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## **Luthuli's Conceptualisation of 'Civilisation'**

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*But there was something called "white civilisation" that had to be preserved. Its preservation required that blacks not go to universities attended by whites and that their own so-called universities be located outside the white country, in their own countries, wherever those were. Even there, however, what was taught had to be strictly controlled by whites. To say that "civilisation" also required that blacks and whites not cohabit on more intimate terms was hardly necessary, for this had already been spelled out in a law called the Immorality Act. And "civilisation" meant the rule of law, didn't it? – Joseph Lelyveld<sup>1</sup>*

*I speak to you as one who was born into the privileged race of South Africa, who grew up accepting...the fact that there were two kinds of men, utterly, completely, inevitably distinct; one superior, the boss, the master; the other inferior, the servant, the underdog; one with a white face, the real man; the other, one with a dark face, half a man; and with that dark face I associated, and I apologise to all those whom the words offend, all that was unpleasant and uncouth and uncivilised.<sup>2</sup> – Archbishop Denis Hurley in the July 1949 issue of Southern Cross*

### **Introduction**

The perspectives of Jean and John Comaroff found in their text *Of Revelation and Revolution* are undercurrents in this paper's assessment of Luthuli's theological, philosophical and political outlooks as they concern his conceptualisation of 'civilisation'. The Comaroffs examined "the nature of power and resistance" by investigating the symbiotic relationship between the Nonconformist evangelists who were carriers of the colonialists' consciousness and the southern Tswana whose consciousnesses became to a certain degree colonised (1820-1920).<sup>3</sup> As a preface to their investigation, the Comaroffs offered critiques of various schools of historical thought that also sought to articulate "the long battle for the possession of salient signs and symbols".<sup>4</sup> The Comaroffs, as historical anthropologists, were critical of the simplistic "missionary imperialist" thesis that argued that colonisers and their missiological handmaidens

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Lelyveld, *Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White*, (New York: Times Books, 1985), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Patty Kearney, *Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley, Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid*, (Scottsville, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 58.

<sup>3</sup> Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 1: 6.

The Comaroffs were influenced by Gramsci's (1971) vague and amorphous understanding of hegemony (or "ideology" in its "highest sense").

<sup>4</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 4.

(both presented as homogenous caricatures), exclusively through forceful actions and/or processes of political economy, imposed their worldviews on the subaltern who lacked agency and hence were simply dominated. The Comaroffs perceived a more stealthy, but perhaps more potent, moral economy wherein the materialist paradigms and goods “presupposed the messages and meanings they proclaimed in the pulpit, and vice versa” to answer: “How is it that [the missionaries], like other colonial functionaries, wrought far-reaching political, social and economic transformations in the absence of concrete resources of much consequence?”<sup>5</sup>

In their study of the encounter between Nonconformists and southern Tswana in the nineteenth century, the Comaroffs expressed their grave concerns with deconstructionalist thought wherein artefacts, archives and texts were perceived as inherently prejudiced, contrived and/or mutually contradictory and completely meaningless. While the deconstructionists’ scepticism about the existence of truth can be helpful, the Comaroffs recognised that hegemonies of minorities (missioners) to exist over long periods of time, and more importantly, can be imposed without the use of violence. The Comaroffs sought to exhibit the reciprocity engendered by the intersection of societies and cultures wherein social meaning does “indeed become unfixed, resisted and reconstructed” for both partners.<sup>6</sup> The transfer of socio-cultural paradigms was not one-way and thus explains the agency of the subaltern as it accepts, resists or amalgamates the ‘alien’ paradigms within its own. Likewise, the Comaroffs did not recognise the missionaries as monolithic and they sought to explain how they fused indigenous society within their own thinking. Also not dismissed was the reality that missionaries and their political compatriots wielded a disproportionate quantity of “agentive” and “nonagentive” ‘power’ thus enabling them to produce and reproduce the bases of the Tswana’s existence; likewise, such a reality is not ignored when examining Luthuli’s conceptionalisation of ‘civilisation’.<sup>7</sup>

## Civilisation

From 28 June 1959 to 27 May 1962, Luthuli wrote a ‘weekly’ column to the *Golden City Post* (the *Post*).<sup>8</sup> On the column’s advent the *Post* proclaimed:

Beginning this week, POST will publish a regular weekly column by South Africa’s leading figure in exile, Chief A. J. Luthuli. He speaks from his home in the small village of Groutville on the Natal north coast, and through POST his voice on current trends will be heard all over the country.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 22.

<sup>8</sup> The ‘weekly’ column was not always printed weekly. There were many hiatuses in Luthuli’s contributions. Luthuli wrote seventy-five or seventy-six columns for the *Post* during this three year period. Most of the *Post* columns were obtained from the Bailey’s African Photo Archives, Johannesburg. Many of the seventy-six columns that were missing from the Bailey’s collection, I obtained from the Pietermaritzburg Municipal Library periodicals archive. Luthuli’s contributions were published quite regularly from June 1959 to the first week of April 1960. The largest absence was of course due to Luthuli’s 30 March 1960 arrest for burning his pass two days prior. After a nine month absence, Luthuli again wrote towards the end of December 1960 and continued irregularly until May 1962. During this later period, the *Post* only published one or two columns per month. For example, in October and November 1961, only two pieces were written each month. The pace slackened presumably because in October 1961, Luthuli received news that he had won the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize and was heavily engaged in public responses. From the end of December 1961 until the end of May 1962 only six columns were written and published.

<sup>9</sup> Bailey’s African Photo Archives (BAPA), Luthuli File (LF), *Golden City Post*, 28 June 1959, 2.

As judged from the seventy-five submissions published by the *Post*, Luthuli can accurately be described as an “Absolute Idealist”. The articles published in the *Post* document that he represented the quintessential *Kholwa* (Believer) who advocated the acceptance western culture and Christianity as valuable contributions to indigenous African society. Luthuli’s often paternalistic and condescending missiological upbringing imbued in him that the practice of Christianity is preferable to “heathenism”.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, he did not disparage traditional society. He was a chief and in many ways upheld indigenous culture. Luthuli affirmed there to be many aspects of traditional African culture that ought to be retained. Likewise, Luthuli was not so enamoured with the west that he accepted its ways ‘lock, stock and barrel’. On the contrary, he lamented its proclivity towards materialism (avarice) and militarism (violence). Luthuli routinely berated western democracies and white Christians for abandoning and thwarting their highest and most esteemed ‘civilised’ ideals.

Luthuli did not conceive that ‘civilisation’ belonged to the white race. Rather, he argued civilisation to be a corporate philosophic culture to which all races ought to aspire. The fact that Africans joined at a late stage the current towards civilisation that swept the globe did not prejudice people of colour any more than those who joined the current sooner and often failed to live up to its seminal tenets. Luthuli viewed civilisation to be appropriate for all humans, a state to which all humanity is progressively moving. Luthuli’s admiration and acceptance of Christianity, westernisation and civilisation did not in his mind elevate Whites above Blacks. Nor did it develop a ‘false consciousness’ in which ‘self-hatred’ or an ‘inferiority complex’ developed. Luthuli believed that all humans are inherently capable and equal. The sin of Apartheid was that it prevented people of colour from joining the current towards civilisation. Worse, utilising the bantustan framework, Apartheid sought to expel people of colour from the progressive global current and dispose of them in a stifling caricature of the traditional past. Attaining an unrecoverable past would be futile, rendering its imitation an anachronism. Luthuli sought to graft the best of African culture with western culture, thus making a modern synthesis that was neither ‘western’ nor ‘African’.

In his book *Restless Identities*, Paul la Hausse de Lalouvière described an early twentieth century *Kholwa* named Petros Lamula as being motivated or justified by a “new kind of historical faith” and this historical faith is described later as an “historical optimism”.<sup>11</sup> The philosophical sciences better identify this brand of faith as ‘absolute idealism’.<sup>12</sup> Luthuli, as an absolute idealist, sought to place metahistory on a macrohistoric plane. The *scientific* outcome of such a philosophy intended to “provide a definitive conceptual analysis of the meaning and purpose of history”.<sup>13</sup> Not being a formal philosopher, scholar or theologian, Luthuli was not consumed by the scientific project, per se, born of absolute realism. Rather, Luthuli, as a

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<sup>10</sup> “A few members of the original Groutville community did revert to heathen ways...”

Albert Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli Nobel Prize Winner*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2006), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Paul la Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnicity and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1881-1948) and Lymon Maling (1889-c. 1936)*, (Scottsville: University of Natal, 2000), 59 and 67, respectively.

<sup>12</sup> Wesley Wildman, *Fidelity with Plausibility: Modest Christologies in the Twentieth Century*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 105.

<sup>13</sup> Wildman, *Fidelity with Plausibility*, 105.

follower of the Christian faith, was primarily interested in an *ethical* project that would locate the events of South Africa within the current of cosmic time. Within absolute idealism...

...the philosophy of history combined scientific historiography with an existential and intellectual struggle; it was simultaneously an area of scholarly inquiry and an urgent problem to be solved.<sup>14</sup>

Luthuli's absolute idealism viewed history primarily as a narrative, and similar to Lamula, this narrative was progressive and optimistic. Luthuli read one book from his bookshelf that quoted the Congregationalist minister George Gordon who comprehended that:

...above and beyond history, God dwells in the processes of human society, giving man his ideals and sending the race to its highest achievements.<sup>15</sup>

The same book quoted another Congregational minister, Newman Smyth, who defined Christianity as...

...the unfolding and application to human life in all its spheres and relations of the divinely human ideal which has been historically given to Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Likewise, for Luthuli, this grand narrative was irreversible because it was divinely ordained. Despite the inevitable progress of history, Luthuli was well aware, and thus did not deny or ignore, anomalies within the narrative. Retrogressive forces, such as the Apartheid regime, within the narrative represented an unnecessary and regrettable stumbling block to that which would ultimately be fulfilled.

The origins of Luthuli's absolute idealism lie in George Hegel's philosophy of history. Hegel's project was to describe the essential theme of history, to avoid the randomness of historical events and/or their meaningless tedium. The culmination of Hegel's thought evolved into 'triumphal-ism', more recent philosophical and historical understandings of 'manifest destiny' and 'divine Providence'. Hence the post-modern movement within philosophy, at least within theological circles, raised important and challenging questions concerning the disjuncture and inapplicability of micro-events to macro-historical themes. The questioning of successive progressive epochs led to the philosophical paradigm termed 'historical relativism' that emphasised the uniqueness and un-repeatability of historical events and holds that...

...every historical event derives its significance and its power to influence only from its various contexts, and not from the control of any intelligible supernatural force, malevolent or benign, or any conceivable idea, no matter how elevated from some point of view.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Wildman, *Fidelity with Plausibility*, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Gaius Atkins and Frederick Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism*, (Boston: The Pilgrim, 1942), 251. Atkins and Fagley cited: George Gordon, "The Theological Problem for Today", in *The New Puritanism*, 156-7.

<sup>16</sup> Atkins and Fagley, *The History of American Congregationalism*, 251.

Atkins and Fagley cited: Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, 57.

<sup>17</sup> Wildman, *Fidelity with Plausibility*, 111.

The Apartheid context within South Africa brought Luthuli's adherence to 'absolute idealism' into conflict with 'historical relativism'. The clash of philosophical/historical perspectives revealed a generation gap between Luthuli and those who, like Mandela and Sisulu, advocated for the formation of the militant wing of the African National Congress (ANC), *Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK)* or "Spear of the Nation". The clash represented more than a disagreement between conservative and radical or 'old' school and 'new' school. With Luthuli, the clash of strategies and tactics had much to do with theology and in particular, Christian theology, influenced by Congregationalism's then understanding or philosophy of human history.

Luthuli's understanding of world history motivated by a divine Providence acknowledged the aberrancies in history and thus he was capable, in fact, quite adept at making strategic and tactical decisions to suit any given historical context. Thus, he was not surprised by the intractable and increasingly brutal tactics of the National Party regime in the South African context. From the ANC's 1949 Program of Action, to the early '50s Defiance Campaign, the 1960s strikes, to stay-at-homes and boycotts, Luthuli increased his degree of militancy. Nonetheless, Luthuli's allowance for historical relativity, i.e., the uniqueness of the South African context, did not justify the use of violence. The philosophy of absolute idealism discouraged the resort to violence. By resorting to violence, the grand scheme of progress, divine Providence and even Christian triumphalism would become the impotent farce that so many believed it was. For Luthuli, an absolute idealist philosophy of history defined a purpose, a Christian ethical purpose, for the South African context. The descent into violence, whether intentional or unintentional, would render void that ethical purpose.

News in October 1961 that Luthuli won the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize sustained his hope despite his ban, Sharpeville and the ANC's subsequent ban. In a moment of restrained euphoria, Luthuli commented in the *Post* about the African continent at the conclusion of 1961. Optimistic about Tanganyika (Tanzania), Nigeria, Ghana, pensive about Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and concerned about Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), Luthuli viewed the progress of Africa as moving forward. He then turned his thoughts to South Africa where despite the darkness he viewed much light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

Yet more and more I have a feeling – nay the faith – that we are far nearer [to] our goal than many of us might imagine. There is no need to despair. There is every reason to hope and to strive for that hope to become an actuality soon.<sup>18</sup>

Luthuli's understanding of history provided a sense of trajectory and development. The prospective tragedy of a civil war, waged primarily on racial lines, rendering a country devastated materially, physically and, most importantly for Luthuli, spiritually wounded, would be a reversal of that forward trajectory. Luthuli's understanding of history provided for him an assurance of meaning and moral security that would cease to exist with the advent of violence. Despite coming face to face with proponents (knowingly or unknowingly) of historical relativism, Luthuli remained steadfast to the tenets of absolute idealism.

Mandela mentioned in his autobiography a secret meeting he had with Luthuli in August 1962 following Mandela's extensive tour of Africa. Their discussion centred on Mandela's perceived need for the ANC to present an image of being controlled by black Africans. Mandela

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<sup>18</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "It's Great to be Alive in Africa Today!", Albert Luthuli, 26 November 1961.

suggested making ‘cosmetic changes’ to the ANC’s organisational structure. Mandela explained that potential continental allies of the movement were more closely identified with the black militancy and the pan-African nationalism of its Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) rival. Mandela explained that the multiracial Joint Congresses’ movement confused potential African allies who perceived it to be watered-down and ineffective. Luthuli disagreed and responded that the ANC had “evolved the policy of non-racialism for good reason” and “did not think that we should alter our policy because it did not suit a few foreign leaders”.<sup>19</sup> Luthuli’s acceptance of the South African exceptionalist paradigm and his conception of civilisation led him to seek an alternative path for South Africa’s future that differed from what other African states advocated.

This political decision made at the same time Luthuli wrote for the *Post* reflected a philosophical inclination towards ‘cultural miscegenation’. For Luthuli, civilisation is not something that is brought wholesale and delivered to another location. Rather, civilisation is a synthesis, an evolving product of social development requiring cooperation and partnership between South African Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians. Luthuli wrote in his column:

True civilisation is neither white, black nor brown. It is a synthesis – the *summum bonum* – representing the potent and relevant accumulation of mankind’s positive experiences that have contributed effectively to human progress and wellbeing.<sup>20</sup>

Luthuli considered ‘civilisation’ to be a desired composite product of scientific, political, cultural and moral (religious) progress. A constant theme throughout Luthuli’s columns was a desire to achieve ‘civilisation’. For example, in an article that one can surmise he post-dated to be printed while in Oslo, Norway, Luthuli wrote to his constituency back home:

If only the fruits of civilisation were made available in South Africa to all people, what a great and happy country this would become.<sup>21</sup>

Luthuli believed that cultures contribute in varying degrees to the composite given their respective strengths and weaknesses. Luthuli perceived that Africa was destined to make a special contribution to civilisation within the socio-ethical realm, essentially, within the realm of human relations. In an indirect retort to the then Prime Minister of South Africa who among others overused the term “white civilisation”, Luthuli reasoned that such a thing did not exist.

I hope Africa with its experience of multi-racial communities will successfully meet the challenge by making a distinctive contribution to this broad universal civilisation by producing a formula of universal validity to meet the problems arising out of race relations. To many of us, Integration is the only valid and practical answer. It is the most likely to produce a cultural synthesis of the best and most potent of the cultural heritages offered by our multi-racial society. Such a common civilisation could not be described as exclusively “white civilisation”. But it would be in direct line with the stream of universal broad culture I describe as World Heritage (capitalisations are Luthuli’s).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, (London: Abacus, 1995), 370.

<sup>20</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Is This White Civilisation?”, Albert Luthuli, 05 March 1961.

<sup>21</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Groutville – Oslo”, Albert Luthuli, 10 December 1961.

<sup>22</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Is This White Civilisation?”, Albert Luthuli, 05 March 1961.

Luthuli assessed that to some extent cultures are further along the ‘path’ to civilisation than others. Critical of racist policies that block efforts of human progress, Luthuli used pejorative and inflammatory language that today would be seen as ‘politically incorrect’. For example, as part of a conclusion to the same column cited above Luthuli wrote:

This [concept of white civilisation] confronts us with the inescapable task of helping to truly civilise South Africa by resisting all efforts to push us back to backwardness and barbarism.<sup>23</sup>

Luthuli’s terminology is a reflection of the time in which he lived rather than sentiments of inferiority as a black man when compared with Whites. On the contrary, Luthuli entitled one column, “What Has Europe to Boast About?” and its subtitle read, “We Are NOT Inferior” (Luthuli’s emphasis).<sup>24</sup> Luthuli’s references to ‘barbarism’ and ‘backwardness’ must be seen in the context of how Luthuli understood world history. Luthuli used such terms with the understanding that all cultures and races were at one time ‘backward’ and ‘barbaric’, even (or especially) European culture. Luthuli knew that *all* cultures seek to progress from barbarism to civilisation. The white so-called ‘preservers of civilisation’ have nothing about which to boast. Luthuli recalled what Europeans term as their ‘Dark Ages’ that, until the Renaissance, fundamentally altered European culture. In fact, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in December 1961, Luthuli reminded the predominately white European audience of the centuries of war, culminating in World War I and II, that Europe masochistically suffered. Luthuli coolly mentioned that Africa, by contrast, is emerging from the equivalent of Europe’s “age of feudal backwardness” with relatively little bloodshed.<sup>25</sup> In one article, Luthuli posed the reality that “world civilisation” has been, is and will forever in the future manifest itself more in various parts of the world at various epochs due to “various forces and conditions”.<sup>26</sup> Just as European culture rose from its past, so African culture should and will, provided it is not artificially stunted and reversed. Africa’s ‘backward’ state was not due to an innate inability to progress. Luthuli at one time noted that Africa’s “backward” state is “temporary”, merely circumstantial and relative. As an alternative to the bantustan paradigm, Luthuli asserted:

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<sup>23</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Is This White Civilisation?”, Albert Luthuli, 05 March 1961.

<sup>24</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Has Europe to Boast About?”, Albert Luthuli, 29 November 1959, 6.

<sup>25</sup> “Your continent passed through a longer series of revolutionary upheavals, in which your age of feudal backwardness gave way to the new age of industrialisation, true nationhood, democracy and rising living standards – the golden age for which men have striven for years. Your age of revolution, stretching across the years from the eighteenth century to our own, encompassed some of the bloodiest civil wars in all history. By comparison, the African revolution has swept across three-quarters of the continent in less than a decade; its final completion within sight of our own generation. Again, by comparison with Europe, our African revolution – to our credit – is proving to be orderly, quick and comparatively bloodless”.

Albert Luthuli, Nobel Lecture, delivered on 11 December 1961. Found in:

Kader Asmal, David Chidester and Wilmot James, eds. *South Africa’s Nobel Laureates: Peace, Literature and Science*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2004), 23-4.

<sup>26</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Is This White Civilisation?” Albert Luthuli, 05 March 1961.

The history of the human race shows that given an opportunity and the right conditions, these [civilised] values can grow and flourish in essence, at least, anywhere.<sup>27</sup>

An imperfect, but nonetheless helpful, metaphor to explain the path toward civilisation would be that of a river. Just as many tributaries feed into a river that leads to the ocean, so many cultures feed into the path that leads to civilisation. Luthuli's references to "barbarism" and "backwardness" notwithstanding, it matters not whether some tributaries are larger than others, or whether some tributaries enter into the path farther upstream than others. All the tributaries merge into the river and their synthesis contributes, without distinction, to the 'ideal', the ocean, or 'civilisation'.

## **Bantustans**

The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (No. 46) became effective on 19 June 1959.<sup>28</sup> The 1959 Act logically followed the Malan government's Bantu Authorities Act (No. 68) of 1951 that established "homelands" for the country's different black ethnic groups.<sup>29</sup> The 1959 Act set out a plan for "separate development" and in reaction to this act, Luthuli wrote in the latter months of 1959 a plethora of columns condemning it. Luthuli likened the path to civilisation to a "stream" when in September of 1959 he condemned the bantustan system.

The National Party policy of separate development seeks to keep us off the general stream of modern civilisation and development. It does this by means of denying us free contact with educative agencies and of acquiring adequate means of attaining civilised standards of life.<sup>30</sup>

Apartheid for Luthuli represented the damming of the tributary system. The bantustan scheme implemented a reversal of the natural water course, and thus of human progress, forcing Africans back to the original source of the tributary. Fresh water ceases to come and go, the water becomes stagnant, oxygen is depleted, life becomes unsustainable, and hence, the body of water becomes a cesspool. Luthuli's religious faith affirmed that human progress was ultimately divinely ordained and inevitable. However, various malevolent forces can and do unnecessarily frustrate and delay Providence. Luthuli viewed the bantustan scheme as an impediment to Africa's ultimate equality.

[The bantustan plan] is not for free and democratic South Africa which respects civilised tenets and standards...it is a shameful perversion of [traditional government] and an affront to good government in a civilised democratic country

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<sup>27</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Bantustan Is a Mockery", Albert Luthuli, 06 September 1959, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Also known as the "Representation between Republic of South Africa and Self-Governing Territories Act No. 46 of 1959".

<sup>29</sup> About.com, "Apartheid Legislation in South Africa", 2. Found at: <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsalaws.htm>, accessed 11 August 2008.

<sup>30</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Bantustan Is a Mockery", Albert Luthuli, 06 September 1959, 6.

South Africa claims to be (sic)...[the proposals] are an order to us to march back to tribalism in this scientific age.<sup>31</sup>

Luthuli's ancestors practised subsistence farming. Yet, he prided himself on utilising modern farming methods, including mechanisation. Luthuli believed, and strove to practise commercial farming, to the extent that he was able given the restrictive laws on land ownership. Luthuli acted progressively by seeking to organise black cane farmers, consolidating their finances and increasing their buying power. If one was able to farm commercially, subsistence farming was anachronistic. Though Luthuli served his community as a chief, he served as a modern chief. Whereas most chiefs received their powers hereditarily, Luthuli was called and elected democratically, and thus, by merit. In Luthuli's day, and also to a great extent today, many chiefs lacked formal education. Both then and now, hereditary leadership's hold on power is dependent on the past, on the maintenance of traditional customs. Luthuli, a chief, commented dismissively on traditional leadership when he considered their potential to be co-opted by the Apartheid regime. Luthuli believed that while aspects of indigenous African culture can and should contribute to the common 'stream' of civilisation, a reversion to indigenous culture (or a false synthetic caricature of it) is antithetical to the nature of human history and the direction Africans should orient themselves.<sup>32</sup> In one column, Luthuli lamented the direction the state wished to urge black leaders to lean.

Much of our destiny as a people in a scientific age has been placed by the white government in the hands of chiefs and their councillors...What will matter more [than the affluence of a few Bantu] is the raising of the general standard of living of the masses of the people to progressively approach civilised standards of living.<sup>33</sup>

In November 1952 the Apartheid regime dismissed Luthuli as he was seen as a cantankerous and progressive chief. The state required chiefs who could not envision Africans participating in and contributing to the great synthesis of world civilisation. In late 1959, Luthuli wrote an article entitled, "Apartheid, War on Progress". Therein, Luthuli viewed Apartheid as an attack on the progress of history and condemned it in no uncertain terms.

Twelve years of National Party rule have shown how the forces of Apartheid have marshalled to make an all-out assault on African life – to slow, if not halt our progress along the path of civilisation. Apartheid does this in many ways. It insinuates that western civilisation is not for us, and that we should "develop

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<sup>31</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Bantustans Plan Is Not for Us!", Albert Luthuli, 04 October 1959, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Luthuli believed that not all aspects of western culture should be emulated. The American Board missionaries were aware that, in the main, the choice between the modern and the tradition was false. Any traditional society would be, as with the bantustans, a synthetic caricature because the force of the modern was irresistible. Often the missionaries prayed that they encountered an indigenous population before other Whites did to assist them and 'arm' them against the many negative aspects of the western cultural onslaught. Rev. Daniel Lindley thought that the most efficacious means by which to convert the Black heathens was to convert the Whites heathens *first*, as the two would conflate and the Whites would make the Blacks "twice the sons of hell that they already are".

<sup>33</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Answer These Posers, Bantustan Supporters", Albert Luthuli, 20 September 1959, 6.

along our own lines”, and in the process evolve a civilisation of our own, rooted in our isolation, simple tribal culture.<sup>34</sup>

Luthuli articulated that “civilisation” was a human right and not something that was designated for specific races or cultures.

We demand our human rights. We propose to use them to become, on a basis of equality, joint heirs and defenders with them of the privileges and values of this civilisation.<sup>35</sup>

By far, the most prominent theme Luthuli presents in his seventy-five articles published over a three year period in the *Post* is that of an African who yearns to benefit from and contribute to ‘civilisation’. This movement is fostered through support and partnership, mutually beneficial to all irrespective of race or culture, enabling access to education, science, vocational opportunities and universal human rights. In other words, Luthuli did not ascribe to a patronising and racist “White Man’s Burden” whereby the onerous task of bequeathing and transferring one-way ‘light’ and knowledge from the white to black races is advocated; fundamentally Luthuli desired that the black race not be malevolently held back by the white race from realising their fullest God-given potential. For Luthuli, the sin of the Apartheid regime is its quest to restrain black Africans from moving into the stream of civilised culture that constitutes a modern amalgamation of all cultures’ strengths.

Luthuli was a product of Christian evangelism as his father served as a missionary translator and teacher in Zimbabwe. As a young child, Luthuli’s uncle, Martin Luthuli, a *Kholwa* chief of the Groutville community, mentored him. He attended mission schools throughout his formative years and became a teacher at Adams. Luthuli served on numerous boards, most, such as McCord Hospital and Inanda Seminary, ecclesiastically affiliated. Luthuli often utilised Christian missionaries’ paternalistic and condescending terminology. Even when writing to a predominantly black audience, he did not shy away from pejorative terms such as ‘backwardness’ and ‘barbaric’. When referring to white South Africans, Luthuli quipped:

[The white man] must accept blame for much of our backwardness. The white man has protected himself by laws which deny us opportunities to progress unfettered.<sup>36</sup>

The seemingly pejorative terminology did not restrict Luthuli’s conceptualisation that all races mutually benefit from one another through support and partnership. Luthuli did not argue: ‘Whites, your burden must be to help enlighten Blacks’. Rather, Luthuli’s refrain was always: ‘Whites, it is your responsibility not to impede the progress of Blacks’. Luthuli argued:

The other common tactic [of the white man] is to impress us with his so-called greatness and superiority. We do not begrudge the white man the material and

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<sup>34</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Apartheid War on Progress”, Albert Luthuli, 13 December 1959.

<sup>35</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Bantustan Is a Mockery”, Albert Luthuli, 06 September 1959, 6.

<sup>36</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Has Europe to Boast About?”, Albert Luthuli, 29 November 1959, 6.

scientific progress which he has made. He does us serious injury however, if he ascribes our temporary backwardness to innate inability.<sup>37</sup>

Luthuli examined his own life and his own education and those before him such as John Dube and Pixley Isaka ka Seme and reasoned:

Given an opportunity, Africans have shown a capacity to learn from the west, and have proved themselves adaptable to new conditions and able to assimilate new and foreign concepts. They have accepted new concepts in religion – Christianity – and new concepts in law. Why should it be suggested that they cannot assimilate democracy and enjoy its values?<sup>38</sup>

White rule having this made a vicious circle around us denies effectively and completely democratic rights we could use to promote our progress and development.<sup>39</sup>

Luthuli resented the bantustan concept for it obstructed white South Africa's divinely ordained responsibility to partnership with people of colour on equal terms. The vision of "separate development" infuriated him, for it did not allow one culture to absorb from another thereby enhancing both. Luthuli contended if various cultures and races truly developed according to "their own lines", then Blacks and Whites had the freedom to share, co-opt and benefit from various contributions to 'civilisation'. The bantustan concept stymied white and black South African Christians' biblical responsibility to be open, sharing and generous to one another.

In his writings, Luthuli differentiated civilised standards, ideals and values from white South Africa's inability to live up to them. Luthuli did not discount many positive aspects of western culture, though those who expounded them often failed to implement or, worse, strove to contradict them.

What a disservice to this [white South Africa] to associate it with cruelty and persecution of the non-white people, who have long shown a yearning for and an appreciation of the best western civilisation has to offer.<sup>40</sup>

In short, Luthuli chastised the messenger, but not the message. Just as within the political realm, Luthuli distinguished the Christian faith from the all too fallible human instruments that brought it to Africa. Just as Luthuli provided clear and forthright criticisms of western evangelical efforts in southern Africa but not the faith tradition they expounded, so he criticised western political leaders but not their democratic concepts and politics. In fact, Luthuli coveted them. He wrote in 1959:

White South Africa is guilty of doing a disservice to civilised standards of life by selfishly hoarding to itself its values and ideals.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "What Has Europe to Boast About?", Albert Luthuli, 29 November 1959, 6.

<sup>38</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "What Would Mr. Mac Do in Our Position?", Albert Luthuli, 21 February 1960.

<sup>39</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Our Political Weapon", Albert Luthuli, 23 August 1959.

<sup>40</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Anything to Uphold White Domination", Albert Luthuli, 06 March 1960.

For Luthuli, the evil of Apartheid lay in its failure to instil western concepts of political ideals within its own constituency. The Apartheid regime articulated theological, political and philosophical heresies to its own people thus denying human progress and western advancement to themselves as well as to Africans. In a column criticising the United Party for not being dissimilar to the National Party regime, Luthuli charged:

The white leadership in the two major political parties shirks its task of progressively educating white public opinion along democratic lines.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout Luthuli's columns to the *Post*, he revealed his absolute idealism in his optimistic appraisal of Blacks' potential to participate in creating a 'civilisation' with western culture. As mentioned earlier, Luthuli believed that African culture is capable of more than 'attaining' higher standards; African culture can contribute to those civilised standards. Many of his articles from 1959 through 1962 thoroughly condemned the bantustan system envisioned by the National Party leaders and their accomplices. Luthuli reacted viscerally to bantustans, not only because of the oppressive nature and impractical nature of the scheme, but because their existence was diametrically opposed to his concept of human history, the progress of all humans and the divinely given potential of all people.

### **'Tribalism'**

This study challenges *Nkosi* (Chief) Phathekile Holomisa's claim that in the spirit of *Nkosi* Albert Luthuli, "*Ubukhosi* [the institution of traditional leadership] is here to stay".<sup>43</sup> Luthuli was a modernist and though possessing pride in his culture believed that it ought to progress rather than remain static or regress.<sup>44</sup> Luthuli rejected the Shepstonian and Verwoerdian objective of placing Zulus in eighteenth or nineteenth century time capsules. Holomisa also indicated in his tribute to Luthuli that *ubukhosi* "is not a mere phase in the development of a people". In contrast, Luthuli's sentiments resonate with Govan Mbeki's below quoted perspective on traditional leadership.<sup>45</sup>

If the Africans have had chiefs, it was because all human societies have had them at one stage or another. But when a people have developed to a stage which discards chieftainship, when their social development contradicts the need for such an institution, then to force it on them is not liberation but enslavement.<sup>46</sup>

Luthuli, as a former chief and lay preacher, conflated anthropology and theology to discern the sociological state of affairs brought about by the bantustan framework. Luthuli, though still reverently referred to as "Chief", rejected an idolatry of the past when he railed:

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<sup>41</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Bantustan Is a Mockery", Albert Luthuli, 06 September 1959, 6.

<sup>42</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "U. P. No Better Than Nats", Albert Luthuli, 30 August 1959, 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Umrabulo: Special Edition, A Tribute to Chief Albert Luthuli*, August 2007, 27.

<sup>44</sup> *Umrabulo: Special Edition, A Tribute to Chief Albert Luthuli*, August 2007, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Of course, Mbeki and Luthuli came to the same understanding through different hermeneutical lenses.

<sup>46</sup> Govan Mbeki, *South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt*, (London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1984), 41 and 47.

This exaltation of an almost obsolete way of life, tribalism, was a studied effort by the Minister to gain acceptance by Africans of a reactionary policy of the Nationalists, a “back-to-tribalism, African” policy.<sup>47</sup>

Luthuli concluded that the Apartheid conception of what constituted indigenous tradition was a myth and thus an ideological construct with little relevancy to historic reality. Luthuli continued to explain:

It would be more correct to call it a return to a caricature of tribalism, for **fortunately** irreparable damage has been done to tribalism by our 200-years of contact with an aggressive civilisation itself subjected to the dynamic forces of a highly scientific and technological age and a dynamic revolutionary religion, Christianity. Progress is the essence of the whole creation. The Creator expects Africans, as other human groups have done, to march from tribalism to a wider association of the human race (Couper’s emphasis).<sup>48</sup>

The theological reference, particularly to Christianity, is not immaterial. Apartheid’s philosophy was actually heretical to Luthuli, for it was antithetical to God’s will. Luthuli’s objection to Apartheid was not primarily strategic or political. Rather, his objection was, at heart, deeply theological. The ultimate arbiter of Luthuli’s political strategy was his faith. Luthuli stated clearly in his autobiography, “For myself, I am in Congress precisely because I am Christian”.<sup>49</sup> For Luthuli, participation within the Apartheid system was not debatable, not even for tactical reasons. Cooperation with separate development, no matter the intended ends, was a sin. In his autobiography, Luthuli declared that the pressure for Africans to ‘develop along their own lines’ ...

...corrupts Christian standards. The effort currently being made to pour us back into the mould of nineteenth-century tribalism is detrimental to our advancement and to Christianity.<sup>50</sup>

Theology sourced Luthuli’s philosophical and political understandings. The theological, and thus eschatological, implications of not correctly defining and articulating an ideal are very different from those that potentially result from not attaining it. Theologically, an error in defining the ideal is idolatry, and thus a heresy. Theologically, an error in realising the ideal is ‘simply’ a failing (and for which ‘grace’ relieves). Provided that repentance (in Greek, ‘changing direction’) is enacted, and a striving for the ideal is genuine, then the failing is less egregious.<sup>51</sup> Luthuli interpreted Apartheid to be a heresy, and its nationalism or worship of the *volk*, idolatry. Apartheid’s sin was, for Luthuli, its worshipping of a false god. The National

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<sup>47</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “‘Back-To-Tribalism’ Is Unrealistic”, Albert Luthuli, 18 October 1959, 6.

<sup>48</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “‘Back-To-Tribalism’ Is Unrealistic”, Albert Luthuli, 18 October 1959, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 147.

<sup>50</sup> Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 5.

<sup>51</sup> In relation to South Africa, Luthuli used the term “repentance” in his 12 November 1961 column.

BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “The United Nations and Ourselves”, Albert Luthuli, 12 November 1961.

Party regime led South Africa's society in a demonic direction. Luthuli's fusion of theology and politics can be further seen in his reference to the American project.

The Founding Fathers felt themselves to be agents of a special mission, which John Adams, America's second President, described as a "grand scheme and design in Providence for the illumination and emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth" ...there is no escaping the fact that the American nation is oriented towards a noble goal, that it is bound to the grandest conception there is of human progress and freedom by reason of the heritage which it gave birth... We take hope in the fact that the Divine Ruler of our destinies has provided for this earth of ours such a nation as the American nation.<sup>52</sup>

### **International Influence**

In many of the *Post* columns, Luthuli appealed to the international community to uphold in South Africa the ideals to which it aspired. Luthuli held the United Nations, in particular its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as the quintessential articulation of humankind's moral/ethical project.

The [Universal] Declaration [of Human Rights] represents a most significant stage in progressive universal thinking on the rights of man, and a growing acceptance by world opinion of the COMMON HUMANITY of all men (Luthuli's emphasis).<sup>53</sup>

Thirteen years, to the day, before Luthuli accepted the Nobel Peace Prize, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>54</sup> For Luthuli, a core tenet of absolute idealism was found within this second of two declarations.

In the Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations set a goal for the nations of the world. The declaration is a yardstick to measure nations by. Few meet its demands. But it is true that many are making honest and credible efforts to respect it.<sup>55</sup>

The Universal Declaration is premised on the philosophy (for Luthuli, the theology) that human rights are based on the "inherent dignity of every person".<sup>56</sup> Luthuli expressed the same sentiment in a December 1960 column entitled, "Closed Eyes – and the Reality". Luthuli expounded the Congregational ethos, elaborated upon in the introduction to this study, in the following quotation.

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<sup>52</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Declaration of Independence", Albert Luthuli, 16 July 1961.

<sup>53</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Our Right to Live", Albert Luthuli, 06 December 1959, 5.

<sup>54</sup> 10 December 1948.

<sup>55</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "The United Nations and Ourselves", Albert Luthuli, 12 November 1961.

<sup>56</sup> United Nations, "Human Rights and the United Nations", 2. Found at:

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/about/history.asp>, accessed 11 August 2008.

Africans, like all other humans, are possessed of the unquenchable, unconquerable inborn spirit of freedom in MAN; a spirit that is ever seeking to reach beyond man himself to something higher and nobler. Freedom is the apex of human attainment. There should be nothing surprising or sinister when the African strives for it (Luthuli's emphasis).<sup>57</sup>

Luthuli felt that the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights articulated the pinnacle of absolute idealism that was, of course, divinely inspired. Luthuli pontificated:

We have a right to full, unfettered enjoyment of human rights and freedoms as enunciated by the United Nations Charter. Nothing less will do. As we ask this right for ourselves, so we proclaim that all others must share and enjoy these rights and freedoms. We strive not for ourselves alone but for a South Africa which, God willing, will one day take its proud place - honoured and revered - among the nations of the world.<sup>58</sup>

Many countries borrowed from the Declaration to draft their constitutions. Despite its widespread acceptance in word, the Declaration is not binding in deed. Although the international community did not, nor does it yet, successfully implement its ideals, it at least articulated them. For Luthuli, aware as a Christian within the Reformed tradition of the desire to achieve a perfect state righteousness while simultaneously recognising that humankind is inherently sinful, the articulation of what constituted an ideal civilisation was as important, if not more important, than its realisation. That is, at least one is going in the right direction, and not the wrong way as Apartheid took South Africa.

## Conclusion

The dynamic between Luthuli and his missiological mentors is not located on a one dimensional plane, whereby Luthuli assimilated bequeathed ideals, rejected others and adjusted some to fit. In matters of faith and polity, interaction occurred on two planes: one being that of the ideal (that to which is aspired and sought) and the other being what is practised (that which is implemented and realised). In matters of faith, the dialectic of consciousness between Congregationalism and Luthuli was multi-dimensional. Congregationalism exposed and educated Luthuli to its ideals, such as what the Comaroffs described as the "global democracy of material well-being and moral merit, of equality before the law and the Lord".<sup>59</sup> Luthuli in turn prophetically implemented that which Congregationalism espoused and did so arguably better than its progenitors, thus proving exceptionally well by his example that Whites had no monopoly on 'civilisation'.

The Comaroffs provided an analysis that included both agency and structure to speak about the encounter of Luthuli (agency) and Congregationalism and those mentors who practiced it (structure). This investigation proposed a dynamic concerning Luthuli and Congregationalism that still remains 'missing'. Perhaps the Comaroffs point to it when they identify a "liminal

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<sup>57</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "Closed Eyes – and the Reality", Albert Luthuli, 18 December 1960.

<sup>58</sup> BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "The Things We Strive For", Albert Luthuli, 02 July 1961.

<sup>59</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 12.

space between the hegemonic and the ideological and the conscious and the subconscious”.<sup>60</sup> It is in this space that we can locate Luthuli, the proto-South African Liberation or Black Theology theologian, representing the *Amakholwa* (Believers), who is able within this space to imagine, redefine, innovate and create.

Hegemony, more a process than a state, saturates a “condition of being” so that it lies almost unrecognised, self-evident, assumed and “ineffable”.<sup>61</sup> Ideology is lesser in degree than hegemony; it is not embodied, it is communicable, it is contestable and it is therefore more easily resisted. Luthuli as a subject of colonial and evangelical influence utilised the tools provided to him by missionaries (theology, concepts of human rights, language, education and private property) to develop a consciousness that could identify and accept the hegemony, critique its warped implementation by those who dominate and then even as an agent re-introduce it in its ‘pure’ form. A perfect example of this dialectic within Luthuli is his understanding of and acceptance of ‘civilisation’ (as a hegemonic concept) and his resistance to the pervasive and enforced racist ideology that civilisation is synonymous with ‘whiteness’. Luthuli bought, ‘lock stock and barrel’, the assumption that civilisation was beneficial, should be engendered and made available to all who chose to participate in it. Yet, in the “liminal space between conscious and subconscious”, Luthuli distinguished and situated himself between the hegemonic understanding of what constituted civilisation and the white supremacists’ ideological assumption that it was Eurocentric or western. Luthuli was thus able to refashion his consciousness as an heir to civilisation and co-participant in its perennial evolution and hence resist Apartheid. Raymond Williams insisted correctly that hegemony, though insidiously invasive, is never total.<sup>62</sup> In his autobiography, Luthuli explained:

I am angered by the Nationalist gibe nowadays that such schools as this one [Edendale], or Adams College, or St. Peter’s, Rosettenville, turned out “Black Englishmen”. It was no more necessary for pupils to become black Englishmen than it was for the teachers to become white Africans. Two cultures met, both Africans and Europeans were affected by the meeting. Both profited and both survived enriched. At Edendale, at Adams, and informally at other times, I have been taught by European mentors. I am aware of a profound gratitude for what I learned. I remain an African. I think as an African, I speak as an African, I act as an African, and as an African I worship the God whose children we all are. I do not see why it should be otherwise.<sup>63</sup>

Within a broader context, Philippe Denis insightfully affirmed Luthuli’s sentiments:

In South Africa, as in other parts of the African continent, the development of Christianity has been moulded by African initiatives. Far from being “the duped and agent-less victims of processes beyond their control”, the local people tried to

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<sup>60</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 30.

<sup>61</sup> Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 5 and 30, respectively.

<sup>62</sup> Raymond William, *Marxism and Literature*, (London: Oxford University, 1977), 109.

<sup>63</sup> Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 31.

make use of the religion brought by the missionaries to make sense of a world in rapid transformation.<sup>64</sup>

The reality that Congregationalism as a whole often failed to live up to its own ideals within the context of southern Africa evangelism does not invalidate the potent influence those ideals had on Luthuli. When it comes to accepting values, hypocrisy is not an automatic disqualifier. Luthuli was highly critical of Smuts' hypocrisy, but that did not diminish the impact Smuts' stated ideals had on Luthuli's politics. Smuts exposed his hypocrisy when he pontificated about universal values of human civilisation and then betrayed those values when reflecting upon and deciding upon the South African context. Luthuli commented in his autobiography that abroad, Smuts was seen as a world statesman of international repute while at home a relentless white supremacist.

There is a tendency nowadays to look back to the Smuts regime as a day of restraint and just government. In point of fact however, the General did not exert his undoubted influence to extend a helping hand to the masses who groaned under disabilities, and it was he who gave Hertzog the power to disenfranchise the few African votes.<sup>65</sup>

Disappointingly, the western democracies ultimately failed to see in the ANC Luthuli's embodiment of their highest aspirations and subsequently provided succour for the opposite with their continued investment in Apartheid South Africa. Luthuli was not blind to the chasm between the western world's ideals and its practice. He wrote a correspondence to *Peace News* in 1963 that excoriated western democracies that were complicit in South Africa's oppression of its black population.

To the nations and governments of the world, particularly those directly or indirectly giving aid and encouragement to this contemptible Nationalist regime, I say: Cast aside your hypocrisy and deceit. Declare yourself on the side of oppression if that is your sincere design. Do not think we will be deceived by your pious protestations as long as you are prepared to condone, assist and actively support the tyranny in our land...No expression of concern, no platitudes about injustice will content us. The test is action - against oppression.<sup>66</sup>

Like Martin Luther King, Jr. ("I Have a Dream"), Luthuli was an optimist. Luthuli believed that for Black and White, to civilise is to integrate. Luthuli conceived that all human beings, though perhaps at different stages, were naturally progressing forward, for the better, both scientifically and socially. Education, both academic and spiritual, was the key to unlocking human potential. Luthuli's optimism placed a 'brake' on any imprudent impatience for the attainment of human rights through violent means. Luthuli never wavered from his

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<sup>64</sup> Philippe Denis, "From Church History to Religious History: Strengths and Weaknesses of South African Religious Historiography", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Vol. 99, November 1997, 90. Denis cited: Elizabeth Elbourne, "Early Khoisan Uses of Mission Christianity", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 65.

<sup>65</sup> Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 98.

<sup>66</sup> Luthuli, "No Arms for South Africa: An Appeal from Albert Lutuli", *Peace News* Supplement, 24 May 1963, ii.

convictions, despite the fact that the National Party regime's intractable racism and thirst for power ultimately undermined at every stage his understanding that history was inevitably progressive. King utilised the North American colonies' Declaration of Independence and the stated ideals of the American dream to persuade others who shared those same ideals (yet failed to implement them) that equality for African-Americans must be realised. Likewise, what enabled the dynamic between Congregationalism and Luthuli to be reciprocal in nature is that he influenced the western world, Christianity and even Congregationalism in his implementation of their stated ideals. Both inspired by the ideal, Luthuli politically demonstrated Congregationalism on a practical plane and Congregationalism theologically inspired him on an ideal plane.