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Alfred Mangena

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1. A founder of the ANC and the first African in South Africa to qualify as an attorney. A Zizi by origin, he was born in 1879 in the Estcourt district of Natal. (1)
2. About 1900 he went to Cape Town to further his education through private study. While there he became involved in a number of court cases, one concerning Africans accused of resisting health controls imposed during a plague outbreak in 1901 and another involving African resistance to a relocation scheme. (2)
3. Eventually he managed to go to England, where completed his matriculation and studied law at Lincoln's Inn. (3)
4. At the time of Bambata's Rebellion in 1906, he submitted two petitions to the British government on behalf of Africans facing court martial in Natal, and he also initiated a case against the governor of Natal charging that his proclamation of martial law was illegal. (4)
5. In 1909 he was appointed by the Transvaal Native Congress to the Multiracial deputation that came to London to Lobby against the Act of Union. Qualifying as a barrister the same year, he returned to South Africa in 1910. (5)
6. Mangena overcame opposition to his admission by the Supreme Court and established a legal practice in Pretoria later opening a branch in Johannesburg as well. (6)
7. He defended many Africans in petty disputes with white employers facing the resistance of white witnesses to cross-examination by Africans. According to Skota, he was a "fearless man" whose "life was in danger more than once because of his success" in defending Africans against Whites. Realizing that the legal injustices faced by Africans were symptomatic of the deeper ills of the SA system, Mangena, in 1912 joined Pixley Seme and other prominent Africans in founding the South African Native National Congress (Later Called the ANC) of which he became one of the four vice-presidents. (7)
8. He was a member of the SANNC deputation to the minister of Native affairs to lobby against the Land Act, and in 1912 he and S M Makagatho founded the Native Advocate a Pretoria newspaper that survived for about a year. In 1916 he formed a law partnership with Seme. (8)
9. Long troubled by ill health, he died at age 45 in 1924. at Umtata. (9)

reference pages 74 and 73 of "From Protest to Challenge Volume 4"
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