

# COMMENT

by Oscar D. Dhlomo

Sheena Duncan's article on the Freiburg Conference (Reality September 1978) does not reveal the findings of the Conference with reference to the role of Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha in black South African politics. In fact, instead of reporting objectively on the conference findings in this regard Mrs Duncan deliberately casts a slur on Chief Buthelezi's leadership, alleging that he is "the only leader who has been allowed to organise and create his power base in Inkatha." It is clear that this allegation is based purely on Mrs Duncan's personal beliefs since it does not appear anywhere in the published findings of the Freiburg Conference. Mrs Duncan herself states that these surveys were conducted between 1974 and 1977. During this period the leaders of other black organisations were also still free to organise their followers. It is known that most black organisations were banned in October 1977 when the survey was already concluded. In Freiburg I recall that as I was standing next to Chief Buthelezi during tea break, Mrs Duncan came up to us and "heartily" congratulated Chief Buthelezi on the German scientists' findings with regard to his leadership role in South African politics! On this occasion Mrs Duncan did not express the views she now expresses in your September issue of Reality. I am therefore left wondering why she decided to be hypocritical about the whole issue. Is this perhaps typical of our so-called liberal friends? For the benefit of your readers who were not in Freiburg I wish to summarise (with your permission) the full text of the published findings of the Conference with reference to Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha in South African politics. I will leave it to the readers to judge whether or not Mrs Duncan's comments on Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha can be regarded as an authentic, objective and scientific account of the findings of the Conference in this regard.

## 1. Black Leadership and Political Organisations

### Who are the Political Leaders of the Blacks?

In the survey the black respondents were asked: "Among Black leaders in South Africa, who do you admire most?" The following is a comment on the results:

The leading personality emerging far on top was Chief M. G. Buthelezi, the President of Inkatha, who was named by 43,8% of those questioned. The leaders of the A.N.C. followed in second place with 21,7% jointly. Of these Mr Nelson Mandela emerged with 18,6% of the support, while Mr Oliver Tambo, Chief Albert Luthuli, Mr Walter Sisulu and others were all named by less than 1% of the sample.

The third place was taken by a group of homeland leaders representing together 18,3% of the sample. Among them Dr Cedric Phathudi of Lebowa was named by 6,4%, followed by Prof. Hudson Ntsanwisi with 4%. Only 3,6% of the sample named Chief Kaiser Matanzima of Transkei and Chief Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana.

In fourth place with 7,4% came the deceased P.A.C. leader Mr Robert Sobukwe.

The fifth and last group of politicians worth mentioning were the leaders of the Black Consciousness Movement. Only 3,5% of the sample named this Movement. Of these 2,1% named Mr Tsietsi Mashinini, and 0,8% named Mr Steve Biko (the survey was conducted before his death).

The scientists did indicate that in fact the Black Consciousness Movement was really not a movement in the true sense of the word but just a state of mind. So that it was difficult to pinpoint any one individual as a leader of such a movement. Graphically the findings can therefore be summarised as follows:

Chief Buthelezi	43,8%
Homeland leaders	18,3%
A.N.C. leaders	21,7%
PAC leaders	7,4%
Black Consciousness leaders	5,6%

### Is Chief Buthelezi a "homeland leader?"

The scientists' findings on this regard were:

"The outstanding political phenomenon in urban Black politics is without doubt Chief Buthelezi. The results of the survey show not only that he is the homeland leader who is a national political figure, but that he is the political figure of Black South Africa in general. His following actually goes beyond the 43,8%. Those questioned who had named, as a preferred political leader neither Chief Buthelezi nor another of the homeland leaders, were asked an additional question:

"Is there a homeland leader whom you recognise as a genuine political leader?"

An additional 6,9% of those asked named Chief Buthelezi in reply to this question. None of the others reached more than one half of one percent. This means that more than half of those asked consider Chief Buthelezi either as the political leader or at least as an acceptable political leader."

### Commentary:

The findings with reference to Chief Buthelezi's role in black politics in South Africa are indeed significant. Chief Buthelezi's opponents often claim that he is a homeland leader and that he is "working within the system". Indeed there have been taunts to the effect that if he were to resign as Chief Minister of KwaZulu he would get even a bigger following. Sometimes even government spokesmen boast that the policy of separate development has "produced leaders like Chief Buthelezi". This of course is a gross untruth which springs either from ignorance or a deliberate attempt to distort History. Long before the advent of homelands and the policy of separate development Chief Buthelezi's role was that of Prime Minister to the Zulu nation. During the last century Chief Buthelezi's great grandfather Chief Mnyamana Buthelezi was Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Zulu army. When the Zulus were defeated by the British in 1879, and King Cetshwayo was taken prisoner, the Prime Minister Chief Mnyamana Buthelezi and the King's brother, Prince Ndabuko, kept the loyal Zulus together. Chief Buthelezi's leadership therefore has nothing to do with homelands.

In fact even if he were to resign tomorrow as Chief Minister of KwaZulu, his traditional and historical role of Prime Minister to 5½ million Zulus would be unaffected. Nobody is therefore "allowing Chief Buthelezi to organise his people" as Mrs Duncan alleges in her article.

### Is Chief Buthelezi a tribal leader?

The findings revealed that Chief Buthelezi was not only a leader of his own group but that his following extended far beyond. A total of 40,3% of his followers among urban blacks were not Zulus. Among Zulus in Durban and Soweto his followers represented an absolute majority, as was the case among the Ndebeles who have historical links with the Zulus. But also among other groups Chief Buthelezi was found to command considerable support as the following table shows:

Soweto Zulus	54,2%
Durban Zulus	78,3%
Xhosas	23,4%
Pedis	20,3%
S. Sothos	26,5%
Tswanas	39,1%
Vendas	36,5%
Swazis	42,1%
Ndebele	63,4%
Shangaans	29,5%

The conclusion of the scientists in this regard was that the political tendency represented by Chief Buthelezi constituted an All-South African force.

### The Role of Inkatha

The conclusion of the scientists with reference to Inkatha was that Inkatha would play a key role in the future orientation of the urban black population.

When the survey was conducted 60% of the sample already knew about Inkatha, while 40% had never heard of the organisation. In Durban, where it originated it was already known to all strata of the population at the time of the survey. In Soweto Inkatha was known to 58,6% of the lower and to 74,8% of the higher strata of the population. In Pretoria on the other hand not quite one half of the higher population strata knew the organisation, as against only 14% of the lower strata.

Among reasons which were cited as a basis for a positive attitude towards Inkatha, the most prominent was the black solidarity aspect which was mentioned by 7,9% of those asked. Other reasons mentioned for supporting Inkatha were the organisation's concern with self-aid for development (3,6%) and its struggle for black liberation without violence (3,2%). On the whole, 21,9% of all those asked expressed themselves positively about Inkatha, as against 17,1% who were negative. This, according to the scientists is an appreciable result for an organisation which, at the time of the survey, had only been active for four years. Since the survey, Inkatha membership has already topped the 200 000 mark. The conclusion of the scientists in this regard was:

**"On the basis of these results, there can be no doubt that Inkatha represents by far the strongest organised political tendency among urban blacks – the organised nucleus of a much larger following of Buthelezi."**

### Conclusion:

To many people (except Mrs Duncan) the findings of the Freiburg Conference with reference to Chief Buthelezi were not unexpected. These findings simply helped to confirm the findings of previous scientific surveys: In 1973 the Quotso Survey in Soweto revealed that Chief Buthelezi was the most popular politician among the people of Soweto. In 1974 a wide-scale Markinor Survey revealed that he was the only leader with measurable support outside his own territory.

We must warn against this dangerous tendency which is increasingly becoming a favourite hobby of some of our liberal fellow countrymen, whereby they take it upon themselves to anoint and reject leaders on behalf of blacks. This hobby does not only smack of paternalism but it is also a direct threat to peaceful change in this country. □

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## A REPLY

by Sheena Duncan

I regret that Mr Dhlomo should have taken exception to what I wrote. I tried to make it clear that I was reporting on the conference itself and *not* on the surveys. I did state that there was no space in a magazine article even to summarize the findings of the survey. The article was written at a time when the responses to the Black leadership questions had been prominently and recently reported in the national press.

I do not quite understand Mr Dhlomo's disagreement with the statement that Chief Buthelezi is the only Black leader who has been allowed to organise. The harassment and banning of Black leaders and organisations began long

before the crackdown of October 1977 which was only the most recent in a long history of such action – for example, that taken against the A.N.C. and the P.A.C.

Chief Buthelezi has every reason to be pleased with the result of the survey (and I am not sure how it can be hypocritical to have told him so) but this does not mean that one can ignore the undoubtedly significant groups of people who do not regard him as their leader. In the discussion at Freiburg it was pointed out that the 21,7% for A.N.C. leaders was astonishing in view of the fact that these leaders have been in prison or exile for many years. To report on these things is not "to anoint or reject leaders on behalf of Blacks". □