

psychological force to break through the internalised habits of inferiority and subservience — the pathological condition that Africanists contended was the first barrier to any effective liberation. Already in spontaneous demonstrations the masses were showing their potential power and receptivity to leadership: the most important pre-condition for the rise of a powerful popular political movement was a militant ideology which reflected the natural nationalism of an oppressed race. The implications of this were clear: Congressites should refrain from collaborating with apparently sympathetic whites, be very careful about any association with Communists (Africans were oppressed as a race not as a class — Marxist analysis merely confused the issue), and embrace a Programme of Action based on confrontationist tactics: strikes, civil disobedience and boycotts. Organisation could come later — too often lack of effective organisation had served as an excuse for compromises by Congress in the past. Africanists, with their belief in spontaneity, in the force of the general will, were in any case contemptuous of organisation. This was in part a function of their class background: these men were intellectuals: students, teachers, doctors, lawyers. They were not themselves active in any of the popular struggles of the 1940s. Their self appointed role was that of interpreters of the popular will. Their relative degree of isolation from working class experience inevitably led them to romanticise it.

Nevertheless, whatever the limitations of their world view, their rise in the ranks of Congress, itself having been restructured and given some organisational rigour by its autocratic and brilliant President, A.B. Xuma, was rapid. Internal reforms apart, Congress was reactivated in the 1940s, its still highly conservative leadership being edged into embracing more militant tactics as the result of the evident failure of persuasion and conciliation — as well as threats to its own class position after the accession to power of another strain of petty-bourgeois nationalism in 1948. By 1943, Congress was claiming in a document inspired by the Atlantic Charter, the right of all Africans to the vote, by 1944, prompted by the reimposition of urban influx control, Congress leaders were laying the basis for

future collaboration. Indians were at that point engaged in a civil disobedience campaign against the Indian Land Tenure Bill. The campaign did not succeed in repealing the bill but it did demonstrate the efficacy of Gandhist tactics in arousing mass political participation — by 1947 the Natal Indian Congress had swelled from a small organisation of a few hundred to a membership of 35 000. Finally, in 1949, the ANC adopted as its own a watered-down version of the Youth League's Programme of Action. Though riven by ideological and personal clashes, though still organisationally very weak, Congress had been resurrected.

The Communist Party had also been through a similar phase of reorientation. Increasingly it paid less attention to issues involving white labour (though it was until 1945 to toy with the idea of an alliance with the Labour Party) and to focus its attention on the organisation of black industrial unions.

A rise in black membership and increasing party involvement in communal as well as industrial activity (Communists were peripherally involved in one or two of the squatters movements and there was even an all-peasant party branch in Zoutpansberg) encouraged the party to participate in and sometimes instigate campaigns which had more general appeal than those concerned purely with the situation of industrial workers: passes, free speech, universal suffrage. Cooperation with reformist organisations became more possible — though the relationship between the ANC and the CPSA was never any easy one<sup>39</sup>.

Some of the older African Communists were now members of the ANC establishment: with their predilection for organisation as an essential precondition to any activity, with their mistrust of spontaneity, they could find common ground with the established old guard ANC leaders under attack from the Africanist young men. By 1949, the influence of romantic nationalists on the ANC's NEC was fairly evenly balanced by that of social revolutionaries. The seeds for the conflicts and achievements of the next decade were beginning to germinate. □

See Footnotes on page 17.

## E. V. MAHOMED

A Tribute by Mrs. J.F. Hill.

Chief Albert Luthuli was a great man, and the world acknowledged his greatness and honoured him with the Nobel Peace Prize. Mr. E.V. Mahomed who died in his home at Stanger on March 3rd 1981, was less well known; but all who loved and honoured Chief Luthuli owe a debt of gratitude to one of the best friends any man ever had.

When Chief Luthuli was banned and restricted in his movements, the one town he was free to visit was Stanger, and one home where he was always a welcome and honoured guest was E.V. Mahomed's. In fact, E.V. became Chief Luthuli's main link with the outside world, arranging interviews for individuals who wished to meet this great African leader. When news of the Nobel Prize award broke, journalists from all over the world clamoured to meet or speak with the prize-winner. Arrangements of various kinds had to be made in preparation for the journey

overseas to receive the prize. And in his joy at the honour accorded to his friend, E.V. set aside his own book-keeping business, and turned his office over to Chief Luthuli's business, with himself as unpaid private secretary, coping at his own expense with all the phone calls and telegrams that came pouring in. I was roped in during the last hectic week, to help answer the hundreds of letters; so I saw for myself something of the unstinting way in which E.V. gave himself. This was typical of the man. All his life he gave himself, to his family, his friends, to those in need, and to the cause in which he believed, the cause of justice and freedom, the cause for which Chief Luthuli worked and suffered. I saw something of the warm human relationship between these two men, each of whom had in abundance that quality of ubuntu, of open-hearted warmth, knowing no barriers of language, race or class; that quality which our sad and troubled world so desperately needs. □