INDIA and SOUTH AFRICA

a collection of papers by

E.S. REDDY

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PREFACE

The contribution made by Indians to the struggle against apartheid does not only derive from historic links that go back to the second half of the nineteenth century when the first Indian indentured labourers arrived in Natal. These papers by E.S. Reddy demonstrate that India's role must be located within a broader international movement of struggle against racial discrimination and the apartheid policies of successive South African governments. Furthermore, it was deeply rooted in India's own struggle for freedom from British rule.

While most observers are familiar with the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to the South African struggle, Mr. Reddy's essays show that many others, including Jawaharlal Nehru, played a vital role in keeping alive the international movement against apartheid in the 1950s and 1960s, after Gandhiji's death, at a time when some Western countries adopted an accommodative approach to the apartheid State. In the fascinating final article in this collection, Mr. Reddy discusses the little-known question of Indian slaves in South Africa and provides evidence that Indians were shipped to the Cape Colony as slaves for domestic and farm work soon after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck.

At the present decisive conjuncture in South Africa's history, on the eve of the birth of a free, nonracial democracy in this country, these essays deepen our understanding of sonic crucial aspects of Indo-South African relations and history.

Hi the light of its own history and its struggle for change hi the context of resistance to apartheid, the University of Durban-Westville is happy, indeed privileged, to publish this collection of papers by E.S. Reddy. Mr. Reddy himself, in his capacity as director of the United Nations Centre against Apartheid and in other ways, played a significant role iii keeping the struggle against apartheid alive at the highest international level.

We were delighted to host Mr. Reddy on his recent visit to Durban and share in his excitement at the chance of meeting again with many old friends. We thank him, too, for his

generous donation to the University's Documentation Centre of an invaluable collection of papers and documents on Indo-South African relations and on the United Nations' role in the struggle against apartheid, as well as many other valuable books and pamphlets on international politics. His support for the University, in these and other ways, is greatly appreciated.

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21 November 1991

INDIA AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID

Introduction

India's contribution to the struggle against apartheid has been highly praised by the leaders of the freedom movement in South Africa. Nelson Mandela, the outstanding leader of that movement, paid a handsome tribute to India and its leaders in a letter smuggled out of Robben island prison in 1980. Great appreciation has also been expressed by African leaders for the role of India since 1946 in promoting international support for the freedom struggle in South Africa, and its many actions and initiatives in solidarity with the oppressed people of that country.

While such expressions of appreciation are most gratifying, it must be emphasised that the contribution by the Government and people of India to the freedom movement in South Africa is more than an act of solidarity. It has deep roots in India's own struggle for freedom and dignity.

The humiliations and indignities to which the people of Indian origin were subjected in South Africa, and the struggle for their human dignity led by Mahatma Gandhi, have had a great influence on the Indian national movement. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it had developed an international outlook, espousing uncompromising opposition to colonialism and racism and recognising that India's own freedom was meaningless unless all the peoples under colonial and racist domination were free. It felt a particular affinity with the freedom movements in South Africa and other African countries.

Soon after assuming office as Prime Minister in the Interim Government of India, Pandit Nehru declared at a press conference on September 27, 1946:

"The kernel of our policy is the ending of colonialism all over Asia, or for that matter, in Africa and elsewhere and racial equality ... and the end of domination or exploitation of one nation by another."

This, he stressed, was the only way to bring about world peace and progress.

While India was concerned with the treatment of people of Indian origin in South Africa as an affront to the dignity and honour of the nation, he saw the issue in the context of even greater oppression of the African majority. India, therefore, took the lead in ensuring United Nations consideration of apartheid and in promoting solidarity with all the oppressed people.

The Government and people of India have entertained great respect for the liberation movement in South Africa and its leaders, and have been unequivocal in support of their struggle. The contributions made in that cause, and in implementation of the United Nations resolutions, were never regarded as a sacrifice but as a national duty.

It may be useful to trace the evolution of India's concern and commitment, not only for an understanding of the role of India, but also for pointing to the lessons of its long experience of solidarity with the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

Gandhiji in South Africa

"The oldest existing political organisation in South Africa, the Natal Indian Congress, was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894. He became its first secretary and in 21 years of his stay in South Africa we were to witness the birth of ideas and methods of struggle that have exerted an incalculable influence on the history of the peoples of India and South Africa. Indeed it was on South African soil that Mahatmaji founded and embraced the philosophy of *Satyagraha*." - Nelson Mandela in a letter from prison in 1980

After the abolition of slavery, the British settlers in the Natal arranged with the Indian Government to recruit indentured labour for their sugar, tea and coffee plantations. Thousands of poor and illiterate Indians were enticed to go to South Africa with promises of attractive wages and repatriation after five years or the right to settle in Natal as free men. The first indentured labourers reached Natal on November 6, 1860. They were soon followed by traders and their assistants.

After some time, the whites faced serious competition from the traders, as well as the labourers who became successful market gardeners after the expiry of their indenture. They began an agitation to make it impossible for Indians to live in Natal except in semi-slavery as indentured labourers. In 1893, when Natal was granted self-government, the Government began to enact a series of discriminatory and restrictive measures against the free Indians.

The Indian traders who had settled in the Boer Republic of Transvaal were also subjected to similar discrimination, while Indians were excluded from the Orange Free State.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a young and diffident barrister, arrived in South Africa in 1893 to represent an Indian trader in Natal in a civil suit against an Indian trading firm in Pretoria. Within days, he encountered bitter humiliations such as being pushed out of a train and being assaulted for walking on a footpath. The experience steeled him: he decided never to accept or be resigned to injustice and racism, but to resist.

He helped found the Natal Indian Congress in 1894, bringing together Indians of all classes, speaking a variety of languages, into one organisation to struggle for their rights. It was the first mass organisation in South Africa.

Proceeding to India in 1896, he travelled all over the country publicising the situation in South Africa, meeting leaders of the Indian National Congress, editors and others. When he returned to Durban in January 1897, he was brutally assaulted by a white mob and barely escaped lynching. The incident was widely reported in India and England, and the British Government was obliged to instruct the Natal authorities to take action against his assailants. Gandhiji refused to prosecute them and went on with his work.

When the Anglo-Boer War broke out in 1899, the British Government gave as one of the reasons the discrimination against British subjects of Indian origin in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Gandhiji organised an ambulance corps on the British side, though he felt sympathy for the Afrikaners. At the end of the war, however, the British administrators enforced more stringent restrictions on the Indians in the Transvaal.

In 1907, the Transvaal Government enacted the "Black Act" (Asiatic Registration Act) requiring compulsory registration and finger-printing of Indians. The Indian community

defied the law under the leadership of Gandhiji, and many were imprisoned in this first *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance) launched by him. Within a few months, General Smuts agreed to release the prisoners and repeal the Act in return for voluntary registration by the Indians.

But the Government broke the promise and maintained the Act, though with some amendments, so the Indian community resumed the struggle in 1908. Thousands of Indians burnt their registration certificates. The *Satyagraha* continued this time for several years as the white authorities, who were negotiating for "self-government", resorted to harassment rather than mass arrests.

Gandhiji went in a deputation of Indians to Britain in 1909 to oppose the granting of self-government to South Africa under white rule, and met with many members of Parliament and public figures. But the British Government ignored the pleas of the Indians - and, indeed, of the African majority - and transferred power to the white minority in 1910.

Meanwhile, the *Satyagraha* received wide attention in India. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a prominent national leader with whom Gandhiji was in constant communication, initiated a debate in the Legislative Council of India and secured a resolution in 1911 to prohibit recruitment of indentured labour for Natal. Subsequently, with British encouragement, Gokhale visited South Africa in 1912 and met Generals Botha and Smuts who undertook to repeal the Black Act and abolish the poll-tax.

But again the undertaking was not kept. Moreover, the Indian community was infuriated at a judgment of the Cape Supreme Court in 1913 declaring all marriages, other than those according to Christian rites and registered with the Registrar of Marriages, beyond the pale of law in South Africa.

Gandhiji then revived the *Satyagraha* on a much bigger scale, inviting women and indentured labourers to join. Tens of thousands of workers in the Newcastle coal mines and in plantations on the Natal coast went on strike and defied brutal police violence. Thousands of Indians went to jail.

Public opinion in India reacted strongly and even Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, criticised the South African Government and expressed his "deep and burning" sympathy for the *Satyagrahis*. There were also protests in Britain.

As a result, General Smuts reached an agreement with Gandhiji in January 1914 repealing the poll-tax and validating Indian marriages. This was a compromise, as other discriminatory measures remained, but provided some security for the Indian community. Gandhiji suspended the *Satyagraha* and left South Africa in July 1914.

The experience of Gandhiji in South Africa had a tremendous influence in India, and he was hailed as a "Mahatma" as he proceeded to develop the Indian National Congress as a mass movement leading to the independence of the country.

In South Africa, despite his great respect and sympathy for the Africans, his political activities were confined essentially to the Indian community as it was in a particularly vulnerable position. His influence on the freedom movement in that country was, therefore,

by example. But as Oliver Tambo said in New Delhi on November 14, 1980: "His imprint on the course of the South African struggle is indelible."

Gandhiji, moreover, was a great publicist who recognised that while the success of *Satyagraha* depended primarily on the courage and sacrifice of the resisters, it should obtain the understanding and sympathy of public opinion. He attracted the support of a number of whites in South Africa who soon became supporters of the African cause. Public opinion in India was aroused as on few other issues. Gandhiji also helped promote awareness of South African racism in Britain.

Gandhiji was also in frequent correspondence with people in other countries, including Count Leo Tolstoy, who wrote to him:

"And so your activity in Transvaal, as it seems to us, at the end of the world, is the most essential work now being done in the world, and in which not only the nations of the Christian but of all the world will undoubtedly take part."

The efforts of Gandhiji thus helped to attract international attention to the issue of racism in South Africa long before the United Nations began considering the matter.

Solidarity of freedom movements

"... there is a real moral bond between Asiatics and Africans. It will grow as time passes." - Mahatma Gandhi in *Harijan*, February 24, 1946

"It would be a grave omission on our part if we failed to mention the close bonds that have existed between our people and the people of India, and to acknowledge the encouragement, the inspiration and the practical assistance we have received as a result of the international outlook of the All India Congress." - Nelson Mandela in his letter from prison in 1980

Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian National Congress developed a strong international outlook, with the elimination of colonialism and racism all over the world as the foremost concern, and established contacts with freedom movements in other countries.

Africa had a special place, partly because of the concern of Mahatma Gandhi. Pandit Nehru, for his part, was always passionate in denouncing the humiliation of Africa and felt that Asia had a duty to help Africa regain its dignity and freedom. He said in his address to the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi on March 23, 1947:

"We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. We must help them to their rightful place in the human family."

And in his concluding statement at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung on April 24, 1955, he declared:

"We have passed resolutions about conditions in this or that country. But I think there is nothing more terrible than the infinite tragedy of Africa in the past few hundred years. Everything else pales into insignificance when I think of the infinite tragedy of Africa ever since the days when millions of Africans were carried away as galley slaves to America and

elsewhere, half of them dying in the galleys... even now the tragedy of Africa is greater than that of any other continent, whether it is racial or political. It is up to Asia to help Africa to the best of her ability because we are sister continents."

There were friendly contacts between Indian and African leaders during the course of their struggles for freedom. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru repeatedly stressed the solidarity of Asian and African peoples and advised the Indians in Africa to identify with the African majority. One of the first acts of Pandit Nehru, after becoming Prime Minister in the Interim Government of India, was to send instructions to Indian envoys in Africa that India did not want Indians to have any special privileges at the cost of Africans anywhere. He called upon the Indians to cooperate with Africans in order to gain freedom for Africans.

The Indian national movement, which began in the 1880s, and the South African national movement, which began three decades later, developed on parallel lines - in organisation, forms of resistance and ideology - in protracted struggles against powerful forces. India had, therefore, a special appreciation of the concerns and aspirations of the latter.

The bond between the national movements of India and South Africa became stronger during the Second World War.

The Indians in South Africa were no longer recent immigrants, but were born in South Africa and developed deep roots in that country. With the encouragement of the Indian national movement, they recognised that their destiny was linked to that of the African majority and increasingly participated in joint struggles against racist measures. The militants - from Gandhians to Marxists - under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. Monty Naicker, took over leadership of the community by the end of the war, from the so-called "moderates" who were compromising with the racist regime, and entered into a pact with the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) in 1947.

Moreover, while the Allies professed to be fighting for freedom, Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, made it clear that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India, while General Smuts, the South African Prime Minister acclaimed in the West as a liberal, was equally determined that equality was not for the blacks. Freedom had to be wrenched by struggle in both countries.

In India, the national movement launched the final assault against colonial rule in 1942 - the "Quit India" movement under the slogan "do or die". In South Africa, the African Youth League was established by young militants calling for "positive action": Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu, who are still leading the struggle, were among its founders.

Complaint to the United Nations in 1946

"In South Africa racialism is the State doctrine and our people are putting up a heroic struggle against the tyranny of a racial minority. If this racial doctrine is going to be tolerated, it must inevitably lead to vast conflicts and world disaster..." - Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a broadcast on September 7, 1946

India's complaint to the United Nations in 1946 on racial discrimination against Indians in South Africa was made even before the establishment of a national Government, because of strong public sentiment in the country.

The Smuts-Gandhi agreement of 1914 had given only a respite to the Indian South Africans. Anti-Indian agitation was revived by the whites after the First World War, and the Union Government introduced new discriminatory measures in violation of the agreement. After protests from India, talks were held between the colonial Government of India and the Union Government: a compromise was reached in the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 and confirmed by a joint communique of 1932. These agreements were also virtually repudiated by South Africa.

In 1943, Natal passed the "Pegging Act", restricting the right of Asians to acquire land. Then, in 1946, the Union Government passed the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act to segregate Indians in trade and residence. The Indian community launched a passive resistance campaign on June 13, 1946. Many Indian men and women were imprisoned by the police or assaulted by white gangsters.

In response to public pressure in India, the Government of India felt obliged to request the United Nations General Assembly, in a letter of June 22, 1946, to consider the question of the treatment of Indians in the Union of South Africa. On July 7, 1946, it prohibited exports to or imports from the Union of South Africa. At that time, South Africa accounted for 5.5 per cent of India's exports, and about 1.5 per cent of India's imports.

The Interim Government was established on September 1, 1946, before the General Assembly session, with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister. The new Government made sure to emphasise the wider context of the dispute between India and the Union of South Africa. It resisted moves by Western Powers to deal with the Indian complaint as a legal problem and insisted on its consideration as a political matter.

Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Chairman of the Indian delegation to the General Assembly in 1946, said in her opening statement:

"... The way this Assembly treats and disposes of this issue is open to the gaze, not only of those gathered here, but of millions of people in the world, the progressive peoples of all countries, more particularly the non-European peoples of the world - who ... are an overwhelming section of the human race.

"The issue we have brought before you is by no means a narrow or local one. ...

"The bitter memories of racial doctrines in the practice of States and Governments are still fresh in the minds of all of us. Their evil and tragic consequences are part of the problems with which we are called upon to deal.

"India firmly believes that imperialism, political, economic or social, in whatever part of the world it may exist and by whomsoever it may be established and perpetuated, is totally inconsistent with the objects and purposes of the United Nations and its Charter."

During the session, a multiracial delegation from South Africa led by Dr. A.B. Xuma, President-General of the ANC, and including Mr. H.A. Naidoo and Mr. Sorabji Rustomji of the Indian Congresses and Mr. H.M. Bassner, a Senator representing African voters, arrived in New York. The Indian delegation constantly consulted them and enabled them to contact many Governments. Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon, a member of the delegation, shared the

platform with them on November 17, 1946, at a public meeting in the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.

Because of the composition of the United Nations at the time, with most of Asian and African nations still under colonial domination, it was with great difficulty that India was able to secure a two-thirds majority for a resolution on its complaint.

At the same session, India played an active role in opposing and frustrating the manoeuvres of the South African Government to annex South West Africa (now Namibia). It strongly supported a resolution moved by Poland and Egypt against religious and so-called racial discrimination.

India became the target of vicious propaganda by the South African Government and earned the disfavour of its Western friends.

The annual discussions of the Indian complaint built up a sentiment against racial discrimination in South Africa, and against apartheid, which became the official policy after the National Party came to power in 1948.

Initiative on apartheid

On June 26, 1952, the ANC, the South African Indian Congress and the Coloured People's Organisation launched a non-violent "Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws" in which 8,000 people of all races were imprisoned for contravention of discriminatory laws.

India, together with 12 other Asian and Arab States, called on the General Assembly to consider the wider issue under the title "question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa". Their explanatory memorandum deserves to be recalled. They said:

"The race conflict in the Union of South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the South African Government is creating a dangerous and explosive situation, which constitutes both a threat to international peace and a flagrant violation of the basic principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

"Although Africa's importance in world affairs is increasing rapidly, many parts of that continent still remain subject to racial discrimination and exploitation. The founding of the United Nations and the acceptance by the Member States of the obligations embodied in the Charter have given to peoples of these areas new hope and encouragement in their efforts to acquire basic human rights. But, in direct opposition to the trend of world opinion, the policy of the Government of the Union of South Africa is designed to establish and to perpetuate every form of racial discrimination which must inevitably result in intense and bitter racial conflict...

"... a social system is being evolved under which the non-whites, who constitute 80 per cent of the population of the Union of South Africa, will be kept in a permanently inferior state to the white minority. Such a policy challenges all that the United Nations stands for and clearly violates the basic and fundamental objectives of the Charter of the United Nations...

"It is therefore imperative that the General Assembly give this question its urgent consideration in order to prevent an already dangerous situation from deteriorating further and to bring about a settlement in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter."

To stress the importance attached by India to this issue, leaders of the Indian delegation personally led the annual debates until 1957 (when, with the independence of Ghana, India requested Ghana to take the lead). For, India recognised apartheid as a unique and grave menace to peace, rather than one of many human rights violations in the world.

Pandit Nehru said in the Lok Sabha in April 1958:

"There are many conflicts which divide the world and this question of racial conflict in South Africa is as grave as any other issue.

"In South Africa, it is the deliberate, acknowledged and loudly proclaimed policy of the Government itself to maintain this segregation and racial discrimination. This makes the South African case unique in the world. It is a policy with which obviously no person and no country which believes in the United Nations Charter can ever compromise, because it uproots almost everything the modern world stands for and considers worthwhile, whether it is the United Nations Charter or whether it is our ideas of democracy or of human dignity."

While the original Indian complaint remained on the agenda of the General Assembly for several years, Pandit Nehru recognised that it had become part of the larger issue. He said in a speech in Rajya Sabha on December 15, 1958:

"The question of the people of Indian descent in South Africa has really merged into bigger questions where not only Indians are affected but the whole African population along with... any other people who happen to go to South Africa and who do not belong to European or American countries."

He said in the Lok Sabha on March 28, 1960, a week after the Sharpeville massacre:

"The people of Indian descent in South Africa, as we all know, have had to put up with a great deal of discrimination and suffering and we have resented that. But we must remember that the African people have to put up with something infinitely more and that, therefore, our sympathies must go out to them even more than to our kith and kin there."

The two items were merged in 1962 under the title "Policies of apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa".

India joined the African States in calling for Security Council discussion of apartheid after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. It co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution of 1962 urging all States to impose sanctions against South Africa and establishing the Special Committee against Apartheid.

In the specialised agencies of the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Commonwealth, as well as in numerous other organisations and forums, India was active in calling for the isolation of the apartheid regime and support for the liberation struggle.

Support to Africa

"... we regard Nelson Mandela as one of the foremost proponents of freedom - freedom of man. We regard him also a friend of India. We admire him. We have honoured him as one of our own heroes and our thoughts are often with him and his family..." - Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in an address to the African Students Association in New Delhi, January 11, 1982

"This is the time when all the non-white people of South Africa, and even those sections among the whites who oppose apartheid should close their ranks and fight unitedly to vanquish the racist policies. The people of India will be with them." - Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in a statement on August 16, 1985

By the early 1960s, the independent African States were able to take over the responsibility for promoting support to peoples fighting against colonial and racist domination, recognising that their cause was that of the entire continent.

India lent full support to African States and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). It set an example by scrupulously implementing the resolutions of the United Nations and other international organisations. It also provided substantial assistance to the oppressed people of South Africa and their freedom movement. Thus, while India gladly handed over leadership to African States, its role was hardly passive.

In recent years, India has been obliged to assume a more active role, with the encouragement of African States, because of its chairmanship of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the difficulties encountered by African States.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi had personal knowledge of the humiliation of Africans and Asians in South Africa as she was obliged to stop in South Africa in 1940-41 on her way home from England. She was passionate in her hatred of apartheid and entertained great respect for the leaders of the resistance. She told the African Students Association in New Delhi on January 11, 1982:

"The decade of the eighties may well decide the destiny of southern Africa. The African people must win. And we, in India, reiterate our total support to you."

Some observations

India has been privileged to play a special role in support of the long and difficult struggle of the black majority in South Africa for freedom and human dignity. Solidarity with the South African movement is an issue on which all segments of public opinion in India are united.

Having gone through a long struggle for independence, India has always entertained faith in the triumph of the liberation struggle in South Africa. It also showed full understanding, in the light of her own experience, when the freedom movement in South Africa was obliged to abandon strict adherence to non-violence.

India's long experience with South Africa has influenced its approach to apartheid.

For India, the distinction between colonial and racial problems in southern Africa has little basis. In South Africa, racism became "State" policy because the colonial Power, ignoring the

pleas of the African majority and the Indian population, handed over power to a white minority intent on reinforcing racist domination and exploitation.

India is also not influenced by propaganda describing Afrikaners as racists and English-speaking whites as liberals. For, the Indians in South Africa suffered discrimination from the English-speaking whites in Natal as much as from the Afrikaners in the Transvaal.

Aware of the long record of breaches of undertakings by the racist authorities, India fully appreciates that the black people can have little faith in so-called "reforms" by the apartheid regime. It rejects appeasement of the racist regime and recognises that the transition to a non-racial society will need to be under the leadership of the genuine leaders of the people.

As Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said on August 19, 1985:

"South Africa must be made to see reason. It must be made to release Nelson Mandela unconditionally. The only way this can be done is to isolate totally the racists. It is futile to hope that cooperation in any manner with that regime will give anyone leverage or influence, so as to change things for the better."

While the experience of India is perhaps unique, it has relevance for other States that have been seized with the problem of apartheid, at least since the United Nations began to discuss it in 1952.

South Africa is a microcosm of the world with people of different national and racial origins. The racist regime in that country has been pursuing a criminal, indeed suicidal policy, while the freedom movement has consistently espoused the need to establish a just and non-racial society in the interests of all the people of that country.

India, with a million people in South Africa tracing their origin to it, has made a clear choice in total support of the liberation struggle. Why is it that other countries of origin - especially of the white minority - are unwilling to make such a choice and act accordingly? Why is it that some of them even use their historic links as a justification for collusion with apartheid to the detriment of all the people of South Africa?

India, a poor country, gave up over 5 per cent of its export trade in 1946 to demonstrate its repugnance of racism in South Africa. Why is it that the major trading partners of South Africa are unwilling to give up their trade with South Africa, which amounts to one per cent or less of their total trade? Are they less committed to the struggle against racism?

The leaders of India have educated public opinion on the situation in South Africa and secured widest public support for all measures recommended by the United Nations. Why is it that Governments in the West are still resisting demands of public opinion in their own countries for action against apartheid?

India, a country which suffered from alien domination and exploitation, has accepted responsibility to assist Africa in its striving for total emancipation from centuries of humiliation. Why is it that Governments of countries that ravaged and plundered Africa seem unwilling to shoulder their moral responsibility?

It is to be hoped that the heroic struggle now being waged by the men, women and children of all racial origins in South Africa will persuade the Governments concerned to reassess their positions and contribute fully to the international efforts for the eradication of apartheid.

NATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: A HISTORIC FRIENDSHIP

The convening of the International Conference of Youth against Apartheid in New Delhi, on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the African National Congress of South Africa, highlights the historic relationship between the Indian and South African national movements.

Both India and South Africa were colonised for long periods. The modern national movements which emerged after the defeat of resistance by the indigenous rulers had to carry on long and difficult struggles - in India because it was by far the largest colony, and in South Africa because of a large white settler community and the mineral riches which attracted powerful vested interests. The first task of both was to overcome the divisions which facilitated alien conquest and unify their peoples. They acquired a similar ideology and international outlook which brought them ever closer, as did the growing identification of the Indian community in South Africa with the African majority in the struggle for freedom, equal rights and dignity.

I would like, in this article, to trace some landmarks in the relationship which developed between the two national movements and continues to grow even after India attained independence.

Gandhiji in South Africa

The beginnings of political organisation in South Africa can be traced to the 1880`s - soon after the defeat of the Zulu Kingdom and about the same time as the establishment of the Indian National Congress.

The sojourn of Gandhiji in South Africa from 1893 to 1914 and his organisation of the Indians of all strata, from wealthy merchants to illiterate serfs under indentured labour - professing several religions and many languages - in a united struggle for their rights, had no doubt a great impact as the small African associations developed into a national organisation in 1912.

Gandhiji himself kept aloof from the African movements for fear of scaring the whites and endangering the security of the Indian community. He barely mentions any African leaders in his autobiography or in *Satyagraha in South Africa*, though he met many of them during the deputations to London and in South Africa itself where John L. Dube, who was to become the first President of ANC, set up an industrial school and a newspaper close to his Phoenix Settlement.

The Natal Indian Congress, founded by Gandhiji in 1894, could not but have influenced the formation of Natal Native Congress in 1900 and similar bodies in other provinces in subsequent years. They came together at the South African Native Convention, the first representative national conference, in 1909 to protest the move by the British Government to transfer power to the white minority.

Meanwhile, the African People's Organisation was established in 1903 and two years later Dr. Abdulla Abdurahman, who espoused unity of the oppressed people, became its President.

Though its membership was small, and almost wholly confined to the Coloured people, it exercised a significant influence on public thinking.

Separate deputations were sent to London by the Africans, the Indians and the Coloured people to appeal to the British Government and Parliament against the transfer of power under a "colour bar" constitution with a whites-only Parliament. Their representations were ignored in a cynical betrayal of promises to the African and Indian people, and the South Africa Act was passed in 1909. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 and the white regime proceeded to deprive the Africans of their land as well as the few rights they enjoyed.

The African leaders then convened a conference in Bloemfontein on January 8, 1912, and established the South African Native National Congress (later renamed the African National Congress) to unite all the people across tribal divisions to defend the rights of the Africans against the union of Britons and Boers to exploit, oppress and dispossess them.

One of the first mass actions of the ANC was the 1919 "passive resistance" campaign against pass laws, reminiscent of the *satyagraha* launched by Gandhiji on July 1, 1907, against the Asiatic Registration Act in the Transvaal. Thousands of men and women threw away their passes and courted arrest. Thousands were sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour; those who were sentenced to fines refused to pay them and elected to go to prison. Many were trampled under horses` hoofs by mounted policemen and shot at by white vigilantes. Several were killed.

Common outlook

After the First World War, the common international outlook of the national movements of the two countries brought them closer.

The Indian National Congress began in the 1920`s to espouse Asian solidarity and, with the accession of Jawaharlal Nehru to leadership, the solidarity of all the oppressed people of the world.

The African National Congress, for its part, developed an African and international outlook. The partitioning of Africa by the imperial Powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 and the subsequent rape of Africa were fresh in the minds of the African leaders in South Africa. Moreover, partly to overcome any feeling of helplessness in a contest against the white settler community backed by the strongest colonial Power, they looked upon their struggle as part of the struggle of the African continent and of people of African origin in the Western Hemisphere, for redemption. The founding Conference of ANC adopted the slogan *Mayubiye i Afrika* (Come Back, Africa) and the national anthem *Nkosi Sikelele i Afrika* (God Bless Africa). South Africans were active in the Pan African Movement and were encouraged by support from outside, especially from the Black leaders in the United States.

Both the Indian National Congress and the African National Congress welcomed the convening of the Congress of the Oppressed People against Imperialism in Brussels from February 10 to 15, 1927. The meeting of Jawaharlal Nehru and Josiah K. Gumede (President of ANC) at that Congress was of great significance. Indeed, the contacts established by leaders of colonial peoples at that Congress were to lay the foundations for the Bandung Conference of 1955 and the Non-aligned Movement.

Soon after that Congress Indian leaders began to express strong support for the aspirations of the Africans in South Africa and in other African countries.

The relations between the Indian National Congress and ANC did not develop further for several years because of the situation in South Africa. The leadership of the South African Indian Congress had been taken over by petty traders and others who were loath to antagonise the government. The ANC replaced Gumede as President and was unable to organise effective resistance in the face of moves by the white regime to further whittle down the rights of the Africans.

A determined struggle by a new generation of Africans and Indians for militant action and cooperation of all the oppressed people had to be waged for many years.

The younger Indians, who were born and grew up in South Africa, were not satisfied with the petition politics and squabbles of the leaders of the Indian Congress. Some of them worked in the trade union movement with the Africans and some had been influenced by the European radical thought of the 1930`s. In the Liberal Study Group in Durban, young Indian radicals discussed national issues with African leaders.

Their ranks were strengthened in the late 1930`s when three newly-trained medical practitioners from Edinburgh University - Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo, Dr. G. M. ("Monty") Naicker and Dr. K. Goonam - returned to South Africa and agreed to lead a militant movement. A Non-European United Front, set up on April 25, 1939, and the South African Communist Party also provided means for joint discussion and action by African and Indian radicals.

Role of Dr. Dadoo

Special mention must be made of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo who was to become one of the foremost leaders of the South African liberation movement, receiving the highest award of the ANC in 1955 and being elected Vice-Chairman of the ANC Revolutionary Committee in 1968.

His political career began in the late 1920`s when he completed high school in India and went to Britain for further studies. Inspired by the Indian national movement, he was arrested in the demonstration against the Simon Commission in London in 1928: that was the first of numerous arrests he underwent in the struggle for freedom. His feeling of solidarity with the African people, aroused early in his life as he watched the militant African trade union movement in the 1920`s, was strengthened during his stay in Britain where he was active in the League against Imperialism. He plunged into the struggle soon after his return to South Africa in 1936, and became the foremost architect of Indian-African unity.

Oliver Tambo, President of ANC, said at his funeral in London in 1983:

"... it would be wrong to conceive of Comrade Dadoo only as a leader of the Indian community of our population. He was one of the foremost national leaders of our country, of the stature of Chief Lutuli, Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, Bram Fischer, Nelson Mandela and others...

"(He) played an important role in shaping the revolutionary orientation of our entire movement towards the noble ideals of true revolutionary democracy for all the citizens of our future democratic State."

Indian passive resistance and African Mineworkers` Strike

After a long struggle, the conservative leadership of the Indian Congress was removed in 1945-46. Dr. Dadoo became the leader of the Transvaal Indian Congress and Dr. Naicker the leader of the Natal Indian Congress. The Indian community decided to launch mass action - a Passive Resistance Movement - against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946 (the "Ghetto Act") which restricted Indian ownership of land and trading rights and, as a sop, offered representation in Parliament by three whites.

Two thousand Indians courted imprisonment in the two phases of the passive resistance movement between 1946 and 1948, and were joined by some Africans, Coloured people and whites. The Government was forced to withdraw the so-called Parliamentary representation because of a complete boycott by the Indians. The Indian Congresses grew into mass organisations. (The membership of the Natal Indian Congress, for instance, rose from a few hundred in 1945 to 35,000 in 1947.)

Jawaharlal Nehru, who had already exhorted the Indians to identify with the African majority, hailed the Passive Resistance Movement. He even remarked that perhaps the future of India was being decided by the struggle of the Indians in South Africa.

Mahatma Gandhi spoke repeatedly in strong support of the movement and sent a personal message to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, calling for action by the government. He had, by this time, become convinced of the need for unity of Indians and Africans, though somewhat paternalistically in terms of Indians helping and leading the Africans in a non-violent struggle. He told a delegation of the South African Indian Congress on May 8, 1946:

"The slogan today is no longer merely 'Asia for Asiatics' or 'Africa for Africans' but the unity of all the exploited races of the earth."

Because of the strong public sentiment in India, the Government broke all trade relations with South Africa and lodged a complaint with the United Nations against racial discrimination against Indians in that country.

Meanwhile, changes were taking place in the ANC too. Dr. A. B. Xuma, the new President-General, though a moderate by temperament, revitalised the organisation. With the industrialisation and urbanisation during the Second World War, the African workers began to play a more active political role in the ANC. The ANC Youth League, formed in 1944, pressed for militant mass action such as civil disobedience and strikes. (Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, the present leaders of ANC, were among the founders of the Youth League).

Dr. Xuma recognised the value of cooperation between Africans and Indians. He joined with Dr. Dadoo in organising an anti-pass campaign in 1944. He attended the conference of the Transvaal Indian Congress in 1946 and declared full support to the Indian Passive Resistance Movement.

The African Mineworkers` Strike in August 1946 was a turning point in the African movement - leading to a transition from mere petitions and appeals to mass action. A hundred thousand mineworkers went on a strike for higher wages. The Smuts Government called in

the army and resorted to savage violence to break the strike. Estimates of those killed range from twelve to hundreds, and at least a thousand were wounded.

The African leaders then boycotted the Native Representative Council - an advisory body which they described as a mere "toy telephone" - and looked for other means to secure their rights.

The Indian Passive Resistance Council, itself engaged in a difficult struggle, placed all its resources at the disposal of the African Mineworkers` Union. Paying tribute to the mineworkers, it called on the African, Coloured and Indian people "to rally their entire communities behind the struggle for national liberation and for full democratic rights for all in South Africa..." Dr. Dadoo was charged - along with the leader of the union, J. B. Marks, and others - with "inciting" the workers.

Emergence of African-Indian unity

Indian and African leaders then began discussions about cooperation. One immediate result was the despatch of a multi-racial delegation to the United Nations. It was led by Dr. Xuma and included H. A. Naidoo and Sorabjee Rustomjee from the Indian community and H. Bassner, a Senator representing African voters, and received the active support of the Indian delegation at the United Nations.

India not only made a considerable sacrifice by its trade embargo against South Africa (affecting five percent of its export trade) but earned the hostility of the Western Powers by its strong anti-racist and anti-colonial position at the United Nations.

Discussions between ANC and the Indian Congresses continued after the return of the delegation from New York. On March 9, 1947, a "Joint Declaration of Cooperation" was signed by Dr. Xuma on behalf of ANC, Dr. Naicker on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress and Dr. Dadoo on behalf of the Transvaal Indian Congress. This "three Doctors` Pact", formalising the African-Indian alliance in struggle, is a major turning point in the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

It led to the launching of the "Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws" in 1952, in which over 8,000 people of all races courted arrest; to the establishment of the Coloured People's Congress, the Congress of Democrats and the South African Congress of Trade Unions; and to the "Congress Alliance" which directed the freedom movement from 1955.

India, together with other Asian and Arab nations, brought the whole issue of apartheid before the United Nations in 1952, and remained the foremost supporter of the freedom movement in South Africa until African nations could take over leadership in international action. In 1962, India asked the United Nations to stop further discussion of discrimination against the people of Indian origin in South Africa as a separate item as it had become part of the wider problem of apartheid.

The alliance of the African and Indian people developed into an alliance of all the oppressed people and white democrats, and was cemented in growing struggle and sacrifice.

In 1961 when ANC leaders decided that they were obliged to resort to an armed struggle, the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) was established with a multi-racial leadership, including Indians.

In the external missions established since 1960, Indians worked as part of the ANC. The late M. P. Naicker, who went into exile in 1966, served as director of publicity of ANC until his death in 1977.

In 1968, the ANC threw open its membership to non-Africans and Dr. Dadoo was elected Vice-Chairman of its Revolutionary Council. In 1985, it elected six non-Africans, including two Indians, to its national executive.

The United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the two powerful mass organisations established inside South Africa in recent years, are multi-racial and include Indians in their leadership.

These steady advances towards unity of the oppressed people were not easy and had always encountered opposition of the regime and of some short-sighted elements among the oppressed people. It is to the credit of leaders like Chief Albert Lutuli, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Yusuf Dadoo that they fought all racialism, at times even risking their popularity.

Alliance of India with fighting people of South Africa

India continued its unequivocal support of the liberation struggle in South Africa; but in the early 1960`s its solidarity became somewhat passive and routine. There was a tendency to regard the struggle in South Africa as primarily an African concern and to await the lead of African States. Public activity in support of the South African struggle declined on the part of India and several African and other countries overtook India in the level of concrete support to the South African liberation movement.

Passivity, however, has become utterly untenable with the growing crisis and confrontation in southern Africa and the efforts of the South African regime to intimidate the frontline States. African leaders appealed for a more active role by India when India became the chairman of the Movement of Non-aligned Countries.

In 1983-84, the racist regime tried through a new racist constitution - offering segregated chambers of Parliament to the Coloured and Indian communities and excluding the African majority - to divide the oppressed people. The imposition of that constitution, despite overwhelming opposition by the Coloured and Indian people, was followed by an unprecedented revolutionary upsurge in South Africa. The regime, unable to control the situation, has been resorting to ever-increasing repression and violence. At the same time, it has escalated aggression and destabilisation of the Frontline States, causing enormous damage to their economies.

The genocide in South Africa and the conflict in southern Africa demand decisive international action. But the major Western Powers continue to block such action, trying to find a solution which would preserve white domination. The African States, faced with enormous difficulties, have been unable to exert effective influence on these Powers.

India, true to its traditions, must again take the lead in cooperation with African and other States. It can and must help confront and press the major Western Powers to stop their collaboration with the racists, provide greater assistance to the Frontline States and liberation movements and promote greater solidarity action by world public opinion.

The struggle in southern Africa must be viewed as our struggle, and India must become a Frontline State.

Happily, India is moving in that direction.

The appeal by Indira Gandhi to the Indian and Coloured people of South Africa in August 1984 to boycott the racist constitution and reject the inducements of the racist regime had a great impact on the developments in South Africa.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has not only been forthright in the Commonwealth discussions and in public statements, but has taken concrete action such as the order prohibiting Indian collaborators with apartheid from entry into India and an increase in assistance to the liberation movements. He has taken seriously his responsibility as Chairman of the Africa Fund of the Non-aligned Movement. Southern Africa has been given higher priority in India's foreign policy and is receiving constant attention.

The establishment of an all-party Parliamentary Committee against apartheid and the moves for a public committee against apartheid will help reflect the unity of India on the issue and reinforce the policy of the Government, recapturing the spirit of 1946 when the country showed readiness for any sacrifice in support of the struggle in South Africa.

Let us in 1987 observe the 80th anniversary of the *Satyagraha* in the Transvaal, the sixtieth anniversary of the Nehru-Gumede meeting in Brussels, and the fortieth anniversary of the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo pact, as much as the fortieth anniversary of our own independence, by proclaiming an alliance between India and the fighting people of South Africa. Let us declare that any support to the despicable racist regime in South Africa is an affront to India. Let us assure the people of South Africa of all necessary political and material support to ensure that the present confrontation will not be one more skirmish but the battle for final victory over racist domination.

GANDHIJI AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA[1]

As important as the fortieth anniversary of the assassination of Gandhiji which is observed on January 30, 1988, is the eightieth anniversary of his first imprisonment in South Africa in January 1908, which was a turning point in his life.

Gandhiji always considered himself an Indian and a South African. Not only had he spent twenty-one years of his adult life in South Africa, but he had served four of his ten terms of imprisonment in that country - in the prisons of Johannesburg, Volksrust and Dundee. It was in South Africa that he developed his philosophy of *satyagraha*.

In a sense, his last *satyagraha* was also in South Africa. Though he could not be physically present, he guided and inspired the great Indian passive resistance movement of 1946-48 and lent it enormous support.

Birth of Satyagraha

The small Indian community in the Transvaal had launched, in July 1907, a passive resistance campaign against the Asiatic Registration Act (the Black Act) designed to humiliate, harass and eventually expel them from the territory. Volunteers picketed registration offices and most of the Indians refused to take out permits under the Black Act.

Gandhiji found that "passive resistance" was seen even by European friends as a "weapon of the weak." He sought a term which could be understood by Indians and make it clear that the resistance was out of moral strength rather than any weakness. He invited suggestions and, in November 1907, invented the term "*satyagraha*" (firmness in truth). The choice of the term itself appears to have helped crystallise his thinking.

On December 28, 1907, Gandhiji and several of his colleagues were taken to court for refusing to register and were ordered to leave the Transvaal within two weeks. They defied the order and were sentenced on January 10, 1908, to two to three months` imprisonment.

General Smuts, however, was obliged soon to negotiate a settlement with Gandhiji and the prisoners were released on January 30th - the very day that Gandhiji was to be assassinated forty years later.

The brief imprisonment was not only the "baptism of fire" for Gandhiji but transformed him from a public servant and adviser to the Indian community into the leader of resistance.

In the many years that the struggle lasted with its ups and downs - jailings, beatings, torture and deportations of resisters, as well as the intervals when they were obliged to while away their time on the Tolstoy Farm - Gandhiji developed the concept of *satyagraha* which was later to inspire the national movement in India.

There was little discussion at the time of non-violence, for no one had contemplated an armed struggle which was, in any case, unthinkable for an unarmed and vulnerable community of a mere 12,000 Indians in the Transvaal. Gandhiji had not yet become an uncompromising

devotee of non-violence: he had in fact favoured the enlistment of Indians in the armed forces. The emphasis was on the duty to defy an unjust law and to defend the honour of India.

Satyagraha - the common heritage of India and South Africa

The *satyagraha* in South Africa was not only a struggle for the rights of the Indians or the redress of their grievances, but a part of the struggle of India for freedom and dignity. It was influenced by the upsurge in India in protest against the partition of Bengal and the mass boycott of British goods in the *swadeshi*movement.

The experience of Gandhiji in the struggle in South Africa had, in its turn, a great influence on the Indian national movement.

Out of his close association with the Muslims in South Africa, and their great contribution to the passive resistance campaign, came his stress on Hindu-Muslim unity as a tenet of the Indian national movement.

Out of his outrage at the treatment of Indians in South Africa by the Europeans as virtual untouchables came his determination to eliminate untouchability in India.

Out of his experience in trying to unify the Indian people in South Africa, speaking many languages, came his advocacy of a *lingua franca* for India. It was in *Indian Opinion* in Durban on August 18, 1906, that he first called for the adoption of Hindustani as the common language for India.

As the national movement developed in India under Gandhiji`s leadership - from non-cooperation to civil disobedience and then to the "do or die" struggle in 1942 - it became radicalised. It stopped seeking a compromise settlement with the oppressors and became committed to the complete independence of India. It also became strongly internationalist under the influence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and by 1946 Gandhiji began advocating the unity of all the oppressed peoples of the world for the elimination of colonialism.

Gandhiji, meanwhile, kept in contact with developments in South Africa. He encouraged the Indian passive resistance movement of 1946, under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo and Dr. G.M. Naicker, and lent it great support. While he had confined the first *satyagraha* in South Africa to the Indian and Chinese settlers whose security was threatened, he gave his blessings to the efforts of the Dadoo-Naicker leadership to build a united democratic front.

He was, in a sense, a patron of the movements both in India and among Indians in South Africa. In the last year of his life, when he felt anguish at the eruption of violence between Hindus and Muslims in India, he seemed to find some solace in the *satyagraha* in South Africa.

One of his last speeches - at the prayer meeting in Delhi on January 28, 1948 - was devoted to the struggle in South Africa. He said:

"Today we are also a free country as South Africa and are members of the same Commonwealth, which implies that we should all live like brothers and equals... Why should they look down on the Coloured people? Is it because they are industrious and thrifty? I shall tell the Government of South Africa through this meeting that it should mend its ways."

The Indian people in South Africa benefitted from the lessons of their own *satyagraha* of 1907-14, as well as the experience of the Indian national movement. The concept of *satyagraha* was enriched by their passive resistance of 1946-48 which was joined by several Africans, Coloured people and whites out of solidarity.

The Indian *satyagraha* was the precursor of the great non-violent resistance under African leadership in 1952, aptly named the "Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws" and, indeed, the beginning of mass resistance in South Africa.

The heritage of Gandhiji and of *satyagraha* is thus a common heritage South Africa and India.

Continuing inspiration of Gandhiji

One does not need to be a Gandhian to recognise that the philosophy and example of Gandhiji remain a powerful force in the world, spreading wider and adapting to the traditions and circumstances in different countries.

The leaders of the freedom movements in many colonial countries acknowledge the inspiration of Gandhiji. The civil rights movement in the United States, led by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was inspired by his example, as was much of the movement against the Vietnam war.

The mass movement for disarmament and against nuclear war, and the environmentalist movement, have been influenced, among others, by Gandhiji.

Non-violent resisters in the Philippines played a significant role in the struggle to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship. The mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of unarmed people to surround and protect the armed forces which turned against Marcos was a crucial event in the struggle and added a new dimension to the history of non-violent resistance.

Liberation theology, which has spread in Latin America, Africa and Asia, draws some of its inspiration from Gandhiji.

A dramatic affirmation of the vitality of the heritage of Gandhiji was the Delhi Declaration of Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi in November 1986 - calling for a non-nuclear and non-violent world - the reference to non-violence reportedly included at the suggestion of Gorbachev.

None of the recent non-violent movements perhaps strictly follows the tenets of Gandhiji, as understood by his disciples in India, but he has been an inspiration as people tried to choose the most peaceful and effective means of struggle against injustice and oppression in the light of the relevant conditions. The philosophy of Gandhiji cannot be codified into immutable rules, but must always be creative. It evolved with his experience in forty years of struggle. He kept his windows open to receive inspiration from all sources. He learnt from the humblest in the resistance campaigns. He welcomed discussion and debate. He changed his views many times and never hesitated to admit errors.

It is a pity that Indian thinkers and public leaders have not followed the spread and development of Gandhian ideology and have made little contribution to the movements inspired by it.

Is non-violent resistance relevant to South Africa?

Has *satyagraha* lost all relevance in South Africa as a means of resistance, especially after the Sharpeville massacre?

The answer is not simple.

I believe that patient suffering with love has hardly ever melted the hearts of oppressive rulers. *Satyagraha* has succeeded to the extent that it aroused public opinion in the camp of the adversaries and beyond so as to restrain and exert pressure on the oppressors. That is why Gandhiji always devoted great attention to publicity.

Given the possibility to reach and arouse public conscience, non-violent resistance makes it difficult for the oppressors to resort to extreme savagery and thereby saves lives. It helps the oppressed people to overcome fear of prison and torture and steels them in the struggle. It makes it possible to reach settlements without bitterness.

In South Africa, however, the movement faced not only an enemy which became ever more brutal, refusing to recognise the humanity of the black people, but powerful international forces of greed and prejudice hindered effective pressure against the racist regime.

Regrettably, many people in the Western world are not outraged by violence against people with a black skin and such violence gets little press and public attention. As powerful vested interests from abroad became involved in South Africa, they tended to exert their influence to protect the racist structures which ensure them exorbitant profit. Perhaps even more important, mass resistance in South Africa began at a time when the world was divided by the "cold war" and cold war calculations began to influence the policies of powerful nations much more than justice. The ANC was branded by Western intelligence services as pro-Communist, because like most national movements it tried to encompass all the people and had not excluded Communists or followers of other ideologies. This has largely determined the actions of Western Governments, particularly that of the United States, whatever the public pronouncements of their leaders.

As a result, even on occasions when some of the white rulers in South Africa contemplated a change of course, powerful influences from abroad reinforced those who advocated reliance on ever greater violence to perpetuate racist domination.

It is, therefore, understandable, to say the least, that the leaders of the liberation movement felt that they had to undertake violent resistance. But that does not necessarily mean that non-violent resistance has become totally irrelevant nor that the spirit of *satyagraha* had disappeared.

In many countries, non-violent resistance took place at the same time as violent resistance, or threat of such resistance. There was, for instance, violent resistance in India on many occasions and a threat of violence by others in the United States when Dr. King was leading the civil rights movement. The oppressors are often obliged to choose between compromise

with the mainstream of the movement pursuing non-violent resistance and confrontation with the growing trend toward violent resistance.

In South Africa, the movement has used peaceful means whenever possible and hardly any other country has seen such persistent non-violent resistance, even alongside armed struggle, as South Africa.

There are also situations in which effective non-violent resistance by the oppressed people is not practicable, but non-violent action can be carried on by those abroad outraged by the injustice. For instance, the Vietnamese peasants could not non-violently resist unseen persons throwing bombs from high up in the sky, but the American people could carry on such resistance against involvement in the Vietnam war. In the case of South Africa, too, there have been times when *satyagraha* abroad in solidarity with the oppressed people was more feasible and effective than non-violent resistance inside the country.

Mass *satyagraha* against apartheid and all its protectors and accomplices all over the world may well be the most effective means to put an end to the continuing tragedy in South Africa.

The answer to the question of relevance is then that even though the oppressed people and their leaders are convinced that clandestine activity, sabotage and armed struggle have become essential or indispensable, the spirit of Gandhiji has not lost all its relevance.

I would like briefly to trace the course of the liberation struggle, in the context of violence and non-violence, to underline this conclusion.

Unconcern for African lives

One of the first mass actions of the ANC was the 1919 campaign against the pass laws, reminiscent of the Indian *satyagraha* in South Africa a few years earlier. Thousands of men and women threw away their passes and were sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour; those who were sentenced to fines refused to pay fines and chose to go to prison.

The regime reacted with savagery. Many Africans, including even children, were trampled under horses` hoofs as mounted policemen charged on a peaceful demonstration outside a Johannesburg court and shot at by white vigilantes. Several were killed. But there was hardly a murmur of protest in the world - though that was the time when leaders of Allied Powers were waxing eloquent about human rights - as the victims were Africans.

When the Indian people launched passive resistance on June 13, 1946, the police in Durban stood by without arresting the resisters and let white ruffians attack them with bicycle chains. At least two resisters fell unconscious, and one bystander died.

Fortunately, a white priest, the Reverend Michael Scott, felt compelled to join the resisters. Gandhiji expressed his outrage and sent a personal appeal to General Smuts so that the violence was curbed.

The great Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws in 1952 attracted attention and sympathy around the world as 8,000 people of all racial origins courted imprisonment. The regime responded with inhuman laws for whipping passive resisters. There was hardly a protest from the governments of the great Western democracies.

The ANC, however, managed to carry on non-violent resistance - bus boycotts, school boycott, potato boycott and resistance against the removal of African communities - over the next few years. Its leaders were subjected to arbitrary restrictions and even a four-year trial for "High Treason". But there was not even verbal condemnation of apartheid violence by the major Western Powers until the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.

Instead, they called for sympathy and understanding for white fears for the future rather than for the suffering of the black majority. They invited the Pretoria regime to discussions of Western military strategy and alliances in Africa and the Middle East. Britain signed the Simonstown military alliance with the Pretoria regime in 1955.

When some National Party leaders advocated a change of course in the wake of the flight of capital after the Sharpeville massacre, Western financial interests bailed out the regime and thereby strengthened the position of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd and other advocates of greater repression.

Combination of armed struggle and non-violent resistance

As a result, the ANC leaders felt obliged, in 1961, to abandon strict adherence to non-violence and prepare for armed resistance. As Nelson Mandela explained in his statement to the court in April 1964, members of the ANC had begun to lose confidence in the ANC policy, as fifty years of non-violence seemed to have achieved nothing, and were developing ideas of terrorism. Scattered incidents of violence had broken out in the country and there was a danger of uncontrolled violence. The ANC leaders felt that a properly controlled violent resistance, under the guidance of the ANC, was essential to avert the danger of terrorism and make any progress.

The *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the military wing of the ANC, said in its first manifesto on December 16, 1961:

"We of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* have always sought to achieve liberation without bloodshed and civil clash. We hope, even at this late hour, that our first actions will awaken everyone to a realisation of the dangerous situation to which the Nationalist policy is leading. We hope we will bring the government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that both the government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war."

The *Umkhonto* carried on some three hundred acts of sabotage between 1961 and 1963 against symbols of apartheid and some economic installations in order to warn the regime and its supporters, give hope to the people and promote international action. Every care was taken to avoid loss of human life. Only one person - a police informer in the eastern Cape - was killed by the ANC underground while the regime tortured several leaders of the people to death. Vuyisile Mini, the respected composer of freedom songs, and his colleagues were executed.

Until today, the total number of persons killed in numerous ANC armed actions is perhaps less than two hundred. Several of the casualties were possibly unintended and resulted from malfunction of the timing mechanisms of explosives.

Even after gruesome killings of refugees in Maputo and Maseru by South African raiders, and a series of tortures of detainees to death, the ANC was able to prevent retaliation in kind.

It was not beyond the capacity of ANC, or of the black people in spontaneous eruptions of anger, to kill thousands of whites. The absence of such terrorism was due to the enormous restraint of the ANC and its influence among the people, an influence which it would not have had if it had opposed all violence.

During all these years since 1961, the freedom movement has also utilised every opportunity for non-violent defiance of unjust laws at great sacrifice.

The student upsurge in the 1970s was essentially non-violent. The funeral processions defying laws prohibiting the display of the ANC flag and symbols - thereby making the laws virtually inoperative - were non-violent resistance, as are the rent boycotts, the consumer boycotts and the "end conscription" campaign.

The United Democratic Front and allied organisations have contributed an impressive chapter to the history of non-violent resistance.

The growth of non-violent resistance in South Africa, and the development of international solidarity, encouraged and enabled Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Reverend Alan Boesak and other churchmen to defy the laws on many occasions and force the regime to retreat.

Since 1985, the violence of the apartheid regime under its State of Emergency - the indiscriminate shootings and the mass torture of detainees - as well as the series of ghastly murders by vigilante groups, provoked counter-violence. Enraged youth groups resorted to killing suspected informers by "necklacing," and that was used by the regime and its friends to malign the liberation movement.

The ANC could perhaps have said - as even Mahatma Gandhi wrote from jail in 1942 - that it could not condemn, without full information, people who were provoked to violence by the "leonine" violence of the regime when their leaders were confined and exiled.

But Oliver Tambo, the President of the ANC, declared last year that the ANC opposed "necklacing". He was reported to have advised African youth last September to try to win over informers and vigilante groups. I can think of none but a Mahatma Gandhi who could show such courage and humanism in the midst of a difficult battle and popular emotions.

Spirit of Gandhiji lives on in South Africa

The spirit of Gandhiji lives on in South Africa eighty years after he went to prison in the Transvaal defying unjust racist laws, forty years after his ashes were immersed in the ocean off the mouth of the Umgeni river in South Africa - not least in the hearts of the leaders of the liberation struggle.

They have stood firm on truth, despite constant provocation and bestiality by a racist regime, resisting all forms of racism and constantly upholding the objective of a non-racial democratic society. They have resisted unjust laws with exceptional courage and sacrifice. They have recognised that ends and means are inseparable, and have avoided the temptation

to reply to the massive terrorism of the white racist regime with terrorism against white civilians. Even in the course of armed resistance, they have avoided the loss of innocent lives.

Gandhiji did not condemn Sant Bhagat Singh or those who resorted to sabotage when he was jailed along with other leaders of the national movement in 1942 - but placed the blame squarely on the violence of the British Raj. Martin Luther King, Jr., did not condemn John Brown or Malcolm X, but only slavery and racism.

Chief Albert Lutuli did not condemn Nelson Mandela for founding and leading the military wing of the African National Congress, but declared when Mandela and his colleagues were sentenced in June 1964:

"... in the face of the uncompromising white refusal to abandon a policy which denies the African and other oppressed South Africans their rightful heritage - freedom - no one can blame brave just men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods nor could they be blamed if they tried to create an organised force in order to ultimately establish peace and racial harmony...

"They represent the highest in morality and ethics in the South African political struggle..."

The ANC is attacked by the Botha regime, which relies on violence and terrorism, as violent; and that charge is echoed by the friends of that regime who instigate and support violence and terrorism in many countries of the third world. But it has earned the understanding, sympathy and even active support of the greatest pacifists of our time, many of whom acknowledge the inspiration of Gandhiji.

1. Written in connection with the 80th anniversary of the imprisonment of Gandhiji in South Africa. Published in *Asian Times*, London, January 29, 1988, and in several papers in India.

PANDIT NEHRU AND THE UNITY OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA

The historic role of Gandhiji has overshadowed the crucial role of Pandit Nehru and others in encouraging and promoting the unity of the Indians in South Africa with the African majority in the common struggle against racism, and in organising international support for the struggle.

Perhaps the first political activity of Jawaharlal Nehru after return from England as a barrister was to join the campaign against the recruitment of indentured labour for Fiji and South Africa, and to throw himself into the fund-raising campaign, launched by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, in support of Gandhiji's *Satyagraha* in South Africa. That was in 1912 - the year when the African National Congress was founded.

Brussels Congress

At the Brussels Congress against Imperialism, February 10-15, 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru met the South African delegation which consisted of Josiah T. Gumede, President of the ANC; J.A. La Guma, a Coloured leader of the Communist Party; and D. Colraine of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. The three jointly drafted the resolution on South Africa which was adopted by the Congress. Later that year, Nehru, Gumede and La Guma were guests at the tenth anniversary celebrations of the October revolution in Moscow.

Pandit Nehru, in his report to the Indian National Congress on the Brussels Congress, noted with pleasure that the South African delegates worked together. "In these days of race hatred in South Africa and the ill-treatment of Indians," he wrote, "it was pleasing to hear the representative of the white workers giving expression to the most advanced opinions on the equality of races and of workers of all races."

He added in a further report:

"The South African delegates have undertaken to form a branch of the League (against Imperialism) in South Africa in collaboration with the advanced wing of the white workers, the African workers, the African (National) Congress and the South African Indian Congress. This branch will specially work against all colour legislation and discrimination. So far there has not been much cooperation between these different organisations and each one of them has had to fight its battle singly. The white workers have of course not only not helped but have been the partisans of the colour discrimination policy. It will therefore be a great gain if the League succeeds in bringing about some cooperation and specially in associating at least the advanced white workers with the oppressed races in South Africa. A recent agreement between the Government of South Africa and India has apparently been approved in India. I am unable to express an opinion on it, though it does not seem to me to go very far. But in any event it would be foolish to imagine that the troubles of Indian settlers in South Africa are over and the help of the other communities should be very welcome."

The plans of the South African delegates at Brussels for unity in the struggle in South Africa did not come to fruition for many years.

Mr. Gumede was, in fact, forced to leave the presidency of the African National Congress in 1930, because of the opposition of chiefs, who exercised considerable influence in the organisation at that time.

Non-European United Front

But very significant developments were taking place in South Africa towards unity in the struggle.

While Indian traders and some professionals in the leadership of the Indian Congresses were always compromising with the racist regime and seeking only some mitigation of discrimination, a new generation of Indians, born and raised in South Africa, sought nothing less than full equality. They were active in the trade union movement where they cooperated with African and other workers.

In the thirties, many of them were influenced by Marxism. A Young "Liberal" Study Group in Durban became a forum where radical Indians and Africans met to discuss the common problem of the elimination of racism.

A Non-European United Front was formed at a conference in Cape Town on April 25, 1939, attended by representatives of 45 organisations, "for the cooperation of Native, Indian and Coloured races in the struggle against the colour bar in South Africa."

It was led by Mrs. Zainunisa (Cissie) Gool, daughter of Dr. Abdulla Abdurahman, and wife of Dr. A.H. Gool, a former President of the South African Indian Congress. Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo and Dr. H.A. Naidoo were among several Indians in the leadership of this Front.

Understanding and support for this movement grew rather slowly in India since the "moderates" in the South African Indian Congress, rather than the young radicals, had access to Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders in India.

Gandhiji's reservations concerning a united front in South Africa

At the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in June 1939, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, then head of the Foreign Department of the Congress, moved an amendment to the resolution on the problems of Indians in South Africa urging them "to join hands with other Non-Europeans to form a front to oppose the segregation policy." Gandhiji pointed out that the amendment does not belong in the resolution which concerned violations of undertakings by the South African Government on the rights of the Indian community. The amendment was then withdrawn at the request of Pandit Nehru.

Gandhiji's subsequent statement, that the South African regime's policy of segregation of Indians had nothing to do with the policy concerning the Africans, embarrassed young Indian leaders in the Transvaal who were preparing for resistance against racist oppression and espoused unity with the African majority. It provoked considerable criticism in India.

Even Sir Sayed Raza Ali, former Indian Agent-General in South Africa, said in a statement that "the All India Congress Committee made a serious blunder by deleting from the resolution the passage supporting the Non-European front."

"Mahatmaji cannot be unaware of the fact that segregation as a policy was first enforced against the Bantu race. The trouble is that Mahatmaji's knowledge is quarter of a century old...

"I am afraid that Mahatma Gandhi has done a great deal of harm to our people."

Replying to Sir Sayed, Gandhiji wrote in the *Harijan*:

"I have carefully read Sir Raza Ali's condemnation of my advice to Indians in South Africa not to embark upon a non-European Front. My advice may be bad on merits, but does not become bad because I have been absent from South Africa for a quarter of a century. I have no doubts about the soundness of my advice. However much one may sympathise with the Bantus, Indians cannot make common cause with them.

"I doubt if the Bantus themselves will, as a class, countenance any such move. They can only damage and complicate their cause by mixing it up with Indians; as Indians would damage theirs by such mixture. But neither the All India Congress Committee resolution, nor my advice need deter Indians from forming a Non-European Front, if they are sure thereby of winning their freedom. Indeed had they thought it beneficial or possible, they would have formed it long ago."

Gandhiji had not been aware of the trends towards unity in South Africa. His attitude represented no lack of regard for the rights and aspirations of the African people. He had declared in an interview with the Reverend S. Tema of the African National Congress of South Africa, at the beginning of that year:

"The Indians are a microscopic minority... You, on the other hand, are the sons of the soil who are being robbed of your inheritance. You are bound to resist that. Yours is a far bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indian. This does not preclude the establishment of the friendliest relations between the two races."

It is to the credit of Gandhiji that he was to revise his views in the light of further developments.

In 1946, when a delegation of Indians from South Africa, led by Sorabjee Rustomjee, met him to seek his support and advice for a mass passive resistance campaign against the Ghetto Act, Gandhiji told them - echoing Nehru - to associate Africans with the struggle.

"The slogan today," he said, "is no longer merely 'Asia for the Asiatics' or 'Africa for the Africans' but the unity of all the oppressed races of the earth." He lent full support to Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo and Dr. G. M. Naicker, leaders of the passive resistance.

Next year, when Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker visited India, Gandhiji held lengthy discussions with them and gave them a message in which he said:

"Political cooperation among all the exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual good if wisely directed."

Nehru's contribution to unity in South Africa

Nehru, meanwhile, had significant influence on the thinking of young militants in South Africa. His writings were avidly read by Indians as well as Africans as testified by the moving letter sent by Nelson Mandela from prison when he received the Nehru Award for International Understanding.

India's complaint to the United Nations on the treatment of Indians in South Africa was taken up soon after Jawaharlal Nehru became head of the Interim Government in September 1946. The Indian delegation took care to ensure that India's espousal of the rights of people of Indian origin was in the context of opposition to all racial discrimination. India helped to secure support for the freedom movement from governments as well as world public opinion. The India League in London set up a South Africa Committee to promote solidarity with that movement.

In 1947, the Indian Government was inclined, at the request of Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker, to propose United Nations sanctions against South Africa. But the strong support received by the Smuts regime from the Western Powers with the beginning of the "Cold War" and the problems during the transition of India to independence, made that impracticable. In fact, India was unable to obtain a two-thirds majority even for a mild resolution of censure of South Africa. A resolution on sanctions had to await an appeal by the ANC in 1958 and the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.

In 1952, however, India was able, with the support of other Asian and Arab States, to place the whole problem of apartheid on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

The struggle and sacrifice of the Indians in South Africa, and the actions of the Indian Government under the leadership of Nehru, persuaded African militants to overcome their hesitations about multi-racial unity and build a united democratic front.

Jawaharlal Nehru was always responsive to requests from the leaders of the movement in South Africa.

In 1955, when India secured the exclusion of South Africa from invitations to the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, ANC wished to send Moses Kotane and Moulvi Cachalia as observers to the Conference. It approached Pandit Nehru for assistance: he offered not only to take them with him but to introduce them to all the leaders at the Conference.

In 1960, when Oliver Tambo and Dr. Yusuf Dadoo escaped from South Africa, he provided them urgently with Indian travel documents and transport from Dar es Salaam to London. He met them soon after and took initiatives to secure the exclusion of South Africa from the Commonwealth the next year.

While exhorting Indians abroad to identify with the legitimate aspirations of the indigenous people, he educated Indian public opinion to recognise that the problem of Indians in South Africa was inseparable from the struggle of the African people. He said in a speech in Rajya Sabha on December 15, 1958:

"The question of the people of Indian descent in South Africa has really merged into bigger questions where not only Indians are affected but the whole African population along with...

any other people who happen to go to South Africa and who do not belong to the European or American countries."

He said in the Lok Sabha on March 28, 1960, after the Sharpeville massacre:

"The people of Indian descent, as we well know, have had to put up with a great deal of discrimination and suffering and we have resented that. But we must remember that the African people have to put up with something infinitely more, and that, therefore, our sympathies must go out to them even more than to our kith and kin there."

By then, the movement in South Africa had made tremendous strides in forging the unity of the oppressed people, as well as democratic whites, which Nehru had envisaged in 1927. He had himself made a significant contribution, as a national leader and as head of government, to promoting that unity in struggle.

DR.YUSUF DADOO, MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE[1]

Speaking to a group of South African Indian students in February 1939, Gandhiji said that if the Indian community in South Africa had guts in them, they would launch a *satyagraha*.

"I am hoping that some day from among the youths born in South Africa a person will rise who will stand up for the rights of his countrymen domiciled there, and make the vindication of those rights his life`s mission."[2]

He had been distressed for a long time with the situation in South Africa where he had discovered and dedicated his life to *satyagraha*, with a conviction that defiance of evil and willingness to sacrifice would prevail over brute force of the oppressors. Ever since he had left the shores of that country in 1914, more and more humiliating restrictions had been imposed on the Indians - undermining all that had been achieved by the great *satyagraha* of 1906-14 - but there had been little resistance. Leaders of Indian organisations had become docile and selfish, and engaged in petty squabbles and shameful compromises of the dignity and honour of the Indian people.

Gandhiji did not know, when he met the students, that a dedicated leadership was emerging from a new generation of South Africans - one that would recapture the spirit of defiance he had inculcated and take it forward to a new level, one of which India could be proud.

At a mass public meeting called by the Transvaal Indian Congress on March 1, 1939, Dr. Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo and his supporters secured the adoption of a proposal, against the opposition of the leadership, to launch passive resistance if a pending segregation bill was enacted. At a subsequent meeting chaired by E. I. Asvat, a veteran who had been imprisoned many times in Gandhiji`s *satyagraha*, Dr. Dadoo was elected leader of the campaign and head of the Council for Action. That marked the dedication of his life to public service.

Dr. Dadoo sought the "advice, guidance and inspiration" of Gandhiji who readily endorsed the emerging leadership. Advising a postponement of passive resistance - while he contacted General Smuts and the Indian Government to secure an abandonment of the obnoxious bill - he assured Dr. Dadoo that if his efforts failed, the whole of India would back the resisters.

"It has stirred me to find you heading the *satyagraha* band," he wrote to Dr. Dadoo on August 19, 1939, recalling that Dr. Dadoo`s father had been his client. "You are engaged in a very hard struggle. And if as a result of the present effort a handful of you make it the mission of your life to serve the cause there you will gradually build up a prestige that will stand you in good stead."

The confidence and hope of Gandhiji were not misplaced. Dr. Dadoo not only led the Indian people in mass defiance but proceeded to do what Gandhiji could not envisage in his time. He became an architect of the unity of all the oppressed people in the struggle to end racist tyranny.

The African National Congress honoured him in 1955 with the award of the decoration *Isitlawandle Seaparankoe*. Nelson Mandela described him, in evidence during the Treason Trial in 1960, as "one of the most outstanding leaders in our movement, revered throughout the country." The ANC elected him Vice-Chairman of its Revolutionary

Committee in 1969. Oliver Tambo said at his funeral in London in September 1983, on behalf of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress: "He was one of the foremost national leaders of our country, of the stature of Chief Lutuli, Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, Bram Fischer, Nelson Mandela and others."

Education of a revolutionary

Yusuf Dadoo was born on September 5, 1909, in Krugersdorp, the son of a prosperous Indian trader. Even as a child, he experienced racism and was involved in fights with white boys who insulted and attacked him. He learnt about the struggle led by Gandhiji and participated in *hartals* (strikes) in protest against anti-Indian measures such as the Class Areas Bill of 1923.

While a student at Aligarh Muslim College in India from 1925 to 1927 he took great interest in the Indian national movement, rejecting communalism. Proceeding to London in 1929 at the age of 19, he joined the London branch of the Indian National Congress and was arrested in a demonstration for Indian freedom and against the Simon Commission. While studying medicine in Edinburgh, he took an active part in politics - as a member of the Independent Labour Party and of the League against Imperialism which advocated unity of the oppressed people of the world. He joined hunger marches in Britain, addressed meetings in Hyde Park and worked for the India League. He came under the influence of Pandit Nehru and of Marxists who advocated a "united front" against fascism. All the time, he kept close contact with South Africa, trying to encourage resistance against the racist onslaughts.

Returning to South Africa in 1936, he became a popular doctor and his professional work only strengthened his political commitment. He recalled:

"I came across the poverty, the misery, the malnutrition, the sickness of the black people every day... And that made one`s blood boil. What can one do to help these people? Medicine is one thing - you give a few tablets or a mixture - but it doesn`t go to the basis of the problem. That had a great deal to do with my thinking and I got into political struggle."[3]

He proceeded to rally the Indian people against the compromising leadership of the Transvaal Indian Congress, for militant resistance against anti-Indian measures and for a united front with the African majority against racist-fascist oppression. He was soon able to secure the support of the great majority of the Indian people, including many former colleagues of Gandhiji and their children. He organised the Non-European United Front in the Transvaal and became its Secretary-General. And in 1939, the year he contacted Gandhiji, he joined the Communist Party of South Africa.

Passive Resistance of 1946-48

The postponement of passive resistance in 1939, on the advice of Gandhiji, was utilised by Dr. Dadoo to strengthen the organisation of the Indians and to develop unity with the Africans. He spent much time addressing meetings in African locations and was twice sentenced to prison on the charge of inciting Africans against the war.

He became a leader - together with Dr. A.B. Xuma, President of the African National Congress - of the Anti-Pass Council set up in 1943 to campaign against the humiliating restrictions on the movement of Africans. It collected 800,000 signatures to a petition against

the pass laws and Dr. Dadoo was again arrested for leading a procession to present the petition to the government.

He earned the respect of the Africans by identifying himself with their concerns - a square in Orlando township was named after him - and developed intimate friendship with African leaders like J.B. Marks and Moses Kotane.

The Indian passive resistance movement of 1946-48 - led by Dr. Dadoo, a Marxist, and Dr. G. M. Naicker, a Gandhian - in which two thousand people went to jail, made South African racism a world issue. It also laid the basis for a national mass movement for freedom in South Africa. The African National Congress backed the Indian resistance. A number of non-Indian volunteers - Africans, Europeans and Coloured people - courted imprisonment in solidarity with the Indian people. International solidarity with the Indian and African people was promoted by the Indian Government and, in Britain and the United States, through the efforts of V.K. Krishna Menon, Fenner Brockway and Paul Robeson with whom Dr. Dadoo had come in contact as a student activist.

A few weeks after the launching of the resistance, when African mineworkers went on strike under the leadership of J. B. Marks, and many were massacred, the Indian community rushed to provide assistance. Dr. Dadoo was brought from prison to be tried on the charge of inciting the strike.

Later that year, when the Indian complaint against South Africa was discussed in the United Nations, a multi-racial delegation led by Dr. Xuma visited New York to assist the Indian delegation. And in March 1947, Dr. Xuma, Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker signed the pact of cooperation between the African and Indian Congresses.

Mantle of Gandhiji

It may seem strange that the mantle of Gandhiji in South Africa had thus fallen on a Marxist. But Gandhiji, who followed and guided the movement, fully supported Dr. Dadoo, brushing aside complaints of Communist influence. For him, the objectives of the struggle and the means employed were the essentials, rather than the ideological and other labels of participants. And Dr. Dadoo demonstrated integrity, courage and willingness to sacrifice that Gandhiji valued in a public servant.

Speaking of early influences on his thinking, Dr. Dadoo said in an interview with the United Nations Radio in 1979:

"I hold Gandhiji in very high respect and affection. He, as a matter of fact, had a great deal in moulding my thinking and subsequently my political activities. I believed in Gandhiji to the extent that there must be resistance, there must be struggle for justice and righteousness. But after Gandhiji went back to India there arose another great revolutionary fighter, Pandit Nehru whose broad views on politics attracted young people at the time. I believed in the policy of Nehru who also did not believe completely, implicitly, in absolute non-violence."

In his mind, the influence of Pandit Nehru, and one might add Karl Marx, did in no way erase the spirit of defiance he had imbibed from Gandhiji. He became noted for constant refusal to submit to racist intimidation and repression which led to numerous arrests. He risked even his life for the cause. And though he did not believe in non-violence as a creed, he took every

care to see that the passive resistance movement was totally non-violent - even when white ruffians began brutally to assault passive resisters, including women.

The interaction of Gandhism and Marxism perhaps enhanced the significance of the Indian *satyagraha* of 1946-48 and made it the rehearsal for mass resistance by all the oppressed people of South Africa.

For Gandhiji who was deeply anguished by the Hindu-Muslim carnage that spread in the Indian sub-continent on the eve of independence, as if his life`s work had been in vain, the resistance in South Africa was a solace, demonstrating that *satyagraha* was alive and well in the land of its birth.

Unity of Indians and Africans

Much has been written about Gandhiji`s opposition to a united front of Indians with Africans, but his attitude is often misunderstood and requires explanation.

During his sojourn in South Africa, the Indian community was composed largely of people born in India who were essentially alien settlers, though some Indians had arrived in that country long before the first shipload of indentured labourers were brought in 1860. Many of the Indian traders maintained their contacts and property interests in India.

The struggle led by Gandhiji was for the security of the settlers and to enable them to live with self-respect. It was, for him, even more for the honour of India which was affronted by the racial legislation. It was thus a contribution to the Indian national movement rather than an attempt to change the social order in South Africa.

The victory of the *satyagraha* - when the determination and sacrifices of resisters and the savage repression by the regime aroused opinion in India and persuaded the Imperial Government in London to intervene - was of great historic significance for India and the world. But its immediate effect in countering racism in South Africa was very limited. Gandhiji secured satisfaction of the minimum demands, leaving the rest for the future. Further Indian immigration to South Africa was virtually stopped and Gandhiji assured the authorities that Indians did not seek political rights.

The Indian demands - ending of the three pound tax on former indentured workers and members of their families, validation of Hindu and Muslim marriages, and protection of vested rights as regards ownership of property or trading licences - had little to do with the legitimate aspirations of the African people for self-determination in their country. There was, moreover, little possibility of a united struggle since the African political movements were then at a nascent stage.

Gandhiji, however, foresaw the inevitability of confrontation between the Africans and the white rulers. Replying to fears that his passive resistance would place a new weapon in the hands of Africans, he said, soon after the Bambata uprising, as reported by the Reverend Doke:

"Men who see far believe that the problems which are connected with the Natives will be the problems of the future, and that, doubtless, the white man will have a stern struggle to maintain his ascendancy in South Africa. When the moment of collision comes, if, instead of

the old ways of massacre,*assegai* and fire, the Natives adopt the policy of Passive Resistance, it will be a grand change for the Colony...

"If, then, the Natives accept the doctrines which are now so prevalent amongst the Indian community, South Africa need not fear the horrors of a racial uprising. It need not look forward to the necessity of maintaining an army to keep the Natives in awe. Its future will be much brighter than its past has been."[4]

While this early experience conditioned the thinking of Gandhiji, the situation in South Africa had changed by the 1930s when Dr. Dadoo came on the political scene. Most of the Indians had been born in South Africa, and saw the rise of the African political consciousness. African-Indian dialogue and cooperation began to develop in the trade unions and among intellectuals. As the regime continued with its plans to force out or segregate the Indians, more and more Indians began to feel that new means of struggle had become necessary. The small Indian community could not by itself stop the racist onslaught nor could it depend on the agents of the colonial government in India. Unity with the Africans, they felt, was the only hope for a secure future.

The issue of Indian-African unity provoked a public debate in India in 1939 when the Non-European United Front was set up in South Africa. Gandhiji strongly opposed a proposal by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia that the Indian National Congress welcome the efforts towards united struggle.

The reasoning behind Gandhiji`s opposition to united struggle may be found in an interview he had given to the Reverend S.S. Tema somewhat earlier, when asked for his views on the "talk" of a united front of Africans and Indians. He said:

"It will be a mistake. You will be pooling together not strength but weakness. You will best help one another by each standing on his own legs. The two cases are different. The Indians are a microscopic minority. They can never be a menace to the white population. You, on the other hand, are the sons of the soil who are being robbed of your inheritance. You are bound to resist that.

Yours is a far bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indian. This does not preclude the establishment of the friendliest relations between the two races." [5]

He added that the Indians should never put themselves in opposition to the legitimate aspirations of the Africans, and encouraged the development of an African mass movement.

Gandhiji still thought of Africans as the only rightful owners of South Africa, the Indians as alien settlers and the Europeans as "undoubtedly usurpers, exploiters or conquerors or all of them rolled into one."[6]

He was not persuaded that the new trends of thinking had taken hold among Indians or that the Africans sought a united front. Neither seemed well organised to be able to combine strength.

When his position at the Congress came under criticism in India, he conceded that his view "need not deter the Indians from forming a non-European front if they are sure thereby of winning their freedom." [7]

He was to change his views in the light of further developments in South Africa and the sentiment in India.

Indian nationalist opinion was essentially in favour of identification of Indian settlers abroad with the indigenous people in the cause of freedom and human dignity. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu forcefully expressed this view on her visit to South Africa in 1924. Pandit Nehru spoke out for a united front of the oppressed people and advanced sections of the whites, in South Africa and elsewhere, since the Brussels Congress against Imperialism in 1927.

The urge for unity in struggle grew stronger during the Second World War. This was reflected by Indira Nehru who visited South Africa in April 1941 on the way home from studies in England. Together with a party of fellow students, she issued a statement welcoming "the new awakening of the exploited and oppressed nationalities in South Africa". She added:

"We wholeheartedly support the Non-European United Front in its historic task of mobilising the progressive forces against all manifestations of political and racial tyranny of your existing government.

"At a time when we are fighting our battles in India, this growing movement in your land provides the basis for united action by the enslaved peoples of our two countries." [8]

By the end of the War, Gandhiji too began to espouse the unity of the exploited races of the earth. Never again did he oppose a united front in South Africa, but merely kept warning against any abandonment of non-violence. In the message he gave to Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker on their visit to India, soon after the pact of cooperation between the African and Indian Congresses, he said:

"Political cooperation among all the exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual goodwill, if it is wisely directed and based on truth and non-violence." [9]

He constantly stressed the primacy of African interests. He even told the All India Congress Committee on July 7, 1946, on learning of the murder of an Indian near the site of passive resistance, that he would not shed a single tear if all the Indian *satyagrahis* were wiped out, for they would thereby point the way to the Africans and vindicate the honour of India. [10]

Defiance Campaign and After

Gandhiji was no more when the National Party came to power in May 1948 and began to erect the structure of apartheid for perpetual white domination and the dispossession of all the black people.

Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker came out of prison in July calling for a united front against racism - Dr. Naicker used the term "united democratic front" - and they immersed themselves in efforts to build a truly firm alliance. This led to the "Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws" - organised jointly by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress - in which over 8,000 people of all racial origins went to prison: Dr. Dadoo was among the first to defy.

The African movement had come of age: it contributed most of the resisters and from their ranks emerged inspiring national leaders such as Nelson Mandela, the Volunteer-in-Chief, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo.

The non-violent Defiance Campaign was not only a great landmark in the long struggle of the South African people, but had a much wider significance. For it was that campaign in South Africa, and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States which followed, which showed that the concept of *satyagraha* was not for the Indians alone. These campaigns, as much as Gandhiji`s *satyagrahas*, were to inspire numerous upsurges of aroused peoples around the world to topple mighty dictators, stop wars and save the human environment.

With the launching of the Defiance Campaign, the perspective was no more of petitions or actions to alleviate grievances, but a long and hard struggle to end racist rule. Victory would be the culmination of a series of ever more difficult battles, each perhaps ending in defeat but ultimately leading to triumph. That required a band of determined men and women willing to dedicate their lives to the cause and make the supreme sacrifice if need be.

The Defiance Campaign, which began as a joint African-Indian effort, transformed the freedom movement into one under African leadership and buried for ever the myth that the Africans were not advanced enough to undertake and lead a well-organised and humane resistance. The mantle of Gandhiji passed from Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker to Chief Albert Lutuli who was to carry it with honour and dignity.

Dr. Dadoo continued to make a crucial contribution - for eight years under severe restrictions and three decades in exile - as an elder statesman as well as a militant, under the leadership of the African National Congress. The tremendous contribution he made, under conditions of illegality, will not be known for some years. But he fought on till the end, with unbounded faith, exhorting his colleagues even on his death bed on September 19, 1983: "You must never give up, you must fight to the end."

The Legacy of Dr. Dadoo

Dr. Dadoo began his political life in the small Indian community in South Africa, with a conviction that its destiny was with the African majority and that its future should be built by its willingness to sacrifice in the struggle for a free, democratic South Africa. That conviction was in harmony with the views of Gandhiji who warned in *Young India* on April 5, 1928, that Indians "cannot exist in South Africa for any length of time without the active sympathy and friendship of the Africans."

Dr. Dadoo carried forward the tradition of Gandhiji by building an alliance of Indians and Africans as the basis for widest unity of the people against racism.

He became the prototype of the new men and women of the future - as against the carricature of a human being which apartheid sought to mould. Ezekiel Mphahlele, the African writer, said, perhaps half in jest, as early as 1956:

"One might even say Yusuf Dadoo has a Marxist head, a Hindu heart, Mohammedan nails, and an African blood-system."

Under his leadership, and with the legacy of Gandhiji, the Indian community, consisting of hardly three percent of the South African population, has been privileged to make a very significant contribution at a crucial stage of the freedom struggle. Let us hope that it will make a worthy contribution in the coming final effort to transform the country from a prison of the black people to a land that can inspire the world with people of African, Asian and European ancestry living in freedom and harmony.

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1. Written for the 80th anniversary of the birth of Dr. Dadoo on September 5, 1989, and 120th anniversary of Gandhiji, October 2, 1989. Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, September 16, 1989, and *Sechaba*, November 1989.

2. *Harijan*, February 18, 1939

3. Interview to United Nations Radio in 1979

4. Joseph J. Doke, *M. K. Gandhi: an Indian Patriot in South Africa*, 1909

5. *Harijan*, February 18, 1939

6. *Harijan*, July 1, 1939

7. *Harijan*, July 15, 1939

8. *The Guardian*, Cape Town, April 10, 1941

9. *Harijan*, May 25, 1947

10. *Harijan*, July 21, 1946

INDIAN SLAVES IN SOUTH AFRICA:
A little-known aspect of Indian-South African relations

Soon after Jan van Riebeeck set up a Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, to supply provisions to Dutch ships plying to and from India and the East Indies, people from India were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery to do domestic work for the settlers, as well the dirty and hard work on the farms.

A woman from Bengal named Mary was bought for van Riebeeck in Batavia in 1653. Two years later, in 1655, van Riebeeck purchased, from the Commander of a Dutch ship returning from Asia to Holland, a family from Bengal - Domingo and Angela and their three children. On May 21, 1656, the marriage was solemnised at the Cape between Jan Wouters, a white, and Catherine of Bengal who was liberated from slavery. Later in the year Anton Muller was given permission to marry Domingo Elvingh, a woman from Bengal.

From then until late eighteenth century when the import of slaves from Asia was prohibited, many hundreds, if not thousands, of persons from India - mainly Bengal, Coromandel Coast and Kerala - were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery.

Officers of ships and officials of the Dutch India Company returning to Holland usually took slaves or servants with them and sold them at high profit in the Cape. (Slaves could not be taken to Holland where slavery was prohibited). Many others were carried by Danish and British ships. While most of the Indians were taken from Dutch trading posts in India, a considerable number were also taken from Batavia as thousands of Indians had been taken by the Dutch as slaves to Batavia.

South African, American, British and other scholars have conducted painstaking research into the archives in the Cape - records of the deeds office, courts, churches etc. - and have brought out several studies on slavery in the Cape. They contain extensive, though far from complete, information on transactions in human beings, the conditions of slavery and resistance of the slaves.

The archives indicate that Mary, the first known Indian slave, was found in bed with a constable, Willem Cornelis, in 1660. He was fined and dismissed from his post but she was apparently not punished. Van Riebeeck and his family probably took her with them when they moved to Batavia in 1662.

Jan Wouters was transferred to Batavia soon after his marriage to Catherine. There is no information on Anton Muller.

Van Riebeeck sold Angela, who had taken care of his children, to Abraham Gabbema, his deputy and law officer. Gabbema granted freedom to Angela and her three children before he departed for Batavia in 1666, except that she was required to work for six months in the home of Thomas Christoffel Muller.

She integrated easily into the white community even while continuing relations with her friends who were still in slavery. She asked for and obtained a plot of land in the Table Valley in February 1667. Next year she obtained a slave from Malabar on hire.

In 1669 she married Arnoldus Willemsz Basson, with whom she had three children. Her daughter from the first marriage also married a Dutchman. When her husband died in 1689, Angela took charge of the estate which had a considerable value when she died in 1720.

Some of these early slaves - especially women from Bengal who were acquired by senior officials of the Dutch India Company for domestic work - were relatively fortunate. The great majority of those enslaved in the Cape, however, lived under miserable conditions.

The researches in the past three decades - by Anna Boeseken, Margaret Cairns, Achmat Davids, Richard Elphick, H. F. Heese, J. Hoge, Robert Ross, Robert Shell, Nigel Worden and others - destroy several myths that had been prevalent - for instance, that slavery had little economic importance in the Cape, that the treatment of slaves, especially Asian slaves, was benign, that Asian slaves were mostly from Indonesia etc. The number of slaves exceeded the number of white settlers by early 18th century and they did the hard work of developing the land. Most of the Asian slaves worked on the farms and were treated as cruelly as the Africans. There were almost as many, if not more, slaves from India as from Indonesia.

Places of Origin

The slaves were almost invariably given Christian names but their places of origin were indicated in the records of sales and other documents so that it is possible to get an idea of the ratio of slaves from different regions - Africa (mainly Guinea and Madagascar) and Asia (India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka).

Frank R. Bradlow put together available information from various scholarly studies on the places of origin of the slaves and free blacks between 1658 and early nineteenth century. The information is very incomplete after 1700 and covers only a little over three thousand persons. The figures were as follows:

Place of origin	*Number*	*Percent*
Africa	875	26.65
India	1195	36.40
Indonesia	1033	31.47
Sri Lanka	102	3.10
Malaya	16	0.49
Mauritius	6	0.18
Other and unidentified	56	1.71
Total	3283	100.00

(Note: The number from India includes those from Bangladesh)

Source: Frank R. Bradlow and Margaret Cairns, *The Early Cape Muslims*, page 102

If these figures are representative, over 70 percent of the foreign-born slaves in the Cape came from Asia, and more than a third from India.

Of those from India, the following is a more detailed breakdown:

Bengal (including Bihar and Orissa)	498
Coromandel Coast (especially Trancquebar, Tuticorin, Nagapatnam, Pulicat and Masulipatnam)	271
Malabar Coast (including Goa, Bombay and Surat)	378
Other	36

Source: *Ibid*.

The slaves were, however, dispersed and lost their identity in the course of time. The Indians became part of the "Malay" community - so called as Malayo-Portuguese was the *lingua franca* in the Asian ports at that time - and their descendants later came to be identified as "Cape Malays" (Cape Muslims) as the Muslim community expanded.

Kidnapping

South African scholars, with little access to sources or contacts with scholars in India, have tended to make some errors in their conclusions.

They assume, for instance, that the Asian slaves had been purchased from the "slave markets" or "slave societies" in Asia.

Many of those sold in the Cape, however, had not been slaves at all in India, but domestic servants, bonded or otherwise. The Reverend William Wright, a missionary in the Cape of Good Hope in the 1830`s, wrote of the slaves: "Some are natives of Bengal and other parts of India, who came to the colony as free servants, and were bartered or given away to the colonists."

In fact, there is reason to believe that many of the slaves - far too many of them were children, even less than ten years old - had been kidnapped in India. Warren Hastings, the British Governor-General of India, wrote in a Minute on May 17, 1947: "... the practice of stealing children from their parents and selling them for slaves, has long prevailed in this country, and has greatly increased since the establishment of the English Government in it... Numbers of children are conveyed out of the country on the Dutch and specially the French vessels..."

In 1706, a Dutch political prisoner, Jacob van der Heiden, was confined in a dungeon in Cape Town with Ari, an Indian slave charged with serious offences. He found that Ari had been kidnapped as a child while playing with other children on the Surat beach. He had been sold from one master to another and had been treated so harshly that he had run away. He joined other fugitive slaves and lived on stolen food until he was caught. He escaped torture and persecution because of the intercession of the Dutchman.

Brutal oppression and the spirit of freedom

Individual slaves ran away from the harsh conditions on the farms and lived as fugitives. Most of them were caught: they were flogged, branded and sentenced to hard labour in chains.

At least two attempts were made at mass rebellion. The most remarkable was on October 27, 1808, when hundreds of slaves, including many from India, rebelled and joined a peaceful march from Swartland (near Malmesbury) toward Cape Town to demand freedom. The government sent troops and over 300 were captured. To avoid wider repercussions, it eventually charged only the leaders of the resistance.

Two accounts from court records show the harsh punishments to which the slaves were subjected and their spirit of freedom.

In 1739, Cupido, a slave from Malabar, threatened his mistress with a knife to force her to listen to his story. He said he resented the work and the lack of freedom which he had enjoyed in his own country. He wished to commit suicide as that was the only way he could obtain freedom and deprive his owner of his possession.

Cupido was overcome before he could stab himself, and broken alive on the wheel, thus being subjected to slow death.

Alexander, from Bengal, ran away and was captured in the 1730`s. He was flogged, branded, pilloried under the gallows and sentenced to 25 years of hard labour in chains. He managed to escape and was captured again in 1737. He was broken on the wheel after eight pieces of flesh were pulled out from him with red-hot tongs.

Miscegenation

Sexual relations between whites and Asian slaves were quite common in the 17th and 18th centuries, and several studies show that half or more of the children of slave women had white fathers.

Many white settlers married or lived with Asian women and their children were accepted in the white community. Marriages between the Dutch and slave women were prohibited in 1685 but persons of mixed parentage were allowed to marry anyone, including the white settlers. Inter-racial marriages, in fact, increased from that time.

J. A. Heese, in *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner 1657-1867*, presented the results of research from parish registers and other sources on the ancestors of the Afrikaners. He found that between 1660 and 1705, 191 of the settlers from Germany married or lived with women who were not pure blood Europeans. Of the women, 114 were born in the Cape (most probably mixed), 29 were Bengalis and 43 were from other Asian regions.

He estimated that in 1807, between 7.2 and 10.7 percent of the ancestors of the then living Afrikaner population were Africans and Asians. His figures were perhaps inevitably conservative. It may well be that a tenth of the present Afrikaner population has Indian ancestry.

Asian ancestry was not considered unusual. The mother of Simon van der Stel, the most prominent Governor of the Cape in the 17th century, after whom Stellenbosch is named, was Maria Lievens, daughter of a Dutch captain in Batavia and an Asian woman. The Reverend M. C. Vos, a prominent clergyman in the 18th century, mentioned in his autobiography his Asian ancestry without any comment.

Need for research by Indian scholars

It is a pity that there has been hardly any research by scholars in India on the export of Indians to slavery in Indonesia and South Africa, long before labourers were sent into semi-slave conditions in Natal as indentured labour from 1860 to 1911. That has left a serious gap in Indian history.

A study of the slave trade is also important to appreciate the contribution of Indians to the building of South Africa: the descendants of the slaves may well outnumber the million people now known as Indian South Africans.

Indians played an important role in the spread of Islam in South Africa: the first mosque in Cape Town was established early in the 19th century by Imam Frans and Imam Achmat, both from Bengal. The Indians contributed to the origin of the Afrikaans language which was created by slaves and the Coloured (mixed) people: the oldest book in Afrikaans was a Muslim religious text published in 1856.

It is also important to appreciate the historic blood relationship between the Indian and Coloured communities whom apartheid has tried to separate - and the significance of resistance by slaves in the history of the freedom movement in South Africa.

The Afrikaners must be helped to shed the false notions of race purity and superiority if the hopes for a new non-racial and democratic South Africa are to be fulfilled.

I hope that with the changes now taking place in South Africa, Indian and South African historians will cooperate in producing an authoritative study of the transport of Indians into slavery in South Africa and their contribution to the development of South Africa.