

Yusuf Dadoo

The

Life Story of Yusuf Dadoo, national chairman of the South African Communist Party and a tireless fighter for national and social liberation.

A PROUD HISTORY OF STRUGGLE by Essop Pahad

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Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo - popularly known as "Mota" or "Doc" ("Mota" is a Gujarati term of endearment reserved for those held in high regard and esteem)
- celebrates his 70th birthday on September 5, 1979. The story of his life is inextricably bound up with the resistance to racial discrimination and apartheid, and the forging of ever closer links between the Indian and African and Coloured people in the struggle for national liberation.

Yusuf Dadoo was born in Krugersdorp on the West Rand in 1909. His father Mohamed Dadoo arrived in South Africa in the 1880s, in the wake of the first Indian immigrants who arrived in the 1860s as indentured labourers on the sugar fields. The working and living conditions of the Indians at that time can only be compared to slavery. However, on the expiry of their indentures many of them became market gardeners, railway and council workers and domestic servants. This was the origin of the Indian working class in South Africa .

Mohamed Dadoo the elder came to South Africa from Western India. The Indian immigrants were divided on lines of language, culture, tradition and religion. It was Gandhi who created the base for the unity of the Indian people through his passive resistance campaign in South Africa in 1906 and 1913.

As the majority of Indians were brought to South Africa to work as indentured labourers on the sugar plantations, most of them lived in Natal. By 1946 27.12 per cent of the economically

active population were workers in industry. Today the Indians constitute nearly three per cent of the total South African population, the overwhelming majority of them members of the black working class. It was the active participation of the workers in the affairs of the Indian Congress which made possible its transformation into a radical instrument of struggle against apartheid and colour bars.

Whilst a schoolboy Yusuf Dadoo used to attend meetings held by former stalwarts of Gandhi and with some of his contemporaries such as Molvi A. I. Cachalia used to help mobilise support for the All-Indian National Congress in its struggle against British colonialism. At Aligarh, in India, where he completed his matriculation, his hatred for and opposition to British imperialism intensified.

As the eldest son, his father expected him to go into business on leaving school, but Dadoo adamantly refused and insisted on further study. In 1929 he arrived in London, friendless and without contacts, with the intention of studying medicine. Within a few months he was one of six persons arrested for participating in a demonstration against the imperialist Simons Commission. In an attempt to curb his political activities his father insisted that he transfer his studies to Edinburgh .

It was in Edinburgh that Dadoo's political horizons were widened and he gradually came closer to understanding the nature of colonialism and the capitalist system which gave birth to it. He became involved in a wide variety of political activities and began to read Marxist literature. The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels gave him a new outlook on the struggle against colonialism and imperialism and the place and role of the working class in the revolutionary movement. He became convinced that the South African Indian Congress could only advance their fight for freedom in close co-operation with the national organisations of the African and the Coloured peoples.

In 1936, when Dadoo returned to South Africa, the national liberation and workingclass movements were in some disarray. The racist regime had rushed through the white Parliament the 1936 Hertzog Bills which form the basis of the present Bantustan policy. The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was still suffering from the effects of the sectarianism which had plagued it in the 1930s. The Indian Congresses were content to mouth rhetorical denunciations of racist legislation whilst pursuing a policy of compromise and of isolation from the African and Coloured people.

The struggle in South Africa was in need of sincere, courageous revolutionaries who could capture and fire the imagination of the toiling masses, who could speak the language the people understood and were prepared to make the personal sacrifices demanded by a life-and-death struggle. Dadoo was one such revolutionary. He illuminated the political landscape with the sudden clarity of a meteor - but fortunately in a less transitory manner. He grew in stature, political experience and maturity and developed a steel-like resolve never to rest until South Africa was free from the triple scourge of racism, colonialism and capitalism. He bent all his efforts towards building the unity of the national liberation and working class movements in South Africa.

Dadoo was not alone in this crusade. Amongst the Indians there were the veterans of Gandhi's resistance movement and contemporaries such as T. N. Naidoo, P. S. Joshi, Molvi A. I. Cachalia, Nana Sita, G.H.I. Pahad, J. Nanabhai and others who were equally determined to change the ideological and political positions of the Indian Congresses. With Dadoo as the acknowledged leader they formed the nationalist bloc of the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) in March 1939 to change its policies from the inside. The nationalist bloc attracted 5 to 6 thousand people to their meetings. This was impressive considering that the total population of the Indians in the Transvaal in 1936 was only 25,493. During this period Dadoo went on speaking tours throughout the whole province, and emerged as a powerful orator. People flocked to his meetings which gave them a renewed sense of pride and dignity. No longer did they have to crawl and plead with the white bosses. They could and did stand up for their legitimate rights as South Africans. Already at that time he had become a household name amongst the Indians in South Africa, many of whom proudly displayed his photograph in their homes.

Non-European United Front

Dadoo was also active in a wider political spectrum. In 1938 he was one of the founders of the Non-European United Front (NEUF) in Johannesburg. Acting in harmony and concert with other national leaders, some of whom were Communists, such as J. B. Marks, E. Mofutsanyana, Josie Mpama, G. Carr and Alpheus Maliba, the NEUF took up the vital problems agitating the African people. In his capacity as secretary Dadoo diligently attended to the daily organisational requirements of the NEUF. As one of the main speakers he constantly addressed mass meetings in African townships and locations in which he called for united mass action against living conditions. He became popular amongst the African people and not surprisingly a square in Orlando was named Dadoo Square. In the process of the struggle Dadoo and J. B. Marks became close friends and comrades-in-arms and remained so until Marks' death. In some respects they had similar personalities. They were ebullient, open-hearted, easy to get on with, and both had a lively sense of humour. Through their practical activities and personal relations they gave meaning and life to the concept of the unity of the oppressed working people .

Dadoo's profound political understanding and wide variety of political activities logically led to his joining the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in early 1939. By then the CPSA under the firm leadership of Moses Kotane, its general secretary, had largely overcome the drawbacks of sectarianism which affected the Party in the early thirties. Dadoo says that without a Party dedicated to realising the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism in south Africa he would have remained a half-developed revolutionary. It was in the CPSA that he matured theoretically and this in turn immensely improved his practical work and approach.

The South African situation was transformed with the outbreak of the second world war. Communist and non-communist progressives characterised the war as an imperialist war, and fought tooth and nail against the racist regime's attempts to recruit black soldiers. Dadoo and his comrades argued most vehemently and persuasively that as long as there was racist oppression and segregation in the armed forces, there could be no question of countenancing the recruitment of black soldiers.

In 1940 Dadoo was arrested for printing and distributing a leaflet published by the NEUF which said "Don't support this war, where the rich get richer and the poor get killed". When he appeared in court there were mass demonstrations outside and during an adjournment the people, Africans and Indians, carried him shoulder-high to his home - a distance of about 3 kilometres. Dadoo refused to pay his fine of 25, but was saved from imprisonment by a supporter who paid his fine because he could not bear to see "this wonderful person" going to prison.

In January 1941 Dadoo was arrested once more this time for allegedly inciting the African people in Benoni where he had spoken at a meeting. Once more his trial was the occasion for a mass demonstration. He was sentenced to a fine of 40 or four months imprisonment, and once again elected to go to prison. His statement to court was a powerful indictment of racist and national oppression and a bold declaration of the NEUF's opposition to the war:

"The struggle of the non-European people for liberation is not an isolated struggle; it is merely a continuation of the struggle of the oppressed masses carried on in many lands . . . The Government may imprison me, it can fling hundreds and thousands into jail and concentration camps, but it cannot and shall not suppress the demand for freedom which arises from the crying hearts of the non-Europeans . . . The struggle goes on . . ., all non-Europeans unite! Create a fighting unity! . . ."

Dadoo vividly recalls his prison experience at the notorious "Blue Sky" prison in Boksburg: For the African prisoners it was "hell". The prison warders were horribly cruel, subjecting them to the most gruesome treatment. Some African prisoners died because even though they were ill they were sent out to work. When the other prisoners realised that Dadoo was in for politics they became very sympathetic and offered to do his share of the dirty chores such as cleaning out the latrine buckets. Dadoo politely refused.

Whilst Dadoo was in prison, protest meetings were held throughout the country, and the Guardian reported that in Durban his imprisonment was the chief topic of conversation and practically every street had a slogan demanding Dadoo's release.

People's War

In June 1941 Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. In a flash the progressive forces everywhere marshalled their energies in support of the world's first socialist country. The CPSA, after a lengthy and thorough debate, came to the conclusion that the character of the war had changed. It was now a people's war in which the Soviet Union, the only socialist country in the world, had to be defended and assisted.

The burden of conveying this change of line to the people fell on the shoulders of Kotane and Dadoo. In the beginning they experienced great difficulties and at one meeting in Maritzburg Dadoo and other speakers were shouted down and had to make a hurried exit. But by explaining the issues honestly and simply, by analysing the qualitative change in the international situation and showing the role of the Soviet Union, "the land without colour bar", the CPSA gradually won the support of influential leaders and members of the national liberation movement and of the broad masses .

A later complicating factor was the entry of Japan into the war. Many black people regarded Japan as a "coloured nation" inflicting defeat on a "white enemy" and openly expressed the hope that Japan would attack South Africa and liberate them. Once more the CPSA with Kotane and Dadoo in the forefront had to meet the challenge head on. Meetings and propaganda campaigns were organised to expose the true nature of rapacious Japanese imperialism.

The heroic defence of their motherland by the Soviet people and the exploits of the Red Army won the admiration, respect and love of the oppressed people. At the sacrifice of 20 million lives, the Soviet Union played the major part in ensuring that the Nazi millennium did not even last five years. The war brought out the greatness of Soviet society and opened the eyes of millions to the true nature and achievements of socialism.

The influence of African workers, youth and progressive intelligentsia in the African National Congress was growing apace during these years. Leaders such as Lembede, Tloome, Sisulu, Tambo and Mandela were in the forefront demanding a more militant and revolutionary policy. Within the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses, too, great changes were taking place. By 1945 the militants, led by Drs. Dadoo and Naicker, had all but taken control. In the period 1941-43 the membership of the Communist Party rose fourfold - a clear indication that the Party and its policies were gaining support from the working masses.

The lives of the African people, then as now, were characterised by extreme poverty, total insecurity in employment and every other field of life, the hated Pass Laws and brutal pass raids. In the Transvaal the NEUF had organised a huge campaign against the Pass Laws which included meetings, rallies and demonstrations in the locations and townships and outside factory gates. Dadoo was one of the most prominent speakers. The campaign reached its peak at a representative conference in May 1945 attended by over 540 delegates at which a National Anti-Pass Council was elected with Dr. A. B. Xuma, President of the ANC, as Chairman and Dadoo as Vice-Chairman.

It was partly through the activities of the NEUF that the broad united militant front of the national organisations of the African, Coloured and Indian people and the CPSA was developed and strengthened .

A landmark in the struggle

1946, the year of the Indian Passive Resistance Campaign and the glorious African mine workers' strike, witnessed an unprecedented confrontation between the forces of national and social liberation and those of an obdurate vicious racist oppressor and exploiter.

By the time that Smuts - a thoroughbred racist had introduced the Ghetto Act, which sought to

segregate the Indians residentially and commercially even further and to introduce a limited form of communal representation, the Indian Congresses, greatly strengthened by the active participation at all levels of the Indian working class, were ready for confrontation. The hard, grinding work carried out by Drs. Dadoo and Naicker, trade unionists such as H. A. Naidoo, G. Ponen, M. P. Naicker, D. Seedat, D. Singh, M. D. Naidoo, G. Singh and others had infused in the Indians a spirit of resistance.

During the two-year campaign Dadoo and the other Passive Resistance organisers worked with the purposeful energy of a hive of bees, and won a huge response from the people.

In the course of that campaign Dadoo went to prison twice. The first time was in July 1946. The second time was in March 1948 when he and Dr. Naicker were sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "inciting" Indian people to break the law which prohibited Indians from moving from one province to another without a permit. The imprisonment was received with wrath and indignation by the Indians who responded with slogans such as "Long Live Drs. Dadoo and Naicker!" and "We Shall Resist!".

The Passive Resistance Campaign, in which nearly 2,000 men and women voluntarily courted imprisonment, is a glorious page in the annals of the militant resistance of the Indian people. Moreover it had a far wider long-term impact in that it helped to lay the basis for the 1952 Defiance Campaign.

Despite his overburdened schedule in that campaign Dadoo did not neglect his other political duties and tasks. In 1946 he was a member of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Johannesburg District of the CPSA, vice-chairman of the National Anti-Pass Council, President of the TIC, chairman of the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council and joint-chairman of the National Passive Resistance Council.

As chairman of the Johannesburg district of the CPSA Dadoo made his contribution to the strengthening and development of African trade unions, but it was above all the sterling work of his comrade J. B. Marks which welded the African Mineworkers' Union into a force capable of bringing out, in the week August 12 to 19, 1946, 100,000 African miners on strike for higher wages - one of the high points of African resistance in this century.

In 1947 Drs. Dadoo and Naicker made an extensive and triumphant tour of India where they met most of the national leaders including Gandhi, Nehru and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. They addressed a great number of meetings and also attended the first All-Asian Conference.

In March of the same year the historic Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo pact was signed, marking a significant development in the co-operation between the African and Indian peoples. The "Doctors' Pact" made a bold demand for full franchise and the removal of all discriminatory and oppressive legislation.

But before the co-operation could be consolidated riots broke out between Africans and Indians in Durban in January 1949. There is no doubt that the racist authorities encouraged, aided and abetted the carnage. Having stood aside in the beginning when prompt action could have averted the riots the army and police later opened fire indiscriminately and killed many Africans. The casualty figures were as follows: Dead - 142: 87 Africans, 50 Indians, 1 European and 4 who were not identified. Injured - 1,087: 541 Africans, 503 Indians, 11 Coloureds and 32 Europeans. Fifty-eight of the injured died later.

The response of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) was prompt and effective. Both organisations fully realised that firm action had to be taken to defeat the enemy's plot to divide the oppressed masses. The African and Indian Congresses submitted a joint memorandum to the Commission of Enquiry which was set up and with many other organisations withdrew from that commission when they were prevented from cross-examining witnesses. In February 1949 30 African and Indian leaders issued a joint statement in which they emphasised: "the fundamental and basic causes of the disturbances are traceable to the political, economic and social structure of this country."

At the time of the riots Dadoo was abroad. His view then as now was that the racist enemy would stop at nothing to provoke and incite violent divisions within and amongst the oppressed national groups. The most important lesson was that for unity to be really effective it had to permeate to the grass-roots and this process had to be speeded up. It was the unity in action of all the oppressed blacks and democratic whites initiated and organised by the Congress movement in the fifties which defeated all the enemy's nefarious schemes and conspiracies to provoke similar riots and disturbances.

A Glorious Decade

The Nationalist Party won the all-white election in 1948 on the basis of a virulent white chauvinist and anti-communist campaign. However, whilst the white electorate further entrenched the power and influence of the racists and fascists, the national liberation movements and the CPSA laid the basis for a common united mass militant resistance. Most significantly the adoption of the 1949 Programme of Action was a clear indication that the ANC was now getting ready to assume its historic role. An impressive demonstration of the unity and power of the national liberation and working class movements was the highly successful May 1, 1950 strike in Johannesburg and the Reef. But before this unity could be strengthened the racist regime introduced a Bill in the All-White Parliament to ban the CPSA. This was recognised by Communists and non-Communists alike as a prelude to the banning of all people's organisations which spoke out against apartheid and racially discriminatory laws and demanded justice and equal democratic rights for all.

Meeting before the ban came into effect, the Central Committee of the Party decided to dissolve itself with a view to frustrating the aims of the enemy. For Dadoo the decision to dissolve the Party was one of the most painful he had ever had to take part in, but he considered at the time that there was no alternative. However, there was never in his mind any doubt that the situation in South Africa demanded the active and vital presence of an independent party of the working class, fighting for national liberation and socialism. When Moses Kotane took the first steps towards reconstituting the Party in illegal conditions, Dadoo and others were with him from the outset. Units were established in the main centres of the country and by 1953 an underground conference was held in Johannesburg attended by Communists from all over the country. At this conference a new central committee was elected - Dadoo being one of them - with Moses Kotane as general secretary. A new name was adopted, the South African Communist Party (SACP), heir to the glorious traditions of the CPSA.

Dadoo steeled himself to the arduous task of working in an illegal Party whilst remaining a prominent figure in the public eye. He and other Communists studied the experiences of other underground parties and resistance movements and learned how to operate with a combination of caution and precision which enabled them to escape the attentions of the security police. Slowly the Party became more influential and recruited to its ranks some of the most dedicated and courageous freedom fighters in the national liberation and trade union movements. The composition of the membership and leadership since its reconstitution has reflected accurately the situation in South Africa where the African working class is the main force for social renewal. Commenting on the attacks of the enemy and sometimes even well-meaning friends that the Communists used a back-door approach to infiltrate the national liberation organisations Dadoo is emphatic that the SACP never entertained any idea of dominating any organisation. He points out that as Communists they were as patriotic as anyone else in fighting racism and white domination for the freedom of the black people.

But they were also fighting for socialism and for that it was absolutely necessary to have an independent vanguard party of the working class based on Marxism-Leninism - a party that understood that racist oppression and white supremacy is the creation of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism and that the national liberation of the African people is the precondition for the building of a socialist South Africa. This is what the Communists work for, fight for, go to prison for and die for. There never has been nor ever will be any attempt to dominate any organisation. The SACP is an indispensable part of the national liberation front headed by the ANC.

Defiance Campaign

In 1950, Dadoo was elected President of the South African Indian Congress in recognition of his contribution to the struggle. Nominating him for the post, Dr Naicker called him "one of the greatest sons of South Africa". Soon the SAIC was to join with the ANC to organise a Defiance Campaign against unjust laws in a bid to raise the struggle of the oppressed to new and higher levels. A planning Council was set up consisting of Dr. Moroka (Chairman), Walter Sisulu, J. B. Marks, Yusuf Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia. The Council was instructed to prepare a report on the methods and forms of struggle to be adopted. That report, which was the basis for the organisation of the Defiance Campaign, was prepared mainly by Sisulu and Dadoo. Though he had met Sisulu some years previously, this was the first time that Dadoo had worked so closely with him. They had continuous discussions in which their common outlook and friendship blossomed. Dadoo was impressed by Sisulu's sharp analytical mind, his pragmatism and his common touch with the people.

Nelson Mandela was elected volunteer-in-chief with Molvi Cachalia his deputy. Already at that time Mandela's courage, devotion to duty, magnetic personality and dynamism had manifested themselves. Following Kotane's defiance of his banning orders, Dadoo and Bopape followed suit. Once more Dadoo found himself in prison. Unencumbered by the detail of daily work, he spent six very fruitful weeks discussing with Kotane and Bopape numerous problems that faced the revolutionary movements in South Africa. Dadoo says that Kotane was also very busy advising the ordinary prisoners on their legal rights and helping them to prepare their court cases.

Dadoo has no doubt that the Defiance Campaign in which over 8,000 courted imprisonment was one of the great acts of resistance in our revolutionary history. It led to the strengthening of the ANC and SAIC, generated a new spirit of militancy and a conscious feeling of organised resistance, and brought about the formation of the South African Coloured People's

Organisation (SACPO) and the Congress of Democrats (COD) of white allies of the liberation movements.

The question of political consciousness and enlightenment, Dadoo maintains, is a complex process which assumes new features as changes occur in the working and living conditions of the people. For him the strength, vigour and influence of the leaders, however formidable their personal capabilities may be, lies in the growing political consciousness and organisation of the toiling masses and in their ability to express and articulate the collective will. Thus diverse forms of mass struggle, demonstrations, strikes, rallies, mass meetings, group discussions and other actions are the principal and most distinct expression of the will of the oppressed and exploited people.

The intensified repression of the racist regime had brought about a new situation and the revolutionary forces had to find new forms of struggle to ensure that the mood and spirit of militancy did not flounder and ebb away. The Congress Alliance decided to hold a Congress of the People where a Freedom Charter could be adopted. At that time the Congress Alliance consisted of the ANC, SAIC, SACPO and SACOD. Later it was augmented and strengthened by the inclusion of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the only non-racial trade union centre in South Africa .

Dadoo was continuously under banning orders which prevented him from participating openly in the hectic activities of the Congress Alliance. But this did not prevent him from making his contribution at secret meetings and discussions with leaders of the Congress Alliance and the SACP. He was consulted on all major issues and his views and analyses greatly respected.

On the suggestion of the ANC it was decided to award the honour of Isitwalandwe to Chief Lutuli, Dadoo and Father Huddleston. Dadoo was deeply touched that he was considered for this honour and even twenty-four years later says with emotion "I am at a loss for words to describe my feelings." His great regret was that like Chief Lutuli he could not participate in that great assembly as they were both banned. He also feels honoured to be associated with Lutuli, as Dadoo has the greatest respect and appreciation for Lutuli's incalculable contribution to the deepening of the revolutionary process in South Africa.

Dadoo is unequivocal that the Freedom Charter is really a People's Charter, reflecting the deep-seated feelings, grievances and aspirations of the masses who were active participants in

its formulation. He characterises the Freedom Charter as the embodiment of the demands of the national liberation movement at the stage of the national democratic revolution which can and does unite the most diverse forces. The inclusion of the clause on the nationalisation of monopoly industries and banks he says is a logical demand of the national liberation movement in the conditions obtaining in South Africa, since it is not possible to overthrow the racist system without a fundamental and irreversible shift in economic and political power.

The period 1950-60 was characterised by the most formidable acts of mass militant resistance. In the urban areas the African working class demonstrated its power and willingness to lead the struggle and to fulfil its historic mission. In the rural areas there were the heroic battles including armed uprisings of the people of Zeerust, Sekukuniland and Pondoland. The people's resistance in the rural areas was temporarily halted only because the enemy used the most barbarous and murderous methods of suppression. However these actions had a long-term impact on the will of the people to resist. In all of these activities the ANC was involved in one way or another.

For Dadoo the formation of the Congress Alliance was a highwater mark in the process of bringing about unity in action. From the very beginning Dadoo operated on the basis that the major role would have to be played by the African people and that the struggle for national liberation would have to be under the leadership and guidance of the ANC. The Congress Consultative Committee, which was the organisational expression of the Congress Alliance, was not a decision-making body. It discussed various issues, acted as a coordinating body and made recommendations which were not binding on any constituent part of the Alliance. In the conditions at that time the Congress Alliance under the leadership of the ANC was the most appropriate form for bringing about the unity of all those opposed to racism and apartheid.

Internationalism

A genuine patriot, Dadoo clearly understood the organic relationship between the struggle in South Africa and the world-wide struggle against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism, for national liberation, peace, democracy and socialism. With Dadoo there were many leaders including Kotane, Marks, Mandela, Tambo, Tloome, Sisulu, Nokwe, A. Nzo, G. Mbeki, Bram Fischer and M. Mabida who worked tirelessly to expose the aggressive nature and conspiracies of imperialism and the forces of reaction. While the ANC was still legal, the Congress Alliance organised protest meetings and demonstrations and produced an immense amount of analytical and propaganda materials on a wide variety of international problems. A few such issues were the Zionist-imperialist aggression against Egypt, the counter-revolutionary conspiracy in

Hungary in 1956, the bloody French colonial wars against the people of Algeria and Indo-China, the imprisonment of Kenyatta, the CIA-inspired murder of Lumumba, the Portuguese colonial massacres in Mozambique and Angola and the fight for peace and disarmament.

Furthermore, fraternal links were developed with progressive continental and international organisations of the workers, youth, students, women and peace fighters. After 1960 the SACP developed and strengthened its relations with the international communist movement. Today the ANC has an internationalist outlook with a breadth and scope which make it one of the leading anti-imperialist national liberation forces. Our people, whom the racists tried to isolate from world developments, developed a fierce hatred for imperialism and a love and respect for progressive forces throughout the world.

In spite of the Treason Trial - 1956-1961 - which incarcerated so many of the leading activists, the struggle against the pass laws, Group Areas Act, Bantustans, forced removals, slave wages and inhuman exploitation went from strength to strength. To take the struggle against the pass laws to a new and higher level in 1960 the ANC planned a mass militant campaign. But the ANC plan was preempted by the Pan-African Congress (PAC) which was formed by some disgruntled, chauvinist and anti-communist elements within the ANC.

The PAC call for anti-pass demonstrations on March 21, 1960 was an ill-prepared adventurist action. In only two places, Cape Town and the Sharpeville- Evaton-Vereeniging complex, was there any kind of mass demonstration. The trigger-happy white police and army wantonly opened fire on the peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, killing 69 people. "Sharpeville Massacre" was the message that flashed all round the world. The callous brutality of the killings in Sharpeville and Langa exposed the fact that the fascist regime in South Africa would stop at nothing to preserve the privileges and power of the white minority and monopolists.

The experience of Sharpeville, taken together with the massive use of armed force and intimidation, backed by the white mass media, to suppress all popular struggles made it inevitable that non-violent mass resistance should give way to other methods. The revolutionary forces had to find alternative forms of struggle to meet and defeat the fascist terror. Thus at the initiative of the ANC and SACP came into being Umkhonto-We-Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the ANC. Into the ranks of Umkhonto came the most dedicated and fearless revolutionaries from all the racial groups. On December 16 1961 the first acts of sabotage took place in all the major cities. Preparations were made for a concerted, well-organised, armed revolutionary struggle. But the enemy was not unprepared. It introduced the most draconian legislation which effectively legalised torture and the murder of detainees

and substantially increased military expenditure.

Dadoo Abroad

Following the Sharpeville massacre the racist regime declared a state of emergency. Thousands were arrested including most of the leading members of the national liberation and working class movements. Dadoo with Kotane, Harmel and others evaded the fascist net and went into hiding. For some months they operated underground moving from one place to another and continuously keeping abreast of the developing situation. It was then decided that the time was ripe to make public the existence of the illegal SACP. Leaflets were distributed throughout the country and according to Dadoo the declaration was widely acclaimed by the working people. The SACP in consultation with the SAIC decided that Dadoo should go abroad to give the Party an external presence and to help in organising all-round international support for the internal struggle. In the discussions Dadoo vigorously argued that his place was in the underground, but he was overruled and as a disciplined Communist and revolutionary he submerged his own wishes and feelings and fulfilled the collective decision.

From London he travelled to different parts of the world to put the case of the oppressed, but maintained the closest contact with the movement at home and was able to make his contribution to the new programme of the Communist Party which was adopted at an illegal conference in Johannesburg in 1962. This programme has made a tremendous contribution to the theoretical elaboration of the nature and character of the racist socio-economic system in our country and to the creative development of Marxist-Leninist thought in our continent.

Following the Rivonia and subsequent trials of our brave freedom fighters, the revolutionary movements were compelled to retreat, take stock of the changed conditions and map out new plans for the revolutionary struggle. However, despite the most sustained reign of terror over nearly twenty years the ANC and SACP were never cowed into submission. Time after time the fascists boasted that they had "broken the back" of the ANC and SACP, but this was never to be. The ANC with its clear programme of action and demands became the heart and the mind of the oppressed. The fascists may torture, maim, imprison and kill our revolutionary cadres and leaders but they will never destroy the ANC, SACP and SACTU.

A cardinal test of an organisation claiming to lead the people in struggle is its ability to analyse and discuss its achievements and shortcomings in an objective manner permeated by the principle of criticism and self-criticism. The ANC manifested this essential quality at the

Morogoro Conference of 1969. That conference was a historical milestone. After a careful and searching analysis and an open discussion decisions were taken which have had a positive impact on the course of the revolutionary struggle. One such decision was to set up a Revolutionary Council which was entrusted with the task of improving the underground structures of the ANC, strengthening the capacity of Umkhonto-We-Sizwe to meet the firepower of the enemy with the fire-power and superior tactics of the guerillas, and relating the armed struggle to the mass actions of the working people. Oliver Tambo was unanimously and enthusiastically elected chairman and Dadoo vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Council. Since its formation in 1969 the Revolutionary Council has considerably heightened the activities of the ANC underground and Umkhonto-We-Sizwe. In his post Dadoo has worked tirelessly and selflessly, never sparing himself.

As a leading member of the SACP Dadoo was also occupied by his Party duties and functions. In August 1972 J. B. Marks, then chairman of the SACP, died and was buried (in his own words) "in the land of the proletariat". At a CC meeting soon after Marks' death, Dadoo was unanimously elected chairman. He says that his election was a great honour and a heavy responsibility; more so since he had to follow the high standard of leadership set by Marks. However, once he took on this responsibility he made and continues to make valuable contributions to the extension of the Party's influence and position inside and outside the country.

In the continuing work to heighten the political and revolutionary consciousness of the people, underground literature plays a preeminent role. It acts as a mobiliser, organiser, stimulator, and catalyst. Both the ANC and SACP have produced a vast quantity of underground resistance literature. Even the enemy has been compelled to admit that the consistent production and distribution of illegal propaganda material by various means, including bucket bombs, has made an impact on the country. Our brave underground fighters take great risks to prepare and distribute this material. A number of them have been arrested, tortured, imprisoned and killed, but the work continues.

The national liberation front, headed by the ANC and of which the SACP is an integral part, has played its rightful role in the rapidly developing situation in racist South Africa, despite deep illegality and certain shortcomings and weaknesses. Whether in the massive strikes of the black working class, the ferment of revolt amongst the youth and students, or the resistance in the rural areas, the contribution of members of the national liberation, trade union and working class movements has been significant. A large number of young people who have left South Africa to acquire political and military skills have testified to the influence of the ANC.

Soweto Explosion

The uprisings in Soweto and other parts of the country In June 1976 shattered for all time the propaganda of the racists that South Africa is an ocean of peace. The oppressed, down-trodden youth and students demonstrated not only their utter rejection of racism and apartheid but most significantly their readiness to make the supreme sacrifice. Workers, youth, students, professionals and small traders came out in united mass action.

In the recent period militant actions on a wide variety of issues, by black working people in the urban and rural areas, youth and students and other strata of the population have intensified. Moreover, the underground structures of the ANC, SACP and SACTU have been strengthened and the fighting qualities of Umkhonto-We-Sizwe have been displayed in action. Even the enemy has been compelled to admit that South Africa is in a "state of war". Numerous armed clashes have occurred between the freedom fighters and the forces of racism, repression and murder. In some of the clashes units of Umkhonto have inflicted wounding blows on the enemy troops and eliminated traitors and informers such as Abel Mtembu and L. Nkosi.

Dadoo's political life, like that of so many outstanding revolutionaries throughout the world, proves irrefutably that one can only be a true patriot if one is an internationalist. Dadoo emphasises that class unity is essential both on the national and international scale. Imperialism and the national forces of reaction will do their utmost - including the use of terroristic violence - to protect their interests. Thus it is not possible to dispense with the most potent weapon of the international working class, proletarian internationalism.

In the course of his political duties Dadoo has represented the SACP at various congresses, conferences and seminars in the socialist countries. He went to the Soviet Union for the first time in 1960. When his plane landed at the airport in Moscow his heart beat faster. He was tremendously excited and overjoyed that at long last he was in the motherland of Lenin, where the material base for socialism had been established. His love for the Soviet people and the CPSU had grown steadily stronger over the years. For Dadoo, as for millions of people, the Soviet Union is the main bulwark of all those fighting for a new and better life free from capitalism, imperialism, neocolonialism, racism and fascism.

In contrast to the principled class positions of the socialist community headed by the Soviet Union, the Chinese leaders in Peking have betrayed the most sacred principles of socialism and proletarian internationalism. Dadoo represented the ANC at the representative conference held

in Helsinki in March 1979 in support of Vietnam after the criminal aggression and brazen banditry of the Chinese invaders. In his speech he said: "By their actions the Chinese leadership have entered into an unholy alliance with the most reactionary and warmongering forces of imperialism. In Chile, Angola, Ethiopia, wherever the people are fighting against imperialism and reaction, they find ranged against them the Peking leadership".

Dadoo led a delegation of the SACP to Congo (Brazzaville) in November 1975. During this highly successful visit they met leading officials of the Congolese Party of Labour and the government. In a joint communique after the visit both parties agreed to develop contacts and to help each other in the struggle for socialism. In 1977 Dadoo had the honour and pleasure to be part of the world

Peace delegation which presented the Julio-Curie Medal to Agostinho Neto in Luanda.

Dadoo as always remains a firm champion of the might and strength of the international communist movement. Within the ranks of the Party and internationally he is a tireless fighter for the unity and cohesiveness of the world communist movement. On behalf of the SACP he attended the 1960 and 1969 international meetings of the Communist and Workers' Parties and the recent

historic first meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Tropical and Southern Africa. He reads extensively and is well informed about developments in Africa, the socialist world, Middle East, Asia and Latin America. In many ways Dadoo is a symbol of the internationalism of the oppressed people of South Africa.

Dadoo draws his political strength and dynamism above all from the black working class which is the main social force for national liberation and socialism. In his political life he has always attempted to draw the widest possible sections of the oppressed blacks and democratic whites into the mainstream of the struggle. An implacable foe of sectarianism and exclusivism Dadoo has made an immeasurable contribution to the significant role played by the Indians in the revolutionary struggle.

Dadoo's political life is indeed A Proud Record of Struggle. Notwithstanding the drawbacks, weaknesses and retreats of the revolutionary forces, Dadoo on the basis of a scientific evaluation of the scope, depth and potential of the national liberation and working class movements and the fierce opposition of the oppressed to racism and apartheid is supremely confident that as surely as spring follows winter the popular Congress slogan "Freedom In Our Lifetime" will become a reality.

