

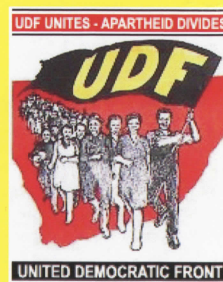
A LEGEND OF THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT



Yunus Ismail Mahomed
1950-2008

Yunus Mahomed is no more. A formidable human being, Yunus will always be remembered for his love of family and comrades, for his strength of principle, strategic and operational rigour, for building mass organisation and for motivating a generation of anti-apartheid activists.

The spirit of Yunus Mahomed lives on!



YUNUS MAHOMED: PIONEERING ACTIVIST, LEADER & DEDICATED DEMOCRAT

Respected anti-apartheid cadre, development activist and business leader Yunus Mahomed passed away suddenly on 6 January at his home in Durban. At the birthday celebration of his life partner, Dhaya Pillay, he complained only mildly of feeling unwell, and retired quietly to his bedroom. In the early hours of the morning, after the last of friends had left, Yunus spoke briefly to Dhaya before succumbing to what in fact had been a heart attack. Even to the very last, Yunus was always sensitive to the needs of others.

Yunus will always be remembered as a courageous fighter for human rights, a person who helped formulate and promote the organisation and participation of the masses in their own liberation.

He was part of the 1960s/1970s generation of political activists whose historical responsibility it was to revitalize the struggle in whatever way possible in the post-Rivonia lull. His pioneering role in the 70's contributed quite significantly to the development of a new generation of politically conscious cadre that would advance the struggle both on the legal terrain and underground; through peaceful protest and military action.

This laid the basis for the militant mass actions of the 70s and 80s in particular; to the growth of civic, political, student, youth, trade union and other mass organizations; the deployment of innovative mass mobilization methods; and the creation of a culture of political rigour, discipline and democracy both within the organizations and in the relationship with the masses.

Yunus is survived by his life partner Dhaya Pillay, siblings Zarina, Rabia, Idris and Husain, his parents Amina and Ismail Mohamed - and hundreds of comrades who loved him.

THE EARLY YEARS

Yunus Ismail Mahomed, "YM" or "Styles" as his comrades, friends and colleagues fondly called him, was born in Johannesburg on 30 December 1950 to Amina and Ismail Mahomed. He grew up in Jeppe, Johannesburg, attending Gold Street Primary School and then William Hills Secondary School in Benoni from which he matriculated in 1967. As a young scholar, Yunus became conscious of the inequities of

the apartheid system. The train journey that he undertook daily to school passed through well-appointed white suburbs that contrasted starkly with the deprivation of Black communities. Thus began a lifetime's devotion to ending the apartheid system.

At school, teachers of conscience, many of whom would have been impacted on by the heightened struggles of the 1950s led by the African National Congress (ANC), developed Yunus's political outlook. In 1966 as a teen, at a time of great community fear under the prevailing blanket of repression, he courageously distributed pamphlets against the commemoration of Republic Day.

Yunus went on to study at the University of Durban-Westville (UD-W) where he became involved in the student movement, including a national class boycott organised by the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) in 1972. He joined the drive to form a democratic SRC at UD-W to organise students to achieve their interests within a democratic South Africa.

While at UD-W Yunus interacted with such other student leaders as Pravin Gordhan, Zak Yacoob, Krish Govender, Roy Padayachie and Yunus Suleman. They drew inspired organisational and strategic lessons from other struggles in the developing world and sought to relate to and build on the historical experience and tradition of struggle in South Africa itself.

POLITICAL & COMMUNITY LIFE

The Freedom Charter was Yunus' guide to action. In striving to achieve the principles of the Charter, Yunus developed the closest of comradeships with the likes of Pravin Gordhan, Yousuf Vawda and the late Vish Suparsad. Together they inspired a generation of activists to build mass organisation and engage in struggle under the banner of the Congress movement led by the ANC.

Yunus became involved in the revived Natal Indian Congress in 1970, serving on its executive from the late 1970s together with stalwarts George Sewpershad, MJ Naidoo, Jerry Coovadia, Thumba Pillay, Swami Gounden, Farook Meer and Paul David. He contributed significantly to the popular rebuilding of Congress, its values, outlook and programme.

By the late 1970s Yunus had joined the underground of the ANC and the SA Communist Party. He was admitted as an attorney in 1976 and went on to become a partner in Shun Chetty and Company extending his commitment to defending anti-apartheid activists and causes. His colleagues viewed him as extra-

ordinarily dedicated, deeply honest and ethical in all his legal work.

Working with the displaced community in the aftermath of the Tin Town floods through to the creation of the mass civic organisations in Chatsworth, Phoenix, Tongaat, and various communities in KZN, Yunus devoted himself to the day-to-day needs of communities, agitating community-wide unity and democratic participation and organisation around the local issues caused by apartheid policies. His work and those of his colleagues resonated across the country and throughout the decade of the 1980s, served as a model of democratic grassroots mobilization, organisation and civic participation.

Activists recruited to this work by Yunus recollect fondly how he taught them to write a letter to the authorities on behalf of families, how to draft and collect signatures for a petition, draft a constitution for an organisation and write a pamphlet. Among the many organisations of the progressive movement in which Yunus was active, were the Democratic Lawyers' Association, the Chatsworth Housing Action Committee, the Natal Rates Committee and the Durban Housing Action Committee.

Yunus committed himself to building the democratic movement on a non-racial basis in all communities, working closely with the likes of Archie Gumede, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, Virgile Bonhomme, Jabu Sithole, Lechesa Tsenodi and Baba Dlamini.

Yunus committed much of his life to striving for the unbanning of the ANC, and as a member of the ANC, he participated in various campaigns and mobilised the masses as part of the ANC programme to end apartheid.

Throughout his adult life he was committed to non-racialism, to building the Congress Alliance and the hegemony of the African National Congress, promoting the Freedom Charter, advancing and defending democracy and fighting racism, injustice and poverty in every way possible.

He co-created campaigns against apartheid structures and policies which were critical to creating conditions within the country for the collapse of apartheid. He was remarkable in combining political strategy, political conscientisation, mobilization, building organizations, and finding endless creativity in developing tactics to engage the enemy state machinery.

ANTI-SAIC CAMPAIGN

Yunus was a central figure in the sophisticated Anti-SA Indian Council campaigns of 1981, which together with the growth of mass based community organisations, the national student movement, the Anti-Republic campaign, Wilson-Rowntree workers' strike and consumer boycott, gave the mass democratic movement increasing cohesion and continuity of historical identity.

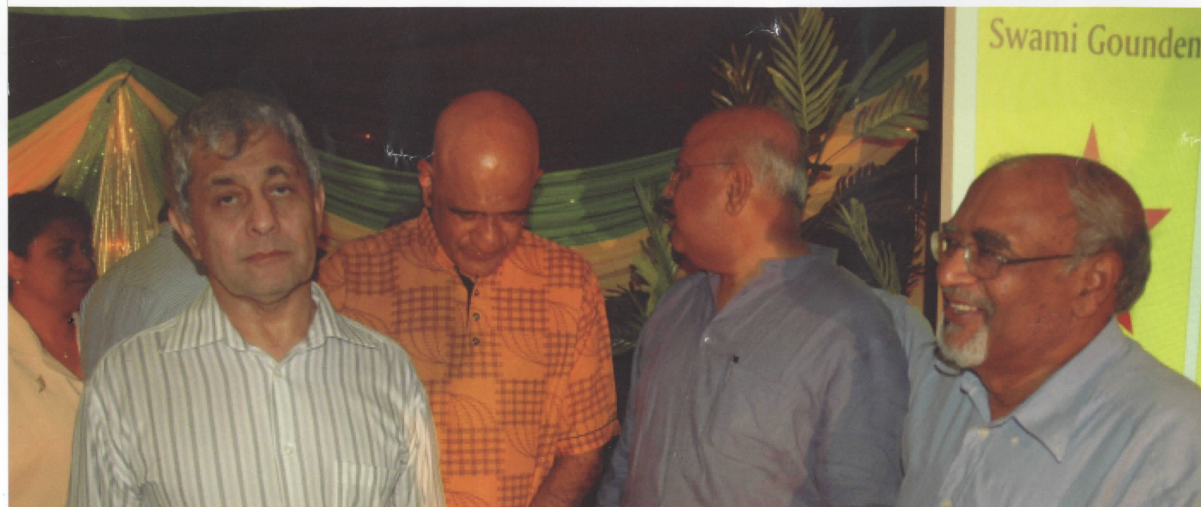
The stage was thus set for the emergence of a national

structure which gave organizational cohesion to these mass-based campaigns and organizations. Yunus consequently served on the steering committee leading to the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983. He was elected as the UDF Natal regional secretary as well as to its National Executive Committee and made a signal contribution to all the campaigns of the UDF to defeat the co-optive reform strategies of the apartheid state. In the late 1980s Yunus represented the UDF on the Joint Working Committee with Cosatu, working for peace with Inkatha and to stem the endemic violence in Natal townships at the time.

Yunus was also central in organising the occupation of the British Consulate by UDF leaders wanted on treason charges in 1984. This tactic highlighted international attention on the repressive policies of the apartheid state, in particular, detention without trial.

Over 29 years I was privileged to be Yunus' friend, comrade and business and life partner. These four facets made for a unique rapport that transcended cultural and religious differences. Basic values of truth, honesty and human kindness were hallmarks of Yunus' relationships with everyone with whom he interacted. His brutal frankness to charlatans was matched only by the gentle love and care he exuded towards our friends and families. He was uncompromising on issues that mattered and consistently refused to profit at the expense of principle. All who encountered him can paraphrase a popular song to say that he raised us up to be more than we can be. For that, thanks YM.

DHAYA PILLAY



A LEGEND OF THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

DETENTIONS AND TORTURE

For his activism Yunus was detained in solitary confinement for about five months in 1981/1982. These detentions were characterized by tough interrogations and torture. It was during this period that trade union activist, Neil Aggett, was detained in Johannesburg. He died in detention.

Yunus was detained again in 1985 during the Inanda conflict in Durban.

WORKING WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

In addition to these roles, in 1986 Yunus was deployed to the Economic Intelligence Desk of the ANC, working underground to develop its economic policies. He is credited with bringing a dimension of management principles and operational rigour to the workings of the unit.

The work of the unit led to the launch of the Consultative Business Forum (CBF) in order to promote interaction between business and the banned ANC and, with the establishment of CBF Holdings, was the basis of Yunus's involvement in business and economic transformation from the 1990s onwards.

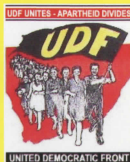
Yunus advocated the highest degree of fairness, honesty and ethics as the core values of CBF Holdings.

By 1993 Yunus had graduated with an MBA and, over the years, held a number of trusteeships and directorships, including with the Centre for Community Organisation, Research and Development (CORD), the Community Banking Trust, Transitional National Development Trust, Ensign Container Terminals, and the First Rand Group. Kagiso Trust, together with the likes of Eric Molobi in 1985, helped to channel European Union support to victims of apartheid. This grew into a social development grant agency - Kagiso Trust Investments - and achieved self-sufficiency in post-apartheid South Africa with Yunus's sound strategic vision.

At the time of his passing Yunus was Chairman of Kagiso Trust and Deputy Chairman of Kagiso Trust Investments.

He is remembered as "extraordinarily dedicated, deeply honest and ethical in all his legal work"; "an incisive strategist and tactician", "a person with a deep level of humility" and for teaching that "the best political education of all is gained from the women and men you encounter while doing door to door work". while doing door to door work".

Issued by: Yunus Mahomed Memorial Committee
36 Urania Street, Observatory, Johannesburg, 2198



Hamba Kahle Comrade



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Sheikh Maktoum Hasher Maktoum Al Maktoum
a member of the Ruling Family of Dubai
are honoured to invite you and your partner

Mr Ahmed Kathrada

to the launch of
the South African A1 Grand Prix and the unveiling of the
South African A1 Grand Prix Car.

Venue

Vodadome, Vodaworld, 082 Vodacom Boulevard, Vodavalley Midrand

Date

1 November 2004

Time

18h30 for 19h00

Dress

Business Suit - Smart - Traditional

RSVP

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