

Daluxolo Luthuli

Abstract

Daluxolo Luthuli, a man who started off in the African National Congress (ANC) fighting against the Nationalist Government, later became Inkatha's commander-in-chief of the Caprivians. Through Amnesty and a Special Hearing on the Caprivi, Luthuli made important revelations about state support for Inkatha at the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Key words

Daluxolo Luthuli, , Caprivi, Death Squads, African National Congress, Inkatha Freedom Party, Umkhonto we Sizwe, South African Defense Force, Truth & Reconciliation Commission,



Figure 1 IPMG215 , SOUTH AFRICA, JOHANNESBURG, NOVEMBER 8: Thula Bopela (left) and Daluxolo Luthuli (right) discuss their book Umkhonte we Sizwe, Fighting for a divided people', based on the experiences as ANC fighters in exile, and in Luthuli's case, as an IFP assassin after he was turned, in Alberton, south east of Johannesburg November 8, 2005. Greg Marinovich / South Photos.
http://www.africamediaonline.com/search/preview/824_496

Born during apartheid, Daluxolo Luthuli grew up during a time of a struggle in South Africa that required many men and women to become freedom fighters. The [Nationalist Party](#) government repressed any resistance under the banner of communism, which caused many of these groups to fight back with violence when the government responded to passive resistance with violence and more oppression. Luthuli joined many others in the fight against apartheid by becoming a part of [Umkhonto we Sizwe \(MK\)](#), the armed wing of the [African National Congress](#) (ANC). But he would move between organizations for much of his life. He became a spy for the ANC by joining [Inkatha](#) but later whole-heartedly converted to the organization and became the military leader of its [South African Defence Force \(SADF\)](#) trained soldiers known as Caprivians (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). After apartheid ended, Luthuli cooperated with the ANC and applied for amnesty through the [Truth & Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](#) to absolve himself from his crimes while he worked for Inkatha. Daluxolo Luthuli's revelations at the TRC provided evidence that the state collaborated with Inkatha to weaken the anti-apartheid movement.

Background

Luthuli joined MK on account of his family's connections in the ANC. Luthuli came from a family full of freedom fighters. His father, Japhta Skhumbuzo Luthuli, was a 'very strong member of the ANC and MK' (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005) and he was a relative of [Albert Luthuli](#) (Meredith, 1999), the ANC president and Nobel Peace Prize winner. From a very early age, Luthuli witnessed the struggle that his family had to endure because they were freedom fighters. He saw his father get taken to the gaol often through out his upbringing. Japhta Luthuli often had Daluxolo escort other ANC members to their home. When Daluxolo was 14, Japhta

encouraged his son to follow in his footsteps and join the ANC's MK in their fight against the white government. He told him, 'from today you have ...become [a member of the ANC]. This means that you are now a soldier of the nation' (Meredith, 1999). Daluxolo understood immediately that it was his turn to commence the fight against the oppression from the government. He responded to his father with 'I understand, father. I will do my duty to my clan, the Luthuli people, and to the people of South Africa. I will go and return later to free the land' (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). Luthuli wanted to follow in his ancestors' footsteps and fight for African rights in South Africa.

Luthuli was one of the youngest recruits to join the MK. While others his age had favored and were encouraged to continue on with their education in exile with the aid of the ANC, Luthuli insisted upon military training. [Joe Modise](#), the first commander of MK, demanded that Luthuli 'finish his education because he was still young, yet Luthuli refused stating that he must fight for the freedom of his country (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). Even though Luthuli was just a boy in the eyes of the rest of MK, he proved himself by becoming the best shot in MK. He constantly practiced his musketry during his free time and 'his shooting skills became legendary in MK' (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005).

During his early involvement with MK, he had participated in campaigns as a part of the Luthuli Detachment. One of this group's missions was participation in the War of Liberation in Rhodesia. This mission was one of the first ones that this detachment had completed. Unfortunately, MK lost a few soldiers during their participation including Gandhi Hlekani from Cradock, Jacques London, Delmas Sibanyoni, Melane and James Masimini (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). During the mission, Luthuli got separated from his detachment along with his comrades Bopela and Derek, Luthuli's cousin. Bopela got arrested early on, but Derek and Luthuli

avoided arrest until Derek, who was an undercover South African Security Branch policeman, enabled Luthuli's capture (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). Luthuli stayed in Pretoria Central Prison in 1968 (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). Luthuli was often beaten during his prison sentence in order to find out information about the plans of MK or the ANC, similar to many other freedom fighter prisoners. He was later transferred to Robben Island after receiving a 10 years hard labour sentence during his trial in Natal (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005).

An Inkatha Spy Turned Military Commander

At the end of his prison sentence [Curnick Ndlovu](#), a senior ANC leader from Natal, suggested that Luthuli join Inkatha as a spy. Ndlovu told him:

'to join the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) once he got home. He explained that the IFP was a good umbrella under which to conduct MK activities. His task would be to use the IFP as a means to covertly recruit young men and women for MK for military training outside the country. He would also keep track of important IFP policy decisions and report back to the ANC.' (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005)

Luthuli became a double agent for the ANC to gather information about Inkatha. Luthuli was still pledged to the ANC and continued to believe in freeing South Africa from apartheid, but Inkatha believed that Luthuli was joining them in their cause.

But Luthuli did eventually convert to the Inkatha ideologies. He did so due to his intense immersion within the IFP. At first, Luthuli kept the ANC informed, but when he was promoted to the central committee and commander-in-chief of the IFP, the ANC reminded him that gaining a high position in the IFP was not his goal. Luthuli decided that it would appear suspicious if he did not accept the higher-ranked positions. After he became the commander-in-chief, he was supposed to meet the ANC for meeting in Swaziland, but he did not go because someone had warned him beforehand that he was going to be killed. In the end he decided to commit himself to the IFP (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005).

During his time with Inkatha, he became the commander of the Caprivians, a paramilitary wing of Inkatha. Trainees for the Caprivi were told that they were being trained to become KwaZulu Police. They were trained by the SADF Military Intelligence (MI) at Hippo Camp in the Caprivi Strip in northern Namibia. The Caprivians got their name due to the fact that they were trained in the Caprivi Strip, although none of the trainees knew this fact, they believed that they were in Israel. Some of them were trained in offensive operations that attacked ‘members of the anti-apartheid organizations; house penetration; ambushes on people travelling in motor cars; setting booby traps; ...abduction/kidnapping’, while others were trained in defensive work, contra-mobilization and bodyguards for Inkatha VIPs (Sithole, 2013). He was their political commissar at first, so he had controlled and supervised the trainees. The [South African Defense Force \(SADF\)](#) trained the young recruits to kill members of the ANC while Luthuli was in charge of them in South Africa. The recruits were told to kill without questioning why they were doing so and to show no remorse while doing so. They were led into believing that they were a part of the ‘national liberation movement by being prepared militarily for the national liberation struggle’ (Sithole, 2013). Luthuli and the trainees understood that they were being trained to protect senior Inkatha leaders and to serve as hit squads designed to weaken the anti-apartheid movement. Back in South Africa, Luthuli instructed the Caprivians on their targets and their weaponry. One of the many operations that Luthuli had instructed the Caprivians on was when he had them ‘report to the police station in the township of Mpumalanga’ in October of 1986 (O’Malley). In Mpumalanga the IFP was split into two groups: the Theloweni and the Inkatha. Luthuli’s task in Mpumalanga was to unite the people who were fighting in the area. He was not able to convince the IFP leader in regards with killing people, so he divided the Caprivians he brought with him into two. They would infiltrate the two groups of the IFP so that they could

recruit the youth. During the day, Luthuli's men worked as police men and then do their raids (Truth & Reconciliation Commission Hearing, 1997). Luthuli worked with Inkatha until the end of apartheid and the establishment of the TRC.

Amnesty Hearing

Luthuli applied for amnesty from the TRC due to the guilt of the many murders he had committed and his overall involvement in the planning the attacks (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005). From planning the attacks, to executing the attacks, Luthuli had committed many offenses that could have him left in jail if he did not apply for amnesty. Even though he started as a spy, he committed many crimes upon conversion to the IFP.

In order to receive amnesty, Luthuli attested to his many offenses. Luthuli had murdered or planned the murder or attempted murder of Zazi Khuzwayo, Mrs. Pam Tshabala, Mr. Guduza, April Taliwe, Detective Sergeant Khumal, Mr. Mabika, Nathi Gumede and many other unknown people. He also was involved in conspiracies to murder Mr. Nxumalo and Captain E. N. Masinga. He aided in burning down of houses of non-IFP supporters during the many attacks he organized. He had participated in a battle between IFP and UDF supporters, in which had at least one person killed. He was also charged with unlawful provisions of military training to people. Luthuli was unlawfully in possession of ammunition for machine guns and rifles along with being in possession of said firearms. He also unrightfully had hand grenades along with other explosive materials (Truth & Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Committee, 1999). Luthuli did not have a short list of crimes, but he did not deny any in which he participated. Luthuli's testimony not only revealed the identity of both targeted victims and perpetrators, but also evidence that the IFP were attacking South Africans on behalf of the South African government and acting as hit squads against the ANC.

Luthuli was granted amnesty for his many offenses during his time as the commander-in-chief of the Caprivians (Truth & Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Committee, 1999). He was granted amnesty due to his complete honesty and his motivations towards his actions being political during the time in which he executed his actions:

'This Committee is of the opinion that all the victims or members of their families affected by and involved in above-mentioned offences are victims in terms of Section 26 of the Act and hereby recommends that they be referred to the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation for consideration' (Truth & Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Committee, 1999).

Luthuli proved to the committee that he told the truth about the crimes that he participated in, as well as providing all the crimes in which he had participated or organized. Even though he had committed horrendous crimes, he provided evidence that his actions were motivated politically motivated through his high position in the IFP as the commander-in-chief of the Caprivi. He did not spare any expense during his statement to the TRC. He had committed murders, conspiracies, the burnings of buildings, and illegally possessed weapons. Each and every single one of said offenses, he had done on behalf of the IFP.

Special Caprivi Hearing

In addition to his amnesty testimony, his participation in a special hearing on the Caprivians revealed the extent of apartheid state support for Inkatha. This special hearing had to be split up in six different sections and continue on for ten days due to the extensive questioning of former Caprivians and their leaders, including Commissar Daluxolo Luthuli. Luthuli already had gained amnesty by the time he attended this special hearing as a witness, where they cross-examined his earlier statements to test their validity and coherence with the other Caprivi members.

The committee also gained new information on the inner workings of the Caprivi from Luthuli during their questionings. For example, one of the many TRC members who contributed to the extensive questioning was Mr. Maritz, a commission member. He asked Luthuli for more details about Caprivi units' sizes, deployments, specified arrival locations and their mission objectives. One of his investigations led him to asking Luthuli about a 'VIP protection' unit that had 'roughly about 30 young men'. Luthuli responded in kind with his answer:

'I will explain in this manner. After the training at Caprivi, they went first because there were certain courses that they were supposed to attend in Pretoria with regard to the work you have just referred to, so they left before us and when we got to Ulundi later on, they did not arrive with the same group that I've referred to, which was at Nhlungwane camp. They went straight to their respective jobs, that is the job that you've spoken about to go and safeguard some VIPs from the KwaZulu Government and thereafter I never got any contact with them, but that didn't mean that I did not have any powers to use them wherever they were.' (Truth & Reconciliation Commission Hearing, 1997)

Other commission members such as Mr. Wills, an attorney, followed up on Luthuli's response to Mr. Maritz. He questioned Luthuli about what occurred after the Caprivians returned to South Africa. He wanted Luthuli to re-confirm if the Caprivi were indeed deployed to offices throughout KwaZulu/Natal. He asked Luthuli to expand on his previous response as to what type of work that the Caprivians were executing. Luthuli responded honestly with:

'Firstly, it was to assist members or certain members of Inkatha in places that were under Inkatha or Inkatha strongholds. Secondly, they had to assist in the training of the Inkatha Youth in their respective places. Thirdly, it was to help the people to kill certain members who had been identified by the Inkatha leadership.' (Truth & Reconciliation Commission Hearing, 1997)

Luthuli re-iterated information he provided in his amnesty hearing, but he did give more elaborate answers during this special hearing to help with discovering new information for the

TRC, revealing the levels of state cooperation with Inkatha and Inkatha attacks on South Africans.

Conclusion

Luthuli's testimonies before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission demonstrated apartheid state collusion with Inkatha as well as the violence of state and Inkatha against anti-apartheid activists. Luthuli originally started as a MK soldier for the ANC, but his allegiance changed during his time as a spy and commander in the IFP. His TRC testimonies about this time as a commander of Inkatha's Caprivians revealed the extent of state training of Inkatha hit squads and the fueling of violence in KwaZulu-Natal.

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Thula Bopela and Daluxolo Luthuli discuss their book *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, 2005. Photography by Greg Marinovich. Permission: http://www.africamediaonline.com/search/preview/824_496 [Accessed November 18, 2013]

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