Luthuli, Moses Kotane or Walter Sisulu spent the night at Chota's home while passing through Pietermaritzburg: 'We would sit from 8 pm to 3 am listening to their analysis of the National Party, the economy ... brilliant. We used to just sit down and listen and listen and listen to Walter Sisulu. We would never get tired of what he had to say.'

In Pietermaritzburg Chota Motala, SB Mungal, SB Maharaj, Omar Essack, and others forged close ties with the local ANC branch led by Archie Gumede, Moses Mabhida, and Harry Gwala. Chota and Gumede were appointed joint representatives of the Natal Midlands Committee of the Congress of the People (1955) which was held in Kliptown. They were responsible for compiling people's grievances under the apartheid state, and raising awareness of the Freedom Charter after its adoption. On the eve of departure for Kliptown, Chota gave the farewell address on behalf of Albert Luthuli who was banned and prohibited from attending the gathering. In the early hours of 5 December 1956, Chota's home was raided by police and he was subsequently arrested and charged with treason. His long detention kept him away from his family and his practice. In 1959, the charges against him were withdrawn. The experience was difficult but it allowed him to forge close ties with such men as Oliver Tambo and Professor ZK Matthews, as well as Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, and Yusuf Dadoo. Following the 1960 state of emergency Chota was arrested and detained for five months.

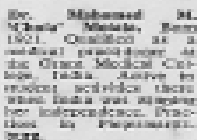
Two years later he was banned and his movements were restricted to Pietermaritzburg. Chota was also detained under another state of emergency in the 1980s. On this occasion ill-health led to his early release. His health notwithstanding, Chota continued his political affiliations as a member of the Release Mandela Campaign and visited Mandela in the Victor Verster Prison just prior to his release. With the unbanning of the black political organisations in 1990, Chota assumed leadership of the Pietermaritzburg Northern Areas Branch of the ANC. President Mandela appointed him South African Ambassador to Morocco in 1996. Chota Motala passed away in 2005, having given long and loyal service to the anti-apartheid struggle.



Chota Motala and Peter Brown, Pietermaritzburg, 1950s



Frank
Frank C. Mear, Born 1918. Assistant Secretary of the Metal Trades Union in the early '40's; secretary of the Industrial Union Congress during 1948. President, Karnataka Committee.



Dr. Mahomed M. Nizam, Born 1901. Qualified as a medical practitioner at the Grant Medical College, India. Active in student activities there when India was fighting for independence. Practitioner in Pimpri, Pune.



M. H. Nale
Billy Nale, Born 1930. Trade unionist. Secretary of 5 Metal Unions in the dia. chemical, diary and tea industries.



Doreen
Doreen A. Sooda, Born 1916. Indian. Former Green and political activity from 1941 to 1948 under a War Measure. Active in the Free European Central Front, and in the Metal Trades Congress since 1950.



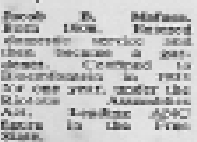
E. E. Shankar
Ernest E. Shankar, Born 1911. Maharashtra's first. Formerly secretary of the Maharashtra Students Union, secretary of Indian Trade and Labor Council for eight years. Served with S.A. Central Detachment during the war.



Minnie
Minnie H. 'Minnie' Simbhoo, Born 1916. Teacher and cinema's activist. In 1953 helped organize 22 night schools for adult illiterates. A leading spirit in many Metal Trades campaigns.



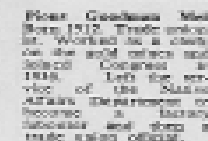
Mrs. Minnie Makhijani
Mrs. Minnie Makhijani, Born 1906 of a family of four generations. Has worked in Bombay service for 21 years. Joined Congress in 1948. One of the leaders of Free State women in the doctors' campaign. Member of 4 clubs.



Jacob
Jacob B. Marfan, Born 1908. Former electric worker and then became a journalist. Campaigned in Maharashtra in 1948 for one year, under the National Association of India. Working APO since in the Free State.



Dr. G. M. 'Manny' Pankaj, Born 1910. President of the South African Indian Congress. Served two terms of imprisonment of six months each during the 1918 Passive Resistance campaign, and went to prison again after leading the first Metal Strike at Indian Chamber of Commerce. Joined India's first union with Gandhi.



Peter Goodman, Born 1912. Trade unionist. Worked as a clerk on the world relief and Social Congress in 1948. Left the service of the State after its termination. Became a literary laborer and then a trade union official.



Abanindro
Abanindro Bhattacharya, Born 1901. Former electric worker, now tea student. AA president of the Students' Representative Council played a leading role in the late student movement campaign at the University of Madras.



Harshadha
Harshadha B. 'Harshad' Yengra, Born 1921. Bookkeeper, near an activist. Formerly President in the Maharashtra Congress. In 1953 was named from Bombay, where were industrial districts in the Union and was organized for two years in Maharashtra, a place he had left 17 years before.





Mrs. Gerda Niklas, Teacher and laborer. Women's committee member from 1931 to the 1934 and 1935-1936 campaigns.



Nardonne Donald Nantoko, Born 1924. Attorney, President of the Non-European Students' Representative Council at the University of Natal in 1945. Active in the Natal Indian Congress since 1945.

Kenneth Mosemer, Born 1935. Indian Congress organizer, served NCBI South African Council in the 1945-1946. Former Robinson Campaign, helped organize the 1947 25th Annual Day (with Special Supper) of the Committee, Act. in 1949.



Mrs. Gerda Nantoko, Born 1930. Women's organizer. Served two years' sentences during the Robinson Campaign; led the campaign of Natal women who petitioned to the Prime Minister in August, 1950. In Pretoria, against cancer for women.



Fred Singh, Born 1921. South African. In 1944 was the secretary of Anti-Discrimination Council which campaigned against the firm conservative leadership of the Natal Indian Congress and for the election of the Disenfranchisement leadership. Secretary of Natal Passive Resistance Council in 1948.



V. K. M. 'Mama' Pillay, Born 1918. Trade unionist. Has played a leading role in Durban's trade union movement and is today Durban's secretary of the Natal Indian Union of Operating South African and Workers.



Mrs. Doris Shanks, Born 1918. Nursery school teacher. Mother of three children aged 11, 8 and 7, cared for by friends and neighbors during the arrest and trial of Dorothy and her husband, Errol.



Gabriel Dikaba, Born 1903. A lawyer till he was 14, and then left school to become a laborer in the railway workshops. Led the first Free State campaign in the Robinson Campaign.



Dr. Arthur E. Letele, Born 1916. Medical professional. Indian African was selected to University Medical Center, trained as a medical aide in a short period. Led the first 1945-1946 campaign to the Robinson Campaign and was one of those found guilty of leading the campaign.



Leffe Somo Thabo Mmamagana, Born 1924. Laborer. Came into the ANC during the Robinson Campaign and has been a prison, once Free State leader over there.



Abraham Barnette Moolenaar, Born 1924. Schoolteacher. Assigned as a teacher when the South African Act was introduced. Active in the Mlambo ANC.





Choti Motala during one of the joint ANC / NIC meetings at Fitzsimmons Park, Pietermaritzburg, 1950s. Monty Naicker and Archie Gumede are on stage

Rabia ‘Choti’ Motala

(1932 –)

Rabia “Choti” Motala was born in Kokstad in 1932. She did her primary schooling in Kokstad at the local Coloured school but her conservative father did not permit her to enter high school and so she ‘was at home, helping in the shop, did dress-making, but the urge to study was always there.’ Between primary school and marriage she read profusely: ‘all novels, you know, anything I could lay my hands on.... Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Louisa Alcott’s *Little Women* ... that sort of thing.’ She married the dashing Chota Motala on 30 September 1951. Chota encouraged her to complete her schooling and she attended night school from 1952 to 1955, and enrolled for the BA degree at University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. She completed eight courses and only had her majors to complete but the stresses resulting from the Treason Trial (1956-1961) and other restrictive measures imposed on Chota put paid to her ambitions.

Choti had little interest in politics at the time of her marriage: ‘I came from an apolitical family...’ Marriage changed her life dramatically. She found herself ‘immersed in protest. Chota, you know, was so involved, his practice was secondary. I would go with the babies everywhere too ... to Newcastle. [We would] leave here at 5 am, go for meetings via the old road [and] come back at 1 or 2 o’clock the next morning.’ Choti was gradually drawn into various organisations and met Albert Luthuli, Walter Sisulu, and Nelson Mandela who sometimes stayed at her house.

Another activist, Sonia Bunting, was a regular visitor when she was raising funds for *New Age*. Choti herself helped raise funds during the Treason Trial, teaming up with Durga Bundhoo and Bunty Biggs. ‘It was very funny,’ she recalls, ‘some places you go, ... they say, “it must be very hard for you to run the house, that’s why you have to ask for money.”’ But the money wasn’t for us. We went house-to-house, shop-to-shop ... some shops would throw us out too.’ In the early 1960s, Choti joined the Banishees Committee, which assisted African activists who were banished to remote corners of the country.

As Choti explains, ‘in those dark days banishment meant [that] they just didn’t restrict you to a house or a magisterial district but they sent you to some place where you had no network ... these people were literally destitute.’ With Helen Joseph, Marjorie Fleming, and Bunty Biggs, Choti worked for almost two decades collecting funds and purchasing beans, milk, rice, and flour at a subsidised rate, collecting clothing from Oxfam, and purchasing schoolbooks and farming seeds, which they mailed to banished persons and their families. Choti was also a member of the International Peace Council which met every few months to discuss the international political situation.

Chota Motala was banned for five years in the 1960s. According to Choti, ‘the banning impacted on the family. The SB were really nasty. They didn’t let him go to his sister’s husband’s funeral. It was hard for Chota because he loved being involved with people. He was quite a public speaker and missed this.’ A mark of the esteem in which Chota Motala was regarded by Mandela is that in late 1989 he received a message that Mandela wanted to meet him at Victor Verster Prison. Choti and Chota Motala spent eight hours with Mandela, reminiscing about the past but also discussing a future South Africa. At a mass meeting at the Pietermaritzburg City Hall in 1996 Mandela announced that he had appointed Chota as ambassador to Morocco. He held this post from 1996 until 1999.

For Choti, it was an ‘exciting journey’ as she and Chota had been denied a full passport for 27 years. To prepare for Morocco, Choti, in her late sixties, took lessons in French. She initially felt ‘a bit lost but adapted quickly,’ mixing with other ambassadors and dignitaries and their wives and husbands, being involved with the Africa group of ambassadors in fundraising activities, and joining an international gourmet group, where her culinary skills were put to a stern test – and with the wives of other ambassadors, was flown on the Royal jet to places such as Dubai and Kuwait. Choti Motala described the Moroccan experience as the highlight of a rich and fulfilling life.

Shaikh Hassan Mowla

(1933 – 1998)

A Tribute by Kader Hassim

*H*assan Mowla, or Shaik Hassan as he was known, was a member of a large family of six. The family was poverty stricken lived in a place called ‘Akoo’s Barracks’ at the bottom end of Church Street, Pietermaritzburg. The father of this family had his financial problems made worse when he had to have his arm amputated. There is no record of how this family survived until Hassan and certain of his brothers went out to work. With steady income assured, the family moved to ‘better’ living quarters – a wood and iron structures at the rear of a property in what was formerly called Loop Street.

The path to the rented quarters was not paved and on rainy days one had to negotiate a series of puddles and little pools of water to get to Hassan. At 14, Hassan went out to work. Like most Indian working class families of Pietermaritzburg, he landed in the leather industry. For many it was work in the shoe factory until the end of their working days. The day for the worker began early in the morning. After ablutions and a hurried cup of tea, the worker made himself ready for ‘The Eddels workers walk,’ a long line of marching workers to the shoe factory to beat the second hooter. The bulk of the workers came from the ‘Indian bottom end,’ from the slums of wood and iron structures built behind the well built homes of the well-off.

The workers literally spilled into the streets. The Eddels workers’ stride to the factory never left Hassan. He did not know how to walk at a relaxed pace. Apart from working fulltime as a leather worker in the polishing room in the factory, Hassan showed himself to be an enterprising person. Somewhere along the line, he converted to reality what most young persons dream of – PERFORMING MAGIC! Like all magicians, Hassan point blank refused to show you how to perform a magic trick! He proudly and mercilessly adhered to the oath of secrecy of magicians never to reveal the secrets of their trade!

Hassan had to leave school after completing his standard six to maintain the family. To compensate for his low formal education, Hassan joined the M.L. Sultan Technical Students Society, whose chief activity was to train its members to become public speakers and debate intelligently. Apart from lectures there was a mock parliament in which participants argued and debated in accordance with the rules of Parliament. Formidable speakers and debaters emerged in this Society – YD Asmall, CR Rajgopal, LM Naidoo, to name the outstanding ones, but there were many speakers who seldom missed an opportunity to make their views known. One such person was Hassan. He spoke at each meeting and thus learned to speak in public. This held him in good stead when he went into exile and toured many countries speaking on the struggle for liberty in South Africa.

In the early 1950s, the owners of Eddels introduced the notorious incentive system whereby they kept increasing the expected ‘average’ production and gave a bonus to those who exceeded that. The closing years of the 1950s witnessed tremendous opposition to the ruling class and the changed political climate of militancy influenced the thinking of the leatherworkers of Pietermaritzburg who took a decision to go on strike against the hated bonus system. Workers threw overboard their official trade union representatives and shop stewards. New leaders emerged. Hassan became the most popular leader of the leather workers. Packed meetings at the Leather Workers’ Hall became a regular feature attracting workers and ordinary members of the public. When the bosses of Eddels laid criminal charges against workers, Pietermaritzburg was exposed to an outspoken black lawyer who was not scared of the functionaries of the State. This was Enver Hassim, a leading Apdusa member from Durban. Hassan Shaik had, in the meantime, developed into an accomplished platform speaker and whenever he spoke he had his audience standing on their feet applauding him. As the strike continued and savings were diminishing, shopkeepers supplied workers with goods on credit. When savings were dried up, shopkeepers supplied the bare essentials – oil, mealie rice, rice, mealie meal, sugar and salt and canned food. But this could not go indefinitely and soon one saw the shelves of the shops being denuded of goods. Pietermaritzburg had become a ghost town. The legal battle was fought but the workers lost. They returned to work. But all the ‘troublemakers’, that is, the militant

leaders and so-called ‘agitators’, were dismissed. Those were hard days for Hassan. All his working life he had been a leather worker. There was nothing else he could do. His skill as a magician provided some income but nowhere near the needs of his family. Fathima, his wife, took to making samoosas which were sold to bars and such like places. Hassan’s sense of pride did not allow him to enter bars to sell Fathima’s efforts. So his comrades, Essop Hassim and Prem Bheek, effected the deliveries. Things changed when Hassan got a job as a driver with OK Bazaars. Once again there was a regular income.

No more going into bars to sell samoosas. All went well until Hassan was served with banning orders. The reaction of his employers was to terminate his services. Mr Maisels Q.C. was South Africa’s leading human rights lawyer. When Maisels QC was eligible for judgeship in South Africa, he refused to apply because it would have meant applying the draconian laws of the racist regime. He accepted directorship of OK Bazaars. Hassan contacted Mr Maisels and told him about his dismissal. The latter’s reaction was immediate. He instructed local management of OK Bazaars to re-employ Hassan without delay. Hassan then forgot to report to the police as he was obliged to in terms of his banning orders. He was charged and sentenced to one year’s imprisonment which was suspended barring one month. Hassan was once again dismissed and once again Mr Maisels had him reinstated. His unforgettable words were: *Mr Shaik to be given leave to serve his sentence and thereafter to be reinstated in his employment.* This took place in the mid-sixties when Fascism had this country in its deathly grip. We can only express our infinite admiration for a person like Mr Maisels, a Jewish South African who stood firm on principle and with Hassan until the very end.

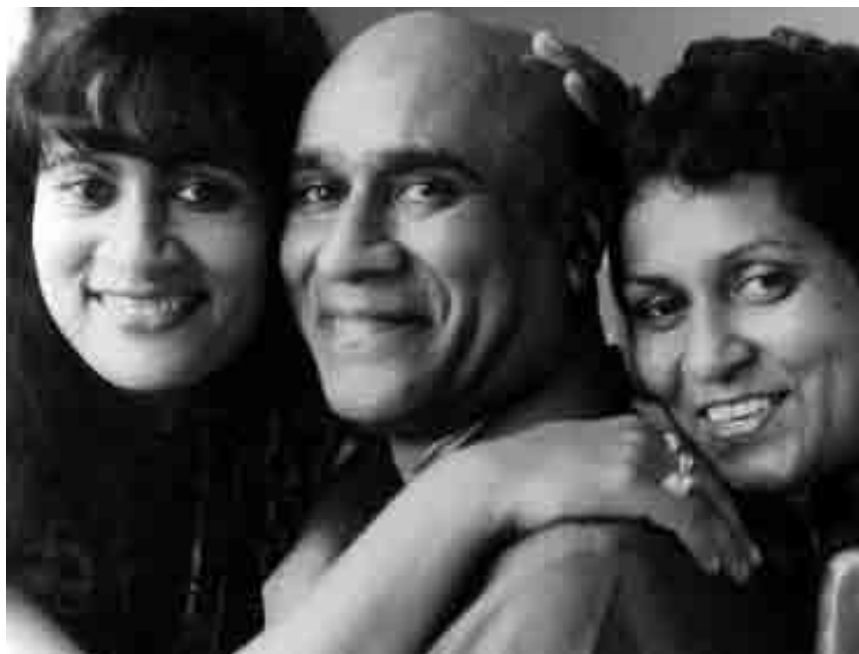
Hassan was too much of a free-roving spirit to have the discipline to comply with the terms of his severe banning orders. Life became unbearable and he chose to leave the country. During or about 1967 Hassan left the country on an exit permit in the expectation that his wife and young children would soon follow him. Once Hassan reached the UK, Fathima, his wife, applied for passports for herself and the three children. The government refused. Instead, it offered a one-way exit permit which meant that they could not

return to the country. Fathima, after much agonising, decided not to apply for an exit permit. Hassan had to (re)make his own life in the UK. Contact between him and his family was reduced to a trickle and finally to nothing. These were hard days for Fathima who was a housewife all her married life. The samoosas she made could not sustain a family of three growing children. Fortune intervened in the form of family friend Deena, who later converted to Islam and took the name of Dawood. Dawood decided to take in Fathima and her children as his family. He thus provided succour to this family steeped in indigence. But life's cruelty did not end. Yusuf, the son of Fathima and Hassan, died very suddenly. He was just 24 years old.

In 1990, further tragedy struck the family. Dawood passed away. But by then the daughters had grown into adults and could maintain themselves and their mother. Thirty years had slipped by. Life had moved on. The girls had married and were convinced that they would never see their father again. In the meantime, fate had woven its own ending for this ill-starred family. Hassan had become afflicted with a heart condition for which there was no cure. His time to die had come. He wanted more than anything to see his family and comrades before he died. He needed their forgiveness. With days left he made his perilous journey to South Africa. It was ironical that the taxi driver from Durban dropped him off at the very site he was born – where now stood Akoo's Flats. The place was beyond recognition. The place was now no longer safe especially with a well dressed Indian who carried a large suitcase. A kindly shopkeeper advised Hassan to get to the Imperial Hotel and from there to make inquiries about his family. From his hotel room Hassan advertised in the local paper the fact of his presence and for members of his family to contact him. Fortunately for him, his daughter Zulei is an inveterate small-ad reader. She spotted the advertisement and made contact with him. There was disbelief and then uncontrollable joy. Hassan looked so well that some suspected that his story about his heart was no more than a gimmick to win sympathy! Alas! If it were only so! Hassan, a dying man, was subjected to a whirlwind of activities. There was an unending stream of visitors – old friends and comrades. He was driven to Lesotho to visit his daughter and son-in-law who had a business there.

Then came the day before his return to the UK. He spent the evening with his fellow-Apdusans. One could see him gasping for breath. We attributed that to the very hot evening. We said our goodbyes to him and asked him to come back soon. With a faint smile he nodded. That night Hassan's heart finally gave way and he passed away. His daughter Zulei recalls her efforts to make him comfortable. His reaction was 'Don't fuss!' That was Hassan all the way through – though dying, he scolds about fussing! His funeral took place on an unbearably hot day. He was buried in the Mountain Rise cemetery. Before his grave was covered, members of his family asked the Apdusa members present to say a few appropriate words. A member spoke about Hassan's life and his contribution to the struggle. Pietermaritzburg mourners at that Muslim funeral heard their first political funeral eulogy. At the Muslim 40 day ceremony the tribute was repeated, this time it was under a fluttering banner of Apdusa. Hassan returned to South Africa on 4 January 1998 and passed away on 27 January 1998.

Source: APDUSA VIEWS. From <http://www.apdusaviews.co.za/repos.php>



Shaikh Hassan Mowla with his daughters

Suleman Mohamed Nathie

(1918 – 1979)

Solly Nathie was born on 16 October 1918 in Evaton in the then Transvaal. He left school in standard six to assist in the family business but was a self-taught intellectual and dynamic public orator. He participated in the 1946-48 passive resistance campaign. He helped organise the Evaton Bus Boycott during 1955 and 1956 and as secretary of the TIC was involved in the major political campaigns of the 1950s. He was arrested along with 155 others on 5 December 1956 and charged with treason. He was acquitted in April 1959. During the State of Emergency that followed the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March 1960, Solly was imprisoned without trial for five months. Solly married Amina Bibi and they had two children, Mohamed and Hajra. Frequent arrests and two banning orders of five years each eventually led to him taking an exit permit in 1968 to settle in Bombay where his son was studying medicine at the Grant Medical School. Solly was a diabetic and when his health deteriorated he returned to South Africa in 1976 for treatment. He suffered a kidney failure and passed away in July 1979.

Sources: SAHO; Phyllis Naidoo, 156 Hands that built South Africa.





Nathie, because of his banning order, was prevented from attending Hajra's wedding because it constituted a 'gathering' (three people or more). He wished her well and was forced to watch proceedings from a distance (see opposite page)



Suleman Nathie leading a street procession



Goolam Pahad, SM Nathie and Nana Sita printing newspapers during the Passive Resistance Campaign of 1946-48

Abdullah Mohamed ‘Dullah’ Omar

(1934 – 2004)

*A*s a small boy, I used to walk a mile every weekday afternoon to “*cheder*” (Hebrew school) from my home in the Cape Town suburb of Observatory. On the way I passed a fruit and vegetable shop owned by a ‘Coloured’ family. I stopped to buy fruit and was often served by a dark-eyed boy of my own age. We had different skin-colours and in the South Africa of that time did not become friends. Many years later the boy and I, now adults, found each other again. He was ‘Dullah’ Omar, and was then a lawyer fighting legal cases against apartheid. ‘I was a journalist reporting apartheid. Somehow we recognised each other from the years before. We overcame the racial apartheid barriers to form a friendship which remained until his death....Merely to say that he fought cases against apartheid does not convey the courage which he displayed. Few solicitors were willing to challenge the government of South Africa. Dullah Omar, however, did not shrink: he defended the accused in a range of political trials.... I retain my memory of the dark-eyed boy and of the later years, of the adult who spoke to me with quiet passion and strength about the struggle to bring freedom to South Africa. And who lived to enjoy success – Benjamin Poggrund, journalist.

*D*ullah Omar was born in Cape Town on 26 May 1934. He grew up in District Six as one of eleven children and was educated at Trafalgar High where his political views were shaped under the influence of English master Ben Kies, the Unity Movement intellectual whose ideas influenced many activists. Omar studied law at UCT, graduating with a BA LLB in 1957. During the 1950s, when the NP government targeted Coloured voters, Omar was an active student member of the Unity Movement and remained a member until he joined the UDF in 1983. Omar was admitted as an attorney in 1960 and set up his own law practice because it was difficult for a black attorney to find a position with a white law firm. For his office in Caledon

Street, he had to apply annually for a Group Areas permit until the Act was applied more stringently and he was forced to move to Woodstock. He became the PAC's official attorney, and also made frequent trips to Robben Island to act for some of the Congress leadership. In the early 1960s he defended the accused in the Poqo trials (acts of sabotage carried out by PAC members in the Cape), and in the 1970s acted for the Black Peoples' Convention and SASO. His passport was withdrawn in September 1981, three days before he was due to leave to study for a Master of Law degree at Harvard. Omar was admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court in 1982. He worked with the UDF and was detained twice in 1985, and then served with a banning order that restricted him to the Wynberg magisterial district and forbade him from taking part in UDF activities.

When Omar was detained in 1985, Ahmed Kathrada wrote to his wife Farieda on 1 September 1985: 'I reacted to the news with a degree of surprise, mingled with disappointment and sadness. To think that, in a matter of hours or a couple of days, life can take such a dramatic turn! A loving husband and father so suddenly removed from the comforts of home and from the warmth of family to spend an undetermined time within the cheerless, regimented and unsociable confines of a police or prison cell.' In July 1987 Omar was elected chairman of the UDF in the Western Cape. He remained an implacable opponent of the Tricameral system: 'To think you can use the Tricameral system in this fashion is like trying to cross the river on the back of a crocodile,' he said. In 1987 he was elected vice president of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADAL) and in 1989 became vice president of the UDF. From 1989, Omar was the most widely-quoted spokesman for Nelson Mandela in the months leading up to the former president's release. He was appointed director of the UWC Community Law Centre in 1990. He was elected to the Western Cape regional executive of the ANC in 1990 and to the ANC's national executive in July 1991. He was a member of the ANC's constitutional committee and of its negotiating team at constitutional talks in 1991. Dullah Omar became the first Minister of Justice of the new democratic South Africa in 1994. In July 1994 he became the first Cabinet Minister to be appointed as acting President of South Africa. He was also involved in establishing the legislation that set up the TRC. In June 1999, President

Thabo Mbeki appointed Omar to the position of Minister of Transport. As Justice Minister, Omar piloted legislation to set up statutory bodies such as the Constitutional Court, Human Rights Commission, and Office of the Public Protector. As Transport Minister, Omar focussed on completing institutional transformation, safety issues in respect of road, rail, sea and air, and transformation of the mini-bus taxi industry. He was conferred with honorary doctorates of Law from Fort Hare (1993) and UDW (1996). He has also been the recipient of awards in the USA, Chile and Germany for his contribution to the struggle for human rights in South Africa. As a cabinet minister from 1994, Omar was entitled to a luxury ministerial residence but insisted on remaining among lifelong friends and family in Rylands.

Mewa Ramgobin, longtime member of the NIC and an MP, wrote on the passing of Dullah Omar: ‘What a pity I was not physically present at your funeral. But, watching it all on television with a deep sense of pain inside me I did manage a slight smile to say, “Here goes to rest a towering cadre of the ANC”.’ Dullah Omar was married to Farieda Ally and they had three children. He was diagnosed with cancer in late 2002 and passed away on 12 March 2004. Omar was given a state funeral, with a naval guard of honour combined with burial by Islamic rites. Then President Thabo Mbeki, former President Nelson Mandela, and most members of the cabinet attended the funeral. Mandela said that ‘a humbler, more committed, more dedicated person you could not wish to find.’ An ANC spokesman said that Dullah Omar would be remembered ‘for his modest demeanour, his intellect, compassion and unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom in this country.’

Sources: Mewa Ramgobin, Prisms of Light. Within My Memory. East London: Iqula Publishing, 2009; Benjamin Pogrud, ‘Dullah Omar,’ The Independent of Sunday Obituaries, 15 March 2004. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/dullah-omar-549620.html>

Rashied Omar

(1959 –)

[*R*ashied Omar's] biography hints at two factors that can shape a religious progressive: learning to value a complex education and having the opportunity to apply religious commitment to human equality, not just one's own liberation – Gershom Gorenberg.

*R*ashied Omar, born on 17 January 1959 in Cape Town, was involved in anti-apartheid protest from high school. He recounts that his life has largely been shaped by a struggle 'to build a bridge between my faith commitment and my participation in protest against racism and apartheid.' Omar has successfully combined an Islamic and secular education. He completed his BA Hons (1986) in History, and Masters (1992) and Doctorate (2005) degrees in Religious Studies at UCT, and an MA in Peace Studies (2002) at Notre Dame. He studied Islamic religious education in South Africa, at the African Islamic University in Khartoum, Sudan; International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan; and the International Islamic University of Malaysia. In 1985, Omar became an Imam at the Claremont Mosque in Cape Town, a mosque that prides itself on having survived the Group Areas Act, with congregants continuing to attend as a mark of defiance, and by the 1980s it was the hub of anti-apartheid protest.

There was at the mosque, in reporter Gorenberg's words, 'a bubbling mix of Islam and questioning, progressive politics. That blend still sets it apart from most of local Islam...' Omar was Imam until 2000. He was president of the MSA in 1981 and 1982 and director of the MYM during 1984 and 1985. He has used the pulpit to highlight social issues such as HIV Aids and invited an HIV positive person to address his congregants. He did this, he says, to humanise the pandemic and build awareness and compassion among ordinary South Africans. Omar also spoke out against the violence associated with the anti-drug organisation PAGAD in the late 1990s, despite receiving several death threats. While many in the post-9/11 world have

blamed religion for many of the world's problems, Omar maintains that while 'religion has many, many problems [and] has contributed towards conflict so too has secular modernity and post enlightenment. It's not been a panacea to all of our problems.'

At the Kroc Institute in Notre Dame where Rashied was a Research Scholar of Islamic Studies and Peacebuilding, his research and teaching focused on religion, violence, and peacebuilding, especially the Islamic ethics of war and peace and interreligious dialogue. He has been a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (2003); authored *Tolerance, Civil Society and Renaissance in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2002); and co-edited *A Dictionary of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Cambridge University Press). Rashied Omar has served post-apartheid South Africa in various capacities. He was national vice president of the World Conference on Religion and Peace – South African Chapter (1995-1999); co-chair of the Cape Town Parliament of the World's Religions (1999); deputy-chair of the Interreligious Commission on Crime and Violence in the Western Cape (1997-1999); deputy-chair of the Electoral Code of Conduct Observer Commission – National Elections (1999); trustee of the Institute of the Healing of Memories, South Africa; and trustee, Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa (until May 2006).

*Sources: Faculty Directory, Kroc Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA; <http://kroc.nd.edu/people/directory/faculty/rashied-omar>; Gershom Gorenberg, 'The Progressive Imam', *The American Prospect*, 26 September 2008. http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_progressive_imam*



Rashied Omar with Archbishop Desmond Tutu



Abba Omar with his relieved parents when he was released from detention, 1980

Yacoob Abba Omar

(1961-)

*A*bbas Omar was born in Durban in 1961, matriculated from Sastri College and enrolled at UDW where he completed a BA degree, majoring in politics. During his university years, he was drawn into students politics as one of the key leaders of the national student boycotts in 1980 and 1981 and was arrested on several occasions during this period. During the mid-1980s, as the ANC was attempting to prepare a strong presence within the country in response to the general uprising in the townships, it sent middle-ranking members such as Ebrahim Ebrahim and Siphos Khumalo into the country to carry out clandestine recruitment missions.

This resulted in the development of a highly efficient network of about thirteen members in Durban, including Mo and Yunus Shaik and Yacoob Abba Omar, around the figure of Pravin Gordhan. One of their key operations was Operation Butterfly which aimed to settle a group of externally trained military cadres in the Durban area to re-organise the local underground. Police uncovered the operation and arrested one of the key leaders, Vijay Ramlakan, on Christmas Eve 1985. Under instruction from the ANC, Abba went into exile and received military training in Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. He also went to Moscow to study political economy.

Abba Omar served on the Political Military Committee of the ANC and managed the political outfit's information and publishing affairs between 1990 and 1994. He was appointed Director of Communication of Armscor, South Africa's military material manufacturer, in 1993. When the South African Communication Service was transformed into the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in 1998, Joel Netshitenzhe was appointed as CEO with Abba as his deputy, a post that he occupied until 2001. From 2001 to 2003, Abba Omar engaged in his own business; from 2003 to 2008, he was South Africa's ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman and in 2008 took up a fresh assignment in Abu Dhabi.

Amina Pahad

(1918 – 1973)

Amina Pahad, popularly known as the mother of Essop and Aziz Pahad, was an activist in her own right who courted imprisonment twice during the 1946-48 campaign. She was born Amina Tilley in July 1918 in Klerksdorp in the then Transvaal. She was deeply moved by white oppression and became active in Indian resistance politics in the Transvaal. When the Ghetto Act, which restricted Indian occupation and ownership rights of land, was passed in 1946, volunteers courted imprisonment by deliberately occupying land reserved for white people. Amina Pahad was among the first to volunteer even though volunteers were attacked by gangs of racist thugs. Although the prison experience was harsh, she was among those that courted imprisonment for a second time. The example set by the passive resisters served as a lesson to ANC strategists of the 1950s and also laid the basis for joint campaigns between the SAIC and ANC.

Though suffering from rheumatism, Amina Pahad participated in the 1952 Defiance Campaign against unjust apartheid laws, and also took part in the Women's March of 1956 in which 20 000 women converged on the Union Buildings to protest against the extension of apartheid legislation to urban black women. Amina Pahad's home was one where people from all walks of life were welcomed. Nelson Mandela wrote in his autobiography: 'I often visited the home of Amina Pahad for lunch, and then, suddenly, this charming woman put aside her apron and went to jail for her beliefs. If I had once questioned the willingness of the Indian community to protest against oppression, I no longer could.' Walter Sisulu noted that his initial assessment that Indian women were 'conservative and unwilling to involve themselves in public life' changed after he had met Amina Pahad and other Indian women who were involved in the passive resistance campaigns. Ahmed Kathrada wrote of Amina Pahad, his 'second mother', in his *Memoirs*: 'Through my late teens, I still felt the absence of a mother, and Aminabai was a wonderful surrogate. My visits to the family became so frequent that if, for some reason, I missed lunch or supper, she would telephone to find out where I was and if I was

having a decent meal. When I was laid up with the flu or some other minor ailment, she bought me food and medication and fussed over me as only a mother can.... Aminbai was an exceptional person, warm, friendly, always smiling, generous, compassionate and hospitable to a fault. Aminabai and Goolambai were dedicated activists, willing to make great sacrifices in the struggle for freedom and justice. She was so much more than a good and gracious housewife, and would be imprisoned on at least three occasions for her political activity. She was among the first volunteers from the Transvaal to occupy the vacant lot in Durban in 1946, leaving behind her children, of whom the youngest was a mere two years old at the time, and going to prison for a month. Later in the campaign she was imprisoned again, explaining, perhaps only partly in jest, that she did not want her husband to know the humiliation and ordeal of going to jail, and would rather volunteer in his place.' Amina Pahad passed away in a car accident in India on 26 May 1973.



Amina Pahad (left), photographed just before she was arrested as a passive resister, 1946. Goolam Pahad is seated with sons (l to r): Essop, Nassim, Juneid, Aziz, and Ismail.

Aziz Goolam Pahad

(1940 –)

*A*ziz Pahad was born on Christmas day 1940. He matriculated at Central Indian High in 1959, graduated in 1963 from Wits with a BA degree in Sociology, and completed an MA in international relations at the University of Sussex in 1968. Pahad was active in politics from an early age and given a banning order in 1963. He left South Africa in 1964 and until the unbanning of the ANC lived mostly in London where his father had relocated in 1962. He also spent time in Angola and Zimbabwe. He worked full-time for the ANC from 1966 and helped to build the anti-apartheid movement in the UK and Europe.

Pahad travelled for weeks at a time throughout Europe addressing students, workers and communities about the situation in South Africa. He was on the central committee of the CPSA from the early 1980s. In 1985, he was elected to the NEC of the ANC and was part of the first group, led by Thabo Mbeki, that met with the then ruling NP in the mid-1980s. He was one of the first ANC members to return to South Africa to prepare for negotiations. Pahad has been one of longest serving members of the ANC's foreign affairs department and built up an impressive international network. It was therefore fitting that he was given a prominent role as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in post-apartheid South Africa.

Pahad returned to South Africa in 1990 and was appointed deputy head of the ANC's Department of International Affairs in 1991. Until 1994 he served as a member of the National Peace Executive Committee and of the Transitional Executive Council's sub-committee on Foreign Affairs. In 1994, he was elected an MP and was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of President Mandela. He was re-elected in the 1999 and 2004 elections. Thus one quip described him as the 'permanent deputy'. Aziz Pahad played a key role in shaping the ANC government's foreign policies. This included South Africa's attempt to stop the US-led attack on Iraq in 2003. He represented the country in 2004 at the International Court of Justice when South Africa argued strongly against

Israel's erection of a security fence. He told the court that the Palestinian 'separation wall was a wall of occupation, a wall that has separated hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their families, their homes, lands and religious sites.' In Africa, Pahad played an active role in bringing peace to the warring factions in the DRC, Burundi, and Angola. Pahad was one of the few in the ministry who was perceived to be charming and amiable and easy to engage with. Following the recall of President Thabo Mbeki by the ANC in September 2008, Pahad was among those members of the cabinet loyal to Mbeki who submitted their resignations.



Aziz Pahad (l) and Ruth Mompoti, who represented the ANC at a UN conference on sports sanctions against South Africa, London, 1983. With them is wrestler Nicolai Baloshin

Essop Goolam Pahad

(1939 –)

Essop Pahad was born in Schweizer-Reneke in the then Western Transvaal on 21 June 1939. As a young boy, he spent a great deal of time in the company of activists such as Nelson Mandela and Yusuf Dadoo, who were regular visitors to his home, and his political consciousness was heightened by key events in South Africa's political history during the 1950s. Essop was an executive committee member and secretary of the TIYC from 1958 to 1964 and of the TIC from 1962 to 1964. When the state banned the ANC and PAC in 1960, Mark Gevisser points out, Walter Sisulu formed the Rand Youth Club on the top floor of Macosa house in Johannesburg as a cover for political activism. This non-racial club included Pahad and others from the TIC who formed friendships with African activists such as Thabo Mbeki who had moved to Johannesburg from the Eastern Cape in late 1960. They discussed politics, recited poetry, played table tennis, and listened to jazz.

The friendship of Pahad and Mbeki continued in London and their return from exile. Gevisser makes an interesting observation about Mbeki and Pahad: 'Even the ballsiest of leaders needs a fixer; how much more so, then, when you are by nature diffident and non-confrontational, when your entire mission impels you to be civil. Mbeki and Pahad's political relationship was a rendition of the tough-guy/soft-guy two step, one of the basic moves in the dance of style, but the whole point of the politician's hit man is that, unlike his boss, he doesn't need friends. Pahad's bluntness is, in fact, one of the more attractive things about him. A tall man, he lopes rather than walks, and his long flailing arms seem purpose-built for the glad-handing and backslapping and finger-pointing that are his stock-in-trade. During the Mbeki era he would deal belligerently with adversaries in parliament and the media; and he was not averse to the *ad hominem* attack. But he is also an amiable, throw-your-head-back-and-laugh kind of chap; his easy sociability a marked foil to his aloof friend.' Mbeki spent a lot of time at the Pahad home in the Dadabhai Building opposite Macosa House. Later, when Essop Pahad and Kenny Parker, one of the few black leaders of

NUSAS, shared a home in north Brighton, it became a gathering point for South African students, including Thabo Mbeki. In June 1966 they even hosted the touring West Indies team. The match on the following day was the only one that the West Indians lost on the entire tour! Pahad and fellow students were active politically and organised, for example, a 24-hour vigil on 18 May 1966 at the clock tower in Brighton's central square against Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. There was a disturbance from a protestor, and Kenny Parker recalls that 'Essop just floored him.'

Pahad completed a BA degree at Wits and went into exile after being banned for five years in 1964. In England, he completed his MA and PhD degrees at the University of Sussex, where he and Thabo Mbeki were contemporaries. Pahad was on the central committee of the CPSA and its representative on the Editorial Council of *World Marxist Review* from 1975 to 1985. He was described as doctrinaire in his views. According to Mark Gevisser, Pahad told him he was 'more dogmatic [than Thabo Mbeki]. I suppose I've always had a closed mind about socialist countries and where they stood.... When a new body of information comes into play, one which challenges long-standing views, it's not easy to respond in a way that's able to grasp the new thing.'

Pahad was an MP from 1994 to 2007; Parliamentary counsellor to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki (1994-1996); deputy minister in the office of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki (1996-1999); Minister in the Presidency (1999-2008); member of the NEC of the ANC (1994-2007), chairperson of the board of trustees of the South African Democracy Education Trust; chairman of the board of the South Africa/Mali Timbuktu Manuscripts Trust (since 2003); and a member of the board – South Africa 2010 World Cup Local Organising Committee (2004-2010).

Essop Pahad fought many of Mbeki's ideological battles within the ANC, against its allies Cosatu and the CPSA, and other opponents. Being close to Mbeki, it was not surprising that when the latter was recalled by the ANC, Pahad quit politics. Explaining his decision, he said: 'I did not agree with the decision [to recall Thabo Mbeki], it was profoundly unjust so I couldn't continue to serve as a Cabinet member or as a Member of

Parliament.’ But Pahad remained a member of the ANC, which ‘has been our life, even more so than our wives. The ANC has been our mother and our father.’ Pahad launched *The Thinker*, an intellectual monthly journal that, he hoped, would ‘make a serious contribution towards opening up a space for the deepening of political discourse and intellectual debate.’ Pahad was also instrumental in assisting India's Gupta brothers to set up the *New Age* newspaper.

Sources: SAHO; ‘A Special, emotional and sad moment,’ *Mail and Guardian*, 26 September 2008. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-09-26-a-special-emotional-and-sad-moment>; Mark Gevisser. *Thabo Mbeki. A Dream Deferred*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007.



Essop Pahad with Don Mkhwanazi of the Black Management Forum, c. 1997

Goolam Hoosen Ismail Pahad

(1912 – 2001)

Goolam Pahad was born on 21 September 1912 in Kholvad, Gujarat. He came to South Africa in 1919 to join his father's retail business and returned to India in 1922 to further his education. When Dadoo went to India in 1925, they met with Gandhi and took a deep interest in the Indian nationalist struggle and participated in anti-British activities. After his father's death in 1926, Goolam returned to South Africa to help in the business. He married Amina Tilley in Kholvad in 1933 and returned to South Africa two years later. He was elected a committee member of the Kholvad Madressa of the Transvaal and remained a member until 1961. From 1943 to 1958 he was the general secretary of the Madressa, and president in 1959. Pahad bought a business in 1938 in Schweizer-Reneke, where Ahmed Kathrada's family also lived. In 1944 Pahad relocated to Ophirton in Johannesburg where he ran a wholesale agency until he went into exile to London in 1961.

Goolam Pahad was one of the founders of the nationalist group of the TIC in 1939 and was the principal representative in Western Transvaal. By the mid-1940s they had taken control of the TIC from the moderate faction led by Suleman Nana. Pahad also organised support for the NEUF. Pahad was a member of the SAIC delegation, which was rebuffed by Smuts in February 1946, and decided to initiate a passive resistance campaign in Natal. He served on the Passive Resistance Council. From 1945 to 1961, Goolam Pahad was on the executive of the TIC and SAIC. During the state of emergency in 1960, he was detained for five months. He left South Africa in 1961 to settle in London. He died at the age of ninety in November 2001. Goolam and Amina Pahad had five children, Ismail, Essop, Aziz, Nassim, and Zunaid. Their flat in Johannesburg was a central meeting point for Congressmen and they took care of many of the activists from Natal during the Treason Trial of 1956-1961. Amina Pahad's hospitality and culinary skills were legendary.

Source: Essop Pahad, 'The Development of Indian Political Movements in South Africa, 1924-1946,' D.Phil thesis, University of Sussex, 1972; SAHO.

Naledi Mandisa Pandor

(1953 –)

*N*aledi Pandor, granddaughter of one of South Africa's earliest African intellectuals, Professor ZK Matthews, the first African to gain a degree from a South African university, and daughter of struggle stalwart Joe Matthews, was born in Durban on 17 December 1953 but spent much of her formative life in exile. Both Joe Matthews and his father Professor Matthews were among the 156 on trial for treason from 1956 to 1961. Pandor completed her secondary schooling in Gaborone, Botswana, and graduated with a BA degree in English and History from the University of Botswana in 1977, and an MA in Education from the University of London (1979), a Masters in Linguistics from the University of Stellenbosch (1997), while she was serving as an MP, and a Diploma in Leadership in Development from Harvard (1998).

Her interest in education manifested in her stint as a teacher – she taught English at the Ernest Bevin School in London, before taking up positions in the English departments of the universities of Botswana and Boputhatswana. From 1989 to 1994, she was senior lecturer in the Academic Support Programme at UCT. In 2000 she was appointed as the second chancellor of Cape Technikon. She was a member of the ANC Western Cape Education Committee (1991-1995); ANC Chair for Athlone Central branch (1992-1994); Executive Chair of the Desmond Tutu Education Trust (1992-1994); Deputy Chair of the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA) (1992-1995); and Deputy Chair of Joint Education Trust Board of Trustees (1993-2001).

In 1994, after South Africa's democratic transition, Naledi Pandor was appointed an MP. She has served on the portfolio committee on Education; been convener of a sub-committee on higher education (1994); ANC Whip in the National Assembly (1995-1998); deputy chairperson of the National Council Of Provinces (1998-1999); chairperson of the NCOP (1999-2004); member of the ANC NEC and member of sub-committees on Education, Communications, Archives and Political Education (2002). In 2004 she was appointed the Minister of Education and in May 2009, President Jacob Zuma appointed her the Minister of Science and Technology. Pandor is known as a leader who is level-headed but able to complete the task at hand.



Naledi Pandor



Anti-apartheid protest was dealt with brutally. Lenasia

Ahmed Ebrahim ‘Aggie’ Patel

(1924-2001)

Aggie was born in Benoni in 1924. Although a first cousin of the conservative leader of the TIC, SM Nana, Aggie was inspired by Yusuf Dadoo and his group of young radicals, and joined the TIC as a teenager. Aggie was secretary of the TIC by the time of the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48 and coordinated the activities of Transvaal resisters. He was involved in organizing the 1955 Congress of the People at Kliptown where the Freedom Charter was adopted. Aggie was well known to all the political icons of the 1950s. For example, Amina Cachalia recalls her 21st birthday: ‘In 1951 I turned 21, and Nelson [Mandela] suggested we have a party. Yusuf [Cachalia] suggested we cook pigeon, and managed to get hold of 21 pigeons. Yusuf and Nelson cooked. It was at Aggie Patel's flat. Arthur Goldreich, Robbie Resha, Duma Nokwe and Essop Nugdee were there. I remember Nelson cleaning rice.’

In his *Memoirs*, Ahmed Kathrada related an incident in the mid-1950s when several friends stayed at Aggie's house after attending Reggie Vandayar's wedding. On Sunday morning, there was loud banging on the door followed by policemen breaking it down and forcing their way in, having received reports of the Group Areas Act being contravened. As Aggie and his wife Khatun, who was extremely light skinned, emerged from the bedroom, the police assaulted Aggie for being with a ‘white’ woman. His jaw was broken in several places. While this was going on, Dr Ike Moosa arrived. He too could pass for ‘white’ and the police took him for a ‘kafferboetie’ hampering their work. They arrested Aggie, Dr Moosa, and Solly Jooma. Kathrada arranged bail. They were acquitted and successfully sued the state for damages. Their joy was shortlived, however. A few months later Solly Jooma was found bludgeoned to death in Newtown. Kathrada told the investigating officer that Jooma would not hurt a fly and related the incident at Aggie's house. Sergeant Visser, the man who had broken Aggie's jaw, was arrested some time later and convicted of the murder.

Venter was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. A few months later he was spotted by Barney Desai in Cape Town. They photographed him and published it in *New Age*. Minister of Justice CR Swart initially denied the allegation but eventually explained that Visser had been transferred to a psychiatric hospital and had been released by ‘mistake’. He was rearrested but within a year was back on the streets of Johannesburg.

For his political activism Aggie was banned in June 1956. Both *New Age* (14 June 1956) and the *Natal Mercury* (12 June 1956) reported his banning. The *Natal Mercury* reported that Patel, ‘the Joint Secretary of the TIC was served with a banning notice today. He was restricted for a period of five years to the magisterial district of Johannesburg and forbidden to attend any gathering in any place within the magisterial district.’ According to *New Age*, ‘Mr Patel has been a familiar and vigorous figure on meeting platforms in practically every town in the province and a vociferous representative of the Congress at sessions of the Group Areas Board.’ The banned Patel was arrested on 5 December 1956 and charged with treason.

Ironically, Patel’s banning ‘liberated’ him from confinement as he was able to mix with old comrades at the Fort. *The Leader* (10 October 1958) carried profiles of treason trialists. Patel’s profile read: ‘Throughout South Africa Mr AE Patel is affectionately known as Aggie and is well known as an Indian leader of courage and ability.’ Charges were eventually dropped against Patel on 20 April 1959. At some point after the trial, Aggie, who was married to Khatun and had four children, migrated to Canada where he passed away in Vancouver on 1 April 2001.

Sources: SAHO; Kathrada, Memoirs; Phyllis Naidoo, 156 Hands that built South Africa.



P. Makhlo

Philson Makhlo. Born 1918. Trader. Worked as a mixer and work man in the 1930 miners' strike. Served on Moroka Advisory Board after establishment of this township, and has been in forefront of many campaigns in Johannesburg.

James Modise. Born 1929. Lorry driver. Active in campaigns for the removal of the Western Areas and the Congress Youth League.



H. Mokoena

Dr. Hussein M. 'Bo' Mokoena. Born 1923. Medical practitioner. Educated at Fort Hare and the University of Cape Town and active in the political movement since his student days. An executive member of the Transvaal African Council and vice-president of the Cape Indian Assembly.



Ida Peta Mntwana

The late Ida Peta Mntwana. Born 1903. Dressmaker. First president of the A.N.C. Women's section of Transvaal and leader of many 1930s women's demonstrations from Western Native Township.



William Ngwenane. Born 1904. Insurance agent. Joined Congress in 1937; active in 1941 anti-pass struggle and 1949 Women's Area campaign boycott.



Peter Papela Ntsho. Born 1929. Clerk. Became active in Congress and the Congress Youth League during the Defiance Campaign.



Jonas Dlamini Mkhosana. Born 1910. Insurance and food agent. Herded his farm-tenant family's flock till he went to school at age of 12. Joined the A.N.C. in the '40s at an anti-pass protest meeting. Foundational member A.N.C. Youth League.

Patrick Mosele Mokoena. Born 1925. Clerk. Pass raids and the disabilities of African youth brought him into the African National Congress. A high-wind boxer since his school days, he runs a gymnasium in Western Native Township.



E. Phisoa Marediwe

Elias Phisoa Marediwe. Born 1907. Restaurant proprietor. Joined Congress in 1917 and is a veteran of the 1925 struggle against increased poll tax, the 1925 campaign against passes for women, and subsequent struggles.



S. Makhosana

Sulaiman Makhosana Saka Ntsho. Born 1918. Businessman. Entered Indian politics in 1919 with the passing of the Peggung Act and started a branch of the Non-European United Front in Kilsnoo. Charged with public violence and murder during the Evaton bus boycott but acquitted on all counts.



J. Ndadimela

John K. Ndadimela. Born 1925. Trade unionist. Formerly organizer of iron and steel workers. Helped organize volunteers for the Defiance Campaign.



Inkadimela

Ahmed Ebrahim Patel. Born 1924. Agent. Key organizer since 1939 of the Transvaal Indian Congress on the East Rand, and appeared for the Congress before numerous hearings of Group Areas Board.



Ebrahim Patel

(1944 –)

Ebrahim ‘Joe’ Patel was born in Vrededorp, Johannesburg. He developed a love for rugby at an early age and aside from playing the game, was an official under Abdul Abbas in the Sacos-affiliated South African Rugby Union (SARU) and was president of Saru from 1983 to 1989. During this period, he literally became the voice of non-racial rugby in South Africa. He faced a formidable opponent in negotiations to unite rugby in Danie Craven, then regarded as the ‘father’ of white rugby in South Africa. Patel was on the executive of Sacos from 1985 to 1987, but joined the ANC-aligned National Sports Council in 1988 and led SARU in talks with the white-controlled South African Rugby Board which started in Harare in 1988 and culminated in the formation of Sarfu in 1992.

The negotiating process was complex, for Patel not only had to battle against Craven but also against his former Sacos colleagues who felt that it was premature to engage in unification talks. For Patel, however, ‘a new rugby body was needed, if for no other reason than to give politics in the country a boost.’ He saw a bigger picture, and that was sports unity, which was a means to boost political negotiations. While Patel feels that SARU did not get all that it wanted, he had to be pragmatic: ‘I had to ask myself what was more important – the freedom of this country or the benefits you could derive strategically. The answer was “freedom first”.’

A united rugby body emerged on 23 March 1992 when Patel and Craven signed the unification agreement in Kimberley, the historic home of black and white rugby. Craven served as executive president, while Patel acted as president in a move that paved the way for readmission into international rugby after years of isolation due to apartheid. After the death of Danie Craven in January 1993, Patel took over the reins of Sarfu. Once he lost his place on the Transvaal executive, however, he lost his power base and resigned in February 1994. These were painful days, he points out, when ‘even the intimacy of your spouse does not help. But that is what leadership demands from you. Often when the media took umbrage at any

decision you made, you did not know what hit you. If you are good you are a hero, if you're bad, you are a zero.' A teacher by profession, Patel taught Afrikaans and was principal of Lenasia's Muslim school. Since his retirement, he has continued to do community work and now serves as the CEO for Retina SA. His work in sports, education, and community work was highly pressured, and it was faith that helped him to withstand those pressures. As he puts it, 'you stand in front of your Creator, waiting for an answer...and God does not send sms's. Allah ta ala will decide in His own time and He provides you with *hidayah* – that feeling that you are right, even if the entire world stands up against you.' Patel added that he was able to keep a level head because he understood that whatever he achieved was due to the work of the Almighty and that he was merely the instrument through which Allah worked.

Source: 'Patel: stalwart rugby hero,' 4 March 2010. The Voice fo the Cape. <http://www.vocfm.co.za/index.php?§ion=news&category=&heritagenews=&article=51702>.



Ebrahim Patel (Sports Administrator)

Ebrahim Patel

(1962 –)

Ebrahim Patel was born in District Six in Cape Town to a working class family, with his mother, a garment worker, being the sole bread winner. He grew up in Lansdowne and Grassy Park. Patel cut his teeth in activism in high school where he led the student boycott of Fatti's and Moni's products during a worker strike at the pasta factory in 1979. During his first year at the University of the Western Cape in 1980, he was a leader in a nationwide student uprising. He was detained under the Internal Security Act and imprisoned for a number of months without charges being brought against him. In 1981, Patel was again held in detention without trial at Caledon Square police station in Cape Town. He was involved in building support for workers on strike at Leyland Motors as well as at Wilson Roundtree, an Eastern Cape factory.

In 1982 he was detained for a third time and on this occasion was taken to Protea Police Station in Soweto. Patel joined the UDF in 1983 and represented the Lotus River/Grassy Park area. He was also involved in community struggles over access to housing and electricity in the Lotus River-Grassy Park-Parkwood area, and worked with Trevor Manuel on the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC). Patel left UWC in 1982 because of his activist work and took up a full-time position with SALDRU, the research division of the School of Economics at UCT. He completed his degree part-time at UCT.

Patel remained close to the union movement. While studying at UCT he started a union for university workers and was elected its first general secretary in 1985. He took part in the meetings that led to the formation of Cosatu in December 1985. He joined the National Union of Textile Workers in 1986 and became general secretary of the renamed Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu) in 1993. Patel was a member of the first trade union delegation that met with Nelson Mandela in Soweto after his release from prison in 1990.

He was one of the architects of the National Economic Forum, which sought to shape the relationship between business, government, and labour. In fact, he convened one of the first industry summits in 1991 when he presented plans for the restructuring of the clothing and textile industries. Patel was also the chief negotiator for the Framework Agreement on HIV/Aids (2002-2003) and the National Textile Bargaining Council (2003-2003). He was appointed Minister for Economic Development by President Jacob Zuma in 2009 and mandated to plan government economic policies and seek to eliminate poverty. He has edited two books: one on the National Economic Forum and the other on worker rights in the new South Africa. He is also a member of the Council of the University of Cape Town; patron of the Bureau of Economics Research, University of Stellenbosch; and acting president of the SA Labour Research Institute. He is married and has three children, Amilcar, Iqraa and Zamir.



Ebrahim Patel (Trade Unionist and Politician)

Abdul Haq Randeree

(1929 – 2002)

*A*H Randeree was born in Durban on 30 October 1929. His father Goolam Rasool ran a retail store in Berea Road called ‘Ransons’ as well as ‘Happy House’ in Queen Street. AH Randeree was involved in a host of public activities. He was the founding member of the Asherville Muslim Educational Society and served as its treasurer and secretary. One of the organisation’s major accomplishment’s was the building of the Musjid-E-Noor in Mallinson Road. He was also a secretary and executive member of the Asherville Ratepayers Society; founding member and secretary of the Asherville Housing Action Committee; and executive member and secretary of the David Landau Community Centre. Randeree was also a founding member and secretary of the Natal Education Trust, which was formed under the presidency of AM Moola to assist underprivileged communities by building schools.

The trust was formed when Randeree and a group of activists met to discuss ways to rebuild the Victoria Street market after a fire destroyed it in 1973. One of their first acts was to contribute funds to Chief Buthelezi in August 1973 to build schools in the homeland. In the political sphere, Randeree was an executive member of the NIC from 1973 and remained a member until his death. He was active in community mobilisation against the apartheid regime, in issues such as the anti-SAIC campaign, anti-Tricameral protests, the Free Mandela campaign, and Parents Support Committee during the education boycotts. In the post-apartheid era he was a member of the Western Areas Branch (Durban) of the ANC. AH Randeree was married to Haziera Khatoun and they had six children.



SA Randeree



AH Randeree



SA Randeree

Shaikh Ahmed Randeree

(1931 –)

SA Randeree, brother of AH Randeree, was born in Durban on 7 February 1931, matriculated from Sastri College and qualified as a medical doctor from UCT in 1957. He was initiated into politics as a teenager during the passive resistance campaign of 1946-48 and at Sastri where he came into contact with members of the NIC and CPSA and became involved in trade union activity. After his return from Cape Town he became involved in the NIC and underground structures of the banned CPSA. He was also involved in the Asherville Ratepayers Society and Asherville Housing Action Committee which fought for better facilities in the early years of Indian settlement in Asherville.

As South Africa entered the 1960s, concern about the police, security branch, detention, and especially interrogation increased. Randeree was arrested during the state of emergency in 1964 and released in January 1965 after three months of detention without trial. Fearing re-arrest, many who were arrested under the Ninety-Day law fled into exile as soon as they were released. The state was brutal and many activists ‘confessed’. The following confession is available at the National Archives in Pretoria. It is the confession of a Durban activist. All names have been removed by archives staff to protect those mentioned. The ‘surgery’ in question, according to Swaminathan Gounden, was that of Dr. SA Randeree:

‘I am an Indian male adult aged 29 years. I reside at No. ... , ..., Durban. I am also known as ... I am at present employed by the Coronation Brick and Tile Works, Briardene, as a clerk. I left school at the end of 1955 having passed five subjects in Matric. I thereafter unsuccessfully applied for exemption to attend University and started work. I joined the Natal Indian Youth Congress during 1956, and was later elected to the committee. During 1958 however, ... approached me at Vetans Lounge [now known as the Delhi Restaurant] and asked me to join the CPSA.... We met regularly and meetings were held weekly at ... office mostly in the evenings. George presided.... We held meetings on Tuesdays.

‘The meetings were held at ... office and at ... surgery which is situated in Victoria Street. Most of the discussions by this new group were centred around the emergence of the African States. The CP claimed credit for their role in assisting the African States in obtaining their freedom and independence. Recruiting of members for the CP appeared regularly on the agenda but it was emphasised that recruiting should not be done at random but by selection.... About three or four months ago i.e. during about April/May 1964 it was decided at a group meeting at ... surgery that a suggestion be placed before the district committee of the CP to re-group our group once again. This recommendation followed discussions on ... irregular attendance at meetings and ... having to depart early in order to get transport to his home which is somewhere out of town.

‘After this, I went to ... surgery and he then informed me that I had to meet him at his house in Daintree Avenue, Asherville on a specific evening. When I went there, I was asked to remain in the lounge. Later on ... came in and yet later on ... arrived and was again followed by ... (an Indian not known to me – he is a furniture worker in ... and stays somewhere in Overport). Lastly ... himself arrived with his car. It is normal procedure for group members to arrive punctually but never together. After the arrival of ... the meeting commenced presided over by himself and myself as secretary.’

Randeree went into exile to Zambia where he spent the period from 1965 to 1981 working for the ANC in Lusaka. For a time he helped to edit the ANC’s magazine *Mayibuye*. Randeree attended the Morogoro Conference in Tanzania in April-May 1969, where important changes were made in the structure and administration of the ANC. One crucial decision taken at the conference was to partially open ANC membership to non-Africans. Randeree went to Canada in 1982, settling in Winnipeg, where he continued his anti-apartheid work by organising rallies, addressing meetings, and issuing media statements to keep the issue alive. He was married to Zohra and they had two children, Mehmood and Rooksana.

Ebrahim Rasool

(1962 –)

*I*t is in the interest of the liberation struggle as a whole that the religious conscience of the nation be kept alive as a basis for ensuring the survival of the very values that have sustained the struggle over many years. I am not suggesting that it is only the religious community that can do this. I have too much respect for the moral integrity of some non-religious people who share this concern for values.... There is, however, a moral incentive at the centre of the great religious traditions of South Africa that, if released at a time when a new nation is in the process of being born, can make a far-reaching impact on the future – Ebrahim Rasool.

Ebrahim Rasool experienced the ruthlessness of the apartheid state firsthand. Born in July 1962 in District Six to a vegetable hawker, he was only nine when his family was forcibly moved under the Group Areas Act. Like Sophiatown in the then Transvaal, District Six became the most public symbol of the viciousness of the apartheid system in the Cape. Rasool grew up in a home that was ‘religious’ but also one that instilled in him a culture of reading and questioning: ‘My mother brought a certain Muslim piety into our home, with Sheikh Nazeem Mohamed (president of the MJC) being regarded as our family’s spiritual leader. My father was always more of a free-thinker. He bought the *Cape Times* and the *Argus* every day, bringing the ‘outside’ world into our Muslim home, encouraging us to discuss the events that were happening around us. I lived at the nexus of Muslim traditionalism and secular free-thinking [and] am still trying to integrate the two.’ Rasool’s upbringing, while including many Christians in the neighbourhood, did make him an intrinsic part of the Muslim community. As he explains: ‘This sense of community, of being a Muslim, going to the mosque, sharing in the fasts and celebrations and practising Muslim tradition is a vital part of who I am. This is where I belong. It is here that I draw on my roots for sustenance. I am part of a Muslim culture, which is the interweaving of things like Malay choirs, weddings, funerals, certain kinds of food, the singing of spiritual songs, gatherings at the mosque and

so on. So, when I speak of my quest for religious identity, it is within this broader context. I am part of Islam in the Western Cape. Even when I am critical of it, I am dependent on it... There are dimensions of this tradition to which I cling, understanding them to be indispensable to life itself.’

Rasool matriculated from Livingstone High in Claremont in 1980. The school played an important role in his political development because the principal, RO Dudley, was inclined towards the New Unity Movement and active in political struggles. In his matric year, Rasool was secretary of the SRC and on the Committee of 81 that co-ordinated the 1980 school boycott in the Western Cape. While Rasool retained a ‘deep respect for the essential ideas within the [Unity] movement’ he drifted ideologically towards the ANC. He enrolled for a BA degree at UCT in 1981. He joined AZASO and the MSA as he sought to reconcile his secular and religious worlds. He found AZASO politics ‘more colourful, less cerebral and more broadly inclusive’ while the Islam of the MSA provided a religion that was ‘related to the political struggle in which I was engaged.’ This allowed him to synergise his ‘religious and political personae’, with Farid Esack playing a significant role in this quest.

As a member of the AZASO executive he attended the launch of the UDF in August 1983 and was elected to the regional executive. In 1984, he was a founding member of the Call of Islam, which attempted to involve Muslims formally in the political struggle. In 1985 Rasool took up a teaching position at Spine Road High in Mitchell’s Plain. The school was involved in the education boycott and Rasool was detained for three months and served with a banning order upon his release. He was arrested again in June 1987. This time he was imprisoned for thirteen months. After the unbanning of the ANC in February 1990, Rasool was elected treasurer of the ANC in the Western Cape in 1991. He was also a member of the executive council of the Western Cape legislature. He subsequently became leader of the ANC in the Western Cape and was named the province’s premier in 2004. He held this position until July 2008 when he was caught in the power struggles within the ANC and replaced as Premier. In July 2010, Rasool was appointed South Africa’s ambassador to the United States.

Source: Charles Villa-Vicencio, The Spirit of Freedom. South African Leaders on Religion and Politics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 234-245.



Ebrahim Rasool



Ladysmith's Ahmed H.Sader photographed at the London Conference held at the end of 1945. At this World Youth Conference he represented India. Seated next to him is Vidya Kanuga and to the extreme left is Miss Kitty Boman, who led the India delegation.

Mohammed Rafiq Rohan

(1955 –)

*R*ohan was born in Durban and attended UDW in the mid-1970s where he was drawn to student activism. After graduating, he took up a teaching position on the Cape Flats but was dismissed as an ‘agitator’ during the boycott of 1980 and joined *Muslim News* as a reporter. The newspaper took a strong anti-apartheid line. In 1984, Rohan joined *The Leader* as a reporter and then became a political reporter at *Post-Natal*. He was recruited into Umkhonto, the military wing of the ANC, during this period. During October 1988, he accompanied an NIC delegation to meet with representatives of the ANC in Lusaka. There, he met Aboobaker Ismail, known as MK Rashid, and agreed to work for MK. According to Rohan, he ‘wanted to go the route of the armed struggle because of the military’s role in maintaining apartheid. By striking at the military, I would be striking at the heart of the apartheid State.’ Aboobaker introduced Rohan to Kelvin Khan (real name Riaz Saloojee) who trained him in Zimbabwe in the use of explosives, including limpet mines, Makarov pistols, and AK47s. It was agreed that Rohan would operate independently and target the police radio headquarters in Ridge Road, the Natal Command, and CR Swart Police Station. On 28 January 1989 he placed a limpet mine at the police radio headquarters in Ridge Road but it was discovered by the police and moved onto the road where it detonated.

On 10 March 1989 he placed a limpet mine next to the wall of the building at the Natal Command. The explosion injured seventeen people. On 7 April 1989 Rohan placed a limpet mine at the CR Swart Police Station. As he was driving out of the premises two policemen spotted him and gave chase as he drove through a series of red robots down Stamford Hill Road towards central town with the police firing shots which shattered the car windows. At Ordinance Road he smashed into the back of another vehicle and his car somersaulted. He was shot in the leg but managed to escape into the bush. While the police dogs were sweeping the area, the bomb went off at CR Swart Police Station.



*Rafiq Rohan, freed from prison, May 1991.
With him are Trevor Manuel and Tony Yengeni*

This delayed the search but Rohan was eventually arrested and convicted on 29 counts of terrorism and sentenced in April 1990 to 15 years imprisonment on Robben Island. He was the last occupant of the infamous B-Section cell where Mandela was once held. Rohan was in the last group of 15 prisoners released from Robben Island. Prior to his release he had embarked on a protracted hunger strike (from 1 May 1991) to protest the failure of the government to release prisoners by the 30 April deadline agreed to in negotiations with the ANC.

Amnesty International reported on 19 May 1991: 'Among those on hunger-strike is Muhammad Rafiq Rohan, a 37-year-old journalist from Durban who was sentenced in April 1990 to 15 years' imprisonment on Robben Island for sabotage. He is in the 20th day of his hunger-strike and has already suffered permanent kidney damage. He and five other prisoners from Robben Island were, until 12 May, chained to their hospital beds at Somerset Hospital. After protests from medical and human rights organisations, the authorities removed the chains. The authorities continued to deny access to these six prisoners.'

Rohan was released under indemnity legislation on 20 May 1991. He became deputy editor and then editor of the anti-apartheid newspaper *SOUTH*. From 1994 to 1999, he worked as parliamentary bureau chief for *The Sowetan* and was the newspaper's political editor in 2000. This was followed by his appointment as executive editor of *The Star*; editor of the *Independent on Saturday* and deputy editor of the *Daily News* during 2004 and 2005; and chief director of *Vuk'uzenzele*, a South African government magazine, from June 2005. Rohan is a recipient of The Foster Davis Award for excellence in journalism, bestowed by the Poynter Institute in Florida, of which he is a Fellow. Rohan was also a Senior Editor at Al-Jazeera in Qatar.

Sources: MOHAMMED RAFIQ ROHAN, Amnesty Hearing, the TRC, 26 June 1996. 'Hunger Strike', Amnesty International, AFR 53/15/91. 19 May 1991. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR53/015/1991/en/4b8fe039.pdf>

Ahmed Hoosen Sader

(1919 – 1995)

Ahmed Sader was one of five sons of Hoosen and Hawa Sader of Ladysmith, who had a retail store, Sader Brothers, in Murchison Street. After completing his primary education in Ladysmith, Sader matriculated from Sastri College in 1938 and proceeded to Birmingham in England to study medicine. Family friend Cassim Lakhi of Greytown was already studying there. Sader was drawn to the politics of Indian students who were agitating for the British to quit India. One of Sader's mentors was Krishna Menon (1897-1974), a well known figure in India's anti-colonial struggle who had studied at the London School of Economics and lived in London from 1934 to 1947. Menon was a Labour borough councillor for St. Pancras and founded the India League. Sader travelled to Albania in 1946 and met its leader Enver Hoxha, and from there went to Prague for the founding of the left leaning International Union of Students (IUS) on 27 August 1947. Delegates from 39 countries formed the student union to maintain open lines of communication across Europe and prevent a resurgence of fascism.

Sader was sent to Austria by Menon as the official representative of India. The South African authorities were aware of his activities and when Sader returned to South Africa in 1947, his passport was seized by the government. Sader set up a practice in Murchison Street, being the first Indian doctor in Ladysmith, and married Khatija Jassat of Pietermaritzburg. They had four children, Mohammed, Fathima, Faizal, and Shiraz. Sader started a local chapter of the NIC in Ladysmith and was prominent at provincial level as treasurer of the NIC until his banning in 1964. During the state of emergency in 1960 he was detained for five months with Chota Motala and Archie Gumede in Pietermaritzburg, and shortly thereafter was banned for a total of fifteen years. Sader famously challenged his eviction notice from 27 Murchison Street under the Group Areas Act. He lost the case in the local court and Supreme Court in Pietermaritzburg but won in the Appellate Division. His advocates included Joe Slovo and Ismail Mohamed and he was able to live in Murchison Street until his death.

Rashid Ahmed Mahmood (RAM) Salojee

(1933 –)

RAM Salojee, the eldest of twelve children, was born in 1933 on the family farm in Kliprivier in the then Transvaal to Ayesha and Ahmed Salojee. His family had close links to Gandhi's satyagraha movement, with his uncle Suleman Salojee and neighbour Ebrahim Bhoola staying at Tolstoy farm. Salojee's father served as treasurer of the TIC (Southern Transvaal). Salojee attended the Waterval Islamic Institute (Mia's Farm) for five years and memorised 15 chapters of the Qur'an. The spartan life at Mia's Farm held him in good stead later in life and he would also say that his Islamic beliefs provided the impetus for his activism.

He was asked during a 1981 interview whether he feared state brutality and replied that his Islamic faith commanded him to 'oppose injustice and racism. As a Muslim I am committed to act and function within the total existence of my faith, which makes no division between social, political, economic, and recreational spheres of life.' Salojee matriculated in 1951 and enrolled at Wits where he qualified as a medical doctor and opened a practice in Nylstroom. In February 1960 he married Sara Makda and in 1964 did postgraduate studies at Coronation Hospital. He settled in Lenasia.

As a result of the terrible conditions in the township, he initially participated in the Lenasia Management Committee (LMC) as a member of the People's Candidate Party (PCP), out of concern that in the absence of 'authentic' leaders who were in detention or under house arrest, opportunists had filled the vacuum in government structures. In July 1977, in the aftermath of the Soweto revolt and the conflagration that engulfed the country, he announced that the LMC was just a 'glorified advisory board' and that there was nothing to be gained by participating in government structures. Salojee and the PCP withdrew from the LMC. Salojee was elected as co-vice-chairman of the Anti-SAIC Committee (Transvaal) and on the editorial committee of its newsletter. He played a leading role in the UDF, founded in 1983, alongside Trevor Manuel, Allan Boesak, and others.

For joining the UDF, Salojee became a marked man and paid a heavy price. At 4:30 am on 21 August 1984 the security police ransacked Salojee's home, and took him handcuffed to John Vorster Square where he was charged with 'attempting to create a revolutionary climate.' Salojee was released on 10 December 1984 and served with a banning order that restricted him to the magisterial district of Johannesburg, prohibited him from attending or addressing meetings and social gatherings, or assisting in compiling or distributing publications. On 18 February 1985 Salojee was subjected to another search warrant. On 22 July 1985, the security police marched into his surgery and arrested him in front of his patients without giving him reasons or informing his family.

His attorney Priscilla Jana wrote to the Minister of Law and Order but there was no reply or knowledge of his whereabouts. On 16 August 1985 Sara Salojee addressed a personal letter to the Divisional Commander of Police at the Soweto Police Station requesting permission to visit her husband. The Commissioner replied on 28 August 1985 that Salojee was being detained at Diepkloof. She eventually visited him on 9 October and wrote to the Minister of Law and Order that he had lost 10kg in weight; had a growth in his colon which had to be operated upon; had difficulty urinating; suffered from ulcers; and was depressed. Brigadier Viktor replied on 11 October 1985 that Salojee would undergo a medical examination by State doctors on 11 October, and that he had been placed 'in a separate cell, not as a punitive measure but so that he may enjoy more privacy'!

Salojee was moved to a common cell after 81 days in solitary detention, released on 11 November 1985, and subjected to another banning order. On 12 June 1986, Salojee's home was again raided (at 2 am). Police took away literature of the UDF and TIC and detained him. Sara wrote to Brigadier Coetzee on 17 June 1986 for permission to visit him. Coetzee replied on 25 June that she could visit for half an hour on 30 June 1986. On 27 June 1986, the 35 prisoners in Salojee's cell signed a petition complaining of overcrowding (the cell was meant to hold 15 persons), race-based diets which did not take into account 'changing lifestyles, religious denominations, and specific individuals,' and called for family visits. Salojee was released on 31 July 1986.

The years following this detention saw the demise of apartheid and release of Mandela in February 1990. In an interview with Padraig O' Malley in July 1990, Salojee expressed surprise at the rapid pace of change, which he attributed to international and domestic pressure. 'People like Pik Botha, Viljoen, De Klerk saw that leaving the situation as it is for very much longer is going to create economic chaos within the country and it was better to salvage something at this stage while still in power.' He believed that after discussions with Nelson Mandela they 'probably felt that it was judicious to try and reach some sort of a compromise now under a leadership which was still, I wouldn't say conservative in that sense, but not that radical, than to negotiate with the unstructured radicalism that may take over the political formations in the country.' Salojee was appointed an MP in 1994 and served, variously, on the Select Committee on Housing, Health, and Foreign Affairs.

In January 1996 he was moved from Parliament to the Senate, which was later renamed the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), where he served on five committees – Foreign Affairs; Trade and Industry; Public Enterprises, Housing and Public Works; Health, Welfare, Population Development; and Home Affairs. He was subsequently a member of the Gauteng Legislature until his retirement in 2009. In his farewell speech on 26 March 2009, Salojee warned: 'I was never a doctrinaire politician; nor consumed by the niceties of dogma and theories, which might even be impracticable. I believed and constructed my earlier involvement in public life based on social consciousness, responsibility, and direct involvement.... I sometimes feel unfulfilled. I do not know whether we are still living in the liberation struggle era or are we now in the modern era of an economic and industrial state.... [Salojee quoted a morning newspaper headline about someone who had lost billions, and asked] What about the vulnerable, the ill, the denied, the poor, the unemployed? What about all those, the orphaned and the indigent – what about them? I think it is ridiculous when society has reached a stage where we look at the rich and how less rich they have become rather than the poor who have [not been] given greater opportunities, which we have not been able to offer, unfortunately, even in the fifteen years of our democracy. To me, injustice, poverty, and discrimination cannot wait until we achieve retributive final

goals; ameliorating of immediate problems requires immediate attention and palliation.’

Salojee served many organisations over the years, including the Lenasia Muslim Association, Central Islamic Trust, Suliman Nana Memorial Trust, South African Hajj & Umrah Council, Islamic Council of South Africa, and Awqaf SA. He has been the recipient of numerous awards.

*Sources: Padraig O’ Malley Interview, 17 July 1990. <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv00017/04lv00344/05lv00511/06lv00533.htm>; Haroon Aziz, *Life of Social Justice. Biography of R.A.M. Salojee. Johannesburg: Gravity International Publishers, 2010.**



RAM Salojee



RAM Salojee with his wife Sara and daughter

Ebrahim “Cass” Saloojee

(1935 – 2009)

Ebrahim Saloojee was born in 1935 in Krugersdorp in the Transvaal, where his grandfather’s shop was adjacent to that owned by Dadoo’s father. Saloojee’s father, in fact, held Dadoo up as an exemplar. Like many young men of his generation, Saloojee was expected to emulate Dadoo by getting a good education and serving the public in whatever capacity. Saloojee’s family moved to Roodepoort and initially lived with his father’s employer. The family was not well off and Saloojee began his schooling in Sophiatown with old clothes and no shoes. From a jeweller’s assistant, his father became a bicycle dealer but that business failed.

The family found themselves on the move again, this time to Bloemhof where Saloojee completed his secondary schooling. He was initiated into politics and joined the TIC during this period. Saloojee matriculated in 1954 and, in compliance with his father’s ambitions, went to India to study medicine. However, he preferred teaching and registered at the Transvaal College of Education where one of his lecturers was PAC leader Robert Sobukwe. Saloojee became disillusioned with apartheid education and in 1967 spearheaded the formation of the Johannesburg Indian Social Welfare Agency (JISWA). Here, he associated with liberal activists and developed a love for theatre. He became involved with the ‘Phoenix Players’ and initiated the Market Theatre. He spent a year in the US studying at Princeton University. On his return, Saloojee, finding it difficult to get suitable accommodation in an “Indian” area, moved into a “white” area. The legal challenges that ensued led him to establish ‘Act to Stop Evictions’ (ACTSTOP). In the early 1980s, Saloojee was the publicity secretary of the TIC and mobilised successfully against the South Africa Indian Council. He joined the UDF in 1983 as its national treasurer and helped mount a successful campaign against the Tricameral dispensation. He represented the MDM within Africa and other European countries to garner international support against the apartheid regime.

In 1984 he received the Freedom Prize on behalf of the UDF in Sweden. On the night of 18 February 1985, Saloojee was arrested and was one of sixteen charged with treason in the lengthy Pietermaritzburg treason trial of 1985. The others were Mewa Ramgobin, George Sewpersadh, Moorooogiah “MD” Naidoo, Essop Jassat, Aubrey Mokoena, Curtis Nkondo, Archie Gumede, Paul David, Albertina Sisulu, Frank Chikane, Ismail Mohammed, Richard Gqweta, Sisa Njikelana, Samuel Kikine and Isaac Ngcobo. This was the first political trial to target the UDF. Charges were dropped in December 1985 due to lack of evidence.

Cassim Saloojee was not deterred by the state’s scare tactics, He represented the MDM in Iran in 1987 on the eighth anniversary of the Iranian revolution. In 1989 he led a delegation of the NIC and TIC to Lusaka, where they met with the ANC, which was led by its then treasurer general Thomas Nkobi. They declared their commitment to ‘effectively mobilise the Indian community in a struggle for a democratic, peaceful and non-racial South Africa.’ Saloojee was among those who were with Nelson Mandela in Pollsmoor Prison when his release was announced. Under the democratically elected ANC government, Saloojee headed the Parliamentary Social Welfare Portfolio Committee from 1994 to 1999. He passed away in February 2009 after a long struggle with Alzheimer’s disease. He was married to Khatija and they had two sons, Riaz and Mohammed.

Sources: SAHO; ‘Parliamentary Caucus of the ANC, <http://www.anc.org.za/caucus/index.php?include=docs/pr/2009/pr0202.html>



Ebrahim 'Cass' Saloojee



*Yusuf Saloojee with the ambassadors of Palestine and Syria
at an anti-Iraq War rally, 2003*

Khalil Suleman Saloojee

(1928 – 1997)

*K*halil Saloojee was born on 15 September 1928 in Hendrina in the then Eastern Transvaal (Mpumalanga). The family moved to Newlands in Johannesburg and much later to Lenasia when they were forcibly removed by the Group Areas Act. Khalil attended Bree Street primary to standard four. He worked for several companies as a commercial 'rep' covering the whole of the Western Transvaal and was well known throughout the region. He married his first cousin from the village of Lachpur, Rookeya Patel, and they had five children: Shereen, Zohra, Abdul Jalil, Mohamed Azhar, and Suleman.

The political inspiration for Khalil was his father Suleman Moosa Saloojee (d. 1961) who was regarded as a political elder of the TIC. Dadoo, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo visited his home, while Nelson Mandela sometimes used their Newlands home as a hideout. Khalil joined the TIYC and TIC. He was an ardent supporter of Dadoo and close friend and compatriot of Ahmed Kathrada, Mosie Moolla, and others. Khalil was imprisoned during the passive resistance campaign of 1946, and was involved in all the major campaigns of the 1950s – the Defiance Campaign, Kliptown, the Treason Trial. Khalil was equally renowned for his rendition of Urdu poetry.

Many of the towns in the Transvaal were fairly conservative and Khalil would usually win over supporters by beginning his talk with a *naat*, to show that the Prophet of Islam opposed all forms of discrimination. Many of the songs were freedom songs composed by his wife Rookeya whose compositions covered every major political event in South Africa, including the death in detention of Ahmed Timol. Khalil also moved crowds at political rallies when he sang *Parna Janda*, the Indian resistance song. These were especially popular during the 1980s campaigns against the Tricameral Dispensation. Khalil was also a member of the Call of Islam, and when the ANC was unbanned, he became a card carrying member. He passed away on 11 July 1997.



*Khalil Saloojee addressing a rally when Nelson Mandela was in prison.
Third from the left is Mosie Moolla and next to him is Winnie Mandela*



*Khalil Saloojee was famous for singing protest songs in Urdu. Here he is singing
at a 1981 anti-SAIC rally*

Suliman ‘Babla’ Saloojee

(1932 – 1964)

*T*wenty activists died in detention between 1964 and 1969. Looksmart Ngudle was the first, three months after the Ninety-Day Law was introduced. Thirty-two year old ‘Babla’ Saloojee, an attorney’s clerk, was detained on 6 July 1964, two years into his marriage to Rokaya, and shortly after he had taken over the newspaper *Spark*. Along with people like Ahmed Kathrada and Abdulhay Jassat, Babla was a member of the Picasso Club, which painted anti-apartheid slogans around Johannesburg and assisted fellow activists flee into exile.

In the year preceding their marriage Babla had been detained for almost a hundred days. Following his 1964 arrest, Rokaya was allowed five to ten minute visits but had an uphill task as she had to travel by bus to the Rosebank police station and only seven black people were allowed on ‘white’ buses even when there were seats available on the bus. In her submission to the TRC, Rokaya said that during one visit she noticed that Babla had a makeshift bandage on the side of his forehead. ‘When I asked him what happened to you and this one policeman said that he bumped his head in the cell. So, I said that’s funny he must have been drunk because there is nothing else that’s in the cell that you can bump your head on. They closed the door on me and told me to go away, which I did. I had no alternative. I didn’t even speak to my husband. All he [Babla] said to me in Gujarati is that I should keep quiet.’

On 9 September 1964, the police told Rokaya not to visit Babla as he was in hospital after ‘falling’ from the sixth floor office of the security police’s headquarters, Grays building. Babla’s interrogators were Rooi Rus Swanapoel, Major Brits of the Railway Police, Constable Van den Heerder and Lieutenant H.C. Muller. Rokaya failed to trace Babla at the hospital and only heard of his death when a journalist approached her for a statement. Abdulhay Jassat, who was interrogated by the same policemen, told the TRC on 2 May 1996: ‘They said that Babla jumped from the window. I think it’s a lie. Babla was supposed to have fallen on



Babla Saloojee died in detention



Babla Saloojee's funeral, September 1964

the parapet which was barely a metre wide. Now if you jumped from the sixth floor you would fall on to the road or pavement, not the parapet. That means they must have done the same thing to him that they did to Timol at John Vorster Square. I don't think any sane person, when there are 10 or 12 bulky policeman around you, would try to escape through a window on the tenth floor or the sixth floor.' According to Rokaya, several people knew that Babla was already dead when the police took him to the hospital. A journalist had told her that his body was in the mortuary even though the police pretended that he was alive. The inquest into Babla's death lasted five minutes. Magistrate AJ Kotze did not allow questions. He responded 'that is all' when Rokaya asked why his clothes were full of blood. Kotze ruled that nothing in the evidence suggested that the methods used in interrogating Babla were responsible for his death.

Following Babla's death, Rokaya 'was a very scared woman' and suffered a nervous breakdown. She was still on medication when she appeared before the TRC in April 1996. The police continued to harass and 'make life difficult' for her after Babla's death. She was refused a passport on five occasions, and only given one in 1979 to perform Hajj. During her 'dark days' Swanepoel offered Rokaya financial inducements to inform on 'communists [but] I told them to shove it.'

The TRC found that 'in all probability, these persons [police] assaulted and tortured Saloojee during his interrogation, thus directly causing his death.... The Commission finds that the SAP was responsible for the severe ill treatment of Ms Rokaya Saloojee, the wife of Suliman Saloojee, who continued to be harassed and threatened by the police after his death.' And yet when Rokaya Saloojee told the TRC, 'I still hate some of the whites. I am sorry to say that,' she was seen in some quarters as an aberration of Tutu's Rainbow Nation!

Yusuf Suleman Saloojee

(1944 –)

*Y*usuf Saloojee, brother of Khalil Saloojee, was born in Newlands, adjacent to Sophiatown, on 4 September 1944 to Fathima and Suleman Moosa Saloojee. The family was involved in politics for as long as Yusuf can remember. His father was a staunch supporter of the TIC and Dadoo, Mandela, Sisulu, and others were well known to him. Yusuf Saloojee's political education continued at Congress High where his teachers included Dennis Brutus, Molly Fischer, wife of Bram Fischer, and Mr. Thandray, a member of the CPSA.

Saloojee matriculated in 1964 and studied medicine at Grant Medical School in Bombay, where he was involved in distributing the Freedom Charter and the ANC's *Sechaba* magazine, and where he met Dadoo, Moulvi Cachalia, Mosie Moola, Mendi Msimang, and Alfred Nzo. The family was also affected by the Group Areas Act, which added to their determination to overthrow the regime. Saloojee returned to South Africa in 1973 and worked at the Natalspruit, Baragwanath and Coronation hospitals before setting up practice in Lenasia in 1981. He married Hawa Wadee in 1975 and they have four children – Bilal, Fatima, Shabir Ahmed and Tasmiya.

Saloojee became involved in the TIC in Lenasia in the early 1980s but felt that there was a need to organise Muslims through a religiously oriented organisation since the existing Jamiats, in his opinion, lacked political direction. This became especially urgent when the Tricameral dispensation required people 'to take a political position.' The seeds for the Call of Islam were laid in 1983 but the organisation was formally launched in 1984, with Nazeer Osman, Ahmed Saloojee, Ismail Patel, Yusuf Patel, Abdul Rahman "Apmal" Dawood, Navid Hassen, Yusuf Akhalwaya, Rehana Adam, Nazim Adam, Bibi Khan, Mohamed Sujee, Mohamed "Ike" Sujee, and Shahid Sirkhot (who printed UDF, SACC, pamphlets, often at great risk and no charge) prominent in the Transvaal.

Call of Islam members felt that Islam ‘should be in touch with the problems of the country and not be an abstract concept.’ Justice was a critical component of their platform since this was an uncompromising call in Islam. They also emphasised gender equality and worked with members of other faiths because they felt that Muslims should share their faith so that others would respect them. The Call participated in protest against the Tricameral election, responded to Islam being accused of being a false religion by the NG Church, placed an advert in *The Star* advertising the unbanning of the ANC, organised a National Muslim Conference prior to the 1994, 1999, and 2004 elections, and during the NUM strike donated bread for approximately 200 mine workers for about 40 days.

While 1994 was the highlight for black South Africans, one result, Saloojee believes, was that many people got ‘sucked up’ in organised politics to the detriment of civics. Saloojee himself was an ANC councillor in Lenasia from 1995 to 2000. While he found this intrinsically rewarding, the work ‘was very difficult and the hours long’, and he did not stand for elections when his term ended because of his work commitments. Saloojee is concerned that in the post-apartheid period many Muslims are ‘not projecting the true message of Islam which should lead to the growth of the nation. Muslims seem to be tending to focus on self-development.’ Muslims have an imperative, he argued, ‘to help build the moral fibre of the nation. This means helping to build homes, ending corruption, and so on.’ Instead, with the imperative to destroy apartheid removed, people seem to have lost interest in politics. Saloojee also fears that the principle of non-racialism, on which the struggle against apartheid was built, seems to ‘have taken a back seat.’ The challenge is: ‘How do we get the nation back on track? How do we come back to value system of the Freedom Charter?’

Source: Interview, Yusuf Saloojee, 12 December 2010.

Dawood Seedat

(1916 – 1976)

Dawood Seedat was the grandson of a prominent trader in Ladysmith, ME Seedat of the firm of *Ismail, Mahomed & Co.* in Murchison Street. ME Seedat's son Ahmed moved to Durban to educate his sons Dawood, Hoosen, Mohammed, and Moosa (d. 2010). Hoosen (d. 2008) was a maxillo-facial surgeon and professor at the Medical School at Natal University while Mo Seedat is based at King Edward Hospital. Dawood Seedat earned his 'professorship' in the school of politics in the middle decades of the twentieth-century. Like many young radicals of his generation he saw the value in seeking alliances across racial lines to overturn white minority rule. For much of his later life he was banned for his anti-apartheid activities.

After qualifying as a bookkeeper, Seedat entered the political struggle in 1938. Paul Joseph, once of the TIC, described Seedat in his obituary as 'quiet, unassuming, always sporting red ties, Dawood cut a Makarenko-like figure with rimless spectacles and his manner of dealing with people.' This was in reference to Anton Semyonovich Makarenko (1888-1939), the Ukrainian-born writer who, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, established self-supporting orphanages for street children. In the 1930s, Seedat helped to establish the Liberal Study Group which included other political luminaries of the day, such as Monty Naicker, IC Meer, and Cassim Amra.

They held regular lectures on relevant political issues, including South Africa's participation in the Second World War, the struggle against British imperialism in India, and the nature of political resistance in South Africa. The group published a monthly newsletter – *The Call for Freedom and Justice* – with Seedat as its proprietor and Cassim Amra as editor. *The Call* was under constant police scrutiny. In July 1940, for example, in reaction to its anti-war rhetoric, police raided Seedat's home. When Seedat refused to allow this 'unwarranted intrusion, he was held back by the shoulders by two of the officers, whilst the third ransacked the place in real Gestapo fashion,'

and took away documents, pamphlets, and personal correspondence. Seedat's grandmother was pushed aside and to 'add insult to injury,' the documents were carted off in Seedat's personal briefcase. Seedat opposed South Africa's participation in the Second World War. He wrote an article, 'Don't Support the War' to dissuade Indians from enlisting in the army. His objections were based on Britain's role as an imperial power as well as racial discrimination in South Africa. A secret memorandum of the Department of Justice, dated 20 January 1964, recorded that 'this pamphlet, coupled with the agitation of Seedat had a marked deterrent effect upon the recruiting of Indians for the war at the time.' On 5 February 1941, Seedat told a mass meeting at Red Square that 'if freedom will not be given to us we will have to use force and take our freedom.'

He was charged with contravening National Security Regulations. His other 'scandalous and dishonouring words' against King George VI included:

'I personally have no respect for King George VI. We have a satellite of the King in this country, General Smuts. He is a cunning and clever crook.... We have got no more time for kings and emperors.... We are going to destroy the power of the government in this country.... Do you wish to see your Motherland – India – in everlasting bondage and slavery?.... Do you know that the British Empire is not an Empire but a *Vampire*? It drains all the wealth out of India and keeps millions of our people in suffering, starvation, sickness, illiteracy, and without homes.... We, too, in this South Africa; let us raise the voice of revolution. Let us proclaim in this country: 'Long live revolution!'

When the case was first heard before magistrate Ryle Masson in Durban, Seedat asked for an adjournment because he was unable to secure counsel. He was given a postponement to 14 March 1941. On that day he told the magistrate that he had engaged an advocate from the Transvaal who, it transpired, was not admitted to the Natal Bar. Despite vigorous protests from the prosecutor, the magistrate granted a remand until 16 April. Harry Bloom was brought from Johannesburg for the trial, at which Seedat made a passionate speech: 'The non Europeans of this country, due to South Africa's participation in the present Imperialist war, are called upon to

sacrifice their lives for a cause that offers them nothing but insult and humiliation.... We do not enjoy any privileges and yet we are expected to respect a system of government that denies us these rights.... The British Government is much concerned about the Poles and has gone to war on that issue but it has not shown itself in any way willing to grant the simplest of democratic rights to four hundred millions in India. If I say that I would like to see the downfall of the British Empire it is so that my people could begin to regenerate themselves'

Seedat was sentenced to three months with hard labour. When he was released on 17 July 1941, pamphlets were circulated widely advertising a meeting to accord 'a Public Welcome to a Young Leader who was imprisoned for CHAMPIONING the cause of NON-EUROPEAN FREEDOM.' For CPSA luminary Rusty Bernstein, the arrest of Dadoo and Seedat 'triggered the biggest campaign of meetings, handbills and posters that the party had managed for years. Whether we affected the fate of Dadoo and Seedat is hard to say. Both were found guilty and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, making them the first martyrs of the Communist Party revival.' Seedat's "Struggle Resume" made him an automatic candidate for arrest during the 1956 Treason Trial arrests. He founded the Indian Shop Assistant's Union in 1942; was imprisoned for three months in 1943 for his part in the Anti-Pass campaign of the ANC; was secretary of the CPSA in Durban; was a key organiser of meetings at Red Square; worked almost full-time for the leftist newspaper, *Guardian*. From July 1951 to February 1952, Seedat visited Palestine, East Germany, the USSR, and China. He was probably the first South African to visit the People's Republic of China after Mao Tse Tung had established a communist republic.

In East Germany, he addressed the Third World Festival of Youth. No one quite knows how he got to these countries as he left South Africa with a passport valid for India only and returned on the ironically named *Bloemfontein Castle* on 6 February 1952. Seedat addressed a mass rally at Red Square on 25 September 1952, urging people to volunteer for the Defiance Campaign. He gave the same message when he spoke at a meeting at Trades Hall in Johannesburg on 1 October 1952 to celebrate the third

Seedat's Release

A Leading Member of the Non-European United Front and the Nationalist Bloc.

Mr. D. A. SEEDAT who was imprisoned on 30th April, 1941, will be released on 17th July, 1941, at 8 a.m.



All sympathisers and supporters are asked to be present at the Central Gaol on Thursday, 17th July, 1941, at 7.45 a.m. to

WELCOME this Young Leader who was imprisoned for Championing the cause of **NON-EUROPEAN FREEDOM.**

At 5.30 p.m. on Thursday, 17th July, 1941, a Meeting will be held at the M.K. Gandhi Library & Feroze Rustomjee Hall, 140, Queen Street, Durban, to accord Mr. Seedat a Public Welcome.

Come in your hundreds to greet this young leader who served imprisonment in defence of your rights.

Issued by the Joint Reception Committee of the Non-European United Front and the Nationalist Bloc of the Natal Indian Association.

Try

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G.F.M. Durban

anniversary of New China. On 2 April 1954 he addressed an NIC and ANC meeting in Durban to protest Sophiatown removals and increased rentals at the Magazine Barracks. In May 1955, as a member of the Natal Peace Council, he spoke out against the atomic bomb. He was imprisoned for 14 days in September 1955 for holding illegal meetings at the corner of Grey and Lorne Streets. Seedat was one of the 156 activists arrested on charges of treason in December 1956. The charge against him was dropped on 20 April 1959. During the state of emergency in 1960, Seedat was arrested on 31 March 1960. Though the police files state that ‘nothing of evidential value was found in his possession’, he was only released on 5 July. Seedat was vice-president of the NIC at this time. He and his wife Fatima Seedat were banned for five years in January 1964, which was extended for a further five years in 1969. He passed away in 1976.

Sources: The Call, July 1940; Daily News, 15 March 1941; Bernstein, Memory Against Forgetting, 48-49; ‘I.C. Meer Remembers,’ Accessed at <http://www.sahistory.org.za>; Personal correspondence from Ray Simons to Fatima Seedat, 30 January 1998.



Red Square, 1930s



Dawood Seedat was a war hero when he was imprisoned for opposing South Africa's participation in World War Two



Dawood Seedat addressing a rally in Peking, China, 1951



A cartoonist's impression of Dawood Seedat and Yusuf Dadoo during the treason trial

Vorm - Form P.D. 65 VERHOORAFWAGTENDE - AWAITING TRIAL	
6264/60	TRONK GAOL
NAAM NAME	Dawood Ahmed
Alias	SEEDAT (A)
Beskuldiging Charge	Em. Reg.
Opgeneem (datum) Admitted (date)	31-3-60
Opmerkinge Remarks	
Na die Hoër Hof verwys (datum) Committed for Trial (date)	

Vorm - Form P.D. 65 VERHOORAFWAGTENDE - AWAITING TRIAL	
24905	TRONK GAOL
NAAM NAME	Dawood
Alias	Seedat
Beskuldiging Charge	Treason
Opgeneem (datum) Admitted (date)	5/12/56
Opmerkinge Remarks	
Na die Hoër Hof verwys (datum) Committed for Trial (date)	

Dawood Seedat was arrested during the treason trial and State of Emergency, 1960



Dawood Seedat (cigarette) and Fatima Seedat with wellwishers when treason charges were dropped against him

The State President of the Republic of South Africa

Mr. Nelson R. Mandela

requests the pleasure of your company

COMRADE FATIMA SEEDAT.

*At a luncheon in honour of the veterans of our struggle for
freedom at the Presidency, Church Street, Pretoria
on Saturday 23, July 1994 at 11h00*

Dress:

Informal

R.S.V.P.

(011) 646-5012 Amina

(011) 330-7058 Rica

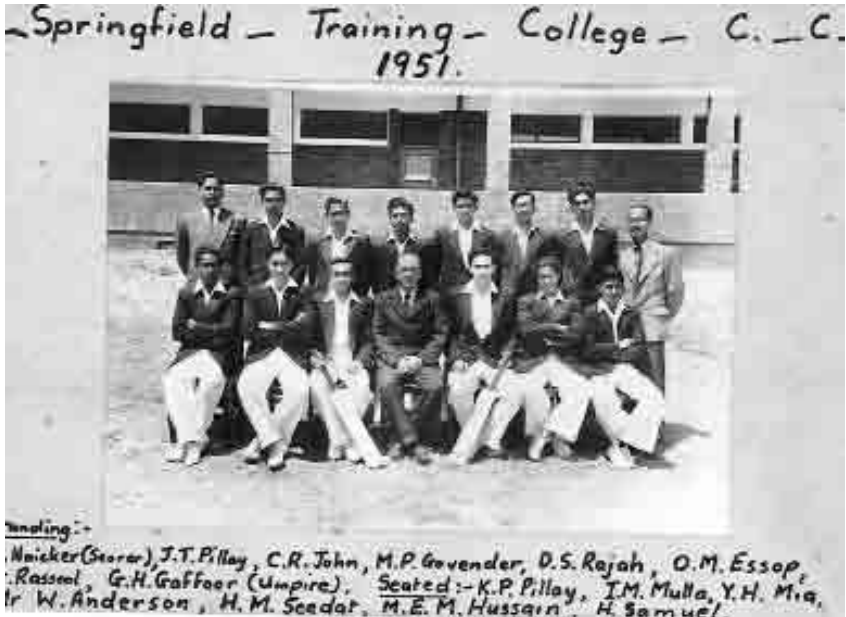


Fatima Seedat being arrested during the Defiance Campaign, 1952 and with Monty Naicker on her release





Fatima Seedat (seated) with her daughter Zoni shortly after her return from Hajj



Hassim Seedat was captain of the College cricket team

Fatima Seedat

(1922 – 2002)

*F*atima Seedat was, like her twin sister Rahima Moosa, a prominent anti-apartheid activist. Born in Cape Town in October 1922, Fatima was educated at Trafalgar High to standard eight. She got a job in the food industry, and became involved in politics through her participation in the Food and Canning Workers Union. She attended meetings of the Young Communist League and CPSA where she was influenced by Ray Alexander and Jack Simons. Another powerful influence was Cissie Gool and the NEUF. It was through these activities that she met her future husband Dawood Seedat.

They married in 1945 and had eight children. Ahmed Kathrada would write of the Seedat home in his *Memoirs*: 'Arrangements were made for me to stay at the home of Fatima and Dawood Seedat in Hampson Grove [in 1946].... They simply exuded warmth, kindness, hospitality, generosity, friendship and love, and everyone from the grandmother to the youngest child, welcomed visitors and strangers alike with open arms. Yusuf Dadoo told us that he could never go to Durban without calling at the house in Hampson Grove, and that he just loved the food.... Fatima joined the NIC which had become radicalised in the 1940s under the leadership of Monty Naicker.'

She was arrested for volunteering during the passive resistance campaign of 1946. Playing a similar protest role in the Defiance Campaign, she was one of the first women imprisoned and was sentenced to one month's hard labour. Once released, she threw herself into activism. Her range of organisational affiliations and speaking engagements reveal her full time commitment to the anti-apartheid and anti-imperialist cause. She was on the committee of the Natal Indian Youth Congress; on the Resolution Committee of FEDSAW; member of the NIC, Natal Peace Council; Civil Liberties Defence Committee with Rowley Arenstein; Society of International Friendship; SACTU; Women's Anti-Pass Committee; and Cato Manor and District Ratepayers Association. Fatima Seedat was a

dynamic public speaker who often shared the platform with Dadoo, Walter Sisulu, Monty Naicker, and Cassim Amra. During 1954 and 1955 she addressed numerous rallies in preparation for the Congress of the People at Kliptown, and in the late 1950s she spoke out against various apartheid laws. She was banned for five years on 14 January 1964. On 10 October 1966 she applied for the withdrawal of banning restrictions because her husband Dawood was also banned and they were having difficulty to see to the education, welfare and upbringing of their eight young children. She also wanted to travel to Cape Town to visit her ageing parents and, as a chronic diabetic who received treatment at the Beatrice Street clinic, she was sometimes too ill to go to the police station.

She concluded that 'as a housewife and mother of eight minor children all my time and attention is devoted to my home and children. I have not the time or the inclination to indulge in political activities.' On 9 December 1966, the Ministry of Justice rejected her application, based on a report from Commissioner JH Blignaut on 21 November 1966 that 'it is freedom of movement that Seedat desires and not the opportunity to assist in their education. It is a well known fact that she fosters the same political views as her husband and at one time their Post Box was used by various leftists as a covering address. Should she be allowed freedom of movement it will give her the opportunity to start her activities afresh as courier.'

The double bannings made life very difficult for the Seedats. Unable to work for a union, and with the wider community afraid to employ persons under the obvious gaze of the police, the family lived a frugal life in Hampson Grove. Fatima Seedat's banning did not mark the end of her involvement in community affairs. She moved to Phoenix and organised the local community around infrastructure and service delivery. She joined the ANC after its unbanning and was invited to a reception by Nelson Mandela. She also performed the Hajj in 1997, which she described as one of the highlights of her life. Fatima Seedat passed away in Durban at the age of 80.

Source: Interview, Zoni Seedat; Ahmed Kathrada, Memoirs. Cape Town: Struik, 2005.

Hassim Mohamed Seedat

(1930 –)

*H*assim Seedat, son of Mohamed Suleman Seedat, was born in Newcastle, Natal, in 1930. He attended St Oswalds School and Sastri College where he matriculated in 1947. He qualified as a teacher at the Springfield Teachers Training College, being part of the first group of teachers to qualify from this institution when it was opened in 1951. He taught at Ballengeich Indian School before proceeding to London where he enrolled with the London Education Council and took up a temporary teaching assignment whilst studying to obtain his Barrister-at-Law. He was called to the Bar in 1960. Seedat stayed at Down Hills Park Road, and Mac Maharaj and Kader Asmal, amongst many, stayed with him when they first landed in London. Whilst in London he was active in the anti-apartheid campaigns mounted in the UK by the Anti-Apartheid Committee.

He was an articled clerk to attorney NT Naicker, a prominent NIC activist and treason trialist. He subsequently established a legal practice in Durban, and was later joined by Thumba Pillay and Ebrahim Goga. Seedat defended a number of political activists and was detained for a month in 1965 in connection with the trial of MD Naidoo who was sentenced to five years on Robben Island. He was active in the NIC when it was revived in 1971 and was treasurer. He was elected a council member of the Natal Law Society in 1980, the first black member to hold this office.

He is a former member of the Democratic Lawyers Association, the first black law organisation in the country. He has been a past chairman of the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) South African Chapter based in Durban. The organisation is one of many around the world, representing about 20 million Indians living outside India. Seedat contributed to *The South African Gandhi 1893-1914*, edited by Fatima Meer, and wrote a series of articles on Gandhi in South Africa which appeared in *The Leader* during 1979 and 1980. He is presently a trustee of the Gandhi Development Trust, on the editorial board of *Satyagraha*, and chairman of the Freedom Park Trust History Durban Committee.

Seedat has the most extensive collection of books, pamphlets, magazines, brochures and memorabilia on Gandhi's South African years, as well as general material on Indians in South Africa. He is also the chair of the Mota Varachha Trust which was founded in 1906 by villagers from Mota Varachha who settled in Natal. Seedat is married to Farrieda and they have three children, Yusuf, Imraan, and Shirin.



Anti-apartheid rally at the University of Natal. Farrieda Seedat is seated on the front left and Hassim Seedat is to her left (Omar Badsha)

Mo Shaikh

(1959 –)

*M*o Shaikh, born on 26 August 1959, was the son of well known activist Lambie Rasool. He matriculated from Gandhi-Desai in 1976. His high school years were critical in his political development. He points in particular to ‘the Naidoo teachers – two sisters, very political, ... and Saths Cooper’s mum, a very popular lady, wonderfully caring, but remarkably strict in that caring.’ The Frelimo Rally of 1974 was a defining moment in Mo’s life: ‘When we jumped out at Curries Fountain there were a lot of people gathering. Curries Fountain was locked. On the right-hand side of Curries Fountain was a little embankment. Now this embankment had a field. And all of a sudden the gates of Curries Fountain opened, people came rushing out with dogs. So people were trying to jump over this embankment and there was this wire fence where everyone stampeded ... this dropped everyone; and the dogs were picking people; grabbing them – private parts. And this horror was unfolding in front of my eyes.... This shocked me because this is something I personally saw and it was then that I realised that things are not going to be easy here.’ The pain became personal the following day when he learnt that Mrs Cooper’s son Saths had been arrested. The 1976 Soweto revolt was another turning point as Mo distributed political pamphlets. Gaining entry to UDW politicised him further. He had been registered as ‘Malay’ and needed a permit to study at UDW, an ‘Indian’ university. He studied computer science which was not offered at UWC.

Politically, this was also a difficult time because the BCM had been banned by October 1977. This produced ‘an element of helplessness in the student movement.’ Mo came to the conclusion that although he was ‘scared [of violence], I had to muster the courage to say: “Yes I will join” [the armed struggle].’ Mo’s brother Yunis met with the ANC leadership in Swaziland and set up an underground unit in Durban. Mo was ‘very excited partly because of the mystique of the ANC as an organisation’ but, more importantly, having ‘liberated our minds by Black Consciousness,’ he believed that activists had to start thinking of building a strong organisation to mobilise the masses and the ANC seemed the best option to do so.’

Even at university, he points out, politically conscious students were initially against the SRC because they felt that it would give credibility to an apartheid institution but the four month long 1980 nationwide student boycott forced them to rethink their stance. Mo was arrested during the boycott as a 'student leader'. In 1986, the ANC sent Ebrahim Ebrahim into the country to assess the situation and the Shaikh family was asked to take care of him. After six months in the country, the ANC wanted Ebrahim to leave but this was proving difficult because they were under surveillance.

They succeeded in hiding Ebrahim but a number of them were arrested, including Mo on 29 June 1985, then Shirish Soni, Rajeshwar Maharaj, Yunis Shaikh, Lambie Rasool, and Mo's younger brother Chippie. Mo and Yunis spent nine months in solitary confinement and were only released on 22 March 1986. They were kept in their cells for 23 hours per day. While they were in detention they lost their mother. They 'were allowed to go to the funeral ... in handcuffs and brought back to detention.' When Ebrahim Ebrahim was kidnapped in Swaziland the police came looking for Mo. He and Yunis evaded the police but Chippie was detained for eighteen months. Mo obtained a false passport and met Jacob Zuma, the then chief of intelligence, in London. Zuma sent him to East Germany for training. He returned to South Africa in 1988 a somewhat forgotten person and secured a lecturing position at UDW.

Mo was involved in the next major ANC operation, Vula, and when that was discovered in 1990, he went back into hiding for almost a year until he was granted indemnity in 1991. Mo joined the negotiation process and was involved in shaping the new intelligence structures of South Africa. In 1994 he became chair of the Amalgamation Committee which had been set up to amalgamate the various intelligence services of the country. In 1997, he was appointed deputy co-ordinator of intelligence to Joe Nhlanhla; was Consul General in Hamburg from 1997 to 1999; and was ambassador to Algeria from 1999 to 2005. After the election of Jacob Zuma as President, Mo Shaikh was named South Africa's new intelligence chief in September 2009.

Source: Interview, D. Shonge, 7 July 2002. Voices of Resistance Project, UKZN Documentation Centre.



Saso / BPC rally at Curries Fountain, 1974. Police brutality conscientised many young activists



Shaikh brothers: Mo, Schabir; and Yunis



Yunis Shaikh reunited with Lambie and Kay Rasool after his release from detention, 1980



Iqbal Sheikh

Yunis Shaikh

(1957 –)

Yunis Shaikh, born in 1957 in Kliptown, attended Gandhi Desai where he was influenced politically by Saths Cooper's mother who was his Afrikaans teacher. His father Lambie Rasool was another important influence. The manner in which the police set upon protestors at the Frelimo Rally in 1974 and the arrest of Saths Cooper left a deep impression on him. Like Mo, he was classified 'Malay' and regarded it as demeaning to request permission to study at UDW. The eviction of an African student, Pinky, from the residence in 1978 resulted in a student boycott and Yunis's first spell in detention. It was a frightening experience because his uncle Dr Hoosen Haffajee had died in detention the previous year. Yunis was held at Brighton and Modderbee prisons but released after a few months.

Yunis was arrested again in 1980 during the nationwide student boycott and detained for almost ten months. He was imprisoned with Thumba Pillay, Farouk Meer, MJ Naidoo and other NIC leaders at Modderbee in Benoni. Spending time with seasoned politicians transformed his 'political education qualitatively. An older generation shared with us an entire history of struggle. So I got to locate the struggles we were in to the struggles that went before. I got connected to a whole range of people and families who were involved in the movement at the time. I also got exposed to different political thoughts.'

They discussed ways to link the struggles of students with community issues and workers. After graduating in 1980, Yunis met with Mandla Kuswayo of the ANC High Command in Swaziland, and agreed to become an operative in the country. From 1981 to 1984 he built up a network of people. Their handler from 1984 was Ebrahim Ebrahim for whom they arranged a car and flat when he was underground in South Africa. Yunis joined the Garment Workers Industrial Union, whose membership had a large number of working-class Indian women, and tried to build a clandestine relationship between the UDF, the labour movement, and the ANC so that they could bring in operatives and raise money for pamphlets and other work. While Yunis focused on the union, Mo became unit commander.

Mo, Yunis, their father Lambie, and brother Chippie were arrested in 1985 and kept in solitary confinement for nine months. It was during this period that their mother suffered a fatal heart attack. The brothers were allowed to attend the funeral: 'I went to the grave. I was standing outside, I couldn't do that even because I was shackled to another policeman. So we buried our mum and were taken back to our separate prisons. It was really a difficult time but it was a relief, just coming out of solitary confinement was a relief. For the first time you're seeing cars and people of the old neighbourhood. I'm not being disrespectful to my mum, but she gave me life. I was quite depressed and her death sort of gave me a chance to come out. We were sent back to solitary. It was very hard because you can't talk to anyone, the security guards were on 24-hour watch. [But] the security started to ... be quite respectful of our ability to endure pain, suffering, our refusal to speak out and give any information, the willingness to die, just the fierceness with which we conducted ourselves.'

When Yunis was released he began to rebuild counter-intelligence through the labour movement. In 1988 Mac Maharaj, Ronnie Kasrils, Simphiwe Nyanda, and others from the ANC's military wing returned to prepare for Operation Vula. Mandela's release aborted this operation but the Security Branch became aware of the planned operation and Yunis, Pravin Gordhan, and Mo were forced to spend extended periods underground. Yunis feels privileged to have been involved in the struggle as it brought the ANC 'which was just an abstract movement, very close. It was for us, all who lived in that era, a wonderfully challenging time. The struggle built us and I wish my son will be part of some social movement that advances the cause of human rights, or whatever the issues may be in his day, for it was a deeply enriching period of our lives.' Yunis found the TRC a 'cathartic experience. From that moment onwards, I began to rehabilitate myself and get a better handle on detention. Because we were living in the underground for so long that if I was sleeping and my wife came to wake me up, I instantly got up and grabbed at her neck. So the TRC helped me.'

Source: Interview with Dimakatso Shongwe, 13 August 2002. Voices of Resistance Project. UKZN Documentation Centre.

Mohammed Iqbal Sheik

(1958 –)

*M*ohammed Sheik was one of the later generation of political activists who came to the fore during the turbulent seventies. He was born in Vrededorp, Johannesburg, in August 1958 and attended the ML Sultan Technical College in Durban where he emerged as a student leader. Although the ANC was banned, Sheik and a friend, Abdulhai Ismail, travelled to Swaziland where they became members of Umkhonto (MK). Initially, the ability of MK to carry out campaigns in South Africa was limited because the frontline states of Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique were under colonial or white minority rule. The independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1974, and majority rule in Zimbabwe, changed the dynamics.

The defeat of the South Africans by the Cuban Army at Cuito Canavale in Angola in 1977 provided hope to black South Africans that the regime could be defeated. During 1982, Iqbal and Abdulhai Ismail travelled to Swaziland where they met Abdoolhai's brother Aboobaker Ismail. They joined MK and received training in the use of and maintenance of firearms and limpet mines. They joined the Dolphin Unit which had been established in 1982 by Aboobaker Ismail and Joe Slovo to carry out operations in South Africa. Iqbal and Abdulhai were trained by Aboobaker and operated under his general command.

Iqbal, as commander of the unit, identified targets for bombing while Aboobaker supplied the materials. They attacked what were considered "legitimate" targets – non-civilian, government, economic and policing infrastructure. Iqbal and Abdulhai carried out thirteen attacks of sabotage by the time Abdulhai left the unit in 1985. Iqbal receive further training in the German Democratic Republic in 1986 and continued to work in the Dolphin Unit until 1988. His final act of sabotage was a bombing at the Krugersdorp Magistrates' Court. Thereafter the Dolphin Unit was responsible for the distribution of weaponry inside the country. Although they wanted to avoid casualties, some people were killed or injured.

Iqbal remained a member of MK until its disbandment in 1992. Following Iqbal's testimony, the TRC concluded that 'the Applicant has made a full disclosure of all of his activities as a member of MK and we are satisfied that all the operations carried out by him as a member of the Dolphin Unit and all his actions as a member of Ordnance were committed with a political objective. He stressed in his evidence that in all the operations he was mindful of the fact that civilian casualties should be avoided and, at worst, kept to a minimum.'

Source: Truth and Reconciliation Amnesty Committee. 16 January 2000. <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21003.htm>



Imam Gassan Solomon addressing a rally

Imam Gassan Solomon

(1941 – 2009)

Gassan Solomon, the son of Abdurrahman and Gasena, was born on 6 January 1941. He matriculated from South Peninsula High and earned a social science degree from UCT. Imam Solomon's activism began during his student days when he was influenced by the ideologies of the Unity Movement and PAC. The death in detention of Imam Haron in 1969 deepened his anti-apartheid commitment. In 1980 he became Imam of the Claremont Mosque and his leadership helped to galvanise the youth politically. He was a founding member of the Call of Islam in 1984. He was swayed by charterism and joined the UDF in 1983. He was a prominent leader of the inter-faith solidarity movement and led marches with the Reverend Allan Boesak.

Professor Aslam Fataar of Stellenbosch University described him as 'a man who provided an example of a seamless marriage between his Islamic commitments and his commitment to non-racialism in the heroic fight against apartheid.' On 10 August 1985 Imam Solomon was part of a group that defied a government ban and entered Gugulethu to attend the funeral of youth activist Sithembele Mathiso. There was a large police presence and 19 leaders were arrested. Under police scrutiny, the Imam escaped to Zimbabwe and from there went into exile to Saudi Arabia.

He returned to South Africa in 1991. Imam Solomon was appointed to parliament in 1994 and was a member of the justice portfolio committee when Dullah Omar was minister of justice and also served on Parliament's Ethics and Constitutional Review committees. He served as an ANC MP from 1994 to 2009. He was a driving force in the Zakaah Fund and was national chairperson of the South African National Zakaah Fund. He was a founder member of the Voice of the Cape Radio Station. The Imam accompanied Mandela on an official ANC visit to Saudi Arabia and Iran in 1992. He passed away on 28 October 2009 from prostate cancer. PT Mellett was among those who attended the Imam's *janazah*: 'At 12:30 pm today I was amongst a huge throng of people who gathered on the old

Solomon's land, off the Spansjemacht River Road in Constantia to say our farewells and to bury our comrade, friend and great community leader Imam Gassan Solomon, a descendent of Tuan Guru.... Amongst the speakers paying tribute to Imam Solomon's role in the struggle, the formation of the UDF and his role as an ANC MP, was his old friend and comrade, former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel. Imam Solomon's comrade and life-long friend Sheikh Gabier also paid a memorable tribute to his friend as did the Imam's son Nasser. To the end he displayed the courage that had been a hallmark of his life.'

'His life was one of a carefully balanced service to the communities of Cape Town, to his family, to his community of faith, to the UDF, to the ANC, to the electorate, to the MJC, to his Claremont Mosque, to the Zakah Fund, to Radio Voice of the Cape, to the youth and so much more. He was also a dedicated gardener and pigeon man. I remember Imam Solomon as a humble man who always greeted one warmly with a smile clasping your hand in both of his hands. He had a way about him that told you that everyone was equal in this man's eyes and he was someone who always made time to stop and smell the roses. It was men like these that led us in the struggle against apartheid. He was often on the run from the police, changing his appearance frequently.'

'Imam Solomon was a man of practical faith. He lived the Muslim path, emphasising the simplicity of the faith by underlining its spirit through his service to people. His was not a faith and politics of making a loud noise and shouting radical slogans. It was one of carefully laying sound foundations for us all and laying cement and brick, one by one to build a solid structure for future generations. May the peace of Allah and the spirit of Gassan Solomon envelope his wife Amina and his sons and daughters in this time of grief. We've all lost a great brother. But his life and legacy is our gain and the gain of future generations.'

*Sources: PT Mellett, 'Farewell Imam Gassan Solomons,' <http://cape-slavery-heritage.iblog.co.za/2009/10/29/farewell-imam-gassan-solomons>; Kgalema Motlanthe, 'Tribute to Imam Gassan Solomon,' *ANC Today*, Vol 9, No 44, 6 November 2009.*

Goolam Suleman

(1929 –)

Goolam Suleman was the son of Suleman Hoosen who came to Natal in the 1890s and worked for relatives before opening his own store about 30 kilometres outside Stanger. Suleman senior married Fathima and they had seven children. Goolam was born on 10 September 1929. At the age of eight he was sent to Stanger to board with a local family and complete his primary education. He went to Sastri College in 1948 and was drawn to the NIYC, sold the radical *New Age* paper, and attended various political rallies. His family learnt that he was more interested in politics than education and made him return to Stanger to run Liberty Stores. Goolam married Khatija and they had four children: Feroza, Fathima, Mumtaz, Razia, and Mohammed.

Goolam and EV Mahomed were very close to Chief Albert Luthuli. Suleman even gave the keys of this house to Luthuli who was free to visit at any time. Luthuli worked in Suleman's house and EV Mahomed's shop. Many of Luthuli's meetings took place at the home behind Liberty Stores. When Luthuli was banned in the 1950s, Suleman functioned as the unofficial treasurer of the ANC even though non-Africans were not allowed to be members of the ANC. Suleman organised a postal address box for Luthuli under the pseudonym 'Abou Jaffar.' Moses Kotane, Mangosutho Buthelezi, Monty Naicker, Yusuf Dadoo and Nelson Mandela all visited the Suleman home for their meetings with Luthuli.

Luthuli was banned in 1956 and relied even more heavily on Suleman and EV Mahomed. During the treason trial Suleman visited Luthuli at the Drill Hall in Pretoria. When Luthuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1960, the Ratepayers Association of Stanger, of which Suleman and EV Mahomed were members, organised a farewell function in his honour. The government refused permission for Luthuli to address the meeting but thousands attended the farewell at the Jainah Hall. Alan Paton and Fatima Meer were among the speakers, while Zohra Meer presented a scroll to Luthuli's wife Nokukhanya.

Suleman and Mahomed organised the venue for one of the last meetings between Mandela and Luthuli after the latter's return from Oslo, and they drove Mandela back from Stanger to Fatima and Ismail Meer's home late that night. When Mandela visited Stanger after his release from prison, Riaz Meer, Goolam Suleman, and Justice Mpanza were chosen to meet him at the airport in Durban. Mandela stayed at Suleman's home in Tinley Manor in recognition of his support to the struggle. In 1993, Suleman hosted Ebrahim Ebrahim at his home, and was thanked by the ANC.

The letter dated 25 October 1993 concluded that 'in the eyes of freedom fighters and activists, young and old, the name of Goolam Suleman stands out as a lighthouse of hope; the person himself rises tall as a symbol of all the qualities that people espouse and wish to treasure in their lives. You have been, you are, and will continue to be a living lesson to us in the manifold dimensions of society's expectations of us.'

Source: Logan Naidoo, In the Shadows of Chief Albert Luthuli. Kwadukuza: Luthuli Museum, 2010.



Goolam Suleman with Nelson Mandela, October 1990

Enver Surtee

(1953 –)

Enver Surtee, born in Rustenberg in the North Western Province on 15 August 1953, matriculated from Lenasia High in 1970 and completed an Honours degree in philosophy at UDW (1974); BProc from UNISA (1977); and LLM in constitutional litigation at UWC in 1995. He practiced as a human rights lawyer in Rustenberg from 1977 to 1994. During this period he acted on behalf of Cosatu affiliates, and especially the National Union of Mineworkers, as well as the ANC after its unbanning. He was also a member of the parent-teacher body at Zinniaville Secondary school in Rustenberg in the 1980s. This was a very progressive anti-apartheid body that defied apartheid policy by admitting African learners. He was co-opted to the ANC negotiating team that helped to draw up the 1996 Constitution and was involved in shaping the Bill of Rights. He joined the National Assembly in 1994 and was redeployed to the National Council of Provinces as the ANC's Chief Whip in 1999; Naledi Pandor was the NCOP's chairperson at the time. Surtee's association with Pandor continued when he was appointed Deputy Minister of Education in 2004, with Pandor as minister. In 2009, Surtee was appointed Deputy Minister of Basic Education, with Angie Moshekga as Minister.



Enver Surtee

Mohammed Tikly

(1939 –)

*M*ohammed Tikly was born in Pietersburg (now Polokwane) in 1939 to Amina and Abdul Hamid who had a retail store in the town. He was the only son and was sandwiched between five sisters. Tikly moved to Johannesburg in 1953 to attend high school. His contemporaries included the Pahad brothers, Aziz and Essop, Ahmed Timol, Yusuf ‘Joe’ Saloojee, and Ismail Bhorat. This was a period of heightened political activity, with the Defiance Campaign having just been completed, and vigorous canvassing having begun for the Congress of the People. He was influenced by the Vassan brothers, Herby Pillay, Babla Saloojee, and Mosie Moola, and drawn into the struggle as a member of the TIYC.

Dadoo was a distant relative and they regularly attended his inspirational speeches in Doornfontein. Tikly was also inspired by the adoption of the Freedom Charter (1955) and took a keen interest in the Treason Trial (1956-61). Tikly proceeded to Dublin to study medicine but instead studied Sociology at the Middlesex Polytechnic. During the Rivonia Trial in 1963, he participated in a week-long hunger strike at Trafalgar Square in London to attract international media attention and reduce the likelihood of the death sentence being imposed on Mandela, Kathrada, and others.

The South African Embassy punished him by refusing to renew his passport and Tikly remained in exile. He taught economics and social studies in London for fourteen years. He also campaigned against apartheid on behalf of the ANC by speaking at universities and schools throughout the UK and Europe. After the 1976 Soweto uprising, he was part of an ANC education committee in London that campaigned against inferior Bantu Education. With hundreds of students in exile, the ANC established the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO) in Tanzania and Tikly was appointed as director. He was based in Tanzania from 1982 to 1987, overseeing the settlements in Mazimbu and Dakawa, then spent two years in Lusaka as administrative secretary of the ANC’s Department of Education. He oversaw all ANC education projects in exile.

The unbanning of the ANC in 1990 facilitated his return home. Following its unbanning, the ANC handed over the two SOMAFSCO settlements to the government of Tanzania in July 1992 and returned the students to South Africa. Tikly was tasked with integrating the returning students into the education system in South Africa. He became head of the Batlagae Trust (Batlagae is a Setswana word meaning ‘those who have come home’) which assisted with this process. They provided welfare for a limited period for returnees and funded students to attend university, school, or adult education classes.

The trust established the Yeoville Community School in Johannesburg for primary pupils and Yeoville Education Polyclinic, which provided trauma counselling and remedial education. Tikly also oversaw the SOMAFSCO Archives Project, which entailed transferring documentation and artefacts to the University of Fort Hare. With the exception of the archives, the other activities were phased out by the late 1990s. In 1995 Tikly joined the National Department of Education in Pretoria, where he worked for five years, first in the International Relations Division and later in the Gender Equality Division, until his retirement in 2000. He also served on the ANC’s Archives’ Committee, was active at ANC branch level in Pretoria, and was a trustee of the Desmond Tutu Diversity Trust.

Source: Interviewed by Bertil Högberg, 25 July 2005. Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in South Africa. <http://www.liberationafrica.se/intervstories/interviews/tikly/index.xml?by-country=1&node-id=2237398662-4>; Interviewed by Goolam Vahed telephonically, 5 November 2010.

Ahmed Timol

(1941 – 1971)

I had noticed that my son had been assaulted and was full of blood and that the whole face was covered in blood... They hit him very badly. They ripped off all his nails and the coffin was also filled with blood – Hawa Timol.

*D*espite what Hawa Timol saw, magistrate JLL De Villiers, who carried out the inquest, attributed Ahmed Timol's death to suicide: 'He [Timol] had been familiar with instructions given by the party to its members, these instructions included to commit suicide rather than betray the Communist Party.' Ahmed Timol came from a politicised family. His father, Haji Timol, had been part of the Dadoo generation, political activists who took on a more radical bent and transformed their tactics from negotiation with the state to passive resistance and protest. Ahmed Timol's brother Mohammed testified before the TRC that his brother grew up in a 'very religious orthodox family of the Islamic faith. He grew up at a time when there was intense oppression in South Africa, and as a young Indian Muslim he too became affected by what was happening in this country, the injustices committed against the vast majority of the people of South Africa, those who were not White.'

Timol qualified as a teacher but had a deep interest in radical politics and attended the Lenin School in Moscow where he was accompanied by former president Thabo Mbeki, who recalled: 'Ahmed Timol was my comrade.... He and I went to receive political training in Moscow in the Sixties. We had the same teachers in the same institution. We ate the same food. We made the same friends, acquaintances and contacts. We shivered alike in that cold foreign place and were warmed by the same revolutionary yearnings.... Ahmed was a Muslim but never sectarian: he sought national unity across the class, caste and religious divides of his own community.... He was communist without ever abandoning his religious piety.'

‘His revolutionary discipline never overtook his joy in simple things. Ahmed was, apart from all of this, a great Africanist in the most profound sense.... Just as Dr Dadoo lifted the gaze of his community to behold its African realities, so too did Ahmed Timol expand upon and enact, in his own flesh and with his own blood, the great lengths to which the Indian community would go to assert and claim its proper birthright in this place. The apartheid regime performed upon his body a macabre dance, a *danse macabre*, of exorcism through violence. It was their own neurosis that spoke through every blow, because in him our revolutionary spirit was made flesh and they simply could not believe it. He was and remained, even after his death, the spectre that was haunting South Africa. When Timol returned to South Africa, he engaged in underground struggle as the major political organisations had been banned.’

Timol was arrested on 22 October 1971 and taken for interrogation to John Vorster Square. Five days later, 32 year old Timol died in custody, his body displaying signs of torture. The police alleged that he had committed suicide by jumping from the tenth floor of the building. He was the 22nd person to die in police custody since the introduction of detention without trial in 1963. Hawa Timol described to the TRC how she heard of her son’s death: ‘On Wednesday 27th my husband and son had gone to the mosque for evening prayers. During this time three policemen came and entered our house. One of them pushed me into a seat and then proceeded to tell me that my son had tried to escape by jumping out of the tenth floor of John Vorster Square and that I was to tell my husband that his body was lying in the Hillbrow government mortuary. I could not believe what was being said and in my confusion, I tried to argue that this was not true. I even remember taking them to the flat windows and saying look how could my son have jumped out of the difficult windows at John Vorster Square? I was crying and screaming and our neighbour came to enquire what was happening. The policeman without further explanation left.’

After Timol’s arrest, his family was harassed by the Security Branch who repeatedly came to their home to interrogate his parents and search the house. Police officers named at Timol’s inquest included Colonel Greyling, Captain Bean, Sergeant Rodrigues, Warrant Officer Cloete, Sergeant F.J.



Ahmed Timol



Yusuf Timol grieving at the funeral of his son



Ahmed Timol's funeral procession

Ferreira, Sergeant M.C. Pelser and Sergeant D.L. Carter. At the end of an eight-month inquest, magistrate de Villiers ruled that Ahmed Timol had died ‘from serious brain injuries and loss of blood when he jumped from a window from the tenth floor of John Vorster Square. The cause of death is suicide and nobody is to blame.’ The three people with whom Timol was arrested under the Terrorism Act, Kantilal Naik, Amina Desai, and Salim Essop, reported that they were severely tortured. Essop was so badly assaulted that he was hospitalised. Naik, who was arrested the day after Timol, was suspended from a beam by his arms, causing temporary paralysis. He told the TRC:

‘Myself and Timol were both teachers at the Roodepoort Indian High School. On the morning of the 23rd, it was a Saturday morning, security policemen came to my home and said that I should take them to school as they wanted to seize the typewriter. I was then taken to John Vorster Square. I made a statement and some of the security policemen said I was talking rubbish. They started to question me. They were not satisfied with my answers and two burly policemen were assaulting me. It was like a seesaw. The one punched me and I fell on to the other guy, and the other guy then of course punched me and you know, it was a seesaw thing.’

The TRC concluded: ‘The commission finds that the SAP and in particular Colonel Greyling, Captain Bean, Sergeant Rodrigues, Warrant Officer Cloete, Sergeants FJ Ferreira, MC Pelser, and DL Carter were directly responsible for the death of Mr Ahmed Timol. The commission finds further that the inquest magistrate’s failure to hold the police responsible for Ahmed Timol’s death contributed to a culture of impunity and that led to further gross human rights violations.’

Sources: Imtiaz Cajee, Timol. A Quest for Justice. Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2005; Hawa Timol, Testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mahommed Ismail “Beaver” Timol

(1913-1994)

*B*ever Timol, born on 25 June 1913, was the eldest son of Ismail Beena Timol and Rasool Mullah (d. 1953). Ismail had arrived in South Africa from the village of Kathor in Surat, India, in the mid-1880s. He died in 1918/1919 when Beaver was just five or six years old. It was a struggle for Rasool to bring up four young children and Beaver was forced to leave work at fifteen to help support the family financially. His first job was as a storeman for Lockhat Brothers, and he later became a travelling sales representative for the same firm. This suited Beaver’s gregarious personality as he was a “people” person who enjoyed socializing, and always put the wellbeing of others before all else.

Though Beaver was forced to leave school at fifteen, he was eager to acquire an education and attended the Dartnell Crescent School where Pauline Morell, principal of Durban Indian Girls High School, ran adult classes in the evenings. The result was that he became a confident public speaker and was an avid reader with a vast library of books. Books such as *Glimpses of World History* by Jawaharlal Nehru; *China Fights Back* by Agnes Smedley, and others on the Russian Revolution shaped his strong socialist leanings. Beaver married Rogaya Jacobs (cousin of Yusuf Jacobs who is featured in this book) and they had eight children, four girls and four boys. Despite the large family placing a financial strain on Beaver, he did a lot of the backroom work for the political organizations in the 1940s and 1950s. He was also an excellent sportsman, playing cricket for Kismet Cricket Club (Beaver was the brother of one of South Africa’s finest wicketkeepers “Peppy” Timol, and cousin of the great all-rounder of the 1940s, “Goofy” Timol) and was goalkeeper for his local community team. Beaver was also on the board of trustees of the ML Sultan Technical College.

During the 1940s, Beaver was a founding member of the Liberal Study Group (LSG) and one the Group’s more accomplished debaters. For example, The Leader of 25 March 1944 gave full front page coverage to the debate between the LSG and the Durban Parliamentary Society.

The motion was that ‘in the opinion of the House the time is not yet ripe for the granting of the Dominion Status to India.’ The LSG team comprised of political “heavyweights” Beaver Timol, Rowley Arenstein, M.D. Naidoo and H.L.E. Dhloomo. The Parliamentary Society was represented by T.A. Blakely, E.L. Roberts, K.R. Burne, and K.A. Shappard. The debate was moderated by Elizabeth Sneddon and Justice J.R. Brokensha. Beaver was also a member of the CPSA and NIC, and was part of the faction headed by Monty Naicker that overthrew the moderate leadership of the NIC in 1945. His “comrades” included the likes of Cassim Amra , Dr Goonam, Yusuf Dadoo, Dawood Seedat, AKM Docrat, MJ Naidoo, Dr Jassat, Zainab Asvat (whose sister Khatija married Beaver’s brother Essop), and Cissie Gool, to name a few. Beaver was a regular at protest meetings at what activists dubbed the “Red Square” (now Nicol Square). Many meetings took place at Beaver’s flat at 10 Dominion Court, 55 Beatrice Street, where they printed pamphlets on a roneo machine that he had in the verandah. Activists referred to the flat as 10 Downing Street! When Beaver travelled upcountry as a sales representative, he would take this literature along to pass on to leadership in Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, Newcastle, and elsewhere.

Once the apartheid state clamped down on activists in the 1960s, Beaver faded from the public political limelight but continued with his social, educational, and welfare activities in the community. He took up gardening and though he lived in a flat, the outside landing was turned into a tropical “jungle” with lots of exotic plants and a variety of orchids. He was a member of the orchid society and a garden judge. The highlight of Beaver’s life was the day that he finally went to vote, 27 April 1994, in South Africa’s first democratic election. During the run up to the elections he enthusiastically attended all the political meetings. He passed away a month later on 25 May 1994 at the age of 81.

Source: Sherene Timol (daughter of Beaver Timol).



Red Square, 1940s

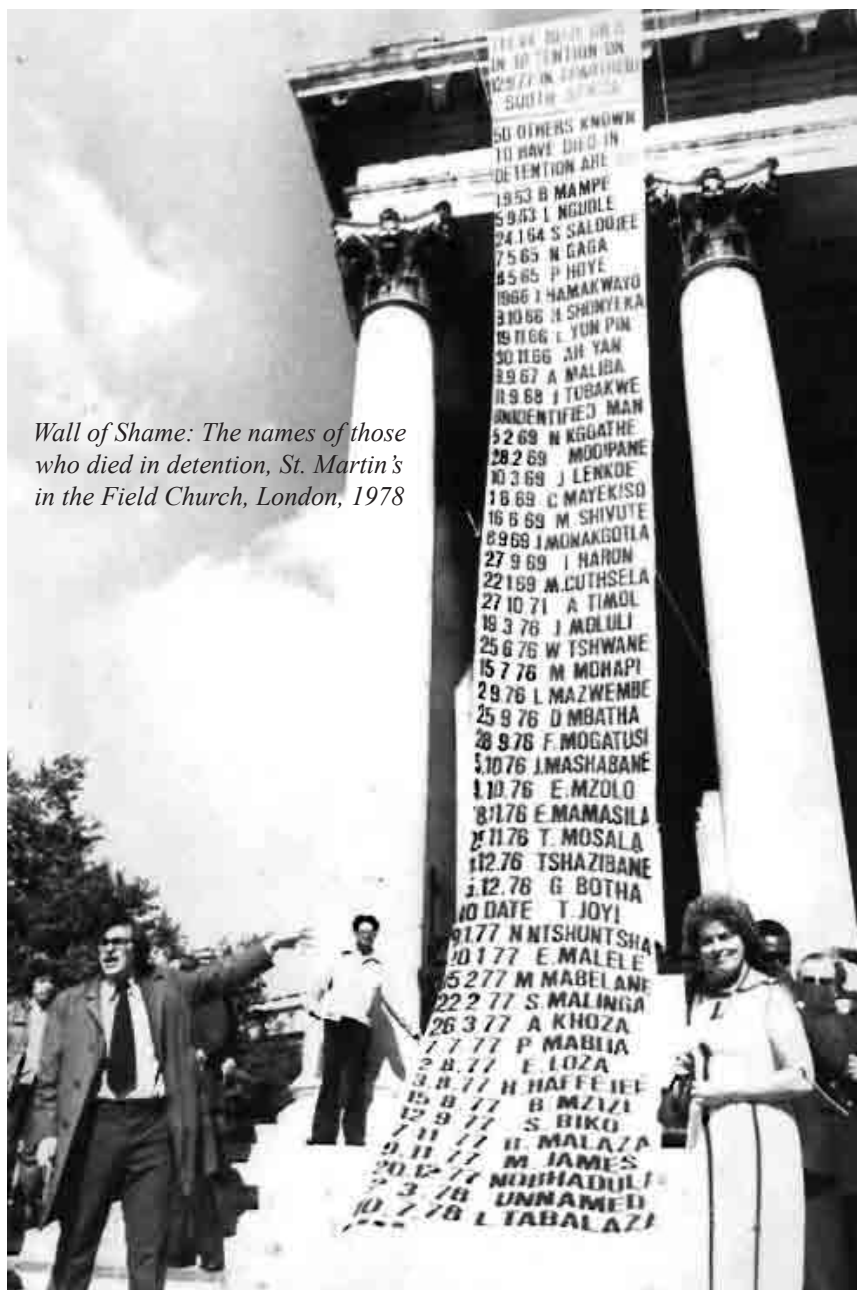


Mahommed Ismail "Beaver" Timol (middle)



Protest corner Pine, Grey and Commercial Road, 12 January 1941

Wall of Shame: The names of those who died in detention, St. Martin's in the Field Church, London, 1978



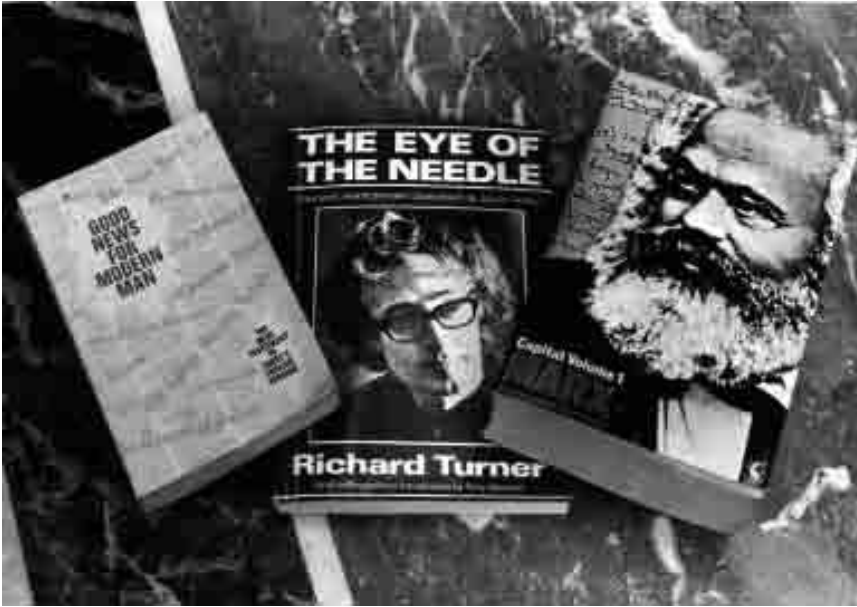
Rick Turner

(1941 – 1978)

Rick Turner was a South African activist, political scientist, and philosopher who was allegedly assassinated by the apartheid state in 1978. He was born in the Cape in 1941 and grew up on a fruit farm near Stellenosch. He schooled at St. George's in Cape Town and graduated with honours in Philosophy from UCT in 1963. He pursued post-graduate studies at the Sorbonne in Paris where he received a doctorate for a dissertation on the political implications of existentialism, with a particular focus on French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Turner returned to South Africa in 1966 and worked on the farm in Stellenbosch for two years before lecturing at the universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Rhodes, and Natal.

In Durban he befriended Steve Biko and responded to Biko's Black Consciousness call by encouraging activism among whites. With Harriet Bolton, he got white students involved in organising black workers and with his student Halton Cheadle began the *South African Labour Bulletin*. Turner was a prominent academic at the university and leading South African political scientist. His work stressed the virtues of bottom-up popular democracy and workers' control. Turner's 1972 book, *The Eye of the Needle – Towards Participatory Democracy In South Africa*, outlined these ideas for a radically democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Turner had married his first wife Barbara in 1964 and they had two daughters, Jann and Kim. Their marriage had broken down by the late 1960s and it was through Biko that he met his second wife Fawzia, a student at university. The Mixed Marriages Act barred them from a civil marriage, and Turner, who converted to Islam, married Fawzia in a religious ceremony conducted by an imam in the garden of Fatima and Ismail Meer's Burnwood Road home. In 1973 Turner was banned for five years. He was confined to Durban and prevented from visiting his daughters and mother in Cape Town. His daughter Jann would reflect: 'He was unable to visit us in the Cape because the absurdly titled "Minister of Justice" confined dad's movements to the magisterial district of Durban, forbade him from



Rick Turner was both an activist and brilliant academic



Fawzia Turner at Rick Turner's funeral

teaching, publishing or even being in a room with more than one person at a time. We knew the minister's agents were watching us because they made their presence felt with the slashes they left in dad's car tyres, the fire bomb they threw into our house one night and the truck-load of cement they dumped on our lawn for a laugh. We saw them following us when we drove around the game reserve, we heard them listening in on our phone conversations and we met them when they raided our house in the middle of the night. I knew they would be there over the holidays because they'd been there, on the shadowy edges of our lives, ever since I could remember.'

Turner's banning did not stop him from speaking out and in April 1973 he and other banned individuals staged an Easter fast to underscore the sufferings caused by bannings. He also attended the SASO terrorism trial of nine BC leaders as a defence witness in March 1976. In November 1976 Turner received a Humboldt Fellowship but the apartheid regime refused him permission to travel to Germany. In September 1977 Steve Biko was murdered in police custody. A few months later, on 8 January 1978, Turner was murdered, just two months before his banning order was due to expire. He was shot through a window of his home in Bellair, and died in the arms of his 13-year old daughter, Jann, who described what happened:

'It was raining in the early hours of the morning of January 8 when someone armed with a 9mm pistol walked up our driveway and shot my dad through the window of my sister's and my room. The bullet hit him at point-blank range. He lost consciousness almost immediately and died 20 minutes later in a pool of his own blood. The empire triumphed again. Nevertheless I knew, as we buried my father with voices raised in song and fists raised in defiance, that somewhere out there was a force called justice that would ultimately eradicate the evil that had shrouded my family and my country in darkness. Police investigations, predictably, failed to identify his killers though most people believe that he was murdered by the apartheid security police.'

Sources: Jann Turner, 'May the force be with you,' Mail & Guardian, December 21 2007 to January 3 2008; Tony Morphet, Richard Turner. A Biographical Introduction. In The eye of the Needle, 1980. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/r-turner.pdf>.

Ismail Vadi

(1959 –)

*I*smail Vadi was born on 30 November 1959 in Kliptown, where the Freedom Charter had been adopted a few years before. He matriculated from Trinity High in Lenasia and received an MA in History from Wits where he was involved in politics as a member of the executive committee of the Black Students Society in 1980 and 1981. Vadi joined the TIC and UDF, which espoused the non-racial values of the Freedom Charter. As an English and History teacher at the MH Joosub School in Lenasia, Vadi was a key member of the Progressive Teacher's League, a forerunner of SADTU. He was vice-president of SADTU from 1990 to 1994, when he became an ANC MP in the first ANC government.

As an MP, Vadi was involved in education for over a decade until his appointment as chairman of Parliament's important portfolio committee on communication in 2008. At the time of his appointment, Vadi said that he was surprised because he knew 'absolutely nothing about communications.' But as Duncan McLeod pointed out, 'since assuming the role Vadi has taken to the job like a duck to water. Under his direction, the committee has become vocal and active in the information and communications technology sector.' Vadi developed an interest in security and crime issues and worked in Parliament's safety and security portfolio committee and in the joint standing committee on intelligence.

He has completed an MA degree in security studies and is currently working on his doctorate. In May 2010, Vadi was co-opted onto the ANC Gauteng Provincial Executive Committee. Vadi said that he was 'humbled by and appreciative of the appointment. This is yet another opportunity to serve the liberation movement and the people of Gauteng.' Vadi was appointed as the new MEC for Roads and Transport in Gauteng in November 2010 by premier Nomvula Mokonyane and was lost to Parliament. According to the website of the Documentary Filmmakers Association, Vadi's 'loss to parliament is a big blow for the telecommunications and broadcasting industries. Vadi, who is regarded by many in the industry as incorruptible,

was a hard worker, and gave poorly performing state-owned enterprises and even the department of communications a hard time over their performance – or lack thereof.’ Unlike some former colleagues in government, Vadi has no interest in going into business. As he explained, ‘this is my fourth term in parliament, so I suppose that’s the career path I’ve chosen.’ He has three children and two grandchildren and spends his leisure time hiking, fishing, and reading, particularly on politics and religion. He published *The Congress of the People and Freedom Charter Campaign* in 1995.

Source: SAHO; Duncan McLeod, ‘Parliament’s Vadi vows to get tough in 2010,’ TechCentral, 19 January 2010. <http://www.techcentral.co.za/tough-talking-ex-teacher-tackles-icasa-sentech-sabc/12285/>; DFA, ‘Parliament loses Ismail Vadi,’ 3 November 2010. <http://blog.docfilmsa.com/2010/11/parliament-loses-ismail-vadi.html>.



Ismail Vadi with Moulvi Cachalia (R) and Jay Naidoo

Essop “Errol” Vawda

(1929 – 1993)

Errol Vawda was born in Johannesburg on August 1929 but grew up in Newcastle where his father Ismail owned a retail store S.E. Vawda. He home-schooled during his primary years, matriculated from Sastri College, and qualified as a medical doctor from Wits in 1954. After doing his internship at McCords, Vawda opened a practice in Brits in the then Transvaal. He did not find general practice stimulating and opted to specialise, becoming one of the country’s first radiographers. He was one of the doctors who helped establish the Medi-Centre in Lorne Street. Vawda married Ruqayya Nagdee (sister of Halima Gool and Amina Desai) in 1953 and they had three sons: Shahid, Ahmed, and Ismail.

A dedicated medical man, Vawda was equally respected for his role in politics, and in particular his contribution to the boycott of apartheid sport. It was at Wits that Vawda participated in the Progressive Forum, an organisation of non Stalinist-Marxist intellectuals whose members included AI Limbada, Enver Hassim, Karrim Essack, Zulei Christopher, Dolly Hassim, David Soggot, Mike Davis, Fatima Meer, and AKI Vahed. This formidable group attracted many young people and was affiliated to the Unity Movement. Vawda was one of the staunchest members of Sacos, where he worked with Hassan Howa and Morgan Naidoo. Sacos was formed in 1973 to organise an international boycott of South African sport. The success of this movement dented white morale and it is for this reason that members received many warnings from the government that there was no place for political activists in the sports dispensation. Passports for overseas travel were withheld from Sacos officials to punish them.

Vawda was president of the South Africa Table Tennis Board from 1983 to 1991 and the withholding of his passport meant that he could not attend world conferences and championships of the International Table Tennis Federation. Errol Vawda was also vice-president of the Natal Council of Sport from 1981 to 1985; Sacos’s secretary of finance from 1981 to 1983 and executive member from 1987 to 1989; vice-president of the Federation

Professional League, and member of the Durban Golf Club. Vawda was a keen golfer and played at what his wife Ruqayya described as ‘the cowshed’ (Siripat Road). In the 1980s they were offered use of Windsor golf course on Wednesday afternoons. While some members, including ardent anti-apartheid activists, took up the offer, Vawda stuck to his guns and refused what he termed ‘apartheid handouts.’ Ruqayya Vawda’s one regret is that Errol Vawda did not live to cast his vote in 1994, for the demise of white minority rule was what he had dedicated his life to.



Errol Vawda graduated from Wits and was involved in the Unity Movement and later in SACOS, where he was involved in table tennis



Attorney Clive Vawda, brother of Errol Vawda, was also a key member of the Unity Movement in the 1960s and later SACOS. He was involved in the administration of squash



Yusuf Vawda



Zac Yacoob debating the merits of the Tricameral dispensation

Yusuf Vawda

(1952 –)

*Y*usuf Vawda was born in Durban in 1952 and matriculated from Orient High where he was the Dux. His politicisation began in Standard 9 when students were required to hoist the South African flag and sing the national anthem during Republic Day celebrations. Vawda and a group of students jeered and, as punishment, were taken to Currie's Fountain and 'made to run up and down the pavilion several times. I don't have any permanent damage from that [but] it was a kind of first awakening of some sort of political consciousness.' Inequities in apartheid South Africa was also a form of politicisation. 'We couldn't go to the beach – the best beach, the surfing beaches, were segregated for Whites only. We had to play soccer in Prince Edward Street, dodging between the traffic. Of course, it was highly dangerous and also illegal. We would have police sort of raiding and everybody would disappear into the buildings. On one occasion we got arrested for playing soccer on the streets and had to be bailed out. We all were taken in a van to Smith Street Police Station to have our little comeuppance.'

Vawda enrolled for a law degree at UDW, which he found 'a very repressive climate' because most of the 'lecturers were handpicked by the Broederbond,' but it was also 'a melting point for ideas.' They protested against dress codes, rules about hairstyle, and other restrictions that made the university as 'rigid as the school system.' Vawda was inspired by Steve Biko and Ric Turner, while Zac Yacoob, Pravin Gordhan, Yunus Mohamed, Vas Soni, and others 'provided the campus leadership in that period.' At university, politics 'came alive in a focused way' for Vawda who was attracted to BC philosophy because it was 'strident and forthright. I was very charmed by that philosophy but felt that it didn't really look at issues of class. It tended to put everybody in racial categories and one needed to go beyond that.' He read the Freedom Charter for the first time and came to realise through debates that problems at the university were 'linked to something bigger. There was a repressive government which made it possible for repression to continue at campus level and if you really wanted significant change in your life as a student, you needed to look beyond the

campus.' The 1973 strikes and burgeoning trade union movement drew students into community and workers organisations. Vawda taught English to adult workers at the Roman Catholic Church in Cathedral Road under the auspices of the South African Council of Higher Education (SACHED). He also gave tuition to high school students in Sydenham. When Tin Town, a low-lying Indian settlement of tin shacks in Springfield, was flooded in 1977, he helped to provide emergency shelter at the Asherville Sports Ground. Housing was a major concern of activists who formed a committee to attend to the problems faced by new residents in townships, such as the absence of roads and recreational amenities, and the high rent.

Vawda joined the NIC and became a member of the executive committee in 1980. He also became involved in underground politics and attended the launch of the UDF in 1983. He helped to distribute ANC propaganda at factories and travelled to Swaziland, Lesotho, and Mozambique to meet with Mac Maharaj and Jacob Zuma. In 1986 the Security Police intercepted telephonic communication and raided his home but he was not staying there that night. He went underground for six months, his law practice suffering considerably as a result. In January 1987 he returned to his office hoping that he would be 'off the radar' but was arrested and detained for six months. He was held at Westville Prison where his fellow inmates included ex-Robben Islander, Nattoo Babenia.

He was interrogated but not tortured. Vawda's attorney Thamba Pillay challenged the arrest which was heard by a conservative judge (Kriek) who 'reserved judgment and the matter went on for months.' A frustrated Vawda wrote to the then Judge President, John Milne, that it was unjust that he was languishing in prison without his fate being decided by Kriek. Vawda slipped his note to an awaiting trial prisoner, Alan Pearce, who, in turn, passed it on to his lawyer. Without warning, he was released on 12 June 1987. Vawda was involved in the first round of CODESA as an NIC delegate but took up a position as director of the Law Clinic at UDW and opted out of formal politics.

Source. Interview with M. Ntsodi, 8 October 2002. 'Voices of Resistance Project,' University of Durban-Westville Documentation Centre.

Zakeria Mohamed Yacoob

(1948 –)

Zac Yacoob, as he is known in political and community circles, lost his eyesight as a child after contracting meningitis. This has not prevented him from reaching the pinnacle of achievement in the legal field – being appointed as a Constitutional Court judge. Born in Durban on 3 March 1948, he attended the Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind from 1956 to 1966, and studied law at UDW between 1967 and 1972. He was admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court, Natal, in 1973 and practiced as a junior counsel until 1991. He was involved in anti-apartheid politics as a member of the NIC and the UDF during the 1980s.

In 1980 Yacoob was appointed head of the Durban Committee of Ten which had been formed to alleviate the plight of pupils involved in the national education boycott. They focused on the release of those in detention and facilitated talks between pupils, students, parents and educational authorities. As a member of the executive of the NIC from 1981 to 1991, Yacoob organised and addressed many anti-apartheid mass meetings. He was also a member of the executive of the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC) from 1982 to 1985, whose focus was on ensuring that the City Council managed its housing schemes fairly and provided amenities in townships. As an executive member of the Durban Detainees' Support Committee in the 1980s, Yacoob actively promoted community support for the release of detainees and an amelioration in the conditions under which they were held.

They also exposed the evils of detention without trial. Yacoob was also a member of the Democratic Lawyers Association from 1979 to 1984. In the post-apartheid period, Yacoob opted for a career in law rather than politics. He was a member of the council of UDW and chancellor of the university from 2001 to 2003; chairperson of the South African National Council for the Blind and member of its national executive from 2001 to 2009; commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission in 1993 -1994; and a member of the panel of independent experts of the Constitutional



Zac Yacoob with his wife Dhunyatha, when he was admitted as an advocate in the Supreme Court, 1973

Assembly appointed in terms of the Interim Constitution 1995-96. He was appointed Judge of the South African Constitutional Court by President Mandela in February 1998. He is renowned for his phenomenal memory, which includes a formidable ability to absorb the details of documents that are read to him, but attributes his achievements to hard work: 'I think a lawyer's brain is like a magician's hat. You get out of it what you put in. Basically it was necessary to work quite hard at it and that was about it.'

Extract From Judge Zac Yacoob's Reply Accepting The *Lld Honoris Causa*, University Of Fort Hare, Alice Campus, Friday 7 May 2010:

I am humbled by this unexpected and singular, prestigious doctoral award. It is necessary for me, in accepting it, to explain that the apparently long list of activities or achievements may create the wrong impression. All that happened was this: Like tens of thousands of South Africans, I was implacably opposed to the evil of apartheid and did everything I could reasonably do, to fight against that evil. I was privileged to play a relatively minor role in the process of the overarching and all-embracing struggle for our democracy. I am, on this important occasion, painfully aware that I remain gratefully alive, yet thousands died for the cause. I remember that many, many thousands of human beings were tortured, suffered disability, were detained without trial, and suffered long terms of imprisonment, house arrests and banning orders of many kinds.

I was never a direct victim of any of these atrocities. Nor did I suffer the indignity and pain of forced removal, abject poverty, or brutal police and army action. Therefore, while I accept that this presentation is intended to acknowledge any contribution I might have made, and while I appreciate this considerably, I would beg your leave, Mr. Chancellor, to regard this valuable doctorate as a resounding salute and a telling tribute to all the people who made sacrifices in the course of our struggle for freedom. The things for which I am recognised today were really done under competent leadership, as part of a collective, and as part of an irrepressible movement. The award recognises for me, with admiration and appreciation, the many selfless human beings who helped, worked with, led and contributed to me personally.

Source: <http://www.constitutionalcourt.org.za/site/judges/transcripts/yacoob.html>.