Mary Benson

Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa

A THREE CROWNS BOOK

Reddy

CHIEF ALBERT LUTULI OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mary Benson

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PRAISE SONG FOR LUTULI

by Alan Paton

You there, Lutuli, they thought your world was small
They thought you lived in Groutville
Now they discover
It is the world you live in.

You there, Lutuli, they thought your name was small
Lutuli of Groutville
Now they discover
Your name is everywhere.

You there, Lutuli, they thought that you were chained
Like a backyard dog
Now they discover
They are in prison, but you are free.

You there, Lutuli, they took your name of Chief
You were not worthy
Now they discover
You are more Chief than ever.

Go well, Lutuli, may your days be long
Your country cannot spare you
Win for us also, Lutuli
The prize of Peace.

CONTENTS

Chief Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli

1. THE MAN

ALBERT LUTULI is the first African ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize, the great international prize for the man who has done most or best in the world to 'further brotherhood among peoples'.

He is also the first man in the history of South Africa capable of uniting people of all races. But banned and banished, or imprisoned, he has not been left free to do this. And if South Africa were a democratic country, with Africans as well as Europeans having the vote, Albert Lutuli would most probably be Prime Minister.

Lutuli is a man of dignified bearing. Indeed, of noble bearing, and that nobility gives an impression that he is tall. He has greying hair, he looks serious and his eyes study you attentively, then suddenly they screw up in laughter, for he has a strong and quick sense of humour.

Although Lutuli has been a chief and then a political leader for nearly thirty years he is a man of the people and during the long years of being banished to the sugarbound districts of lower Tugela, in northern Natal, what he has found hardest is being cut off from the people.

On one occasion he explained what it felt like, his relaxed hands firming on his knees as he did so: 'It is extremely important for any leader to have constant contact with people. You travel around and you get to know in any area the special problems there, and what the people are thinking and feeling, and you don't fall into the mistake of thinking your own views are their views. Meeting them really gives an insight into their feelings and then your own views are corrected and you are able to plan things more realistically.

'Besides contact with people keeps your spirit up.'

It is hard to imagine his spirit being low, whether at the time when the marvel of being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize caused him to rejoice and made him both humble and proud or even during the Treason Trial when friends meeting him would feel renewed and uplifted.

'The people' to him are not just a political term nor a mass of followers, they are the individual human beings whose problems, personal as well as political, concern him. And as you sit on his small veranda looking across a garden bright with tropical flowers and framed by two dark cypress trees, you see in the fields beyond, or along the winding track, only an occasional African peasant, and you sense his enforced isolation. He is stimulated by discussion and debate, his vigour and concentration lasting far into the night. Crowds at meetings used to feel his warm communication and followed his rich baritone in singing freedom songs. His friends describe him at a wedding, his upright, dignified figure performing the rhythmic movements of African dances in the curious thoughtful manner that is somehow also gay.

But it is not only contact with African people that he misses. He said once: 'If I were free I would like to have lots of house meetings, as I did in the Cape and during the Treason Trial' (when even conservative whites including Afrikaners invited Lutuli to their houses for eager questioning). 'If we could go from house to house in African houses to recruit members, why not in white houses? I would stretch myself out [at this he opened wide his arms] to go and meet farmers in Rustenburg, say. Never mind if they hit me with chairs as in Pretoria.' His grin turned to vehemence: 'I would not miss that opportunity except for the damn ban (excuse my language)', and his glowing laugh dispelled the momentary anger.

Lutuli's background has always brought him into touch with country people, for his family has during the past century provided several of the elected chiefs of the Umvoti Mission Reserve in Zululand, on the north coast of Natal.

2. STUDENT AND TEACHER

ALBERT LUTULI's grandfather was Ntaba Lutuli, who in about 1860 became the chief over Groutville. This is a Zulu, and largely Christian, community living in the Umvoti Mission Reserve, and is named after Aldin Grout, leader of American Congregational missionaries who built a mission station there in 1836.

Ntaba held the chieftainship during the years of the war between the Zulus and the British. Albert has recalled how his grandfather, being an elder of the church, was asked to pray for the success of the British forces. He was evidently quite a diplomat, for he prayed 'O God, protect the victims of whoever is the aggressor in this war'!

On his death he was succeeded by his cousin and then by his eldest son, Martin, who was elected to the chieftainship by the people.

Albert Lutuli's father was Ntaba's second son, John Bunyan. He must have had an adventurous spirit for he went to Rhodesia, a thousand miles or more away, to serve with the Rhodesian forces in the Matabele wars, and later he joined a Seventh Day Adventist mission as evangelist and interpreter. There he was joined by his wife, Mtonya Gumede, a young woman who had spent part of her childhood at the Royal Kraal of Cetewayo, the great Zulu king. And there, at the mission near Bulawayo, a son was born. They christened him Albert John. His Zulu name is Mvumbi which means continuous rain. (Incidentally, he prefers it to the English names. He also prefers his surname to be spelled Lutuli, while some people spell it Luthuli.)

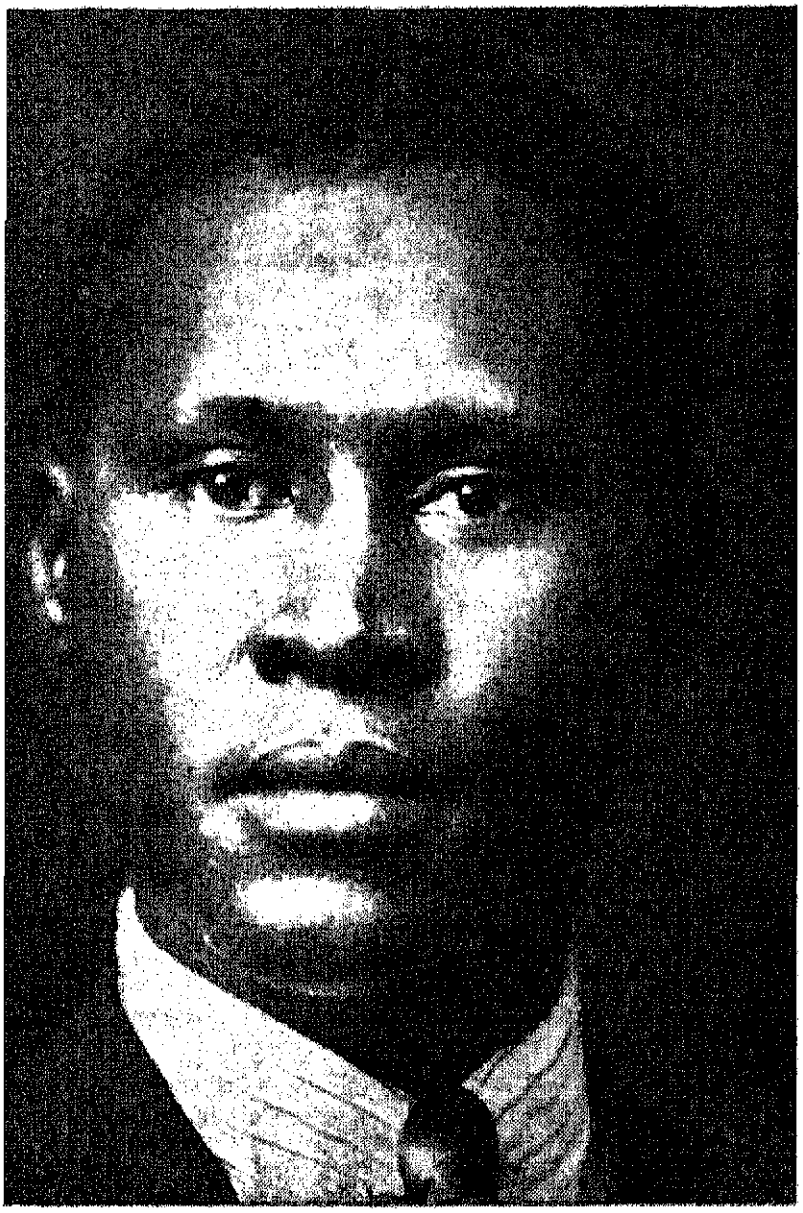
Albert Lutuli reckons that he was born in 1898. His father died soon after and eventually, in about 1908, mother and child returned with an elder son to Natal.

Student and teacher

South Africa was in a ferment at the time over the efforts of white politicians trying to achieve union between the two former British colonies, the Cape and Natal, and the former Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Lutuli was later to describe the Act of Union as 'an act of piracy, in which the lives and strength of ten million Africans are part of the loot' (*Let My People Go*). In Natal the Zulus were often harshly treated by whites and as a result the Bambata rebellion had flared up in 1906 and been quickly suppressed. However, Africans in mission reserves such as Groutville were not directly involved in these happenings. Albert's boyhood was therefore sheltered compared with that of children whose parents were drawn to the white towns, mines and farms. At first the ten-year-old boy looked after mules for a Seventh Day Adventist mission until his mother sent him to be educated at the seat of their ancestral home, Groutville.

So, in this small township at the heart of Natal's lush north coast, Albert joined the household of his uncle, Chief Martin Lutuli. Apart from being chief, Martin had also founded the Natal Native Congress in 1901 and in 1912 was to take part in the founding of the South African Native National Congress. As chief he was guardian over many relatives and children so that Albert had a pleasant time with companions of his own age. In this sound Zulu and Christian home he unconsciously absorbed Zulu traditions and naturally performed the small duties expected of a boy in tribal society: building the chief's fire, fetching water, herding and weeding. He also went to school for the first time.

When his mother, Mtonya, returned to Groutville, Albert lived in her care, in a new house built by his elder brother on the site where Ntaba had lived. And, as so many mothers have done, Mtonya laboured long and hard in her fields to be able to send her son to boarding school. Also in one of the strange paradoxes of Africa, this woman, daughter-in-law of a chief, and sister-in-law of a chief, had to take in laundry from European families in the near-by white township of Stanger



Luthuli at the age of twenty-five

in order to earn the necessary money. Albert was thus enabled to go to Ohlange Institute as soon as he had passed Standard 4 in 1914.

Ohlange had been founded by Dr. John Dube, a man distinguished for many achievements. Educated in America, he had returned to South Africa to be the first African to establish such an institute. He also became the first President-General of the South African Native National Congress, and founded a newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* (Sun of Natal). Albert came to admire his achievements.

Albert went from Ohlange to Edendale, a Methodist institution near Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal. In his autobiography he said, 'it was at Edendale, I think, that I began to wake up and look about me'. For one thing, he developed a high regard for teaching and during the two-year-long teacher's course a sense of responsibility grew in him. Probably the seeds of leadership were then sown. For the first time he really encountered whites though, happily, the students were not particularly aware of their colour but rather were interested in their behaviour as *teachers*. There, too, he took part in his first strike when the students rebelled against a form of punishment inflicted by one master who made boys carry heavy stones a long distance, causing damage to their clothes that many of them could ill afford. Albert and the other students left the school in a body. As soon as they were outside the school grounds, heading for Pietermaritzburg, with its curfew for Africans and the ominous threat of arrest by the police, Albert for the first time sensed what all Africans feel about the police in South Africa. Subsequently the strike ended with the return—and punishment—of the strikers. Albert went on to graduate as a teacher in 1917.

His first job was that of principal at an intermediate school in Blaauwbosch, Natal. He was only about nineteen years old, but as he was also the entire staff it was clearly not a very big school. He enjoyed teaching and it was in this obscure place that a most significant event took place. Lutuli was aroused by two staunch African Christians to think through the Christian

beliefs he had hitherto taken for granted. As a result he was confirmed in the Methodist church and became a lay preacher. The reality of his faith to him would for ever after be a vital influence in his life.

He was proving to be a good teacher and the Natal Department of Education awarded him a bursary in 1920 to Adams College, the famous American Board Mission Institute. This was in Amanzimtoti, a tropical village on the Indian Ocean. At the end of the two years' Teacher Training course Lutuli was faced with a big decision; he was offered a bursary to the College of Fort Hare. He wanted more than anything to go to this new African university but he refused the offer for he felt it was time for him to help his mother. He therefore became a teacher at Adams. He was one of the first three African instructors in the Teacher Training College. He specialized in Zulu, Music and School Organization and found added scope for his love of music in being college choir master.

Lutuli, therefore, did not have much formal education and, as he has pointed out, his schooling amounted more or less to the equivalent of matriculation.

Life was still sheltered. Adams was a world of its own. Lutuli, good-looking, serious, pleasant, was absorbed in mastering his profession, and the external activities that interested him were mainly concerned with teaching. For instance, in 1928 he became secretary of the Natal African Teachers' Association; the President was his friend, Z. K. Matthews, the Principal of the High School at Adams. Their main concern was agitating for better wages: £18 per quarter and principal's allowance were regarded, Lutuli says, 'as a princely salary'. Lutuli also founded the Zulu Language and Cultural Society. Its aims were to decide which Zulu customs should be preserved so that Western culture would not swallow up Zulu culture and to encourage an 'authentic, comprehensive South African culture' to grow.

But all was not solemn in his interests and he became 'a compulsive football fan' and confesses in his autobiography that 'to this day I am carried away helplessly by the excite-

ment of a soccer match'. He was to become first secretary of the non-racial South African Football Association.

Even though Adams was a small world apart, Lutuli's character was expanding and there were opportunities for contact with people, which to him is 'the very breath of life'. There were visitors from abroad including Dr. Aggrey, the eloquent West African educationist whose advice that South Africans should accept half a loaf and compromise with the segregation policy, was instinctively rejected by Lutuli. There were liberal Europeans on the staff who exemplified service to society so that Lutuli, always an eager learner, could say later that among his debts to Adams and its people, the greatest was the spirit of community he gradually absorbed. The foundation laid in his home and built on by the two African Christians was now added to by the understanding that his faith could equip him to meet the challenge of society. He was learning who his neighbour was and how he should be associated with that neighbour and, more, how he should work in society. One Afrikaner on the staff who mixed even more freely with Africans than the English-speaking members, helped him to understand the fears suffered by the whites. It is interesting to note that this Afrikaner went backwards in his thinking and became Secretary for Bantu Education, a system which abolished such schools as Adams, while Lutuli's tolerance and compassion grew despite the narrow intolerance of so many whites. Also relevant is Lutuli's reaction to the Afrikaner Nationalist taunt that such church schools as Adams and Edendale turned out 'black Englishmen'. Lutuli comments in *Let My People Go* that at these schools 'two cultures met . . . Both profited and both survived enriched . . . I remain an African. I think as an African, I speak as an African, I act as an African, and as an African I worship the God whose children we all are . . .'

At Adams in 1927 a most significant event in Lutuli's life took place. He married Nokukhanya Bhengu, a teacher, granddaughter of a hereditary Zulu chief. She was a tall, slight young woman with a low voice and a lively sense of humour lighten-

ing her strong character. Her name, meaning The Bright One, exemplified her nature.

As there was no provision for a permanent home at Adams, the Lutulis made a home in Groutville, and Albert's mother lived with them until her death. Nokukhanya tended their small sugar-cane and vegetable fields and their first child, a son, was born in 1929. Not long after, a daughter was born.

3. CHIEF AND MEMBER OF THE NATIVE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

LUTULI loved teaching so that when some of the elders of the tribe at Groutville and the local white missionary came to him and begged him to accept the Umvoti chieftainship, he refused. For one thing chieftainship, as he knew from living as a boy in his uncle's household, meant a stream of petty administrative tasks. For another, it would mean a serious financial loss; after all, as a teacher he was getting £120 a year. However, the elders persisted. But it was two years before he gave in to their appeals and then it was because he suddenly felt that this might be a call of the people, which it was his duty to obey. When he told this to Nokukhanya she said, 'I also have suddenly come to the decision that no, you ought not to resist any longer'.

And so, at the end of 1935 after fifteen contented years at Adams College, he left, reluctant but for one thing, that at last he could live all the week round with his wife and children.

Their home (in which they still live) was about a mile from the village of Groutville, just half-way between Chaka's Kraal and Chaka's burial ground in Stanger. The house, small, neat, red-roofed, has palms and jacaranda trees on one side of the garden which is surrounded by a shiny-leaved mat-ungulu hedge, and from afar it can be picked out by the slender dark cypress trees growing where the garden ends and fields begin. The fields that the Lutulis own, which amount in all to about forty acres, are widely scattered and he and Nokukhanya would have to walk far in doing their work.

Groutville itself, on the other side of the main road from Durban, is a township of about 500 people whose houses cluster around the cream-coloured church, set high on a hill overlooking the Umvoti River. The river, low-banked and

beautiful, flows under the railway and road bridge, past a red-chimneyed sugar mill, down to the Indian Ocean a few miles away.

The countryside with its rounded hills is covered in the lush green of sugar cane. Here and there are forests of tall gum trees, mansions of white planters, and African homesteads. Along the main north coast road the villages teem with brightly housed and dressed Indians some of whom work in sugar mills or own shops.

This was to be the background to Lutuli's life.

From the start he was naturally a conscientious chief, well versed in native law and custom and bringing understanding and humour to his rule over some 5,000 people. He enjoyed particularly the court work, where he could reconcile opponents. 'I loved the impact of mind upon mind, and I loved thrashing things out in the attempt to get at the truth' he has said. Had he not become a teacher and had he been able to afford it he would undoubtedly have become a lawyer. Among his duties he also allocated land and generally kept order aided by unpaid, selfless tribal elders. He took a revolutionary step in admitting women to tribal councils.

It was in 1936, the year when Lutuli became chief, that the Hertzog-Smuts Coalition Government set the seal on the policy of segregation of the races. They removed Africans in the Cape from the common voters' roll and thenceforward the African four-fifths of the population were represented in the House of Assembly by three Europeans, while the European one-fifth was represented by 150 members. The Government also virtually confined Africans to reserves and locations.

Hitherto Lutuli's scope had been local. His life had been a sheltered one in a chief's household and later as a teacher, and his outlook had been conservative. Now he was abruptly confronted with the facts of life as lived by Africans in South Africa. He came to see that the land hunger of his own local people—confined to four or five acres a *family* as against the whites with 375 acres a *person*—was but part of the national problem of the African four-fifths of the people restricted to less than thirteen

per cent. of the land. And those people were voiceless because they were virtually voteless.

As his deeply held religious beliefs were applied to these facts, almost for the first time he felt the poverty and daily hurt to human beings inflicted by the system of rule by a privileged white minority. He was confronted by the Africans' urgent need and desire to earn wages which led the menfolk to migrate to the mines and towns and caused families to be broken. And he saw the apathy that resulted among his people.

He did not yet realize the need for political action to right the fundamental wrongs. In order to help the local people he revived the Groutville African Cane Growers' Association to work for much-needed improvements for African sugar producers. Out of this grew the Natal and Zululand Association of which he became chairman. He helped to raise living standards in a wide area in mission reserves through similarly reviving and chairing the Mission Reserve Association.

But in all his activities he was finding that tribal organization was outmoded; that chiefs were caught in a dilemma between the interests and desires of their people and the commands of an alien government. The result was that many chiefs were becoming mere puppets, and their people were caught in a resulting dilemma, between traditional respectful loyalty to chiefs and contempt when they gave in to government pressure.

He incidentally had inbred in him this traditional respect together with a streak of formality so that he revelled in the leisurely court etiquette during visits to the royal capital of Zululand in the days when he advised the Regent Chief Michiyeni. But equally he had firmly criticized the present Paramount Chief for falling in with the Government.

Because Luthuli was not yet awake to the urgent need for political unity and action among Africans he did not take part in the All-African Convention that came together in the late thirties to oppose the Hertzog Segregation Acts. In any event, Natal was still politically isolated from the rest of the country.

During those years he was making wider contacts among

whites than was usual for a chief. He was a member of the Durban Joint Council of Europeans and Africans (an organization meant to consider joint problems, but he felt that it curbed African initiative). He also joined the Institute of Race Relations and was invited to address Rotary and Y.W.C.A. meetings. In addition he was elected to the executive of the South African Christian Council, a body representing all Christian Churches except the Roman Catholics.

He became concerned about the failure of the Church in South Africa when, in 1938, he attended the International Missionary Conference in Madras. (He and the other African members of the delegation were, incidentally, sent second class while the white members went first.) His meeting with leaders from India, Japan, China and other parts of Africa, made a deep impression, and he felt the vigour of Christianity. In their discussions on the interaction of the Christian faith and rising nationalisms he discovered that 'we in South Africa were way down below in our thinking, not only as nationalists but as church leaders'. Besides, in India the Church was tackling poverty by means of agricultural projects, and church leadership was increasingly Indian. In his report-back meetings, therefore, his theme was that in other countries 'the challenge of other religions, Islam, Hinduism, may have been so great that the Church could only meet it by coming up to the mark, whereas in South Africa, tribal religion did not have an aggressive nature, so that the Church has not grown'. He began to feel that the Church tried all too often to evade its responsibility in the *whole* of a man's life; for 'how can you wipe out man's political ambitions and desires and say you are developing human personality—how can you?' he has asked, almost fiercely.

But at that time he had not clearly thought out this question. Indeed, when he joined the Natal African National Congress in 1945 it was not out of the desire to take necessary political action but out of loyalty to its leader, Dr. Dube. The A.N.C. had been founded in 1912, just before, it is interesting to note, the Afrikaner Nationalist Party. The A.N.C. aim was to

unite tribes and, as Lutuli later put it, to remove race prejudice and win the vote and civil rights for all people. Dr. Dube had led the Natal A.N.C. for some years and when he had a stroke in the 1940s, Lutuli and other young men who admired him as an elder statesman, decided to join Congress so as to carry on his work. They did not at the time realize that the Natal Congress was an exclusive body formed by Dube and having hardly any contact with the national body. However, for the moment Lutuli took little part in its activities.

During those early war years, the non-whites in South Africa felt a glow of optimism: they had loyally supported the war effort, and the Prime Minister, General Smuts, encouraged them to believe that they would share in the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter; Africans flocked to the towns to work in factories and war-time industries. The Government and city councils did little to provide housing for them and huge slums grew, of people with great vitality and urge to assert their dignity as human beings. Many Africans went overseas in the army despite the fact that they were not allowed to be armed because they were African and could only do labouring jobs or driving. All these changes in their way of life had a profound influence on them, they began to realize that they were part of a world movement of people surging towards freedom.

The end of the war brought bitter disillusionment. In 1946 General Smuts enacted laws that harshly restricted the Asian population. Thousands of Indians, together with a handful of Africans and Europeans, went voluntarily to gaol in protest. At the same time African miners around Johannesburg went on strike. They had been making representations for higher wages for years and all their efforts had been ignored by the mining industry and the Government. Smuts ordered the police to drive them back to work. Eight miners were killed and nearly 1,000 injured.

On the very day that the worst shootings occurred, Chief Lutuli, newly elected, took his seat on the Native Representative Council. (This body had been set up to advise the Govern-

ment on African questions at the time when Africans were taken off the common roll in the Cape.) The Government had not listened to this Council and Lutuli and leaders like Z. K. Matthews and Dr. J. S. Moroka, who were on it, had come to mock it as a 'toy telephone'.

At this dramatic time Lutuli made his maiden speech in the N.R.C. He expressed the disillusioned mood of the people and told about how the Smuts Government was turning Africans off land in order to give it to white soldiers, while Africans were desperately overcrowded and had not even been given the small increase of land promised them thirty-four years earlier. Lutuli joined in the unanimous decision of the African councillors to adjourn the Native Representative Council indefinitely in protest against Government policy and actions. The Council was later abolished by the Nationalist Government.

Lutuli has since spoken in *Let My People Go* of Smuts's failure to stand on principle, and of his failure ever to exert his influence to help 'the masses who groaned under their disabilities'.

Lutuli was growing with events and he showed the breadth of his thinking on matters local and continental in his addresses to audiences all over America in 1948. He visited the United States as a guest of the Congregational American Board of Missions. He toured youth camps and spoke to huge gatherings in the main cities. He warned the World Mission Assembly in Ohio that Africa was riding 'the crest of a crisis' and said that whether Africa became noble and progressive or dominated by anger and revenge would depend largely on how government, industry and commerce behaved towards Africa. He went on to warn that Christianity was facing its severest test in Africa because of the great evil of racial discrimination. And he spoke of the thrust of Western ways that was breaking down the culture of Africa. He urged recognition for the 'valuable African social values and patterns of life' that were not incompatible with Christianity.

His warnings were timely. While he was lecturing in

America, the Afrikaner Nationalists were winning the election in South Africa. Lutuli arrived home to find that several pro-Nazis were among the new rulers of South Africa and that their policy of apartheid, the total separation of the races, was to be enforced. His misgivings about the Christian churches were shown to be justified: only a few individuals met the challenge of this newest and worst crisis in the lives of the African people in South Africa.

4. THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

MEANWHILE the African National Congress (A.N.C.) after thirty-six years of protest by means of deputations and petitions, was at last becoming militant. Dr. A. B. Xuma and the Rev. James Calata had ably set about its reorganization, and had attracted leading young intellectuals who had joined Congress and were eager for action. However, Xuma still believed in the old methods. The young militants therefore formed the Youth League. A brilliant young Zulu lawyer, Anton Lembede, two teachers, Peter Mda and Oliver Tambo, an estate agent, Walter Sisulu, and a law student, Nelson Mandela, were among those in the League who believed that only by non-co-operation with the white Government, by strikes and stay-at-homes, could the African people assert their power and achieve reforms. Their Programme of Action was adopted by the A.N.C. in 1949. Xuma and Calata were replaced by men ready to carry out this programme such as Dr. James Moroka and Walter Sisulu. The idea of the campaign to defy unjust laws was born.

Natal still lagged behind, this time not because of Dr. Dube's tendency towards isolation, for he had died, but because his successor as provincial president, A. W. G. Champion, liked to keep things to himself. He did a good job of reorganizing the province but resented the local Youth League, insisted on appointing his own executive and then did not share with them decisions made by the national headquarters. This unsatisfactory state of affairs reached a crisis at the Natal Annual General Meeting of 1951. The local Youth League leaders, M. B. Yengwa and Jordan Ngubane, wanted a leader who would be willing to work with other members of the executive and who would be consistent. They believed that Albert

Lutuli possessed these modest qualities and asked him to stand in the election for the provincial presidency. Lutuli refused. For he was not a man to seek office nor a man to enjoy controversy, and he knew that the energetic secretary for Natal, Selby Msimang, was being put up for the presidency.

The Youth League argued strongly that a change in leadership was vital if the Congress were to become a worthwhile organization in Natal. They went on to argue that only a newcomer could oust Champion, but Lutuli was still doubtful and said that they must first get Msimang's approval. Selby Msimang generously agreed to stand down. By a small majority Chief Lutuli was elected President of the Natal A.N.C.

He made a most unfortunate first appearance at a national conference of the A.N.C., not through any fault of his own. The Congress met in Bloemfontein in December 1951 to discuss the plans for the Defiance Campaign which was due to be launched in a few months' time, but as far as Natal was concerned all the letters giving details of the plans had gone to Champion when he was president and he had not told his executive about them. Lutuli, in fact, only learnt about the planned campaign as he set off by car for Bloemfontein.

In the middle of the National Conference, when delegates were enthusiastically acclaiming the plans, it took honesty and courage for Lutuli to stand up and appeal for Natal to be given more time to consider them and to prepare for action. One woman taunted him with 'Coward! Coward!' Nevertheless, he made an impression on other Congress leaders for his frankness and thoughtfulness and when Dr. Moroka invited him to take the chair at one session, he did so ably.

On returning to Natal he and his executive had to face criticism not only from Europeans and their press who deplored the proposed civil disobedience but also from Africans who were suspicious of the idea of joining with the South African Indian Congress in the campaign. It was, after all, only two years since mutual hostility, inflamed by the wretched conditions in which people were living, had led to serious riots with Africans attacking Indians in Durban. Through

Lutuli's growing friendship with the Indian leaders—Dr. Naicker and the young lawyers, J. N. Singh and Ismail Meer—the situation was tactfully handled and it was agreed that Africans should act first and that only when confidence had grown should Indians support them.

In April 1952 Dr. Moroka and other leaders addressed their followers in various centres. In the drab Congress office in the business area of Durban, Chief Lutuli took the first step along the path that was to lead to his winning the Nobel Peace Prize. His friend and colleague, M. B. Yengwa, has described the occasion. Lutuli, as President of the Natal Congress, asked each member present whether or not he was prepared to go into the Defiance Campaign: 'We all said we were prepared and Lutuli said too he was prepared and he asked us to pray. It was a very significant day. As far as I was concerned Chief was transformed into a different man altogether. Before that he was conscious of being Chief and used to say he couldn't do this or that as it might interfere with his job. Afterwards, it was not that he was irresponsible, but he was prepared to damn the consequences as long as he was advancing the cause of the movement.'

And so, in towns and villages, scattered throughout the Union, the great Defiance Campaign began. Thousands of African men and women, supported by some Asians and later by a handful of Europeans, deliberately broke the humiliating segregation and curfew laws and went voluntarily to gaol. The campaign was conducted with marvellous restraint and good humour, typical of the A.N.C. aim, as Lutuli has put it in his autobiography, 'to bring the White man to his senses, not slaughter him'. The self-discipline of the volunteers generated an exhilarating pride in their own restraint. The Africans, throughout 1952, held the initiative.

In Natal Lutuli led the people. It had been decided that several leaders, including himself, should not defy but organize and recruit and he was an inspiring force in addressing innumerable meetings, while his splendid baritone voice led the singing before processions. He and Dr. Naicker, President of

the Natal Indian Congress, challenged a by-law controlling processions. They were arrested. Not for the only time, authority (in this case the police) had to ask for Lutuli's help in persuading the crowd to disperse peacefully. When the case against the two leaders later came to court, it was adjourned—indefinitely.

As Lutuli frankly admits, the Natal record of volunteers was not up to the standard of the enthusiasm shown at the meetings. He went on a tour of the north of Natal to brief volunteers. On his return to Groutville he had a message to go urgently to Pretoria to see the Secretary for Native Affairs, Dr. W. W. M. Eiselen. Dr. Eiselen and his officials paid tribute to Lutuli's efficiency and conscientious service as a chief. They went on sharply to criticize the A.N.C.'s opposition to land rehabilitation schemes. Lutuli reminded them of the overcrowding of Africans and pointed out that the root cause was the grossly unjust segregation of land. This must be removed and he said that an end should be put to influx control which prevented Africans from moving freely in the land of their birth and offering their labour in the most profitable circumstances. Dr. Eiselen rebuked him for asking people to break the law of the land; 'a Jekyll and Hyde' he called Lutuli. And he gave Chief Lutuli an ultimatum: resign from the Congress or from the chieftainship. Lutuli was given a week or two in which to decide. He could have given his decision at once but this he felt to be bad tactics.

He went from the interview to see the A.N.C. Working Committee who agreed with his decision. From them he went on to address the Transvaal Congress's annual conference. A large crowd cheered his references to the way in which the Defiance Campaign had awakened the African's political consciousness. Indeed, he himself would have been a good example of this.

On his return to Groutville he made known his decision. He would not resign from the Congress; nor would he resign from the chieftainship; he believed that his duty to his people lay in both roles. The Government promptly deposed him.

So after sixteen years as chief, Lutuli was now out of a job. Congress, always short of funds, could certainly not help him. He began with his wife to try to build up a living on his forty acres so that they could educate their children (by this time seven in number). Their future looked dark and difficult.

The spirit in which Lutuli faced that future can be judged from the public statement that he made at the time. He pointed out that in thirty years as teacher, as chief and as member of the Christian Council and other welfare organizations, he had always pursued a path of moderation. 'In so far as gaining citizenship rights and opportunities for the unfettered development of the African people,' he asked, 'who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately and modestly at a closed and barred door?' In all that time the response of successive Governments had simply been to pass more and more laws restricting the rights and progress of the African people; 'an intensification of our subjection to ensure and protect white supremacy' as he put it.

The statement, that moved and deeply influenced many South Africans, including Alan Paton, the writer, concluded: 'Laws and conditions that tend to debase human personality—a God-given force—be they brought about by the State or other individuals, must be relentlessly opposed in the spirit of defiance shown by St. Peter when he said to the rulers of his day: "Shall we obey God or man?" No one can deny that in so far as Non-Whites are concerned in the Union of South Africa, laws and conditions that debase human personality abound. Any Chief worthy of his position must fight fearlessly against such debasing conditions and laws . . .

'As for myself, with a full sense of responsibility and a clear conviction, I decided to remain in the struggle for extending democratic rights and responsibilities to all sections of the South African community. I have embraced the Non-Violent Passive Resistance technique in fighting for freedom because I am convinced it is the only non-revolutionary, legitimate and humane way that could be used by people denied, as we are, effective constitutional means to further aspirations.

'The wisdom or foolishness of this decision I place in the hands of the Almighty.

'What the future has in store for me I do not know. It might be ridicule, imprisonment, concentration camp, flogging, banishment and even death. I only pray to the Almighty to strengthen my resolve so that none of these grim possibilities may deter me from striving, for the sake of the good name of our beloved country, the Union of South Africa, to make it a true democracy and a true union in form and spirit of all the communities in the land.

'My only painful concern at times is that of the welfare of my family but I try even in this regard, in a spirit of trust and surrender to God's will as I see it, to say: "God will provide".

'It is inevitable that in working for Freedom some individuals and some families must take the lead and suffer: The Road to Freedom is via the Cross.

'Mayibuye!

Afrika! Afrika! Afrika!'—

The need for courage and faith was greater than ever. At this time dreadful riots broke out in Port Elizabeth and soon after in East London and Kimberley. Europeans as well as Africans were killed, a most unusual happening. Lutuli told a parable in *Let My People Go:*

> Many whites, having persuaded themselves against the evidence that they share South Africa with a barbaric and hostile black horde, cannot leave us alone, they feel they must goad and prod us. It is as though they are perversely most afraid of us when we are friendly and disciplined and patient. The large, amiable dog in the yard is on a chain. You have been told that he is a snarling, dangerous cur. His amiability must therefore be a deception. You keep out of reach and jab repeatedly at him to rouse him to anger. If you succeed, that proves he is a wild and savage creature. Now and then you do succeed —the best tempered animal gets sick of ill-willed pestering. Sometimes you do enrage him. Sometimes the chain made for him snaps. Then there is a riot.
>
> Whites see only the riot. Their reaction?—Make a stronger chain.

As he pointed out, the challenge of non-violence was more

than the Government could meet because it robbed them of the initiative. With uncompromising severity he went on to show that the infiltration of *agents provocateurs* in Port Elizabeth and Kimberley, which was well attested, had started off the violence and thus initiative had been restored to the Government. The A.N.C. demand for an impartial inquiry was refused by the Government which proceeded to pass a proclamation. Under this, non-violent protests could be punished by three years' imprisonment with lashes or a fine of £300 with lashes while anyone (including newspapers) instigating protests could get five years or a fine of £500 with lashes.

Eight thousand five hundred volunteers had gone to prison in the Defiance Campaign. Some were ready to defy the proclamation but the effect of the riots had been to dampen the spirit of the campaign.

It was at this critical time in the history of South Africa that the A.N.C. National Conference was held. The President-General, Dr. Moroka, had greatly disappointed his followers by having independent legal defence and appealing for himself alone when he and other leaders were on trial together. Furthermore, it was felt that his early promise of militancy had not been fulfilled. A new leader must be found; a man who combined militancy with authority, who could command respect and loyalty, a man who would be ready to face the harsh struggle ahead, and the personal sacrifice that this would mean.

5. PRESIDENT-GENERAL

THERE was considerable difficulty in choosing a candidate with all these qualities to put up against Dr. Moroka. Z. K. Matthews, for instance, refused to stand because he felt that he must concentrate on his academic duties at Fort Hare University College. Other men who might have been suitable had been banned by the Government. On the way to the conference the Natal delegates decided that they would put up Albert Lutuli. For most of the delegates he was a dark horse. However, his refusal to resign from the A.N.C. in face of Government pressure and the work that he had already done in leading Natal had made a deep impression and in the end it was the ordinary members from the Transvaal who swung the vote. Lutuli was elected President-General of the National Congress by an overwhelming majority.

Even so, there were many people who were doubtful about whether he was suitable. Some felt that as a man who had spent most of his life with rural people he would be out of his depths in leading the great majority of A.N.C. members who came from the towns. Some thought he would simply be used as a figurehead by militants and the left-wing in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.

The doubters were to be proved wrong.

Lutuli had said on recalling his feelings on being elected President-General at so crucial a time: 'I knew what I was in for—a policy of militancy—and I realized that one was being honoured and yet given a very difficult task. I had already been hit hard by the Government. But if a task comes and you are physically able to carry on—you can't say no to a liberation task—this is something I think is right.' And he added: 'I felt it was an overwhelming call of the

people—and the voice of the people sometimes is the voice of God.'

His first act was to go to the people. He visited Congress branches in Cape Town, and in the eastern Cape, which since 1950 had been the most militant and best organized section of Congress. In Port Elizabeth he was thrilled by the reception he got from a crowd of 35,000 people. In his address he said that the African people, led by the A.N.C. 'are running towards the door of freedom. Talking has failed. We live in a time of action. History is being made. The Africans are on the right road. World progress has been achieved by revolutionary action. In France the people fought for liberty, equality and fraternity. In America they did the same. Now the process has reached South Africa itself. We ask White South Africa to accept us now. We do not want to drive the Europeans away, we wish to share equally as partners in this country.' (Treason Trial Record.)

From the Cape Province he went on to the Orange Free State. The Government promptly banned him from all the larger centres in the country and from attending gatherings. Bans came thick and fast on the Congress leaders but, undeterred, Lutuli and his executive met regularly and discussed ways of combating the ever-increasing repressive laws. Perhaps the one that Africans hated most after the humiliating Pass Laws was the Bantu Education Act. In his autobiography Lutuli has said of Bantu education and of the tribal universities established by the Government, this is 'brain washing on the grand scale', an 'attempt to enslave the minds and spirit of ten million people' with the intention of erasing all African leadership.

The Congress hastily planned a boycott of Bantu education schools but with so many leaders banned, banished or imprisoned, the organization was weak and only in parts of the eastern Cape and the African townships near Johannesburg was the boycott effective. In these places the Government punished the protesting students by denying them any education in the future. But the failure of this campaign was due also

to the apathy of people for so long held in servitude. Lutuli has been frank both about the weaknesses of Congress organization and the apathy of so many people. He found that many country people who were victims of the farm labour system had been depressed and oppressed to the point of hopelessness. He found that in some cases the influence of tribal life had accustomed people to be satisfied with very little. Then, some had misapplied their Christian trust and resigned themselves to wait for better things in the life hereafter. Lastly, he found that there had been a new materialism, with people holding on to small possessions because this they felt was their only form of security and they were unwilling to make sacrifices for political reforms that seemed uncertain.

Over the years the stay-at-homes and protest campaigns that the A.N.C. organized with its Indian and white allies, met with ever greater force: all the force of a modern state with police and army heavily armed and usually the state was supported by industry and by the Press. Throughout all this persecution Lutuli and the other leaders were undaunted.

As soon as his ban was ended, in mid-1954, he went to the eastern Cape to address their annual conference. From there he went to the Natal Indian Congress Rally in Durban and on again to the Transvaal. As Professor Matthews said, to the people he was 'Chief' Lutuli and he would never cease to be Chief Lutuli 'because his claim to that title does not rest upon recognition by the Governor-General, but upon the place which he occupies in the hearts of our people'.

In the Transvaal Lutuli was due to lead a vast protest against the Western Areas Removals—the Government scheme under which 75,000 Africans were to be forced to move from Sophiatown and other townships. As he stepped off the plane in Johannesburg the Special Branch hurried forward and handed him two new banning orders. This time they were more severe, not only forbidding him to attend meetings but confining him to the Groutville area for two years. With customary understatement he describes in *Let My People Go* what happened as he studied the documents: 'An

officer in possession of a few words of Xhosa, which when properly spoken does have some affinity with Zulu, apparently felt that I was taking things too blankly. Fearing that I had not grasped what had happened to me, he endeavoured to explain the contents of the documents in Xhosa. He ended very emphatically: "You understand, you can't go from here and address any meeting. You understand?"

"Yes," I said, "I think I understand".'

As the ban confining him to Groutville did not take effect for a few days he stayed in Sophiatown. Though the people there hardly knew him at that time his reputation had grown and, angry about the new bans on their leader and eager to show their support, they came in their masses and marched past the house where he was staying in a moving exchange of silent greetings.

The A.N.C. and its allies went ahead with the organizing of the Congress of the People. Lutuli has described what their object was:

> There was in our minds appreciation of the need to think creatively about the new South Africa. We are, after all, not mainly devoted to battling *against* something, though that is imposed on us at present. We are inspired by the ideal of working *for* something. If we are against passes, it is because we are for human dignity and freedom of movement. If we are against Bantu Education it is because we are for education. When you are constantly impeded in the effort to work towards a worthy goal, there is the danger of becoming preoccupied with the impediments. It was felt to be high time to counteract this by defining the goal rather more clearly.

However, Lutuli could not take part in the framing of the Freedom Charter that came out of this Congress because he was desperately ill with the high blood-pressure and heart trouble that constantly troubled him. Though he had been a national figure for less than three years and for most of that time had been restricted by bans, many people had already come to have a deep affection and respect for him and when they learnt that he was out of danger their relief was great. At

the Congress of the People, *Isitwalandwe*—the highest tribute that Congress could pay—was bestowed on him as well as on Father Trevor Huddleston, C.R., and on Dr. Yusuf Dadoo—a Christian Zulu African Nationalist, a Christian priest and a Marxist Indian.

In 1955 Lutuli was re-elected President-General of the A.N.C. In mid 1956, when his second ban ended, he was once again eager to speak to the people and delivered in person the presidential address that for three years had had to be read on his behalf in Congress conferences. His theme was—bans or no bans, the struggle must go on. Then he and his wife went with their close friends, Dr. Zame Conco and M. B. Yengwa, for a holiday. As Lutuli has put it, they decided to give themselves 'a shake in the air of freedom' in Swaziland—an unusual revelation in his often unrevealing autobiography.

The freedom did not last long. On 5 December 1956, at dawn, this man who in any sane country would have been Prime Minister or perhaps Minister for Education, was awakened by the police and arrested on a charge of high treason.

6. THE TREASON TRIAL AND AFTER

The Treason Trial was the great test of Lutuli's leadership; 156 men and women were on trial for their lives. These people represented the resistance movement to the Nationalist Government, a movement that included a mixture of races and beliefs that in other parts of the world often caused people to clash violently with each other: African, European, Indian and Coloured People; professional men and labourers; Christians, Marxists, Hindus, Muslims; all were uniquely united in South Africa. And when they were brought together in this trial, though the Congress Organization of each race was included, it was clear that it was the A.N.C. that was really on trial and that the undisputed leader of all these people was Albert Lutuli.

Once again, as at the time of the Defiance Campaign, he led the people in taking a pledge. This time the ceremony took place in a prison cell. First Father Calata (the former Secretary-General of the A.N.C.) led the devotions in what Lutuli described as 'a real spiritual preparation for what lay ahead'. Then the prisoners followed Lutuli in pledging themselves to solidarity in the cause of liberation. Morale was high.

Soon the 156 were all released on bail and the prolonged trial began. Lutuli's authority was epitomized in an incident during the preliminary inquiry. After months of harassing, sometimes boring, sometimes ludicrous evidence being led, there had been a tense exchange between the magistrate and one of the accused, Joe Slovo, an advocate. The magistrate charged Slovo with contempt of court: this was the last straw for the accused; their anger was expressed in almost a growl and in a spontaneous rising and what threatened to be an advance by a number of them on the magistrate. Startled

police began to react. In a moment Chief Lutuli was up, dominating the scene with a firm voice and restraining gestures. An ugly incident had been avoided.

The qualities of his leadership can best be summed up by his friend who was on the Natal A.N.C. executive, and among the accused in the Treason Trial, M. B. Yengwa: 'Chief is notable for rising to occasions. He has a tremendous reserve of power and ability, and does not use it lavishly. You find when a crisis arises he is able to tide it over with far more strength than you thought he had.' He adds: 'His leadership is strong; even Marxists respect his political maturity and consistency.' And permeating all, 'he gets much inspiration from his convinced Christian beliefs'.

Lutuli has often been asked how he, a convinced Christian, can co-operate with the Communists who, since the early twenties have been active in opposing the Government in South Africa. This is a subject on which he speaks with vigour: 'I do not feel in the least defensive or apologetic about the position as it actually is—it is often misrepresented. For myself I am not a Communist. Communism seems to me to be a mixture of a false theory of society linked on to a false "religion". In religion I am a Christian, and the gods of state-worship (as in Russia and to some extent in white South Africa) and man-worship (as in pre-war Germany, and to some extent perhaps unconsciously in white South Africa) are not my gods. In politics I tend towards the outlook of British Labour, with some important modifications.'

Certainly Congress had Marxist members, and certainly, as in all countries where repression and poverty invite radical reform, they played a consistent role in resisting the Government's tyranny, but this was no novel and sinister development: Congress was always proud to be an 'omnibus' organization, including chiefs and Conservatives, as well as Socialists and, before the Communist Party was banned, some African Communists. To critics of its association with whites who were formerly members of the South African Communist Party, Lutuli has said: 'The reply of the people is—we only

know these whites because when we are in trouble they come forward.' He reminded the critics of the story of the blind man, healed by Christ, and people came and asked who healed you, was he not a sinner, and the blind man said (here Lutuli threw wide his arms): 'I don't care *who* he was, all I know is that he healed me.'

'All we know is that these men came to help us. I don't deny that some might have ulterior motives, but all I am concerned about is that they came to assist me fight racial oppression, and they have no trace of racialism or being patronizing, just no trace of it at all.'

In short, as he says emphatically: 'I am interested in the arch enemy.' He does not mind whether it is a liberal platform or leftist 'as long as I get someone to oppose Verwoerd!' Congress therefore must not be side-tracked by witch hunts. 'We are not playing at politics, we are bent on liberation.'

His contention that the number of Communists in the resistance is small was borne out during the Treason Trial, when the South African Government tried to prove that the A.N.C. was infiltrated by Communists and also that it was trying to achieve a change of Government by violence. The trial became a prolonged, cruel farce. Most of the accused were separated from their families and were out of jobs, with many anxieties, and overall was the threat of a death penalty or long imprisonment. Yet there were compensations. The accused knew that the people were with them. For instance, on the very first day vast crowds turned out to welcome them as they were driven up to the Drill Hall in Johannesburg where the preliminary investigation was held. As the accused arrived the crowd sang 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika', the A.N.C. and the African national anthem. Lutuli was profoundly moved. He said afterwards that it sounded like an angelic choir, that the precision and perfection of the singing would always remain a mystery to him.

And when the people of Alexandra township in Johannesburg began a boycott of buses because they simply could not afford the penny increase in fare, it was clear that they drew

strength from the leaders who were on trial, and the leaders themselves drew strength from this remarkable spontaneous resistance which ended in a victory for the people of Alexandra.

Also, in one way, the Government played into the hands of the liberation movement. As Lutuli says in a sardonic remark characteristic of his comments on the Government, the Treason Trial provided a meeting place for the resistance leaders: 'What distance, other occupations, lack of funds, and police interference had made difficult—frequent meetings—the Government had now insisted on. We could at last confer *sine die*, at any level we liked.' And remarkably, his call for a stay-at-home on 26 June 1957 met with much success.

Lutuli's influence was felt not only through his firm, uniting leadership that contributed to the high morale of the accused. Some of the splendid team of lawyers who defended them were drawn to the case by the fact that he and Professor Matthews were on trial. Their involvement also helped in arousing the opinion of people all over the world who sympathized warmly with the accused, and contributed generously to the Treason Trials Defence Fund.

Distinguished foreigners came to observe the trial: lawyers, historians, politicians and journalists. All of them particularly wanted to meet the President-General of the A.N.C. It was through the impression that Lutuli made on some of these men that his name was suggested for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Equally important were the other, daily, visitors: the African people, many of them messengers or domestic servants, who came to show their support for their leaders and to meet with them during the lunch break.

At the end of the preliminary inquiry all of the accused were committed for trial. However, not long after, Lutuli and sixty-four others were discharged. He expressed 'mixed feelings' for, truth to tell, 'I would be happier to see the whole thing through with my comrades'. He continued to attend the trial whenever he could go to Pretoria where it was then being held.

7. THE GREAT TOUR

WHILE the Treason Trial dragged on the A.N.C. went through a troubled time. The Government relentlessly passed laws that shackled the non-whites, and the leaders had been seriously handicapped in their organizing by the Trial. However, women of all races had organized remarkably effective protests against the extension of the Pass Laws to African women. Lutuli welcomed this breakaway from women's traditional role and praised them for their work in both urban and rural areas. Besides, as he appreciated, they made a distinctive contribution in giving life to the A.N.C., life in action, in singing and in welfare work.

At the same time, in a number of rural areas the people were expressing their bitter opposition both to the Pass Laws and to the Bantu Authorities Act. This and the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act aimed at re-establishing tribalism, only, as Lutuli has made clear, not the democratic tribalism of the African ideal but 'a mongrel-like form of local government which has no semblance to democracy . . . the worst caricature imaginable of our traditional form of government', with chiefs acting as the puppets of a white dictator. The Bantustans that the Government was establishing would be, he said, 'destitute reservoirs of cheap labour'. He went on: 'To us Bantustan means the home of disease and miserable poverty, the place where we shall be swept into heaps in order to rot, the dumping ground of "undesirable elements", delinquents, criminals created especially in towns and cities by the system. And the place where old people and sick people are sent when the cities have taken what they had to give by way of strength, youth, and labour. And still, to the day of death, whether in cities or farms or Reserves, we are tenants on the white man's

land. That is our share of South Africa. Our home is the white man's garbage can.'

This 'huge deceit' was being sold to the world as Bantu self-government in the traditional way. Lutuli believed that 'when my people see the magnitude of this bluff, as indeed they are seeing it, the docile people with whom the Government is now dealing will change beyond recognition. The lie is too big. You cannot fool all the people all the time' (*Let My People Go*).

Though the A.N.C. was not directly involved in the ferment in the rural areas people there gave Congress salutes and even sometimes said that they were members. The Government accused Congress of organizing the opposition and banned it from going into those areas.

It was against this background that Lutuli and the Congress Alliance called for a stay-at-home to coincide with the white election in 1958. Lutuli's object was to make the African voice heard when the white political parties were as usual competing with each other in putting forward plans to maintain white supremacy. The stay-at-home was a failure and, as he frankly admitted, it showed misjudgment of the mood of the people.

One factor in the failure of the stay-at-home had been the attempts of the Africanists to call it off. For years some A.N.C. branches in the Transvaal and western Cape had been handicapped by quarrels as the Africanists fiercely criticized the Freedom Charter of the Congress of the People because it spoke of all South Africans sharing the country. They called for an Africans-only resistance. They attacked the A.N.C. for working with other races, accusing it of being under the thumb of white and Indian Communists, and describing Lutuli as 'a cat's paw of Moscow'! Lutuli worked hard to reunite the different views and presided at meetings in the Cape and in the Transvaal with that object in view. However, the final break came towards the end of 1958 and Robert Sobukwe, a university lecturer, formed the Pan-Africanist Congress. Lutuli has commented in his autobiography: 'I cannot say that I am clear about what the Pan-Africanist Congress stands for,

especially as its statements to date have been contradictory and vacillating. If their slogan "Africa for the Africans" means "Africa for the Aboriginals", then their appeal is obviously explosive. The white Nationalists daily make such a counsel of despair more acceptable, since they daily frustrate the achieving of a South Africa along non-racial lines, and a rabid form of African Nationalism is the easy answer to rabid white Nationalism.

'But if I am misled here and "Africa for the Africans" does not mean "and the devil take all the others", then P.A.C. policy is not greatly divergent from ours, and the goal may not be dissimilar.

"They do, however, claim divergence of method. I do not know what the P.A.C. method is, but they have no hesitation in declaring that the A.N.C. tinkers and fiddles—here a boycott, there a demonstration, elsewhere a Defiance Campaign. Their claim is that while we occupy ourselves with details, they will turn off the tap whence comes the flood of oppression. I do not know what this means, stripped of metaphor. My reply though is that in order to get at the tap a good deal of wading through dirty water is necessary. Furthermore, what single blow does one deal this particular tap which will stop the flow? I suspect that when it emerges from theory, the P.A.C. may well find itself committed, like us, not to a single masterstroke, but to a series of partial successes. You have to wade.'

Lutuli was greatly saddened by the actions of the P.A.C. in trying to hinder A.N.C. activities. Yet in spite of the break-away the A.N.C. was strengthened because time previously wasted in negative argument could go into planning and action. Once again the National Conference of the A.N.C. re-elected Lutuli as their President-General.

He immediately made resounding appeals for economic boycotts of Nationalist products in South Africa. In the Cape these met with some success and when subsequently the A.N.C. organized a boycott of potatoes the African people responded splendidly. The reason for the potato boycott was that on some of the white farms African labourers were forced to

work in conditions of near slavery. They had to dig potatoes with their fingers. 'Boss-boys' stood over them with whips and there had been many cases of assault and even murder by them or by the white employers. Living conditions were dreadful. Lutuli has maintained in his autobiography: 'I do not say these conditions prevail on every farm where there are farm prisons and convict labour. I say that the system exists, and I say that it is not only isolated farmers of bestial morality who take advantage of it. And I say that the system exists because the Government approves of it. It is their system.'

Even though the Government and the farmers and merchants tried to break this boycott it was a great success. Africans, in spite of the sacrifice of giving up potatoes which were their staple diet, refused to buy them. By the time the boycott was called off, potatoes had piled up in markets throughout the country.

Lutuli went on to urge the people in the world outside to boycott all South African goods. He said that they should not be put off by the suggestion that they would harm the people they were wanting to help, because only through non-violent methods including such economic pressure could whites and non-whites be brought together to prevent the country's destruction. His call was to be taken up by governments in many African and Asian countries and by trades unions and organizations in Britain, the United States, Canada and several European countries.

On Africa Day, 15 March 1959, Lutuli addressed a huge gathering in Durban—one of many similar gatherings throughout the country—which celebrated the freedom that so many African countries were achieving. The dancing, singing crowds, many of them wearing tribal dress, rejoiced on behalf of the millions of their fellow Africans throughout the continent and reaffirmed their faith that they themselves would also achieve the freedom they were working for.

From this celebration Lutuli set off on a spectacular tour. His renown had been enhanced by an incident at a meeting he had addressed in Pretoria a few months earlier. It was a

meeting of Europeans, including academics and diplomats, who had invited him to speak to them because they wished to study the African point of view. It had been broken up by a group of white men who had attacked Luthuli and the chairman, hitting them with chairs, kicking Luthuli while he was on the ground. The police had eventually restored order. Luthuli, though injured and in pain, went on to speak to the gathering. He was touched by the shame and concern that so many people showed. The nobility of his demeanour in face of the shocking assault by the white hooligans deeply affected many people of all races.

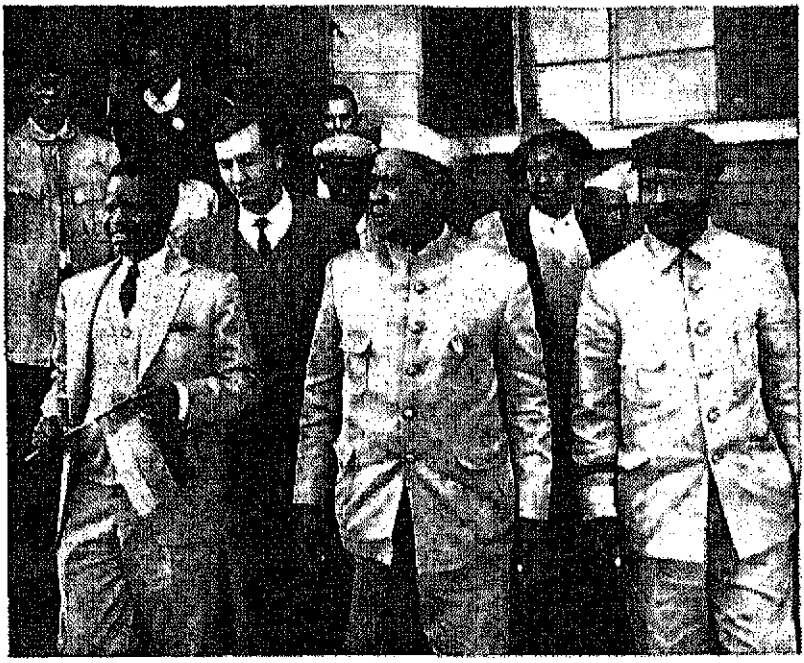
Therefore, when he toured Natal and the Cape, Europeans flocked to hear him and to cheer him. He gave them hope. What he said was radical and militant and included the uncompromising demand 'one man one vote'. Yet they felt such confidence in his presence that they accepted it from him. As one observer put it after he had addressed a largely white audience in Cape Town: 'The secret of the Chief's unexpected success is that, in a situation bedevilled by fear and mistrust he has managed, magically, to inspire confidence and trust.'

He coped good-humouredly with awkward hecklers—not that there were many. One white man, clearly wanting to show up barbarian Africans to the impressionable women in the audience, asked: 'According to native custom, how many wives may a native man have?' With a slow smile Luthuli courteously replied: 'Just as many women as he can find to love him.' Then adjusting himself to his western bourgeois audience, he added, 'but most men find of course that one woman is quite enough to cope with.'

The tour not only brought Luthuli to the forefront as a factor in white political life, it also enabled many whites to experience the warmth, vitality and humour of African political meetings and they joined the lines of dancing Africans who sang 'Sobalandela Luthuli' (We will follow Luthuli) as their leader left the meetings.

The South African Government's great dread is that

Europeans should know and understand and therefore lose their fear of Africans. For the first time in the country's history the status of an African leader, his moral and intellectual integrity, had been recognized by many Europeans. To the Government, therefore, Lutuli was now a worse menace than ever before and so the Special Branch were sent hurrying to see him. They handed him an order from the Minister of



Lutuli in A.N.C. *uniform at Durban in 1959*

Justice. The Minister, it said, was satisfied that Lutuli was 'promoting feelings of hostility between the European . . . and non-European inhabitants'. Once again Lutuli was banned from gatherings and banished to his home district, but this time it was for *five* years.

And this time the European press exploded into banner headlines while editorials and letters to the editor expressed outrage and contempt for the Government's action.

The ban on gatherings was immediate; however, before the banishment took effect Lutuli had a week's grace. He had been due to speak at mass meetings in Johannesburg but all that he could now do was to go there and silently acknowledge the crowds that saw him off from Durban, that waved along the railway lines and that met him in the Transvaal. He was much moved.

The absurdity of Government restrictions was symbolized by an interview which took place on the train between a number of journalists and the chief. Because they were white and he was black they could not meet in the same coach. They therefore stood at the end of the corridor of their coach and he at the end of the corridor in his and as the train rushed along they shouted questions and answers to each other.

When Lutuli returned to Durban he found a large array of Congress members waiting at the airport. He was not allowed to go near them. He is not a man to express emotion and his description of his feelings at this time shows what it must have meant to him. 'It was desperately frustrating, and deeply moving,' he said in *Let My People Go*, 'the wide gulf and beyond it the devotion to which I could not respond.'

When he set off by car for Groutville a procession of cars filled with friends saw him on his way. Where the rough twisting road to his farm branches from the main road his friends left him. He gave the Congress salute to them—thumbs up—'Afrika!' and turned and walked alone into his exile.

8. IMPRISONMENT AGAIN

This time Lutuli felt the bleakness of exile more sharply after the marvellous experience of making wide and deep contact with the people of South Africa—people of all races truly representing the non-racial South Africa that he envisaged. As he has explained, it is not just the physical restraint nor is it the tedium (each time he visits his doctor in Durban for a monthly check on his heart trouble, he has first to report to the police in Stanger, then to the police in Durban and, on return, yet again to the Stanger police); it is not just the political repression, and the feeling that he has 'of being cut off from the stream of political thinking in the country'; what he always finds hardest is being cut off from the people.

However, he was busy planning with members of the National Executive who visited him for an anti-pass campaign due in 1960. Then there was writing to be done for local and overseas publications; and an increasing number of distinguished visitors to South Africa felt that an interview with Lutuli was an essential part of their survey of the country. One of these visitors was the American Ambassador, Philip Crowe. These visitors and journalists if they wished to see him at home had first to get a permit from the local authorities which said that they must 'under no circumstances . . . interfere with or in the domestic affairs of the Bantu . . . must behave in a dignified manner and refrain from criticism of the administration, of the Government, or of any of its officials'!

All the time he had the difficult task of making a living—difficult because of periods away during the Treason Trial and on tours and because of his health. His wife, Nokukhanya, had so often carried the burden of the home alone and done much of the work on the lands, and even at one stage had

delivered mail in order to earn money for the children's education. At another time she ran a small shop. In all those years, not once had she asked, 'what will become of the family and me?' She had backed him up in all his decisions and actions. Through the trials and upheavals of their life since 1952 she had maintained a normal and stable home for their seven children. Her wisdom and humour showed clearly in her face, but so also did something of the anguish she must have felt at times. Lutuli has written in his book of her openness and honesty and of her integrity 'which expresses itself in everything from her steadfast reliance on God, her devotion to me and our family, right down to such things as paying our accounts without delay or immediately acknowledging herself to be in the wrong if she discovers that she has made a faulty appraisal or has misunderstood a situation'.

But what, of course, was most significant for him was that his wife was with him in political affairs.

When Lutuli was confined he would work regularly on the lands, trying to build up for the future. 'But,' he would say in a voice rising a little with impatience, 'this is not my line and sometimes in the fields I think what time I am wasting.' He could not know that, as so often happens in South Africa, dramatic events would soon sweep the country.

1960 was Africa Year, but while other parts of the continent celebrated their independence or near-independence there was no sign of change in South Africa. Mr. Macmillan made his famous speech in Cape Town warning of the great wind of change that was sweeping the continent. Though Lutuli and other leaders were pleased that the British Prime Minister had been outspoken, Lutuli was sceptical for two reasons. He was extremely sceptical about whether words would bring about a change of heart in South Africa's rulers and he was sceptical about whether Mr. Macmillan would back up his words with action: the test of Britain's sincerity would come when next she had to vote at the United Nations on the question of apartheid. His scepticism was justified, for at the U.N. that year Britain once again supported South Africa.

Imprisonment again

Meanwhile the A.N.C.'s main activity was to prepare for the anti-pass campaign. Chief Lutuli has described the very deep hatred all Africans feel for a pass and the suffering 'this evil thing' causes them. He has said:

> We are deeply conscious of, and grateful for, the fact that there is a growing number of fellow white South Africans who appreciate our situation and feel deeply about it; but they, too, can never really fully understand the depth of our suffering. Can anyone who has not gone through it possibly imagine what has happened when they read in the Press of a routine police announcement that there has been a pass raid in a location? The fear of a loud, rude bang on the door in the middle of the night, the bitter humiliation of an undignified search, the shame of husband and wife being huddled out of bed in front of their children by the police and taken off to the police cell.
>
> If there is a law in any country in the whole wide world which makes it a crime in many instances for husband and wife to live together, which separates eighteen-year-olds from their parents, I have yet to learn of it. But the pass does so in the Union of South Africa.
>
> Each year half a million of my people are arrested under the Pass Laws. Government annual reports tell of this tragic story. But statistics can tell only half the tale. The physical act of arrest and detention with the consequence of a broken home, a lost job, a loss of earnings, is only part of this grim picture. The deep humiliation felt by a black man, whether he be a labourer, an advocate, a nurse, a teacher or a professor or even a minister of religion when, over and over again, he hears the shout, 'Kaffir where is your pass—*Kaffir waar's jou pas?*' fills in the rest of this grim picture.

He went on to refer to the many Government commissions and individuals who had advocated the abolition or reform of these Pass Laws. The present Government he said 'has not only not seen it fit to curtail or abolish them, but has extended and intensified their operation . . . and, to add insult to injury, extended them, for the first time in the history of our country, to our women folk'.

In February 1960 Lutuli warned the people of South Africa that resentment among Africans was building up. The A.N.C. announced that its anti-pass campaign would start at the end

of March. But the P.A.C. had also been active, particularly in Langa in the Cape. It short-circuited the A.N.C. by ten days and on 21 March called on African men all over the country to go to police stations and surrender their passes. At two places, Sharpeville and Langa, the police fired on the crowds. The rest is history.

In the shock that reverberated around the world there was also a deep sense of sorrow. Chief Lutuli called for a national day of mourning in South Africa. The African nation and many sympathizers of other races responded to the call.

On the day after the shootings, in the Treason Trial, a gravely shocked Lutuli was called to give evidence as principal witness for the defence. The defence lawyers had been much impressed by the way in which he had prepared his evidence, but in the witness stand for once he was not at his best. It soon became apparent why; he was ill.

But meanwhile he and other A.N.C. leaders had felt that the national stay-at-home to mourn the dead was not enough. In a fiercely provocative action he burnt his 'pass', his reference book, and many other Africans followed suit.

On 8 April the Government outlawed the A.N.C. and the P.A.C. It declared a State of Emergency and arrested not only all of the leaders of the resistance movement but some 18,000 Africans as well. Lutuli, taken from the home of white friends at 3 a.m. was locked in Pretoria gaol. There, in the dim light of the passages as he and other men were being marched to their cells, he slowed down when they came to some stairs. A white policeman hit him—twice. 'I was angered,' Lutuli says in his autobiography, 'but not surprised.' Not surprised, nor yet embittered, so magnanimous is this man.

When his illness brought on a severe attack of high blood pressure he spent the rest of the five months' imprisonment in the prison hospital and during the twenty-eight days of his cross-examination in the Treason Trial he was only able to spend two hours a day in the witness stand.

Before long he was in court again charged with burning his reference book, with breaking a law by way of protest, and

with inciting others. He was found guilty on the first two counts and sentenced to six months' imprisonment (suspended for three years because of his health), and to one year's imprisonment or a fine of £100. The fine was immediately paid by women of the Black Sash, which is a European organization in South Africa, and by the Defence and Aid Fund in London.

Lutuli had intended to make a statement to the court before the passing of sentence but his lawyers advised him not to and because of his state of health he followed their advice. In it he said that he had destroyed his pass 'because I, together with the overwhelming majority of my people, condemn the pass system as the cause of much evil and suffering among us. We charge that it is nothing less than an instrument of studied degradation and humiliation of us as a people, a badge of slavery, a weapon used by the authorities to keep us in a position of inferiority . . .'

The emergency over, Lutuli went from prison straight back to Groutville. Nine years earlier the Government had deposed him from the chieftainship and this had only enhanced his authority. Now the Government had outlawed the A.N.C. and any acknowledgement of him as its leader could be punished by imprisonment, but again the Government could not destroy his authority. Even as an individual he remained chief and leader. And other leaders kept in touch with him, consulting him about the All-African Convention held in Pietermaritzburg early in 1961. He approved Nelson Mandela's leadership and he called on the African people to defy apartheid and to dedicate themselves 'to active sacrificial service'.

A critical moment in the history of South Africa came in March 1961 when the Republican Government applied for continued membership of the Commonwealth. From the point of view of Africans it was virtually an Afrikaner republic. African leaders who had formed the United Front outside South Africa travelled to African and Asian capitals, lobbying the governments, calling on them not to readmit South Africa to the Commonwealth. While the Commonwealth Prime

Ministers were in the midst of their discussions in London, from Groutville Chief Lutuli sent a significant cable to *The Times* in London in which he called on the Commonwealth to expel South Africa from membership. At the same time Mr. Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika contributed an article to *The Observer* which ably argued the case against South Africa remaining in the Commonwealth. Their intervention undoubtedly made a deep impression.

None of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers supported South Africa's racialist policies, though there was a division of opinion on whether to keep them in the Commonwealth or not. The Prime Ministers of Canada, Malaya and Ghana were particularly strong in their condemnation of apartheid. Dr. Verwoerd withdrew from the Commonwealth, defeated.

This was a victory for Lutuli and all the other militant opponents of apartheid.

A second victory in 1961 was scored when the three judges in the Treason Trial gave their verdict. The accused were 'not guilty'. The A.N.C. was not a Communist organization nor had it been infiltrated by Communists, nor had it intended to use violence to achieve a change of state in South Africa.

A third victory lay ahead.

On his farm at Grouville, November 1961

9. THE PRIZE

One day in October 1961 as Albert Lutuli trudged home from the fields his friend, E. V. Mahomed, drove up in his car and said, trying to control his excitement: 'I have a most important message for you Albert.' He opened the car door as he added: 'Come, let me drive you home so that I can give it to you in the presence of your wife.'

As soon as they reached the small, red-roofed house and had found Mrs. Lutuli, Mahomed, almost overcome with emotion announced: 'Albert you have been awarded the most important prize in the world—the Nobel Peace Prize.'

Lutuli was unbelieving: 'You are confusing it with the Gell award,' he said (an award in memory of Christopher Gell, a great South African, that had been awarded him only a week or two earlier).

No, no—Mahomed eventually persuaded him that he really had been awarded the Nobel Prize. Lutuli said only: 'I thank God who has answered the call of the oppressed people of South Africa.'

And as the news swept South Africa there was great rejoicing among the vast majority of the people—Africans proud of their leader, sensible Europeans, delighted Indians and Coloured People whose leaders expressed their excitement. As Alan Paton said, over years Dr. Verwoerd had lowered the prestige of South Africa throughout the world but 'Lutuli has raised it again'. While Dr. Naicker, the Indian leader, said: 'We are all so thrilled by this great honour bestowed on a great son of South Africa, a Prince among men.'

Only the Nationalist Government and its press commented sourly. For instance, *Die Burger* said the Nobel Peace Commit-

tee's award was a 'remarkably immature, poorly considered and fundamentally unWestern decision'!

To the crossroads town of Stanger came journalists and photographers from all over the world, some interviewing Lutuli in Mahomed's busy bookkeeper's office, some going out to the little farmhouse in the sugar fields, photographing Lutuli and his wife, his eldest daughter (now a doctor), and his grandchild, Msomi, an engaging small boy probably rather like the child Albert who had come to Groutville from Rhodesia fifty-three years before.

In his first statement after hearing of the award, Lutuli remarked that it was an honour not only done to him 'but also to my country and its people—especially those who have fought and suffered in the struggle to achieve the emancipation of all South Africans from the bonds of fear and injustice . . . It is to our credit that we have sought emancipation along peaceful lines.'

To each of the dozens of interviews that he gave at this time he came freshly, listening to each question attentively and giving to each an answer that had a singular appropriateness. Often he would disarmingly turn the table and begin to question the interviewer with genuine interest. Through the interviews ran the theme: 'I think they gave me the Nobel Peace Prize because they quite correctly believe I was leader of a liberation movement that pursued non-violence. I think so. The credit is not mine at all: my régime of the former African National Congress inherited policies that go back fifty years which I have been happy to carry out. You take the policy of being non-racial. If Congress had followed a racialist line I would just not have been a member. No, oh, no.'

He went on to answer those critics of the A.N.C. who had felt it was too ready to co-operate with non-Africans, and in doing so he pointed out that in certain other parts of Africa, for instance in Northern Rhodesia and in Nyasaland, political parties had even accepted white members. In other words, 'we all stand for non-racial democracy where colour is irrelevant', he said.

Chief and Mrs. Lutuli with their eldest daughter and their grandson Msomi, 1961, with the cable announcing the award.

During one interview he was interrupted by a phone call from London. He was enchanted by this: 'As clear as anything, as clear as anything, gee!' he exclaimed with a gust of laughter. His sense of humour is always near the surface. When the Minister of Justice refused him permission to attend a local celebration of the award he did not, as he understandably could have done, deplore the Minister's meanness, he simply remarked: 'It's making history to get the Minister to reply within two days. Something he has never done, honestly.' And when someone pointed out that the Minister's telegram expressed 'regret' Lutuli let out another gust of laughter: '*And* with regret, that is something. That *is* something!'

The local celebration in Stanger was marred only by his absence and by the refusal of the transport authorities in Durban to allow buses to transport the crowds of people who wanted to go to the gathering. The packed audience trilled and shouted with pleasure when Mrs. Lutuli received a scroll for her husband and when Alan Paton read his praise song 'You there, Lutuli' (see page iii). But perhaps the greatest delight followed Yengwa's Zulu praise song. He spoke of the great bull that enemies had tried to fence around in a kraal; the bull, he said, had broken the strong fence and wandered far, as far as Oslo! 'Nkosi yase Groutville! Nkosi yase Afrika! Nkosi yase world!' (Chief of Groutville, Chief of Africa, Chief of the world!)

As the air filled with their laughter and ululations, women waved their umbrellas high. Perhaps most moving were the words of Fatima Meer, a beautiful and militant Indian woman, as she spoke of the small victory which the Prize meant for all those who shared Lutuli's vision of the future South Africa. The vision which had taught people to demand freedom with love and tranquillity, which had led to the martyrdom of many, to imprisonment and banishment, even to death as at Sharpeville. The vision that the world was heralding. The Lutulian vision.

Even in the midst of all this excitement Lutuli went on with certain liberation tasks. He sent off a cable to Oliver Tambo,

the A.N.C. representative at the United Nations, in which he urged sanctions against the Government of South Africa; he called on the Coloured People's Convention in Cape Town to redouble efforts to achieve freedom by non-violent means; from the people of Britain he asked for more material and moral support in face of intensified Government repression; and after all the journalists had left one evening, at midnight he settled down to write his weekly article for an African newspaper.

On 5 December 1956 Lutuli had boarded a plane in Durban —to be flown to gaol in Johannesburg and to be tried for high treason.

On 5 December 1961 he and his wife boarded a plane in Durban—to be flown via London to Oslo, to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for 1960. Soon after his arrival he received a warm message from President Kennedy. Though the South African Government might not recognize him, the President of the United States addressed him simply as 'Chief John Albert Lutuli, Oslo, Norway' and said: 'I have been moved by the award to you of the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize and I join with many others from all parts of the world in extending sincere congratulations to you. This high recognition of your past and continuing efforts in the cause of justice and the advancement through peaceful means of the brotherhood of man is applauded by free men everywhere. Please accept my best wishes for your continued health and well-being.'

On 10 December in the presence of King Olaf of Norway, of the Prime Minister, many diplomats and other distinguished people, Lutuli received the Prize. Wearing a chief's ceremonial garb, he was given a standing ovation. Gunnar Jahn, the chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, described Lutuli's work and said that his efforts to seek equality by non-violent means while being confined to his own country had a much wider perspective. It concerned the struggle for human rights not only in South Africa but also in other countries. 'If the non-white population in South Africa manages to raise itself from its humiliation without the use of terror and violence, it

will be first and foremost Lutuli's work.' But, he added, if violence came in South Africa and the country drowned in blood 'let us remember him then, and never forget that his policy was unshakeable and clear. He did not want it that way.'

Lutuli receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, 1961

Lutuli was clearly overwhelmed by feeling. His few words of thanks were barely audible: 'I regard this as a tribute to Mother Africa, to all peoples, whatever their race, colour or creed,' he said. 'But I also regard it as an added responsibility laid upon us. We have been made answerable for our part in the future development of the world.' And as before when he had first been told of the award he paid tribute to his wife, Nokukhanya, without whose help he could not have done his work.

On the following day, Chief Lutuli gave his Nobel Peace Prize address. Standing very upright as is characteristic of him he spoke of the three-fold significance of the award—a tribute to his humble contribution among people of all races to find a peaceful solution to the race problem; a democratic declaration

of solidarity with those fighting to increase liberty in South Africa; and 'a welcome recognition of the role played by the African people during the last fifty years to establish, peacefully, a society in which merit, and not race, would fix the position of the individual in the life of the nation.'

He spoke of how little peace there had been in Africa in our time, from the war in Algeria to the shootings in Sharpeville in South Africa. 'Ours is a continent in revolution against oppression. And peace and revolution make uneasy bedfellows. There can be no peace until the forces of oppression are overthrown.'

He went on to refer to the long series of revolutionary upheavals in Europe, from the age of feudal backwardness to industrialization, true nationhood, democracy and rising living standards, an age of revolution that encompassed some of the bloodiest civil wars in all history. By comparison the African revolution had swept three-quarters of its continent in less than a decade. He quoted eminent observers in support of his remark that the African revolution by comparison had been orderly, quick and bloodless.

In spite of Africa's many divisions he pointed to its single aim, 'our goal is a United Africa in which the standards of life and liberty are constantly expanding, in which the ancient legacy of illiteracy and disease is swept aside, in which the dignity of man is rescued from beneath the heels of colonialism which have trampled it . . .

'There is a paradox in the fact that Africa qualifies for such an award in its age of turmoil and revolution.

'How great is the paradox,' he went on, 'and how much greater the honour that an award in support of the peace and the brotherhood of man should come to one who is a citizen of a country where the brotherhood of man is an illegal doctrine, outlawed, banned, censured, proscribed and prohibited, where the work, talk of campaign for the realization in fact and deed of the brotherhood of man is hazardous, punished with banishment or confinement without trial, or imprisonment, where effective democratic channels to peace-

ful settlement of the race problem have existed these 300 years, and where white minority power rests on the most heavily armed and equipped military machine in Africa.

'This is South Africa.'

But it was not necessary, he said, to speak at length about South Africa, for it had forced itself on the attention of the world. 'It is a museum piece in our time, a hangover from the dark past of mankind, a relic of an age which everywhere else is dead or dying.' He analysed the mythology of white supremacy, of apartheid, and paid tribute to such opponents of it as Livingstone and John Philip, who had stood for social justice in the face of overwhelming odds, men whose names were still anathema to some South Africans.

'I, as a Christian,' he said, 'have always felt that there is one thing above all about apartheid or separate development that is unforgivable. It seems utterly indifferent to the suffering of individual persons, who lose their land, their homes, their jobs, in the pursuit of what is surely the most terrible dream in the world.' A dream which is the deliberate policy of a Government, supported actively by a large part of the white population and tolerated passively by an overwhelming part but 'fortunately rejected by an encouraging white minority who have thrown in their lot with non-whites'.

African history, he pointed out, had been one of opposition to domination and he paid tribute to some of their great leaders and to the stock that had nurtured them: those forebears who 'in trekking from the north to the southernmost tip of Africa centuries ago, braved rivers that are perennially swollen, hacked their way through treacherous jungle and forest and survived the plagues of the then untamed lethal diseases of a multifarious nature that abounded in equatorial Africa, and wrested themselves from the gaping mouths of the beasts of prey.

'They endured it all.' These forebears had settled in southern Africa 'to build a future worth while for us, their offspring'.

Generally the passing of time has seen barriers to freedom going down in most parts of the world, Lutuli went on. 'Not

so South Africa. Here the barriers do not go down. Each step we take forward, every achievement we chalk up, is cancelled out by the raising of new and higher barriers to our advance . . . All too often the protests and demonstrations of our people have been beaten back by force, but they have never been silenced.' In this modern struggle, in spite of cruel treatment in the name of law and order, the freedom fighters had remained non-violent.

'If today this peace award is given to South Africa through a black man, it is not because we in South Africa have won our right for peace and human brotherhood.

'Far from it. Perhaps we stand farther from victory than any other people in Africa. But nothing we have suffered at the hands of the Government has turned us from our chosen path of disciplined resistance. It is for this, I believe, that this award is given.

'How easy it would have been in South Africa for the natural feelings of resentment at white domination to have been turned into feelings of hatred and a desire for revenge against the white community.

'Here, where every day in every aspect of life every non-white comes up against the ubiquitous sign "Europeans only", and the equally ubiquitous policeman to enforce it, here it could well be expected that a racialism equal to that of their oppressors would flourish to counter the white arrogance towards blacks.'

That the Africans had not been racialist was, he pointed out, no accident. It was because their leaders over fifty years, inspired by the A.N.C., which he had had the honour to lead for the last decade until it was outlawed, had 'set itself steadfastly against racial vaingloriousness'. In doing so the leaders had passed up opportunities for 'an easy demagogic appeal to the natural passions of a people denied freedom and liberty . . .

'The true patriots of South Africa, for whom I speak,' he went on, would be satisfied with nothing less than full democratic rights, complete equality of opportunity in economic

matters, the opening of all doors of learning and the abolition of all racial bars. All these things they demand for *all* South Africans. And on these principles 'we are uncompromising' he emphasized.

When he came to speak of the things that had sustained the spirit of freedom-loving people in South Africa in their fight for lasting values, he paid high tribute to 'the magnificent support of the progressive people and Governments throughout the world, amongst whom number the people and Government of the country of which I am today a guest, our brothers in Africa, especially in the independent African states, organizations who share the outlook we embrace in countries scattered right across the face of the globe, the United Nations Organization jointly and some of its member nations singly.'

In expressing heartfelt appreciation for all this support, however, 'we South Africans,' he said, 'equally understand that much as others might do for us, our freedom cannot come to us as a gift from abroad. Our freedom we must make for ourselves.'

Lutuli ended with an invitation to all Africa 'to cast her eyes beyond the past and to some extent the present, with their woes and tribulations, trials and failures, and some successes', for 'this is Africa's age—the dawn of her fulfilment . . .'

'Could it not be', he asked, 'that history has delayed her rebirth for a purpose? The situation confronts her with inescapable challenges, but more importantly with opportunities for service to herself and mankind . . .'

Could Africa not be magnanimous; turn enmity into amity? 'Though robbed of her lands, her independence and opportunities to become—this often, oddly enough, done to her in the name of civilization and even Christianity—should she not see her destiny as being that of making a distinctive contribution to human progress and human relationships with a peculiar new African flavour enriched by the diversity of cultures she enjoys, thus building on the summits of present human achievement an edifice that would be one of the finest tributes to the genius of man?'

Furthermore, Africa, acting in concert with other nations,

'is man's last hope for a mediator between the East and West', and is qualified to demand of the great powers 'to "turn the swords into ploughshares" because two-thirds of mankind is hungry and illiterate; to engage human energy, human skill and human challenge in the service of peace . . .

'Africa's qualification for this noble task is incontestable. For her own fight has never been and is not now a fight for conquest of land, for accumulation of wealth or domination of peoples, but for the recognition and preservation of the rights of man and the establishment of a true free world.'

During his address Chief Lutuli paid tribute to the late Dag Hammarskjoeld, 'distinguished world citizen and fighter for peace', to whom the Nobel Peace Prize for 1961 was awarded. And when Lutuli ended he did something never before heard of at a Nobel ceremony, he sang—'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika'—and soon all the assembly joined in, singing or humming the great anthem.

The Times described the deep impression made by Lutuli's dignity and by his moving address and appeal for ending racial suppression in South Africa and creating a basis for equality and peace.

South Africa's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eric Louw, on the contrary, attacked the address for slandering and abusing South Africa. Lutuli's conduct, he said, proved he was 'no man of peace'. But though the South African Government severely restricted Lutuli's movements, refusing to let him accept many invitations to Sweden, England and the U.S.A., they could not restrict his influence. A Norwegian newspaper, *Arbeiderbladet*, describes the effect of his visit: 'We have suddenly begun to feel Africa's nearness and greatness. In the millions of huts of corrugated iron, mud and straw lives a force which can make the world richer . . .

'Lutuli, the Zulu chieftain and schoolteacher, is an exceptional man. But in his words, his voice, his smile, his strength, his spontaneity a whole continent speaks.

'Africa's laughter and tears are now breaking against our own shores . . .

'Albert Lutuli must now return to his people in chains, to his guards in exile. We have never seen a freer man.'

The Nobel Prize, as the Johannesburg *Star* remarked, was 'a measure of the gulf that divides South Africa morally from the rest of the civilized world'; it did indeed show up the contrast in values between the South African Government and the outside world and it is interesting to think that the reasons for which the Nobel Prize Committee conferred this high honour on Lutuli are the very reasons for which the Government ban, confine and imprison him.

Back in Durban huge crowds roared, sang and danced their welcome as Lutuli stepped out of the plane. He and his wife were told by the Special Branch to go straight to a waiting car.

If a prophet is without honour in his own land a Nobel Prize winner who is African is even less so among the Europeans in his home district in South Africa. After a lifetime in the neighbourhood, Lutuli is startled if local Europeans greet him in the streets of Stanger. And when he and the European secretary from Johannesburg who helped him at that time went to the Post Office to collect his mail, she had to enter by the 'Europeans only' door, while the Nobel Prize winner went into the 'Non-European' section.

10. THE MAN WHO KEEPS ON GROWING

ALBERT LUTULI'S story is the story of the greatness of a Zulu school teacher. A man who did not have much education, who is not an intellectual (he does not even read widely), but who has deep roots and therefore a remarkable, deep intelligence. This, together with his clear integrity, enables him to deal with each problem that arises with aptitude. Yet it is more than aptitude; it is a kind of grace.

His one weakness is that he takes it for granted that those who help him do so because of the cause, when in fact some of them also do so because of their reverence and affection for him. The result is that he sometimes overlooks their generosity. This is a weakness common to many people who are dedicated to a cause.

Undoubtedly history has made Luthuli. And as he has responded to the challenge of events in South Africa he has grown in stature, a growth so pronounced as to be visible, for over the years he has become physically firmer and more integrated; his face, from being heavy and unremarkable, has become noble. But he could not have grown thus unless he had had a fundamental strength of character and intelligence and the spiritual potential. Nor could he have responded without the constant support and companionship of his wife, Nokukhanya. Her sheer hard work on the land and in the home set him free to concentrate on the needs of a nation. Her encouragement has refreshed him, and she has done much to maintain the serenity of their household so that today the family includes one daughter who is a doctor, and three who are nurses.

Some of the men who have worked with him or known him during many years have expressed their opinions:

'Whereas other leaders are often self-centred, Chief in the true sense of the word tends to be a purist. If he says he wants democracy he means he will fight damned hard for it. Some people, like him and Father Huddleston, take Christianity very very very seriously and see no reason why it should not be put into operation here.' This was said by a militant African leader.

'Chief is the one leader of great calibre. He does not talk empty. He thinks things over for days and days and comes to decisions. He speaks from conviction.' This was the opinion of an Indian Muslim leader.

'To South Africans, Chief is more than a symbol. He is a leader, a crusader, a builder.' A white Marxist was speaking.

Lutuli has a strength and pride that makes him no man's plaything, and a certain solitariness, partly imposed by the harsh bans of authority, partly a quality of his own nature. This view was expressed by a white liberal.

Chief has 'a profound sense of the supernatural' said a Christian priest.

Running through his life are two qualities: humility and authority. And perhaps what has inspired him most has been his belief in the dignity of the human personality. One author who wrote about him has drawn attention to a statement that Lutuli made on the effects of minority rule. Lutuli said: 'Non-whites under the minority rule of whites only, have for decades suffered and continue to suffer a repression that not only impoverishes them but is a most humiliating affront to their person and dignity' (*South Africa, The Road Ahead*, chapter by A. J. Lutuli).

This author went on to remark that 'the deep awareness of human dignity and of the sacredness of the human person which underlies such statements as these is essentially Christian; but it should be noted that the conception of personality as a Divine *force* (in Lutuli's phrase "human personality—a God-given force") is also uniquely African. In African thought, according to Rev. Placide Tempels's *Bantu Philosophy*, the fundamental Western concept of *being* finds its equivalent in a

dynamic concept of *force*. "For the Bantu," he says, "man is the dominant force among all created visible forces. His force, his life, his fullness of being, consist in his participation to a greater or less extent in the force of God . . . At his own level, man, by Divine Force, is himself a living force" ' (*Albert John Luthuli and the South African Race Conflict* by Edward Callan).

Lutuli does his writing at home in Groutville. Their sitting-room in the farm house is modest, with pale blue and pink washed walls, a sofa and a few chairs, a glass-fronted cupboard full of files, a radio, a painting of a river scene in England and a photograph of the huge meeting in Sophiatown from which he was banned. In the evenings, at a small desk that is cluttered with books, he works by lamplight. There in December 1961 he wrote an article in *Drum* describing what he would do if he were Prime Minister of South Africa. As a background to his suggestions he emphasized that nothing but a democratic form of government of all the people, for the people, and by the people, would satisfy: a State where all adults regardless of race, colour or belief were voters.

The land question would call for revolutionary changes because the white quarter of the population possessed eighty-seven per cent. while the African three-quarters had less than thirteen per cent. of which ninety-nine per cent. was Trust land with Africans being virtually State tenants. So he proposed that a system such as that in Great Britain and Sweden might meet the case. 'The land must be redistributed and allocated to those who have to live and make their living on the land . . . This would not preclude some land being held by the State for renting to individuals and for State Experimental Farms.' Speculation on land would be stopped. 'The present so-called African Reserves which are very much depressed areas, will need special attention . . . The duty of the Government would be to rehabilitate both the land and the people.' He envisaged special aid for farmers in those areas as well as co-operative farm settlements liberally aided and drawing on the experience of Israel.

There would be Government control of private enterprise,

commerce and industry, with nationalization of certain sectors, and supertax on high incomes to enable the oppressed to be uplifted.

Human rights would be entrenched in the Constitution.

Workers would enjoy trade union rights and there would be minimum wages and conditions with no discrimination on grounds of colour or race.

The best guarantee against fears and prejudices would come from planned development to increase employment and raise standards of living all round. All discriminatory legislation and restriction on movement would go. Racialism would be outlawed. Education would be free and compulsory at first in the primary stage and later up to matriculation, and substantial aid would be given for bursaries and loans to students. Technical and adult education would be encouraged.

'My South Africa would encourage a harnessing of science and technology to everyday uses of man and not for his destruction.' It would, he said, seek the banning of nuclear warfare and support the United Nations.

He also described how the rule of law would be scrupulously respected and how special care would be taken to develop an efficient and civil police force. Defence would rest on 'a people's army'.

'My idea is a non-racial Government consisting of the best men—merit rather than colour counting' and he envisaged a Republican form of Government which would be part of larger units such as the Commonwealth of Nations and a Federation of African States.

As for the State itself, Lutuli said, 'the individual would remain cardinal, for "the State exists for the individual" and not "the individual for the State".' He realized that a state such as he visualized—a democratic social welfare state—could not be born in one day, 'But it would be the paramount task of the Government to bring it about and advance it without crippling industry, commerce, farming and education.'

Lutuli's most important literary work was his autobiography,

Let My People Go. This he dictated to the Rev. Charles Hooper and Mrs. Sheila Hooper. In it the reader will find clearly expressed the Chief's views on many subjects. There is one matter on which he always expresses himself with passion. This is the failure of the Church in South Africa. He wrote in his book: 'White paternalist Christianity—as though the whites had invented the Christian Faith—estranges my people from Christ. Hypocrisy, double standards, and the identification of white skins with Christianity, do the same. For myself, for very many of us, nothing short of apostasy would budge us. We know Christianity for what it is, we know it is not a white preserve, we know that many whites—and Africans for that matter—are inferior exponents of what they profess. The Faith of Christ persists in spite of them. But how many weak and experimental black Christians are made to stumble by the white example! How vulnerable we Christians are!' Yet, he pointed out, 'it is not too late for white Christians to look at the Gospels and redefine their allegiance'. But he warned 'in South Africa the opportunity is three hundred years old. It will not last forever. The time is running out.'

A Christian who commands Luthuli's deepest respect is Bishop Ambrose Reeves, who was Bishop of Johannesburg during the 1950s and who became Luthuli's friend during the grim years of the Treason Trial. When first they met it had been a brief conversation and Albert Luthuli had been too amused by the Bishop's gaiters to get much impression of him as a man. Then, as they got to know each other, he saw the Bishop as man of God and was deeply impressed by his insight into the true nature of what was happening in South Africa and by his courage and concern for people. He came to regard the Bishop 'really as a father' and to feel that the Church does not fully appreciate what Bishop Reeves and the Rev. Michael Scott, Father Huddleston and Canon Collins have done for *the Church* in Africa, quite apart from what they have done for the people. It is his belief that Africans could contribute to Christian thinking what is native to them and compatible with Christian principles. Yet in its own field, not

even the political field, he feels that 'the Church is not at all aggressive enough', so that 'things are moving fast to heathenism'—to a polished form of heathenism.

Another subject on which Lutuli has written is that of non-violence. He has said: 'Violence disrupts human life and is destructive to perpetrator and victim alike. If we steadfastly refuse to be drawn into violence, reconstruction and reconciliation will become easier—because there will not be the deep aftermath scars which are almost bound to follow a violent struggle where lives are lost and abiding hatred engendered.

'To refrain from violence is the sign of the civilized man as compared with the brute. The more truly civilized an individual is, the more likely he is to find peaceful methods of fighting for the things in which he believes. . . .

'Non-violence gives us a moral superiority over any who would use violence against us. Yet I do not regard peace as a passive thing. The non-violent policy I am advocating is a positive one, using positive methods and aimed at the positive, worthwhile objective of freedom.

'It demands moral courage and taxes our physical courage. It does not dupe freedom fighters by forms of mass hysteria which are all too prevalent in violent campaigns.'

Besides, he asks, 'if we were ever to forget our high call to peaceful duty and action and turn instead to bloodshed, how could we demand and expect the sympathy of the outside world?' But basically the pledge to non-violent activity is made 'because our better natures and our conscience demand this of us'.

On one occasion, questioned about when he had first begun to believe in non-violence, he closed his eyes tight—a characteristic gesture when he searches back into the past—then slowly began to reply: 'I wouldn't say that there was ever a time when I consciously decided and said—now look, I am here deciding for non-violence. For one thing, when I came into Congress, the campaigns it was planning were in fact on non-violent lines and one was happy to fit in with that.' He

has casually read Gandhi, 'but I don't know the theory of non-violence as explained by experts. I would not classify myself as a pacifist, to say I would never participate in a war. But if I were not in South Africa I would have the same attitude to a nuclear war as to the South African Government because it means the destruction of humanity.'

That he is essentially non-violent is undoubted, his literal turning of the other cheek when the white hooligan knocked him down at the meeting in Pretoria is but one example. But there is no softness in the policy of non-violence; as he has said, it is militant, and he feels, despite Government's crushing of non-violent demonstrations such as the three-day stay-at-home in May 1961 that 'the non-violent method, even unclothing it of any moral consideration—is the most effective and practical in our situation.' He has pointed out that it has never been sufficiently well organized to prove its efficacy.

But he is well aware of the appeal of anti-whiteism and of violence: 'If one wanted to be a cheap popular leader, the cry let's drive the white man out would catch on like wild fire', he said once. As to whether an Angola situation could arise in South Africa, his view was: 'You would expect people to start questioning and asking how long would these white men take advantage of our seeming docility. It would not be surprising to find some, particularly young people, beginning to question the efficacy of non-violence when they face so aggressive a Government. If the oppressed people here ever came to indulge in violent ways that would be reaction against the policy of Government in suppressing them. However much you may disagree with them, you cannot *blame* them. But the leadership', he added, 'stand by the non-violent method.'

It was clear that when the Nobel Committee made its award, it recognized the danger of racial strife facing South Africa—and indeed the world—so long as the arrogance of white racialism persists. And the award, coming at a moment when for the first time in South Africa people had been driven to use sabotage, had a peculiar significance.

How long could Lutuli's influence survive? The answer was uncertain and his problem in exerting his influence was illustrated by an incident that happened just after he was awarded the Nobel Prize. An Afrikaner Nationalist journalist who called on him then began to say, 'You're a man of influence, why don't you . . .' when Lutuli cut him short and, standing feet close together, arms tight down his side, in a spontaneous illustration, retorted, 'you crowd me, you tether me tight, and you expect me to exert my influence'. There was a note of anguish in his voice.

Now, under the 'Sabotage' Act Lutuli's voice has been utterly silenced in South Africa. In the Act the term sabotage covers a wide range of actions, even, for example, writing a slogan on a wall. The minimum penalty is five years' imprisonment, the maximum death. It is now a serious offence for anyone to publish the remarks or writings of a banned person. Chief Lutuli's words can no longer be quoted. Anyone quoting him will be liable to three years' imprisonment. This book is illegal in South Africa, a book telling the story of a South African patriot of whom the whole country should be proud.

Lutuli's story is the story of a man who kept on growing. The racialism of the Nationalist Government and its supporters could so easily have driven Lutuli to an equally negative racialism. Instead he became ever more creative and constructive. His story is proof that in the midst of evil good can grow.

The inspiring quality of Lutuli's creative thought runs through his book. 'South Africa' he says in his autobiography 'is a heroic country. The patient endurance of the weak is stronger, far stronger than the toughness of the bully with the gun.' The people of all races who attended the Treason Trial and showed their support for the accused, portrayed, he said 'my new South Africa, a company of men and women of goodwill, yearning to begin work on the building of a structure both permanent and real. Indeed, they have already begun.'

Lutuli has no illusions about the fanaticism of the Nationalist Government nor the granite quality of their apartheid. He is eager for resolute action from the outside world in the form of sanctions, but insists that this can only supplement South Africans' own struggle for liberation.

He is inspired by an optimism that is not of this earth. During the Treason Trial he was asked by the Crown Prosecutor: 'There was very little hope of negotiation . . .?' He replied: 'There were no signs, my lords, in that direction.' Judge Bekker: 'Any hope?' Albert Lutuli: 'Hope, yes, hope is always there, my lord.'

And the extent of his hope is in his belief that 'we in South Africa can forge together a more unified way of life, without the rawness, competitiveness, and the too materialistic outlook of the Western way of life, which has the inherent power of breeding conflict and division . . .' Those words were spoken in December 1961. Since then he has been silenced. Since then the struggle has entered a new and even grimmer phase: Government violence having finally provoked counter-violence, the underground movements increased their acts of sabotage. The Government ceaselessly imprisons all African opponents it can capture without trial. Lutuli, in his exile in Groutville has virtually become an elder statesman, to whom honour is paid as a great leader of his day, who won for himself and his followers the Prize for furthering brotherhood among peoples.

'Who knows', he asked in his Nobel address, 'but that the precise role of Africa would be one day to restore to the white man his lost soul?'

A READING LIST

BOOKS

Let My People Go by Albert Lutuli (London, 1962).
The Treason Cage by Anthony Sampson (London, 1958).
South Africa, The Road Ahead, essays including 'The Effect of Minority Rule on Non-Whites' by A. J. Lutuli (London, 1960).
The African Patriots by Mary Benson (Faber, London, 1963.)

PAMPHLETS

Albert John Luthuli and The South African Race Conflict by Edward Callan (Western Michigan University Press).
Man of the People—Chief A. J. Lutuli, Afrika Publications.

The author and publishers acknowledge with thanks the permission given by William Collins & Sons to quote from Chief Lutuli's autobiography *Let My People Go*. They hope that this short life will lead readers on to reading Chief Lutuli's own book.

In this short biography of the great South African Mary Benson tells of his early life and education and of the struggles that he undertook on behalf of his people. Struggles which resulted in the formation of the African National Congress, and in his arrest, trial and acquittal on the charge of treason.

Throughout his life and despite the treatment he received, Chief Lutuli has been an apostle of non-violence; and this characteristic although not recognized by the South African authorities received world wide recognition when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, a prize which he received in person in Oslo. Chief Lutuli is now back in his reserve on his farm; forbidden by the Government to travel or to address meetings. This is the story of a great and good man.

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