

JOE



SLOVO

## "... HE COMFORTED US IN HIS VERY LAST HOUR".

I became acquainted with Yusuf in the early Forties. But it is in the last twenty years of exile that I could claim not only his comradeship but also his friendship. And everything I learnt about the man in these twenty years emerged with such poignancy and vividness in a rare twenty minutes just a few hours before he died. I want you to share something of these moments.

Earlier he had lapsed into a coma from which it seemed he would not emerge. But clearly he had not finished what he had to do. Suddenly and unexpectedly the life in Yusuf started fighting back. He opened his eyes and started moving his head, looking at each of us in turn with a growing smile on his lips.

When he looked at me I raised my fist. His smile deepened and he began raising his own fist to each of us in turn. He then signalled with his hand that he wanted to write. He was to have attended the meeting of his Central Committee and he had, the previous day, dictated an apology and a most inspiring message of optimism to the meeting. He signed the message with a hand which was steady and flowing.

And then the words came back to him. He selected each of us in turn to say farewell and to inject us with the strength of commitment and struggle. Over and over again he said: "*You must never give up. You must fight to the end*". And like the chairman that he was, he then looked at us and said: "*Any questions?*"

He called his daughter Roshan. He told her that death is part of life and that if you have fought until the end you can accept death; that others who continue with the struggle will continue with your life. He spoke to his wife Winnie about their companionship and good life together. In between he raised his fist with the words "*Amando!*" on his lips. He spoke to his brother, sisters and sister-in-law in Gujarati. He clearly knew that he was in his last hour, and in that short rally everything we knew about Yusuf which made him into such a great figure and a warm, generous human being showed itself; his courage, his modesty, his humour, his sensitivity and, above all, his dedication to the revolutionary cause.

Yusuf then asked everyone to leave the room except his brother and me. And he talked to us about his funeral. He said ideally he would like to be buried in South Africa. He knew the authorities would not permit it, but he had the visions of his body being carried over the border as a last gesture of defiance. We must fight, even with our dead bodies, he said.

But he explained that such a course would be practically impossible and that he did not want to impose the burden of such a task on the movement. So, what he was telling us was the expression of his dream, his last blow at racism.

When the others came back the air was filled with laughter and relaxed communication. He seemed so much with us that I said: "Yusuf, what about a little Scotch?" With that shy, naughty smiling face he turned to the doctor who thought it was a wonderful idea.

Yusuf loved to hear singing and it was the regret of his life that he felt quite incapable of holding a tune. He suddenly said: "What about a song - Amajoni". We tried our tuneless best but he thought it was great and moved his hand with the rythm.

*And soon thereafter, as if he had done everything he wanted to do, he slowly relapsed into a coma and passed away a few hours later.*

Who but Yusuf could have turned this moment of irreversible defeat into a victory of pure will? Who else could have turned such a moment of immense sadness into laughter, inspiration and song? We were there to comfort him and instead he comforted us in his very last hour.

**HAMBA KAHLE, COMRADE DOC!**

**»... IN THE FORE-FRONT OF OUR BATTLE FOR FREEDOM.«**

**- ZENZILE MEHLO**

**(MADINOGA DETACHMENT)**

History would not regret if Reagan, Thatcher, Botha and Pinochet had died twenty years ago. But it is the wish of mankind that Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin lived to this day to witness the fruition of their work. Be it the Soviet people and the entire socialist community, the embattled working class in the capitalist countries, the toiling masses in the developing countries or those who are still fighting for national independence, the loss of these three great liberators of mankind is still felt with grief.

South Africa, too, has produced heroes in the likes of Comrade Yusuf Dadoo, fighters for freedom whom our fighting people cannot do without. From his youthful days till his heart ceased to beat, he was in the forefront of our battle for freedom. His contribution is immeasurably great.

Comrade Mota, as patriots and revolutionaries we are fully aware that the higher we advance the more difficult will be the way forward. But we shall not waver. As you once said when addressing the June 16 Detachment of our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe six years ago: "We can see freedom over the horizon".

To emulate you Comrade Chairman, we the youth of the ANC, combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe vow that nothing will stop the revolutionary advance in South Africa while we are still alive. Our Black, Green and Gold hoisted in various parts of South Africa in the face of fascist bullets will in the near future be raised forever in the land of our birth.

**MAYIBUYE! i-AFRIKA!**