

to curb the growing power of the communists. He was a man in difficulties. The bans had virtually cut him off from regular communication with his head office. It was physically impossible for him to wield any direct influence on the administration of its affairs. He was isolated from the rest of the world. When called upon to make decisions he was not in the position to see situations in the context of what was happening beyond the boundaries of his magisterial area. He relied, for information, on his head office. In addition, his finances were in a chaotic state. His debtors were pressing him very hard. He managed a little grocery store on the other side of Groutville <sup>which</sup> was clearly unable to support him and his growing family. His enemies criticised his running of it. They sent their children to spy on him. I often visited him at the grocery. One afternoon I called on him just before he closed it for the day. A few boys were standing on the verandah. One of them said to the other: "Watch that paper bag he's carrying! See what this man does? There goes my father's money... I'll tell my father ....."

Small talk like this hurt him and his friends. Above all this there was his declining health. As a man he had always had a robust constitution. But the strains on him were beginning to make themselves visible. He told his closest friends that he had difficulty in remembering things. Now and then he felt his legs wobble. The difficulty which frightened me most was his growing awareness of his impotence as a banned man. It sharpened the conflict between the man of God and the man of power. The man of God had found solace in being a martyr for a righteous cause. The man of power, the Zulu nobleman, could not reconcile himself to a life of indefinite ineffectiveness and isolation. Out of the resulting conflict there arose a keen awareness of the futility of being moderate. I watched the curve of frustration rise from month to month. I was powerless to do anything to get him out of the position in which he was caught. He had enough time and trouble to brood over his situation. That hardened his sense of outrage. A new note came into his speech. He spoke in bitter terms. The iron had entered his soul. The man of God and the man of power were at loggerheads. The infectious smile gradually faded out of his face. In its place there was the grave look, sometimes the fierce stare, behind which was a flaming hatred for injustice. Luthuli had become an angry man. His was a diffused anger. It was directed against apartheid, against people of goodwill who felt safe in remaining ineffective, against the better-privileged in his community who grovelled in the dust to pick the bread-crumbs from the oppressor's table and, finally, against the inertia of the masses which prevented them from rising against tyranny.

I talked to him about the damage the communists would wreak on the ANC. I pointed out how they would wreck the unity all of us had sacrificed

so much to build/

so much to build. He saw my point . . . . . sometimes dimly, I thought, through the anger which consumed him. The communists were at least opposing apartheid with some show of determination. That impressed the man of power. The paper I had edited had been closed down for lack of financial support. The man of power was a realist. He was emotionally involved in the race crisis and was gradually shifting to the point where he was not likely to bother about who stood by his side against apartheid. Like a drowning man he was beginning to clutch almost at every straw; at every suggestion of power against the tyranny of race.

The communists sailed into this situation slowly to project before him the image of themselves in which he could identify them with power; with effectiveness, and with the ability to help. They organised publicity stunts of all sorts to create the illusion that they fought to free the African. These things impressed the angry man of power. They kept the political pot boiling almost continuously on the surface. He saw in that their proof of effectiveness. The Zulu nobleman was encouraged. The Church, which had lionised him in the days when it could use him with advantage to itself, withdrew to its funkhole and spoke in tones which were hardly audible, condemning the injustices he was a victim of. It was not the personal sufferings he was bitter about. It was the reality of the tyranny. The representatives of God ~~had~~ had run away when the storm rose and left the man of God, in him bewildered and alone. He survived because he leaned heavily on God. But the same God had given Luthuli's fellowmen power. When the communists came with it, they reinforced the man of power in him. In a very limited sense, they were kindred spirits. Their performance held out the hope of effectiveness before him.

I was growing increasingly uneasy with Luthuli's anger. It was not directed against any particular race. He did not hate the White man. He did not love him either. He was indifferent to groups. He did take note of group weaknesses and strong points. Some of the harshest criticisms were levelled against the African community itself. It was too patient. He saw in this a yielding disposition. He was not inclined to take into account the peculiar workings of the power reserves held by each racial group. These were moderating influences on both sides of the colour line. He had got into the inner swirls of the political maelstrom without a clearly-defined ideological commitment. Broadly speaking, he was known for a democrat, a multi-racialist, a nationalist. To him the division into ideological factions was not important. What mattered was the goal - the freedom of the African. In private conversations he indicated that he had a preference for socialism as adhered to by the British Labour Party. He did not at any time/

He did not at any time push his own political preferences to the fore. He was willing to work with both the (realistic) and the heroic wings of African Nationalism to advance the greater goal of freedom. When these collided, he had sided with the realistic group. It had confronted him with a situation of demonstrable power. The ideological cleavages in the ANC were, in so far as he was concerned, unimportant. At first he even said that there were no such things as the Right, Centre and Left wings in the ANC. (All were Congressmen.) He was not an ideological man. Nor did he go seriously into the factors which divided one group from the other. He did not know precisely what the communists stood for. To him they fought for freedom. (His real objection to them was their atheism.) Since this issue never came up for discussion, he found them as good Congressmen as any others. Their attitude to God and religion he was prepared to regard as a matter for the individuals to settle.

When the government announced that it would drive the Africans out of Sophiatown, he sent me a letter early in 1955 asking me to come and have a chat with him on the situation. I did not reply to the letter. He sent a telegraph and also a telephoned message, imploring me to come. When I got to Groutville I found him with Hyacinth Bhengu who was from Johannesburg. He said he had called us to get our views on the situation developing in Sophiatown. His own head office had given him to understand that the Africans would resist ejection. Both Bhengu and I took the line that there existed internal conflicts in the African community which would weaken resistance. There was a clash of interests between the landlords and the tenants and sub-tenants which would have to be resolved before resistance could be considered seriously. We expressed concern over the fact that the communists beat drums as though every African would defy apartheid. He could not understand how they could give him wrong assessments of the situation. (Luthuli was like that.) Since he dealt honestly and honourably with others, he expected everybody to do that to him. During the conversations we warned him against taking every communist statement as gospel truth. It was not in the interests of the communists to have a man who prayed leading the ANC in the ultimate reckoning. He was puzzled by this. I referred to my own personal experiences with them briefly. He did not seem to understand. In the end he told us that in all his dealings with the communists he had never heard them say a single unkind word about me. The naivete astounded me. Luthuli did not understand the communist mind. He did not appreciate the imperatives which influenced communist policy, strategy and behaviour in South Africa generally and in the African community in particular. This circumstance made it difficult for him to evaluate communist actions correctly. They were freedom fighters and this was all that mattered in so far as he was concerned.

There were not many

Reason for NIBANES  
HATRED OF COMMUNISM

There were not many books on the history of the African people's struggle. This weakness somewhat concealed the long record of disruptive communist activity against African Nationalism. Luthuli, like most Congressmen, did not go out of his way to study communism's past associations with African Nationalism. He was inclined to judge them merely by what they did and said. As the years of being banned went by they became one of the important links which connected him with events in the country. They were the dominant influence in his Johannesburg head office. Theirs was then <sup>about</sup> the only Press which reported on events in the struggle against race oppression. In his executive committee they were the most powerful group. The Congress Movement was their baby. They gradually surrounded him with an atmosphere in which he saw them as the only effective people; his most determined followers and colleagues.

The ban on him had provided a first-class opportunity for isolating him from his very wide circle of friends and admirers who would have enabled him to see events from wider perspectives. In a sense the government had, by banning him, done Moscow a favour which the communists made the fullest use of. Thus isolated, he became increasingly aware of his impotence. He was virtually a prisoner in this situation. To emphasise their position of power and his of weakness, they took important decisions in Johannesburg and merely informed him of these. Sisulu's visits to Bucharest, Moscow and Peking were one example. On another occasion he told me, without any solicitation from me, that Moses Kotane, who had been on his way to the Bandung conference, had visited him to inform him that he was getting out of the country. He had come to him as head of the ANC. Luthuli told me that he did not know who had financed Kotane's trip nor what his specific mandate was. By slow degrees the communists were reducing Luthuli to the status of a rubber stamp. As they did this, they either won over to their side those of his colleagues who had weaknesses they could exploit or who allowed themselves to be indebted, one way or the other, to them. Those of his friends who were critical of communist intentions and behaviour were smeared or their characters murdered. By the end of 1955, this process of isolation was almost complete.

It must be said to his credit that he did not allow himself to become a communist stooge. He was aware of his own position of impotence. He was realistic enough to know that in that situation the communists were strong enough to destroy his influence in the ANC - with whose rank and file he had no link apart from the communist Press. In this set-up his policy was to collaborate with them and, at the same time, retain his independence of mind. This was not much of an advantage where he depended largely on them for the carrying out of his wishes. He still waged what could be said to be one-man struggle to keep his mind in an atmosphere which the communists sought to saturate with their doctrines. The annual conferences of the ANC increasingly uttered hostile things against the West and saw virtue in the "peoples' democracies." The number of fraternal greetings from Iron Curtain countries

increased from year to year

*TOPIC FULLY REVEALED*  
*LACK OF UNDERSTANDING*

increased from year to year. Even the language used inside the Congress changed. It became fashionable to talk of solidarity instead of unity; to refer to imperialism instead of racial tyranny; to speak of elements and not of factories; to think in terms of the masses and not the community.

He was willing to work with the communists and the realistic wing of the ANC and even the white moderates in the fight to extend the area of freedom. When the two <sup>wings</sup> collided he did not find it difficult to work with the communists. They confronted him with a situation of demonstrable power.

*CONNECT POLICY OF LUTHULI*

In 1954 the South African Institute of Race Relations organised a private conference of eight leaders of thought from each side of the colour line. They were to meet at Adams College to try and explore the possibilities of agreeing on a formula both sides could push to the fore as an alternative to apartheid. These were drawn from many walks of life and all of them were men who were held in high respect in their sections of the community. Luthuli and I were among the sixteen invited. The government allowed him to attend this conference provided he did not pass through Durban on his way to Adams. This meant that he had to follow the devious route through the Valley of a Thousand Hills. Inanda was next door to the Valley. His health was giving his friends anxiety. He had <sup>had</sup> an injury on the leg while working in the fields. Something like blood poisoning had developed. A large sore had grown on the leg which gave him a lot of pain. He wrote to say that he would very much like to spend the day before the conference started in my house. We would then talk about quite a number of things. I could, he continued, give him the latest picture of the political situation. He knew he was most welcome in my house. Eleanor who was a Nursing Sister, dressed his wound. She told me later that she had never seen a man who could tolerate and endure pain in the way Luthuli did. After dinner we sat down to talk. One of the things I was most <sup>\*</sup> anxious to get his views on was Sisulu's trip to Moscow and Peking. I wanted to know who had financed it because the national treasurer of the ANC had just told us that we were in debt. I sought information on Sisulu's real mission. What had he gone to do in Bucharest, in Moscow and in Peking? What was it that the ANC was being committed to by its secretary-general?

Luthuli gave me a detailed description of what he knew. He did not know who had paid for Sisulu's trip. He did not have the slightest idea of what Sisulu had gone to do in the communist capitals. What he knew then was that at a meeting in Johannesburg he had asked for information which could have been furnished only by Sisulu, the secretary-general, who was not present. He, Luthuli, did not press his demand farther. After the meeting somebody from Johannesburg came up to him and told him that Sisulu

had left the

had left the country on his way to Bucharest. Beyond this he was as much in the dark as I was. I was disturbed very profoundly when he told me this. It was an indication that the communists were the new bosses of the ANC. They could send Luthuli's next-in-command without consulting the leader. When Sisulu returned Luthuli would have to defend policies on which he had not been consulted. My other objections were that the Iron Curtain countries were not distinguishing themselves in the fight against race oppression. They could not be effective; certainly not in the way the Western Powers could be, with their economic links in South Africa. Finally, I was convinced that the trip would have the effect of justifying the government in branding the ANC as a communist organisation. This would isolate us from the Free World, to which I was, as everybody knew, committed. From whichever angle I saw Sisulu's visit, it was a tactical blunder. I did not want us to go cap in hand to the Free World. Mine was an ideological commitment. I respected the individual. The West did. On this issue we were of one mind. Besides, I attached importance to African Diplomacy's insistence on driving a wedge between apartheid and the Free World for the purpose of isolating the White Supremacists. If our leaders ran in and out of Moscow we would give the government the argument it needed to impress the Free World.

Luthuli indicated, somewhat tentatively, that it would help if I joined the executive. I explained that I could not for a number of good reasons. As long as I was not identified with it I could be able to use the White daily Press to put across the Congress line. Where he was banned, this had its own advantages. He agreed heartily with this. Secondly, my health had not improved in ways which could enable me to stand the strain of the long night sessions fashionable in the ANC.

At the back of my mind were also the thoughts of the troubles I could see coming. I could see the delineations of the crisis toward which the communists were driving us. If I joined the executive I would be merely playing into their hands. They were out to split the ANC and destroy everything we had worked for in the Youth League. I could not be a party to this by taking orders from them. Luthuli did not see the danger as clearly as I did. Perhaps I did not have the eloquence to enable him to do this.

The following day the American missionary, Mr. Booth, called at my house and drove the two of us to Adams.

The conference was a top-level consultation between African leaders in politics, business and the professions on the one hand and White men prominent in the Church, the professions, science and business. For reasons I did not appreciate the delegates decided to keep it secret.

We spent nearly a /

FINDING THE POSITION

DEFENDING POSITION OF YOUTH LEAGUE

COW WARRIOR LIGHT WING WARRIOR NGIBANE

We spent nearly a week trying to find the formula for agreeing on ultimate objectives. The majority on the White side wanted us to pursue a course so moderate our people would promptly lynch all of us. The relatively mealy-mouthed communique issued at the end of the session reflected the wide gulf not breached, although we did say that it would be a good thing to get together again. During the course of the discussions a very interesting development took place. One of the delegates, <sup>who had</sup> ~~who~~ had been very close to Dr. Malan, the Prime Minister, revealed that the Nationalist leader had, at about the time of the resistance movement, expressed a strong desire to meet Dr. Moroka, the President-General of the ANC, to talk on a man-to-man basis on the laws against which the Africans had demonstrated. This person was convinced that right up in the government there were men who, if approached in ways that would not embarrass them, were keen to meet African leaders and see if African Nationalism and its Afrikaans opposite could not start exploring the possibilities of some form of agreement on ultimate objectives. Steps had been taken to establish contact between Dr. Moroka and Dr. Malan. Somewhere along the line a bottleneck had been encountered and Dr. Moroka had not received the Prime Minister's message - possibly not in time to react to it one way or the other. I was very keenly interested in this because my attitude was that if we could find a formula of agreement between the two powerful nationalisms - one which could guarantee freedom and security to all our peoples - we could all pool our resources and build South Africa into a country as great, powerful and wealthy as America. We would then have no reason to be humiliated by the communists as Africans.

Some delegates hinted that it might not be a bad thing to try and revive the prime minister's interest in meeting African leaders. While the suggestion was a good one, purely for the purpose of establishing communication, it was impracticable. Luthuli, the new president-general, was a banned man. It would offend against the dignity and self-respect of the African people if he met the head of the government in the role of a virtual prisoner. If the government genuinely wanted to come to terms with us, I insisted, the ban on Luthuli would have to be lifted. The young militants, on whose side I was, supported me powerfully. As a result we left the matter there.

Two things struck me very forcefully about the conference. Both sides evinced a very strong desire to grapple with the realities which complicated the race crisis. They were handicapped by the very wide gulf which sealed off the Whites from the Blacks. The best-intentioned of the former were to a large extent unaware of the motivating urges which determined thought and action on the African side. As a result people could not establish real communication. Without this rapport they could not make much progress.

We spent nearly /

We spent nearly a week at Adams. On the last day the chairman, a former judge of the Supreme Court, asked Chief to close the conference with prayer. We all rose to our feet. By then I had cultivated the habit of not shutting my eyes when people prayed. Luthuli spoke in a soft but agitated voice. He asked for that wisdom which respected the things the other man cherished; for ~~that~~ tolerance which laid stress on the things human beings had in common. As he developed his theme I turned my head to see how the Whites reacted to what the African leader was saying. Most of them seemed moved. One or two were impassive. At the corner, almost opposite me, stood a distinguished writer on South African affairs and prominent figure in the book publishing world. ~~Leo Marquard had a national name in his own right which was respected in the African community as well.~~ He came from a distinguished Afrikaans family. The non-Whites respected him for his calm but determined espousal of the liberal cause when it came to matters of race. Tears were rolling down his White face as the Black leader continued to pray .....

I was never to forget this episode.



After the adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Kliptown meeting in 1955 Dr Wilson Z. Conco, who had presided over the assembly on <sup>Professor Matthews'</sup> ~~Luthuli's~~ behalf, returned to Natal and told us that he had seen the Freedom Charter for the first time at Kliptown. This only deepened my anxiety. While walking down Grey Street one day I met Wilson Cele, then one of the most devoted communists. I started attacking the Charter. He laughed scornfully at my criticisms. He had connections with the Press and this made him a man I could not ignore. I pointed out to him that I would like to meet Luthuli and convey to him my feelings on the Charter, which I regarded as a communist document drafted in a deliberately vague manner to mean different things in different situations. Its ultimate aim was to condition the African people for the purpose of accepting communism via the back door. "Go to him if you like!" he exclaimed. "But don't say you were not warned if you get a very rude shock." I demanded an explanation. "I can see you don't know what is happening" he boasted. "We own Luthuli's thinking cap. When we want him to think, we put it on his head. When we want him to stop thinking, we take it off his head....." His brutal candour angered me. I had a long chat with Mtolo, whose thinking was closest to mine. We agreed that I should go to Groutville and talk things

over with

over with Luthuli on the Freedom Charter. I met him in Stanger. During the course of our discussions he told me that he was not happy with some of the things in the Charter. As a man with socialist sympathies there was, of course, much that he sympathised with. He and the Natal executive had made amendments to the Charter which, he hoped, would be incorporated in the final draft to be presented before the annual conference of the ANC.

Whatever Cele had meant, he had been right when he said I was in for a rude shock. If Luthuli had had to make amendments who then had drafted the Charter? Why had he not been allowed to see it before the Kliptown meeting? He was the man to defend it as <sup>the ANC</sup> statement of policy. It became clear to me that the inevitable was in sight.

The communists overworked themselves in Durban sowing suspicion, disension and distrust among the Congressmen. Those of us who had worked together like brothers in the League avoided each other. It no longer had a Press organ through which to expose communist machinations. We had had to close down "Inkundla yaBantu" because of financial trouble. The communists had more than one paper. They had the money and the mobility. They isolated me and projected me before the country as the incarnation of all human vice. I could see the achievements of the League crumble under from every side. I wrote to Mda, appealing for a regrouping of our forces. He asked me to wait a little. He would go up to Johannesburg and would reply fully on his return. I knew I could not count on him to do much. His health had cracked in the days when he ran up and down the country building up the League. He had developed heart trouble which had forced him to retire from public life. Many of us still held his name in very high respect but we knew we could not ask him for more than he could do.

After a while he wrote to say that he had been to Johannesburg. When he got there he had found that other men than those he knew sat in places of power. Those he had regarded as "our fellows" no longer

longer acknowledged any bonds with him. Even  
Oliver Tambo, for whom both of us had the highest  
respect, seemed to have been impressed by the com-  
munist demonstrations of power and was swimming  
cheerfully with them although he certainly was not  
with them. I took the bitter pill. In

desperation I wrote a long letter to Luthuli describing  
the crisis in which we were all involved in the ANC.  
I ended up with the appeal that he should call together  
the ANC caucus so that we should thrash out the  
differences which would split the movement if not  
backed on time. He did not reply to my letter just  
then.

After a few days I noticed that Durban was  
full of reports that I was going to get into very serious  
trouble with Luthuli. I dismissed these at  
first.

How could he play into the hands of the  
communists in that way?

In all our conversations with him he had  
given me the impression that he welcomed the pressure  
I exerted on the communists. He had never told me  
that he did not want them interfered with. If he  
had said that I would have known clearly where I stood  
with him.

At the same time I realised that because  
of his weak position he had had to steer a middle course  
between them and our side. We were, with the  
closure of "Inkundla", very much weaker. If he did  
not want to come under fire from the communist Press,  
I was the type of man who would understand.

One day I received a curt note acknowledging  
receipt of my letter. He added that we need not  
waste time talking about ~~our~~ internal dissensions. He  
would write more fully later. The communists in  
Durban went wild with excitement. They told some of  
my former colleagues that Chief was preparing a reply  
which would destroy me for good as a public figure. I  
would never again be looked at by anybody on the  
political plane.

If this was the price I was going to  
pay for daring to oppose communist intentions, I said  
I would be ready. I did not bother about being  
destroyed politically. How could you destroy a  
man who had no political ambitions? If I had  
had those there had been every opportunity in the days

of the League for me to push myself right to the top. I had not done that because I was not going that way. At the Bloemfontein conference where we threw out Xuma, the post of secretary-general had gone begging. All the top leaders of the League, including Tambo, Mda and myself had been asked to take it in the caucus which decided Xuma's fate. I had refused it. ~~At the time~~  
~~My wife Sushila had volunteered to do my services~~  
~~My wife Sushila~~

By this time I was writing a weekly feature for "Indian Opinion", which Mahatma Gandhi had founded. His son, Manilal, had published it at the Phoenix Settlement. From its columns I continued the fight to widen the area of freedom. Manilal had died by then. His wife, Sushila, ran the paper. One morning I went to the printing press at Phoenix. When I got there Manilal's son, Arun, told me that Luthuli had sent a long reply to my attacks on the communist influence in the ANC. He could not publish it in one issue. He would serialise it. I told him that I would reply as each serial came out. Arun and his mother were very upset with this development. It was perhaps one of the most unpleasant political crises they were ever to be caught in. I realised that in a deeper sense I was face to face with disaster. I had lost round after round in efforts to save what the Youth League had built. I had been knocked out over the situation of the head office. I had lost in the fight over the new constitution. I had been defeated during the phase of the Freedom Charter and the transformation of the ANC into a minority group in the Congress Movement. ② Luthuli's attack was the final blow in a chain of disasters by which the communists wanted to get rid of me and those who thought as I did. I faced the inevitable and took the bitter pill. Again after reading the first instalment it became clear to me that the central conflict in his personality had come to the surface. He wrote in terms of unbridled anger, contemptuous sarcasm and wounded pride. I had never learnt the habit of trembling when the mighty frowned or thundered. And quite a few, from the Zulu Regent downwards, had thundered rather badly against me.

# BINARYS OF NIGIBANIE

I could see from the ferocity with which he tore at me, goring like an enraged bull in a desperate bid to silence me for all time, that this was not the Luthuli I had known. Two men in him were trying to present a united front against me --- the man of God and the man of power. The inner conflict was as painful to him as his attacks on me were distressing. I did not say to myself that he did not know what he was doing. At the same time I realised fully that his political naivete had placed him in the position where he could not realise that when his communist friends turned him against me what they had in mind was, in fact, to complete the process by which they were isolating him and therefore forcing him to the position where he would be alone, in their power. He was the last of the great monuments to Youth League statesmanship and I was not going to allow the communists to manoeuvre me into the position where I collaborated in its destruction. I adopted the line that I would stand firm, debunk the wild generalisations he resorted to and at all times draw a very sharp distinction between Luthuli the fighter for Africa's freedom and Luthuli, the political prisoner of the communists.

7 CRITIQUE OF COMMUNISM // THE BUREAU OF COMMUNIST AS A 199  
HYPOCRISY ENTIRE

I sincerely thought Luthuli was both wrong and shortsighted when he took up the position that we should not bother about communist machinations in the ANC to the point of taking a stand against them. From the days of the ICU these machinations had followed a fixed pattern. The moment the communists joined an African political organisation, splits developed which left the Africans weaker for their purpose of fighting race oppression. From 1929 onwards they had decided to remain a small group of the elite which would direct the struggle of the African people. They were going to be the keepers of the faith, using their experience, material resources and intellectual equipment to commit the African people to directions desired by Moscow.

History forced them into this position. South Africa's racial policies made it impossible for them to escape from it. Social stratifications followed racial lines. The White man was at the top of the socio-economic pyramid, the Coloureds and Indians in the middle and the Africans at the bottom. These differences made themselves felt in the behaviour patterns, the modes of living and the thought habits of the different sections—even within the Communist Party itself. Try as he would, the White communist could not identify himself completely with the African worker. This went for the Indian too. They could not lower their standards of living to the level on which the African existed. They had to conform to the social standards accepted in their respective communities. The top communists from the White and Indian sides were almost invariably highly-paid professionals who lived in palatial mansions in the wealthier suburbs of South African cities. Some of them owned large farms or country houses. They lived exactly like the capitalists whom they claimed to despise. To a lesser extent this was more or less the position on the Indian side. At the leadership level, there was not a single wealthy African.

The chasm dividing the White and Indian communists from the African was such that the followers of Marx led different lives and had nothing in common except their commitment to the doctrine and their hatred of the capitalists. The non-Africans could not do much more than merely confess the faith without being able to relate it to their personal lives. This reduced the White and Indian communists to the position of being largely intellectual revolutionaries who accepted Marxism as an ideal but who found themselves unable to give it valid meaning in their lives because race made them members of the privileged classes.

This circumstance affected the attitude of the non-African communists profoundly. They were scared of transforming the Communist Party into a mass movement. It could not compete successfully with African nationalism. If it tried to, it would run the danger of being corrupted and diluted by nationalism. Beneath this fear, there was also the race factor. Intellectual revolutionaries feared that a militant nationalism could get out of control and create all sorts of ugly situations for the racial groups to which they belonged. One instance will illustrate how these fears affect the freedom struggle. The Natal branch of the ANC was led for a while by Gabriel Nyembe while Luthuli was involved in the treason trial. At one stage the Africans wanted to boycott Indian and municipal buses. Nyembe used to come to my house, spend nights there and often asked me to prepare his presidential addresses. He once came to the house in a

NUMEROUS

THE BUREAU OF COMMUNIST AS A HYPOCRISY ENTIRE

very bad temper. He complained bitterly that the communists in Durban had sabotaged his and the ANC's plans to stage the boycott—because they did not want Indian interests threatened by the Africans. He was eventually shunted out of the leadership of the ANC.

On another occasion the Indian bus owners decided to raise fares in Durban. The PAC called a meeting in the Bantu Social Centre which decided on a boycott. That night the Congress Movement leaders in Durban ran all over the city telling the Indian bus owners ~~not~~ not to raise African fares. For some months the Indians and the Coloureds from Mayville paid a higher fare while the Africans paid less.

To ensure that African nationalism did not become a powerful force, the non-African communists had to clique together with the Africans, remain a political elite and give direction to the struggle. To serve this end the ANC had had to be brought within the Congress Movement where it was reduced to the status of a mere branch of an alliance in which the organisations representing the non-African minorities were the majority. At times Luthuli saw the dangers inherent in this situation. At others

he did not. In the end he took up the position that it was not for him to bother much about his allies so long as they opposed apartheid. The opportunism expressed here might have been realistic, but he was placing himself and the ANC in the position where he would have to fight on two fronts. We had worked very hard in the League to prevent this situation which had weakened the ICU, crippled the convention and thrown the trade union movement into confusion—and I, for one, was in no mood to allow it to develop again. I thought Luthuli was wrong to connive at its development.

Apart from this, I thought the opportunism somewhat shortsighted. From 1912 onwards African diplomacy had concentrated on isolating the White supremacists from the community of civilised nations. It had made specific attempts to drive a wedge between South Africa on the one hand and the Great Powers of the West on the other. This policy was based on the fact that these Powers had important economic links with South Africa. In a non-violent fight, these links could be a useful weapon against apartheid. Besides, the West still had a powerful say in the United Nations. I feared that if we pursued courses which would alienate the West or if we ignored it, in favour of the communist countries we would be making an unfortunate departure from a policy the community had followed for a long time because it enabled us to build up our power reserves. I could not be persuaded that the communists could give us much more than moral support. To show any bias for them would enable the government to brand the ANC as communistic and bar certain Western doors to us which could otherwise have been kept open. I was convinced that while the ANC chose to turn to Moscow and Peking, our diplomacy should keep a window on the West open—even if this meant that I would have to go into the wilderness.

I was very sore at heart over the quarrel. I had done everything in my power to avoid it. But the issues involved were too fundamental for me to yield more ground than I had given up. The communists were determined to have a showdown with me. And when it came, they used the very man to whom I had risked my reputation to have him backed by the League, to try and smash me. I did not feel inclined to retreat without a fight; some day, I said to myself, Luthuli might return to the path of sanity. I would keep the door open.

WIFE TRICK

Correct POSITION

THE CONGRESS MOVEMENT IS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION THAT CAN BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT

after is impossible

N. W. B. M. A. D. V. E. S. M. O. T. J. E. E. T. A. T. T. H. I. S. I. S. S. U. E.  
DEAR TO MAINTAINING UNITY WITH COMMUNISTS 201

My reasoning in this situation was simple. Luthuli, I was convinced, was primarily ~~is~~ not an ideological man. Very many leaders of his generation were not ideological men. To them what mattered was the winning of the freedom struggle. They had not applied themselves fully to the task of defining freedom. Most leaders of the African Revolution in other parts of the continent were more or less in his position. I feared that this absence of clarity on final goals was a grievous weakness on our side; so serious that I could never allow myself to be party to it. In the ultimate analysis it was an unconscious and unwitting betrayal of liberty as I understood it. I decided to break with Luthuli, in the belief that when the communists had used him and betrayed him—the man of God was too powerful a factor in him for him and the communists not to reach the point of disenchantment—it could be possible for us to regroup and move to the goal we had agreed upon at the historic interview in the Bantu Men's Social Centre, when he agreed to become Natal's ANC leader.

\* He, ~~then~~, took the quarrel bitterly. Years later, when he wrote his autobiography he found it impossible to give me my rightful place, not only in the struggle but in the development of his own political career. When he wrote it, our quarrel was at its height. I believed then that either he feared to give me credit lest his communist allies took offence; or was so embittered he could not give credit where credit was due—except for a passing reference to a memorandum he had asked me to prepare at ~~the~~ about the time of his illness. Wherever he was compelled to mention my name he hinted vaguely at ~~an~~ unnamed persons or the Youth League.

After our quarrel groups of former Youth Leaguers who sided with me approached me to form a nationalistic opposition to communist domination of the ANC. I flatly refused to do this partly because of the state of my health at the time and partly because my political ambitions did not lie that way. I did not regard myself as cut for political leadership. I wanted to become a writer. I was involved in the political fight because political and economic conditions in my country made it impossible for me to develop and release my creative abilities ~~in~~ in the way I felt I should. After the Accra Conference some of Natal's rebel groups once more asked me to stand up and ~~represent~~ lead the faction which was preparing for a break with the ANC—which finally became the PAC. Once more I could not be persuaded that this would be my best contribution to the struggle. In a sense, Luthuli's ~~criticism~~ criticism of my defection was a criticism of my judgment; of my choice of him as leader in the face of Youth League opposition. It had been the biggest defeat of my career. I had to sit down and tell history what happened on my side which led to this disaster. I could not do it objectively; certainly, I could not convince myself that I would do it objectively if I became his political rival. Apart from this, there lingered at the back of my mind the belief that if I set up in leadership of a rival group, I could possibly tilt him over to the point where a regrouping would ultimately be impossible. If I did that, only the communists would benefit.

Autobiography

Parsons



In December 1958 the Liberal Party of South Africa sent me at the head of its delegation to the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra. The two other delegates were Cynthia and Patrick Duncan. I experienced the usual delays after I had applied for my passport. <sup>The document</sup> It came in the day before the last plane was due to leave which would get me to Nigeria in time for the conference. I was originally scheduled for a direct flight from Johannesburg to Accra. I was advised that for this trip Yellow Fever inoculations were not compulsory. The delays with the passport forced me to go through Nigeria. I got off at Kano. In this part of Africa Yellow Fever regulations were in force. But after the authorities had learnt that I was from South Africa, they allowed me to proceed to Lagos and from there to Accra. In the Ghanaian capital I met a number of South Africans. I learnt, also, that the Congress Movement was going to be represented by a mixed delegation which included a White American lady and a South African Indian living in Nigeria. A few days after my arrival a Ghanaian official came to me and said he was glad I had been allowed to stay on in Ghana. Some people in the Congress delegation had made representations to the Ghanaian government to get me returned back to South Africa the moment I landed at Accra. They said I was a government spy. By this time I had come to know that my communist enemies were capable of doing anything in efforts to destroy me. I wanted to know why Ghana had not acted on the advice of these people. The official laughed and said they knew too much of my record to worry about what they had been told by the people in the Congress Movement delegation.

I did not think it wise for us, South Africans, to pursue our quarrels in Ghana. I approached Ezekiel Mphahlele, who led the Congress Movement delegation and asked that we should present a united front. He agreed to this. A few days later, I learnt that some people in his group were not happy with our arrangement. Our side were informed by a French-speaking friend that the Congress Movement delegation was preparing a speech in which they were attacking the Liberals very savagely in an effort to discredit them in the conference. I woke up before dawn next morning and ran around Accra in search of Ezekiel. When I met him I confronted him with the story I had heard. He looked worried. I pointed out the consequences for all concerned if I returned to South Africa while he remained in Nigeria, where he lived. In the end both of us agreed on a particular line he would take. He kept his word and another round of friction was avoided.

I had accepted the Liberal invitation to lead the delegation for two main reasons. South African liberalism could be given valid meaning in the lives of the Africans only if it projected itself as a liberating influence which identified itself openly with the struggles of the peoples of the continent.

On the other hand I looked

→ Nkrumah how + the progress of his training the Liberal Party.

The social problems were no less baffling. The schools were producing a large number of boys and girls very many of whom had gone only as far as standard nine. These people were not qualified for any skilled job. They were of no real use to Ghana, other than as ordinary clerks. The money invested in their education was not producing returns. They looked forward to having white-collar jobs in the civil service. But the capacity of this channel to absorb them was limited. As a result a very large number of boys who had been through the high school roamed the streets. These, it seemed to me, would constitute the core of Ghanaian society's discontented segment. After the independence honeymoon, they would create a very difficult problem for Nkrumah. He had tried to organise them into the Builders Brigade - a para-military organisation which helped in the building of roads, dams, bridges, etc. Unfortunately he did not have the money to pay these people well. Even at the time they had started grousing about their working conditions. They had not fought against British exploiters to have their blood sucked by their own people, they said.

### Conclusion of NKRUMAH

I was not an economist. Mine were merely an interested journalist's impressions. In the face of these problems I thought Nkrumah committed one or two economic blunders. The money he had been able to procure from friendly countries did not go into the direct creation of wealth. It was spent largely in what I regarded as "prestige projects." The year I was there Ghana was spending nearly a million pounds sterling on extensions and improvements to Ghana university college on Legon Hill. I could understand how the first African State to free itself from imperialism could be anxious to put its best foot forward. But magnificent buildings did not feed hungry stomachs. Nkrumah did not seem to realise that the day would come when Ghana's capacity to attract foreign capital would be limited by the simple fact that as more States became independent they might attract capital more than she could.

At the time there were indications that political conditions would affect stability. He did not seem to appreciate realistically the fact that political instability in a country which needed foreign capital could be catastrophic. The most dangerous source of tensions which would shake the economy and threaten the political structure of Ghana was tribalism. Ghana had no less than five main tribal groups, not all of which adhered to the same cultural pattern. Tribal loyalties were so powerful they superseded the loyalty to the Ghanaian State. Differences on political and social problems, in this context, tended to follow tribal lines. The gulf between wealth and poverty, broadly speaking, also followed tribal lines. The Ashantis held the best part of the land and were the wealthiest community. They were a largely agrarian people. The Ewes, to the south, were relatively poor. This circumstance gave to political parties a strong-

GHANA

a strongly tribal /

a strongly tribal hue. Both Nkrumah and Busia tried to fight this evil. But the realities of the situation were such that the tribal tradition was deeply entrenched.

Finally, Ghanaian society as a whole was stratified in a manner which invited trouble. There was not the decisive balance in the distribution of political power and wealth. The political masters of Ghana were the nationalists who had fought the British while the conservatives largely sat on the fence. At the same time wealth was concentrated largely in the hands of the conservatives. The conflict between the two was complicated by tribal loyalties. In this situation political opposition was not always distinguishable from treason. Because the Ghanaian saw nationhood largely from the tribal angle, he was sometimes reluctant to accept the implications of acknowledging the government's legitimacy. These problems would have faced Professor Busia or Dr. Danquah or any other Ghanaian leader. It is possible that these men might have adopted different procedures to solve them. The war between political power and conservative wealth was waged above Ghana's poverty-stricken labouring class. Any change in power dispositions in this stratum of society could affect profoundly the entire political structure. The government was extremely sensitive when it came to influences likely to stir up the depressed classes, made up as they were also of migrant labourers from nearby countries. Leaders who rose and attempted to teach the labourers how to assert the strength of their numbers to improve their living conditions were branded as agitators. Those of them who came from outside Ghana were thrown out of the country. Nkrumah's own problem in this setting was firstly to gain acceptance for the legitimacy of the government; to guarantee the security of the Ghanaian State as a unified entity and to ensure that his people used their freedom and the political power they had in ways which would preserve viability. How did one do this in a society where the tensions which make the democratic machine tick worked for disruption, instead of cohesion? Nkrumah's answer was to use strong-arm methods to ensure compliance.

At best, these could only delay the day of reckoning. The discontented segment always remained the sword of Damocles over his head. If he did not solve the problem it created it could declare war on privilege and press him to proceed at a very rapid pace with his programme of socialising wealth. If he did not go fast enough it would become a revolutionary force, ~~which threatened to destroy everything he had won for Ghana.~~ It could reinforce itself by forming an alliance with the labouring classes and march in phalanctic formation against political power and economico-tribal wealth.

When it did this it would have at its disposal forces with a very high potential for widening the fissions in the government, shaking Ghana's relatively weak economy and possibly engulfing Ghana in revolution.

I dreaded this as much for Ghana's sake as for ours. The tensions within Ghanaian society were of such a nature that they would affect Nkrumah's policies in Africa. One of the first things he had committed himself to after independence was to say that freedom for Ghana would remain meaningless as long as there was an African in bondage on the continent. It was very thoughtful of him to say this. Those of us in the south, who were still far from freedom at the time were grateful for the assurance that we would not stand alone. We believed, however, that our champion would, in order to carry out his mission, have to solve the internal Socio-economic problems which faced him in his own country. This would give him the strength and stability he would need in order to follow a positive and constructive policy of liberation on the continent. If he set out to free us while internally he was weak there was always the very real danger that he would become the agent of one form of imperialism or the other. Liberation was a very costly business in terms of manpower, money and brainpower. Ghana was one of the smallest nations. Fortuitous circumstances had placed her on top of the list of peoples who freed themselves. If she was to lead the emancipation crusade successfully she had to have the manpower; she had to have the money and she had to have expert knowledge of Africa's complicated problems.

The Ghanaian was human like everybody else. It was alright for him after the independence excitement to project himself to the fore as the responsible brother of all oppressed Africans. He would make heavy sacrifices to do this. In time, however, he would feel the pinch. The unsolved internal strains would create crises which would shake Nkrumah's government very badly - possibly with disastrous results on the freedom struggle in other parts of Africa.

At the same time I was quite unsentimental in my assessment of Ghana's commitment to freeing Africa. Not all of it sprang from the purest altruism. Ghana wanted to project herself as the leader of all the peoples of Africa to strengthen her bargaining hand in dealing with the Great Powers. / If not getting the money then for her Volta project. She was Nkrumah could emerge as the strong man of the continent; if America and Russia could be convinced that he had the continent in his grip, Washington and Moscow would possibly vie with each other in prostrating themselves at his feet. He would hold the balance of power in the ideological war because he would have the continent's uncommitted millions behind him. Such a position would make Ghana a Great African Power. America or Russia would possibly be forced to give him the economic aid he needed if to keep him in an even temper.

The danger in this setting was that if neither side hurried to accept him as the big boy in Africa he could be pushed by the internal strains in his own country to set the continent on fire in the bid to force the hands

of the Great Powers. /

MISSING PAGES

XVIII  
ETA.

SORUKWE SACRIFICED ?

1959 - 1960

During the whole of 1959 and the greater part of 1960 I addressed large and small meetings, public and private on both sides of the colour line in very many parts of the country on the Accra Conference, Pan-Africanism and the African Personality. One of the very earliest in the series was called by the Stanger branch of the Liberal Party. When Eleanor and I got to the hall it was packed to capacity. Hundreds of people stood outside. As we walked in we saw Mrs Luthili. She had taken the quarrel rather badly and to avoid unpleasantness we decided not to approach her. We did say among ourselves, however, that it was significant that she had attended my meeting. We agreed that we would take her as she presented herself. Eleanor always preferred to sit in the pit of the hall when I spoke. As we were almost late, she hurried to a seat while I was led to the platform. After the address people from all sides of the racial line came up to shake hands. In the midst of all this I saw Eleanor and Mrs Luthili chatting very animatedly. The ice had been broken. Later I walked up to her and paid my respects for the first time in years. After that we greeted on the streets. By slow degrees Luthili and I approached each other once more. People on both sides of the colour line were most anxious to know what the Accra Conference understood by African. Did it have in mind the man of negroid origin or the person who identified himself with the cause and spirit of Africa? I had been in the constitutional commission where we had rejected the emphasis on race. Even if we had wanted to, the substantial bloc of Arab delegates would not have been a party to racialism from the African side. The African audiences were interested also in the African Personality. What was it, really? Another racial monster in the making? An answer to Verwoerd's apartheid? Was not Nkrumah exploiting Africa's suffering to project himself to the fore as Africa's Napoleon? Was Ghana not setting out to become an African imperialist power? How deep was

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ideal which would, by its emphasis on real freedom and tolerance, unite Africa and enable her to help lead civilisation in its next jump into the future?

These and other questions people hurled at me whenever I spoke. Isaac Matlhare, the shrewd lawyer who trained in Durban and settled in Kimberley asked: Is it realistic of the All-African Peoples' Conference to commit itself to positive neutralism when Africa has no power reserves by which to maintain her neutrality between the two-ideological Power blocs?

The debate went on in South Africa almost as heatedly as in any other part of the continent. Nkrumah's speech at the conference was studied and analysed in a number of private meetings.

The result was that two interpretations emerged. Note was taken of the medial position he had taken. One school accepted Nkrumah as the chief spokesman of the heroic wing of African Nationalism.

These worked for the unity of the negroid Africans which they would use to overthrow White rule. They would establish a closed Pan-African state in which "foreign elements" like the Whites and the Asians would be discriminated against.

"Settler-orientated" Africans would be kept out of harm's way because they would be a danger to African irredentism. Some even said that they would be punished severely for defecting to the side of the enemies.

The African Personality was the dynamic product of the African's historical experience; the binding reality which would ensure that the African, who had a common destiny, overcame all obstacles and in the end reached <sup>his</sup> moment of fulfilment.

The destruction of White rule and the establishment of the Pan-Africanist state would be but stepping-stones on the march toward the unification of all the peoples of Africa in one monolithic state.

This centre of power would be one of the largest and strongest countries of the world.

The realistic wing was disappointed that Nkrumah had taken a position on the race issue which they regarded as somewhat equivocal. They accepted the need for African unity and recognised the African

Personality as the product of a mixed experience - as the eclectic amalgam which incorporated in itself borrowings from the human experience on a number of different planes.

This circumstance placed on it the need to regard a measure of racial and cultural tolerance as essential for its fulfilment. To be a unifying influence

the African Personality had to work continuously for the enlargement of individuality in opposition to imperialism and its South African variant, apartheid, which strove for its constriction. This involved the open

AKWAMINU EFFECT IN SOUTH AFRICA