

REGGIE VANDEYAR

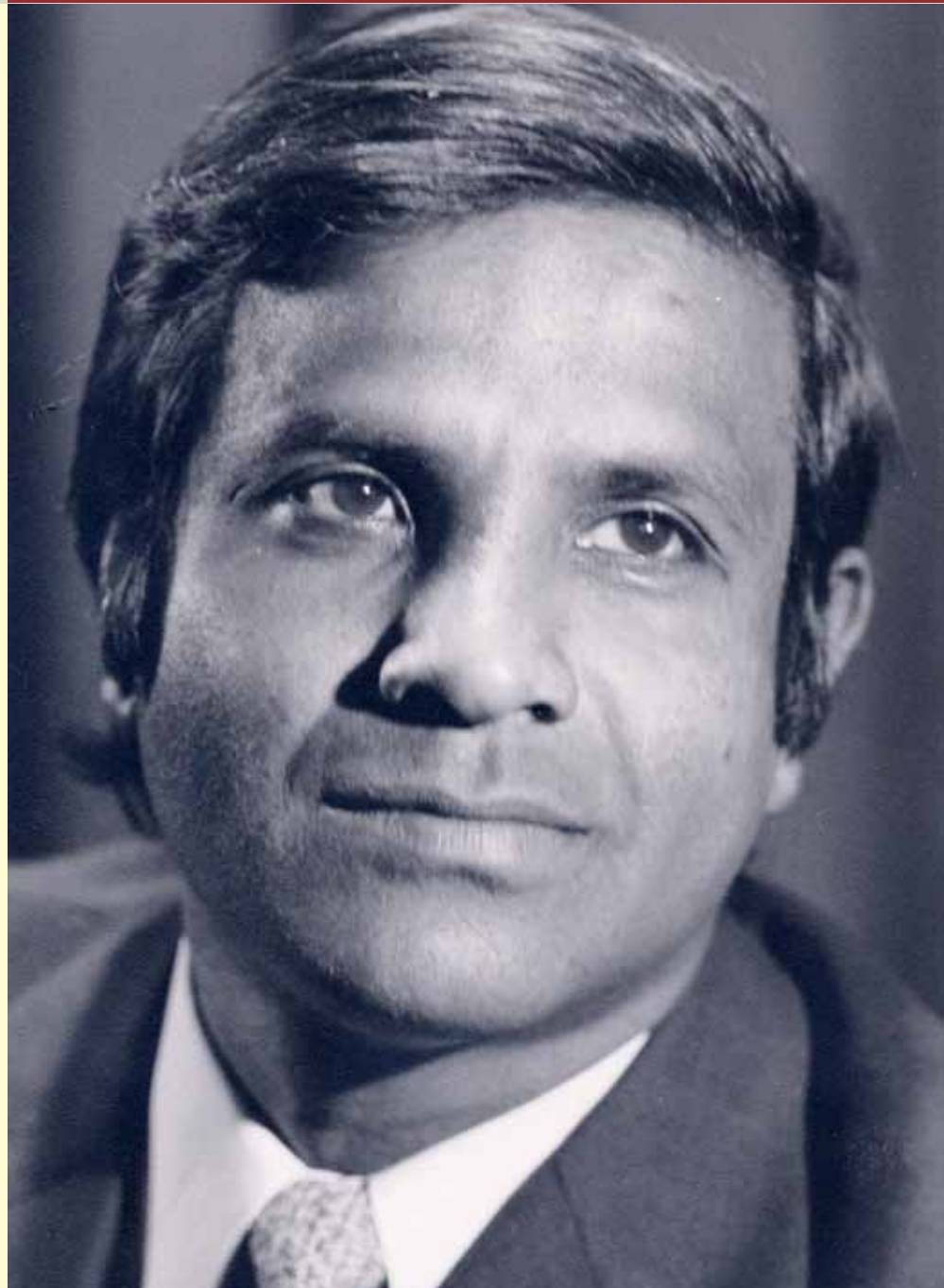
PORTRAIT OF A REVOLUTIONARY

ISMAIL VADI

LIVES OF COURAGE PROJECT



AHMED KATHRADA FOUNDATION
deepening non-racialism

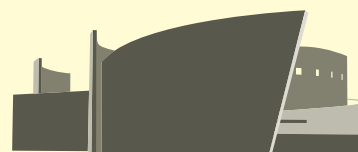


CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	01
FOREWORD	02
EARLY LIFE	03
POLITICAL INITIATION	05
CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE	07
ONE MILLION SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN	11
EARLY LENZ CAMPAIGNS	12
WAITER TURNED SABOTEUR	13
THE ARREST	16
JOURNEY TO ROBBER ISLAND	18
PRISON LIFE	19
RELEASE AND HOUSE ARREST	21
PICKING UP THE POLITICAL PIECES	22
FREEDOM CHARTER	25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ahmed Kathrada Foundation acknowledges that substantial parts of the information presented in this booklet are drawn from interviews with Reggie Vandeyar conducted by Raymond Suttner (1984); Ismail Vadi (1985); Razia Saleh (2005) and Varsha Lalla (2010). Indres Naidoo's book, *Island in Chains*, and the ANC's commemorative publication, *Selected Writings on the Freedom Charter*, also provided valuable background information and photographic material. We also express our gratitude to Reggie Vandeyar for making available his family photographs and to Alma Nel for her photographs on Robben Island.



AHMED KATHRADA FOUNDATION

Published by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation

PO Box 10621, Lenasia, 1820

Telephone: (011) 854 0082

email: kathradafoundation@gmail.com

www.kathradafoundation.org

© July 2011

For more information on the *Lives of Courage Project*, please visit
SA History Online at www.sahistory.org.za

FOREWORD

Biographies often analyse the lives and experiences, and values and beliefs of leading personalities. Invariably they popularise the life of a celebrity or highlight the critical role of an individual within a political movement or party; in government or more generally, in the history and destiny of a nation. In an age of globalisation, biographies focus on individuals with global impact. Of course, these are interesting and often carry their own gossip on the leading personalities of our time.

However, there is also a need to record the lives of less well-known, rank and file political activists, particularly in South Africa. With them resides a 'bottom-up view' of the more dramatic political developments of our time. This is the main aim of the *Lives of Courage* project, which is being done in partnership with South African History Online. One such example is that of Reggie Vandeyar, a rank and file revolutionary in the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC); the South African Communist Party (SACP); the African National Congress (ANC); and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

Reggie's life is unique and remarkable in a number of ways. His participation in the struggle for national liberation covers a span of three generations. He is an ordinary person of working class background who participated in a variety of political activities. In the 1940s, he was a member of the Young Communist League (YCL). In the 1950s, he was an activist in the TIC and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), later reconstituted as the SACP; and in 1961, he became a combatant in MK.

He was arrested and convicted in 1964 for his armed activities

against the apartheid state and served a ten year sentence on Robben Island with his co-accused, Shirish Nanabhai and Indres Naidoo. On his release in 1973, he was banned and house arrested for ten years. In the 1980s, he played a pivotal role in the revival of the TIC and the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Reggie's life contributes to our understanding of the relationship between the leaders and rank and file activists of the liberation movement; the role of an activist as an intermediary between the leaders and the masses; their level of participation in decision-making and in shaping the direction and non-racial character of the liberation movement; and their personal political development - all of which are crucial to any in-depth understanding of a mass-based liberation movement such as the ANC. Therefore, in this booklet, I've allowed for Reggie's own voice to emerge as much as possible.

Today, Reggie turns 80. The Ahmed Kathrada Foundation celebrates his life; his bravery and courage; and his contribution to the liberation of our country. In humility, we acknowledge the sacrifices of Reggie and his wife, Assoo, and his son, Karuna and daughter, Sushila. We wish Uncle Reg a happy birthday!

Ismail Vadi

15 July 2011



{ Reggie – childhood days }



EARLY LIFE

Reggie Vandeyar was born into a poor family on 15 July 1931 in Newclare. His father was originally from India, who had come to South Africa as a wealth-seeker hoping to find gold and diamonds. Guided by this objective his parents travelled the length and breadth of the Transvaal, moving from Hammanskraal, Heidelberg, Vereeniging, and finally settled down in Johannesburg.

His school days were spent in Fordsburg where his family of nine members, of which he was the youngest, eventually settled down. From the age of seven Reggie mixed around with children from other race groups – Africans, Coloureds and Afrikaner children. But at a very early age the conflict between the Afrikaner children and the other races became evident. Reggie attended the Bree Street Indian Primary School, a few hundred metres away from the Afrikaans-speaking Helpmekaar Höer Skool.

It was fantastic being in Fordsburg because it brought about some sort of understanding of life itself. We were all living in poverty, which was most intense during the Second World War and as kids we could see what poverty really meant. You would come home and you would not find any bread and no proper meal. My mother used to work for a shilling a day at an Indian laundry and we had to virtually manage with that for the day. My brothers were unemployed and life was difficult. Out of all this there was a real struggle within me. I couldn't get money for school books, for instance. As a result I did not complete my schooling. I left school in Standard 5.

During the war years I became a bit of a drug pusher just to make a few pennies. I used to supply the soldiers at Crown Mines with dagga. I did this innocently. I mean I was not aware of the danger of doing this type of thing. I also used to collect brandy bottles and exchange them for money. I'm relating this to show you the anger that built up in me – about this struggle in life, where you don't get food to eat.

It's at one such instance where four of us, who were about 13 or 14 years of age, were swimming at the river near Crown Mines when Afrikaner boys gave us a tough time. They stole our clothes and burnt them. We had to run naked to the Grovenor Station in Mayfair, covered only by gum tree leaves. We then decided to find a safer place to swim. We decided to go to the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Wemmer Pan. There we met African kids and mingled with them. We also messed around in the Jubilee Library, not really interested in reading.

One day a chap from Fordsburg walks in and we asked him for some money. So he suggested that we go to Chancellor House, which housed the offices of Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). "There's a meeting there," he said, "and they'll give you fellows little tasks to do for the war effort. In return you can get coffee and sandwiches."

So, off we went to the Communist Party offices. We didn't know at that stage that the Communist Party initially opposed the war. Dr Yusuf Dadoo made a call asking South Africans not to support the war. When the Soviet Union was attacked, then of course, the policy changed and Dadoo called upon the people to support the war effort.

Some Indians and Coloureds joined the army. So we went to Chancellor House and true to his words, there was a canteen there and we ate. The first persons I met were Patsy Gilbert and Ruth First. They asked us to give out some leaflets on the war effort. We were asked to return that evening for a meeting.

The Young Communist League was having a meeting. We sat through it and it was helluva boring – all we were interested in was food. We later met some Indian chaps, like Vella Pillay, and were called upon to give out leaflets for the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC). It was a period when the moderate "Nana-Kajee Group" was in power in the TIC and it was election time.



Reggie and wife, Assoo with Teddy Govender and his wife, Lilly



TIC leaders - Molvi Ismail Cachalia (left) and Dr Yusuf Dadoo (right)

POLITICAL INITIATION

Reggie and his friends, such as Paul Joseph, were called upon to support and campaign for the political bloc led by Dr Yusuf Dadoo. Dr Dadoo, who had returned with left-wing ideas in the late 1930s from the United Kingdom, had joined the Communist Party and the Non-European United Front. He was contesting the moderate leadership of Suliman Nana within the TIC. The Dadoo bloc believed that the TIC should embark on militant campaigns and active opposition against racial segregation and should forge a strategic relationship with the ANC in a common struggle against white minority rule in South Africa.

Well, we reluctantly accepted that kind of thing, but over the years - that is from about 1947 - mingling with these people, disciplined us. They gradually gave us pamphlets to read and there was this eagerness now in us to know more about things. We became a bit more committed and the terribly boring thing was to get other youngsters from the streets to lectures. Political development slowly took place and we became increasingly conscious of what we were doing. Eventually we became acutely aware of what was happening. We were aware of the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign (against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act) and later got involved in it. We had the Passive Resistance Bulletin and we had people camping

outside the Red Square. We also met people like Nana Sita. We were of course very young and were not taken too seriously. It was then that we met Suliman 'Babla' Saloojee (who was killed in detention on 9 September 1964). We did all the hard work of the TIC.

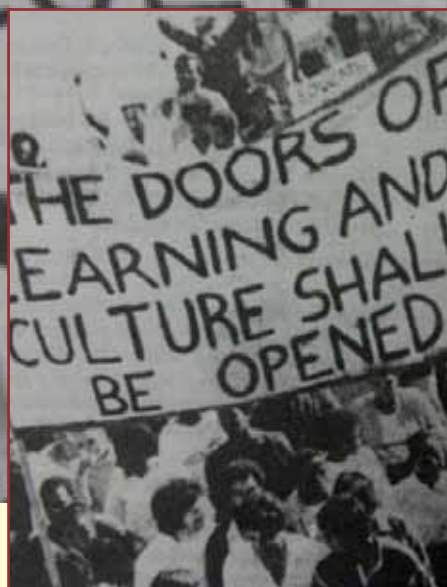
As I grew up I had to find work, because the question of poverty never really left our family – it was even more difficult after the war as things were rationed. I remember waiting in long queues for bread. There was a shortage of sugar and rice, which was like the staple diet of Indian families. We never had oil. I remember we mainly had sheep tail fat which my mother melted – it was quite horrible.

This was the initial development that took place in my youth. Constantly I was dragged into political activity. By the age of 17 or 18, I was politically conscious and was a fully-fledged member of the Young Communist League. I used to read a lot of Marxist and Congress literature.

What's interesting is that when Dr D F Malan stood and campaigned for the general (all White) elections in 1948, the Communist Party held a very big meeting on the Johannesburg City Hall steps. I was impressed with Vella

Pillay and Bram Fischer. A big clash broke out between us and the 'Greyshirts', a fascist clique. This was a regular feature of these meetings and we had a strong force of Communist Party members. The Communist Party was very powerful and was at its strongest. The Indian Congress' influence was also more pronounced and one could identify with it because there was a high interchange of Communist Party and Indian Congress cadres.

When the Nationalist Party (NP) came into power in 1948, things were already beginning to look bleak. The Communist Party was still strong, but Malan immediately began attacking it through the press. Things at home were also not going well. My mother was ill and I had to find work. I found work at the Ambassador Hotel as a porter. Over the years I was promoted from porter, to floor-waiter, dining-room waiter and senior waiter. I spent a total of about fifteen years in the catering trade. At job I was able to politicise a number of Indian and African waiters who had grievances. Many joined the Indian Congress and 'Mervie' Thandray, a TIC and CPSA member, played a leading role in politicising these workers.



Supporting the Freedom Charter - students demanding the doors of learning should be open

CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

Reggie was formally recruited into the TIC in 1948 and participated in the Defiance Campaign of 1952. But his most memorable experience was his work in support of the Congress of the People. Reggie became a volunteer very early in the Campaign for Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, initiated in late 1953 by the ANC; the South Africa Indian Congress (SAIC); the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO); and the South African Congress of Democrats (SACOD). This later became known as the Congress Alliance. He worked for the full length of the campaign and was a delegate to the Congress of the People held on the 25-26 June 1955 in Kliptown. The Congress of the People adopted the Freedom Charter. Recalling the objectives of the campaign, Reggie said:

In the 1950s, particularly during and after the Defiance Campaign, there was a growing unity between the different racial groupings and their Congresses. There emerged a need for a document that could reflect this unity and to establish a way forward. The campaign for the Freedom Charter aimed to draw all races together and politically highlight their grievances, so that the political organisations could spearhead the struggle with a political programme. The Passive Resistance and Defiance Campaigns brought inspiration to the liberation movement. The Defiance Campaign was proof of unity in action and joint struggle. We now needed a joint document.

The Congress of the People campaign was significant. We went around with blank lists asking very general questions, such as: "What do you think of freedom?" Sometimes we got nonsensical answers, such as: "I want to marry a white woman." There were mixed demands, which at times did

not make complete sense, but when we went out, we were specifically instructed not simply to ask questions and get replies. We had to politicise people! This is precisely what we did. If a fellow went off at a tangent (and some of them would do it mockingly) then we'd rap this fellow over the knuckles and speak to him. We would educate him. We would engage in political dialogue. In most cases, after a lengthy political discussion and debating the particular problems of the fellow, we would get a definite, positive response. People often invited us to come back, saying it was a refreshing talk. A key problem was that people could not always express themselves clearly. They sometimes put forward crude demands, but when we discovered the crudity of their answers, we would lead them on to facilitate discussion – they were not always articulate and clear.

The campaign for the Congress of the People served wider political discussion and stimulated a great interest in the organisations. People would ask what organisations we belonged to. I remember churches were criticised a bit and some people said, "Oh, this is not just another church group." This was particularly so when we went to shebeens. When we knocked on the door, we didn't know it was a shebeen. Some of our activists would be scared to go in, because chaps were boozing, but we encouraged our people to have talks with them. We had quite a bit of fun and at the end we would come out all friends. I don't remember an incident where anybody attacked us. Shebeens were to be found in all areas - Coloured, Indian and African. 'Shebeen discussions' always ended up in group discussions.

In many areas we went out in linguistic groups - Gujarati, Urdu and Tamil so as to facilitate communication with elderly people. Sometimes an interpreter went with. When we went to African areas, this was important. A fair amount of work was done with African comrades. When we went to Alexandra and Kliptown, for instance, Indian and African comrades went together. I must add that African comrades did not work in Indian areas, although reflecting back on it now I think it would have been a healthy thing. In some areas there were racially mixed residents. This was healthy and people responded quite well to a mixed activist grouping. There wasn't any antagonistic feeling at all.

Very often people raised demands which we hadn't thought of - things which we thought were insignificant, but what people thought to be important. The question of trade unions and workers' problems were not explicitly formulated in the questionnaires. For example, when we approached people, we would ask them if they liked the areas they were living in. Wouldn't they like to live in Houghton and Wonderboom in Pretoria? Do you know that you are restricted from these areas? This was aimed at stimulating political discussion. Arising out of that, a lot of people wouldn't exactly know why they can't live in Houghton and say, "Well, we can't afford to live in Houghton and Parktown, who'll pay so much? Now this was a bit unrelated to our idea of politicisation, for example, linking it to Group Areas Act and racial segregation. For them it was a practical question of economics. This helped to concretise our questions and to be more flexible. It also made us think more carefully about political and economic issues and their relationship.

We also had quite a number of house meetings, for example, at the Wolluter Hostel in Jeppe. I remember going with Thomas Nkobi (the former Treasurer-General of the ANC) and he spoke in the vernacular. I noticed that it was a fiery meeting where the hostel dwellers were asking him a lot of questions. Because of the low level of literacy, we got a discussion going with them and later wrote down the demands. After extracting the demands these were read out to the meeting.

The Transvaal Indian Congress did extensive work in the following areas: Fordsburg, Vrededorp, Doornfontein, Alexandra Township, Jeppe, Malay Camp, Pretoria (Asiatic Bazaar and Marabastad), Benoni, Nigel, Springs, Germiston, Kliptown, Coronationville, Noordgesig and Albertsville (with SACPO). We were briefed at the Indian Congress offices and always returned to report on our trips. We made regular assessments of the development of our work. SACPO was not a very powerful organisation and we normally helped out when it worked in its constituency.

Abdullah Jassat, Moosa 'Mosey' Moolla, Dr Essop Jassat, Herbie Pillay, Harry Naidoo, Tommy and Bobby Vassen worked in the schools and had discussions with scholars. They used to have group meetings and discuss conditions in schools. Pupils were asked to talk to their parents and to join the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress.

I remember addressing flower-sellers at the Indian Flower

Market. I got these chaps to stay behind and addressed them about conditions at the flower market and the attitude of the White farmers towards them. We then asked them to think about the issues and made a point of meeting them again at home. So we didn't always catch them by surprise.

I personally did not go to rural areas - many African comrades went out and held meetings with the tribal heads and local people. I was told by Stephen Dhlamini and Harry Gwala that they had a meeting with Gatsba Buthelezi and his people. He was a better chap then.

We had a number of female volunteers - not very many from the Indian Congress. Generally, the Indian women did not play a very active role in the campaign. This was particularly evident at the house visits. My view is that the women took a back seat. One has to really look at the make up of the community to understand this. The Indian family is male dominated and though women were present when we did house visits, they did not fully participate in the discussions. This does not mean that they were unconcerned about political issues. The emergence of the independent states of India and Pakistan generated wide interest and discussion, even among the (Indian) women, and parallels with South Africa could easily be drawn. But in the Coloured areas, I found women taking an active part in the discussions. Coloured women, many being factory workers, came with a lot of grievances, such as low wages and demanding housing. The Garment Workers' Union was

quite a strong union. They would interlink your questions with the demands they were making at work.

Amongst the African people, in areas such as Alexandra Township, Sophiatown and Newclare, you'll find that the African men dominated the discussions. I suppose language was a barrier and the African women sometimes felt embarrassed when they saw activists from other races addressing them on political issues. In those houses where people were of middle class background and where there was a higher level of education, both women and men participated in the discussion.

We did experience a mild degree of harassment from the security police. It intensified as we came closer to the actual day of the Congress of the People. There was a general sporadic harassment, for example, the police presence at meetings etc. They were not really around when we conducted our house-to-house work and house meetings. I suppose they were not really aware of what was going on.

For Reggie, the Congress of the People was not simply a culmination of a long period of hard political work; it was a great moment in his life. It was also an extraordinary learning experience. He became more politicised and gained mastery over

the art of conducting mass political work. The campaign was an important training ground in preparation for the more intense struggles that lay ahead of him.

Through all the years of going to meetings and listening to speeches and seeing the dynamism of mass struggles in the form of the Passive Resistance Campaign and Defiance Campaign, one felt that this (the Congress of the People) was the epitome of your contribution to the struggle. You saw people coming together in a convention of all people. It was one of the most inspiring meetings and dynamic gatherings ever. Just the delegates were in their thousands. Every delegate was a speaker...he/she would be able to say something about his/her plight in South Africa and that was the most inspiring thing of all.

The Freedom Charter was eventually adopted as the political programme of the Congress Alliance. This led to the arrest of 156 leaders of the Congress Alliance; all of whom were charged in 1956 for treason as the racist regime considered the Freedom Charter to be a treasonable document. Almost forty years later, the Freedom Charter shaped the content of the democratic Constitution of South Africa; and to this date, it remains the historic political programme of the ANC and its allied organisations.



{ Popularising the Freedom Charter in the 1980s }

ONE MILLION SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN

After the Congress of the People, the Congress Alliance launched a One Million Signature Campaign for the Freedom Charter. The various provinces were asked to collect a certain number of signatures in support of the Freedom Charter; Transvaal had to collect 450 000 signatures. Quite clearly this figure was not reached. Reggie, commenting on the popularisation and propagation campaign, made the following observations:

There were report back meetings. The Transvaal Indian Congress members got together and discussed the Freedom Charter. Public report back meetings were held and dealt with the success of the Congress of the People itself. There were more discussions of a jubilant nature, rather than proper discussions on the Freedom Charter itself. People and activists spoke about the greatness of the gathering. It was simply accepted that the Freedom Charter was okay. But at the leadership level there was more intense discussion and analysis of the content of the Charter. Ordinary people did not criticise the document; they accepted it as their document.

Popularisation of the Freedom Charter did take place, but it was only in 1963 that I realised how little work was put into propagating the Charter itself. In prison (Robben Island Prison), from 1963-67, we initiated discussions on the Freedom Charter. And little did we realise how little work went into that great achievement.

A few explanations can be offered. Firstly, the main concern of the ANC and Congress Alliance was to try and settle the dispute with the Africanists. There were rumblings in the ANC and dissident groups came about – racist groups really. The ANC had to deal with this problem – this took precedence over everything else. At the same time the racist government came out with an onslaught against the Congress Alliance and fragmented the organisation. There was a spate of banning orders so that the leadership couldn't really concentrate on propagating the essence of the Freedom Charter. It had no time to do that sort of thing. By 1960, it was becoming more difficult to work openly. You see, I don't want to slate our leadership of the period as being negligent, because I don't think they were given the opportunity to carry out their work. One very important thing is the Treason Trial (1956-1959). This fragmented and disorganised the organisation completely. It sent a wave of fear over people and (crippled) political organisations.

EARLY LENZ CAMPAIGNS

Shortly afterwards, the Congress Alliance adapted to this new phase of political repression and political activity was to continue. In 1958, the Congress Alliance called for a national stay-at-home in protest against the all-White general elections.

In 1958, the Congress Alliance called for a national stay-at-home. We, in the TIC, worked a helluva lot. Ameen Cajee, Ebrahim Moolla, Solly Esackjee and I worked for a number of days preparing for the stay-away. The stay-away was called mainly because of the White elections. As far as I can recall, it was a success. I know that a number of people say it was a failure. I remember we canvassed heavily in Lenz, asking people to support the stay-at-home call.

Lenz was sparsely populated then and most people were living in the old army barracks. When checking up on the morning of the stay-away, I recall that very few people boarded the train from Lenz to Johannesburg. Now it could be the result of fear you know, because the minute there was a national call, people feared that they may be attacked if they did not support the call. But we had a very good response as far as the Indian people were concerned. I think more people accepted the fact that there should be some form of protest, although some people felt that it should not be longer than a day; that it was a financial burden to lose wages. I remember we also walked around Fordsburg and a few industrial areas, and the stay-away looked fairly successful.

The TIC played a big role in 1959 in the Potato Boycott. For this campaign we concentrated mainly on propaganda work, which exposed the atrocious working conditions of African workers in Bethal. In those days convicts were 'sold' to potato farmers to work for a period of time on the farms. These farmers hired prison labour and it was discovered that the farmers would ill-treat the prisoners. There was no police intervention at all. We then launched a political campaign. We called for a boycott of potatoes. The Indian Congress was very, very active in the potato boycott. We went to the Indian Market and spoke to B.T. Naidoo, (an ex-treasurer of the TIC), who was the chief agent for potato farmers. He actively supported the boycott and played a key role in getting Indian shop owners not to buy and sell potatoes. The boycott was actually highly successful.

When asked to comment on the political strength of the Transvaal Indian Congress in the sparsely populated rural, *platteland* areas, Reggie remarked:

I don't think we in the TIC could claim a lot of strength or muscle in these areas. I think that the ANC itself was strong in the rural areas. We, in the TIC, had a slight influence in the communities, particularly among shopkeepers. In almost all the platteland towns, there was a great respect for Dr. Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia. And whenever we needed money or so, they supported the Indian Congress.



{ Robben Islanders (L-R) Reggie Vandeyar, Shirish Nanabhai, Laloo 'Tsu' Chiba and Ahmed Kathrada presenting a gift to Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe at an ANC Election Rally in Lenasia. }

WAITER TURNED SABOTEUR

By 1960, Reggie's political role changed substantially. This was partly in response to the changing political climate and the threat of intensified repression confronting the Congress Alliance as a whole. After the Sharpeville massacre on the 21 March 1960, a State of Emergency was declared and the ANC and other liberation movements were banned. This forced Congress Alliance activists to operate clandestinely. But it also precipitated an intense debate on the launching of an armed struggle against the apartheid state. Reggie was among the first to agree to join the armed struggle, initially led by the SACP and later by the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

In 1963, his name appeared prominently with those of Shirish Nanabhai and Indres Naidoo in the daily newspapers. They were the first three members of Indian origin to be arrested for

Umkhonto we Sizwe activity in the Transvaal. Reggie, and his comrades, were sentenced to ten years each and were transferred to Robben Island. So, what explains this shift in the nature and character of struggle – from passive resistance to armed struggle? When asked whether or not there was a conscious decision to embark on the armed struggle in 1961, Reggie stated:

The SACP was the first to initiate the armed struggle. It had already decided to carry out acts of sabotage. The first act that we, as a cell did was in Springs. We were busy in one of the main streets - incidentally, in this street lived Reverend Douglas Thompson, known as a 'Red Priest' - cutting electricity cables. I was given a sickle with a long handle and had to climb up a huge tree to cut the telephone wires. While doing so, there was a big scuffle down on my right hand side. I looked down the tree and I saw a few of police cars pulling up, and I got the shock of my life. I

shouted to the chaps below me, saying, "Hey chaps, it seems the game is up, you'd better run." Laloo 'Isu' Chiba was at the bottom, and he said, "No, come down." I said: "No, it's too late. By the time I come down, they're going to get me. You guys run along." And I sat in the tree, with this sickle in my hand; I didn't even fling it away. After a while I thought to myself, "Agh, if they're going to arrest me, I may as well cut the line." I looked down again and I see these cops taking drums of beer out of a bush. It was a raid on a shebeen in the bush. So I sat quietly on the tree for a while, until they left. I wiped the handle of the sickle; took the sickle off the wood; and flung it in the bushes. Then I walked up the hill to where our chaps were waiting and I told them that it was a raid on a shebeen.

A month or two after that, we were told that there's going to be a concerted campaign of sabotage by the ANC; that MK was going to be formed. We were told that we were now going to be members of MK. So, our cell composed of Wolfie Kodesh, Paul Joseph and 'Isu' Chiba, switched over to MK. We were the first unit in Umkhonto we Sizwe, other than the Soweto units. We were the first multi-racial unit. Later, I was placed in charge of another unit made up of Indres Naidoo, Shirish Nanabbai and one Gammat Jardien, who turned out to be working for the Special Branch and eventually got us arrested. Jardien supplied us with small arms and explosives – but he had succeeded in infiltrating our unit.

Our first attack on a Saturday night was on the Johannesburg Pass Office; the Fordsburg Post Office; and the Bantu Commissioner's Court in Newtown. We were to blast three places in one go. We decided that it must be done at precise times; it must be done accurately and with discipline.

I was working at Knights Tavern. It was newly opened and I was in charge of the place. So I told Wolfie exactly what time to pick me up. I went to one of my work colleagues and told him, "Look here, I'm going to the toilet; my tummy is giving me a lot of trouble. I'm going to be a little while, about five, ten minutes in the toilet. When the boss looks for me, just tell him I'm in the toilet." And then I went off. We were very accurate. We blew up the Fordsburg Post Office, blew up the Johannesburg Pass Office, and the third target and I got back to work in a short while. I asked my chap at work, if anyone asked about my whereabouts and he said, "No."

But this darn chap is the one that got me into a mess. I went home and the cops raided me at home. They didn't find anything and I got back to work the following day. My boss called me into the office, two of them; one American chap and one Swiss, and they said: "Look, we just want to have a chat with you because Special Branch was here, and we told them you weren't here. What is all this about?" One of my bosses knew that I was involved in politics, and

he said, "Look, I know you're involved, but what is this new thing, I mean, the explosions took place and they're coming for you?" So I told them, "No, they always raid, they just raid you if you're involved in politics, whether you committed it or not." He said: "Ja, but one of your chaps says that during this period you were missing. And apparently he told the Special Branch this too, when they questioned the waiters.

When I got home, the cops raided again and then they found potassium powder, just the powder. It was lack of discipline on my part as we were instructed not to keep anything that would involve us. But they found a slight bit of this powder on the wardrobe; and in my tool bag, they found a gas pistol. Then they arrested me, for being in possession of explosives and a firearm. The firearm was a harmless thing. They charged me and I was locked up at the Johannesburg Fort for Christmas and New Year's Eve. It was one of the most miserable days I've had in prison, because on New Year's Eve, you could hear the booters going off and I was isolated in this cell. They released me on bail and later sentenced me to a fine of R100 or 50 days on the first charge; and 50 days or R100 on the second charge.

Reggie and his comrades were not highly trained guerrillas. They received elementary training in handling explosives and improvised as they went along. None actually went out of

the country to receive military training. Reggie, the unlikely saboteur, explained as follows:

We had a bit of training from people like Wolfie Kodesh and Jack Hodgson. Wolfie Kodesh had a brother that had a brickyard somewhere near the East Rand. We used to go to there and train how to shoot with rifles and use a gun. And then we got internal training as to how to mix explosive cocktails; make Molotov cocktails; how to make a bomb with mixtures of potassium chlorate and gun powder. We used to make the gun powder ourselves; grind it ourselves. Although we never went out of the country for military training, newspapers all over the country, when reporting on the explosions carried out by us, referred to us as "Nigerian; Ethiopian, Russian and Chinese trained terrorists".



Logo of Umkhonto we Sizwe



{ Prison mate – Indres Naidoo }

THE ARREST

Reggie and his fellow combatants, Shirish Nanabhai and Indres Naidoo, were arrested on the night of 17 April 1963 at the railway signal site near Riverlea that they had targeted for attack. It was clear that they had been betrayed by Jardien, who had accompanied them on the mission.

That evening Jardien picked us up and before going there I gave specific instructions. I said that the cortex had to be put on for eight seconds. We must park the car in a convenient place so that we can move away quickly from there. And we must make sure that there's no bonfire; that we must light a cigarette, which should light the cortex. I told Jardien, "You'll be the one to do it." Indres and Shirish were now going to go plant the bomb with

this chap. He said, "Don't worry, I know what to do."

We got to the spot and he takes newspaper and lights it. I immediately thought, "The game is up!" I told Indres and Shirish to run. He somehow dodged me and got into Riverlea. I couldn't follow him and the three of us started running. We cleared a 6 feet fence. We were on the field in Riverlea when the floodlights lit up. Lying in wait for us was the Lieutenant van Wyk, Captain 'Rooi Rus' Swanepoel and Major Brits. The cops were lying side by side; a whole lot of them. A shot rang out and it hit Indres on his right shoulder.

They bundled us off to nearby police station. I made the fatal mistake of telling them that Indres was bleeding

heavily and that they need to take him to hospital. About eight of them pounced on me. They said, "You've got a bloody nerve. You want to blow up people and stations, and now you want sympathy from us. We must take your friend to hospital." They took me to a room and then two others joined them; all with rifles. They hit me from pillar to post. They beat me on the ribs with their rifles; I could feel this searing pain in my side. Then one of them hit me on my back. 'Rooi Rus' was a big, bulky chap. He took my right arm, twisted it and I fell on my face. I must have been out, because they threw a bucket of water over me and I slightly awakened. He sat on my back and started twisting my arm and I could hear the crunch of my muscles tearing on my shoulders. I couldn't bear it. Then he rattled off a whole lot of names, asking "Are they the ones that sent you?" Then I found myself at Marshall Square. They shoved me in one cell and I dropped down, I couldn't lie down; I tried getting up; I couldn't stand up; I couldn't sit; I couldn't do a thing.

Subsequently, the police detained 'Isu' Chiba and Abdulhay Jassat at their homes, who like Reggie, Shirish and Indres, were severely tortured. They too were charged with Reggie, Indres and Shirish, but later, the trial of the former two was separated. In the end, charges against Chiba and Jassat were withdrawn due to a lack

of evidence. However, both were immediately incarcerated under the 90-day detention law. Chiba was released from detention in August 1963 and Jassat escaped on 11 August 1963 from the Marshall Square Police Station with 'Mosey' Moolla, Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe.

The beatings (in detention) didn't seem like an overnight thing; it seemed like days of torture; you don't know day from night, you don't know hour from hour. After being tortured and questioned, we - Laloo Chiba, Abdulhay Jassat, Indres, Shirish and I - found ourselves in one cell at the Johannesburg Fort. Eventually, on the 13 May 1963, the five of us appeared under Justice Becker. Then they withdrew charges against Chiba and Abdulhay, because questioning us, they didn't get any information from Shirish, Indres or myself. We were each given a 10 years sentence. We were taken to Leeuwkop Prison, where we remained for about two or three months.

Extract from Umkhonto we Sizwe manifesto, 16th December 1961

The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa.

We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom. The government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as weakness; the people's non-violent policies have been taken as a green light for government violence. Refusal to resort to force has been interpreted by the government as an invitation to use armed force against the people without any fear of reprisals. The methods of Umkhonto we Sizwe mark a break with that past



{ Prisoners arriving on Robben Island }

JOURNEY TO ROBBEN ISLAND

The 1400km journey to Robben Island Prison in Cape Town was arduous and unpleasant. Prisoners were herded into the back of four trucks; each one chained by leg-irons to another prisoner; with little in the way of food and water. Along the way they slept for a night at a police station in Richmond.

One morning we saw the warders carrying a whole lot of handcuffs and leg cuffs. We were wondering what's taking place. Then without warning, they told us, "Fall in line!" They started cuffing us up and loaded about 300 of us into trucks. They were now taking us to Cape Town; to Robben Island. At the centre of the truck they put what you call a "balie" (bucket), where you can urinate and relieve yourself. In no time this thing became full. So when we went uphill, it would roll down and spill. When we went downhill, it would spill, so much so that most of our bread got soaked.

Our first stop was Kroonstad. Then we were on our way to Bloemfontein, where got our first plate of porridge. They gave us just a few minutes to have that. We then drove the whole day and got to Richmond that evening.

The next morning we were on our way to Cape Town. It was a very uncomfortable ride; it was very hot and again this question of the "balie" that was there and toppling over. Chaps were vomiting. It was a very sickening and terrible trip; it was quite inhumane. We eventually got to the Robben Island late at night. The Chief Warder was a terrible looking chap with big eyes, bow-legged and well built. You could see he was a rugby player. His name was Theron. He came, gave us a sinister look and said, "Ja, welcome to your new home. You'll see how nice it is here; it's a hotel." We had to undress completely and I had to take off my sling, in which I had hidden some toilet paper. The toilet paper fell out and the warder, Verster, came up to me

and asked, "What is that?" I said, "What is it? Toilet paper." "What do you use it for?" he asked. "What do people use toilet paper for?" I asked. He said, "No, no, no, my friend, here we use stones. There's no such thing as toilet paper." He took it, crumpled it and threw it away. My prisoner number was 884/63. This meant that I was the 884th prisoner to be admitted to Robben Island in the year 1963.

PRISON LIFE

Reggie, Shirish and Indres were kept in the communal cells in Robben Island Prison, which accommodated 50 prisoners per cell; while political leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Walter Sisulu and some others were later kept in single, isolation cells in the "B" Section. So, Reggie and company were completely isolated from the leadership in prison. In their cell, there were six ANC and 44 PAC political prisoners. They slept on sisal mats and were given thin blankets. There was nothing else in the cell; except a section which had a bathroom, cold water showers, some basins for washing, four washing tubs and two buckets that served as toilets. Indres and Shirish's prison numbers were 885/63 and 886/63 respectively.

We were led to our prison cells, which was a solid brick building. We slept on the floor. They woke us up early in the morning, shaved off all our hair and told us that we're going to work at the quarry. The island was a whole new experience for us. It was notorious - even before we got there, there were hardened criminals, murderers and rapists. One of the main gangs was The Big 5. Then there were other groups like the 28s, the 26s and the Fast 11. The Big 5 were the ones that were used by the warders to inform

on other prisoners. The 26s and the 28s were regular gangs that used to fight amongst themselves, but they never really interfered with political prisoners. The criminal element was later separated from political prisoners because some of them were being politicised by ANC prisoners.

We had to make the best of prison life. We initiated political classes and we established a News Committee, so that we were kept informed about what's happening outside of prison. We were friendly with some of the common law prisoners, who would steal newspapers and magazines and bring it to us. I became deeply involved in these activities. I was made Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee. In 1964, a group from the Natal ANC joined us in prison, which included Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Curnick Ndlovu and Jacob Zuma. Zuma actually wrote his Standard Six on the island, Later we were joined by Harry Gwala and Steven Dhlamini, a top trade unionist. Then we got the Yu Chi Chan chaps - that was Marcus Solomon, Gordon Hendricks and their leader, Neville Alexander, (who was kept in the "B" Section).



Some of us were very unfortunate. We couldn't write to our families for more money. Sometimes our money was withheld by the authorities and not passed on to us. Others like Ebrahim Ismail used to get money from a Natal lawyer named, George Sewpersadh. Ahmed Kathrada used to get money from his family. They used some of this money to study. Of course, there was the psychological trauma also involved in why some people could study, while others were ingrained in hardship. We never had peace of mind from day one. You'd worry about your kids. Family visits were not so frequent to put your mind at ease.

We used to collect the flotsam and jetsam of the sea; we used to pick up big plastic bags. A lot used to be washed up on shore. We used to take that, cut out two holes on top and for the neck, and when it was very cold we used to put that over us. In a way it was very unhealthy, because when you put it on, you start perspiring and sweating. Each one of us would chop stones. We didn't have protection for the eyes for the splints of the stones. We had terrible food. African political prisoners did not get the same diet as we were getting; while we got a quarter loaf of bread, they got pap. At lunch

we'd get mielie-rice and they would get a mielies, hard mielies. This forced us to stage a six day hunger strike, which brought about some improvements in our condition. Thereafter, on Saturdays and Sundays, they gave us boiled egg and chicken. Eventually we started getting long pants, shoes and warmer jackets in winter.

Then we were allowed magazines, The Economist, Outspan and The Farmer's Weekly. I ordered the magazines that had a lot of women in bathing costumes and things like that. So, the first magazine I get, they told me, "Your magazine is here, come and fetch it." So I asked him, "What's this?" They said, "The magazine you ordered is censored." So I asked him: "Surely the whole magazine can't be censored." He said: "Ja, there's photos of nude women. Well, with bathing costumes." And what was censored in mine was a silhouette of a woman in a bathtub. Because of that, they took out the whole magazine and gave me the cover.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN B AND C DIETS:

B - Coloureds/Asiaties

C - Bantus

Mealie meal 6oz - breakfast

Mealie meal 12oz:

Breakfast - 6oz

Supper - 6oz

Bread: 4oz lunch & 4oz supper

Puzamandla - lunch

Fat: 1oz daily per person

Fat 1oz per person daily

Mealie rice or bump

Mealies

Meat: 6oz per person

Meat 5oz per person

Jam/Syrup: 1oz per person daily

No jam/syrup

Sugar: 2oz

Sugar 1oz

Coffee: Breakfast - 1oz
Supper 1oz

Coffee: breakfast 1oz

{ Racially unequal prison menu }

RELEASE AND HOUSE ARREST

Before he reached home in Lenasia after his release, Reggie, together with Indres and Shirish, was served with five-year banning and house arrest orders at the gates of Leeukop Prison. This meant that he had to remain in-doors from seven o'clock in the evening until seven in the morning on weekdays; and from 2pm on Saturdays till 7am on Mondays. He had to report to the police station on a weekly basis and was prohibited from communicating with another banned person. He was not allowed to leave the Johannesburg magisterial district or to enter a place of learning and teaching, publishing or printing. He was not allowed to address any meetings or to give press interviews.

When our term of incarceration was over, they called us in one day and said "Have you changed your mind about the revolution and have you learnt a lesson?" So I said, "No, I still think the same way and you can't tell me to change

my mind, I've served my sentence." Then on the date of the release, after the full ten-year sentence was served, every single minute of it, we were brought to Leeuwkop Prison. They kept us for a day or two and then we were released. But the day we were released, Brigadier van Wyk, the chap who arrested us, stood with a big broad smile on his face, and asked, "You enjoyed your stay?" I just looked at him, but I could see he had something in his hands. He handed me my first five-year banning order. I came home and, of course, it's a whole new episode, with people visiting and talking to people. For a while I lived in a caravan in the backyard of Teddy Govender's home. My family was fragmented. I was having difficulty recouping my family life. My children were upset. My wife wasn't very well-to-do at that stage too, and I had no work. To my utter dismay I found that all political activity had come to a halt; that people were suspicious of each other.



{ *Meeting in Lusaka - (Foreground) Joe Slovo, Nadas Pillay and Reggie Vandeya* }

PICKING UP THE POLITICAL PIECES

Life after prison was equally tough for Reggie. With the lull in political activity after the banning of the ANC; the arrests of activists and leaders, while others went into exile; and the inability to get a job due to his banning orders meant that life was virtually unproductive. But Reggie is a fighter and a revolutionary. He gradually made clandestine contact with a younger generation of activists such as Prema Naidoo, former Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa and Ismail Momoniat.

In a little while, they had re-established contact with an earlier generation of TIC activists and community leaders such as Dr Essop Jassat Molvi Ismail Saloojee, Kista Moonsamy, NG Patel, Cassim Saloojee and Saeed Cachalia. The 1980 countrywide schools boycotts in the Indian and Coloured townships and the Anti-South African Indian Council (Anti-SAIC) campaign in 1981 against dummy, racist political structures established by

the National Party set the scene for a higher level of political activism in Lenasia and surrounding areas. These events broke the culture of political fear that permeated the community in the decade before.

Behind the scenes, Reggie played an instrumental role in reviving the Transvaal Indian Congress on the 1 May 1983 at the Ramakrishna Hall in Lenasia. After the expiry of his second, five-year banning order, he was elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of the TIC. As such, he and “Isu” Chiba were among the senior ANC members that attended the launch of the United Democratic Front on the 20 August 1983 in Mitchell’s Plain, Cape Town. The UDF, a broad front of over 500 civic, labour and community organisations, was established to oppose the establishment of the Tri-cameral parliamentary system that created racially-separate, parliamentary chambers for Whites, Coloureds and Indians. Africans, the vast majority of South Africans, were of course to be excluded.



{ Meeting Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi (L-R) Moosa 'Mosey' Moolla, Reggie Vandeyar, Fred Gona, Rajiv Gandhi, Cassim Saloojee, Yunus Carrim, Sharm Govender and journalist, Armanath Singh }

Subsequently, in the European winter of 1986, Reggie was able to pay a three month visit to his exiled comrades in London, such as Wolfie Kodesh, Shanti Naidoo, Brian and Sonya Bunting, John Nkadimeng, Ramnie Naidoo and Issie Dinath, Paul and Dasu Joseph, Rusty Bernstein, Vella Pillay, Aziz Pahad, Herbie Pillay, Tommy and Bobby Vassen, Billy Nannen and Zarina Maharaj. There he received medical treatment for his back that was injured during his arrest.

In October 1988, Reggie was part of the historic meeting between the Transvaal Indian Congress/Natal Indian Congress and the banned ANC leadership held in Lusaka, Zambia. The talks with the ANC were initiated by the Government of India. The Indian Congresses' delegation comprised of political leaders, as well as sports administrators, businessmen, religious figures, teachers, doctors, lawyers, academics, trade unionists and journalists. The ANC's delegation included Dan Tloome, Ruth Mompati, Thabo Mbeki, Thomas Nkobi, Jacob Zuma, Ray Alexander, Joe

Nhlanhla, Steve Tshwete, Aziz and Essop Pahad, Gertrude Shope, Joe Modise and Joe Slovo.

These talks held two years before the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, reaffirmed the view that the ANC was indispensable to the process of seeking a peaceful and lasting solution to the political crisis that faced South Africa. They, therefore, called for the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations; the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners; and the lifting of the state of emergency. They urged the apartheid government to begin negotiations with the ANC to create a peaceful, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

In May 1989, Reggie was part of the TIC/NIC/UDF/COSATU delegation composed of Cassim Saloojee, Yunus Carrim, Sharm Govender and Fred Gona that travelled to India to meet officially with the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi; the Minister of External Affairs, P V Narasimha; the First Secretary for Africa, Rao Alfred Gonsalves; the Minister of State for Broadcasting and



{ *President Jacob Zuma and Reggie Vandeyar at an ANC Dinner in Lenasia* }

Information, Prof. Tewary; and the Joint Secretary for Africa, Arun Dhoti Ghose. The ANC's Chief Representative in India, Moosa "Mosey" Moolla, also attended the meeting. During this mission, the South African anti-apartheid delegation sealed an agreement with the Government of India allowing for a selective cultural boycott; the blacklisting of apartheid collaborators who had participated in the racist Tri-cameral Parliament; and the granting of bursaries to underprivileged black students. In addition, the Indian government agreed to provide assistance to Gandhi's Tolstoy Farm near Lenasia and the Phoenix Settlement in KwaZulu-Natal.

Reggie's crowning moment of honour came in 2002, when he received from the former Minister of Defence, the late Joe Modise, and the former Minister of Intelligence, Ronnie Kasrils, MK's gold, silver and bronze medals for long and distinguished service in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

Reggie's political career in the liberation movement spans over 60 years. Rarely did he clamour for any organisational leadership position or for a position in high public office. His is a life of simplicity and self-sacrifice; of total commitment to the struggle for national liberation; and of selfless service to the people of South Africa. His humble life depicts a celebrated portrait of a rank and file revolutionary; a life of extraordinary courage!

In paying tribute to this humble revolutionary, let me end by quoting Ulysses:

Men are haunted by the vastness of eternity. And so we ask ourselves, will our actions echo across the centuries? Will strangers hear our names long after we gone, and wonder who we were? How bravely we fought? How fiercely we loved? If they ever tell my story, let them say I walked with giants. Men rise and fall like the winter wheat, but these names will never die!

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;
that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;
that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;
that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;
And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together equals, countrymen and brothers adopt this Freedom Charter;
And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The People Shall Govern!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;
All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;
The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;
All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government .

All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;
All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;
All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;
The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;
All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;
All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people;
All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger;
The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;
Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;
All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;
People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All Shall be Equal Before the Law!

No-one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial; No-one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official;
The courts shall be representative of all the people;
Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;
The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;
All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;
The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;
All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;
Pass Laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

There Shall be Work and Security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;
The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;
Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;
There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;
Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;
Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

There Shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space to be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no-one shall go hungry;

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children;

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres;

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all:

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished, and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There Shall be Peace and Friendship!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;

The people of the protectorates Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;

The right of all peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all people who love their people and their country no say, as we say here:

THESE FREEDOMS WE WILL FIGHT FOR, SIDE BY SIDE,
THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, UNTIL WE HAVE WON OUR LIBERTY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ismail Vadi was born in Kliptown in 1960. His family moved to Lenasia in 1965. In the 1980s, he was an activist in the Transvaal Indian Congress and the United Democratic Front.

He served on the Executive Committee of the Black Students' Society at Wits University between 1980-1981. He was a founder member of the Lenasia Youth League and the Progressive Teachers' League. Vadi was a National Vice-President of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union between 1990-1994. He served as an ANC Member of Parliament from April 1994 until November 2010.

He is a Board Member of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and currently serves as the Member of the Executive Council for Roads and Transport in Gauteng. He is also a member of the ANC – Gauteng Provincial Executive Committee.

He has known Reggie Vandeyar since the early 1980s.



Published by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation
PO Box 10621, Lenasia, 1820
Telephone: (011) 854 0082
email: kathradafoundation@gmail.com
www.kathradafoundation.org