

Inkatha and KwaZulu

Blocking the grand apartheid plan — a history of the struggle

Since their election to power in 1948, successive National Party Governments have been determined to grant so-called "independence" to 10 black "homelands" — covering an area of 13 percent of South Africa.

The rest of the country (87 percent) was, in the grand apartheid design, to have been controlled by whites, with coloureds and Indians being included without real power.

This was a policy forced on black South Africa.

Black leaders at that time and since then (with notable exceptions) have used all the means at their disposal to thwart this racist policy of divide and rule. They have steadfastly clung to their South African citizenship and have refused to sell their birthright.

Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi is a prime example.

Chief Buthelezi's family ties with the founding father of the Zulu nation, King Shaka, and successive rulers determined that he, too, would serve his people.

KwaZulu was not a creation of Pretoria. Its land is all that is left of a once mighty empire which was systemically carved up by successive white rule.

Chief Buthelezi traces his ancestry back to King Shaka, the founder of the Zulu nation and, on his mother's side, is the great grandson of King Cetshwayo and the grandson of King Dinuzulu.

On his father's side he is the great grandson of Chief Mnyamana Buthelezi, Prime Minister to King Cetshwayo,



His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini of the Zulus with Chief M G Buthelezi.

and Commander-in-Chief of the Zulu armed forces that defeated the British at the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879.

The leaders of the Buthelezi clan, the largest in the Zulu nation, have been Prime Ministers to a succession of Zulu Kings. As such Chief Buthelezi

is the traditional Prime Minister of the seven million Zulu nation and the senior advisor to His Majesty the King of the Zulus. Today, of course, he is also the elected leader of his people.

When it became clear that the National Party was determined to bulldoze its homelands

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policy through, blacks leaders realised that their only hope was to do what they could to block this plan.

The leader of the African National Congress at that time, Nobel Peace prize winner Chief Albert Lutuli, was instrumental in persuading Chief Buthelezi to take up his hereditary position.

In evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons in London (January 20, 1986), Chief Buthelezi outlined the pressures which were brought to bear on him to enter politics.

"From my mother's knee onwards I was surrounded by political thought and discussion. The founding father of the African National Congress, which was established in 1912, was my uncle, Dr Pixley ka Isake Seme. Throughout my youth I was brought into contact with leading black political figures. I knew people like Chief Albert Lutuli, Nelson Mandela, Zami Conco, Walter Sisulu, Robert Sobukwe, J K

Ngubane and M G Yengwa, personally, as colleagues in the liberation struggle.

"After school and university education, I was keen to pursue a legal career but pressure was mounted on me to return to my home to take up the Chieftainship of the Buthelezi people . . .

"I consulted many prominent black leaders then active in the African National Congress about the options before me. I was eventually persuaded, against my personal desires, not to delay entering into politics until after I had been in law for some time.

"Chief Albert Lutuli was particularly insistent that I took up my hereditary position without delay. It was a consensus view of the African National Congress leadership that it was in the interests of the liberation struggle itself that I should take up my Chieftainship."

Chief Buthelezi pointed out that these discussions took

"Had those now in prominent roles in the ANC Mission in Exile paid more attention to the dangers which (ANC President) Chief Albert Lutuli and I so clearly saw, and set about mobilising blacks in other areas as I mobilised them in KwaZulu, the South African Government would never have gone as far along the road as they did go to implement their homeland policy. Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei today would not be quasi so-called independent States. Chief M G Buthelezi, evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London, 1986.

place in the "ascendancy of political prominence of the old ANC" as it responded to increasing black anger at the developments which followed the National Party's electoral victory in 1948.

Deepening black concern demanded a national black effort to oppose the radicalisation of right-wing politics and the ANC responded to the call of the people.

"At that stage of my political career, as a member of the ANC, I was torn between the desires to serve my organisation and the need to devote my energies to my hereditary leadership role.

"It was Chief Albert Lutuli who did more than anyone else to persuade me that I had no option but to combine the two roles. This I set about doing."

The South African Government opposed Chief Buthelezi and for five years refused to recognise his Chieftainship of the Buthelezi people. It was only after insistent demands by the Buthelezi people that the Government was forced to accept his position.

After a trip to the United States in 1963, the Government confiscated Chief Buthelezi's passport and for nine years he was not allowed to leave South Africa.

Once having accepted the need to combine a party political role with his traditional political role, Chief Buthelezi set about opposing apartheid at local, regional, provincial and national levels.

"I campaigned vigorously against apartheid and for the rejection of the so-called homeland policy — a policy of dividing black South Africa into ethnic groups with their own political identities and each with their own political machinery . . . which separated them not only from white politics but from each other as

"I had dealings with Mr Oliver Tambo until 1980. Those in the ANC Mission in Exile who now belatedly criticise me, and who complain all of a sudden because they say I occupy the position of Chief Minister of KwaZulu, conveniently forget that the enabling legislation which was enacted to enable the National Party to pursue its homeland policy . . . was passed before I assumed my Chieftainship . . ."

"It was quite clear that it was the intention of the National Party to separate black and white politics. It was in these circumstances that Chief Albert Lutuli encouraged me to take up my position and it was during the years of his Presidency of the ANC that he continued to support me as I campaigned amongst my people for the rejection of this legislation. He clearly saw the threatened balkanisation of South Africa as an impending catastrophe . . ." Chief M G Buthelezi.

well.

"As a black leader I rejected this policy from the outset, just as I continue to do so vigorously today.

"For me South Africa is one country with one people which history is thrusting into a single destiny. I reject all notions of political structures based on race divisions.

"The multiplicity of the ethnic origins of white South Africa did not deter whites from uniting politically. The diversity of black ethnic origins in South Africa demands in fact black political unity rather than deters it."

The South African Government forced separate



"My perspective on Chief Buthelezi is that no-one — the ANC included — has done more to halt the ideological thrust of apartheid than Buthelezi.

Because he has rejected violence as an instrument to bring about national change he naturally stands in a better light for many than those who do not. It is easy today to forget that Buthelezi was the only black leader with an authentic power base to have faced the heat, a long time ago, of a government still determined to enforce apartheid. I think history, if reasonably and objectively written, will endorse the fact that he was the anvil on which apartheid ultimately faltered. However, who will write the history?" Mr Gavin Relly, chairman, Anglo American Corporation.

Delegates at an Inkatha conference in Ulundi

political institutions on the black people of South Africa and informed them that they had no say in the matter.

Chief Buthelezi stresses: "It was in these circumstances that the people turned to me to lead them through the difficulties which lay ahead. I accepted the challenge to do so and assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer in the

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KwaZulu Territorial Authority, and later Chief Executive Councillor, which was imposed on us.

"I vowed to lead my people in the tactics and strategies which would ensure that they would retain their South African citizenship and would continue to be entitled to exercise their democratic rights to oppose apartheid and any form of politics based on racial differentiation."

Chief Buthelezi points out that he had dealings with Mr Oliver Tambo until 1980.

"Those in the ANC who now belatedly criticise me, and who complain all of a sudden because they say I occupy the position of Chief Minister of KwaZulu, conveniently forget that the enabling legislation which was enacted to enable the National Party to pursue its homeland policy, the Bantu Authorities Act (68) of 1951, was passed before I assumed by Chieftainship.

"It was in these circumstances that Chief Albert Lutuli encouraged me to take up my position and it was during the years of his Presidency of the ANC that he continued to support me as I campaigned amongst my people for the rejection of this legislation. He clearly saw the threatened balkanisation of South Africa as

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"Had those now in prominent roles in the ANC Mission in Exile paid more attention to the dangers which Chief Albert Lutuli and I so clearly saw, and set about mobilising blacks in other areas as I mobilised them in KwaZulu, the South African Government would never have gone as far along the road as they did go to implement their homeland policy. Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei today would not be quasi so-called independent states.

Chief Buthelezi believes it is important to note that the question of "non-participation" had been discussed as a strategy in black politics but it is only recently that it has been "falsely elevated to be a sacrosanct political principle."

"Chief Albert Lutuli himself saw no clash of interest in being a Chief and the President of the African National Congress. Dr Nelson Mandela shared his view.

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also politically naive. Had I not accepted the challenge . . . KwaZulu may well by now have been manipulated into the same positions as Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei."

In its turn, Inkatha has accepted the responsibility of mobilising the people against so-called "independence" for KwaZulu.

In spite of the SA Government attempting to set up bogus opposition parties (funded with money from Pretoria) to destabilise Inkatha, the movement has received massive popular support.

In the 1978 elections for the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, Inkatha won every seat and repeated this success in 1983.

The record of Chief Buthelezi, Inkatha and KwaZulu speaks for itself:

. . . KwaZulu has blocked Pretoria-type "independence" for the region.

. . . KwaZulu is the only so-called "homeland" which has opened its citizenship to all ethnic groups (thereby guaranteeing South African citizenship) and supports movements which are open to all black South Africans.

. . . KwaZulu is the only region which pursues political policies beyond its administrative boundaries.

. . . KwaZulu is the only region which pursues national as opposed to regional goals.

. . . The political power of KwaZulu and Inkatha resulted in their unprecedented success in blocking the SA Government's intention of handing over South African territory — and citizens — to Swaziland. In a unique series of court cases in 1982, Inkatha was triumphant in opposing the Government's plan to hand over Ingwavuma and KaNgwane to Swaziland. These historic court cases reinforced Inkatha's belief in non-violent, democratic, opposition to apartheid.

"The fact is that we proposed the formation of Inkatha to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and he acted on our advice. That is because we thought our people, whether they are in the Bantustans or not, are part of the overall struggle against apartheid and, if they are against the apartheid system, then we regard them as part of the liberation struggle." Mr Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC Mission in Exile. Evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London, October 29, 1985. (The ANC did not propose the formation of Inkatha, which was initiated by Chief Buthelezi. However, Chief Buthelezi did inform the External Mission of his intention to launch Inkatha and there were cordial relations between the two until 1980. — Editor.)