

A.W.G. CHAMPION.

318 B Grey Street
Durban March 13, 1959

Mr Lionel Forman,
8 Park Avenue,
Camps Bay,
CAPE TOWN.

Dear Mr Forman,

I am in receipt of your letter dated the 8th Inst. I think this information you want can be suitably taken by the student in Durban as you suggested in your letter because I may not find time to write all this information you want.

I am now living in a sort of retirement doing my own writing and typing. The information may be long and as such I may not find time to do all that.

Recently I have been visited by people from three different Universities and some took my papers with many years information. The Stellenbosch University Professors visited me on behalf of SABRA.

I am not sure whether I will live very long now because I see so many learned people visiting me for my life history. For many years I have worked as an agitator disliked by many Europeans and some native leaders and some people. There came a time when I felt that I should leave active politics to others because I felt that my services were not appreciated.

At one time I was shown a book published which had been written by Edward Roux which gave me a bad picture of misrepresentation.

I have hardly had a European friend from the Government, Capitalists and some of my colleagues the trade Unionists.

From my class room I began to represent my people who were students. I first worked for the police in Johannesburg in 1913 I then again started to organise the native constables to claim their rights.

I had to resign in 1914 to get another police job in Natal where I found that my services could not keep up with the policy of the S.A.P.

I then decided to seek work in the Mines in 1916. My first job as a Clerk was at Simmer & Jack (Pty) Ltd as a clerk in the Time Office.

In 1917 I went to Roodepoort United and Gold Mining Co as a clerk in the time Office. In 1919 I went to the Riverdale Diggings in Taungs. I could not live long there because I was sent back because of my activities. I came back to Johannesburg sad and wiser. I joined the native staff of the Crown Mines Ltd as a clerk. This is where I took part in the organisation of the Native Mine Clerks Association.

I became its President until I left the Mines to join the I.C.U in 1925 from 1920. During this period I was interested in the Gamma Sigma Club organised by Rev Ray Phillips and the Joint Council of European and Natives, Johannesburg. I met Dr Aggrey personally. He spent many days with me in Crown Mines telling me rather trying to instil in me that the best music produced by a piano is played by the black and white notes.

I was a Zulu and a nationalist. I am still one. I believed that if there must be corporation it must be on equal footing. There is a bad practice with white friends when they corporate with Africans. They do so in order to control them. Use them. Drag them to their way of thinking.

When my eyes first opened in 1920 there was what I think the first trike of native employees employed by the Municipality of Johannesburg.

These men were charged before a magistrate whose name remains in my memory as McFie. He scolded them and sent them to jail as culprits. This magistrate did not know that the awakening had begun in the life of the African worker.

Since that time I have been in many strikes, rioting, inquiries and statutory boards. In Johannesburg I was nearly killed under the bridge of the Vrededorp subway during the strike of passes in 1920. I was through out the Rand European strike which ended by bloodshed. *European Strike*

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN.
UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD.

Registration
Card.

Registrasie-
Kaart.

1959

Name..... Lionel: Torman.....
Naam

Local Address..... 8 Park Avenue.....
Plaaslike Adres

..... Camps Bay.....
.....

Degree or Diploma
to be taken..... Ph.D.....
Graad of Diploma
waarvoor studeer word

N.B.: A Student is required upon request to present
this card to each of his professors or lecturers for
checking departmental registers.

L.W.: Dit word vereis dat 'n student hierdie kaart op
versoek aan elk van sy professors of lektore sal toon,
sodat dit met departementele registers vergelyk kan
word.

Registration No. 730
Registrasie No.

CLYDE C.T. F2881/1/59

Box 2 F13

NOTES

- 1. Matriculation Certificates must be shown at the Registrar's office.**
- 2. The Registrar must be informed of any change of curriculum.**

- 1. Matrikulasie sertifikate moet by die Registrateur se kantoor getoon word.**
- 2. Die Registrateur moet in kennis gestel word van enige veranderinge in die leerplan.**

AANTEKENINGS

The Transvaal Native Clerks Association was not organised by the Chamber of Mines as Eddie Roux wrote in his Book. It was organised by the native clerks themselves. In fact the men who started were from Randfontein Mines.

Our General Secretary was Paul Gajana who is residing in Sophiatown. He was employed by the City and Suburban Gold Mining Company. I was employed by the Crown Mines. Through our representation we succeeded to have the Association recognised by the Chamber of Mines against the wishes of the Compound Managers Association.

It was in 1925 just before the visit of the Prince of Wales when the late Clements Kadalie came to see me. He asked me to leave the Mines and join him in organising the workers under the constitution of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Of Africa (I.C.U.)

I agreed and resigned my employment as the Chief Clerk and accepted the appointment as the Organising ~~Chairman~~ in the ~~main~~ I.C.U. (Secretary)

I was stationed in Johannesburg for few months and sent to Bloemfontein for another few months. In September 1925 I was transferred to Natal with Head Quarters in Durban.

Mr Batty was employed by me as Adviser, Bookkeeper and at times my driver when touring the country. Mr Batty was a trade unionist from England a member of the Engineering Union in England and Durban. He had served in a Government Sugar Commission. He knew every one in the Labour Department and Trade Union Movement. I had a good friend

It was through Mr Batty that Mr Clements Kadalie decided to obtain the services of a European Advisor from England. He brought Mr W.G. Ballinger. It is my considered opinion that Mr Ballinger contributed largely to the death of the I.C.U. If Ballinger had the experience of Batty he would have saved the I.C.U.

Before Mr Kadalie went to Europe there was a civil case between me and one George Lenono. I lost the case because the books of the I.C.U. had not been audited. When Kadalie returned he was advised to suspend me from my Office as I was acting in his place as the National Secretary. My suspension caused the Natal branches of the I.C.U. to secede from the National Body. The step made all the branches not to pay for the contributions. Just at that time there came Mr Ballinger. The appearance of Ballinger precipitated the misunderstanding. New in S.A. not knowing the pillars of the I.C.U. he started to dictate. The Union had got rid of some officials because of their views. Amongst them was J.A. Laguma, and Comrade John Gomas.

Mr Kadalie with only Kadalie's European ideas could not help this new arrival organiser. Mr A.F. Batty was busy in Durban managing our Union's Clothing Factory. We had a fully paid up properties in Durban and Greytown and one in Pietermaritzburg with a Bond (33 Church Str)

We having seceded these were left with Ballinger's regime. He failed to protect them and finally quarreled with Mr Clements Kadalie.

Natal kept on getting strong against the attacks of the Government employers of labour and Mr Ballinger's silly attitude. In 1929 we organised a boycott of Kaffir Beer which ended in bloodshed. We demanded the establishment of Locations for families, increase of pay and granting of trading licenses to our African people. In the riot six natives were killed by Europeans and two Europeans were killed. As the result of this many opportunities were opened. Here our W.G. Ballinger blamed me and cursed for fighting to be a black distasteful, who wanted to control the brewing of Kaffir Beer. From that time agitation continued at a double pace and there was appointed two successive Commissions. The last recommended that I should be deported if my activities do not slow down. A police Officer was sent to me to warn me personally in the person of Col Lendrum a Deputy Commissioner, S.A.P. from Pretoria. I was exiled as from September 1930. This killed the Natal U.C.U. Yase Natal. I was away from 1930 to 1935. No European friend ever helped me. There was no sympathy of any one for me. In 1931 I was employed by Mr I.W. Silhesenger as a teller in the Colonial Bank and Trust Co. I was placed under the ban and I was advised to promise that I shall not agitate anymore. I refused to do this.

In 1936 I took part in agitating against the native bills of General Hertzog. I was a member of the deputation that interviewed him twice.

I can never forget what General Hertzog told us. He said "Gentlemen if I agree with you and give all your people franchise it would not be long before the white leave this country with you"

I was an active member of the Non European Conference led by Dr A. Abdurahman and Professor Jabavu. I was present in a meeting in the City Hall Capetown when a coloured lady callapsed and died while addressing the conference. This woman was criticising Dr Abdurahman, and General Smuts.

I joined the African National Congress at the request of the Rev A.R. Mahabane. He appointed me to his cabinet and was his Minister of Labour. I continued until the time of Dr A.B. Xuma.

I took part in many discussions. I became the Deputy Speaker under Mr R.V. Selope Thema. When Dr Moroka became President I felt that I could not lead the Congress any more in Natal where I had been the Provincial President since 1945.

I personally know Bill Andrews for many years. In the olden days I used to attend meeting with him and S. Bunting in Johannesburg. I knew Stuart of the Cape Trades Union. He was a great friend of Mr A.F. Batty.

I know many European trade unionists. I met personally Mr B.G. Shaw the famous writer.

I failed to be elected in 1937 to be a member of the Native Representative Council but was successful in 1942. My activities are well known in that Council.

In the Mine Clerks Association we did get the increase of wages for native clerks, police boys and Indunas. We got them built for them good houses by the mines. More rations for them and their families.

I succeeded to get the establishment of the Clermont township and Good Hope Estate where our African people are allowed to buy and own free hold properties in Natal. Clermont Township is near Pinetown but within easy reach of Durban. The Good Hope is within the boundary of Durban in Cato Manor. All this was the work of the Natal I.C.U. Yase Natal.

The establishment of the Municipality Locations in Durban are the work of the I.C.U.

One of the enemies of the I.C.U. was the Congress of the Locations Advisory Boards organised and led by Mr R.H. Godlo of East London. I became the member because of my membership of the Durban Location Advisory Boards.

In the African National Congress I was privileged to organise our native Chiefs. I can claim that even ex Chief Lutulin is my find. He was a minister in my cabinet. With my influence in the A.N.C. I decided to organise a fund which was separte from the funds of the A.N.C. My reason for that I was suspicious that the time may come when the Government may freeze the funds of the Congress. The money is there nearly £500 looked after by me and H. Selby Msimang. The A.N.C. have no claim over it because of its consitution.

When I was outvoted in the Congress I was please because I was not able to work under President J.S. Moroka. In my leadership I want to lead my people and not be led by them.

This policy is very important in my mind. It so happens that members of a body carried away by their feelings will want their President to dance to their tune even if that tune is dangerous.

At present I remain a member of the Locations Advisory Boards representing two locations of Lamont and Chesterville.

My policy seems quite different from the present leadership in many ways. Up to now the Government do not trust me. The Secretary for Native Affairs refused to have me appointed to the membership of Committee to settle disputes in the Department of labour. The same applys to the School Boards Membership under the Bantu Education Act. With all this I remain what I am.

When you send your student to see me you will have read all this from my pen.

Yours sincerely



THE PAMPHLET.

When I wrote the letter in reply to yours I had had no time to read the pamphlet on the early days of the Congress. I have had to read it and I now give you my observations.

What struck me with pleasantness was to find that you had given a space for the first Johannesburg strike for native workers. You actually mentioned the name of the trial magistrate who had convicted those pioneers.

Your will compare my own remarks with yours when I had not even seen your nor had I known that you had referred to them.

2.

I think your description of the late Dr John Langalibalele Dube should also stated that he was a school teacher and founded a school Ohlange Institute besides the Ilanga Lase Natal. The school was opened in 1908.

I note with interest what you have quoted from Mr Mveli Sikota's book the African Yearly's Register. I contributed some pages on this book at the request of Mr Sikota. I gave a different picture of Tshaka and Dingane the great Kings of the Zulus. Some European papers commented adversely about it.

I also note what you quoted about Mr Msane who said the white workers needed to be educated. That their trade union was organised to protect them against the black workers. Up to now the white trade Unions refuse to remove the restrictions.

Your second picture with ANC leaders has also the picture of my friend Luke Masine. It will interest you to know that his son is a treason suspect.

I know them all in the picture except two namely Kraai and Cetyiwe. I know Dr Ed. Roux very well I knew him when he was a student in the Wits University. One time he was at 22 Hanover Street, Capetown.

I once saved him from conviction when he was charged before the Magistrate for alleged creating hostility between white and blacks section 29 of the Native Administration.

I knew Mr S.P. Bunting and his wife very well. I once saved Mr Bunting from conviction by getting the witnesses to change their statements made before the police.

Your outline in the pamphlet is interesting to me.

I knew Solomon Plaatje very well two days before he died he had dinner with me at Sophiatown while I was living in banishment.

I knew Saul Msane very well. If he did not die he was to be the first Editor of Umteteli Wabantu Newspaper. I was to be his assistant.

He died and the Chamber of Mines engaged Rev. J.L. Dube and Sol Plaatje as joint Editors.

You people are in a better position because you have means of publicity. Our present leadership is in a better position because they have many friends amongst Europeans. We in the I. C. U have very few if any. Yes we died as an organisation we have no complaint but men and women like the Ballingers are alive and gloat over our ashes !

Adolf Rosenberg
14.3.59