



Meet our new Director

The Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA) is delighted to welcome Zunaid Moolla as our new Director, replacing the late Professor Ben Turok who passed away in December 2019. Zunaid is already a member of the IFAA family; except for a brief spell from April last year to now, having served as the Deputy Editor of New Agenda magazine since the beginning of 2017.

He brings back to IFAA a lifetime of political experience, most of it spent outside the country in Canada where he moved at the age of 19 to escape the attentions of Apartheid's security police. By the time he left South Africa he had already undergone a fairly tumultuous induction as a young activist, having been detained and interrogated as a 16-year-old schoolboy. This was in the late 1960s, when Apartheid was at its peak, defended by a ruthless security establishment.

He left for Canada after passing matric on a second attempt. He failed the first time because he handed in a blank history examination paper to register his contempt for the pro-Apartheid history curriculum taught at that time.

His political awakening at Roodepoort Indian High School was enriched under the tutelage of one of his teachers, Ahmed Timol, an underground member of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the South African Communist Party and among the first

detainees to be murdered by the South African security police.

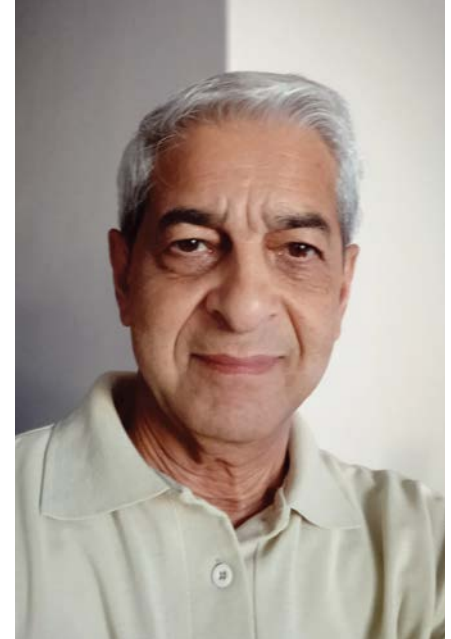
His first few years in Canada were a "life changing challenge". Beds for the night were provided by members of the South African Indian expat community. As welcoming as that was, he missed his family, friends and home in South Africa deeply. After studying political science at Carleton University in Ottawa, he went through spells of unemployment and survived by working night shift in a lumber yard, as a taxi driver and janitor until he found firm positions in the Canadian federal and provincial governments. In 1983 he moved to New York City where he enrolled at the New School for Social Research. He graduated two years later with a Master's Degree in Political Economy.

When he returned to South Africa in 1992 - "the change I had been waiting for all my life, it was a new beginning" - he had an impressive set of skills in governance and economics to contribute to the emerging democracy.

He was responsible for training the members of the first democratic parliament in what they would need to know about economics. Zunaid was also one of the members of the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG), which worked on formulating a detailed macroeconomic and social policy framework for the new South Africa.

A think-tank comprising economists from multiple continents, MERG advocated for a state-led, pro-growth approach to macroeconomic policy. The MERG proposals offered a radical vision of the future of South Africa which required direct intervention to urgently address the imbalances that our democracy had inherited.

When MERG dissolved, Zunaid became Executive Director of its successor, the National Institute for



“

He wants to see IFAA as 'the pre-eminent organisation with ideas for transformation and for translating policy into practical strategies'.

Economic Policy. He continues to share these skills, not only at IFAA, but also at the Training for Transformation Programme at the Grail Centre in Kleinmond outside Cape Town.

Zunaid brings fresh ideas to IFAA about the role of the organisation during this time of crisis in South Africa. He wants to see IFAA become "the pre-eminent organisation with ideas for transformation and for translating policy into practical strategies". **NA**