

A certain lack of feeling

I was humiliated in Canada," Mangosuthu Buthelezi told me, his usually soft voice rising in anger. Buthelezi is chief of 5.5 million Zulus, South Africa's single largest ethnic group — and the most important black man in that nation.

Canada, the self-professed champion of black rights in South Africa, has thus managed to insult and alienate the country's most numerous and influential black community. Chief Buthelezi, received by President Ronald Reagan and heads of state in Europe and Africa, was coldly snubbed during his November visit to Canada.

Neither Brian Mulroney nor Joe Clark, so loudly and ostentatiously concerned of late about South Africa's internal affairs, would see Chief Buthelezi. He was shunted off to Monique Vezina, the minister of state for who knows what. Compare this shabby treatment to the fawning adulation accorded media darling Bishop Desmond Tutu.

Why was Buthelezi, one of the few democratically elected leaders in black Africa, blatantly snubbed by Ottawa? And why has he been misrepresented and disparaged by Toronto's other newspapers? Because he has committed the sins of advocating co-operation with whites, democratic elections and free enterprise.

Black leaders, like Buthelezi, who dare advocate political and economic co-operation with whites are damned by the western media as "Uncle Toms."

Many foreign newsmen in South Africa have come to resemble Madame Defarge, who sat safely knitting in front of the guillotine, crying out for more and more blood. The media establishment wants fire and revolution, not compromise; it seems determined to turn South Africa into another Lebanon or Vietnam.

Buthelezi is certainly one of the most impressive African leaders I have met. He is articulate and brilliant with a gentle wit and humility that belie his power and awesome responsibilities. Chief Buthelezi, an ardent foe of apartheid for two dec-

Punch



"When everyone wore hats, Brian wore his at an unusually rakish angle."

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ades, insists that the only course for South Africa is the sharing of political and economic power between the races.

He also emphasizes that South Africa's enormous economic wealth and power must be preserved under a system of free enterprise and democratic government — otherwise his country could end up a beggar and crippled like so many other black African socialist dictatorships.

In fact, Buthelezi makes so much sense it is frightening that more people in the West do not listen to him. Here we urge brotherhood and racial harmony in South Africa and yet we snub or malign the clearest and sanest voice advocating these virtues. Instead, the western media and our own government have come out in favor of the African National Congress (ANC) as the somehow "legitimate" expression of black South Africa. This is an incredible stupidity.

The ANC gets a huge amount of soft-headed, uncritical media adulation. In truth, the ANC is run by Joe Slovo, the head of South Africa's underground communist party and a full colonel in the KGB. There is no doubt the ANC takes its orders from Moscow. Grafted onto its communist core is a veneer of non-communists, just as the communists in Vietnam had non-communist members to show the world they were a truly "popular" party.

ANC agents have tried to kill Chief Buthelezi a number of times. The reason is obvious. He and his Zulus represent the peaceful political and economic future of South Africa as a member of the western group of nations. The ANC, which rejects all compromise with the whites, wants to destroy the existing order and remake the shattered remains of South Africa into a black Marxist state. This is the movement our government and media supports.

There are reports that President Botha may soon agree to share real political power with Chief Buthelezi in Natal. If true, such an event would be the beginning of a truly multiracial, moderate South Africa. It is the most promising development in South Africa — though our media have completely ignored the issue.

Canadians should tell our government, churchmen and media that it is time to begin supporting moderate men of goodwill in South Africa, men who share our political, economic and religious values. It is time to stop supporting the communist-dominated ANC, its political front, the United Democratic Front, and the ragbag of political prelates who are trying to destroy South Africa.

Chief Buthelezi is the man upon whom South Africa's future may well depend. He is a leader of rare courage, honesty and common sense. Our politicians, who snubbed Buthelezi in order to curry favor with leftwing church groups, would do well to meet with him and learn from this remarkable man.