

LUTULI, Albert John

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One. Lutuli certainly did not get his politics from his father John Bunyan Lutuli, who went to Rhodesia to fight for the white forces against the Matabele. Lutuli was born there in 1898, and on the death of his father, he and his mother returned to the family home at Groutville in 1908. The boy trained as a teacher, and finally taught at Adams College.

Cartoon: L. as a teacher. Splendid portrait of L. as a young man in Mary Benson: Chief Albert L. of South Africa.

Two. In 1935 he accepted the chieftainship of Groutville reserve. A devout Christian, he preached often at the Groutville church. He became active in liberation politics, and in 1952 the Government decided he must choose between politics and the chieftainship. He chose politics. He made the famous statement that for thirty years of his life he had been knocking in vain, patiently, moderately and modestly, at a door that would not open. He embarked on non-violent protest, and became National President of the African National Congress.

Cartoon: Knocking at the door?

Three. Lutuli had a voice like a lion. He could growl and roar. He could coo like a dove also. His power over an audience was immense. In 1956 he was accused of treason. In 1959 he toured the country, attracting packed white audiences. He was attacked by white hooligans at a Pretoria meeting, and when order was restored, he proceeded without rancour. His moral strength was great.

Cartoon: L. attacked at table. White chairman defended.

Four. In 1959 Lutuli was banned for five years. In 1960 people protested at Sharpeville against the pass laws. The police opened fire, killing sixty-nine. Lutuli called for a day of mourning and burned his pass publicly. On 8 April the Government outlawed the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress, and declared a State of Emergency, arresting many people. The treason charge against him was dismissed, the emergency ended, and he returned to Groutville.

Cartoon: Not Sharpeville I think: perhaps Burning of the Pass.

Lutuli (cont)

Five. He returned to an isolation which he hated. The leadership of the liberation movement passed to the younger man Nelson Mandela, with Lutuli's approval. He might have ended his life in obscurity but for a great event. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1961, and the Government relaxed his banning order to allow him to go to Oslo. He made a great speech, and did not forget to thank his wife Nokukhanya for her love and support.

Cartoon: Receiving the prize, wearing the ceremonial garb of a chief.

Six. On 21 July 1967 Lutuli was walking home, and when on a narrow railway bridge with an unguarded pedestrian way, he was killed by a train. It seems certain that he did not hear the train approaching. So died a noble man who would have made a worthy Prime Minister of South Africa. He was buried at Groutville before a great throng of people.

Cartoon: The stone memorial erected five years later over his grave?