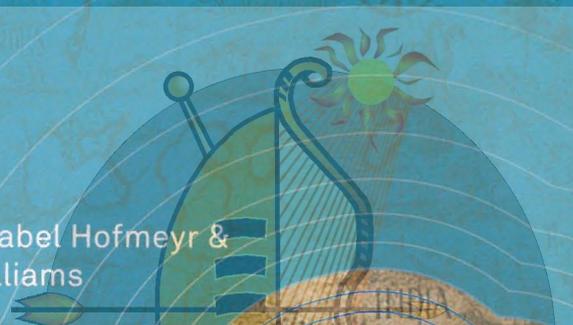


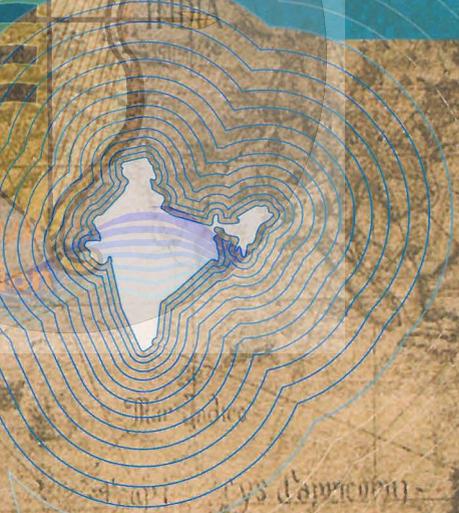
South Africa & India

Shaping the Global South

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Chapter

Monty ... Meets Gandhi ... Meets Mandela: The Dilemma of Non-violent Resisters in South Africa, 1940–60

Goolam Vahed

The time for personal contact with the great leader had now arrived. I [flew] to Wardha with Dadoo in order to receive more precise guidance in regard to future plans To be with Mahatma Gandhi was like the vision of a dream. I was not going to meet a stranger. His teachings had become part and parcel of my life. His autobiography had been my Bible, and in my leisure time I have been reading it over and over again Gandhiji was sitting cross-legged with the spinning wheel in front of him. We had come to meet the Father of the Indian Nation, and the welcome we received was naturally that of a dear father to his affectionate children. We will never forget the warm smile which lighted upon both of us – the smile of the hero we admired for thirty years. We gave him an account of the progress of the struggle, and were quite surprised to find that, in the midst of his multifarious activities, he had found time to keep in touch with the latest developments of our satyagraha movement Throughout our talk he kept on emphasising the central lesson of the satyagraha movement. He asked us always to remember that non-cooperation was not the weapon of those who found a shelter in a negative attitude of life; it was a most positive action leading straight to success if the principles were not compromised on the way. India recovered her freedom by clinging to the principles of non-violence. South African Indians, he said, would see the milky way if they followed the example of the mother country. He also advised patience. Success never comes in a flood, he said (Shukla, 1951).

Doctor G. M. ‘Monty’ Naicker’s recollection of this meeting in April 1947 underscores his reverence for Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi did not (re)appear from nowhere. The new inheritors of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) held Gandhi in the highest esteem and paid homage to him at every opportunity. In some ways this marked a shift from the 1930s, when the agents-general held sway in local politics and the ‘moderates’ held the leadership of the NIC and TIC.

This chapter focusses on Monty, as he was affectionately referred to by contemporaries, as a Gandhian whose commitment to non-violent resistance

came to the fore during the campaign of 1946–48 in Natal. Monty was deeply influenced by Gandhi, whose philosophy of non-violent resistance shaped his thinking in the crucial decades of the mid-20th century when South Africans were debating how to overturn segregation and apartheid, a system predicated on and backed up by the use of state-sponsored violence.

Monty's ideas did find resonance in the early joint campaigns of the Indian Congresses and the African National Congress (ANC). But as the 1950s moved into the early 1960s, Monty had to confront the fact that the movement that he thought best exemplified Gandhian ideals was contemplating a new direction – a turn to violence. Many of Monty's closest comrades in the NIC were adamant that this was the way to go. Monty's adherence to non-violent resistance and the dilemma facing activists are the main substance of this chapter. The focus is on two key moments, the Passive Resistance Campaign of 1946–48 and debates around the ANC's turn to armed struggle in 1960.

Edinburgh

Monty Naicker was born in Durban in 1910, the year the Union of South Africa was established, signalling the coming together of 'old foes', the Afrikaner and British, in a common quest to ensure continuing white dominance on the southern tip of Africa. Monty was the son of P. G. Naicker, a fruit exporter and stallholder at the Indian market. He attended Marine College in Leopold Street and proceeded in 1927 to study medicine at Edinburgh University, where his contemporaries included two other 'coolie doctors', Yusuf Dadoo and Keseval Goonam (see Goonam, 1992). Their lives were to intersect not through their medicine, but through the interstices of political confrontation, all three cutting their teeth in the Passive Resistance Campaign of 1946–48.

Monty would not have anticipated the profound effect life in Edinburgh would have on him. It was there that he rubbed shoulders with the anti-imperialist fighters of India. He joined the Edinburgh Indian Association. Regular debates and lectures suggest that this organisation was also a hotbed of Indian nationalist and anti-imperialist agitation. A slew of speakers made their way through its doors, while regular discussions were held about the unfolding struggle against the British Raj in India. Doctor Goonam (1992:42), in her autobiography, mentions the visit of Srinivasa Sastri, who:

was very unpopular among Indian students and became even more so when he came to Edinburgh to receive the freedom of the city at a time when thousands of Indian freedom fighters languished in British jails. What were his views on British Home Rule for India, they heckled.

Marie

Monty returned to South Africa in 1934. Two years later he married Marie Appavoo from the Eastern Cape, whose two brothers, Shunmugam and Nadaraj, were Monty's contemporaries at Edinburgh. Even as Monty was establishing his practice and becoming domesticated, political divisions were continuing to fester. In Natal, the NIC and the Colonial Born and Settlers Indian Association amalgamated into the Natal Indian Association (NIA) in October 1939. While the majority of the executive were old moderates, the likes of Monty, Cassim Amra, George Ponnen, H. A. Naidoo and George Singh had strong roots among the Indian working classes and formed the (Natal) Nationalist Bloc within the NIA, which would later coalesce into the Anti-Segregation Committee.

Monty made his entry into local politics in 1940, as I. C. Meer (2002:47) recalls:

On 11 February 1940, Dr. Naicker made ... his maiden speech in a packed City Hall. He took his stand clearly and forcefully against non-Europeans supporting the war, and vigorously attacked the NIA leadership for collaborating with the white authorities to enforce voluntary segregation on Indians.

Monty was 30 when he made this intervention. But it was in a sense a culmination of some five years of integrating himself back into the city of his birth. Important impulses in the development of progressive ideas were sprouting in the Indian quarter of the city. Pre-eminent was the Liberal Study Group (LSG), an important avenue to radicalise middle-class Indians. Monty and Doctor Goonam both joined the LSG, founded in 1937 by trade unionists and communists such as H. A. Naidoo, George Ponnen, Dawood Seedat, Cassim Amra, A. K. M. Docrat, P. M. Harry, Wilson Cele and I. C. Meer. The LSG held classes in English, political economy and public speaking. They discussed issues such as 'passive resistance', 'non-Europeans and the war', the socialisation of medicine, and the international

situation (*Call*, February 1940), and laid the foundation for the political beliefs and actions of many.

Monty takes charge

By the late 1930s access to urban space in Durban was a contested issue. Africans with a precarious toehold in the city hugged the outer expanses, in particular Cato Manor. The ramifications of this 'squeezing' were to have dramatic and tragic consequences at the end of the 1940s. For the moment, though, the white city barons were most concerned about what came to be known as 'Indian penetration' of white areas. The sexual innuendo that could be read from this wording probably lent weight to the mounting hysteria. The Lawrence Committee, which included a number of Indians, was appointed in February 1940 to talk (Indian) purchasers out of transactions (*Call*, July 1940). Radicals tried to reverse this at a mass meeting on 9 June 1940, but failed, resulting in Nationalist Bloc members such as Monty, Cassim Amra, 'Beaver' Timol, George Ponnen, H. A. Naidoo and Manilal Gandhi being expelled from the NIA (*Call*, July 1940). Whites continued to agitate for legal segregation, even though the Broome Commission of 1940 concluded that there was no evidence that Indians were 'overrunning' whites. The Second Broome Commission was appointed in February 1943 and its report, published on 6 April 1943, led to the Trading and Occupation of Land Restriction Act of April 1943, which banned white-Indian property transactions in Durban for three years. It was called the 'Pegging Act', because the intention was to 'peg' Indian land ownership and occupation until further measures were introduced (Bagwandeem, 1991:50-57). Growing segregationist practices 'helped define the boundaries of identification between communities and also gave rise to oppositional political practices' (Raman, 2006:194).

The Nationalist Bloc saw this as the first step to racial segregation, and Monty, George Ponnen, Dawood Seedat, Billy Peters and M. D. Naidoo (re)joined the NIC executive to present a united front. The fragile unity collapsed when moderates agreed to the Pretoria Agreement of 19 April 1944 (Bagwandeem, 1991:142), which established a board of two Indians and three whites to license the purchase of property by members of a different racial group. Voluntary segregation (Lloyd, 1991) was the last straw for radicals, who formed the Anti-Segregation Council (ASC) in April 1944 under Monty's presidency. This was a broad front of intellectuals; trade unions; and sports, cultural, youth and farmers' associations that decided

to work from within the NIC to effect change (Bagwandeem, 1991:142). The ASC hosted a conference on 6 May 1944 at which 29 organisations rejected the Pretoria Agreement and, beginning with a rally at Red Square, set about mobilising the masses. The ASC threw its resources into raising consciousness about the 'betrayal' in Pretoria and challenging the moderates (*The Guardian*, 14 July 1945). In the first three months of 1945, 31 meetings were held and the NIC's registered membership increased from 3,000 to 22,000 (*The Leader*, 12 January 1946). Most of these were members of trade unions. Workers came to form the core constituency of the political leadership.

The NIC's annual election was scheduled for 3 March 1945. The old guard under A. I. Kajeem and P. R. Pather continued to delay the election until a frustrated Monty, B. T. Chetty and A. K. M. Docrat got a court order that elections be held by 22 October (*Indian Views*, 19 September 1945). Most of the office bearers resigned from the NIC (*The Leader*, 20 October 1945) and all 46 nominees of the ASC were elected to the executive of the NIC. Monty was president and Doctor Goonam vice-president – the first woman to hold an executive position (Roux, 1966:360). When Monty got up to address the animated masses at Curries Fountain, alongside him was a hybrid of communists, Gandhians and liberals. Monty's acceptance speech took a more decisive bent as he called for the unconditional repeal of the Pegging Act; the vetoing of the Natal Housing Ordinance; the rejection of residential zoning; the removal of the provincial barriers, which were a stigma on Indians; adult suffrage; and free education for Indian children up to Junior Certificate (*The Leader*, 27 October 1945).⁸²

Passive Resistance Campaign, 1946-48

The first step was a meeting with South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts on 9 November 1945. There was great optimism, borne of their confidence to make a coherent argument and the fact that Smuts may have been keen to maintain his growing reputation as an international statesman.⁸³ The meeting proved an initiation into the hardball of politics, as Smuts made no concessions (*Indian Views*, 14 November 1945). In fact, with the Pegging Act due to expire in March 1946, Smuts announced in parliament on 21 January 1946 that the government would introduce the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act to regulate the occupation of fixed property by Indians. During March the NIC agreed to embark on passive resistance and the Passive Resistance Council (PRC) was formed (*The Leader*, 6 April

1946, in Cachalia, 1981:45). The day of 13 June 1946 was designated as Hartal Day to mark the start of the campaign. Monty's diary entry read:

13 June: Hartal Day. After 2:00 pm, 100% closed shop. Miss Asvat, Miss Chellan, Miss Nayager, Mrs Patel, Zora Bayat, and Mrs Pahad from Johannesburg; 5:30 pm march. 20,000 present [Red Square]. After march, left at camp. Police nearly used force.

Monty gave a powerful 20-minute speech at the rally. I. C. Meer (2002:95) recalls that he was 'unusually charged that afternoon, and the crowd cheered enthusiastically'. The historic mass meeting culminated in a great procession from Red Square to the corner of Gale Street and Umbilo Road. Under Monty's leadership, 18 passive resisters (including seven women) pitched tents on vacant municipal land in defiance of the Ghetto Act. Monty and Dadoo blamed compromise, 'a policy which has enabled the Government to introduce measure after measure of racially discriminative legislation', for the deterioration in the position of Indians.⁸⁴

One problem that resisters faced was the violence of what they called white thugs. The Reverend Michael Scott, one of the few whites to join the campaign, provided an eyewitness account of the actions of white thugs at the Gale Street camp:

Groups of European youths dressed in sports kit ... gathered in two's and three's on the opposite side of the plot to where we were standing Suddenly a whistle blew, and with shouts and catcalls the whole formation charged and bore down upon the little group of resisters who were standing back-to-back so as to face in all directions With their fists they struck the Indians in the face and about the body. No one retaliated but some tried to duck or ward off blows before falling down. On the ground they were kicked (Troup, 1950:128-29).

Monty recorded these events in his diary:

14 June: Quiet day. Three Europeans tried to damage tent. Applied Gandhian teachings successfully.

15 June: Same thing applied in the evening. Wild rumours about town. Met Dadoo at 10:00 am at Aerodrome.

16 June: 30 Europeans (organized) pulled the tents and dragged it away. This roused the determination of volunteers to unite and struggle; 11:00 pm put tent up again.

17 June: 5:30 pm meeting to appeal for non-violence and guards. 8:00 pm 150 Europeans expected and action; Cordon of passive resisters formed. Used women around outfield; 12 passive resisters replace tent.

18 June: Dadoo left for Johannesburg. 300 European and 500 Indians assembled on East side of camp. Only the leaders in camp. Having sent women volunteers to the footpath, Europeans brought women to molest our women. Very tense situation. Teach courage.

19 June: At appeal of Major Coetzee and Keevee decided to remove leaders from 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm and we decided to appeal to Indian supporters to keep away from camp for the period. 8:00 Europeans assembled. Completely out of control. One car burnt. One other car set light. Wife in same car. The few Indians present provoked and some badly assaulted - slept outside (no camp put up, was early in the morning - very cold). The ground. Asvat, Bhaba. Showed courage vindicated.

20 June: Today at 2:00 pm met European sympathizers - Satchel, Wormington, Paul Sykes. They considering forming an organization.

21 June: Last night, as the previous night, Europeans intent on assaulting us. Again cordoned. Isolated Indians hit and cars stoned. Ultimatum by Deputy-Commissioner Lt. Colonel Booyesen to quit camp or charge for inciting public violence - refused. Cable from Tata and £100 from Henderson from Ireland who deeply sympathetic.

On 21 June Monty and the resisters were finally arrested for 'trespassing'. They were found guilty, but cautioned and discharged. They returned to the Gale Street camp, because they wanted to be imprisoned. They were again charged with 'trespassing' and the magistrate passed a suspended sentence of seven days' hard labour. Undeterred, the resisters made their way back to Gale Street and occupied the camp once more:

22 June: 7:30 pm District Police Johnson gave us notice to quit ground or else be persecuted for trespassing. Refused - were arrested and taken in to jail. One batch remained till 9:00 pm at B Court. M. D. and I left charge office at 12:00 am. (Tore all Edicts at 8:45.)

23 June: Went to camp at 4:50 in the afternoon. 5:30 arrested and taken to charge office. Released and set to appear in court at 9:00 am next day.

24 June: Went to court at 9:00 am. Great interest by Indian people. Two of the thugs present to observe. M. D. and myself asked to appear on the 1st July. The rest cautioned. Last evening the thugs really got going. 2nd batch released. 3rd batch Joshi and A[unclear] laid out unconscious. Spirit untainted. We were released at 1:30 am. Went to office. A[unclear], myself and M. O. decided to go in the next batch. Sympathisers begged us not to go as thugs still present in large numbers to keep us up. We went and were arrested immediately. Court at 9:00 am. Charged. Rowdy mass weekly. Enthusiastic. Money coming in. Went to camp.

26 June: Rowdy and Europeans great. Act read and arrested. Spent up till 2:30 in charge office, then in the cell. Condition very hard. Court on Tuesday – seven days hard labour suspended for three months.

27 June: Dadoo and next batch of fifty arrested. Appeared on Wednesday. Case remanded till Thursday.

28 June: Led batch with few more to occupy the land tonight. Expect to be imprisoned for long time. Sentence: six months hard labour.

For Gandhi, the aim of *satyagraha* was to eliminate the hostility of an opponent without harming that opponent. Gandhi contrasted *satyagraha* (holding on to truth) with *duragraha* (holding on by force), as in protest, which aimed to harass rather than enlighten opponents. Gandhi (1967) writes that ‘if we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one’s cause’. Gandhi saw suffering as a means to a just society. Non-cooperation was a means to secure the cooperation of the opponent consistently with truth and justice (Gandhi, 1920).

The glimpses that we get of the attacks by whites and the preparedness of Monty and fellow resisters to endure those attacks point to these lessons having been absorbed. Its effectiveness in ‘enlightening’ whites was debatable, however.

When Monty and the resisters occupied the camp for a third time, they were sentenced to five months’ imprisonment, which Monty served in Newcastle and Pietermaritzburg. After his release on 16 November 1946 Monty wrote of his prison experience:

When I was locked up in the prison of Newcastle, I spent my time reading *My Experiments with Truth*. I had read this book many times before, but inside the prison walls the words came to have a different meaning for me. It was in Newcastle that he [Gandhi] started his epic march with thousands

of men, women and children; and somehow I felt that I too was in the crowd that marched past across the Transvaal border in serried ranks. I said to myself that if only the spirit that animated our people in those days could once again be mobilised, how nearer would we all be to the goal! It was true that Mahatma Gandhi was now in India and not in South Africa, but did it really make any difference? Had we not promised to be pure *satyagrahis*? And whether the master was in our midst or engaged in a bigger struggle elsewhere, we had to show the mettle of our pasture. It is to the credit of the South African Indians that in 1946, when we decided to take up the challenge, Gandhiji sent his blessings from India (16 September 1948, from Shukla, 1951).

The success of the non-violent resistance, aside from broadly supported moral principles, depended on widespread publicity. The mass rallies, the public garlanding of those who had served their terms of imprisonment, exposing the violent behaviour of the police through Indian newspapers such as *The Leader* and *Graphic*, and international publicity provided a sense of theatre. The PRC published *Flash* and the *Passive Resister*, which gave instant and widespread coverage to the campaign.

But the authorities were determined to break resistance ‘by any means necessary’. They first used a 70-year-old law relating to trespass, then the Riotous Assemblies Act, handing down long jail terms. When this did not work, magistrates handed out fines of £5 each without the option of imprisonment. Resisters refused to pay the fine, leaving, in the words of the PRC newsflash No. 47, ‘the headache on the other side’. Eventually, resisters were given one month in jail with hard labour.

By December 1947 support for civil disobedience was waning. There were 1,500 volunteers in the first six months and only 500 in the next eighteen. Statements by Monty and Dadoo suggest a recognition that outside intervention was necessary. For example, *Passive Resister* opined on 11 December 1947 that the ‘most practical method by which measures may be inaugurated that could lead to a solution of the conflict remains a Round Table Conference between the Governments of India, Pakistan and South Africa’.

Recognising that the Ghetto Bill could not sustain the campaign, the May–June 1947 NIC conference resolved to challenge the Immigrants Regulation Act of 1913, which prohibited Indian interprovincial migration. This became all the more important because the movement was stymied

by the fact that the police were not arresting volunteers at Gale Street. On 25 January 1948, 15 resisters from Natal, with Monty at the forefront and reminiscent of the 1913 March inspired by Gandhi, crossed the Natal–Transvaal border at Volksrust. They were met by Dadoo as they did so. Dadoo and Naicker were summonsed and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for violating the 1913 law. Monty was defiant as he read out a statement in court on 2 February 1948 on behalf of himself and Dadoo:

The Passive Resistance struggle which we are conducting is based on truth and non-violence. It is associated with the name of one of the greatest men of all time, Mahatma Gandhi, on whose death in tragic circumstances just a few weeks ago the whole world wept. Among the millions of men who paid their last tribute to this great soul was Field Marshal Smuts, the Prime Minister of South Africa. Mahatma Gandhi was the father of our struggle. Gandhiji too defied the unjust laws of South Africa and suffered imprisonment during the 1906–1914 Passive Resistance Campaign. This is the man whom Field Marshal Smuts referred to as a 'prince among men'. This is the man – the pilot of India's march to freedom – who is the source of inspiration of our just struggle for democratic rights in South Africa.

The Passive Resistance Campaign ended in June 1948. The campaign was already petering out, but it was developments in white politics that occasioned a rethink.

Smuts's United Party was defeated by D. F. Malan's National Party in 1948. Malan was the self-same arch proponent of the idea of the Indian as 'alien' and advocate of repatriation as the solution to the 'Indian problem'. The policy of appeasement initiated by Sastri and the moderates had failed to quench his desire to rid the white man's country of the scourge of the 'coolie'. Despite this history, the NIC announced that it was suspending the campaign until the new government had made a clear pronouncement on the future of Indians (*The Leader*, 5 June 1948). Was this just a cover for the fact that sustained repression had slowed the campaign? It soon became clear that the new government was determined to make the old policies even tougher. The minister of the interior, T. E. Dönges, refused to meet the NIC, which he described as 'communistic in orientation', guilty of brazenly defying the laws of the country and constantly crying out for foreign help (Bhana, 1997:78–79).

Despite the campaign petering out, significant aspects are to be noted. One is the cooperation between 'communists' and 'Gandhians'. Many of the

activists who initiated mass action against discrimination were communists who were influential in the NIC's cooperation with Gandhians such as Monty Naicker and Nana Sita. Gandhi dismissed letters from some South Africans who complained that Dadoo was a communist. On 27 November 1947 he wrote to S. B. Medh: 'The best way is not to bother about what any "ism" says but to associate yourself with any action after considering its merit. Dr Dadoo has made a favourable impression on everybody here.'⁸⁵

The Passive Resistance Campaign was doomed to fail. It was naive to think that the government would repeal the Ghetto Act in the face of non-violent protest. Pitching tents on Gale Street in itself was not sufficient to build momentum, especially when the state ignored attempts to duplicate this elsewhere. While passive resistance had widespread support among Indians, even if large numbers did not volunteer for imprisonment, and the movement drew support from outside, it was unsustainable in the absence of clear time frames. When interest waned, the leaders had no alternative strategy of resistance. The campaign was played out in Gandhian terms: Monty's going to jail, his refusal to engage in violence despite the assaults by whites and his crossing of the border all reflected this. And in the midst of the campaign, Monty and Dadoo visited India.

Gandhi

Monty was aware of the importance of independent India to focus attention on South Africa. A trip to India during March and April 1947, at the height of the Passive Resistance Campaign, was crucial in terms of Monty's political outlook and in garnering the support of India in opening new fronts in the United Nations, and in the drive to unite the struggle of Indians with that of Africans in South Africa. Monty was already driving a closer working relationship with Africans as a signatory of the Xuma–Naicker–Dadoo pact in 1947 for cooperation between the ANC and the Indian Congresses. The Indian visit coincided with the 1947 Asian Conference, where Monty and Dadoo met delegates from 32 countries, including Tibet, Nepal, China, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia and Vietnam. They met Nehru, Gandhi and Jinnah, and a host of other leaders (*The Leader*, 7 June 1947).

While Monty and Dadoo had a great deal in common, including their veneration of Gandhi and the need to build a non-racial struggle, unlike Dadoo, Monty did not become a member of the Communist Party or embrace the armed struggle. Monty, while following the Gandhi template, probably did not realise that he was to take the struggle beyond the

boundaries defined during Gandhi's South African years. In many ways, a combination of factors – the Passive Resistance Campaign, the 1949 Indo-African disturbances, the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and the realisation that there were limits to what India could achieve – pushed the Indian Congresses into a substantial working relationship with the ANC. But this did not cut off the link with the Indian nationalist cause.

1952 Defiance Campaign

For Monty, the riots of 1949 in Cato Manor reinforced the fact that he had to push more forcefully the idea of breaking racial boundaries around political struggles. This would crystallise in the non-racial struggle during the Defiance Campaign of 1952. While the riots cast a long shadow, Monty was willing to pursue non-racialism. Together with this, there was a move from 'passive resistance' to a more active form of resistance – defiance. While still seeking to avoid violence, the campaign aimed to be more assertive and this was reflected in its naming, according to Billy Nair.⁸⁶

The Defiance Campaign began nationally on 26 June 1952, but in Natal it only started on 31 August. This was because both Monty and ANC head, Chief Albert Luthuli, were concerned about Indian–African cooperation so soon after 1949. Monty, according to Billy Nair, was also concerned that the Indian response would not be enthusiastic, given that the two-year Passive Resistance Campaign had taken a heavy toll. However, the NIC resolved to participate, according to Nair, 'because ... for the African people this was a new experience'.⁸⁷ Luthuli also faced opposition from Africanists such as A. W. G. Champion and Selby Msimang.

A crowd of 4,000 attended a rally at Red Square on 31 August 1952 to initiate the campaign. Both Monty and Luthuli addressed the rally. Thereafter, led by Monty, volunteers entered the 'whites only' waiting room and were promptly ushered into police vans, and subsequently sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour (Meer, 2002:146). Although there was much enthusiasm and large numbers attended rallies, only about 200 people had courted imprisonment in Durban by the time the campaign petered out in December. However, it did mark the emergence of the ANC as a mass organisation and created awareness for the Congress of the People in Kliptown in June 1955, where the Freedom Charter was adopted. The likes of Monty, Dadoo, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, as banned people, missed this historic occasion.

Monty pushed the non-racial alliance further than anybody before him. He invited ANC leaders such as Luthuli and Sisulu to open the annual conferences of the NIC and South African Indian Congress (SAIC) during the 1950s and he himself delivered the opening address to the National Conference of the ANC in Durban on 16 December 1954. Monty was not just leading the NIC, he was taking it in new directions and, while he might not always have carried the masses with him, symbolically he was signalling a new path. The personal price he paid, though, was high. During the early hours of 5 December 1956 activists across the country, mostly members of the ANC, Congress of Democrats, Indian Congresses and South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), were arrested on allegations of treason (*Indian Views*, 5 December 1956). In all, 156 people were charged with 'high treason'. On 19 December 1956 the accused appeared in court to open preparatory examination. The first phase of the trial lasted until 17 December 1957, when allegations were withdrawn against 61 of the accused. On 6 December 1958 the state announced that new indictments would be framed against 91 accused. Charges against a further 61, including Monty, were quashed on 20 April 1959. The last 30 treason trialists were found not guilty in March 1961.

➤ Monty had an especially healthy respect for Chief Luthuli. A large portrait of Luthuli, for example, dominated the lounge of his home. While Dadoo was Monty's great friend over these years, it really was Luthuli who was Monty's political beacon in the local context. In October 1961 Luthuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. There was some irony in Luthuli's award, as the leading figures in his organisation were now committed to violence. But the non-violent strand still ran strongly through the Congress lines and Luthuli's popularity was incredibly strong. Politically and personally it was a very important moment for Monty. In driving the NIC into the Congress Alliance he placed great faith in the leadership of Luthuli. The Nobel Prize vindicated his own confidence in Luthuli.

Once the government, albeit reluctantly, granted Luthuli a visa, Monty organised a fabulous farewell for him as he made his way to Oslo. The NIC organised a mass meeting to honour Luthuli at Curries Fountain on 9 November 1961. The ground was packed to capacity as 15,000 people, mainly Indians and Africans, sat through a heavy downpour to celebrate the moment. According to one report, 'scenes reminiscent of the great meetings held in Durban during the Defiance Campaign were re-enacted'. Amid 'tremendous applause', Monty led Mrs Nokukhanya Luthuli to the platform, which contained a huge six-by-four-foot portrait of Chief Luthuli.

An application for permission for Luthuli to attend had been declined by the minister of justice. Speakers included Steven Dlamini of SACTU, Florence Mkhize on behalf of the Women's Federation, Vera Ponnien on behalf of the Congress of Democrats, C. K. Hill on behalf of the Liberal Party and M. B. Yengwa, former secretary of the banned ANC (*New Age*, 16 November 1961). Monty himself delivered a speech in honour of Chief Luthuli:

The calm and dignified manner our Chief reacted to the campaign reviling and belittling him with violent, virulent and vicious words demonstrated to the democrats of the country and the world why our Chief – a devout Christian not caring about glory and whose character is not sullied by envy or arrogance – deserves the award Millions more South Africans than the handful who voted the Nationalists into power, admire, love and are prepared to follow our Chief. It is not accident or emotion that so many of us hold him so dear; it is not hero worship that so many of us admire him; it is not some kind of witchcraft that leads us to follow him The reason why so many respect and follow our Chief is because of his humility, his dignity, his service to better race relations through peaceful methods and his service to Mankind. The whole world, East and West, the 99.8 percent people acclaim him with this award. Only the 0.2 percent of White Nationalists are against this signal of honour to our country Where every avenue of peaceful negotiation is closed; where every Democratic leader is banned and banished; when the foremost organization of the African people – the ANC – is banned after 48 years of peaceful existence; when the clamour for other forms of struggle other than non-violence became louder and louder, our Chief was firm for a peaceful solution to the problem of South Africa When the ex-Minister of Defence said 'We are willing to shoot down the Black masses', our Chief sat at his home in Groutville armed with a ball point pen appealing in the hope of arousing the Christian conscience of the white people so that they might help him in finding a peaceful solution rather than a shooting solution.⁸⁸

On 5 December 1961, the day of Luthuli's departure, lunch was served at the Himalaya Hotel, the main 'non-white' entertainment centre at the corner of Grey and Beatrice streets. Guests included Monty and Alan Paton. Over 4,000 people were outside the hotel (*New Age*, 14 December 1961). Luthuli's wife, Nokukhanya, remembers how, when they left the hotel, 'people picked him up onto their shoulders. They wanted to carry him all the way to the airport And what was happening to me? Well, while this was going on, I

was trying my best to keep close to my husband, but those crowds!' (Rule, 1993:122). A cavalcade of a hundred cars accompanied Luthuli to Louis Botha airport in Habib Rajab's silver-grey Cadillac; the very car that took British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan around Durban during his 1960 visit. With Luthuli in the car were his wife Nokukhanya, daughter Hilda and Monty. The farewell was significant. The apartheid state was bent on crushing resistance, it had locked up thousands and yet the leader of the movement, with incredible local support, was off to receive a prestigious accolade for peace.

'The attacks of the wild beast cannot be averted with only bare hands'⁸⁹

After the 21 March 1960 massacre of 67 Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) supporters protesting the pass laws, the government of Hendrik Verwoerd banned public meetings on 24 March, declared a state of emergency on 30 March, and outlawed the ANC and PAC on 8 April. Mass arrests followed. The force unleashed by the state marks this, arguably, as the moment when serious questions were raised about the viability of non-violent protest in the South African context. Gandhi argued that the use of force was immoral. One of the underlying principles of *satyagraha* was that the suffering of the *satyagrahi* would appeal to the heart and convert the wrongdoer. Gandhi saw non-violent resistance as dealing with oppression in a manner that allowed the oppressed to reconcile with the oppressor. It was thus a positive action aimed at reconciliation. By 1960 it was clear that the suffering of oppressed South Africans failed to affect the ruling class in this way. It also brought into question the other notion of *satyagraha* that 'a good result can only be brought about by good means' (Appadurai, 1969).

Activists such as Monty, Mandela, Nair, Sisulu and others were at a crossroads, because non-violence aimed at reconciliation had failed to yield the desired outcome. The dilemma is summed up by Gay W. Seidman (2000), who asked: 'What is the obligation of leaders to protect their supporters from serious physical danger when they know that peaceful protest may lead to their deaths?' The appeals to white conscience, peaceful protest and pleas to international opinion had all failed. The apartheid government had a powerful military machine, a sophisticated and repressive internal security apparatus, the support of Western nations, and mineral wealth at its disposal. While Gandhi's position was clear, i.e. that under no circumstances were individuals to resort to the armed struggle,⁹⁰ others were not so sure. As Rusty Bernstein (1999:232) put it, non-violence

had always been a hard course to steer in a violent country. Now the tide was turning against it. Yesterday's non-violent activists were becoming today's trainees in sabotage and armed struggle. Yesterday's non-violent ANC had spawned today's armed struggle.

The adoption of non-violent resistance as a principle has been criticised by some activists. Monty's cousin, M. P. Naicker, who had been a key figure in the NIC and Communist Party of South Africa and who wrote for *New Age* and edited *Sechaba* in exile, came out on the side of violence. He credited Gandhi with 'moving millions upon millions of people into action for freedom and dignity against imperialism', but felt that

while satyagraha had great potential ... the method also caused undue power to be placed in the hands of the leadership to curb and take away the initiative of the masses if they so wished To disarm the masses in the face of an enemy determined to rule by force is a problem Gandhi never really resolved (Naicker, 1969:57–59).

After the lifting of the State of Emergency at the end of August 1960, Monty, who had been on the run for five months, issued the following statement: 'Our people are to be congratulated on their tolerance and courage in bearing up with these uncalled for attacks by a Party at the head of Government, which has become power drunk and whose policy seems to be that "might is right"' (*Post*, 4 September 1960).

The next major event was the mass demonstrations on 29–31 May 1961 to protest against South Africa declaring itself a republic on 31 May. The Security Branch swung into action. Offices of SACTU, the Durban Residents' Association, and the NIC were raided and pamphlets confiscated, and the government mooted new legislation, the General Law Amendment Act, to strengthen its powers. Around ten thousand people were arrested in order to undermine the strike (Fullard, 2004). The stay-away was consequently not the success that organisers had hoped for. Monty was still holding out for discussions and dialogue, despite the brutal state response and its intransigence to overtures of negotiation and compromise. Within the leadership of the Congress Alliance murmurings were heard that a change of direction was needed. The call to armed struggle would be difficult to resist. Monty, according to Billy Nair, was one of the most implacable opponents of the armed struggle:

Now violence was a new form of struggle. Mandela made it quite clear and I agreed with him wholeheartedly ... not that I was violent and what-not, but because we tried all forms of struggle. The reaction of the ruling class was one of violence One has to just experience it for a few minutes, what they did. Or you get striking workers where a strike breaks out ... where they go into the factory premises, use the batons and their guns to crack the skulls of the workers. This was a common thing. So you had this form of repression, violent repression and that is why there was no alternative to violence. Mandela said there's a parting of ways now But, Monty and a few others in the NIC ... felt strongly that we should not depart from passive resistance.⁹¹

Around August or September 1961 the ANC executive met on Chief Luthuli's farm in Groutville, while the NIC executive met on Hurbans' farm in Tongaat. The NIC meeting was 'heated', according to Nair.⁹² The dilemma was summed up by I. C. Meer (2002:225):

Were we contemplating a shift to violence as an easy way out of the hard task of mobilising the people in the face of repression? Would resorting to violence lead to the neglect of orthodox forms of mobilisation? It was a vigorous debate. By turning to violence would we not be giving the regime the excuse to come down on us even more heavily? Would we not be sacrificing the legal space that the Indian Congress, SACTU and CPC still enjoyed? On the other hand, if we did not shift to violent means, would we not be failing our people by not harnessing their rising militancy and providing them with the leadership needed?

Monty and Yusuf Cachalia especially were adamant that violence should not be adopted, as it would lead to the destruction of the whole movement. For Monty, non-violence was a principle from which he was not prepared to waver, and his opposition arguably had little to do with M. D. Naidoo's accusation that opponents of violence were afraid of going to jail. Monty remained consistent, like Luthuli, that non-violent resistance was a superior method of engaging the foe and in the long run would yield positive results. As Gandhi had advised him, patience was key. The NIC executive resolved that when they met with the ANC the following evening they would express the view that there was place for non-violent struggle, but if the ANC decided otherwise, the NIC would not be an impediment (Meer, 2002:223–24). According to Billy Nair, that meeting took place on the Bodasing's

farm on the North Coast.⁹³ While Luthuli and Monty spoke against the armed struggle, Mandela and Moses Kotane won the day. Mandela wrote in *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994:433):

it was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle. We did so not because we desired such a course, but solely because the Government had left us no other choice.

Thus was born Umkhonto we Sizwe, 'Spear of the Nation'.

Conclusion

The years following the adoption of armed struggle were characterised by the state turning to extremely repressive measures. This included listings, bannings and banishments, with many in the resistance movements going into exile or serving long periods of incarceration. These draconian measures destroyed personal lives and decades-old friendships, and cut off activists from their mass base. Talented people were rendered redundant and made to mark time as the years ticked by and memories of their exploits and leadership faded. Bannings allowed the government to circumvent the legal process. Anyone could be banned for promoting the aims of communism, which was so widely defined that even a staunch Gandhian like Monty was served with successive banning orders.

For most of the years from 1952 to 1973 he was either a prisoner awaiting trial, a detainee, 'on the run' or a banned person. He was served with a five-year banning order from 1963 to 1968, which, on expiry, was extended to 30 April 1973. The repeated multiple banning of leaders muted the effectiveness of organisations such as the ANC and NIC. Monty's ban expired at midnight on 30 April 1973. Much had changed in his absence. The NIC was revived on 25 June 1971 under Mewa Ramgobin. Monty did not play an active role in the NIC until the Anti-SAIC Committee was formed in November 1977 with him as chairman and Doctor Goonam as treasurer. The first of what was advertised as a 'series of countrywide meetings' was held on 26 November 1977 (*The Leader*, 18 November 1977), with a second meeting on 11 December 1977. Monty was the chief speaker on both occasions (*The Leader*, 16 December 1977). But just as his 'Second Coming' was gathering momentum, he took ill and died on 12 January 1978.

During his heyday, in Monty's mind the Passive Resistance Campaign was a re-enactment of the earlier movement of 1913: the Gandhi symbolism, the enthusiasm and the moral triumphalism. Going to jail, reading Gandhi's autobiography in prison, visiting India and crossing the Transvaal border were all examples of playing out the struggle in Gandhian terms. Some of the tactics of the struggle were adopted after consulting with Gandhi and Nehru, while the language often evoked images of 'Indian national identity with South African belonging' (Raman, 2006:202). But the period 1946–48 was a different political terrain, and the movement made little impact on the government. The earlier strategy of passive resistance was re-enacted in the 1950s, even if instead of 'passive' the word 'defiance' was used. The 1952 Defiance Campaign targeted laws that the liberation movement selected to defy, much like the Passive Resistance Campaign. The 1955 Freedom Charter flowed from this and the document was a broad statement of ideals, much as in the Passive Resistance Campaign. Other similar movements of the period had similar defining elements: pass laws, consumer boycotts, anti-removals, and so on.

In a sense, 1946–48 helped to project the SAIC and with it the ANC as 'peaceful' organisations, and this perception survived in the 1950s, even as the nature of the 'movement' was changing. For most of the 1950s the strategy was non-violent resistance, and it was largely the crisis in 1960 that tipped the scale in favour of those who said that non-violent forms of resistance were ineffective, since the government had closed all avenues of peaceful resistance. When the ANC eventually decided on a limited form of armed resistance (born out of necessity, since it was unable to mount an armed rebellion), it did not say that other forms of resistance should disappear. Many of the protagonists (including Mandela) who have written about it have introduced 'morality' as an issue – and indeed, some diehard Gandhians like Monty may have seen it that way, but it was mainly a question of the most suitable strategy.

Monty's dilemma raises questions about making moral judgements about the decision to embrace violence as well as essentialising the debate to one of violence or non-violence. Was moral justification needed to disobey an immoral system through armed struggle? Do people like Monty and Luthuli hold a higher moral ground for rejecting violence? Did their failure to publicly condemn those who embraced violence make them morally culpable? We should not box people neatly into absolute categories such as 'violent' and 'non-violent'. Those who found even this form of struggle

objectionable recoiled and perhaps withdrew, but most understood the circumstances that made the change in strategy necessary.

Runkle has suggested that violence and non-violence are not always good or bad either intrinsically or extrinsically and that any action must be ‘conscientiously examined’² taking into account a ‘whole complex of circumstances’. He acknowledges, though, that ‘feelings, sincere and hypocritical, run so strongly against violence, [that] a resolve to do this is difficult to arrive at and to carry out’ (Runkle, 1976:389). But did Monty’s kind of politics disappear entirely? Some, like Gay W. Seidman (2000) and Stephen Zunes (1999), among others, suggest that it was not the armed struggle that ultimately forced the apartheid state to the negotiating table, but international pressure and new modes of non-violent resistance by black South Africans, such as mobilising students and communities to make the apartheid state ungovernable. To some, this may not be totally convincing, because it glosses over the strategy of making townships ungovernable, a strategy that included the gruesome act of necklacing ‘collaborators’.

This form of resistance emerged in the 1970s and climaxed in the mid-1980s. The involvement of masses of people in opposition to the structures of apartheid was a form of resistance that Monty had always advocated. He would have been horrified by the necklacing of ‘collaborators’. The international media latched onto it with the help of the apartheid regime, but it was a very small part of the resistance. More significant was the resurgence of communities, the kind that Monty would have loved in the 1940s and 1950s.

The logo for the UKZN Gandhi Luthuli Documentation Centre is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a yellow and orange sunburst at the top, a blue and white striped banner across the middle, and a blue and white wavy base representing water. A stylized figure is visible behind the shield. The text 'UKZN Gandhi Luthuli Documentation Centre' is overlaid on the bottom half of the emblem in an orange, sans-serif font.

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