

MANGENA Alfred

1. Mangena, a member of the Zizi clan of the Hlubi tribe, was born in 1879 in the Estcourt district of Natal. In 1900 he went to Cape Town to further his education by private study. He was drawn to the law, and became involved in court cases involving Africans who resisted what they thought were unjust laws. Frustrated by his powerlessness, he decided to become a lawyer.

Cartoon: Mangena as a spectator in court, frustrated by his lack of status.

2. Full of determination he raised money to go to England, and studied law at Lincoln's Inn. In 1906, during Bambata's rebellion, he acted for Africans facing court martial. It was inevitable that he should go in for politics. In 1909 he joined the famous deputation that went to London to lobby against the Act of Union.

Cartoon: Mangena with Rubusana, Jabavu, Abdurahman (with fez) Schreiner, Dube, outside the British Houses of Parliament.

3. He qualified as barrister in 1909 being the first African in South Africa to do so. He was admitted by the Transvaal Supreme Court after strong white opposition. He was fearless in his defence of Africans, and was sometimes threatened with death. He helped Seme to found the South African Native National Congress, which later became the A.N.C. He strongly opposed the Land Act of 1913. His political promise was never realised; long troubled by ill health, he died in Umtata, aged 45.

Cartoon: Mangena leaving court, watched by resentful whites.