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Imtiaz A. Cajee, *The Murder of Ahmed Timol: My Search for the Truth*. Publisher: Jacana Media, 2020. Auckland Park, South Africa. 257 pages. ISBN 978-1-4314-2963-9.

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The Murder of Ahmed Timol: My Search for the Truth is a noteworthy and touching project of historical recollection. It is an exemplary exercise in ameliorative historiography and a stirring account of purposeful and resolute excavation of the truth. The book works to evaluate and correct historical narratives concerning the torture and murder of South African revolutionary Ahmed Timol while he was in detention on October 27, 1971 by members of the South African security police. More endearingly, the author, Imtiaz A. Cajee, is Ahmed Timol's nephew and was five years old when his uncle was killed. The book exemplifies Cajee's steadfast commitment to ensuring that the facts relating to the circumstances of his uncle's death in police custody are known and scrupulously documented. Cajee foregrounds the value of narrating the past in ways that examine and evaluate strategies for validating violence and persecution. As such, the book curates and honours the legacy of Ahmed Timol.

The paramount achievement of the book and the author's relentless quest for justice is in ensuring that the truth is not buried with the brutalised bodies of the dead victims of state-sponsored murder. Acts of state-homicide and criminality must be rigorously scrutinised, intellectually disavowed, ethically denounced and legally prosecuted. Gory tenets of coercive creeds must be revealed and noted, lest the untreated sewage of such execrable creeds and deeds returns to blight the present. Accurate historical record not only aids understanding of the present but also nourishes resistance against present iniquities. Thus, efforts to reveal concealed acts of past wrong-doing are necessary ingredients of the emancipatory projects of the present.

The book offers a cogent sense of the kind of person Ahmed Timol was and what he stood for. It furnishes details of his family background, his early life, his hajj to Mecca, and his sojourn to the United Kingdom where he briefly served as a schoolteacher. The book also sheds light on his contacts with members of the South African Communist Party and subsequent political training in the Soviet Union together with Thabo Mbeki and Ann Nicholson. It gives an account of how Timol underwent more training in underground political activity in London under the guidance of Jack Hodgson who ensured that his charge had requisite skills and psychological preparedness before being tasked to return to South Africa to carry out the work of establishing underground structures and distributing of literature.

The book offers an intelligible and even-handed account of how Timol eagerly established himself into a double life as a high school teacher and a political operative whose task was to set up underground structures for the then-banned ANC and South African Communist Party. The political cells that Timol organised disseminated literature announcing to South African people and to the apartheid regime that the struggle for freedom was alive within the country. The book diligently contextualises and chronicles the circumstances leading to Timol's arrest showing that communities of the oppressed majority teemed with spying and

were subjected to intense and intrusive surveillance. Moreover, there is indication that in his inexperience and exuberance Timol was liable to error and security indiscretion. Evidently his arrest was not fortuitous but the culmination of being followed and hounded by the security police for a considerable length of time. Timol had been aware of being closely shadowed and watched by the security police for he had asked his brother Mohammad to discreetly leave Roodeport, his home town in the Gauteng region not far from Johannesburg, five days prior to his arrest.

The book details how once in the custody of the security police, Ahmed Timol was subject to rough treatment. He was tortured for more than four days. Testimonies of several eye-witnesses and evidence gleaned from various experts suggest that Timol was deprived of sleep, physically assaulted, and pushed from either the window of Room 1026 or the top of the roof of the John Vorster Square building. The findings of 1972 inquest into the Timol's death mendaciously ruled that Timol committed suicide by jumping out of a tenth-floor window as per instructions of the South African Communist Party. On 12 October 2017, the judgment of High Court Judge Motlale reversed the findings of the 1972 inquest. Judge Motlale found that the initial inquest that was shoddily and sloppily done and pronounced it a cover-up for Timol's murder at the hands of the security police. The 1972 inquest was exposed as vile collusion orchestrated by the police in cahoots with pathologists, prosecutors and the judicial system, and it was accordingly overturned. 46 years after the murder of Timol, a competent court vindicated Timol's family's insistence that their loved one was murdered. The ruling also restored the dignity of a committed revolutionary who paid the ultimate price in pursuit of an emancipatory objective.

The ruling on Timol's murder is historic in the sense that it was the first time an apartheid era inquest into the death of an activist was reconsidered and found fraudulent. The ruling also made public the murky and pernicious operations of the security police. *The Murder of Ahmed Timol: My Search for the Truth* is a commendable addition to the vital documentation of the life-denying attributes of apartheid. The book also gives hope and impetus to many other South African families who have been robbed of their loved ones to seek closure and justice in the face of historical amnesia, political indifference and the machinations of those who seek to expunge martyred freedom fighters from history.

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