

offered £500 by the Ossewabrandwag, a fascist organisation in the Afrikaans community, to help the League in its fight. The OB, as the organisation was called, said the aims of Afrikaner Nationalism and its African counterpart were identical; that the enemies were also the same - the Jews, the Indians and the English capitalists. Lembede refused to take the money on the score that the goals of African Nationalism and its opposite on the Afrikaans side were irreconcilable. This was the type of young man we had produced. We were committed to freedom and our loyalty to it could not be bought. We taxed ourselves, starved our families and exhausted our bodies in the bid to transform our ideal into reality. Our finest brains died, the health of some was broken and their families were often wrecked in the process. These were the sacrifices we were prepared to make to win freedom for Africa.

In due course I fixed an appointment with Luthuli. When I lived in Durban he either slept in my house when in the city or in Ngazana Luthuli's home. Since I was in Rosetta and there was not enough space in the Ngazana homestead he often slept in the visitors' rooms in the Bantu Social Centre in Beatrice Street. We met in the evening in one of the tiny cubicles reserved for distinguished visitors to Durban. We sat from about nine in the evening to about four the following morning. I analysed the developments which had led to the formation of the League. We were basically not a reformers' organisation. We were revolutionaries out to establish a new order of society. We wanted to restore to the African his freedom, his land and his self-respect in ways which would enlarge our personality. Our ideal was a social order in which the human individual, in his male, female, Black, Brown, White or Yellow forms could be free and be enabled to make better use of their life. The years in the house of bondage had awakened in us a consciousness which made it imperative that fulfilment for us should be in being committed irrevocably to a just society in which decent men ruled in a decent way. Our struggles against Mtinkulu, Xuma and Champion were but climacterics in the process of clearing the docks for the decisive showdown with the White Supremacists. We had

defined our goal; we had built up the machinery. We felt we could win. It would be a long, costly and bitter fight. For our part we had shown our readiness to sacrifice. We were conscious of the peculiarities of our history and the nature of our struggle. We had long contact with the white man. We had fought him for more than three hundred years. After defeat we had transformed ourselves into a new people with a definite purpose in life. We had created for ourselves a new way of life; a cultural pattern based on our historic experience. This pattern worked for the continuous enlargement of human personality where the white supremacist wanted it constricted. Fulfilment for the individual and the group was in this enlargement. Chompton did not understand the importance of this enlargement. We were convinced that Luthuli did and even appreciated it. The quality of his ideals assured us of this. This was why we wanted him to march in front of us.

He listened in his usual careful style. When he started replying, I was nervous. The Zulu does not like going straight to the point in a discussion. He believes in defining perspectives first. He pays his listener the compliment of regarding him as important; as one who needs all the facts in order to make a weighty decision. The process of giving the background is often long, sometimes tedious and now and then wholly irrelevant. But it is the custom of the people. The listener must be provided with the background in order to judge wisely. The prelude to the decision was long and gallingly non-committal. At one stage I felt Luthuli was taking so neutral a line he would not accept our offer. I almost blamed myself. Had I given an apolitical person like him too much indigestible information? Was he being scared? As he proceeded, speaking slowly, very gravely, I scanned every pore, every furrow and every movement on his face for an indication of the way he was thinking. His face was as expressionless as that of a monument cast in bronze. I sat impatiently and waited. So much was at stake. For me personally the ambition of a lifetime was in the balance. For our cause, it was at the critical crossroads. Nearly half an hour went by and he had not given a single word to indicate which way he was going. He no longer looked at

me. To look a friend and equal in the eyes is the height of rudeness in Zulu society. You express hostility that way. Only enemies look each other in the eyes. Then his face became darker against the electric light by his side. His voice became graver.

"Well, you know my feelings in this whole situation," he said. I was thrilled with the opportunity of having to break the suspense. Yes, I knew how he felt, but all of us were in a crisis. If nobody took the plunge, we would wallow in it possibly indefinitely. It was the journalist in me trying to steer events in the right direction. I knew this was futile with Luthuli when grave matters were at stake. He thought in a straight line and no interjections swung him off his course.

"I am a greenhorn in politics!....." I hastened to assure him that none of us was a professional. We all felt driven by the desire to put our shoulders to the wheel. In any case he would not be alone. Whatever we could do to support him, he would be assured of.

"What choice do I have, when the call to serve is sounded?"

For me, the deal was clinched. I took a deep breath, stretched myself and began to relax. We talked about other things....the state of my health, the political situation, the problems of the sugar-cane farmers. At about four in the morning, I rose to leave. The Rosetta train was going to pull out at 4.30. He rose too and said, with characteristic modesty, he would see me to the door. We walked slowly down Beatrice Street into Soldiers' Way. Just before we got to the main entrance to the Durban railway station we stopped, gave each other a very warm handshake and parted. I had reached the end of the road in the first part of my journey. Natal's unity was in sight. We had succeeded in helping Champion to hang himself politically. - He was still in a furious public rage against Msimang, wholly unaware of what was happening. The province was getting tired of his rancorous vapourings. The beating of the bosom in the pose of a martyr had been overdone. All the tricks in the bag were known and no longer evoked response that kept us awake of nights. When I reached home I sent a long despatch to

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Yengwa, reporting on my conversations with Luthuli. The men on the executive were most remarkable. Once we had taken a decision, no matter how unpalatable, everyone of them backed it as though it had been their suggestion. Yengwa mobilised the forces of the League in a major onslaught on Championism. I covered his rear with incessant fire from the columns of "Inkundla yaBantu."

Early in 1951 Yengwa wrote to say I should come down to Durban to lead the forces of the League to final victory. I replied declining the invitation. To me, Champion's victory was not a moment of fulfilment. It was a climactic in the struggle to extend the area of liberty in South African national life. He had to be got rid of because he and his generation saw the struggle from perspectives which were too narrow; which retarded movement forward against the common enemy. He had bruised my spirit and wounded my feelings. That was not because of malice on his part. He had thought I was leading the Africans to disaster. It had been his right and duty to defend the truth as it stood revealed to him. We had fought fiercely, neither side giving nor asking for any quarter. In the process I had learnt to respect him as a soldier in the fight for freedom. I admired his courage. I respected his capacity for striking blows. It was the tragedy of our situation that his admirable qualities were not harnessed in destroying the defences of the enemy but in sowing dissension in the ranks of those whom he wanted to free. The image of the African giant lying prostrate at my feet could not mark my moment of fulfilment. In his fall was reflected the tragedy of Apartheid in our lives. I would have been happier marching against our common enemy behind him. But then, history decreed otherwise.....

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XII
~~FRONTAL~~ FRONTAL ATTACK ON APARTHEID : 1951.

By 1951, three problems had come to the fore in the League. There was the universal clamour for a frontal attack on apartheid. Here, we did not look forward to a decisive showdown. The economic and military power of the White man was formidable. We wanted to intensify peaceful pressures which would weaken the economy, widen ideological fissures on the White side and convince the rulers of the need to extend the area of freedom. In the process, we would encourage and teach our people to be ready for participating in the government of the country. If South Africa was to be a democracy, the African majority would naturally be in the ascendancy. Secondly, there was the need to awaken the world to the dangers which arose from apartheid's humiliation of the African. After the collapse of the ICU in 1929 practically no systematic attempts were made to maintain direct contacts with the outside world for purposes of the fight against race oppression. If the League had in mind the idea of starting to make the political pot boil, foreign relations had to be placed on a new footing. This led on to the third problem. The communists were the only pressure group which had never allowed its connections with the rest of the world to weaken. Collaboration with them on a large scale was out of the question. At the same time Nehru and the Indian republic's representatives in South Africa were putting heavy pressure on the local Indians to abandon the Gandhi line and see salvation for themselves in joining forces with the Africans. The communists mainly through Dr. Dadoo were becoming the dominant influence in Indian politics. This made collaboration between the Natal Indian Congress and ourselves difficult. The Indians believed it was in their interest to influence the course of political events on the African side to prevent a recurrence of the 1949 disasters. The communists also wanted to influence events to serve Moscow's ends. Indian and communist interests converged at the point of wanting to dominate the ANC in such a way that we found it difficult to draw the line between the two.

All sorts of difficulties arose from this. India was prepared to help us isolate the men of apartheid in the

United Nations provided there were no riots against the Indians. I had made my first Indian friend after the riots. Manilal Gandhi had written bitterly against the Africans, drumming the theme about savages, which most Whites liked. I attacked him in "Inkundla" and pointed out that an African had lost his life in the flames during the riots trying to save two Indian children. There were countless incidents in which Africans had protected the Indians against their own kith and kin. Manilal sent me a personal letter apologising for his editorial in "Indian Opinion" and inviting me to meet him whenever I had the time. That started a friendship which lasted to his death.

He was most anxious to establish Afro-Indian relations on a footing not influenced by the communists. At the time, India's diplomatic representatives in South Africa were doing all in their power to help bridge the gulf between the Africans and the Indians. I met the third Secretary to the Indian High Commissioner in Manilal Gandhi's house. During the course of our conversations he made it clear to me that India had no desire to interfere in our domestic affairs. At the same time she was committed to the fight against imperialism. As long as the local Indians were not represented in their adopted country's legislative councils, she had the moral obligation to speak on their behalf. He indicated, very politely, but very clearly, that it would make India stronger against apartheid's imperialism if the Africans did not see in the local Indian an enemy. India was not in any doubt about our position. South Africa was our country. The Whites and the local Indians had come in originally as foreigners. It was up to us to decide what to do with them.

We had by then made up our mind on these things. One aspect of the conversations struck a discordant note. The Indian diplomat regarded Dr. Yussuf Dadoo, the communist leader, as having a monopoly of political virtue. He regarded Manilal as belonging to the old school. Whether or not Manilal belonged to the Old Guard was not very important. What mattered was that situations could very well arise in which we would, in order to get India's assistance in the United Nations, have to toe Dadoo's and therefore, Moscow's line. The secretary did not think that communism in the Indian community was the danger I feared it was. He

mentioned/...III

mentioned a number of leading African personalities he had met and from this I concluded that he had put across to them the suggestions he was making to me. I got the impression that the people in Johannesburg were more amenable to reason from Dadoo's side. He seemed pleased with this.

India did not initiate the process of communal rapprochement by which the Indians and the Africans were to work together. As long ago as 1927 the Coloured leader, Dr. Abduraman, had told the Kimberley conference of the African Peoples Organisation (APO) that it should think in terms of a Non-European united front. Just before the fall of the Smuts government, in 1948, Dr. Xuma had gone to the United Nations to present the African's case. He had been accompanied by Sorabjee Rustomjee, who was to plead on behalf of the Indians. Rustomjee had been a friend of Manilal's. The Old Guard on both sides had laid the foundations of an Afro-Indian front. When the communists became the dominant influence in the Indian Congress they kept the links with the African National Congress.....particularly with its Transvaal wing. Dadoo was the leading communist in the new set-up. Our problem was: If we went on the offensive against apartheid, we would have to ensure that our demonstrators did not get out of control under government provocation; that they did not riot against the Indian. If we launched a campaign confined to the Africans only, we would, indirectly, emphasise the racial angle. The danger was very real from this that our people would conclude that the Indian was sitting on the fence as usual, remaining neutral in a fight where this helped the Whites. After that anything could happen. Our trouble was that racial collisions on any plane were such that nobody could say where they would stop. They could ultimately set up one African community against another. The government was always around, eager to throw wedges in the African community. On the other hand there were sections of the Indian community which wanted to collaborate actively with the African, both as a declaration of solidarity as well as an indication of good faith. The Indian had always been a more privileged non-white than the African. These people went with this. They thought in terms of a defiance campaign. Moulvi Cachalia of Johannesburg was particularly keen on this. He was not a communist himself but in advancing what were

purely Indian interests he often served the communist purpose. The detailed negotiations leading to agreement on the launching of the campaign were carried on largely in Johannesburg.

A co-ordinating committee had been formed to run the campaign. The Indian minority and the African majority were represented in equal proportions. I objected very strongly to this. It was apartheid in reverse; a backdoor attempt to get the Indians ganging-up against the Africans for the purpose of influencing events in directions favourable to themselves. The minority was, in other words, taking unfair advantage of our economic and educational disadvantages to impose its will on us. Equal representation of the majority with the minority implied recognition of swap rights which I rejected. Yengwa, Luthali and Mtolo agreed with me here. I pressed for the transference of the head office, which was coming increasingly under Dadoo's control, with Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela mere puppets, to Durban. If it was there we would exert successful anti-communist pressures. Events started running swiftly. Six months after Luthali's election the national conference gave the order to launch the campaign of defiance of unjust laws. This meant that an internal truce had to be maintained. The communists took the fullest advantage of this. They put our head office under heavy pressure to yield to their attitude.

The campaign was used by us and the communists to serve different purposes. We wanted to "politicise", our people, as Kda put it; to awaken them to their responsibilities as a majority group in the fight against White Supremacy. We wanted to accustom them to the habit of using non-violent action. We sought to create a climate of opinion in which the White democrats could cross the colour line and join the non-White democrats against White Supremacy. We wanted to teach our people and the Indians the "habit of collaboration." This would weaken the African's temptation to riot against the Indian and would bring the latter nearer our side and in that way isolate the White Supremacist internally. At the same time we would awaken the world in a dramatic way to the danger to internal peace which apartheid constituted. By contrasting the quality of our ideals, as expressed through non-violent action, with those of apartheid, we hoped to

After the resistance movement Luthuli found himself facing a number of complicated problems. Some of these were personal. His finances were ~~in~~ in a chaotic state, ^{he wrote to me.} His sugar-cane farm was neglected. As he was drawn deeper into the struggle he had less time for work on it. Some of his children were entering the university and he needed the money to see them through. He did not have a stable source of income. The effect of the strains from all this were seen in the poverty in which he lived. In his house he kept the barest necessities for civilised living and ate that food which barely kept body and soul together. This was the exacting price paid by anybody who dared to oppose race oppression with determination. We were used to this sort of life in the Youth League. Chief, as we all called ^m him, had been to our homes and he knew how we lived. Absolute simplicity was the keynote. We did not make a fetish of poverty. We merely faced the inevitable consequences of the position we had chosen for ourselves. He was very much older than ourselves and was not used to the type of life we led. We were worried about the effect on his wife. When she agreed to marry him political careers were not the fashion. She had set out to establish a home and rear children in the normal manner of African Christians. She made the sacrifices involved in being his spouse. What went on deep in her mind we could never know. Our own wives had been brought up in a different tradition. When I asked for my wife's hand in marriage, for example, I made it clear to her that I was determined to leave the comfortable job I held as assistant editor of the "Bantu World". The path I planned for myself, I said, led ultimately to prison. Beyond that I did not know what would happen. There was probably death. What I was certain of was that we would never have the time to make money and live in comfort. A slave could never have the

time to make money and live in comfort.

~~He had to~~

He had to

~~fight constantly, using his spirit, mind and body to~~
fight constantly, using his spirit, mind and body to
destroy the shackles which kept him owned and struggle
with a will nothing could crack, to be a free man. When
he had done this, then only could he think of money,
comfort and security. When she agreed to marry me, she
knew precisely what she was bargaining for. On the
day of our marriage we went to the reception in the
evening. I had a meeting to attend, after that. I
sent her home. I got to bed at about three in the
morning. It was to be like that for the greater part of
our life together.

Political problems started piling up for Luthuli.
The government did not like the effect of the resistance
movement ^{on our people} nor the growing influence of the ANC. It
tried all sorts of stunts to destroy both. Government
supporters openly financed a semi-literate herbalist by the
name of S. S. Bhengu - no relation of Myacinth Bhengu - who
brought into being the Bantu National Congress to oppose
the ANC. Bhengu's activities in Natal worried
Luthuli. Personally, I thought he gave him more credit
than he deserved. This did not assuage Luthuli's fears.
From the Prime Minister downwards Bhengu's statements were
being accepted by the government and quoted as the real
voice of the African people. - The White Press even
announced that he would lead an African delegation to the
^{United} Nations to counter the "lying and malicious propa-
ganda" against South Africa. This upset Luthuli very much.
He set up a special sub-committee consisting of himself,
the poet-journalist Herbert Dhlomo and myself to counter
Bhengu's influence. For my part, Bhengu was playing the
dangerous game which would destroy him. His organiza-
tion's reason for existence was to oppose everything Luthuli
said and to approve everything from the government side.
The moment he did this he showed he did not understand the
mind of the African community. Not every African was
a tribesman-like him. Some of them had been brought up in
the realistic tradition for nearly 200 years. They had
learned to think for themselves and to reason their way
into and out of situations. Then, there was the very large
urban proletariat to whom the call of the tribe no longer
appealed. From these two sections the leadership of the
Africans had been produced. Bhengu did not have the

slightest understanding of the mind of these key sections of the community. They thought in terms of values. The tribesmen thought in terms of groups. For Bhengu merely to raise the government was to isolate himself from those sections without whose support his organisation would be doomed.

Luthuli was particularly anxious about the publicity the White Press was giving Bhengu. He called the poet and me and unburdened his fears. We asked him to leave the problem in our hands. He was pleased with our offer. After he had left, we started digging into Bhengu's past. We came up with political dynamite. Herbert discovered that there lived in Durban a lady who had been divorced from Bhengu. Who else could give us better information about him? I knew her very well. We went up to her. She was most obliging. Herbert turned to me when next we met. "You are on good terms with some highly-placed people in the local daily Press?"

"Yes"

"Why not let them know what we now know?"

I fixed an appointment with the political correspondent of the "Natal Mercury". Herbert and I went to his office. We expressed our concern with the way in which his paper was boosting Bhengu. There was nothing wrong with a paper backing a political figure whose policies it supported. There was, however, everything wrong if the paper did this without knowing precisely what it was lending its aid to. We ^{asked} the correspondent to try and dig up some of the court records to which the lady had referred us. After that he would then be free to decide whether or not to see in Bhengu ^{the} Messiah of his people. The man was shaken very badly. The things he discovered made it impossible for the "Mercury" to mention Bhengu's name again. The correspondent ^{asked} me to write a letter to the editor of the paper as soon as I could, about Bhengu. I waited for a while. A friend of mine hinted to me that Bhengu was in serious trouble with a Boer farmer in northern Natal. I followed up this story and discovered ^{more} ~~that~~ ^{political dynamite} ~~was~~. I sent a short letter to the Editor of the "Natal Mercury" putting a number of leading questions to Bhengu. They were so framed that he would land in disaster whether or not he replied. He chose to ignore my letter. That was his undoing. The police started

running after him to get him to clear himself. The reputation of the Prime Minister, Dr Malan, who had quoted Bhengu publicly as a responsible leader of the Africans, was at stake. So was that of other cabinet ministers. Bhengu ended up in gaol, serving a long sentence on a charge which involved using other people's money for his own ends. That wrote the Bantu National Congress off the pages of contemporary history.

Government agents tried other methods. They spread the rumour that a movement like the Mau Mau was being organised and that some people in the ANC were behind it. It had the rather curious name of Shisa Shisa. (Shisa is the Zulu for BURN). That gave out the secret. The Minister of Justice, who was in charge of the ^{police} ~~branch~~ had told parliament once, of terrible plans to burn white homes and poison water in efforts to kill the White people. Most Africans had laughed at this and similar horror stories. How could reservoirs be poisoned when urban African communities used the water the Whites drank? In the end it became clear that the Shisa Shisa movement existed only in the imagination of the security police. When these tactics failed, more drastic measures were adopted to destroy Luthuli's leadership. One day I received a letter from him in which he asked me to meet him in Durban. When we got together he informed me that he had been summoned to Pretoria and was on his way out there. He suspected that he would be questioned about his role in the resistance movement. I suppressed the temptation to start discussing his possible reactions. In my case, he said, since he knew nothing about what he was being called for it would not help much to indulge in speculation. I was terribly upset by this news. When he was elected leader of the ANC I had reached one of my moments of fulfilment. A new and more difficult test was in the offing. How was he going to perform? If he was frightened, it would mean that the years I had spent trying to project before my readers a particular image of him would be destroyed. If he stood the test, I would be vindicated. That afternoon I went to the Durban railway station to see him off. I found him with a close personal friend of his, Robbins Guma, and a rather tall, almost habbily dressed White man just on the threshold of the ageing side. Guma introduced this man to me as

Professor Roberts of the Witwatersrand University.

Lucifer himself could not have been more unwelcome in that situation. Professor Roberts and I had clawed each other ~~away~~ in the Press. We did not know each other and had never met. I nodded briefly. He reciprocated and then gave me his back.

After a few days Luthuli returned from Pretoria. He called a meeting of the executive committee of the ANC in Natal to give it a report of what had transpired. I was not a member of this body. He insisted that I should be present. He told us that he had travelled by train to Pretoria. When he got off ^{his coach} he saw the Chief Native Commissioner for Natal on the platform with him. The other came up to him and apologised for having not warned him in Natal of the Pretoria interview. They parted, to meet in the office of the secretary for Native Affairs.

When he got to the headquarters of the Department for Native Affairs, the secretary informed him that he had been called for a discussion of his activities as leader of the African National Congress and the resistance movement. The government ~~had~~ had a very high opinion of Luthuli, he said. It had regarded him as a model chief who would do a lot for his people. It had come as a disappointment to it that he had identified himself with people and an organisation whose goal was to break the laws of the land. As a servant of the State, the government expected him to uphold the law. They would be happy to see him sever his ^{ct} connections with the law-breakers. He would be given 14 days within which to make up his mind.

As the story unfolded, I realised that we had reached the critical climacteric where he would either break ^{down} or take the right direction. I had assured my executive that at that point he would, because of the quality of his ideas; of the moral conscience, most probably take the right direction. I had persuaded myself that I had a fairly accurate knowledge of how his mind worked. But even ^{then} there had always lingered at the back of my mind the conflict between the man of God and the man of power. I could not say precisely which would be in the ascendancy in the moment of crisis. Taking everything into account, I imagined the man of

God stood better chances. I waited, my breath growing thinner as he proceeded. I waited for the fateful moment when he would tell us what his intentions were. Did he feel that he had more important work to do at Groutville? Would he then climb down and tell us that he could not act against his bosses? I could not really blame him, if he did that. He had made it clear on more than one occasion that one could advance the struggle as much at Groutville as anywhere else. If he raised the standard of living of his immediate people, he would be showing what was possible; setting an example, so to speak. That, in itself, was a valid contribution to the struggle. As his report drew to a close, I felt tormented by the uncertainty about what he would do. If he decided to go back to the life of the farmer-chief, ^{for me} the hopes of a lifetime would be dashed. Did I have the energy to start all over again, building up a new symbol? "Inkundla yaBantu" was in very serious financial troubles. It could be closed down. - If that happened I would be ineffective for the purpose of stoking the fires of revolution. The communists, who were already showing interest in Luthuli's position, could move in. If they did they would wreck everything which had been achieved. Their line was to mouth slogans about freedom for the African while subtly sabotaging the Black man's effort to free himself. Once more we would find ourselves in the political wilderness, following the circuitous route which would take us farther from our goal than before. As these thoughts came into my mind my anxiety grew. I held my breath when he asked himself the question on what he was to do. All of us were gripped by tense suspense when he started outlining his reactions. In so far as he was concerned, he said, he regarded a chief as a leader of the Africans whose duty it was to interest himself in every phase of his people's life. He had thus seen no conflict ^{of duties} in participating in the political activities of the Africans. His reply to the ultimatum to choose between his job and the ANC was simple, he said. He would go with his people. For a minute all of us sat still and tense. We could hardly believe our ears when we heard this. I found myself caught in a frenzy of gratified excitement. I felt like jumping to my feet, running to him to throw my arms around him and kiss him.

But things

But things were not done that way in Zulu society. He added gravely that when he decided to play a leading role in the struggle it had been after weighing possibilities like the one he was then facing. He had come to the conclusion that some people had to make sacrifices for freedom to come the way of their communities. He was going to face the inevitable.

At first things moved slowly. The government had not expected Luthuli to take up a defiant attitude. They still hoped that he would reconsider his decision. When he did not, their anger almost knew no limits. He was deposed from the chieftainship. Then followed the ban prohibiting him from moving out of his magisterial area for a fixed period. He was debarred from attending meetings. Going to church became illegal for him. The government justified its actions here by saying that Luthuli had, by encouraging his people to break the law, harmed their interests. He issued a statement in which he showed how moderation and patience had proved futile. Reason and facts had failed to persuade the rulers to change their mind. The deposition did not embitter him. It marked the point of launching deeper into the struggle.

A challenge had been flung at us. We had to accept it. After a few days I went up to Mtolo. I told him that after giving very careful consideration to the implications of the deposition, I had come to the conclusion that it was a government vote of no confidence in Luthuli. We could not sit down and do nothing about it. The world was watching to see what we would do. We had to make it clear beyond all shadow of doubt that we had the fullest confidence in Luthuli. To do this in ways which should enable all people to see clearly where we stood we should persuade the national conference to elect him President-General of the ANC. I was not a member of the Natal executive committee. I begged Mtolo to place my suggestion before the committee and to ask it to go to the national conference with a request for a vote of confidence. I did not need to argue my case before him. After a few days he came back and informed me that the executive had accepted my suggestion on one condition: that I led the Natal delegation to the national conference which was going to be held in

— although Luthuli was president of the Natal ANC, Johannesburg in 1952. I accepted the offer provided Hyacinth Bhengu, the Durban lawyer, was included in my delegation. He was then a law student at the Witwatersrand University and was home on holiday. Mtofozi was the treasurer. He assured me that I could have anybody in the delegation I wanted. On the platform I was dull and unconvincing. People went to sleep a few minutes after I had opened my mouth. Bhengu literally swept them off their feet. He spoke straight to their hearts. He would emerge as the orator from Natal in the conference while I did the lobbying. The largest bloc of delegates in the conference came from the Transvaal. The Cape came second, with about 130 people. We had 22 in our group. The Free State came with about 19. Moroka was the incumbent. I spent most of my time outside of the conference, trying to persuade the key delegates from the various provinces to see Luthuli from our perspective. The Cape came determined to support Njongwe. I contacted Mandela, then leader of the Transvaal, in efforts to get him on to our side. He was not interested. He was going to support the Cape. We saw him in Dr Conco's car. As we sat in it, the police swooped on us and arrested us for being in Johannesburg without the necessary papers. We were taken to the charge office where we were subsequently released, after our names and addresses had been taken down. The Free State made it very clear that it would stand by Dr Moroka.

The going was tough for the Natalians from the very beginning of the conference. The Natal delegation was subsequently met in a small room next to the conference hall in the Trades Hall. We considered the situation. It was clear that Luthuli stood no chance of success. There was even the possibility of ill-feeling if we pushed him too far and he failed. He jumped to his feet and announced that if things were as bad as they seemed, he would gladly withdraw his name from the elections. I pointed out that I was leader of the Natal delegation. I had been given a specific mandate by the executive committee to get the vote of confidence with which to answer the government. I could not go back to Natal and say that when I saw the odds against me I decided to save my army by running away. I was going to fight and if we were defeated, everybody should know that we had done our duty.

Luthuli withdrew his suggestion. After that my delegation worked with a zeal and determination which knew no bounds. Hyacinth ~~boasted~~ ^{captured} the imagination of the delegates and swayed them perpetually in the direction of our choice. The rest of us held endless little conferences with delegates from all the provinces. When election time came Luthuli beat Moroka in the ratio of 3:1.

For my part this meant the end of the second stage of my journey. The Youth League had finished the preliminaries. It had got the ideology, unified the Africans, built up the political machinery and found the symbol. Our next task was to consolidate the victories gained and clear the ground for a decisive showdown with race oppression.

In the Cape, the militant resisters did not want a period of inactivity after the defiance campaign. ^{Professor} Matthews was under pressure to keep up the spirit of militancy by producing another programme. Voices were ~~now~~ raised on the need to call a "parliament of the people" which would produce a South African "Magna Carta." (The communist Press seized on the idea.) As the weeks went by, bourgeois phrases were purged. The national gathering was going to be a Peoples' Conference. The document it would formulate would be the Freedom Charter. In 1950 the communists had met and taken the decision to establish an alliance of political organisations in all the racial groups. It would be orientated in the direction of advancing workers' interest. Chauvinists (African Nationalists) and other undesirable elements (Liberals) would be elbowed out of it. It took form as the Congress Movement. The Freedom Charter became its manifesto. The Movement was made up of the African and Indian Congresses, a hastily assembled contraption called the Congress of Democrats (the all-White COD), the Coloured Peoples Organisation (SACPO) and the mixed Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). These co-ordinated their activities in a committee in which the various allies were equally represented regardless of their numerical strength.

In practice the Indian, Coloured and White minorities together controlled a majority of votes. The ANC was reduced to a minority group in the alliance. The solid core of communists met secretly underground, whether they had been driven by the Afrikaner Nationalist government shortly after it had got to power in 1948. They formulated policy. They then infiltrated into the various national organisations where they held key positions. They met again in the co-ordinating committee as the representatives of their racial movements and ganged-up to swamp the African nationalistic delegates. This machinery enabled them to impose their will on the African National Congress in ways which very many Congressmen, including Luthuli and Matthews, found acceptable. The younger Nationalists found this intolerable. Friction developed between them and the mother body in every province. The communists took over the control of the Youth League. Former members of the Communist Youth organisation became prominent in the leadership of the Congress Youth League. Conflicts developed. Some of the new leaders of the League were taken to Iron Curtain countries to attend the world festivals of youth. Sisulu travelled to Bucharest, Moscow and Peking. Who actually paid his travelling expenses remains a closely-guarded secret to this day.

While all these things happened, the communists pressed the ANC, one result of which was the destruction of the Congress Youth League. Key leaders like Mtololo resigned in protest against Sisulu's trip to Moscow. Quarrels developed. Alarmed by the dangers which threatened Congress unity, I frequently visited Luthuli, who was then a banned man and whose movements were confined to the Stanger magisterial area, to urge him to accept a new constitution which centralised control in Johannesburg. These developments, very serious, produced internal crises in the ANC. to curb the/