

WHAT THEY ARE BEING TOLD OVERSEAS — FACT OR FICTION?

MRS Reina Steenwijk, who represents Chief Buthelezi in Europe, reports from Amsterdam that two newspaper articles — one in the UK, the other in the Netherlands — gave particularly one-sided reports of the Lamontville issue.

In the Netherlands readers are under the impression that the Rev M Xundu, a Xhosa, has the support of the majority of Lamontville's Zulus, that Inkatha members have been trying to kill him for a year and that Chief Buthelezi has "partly accepted" the homelands policy.

This was all contained in an article sent to a Dutch newspaper by a South African journalist, Mr Hennie Serfontein — well known for his anti-Buthelezi and anti-Inkatha sentiments which he has been propounding for many years.

Of course, comments Mrs Steenwijk, how are Dutch readers to know his bias?

One gets a clue of Mr Serfontein's political predilections in the following paragraphs he wrote in the article on Lamontville:

"Rev Xundu leads the resistance against expensive bus fares, high rents and the incorporation into KwaZulu and that is why he is hated by the Inkatha movement.

"Inkatha is an ethnic movement and has great difficulties with the fact that a Xhosa is leading the Zulus.

"Chief Buthelezi has called the Rev Xundu a puppet of the ANC and the UDF... both liberation movements are too violent for Buthelezi's tastes."

In the Guardian newspaper in the UK, David Beresford (a former South African now living in London who recently briefly visited his home country to report on the Coloured and Indian elections) based his report on the few hours he spent in the township.

Unfortunately, it appears he resorted to newspaper files for the rest of his information.

Mrs Steenwijk reports that, thanks to Mr Beresford's less than penetrating analysis, readers of the Guardian are now under the impression that Chief Buthelezi has "a famous jeep



Chief Buthelezi seen acknowledging the rapturous applause he received in Lamontville. David Beresford in the British Guardian newspaper alleged that people "fled from Lamontville when word circulated that Chief Buthelezi was coming with his impi's."

with armour-plating, bullet-proof glass and built-in teargas cylinders..."

Mr Beresford lifted this piece of misinformation from an article in the Durban Sunday Tribune which has been reported to the SA Media Council.

Mr Beresford alleged that Chief Buthelezi was seen as a "collaborationist" and that he had given "secret testimony" in a security trial.

Both these and more of Mr Beresford's allegations are patently untrue.

Mr Beresford did not, obviously, receive the information from his informants that the trial, in 1968, involved an ANC woman member who had openly gone to Chief Buthelezi's home and whose actions had been reported to the security police by an informer within the ANC. Chief Buthelezi had then been questioned by the security police who said they knew she had visited his home.

So much for the alleged "secret testimony..." What has since come out, again not reported by Mr Beresford, is that ANC leader in exile, Mr Oliver Tambo, was furious that the woman so clumsily contacted Chief Buthelezi (thereby exposing herself to the security police) and reported this personally to the Chief.

Mr Beresford is blaming Chief Buthelezi for the bungling of an ANC

agent who through her own ineptitude got herself caught and by inference he is accusing him in his article of being a police informer.

Great exception is naturally taken to this distortion.

Mr Beresford said in his article that it was clear that Chief Buthelezi conceives unity as only under his leadership and there is a constant threat to those who challenge it."

Mrs Steenwijk replied to Mr Serfontein's article in the Dutch paper but her article was not published.

She pointed that the Rev Xundu is not just an Anglican priest. He is the leader of JORAC, an affiliate of the UDF.

It was Inkatha, not JORAC, which managed to get the rent increases postponed by taking the issue to court. It was Inkatha money which paid for the court case.

Mrs Steenwijk added that the same Rev Xundu who accuses Inkatha of violence was present when Inkatha supporters were hacked to death in the Lamontville cemetery at the unveiling of Mr Harrison Dube's tombstone.

"There is more behind Mr Serfontein's story than just a priest who cares for people and because he is a Xhosa in Zulu territory claims he is threatened," she said in her report.