

*A limited portrayal of a controversial figure*

# Tale of a survivor



## Book review

by  
**YVES  
VANDERHAEGHEN**

**A**S IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi's role in South African politics is strongly contested, no biographer is likely to produce an account of his life that is thoroughly satisfactory.

Ben Temkin doesn't pretend to be a neutral observer. He acknowledges a debt of friendship to his subject but expresses the hope that the book will not be seen as a whitewash. Temkin's is a challenging task. Buthelezi has, on the one hand, been the hero of the west, who approved of his free-market economics, of South African whites, who liked his "good black" image, and of his ethnic support base.

On the other hand, to the ANC he was a collaborator with the Nats in frustrating liberation, a "snake" who needed to be "hit on the head", or a "smell in the dustbin of history". His longevity is, however, a repudiation of critics who regarded him as a puppet of Pretoria who would fall if he had to stand on his own feet. His place in history was endorsed by former State President F. W. de Klerk, who complimented him for his role in accelerating the unbanning of the ANC and the engagement of meaningful negotiations.

Temkin's approach is to present Buthelezi much as Buthelezi would like himself to be seen, with discreet glimpses of a few warts.

Of royal birth, Buthelezi was made chief of his clan, a position which thrust him into political opposition to Pretoria which, through the Bantu Authorities Act, expected chiefs to carry out official administrative duties. He went on to oppose "independence" for KwaZulu-Natal, and founded Inkatha as a supposedly cultural organisation which borrowed the ANC's colours and kept the spirit of legal dissent alive.

**'His place in history was  
endorsed by former State  
President F. W. Botha.'**

In 1979 relations between the ANC and Inkatha soured and eventually collapsed completely, ostensibly because of Buthelezi's refusal to endorse the armed struggle, support sanctions or allow Inkatha to be an internal (militant) wing of the ANC.

Temkin sheds light on the first serious blow to the relationship. A secret meeting in London between Buthelezi and Oliver Tambo was embarrassingly leaked to the media and, while the ANC blamed it on Buthelezi's desire for self-promotion, Temkin reveals that the leak came from within the ANC's own ranks.

Buthelezi's principled refusal to take up arms is ascribed to his Christian faith, and is cited as the



proof that his characterisation as a war-monger by the ANC and the TRC is untrue.

Temkin seems to believe that the media took it upon themselves to vilify Buthelezi and that they are responsible for an inaccurate and biased image of the man being perpetuated.

Far from being wronged by them, however, the liberal English media overwhelmingly supported him before 1990, as a credible future leader of the country, in preference to Nelson Mandela who at the time was tainted in their eyes both by his militant history and the ANC's socialist rhetoric.

Temkin's attempt at setting the record straight is nevertheless a valuable reminder of the influential role Buthelezi has played in South Africa's history.

He chronicles all the highlights, from his political awakenings, through the barren years from 1960 to 1976, the years of violence in KwaZulu-Natal and the Johannesburg hostels, his forcing of concessions before entering the 1994 elections, and his current role as national minister and elder statesman.

Any criticism of Buthelezi is mild. To the extent that Buthelezi has a fault, it is that he sometimes comes on too strong because his principles are so heart-felt. His reputation as an autocrat who brooks no opposition is dismissed.

What troubles critics of Buthelezi is simple.



## *A limited portrayal of a controversial figure* **Tale of a survivor**

They do not see how it is possible that someone with so much power, who was at the heart of national politics, who carried authority as a chief, a chief minister, the head of a military-styled organisation, minister of KZN police, and who received covert funds and SADF assistance can not have had a hand in the atrocities in this province.

Temkin argues that he could not have known everything that went on and that his underlings exceeded their authority. This explains why he didn't know about the hit squads. However, in the context of maintaining party discipline and insisting that party members speak with a single voice, Temkin paints a picture of a Buthelezi who is supremely diligent and who makes it his business to know what's going on and hold people accountable.

Buthelezi's ambiguous relationship with the idea of violence is also inadequately addressed. This is a serious omission in the light of both the TRC report and previous work that has argued that his public statements have always amounted to a veiled call to arms: that Inkatha was an aggressor, not an unqualified victim of ANC violence.

Christian principles that could not stomach liberation theology found no difficulty in the training, arming and deployment of Inkatha soldiers. The gospel of defensive violence preached by Buthelezi does not stand up to scrutiny.

To take but one example: the Seven Days' War in Pietermaritzburg that claimed 200 lives and created thousands of refugees was triggered by the stoning of buses carrying IFP supporters.

***'Buthelezi's principled refusal to take up arms is ascribed to his Christian faith.'***

The IFP response was to launch a major military offensive in the Edendale Valley. The major figures in the attacks were IFP stalwarts who, far from being censured, were rewarded. Temkin's disappointing account of this traumatic episode in local history is to quibble about TRC procedure.

Temkin does achieve what he sets out to do, which is to set the record straight and cut through ideologically motivated and unsubstantiated criticism of one of the major figures of politics in the past four decades.

He concludes that Buthelezi "has much to contribute yet. It would be sad if South Africa were to spurn that contribution. It may well do so."

If Temkin's sceptical conclusion comes about, it would be because of Buthelezi's ambiguities, which are still far from being satisfactorily resolved.

A whitewash: maybe not. An apology: certainly.

• Buthelezi — A Biography by Ben Temkin is published by Cass JB.



*As deputy president denies he tried to get an arms deal bribe ...*

# No Zuma inquiry - Mbeki

**P**RESIDENT Thabo Mbeki has ruled out a commission of inquiry into allegations that Deputy President Jacob Zuma took a bribe in connection with the multi-billion-rand arms deal. But he has not ruled out investigations by other state agencies.

Replying to a question in Parliament from Democratic Alliance finance spokeswoman Raenette Taljaard, Mbeki said: "Commissions of inquiry cost money. They must, therefore, be appointed on the basis of clear evidence presented to the president, backed by some material facts."

According to newspaper reports, Zuma is being probed by the Scorpions for allegedly soliciting a R500 000 bribe from former southern African head of Thompson-SCF (now Thales), Alain Thetard.

Yesterday Zuma again denied the bribery allegations, adding he does not know if he is under investigation by the Scorpions on the issue.

Taljaard asked whether the probe by the Scorpions is a consistent approach, given that a certain person — understood to be Kevin Wakeford, former SA Chamber of Business CEO — made allegations against key market players for their role in the collapse of the rand in 2001, and the Myburgh commission was appointed.

Mbeki said: "Yes, in the case referred to, allegations were supported by evidence."

He added that "the possibility of using other state agencies to conduct inquiries must be considered".

In written reply to a question by Taljaard, Zuma said he did not meet Thetard on March 11, 2000 in Durban (as alleged) "or anywhere else in South Africa". He did not discuss the issue of protecting Thales or any other company or individual from the Joint Investigating Team's probe into the arms deal with anyone at all.

In his capacity as deputy president and previously as KwaZulu-Natal economic affairs and tourism MEC, Zuma said he interacts with a large number of people, but is unable to personally remember the names of all of them. "Alain Thetard may have been part of one of the Thompson-SCF delegations."

Zuma added that he has no business interests and/or shareholdings in Thales or the other companies mentioned in this regard (the Nkobi Group and African Defence System). Nor does he have any knowledge of any member of his extended family having any such interests.

Regarding the probe by the Scorpions, Zuma said: "The Directorate of Special Operations has, however, never approached me for comment. At my request, my attorneys approached the National Director of Public Prosecutions when the allegations first surfaced late last year, to inquire as to whether I was indeed being investigated."

"The national director refused to confirm or deny that such an investigation was taking place. I am therefore gathering most of the information in this matter from the media," Zuma said.

Yesterday Zuma was again asked by DA Chief Whip Douglas Gibson about the allegations, saying now is the moment to protest his innocence before Parliament and before the people of South Africa.

"They need to hear you deny the allegations and lift the cloud of suspicion which is being cast over your head," he said.

Zuma replied he has indeed denied the allegations "in the newspapers, which have published this".

— News 24-Sapa.

**Arms deal appeal withdrawn:  
page 2**



A-G drops case to block losing bidder's access to records

THE NATAL WITNESS 13 MARCH 2003

# Arms deal documents available

**A**UDITOR-GENERAL Shauket Fakie has dropped his opposition to an attempt by a losing bidder in the arms deal to get his hands on documents relating to the controversial weapons acquisition.

As a result, the contents of some of the documents may become public for the first time, shedding light on previously confidential aspects of the arms deal, which has been embroiled in allegations of corruption and irregularities.

Richard Young, whose company CCII Systems lost out on a R150 million contract to supply

combat technology to SA Navy Corvettes, applied in court under the Promotion of Access to Information Act to gain access to the documents. They relate to the arms deal and the outcome of a probe into the arms procurement process by a joint investigating team appointed by Parliament.

Young won his case and Fakie sought leave to appeal. However, he dropped the application yesterday — a day before it was to be heard — after weeks of negotiation between Young's lawyers and lawyers representing the investigating team, which consisted of Fakie, former public

protector Selby Baqwa and national director of public prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka.

There appears to be only one condition from Fakie's lawyers — that certain of the documents may not be made public. Young had to fight to get access to these documents himself as Fakie originally only wanted the businessman's lawyers to have access to these documents.

Young is particularly interested in the drafts of the report by the joint investigating team before they were sent to the Defence Department and a cabinet committee to be revised,

believing they contain important and potentially embarrassing information.

Young said yesterday that there was initially a misunderstanding about which records he wanted. "We do not want to see the entire record of the joint investigation, which is some 77 000 pages. The application was for the reduced record with specific reference to the Corvette deal."

Lawyers representing the government have asked for 40 days from today to prepare the documents, but Young has refused the request.

"This is completely illogical," said Young. "They might need some time to prepare some of the documents, but there are documents that they can supply to us within a reasonable time, like two or three days."

Young admits that he is already in possession of some of the documents, but these documents cannot be used in court as they are not official records.

"My verification process will be to correlate what they give me against what I have already got," he said.

Young is considering court action after the Corvette deal was awarded to French company Detexis, a sister company of African Defence Systems, in which Schabir Shaik, brother of the Defence Department's former head of acquisitions, Chippy, has a stake.

Young claims that irregularities and political interference in the selection process led to the failure of his bid.

Interviewed by *The Natal Witness* yesterday, Young said he is delighted justice has been done. "But it has been a very expensive effort in terms of effort and financial cost," he said.

Young was adamant yesterday that he should have immediate access to the documents he requires for his case, particularly the initial report.

"I shall demand immediate [within a week] access to the drafts and other records I require," he said.

"... we have to verify that there has been full compliance and no alteration of any of the records."

— Political Correspondent-Business Day.



Spoornet offered refunds to Blue Train passengers when they arrived at Pretoria Station yesterday morning to find the luxury train gutted by fire. Four coaches were extensively damaged by fire late on Tuesday night. The famous train is out of action until September.

Photo: LEE WARREN



## Taxes pay for ANC's 'dirty deal'

CAPE TOWN — The Democratic Alliance has accused the African National Congress of supporting its "dirty" deal with the New National Party at taxpayers' expense, saying that two new posts of deputy ministers were created purely to provide positions and perks to the NNP and are serving little purpose.

This follows the revelation by Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang that the appointment of the NNP's Renier Schoeman as Deputy Minister of Health will cost the department about R50 500 a month, excluding the salaries of five additional staff members.

In a written response to questions, the minister said five additional staff have been budgeted for in addition to Schoeman, including: a head of office, with a salary scale of R185 000 — R207 000 a year; a media liaison officer (R132 000 — R144 000); an appointment secretary (R106 000 — R113 000); a secretary/receptionist (R72 000 — R79 000) and an office assistant (R39 000 — R42 000).

Health spokesman Mike Ellis said it appears that neither the Minister of Health nor the Minister of Social Development considers their deputy ministers "particularly necessary".

"Nearly four months after he was appointed deputy minister of health, no line functions have been delegated to Mr Renier Schoeman," he said.

"What has Mr Schoeman been doing for his more than R50 000 per month pay package for the last four months? And what did Mr David Malatsi do to contribute to his portfolio in three months?"

— Political Correspondent.