



Mandela - Meer Liberation Saga comes to an end

The year 2018, marks the 60th anniversary when Professor Fatima Meer and Nomzama Winnie Madikizela met for the first time at the Railway Station, Durban. The Meers had received a telegram from Nelson Mandela while he was on the run, asking them to meet and take care of Miss Madikizela until he visited Durban. "The sketchy details were acceptable, considering the situation at the time and with the authorities cracking down on the leadership of the struggle. He would be a prize catch."

"I was staggered when I saw the young lady. She was fascinatingly beautiful and there was something very special about her. Once the introductions were done, we drove back home. Winnie as we called her then lived with us while we waited for Mr Mandela to arrive. At this stage he was underground and had to be careful about his movements because the Security Police were looking for him," said Professor Meer.

As the days went on, they spent many hours talking to each other and developed a mutual trust. "The young woman became more forthcoming with information, which was obviously secret. When we spoke about Mr Mandela, it was obvious that she was smitten by him and that she was very much in love with him.

Miss Madikizela spent the nights on the sofa downstairs in the lounge as she waited for Mr Mandela. It was after about 10 days that Mr Mandela arrived at the Meer house and the couple were reunited. "These were no doubt that the couple were very much in love. I did not know what to make of it. Obviously he was a man of the world and a dedicated political activist who was on the run. If they were planning to get married, the future was fraught with danger," said Professor Meer.

Here was the Commander in Chief of Mkonto we Sizwe who was due to take on the greatest fighting machine in Africa was taking time off from the struggle to indulge in a romance. "It was in fact a meaningful and lasting relationship which was subjected to some of the toughest tests for any human being to bear. The journey which they undertook to travel across the country and still keep ahead of the government forces, must be one of the greatest feats in South African history," said Professor Meer.

Mr Mandela looked like a heavyweight boxing champion and Miss Madikizela every bit the princess. "The couple looked the part of being President and First Lady of a country. Will it ever happen. I wondered and often thought about it. But for the present here were two people who seemed to have no cares about the world. They were totally engrossed in each other," said Professor Meer.

After a short stay the couple left and



Celebrating 20 years of freedom in 20 years with Nelson Mandela - 2010 (second from left seated) is (back row left to right), famous photographer, Alf Khumalo, stalwart Ahmed Katradha, Farida Omar. Front row from left to right: Mrs Graca Mandela, Mr Nelson Mandela, daughter, Zindzi Mandela and former wife, Mrs Winnie Mandela. This photo by Kevin Joseph is from "Mandela in Focus", a coffee table book which is due to be released in July and will be authored by Farook Khan. Kevin Joseph served as Nelson Mandela's private photographer for 23 years. The book will highlight 23 years of Mandela's freedom and feature photographs which haven't been published before.

off they went and melted into the shadows. Where they went and what happened, only the two of them know. But eventually when they emerged, they were married and the world for the first time saw the new Mrs Mandela, the couple had two daughters.

The National Party Government cracked down, banned all liberation movements, arrested top leaders, many were jailed and others fled into exile. By 1965, the people's popular leadership had been wiped out, but there new firm of Mandela and Meer emerged as the voices of protest. They remained close throughout the preceding seven years and were a united front to such an extent, that they were seen to be the voices of protest, defiance and liberation leadership. Emergent black leaders from the West who visited South Africa, came looking for Mrs Mandela and Professor Meer. Locals took the cue and before long were responding in large numbers to their respective rallying calls.

During May 1969, the Security Branch swooped on Mrs Mandela and held her in solitary confinement for 491 days. They tortured her, tampered with her medication and subjected her to gross indignity. But she emerged even more defiant and a plan to mobilise the youth of the country. Professor Meer was also banned and house arrested further and police harassment.

In 1972 when Congressman Charles Diggs, chairman of the Committee on Apartheid came to South Africa to investigate the plight of sugar cane workers,

among the leaders he sought out Mrs Mandela and Professor Meer.

First they began organising women and the blueprint was put into place to launch the South African Black Women's Federation, which was eventually launched in 1975 in Durban. After the launch, Professor Meer now elected president went to leave Mrs Mandela at the Louis Botha Airport (now an executive committee member) when they spotted the then Minister of Justice, Mr Jimmy Kruger. Mrs Mandela could not resist, she confronted Mr Kruger and demanded, "When are you going to release my husband? The apartheid strongman was so flummoxed, that he babbled before his security detail hurried him into a side office.

It was also at a time when Mrs Mandela was elected chairman of the Soweto Committee of 10 and was addressing the ills of apartheid education, especially the poor matric results. She was the defacto leader of the youth and she marshalled them into a powerful resistance movement, which led to the 1976 Soweto uprising. South Africa was rocked and the government banned Fatima Meer and restricted her to the magisterial district of Durban. Mrs Mandela was banished to Brandfort in the Free State. But by this time, the fate of the apartheid regime was sealed, never again where they going to have an easy ride.

Mrs Mandela was sending out special envoys to brief youth leaders and followed the progress made by Black Consciousness

activists like Steve Bhiko, Saths Cooper, Strini Moodley and Barney Pityane. By the time 1980 came around, Mrs Mandela was confident that liberation was nearby.

The old firm of Mandela and Meer stepped up their campaigns in a double pronged attack, calling for economic sanctions against apartheid South Africa, dis-

coursed dis-investment and called on the masses, especially labour unions to make themselves felt.

The final run up to liberation saw Mrs Mandela being estranged from the main liberation groups but Professor Meer, dismissed stood steadfast and pledged support for her long time friend and ally.

This week, Mrs Mandela died in a Johannesburg Hospital on Easter Monday 2 April 2018. She was 81. This brings to an end the old firm of Mandela and Meer which was a special feature of the liberation struggle.

The Islamic Forum sends its condolences to her family.

Kenilworth Respite Centre - Sanctuary for victims of abuse

Seek help, do not wait for the situation to get worse, this is what the founder of the Kenilworth Respite Centre, Mrs Sabera Timol said in an interview this week. "There is no shame in getting assistance, rather than to let the problem develop to such an extent that it is beyond rescue."

She said that victims of domestic violence and abuse tend to keep their "secrets" and by the time they speak up or seek help, much damage would have been inflicted which could be averted. "The moment you realize that there is an issue in your marriage, seek help so that the matter could be resolved quickly and efficiently," she said on the 10th anniversary of the Centre, which cares for around 130 women a year.

Mrs Timol said that the term, "domestic violence" and "woman abuse" under scored the seriousness of the problem in homes and shared the view that it should be regarded as a "crime against humanity." "A violent spouse affects the entire family including children, the elderly and the extended family. Many more people are affected and becomes visible on communities.

"When we first started out a decade ago, we cared for women who came into our office was counseled and then sent back home to the very same violence and abuse. We researched and found that we needed a shelter where we could house our patients who could get professional help. We got a license for 10 women from the Department of Social Development and also for a few children. But our numbers have grown," said Mrs Timol.

All services provided by the Centre are free and this include professional help and networking with a host of other non-governmental organisations who provide training in life skills, job creation and even the development of a home based business. "Working with other groups is a great assistance and it enables us to enjoy a far greater success rate in overcoming this evil and enable families to be reconciled. We also have the support of the Jamiath and when there are meetings, we send a social worker



Lerina Coles (Pick n Pay Hyper), Mariam Hassen (ex Kenilworth Respite Centre), Pushie Pillay (Pick nPay Hyper) and Sabera Timol (Kenilworth Respite Centre)

along to ensure that the woman gets adequate protection."

The modern day scourge of substance abuse is a major cause of violence in the home and it is an issue, which has to be tackled in a far intense manner than the attention, which it is now receiving.

Mrs Timol said that men who are affected need to undergo therapy and that often, some of them resisted and inflict even more harm, before they eventually seek help. There has been success in rehabilitating family life and sustainable reconciliations, but that much more work needs to be done. Young couple are particularly vulnerable when it comes to domestic discord and said that specialist groups would have to be formed to tackle this issue.

**You may contact Kenilworth Respite Centre on 031 207 6483
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Racism in Israel against Africans on the rise

The human rights and Palestine solidarity organisation, BDS South Africa, condemns the racism by Israel's Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef who during his recent weekly sermon compared African people to monkeys. In footage aired by the Israeli media house, Ynet news, Yosef (who is one of two Israeli state-elected rabbis) can be seen referring to black people by the word "kushi," which in modern Hebrew has derogatory connotations, and comparing Africans to "monkeys." This is not the first time that Israel's Chief Rabbi Yosef has used his position to justify and legitimize discrimination. In a sermon delivered in May 2017, he suggested that secular woman behave like animals because of the way they dress. In March 2016 Yosef declared that non-Jews should not live in Israel.

Israeli racism against African people is on the rise and is a view not only of the broader Israeli public, but also of the Israeli government and its officials. Currently Israel is considering expelling thousands of Africans and portraying non-Jewish Africans as a threat to Israel's Jewish character by calling them "infiltrators." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly called for their expulsion saying that Africans "threaten the social fabric of society". Israel's Minister of Interior, Eli Yishai, has said that African immigrants "think the country doesn't belong to us, the white man." The Israeli Minister of Culture and Sport, Miri Regev, has compared Africans to "a cancer". In 2013 Israel admitted to have forcibly sterilised African women without their consent. Israeli racism against Palestinians as well as Africans in particular was the focus of this year's #IsraeliApartheidWeek campaign.

BDS has joined the United Nations calling on all nations to impose an arms boycott against Israel. The BDS National Committee welcomes the recent resolution of the UN Human Rights Council calling on states to ensure respect of international law, among others by preventing arms trade with Israel. We reiterate our call on people of conscience across the world to:

- Mainstream the demand for all private and public entities in your country to end all cooperation and/or trade with the Israeli military and "security sector."
- Join military embargo campaigns targeting Israeli military companies and other companies involved in Israel's military and security sector. Examples include the campaign against Elbit Systems, which tests its weapons on Palestinians;
- Intensify the campaign against the security company G4S, which trains Israeli police in enforcing Israeli apartheid;
- Pressure the Hewlett Packard (HP) group to end provision of vital technology to the Israeli checkpoint system and the Israeli military imposing the siege on Gaza.
- Join or build campaigns against cooperation between Israeli police and police forces abroad, through which Israel's tested doctrines and techniques of brutal repression of peaceful protests are exported to the world. An example is the Jewish Voice for Peace-led "Deadly Exchange" campaign.
- Join or build campaigns to end all transactions with Israeli banks and pressure international banks and investment funds, like HSBC and Axa to end their complicity in Israel's human rights violations.

Muslim Luminaries of the past - 10 Excellent children's Books

Islamic publishing house, Baitul Hikmah has launched a fascinating collection of 10 easy to read books on the contribution by Muslim scholars who over 611 years changed much of the world. Each book contains 24 pages and while it is aimed at children, adults would find that it makes fascinating reading.

The collection is available and is expected to be extremely popular across a wide section of the South African nation, especially since some of the personalities have been enigmas for many decades. Professionally printed with glossy cars, each book is no more than 24 pages and is written in a simple text which makes enjoyable, yet informative reading. These books bring to life the illustrious history and character of each of these luminaries and whilst this is not a definite list it is the beginning of getting to know these historic personalities.

Included in this illustrious line up is **Jabir Ibn Hayyan**, who is regarded to be a "a person of encyclopedic learning." – an expert on a number of subjects. He made contributions to Chemistry, astrology, astronomy, geography, philosophy, and pharmacy and was the first known practical alchemist. (someone turns ordinary metals to gold).

Ibn Al Khwarizmi, is known as the father of Algebra and this subject got its name from his book, Al Jabr wa-al Muqabalah which was written in 820AD. He was a mathematician, astronomer and geographer. He introduced Arabic numerals and algebra into European mathematics. He worked at the "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad, which was founded by Caliph Al-Mamun. He lived during the "Islamic Golden Age.

Al Razi, he contributed "generously" to

the fields of medicine and pharmacology. He was a noted physician and free thinking philosopher. There is a famous story about him being consulted about the building of the Muqtadari Hospital in Baghdad. He hung pieces of meat at various locations. A week later he chose the spot where the meat was least rotten. He is also quoted often: "If a physician can treat a patient through nutrition rather than medicine, then he has done the best thing."

Ibn Al Haytham contributed significantly to optics, astronomy, mathematics, meteorology, visual perception and scientific methods. He conducted a number of experiments with light and gravity. He studied the works of Ancient Greek scholars. He is also regarded as the founder of the experimental method that forms the most basic tenet of modern science today.

Al Beruni, was born in Uzbekistan and was a scientist and scholar of Islamic history. He studied the works of Turkish, Syrian, Persian, Greek and Hebrew through Arabic translations. He mastered subjects such as astronomy, mathematics, chronology, physics, medicine, mineralogy, history and palmistry. Although he was Persian his language of scholarship was Arabic.

Ibn Sina was just 16 when he launched his practice of medicine and treated people that were ill. He also handled legal disputes and apart from being a mathematician and philosopher, he was also a doctor and lawyer. He wrote some of his most important principles in medicine in poetry.

Omar Al Khayyam came from Afghanistan and chose Samarqand as his place of learning. He was an astronomer who wrote intricate studies on mathematics and geometry. In 1074, he was invited by the powerful Seljuq Sultan, Malik Shah Jalal al-din to build an observatory in Isfahan. He was

also charged with the responsibility to establish the length of the solar year, which he measured to be 365.24219858156 days.

Ibn Al-Baitar was a top-flight botanist and herbalist who contributed to the field of medicine and pharmacology. He grew up in a family of veterinary surgeons in Spain. While very young, he recognized the divide between Muslims and Christians and decided to leave home. He travelled to Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli and then Egypt. Finally he moved to Damascus where he studied plant life in Syria, Palestine and Iraq and documented his findings in a number of books.

Ibn Batuta wanted to be a Judge, but changed his mind and became a world traveller, covering 73 000 miles, much more than Marco Polo. He documented his travels and recorded information, which was later, used by scholars. Through his journeys to exotic lands, he spread Islam.

Ibn Khaldun. Born in Tunisia and is regarded as one of the greatest Arab historians. He wrote many important works, with The Muqaddimah being his very best. He studied Muslim law, wrote important studies on Arabic literature. He also took a keen interest in history, geography and philosophy. At the age of 20, he rose to become the Chief Secretary to the Sultan of Morocco.



The set of books is available from Baitul Hikmah at a cost of R240,00. Place your order for this set and other Islamic books of interest on their site: www.hikmah.co.za or info@hikmah.co.za or 031 2073871

