



OUT & ABOUT

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Ahmed Timol Website Launched

Hassen Karoolia

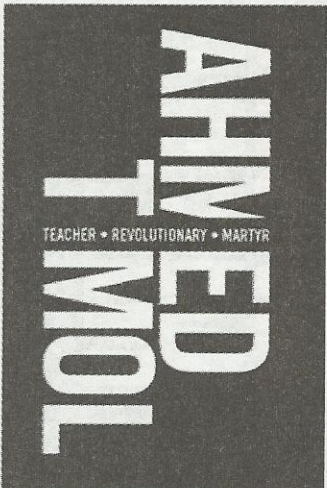
Ahmed Timol was a young school-teacher in Roodepoort who opposed apartheid. He was arrested at a police roadblock on 22 October 1971 and died five days later. He was the 22nd political detainee to die in detention since 1960.

Forty-one years after his death, and 16 years after his mother's appearance before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in search of closure, the circumstances that led to Ahmed Timol plunging from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square Police Station remain shrouded in mystery.

An inquest did not explain the gruesome marks that covered Timol's body, finding that he had committed suicide by jumping to his death. Timol, 29-years-old at the time, would have been 70 today. Security police coined the term "Indians can't fly" in reference to his death.

Among key "missing" information in the case are the classified records of the former Security Branch. Was the roadblock set up specifically to entrap Timol? Were police informers involved in his arrest? Precisely what information were they trying to extract from Timol under torture? If he was pushed from the window, who pushed him? These are some of the questions that still remain without answers.

"Retrieving records from the apartheid archives is a long and tedious process. Bureaucrats who have no understanding of our struggle history, are responsible for making decisions to de-classify these records. If this information is not de-classified, I intend to escalate the matter to the Information Regulator", Cajee said.



"South Africa's approach to these archives differs markedly to those of some other countries that emerged from repression at more or less the same time. In Germany, for example, The Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Archives is an upper-level federal agency that preserves and protects the archives and investigates past crimes of the former Stasi, the secret police and intelligence organisation of the communist German Democratic Republic (East Germany). In 2010, the agency had 1 687 employees. The German government has the political will to ensure that what happened in the past is not lost to history," Cajee added. Timol was posthumously awarded the National Order of Luthuli, in 2009.

In order to commemorate Ahmed Timol's life, to keep memories of his contribution to the anti-apartheid movement alive, and to provide a platform for the further exploration of the unsolved case, a dedicated website www.ahmedtimol.co.za has been launched.

The website contains a complete record of all the information about Timol's death that his family has been able to collect, from an exhaustive collection of newspaper articles from the 1970s to official records such as the inquest report.

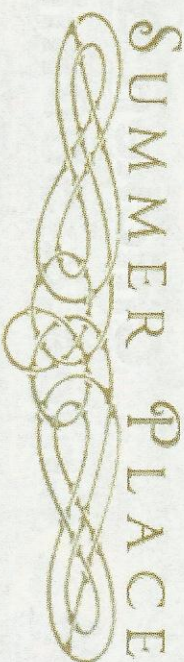
The new Website is the brainchild of Timol's nephew, Imtiaz Cajee, author of the book, *Timol - Quest for Justice*, published in 2005. Cajee is presently working on a second edition to be titled, *Timol - Quest for Truth*.

Visit the website at www.ahmedtimol.co.za



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