

ESSOP PAHAD

South African Communist Party Central Committee

Born in the western Transvaal town of Schweizer-Reneke on 21 June 1939, Essop Pahad was the second of the five children of Amina and Goolam Hoosein Ismail Pahad. At the age of six Pahad moved with his family to Johannesburg where he attended the Ferreira Indian Primary School and the Johannesburg Indian High School (JIHS). He matriculated from the Central Indian High School founded by the Transvaal Indian Congress following the closure of the JIHS in terms of the Group Areas Act evictions which forced Indians from central Johannesburg to Lenasia.

The political events of the time had a great influence on the Pahad family. Both Pahad's parents were active in the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC). Pahad recalls that his father, who served as treasurer on both bodies, supported the move to turn the Indian Congress movement into a militant mass organization.

Pahad pays tribute to his mother, Amina, as a profoundly human person who instilled a strong political awareness in her children. Illiterate in both English and Afrikaans she was one of the first to volunteer when the passive resistance campaign was called. She went to prison three times during the passive resistance and defiance campaigns. The children followed suit and during their school years actively participated in strikes and protests, primarily against the implementation of the Group Areas Act. At the age of 18 Pahad was elected to the executive of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress (TIYC).

At the University of the Witwatersrand where he enrolled for a BA degree in political science, Pahad continued his political involvement. Following graduation in 1964, Pahad's political activities were severely curtailed. Pahad and his brother, Aziz, were both served with strict banning orders as a result of their participation in the boycott and the protest activities of the TIC and TIYC.

Following a two-week prison sentence for breaking his banning order by calling for a strike, he and his brother responded to the call from the Congress Alliance for activists to go into exile for political and military training. The two left together at the end of 1964. According to Pahad he received part of his training in Angola. He served as a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) for



more than 25 years.

In England Pahad enrolled at the University College and the University of Sussex where he obtained his MA in African politics and economics in 1966. In 1970 he completed his doctoral thesis on "The Development of the Indian Political Movement in South Africa from 1924 - 1946."

Following his studies Pahad worked full-time for both the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the ANC. He participated in setting up the youth section of the ANC in London and the building of the Anti-Apartment Movement (AAM). In 1973 he spent a year at the Institute of Social Science in Moscow. From 1975 to 1985 he represented the SACP on the editorial council of the *World Marxist Review* (now closed down). Representatives from more than 60 communist and workers' parties served on the editorial board of the monthly journal. While a member of the editorial board he returned to London in 1985 where he worked for the SACP for a year before joining the ANC office in London where he worked until he returned to South Africa in July 1990.

Pahad, who served on the Regional Committee of the SACP in London, has been a member of the SACP Central Committee for a number of years. He was elected onto the Internal Leadership Group of the party at its official internal re-

launch in July 1990 and in December 1991 he was re-elected to the Central Committee. He is also a member of the politbureau. Pahad is a full-time employee of the SACP where he heads the organization's International Department. He is also coordinator of the Media Strategy Group. He

represents the SACP in the negotiations on Working Group 1 at Codesa.

Pahad and his wife Margaret Cynthia have two children, Amina-Zanele, aged 12, and Govan Timol, aged nine. They live in Johannesburg.