

## Chapter 1: Childhood Days

My father, Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa, once a prosperous nobleman according to the standards of that time died in 1930 having lost his chieftaincy and all the wealth and comforts attached to that office.

Shortly thereafter my mother and I went westward on a journey which, unknown to me then, was to change my whole life. I was sorry to leave behind the sweet home where I had spent the happiest days of my childhood; the simple peasant huts where my sisters and I had enjoyed my mother's love and protection as well as her tempting dishes; where we had listened to her at night telling us gripping stories and fables from the distant past, and where no evil could touch us.

Before we disappeared behind the hills I turned and looked for the last time at the cluster of villages I was leaving behind. I could see the two trading stores where I used to buy my mother's groceries, the two primary schools I had attended, the dipping tanks, the maize fields and the green pastures where the herds and flocks were grazing. I imagined how other boys were enjoying themselves hunting, roasting maize on the cob, drinking milk straight from the cow's udders and swimming in the pools. Above all I could see those three round huts which I associated with happiness, with life itself. I wished I had kissed them before I left.

We travelled on foot and in the afternoon came to a large and beautiful home with an equally large

courtyard. The buildings consisted of two large ingxande (square houses) and seven rondavels, all washed in white lime and far bigger than anything I had seen before. In the shade of two gum trees sat a group of about twenty serious elders. There were peach trees and maize in the front garden and a larger garden at the back had apple trees, maize, a vegetable and flower strip and a wattle patch. Grazing around the place were about fifty head of cattle and about three hundred sheep. This was Mqhekezweni, the provisional capital of Thembuland, and the residence of Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo who acted as the regent for Sabata, a future king.

In my village at Qunu I had seen modern homes of the families of Mbekela, Zidlele, Njomane, Habe and others, but the royal residence completely dwarfed all these. Here almost everything had a dimension of its own and at that age I could hardly imagine anything on earth which could exceed this. It would take me almost two decades to discover the prosperity of the Thembu Court could hardly be compared to that of the senior chiefs of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. Towards sunset a huge motor car drove through the western gate and the men in the shade rose to their feet shouting: Bayethe a-a-a Jongintaba ! (Hail ! Jongintaba !), the traditional salute of the Xhosas for their chief. A short thick set man, dark complexioned and wearing a smart suit, stepped out and joined the gathering under the trees. He had a resolute bearing and an intelligent face. His confidence and casual manner marked him off as one who was used to praise and exercise of authority. This was the regent who for more than a decade was to be my guardian and generous benefactor and who was to exercise a tremendous influence on me. His physical appearance symbolised all the prosperity and grandeur that was written into everything that made up that home.

The men around him were the counselors who handled the affairs of Thembuland and who formed the highest Thembu Court of Justice.

Before my arrival at Mqhekezweni I had no higher ambitions than to have plenty of good food, nice clothes, to become a great hunter, a champion stick fighter, and the centre of a host of other adventures some printable others not. The idea of property and class had not become an obsession as yet. But even on that first day of my arrival, I felt like a tree that had been pulled out root and branch from the earth and flung mid stream into a strong current.

Children who come from poor homes, whose parents can neither read nor write, are exposed to many temptations when they suddenly find themselves in the midst of prosperity. Established beliefs, existing loyalties and even affectionate relationships may be undermined. During the first days at the royal residence I felt the slender foundations my parents had built in me beginning to shake with the impact of all the glitter that surrounded me. Life here made me acutely aware of the poverty in which I was born and bred.

A few days after our arrival my mother, my very first friend in life, returned to Qunu to resume the fight against poverty and growing physical and spiritual needs that would never be satisfied. I remained behind merry in the festive atmosphere of Mqhekezweni, eating fairly good food, sleeping in comfort and looking like a polished piece of bronze in the new outfit the regent had bought me. Parting came without fuss. There were no sermons, moral or otherwise, no kisses and not even a

handshake. All these things would have been superfluous. That tender look of hers which has always moved me and her smooth and concise remarks were all that I needed to feel secure and relaxed. Uqinisufokotho Kwedini ! (Brace yourself up, my boy !) meant more to me than anything else.

Both my home at Qunu and the royal residence at Mqhekezweni are in the district of Mthatha (the corrupt European form being presently Umtata), the capital of the Transkei. The Transkei itself is about seven hundred miles east of Cape Town and lies between the Kei River and the Natal border, the Drakensberg mountains and the Indian Ocean. A beautiful country of rolling hills, fertile valleys and numerous rivers, it is the largest block of African territory in South Africa, covering an area of 16,500 square miles and with the present population of 3,600,000 Xhosas with a tiny minority of Basothos, Coloureds (mixed blood) and whites.

The land is owned by the State and, with a few exceptions, Africans enjoy no private title to land. Africans are state tenants paying rent annually to the Government. Much of the beauty of the territory has been destroyed by over population, over stocking and soil erosion. The houses consist of rounded mud walls, grass roofs with strong wooden poles in the centre on which the roof rests. The floor is made of crushed ant heap and kept smooth and clean by smearing it regularly with fresh cow dung. The houses are generally grouped together in residential areas separate and very often some distance from the maize fields. Cattle, horses, sheep and goats graze in common pastures.

Maize, sorghum, beans and pumpkins form the staple diet, not because of any inherent preference for this type of food, but because the people cannot afford anything better. The more well to do families supplement their diets with some milk, tea, coffee and sugar, but for many people these are luxuries which are beyond their means. For the greater part of the year the men are away working on the mines, farms and towns. They return mainly for the purpose of ploughing but leave the hoeing, weeding and harvesting to women and children. Water has to be fetched in buckets or clay pitchers by women from springs and streams.

As a rule Christians move about in modern clothes whilst the non-Christians wear blankets soaked in ochre. The Transkei is a country of poverty and hunger, disease and illiteracy. It serves as an important reservoir of cheap labour for the mines and the farms, the former having established an efficient network of recruiting agencies throughout the area. Much change has occurred to this area over the past fifty years in regard to the living conditions of the people and, in spite of strong objections and stubborn resistance from the liberation movement to the policy of separate development and its institutions, today there is even talk of independence in which the people it is claimed will for the first time since conquest run their own affairs.

My father ruled at Mvezo in the district of Mthatha. Here I was born on the 18th July 1918, a year which is significant in many respects. It brought both disaster and happy days. It was the year of the influenza epidemic in which millions of people throughout the world died. It marked the end of the

first world war and ushered in world peace for two decades. That year a delegation of the African National Congress travelled to the Versailles Peace Conference to voice the grievances of the African people of South Africa. On the home front it was a year of rising industrial unrest in which both black and white workers went on strike and in which there were even wild rumours of an impending rebellion by the workers. It was in this atmosphere that in Johannesburg and Durban workers went so far as to establish soviets to manage their affairs. Above all, it was the year following the Bolshevik revolution - an immortal achievement which opened up vast possibilities for man's forward movement.

My relationship to the Thembu royal house, and more particularly the fact that I spent my youth at Mqhekezweni, has led to well meant but exaggerated accounts of my exact position in the affairs of Thembuland. In actual fact even if my father had not been deposed, I would not have succeeded him as chief and I was never at any time in the line of succession of the Thembu throne. If the regent was grooming me for an important traditional post, it was not because of any hereditary claim to such a post but because he believed that the holding of such office would strengthen my position as advisor to the future king.

The Thembu monarch, Ngubangcuka, reigned until his death in 1832. As was the custom in those days he had, apart from his junior wives, three main houses: the Great House, the Right-Hand House and Ixhiba House. Mthikrakra became the heir in the Great House of the king. Amongst his sons were Ngangelizwe and Mathanzima. Sabata, the present king, is the great grandson of the

former and Daliwonga, the present chief minister of the Transkei, of the latter. The heir in the Right-Hand House was Mbambnonduna whose descendants are to be found near Clarkebury Institution. The eldest son of Ixhiba was Simakade, whose younger brother was Mandela, my grandfather. The reader will immediately realise from this broad outline of my family tree that the Mandelas were never in line to the succession of the Thembu throne.<sup>(1)</sup> See Thembu Genealogy table. Appendix....

My father had four wives and my mother, Nosekeni Fanny, the daughter of Nkedama from Amampemvu clan, belonged to the Right-Hand House. With the exception of the youngest wife, each one had her own separate home, garden and maize field and stock. At the time of his death my father had thirteen children - four boys and nine girls and a handful of grandchildren. His eldest son was Mlahlwa but the heir to succession was Daliqgili who died in the early thirties. The other son was Tututu from Igodi (supporting house) to the Great House. All of them are now deceased but each one of them was my senior in age and status.

I am the eldest in the Right-Hand House and have three sisters: Baliwe, who comes after me, runs an eating house at Qunu. Notancu is married to Daniel Timakhwe a mine worker and close relative of Timothy Mbuzo who has been the leading member of the African National Congress in the Transkei for many years. They have provided South Africa with a strong batch of eight children. Makhutswana's husband is the police sergeant Russell Philiso. She is the most politically conscious of my sisters. In the 1950s she was expelled from Boksburg - Benoni Hospital, where she was

probationer nurse together with Oliver Tambo's niece, for leading a nurse's strike. In 1963 while training as a nurse at Baragwanath Hospital, she was detained under the Sabotage Law on the allegation that she had recruited people for military training abroad.

My father is often referred to as Prime Minister of Thembuland during Dalindyebo's reign and that of his son, Jongilizwe, a claim which is by no means new in African Government. Gatsha Buthelezi's ancestors, Nqgengelele and Mnyamana, have been described by several historians as Prime Ministers of Shaka and Cetshwayo respectively. Certainly, my father was very close to Dalindyebo and accompanied him in his travels throughout the country. He was always at his side during important interviews with government officials and his views carried weight.

A passage on page 28 of I DALI LA BA TEMBU ( The History of the Tembus) by W.D. Cingo (Palmerstone, January 1927) which appears in The Praises of Jongilizwe by the poet Qhakuva Dyanti, confirms this view. According to the poet, the king's right to the throne was challenged by one of his brothers and the matter was settled in favour of the king through the intervention of my father. It is common knowledge that on the death of Jongilizwe a regent had to be appointed during Sabata's minority. There were several contestants including Jongintaba, Dabulamanzi, and Malithafa, all of whom were Dalindyebo's sons and fairly popular. My father suggested Jongintaba on the ground that the latter was, in the absence of Jongilizwe, the most senior of the sons of Dalindyebo and entitled as of right to act as regent. This argument was ultimately accepted both by the Tembus as well as the Government.



But whether my father's actual relationship to his monarchs and his ability to influence policy entitled him to be styled premier may be contested by orthodox political scientist. Certainly, if we are guided by the precise political concepts of Westminster, there is some merit in the view that, judged strictly, neither my father, Nqgengelele nor Mnyamana could in any sense be described as premiers. As a rule a premier is the leader of a definite political party with a specific name and a distinct policy on questions of national importance. He is the head of government, appoints members to his cabinet and presides at cabinet meetings. He makes major policy statements and exercises general supervision over government. It would be easy to show that my father was leader of no political party and head of no government, that Amaphakathi (Counsellors) were not formally appointed, but automatically became such because they were the king's own close relatives, influential chiefs or men who had risen to that position through sheer personal ability; that both Dalindyebo and his son, Jongilizwe, had many brothers and uncles who were senior in status to my father; that there was a couple of educated men in the Thembu Court who were more useful to the community than my father could ever hope to be, and that he neither made policy statements nor exercises any general supervisory powers on government. But grave errors will be made if we examine these notions formally and not in substance, for even though in advanced societies such concepts may take specific forms, in less developed ones we may be influenced by substantially similar though not identical standards. The central point in this regard is that the office of premier is part and parcel of the machinery of government. The head of state normally relies on advice of some particular person whose judgement is sound and trustworthy, and who commands the

confidence of the community. Whether we call him premier in the capitalist epoch or chief counsellor in communities living under primitive classless society is more a question of form than of fundamental difference. Substantially, both perform the same function. My father was also member of the Bunga (Transkeian Territories United General Council) which advised the government on the administration of the Transkei. But I have no independent knowledge of this fact. The regent and C.K. Sakwe, themselves members of the Bunga for many years, and Tennyson Makiwane (senior), an employee of the Bunga, frequently reminded me of this fact. A distinction should however, be made between the Transkeian Territorial United General Council whose jurisdiction covered the twenty six districts of the Transkei and the District Council whose authority was confined to the district concerned. In Xhosa they are both called the Bunga. I have been unable to ascertain whether he was a member of the one or the other or both. My father became a chief of Mvezo not by virtue of the fact that he was a grandson of Ngubengcuka, but because the government of the had appointed him as a headman to this position. He had to account for his stewardship to his king and to the magistrate. During the course of his chieftaincy one of his subjects lodged a complaint against him and the magistrate ordered him to appear for the purpose of investigating the matter administratively. Instead of obeying the order my father took up a defiant attitude, arguing that in matters of this kind he was guided by Thembu law and custom, that according to such law and custom the action complained of was perfectly valid and that there was consequently nothing to investigate. His defiance was not just an outburst of temper. It was based on principle - he was asserting what he believed to be his traditional prerogative and challenging the right of the magistrate to interfere in such affairs. When the official insisted that he should appear,

he replied: "Andizi Ndisaqula" (I will not come, I am still putting on my sword). He was charged and convicted and that ultimately led to his deposition. The only form of tribalism of which I first became aware in our small world at Qunu was that between the Xhosas and Fingoes. As far as the standard of education was concerned the latter were in those days the most advanced section of the community. They were the first to produce clergymen, policemen, teacher, clerks, interpreters, and agricultural demonstrators. They were amongst the first to become Christians, to build better houses and use scientific methods of agriculture. Their economic standard was higher than that of their Xhosa compatriots. This disparity gave rise to feelings of hostility between the two sections.

My father lived above these prejudices and was accepted warmly by both sections. The Fingo brothers, George and Ben Mbekela, were among his closest friends and he consulted them on numerous problems. It was because of their influence that my mother became a Christian and I was baptized and sent to school on their advice. The old man, George, was a sort of godfather and visited me regularly at Mqhekezweni. It was at Mqhekezweni that I learnt for the first time that Ngangelizwe, immediately after the war of Nongxokozelo in 1875, officially banned the use of the word "Fingo" against any Thembu citizen in his kingdom. In that war the Thembu army was badly mauled by the Gcalekas and its reputation was saved, if at all, by the courageous stand of a Fingo regiment under Menziwa at Mthentu. Even to the present day the Menziwas rank amongst the most respected families in the Thembu Court. In spite of his friendship with Christians, my father remained aloof from Christianity and instead pinned his own faith on Quamata, the God of his fathers. As the most senior member of the family, he was family priest. Occasionally a goat would be slaughtered and he would officiate the traditional rites connected with the breaking of the

drought with planting, first fruits, harvest, marriage, birth, initiation ceremonies and death. By the standards of the community then, he probably would be regarded as a refined person. I think he was and certainly loved and respected his wives and children like any other man. But in maintaining discipline among his children he did not hesitate to use the rod ever he thought such a course was necessary. At birth my father gave me the name Rolihlahla, which literally means 'pulling the branch of a tree' and more accurately, 'troublemaker'. In later years relatives and friends would jokingly ascribe to this name the multiplicity of storms into which I have run. My English name was given to me by my class teacher on the first day I attended school. Before that I do not remember receiving any kind of formal education. Nobody ever sat with me at regular intervals to give me a clear and connected account of the history of our country, of its geography, natural wealth and problems, of our culture, of how to count, to study weights and measures. Like all Xhosa children I acquired knowledge by asking questions to satisfy my curiosity as I grew up, learnt through experience, watched adults and tried to imitate what they did. In this process an important role is played by custom, ritual and taboo, and I came to possess a fair amount of information in this regard. For example I soon learnt that a married woman may under no circumstances enter the cattle or sheep kraal in her new home, may not mention the name of any of her husbands ancestors, that men may not enter a house where a woman recently given birth, that the first fruits may not be tasted without appropriate ceremonies, and that to neglect your parents and your customs would bring disaster and failure in life. In our home there were other dependents, boys mainly, and at an early age I drifted away from my parents and moved about, played and ate together with other boys. In fact I hardly remember any occasion when I was ever alone at home. There were always other

children with whom I shared food and blankets at night. I must have been about five years old when I began going out with other boys to look after sheep and calves and when I was introduced to the exciting love of the veld. Later when I was a bit older I was able to look after cattle as well. It was here that I learnt how to use sticks, to strike and parry blows, to hit birds in flight with a stick or sling, to set traps, gather wild honey, fruits and edible roots, drink milk straight from the udder, swim in the streams and pools and to catch river fish with twine and sharpened bits of wire. We stole maize from the fields, produced fire by rubbing together two dry sticks, and roasted the maize, preferably in old ant heaps. We made and played with clay toys - oxen pulling a sledge, plough or wagon, horses in harness, human beings, birds and all the other objects we knew. Not only could we not afford modern toys. At that time I had not even seen or heard of them. We used small flat stones to slide down the face of a large sloping rock - the indigenous version of the western sliding chute for children and repeated the performance over and over again. We learnt to ride by taming weaned calves and after being thrown several times to the ground, one acquired the technique. Several games like Ndize (hide and seek), Icekwa (touch and run) could be played together with girls. In the latter the competitors touch one another, usually on the upper part of the body, and the winner is the one who is the last to touch the other. This is usually done by touching and sprinting away before the other could retaliate. Another game I enjoyed very much was what I call Khetha (choose-the-one-you-like) game. We would stop girls of our age group along the way and ask each one to choose the boy she loved. It was a rule that the girl's choice would be respected and, once she had selected her favourite, she was free to continue her journey escorted by the boy she had chosen. Nimble witted girls used to combine and all choose one boy, usually the ugliest or dullest, and there

after tease or bully him along the way. Thinti was the most popular boys' game in our area. We would divide ourselves into two equal sides. Two Thinti was the most popular boys' game in our area. We would divide ourselves into two equal sides. Two sticks would be driven firmly into the ground in an upright position and at some reasonable distance apart. They served as targets. The game would begin when one side started throwing sticks with the object of striking down the opposite target. If they missed a target the opponents would then collect all the sticks and, in turn, begin throwing against the opposite target. If a side struck down the target and the last stick had been thrown over, they tried to retrieve the sticks with the opposite side defending. Many times we organised faction fights against boys from the other villages and those who distinguished themselves in this field were highly regarded amongst us. Finally we used to sing and dance and fully enjoyed the perfect freedom we seemed to have far away from the old people. After supper we would listen enthralled to my mother and sometimes my aunt telling us stories, legends, myths and fables which have come down from countless generations, and all of which tended to stimulate the imagination and contained some valuable moral lesson. As I look back to those days I am inclined to believe that the type of life I led at my home, my experiences in the veld where we worked and played together in groups, introduced me at an early age to the ideas of collective effort. The little progress I made in this regard was later undermined by the type of formal education I received which tended to stress individual more than collective values. Nevertheless, in the mid 1940s when I was drawn into the political struggle, I could adjust myself to discipline without difficulty, perhaps because of my early upbringing. On the death of my father, the regent became my guardian and Mqhekezweni my other home. They had two children - Justice, who

succeeded him as chief of Mqhekezweni, and Nomafo. A few years after my arrival, Sabata's brother, Nxeko, now chief of Matyenqcina and chairman of the Dalindyebo Territorial Authority, joined us. There were other dependents, mainly from our Madlomo clan. The regent and his wife, No-engeland, brought me up with all the love and affection of natural parents and hardly do I remember ever feeling that I was not their child. Throughout they fondly addressed me with the pet name of Tatomkhulu (grandpa). Justice, Nomafo, Nxeko and I ate the same food, dressed equally well and went to the same colleges. During school holidays I became a plough boy, wagon guide, shepherd and some evenings even danced away to the beautiful music and clapping of Thembu girls. Little did I suspect then that one day I would be moved by the singing of Mariam Makheba, Vera Gow, Eartha Kitt and Joothika Roy, and by the graceful movements of Margot Fonteyn and Maya Plisetskaya.

Justice, four years older than me, was my first real hero outside of my parents. When we first met he was a student at Clarkebury. He was a good sportsman and excelled in athletics, cricket, rugby and soccer. He was also a singer and a polished ballroom dancer. Tall, well built and handsome, he had a bevy of admirers and an army of critics. But to me he was a saint and I tried to model my own life on his. The powerful hold he had on me later weakened but for quite some time I was under his spell. It was at Mqhekezweni that I first heard of African heroes like Sekhukhune and Moshweshwe, Dingane and Bhambatha, Hintsa and Makana, Montshiwa and Kgama. At first these were somewhat remote figures to me and I was immediately attracted by Thembu heroes like Siquingathi, Mathanzima, Dalasile and Gecelo who defied the orders of their own king and fought

against the British. It was much later that I was carried away by the broad sweep of African history as a whole, that the deeds of all African heroes gave me an intense pride and confidence. But even then I was unable to appreciate the issues at stake and the real forces that actually shaped our history. It did not occur to me in those days that the real history of our country is not to be found only in standard text books and works of reference prescribed for our schools and universities, that it still has to be written by progressive historians who have no race prejudice and who regard all human beings as equals. I was still to learn that the history of South Africa begins not in Europe, not with the Portuguese voyages and the wrecks along our coast, and still less does it start with the landing of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 as most Western historians claim. I would in due course find that our history starts in South Africa itself centuries before the arrival of the Khoi Khoi, the Bantu speaking people and the Whites.

Equally important I would discover that South African history, like that of the world at large, was not made by monarchs and commanders, however gifted and powerful these might have been, but by the masses of the people - by Abathwa, the Khoi Khoi, the Bantu speaking peoples, the simple country folks who held foreign armies at bay for more than two centuries with only their poisoned arrows and bows, knobkerries and spears. It was also at Mqhekezweni that I heard for the first time about the historical origins of the Bantu speaking people, that we came from far in the north, from a country of lakes and green plains and valleys.

Mqhekezweni was also a mission of our church, the Wesleyan Church, and Reverend Matyholo



was then in charge. A relative of No-England, I saw him quite often at the royal residence or the mission house. He was tall and powerfully built with an equally powerful voice. Though he was in his fifties when I first met him he was still growing sideways when he left the mission. Whenever he was scheduled to preach, the church would be packed and almost every woman present would kneel down at his feet and cry for salvation. The story was often told, and even believed by some, that shortly before my arrival at the mission, he had chased away single handed a dangerous ghost with only a bible and lantern as his weapons.

Speaking for myself, the only occasion on which I ever saw a ghost with my own eyes was at Qokolweni in 1933. One evening a friend and I were going to a concert. We were frightened and tense as we passed a graveyard where those notorious creatures are supposed to live. Just at that moment a column of light flashed on us and we ran like hares chased by a pack of hunting dogs. We stormed into Reverend Mboniswa's house which was on the main road from Mthatha and Mqanduli. We were still speechless from shock and exhaustion when the triumphant ghost roared past. It had four wheels - a motor car.

Reverend Matyholo always reminds me of an incident for which I received a sharp rebuke. One afternoon I broke into his garden and stole maize which we roasted and ate with other boys. A girl saw me and immediately reported to the priest. The news reached the regent's wife the same day. She waited until prayer time, and as soon as we finished praising the Lord, she confronted me with this allegation and accused me of having taken bread from a poor servant of God and of disgracing

the family. She condemned my action so strongly that I feared the devil would torture me for this.

At Qunu I never went to church except on the day when I was baptized by the same priest at the age of seven. But at Mqhekezweni I attended regularly. In fact the only occasion on which the regent ever gave me corporal punishment was when I dodged service and took part in a faction fight. I never made that mistake again. At Qunu I used to stay away from school during ploughing season to help the family in the fields. But at Mqhekezweni ploughing presented no problem. For one thing the large royal field would be completely ploughed in less than a day by the community, and there was enough labour for purposes of planting, hoeing and reaping. Only on Saturdays was I free to go to the fields and join the other boys in the veld. The regent was not keen that I visit Qunu, lest I should fall into bad company and run away from school, so he reasoned. He would allow me only a few days to go home. On other occasions he would arrange for my mother to be fetched so that she could see me at the royal residence. It was always an exciting moment for me to visit Qunu and see my mother and sisters and other members of the family. I was particularly happy in the company of my cousin, Alexander Mandela, who inspired and encouraged me on questions of education in those early days. He and my niece, Phathiwe Rhanugu (she was much older than me), were perhaps the first members of our clan to qualify as teachers. Were it not for their advice and patient persuasion I doubt if I would have succeeded in resisting the attractions offered by the easy life outside the classroom. The two influences that dominated my thoughts and actions during those days were chieftancy and the church. After all, the only heroes I had heard of at that time had almost all been chiefs, and the respect enjoyed by the regent from both black and white tended to exaggerate the importance of this institution in my mind. I saw chieftancy not only as the pivot

around which community life turned, but as the key to positions of influence, power and status. Equally important was the position of the church, which I associated not so much with the body and doctrine contained in the bible but with the person of Reverend Matyholo. In this circuit he was as popular as the regent, and the fact that in spiritual matters he was the regent's superior and leader, stressed the enormous power of the church. What was even more was that all the progress my people had made - the schools that I attended, the teachers who taught me, the clerks and interpreters in government offices, the agricultural demonstrators and policemen, were all the products of missionary schools. Later the dual position of the chiefs as representatives of their people and as government servants compelled me to assess their position more realistically, and not merely from the point of view of my own family background or of the exceptional chiefs who identified themselves with the struggle of their people. As descendants of the famous heroes that led us so well during the wars of dispossession and as the traditional leaders in their own right, chiefs are entitled to be treated with respect. But as agents of an oppressive government that is regarded as the enemy of the black man, the same chiefs are the objects of criticism and hostility. The institution of chieftancy itself has been captured by the government and must now be seen as part of the machinery of oppression. My experiences also enable me to formulate a more balanced assessment of the role of the missionaries and to realise the folly of judging the issue simply in terms of relations with individual priests. Nevertheless, I have always considered it dangerous to underestimate the influence of both institutions amongst the people and for this reason I have repeatedly urged caution in dealing with them. But to continue the story. I was among the twenty six boys who sat around two grass huts in a secluded valley on the banks of Mbashe (called

Bashee River by the whites) River in January 1934. Our otherwise naked bodies were clean shaven. Each one of us was tense and anxious, uncertain how he would react when the critical moment came. The regent, a handful of chiefs and counsellors were amongst the crowd of parents, relatives and spectators. Suddenly there was excitement and a thin elderly man shot past towards my left and squatted in front of the first boy. A few seconds thereafter I heard this boy say: "Ndiyindoda !" (I am a man.) Then Justice repeated the word followed one after the other by the three boys between us. The old man was moving fast and before I knew what was happening he was right in front of me. I looked straight into his eyes. He was deadly pale and though the day was coll his face was shining with perspiration. Without saying a word he seized and pulled the foreskin and brought down the assegai. It was a perfect cut, clean and round like a ring. Within a week the wound healed, but without anesthetic, the actual incision was as if molten lead was flowing through my veins. For seconds I forgot about the refrain and tried instead to absorb the shock of the assegai by digging my head and shoulders into a grass wall. I recovered and just managed to repeat the formula "Ndiyindoda !" The other boys seemed much stronger and repeated the chorus promptly and clearly when each one's turn came round. The mysterious elder was a famous Ingcibi (circumcision expert) from Gcalekaland. The place was Tyhalarha, the traditional place of circumcision for several Thembu kings. The occasion was the circumcision of Justice and we twenty five were merely his companions. Each one of us had now taken the essential step necessary in the life of every Xhosa man. We had reached the bridge to cross from the Utopia of childhood to the realities of manhood. Now I could marry, set up my own home and plough my own fields. I could go and work in the gold fields and be as rich as my strength and wits would allow. Above all I could now be

admitted into the councils of the community and be able to influence policy and decisions. Among the Xhosas circumcision is the only gateway to full age and full rights of citizenship. The name Dalibhunga (founder of the Bunga) was given to me at this stage. It is more acceptable to the traditionalists than either of my two other names and they may be used freely by my contemporaries, elders and juniors. Towards the end of March we were discharged. The huts were burnt down and we washed away the white ochre in the waters of Mbashe amidst ceremonial festivities to welcome us formally to our new status. Speeches were made and presents given, a heifer here, a horse there, a goat or saddle. We all felt fresh and high, looked serious and even tried to walk differently. After all we were a new generation ready to lead Thembuland to a new era of greatness and prosperity. But the son of Dalindyabo, chief Meliqgili, dashed all our illusions and brought us back to South Africa, with earthy remarks that have been ringing through my ears for more than forty years. This is the jist of what he said then: There sit our sons, all looking young, healthy and handsome. We have circumcised them but none will ever become a man because we are a conquered people and slaves in our own country. For the rest of their lives they will cough their lungs out deep down in the bowels of the earth, because we have no land to give them where they could prosper and multiply as whites do. Among them are chiefs who will never rule because we have no power to govern; soldiers who will never feel the thrill of fighting for their own country because we have no weapons. But Qamata (God) never sleeps and will never let us down. But if, contrary to our expectations, he is dozing, then the sooner I die and meet him the better. I shall then shake him out of his sleep and tell him that the children of Ngubengcuka are dying. My immediate reaction to the chief's remark was one of utter disappointment. He seemed to be cursing

instead of blessing us as other speakers had done. I dismissed his speech at the time as the abusive remarks of an ignorant man who was unable to appreciate the value of education and all the wonderful things the white man had brought to our country. Much later I discovered that in actual fact the chief was one of the leading thinkers of the day in this field, that the ignorant man was not him but me. In the Transvaal in particular I came across progressive politicians who echoed the chief's remarks in different words. Among these were Doctors Xuma and Dadoo, Selope Thema, Michael Harmel, James Phillips and many others. In this chapter I have referred several times to custom and tradition. In actual fact the social importance of both has waned considerably during the last fifty years, a tendency which may gain momentum as the country continues to industrialise and education spreads. But in this country areas in particular and in towns with homogeneous African populations, the practice of circumcision is still prevalent, and one's acceptability to the community depends very largely on whether one has observed the custom or not. My association with the African National Congress has taught me that a broad national movement has numerous and divergent contradictions, fundamental and otherwise. The presence in one organisation of various classes and social groups with conflicting long term interests that may collide at crucial moments, brings its own train of conflicts. Contradictions of a different kind may split from top to bottom an otherwise homogeneous class or group, and the prejudices arising from different practices in regard to circumcision are amongst these. I still remember well my first reaction, and even revulsion, at Fort Hare when I discovered that a friend had not observed the custom. I was twenty one then and my subsequent association with the African National Congress and progressive ideas helped me to crawl out of the prejudice of my youth and to accept all people as equals. I came to accept that I

have no right whatsoever to judge other in terms of my own customs, however much I may be proud of such customs; that to despise others because they have not observed particular customs is a dangerous form of chauvinism. I consider myself obliged to pay proper respect to my customs and traditions, provided that such customs and traditions tend to keep us together and do not in any way conflict with the aims and objects of the struggle against racial oppression. But I shall neither impose my own customs on others nor follow any practice which will offend my comrades, especially now that freedom has become so costly. But these were not the issues that preoccupied my mind as I left the ceremony in our honor at Tyharlarha in March 1934. I strolled into the open veld and from where I stood I looked at the lush green valley down below. To my back was a large village which I knew so well and through which I had passed many a time on my way from Mqhekezweni to Tyharlarha. Not a single school, Christian or person in Western clothes could be found in that village. It was one of the poorest places I have ever seen in my life, much poorer than Qunu. Battalions of men, young and old, left the area yearly to work on the gold mines. Its only wealth was the cheapness of its labour. But this was the wealth for others and not for the village. For the mine bosses and not for Thembuland. To our generation the village was famous for the beauty of its women. I thought I should walk in that direction. Just then I looked to my right and saw the Mbhashe flowing slowly like a giant serpent towards the Indian Ocean. I had never crossed that river before and knew nothing of the world beyond. I had known vaguely that Hintsa, the famous Xhosa king, had lived somewhere in those areas, and that Makana, the African general who tried to take Grahamstown in 1819 had also lived in that direction. I turned to my left and saw several homes scattered among the mimosa trees with cattle and sheep grazing nearby. I could see

the wealthy home of Banabakahe Blayi, the most popular boy in the circumcision school. He was a champion stick fighter and a glamour boy whose many girl friends kept all of us supplied with various kinds of delicacies. Although he could neither read nor write he was easily the most intelligent amongst us. Several times he had been to Johannesburg and had so thrilled me with stories of his experience on the mines that he almost convinced me that to be a miner was more exciting than to be a monarch. I looked straight ahead of me and for some time my thoughts wandered far and wide. Suddenly something caught my eye. Indeed, there it was. Though it was almost sunset, I could not resist the temptation. I hurried down into the valley until I reached the two heaps of ash next to a large mimosa tree. The flames had brought down the two grass huts in which we had lived for more than two months. Under these heaps, a magic world lay in ruins, the world of my childhood, the sweet and happy days of Qunu and Mqhekezweni. Now I was a man and never again would I play Thinti, Ndizi and Icekwa, roast stolen maize, drink milk from the udder or live irresponsibly without getting the reproach of the community. I missed the old days. But old feathers had been shorn and new plumage gained. I turned my thoughts from the past to the present, to my new status and my new outfit, to new possessions and to a new world of fantastic hopes and dreams. At the ceremony I had been given two heifers and four sheep. In comparison to the presents Justice got that day, I received very little. But to one who had never owned anything before it was an exciting moment. I felt quite strong and looked forward to the day when I would be even much stronger. The idea of property, of wealth and status was beginning to influence my thoughts and actions.



## Chapter 2: At College

Immediately after our return from Tyhalarha, the Regent took me across the Mbashe (the river rises in Thembuland but towards the sea it forms a boundary between Thembuland and Gcalekaland) to begin Standard VI at Clarkebury Boarding Institution, then the highest centre of learning in Thembuland and where the Regent himself had once been a student. Justice had entrained for Healdtown the day before. Clarkebury is in the district of Ngcobo (Engcobo) and was built on land donated to the Wesleyan missionaries by Ngubengcuka. It was mainly a teacher training school but also offered courses in secondary education, tailoring, carpentry and tin smithing. Only African students were accepted.

The Reverend C. Harris was the governor and he was one of the most powerful figures I had thus far met. For one thing, he was white and head of the leading institution in the area, enjoying respect and support of members of the staff, parents and the public. At Mqhekezweni I had met many white traders and government officials, including magistrates and police officers. The Regent always received them courteously but on equal terms. There were occasions when he would be quite aggressive and dictatorial, and he never gave any solemn lecture as to how I should behave in their presence other than to urge caution on my part.

But with Reverend Harris the position was quite different. Before leaving home the Regent carefully briefed me on this clergyman, pointing out that he was one of the few white persons in the

area who was a Thembu at heart. He told me that Reverend Harris would bring up Sabata as a Christian king and prepare him for his future role as the traditional head of Thembuland. He stressed again what he had said many times before, that I would be Sabata's Counsellor and appealed to me never to do anything that might compromise Sabata's and my position. He bought me a new suit and my first pair of boots and ended the talk by giving me a pound for pocket money, the largest amount of money I had ever possessed. Now I was convinced that I was about to meet a great man. I was introduced to Reverend Harris, the first white man with whom I shook hands. He received us warmly and gave me advice along similar lines to that of the Regent. During those days students were given manual work after school hours and, fortunately, I was assigned to work in Reverend Harris' garden and remain there for two years. It was during this period that I learnt to know him and his family well. He had a severe expression, rarely joked or laughed with us and ran Clarkebury with an iron hand, more like a field commander than a school head. When he appeared students, members of the staff, including white principals of the training, secondary and industrial schools, rose to their feet. But behind the mask of severity was gentle and broad minded individual who was conscious of the importance of his pioneering work, who regarded himself as part and parcel of a powerful religious organisation which for many years had shouldered the burden of educating Africans. His wife was kind and simple and, unlike Reverend Harris, frequently conversed with me. The reception I got from Reverend Harris, and more particularly his remarks, made me assume that I would be similarly treated by members of the staff and students. After all, Clarkebury was a Thembu College and I was a descendent of Ngubengcuka. In fact, the secondary school was called the Dalindyebo Secondary School. At home the youth knew my position even

though we played together on equal terms and, at times, even fought it out physically. But were I would soon be disillusioned. It was a painful experience to discover that in this new environment I was a person of no importance. The boarding master received me without any blowing of trumpets and my fellow students treated me no differently. Even more, I was to discover later that most of them would beat me hands down in the classroom, in discussions, singing, sports and dancing. The Standard VI classroom was on the first floor and the following day I carefully climbed the steps and entered. The room had a wooden floor and, wearing boots for the first time in my life, I walked like a newly shod horse, the boot crashing down with the heel first and thereafter the front part. A girl student Mathona, watched this exhibition with obvious amusement and remarked to her friend sufficiently loudly for me to hear: "Chum, I'm not used to wearing shoes". I realised she was referring to me and the truth of the statement hit me badly and I went completely wild with anger. I almost manhandled her. Little did I know that she would later become my best friend at that school with whom I would share many secrets. Though I took part in sports and games my performance was generally less than mediocre. However, I continued playing purely for the love of sport and for the experience. We played lawn tennis with home made wooden rackets and soccer with bare feet. In spite of that our centre forward, Wycliff Voyi, always sparkled and potted goals against better equipped teams. In athletics, Thinzi was the star, ran like a springbok and would collect many a trophy. I considered both of them to be exceptional men and enjoyed watching them in action. With a few stringent exceptions, the only contact allowed between male and female students was in the classroom and during intervals. Student complaints regarding diet are as old as boarding institutions themselves and we also had our list of grievances and made demands for improvement. But this is a

matter which has always given me some trouble. For one thing, in this country the issue is complicated by the racial element, for the church and church schools were controlled by whites and the governors of African colleges were also whites, responsible not to the parents but to the church. Any problems that arise are seen by us primarily from this angle. Nevertheless, where educational services are run largely by private enterprise, the facilities available and the diet provided bear some relationship to the amount of fees paid; low fees mean correspondingly inferior services. But even after making allowances, I found the diet poor and sometimes difficult to eat. But I consider the achievements of the missionaries in the field of African education to be tremendous, and Clarkebury and other missionary colleges have played an important role in providing Africans with opportunities for primary, secondary, university and vocational training. For me in particular Clarkebury is the alma mater which gave me the benefit of its years of teaching experience and general guidance, and which opened my eyes to the value of scientific knowledge. One day Mathona told me that we would definitely pass our exams at the end of the year because we were taught by a clever lady teacher. She pointed out that our teacher had read all books and that she knew everything for she was a B.A. She was referring to Gertrude Ntlabathi, the first African woman in South Africa to obtain a degree in Bachelor of Arts. At that time I had a vague idea as to what a B.A. was and, to make sure, I asked Mathona to explain. "Oh yes, a B.A. is a very big and difficult book." She was a bright scholar and I completely believed her. The only other African graduate at Clarkebury, and in whose garden I worked in my last year at that school, was Ben Mahlasela who taught us at the secondary school. He was an independent person and one of the few members of the staff who could meet Reverend Harris on equal terms. He used to walk into the

governor's office fearlessly and with his hat on. He never quite forgot the customs of his forefathers and, when he went to service, he would lead the way to the seats with his wife trailing behind him all the way. The only concession he would make in this regard was to give her the honour of taking her seat first. There was nothing particularly heroic in all these things, but to young students from the countryside it was impressive and we admired him a great deal. Among the students I met at Clarkebury were Honourbrook Bala, Arthur Damane, Sidney Sidiyo, Lincoln Mkentane, Gamaliel Vabaza, and Reuben Mfecane. I was very close to the first three. Bala, Damane and I were allowed to do Standard VIII, normally a third year course after Standard VI, in two years. Bala is now a flourishing medical man in Butterworth. In 1963 he was elected member of the Transkeian Legislative Assembly and became the treasurer of the Democratic Party when it was formed a year later. His refusal to associate himself with an unopposed motion introduced in the Assembly in memory of Verwoerd, the South African premier who was assassinated in Parliament in 1966, created a sensation. Strangely enough, his action was criticized even by members of his own party. Damane settled in the Witwatersrand and joined the African National Congress and the Communist Party of South Africa. For years he worked for the militant newspaper, The Guardian. We were detained together in Pretoria Prison during the State of Emergency in 1960. Sidiyo became a teacher and musician and has written songs which are sung in African schools throughout the country. I remained in touch with him until the early 1950s when the freedom drums began to beat louder, forcing me to desert some of my best friends who are advancing our interests in other ways. I was very close to Mkentane. I later met him at the University College of Fort Hare and he impressed me as a capable man. The inevitable happened to him and today he is one of the top men

of the Non European Unity Movement. Though we have not met for thirty six years I sometimes think of him. Even at Clarkebury I considered Vabaza to be a man who was carved out for the highest honours, an impression which has been fully confirmed by his activities as a student at Fort Hare, his contributions as a teacher and as a member of the Cape African Teachers Association and as a lawyer. But I have always thought of him more as a community leader than a successful professional man, a people's prophet working full-time and systematically for heaven on this earth. A man with his abilities would have been an asset to the struggle for national emancipation no matter which wing of the liberation movement he belongs to. There are many South Africans who as individuals are better known than Mfecane. But the special importance of men like him lies in the fact that they have pledged themselves to fight against the greatest evil in life - man's inhumanity to man. They proclaim that love of all human beings, equality of all people and the need to live in harmony are the highest principles of social life, and believe that one's total commitment to the struggle against social evil is the true mark of one's progress. They seek solutions through team work, and as members of a mass political organisation which is countrywide and which serves as a vehicle for the African opinion as a whole. They are front liners who have renounced personal comfort and placed themselves at the service of the people. They pay particular regard to both principles and method and have consistently sought peaceful solutions because peace is the mother of all nations. But they are realists, and where peaceful solutions have failed they do not hesitate to use violence. Above all, throughout their political career, they have been inspired by the knowledge and belief that where a people are divided, victory is impossible. Soon after leaving school Mfecane settled in Port Elizabeth where he became a trade unionist, and member of the African National

Congress of the Cape Province. I never suspected during the good old days at Clarkebury that one day he and I would serve our time on this island. But to return to Clarkebury, Mathona was a day scholar and when she passed Standard VI she left school. Her parents did not have the means to send her to College and no other person could help her. That is how the brilliant Mathona missed a chance in life and joined the exceptionally high percentage of drop outs which is the characteristic feature of African education in South Africa. Nevertheless, we met often until the end of 1936 when I completed my Standard VIII. I bade her goodbye as I left for Mqhekezweni hoping to see her again. Then suddenly she disappeared and I have never seen or heard of her again. At Clarkebury I met students from all over the Transkei and a few from Johannesburg and Basutoland, as Lesotho was then known. These contacts helped to broaden my outlook but at heart I was still a Thembu and by large I thought and acted like one. At the beginning of 1937 I joined Justice at Healdtown, the Wesleyan College in Fort Beaufort. It lies in the centre of an area which once formed part of the kingdom of Phalo, the last great king who ruled over all the Xhosas from the Mbashe to the Gamtoos River. On his death in 1775 the area between the Kei River and the Gamtoos passed to his son of the Right-Hand House, Rharhabe. For a whole century this area was the scene of fierce fighting in which the intruding whites systematically dispossessed the Xhosas of their land. The names of many places in the area, like Fort Beaufort, Fort Cox, Fort Glamorgan, Fort Hare and Fort Wiltshire, testify to the fact that war was once a dominant feature in the life of its inhabitants. It was here that between 1779 and 1879 warriors like Ndlambe, Makana, Maqoma, Sandile and others operated and achieved fame. Healdtown was a much larger institution than Clarkebury and attracted students from all parts of the country. Regionalism and even tribalism

were still strong and after school hours and over weekends we moved in separate groups each made up of the students who came from the same region. In spite of this the process of broadening my outlook continued uninterrupted. We mixed freely in the dining hall, the classroom, in sports and games, at meal time and in bedrooms. It was at Healdtown that I met my first Sotho-speaking friend, Zachariah Molete, a friendship that would bear rich fruit in later years. The boarding master, Reverend S.S. Mokitini, who later became the first African president of the Methodist (Wesleyan) Church of South Africa, was also Sotho speaking. He was gifted and progressive and when I became a prefect in my second year, I found it a pleasure to serve under him. Another Sotho speaking person who was popular among the students was our zoology teacher, Frank Lebentlele. He had cut across tribal barriers and married a Xhosa lady from my home town. Such a marriage was something quite novel to me in those days and further exposed my backwardness in matters of this nature. Lebentlele also mixed freely with students and played in the College's first soccer team. The cumulative effect of all these things was to undermine my parochialism and to give me new perspectives. I became vaguely conscious of an identity which held together all Africans, which forced us to attend separate schools from whites, worship in separate churches and travel in separate railway carriages, which made us live in separate areas and to be buried in separate graveyards. Nevertheless, I was still essentially a Xhosa - my thinking, inspired more by the achievements of my own ethnic group than those of the people of my country as a whole. In this regard an important role was played by the poet Krune Mqhayi who visited the college in 1938. The college authorities declared the day a school holiday. Members of the staff, black and white, and students gathered in the dining hall to listen to the visitor. Then the door leading to the Governor's house opened and a



man in a kaross and carrying two spears entered, followed by the Governor himself. The sight of a black man coming in through a door which was reserved for the Governor only electrified us. But his physical appearance was even more symbolic and brought in to the assembly hall the fire and fascination of African nationalism. Even before he spoke we were conscious of the spirit of challenge and conflict that gripped us. Those spears and kaross reminded us that we had our own history and culture which at once became the centre of attention as Mqhayi sat confidently next to the Governor on the stage. Mqhayi began his speech quietly. As he warmed up one of the spears accidentally struck a curtain wire on the stage. He immediately took up this incident and described it as symbolizing a clash between the culture of Africa and that of Europe and predicted a momentous victory for the indigenous culture. His boldness in speaking frankly on such delicate matters in the presence of the Governor and other whites not only swelled our pride, but also showed that a black man could challenge the authority of the all powerful white man. He resumed his theme and recited the well known poem where he divides the stars amongst the nations of the world. To the people of Europe, he gave the milky way, but sharply criticized them as people who fight over even what is enough for all. After attending to the nations of Asia and other sections of the African people in our country, he called upon the Xhosas and allocated them the Morning Star - the most important of the stars, he claimed. For this, he said, was the star for counting the years - the years of manhood. Throughout the recital Mqhayi moved about on the stage, darting forward, waving the spears, dramatically modulating his voice. When he reached that part where he addressed himself to the Xhosas, even his stance and tone changed radically. He stood in one place and as he deliberately dragged his words, he steadily pulled himself downwards so much so that

when he uttered the last word he was almost resting on one knee. We all rose spontaneously to our feet and gave him a prolonged ovation. I, as a Xhosa-speaking student, left the meeting feeling like a member of a chosen race. That was in 1938. In the early 1940s the University of Witwatersrand published an anthology of Mqhayi's poems. Here he spoke no longer as a Xhosa but as an African nationalist and as a people's poet. He dealt with the wars of liberation throughout the country, other important historical events, the African National Congress and the public figures who shaped our history - all of which stressed our common destiny as Africans and the identity of our aspirations. This was the final image Mqhayi projected on one until his death - a patriot speaking to a wide public. The image of the new Mqhayi resolved the conflict that had raised in my mind since the memorable occasion at Healdtown, namely, how to reconcile the message in which he praised the Xhosas above other ethnic groups with my experiences in Healdtown itself, and more especially in Johannesburg where I had come to realise that Africans were bound together by common aspirations. That anthology projected Mqhayi as a nationalist who used his pride as a Xhosa to reach out and voice the aspirations of the African people as a whole. To those of us who studied history as a subject, the spirit of nationalism aroused by Mqhayi was fanned by the equally rousing lessons we received from our teacher, Weaver Newana. He made the subject lively by adding to the standard text books information gathered from indigenous sources and when he dealt with the wars in the Eastern Cape the battlefields were very often places which were nearby and some of which I had come to know quite well. Meanwhile Reverend Mokitini was busy in introducing substantial reforms in regard to the conditions and treatment of students. These reforms related to the improvement of diet, relaxation of restrictions on student movements, inculcation of a sense of

responsibility by making students themselves primarily responsible for the maintenance of discipline. But one aspect of these changes worried many students, especially those of us from the country, namely the mixed dinners where students of both sexes dined together on Sundays. Since many of us knew nothing about knives and forks, table etiquette, we left the table hungry and depressed. The standard of sports and athletics at Healdtown was far higher than at Clarkebury but during the first year I did not take part. The following year, however, my friend, Locke Ndzamela, the school's champion hurdler, encouraged me to try long distance running and offered a few useful hints. I started training but was not good enough to compete that year. It was also here that I learnt to box. The only prize I ever received at Healdtown was for writing the best Xhosa essay for the year 1938. James Njongwe, Lionel Majombozi and ... Pasha were also my friends. Little did I suspect then that years after leaving school we would become members of the same political organisation. Njongwe was a year ahead of us and at the beginning of 1939 Majombozi and I joined him at the University of Fort Hare. The college was built in 1916 on the site of an old fort through the initiative of the United Free Church of Scotland and until 1960 it was the only university for blacks in the country. It offered training to students from all over Southern Africa and from so far afield as Kenya and Uganda and produced men who today are playing an important role in the affairs of their countries. Here I immediately came under the influence of my nephew Daliwonga who is older than me. A kind man by nature, he welcomed me warmly and took me under his care. We were both Wesleyans and stayed at the same hostel. We attended church service at Lovedale regularly and visited various places together with our cousin Sonto Mgudlwa. I soon discovered that Daliwonga was ambitious and, like Justice, came to exercise influence over me. His approach

to my future role in Thembuland hardly differed from that of the Regent and was throughout preoccupied with Sabata's education, hoping that the future king would be inspired at least to pass through Fort Hare. He encouraged me to study law and advised me concerning my curriculum. On college politics and on the question of preparing for my future career, he acted as my mentor. I never suspected then that we would later differ so radically on questions of principle and method as we do now. Another prominent student at Fort Hare in those days and a friend of Daliwonga was the present leader of the Transkeian opposition, Knowledge Guzana. He was influential and respected both by students and the College authorities alike. Oliver Tambo also came to Fort Hare in 1939 and immediately attracted attention. He was a keen debater and even during that first year, it was clear that he would make a definite mark in life. It was here that I met a bright science student from Basutoland and who in the early 1950s became head of the basutoland Congress Party and leading figure in the struggle of the people of that country for national independence. This was Ntsu Mokhehle. Interested as I was in law I none the less could not resist the glitter of a civil service career. My ambition was now to be an interpreter or clerk in the Native Affairs Department of Bunga. In the rural areas during those days an interpreter in the Magistrates office was an important person, second only to the Magistrate - the administrative head of the district. Not only did he serve as interpreter at court and at official gatherings, but he acted as liason between the public and the administration. Usually even those senior chiefs who could speak English well were given audience by officials in the presence of an interpreter. Interpreters from the department formed an important African elite who commanded influence among the people. My ambition for a civil service career was largely influenced by this background. When at the beginning of 1940 Fort

Hare introduced a course in interpreting with Tyamzashe, a retired court interpreter, in charge, I enrolled for this course. In athletics I was more active than I was at Healdtown and did well enough to be included in the College team that competed in the inter-college sports at Lovedale in 1940. I was also drawn into the Debating Society and the Students Christian Association. Since my days at Healdtown I had been a Sunday school teacher travelling in the surrounding villages and holding religious classes. I continued this work at Fort Hare. At the highest centre of education for Africans in the country at that time, the College attracted important visitors from inside and outside South Africa. In 1939 General Smuts, then Deputy-Premier, visited the College and addressed that year's graduation ceremony. I can recall nothing particularly striking in his speech except that I considered it a great privilege to listen to a man acclaimed as a world statesman. Shortly after General Smuts had replaced General Hertzog as premier, Margaret Ballinger, a white politician who represented Africans in the all white Parliament, also addressed us. A student asked her bluntly: "Now that General Hertzog threatens to rise against the Government is it not likely that General Smuts will reduce him to physical atoms?" That question brought forth a sharp repartee, for which she was famous in Parliament, from the visitor. Today the demand for direct representation in Parliament has become so strong that if Margaret Ballinger were to visit Fort Hare she would certainly have a rough time. But in those days, and although the demand had been repeatedly made by black politicians, it had not become the burning issue it now is. Almost every student attended her meeting and she was well received. Nevertheless, the two visits sparked off a lot of political discussion among the students, but I was particularly struck by the views of a fellow student, Nyathi Khongisa, who condemned Smuts as a racist and a pitiless oppressor, and Ballinger as one of

those white liberals who were making fortune for themselves out of the political disabilities of our people. He was a keen supporter of the African National Congress which he described as the black man's hope, adding at the same time, that all that was needed was for Africans to give it mass support. At home I had repeatedly heard that all Thembus were members of Umbutho We Sizwe (National Organisation) because Dalindyebo had paid a subscription fee of thirty pounds for his people. But it was first time I heard the name African National Congress, and it was much later that I discovered that this Umbutho We Sizwe was none other than the African National Congress. Khongisa held radical views not only on national but on international politics as well. The most important world event in those days was the outbreak of the Second World War and almost every one of us prayed for England and her allies. The warden of Wesley House gave us a review of the military situation every night and painted a grim picture of what would happen to the world and to us in particular if Hitler won. Khongisa was unimpressed and unlike the majority of the students wished for a German victory, not because the Germans would want to free us, but mainly because victory over the allies would give the Germans effective control in Europe only and, so he argued, it would be comparatively easy for us to rise against our own oppressors here at home. I found his views on local questions impressive but I thought he went too far on the question of the war. With regard to the actual treatment of students at Fort Hare, I felt that we were in most respects far better than anything I had seen in Healdtown and Clarkebury. We had greater freedom of movement, more autonomy and the food was reasonable. But even university students do find time for light moments during which high moral standards may be relaxed. That was the position in our days. It may still be the case even now. One of the hobbies I had to give up on circumcision was roasting

stolen maize in the veld. The College ran a farm which produced delicious mealies. I have always welcomed a bit of relaxation and fun and I belonged to a group of students that organised evening expeditions to the maize fields. We did so not so much because of hunger but in the spirit of sport and adventure. On the whole I enjoyed my stay at Fort Hare and more especially my studies. I was making fairly good progress acquiring new ideas and new attitudes. Equally important, I was being drawn into a hundred and one little battles that the black man fights in our country against colour oppression and being forced to take sides. An incident in 1940 made me sharply aware of my own limitations on questions of human dignity. A fellow student, Paul Mahabane from Bloemfontein, son of a former president of the African National Congress, spent the winter holidays with me in the Transkei. One day we were standing outside the General Post Office at Mthatha when the local magistrate asked my friend to go and buy him postage stamps and offered him money for the purpose. Mahabane promptly refused. "Do you know who I am?" asked the offended white man. "It is not necessary to know who you are. I know what you are", replied Mahabane firmly. "What do you mean?" enquired the magistrate. "You are a rogue", said Mahabane quite firmly. "You'll pay dearly for this!" threatened the official before disappearing. "Farewell", shouted Mahabane without moving. That was the last we saw of that man. With my background I was a bit uncomfortable but Mahabane's behaviour made an unforgettable impression on me. I returned to College feeling fresh and strong. At the beginning of the year I had been elected to the House Committee of Wesley House and towards the end of the same year I was elected to the Student Representative Council. But although the scales were steadily falling off my eyes and old beliefs were being shattered one after another, neither war nor politics were my concern. I was concentrating on my studies and was

confident that I would pass the November examinations. Life was exciting and the future appeared rosy. In a year time I thought I would be a graduate, a B.A. just like our clever Gertrude Ntlabathi, Messers. Mahlasela, Newana, Lebentlele and a host of other graduates. After all, the principal of Fort Hare, Dr. Alexander Kerr, and D.D.T. Jabavu and Z.K. Matthews (both were later made professors) had told us on numerous occasions that we were the salt of the earth, the leaders of a new Africa. A university degree, I was made to believe, was the passport to community leadership. I would soon acquire that passport and the world would be at my feet. Above all, a degree would not only enable me to achieve my life's ambition. It would also bring me a steady income and make a world difference to my poor mother and sisters. I would be able to build a decent home for her with modern furniture and fittings and with large gardens, a home as spacious and beautiful as the Mqhekezweni residence. I would be able to give her a regular allowance so that she could have whatever her heart desired, buy clothes and make life meaningful and enjoyable for her. The SRC elections had taken place and we had sat for the examinations. The year was running out. Suddenly all my beautiful dreams crumbled and the prize that was so near my grasp vanished like snow in the summer sun. Those elections created unforeseen difficulties for me, difficulties which in turn contributed in altering my future career. Had those developments not occurred I probably would have honoured the wishes of the Regent and remained at Sabata's side to the last moment of my life. Perhaps I would have been safe from all the storms that have blown me from pillar to post over the last thirty years. In terms of the constitution in force in 1940 six members of the SRC would be elected by the general body of students and the rest would represent the various hostels. Shortly before the elections, the students decided by an overwhelming majority to boycott the elections



until the College authorities accepted our demand for improvement of the diet and the increase of the powers of the SRC. The total number of students at the time was a little over a hundred and only about twenty five attended the election meeting. It was this tiny minority that elected me and my five colleagues. We met the same day and unanimously tendered our resignations on the ground that, taking into account all the circumstances, we did not enjoy the confidence and support of the majority of the students. The principal changed his strategy and ordered that the elections should now be held in the dining hall at supper time the next day. It was a shrewd move on his part because all the students would then be present irrespective of their motives for being in the hall. The elections were held as ordered, and the same six were again returned by the same twenty five. We again met to consider our position, but this time we differed sharply. My five colleagues were influenced by the technical point that we had been elected at a meeting in which all the students were present and argued that it would be morally incorrect to say that we did not enjoy the confidence of the students. They accordingly suggested we should now accept the office. On the other hand I pointed out that the starting point in deciding on our line of action was the boycott resolution which we had freely and fully supported. I argued that our first duty was to ensure that that resolution was put into effect and that it would be shocking if we allowed a well thought out decision to be frustrated by our adversaries on technical grounds. I was unable to persuade my colleagues and I accordingly resigned for the second time. The principal called me to his office and at first discussed the matter with me earnestly and calmly. I stuck to my decision but he was patient and asked me to sleep over the matter and tell him my final decision the next day. He warned me that he could not allow any of his students to act irresponsibly and threatened that if I insisted on

my stand he would reluctantly be compelled to expel me. I was shaken and spent a restless night. I wavered and did not make up my mind until the very moment when the principal asked for my decision. My personal interests conflicted with my duty to my fellow students and throughout I was inclined to the view that it could be foolish for me to jeopardize my career for some abstract principle to the body of students. I was still in this state of indecision when I reached the principal's office the next morning. But when he questioned me I told him I would not serve on the SRC and expected him to carry out his threat. Contrary to my expectations he then gave me the last chance and told me that I was free to return the following year provided I was willing to serve on the SRC. This is a revealing incident for it showed that in spite of the fact that we enjoyed more privileges in comparison with high school students the Fort Hare authorities still exercise tight control over students affairs. Normally a university student should be perfectly free to decide whether he should accept or decline an election to a student body and the matter ought to have been left there. Nevertheless when I reported the affair to the Regent he was furious and told me bluntly that I would return and obey the principal's instructions. It would have been costly for me to argue with the Regent and for the moment I was content to let the matter rest there. But life has its own way of forcing decisions on those who hesitate. Another matter completely unrelated to my studies forced my hand. Early in 1941 the Regent told Justice and me that he feared that he would not live long and that he had decided to arrange marriages for us before he died. He indicated the girls he had in mind as our respective wives. Justice was to marry almost immediately and I was to do so as soon I had completed my degree. Meanwhile lobola would be paid by the community as far as Justice was concerned; mine would come from his personal herd. In taking this decision the Regent was acting

properly and in accordance with the accepted Thembu custom. He was inspired mainly by the desire to see us properly settled with our own families and with women he had personally chosen. In my case I knew the girl quite well. She was a decent person from a prominent and respected family. But she probably had her own ideas of an ideal husband and was no more anxious to be burdened with me than I with her. I thought this was the last straw and could no longer postpone the decision that the Regent and I had come to the parting of ways. Viewed from the standpoint of the family, that was a tragic decision. The Regent adopted me as his own child and at his residence I never experienced the hardships and humiliation of being an orphan. He brought me up and maintained me faithfully, sent me to the best schools in the country and carefully groomed me for an important traditional office. I depended on him completely when I was helpless and he never let me down. Now he was ailing and ageing and needed me. And yet I had chosen just this moment to make secret plans to flee with his only son and successor and to dash all his schemes and hopes. Maybe I acted too rashly in fleeing from the Regent. I could have tried to discuss the matter through intermediaries and sought an amicable settlement within the family framework. For one thing his wife supported our argument that we should be at liberty to marry women of our own choice. In addition, I could have appealed to his cousin, Chief Zilindlovu, next to the Regent the most enlightened and influential chief at Mqhekezweni Court, and asked him to intervene. But I chose the easy way. That choice meant that I would never return to Fort Hare and, for the time being, that was the end of my school days and the striving for a civil service career. That same choice plunged me into the centre of an environment where I could make use of the thoughts and experiences of the finest representatives of mankind; where I could see the history and culture of my own people as

part and parcel of the history and culture of the entire human race; where I would gain an even deeper understanding of the spiritual forces that have moulded my people throughout the ages.

### Chapter 3: In Johannesburg

In 1939 Daliwonga and I were shopping at Alice when we met Zineli Sangoni, then a student at Lovedale and who later married Justice's sister, Nomaflu. As we parted I remarked to Daliwonga that the man had a beautiful sister whose name was Agrineth, a student at Clarkebury. That remark was followed by a chain of events which culminated in the marriage between Daliwonga and Agrineth in December 1940. Daliwonga's brother, George, Sonto and I were the best men. The Regent and Daliwonga's uncle, Chief Dalubuhle, were amongst the most important people at the wedding. Agrineth is the mother of the late Mthethu Vumile, who would have succeeded Daliwonga as the head of Emigrant Thembuland if he had lived.

At the time of the wedding Justice was away on holiday in Cape Town. He returned early in 1941 and the Regent was putting tremendous pressure on him to get married. He had left school the previous year and the Regent found him a clerical post in Crown Mines which he would take up after the wedding. When we realised we could not stop the Regent from arranging the marriages for us, we decided to flee to Johannesburg and we kept this a closely guarded secret known only to ourselves.

The Regent obviously suspected our intentions and took the precaution of never allowing the two of us to remain behind together whenever he was away. But one day in April he made exactly that mistake and we struck at once. Our main difficulty was lack of funds which we solved by selling

two of the Regent's oxen to the local trader who was unaware that, in this particular case, we had no authority to sell the cattle, and who paid us a good price. We travelled by train up to Queenstown and, as we had no travelling documents, we tried to obtain them in that town.

Fortunately we met Chief Mpondombini, the father of Sonto, and the man who brought up Sabata before he went to live with Reverend Harris. Chief Mpondombini was a retired interpreter from the Native Affairs Department and knew the chief magistrate well. He took us to that official and the latter, after listening to the Chief, made out the travelling documents and affixed the official stamp. As he was handing them over to us, he seemed to remember something and put the documents on his desk. He then explained to the Chief that, as a matter of courtesy, he would inform the chief magistrate of Mthatha, in whose jurisdiction we fell, of what he proposed to do. He then phoned and, unfortunately for us, exactly at that moment, the Regent was in the office of the Mthatha chief magistrate and our secret was exposed.

We apologized to the Chief and thereafter consulted the local white attorney. His mother was planning to visit Johannesburg in a fortnights time and he arranged for her to leave with us the following day, charging us fifteen pounds for the trouble. We started the journey early in the morning, the old lady sat next to the driver. Justice and I sat in the back seat with Justice immediately behind her. As usual he was curious, excited and talkative. I was also excited because I was on my way to Johannesburg where many of my childhood friends now worked, earned money, and from where they returned to buy a lease of land, cattle, and build their homes, and plough,

marry and have children. I remembered many of the stories Banabakhe had told us in the circumcision school about Johannesburg - the tall buildings, countless crowds that spoke several tongues, many motor cars, rickshaws and ferocious gangsters.

But the old lady was less worried about me than by Justice. Apparently she had never before seen a darkie who had no inhibitions whatsoever in the presence of a white person, and who could speak and joke so freely. She became nervous and to make sure that everything was under control she asked us to change places so that I sat behind her and Justice took my seat. In the meantime the old lady half turned in the front seat with her eyes trained on Justice. She sat in this position for quite some time and the slightest movement from him made her alert. But she gradually relaxed and even joked as we went on.

At about ten o'clock in the night an unforgettable scene unfolded before our eyes. We saw spanking at a distance a maze of glittering lights which seemed to stretch out endlessly in all directions.

Although it was at night the traffic was far heavier than anything I had seen before. We knew we had reached Johannesburg. Later our movements were controlled by traffic lights, now we passed tall buildings and saw the attractive advertisements of the country's leading industrial city; now we were amongst huge and beautiful mansions. Finally the car turned into one of these and that ended the journey for the day.

The following morning we met Pilisco, the chief Induna (headman) at Crown Mines. He told us

that he was expecting Justice for whom a clerical job was available, but that he knew nothing about me. Pressed by Justice to take me on, I was eventually employed as a policeman with a promise that in about three months I would also be given a clerical post. We were supplied with free rations and sleeping quarters but for the first few days we stayed with Pilisco. The miners, especially those from Thembuland, greeted Justice with gifts, mainly in the form of cash, in accordance with the practice of those days when a chief visited the mines. He never failed to give me a bonus and I collected a few pounds quite apart from what I expected in the form of wages. It was a good start and I was beginning to feel that I was a child of fortune, that if I had not wasted precious time at College I would have been fairly rich by now. I had no idea whatsoever that fate was busy setting snares around me. We had not disclosed to the mine authorities that we had fled from home, but we confided to an old friend we had known from home. Unknown to us, he passed on the information and we were kicked out of the mine.

Shortly after this incident we were introduced to Dr. A.B. Xuma, then the president of the African National Congress. His friend, Wellbeloved, was then president of the Chamber of Mines which controlled almost all the gold mines in the country. We told the doctor half truths which he accepted and conveyed to his friend. The latter, who knew nothing of our short history in the city, sent us back to the manager of Crown Mines with instructions that we both be employed as clerks. We were happy about this sudden turn of events. For one thing it offered us a chance of putting Pilisco in his place, so we thought, and of avenging the humiliation we had suffered a few days before. We were back at Crown Mines and, while the white manager was attending to us Pilisco



stormed in and took over from the former without any courtesies.

"You silly boys, you've come back", he said, literally shaking with anger. "We've been sent by Mr. Wellbeloved", replied Justice in a tone bordering on defiance. "Did you tell him that you ran away from your father?" the old man countered. Justice did not know how to handle this one and kept quiet. "You'll never be employed in any of these mines. Come on, get out of my sight!" ordered the old man. I looked appealingly to the manager hoping that he would over-rule Pilisco. But he was as still as a statue and did nothing to help. The old man had put us in our place and we went away feeling bitter and more humiliated than on the first occasion. It was at this stage that my nephew Garlick Mbekeni, took me to the office of an estate agent in Market Street. We sat in the waiting room while an African receptionist announced our presence to her boss in the inner office. In the public and business offices at Mthatha and at College I had never seen a black typist. Typing was done by males, none of whom was a professional typist and who generally used two fingers only.

But here was a black typist and I watched her in amazement as her fingers flew over the keyboard with grace and ease. Later she ushered us into an inner office where we were received by a man in his late twenties. He was light in complexion with a kind and intelligent face. Judging by his clothes, the number of clients that were waiting, he was a fairly busy man. He was fluent in English and at once struck me as versatile and experienced. The advice he gave me was sound and he made a great impression on me. This was Walter Sisulu whose name was already rising in popularity in Johannesburg. During those days I tended to associate proficiency in English and success in

business with high academic qualifications and I assumed that our host was a graduate. At the end of the interview he escorted us to the outer door and those pretty fingers were still dancing on the keyboard.

On Walter's recommendation Lazar Sidelsky of the law firm of Messrs. Witkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman agreed to take me on as an articled clerk on my completing the B.A. degree. I stayed with Reverend J. Mabatho of the Anglican Church at Alexandra Township. He also came from Thembuland and knew my family well. His wife was a warm person and liberal with food. I had a wonderful time in their house. I had, however, learnt very little from my experiences with Pilisco and did not tell them how I had left home. A few days after my arrival at Alexandra, Festile, the headman at the Chamber of Mines, and who was present when we met Wellbeloved, visited the Mabathos. I wished then I had told them the whole truth right from the start. But it was too late. The following day they made it clear that they could no longer keep me, but they were kind enough to find me accomodation with the next door neighbours. I lived there until the end of 1941.

In that first year in Johannesburg I learnt more about poverty than I did during my childhood days at Qunu. The common practice was for an articled clerk to pay his principal a premium from which he would be paid an allowance. I could not pay the premium with the result that I started with the salary of £2 a month. I had no other source of income. My monthly expenses, however, far exceeded the income. Out of the £2 a month I had to pay for my food, rent, transport, clothing and other necessities. The cheapest means of transport between the city and the township was a bus

which cost £1.10 a month. I paid a monthly rent of thirteen shillings and four pence for an old room with a leaking roof and which was infested with mice. I was also trying to complete my degree as an external student at the University of South Africa, for which I had to pay fees. There were days when I would walk the twelve miles from the township to work and back; when I would go without food, without a bath and when I had to wear patched trousers.

During these difficult days I built lasting friendships and strengthened existing ones. My landlord was not only interested in collecting money from me, but was also a sort of philanthropist.

Throughout the whole period I spent with him, his wife would invite me to lunch every Sunday - my only substantial meal for the week. Reverend Mabatho and his wife invited me frequently to their house and made it clear that I could always call on them whenever I wished. I also met an old school friend from Healdtown, the ever cheerful Ellen Nkabinde, who was teaching at one of the township schools, without whose help I would have found it difficult to manage. She was a Swazi and a person close to me condemned our friendship on purely tribal grounds. But Ellen and I continued to share a common affection and became even more attached to each other. We wandered together in the veld, hills and valleys round the township and there was hardly a day we did not spend a few hours together. In fact, in Johannesburg, she played the role of mother giving me her warm love and pumping strength and hope into me. It was a tragic day when she bade me farewell for the last time knowing, as I did then, that we would never walk again hand in hand across the Jukskei stream and picnic alone in the bush.

My old friend, Zachariah Molete, lived here. His father was a grocer and chief steward of my church. Not only did they help me with groceries on easy terms, but they introduced me to influential people in the township - a fact which helped me to ease some of my problems. Gertrude Ntlabathi, our teacher at Clarkebury, was now teaching here. I spent a lot of time with her and it was largely due to her assistance that I completed my studies at the end of 1942. A warm friendship developed between me and Lazar Sidelsky and the numerous acts of kindness and assistance he gave me on all sorts of problems would fill a whole chapter. A very special friend was John Mngoma, an orator and well versed in Zulu history. I would listen to him for hours relating interesting episodes from our past. I still remember one dealing with the meeting between the Zulu king, Shaka, and the first white missionary to visit his kingdom. John Mngoma prefaced his story with the remark "Whites will tell you that Shaka was a blood thirsty savage who enjoyed washing his spears in human blood. Very few amongst them will agree that he was a highly intelligent man. I am going to tell you a story to illustrate that he was a gifted person."

"One day", continued John Mngoma, "there came to the King two whites, one of whom was a missionary. They came for the purpose of converting the King to the Christian faith. But knowing that he was a superstitious warrior, they began their story with those aspects they believed would impress an ignorant man and reserved their real mission to the last. 'Hail Oh mighty King!' saluted the missionary. 'An empire builder of your standing requires a powerful weapon which will enable your Majesty to beat all enemies. I have brought you such a weapon, oh King, which can command thunder and with which one can kill a man at distance,' said the missionary. This was, of course, a

dramatic description of a simple gun."

"Shaka was a practical man", Mngoma pointed out, "and he immediately asked the missionary to demonstrate. One of Shaka's men was ordered to stand at an indicated spot and the missionary was asked to kill him. The missionary raised the weapon to his shoulder, aimed carefully and pulled the trigger. There was a violent explosion and the man fell dead. Shaka accepted the weapon without any hesitation."

"Encouraged by this success, the missionary reminded the King that his success in the battlefield would bring him many enemies, even from amongst his own people, and that they would expose him to numerous conspiracies and treachery. To counter these evils, the missionary added, the King would have to rely on an effective method of divining. The missionary claimed that his people had developed such a method; that by making black lines on a piece of paper, a man could know what was discussed in his absence. Here the missionary was dramatising the art of writing."

"Again, Shaka immediately put this fantastic claim to the test. The missionary's friend was asked to stand out of hearing range. Shaka then pointed out to a grain of sorghum on the ground and ordered that, on his return, the missionary's friend should pick it up and put it in Shaka's hand. The missionary wrote all this down on a piece of paper. On his return the friend read the piece of paper and did exactly as Shaka has ordered. For the second time Shaka accepted without hesitation."

"Feeling confident", Mngoma went on, "the missionary turned to the real mission. 'Hail, oh mighty King! Your Majesty as King of the Zulus enforces laws which must be obeyed by all subjects. Your Majesty punishes all those who disobey him. There are many other kings on this earth, with subjects and laws just as your Majesty has. But above all kings in this world there is one who lives up there in heaven. He is King of all Kings, including your Majesty, and his laws must be obeyed by kings and subjects alike. He burns in a huge furnace all those who break his laws.'

"At this stage Shaka called out one of his regiments and ordered each warrior to bring firewood which was then piled up in a heap and set on fire. It burned fiercely and when it was very hot Shaka ordered the regiment to extinguish it with their hands and feet. Many men died in the process, but the fire was ultimately put out. Whereupon Shaka turned to his visitors and told them that there was no king alive who was his superior, and that if anybody tried to burn him alive his army would easily handle the situation. Now son, do you realise what an intelligent man Shaka was?" concluded Mngoma.

In my reading of Zulu history since those days I have found no confirmation of this particular incident, and it may well be that Mngoma's account is a garbled version of the meeting in 1824 between Shaka and the Englishman, F.G. Farewell and H.F. Fynn, the first whites to be received by the Zulu king according to written records. But though there are a few notable exceptions, South African history has been written by whites for whites and rarely takes into account the oral history of the black man.

This problem is by no means peculiar to South Africa. It is a characteristic way in which colonialists have presented the history of colonial peoples, hardly ever examining events on the basis of the indigenous sources of information. Until South Africa produces progressive historians who will write a true history of the country there will always be serious discrepancies between the established tradition of the oppressed people and the written history.

Even in regard to the writing of history of Europe there have been examples of this blatant chauvinism in which historians have ignored historical truth and become openly partisan. A prominent student of international politics has cited the case of the first imperialist world war when the Oxford Faculty of History issued a manifesto on the strength of the evidence they had examined, unanimously declaring that Britain was in the right and Germany in the wrong. The Oxford Manifesto was challenged through a counter manifesto published in the name of all the most famous German historians that Germany was in the right and Britain in the wrong.

History cannot be raised from this propagandistic approach to a scientific level in the prevailing state of the world, where nations are divided by basic interests and policies where the regimes in power represent racial minorities. When classes have disappeared in society and full equality of all peoples has become the basic principle of life, then the conditions will be created for the emergence of scientific history. In our own country, the oral history of the people will become an important source of information.

For these reasons I was not at all surprised when I found that the standard history books contained no reference to Mngoma's anecdote. Most of his accounts are in line with written records and he did as much as Wearer Newana in introducing me to the real history of my people.

As a result of these and other contacts I made during my early days in Johannesburg, I developed some inner strength and soon forgot about my difficulties and my poverty and suffering, my loneliness and frustrations. These connections gave me the confidence that I could stand on my own feet, enjoy the goodwill and support of worthy men and women I had not previously known and to whom I could turn in case of need. And now I had a home of my own choice far away from my birthplace and had made progress, however little, mainly through my own initiative and resources. I have a special attachment to the people who befriended me during times of distress. A feature of many of these friendships is that they were built around families rather than individuals, and they have scarcely been affected by the death of those members through whom they were founded.

In Alexandra life was exciting and, although the racial policies of the present government have destroyed its social fabric and reduced it to a ghost town, thinking of it always evokes in me fond memories. Here I learnt to adjust myself to urban life and came into physical contact with all the evils of white supremacy. Although the township had some beautiful buildings it was a typical slum area - overcrowded and dirty, with under nourished children running about naked or in filthy rags. It teemed with all kinds of religious sects, gangsters and shebeens. Life was cheap and the gun and the



knife ruled at night. Very often the police would raid for passes, poll tax and liquor and arrest large numbers. In spite of this, Alexandra was more than a home for its fifty thousand residents. As one of the few areas of the country where Africans could acquire freehold property, and run their own affairs free from the tyranny of municipal regulations, it was both a symbol and a challenge. Its establishment was an acknowledgement that a section of our people had broken their ties with the rural areas and become permanent town dwellers. Drawn from all the African language groups its population was politically conscious, more articulate and with a sense of solidarity which was causing increasing concern among the whites. It became clear to me that the leadership of my people would come from the urban areas where militant workers and an emergent class of prosperous and ambitious traders were suffering all the frustrations of racial prejudice. These are the straps that bind one tightly to Alex. Up to the actual moment of my arrest fourteen years ago I regarded the township as a home in which I had no specific house and Orlando, where my wife and children still live, as a place where I had a house but no home.

I was still settling down in Johannesburg when the Regent visited the city towards the end of 1941. I went to see him and he questioned me closely on my work, studies and future plans, but he was kind and courteous and Fort Hare and marriage were not even mentioned. This meeting was some stroke of luck for me and had the effect of rehabilitating me to that section which I was indifferent and even hostile to me because I had run away from school and had refused the wife the Regent had chosen for me. He spent about two weeks in Johannesburg and then returned home. In August 1942 he died after a short illness and Justice and I went down but arrived too late for the funeral.

The death of the Regent removed from the scene an enlightened chief who led his people quite well. One of the marks of a great chief is the ability to keep together all sections of his people, the traditionalists and reformers, conservatives and liberals, the illiterates and literates and, on major questions, there are sometimes sharp differences of opinion. The Mqhekezweni Court was particularly strong, and the Regent was able to carry the whole community because the Court was representative of all shades of opinion. His death was a great blow to me personally. Although I had fled from him and had now settled in Johannesburg, he had always been the final inspiration to all my thoughts and efforts. I knew quite well that if all my friends deserted me and all my plans collapsed, he would certainly be my last refuge. At times I even felt guilty that I had hastened his death by letting him down at the last moment when part of his elaborate plans for a future Thembuland had depended on my co-operation.

Above all, I felt I had missed a glorious chance of getting a clear and connected account of his views on major issues, apart from the formal speeches he made on official occasions. I should have asked him to paint for me a picture of his future Thembuland and the exact role of Sabata in that Thembuland. It would have been important for me to know his views on the speech made by Chief Meliqgili when we returned from the circumcision school. I have no clear idea of how he thought we would ultimately solve the question of white supremacy in our country and his attitude to the liberation movement.

During the short period of about a week that I spent at home for the funeral I discovered that significant changes had taken place in my outlook. I was no longer attracted by a career in the civil service, of being an interpreter in the Native Affairs Department or Bunga, of seeing my whole future bound up with Thembuland and the Transkei. My association with John Mngoma and Gaur Radebe had put certain ideas in me radically different from those I held before leaving Transkei only sixteen months before. I was surprised to be told that even my Xhosa was no longer pure and to discover that my way of greeting people was now influenced by Zulu.

In our language there is a saying: Ndiwelimilambo enamagama (I have crossed famous rivers). It means that one has travelled and, in the process, gained much experience. Indeed I had since 1934 been crossing important rivers of my country: Mbashe, Great Kei, Orange and the Vaal. I had seen new places and new faces, absorbed new ideas and renounced old ones. But on Sabata I could not speak with such certainty. My relationship to him was primarily a question of blood and not of brains and the former has always dictated what the latter resists. It is the right of every man to plan his own future as he pleases and to decide the actual role he wishes to play and, if at a certain stage in my life, and as a result of circumstances and practical experience, I did exactly this, I was perfectly within my own rights.

But in a way I am a product of the Thembu community, brought up and sent to school with Thembu funds so that I could play a special role. Having profited from this benevolence, was I justified in later taking a unilateral decision and changing the entire plan? Have I no obligation, moral or

otherwise, to the deceased and the living to honour arrangements based on good faith and mutual trust? The blood and the brain kept on clashing endlessly. Every time this conflict arose, I preferred to postpone the decision indefinitely. After all I was only twenty four when the Regent died and not yet in a position to make such crucial decisions so I reasoned. There would be time enough for such matters some day to come, and I turned my mind to preparing for my return to Johannesburg.

The death of the Regent meant new responsibilities for Justice and he could no longer run around freely like me. He had to succeed the Regent as Chief of Mqhekezweni. Besides Sabata was still a minor and another Regent had to be appointed to act for him. Both tasks required Justice's presence at home. In the circumstances I returned to Johannesburg alone and left him behind. I was unable to attend his installation as Chief nor that of his uncle, Chief Dabulamanzi as the new Regent. I continued struggling in Johannesburg until the end of 1942 when I wrote and passed the final examination for the B.A. degree. As soon as the results were published I started my apprenticeship as an attorney. Dr. Kerr, the principal of Fort Hare, gave me an excellent testimonial which facilitated my acceptance as an articled clerk. As far as I can remember, there were only three African attorneys in South Africa at the time, all of whom were practicing in Johannesburg.

The following year I enrolled for the L.L.B. degree at the white university of Witwatersrand. Early in 1943 I went down to Fort Hare for the graduation ceremony. Walter Sisulu and his business colleagues bought me a new suit for the occasion and Randall Phetheni lent me the academic dress. Daliwonga brought my mother and sister-in-law, No-England, all the way from the Transkei to Fort

Hare and the reunion with members of my own family was a great occasion for me. I was also happy to be back at College to see old friends and to listen to their varied experiences.

After the ceremony I spent a few days relaxing at Daliwonga's home at Qamata before returning to Johannesburg. He took advantage of our meeting to press the point that I should have leave the Transvaal immediately after qualifying and come to practice in the Transkei, a view which was strongly urged by the new Regent when he visited me at Orlando in 1947. Although I did not reject their arguments, I kept pointing out that the question was premature and that we could review it as soon as I had qualified. In the meantime I continued with my law studies at Witswatersrand but did not do well enough to complete the degree. Later I abandoned the L.L.B. degree and obtained an Attorneys' Diploma which qualified me to practice as an attorney. I was formally admitted in March 1952 and the same year I went into partnership with Oliver Tambo.

Studying at Witswatersrand brought me into close contact with white students and a handful of Indian students. Here there was a segment of liberal opinion that was vocal on the question of providing equal opportunities for the black man. At Fort Hare we had some sort of contact with the equally liberal white students from Rhodes University College in Grahamstown, but such contacts were few and far between. They took the form of visits by selected students from one college to the other for the purpose mainly of debating some subject or other. But at Witswatersrand we attended the same lectures, used the same libraries, cafetaria, toilets, attended the same campus meetings and talked on a variety of issues. It did not take me long to realise that not all whites supported the policy

of racial discrimination.

I had met a few Indian students at Fort Hare but they all stayed in a different hostel and I hardly had any contact with them. At Witswatersrand I met Ismail Meer, J.N. Singh, Ahmed Bhoola, ... Vahed, Ramlal Bhoolia, to all of whom I became friendly. We studied and starved at Flat 13, Kholvad House together with Ismail and J.N. This flat is in the centre of the city and has become famous in the liberation movement and to the South African police as the place where freedom fighters from all population groups frequently relax.

It was also at Wits that I met Joe Slovo, Ruth First and Tony O'Dowd and Harold Wolpe all of whom were members of the Communist Party. I also met George Bizos and the late Sarel Tighy, who became a member of parliament for the United Party. For a brief period Seretse Khama joined the Law Faculty and the number of Africans in the faculty increased from one to two. Bram Fisher and Rex Welsh were amongst our part time lecturers. These contacts stressed not only the cosmopolitan character of the city in which we lived but also that differences in colour and historical background are not necessarily a bar to a common outlook, common beliefs and common ideals.

The presence of black students in the English universities of Cape Town, Rhodes and Wits has always been a source of concern to the Nationalist Party government. (2) The Nationalist Party is a white political party that preaches apartheid. It is the ruling party since 1948.

The University of Natal organised separate classes for its black students. In 1959 the white universities were prohibited by legislation from admitting black students. But the legislation could not rob our English universities of the honour of having taken the bold step to open their doors to black men in a country where racial prejudice has struck deep roots. They have produced teacher, doctors, lawyers and other trained men who today are providing leadership in various fields.

At the end of 1941 I lived again with Reverend Mabutho and then with Walter Sisulu in Orlando. But when I enrolled at Wits it was convenient for me to live in town. Festile arranged for me to stay free of charge at the headquarters of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the distributing agency for mine labour on the Witwatersrand. The place also accommodated chiefs and other important visitors, and I had the privilege of meeting prominent people from all over South Africa. I well remember meeting Regent Mantsebo Mshweshwe from Basutoland. She was accompanied by Chiefs Lerothodi Mojela and Nkwebe Sempe, both of whom knew Sabata's father from Lovedale. For about an hour I seemed to be back in Thembuland as they gave me interesting accounts of him as a student and asked significant questions about the Transkei. Both were fluent in English and appeared better informed on current topics than the average South African chief.

Then Regent Mantsebo spoke to me in Sesutho and realised that I could not speak the language. "What kind of lawyer will you be who cannot speak the language of his own people?" she asked. The question embarrassed me and sobered me at one and the same time. I showed how sectarian and selfish and unprepared I still was for the simple task of serving my people. I was a stranger to my

own kith and kin. I could not talk and understand them, share their feelings, hopes and aspirations, grasp the history that held them together, and enjoy the music and poetry that moved them. I was planning to help correct the errors of South Africa and had forgotten that the first step in doing so was to overcome the weakness of one of the one South African I knew very well - myself. Equally important was the fact that from her question she regarded me as part of her people, a fact which immediately drove home the vital fact that I was now talking to my Queen and leader.

It was also here that I was introduced to the Zulu Regent Mshyieni Ka Dinizulu. To be received by a member of one of the country's most illustrious families was an unforgettable experience. Another distinguished person who visited the WNLA headquarters was my former Fort Hare lecturer Prof. Jabavu. At College I had no contact with him outside the lecture room. But in Johannesburg we met as equals and I spent many hours listening to the story of his travels inside and outside South Africa, and to his account of the oral history of our people. He remained simple and humorous in spite of his immense reputation as educationist and leader and was at home amongst his people as amongst the whites.

I have already said I was articled by Messrs. Whitkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman, a Jewish firm. It was one of the city's largest firms handling business from both blacks and whites. Amongst its clients were building societies and other financial institutions. In this firm I learnt much more than law and its practice, and quite early in my apprenticeship there loomed some of the practical problems I would later meet in life. I came into contact with men and women who had different outlooks,



definite views on the problems facing the country and even different solutions. It was also the first occasion for me to work with whites outside the formal contact between teacher and student at school.

I was articled to Lazar Sidelsky, himself a graduate of Wits where he obtained his LLB degree. When I joined the firm he was probably in his early thirties. He was liberal in outlook and was actively interested in African education, donating funds and trophies to African schools, helping in various ways in the advancement of African education. In our discussions he repeatedly stressed that only mass education would free my people, arguing that an educated man could not be oppressed, that he could think for himself and would know how to fight for his rights. He maintained that we should concentrate all our efforts on education and that my aim should be to become a successful attorney that would inspire the African youth in turn to become successful lawyers. He painted a frightening picture of what would happen to me if I drifted into politics. My practice, he said, would suffer. I would come into conflict with established authority and end up in prison. He warned me to avoid the company of trouble makers and to seek that of responsible and enlightened persons. He pointed to some of his clients who were men of substance and a source of pride to my people and whose example he felt I should follow.

I listened carefully to him for he was an impressive man and a flourishing lawyer who knew what he was talking about. Moreover he was my principal and genuinely interested in my welfare. He was the white South African who had taken the bold step to article a black man, something rare in

the country in those days. But it soon became clear why he took such pains to stress this warning. One of the members of our staff was Gaur Radebe, the clerk in charge of the African side of the business, and an influential man in the community. A leader of the African National Congress, a member of the Johannesburg District Committee of the Communist Party and of the Advisory Board in Western Native Township, his views were the exact opposite of those held by Mr. Sidelsky.

Gaur Radebe argued that education was essential to the advancement of the African people and that it was quite correct to stress its importance. But at the same time he pointed out that in seeking solutions on questions of this kind we should be guided by the lessons of history and by our own conditions. He argued that no nation had ever been freed through education alone, that history taught that oppressed people are liberated by conquering political power through their own independent mass organisations. Turning to South Africa he cited the poverty of the African, the absence of schools and the small number of African teachers produced by the existing schools, and asked where the money would come from to educate the masses of the people, build the required schools and train the teachers needed for such an ambitious programme. Finally, he held that the policy put forward by the African National Congress was the only solution for the country's problems. At other times Gaur would make jokes which would be received with glum expressions. He once told my principal and partners: "You people came all the way from Europe, took our land and enslaved us. Look now, there you sit like a lord whilst my Chief runs around on errands. One day we will catch all of you and dump you into the sea."

Gaur's views were strongly supported by Nat Bregman, also articulated by Sidelsky. He was fairly familiar with progressive literature and articulate in urging the principle of full equality. He later cooled considerably in his views, but sounded quite impressive at the time. Hans Muller, an estate agent and Sidelsky's partner in another business disagreed with both schools of thought. He was a business man to the marrow and his views were simple and straightforward. "Look through the window, Nelson. Do you see those men and women hurrying up and down the street? All of them without exception are looking for money, for wealth and happiness. That is what you must struggle for. Once you have enough cash, there is nothing else you will want in life." Muller did just that and had every right to speak authoritatively on the subject.

One had to weigh all these views against those of William Smith, a coloured veteran of the ICU of Clements Kadalie which he joined in the twenties. With the collapse of the ICU, Smith abandoned all political activity and concentrated on business. He was now associated with the firm and often took part in these discussions. He was as blunt as Muller and claimed to speak from experience. "I have been through all this", he would say, "and regret it very much that I wasted all the best years of my life in futile efforts, only to discover so late that I was being used by selfish men who placed their interests above those of the people they pretended to serve. Politics is nothing else but a fraudulent scheme to steal money from the poor. That is what I discovered."

Some of those informal discussions took place in the early forties. Since the world has undergone

radical changes and subsequent developments have confirmed the correctness of Gaur Radebe's views. The approach he advocated then has always strongly appealed to serious minded politicians and has been successfully used by revolutionaries throughout the world. Later on I became committed in matters of this nature and took a definite line. But the process of deciding was not simple and straightforward. For some time I hesitated on the side lines, uncertain what to do. Often I realised the full implications of what I had done, not before, but after taking the step. Equally important is the fact that throughout my political career I have repeatedly heard echoes of those lively discussions in the firm from men and women whose reactions to situations are influenced by their backgrounds, personal experiences, current interest and ambitions, but who may and often do respond positively once the problems and solutions are clearly and patiently explained.

Elsewhere in this story I refer to circumcision as marking the end of childhood and the beginning of manhood. But the process of illusion and disillusionment is part of life and goes on endlessly. In the early 40s what struck me forcefully was the conflict between my expectations and actual experience. At College I had come to believe that as a graduate I would automatically be at the head leading my people in all their efforts. In a sense that was true of the majority of the Fort Hare students. Many of them left the lecture room straight to some cosy job, with a steady income and carrying a measure of influence. It is also true that graduates do enjoy the respect of the community especially in the field of education.

But my experience was quite different. I moved in circles where common sense and practical

experience were important, and where high academic qualifications were not necessarily decisive. Hardly anything I had been taught at Colelge seemed directly relevant in my new environment. The average teacher had fought shy of topics like racial oppression, lack of opportunity for the black man and the numerous indignities to which he is subjected in his daily life. None had ever briefed me on how we would finally remove the evils of colour prejudice, the books I should read in this connection and the political organisations I should join if I wanted to be part of a disciplined freedom movement. I had to learn all these things by mere chance and through trial and error.

What was even more difficult for me was to unlearn what I had already learnt and to adapt myself to the actual conditions in which I now lived. In a big city like Johannesburg where the population is very large and where the different national groups mix freely every day, it takes a lot of personal ability and initiative and connections to rise to the top in any field of activity. In industry, commerce and trade men with humble educational qualifications frequently draw higher wages than those of graduates, whilst factory foremen and stewards may handle larger numbers of people than graduates normally do in the course of their duties. In addition, there are successful traders who can hardly read or write and who have no theoretical training whatsoever in economics or commerce.

Suddenly I found myself in a world different from the one I had imagined from behind the College walls.

Amongst the men who were close to me in those days were Gaur Radebe, John Mngoma and Walter Sisulu, and they towered above me in almost everything. Although it shocked me to find

that men who had no university training could be my superiors in knowledge, I felt they had the right solution for our problems. Gaur, with whom I spent almost every day of the week for two years, used to give me books to read. During lunch break he would give me impromptu talks on a wide variety of topics. These sessions once provoked a member of the firm to remark: "Keep away from Gaur. He will poison your mind. Every day he sits on that desk planning a world revolution!" But by this time Gaur's grip on me was quite strong and I could not accept this fatherly advice. What particularly fascinated me in him was the confidence with which a black man could express his sense of total commitment to the freedom struggle in the presence of white intellectuals and punch visible holes in their arguments. Indeed he seemed to think of nothing else but revolution. He was not merely a theoretician, but was attending meetings all over the Transvaal and featuring prominently in political demonstrations.

## Chapter 4: Days of Commitment

In South Africa the worst forms of racialism are practiced and white supremacy is rigidly maintained by law and tradition and the black man suffers numerous indignities in his daily life. A white skin is the qualification to political rights, economic power, social status and to a free and full life. The colour bar is the South African way of life.

The country's population in 1946 was 11,415,925 consisting of 7,830,559 Africans, 928,062 Coloureds and 285,200 Asians - a majority of 9,043,881 blacks as against a minority of 2,372,044 whites. In addition, the blacks provided, as they still do, the labour force essential for industry, commerce, communications and agriculture and yet only whites have voting rights, can be members of parliament, the provincial councils and local authorities. Judges, magistrates, registrars and clerks of court, senior army and police officers are invariably whites and blacks have until recently been totally barred from serving in the army. But in the early 60s a Coloured army corps was established, followed in the 70s by one for Asians. In the Bantustans a police force that is officered by Africans is in the process of formation and there are parallel developments for Coloureds and Asians in their respective areas, whilst the threat of guerilla warfare has forced the government to abandon the established policy and to send black men to fight against their own brothers on the country's borders.

But these are innovations which have not changed the basic policy of the country in which whites

dominate in every field. Eighty seven per cent of the land is still owned by the minority of the whites whilst the black majority is squeezed into the remaining 13%. Wages for blacks are far less than those paid to whites for the same job. In 1944 the average male cash wage in the mining industry £3.11.1d for Africans £35.6.4d for the whites per month. In the other sectors of manufacturing industry the average annual pay £81 for Africans £129 for Asians £136 for Coloureds £322 for whites.

A substantial percentage of South Africa's labour force is made up of migrant labourers. The movement from the country to the towns is world wide and in our country it effects all population groups, having been stimulated by the growth of towns, commerce and industry. Shortage of land, poverty absence of employment and population pressure inevitably drive people from the land to the urban areas. But a peculiarity of the system in South Africa is that, whereas in the case of other froups migration has resulted in permanent urban populations, the African worker who comes from the rural areas and seeks work on white farms or mines is treated as a temporary resident in his area of employment, and there are no facilities for him to live with his family there. The circumstances force him to become a worker and peasant at one and the same time. His place of work is miles away from his home and family to which he returns periodically. For a year or so he is a townsman working for a wage and the following year when he returns to his home he becomes a peasant and lives ploughing his land. When he goes back to his village he loses his employment in the urban area and on his return has to start as a newcomer. The system has disastrous social effects and has been condemned by commerce and industry, economists, church men, social workers and other



enlightened circles. It provides no scope for specialisation and the constant movement of labour between country and towns retards the emergence of scientific agriculture as well as the group of a skilled and efficient urban proletariat. Above all, the continued absence of men from their wives for long periods leads to emotional strains and the breakup of families.

The abhorrent pass system makes serious inroads into the rights of an African and enables the authorities to break up his family life, to restrict his freedom of movement and to prevent him from selling his labour on the free market. Under this system an African may not leave one district too go to another inside the country without the permission of the authorities. He may be removed in custody to his home or some other place indicated by an official or he may be ordered to perform manual labour at a farm colony for a specified period. In 1940 there were no less than 99,000 Africans in the Transvaal alone who were convicted under the pass laws. There are similar restrictions for preventing Asians from moving from one province to another. Public services for the black man are fewer and far inferior to those enjoyed by whites. In the field of education, for example, there are at present 9 universities for whites as against 3 for Africans, 1 each for Asians and Coloureds respectively. The University of South Africa is a non residential university and is open to all groups. Of the 97,858 university students in the country in 1975 84,232 were whites, 6,472 Africans, 4,639 Asians and 2,515 Coloureds.

The colour bar has dominated South Africa throughout its history, with the white man as top dog. For each group there are separate schools, hospitals, theatres, cinemas, sports clubs, hotels, bars,

churches and even graveyards. The white man maintains his supremacy through brute force and intrigue, falsehood and hypocrisy and by means of all the double standards that characterize an oppressive regime. South Africa is a "democracy" that excludes the vast majority of its citizens from the process of government, that denies them the right to determine their own future and that thwarts their orderly progress through numerous restrictions. It is a "Christian" State whose rulers have no love or mercy and where unpardonable sins are committed daily against the black man. It claims that racial peace and harmony reign within its borders while it persecutes, torture and even slaughters its black citizens on stupid and frivolous grounds.

The black man has resisted racial oppression for more than three centuries in struggles that have thrown up legendary heroes. Contempt for the Bathwas (commonly know as Bushmen) - South Africa's oldest inhabitants - even from otherwise progressive historians, has tended to belittle their contribution to these patriotic wars and their magnificent performance has passed into oblivion unrecorded. But they passionately loved their country and highly valued their freedom, defending both with unsurpassed courage. In another age and using modern weapons the nimble Bathwas would have given South Africa fighters as powerful as Kutuzov, Haile Selassie, Chu Teh, Giap and Che Guevara.

With the exception of the Griquas - the only Khoi Khoi group (commonly and derogatorily known as Hottentots) who still retain a substantial body of their legends - the oral history of the Khoi Khoi people, from whom the bulk of the Coloured folk are descended, vanished with the disappearance

of the Khoi Khoi themselves as a distinct community. Our knowledge of their history is accordingly derived from the writings of prejudiced white historians and sociologists who had little or no sympathy for the aspirations of the Khoi Khoi. But even such one sided accounts cannot hide the fact that the Khoi Khoi have a long and proud record of armed struggle against aggression by the whites, and their courageous exploits in battle nevertheless emerge from the standard history books and is preserved in the oral traditions of the Griquas.

But it was the Bantu-speaking people who offered the tougher opposition. They had the advantage of greater numbers and could raise larger armies than either the Bathwa or Khoi Khoi. Unlike the Bathwas or the Khoi Khoi who were nomads, the Bantu-speaking people were already a settled community that ploughed the land and reared livestock. Their social system was more developed and weapons more effective, advantages which enabled them to contest the advance of the whites for more than a century. But the superior arms the whites used, their greater economic resources and better organisation gave them the edge in these conflicts. The gun was mightier than the spear and the ox-shield, the arrow and the bow. The advance of capitalism could not be repulsed by a primitive social system relying on equally primitive weapons. In spite of the daring energy and skill with which our forefathers fought, they were beaten in the end and, in the process, we lost the right to run our own states, to command our own armies, arrange our own external relations and the most precious of all liberties - the right to be a man.

The defeat of the black armies towards the end of the nineteenth century marked the end of

large-scale attempts to drive back the white man into the sea. Sporadic efforts were still to be made by organised groups and isolated individuals to resort to armed violence against the whites but, for the moment, the age of settling problems between blacks and whites by means of war belonged to the past.

Nevertheless the black man's desire to win back his country and direct its destinies still burned as fiercely as before, and soon after the wars of dispossession, he was forging new weapons to voice his aspirations. A handful of small, regional, political organisations sprang up, all having as their main object the unity and freedom of each oppressed population group in a specified region. The oldest of the larger organisations that were to play a crucial role in the liberation struggle was the Natal Indian Congress, a constituent body of the South African Indian Congress, which was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894, followed in 1902 by Dr. Abdurahaman's African People Organisation. Although the APO was in theory non-racial, in actual fact it became an organisation for Coloureds.

But the most significant development in the black man's struggle through organised political action was the emergence in 1912 of the African National Congress, the oldest African national organisation in the country. Its emergence was a landmark because the pivot of South African politics is, and has always been, the exact position of the African people in the country's political structure. A liberation movement which does not enjoy the support of the African masses is like waging a war without an army and only the involvement of the African people as a whole will give

striking power to the political activities of the oppressed people. The ANC arose in a totally different climate. In 1910 the area over which the wars were fought was united under one central government, a development which put a new dimension to the aspirations of all population groups in the country, demanding more ambitious programmes and larger organisations. In this new atmosphere African leaders no longer wished to champion the cause of separate and small ethnic states which existed when the whites came and whose independence our ancestors had sought to defend. Now the central task was to unite Africans for common action under one country wide body fighting for their political rights in a united South Africa. The ANC was founded with this aim in mind. Its constitution expressly denounced racialism and tribal feuds and demanded the participation of Africans in the building of a national policy acceptable to all sections of the population.

The other political organisations that were established after 1912 were the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in 1920, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) also in 1920, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) in 1943, the African Democratic Party in 1943, the Coloured People's Organisation (later changed to Coloured People's Congress - CPC) in 1953, the Congress of Democrats (COD) in 1953, the Liberal Party also in 1953, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959. They differ on questions of principle and tactics and have wasted valuable time and resources in fighting amongst themselves. But they have all at one time or another, formed part of the country's liberation movement and have served as the vehicle through which the people of South Africa have over the

years tried to shape their own political beliefs and to develop the country wide opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. They have in varying degrees, and subject to remarks that will be made later, helped not only to educate the masses on the evils of racial oppression and disunity amongst the people, but in maintaining a hard core of dedicated fighters who have kept the ideals of freedom alive even at such a crucial moment when the enemy has become more ruthless in dealing with its political opponents.

These are the organisations through which we have tried to rally the people during the last eighty years and to fight for our rights. Some of these, the ADP of Paul Mosaka for example, have disappeared from the scene and are forgotten. Others remain in name only, and still others have grown considerably and today are the centre of the struggle trashing out problems, providing leadership and developing new programmes to meet new situations.

Equally different was the environment in which the ANC founded the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944. The first half of the 40s was an important period in world history and created the ideal atmosphere for the propagation of enlightened ideals. In 1941 Roosevelt and Churchill outlined certain democratic principles on which the respective countries hoped to build a future world, whilst the United Nations Charter reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and work of the human person. It called for international co-operation in promoting respect for human rights without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. At the same time the 1944 Brazzaville Conference called by the French Provisional Government advocated greater

administrative autonomy for the French colonies and felt these territories should have a say in the reconstruction of the French political system after the war.

The Second World War was still raging and the Nazis, whose atrocities were arousing intense revulsion throughout the world and focusing attention on the evils of racialism, were retreating on all fronts. These developments encouraged the hope that the world was moving away from oppressive systems of government, and that conditions would soon be created which would enable the ordinary man to develop his personality to the full. South African blacks had gone up North and saw other blacks carrying arms and defending the so called democratic way of life, returning home even more bitter about their own disabilities. It was also a time of acute shortage of houses and of intolerable conditions in the African townships where the vast majority of the people lived below subsistence level.

It was under these conditions that the League was founded to mobilize the masses of the African youth into the organisation. I was a foundation member together with Anton Lembede (National President), Oliver Tambo (National Secretary), Walter Sisulu (Treasurer), Willie Nkomo (chairman of the Provisional Committee), Peter Mda, Jordaan Ngubane, Lionel Majombozi, Congress Mbata, Peter Borman and Msikinya. Branches were established in all the provinces and in 1948 I became the National Secretary, editor of its journal "The African Lodestar" and National President in 1951. Its creed was African Nationalism, and the creation of a united African nation out of the different tribes, the overthrow of white supremacy and the establishment of democratic forms of government

were declared to be the main goal. It condemned all kinds of racialism and accepted as full citizens, regardless of colour or creed, all those who had made South Africa their home and who renounced white supremacy.

The basic policy of the League contained nothing new as a study of the first constitution of the ANC would show. But in the League we had at least a group of enthusiastic disciples who consistently made African nationalism the battle cry on practically every occasion and who seriously attempted to give it concrete expression. The League had a collective leadership and it made progress as a result of the joint efforts of all its members. Within that context its head, Anton Lembede, attracted a lot of attention throughout the country and from all national groups. He was a highly qualified man, having made this achievement through private studies, and was one of the four African lawyers in the country in those days. His marathon addresses were always full of learning and he stressed repeatedly that, wherever the African had been given the opportunity, he was capable of developing to the same extent as the white man. Men like Marcus Garvey, Du Bois, Haile Selassie, as well as feats of our forefathers in the wars of dispossession, frequently formed the theme of his speeches. We took it for granted that one day he would head the ANC. One day he and I were chatting together when he complained of a sudden pain in the stomach and of feeling cold. As the pain rapidly worsened he was driven to Coronation Hospital where he died the next day.

Peter Mda, then the leading theoretician of the League, was the obvious successor to Anton Lembede. His cautious and analytical approach, ability to express himself in simple terms and his



tactical experience, lent much weight to his views and the League benefitted immensely from his advice. Although the basic policy of the League was broad and non racial we were nevertheless suspicious of the Left and strenuously opposed any joint political campaigns with other oppressed population groups. On many occasions Youth Leaguers appeared on public platforms and attacked the communists, Coloureds and Indians who sought to run our affairs, so we argued, under the pretext of joint action. It was precisely this suspicion which made us introduce a motion, which we lost heavily, at the 1947 National Conference of the ANC, demanding the expulsion from the ANC of all members of the CP.

Although he was a solid African nationalist and fully supported the view that Africans should be left free to plan and fight their own political battles, Peter Mda consistently warned against the danger of taking our ideological differences too far and to the point of breaking up public meetings and confusing the masses when unity and common

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Ramohamoe related how Makgatho challenged the legality of this practice by boarding a second class compartment. He was arrested and charged but the courts upheld his action. It was also Ramohamoe who first told me the story, which I have since heard repeatedly from various sources, that during Makgatho's days Africans were prohibited by law from walking on town pavements in the Transvaal, a law which many municipalities strictly enforced. Those Africans who made the

mistake of doing so were beaten up by whites. Again it was Makgatho who organised volunteers to defy the law and forced the authorities to back down.

Ramohanoe understood the basic guidelines to be followed by those who work in a national movement and resisted all forms of witch hunting inside the organisation or of sectarian thinking. The attitude of the older generation in the ANC as to the national character of the organisation was clear and consistent. They strictly adhered to the constitution and welcomed every African willing to play his part in the struggle, and worked well with African nationalist, Marxists, Christians, workers, peasants, business- and professional men. In this regard many of our thinkers, both inside and outside the movement, cannot free themselves from the influence of the enemy press, radio, literature and other forms of propaganda and see problems mainly from the point of view of the enemy. They tend to be hostile to radical thinking and do not want to be associated with any idea, however sound it may be, which enjoys the support of the CP. They are lukewarm on the question of unity with other population groups and unconsciously help to divide the oppressed people when they should make unity a principal issue. This mistake is as dangerous as the views of those Marxists in a broad national struggle who regard as revolutionaries only those people who are members of the CP, who are suspicious of other schools of political thought and who see a multitude of counter revolutionaries in the national movement.

Ramohanoe believed that Africans were the principal force in the freedom struggle and that they could win the struggle single handed even if the other population group combined against them. But

he also believed that the other oppressed groups formed an essential part of the liberation movement and that whenever possible we should unite against the common enemy. He regarded the ANC as a national forum where all schools of political thought could freely debate issues together and take common action. He worked harmoniously with other population groups and often addressed mixed audiences with Coloureds, Indian and white speakers.

In 1947 I was elected to the executive committee of the Transvaal ANC and served under Ramohanoe. He was a staunch nationalist and a devout Christian and in many ways an ideal man to head the broad committee. He could skillfully balance the various trends of political thought and whenever deadlock threatened he was always ready to come forward with a suitable compromise. In this way he was able to reconcile sharp differences and to move forward with his entire team.

My association with Ramohanoe strengthened my conviction that I was in the right place and that the ANC was the organisation best suited to lead us towards our most glorious day of liberation. From now on I was a committed man with my whole future tied up with the ANC and ready to identify myself with its hopes and despairs, its victories and reverses.

Although I was now fully committed and had gained some idea of the hazards that accompanied the life of a freedom fighter, I had not seen any major political campaign by blacks and had not even begun giving serious attention to the question of methods. The sacrifices I was called on to make so far went no further than being absent from the family during weekends mainly, returning home late,

travelling to address meetings and condemning government policy. During the Alexandra bus boycott I had joined others and walked to town and back. This was, however, a local demonstration, and apart from a handful of outside supporters, only the Alex residents were involved.

But in 1946 there occurred an event which shattered many of my illusions and forced me to recast my whole approach to my political work. The Smuts government passed the Asiatic Land Tenure Act which severely restricted the rights of Asians to buy and occupy fixed property and which made provision for their representation in Parliament by whites. The measure aroused the strongest reaction from all sections of the Indian community throughout the country and had world wide repercussions.

Dr. Y.M. Dadoo, president of the Transvaal Indian Congress, dismissed the whole measure as a "spurious offer of a sham franchise" and a "diabolical attempt to strangle the Indian people economically and degrade them socially". In addition, the Indian community under the leadership of Drs. Dadoo and G.M. Naicker, president of the Natal Indian Congress, went over to the offensive and launched passive resistance to defeat the measure. Housewives, family heads, priests, professional men, traders and workers responded magnificently to the challenge. Even students suspended their studies to take their turn in the line of battle. The campaign raged for two years and the hostility of the people was so deep and unity so strong that the scheme was completely paralysed and, at the end of the campaign, no less than two thousand volunteers had been jailed.

The campaign did not lead to the reversal of government policy towards Indians, and another equally harsh law was soon to cripple them. But the Indian people had at least registered protest against the tyranny of colour oppression in the most effective manner within their means. The campaign instilled a spirit of defiance, broke the fear of prison and boosted the NIC and TIC considerably. By launching passive resistance they reminded the people of South Africa that the freedom struggle is not merely a question of making speeches, passing resolutions and sending deputations but, more important, of intensive organisation, militant mass action and readiness to pay the highest price.

But the 1946 campaign did not open a new chapter. The freedom struggle in South Africa has a long and colourful history of stubborn resistance to attacks on human rights and, in some cases, great victories were scored. It has been said by some certain aspects of the 1913 passive resistance campaign in which Mohandas Gandhi (later Mahatma) and a large procession of Indians illegally crossed from Natal to the Transvaal, had a greater impact than that of the 40s. During the same year and again in 1918 African women in the Orange Free State organised a resistance campaign and defeated moves by the authorities to force them to carry passes. In the process, many women were imprisoned or fined. In 1939 the Coloured people staged a demonstration against the attempts of the Nationalist Party and Smuts government to secure their total segregation. Although the demonstration was violently dispersed by the police, it showed once again that the Coloured people were in the field of battle ready to take the most ferocious blows the enemy could deliver.

But by 1946 all these events, as important as they are in the political evolution of our people, lay in the past. Few of us had seen them or actually knew the personalities involved and we were able to recapture the dramatic atmosphere in which they occurred. The 1946 campaign however, was taking place under our own eyes. We followed the parliamentary debates on the Ghetto Law (that is, the Asiatic Land Tenure Act), statements issued by Indian leaders, witnessed the sabre rattling, the approach of the actual conflict and its final outbreak. It was our contemporaries, some of whom we knew quite well, who defied. It was my friend Ismail Meer and J.N. Singh, who suspended their studies, said goodbye to me and went to jail. Even high school students like Ahmed Kathrada and others left their names into their history of South Africa. Luxmi Ranchod, a thirteen year old girl in Standard VI, left school and went to jail a couple of times.

The campaign was confined to the Indian community and the participation of the other sections of the population was not encouraged. Nevertheless, the campaign attracted the support of the other groups. Dr. Xuma, president of the ANC, and the other African leaders, spoke at several meetings and gave full support to the just struggle of the Indian people. Joshua Makue, a leading member of the Germiston branch of the ANC, Cissie Gool, a Coloured City Councillor from Cape Town and the Reverend Michael Scott, a white priest, also joined the campaign and went to jail.

Another issue that loomed very large in 1946 was that of unity. Black leaders have always been aware of its importance and of the dangers of a divided movement. The formation of the ICU in 1920 brought together thousands of black workers in one organisation, followed in 1927 by Dr.

Abdurahman's attempt to create one body to serve as the mouthpiece of all the oppressed people.

Three years later the CP made a similar attempt when it established the National-Pass Council and in 1938 Dr. Dadoo formed the Non-European Front. Lastly in 1943 the ANC and the All African Convention, an affiliate of the NEUM considered ways and means of setting up a central political body to put forward the demands of the African people.

The success of the ICU in this and other fields was short lived and, other attempts did not receive the support of the various sections of the movement. There were many reasons for this poor response, amongst which was the clash of personalities and the related fact that the other organisations did not want to be superseded by other bodies. In addition was the fundamental fact that in the light of the economic and social conditions at the time the whole idea of racial unity was premature. Such unity is essentially the product of economic forces and is related to the social conditions. In a South Africa where Africans, Coloureds and Indians lived in separate areas, had separate sports facilities, separate schools and separate cultural organisations and where there were marked differences in income and political privileges, it was not easy to convince the people of their common interests. Even the most advanced section of the movement, the industrial workers, had to be organised into racial trade unions.

The social conditions were basically the same during the Second World War, but the rapid industrial expansion led to the emergence of large factories with workers drawn from different groups and with grievances and demands that were increasingly becoming communal. It was also a

period of considerable unrest amongst the workers and a strike of fifty thousand miners on the Witwatersrand, large numbers of whom marched to Johannesburg from various centres, during which eleven miners were killed by the police, led to the adjournment of the Native Representative Council in protest and to a sedition trial involving members of the Central committee of the CP. Africans, especially on the Reef, were defying the law and establishing a series of shanty towns and in 1946 violent clashes between Africans and the police took place.

The Indian people opened a second front and for two years campaigned against the Ghetto Law with a vigour that aroused administration from far and wide. Although Coloureds held no spectacular demonstrations during this period, Dr. E.T. Dietrich, president of the APO, declared that the Coloured people saw in the oppression of the African and Indian a likeness to their own oppression. He added that the Coloured man recognised that only by united movement of all the oppressed people fighting for the same aims could the tide of reaction and oppression be stemmed.

It was against this background that in 1974 Drs. Xuma, Dadoo and Naicker thought another attempt at unity could be made. They met in Johannesburg and, guided by experience, avoided the over ambitious step of establishing a central political body to direct future struggles. Accordingly they agreed, as a start, that the ANC, MIC and TIC would co-operate on matters of common interest, the only form of joint action likely to receive wide support. Later James Phillips signed the agreement on behalf of the APO. Whilst the agreement laid a firm foundation for the co-operation of Africans, Indians and Coloureds, it respected the independence of the separate political organs party to it. It



was a shrewd move and during the past twenty nine years inter racial unity was grown and organs of collective action, co-ordinating the activities of the different groups have emerged. The roots of the alliance between the ANC, SAIC, CPC, the white SACOD, the non racial SACPU and the joint campaigns waged from 1950 onwards are to be found in the Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker Pact.

In the light of the conditions in which one worked at the time no other form of unity could have succeeded. Each national group faced problems peculiar to itself, which did not affect the other groups and which could best be taken up by the political organisation of the group affected. The Pass system, for example, encroaches upon one of the most cherished rights of democratic government and, as the principle means of persecuting Africans, it is deeply resented by them and some of the most powerful African campaigns have centered around this question. But the pass does not affect the other groups at all, or at least not in the form in which it affects Africans, and they do not regard it as the number one enemy.

Similarly hardly any issue has agitated the Indian people more than the Ghetto Law, the principle of which has now been embodied in the Group Areas Act. Short of violence, Indians have resisted these two laws by all means at their disposal and the latter is still the main object of attack. But the same law has not hit Africans as hard as Indians and, apart from expressing admiration and solidarity, African response to a campaign based solely on this law would at present probably not be as solid and sustained as that of the Indians.

The position in regard to the Coloureds is the same. Apart from the general demand for political rights, the main grievances of the Coloured man today arise out of the classification law and job reservation. Under the former the relevant authorities may classify one as white, Coloured, Indian or African. In our country whilst many Coloureds may consider it an honour to be classified as white, they consider it a tragedy to be declared African and the latter not the former, is the real purpose of the classification law. Under Job Reservation certain categories of work may be reserved for a particular racial group, the whites for example. In this way the blacks, particularly Coloureds, have lost or been debarred from taking well paying jobs. Those who wish to mobilise the support of the Coloured masses will make issues of this matter a focal point of political agitation.

The most immediate lesson to be drawn from the above outline is that the existing political organisations in the liberation movement are essential for the mobilisation of the oppressed people and to prepare them for the rise of a single organisation which will serve as a mouthpiece for all the oppressed groups. In present day South Africa, the issues facing each group can only be effectively taken up by the organisation that caters mainly for that group. The African masses can only be reached by the ANC, the Coloureds by the CPC, Indians by the SAIC to which the PIC and NIC are affiliated and the whites by the SACOD. In our external work patterns of organisation are already being developed which unmistakably show the direction of our efforts towards the goal of ultimate unity, but the internal situation today confirms the wisdom and foresight behind the Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker Pact.

The signing of the Pact was followed by a series of non racial campaigns, the first being the First Transvaal and Orange Free State Peoples Assembly for Votes for All whose aim was to campaign for the extension of the franchise to all black South Africans. The League welcomed the Pact as well as the principle of waging joint campaigns but took no part in the campaign for the Assembly. We felt that the campaign should be sponsored not by individuals, but by the political organisations themselves, in accordance with the spirit of the Pact. Although the campaign for the Assembly was announced by Dr. Xuma at a press conference over which I presided, I believed at the time that the Congress would run the campaign. The question of the machinery through which such a campaign would be conducted was later debated and when the view that the political organisations should take control was defeated, the ANC withdrew its support, a decision which I fully supported.

The 1948 campaign precipitated a crisis in the Transvaal ANC when the executive committee passed a vote of no confidence in its president, C.S. Ramohanoe for issuing a press statement calling upon Africans in the province to take part in the campaign in defiance of the decision of his executive which was against such participation. At a special provincial conference called to settle the dispute, I moved the no confidence motion seconded by Oliver Tambo. The meeting broke up in disorder. In this regard duty conflicted with personal loyalty. The seriousness of Ramohanoe's mistake of flouting the decision of the executive was too obvious and I readily agreed to lead the attack. At the same time I knew throughout the dispute that we were condemning the action of a man whose integrity and devotion to the struggle could not be questioned, and who had sacrificed far more than we had done.

The 1947 Pact ushered in a new formula in the struggle to unite the people of South Africa. But in the history of the ANC it is the year 1949 which constitutes a landmark and in which a serious effort was made to turn the ANC into a mass organisation relying primarily on its own strength and ready to meet new challenges. That year the annual conference decided to use new forms of struggle and adopted a programme of action which made the boycott, strike, stay-at-home, passive resistance, protest demonstration and other forms of mass action its principal weapons. A Council of Action was set up and charged with the task of implementing the programme. Militant mass action was not unknown in the ANC, and in the course of its long history there has been plenty of fireworks and enormous sacrifices were made then which many of us today would find difficult to attempt. But such bold demonstrations reflected flashes of temper and spurts of militancy from men whose policy was to keep their activities within the law.

But now we faced a new situation in the country. In May 1948 the Nationalist Party had shocked South Africa and the world by winning the general election in spite of the fact that it admired Hitler and had prayed for a Nazi victory during the Second World War. For a long time before the election it clamoured for a tougher line towards the black people and had fought the election on the slogan "Die Kaffer op sy plek en die Indier uit die land!" (The kaffir in his place and the Indian out of the country.) As a government they immediately applied apartheid - the total separation of the races - the most ruthless policy in the history of the country. With the rise of the Nationalist to power the atmosphere of crisis hung upon South Africa and we realised that ours would thenceforth be a land

of tensions and civil strife. We prepared for action and the 1949 programme was the corner stone of our campaign of mass mobilisation.

The programme was sponsored mainly by the League and a few weeks before the 1949 conference Walter Sisulu, Peter Mda (according to Walter Sisulu the third person was Oliver Tambo and not Peter Mda. check) and I had a long and stormy session with Dr. Xuma during which we promised to support him for re-election to the presidency provided he supported the proposed programme.

The over cautious veteran was adamant and maintained throughout that the proposed forms of mass action were premature and would merely give the government the excuse for crushing the movement. He resented the fact that we should lay down conditions on which we would vote for him and regarded such an approach as a form of blackmail. To our argument that Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru had won the independence of their countries through militant struggle and sacrifice, he replied that such action would in due course also come to South Africa but that for the moment such a step would be fatal. We reached a deadlock. At the conference the League voted for Dr. J.S. Moroka who readily accepted the programme and Dr. Xuma was defeated. The new secretary was Walter Sisulu and Dr. S.M. Molema became the treasurer. Oliver Tambo was one of the younger men to be elected to the antional executive.

The 1949 programme of action was to bring about changes not only in the ANC but in the League itself. Personalities whose learning and oratory had dominated the mother body for many years and the League were to fade away with the approach of the conflict and new blood that was carved out

for difficult times joined the hard core in the crusade against apartheid. The Assembly held its congress in Johannesburg a few days before the Nationalist Government came to power. The Convention followed two years thereafter and was the first important Transvaal mass campaign to be organised against the policy of the new government. Africans, Coloureds, Indians and whites jointly protested against the Suppression of Communism Act, which was then before parliament, and against the gagging of Sam Kahn, a member of the Central Committee of the CP, who also represented the Cape Africans in parliament. Although the ANC had taken part in the preliminary discussions on the idea of holding the Convention and although the Convention was opened by Dr. Moroka, president of the ANC, the ANC itself refused to have anything to do with the affair, again on the ground that it was sponsored by individuals and not by the organisations.

Hardly two months after the holding of the Convention the Freedom Day Strike was held on the 1st May 1950. This was also a Transvaal strike and was again organised on the same lines as the Assembly and the Convention and sparked off the same disputes and recrimination. We also felt that the organisers of the strike were trying to undermine the decision of the ANC to hold a National Day of Protest during 1950, and we felt it would be better to concentrate our efforts for a year on one campaign. Ahmed Kathrada was then barely twenty one and like all youth, keen to flex his muscles. One day he confronted me with the charge that the League did not want to work with other groups and threatened that he and his colleagues had decided to challenge us by appealing directly for co-operation to the masses of the African people. Although the threat angered me it had a hollow ring and was never carried out. Today it is one of the episodes we recall with amusement.

In the evening that day Walter Sisulu and I were in Orlando West and the police were camped across a stream about five hundred yards away from us. Suddenly a volley was fired in our direction and we took cover but the bullets hit the houses and in some cases even shattered windows. That was the reckless act of irresponsible men and typical of police behaviour towards Africans under the Nationalist regime. There was no provocation whatsoever for the indiscriminate firing; the police were not in danger nor were there any gatherings they wished to disperse. It is not surprising that on that day alone they killed no less than eighteen Africans.

Early in 1950 I was co-opted into the National Executive of the ANC in place of Dr. Xuma, who had since resigned. We were now preparing for the National Day of Protest on June 26th 1950. On this occasion we closed ranks and the ANC, SAICand APO, and nationalists and Marxists, conservatives and progressives, priests and laymen worked together harmoniously. In preparation for June 26th Walter Sisulu toured the country and left me in charge of the office. The whole place buzzed with activity and Moses Kotane, Dr. Dadoo, J.B. Marks (now Transvaal president of the ANC), Yusuf Cahcalia and his brother Maulvi Cachalia, Gaur Radebe (secretary of the Council of Action), James Phillips, V.T. Safera, Michael L. Harmel, Jack Hodgson, Diliza Mji, Peter Raboroka, Ntatho Motlana were amongst those who called in daily to see that things were moving according to plan.

A political strike based on the demands of a general nature and not on such clear cut issues as higher wages, shorter hours of work and a reduction of house rents and transport costs is a difficult

form of mass action, demanding an efficient organisation and long hours at the desk and in the field. Such action is even more difficult in South Africa where it is a criminal offence for an African to go on strike, where by refusing to work he may lose not only his job but also the right to remain in such an area, where freedom of assembly, speech and movement are drastically curtailed and where the executive enjoys wide powers and the police are ruthless in suppressing the political activities of the blacks. In spite of all these difficulties June 26th was a success and in the leading cities the majority of the workers stayed away from work and black business men closed their shops. In Bethal, Gert Sibande, who later became a president of the Transvaal ANC, led a demonstration of 5,000 people. The success of this day raised our morale and served as a warning to the Malan government that the people would resist apartheid to the bitter end. Since then we have observed June 26th as our National Day.

At that time my eldest son, Madiba, was five. One day he asked his mother where I lived. I used to return home late at night and leave early in the morning before he was awake. I missed him a great deal during those busy days. I love playing and chatting with children, giving them a bath, feeding and putting them to bed with a little story, and being away from the family has troubled me throughout my political life. I like relaxing at the house, reading quietly, taking in the sweet smell that comes from the pots, sitting around the table with the family and taking out my wife and children. When you can no longer enjoy these simple pleasures something valuable is taken away from your life and you feel it in your daily work.



Shortly before the National Day of Protest I wrote a leading article in "The African Ledestar" on the Bill which finally became the Suppression of Communism Act. My argument was that the Bill was not intended for the CP as was generally claimed, but for the ANC, which was the only real opposition to the government outside the parliament. I pointed out that the CP was an insignificant party with no substantial following and added that the government merely used the name of the CP as a tactical move to get the support of white South Africa for the Bill, but that once it became law it would be used against all the critics of the government.

This article led to an important discussion between Moses Kotane and myself in which we tried to reason calmly with each other. It is never safe and may even be reckless to comment fully on events relating to a liberation movement which is still in the field of battle. Such comments might give vital information to the enemy and cause serious damage to our work. Consequently, relevant information may be omitted from the story and the narration ends abruptly. It is sufficient to say that that discussion gave me a deeper grasp of the reasons why the CP has since its emergence been the main object of vilification and attack by oppressive regimes.

I have already said that the 1946 resistance campaign reminded the people of South Africa that the freedom struggle is not merely a question of making speeches but, even more important, of militant mass action and readiness to pay the highest price. It focused public attention on political action as a means of preaching one's goal and forced me to re-examine my own approach. I became acutely aware of the paucity of my knowledge and the feebleness of my own political activity. For the B.A.

degree I majored in Politics and Native Administration and was fairly conversant with the evolution of political thought up to the capitalist era, and with the more respectable literature that dealt with the life of my people. I was also familiar with such radical Western thinkers as Harold Laski, Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell, as well as with South African liberals like Dr. Edgar Brookes, Professor R.F.A. Hoernle, Julius Lewin and with the publications of the Institute of Race Relations. All these were outstanding intellectuals who had done valuable research work in various fields and had presented facts in a scholarly manner. I gained a lot from reading their work and I still consult these and numerous other Western thinkers. The Institute publishes important material on race relations and these publications are indispensable to any student of South African politics. One of my regrets is that in my current circumstances such material is no longer available to me. But all these publications had one fundamental weakness: none of them contained a formula of how I could solve my problems. As a freedom fighter I am interested not only in books that clearly describe my political disabilities but, even more important, in those that can tell me how we can fight for our rights and free our country from oppression. Literature that dealt with topics of this kind was bound to grip me.

In the late 40s I began reading the works of nationalists like Drs. Nmandi Azikiwe and Nkwane Nkrumah, Mr. George Padmore, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and others. The problems of each country differed from the others and, in some cases, materially. But there were also remarkable similarities and the experience of the national movements in Africa and Asia contained vital lessons for us. At that time I was preoccupied mainly with the struggle against racial oppression and

never considered the nature of the social system that we would introduce after liberation. Members of the League, especially Peter Mda, often talked about the building of an African society in which we would take what was best from both the East and the West and, with these, create something distinctly African. But we never spelt out the essential features of this social system which made it unique, and in particular, which distinguished it from scientific socialism on the one hand and from capitalism on the other.

Related to this question was the fact that some of my university friends, especially Ismail Meer, Ruth First, J.N. Singh, were familiar with Marxist thought and in political discussions with them I found that my ignorance of Marxism was always a handicap. What was even more important, in the light of my own personal experience with individual members of the CP who had befriended me, and in the light of the lessons of the 1946 campaign, I had difficulties in justifying my prejudice against Marxism. Dr. Dadoo, one of the leaders of the campaign, was a well known Marxist. A successful medical practitioner, he belonged to a well-to-do family and could have lived in luxury for the rest of his life if he so wished. But his patriotism had pushed him right into the front line of battle, whilst his role as a fighter for human rights had made him a hero respected by all population groups. Dr. Dadoo was not an exceptional Marxist. There was a substantial number of Marxists amongst the 1946 resisters, all of whom were upright men dedicated to the ideals of freedom and who were making enormous sacrifices in the service of their own countrymen. In the leadership of the ANC were men like Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks, Edwin Mofutsanyana, Dan Tloome, David Bopape, and others, equally able, devoted and hard working. How could I question the bona fides of

such men?

In this regard Gaur Radebe had given me a handful of Marxist books and I had read some of them and packed away others. Before this, I had stumbled on Edgar Snow's "Red Star over China" and had been spellbound. But now I decided to make a deeper and systematic study of Marxism and immediately tackled the Communist Manifesto, the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Das Kapital. The first two were relatively simple and contained a wealth of information which was to make me see things in perspective. I found Das Kapital difficult to understand and gave it up. Later I acquired the Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse Tung and probed the philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism. I also tried to read the publications of the CPSA and related material. Edward Roux's "S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography" and "Comrade Bill Andrews" by Jack Cope contained the biographies of two of the founders of the CP and outlined some of the problems that faced them in their pioneering work. But when one is a part-time university student and also politically active, spare time reading is a long and slow process. I seldom found time to read the Selected Works and when I did so it was done haphazardly. Nevertheless, I had made a start and the idea of a classless society strongly appealed to me. Later I was to embrace dialectical and historical materialism as my philosophy.

I also discovered that Marxists have since the time of Karl Marx given serious attention to the question of national liberation movements, that the Soviet Union fully supported the national struggles of the colonial people and that in that country racial discrimination was expressly

prohibited by the law. My reading of Marxist literature deepened my sense of commitment and brought me closer to members of the CP with whom I often had lengthy discussions on theoretical and practical problems. With this background I came to appreciate the correctness of the policy of the ANC which has since the formation of the CP welcomed Marxists as members and which has repeatedly and emphatically resisted any anti communist influences within its own ranks. Of more immediate concern to me was the fact that in Marxist literature I had found a wealth of information on all types of problems that trouble an active politician; information collected by leading theoreticians who themselves had been in the forefront of revolutionary struggles in their respective countries.

A friend once asked me how I would reconcile my belief in African nationalism and dialectical materialism at the one and the same time. There is no contradiction whatsoever between the two ideologies; on the contrary, I have found them complementary. I am an African nationalist and strive for the unity of the African people, for our emancipation from minority rule and for the right to manage our own affairs. Accordingly I considered the struggle against white supremacy as our most immediate task. I am proud of what I am, of my country and people, our history and tradition, language, music and art, and firmly believe that Africans have something distinct to contribute to world culture. I will strenuously fight for the respect of the national independence of a free and democratic South Africa and will resist aggression against its territorial integrity or interference in its domestic affairs. Equally important is the fact that my roots are struck deep into the soil of Africa and the idea of pan-Africanism flows in my blood.

But South Africa and the African continent are part of a larger world and the people of my country and those of Africa are part of the human race.

Their problems must be seen from the point of view of their uniqueness as individual peoples and from the point of view of the history of mankind as a whole. By studying the history of the entire human race we can anticipate the course of the future development of our people and help to speed up the process by concentrating our resources on the achievement of what human history demonstrates as inevitable.

In this regard dialectical materialism is a mighty weapon which puts me in a strong position to realise all my aspirations as a nationalist and as a member of the human race. Freedom fighters may choose to court disaster and fight today's revolutions with bows and arrows, shields and spears, or they may be wise and use rifles and ballistic missiles. To a nationalist fighting against national oppression dialectical materialism is like a rifle, bomb or missile in the field of battle enabling the army to defend its position and to strike. It is a powerful searchlight on a dark night which enables the traveller to see all round, to detect danger spots and the way forward. Finally, dialectical materialism excludes belief in the existence of a super natural world and rests on the principle that all causes are capable of scientific explanation. It demands that our actions should be based on facts that can be verified through observation, research or experiment. It rejects anything beyond the realm of experience and in particular the existence of a supreme being directing the course of

human affairs. For this reason, many people who otherwise would accept the correctness of a materialist approach feel outraged when they realise that belief in dialectical materialism clashes with their religious views.

Those of us who have been brought up in religious homes, educated in missionary schools, prayed regularly and modeled their lives on religious principles are grieved when scientific truth forces them to abandon established beliefs and to allow new forces to channel their beliefs and aspirations in a totally different direction. They feel as St. Peter did when thrice he denied Christ. I do not propose here to debate questions of faith and each person faced with a similar dilemma will decide the matter for himself. It is sufficient to say that the origin of religion is to be sought in man's ignorance of his environment and his inability to control the forces of nature on which his life depends. As scientific knowledge increases and man masters the natural forces, supernatural beliefs will be correspondingly weakened. The origin of religion is also linked up with man's efforts to fight against all kinds of evil, to live in peace with others and to build homes based on mutual love and respect. There are two kinds of evil which have retarded human progress and destroyed human happiness from time immemorial: man's cruelty to man and war. Those who have committed their lives to a removal of these evils, who strive to live honestly and in peace with themselves and with others are true saints even though they build no temples, wear no clerical robes or have not mastered the scriptures. Once I understood the basic principles of dialectical materialism I embraced it without hesitation. Finally, in my first six years as a member of the ANC I also learnt how to work in a broad national movement, how to work with all schools of political thought

whose long term objectives were radically different from mine and how to make headway without dividing the people. In our country colour prejudice is deeply entrenched and affects not only the ruling groups but has even penetrated to the oppressed groups themselves. More serious, some of the social evils that we strongly condemn and which the liberation movement has fought throughout its history constantly creep unnoticed into the movement itself, creating delicate problems for organisations which seek to co-ordinate the political activities of all national groups. In this situation I soon recognised the value to a freedom fighter of developing suitable techniques to settle mutual differences within the movement; that its kingpin are those whose field of vision is not hampered by the prejudices of the average man, who have the moral and intellectual qualities to focus attention on those issues that unite us and who are well suited to lead a great mass movement. The Congress movement is built on this rock and provides a platform for all those who believe that a united movement of all the oppressed people will defeat apartheid. The unity it preaches is destined to grow into a mighty force because it was born of struggle and tempered by experience. The Nationalist government has throughout its twenty eight years of its reign launched ferocious onslaughts on the liberation movement and, in the process, some organisations disappeared while others were completely paralyzed. The Congress movement took the brunt of these attacks and at some stage the state of disorganisation in our ranks was alarming. But whilst other sections of the liberation movement became even more over cautious than before and confined their activities to mere polemics, the ANC and its allies were ever resourceful and the initiative never totally slipped away from our hands. We continued to mobilize the people against apartheid and its host of evils and launched a series of mass campaigns which demonstrated in practical terms the value of united



political action. The campaigns showed that the people of South Africa could fight and beat the government, a belief which today has become a firm conviction. That is why throughout the twenty eight years our sense of commitment has remained unshaken, our morale so high and hope for victory so strong.

## Chapter 5: The defiance Campaign

The National Day of Protest on June 26th 1950 was the first national campaign in which I took part and at the end of that day I felt the exhilaration that springs from the success of an important venture one has helped to plan. The sense of involvement and comradeship becomes particularly strong in moments of challenge and action, when you are part of an organisation which can influence the people in a particular direction, when you know that you can fight and win with battles. Now we could look forward to the next round with even greater confidence and more hope. That round was not far off and would constitute another milestone in our struggle.

Soon after coming into power the Nationalist government began to spell out the policy of apartheid and passed a series of notorious laws to implement their slogan of "Die Kaffer op sy plek en die Koelie uit die land" (The kaffir in his place and the coolie out of the country. Both terms derogatory). Among the laws that were passed in 1950 alone were the Suppression of Communism Act, the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act. The first gave the government arbitrary powers in dealing with its critics and went a long way in destroying the meagre democratic rights in the country and was an admission on the part of the government that they were well aware that apartheid would be resisted by the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa. The second authorized the government to classify people in official records according to its race concepts and in the implementation of this law there would be tragic cases where members of one family were to be classified differently, some as whites and others as blacks, depending upon

whether the person had a fair or dark complexion. The Group Areas Act was the cornerstone of apartheid and under it each racial group could only own land, occupy premises, reside and trade in its own separate area.

The arbitrary and meaningless test applied and the inhumanity of the Population Registration Act is illustrated in a case I once handled. In this instance a Coloured man was classified as an African. During the Second World War he had served in North Africa and Italy. We appealed to the Classification Board consisting of a magistrate and two other officials, all white. We had formidable evidence to establish our client's case and the prosecutor formally indicated that he did not wish to oppose our appeal. A magistrate asked our client to turn around with his back facing the bench. After looking carefully at our client's shoulders, he nodded to the other officials and upheld the appeal. And so it came about that such a crucial issue was decided purely on fortuitous grounds and the structure of the shoulders.

In 1951 the government made a direct attack on the rights of the Coloureds and Africans respectively. It passed the Separate Representation of Voters Act which it later used to remove Coloureds from the common voters roll, a right which they had enjoyed in the Cape for more than a century. The same year it passed the Bantu Authorities Act to restore the power of the Chiefs and to break up Africans who were increasingly becoming conscious of their unity and power as a national group, into small ethnic entities preoccupied with purely local affairs and completely lacking a nationwide and international outlook. To split up the African into several narrow visioned

communities was a logical step for men whose political careers were built up on the propaganda of the "Black Peril", who wanted to save white supremacy at all costs and who regarded every black man as a political enemy waiting for an opportunity to slash the throat of every white man.

At that time the only statutory body through which the African could voice their grievances was the Native Representative Council which had a total of twenty two members consisting of six whites appointed by the government and sixteen Africans. Four of the sixteen Africans were nominated by the government, the remaining twelve were elected indirectly by electoral colleges whose voting units were made up of the local councils, Chiefs, electoral committees, municipal "Native" advisory boards, and in the case of the Transkeian Territories, members of the Transkeian Territories General Council (Bunga). In effect the elections were remote from the ordinary African and were the business of a tiny handful. Thus by 1950 three million whites were represented in parliament by no less than 150 members elected directly by individual voters, whereas 8 million Africans were allowed a purely advisory council with only 12 "elected". In spite of this gross disparity and its lack of power, the Native Representative Council at least enabled Africans from all over the country and irrespective of their ethnic origins to come together and present their grievances to the government as a national group. The existence of such country wide statutory bodies, in spite of their powerlessness, could be exploited by African Nationalists in their task of nation building in so far as they made it possible for the Africans outside the liberation movement to discuss their problems as Africans and not as Batswana, Vendas or Zulus. But in 1951 the government introduced a pyramid of ethnic institutions built around the Chief and his council in place of the NRC.

The reaction of the Coloured people to the Separate Representation of Voters Act was swift. They realised that the measure was the first step in a comprehensive plan to rob them of their voting rights. They resisted the move on the simple ground that the government had no moral justification whatsoever for taking away their birth right and hit back by holding a series of protest meetings and demonstrations. For whites the new law sparked off a constitutional crisis in which the contending parties fought it out inside and outside the parliament. Here the main issue was not so much the taking away of the rights of the Coloureds as the threat to the English language which the law represented. Government opponents argued that the new measure was invalid in as much as it had not been passed at a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the provisions of Section 152 of the Constitution. The strongest attack from the whites outside parliament came from the Torch Commando and the Springbok Legion, both of which were organisations of ex-servicemen from the Second World War.

Thus the Separate Representation of Voters Act portrayed the government as the common enemy of the people of South Africa, concerned not just with the preservation of the general policy of apartheid but, more particularly, with the entrenchment of Afrikanerdom and in which the interests of the Afrikaners would precede those of other national groups, black and white. The opposition to the Act was evidence of the realisation that apartheid was incompatible with racial peace and harmony and the whole issue brought the Coloureds closer to the other oppressed groups. The Franchise Action Council which took the initiative in organising the mass demonstrations, worked

closely together with the ANC and the SAIC and Walter Sisulu, Yusuf Dadoo and other Congress leaders addressed meetings in various parts of the country. So strong was the indignation of the Coloured people that even the moderate Coloured Peoples National Union of George Golding was drawn in against the government.

It was in this situation, when we were preparing for action and when unity was essential that the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM) played its characteristic role of dividing the people at a critical moment. Throughout its history the NEUM has condemned political and workers strikes as adventurist and futile activities and instead called for "non collaboration" with the oppressor. In particular the NEUM has just about condemned every action and every thing done by the Congresses without exception while its own activities have been confined to holding meetings.

"Non collaboration" has always been their pet excuse for doing nothing and now once again in 1951 the big talk of withholding co-operation from the oppressor and building a non-European united front was heard. In spite of the factional activities, public meetings and demonstrations were held culminating in a successful strike in the Cape on May 7th.

The struggle to defend the Coloured vote was still on when Walter Sisulu broached the idea of a civil disobedience campaign in which all the oppressed people would participate, as on June 26th 1950. He outlined a plan under which selected volunteers would deliberately invite imprisonment by defying specified laws chosen on the ground that they were considered to be the most oppressive. He believed that with the contacts we had made and the experience acquired during the 1950

campaign we could make an even greater assault on apartheid.

The idea immediately appealed to me and I readily accepted. However we differed on the important question on who should take part in such a campaign. It seemed to me that an exclusively African campaign, planned and directed by Africans and relying on screened African volunteers only would be far better than a joint one. I felt that in spite of good progress we had made, the social conditions still tended to make the average African cautious of joint action and that a purely African resistance movement would attract greater support. I considered that in due course closer contact between the racial groups and experience would remove all suspicion and our people would warmly welcome mixed campaigns. But I feared that joint campaigns where Africans had few literate and properly trained men and where they lacked economic resources and influential contacts could give to minorities enjoying these advantages an influence out of proportion to their numbers. I pointed out that confronted with political actions by Africans, our enemies would find it difficult to use propaganda that we were merely being incited by other groups and concluded by stressing the immense material and psychological advantages to the liberation movement as a whole of an African leadership that continued to challenge the government by organising successful campaigns on its own initiative and resources.

Walter contended on the other hand, that it would be inadvisable for us to launch a purely African campaign first because the 1947 agreement bound us to work together on matters of common interest and the contemplated campaign fell into this category. He added that on June 26th 1950 we

had staged a successful joint campaign and that to depart from that policy would necessarily appear strange, leaving us with no convincing argument to meet the criticism that would certainly follow such a departure. We ultimately argued the matter at the meeting of the National Executive of the ANC and after careful consideration it rejected my views and endorsed those of Walter. Among those who turned down my proposal were Dr. J.S. Moroka, Professor Z.K. Matthews, Dr. S.M. Molema and Reverend Sikomolo, all of whom were regarded by many Congressites as right wingers and staunch African nationalists who would normally be expected to favour the go-it-alone line. They agreed with the other members of the executive that the ANC was an independent body fighting primarily for the liberation of the African people. It alone decided whether on any particular question it should work alone or co-operate with other organisations. The contemplated action was one of those matters it considered should be tackled jointly with the other oppressed groups. They held that whether Africans would support a move in greater or lesser numbers would depend mainly on the efficiency of our machinery and on our ability to reach the people and explain the issue involved. Although I respected the decision of the Executive I none the less thought the issue was of sufficient importance to be canvassed at the national conference in December 1951 but the delegates dismissed my views just as emphatically as the Executive had done. The matter had now been considered by the highest organ of the ANC and I fully accepted the position.

That conference attracted a record number of zealous delegates and observers from all over the country, including former President General Dr. A.B. Xuma, Yusuf Cachalia, joint secretary of the SAIC, and Manilal Gandhi, son of the famous Mahatma. Chief A.J. Luthuli, who presided,



delivered a brilliant address welcoming delegates and visitors and stressed that the political situation called for a momentous decision. One may get a picture of the mood of the delegates when I say that whereas it met with a lukewarm reception when I outlined my views on the form the campaign should take, I was warmly cheered later during the conference when I spoke as National President of the Youth League and pledged the support of the Youth for the campaign.

Shortly before the conference the ANC and SAIC established a joint planning Council consisting of Dr. Moroka, Walter Sisulu, Yusuf Dadoo, J.B. Marks and Yusuf Cachalia to plan for action. Their report of the Council was accepted enthusiastically by the conference, the only dissentient being M.T. Moerane who was later to become editor of the newspaper "The World". The conference went further and called upon the government to repeal by not later than February 29th 1952 the Suppression of Communism Act, the Group Areas Act, the Separate Representation of Voters Act, the Pass Laws and the Rehabilitation Scheme. Finally the conference resolved that the ANC would hold protest meetings and demonstrations on April 6th 1952 as a prelude to the launching of the campaign for the defiance of unjust laws. In January 1952 the SAIC formally adopted a resolution supporting the decision of the ANC.

The actual campaign was preceded by an exchange of letters between the ANC and the government, which disclosed the existence of irreconcilable differences in the views of the two parties. Our letter drew the attention of D.F. Malan, the Prime Minister, to the series of efforts we had made since 1912 to bring to the government by every constitutional means our legitimate

demands and in particular our inherent right to be directly represented in parliament and other legislative bodies. We accused the government of continuing to insult and degrade us to refuse our co-operation through its repressive policy of trusteeship, segregation and apartheid legislation. We pointed out that the result of this policy was a gradual worsening of our social, economic and political position and a rising tide of racial bitterness and tension. We called attention to the fact that the action we were planning was not against any national group but against unjust laws which kept vast sections of our people in perpetual subjugation and misery. Finally we told the government that we believed that the decision was in the interest of all groups and would inspire our people for ages.

Malan promptly replied to our letter and challenged the claim that we had an inherent right to be directly represented in parliament and other bodies on the ground that between Africans and whites there were differences that were permanent and not man made. He added that the whites also had an inherent right to take the necessary measures to preserve their identity as a separate community and made it clear that the government would under no circumstances entertain the idea of granting administrative, executive or legislative powers over the whites or within the white community, to Africans or other blacks. He dismissed our demand for the sharing of political power with the whites as no genuine offer of co-operation but an attempt to supplant white rule. He maintained that the laws which we denounced as discriminatory were largely of a protective nature and that the Bantu Authorities Act was intended to give us the opportunity for enlightened administration of our own affairs in accordance with our own heritage and institutions adapted to modern conditions. The

letter ended with the threat that if we pursued the contemplated course of action the government would make full use of the machinery at its disposal to quell any disturbances and thereafter deal adequately with those responsible for inciting subversive activities of any nature whatsoever.

We were irrevocably committed and we embarked on preparations for mass action in real earnest. In a second letter to Malan we pointed out that we were not concerned with biological differences but with citizenship rights which were denied to us by man and laws that were artificially imposed. We denounced his rejection of our demand for direct representation as the kernel of the policy of apartheid and stressed that nothing in the Bantu Authorities Act could be a substitute for direct representation in the councils of state. We placed on record that as a voteless and defenceless community we had explored other channels without success and that we had no alternative but to resort to civil disobedience.

Neither we nor the government could afford to make empty threats and we accepted Malan's rejection of our demands as a declaration of war, demanding immediate mobilisation of the forces on both sides. At this time the whites were preparing to celebrate on April 6th 1952 the 300th anniversary of the landing of Jan van Riebeeck and on that day preliminary skirmishes broke out when we held protest meetings in various centres. On May 31st the executives of the ANC and SAIC met in Port Elizabeth and announced that the defiance campaign would begin on June 26th, the anniversary of the first National Day of Protest. They also set up a National Action Committee to direct the campaign and a National Volunteer Board to recruit and train volunteers. I was

appointed National Volunteer-in-Chief and chairman of both the NAC and NVV.

The Joint Executives also discussed whether the campaign should be based on a non-violence as a principle, as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi in India where all forms of violence as methods of struggle were completely renounced. Some held this point of view and drew attention to the hopelessness of any violent resistance against the government. They argued that non-violence as a philosophy of life was morally superior to any violent method the enemy might use and that just as Satyagraha brought the downfall of British imperialism in India so it would ultimately lead to the collapse of apartheid in our country. Others pointed out that we should approach the matter not from the point of view of principle but rather of tactics and that we should rely on any method which was demanded by the conditions. If a method would enable us to defeat the enemy it should be used by all means. If the conditions later rendered that same method ineffective, they maintained, it would be fatal to continue to adhere to it. This view prevailed and at once brought us into conflict with Manilal Gandhi who insisted that the campaign be run on identical lines as that of India. He also wanted us to exclude the communists from the campaign. In this too his bid failed.

Throughout the campaign and for some time afterwards government propagandists repeatedly said that the leaders of the campaign were living in comfort and enjoying themselves whilst the masses were languishing in jail - an accusation which has been echoed in 1976 even by one or two ignorant individuals who are prisoners here. This is either a malicious alligation or a statement due to ignorance or both. The facts show that, far from being in the background, it was the leaders who

fired the opening shots. The first people to defy their bans and to be jailed on various dates immediately before the commencement of the campaign on June 26th were Moses Kotane, Yusuf Dadoo, J.B. Marks, David Bopape and Ismail Bhoola, all of whom were well known Congress leaders. The latter was a youth leader. They had been ordered under the provisions of the Suppression of Communism Act to resign from specified organisations and also prohibited from attending meetings. They defied by addressing meetings in response to the instructions of the Congresses and were the forerunners of the army of 8,500 volunteers who stormed the institutions of apartheid during the defiance campaign. Again on June 26th the leaders were on the forefront sharing hardships of prison life with their comrades. The first Transvaal batch was led by the secretary general of the ANC, Walter Sisulu, and Nana Sita, the president of the Transvaal Indian Congress. Flag Boshielo, chairman of the central branch of the ANC, led the second. In Port Elizabeth the honour of being bellwether went to Raymond Mhlaaba, chairman of the New Brighton branch. Natal started a few weeks later and their first batch was led by Drs. G.M. Naicker and Wilson Conco, president of the NIC and vice president of the Natal ANC respectively.

As the campaign progressed even more leaders went to prison for acts of defiance. Men and women drawn from every level of the leadership of the organisations took their place in the battle lines. Among them were Amina Asvat, Mariam Cachalia, Ashwin Choudree, Percy Cohen, Barney Desai, Patrick Duncan, Manilal Gandhi, Alcot Gwentshe, Dr. Arthur Letele, Uriah Maleka, Caleb Mayekiso, John Mngoma, Ida Mntwana, Peter Molotsi, Doreen Motshabi, M.P. Naicker, Henri Naude, Lillian Ngoyi, Constance Njongwe, John Nkadimeng, Amina Pahad, Peter Raboroko,

Robert Resha, Arnold Selby, Marupeng Seperepere, Stalwart Simelane, J.N. Singh, Betty du Toit, Freda Troupe and M.B. Yengwa. Duma Nokwe, Henri Makgothi and Alfred Hutchinson, young university graduates and prominent youth leaders, gave up teaching posts and joined their countrymen in prison. Even students like Lindi Ngakane, Mosie Moola, Moosa Moosajee, P. Padayachi, I. Cachalia, Harold Sundrum, Sydney Shall and E. Wadee, to mention but a few, could not resist the pull of dramatic events that were taking place around them.

Apart from these and many others who were in prison there were scores of leading personalities who concentrated on the essential task of directing the campaign, recruiting and training volunteers, placing in suitable jobs those who were returning from prison, arranging legal defence for those who were being endorsed out of their homes under the influx control system, and attending to various kinds of welfare work. Without these men and women the campaign would never have taken off and apartheid would probably not have been regarded with such intense revulsion as it is today.

In the midst of preparations for the campaign I had two lively experiences in the Orange Free State in two successive days. The Working Committee of the ANC had instructed me to visit Dr. Moroka at his home in Thaba Nchu with the draft of our first letter to Malan. As I drove out of Kroonstad at about 5 p.m. I collided with a white youngster on a bicycle. The police were soon on the spot. The sergeant in charge, who was in no mood for sweet words, advanced threateningly towards me, screaming "Kaffer, jy sal kak vandag!" (Kaffir, you will shit today). Shaken by his violence I tried

to put on a pretence of bravery. "You touch me and you'll be completely ruined. I'll take you to the highest court in the land", I retorted. No one could have been more surprised than myself when I noticed the sergeant hesitate. I straightened my back even more and plunged into the offensive. That saved me and he turned to the car and ransacked it. From under the floor mat in the front he pulled out a copy of a newspaper which I had hidden immediately the accident occurred. He looked at the title and exploded: "Wragtig ons het 'n Kommunis gevang!" (My word, we've caught a communist). It was a copy of "New Age". He left behind him an African constable to guard me and hurried off.

I tried to speak to my kinsman but the situation was hot and he was unfriendly. Our friend was back by about 8 p.m., accompanied by another sergeant and a different approach. He was all politeness and intent on his duties. But I had tasted victory and had become more difficult. I objected to the taking of measurements at night when the accident had occurred during the day. "Mandela", he said, "I want to help you resume your journey. But if you are difficult I will have no alternative but to lock you up." That sobered me. I had reached the limits of my advantage.

The next day I was travelling through the district of Excelsior when I ran out of petrol. I explained my difficulty in English to an elderly white lady. She had an aggressive face that I would easily recognise even if we met in a crowd at the Red Square or before the Vatican. Her reply was simple and tart and there was no mistaking the nuance. "I have no petrol for you." I tramped another two miles to the next farm. Chastened by the earlier attempt I covered up my own need and told the farmer my boss had sent me. I got the petrol. He was a friendly person and a relative of the South

African premier. I believe I would have got what I wanted even if I had told him the truth.

A few hours before the Transvaal batch went into action and in the presence of a large contingent of inquisitive pressmen and photographers I delivered a letter from the ANC to the Boksburg magistrate, advising him that volunteers would enter the African township in his area that same day without permits that are required by law and the actual handing over of the letter was a moment the pressmen did not want to miss, and publicity given to the matter and the click of the cameras annoyed the official. He invited Yusuf Cachalia and me into his office and warned that undue publicity on matters that ought to be discussed quietly and directly by South Africans alone was undesirable. His office he said would always be open to us and that we could always bring problems directly to him. He felt confident that in this way we could make greater progress in finding proper solutions.

I had not expected anything so polished and gentle from a white official and momentarily caught off guard. But I fully appreciated the force of his argument and expressly commended him for a sober approach, at the same time assuring him that I would always bear his remarks in mind. I nevertheless thought it my duty to tell him that our organisations had since their establishment tried to do exactly as he advised and that it was his government which had spurned our offers of co-operation and forced us to act as we had done. This impromptu discussion ended on a friendly note. As an attorney I had appeared before the same official on several occasions. He was a capable man for whom I had developed much respect. His reaction to the manner in which we advised him



of the beginning of the acts of Defiance in his district was consistent with his fine personality. But I believe at the same time that the way he handled the whole affair was not unrelated to the fact that we were acting from a position of strength. Government officials are too busy to grant interviews to weak opponents and the only weaklings they are prepared to treat with some measure of respect are those who are willing to tow the line.

From the magistrate's office we went straight to the township, the scene of action, and from a distance we could hear the volunteers singing lustily and with feeling. We found the main gate locked and guarded while the volunteers demanded entrance. There was a strong and heavily armed police force. They were apparently waiting for orders and there was little interference with the volunteers. A large crowd of spectators had assembled at some distance from the scene. In spite of his acute arthritis Nama Sita, an old campaigner familiar with the misery of prison life in South African jails, was in high spirits, moved around the volunteers, chatting and cheering them. The presence of the Secretary General of the ANC in the first batch was of great significance. It showed, amongst other things, that we were ready to hit the enemy with everything in our hands and that our organisation had produced leaders who were ready to share all the hazards with their comrades.

I was particularly struck by their restrained manner, at least on the surface, in which the otherwise reckless South African police behaved on this occasion. The government was very touchy about anti-apartheid demonstrations and dealt with all of them, especially those involving Africans, in a high handed manner. Only two years before this it had butchered 18 innocent and defenceless

Africans. What was holding them back now? Was their restraint part of a strategy to wear out the volunteers, or were they waiting for the dark night and the pressmen to go to bed before they staged another carnage? Or were they faced with the dilemma of doing what we wanted - arrest and thus help launch the Campaign, or alternatively not to arrest people who were deliberately breaking the laws of the country? There was wide scope for speculation but it was heartening to note that the enemy was treating us seriously. Equally important was the unusual sight of black men in dynamic mood in the face of a large show of force. Suddenly the whole scene changed: the police surrounded and arrested all the volunteers. The battle was on!

That same day at midnight Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Cachalia and I were nearby when Flag Boshielo's batch was arrested. As I turned away feeling hungry and exhausted after a strenuous day and looking forward to a good meal and a well deserved rest, a policeman intercepted me, "No, Mandela. You can't escape. Get into the van." Yusuf Cachalia was also picked up and thus unwittingly the two of us found ourselves among more than fifty of our volunteers locked up at Marshall Square that night. Yusuf Cachalia and I were not on the list of defiers for June 26th and after spending a couple of days in the police cells we were released on bail and although we were charged jointly with Flag and his batch, we were all found not guilty and discharged.

Meanwhile the Campaign gathered force and there was plenty of action in the main centres of South Africa. On the first day no less than 250 volunteers defied and within five months 8,500 took part. The total membership of the ANC shot up from a mere 20,000 to 100,000 within that period.

The most spectacular rise in membership occurred in the Eastern Cape where there was an increase of 50,000 - the result of the excellent efforts of an active and resourceful team of men like James Njongwe, Robert Matji, Raymond Mhlaba, Gladwyn Tshume, Caleb Mayekiso, Wilton Mkwai, Benson Ndimba, Milner Ntsangani, Alcot Gwentshe, Robert Mahlangeni, Appavoo and others.

The whole campaign had been planned to develop in three phases. First there would be small selected batches of defiers taking the field in selected principal areas of the country. As the Campaign developed there would follow the next phase with increasingly larger batches of volunteers drawing in the masses directly into courting imprisonment. Finally we envisaged this phase leading to the spreading of the campaign and radiating into the hinterlands of the main centres and deep into the rural areas. In this too the Eastern Cape was the only region we succeeded in reaching the second phase of the campaign and where a fairly strong resistance movement in the rural areas also emerged. At one stage they succeeded in having a single batch of 500 volunteers take the field in East London. Local conditions in the Eastern Cape also facilitated the work of the organisation. For one thing here we dealt with a homogeneous group bound together by a common historical background, tradition and language. The pass system was not strictly enforced and political functionaries were able to move about with comparative ease. Finally the security police in the area were not as powerful, experienced and efficiently organised as on the Witwatersrand and police surveillance was less sharp.

The publication of the correspondence between the ANC and Malan immediately made the

campaign a central political issue and political parties defined their positions. According to the Nationalist Party, the resistance movement was instigated by communist agitators and the Party fully backed the government's threat to use force to crush it. Swart, the Minister of Justice, even went further and announced that he would in due course pass suitable legislation to deal with the defiance, a threat which he promptly implemented during the 1953 parliamentary session. The first Act passed during that session was the Public Safety Act which empowered the government to declare martial law and to detain people without trial.

Strauss, the leader of the United Party opposition, had indirectly appealed to us to call off the campaign when he called on South Africans to sink their differences on the occasion of the Van Riebeeck celebrations on April 6th 1952. When we did not heed this advice he attacked us in terms similar to those of the Nationalist Party. Later when the campaign was at its height, and with an eye on the coming 1953 General election, the United Party sent two of its members of parliament with instructions to urge us to stop the campaign. It believed that the abandonment of civil disobedience in response to a call that would be made by Strauss would considerably increase the prospects of a UP victory. This particular meeting was brief and we rejected the proposal out of hand.

Thereafter lengthy suggestions followed when the UP promised to repeal on coming to power all unjust laws we had highlighted with the exception of the pass system on the mines. This proposal created a deadlock because the pass laws on the mines affected no less than 400,000 Africans.

The Torch Commando took an even more surprising attitude for an organisation that was born of the struggle against apartheid and whose aim was the overthrow of the Nationalist Government. It strongly disassociated itself from the breaking of the laws of the country and urged us to give up our plans. The liberals also came under heavy attack from the Nationalist Party who accused them of encouraging blacks to make extravagant demands that could never be won. I do not know to what extent this Nationalist Party propaganda actually influenced the attitude of liberals; but about September 1952 Reinaldt Jones and William Ballinger, both former senators representing Africans, tried to persuade us not to continue with the campaign on the grounds that we had many friends amongst the whites and that our action would alienate the support of such whites.

We appreciated their interest in our problems and the assistance they gave us from time to time and expressed the hope that we would continue to enjoy that support. But we regretted that we could not accept their advice and pointed out that as progressive as it was when compared with the racist policies of the major white political parties in the country, liberalism was not a foundation on which we could build our plans. We attempted to show them that it fell far short of our immediate and long term objectives and that its weakness was fully exposed by the victory of the Nationalist Party, the most reactionary party in South Africa, and the systematic whittling away of the economic, political and social rights of the black man. We maintained that the campaign had given them the ideal opportunity of putting their ideas into practice and that they could now make the white public alive to the ugly racial clashes that would ultimately erupt as the National Party continued to provoke and drive the black man to desperation. The discussion was cordial but unproductive.

Not all blacks supported the Campaign and there were political organisations that opposed us as vehemently as the white parties. Foremost amongst these was the NEUM, which was also the most abusive in its condemnation. The NEUM attacked defiers as leader goats, quislings, imperialist lackeys and also condemned the internationalisation of our affairs which resulted from our efforts to bring the apartheid question before the United Nations through sympathetic governments. But the Congresses have since the formation of the NEUM 34 years ago deliberately refrained from attacking them except merely to reply to their invective whenever necessary. On the contrary, in spite of the NEUM's hostility to all forms of mass action we repeatedly invited them to unity talks and to participate in joint campaigns without success.

We were also attacked by the National-Minded Bloc of Seloape Thema, a former member of the national executive of the ANC and the NRC, who broke away from the ANC when J.B. Marks, a well known Marxist was elected president of the Transvaal ANC. The Bloc was anti communist and anti Indian and refused to work together with these elements. When he broke away Seloape Thema was editor of "Bantu World" and some of his editorials were very critical of the Campaign. His breakaway at an old age from an organisation he had helped build up was an anti climax in his career, fo he was undoubtedly a brilliant and fearless fighter for African rights. At various periods in the past he had been speaker of the ANC and member of the national executive and a member of the NRC throughout the 15 year existence of this statutory body. To this day and in spite of his serious error of judgement he committed he is regarded as a worth heroe whose good work has

outlived his Bloc. Lastly, the Indian Organisation and the Coloured Peoples National Union remained aloof from the Campaign and said very little about it.

The man we should have treated with more respect than we did and whose views we should have examined more carefully was Dr. Xuma, former head of the ANC. He saw us about the same time as Reinaldt Jones and Ballinger and thought that the Campaign had made a significant impact, that sooner or later it would lose its momentum and that it would be wise to call it off before it fizzled out on its own. To stop the Campaign when the masses were still on the offensive would be a shrewd move, he reasoned with us, and would pave the way for even greater success when we resumed. But we were flushed with success and so full of fight that we brushed aside his sober assessment of the position and in the process we drove the people to the point of exhaustion.

Secondly in planning the Campaign we made the mistake of relying mainly on the fact that the offences that were to be committed would involve comparatively light sentences and, although during the Campaign we frequently warned against government reprisals and although volunteers showed a high standard of determination and discipline and braved numerous hardships, including assaults by the police and jail warders and even whipping, in actual fact we never worked out any effective answer to the drastic measures the government were to use subsequently.

In spite of the careful way in which the volunteers were screened and the high standard of discipline they maintained, the police penetrated some of our local branches and, in one case, a detective

sergeant even wormed his way right into the national headquarters, cleaning the offices and running errands. In the process he must have removed valuable documents and given away much information that we would not have liked the enemy to possess. He even defied with Flag Boshielo's batch and we spent the first night at Marshall Square with him.

The real purpose of checking volunteers was to make sure that agents provocateurs did not slip through and that the Campaign was run on disciplined and non violent lines. That there was not a single act of violence on our side during the course of the entire Campaign is a measure of our success in this regard. During the Treason Trial that subsequently followed, the Crown, as the State then was, made a desperate and unsuccessful bid to hold us responsible for the riots that occurred in Port Elizabeth, East London and Kimberley during the Campaign. Many stool pigeons, who infiltrated the volunteer corps, were rendered harmless by the fact that we really had little to hide and gave wide publicity to our plans and actions.

Nevertheless the Campaign had a fine run and for 6 months it dominated the country's politics and was the main subject of discussion. By 1953 there were clear signs that it had reached a low ebb and we formally called it off.

The NEUM attacked the Campaign on the grounds that it was not a revolutionary but a Ganhian method of struggle designed to make the mass of the people submissive to authority and unable to defend themselves; that in the special conditions where we were dealing with a vicious government



which was always looking for an opportunity to shoot, to resort to passive resistance was to play with the lives of the people. Incidentally this criticism came from those who opposed all forms of mass struggle and who have never through out their experience carried out a single national campaign; nor despite their repeated preference for non co-operation and the boycott, have they ever carried out any successful boycott even at the local level.

Whether or not a particular method of struggle is revolutionary is not a question of abstract principles but of concrete conditions in which one works. In spite of all the mistakes we made, the Defiance Campaign marked a new chapter in the fight against oppression and had positive results. In selecting the six laws which we highlighted as unjust we had no illusions that we would defeat these laws. We selected them as the six most immediate laws pressing on the lives of the people and enabling the organisation to reach the different sections of our country's population. Although it had little impact on the Coloureds, the Campaign brought the African and Indian people even closer and focused attention to our grievances and demands. Prior to the Campaign the ANC was not really on the map and had no paid organisers. Out of the Campaign emerged a truly mass based ANC with an impressive corps of conscious and experienced functionaries who rose to the position of community leaders in their respective areas and to whom the police, courts and jails were no longer a paralysing terror. It removed the stigma that is usually associated with imprisonment and also directly led to improvements in jail conditions wherever defiers served their sentences.

The success of the Campaign is to be measured not only by the rise in the membership of the ANC,

but in addition by the spread of its influence among the people outside its own membership.

Professional and business men gave financial support, provided accomodation and transport, whilst priests prayed and blessed us. A magnificent gesture was made by Sanna Teyise of the famous Blue Lagoon in Johannesburg. Throughout the Campaign she fed free of charge all the awaiting trial resisters in the Johannesburg jail with a goood meal twice a day. At one time she was feeding no less than 80 people and her whole gesture must have cost her a fortune.

In addition the Campaign pricked the concience of a small but important section of the whites and two new organisations, the Congress of Democrats and the Liberal Party emerged and joined the battle against apartheid. The ANC and the SAIC were instrumental in the formation of the COD and right from the bginning the white democrats lined up with the two Congresses and completely identified themselves with the struggle of the African and Indian masses. Unlike the Liberal Party which at first advocated a qualified franchise and constitutional methods, the white democrats stood for full equality between black and white and were prepared to use all methods which would speed up the liberation of the oppressed. Now our views could be put directly to the white public by an organisation of white men and women with whom we shared the same beliefs and who were prepared to pay the full price for those beliefs. From the early days of our struggle the first white people ubreservedly and fully identify themselves with the blacks were the communists. With the dformation of the COD we could now look forward to a broader section of whites committing themselves as fully.

The Campaign not only strengthened the ANC in the country but it emerged in the international plane as the foremost organisation in the liberation movement in South Africa. And world attention came to focus itself on the heart of the apartheid system - the condition of the African people. Since 1946 the treatment of the people of Indian origin in South Africa had occupied a prominent place in the deliberations of the UNO as a result of the mass struggles of the Indian people under the leadership of the SAIC and through the acts of the Government of India. Now apartheid was placed in the dock and every aspect of the meaning of apartheid to the people of South Africa would come under scrutiny in the world councils. The world came to realise more than ever before that apartheid policies were not only oppressive and degrading but a menace to world peace. From now on South Africa was to be pressed from all sides to abandon her racial policies and when the influence of the Socialist and Afro-Asian countries had increased South Africa was to be hounded out of many world bodies. Apartheid made South Africa a polecat in the international community.

The government could not be expected to condone the deliberate violation of its laws and regarded the unity of the Africans and Indians as a threat to the whole policy of apartheid which sought to drive racial groups apart. Malan in his reply to the letter of the ANC, had stated explicitly that the government would use all its powers to quell any disturbance and thereafter deal adequately with those responsible for inciting subversive activities. The State geared itself to realise this latter threat. Soon after the Campaign was launched the police began a series of arrests which culminated in trials at Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley. Those appearing at these trials were leading office bearers of the organisations involved in the Defiance Campaign. The twenty accused

who appeared in Johannesburg in September 1952 included the presidents and general secretaries of the ANC, SAIC, ANCYL, TIC and the TIYC. I was among the twenty accused in the Johannesburg trial and we were charged, like our comrades in the trials at Port Elizabeth and Kimberley, with organising the Defiance Campaign. We were all found guilty and given suspended sentences of 9 months each.

The Johannesburg trial evoked tremendous interest and support from the community. Massive crowds and demonstrators marched through the streets and converged on the Johannesburg Magistrates Court. Students of Witwatersrand University marched to the court in solidarity with the accused. School kids from all the Indian schools, primary and secondary, in Johannesburg stayed away from school and joined the marchers. The courtroom was packed while outside crowds, the like of which have never been seen around the Johannesburg Magistrates Court, invaded the precincts of the court.

The twenty accused in Johannesburg included Dr. Moroka, the National President of the ANC. As a man who led the Campaign, a successful medical practitioner and prominent churchman and a direct descendant of the famous Chief Moroka who had welcomed the Afrikaners when they reached the Orange Free State, he was widely respected by all national groups. His fearless, steady and open handed manner made him an ideal man to lead an important mass campaign with people of various shades of political opinion.

The three years of Dr. Moroka's office were packed with action and for a man with his background he did very well. He addressed huge gatherings throughout the country, ably explained the issues involved in the Campaign, and the principle on which it would run and his efforts contributed to the success of the Campaign. It was therefore a great shock to us when he broke down during the Defiance case. Our first shock came when we learnt that he would be employing his own attorney and counsel to defend him. My fellow accused deputed me to discuss the matter with Dr. Moroka in an effort to persuade him differently but my efforts failed. We suggested as an alternative that he, Dr. Moroka, and Dr. Dadoo, should be defended by a separate counsel. Again we had no success. Our final shock came when he tendered a humiliating plea in mitigation to the court in which he renounced the principles on which the ANC was founded and which formed the basis of the Campaign. He told Judge Rumpf that there never would be equality between black and white in South Africa and thereby expressly repudiated the point he made in the letter to Malan that the difference between black and white were the result of man made laws artificially imposed. As a result we were forced to disassociate ourselves publicly from his views and repudiate him as leader. This ruined his whole image. That was a tragedy, for no man deserved a greater honour at the end of the Campaign than Dr. Moroka and the ANC would certainly have honoured him by re-electing him President for the second time.

Dr. Moroka probably did not expect that the government would arrest him and may have been caught quite unprepared when the police finally swooped on us. He may also have been under great pressure from various quarters, including influential Afrikaners in the Orange Free State. He was

the oldest or one of the oldest amongst us. We were all poor men. He was a wealthy man with a flourishing practice, several shops and farms. It was even rumoured that he was the richest African in the country those days and it is never easy for such men to risk their wealth and go to prison. Whatever the reasons which may have made him renounce his political beliefs, to the masses of the people he was no longer fit to lead them and at the 1952 annual conference of the ANC in Johannesburg Chief A.J. Luthuli replaced him as president.

During the six months of the Campaign I travelled a great deal on the Witwatersrand, Durban and in the Eastern Cape. On one occasion I was sent to East London to settle a dispute there involving Alcot Gwentshe on the one side and the rest of the local leadership on the other. Earlier Alcot Gwentshe had given up a good job and gone to jail, and the organisation in the area was so good that at one time they sent in a batch of 500 volunteers. I found on the merits of the case that the masses of the people were fully behing Gwentshe. I had to find a compromise. It was a measure of his great influence in the area that soon after his conviction in the Defiance case he and his colleague Joseph Lengisi were deported to Mafeking.

About May 1952 J.B. Marks, one of the leading figures in the Campaign and president of the Tansvaal ANC, was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act and ordered to resign from the ANC and a host of other organisations. Reverend N. Thantsi of the American Methodist Episcopal Church acted as president until the next conference in October that year. My name was proposed for the presidency and was opposed by a group which called itself Bafabegiya (those who

die dancing) and which consisted mainly of former members of the CP and which was led by Macdonald Maseko. At the time I was National President of the Youth League and the Bafabegiya was in my proposed election a triumph of extreme nationalism in the politics of the ANC. Happily the bulk of the former members of the CP did not share this sectarian approach and together with other delegates returned me with an overwhelming majority. J.B. Marks, who had been forced to resign because of his ban supported my candidacy. John P. motshabi became the provincial secretary.

I was unable to attend the National Conference because a few days before the conference I was banned from attending meetings and restricted to the district of Johannesburg for six months. This was the first of a series of bans on me which continued with brief intervals of freedom of movement in between until I went underground in 1961.

In 1951 I worked for the legal firm of Messrs Helman and Michel who probably ran a practice with the largest African clientele in Johannesburg at the time. For some time before I joined them I investigated the scale of fees charged by various white legal firms in that city and was shocked to discover that many of them charged Africans even higher fees for criminal and divorce cases than they charged white clients. Messrs Helman and Michel was one of the few firms that had a reasonable scale and donated handsomely to projects relating to African education. When I qualified I joined the firm of H.M. Basner, a representative of the Africans in the Senate and a popular attorney in the Transvaal. As a Boss he was an excellent man and I gained a lot of

experience under him. In August 1952 I opened my own office in the city with Zubeida Patel as my secretary. She attracted a lot of work to the firm and was invaluable in setting the new business on its feet.

As a result of my conviction in the Defiance case the Incorporated Law Society of the Transvaal applied to the Supreme Court for my name to be struck off the roll of attorneys on the ground that the political activities for which I was convicted amounted to unprofessional conduct. This was a grave mistake on the part of the Law Society and that application brought me more friends than I expected. When one is personally involved in a matter, one is likely to grasp the related issues more clearly than when one is merely an observer from a distance. Now I could understand the tremendous possibilities in the often repeated statement that the rule of law is the kernel of democratic government and that the courts are the guardians of civil liberties. Whether or not the rule of law applies and the courts fulfill their function depends on the social conditions in each country. The law is an instrument the ruling class uses to shape society in a mould favourable to its own interests and the duty of the courts is to apply the law as it is. The courts enjoy such discretion as the ruling classes allow, and it is within that framework that the rule of law is said to apply and that the courts serve as guardians of civil liberties.

In our country where there are racial laws and where all the judges and magistrates are white and reeking of the stale odour of racial prejudice the operation of such principles is very limited, especially in cases of a clash between black and white interests. The position is made the more



difficult by the policy of the present government which has since 1948 sought to tamper with the independence of the judiciary by packing the courts with Afrikaner judges and passing numerous laws which have cut down the powers of the judiciary and subordinated it to the executive in several respects. Even so South Africa has produced great judges who have tried to assert the independence of the courts and to resist attempts to reduce them to agents of the Nationalist Party. A clear example of this was the decision of the appellate Division where the court defied the government's threats and declared the Separate Representation of Voters Act null and void after the Minister of Bantu Affairs, Verwoerd, had publicly announced that parliament would reverse the decision if the courts decided against the government. The case illustrates the independence of the judiciary even though all the judges who heard the appeal were originally appointed by a UP government and their decision upheld the argument of the UP. In another case where Harold Wolpe made an urgent application to prevent the police from attending a particular meeting Judge Blackwell sharply told the Chief of the Security Police of Witswatersrand: "This country is not a police state yet!"

The judgement of Judge Ramsbottom in the case of the Law Society against me in which he upheld my inherent right to fight for my political beliefs was in line with this great principle. In dismissing the application he took the unusual step of depriving the Law Society of their costs, a clear indication of his disapproval of the attempt to interfere with the liberty of the citizen. It was inspiring to receive the services of Liberal lawyers who were in the forefront of the struggle to defend the rule of law and civil liberties. The case was ably defended by Advocate Walter Pollack

Q.C., Chairman of the Johannesburg Bar Council, and Franklin, both instructed by William Aaronsohn, a leading Johannesburg firm, all of whom acted free of charge. But an unforgettable experience was when I received offers of support from a number of well-known Afrikaner lawyers and kind sentiments from Afrikaner magistrates and prosecutors. I do not know what were the political affiliations of all of these men, except for one of them with whom I had several informal discussions and who openly defended the policy of the Nationalist government. It is a pity I write this story under these conditions. Perhaps some or all of them would have no objections to my revealing their names. But I am bound to say that experience shows that even in racial South Africa professional solidarity can at times transcend colour differences; that in spite of the systematic whittling down of the rule of law by the present regime there are still judges who refuse to be rubber stamps of the government. These and other experiences draw attention to the diverse ramifications of the anti apartheid struggle which is fought in many fields and with a wide variety of weapons. A liberation movement which is consciously aware of these ramifications and which is able to exploit them fully can make great progress and force the enemy to fight on many fronts.

The 1952 National Conference reviewed the political situation created by the Campaign, with particular reference to the measures the government was likely to adopt to deal with the ANC and to forestall another resistance. Statements made by the government spokesmen during the proceeding 12 months had left us with the definite impression that both the ANC and the SAIC would be declared illegal and the Conference felt the moment had come to take emergency precautions. With this in mind Conference gave the National Executive extraordinary powers to

prepare a plan to meet the new danger. In pursuance of this resolution the Executive took several steps, amongst which was the creation of the post of Senior Deputy President to which I was appointed. The Executive further instructed me to draw up a plan which would enable the organisation to operate from underground. The plan came to be called the Mandela-Plan, or simply M-Plan.

The idea behind the plan was to set up a machinery which would enable the ANC to take decisions at the highest level and which could be swiftly transmitted to every member throughout the country without calling a meeting and without publicity. By means of this plan we hoped to maintain regular contact with our membership, recruit new members, take up local and national issues affecting the people and devise new methods of frustrating the diabolical scheme of the enemy.

The plan was drawn in broad outline so as not to fetter individual initiative and adjustment to local conditions. Its smallest unit was the cell which in urban townships would consist of about 10 houses in a street with a cell steward in charge. If a street had more than one cell, a street steward would be appointed to take charge of all cells in that particular street with the cell steward reporting to the street steward. A number of streets, depending on the size of the township and population formed a zone under a chief steward and to whom the street stewards were responsible. The chief steward was in turn responsible to the secretariat of the local branch of the organisation. The secretariat was a sub-committee of the branch executive which reported to the provincial secretary, whilst the latter received instructions from the Secretary General. The plan could also be adjusted to

the peculiar conditions of the rural areas.

It was the duty of every cell steward and street steward to know every family and person in his area and, more particularly, the background of each person, his standard of education, his work, business or profession, whether he was a member of the organisation and trade union, the number of children, personal problems, ambition, relations with neighbours, recreation and other interests; to keep in close contact with every body in his area and to assist wherever possible. The cell steward collected subscriptions, arranged regular political classes and other meetings in his cell which would be addressed either by a member of the Executive, Woman's League, Youth League or member of the Volunteer Board. The National Executive also decided to retain the Volunteer corps intact. Now they were put on standby duty, ready to be called up in emergency and entrusted with the work of helping the cell stewards to recruit new members, call meetings, legal or otherwise, and to distribute leaflets.

Attempts were made to implement the Plan with varying degrees of success. Once again the most imaginative application of the Plan and the most impressive results were scored by the Eastern Cape where the organisation has always succeeded in taking up local issues and hitting back powerfully in the face of vicious attacks by the enemy. The Volunteer Corps in the area was also the best organised in the country and remained fairly active long after the volunteers in other areas had disappeared. Our success in this area is of vital interest in the light of the allegation that has been repeatedly made by our enemies that Africans can organise no campaigns without the

assistance of Indians and whites. There have been no joint campaigns here and hardly any substantial help in this regard from other racial groups. The high standard of organisation that has been reached there is the result of African skill and initiative and the ANC working harmoniously with a well organised trade union movement.

At the end of the Defiance Campaign I again experienced that thrill born of the knowledge that we have a just cause and the strength to fight for it and win. I no longer felt like an inferior, broken in spirit and overwhelmed by the seeming invincibility of the white man and the might of his institutions. The ruling group had felt the power of my punches and now I could walk upright like a man, look at everybody straight in the face and face the future hopefully. But Malan's reply to our letter of January 1952 rejecting our offer of co-operation, and in which he told us that whites would never share power with Africans, at once stressed the severe limitations of non-violence as a weapon that would ultimately free us and I began thinking of alternatives. Although it had brought freedom to people of India, enabled us to emerge stronger from the recent conflict and considerably aroused our national pride, I regarded non-violence as the best weapon in our hands only in so far as our people still needed to prepare for more effective forms of struggle.

About this time Walter Sisulu was invited by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) to attend as guest of honour the World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship to be held in Bucharest. I took advantage of this opportunity to put him my views on alternative methods of struggle and suggested that from the Festival he should visit the Peoples Republic of

China and arrange for arms. He was enthusiastic about the idea and indeed from Prague he visited China and discussed our proposition with the leaders of that country's CP. The Chinese leaders received him warmly and took pains to warn that an armed struggle was a very serious matter to undertake and questioned whether the conditions in South Africa had matured sufficiently to justify such an undertaking. During his stay abroad Walter also visited the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries.

At that stage we confined the matter to ourselves but at a meeting in Sophiatown called to protest against the proposed removal of that township and in the presence of members of the Security Police I put the matter bluntly to the audience, my theme being that violence was the only weapon that could destroy apartheid, the meeting was attended by a very large crowd of youth and my speech was loudly cheered. After the meeting my colleagues reprimanded me for indiscreet remarks, pointing out that these were contrary to the accepted policy of the ANC and that the correct procedure was to have raised the matter first within the organisation for discussion before making a public statement. I fully accepted the censure and defended the policy of non-violence until the three Day Strike of May 1961.

Walter Sisulu's visit abroad and attendance at the Youth Festival did not go without causing quite a rumpus within the organisation. The invitation gave him little time to prepare for his departure and since he had to go abroad without a passport his proposed visit could not be publicized until he was out of the country. This created a grave difficulty in that time did not permit him to first discuss the

matter of his invitation with the National Executive of the ANC. I was keen that he should attend the Festival and undertook to personally convey his apologies and acquaint the National Executive with the facts relating to his trip in his absence. The Executive was unhappy about the whole affair and I had quite a difficult time explaining the circumstances before they came round to withholding any expression of disapproval. The matter, however, did not end there. A small section of the membership took up the matter and made a move to censor Walter at the 1953 National Conference which he attended on his return. Some of the men were opposed to his having visited the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. In the event the move failed but it is interesting to note that while these men condemned us at the time for this, these very men are today visiting Socialist countries and soliciting their assistance.

## Chapter 6: The Freedom Army Grows.

The ANC emerged from the Defiance Campaign under the new and dynamic leadership of Chief A.J. Luthuli who was to hold this position for 15 continuous years until his death in 1967. This was a record for no other National President of the ANC has ever held this position for so long. I first heard of him in the mid-forties when he became a member of the Native Representative Council and soon after that actually met him when I was invited to a meeting of the Natal Executive of the ANC. In 1950 he became President of that province when he defeated A.W.G. Champion, an influential figure who had dominated the politics of Natal for many years. Chief Luthuli and Chief Kumalo of Ladysmith attracted considerable attention as ruling chiefs who were active in the ANC and who resisted the policies of the government. The success of the National Day of Protest in Ladysmith in 1950 having been largely due to Chief Kumalo's hard work.

In 1950 the government informed Chief Luthuli that his activities in the ANC were incompatible with his duties as chief and ordered him to resign from the ANC. When refused to comply with this order he was promptly deposed from his position as chief, a step which made him a national hero almost overnight. He was warmly welcomed by delegates at the 1952 Conference of the ANC as one who was prepared to suffer for his beliefs and the right man to lead the attack against the enemy in a period of rising mass activity that faced us.

During 1953 alone there emerged the South African Coloured Peoples Liberal Party, all of which



varying degrees strengthened the anti-apartheid forces. SACPO which later changed its name to Coloured Peoples Congress (CPC), would ultimately line up with the ANC and SAIC to form together with SACOD the Congress /alliance, whereas the Liberal Party operated on its own.

Though the influence of the Defiance Campaign cannot be completely excluded, SACPO is really the belated offspring of the struggle to defend the Coloured vote and the initiative in its foundation was taken by Dr. R.E. van der Ross, who in 1976 became rector of the University of the Western Cape. He must have discussed the matter with many people. In Johannesburg Dadoo, J.B> Marks and I were amongst those he consulted, expressing the need for an organisation working mainly among the Coloureds and co-ordinating its efforts with those of other oppressed groups. We readily pledged our support and were happy when in due course SACPO emerged under his leadership. Unfortunately Dr. van der Ross did not last long enough for his continued participation in the leadership of SACPO would have helped that organisation to be established on a broader base among the Coloured people. Be that as it may, SACPO since then has been ably led by an active and courageous group of fighters who have acquitted themselves well and who are still in the front line. Such men will always be an valuable investment to the liberation movement as a whole and as long as we advance with them bleak moments will continue to recede. But in gaining a militant approach, SACPO also lost much of its potentially broad base, A setback which was accelerated by the fact that SACPO was founded at a time when the enemy was making full use of its drastic powers of banning activists left and right. In spite of all the problems that subsequently hampered its expansion, the establishment of SACPO was an important historical event. Now on the Coloured

front there had come up an organisation we all regarded as the heir of the once powerful APO, with fresh blood and brains, capable of rallying massive support and of organising vigorous struggles.

SACOD, on the other hand, was inspired by the Defiance /campaign and its whole history, policy and activities bear all the characteristic features of that ancestry. Bram Fischer, Michael Harmel and other leading personalities who formed the organisation, consulted closely with the leaders of the ANC and SAIC and the inaugural meeting which launched the new body was addressed, amongst others, by Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Yusuf Cachalia. SACOD works for full equality between white and black and its members constitute the politically advanced section of the whites in the country. They mingle fully with us in the course of our political work, organise and attend mixed mass meetings and take part in all kinds of demonstrations. Standing shoulder to shoulder with us, they shared heavy penalties that inevitably attend the difficult part of opposing white supremacy, when many oppressed choose to be neutral or even worse to co-operate with the enemy. SACOD members have been banned, hounded out of good jobs, persecuted and beaten up by the police and even imprisoned.

It was but natural that many communists, having been deprived of their own organisation when the CP was declared illegal in 1950, and keen to play their part in the fight for full racial equality, should have flocked to SACOD when it was formed. From the outset it had a fair percentage of members of the former CP. With the anti-communist hysteria that has been assiduously propagated in our country, many whites who otherwise may have joined SACOD< including some of those

like Patrick Duncan who had actually defied only a year before, were frightened away and decided instead to form another organisation which would be avowedly anti-communist. This is how the Liberal Party came into existence. Though, like SACOD, the Liberal Party was decidedly anti-apartheid, its outlook was marred by a certain hesitancy in grasping the nature of the struggle that was being waged and a reluctance to align themselves unreservedly with the struggle of the black man against national oppression and for complete racial equality. As a result, while SACPO and SACOD became members of the Congress Alliance and adopted the Freedom Charter as their basic policy when the Charter was drawn up in 1955, the Liberal Party which was born in the same year as SACOD, stayed out of the Alliance and as it happened did not associate itself with the Freedom Charter.

The policy of the Liberal Party differed with that of SACOD in three main aspects. In spite of the fact that South African whites automatically acquire voting rights on reaching the age of 21 (since reduced to 18 ?), and irrespective of education or property qualifications, the Liberal Party nevertheless favoured a qualified franchise for the blacks and demanded the extension of the vote only to those Africans, Coloureds and Indians who had passed Standard VIII. Secondly they bound themselves to use only constitutional means of struggle. Finally the Liberal Party did not like the structure of the Congress Alliance in which they argued people were organised on racial lines in conformity with government policy. Consequently, although the initiative in establishing the organisation came from its white members, and in spite of their commanding position as a group in the determination of policy and of practical problems, the Party was a mixed one open to all groups

though it attracted few black members.

On the emergence of the Liberal Party I wrote an article in the monthly journal "Liberation", on whose editorial board I served, welcoming the new body as an ally and looked forward to close co-operation between them and ourselves. But I criticized the demand for a qualified franchise, and felt that a minimum qualification of Standard VIII would virtually disqualify the overwhelming bulk of the black people, and added that such a demand could be made only by a party that catered, not for the interests of the masses of the blacks, but primarily of whites. I also criticized their decision to limit themselves to constitutional forms of struggle where such forms were closed to us, and that the practical effect of such a limitation was to force blacks to fold arms when they should be fighting back. I urges them to put forward the demand for one man, one vote and to strive to bring about political changes by all means, constitutional and otherwise, as dictated by the conditions.

In regard to the non-racial character of the Liberal Party, all of us are working for a non-racial South Africa where all groups will live together harmoniously as they please and free from the morbid tensions that are presently ruining this country. Our target is a non racial society governed by a non-racial parliament with an executive, judiciary and laws that are non-racial. There may be different paths to that destination and whether the one or the other is the better road only the future will decide. But the fact that the Congresses remain influential mass organisations where the Liberal Party and similar organisations remain comparatively small and weak, may have an

important bearing on the matter. Though we welcomed SACOD as a sister organisation in the Congress Alliance and believed that it provides the real home to whites who are prepared to work for a non-racial South Africa, we none the less welcomed the Liberal Party as an anti-apartheid ally, while at the same time drawing attention to those aspects which would certainly hamper a common approach and common action between our respective organisations. It is in this light that we continue to be ready and always welcome any sections among the white community who may be willing to break away from the white supremacist ideas.

A few months after Chief Luthuli was elected President of the ANC, Professor Z.K. Matthews, stimulated by his Accra meeting with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on his way back from the United States, arrived with a novel idea which was to become the central political issue for the next 2 years and which would ultimately lead to South Africa's marathon Treason Trial, involving no less than 156 people and lasting for a little more than 4 years. In his presidential address to the August 1953 Caoe Conference of the ANC Professor Matthews proposed a national convention of all South Africans to draw up a charter of freedom embodying principles on which a new South Africa would be built. Four months later the national conference accepted the proposal and referred it to the executive committees of the ANC, SAIC, SACPO and SACOD and recommended that they create suitable machinery to give practical effect to the idea.

In pursuance of this recommendation the 4 executives met in Johannesburg to set up a Council of the Congress of the People with Chief Luthuli as chairman and Walter Sisulu and Yusuf Cachalia

as joint secretaries. The principal task of the COP was to draw up a programme of principles which would lay down the foundations for a new South Africa. With this object in mind, the Council invited all political organisations in the country, black and white, and mixed, where the contemplated Congress of the People would be discussed. The Liberal Party accepted the invitation and took part in the joint discussions that followed. Right from the beginning the discussions ran into difficulties. The Liberal Party held that such a Congress be attended by the delegates of the existing political organisations, whereas the Congresses maintained that it should be composed of selected delegates of the masses of the people throughout the country. In the event the Liberal Party finally withdrew and the campaign for the COP was mounted through a machinery set up by the Congress Alliance only.

During this period I was paralysed by bans, first a 6 months restriction that prevented me from leaving the district of Johannesburg and from attending gatherings. This expired early in June 1953. For about 3 months I had a brief spell of freedom and it was refreshing to move around the country again, mainly in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. I am essentially a country boy, easily charmed by the open veld, a blade of green grass, by running streams, clean air and a blue sky. I revelled in my liberty and could feel my spirits surging upwards and pleasant thoughts filled my mind. The Free State has always had a magic effect on me and in spite of the detestable racialism of its whites who constitute perhaps the most rabid racist-minded section of the whites in South Africa, I am dominated by a false feeling of freedom whenever I travel through it. Locked up in its vast plains is the atmosphere of wide horizons where nothing can ever shut me in, where I can

move freely, commune with myself and plan treason without fear of the law.

Perhaps this feeling is due to the fact that the history of that province bears in many respects the imprint of General De Wet, the gifted Boer commander who outclassed the British in many engagements during the last days of the Anglo-Boer war. He would certainly have been my hero if he had been a true patriot fighting for the rights of all South Africans, black and white. Nevertheless a visit to the Free State always refreshes me and this is exactly how I felt on the 3rd September 1953 as I drove to and from the court in the little dorp of Villiers. As I reached my office I found the police waiting and they immediately served me with an order under the Suppression of Communism Act requiring me to resign from the ANC and other organisations, restricting me to the Johannesburg district and prohibiting me from attending gatherings for 2 years. That ended a period of 9 years during which I had been a lawful member of the ANC. I was also ordered to resign from the Peace Council of South Africa of which I was vice president.

The Transval Conference of the ANC was due to be held the next month and when I received the ban I had already completed the draft of my presidential address. In due course it was approved by the Executive and read to the Conference by Andrew Kunene, a member of the Executive. It is now known as "No Easy Walk to Freedom". I kept in touch with the Executive through John Motshabi who, as full time secretary, was the brick on which everything rested. He worked dhard and for long hours often without pay and at one time his health broke down through sheer strain. But when he recovered he joined us again, working as hard as before and was still active when I last saw him 8

years later.

During the 11 months in which I was Transval President, I worked closely with my predecessor J.B. Marks and frequently consulted him on many problems. On some occasions we arranged for him to attend Executive meetings. It was correct that I should give him the full opportunity of taking part in the affairs of the Transvaal for he was the man we all regarded as the head of the province.

My ban drove me from the centre of the struggle to the sidelines and although I was often consulted and could influence the directions of events, I could do so only from a distance and when expressly asked. No longer was I vital organ of the body - the heart or the backbone. Now I was like a severed limb or one of the several walking sticks used as occasion demanded. Not even the most disciplined activist would like to be used as a rubber stamp, and to advise when not requested can hurt and offend. Even freedom fighters striving for a new social order must respect the law. It is not only the instrument the oppressor uses to enforce his policy, but a means of regulating our own relations and activities. Once a man is ordered to resign from a legal organisation and members properly appoint another in his place, the former ceases to hold that position and can no longer wield the authority he once possessed, however highly placed he might have been before he was banned. Strictly speaking there is no right of interference even when things are going wrong.

The purpose of those bans was, and still is, to deprive the organisations of the services of their most active and experienced functionaries who could build the machinery of the organisation and hold



the membership together. Their removal could create the ideal condition for the growth of the crippling evils of factionalism and regionalism, dangers which repeatedly loomed on the horizon as more and more persons were ordered to resign. To allow such a situation to continue was to surrender to the enemy the right to determine who our leaders should be and to allow the enemy to get out of the way those he considered a threat to his position. The answer was found in a plan which made it possible for the official and banned leadership to work together harmoniously and to allocate tasks to everybody on merit. The plan was implemented before serious damage was done and once it was put into practice the bans were no longer as paralysing as before. Above all, the return to active duties and the contribution of functionaries who were previously immobilised by the enemy, strengthened the leadership and put the organisation on its feet again.

The first major test of strength for the ANC and its allies after the Defiance Campaign was the removal of the so called "black spots" of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare in Johannesburg with a population variously estimated between 60,000 and 100,000 Africans, a few Coloureds, Indians and Chinese. Official estimates tended to stress the lower figure but in actual fact there were large number of people who had no permission to live in the area and who thus kept away from the censors.

The excuse given by the government for removing these townships was that of slum clearance. To be sure there were many slums, much congestion and rents were exorbitant. Tenants would certainly benefit a great deal by moving to relatively spacious houses with a garden patch and which

they could hire for comparatively lower rentals. But slum clearance was a smoke screen which clouded the real issues involved. Government policy regarded the urban areas as white areas and considered Africans as temporary residents who provided labour for the industry and commerce and who were to return to the rural areas on retirement. Freehold land for Africans in white areas thus conflicted with that policy.

The government was also under pressure from its own colour conscious supporters in the surrounding areas of Westdene and Newlands. Comparatively poor and jealous of the fine houses owned by some black men, these whites clamoured for the removal of the "Kaffirs, Koelies en Hotnots" on their doorsteps. The government also wished to acquire complete control over the movements of the African people in the area. Such control was impossible in freehold urban townships where there was no white local authority, no permit system in force, where public meetings could be held freely and people could come and go as they wished. Of course, the pass system applied throughout the country, including these townships and the police frequently raided the place for passes, poll tax, dangerous weapons, liquor and a host of other offences and arrested large numbers. Still one did not need a special permit to enter the place, as was the case with municipal locations, and its residents enjoyed relatively more freedom. The removal scheme was motivated by this state of affairs and had little to do with slum clearance. The Western Areas Removal scheme was part of the government's grand design to corral the people of South Africa into racial ghettos, which they hoped to realise through the Group Areas Act. In fact so callous was the government about the matter that the original plan was to start the removal scheme before

houses were even built to accomodate the displaced people.

By the middle of 1953 the anti removal campaign, led by the local branches of the ANC and TIC (Transval Indian Congress) and the Ratepayers Association was underway and the masses of the people were being mobilised to resist. From now on until the actual removal eventually began in 1955 the Sophiatown branch, under the leadership of Robert Resha, held weekly public meetings addressed by leading Congressmen, standholders, tenants, city councillors, churchmen and other public figures. It was in the course of this campaign that I made the violent speech for which I was reprimanded. Our first real victory in the fight against the removals was when the government was forced to postpone the removal operations until houses had been built in Meadowlands.

The largest protest meeting in the history of this area was held in 1954 and was originally scheduled to be addressed by Chief Luthuli. It was widely publicized in the press and through pamphleteering and was expected to bring to Sophiatown a record crowd. The Chief flew from Durban to Johannesburg to deliver his speech but on his arrival at Jan Smuts airport the police served him with a banning notice which precluded him from attending the meeting. Walter Sisulu ably filled the gap and at the end of his speech the large gathering strongly denounced the proposed removal and pledged to fight to the bitter end.

A few months before that, a well attended conference was held at a local cinema. The police, rough and provocative as usual, invaded the cinema and demanded admission. Robert Resha blocked the

entrance and insisted on their producing entry warrants. He was violently taken into custody.

Ahmed Kathrada took Robert's place at the entrance and was also taken into custody, whilst Yusuf Cachalia was being manhandled by the police on the platform and dragged away.

Walter Sisulu's and my bans had recently expired and we were attending a meeting for the first time since the lapse of our respective restrictions. The police were not aware of our newly gained freedom and when the officer in charge saw us he ordered our arrest. Father Huddleston, already noted for his fearless opposition to the scheme and for his support of the people's decision to resist the removal, boldly stepped between us and the advancing policemen. "Don't do it! Arrest me instead, my dear", he said fearlessly. That stopped them in their tracks and we were thus able to take part in the deliberations of the conference. Other anti-removal meetings were addressed by Bram Fischer, E.P. Moretsele, P.Q. Vundla, who later joined Moral Re-armament, city councillors Lewis and Harvey and other public figures. The churches, members of the Liberal Party, the Institute of Race Relations and liberal whites outside these particular bodies as well as the press, all denounced the move as inhuman. Father Huddleston completely identified himself with the people and continued to speak at meetings in spite of repeated warnings from the police to confine himself to church affairs.

Meanwhile government officials, working closely with the police and the Native Labour Bureau, were screening the residents stringently and hundreds were being endorsed out of Johannesburg or sent to labour on white farms through the Bureau or taken into custody by the police for

prosecution. Accounts given by the individuals involved and by the press on the questions asked by the screening officials to determine a person's domicile at the interrogations were unbelievable. It was said that people were asked, amongst other things, whether they knew where Dr. Xuma's house was situated, a particular Chinese who ran a gambling school in the area, a certain shebeen queen or the number of large rocks at a specified sport in the township. People failed to qualify, it was alleged, simply because they could not answer these questions.

The ANC, the Ratepayers Association under the leadership of Dr. Xuma, continued to agitate against the scheme right up to the day in 1955 when the removals started. The operations began from the eastern side of the township and the night before the ANC evacuated several families to pre-arranged accommodation in the interior in an effort to help them evade removal. Such tactics lasted for a few weeks. But the scope of this strategy was limited by lack of necessary resources. We had no transport, houses, lands, funds and army, the only things that could enable us continue the struggle once the enemy had started to move the people by force and to demolish their homes. After a few weeks we were forced to abandon the plan and resistance collapsed.

Throughout this period I visited Sophiatown regularly, meeting the local leadership and discussing plans. As D-Day approached I was daily and witnessed the first removals. Oliver Tambo and I also featured in our professional capacity, acting for those who were being endorsed out of the area or prosecuted.

At no time during the course of this campaign did we think we could beat the government. From the outset we knew that the outcome would depend mainly on who commanded the power to ram down his will and plans on the other. An unarmed and voteless population could not be expected to check the schemes of a tyrannical regime that regarded force as the normal way of dealing with our people and our organisations. On the first day an imposing force of no less than 4,000 heavily armed policemen cordoned off the township, forcibly loaded families and broke down the empty houses. About a week or so before that Congress leaders in the area were restricted and meetings banned.

Much was at stake for the people facing the removal and they fought stubbornly. But a purely negative strategy was not enough for the exploited tenants who were sick and tired of living under the humiliating conditions of acute congestion and rack-renting, and who longed for an opportunity to have their own houses where they could lead better lives. Only by working out a positive plan, capable of solving their concrete problems and finding homes for themselves and their families, could encourage them to resist indefinitely. When they realised that we could neither stop the government forcing the people out of their homes or give them houses elsewhere, they felt that further resistance would be pointless and the flow of people to Meadowlands increased.

Nonetheless victory lies not only in defeating the enemy but in living up to expectations and putting up the good fight. We gave a good account of ourselves and made important gains. The Sophiatown branch, quite weak at the beginning of the campaign was by the spring of 1955 the strongest in the whole Transvaal and was sending out organisers to various parts of the province for fieldwork.

Among the leading members of the ANC branch in that area were Patrick Molaoa who subsequently lost his life in the fighting in Rhodesia in 1967, Kate Molale and Joe Modise. Stephen Segale and David Mahopo from that branch played a leading role in organising resistance to Bantu Authorities in certain rural areas. The campaign was one of the quickest and most effective ways of educating the mass of the people as to who their friends were and who the enemy was, and few issues in the country ever brought together on the same platform and against the government black and white, believers and non-believers, landlord and tenant as the fight to save the western areas of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare.

Of the mistakes we made the most obvious was to run the campaign on the slogan "Over our Dead Bodies", which raised the false hope that we could ultimately resort to armed force if the government persisted in carrying out the removal. This theme was distinctly pronounced in many of our speeches and the people were told to resist with their lives, if need be. Jonas Matlou, one of the leading men in the area, addressing a meeting made what amounted to a call for physical resistance. Dr. Xuma, an otherwise cautious man, could not resist the temptation of reminding the residents of Sophiatown of the electrifying slogan used to rally people to war in the old days: "Zemk' inkomo magwalandini!" (The enemy has captured the cattle, you cowards!)

Tension mounted as removal day approached and we were hard pressed even by our own loyal supporters to arm the people, barricade the streets and fight it out with the government. The pressure became all the heavier when two of our prominent ex-servicemen who had fought in the

Second World War vigorously advocated this line. For the youth inside and outside our ranks this was the only answer. The night before the removals began Jo Modise addressed a meeting of more than 500 people who were waiting for a lead from us in accordance with the expectations aroused by our resounding slogan. In vain he reasoned with them showing how disastrous violence would be. We put our foot down and resisted this desperate demand, pointing out that an insurrection was not just a demonstration of anger, but a serious matter requiring careful preparation, and that an uprising based upon a local issue would be suicide. When we rejected the whole idea of armed resistance we were heavily criticized for having misled the masses of the people by using a slogan we had no intention of putting into effect. As a result we lost the support of many young people in the area.

Only arm-chair politicians are immune from committing mistakes. Errors are inherent in political action. Those who are in the centre of political struggle, who have to deal with practical and pressing problems, are afforded little time for reflection and no precedents to guide them and are bound to slip up many times. But in due course, and provided they are flexible and prepared to examine their work self critically, they will acquire the necessary experience and foresight that will enable them to avoid the ordinary pitfalls and pick out their way ahead amidst the throb of events.

The Western Areas anti-removal campaign forcibly imprinted on us many valuable lessons. During the course of the campaign we came to realise the shortcomings of the slogan "Over our Dead Bodies". It was a dynamic slogan that caught the imagination of the people and fanned their



emotions. But there is more to it than this in fashioning a slogan. A slogan is a vital link between the organisation and the masses it seeks to activise and politicise. Ideally it ought to synthesize the particular grievances of the people, give the masses an insight into the real nature of their oppression by situating the particular grievances within the overall struggle, mobilise and direct their energies into active participation, and match these energies with the capacity of the organisation during the given period. The encapsulation of these needs in a pithy slogan is a task requiring careful thought and analysis. In this instance our slogan "Over our Dead Bodies" was premature and could only have concrete meaning when both the people and the organisation leading them were geared to measure up to the implications inherent in the slogan. A slogan is like a bullet - charged with high explosive and lethal in effect; and the organisation may be likened to the gun. The effectiveness of a slogan depends on its matching the bone of the gun.

Premature as was this slogan on the basis of which we ran the campaign, it was also evidence as yielded in the experience of the campaign, that more and more people realised that armed resistance was our ultimate weapon against the petty and short sighted men who ruled our country with an iron hand. Our people have been faced with forced mass removals over and over again. Again and again resistance to these removals leaves them only two alternatives: protest and resist until the powers of the State compels their moving, or carry the resistance through to armed resistance. In several rural areas, such removals were to erupt into such spontaneous and localised outbursts.

The fifties, especially the first six years, were packed with activity, and from the anti-removal

campaign we moved straight into another campaign, this time the boycott of Bantu Education.

The basic premise of apartheid is that the blacks differ from the whites in their historical background, tradition and culture, all of which stamp the black man as being inferior to the white man, and that these differences demand that each group should develop separately from the other. The theory goes further and draws similar differences not only between Africans, Coloureds and Indians, but also seeks to split Africans into 8 ethnic groups each with its own separate territory and institutions. In pursuance of this ideal the Nationalist government attempted at first to reduce all contact between black and white and to provide separate facilities for black.

But a study of the provisions of the principal apartheid legislation shows that the real aim is not only to keep the races apart but to maintain the country's traditional policy of white supremacy. The Bantu Education Act 1953 was originally intended to create an educational system for Africans which would conform with the government policy and permanently restrict the African to an inferior position in all spheres. A story of one's own life cannot go deeply into the history of African education. Suffice to say that it was started and financed by missionaries who provided Africans with a western type of academic education in English. Later, administrative control was shared between the churches and the provinces but gradually the central government assumed financial control with a fixed grant of £340,000 to which was added an amount from the African polltax. But from 1945 and as a result of growing criticism of the government's lack of interest, African education was financed from general revenue. However, the amount the State actually spent on an

African child remained alarmingly small in comparison to that spent on children of other groupings. For example, during the financial year 1951 -52 the government spent approximately £7 on an African child, £18 for the Coloured and Indian and £43 per annum for white, more than six times the amount spent per capita on African children.

In accordance with the policy of providing Africans with a western type of education, an African language was theoretically used up to Standard IV and thereafter English. Whilst there were important differences in the respective syllabus' of the African and the white primary schools, at the secondary grades it was the same.

The Act transferred administrative control of African education to the central government but did not place it under the Education Department as was the case with other population groups. It fell under the Department of Bantu Administration. The local control of African schools was given to Africans and administered through school boards and school committees. To achieve the the transfer of African education the government used the powerful whip of progressively cutting down the subsidy through churches that refused to transfer their schools.

In explaining the principles of the Act Verwoerd, Minister of Bantu Administration, bluntly told the Senate that there was no place for Africans in the white community above the level of certain forms of labour. He proclaimed that Bantu Education must stand with both feet in the Reserves and having its roots in the spirit of being of African society. He regarded Africans as tribesmen and

would ensure that they would not receive an education that showed them green pastures of white society in which they would never be allowed to graze. He explained that the Act would ensure that African Education conform to the broad national policy, that in the primary schools African children would be taught the three Rs through the medium of the mother tongue and the cardinal principles of the Christian religion. Such education would equip the African child to meet the demands which the economic life of South Africa would impose upon him. In a nutshell the aim of Bantu Education was to restrict the African to the position of perpetual subordination to the white man.

When the Act was passed there were less than 900,000 Africans attending school and it was feared that even this meagre figure might shrink after the introduction of the Act. About 400,000 children were in sub-standard grades and there was, and still is, no compulsory education for Africans. The rate of drop outs was exceptionally high, and whereas about 24% of white scholars went beyond the primary levels only 4% of the Africans did so.

Stringent conditions, far different from those applicable to their white counterparts, were imposed on African teachers under the new policy. From now on they were banned from all political activity and could not even take part in elections to statutory bodies like Advisory Boards without ministerial approval or that of the School Board. They were not allowed to criticize any government or school authority and were denied legal representation in trials for misconduct by the School Board. Increase in salary was at the discretion of the Minister and depended on the conduct and

efficiency of the applicant.

The Afrikaner has always been lukewarm about academic education for Africans and, in comparison with other Christian churches, his contribution to African education is quite negligible. His hostility to the English language and its influence on Africans has made the Afrikaner equally hostile to the educated African and to overstress the importance of mother tongue instruction and vocational training. The Bantu Education Act embodied this narrow approach and one of its main aims was to eradicate English influence on African education and replace it with that of the Afrikaner. If there was any doubt about this point Verwoerd's Senate speech completely removed it.

The Act and Verwoerd's crude exposition of the new policy on African education aroused widespread indignation from both black and white throughout the country. With the exception of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Lutheran Mission, all Christian churches were up in arms against the new measure and the government came under heavy attack from leading education and teacher's organisations, the famous Bunga of the Transkei, the Advisory Board, Congress, Industrialists, retired judges and press.

But the unity of the opposition stopped at condemning the new policy and spelling out its sinister motives. When it came to the crucial question of what should be done, they pulled in different directions. The assault of a great army on any position can hardly be decisive if that army is not centrally directed and the operation of its various divisions not co-ordinated. In any great conflict,

and other things being equal, victory will go to the party that can unite those who share a common point of view and make them speak with one voice and act as one man. Ability to describe situations and to make people see issues clearly can only be fully exploited if we are able to unite the masses in common action and defeat or isolate or weaken the enemy. It was at this critical point that disastrous breaches in the ranks of the opposition appeared, and once this had happened, the enemy gained courage and thrust forward even more forcefully whilst its opponents were weakened by their failure to present a united front.

The Anglicans, the most fearless critics of the new education policy in the South African church and who controlled a large number of private schools, split in regard to the course of action to be pursued. Bishop Ambrose Reeves of Johannesburg took the drastic step of closing his school with a total enrollment of 10,000 children. The Archbishop of the Church and most of the bishops, anxious to keep the children out of the streets and teachers in their posts, handed over their schools to the government. The Wesleyans, Congregationalists and the London Missionary Society also accepted the government terms; but the American Board of Missions closed all its schools. The Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists and the United Jewish Reformed Congregation in the Transval followed the constructive course of carrying on without State aid.

If all the other churches had followed the example of the Roman Catholic Church, the Seventh Day Adventists and the Jewish Reformed Congregation the government would have been confronted with a far more difficult situation and would probably have hesitated or even compromised. As

organisations directly concerned with the history and control of African education, and commanding massive resources and powerful contacts here and overseas, they could have played a crucial role in the struggle against the Bantuisation of African education. The government realised only too well that if they did not break the opposition of the churches, it would be difficult for them to introduce the new system and when therefore the Wesleyans handed over their schools with 200,000 African pupils, Verwoerd must have danced the askoek (Afrikaner dance copied from the Khoi Khoi).

The teachers fared no better than the churches and in spite of individual acts of heroism their collective efforts were hampered by divisions when action was discussed. At the time of the introduction of the Act there were two rival organisations in the Cape, namely the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA) and the Cape African Teachers Union (CATU). The split had occurred a couple of years earlier when CATA decided to affiliate to the NEUM. There were many teachers in the organisation who were either members or supporters of the ANC or who were uncommitted and who did not want to be associated with the NEUM. This situation made a united front of all teachers difficult to achieve. The NEUM and its affiliate CATA, could not advance any path for resisting the Act. As it was they condemned the campaign waged by the ANC and in reaction to this campaign advocated the boycott of the school boards and school committees. Though this campaign never really got off the ground, it did not prevent the enemy from striking at them and a large number of teachers who were members of CATA were forced out of the teaching profession.

In the Transvaal the Transval African Teachers Association (TATA), noted for its militant demands was the principal voice of the African teacher until the late 50s when a section broke away and formed the Transval African Teachers Union (TATU) which immediately enjoyed the blessing of government officials. But the schisms in TATA's ranks had been evident as far back as the early 50s and became particularly acute at the time of the introduction of the Bantu Education.

The point of departure was the exact role of the African teacher under the new system. Some held that a teacher was not concerned with politics and that his duty was to give lessons in the classroom in accordance with the prescribed syllabus. If a teacher wished to suggest changes in that syllabus or any other aspect, he could do so through his organisation, or by sending delegations to the official of the Department or through his circuit inspector. They maintained that a school boycott was a double edged weapon and would hit the African child more than the government. They concluded that in the absence of something better, Bantu Education was better than turning children into the streets.

Others argued that the role of the African teacher could not be compared with that of the white teacher who was in an entirely different position. The white teacher was a member of the ruling class who fully enjoyed all the basic human rights and who could influence government policy by exercising his vote. They pointed out that the African teacher was part of the oppressed and that all his difficulties as a teacher were due mainly to his political disabilities. Consequently the winning



of his political rights was an essential condition for the solution of his problems as a teacher. That solution would come only if he actively participated in the political struggles of his people. Similar debates were taking place among teachers in Natal and the Orange Free State and when the crisis broke over the country the teachers were everywhere unable to present a common front.

The position of the parents and children in this regard immediately called for a review of our own role in the matter. In examining the new legislation, the ANC took account of the fact that Africans had no share in the planning and direction of the system of education existing at that time, that the amount spent on African education made the ideal of a free, compulsory, universal and equal education for African children unobtainable, that African teachers lacked the rights enjoyed not only by other citizens, but more particularly by white, Coloured and Indian teachers, that there were no adequate facilities for the technical training of our people.

The Eislen Commission Report on Native Education, on which the Bantu Education Act was based, stressed the need for the transfer of African education to the central government, the active participation of the African people in their own system of education, mother tongue instruction and practical training. These are time honoured principles of education which have been followed by almost all countries and, on principle, we had no objections to them. But the so called African education is a product of the monstrous theories of race discrimination. In a free and democratic South Africa there will be neither African, Coloured, Indian nor white education. As TATA said in its comment on the Eislen Report "education is education". Moreover the fabric of tribal life among

the African people has long been shattered and practically all Africans, whether rural or urban have been drawn inextricably into a money economy. The government's object in turning the African back to a tribal structure was nothing short of callous design to block African advancement. From the speech delivered by Verwoerd when he moved the 2nd reading of the Bill, it was clear that lofty considerations mentioned by the Commission were a mere smokescreen and that, far from seeking to solve these problems, the real aim of the Act was to do the exact opposite. It was intended to put an end to the system of education which, he held, encouraged Africans to have expectations in life which circumstances in the country did not allow to be fulfilled, which offered a form of cultural training which strengthened the desire of the Africans for white collar jobs. From our point of view the Act was a sinister and negative measure which, once applied, would turn the clock back for many years to come. In 1954 the government announced that African schools would be taken over by the State on April 1, 1955 and a draft syllabus for the African lower primary schools was issued for use in 1956. The ANC discussed plans for a boycott on the date of transfer.

Inevitably the discussion turned on whether we should call upon the people to stage a protest for a limited period, or whether we should proclaim a permanent boycott and go all out to destroy Bantu Education. There were enthusiastic advocates for both views which were presented forcefully and skillfully. The argument for an indefinite boycott was based mainly upon the principle that Bantu Education was intended to prepare our children for a subservient position in life. It was like poison which one could not drink even when one was almost on the point of death from thirst. The argument in the National Executive took place at the height of the storm raised by the new law and

those who called for a fight to the finish added that the whole country was in an explosive mood, and that the people would only rally to a call for something more spectacular than the half hearted reaction of a mere protest.

The case for a protest rested upon the premise that a mass campaign should be influenced not by idealistic considerations but by objective factors, that we should rely on our own organisation, the ANC, and make our plans on the basis of what we ourselves could do, that to launch a campaign for a permanent boycott would require a gigantic machinery and vast resources we did not possess, and that our past campaigns had shown the dangers of exaggerating our strength and underestimating that of the enemy. It was further argued that we could not stage a show down when we had been caught unprepared and that victory over the enemy at a later stage when we would be better prepared would still be as magnificent. Finally, it was argued that we should call for a week's boycott. This view prevailed in the Executive and I shared it fully, having helped to urge it on those colleagues who held the other point of view.

The National Executive therefore resolved that the people be organised not to send their children to school for a week, beginning April 1, 1955 and recommended accordingly to the Annual Conference which met in Durban during December 1954. Delegates to the Conference were in an aggressive mood and rejected the recommendation. Conference resolved in favour of an indefinite boycott. This mood was so strong that when the issue came up before a special conference at which the Liberal Party was also present at Port Elizabeth four months later delegates remained steadfast

in favour of the indefinite boycott. At the Special Conference, the conference chairman P.Q. Vundla, Ida Nntwana the National President of the ANC Woman's League and Wilton Mkwayi the organising secretary of the African Textile Workers Union appealed in vain for a boycott of limited duration.

At that time many members of the National, provincial and local executives were restricted and could not attend and guide the Conference on the matter. However dmuch delegates might have misjudged the situation, Conference was supreme and we found ourselves saddled with a boycott as directed by conference. In the meantime the government brandished the big stick. Dr. Verwoerd announced that the government would permanently close down all schools that were boycotted and that children who stayed away would not be re-admitted.

Shortly after we launched the campaign P.Q. Vundla, who organised a successful boycott in Western Native Township for more than a week, reacting to Dr. Verwoerd's threats and worried that hundreds of children in the area would be thrown into the streets, acted on his own and called off the boycott in that township. He followed this up later by leading a delegation to Pretoria where he was assured that boycotting children in the area would be re-admitted. This enraged the youth in adjacent Sophiatown and resulted in an unpleasant incident in which he was assaulted. We strongly condemned the use of violence as a means of settling domestic problems and reprimanded the culprits.

The response was fairly good and some areas did exceptionally well, especially those that went beyond the negative action of merely pulling out the children and who organised their own independent schools. In Germiston location, Joshua Makue, chairman of our local branch there, ran a school of close to 800 children and, in spite of repeated persecution, it lasted for more than 3 years. Bernard Moliwa of Alexandra Township resigned a secure teaching job to take charge of two schools run on the cover of cultural clubs. The most spectacular results were in Port Elizabeth where Barret Tyesi also threw away a government teaching post and took over, with the assistance of 8 teachers, a principalship of a school for boycotting children with a very large enrolment. In 1956 he presented 70 children for the Standard VI exams, all of whom, save 3 passed. He and his staff also resisted persecution by the police until 1957 when the numbers dwindled away and poverty and hunger inevitably drove the teachers to paying jobs.

The campaign showed once again, that Africans were ready to follow an imaginative leadership with constructive plans. It is not easy to give statistics under the conditions in which I write this story, but a well known writer points out that on April 1 1955 the boycott in the East Rand affected some 5,000 school children and that on April 25th when the ANC Working Committee called for an intensified boycott, 7,000 children stayed away. The learned writer adds that Verwoerd issued an ultimatum that children who were absent on April 25th would not be re-admitted to schools and that the 7,000 children were at once removed from the register with some 116 teachers becoming redundant.

These activities were organised by teams of fieldworkers who worked under semi-illegal conditions and whose movements were closely followed by a rough and vigilant police force. These campaigns should be judged on two levels. Firstly on whether the immediate objective was achieved and, equally important, as activities which drew the masses into active struggle and which is always the primary school for their politicization. Planned to withdraw African children from all schools throughout the country the campaign for the boycott of Bantu Education was not a success. Nonetheless it did make a considerable impact.

One day in 1954 my son Makghato, then 4 years old came running and excitedly announced: "Daddy, there's Malan on the hill". The Minister of Bantu Education, Willie Maree had announced that he would that day address a public meeting in the township. The ANC responded by organising to ensure that the meeting did not succeed. As I went out I saw a couple of police vans escorting Maree to the spot. There was trouble right from the start and the Minister of Bantu Education fled without delivering his speech.

Whatever weaknesses were revealed in the course of the nationwide opposition to the Bantu Education Act, the government was so shaken by the flood of criticism the Act unleashed, that it had to modify its original intention in regard to the new educational system. It was a different Verwoerd who declared at the height of the storm of protest on November 14th 1954 that education was everywhere the same and its purpose the same. It has also been said that, in spite of the objectionable features it contained, the November 1954 draft syllabus represented a significant shift

from the original notion of modelling the new system of education on tribal foundations.

Today, and with all the advantages of 20 years hindsight, we can see things better and advance better solutions. Again, in seeking a solution, it is easy to criticize the churches and teachers and parents for failure to unite in the face of the common enemy, and to censure Congressites who clamoured for an indefinite boycott. But when great issues are at stake and strong views held, the participant's field of vision is often clouded. In the struggle against Bantu Education 887,949 children were directly involved and it was a heavy responsibility to choose between two evils of fighting to the bitter end even if all the children were turned into the streets, and a compromise which at least would keep them in the classroom.

To the extent that Bantu Education today is not what the government planned and intended it to be, credit must go not only to the strenuous actions of our people and those brave and dedicated teachers who were forced out of the profession but also to those teachers who even as they remained at their jobs, found ways and means to go outside and beyond the confines of the syllabus to kindle and keep alive in the minds and hearts of their students an awareness of our proud past and their own dignities in the face of an ubiquitous system which proceeds on the basis that the black man is a white man's inferior. Until that glorious day when South Africa becomes free and the doors of education are opened to all without regard to colour or race or creed, we shall have to continue hammering away against Bantu Education from without and our teachers subverting it from within so as to defeat its diabolical ends and forcing the education of our children to the

proper ideals that are associated with education.

Above all, these campaigns serve as a constant reminder that racial discrimination is in conflict with democratic ideals and that there are men and women who are prepared to stake their lives in the fight against colour oppression.

The wealth of our country consists not only in its gold and diamonds and other natural resources but also, and in a more important sense, in its people. There is a profound truth in the idea that "man makes himself", a truth bound up with the whole history of mankind and that has shaped our own history. Those who are today crusading for truth, justice and humanity are fashioned out of the same crucible as the men and women who fought against all forms of human cruelty in South Africa for the past 300 years. Today's freedom army though predominately black, is non-racial and fights for values that cut across all colour considerations. It is the army that faced the Nationalist government from the moment it came to power, and it is the army that is destined to rule South Africa.

Amongst the men and women who form part of the wealth of our country and who have made a real and permanent mark in its history is Professor Z.K. Matthews who has had a distinguished academic and political career and who has been a pioneer in many fields. Many leading personalities in Southern Africa and further afield will remember him as a man who taught them at high school and law and anthropology at Fort Hare. Others knew him as a Christian and an articulate speaker in the Native Representative Council. But even more people here and abroad will



remember him as a fighter for national rights and a leader of the ANC whose most important single contribution was the idea that finally took shape as the present Freedom Charter. It is one of the ironies of history that ridicules one's judgement that a man often criticized as an illusive fence sitter should have conceived a dynamic idea which would form the vortex of our aspirations as a broad national movement and which would lead to biggest and longest treason proceedings in the history of our country.

Many people assume that the Charter was drawn up in plush offices by a group of schooled politicians and imposed on our people. Nothing could be further from the truth and the way the document was prepared gives a valuable insight into the work of our organisation. One of the first steps taken by the Council of the Congress of the People (COP) after its formation was to give the widest publicity to the idea and to invite suggestions from the entire public as to the nature of the demands that should be written in the Charter. The actual principles it embodies were formulated out of demands that came from people from different walks of life. These came from sports and cultural clubs, church groups, ratepayers associations, women's organisations and meetings, students, schools, trade union branches. It was of great interest to many of us to see from the actual suggestions sent in just how far ahead of the politicians the masses were in several respects. The bulk of the demands were well thought out and dealt with crucial issues in plain language and a common feature was the universal realisation that political power was absolutely necessary in the struggle to build a new South Africa, and that that political power would be meaningless if the key sectors of the country's economy were in private hands. One man one vote and the nationalisation

of the country's major industries appear in many drafts. Another remarkable feature, in view of the long tradition of racial regimes that have ruled South Africa, was the absence of extreme nationalism and the acceptance that this country belongs to all those who have made it their home. One felt that we had hit on an idea that immediately caught the imagination of the people throughout the country. Two of the best drafts came from the Durban and Pietermaritzburg regions; the one from the Durban region was almost identical to the one we had prepared.

The history of the Charter from this point onwards is well known - the actual holding of the Congress of the People at Kliptown near Johannesburg on June 25 - 26 1955, the 3,000 delegates of the people who braved massive police intimidation to assemble and approve the document, the huge crowd of non-delegates, the actual terms of that historical document, the breaking up of the meeting by 400 policemen, and the subsequent approval of the document by each of the Congresses.

In one respect the demands that came from the public did not accurately reflect the forces at work within the ANC itself, in so far as they were silent in regard to the views of a group of extreme nationalists amongst us. Such groups made their presence evident when the ANC held a special Conference in March 1956 to adopt the Freedom Charter as its basic policy. This extreme nationalism manifested itself then in the form of African exclusivism which rejected working together with Indians and Coloureds and in the form of anti-communism.

But to return to the theme of the Charter for the present, some regard this document as forshadowing a radically different South Africa from what the ANC and its allies have fought for throughout their history. On the contrary, the social order the Charter envisages is still much the same, as an examination of the African Claims in South Africa, Congress Series No. 11, 1945 will show. But in spelling out in a single document the details of its essential features, it makes clear to our countrymen exactly what we fight for and thus boosts our work tremendously.

In the June 1956 issue of the monthly journal "Liberation" I examined the misconception that the Charter was a blueprint for a socialist order and my main argument was that, far from being a move towards socialism, the basic premise of the Charter was private enterprise and that when the Charter was fully implemented capitalism would flourish amongst the Africans for the first time in our history. I pointed to the clause dealing with the nationalisation of the mines, the banks and monopoly industry as an exception, dictated purely by practical considerations and limited for the moment to these specific sectors of the economy. In addition, the land provisions of the Charter I maintained clinch my argument. Here the demand is not for nationalisation, as is invariably the case when scientific socialism is introduced, but for the end of restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis and its division amongst those who work it. This is a clear declaration in favour of the principle of private ownership in land.

The whole Charter must be seen as a programme of a broad national movement with different political trends. Considerations of capitalism or socialism were not really the basis on which the

Charter was formulated. Its practical value and singular importance derived from the fact that it was welded out of the demands that came from the masses pinpointing concrete forms in which national oppression touched their daily lives and embodying the practical conditions whose implementation would ensure the elimination of national oppression for all national groups in the country. It is solely because of this that the Charter enjoys the support of all sections of national groups of the Congress movement, of ambitious business men, struggling workers, poor peasants, priests, teachers and other intellectuals. Of course in a way we cannot dismiss the argument that the victory of the Congress movement and the overthrow of colour oppression will be a step towards scientific socialism. In a democratic South Africa established by us our allies will naturally have a free run and the CP will have a proportionate say in the solution of the country's problems. But that by itself need make neither us nor South Africa a communist country. The fact that during the Second World War the communist parties of France, Holland, Italy and other countries freely supported the war against Hitler, that their members were part of the resistance movement and are now operating legally in their respective countries does not make them communist countries.

But the enemy panics when, in spite of all restrictions it imposes on its opponents, the freedom armu continues to grow and the drums of freedom beat louder and louder, and this is precisely what happened to the government after the COP. It was shaken by the fact that the entire campaign was organised under abnormal conditions where a large number of senior members of the Congresses were banned, where municipal authorities would not allow mixed meetings in their areas and when the police were harassing the people by rigorously enforcing the pass system and intimidating black

politicians in numerous ways. The success of the COP in the face of all these obstacles meant that we had an efficient organisation which could cope with all the problems confronting it.

The government was also disturbed by the growing unity of the country's progressive forces.

Although a handful of whites had taken part in the Defiance Campaign, what particularly worried the government then was the growing solidarity between Africans and Indians. Now that solidarity had taken a new dimension when relatively large numbers of whites fully identified themselves with the blacks. At the COP Benny Turok spoke on behalf of the COP and was cheered by the delegates. Then Father Huddleston, widely known as a champion of the rights of the black man, was honoured with the title of "Isithwalandwe" (A warrior decorated with the feathers of the blue crane), a title bestowed in the olden days with Chief Luthuli and Dr. Dadoo. Helen Joseph and Piet Beylerveld were also among the speakers at the COP. It was this situation that brought 400 armed policemen to Kliptown to break up a perfectly lawful gathering by sheer force. This lawless action was followed by a spate of bans which immobilised even more people. Worse was to follow.

In 1953 the ANC introduced an elementary course of political lectures for its members throughout the country which sparked off spirited discussions and helped to sustain interest and hold the membership together after the flames of the Defiance Campaign had died down. When the Campaign for the COP was in full swing an advanced course of three lectures was prepared and also widely distributed. The lectures were "The World We Live In", "How We Are Governed" and "The Need For Change". The majority of the lecturers were drawn from the banned people who

were thus kept active and in close contact with the mass of the membership. Equally important, the lectures grew to be one of the best means of consolidating the advances we made up to June 1955 and of training new functionaries and preparing for the next round.

Three months before the COP progressive trade unionists took a significant step in the workers front and established a non-racial trade union centre, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), to co-ordinate the activities of progressive workers without whose participation victory over the oppressor is inconceivable, with Piet Beyleveld and Leslie Masina as president and secretary respectively. Its emergence was a challenge to the racist and separatist policies of the government. My association with the new body was not only political and through bringing us together on the same committees and same campaigns; it was also professional. I handled a large number of their cases and came to have an even better appreciation of the problems facing it.

From its very beginning in the 19th century trade unionism in South Africa was marred by a vicious racialism. The African workers were relegated to the most menial tasks in agriculture, industry, mining, commerce and the public services and were kept out of skilled jobs. With few exceptions Coloured and Indian workers were in a similar position. It is ironical that employers, especially the mines, always wanted the black workers to be employed in skilled work and each time the white workers barred the way. Of course, each of the parties concerned had his own reasons for his attitude on the matter. The mine bosses wanted to exploit cheap black labour for super profits, while the white worker did not want his monopoly of skilled trades to be disturbed.

Successive governments have carefully exploited the fears and fanned the hostility of the white workers towards their black brethren. Through the legislation they have built a solid wall to protect the white worker against any black encroachment. In this situation class unity became difficult and antagonisms between black and white workers became so intense as to explode into violent racial clashes as in the mining strike of 1922.

The prosecution, deportation, mass shootings, hangings and a host of other methods of victimizing white workers that were characteristic of their struggles in the early 20s are things of the past. The coming to power of the Nationalist-Labour Pact Ministry in 1924 marked the beginning of the end of the poor white problem and the entrenchment of white workers in South Africa as the labour aristocracy. The only section of the working class that enjoys the franchise, they have wrung important concessions from both the government and the employers. The poor white problem that hit the Afrikaner worker in the 1930s has long been forgotten and they are now firmly established in fat jobs in the mines, industry, commerce and the civil service. Above all, they have kept the Nationalist Party in government continuously since 1948.

The suppression of trade unionism among African workers, racial division of the trade unions, the encouragement of splinter unions, job reservation, exceptionally high wages, have bound the white workers to the employers and induced them to collaborate in the oppression and exploitation of the black worker. The government is prepared to accord special privileges to the white worker even if

such a course adversely affects the country's economic development as, for instance, the government's reluctance to admit blacks into skilled jobs although the pace of economic development warrants it.

The Transvaal Non-European Council of Trade Unions played a leading role in the formation of SACTU. Despite considerable pressures by various white unions to get the South African Trades and Labour Council to exclude affiliation of African Unions or unions with African membership the pressure of progressive trade unionists like Bill Andrews and others had hitherto foiled such moves. The advent of the Nationalist government in 1948 helped to break the moderating influence of the progressives. In the first place the Settlement of Disputes Act (check date) set up a special machinery for African labour to see to it that there would be no room for African trade unions in the industrial set up of the country. Furthermore the government by banning Bill Andrews and other progressive trade unionists, facilitated a change in the balance of power in the South African Trades and Labour Council, a change which immediately made itself felt when racist trade unionists had their way in closing the doors of the South African Trades and Labour Council to African workers. Thereby SACTU's emergence became inevitable.

This background enables us to appreciate the tremendous odds which faced SACTU when it was born. It decided from the outset not to confine itself to the struggle for the improvement of the workers' conditions to higher wages, shorter working hours, adequate health and social security schemes - but to challenge the very foundations of racialism and to fight for economic, political,



social and cultural well being of the workers. Unlike all other trade union co-ordinating bodies in the country, it opened the doors to all trade unions irrespective of race or colour. Its office bearers and executive members have been non-racial from its inception. Because the economic and political aspirations of the workers are inextricably linked SACTU decided at its inaugural conference to take an active part in the political struggle of the people and accordingly became a member of the Congress Alliance; took part in the Congress of the People, stay-at-homes and other campaigns. Reciprocally the sister Congresses actively helped organise the unorganised workers into SACTU under the slogan "the trade union and the Congress membership are the spear and the shield of the workers".

Because the unions affiliated to SACTU were largely African unions which were legally not recognised, and because the government, the Department of Labour and police were hostile to SACTU unions, the employers were encouraged to ignore SACTU's demands, dismiss its leading workers from the factories with a view to killing trade unionism amongst them. The unions had therefore to resort to the strike weapon but only after exhausting all other peaceful methods of resolving disputes. Practically every strike brought the police, the Department of Labour, industrial councils and even some white trade unions together into an unholy strike-breaking alliance and it was typical for the cause of the strike to be totally ignored. The workers were arrested, charged and very often heavy sentences were imposed. In other cases they were expelled not only from work but from their homes and compounds or endorsed out of the urban areas altogether. In yet other cases they were brutally assaulted and driven back to work by force.

In the face of such concerted action SACTU and the Congress Alliance had to resort to extra trade unions forms of struggle to bring the employers to their knees. A popular bakery, a large cigarette company with international connections, a multi-million Rand food firm had their products boycotted until they recognised the unions and made concessions. An international soap company granted two wage increases within a single year in the face of international aid for the workers. Perhaps the best example of the solidarity of the trade unions from Africa with the South African workers was the case of a large sweet factory which dismissed 500 Indian strikers and replaced them with new African labour. The firm faced the wrath of the trade union movement in Africa. The workers of Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Congo, Kenya, Uganda and many other countries demanded immediate re-instatement of the dismissed workers, failing which the firm would face a boycott of its products which were exported to the continent. The firm beat a hasty retreat and made concessions.

Perhaps one of the biggest acts of international solidarity was when the international trade union and progressive movement in England, Europe, the Americas, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia and the Socialist countries protested against the low wages and bad working conditions of black workers in a large hospital, forcing the government to make concessions.

One of the most sustained and successful campaigns launched by SACTU was one for a minimum wage of £1 a day. The idea such a campaign was suggested to SACTU by the ANC and throughout

the campaign both organisations exerted all power to realise the demand. This has been more than realised although negated by the high cost of living. Wage Boards, the Chamber of Mines, commerce and industry, the various employers' associations and hundreds of individual employers throughout the country were inundated with memoranda setting out the grievances and demands of the workers. Oral evidence was led, publicity given, rallies held, and workers were organised behind the campaign.

From its inception SACTU's efforts at organising the unorganised workers met with State, police and employers' hostility as well as that of the bulk of the white trade unions. Notwithstanding this membership of SACTU grew about 16,000 in 1955 to 53,323 members in 1961, made up as follows: 38,791 Africans, 12,384 Coloureds, 1,650 Indians and 498 whites. When government repression drove it underground and, in spite of its impressive work and achievements within a relatively short period of time, the bulk of the country's trade unions and workers were still outside it and, in reality, the organisation was far from being a congress of South African trade unions. According to government statistics by 1960 South Africa had a total labour force of 5,696,060. Thus in terms of actual numbers 53,323 is insignificant and there were several individual unions with conservative views which had a larger membership than this. In examining this figure we should also keep in mind that whereas in the 40s the trade union of the African mineworkers was affiliated to the Transvaal Non-European Council of Trade Unions thus enhancing its membership figures, this important section of African workers had no access to SACTU because from the time of the great African mineworkers strike of 1946 in which J.B. Marks played a leading role, the

doors to organising African mineworkers were closed by making it illegal to organise them.

Thereby SACTU was prevented access to one of the biggest sections of the African workers. But SACTU had a greater potential than all the other workers co-ordinating bodies in the country. Of even greater importance, its emergence gave us an organisation which could concentrate on the task of organising the most militant section of the oppressed people and lent terrific power to the blows of the Congresses. From 1955 we were always confident that every campaign would receive the solid backing of an ever growing section of the workers.

The organisational structure of the Congress movement was influenced by existing conditions in the country and we have consistently refused all attempts to rush us to forms of organisation which are ahead of the people's thinking. At the same time we have always been on the lookout for opportunities where non-racial patterns of organisation can be developed and SACTU is one example of this vigilance.

The South African Women's Federation formed in 1955 is yet another illustration of our attempt to encourage, through an appropriate organisational structure the flow of ideas in the liberation movement towards a South Africa free from all forms of racial thinking. Under the leadership of Lilian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph, president and secretary respectively, it grew so rapidly that on August 9th 1956 it organised a gigantic demonstration of 20,000 women of all races who gathered at Union Buildings, Pretoria, to protest against the extension of passes to African women, against race classification, against permits for Indians to cross provincial boundaries and identify

certificates.

That historic pageant was far larger and more representative of the women of South Africa than another memorable procession of women also held during the month of August in 1915 and that marched to Pretoria to petition the Governor General to release rebels sentenced for high treason. While the government of the day received the delegation from the latter and even released the rebels long before the expiration of their sentences, it refused 41 years later even to meet the representatives of the Federation whose grievances were far more genuine and demands more just. The difference between the two events is simple. It was a case of blood being thicker than water. In 1915 the government was confronted by white women, Afrikaner women at that, demanding the release of white rebels. But the 1956 demands came from a mixed organisation which was nevertheless predominately black, with only a handful of white women, and whose demands were against racial discrimination. South African governments rarely receive black women who do not start from the premise that they are inferior to whites and who regard all human beings as equal. Perhaps it is because of her role, particularly in this demonstration, that the Nationalist government has never forgiven Helen Joseph. With their racial prejudice and contempt for black they invariably assume whenever black and white work together the latter must think for the former. She was the first person in the country to be house arrested and she also lost her job as secretary of the Industrial Council of the Clothing Industry.

Helen Joseph and Lilian Ngoyi have many common characteristics. Both are strong personalities,

gifted with inexhaustible energy and determination, both are great entertainers and every year scores of Congressites flock to their homes to relax and enjoy her refreshments. A holder of an honours degree from the University of London, Helen who held the rank of lieutenant in the South African army during the World War II, could have left South Africa and settled comfortably in England where she was born and grew up, as many people younger than herself have done. It gives us an idea of how tough she is that in the face of all the persecutions she has gone through, she instead to live in a country torn by racial strife where one day the sweet air will smell of gunfire, elegant buildings will crash down and where the streets will be splashed with blood.

Lilian Ngoyi is a self made person with very little education, hardly any political training, one of those persons who are produced by the struggle. In the Defiance Campaign she defied and went to prison. Became member of the provincial Executive and later the National Executive of the ANC. Also National President of both the ANC Women's League and the South African Women's Federation. In 1953 she visited England, Europe and the Socialist countries including the USSR as guest of the International Women's Federation. She is a widow. A powerful mass speaker.

The five Congresses and the Women's Federation were loosely linked together through the Consultative Committee consisting of two representatives from each of the constituent bodies under the chairmanship of the President of the ANC. The Committee had no plenary or executive powers and its recommendations were purely advisory. Each constituent organisation retained its independence and was free to accept or reject recommendations of the Committee as it deemed fit.

Its aim was to co-ordinate the activities of our respective organisations and to plan joint action. It also conducted research on a wide variety of topics and made the information available to all the Congresses.

Its co-ordination and constant consultation not only enabled us to keep abreast with national and international developments but more than compensated for the existence of separate political organisations, each serving a specific national group, and put us in a far better position to work for a united South Africa more fruitfully than all the so called non-racial organisations in the country put together.

From the beginning of the 50s the ANC and its allies were highly active and our prestige shot up considerably. The Congress movement overhadowed all the other political organisations in the country, inside and outside the parliament, in its efforts to unite the people of South Africa on a democratic non-racial programme, in exposing the evils of apartheid and isolating the enemy. As 1955 tailed towards its end and as the ANC and its freedom army grew from strength to strength in spite of all the attempts of the enemy to crush the organisation, we had no illusions whatsoever as to what was coming. We felt sure that the enemy could strike soon and we prepared to parry the blows, to choose our own field of battle, the moment to strike back when the hour arrived to do so with everything within our reach.

## Chapter 7: A Circle of Impressions

The bans confining me to Johannesburg and prohibiting me from attending meetings expired early in September 1955. I had last had a holiday in 1948 when I spent three months in Cape Town. Then I was a green lightweight in the ANC with hardly any serious responsibilities other than attending meetings in the Transvaal Executive, addressing public meetings, writing an article or two and accompanying the provincial president on his rounds. In the intervening years I had reached the light heavyweight division and carried more poundage.

Confined to Johannesburg for a whole two years and with the pressure of both my legal and political work weighing heavily on me, I was suffocated from claustrophobia and anxious for a bit of fresh air. Fourteen years of crammed life in South Africa's largest city had not killed the peasant in me and once again I was keen to see that ever beckoning open veld and the blue mountains, the green grass and bushes, the rolling hills, rich valleys, the rapid streams as they sped across the escarpment into the insatiable sea.

In 1953 my mother and sister-in-law, No-England, has spent a year with me in Orlando and I now missed them very much. The political storms in which I had been caught on the Rand and elsewhere had made me neglect family affairs and I had now to confer with both Sabata and Daliwonga on several problems. On and off Daliwonga and I had exchanged views on the political situation and, with current developments in the Transkei, I thought the moment was ripe for a full



discussion on the whole issue. I decided to holiday on Mthatha.

Duma Nokwe and others gathered at home one night to see me off. The young and promising barrister was in his usual jovial mood and as the evening lengthened he became more lucid and loquacious and kept us roaring with laughter. Occassionally he would burst into song - Russian and Chinese - at the same time gesticulating zealously as if conducting an imaginary choir. We sat up until about midnight and as they were leaving the house my daughter Makaziwe, then two years old, awoke and asked me if she could come along with me. Although I had been confined to Johannesburg pressure of work had allowed me little time to spend with the family and I was well aware of the longing that would eat away their insides as I drifted further and further from them on my way to the Transkei. For some seconds a sense of guilt persecuted me and the excitement about the journey evaporated. I kissed her and put her to bed and, as she dozed away, I was off.

I manoeuvred my car out of the maze of streets in the centre of the city and within an hour or so, I was on the national road to Durban, the first leg of my journey. The breeze was gentle and soothing and, although I had not slept at all that night, I was fresh as dew. Over the car radio I listened to light and sparkling music and felt as merry as my friend Duma Nokwe.

At daybreak I crossed from Volksrust into Natal. Once Getshwayo's country, the black King whose crack army wiped out the British at Isandhlwana, it was no longer ours. It had been grabbed from us by men whose sole title to it was gunpowder and who have no conscience whatsoever about

robbing those weaker than themselves. Now we needed passes to travel through that beautiful country, to visit relatives and friends, to get material from the woods to build our homes and to hunt game.

Shortly after crossing the river on the border my eye was caught by the Majubas, the steep hills I has seen on several occasions before on my way to and from Durban. This time I remembered that this was the historic battlefield on which the inept Afrikaner once stoutly defended his independence and shook British imperialism. Was it the same Afrikaner who fought so tenaciously for his own freedom who had now become such a tyrant and who was persecuting us? I once wondered whether history knew any people as oppressive and cruel as the Afrikaner who could shoot down human beings as they did, work them to death on the potato farms of Bethal and treat them worse than animals. Later I came to discover, as many others did, that the Spaniards and Portugese, the English, Dutch, French, Belgians, Germans, Italians and Americans - in fact all imperialist - had done worse things than these. As for myself, twice he had locked me up and twice he had restricted me to Johannesburg and prevented me from attending meetings merely for demanding in 1952 and by non-violent and peaceful means what he fought for through armed force seventy one years ago. With all the multiplicity of humiliations and frustration I has suffered and the opportunities that were closed to me, I was bitter and felt even more strongly now that South African whites needed another Isandhlwana.

I remembered that I was on leave and pulled myself together and forgot about the problem of

human folly to which the relations between black and white, between African and Afrikaner, gave rise, continued on my journey and listened more consciously to the music. This time I had tuned to Radio Bantu whose politics revolted me but whose music I thoroughly enjoyed. At home I hardly missed the rediffusion service, as this programme was then called and which featured almost all the leading African stars in the country - Miriam Makheba, Dolly Rathebe, Dorothy Masuku, Manhattan Brothers and others - and which brought us into contact with the best choral music our people had produced.

The fight against a State enjoying vast resources and enormous powers of coercion is never easy and its opponents frequently find themselves leading contradictory lives. Although we fight against all forms of colour discrimination we are forced to live in separate areas and use separate travel facilities, separate entrances to private and public buildings and to accept lower wages than those paid to whites. Even in regard to matters where we have a choice, circumstances may compel us to act in contradiction to our beliefs. We go to separate shows, organise our own sports clubs and tournaments and attend separate church services. To sing and dance is as natural to my people as to all others and I have never found it easy to ask the people to boycott a music programme, which was the only source of entertainment for most of them, without offering an alternative. I enjoy all music, indigenous, Euro-African and western, and here in jail I even learnt to appreciate Eastern music much more than I did when I was out of prison. But those of Reuben Caluza, Joshua Mohapeloa, Hamilton Masizi and Benjamin Tyamzashe always bring a special message to me. Even on that beautiful morning I could not resist the urge and joy of listening to the voices of my

own flesh and blood. My restriction to Johannesburg put me out of touch with developments in other parts of the country and I was now keen to pick up the old threads and brush up my knowledge. Although I read the newspapers as carefully as I could, journalists are usually not the best source of information for those who must plan on the basis of hard facts. What could offer me a better opportunity than to go out and talk directly to people who were in the centre of activities in their respective areas? My first stop was at G.S.D. Nyembe's home near Dannhauser. He was then vice-president of Natal ANC and one of the top figures in Northern Natal. I did the same in Ladysmith and paused to chat with Ahmed Sader, Frank Bhengu and his father. Dr. Ahmed Sader, while studying abroad had been associated with the International Union of Students (IUS). On completing his medical studies he had settled down to practicing medicine in Ladysmith and had emerged as one of the top figures in the Natal Indian Congress in Northern Natal. Between him and G.S.D.Nyembe, and with the assistance of other leading Congressites, they had organised the whole of Northern Natal as a strong base of the Congress movement. They all briefed me on the situation in their region and when later in the afternoon I left Rosebaun Township where the Bhengus lived, the cobwebs were beginning to fall away from the mind.

My next stop was Pietermaritzburg where I hoped to see Dr Chota Motala, Archie Gumede and Harry Gwala for an hour or so, so I thought. The Midlands, with Pietermaritzburg as the centre, was one of the best organised regions in the whole country for the COP campaign and to want to talk to its principal figures was but natural. Soon Moses Madiba, Dr. Omar Hassim and S.B.Mungal were there and we talked and talked for hours. I had not slept for two nights now and drowsiness and

fatigue were catching up on me. At dawn I had a nap. This altered my programme and I could not see Harry Gwala and Archie Gumede.

From Pietermaritzburg I travelled with S.B.Mungal, a veteran of many campaigns who had been active the the CP from the early 30s. His presence made the trip to Groutville brief and enjoyable. I still remember one of the stories he related to me during that trip. He was once visited at his place of work by the Security Police who were looking for the whereabouts of a cetain Mr.Baker. He told me that during the 1930s the latter was in charge of adult night schools organised by the CP. "Do you want to know where he is?" asked Mungal. "Yes", replied the policeman. "I'll show you come." said Mungal. He and the two policemen climbed into the police van with Mungal directing the driver. The police had apparently been looking for Mr. Baker for quite some time and the prospect of tracking him down at last excited them. As they reached the outer limits of the town, they came to a gravel road which led to a cemetry. "Does he work there?" enquired the policeman. "I'll show you", insisted Mungal. They reached the cementry and left the car outside the entrance. As they passed the offices and went deeper and deeper into the graveyard tension increased. Finally Mungal stopped next to a particular grave and said triumphantly, "there's Mr.Baker!"

He has a lively sense of humour and I enjoyed his story and puns.

Chief Luthuli and his family were pleased to see S.B.Mungal and we spent a lovely time at their home. Although the Chief had been confined by banning orders for more than 12 months he was

well informed and ably outlined the urgent problems he thought the ANC head office in Johannesburg should attend to and made constructive suggestions. In the evening we returned to Durban and, as usual, I stayed with Ismail Meer, spending most of the time in the kitchen with his wife, Fatima. During the three days I spent in Durban I had discussions with Masabalala Yengwa, Stephen Dlamini and other leading members of the ANC in that city. Later, I met Dr. Monty Naicker and other members of the Executive of the NIC.

One of the questions I had been discussing with my colleagues during this trip and which I now raised with my NIC colleagues, was the effect that bans and restrictions imposed by the government on our leading members were having on our organisations. Once a person was banned he came to accept the restrictions and ceased to be active. In my discussions I set out to urge that this should not be allowed to happen and that banned members should continue to play an active part. In this instance Debi Singh, usually in a good frame of mind and keen on discussion, made the conversation lively when he protested against what he called constant meddling in the internal affairs of Natal by people from the Transvaal and asked me to leave them in peace, adding that we would do the movement a lot of good if we concentrated on organising the Transvaal first and solving its problems before we offered advice to others. But he was a disciplined and experienced man with his heart in the movement and, once he realised that his colleagues did not share his point of view, he immediately fell in line and participated fully in the discussions.

From Durban I travelled along the south coast past Port Shepstone down to Port St. Johns. Places

like these are typical of all colonial and semi-colonial countries where the towns, streets, parks, buildings, railway stations, airports, dams and other public places bear the names of people from the imperial countries and not those of the indigenous population and other opponents of racial oppression. On merit men like Dr. John Dube, Professor Jabavu, Dr. Abdurahman, Mahatma Gandhi, Bill Andrews and Revered Michael Scott deserve as much, if not more, honour than Sir Theophilous Shepstone, after whom the former port was named, and a host of other white public men who have been similarly honoured.

Port St Johns is an even more sad commentary on the mentality of those responsible for the naming of the country's towns and shows that South Africa is prepared to honour other imperialist countries rather than its distinguished black citizens. The name commemorates the Sao Joao, a portugese ship that was wrecked near the mouth of the Mzimvubu in 1552. On principle there is nothing wrong in giving recognition to the many links between our history and that of Portugal. The human lives that were lost when the ship went down, the hardships suffered by the survivors as they travelled through the country to Delago Bay and the fact that some of them remained behind and lived among the Africans, deserves some form of permanent recognition and in the ordinary course the name Port St. Johns would be quite appropriate. We condemn the practice because, in this particular instance, the commemoration is part of a deliberate policy of discriminating against black people in South Africa.

Far from improving this position, white South Africa seems to be going from bad to worse. Names

like "Sekhukhuneland" which used to appear in the old maps have now disappeared from the new ones. True there are a few insignificant places bearing the names of black historical figures like Shakaskraal, tucked up in an obscure spot on the Natal north coast. But such taken gestures are more of an insult than an honour to our people. It is not difficult to imagine what is certain to happen when freedom comes to this country. The radical changes in the naming of independent countries and public places in Africa, Asia and Latin America indicate the sort of demands that will be made here.

I reached Mzimkhulu late that day and stayed with Dr. Wilson Conco who ran a large medical practice in the area. We were students together on the Rand and worked closely in the ANC and especially in the Youth League. I was happy to see him again and his wife Sheila again. Although active in Natal politics, he was actually living in the Transkei and acquainted with current developments there. After consultations with him, I had a clearer picture of the situation in the area than when I left the Rand. In the evening of the third I reached Mthatha, my home town. Home is home even for those who aspire to serve wider interests and who have established their homes of choice in distant regions. The happy lift that seized me as I drove into York Road, the main street, is beyond measure. I had been away for the long stretch of 13 years and although there were no fatted calves and festooned trees to welcome me I felt such like the Returned Wanderer of Biblical fame and looked forward to seeing my mother and humble home, the numerous friends with whom I grew up, that enchanting veld and all the paraphernalia that make up unforgettable days of childhood.



My arrival coincided with the meeting of a special committee appointed to handle the whole question of the Transkei changing from the Bunga system to the Bantu Authorities. For the greater part of their history the Transkeian Territories were treated as a separate administrative area and in due course even developed a system of local government which, despite its weaknesses and shortcomings - and there were many - was perhaps the most advanced to be found in any of the country's African areas.

Politically the Transkei had 26 magisterial districts with Mthatha as capital. By 1955 the Council system had existed in certain of these areas for about 61 years and from 1926 every district has its own Council, all of which were in 1932 federated into the United Transkei General Council (Bunga) with jurisdiction over the entire area and consisting of 108 members made up of the chief magistrate as chairman and 26 magistrates, all whites, and 81 African members. Each of the District Councils elected from its own members 3 representatives and the 3 Paramount Chiefs of Thembuland, Eastern and Western Pondoland were ex-officio members. It is ironical that the Gcaleka chief, who is the traditional head of all the Xhosas (a district from the Tembus, Pondos, Pondomises, Bacas and Xesibes) on both sides of the Kei, and member of the most influential Royal Houses in the country, should have been denied by the government official recognition as Paramount Chief and ex-officio member of the Bunga. The authorities have always been hard on the house of Gcaleka and that of his brother Rharhabe, because of their stubborn refusal to submit to foreign rule. Official policy has been to crush that Chieftency and to eliminate its influence

completely. That the Nationalist government has repudiated official policies in this regard and recognised the Paramount Chieftancy of that House shows the extent to which they are prepared to go in buying the support for the chiefs.

Under the UTTGC were the 26 District Councils with the magistrate as chairman, and 6 African members, 4 of whom were elected by the tax payers and 2 nominated by the magistrate. In Eastern and Western Pondoland 2 were elected by tax-payers, 2 by the Paramount Chief and 2 by the magistrate. The main function of the Bunga was to advise the government on any proposed legislation affecting Africans in the area and exercise functions specifically entrusted to it by the government. These related mainly to taxation, agriculture, rehabilitation schemes, construction of roads and dams, dipping and scholarships. Its resolutions were purely advisory and were subject to review by a separate conference consisting of the chief magistrate and the 26 magistrates. All of which thus made the Bunga a mixture of democratic impulse severely restricted by paternalism born of white overlordship.

Although the Bunga was certainly the most influential political body in the Transkei and provided a platform for the people of the whole area to meet and review their problems, it was not the only political organ in the territory. There were a number of mass organisations, national and purely local, whose policies clashed with those of the official body and who held that African aspirations could never be achieved through government institutions. But these organisations were relatively weak and divided and at no time did they exercise the Bunga commanded.

In spite of the fact that the Bunga was primarily concerned with the affairs of the Transkei, it frequently expressed itself on major national questions and at times did so quite forcefully. It consistently demanded direct representation for Africans in parliament, condemned the taking away of the franchise from the Africans, rejected apartheid and the Bantu Authorities Act in particular. Its opposition to Bantu Authorities was perfectly understandable as this is a system which is inherently feudalistic in character depending not on the personal ability of the man but on his birth and social status, whereas the composition of the Bunga, with the exception of the white magistrates, the 3 Paramount Chiefs, and the nominated members was based on the democratic principle of election. It is therefore surprising that it allowed the government to pressurise and entice it to sign its own death warrant in favour of an outdated system which would deprive the masses of the people of a democratic right which despite its limited application they had enjoyed for more than 6 decades, namely, to elect their own representative.

It may well be that some councillors were largely influenced by the promise that under the new system, the people of the Transkei would be able to run their own affairs free from immediate control by white magistrates. Be that as it may, on the night of my arrival at Mthatha I met some members of the Special Committee including Chiefs Tutor Ndamase, Douglas Ndamase and Sandi Majeke and Councillors S.Mabude and Elijah Qamata. I had a brief discussion with both councillors before and after one of the sessions and had a glimpse of the matters that were considered there. At that time Sabata was ill in hospital and I visited him regularly during the

fortnight I spent at home. Daliwonga, who was playing a leading part in persuading the Bunga to accept Bantu Authorities, was also a member of the Committee and we met the same night. He was the central figure in the discussions quite pressed for time and we arranged to meet later at home. Meanwhile I slept in a boarding house in the town.

I thought I had left the Security Police behind on the Rand and had not suspected that they had spread their tentacles as far afield as my home town. I was still drinking coffee with two chiefs in my room when early next morning my hostess brought in a white gentleman. Without any courtesies he arrogantly asked, "Are you Nelson Mandela?" "And who are you?" I countered.

He gave his rank as a detective sergeant and his name. I then asked, "May I see your warrant, please?" He resented my impertinence much more than I detested his own arrogance but after some hesitation he produced his authority. I then told him that I was Nelson Mandela. He requested me to accompany him to the police station and I asked whether I was under arrest to which he replied that I was not. I refused to go. Whereupon he fired a succession of questions while at the same time noting my remarks in his notebook: when did I leave Johannesburg, what places had I visited, how long did I intend remaining in the Transkei, exactly where would I go on leaving the area, did I have a permit to enter the Transkei? I told him where I would stay, that the Transkei was my home and that I did not need a permit to enter it, but refused to answer the other questions. When he left the Chiefs criticized me for my abruptness, stressing that I could have answered some of the questions without any risk to myself. I explained that I had done so because of the man's discourtesy and

hautiness and that I had justly rewarded him for his arrogance. I don't think I convinced them.

That incident, small as it was, brought sharply to me that I had returned to a Transkei far different from the one I had left behind 14 years ago, and that there was much at stake in the activities that had brought together the Chiefs and the Councillors assembled there at that time.

Much as I was interested in having a first hand knowledge of what was happening among that segment of our people that worked with the government institutions, my chief interest was to find out what the people's organisations outside the Bunga, and especially the ANC, were doing. The first thing I did on leaving the boarding house that morning was to visit the workshop of Timothy Mbuzo, the ANC leader in the capital. Kenneth Qhina later joined us. I soon discovered that on the whole we were stronger than I expected, but our membership was scattered all over the area and immobilized by the lack of funds and long distances to be travelled to meetings. Meanwhile the situation demanded a tighter organisation, full time personnel and a central office to plan and co-ordinate our activities. In the limited time at my disposal I did what I could to help but such tasks require a strong team and far more resources than I possessed. When I left the Transkei I had done less than scratch the surface.

I was occupied with Timothy Mbuzo and Kenneth Qhina for the whole day and reached home at night. I blew the hooter from a distance, waking up the whole village and a number of people gathered at home to see what was happening. Having been away for so long I hardly suspected that

such an incident would be taken more seriously than I meant it to be. Some thought it was an ambulance bringing tragic news, others feared that it was the police coming to investigate some offence I probably committed in Johannesburg. Nevertheless they were all relieved and happy to know that the noise was an announcement that I was back.

Being together with my mother in her home filled me with boyish excitement. At the same time I could not avoid a sense of guilt as my mother was living all alone and 22 miles from the nearest doctor. My sisters and I were each living on their own. Despite the fact that her children tried in their own way to render her financially comfortable, she chose to live an auster life and saving what one child gave her to distribute to any of her other children who happened to be in need. On previous occasions I endeavoured to persuade her to come and live with me in Johannesburg, but she could never face the wrench of leaving the countryside where she had lived all her life.

I have often wondered whether a person is justified in neglecting his own family to fight for opportunities for others. Can there be anything more important than looking after your mother approaching the age of 60, building her a dream house, giving her good food, nice clothing and all one's love? Is politics in such cases not a mere excuse to shirk one's responsibilities? It is not easy to live with a conscience that raises such questions from time to time. Often I am able to persuade myself that I have done my best at all times to bring a measure of ease and comfort into my mother's life. Even when at times I am plagued with an uneasy conscience I have to acknowledge that my whole hearted commitment to the liberation of our people gives meaning to life and yields

for me a sense of national pride and real joy. This feeling has been multiplied a hundred times by the knowledge that right up to her last letter she wrote me shortly before her death, my mother encouraged me in my beliefs and in fighting for them.

I arrived at Mqhekezweni also at night and in spite of my experience at Qunu, my home, I again hooted continuously from a distance. At that time Justice has been deposed from chieftaincy by the government and was living in Durban. When the hooter was heard, many people thought their Chief has returned. To Africans a chief is such by virtue of his birth and not of his appointment by the government and there are many chiefs who hold no government appointment yet wield a greater authority and who are highly respected by their people. Perhaps it was because of this that Justice remained quite popular among his followers even during the period of this deposition. Imagine their disappointment when they discovered that it was not their chief who had come. Although they were happy to see me they would have been happier still to welcome him.

My sister-in-law No-England who was asleep when I arrived, was so excited to see me that she demanded I drive her that same night to visit a relative. To do this I had to cut across a wild and rough veld, avoiding holes, rocks and shrubs, but we managed all the same. During the fortnight I kept moving between Qunu and Mqhekezweni, now staying with my mother and now with my sister-in-law, all the time visiting and receiving friends and relatives.

I could not leave the Transkei without visiting Dr. Jimmy Njongwe and his wife Connie. I had last

seen them in Port Elizabeth at the end of 1952 where he ran a popular medical practice. Both of them were politically active there and he had become one of the commanding figures during the Defiance Campaign, acting as provincial president when Professore Matthews was away in the United States. He was now practising in Matatiele on the Basutoland border and I paid them a two day visit. In their house I have always felt perfectly at home - much as if I was at Qunu, Mqhekezweni or Orlando. What was even more important, there hardly any person knew me and I could relax completely. I spent the greater part of those two days in bed.

I also visisted my nephew George Mathanzima, then practicing as an attorney in the Ngcobo district, and stayed with him and his family for a day. There I met A.P.Mda and Tsepo Letlaka, both serving articles under George and both still staunch supporters of the ANC, having done excellent work in that region. I had always enjoyed talking with A.P.Mda, with his ability to analyse situations and lively sense of humour. He had joined a number of local groups and committees, sporting and otherwise, and reviewed not only the major political currents in the Transkei, but possessed a wealth of valuable detail on what went on behind the scenes.

When the Special Committee on the introduction of Bantu Authorities adjourned Daliwonga and I visited Sabata in hospital. Unfortunately the Chief's illness limited the scope of the discussions and we considered only urgent matters and agreed that the two brothers would resume talks as soon as Sabata was well enough to do so. Their father's were not only relatives but friends who kept close together all the time, a traditions which was faithfully observed by Chiefs Jongitaba and Dalubuhle



who acted as regents respectively for the sons. It was a great moment for me to see the descendants of Ngubengcuka putting their heads together to sort out family problems.

From Mthatha Daliwonga and I drove to Qamata where we examined the proposed developments in the Transkei in the presence of George, A.P.Mda, Tsepo Letlaka and P. Breakfast. I approached the whole discussion not from the point of view of staging a show down or of fault finding, showing off, making propaganda or even debate, but with a view of persuading a man I knew was primarily concerned with the idea of an independent Transkei, and who was destined to play a leading role in the realisation of that ideal, and who would thereby help to set in motion similar forces elsewhere in the country.

Up to 1940 we were bound together by a common family background, a common outlook and common aspirations. But that year we took opposite directions and I found myself on the Rand, the hub of the country's political life, coming into close contact with forces that aimed higher than the welfare of a particular region. From Fort Hare, Daliwonga went straight home and became senior chief of Emigrant Tembuland, a position he had held for no less than 15 years when we met at Qamata in 1955. I realised at the outset that he would look at the problem mainly from the point of view of his own background and of his aspirations as chief. In the circumstances I thought it advisable not to introduce any isms or clichés in the discussion, but to rely purely on truth and common sense and the facts of history, stressing in particular the demands that have been consistently made by African leaders throughout the country, the Transkei included.

My initial argument was built on the premise that Africans were capable of determining their own future and that no racial group, the Nationalist Party included, has any right to decide for us. Any so called solution forcibly imposed on us, as was the case with the Bantu Authorities, could never succeed. But the central point I kept on hammering over and over again that night was the obvious fact that more Africans were already living in so called white areas and outside the Reserves, that apartheid offered no solution whatsoever for this section, that Bantu Authorities would affect not only a minority in the Reserves which would continue to shrink as economic factors drove more and more people to the urban areas and that, in any event the actual area covered by the new system was no less than 13% of the country - too small to constitute a solution.

I added that since 1910 when the Union of South Africa was formed, African leaders throughout the country had worked for the unity of all our people, an objective which was being gradually accomplished and which was not just a utopian dream but a concrete ideal reflecting the direction of economic forces. African unity was a development that conflicted with the existence of white supremacy and, once it had been fully achieved, radical oppression would tumble down. By breaking up Africans into several small ethnic units through a system of Bantu Authorities the Nationalist government hoped to forestall that danger. I concluded by stressing that leadership in all fields, especially in politics, should be based on merit and not on birth or social status and that the principle of the masses of the people electing their won representatives to the organs of government was the basis of democracy which had already taken root amongst Africans and that a change now

to hereditary leadership on levels similar to that of the Bunga was a backward step the people would definitely resist. I earnestly urged him to reconsider his whole attitude and to use his talents and influence towards the realisation of the ideal of African unity, the defeat of white supremacy and the emergence of a free and united South Africa.

Daliwonga's reply was a simple one with a personal and wider motivation. On the personal level, he argued that Chieftaincy of the Right Hand House of Mthikrakra had been taken away from his great grandfather Mathanzima, and the status and influence of that House subsequently whittled down severely. He also outlined the difficulty he had experienced and humiliation he had suffered as chief under the United Party government and gave interesting figures in support of his argument. Under Bantu Authorities his full powers as chief would be restored and he pointedly asked me on what grounds did I expect him to reject a system which held such promise.

On the wider level he pointed out that his ultimate goal was also a free and united South Africa and praised the efforts of all those who had fought for this ideal, but he felt he could achieve this goal peacefully and quicker than us by making use of the opportunities offered by the government. He criticized our policy and method on the grounds, firstly, that multiracialism would create more racial friction in the country and that apartheid offered each racial group the opportunity to develop freely in accordance with its own heritage and culture. Secondly he feared that our method would bring about bloodshed and more tension and bitterness. He was startled to learn that in spite of my own family background I did not support the principle of traditional leadership in national affairs,

insisting that such leadership was in accordance with our own history and heritage.

Daliwonga's plain answer as to why he, as an individual, had accepted Bantu Authorities simplified the issue not only in regard to himself but also in relation to other chiefs. They regarded the new system as a formal recognition of their position as traditional leaders in the rural areas, where the system applied, the machinery of government would be based on chieftaincy. From now on the chiefs would occupy a commanding position in the community and would enjoy a measure of prosperity quite beyond the reach of their won fellow men. Everything else, including the welfare of the entire African population, was to be subordinated to the interests of the chiefs as a group. They accepted this bait even though it was clear from the outset that its overall intention was to save white supremacy in South Africa by forestalling the emergence of a united African community and handing over less than 13% of the country to ethnic regimes dominated by chiefs.

I told my nephew that I understood his personal position quite well and the logic of his attitude as a chief. But I thought it my duty to draw his attention to the fact that I considered his personal interests to be definitely in conflict with those of the community, that placed in a similar position I would try to subordinate my individual interests to those of the people at large. I deliberately did not wish to say more on this aspect and turned to more general issues.

I welcomed his statement that his ultimate goal was the same as ours but told him that to realise that aim he would have to resolve first the contradiction to which I had already referred. I spent some

time explaining that social problems could only be solved through organisations and not by individuals, however influential and worthy their motives might be, that if he wished to contribute to the struggle to unite the African people and hasten their liberation his duty was to join the liberation movement as Chief Luthuli had done. On the question of multiracialism I reminded him that our country was the home of many races and that living together under one government was unavoidable. I thought to allay his fears by citing numerous examples in the world where different races were living together harmoniously and that there was no reason why a non-racial social order in South Africa should lead to racial friction. I reminded him that South African whites were not a homegenious group and that they were a mixture of Afrikaner, English, French, German, Greeks, Jews, Portuguese, and Spaniards who differed in their historical backgrounds and culture but who lived together peacefully.

I repudiated the suggestion that our method would lead to bloodshed and racial strife and showed that it was precisely because of the peaceful and non-violent methods we had consistently followed throughout our history of more than 40 years that worse massacres had been avoided, that the people who deserved his rebuke were his friends, the Nationalist government, whose cruelty and racialism was well known and who easily resorted to the rifle as the ordinary means of dealing with genuine grievances of the African people. It was the wicked schemes of such men that he was now urging us to accept as the blueprint for our freedom.

We argued through the night right until dawn. Early in the discussion he invited both A.P.Mda and

Tsepho Letlaka to take part but they declined, preferring that the argument be confined to the two of us. Later Daliwonga insisted on hearing their views and both supported my arguments and disagreed with his. A.P.Mda was even more outspoken than me and bluntly told the chief to choose between personal comfort and the hardships of serving his people. George and P.Breakfast hardly spoke.

In this discussion I should have driven home the point that whether or not Daliwonga's views are correct would be judged, not by the independence of the Transkei, but by the answer to the question whether such independence would strengthen or weaken the struggle for a united and free South Africa. It is because we see in the whole policy of separate development and its fragmentation of the country, the entrenchment of racial oppression in the rest of the Republic and a direct threat to all our labours and dreams that we consider Daliwonga amongst those who have allied themselves with the main enemy of the black people in South Africa.

The discussion revealed a wide gap in our respective beliefs and methods of action and I immediately accepted that on political issues our roads had definitely parted. This grieved me a great deal because other than Justice few men have inspired me in my youth as he did and I would have loved to fight side by side with him and share with him the laurels of real victory. On family matters he had always been excellent and our friendship remains deep and warm. I was really sorry to come out of the discussion with empty hands.

The next morning I returned to Qunu and I spent a few days with my mother and sister Mabel.

During the day I would leave the car behind and visit friends and relatives on foot and walk long distances leisurely into the veld. But the magic world of my childhood evaded me and everything that remained had changed. Although it was no spring the grass was short and brown and I saw very few flowers, whilst the bushes that were once dense and tall not appeared stunted and scattered here and there. Even the streams whose sweet waters I used to enjoy and where I used to catch eels had dried up into numerous dirty pools. All the same it was a tremendous experience to see once again the old landmarks that reminded me of the exciting moments of my youth.

My time was no up an one evening I bade my mother and sister-in-law No-england farewell and went off to Mthatha for final consultations with Timothy Mbuzo. My last act that night was to visit Sabata in hospital to wish him speedy recovery and to say goodbye. We shook hands and he wished me well in return. At 3 a.m. next moring I was on my way to Cape Town. In the bright moonlight and crisp breeze I felt fresh and light and drove at moderate speed past Dutywa (Idirtywa) and Butterworth and across the Kei. The road winds up the rugged mountains from that historic river and the majestic scenery on both sides of the road heightened the feeling of bliss that surged through me. From the top of the mountains I looked down on a beautiful valley with vast and green fields. I was last on that road 18 years before when Chief Jongintaba took me to Healdtown. Between 1937 and 1940 I had travelled on several occasions by train to and from Healdtown and Fort Hare but on all those occasions it passed the region at night. This was an ideal opportunity for me to see the area and I slowed down considerably.

I was still enjoying the scenery when a limping man raised his hands appealingly. I stopped instinctively and picked him up. I had hardly travelled a mile further when I discovered that I had given a lift to an unusual companion. He told me that his car had broken down on the other side of Mthatha and he had walked for a whole week from there, his destination being Port Elizabeth. He brushed aside with ease some pertinent questions I asked him and talked ceaselessly all the way to East London. Although I was a bit uneasy about his evasiness, the man had a charming personality and from his remarks he appeared a good conversationalist. He also seemed to know the particular area quite well and was making interesting observations about the region as we travelled along.

We reached Robert Mahlangeni's house in East London but found he was away to see the British Lions Rugby team playing in Port Elizabeth. We met a few people in the township and after lunch we left for Port Elizabeth. Now my companion had discovered who I was and he decided to introduce himself properly. He told me that he was driving from Pondoland coast carrying contraband when he ran into a police road block. As he jumped out of his car and dashed away the police fired hitting him on the leg but he escaped. He limped along from there until I came to his rescue.

I asked him a question the answer to which I knew fairly well: why did he choose such a dangerous source of livelihood? This touched off a lively speech. As a youngster his ambitions was to become a teacher but his parents were too poor to send him to college. After leaving primary school he



worked in a factory but the wages were low and he could not manage. He tried to supplement his income by smuggling dagga. The sideline proved so profitable that he decided to leave the factory and concentrate on the risky but lucrative occupation of smuggling. In any other country, he argued, he could have found suitable opportunity for his talents. He added that he was a member of the ANC and that he had defied during the 1952 Defiance Campaign, all of which was confirmed by our people in Port Elizabeth. One needed only to spend a few hours with him to appreciate his talents. As an attorney with a large criminal practice I was fairly conversant with this type of problem and had come across tragic cases where otherwise talented and fine individuals were driven to crime because South Africa provided no opportunities for their talents. Black men saw people far less competent than themselves with higher incomes simply because they were white. Although there are important exceptions where children from well to do families resort to crime, it is now an established fact that racial oppression plays a role in turning law abiding citizens into criminals.

We reached Port Elizabeth at sunset and Joe Matthews arranged for me to stay the night with his uncle Wotana Bokwe. The following morning I met Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba and Frances Baard. I knew the latter quite well have worked with them in the ANC for several years. Although I was meeting Govan Mbeki for the first time I knew him from my student days as the author of the booklet "The Transkei in the Making" and one of the few African graduates in those days who had gone to business as a source of livelihood. He and several others were running a co-operative society in the Transkei. In 1955 Govan gave up a teaching post to take up the post of regional

manager (Port Elizabeth) of the weekly "New Age".

Later during the same morning Joe Matthews and I visited Christopher Gell who was noted for his non-racial views and whose articles at the time were appearing in several South African newspapers and arousing great interest in progressive circles. In spite of the fact that he was kept in an iron lung and rendered immobile through paralysis he was alert and cheerful. Although ours was more of a social than a business visit I complimented him on the outspoken manner in which he stated his views on current social problems and on the constructive solutions he suggested. Christopher Gell spent his last years working closely with the ANC and the Congress Alliance as a whole and one gets an idea of the esteem in which he was held by the masses of the people that when he died in the late 50s the ANC arranged for his funeral and that there were more blacks than whites at the graveside.

I left for Cape Town at about 11 a.m. in beautiful weather and travelled at a moderate speed. Although I had visited Port Elizabeth from Johannesburg several times and Cape Town once, the stretch between the two cities was unknown to me and I looked forward to the trip. I had hardly left the outskirts of the city when I unconsciously overran a serpent crossing the road, an incident which warned me of the type of country through which I would be travelling for the greater part of that day. Soon the road cut through forests and beyond Humansdorp, the first town from Port Elizabeth, the forests became thicker and thicker and the road twisted and turned. For the first time in my life I saw troops of wild elephants and baboons and other small game. The scenery was breathtaking and

it seemed I had rediscovered the lost world of my childhood. I wished I had a rifle and camping equipment so that I could spend a day or so in the area hunting and enjoying myself far from the pollution and noise of the cities.

But seditious thoughts accompany a freedom fighter wherever he goes. Even to regions such as these where one should feel at peace with everything that lives and where grievances should be forgotten. Soon after I passed the tiny village of Clarkson I stopped for about 30 minutes and surveyed the area from the roadside for as far as the eye could see, an unsatisfactory and even dangerous way of examining the natural features of any place. But the forest sprawled in all directions affording ideal cover for all sorts of human activity. My head was full of dangerous ideas. Late in the afternoon I reached Knyasna, the most beautiful place I have seen in South Africa. If I had been removed from Johannesburg blindfolded and had spent the whole holiday wandering in the area between Humansdorp and Knyasna, I would still have thought I had had a lovely time.

After sunset I could concentrate on the road and as I was beginning to tire I increased speed reaching Cape Town about 12 midnight. That night I slept at Johnson Ngwevela's house, then leading member of the ANC in the Western Cape. But for the two weeks I spent there I lived with Reverend Walter Teka, a leader of the church in which I had been baptized.

Johnson Ngwevela and Greenwood Ngotyana, with whom I spent most of my time there, were most interesting personalities. Both of them were also leading members of the Congress Movement

and the Wesleyan Church, the former being chief steward of the Cape Western Region of the Church. We had a heavy programme and travelled every day after working hours to places as far afield as Worcester, Paarl, Stellenbosch, Simonstown and Hermanus. Being from Johannesburg where we used weekends as well, especially Sundays, for political work, and because of the crowded engagements they had arranged for me, I insisted that we should work on Sundays also, but they firmly told me that this holy day was reserved solely for church affairs. I could not move them.

Cape Town interpreted the provisions of the Freedom Charter very literally and assumed that it had removed all differences between the ANC and its sister Congresses, and that from the moment the Chapter was adopted members of the one were now free to attend meetings of the other. At a meeting of the officials of the Cape Western Region of the ANC held at Langa I was surprised to see Benny Turok of the SACOD amongst those present and I immediately drew attention to the irregularity. I met with a wall of opposition from almost everybody there and it took quite some time to convince them that they were out of step with the Congress movement in this regard. However, I compromised and suggested that Benny Turok took part in the proceedings of that particular meeting. Later my hostess, Mrs Teka, invited him and his wife Mary to supper and we discussed the matter more fully.

This was my second visit to Cape Town and it differed significantly from the first one. When I visited Cape Town in 1948 I had a lot of time for pleasure and spent whole days sightseeing,

visiting the Castle, going up by cable to the top of Table Mountain and swimming in Muizenberg and the Strand. It was on this occasion that I first saw Robben Island from the top of Table Mountain. I had no idea then that I would spend many years here subjected to the flippant and inept treatment characteristic of the country's Department of Prisons.

Secondly, during the first visit I spent many hours with I.B. Tabata and A.C. Jordan, both leading members of the NEUM. The first was full time functionary of that organisation, whilst the latter was then lecturing at the University of Cape Town. Although the NEUM never had a mass following Cape Town itself they had built up an efficient machinery and kept watch on almost all the intellectuals that came to that city. I had arrived on a Friday afternoon and stayed with Cabel Mase, a member of the ANC and a relative of mine, at Langa. At about 11 a.m. the next day I.B. Tabata arrived with an invitation from the Jordans for the following day which I accepted. I had heard of them from Justice from the late 30s and he spoke of them in glowing terms. A.C. Jordan was the author of "Imqumbo ye Minyanya" (The Wrath of the Ancestral Spirits) and the Thembus thought highly of him because of the favourable manner in which he portrayed a Tembu chief, obviously Chief Jongintaba. I was keen to meet him and his wife Phyllis and we met on the Sunday.

They lived amongst Coloureds in Sunnyside in a beautiful cottage built on their won freehold plot and I found three of my former college mates there. After the usual preliminary courtesies I.B. Tabata led a discussion on South African history and politics and spoke eruditely on the subject. With a view to drawing me into the discussion he asked why I had chosen to join the ANC and not

the NEUM and then proceeded to answer his own question. "I am sure you did so simply because your father was a member of the ANC!" To which I replied, "That would be quite enough for me". In addition I made it clear that I would never leave my organisation but that I considered co-operation or unity between our respective organisations a worthy goal to strive for.

I also accepted an invitation from Goolam Gool, another top leader of the NEUM. At his house I met Drs Lebona and Leslie Mzimba who had just completed their medical studies at the University of the Witwatersrand and were then doing housemanship in one of the city's hospitals. Again I listened to another interesting lecture on history, this time delivered by Goolam Gool. The other prominent members of the NEUM I met then included Dr.J.Taylor and his wife, Ali Fataar and, of course, Jane Gool.

A.C.Jordan differed from I.B.Tabata in several respects. For one thing he did not seem to have the latter's initiative and hardly ever discussed politics with me. He was more reserved, preferring to deal with specific questions I asked. But he was equally impressive in his own field of languages and his academic achievements, reputation and modesty may have helped to influence a substantial percentage of the people who joined his organisation than the public is aware. At the end of my first visit I left Cape Town with the definite impression that the NEUM had many intellectuals and that I.B.Tabata was certainly one of the top theoreticians in his organisation. I was happy to be associated with such thinkers and was determined to do my best to help bridge the gap between the two organisations.

But even of the first occasion I had heard him speak at the Jordans I gained the impression that Tabata regarded the ANC, and not the government, as his greatest enemy in this country, and he spat out all his venom on us. Between 1948 and 1955 I read many of his speeches and articles and found them incompatible with the spirit of unity. Throughout he remained essentially sectarian, pompous and cynical and his views were often couched in intemperate and provocative language. I finally came to the regrettable conclusion that all talk of unity from him was mere lip service to a popular demand from a man whose vision was obscured by his hostility to the ANC and who was ever ready to support any new organisation that came up, however reactionary it might be, if it was also against the ANC. Unfortunately this sustained sneering ultimately blurred the initial image I had of the man and although I still respected and even admired him for the wealth of information he carried in his head, I completely ruled him out as a man who could help unite the people of South Africa. Accordingly when I returned to Cape Town in 1955 I thought I should devote all my attention to ANC work and was not very keen to resume discussions with him. Nevertheless I intended seeing him and the Jordans purely as friends, but the heavy programme prepared for me did not allow for this.

During my first visit I was in the city one afternoon when I saw a report in the "Cape Argus" that Mahatma Gandhi had been assassinated. That was a great shock to me because, although the world associated the Mahatma with distant India, he was always close to us, not just because he consistently supported our struggle at the height of his political career, but because he was one of the pioneers of South Africa's liberation movement. He cut his political teeth in South Africa and

helped found the Natal Indian Congress in 1894. It was in South Africa that he experimented and developed non-violent forms of struggle which later paid such handsome dividends in India. He led the Indian people of South Africa in the historic mass campaign of 1906 to 1913 and owed the foundations of the satyagraha to his experience during these struggles.

(Perhaps add here the effect of Nehru and his books on my thinking). But to return to 1955. Early one morning I visited the offices of "New Age". As I came up the steps I heard an exchange of angry words. On approaching the door I recognised the voice of Fred Carneson. I entered but immediately pulled back. The Security Police were searching the offices. That afternoon we learnt from the press that the raid was countrywide. The records seized in that raid ultimately led to the arrest of 156 people for treason in December 1956 and were used as evidence when the proceedings began.

While staying at Langa I had a discussion with various people outside the ANC and one of these was Godfrey Kolisang who later became national secretary of the Basutoland Congress Party. He outlined the political developments that were taking place in his country, the difficulties they were experiencing and stressed the value of co-operation between the ANC and BCP. I assured him that I unreservedly shared his sentiments and stressed that co-operation was but natural since the ANC had helped in the formation of the BCP, Walter Sisulu and Ntsu Mokhetla having worked together on the project. I added that our attitude was clearly set out by Walter Sisulu when he opened their inaugural conference in 1952 and called for such close relationship between the two organisations. I



further assured him that for our part the maintainance of harmonious relations between our countries would always form the basic premise of our policy and, on this note, we parted.

I have never welcomed the weakening of family ties by politics or plessure and have always tried to resist that wherever possible. I derive a lot of joy and strength from continued association with members of the family, chatting with them on numerous topics and helping as much as I can.

During my first visit I was frequently with my nephew Nxeko, brother of Sabata, and together we called on members of the family in Cape Town. Even in 1955 I was always in the company of close relatives. Vulinyanga, a son of Dalindyebo, who is now chief where my father ruled, was frequently at the Tekas and we moved around together before my political engagements started in the late afternoon. On my last day at Langa he was with me for practically the whole day. In the evening we were joined by Johnson Ngwevela and other friends and we all kneeled down as Reverend Teka led us in solemn prayer wishing me a safe and pleasant journey.

We has early supper and I immediatly went to bed. At 3 a.m., my favourite hour for starting on a long journey, I motored cautiously to the highway and within half an hour was on the road to Kimberley, my next stop, arriving there in the afternoon. I had intended staying with Arthur Letele for one night but that same night I contracted a cold and, being mecical practitioner, he immediatly confined me to bed for two days. That completely upset my schedule. My plan was to visit Frenchdale in Mafeking district where Alcott Gwentshe, Joseph Lengisi and Chief Paulos Mopedi, the hero of Witzieshoek, were exiled. My illness forced me to alter my plans.

Arthur Letele who was then Treasurer General of the ANC was one of the main pillars of our organisation and did well in his area during the Defiance Campaign. He left behind a busy medical practice and a large family and led his comrades to jail. It required a lot of courage for him to take such a risk in a small town where political action by blacks was rare, and where the reaction of the authorities was likely to be severe. In places like the Rand, where the head offices of the ANC are situated, the concentration of the top leadership in one place is an immense advantage and tends to inspire those involved. The frequency of political demonstrations and the large numbers taking part, the constant institution of civil actions against the State for offences committed by the police, the vigilance of the press and criticism by liberal circles forced the authorities to act less recklessly. But in isolated places like Kimberley the same authorities frequently run wild and do unbelievable things. To lead a resistance campaign in such a situation demand great determination. It was in Kimberley during the Defiance Campaign that one of our leading members Itoleng was give lashes by the magistrate.

Politicians who have a sharp eye for opportunities for activating their membership can be hard taskmasters even when they are medical practitioners dealing with sick men. In spite of my cold I had to address a meeting which Arthur Letele called in his house the following evening. That night I felt fresh and strong and ready to set out on the last lap of my journey back to Johannesburg. As usual I wanted to leave at 3 a.f. but the boss in that house was not Arthur but his wife Mary. She insisted that I leave only after breakfast and that is what I had to do.

Kimberley is right on the border of the Cape and the Transvaal and soon after leaving it I was travelling in the Transvaal, my home province. From Christina I knew the area very well, having been there on many occasions either in the course of my political work or professional duties. I travelled even slower than usual, stopping and seeing friends along the way. I reached home just before supper amidst great excitement from the family. I handed out presents I had brought from Cape Town and for a few hours had the pleasure of answering the barrage of awkward questions children are prone to ask on such occasions. I had now circled the country and the holiday was over. I was ready for another notice confining me to Johannesburg and prohibiting me from attending gatherings.

## Chapter 8: A Blueprint of Fragments

On my return from holiday I reported to the Working Committee of the ANC on my tour and impressions, covering all the places I had visited. I naturally concentrated on the Transkei where plans were already being mooted for the setting up of the country's first Territorial Authority.

In July 1955 and before I went on holiday I had written an article in the monthly magazine "Fighting Talk" under the title "Bluffing the Bunga into Apartheid" and had posed the question whether participation in apartheid institutions would not serve as a means of maintaining contact with the masses of the people in the affected areas, as platforms from which we could expose the policies of the government and win our people over to the liberation movement.

My visit to the Transkei confirmed my views and I told the Working Committee that I did not think that as an organisation we were strong enough to halt the introduction of Bantu Authorities in that area and that, in the circumstances, a boycott from within was the best means of keeping the people of the Transkei aware of our point of view. I added that activities of the Security Police down there indicated that from now on our operations in the Transkei would be even more carefully watched by the enemy and the organisation would soon be operating under semi-legal conditions where our functionaries would be immobilised by restrictions as was happening in the rest of the country. This would oblige us to exploit all legal means at our disposal.

I raised the question whether the boycott tactic would be feasible in the new situation where the proposed Territorial Authority would consist only of nominated chiefs, headmen and councillors. Already at the sessions that took place when I was at Mthatha the government officials, with whom the members of the Select Committee were negotiating, insisted on a fully nominated Territorial Authority on the ground, they argued, that elections entailed the risk of agitators being elected and using the Territorial Authority as a platform from which to launch attacks against the government.

Secondly, I argued, we were confronted with a pyramidal structure resembling an iceberg, the base of which was as dangerous, if not more, as the apex on which the liberation movement was concentrating all its energies. Beneath the Territorial Authority were the Regional and Tribal Authorities which were entrusted with the actual functions of carrying out the new policy, and all of which would be based very largely on nominated members and making it difficult for the movement to penetrate them. I considered that in some areas elsewhere in the country ANC organisers were attending meetings in the rural areas called to discuss the introduction of Bantu Authorities and had done good work, but I felt that to wreck the whole system we needed more resources, human and financial, and above all, a machinery that would enable us to capture the institutions where we could not destroy them from outside.

The Working Committee did not discuss the report exhaustively but merely noted it and gave tentative comments on certain aspects. One of the most important events of 1955 which was being discussed throughout the country was the publication of the Report of the Commission for the

Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa, under the chairmanship of Professor F.R. Tomlinson of Pretoria University. This issue dominated our discussion at the time and immediately after considering my report we turned to the Commission Report. Since it is the blueprint of the whole policy of separate development it is necessary to set out fairly fully some of its principal recommendations.

The central point that dominated the whole Report was the rejection of the policy of complete integration in favour of the separate development of the African and the white races, and that the initial step towards the practical realisation of that goal lay in the full scale development of the African areas, embracing a fully diversified economy and comprising development in the primary, secondary and tertiary spheres. The Commission pointed out that any programme of development which did not aim at providing opportunities of development for Africans in their own areas would be of little social or political development.

The Commission further recommended the development of a true African farming class settled on farm units which would ensure the full means of existence to each family. It also recommended the development of a true African urban population which would require a comprehensive programme of industrial development. The Commission called for an alteration in the system of land tenure for both rural and urban population based on private rights. The development programme should be a balanced one and should emphasise the various social facets of human development such as ecclesiastical, educational, medical and other welfare services taking into account the cultural

background and the economic capacity of the African.

The Commission estimated that between 1980 and 1985 the African areas would have a population of 10 million with 8 million dependent for their existence on activities within the African areas and 2 million on activities within the white sector. If the African areas were not fully developed in the white sector would probably have to accommodate an African population of about 17 million by the year 2000 A.D. The Commission then detailed the steps to be undertaken in order to launch the proposed programme of development including the organisation of the Department of Native Affairs, the South African Native Trust and the setting up of the Development Council and a Development Corporation.

Finally the Commission made the crucial point that the present geographical pattern of the African areas was so fragmentary that it would not be possible to carry out in all respects the proposed programme of development. Consequently it recommended a consolidation of the African areas on the basis of what they termed the historical-logical homelands of the principal ethnic groups.

The Report contained several implications of a general nature for the country but for our purpose we highlighted only a few of these. Firstly, the Commission's recommendations meant that some of the industrial and commercial concerns that would otherwise have been located in the white areas would shift to the African areas. Secondly, the recommendations implied the development of a class of African entrepreneurs who would be assisted by white capital and advice. Thirdly, the

African worker would have free opportunity in his area to rise to all grades of skill and responsibility and the absorption of African labour in the new industries and commerce that would be established in the African areas would in the long run produce a scarcity in the white sector. It was the opinion of the Commission that the implementation of its recommendations would be successful only if they offered the African the prospect of political expression.

They refrained from making any suggestions on the question of ultimate independence but felt that the successful implementation of its programme would at least be a forerunner to such a development.

The Report concluded with the following passage: "The choice is clear, either the challenge must be accepted, or, the inevitable consequences of the integration of the Bantu and European population groups into a common society must be endured. "

It drew a flood of conflicting comments, of praise and condemnation, of acceptance and rejection, reflecting a fundamental, but regrettable clash of African and white aspirations. In October 1956 at a conference sponsored by the Interdenominational African Minister's Federation African totally rejected the Report and denied that the interdependence of blacks and whites would threaten the survival of the latter. Earlier in June the same year a Volkskongres (People's Congress) of Afrikaners had already accepted the Report on the grounds mainly that peaceful evolution of black and white in South Africa was impossible.



There were about 400 African delegates attending the October Conference in Bloemfontein as against 800 at the Volkskongres and some may argue that the number of delegates at the former conference proves that only a small percentage rejected the policy of separate development and that the bulk of the African people favoured or were at most indifferent to it. But when one takes into account the obstacles the African delegates had to overcome to reach Bloemfontein, one must concede that the attendance indicated wide and deep concern amongst the Africans about the Report. African delegates, the majority of whom were workers had to obtain leave of absence from white employers, most of whom were usually not sympathetic on such issues. They had to get passes to leave their areas and travel to Bloemfontein as well as passes to enter the township where the Conference was held. In addition financial and transport difficulties cut down the number of those who would otherwise have attended. The delegates to the Volkskongres had no such difficulties. Most of them were probably independent business or professional men who had no travel restrictions whatsoever, who either belonged to wealthy organisations or had enough money to travel on their own to the Volkskongres. Above all, it should be born in mind that the IDAMF Conference was a conference of the oppressed whereas the Volkskongres was a meeting of the ruling whites and backed by the ruling Nationalist Party. Quite apart from the disabilities I have mentioned the government had been systematically banning leading members and activists of the liberation movement. In the best of circumstances for an oppressed people to organise a conference of 400 delegates is a remarkable event. What is even more remarkable about the IDAMF Conference was its breadth for it succeeded in drawing 400 African delegates from every walk of

life. The ANC played no small part in helping to organise the conference. Both gatherings were representative but it shows how strong was the interest of the African people in the whole issue that the Conference was sponsored by churchmen who normally are cautious on matters of this nature.

A striking feature of the Commission is that although it was set up to investigate the socio-economic development of the African people, not a single African sat on it. Not only was it all-white in actual fact it was a Commission of Afrikaners. Of its 10 members only one had an English name and he came from the Department of Native Affairs. The exclusion of Africans was not due to lack of suitably qualified African economists, sociologists and other academically qualified men. By then we already had a handful of competent men who could serve on any such Commission. But the government was influenced in its choice not by the objective economic and social considerations but by its own political motives and schemes based on the sectarian interests of the Afrikaners in the country. The Nationalist government had already decided unilaterally to introduce the policy of separate development for the black and white races and now they wanted their own specialists to examine the practical problems relating to its implementation. Any assessment of the Tomlinson Commission Report must be made against the background of this fact which touches the nerve centre of any oppressive system. As a scheme devised by the rulers for the African people its rationale was the grandiose plan of creating an African middle class in the hope that such a stratum would blunt the edge of the liberation struggle headed by the ANC. As such it was a novel idea. In the history of colonialism, especially in the period when colonialism was forced into the defensive, such attempts have not been uncommon. Similarly motivated attempts

were made in the so-called Central African Federation and in the Kenya White Highlands. These schemes were doomed because they shared the common failing of being "too little too late". The scheme outlined in the Tomlinson Commission Report is notable for the scale of the undertaking it advanced. But in common with similarly motivated efforts by colonialists in other parts of Africa, it was marked by the fact that it was a blueprint advanced after the white rulers of our country had for centuries doggedly prevented the emergence of a middle class amongst the Africans through the normal processes of capitalist development. Would the presence of one or two Africans on the Commission have made a difference? The acid test in any such scheme for the oppressed is that such a Commission must have sufficient members on it to enable the oppressed to genuinely feel that they are actively and decisively shaping their future. None the less the fact that not a single African was present on the Commission denied the Commission of even a smokescreen with which to delude our people of its real aims.

The basic problem underlying race relations in this country is one that has faced mankind ever since society divided into economic classes. The exploitation of the masses of the people by a minority of rich people and the domination of the whole life of the community by the wealthy is one of the main sources of evil today. The social problems of South Africa are essentially those inherent in a society riddled with inequalities and real solutions will remain beyond our reach as long as this main difficulty remains unresolved. The situation is complicated by the colour question under which whites are the ruling group whilst blacks, especially Africans, provide the labour essential for industry and commerce.

Apart from these major obstacles there is the fear which most South African whites have repeatedly expressed that the direct result of granting Africans unqualified rights of franchise would be to surrender all political power to blacks and put Western culture in jeopardy. This fear is due to ignorance of our policy and, in due course, will disappear as bridges of contact between the different population groups are built. Such fears are understandable from a minority group that has dominated the country for more than 3 centuries and where the relations between whites and blacks have always been those of master and servant. In such a situation the ruling minority thinks of political changes not in terms of a total disappearance of racialism but of a reversal of the relationship under which the former master will now serve the servant. For this reason we have always treated such fears sympathetically and patiently tried to educate the whites to accept the principles set out in the Freedom Charter as the only democratic programme in the country which offers to all South Africans the opportunity to live together peacefully and as equals.

What provokes the strongest resentment is the contempt and hatred, the levity and lack of feeling with which the government handles grave national issues affecting blacks. Separate development is no serious effort to provide the opportunity of political expressions to the blacks. It is the typical example of the white man's contempt and callousness for our people. The Report itself and the evolution of the whole proposed programme since its publication justifies the charge that separate development is a spurious solution. Although the members of the Commission were almost all Afrikaners and Nationalist Party supporters selected because of their trustworthiness by the Volk,

the government rejected some of the more important recommendations of that body.

No attempt was made to implement the recommendation that Africans in both the rural and urban areas be given freehold tenure and more than twenty years after the publication of the Report no professional farming class has emerged in any of the Bantustans. By the end of 1966 there was not even a completed topographical survey or classification of the mineral and other natural resources of the "homelands".

The government has demarcated certain areas along the borders of the Bantustans to which it would shift some of the industrial and commercial establishments in the white sector. In this way they hope to stop the influx of Africans into the industrial areas of South Africa. But the response from the industrialists has been very poor and the contribution of the State even worse.

In 1966 a noted economist made some observations on the economic implications of territorial segregation in South Africa based on an essay that was awarded the J.B. Ebdon Prize. He pointed out that in 1960 about 4 1/2 million Africans regarded the Reserves as their home and that if we supposed, as did the Tomlinson Commission, that just over one half would have to be removed to allow the establishment of an efficient agricultural system, then we would have to provide jobs to support 2 1/2 million people. He calculated that over a 40-year period, and making an allowance for population increase, jobs would have to be created for approximately 80 000 people every year to ensure the end of the flow of African labour into the present industrial areas of the country. He

quoted authority for the view that it required roughly R2 000 to provide employment for one man. This would mean an annual investment to the scheme of R160 million. He gave figures to show that funds provided by the public sector to border industries up to the beginning of 1966 were about R10 million and he doubted if the private sector had provided more than R60 million a year. He concluded that the scale of the effort so far was not even sufficient to stop the flow of African workers into the present industrial areas.

But what makes the whole scheme at one and the same time a tragedy and a comedy even to those who believe separate development offers the opportunity of political expression, is the fragmentary nature of the areas earmarked for this programme. On their own terms, they should make the effort of giving Africans their own areas meaningful by giving them compact areas. As it is, the only compact Bantustan in the country is Qwaqwa. Even the showpiece, Transkei, consists of two geographically separate blocks, Nyamazane, the Swazi Bantustan has two, Lebowa and Vendloland three each, Gazankulu four, the Ciskei and Boputhatswana 19 each and Kwazulu as many as 29. Efforts are being made to consolidate the above areas and the Ciskei has now been trimmed into four blocks. But even if we make due allowance for this development and that these areas will ultimately enjoy a measure of independence, looked at from the point of view of providing a permanent settlement to the crucial problem of race relations in South Africa, the whole scheme is a pipe dream.

From the outset the ANC denounced the Report on much the same grounds as I advanced during

my discussion with Daliwonga. It pointed out that economic forces had so integrated black and white in the country that any talk of racial separation was utter nonsense. The political aspirations of the African people in the urban areas it stressed could not be met by giving them rights in areas other than where they lived and worked. When the idea of a broad African conference to consider the Report was suggested the ANC immediately supported it and used all its resources to make the Conference a success. A substantial number of the 400 delegates were our members.

In February 1956 I had to return to the Transkei to buy a plot of land at Mthatha from Councillor C.K.Sakwe who was a member of the Bunga and had served on the Native Representative Council. The Congress movement took advantage of this trip and gave Walter Sisulu and me certain instructions. We went down to Durban first and from there to Mthatha. Councillor Sakwe, then in his 60s, came from Dutywa and we concluded the transaction at what is regarded as a fair price and on reasonable terms.

He told us of an incident that occurred the previous Saturday at Bumbhane, then Sabata's headquarters, when the Tembus broke up a meeting called to discuss the introduction of Bantu Authorities and attended by government officials and leading chiefs from various parts of the Transkei. He regretted what he described as improper behaviour in the presence of distinguished visitors. From Mthatha we visited my mother and No-england, paid our respects to Sabata, and went as far as Ngcobo. At home we met one of the elders, a peasant who could neither read nor write, who amused us with glorified accounts of my political activities in the Transvaal. What

particularly struck us was his awareness of the dangers inherent in the system of Bantu Authorities and after speaking to him and others we got an idea of how deep the hostility of the Tembus to the new system was.

By now the police thought they had given me enough rope to run around and towards the end of March I received my third ban now restricting me to Johannesburg for 5 years and prohibiting me from attending meetings for the same period. I was back where I was in December 1952 when I received my first ban. For 60 months I would be quarantined in one district seeing daily the same mine dumps, buildings, streets and faces and for information as to what went on elsewhere in the country, I would have to rely on the press, radio and what others told me.

By this time my attitude had changed radically and although I tried not to be restless, I had developed contempt for these restrictions. I was determined that my involvement in the struggle and the scope of my political activities would be determined by nobody else but myself. Obstacles can break or discourage some people, but may inspire others and tap those inner springs of challenge and initiative which mark out every community leader. One of my fortunes is to be associated with such men who have influenced me to try and follow their example.

I hate to be regarded as an inferior and to carry out orders from men I never put in positions of authority and I will fight strenuously for the right to be accepted as equal to all other human beings. To crusade against public evil and suffer hardship for persisting in a great cause can make life rich



and full and give a man a sense of mission that lifts him much higher than those who regard themselves as the Herrenvolk. Defiance of autocratic authority is always correct and to find answers to the numerous obstacles placed around you by the enemy is a source of strength and hope. Not only does it give you a pleasant feeling of success in dealing with immediate problems but keeps the prospects of final victory on big issues much in sight all the time. This was my state of mind as I began planning my programme in March 1956.

About this time the boxing and weight lifting club of which I had been a member since 1950 was and much in the news. Amateur boxing long commanded my participation and my son Madiba, then 10 years old and I spent most of our evenings in the gym at the Donaldson Orlando Community Centre. The club was managed by Johannes (Skipper Adonis) Molosi and its membership consisted of both professionals and amateurs. Our star boxer, Jerry (Uyinta) Moloi, later became Transvaal light weight champion and number one contender for the national title. He fought top boxers like David (Slumber) Gogotya, Elijah (Maestro) Mokone, Enoch (Schoolboy) Nhlapo, Levi (Golden boy) Madi, Sexton (Wonderboy) Mabena, Jaos (Kangaroo) Maoto, Leslie Tangee and others in the bantam, feather and light weight divisions.

But in 1956 the club split and all the boxers went away with Jerry whilst the weight lifters remained with Skipper. Twice before we had almost broken up and although i fully agreed with Jerry in his criticism of Skipper I managed to keep the boys together for a while. This time I felt that the split was more serious and I could not even convince my little son that we should patch up the quarrel

with Skipper. The discussions that led to the final break were lively and witty and even Shakespeare was quoted. They were conducted in Sesutho, Zulu/Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. In attacking Jerry, Skipper referred to the betrayal of Caesar by his friend Brutus. My son asked: "Who are Caesar and Brutus?" Skipper explained. "Are they dead?" asked another member. "Yes", said Skipper, "but the truth about the betrayal is much alive". To which someone retorted: "The actions of dead men do not worry us, but yours do!"

In view of the strong views held by both sides at the moment I thought it advisable to make no appeal for unity, hoping to bring Skipper and Jerry together when feelings had cooled down. From the point of view of ability Skipper had been an asset to the club and, if he had given it more of his time than he did, he would have produced quite a number of good boxers and I was keen to bring him back provided he was prepared to heed the criticisms of his colleagues.

The weight lifters, who had since elected their own manager remained at the Donaldson Orlando Community Centre and the boxers trained for a few weeks at the police gymnasium about 200 yards away from the Centre whilst negotiating for our new headquarters. Fortunately the Anglicans gave us premises at a reasonable rental where we trained under Simon (Mshengu) Tshabalala until I left the gym suddenly and quietly at the end of March 1961. Simon is now one of the leading and dependable members of Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the ANC.

When the club broke up Skipper was either in his late 20s or early 30s. Now the gym was run by younger men in their early 20s and they did far better than I expected. We trained from Mondays to Thursdays for one and a half hours a night except on special occasions when we were preparing for a fight or tournament. We would then extend the time to two or two and a half hours. The training programme varied from day to day. Some days we skipped for about 30 minutes and did exercises. Other days we skipped and shadow boxed and sparred.

Each member was given the opportunity to be in charge of the training programme on certain nights and develop leadership, initiative and self-confidence. Things used to be a bit tough for me whenever my son was in charge. He was quick to point out any mistakes I made and when ever I slowed down my pace due to exhaustion. Everybody in the gym called me "Chief", a form of address he scrupulously avoided and used instead "Mister Mandela", or, when he wanted to be gently, "my Bra". But often he would say : "Mister Mandela, please don't waste our time. If you can't cope, remain with the old women at home" - a gibe everyone would enjoy. Our membership fluctuated between 20 and 30 but in winter, when the globes became particularly painful, the numbers would dwindle to less than ten, rising again when summer returned.

Like most African gyms ours was poorly equipped. It had a cement floor which was quite dangerous when a boxer was knocked down in sparring. We could not afford a ring, nor more than one punching bag and a handful of pairs of gloves. Only Jerry and one or two others had a head guard and we had no medicine or speed balls at all, no qualified masseurs, proper boxing trunks and

shoes, skipping ropes and even mouth pieces. Nevertheless the boys did well and produced a couple of champions like Eric (Black Material) Ntsele, bantam weight champion of South Africa, Freddie (Tomahawk) Ngidi, Transvaal fly weight champ, and who was employed at the legal firm in which I was a partner and who lost on a narrow points decision to the national champ John Mthimkhulu; Jo Mokotedi, also Transvaal fly weight champ. Then there was Jerry himself who became a champ only after the split. The club was functioning well; the discipline was good and solidarity so strong that I abandoned the idea of bringing Jerry and Skipper together.

We developed a good relations with other boxing clubs and individual boxers. Fondi Mavuso from Sophiatown, then welter weight camp of South Africa and Oriel Xaba from Evaton and Transvaal light heavyweight champ, were amongst the boxers who came to our gym for sparring when they were preparing for fights.

African boxers, like all black sportsmen and artists, have to overcome many handicaps, not the least of which are poverty and the colour bar which denies them the opportunity of belonging to white clubs where they could have access to all the equipment and expert advice necessary to produce a first class boxer. Almost all the money they earn goes mainly to buying food, paying rent and purchasing clothing and the average African boxer finds it difficult to invest in boxing equipment and literature.

Almost all African professional boxers have full time employment and only start their daily training

programme after working hours, exhausted and not in a condition to get maximum benefit from training. Sparring partners are few, either not paid at all or poorly paid and frequently not up to the grade. A sparring partner should offer real opposition to a boxer preparing for a fight and not be a mere punch bag. Sparring sessions are like a rehearsal of a play before the actual performance and each boxer should play his part conscientiously. The conditions under which our boxers train makes it impossible to achieve the high standard of preparation required. In spite of all these difficulties boxers like Enoch Nhlapo, Jo Ngidi, Mackeed Mofokeng, Norman Sekgapane, Elijah Makhatini and Nkosana Mgxaji have done well against overseas boxers, whilst Jake Tuli remains the most eloquent example of what African boxers can achieve when given the opportunity. He won the British and Empire fly weight title in the 50s.

The gymn not only kept me physically fit and busy during my spare time but was an enjoyable form of relaxation and took my mind away from the more serious problems of race relations that harassed us at the time. The next morning I would wake up feeling fresh, strong enough to carry about my body with ease, and ready to begin the new day and face up to all the trials to which life exposes my as a black man in m country. Our club members were very much the product of township life. They carried all the scars oppression inflicts on our people by driving our people into the gutters. But the outstanding feature was that each of them in his own way showed remarkable qualities which survived despite these conditions. Then as now I remain immensely proud of the friendships we developed through our membership of the club.

Whilst I was enjoying the workouts in the gym, and together with my political colleagues formulating plans for resisting the whole policy of separate development as outlined in the Tomlinson Commission Report, the government was conspiring on how to crush the ANC and its allies. Ever since the government came into power we had given them no rest in spite of the wide arbitrary powers it enjoyed under the Suppression of Communism Act. Its attempts to immobilise us by means of restricting us in particular areas and forcing us to resign from our political organisations had failed. The Defiance Campaign, the anti-Removal Campaigns, the Congress of the People, the Women's gigantic demonstration to Union Buildings on August 9th 1956 were organised under semi-illegal conditions and the government was not certain what we would do next. The government felt it had to take even more drastic measures to crush us. In a massive countrywide police swoop it picked men and women under the charge of High Treason.

At dawn on December 5th, 1956 head-constable Rousseau, who later became colonel and head of the Security Police in the Western Cape, and two other policemen searched my house, arrested and drove me to my office in the town. Rousseau was driving and I sat alongside him un-handcuffed. Along the way he dropped the other two policemen, presumably for the purpose of arresting another political colleague and the two of us proceeded to town alone. For about 20 minutes or so we would have to travel through an uninhabited area and while travelling in this stretch I asked him why he was so confident as to drive me alone. "What would you do if I seized and overpowered you?" I asked. Rousseau: "You are playing with fire Mandela!" I replied, "Playing with fire is my game". Rousseau: "If you continue speaking like that I'll have to handcuff you". "And if I refuse, what will

you do?" I asked. We continued in this vein for some distance and, as we approached Langlaagte police station, he said: "Mandela, I have treated you well and I expect you to do the same. I don't like your jokes at all". I changed the subject.

After searching the office, he took me to Marshall Square where I had spent a few days in 1952. There I discovered that many people had been arrested and throughout the day people were being brought in. In the afternoon we bought a newspaper "The Star" and learnt that the raid was countrywide and that many others had been arrested on a charge of High Treason. People were flown in military planes from various centres in South Africa where they were arrested to Johannesburg where the trial was to be held. Among those who were arrested were Chief Luthuli, Monty Naicker, Reggie September, Piet Beyleveld, Lilian Ngoyi and Reverend Douglas Thompson, presidents of the ANC, SAIC, CPC, COD, the Women's Federation of South Africa and the South African Peace Council respectively. Piet Beyleveld was also president of SACTU. A week later Walter Sisulu and about 11 others were also arrested, bringing the total up to 156. There were 105 Africans, 21 Indians, 23 whites and 7 Coloureds. There were a few surprises in which some of our senior men were left free. Yusuf Dadoo, J.B.Marks, Michael Harmel, Yusuf Cachalia, Brian Bunting (editor of "New Age"), Hilda Watts, Dan Tloome, J.N.Singh and Ahmed Sader were inexplicably not arrested.

Ours was not the first political treason trial in the history of this country since 1910. The first of

such trials arose during the first World War when Generals Beyers, De Wet, De La Rey, Kemp, Colonel Maritz and other Afrikaners rebelled against the declaration of war against Germany by South Africa. Some felt that the country should remain neutral whilst others favoured the breaking of all ties with Britain and declaring an independent republic. When the Botha-Smuts government refused to accept either of these demands 12,000 Afrikaners rebelled and occupied towns, destroyed government installations and caused damage of no less than £ 500 000. About 300 people died and hundreds were injured. The rebellion was ultimately crushed and the rebels arrested and prosecuted. Jopie Fourie who was an officer in the Defence Force was sentenced to death by a military court and executed. General De Wet, accepted as the leader of the rebellion was sentenced to 6 years plus a fine of £2,000 and Kemp got 7 years plus a fine of £1,000. Others received lesser sentences. Within 6 months De Wet was released and the rest within a year.

On the whole the government acted leniently towards the rebels. Botha and Smuts were dealing with their own flesh and blood and it was not easy for them to be harsh. Before launching a full scale attack on De Wet, they promised all rebels immunity from criminal proceedings if they surrendered within a specified time. Although no such offer was made to the ring leaders and to those who had broken the laws of civilized warfare we know that, with the exception of Jopie Fourie, all the rebels were released before they had served their full terms.

The second series of treason trials arose out of the Second World War and one that attracted much attention was that of Robey Liebrandt, one time heavy weight boxing champion of South Africa.



The evidence showed that he had left the country shortly before the outbreak of the war and finally landed in Germany where he became a lieutenant in the Nazi army. He was in Germany when the war broke out. During the war he slipped back into the country and started organising a para-military organisation with the intention of overthrowing the existing government and replacing it with a Nazi dictatorship. He was arrested and sentenced to death, later commuted to life sentence.

The Smuts government had also arrested about 350 policemen and individuals who were members of the subversive and pro-German Ossewabrandwag, of which the present Prime Minister, B.J. Voster was a member, and who since the beginning of the war had been committing acts of sabotage to undermine the country's war effort. One of the first acts of the Malan government then they came to power was to release Leibrandt and several other traitors who had served Germany during the war. They also went further and re-instated the police and others who were dismissed by the Smuts government for committing acts of sabotage. (Check about the Robey funeral and Voster's participation in it - possibly you may use this at this point.).

In our case the same Nationalist government which had been so generous in its treatment of Leibrandt and other traitors who had assisted an enemy country with whom we were at war was harsh.

I do not believe the government ever thought we were really guilty of treason in the proper sense of the word, and have always felt that the whole affair was a frame up from beginning to end. The

whole Crown case, as the State then was, rested upon the Freedom Charter. They alleged the existence of a conspiracy to overthrow the State by violence and to replace it with a Soviet type of State. The Charter was a public document which contained democratic principles of government recognised throughout the civilized world and the Nationalist Party had even been among the organisations invited to take part in the machinery that was set up to prepare for the Congress of the People. Conspirators act secretly for an unlawful purpose. If we intended working together with the ruling party in formulating the principles that would form the basis of a new South Africa, against whom was the alleged conspiracy directed?

In addition the police files were full of evidence showing non-violent and peaceful methods of struggle to which the organisations were committed at the time, evidence which was readily admitted by many Crown witnesses who had watched the activities of the Congress movement for a long time and who knew our policy quite well. I have always believed that the government had hoped to secure a conviction on a charge of treason only by packing the Special Court that would try us with hand picked judges who would use the courtroom for the purpose of giving effect to political decisions taken beforehand by Nationalist politicians. The Nationalist government had done precisely this in the case of the removal of the Coloureds from the common voters roll. Through a special court packed with "reliable " judges they had hoped to put us on ice for many years.

Someone once said that no-one knows that kind of government it is who has never been in its jails.

I have found that to be quite true. A few days after our arrests we were all moved to the Johannesburg prison, popularly known as the Fort. The Prison Rules and Regulations provide that searching shall be conducted in a seemly manner and as far as possible without injury to self respect and shall only serve the object of and be sufficiently thorough for detecting any unauthorised articles. A prisoner shall as far as possible not be stripped and searched in the presence and sight of other prisoners. But there has always been a vast difference between the legal rules and the actual practice of the Department of Prisons. Our complaint has been that our treatment does not even comply with the letter and spirit of their own Prisons Act and Regulations.

On admission we were stripped completely naked and lined up. There we stood for more than an hour shivering in the cool breeze and shy to look at one another. Priests, university lecturers, doctors, lawyers, prosperous business men looked far less impressive as they stood there in their birthday suits trying to cover up with bare hands those parts of their bodies which ought not to be seen by others. In spite of my anger at this humiliation I could not resist the temptation to laugh as I scrutinized the physical structures that surrounded me. Now I fully appreciated the truth of the statement that clothes make a man. I thought to myself that if a fine body was an essential element of a good leader few of us would qualify. Only a handful had the symmetrical build of Shaka and Moshweshwe in their younger days.

After standing there for what appeared to be life time a white doctor came and asked us whether we were all right and when nobody complained of any ailment he dismissed us. We were locked up in

two large cells and although they had recently been painted, they still had an offensive smell because of the poor ventilation and lack of cleanliness of the surrounding cells. The cells had cement floors and each one of us was given three blankets plus a sisal mat. Each cell had only one eastern-type of floor level latrine which was completely exposed. It was quite a painful experience especially to the elderly people to have to use such conveniences in the sight of everybody.

But man is adaptive and will always strive to make the best of the worst of circumstances.

Whenever I recall those days at the Fort I remember best the excitement with which we read each other newspapers through which we learnt of the wave of indignation aroused by our arrests.

Throughout the major centres of South Africa protest meetings and demonstrations were held declaring defiantly "We Stand By Our Leaders". Then there was the excitement of meeting long standing colleagues from all over the country - colleagues who had for years been labouring under restrictions and banning orders which made it illegal to come together. Here, under one roof, the enemy ironically presented us with the opportunity not only to meet on a personal level but as a body of freedom fighters. We revelled in the opportunity and enjoyed ourselves with matters both serious and light during the two weeks we remained there as awaiting trial prisoners. We prepared a programme of activities which kept us occupied for the greater part of the day. Patrick Molaoa and Peter Ntithe organised a physical training programme. Creative talks were arranged with Professor Matthews giving a talk on the history of the ANC, Debi Singh on that of the SAIC, while Reverend Calata spoke on African music - if speak can be the right word, for during his talks he sang more than spoke - and Arthur Letele delivered a lecture on African medicine men. These lectures aroused

much interest and discussion. One of the memorable incidents of our programme was a recital of a praise song in honour of Shaka which was beautifully rendered by Masabalala Yengwa. He draped himself with a blanket and moved up and down as he praised the famous king. All of us, including those who did not understand Zulu very well, listened entranced. Then he reached the lines "Inyonedle ezinye! Wathi esadlezinye, wadlezinye !" (The bird that kills others, which whilst killing some, kills others) and panamonium broke out. Chief Luthuli, who until then had remained seated and grave in demeanor, suddenly sprang to his feet and exploded: "Ngu Shaka lowo!" (That is Shaka) and began to dance vigorously and to chant as our forefathers used to do in the old days. Stalward Simelane, Stephen Dlamini and most of us followed suit. Accomplished ballroom dancers who had never tried indlamu before, sluggards who knew neither traditional nor modern western dancing, all joined in - some moving gracefully, others like frozen mountaineers trying to shake off the cold. Now there were no political or religious leaders, no rightist or leftists, urbanites or countrymen. We were all nationalists bound together by love of our history, culture, country and people. That recital stirred something deep, strong and intimate in us - all that makes us what we are. It reminded us of a great past and what is possible in days to come.

Daily Vuyisile Mini used to lead us in singing freedom songs. One of the most popular was: "Nants'indoddemnyama Strydom, Bhasopha nants' indodemnyama Strydom" (Strydom, here's the black man, beware the black man Strydom). In moments like these it was easy to forget about the charge of treason and prison and revel in the joy of living and fighting for our birth right.

When we first appeared for formal remand at the Drill Hall we were still in custody. The Hall was packed to capacity and outside massive crowds completely blocked traffic in Twist Street. The way we were brought to the Hall, one would have thought that civil war had broken out in the country. We were escorted from the Fort by several troop carriers filled with armed men. The whole block around the Drill Hall was surrounded by armed men and the sealed vans in which we were brought were parked in such a way that each accused should alight straight into the courtroom without being seen by the crowds outside.

The presence of the crowds inspired us and we walked into the Hall with thumbs raised in the then ANC salute. The crowds outside demanded admission into the Hall. Tension mounted and the police and armed men suddenly opened fire, injuring several people among the crowd outside.

Inside the Court a formidable defence team had come together. In a fighting mood, they included several senior and junior advocates from Johannesburg. These included advocates Rosenberg, Maisels, Franks, Barrange, Lazer and Coaker. The preparatory examination was presided by regional court magistrate Wessels.

In court we struck the first blow. As we entered the Drill Hall we were ordered to sit inside a wire cage especially built for us and which would cut us off from everybody, including our lawyers. Advocate Franks immediately lodged a strong protest in open court for thus humiliating his clients and treating them like wild animals and demanded the removal of the cage. A compromise was

finally reached under which the front part of the cage was pulled down and the case was remanded.

After two weeks we were all released on bail and were happy to be back amongst our families and friends. On the day we were granted bail large crowds attended the court and well-wishers from diverse walks of life came forward to guarantee bail for each of the accused. This was a tremendous gesture of solidarity and proved to be the beginning of what later came to be the Treason Trial Defence and Aid Fund.

The next day I went to my office. There I met an old friend who was a keen rugby player. I had not seen him for several months. Before the arrests I had deliberately cut down my weight and thought I was looking quite trim. "Madiba (which is also my clan name), must you look so thin?" he asked. I caught the hint and offered an explanation. He was not impressed. "No man, you were scared of jail, that is all. You have disgraced us Xhosas!" he said. There are arguments one cannot win. I changed the subject to rugby and he talked ceaselessly and warmly till we parted.

Wessels, who heard the preparatory examination, was an experienced and courteous magistrate but with hardly any sympathy for the sort of accused now before him. Joe Slovo, and advocate, was one of the accused and conducted his own defence. There was an interesting incident when a number of accused almost rioted when they rose and moved forward towards the bench when Wessels summarily fined Joe Slovo for alleged contempt of court. Chief Luthuli and captain van Zyl, the senior orderly, had great difficulty in restraining the accused.

The Crown produced many witnesses amongst whom I should like to mention three whom I regard as their star witnesses. The first was Solomon Mgubasi who was brought from Kimberley prison where he was serving a sentence for fraud. According to his evidence he claimed he obtained a Batchelor of Arts degree at Fort Hare and that he was a practising attorney; further that he became secretary of the Port Elizabeth branch of the ANC as well as a member of the National Executive. According to him he was present at the meeting of the National Executive when a decision was taken to send Walter Sisulu and David Bopape to Russia to get arms for the purpose of starting a revolution in South Africa. He also claimed to have been present at an ANC meeting which decided to stage riot in Port Elizabeth on the 18th October 1952 and that he led the riots that occurred on that day. Mgubasi turned out to be an imposter of the first order and the defence was able to expose him completely. Among other things the defence was able to show that at the time of the riots he was serving one of his several sentences for a criminal offence in Durban jail. Advocate Vernon Berrange, nicknamed Isangoma (diviner) by the accused, was ruthless in his cross examination and easily established that Mgubasi was neither a graduate nor was he ever a member of the ANC. The cross examination of this particular witness ended disastrously for both him and the Crown. Finally Vernon asked the witness: "Mgubasi, so you know what a rogue is?" Mgubasi: "No". Berrange: "You are a rogue!"

The next star witness was Ralekeke, the chief of the notorious "Russian" gang from Evaton, who came to testify against Joe Molefe, Solly Nathie, Vusumzi Make and Bob Asmal. The four together



with Lombard Mbhata who is presently serving a long term imprisonment on Robben Island, had organised the Evaton bus boycott in 1956 in the face of formidable opposition from the bus owners, the police and gangsters. Ralekeke and his gang's role was to break the boycott. On occasions he and his gang were loaded onto buses to give the impression that the boycott had collapsed. Throughout the boycott they tried to terrorize the people and the organisers into abandoning the boycott by violence and thuggery. The jist of his evidence was that violence was used by the above mentioned accused to keep the people away from the buses. Ralekeke admitted that he had killed a man but denied that he had agreed to give evidence for the Crown in order to escape appropriate punishment for his crime. Cross examination, however, showed that his evidence was as worthless as that of Mgubasi's and the Crown did not have the courage to call either of them for the actual trial.

For the allegation that the accused intended to replace the existing State with a Soviet type of State the Crown relied mainly on the evidence of Professor Andrew Murray, head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Cape Town. In his evidence-in-chief he outlined what he described as the basic principles of Marxism, and then proceeded to calssify many of the documents seized from us by the police as typically communistic in content and language. Again Vernon Berrange was as devastating in his cross examination of the Professor as in the case of the other two star witnesses, and he clearly established that the Professor knew very little about Marxism. He read to the witness a number of statements without indicating their authors and asked him to indicate whether in his opinion the particular statement was communictic or not. The witness described as

communicative a statement made by the anti-communist Dr. Malan some years before he became premier of the country. But the highlight of the proceedings was when he described as communistic his own statement from an article he wrote in the 30s. He was asked whether he had ever been a communist to which he replied in the negative. When he was told that the statement was taken from his own writings he could only laugh embarrassingly. Vernon was ably assisted by advocate John Coaker who remained throughout the preparatory examination and whose quiet efficiency impressed us all. The preparatory examination lasted for the whole of 1957 and at the end of it Vernon announced that he would apply for our discharge. That brought Oswald Pirow Q.C. into the picture. He opposed our application and after quoting from several inflammatory speeches by some of the accused he forcefully told the court that the police had unearthed a highly dangerous conspiracy to overthrow the State by violence and establish in its place a communist State. Suddenly the whole picnic atmosphere that had characterised the proceedings until then disappeared and the accused realised that we were facing a serious charge. We were all committed for trial in the Supreme Court.

However when it came to the Supreme Court trial which was held in a special court sitting at the Synagogue in Pretoria the Crown indicated only about 90 of the original 156 accused and dropped the charge against the remainder. And it divided the 90 accused into three groups. Only the first group of 30 were eventually tried at Pretoria. The main trial began at the Synagogue on August 1958.

The appointment of Pirow to lead the Crown team indicated the importance attached by the government to the case. He was one of the top barristers in the country, who had since retired to his farm. As a former Minister of Justice and as a man who had acted on several occasions as a senior to the judge who was to be appointed President of the Special Court that would try us, it was hoped that he would carry a lot of weight in that court. As a man who had met Hitler shortly before the second World War, leader of the New Order - the South African version of the Nazi Party, and one who was passionately anti-communist, he was the one advocate in the country who would tackle the whole job as an act of faith and press hard for a conviction.

For the trial the government set up a special court of three white judges with Judge Rumpff as President. On merit he deserved that position for he was certainly an able judge and, soon after the commencement of the proceedings, he struck me as better informed than the average South African white man on local and international political trends. But there was a widespread belief that he was a member of the Broederbond (Band of Brothers, a secret Afrikaner organisation) the secret society of Afrikaners whose aim was to establish an Afrikaner Republic governed by Afrikaners. The second member of the court was Judge Ludorf, a well known member of the Nationalist Party; the third was Judge Kennedy from Natal who was also a Nationalist Party supporter. Kennedy had earned himself the reputation of a hanging judge when he sent about 23 Africans to the gallows for killing two white policemen. This was the "Court of Justice" that the government set up to try us. Not only was it a racist court, but it was composed of carefully selected judges who had close links with the ruling party.

Finally the government made sure that we should not find it at all easy to prepare our defence by subjecting us to unnecessary financial and physical strain. Although all the accused as well as our defence team stayed in Johannesburg and although the preparatory examination was held there and a suitable court was available for the trial also to be held there, the proceedings were shifted to Pretoria, 36 miles away. This meant travelling 72 miles daily and reaching the courtroom hardly fresh enough to follow the proceedings as diligently as one ought to. Nevertheless we were encouraged by the knowledge that we were defended by one of the best teams of lawyers in the country, led by advocate I.A.Maisels Q.C. and assisted by advocates Bram Fischer Q.C., Rex Welsh Q.C., Vernon Berrange, G.Nicholas, S. Kentridge, Tony O'Dowd and Chris Plewman, all instructed by Parkington of Messrs A. Livingston and Company. We were also strengthened by the flood of good wishes and solidarity that came from the country and all over the world.

The first barrister we had engaged to lead the defence team was Advocate Rosenberg Q.C. Unfortunately he laid down conditions we could not accept. Important political trials do not involve merely the ascertainment of legal rules and their application to the evidence before the court. In such cases what is on trial is not only the accused and their beliefs but the judges as well.

Where, as in our country, white politicians have persistently assailed the white public with the threat of the Black Peril, the poisoning of wells, communist conspiracies and Russian submarines lurking in our territorial waters, it takes strong white judges to be guided purely by rules of law in

cases where the bulk of the accused are black men and women charged with offences involving the security of the state. We thought that advocate Rosenberg, in spite of his ability and prestige, was unaware of this danger. Even with the defence team I have listed occasions did arise when the accused and some of the members of the defence team did not see eye to eye on how to conduct the defence. Fortunately none of the subsequent difficulties were insurmountable and we were always able to overcome them through discussion. What is more we have never had cause to regret appointing the team we did to lead our defence. They performed their task with courage, determination and formidable skill.

As usual we took the initiative at the trial and fired the first shots by applying for the recusal of both Ludorf and Rumpff. That was not an easy decision for us to take for although we regarded both of them as members or supporters of the Nationalist Party, they were not the worst judges in the country and by having them removed we were running the risk of getting an even worse court. We thought carefully about the matter and finally decided to take the plunge. The basis of the application against Rumpff was that he had already adjudicated on certain aspects which formed subject matter of the present indictment and that it was not in the interests of justice that he should try the case. In the case of Ludorf the basis was that he had acted as advocate for the police when Harold Wolpe had sought a court interdict to eject the police from a meeting of the Congress of the People held in the Trades Hall, Johannesburg. Ludorf excepted the argument and withdrew, but Rumpff decided to be a witness in his own case, refused to recuse himself and gave the assurance that his judgement in the Defiance Case, the facts of which were covered in the present indictment,

would have no undue influence on him. At this stage the court adjourned to enable the government to appoint a third judge. We considered Ludorf's recusal a great victory and a slap in the face for the government. They must have known that it was undesirable for judges who had already given adverse judgements on some issues covered by the present indictment to sit on a special court.

The new judge was Bekker and we felt that the application for the recusal of Ludorf was well worth the effort. Bekker had no connections knowns to us that were a source of concern and we liked him from the start. Rightly or wrongly we felt that by removing Ludorf and bringing in Bekker we had considerably weakened the link between the Nationalist Party and the Court and that from then on the proceedings would be guided mainly by the relevant legal rules and evidence rather than by ideological considerations.

Our second victory was chalked when we successfully applied for the quashing of the indictment on the grounds amongst others of lack of particularity. This involved a lengthy argument on the meaning of treason in law and, as the argument proceeded, we gained the impression that the court was of the opinion that our submissions carried a lot of weight. The Crown eventually withdrew this indictment and later issued a new one. Although we again attacked it, the court refused to quash it and only ordered certain amendments to be made by the Crown. After we pleaded not guilty to the charge the Crown divided us into three groups of 30 each. The case proceeded against the first 30 and was remanded indefinitely against the 60 others. I was in the first batch.

Soon after we were committed for trial we heard that the Crown intended calling a new star witness, Father Boschensky, a Catholic priest who had been born in Poland and had later settled in Swaziland. He was reputed to be a leading "Sovietologist" and an expert on communism. Indeed Father Boschensky arrived in South Africa and even came to court, but the Crown never called him nor did they ever explain why he was never called. Naturally that gave rise to speculation, the most persistent of which was that, after studying the exhibits, he told the Crown that in his opinion there was no evidence of any conspiracy to replace the existing State with a communist State, that the Freedom Charter and other related documents upon which the Crown case rested were far from being a blueprint for a communist state, and that the exhibits generally embodied the views of nationalist fighting for democratic rights in their own country.

Oswald Pirow must have reported all this to the government but the Nationalist Party was at war with us and a man who wages a war is not interested in justice and fair play but in victory over the enemy. A special court is part of the machinery the government uses to immobilise its political opponents and we had to be put away at all costs. The case continued and the Crown had to fall back on the evidence of Professor Murray who had proved to be so uncertain on the subject during the preparatory examination as to describe his own statement and one by Malan as "communism straight from the shoulder". Now he was back and this time his evidence-in-chief was led by Advocate de Vos Q.C. and in my opinion he was even more incoherent on Marxism now than he was at the preparatory examination. Cross examined by Maisels he admitted that none of his theses for his senior degrees covered the subject of Marxism, that he had never visited any of the

Socialist countries to see Marxism in practice and that all his information on the subject was gained from literature he had read and that his acquaintance with the classical works of marxism was sketchy. He also considered that the blacks, especially the African people, suffered political disabilities, that they had no vote, could not be members of parliament, the provincial councils and local authorities. He admitted the hardships cause by the application of the Pass System and the evils of racial discrimination and appreciated the struggle of the black man for equality of opportunity. The rest of the Crown evidence consisted of police officials handing in books and documents seized from the accused during the numerous raids that took place between 1952 and 1956 as well as notes taken by the police at Congress meetings during the same period.

For some time before the opening of the defence case the press had been spreading the story that Chief Luthuli would be our first witness and the Crown apparently believed the press reports. There was consternation on the part of the Crown team when a few minutes before the opening of our case Parkington formally told them that Dr. Wilson Conco would be our first witness. The whole Crown team immediately left the Court and returned later. Natalians are noted for peculiar bonds that unite people from that province and the strong sense of attachment amongst them can sometimes ever transcend colour differences. When Wilson Conco gave his background with his brilliant academic record at the University of Witswatersrand where he obtained his medical degree, I got the distinct impression that to the Natal judge Kennedy we were no longer just mischievous agitators bent on stoking up trouble for the whites. He was beginning to see in Wilson Conco and his colleagues men with worthy ambitions and who could be a credit to their country if given proper



opportunity for political expression and development in all fields.

Chief Luthuli was the next defence witness. At that time his blood pressure was troubling him and the court agreed to sit only in the mornings whilst he was giving evidence. His evidence-in-chief lasted several days and he was cross-examined for almost three weeks. He outlined the policy of the ANC and the evolution of its policy from its formation right up to the period of the indictment. His position as former teacher and chief enabled him to put things simply and systematically and on the living conditions of Africans in the rural areas and on our political disabilities he sounded authoritative. The fact that he had served on the Native Representative Councils made him the ideal man to discuss its limitations as well as those of other government institutions. A devout Christian and a modest man who sincerely strove for racial peace in the country, he made a great impression on the court and the judges were beginning to learn that the fight for the right to determine our own future was not the monopoly of the Afrikaners or other whites as the government's handling of our grievances and demands suggested. They were learning that police files and the electioneering speeches of white politicians were not the most reliable source of information for those who wished to make a serious study of the problems of race relations in South Africa. Perhaps for the first time in their lives they were listening, not to their domestic servants who expressed views they knew their masters would like to hear, but to independent and articulate Africans outlining their political beliefs and how they hoped to realise them. The Chief was cross examined by Advocate Trengove, now judge of the Supreme Court, who battled to get the Chief to concede that the ANC was dominated by communists and that it had a dual policy of non-violence intended for the public and

a secret one of violence. Failing to make headway in this advocate Trengove became desperate and discourteous, but Chief remained calm, unruffled and dignified, and the strongest remark he ever made was "I think the Crown is running wild."

The Treason Trial was not in its 4th year and for us accused the task of attending court daily had become a routine. In many respects it was becoming a test of stamina demanding much spiritual resources to keep us from becoming inattentive through boredom despite the gravity of the charge. A brilliant defence team tearing the Crown case to shreds through vigorous cross examination of Crown witnesses had given us much to savour. Now that the trial had entered the stage where the defence witnesses were entering the box we began to feel more as if we were directly involved. Those of us who were due to give evidence anxiously prepared ourselves for the ordeal. The manner in which Dr. Conco and now the Chief were conducting themselves in the box gave each of us a tremendous boost.

In the meantime events outside the courtroom were unfolding even more dramatically. Suddenly on the night of the 30th March 1960 the police swooped down on us again taking hundreds of men and women into custody. The fact that 30 of us were appearing in the Treason Trial turned out to be no immunity from re-arrest and those of the accused who were easily traceable to their residences found themselves re-arrested that night. I was among those accused who were picked up and we were unable to attend court next day. Those trialists who had not been re-arrested attended court as usual only to find a large number of their co-accused absent.

The Court assembled and prepared to proceed. Chief had been in the middle of his evidence but now the witness box remained empty. The judge asked for an explanation and was informed that Chief had been taken into custody the night before. Judge Rumpff demanded that the police bring Chief to court to continue his evidence and adjourned the court for a short while. When the court re-assembled that same morning the court was informed that the police refused to bring Chief to the court. The judge then adjourned the court to a latter date and the accused trooped out of court to make their way home. At the gate entrance in the courtyard the police set about re-arresting the remaining accused, and in the process landed themselves into quite a mix-up. One of the accused, Wilton Mkwazi, walked up to the gate and wanted to know from his fellow accused who was in the process of being arrested what was happening. The police ordered him to leave. On learning that the treason case accused were all being arrested Wilton informed the police that he was one of the accused. The police refused to believe him and threatened to arrest him for obstruction. They angrily ordered him out of the gate. That was the last time the court saw Wilton. He stayed in the country evading arrest for two months, was eventually sent out of the country by the movement. Whilst abroad he together with Moses Mabhida served as SACTU representatives. Subsequently Wilson underwent military training and returned to South Africa and at the end of 1962 where, in the underground movement, he led a cloak and dagger existence outwitting the police who were combing the country for him, until he was arrested in October 1964 and sentenced to life imprisonment for his part in the activities of Umkhonto We Sizwe and the ANC.

In the meantime the rest of Wilton's colleagues who attended court that day were arrested. The next day, 1st April, the government officially declared martial law, which it nicknamed the State of Emergency. The trial was to continue in the midst of the State of Emergency. But the Emergency brought about a radical change in the conduct of the trial. All the accused were thrown back in jail and consultation with our lawyers became practically impossible. The government used its enormous powers to hamper us in our defence and to deny us a fair trial on a capital charge.

(Add to text here at a suitable place: During this period the government was busy coaxing Africans in the rural areas to accept Bantu Authorities. In some areas, and due to the circumstances of the particular community, it made some inroads. Witziedhoek in the Orange Free State was the first reserve to have a tribal authority. Then by June 1953 no less than three authorities were established in the Transvaal. Chief Frank Maserumule, who had never fully acknowledged the authority of the House of Sekhukhune, was one of the first chiefs in that province to accept the system.

But there were exceptions. The initial reaction of the chiefs was one of solid opposition to the whole scheme. Verwoerd, Minister of Bantu Development and Administration, summoned most Transvaal chiefs to Olifants River to discuss the introduction of the system. At the meeting the ANC distributed leaflets spelling out the implications of this scheme and the dangers of accepting it. Chief Sekwati, one of the senior chiefs at the meeting, spoke on behalf of them and put the matter bluntly: "Le re rekisetsa khome e na le moroto teng, re sa tsebe gore e gwaetser ke poo eve. Ka lebaka leo ga re tsebe gore a tla tswala na-bjang." (You are selling us a cow which is already in

calf. We do not know which bull has impregnated it. For that reason we do not know what it will bear.)

That is how the matter ended on that occasion. Chiefs in the Western Transvaal were no more enthusiastic on Bantu Authorities and Chief Moilina and Mabi in particular were so uncompromising that the government was forced to depose them in the end. Even a Chief Didimane Pilane when he became the Chief Executive Officer of the Tswana Territorial Authority expressed ideas which aroused concern from Pretoria.

But the heaviest artillery trained on Bantu Authorities in the Transvaal, apart from Zeerust, came from Sekhukheland where the ruling chief Morwamorshe was also deposed and deported together with his chief advisor Godfrey Sekhukhune. A government stooge was appointed in Morwamotshe's place, who was prepared to accept what the people had rejected. He paid the penalty of all traitors and the heroine Madinoge and about 15 (?) others were sentenced to death, later commuted to 15 years (?).

But even greater resistance came from Zululand under the direct leadership of King Cyprian and his cousin Chief Gatsha Butelezi, and it is common knowledge that this was the very last area to work the system. I do not know whether Verwoerd ever realised the way in which he was rebuffed when he visited Zululand to introduce the system.

White officials at such meetings were usually greeted with "Bayethe!", the royal salute which, according to tradition, was reserved for the king. On this occasion it was decided not to elevate Verwoerd to that honour and, instead, he was greeted with the salute "Bayeza"" (They are coming) - meaning the whites, of course.

Sabata and other chiefs in the Transkei have fought Bantu Authorities until the 60s.

However in the end the government having failed to persuade some areas to accept the system on their free will, began using force. It made it clear in 1965 that the peoples' acceptance of the system was unnecessary as long as they have been consulted. The law empowered the government to proclaim tribal authorities whether the people approved or not; and in cases where the government met resistance it did precisely that.

Of course, behind the resistance of the chiefs were the masses of the people and it is possible that without mass perssure some of the resisting chiefs would have immediatly accepted. But all the same a man's stand will go down on record as progressive whether that stand was conceived in his own brain or he was merely acting as an agent of his people.

To be sure the whole system of Bantu Authorities rests on Chiefs and their councillors and we must unreservedly condemn them for their share in making the system work. As traditional leaders they still wield a lot of authority on substantial sections of the population and what they do is bound to

sway the attitude of many of our people. If they had chosed the path of resisting to the bitter end, the government would have been in serious difficulties.

But I have often wondered just what the position would have been if we had an efficient organisation in the rural areas and a strong hold on the masses of the people, and on the councillors who form the bulk of the membership of the tribal and regional authorities. The actual membership of a tribal authority varies from area to area but we know of one consisting of the chief and 67 councillors. If the liberation movement were able to influence those councillors against the system, would the authority have been established? Would chiefs have had the courage to side with the government? Is the scheme not operating today mainly because in the first instance the movement failed to galvanize the people in the face of coercion and enticement by the government?

That our inability to find an answer to the strong arm tactics the government used and the collapse of our own resistance to the scheme left others with no alternative but to side with the strong fellow?

A movement that does not examine its own mistakes and weaknesses frankly and constructively, that hastily and blindly piles all blame for set backs on all those who do not agree with it, makes a serious error. Those men are traitors who identify themselves with the Nationalist government, who help to suppress those who fight for their political rights, who threaten after gaining their independence to help South Africa defend its borders against guerilla fighters, and who ask the UN

not to expel South Africa. We must condemn them as such, but there are many people in apartheid institutions, chiefs and councillors included, who are by no means traitors, and whom we can talk to and try to win over to our side.

I have patience and am boiling over with hope. I belong to an organisation whose strenght lies amongst other things precisely in the fact that it always looks at problems selfcritically and has never hesitated to examine and admit its mistakes. In Morogoro in 1969 and in Lusaka in 1971 it reviewed its work and took important decisions with which I am in full agreement. I have complete confidence in the men who lead the organisaion and for the past 15 years have watched them feeling their way forward cautiously and sure in a difficult situation. There has never been any doubt in my mind that one day we will pull down apartheid and all its institutions and build a free and united South Africa.



## Chapter 9:

The country-wide police swoop that preceeded the declaration of martial law on 1st April 1960, euphemistically called the State of Emergency, led to the detention without trial of more than 1,000 people of all races, belonging to the Congress movement, the Communist Party, the Pan-Africanist congress, the Liberal Party and two members of the Non Euripean Unity Movement. They were kept in Johannesburg, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

The swoop took place in the early hours of the 31st March (check?) and the same day urgent Supreme Court applications were made on behalf of several detainees for orders calling upon the police to release the detainees concerned on the ground that the police had no authority for such measures. The orders were granted and these particular detainees were released.

But a government which has no respect for democratic procedures cannot be frustrated in its intentions by court orders. I and many of those who came from the South Western Area, as Soweto was then known, were kept at Newlands police station from dawn and our first meal came only in the evening and consisted of un-sugared plain porridge which we had to eat with unwashed hands. At 12.05 a.m. I was released and when I reached the station gate I was re-arrested and brought back to the cells. This happened to all of us and soon the cell was again packed with the same detainees. The police swoop had occurred before the declaration of martial law and, in spite of the court orders, we were detained illegally and only "released" when martial law came into

force.

On 1st April we were transferred from the Newlands police station to the Fort where we found other detainees from various parts of the Transvaal. We spent several days at the Fort and were later removed to the Pretoria local prison where we were kept for the duration of the martial law. Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Bertha Mashaba and other women detainees were kept at the Central Prison in Pretoria which is a short distance from the local.

If the conditions at the Fort were poor, those at the Pretoria were unbelievable and beyond human endurance. We were sandwiched in groups of five in small cells measuring about 9 feet by 7 feet and about 9 feet in height. The cells had cement floors and ceilings and ventilation and lighting were poor. Generally speaking they were filthy, some with blood marks and obscene remarks scratched out on the walls and obviously made by non-political prisoners. All of us in a cell had to use one sanitary pail which had a loose lid. The blankets and mats were old and dirty with crusts of porridge and other ugly blotches and full of vermin. The pail emitted an offensive smell which worsened as each person used it. An hour a day was allowed for exercise when we could go out and breathe freely.

The commanding officer was Colonel Snyman assisted by Lieutenant-Colonel Steyn. The second day after our arrival we complained to the latter about the filthy condition of the cells as well as bugs, lice and fleas. He was abrupt and provocative, demanded that we substantiate our complaints

by producing evidents. We had not anticipated such a reaction and had collected no vermin to prove our case. When we failed to comply with his demand he accused us of having brought the vermin from our homes and threatened to prosecute us for making false complaints. We called his bluff and pointing to the blood marks on the walls and the filthy blankets and mats, asked whether these things also came from our homes. He walked away.

Later the cells were painted and fumigated and we were supplied with new blankets and mats as well as sanitary pails with tight fitting lids. We were also allowed to stay out in the yard for the greater part of the day. Those of us who were involved in the Treason Trial were provided with a large cell which we used for consultations and where the record of the proceedings was kept. Brighter globes were installed and there was a general improvement in our living conditions.

At Pretoria local prison the black male detainees included those appearing in the Treason Trial. The trialists and non-trialists were all accommodated together but in obedience to the dictates of racism the prison authorities insisted on separating the black detainees by accommodating Africans apart from Coloureds and Indians. It was bad enough that we were separated from our white colleagues but this further separation which had no legal sanction whatever was to our minds carrying matters beyond madness and the authorities faced a chorus of protests from all the black detainees. The inflexibility of red tape is proverbial, but when combined with the small- mindedness of racism it becomes truly ridiculous and we had a difficult time trying to get the authorities to understand our demand to be accommodated together. Eventually the authorities yielded a little by allowing the

treason trialists to be kept together without distinction between African, Coloured and Indian. That was as far as they would go - they were not prepared to extend this arrangement to the other detainees.

The diet scale depended, as it still does, on one's race and was scaled in uncooked form. For Africans it was as follows: Breakfast: mealie meal 6oz soup powder 1/6 oz coffee (made out of roasted mealies) 1/7 oz fat 1/2 oz. Lunch: boiled dry mealies 7 oz vegetables 7,5 oz. Supper: mealie meal 3oz meat (3 times a week) 4,4 oz vegetable 8,5 oz.

Indians: Breakfast: exactly the same as for Africans. Lunch: mealie rice or samp 7 oz fat 1 oz vegetables 7,5 oz. Supper: meat: same as for Africans bread 4 oz fat 1 oz soup powder 1/6 oz.

The fat was used in the porridge, rice or soup whilst the sugar ration was used for porridge and coffee. At first our diet was the same as that of non-political prisoners but later there was improvement in ours. Bread was supplied to Africans and for lunch we got samp, beans, gravy and vegetables.

I have no exact particulars as to the diet scale for white prisoners in general and more particularly for white detainees at the time. But they received far better food than the blacks. Some even say that South African white prisoners ate better food in prison than many of them did as free men in their own homes. What I definitely know is that for breakfast they received porridge with butter, enough

sugar, milk and tea. For lunch they had sandwiches or meat pie with soup , and for supper quality meat far larger in quantity than that of blacks, vegetables, rice, gravy, pudding, coffee and milk. So colour conscious are South African whites that eve the color of sugar supplied to blacks and whites differed. Blacks received brown while whites were provided with white sugar.

Basically the African diet consisted then, as it still does now, of mealies prepared in two different forms. The quantity of meat and vegetables supplied was too small to make much difference and that of sugar even worse. Few things incense me as a prisoner as to see human beings having to stuff their bellies with plain porridge for breakfast and supper and munching boiled mealies for their lunch. It is cruel to treat any man in this fashion but hatred and anger welled up in me when I saw our aged and respected leaders like Chief Luthuli, who was to be honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize in less than two years, and Professor Matthews, an assistant principal of a university and a deputy president of the African National Congress, being subjected to such humiliating treatment. There are matters which fill one with a sense of real shame because, even making due allowance for all the peculiarities of our situation and our protests against such practices, their continued existence is an indictment against us as a people. Even as I look back now over all those years in prison I cannot avoid the feeling that with proper organisation and super-human determination that freedom fighters are capable of, we should have by now brought an end at least to these aspects of prison life.

Of course, as detainees, we protested about the diet and the improvement made by the authorities

did make a difference, but the improvements were confined to the political detainees and for the duration of the State of Emergency and were hemmed in with the pattern of race craziness. Thus Africans were provided what was called an improved Diet, which in substance really meant we received bread daily; Indians and Coloureds were given the diet provided to white prisoners. The Moslems among the Indians presented the authorities with a dilemma because they demanded kosher food, and this led to the Indian detainees being allowed a kitchen of their own where they could cook for themselves. Though this was intended for "Indians only", from time to time other black detainees did find food from this kitchen making its way on to their plates.

The struggle against oppression goes on even behind prison walls and some of the scrawls on the walls inspired us a great deal. They showed that even amongst the non-political prisoners the desire to live freely, to win human dignity and equality of opportunity cannot be easily extinguished. One of these read: "Mabhuru (Boers) why you oppress us like this?" Another contained a drawing of the swastika with the words: "You bloody fascists!" A third read: "You whites will pay dearly for this!"

Our situation sharpened our eyes for all anti-apartheid symbols and we were constantly looking for new recruits against the enemy. These scrawls sparked off lengthy and spirited discussions on whether in our struggle we could count on the support of "anti-social" forces. Some tended to follow the orthodox line of the unreliability of this section of the population and in support of their argument inted the experience of progressive movements in Europe and elsewhere.

Others, whilst not ignoring the lessons of world history, drew attention to the uniqueness of our own situation and felt that our social system, and more particularly the colour bar, demanded a modification of such lessons. They sought to substantiate their argument by showing that whenever we launched political campaigns these elements were always on our side and were confident that when acts of violence commence they would rally behind us. They pointed out that there exists a host of legal "crimes" such as transgressions of the influx control regulations and the hated pass laws which contributed a large proportion of the African prison population and which had nothing to do with anti-social behaviour.

Still others were of the view that there was hardly any fundamental difference between our situation and that of the rest of the world. They pointed out that throughout history and in all countries, the social system is the basic cause of crime; that at the root of this problem was the division of society into rich and poor and that in this regard our country was no exception.

Discussions of this nature often end without any clear-cut decisions and ours tailed off in similar fashion. Nonetheless we were united in our admiration of the courageous men who poured out their feelings on those dirty walls and in whose hearts still burned the immortal flames of freedom.

Soon after our transfer to Pretoria the trial resumed. In the course of the proceedings however Maisels called us together and reported that the State of Emergency had made proper consultations with us well nigh impossible, and that subject to what we might say, the defence team proposed to

withdraw from the case in protest. He asked us to express our views and warned us of the serious implications of conducting our own defence in a capital charge.

We carefully discussed the matter amongst ourselves and unanimously approved of the recommendation of the lawyers. In spite of this unanimity and because of the seriousness of the whole issue we thought it advisable to ask each of the 29 accused to express his opinion. Again the proposal was unanimously endorsed. It was further agreed that each accused would conduct his own defence and Duma Nokwe and I would help in preparing the case and advising them on matters of procedure.

One day as the proceedings started, Maisels dramatically announced the decision and thereafter he and the other lawyers quietly filed out of the synagogue. After Maisels' announcement the judges repeated the warning previously given to us by counsel in almost identical terms. But we were angry and ready for a showdown. We had briefed lawyers and not judges to advise us in the trial. They had done so and the matter was closed. It was under these conditions and in this atmosphere that the trial proceeded thereafter until the five month long martial law was lifted and our defence team returned to conduct our case.

Our strategy was simple - to drag out the case until martial law was lifted when our lawyers would return. We were arranged alphabetically and accused number one was Farid Adams, a member of the Transval Indian Youth Congress. According to our plan he would open his case by calling



accused number two, Helen Joseph, as his first witness, and who would then be cross examined by the 27 co-accused. Thereafter she would be cross examined by the Crown and re-examined by accused number one. He would then proceed to call accused number three and the whole procedure outlined in regard to accused number two would be repeated until every accused was called.

It is always difficult to prepare a case from prison and this is particularly the case in South Africa where one is immediately hampered by racial barriers which multiply the difficulties. This is exactly what happened to us in 1960. In this particular case proper consultations required a meeting of all the accused, where we could discuss the case together in privacy and not in the hearing of the warders. We enjoyed neither of these privileges. Firstly, the Prison Regulations prohibited meetings between male and female prisoners and this meant we could not have joint consultations with Helen Joseph and Lilian Ngoyi. Secondly, the official policy discouraged contact between black and white prisoners. Helen would be the first defence witness to be called after the withdrawal of the lawyers and Duma Nokwe and I had to prepare her evidence. For this purpose we required the presence of Farid Adams, Ahmed Kathadra and Leon Levy.

After protracted negotiations with the prison authorities and the Crown team, and which even involved raising the matter formally in court, we were ultimately allowed to have these consultations but under stringent conditions. In the first place there would be no contact between white and black prisoners. In this regard an iron fence was erected to separate Helen Joseph and Leon Levy from us. Secondly, there would be no contact either between Helen Joseph and Lilian

Ngoyi and this was effected by a second partition separating the two from each other. Thirdly, the consultation would be in the sight and hearing of warders. Under these conditions we sat down and hammered out our line of action, examined the indictment, took down statements, cross examined Helen and had a full-dress discussion of policy and practical issues.

But life has its own drama and amusing episodes even behind the grim walls of a South African prison. Right at the outset of our consultations I got a rebuff from our first witness. As is the custom when taking a statement from a witness I wrote down the name "Helen Joseph" and then asked her for her age. This pleasant lady stiffened and looked straight into my eyes: "What has my age to do with this case?" she asked sharply. I explained as carefully as I could but all I was able to extract from her that evening was the promise that she would consider the matter.

Bridges of contact between human beings are essential and, once established, they can completely shatter racial barriers and even lead to lasting friendship. A white Afrikaans speaking wardress used to bring down Helen Joseph from the Central Prison for consultation and she would sit next to Helen listening to the discussions. One day Helen, thinking that the wardress was bored and feeling sorry for her, suggested that she could always bring a book which would keep her occupied during the lengthy consultations. She promptly replied: "No, I won't. I find all this interesting and want to listen". A bit stiff and cold at first in the presence of black male prisoners she gradually relaxed and even exchanged friendly remarks with us.

Even more interesting was the relationship that developed between the treason accused and the white police constable who drove the van that took us to and from court daily. Every moment spent outside the forbidding prison walls was a relief for us and the van driver contributed much to such relief for he would often take us, on his own initiative, on long un-authorised drives. He developed quite a close acquaintance with us and even got to know the birthdays of some of us. One morning, after we had trooped into the van and were due to pick up our white co-trialists, he drove and parked just outside the cells where the white prisoners were kept. He then informed us that it was Joe Slovo's birthday and exhorted us to welcome Joe that morning with a song. We responded readily. He seemed to enjoy our singing, which needless to say, was heavily weighted with freedom songs, and often asked us to sing as we travelled to and from court. In 1963 when Walter Sisulu was arrested and held under the 90 day detention law at Pretoria local prison, this same police constable called at the prison and visited Walter with whom he had become acquainted during the Treason Trial.

On another occasion Robert Resha and I were working in the library when a white warder, also Afrikaans speaking, joined us and started a political discussion with Robert. After listening to him explaining the policy of the ANC and the Freedom Charter the warder remarked that our policy was certainly better than that of the Nationalist Party. He also became friendly and assisted us in various ways throughout the five months of our detention.

It is mainly because of reactions such as these that the Nationalist Party is so violently opposed to

all forms of integration between black and white, and regards separate development as a matter of life and death. The Nationalists will survive as a political party only as long as the links between the various sections of the population remain few and slender. Only an ignorant electorate that is isolated from the broad stream of thought amongst the black South Africans, that has been indoctrinated with the fear of being swamped by Africans, can support the monstrous philosophies propogated by the Nationalist Party.

At the request of the Crown we held no consultation with Helen Joseph and Leon Levy on weekends; but I frequently visited the former at the Central and brought her the record of the proceedings, exhibits and other documents. On these occasions I met the other women detainees and consulted them as possible witnesses. Even visits like these aroused considerable interest among white wardresses who had never known that there were professional men amongst Africans. Seeing prominent white women discuss serious matters with a black man on basis of perfect equality could not but lead to a weakening of many false assumptions.

When the proceedings resumed Farid Adams called Helen and led her evidence-in-chief. He did fairly well and quickly grasped the intricacies of court procedure. He frequently argued with the judges and, considering that he was a layman, he came out quite well in these exchanges. The accused, who, until this stage of the proceedings had sat passively watching the battle between the defence and Crown teams, suddenly moved right into the front line and showed a lot of common sense and initiative. They cross-examined the witness, argued with the judges and the prosecution

and took a lively interest in the proceedings. Although their calibre could be inferred from the massive evidence already before the court and containing their speeches and writings, their actual interventions as the principle parties in the proceedings made a formidable impact. I had the impression that it was only at this stage that the court and Crown teams really came to know the men in the dock.

Our men abroad were becoming active and South Africa was fire at the Nations Organisation and other world bodies. The morale amongst our people and the accused was high and on our way to and from the court we sang at the top of our voices. Things were going according to plan, we held the initiative and were confident that we would hold out until martial law was lifted.

But there were also days when he did not do so well and when spirits suddenly plunged down. Duma Nokwe and I sat on either side of Farid, supplied him with questions to ask in leading the witness and helped him in dealing with any issues that arose. But we worked under great pressure and one day we were running out of material. Without consulting us Farid asked for a postponement and gave as his reason for doing so the fact that he was tired. The judges promptly refused the application and reminded us of the warning they gave us the day the lawyers withdrew. There was consternation and murmuring among the accused. Farid, Duma and I exerted ourselves and just managed to pull through.

But we realised that a crisis was brewing. That day there was no singing as we returned to the

prison and in the van there were small conferences and whisperings whilst others sat with sullen faces. On our arrival in prison they demanded a meeting that evening and I called the men together. J. Nkampani led the attack: "Madiba (which is one of my clan names), I want you to tell us why you drove away our lawyers?" I assured him that I appreciated his concern about the whole matter but I reminded him that the lawyers were not driven away by any individual, their withdrawal having been fully thrashed out and expressly approved by all of us including himself. He brushed me aside and asked: "What did we know about court procedure? We relied on you lawyers."

Discussion continued and it became clear that there was a substantial section among us that shared Nkampani's misgivings. We warned against the danger of dismay and panicing from what was hardly a set back. We stressed that in a case like ours we should expect difficulties and meet them bravely when they come. We assured them that, taking into account all the circumstances, we were doing well and that there was no need for concern. As we were pressed for time we appealed to them to accept this explanation and closed the meeting.

Duma and I made several court applications relating mainly to the conditions under which we prepared for trial and the specific issues that arose in the course of the trial. Although newspapers were strictly forbidden we were reasonably informed and on one occasion we became aware of a statement by a certain advocate Louw, son of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Louw. He was reported as having said that people would be shocked by disclosures that would be made at our trial. I formally drew attention of the court to these remarks and submitted that in the opinion of my

fellow accused and myself, these remarks amounted to contempt of court and asked that the matter be investigated with a view of instituting criminal proceedings against the culprit concerned.

As students we were taught that South Africa was a democratic country in which the rule of law applied and where all persons, irrespective of their social status or official position, are subject to the ordinary law of the land. I sincerely believed this to be true and tried to plan my life on this assumption. But experience ultimately removed the scales from my eyes and I realised that there was a wide gap between the theory we were taught in the lecture room and law as it functions in society. In actual practice law is nothing but organised force used by the ruling class to shape the social order in a way favourable to itself. In our country it is the instrument employed by the ruling white minority to maintain their dominance over the blacks; where there is a clash of interests the law favours the whites and is more harshly applied to blacks. In cases such as ours the temptation is always strong to administer justice secretly and to refrain from taking any measures which are likely to undermine the position of the dominant group. The culprit against whom we complained was the son of a senior cabinet minister, and, as we expected, the authorities did nothing about the matter.

In the meantime we decided to modify our tactics. After Helen Joseph had been cross-examined and re-examined, accused number three, Ahmed Kathadra, opened his case by calling Moulvi Cachalia, a member of the executive committee of the South African Indian Congress and a detainee. He was a man of considerable experience and he and Moses Kotane had attended the 1955 Bandung Conference as observers on behalf of the ANC and the SAIC. Although he could

speak English, he was most fluent in Urdu and, bearing in mind our strategy of dragging out the proceedings, we suggested that he give his evidence in Urdu, a move which would make it necessary to have an interpreter and lengthen the trial. But Rumpff immediately saw through all this, and abruptly forced Moulvisahib to give his evidence in English. Although we could have challenged this arbitrary ruling we knew that the witness was not in full agreement with us on this particular tactic and we decided to leave the matter there.

Moulvisahib's evidence-in-chief as well as under cross examination was interesting and damaging to the Crown case. He indicated that he believed in the principles of satyagraha and had faithfully followed them throughout his political career. Under cross examination the prosecutor pointed to the numerous speeches and writings before the court made by Congress spokesmen and praising the Mau Mau of Kenya, and asked why he never condemned the atrocities committed by this organisation if his claim was true that he was a non-violent man. He countered with remarks to the effect: "Who are we to tell the people of Kenya how to conduct their own struggle? That is a matter for them to decide. What particularly inspires us in their struggle is their courage with which they fought British imperialisme. They chose their own method of struggle. We have chosen ours on the basis of our conditions." Pressed by the prosecutor to indicate whether he admired Jomo Kenyatta, he replied with the words: "Wait, I tell you India". He then pointed out that non-violence was to Mahatma Gandhi a principle and way of life and he relied on it in fighting the British, but that his friend Chandra Bose advocated the use of force to destroy British imperialisme. Yet when Bose died Gandhi hailed him as a national hero who had faithfully fought for the freedom of his people.



The lessons he drew from the Indian freedom struggle were so devastating to the Crown case that every time he began with the statement "Wait, I tell you India", the prosecutor would protest "No, we don't want to hear about India anymore but about South Africa".

Ahmed Kathadra's next witness was accused number four, Stanley Lollan, a member of the national executive of the Coloured Peoples Congress and he was still giving evidence when Verwoerd announced that martial law would be lifted on 31st August 1960, on which date our lawyers returned. Their return was a real relief and was welcomed by all of us. Ours was something far more than a trial of legal issues between the Crown and a group of men charged with breaking the country's laws. It was a trial of strength between the people of South Africa and a minority of whites who monopolised power in the economic, political and social spheres, and the outcome of the conflict would radically influence the future course of the struggle in our country.

In this situation it was proper that we should have the services of the most highly qualified jurists who would handle the technical side and enable us to fight to the finish. Seeing again the eight barristers lined up against the Crown team was indeed symbolic of the greatest struggle that was being fought outside the courts; the clash of ideas that runs through the history of South Africa, that becomes more bitter and sharp as the years pass by. Two of these barristers - Bram Fischer and Vernon Berrange - were more than legal men defending clients for a fee. They were members of the Congress movement and dedicated freedom fighters. The rest were liberals who fought against racial prejudice inside and outside the courts, even though their methods of doing so differed

radically from ours.

The trial groaned on for another 7 months with the defence leading evidence. Professor Matthews was another star witness for the defence. As a man who had studied in the United States and England, lectured for many years at Fort Hare, served on the Native Representative Council and met the then premier General Smuts as well as other leading statemen in the United States, Europe and Africa, and who had served on a Royal Commission in East Africa, he spoke like a patriarch to his family and easily disposed of otherwise awkward questions from the Crown. Often he would tell the prosecutor: "What you really want me to say is that that speech which you allege is violent represents the policy of my organisation. I am not going to say that". Or words to that effect. On other occasions he would say: "You are now elevating junior members to positions of leadership just because you want their speeches to be regarded as policy statements. I am the leader of the ANC in the Cape, not these young men. It is my speeches that lay down policy, not theirs".

The indictment laid the primary responsibility for the alleged conspiracy to overthrow the State by violence and to establish a Soviet State on the ANC, with the result that the defence concentrated mainly on explaining its policy and all but three of the defence witnesses were its members. The old man Bhengu from Ladysmith, Masabalala Yengwa, Mkhali, Jane Motsabi, Florence Ntombela, Milner Ntsangani and Robert Resha were praised by both the accused and counsel for the clear outspoken manner in which they explained the policy of the organisation and the future South Africa for which we fight. Adding to the evidence of Chief Luthuli, Professor Matthews, Moulvi

Cachalia, Helen Joseph and Wilson Conco, they repeatedly stressed that our struggle was non-violent, peaceful and disciplined. They traced the efforts we had made to reach peaceful solutions and how, in spite of these efforts, successive governments continued to whittle away even the few rights we still possessed.

They emphasised that the political struggles of a voteless people, though non-violent, peaceful and disciplined, must necessarily be extra-parliamentary using legitimate means of struggle, legal and illegal, the test always being whether such methods help us advance towards our main goal.

In presenting its case the Crown had highlighted those speeches and writings it considered to be violent and which tended to support the allegation that there existed a conspiracy to overthrow the State by violence. In the nation wide raids of September 1955 the police had seized from members of the Congress movement large quantities of marxist literature which, together with the Freedom Charter were used to show that the ANC and its allies aimed at establishing a communist state.

Among the violent speeches that were quoted to the court was that of Robert Resha which he made in his capacity as Transvaal Volunteer-in-Chief at a meeting of volunteers in Johannesburg and where the police had installed a listening device. According to the Crown evidence Resha had told the volunteers that they were required to show a high standard of discipline and to be non-violent but that if they were told to be violent, they should murder, murder and murder. The Crown also called Sergeant Sharpe who handed in the notes of the Sophiatown speech in which I openly advocated the use of violence. But after he had been ruthlessly cross examined by advocate

Berrange his evidence was rejected by the court as untruthful and dangerous and expunged from the records.

Several police witnesses, especially Head Constable Truter, Sgts. Muller, Ngcai and Swanepoel (not the same as Colonel Swanepoel who in the 60s gained notoriety for his brutality as Security Branch police officer), gave a sober and balanced account of the policy of the ANC and its allies. They also agreed that our struggle was non-violent and that the violent speeches delivered by some of us did not express the policy of the organisation. The evidence of the defend witnesses on policy were even more sober and balanced than that of the police and a wealth of relevant material in this regard was placed before the court. In particular they emphasised the crucial fact that the principles set out in the Freedom Charter would be realised through non-violent means.

The police had also seized from a collection of marxist literature and notes I made from this material, especially from the Communist Manifesto and from the three volumes on dialectical materialism by Maurice Cornforth. In my evidence, I told the court that I was a nationalist who fought against all forms of national oppression and injustice, that I was opposed to the division of society into classes and was attracted by the idea of a classless society which I considered to be the core of marxism.

In cross examining me advocate Hoexter tried to re-introduce my Sophiatown speech by getting me to admit it. Although Sgt. Sharpe had given a distorted account of the speech I would certainly have

admitted advocating the use of violence. But once it was expunged from the record I refused to assist the Crown.

The Crown team had a dynamic leader in Adv. Oswald Pirow, a former Minister of Justice and later Defence, and a man who was once regarded as the country's future premier. He had met most of the leading figures in Europe including Chamberlain, Salazar, Franco, Hitler and Mussolini and was widely known as a staunch opponent of the principles of National Socialism. In appointing him to lead the prosecution team the Nationalists were probably influenced by both his skill as a lawyer and his political convictions. They saw in him the ideal man in the country who would press hard for the conviction of those who were alleged to be plotting to introduce a communist regime in South Africa. Some even say that it was by no means a coincidence that the Presiding Judge was his personal friend who had acted as his junior on several occasions.

Pirow indeed fought hard and brilliantly for our conviction and throughout the proceedings he was formidable and menacing. But he was also a strong willed and independent person and could be surprisingly generous. He saved us a lot of money when he decided to give the record of the proceedings free of charge. It ran into more than 100 thick volumes. His polite reference to us as "Africans" contrasted sharply with his totalitarian views.

He could also be humorous. On one occasion he was addressing the court when he said something to which Issy Maisels objected. As the latter shot up to intervene Pirow calmly appealed to his

opponent: "Take it easy, Issy". On another occasion Bram Fischer, a marxist, was dealing with the definition of communism under the Suppression of Communism Act. According to the Act communism is the doctrine of marxian socialism as explained by Lenin or Trotsky, the Communist Information Bureau or any related form of that doctrine. After quoting this definition Bram asked rhetorically: "What is the meaning of the phrase 'any related form of that doctrine'". Pirow snapped back: "You should know better!"

Pirow and Bram were interesting contrasts. One of the familiar sights of the courtroom was the frequent scene in which Pirow would be sitting at the Crown team table reading a copy of the pro-Nazi "Nuwe Orde", while Bram, at the defence table would be reading his weekly copy of the independent and progressive "New Age" which actively espoused and supported the ANC and its allies.

One morning as we woke up to go to court we saw press reports of Pirow's sudden death from a stroke. It was a severe blow to the government and the Crown team and, from that moment, the onslaught of our opponents lost its fury and momentum. Rumpff was full of emotion as he paid his last respects in court to an old friend. He rightly described him as a man who would have risen to the highest position in the land were it not for his political views.

Since the special court hearing the treason case constituted a prominent and important court in Pretoria this court was set aside that day as the place where the Pretoria bar would pay tribute to

Pirow. Ironically the two other speakers on that occasion were two "listed" communists. George Findlay came to the court that day in his capacity as chairman of the Pretoria Bar. Present in court that day as the leading defence lawyer was Bram Fischer and it thus became his task to also say a few words in tribute to Pirow. Findlay's tribute was warm and stimulating and he described Pirow as a brilliant advocate. Bram, in his usual courteous and adroit manner, avoided any embarrassment he felt in his role and ended his oration with the pertinent remark that Pirow would be remembered by different people for different things.

Advocate De Vos became the new leader of the Crown team. The defence team had little difficulty in showing that the Crown had failed to prove the allegations in the indictment. In support of their argument they quoted in addition to the massive evidence of the different witnesses, that of the police men referred to earlier and asked for our discharge.

On 29th March 1961, four years and four months after our arrest we were found not guilty and acquitted. The Treason Trial had ended. The State had set out to characterize the ANC as a front organisation of the Communist Party. In this it failed dismally before its own courts. In the judgement of the court the ANC emerged clearly as an organisation in its own right and the spearhead of the Congress movement. We were acquitted to the accompaniment of tremendous excitement amongst counsel, the accused, our family and members of the public. Members of the defence team were loudly cheered as they came out of the synagogue and carried aloft whilst the accused kissed and embraced their wives, relatives and friends.

Dr. Ellen Hellman, chairman of the Treason Trial Defence Fund, and one of the key figures in the raising of funds for our defence and needs, Freda Troupe, the secretary of the Fund, Reverend Nye of the Wesleyan Church and in whose house the accused were served with lunch, were also in court. My colleagues and I shook hands with and thanked them warmly for their respective roles in the case.

Local and foreign pressmen and photographers were also present to report the whole affair and amongst them was Ruth First, the Johannesburg editor of "New Age" which had faithfully given full coverage to the proceedings from the beginning to end and which continued to do so when other newspapers had lost interest.

A week thereafter Amina Cachalia played hostess when we held a function in honour of Mrs. T. Pillay of Pretoria, who throughout the trial had brought us lunch daily and we were deeply indebted to the Treason Trial Defence Fund, which raised thousand of Rand (check the figure) and made it possible for us to enjoy the services of an outstanding defence team. Funds were raised inside and outside South Africa and testified to the widespread support and sympathy our struggle enjoyed. Many who gave generously did not necessarily agree with all our views but they seldom wavered in support and generosity. One incident illustrates such divergence of views. When the Congolese patriot Patrice Lumumba was murdered the accused mourned his death and attended court wearing black badges and during tea adjournment we stood for a few moments in silence. What was to us an



act of duty and solidarity caused quite a storm in the Treason Trial Defence Fund. The press published our act of solidarity and followed up with a letter by Dr. Hellman objecting to such action by us and pointing out that our homage to Patrice Lumumba was making the Fund's difficult task even more difficult. But this incident was fortunately smoothed out. We, who were on trial for our political views, could not agree to alter our views and actions. We appreciated the magnificent work of the Fund, but to acquiesce to such pressures would be to conduct ourselves dishonestly. This was something that organisers of the Fund had to recognise and accept. That Dr. Hellman and others we shared her disquiet did so is a measure of their willingness to respect our views. The Treason Trial Defence Fund became the basis for the subsequent Defence and Aid Fund which was established after the Treason Trial to assist political trialists and prisoners in the ensuing period of savage repression that the Nationalist government unleashed against the liberation movement. The sensitivity of the Nationalists to such acts of solidarity can be measured by the fact that they banned the Defence and Aid Fund and made it a criminal offence for anyone in the country to continue this function.

Mrs. Pillay comes from a family of staunch Congressites. Her brother, the late T.N.(Roy) Naidoo, was an official of the Transval Indian Congress and Mrs. Pillay herself has been to prison on several occasions in the course of Congress campaigns. The lunch which she provided for us became an institution in Pretoria. Throughout the State of Emergency she provided out of her own funds daily lunch to all detainees, whatever their colour or political affiliations in the liberation movement. She supplied me similarly throughout my 1962 trial in Pretoria and continued this practice throughout the operation of the 90 Day detention law and no doubt continues to do so even

to this day in so far as prison authorities allow it.

There was plenty of drama in the trial. One day after the lifting of martial law and as the judges prepared to adjourn Col. Prinsloo, the country's Chief of Security Police and other top police officers, entered and sat behind the Crown team. We noticed that all the doors were also heavily guarded by the police. Suddenly a member of the prosecution team rose and made an application to have us re-arrested and taken into custody on the ground that the police had received information that we intended not to stand trial and were even planning to flee. They added that on security grounds they could not disclose their source of information.

We were indignant at this foul conspiracy to throw us back into prison and were convinced that the police had received no such information. Normally in applications such as this, there is no postponement and the court must decide the matter on the spot, unless the accused are prepared to remain in custody during the adjournment of the application. Whilst the prosecution would have the advantage of having prepared its case before the application is made, defence counsel would enjoy no such privilege. He must argue the matter on the spur of the moment and that is exactly what happened that day. Our counsel, just like us, was caught unprepared. In spite of that he handled the matter skilfully, the argument lasting until very late at night. Fortunately for us the court dismissed the application and we could move freely once more.

On another occasion Bram Fischer made a substantial application for the recusal of the Presiding

Judge on the ground that he had improperly examined Helen Joseph and infringed the golden principle that justice must only be done but must be seen to be done. The application concerned the Presiding Judge and the accused and the Crown had no right to intervene. But at the end of Bram's argument and before the Presiding Judge delivered his judgement, De Vos, the leader of the Crown team and contrary to practice, intervened and made remarks we considered defamatory to Bram. Instructing attorney Parkington with his presence of mind and ability to anticipate knew what the De Vos would next do. As the latter walked out of the court, he followed and caught him handing his defamatory speech to a press man.

On one occasion my nephew Chief Daliwonga Mathanzima stayed with us for a week. One day during his stay we travelled to Pretoria together and Maisels introduced him to the Presiding Judge. He and two of his councillors were allowed to sit in the well of the court immediately behind the defence counsel. During the tea adjournment he joined us and pointedly asked us to state our objections to separate development. Lilian Ngoyi angrily remarked: "Tyhini, uyadelela lo mntu" (Gracious, this man is provocative). However we pointed out to him that such important matters required more time and a better atmosphere for discussion and this helped to stave off what might have developed into a heated argument.

A final word about the Treason Trial. Throughout history and even in homogenous class societies, the court has always formed part of the machinery of oppression and used by the dominant class to coerce the public and to punish those who might seek to challenge its position. In cases such as the

Treason Trial, the government has a special interest in the selection of the judges and in the judgement of the court. The court becomes a weapon to enforce the existing policy. This is specially the case in a country like South Africa where all the judges are white and where justice in political trials involving blacks might be administered secretly.

But there have been individual judges in this country and elsewhere who have honoured their profession even when trying political cases and who have risen above their prejudices. In this regard the Treason Trial tended to broaden one's understanding of the complexities of human nature and warned of the dangers of oversimplification, of classifying human beings either as totally good or totally bad. There is a streak of goodness in all men, something to be admired. One is able to draw a distinction between the social system, the established institutions that have evolved definite policies over the years and the men who administer these institutions. Frequently the feelings and views of the individuals may clash with their official duties and men may do a lot of things which indicate their concern about human suffering and their anxiety to soften such hardships.

Throughout the proceedings Rumpff remained cold and aloof and gave me the impression that he tended to look at issues from the point of view of the ruling white minority and that he upheld racial discrimination and did not wish to make any orders that might undermine the present set up. During our detention Adv. Kentridge complained formally in court about the inferior quality of the diet supplied to us by the Prison Department and asked the court to adjourn for the purpose of examining the lunch.

After tasting the beans Rumpff expressed the view that the food was well cooked and tasty. Which was quite true. He agreed with Adv. Kentridge that the food should be served warm and in better plates. But did not concern himself at all with the issue raised by counsel, namely, the inferior quality of the diet and the contrast between the food provided for black detainees and that supplied for white detainees.

In spite of all this I considered him a brilliant lawyer who deserved the highest judicial honours. In this regard he commanded the respect of both the State and the defence teams, the accused and the public. Often he allowed us indulgences which made the abnormally lengthy trial easier to endure.

Kennedy was definitely less conservative than Rumpff and seemed to be attracted by the idea of the equality of human beings irrespective of colour. On one occasion he shook hands with Professor Matthews, wished him well and expressed the hope that they meet again under better conditions than existed at the time. Once he and Duma Dokwe flew together from Durban to Jan Smuts airport and when the airways bus to Johannesburg refused to take Duma, Kennedy also refused to travel on it. His registrar was his sister Mrs. Duke, who provided Chief Luthuli with lunch daily when he was giving evidence. She also presented Helen Joseph with a bouquet on her birthday.

To me the third judge, Bekker, was under the circumstances in which all judges are white, the ideal man to handle a political trial. He struck me as a warm and impartial person, and who was

consciously aware that the men before him suffered serious political disabilities. I felt sure that if the law permitted, he would tend to uphold our defence and that, if we were found guilty, he would take a lenient view of the matter.

All major issues, especially those that bring together people from different walks of life and from different population groups, bristle with all kinds of problems and the Treason Trial was typical in this regard. Some of these required to be trashed out openly, whilst others were better handled in confidential discussions. But there may have been others which, bearing in mind our historical background, one was called upon to solve alone and having done so, never allow any other person to know about them. To share secrets with comrades is natural and I have done so many a time. It is by no means easy to keep things to yourself. But circumstances and experience may force a person to try the impossible and bury forever in his heart those delicate political problems which have been nipped in the bud.

In comparison with the wave of detentions since 1963 that in 1960 was like a picnic. To the best of my knowledge and belief no individuals were then isolated, forced to give information, beaten up, tortured, crippled and killed as has been happening since 1963. Speaking comparatively the Security Police still had a number of men who carried out their duties according to the law and who resisted the temptation of abusing their powers. Apart from keeping us in confinement, withholding newspapers so as to prevent us from knowing what was happening outside, the atmosphere was generally free of the brutalities and acute tensions that characterise the subsequent detentions.

My partner Oliver Tambo left South Africa on the instructions of the ANC on 27th March 1960, a few days before we were arrested. Our friend, attorney Hymie Davidoff, who was winding up our partnership then arranged with Col. Prinsloo for me to be brought to Johannesburg on weekends and work with our bookkeeper, Nathan Marcus, in our office. I travelled to and from Johannesburg with Sgt. Kruger, the investigating officer in the Treason Trial, in his private car and un-handcuffed. He was relaxed and, on several occasions, would leave me alone in the car and enter a shop to buy biltong and chocolate slabs for both of us.

Our offices were on the 2nd floor and I moved freely to the cafe on the ground floor. Zami and Amina Cachalia saw me daily and brought me food at the office. I was also visited by Matlala Tambo and Freda Troupe, without any interference. All these things could never have happened in the hostile and grim atmosphere that prevails since 1963.

## Chapter 10: The heat rises

In sketching the progress of the Treason Trial we left out important events between 1956 and 1961 and without these the story of the struggle of the people of South Africa against oppression would not only be incomplete but many people would probably find it difficult to grasp clearly the reasons for the radical shift in the methods of struggle after May 1961.

In 1956 two black states in northern Africa, Morocco and Tunisia, became independent, increasing the number of independent African states to 5. But Morocco and Tunisia were French-speaking countries and, like Egypt, too remote from us to give real momentum to our struggle. Ethiopia and Liberia, especially the former, had always been an inspiration to African national liberation movements, giving concrete proof that even in the capitalist era, with all its enormous resources for subjugating under developed countries, Africans could stoutly defend their independence and competently run their own affairs. Speeches by African nationalists have always proudly pointed to these countries to show that the ideas they were preaching were not utopian but capable of achievement in our own lifetime.

But the independence struggles of the people of Ethiopia and Liberia, as heroic as we have always considered them to be, lay in the distant past. True the former fought magnificently against Mussolini from the mid-1930s and stubbornly resisted Fascist aggression through full scale military operations and guerrilla warfare until the very moment of the liberation of the country during the



second World War. But to the new generation that was coming to the fore on our struggles these achievements were already part of history, more accessible to those who read history manuals than current literature.

The emergence of the independent state of Ghana had a far greater impact on us than all the states mentioned above. The events leading to the independence of that country were taking place not in the distant past but in our lifetime. The daily press, journals and the radio were repeatedly mentioning the name of Kwame Nkrumah, the Convention Peoples Party, the policy and tactics of that party, and the determination of the people of Ghana to regain their independence. There was a similarity in our respective situations which made the lessons of their struggle very valuable to us and the meeting between Professor Matthews and Nkrumah strengthened the ties between the ANC and the CPP. This meeting came about as a result of a suggestion made by the ANC and circularised to liberation movements in Africa for the convening of a Pan African Conference. Dr. Nkrumah undertook the task of convening such a conference (which took place in 1958 ?).

From the panic and the hysteria the independence of Ghana aroused amongst the reactionary white politicians in this country, especially from members of the government and the United Party, one thought this new State was right on our borders and its army ready to march to Pretoria. On independence Nkrumah immediately concerned himself with the liberation of the rest of Africa and put Ghana right in the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle. He repeatedly stressed that the independence of Ghana was meaningless in a continent that was still in chains and undertook to do

everything in his power to give material aid to all African liberation movements, an undertaking he faithfully tried to carry out. With an independent Ghana Pan-Africanism ceased to be a remote idea associated with black patriots in foreign countries. Now it became a stem growing on African soil, shooting its roots in all directions and giving us that exhilarating feeling of confidence that springs from the knowledge that we are part of a great movement that spans the whole continent.

A decade before the emergence of Ghana we witnessed the independence of India, Pakistan and other Asian states whose political organisations defeated mighty imperialist powers and threw away the yoke of oppression. Because of close historical ties between India and Pakistan and a significant section of our population, and more particularly the strong line India took on racialism and the association of Mahatma Gandhi with the South African freedom struggle, her independence had a positive influence on us. All these events deepened our hunger for political power and quickened the pace of developments.

It is against this background coupled with the heightened political activity and consciousness among the black masses following on the Congress of the People and the Treason arrests, that we should look at the events that took place in South Africa between 1956 and 1961.

The rapid strides made by the independence movements in Africa were celebrated at a mammoth "Africa Day" rally organised by the Congresses at Alexandra Township. The rally was preceded by intensive organisation and a propaganda campaign which included a colourful float manned by

Congressmen and women - African, Indian, Coloureds and whites - in national costumes, which toured the black areas. At the rally itself a festive atmosphere prevailed enlivened by the marching of school children, the sound of band music accompanied by traditional dancing and singing, the waving of thousands of flags and the display of huge portraits of African leaders, including Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, Chief Luthuli, Nasser and others. The excitement reached fever pitch when Congress leaders - Oliver Tambo, Arthur Letele, Lilian Ngoyi, made a dramatic experience dressed in traditional garb.

While the preparatory examination was proceeding at the Johannesburg Drill Hall in 1957, another explosive issue - the Alexandra Bus Boycott - attracted much public attention. The Public Utility Corporation (PUTCO) which ran the bus service between the township and the city decided to raise the fare from 5 pence to 6 pence for a single trip and to 12 pence for a return journey. At the initiative of the local ANC branch a massive campaign was launched against the raising of the fares. It enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the township residents. Politicians, churchmen, sports leaders, scholars, businessmen, workers, womens groups combined to form the committee which ran the campaign. The local ANC leaders like Alfred Nzo, Thomas Nkobi, occupied prominent positions on the committee, while rank and filers such as were in the thick of the organisational work relating to the campaign.

The campaign leaders protested to the Corporation against the increases mainly on the ground that the majority of the people there were already living below the bread line and could thus not afford

to pay more, a fact which was aggravated by the high cost of living that affected all lower income groups in the country at the time. They stressed that in spite of this rise in the cost of living and the increase in the wages of white workers, those of African workers had remained practically unchanged.

The township spokesman further argued that in this particular case the operator (PUTCO) was not a private company or individual whose only aim was to make profits, but a public corporation enjoying government support and established for the purpose of providing the public with an efficient and cheap transport service. They denounced the existing fare as beyond the means of the ordinary worker and pointed out that the proposed increase would be oppressive. They added if the service was running at a loss, the duty of the corporation was not to squeeze that loss from those who could not pay, but from those who could - the government or industry and commerce. It was also pointed out to the corporation that the distance between the township and the city was comparatively short and did not at all warrant the increase. The whole issue rested on economic considerations - the people's inability to pay.

The people had a powerful case and, in any other country, the corporation would either have completely yielded or compromised. But not so in our country. Here all the good things are as far as possible reserved for the whites while the blacks are condemned to a life of hardship and misery. The government, public corporations, the transport system, industry and commerce, are all run by whites for the benefit of whites. This is the basic premise from which we should attempt to analyze

any dispute between a public body and our people. Once your opponent believes that you are powerless and cannot hit back he brushes aside all your logic and insists on his own terms.

The corporation knew quite well that they were dealing with a voteless community and based its whole strategy on the assumption that the people affected by the increase were too poor and weak to resist for any length of time the demands of such a wealthy and influential organisation. Inspired by this mistaken belief they rejected out of hand all these weighty considerations and insisted on payment of the new fare. At this point the dispute burst into flames. Under the leadership of the Bus Boycott Committee the people began to walk to work and back. Starting in the cold early hours of morning - often at 3 and 4 a.m. - thousands of workers, men, women and youth began their daily trek to the city. For many it entailed a walk of as much as ten miles each way, for almost all it meant a minimum daily total of 16 miles.

The government was no less wiser and no less inept than the corporation. As usual they dealt with the matter not on merit but mainly with their eyes on the ballot box. A general election was due to be held in April 1958 and the government was not only determined to remain in power but was anxious to be returned with an even greater percentage poll than before. Ever since the Nationalists won the 1948 election they faced the embarrassing criticism that even with regard to whites they were a minority government, having polled only 36 - 37% of the total votes cast in that election as against the 50,36% for the United Party. Although the Nats increased their poll during the 1953 election they still mustered less votes than the United Party and they were not going to spoil their

chance of being a majority government, at least in so far the election involved whites only, by siding with the weaker party in what was essentially a conflict between a white corporation and the voteless section of the public.

Without even investigating the disputed issues or at least giving the people of Alex a hearing, the government chose to side with the mighty corporation whose directorate consisted of influential whites whose support would be essential in thier forthcoming contest. Realising that they had no real answer to the crucial issue of the people's inability to pay they tried to evade the whole question by dismissing that magnificent protest as a dangerous political move and threatened to take measures against all involved. In this way they hoped that the people would be intimidated and the boycott broken.

But on issues like this the people of Alex invariably showed surprising talent for organising and unity. On this occasion, as in 1942 and 1944, they walked the whole distance of about 16 miles to and from the city. They knew beforehand the exact measures the enemy would use in its attempt to break the boycott: summon a strong police force and patrol the area, protect and encourage those who might wish to use the buses, arrest the boycotters for passes, poll tax and a host of other petty offences. The corporation would keep the empty buses running slowly along the route to temptexhausted workers to throw in the towel and ride the buses. The corporation would also be able to get the police and traffic inspectors to intimidate those who might have the temerity to give lifts by threatening them with prosecution and the cancellation of their licences. This is exactly

what happened. But the people were determined to the bitter end and inspired by the great victories they had scored in the past, showed tremendous solidarity and stamina.

In spite of the government attempts to smear the boycott as a dangerous political move and its appeal to employers to dismiss latecomers or to cut down wages in proportion to the hours worked, the response of the black and white public was good. As usual religious, welfare, cultural and political organisations came together and set up a committee under the chairmanship of Bishop Ambrose Reeves to mobilize support for the boycotters. Many whites, especially those living in the northern suburbs, gave lifts, others shortened the hour of work so that workers could start off on their walk home early. All these developments gave a new dimension to what originally was a purely local affair. It became an important battleground in which the contending parties were rallying support in a bitter struggle to wear out each other.

Success has always been the best organiser and in a few weeks the boycott snowballed first to the South Western Townships of the city and to the Western Areas of Sophiatown and surroundings and soon the huge corporation buses were running empty there as well. A co-ordinating committee was established under the secretaryship of Alfred Nzo and consisting of representatives from the various areas. ANC men played a prominent part in organising the solidarity boycotts. Even in far off New Brighton in Port Elizabeth the African people responded in full force to the call of the ANC there and walked to and back from that city in sympathy with the people of Alex. There were similar but less spectacular demonstrations of solidarity in Pretoria and Durban. The bus boycott

had now become a live bomb and a national issue. The memory of the Evaton bus boycott which only a year before had brought humiliating defeat to a bus company in spite of the strong government backing was still fresh in the minds of the enemy. Above all the people held the purse and as their reserves began to dwindle away as the boycott lengthened into its third month the corporation realised for the first time that it could never win.

A simple boycott involving thousands of workers can be dangerous and industry and commerce cannot afford to ignore it. In the particular area affected production relies on a labour force that reaches the factories quite exhausted and hungry, that sleeps over the machines, that is disgruntled and particularly sensitive to the slightest manifestation of injustice. The longer the boycott, the more acute these problems become and the more widespread does the anger of the workers become.

The boycott was hardly a week old when some employers began urging the corporation and the government to revert to the old fares and as the months passed the pressure on the enemy became even more overwhelming. The mighty corporation had lost thousands of pounds and even more goodwill of all its customers. They had no choice but to capitulate. The original fares were restored. It was a great victory which showed the immense possibilities once the people are united and determined.

But the heat was steadily rising and victory on one front was immediately followed by victory on another, forcing the enemy to reveal its true colours and exposing it to the world where the colonial



and semi-colonial powers had their backs against the wall and where a few African and Asian States and the Socialist countries were carrying the fight against all forms of oppression and racial prejudice into practically every world body.

At home the Nats were under heavy pressure and paying heavily for their antiquated policies. Still in 1957 and hard on the heels of the Alex Bus Boycott, the Congresses launched a boycott of the products of several firms controlled by members of the Nationalist Party or which supported that party and amongst these were the Laageberg Kooperasie and the Rembrandt Tobacco Company. The former was one of the country's largest producers of canned foodstuffs employing thousands of black workers and with branches in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and other centres, while the latter produced various brands of tobaccos and cigarettes. Both were big concerns and quoted on the stock exchange.

The Langeberg immediately negotiated a settlement and met a delegation of the Congresses led by Duma Nokwe, then secretary General of the ANC. The directors argued that the firm was not controlled by members of the Nationalist Party and in support of their argument produced a share register which showed that amongst its shareholders were Afrikaners, English and Jews. While the negotiations were in progress about 500 African and Coloured workers at the Port Elizabeth branch of the firm went on strike for higher wages and general improvement of their working conditions.

In the meantime the Food and Canning Workers Union made several demands to the firm,

including the recognition of the union and giving black workers all trade union facilities such as the right to collective bargaining, higher wages, improved working conditions, free access to the firm for all trade union representatives, cloakroom facilities for holding meetings, stop orders for deduction of trade union activities, and better relations between the union and the firm. In order to forestall the boycott the company accepted these demands and the campaign against its products was called off.

For the Rembrandt Company, at first it took a different line and accepted the challenge but instituting civil proceedings for damages against us. But the matter was eventually settled out of court.

In Port Elizabeth, a stronghold of the ANC, the economic boycott started as far back as 1953 and was launched by our local branch there. A demand was sent to many firms demanding promotion of African workers to responsible positions and better pay. It was publicly announced that those firms that refused to accept the demands would be boycotted from the beginning of 1954. Several demands accepted and upgraded workers and those that failed to do so were boycotted.

By 1957 the economic boycott in Port Elizabeth took the form of boycotting shopkeepers in the township who stocked the blacklisted goods and they were given a month within which to dispose of their stocks. The majority of the traders in the area were members of the organisation and respected its decisions. Others responded not out of loyalty to the ANC but for fear of the

repercussions. But there was a minority of stubborn and short sighted traders who thought of nothing else but their profits and who persisted in their defiance in spite of the friendly warnings not to risk a confrontation with the organisation. When all persuasion failed the boycott was applied. One of these shopkeepers ran a grocery and butchery and on the first day of the boycott he called in the police who arrested a picket. Notwithstanding the police intervention the boycott continued in full force and was so complete that on a Friday, the day when the workers are paid, he sold only 6 pence worth of goods. He gave up and fell in line.

Another defiant trader ran a grocery shop, butchery and eating house and the whole complex had become a popular social centre where the youth whiled away the time. The launching of the boycott immediately made a once crowded place look like a haunted place, shunned by everybody. The shopkeeper never had a chance. The organisation was the real force in the area and commanded solid support from the community. A strong force and carefully selected pickets, using unconventional methods and keeping away customers to avoid arrest patrolled the area throughout the day. Few traders will persist a course of action if by so doing he drives away his customers to his rivals and his daily takings disappear. This is exactly what happened to this man. On the third day he broke down and wept. His resistance had collapsed. There were several other defiant business men but when they saw their takings plunging down they also yielded.

On the Reef and with the exception of a few areas like Sophiatown at the height of the anti-removal campaign, Alex Township and Brakpan, the ANC never reached the high level of organisation that

existed in the Eastern Cape since the Defiance Campaign in 1952. There was no systematic plan of campaign, no inspection of the stock kept by shopkeepers, hardly any list was kept either of those businessmen who responded nor of those who failed to do so and there were no pickets organised to carry the message to the actual customers. In spite of this and thanks mainly to the widespread influence of the Congresses and the high level of political consciousness among the masses, the boycott caught on. Within a short time the blacklisted products began to disappear from Indian and African shop windows and shelves. Company travellers turned back from shops without orders. Congress offices received reports of spontaneous boycotts often from remote and unlikely areas.

Although we could boast of several strongholds in the rural areas the boycott as a whole was concentrated in the cities and never really penetrated deep into the countryside. This has always been our weakest link and in spite of persistent efforts to strengthen our forces there, we have throughout remained relatively ineffective.

Nevertheless the Nats were shaken and they who only 9 years before had organised a boycott of Indian businesses and whipped up anti-Indian feelings in the country now loudly squealed when the same weapon was turned against them and accused us of stirring up racial strife when we did no more than what they have always regarded as legitimate action on their part. They appealed to the government for protective measures. But while the Nat politicians were making threats the attitude of the affected firms was influenced by the effect of the boycott on sales and profits and when these continued to fall they sought an amicable settlement which led to the calling off of the boycott.

The same weapon was used from 1954 against the United Tobacco Company, an international concern with branches in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Trouble started at the firm's Durban branch when African workers demanded higher wages and recognition of their trade union by the firm. The company had a small directorate and clerical staff of whites who handled the technical side of the business but the actual factory was run entirely by African workers. The wages of the Natal workers, black and white, especially Africans, have always been the lowest in the country and one of the principal objects of the trade union movement in that province has been to close this gap.

In South Africa unions of pass carrying workers cannot be registered. Africans are legally compelled to carry passes and the effect of this restriction is that although Africans are free to form trade unions such unions cannot be recognised by the government and the majority of the country's firms follow the same policy. In addition a union may be refused registration or deregistered if it accepts pass bearing Africans as members. This prohibition has led to the creation of two parallel unions in the same industry, one for Africans and the other for whites, Coloureds and Indians.

Consistent with this practise the tobacco industry had two parallel unions, namely, the African Workers Tobacco Union which was not recognised either by the government or by the firm, and the National Union of Cigarette and Tobacco Workers for Whites and Coloureds, which enjoyed such recognition.

The African workers in the Durban branch of United Tobacco demanded higher wages and recognition by the firm of their union and when the demands were rejected they went on a go slow strike and production stopped.

The firm retaliated by locking out the workers, an action which was, as it still is, a criminal offence under the law, and called in the Department of Labour and the police who assisted and charged the workers for taking part in an illegal strike. Lengthy court proceedings then ensued but they were ultimately found guilty and fined. As is usual the police brought no criminal proceedings against the firm for locking out the workers. About 800 workers were dismissed.

In the course of the dispute the Union appealed to the white Union for support and when there was no response from this quarter they turned to the Congresses who called a countrywide boycott of the products of the company.

The response was good and the company shares on the international stock exchanges plunged down. The London headquarters of the company instituted an investigation which led to the dismissal of the managing director of the Durban branch and the introduction of changes in the whole management as well as improvements in the workers conditions. The strike failed in the sense that not all the workers were reinstated but the boycott succeeded in that it led to changes in management and the improvement in wages.

June 26th is our national day. In 1957 we commemorated it as a "Day of Abstinence" by calling upon the people not to do any shopping, not to eat during the day, not to use electric lights in their homes, but to use candles instead, to display ANC flags, and to take part in bonfire ceremonies at night. A balloon carrying a huge ANC flag was released over Johannesburg. This novel form of demonstration was highly successful. Reporters from a daily newspaper in Johannesburg visited bazaars and shops in the centre of the city at the peak hours and found them empty. The only customers they found were whites. Indian shopkeepers in Johannesburg also reported "No business" for the day.

The coming into power of the Nats led to a stepping up of political activity by the oppressed people. It was widely realised that the country was heading for a confrontation and that nothing short of the highest sacrifices would stop the bunch of racials who were now in power. Ironically it was during the Nat regime whose main policy was the separation of the various population groups, the smearing of our struggle for political rights as a conspiracy of international communism and the use of violence in dealing with our grievances that the unity of the black people in the country became solid, that a group of militant white democrats emerged and openly identified themselves with our struggles, that the liberation movement became a real force both locally and on an international plane. In spite of unprecedented measures of government repression the voice of protest has become louder and louder and resistance more stubborn.

While the economic boycott was being waged in the cities there was considerable unrest in the rural areas of Sekhukhuneland, Rustenburg, Zeerust and Pondoland and in some of these the unrest verged an open revolt. The actual issues varied from area to area and centred around opposition to the introduction of Bantu Authorities, the rehabilitation scheme and extension of passes to African women. In Sekhukhuneland a chief who co-operated with the government was assassinated and the attempts of the Nats to introduce Bantu Authorities were wrecked for quite some time and only after harsh measures had been taken was the government able to impose the hated system. The opposition was led by Godfrey Sekhukhune, a member of the Pedi Royal House and by Madinoge, a patriot who attracted much attention when Judge Theron sentenced her and about 15 men to death for the alleged murder of the chief. The sentences were later commuted to life imprisonment. Godfrey Sekhukhune was banished to Zululand.

Few areas in the country have fought so stubbornly and so long against Bantu Authorities and passes for African women as Zeerust where Chief Abraham Moilwa led the resistance of his people. Areas such as these are usually inaccessible to the press and government repressive measures often reach shocking levels of cruelty. Here scores of innocent people were arrested, prosecuted and jailed, banished, beaten up, tortured and murdered. After facing this ferocious onslaught for many months the courageous chief and a substantial section of his people were forced to flee to Botswana, then known as Bechuanaland.

Similar issues sparked off violent resistance in Rustenburg under Chief Mabi and in Eastern



Pondoland and Nongoma in Zululand where the people had long fought against the culling of stock and the fencing and reclamation of land.

In these areas, especially in Zeerust and Sekhukhuneland there were active branches of the ANC and right from the outset ANC men played a prominent part. For his activities in Zeerust trade unionist and ANC leader Kenneth Mosenyi was banished to Zululand. In spite of the severe repression a number of new ANC branches sprang up in the Zeerust area, one of them having recruited about 2,000 members. It was not surprising that Sekhukhuneland and Zeerust were the first areas in South Africa where the ANC was banned, that is, some years before the whole organisation was illegalised in 1960.

In the series of trials that followed these events legal men like Oliver Tambo, George Bizos, Ismail Mahomad, Duma Nokwe, Ebrahim Gani, Douglas Lukele, M.D. Naidoo, Roly Arenstein and several others appeared on behalf of the accused.

Considerable service was rendered to the people of Zeerust by Anglican clergyman Reverend Hooper by way of helping to organise welfare work, legal defence and protecting refugees. For this Reverend Hooper invited the wrath of the Nats and he was ordered to move away from Zeerust.

But the courage and resistance of a voteless and unarmed people against a brutal regime is always a very costly affair and even though we must fight to the bitter end for our rights, until we were able

to arm ourselves adequately, the end will always be the same - the crushing of the people's opposition, as indeed happened in these areas. Sebatana ha se bokwe ka diatla (the attacks of the wild beast cannot be averted with only bare hands) is a well known African idiom which accurately summarises this basic lesson. Nevertheless, these struggles and sacrifices have not been in vain; in the long run they are a profitable investment and will certainly yield a rich harvest in the pending confrontation that will surely come. Our people will never forget the atrocities of the white man and are anxious to settle scores with the enemy when the appropriate moment comes.

(Note: Inadequate treatment of rural struggle especially no reference to peasants association as sponsored by us. Obtain information and fill up especially for Zeerust and Transvaal areas).

Three other issues must be mentioned to complete the brief outline of events that occurred in 1957. Among these were the lengthy memorandum sent by Chief Luthuli to Prime Minister Strydom in which Chief Luthuli detailed the grievances of the African people, the efforts we made to reach amicable solutions in the proceeding 45 years and the systematic encroachment on whatever major rights we still enjoyed. He demanded a meeting between the government and the ANC to examine the whole situation. Although the memorandum raised major problems and was carefully worded Strydom did not even have the courtesy to acknowledge receipt. It is this callousness and contempt on the part of the Nats when dealing with the grievances of the black man that has driven us to violent methods. For the human slaughter and destruction of poverty that will break loose in the near future the Nats must accept full responsibility.

The same year a special conference of the ANC in Orlando ratified the Freedom Charter. Although the whole idea had originated from the ANC, and although its National Executive had approved the actual draft, the Charter had not been formally adopted by the organisation as a whole. There was not sufficient time to deal with it at the annual conference in December 1955 and it was decided to hold a special conference for the purpose.

The conference of the Natal ANC had recommended several amendments to the document, including the clause on the nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industry. They regarded this particular clause as a radical departure from the principle of private enterprise and feared that it would alienate the support of a substantial section of our members. But as a result of the disruptive activities of a small clique at the conference, the Natal delegation not to raise the matter at all. Later during the year we discussed the matter informally and at length with the treason trialists from that province and the need for this particular clause was widely appreciated.

Finally 1957 was the year when the ANC adopted a new constitution, popularly known as the Oliver Tambo constitution, and which eliminated the outdated features of its structure and streamlined the entire machinery. The first constitution was cumbersome and lengthy and ran into 26 pages of 166 clauses. It reflected the social composition of the organisation when it was formed and which, in spite of its sophisticated leadership of middle class intellectuals was dominated at the mass level by traditional elements, and which was largely modelled on the British Parliament. The

principal chiefs of the various sections of the African people were declared honorary vice presidents. From the outset the ANC was regarded as a national parliament in which all schools of political thoughts were welcomed and in which all parties could be affiliated. The strength of the ANC lay in its ability to bring under one umbrella the traditional and urban leadership and to exploit to the fullest extent the national sentiments of the African people.

But in 1927 the government changed the law in regard to the recognition of the chiefs and was thus able to put tremendous pressure on them to abstain from politics. This severely limited their scope and all but the most fearless disappeared from the organisation. By the end of the 30s the House of Chiefs was a relic of olden times and hardly any ruling chief was seen at national conferences.

In 1943 the organisation felt that an up to date constitution was required. The simple composition of the African people had drastically changed and the simple social organisation built around chiefs was crumbling rapidly with the use of modern industry and commerce and a substantial urban population had emerged living no longer on agriculture but on wages and salaries and on incomes earned as petty traders. The 1943 constitution was a short and simple document with 16 sections and covering only 4 pages. It reflected all these social changes. It eliminated the House of Chiefs altogether and was based squarely on the principle that leadership depends not on hereditary but on merit. The four provincial presidents automatically became vice presidents.

(N.B. Re 1957 constitution changes - check detail)

The 14 years from the adoption of the second constitution witnessed an unprecedented upsurge of industrial development and population increase, in the emerge of an even larger and more urbanised working class and in the rise of registered membership of the organisation. These developments required a change in the minimum number of members required for the formation of a local branch, the introduction of regional branches, elimination of the provincial structure and of the 4 deputy national presidents and on working out a new system of local branch delegations to the national conferences.

In addition there were now 2 new subordinate organisations within the ANC, namely, the ANC Women's League and the ANC Youth League for which the 1943 constitution did not provide. The National Executive accordingly appointed Oliver Tambo to head a committee with representatives from the 4 provinces to draft a new constitution on the lines suggested above. Centralisation was the key principle underlying the draft. But the suggested amendments were fiercely resisted by the membership, especially the proposed elimination of the provincial structure and opposition was so widespread that we decided to drop this clause.

We began the year 1958 flushed with success and determined to consolidate the gains we had made. The major event facing the country in April that year was the general election in which only 3 million whites would take part and about 12,800,000 excluded. To focus attention on this injustice and to bring to the fore the plight and struggle of the black workers the Congresses joined with

SACTU on the calling of the 3 day "workers strike". Field workers went to work holding public meetings, distributing leaflets in factories and shops, from house to house, at railway stations and bus stops, on trains and buses, theatres, beer halls, schools and hospitals. Stickers and posters were placed on public transport, prominent buildings, including police station, post offices and city halls, on bridges, factories and shops.

As is the custom when organising such demonstrations, on the eve of the strike we took cover to escape the police swoop that is usually made to forestall the demonstration. Walter Sisulu, Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks, Oliver Tambo, Dan Tloome, Duma Nokwe and I established our headquarters in Orlando. We were in telephonic contact with Yusuf Dadoo and others in the city and with other centres.

Although we arranged no pickets on the first day of the strike we posted men to watch the trains, buses and taxis to see the volume of traffic. Our first shock came early that morning. The day before we slept at the home of a relative of an ANC leader and after making coffee for us he vanished. We discovered that he had gone to work! Late that afternoon reports from all over the country clearly indicated that the demonstration was an anti-climax to the successful campaigns of the preceeding year and we promptly issued a press statement calling it off.

Hardly an hour after we had released the statement the South African Broadcasting Corporation told the country on the radio that the ANC had caled off the strike and quoted the statement in full. The

readiness with which the SABC publicised the statement shook Moses Kotane and he now doubted whether we had acted correctly in calling off the strike. But we assured him that on the basis of the reports received we had done the right thing in stopping the demonstrations irrespective of the way in which the enemy chose to exploit the situation.

Pickets were used in Sophiatown and the strike was almost a 100% success there. In Port Elizabeth the response was far better on the 2nd and 3rd days but only after the ANC had taken tough counter measures. We have often discussed the question to what extent we should rely on coercive measures in organising political demonstrations and we have had to choose between two alternative courses. We could rely purely on the support the people have freely given because they fully realise that successful demonstrations would be in their best interest and that any action on their part that directly or indirectly assists the enemy should be avoided, that once the majority supports a demonstration freely, coercion should be used against the dissident minority.

The other alternative is to rely from the beginning to end on coercion and to use it even if on a specific issue the majority of the people are against us. The ANC policy has been clear and unequivocal. The organisation declared itself against the use of coercive measures as a means of mobilising the support of the people. It is definitely undesirable and even dangerous to mobilise mass support by means of force alone and wherever possible a political organisation should try to avoid such extreme measures. It is far better that the masses should themselves regard the organisation as their principal fortress and should see a particular campaign as a means of solving

their immediate or long term problems.

But this is neither a question of principle nor wishful thinking but of necessity and should be governed strictly by actual conditions. The real issue is whether the use of force will advance or retard the struggle. If the use of force on a given occasion will harm the cause then we must avoid it by all means. But if it will advance it then it must be used whether or not the majority agrees with us. In our case we have to contend with a brutal regime which invariably uses force to break our strikes and to drive the people from their homes to work and to allow ourselves to be crippled by lofty principles unrelated to the circumstances would be fatal.

Our house assistant at the time of the strike was Ida Mthimkhulu, a Sotho speaking lady of about the same age as myself and whom I fondly called Kgaitsemi (sister). She was more a member of the family than an employee and completely ran the house, sat with us at table and even sent me on errands. She was off on Thursday and Saturday afternoons and did not work at all on Sundays.

As I was driving her to her house a few days before the strike I requested her to attend to a family matter which meant she would have to report for work during the three days of the strike. She angrily burst out: "You know very well I won't do that. I'm not working on those days". "Why not?" I asked, quite surprised. "Have you forgotten that I am a worker. We will be on strike on those days", she told me.

I immediately realised my mistake. Her 12 year old son, seeing my embarrassment, tried to pull me



out of the mess by pointing out that we treated her as a sister and not as a worker. It did not work.

"You stupid nipper. Where were you when I was struggling for my rights in that hosue? If I had not fought hard against your uncle I would not have been treated like a sister!"

It was time for me to change the subject.

On several occasions during political demonstrations I made the same mistake for our whole relationship was that of friends and the idea that she was a worker never really sank into my mind. She was keen on stay-at-homes and frequently taunted me with drifting away from the struggle or of lack of militancy when ever a long interval ensued without a mass campaign. Although she was a member of the ANC and even recruited a few women in her area, I suspected that her keenness on strikes was motivated by the fact that they would add to her holidays.

A few months before the strike my nephew, Nxeko Mtirara, brother of Sabata, who was then employed as a clerk by the Johannesburg City Council was envolved in an accident in which he broke a leg and lay in Baragwanath Hospital for about 6 months. His wife Phyllis, a nurse, was employed by the same council. One Sunday afternoon while my nephew was still in the hospital, the ambulance in which she was travelling collided with another car and she died on the spot leaving behind two children, the eldest of whom was 5years old. At the time of her death she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy and it was a tragic loss not only to my nephew but to me personally for she was not only a relative but a friend we all dearly loved. According to law and custom Nxeko

is the second senior chief in Thembuland. His wife's funeral involved a lot of preparatory work and problems which kept me busy for several days and attracted one of the largest crowds to be seen at a funeral in Johannesburg.

My mother was then living with me and I spent my spare evenings listening to her relating fables and legends which I wrote down. She also gave me valuable information on family history which too I took down, packed neatly and put away safely in the hope one day that I would make use of them. I enjoyed these light moments for they not only provided me with relaxation which removed the strains and anxieties of political problems but reminded me of my childhood days and our small village of Qunu. But the Security Police of South Africa do not respect even family records like these and in one of their numerous raids they seized them from me. I was still trying to retrieve them when later political events forced me to leave my home and family.

Early in 1958, on June 14th I divorced my wife and in the same year married Winnie Nomzamo (I call her Zami), a social worker employed at Baragwanath Hospital and daughter of C.K.

Madikizela, a school teacher, who later became Transkei Minister of Agriculture. At the time I was confined to Johannesburg and the restrictions had to be relaxed to enable me to travel to her home in Mbizana (corrupted to Bizana by the whites) where the wedding took place.

At the reception which was attended by a number of security police my father-in-law told his daughter that he knew quite well her husband's political views and advised his daughter that if she

wanted a lasting marriage and real happiness in her new home she should adopt the same beliefs.

"If your man is a wizard, you must become a witch", he concluded his speech. Zami took particular note of these remarks and throughout the difficult stretch of 18 years of our married life she has faithfully followed her father's advice. On our return from the wedding, and in accordance with custom, the family and friends arranged a feast, slaughtered a sheep and gave her the name Nobandla.

The treason case was in its second year when we got married. Both my partner Oliver Tambo and I had been arrested and were appearing then as accused at the preparatory examination. Our practice was falling apart and we were experiencing considerable financial difficulties. Fortunately Oliver was not indicted for trial by the Special Criminal Court and he was thus able to spend more time on the practice. But a lot of damage had already been done and the practice was declining very rapidly. For all practical purposes our income from the firm disappeared and I could not even pay the small balance of about £50 still owing on the plot of land I had bought at Mthatha.

I explained this whole situation to Zami before the wedding and warned her for the difficulties she would face if she married me. But she was quite prepared to take the risk with the result that from the beginning of our married life we had financial problems and lived almost entirely on her small salary.

To enable me to travel the 30 miles to the trial in Pretoria required that both of us wake up very

early in the morning daily, she for the purpose of preparing breakfast and I to catch the bus, or to start from the office with my secretary Ruth Matseoane, and thereafter travel to Pretoria together with Helen Joseph. The wife of a freedom fighter hardly ever enjoys a full and decent family life and often lives as a grass widow during her husband's lifetime. In this regard Zami has had her own harvest of hardships and disappointment.

The collapse of the April demonstrations turned out to be the proverbial calm before the storm and towards the end of the year the pendulum swung upwards once more as the thunder claps began to shatter the ominous serenity of the weather that immediately followed the April fiasco. This time the initiative was taken by women under the leadership of the ANC Women's League. In other areas the demonstrations were spontaneous or the result of local initiative, but even in such cases the League immediately intervened and used its resources and wealth of experience to mobilize support and to help the women to fight better.

We heard the rumblings of the great storm as far back as 1955 when about 200 African women were arrested and charged in Winberg for holding demonstrations against passes. At the time I was restricted to Johannesburg and our firm sent our professional assistant Douglas Lukele, now Deputy Solicitor General for Swaziland, to defend the women.

This backward country dorp was, it still is, a stronghold of the Nats and it was probably the first time in its history for an African attorney to appear in its courts. Perhaps Douglas Lukele would

have fared better and the women cautioned and discharged if he were the cringing type or supporter of apartheid. But as many of us already knew, he was a fearless fighter and turned the courtroom into a battleground between the forces of freedom and those of reaction.

From the outset he met with open hostility from the police, the prosecutor and the magistrate and, on the instruction of the latter official, he was ultimately manhandled and bundled out of court. Finally the women were found guilty and in my opinion given a harsh sentence for what was essentially a petty technical offence.

That incident lit a flame and served as a source of inspiration to the women in their struggle against these relics of feudal oppression in our country. The anger of the people had been smouldering quietly ever since it became known that the Nats were planning this humiliation for our women. That anger now burst into the open and rapidly spread to other areas. One of the freedom songs which the women used to whip up enthusiasm for the demonstrations centred around the Winberg court incident and expressly mentioned names of the lawyers involved namely, Lukele, Tambo, Nokwe and Mandela.

From Winberg the scene shifted to the south eastern Transvaal, especially Standerton, Heidelberg, Balfour and other dorps where hundreds of women refused to take passes. Oliver Tambo ably defended most of these cases and as a prominent official of the ANC worked closely with local branches in the areas and with Mrs. Melo, the organiser of the League. By 1958 the entire region

was in flames and pass-issuing teams were being rebuffed in practically every village.

The women of the Eastern CApe were the last to take this insult lying down. Government officials who arrived to issue passes found the place deserted with only pickets in the neighbourhood and those few women who had the temerity to attempt to take these documents paid very dearly for their mistake. Under the leadership of treason trialist Frances Baard and Florence Matomela, the women of Port Elizabeth showed a high standard of organisation and unity and a whole diabolical scheme was for some time completely paralyzed.

In October the same year demonstrations began on the Witwatersrand and especially in Johannesburg where large batches of women gathered at the Central Pass Office, dispersed those who had come to collect passes, chased away the clerks, brought the work in that office to a standstill and forced the government to bring hundreds of policemen to the centre of the city. About 2,000 women from the city's township were arrested and no less than 750 of these came from Alexandra township.

In Natal the demonstrations were led mainly by Dr. Margaret Chueme and Dorothy Nyembe, another old stalwart and treason trialist who is presently serving a sentence of 15 years under the Terrorist Act and took a different form. They were directed not only against passes but included a host of other measures. Dipping tanks were smashed or filled with stones, fences and installations of so called betterment schemes were pulled down, beer halls were raided by women carrying sticks

and men patronising them were beaten up and furniture and drinking utensils destroyed. In the Ngutu district chiefs who were government stooges were assassinated and their homes burned down. It was during this period that 11 policemen were killed and the Corporation buses boycotted.

The Natal branch of the ANC distributed 100,000 leaflets throughout the province calling a public meeting in Durban to enable the people to express their grievances. It was an unusual meeting and attracted a record crowd of townsmen and countrymen and gave the average Congressman a clear picture of the multiplicity of problems facing our people in the rural areas and showed what we could achieve with better organisation, more initiative and bold leadership.

The whole anti-pass demonstrations, the disturbances that took place over a wide area, and particularly the death of some chiefs and destruction of property, inspired fear on the part of the wavering elements that would otherwise have collaborated with the enemy. The political situation not only strengthened the ANC in its fight against racial discrimination but particularly gave impetus to the struggle against Bantu Authorities in the rural areas. The pot was boiling over, hope was rising and the enemy was anxious.

Soon after the first batch of women had been arrested in Johannesburg Zami told me that she would join the Orlando group to the pass office the next day. I welcomed the decision and warmly complimented her for her courage. But I warned her of the seriousness of the step she was about to take stressing that it would radically change her entire life. By African standards she came from a

well to do family, her father being a retired school principal, prosperous bus owner with a couple of free hold properties. She had been brought up in relative comfort, had a status job and prior to our marriage moved in circles far removed from the dust and storms of political struggle. I reminded her that she was employed by the provincial administration and that imprisonment would cost her her job at a time when my own income had disappeared and when I could no longer support her. I pointed out that her contemplated action would also mean the end of her profession as a social worker since the stigma of imprisonment would make all public agencies reluctant to employ her. She was pregnant and I warned her of the hardships and humiliation she would suffer in jail.

She was determined and the grim picture I painted did not frighten her. Early the next day I helped her make breakfast and after kissing and embracing we drove to Walter Sisulu's wife Albertina. I watched her as she walked with other women to board a train at Phefeni station. Since our marriage she had always travelled to town by car either with me or with my friends, Ismail and Martha Matlhaku, and she looked a bit strange as she walked to the station. That day she and others were arrested and later that afternoon I spent about half an hour chatting with her at the police cells at Marshall Square. The following day they were remanded to the Fort where they awaited trial. Lilian Ngoyi, the national president of the Women's League and Bertha Mashaba were appearing in the treason trial and it was decided that they should not take part in the demonstrations.

The arrest of 2,000 women created formidable problems for the Women's League, our firm, the police and jail authorities and the magistrate and his staff. Few cells in the magistrate court were big



enough to accommodate all the women who were due to appear in court and there was no court whatsoever in the city where the trial of the large batches could be heard. The jail authorities did not have the resources to cater for the women and the cells, mats, blankets, food, plates, containers for drinking water, toilet and bath facilities, space for exercising were all insufficient and the conditions was unbearable.

Many relatives and friends wished to bail out the women and I discussed the matter with Lilian and Helen, secretary of the South African Women's Federation which worked closely with the Women's League in organising the demonstrations. They stuck firmly to the view that no women should be bailed out and that all of them should serve whatever sentences might be imposed. They added, perhaps with some justification, that this was an affair for the women and that the men in the ANC as well as husbands should keep out of the matter. Nevertheless I felt that this was an issue to be thrashed out directly with the women actually involved and for this purpose took Lilian down to the cells where we discussed the whole issue. There was no doubt that a substantial section were keen on bail and that we had not prepared them sufficiently for the demands we were now asking them to make. I accordingly suggested the compromise that they spend a fortnight in prison awaiting trial after which we could bail them out. In the meantime I applied formally for bail which was fixed at £1 for each woman. In spite of her objection to men's interference in this affair I urged Lilian to discuss the matter carefully with Walter and Duma, a suggestion which she ultimately accepted.

There was a batch of about 500 women from Alexandra Township and the question of their remand

gave us a lot of trouble. I took up the matter with chief magistrate Silk and he pointed out that we could either remand them at the rate of one at a time, which would be a protracted affair, or all of them at one sitting. For obvious reasons I preferred the latter and suggested that we should hold the court in the basement where there would be enough room for the purpose, a suggestion which Silk welcomed.

As Silk and the presiding magistrate and I walked to the basement my friend Benjamin Pogrund, reporter for the Rand Daily Mail, with note book and pencil in hand, asked Silk whether the press would be allowed to attend the "secret court in the basement". "In that case the accused will have to be remanded one by one in this court" burst out the official. I knew exactly what that meant. The case started at 9.30 a.m. and I arranged with attorney Natvar Patel, who lived in town to relieve me at 4.30 p.m. He worked until 12 midnight when the last woman was remanded.

As the cases dragged on many women began to lose interest in the proceedings and simply stayed away from the court. Some would tell me bluntly: "I am tired of your troubles, Mandela. If this thing does not end today you won't see me here again." One woman arrived in court after lunch happy and unconcerned. When I asked her where she had been she told me she had been busy brewing liquor for sale, adding that that was her only source of livelihood. As the brewing of liquor was a criminal offence I could not offer this explanation to the court. I simply reported her presence and promised to go into the matter after which I would offer an explanation to the presiding officer.

Johannesburg has always had a crop of able women - Florence Mophosho, Virginia Mngoma, Muriel Sodinda Davids, Catherine Mngwai (?), Kate Molale, Maggie Resha, Albertina Sisulu, Doreen Motshabi, Vuyiswa Nokwe - all of whom tried to limit the problems and constantly appeal for the women for discipline.

Although more than 100 warrants of arrest were issued by the court none were ever executed.

Relatives co-operated very well and the women were bailed out after the expiration of about 15 days in prison. Volunteers came from Johannesburg Bar and Side Bar and all the accused were freely and ably defended and many of them including Zami, were discharged by the magistrate or on appeal. The harshest sentence was that imposed on Pauline who was sentenced to months imprisonment without the option of the fine and on Muriel Davids (?), Florence Mophosho and Catherine Magwai(?), who were fined R50 each.

In a jail Zami became friendly with two teenage Afrikaner wardresses and after she and the other women were released on bail, they travelled by train and spent a day with us in Orlando. They were perfectly free and after lunch Zami took them around Soweto visiting other women. After supper I drove them back to town and dropped them near the jail. But in travelling to Orlando they used a train which had no carriage for white passengers and as a result travelled with Africans. This attracted much attention and soon it was widely known that they had visited Orlando. One was dismissed from the service shortly after that and although we never heard the full story we

suspected that it was as a result of their visit to our home. We never saw the second again.

The anti-pass demonstrations stretched from about 1955 to 1960 and involved a substantial number of women throughout the country, and in Sekhukhuneland, Zeerust and Natal they reached the brink of open revolt. But once again we came up against the hard realities of the situation. We had no votes with which we could influence government policy nor arms to defend ourselves or break through to final victory. When dealing with a stubborn and ruthless enemy whose answer to the people's genuine grievances and demands always is the use of force, the most powerful demonstrations and costly sacrifices often fizzles out long before the moment of real and lasting victory comes.

Soon the enemy took counter measures and the possession of a pass became as essential condition which affected African women in numerous ways. Without it public authorities refused to grant them land and houses, trading licences, to solemnize marriages, allow movement from one area to another, grant old age pensions and permits to visit relatives in jail. It became illegal for employers to take on employees who did not possess these documents and in due course pressing needs began to punch holes in our ranks and that powerful movement petered out.

But early in 1959 the Congresses opened another front and again the people throughout the country rallied marvellously. Labour conditions on white farms have always been shockingly bad and African and Coloured workers exposed to merciless exploitation. Industrial legislation designed to

protect workers did not apply to farm labour. Except in rare cases, there was no legislation which fixed minimum wages, working hours and other conditions of work, compensation for injuries or unemployment benefit. The result was to leave farmers perfectly free to make excessive demands on black labour and to reduce farm labourers to a life of poverty and degradation.

With the coming into power of the Nats labour conditions on white farms worsened considerably and the most scandalous excesses were committed on the potato farms in Bethal in the Transvaal. The first exposures which shocked the country were made in 1946 by the old campaigner Reverend Michael Scott and Gert Sibande, a leading member of the ANC in the area who later became Transvaal president of the organisation.

(NOTE: On the Bethal exposure check the sequence. One view - the first exposures were made in New Age by Ruth working with Carlson. Only after that Henry Nxumalo went and got himself arrested).

Following on these exposures the late Henry Nxumalo, a reporter on the monthly magazine Drum, and a real goal-getter, conceived a daring plan for investigating labour conditions in this area. He got himself arrested for a pass offence and in accordance with the practice of the Department of Prisons of supplying farmers with convict labour, Henry ultimately found his way to this notorious area. Later he escaped and returned to Johannesburg and published a full account of his experiences.

The sensational disclosures by a man who had himself worked on these farms and who could speak authoritatively on the scandals and brutalities shook the whole country and led to intensive investigations by the South African press. 'New Age' sent out there its own reporter Ruth First and in a series of scathing articles gave a wealth of detail on the barbarous conditions that existed on those farms. Soon the Sunday Times, the Rand Daily Mail and other sections of the press were on the same trail and helped to bring the conditions of semi-slavery to a wider public. Attorney Joel Carlson brought a number of actions in the Supreme Court which further highlighted the atrocities committed on white farms.

Broadly speaking the picture that emerged from these investigations was as follows. Quite a substantial portion of labour on the potato farms consisted of convict labour supplied by the Department of Prisons in the knowledge that some of these men would never return. The farms also made use of persons deported from the urban areas under the influx control regulations and of Africans who came from the neighbouring countries and who entered South Africa illegally.

The farms labourers worked on the potato fields from dawn to sunset with hardly any rest in between, earned nominal wages, lived on meagre rations and those who fell ill received no medical attention. Labourers who did not work hard enough were flogged, some to death while others were crippled for life. Many of these farmers ran their own private prisons where the labourers were kept under insanitary conditions. Although the government had an inspectorate system to check abuses

its personnel was drawn exclusively from the most backward section of the white population and consisted of men who were indoctrinated from early childhood with racial hatred, who were corrupt and who connived at the excesses they were supposed to curb. The main culprits were prominent farmers all or most of whom were members of the Nationalist Party and who enjoyed government support. Except in unavoidable cases the government took no action against those involved and in spite of persistent demands for investigations made by all sections of the population the Nats did nothing to remove the conditions. Finally, the Congresses appealed to the people and called for a boycott of potatoes.

The boycott was planned to be launched by Chief Luthuli but as he was banned immediately before this, the task passed on to Deputy President, Oliver Tambo, who formally announced it at a packed meeting of the Congresses at the Gandhi Hall in Johannesburg. The spirit was high and the mood militant. The campaign caught on and rapidly spread throughout the country. The biggest meeting in the history of the Congress movement attended by 60,000 people - some put it even higher than that - was held at Curries Fountain in Durban on a Friday night and addressed by Robert Resha, Monty Naicker, Masabalala Yengwa and Vera Poonen. The following two days Robert Resha addressed record meetings in Pietermaritzburg and Ladysmith which were attended by people from the cities and rural areas. Similar meetings were held in the Cape and Orange Free State and in almost all the towns and in some of the rural areas potatoes disappeared from the family table.

To call on the people to boycott potatoes was to ask them to pay a heavy price for potatoes are

virtually a staple diet. But this was a matter about which we all felt very strongly and we were prepared to make the sacrifices which were demanded. The sense of shock was so great that people spontaneously organised their own system of inspection and culprits were rough handled. At markets and outside wholesale and retail shops there were scuffles and skirmishes in which people threw out the shop's supplies of potatoes into the gutters and people were beaten up and their baskets or shopping bags thrown away.

A church conference attended by white and black delegates was held in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, and the African priest who acted as host was a man who once visited India and was given an interview with Mahatma Gandhi. But he chose to defy the people by including potatoes in the dinner prepared for the guests. Some of the women who cooked the food threw away the potatoes. Both white and black delegates refused to touch those that reached the table.

This boycott was one of the greatest triumphs and showed that the ANC and its allies enjoyed solid mass support. It was felt both by the shopkeepers and merchants and by farmers and the government. In the warehouses and on farm stacks and stacks of potatoes in bags went to seed and began shooting out roots and stems through the hessian sacks or rotted away altogether. Although we have no records it is clear that the industry suffered heavily. The Indian vegetable merchants in Ddiagonal Street as well as potato wholesalers kept us well informed about the developments and extent of the boycott, and throughout they acted as a good barometer of the campaign.



The government acknowledged the success of the boycott by appointing a commission to enquire into the whole matter after it had repeatedly refused this demand previously. South African agriculture has for three centuries relied heavily on semi-slave labour and no substantial changes can be expected until white supremacy is removed and a democratic government established. Nevertheless the commission recommended some small improvements, some of which the government accepted and the most brazen atrocities were at least checked.

In a great campaign it is often difficult to determine the exact moment when it should be called off and many people tend to be too ambitious and in the process exaggerate the strength and endurance of the people while underestimating that of the enemy. The result is to push the people to the point of exhaustion and to allow a campaign to peter out on its own.

It is a mistake to start any demonstrations without settling the question whether it is a matter of principle demanding a fight to the finish or a protest to be called off at an appropriate moment. The exact course we choose to follow is determined by the conditions and the former is permissible only if there is a fair chance of victory. To insist on it irrespective of the circumstances is to invite disaster and must be avoided. A good lesson in this regard was the Defiance Campaign. The ideal moment to have called it off was when the campaign had reached its peak and enthusiasm was widespread. Instead it was allowed to go on; and when it was eventually formally called off it had already begun to wane. We had missed the psychological moment.

Both in regard to the 1958 strike, the women's anti-pass demonstrations and especially the potato boycott we encountered strenuous opposition from a substantial section of our membership who urged us to fight to the bitter end and to ask the people never to eat potatoes again. We dismissed such extreme demands as unrealistic and dangerous and called off the boycott when we felt it had achieved its object.

The 50s was a decade of strife and turmoil when the ANC and its sister Congresses were constantly on the attack, engaging the enemy on many fronts and forcing it to defend apartheid at a heavy cost. To mount so many mass campaigns in one decade and in the face of ferocious enemy counter measures is a feat no other organisation outside the Congress movement has ever attempted.

One of these campaigns collapsed, others were a moderate success and still others were peerless. But whatever the ultimate fate of each particular campaign was the overall pressures were building up to a climax and the ANC emerged to a commanding position as the spearhead of the anti-apartheid struggle and ready to lead the freedom forces into the centre of battle.

(N.B. Absolutely essential - check all the facts on both incidents that follow)

Two incidents that also occurred during 1958 need some mention. Although involving only two individuals, the status of the men and the circumstances surrounding the happenings served to highlight the utter contempt that the whites have for the African people.

In 1958 Chief Luthuli was invited by a Discussion Group consisting among others of Pretoria University students to address a meeting in Pretoria. The scheduled meeting had received considerable publicity as it was probably the first time that a black man was to address a white gathering in Pretoria. The meeting was packed by young Nat hooligans and when Chief was called upon to deliver his address pandemonium broke loose. There was shouting and booing, missiles were hurled and one of the hooligans displayed his strength, valour and civilization by mounting the platform and brutally assaulting the elderly chief. The incident received wide publicity and there was considerable clamour that the culprits be brought to book. In the face of this the police were forced to act and a certain Claasen, an ex-policemen(?) was brought before court and sentenced to three months imprisonment. A large section of the whites could not countenance the idea that a white man be actually charged for what they considered a trivial act. After all only a "kaffer" was assaulted! In order to show their solidarity with Claasen a special fund was launched in order to cover the legal costs as well as other incidental expenses. It is not known whether Claasen was actually served his sentences. It would not at all be surprising if he was freed soon after the court paroles.

Also in 1958 Advocate Duma Nokwe was driving home from Alex Township one night when his car developed some trouble. He got out and was trying to effect repairs when a police car drove up. As is usual practice the policeman demanded: "Kaffer, waar is jou pas?" (Kaffir, where is your pass?) and immediately set about investigating whether the car had been stolen. In the course of the

verbal exchanges the agents of law and order learnt that the black man was Mr. Nokwe. This only served to enflame them further and they severely assaulted him. Had Advocate Nokwe not learnt how to behave before his superiors! After spending a little time in hospital Duma instituted civil and criminal proceedings against his assailants. The policemen were acquitted of any criminal offence but the Minister of Justice settled out of court the civil action by paying Duma £1000 damages.

ADD THE FOLLOWING AT THE SUITABLE CHRONOLOGICAL PLACE

In 1949 tragic riots broke out in Durban between Africans and Indians resulting in the death of a number of Indians and the burning and looting of scores of business and buildings. Many Africans were also shot as a result of police action. The disturbances were sparked off by a relatively minor incident between an African boy and an Indian. The riots have been attributed by some as having been caused by the existence of anti-Indian feelings among Africans arising out of their exploitation by Indian traders. Indians have also been accused of treating Africans with contempt. On the other hand the existence of extreme nationalistic feelings among the Africans has been sighted as a probable cause.

There may or may not have been an element of truth in the above reasons. But to proceed along this line of investigation would be side tracking from the real issue. The primary causes for the riots must be sought in the social system itself which is based on the engendering of racial feelings, suspicions and hatred. In particular one must view the riots in the background of the happenings of

the preceeding years.

With the launching of the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign by the Indian Congress and the concomitant imposition of trade sanctions by India against South Africa, the withdrawal of India's High Commissioner from South Africa and the indictment of South Africa's racial policies at the UN a tremendous anti-Indian campaign was let loose by the whites in South Africa. The Nationalist Party came into power in 1948 promising to keep the "Kaffer's" in their place and driving the "Koelies" out of the country. Among all population groups the Nats built up a picture of Indians as some hideous monster which threatened the lives and livelihood of all the people, and which had to be destroyed.

For more than 300 years the whites have also forced the idea that the African is a savage, without a history, culture or worthy aspiration. He has been reduced to a life of hardship, frustration, bitterness and hostility against all who enjoy better social, economic and political opportunity than himself.

History seems to have presented just the oppoetunity the Nats had been praying for. What could be better than to divert all the accumulated frustrations and anger of the African away from the real issues. The Indian had been presented as his main enemy and they were the weakest and most accesible victims.

It was no accident that the police force in Durban was not called out timeously to curb the rioting. For prompt action by the police could have brought the situation under control on the very first night. It was no accident that some of the leading white firms especially let their African workers off early and provided them with transport to go out into the Indian areas. Instances of whites actually egging the Africans on against the Indians were widespread. The authorities intervened effectively only after most damage was done, and then they turned their guns mercilessly against the Africans. The rioting was eventually drowned in a river of blood.

The most significant development from the riots was the strengthening of the unity between Africans and Indians that had been steadily growing since the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact in 1947. During the riots leaders of the two Congresses, including Drs. Xuma and Naicker, and others together toured the affected areas in efforts to restore peace and calm.

Because of the wave of criticism against the racial policies of the Nats as well as the irresponsible manner in which the police handled the riots, the Nats felt obliged to appoint a commission (on which no black man was appointed). The Congresses decided to make joint representation before the commission. They aimed to adduce evidence to show that there was no inherent hostility between the African and Indian people, and to put the blame squarely where it belonged. An exhaustive joint memorandum was prepared and Congress workers were assigned to gather evidence in support of the contention. The Johannesburg lawyer Advocate George Lowen was briefed by the Congresses to present their case. But from the outset Dr. Lowen was met with

obstruction and difficulties. The commission did everything possible to frustrate the Congresses case. The crowning blow was struck when it ruled that it would not allow the cross examination of witnesses. It was clear that the government feared the exposure that was planned by the Congresses. The commission was set up merely to whitewash the Nats. Under the circumstances the Congresses decided that no useful purpose would be served by their continued appearance before such a commission. On their instructions Dr. Lowen withdrew and with him hundreds of Africans and Indians who were present in the hall marched out. Only the whites remained.

After the Durban riots there were very minor incidents involving Africans and Indians in Newclare (Johannesburg), Benoni and Germiston. In all these instances, it was the timely intervention of the African and Indian Congresses that promptly brought them to a stop. The years following have been marked by the growing unity and co-operation of the people and in spite of the policy of apartheid and separate development the Nats have not been able to crush desire of the people to work and live in harmony.

Note: Add to suitable place possibly to Chpt 10 the following:

Side by side with this material was the influence of the writings of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, especially his autobiography, "The Unity of India", and "Glimpses of World History", which contained letters he wrote to his daughter Indira, the present premier of India, all of which widened my understanding of the political problems of a colonial country and the practical difficulties of

trying to unite people from various social strata and schools of thought in a struggle against a common enemy.



## Chapter Eleven:

The ANC has for the last 64 years been the premier African political organisation in South Africa striving to unite Africans around the demand for full democratic rights and advancement of African welfare in all fields. It has always been far ahead of all other African political organisations in the country in the size of its membership, influence both at home and abroad, in policy and activities. Like most national movements throughout the world that were founded before the October Revolution, it started as an organisation that laid stress on constitutional and conciliatory struggle and in the course of its evolution developed a militant outlook which it effectively uses in its fight for a new social order.

Throughout its history its leadership has been repeatedly challenged by new organisations one of whose main objects has been to oust it from its dominant position or to wrest the initiative from its hands, and who became its bitter critics when they discovered they were too weak to shake its firm hold on the people. Amongst these organisations were the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, the All African Convention, the Cape African Voters Association, the African Democratic Party, the Unity Movement (NEUM) to which the AAC is affiliated and the ANC National-minded Bloc. Some of these have long been forgotten and none of those that remain are a threat to the position of the ANC as the real mouthpiece of the African people in the country.

In 1959 there occurred four important developments which aroused considerable interest in the

country and more particularly in the liberation movement. One of these was the emergence of the Pan Africanist Congress under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe, then lecturing on African languages at the university of Witwatersrand. In 1955 I wrote in "Liberation" under the pen name Dalibunga Ngubengcuka an article in which I discussed the activities of a clique within the ANC and predicted that they would finally emerge as an independent organisation. This occurred in April 1959.

The immediate cause for the breakaway was their objection to the Freedom Charter which they attacked on four main grounds. They objected to the clause in the preamble that our people had been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and regarded this statement as an over generous concession to whites and inaccurate for whites had never been deprived of their birthright to land and liberty.

They also attacked the principle of inter-racial co-operation which forms the central theme of the Charter and announced that under their leadership Africans would conduct their own independent struggles. They rejected the co-operation of Indians and whites but opened their doors to Coloureds on the grounds that the latter had no other home except South Africa. In fact their most vicious accusation was that Indians and whites dominated the policy of the ANC in the "Consultative Committee" which was made up of representatives of the Joint Executives of the Congresses.

They labelled the Charter as a communist inspired document and sought to substantiate the

allegation by quoting the clause dealing with the nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industry. Finally they denounced the ANC as a reformist organisation which had failed to give an effective leadership and accused us of having abandoned the 1949 Programme of Action which detailed the various methods by which we hoped to achieve our main objective.

Their aim was declared to be the overthrow of white supremacy and the establishment in its place of a non-racial, Africanist, socialist and democratic society, non-racial in character, Africanist in origin, socialist in content and democratic in form. (N.B. Check when did they begin to emphasize socialism - possibly after their men went abroad and witnessed its popularity in the African states? Diba's impressions: matter was expressly mentioned in RS' presidential address at the inaugural conference). They condemned what they termed multi-racialism and claimed that they stood for positive action, a claim that was highlighted by the public declaration that they made that they would free Africans by not later than 31st December 1963.

The name of the new body was a shrewd move on the part of its founders and at once projected the PAC as a product of African soil and the South African heir to all the glorious traditions left behind by patriots of our continent. Among its founders was Peter Raboroko, an old friend from Fort Hare days and with whom we had worked closely in the Youth League. A voracious reader whose literary talent and sense of humour we greatly exploited on the editorial board of the "African Lodestar", the mouthpiece of the League, he was one of those who helped to put the league on its feet. The general secretary was Potlako Leballo, a pleasant man for whom it had been my pleasure

to act professionally during the first months after my admission as an attorney. Zephania Mothopeng, another friend for whom I had also previously acted became the national chairman. The organisation attracted men like Gaur Radebe, my former hero and political tutor, and fellow accused in the Treason Trial like Joe Molefe and Vusumzi Make, able young men who were among the leaders of the great Evaton bus boycott. There were several others among them whom we knew as courageous and devoted and we believed would give a good account of themselves wherever they might be.

This situation immediately aroused in me the fervent hope that unity between our respective organisations would not be difficult to achieve and that, as soon as the heat of polemics had cooled, the bitter lessons of struggle would bring us together. Inspired by this belief I made it a point from the outset to pay more than casual interest in the policy statements and activities of the new organisation. To equip myself for this purpose I approached my friend Robert Sobukwe, the day after their inaugural conference and asked for a copy of his presidential address, constitution of his organisation, and basic policy material.

In our situation where a minority of whites imposes its arbitrary rule on the vast majority of blacks any organisation that exploits racialism, that puts forward spectacular programmes of activities and promises speedy solution will have a strong appeal, especially on the younger generation who are always impatient of the caution of the older and more experienced generation.

The undertaking to liberate the country by the end of 1963 and the call upon the people to be ready for the historic hour created the belief that Africans had at last produced a leadership that would fulfill all the fond hopes that were once aroused by Sekhukhune and Cetywayo, Maqomo and Montshiwa, by Dube, Kadalie, Xuma, Jabavu, Mosaka, Lembede and others.

The Western press and the American State Department hailed the emergence of the Young Turks, especially because of their anti-communist attitude and the American Embassy in South Africa immediately fraternized with them. The Nats were in a dilemma. The attitude of the PAC on communism and Indians and their virulent criticism of the ANC was identical with theirs. The PAC's rejection of inter-racial co-operation in the struggle for political changes gave the Nats the satisfaction that their policy on separate development was being echoed by a group of intellectuals from right inside the liberation movement itself, and they saw in the new organisation a potential ally with whom they could settle and combine when the onslaught of the ANC becomes overwhelming.

In their glee over the appearance of this group both the American State Department and the Nats went so far as to inflate their actual membership so as to give the false impression that the PAC was now the leading political organisation for Africans in the country. But at the same time the Nats were disturbed by the ultra militancy of these men whose pompous plans were designed to win within four years of their emergence what the black man had fought for for 3 centuries. They were potential allies that had to be carefully watched.

In regard to the attacks made by the PAC the ANC has always welcomed constructive criticism from members and non members and regards it as the life blood of any great movement. Frequently we have publicly acknowledged our weaknesses and mistakes, repudiated decisions when we realised that we did not correctly assess the situation. Well meant criticism from non-members is weighed as carefully as that of members, the approach being whether the acceptance of that criticism will help us to see the way forward more clearly.

To those whom the unity of the African people is always uppermost in their minds and who are constantly seeking solutions, the views of another African political organisation, however comparatively weak and inexperienced it may be, is a matter of great importance and to brush aside with contempt its reservations about our policy and activities, would be a serious error.

At the same time an organisation that has a mania for making flippant charges and malicious propaganda against another organisation does great harm to the common cause and must accept full responsibility for creating divisions and tensions amongst the people and deserves the rebuke and scorn of those they try to smear by underhand methods. This is not the type of criticism our membership can tolerate.

The PAC argument that the above mentioned clause in the preamble of the Freedom Charter is over generous and inaccurate is probably due to an inaccurate reading of this particular sentence. They

interpret it as declaring that the people of South Africa, black and white, have both been deprived of their birthright to land, liberty and peace. In actual fact the preamble says nothing of the kind. To quote from the preamble: "We, the people of South Africa declare for all our country and the world to know: - that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people; -that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality....."

When freedom fighters from different population groups belong to the same movement, have common aspirations and common programmes, they completely identify themselves with the problems of that movement even when such problems affect a particular group only. When Hilda Bernstein, a member of the Congress of Democrats, addresses a meeting of the ANC Women's League on passes for African women, she will speak of the grave injustice to "our women", "our mothers, sisters and daughters", "our people" although she herself is not required to carry a pass. Nobody can infer from her remarks that white women now also carry passes and the above mentioned clause must be seen in this light.

The principle of inter-racial co-operation has been accepted by almost all national movements in Africa and elsewhere, and has been fully acknowledged by the Tanganyika African National Union, United National Independence Party of Zambia, Frelimo, MPLA and FNLA in Algeria, to mention but a few examples. Non-Africans in these countries were and are admitted as members

and some of them even held prominent positions in the movements. The colour of a man's skin was considered irrelevant and the primary concern of freedom movements was to mobilize all those who identified themselves with the anti-colonial struggle and who were prepared to fight as part of an organised and disciplined movement.

In this regard the PAC had been out of step and, in Southern Africa, was in line only with Adelimo Gwambe's UDENAMO in Mozambique and Holden Roberto's UPA in Angola, both of which had the same ideological outlook as the PAC, who similarly scoffed at other racial groups and encouraged divisions in the ranks of the oppressed people when unity had become more crucial than ever before. It is with these organisations and with COREMA in Mozambique that the PAC was allied and for whose victory they prayed and whose collapse they now mourn. It is true that in Tanganyika, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Algeria there were no parallel organisations as in our case; all freedom fighters who wished to join one body could do so. But the difference in actual application of the principle of inter-racial co-operation is due solely to local conditions. The PAC has since repudiated its initial policy in this regard and today practice what they previously condemned. Now they have Indian and white members, however few these may be - a clear admission on their part that they have to come to realise their mistake.

The only reason worthy of consideration advanced by the PAC for the allegation that the Charter is a communist inspired document is the fact that the document contains a clause nationalising the mines, banks and monopoly industry. Nationalisation is an essential part of socialism and the



criticism is quite a strange one coming as it does from those who claim themselves to be socialists. Today nationalisation of the major industrial and commercial concerns is quite common, especially in the new states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. But we do not have to take a world tour to know that nationalisation is no evidence of communist influence for the history of our own country is full of several examples of nationalisation. In South Africa communications, iron and steel, power and other key sectors of the economy have long been nationalised.

But even more important than this is the fact that members of the PAC know very well that the whole idea of the Charter came from Professor Matthews. Almost all the members of its national executive were members of the ANC before the breakaway and some of them attended both the 1953 Cape Provincial Conference where Professor Matthews first introduced the proposal, and at the National Conference which accepted the idea. Many rank and filers who did not attend these two conferences received the reports from their branch delegates and became fairly conversant with the history of the idea. The charge is nothing more than a piece of cheap propaganda to discredit the ANC as the Nats have tried to do when they came into power and ever since.

What is of course trite is the fact that there are communist in the ANC and some of them occupy top positions. The PAC has repeatedly stated that they are not prepared to work with them and have refused to co-operate with us on any issue mainly because of this fact. In fact it has been given as one of the stumbling blocks to the question of unity between the two organisations. But here again the inconsistency and opportunism of their leadership was clearly exposed when in later years they

toned down their anti-communism and established friendly relations with the Communist Party of China and in fact received much material aid from Peking. Where then is the logic in spurning the hand of co-operation with the South African Communist Party which is in the forefront of the freedom struggle? It is ironic that some of the very same PAC leaders who previously attacked the Freedom Charter as a "communist document" now criticise it as "capitalist document".

The SACP is one of the most radical, active and consistent political parties in this country, and has a far better record of service and achievement than those who now question its bona fides. For more than 50 years it has fought against all forms of oppression and fully identifies itself with the struggle of the oppressed peoples, emerging in the process as a bitter enemy of apartheid, a fact which the Nats acknowledged by declaring it illegal within two years of coming to power. To reject the co-operation of a party with such a good record can only be due to the influence of our own background and of missionary education, to many years of anti-communist indoctrination by the propaganda agencies of the enemy and to inability to think for ourselves in this regard.

Anti-communism is a social disease most people educated in Western schools have inherited and as long as community leaders are trained only in such schools the ridiculous spectacle of freedom fighters who are chained to the patterns of thought current in the enemy camp will continue to play havoc with our own minds.

Finally the PAC argued that the ANC was a reformist organisation and that it had abandoned the

1949 Programme of Action. Firstly it is a contradiction in terms to say as one and the same time that we are a communist front and a reformist organisation. A communist party is a party of revolution, and the SACP has lived up to its tradition, while a reformist organisation shuns away from revolution. But of even more importance, and as indicated in the preceeding chapters, is a fact that the whole history of South Africa since 1950 has been dominated by the political activities of the ANC and its allies during which we have waged the most powerful campaigns the country has ever seen.

The achievements of the ANC and its allies in this regard become all the more significant when we take into account that most of our campaigns were organised under semi-illegal conditions, when many of our members were restricted in particular areas, and were prohibited from attending meetings, when it was difficult to hold meetings, when the organisation was already banned in some areas and when the Security Police were waging a reign of terror and persecution.

None of the reasons given by the PAC for breaking away from the ANC can stand the test of objective examination and the true explanation must be sought elsewhere. Some have explained their action as the adventure of men who were influenced more by events in Africa than at home. They heard how Nkrumah had broken away from Danquah's United Gold Cost Convention Party and established the Convention People's Party which soon thereafter rose to power, how Nyerere broke away from the Tanganyika ANC and came to power at the head of TANU, and Kaunda led UNIP away from the ANC in Northern Rhodesia and immediately occupied a commanding position

in the politics of that country. They hoped that this magic formula would also work in our situation.

Ours is part of the anti-colonialism struggle and of the Pan African movement and it is correct that we should link it with that of the people of South Africa. In fact, as has been pointed out earlier, the ANC has been closely associated with the Pan African movement from its earliest days and was one of the co-sponsors of the continental Pan African Congress. But in parroting the speeches of Nkrumah and other national leaders on the continent the PAC forget that in order to become the leading African political organisation in the country they had to deal with the ANC which was not a conservative or spent force as was the UGCC and the ANCs of Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia, but a powerful and flexible organisation which was growing stronger by the day because it was keeping abreast of political developments, rallying all the oppressed people, providing a common platform for all the schools of thought opposed to the radical oppression and ready to make use of the experiences of revolutionary movements all over the world.

They also forgot that to occupy a central position in the political life of South Africa they had first to make a correct assessment of the situation here at home. They missed this simple fact right from the start. This is their inability to see the pressing necessity for the unity of all the anti-apartheid forces at home.

Others see their action as that of a frustrated clique who tried inside the organisation to push a particular line and dismally failed in the attempt. As a result of their factional activities over a long

time they stood discredited to the membership, became unhappy in their own home and could find peace of mind only by walking out and forming their own organisation. Perhaps no one reason can be given for the emergence of the PAC and the step was influenced by diverse factors, some political and others of a personal nature.

The PAC sought to project an image of a revolutionary organisation par excellence when it made the dramatic statement that it would free Africans by the end of 1963 and attempted to put itself in the centre of Pan Africanism when it called for the unity from Cape to Cairo and from Morocco to Malagasy. Its final objective it declared was a United States of Africa in which the whole continent would be under one central government, one monolithic state led by one monolithic party. Its call for a monolithic State of Africa is as utopian as their childish rhymes on the character, origin, content and form of their policy and presents the comic spectacle of men who tinker with fantastic dreams whose realisation will delude the African statesmen for centuries to come. The idea of a team of men who have set themselves the task to destroy unity at home and building that on the vast continent of Africa completes the comedy. As for its claims to be socialist in content I am aware of no attempt by the PAC to spell out the essential features of the socialism which they proclaim. Their protestations of socialism are incongruous with their criticism of the nationalisation clause in the Freedom Charter and perhaps is symptomatic of the fact that proclaiming their policy to be socialist in content they were dealing merely with propaganda slogans without having considered the implications of their claim in this regard.

The PAC launched their movement of "positive action" with a "status campaign". The object was to achieve a position of dignity and self respect for the African people. One of the aims envisaged was to secure fair and dignified and courteous treatment for Africans shopping in white stores and bazaars. Demands were made that Africans be addressed as "Sir" and "Madam". Shops not complying with this requirement were to be boycotted. This campaign hardly got off the ground.

Some PAC leaders have a penchant for the dramatic and the spectacular. They saw their opportunity in the ANC AntiPass Campaign which was rapidly gaining momentum throughout the country.

The December 1959 ANC annual conference was held in Durban at the height of the anti-pass demonstrations in Natal. It was a conference at which many familiar faces were absent. Apart from hundreds who were banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, there were scores of others who could not attend because they were accused in the Treason Trial, one of the bail conditions being that they should not attend meetings. This was the right place to hold the conference at the time for the people of that city were boycotting passes, beer halls and municipal buses and the struggle in the country areas against Bantu Authorities and a host of other irksome measures of repression was still raging fiercely. The campaign against passes would be a real test of strength for the ANC and the African people and would require thorough going organisation and the creation of a proper machinery throughout the country as well as working out of effective counter measures against what the enemy would certainly try to do. Conference decided on a gigantic anti-pass campaign throughout the country. Although it was not explicitly stated in the resolution it was

generally understood that the campaign would climax on June 26th with the burning of passes. In preparation for this event massive demonstrations were to be held on 31st March. Head Office officials at once toured the country, field workers laboured systematically in the townships, in factories and in other firms and in trains and buses publicising the decision. Leaflets, stickers and posters were printed and circulated. The campaign was definitely catching on and the people were beginning to talk about it.

It was at this stage that the PAC decided to jump the gun and announced that it would launch its anti-pass campaign on the 21st March. Up to this moment they had no definite plans in this regard. No conference was held by them to discuss the matter and no organisational work of any significance had been undertaken for the purpose. But when they saw the splendid build up of our activities they viewed the whole matter not from the point of view of concerted action against a common enemy but of pure opportunism and rivalry. They climbed on the band wagon and exploited the explosive mood that prevailed and which we had created.

They announced that on 21st March batches of people in different parts of the country would march to the local police stations and hand in their passes and thereby court arrest. It was expected that the masses of the people would demonstrate in solidarity with the volunteers. Another example of their naivety was their belief that the action of surrendering their passes would earn them sentences of 3 or 4 weeks only. Indeed it was said that a number of them especially took their annual leaves from employment in order to participate in the campaign.

On 21st March Robert Sobukwe and his executive walked to the Orlando Police Station to hand themselves in. The tens of thousands of people going to work all but ignored the PAC men. Hardly any people turned out in solidarity and even the batches of volunteers was much smaller than announced. In Johannesburg the campaign was a dismal failure.

In three other centres however the response was tremendous. In Evaton ZB Molete, ably assisted by the experienced Joe Molefe mustered the support of the whole township. In Sharpeville Location, Vereeniging thousands of people stayed away from work and demonstrated outside the police station. Cape Town witnessed one of the biggest anti-pass demonstrations in the history of that city. Apart from these three areas there was little activity in the rest of the country.

But it was the massacre of the people of Sharpeville in which 80 people were killed and hundreds wounded, and the shooting at Langa that brought the PAC into the limelight.

Prior to the 21st March attempts were made to organise the PAC in Natal. Robert Sobukwe, Potlako Leballo, Selby Ngendane, Peter Molotsi, Madzunya and other leading members of the organisation visited Durban where a meeting was organised for them. They were welcomed by A.B. Mgcobo and Howard Ngcobo and the hall was packed out. But there was trouble right from the start when the audience demanded to be addressed by speakers elected by themselves. During the heated exchanges that ensued Steve Dlamini rose and called upon the followers of Chief Luthuli to



walk out with him. Almost the entire crowd marched out leaving behind Robert Sobukwe and his men on the platform and the Security Police. The PAC fared no better in this city when the demonstrations were launched. Similarly the campaign completely failed in the Orange Free State and was centred in Johannesburg, Vereeniging and Cape Town. A handful of people were also arrested in Pretoria.

Sobukwe and his group were arrested and charged before a Johannesburg magistrate. He fought the case on the militant slogan "No bail, No defence, No fine" and he used that forum to launch a vicious attack on the ANC, accusing us of wasting money on lawyers to defend political cases, of lack of militancy and of misleading the people, remarks which were widely reported by the press. He was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment without the option of a fine. Others received comparatively lighter sentences. These heavy sentences came as a shock to all the participants, who had expected to receive but a few weeks.

No less than 300 members of the PAC were convicted and most of them were sentenced to 3 years but with the option of a fine. Amongst them was Matthew Nkoana, an able journalist whose articles I often found stimulating. In spite of the slogan "No bail, No defence, No fine" he and many others served only part of their sentences after which they paid the fines.

Later Sobukwe appealed to the Transval Supreme Court on the ground that the sentence was severe and argued his own case. In dismissing the appeal, the presiding judge reminded him of the

statement he had made in the magistrates court to the effect that members of his organisation would not defend cases. His efforts to appeal to the Appellate Division, the country's highest court of appeal were unsuccessful. In Vereeniging Nyakale Tsolo and his colleagues were also convicted as well as Phillip Kgosana and others in Cape Town. Again in spite of their slogan "No bail, Nodefence, No fine" they were all released on bail and later fled to the then Basutholand. In subsequent political trials the PAC completely abandoned their slogan, applied for bail, instructed white lawyers to defend them (the very practice for which they had vociferously condemned the ANC) and paid fines wherever they could. The slogan was by no means a well thought out tactic but an opportunistic technique to rally support and to create the impression that they were fire eaters. They abandoned it as soon as they tasted the hardships of jail life.

Four days before the demonstrations were launched Sobukwe advised us of the contemplated campaign and asked us to join him. In fact he did not want our co-operation and the whole move was a tactical one to anticipate the criticism that would be made that they did not invite the ANC. He told us at the last moment when he was sure we could not call a members conference to discuss the matter, when we could not mobilise the public and when we would not even have sufficient to even summon a meeting of our National Executive before the start of the demonstration. We however replied that the ANC was already engaged in its own campaign and declined Sobukwe's invitation.

In spite of their inconsistency, amateurishness and stunts the PAC rank and file showed a lot of

courage and the spectacular demonstrations at Sharpeville and Langa caught the whole country off guard and had far reaching repercussions. It created a new situation and the ANC had to make rapid adjustments to its own plans. The massacre of the people could not be tolerated. Firstly, with the advantage of a better machinery and resources at its command the ANC decided to call for a nation wide Day of Mourning on the 28th March for the victims of Sharpeville and to protest against the wanton massacre. At the same time it brought forward its own schedule for action against passes. On Sunday March 27th Chief Luthuli publicly burned his pass and called upon the country to do like wise. We damned the consequences and many of these humiliating documents disappeared in bonfires in various parts of South Africa. (Chief Luthuli was later convicted for this offence and received a suspended sentence).

There was a tremendous response throughout the country to the ANC call for the Day of Mourning and hundreds of thousands of workers did not go to work. Already after the Sharpeville massacre there had been panic in government circles and senior ministers made policy statements which indicated a growing concern about the explosive situation apartheid had created. General Rademeyer, the Commissioner of Police, went so far as to issue a public statement that virtually meant the suspension of pass laws.

With the success of the Day of Mourning and fearing the consequences of the ANC pass burning campaign, the government declared a State of Emergency.

On the night after the general strike police swooped on homes of government opponents throughout the country and detained about 2,000 people. Units of the army were mobilised and posted in strategic areas. Both ANC and PAC were declared illegal. Many people from the liberation movement fled the country. There was also a flight of capital and the government had to resort to extraordinary measures to control the outflow. All in all South Africa was in turmoil and chaos.

Only a powerful mass campaign could produce such immediate reactions and undermine the confidence of hardened racialists like the Nats in a policy which had helped them to power. With these demonstrations the PAC moved to the front line of battle and blasted away at the enemy with all the determination of men who were hungry for freedom. Sobukwe was praised by the press and individuals inside and outside the country as a man of the future and the "Voice" of Ghana hailed him as a Messiah arisen from amongst the people and who was carrying the cross of freedom to Mount Golgotha.

But if by launching these demonstrations the PAC hoped to eclipse the ANC, events were soon to disillusion them. The ANC held its position as the leading African political organisation and stuck to its programme of activities. With their failure to implement their promise to liberate the people by December 1963 their sort lived popularity vanished. Even before 1960 ran out Prime Minister Verwoerd who had been shot and badly wounded, returned from hospital and rallied his people, including the wavering senior cabinet ministers, back to the beaten track of apartheid and the hope of policy changes that were aroused by speeches of government spokesmen receded.

Few things indicated just how naive and reckless the PAC could be as the promise to overthrow racial oppression within 4 years of their emergence. In their keenness to keep in line with the Pan African movement they blindly accepted schedules and datelines which were worked out not on the basis of our own situation, but on entirely different conditions in the rest of Africa where British, French and Belgian imperialist countries were already in full retreat and independence of the affected colonies was in sight.

In our country the position was quite different. There was a substantial and deeply entrenched white population which had no parent state to retreat to and which would be dislodged at a very high cost and only after the use of the most extreme measures of coercion. Already by the end of the 1950s many people felt that nothing short of that would remove the yolk of oppression from our necks. Yet not withstanding this and in spite of the gigantic task they had set for themselves, the PAC did not appear to have made any plans to prepare the people for that historic moment and we must assume that they thought that that moment would be brought about merely by going to jail and waiting there for the Nats to fall on their own.

With the declaration of martial law and the arrest of practically all our leading activist it became quite impossible to organise for June 26th. Looked at from the point of view of the PAC the campaign was a success because it put them in the limelight, made an impact on the youth and attracted the support of many national movements in Africa.

But viewed from the angle of the freedom struggle as a whole they acted as wreckers and saboteurs. Although their activities were centred mainly in Cape Town and Vereeniging, with a handful of followers in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Ladysmith, they divided the people at a critical moment and the day of decision for which the people had laboured so long never arrived. The PAC was to play a diversive role in many subsequent campaigns asking the people to go to work when we called general strikes, condemning acts of sabotage when we first launched them and making dramatic and misleading statements to counter any announcements we made which might have an impact on the people. From the opportunistic way they started their campaign it became clear that the problems of disunity had deepened, that from now on we would deal with a group that would act independently. The malicious attacks made by Sobukwe on the ANC during his trial indicated the tremendous hostility he harboured against the ANC. We realised that for many years to come we would have to work for unity far harder than ever before.

But the factional activities of the PAC, like those of the Unity Movement and its affiliates, have left the ANC in a stronger and commanding position than ever before. Of course, internally it has taken severe knocks especially since it was declared illegal in April 1960. None the less it is prosecuting the struggle against the enemy at home and abroad and has kept the freedom flames alight raising hope in the minds of the people that the day of decision will surely come. In the meantime the PAC is handicapped in its work by the wild and misleading promises it has repeatedly made in the past and which it never carried out. If it does not immediately adjust its position it will certainly suffer

the same fate as the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, Cape African Volunteers Association, African Democratic Party and the National-Minded Bloc which no longer exist or the Unity Movement which really exists in name only and whose role has been essentially as factional as that of the PAC.

My criticism of the PAC does not in the last diminish my respect for Robert Sobukwe's personal ability, courage and integrity. We are personal friends of long standing and I enjoy his company. He is a scholar and sportsman, devoted to the freedom struggle, an eloquent speaker and humble Christian. As former national president of the ANC Youth League and the Fort Hare SRC he showed a lot of initiative and won the respect of many people and his readiness to pay the penalty for his principles enhanced my respect for him.

I was astonished and even disgusted when my former political mentor and hero, Gaur Radebe, joined the PAC. It seemed an anti-climax for a man who was once a member of the National Executive of the ANC, a marxist and on-time member of the Johannesburg District Committee of the CP and a veteran who had courageously and competently led many campaigns to align himself with a group of extreme nationalists who were at war with the other sections of the oppressed people in their own country.

I would probably have condoned his defection if by joining the PAC he had hoped to play the role of bridging the gap between our respective organisations and keeping us together. As it was his

abilities and wealth of experience was not even appreciated by his new friends and he was relegated to a junior position where he was primarily concerned with purely local and routine administrative matters. Notwithstanding this my indebtedness to him remains as deep as it was before his defection and I regard him still as a worthy fighter who has made his mark.

Finally I regard the PAC, in spite of its mistakes and weaknesses, as a militant organisation which has attracted the support of many gifted and hard working men, and it would certainly be unrealistic to write them off as a spent force. In my political work I am inspired by the confidence that the ANC and its allies can fight alone and beat the Nats and there after bring about a completely new society that will enable our people to live freely and happily.

At the same time I respect all men who have committed their lives to the fight against social evil, the greatest of which is the exploitation of man by his fellow men. Members of the PAC are also in the centre of this struggle and against our common enemy and in spite of our disagreements I know that there are men in their ranks who strive genuinely and hard for unity. It is because of this that I have never lost hope that one day our respective organisations will merge their resources, human and otherwise, and fight under one command. That will be a breakthrough that will give our people striking power the enemy will find difficult to counter.

A new trade union co-ordinating body that was formed in 1959 and that worked closely with the PAC was the Federation of Free African Trade Unions (FOFATUSA). Under the leadership of Jacob Nyaoase, then secretary of the Bakers and Confectioners African Workers Union and a former



member of the National Executive of the ANC Youth League and executive member of the PAC. African workers in the baking, chemical, garment (women's branch) leather, motor and sweet industries were affiliated to it.

By 1962 FOFATUSA claimed a membership of 36,000 workers from 20 affiliated unions. The new body was opposed to the non-racial policy of the progressive SACTU which stood for equal rights for all workers, black and white, and whether registered or not. In spite of SACTU's attempts to find some working arrangements with FOFATUSA it rejected co-operation with SACTU on the ground that it was interested in organising African workers only, and instead chose to collaborate with the racist TUCSA, which accepted only registered unions and which was controlled by whites, and with whom FOFATUSA immediately established a liaison committee to advise FOFATUSA on a variety of technical problems such as book keeping, preparation of memoranda and office administration. Later during the same year TUCSA amended its constitution to permit the affiliation of African trade unions even though unregistered. FOFATUSA was prepared to affiliate as a body but the TUCSA constitution only provided for the affiliation of individual unions. Prior to the amendments of TUCSA's constitution it was the policy of TUCSA to create parallel African trade unions and these were regarded as lackeys of the parent white trade unions and there was a general impression in progressive circles that FOFATUSA was under the strong influence of TUCSA.

The role of FOFATUSA in the South African labour movement was the same as that of the PAC in

the liberation movement. They were a divisive force and frequently organised workers who were already members of SACTU. They also opposed strikes and other actions connected with SACTU, arguing that they were interested in industrial issues and the workers welfare and not in political issues as SACTU was. Internationally they aligned themselves with the right-wing of American inspired International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and refused to have any dealings with the progressive World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) to which SACTU is affiliated.

Jacob Nyaose was arrested and sentenced together with Robert Sobukwe in 1960 and later left the country and FOFATUSA was dissolved in 1966. One of the leading executive members of FOFATUSA was Lucy Mvubelo, secretary of the Garment Workers Union (Women's Branch) (check if this is correct). In 1964 she and Edgar Deane of the Furniture Workers Union attended the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference from which South Africa had withdrawn in 1964 and asked for her re-admission. But SACTU representative Moses Mabida and others foiled their move. Later the same Lucy Mvubelo attended a conference of the ICFTU in West Germany and asked the conference to lift the boycott of South African goods but her plea was rejected out of hand.

It is significant that TUCSA has in due course progressed so far as to accept the non-racial policy of SACTU and although the leadership of the organisation will remain for a long time in the hands of white trade unionists who will also shape its policy. In the light of our own situation, the new line is

a bold one we welcome. But the ghost of FOFATUSA may continue to haunt the South African labour movement by perpetuating the heritage of racial divisions that organisation left behind when it disbanded.

The third development of interest to the labour movement in 1959 was the split in the United Party when 12 of its MPs broke away and formed in November of that year the Progressive Party under the leadership of Dr. Jan Steytler. Within the UP the 12 members had attacked the whole policy of separate development and the political fragmentation of the country and demanded instead the integration of Africans and whites, a common voters roll for all population groups, direct representation for Africans in parliament and more land for them, all of which the reactionary UP opposed.

The Progressive Party (PP) then went on to make the same policy mistakes as did the Liberal Party when it was formed. It was prepared to support only a qualified franchise for blacks and equally denounced the use of unconstitutional action as a means of obtaining one's political objectives. These two aspects of their policy marked out clearly a parliamentary party that was preoccupied with the question of winning white votes and of assuring them that under its government whites would not be swamped by black hordes. They projected themselves as a white party that did not understand the problems of the black man who has to fight for his rights without votes, who for more than 80 years had used constitutional and peaceful means, whose economic, political and social conditions, had continued to worsen and who was now seeking to advance his welfare under

semi-illegal conditions. In denouncing extra-parliamentary methods they made no suggestions whatsoever as to alternative means blacks could use and the impression was gained was that political struggle had now become the monopoly of parliamentary parties and those who had the votes. (Check: did they condemn communism as well?) This alienated many blacks who otherwise would have given the new party their full support, and from the point of view of gaining new members other than whites it made even less headway than the Liberal Party.

There was an even more fundamental error in their condemnation of extra-parliamentary action and in putting much reliance on the ballot box. An examination of the actions of the Nats during the last 28 years in which they have been in power suggests that they regard themselves not only as a government that owes its authority to white votes, but as hereditary and permanent heirs of Afrikanerdom who will cling to power no matter what the majority of voters may say in the future.

Their contempt for the democratic process of government has been demonstrated by numerous incidents and they have long been preparing to entrench themselves in power in order to deal with any pressures of liberalism that may threaten their position even if that threat is constitutionally exercised. When the Appellate Division decided against them in the Coloured Vote Case cabinet ministers publicly insulted the judges of the country's highest court as decrepid men and on top of that created a packed court which superseded the jurisdiction of the Appellate Division in constitutional cases.

In appointing members of the cabinet, judges, army commanders and police chiefs, the Commissioner of Prisons and his entire staff, provincial administrators, university heads and those of other public institutions they are guided not by merit but by a man's ideological outlook. Their neurotic aversion to all forms of liberal thought should be a warning to all liberals whether it is reasonable for them to think that they can remove the Nats from power through the ballot box alone. That hope may be more than a fantastic dream.

After all the Nats know too well that the victory of the Progressive Party would mean the end of colour discrimination at least in the extreme form in which it exists in the country today, and that henceforth the "Baas" would sit in parliament, the provincial and municipal councils, next to "Kaffers, Koelies and Hotnots", a development the Nats have sworn will happen over their dead bodies.

Above all the Nats know only too well that the victory of the Progs would immediately lead to a clamour from the people for the punishment of all members of the Nat regime for all the atrocities they have committed in the shooting down of defenceless men, women and children, hanging and murdering through torture of innocent freedom fighters, the crippling of many people who oppose racial oppression, wholesale deportations of Africans from the urban areas, the break up of families through such deportations and imprisonment of husbands and wives, the persecution of their wives. They know only too well that they are hated today by black and white as men who have an insatiable mania for cruelty and pettiness and that the respite they now enjoy is due mainly to the

fact that they are in government commanding enormous power. The Nats will relinquish power to the Progs only when the last soldier defending apartheid will have been shot down and if the Progs have not firmly grasped this simple lesson they will be bitterly disillusioned.

In the 1961 elections all of them except one were eliminated, including their leader Dr. Steytler, a fact which showed just how far ahead they were of the average white voter. Nonetheless Helen Suzman, the only member of the Progs who was retained, put up a magnificent one-man show and received the warm support and admiration of people of various schools of political thought here and abroad. She was undoubtedly the only real anti-apartheid voice in parliament and the discourtesy of the Nat MPs towards her showed how they felt her punches and how deeply they resented her presence.

Another significant development that occurred in 1959 was the passing of the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act to introduce self government in the Bantustans. The bill also created 8 separate Bantustans for the Batswana, North Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tsonga-Mashangane, Vavenda, Ma-Xhosa and Amazulu. Later Ma-Swazi were given their own stan. The bill further made provision for the appointment by the government of the Republic of South Africa of Commissioners General to serve as official links between the Republic and the Bantustans. There would also be persons, subsequently called ambassadors, who would represent the Bantustans in the urban areas of the Republic. In introducing the bill, De Wet Nel, then minister of Bantu Administration and Development, explained that it was the deep conviction of the government that

the personal and national ideals of every individual and of every population group could best be developed within its own national community and that only then would the other groups be relieved of the feeling of threat and danger. He added that although the principle of African representation was introduced in the Cape in 1853, whites had never accepted and would never accept it.

(Ommitt? : He blatantly misrepresented African nationalism, stating that the root of African nationalism was hatred for the white man and claimed that nationalism was not African nationalism so much as Sotho, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu nationalism. According to him the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa, including Africans, had rejected multi-racialism and had chosen separate development.)

Dealing with urban Africans De Wet Nel said that they would never be integrated into the white community and added that he had ascertained African feeling in the matter by sending 3,000 copies of the White Paper on the Bill and 30,000 copies of the government sponsored magazine "Bantu" and that he had not received a single protest.

De Villiers Graaf, leader of the opposition, attacked the Bill on the ground that the division of South Africa into black and white states would constitute a grave danger for all South Africans. He feared that the black states might well become spring boards for the propagation of foreign ideologies, like communism. He denounced the Bill as repugnant to the principles of natural justice in that it removed long standing rights without giving anything substantial in return and left

Africans without any voice in a parliament that governed them. He attacked the proposed establishment of a Bantustan system of government which was in conflict with western democratic lines and which left out the millions of Africans permanently settled outside the Bantustans without any means of political expression whatsoever. He asked pertinently: "Is it moral, while people are in the process of development from a primitive state of society towards a higher degree of civilisation, to attempt to force them back into the primitive mould from which they are trying to break out? Above all, is it moral to arrogate to oneself the right to attempt to arrest the development of our native people in the tribal stage of human society when similarly placed people throughout the world are reaching out for western civilisation and are pressing irresistibly for the achievement of that civilisation, and to arrogate that right to oneself without consulting the people concerned?"

Finally De Villiers Graaf attacked the grant of 13% of the country's land to 78% of South Africa's population as immoral and discriminatory. Verwoerd in his reply to Graaf pointed out that the new system of government was engraved in the soul of the African people and incorporated their own laws. He argued that urban and professional Africans would have to go back to the Bantustans to promote civilisation and to assist in the building up of the Bantustans. (He insisted that he and his Party stood by what he had said at the beginning of that year, that is, autonomous, politically independent black states would be established. Urban Africans would have the right, while in the white areas, to take part in the Bantustan government. In addition they would enjoy a limited municipal self government in the form of urban Bantu councils.



In dealing with the question of independence of Bantustans Verwoerd conceded that the white parliament would retain control of functions like defence, foreign affairs and railways, but not for ever. He stressed that neither the Africans nor he could stop the development of the Bantustans towards full independence and that none of their successors would be able to stop it either, whether the policy of the Nats was accepted or that of the UP.

His belief was that the independence of the Bantustans would create so much friendship, so much gratitude and so many mutual interests that there would be no threat or danger of these new Bantustans becoming springboards for the propagation of foreign ideologies.

Verwoerd's reply to the crucial question of immorality of land distribution amongst white and black was evasive. He brushed Graaf's question aside by comparing the population densities in France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and Switzerland.

(Omit or retain?)

He then turned to the old bogey of the Black Peril to scare the whites about the disastrous consequences of UP policy that would result in domination of whites by blacks; in the formation of a South African army and police force under black generals, an air force under a black marshall, a government with black cabinet ministers, a parliament with black MPs, administrators and mayors, all black.

(Retain or omit?: the majority of the speeches were made by men who were ignorant of African problems and aspirations, who obtained their information mainly from press reports, chiefs and headmen, police files and informers, who have never spoken directly to African leaders and who have never made any systematic study of our problems. The most typical example of this ignorance was the man who was in charge of the government department dealing with Bantu Administration. His speech was ridiculous, full of hypocrisy and contradictions and at times based on pure fiction.

He claimed that God had given a divine task to every nation in the world, which dared not be destroyed or denied by anyone, yet the Bill he was piloting at the time he preached this sermon sought to further deny us the right to decide our future. His statement that whites had never and would never accept the principle of African political representation was to say at least grossly inaccurate and in conflict not only with the history of non racial societies throughout the world but with our own history. From 1853 to 1936 Cape Africans enjoyed qualified franchise rights and those who qualified were put on a common voters roll with the whites. In 1936 Hertzog altered this system of political representation by means of an act which was passed by more than two thirds of the members of both Houses of parliament sitting together. In terms of the new law Cape Africans would be represented in the House of Assembly by three whites and by four whites in the Senate and two whites in the Provincial Council. White South Africa accepted this system until the Nats abolished it in 1960. Yet De Wet Nel had the temerity to tell the House that whites had never accepted the principle of African representation.

De Wet Nel also told the parliament that he had consulted Africans by sending out 3,000 copies of the White Paper on the Bill and 30,000 copies of the government magazine "Bantu" and that he had not received a single protest. At the time of this debate there were more than 10 million Africans in South Africa and the circulation of a mere 30,000 copies of such material was no means of consultation whatsoever. Apart from the fact the overwhelming majority of the Africans could neither read nor write, the circulation of this departmental material is up to the present day limited to chiefs and headmen, members of the Bantu Authorities, to schools and hardly ever reaches beyond these groups.)

But the real point is that De Wet Nel consciously suppressed the important fact that at that time some rural areas were in turmoil, fighting against the whole system of Bantu Authorities of which the Bill then before parliament formed the most far reaching development in the implementation of the policy of Bantu Authorities. One writer whose book is based substantially on a theses submitted for the degree of Master of Arts of a South African university, summarises the position as follows; ".....for the establishment of Bantu Authorities in many instances has not been voluntary establishment but imposition - imposition that has been accompanied by government threats, by murder, violence, arson, tribal revolt and severe police action".

In these pages we have repeatedly referred to the 1958 revolt of the people of Zeerust, Sekhukhuneland and other areas and pointed out that in the former area Chief Abraham Moilwas

with hundreds of his people, after putting up a courageous fight, had to flee to Bechuanaland. Between 1958 and 1960 the people of Sekhukhuneland revolted. The acting Paramount Chief Moroamoche, Godfrey Sekhukhune and other councillors were banished and no less than 338 people were arrested. For the assassination of a chief who was a government stooge and his bodyguard Madinoge and 13 others were sentenced to death. By 1960 the resistance reached the point of open defiance in which the people refused to pay taxes and to co-operate with the government in the implementation of the so-called rehabilitation scheme. The disturbances were so widespread that between 1958 and 1961 a strong police force was stationed to patrol the area.

Between 1959 and 1960 considerable unrest erupted in Eastern Pondoland in opposition to Bantu Authorities. Government stooges were killed, stabbed, assaulted and their homes burned down. In June 1960 the police, according to official reports, killed 11 Africans but eye witnesses put the figure as high as 30. The situation in the whole area was so explosive that Paramount Chief Botha Sigcau had to flee from his area. It was from this area and during this period that Anderson (?) Ganyile was deported. In January 1961 the Minister of Justice announced in parliament that 4794 Africans and 2 whites had been arrested and imprisoned in this area under the emergency regulations. Units of the defence force assisted the police in patrolling Eastern Pondoland.

Thembuland and Zululand fiercely resisted the introduction of the system and they were amongst the last areas to yield after almost all the areas had been forced to accept it. Although the police atrocities were not as blatant as in Zeerust, Sekhukhuneland and Eastern Pondoland, opponents of

the scheme were deported, beaten up, arrested, their homes destroyed, stock confiscated, and many were given heavy sentences.

Despite these facts De Wet Nel told parliament that he had consulted Africans about the Bill and that there was not a single protest. (Delete: It is this type of exhibition where even responsible cabinet ministers deliberately attempt to mislead the public as to what is happening in the country that makes parliamentary proceedings in South Africa like a circus.) Perhaps it was because Verwoerd well knew that his colleague's statement was at variance with the facts that he pointed out in the same debate that since the Bill was essential to white survival it could not be made subject to the consultations of the African people.

In Thembuland resistance to the introduction of Bantu Authorities had been going on since 1955 and throughout this period Sabata had been solidly behind his people. In 1958 matters came to a head when 4 leading spokesmen, three of whom were members of the Royal House, were deported to the North Western Cape, others to the Transvaal. They were Jackson Nkosiyané, Sabata's secretary, who had worked in the Native Affairs Department for a long time, Chief Bangilizwe Joyi, a senior chief who to this day refuses to take over the chieftaincy of his area, preferring his relative to act for him, Twalimfene Joyi and Mgolombane, the oldest amongst them.

That same year and after consulting the Basutholand Congress Party, the ANC collected all of them from banishment and transferred them to Basutholand where they could live comparatively freely.

One day shortly before we transferred them Mgonibane suddenly turned up at our Orlando home and told me that he was returning immediately to Thembuland and added that he intended challenging his deportation order on the grounds that Thembuland was never captured by the Boers and was therefore not under the jurisdiction of the South African government. I tried to point out that no South African court would ever uphold his plea and to persuade him to drop the matter. But he was adamant and I ended by seeing him to Mthatha.

Jackson Nkosiyanane and others returned home late in 1959 or early 1960. Jackson joined the Democratic Party and became a member of the Transkeian Legislative Assembly. After my first conviction he lived at our Orlando home and during the Rivonia Trial visited court several times. In 1960 (?) he was convicted and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for an alleged attempted assassination of Daliwonga Mathanzima. He has now been installed as chief of his area.

Twalimfene Joyi had been active in the ANC ever since his return from banishment. In 1967 he was arrested and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for recruiting people for military training and was imprisoned on this island. On his discharge in 1973 he returned home and became one of Sabata's advisors. During the first half of 1976 he was found murdered on the Kei River and like many other anti-apartheid fighters, his murderers have not been arrested. This is not the type of case the South African police will even make a pretext to investigate. The police know very well who the culprits are.

Twalimfene was respected not only in Thembuland but throughout the Transkei for he was a descendant of Joyi, the popular chief who acted as regent during the minority of Ngangelizwe, the great grandfather of Sabata. His political activities, his banishment and conviction under the so-called Terrorism Act made him known to a wider public and his death will be mourned not only by his wife and children, relatives, Sabata and the Thembus, but by black and white freedom fighters and other democrats throughout South Africa. Zami and I feel his death very much because of the many acts of kindness he showed us for which we had hoped we would have the chance to thank him personally one day. That opportunity will never come.

Ethnic grouping has created friction amongst Africans in the mines and urban areas and in some cases led to fierce clashes and considerable loss of life. In September 1957 for instance, Basuthos and Zulus clashed in Johannesburg. The city council set up a commission of enquiry consisting of a former Chief Justice, a former acting Chief Justice and a former judge. They found that the policy of ethnic grouping was one of the causes of the rioting.

The head of the ANC, Chief Luthuli, in an article in May 1959 issue of the "Rand Daily Mail" pertinently asked who it was that had decided that the Bill, as its preamble stated was desirable for the welfare and the progress of our people and added that we had not been consulted on the matter and that we were certainly against the measure. He stressed that the African people did not want partition or separation and that the Bill was totally unacceptable. He condemned the allocation of only 13% of the country for the occupation of 78% of the population as plain robbery. He

denounced the government's aim of developing an African middle class who will paradise in the Bantustans and pointed out that a nation was not made up of traders, businessmen and civil servants. 80% or more of the African people were semi-skilled and unskilled workers and peasants. He criticised the government scheme of establishing industries on the borders of the Bantustans as depending upon the immoral use of migrant labour. He also criticised the abolition of African parliamentary representation and its replacement with Bantu Authorities which excluded two thirds of our people in the so-called white areas, and amongst whom were the most educated and politically advanced section. He went on to show that the system of Bantu Authorities made the chief and his councillors absolutely dictators and ended his article by making the point that the government plans were completely unacceptable because they gave us neither freedom in the so-called white areas nor independence in what they regard as our areas.

Although many parliamentarians displayed ignorance and fooled around in discussing the African problems, in this particular debate there were quite a few who spoke some sense and who even made what I consider fundamental observations. The Nat, J.E. Potgieter, declared: "We do not regard politics as the science of government but as the most important sphere for determining all other spheres of your national life".

Potgieter was dead right and the history of mankind owes much to this basic fact and that is why men are ready even to give up their lives for the right to shape their own lives. That is why the black people of our country have fought for so long and stubbornly for one man one vote.



De Villiers Graaf made the profound statement: "The real crux of the African problem was the vast numbers who had lost their tribal affiliation. The greatest demand for political expression came from the most evolved section of the African population, the section which had been longest in contact with civilisation, the section which included professionals, lawyers, doctors, clergymen, teachers, many skilled workmen".

But in the debate on the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Bill the average white parliamentarian looked at all African problems from the point of view of the whites and not of the Africans. The primary concern of all speakers both from the ruling and opposition parties, including De Villiers Graaf and J.E. Potgieter, was the best formula to save white supremacy and the profound observations mentioned earlier must be seen in this context.

As Chief Luthuli pointed out, Africans did not want the partition of South Africa and we have constantly fought against all attempts to fragment our country ever since the passing of the Bantu Authorities Act in 1951. But the granting of self government to the Bantustans was a radical change in the policy of men who had repeatedly stressed that Africans would be under white rule for centuries to come. This change was not due to the generosity of the Nats. It was most certainly a measure of the strength of our movement. The programme of development envisaged under the Bill was in all respects diametrically opposed to almost every demand set out in the Freedom Charter. Nonetheless it was an acknowledgement that our struggle for self determination was perfectly just

and that great injustice was done to those who were shot down or imprisoned for demanding the right to run their own affairs, to acquire the political power which will enable us to determine all the other spheres of our national life.

It was an admission that in spite of all their attempts to destroy us we had become a force whose demands they could never ignore. But the Nats had not the magnanimity of men who handle the national problems of a country. Instead of negotiating directly with us they built up their own stooges who welcomed the splitting up of our people into several ethnic groups, cringing men who swallow almost everything the Nats tell them and who attack us for fighting for our birthright and for opposition to apartheid.

The new line was also a response to the tempo of revolutionary changes in Africa and an attempt to win the support of the West to whom South Africa with its policy of apartheid had become an embarrassment. It was also an effort to save white supremacy by breaking up the African people into 8 separate ethnic units, buying them off with so-called self government in their respective areas which covered only a tiny portion of the country and thus removing the threat to 3 million whites presented by the existence of 10 million oppressed Africans.

From now on the main issue became even more clear to us - the choice before South Africa was between a common fatherland with a non racial society, common organs of government in which all South Africans were free to participate and determine all other spheres of their national life. This

is what we fight for, an ideal for which many have died and for which many more are ready to give up their lives. The alternative is a South Africa where millions of Africans in so called white areas will remain forever oppressed and exploited, outcasts and foreigners, in their own fatherland and always seeking opportunities to settle scores with those who have turned them into inferiors in their own country.

Those who crawl on their bellies and eulogise the Nats for giving them freedom on a platter, who see in the so called independent Bantustans, the chance to make quick riches for themselves and to exploit their fellow Africans as ruthlessly as the whites have done for the last 300 or more years naturally welcome separate development as a new paradise where they will swim in comfort and pleasure and enjoy a status and honour they have never imagined even in their dreams. As the year drew to a close it was clear that an even bigger conflict between us and the enemy was about to break out, and that the two principal issues - passes and Bantu Authorities - would fan the flames far and wide.

to be added in suitable place on Chapter 11:

After our legal firm closed down I tried to continue doing whatever little I could manage after returning from Pretoria and during recesses. Numerous colleagues readily made their offices, staff and phone

facilities available to me. But most of the time I preferred to work from the flat at No. 13 Kholvad House occupied by Ahmed Kathrada. Word got around and soon more and more clients began arriving at the flat to consult with me. At one stage all three rooms were occupied by them and I often felt embarrassed when Kathy would walk in to find he could have access only to his kitchen. But political developments soon brought an end to this. The Treason Trial ended and soon thereafter I was entrusted with an important political responsibility. So I had to say goodbye to my law practice. I am sure Kathy must have felt quite relieved to see the last of my clients.

## Chapter Twelve: The end of a Chapter.

At the beginning of 1960 Verwoerd announced in parliament that South Africa would hold a referendum in which only whites would take part on whether or not South Africa would become a Republic. He added that if South Africa decided to become such a republic she would also decide whether she should remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations or withdraw her membership.

South Africa's isolation from the democratic world, especially since 1946 when at the UNO India and the Soviet Union in particular led a full scale attack on her racial policies and on all forms of colonialism. With the emergence of the independent states of Africa, South Africa became even more unpopular and the offensive against her rapidly spread to other world bodies. At the same time the demand for her expulsion became even more insistent.

In the meantime a united front of the ANC, SAIC, PAC (and SWANU - Jarietundu Kozonguizi ?) was formed abroad consisting of Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo, Xola Makiwane, Peter Molotsi, Nana Mahomo and Vusumzi Make. Although there were hitches from the start, for some time the front worked fairly well and armed our friends in Africa, Asia, Europe and America with a wealth of data that made the onslaught on apartheid more informed and effective. Oliver Tambo and Vusumzi Make both of whom attended the UN sessions, were a fine example of how freedom fighters from two different political organisations could rise above petty differences and act most of

the time as a team, conscious that they represented the oppressed people of South Africa as a whole.

South African goods were being boycotted in many parts of the world and the government realised that in the prevailing atmosphere of international hostility she would have to be self sufficient and develop her own industries, commerce and agriculture so that she could stand on her own feet in every field. This decision was also encouraged by the knowledge that she occupied a strategic position on the African continent, had vast natural resources and huge investments sunk by foreign companies, all of which the Western Powers could never ignore even at the height of the campaign to isolate her. She well knew that she was the greatest gold producer of the West and that even those who loathed her colour policies would always waver whenever effective action against her was proposed.

The referendum was held in October 1960 and by 850,000 votes against 775,000 votes white South Africa decided to become a Republic. That was the realisation of a dream that the forefathers of the Afrikaners had cherished from the earliest days of their arrival in the country. Indeed in the course of their history they succeeded in establishing several semi-feudal republics, the most stable of which were destroyed by the British during the so called Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) and finally merged in 1910 with the Cape and Natal provinces to form the Union of South Africa as a single British colony. By 1948 when the Nats came to power South Africa was a fully independent country with its own sovereign parliament, a stable government, an independent judiciary, its own army and full control of its foreign affairs. Accordingly the decision to become a republic did not

add even a fraction of an ounce to its sovereignty but it was a passionate dream which had inspired the Afrikaner throughout his history here and the declaration of a republic was the severance of the last remaining historical link with the British Crown and its realisation the final triumph of Afrikaner nationalism. The formal proclamation of the republic was made on May 31st, 1961. That was the end of a chapter.

South Africa was still a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations whose character now had radically changed since its formation. Now it had a majority of black prime ministers who were vocal in condemning apartheid and South Africa's position as purveyor of the idea of the inferiority of the black man had become untenable. The Canadian premier (Diefenbaker?) had always been outspoken in his attacks on racial discrimination and with the increase in the number of South Africa's critics in the Commonwealth, even those premiers who had soft peddled all along became vocal also. Immediately prior to the conference, the United Front was particularly active, conferring with statesmen like Nehru, Nkrumah, Nyerere and others to kick out South Africa if she was not prepared to change her racial policies.

South African whites have been bred on racialism for 3 centuries and mere speeches alone, however scathing they may be, will never make them surrender and share political power and the natural wealth of the country with the blacks. Racialism is engrained in their blood and in their religion. If Christs were black and Satan white they would certainly denounce Christianity and worship the Devil instead. In everything but name they have set their faces against the common

brotherhood of man and peace on earth. Their entire lives and aspirations are warped in all the evils of greed and monopoly, selfishness and hate. Rather than listen to the voice of reason and to start on a new road, they chose to withdraw from the Commonwealth and retreat behind the laager and continue to live as their forefathers did on the backs of the black man, without interference from foreign ideologies like democracy for blacks, liberalism and equal opportunities for all citizens. That completed the end of a chapter as far as white South Africa was concerned.

Speaking for myself I had no fundamental objections to a republican form of government. After all, we were also fighting for the same of government. With the exception that ours would be a democratic and non racial republic. Our real objection was the fact that it was a decision taken by the white minority without consultation and participation by us.

Three issues have kept the Afrikaners together throughout their history; the republican ideal, the maintenance of white supremacy and, since the 60s, the threat of armed intervention from our freedom forces enjoying the support of almost the entire world. I had hoped that the coming of a republic would loosen the rivets that held the Afrikaner together and encouraged the emergence of progressive trends of thought which would lead him away from behind the laager and put him in the current of enlightened ideas that are aweeping the whole world today. I expected not only the appearance of progressives who were nearly so only in relation to the prevailing feudalistic outlook of the Nats but of a bold and forward looking segment of thinkers determined to shatter all the fetters of bigotry and boorishness that dominates the thinking of white South Africans on racial



questions. I hoped for the rise of more Bram Fischers, Andre Brinks who would be willing to work with us and create a new South Africa.

I believe today there are growing numbers of Afrikaners, amongst whom are industrialists, churchmen, university professors and other intellectuals, writers, farmers, students and women and even amongst Nat politicians who realise that separate development is by no means a solution and who strive for better solutions. But the traditionals are still too powerful and their hold on the party machine too tight for real changes to be brought about by mere debate within the inner councils of the party. Unfortunately those who were courageous enough to challenge the Party openly and put forward a relatively progressive policy were immediately snuffed out and forgotten.

Albert Hertzog had the courage to defy the Party line, and being the son of an esteemed former premier, he probably had the status to lead a substantial breakaway group, and thus weaken the Nat Party. But he advocated mediaeval policies which proved to be unacceptable even to the backward Nat voters. He and his *Herstigte Nasionale Partier* (check spelling) could hardly get off the ground and remains small and ineffective. Whatever may be happening inside the Party 15 years after the proclamation of the republic, on the surface the Nats remain united and the hope of the appearance of a group with a non racial and democratic programme seems remote. Although they are relaxing in the field of sports and other unimportant spheres they still cling firmly to white supremacy and they are turning the country into an armed fortress to defend apartheid. They have only recently increased the military budget to an unprecedented level, at the cost of neglecting numerous

indispensable requirements that should have been given top priority. In actual fact the coming of the republic ended a chapter neither for blacks nor for whites and the country's economic, political and social pattern remains practically the same as before with a government based on inequality and injustice.

Soon after making the announcement that South Africa would hold a referendum Verwoerd declared the ANC and the PAC illegal. At the time we were already detained and soon after our release on August 31st 1960 the National Executive of the ANC met, either in September or October the same year, and publicly announced that the organisation would not disband but would carry on from the underground.

The decision brought about a host of internal and external problems. Internally it meant a drastic departure from the democratic procedures outlined in the constitution of holding national and provincial conferences, local branch meetings, public meetings called by the organisation, elected committees, open recruitment of members.

The new situation demanded an equally severe trimming down of the organisational structure in which the executive committees at all levels had to be reduced and shaped for illegal conditions. The changed conditions also required the dissolution of the ANC Youth League and the ANC Women's League and an adjustment in our personal lives. From 1949 when we adopted the Programme of Action, membership of the ANC had ceased to be primarily a pastime where leading

members only attended meetings, made speeches, pressed resolutions and waited for the next meeting to repeat the process. Since then a political career became a risk and a gamble when one had little time for family life and nice times. But now the picture changed once more and politics for any active member became highly dangerous and a form of activity reserved only for the hard core. An organisation that for almost half a century had served as our national parliament and fighting for the limited objective of a democratic form of government suddenly found itself in the same position as the CPSA whose objective was far more radical than its own. I recalled the editorial in "The African Lodestar" a decade before where I had argued that the Suppression of Communism Act was meant not for the CP but for the ANC, and the discussion I had then with Moses Kotane. The polemic was now academic for the reality was that the enemy had used exactly the same weapon against both organisations and the membership of both organisations had come to learn about the dangerous pitfalls of disunity and mud slinging amongst those who face a common enemy.

Joint political activity between an illegal and legal organisation had to put on a new basic. The ANC was not only part of the Congress movement but its most senior member, and the ban on it called for important changes in the structure and co-ordinating machinery.

The internal changes were fiercely resisted by a section of the membership that had been brought up in a tradition of legal activities and who held the view that the organisation should go underground intact with its conferences and democratically elected committees. The Women's and the Youth

Leagues also resented their dissolution and some elements among the latter became disgruntled.

But actual experience has vindicated the wisdom of the precautions we took. In a country such as South Africa where there is a wide gap in the living standards of black and white, and where the enemy commands vast resources to entice individuals to inform on their own people, it is remarkable to note how insignificant are the numbers of those who have gone over to the enemy from our organisation, as well as the difficulty the enemy has had in its attempts to penetrate our ranks. It was only as a result of merciless torture in detention and the grim threat of death sentences that the enemy was able to impose a deal on several of our members.

I wonder whether John Dube, P.I. Ka Seme, Sol T. Plaatjie or W.B. Rubusana and other founders of the ANC ever imagined that on the 48th year of its history it would graduate into an underground organisation defending its position with even more vigour than it had ever done before; closing a page in the struggle of a people that once pursued their faith on the strength of their cause and their ability to influence public opinion through the logic and earnest persuasion.

But an even more significant landmark and one that is the hope of millions of our countrymen occurred only 6 months after the advent of Verwoerd's Republic. In the long run South Africans, black and white, will never permit the Nats to forget their crimes, for it is their extreme racialism and arrogance that has pushed the country to the brink of civil war, and the emergence of Umkhonto We Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation), MK for short, on December 16th 1961 underlines

this fact.

During the second half of 1960 Chief Luthuli, Professor Z.A. Matthews, Duma Nokwe (?) and W.B. Ngakane sponsored a conference of African leaders to review the political situation in the country and to demand the calling of a National Convention of all South Africans to draw up a nonracial and democratic constitution. After the proposal had been publicised in the press the Working Committee of the ANC instructed me to negotiate with the PAC to participate in the conference. At the time Robert Sobukwe was in jail and I went to see Z.B. Molete who led the PAC in the absence of their president.

Z.B. Molete felt the time had come for the two organisations to find a suitable formula to work together and thought the proposed conference was a step in that direction. But he criticised us for publicising and introducing the move as an ANC matter and thereafter inviting his organisation to take part. However he thought the suggestion was important enough to be examined on merit and not upon the point of view of the mistake we had made in launching it. He informed me that his colleague Philip Kgosana and others were coming up from Cape Town when they would discuss the suggestion and that they could later advise us. Soon after this he told me that his organisation would overlook the mistake and take part in the conference which was ultimately held in Orlando in December 1960.

Reverend B.N. Tantsi presided at the conference which was attended by political, religious,

cultural, sports, professional and business people. None of the original sponsors could attend as they were under restrictions of one kind or another. Govan Mbeki led a strong delegation from the ANC while Z.B. Molete headed that of the PAC. The Liberal Party was represented by Jordan Ngubane and several others and the Institute of Race Relations by Congress Mbatha. Douglas Lukele of Winberg fame, W.B. Ngakane, Reverend Z.R. Mahabane and B.S. Rajuli were amongst the delegates.

Although two men had to be ejected for being disrespectful to the chairman of the conference, unity was otherwise solid, morale good and the standard of discussion high. The conference dismissed the referendum as a decision of the racial minority and decided to call an All-In African Conference where the idea of summoning a National Convention would be discussed.

The conference also resolved that a machinery be created to prepare for the proposed conference and in pursuance of this resolution an All-In African National Action Council was formed with Julius Mali, Transvaal organiser of the Liberal Party, as chairman and myself as honorary secretary. Among the members of the Committee were Duma Nokwe, Govan Mbeki, Z.B. Molete, Jordan Mgubane, Congress Mbata and Reverend Rajuli. The conference was arranged for Pietermaritzburg on March 25th 1961.

Soon after the Orlando meeting Walter Sisulu and I visited Basotholand to see South African refugees there and Ntsu Mokhehle. Arthur Letele, national treasurer of the ANC and our strong man

in Kimberley had already been deported to Basotholand. Joe Mathews who was practising as an attorney in Durban when martial law was declared also fled there. Both were present when we met Ntsu who invited us to hold the proposed conference in Maseru. We thanked him for his kind gesture but were unable to accept his invitation as final arrangements had already been made to hold it at Pietermaritzburg.

In the meantime Z.B. Molete was touring South Africa, in the course of which he released a press statement announcing the withdrawal of the PAC from the All-In National Action Council. As far as I can recall now no official explanation was given to us on the matter, except that we assumed that considerable pressure was put on him by members of his organisation to pull out. But once they had done so, the Liberal Party and the Institute of Race Relations follows suite on the ground that the African people were no longer united on the question. But Julius Mali had an independent mind and remained chairman of the Council in spite of the withdrawal of his organisation. A strong delegation from the Brakpan branch of his party however did also attend the Pietermaritzburg Conference. But from now on the task of organising that Conference fell solely on the Congress movement. My ban was due to expire shortly before the Conference and I was scheduled to be the main speaker but we kept the matter secret.

No less than 1,500 delegates from all walks of life attended the Conference and crowds milled around the hall. The Congress movement in Pietermaritzburg and especially Harry Gwala, Chota Motala, Archie Gumede and Mandla Sithole, arranged for the accommodation of delegates. The

presence of Jimmy Njongwe, one of the moving spirits in the Eastern Cape during the 1952 Defiance Campaign, led to considerable speculation. He had been inactive since 1953 and it was believed that he was now on the come-back. Throughout the proceedings were punctuated by freedom songs and the most popular at that time was "Amandla Ngawethu Nobungewalisa Bobethu" (Our case is invincible and just).

A substantial number of delegates came from areas where there were serious disturbances and where the enemy had come out in full force and persecuting our people in the affected areas. Some of these men and women had been living in hiding for many months and came to listen not to militant speeches but to concrete solutions. Brave as they were, their families were living under a reign of terror, their livestock was being confiscated and their huts burned down.

The main theme of my speech was of course the National Convention and the perennial question of united action. I praised those patriots who had already fallen in engagements with the enemy, those who were in custody and those who were still holding out. I pointed out that as long as we were still divided, fighting sporadically and in isolation from one another we would be easy victims. I stressed that what we urgently required was a disciplined struggle under an organisation which commanded the support of the masses of our people from every walk of life, that until we achieved this freedom would continue to elude us. (Image of a homeless cow?); that we could bring temporary and token relief here and there but no real solutions; that the demand for a National Convention was the best way to rally the whole country against apartheid. I finally appealed to all



delegates to carry the message to their respective areas. (For speech text or notes contact Benjie or the Drum reporter, or New Age).

The theme was taken up by speeches from the floor and the main resolutions.....(summarise the resolutions here).

The conference continued from the afternoon through the whole night and adjourned the following morning. The main resolution asked the government to call the Convention failing which we would organise a 3 day strike from May 29th that same year. After seeing the delegates off I went straight to Groutville to report to Chief Luthuli and left him with a copy of the resolutions.

Four days after the Conference the Treason Trial ended. Our eldest daughter Zenani (we call her Zeni) was only 12 months when I was detained in 1960. Zami brought her a couple of times to see me in Pretoria jail and at the end of each interview Zeni would ask me to come along and could not understand why I could not do so. At the end of the trial her younger sister Zindziswa (Zindzi) was 3 months old. Zami and I had now been married for 33 months and the hectic events that marked that period had been a severe strain on her. I now looked forward to joining her and all the children, re-organising my practice and lifting the load from her shoulders, taking her out for entertainment and trying to give her all the happiness within my means. That was not to be.

About this time I and Adie Tambo, who had now joined Oliver in London, started corresponding

with each other and in the course of which she gave me her impressions of our work as she saw it from a distance. She was critical of the extreme nationalism and anti-communist views advocated by the PAC but at the same time warned us not to exaggerate the adverse effects of these tendencies on the part of the PAC because there was justified hostility to colonial rule on the African continent and people there did not find it at all strange for a nationalist organisation to be anti-white. She also stressed that their anti-communism did not shock the average man in England and explained that some people even found it strange that we should work so smoothly and willingly with whites. Naturally she strenuously defended our policy and showed that in their extreme nationalism the PAC was lagging behind nationalist movements in Africa and elsewhere.

It is profitable for an organisation to be constantly reminded of how others see it and her comments enabled us at least to be consciously aware that in shaping our policy and activities we should take account of the conditions both at home and on the continent. About the same time Oliver Tambo wrote to the National Executive along similar lines.

In regard to the situation here at home the ANC realised that another crisis was approaching and that our political obligations could no longer be fulfilled through part time officials who waged the struggle only from offices. The organisation of the Convention and the strike would require full time activists operating from the underground and who were not paralysed by the need to obey the host of restrictions imposed by the enemy and who could travel from place to place meeting people and organisations and setting up the necessary machinery. I was asked to undertake this task and to

go underground.

I had an obligation to Zami and the children. She had been the breadwinner since our marriage and the thought that she would play this role indefinitely worried me. She read my thoughts as I walked in from a meeting of the Working Committee and we discussed the matter at once. She felt there were obligations more important than that of a man to his family and considered my political work such an obligation.

At that time my eldest son, Madiba, was schooling in Qamata in the Transkei and on the eve of my disappearing underground I fetched Kgatho and Maki from their mother in Orlando East and we spent the day together. That afternoon I was visited by Leo Sihlali, president of the NEUM and his colleague Victor Sindlo, for preliminary discussions on the question of unity. It was an opportune time for such a move and I welcomed the idea, but as it was on the eve of my departure, I referred them to Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe.

Although it would have made little difference to my future work I was anxious to disappear before the police banned me again and I spent a restless night hearing all sorts of motor car noises in my sleep. Early the next morning I saw Lawrence Gandar, chief editor of the Rand Daily Mail to discuss the campaign for the Convention. A cold but liberal Englishman whose editorials sharply criticised apartheid, I had met him on social occasions several times before. He was worried by divisions amongst the African leaders and feared that the ANC was dominated by communists.

I pointed out to him that divisions amongst the oppressed people were a common feature throughout the world and that in South Africa Africans were no more divided on political issues than were the whites. On the second point I referred him to the Treason Trial judgement in which the court had expressly dismissed the allegation and reminded him that the charge was no more than a fear which was used by an oppressive regime to discredit its opponents.

Later that day Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe accompanied me to the Vaal River and from there I travelled with fellow Treason Trialist Milner Ntsangane to Port Elizabeth, the first leg of my journey. There I spent a day with Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba and others discussing problems relating to the new structure of the ANC as an underground organisation. We met at the house of Dr. Masla Pather and for this he was subsequently sentenced to two years imprisonment. I also met Sutherland, editor of the Evening Post, and he splashed the campaign the same day in his newspaper.

The editor of the Cape Times, Mr. Norton, was a friend of Professor Matthews and he received me warmly. I stayed in a hotel under a cover name, took all my meals in my room and went out only in the evenings. I would meet Archie Sibeko at a pre-arranged spot and he would accompany me to various places. It was on this occasion that I addressed the Committee of the Coloured Convention under the chairmanship of Dr. R.E. van der Ross, now rector of the University of the Western Cape. It brought together influential leaders of the coloured community amongst whom were Reggie

September (?) of the Coloured Peoples Congress, Bishop Gow of the AME church, Joe Daniels of the Liberal Party and others. The Pietermaritzburg Conference was criticised by Cardiff Marney, a member of the CPC, on the ground that it was organised on racial lines. This point had long been the bone of contention between the NEUM and the Congress movement and although the former was itself "Non-European" movement and organised on racial lines they nevertheless criticised our structure as racialistic. The remarks made by the other members of the committee indicated that he had been canvassing this view among them for quite some time and though they favoured the principle of a non-racial organisation every other speaker felt that the proposal was premature. I associated myself with the majority opinion and assured him that the National Convention for which we were campaigning was non-racial. He now had the opportunity, I pointed out, to bring in all the people who were ready for his proposal.

At that time Patrick Duncan, then proprietor of the weekly "Contact" was ill in bed at his home and Randolph Vighne (check spelling and his position in the LP), organiser of the Liberal Party (?) drove me to his house. In his paper Patrick had repeatedly said that the policy of the ANC was influenced by communists. As we entered the bedroom I greeted him and before I could say anything further he referred me to the proceedings of the Treason Trial in which the suggestion of communist influence had been shown to be unfounded. He added that he would have to correct the impression he had created in this regard. I complimented him for his frankness and briefed him on the campaign. He needed no convincing on the question of the National Convention and fully grasped its importance. I had already discussed the matter with Randolph and his contribution in the

conversation with Patrick facilitated a consensus on various aspects of the campaign.

I addressed an important group of ministers of an African township in Cape Town and one of them led us in an unusual prayer. He reminded the Lord of our people's disabilities and suffering and warned that if He did not lead us to salvation Africans would take things into their own hands and show Him how oppressed people should be freed.

I was in constant contact with our own men - Archie Sibeko, Oscar Mpeti, Reggie September, Alex La Guma, Brian Bunting, Fred Carneson and others. Archie had tremendous drive and he never allowed me to rest. As Greenwood Ngotyana did with me when I visited the city in 1955, Archie took me to some meeting every evening, at times as far out as Worcester.

One morning as I was leaving the hotel with George Peake, a member of the National Executive CPC, I thanked the Coloured manager for looking after me so well during my stay there. My habits must have aroused his suspicion and he must have guessed who I was. According to him the Coloured community as a minority group feared that a future African government would leave them in the same position as they were now.

I briefly told him about the Freedom Charter and explained that the Congress movement, of which the CPC formed a part, would come into power only if the country accepted the policy embodied in the Charter and that no section of our people would have any reason to fear from a government

committed to those principles. There were people around and I could not take the risk of delaying any longer. We shook hands and I left.

He was of middle class origin and probably had no contact with Africans except for an occasional visitor in the hotel and his fears were in the circumstances not unreasonable. The problem of national minorities has faced many countries and has been approached in various ways, all depending on the actual conditions. In our case the Freedom Charter expressly guarantees the rights of all national groups and races, and makes the preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination a punishable crime.

A novel feature that was hotly debated at the Durban meeting of the ANC National Executive and on the following day by the Joint Executives of the Congress movement as a whole was whether the planned strike should take the form of a non-violent or peaceful stay-at-home as on previous occasions of the normal strike where people not only downed tools but organised pickets outside railway and bus stations, factories and other work places, holding meetings and processions.

There was a substantial group that felt that the normal stay-at-home we had used since 1950, good as it was in the sense of the impact it had made on the people themselves, industry and the enemy, was dominated by the self defeating element of non-violence and peaceful struggle at a time when more militant forms were urgently required to check the wanton brutalities of the enemy. They felt that the stay-at-home tended to give the wrong impression that we were essentially reformist in our

methods and lagging far behind what was actually happening in different parts of the country. The killing of 11 policemen in Cato Manor and the riots in the rural areas in the Transvaal, Cape and Natal were quoted in support of the argument that the people were ahead of us in this regard. The best course of action in the new situation they maintained was to use forms of action which would allow mass anger and initiative full play, and that a general strike would provide for this.

The other view was that the stay-at-home was a tactic which was born of our conditions and that the previous decade had shown its correctness and wisdom. They argued that its principal value lay in the fact that it enabled the people to strike at the enemy whilst at the same time it deprived him of the opportunity to hit back; that the confidence of the people in our leadership had grown and our campaigns had received more support precisely because we were not reckless with people's lives. They pointed to the shootings at Sharpeville and Langa which served as a warning to us of the danger of using methods which were unrelated to our situation. They further argued that we should look at the picture as a whole and not in isolation; that we must focus attention not only on the mere occurrence of the Cato Manor incident and the eruption of disturbances in the rural areas but even more important on what finally happened in those areas. Those heroic demonstrations they argued were ultimately suppressed and that in the final analysis merely enabled the enemy to demonstrate its enormous strength, to come out as victors and the people in the affected areas came out as losers; that the stay-at-home carries no such dangers and held that the strike should take this form.

Both views were based not on principle but on facts. They were attempt to use forms of struggle



that correctly interpreted our situation. At the two executive meetings in Durban I had the advantage of having travelled throughout the country and spoken to many of our people in the course of which I became aware that some of our dedicated men were becoming impatient with passive forms of action. I had realised that this was a trend that had come to stay and that in due course it would become irresistible. The very reckless and opportunistic actions of the PAC that we condemned would also tend to influence a substantial section of our people to force the pace.

I was inclined to the first view, but I felt that a departure from a tactic we had used for more than a decade without fuller discussion could bring many problems at crucial moments. The contemplated strike we were discussing was just more than a month away and in my opinion we needed more time to explain the new line to our own forces and to rally them behind us. I drew attention to the fact that the All-In African National Action Council, the official body handling the whole affair, and whose personnel was not identical with that of the Congress movement had not even been consulted about the matter, that the delegates at the Pietermaritzburg Conference who would lay an important role in organising of the strike had not been prepared at all for the suggested tactical changes and finally urged that we should stick to the beaten track.

After the Pietermaritzburg Conference I sent Verwoerd a copy of the resolution under a covering letter in which I formally asked him to call the Convention and in which I warned that if he failed to do so, we would stage a 3 day strike as from May 29th. (Check letter and fill up). On my return from Durban and in consultation with Julius Mali, chairman of the AANAC I issued a press statement

announcing that the strike would take the form of a peaceful and non-violent stay-at-home, a point which I repeated in subsequent press interviews.

Unlike previous occasions this time the announcement that we would have a peaceful and non-violent stay-at-home immediately provoked protests from our own men who felt that it was psychologically incorrect that I should stress peace and non-violence when the enemy was relying on naked force, and insisted that I should also take a strong line. But I told those who held this view that whatever we might do in the future a non-violent stay-at-home for that campaign was the official line and asked them to fall into line.

At first the English language press widely publicised the campaign for the Convention as well as that of the strike until a few days before May 29th. But the enemy was not sitting idle. It was marshalling its own press and using its vast resources to crush the strike. The usual steps were taken - all meetings were banned and all conceivable steps taken in order to obstruct the work of our organisers. In addition to open intimidation, commerce and industry were urged to prevent their workers from going home during the strike period by providing sleeping accommodation for the workers on premises. They were also told to take firm action against absent workers.

Special legislation was rushed through parliament authorising the police to detain charged prisoners for 12 days without bail.

And as the final coercive measure the army was called out in what was undoubtedly the greatest peace-time show of force in South Africa's history. Military units were posted at strategic places in the townships while Saracen tanks patrolled up and down the streets.

As the day of the strike approached leading industrialists, and managers of non-European Affairs Departments joined the police chiefs and made similar appeals assuring those who ignored the strike call of police protection. Except for "New Age" and "Contact" the entire English language press crumbled on the eve of the strike and also asked workers to go to work. This has always been the pattern. The press starting off by giving fairly objective reports but when they saw the build up of the campaign and the people everywhere talking about action they soon changed their line.

What however shocked the people more than the sumersaulting of the press was the role the PAC played in this campaign. We can appreciate a political organisation from the liberation movement ddisagreeing with a particular action and making its attitudes known to the public, even when we think they are completely wrong in their stand. But to try to break a strike by calling upon the people to go to work serves the interests of the enemy and not of the oppressed and this is precisely what the PAC did.

Their leaflets were distributed in all the important centres throughout the country including the Transkei appealing to Africans to go to work. There were even rumours that top PAC men were seen in police company distributing this literature. Apart from the rumours, a vast quantity of

leaflets issued in their name, the wide area of distribution suggested the possession of resources of a countrywide machinery the PAC never had at the height of its 11 months existence as a legal organisation. The fact that many of its members knew nothing at all about the leaflets and the failure of the organisation to disclaim responsibility for the leaflets led to tremendous speculation and showed the extremes to which they were prepared to go in their hostility to the ANC.

Reports received from the different parts of the country late on May 19th showed that in spite of the good reaction in several areas, in the country as a whole the response to our call seemed less than we expected. I readily, and as it turned out, prematurely acknowledged the fact to Benjamin Pogrand of the Rand Daily Mail the same evening, adding that we had closed a chapter in regard to our method of struggle. Later, in both my trial and in that of Walter Sisulu, wherein we were charged for organising the strike the State called a number of witnesses who adduced facts and figures which revealed that the strike was not a failure which the press at the time made it out to be. In fact scores of thousands of people responded to the call and stayed at home.

However it could not be denied that government action and intimidation did have their effect. I felt that we could not go on indefinitely wasting our energies in fruitless activities, and as keen as we were on peaceful solutions, we had no alternative but to explore new methods.

The debate on the use of violence had been going on informally amongst us since the first half of 1960 when we were detained and now when the enemy once more used force to suppress the strike

the demand for counter measures on our part became even stronger. We were aware that this was now the main topic of interest both inside and outside the Congress movement and early in June 1961 the Working Committee of the ANC felt that resort to violence was inevitable and put the whole matter on the agenda of its National Executive which met in Durban that same month.

The matter was discussed under the shadow of the Treason case where the main issue was whether or not the policy of the ANC was violent or non-violent and where the nature of our defence tended to overstress the question of non-violence. The Crown case was that we believed in violent methods and merely used non-violence in our public statements as a smokescreen to cover our real aim of overthrowing the State by violent means. In the circumstances we presented the whole question of non-violence as an established policy and not as a tactical one to be changed as conditions warranted. This made it even more difficult, so soon after the Trial, to convince one another on the feasibility of the changes that were now being advocated. Sharp differences were to be expected but finally we unanimously endorsed the decision of the Working Committee.

The following evening we discussed the matter at a joint meeting of the Congresses. Chief Luthuli who presided announced the decision of the ANC but suggested that we should handle the issue as if the ANC had not discussed it. In a matter of such importance members of the ANC thought it would be dangerous to rely on technicalities and readily accepted the Chief's suggestion.

The discussion reiterated the arguments used at the meeting of the Joint Executives earlier in the

year when we considered the form the strike should take. The point was repeatedly made that "we had failed non-violence, not the other way round" and that in spite of the methods the enemy had used against us on numerous occasions there was still plenty of scope for the use of non-violence. The meeting lasted the whole night and in spite of disagreements we were able to reach a unanimous decision in the end.

The need for new methods and the importance of the ANC taking the initiative in launching the new phase of activities was appreciated. I was asked by the ANC to take the initiative in the formation of the organisation that would wage acts of violence and in due course units were formed in various centres. In the meantime the Communist Party had formed its own units and in October the same year they cut telephone and electricity cables in Johannesburg and on the Witwatersrand. Later when MK was formed the CP dissolved its units and the members joined MK. I was chairman of the National High Command of the Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) and on the 16th December 1961 MK announced its existence amidst a spate of bomb explosions in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban (Refer to MK manifesto).

A chapter had been closed and a new page was turned. December 16th is the historic day when Dingane, head of the most powerful African state that ever existed south of the Limpopo was defeated by the forefathers of the Afrikaners. This Zulu State was not crushed, as Afrikaner history claim, and was still powerful enough under Cetywayo in 1879 to score a sensational victory against the British at Isandhlwana. The Afrikaners used to celebrate the day as marking the defeat of our

people and MK chose this significant date to launch its first attack on the enemy.

Many speakers at both the meeting of the National Executive of the ANC and the Joint Executives in June, including Chief Luthuli, Monty Naicker and Moses Kotane, repeatedly warned against the likely error of using the new phase as an excuse for neglecting the essential task of political organisation and the use of conventional methods of struggle, like strikes and other forms of mass mobilisation. It was stressed that acts of sabotage would only have an impact if they were under proper political direction and this meant that the existing political organisations should be put on an even stronger level than ever before.

It has been said by some that Chief Luthuli was against violence and the MK in particular. Nothing could be further from the truth and he made his point quite clear at the June meeting of the Joint Executives when he hit back against one who made this insinuation. "If anybody thinks I am a pacifist, let him go and take my chickens; he will know how wrong he is". After the emergence of MK a reporter asked him whether he was prepared to condemn acts of sabotage and he unequivocally refused to do so.

At the meeting of the National Executive of the ANC he criticised the statement I had made to the Rand Daily Mail on May 29th to the effect that we had closed a chapter, on the ground that such a statement raised an important matter which should have first been discussed by the organisation before a public announcement was made, a point which was perfectly sound and which I expressly

acknowledged.

Sometime before the Pietermaritzburg Conference some of the persons who attend the meeting in Orlando in December 1960 were arrested and charged with furthering the aims of an illegal organisation, the ANC (check). Among them were members of the ANC, Liberal Party, Progressive Party and the PAC (check in fact if the PAC men were not charged and amend accordingly).

Although members of different political organisations were from the start represented by different lawyers, the trial started smoothly with all the accused putting up the same defence. But later the accused split as a result of the suggestion by members of the Liberal Party that the whole responsibility for the campaign for a National Convention should be laid on Duma Nokwe, the secretary general of the ANC, a proposal which was rejected out of hand by our people. Reverends Tantsi and Rajuili, Paul Mosaka, former leader of the long defunct African Democratic Party and former member of the Native Representative Council, and Congress Mbata sided with Julius Mali, Jordan Ngubane and Bhengu and now fought the case on the basis that they had no responsibility in the matter and that all the preparations were done by Duma, while Govan Mbeki, Alfred Nzo, Thomas Nkobi, W.B. Ngakane and Mark Shope relied on what had actually happened. None the less the magistrate sentenced all of them to 12 months imprisonment but on appeal the sentence was set aside. (NOTE: depending on whether PAC men were charged - if not include the following here:- the police took no action against the members of the PAC although they had attended the Orlando meeting and pulled out simultaneously with the Liberal Party).



I operated from Johannesburg keeping to my den during the day and becoming active at night. Although I liked the company of friends, chatting with people and playing games, I like privacy even more. I welcome the opportunity to be alone and never have enough time to do all the little things my heart desires. Sports and company are only forms of recreation and activity which make my private work more enjoyable. But now that I was underground I suddenly found that I had too much privacy and really missed the family, company and the gym where I could completely relax and it required a lot of self discipline to keep to the routine demanded by my new style of life.

I spent a lot of time preparing myself for the new phase, reading as extensively as I could all the available literature on armed warfare with particular emphasis on guerrilla warfare in Europe, Asia and Latin America and tried to acquaint myself with its problems. I read the report of Blas Roca, general secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba which covered the 8 years of its history as an illegal organisation under Batista. His account of the Cuban Revolution written by a leader of a party that had taken part in that revolution, sounded more authoritative than the "Anatomy of a Revolution" by Huberman and Sweezy. He made the interesting point that the significance of Fidel Castro in the Cuban Revolution lay in the fact that while the CP did not realise that the moment of revolution had come, Fidel was able to see and seize it. From the constructive manner in which Blas Roca criticised Fidel and predicted the bright future of Cuba under his rule it became clear that the 26th July movement and the CP were working closely with each other. (Check Blas's report and check the Spanish title for the CP). There was little material on the subject as far as armed struggle

was concerned and I was now anxious to know more on the armed struggle of the people of Ethiopia against Mussolini, of Kenya, Algeria, the Cameroons and Angola.

I examined not only the history of revolutions that succeeded whilst others failed. But I spent even more time studying our own history before and after the advent of the whites - the wars between African (meaning here Bathwa, Khoi Khoi and Bantu-speaking people) and African, African and white, and English against Boer.

All kinds of information became of vital importance to my work - the country's chief industrial areas, the contribution of each to the national economy, the transport system and the vast distances to be covered between the Witswaterrand and the sea. We collected detailed maps and made a systematic study of our own terrain, and I realised how disadvantageous it could be to neglect the essential task of cultivating proper contacts which would supply us with the information necessary for future plans.

It was at this time that I became closer to Wolfie Kodesh, a member of the Congress of Democrats, who had fought in North Africa and Italy and whose knowledge and experience made my reading even more practical and fruitful. He worked for New Age and I made heavy demands on him which infringed on his free movements and pleasure. He was able to reach source material not readily available and help me in many ways.

I was the first member of the Congress movement to stay in Rivonia. Its spacious grounds, the central position of the cottage and the bushes that surrounded it isolated it from the neighbourhood and made it suitable in many respects as the headquarters of an underground organisation. For some time I lived there alone, cooking and making tea for the builders who were extending the outbuildings and repairing the place and for the painters. My cover name was Davis Motsamayi.

My disguise made me look less than ordinary and I enjoyed being treated with condescension, with everyone calling me "waiter" and not bothering to know whether or not I had a name and sending me about on the farm. Many people have painted an idealistic picture of the equalitarian nature of African society and whilst this is true, saying just that can be quite misleading.

To be sure there were no economic classes in our society and the land and its natural wealth was the common property of the whole community. All men above a certain age group were free to take part in political meetings and to influence policy as they wished. In that sense the principle of human equality formed the fabric of society. But social groups existed even amongst those who were entitled to take part in political gatherings and birth, personal wealth, prowess and ability led to the rise of social categories, bringing with them all the social problems connected with the concepts of chief and commoner, rich and poor. Industrialisation has introduced the urban African to the outlook of the white man and he has become even more conscious of status. To those builders and painters I was outside their trade, an inferior, a mere waiter. As a politician and professional man who was used to all the publicity that surrounds a public figure, I enjoyed the

simple life being no more than one who took and carried out orders, who collected and washed dishes and swept the floors.

At the end of the day all the builders and painters would return to their homes and I would be alone until the next morning. I continued going out on certain evenings to meet people and always felt a bit uneasy to return late at night to a place I did not know so well. On each occasion I felt as if somebody was lurking behind the bushes that surrounded the house.

Shortly after this Raymond Mhlaba came up from Port Elizabeth in preparation for his departure with three other recruits for military training in the Peoples Republic of China. We stayed together for about a fortnight and I used the opportunity to get a clearer picture of the problems of the movement in the Eastern Cape. I had been given the task of drawing up the MK constitution and I enlisted the assistance of Raymond and Joe Slovo in drafting it.

Later Michael Harmel was given an important political assignment and he needed a quiet and safe place where he could work full time. He joined me at Rivonia. Now I had company and my restlessness at night vanished. We kept at a distance during the day and rarely spoke to each other in the presence of people. Although we were both occupied with work we spent some evenings chatting about various problems and I used to look forward to these sessions.

One day I returned at midnight and as I drove in through the main gate I noticed that the outside

lights were still on. I was even more surprised when on reaching the house I found the doors wide open and the radio blaring away. Mick was fast asleep in bed. I woke him up and asked for an explanation. He was angry. "Nel, must you disturb my sleep? Couldn't you wait until tomorrow morning?" he asked. I reprimanded him.

A little while later Arthur Goldreich and his family moved into the main house at Rivonia. This provided a good cover for us.

A certain Mr. Jellyman (check name) an elderly man and a friend of the movement for many years became the farm foreman with Thomas Mashiyane as his assistant. Several young men were brought from Sekhukhuneland to work on the farm. Now everything became normal and the place was like any other white small holding in the country.

Arthur was a suitable man for our purpose for although he was a member of the Congress of Democrats and of MK he was unknown to the police and had never been raided. With his arrival I moved out of the house and occupied an out building.

Arthur had served in the Israeli Army and like Wolfie was also familiar with armed warfare and filled up many gaps in my knowledge. He was enthusiastic, determined and resourceful, and was useful in collecting information and making practical suggestions.

Zami brought my air gun from home and Arthur and I spent our free time at target practice and hunting doves on the farm. One day as I aimed at a sparrow perched high on a tree, Arthur's wife Hazel remarked that I would never hit any bird. She had hardly finished the sentence when the sparrow fell dead on the ground. As I bragged about the incident their younger son Paul, then about 5 years old, was upset and asked: "David, why did you kill it? Its mother will miss it." He was more humane than his father, mother and me put together.

Wild stories have been told or written about my underground experiences some of which were entirely incorrect whilst others were an exaggeration of what actually happened. I still remember "Time" magazine carrying the story that I slipped through a police cordon into my legal offices disguised as a delivery boy. In actual fact my practice was closed before I went underground.

A popular story was that on one occasion my car had stopped at a traffic light next to that of Col. Spengler, then chief of the Witswaterrand Security Branch. This was also untrue. All that happened was that while waiting against the traffic lights, Spengler drove past me along a cross street but his car was moving too fast for him to see me.

I had several narrow shaves from the police and the worst of these took place on a Friday, a few days before the May 1961 strike. That evening I had to meet the Soweto region of the ANC and, to avoid the usual police road blocks on weekends, I entered Soweto through Kliptown on the southern end. But as I went around a bend I drove straight into what I was trying to avoid - a road

block. A white policeman in charge of a force of African policemen stepped forward and searched the car and rounded off the operation by demanding my pass. I told him I had forgotten it at home and gave him a fictitious number. It worked.

One night I had to attend a meeting in a certain locality in town and a well known priest arranged with his friends to put me up for the night. Naturally he made no elaborate explanation as to who I really was. I must have looked repulsive in my shoddy outfit and with unkempt hair and beard. After the meeting a friend who also knew the family well, took me to their place. An elderly lady opened the door and when she saw me she was startled and said emphatically, "No. We don't want this man here", and disappeared, leaving my friend and me standing at the door.

I had a similar experience when I met a group of men in a certain house, also in the city. When I finished with them I was due to meet another one in the same house. While I was waiting a girl approached, hesitated somewhat and finally asked: "When will you leave? My mother is scared."

But we had many pleasant surprises when we realised that our cause had a wider support than we knew and when help came from unexpected quarters. People we had never suspected of any political convictions, to say nothing of associating themselves with an underground movement, offered all forms of assistance and used their own positions of influence to facilitate our work. Wealthy industrialists, high browed professional men and holy looking churchmen, factory workers, teachers and artisans, took many risks in their desire to help.

I also made a number of mistakes. In Natal I lived for a fortnight on a sugar farm with a number of African labourers and their families. I posed as an agricultural demonstrator and spent part of the day testing the soil and making experiments to validate my pose. But almost every evening I disappeared quietly into the dark night. This must have aroused suspicion and they probably guessed what I was doing. As we were conversing one day their leader addressed me. "Tell me, Qudeni (a cover clan name), what does Luthuli really want?" I explained. "But how is he going to get the country back if he has no army?" He had raised a fundamental question but I could not discuss the matter with him frankly. I realised I had stayed too long in the place and the following night I left as quietly as I had come.

Zami and the children spent some weekends with me at Rivonia. My son Kgatho, then 11 years, was careful not to reveal my real name. But one day he slipped up. Zami and I went out, leaving a copy of the Drum magazine on the table. As Kgatho and Nicholas, Arthur's eldest son, were paging through it they suddenly came across my photo taken before I went underground. In his excitement Kgatho revealed that I was his father. That evening Nicholas told his parents that he knew my real name. For the second time I realised that I stayed too long in one place. We were looking for another place when I had to leave on another mission.

One day I was listening to the radio when it was announced that Chief Luthuli had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. We welcomed the award and considered it as a recognition of the



tremendous impression he had made as a fighter for the freedom of his people. His readiness to give up chieftaincy rather than change his views and his able leadership as president of the ANC earned him the respect of many people here and abroad.

Under his leadership the ANC had grown to become a formidable opponent of the government, pressing the enemy hard at home and isolating him from the democratic world. He was then in the third year of a 5 year restriction confining him to the district of Stanger. The ban was imposed on him in the course of an impressive campaign in which he was addressing white gatherings and drawing large crowds in various centres in the country. His campaign was becoming a source of concern to a government which thought only in terms of racialistic formulas.

The award was an affront to the government for it meant that the western world, to whom Chief Luthuli was portrayed as a dangerous agitator at the head of a communist front organisation totally disbelieved that cheap propaganda.

It was against this background that MK dramatically announced its emergence and shocked white South Africa to the realisation that they were living on top of a volcano. The award to the Chief and the emergence of MK were among the major events of the year.

As the sirens wailed and the bells tolled away at midnight on December 31st, 1961 we felt that we were welcoming not just a new year but a new era in our freedom struggle.

## Chapter 13: Around Mother Africa.

I was part of a crowd of guests, foreign diplomats and military missions, many generals, pressmen with TV cameras that stood around a famous statesman who sat on a raised platform draped with flags and overlooking a large square. The hushed atmosphere was disturbed several times by the zoom of low flying jet planes that circled above the area.

Soon after our arrival we heard the distant sound of a bugle and thereafter faint music from a brass band accompanied by the beating of drums. Gradually the music became clearer and we could hear the synchronised thud of many feet. Suddenly from the corner on our extreme right a lieutenant with an upright and shining sword emerged at the head of about 500 black soldiers marching 4 deep and each carrying a rifle. On either side of the lieutenant was a soldier bearing a flag.

It was beautiful to see them looking neat and straight and marching with perfect timing as they went down along the wall to our right. At the corner they turned along the wall directly opposite us, up along the left one and turned to pass straight before us. When the vanguard was almost abreast of the platform order rang out in a language I could not understand and the lieutenant and the flag bearers saluted by dipping sword and flags. The smartness with which the salute was executed drew spontaneous applause from the crowd.

The column marched past and repeated the whole process, but this time when the lieutenant came

abreast of the platform the soldiers came to a standstill like one man, the lieutenant broke off and came straight to the statesman and saluted.

A month later I witnessed another military parade in honour of a political figure who had just returned from an island prison. But this particular parade differed from the first one in that it was not just a procession of troops for inspection, but even more important, it was at the same time a review of the country's armed revolution over a period of 8 years.

At the head of this parade were veterans in turbans and long tunics and sandals. They carried the type of weapons they used on the first day of the revolution including flintlock guns, shotguns, battle axes and even assegais. Some were elderly men, others were limping and there was hardly any precision as they moved forward. But from their confident bearing and the tumultuous applause they received as they passed the pavillion of distinguished guests there was no doubt that these were national heroes who had made a marked impression in the struggle of their people against imperialist exploitation.

They were followed by comparatively younger soldiers, all carrying modern arms and equally proud. But even with this section of the parade there was nothing of the smartness and precision of the first military display I had seen. This was part of an army that had been born in the fire of actual battle, that concentrated in the beginning to end on good marksmanship, physical fitness and that had little time for drill and that had fought almost daily. As the long column of soldiers filed past

with heavy tanks and artillery we could see with our own eyes the history of that country's struggle for independence.

I was then 44 years old and this was the first time for me to see black armies commanded by black generals. The first parade was in Debra Zaid (check spelling) and the soldiers on parade were a unit of the Ethiopian army. The statesman who took the salute was Emperor Haile Selassie and the command was given in Amharic, the official language of the country. The second parade was in Oujda, the headquarters of the Algerian army on the Moroccan side and was in honour of Ben Bella, who was cunningly arrested by the French in 1956 and imprisoned for 6 years.

Among the dignitaries that were on the pavillion were Dr. El Khatib, Moroccan Minister of State for African Affairs and himself a former guerrilla leader, Jacques Verges, formerly of Reunion, Mario Andrade, the general secretary of the MPLA, Marcelino Dos Santos, Micane(spelling?) from the Cameroons and Gibo Barkary (spelling?), leader of the Wasaba Party and former premier of French Sudan, who was deposed by the French when he followed the example of Sekou Toure and opted for independence outside the French community of states, and Robert Resha.

Ben Bella, amidst prolonged cheers, introduced us all in a 5 minute speech in which he made the single point that the freedom of the people of Algeria was meaningless in an Africa that was still under the claws of imperialism. He appealed to his people to do everything in their power to assist liberation movements in their struggle against colonial exploitation.

All these freedom fighters represented revolutionary movements that were already engaging the enemy in their respective countries or that were preparing to do so. In Rabat which was then the headquarters of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Freedom Movements of the Portuguese territories, I had lengthy discussions with all these men including a lady, Amalia Fonseca, from the Cape Verde Islands who represented Cabral on the Co-ordinating Committee. There were already men from Angola, the Cameroons, Portuguese Guinea and French Sudan who were undergoing military training in several countries in North Africa.

One of my missions to Africa was to arrange military training for our men and I felt that the formation of MK was a wise and timely move on the part of a movement that spanned the African continent as a whole. The whole atmosphere on the continent made our mission fairly easy.

The impact created by the two military parades I had seen was beyond words and dominated all my thinking as we went round the continent. The main passion that inspired me was the birth of a South African liberation army commanded by ourselves and fighting on our soil. I felt sure then, as I still do now, that once our units, operating from a friendly territory, set their foot on our soil, they would grow in numbers and striking power so rapidly that in due course Verwoerd would be plagued by all the problems which once tormented Chiang Kai Shek, Ngo Diem, De Gaulle, Batista and the British. I was confident then as now that the democratic social order we hoped to build, our superiority in numbers, the isolation of white South Africa and the overwhelming support we enjoy

from every part of the world would enable us to fight our way right to the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. 14 years have passed since I visited Ethiopia and Algeria and yet that dream remains as fervent today as it was when I watched the stirring displays at Debra Zaid and Oujda.

In December 1961 the ANC received an invitation from the Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) to attend its conference at Addis Ababa in February 1962, and I was asked to attend and lead our delegation there. I was reluctant to do so because after the 3-day strike the previous May I had publicly stated that I would not leave the country but would operate from underground. I was not convinced that leaving South Africa even for the specific purpose of attending such an important conference was compatible with the announcement I had made. But when my colleagues insisted that I should none the less leave I had no alternative but to do so.

They pointed out that my actual return to South Africa after I had publicly announced the fact at the Addis Ababa conference would remove any impression that I had not honoured my undertaking. Apart from attending the PAFMECSA conference, there was the question of seeing Kwame Nkrumah to discuss the hostile attitude of the Bureau of African Affairs towards the ANC, an attitude we were certain the Ghana President was not aware of. Peter Raboroko, a member of the executive committee of the PAC, was serving on the editorial board of the "Voice of Ghana (Africa?)" and on South African politics he had turned that publication into a PAC propaganda organ. We felt that the time had come for us to discuss the whole question with the Ghana

government. I agreed to undertake that mission.

Abe Gani and I drove down to Durban to report to Chief Luthuli as usual. On every occasion I went to Durban since I went underground I would try to contact Masabalala Yengwa and he would make all the arrangements for me to meet Chief. But it was not easy to reach him because he lived in an African township the entrance of which was guarded day and night by the municipal police. He also visited Inanda very often where his wife Edith Yengwa was teaching and I had to wait in town for him.

On our arrival in Durban we immediately advised Masabalala and in the meantime lived with a friend in town whose wife came from Johannesburg. I quickly struck friendship with their lovely daughter who was about 4 years old at that time and she sat on my lap as we conversed. My face was full of hair and my appearance not so tidy. She scanned me for some time and bluntly remarked: "You're dirty!"

Early the next morning my friend took me to his mother's place and I saw several people throughout the day, including Kgalaki Sello and Earnest Galo. After each group left I would make some notes and thereafter read. The old lady turned out to be quite sharp and late that afternoon she asked me to take a walk with her, which I politely refused. Then the interrogation started.

"Where you come from ?" she asked. "Pietersberg", was my reply. "Why you visit Durban ?" she

proceeded. "For holiday", I said. "When you go back Pietersberg ?" she persisted. "Tomorrow", I answered. "You come Durban for holiday and spend the whole day in room talking to people and reading book?"

The old lady had seen through our plans and I was happy when that evening Masabalala drove me to Groutville to see Chief. He readily endorsed the whole proposal that I should go to the PAFMECSA conference, make arrangements for the training of our recruits and visit Ghana, but insisted that I should return as soon as I had accomplished my mission.

We had chartered a plane that would fly me to Dar Es Salaam and that would bring back Moses Kotane who was on another mission abroad. On the morning of my departure Zami brought me a new travel suitcase packed with personal belongings. Later Ahmed Kathrada arrived and we spent some time together while waiting for Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe to bring my credentials for Addis Ababa. But when they did not turn up Amin Cajee drove me to Bechuanaland. We later learnt that Walter had been arrested on his way to me and that also held up Duma.

I had never left South Africa before and although I was a bit tense all along the way and constantly on the lookout for the police I looked forward keenly to my journey which would give me the opportunity of visiting new places I had only seen in atlases and meeting leading figures like Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, who led a party with a policy almost identical with ours, Haile Selassie, one of the first black statemen I ever heard of, the Cairo museum and pyramids,



Timbuktu, once a leading African education centre, Guinea's Sekou Toure whose defiant stand against De Gaulle marked him as amongst those African leaders who wanted to make a clean break with all forms of imperialism and Ghana which as the first African independent state in the 50s had become a Mecca attracting freedom fighters and professional people from many parts of Southern Africa. Above all I hoped to visit the battle fields in Algeria and see with my own eyes actual combat.

Guerilla warfare had already started in the Cameroons and in Angola and I was anxious to visit these countries as well and learn from their experiences. But of immediate interest to me was the prospect of meeting Seretse Khama who had just formed the Democratic Party and who was staking out his claim to the first premiership of an independent Botswana. Independent states on our borders were of far more immediate importance to us than distant Ghana, Guinea, Ethiopia and Algeria.

We arrived at Lobatsi in the afternoon and immediately called at the offices of the Bechuanaland Air Safaris where we learnt that a telegram had been received from Dar Es Salaam postponing the trip for a fortnight. We put up with my fellow Treason Trialist Fish Keitsing who had left South Africa and settled there.

The next morning I met Professor K.T. Motsete, president of the Bechuanaland Peoples Party (BPP), Kgaboesele, treasurer, Fish and others and we immediately discussed the political situation. My sympathies were distinctly in favour of the BPP because it was formed mainly by

former members of the ANC of South Africa. Its National Secretary was Motsamai Mpo, another former Treason Trialist and Phillip Mathante, who was prominent in the Alexandra branch of the ANC, was one of the leading members of its national executive and I hoped that they would do well in the elections that would be held in the following year.

Nonetheless I strongly felt that the existence of two political parties on the eve of independence was undesirable and urged them either to merge with Seretse or sign an election pact with him. It was my firm opinion that in spite of my own personal wish in the matter, bearing in mind the family background of Seretse and the influence of chieftaincy still in the country, his own personal ability and popularity and the massive support he received from his people during the conflict with his powerful and resourceful uncle Tshekedi, he would certainly romp home to victory. I pointed out to Professor Motsete that it would be unrealistic to expect any other result and persuaded him to have discussions on the matter with the leader of the Democratic Party. He acknowledged the point and promised to discuss the whole question with his executive at the earliest possible convenience.

Motsamai was living in Palapye at the time and Phillip was on a visit to Ghana but I was hoping to visit Motsamai and discuss the matter with him directly as well. I was also keen to go to Serowe to pay a courtesy call on Seretse whom I had last met in South Africa. After a separation of more than a decade I looked forward to seeing him again and meeting his family.

We were still conversing with the professor and others when a white gentleman arrived and who was introduced as Mr. Kirby, the immigration officer. After a few preliminaries he indicated that he

wanted to have a discussion with me and pointed out that his house in town would be the most ideal place for the purpose. At that time the Anderson Ganyile affair, who was kidnapped from Basutholand by agents of the South African government, was still fresh in our mind. I bluntly refused and told Kirby that we could discuss everything where we were. But after receiving assurances from my friends that he had been of assistance to all our friends who passed through the country and that I had nothing to fear from him I accepted his invitation and we drove to his house.

Although I was invited to him as David Motsamai he obviously knew who I was and along the way repeatedly complained that we should have told him beforehand that I was coming and added that he was not only the Immigration Officer but also the Security Chief for Lobatsi. That shook me badly. In my country the Security Police were not just concerned with the safety of the State but were the instrument the enemy used for persecuting freedom fighters and all those who opposed racial discrimination. As an outlaw I had been dodging them for 10 months only to find myself in the clutches of one of them in the course of an important mission.

It turned out that my fears were quite baseless and Kirby had no sinister motives. He outlined the position in his country quite well and made sensible suggestions in regard to my security whilst in Bechuanaland. He pointed out that Fish's house was a dangerous place for me in which to stay for the South African authorities well knew that every South African refugee stayed there. Secondly he pointed out that the house was in the African township where Fish lived was near the South African border and within the easy reach of South Africa and difficult for them to protect. He then

suggested that I should live in a house next door to him where security measures would be far more easier to arrange and pointed out that he had offered Oliver the same place on his way to Ghana in 1960. I thanked him for his offer and interest but preferred to leave all arrangements for my safety to my hosts of the BPP, assuring him at the same time that they would bear in mind all the problems he had raised. Later I discussed the matter with Porfessor Motsete, Fish and Joe Matlou, one of our members who was now living in Lobatsi and Sam Chand (check name and initials) and they took the necessary precautions. Kirby however put one condition, namely, that I should not leave Lobatsi and visit other areas without notifying him. This may have been a double edged measure to ensure my own safety from South African agents as well as to keep track of my activities in the country. This made me change my plans of visiting Seretse because I was no longer so certain whether he would not be embarrassed by my paying him a visit under police surveillance.

Lobatsi township had a small bookstore and I bought a number of works which were not available in South Africa and which kept me occupied. I also used the opportunity for the purpose of preparing our address at the Addis Ababa conference and in spite of the warning of Kirby I roved around Lobatsi. One Sunday shortly after breakfast and accompanied by Marks Mlomyeni, another South African refugee, we climbed the steep and rocky hill above Lobatsi township, crossed the railway lines to Mafeking and as we climbed the hill to cross the motor road to Kanye we met a troop of wild baboons and their social organisation and skill in keeping us at arms length as we followed them fascinated me. We roamed the deep gorges west of the town, surprising buck and other small game. We returned late in the afternoon tired and hungry. I repeated this a couple of

times and enjoyed the outing a great deal.

In the meantime I was joined by Joe Matthews from Basutoland and a few days after his arrival I insisted that we should leave for Dar Es Salaam. I joined the plane from Gaborone and took a back seat while Joe sat next to the pilot. On our way to Kasane on the Chobi River the 5 seater plane ran into a heavy storm and bobbed up and down like a cork in a turbulent sea. But the pilot was an experienced and confident navigator and skillfully manoeuvred his machine through the tempest.

The landing strip at Kasane was waterlogged and after we had signalled to the hotel we landed on a firmer strip several miles away and waited there for the hotel manager to come and fetch us. The hotel as well as the landing strip were each situated in a bush clearing and the two were linked by a track road that cut through the forest. The manager and his wife finally arrived shortly after sunset armed with rifles and reported that they had been held up on the way by rogue elephants. They were driving a van with an open back and on the return journey Joe and I sat in the back. A lioness crossed the road in front of the van and it was clear that I was no longer in the cosmopolitan city of Johannesburg governed by a City Council according to the rules of law. I was in another cosmopolitan centre where the survival of the fittest was the supreme law and where the tangled vegetation concealed all kinds of danger.

The hotel was strategically situated at a point where almost the whole of Southern Africa met - Angola, Bechuanaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia and South West Africa as all these

countries were then called. Most of the African employees came from Southern Rhodesia and at that time Joshua Nkomo was at the height of his popularity. I asked them about him and in the course of our conversation told them we were together in South Africa and that we were friends. They all thought highly of him and regaled us with some of his exploits as a fighter for the liberation of their country. The discovery that we were his friend made us special guests. We took our meals in our rondavel and I suspect that we received better treatment than the owner of the hotel. Throughout the night our sleep was interrupted by the roar of a lion and lacking experience of bush life, it seemed to us to be lurking a few yards away from the rondavel. All toilet facilities were outside and none of us dared venture out until daybreak.

Early the next morning we took off for Mbeya, a Tanganyikan town on the Northern Rhodesian border. It was a clear and beautiful day and all sides we could see far out into the distant horizons. I was keen to see the famous Victoria Falls in Livingstone on the Zambezi but did not have the courage to ask the pilot to deviate from the route for the purpose and I was content to see then at a glance some distance below to our right. We passed Lusaka on our left and sometime thereafter sighted some mountain range ahead of us. It seemed to me that at the height at which we were flying we would not be able to clear the mountains. But as we approached we could see a neck through which we passed.

At the beginning of our flight we were in radio contact with Gaborone police until we entered Northern Rhodesia when Lusaka provided us with weather information. Before we reached this

mountain range Lusaka handed us over to Mbeya but the pilot tried in vain to establish contact with Mbeya and called over and over again "Mbeya, Mbeya!" As we passed through the neck we flew over a series of parallel ranges and the weather seemed to be changing rapidly. The mountains were full of air pockets which made the light plane bounce up and down once more. Now and again we went through patches of mist and the pilot was still trying to contact Mbeya.

In desperation he tried to keep on course by following the direction of the motor road which on the mountains turned and twisted as usual. A fast moving plane flying low and which turned and twisted the air was by itself not a very pleasant experience. But suddenly the mist thickened and we could not even see the road. Once we narrowly missed a mountain on the left and it was a shattering experience to hear the SOS go off high up in the air and I noticed that even the confident and experienced pilot was concerned. The ever loquacious Joe had become speechless and his eyes seemed to grow bigger and bigger. But he and the pilot appeared more resigned than I was in the back seat. I must have surely fainted when the mountain suddenly reared up on our left and I expected the journey to end at any moment with the plane like a pancake against some cliff. Suddenly we came through the mountain into as clear and beautiful a day as before we reached the range. Mbeya was far to our left and we reached it from the West instead of East as we would have done if we had kept it on course. We had flown non stop for 6 hours and for that day our journey had ended.

We booked in at the local hotel and we found a non racial crowd in which the people in small

groups were chatting together harmoniously. We called first at the TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) offices and at the house of Mr. Mwakangale the local MO. We found the latter out and then returned to the hotel via the UNIP (United National Independence Party of Zambia) offices. By the time we reached the hotel Mr. Mwakangale had already called there looking for us.

To see a non-racial crowd together was nothing new to me. In the Congress movement we had become used to mixed crowds either in formal meetings, parties, concerts and other functions that we arranged. I had also seen mixed crowds in Bechuanaland even though I kept at a distance. But on otherwise insignificant incident indicated that this was a mixed crowd of an entirely different kind, that we were now in a country ruled by Africans.

An African customer who was present when we were informed that Mr. Mwakangale had enquired after us immediately took the matter up with the white receptionist. "Madam, come here", he called and she came at once. "Did Mr. Mwakangale enquire after these two gentlemen?" he asked. "I am very sorry sir, he did, but I had forgotten about them", she replied. "Please be careful, madam. These are our guests and we would like them to receive proper attention." His tone was authoritative but polite. I do not know whether the receptionist was born in Tanganyika or came there before or after independence, nor I have any idea as to what went on in her mind during that incident. But I recalled the biting poem of my countryman Krune Mqhayi where he speaks of the turning of the wheel of history when underdogs become the top dogs and the top dogs the under dogs.



We arrived in Dar the day Julius Nyerere resigned from the premiership and not knowing the reason for this completely unexpected development we were disturbed for he had made a marked impression not only as a leader of his country but as a faithful friend of the oppressed people of my own country. I met him the following morning and the first question I asked related to his resignation and from what he said it became clear to me that he was still in firm control of the political machinery of the ruling party and that the extraordinary step he had taken was a carefully planned and shrewd move to put TANU in an unassailable position and to prepare it for the great task of social reconstruction that lay ahead.

He was well disposed towards our mission and readily promised help where he could but frankly discussed his difficulties in regard to other aspects, and referred me to Emperor Haile Selassie, promising at the same time to introduce us to him.

Although he was the first African statesman I met his simplicity, modesty and ability to get at grass roots of every question we discussed at once convinced me that he was one of Africa's top men and would go very far in his efforts to solve the problems of poverty and ignorance bequeathed to him by many years of colonial exploitation.

That same afternoon I met his close friend Rashid Kawawa, then Prime Minister. Although he had a busy programme and was due to meet the Governor that afternoon he nonetheless gave me enough

time to speak to him and to know a little more about the men who organised the country's agricultural workers union and who also made an important contribution in the Party that led the independence struggle. He and Julius Nyerere seemed to match each other in their humility and friendliness and he repeated the warm sentiments expressed to me earlier by the ex-premier.

I stayed with Nsilo (?) Swai, a cabinet minister and the warmth with which I was received made me feel perfectly at home and among life long friends, the same feeling that inspired me whenever I was in the company of Chief Luthuli, Professor Z.K. Matthews, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and other colleagues. Their government was non racial and the population groups of the country were represented on it - an inspiration to us who sought to build a South Africa on the same model.

I visited the TANU offices and even before I reached them it was evident that I was about to enter the headquarters of a party which had triumphed because of its own strength and efficiency and its machinery and certainly not because of the generosity or weakness of the enemy. There were still visible symbols which showed unmistakably that TANU occupied a dominant position in the political life of the country. Prior to my arrival I had read reports to the effect that before independence it had a membership of about half a million out of a population of 9 million. My companion pointed to the vehicles parked outside the building as belonging either to TANU or its officials and the party itself occupied 3 floors in its own building with a large number of full time officials. There were detailed maps from which you could see at a glance the branches throughout the country.

I was reminded of a Rand Daily Mail article written by certain Mr. Layton who claimed that the ANC lacked the distinctive marks of a mature political organisation. He claimed that its membership was small and did not command the support of the African people; that it had no proper offices, full time officials, efficient machinery, transport or records. Reporter Layton deliberately omitted to mention the fact that throughout its history and especially since the Nats came to power in 1948 the enemy had systematically attacked the organisation by means of sustained raids on its offices and homes of its leaders, banned, restricted and deported officials, prohibited government employees from being members, disrupted its machinery by removing records and arresting key figures and by intimidating landlords not to give us offices. If he had examined the matter objectively he would have realised that it was remarkable that we were still active under such semi-legal conditions. Nevertheless my visit to the TANU offices showed me what we could have been if we had operated under more favourable conditions.

Oliver Tambo, who had been waiting for me in Dar had left a message that I should follow him to Lagos where he had gone to attend the conference of the Monrovia group of African states. I spent happy moments with Moses Kotane who was returning from a trip abroad, Xola Makiwane, Frene Ginwala, Jimmy Radebe and many of our people there.

One evening we flew to Lagos and met on the plane Hymie Basner and his wife who were bound for Accra where he had been offered employment. About 8 a.m. the following day we landed at

Kano in Northern Nigeria and a bearded gentleman with a stern face joined Joe and I at the table and in perfect Xhosa: "Camagu" (Good morning). That common expression was electric when said by an unknown person in a far off land. The man who greeted us was Mzwayi Pilisco who had left the country a few years before to study pharmacy in England and who was now an active member of the ANC and our representative in Cairo. Within a few hours we were at Lagos airport where we were met by Oliver. I had last seen him 22 months before, then with a clean shaven and well groomed face. Now he had also grown a beard and had little time to attend to his hair. As head of our foreign mission he had a tight programme travelling in Africa, Europe and visiting America, meeting heads of states and other important government officials, explaining our policy and needs, addressing conferences of all kinds. He had already established ANC offices in Ghana, England, Cairo and Tanganyika and had made valuable contacts for us even in countries where we had no actual offices.

Attempts have been made by the sponsors of the Lagos Conference of Independent States to unite all African states including the Casablanca group consisting of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (?). Prior to the Conference Sir Balawa, premier of Nigeria, travelled to Conakry to discuss matters with Sekou Toure. The bone of contention was whether or not the Provisional Government of Algeria should be invited to the conference, a point on which the Casablanca group insisted while the Monrovia group approached the matter purely formally and held that Algeria was not an independent state in the classical sense of the term and opposed its invitation. As a result of this deadlock the Casablanca group boycotted the conference.

The Nigerian press exploited the presence of Emperor Haile Selassie and described him by all his titles: Emperor of Ethiopia, Lion of Judah. He had, they said, cursed the League of Nations and it had collapsed; he had cursed Mussolini and he was hanged; "He has blest this conference!" they boasted.

In actual fact in his address to the conference the Emperor had made his position clear. He declared that Ethiopia belonged to neither of the two blocks but to one group and one group only - that of Africa, his own way of asserting neutrality of his country.

Both in Bechuanaland, Tanganyika and Nigeria I kept away from public places because we wanted the enemy to discover that I was out of the country only when I attended the PAFMECSA Conference. I stayed with Lennard Amechi, a barrister and Deputy Minister of Information and a member of Dr. Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria (and the Cameroons) Citizens (NCNC ?). He held radical views and was uncompromising in his opposition to certain African statesmen who had conservative views.

Although I did not attend the conference I closely followed the proceedings and obtained copies of the main speeches. Dr. Azikiwe, then Governor General of the country welcomed delegates in a scholarly speech in which he pointed out that the main object of the meeting was to unite the people of Africa, to solve their social problems and generally to advance their well being. He contrasted

the Lagos Conference which had constructive plans of uplifting human beings with those of the Congress of Vienna in 1814 and the Congress of Berlin in 1878 which were inspired by the imperialist aims of dividing the world into colonies of the Big Powers and of exploiting the wealth of those colonies. (Check resolutions).

Our delegation met Mr. Tubman, President of Liberia and we arranged that I would visit his country in April the same year. We also had a discussion with the Prime Minister of Somaliland who also invited us to his country, as well as Justin Bomboko, Foreign Minister of the Congo, as Zaire was then known.

But the man who seemed to have more than superficial knowledge of our country's politics was undoubtedly Jaja Wachuku, the Nigerian Foreign Minister. His private library was well stocked with standard works on South Africa and judging from his comments during our discussions he had used the material very well. He had created a stir in the 1961 session of the UN when he proposed that South Africa should be given ten years within which to change her policies. We were all indignant at this unilateral declaration and although we in the Congress movement well knew that white South Africa would defend its privileged position to the bitter end and were preparing for a long drawn out struggle his proposal shocked us because if it were accepted, it would have the effect of relaxing the international pressures on her for the abolition of racial discrimination, a breathing space which she desperately needed. Kenneth Kaunda summed up our reaction very well in his speech at the 1962 PAFMECSA Conference when he declared amid loud cheers that Africa

was too impatient to wait another 10 years. Jaja Wachuku was also heavily attacked by his own party the NCNC for his proposal.

Oliver and I had a lengthy discussion with him and he defended his point of view, pointing out that it was his firm conviction that at the time Africa was not in a position to do any thing concrete to force South Africa to abandon her policies except to condemn her publicly and push her out of world bodies. But he felt that something more than that was required to destroy apartheid and bring about democratic changes in the country and that it was this aspect that had influenced him in making his proposal.

Looking back now I still think his views were wrong even though 14 years have elapsed since our discussion without any real changes whatsoever in race discrimination in the country. But I also think he understood our problems far more clearly than most African statesmen I met at the time and was certainly one of our best friends and an able man.

Mr. McCewan (?) Secretary General of the NCNC made a suggestion that was to be strongly urged on me by the Vice President and Minister of Defence Belkacem Krim and the Minister of Information Yazid Mohamed when the late Robbie Resha and I visited the headquarters of the Algerian Provisional Government in Tunisia. He thought that the ANC should open its doors to whites who supported the struggle for full equality and make our bid for political power less costly. The same point was made in Cairo when the late Robbie, Mzwayi and I met Reuben Kamanga,

Samuel Kapwepwe and George Silundika. But we explained to all of them that our goal was a non racial society and that on the basis of our own situation we had created an efficient machinery to achieve the same purpose.

From Lagos we flew to the PAFMECSA Conference and I was happy to meet Joshua Nkomo at the airport on his way to the UN. Although we had often met when he was at the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work in Johannesburg and showed interest in political issues I never suspected that he would feature so prominently in his country's politics.

On the plane I met Peter Molotsi, Gaur Radebe and other members of the PAC and from their reaction it was clear that our security precautions in Lagos were quite good. They were all surprised to see me. Our patriots immediately overwhelmed us and freedom charters and Africanist society rhymes receded into the background. High up in the skies and flying over jungles in foreign countries, South Africa bound us together like one family, all zealous about our country's freedom and we chatted away friendly all along the way.

I had not met Gaur for many years before he left the country and meeting him as we flew across the continent aroused fond memories. I felt the same way towards him as I did when I met Hymie Basner to whom I was professional assistant in the early 50s, on our way to Lagos. They were both courageous men who spoke out openly against the evils of colour inequality, even if we did not always approve of what they did and said. I thought they were too old to be exposed to the strains



and stresses of living away from their country, to adjust themselves to new environments and cultivate new friends and even new interests. It was during the same flight that Oliver introduced me to Reuben Kamanga and other members of the UNIP to whom I indicated my keenness to meet Kenneth Kaunda who was due to attend the conference straight from Lusaka. On the day after our arrival in Addis Ababa I met Kenneth Kaunda, had a brief chat and arranged to meet later during the conference.

Ethiopia is one of Africa's oldest independent states and was already known to the world in biblical times having been associated with such famous names as King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba from whom its people trace their descent. It has inspired African thought both in religion and political questions and up until the death of Emperor Haile Selassie occupied a special position in the affairs of the African continent.

In religious matters it aroused a strong desire for self government and led to the establishment of the first pure Negro Church in America. In South Africa it inspired an exodus of Africans from the churches controlled by whites and to the emergence of a mushroom of African churches, all known as the Ethiopian movement.

The existence of an independent African state from the dawn of history and its ability to resist and repel successive waves of European invasions has had a great impact on the freedom struggle throughout Africa. I was 17 when Benito Mussolini attacked Ethiopia and my own hatred of him

and condemnation of his fascism sprang not from any careful examination of its totalitarian tenets but simply from the fact that he attacked my own kith and kin.

From the moment I agreed to attend the conference the prospect of visiting Ethiopia attracted me more strongly than would have been the case if I were going to London, Paris, Berlin or New York. Ras Abebe (check spelling and date of his death), the national hero who led the Ethiopian people against Italian aggression had just died in the abortive coup in December 1961 but the Emperor was still alive and I doubt if any of the delegates to conference were not as keen as I was to meet him.

From Khartoum to the imperial capital we flew on the Ethiopian Airlines piloted by black airmen and with black hostesses. Until December 1961 I had paid little attention to geography and when I developed an interest in the subject I naturally concentrated on South Africa and we knew very little about the rest of the world, including Ethiopia. Dim memories of press accounts of the Ethiopian terrain during the war against the Italian aggression made me expect a country of highlands, dense forests and thick undergrowth and unique rock formations and as the plane was coming down I scanned the country as far as the eye could see.

At the airport we were met by Getashew Mekasha, Deputy Foreign Minister, and other officials from his Department and our delegation stayed at the Ras Hotel. With the exception of the UN building where we met, the imperial palaces and the university, there was hardly any building or mansion that could at all compare with the imposing skyscrapers of South Africa. The city as a

whole was not properly developed and I noticed no extensive building prospects. Only a few streets were tarred and one met flocks of goats and sheep being driven to the market.

There were no political parties, no popular organs of government nor attempts to separate the powers of government. The Emperor was the legislature, the executive and highest court of appeal and the cabinet consisted of nominated members.

But uppermost in my mind was that this was the country ruled by Africans, even if it had no democratic institutions, and every structure I saw round there was the result of African initiative and skill. Above all Ethiopia was not only an inspiration to the rest of Africa; it had gone out of its way to give concrete help to freedom fighters throughout our continent and from the discussions I had had with Julius Nyerere I was confident that in regard to our main mission we would not come back with empty hands. Peter Koinange, general secretary of PAFMECSA, and now Kenyan Minister of      met our delegation and appealed for unity and the avoidance of any statement that might cause discord at the conference. He obviously did not want us and the PAC to ventilate our differences at the meeting, was too astute a politician to put the matter so bluntly to us.

The next morning Oliver and I attended the meeting of the Steering Committee of PAFMECSA and each organisation had to apply for affiliation afresh. It soon became clear why Peter Koinange felt obliged to appeal to all delegations for unity. Our application was opposed by a delegate from the Uganda's      on the ground that we were a tribal organisation. The temptation was too strong to

dismiss the objection contemptuously but we explained that our organisation was formed expressly to unite Africans and that its membership was drawn from all sections of our people. The application was accepted. Strange enough for an organisation which claimed to value highly the principles and aims of Pan Africanism the PAC did not apply for affiliation.

In spite of Koinange's appeal several applications did not go through so smoothly and there was opposition from rival organisations from the same country. The organisation recognised by PAFMECSA from Ruanda-Urundi, as the country was then known, was UNARU but was not represented at the conference. Its rival UPRONA was however present. Contrary to UNARU which stood for the unity of the whole country, UPRONA demanded a partition of the country on the ground that before conquest the two territories were two separate kingdoms and were only united by Belgium colonialists to serve their own interests. UPRONA's application for affiliation was rejected on the ground that it was a tribal organisation.

But an aspect that particularly disturbed me was the attitude of most delegates in the PAFMECSA area to visitors from West Africa and the Arab countries. Abdoullayi Dialo, secretary general of the All African Peoples Conference and who was also Guinea (Conakry) Resident Minister in Accra and to which PAFMECSA was affiliated, was present and was accompanied by the Administrative Secretary of the AAPC, Mr. Edison. There were also the Guinea and Mali ambassadors in Cairo, Dr. Faud Gallal, Egyptian Minister of State for African Affairs, Ben Barka who carried the death sentence imposed on him by a Moroccan court and Toufie Boutoura, Algerian Ambassador in

Ghana, and Captain Abdul Aziz the Algerian representative of the Afro Asian Solidarity Committee.

The crucial question was whether these guests should be allowed to attend and a substantial number of delegates felt strongly that they should not be admitted. It being my first occasion to attend a PAFMECSA conference and being unfamiliar with the climate of relations amongst the blacks of our continent, the whole issue upset me and I felt I could not keep quiet. I argued that Dialo was the secretary general of our mother body, the All African Peoples Conference, and entitled to attend as of right. I pointed out that it would be a diplomatic blunder on our part to refuse admission to representatives of independent states whose friendship meant much to us in the freedom struggles of our respective countries.

But I was even more concerned about the position of the Algerian representatives and felt that it would be a scandal for us to turn them away at the time when they were waging a patriotic war against French imperialism at great cost in human lives and money. I pointed out that they had come to Addis so that they could carry back to their people a message of solidarity and support which would inspire them in their just war against French aggression. This proposal was accepted but only after one delegate had barked at me in desperation: "The trouble Nelson is that in North Africa you have Africans who are not Africans!"

There are usually two sides on question of this nature and my disagreement with some of my fellow

delegates did not mean that I was unmindful of the fact that they probably had genuine grievances and were reacting to mistakes made by others. The taking of unilateral decisions by any State affecting other countries, however well disposed that State may be to the national struggles in those countries, and interference in internal affairs of other countries by supporting one oppressed population group against other oppressed groups, was bound to create fierce tensions where people found it difficult to think calmly.

The conference was officially opened by the Emperor in an army uniform. I had never suspected that he was so short and small in build. From all that I had heard of him I expected to see a giant. But his dignity and confidence and especially his remarks to the conference were those of an elder statesman. He stressed the question of unity of freedom organisations in each country and sharply condemned rivalry and disunity as the bane of national liberation movements. He expressly drew attention to political events in the Congo and expressed the view that the trouble in that country was not so much due to imperialist intrigues as to disunity of its leaders. Finally he declared that Ethiopia fully supported the struggle against racial discrimination and would do everything in her power to give momentum to that struggle (check speech).

In our speech we commented on the significant fact that the conference was meeting in Addis Ababa the capital of a kingdom whose own struggle to defend its independence had in turn inspired our own struggles. We reviewed the history of the freedom struggle in our own country and the brutal massacres that had been committed by whites on our people here and in South West Africa

from 1920 to Sharpevill in 1961. We referred to the emergence of Umkhonto We Sizwe on December 16th, 1961 when South Africa reverberated under its blows, a statement which provoked Mr. Kiwanuka, then Chief Minister of Uganda to remark: "Give it to them again".

My announcement that after the conference I would return to South Africa and continue to operate from the underground was loudly cheered and we came out with the distinct impression that the freedom struggle in our country enjoyed the full support of the people in the PAFMECSA area.

Our paper was the only one delivered that morning and conference adjourned until the following day when Peter Molotsi delivered a paper on behalf of the PAC. He told the conference that his organisation had decided that all its members, wherever they might be, should report directly to their national executive in South Africa before July 1st the same year. (check). We knew well why they had decided to tell the conference that fairy tale.

During the conference Kenneth Kaunda and Oliver were invited to address the (check the society's name) and the same night I addressed the students at the Haile Selassie University. Phillip Kgosana, the hero of the March 1960 PAC demonstrations (?) in Cape Town was also present at Addis Ababa and I asked the students to invite him as well. I felt that a young man who had done so well at home would have something of value to tell the students and they would have someone who could speak authoritatively on PAC policy. That same day the students invited him and I also discussed the matter with him, stressing the advantage of us appearing jointly at such a meeting.

Although he accepted the invitation he did not come. I was surprised at the amount of information the students possessed on South Africa. Not only did they ask general questions on apartheid and developments in the Transkei but they closely questioned me on men like Chiefs Botha Sigcau and Daliwonga Mathanzima and Knowledge Guzama.

One of the persons I was pleased to meet at Addis Ababa was Reverend Michael Scot, the Anglican priest who lost his appointment in the Church (check) because he tried to follow on the footsteps of Jesus Christ and went all out to fight the demon of racialism. He took part in the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign and was jailed for that, and shortly after he was released, he lived with the squatters in Orlando under conditions of filth and squalor. For a fortnight he lived with me in my Orlando home. He was also active in the struggle of the people of South West Africa against South Africa and did excellent work, including helping in collecting material, drawing up petitions and presenting them to the UN. Not only did he become a great friend of the late Chief Hosea Kutako who led the resistance of the South West African people but he became a popular figure in Southern Africa known for the strength of his beliefs, his uprightness and willingness to pay the penalty for his beliefs. Although our delegation had a heavy programme we tried to entertain him and make him at home as far as we could.

Oliver and I had an important discussion with Kenneth Kaunda in the course of which the leader of UNIP made flattering remarks about the head of our organisation, Chief Luthuli. Just like Julius Nyerere he was worried by divisions among South African freedom fighters and expressed the hope



that perhaps when Robert Sobukwe returns from jail, we might make some progress on the question of unity. After making significant but disturbing remarks about the image the ANC was then projecting to people abroad he referred to us his friend Samuel Kapwepwe for detailed discussions. Remarkably enough his comments tended to coincide with those made to us earlier by Oliver and his wife Adie. Samuel and I spent a whole Sunday together discussing the situation at home as they saw it from outside and I got an even more clearer picture of how others appraised our work. As already indicated Samuel and I met with other colleagues and resumed our discussions which, even though we disagreed on certain aspects, we found quite valuable.

During the conference all the delegations were introduced to the Emperor. When our turn came we gave him the felicitations of Chief Luthuli and briefly outlined our mission. Thereafter we had full discussions with Ato Ketema Yifru, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who attended to some aspects while we examined others with Sir Guebere (check spelling), the then Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian Army.

The day after the conference we reached Cairo at the time when Marshall Tito was a guest of President Nasser and we could thus not see the latter. But we met Faud Gallal and later Mohamed Faik, Head of the Division of African Affairs. (check spelling). He also readily attended to our satisfaction some aspects of our mission and made valuable suggestions while reserving the rest of the matters for the personal attention of the President. He raised the perennial issue of the unity between us and the PAC and Oliver reminded him that the whole question of the United Front of

South Africa had been born in that same room where we were meeting at the time, as a result of a suggestion from President Nasser. Oliver added that since then we had honoured our own side of the bargain.

In Cairo I also met Alfred Hutchinson, an ex-Fort Harean, member of the ANC and promising writer who had been jailed during the Defiance Campaign in 1952. He was one of the younger men we thought had a great future both as a literary man and fighter for national rights and it was a happy moment for me to see him again after almost 3 years. He was then living in England and was now attending a conference of Afro Asian journalists in the city. I was not present at that conference but I was later told that he delivered a stimulating paper which impressed many delegates. It was from Alfred that I obtained a copy of Chief Luthuli's book "Let My People Go". Reading it in a foreign city immediately put my bearings straight and I was able to refresh myself in regard to important aspects of the story of our people's struggle to be free. I also read some literature on the life of President Nasser and two works on the Algerian Revolution and although they were by no means authoritative in the sense that they were written by Algerians who were themselves intimately connected with that revolution, in the absence of anything better, I found them useful and could now look forward confidently to informed discussions with the Algerians on the methods of struggle we were preparing to start in our own country.

In spite of plunder by the colonialists Egypt still is a country of fabulous wealth in ancient art and culture. I have always been anxious to see the pyramids, the sphinx and the embalmed body of

Ramses II, perhaps one of the strongest pharaohs that ever ruled that country. I spent the whole morning at the museum making detailed notes and later Oliver took me to Gizeh where we saw the colossal stone structure with its square base firmly planted on the ground where the sloping sides met at the apex, all done with mortar and giant blocks of stone with which a monumental edifice was built, held in position by their own weight.

Oliver took me for a boat ride around the island on the Nile and as a boy of about 9 skillfully manoeuvred the boat we were going to use, my otherwise fearless and calm comrade-in-arms widened his eyes, watched the whole operation suspiciously and explained: "Are we going to be driven by this small boy? Oh no." At the same time he stepped back and stood at a safe distance. But when an elderly man took the controls we relaxed and I thoroughly enjoyed the one hour ride on Africa's longest river.

My chief interest was to find out the type of men who founded the high civilisation of olden times that thrived in the Nile Valley as far back as 5000 B.C. This was not merely a question of archeological interest but one of cardinal importance to African thinkers who are primarily concerned with the collection of scientific evidence to explode the fictitious claim of white propagandists that civilisation began in Europe and that Africans have no rich past that can compare with theirs. I discussed the matter with one of the curators at the museum but he was extremely cautious and although he drew my attention to several theories on the matter, for which I was extremely grateful, I was no wiser on the subject than I was before I entered the museum.

(NOTE: Re my speech at Addis- check and add- I dealt with the Pietermaritzburg conference, the demand of a National Convention and the 3 days strike that followed, as well as the strong arm methods the enemy used to crush the strike).

There Oliver and I parted and he left for London, promising to join us in Ghana while Robbie Resha and I prepared to tour the rest of the continent. Meantime Mzwayi Piliso was active introducing me to various people including ambassadors and members of the liberation movements.

I had already met the ambassadors of Guinea and Mali in Addis and the latter had several discussions with us. We now met the ambassadors of China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ghana, Morocco, Indonesia and Yugoslavia. The Soviet embassy was the first we contacted but until the moment of my departure we had not heard from him.

We also met Sam Nujoma, leader of SWAPO, the Cairo representative of the PAC Vusumzi Make and his wife Maya Angelou (?) and John (?) Chakela, the representative of the Basutoland Congress Party.

President Nasser had an impressive programme of economic development based on African socialism and involving the cutting down of the right of private ownership in land, nationalisation of important sectors of the economy, rapid industrialisation, the clearing of slums and building

better houses, introduction of educational reforms, improvement in the living standards of both urban and rural populations, the building of the Aswan Dam and of a modern army. Egypt under Nasser was a striking contrast to the feudal and poor country that it was under the pharaohs.

But there was another aspect which interested me about the Nasser development programme.

Although she was the leader of the Moslem world in the Middle East and North Africa, she was also the most powerful African state on our continent and perhaps the only black state then with an army, navy and airforce that could compare with that of South Africa. The mere existence of such a state was a matter of strategic significance to those who were planning armed operations against oppressive regimes in their own countries in Africa.

Prior to my visit to Egypt I had read a voluminous manual issued by the Israeli army on the 1956 war between the two countries. As was to be expected the account was written from the point of view of the Israeli army and skillfully concealed the fact that the whole operation was an imperialist plot of aggression which was simultaneously launched by Britain, France and Israel and which was foiled only by the threat of armed intervention by the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless I always thought it unrealistic to ignore the existence of Israel and maintained that the Jewish people are as entitled as any other nation in the world to have their own national home. I have always wished and still do for the establishment of harmonious relations between all people and more particularly between the Arabs and Israel and the end of all hostilities between them. But I

also felt that, if in spite of our earnest wishes in this regard, war breaks out in this region the Arabs would find it difficult to defend their independence if they fought the war with rickety social systems which are essentially feudalistic when the bulk of the population were downtrodden and excluded from the machinery of government. Israel is an advanced capitalist state and it can only be matched by countries with an equally advanced, or even more important, with a superior system to capitalism where the ordinary man would need not only a good weapon with which to fight but would have something dear to his heart to defend. The Nasser Programme seemed to me to be progressive and fully aware of all these pitfalls.

Robbie and I began our tour by flying to Tripoli and spent two days in that country. We next stopped in Tunis and this was the sixth independent African state I had visited and has already become aware of the magnificent work being done by our mission abroad. Oliver had given us references to influential figures in every country and had certainly made a great impression on many diplomats he met.

At the beginning of our trip Robbie and I had carefully discussed our approach in presenting our case to the various governments we would meet and had decided that we should explain the political situation in our country truthfully and deal adequately not only with the position of the ANC, but also with that of the PAC and not omit any fact known to us that might be in their favour. I stressed that we were in a far stronger position than they were, and that we would make a better impression by handling the matter in such a way that no other visitor from South Africa could ever

paint a more accurate picture than we had done. Although Robbie at first doubted the wisdom of this line, arguing that we were not the PAC spokesman and that we should concentrate only on our organisation he finally appreciated the weight of my argument.

I feared moving around in a foreign country without an escort and I would remain in our hotel until we had established official contact. I also wished to acquaint myself with the history and policy of the ruling party in each particular country, the Head of State, his policy speeches, and more particularly those related to race discrimination. I always had a busy programme reading up material and preparing memoranda for government officials. Immediately we booked in at a hotel in Tunis I kept to my room and started reading the literature I had collected from the Tunisian Embassy in Tripoli.

Robbie was different, had spent part of his youth in town and to him every city we visited was like Johannesburg. On this occasion, as on many others, he went out as soon as we booked in at the hotel. Having lived underground for some time I had become used to informal dress and both in Tripoli and Tunis I was in khakhi as against the smart suit Robbie wore. The hotel manager received us coldly and certainly did not like me. A few hours after our arrival but before Robbie returned, an excited manager literally burst into my room and told me that we were government guests and that I could order anything I wanted. Robbie had found his way right up to the official residence of Bardi (?) Ladgan, Vice President and Minister of Defence as well as Secretary of the Neo Destor Party. We met him the following day.

Bardi (?) Ladgan had a striking resemblance to Chief Luthuli in build, height, facial appearance and mannerisms. As I was explaining the situation at home I mentioned that Robert Sobukwe and other PAC leaders were in jail and dealt briefly with their campaign. At this point Ladgan interrupted: "What then is the purpose of your visit here? When that chap returns, he will finish you!" Robbie became restless obviously saying to himself: "I told you that your line is a bad gamble". But I asked the Vice President to listen to the full story and then make his judgement.

The next morning, and amidst cameras, we met President Habib Bourgiba and the interview with him was one of the most pleasant in the whole tour. His response was immediate and complete.

Tunis has been described as the Jewel of Islam, the treasure house of Islamic art and architecture. In fact the whole of North Africa from Egypt to Morocco is rich in ancient art. We travelled all the way from Tunis to Nabeul, about 100 miles east of the capital. Tunis has a fine museum but I thought Nabeul was tremendous. These museums contained the broad features of the history of early times and make Tunisia the crossroads of many civilisations. But the climax was the visit to the Carthage I had first heard of from my teacher as a small boy. At once I was felt I was in the hub of the ancient history of the Mediterranean world.

Once a mighty maritime power commanded by able generals like Hamilcar, Hasdrubal and perhaps the greatest of them all Hannibal, the historic city was sacked and raised to the ground by Roman



arms and most of what it once was now lay in ruins. Yet the grandeur of that city-state was visible even in those ruins that lay around us.

In the meantime Captain Abdel Aziz, whom we had met at Addis Ababa had arranged an appointment with Vice President Belcacim Krim and we saw him in the presence of Mohamed Yazid and Abdel Aziz, the night before Krim left for the peace talks with the French in Switzerland. It was on this occasion that he suggested that we should admit whites into the ranks of the ANC and added that within their own ranks they had Frenchmen who were members of the FNL and who were completely dedicated to the struggle of the Algerian people against French imperialism. After giving us a survey of their revolution and indicating that they would gladly give military training to our men, he gave us a letter of introduction to Dr. Mustafai, head of the Algerian Mission in Morocco who would discuss the lessons and experiences of the revolution more fully with us. Rabat, the Moroccan capital was also the headquarters of the Co-ordinating Committee of the liberation movements from the Portuguese colonies and here I met Mario Andrade, the general secretary of the MPLA, a university graduate, poet and friend of Ben Bella, Marcelino de Santos from Mozambique, Braganza from Goa and Amalia Fonseca from the Cape Verde Islands who represented the PAIGC. Mario and Marcelino introduced us to Jacques Verges, permanent secretary of the Department of African Affairs, a marxist who was born in Reunion, qualified as a lawyer in France and who held an important position in the French CP (check?). He specialised in defending Algerian revolutionaries who were prosecuted in France and was ultimately deported from that country and declared a prohibited immigrant in his own country. We had not been longer together

when I realised that he followed political events in South Africa quite closely and it was clear in which direction his sympathies lay.

The day we arrived he introduced us to Dr. El Khatib, Minister of State of African Affairs, and like President Bourgiba, responded immediately to our requirements. But he told us that he was going to France the following day to fetch Ben Bella, who was treacherously trapped by the French in 1956 (?). The OAS (find full title) was still highly active at the time and he warned that the task would be a top security one and that he might be away for a week or more. He also indicated that he would like us to see Ben Bella before we leave Morocco and invited us to stay until his return, a request which Jacques strongly supported.

The armed struggle had already started in Angola and Mario gave us a detailed review of the situation in his country stressing the point that at that time Roberto Holden's UPA had a far larger army than the MPLA and that the former were waging the main struggle against the enemy. But he was confident that the MPLA army, some of whose units were being trained in Morocco and Tunisia would ultimately outstrip the UPA in numbers and fire power. It seemed clear to me that the MPLA was our logical ally in Angola for their policy was in essential respects similar to ours whilst that of the UPA was identical with that of the PAC.

Frelimo was not yet established but preparations were already being made to unite the freedom organisations of Mozambique into one front as a prelude to the launching of armed operations.

Marcellino and I left Morocco about the same time, he for Dar for discussions with his colleagues, while I continued my journey to West Africa.

We spent 3 fruitful days with Dr. Mustafai and some of his men and he systematically and patiently told us the history of their revolution - the men who planned it, how the defeat of the French army in Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam influenced the start of their revolution, how at first their aim was a military victory over the French and therefore concentrated all their energies on armed warfare and neglected the task of mobilising international opinion on their side, the reasons for not only fighting from bases inside the country but also relying on a regular army operating from Morocco and Tunisia.

He stressed that in the course of the war they realised that a pure military victory over the French would be well nigh impossible and they then began to establish offices in London, New York and other centres to rally diplomatic support. He also stressed the importance of political unity before starting armed operations as well as that of drawing the support of people from all walks of life - peasants, workers, business men, professional men and other intellectuals.

At the end of the 3 days he sent us to Oujda, right across to the border of Algeria, which was then the headquarters of the Algerian army on the Moroccan side. We visited army units at the front and actually saw French posts with the naked eye and their troops with the aid of field glasses. Our interpreter and friend at Oujda was Nordine (a cover name - check real one). Before he joined the

army he lectured at the London School of Economics and he was well versed in the problems of their revolution.

A controversial question was the refusal of the Algerian CP to dissolve as most political parties in the country did, and allow its members to join the FNL as individuals. The Algerians pointed out that although individual members of the CP took part in the war, some even becoming heroes the existence of the CP as an independent party became a source of friction throughout the revolution and created a dual authority when a central political organ directing the whole struggle had become crucial. We were unable to speak to any members of the Algerian CP on this question and get their point of view; we did not pursue it any further.

A few days after our return from Oujda Ben Bella, who was to become the first Prime Minister of an independent Algeria, was received by King Hassan and a crowd of about 300,000 people. We were introduced to him and later accompanied him back to Oujda where the army staged the parade that we have already described. Here I met both Colonel Boummédiene, then Commander-in-Chief of the whole Algerian army, and Colonel Sliman (check spelling), the Commander-in-Chief on the Moroccan side and we conversed through the aid of interpreters. On our return by train to Rabat I tried to talk English of course to a well known statesman without an interpreter and he politely told me: "Me, English, no talk". He did far better than me because I understood him quite well.

The favourable response we got from Dr. Khatib made it necessary for Robbie to fly to London.

Jacques saw me off at the airport as I flew across the Sahara to Bamako, the capital of Mali, in the company of Jibo Barkry (spelling?). The capital seemed to be a Keita family reserve. Ambassador Dialo in Cairo had already paved my way. I contacted Lamine Keita, a graduate of Moscow and Lincoln Universities who had taught at the Cairo University and who was a member of his country's UN team. On a Saturday he introduced me to Defence Minister Madeira Keita and a contributor to "Fighting Talk", the South African progressive magazine, and the following Monday I met President Modibo Keita, with Lamine interpreting in flawless English. On a bookcase behind the President was an ivory bust of Lenin which set a train of speculation in my mind. Was the President an African socialist, admirer of the leader of the Bolshevik revolution or a marxist, I asked myself. But it would be a blunder at formal diplomatic interviews to try to fish out the political beliefs of a Head of State besides what his public speeches already projected.

I also met Dudu Geyiye (spelling?), acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and general secretary of the Pan African Congress of Journalists. "Where is Brian Bunting?" he asked me in English and Brian's name so far from Cape Town sounded like a dream. "Tell him I am cross with him for not sending me my "New Age". Although I was offered the opportunity to flying to Timbuktu I was unable to accept the invitation. I knew very little about West Africa and Bamako offered me the opportunity of collecting material about the countries I was still to visit. I consoled myself with a stroll to the river Niger whenever I was saturated with facts and figures.

Security precautions in Guinea were strict. I was carrying an Ethiopian passport, a country that had

attended the Lagos Conference of the Monrovia group and which Guinea had boycotted. I was handed over to the Security Police but when they finally established my identity they entertained me and later took me to a hotel where I stayed. Unfortunately on this occasion I could not meet President Sekou Toure as Menon 'Soapy' Williams, the American Minister of African Affairs, was visiting the country.

Their security precautions were impressive. The day after my arrival the hotel manager directed me to the offices of the ruling party, the Democratic Party. On the way there I asked three youngsters, the eldest whom I reckoned to be about 15, whether I was on the right road to the offices.

"Are you a stranger here?" the eldest inquired. "Yes, I am", I said. "Where is your passport?" he asked. "With the Security Police", I replied. "Where do you come from?" he persisted. "Ethiopia", I told him. "What is the purpose of your visit?" he went on. I was now impatient and asked whether or not they were prepared to help me and started walking away. My interrogator then pointed to a building directly opposite us and said, "Do you see that building? You go and enquire there." On the front of the building appeared the words "Surete Polis" (check spelling). I went down the street as directed by the manager and reached the offices of the Democratic Party. My 3 friends were shadowing me all the way and left only when an official warmly welcomed me.

The flight from Guinea to Sierra Leone took no more than 30 minutes but the journey from the Sierra Leone airport to Freetown, the capital, lasted more than an hour involving travelling by bus

and crossing the channel by ferry, all operated by Africans. Parliament was in session and I attended the proceedings the next day. A cabinet minister gave me a seat not far from the Speaker and the Clerk of the House at once approached and asked me who I was. I told him simply that I was a representative of Chief Luthuli from South Africa on a visit to his country. He gave me his hand and went back and whispered something to the Speaker. The Clerk returned and told me that no guest, not even VIPs were allowed to occupy that seat but that it was an honour for them to be host to me and that the Speaker had decided to make an exception and allow me to use that seat. I thanked the Clerk.

During the adjournment for refreshments, as we drank tea, dignitaries lined up to shake hands with me and only then did I discover that I was an unconscious impostor. The Clerk mistakenly understood me as saying I was Chief Luthuli, but still they were polite enough to allow me to return to the same seat. I was also introduced to the Prime Minister Sir Milton Margai and to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Karefa Smart (spelling?). Their spirits were down because the previous days municipal elections were held throughout the country and the opposition had a runaway victory. Dr. Smart, however, generously offered us several scholarships but in regard to the main mission he asked that we should return after May that year after the general elections. He assured me that whatever party was in power they would fully support our struggle and would do everything within their means to give material assistance.

My next stop was Liberia but I arrived the day after the President had left for a holiday in his home

town. In the morning Grimes (check full name) Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs asked me to stay for a month as a guest of the government until the President returned. I regretted that I could not do so because of engagements elsewhere. He promised to phone or telegraph the President and let him know about my visit. That evening I received a message to be ready for him next morning at 9 a.m. He cancelled his holiday as soon as he was reminded of our appointment. I saw him early that morning and after a friendly chat he merely asked for our requirements and said he was well acquainted with our situation. He was more generous than I expected.

From Liberia I flew straight to Ghana and regret now that I did not stop to see Houphouët Boigny (spelling?), President of the Ivory Coast, perhaps if we had done so he would not have gone so completely wild as we hear at present.

Ghana was connected with a special part of my mission, namely, the question of the attitude of the "Voice". I had discussed the matter during my trip with the Ghanaian embassies in Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Liberia (possibly Mali) Sir Saliwa, the Ghanaian ambassador, who received me warmly, confirmed the impression I had gained that they were unaware of the role of the "Voice" (that is, its use as a mouthpiece of the PAC); also that Kwame Nkrumah was not aware too. On my first day which was a Friday, I phoned Barden, head of the Bureau of African Affairs, but he was going to be away and fixed an appointment for the Monday. Oliver had not arrived and we had agreed that I should do nothing until he came. But on the first day I went to the Bureau Offices and accidentally met the editor of the "Voice" (Name?) who had been ill and was still



recuperating. He helped me to change hotels from the Ambassador. I saw Bardeb alone on Monday just to pay respects, told him that I would only be able to start discussions on the arrival of Oliver Tambo. A few days later Oliver and Robbie arrived. Our assesment of the situation in Ghana led to a debate between the 3 of us: Oliver wanted me to draw up a comprehensive and serious memorandum because Barden would block our way to Kwame; that the memo should be such as to oblige him to pass it on to the President. I opposed the idea because I argued that we knew Barden - he would simply give the memorandum to the PAC. In the end the view put forward by Oliver and Robbie prevailed.

We were in Ghana early in May. On the 28th May a conference of freedom fighters was due in Ghana. The Bureau headed by Barden, said that we should wait until then and that we could then see Kwame. But I could not wait until then. Barden however, could not be moved. The secretary of the Bureau, a certain Mr. Sam (?), quiet friendly, and a proper diplomat struck us as favourable towards us but he was the secretary and subject to Barden. We then saw Michael Dayaneng, the Minister Plenipotentiary and the gateway to Kwame, jointly with Adamafio, Minister of Presidential Affairs. Both said that we should wait until the 28th May. The impression I had got from the ambassadors was not confirmed by these experiences. They were well disposed, happy to see me but with regards to the possibilities of seeing Kwame, they remained adamant. We then saw Ako Ajei, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who let the cat out and for a minister he was astonishing in his approach. He was referring to Molotsi's speech at PAFMECSA. (Note that the reports of my speech at that conference were cut in the "Voice"). He gave us a lecture to this effect and

maintained that the UN efforts by Oliver were a waste of time; that we were a tribal organisation and concluded by stating that they could not assist us. (Refer to my reply). Contrary to the views of the ambassadors my impression was that it was not just the Bureau but also a segment of ministers who were against us. Nonetheless I was still convinced that Kwame was not aware of this.

We handed in the memorandum but left without seeing Kwame.

While in Ghana I was invited by the Ghana University students bt Njisane, Zami's cousin, who together with his wife Mpumi treated me very well while I was in Ghana, even going so far as to lending me their car, maintained that I should not go when I consulted him: 'he pointed out that the university was a centre of oppositon to Kwame and maintained that I should not compromise myself. The same view was expressed by the ambassador of Ghana who was in the Congo at the time of the murder of Patrice Lumumba and who lost his post subsequently. I also personally experienced this fact - I met some of the lecturers informally.

I spent much time with Hilary Flag a former member of the Congress of Democrats, Drs. Mervin and Margaret Susser (I think he is wrong here - check name) who entertained me well. Njisane was particularly helpful in making available to me literature on guerilla warfare.

After the tour I went to London where Oliver discussed the issue with Kwesi Armah (?) who advised that we should write a letter to Kwame and give it to him. He stated that they were not

aware about what had happened to us and that he would see to it that the letter reached Kwame. We did precisely this and thereby solved our problem. He also gave Oliver a private phone number which would enable Oliver to phone Kwame whenever he was in Ghana. it should be mentioned here that whenever Oliver had met Kwame in Africa he had found him warm towards us.

From Ghana I went to Nigeria where I again met Lennard Amechi (where is he and his wife?), contacted Jaja Wachuku. It was my aim to see the Prime Minister Sir. Balawa, and then to fly to Enugu to see Dr. Azikiwe. (Jaja was a member of NCNC but was an ideal personality for a co-alition). But on the day of the appointment the quarrel between Awolowo and Akintola broke out and the government trekked from Lagos to Ibadan. As a result my whole trip collapsed.

In Accra we immediately contacted Tofiq Boutara, the Algerian ambassador, and he did his best to help us reach Kwame. We were also entertained by Abdoulayi Ddialo, Guinea's Resident Minister in Ghana. Both never forgot the attitude I had taken at the meeting of PAFMECSA and entertained me warmly. I told Dialo I had not seen President Sekou Toure and he was disappointed. He insisted that I return to Guinea. In Nigeria the Guinea ambassador contacted us as a result and on our way touched again at Liberia (re collectign voucher). In Guinea we met the Foreign Minister (name?) and were taken immediately to see the President. He lived in humble surroundings, his clothing was humble, and he listened carefully to us. In his reply he stated that the government and people of Guinea fully supported the struggle of our brothers in South Africa and pledged that they would continue to do so. (N.B I had referred to his message to the TIYC conference). The President then

got up, took two books, autographed them and gave them to us. They were copies of the Principles of the Democratic Party. He then dismissed us. We were angry but by 3 p.m. up comes Walter Mbayi, head of the Department of African Affairs to the hotel with a suitcase full of cash and personal expenses. We were elated.

From there we proceeded to Senegal where we saw Daboussier, the Minister of Justice, and one time member of the central committee of the French CP (?). That evening Oliver had a particularly severe attack of asthma. The next morning we were due to see the President, Leopold Senghor, and I had to carry Oliver to the meeting. Senghor was extremely concerned to notice the condition of Oliver and insisted that he should be attended by Senghor's personal doctor. Before the visit my impression of Senghor was an unfortunate one. In Algiers we met a Senegalese soldier and found that Senegalese soldiers were serving with the French forces in Algeria. But Senghor disarmed me. I found him simple, friendly, intelligent, and he flattered my personal pride when he told us that he was collecting research material on Shaka and asked us questions about him. With regards to our mission he said that they had never had a visit like that before, had made no provision for that type of request, and that parliament would be meeting in July. He promised that he would arrange for that and asked us to come back by then. He paid our fares from Dakar to London and on to Khartoum. He also gave me a diplomatic passport. He asked us to discuss the question of training with Daboussier (N.B. allocated white girl incident, also incident at Daboussier's office). We saw Daboussier alone.

I now wanted to go to the United Kingdom for a variety of reasons. Firstly I was worried by O.R's health and wanted to discuss the question of his going to the Soviet Union for treatment with his wife Adie. Besides I wanted to see Adie and the children. I was also keen to see Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and give him my impressions because I would have felt that something was lacking from my tour if I did not do so. I also wanted to obtain literature on guerilla warfare.

On my arrival in London I asked Oliver to phone Yusuf who came with Vella Pillay. I told him that I would be staying in London for 10 days, wanted to see him - eventually did so at Vella's. Noticed relations between him and O.R. were not of the best. Explained to Mota re image. Night before I left we spent whole night together - didn't seem to accept this well - seemed to treat it as a change in policy. (N.B. Oliver and co. working under great strain - example O.R. throughout the time I have known him has been a cool, steady and balanced person who has control of himself. I told him I was to mention in my PAFMECSA speech that I must not identify the ANC with MK. Oliver and co. revolted - said I might as well go back. I had expected Oliver's support on this but he was firmly against.)

When I returned to South Africa I presented Mota's arguments both to the National Executive of the ANC and the Joint Executives - his views co-incided more or less with that of Chief who was unhappy that the ANC should purport to be playing an independent role but was won over re key factor of neighbouring territories in the phase of armed struggle.

I was in hiding in London and not leading an open life. I met David Astor and Colin Legum and Michael Scott together. Until then the Observer was supporting the PAC. I explained and Astor was impressed. The result - Astor told Oliver I must see Gaitskill and Grimmond. Healey took me to see both of them.

I saw Mary Benson, who is close to us, Freda Troup, Canon Collins, Bishop Reeves. Also met Mrs. Kisonkoli (ex-Umtata, married to Ugandan chief, uncle of the Kabaka) who was active in the women's movement and was on the way back from Germany (knows my family). Saw Todd Matshikiza and wife Esme - they were excited - insisted on meal in the early hours of the morning. Todd gives "Chocolates for my Wife" autographed "to a leadership I respect very much". Also saw Manhattan Brothers.

Flew to Khartoum and met General Aboud. Received well. Field Marshall Mohammed Kher.

(N.B. Under Kwame - no matter where you went and if there's a freedom fighter this is the first thing they would attend to e.g. in Khartoum - ex London - 4 of our boys stranded on way to study in Cuba. We got help from Ghana embassy. Ghana embassy in Khartoum probably had the best library on Africa inside Africa.) Next Ethiopia - going now for military training. Foreign Minister Yefu took me to Kolfe, on a hill in the suburb of Addis - headquarters of Riot Battalion (800) to be trained there. C/O was Colonel Tadesse Birru (?) (Spelling?), actually trained by Lieutenant Wondoni Befikadu (?). Training well arranged - start at 8 until 1 p.m., then from 2 to 4 p.m.

Shower. Then discussions with Colonel Tadesse, who was also assistant Commissioner of Police in Ethiopia, crushed December '61 (?) coup. We used two shooting ranges - one that of the bodyguard (not far from Addis), other for whole army where we went with the whole Battalion (50 miles away). Now learnt to see the country - beautiful, forests, highlands eetc. Had fatigue marches. Country very backward - ploughing with wooden ploughs with just a tip that is of iron. Hand sowing. Peasants like in South Africa - hospitality - give you amasi plus local beer. Strange rock formations - sharp - dangerous to animals (this in Erithrea - far away - didn't go there). Trained for two months out of a programme for 6 months when telegram from home that I should return immediately. Home arranged for return on a Sunday but I only reached Dar that Sunday. Nyerere gave us a private plane to Mbeya. Reached Botswana on Monday and came through that very night with Cecil. (I was armed - modern pistol plus 200 rounds given as a present by the Batallion). Return - Ethiopia - Khartoum - Dar (stayed with Commissioner of Police, met Oliver, also met first group of 32 chaps on the way for training in Ethiopia; also Nyerere who wished me good luck), - with Oliver to Mbeya, with Fish from Mbeya to Kanye (N.B. Kirby no longer there) - by car to Lobatsi with Joe Modise and Joe Matlou - with Cecil home.

Re African image - the African image had nothing to do with policy. Our policy remained as set out in the Freedom Charter and we never had any intention of either amending or altering that policy. We ( that is Oliver, myself, Xola, Robbie, Pilisco) abroad were merely concerned with the picture we were projecting abroad that we were not a genuine African political organisation taking up issues affecting Africans only, that we were lost in a nebulous organisation representing everybody.

In contrast PAC concerned solely with Africans and we thought the picture should be changed and we were unanimous in this.

The 8 breakaway: my attention drawn that 8 expelled from movement. This came as a great shock because I have known all of them very well as dedicated and loyal members of the organisation and I have been proud of my friendship with them and the fact that they are my comrades in arms. I was even more touched that they should have found themselves out of the organisation abroad because for the 6 months I spent abroad and in spite of the heavy programme I had I had moments of being homesick. I can imagine how they feel.

Both in my life outside and inside jail I have full confidence in my organisation and its leadership and my initial reaction is to support them in everything they do. This is my attitude generally and in this particular matter. I believe that one of the reasons for the misunderstanding is that I should be declared National President of the organisation. I appreciate the sentiments of those who put forward this suggestion and I accept that it is done in a bona fide way. But those who make this demand really miss the point that has always guided us in the organisation and that is that we owe our loyalty not to any individual or group of individuals but to the organisation and it makes no difference to us who is actually at the head of the organisation as long as the machinery of the organisation, the membership, the committees at all levels, especially the National Executive is strong enough and united to ensure that the policy of the organisation is carried out. This is the essence of a good organisation - concentration on policy and not on individuals.



I'll remain unhappy until I hear one day that my 8 colleagues who have been turned out of the organisation after every effort has been made to settle matters with them, to give them an opportunity to think things out, I'll be happy if they find their way back and raise their difficulties inside. Differences in a broad national movement like ours are natural, but they must be discussed frankly, in good faith and openly. But unscrupulous arguments e.g. ANC dominated by other population groups and purse strings held by members of the CP are old arguments and whenever they have been found to be a myth and unfitting of the colleagues which I knew them to be. Also should never allow themselves to assist the enemy. (African nationalism - driving force for the Africans - but we must be clear what we mean - we intend ruling for all - example Tanzania.

Also connect in final chapter re ANC opening doors to all - difference: outside and inside in wake of MK).

ANC history of 64 years - throughout challenged by various organisations - some very powerful e.g. ICU - All African Convention - ADP, National-Minded bloc and PAC - none of these have displaced it as the premier African political organisation and every one of them has gone out into the wilderness. If that could not be done then it is even more impossible today when the ANC has reached this position of strength.

N.B. at appropriate place pay proper compliment to Oliver's leadership, also to Mota and others for

the work being done abroad.

## Chapter Fourteen:

We returned from Durban on a Sunday afternoon of the 5th August. Cecil Williams was driving and I sat next to him in a white dust coat. Cecil had been chairman of the Congress of Democrats and a leading member of the Springbok Legion. He was also prominent in the theatre world and had produced several plays. It was a clear, cool day of Natal, whose scenic beauty has always charmed me, was particularly striking that afternoon. From the time of our arrival in Durban up to the moment of our departure I had had a crowded programme of clandestine activities involving travelling around the city and townships every night, speaking to individuals and groups, and drawing up my report for the National Executive of the ANC. My friends Monty Naicker, his wife Marie, Ismail and Fatima Meer, J.N.Singh and Radhi and others gathered at the place where I was staying and gave me an inspiring send off. I had looked forward to the return journey as a form of rest and recovery from exhaustion. I had had little time to see Zami and the children and I now hoped to spend some days with them discussing domestic matters and telling them about my travels and impressions abroad.

Soon after leaving the stuffy atmosphere of a big industrial city we travelled through rolling hills and majestic views. The relaxing weather and clean fresh air cleared away my drowsiness. Durban is the main sea port for the country's leading industrial area, the Witwatersrand, and the highway between the sea port and Johannesburg runs closely to the railway line for the greater part of the distance, lending strategic significance to this artery for those planning future operations. Soon my

mind shifted from admiring the natural beauty to more weighty problems relating to my mission abroad and to the preparations for the new forms of struggle on which we were now contemplating.

As we approached Pietermaritzburg Cecil and I started discussing my trip abroad and more particularly the image which our struggle was projecting in Africa. He was visibly disturbed by my report and felt as many others did that the line which I was now advocating was a concession to extreme nationalism. We were engrossed in this discussion as we passed through Pietermaritzburg and Howick. I considered Cecil an important friend of the Congress Movement, and I was anxious to dispel any misgivings he might have harboured. Accordingly I spent quite some time spelling out the dissolution of the Congress Alliance in the form in which it had functioned until then. At Cedara a big Ford car, full of white men, shot past and signalled us to stop. I instinctively looked at the back and noticed two other cars full of whites. I knew that that was the end and that for the time being I would be out of action.

We pulled up and Cecil asked, "Who are these men?" But he knew as well as I did who they were. A tall man with a stern expression on his face stepped out of the front car and came over to us. He was unshaven and untidy and left me with the impression that he had been expecting us for several days. He introduced himself as Sgt. Forster (Vorster?) of the Pietermaritzburg police, produced a warrant and asked me who I was. I naturally give him my cover name - David Motsamai. After posing a few other questions which I parried, he snapped, "Ach, you are Nelson Mandela, and this is Ceril Williams!" He ordered us to return to Pietermaritzburg. An officer holding the rank of

major sat at the back of the car. I had been carrying a report of my discussions in Durban. As we returned I unobtrusively slipped this report between the seats. It was a stroke of luck that the police never found it. Had they done so many more people would have been arrested and prosecuted.

We were locked up in separate cells. Naturally I was quite upset. I realised that the police had been tipped off about my whereabouts and had been aware of the fact that I was in Durban. For weeks before my return the Security Branch had thought that I was back in the country. They worked on the assumption that upon my return to the country I would go to Groutville to submit a report to Chief Luthuli. I was informed of this on my arrival in Durban and Chief Luthuli had warned that I should exercise great care in visiting Stanger as police activities clearly indicated that they expected me. Despite this I felt that on this occasion the police were working on definite information and that someone had betrayed. Who was it? Could it be someone in Durban? Someone from Johannesburg? A person in the movement? Or a close friend of the family? Speculation without facts is futile and soon the mental and physical exhaustion, coupled with the shock of disaster and disappointment put me to sleep.

By the morning I had partly recovered and I braced myself for the new challenges which had been thrust upon me. During the afternoon Sgt. Forster escorted me to his office where I found ex-warrant officer Truter and the major waiting for me. Truter had been perhaps the best Crown witness in the Treason Trial and had explained the policy of the ANC accurately and faithfully and created a favourable impression among the accused and members of the defence team. We greeted

each other warmly and after the usual pleasantries he asked whether there was any point in keeping up the farce about my real name. I told him that I had given the police a name and that I had no further comment to make on the matter. We shook hands and parted. I was taken back to the cell. At about 8.30 the next morning I appeared before the magistrate in his office and he formally remanded me to Johannesburg. Two members of the Security Branch from Johannesburg, accompanied by another drove me to Johannesburg. The atmosphere in the car was friendly. I sat at the back, un-handcuffed, and we chatted freely all along the way. Whenever we made stops I was allowed to walk up and down and they appeared unconcerned about my movements. Towards sunset we reached the outskirts of Johannesburg and found a strong police escort waiting for us. The relaxed atmosphere suddenly disappeared - I was handcuffed and was ordered to climb into a sealed van with small frosted windows re-inforced with wire netting. The van twisted and turned and stopped several times at robots and stop streets. Eventually we reached Marshall Square where I was locked up. Although I expected none of the courtesies of the Natal police I was once again in familiar surroundings and knew the cells very well. I even experienced the feeling that I was back home among my numerous and desourceful comrades and could start plans for the morrow in a relaxed state of mind.

During the course of the evening I heard a familiar cough, although I could not recognise it immediatly. But suddenly I sat up as I identified the cough. I called and was quite right. It was Walter Sisulu. He had been arrested shorly after my own arrest at Cedara. The evening sped by as I gave him an account of the events which preceeded my arrival at Marshall Square.

The following day I appeared before a senior magistrate for formal remand. I had appeared before him on numerous occasions in my professional capacity and he knew me quite well. On such occasions one is easily flattered by otherwise insignificant incidents. The court room was full of attorneys and spectators most of whom nodded to me warmly. I was quite used to the idea of appearing in court as an accused person and the presence of my professional colleagues and members of the public encouraged me. Zami, sullen and worried, was present. Perhaps she was thinking of the many months and even years of rigid and humiliating life of a young and inexperienced woman in a wild city like Johannesburg without a husband. The only consolation I could offer her was a hearty nod and a broad smile as I descended the steps which led to the basement of the court. The case was remanded.

The magistrate appeared to be shy and uneasy and I cannot recall him looking directly at me during the brief proceedings. This encouraged me and I realised that even as an accused in the court of the oppressor I had an important role to play; that I represented the great ideals of democracy, truth and justice against the evil of racial oppression which was condemned not only by my people but by the entire world; but we could carry the fight even within the fortress of the enemy and finally disappear into prisons, but leaving behind us service and loyalty to the cause.

A short while thereafter Zami came to see me in the cells below. She brought me new pair of pyjamas and an expensive gown. Prison is no place for wearing new clothes. I hesitated to accept the

parcel but checked myself for I knew that the preceeding events had aroused her deepest affections and that the gesture was her way of expressing her love and pledging her solidarity for me. We hurriedly discussed family matters and I assured her that the strenght and justice of our cause, support, loyalty and solidarity of our friends, and above all her love and devotion would see me through me sentence. We embraced and clung to each other as if to hold back the moment of parting. The warrant officer in charge of the cells was not unfriendly - he allowed me to accompany Zami to the main gate in the basement from where I watched her disappearing around the corner.

I was taken to the Johannesburg Fort, again in a sealed van. Cheering crowds had gathered at the exit of the basement shouting "Amandla" and banging their fists on the sides of the van as it crawled out of the basement.

The Commanding Officer of the FOrt at the time was Col. Minnaar, who was a widely travelled and polished Afrikaner and who was considered to be a liberal person by his own kith and kin. He placed me in the prison hospital explaining that it was the best place for me where I would be provided with a bed and table. It was a fine gesture on his part though I suspected that the real reason for his generosity was that security wise the hospital was the safest place in which to keep me. Four gates had to be unlocked before one could reach "freedom" and behind the solid hospital walls was an impregnable bulwark on which there was an armed guard 24 hours of the day. Behind this bulwark was the women's prison, also surrounded by massive walls. Any attempts to rescue me from that side would be even more difficult.



The prison authorities place no limit on the number of visitors I could receive and visitors thus streamed in continually throughout the day for five days a week. However within a few days I was removed to Pretoria local prison. The van in which I was taken was filthy and greasy. The only object on which I could sit was an equally greasy spare wheel which slid around as the van sped on. I was dirty and annoyed by the time I reached the prison. Once again I was in familiar surroundings for I spent 5 months at the Pretoria local prison during the period of the martial law in 1960.

The round trip from Johannesburg to Pretoria and back did not deter Zami from visiting me twice a week and she saw to it that I was well stocked with clean clothes and good food at all times. Many friends and relatives visited me, amongst whom were Rica Hodgson who brought me an assortment of tasty cheeses and a variety of delicious fruit; Muriel Sadinda Davids, Zami's uncle, Alfred Mgulwa, who kept my larder well stocked with cold meats, Sally Motlana, Mrs.T.Pillay who brought me my favourite curry dishes who had provided the Treason Trialists with a daily lunch throughout that trial; and many others.

There were many other prisoners on the same floor as myself but I was kept isolated from them. I had plenty of food and I wanted to share it with them. But sharing food with other prisoners was strictly forbidden and to be able to do so it was necessary to obtain the co-operation of the warder in charge. With this in mind I offered an African warder an apple. He rebuffed me. "Angiyifundi " (I

don't want it) and walked away unceremoniously. Later during the day he accepted the apple, but only after he had witnessed that a white warder had accepted a similar offer from me. Soon I was sharing food with other warders on my floor.

Meanwhile Walter Sisulu was brought over to Pretoria from Johannesburg. Although we were isolated we managed to communicate with each other. He was shortly to be released on bail - a decision which I fully supported. Ever since he had become the secretary general of the ANC he has always been a key figure in the movement and I felt that every effort should be made to bail him out. We discussed the question of my own bail and he agreed with me that no such application should be made on my behalf. My case was set down for hearing for October the same year. James Kanor and partners were my attorneys with Joe Slovo as advocate. A few days later I was transferred to Johannesburg at the request of my attorneys who found it rather inconvenient and expensive to make the daily trip from Johannesburg to Pretoria for consultations. Again I was kept in the prison hospital in the Fort.

Here there were no particular visiting days as at Pretoria. Visitors were allowed to visit me throughout the day from Mondays to Fridays. It would be difficult to count the number of relatives and friends who visited me or to list the food parcels they brought with them. Suffice it to say that the response of the public was inspiring and that there were many gestures of solidarity from various schools of political thought - liberals, churchmen, social workers and people from unexpected quarters. Van Wyk, the present director of the South African Institute of Race Relations

and who was then vice-president of the Institute, visited me on behalf of the World Council of Churches and undertook to arrange for the payment of my children's school fees; a well known traditional leader sent me R10 towards my defence costs; some came under cover names and addresses and I realised how close the link was between the prison authorities and the security branch, for on every occasion on which I had such visitors, the Commanding Officer tactfully tried to extract their true identity from me but in vain. Harold Wolpe and the Reverend Arthur Blazall sent me reading material; David Astor, now Lord Astor, proprietor of the London "Observer" sent me a few books; I had several visits from Walter Sisulu, Duma Nokwe, Ruth Slovo and Ahmed Kathrada, who brought me a wide variety of newspapers and magazines and who was well acquainted with my reading tastes; my friend Adelaide Joseph, whom I lovingly referred to as Addy, daily brought me delicious curry dishes and chatted with me every time she visited me. Among the many others who visited me at the Fort were Henry Makhothi, Gabula Mahlasela and Stephen Segale.

As usual the amount of food was too much for me and I shared it with my fellow prisoners in the hospital.

It was on this occasion that I fully discovered what a man with wealth and influence can really achieve. Money can batter down racial barriers with ease and make a prisoner's life almost a picnic. One day when I was doing my daily exercises I met Moosa Dinath who was serving a 2 year sentence for some non-political offence. I had known him outside as a prosperous business man but

had never been close to him. But friendships are easily formed in prison and can often prove invaluable. He asked me whether I had any objection if he obtained permission from the Commanding Officer to stay with me in hospital - a suggestion I welcomed. He discussed the matter with the Commanding Officer and joined me the same day. I found it strange that a convicted prisoner was allowed to stay together with a prisoner awaiting trial. He certainly was a privileged prisoner for he wore clothes meant for the white prisoners, ate their diet, and did not work at all. He had many contacts in government circles and I found him to be a fascinating conversationalist. Although I accepted his bona fides and had no reason to suspect his motives for joining me, our work requires us to be on guard. Thus I scrupulously avoided any discussions of a confidential nature concerning the case. At the time he was working on the question of his release from prison on parole. I was amazed at the ease with which he pulled strings and the top personalities he was able to contact from behind prison walls. He was released after serving only 4 months of his sentence. After his release he acknowledges his appreciation of our prison friendship through several acts of kindness to my family.

When Zami and 21 others were charged under the Terrorism Act in 1969, Dinath visited me on Robben Island to discuss the question of her defence. He suggested the names of an attorney and counsel whom I knew well but whose political views I did not share. I indicated to him that I appreciated his concern and efforts for my family but made it clear that I preferred Zami to be defended by lawyers in whom I had the greatest confidence and that accordingly I was instructing Joel Carlson and George Bizos to handle the case.

My arrest was greeted with wild rumours and a number of innocent persons were mentioned in this connection. Some blamed my Durban host, a suggestion which I promptly rejected. He is a respected figure in the movement and well known for his un-equivocal opposition to apartheid - an attitude which he consistently maintained long after my arrest. I am indebted to him and his family for looking after me so well during my stay in Durban and consider it a grave injustice that he should be suspected of such a mean crime. Several others were mentioned and even today, 14 years after that event, people maintain that they know the identity of the man who betrayed me.

The most popular story in the press was that I had been betrayed by leftist elements in the movement who were shocked by my strong nationalist sentiments to which I gave utterance when I returned from abroad, and who felt that I should be immediately removed from the scene. Indeed, many people were disturbed and even shocked when I indicated in my report that the ANC was not projecting the proper image in Africa, that the ANC appeared to be speaking not for the African people but for all the population groups in the country, and at the suggestion that we should take note of this and allow the ANC to play its proper role of being first and foremost an organisation fighting for the advancement and welfare of the African people. In spite of the fact that the report was unanimously accepted by the Working Committee of the ANC, and despite the cautious and detailed manner in which I pointed out the views of African leaders whom I had met, I gained the impression that the other population groups in the Congress Movement were very worried about the new line.

However I completely dismissed any attempt to split the movement by suggesting that my colleagues whose comradeship and encouragement have always been a source of strength to me were responsible for my arrest. In the course of my political career we have had sharp differences on matters of principle and practice. But these differences have hardly affected solidarity and conscious awareness of our common brotherhood. I discussed the matter with Zami upon reading the press reports and I was happy to note that she too resented such mischief as intensely as I did. I also discussed the matter with Walter Sisulu, Duma Nokwe, Kathrado and Joe Slovo. In my address to the court I expressly repudiated the suggestion and appealed to the people to stand united. About a month before this Zami had been invited to open the annual conference of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress and she repudiated the allegations in no uncertain terms and scorched the rumours.

While awaiting trial at the Fort I became aware of plans both inside and outside the movement to rescue me from prison. The possibility of being freed in such a spectacular fashion has all the excitement and drama and is very tempting. Few things would arouse nation wide jubilation and a rise in the morale of the people as the rescue or escape of a political prisoner and cause panic within the ranks of the enemy, as was to become evident some months later by the famous Goldreich escape. I considered the matter seriously and during the course of my exercise periods and numerous trips to and from the Commanding Officer's office carefully surveyed the area and noted the movements of the guards on the bulwark. But viewing the matter objectively I concluded that such an operation would be premature and turn out to be a fiasco. Remarks made by warders and

the precautions taken by the prison authorities during my appearances in court indicated that such a move was expected in official quarters.

I nevertheless made a sketch of the prison with particular emphasis on the exact location of the prison hospital and the gates leading to the prison hospital, and smuggled it out with my comments. I discouraged the proposed operation and suggested that the project be postponed until I was convicted and serving as a prisoner, at which time the vigilance of the authorities would be more relaxed. At the time we were awaiting the return of the first recruits who had been sent for military training and made suggestions as to how they should be posted. I insisted that Raymond Mhlaba should be stationed at headquarters in Johannesburg and the remaining recruits to be in charge of their own areas in different parts of the country. I insisted that the sketch with its accompanying notes be immediately destroyed after they had been persused.

The Congress movement had set up a "Free Mandela Committee" with Ahmed Kathrada as secretary. The Committee launched a lively campaign around the slogan "Free Mandela".

The trial had been set down for hearing on a Monday. Meanwhile the Congress movement had made arrangements to stage a demonstration that day, the plan being to line up demonstrators on either side of the route along which the van conveying me to court would be travelling. It was clear from press reports, talks and remarks by prison officials, that a large turn out was expected for the proposed demonstration and the authorities were shaken. The preceeding Saturday at 10.00 in the

morning I was suddenly moved to Pretoria under a strong police escort.

On the Monday I was back in the Old Synagogue where I and 28 others had been acquitted on a charge of treason early the previous year. The case was heard by a magistrate whom I also knew quite well and before whom I had appeared as an attorney on numerous occasions. My advocate Joe Slovo had been confined to Johannesburg and could not be present.

As I entered the court wearing a laross the crowd rose and greeting me with clenched fists accompanied by shouts of "Amandla" (literally means "strength", but in the context of our slogans it means "political power to the people"). The fact that I was walking into a white man's court in traditional dress symbolised that I carried into that court the past, the history, the culture and the proud heritage of my people. The courtroom was packed to capacity with spectators, Security Branch, among whom was Col.Prinsloo, the head of the Security Branch, and pressmen. Zami was present of course, and I felt inspired and confident. I went up to the prosecutor, greeted him formally and notified him of my intention to ask for a remand. He indicated that he would not oppose my application.

As soon as the case was called I applied for a two weeks remand on the ground that I was due to appear in the Johannesburg magistrate court that morning and that I had been transferred from Johannesburg without being given the opportunity of notifying my attorneys and added that both my attorney and counsel would be appearing in the Johannesburg magistrate court. The trial was



postponed for a week.

Meanwhile Joe Slovo was granted permission to appear for me in Pretoria. However I had announced in court that I would be conducting my own defence but that I would be retaining the service of both attorney and counsel to advise me. I then made application for the recusal of the magistrate on the grounds that as a white man, he was in no position to try the case fairly and impartially as a judicial officer is required to do. I added that I had been charged for the offense of calling upon the people to overthrow white supremacy, which he himself upheld, and that no white magistrate could therefore be impartial in such a case. (Refer to text of application). As expected the application was rejected on the ground that all magistrates in the country were white and that should he uphold the application there would be no trial whatsoever of political cases involving black politicians. While I was still addressing the court my advocate was summoned by warrant office Dirker and the Security Branch and was rudely ordered to return to Johannesburg. I strongly protested at this and pointed out that from the outset I had been obstructed by high officials in the preparation of my defence.

During the morning tea break I was chatting with Zami, Kathrada and others. Members of the Security Branch came up to us and served a house arrest order on Ahmed Kathrada and ordered him to return to Johannesburg immediately. He was the second person in South Africa to be placed under house arrest, the first being Helen Joseph who had been served with a similar order the previous week.

Telegrams of encouragement poured in from many quarters, including, those from Chief Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Cuban Youth movement. Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, where I had received military training, demanded my release, Joe Slovo was replaced by Bob Hepple, a member of the Congress of Democrats and in whom I had the fullest confidence. He was able and dedicated and this made the task of conducting the defence comparatively easy for me.

The prosecutor Bosch opened the proceedings and called witnesses for the State from all over the country including the Transkei and South West Africa, as Namibia was then known. Among the witnesses was Verwoerd's secretary who testified on the letter which I had written to the Prime Minister and in which I had advised him of the resolution adopted at the All-In Conference held on the 25th March 1961, demanding the summoning of a National Convention by the government of all South Africans with a view to discussing a new constitution for the country. During cross examination I asked why Verwoerd had not replied to my letter. His answer was that the tone of the letter was aggressive and discourteous and for that reason the Prime Minister had ignored it. Asked to spell out to the court the aggressive and discourteous aspects of my letter he pointed out that although he was unable to cite any specific sentence as being objectionable, the tone of the letter as a whole was not calculated to obtain the friendly co-operation of the Prime Minister. I dismissed the suggestion made by him, and yet upon reflection after the passage of many years, I think there might be some merit in his claim. In fact Dr Steyler, the then leader of the Progressive

Party, questioned Verwoerd in parliament as to whether he had received a letter from me at the time. The Prime Minister replied in the affirmative adding that it was in an "aggressive tone".

The general comment of the press on the first day of the 3 day strikes which was called for May 1961 was that it had been a failure. BNut evidence of another important State witness, who was secretary (?) of the PUTCO Bus Service showed beyond doubt that the press comments were incorrect. He furnished in court facts and figures of the normal number of commuters and the amount of fares collected. The difference was indeed striking when these were contrasted with those of the first day of the strike. (Check figures and include).

During the proceedings a British advocate, Louis (?) Blum Cooper, attended the trial on behalf of Amnesty and sat next to me. He took a lively interest in the proceedings and made many useful suggestions. On the second day of the trial he informed me that during the lunch adjournment the presiding magistrate had accompanied the investigating officer, warrant officer Dirker, and another sergeant from the Security Branch and had driven away together and that they had returned together at 2 p.m. when the court resumed. On his own initiative Blum Cooper had had an affidavit drawn up to that effect and had it sworn before the Registrar of the Transvaal Supreme Court.

I felt that the magistrate had been guilty of improper conduct and therefore applied for his recusal on the ground that the facts mentioned earlier created the impression that he had administering justice secretly. The magistrate replied that he was under no obligation to offer any explanation

regarding my complaints but hastened to assure me that he had not discussed the case with the investigating officer. At this stage I received a second telegramme from Chief Luthuli complimenting me. (Quote telegramme text).

The State called more than 100 witnesses. Throughout the proceedings the prosecutor kept on enquiring from me as to the number of witnesses I intended calling for the defence. I replied that I intended calling as many as the State had done if not more. When the State closed its case I rose and closed my case. So surprised was the prosecutor that he could not help exclaiming "Jerrer". The magistrate asked me whether I was sure of my intention of not calling witnesses. I replied that had I intended doing so I certainly would have called them. The prosecutor addressed the court briefly and asked for a conviction. The case was adjourned. The following day as I was chatting with Bob Hepple in an office set aside for our use the prosecutor Bosch entered and asked Bo to excuse himself. This was before the resumption of the proceedings. He said to me: "Today I did not want to come to court. For the first time in my career I hate my job. It hurts me that I should be asking the court to send you to prison." He warmly shook my hands and expressed the hope that everything would turn out well for me. I thanked him for his kind sentiments and assured him that the bonds of friendship would remain as strong as they had been and that I shall always remember what he said. I noted that he had expressed himself with feeling and sincerity.

(Insert summary of court address at appropriate place).

On 7th November 1962 the magistrate delivered his judgement and sentenced to me to 5 years imprisonment for leaving the country without a passport and for inciting people to strike. I decided to lodge no appeal against the conviction.

As the court rose I greeted the crowd with my clenched fist and the "Amandla" salute. The crowd reciprocated with "Amandla" and "Mayibuye iAfrika" (Let Africa come back). The uproarious crowd made me forget for a moment that I was going to prison to serve what was then considered the stiffest sentence to be imposed for a political offence in recent times, and the presence of old friends like Walter Sisulu's wife Ntsiki and others meant much to me. I bade the prosecutor farewell. He had already made arrangements with the authorities that I be allowed to study immediately. This arrangement was honoured.

Zami, my sister Leabie and my nephew Chief Lewayo (?) Mthikrakra were allowed to see me. On this occasion Zami was quite different. She was in high spirits and shed no tears. She spoke affectionately but like a comrade in arms. What need for more to prepare myself for the difficult days ahead.

I heard the sentence with mixed feelings. I had recently returned from a tour during which I had important discussions with African leaders but was now to be behind bars instead of applying the knowledge and experience which I had gained in the cause of freedom, and the place of any revolutionary is not in prison but amongst his people, fighting side by side with them against

oppression. However it was a source of consolation to me that I had been sentenced on the 7th November, the anniversary of the day that had witnessed the birth of the first Socialist State in the world, and which not only obliterated oppression in the Soviet Union but which used its vast resources to aid the oppressed peoples throughout the world in their struggle for national liberation.

When I was taken to prison to start serving my sentence I was issued with a pair of short trousers, a khaki shirt, a canvas "jacket", sandals and socks and a cloth cap. Whatever food had been left over was removed; so were the bed, chair and the table; the kaross met the same fate and which had been a source of embarrassment to the prison authorities especially the Commanding Officer Col. Jacobs who tried to prevent me from attending court dressed in the kaross. Only the threat that I would apply to court for a declaration of rights have made him capitulate.

The trial had taken place at the height of the Cuban crisis and under the atmosphere of the threat of a third world war. Unquestionably my sympathies lay with Cuba. The rise of the first Socialist State in the western hemisphere, the revolutionary means whereby Fidel Castro had seized power, the rapid improvement in the living standards and conditions of the people within the first few years of a socialist society, Castro and his people's unequivocal opposition to colonialism and their full support for the liberation movements, had made a favourable and lasting impact throughout the world. The ability of a new and small state to defend its interests and its independence, to repulse repeated attempts by the mighty USA to destroy it, not only shows the popularity of Fidel Castro and his government, but demonstrates in no uncertain terms the superiority of socialism over capitalism.

The people of the USA have an inspiring and proud history and have made valuable contributions in many fields. And it is not difficult for me to find friends amongst the American people - friends whom I love and respect, and whose interest in the welfare of our people is deep and sincere. But I hate all forms of imperialism and I consider the US brand, which attempts to subjugate independent countries when European imperialism is on its last legs, the most loathsome and contemptible.

The activities of the CIA which props up right wing elements in all countries, which tries to undermine and topple legitimate progressive governments through violence, intrigue and dollars, which has caused the downfall of many a country and is responsible for the death of untold numbers of people, has brought the US government into disrepute. It was the acme of arrogance and selfishness for the US which established a network of military bases directed against the Soviet Union, now to object to the erection of a missile base as a defensive measure by an independent state whose very independence was threatened by the US.

On the eve of my conviction and sentence several acts of sabotage in Durban (3-Kloof pylons, Congella and ) and in Johannesburg had taken place as a protest , some of which were widely reported in the press for the professional skill with which they were carried out and which had made an impact on both the police and the public. Side by side with these activities of units of MK, were the widespread appearance of "Free Mandela" slogans painted in the most prominent places throughout Durban. By this time MK members were already in prison - among them were Benny

Turok who, next to Peter Molefe (Accidentally killed by our own bomb on 16th December 1961) has the honour of being the first member of MK to be imprisoned and who was serving 3 years together with Harold Strachan, who shared the same fate.

For about 2 weeks I was completely isolated from all other prisoners. I was locked up for 23 hours a day, the remaining hour divided into 2 half hour exercise periods. I insisted that I should be transferred to the section where Robert Sobukwe and other political prisoners were incarcerated. This was ultimately granted, accompanied by the stern warning that serious consequences would follow should I do anything which the authorities deemed to be improper. I could now be in the company of friends and looked forward to meeting them, especially Robert Sobukwe and Stephen Tefu.

One obvious reason for my keenness to be with Robert Sobukwe and others was the belief that by doing so I would be able to discuss the mutual problems facing the movement as a whole and more particularly the ANC and the PAC. I was confident that together we could sort out delicate issues calmly and seriously and without the wrangling and tensions that usually accompany such discussions.

On my arrival Robert asked me to give them an account of my African tour and my impressions, which I gladly did. This took quite some time but at the end of my account I indicated to him the issues I wanted us to examine. But discussions on confidential political problems was not easy then



because the officials were not keen to see us together. In fact although we lived in single cells in one corridor at any given time, and were repeatedly transferred to other sections and back, the Commanding Officer always took the precaution that the two of us always occupied the most extreme cells with the rest of our fellow prisoners made to occupy cells in between.

On a few occasions, as we sewed vermin infested mailbags, we did discuss relatively unimportant matters but never really has the opportunity to settle down to the major ones. This was unfortunate because prison conditions have a sobering effect on practically every freedom fighter, polemics are tempered by the realities of the formidable problems we are able to see from behind the grim walls and the value of closing ranks is more readily acknowledged.

We differed sharply in our attitude to the actual conditions in prison. He carefully explained to me that the main object of his organisation in launching the 1960 campaign was to show Africans that oppression would be destroyed by means of positive action and now that they had done so their aim was to go out and carry on with the main fight against the enemy outside prison. I disagreed with him and pointed out that we were living under degrading conditions and political prisoners throughout the world always considered it their duty to fight for the improvement of conditions in jail. I conceded that these conditions would never change fundamentally until the entire policy of the country alters, but I argued that we could strive for limited improvements in the existing political framework. Although we did not have sufficient time to resolve the matter the two of us submitted a joint letter to the Commanding Officer in which we set out our complaints on our living

conditions in prison and suggested certain improvements.

As usual prison officials tried to exploit our political differences in the hope of creating further divisions and hostility. To members of the PAC they would condemn my organisation as a communist movement which was a danger to all the people of South Africa, black and white, whilst at the same time telling me that the PAC was a danger to them and me alike. But we ignored such attempts.

One day we were visited by the late Brigadier Coetzee from head office accompanied by the Commanding Officer, Col. Aucamp as he then was, and Chief Warder Brits. The Brigadier was generally considered a comparatively polished official but he asked me what tribe I belonged to. Unfortunately I was not in a good mood that day and I abruptly told him that I was an African and refused to answer any further questions on the matter, much to the embarrassment of the Commanding Officer. After he had left Brits told me, "Mandela, you've made a very bad mistake today. That is one man you can't afford to offend". Two years later the Brigadier visited Robben Island and an official who accompanied him asked me the same question. Again my reply was identical to what I had told the Brigadier in Pretoria prison; only this time my tone was polite. He remembered the incident and laughed as the official tried in vain to establish my ethnic identity.

But to return to my days with Robert Sobukwe in Pretoria prison. One day towards the end of March or early April 1963 we heard that Potlako Leballo had announced from Basutoland that the

PAC was making plans to attack South Africa and that this had created a stir in official circles.

Towards the end of April we were moved to another wing of the prison with Robert placed in the first cell while I occupied the last one at the end of the corridor. If I remember correctly he was due to be released on the 3rd of the following month. He had done a stretch of 3 years under harsh conditions and was looking forward to joining his wife Nosamgo and the children. That was the last day I saw him. When we woke up in the morning he was gone with all his personal belongings and this led to considerable speculation among us as to his whereabouts. I became furious and disgusted when I learnt a few days later that he was detained on this island. He had served his whole sentence and I considered it a grave injustice to punish him further by prolonging his incarceration.

Another group of about 9 political prisoners in pretoria included Stephen Tefu, a former member of the CPSA and a well known trade unionist. Although a well known figure in the movement and one who had featured in several political trials, I was meeting him for the first time. He was now a member of the PAC. He was well versed in Russian history and that of other communist parties in Eastern Europe. It was both a pleasure and an experience to listen to him expounding his views and describing his experiences as a member of the Party and the labour movement, the practical difficulties which he had encountered, his persecution by the police and the enormous tasks which faced any revolutionary. He was also well informed about the biographical histories of the leading statesmen throughout the world. And I always looked forward to further sessions with him.

Security measures were excissive and we had no contact with other prisoners as yet. But political

prisoners everywhere consider it their political duty to establish contact with other prisoners and to make arrangements to be kept informed about events beyond prison walls. We were no exception. Such contact ultimately enabled me to smuggle out a sketch of the Pretoria Local Prison with details regarding the exact location of my cells, etc. to enable my comrades outside to devise plans for my rescue.

Meanwhile Walter Sisuly had been tried and convicted to 6 years imprisonment - also for inciting the strike as well as for ANC activities. I was very disturbed and upset about this. He informed me that an application for bail was being made pending his appeal, a move which I again supported wholeheartedly. Meeting him in prison gave me the opportunity of discussing with him the question of the attempt to rescue me. I pointed out that the prison was an ultra-maximum and any attempt would require the services of an extremely able and experienced squad and I preferred to bide my time for the present. During his two week stay we discussed my African tour and other problems facing the movement. One day he was suddenly called away and I was happy that his application for bail had been successful. While out on bail Walter was instructed by the movement to jump bail and disappear underground from where he was to continue to lead the struggle. I was pleased that in this way the movement could still exploit his services.

The doctor of the Pretoria prison confirmed the diagnosis already made at the Fort that I was suffering from high blood pressure. One morning while I was on my way to the prison hospital together with Robert Sobukwe I spotted Nana Sita in prison clothes about 25 yards away. He had

just been convicted by a Pretoria magistrate for refusing to vacate his premises from an area which had been proclaimed white in terms of the Group Areas Act. The prison clothes seemed even more humiliating on such a dignified, respected and aged person. The fact that he was barefooted, despite his acute arthritic condition and which the prison authorities were aware of for he had been imprisoned during Martial Law in 1960 made me extremely uncomfortable in my sandals.

At this stage I suffered a blackout. I fell on the concrete floor and sustained a deep cut just above the left eye which needed three stitches. The doctor later ascertained the cause of the blackout - an overdose of my treatment. As a result he cancelled the treatment and prescribed a special diet. On the same day Zami visited me for the first time since my conviction. I managed to assure her that all was well with me. However rumour had it that my health had broken down. In fact I keep myself fit through physical exercises despite the rigours of prison life for a black man in a South African prison.

Among the other prisoners of whom I managed to get a glimpse were Benny Turok and Harold Strachan. They had been kept at Pretoria Central Prison but were transferred to a different section of the Pretoria Local Prison in 1963. I used to stand on a rolled sisal mat and a bundle of blankets to reach up to the little window of my cell through which I could look down onto the exercise yard two floors below. I used to try to attract their attention by dropping pebbles from my window while they were exercising and though they looked in the direction of my cell I do not know whether they recognised me. But it always gave me pleasure to see them in spite of the glaring contrast between

our prison outfits - long khakhi trousers, corduroy jackets and boots as against our short trousers, canvas jackets and sandals.

One night towards the end of May 1963 I was ordered to pack my personal belongings. At the reception office I found three other political prisoners - Stephen Tefu, John Kgaitiwe and Aaron Molete. I learnt from Col. Aucamp who was then officer commanding Pretoria Local that we were being transferred to Robben Island. I hate being moved from one prison to another. It involves much inconvenience and degrading treatment. One is handcuffed and sometimes even manacled, and often it involves being exposed to prison officials and members of the public at each stop at different prisons en route while one is dressed in the humiliating prison outfit.

But I was excited at the prospect of seeing Robben Island, a place that I had heard of since the days of my childhood, a place that our people talked of as esiqithini (at the Island). The Island became famous among the Xhosa people after Makane, also known as Nxele, the commander of the Xhosa army in the so called Fourth Xhosa War was banished and was subsequently drowned when he tried to escape from the Island by swimming to the mainland. His death was a sad blow to the hopes of the Xhosas and the memory of that blow has been woven into the idioms of the people who speak of a "forlorn hope" by the phrase "Ukuza kuka Mxele".

Makana was not the first black hero to be banished and confined to Robben Island. That honour goes to Autshumayo, known to white historians as Harry the Strandloper. Autshumayo was

banished by Van Riebeeck to Robben Island at the end of the 1658 War between the Khoi Khoi and the Dutch. The honour is even more fitting in that Autshumayo was also the first and so far the only person to successfully escape from the Island. After several attempts he finally succeeded in making his break in an old boat that was riddled with holes and considered completely unseaworthy. At different times many other patriots and freedom fighters found themselves held prisoner on Robben Island. Heroes like Maqoma, who was commander in the so called Fifth Xhosa War of 1834, Langalibalele, the Hlubi Chief who was sentenced for High Treason by a special court in Natal in 1873, Sheikh Abdul Rahman Mantura, a political exile from Java are part of the history of the Island. Just as the Portuguese colonialists gave a unique place in history to the Island of Fernando Po by imprisoning their numerous African patriots, the British held Indian patriots on the Andaman Islands, and in the same way as the French held Ben Bella on  Island, so to have the rulers of South Africa determined that Robben Island should live in the memory of our people.

Robben Island - onetime leper colony, second World War naval fortress guarding the entrance to Cape Town harbour - a tiny outcrop of limestone, bleak, windswept and caught in the wash of the cold Benguella current, whose history counts the years of our people's bondage. My new home.

We arrived at Cape Town docks late in the afternoon. The Robben Island section of the docks was swarming with plain clothes officials turned out to give us a "big reception". On alighting at the Island we were given a dose of tough talk by the warden in charge of us Kleynhans, who turned out to be one of a group of brothers whose brutality towards political prisoners was to become a

by-word. You, he said, are now on Robben Island, not in the Transvaal. You must carry out orders as given by the authorities. There followed the contemptuous order in Afrikaans to trot - "trap". If there is a man upon whom I can rely in a case of emergency where courage is required that man is Steve. He and I walked in front and whispered to each other that we should walk normally. We were of one mind to fight and settle the whole issue of our attitude with the prison authorities right on the spot. We were not going to trot like cowed slaves. Our behaviour did not please Kleynhans. He called us to halt, ordered us to march faster and warned us of the serious consequences that would follow if we failed to obey his order. We maintained our composure and resumed walking as before. We came to newly built large cell. The floor was covered with water. There could be no mistake. It had been deliberately wetted. We were ordered to strip naked and our clothes were thrown on to the damp floor. In the midst of the strip search four officials in plain clothes walked in. One of them sharply asked Aaron why he was wearing such long hair, and before Aaron could reply, he turned towards me - "like this boy". I protested immediately and told him that the length of our hairs was determined not by him but by the prison regulations. The official stepped towards me in a threatening attitude and I warned him that if he so much as touched me I would take him to the highest courts and ruin him. He stopped and demanded my prison ticket. While he examined it he demanded my name and particulars as to how long I was serving. I told him that he would find all that information on the ticket. At every turn we appeared to be heading for a collision. At this stage one of the officials walked out of the cell and his colleagues followed him. Only the three warders who escorted us remained. The search completed, they walked out leaving behind threats to discipline us the next day.



Some men sooth their tingling nerves with silence, others need words. Steve began to speak. We have provoked the "boere" (Afrikaners) he said, and would be in for an extremely rough time. He appealed to us to stand together and argued that it was necessary that we establish that we are human beings and that we are not prepared to submit to any nonsense from the authorities during our stay on the Island. He was still speaking when a lieutenant walked in. The lieutenant addressed us politely. He warned us not to speak to any other people and not to even peep through the windows. He remarked that all of us had clean records and, turning to Steve, "except this one". "You have a filthy record and you will have to try and do better on this Island". Steve exploded. "Who are you to talk to me like that? You say I have a filthy record. You read your files. You will find that all those convictions were in respect of cases where I was fighting for the rights of my people in prison. I am a member of the most revolutionary party in the world, the Communist Party and have a distinguished record of service to the community. I am even better known than your State President. You - I don't even care to know who you are". That silenced the lieutenant who left after warning Steve that if he uttered those words again he would have him charged. The next morning the official with whom I had clashed returned, this time in uniform and we discovered that he was Captain Gericke. Now he was all politeness. It was difficult to believe that this was the same man. Later we also discovered that the first of the plain clothes men to walk out that first evening during my altercation with Gericke was Col. Steyn, the officer commanding. It turned out subsequently that Gericke played a leading role in the brutalities against political prisoners on the Island. During the Rivonia trial this same Gericke turned up at the Pretoria Local Prison where he

became officer commanding. There however the relationship between the two of us happened to settle on a completely different and friendly footing.

The cell we occupied was the best I had seen thus far in prison. The windows were large and within easy reach. Across the corridor we could see the occupants of the opposite communal cell. From the windows on the opposite side we could catch glimpses of other prisoners and warders as they walked past. The cell was spacious, far too large for just the 4 of us, and had toilet and shower facilities within. I was now in the 6th fmonth of my sentence and even though we were isolated from other prisoners, both political and non-political, it was possible to catch glimpses, enjoy surreptitious conversations with other political prisoners in the opposite cell, and as it turned out even begin to contact prisoners in other parts of the prison. As if this was not enough we were soon to find ourselves well supplied with newspaper cuttings despite the determination of the authorities to keep us cut off from all sources of news.

Later that very first evening of our stay on the Island a man, who I thought was a white, tapped at the window and beckoned to me. My sense of caution was undoubtedly greater in view of the lieutenant's warning but I went to the window. He told me that my wife Zami had attempted to visit me at Pretoria Local Prison but was told that I was at Pretoria Central Prison. According to the press she then went there but was again unable to see me. By this time he noticed that I was cautious and he then gave me some particulars about himself. It turned out that he was a Coloured warder. I had mistaken him for a white because I usually have difficulty in distinguishing fair

Coloureds from whites - perhaps because I have never lived in the Western Cape for any length of time. Anyway he promised me to return later that evening with some sandwiches, tobacco and newspapers for us, which he did. This became a regular practice almost every evening for the whole fortnight which I spent on the Island. In rendering this assistance this warder was taking great risks and jeopardising even his employment if he were to get caught. He was aware of this and warned me that he was only prepared to deal directly with me and that the whole transaction should remain strictly between the two of us. I fully appreciated his position. At the same time I was elated that there were to be found such sympathetic men in the service and was determined that such channels should be preserved and cultivated. We shared the sandwiches among the 4 of us. The tobacco went to the only two smokers amongst us, Steve and John. I used to give the news outtings to John to read to us. Some evenings, despite having heard the news read, I would re-read some of the news items again for my own benefit.

The value of such contacts are extraordinarily great. Hardly had we set foot on the Island when the prisoners grapevine buzzed with the new of our arrival. A good number of political prisoners were Congressites. Of the political prisoners at the time the larger number belonged to the PAC.

Whatever their persuasion it was certain that there were some I knew personally. Even among the non-politicals I could expect to know many on account of my profession. But we were kept strictly isolated. Among those serving was my Treason Trial colleague George Peake a Coloured People's Congress leader and member of the Cape Town City Council at the time of his arrest and who had been sentenced to 3 years for attempted sabotage under the old Explosives Act. George was a

widely travelled old sailor, ever resourceful and in brooding about our isolation from other prisoners, it never occurred to me that George may have cultivated new ways of "sailing". But one evening there was George inside my cell come to pay us a clandestine visit! He had many contacts among the warders, both black and white, and this made it possible for him to pay us a sailor's visit.

We were kept locked up in our cell for almost two days in succession. We protested at this treatment and demanded to be taken out to work like other prisoners. This was eventually granted but we were made to work alone, just the 4 of us. We were taken out to work under the charge of Kleynhans and our first job consisted of covering up a newly laid pipeline. This was my first outing since imprisonment and the experience of being out in the open was very pleasant. On our first day we overworked ourselves through sheer excitement. But as the days lengthened our enthusiasm for the work dried up proportionately. Kleynhans attempted to push us to work harder with the usual tough talk and threats. In doing so he must have overlooked Steve who re-acted by giving him a tongue lashing of the kind he had meted out to the lieutenant on the evening of our arrival. Steve commanded a fluent Afrikaans and once he set out on a verbal war with the warders the toughest Afrikaner warder became inhibited.

Grapevine reports singled out the Kleynhans brothers, including the one in charge of us, as being sadists who revelled in assaulting political prisoners and we were clearly fortunate that this behaviour towards the 4 of us was restrained, perhaps by instructions of his superiors. This appears to have been the case because in one instance the path of one of his brothers and ours crossed and I

am almost certain I missed being assaulted by the brother because Kleynhans intervened and must have told him of this.

This happened while we were returning from work one day. Along the road we came across another large workspan of prisoneres, which was under the charge of the Kleynhans brother. This span, made up of a large number of non-politicals, was engaged in carting sand with wheel barrows. We were ordered to halt while the two brothers had a chat. While they talked a prisoner was made to polish the Kleynhans brother's shoes. In the meantime I recognised some of the 13 men who were sentenced to death with Madinoge in the Sekhukhubeland peasant's resistance in 1958. Instinctively I turned round to get a better look at them. The other Kleynhans noticed this and rudely ordered me to look the other way. I do not know what my reaction would have been if the incident had taken place elsewhere, but here, in full view of those prisoners and especially in the sight of men who had put up such a courageous struggle against the hated Bantu Authorities system all my pride and anger was aroused. I defied the order and stood looking at them. The brother advanced menacingly. Before he could reach me he was stopped by his brother who whispered a few words to him and the incident passed.

Opposite our cell, just across the corridor was a cell occupied by a group of political prisoners belonging to the PAC. They were all young men between ages of 20 and 25, who came from the Transkei and had been arrested in Stellenbosch. In the evenings and when the coast was clear we used to converse through the windows. Among them was Nqabeni Menye, my nephew from

Mqkehezweni, whom I had last seen as a little baby when I left for Johannesburg in 1941. I could hardly believe that he was now old enough to serve a sentence for a political offence. We would spend the evenings talking about the Transkei, Stellenbosch and about political matters in a general way. His friends would also gather at the windows. One evening he asked me directly which organisation I belonged to. My reply that I belonged to the ANC caused a sensation amongst them and he and his colleagues vanished from the windows. After some time they re-appeared and my nephew asked me whether I had ever been a member of the PAC. At my denial he asked whether I had not joined the PAC when I was abroad. There was more consternation when I denied this and said that I had always been a member of the ANC and had no intention of joining any other organisation. Again they disappeared. A little later they were back. Had I met Robert Sobukwe in Pretoria jail he asked. I told him that I had. Had Robert Sobukwe and I had any talks about the unity of our organisations? I explained that we wanted to do so but unfortunately there had been no suitable opportunity for such a discussion. This time they all disappeared from the windows for a longer period and returned only to bid me good night. I learnt subsequently that the claim had been made in certain PAC circles that I had joined their organisation during my Africa tour. This must have been the reason for the question directed at me by my nephew and his colleagues. As it happened I never got the chance to talk with them any further.

Later that same evening Col. Aucamp came over to our cell. After a brief chat with me he left. Thereafter my 3 colleagues very hastily removed with all their personal belongings. I was then told to pack my belongings as I would be leaving for Pretoria the next morning. A Coloured warder was

then posted in the corridor and I remained alone in the cell. Sometime later I realised that they had forgotten to supply me with my supper. I politely called the warder in the corridor: "Warder, I have not received my supper". The warder reacted violently at my addressing him as "warder". He demanded that I call him "Baas". My young friends in the opposite cell lept to the windows and hurled a flood of insults at the warder and taking the strongest exception to his attitude towards me. I did not have to say a word. But as for the supper it never came.

Early the next morning I bade my nephew and his friends goodbye. They were taken aback that I was being removed but we could say no more to each other. In prison one must count himself lucky if as a political prisoner one ever manages so much as to wave a hurried goodbye to one's colleagues and fellow prisoners and such luck comes to very few. I was sorry to leave them behind because most of them were young lads whose families I knew well and it had given me much pleasure to talk with them.

The fates which have been kind enough to enable to say farewell to these lads gave me no such a chance in the case of the 3 colleagues with whom I had come to the Island, and with whom I have worked and lived for a fortnight. They had been enjoyable companions, seasoned fighters. Stephen Tefu, already passed 60, with a chequered political career and a lifetime of experience fighting injustice. He had suffered much for his beliefs and even as he was serving on the Island he had to live through the painful experience of learning of the death of his favourite son. It was a terrible blow. He never lost his fighting spirit though all these pressures and the passing of years had made

him a somewhat difficult companion to live with for many men. But then we all have our faults, some big, some small and some that never become apparent because the conditions for their manifestation never cut a swathe through one's life. And communal living in the difficult and tension-ridden conditions of prison are never easy. John Kgaitiwe, an executive member of SACTU, and member of the ANC. He had left South Africa illegally for Prague where he served on the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) for a while on behalf of SACTU. On his return he was arrested and sentenced for leaving the country illegally. A gentle colleague, ever zealous to minister to the needs of his colleagues. Aaron Molete, a prominent member of the ANC in Soweto, employee of "New Age", sentenced for CP propaganda material. A quite, humble man, determined and very devoted to the struggle. I never said goodbye to them. Nor the others. The grapevine told me of so many others incarcerated on the Island. I had not even seen them.

I have never been able to ascertain why after just 2 weeks on Robben Island I was transferred back to Pretoria. But i do know that the Department of Prisons released a press statement claiming that I had been removed for my own safety because PAC prisoners on the Island intended to assault me. This was a blatant falsehood because the only group of PAC prisoners with whom I had contact on the Island were my nephew and his friends with whom I was on the best terms. And subsequent meetings with various members of the PAC convinced me that the authorities fabricated this story - perhaps to cover their own reasons, perhaps as part of a deliberate design to forment and fan animosities between members of the PAC and ANC both inside and outside prison. The transfer certainly had no connection with the fact that I was subsequently charged in the Rivonia Trial



because the arrest which eventually led to that case took place in the 11th July 1963, almost a month after I was removed from the Island.

On our way to the Island in May we saw a poster announcing the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). This was exciting news for me. I was overjoyed that the Casablanca and Monrovia groups in the African states had sunk their differences and merged to form one group. During my tour of Africa there were already talks of unity which as far as I can recall emanated from the Casablanca group and in which Sekou Toure was playing a principal role. Oliver Tambo and I had arrived in Khartoum almost the same time with him on his return from seeing Emperor Haile Selassie whom he had visited to ask him to take the initiative in inviting the two groups to a unity meeting. I felt that this development would have a powerful impact not only in the world bodies but more particularly in regard to our own struggle here in South Africa.

South Africa's history includes many famous political trials. There was the case of Mampuru, the rightful heir to the Bapedi throne, who was executed for public violence and murder of Sekhukhune in 1883 and who gave Commandant General P.J. Joubert and his burghers a lesson in mobile warfare. There was also that of Langalibalele in 1874, the Hlubi Chief who was convicted by a special court for rebelling against the Natal authorities and exiled to Robben Island. Dinizulu, the Zulu King, was sentenced in 1907 on 23 counts of treason. There was also the C.C. Stassen case following the 1922 strike on the Witwatersrand in which Stassen and 4 others were sentenced to death. One of the recent political trials which had a significant impact was the marathon Treason

Trial which was the first case in South Africa in which patriots, black and white, were jointly charged. That case involved perhaps the largest number of accused and top leaders of the entire Congress movement. It was also the longest case in our history and attracted much interest in the country and abroad.

While it is not easy to compare political trials the Rivonia Trial has a special significance because it marked a turning point in the history of the liberation movement in South Africa. Here the Congress movement made deliberate plans for a countrywide uprising. It involved only 10 accused. We were charged for conducting the sabotage campaign that had rocked the country since late 1961 and for planning and preparing for an armed struggle to overthrow the government. The organisations named as co-conspirators were the ANC, Umkhonto We Sizwe and the SACP.

On my return from Robben Island I was kept alone and completely isolated at the Pretoria Local Prison. Nonetheless I soon discovered and managed to communicate with Fazi and his group who had undergone military training in Ethiopia and were arrested while returning to South Africa. They were members of MK and their trial was to be the first held under the Sabotage Act which had been passed in 1962 (?). I helped them prepare for their trial in which circumstances compelled them to defend themselves without the aid of attorney and counsel. I had advised them to contact our friend Harold Wolpe, an attorney, to handle their case. When they sought permission to communicate with him the prison authorities told them that Harold was under detention. My first intimation of the Rivonia arrests came through Fazi and his group. There were pointers even before

this. I had seen Andrew Mlangeni exercising in the prison courtyard. We had last met in September 1961 when he left the country for military training. I also caught glimpses of a number of other detainees who I did not recognise but it was clear that a large number of people had been arrested. One morning I was returning to my cell after my daily exercise. In the passage to my cell I saw Thomas Mashifane, whom I knew as the foreman at Rivonia, and     who worked for the Goldreichs. I suspected that this opportunity of confronting us with each other was not entirely accidental. Nonetheless I greeted them warmly as I passed them. I now had no doubt that I would be one of the accused in any trial arising out of the Rivonia arrests.

During that week I was summoned to the reception office where I found Walter Sisulu and others who were to become my fellow accused. We were charged and warned to appear in court the next day. I was shocked to find Jimmy Kantor among the accused. Although he was Harold Wolpe's brother in law and very close to many of us I had never known him to hold strong political views and to my knowledge he was neither a member of COD nor the CP.

The next day we appeared in court for remand but had no opportunities to instruct counsel. (Did Jimmy say anything in court on that day?) That week Bram Fischer, Vernon Berrange, George Bizos and Joel Joffe and Arthur Chaskalson interviewed us and I now had an opportunity of talking with my colleagues. Bram and his fellow counsel considered it their duty to inform us at the outset that we were facing a serious trial and that the State had formally advised them that they were going to ask for the death sentence, certainly against some of us.

The menacing shadow of the gallows stalked us in and outside the courtroom throughout that trial. In prison one lived in a pervading atmosphere of the death sentence. Prison officials, maliciously or otherwise, went out of their way to constantly cast such shadows in my path. Some of them may have done so without ulterior motives but at least one was inclined to gloat and taunt. One day Head Warder Schnepfel (?) walked into my cell and woke me. "Mandela", he said, "you don't have to worry about sleep. You are going to sleep for a long, long time." Later I was to learn that many freedom fighters have had to endure similar taunts from the police and prison officials. Nonetheless I felt I could not leave Schnepfel to savour his taunts with glee. "All of us", I retorted, "you inclined, must one day sleep for a long, long time."

At that time Zami was banned from meetings and confined to Johannesburg. She was unable to attend the first days of the trial. After several representations the Minister granted permission on condition that she did not wear her traditional dress. It is strange that such a reaction should have come from a member of a government that sought to teach our people respect for our culture. In taking this step the Nats expressed their true aim - they were prepared to encourage African culture only if it served as an instrument for the propagation for separate development; for the dismemberment of the African people, not for uniting them; for the maintainance of white supremacy and not for equal rights. What they would have liked done by those who were prepared to accept apartheid became dynamite in the hands of the government opponents. They probably had forgotten the impact made by those who appeared in traditional dress at my first trial. In the Rivonia

case the stakes were high and the Nats and Nats alone wished to run the whole show with the accused awed by the threat of a death sentence and the spectators passively waiting for the fatal moment.

In this regard the government badly miscalculated and at no time was the initiative to slip out of our hands. The ordinary procedure prescribed for Supreme Court trials is first the holding of a preliminary investigation by a magistrate. If he thinks the State has proved a prima facie case he may commit the accused for trial by the Supreme Court. Although this lengthens the proceedings it gives the accused an opportunity to know the State case beforehand and more time to prepare for the defence. But in all cases of sabotage and in spite of the fact that under this Act there is provision for capital punishment the government abolished the preliminary examination. This means that in these cases the accused are obliged to fight the case as the proceedings unfold themselves. During the Treason Trial already the government had severely restricted the right to take exception to an indictment which was calculated to handicap an accused person in his defence.

The accused in the Rivonia trial were: Nelson Rohlhlala Mandela, Walter Max Ulyate Sisulu, Dennis Goldberg, Govan Archibald Mbeki, Ahmed Mohamed Kathrada, Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein, Raymond Mhlaba, James Kantor, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni.

We appeared before Justice Q. De Wet, the Judge President of the Transvaal, and one of the last judges to be appointed by the United Party government (check was he related to Gen. De Wet of

1914 Rebellion). The court was packed not only with spectators but with representatives of foreign governments and other VIPs. Top police officers were also in court and they had a tight cordon of policemen lined up between the accused and the spectators in an attempt to create an atmosphere that this was an extraordinary trial requiring the utmost vigilance on their part. As each accused walked up to the dock from the court cells there was a warder in front of him and one behind. To enhance the drama the State had made arrangements to broadcast live the opening address of the prosecutor Dr. Percy Yutar. For this purpose microphones were installed on his table as well as before the judge. The defence lawyers immediately stole the initiative by making an application to the court for the removal of the microphones on the grounds, inter alia, that the proposed broadcast was not in uniformity with the dignity of the court. In spite of Yutar's strong plea for their retention the judge ordered that the instruments be removed. The defence went on to strike the second blow when counsels Bram Fischer and Dr. George Lwen launched a formidable attack on the indictment and had it thrown out. But this was only a temporary victory and all the accused were re-arrested even before the presiding judge had left his seat. It was nevertheless a blow to a government which saw in this case not only an opportunity to remove from the scene influential figures in the liberation movement but which they hoped would pave the way for those stooges who were prepared to operate the machinery of oppression. Through this case it also hoped to rally the whites behind itself so that from now on the Nats would be regarded as the saviours of white South Africa. A new indictment was soon framed and we were again brought before the judge. Although the trial was being held in Pretoria, which is 36 miles from Johannesburg where most of our relatives and our people lived, large crowds once again gathered inside and outside the court. This did not suit

the police plans. Only a limited number of people were allowed in, mainly relatives. Even from some of these the police demanded passes in order to intimidate them. Walter's young son (which one?) was arrested for not having a pass. Walter and I were already convicted prisoners serving our respective sentences and on the first day of our appearance we wore khakhi jackets, trousers and shirts. As a result of objections by our lawyers we were subsequently allowed to come to court in our private clothes.

As each of us entered we turned back and greeted the crowds with clenched fist to which they warmly responded and rose to their feet. Col. Aucamp immediately protested and warned us not to do so again. But we ignored him and pointed out that his authority over us began and ended in jail; once we were in court he had no right to give us such orders. During the tea adjournment he again warned us and threatened to take Walter's and my private clothes so that we would once again appear in khakhi. After this incident the authorities took the extraordinary precaution of bringing in the presiding judge before we entered. We then discussed the matter among ourselves and decided it would be unwise for us to continue the demonstration while the court was in session. A weighty consideration was also our desire to protect our people in court who would have been victimised for responding to our salutes.

Another attack was launched against the indictment but this time we knew beforehand that it was not likely to succeed. And that is how it turned out. We were of the opinion that something fishy had happened between the quashing of the first indictment and our fresh applications. During

counsel's argument on the first indictment the judge seemed well disposed to the defence line and even embarrasses the prosecution by asking: "Dr. Yutar, are you making a political speech?" We felt that after the quashing of the first indictment considerable pressure had been exerted on the judge and he now appeared to be a changed man. He was markedly hostile to our line and favourable disposed to the State.

Nevertheless we continued with our offensive. When we were called upon to tender our pleas we took the State team unawares and one man caused them embarrassment. (Insert here what each accused said. It was only a line each).

Just before this Yutar informed the court that the State was withdrawing charges against our fellow accused advocate Bob Hepple.

In the early stages of the trial the press attitude towards us was decidedly hostile and several uncomplimentary comments were made. On the day the indictment was quashed this is what the "Star" said: (insert).

But now, from our pleas it became clear that we were going to put up a fight and that the State was by no means going to have it easy. The prospect immediately loomed that whatever might be the outcome of the trial we were determined to retain the initiative and continue to uphold our beliefs in a bold and dignified manner. This time the press reaction was warm and they looked forward



keenly to the drama that was unfolding. In tendering bold and unusual pleas we were giving expression to our deepest convictions and not merely attempting to make an impression. What was uppermost in our minds was that the movement should emerge stronger from the conflict - a duty we owed to our families, our people and to posterity.

Right from the beginning of the consultations with the defence team we heard rumours that some of the MK men had broken down in detention and would be giving evidence for the State. One of these was Patrick Mthembu, a member of the Transvaal Region Command of MK, a man I had known since the early 50s. A key figure in the Transvaal ANC he had been one of our first men to be sent out to the People's Republic of China for military training. The other was Bruno Mtolo, a member of the Natal Region Command. Although he was not so well known to me I had met him in August 1962 when I addressed the members of that command on my return from abroad. I did not rule out the possibility of even senior members of the organisation breaking down under police torture but I trusted Mthembu and received the rumours with reservation. And although when he did give evidence he said nothing particularly damaging I could not believe my eyes when I saw him take the witness stand against his former colleagues. There are men who I would never like to see on the side of the enemy, however innocuous their activity might be and until the moment when he entered the court I kept on hoping that the rumour might be untrue.

Before the case began we wondered what evidence the State would lead to prove my guilt and although I had met Mtolo the defence lawyers did not seem unduly worried about any evidence that

he might give on the report of my tour of Africa. Other than this we have no idea what evidence the State had against me. When I met Walter in Pretoria jail just after my first sentence I had asked him to see to it when he is released on bail that all my books and notes are removed from Rivonia. We were all therefore under the impression that this had been done. But much to our surprise, during Rusty's application for bail at the outset of the Rivonia trial, Yutar dramatically produced the notes and sketch I had made of the Johannesburg Fort and vehemently opposed the application. He maintained that a fellow accused of the applicant (meaning myself) had indicated in the sketch and notes that he was waiting for a suitable moment to start a blood bath. This was only the beginning of the surprise. Later in the proceedings the police produced a quantity of literature and notes which I had made on the armed struggle in China, Vietnam, Malaya, the Phillipines, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Cuba, Algeria, Kenya and South Africa, as well as notes on my training in Ethiopia and my diaries.

Mtolo was the star witness for the State and his evidence in chief lasted several days. He struck me as a clever man with a good memory. He had been to Rivonia and had met some of my fellow accused. As is apparent from the preceding pages I was as deeply involved as the others in the activities of MK and once my notes were handed in I realised that the State would be able to secure a conviction against me. The evidence of Mtolo made this a certainty.

But Mtolo, obviously acting on police instructions went out of his way to embellish his evidence. The State could not face us on the crucial question that we were doing no more than what all

patriots do - fight for the right to decide our own affairs. They had to throw dirt and lies to divert public attention from the real issues and Mtolo willingly played his role.

He told the court that in the course of my remarks to the Natal Regional Command I had indicated to them that I had met Col. Boumedienne, the Commander in Chief of the Algerian army of liberation and that he was a communist, and that I had urged them also to be communists but not to disclose their views publicly. He added that I had reminded them about the case of Eric Mtshali who was stranded in Dar es Salaam because he made precisely that mistake. In fact I never said anything of the sort other than that I had seen an article in "Time" magazine which had described Boumedienne as a marxist.

I was also identified by Thomas Mashifane and Arthur's domestic assistants. I cannot be sure whether or not Jellyman failed to point me out deliberately for he knew me well, except that at Rivonia I had always dressed in an overall and had a beard.

The State evidence showed that MK had a High Command situated in Johannesburg and four Regional Commands; that the various Regional Commands selected targets to be attacked, instructed people in the manufacture and use of explosives, that symbols of apartheid which included government buildings, electric and phone cables, communications, railway signals installations, etc. were destroyed; that MK sent out recruits for military training; that I was the prime mover in setting up MK; that Chief Luthuli was kept informed about the activities of MK,

consulted from time to time but kept in the background. Reference was repeatedly made to the Manifesto of MK issued on its emergence and particularly the following: (insert page 21 of judgement 4+).

We defended ourselves on the basis of what the enemy knew, on what was unknown to the enemy and on the basis of the political situation in the country as we assessed it. We readily admitted what was known by the enemy to be true but we refused to give away any information we considered dangerous to our case or that might implicate others. To us the outcome of the case was a foregone conclusion and we fought not so much for an acquittal as to let the people of South Africa know that we were planning to overthrow white supremacy through armed revolution.

The document "Operation Mayibuye" (operation come back) immediately became the central issue between the State and ourselves, the State arguing that it formed the basis for all our plans while we held that it was still a draft and under discussion and had not been finally adopted by the time of the arrests.

It was a lengthy document and contained detailed plans for the waging of gurilla warfare and for full scale military operations against the government. It analysed the country's political situation and stressed that white supremacy could only be overthrown through armed revolution. It further analysed our terrain, and expressed the conviction that the plan was capable of fulfillment but only if the the whole apparatus of the movement both here and abroad was prepared to make unlimited

sacrifices. Four areas were demarcated as bases for guerilla warfare and it outlined plans for landing of guerilla troops by sea and air. The document also dealt with the internal organisation and set a target of 7,000 men who would be ready to join the guerillas in the first onslaught. Provision was made for the setting up of an intelligence department, external planning committee, political authority, logistics, and other committees. The immediate tasks of the National High Command were also outlined.

There was a host of other documents drawn up by my fellow accused and others who were now outside the country, all of which showed that we had reached an advanced stage in our preparation for armed resistance. Amongst them was one which was drafted by Govan Mbeki and Arthur Goldreich and which dealt with the history of the struggle of the African people and the birth of MK. It also dealt with guerilla warfare and tactics. In another document Harold Wolpe discussed military matters, sabotage and tactics.

Documents in my handwriting clearly showed that I had left the country in January after I had seen Chief Luthuli to attend the PAFMECSA Conference; that I had made arrangements for military training for our men. Most of my activities were indicated or could be inferred from the documents. There was another exhibit in my handwriting - "How to be a good communist" - a title taken from the work of the Chinese thearetician Liu Shao Chi.

I did not give evidence but made a statement from the dock. As I was already in jail when

"Operation Mayibuye" was drafted I did not refer to it at all. I dealt briefly with the history of the ANC and its policy and the methods with particular emphasis on the efforts it had made consistently for peaceful negotiation. I added that throughout its history it had consciously tried to avoid civil war. I concentrated on the history of MK which I explained was formed for the purpose of carrying out planned acts of sabotage and to prepare as a long term objective for guerilla warfare. I added that in pursuance of this goal we sent out men for instruction in guerilla warfare and others for training in civil administration and other professions.

I referred to the bombing of private houses of pro-government persons in Port Elizabeth and East London and pointed out that such acts were not in conformity with the policy of MK. (We do not know if this is still valid. Check). I also challenged the State allegation that Rivonia was the headquarters of MK and refuted the suggestion that the aims and objects of the ANC and the CP were the same, adding that that allegation had been disproved in the Treason Trial. I explained further that African nationalism and the concept of freedom and fulfillment for Africans were the inspiration of the ANC, that the final objective of the ANC was the Freedom Charter and that it had never called for radical changes in the economic structure of the country, nor condemned capitalist society. I distinguished the CP as an organisation that strove to build marxist socialism and that it regarded the Freedom Charter as a step in that direction and concluded that the two organisations worked closely because they had the common goal of destroying racial oppression.

I took the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the support we had received from the Socialist

countries and maintained, as I still do, that they condemned apartheid more strongly than the West. I told the court, as I had done in the Treason Trial, that I was an African patriot who was attracted by the idea of a classless society and who had been influenced by marxist thought. I admitted that I had written the notes of "How to be a Good Communist" to demonstrate to an old friend who occupied senior positions in both the ANC and the CP and who had been trying to recruit me into the CP how marxism could be freed from the complicated cliches and jargon of the European continent and made indigenous to Africa. I emphasised that MK was formed by Africans to further the African struggle in our country. After describing our economic, political and social disabilities I ended my address with the following remarks: "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if needs be it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

The address got wide publicity in the local and overseas press and it appeared almost word for word in the "Rand Daily Mail". In the Afrikaans press it was coldly received but Die Vaderland made the important observation that I had acknowledged my guilt. The speech indicated our line of defence and disarmed the prosecution who had prepared the whole case against me on the basis that I would give evidence under oath and that I would deny responsibility for the alleged offence. They had spent weeks pouring over the voluminous Treason Trial records to equip themselves for the purpose of cross examination.

Our was a political trial par excellence and political issues dominated it from beginning to end. It was not only a judicial examination in which the judge tried to determine questions of law and fact but a continuation of the anti-apartheid struggle that was raging fiercely here at home and for which South Africa was being bombarded by democratic forces in every part of the world.

In this context we were right in the front line and our whole bearing and tactics were influenced partly by this fact and the knowledge that history was on our side. Moreover to anticipate accurately the line your opponent will take in dealing with you is frustrating to him, for such anticipation is equivalent to taking over his weapons and using them against him.

The State had hoped to pin on us the label of irresponsible and untruthful agitators who were out to murder all and sundry including the aged and children and who would rape women when operations started. But the fact was that men who were facing a capital offence showed more respect for truth than their opponents and destroyed all prospect of the enemy exploiting the case to his advantage.

The first defence witness was Walter Sisulu. He had to bear the brunt of the cross examination the prosecution had prepared for me. In his characteristic calm and collected manner he withstood what was perhaps the severest barrage of questions to be put to the accused. Always a dependable representative of the movement he explained our policy in simple and clear terms. He admitted that



when he was banned in 1954 he had been Secretary General of the ANC; that he was consulted and expressly approved of the decision to form MK; that he agreed with the decision of the ANC National Executive to allow its secretariat and external mission to co-operate with MK in the transportation of recruits. He however denied that he was a member of the High Command as the State alleged but admitted that he had been kept informed of its decisions and at times attended its meetings and took part in its deliberations. This was especially the case when he said whenever there were to be discussions of a political nature, as for example the policy of guerilla warfare.

His evidence was similar to the statement I had made from the dock and he corroborated it on all major points but there were two issues which came up in his evidence which attracted wide interest. One was the document "Operation Mayibuye" and his evidence on this issue was strenuously challenged by the State whose entire strategy was based on the assumption that the document had been formally adopted by MK, the ANC and the CP and that it formed the blueprint for all our operations.

Indeed the matter was discussed at length by the accused and two conflicting viewpoints emerged. Govan Mbeki, a member of the High Command and Speaker of the ANC when he was banned in 1962 argued that the document had been approved not only by the High Command but also by the ANC. He insisted that it now formed the basis for all the activities of MK and felt that it would be wrong to argue that it was still under consideration when we were arrested. Walter admitted that the document was drawn up by the High Command and approved in principle by the Working

Committee of the ANC but he challenged the statement that it had the approval of the ANC. He supported his argument by pointing out that when the police raided Rivonia he, Goldberg, Govan, Kathy, Rusty, Raymond and Bob had met to discuss that very document which the police found on the table.

With the exception of Raymond who was out of the country when the document was originally drawn up and who therefore remained neutral during the consultations all the other accused agreed with Walter and disagreed with Govan.

In examining the problem one must take into account circumstances in which the document was drawn up. It was drafted and submitted for discussion by skeleton committees operating under conditions of illegality and when many of our members were in jail, had left the country, were house arrested, confined to certain areas and when the police vigilance made meetings very difficult. To insist on plenary meetings on every issue in such a situation would lead to many disasters and hamper our work. Flexibility when each issue is examined on its own merit and even be disposed of at a lower level might have been a correct approach. But this particular document raised questions of principle which needed decisions at the highest level and, subject to conditions, the widest possible consultation of all the Congresses and Regional Commands of MK. To claim that the document had been formally adopted by the ANC simply because it was approved in principle by the Working Committee at the time of only 4 persons - Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, J.B. Marks and Dan Tloome - was contrary to the whole procedure we had adopted even as an

illegal organisation. Chief Luthuli, the leader of the ANC, was confined to Stanger at the time and knew nothing whatsoever about the document. Neither the SAIC, CPC, COD nor SACTU had discussed it. Oliver Tambo, the deputy president, and the entire external mission who would be entrusted with all the tasks of explaining the document to the countries that supported us, had not commented on it.

From the preceding chapters it will be noted that ever since the Chief had been restricted to Stanger all meetings of the National Executive Committee of the ANC as well as the Joint Executives were held there so that the head of the organisation is afforded the opportunity of expressing his views on policy matters. "Operation Mayibuye" was one of these important matters of policy which could never become a decision of the ANC without proper consultation with the leadership of the organisation and its allies. Accordingly we decided to contest the State allegation that the document was a blueprint of our plans and Walter Sisulu and all the other accused were now to put forward this line.

The second issue that attracted a lot of publicity in Walter's evidence under cross examination related to Bob Hepple, against whom the charge had been withdrawn and who the State claimed was to have been one of its witnesses.

We were aware that during his detention Bob, after consultation with two of the accused had made a statement to the police which was considered to be innocuous, the idea being that he would be

discharged and able to flee the country (check).

In his evidence Walter had explained our policy on the question of traitors and had told the court that their fate would not be decided arbitrarily but that they would be given a fair trial and the opportunity to defend themselves. The prosecution then disclosed that on the 5th September 1963 Bob had led the police to the cottage in Mountain View which had been used as a hiding place by Ahmed Kathrada as well as by Goldreich and Wolpe after their escape from the police cells. Yutar then pressed Walter to answer whether he regarded Bob as a traitor. Walter stated that under those conditions he would regard Bob as a traitor. The press incorrectly reported him as having made an unqualified statement that Bob had betrayed us.

The statement by Yutar that Bob had exposed Mountain View was received by us with reservations as the prosecution would readily make such an allegation as a retaliatory act against a man who had outwitted them. After the press publicity relating to this we received a strong protest from Bob reminding us that the whole idea of his making a statement and leaving the country had been fully discussed and he strenuously refuted the allegation made by Yutar. We accepted his assurance and as far as we are concerned the matter is closed.

It was also rumoured that Thami Tshume (spelling?), former member of the ANC National Executive and Treason Trialist, would give evidence for the State but although we were told he had been brought up to Pretoria from Port Elizabeth he was never called. He subsequently gave

evidence for the State in cases in Port Elizabeth involving our members.

Dennis Goldberg, a member of the Congress of Democrats and the youngest of my fellow accused, next gave evidence. An engineering graduate from the University of Cape Town he took a lively interest in the proceedings. He kept copious notes and constantly passed on useful information to the defence lawyers. Frequently my fellow accused became bored with the repetitive evidence led by the State and dozed off. But Dennis' concentration never flagged. In the activities of MK in Cape Town he had worked closely with Looksmart Ngudle, a leading member of the ANC who was one of the first men tortured to death by the police after the introduction of the 90 Day Detention Law. Dennis who was sought after by the police came up to Johannesburg on his way to England and was asked by MK to perform certain tasks before his departure. These related to production requirements of MK, the preparation of sketches and reports relating to the manufacture of hand grenades and land mines, etc. Travallyn, the headquarters of MK, a free hold property in a white area, was bought by him under an assumed name. About 40 witnesses testified against him. The court accepted the evidence of Cyril Davids a member of the Coloured Peoples Congress who alledged that Dennis had organised a camp at Mamre, Cape for the purpose of training young men in methods of guerilla warfare and that he was invited by Dennis to give lessons to the campers on judo and the use of field telephones. Davids also said that Dennis was addressed by the campers as "Comrade Commandant".

Govan Mbeki the next witness was Speaker of the ANC at the time of its banning, a member of the

Central Committee of the CP and of the High Command of MK. He held a B.A. and a B.Comm. Degree and has been a qualified teacher having taught at various schools in the country. Later he and others had formed a Co-operative Society in Butterworth in the Transkei. At one time he had been secretary of the Transkei Organised Bodies and also been a member of the Bunga. He and Joe Slovo had drafted "Operation Mayibuye" and at the time of the arrest he was one of the senior men who were active at the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg. His evidence corroborated that of Walter's.

(Insert Kathy's evidence). The second of the three white fellow accused was Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein. He was an architect. He had been a member of the Congress of Democrats and a member of the Convening Committee of the Congress of the People. He had served in the Second World War and later became a member of the National Executive of the Springbok Legion. The State case against him was weak and the main reason why he was among the accused was that he was found with the others at Rivonia. The only evidence of a direct nature which linked him with Rivonia was that on a Saturday afternoon he had assisted another white person with the erection of a radio aerial in Rivonia to be used presumably by MK for broadcasting purposes. But the two State witnesses contradicted each other. There was also a covering letter to a document seized by the police and through this document the State tried to link him with the activities of MK. He admitted that he had written the covering letter but could not remember what his reaction to the document was. He denied the allegation about the aerial and pointed out that at the time alleged by the State witness he was under house arrest and could not have been at Rivonia. He openly declared that he

was a marxist and worked for the lifting of the colour bar and the granting of equal rights and opportunities for all.

He told the court that there were times when a non-violent policy was wrong and that from 1960 many people had advocated violence. He held the government responsible for this because it would not listen to the people's demands. He admitted that he had read the Manifesto of MK and regarded it as a responsible and well considered statement of a semi-military nature. He further admitted that he had gone to Rivonia to supervise alterations and he saw me living there. He said he had known that I had been in hiding since about June 1961, that he had spoken to me a couple of times at Rivonia and also gave me books to read. On the day of the arrests he had gone to Rivonia at the invitation of Bob Hepple to attend a meeting in order to discuss the 90 Day Detention Law. The court accepted his evidence and he was discharged.

A judge who spoke to me on Robben Island remarked in the course of the conversation that the arrest of James Kantor a white attorney who was accused number 8 in the Rivonia trial was unfortunate for his interests differed from ours in many respects and added that politically he never was one of us. I fully agreed with the judge but told him that although the police had no reason whatsoever for arresting him and although I knew their motives quite well for prosecuting him he was nevertheless a man who understood and fully supported the struggle of the black man for equal rights and the removal of the colour bar.

I did not want to embarrass the judge by telling him that I considered Jimmy's arrest a shame and an attempt to intimidate progressive lawyers who acted for government opponents. Such progressive professional men have been unpopular with the government and have been victimized in various ways. The Minister of Justice refused to grant silk to Vernon Berrange, a prominent barrister, who has featured in many important political trials in the country. Several attempts were made on the life of attorney Joel Carlson by elements which may be regarded as supporters of the Nats and whose actions obviously enjoyed police approval.

Jimmy was the brother in law of Harold Wolpe and at the time of Jimmy's arrest Harold was working as his professional assistant. Files of people belonging to the Congress movement were handled mainly by Harold and there was no reason whatsoever for charging the whole firm for any transaction to which the police objected. He was discharged at the end of the State case. We were all happy when this happened and warmly shook hands with him. I am godfather to their eldest daughter Tanya, a godfather who has never seen his godchild, who cannot carry out his responsibilities towards her and who cannot even send her a box of chocolates. All that I can do is think of her lovingly and wonder whether she looks like her Mum Barbara or her Pa. But to return to Jimmy. Just before we parted that day we exchanged ties. He was a clothing connoisseur and compared with his mine was like a material of clay to that of silver.

One of the leading figures of the ANC in the Eastern Cape, a member of the Central Committee of the CP and a trade unionist was Raymond Mhlaba, who was employed as an attorneys clerk in Port



Elizabeth. He, Jimmy Njongwe, Gladstone Tshume, Robert Matji, and Wilton Mkwayi were among those who made the 1952 Defiance Campaign a great success in that area and who effectively carried out the M-Plan. Together with Govan Mbeki and Harold Strachan he was among the top MK men in the area. He was in charge of the first recruits who left towards the end of 1961 for military training in the People's Republic of China. On his return he was co-opted to the National Executive Committee of the ANC and became chairman of MK. Soon after his return he was sent out again, this time on a mission to Algeria and Czechoslovakia.

The State led evidence to the effect that he took part in acts of sabotage on December 16th, 1961. In his own evidence he denied that he was a member of MK and said that he knew nothing about sabotage except what he read in the newspapers. He admitted that he had read "Operation Mayibuye" and discussed guerilla warfare with Walter and Govan but that they had decided that this was not feasible. Ray denied the evidence that he had taken part in acts of sabotage on December 16th 1961 but refused to disclose to the court his whereabouts at the time. In fact at the time he was already undergoing military training in China.

Accused number 9, Elias Motsoaledi, was born in Sekhukhuneland and came to Johannesburg in the early 40s where he joined the ANC, the CP and the trade union movement. Quite early in his life he became asthmatic and in 1952 spent 5 months in hospital where he received treatment for a chest complaint. In 1961 he sustained serious injuries when he was attacked by tsotsis in his township.

He was among the early victims of the 90 Day Detention Law and during his interrogation he was beaten up and tortured. From his state of health one would have expected him to break down under the gruelling experience but his courage and strong political beliefs pulled him through that ordeal. In spite of his humble educational background he is articulate in English and conducted himself with confidence in court. During the preparations for the trial we were asked to write our biographical sketches which were later submitted to the authoress Nadine Gordimer and she considered his style of writing was the best amongst all of us accused.

In his unsworn statement to the court he admitted he was a member of MK, that he served on the Technical Committee of the Johannesburg region of that organisation, that he knew about the acts of sabotage committed by the MK units and assisted in accommodating recruits in transit. In fact he was a full time employee of MK and a key figure in its activities in the Transvaal. Almost every recruit who left the country passed through his hands and he also gave instructions on sabotage operations.

The last accused was Andrew Mlangeni who was detained about the same time as Elias Motsoaledi. Of all my African fellow accused in the case he was the only one born in an urban area, Johannesburg, and who lived all his life in the city.

He joined the ANC Youth League in 1951. In 1958 he became the secretary of the South Western

Region of the ANC in Johannesburg. In MK he worked closely with Joe Modise, Jack Hodgson and Elias Motsoaledi and in 1961 left with Raymond Mhlaba for military training in China. In his spare time he played golf.

He also made an unsworn statement in which he admitted that he carried messages and instructions for MK, assisted Bruno Mtolo, a State witness, to contact Joe Modise, another key figure in the Transvaal Regional Command and that he disguised himself as a priest to facilitate his travels. But he denied that he made arrangements for the transport of trainees.

An interesting feature of the case was the presence of several VIPs, especially the American, British and Dutch embassies. The representative of the latter attended almost daily throughout the trial. While Walter was giving evidence an official from the American Embassy was reported by the press as having said that the first two defence witnesses, namely Walter and I, had given their evidence frankly and fearlessly - an indication that the embassy was not unfavourable disposed to our line. It was around this time to when Walter was giving evidence and the full glare of publicity was focused on him that Walter's wife Ntsiki and other known ANC people were among the guests at a function at the British Embassy.

One of the influential personalities who visited South Africa at the time was Professor Gwendolyn Carter, authoress of "Politics of Inequality" a standard work on South African politics under the Nat government. The State immediately invited her and mendaciously tried to instruct her on our

political beliefs, illustrating their propaganda lecture by means of carefully selected documents. In my case they showed her my manuscript "How to be a Good Communist" and expressly labelled me a communist. Unfortunately for the prosecution Professor Carter knew a little more than him about the country's politics and even more important the defence lawyers were also in contact with her.

As we entered the court one afternoon she was sitting with her colleague Professor T. Karis in the jury box. I had last seen her in the early 50s when she visited the country to collect material for her "Politics of Inequality" and I had helped her in gathering some of the material she required. Although the judge had already taken his seat I could not resist the temptation to wave to her.

It was her first occasion to attend court proceedings and she came at the right moment - when Vernon Berrange was cross examining Peter Nobomvu, a convicted political prisoner who was serving a sentence of 15 year on this Island for sabotage. He had now sold out and was giving evidence against his own colleagues. Vernon's cross examination was ferocious and tore Nobomvu's evidence to shreds. Whenever the witness was caught out Professor Carter could not hide her delight and would lean forward smiling like a young girl. As we left the court that day we again waved to each other. The next day the jury box was cleared and even the VIPs sat amongst the spectators behind us - an admission that the State efforts to win friends in this matter had badly misfired. Indeed as a result of the Rivonia trial she became a firm and active supporter of our cause and also maintained close personal contact with Zami. Rebuffed and disappointed by her stand the

Nats reacted by declaring her a prohibited immigrant in South Africa.

It was during this trial that the prosecutor, out of the blue, and without leading any evidence to that effect, gave me to the office of Deputy Premier and Minister of Defence in our future government. He further announced that the premiership was reserved for the Chairman of the CP. In any other country the presiding judge would have pulled up the prosecutor for clowning the court, but De Wet gave the deputy Attorney General full reign to indulge in this unusual exhibition. That insubstantial allegation formed the basis for the statement made recently by the Minister of Justice Jimmy Kruger that I was Bram Fischer's Minister of Defence.

With the exception of James Kantor and Rusty Bernstein we were all convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. The same night we were flown to Robben Island. White freedom fighters are kept in Pretoria Local Prison and Dennis Goldberg remained there. The judgement was poor in quality and the presiding judge merely adopted the prosecutor's address and avoided the crucial issues raised by the defence in their arguments.

Cases had been quoted from South African history where white political offenders who did worse things than us and who enjoyed all the rights and privileges available to whites in the country were convicted of high treason but given light sentences ranging between 2 and 7 years. In this trial where we represented the vast majority of black men and women in the country and in a continent where far reaching political changes were taking place and in a world that had declared war against

all forms of racial discrimination I expected the judge to address himself to the question of sentence and to attempt to motivate his reasons for the totally heavy penalties we knew he would impose. I expected him to discharge Ahmed Kathrada and to give Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni lighter sentences. They were both juniors in MK and their respective offences could not be compared with that of the 4 accused on the National Executive of the ANC.

It may be well that the judge also felt that he ought to give Kathy the benefit of the doubt and that he was fully aware of the harshness of his sentence of Elias and Andrew; that having already acquitted 2 accused he now wanted to shift further responsibility in regard to any releases or reduction of sentence to the Appellate Division, the final Court of Appeal. For the Appellate Division to overrule him and acquit one of the appellants and to reduce the sentences of the other two would create the impression that we have received a fair trial and that those whose appeals were dismissed have been justly condemned.

The State had told defence lawyers that they would ask for the death sentence and Vorster, then Minister of Justice, had told Bob Hepple's father that General Smuts, the Prime Minister during the Second World War, had made the mistake of not hanging him and others who committed a similar offence as ours during the Second World War, and that the Nat government would not make such a mistake. He bluntly told Alex Hepple even before the proceedings started (?) that they would hang us. Why did they change their minds? (check).

They did not do so because of any change of heart but because the situation had completely slipped out of their hands. The protest from the masses of the people inside and outside the country was too strong for them to carry out their original intentions. Heads of State in Africa and Europe, including Emperor Haile Selassie, Leonid Brezhnev and Lord Home, several Commonwealth premiers, the United Nations Organisation and other world bodies, the Anti Apartheid Movement and other influential individuals and organisations asked or warned the government not to pass the death sentence, whilst dock workers in various parts of the world threatened not to handle South African goods. Towards the end of the proceedings Judge De Wet remarked to Bram Fischer that we had made a lot of propaganda in this case. That was his own way of acknowledging that as far as the issues before him were concerned we had eclipsed the government.

Professor Gwendolyn Carter also involved herself fully with the campaign and Adlai Stevenson, the US representative at the UN assured her, in a letter which she passed on to our lawyers, that his government was against racial discrimination and would do everything in its power to prevent the passing of the death sentence. The British author and reporter for the London Observer, Tony Sampson, was in court one day as we came in. He was previously editor of Drum in South Africa and was well known to most of us. When we greeted him he responded with the clenched fist salute. He was immediately called out rudely by the Security Branch and warned. He was also in contact with defence lawyers and made valuable suggestions to them. Above all the ANC and the CP abroad were campaigning in every part of the world mobilising support.

Here at home public interest in the case was equally strong and the threat of a general strike and general unrest frightened the government. From the start of the proceedings there was a flood of messages of solidarity and support coming from our families and people from different walks of life. My nephew, the Transkei Minister Chief Minister, and Zami's father, then Transkei Minister of Agriculture, had indicated that they were prepared to intervene if we needed their help. Chief Luthuli, Monty Naicker and A.W.G. Champion, former president of the ANC in Natal, were among those who sent messages of encouragement and solidarity.

On the day I read out my statement the court was packed with our relatives and members of the public and the authorities made the jury box once more available to distinguished visitors. When we were convicted the writer Alan Paton, president of the Liberal Party, gave evidence in mitigation and, as we had done in our respective pleas and evidence, laid the whole blame squarely on the shoulders of the government. Outside the court huge crowds were demonstrating, carrying placards and singing freedom songs that we could hear inside the court. The atmosphere was electric. On that day as well as the next when we were sentenced the police took the usual precautions. We were driven non stop and at great speed under escort to and from court by a huge convoy of police vehicles and cross traffic along the route was blocked. For me personally it was a real inspiration to see Zami in court with my mother who came all the way from the Transkei, my sister Leabie who had been detained a few months before that, Zami's sisters Niki Xaba, Nali Vutela, Nonyaniso and other members of the family.



In the face of this solid wall of protest and representations the government was shaken and realised that if we were executed one day the people of South Africa would go so far as to dig up their bones from the graves and hang them publicly for their sins.

Although it was a tense moment when the judge finally delivered his sentence it was a source of encouragement to see that it was not the accused in the dock who were visibly nervous but the judge himself. The whole of South Africa and the world tensely awaited the verdict and the unprecedented step was taken to have it broadcast directly from the court. The judge's voice was barely audible as he pronounced sentence of life imprisonment and quickly left the court. Among the spectators there was a sigh of relief and many hurriedly left the court to convey the news to the excited throng outside. Verwoerd told parliament that the judgement of the court had not at all been influenced by the telegrams of protest and representations that had come from various parts of the world. In spite of what his Minister of Justice had told Alex Hepple he hypocritically boasted that his government did not interfere with the court's functions and had left the entire decision to the judge. He commented on the remarkable fact that for the first time in the history of South Africa the government had received representations from the Communist countries asking them not to pass a capital sentence and added that these countries had done this because their men were involved. He bragged that the government had thrown these telegrams into the waste paper basket. De Villiers Graaf regretted that we had not been charged with plain treason instead of sabotage, because the world would have better realised how lenient was the court's judgement.

Quite true, every patriot who raises his voice against oppression, whatever his colour and wherever in the world he may be, is a hero in the Socialist countries and we felt proud and honoured that they should join in the campaign to defend what we had done. But the truth was that the whole world regarded us in this light and Verwoerd and his government found themselves all alone in a hostile world. Hitler and Mussolini, the men the Nats tried to imitate in their relations with the blacks, had been destroyed by the people of the world and Salazar and Franco, the only remaining Fascists in Europe, did not have the courage to defend the actions of this government.

Several considerations influenced our decision not to appeal. The danger of a death sentence for sabotage had been averted in our case and an appeal involved the risk of the Appellate Division the country's highest court of appeal, holding that the death sentence should have been passed, which might adversely affect future cases. Moreover there was the strong feeling that in view of the bold and defiant line we had followed throughout the proceedings, a decision to appeal would have been an anti-climax. There was also great pressure on the government demanding our release and it was felt that an appeal would be exploited by them to relieve the pressure by arguing that they could do nothing about the matter until the Appeal Court had given its decision, an attitude which would have been appreciated by many Western countries, organisations and individuals that were applying pressure at that time. The first was a wise decision and is by itself sufficient to explain our action in spite of the fact that it may have cost Ahmed Kathrada unnecessary incarceration and Andrew Mlangeni and Elias Motsoaledi a sentence of life imprisonment which the appeal court might have cut down considerably. Subsequent events have shown that we were mistaken on the

second point and 12 years after Rivonia the Nats are still insisting that we should fully serve our respective sentences.

Fighting a case and the threat of a capital sentence did not spare us from pressing political problems and our time was often divided between legal consultations and discussions of political matters whenever our lawyers were not present.

The future of sabotage activities came up for discussion quite early during the trial. A large number of leading MK men had been arrested and others had fled and although there were some active units that were doing well the precautions taken by the enemy had made operations quite difficult. There was also the view that the continuation of acts of sabotage would create a dangerous atmosphere for the trial and that a judgement delivered in the midst of violent explosions in various parts of the country might easily go to the other extreme and we recommended their suspension.

The view was also expressed that mere acts of sabotage unaccompanied by armed struggle could never be effective and that their continuation before the actual commencement of guerilla warfare merely exposed our people to the enemy without equipping themselves with the weapons for their defence. Although we never reached a consensus on this question we nevertheless faced the reality that acts of sabotage were fizzling out mainly because the enemy had struck hard at MK and reduced it to a mere shadow of itself. We however warned against the danger of allowing the wave of activities to peter out and to leave the impression that it was the enemy that had emerged

victorious from the conflict.

We also reminded the leadership outside prison of the warning given at the Durban meeting of the Joint Executives in June 1961 to the effect that the beginning of acts of sabotage should not be used as an excuse for abandoning the important work of political organisation. The point had been repeatedly expressed by many speakers at that meeting that the new sabotage organisation could make no real impact if it were not backed up by a strong political movement and that the success of the new phase of activities presupposed the strengthening of the existing political organisations.

We pointed out that in forming MK we had made precisely that mistake, drained the political organisations of their enthusiastic and experienced men, concentrated all our attention on the new organisation and neglected our normal but vital task of building up a strong and effective machinery throughout the country. It seemed to us that unless this central task was tackled immediately our problems would continue to grow and solutions become correspondingly more difficult.

As far as the start of guerilla warfare was concerned two diametrically opposed views emerged. Govan and Raymond argued that the struggle was here at home and that guerilla operations should be waged from bases situated inside the country. They pointed out that in all countries where this form of struggle had been used it had been waged from inside the particular country concerned and they insisted that this was what we should do. In support of their argument they quoted the examples of Algeria, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Israel and Vietnam where they said this principle had

been followed.

They dismissed the argument that the armed struggle should be waged from the adjacent independent countries and posed the question that if these countries did not get their independence within the next 50 years did that mean that the armed struggle in this country would never begin. They pointed to "Operation Mayibuye" which the High Command had drawn up as a blueprint of future operations. According to that document: "The objective military conditions in which the movement finds itself makes the possibility of a general uprising leading to direct military struggle an unlikely one. Rather, as in Cuba, the general uprising must be sparked off by organised and well prepared guerilla operations during the course of which the masses of the people will be drawn in and armed".

The document continues: "The absence of friendly borders and long scale impregnable natural bases from which to operate are both disadvantages. But more important than these factors is the support of the people who in certain situations are better protection than mountains and forests. In the rural areas which became the main theatre of guerilla operations in the initial phase, the overwhelming majority of the people will protect and safeguard the guerillas and this fact would to some measure negate the disadvantages".

The document set out 4 areas to be used as bases for guerilla warfare and contained detailed plans for the landing of guerilla troops either by sea or by air. The aim was that on its arrival the external

guerilla force should find at least 7,000 men in the 4 main areas ready to join the guerilla army in the initial onslaught. These would be allocated as follows: Eastern Cape and the Transkei 2,000; Natal and Zululand 2,000; North Western Transval 2,000; North western Cape 1,000.

Finally Govan and Ray asked: if now we must fight from friendly borders what was the purpose of all the elaborate plans detailed in that document.

The views of Walter and myself were more or less the same. At the outset we indicated that we had full confidence in our men both inside and outside the country and felt sure that they were in touch with the situation from day to day and were working full time on plans for the beginning of armed operations on the basis of concrete and more accurate data.

We maintained that the question of whether or not guerilla warfare should start from inside or outside the country was not a question of principle, as Govan and Ray had argued, but a tactical one depending on conditions; and the fact that in Cuba the armed struggle was from beginning to end fought inside the country was determined by their own specific situation. To insist that we should do the same here irrespective of conditions was to urge on us an inflexible approach which could lead to disaster.

In particular we pointed out that the Cuban Revolution was fought against a corrupt and backward dictatorship which had a precarious hold on the people and which could not even fully exploit the

apparatus of coercion at its disposal. Right from the beginning the Cuban revolutionaries could look forward to the support of substantial sections of the very force the enemy relied upon to suppress the revolution.

We drew attention to the fact that the common feature of the armed struggles in Algeria, Cyprus, Israel and Vietnam was that they were essentially anti-colonial struggles in which the indigeneous people had fought or were fighting against an imperialist power whose armed forces came from overseas and who fought under unfamiliar conditions. Any attempt to draw lessons from the experience of the revolutionary movement in Algeria was bound to miss the point if it lost sight of the important fact that within two years of the beginning of guerilla warfare there a regular force was created which operated from adjacent Morocco and Tunisia and which took away a lot of pressure on the internal forces. We also felt that the Chinese Revolution took place in conditions which differed fundamentally from our economically, politically and socially, that the terrain was far more favourable than ours and that the Long March posed lessons for us which we could never ignore. At the time of our discussion the struggle in South Vietnam was being waged with massive assistance from North Vietnam and in geographical conditions which differed fundamentally from ours.

In comparison to revolutions in the above countries ours would be fought in an advanced country with modern industries and a network of modern communications which would enable the enemy to reach any part of the country at short notice. We were dealing not with a metropolitan power but

with a substantial and deeply entrenched white population group which has been in this country for three centuries and which knew the country as well as ourselves. They had a highly trained army which was deployed strategically throughout the country and which was familiar with the conditions in which it would be fighting. We felt that it would be fatal to model our own tactics on the basis of what had happened in other countries and that whether we should start from inside or outside the country should be determined strictly by our conditions. In our view the way in which guerilla warfare had started in the Portuguese territories of Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea seemed a better guide for our plans than Cuba, China and Israel and we urged that we should develop our armed struggle mainly from adjacent territories.

To us the argument that the adjacent territories might not be free for 50 years was largely academic because the British were already pulling out of Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho. We could not accept the argument that we should continue to base our future plans on "Operation Mayibuye", a document which was still under discussion when the police raided Rivonia and which was now in the hands of the enemy. The latter fact required the working out of an altogether different plan and we were sure that this was what our people were doing abroad.

"Operation Mayibuye" had conceded that the absence of friendly borders and impregnable natural bases from which to operate were both disadvantages. But the document went on to make the vital point that more important than friendly borders and impregnable natural bases was the support of our people who in certain situations were a better protection than mountains and forests. This was a



fundamental point which revolutionaries should always have uppermost in their minds.

But the practical problem was that we had created MK and started acts of sabotage, that MK inside the country had taken severe knocks from the enemy and that acts of sabotage were already petering out, that many of our men were either in jail or out of the country. Why was it that we were unable to save MK and to continue waging acts of sabotage under cover of the people's support? Was it realistic for us to insist that the armed struggle should be waged from inside the country without investigating this question and solving it?

The question of the beginning of the armed struggle and that of the boycott of apartheid institutions was to become a bone of contention among us throughout our prison life and up to the present moment the theoretical questions have not been resolved. But we are all agreed that our organisation has the matter in hand and we are confident that in the near future South Africa will again shake under the hammer blows of our armed forces.

Soon after the Rivonia trial the enemy launched a campaign to counter the magnificent impact the trial had made on the public here and abroad. Judge Claasens (check?) published a book on our trial and the name of Bruno Mtolo was used to bring out a second one on the case while a company made a film, all of which portrayed us, I believe, as communist stooges who did not know what they were doing.

But that fairy tale was already buried by the Treason Trial and its ghost exorcised by the magnificent performance of our men in the Rivonia trial itself under the full glare of public interest which followed the proceedings from day to day and in which we turned tables against the enemy. To this day whatever mendacious propaganda they may be spreading, using judges of the Supreme Court and police agents, they have not recovered from the hard blows we struck them at the Rivonia trial and they live in constant fear of us.

In 1966 the government tried to list me as a communist under the Suppression of Communism Act on the ground of my 1952 conviction for the Defiance Campaign and they immediately withdrew when I threatened to go to court to expose their malicious manoeuvres. Later the Secretary for Justice, again acting under the Suppression of Communism Act applied for my name to be removed from the roll of attorneys on account of my conviction in the Rivonia trial. Again they pulled in their horns when I threatened to oppose the application in person from prison. In both cases they acted in a cowardly fashion and tried to take advantage of my incarceration to launch vindictive attacks against me.

(1) On all evidence of accused - from record add portions that bring out the political character of the evidence.

(2) Add re invitation of Mrs Sisulu to British Embassy function - this drew hostile comment from the Nat press and other government sources.

(3) Add at suitable place: it had been decided that a prominent Johannesburg Q.C., Harold Hanson would address the court in mitigation. For this purpose he was given a copy of my address in advance. On reading it he was shocked and apparently remarked that the accused were in fact inviting the death sentence and there was no sense in a plea in mitigation.

Bram used his persuasive powers to convince him of the correctness of our attitude and eventually succeeded in getting him to undertake this task. Hanson made an eloquent plea and spoke with deep feeling and concern.

(4) Kathy's evidence: the second youngest of my fellow accused was Ahmed Kathadra who was only 34 when he was arrested and none of us in the Rivonia case was involved in politics at such an early age in life as he was.

He started at the age of 11 distributing leaflets and taking as much interest in politics as his age allowed. Born in the country dorp of Schweitzer Reyneke in the Western Transval he picked up friends among Africans and Afrikaners early in life.

He typifies the new generation of South Africans who have to close friends among all population groups and his flat at No. 13 Kholvad House in Johannesburg has been the centre where people from all walks of life, from inside and outside the Congress movement, Africans, Afrikaners,

Coloureds, Englishmen, Greeks, Jews and Indians have frequently gathered and many a plan of the liberation movement has been hatched at his flat. His outlook brought him more close to Africans than his political activities demanded and he was often in Dukatole, Soweto, Sophiatown, Alexandra Township and other African townships, visiting friends and attending parties.

He joined the League of Communist Youth in 1942 and was jailed during the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign. In 1951 he went to Berlin as a delegate to the World Youth Festival and in 1953 became a member of the Executive Committee of the Transvaal Indian Congress. He, Walter and I have been amongst the accused in three important political trials - the 1952 Defiance Campaign case, the Treason Trial and the Rivonia Trial.

He was one of those who was consulted on the formation of MK and I had several discussions with him on the matter and although he had reservations about the matter he served in the organisation in many ways and was one of my contacts whilst I was underground. Whilst he was under house arrest the 90 Day Detention Law was passed and it was decided that he should go underground. He moved to Rivonia and found that political work was being done there on behalf of the CP, ANC and MK and that Rivonia was bought by the CP as a hideout for members of the Liberation movement who from time to time required cover. Later he moved to the white area of Mountain View and lived there under disguise. He was arrested at Rivonia in July 1963.

He denied that he had incited others to commit acts of sabotage and that he himself had committed

such acts but did not disapprove of sabotage if it would advance the cause as a whole.

He was a member of the Free Mandela Campaign committee and played an important role in its activities. He also revealed to the court that he was a loyal member and follower of the banned CP whose aim was to free all the people of South Africa from oppression. To that purpose he fully and unequivocally subscribed to and was determined to see the fulfillment of the aims of the CP whose policy involved the overthrow of the government by force and violence if that should become necessary.

(5) Quotes from MK manifesto: "Umkhonto We Sizwe is a new independent body formed by Africans. It includes in its ranks South Africans of all races".

"MK fully supports the National Liberation Movement and our members jointly and individually place themselves under the overall political guidance of that movement".

"The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices - submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within the power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom".

"The methods of MK mark a break with the past".

"We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country. The government policy of force, suppression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only".

"MK will be at the front line of the people's defence. It will be the fighting arm of the people against the government and its policies of race oppression. It will be the striking force of the people for liberty for rights and for their final liberation".

## Chapter 15:

(1) Two different approaches: (a) identifying government policy with new administering policy, or  
(b) distinguishing between the two: (a) advantages and disadvantages.

(2) Congress movement has consistently advocated (1) (b): - (a) Congress movement approach pragmatic and based on common sense and experience, (b) all men capable of changing - experience of prisoners and detainees and as professional men. (c) Rivonia group expressly discussed issue and expressly approved (1) (b); (d) Personal attitude in full agreement with (1) (b) not only as a political duty but as part of my outlook.

(3) Policy of Prison Department determined by government policy as a whole: (a) government policy discriminates between blacks and whites. (b) between prisoners of different racial groups, (c) between political and non political (d) between different section of Robben Island.

(4) Prisoners struggle to change prison conditions part of anti apartheid struggle - (a) link between security branch and Prisons Department demands closer link between our political organisation and ourselves, press and democratic forces outside; (b) struggle for improvement of conditions must be put in this context.

(5) Prison conditions worse on arrival - (a) on leaving Pretoria for Robben Island Aucamp warns

me not to make trouble - promises that we would get everything we wanted. (b) Rivonia trialists isolated. I make list of representations - given long trousers - later taken away except mine. Mine also ultimately taken away. (c) Bram visit - Molly's death - write letter of condolence. (d) crushing stones with hammer - meet Dennis Brutus, George Peake - C.F. incident re Percy and bread. (George Peake). (e) June 26th brought to isolation section - meet Neville groups and non political prisoners. (f) Assaults rifle - Big Boy, Neville, Dlevalile Ganya (Bayi) ( bu c/w Van Staden and others). Mvulane (by van Zyl and Nines). (cf Don Davis incident, Dennis Brutus re Harris). (g) overworked, pushed and singing banned - diet, outfit, studies, visits and letters 6 monthly - inability of censors to speak English Potgieter - 250 words, check cf Leeukop Potgieter is the same?) (h) enforcement of complete silence. (i) attempt by warders to establish master servant relationship- Baas - (H/W Du Plessis - Kathy) - some political prisoners did get concessions - newspapers. (j) warder Van Rensburg - 1966- swastika - after Namibia and Verwoerd's death - (Fiks and I re heap reported - inspection - lies). Don - Kak/vreet. (k) isolation when charged - magistrate comments re Mtshizana assault case: Kadar case etc.

(6) My own personal relations with authorities determined by my position in movement, as spokesman of Congress movement here, family position and being in constant touch with VIPs, Sabata and his chief wife, Daliwonga and wife: (a) accordingly authorities have been cautious - allowed special privileges e.g. immediate permission to study, Huisgenoot, not handcuffed on plane to Robben Island, table and chair, never in 90 days, Aucamp - suggests hospital diet. (b) Cases of ill treatment by individual warders frequently on instructions from higher up e.g. suitcase and work.



Twice spare diet - once newspaper, once refusal to obey order (Kellerman). Isolation at work also Zeph and Mandla. (c) my personal experience does not indicate general treatment of prisoners - but otherwise treatment as far as outfit, diet, work, sleeping equipment (until 2 years ago) the same. Position might worsen as political situation changes.

(7) Campaign to improve conditions: (a) result of 3 factors - our own struggles as prisoners, of progressive forces outside prison including our organisation, Strachan case, press, Red Cross, Suzman's two visits and perhaps Prison Department itself. (b) lengthy discussion with Col. Wessels - letter to COP. (c) letter to COP re assault on Ganya (PAC). (d) re Bogart - bought off with double ration of food. (e) comprehensive memorandum to COP in 1965 - warned to speak for myself. (f) Lieutenant Killian appeals to me and talks to others to work faster. (g) threatened to take legal action - chief magistrate of Cape Town - COP - Minister of Justice. (h) hunger strike - 1966- interview with officer commanding - brought back. (i) establishment of channels of communication with main section and later D section. (j) brunt of enemy onslaught born by them - no truth, or position of influence to rely upon. (k) frequently embarrassed. Statements made by myself or our section published as contradicting main section and others. (l) practically every demonstration has started on that side. (m) recruiting ground for single cells.

(8) Transfer from one prison to another and visits to mainland: - (a) deeply resented. Humiliating, inconvenient - handcuffed. (b) Island cells better than elsewhere. (c) Channels of communication - difficult to start afresh. (d) transfer has however positive advantages - authorities fear it. (e)

demonstrations of solidarity from public.

(9) Effect of political prisoners on non-political: - (a) attitude of prison officials stiffens (b) some have joined the movement in jail (c) assist in many ways

(10) Death of Ma, Thembi - application to attend funeral

(11) Death of Z.K., Chief, Nana Sita, Debi, Vuyisile, Babla, J.B., Robbie, Michael, James Kantor.

(b) Bram - discussion with Kruger. (c) refused permission to send condolence letters - Paton's wife.

(12) Visits from friends: (a) Fatima, Lily, Mtatho, David Mdau, Joel Carlson. (b) Helen indicates desire to come. (c) Benjies application refused. (d) maybe others (e) visits - now only first degree.

(f) letter from Barbara Castle not given - subversive.

(13) Visits from VIPs and lawyers: (a) met many local and foreign (VIPs - Xhamela present in first two but later practice became impossible. (b) Dennis Healey, Helen Suzman, Newman of Daily

Telegraph, David McNicol ( 5Rand - 1 Rand), Red Cross, judges Munnik, Trengrove, De Vos, Riemstra, Theron, Corbett and Steyn, Lord Woolstone, Dutch ambassador and Attorney General.

(c) Arthur Ashe refused: Henning - all this is bygone error.

(14) Treatment now determined by political event outside: - (a) since first operation in Namibia and

ours in 1967 - Economist cancelled. (b) letter to Pelser in 1969 - demand for release ? (c) situation worsens in 1971 - Badenhorst - Lieutenant Fourie - homosexual - assaults and torture - Peter Magano, George Naicker and Andimba. (Earlier cf of Mike Dingake - Pretoria - torture) (d) attempt to cut us off even more - (I) heavy censorship of study material, magazines including government publications, letters, visits. (II) Restriction of visits to first degree relatives. (III) No letters to marked persons. (e) mendacity of officials. - (i) fully discussed in letter to COP.

(15) Persecution of Zami: - (a) collaboration between Prison Department and South African Police. (b) deportation of brother - persecution of any couple that live with her. (c) refusal of Pelser and Kruger to allow him to live with her (d) refusal by Kruger - licence to purchase firearm (e) confinement and loss of employment as social worker (f) served 4 days and 6 months (g) detained for 18 months and charged (h) cowardly attacks on her and destruction of property (i) sending visiting permits late - forcing her to use plane - to ruin her financially (j) cutting of correspondence between us especially when there are attacks on her (k) taping of our conversation and leaking it to the press (l) interference with correspondence between self and family in Transkei.

(16) As spokesman of Congress movement frequently met General Steyn, Brig. Aucamp and Officers commanding: (a) Gen. Steyn - suave and sophisticated Afrikaner - deserves highest appointment - easy to discuss problems with him. (b) not familiar with his internal problems but could have done more for black prisoners here and elsewhere (c) shows tremendous power of social institutions and sad commentary that some of the worst atrocities and scandals occurred during his

term of office. (d) last visited Island in 1973. Despite repeated appeals. (e) 1972 -73 Judges especially drew his attention to matter.

Brig. Aucamp: (a) did well as officer commanding (b) position of Security Officer difficult - changes man's personality (c) had direct access to Minister (d) became quite unpopular (e) allowed correspondence between self and Zami

Officers commanding: (a) no really progressive commanding officer - carry out policy as laid down, powers limited - committed officials. (b) frequently point out that we are the concerned of the Security Branch (c) within this framework men like Prinsloo, Van Aarde, Kellerman and Willemse stand out (d) regulations and prisoners

(17) Kruger - Pelser

(18) Campaign for our release and sense of gratitude

(End) But add notes, if any - notes: re (7) -demand to Red Cross to be sent to prison nearer homes and all political prisoners on Robben Island to be kept together. (10) Ma about 75 years - September 1968 condolence from Gatsha. Madiba Thembekile about 25 years July 1970. Zami in detention unable to attend funeral despite promises. Ma and Thembi funerals arranged by Sabata nd KD. At Ma's also present Guzana. Thembi - two children. (12) Fatima visit 30 minutes. Mtatho - is

Harrison Motlana (wife is Sally). re Joel's visit - pay tribute ( re Zami). (13) - Red Cross - Hoffman, Senn, Sieger, Morillion, Schmidt. Suzman - 1967 and 1973 (NB. letter of congratulations re honorary doctorate- not sent). Badenhorst incident re judges Theron, Corbett and Steyn. Re judges warm visit especially re Munnik and Trengove. Visit from George, Chief Nxeko Mthikrakra and Circuit Inspector Mthuthuzeli Lujabe - 3rd January 1973. (14) (c) Peter Magano. (16) re Brig. Aucamp - correspondence between Zami and self when Zami was in detention. General: link up with treatment of detainees also Preventative Detention Act. Re: Aucamp - link up with Mike's torture - man with double face- shock at learning this. See later for note on Mike.

## Chapter 16:

1. The Congress Movement confident that alone it can lead the oppressed people of South Africa to freedom. Broadest front of the country's liberation movement and consists of the ANC, SAIC, CPC, COD, SACPU and works closely with the CP.
2. Although MK is open to any persons who are against all forms of racial oppression the bulk of its membership is drawn from the ANC and its allies.
3. Aim is the extension of franchise rights to all South Africans on the basis of one man one vote and the removal of racial discrimination in all its ramifications.
4. The ANC and its allies seek to rally all the people of South Africa around this demand and hopes to achieve this through recruitment of individual members, uniting with other sections of the liberation movement, co-operation on specific issues and finding means of bridging the gap between all political organisations that have a democratic programme.
5. Seeks to work with all anti-apartheid organisations and individuals, black and white, even those whose objectives may fall short of ours as long as they are against the colour bar. Our relations with other political organisations, inside and outside prison are governed by these considerations.

6. The political organisations which were represented in the Single Cell Sections between 1964 and 1965 were apart from the Congress movement, SWAPO, PAC, NLF and (APDUSA?) and Liberal Party, but the total number of prisoners here has at no time exceeded 34. For a brief period the Namibians and the ANC group of Benjamin Ramotsi and 7 others were brought here and later removed to the D Section. The overwhelming majority of prisoners on the Island consist of members of the ANC and PAC and are kept in what is known as the Main Section.

(A) Toivo Ja -Toivo is the only Namibian in this section.

(B) Amongst the members of the PAC who have been here are Zephania Mothopeng, Selby Ngedane, Mlamli Makwetu, Kwedie Mkalipi, Dlevalile Ganya and Japhta Masemolo and John Nyati Pokela.

(C) Edward Joseph Daniels is the only member of the Liberal Party who is here and was sentenced for committing acts of sabotage as a member of ARM.

(D) The NLF was a breakaway group from APDUSA and ideologically had the same outlook as NEUM/APDUSA. They had only 7 members and 6 on the Island, 5 of whom were in the Singel Cells and 2 in the Main Section. They dissolved before being discharged in 1973.

(E) Later we were joined by Louis Mtshizana of NEUM and in 1973 by 5 other members of this

organisation.

(F) the membership of the Congress movement in this section has varied from time to time but in August 1975 we were 24 in all.

6. Before our arrival here we knew some PAC members especially Zeph who was an old ANC member and Selby who was on the National Executive of the PAC. We knew nobody in the NLF except by name when they were on trial but I knew Fikile Bam's family.

7. In our view the most immediate task on our arrival was that of unity of the ANC and the PAC and we thought that prison offered an ideal opportunity for discussions on the matter.

But at the time of our arrival and in spite of conscientious efforts on the part of our membership, relations between the two organisations were bad due to the PAC's constant and vicious attacks on us and refusal to co-operate (? anti communism, anti Indian?). Some of its senior members were reported to have openly stated during the Rivonia trial that they wished we were all hanged.

8. According to reports we received on our arrival the NLF group led by Dr.Neville Alexander hoped to unite both ANC and PAC under their leadership. But when their illusions were dispelled they invariably linked up with the PAC on all issues in which the Congress movement differed with the PAC. Examples appear below.



9. Denis Brutus and George Peake who were already here on our arrival and who joined us in this section right from the day we arrived here briefed us on the political situation here. (d) the Congress movement asked me to explain our policy to the MLF on prison conditions and our attitude to the prison authorities along the lines indicated in the preceeding chapter. We did the same when members of the PAC and Liberal Party as well as Louis arrived here. (a) Zeph explained the attitude of the PAC and distinguished between their approach on the matter of prisoners in 1960-1963 and now. He pointed out that now they were prepared to fight for improvement in prison conditions. (b) The NLF group were with the exception of Don Davis all young in their 20s or early 30s. They were established in 1962 and lacked experience of having worked in a mass movement. Throughout they tended to look at problems from an individualistic point of view and not from that of prisoners as a whole. For example unilateral declarations to Col. Prinsloo that he would not sign undertakings re abuse of studies. Mlamli was also prone to this tendency and was the first to sign the declaration before we had discussed the matter as a group. Neville was also impetuous and his actions contributed to a great deal of tension. Repeatedly refused instructions given by fellow prisoners. Would not speak on our behalf when requested. (c) But Neville was a capable man with a lot of initiative and had numerous discussions with him on a variety of issues mainly political. We discussed the national question together continuously for 3 months. He always welcomed such political discussions and expressed his views frankly. These sessions became a link between us and brought us closer to each other. (Neville expressed his views frankly and fearlessly however controversial the issue might be. He was short with a small built and my height tended to irritate

him. He tried to make up for this by being aggressive and there were occasions when in the course of exchanges I thought he was ready to hurl a stone at me. But my smile always disarmed him. I count him among my friends.) (d) He had initiative and was the man who suggested the idea of a prisoners committee (??) to take up our affairs. I warmly welcomed this idea. He suggested that I approach the PAC and Liberal Party and ask for their support for the idea but I told him that that would be unfair to him because the idea was his and he should approach the organisations directly. This he did. Although Eddie accepted, Zeph rejected the idea. Later there was a crisis when the commanding officer Major Kellerman ordered that from that moment we fall in the morning for the purpose of going to work until we returned to prison we should not talk to one another, with the exception of one hour lunch break. This brought into existence the first prisoners committee as originally suggested by Neville. To remove the fear that any organisation would be dominated we defined carefully the powers of the committee. Its powers were purely consultative and its decisions could bind no organisation or representative and it was on an organisational basis. (e) In spite of the existence of the committee it was not easy to find a common approach. But I also struck a friendship with Fiks, another member of the NLF. He was a respectful person and more flexible than Neville. My close relationship with him also helped to shape our respective approach on several issues. Birthdays fall on the same day. As a bigger and more experienced movement we consciously tried to avoid any impression that we wanted to dominate and before the committee was set up we asked Fiks to preside whenever we held meetings. Later after the formation of the committee we suggested that the chairmanship should rotate and although he was lukewarm about it he accepted it as a reasonable suggestion. But all of them were pleasant and competent men and

my relations with them were cordial. I have continued to receive Xmas and birthday cards from Neville and Fiks after their release. Dan Davis, courageous fighter and had several clashes with the authorities. We were friendly until we played a draught match during the end of the year tournament, when there would be tension between us. I am a slow player and that would play on his nerves. "I know what your tactics will be. You want an impartial umpire and will have none of your men as one", he would say before the match. One year I won the championship against the former champ Andrew Mlangeni. Immediately after the match with Andrew he challenged me (that is Don?) and beat me in a friendly match and he taunted me for the rest of the year about it. (d) (i) )add? Neville's attack on Chief at commemoration. His boycott of Xmas sweets and Xmas cards, Xmas games etc. He and some of his members and some PAC chaps here refused to contribute money on principle when we were first given permission to buy games - scrabble, chess, drafts etc??)

11. Selby and I had important talks on the question of unity between the ANC and the PAC and the move came from him. That surprised many people because before he came to this side he was one of our bitterest critics and violently opposed to the Freedom Charter and co-operation between our respective organisations.

But on this occasion early in 1967 he made a powerful plea for unity and I had no doubt whatsoever about his sincerity. He was of the opinion that the question of communists and other population groups among us would be the only stumbling block, and stressed that what was important was the

unity of the African people and urged that we should attempt unity on this basis.

I warmly welcomed the move he had taken and complimented him for it but pointed out that if he insisted on the question of communists and other population groups as a condition precedent for our talks then I could not even report the matter to the Congress movement. I spent several days spelling out the policy of the liberation movement and even bourgeois governments and organisations on this question and defended our policy. (add details).

Eventually we reached agreement on the matter and he and I were later joined by Joe Gqabi and Mlamli Makwetu and summed up our talks and agreements. He and I wrote separate letters to our people in the main section and we exchanged these notes before we sent them to our organisations there. We did the same when the replies came. Our men unanimously supported the idea but he had difficulty. (details).

12. We also had a similar discussion with Pokela (who joined us in '68/'69) but informally and although we agreed on principle nothing definite emerged from the talks. (Note - add ? Selby etc. Worked with Congress movement formally, even though they knew we were mixed. Poks arrived and condemned this as contrary to the policy - led to break up of committee. The attack of the authorities during 1971 - that is demotions, loss of studies, raid of 28th May 1971 etc. brought back some measure of unity. re PAC - PAC chaps ignorant of changes in their policy outside, kept on denying that they had open doors to whites and Indians. The news of Duncan's membership was

condemned by them as untrue and typical "Congress propaganda". When we received news from sections from that OAU had withdrawn its recognition from PAC ( and that PAC had been expelled from Zambia?) the PAC group condemned it in the same way. Later a copy of FM arrived containing the original news item received by us, they saw it, but did not apologise for their allegations. Neither did they resume attending news sessions.)

13. In 1972 authorities made a frame up - weapons at quarry - Poks and I wrote to our men in main section appealing for unity. (details?).

14. Selby great entertainer. He, Hennie Ferris, Jackson Fuzile and Johannes Dangala formed music group which gave us a lot of entertainment. (Add - where? Mageba's Choir).

15. Daniels one of the best friends - closest to Congress movement. Views identical on many points. (details).

16. Andimba (details).

17. Louis disturbed unity. That was a pity for in East London and in main section he worked closely with our fellows and even helped a great deal in advising them legally. Regretted that as a result our relations were not very warm and he left before we could adjust them. In my recollection he was the only person who ever left this section without a farewell being arranged for him.

18. Division between us on question of submitting list of relatives etc. Congress movement, PAC, SWAPO and Liberal Party stood together. Again Apmusa and Neville group. (Gqabi sided with them initially?)

This was a few days before Neville's departure. Here he played divisive role. Pops and I tried to persuade him and pointed to the danger of the role he was playing but in vain. This sort of the image he had created in my mind at the very last moment. But I still regard him as a good friend. (Details?)

19. Throughout Congress movement stood together on all these issues not so much as a result of any prior consultation on these issues but clearly by virtue of our experience.

20. Letter to Pelsaer in 1969 - Neville group and PAC refused to sign. Eddie did. Aucamp remarked to me jokingly that "I must remove Daniels from next to you". (He occupied cell directly opposite me then).

21. Neville's lengthy memo to COP (discuss?).

(ends)

Add the following notes: (i) Leave out part re Joe and list questions where he supported APDUSA at open meeting. (ii) re news - after the incident re PAC kicked out of OAU the PAC boycotted all sessions of news here. (iii) re Neville and Chief's commemoration - Neville was a speaker - he condemned Chief as not being a revolutionary. This was an insult to a man who was leader of a movement that had started sabotage, sent our recruits and formed the nucleus of an army. Attack from a who leads less than 20 men, who were merely talking of violence, who had not carried out a single act of violence, who had no plans even of carrying out revolution etc. (iv) In 1960 (1966?) hunger strike there was then no formal inter organisational machinery here. (v) PAC here do not attend any function organised by CM - not even deaths. Even now. This is a perpetual source of tension and disgust at their conduct and type of thing that makes all efforts of people who want unity even more difficult. No parallel with situation outside. Implies PAC treat our people as enemies. etc. (vi) Comment on APDUSA briefly. (vii) Comment on basis on which persons are housed in single cells. (viii) Comment on Poks. (ix) Comment that later APDUSA, BPC and SASO men came etc. (x) At place where we deal with Joe attending talks with ST put in: Joe is able and articulate. I only wish that even at this late moment he can learn the value of team work, of concealing our internal differences from outsiders and of being less offensive to his own colleagues. (xi) Possibly in Chapter dealing with Rivonia Trial add re Govan - background - long supporter of ANC - in 1943 in committee that drafted Bill of Rights. But only in 1955 when he was offered a full time post in New Age in PE that he left his teaching post in Ladysmith and became active

within ANC in Eastern Cape. He became speaker (that is chairman at annual national conference) in 1958 when the hard core of the ANC leadership was incapacitated by bans and the Treason Trial. (xii) Leave out reference to Neville's memo to COP. (xiii) The Selby singing group was called "The Mediators".

N.B. Add at suitable place a few words of indebtedness etc to Sefton Vutela (wife Nali/Nancy is Zami's sister) presently in Botswana. Expelled ex-FH in 1955 with T. Makiwane, Sello, Betty Lebetsa etc.; a leading figure in SOYA; looked after Zami - left SA around 1968; wrote about 3 letters to him, none reached.



## Chapter 17

(1) A story of one's life should deal frankly with political colleagues, their personalities and their views. The reader would like to know that kind of person the writer is, his relationships with others and these should emerge not from the epithets used but from the facts themselves.

(2) But an autobiography of a freedom fighter must inevitable be influenced by the question whether the revelation of certain facts, however true they may be, will help advance the struggle or not. If the disclosure of such facts will enable us to see problems clearly and bring nearer our goal then it is our duty to do so, however much such revelations may adversely affect the particular individuals concerned. But frankness which creates unnecessary tensions and divisions which may be exploited by the enemy and retard the struggle as a whole is dangerous and must be avoided.

(3) The utmost caution becomes particularly necessary where an autobiography is written clandestinely in prison, where one deals with political colleagues who themselves live under the hardships and tensions of prison life, who are in daily contact with officials who have a mania for persecuting prisoners. Writing under such conditions the temptation is strong to mention only those things which will make your fellow prisoners feel that their sacrifices have not been in vain, that takes their minds away from the grim conditions in which they live and that makes them happy and hopeful. An essential part of that caution and fair play would be to have the widest possible measure of consultation with your colleagues about what you intend to say about them, to circulate

your manuscript and give them the opportunity of stating their own views on any controversial issue discussed so that the facts themselves may accurately reflect the standpoints of all concerned; whatever may be the comments of the writer on those facts. Unfortunately the conditions in which I have written this story, especially security considerations, made it impossible to consult any but a handful of my friends.

(4) At the outset I must make the point that all my colleagues on Robben Island are courageous and determined men who are giving a good account of themselves under difficult conditions. In any country to try and champion the cause of the oppressed is no small sacrifice and exposes one to numerous dangers and indignities. But you have to be a black prisoner in a South African jail to know how wicked the white man can be. My colleagues are men who have thrown themselves into the political struggle with full knowledge of all the risks that are involved.

(5) Having lived with them here for more than a decade the overall impression that I have gained is that whatever weaknesses they have and mistakes they have committed they are all men of integrity and principle and whose outlook and actions are shaped mainly by the noble aim of building a South Africa where all its people can live together in peace and harmony. Whatever theoretical and practical problems we have had amongst ourselves we have always been able to penetrate our defence lines. Naturally under the difficult conditions in which we have lived for many years there may have been one or two, but only one or two, who in their frustration consciously or unconsciously may have revealed to outsiders that we have serious differences on questions of

principles and tactics. The difficulty of holding meetings where the general membership would have the opportunity of making a critical examination of the work of the leadership and the activities of their colleagues must inevitably result in the abuse of authority, serious mistakes and the rise of parochialism, factions, gossiping, inability to apply self-criticism in examining our work and to all kinds of complications which retard progress. A general members meeting is something more than a mere gathering of friends for a common purpose. It is a theatre where surgical operations are performed, where diseased organs and malignant growths are removed and all the poisonous material cleared away from the body. It is a mirror which enables us to see ourselves as others see us and which gives all of us the opportunity to make the necessary adjustments. Once a general members meeting disappears from our machinery and ceases to be part of our normal political work, grave problems are bound to arise. Otherwise upright men become vulnerable to all sorts of temptations. This is one of the problems that faces political prisoners in a backward department of prisons, such as this country's prison system. This has been one of our main difficulties and most of the problems we have had have stemmed from the inability to bring our men together to thrash out problems when they arise.

(6) But all these men, including those who may have yielded to all the temptations mentioned above, are dedicated to the struggle and if need be would readily give up their lives if by so doing they would bring freedom day nearer. One of my greatest fortunes in life has been to count them as my comrades in arms. Throughout their incarceration They have been in high spirits and in spite of all the pin pricks they are experiencing they are oozing with hope that our cause will certainly

triumph.

(7) When we came to prison some of us knew one another, but we had met mainly in the course of our political work and had never lived closely with one another as now. Most of us had never met before and naturally we tried to have more than superficial knowledge of one another. One of my fondest hobbies has been to listen to biographical accounts narrated by each individual. Few things are more exciting to me here than to listen to a man's background, the factors that influenced his thoughts and actions, the unknown life battles he has fought and won, how he joined the struggle, his views on current issues and how he visualises a South Africa modelled on the Freedom Charter.

Apart from the question of pure interest in my colleagues the knowledge of a man's background becomes quite essential for the purpose of our political work. It becomes relatively easier to allocate tasks to persons best qualified to make a success of it, to appreciate their weaknesses and mistakes and to be able to anticipate their reactions to specific problems and situations. Many of our men are widely travelled, an experience that has broadened their outlook and that makes every conversation with them enjoyable. As at August 1975 there were 24 members of the Congress movement in the Singel Cells Section and all but 8 had travelled abroad, some in Africa, others in Europe and still others in Asia, whilst quite a handful have travelled in all 3 continents. Two of the remaining 8 have at least been to the former protectorates. In D Section Benjamin Ramotse and his 8 colleagues have all been overseas. What is even more important 2 of my fellow prisoners Justice Mpanza and James April have had the distinction of having taken part in combat and of having given a good account of themselves. Of course we are not getting younger and memories are fading. I have

had to go back several times to be refreshed on some point or to get further details. The reader will be surprised to know that often I have been supplied with new editions to information previously given to me. We have had to same experience with the same stories we have been telling one another during the same period and new versions keep on coming up all the time.

(8) Although general members meetings are difficult to arrange we do have the positive advantage of amply opportunity to discuss a variety of issues informally as individuals. These exchanges have been extremely valuable and have helped a great deal in promoting a common approach to numerous questions. Initially the assumption was prevalent that we understood basic issues in the same way and were often surprised to learn that we had different interpretations even in regard to some of the important demands of the Charter. I still remember a discussion I had in the mid 60s with two senior colleagues who stated that the Charted demanded the nationalisation of the land. When I challenged this statement they were both shocked and furious and took me up on the matter. We were working with picks and shovels and I thought I should be a bit careful not to press them hard against the wall. Differences have arisen not only in regard to the question of how guerilla warfare should start but on the theoratical approach to the question of tactics arising from the implementation of separate development with specific reference to the question of separate institutions. Two views emerged and one tended to be identical with that of the NEUM and regarded any form of participation in apartheid institutions, whether for the purpose of destroying them from within or using them as platforms to propogate our own ideas or reaching the masses of the people, with collaborating or selling out to the enemy. They maintained that those people who

advocated the view that these dummy institutions could be wrecked from within or used for the purpose of putting forth our views did not mean what they said (presumably that they wanted to accept apartheid as the Bantustans leaders have done for example). They also used the astonishing argument that the Bolshevik Party in Russia regarded the boycott not as a question of tactics but as one of principle. They argued that now that the ANC had decided on the waging of an armed struggle, participation in these institutions, no matter for what purpose, had become unimportant and would serve as a diversion from the armed struggle. Finally they pointed out that the whole question of the boycott was fully discussed and settled in Lobatse in 1962 and there was no need to re-open it now. The debate started in 1969. The opposing point of view was that we should draw a clear distinction between principle and tactics. The former they pointed out was the fundamental line which guided all our actions and constituted the basic foundation on which our organisations were built. In this particular case principle meant the unequivocal rejection of all forms of racial discrimination, the establishment of a government based on the will of all its people and resistance to all attempts to split up South Africa into several independent areas. Like all foundations we could not tamper with it without endangering the whole structure. Tactics on the other hand, it was further argued were the means used to achieve our aims and depended on the concrete conditions. They changed with the ebb and flow of the struggle and should be used or abandoned as circumstances demanded. If to use a particular tactic would advance the cause then we should use it by all means and have no hesitation whatsoever in reviewing or replacing any particular method which no longer accords with these conditions. Equally important, if the employment of a particular tactic would retard our work then we should avoid it. It was urged

that in deciding whether we should use these institutions or not we should be guided by this approach which was the basic policy of the Congress movement. But the point which was hammered over and over again was that our principal task was to strengthen our organisations and to mobilise and prepare out people for the new method of struggle we had decided to use, that the whole issue of participation in apartheid institutions turned on whether it owuld enable us to make our political organsations stronger and carry the message of revolution to the people. The argument that the Bolshevik Party regared the boycott of the Duma as a question of principle was treated contemptuously and dismissed as due mainly to ignorance of the history of that Party. Finally it was pointed out that there need to be no conflict between mobilising and preparing the people for armed struggle and using dummy institutions as legal platforms to preach our own views. In fact those who put forward this line of approach made it clear that their views were premised on the fact that the armed struggle was a reality. (Discuss).

(10) In all countries where the boycott of dummy institutions has been examined it has been a controversial issue. The enemy has always used such institutions for the purpose of dividing the people and weakening the whole struggle against oppression. Such institutions must always be seen as a means of maintaining the status quo and of sowing confusion among the people. It is natural that any suggestion that the liberation movement should in any way be associated with such institutions, irrespective of the reasons for doing so, should be considered by some emotianally as willingness on the part of the oppressed people to operate a machinery designed primarily for their own oppression. Secondly these institutions invariably contain safeguards to ensure that if the

oppressed people decide to enter and exploit them for revolutionary purposes they should find it difficult to gain complete control of them. This is done either by the oppressor nominating the majority of members and by making provisions for the election of the remainder through electoral colleges or by a combination or variation of both forms. The danger is always there that in our desire to capture these institutions the essential work of building our political organisations may be neglected. But this is an imaginary danger (a) because the strengthening of our organisations and the setting up of an effective machinery is the areas would be the first step in our preparation for participation and (b) because it is the experience of our movement that it is during mass campaigns that our organisation and its machinery is built up. Finally many people would like us to have nothing to do with these institutions not because they are so thick headed as to imagine that militant political organisations that have an impressive record of opposition to all forms of racial oppression and are leading the armed struggle in South Africa, now want to collaborate with the enemy, but because the failure of the bid to capture them carries the danger of exploding the claim that our organisation has a mass following and of damaging its claim as the premier national movement.

(11) I was already in prison when the 1962 Lobatsi Conference decided to boycott the elections in the Bantustan Legislatures, with particular reference to the Transkei elections that were due to be held the following year. I made my views known on the subject as soon as I became aware of the decision and it seemed to me to have been inspired more by hatred of apartheid institutions, exaggerated reports about the tactics the people of the Transkei would wish to use in expressing their



opposition to separate development and the fact that most of the top and experienced leaders of the movement who influenced the decision were watching developments from afar and never had the opportunity of touring the affected areas and speaking directly to the key figures whose views were crucial on the whole question. As it is our supporters ignored our decision and went to the voting booths to register their emphatic rejection of apartheid. In actual fact although we resolved to boycott the election we did not have the machinery in the Transkei to launch the boycott campaign.

In regard to the safeguards the enemy usually takes to ensure that its opponents would not be able to dominate the institutions, people who use this fact against participation completely miss the point and assume that such institutions are a means of achieving our freedom. They forget that we enter them for the purpose of rendering them unworkable or of reaching the masses. Freedom will be won through political organisations that are created by ourselves and through various forms of mass struggle. Secondly, of our men speak from the platforms provided by the institutions and tell the country that separate development is no answer, that the only lasting solution which will bring peace and harmony to South Africa are the demand set out in the Charter, we will be speaking the same language both inside and outside these institutions and the danger of dividing our people will be averted. It is positively barren to argue that we should cling to the Lobatse decision even though subsequent events have shown that we were not in a position to carry it out not only in regard to the 1963 Transkei election but also in regard to those that were held in 1968 and 1973 as well as the other elections that were subsequently held in the other Bantustans and for the Coloured Peoples Representative Council. This is an absurd argument and applied logically means that because since 1912 we have used the tactic of non-violence we should hold on to it even when conditions clearly

show that only armed struggle can overthrow white supremacy.

(13) The theoretical debate on the matter will continue but the official line is clear. At the 1971 Lusaka Conference the Acting President General Oliver Tambo announced that our policy is to infiltrate both the apartheid institutions as well as the organisations that work within the framework of those institutions for the purpose of reaching the masses and making our point of view well known. Our organisation takes a flexible attitude on this matter and where we are strong enough to kill these institutions without going into them or where we can reach the people independently of legal platforms we will certainly kill them and make no use of them. We regard Oliver Tambo's declaration at the 1971 Lusaka Conference to be not just a statement of his personal views but as an expression of the firm decision of the Revolutionary Council whose standpoint was accepted by that conference. It is a sound decision which enjoys my personal support and that of our membership here.

(14) Equally important is the fact that although we have had unavoidable internal differences we have always been fortunate in that the urge for harmony and unity pervades our work and those who genuinely strive to hold the organisation together have always been far too strong and vigilant for factional activities to involve any but a mere handful. Although theoretical discussions on the matter are still going on the misunderstanding has been settled and all of us are now co-operating to make that settlement effective and permanent. We do not regard any side to have been defeated. The settlement has been brought about by the co-operation of us all. It is a collective victory which we

all share and bitter grief only to the enemy. (Add re Congress movement in all sections, from beginning engaged in studying political problems- stimulating etc)

(15) The spotlight has focused on a few well known figures amongst us such as Wilton Mkwayi, Billy Nair, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu. This is but natural because they are amongst our leading men in the country, admired by hundreds of thousands of people here and abroad for their courage and dedication. All of them are cheerful and optimistic and have been a source of inspiration to all my fellow prisoners. They are amongst those in prison who have helped to keep our members constantly aware of the noble tradition associated with the Congress Movement. But this is only part of the story. Everyone of our men is like a brick which makes up our organisation and there are men in the Main Section who whilst we here deal with about 20 men have handled greater and more delicate problems affecting several hundred men coming from all walks of life, the overwhelming majority of whom get no visits, no letters, have no funds to study, cannot read or write and who are constantly subjected to all the cruelties of prison life. Men like Harry Gwala, Milner Ntangane, Henry Makgothi, Steve Dlamini, Phillip Mathews, Steve Tshwete, the late Galeb Mayekiso, have done exceptionally well and kept our people united and in high spirits under difficult conditions. In the Single Cells Section we have had and still have men with worthy qualities and forceful personalities who have played an equally important role in keeping morale high - Joshua Zulu, Hennie Ferrus, Jackson Fuzile and Johannes Dangala who entertained us with music (avoid too much overlap here with previous chapter). Banka Cholo, Justice Mpanza, Peter Ntembu and Sandi Sejaka who have impressed all of us with their wealth of

knowledge and experience not only on military and political affairs but even on matters of a general nature. Siegfried Bhengu, Mandla Masondo and Mobbs Gqirana who played an important role in bringing about a settlement of the dispute among us. Thompson Daweti, the all round sportsman who could hardly speak English when he came here but who now is almost fluent and well set for his Standard VI examinations at the end of 1976 and Salim Essop, the youngest member of the Congress movement here who, although like all youth is inclined to be rebellious and impatient is brilliant and articulate and likely to make a valuable contribution if he is properly guided. Laloo Chiba is certainly without peer in generosity and helpfulness to everybody both inside and outside the Congress movement. His eye is quick to see those in need. I hope Mac Maharaj with whom I have spent many happy moments will not be swollen headed if I speak frankly about his recognisable abilities. He has a first class brain and is here undoubtedly the leading marxist theoritician. I know of no other prisoner on this Island who has carried out his political work as enthusiastically as systematically as he has done during his 12 year sentence. The enjoyment of better privileges, having been one of the first to reach A Group and to buy groceries in this section, a fact which usually makes many otherwise vociferous men less loquacious about official cruelty, never dampened his enthusiasm for political work. The cruel torture by the police before his conviction which has damaged his health did not stop him from constant skirmishes and these have resulted in the loss of his grouping. His excellent contribution to the political education of our men has more than compensated for his occasional moods, impatience and sharp tongue. Rrakgadi (=Aunty) Freda, the wife of the late Professor Matthews, in a letter to me once contrasted the diplomacy of Botswana with the aggressiveness of other sections of the African people. I cannot

vouch for the scientific basis of that claim but one of my fellow prisoners who seems to fit her description very well is Mike Dingake. He is modest and reserved, his language is moderate and at times gives the impression of being soft. He has the gift of getting along with everybody. In actual fact he is a tough man. He is one of the few men in this section who has never received a visit from his wife during the 10 years he has spent here. She was politically active and was forced to flee to Botswana when the police were on her trail and Mike is not likely to see her until he completes his 15 year sentence. Mike's case illustrates the co-operation between Prisons Department and the Security Police. In September 1967 while serving his sentence he was removed from here to Pretoria, given 6 days spare diet on a trumped up charge and on the last day of the spare diet week and dizzy, he was handed over by the prison authorities to the notorious Compol Buildings for further interrogation. The previous year he had been tortured with electric shocks, kicked, spat upon his face, insulted and when he fainted revived with cold water. This time when he refused to answer questions he was hoisted up and suspended to a cross pipe with a pair of handcuffs for six hours. He returned with his health affected but his strong political beliefs and courage pulled him through. In political discussion he is ruthless in criticising mistakes of his colleagues for deviations from policy. In the discussion we held to settle the dispute amongst ourselves he raised the most crucial points and piloted the discussion on those issues with considerable skill and frankness. In a work of this nature it is impossible to do justice to my relations with Ahmed Kathrada and on him alone I could produce a volume. We have been together for more than 30 years and have shared hard and happy times together. A dynamic youth leader, militant organiser of many a campaign and persuasive fund raiser, he attracted attention quite early in his youth. As an

uncompromising opponent of apartheid he has several times been banned, restricted, arrested and imprisoned. He is always willing to take risks and shoulder responsibilities and to pay the penalty where many would hesitate. He was given a "double" demotion in his grouping by the prison authorities. Although he tries to avoid confrontations for the sake of harmony and is often unpredictable he is courageous and can stand up to any man. He is honest in both political and personal matters and once he accepts a challenge his tongue can be ferocious. He is witty, humorous and sharp at repartee. In the course of cross examining him in the Rivonia Trial Percy Yutar, of Jewish origin, asked him what he thought if a little girl was killed by a bomb placed by a saboteur. "The same thing that would happen to a little Jewish girl", Kathy hit back. In my diary which was a court exhibit there was an uncomplimentary entry relating to a certain "K" and Yutar put it to him that it referred to me. When Kathy rightly denied the allegation Yutar asked if he knew anybody with a surname that started with the letter "K". "Yes, Kruschev", replied Kathy blandly.

He has the capacity for establishing long lasting friendships with people both inside and outside the movement. I like friends who have independent minds because they tend to make you see problems from all angles and this is one of his qualities. He is intelligent and is one of the two of my fellow prisoners who came here without a degree but will leave with at least two which he has already obtained. For a marxist he has a surprising aversion for theory and tends to scoff at those who attach importance to theoretical problems, a weakness which sets limits to an otherwise brilliant political career. I am proud of our friendship and he was one of the men who made it easy for me to leave Zami and the children behind and go underground because I knew that I had left her with faithful friends who would never desert her at the worst of moments. People have said

that N.D.Naidoo, a member of the National Executive of the SAIC, who acted as a spokesman when the Joint Passive Resistance Council (or was it the Natal?) met the then premier Field Marshall Smuts, is a difficult man with whom to work and there may be some substance in that view. Outside prison I attended a few meetings in which he was present and in which we discussed controversial questions and during which many otherwise calm and steady men raised their voices. I recall that he also did likewise. But I really came to know him well here in jail and his arrival immediately strengthened the organisation. We handled many delicate issues together and our views tended to coincide and I had no difficulties whatsoever in working with him. He struck me during conversations and formal discussions as yet another brilliant man and was the only other prisoner here who obtained two degrees within a period of five years. A cheerful person and all round sportsman he was always a formidable opponent in any match he played. He was released in 1972 and placed under house arrest. I have already referred to Raymond Mhlaba and Govan Mbeki as having been amongst my fellow accused in the Rivonia Trial. Ray is a pleasant and steady person and even where he differs with his colleagues on a particular point his demeanour and comments always give the impression that he is a son of the soil, a loyal member of the organisation who tries to understand not only its policy and practice but also the spirit that inspires and guides its members. Those who have been associated quite early in their political careers with the head office of the national organisation, where political problems involving different sections of the African people from all over the country are handled soon acquire the habit of always approaching problems from a national angle and those who have never had this opportunity are often at a disadvantage and their views tend to be restricted by their local

environment. This tendency has always been evident in our organisation inside and outside jail as in many other political organisations here and abroad, and many of our members are affected by it. I often wish Raymond had had the opportunity to be assigned to the national head quarters early in his political career. In our current circumstances where we live closely together under difficult conditions we have to be constantly vigilant against any developments that may directly or indirectly cause discord. Ray and I are working together to ensure that that comradeship which is so vital to an organisation is not undermined. Although at times he hesitates where he should be forthright he understands the value of compromise and his desire for unity is strong and genuine. I have found it easy to discuss mutual problems with him. Western civilisation has not entirely rubbed off my African background and I have not forgotten the days of my childhood when we used to gather round community elders to listen to their wealth of wisdom and experience. That was the custom of our forefathers and the traditional school in which we were brought up. I still respect our elders and like to chat with them about olden times when we had our own government and lived freely. It is always a great moment when I listen to an expert on our true history, culture, legends and traditions. We used to pester men like Mweliso Skota, Seloape Thema, Chief Luthuli, Professor Z.K. Matthews, Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks and the amount of knowledge they had on African history was impressive. Their chief strength lay in the fact that their feet were deeply planted in African soil and they used scientific knowledge to enrich our heritage and culture. They could trace the movements of each section of our people from the North, discuss competently the various theories on the subject, the reasons for the many clashes between our people throughout our history, contact with the whites and even attempt to predict the future course of events. The



old generation that inherited the oral traditions of our ancestors has disappeared or is disappearing and science has developed modern techniques of acquiring knowledge in all fields, but even the younger generation of today still values the experience of elders. Young men who are grappling every day with fresh practical human problems like to test the knowledge acquired from the classroom and books against the experience of their mature seniors who have been in the field.

The olders colleague among us here who could have played this role is Govan Mbeki, an experienced person who has worked in the Transvaal , taught in the Cape and Natal and who has actually met some of the leading African thinkers who have already disappeared from the scene when we came. But his reluctance to be involved in political discussions inhibits many and those who expect him to play the role of elder here. That is a pity for it is the identity of political beliefs that knit together members of a political organisation and regular discussions, especially informal ones, clear many points of misunderstanding and friction and brings people closer to one another.

The name of Walter Sisulu has featured prominently in this story and the reader will have already noticed that we are intimate friends and he was one of the first persons who befriended me when I arrived in Johannesburg. He is acknowledged by almost everyone inside and outside the Congress movement for what he is - a senior both in age and political status and in his outlook and daily activities he lives up to expectations. He concentrates on major questions and avoids the temptation of cluttering up his vision by paying undue attention to unimportant details. As a senior man he makes the question of unity within our ranks and between political organisations his primary concern and is frequently consulted on a multiplicity of political and personal matters by all. In this regard his stable temperament, cheerfulness and simplicity make him accessible to all

who wish to consult him. What is more he shows the remarkable quality of being always willing to approach fresh ideas and give them serious consideration. He gives political lectures willingly to groups and individuals and shares his knowledge and experience. Among us here he was one of the first to give up an independent livelihood and give his full attention to the struggle. Although sometimes we have sharp differences our approach tends to be the same on many matters. But his judgement and mine have been criticised by some of our men as unreliable in that we readily see good in persons with whom we deal. In spite of his age he is physically fit, goes out with the span to work with pick and shovel or to pull out messy seaweeds from the sea. Like all men who grew up in the countryside he likes the open air, to see green vegetation and trots around the courtyard every morning. He is always among his fellow prisoners cleaning the passage, washing the bathroom and tables, carrying the food drums and doing all the menial things to which our life as prisoners condemns us. He moves up to the forefront with ease when there is danger and is dependable in any fight. In 1971 the Prisons Department brought from retirement Col. Badenhorst, certainly the crudest commanding officer I have met on this Island and who ran the prison as if under martial law. Walter was amongst the delegation that went to see him and foiled his bullying tactics. He features in the annual tournaments and he and his partner won the 1975 scrabble championship. His desire to avoid confrontations and strong striving for unity has been abused by hard liners from inside and outside our ranks, forcing him to drop important proposals and giving the impression of indecision and weak leadership when a bold line is called for. He and Kathy share one common feature which forms an essential part of our friendship and which I value very much - they never hesitate to criticise me for my mistakes and throughout my political career

have served as a mirror through which I can see myself. I wish I could tell you more about the courageous band of colleagues with whom I suffer humiliation daily and who nevertheless deport themselves with dignity and determination. I wish I could relate their conversations and banter, their readiness to help in any personal problem suffered by their fellow prisoners so that you could judge for yourself the calibre of the men whose lives are being sacrificed on the fiendish altar of colour hatred. But a curious warder is walking up and down the corridor, peering from time to time and stopping to chat. I am working under heavy pressure and strict deadlines. Every completed sheet must leave my hands daily and I never see it again.

Add Notes:

(A) Re Fatima and Ismail - ensure sufficient said - possibly where I deal with Fatima's visit- bring out my great regard for them and indebtedness. Ismail was the 2nd man next to Gaur who influenced me greatly with his marxist outlook.

(B) Poks - mention that when he came here (April '68- was in section from August '67 to April '68) after initial warmth of meeting he was inclined to be over suspicious, sensitive and un co-operative at first. Perhaps his attitude and that of Louis reflected some mistakes on our part for they seemd to have worked well with our fellows in the sections. But he seems to have overcome these now- add this in CHapter 16.

(C) Chapter 16 re Andimba - maybe that he is inclined to be too inflexible and aggressive. But his colleagues are being persecuted especially since the beginning of armed operations in Namibia.

Add angle of being in foreign country and demand to be returned to Namibia.

(D) Don Davis - "Khuphu, I am ready to serve my fellow prisoners in every thing but this (that is emptying sanitary pail episode at the quarry). I just can't stand it. You'll have to carry it. I'll dig the hole but you'll have to do the burying." I complied because we were friends and I knew he did not do so out of spite or personal pride but from a natural and strong aversion he could not control.

Note: Khupu - my use of it in drafts when I score but note correct from Khopo.

(E) Re debate on separate institutions etc. - but those who advocate the armed struggle as the sole means to freedom and all other forms as diversionary ignore the wisdom embodied in a Sotho proverb: Noka e tlatsoa ke limokana = a river is filled by little streams, etc . develop this idea.

(F) Other incidents worthy of possible incorporation:

(i) Illustration of way in which people brought here and taken out - case of Herbert Mkole (Mpinga) and Vuyisele Tole - Lieut. Naude and Warder Van Zyl. Herbert 7/9 years - innocent.

(ii) Vuyisele Tole was doing 18 days spare diet but when he heard that we had gone on hunger strike he immediately joined us.

(iii) After much effort on our part the Prisons Department installed "study desks". The next morning on inspection Kathy who had not yet used his desk complained that the slope was too steep and that books kept sliding down. Naude in his brusque manner ordered the accompanying warder to open the cell and asked Kathy for a book. Naude plonked it on the desk and nothing happened. He asked for another and plonked it on top of the first. And still nothing happened. After placing 4 books one top of the other and still not a single book fell off Naude stomped out of the cell shouting "There's nothing wrong with these desks", leaving a very sheepish Kathy behind.

(iv) After lock up (about 4,30 am) Wilfred Brutus went to sleep immediately having had a hard day at work. He awoke with the bell at 8 pm under the impression that it was the morning bell (5.30 am). He got up, washed, dressed, folded blankets and stood around in his cell awaiting inspection. After a while, realising that the section was still unusually quiet he called across to a fellow prisoner who told him that it was just after 8 pm.

(v) Sylvester Skota had just been allowed to buy a mirror which he hung up in his cell against the wall. That evening while smoking an illegal cigarette behind his cell door he felt he was being watched. Then looking across into his mirror on the wall he saw the warder looking at him in the mirror. He had to do some fast talking to avoid being charged.

(G) Re Mike's torture episode - brought out another face of Aucamp.

(H) Chapter 17 add on Mac: In spite of the frankness with which he condemns mistakes on the part of individuals and political organisations he also has the gift of being able to acknowledge readily their positive qualities and will consistently draw attention to these and give a balanced picture about them always.

## Chapter 18:

What appears on these pages is my life story and certainly not a history of the liberation movement. But more than 30 years of my life has been associated with the freedom struggle and an account of my life would be incomplete if I omitted those political events in which I took part or those individuals and issues that influenced my thoughts and actions. 14 years ago when I returned from abroad we were confident that the movement inside the country would be far stronger than it is at present and be able to exert a lot of pressure on the enemy. Events have shown that our calculations have gone wrong, and there are still some tricky problems to be sorted out before our expectations can be fulfilled.

I am also aware that massive efforts have been made here and abroad for my release and that of other political prisoners, a campaign which has given us much inspiration and shown us that we have hundreds of thousands of friends. Next to my wife's affection and that of the family as a whole few things have inspired me more than the knowledge that in spite of all that the enemy is doing to isolate and discredit us people everywhere never forget us.

But we know the enemy very well - they would like to release us from a position of strength and not of weakness and this is an opportunity they have missed forever. However inspiring it is to know that our friends are insisting on our release a realistic approach clearly shows that we must rule out completely the possibility that such a demand will succeed. But i am highly optimistic, even behind

prison walls I can see the heavy clouds and the blue sky over the horizon, that however wrong our calculations have been and whatever difficulties we still must face, that in my lifetime I shall step out into the sunshine, walk with firm feet because that event will be brought about by the strength of my organisation and the sheer determination of our people.

1. The Prime Minister's statement asking the world to give him 6 months and P. W. Botha's at the UNO re abolition of racial discrimination. (a) We ourselves know Nat politicians very well and we did not believe that any fundamental changes would emerge. (b) Minister of Justice J. T. Kruger made the position clear to me that nothing more was contemplated outside the framework of separate development (27/12/73). (c) A man who rises to the position of premier in any country must be a man of ability, forceful personality and uprightness in his public life. (d) Even making allowances for all that behind-the-scenes manoeuvres and pulling of strings, enough funds to run campaigns and to secure the support of influential individuals and propaganda agencies I believe that B. J. Vorster is on merit a man deserving the highest honours in so far as white conservative politics are concerned. (e) His treasonable activities during the Second World War and his internment marked him as a man of strong beliefs prepared to fight for them even when he is in a minority and to pay the penalty for them. (f) In a democratic South Africa where all its people enjoy franchise rights there would be many men who would stand head and shoulders above him both in regard to personality and their views. Nevertheless, among whites as presently constituted he seems to stand out prominently. (g) I have no information whatsoever on his internal difficulties and of the extent of opposition to his 6 month declaration. But we would expect that an experienced politician



of his calibre could never have made such a statement without the fullest consultations between his colleagues in the Cabinet, Party and Party Conference. He could not be so inexperienced as to make such a statement without sounding the views of his colleagues. (h) There will always be a tremendous speculation as to what happened. (i) But one thing should be clear that on the political situation in South Africa not even the declaration of the premier means anything to the world. (j) In a matter of this nature where the alternative "is too dreadful to contemplate" to use his own words, internal differences in his own party can be no excuse for shirking his own responsibilities. (k) If he wanted to challenge the verkrampes on this matter and went to the country he would certainly have got overwhelming support. (l) The premier has spent time and money flying to different parts of Africa discussing our affairs with Heads of States abroad. He knows very well that the solution will not be imposed from outside nor by the Bantustan leaders but by the leaders of the liberation movement.

2. The Nats have had ample opportunity to alter the situation to avert armed revolution and the bitterness that will follow.

3. Nats have ignored the Lusaka Manifesto and all efforts to bring about amicable settlement.

4. We who know the Nats have no illusions.

5. Apartheid or separate development is implemented by coercive means.

6. No self respecting person will accept imposed solutions and perverted concepts of freedom.

7. To us freedom is indivisible and means one man one vote.

8. This conflict in our views on freedom makes armed struggle inevitable.

B.(i) South Africa is part of Africa and not of Europe and it is not for Africans but for whites who must adjust themselves to African conditions. (ii) The only solution in the country is offered by the liberation movement on the basis of the Freedom Charter. (iii) Bantustan scheme must be regarded as fraudulent scheme to divide us. (iv) Independence of the Transkei must be looked at from this position. (v) Will certainly enjoy formal political independence and therefore we have to acknowledge and readjust our efforts. (vi) Ridiculous to call such people - ethnic representatives ambassadors. (vii) Southern Sotho wherever they are, even those permanently resident in the urban areas are citizens of Qwaqwa. (viii) Background to formal independence of Transkei. (ix) In a recent statement Gatsha wants freedom in an individed South Africa and this line has to be welcomed. (x) Government intends to control these territories even when they are independent. (xi) But independence of the Transkei and other areas is to pose formidable difficulties for us. The attitude of the people cannot remain the same as before independence. (xii) I am confident of victory. There are signs even in white politics that progressive forces are growing - PRP is increasing its strength and speaking fearlessly against apartheid and oppression. Apart from NUSAS

which has done magnificently there is SASO which has shown a lot of courage, the BPC and the Black Women's Federation. There is the ANC which however great the difficulties it has faced is in the thick of the fight. Above all we have MK and our trained men, the hope of our dream. We do not underestimate the enemy and in past conflicts against superior odds it has fought courageously and received the admiration of all. But then they had something to defend - their independence. Now positions are reversed - they are a minority of oppressors heavily outnumbered here at home and isolated in the entire world. And the result of the conflict will certainly be different. The wheel of life is there and national heroes throughout our history from Autshumayo to Luthuli, in fact the entire people of our country have been working for it for more than 3 centuries. It is clogged with dry wax and rust but we have managed to make it creak and move backwards and forwards and we live in the hope and confidence that one day we'll be able to turn it full circle so that the exalted will crumble and the despised be exalted, no - so that all men - the exalted and the wretched of the earth can live as equals.

Further notes: (i) Re ANC - opening its doors? (ii) Re Chapter 13 - don't forget poverty, starvation, lack of housing, illiteracy and disease re Africans. Also - returned from trip with tremendous enthusiasm and strengthened confidence. (iii) In dealing with tribalism of marriages across the ethnic lines - Z.K. married a Xhosa, O.R. a Mosotho, Govan a Sotho, Resha married a Sotho, Lillian Ngoyi (Sotho) married a Xhosa. Also ANC meetings - two African languages are used - Sotho and Zulu - allegation crux that Xhosas dominate - must be adjusted but not mechanically. Xola Makiwane married a Zulu. - disturbing that on Robben Island - Ndobe, Zizi, Tchyopho and

Madiba all Xhosas should be in leadership.

African Tour:

(Note: This has to be incorporated in the appropriate place).

Under the conditions in which I write this account I have no access whatsoever to material relevant to African socialism, especially to the works of Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Leopold Senghor and D'Aboussier and others. My remarks will accordingly not be a critical comment on any specific views that have been expressed by any particular individual on the subject.

As I understand it there is as yet no widely accepted exposition of African socialism and African scholars and thinkers have produced a diversity of ideas unrelated to one another except in name only. Some varieties of the concept are no more than capitalism wrapped up with the name socialism. Others are systems of ideas that are skillfully presented but bear little relation to objective truth and scientific experience. Nevertheless African socialism is an attempt to build a social system distinct from capitalism with its division of society into classes and is a move towards some measure of nationalisation of the various sectors of the economy. To that extent it is a progressive idea which we should welcome and encourage. It shows that the people of Africa rightly link colonial oppression with capitalism and its evils and are determined not to perpetuate in their own countries a social order which has caused so much human suffering.

African socialism must also be seen as an effort by African thinkers to build an economic system which seeks to salvage what was destroyed by imperialism and to blend it with modern ideas of government. The effort to resist a mechanical limitation of economic development in Europe revealed the strong urge to be independent from all foreign influence not only formally but in substance. The attempt is a praise-worthy one, especially when we bear in mind that it is made by thinkers produced in capitalist schools and relying for the construction of a new society not on the basis of socialist but pre-independent nationalist organisations.

Ideas, even when they express universal truths, carry the birthmarks of the social surroundings from which they arise and when merely lifted from one environment and rigidly applied in another can be lifeless and dangerous. Exponents of African socialism seem to be consciously aware of these pitfalls and their main aim is to evolve a body of thought that accurately expresses the peculiarities of our continent.

The real difficulty comes when the claim that African socialism is unique to our continent is exaggerated and when it is portrayed as a mode of production not only distinct from capitalism but from marxian socialism as well. Whilst it is perfectly true that when imperialism colonised Africa most African societies were classless, it is definitely incorrect to regard classless society as a social system that was unique only to our continent and that was eternal in nature. Primitive communal societies, the stage of development the greater part of Africa had reached when Europeans came, and where the community lived mainly by pastoral farming and agriculture, were themselves a

development from the old Stone Age societies where people lived by hunting and gathering wild fruits and roots.

All societies without exception, the Europeans, Asians, the Mayas in Mexico and the Incas in Peru have gone through primitive communal stage in which all people lived and worked together as equals and where there was no human exploitation. Classes and the oppression of some people by others only developed much later in all these areas. Even if Europe had not conquered Africa, the people of our continent would in due course and on their own have found this social system a fetter to further development and destroyed it. Classes would have emerged and all the social conflicts that have repeatedly rocked Europe, Asia and the empires of the Incas and the Mayas throughout their long history would have come to Africa as well.

Feudal lords would have emerged, developed ideas of private property in land, grabbed it and otherwise free peasants would have been turned into serfs tied to the land and ruthlessly exploited. The present wars that started with the Great Peasant War in Germany in 1525 and that spread to practically every country in Europe and Asia reaching far off Japan with the Shimabara Revolt in 1637, would have torn our continent from top to bottom. Once this revolutionary change took place there would be no doubt at all to further developed and more advanced forms of society.

Any economic theory that is built on the study of social conditions in a particular continent and that does not focus its attention on human history as a whole will at best express only a half truth.

Theories on African socialism suffer from this fatal defect. A full grasp of the entire historical process is the only basis for building a scientific system of ideas that will not only accurately express what has happened in history but that can be used as a realistic guide on what will happen in the future.

Advocates of African socialism have not explained why in Europe there has been one directional development of society from primitive communism to slave society, feudalism, capitalism and socialism. Many parts of Asia reached class society long before the advent of the imperialist era, on the flood plains of the Indus as early as 2,500 B.C. where the community consisted of peasants who bred animals and cultivated grain and where the monarch and a small priestly class possessed vast concentrations of wealth. The Mayas and Incas had built civilisations far higher than most people in Africa ever reached and were in a stage of social development beyond primitive communism. If in all continents the historical process establishes beyond doubt that primitive communal society was not eternal why would it be so on our continent?

To be sure there have always been important differences in the social conditions of Europe and Africa. Europe is, comparatively speaking, a small continent with a large population whereas Africa is a large one with a small population. According to two issues in a 1974 UNESCO publication the population density in Western Europe that year was between 24 and 26 persons per square kilometer and in Africa it averaged 11 persons per square kilometer. This was so in spite of improved standards of living and increase in the birthrate.



Some have argued that because of the vastness of the population of Europe and the smallness of their continent its people could not live by farming alone and had to find other means of earning a livelihood. In the process they developed much faster than other societies and within the space of only two hundred years they went through four stages of economic development and in Eastern Europe even five stages have been reached. In such a situation higher forms of social organisation were inevitable.

It is further held that in contrast, the vastness of the African continent and the smallness of its population meant that its people could live off the land and there was thus no incentive for rapid economic development. When the land they occupied lost its fertility, pastures and game became denuded and rivers dried up, they moved on freely into the empty spaces that filled the continent and found virgin land, rich pastures and plenty of game. These conditions, we are told, made them content with primitive forms of social organisation. The inference is that if imperialism had not shattered this self-sufficient economy Africans would never have advanced further.

On the contrary, conditions in Africa before the advent of Europeans would only have affected the rate at which social stratification would have occurred. As in Europe and elsewhere classes would have ultimately emerged. In almost every part of the continent Africans had already discovered the art of mining, smelting and fashioning iron. Improved methods of metallurgy, better farming techniques, trade between Africans and Arabs in Western, Northern and Eastern Africa and

between African and African would have led to the accumulation of a social surplus and the emergence of classes. In the Nile Valley this development took place as far back as 5,000 B.C.

Archeological and other evidence indicate that these changes in the mode of production, even though embryonic, were already taking place all over the African continent, even as far down as the northern bank of the Limpopo. The massive Zimbabwe ruins and others in the same area testify to the existence of that social surplus which in history has been the immediate cause of class society. There is no basis whatsoever for the view that classless society was inherent among Africans and that if Europeans had not subjugated our people communal society would have lasted forever.

Nevertheless African socialism sums up a historical and cultural heritage which has a strong appeal to many African thinkers and which has a future and it would be certainly a mistake to treat it lightly. Even more important its adoption by the new African states is basically a condemnation of capitalism and the acceptance of socialism as a superior system that will guarantee higher standards of living and real happiness to all men. Nyerere, Nkrumah and others must be complimented for their valuable pioneering work in this sphere. As men whose outlook was shaped in the crucible of the anti-colonial struggle, who were deeply involved in bread and butter politics and who are now leading their respective countries in the historic task of social reconstruction it would be quite unfair to expect more than they have done in the field of theoretical work. They have laid the ground plan and it is for the new generation to develop their ideas on the basis of the historical process as a whole and to raise African socialism to the status of scientific socialism.

But from a conversation I have had with Julius Nyerere and from his speeches and writings I have read, as well as from the way he is reconstructing his country, he gives me the impression of a man with an inquisitive mind and respect for scientific method. He has aroused the hope in me that during his own lifetime he will put African socialism on a scientific basis.