

## **Luthuli and Bantustans**

**Scott Everett Couper**  
**Department of Historical Studies**  
**University of kwaZulu-Natal**

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### **Preface**

On Wednesday, January 10, 2007, ‘Prince’ Mangosuthu Buthelezi, *inkosi* of the Buthelezi clan, chairperson of the Zululand District Local House of Traditional Leaders, Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders (kwaZulu-Natal), and President of the Inkatha Freedom Party, and I shared the same podium. It was not the first time we spoke to a large gathering together. He, as always spoke as a politician, and I, as always, as a theologian. On this occasion, we spoke at the funeral of Dr. Eliachim Thanai Zibusisoziyeza Mthiyane, or “ETZ Mthiyane.” Buthelezi as an Anglican and I as a Congregationalist share differing theological perspectives. We also, I presume, share differing perspectives on matters of ecclesiastical polity. However, more striking than our differing perspectives on matters ethereal is our different understandings of South African history.

As a novice historian, and as a North American, I can only remain humble before a man whose knowledge and interpretation of history is, literally, his life’s blood. Chief Buthelezi dwarfs my understanding of pre-colonial and post-colonial South Africa. His understanding of the dynamics of race, power, money, and culture in South Africa far surpasses my own. In fact, I would be honoured for him to condescend to discuss or even debate with me the past in which he has so thoroughly lived and which I have so superficially only read. Chief Buthelezi is a living icon, a historical monument in the flesh, and a worthy intellectual. Therefore, it is with some trepidation that I engage in a historical debate upon which he and I have differing perspectives.<sup>1</sup>

As it regards historical inquiry, I have ‘inexperience’ while Chief Buthelezi has ‘self-interest’ as a liability. Both can distort a more accurate understanding of past

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<sup>1</sup> For example, I would disagree with Buthelezi on his stance with the efficacy of economic sanctions as a means by which to dismantle Apartheid. However, that does exclude the fact that Buthelezi and I are in agreement on many aspects of South African history. For example, I would agree with Buthelezi that the armed resistance was strategically counterproductive and futile and that Luthuli never abandoned his call for militant *non-violent* resistance to the Apartheid regime as a means by which to achieve freedom. I fully support and have cited Buthelezi’s assertion that “[Luthuli’s] life was spent in opposition to violence...There is in his whole career no hint of a switch to violence, and in his own life no indication that he espoused violent means toward political ends.”

Buthelezi, Mangosuthu G. “Prayer Meeting to Commemorate the Last Leader of the Banned African National Congress Who Was Democratically Elected Before the Organization Was Banned – Chief Albert Mvumbi Luthuli President-General of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Prize-Winner. Groutville Mission School Grounds, Sunday, August 29, 1982. p. 18. (Also see pp. 12, 13-19, 22-23, 24-26, and 28).

events. I do not doubt at all that Chief Buthelezi is vastly more knowledgeable than I regarding matters of South African history. Nonetheless, I risk in this paper a great act of hubris. I will challenge, subject to correction, a historical justification he has made for his past political positions.

In this paper, I will not challenge Buthelezi's macro-understanding of South African history or his role and motivations within it. However, I am willing to challenge an aspect of his understanding as it relates to my particular field of study: Chief Albert Luthuli. This paper therefore confronts Buthelezi's repeated declaration that Luthuli supported his acceptance of the Bantustan system in general and in particular his leadership of the kwaZulu homeland. My interest in Buthelezi's use of the past, or even Luthuli, is not original.<sup>2</sup> Sithole and Mkhize rightly point out that "the way Buthelezi and Inkatha have subsequently used the past (especially the Zulu past) to justify their political actions, has attracted the attention of several academics."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, one might query, "Why the interest and why the passion against Buthelezi's specific claim about Luthuli's support of his leadership of the Zulu homeland? Why invest so much research, time, and text into arguing one claim. After all, there is not a philosophy or a school of thought that is at stake. Is there? Buthelezi is one person with one perspective; if one includes his party, it is still a very minority opinion. Not only does he represent a minority perspective, but it is dwindling, politically speaking. So then, why bother?"

It must be emphasized throughout this paper that the overall focus is upon Luthuli, and not Buthelezi. During my studies of Luthuli, I have realized that this hero of the African National Congress (ANC) still possesses much prestige. Due to his being silenced by numerous bannings and death in 1967, what current political icons say about Luthuli determines for the most part what is known about him. Even seemingly benign and recurrent assertions that Luthuli's death was "mysterious" and "sinister" are dependent upon, what I believe to be, an incorrect assumption that Luthuli was politically active and thus a threat to the government in July of 1967.<sup>4</sup> I have asserted in previous papers that Luthuli had been rendered politically impotent, first by the Apartheid regime through consecutive bannings and second, by the ANC itself as it essentially declared Luthuli obsolete when *Umkhonto's* first bombs exploded on December 16, 1961. Current political icons have much to gain by justifying their role, decisions they made, and strategies they followed during the struggle. Chief Albert Luthuli is deceased and he can not today clarify the record. Therefore, many claims are made about who and what Luthuli supported so as to enhance a particular individual's struggle credentials or to homogenize South African history with a strong nationalist perspective. Nelson Mandela

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<sup>2</sup> Sithole, Jabulani and Sibongiseni Mkhize. "Truth or Lies? Selective Memories, Imagings, and Representations of Chief Albert John Luthuli in Recent Political Discourses," *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 39, (December, 2000), p. 75.

Sithole and Mkhize cite: Mare and Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power*, Chapter two; Golan D., "Inkatha and its Use of the Zulu Past," *History in Africa*, 18 (1991), pp. 113-136; Forsyth, S., "The Past in the Service of the Present: The Political Use of History by Chief M.G. Buthelezi, 1951-1991," *South African Historical Journal*, 26 (1992), pp. 74-92.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Couper, Scott. "Some Sinister Thing Must Have Happened: The Dominance of Oral Sentiment at the Expense of Archival Evidence as a Historical Determinative," University of kwaZulu-Natal, publishing pending, October, 2006.

understands, incredible as it seems, that Luthuli was aged, confused, forgetful, and almost senile in 1961 and could not remember meetings that he chaired for days and nights and that concluded with the decision to form *Umkhonto We Sizwe*.<sup>5</sup> Mandela's version of those meetings has been seminal for the writing of dozens of other biographies and thus Mandela's version of events have had profound implications as Asmal, Zuma, Nair, Meer, and others who repeat a perspective about Luthuli's stance on violence that I have shown to be highly questionable, if not wrong.<sup>6</sup> The same danger exists with Buthelezi's repeated claims that Luthuli supported his leadership of the Zulu homeland. By implication, this understanding can be extrapolated to assert that Luthuli believed that Apartheid could be fought from within, by collaborating or participating with, the white supremacist structures. Furthermore, the implication could be made that Luthuli was not a multi-racialist, but rather a Zulu nationalist. By implication, it could then be argued that Luthuli was a traditionalist that envisioned a retrograde action to Shakan and Shepstonian times rather than a modern democrat who struggled for a contemporary and progressive South Africa that was free from racial and ethnic divisions. Mzala makes this point quite clear when he articulated the fears of the South African Students' Organization (SASO) in his book on Buthelezi:

*SASO insisted that the oppressed people must refuse to accept as inevitable that the only political action that could be taken against oppression was through [Bantustan] institutions.*<sup>7</sup>

The above fatalism feared by SASO is in fact what Buthelezi argued when he acquiesced to participation within the Apartheid government. Hence, Luthuli's affirmation of Buthelezi's leadership of kwaZulu would therefore implicate Luthuli in the fatalistic strategy. Mzala continues:

*Bantustans were intended to get the African people to fight separately for certain petty 'freedoms' and 'gains' which were prescribed for them long ago. Once that happened, the boundaries of the black people's world would permanently be the circumference of the 13% which comprised black South Africa. **This would lead to further political isolation from the rest of the issues that should concern the whole nation, creating an "I-am-a-Zulu" attitude that would definitely confront the unity forged through struggle in the decades since the founding of the African National Congress in 1912.** The SASO view was that those who treasured this unity and the traditions of militant resistance to oppression should disassociate themselves totally from any compromising stance. **True,***

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<sup>5</sup> Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, (Little, Brown and Company, Toronto, Canada), 1994. pp. 287-288.

<sup>6</sup> Couper, Scott. "'My People Let Go': A Historical Examination of Chief Albert Luthuli and his Position on the Use of Violence as a Means by which to Achieve South Africa's Liberation from Apartheid," *International Congregational Journal, Mission*, Volume 5.1, Fall, 2005. pp. 101-123.

Couper, Scott. "Luthuli and the Armed Struggle: Nelson Mandela as the Historiographical Father," March 15, 2006. This paper can be found at: [www.history.und.ac.za](http://www.history.und.ac.za).

Couper, Scott. "Luthuli and Violence III: King and Niebuhr, unpublished paper, July, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Mzala was actually a pen name. The author's real identity is Jabulani Nxumalo. However, throughout this paper I will refer to the author as Mzala.

*it might prove safe to work within the system, yet doing so was selling one's soul (bold is my emphasis).*<sup>8</sup>

Mzala uses the word “soul” at a literary metaphor. However, the statement is prophetic and expresses Luthuli’s literal understanding of what was at stake. Literally, Luthuli’s soul, his faith, is what is at stake, and therefore our historical understanding of Luthuli. This brings us closer to my larger project: What is that which primarily motivated Luthuli’s perspective? Was it personal power or political circumstances? I argue that for one to understand Luthuli’s political thought, his Christian faith must be seen to supersede all other ingredients. More specifically, it was Luthuli’s specific brand of Christian faith, Congregationalism, which instilled values of egalitarianism, democracy, and unity, that determined his political philosophy. These are all values antithetical to what Luthuli rightly perceived the result of an ethnic Bantustan ruled dictatorially would be.

I use as a template for discussion the funeral eulogy for Dr. ETZ Mthiyane as a basis for debate. The first half of this investigation focuses on secondary sources of information to document Buthelezi’s patterns of historical discourse. I use sources that are complementary, neutral, and opposed to Buthelezi’s political life. The biographies (Smtih and Temkin) are generally favourable. I use documentary collections such as Karis and Gerhart’s *From Protest to Challenge* and the South African Democracy Education Trust’s text *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* as neutral texts. Finally, I reference more antagonistic texts such as Pheko’s *Apartheid: The Story of a Dispossessed People* and Mzala’s *Chief with a Double Agenda*. The second and most prominent portion of this investigation relies primarily on primary sources to document Luthuli’s views on the homelands framework. These primary sources reveal Luthuli’s views on chieftaincy, democracy, multiracialism, and modes of resistance to the Apartheid regime. The theoretical inspiration for this investigation is derived from Shula Mark’s *The Ambiguities of Dependence* and Sithole and Mkhize’s article “Truth or Lies.” Finally, my own published and unpublished work is referenced so as to link this investigation to a larger historical context.

## Introduction

After reading dozens of the hundreds of speeches Chief Buthelezi has drafted, it is clear that no matter the intended topic, the actual topic is often “Buthelezi.” Buthelezi’s speeches are often substantive apologies; apologies not in the ‘remorseful’ sense, but rather in the classic ‘defence’ sense. Buthelezi’s *modus operandi* is recurrent. Buthelezi frequently justifies his decisions, positions, and action by utilizing the names and personas of highly respected others, almost as alibis, to qualify and certify as authentic and correct his positions. “Name dropping” is the colloquial phrase that defines, in a rather unsophisticated manner, Buthelezi’s strategy.

No matter the occasion, for example, even funeral eulogies, Buthelezi drafts his prose so that a majority of the speech is about himself, rather than the deceased. The qualities of the deceased to be remembered ultimately stem from the fact that the

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<sup>8</sup> Mzala. *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Edged Agenda*, (Zed Books, London and New Jersey), 1988. p. 87.

deceased supported Buthelezi when so many others criticized him. Then Buthelezi enlightens all on the historical complexities involved in the deceased's support of his policies and how the contemporary situation has proved him correct. The speeches are demonstrations of a preoccupation with himself; the deceased being mentioned as a courtesy rather than as a focus. Such was the case at the funeral of ETZ Mthiyane. Buthelezi began eloquently and pastorally referring to the deceased's accident and his genuine sentiments of concern. A brief mention is made of the deceased's excellent character and his role as a young teacher during the 1970s. Thereafter, Buthelezi inserts himself into the eulogy and deliberates extensively on his and others' political battle over the debate between "Liberation Now, Education Later," and "Education for Liberation," the latter coined by Buthelezi to justify the compromise to work within the Apartheid system's much resented Bantu Education. Intermittently, the deceased is praised, as if he is the subject, for his role within the kwaZulu government's Department of Education and therefore his support of Buthelezi's policy to opt in rather than out of Apartheid's educational system. Yet, the real issue was the legitimate stance of supporting "Bush Colleges," as they were derisively called, the rightness of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) over and against the ANC (though it is not specifically mentioned so as to not appear too blatantly political), and the central role he has played as an ancestor and relative of the great Zulu kings who have always fought justly for the liberation of South Africa.

### **Buthelezi's Claim**

The claim that I wish to contest as a matter of historical accuracy is the following claim Buthelezi made within his eulogy to ETZ Mthiyane on January 10, 2007:

*I was encouraged not to reject the role leading that Homeland Government by none other than Inkosi Albert Mvumbi Luthuli, the then President General of the African National Congress and Mr. Oliver Tambo and other leaders of the ANC in this Province.<sup>9</sup>*

Buthelezi's claim was surprising to me, not only because it was in the context of a tribute paid to a deceased, but because it was a revelation that I understood to be highly unlikely having studied Chief Luthuli's faith, life, and politics for five years as the former minister of the church at which Luthuli is laid to rest as well as Luthuli being the subject of my Ph.D. studies. Buthelezi had my attention. He continued.

*Mr. Cleopas Nsibande, who a few years ago was the interim leader of the ANC in Gauteng recalled during the unveiling of Mr. Tambo's tombstone in Benoni, attended by President Mandela and the top leadership of the ANC, that he was present in Benoni when the late Inkosi Luthuli and Mr. Oliver Tambo asked my late sister Princess Morgina Phikabesho Dotwana, to request me not to reject the position of Head of the*

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<sup>9</sup> *Kangikhuthazwanga muntu omunye ukuba ngingalichithi leloqhaza lami lokuhola uHulumeni WaKwaZulu, ngaphandle kweNkosi u-Albert Mvumbi Lutuli, owayenguMengameli-Jikele we-African National Congress ngaleyonkathi kanye noMnu Oliver Reginald Tambo nabanye abaholi be-ANC kulesiSifundazwe (Buthelezi's translation).*

*kwaZulu Government if amaKhosi decided to elect me to lead that government which the Regime was imposing on us.*<sup>10</sup>

There is a profound contradiction in the understanding that Luthuli supported Buthelezi's acceptance of leadership of the kwaZulu government. As a researcher of Luthuli's life, I have discovered no statement affirming that Luthuli supported Buthelezi's cooperation with an apartheid structure. In fact, quite the contrary is true. However, this understanding will be dealt with at a later stage in this investigation. For one to discover the veracity of Buthelezi's above statement, one must look into the evidence that Buthelezi presents. More importantly, it is crucial to discern the consistent *modus operandi* that Buthelezi utilizes to project himself as politically legitimate and thus viable. The first *modus operandi* is what is colloquially referred to as "name dropping." I assert in this examination that the predisposition of Buthelezi to "name drop" is a tell-tale indication that Buthelezi is either subconsciously or consciously uncomfortable with his own position and therefore utilizes other personalities of merit to justify it. The second method is what I refer to as "vindication by association." If we examine Buthelezi's pattern of political behaviour, we can justify suspicion that Luthuli supported his leadership of the Zulu homeland. However, for the purpose of historical inquiry, suspicion is a point as which to initiate, not conclude, an examination. Following "suspicion" is the investigation of the claim itself. The veracity of the claim contains at its heart the understanding Luthuli had of the homelands project and therefore the utility and morality of cooperation with or participation in it.

Notwithstanding Shula Marks *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa*<sup>11</sup> and Jabulani Sithole and Mkhize's paper "Truth or Lies" that both highlight the socio-political and cultural complications and nuances involved in twentieth century South African politics, Buthelezi's statements reveal a distortion rather than any complicated ambiguity. Even Marks perceives blatant "contradictions" in Buthelezi's actions.<sup>12</sup> The reader must remember that this portion of the paper is not intended to focus pejoratively on Buthelezi's character, but rather it is used to establish a case that Buthelezi's assertion that Luthuli supported Buthelezi's policy of participation with the homelands project is false. The following review of Buthelezi's liberality with the truth is a basis upon which Buthelezi's use of Luthuli's name to justify his political positions can be questioned and refuted. I do not evaluate, consider, or judge Buthelezi's decision to participate in the homelands structure. What I do rather is question his use of Luthuli to provide it with legitimacy. My focus is Luthuli, not Buthelezi. I seek to further understand Luthuli's

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<sup>10</sup> *UMnu Cleopas Nsibande, obengumholi we-ANC e-Gauteng eminyakeni embalwa edlule, wakukhumbula lokhu ngenkathi kwembulwa itshe elibeni loMnu Tambo e-Benoni, lapho okwakukhona uMengameli Mandela nobuholi obuphezulu be-ANC, ukuthi wayekhona e-Benoni ngenkati umufi iNkosi uLutuli noMnu Oliver Tambo becela udadewethu ongasekho, uMntwana u-Morgina Phikabesho Dotwana, ukuba angicele ukuba ngigasichithi isikhundla sokuba yiNhloko kaHulumeni WaKwaZulu uma aMakhosi enquma ukukhetha mina ukuba ngihole lowohulumeni uMbuso owawuwuphoqelesa phezu kwethu* (Buthelezi's translation).

This narrative matches *almost* verbatim the one recorded in Buthelezi's biography by Temkin. See conclusion.

Temkin, Ben. *Buthelezi: A Biography*, (Frank Cass, JB Publishers, South Africa). p. 264.

<sup>11</sup> Marks, Shula, "The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal," (Raven Press, Johannesburg), 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Marks, Shula. p. 120.

position, not Buthelezi's. I hypothesize that Buthelezi is incorrectly creating a historical record to his benefit and at Luthuli's expense. Luthuli is no longer living and cannot clarify the historical record. As a historian, I seek to understand Luthuli and offer an alternative perspective.

### **'Name-Dropping' and 'Vindication by Association'**

Sithole and Mkhize, using the assistance of P. Forsyth, point out in their paper "Truth or Lies" that "Buthelezi and Inkatha used their representations of Luthuli in at least two ways..."

1. They used Luthuli to bolster their claim that there was continuity in resistance struggles from the pre-colonial Zulu kings, through the ANC, to Inkatha.
2. Buthelezi used his own representations of Luthuli as a political shield when his political adversaries questioned his credibility as an anti-apartheid leader.<sup>13</sup>

It is as if the engine of Buthelezi's great demonstration of confidence is deep insecurity. A review of Buthelezi's speeches reveals a defining characteristic of Buthelezi's political psychology. Buthelezi demonstrates over the years a dependency on other credible figures to bolster his own stature and decisions. Buthelezi seems aware of this accusation and, perhaps felt (subconsciously?) guilty of it, denied it, and accused political opponents of the same.<sup>14</sup> A review of Buthelezi's pattern of name-dropping is often indicative of what can only be described as a distortion of the truth.

The first instance of name-dropping is Buthelezi's own. In the printed copy of Buthelezi's speech eulogizing ETZ Mthiyane, Buthelezi is titled "Prince." Buthelezi's biographers, I presume with his permission as they are 'authorized,' refer to Buthelezi's title as "Mntwana," which in *isiZulu* parlance indicates he is a prince. In his second biographical text, the first line of the first page refers to Buthelezi as "Mntwana."<sup>15</sup> Temkin in his first biographical text states that Buthelezi "is a direct decedent of the Zulu kings."<sup>16</sup> However, Buthelezi is the son of a princess (the son of a daughter of a king) and thus not a (royal) prince.<sup>17</sup>

The second instance, related to the first above, of name-dropping is quite innocent, even benevolent, particularly as it is done to edify or even teach Zulu history and culture. Inevitably, Buthelezi reminds his audience on whose authority his power is derived: the ancestral kings. Buthelezi characteristically attaches himself to the legacy of

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<sup>13</sup> Sithole and Mkhize, p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> "I do not use [Luthuli's] name to get myself political credibility. I benefited from his leadership, but stand on my own merits as a leader following in his footsteps" (p. 13).

"There are too many people today who are not doing anything for the people for whom Chief Luthuli sacrificed so much, but who trade in on his name and yet vilify those of us who even now walk unashamedly in his footsteps" (p. 24).

Buthelezi, Mangosuthu G. "Prayer Meeting to Commemorate the Last Leader of the Banned African National Congress Who Was Democratically Elected Before the Organization Was Banned – Chief Albert Mvumbi Luthuli President-General of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Prize-Winner. Groutville Mission School Grounds, Sunday, August 29, 1982.

<sup>15</sup> Temkin, Ben. *A Biography*, (JB Publishers, South Africa), 2003. p. xi.

<sup>16</sup> Temkin, Ben. *Gatsha Buthelezi: Zulu Statesman*, (Purnell and Sons, Cape Town), 1976. p. 404.

<sup>17</sup> Apparently, a dubious argument can be made that he is a prince of his clan.

his regal forbearers in advocating any particular position. For example, again, using the funeral for “ETZ” Mthiyane as a basis for debate, Buthelezi waxed eloquently about his tie to the past and claimed that his responsibility as the Prime Minister is “traditional.”

*As many older people know I had the additional responsibility of being the traditional Prime Minister of the Monarch who was my late first cousin His Majesty King Cyprian Bhekuzulu Nyangayezizwe ka Solomon and also traditional prime minister of the Zulu Nation. When the system of Homeland government was imposed on us by the Apartheid regime, I already had that responsibility.*

Buthelezi is gifted and intelligent in his prose. For in using Cyprian’s name and title, Buthelezi infuses two important historical points upon which his legitimacy is founded. The first point is that the Homelands Government was imposed upon the Zulus by the Nationalist government, in other words, ‘he’ (Buthelezi) had no choice. The second is that prior to the homelands framework, he already occupied the position of leader and thus he was not in a position of power and influence as a product of it. However, these assertions are inaccurate, at best, and untrue, at worst. Buthelezi’s own biography acknowledges that initially it was the government that endorsed his chieftainship (and chieftainships in general), irregardless of whether he was the legitimate hereditary claimant. His biographer relates:

*Two more years were to drag by until at last it was made official, along with the announcement that the installation ceremony would be taken out of the hands of the Zulus and be conducted by Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Mr. A. Turton. The message behind this was clear: it was to be a government appointment, not a right of succession. As if the lesson needed to be further hammered home, when the big day arrived, Turton reminded the new chief that he was to “look into the affairs of your tribe” and heed the advice of the government. He made no bones of the fact that Buthelezi was by no means Verwoerd’s blue-eyed boy.<sup>18</sup>*

Notwithstanding all of Buthelezi’s recollections of his hereditary privileges and responsibilities, his chieftainship from the beginning was a South African government appointment. Just as Bambatha was removed from his hereditary chieftaincy and just as Luthuli refused the government’s ultimatum to withdraw from ANC politics and was so removed from his democratically elected chieftaincy, so could Buthelezi be removed from or resign his hereditary chieftaincy. Buthelezi was ultimately appointed and could be removed at will should the government decide he proved no longer any use to the regime’s political objectives.<sup>19</sup> And he was useful, though disconcerting, for his very criticisms lent “the apartheid structures a legitimacy no mere stooge could offer.”<sup>20</sup> More revealing than the State’s appointment of Buthelezi as a chief is that Buthelezi was an

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<sup>18</sup> Smith, Jack Shepherd. *Buthelezi: The Biography*, (Hans Strydom Publishers, Melville), 1988. p. 53.

<sup>19</sup> In fact, Buthelezi fought in the Supreme Court of the Natal Provisional Division the brother who was likely the most legitimate successor to the Buthelezi chieftainship. His elder brother, Mceleli, was the first born son of the *first* wife of Chief Mathole, Buthelezi’s father. Buthelezi pledged his support to the Bantu Authorities and pledged that he would persuade his tribe, then against it, to accept it as well. Mceleli was eventually arrested and banished to the Transvaal in the early 1960s (Mzala, pp. 6-7 and Smith, p. 54). Although Smith understands Mceleli to be the first born son, by the *sixth* wife of Mathole (p. 54).

<sup>20</sup> Marks, Shula, p. 123.



employee of the State. That is, he was paid a salary that was “not-ungenerous.”<sup>21</sup> We will come back to Buthelezi’s claim to be an heir of Luthuli when we examine Luthuli’s refusal to remain in the employ of the state at the expense of the liberation struggle.

I assert Buthelezi conjures the memory of Shaka, Dingane, Mpande, Cetshwayo, Solomon, and Cyprian to invoke his legitimacy. Buthelezi is known to have exaggerated his own importance when he stated:

*I was born to occupy a leadership position in South Africa...I am a leader by hereditary right and follow in the footsteps of my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, who in return followed the footsteps of their forebears to the time of the founding father of kwaZulu, King Shaka...I and my forebears have always occupied influential positions as prime ministers...to successive Zulu kings...I provide this detail about my own background because it is a detail known to Black South Africa and accepted by them as establishing my bona fides.*<sup>22</sup>

However, before Mangosuthu, there was only one chief of the Buthelezi clan that served as a Prime Minister to the King, and that was during Cetshwayo’s reign. There is little historical validity that Buthelezi inherited the role as Prime Minister by tradition. No Buthelezi served as Prime Minister for Shaka, Dingaan, or Mpande.<sup>23</sup> Only Buthelezi’s great-grandfather, Chief Mnyamana, was a royal Prime Minister. Also, no Buthelezi served as Prime Minister with King Dinuzulu or Solomon. It is from Mnyamana’s isolated instance and Buthelezi’s appointment by the government to his various positions of power as an *inkosi* (first under Cyprian and then under Goodwill Zwelithini) that he has made a tradition out of his title.

Using the speech at ETZ Mthiyane’s funeral again as a template to discuss Buthelezi’s tactics to articulate his version of historical events, Buthelezi ‘drops names’ to emphasize a given thesis that revolves around him. The thesis of the eulogy for ETZ Mthiyane could have been entitled, “A Justification for the Participation in Bantu Education.” Name dropping is the primary literary tactic.

*At the University of Zululand there was a group of then young Academics who admired my maternal grandfather King Dinuzulu, who as most of you know was not only exiled to St. Helena Island and later again after he returned from the island was subsequently convicted of High treason and given a sentence of [l]ife imprisonment. In 1910 he was released by the first Prime Minister of South Africa General Louis Botha when he became Prime Minister. But the King was still considered a rebel who could not be trusted and a trouble-maker in that he was exiled to UITKYK Farm in Middleburg on his*

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<sup>21</sup> Marks, Shula, p. 117. Mzala provides the figure of R 35,000.00 per year in his 1988 book (p. 10).

<sup>22</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. “The Situation in South Africa,” Minutes of Evidence to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, London, January 20, 1986. pp. 53-56.  
From Mzala, p. 103, cited in footnote 1, p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> The Prime Minister for Shaka was ‘a’ Mthethwa; for Dingane ‘a’ Ntuli; for Mpande ‘a’ Ntshangase; for Cetshwayo ‘a’ Buthelezi, for Dinuzulu ‘a’ Ndwandwa/Nxumalo. However, Buthelezi’s biographer, Smith indicates incorrectly that Mnyamana was Dinuzulu’s Prime Minister (Smith, p. 35). Smith then contradicts himself by saying that Mankulumana (Ndandwa/Nxumalo) was the “principal induna” (p. 36). In fact, Buthelezi’s chiefly ancestor (Pungashe) fought against King Shaka (Temkin, 2003, p. 1). Buthelezi’s only ancestor that was a Prime Minister (Mnyamama) was loyal to Cetshwayo, but was a traitor to Dinuzulu while allied with the colonial forces against the king! Buthelezi’s father, Chief Mathole was not the royal prime minister, but rather only a leader of a regiment, of which there were many. Mzala, p. 105-108.

*release, where he died in 1913. Before his second arrest he had a group of Loyalists called "INKOMNDALA." There were a core of confidantes of the King who included people as Inkosi Mabhekeshiya ka Nkankane Zulu, such as Sukabekhuluma Sithole ka Gezindaka, also known as uShiyanja alias "uChakijana." This group of young academics at the University of Zululand called themselves after King Dinizulu's Loyalists "INKOMNDALA." They included such personalities as the late Dr. Doctor Gasa and "ETZ" were also members of that group of Loyalists. It is remarkable that the two of them made them to adopt the name "INKOMNDALA" for their group. I can not say the same about some of them.*

With a plethora of names, Buthelezi's objective is clear. Buthelezi bestows honour on the deceased by linking him with the names of other honourable deceased, whose pedigree begins with Buthelezi's own royal ancestry. All of the deceased 'participated' within the Bantu Educational system and were thus 'loyal' to the speaker, Buthelezi, when others had more "purist," "holier-than-thou," and thus non-collaborative, that is, ANC leaning, positions. But even those who were *inkomndala* eventually betrayed him. As with the previous paragraph, Buthelezi ends with a dig at his enemies when he says, "I can not say the same about some of them" (p. 5).<sup>24</sup> It is not at all inconceivable that some of the three thousand listening to him were the intended objects of the needling.

Marks records in her book *Ambiguities of Dependence* a "fulsome tribute" to Rev. Dr. John Dube, also a Congregationalist, made by Buthelezi in 1974. Buthelezi, in describing himself, by means of describing Dube, educates his listeners. Dube is described as...

*a man who was not only one of the greatest leaders of the African people in South Africa during his life-time...he was a man who believed in grassroots upliftment of his people. He could be a peasant amongst peasants as well as an Academic amongst academicians, and a politician who was a statesman amongst politicians.*<sup>25</sup>

Lest one forget who is being praised, Buthelezi adds, "like him, I, too have my heart centred mainly in the education of my race."<sup>26</sup> In a 1982 speech, Buthelezi uses Luthuli's legacy to justify his decision to not boycott the Bantu Education system. In referring to the Luthuli Memorial Fund and the ANC-In-Exile's refusal to contribute to it as its proceeds would finance an inferior education for any beneficiary, Buthelezi countered that:

*Chief Luthuli himself never thought along these lines, but those who claim to be his greatest adherents deviated from his objectives in not helping to finance the education of young blacks within South Africa. I went to Swaziland in the early seventies to attend the launching of this fund because I am still committed to Chief Luthuli's ideas. I still believe as he did, that the education of young blacks is one of our most important priorities in the struggle for liberation.*<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> In the previous paragraph, Buthelezi states, "ETZ was not that kind of creature." That is a "false friend" who is opportunistic. "One has seen too many of them in this life" (p. 5).

<sup>25</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. "13<sup>th</sup> Mafukuzela Week: Dr. John Langalibalele Dube: Statesman, Sage, Scholar, and Leader – His Achievements and the Lessons of These to Us in the Struggle for Our Own Liberation," May 05, 1974.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu G. "Prayer Meeting to Commemorate the Last Leader of the Banned African National Congress Who Was Democratically Elected Before the Organization Was Banned – Chief Albert

Leading us to the next persuasive tactic to justify Buthelezi's image and actions is his oft mentioned recollection that his cousin is none other than the Congregationalist Isaka Pixley ka Seme, who was also the founder of what was to be later known as the ANC. Of course, no mention is made that Seme was struck off the roll of attorneys for financial fraud, that he failed to be re-elected to his position as President-General of the ANC, or that he led the movement to a state of, what one commentator termed, "culpable inertia."<sup>28</sup> As a name to be dropped Seme was helpful in that he, like Luthuli, was committed to an undivided South Africa.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the dropping of Seme's name and the linking by association and blood to Buthelezi engendered credibility to Buthelezi's image as a freedom fighter despite the fact that Buthelezi was primarily serving as a consolidator of national Zulu consciousness. Buthelezi on various occasions went beyond name-dropping and links by association, but subtly described Seme as his supporter. Though the example is anachronistic when advocating Seme as an ancestral political ally during the 1970s, Buthelezi recounted how, while at Ft. Hare in the 1950s he and others were expelled for participating in a student protest, Seme's assistance was elicited.<sup>30</sup> Buthelezi was, it is implied, able to take exams off campus and thus still receive his degree due to Seme's influence.<sup>31</sup>

More specifically relevant to the issue concerning Chief Luthuli is Buthelezi's extension of name dropping is his clever use of what I term 'vindication by association' tactic. Buthelezi is well known to exploit his association with other 'credible' heroes of the liberation struggle. Buthelezi's history is dotted with examples wherein he attaches himself to those less inclined, or even hostile, to collaborative methods of resistance. Sometimes, these incidences of "vindication by association," followed with disastrous consequences. The mortifying experience Buthelezi had at the funeral of Steve Biko in March, 1978 is perhaps the most famous and clear example.<sup>32</sup> Other examples are perhaps more subtle, but still produced instances of deep embarrassment. Again, the focus here is not the belittling of Buthelezi, but rather to demonstrate a pattern of behaviour that leads one to question seriously his justification to lead the homelands government on the advice of Chief Albert Luthuli.

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Mvumbi Luthuli President-General of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Prize-Winner. Groutville Mission School Grounds, Sunday, August 29, 1982. p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> "So lackluster and turgid was his Presidency between 1930 and 1937, that Seme was at one stage accused of 'culpable inertia.'"

Couzens, Tim (and Richard Rive), *Discovering Seme*, accessed on April 01, 2006.

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/seme.html>

<sup>29</sup> Seme wrote in a 1906 award winning speech at Colombia University, "The African people, although not a strictly homogeneous race, possess a common fundamental sentiment which is everywhere manifest, crystallizing itself into one controlling idea. Conflicts and strife are rapidly disappearing before the fusing force of this enlightened perception of the true inter-tribal relations, which relations should subsist among a people with a common destiny."

Seme, Pixley, "The Regeneration of Africa," *Journal of Royal African Society*, Vol. 5, 1905-1906, pp. 404-408.

<sup>30</sup> Although, Temkin's biography (2003) states that Senator Edgar Brooks was petitioned and who intervened and arranged for Buthelezi to finish through the University of Natal (p. 33).

<sup>31</sup> Karis and Gerhart, p. 255.

<sup>32</sup> Karis, Thomas G. and Gail M. Gerhart. *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1990, Volume 5: Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979*, (UNISA Press, Pretoria), 1997. p. 259.

Published in the *Rand Daily Mail* in July, 1973 was a picture of Buthelezi and Robert Sobukwe of the Pan African Congress (PAC) smiling.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps, more importantly, the meeting is described as one of “chance.” The PAC and Sobukwe’s stance against any participation with the Nationalists government’s Homeland Government scheme can be described as ‘radically opposed.’<sup>34</sup> Yet, due in large part to his poor public relations image among other liberationists and perhaps due to his own sense of inadequacy and/or guilt, Buthelezi ‘associated’ himself favourably with Sobukwe so as to desperately gain from it some political mileage. Shamelessly, Buthelezi even used the photo as a weapon of self-defence against students in Dar es Salaam who viewed him as a traitor to a Pan-Africanist cause, reportedly providing the verbal caption, “Me and my friend Robert Sobukwe.”<sup>35</sup> Sobukwe’s biographer, Pogrund, writes that Sobukwe was uncharacteristically angered when he learned how Buthelezi had used the image, and thus him, in such a manner. Following the incident in Tanzania, Buthelezi, still apparently clutching this evidence of legitimacy, proudly displayed the picture to the kwaZulu legislature saying, “It was an occasion of great jubilation for both of us because we have not met for almost 20 years.”<sup>36</sup> For a third time, Buthelezi referenced the picture in a April 09, 1978 speech claiming that during the encounter Sobukwe “ ‘encouraged me in the work I am doing and said to me in Zulu: *Uyabashaya mfundini...bashaye!*’ [*You are giving it to them, my comrade, hit them!*]”<sup>37</sup> The point of highlighting this example with Sobukwe is not to contest Buthelezi’s version of events, but rather to emphasize the fact that Buthelezi would on three occasions cite friendship or support from a leading liberationist despite knowing full well that such a leader held diametrically opposing ideas to Buthelezi’s own as it regards the resistance’s path forward. When assessing Luthuli and his supposed support of Buthelezi’s leadership of the Homeland Government, the example with Sobukwe must be kept in mind.

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<sup>33</sup> According to Buthelezi’s biographer, Temkin, it was taken by Pogrund, the friend and biographer of Sobukwe. p. 149.

<sup>34</sup> Pheko, Motsoko. *Apartheid: The Story of a Dispossessed People*, (Marram Books, London), 1984. pp. 148-159.

<sup>35</sup> Pogrund, Benjamin. *How Can A Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe*, (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 1997). pp. 345-347.

Pogrund offers the reader a positive portrayal of Robert Sobukwe, the leader and founder of the Africanist Nationalist movement within the ANC and the later breakaway Pan African Congress (PAC) party. Pogrund’s bias is due in large part to his very intimate association, support, and friendship with Sobukwe and his family. Again, as with most texts, there is precious little on A.J. Luthuli, who was the African National Congress’ (ANC) President-General. Given that the PAC claimed, as it broke away from the ANC at a conference in the Transvaal, to be the true standard bearer of the ANC’s original intentions as stated in the 1949 Programme of Action, it is ironic that Pogrund expends little effort researching and articulating *Sobukwe’s* rationale for the momentous break from the ANC. One quotation from the book serves as an example of Sobukwe’s sense of political grandiosity, lack of respect, pettiness, and immaturity. Sobukwe announces the following soon after the launch of the anti-pass campaign:

*The ANC is now trying to bask in the sunshine of PAC’s successes. Luthuli now has the courage which he has lacked for over twelve years to burn his reference book after passes had been suspended. Supported and boosted by the white Press, he has been making one foolish statement after the other, pretending that he has a following in the country, (p. 356).*

<sup>36</sup> Karis and Gerhart, p. 276. Note 39.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

The debacle of Buthelezi's attendance at the funeral of Robert Sobukwe is well known. It has been recounted by other prominent liberation icons such as Alan Paton and Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu. The story therefore need not be recounted, suffice it to say that more radical Black Consciousness supporters were infuriated that an "Apartheid stooge" would attend the funeral of so great a non-collaborationist as Robert Sobukwe that Buthelezi was chased away humiliatingly with no small risk to his health and life. For the purposes of this investigation, I focus not on the incident itself, but Buthelezi's justification for attending and his claim that he was requested to speak. Apparently, Buthelezi claimed in an interview that the "PAC in London" had telephoned to ask him to attend.<sup>38</sup> Temkim reports that A.B. Ngcobo and Potlako Leballo asked him to pay tribute to Sobukwe on their behalf as they were unable to attend.<sup>39</sup> Temkim also states that Sobukwe's brother Bishop Ernest Sobukwe, who could not have shared his brother's political philosophy, invited Buthelezi to attend.<sup>40</sup> However, again we see that name dropping to vindicate by association is perhaps disingenuous. In an interview in the *Post*, Buthelezi mentions not Leballo, but Nana Mahomo as the one who issues the invitation.<sup>41</sup> Yet, even these links are tenuous as neither Ngcobo nor Mahomo were active in the PAC at the time. Buthelezi's claimed his relationship with Sobukwe was characterized by "feeling of great warmth and affection," despite that fact that Buthelezi never phoned or visited Sobukwe after his release from prison in 1969.

Buthelezi's primary and repeated claim to being a legitimate leader of the liberation struggle is in his perspective validated by his repeated call for the release of Nelson Mandela and others imprisoned on Robben Island.<sup>42</sup> It matters not for Buthelezi that such appeals were futile. There was for Buthelezi, little risk, as it regards liberation tactics, in bleating for Mandela's release. For Buthelezi to periodically request for Mandela's and Sisulu's release was an effective defensive weapon benefiting him politically, rather than an offensive tactic meant to further the advance of the liberation movement. Buthelezi's less than altruistic motivations are revealed in the minutes of a conference that speculated on a federation being formed amongst the various homelands. During the discussions, Mr. M.J. Naidoo of the Natal Indian Congress quite rightly quipped:

*This conference has leaders from all sections of the community to discuss and consider an acceptable solution to the present stalemate. I would not dare suggest that Mr. Eglin or Chief Buthelezi is not a leader, but what about that considerable and significant section whose leaders are not here? Those who are banned or in exile or on Robben Island? Can any solution really be acceptable without the participation of these silent leaders?*

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 260

<sup>39</sup> Temkin, 2003. p. 198.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. Interview with Joe Thloloe, *Post*, Johannesburg, March 19, 1980 and *The Nation*, Johannesburg, April 1978, p. 2.

From Karis and Gerhart, p. 260. Cites footnote 33, p. 276.

<sup>42</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. *Rand Daily Mail*, October 01, 1973.

Found in Karis and Gerhart, p. 259. See document 100 found on p. 674.

Buthelezi, with a high degree of hypersensitivity, defended himself from what he perceived as a personal attack. Buthelezi responds by stating that it would be “morally wrong not to take issue with Mr. Naidoo.”

*I am a personal friend of Mandela myself, and on certain occasions we have exchanged correspondences...I think that for those of us who travel abroad, who are constantly under fire because people make this point that we have no credentials to speak for our people, I think this was the implication made by Mr. Naidoo this afternoon when he says that he doesn't say that I'm not a leader Mr. Eglin but that people must be represented around this table by people of their choice. I think personally it was quite petty to do it, but I think in view of the fact that the press is here and that one has been under tremendous pressure abroad because people try to paint us in this way as just stooges of Mr. Voster.<sup>43</sup>*

When investigating the veracity of a suspicious historical claim, evidence gathered can be circumstantial or definitive. Circumstantial evidence can, if comprehensive, prove a point beyond all reasonable doubt. Circumstantial evidence leads one to a reasonable conclusion, but it is often, in and of itself, by no means convincing. Part one of this investigation concentrates on Buthelezi's motives and patterns of behaviour that lead one to doubt certain claims when made in certain circumstances and for certain reasons. Buthelezi's patterns of behaviour in similar contexts predispose one to arrive at a given conclusion. Buthelezi's proclivity to “name-drop” and use the stature of established liberation ‘heroes’ to vindicate his positions or actions is well documented. When examining Buthelezi's claim that Luthuli supported his position we can evaluate such a claim, in-part, by juxtaposing them against other claims he made that are known to be false. For example, in a notorious forty-eight page *magnum opus* speech on October 18, 1979 vilifying a political opponent and exulting himself, Buthelezi referenced two letters written to him by Nelson Mandela. Buthelezi told the audience:

*From jail I hear a message from Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu telling me to go on what I am doing on behalf of millions of black people. From my brothers in exile I get the same message.*

What was true was that Buthelezi had received two letters from Mandela, one dated November 04, 1968 and the other August 03, 1969.<sup>44</sup> However, as Mzala points out, the two correspondences used to justify his cooperation with the homelands framework (so as to in the future thwart the Apartheid strategy), made no mention at all of Mandela's support for Buthelezi or for his positions.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the correspondences were nothing more than pastoral letters of empathy and condolences for the death of King Cyprian and the death of Buthelezi's son in a car accident, respectively. Buthelezi proves to not just exaggerate, but to also fabricate his allies, particularly ones who have little or no opportunity to contest his claims. Similar incidents fabricating an association or

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<sup>43</sup> Transcript of “All-Race Assembly” at Bulugha, near East London, November 9-11, 1973. From Karis and Gerhart, pp. 642.

<sup>44</sup> It is also likely that Luthuli and Buthelezi (only) met and talked in November, 1952.

<sup>45</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. “A Black Perspective of Realism in the Black Struggle for Liberation,” speech of October 21, 1979, Soweto. Found in Mzala, p. 124-125 and Karis and Gerhart, p. 257, footnote 23, p. 275.

exaggerate support litter Buthelezi's career. All have a similar motive, derive from a common fear, and utilize a common tactic.

## Luthuli's Objection

Lest one perceive that my objective is to denigrate Chief Buthelezi, let us turn to Luthuli. It is one thing to track Buthelezi's political strategies thus casting suspicion on his claim that Luthuli supported his leadership of the Zulu homeland, it is another to prove the opposite. Doubting Buthelezi's sincerity does not ultimately undermine his claim. To fully undermine the claim made repeatedly, and most recently at ETZ Mthiyane's funeral, one needs to examine Luthuli's stance on the homelands system and juxtapose it against Buthelezi's claim.

First, let us look at Luthuli's example to discern what it is that Luthuli would have advised Buthelezi to do. It would be fair to say that at the *very initial* stages, in fact the *very first* stage, of Luthuli's political involvement, Luthuli would have shared Buthelezi's latter day political sentiments; that is, land reform, greater economic opportunities for Blacks, a strengthening of the *amakhosi*, and benevolent support, both financial and administrative, from the South African government would ultimately lead to a full African franchise and a free and democratic South Africa. However, due to Luthuli's involvement with the Native Representative Council his idealism concerning the efficacy of cooperation with the government was short-lived.

Luthuli, from the early forties, before his membership in the ANC in 1944, had high, if not unrealistic, hopes for the realization of political and economic gains. Therefore, Luthuli's optimism as it concerns working with the South African government could be seen as compatible with Buthelezi's later strategy, though such a comparison would be anachronistic.<sup>46</sup> In 1942, his campaign for an election produced what is likely Luthuli's first political "manifesto," his first political platform, so to speak, that would launch his political career. In a May 22, 1942 correspondence from Groutville to the president of the Zulu Cultural Society, Mr. M.J. Mpanza, Luthuli demonstrates some political naiveté, a likely characteristic of his liberal, optimistic, multi-racial background, when he presented an "election manifesto" to initiate his campaign; in Luthuli's words, "the main things I stand for." The election manifesto includes:

1. more help by the government to the rural community...establishment of something like a land bank;
2. improvement of the general status of chiefs and chiefs' courts;
3. acquisition of more land;
4. better local government forums;
5. improvement of education such as higher teacher salaries, extension of education to rural areas.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> I compare political ideas from different eras hesitatingly. For comparing one philosophy at one time with another at another time and saying both agree or both differ is not true to either thinker. Contexts change, therefore so do strategies. When comparing ideologies, time frames should be concurrent. Nonetheless, the above comparison is helpful despite the qualification.

<sup>47</sup> Correspondence to Mr. C. J. Mpanza, dated May 22, 1942.

Found in the Pietermaritzburg Archival Depository, Zulu Cultural Society Papers, A1381, II / 6.

This manifesto indicates that Luthuli's political goals were understandably gradualist, or incremental, in nature. There is a sense that the Smuts regime could be constructively engaged, within whatever forums allowed by the government, so as to improve the lives of those for whom Luthuli advocated. But, the Smuts regime, and even more so the Nationalist regime that was elected by the white minority came to power in 1948, proved to Luthuli that the South African government could not be trusted to constructively engage whatever avenues of redress the disenfranchised population were allotted.

In 1937 the Native Representative Council (NRC) was formed as a means by which to, rather pathetically, compensate and thus console the Black population from the legislated loss of their limited franchise in the Cape Province as a result of the passage of the Hertzog bills in 1935. In 1939, the NRC was likely pressured by the Smuts regime to relinquish domestic political grievances during a time of great international instability as a result of WWII for the promise of future rewards. By the conclusion of the 1940s, these hopes for concessions proved heartbreakingly empty.

Luthuli's involvement with the NRC was the result of his success in a by-election to serve on the NRC as a result of Rev. Dr. John L. Dube's stroke and resultant death in 1946. The absence of Dube, a fellow Congregationalist and educationalist, was perhaps the first substantive aperture in which Luthuli first entered politics. Commenting on the NRC, Chief Luthuli said in his autobiography:

*I had no connection with this council in its early years, save, in my capacity as chief. However, when the death of Dr. Dube brought about a by-election, I was voted into his place. I was interested, though not at all surprised, as I went about among the people before the election, to notice how deeply disillusioned they were by this time with the Council...*

Luthuli should not have been surprised. The mood of the liberation struggle was becoming more militant, particularly with the youth. Founded in 1944 to pursue the intention of increasing the pace of reform, the African Youth League (AYL) apparently placed much pressure on the NRC to permanently adjourn due to the fact the Smuts and the Nationalist governments paid it no heed.<sup>48</sup> Luthuli continued:

*... 'What is the use,' they asked me, 'of your going to the NRC in Pretoria? They do nothing but talk. Where has this Council got us?' It was only true. For years now they had talked. Nobody listened. I was disillusioned myself, and could only reply. There are people beyond South Africa who sometimes hear what we say. All we can do is to shout to the world. All I can do is to help shout louder.'*<sup>49</sup>

Luthuli served on the NRC for a very short time. As others had long begun to perceive, Luthuli realized that the NRC was a futile venture. The lobby group was quickly adjourned by those who served as representatives, rendered defunct, and eventually scrapped in 1951 by the new Nationalist government. The point being: Luthuli and others effectively resigned from the NRC thus refusing to cooperate with the South

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<sup>48</sup> SADET, p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go* (Tafelberg Publishers and Mafube Publishing, Cape Town and Houghton, respectively), 2006. p. 94.



African government or its representative frameworks. Buthelezi's latter day counter defence of his accusers stating...

*In my opinion, to say that we have "accepted" apartheid, by serving our people within the framework of the South African government policy would be as nonsensical as to say that when great African leaders like the late Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr. ZK Matthews and others, served their people within the frame work of the United Party government policy of segregation as members of the Native Representatives Council, that they did so because they "accepted" the segregationists policies of the United Party government. Nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>50</sup>*

...is rendered null and void by Luthuli's resignation and non-participation in the body from the outset on his first participation in an NRC meeting!<sup>51</sup>

Two other organizations that in hindsight likely influenced Luthuli's advocacy not to participate in any structure implemented and controlled by the Apartheid regime (such as the Bantustans) were the All-African Convention (AAC) and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). The formation of the AAC in December, 1935 was catalyzed by an adverse response to the government's 'consultative' process immediately previous to the passage of the Herzog Bills. A newly emerging, almost primordial, AYL took a more radical stance against the Herzog Bills arguing that the proposed NRC should be rejected outright before it even began. Eventually, the AAC gave birth to the NEUM in December, 1943. Composed of the African National Congress (ANC), the Communist Party (CP), and the AAC, the NEUM's expressed purpose was to implement a policy of non-collaboration, "using the tactic of boycotting all racist institutions."<sup>52</sup> The AAC/NEUM rejected all *dummy* bodies and advocated a policy of non-collaboration with the Apartheid government.<sup>53</sup> The ethos of the AAC/NEUM preceded arguments heard twenty and thirty years later when the Bantustan system that constituted 'independent' homelands was debated. It was felt that the operation of segregated institutions for any reason whatsoever was to accept inferiority of the Black man and to involve the population in working the machinery of their own oppression.<sup>54</sup> The ANC and the South African Communist Party departure relegated the AAC/NEUM to eventual extinction. The reasons for the split in the AAC/NEUM are unclear. Pro-ANC sources such as Luthuli suggest that more radical and less accommodation-ist pulled out of the AAC because the AAC was an *ad hoc* entity created only in response to the Herzog Bills and not a more permanent and resolved political institution prepared for action in the struggle. Anti-ANC sources, such as the Pan African Congresses' Phoko, understand less accommodation-ist members left the ANC (that participated in the NRC) to involve themselves in the non-collaborationist AAC/NEUM.<sup>55</sup> The point here is not who left

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<sup>50</sup> Excerpts taken from speeches of Chief Buthelezi held in the ANC archives in Lusaka. From Mzala, p. 100, footnote 4.

<sup>51</sup> Mzala very ably itemizes other arguments refuting Buthelezi's participation as leader of the kwaZulu homeland using Luthuli and Matthew's service on the NRC. Though these arguments are more than valid, I must confine my prose to Buthelezi and Luthuli (Mzala, 45-47).

<sup>52</sup> South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume I (1960-1970)*, (Zebra Press, 2004), p. 204 and 320.

<sup>53</sup> Phoko, Motsoko. *Apartheid: The Story of a Dispossessed People*, (Marram Books, London), 1984. p. 79.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, p. 79. Cites in notes: Ngubane, Jordan. *An African Explains Apartheid*, p. 91.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, p. 79.

who for what reason, but rather since 1935 there had been a strong lobby within the liberation struggle for non-collaboration with the South African government and that at least two organizations in which the ANC was involved upheld that policy.

Luthuli's stance against Blacks' participation in Apartheid structures was not arbitrary or theoretical, but rather based on personal experience. In addition to his collective resignation with others on the NRC, Luthuli refused in 1952 to accede to the government's demand to resign from the ANC or resign from his democratically elected chieftainship of the Umvoti valley's *abasekholweni*. It is commonly and inaccurately claimed that Luthuli 'chose' the ANC at the expense of his chieftaincy. This fallacy about Luthuli is repeated because it is believed that Luthuli responded to the ultimatum given to him by the government, when in fact Luthuli intentionally did not respond to the ultimatum. In other words, Luthuli did not 'choose.' Luthuli's decision not to choose was well thought out. To choose would indicate to all that there was a contraction between serving his people as a local chief and serving his people as a political figure. Luthuli's claim, ironically, was strikingly similar to Buthelezi's: one can serve the people as chief even if being paid by the government (as both Luthuli and Buthelezi were) as well as be a political activist pressurizing through legal means to reform the government's policy. It is true for both Luthuli and Buthelezi there was no conflict of interest. What is crucial then is that the government then made the choice *for* Luthuli, deposing him from his chieftainship following his non-response to the ultimatum in September, 1952. Only thereafter did Luthuli issue his famous statement in November, 1952, "The Road to Freedom is Via the Cross."<sup>56</sup> In this incident, Luthuli learned a very valuable lesson: 'According to the government, being in the employ of the government as a chief and politically serving the disenfranchised are incompatible.' The second lesson was as follows: 'If you are obedient to the latter, rather than the former, the government will remove you.' If this rather simple and obvious lesson was learned by Luthuli in 1952, then it is rather inconceivable that he would have believed in 1953<sup>57</sup>, 1957<sup>58</sup>, 1959<sup>59</sup>, or 1964<sup>60</sup> (let alone in 1970, after his death<sup>61</sup>) that Buthelezi could have achieved what the government would not allow him to achieve, i.e. to serve both interests.<sup>62</sup> Luthuli concluded from his experience that according to the government you can only serve 'one master,' to use a Biblical quotation of which he was very familiar. Luthuli could not have advised Buthelezi to participate with the government's framework as long as Luthuli knew the government would only sanction his chieftaincy if Buthelezi served

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<sup>56</sup> The reader will note that the explanation for this deeply political and strategic decision was inherently theological, that is, faith-based.

<sup>57</sup> Buthelezi became acting chief of the Buthelezi clan.

<sup>58</sup> Buthelezi's chieftainship was confirmed by the government.

<sup>59</sup> The inauguration of Zululand's first Bantu Regional Authority was in October.

<sup>60</sup> Buthelezi publicly reacted to the government's announcement that participation in the homelands framework was not voluntary but compulsory. Buthelezi was later installed as chairman of a regional authority.

<sup>61</sup> Buthelezi is elected in June by *amakhosi* as Chief Officer of the Zulu Territorial Authority.

<sup>62</sup> A number of dates must be considered for Luthuli's advise of support for Buthelezi because as the years progress, as will be revealed later, Buthelezi changes his story of when advise was given to him by Luthuli and for what position.

its interests.<sup>63</sup> Govan Mbeki summarized the difference between Buthelezi and Luthuli quite aptly:

*This [Buthelezi's position] is a very different route to that taken by Chief Luthuli himself when, earlier in the decade, he had been forced by the government to choose between holding his position as chief of the Amakholwa in the Stanger district and being president of the ANC. Luthuli had opted for the ANC, becoming the people's chief, whereas Buthelezi willingly allowed himself to become a government chief.*<sup>64</sup>

In the political discourse within his eulogy to "ETZ" Mthiyane, Buthelezi pitched:

*In paying tribute to Dr. ETZ Mthiyane I wish to pay tribute to all the brave professional people who rallied when I appealed to them during those dark days of Apartheid to continue giving our children some education [rather] than **none at all** as some of the purists were advocating that we were dirtying our hands with Apartheid mud, by continuing to run education departments and Universities such as the University of Zululand under the Apartheid era (Buthelezi's emphasis).*

It is not my interest to debate which liberationist philosophy was 'correct' and which was not. My interest is in the thought of Chief Luthuli and Buthelezi's referring to Luthuli as a philosophical mentor and supporter.<sup>65</sup> In a September 20, 1959 editorial published in the *Golden City Post*, Luthuli quotes Paramount Chief Sabata Dalindyebo of the *abaTembu* in the Transkei saying, "Half a loaf is better than no bread. Before, we had nothing. Now at least we have something." Luthuli responds with a number of socio-economic rebuttals posed as rhetorical questions. It is clear that Luthuli is vociferously opposed to Chief Dalindyebo's line of thinking. Luthuli concludes:

*Much of our destiny as a people in a scientific age has been placed by the White Government in the hands of chiefs and their councillors. **The progress of Bantustans will not be judged on the affluence of a few; chiefs, traders, civil servants and professional people who are hardly 12 percent of the people.** What will matter more is the raising of the general standard of living of the masses of the people to progressively approach civilized standard of living (emphasis is Luthuli's).*<sup>66</sup>

In the following week's editorial, Luthuli takes-up the same theme. Luthuli begins by indicating that "the prospects of Bantustans, in light of the Government plans are grim for

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<sup>63</sup> The only scenario that I can see that Luthuli would recommend Buthelezi to accept responsibility for the Zulu homeland is if Luthuli wished to de-legitimatize the Zulu homeland by having Buthelezi first serve the interests of the liberation struggle, thus be deposed as was Luthuli, thus de-legitimizing the entire Apartheid scheme in the eyes of the world. For this plan to work, Luthuli would need Buthelezi to sacrifice his rights, privileges, money, and power (as he had done) for the sake of the greater national good.

<sup>64</sup> Mbeki, Govan. *Sunset at Midday: Latshon 'ilang' emini!*, (Nolwazi, Braamfontein), 1996. p. 91. Found in the South African Democracy Education Trust's *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, pp. 180-181. Footnote 21.

<sup>65</sup> In addition to Luthuli's view on the Bantustan framework, the debate surrounding Buthelezi's claim to be the political heir to Luthuli can be expanded to the economic boycott that Luthuli advocated in January, 1960. Luthuli was for; Buthelezi against.

Luthuli, Albert. "The Case for the Boycott," *Golden City Post*, January 24, 1960.

<sup>66</sup> Luthuli, Albert. "Answer These Posers, Bantustan Supporters," *Golden City Post*, September 20, 1959. p. 6.

the people of our country.”<sup>67</sup> Luthuli then lists the inadequacy of land and development capital as the two “crippling disabilities” that will doom the Bantustan framework. Luthuli authored a contribution to the book “South Africa: The Road Ahead” entitled “The Effect of Minority Rule on Non-Whites.” One can see that much of the research Luthuli did for the book contributed to his editorial as the two were written contemporaneously.<sup>68</sup> In both, Luthuli puts his expertise as a farmer and lay-economist to work in articulating exactly how and why the formation of Bantustans with a lack of land and resources will actually diminish the living standards of the majority of those who live within and outside of the balkanized territories.

Written slightly later in 1961, months prior to his journey to Oslo to accept the 1960 Peace Prize, Luthuli wrote and delivered a speech that captured perfectly the vehemence with which he opposed participation in the Bantustan framework. It is incredulous that in even a document as widely published as this, Buthelezi would today in 2007 still claim to be an heir of Luthuli’s thought and claim that Luthuli supported his leadership of the kwaZulu homeland.

*But these facts today are becoming known to all the world. A fierce spotlight of world attention has been thrown on them, try as our Government and its apologists will, with honeyed words about apartheid or separate development that is unforgivable. It seems utterly indifferent to the sufferings of individual persons, who lose their land, their homes, their jobs, in pursuit of the most terrible dream in the world.*<sup>69</sup>

The evidence of Luthuli’s objection to Bantustans and even his objection to chiefs’ participation in them is so abundant it requires little or no research; one ‘trips’ over the evidence no matter what documents are in hand. For example, in a report submitted to the Natal People’s Conference on September 06, 1959, Luthuli provides scathing criticism of the framework. Luthuli wailed that the Bantustan system will:

1. *throw off the land 60% to 70% of the peasants without providing them with any new sources of employment;*
2. *re-allocate land to peasant farmers with no prospect of a peasant making a gross income of over 120 Pounds a year at the very most;*
3. *will render millions of Africans in White areas: towns and farms, stateless and rightless;*
4. *fraudulently put forward a so-called partition of South Africa that nobody wants;*
5. *institutes a system of tribal rule that makes African Chiefs, contrary to tradition, autocrats and virtually nothing more than instruments of their people’s oppression.*

*[Honestly], can it be said that such a Bantustan is in our interest? What is morally wrong in principal cannot be right in practice! So all apartheid laws are based as they are on the maxim: “Separate and unequal” in favour of the whites can never be in the interests of the non-whites.*<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “Prospects Are Grim for the Bantustans,” *Golden City Post*, September 27, 1959. p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Spottiswoode, Hildegard, ed. *South Africa: The Road Ahead*, (Howard Timmins, Cape Town), 1960. pp. 111-118.

<sup>69</sup> Friedmann, Marion, ed. *I Will Still be Moved: Reports from South Africa* (Arthur Baker Limited, London), 1963. p. 84.

<sup>70</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “An Examination and Appraisal of the Political Import of the African Woman’s Demonstration in Natal,” *NATAL SAYS NO! To Apartheid, Pass Laws, Bantu Education, Starvation, Bantu*

Here, as early as 1959, Luthuli spoke specifically about chiefs who participate as “instruments of their people’s oppression” and stated categorically, as he did with the issue of violence, that the means must justify the ends. More articles against the homelands scheme were published. “Bantustans Plan Is Not for Us,” “Another Dead End of Apartheid,” “‘Back-To-Tribalism’ Is Unrealistic” all vomit Luthuli’s disgust for the proposal. Buthelezi would retort that he too despised the Apartheid system and he, like Luthuli, also identified its shortcomings. Yet Luthuli’s vitriol, which is itself highly uncharacteristic and demonstrates the passion in which he opposed participation in the framework, articulates that the plan for separate development is ‘fundamentally’ flawed. Luthuli begs,

**“AFRICANS SHOULD CATEGORICALLY REJECT THE BANTUSTANS PLAN BECAUSE:** *Mere administrative devices of a low order intended to get chiefs and their counsellors to implement at the instance of the Government, but at the expense and suffering of their people, odious laws of the state when they have no share in the making of these laws” (bold and capital emphasis is Luthuli’s).*<sup>71</sup>

Luthuli warns,

*Africans should be under no illusions about the efficiency of Bantustan plans. The whole thing is a fraud. The Nats have no intention of developing the reserves to the point of self sufficiency and independence economically and politically.*<sup>72</sup>

Also in 1959, Luthuli, despite being a chief, repudiated that which Buthelezi – both then and now – fosters: tribal nationalism. Luthuli was a modern and despite having pride in his culture, he believed that culture ought to evolve as a forward progression rather than as a primitive reversal.<sup>73</sup> Luthuli rejects the Shepstonian and Verwoerdian objective of placing Zulus in a 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century time capsule. Mzala’s chapter entitled, “Chiefs in the Service of Apartheid” deftly reminds the reader of Govan Mbeki’s analysis of chieftaincy.

*If the Africans have had chiefs, it was because all human societies have had them at one stage or another. But when a people have developed to a stage which discards chieftainship, when their social development contradicts the need for such an institution, then to force it on them is not liberation but enslavement.*<sup>74</sup>

Luthuli, though a chief, rejected an idolatry of the past when he railed:

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*Authorities, Group Areas, Nat Tyranny; Forward to Freedom in our Lifetime, One Pound a Day,*” a report to the Natal People’s Conference, September 06, 1959. pp. 4-5.

<sup>71</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “Bantustans Plan Not For Us,” *Golden City Post*, October 04, 1959. p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “Another Dead End of Apartheid,” *Golden City Post*, October 11, 1959. p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> I have written upon this theme, that is, Luthuli’s Hegelian conception of civilization.

Couper, Scott. “Golden City Post,” unpublished. Submitted to the faculty of the Department of Historical Studies, University of kwaZulu-Natal, August, 2006. pp. 1-16.

<sup>74</sup> Mbeki, Govan. “South Africa: The Peasants’ Revolt,” (International Defense and Aid Fund, London), 1984. pp. 41 and 47.

*This exaltation of an almost obsolete way of life, tribalism, was a studied effort by the Minister to gain acceptance by Africans of a reactionary policy of the Nationalists, a “back-to-tribalism, African” policy.*

Luthuli not only proves to be an astute anthropologist, as any good chief should be, but also he is a perceptive social scientist. Luthuli continued:

*It would be more correct to call it a return to a caricature of tribalism, for fortunately irreparable damage has been done to tribalism by our 200-years of contact with an aggressive civilization itself subjected to the dynamic forces of a highly scientific and technological age and a dynamic revolutionary religion, Christianity. Progress is the essence of the whole creation. The Creator expects Africans, as other human groups have done, to march from tribalism to a wider association of the human race.<sup>75</sup>*

The reference to religion, particularly the Christian religion, is not immaterial. The entire philosophy of the Bantustan framework is actually heretical to Luthuli, for it is antithetical to God’s will. Luthuli’s objection to the Bantustan plan is not primarily strategic or political. Rather, Luthuli’s objection is, at its heart, deeply theological. The ultimate arbiter of Luthuli’s political strategy was his faith. Luthuli stated clearly in his autobiography, “For myself, I am in Congress because I am Christian.”<sup>76</sup> Participation within the Bantustan framework for Luthuli was not debatable. Cooperation with separate development, no matter the intended ends, was a sin. Though not a thesis in this paper, I assert that Luthuli’s particular brand of Christianity, Congregationalism, is the most seminal determinative of his political philosophy.<sup>77</sup> Congregationalism is the most democratic form of ecclesiastical polity. As a chief of a Congregationalist Christian community, Luthuli was *elected* chief in 1935. Therefore, one hears Luthuli’s condemning refrain that the Bantustan framework is fundamentally undemocratic and must be aborted. In his 1962 autobiography Luthuli, referring to the Bantustan system, lamented that “individual chiefs here and there submitted to the new type of rule – but rarely, if ever, have these men sought the opinion of their subjects.”<sup>78</sup> Is it not likely that Luthuli was referring to Buthelezi as one of the “individual chiefs,” given their close association? Luthuli saw constitutional reforms in Basutoland as a promising sign that a trial society can and should move beyond tribalism. Luthuli was heartened that the then most recent first general elections...

*...show an overwhelming support for candidates drawn from the common people...Nothing could prove more that Africans, like the nations of Europe, will outgrow tribal organization and rule.<sup>79</sup>*

Luthuli was no royalist, no tribalist, and certainly no advocate of chiefly rule which the Banutstans enforced. Luthuli concludes a November 22, 1959 editorial with this mantra:

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<sup>75</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “‘Back-To-Tribalism’ is Unrealistic,” *Golden City Press*, October 18, 1959. p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go*, p. 147.

<sup>77</sup> Couper, Scott. “Congregationalism and Luthuli,” unfinished work in progress, unpublished, for the Department of Historical Studies, University of kwaZulu-Natal, October, 2006. pp. 1-58.

<sup>78</sup> Luthuli, Albert. p. 197.

<sup>79</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “Basutoland and Bantustan: The Big Difference,” *Golden City Post*, February 14, 1960.

*The dictatorial concepts behind Bantu authorities in no way prepare the African people for participation in democratic rule in a world that is striving to realize democracy.*<sup>80</sup>

In the same article, Luthuli marches critically through legislation that implemented the homelands framework. Lest one argue that Luthuli is only critical of the scheme in general and not within the context of kwaZulu, Luthuli's writing makes it quite clear that in 1959, eight years after Buthelezi claims Luthuli gave his blessing to accepting the chieftainship of the Buthelezi clan and eight years before his own death, he understood the Zulus to have rejected the Bantustan framework and were not afraid to object to it. Luthuli recounts:

*It was in 1920 that the local council system, which up to then had been operating only in the Transkei, was extended to other African reserves in the Union. **For all this time, until about 1950, when the Bantu Authorities act was enacted, only three out of about 45 magisterial districts in Natal had local councils of a sort. These were Umsinga, Imbumbulu and Ingwavuma.** To the Zulus, the Bantu authority plan is the local system in an unconvincing new look. And they have rejected it, with contempt it deserves, as they did the local council system (emphasis is Luthuli's).*<sup>81</sup>

Luthuli recounted three meetings when the Zulus expressed a rejection of the homelands framework. The first was in July, 1955 in Ndhlamahlahla royal home with King Cyprian as its convener.<sup>82</sup> The second was at Nongoma in October, 1955. Luthuli says that the rejection at this meeting was a "louder and more emphatic 'No' than before."<sup>83</sup> Buthelezi was present and he was one of four representatives nominated to provide a response to Verwoerd. Buthelezi's response was diplomatic in the extreme, emphasizing that his concerns and indecision on whether to accept the Bantu Authorities Act was not to be interpreted as a rejection of it. Mzala discloses an intervening meeting at Nongoma in November, 1957 at which Buthelezi was in attendance. Here, the King publicly endorsed the Bantu Authorities Act to the extreme displeasure of most gathered, though only 72 of 288 chiefs were in attendance and the government presented the King with a bull, a thousand Pounds, and a safe.<sup>84</sup> The third gathering mentioned by Luthuli in his editorial occurred at Eshowe, two years later in October 1959, and was held to inaugurate the first regional authority for a magisterial district in Natal. This event also was poorly attended due to a boycott by the regiments of six chiefs. "We don't want Bantu authorities" was shouted at the Minister of African Affairs, embarrassing him greatly.<sup>85</sup> Buthelezi was not present at the Eshowe meeting. Luthuli issued an ANC leaflet that called for a boycott of the inauguration stating:

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<sup>80</sup> Luthuli, Albert. "The People Won't Gulp This Bait," *Golden City Post*, November 22, 1959. p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Mzala does not recount this meeting.

<sup>83</sup> Mzala recounts this meeting at length. In contrast to Luthuli's summarized version, Mzala's portrayed the meeting, from the Zulu perspective as deeply skeptical, tentative, deliberative, and concerned – but more or less a "draw" rather than an emphatic rejection.

<sup>84</sup> Mzala, p. 61.

<sup>85</sup> Mzala's account resembles Luthuli's. The audience was very antagonistic towards the King and the De Wet Nel.

*To attract the people to this festival of slavery, the Department will provide a lot of food, meat, and African beer. To my people I want to say this: ...We refuse to accept Bantu authorities ...Therefore we say, away with it!*<sup>86</sup>

Some speculated that in response to Luthuli's call for a boycott of the meeting, Buthelezi withheld his presence. Buthelezi publicly cleared the record, obviously worried that the confirmation of his chieftainship would be in jeopardy if the government understood Buthelezi was not compliant, explaining that he did not attend because he was not invited. Buthelezi further clarified:

*...never have I ever declared any hostility to the establishment of the Bantu Authorities to your correspondent or to anybody either now or at any other time...I have never opposed the government either by act of commission or omission...*<sup>87</sup>

As we saw earlier with Luthuli's report to the Natal People's Congress and the *Golden City Post* editorials, Luthuli's editorial observations were coterminous with official reports that are later submitted. Luthuli, in a sense, plagiarizes his own work. In 1960, Luthuli submitted an "assignment" to the South African Institute of Race Relations entitled, "Fifty Years of Union – Political Review." Luthuli proves himself to be a worthy historian as he recounts the chronology of white supremacist legislation. He pours out criticism of the Bantu Self-Government Act because it:

*...uses our chiefs as administrative tools to carry out the will of the Bantu Administration Department and as instruments to destroy those whom de Wet Nel calls "wolves and jackals," clearly those who are opponents of Apartheid. Apartheid in the Bantustan scheme of things purports to resuscitate the status of the institution of chieftainship which was dying a silent death under the pressure of industrialization, but still enjoyed the respect of some tribesman who still referred to the chief as "our chief." No it will die unmourned and unsung, as people are increasingly coming to regard the chief as a government stooge, a government man, not their man, their persecutor, and not a father who punishes to discipline for the good of the tribe.*<sup>88</sup>

On February 01, 1962, shortly after the above cited editorials were written Luthuli issued a statement entitled, "We Don't Want Crumbs" in the publication *New Age*. In the statement Luthuli unequivocally rejects the Government's homelands policy.<sup>89</sup>

One becomes almost bored with the plethora of evidence that contradicts Buthelezi's claim at ETZ Mthiyane's funeral of Luthuli's support for his leadership of the Zulu homeland. Luthuli continued his criticism of the homelands framework in April and May of 1962 while commenting on what he viewed as the sad turn of events in the Transkei. In his April column, Luthuli despairs over the undemocratic nature of the "so-called self government."<sup>90</sup> Luthuli pours opprobrium over the Transkei scenario as

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<sup>86</sup> Quoted in a leaflet held by ANC Archives, Department of Information and Publicity, Lusaka. From Mzala, p. 63. Footnote 6, p. 74.

<sup>87</sup> Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. *New Age*, December 17, 1959. Cited from Mzala, p. 64.

<sup>88</sup> Luthuli, Albert. "Fifty Years of Union – Political Review," Institute of Council Meetings 1960, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1960. p. 4.

Typed manuscript found at the University of Witwatersrand, William Cullen Library, AD 2182, Section F, item 7.

<sup>89</sup> No author cited. "The Legacy of Inkosi Albert Luthuli," brochure, undated. p. 13.

<sup>90</sup> Luthuli, Albert. "Transkei Must Hold A Referendum," *Golden City Post*, April 08, 1962.



chiefs, rather than elected representatives, are the majority within the parliament. Finally, Luthuli laments that the Transkei government will have “no effective link with the legislature of the Republic of South Africa, which will exercise control” thus voluntarily renouncing their inherent rights. In May, 1962, Luthuli writes his second to last editorial for the *Golden City Post*, focusing, again, on his objection to the Bantustan plan. Luthuli holds culpable those who do not fight and rather participate in the travesty. Luthuli concludes his editorial:

*The tragedy of South Africa today is that too many of us – White and Non-White – coil back in fear and capitulate when we should be strong and vociferous. And in doing so, we fail our country and all we stand for.*<sup>91</sup>

Though Luthuli was against the Bantustan system, one can argue that he understood and sympathized with chiefs, like Buthelezi, who had to work within the “ambiguities of dependence.” However, in Luthuli’s autobiography he disparagingly claimed that the Bantustan act “makes our chiefs” into “minor puppets and agents of the Big Dictator.”<sup>92</sup> Luthuli continues to argue that the Act is “government by stooge.”<sup>93</sup> Later in his long diatribe against the Bantustans, Luthuli identified the chiefly collaborators a “hierarchy of government pawns,” and “docile people with whom the government is now dealing.”<sup>94</sup> Has not Buthelezi even read the autobiography of the one who he claims to be his mentor and in whose footsteps he claims to follow? In no document can I uncover any reversal of the opinion that Luthuli did not support Buthelezi’s leadership within the Bantustan structure. Until his time of death, I can not locate one word uttered by Luthuli that could substantiate Buthelezi’s claim. In fact, the Special Branch had interrogated Luthuli until his death, trying to tempt him into supporting the Bantustan framework to no avail.<sup>95</sup>

### **Buthelezi’s Claim Revisited**

In Smith’s biography of Buthelezi, it is inferred that Buthelezi consulted with Chief Albert Luthuli about his choice to study to be a lawyer or to accept the chieftaincy of the Mahlabathini rural district in 1951, just prior to his work as a civil servant with the Department of Bantu Affairs. According to Smith, Luthuli’s advice is “to accept the chieftaincy...” However, this claim is made somewhat amusing in that Smith suspiciously and prophetically interpolates “...and any other position that came his way as the traditional principal administrator of the Zulus” (p. 47). Likewise, it was at this time that Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu gave their assent (p. 47). In Temkin’s biography, the consultation with Luthuli is made in November, 1962 (p. 43) just after the clan invited him to take-up the position of chief (p. 42). I accept Temkin’s November date as it is specified and there is date-sensitive dialogue to substantiate it. The

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<sup>91</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “Transkei Plan: A Fantasy Ends,” *Golden City Post*, May 13, 1962.

<sup>92</sup> Luthuli, Albert. “*Let My People Go*, p. 197.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>95</sup> Author unknown, “The Big Lie Technique: South Africa’s Gestapo Chief, General van den Berg, Who Has Tried to Besmirch the Memory of One of Africa’s Greatest Son, Chief’s Albert J. Albert, is Proved a Liar,” *Sechaba*, Vol. 1, No.10, October, 1967. p. 5.

November date proves very ironic in that it is the same month that Luthuli refuses to resign from the ANC, is then deposed, and issues the “The Road to Freedom is via the Cross” statement. Is it possible that Luthuli would give his protégé (as Buthelezi saw himself) – who was, like Luthuli, a strong Christian, educated at Adams College, of *amakhosi* stock, and an ANC member - the opposite advice as he was presently embarking, that is a refusal to serve the government rather than the disenfranchised of South Africa through politics? How could Luthuli’s advice to someone so similar to himself be any different than the public advice he recently issued given that their circumstances were almost identical? Luthuli’s choice was between chieftaincy and politics and Buthelezi’s was between chieftaincy and law school, essentially politics, as it was for Lembede, Seme, Mandela, and many others.

Taking-up Buthelezi’s speech at ETZ Mthiyane’s funeral again, Buthelezi reminded his mourning audience of his political exploits.

*The Pretoria Regime imposed Afrikaans as a second medium of instruction in all the schools that operated in what were designated as ‘white areas.’ I tried to warn the Prime Minister Mr. BJ Voster and Minister of Bantu Education Dr. AP Treunicht that the imposition of Afrikaans would cause eruptions of violence. I even went to Soweto in March 1976 and in a speech I entitled: “In This Approaching Hour of Crisis,” I issued that warning. This was not heeded by the powers that be as a result we had the Soweto unrest erupting in June 16, 1976.*

This paper agrees with the response of one Black Consciousness leader who commented “that Buthelezi ‘would have been the undisputed leader of Black South Africa’<sup>96</sup> if he had resigned after making the March speech”<sup>97</sup> thus truly following the example of Luthuli.

Buthelezi’s speech claiming Luthuli’s support however is quite disconcerting given the previous dates Buthelezi gives in his biographies for Luthuli’s affirmation. In ETZ’s funeral eulogy, Buthelezi states that Luthuli’s affirmation is not for the chieftaincy in November, 1952 but rather for the “role of leading that Homeland Government” imposed by the Apartheid Regime over a dozen years later in June of 1970. One must now recall that Luthuli died in July, 1967. Buthelezi is presumably the source providing Temkin (2003) with the odd reference to Luthuli’s approval of Buthelezi’s leadership that Buthelezi again cites in his ETZ Mthiyane speech:

*...when Oliver Tambo’s tombstone was unveiled, veteran ANC member, Cleopas Nsibande, told how he was present when Albert Luthuli and Tambo decided to approach Buthelezi’s sister, Princess Morgina Dotwana, in Daveyton, to ask her that Buthelezi should not be dissuaded from participating in the structures that the government was creating for the Zulu people.*

Let us summarize the purported Luthuli assents to Buthelezi’s leadership role.

1. Smith implies the date of 1951;
2. Temkin (2003) implies November, 1952 (which I accept);

<sup>96</sup> *EcuNews Bulletin*, March 17, 1976, pp. 6-7; cited by Karis and Gerhart, p. 277, footnote 61.

<sup>97</sup> Karis and Gerhart, p. 265.

3. Nsibande via Temkin (2003) provides evidence for a second Luthuli assent in 1965. Nsibande's date must be speculated because the vague reference to "structures that the government was creating for the Zulu people" could be 1959 (first Bantu Authority of which Luthuli urged a boycott), 1965 (Tribal Authority), 1968 or 1969 (Regional Authority), 1970 (Territorial Authority) (See appendix). Because Luthuli boycotted the 1959 structure, that date can be ruled-out. The latter two post-date Luthuli's death. Only the 1965 Tribal Authority structure remains.
4. Buthelezi implies an impossible 1970 assent in his Mthiyane speech;

If we follow a chronology of references in the order that they were printed, the date of Luthuli's assent for Buthelezi's leadership role moves from 1951 (Smith), to 1952 (Temkin), to 1965 (Nsibande), to an impossible 1970 (Buthelezi in his Mthiyane eulogy).

The reader must be reminded that there is no documentary evidence for any of the above four instances. There is ample documentary evidence that the ANC in exile, particularly Tambo, did consult with and attempt to cooperate with Buthelezi and Inkatha.<sup>98</sup> However, this is not an investigation concerning Buthelezi and the ANC's relationship, therefore I do not discuss this narrative. However, there may be documentary evidence that in 1955 the ANC, through Luthuli, informally advised Buthelezi to use his prospective position as chief to undermine the Bantu Authorities.<sup>99</sup> Though, it must be remembered that in 1955, Buthelezi was not even confirmed as chief yet (he was still Acting-Chief) and Luthuli's assent to accept the position as chief is not the same as Buthelezi claiming that Luthuli advised him not to "reject the role of leading that Homeland Government."

In conclusion, Buthelezi has mutated the primordial assent given by Luthuli. Buthelezi has exaggerated the claim, moving it incrementally from assent to chief to "leading that Homeland Government." The end result of that exaggeration is a conflating of two different events, one occurring in 1951 and the other (which never happened) in 1970 thus making Buthelezi's 2007 claim not only false, but anachronistic. Buthelezi's claim would not be so serious if it did not happen repeatedly over many years, if not decades, and so very recently.

Buthelezi has summarized his relationship with Luthuli by asserting:

*When Chief Luthuli was alive and active, I associated with him. When he was banned, I visited him and I have never denied him once, let alone thrice.*

It is somewhat a shame then that Luthuli never mentioned Buthelezi in his autobiography *Let My people Go*.<sup>100</sup> Given Luthuli's apparent denial, one wonders how close Buthelezi and Luthuli really were.

<sup>98</sup> Callinicos, Luli. pp. 390-402. Callinicos almost entirely cites and Karis and Gerhart, pp. 255-258.

<sup>99</sup> Mzala. p. 66.

Sadly, Mzala does not give us a reference for this specific information. I suspect that it may have initially derived from Yengwa, from what source I do not know.

<sup>100</sup> Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, (Tafelberg Publishers and Mafube Publishing, Cape Town and Houghton, respectively), 2006. pp. 1-253.

## Appendix

- 1927 Native Administrations Act no. 38 become law creating a separate administration for Blacks in South Africa based on “Native Law”
- 1936 Representation of Native Act No. 12 establishes the Native Representative Council (NRC)
- 1951 Buthelezi began work for the Department of Native Affairs so as to “wipe out” his Ft. Hare record of subversion. Buthelezi agrees to comply with government scrutiny (Mzala, p. 71).  
Bantu Authorities Act (BAA) established homelands (13% of South Africa) to the country’s different Black ethnic group and requires chiefs to either uphold the provisions of the Act or risk being deposed.  
BAA abolishes NRC
- 1952 (September) Government deposed Chief Albert Luthuli  
(November) Luthuli issued as a response “The Road to Freedom is Via the Cross” statement  
(November) The Buthelezi clan decided Buthelezi should be chief.  
Buthelezi consults Luthuli on decision to accept the Chieftaincy of the Buthelezi.  
(December) In large part due to his resignation and as a true leader, Luthuli is elected President-General of the ANC.
- 1953 (March) Buthelezi was approached regarding his position as Acting Chief of the Buthelezi tribe at Mahlabathini  
Buthelezi agrees to support the Bantu Authorities system and convince his tribe of the same (Mzala, p. 70).
- 1955 Purported informal discussions between Luthuli and Yengwa with Buthelezi to use position *as chief* to oppose the Bantu Authorities (Mzala, p. 66).
- 1957 (September) Buthelezi’s chieftainship was confirmed by the government.
- 1958 Bantu Self-Government Act passed.
- 1959 (October) The inauguration of Zululand’s first Bantu Regional Authority  
An ANC leaflet penned by Luthuli urged a boycott of the proceedings.  
Vervoerd developed idea of ultimate independence of the Bantustans.
- 1961 Vervoerd committed his government to the possibility of ultimate Bantustan independence
- 1964 Buthelezi publicly reacted to the government’s announcement that participation in the homelands framework was not voluntary but compulsory.
- 1965 (September) Buthelezi was installed as Chairman of the Mahlabathini Tribal Authority
- 1967 (July) Chief Albert Luthuli dies.
- 1969 (March) Buthelezi was installed as head of the Mashonangashoni Regional Authority or by August, 1968?

- 1970 (April) Zululand Chiefs, led by Buthelezi, decide affirmatively on the establishment of a Territorial Authority.
- 1970 (June) Buthelezi is elected in June by *amakhosi* as Chief Executive Officer of the Zulu Territorial Authority. Buthelezi says to the Honorable Minister of Bantu Administration and Development: “I mention these things as they are a demonstration of loyalty not only to the government of the day, but to White South Africa...The duty that falls on our shoulders now as a Territorial Authority is not to spare ourselves in working with you Department and your government to implement this scheme and to do all to make it work.”
- 1972 (March) The constitution of the Territorial Authority, approved by the Government, was gazetted. KwaZulu became a ‘self-governing territory.’ By changing the Bantu Authorities legislation, the Apartheid government compromised with Buthelezi in his refusal to accept independence. This meant that Buthelezi would be able to utilize many of the benefits of independence without formally being defined as such.<sup>101</sup>
- 1975 Buthelezi launches Inkatha
- 1977 (February) KwaZulu moves from the status of a territorial authority to self-governance, with increased control of local affairs. Buthelezi becomes “Chief Minister” of kwaZulu. [But Callinicos says different!]
- 1979 (October) Inkatha – ANC meeting in London whereby irreconcilable differences were realized

### **Structure of Bantustan System**

1. Tribal Council,
2. Tribal Authority, Buthelezi heads Mahlabathini, September 17, 1965  
Buthelezi did not “accept” it but rather was consulted about it, co-operate, and acted to conform to the laws.
3. Regional Authority, Buthelezi heads Mashonangashoni, by August, 1968  
Bantu Authority changed in Buthelezi’s understanding from voluntary to compulsory.
4. Territorial Authority, Buthelezi leads Zulu Territorial Authority by June, 1970

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<sup>101</sup> Callinicos, Luli. *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, (David Philip, Claremont), 2004. p. 392.