

capt attention? Pupils listen to the speeches as their ZAADVILLE Secondary School becomes Ahmed Timol Secondary School

School renamed after Timol

By Sipiwe Mpye

AZAADVILLE Secondary School on the West Rand was renamed after Ahmed Timol, the deceased 1970s activist and member of the African National Congress.

A plaque in his honour was unveiled by President Nelson Mandela at the ceremony.

Timol, who died at the hands of security police at John Vorster Square in 1971, was a pupil and later a teacher at the school. His mother, Hawa Timol, expressed a wish at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in 1996 that the school attach her son's name to it but she died before the realisation of her request.

The ceremony was attended by various guests, including members of the Timol family, the family of activist and friend to Timol, Salim Essop, members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Gauteng Education MEC Mary Metcalfe, member of Parliament Ahmed Kathrada and of course Mandela.

According to a source at the school, Mandela's address to the crowd was "inspiring", especially to

the children. He urged them to value education and thanked the community for the support they had shown to Timol and his family.

He made a reference to Mrs Timol who, if she were still alive, would have seen that her son "did not die in vain".

Kathrada recalled his days on Robben Island and noted that although he and other prisoners suffered, there were people like Ahmed Timol and Salim Essop who were subjected to more suffering by the apartheid regime.

It is their courage, he said, that gave strength and hope to those in prison.

Mohammed Timol, Ahmed's brother, spoke fondly of him, outlining his total commitment to the struggle.

"He realised from a young age that oppression was rampant and took it upon himself to make a contribution towards correcting the situation.

"Many people were inspired by him and his death persuaded many more to take up the struggle," Timol said.

Dr Kantilac Naik, a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand and

chairman of the school's governing body said: "Ahmed Timol had a dream that this country would be free from the shackles of apartheid.

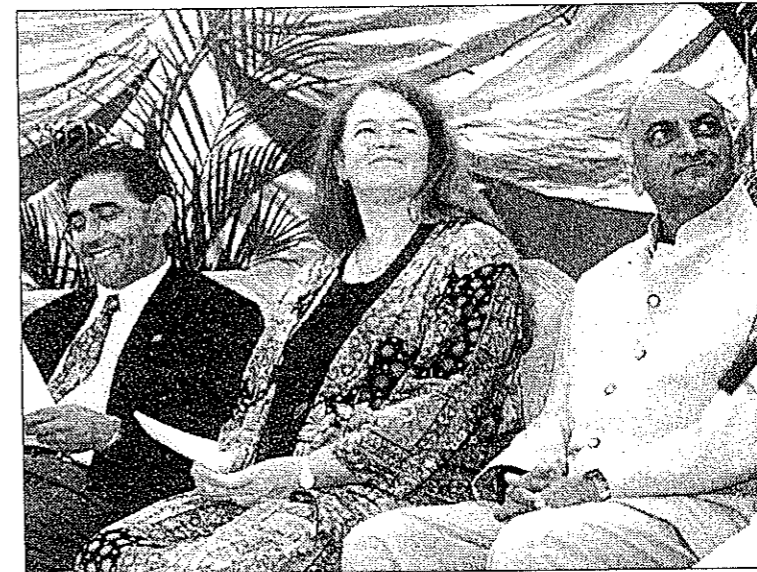
"He died before this was a reality but his death was not in vain because we are now reaping the fruits of his endeavours."

Metcalfe said although Timol had made a contribution to the country as an activist, he should also be remembered as someone who was committed to education.

"Naming the school after Ahmed Timol comes with the responsibility of committing yourself to Timol's ideals. When the pupils leave, they must be democrats who are committed to freedom and justice," said Metcalfe.

Aslam Khan, media officer at the school, took up the challenge saying, "Honouring Ahmed Timol today is not the end of our memories of him. It is now up to us, the educators at the school, to make sure that his legacy lives on through the conscientisation of the pupils."

That even after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, Timol's death still had a cloud of mystery surrounding it, was of concern to many at the ceremony.



Mohammed Timol (Ahmed's brother), Mary Metcalfe and another guest at the renaming ceremony

Ismail Vadi, an African National Congress MP, said: "It is a great pity that the truth remains hidden.

"Those people have a lot on their consciences and will die with the heavy burden of knowing the truth.

"How is the Timol family supposed to reconcile with the perpetra-

tors if they do not come forward with the truth."

The official police account is that Timol took his own life by jumping out of a 10th floor window while Essop, who had been detained with Timol, was hospitalised with severe assault wounds.

SOWETAN " 01/4/99