

**ZULU PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO THE BRITISH
OCCUPATION OF LAND IN NATAL COLONY AND
ZULULAND, 1850 – 1887: A RECAPITULATION BASED ON
SURVIVING ORAL AND WRITTEN SOURCES.**

BY

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SUMMARY

This thesis seeks to close some lacunae that exists in the historiography of Natal and Zululand. Whereas the activities of the colonials are well documented and widely read, the actions and responses of the Zulu people to colonial expansion in Natal and Zululand have been neglected or only given a cursory glance. The impact of colonialism that resulted in the loss of land and a livelihood among the Zulu, could only be articulated with the necessary sensitivity by the Zulu people themselves. This, therefore, is an attempt to give audience to the Zulu voice.

The study focuses on the period 1850 – 1887 which was characterized by a steady immigration, infiltration and penetration of the British into the traditional, social and political life of the Zulu people in Natal and Zululand. The elephant trails charted the way of the traders and hunters into the heart of Zululand and missionaries followed in their footsteps. The initial attempts at evangelization met with fervent resistance from the Zulu, simply because it contrasted with Zulu custom and was too alien to be readily comprehended and accepted by the Zulu, who still owed sole allegiance to their king. Nevertheless, colonial land policies and the establishment of Christian mission reserves led to the rise of an African peasantry which adapted to the white man's ways and flourished.

The colonials introduced the "Shepstone system" which crammed the Zulu into barren reserves and restricted their ownership of land in Natal Colony. This resulted in the steady decline of the peasantry as a recognizable social class. The dominant forces of capitalism and the promulgation of laws prohibiting Zulu freedom of movement eventually destroyed the African peasantry. The destruction of the homestead economy and the loss of land and cattle gave rise to a new class of poor people among the Zulu of Natal Colony. Meanwhile, in Zululand, signs of underdevelopment were already evident during the 1870's.

Federation schemes pursued by the British, with the desire to dominate the southern African region,

coupled the suspicions that King Cetshwayo was planning to attack Natal, culminated in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. Despite Cetshwayo's plea for peace, the British invaded Zululand with the sole purpose of destroying the Zulu dynasty, which they viewed as an obstacle to British overlordship. British victory in the war led to Wolseley's clumsy settlement which unleashed a terribly bloody civil war that left Zululand devastated and the Zulu dynasty permanently weakened. Then came, rather too late, the annexation of Zululand by Britain in 1887.

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My gratitude is due to my promoter, Professor J de Villiers, who helped to panel-beat the topic of the thesis into shape, and then allowed me to take the challenge of researching and writing it. For the completion of the work, I am indebted to the historians of the history of Natal and Zululand whose work helped to chart the way of my research.

Thanks also to the custodians of the Zulu heritage at Killie Campbell Africana Library, the Achives in Pietermaritzburg and the Uzulu Collection at the University. Their co-operation and assistance helped greatly. I wish to add the staff of the local libraries at Bethal, Ermelo, Secunda and Leandra who played their part.

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INTRODUCTION

When writing the history of the region between the Phongola and Mzimkhulu rivers before the arrival of the whites in South Africa, historians have depended on archaeological findings and recorded African oral tradition. The most important collections of oral tradition, still widely and reliably used today, are those of Alfred Bryant and James Stuart. Even though recent scholars have discovered numerous flaws in Bryant's Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, which first appeared in 1929, it continues to be a flag-bearer in charting the way to a better understanding of life in south east Africa from about 1500 AD.¹ Stuarts' records have recently been put together by Webb and Wright as the James Stuart Archive, and were published in five volumes. Scholars of the history of Natal and Zululand, who have discovered the value of oral tradition, use Webb and Wright's research publications very extensively. Historians have, however, also warned that even these should be used with caution. Historiographically, therefore, this part remains a rather shadowy landscape in need of firmer grounding.

Again, many would argue against conclusions that were drawn on the basis of oral traditions collected in the early twentieth century which had already been influenced by the advanced literature of the British. In that case, one would admit that the resultant inconsistencies and glaring contradictions in oral evidence, do reflect the influences of traditional Zulu upbringing, mission education, and settler neighbourliness as well as a mixture of these. The inconsistencies and contradictions can better be rectified with wider consultation and verification. Although, the story-teller's narrative may not necessarily be hundred percent factually accurate, it nevertheless makes up a "historical record replete

¹ J Wright & C Hamilton, "Traditions and transformations: the Phongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." in A Duminy & B Guest (eds) Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910; a new history (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter, 1989), pp 49-50.

with symbolic truths".² The information that is contained in the narrative is simply too valuable to be rejected. On these grounds, this writer, has drawn heavily on Webb and Wright's rewriting of the Stuart collection from the Killie Campbell Africana Library manuscript series, essentially in order to present the Zulu side of the story.

The story is told that the Nguni groups that peopled the region were made up of clans. From archaeological evidence and European mariners' records it is possible to discern that by the seventeenth-century, a patchwork of hundreds of clans were living under chiefs in the land that was to be known as Zululand.³ All these people spoke variations of the same language and observed the same customs and common traditions. Each of them "descended from a progenitor and all together from a single more ancient ancestor".⁴ These Isi-Zulu-speaking "Nguni" people were herders and cultivators as well as hunters. Shula Marks has warned that the otherwise widespread use of the term "Nguni" by historians trying to avoid the anachronistic term "Zulu" for the people who lived in the region before the Mfecane may itself do much to distort their history.⁵ But that they lived as clans in little chiefdoms and that they had a common history, is undeniable. Also, that they had migrated from the north is every historian's contention. The migration may have taken many forms and different directions but the "Nguni" came to settle in this region and laid the foundation from which the story of the Zulu began.

² I Hofmeyr, We spend our years as a tale that is told: oral historical narrative in a South African chiefdom (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1993), p 133.

³ Stephen Taylor, Shaka's children: a history of the Zulu people (London, Harper-Collins, 1994), p 274.

⁴ E A Ritter, Shaka Zulu: the rise of the Zulu empire (London, Longman Green, 1995), p 3.

⁵ Shula Marks, "The traditions of the Natal "Nguni": a second look at the work of AT Bryant" in Leonard Thompson (ed) African societies in southern Africa (London, Heineman, 1969), p 126.

These people kept mainly cattle and goats and by the early nineteenth-century, the number of their cattle is estimated to have exceeded the human population by far. Their livelihood was basically dependent on the land on which they lived and fortunately for them, their physical environment was splendidly well-suited to their basic needs as keepers of herds and tillers of the soil.⁶ Clan life among these people was, according to Taylor, “a pure and untroubled Elysium ... in a land blessed with resources and with few external stresses”.⁷ This idyllic situation lasted till the late 1700’s when homesteads in the lower and middle Thukela suffered the dislocating effects of rivalries among the chiefs who sought to extend their rule by subjugating and controlling their weaker neighbours. Powerful chiefs began to centralise power by encouraging homestead heads (abanumzane) to enlist their sons to common labour and fighting gangs to serve the needs of all the homesteads in a single chiefdom. These are the youths who were later turned into armed regiments (amabutho) to be used to overcome rivals and seize their cattle and pastures.⁸ Cattle became the most valuable trading and exchange commodity while the land was an invaluable natural resource which was plentifully watered.

Minor clashes between clans occurred from time to time but these were insignificant and brought no changes. A politically volatile situation ensued as settlements expanded and the authority of some chiefs grew. Fittingly, varied and imaginative stories of war and peace, triumph and tragedy, hunger and plenty, suffering and survival, abound. In those early days, according to Ngidi, better known as Magambukazi ka Mtshumayeli, fighting

⁶ John Laband, Rope of sand: the rise and fall of the Zulu kingdom in the nineteenth century (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1995), p 3.

⁷ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 34.

⁸ Benedict Carton, Blood from your children (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 2000), p 19.

between groups did not resemble what took place in Shaka's time. A quarrel might arise over the ownership of some unused piece of fertile agricultural land (ifusi), as was common. One side would mobilise its party and the other would do the same. Next thing, they would face each other in the open and throw spears at one another from a distance. Should an assegai strike the shield of one of the fighters, the fighting would be declared over. And, if any one was seriously injured or died, the opposite side would form a procession (udwendwe) to go and mourn the loss.⁹

The chiefdoms then were small. Each of them considered various tracts of land as their own for grazing and cultivation purposes. Conflict between them was frequent but less severe and therefore not responsible for their constant migration southwards. Times of drought and other adverse natural conditions continually drove them further and further afield, so they could graze their herds. The Madlathule famine, for instance, affected the entire northern Nguni country between 1801-1802.¹⁰ It assisted in dispersing the people over a wide area.

The close of the eighteenth-century saw the rise of Zwile of the Ndwandwe, Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa and Phakathwayo of the Qwabe and to a lesser extent, Senzangakhona of the Zulu, each of them extending their own control over a large number of clans under them.¹¹ Shaka, son of Senzangakhona, took over from his father as chief of the Zulu. After the death of Dingiswayo, he united the

⁹ C de B Webb and J B Wright (eds), James Stuart Archive (J S A), vol 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 43.

¹⁰ Trehwella Cameron (ed), An illustrated history of South Africa (Johannesburg), Jonathan Ball, 1986), p117.

¹¹ See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshayankomo; JSA, vol. 4 evidence of Ndukwana, p 277-278. Also Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870 (Cape Town, David Philip, 1986), pp 236-238.

Mthethwa and the Zulu groups. He then appointed Ngomane ka Mqomboli of the Caya or Mdletsheni people as his Prime Minister (u Ndunankulu) before embarking on a programme of rapid expansion, creating the Zulu State. The Zulu chiefdom's "magnetic power increased and, by peaceful means, drew within its orbit the small states of Sikakane, Mpungose and Ndlovu".¹² The Langeni, Qwabe, Zulu and Nyuswa chiefdoms had been on good terms, that is why large numbers of these joined Shaka almost immediately after he had assumed power. The first groups to be attacked were the Mpanza, Mbatha, Buthelezi and Mthimkhulu who were spread out between the White and Black Mfolozi in the neighbourhood of Ntabankulu.¹³

After overcoming the Buthelezi in battle, Shaka conceived the then novel idea of utterly demolishing his enemies as separate entities. He incorporated the young into the Zulu armies, making them one with the Zulu; a kind of roping them together as one would a bundle of wood (inkatha). With this brilliant move, he immediately reduced the number of his possible enemies while at the same time increasing the number of his own warriors. Chiefdoms were absorbed as vassals and military quarters were built to govern the new territorial acquisition.

The bigger and stronger chiefdoms, that is, the Khumalo, Ngwane, Cunu and Ndwandwe were not at first disturbed. But then, the Ndwandwe, under Zwide, were the first to make their move. To their surprise they were defeated by Shaka who, without doubt, showed that he was "the cock destined to rule the roost".¹⁴ It was clear from the start that he would have no competition.

¹² Ritter, Shaka Zulu, p 150.

¹³ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 54.

¹⁴ AT Bryant, History of the Zulu and neighbouring tribes (Cape Town, C Struik, 1964), p 34

The neighbouring Thembu (eba Thenjini) and Cunu chose to flee the area rather than stand to face Shaka's seemingly invincible forces. According to Mqaikana ka Yenge, the Cunu chief, Macingwane, used to fight with Senzangakhona and his people, though the fighting never went further than burning one another's kraals. But when Shaka took over, Macingwane, realising he was no match, opted to flee Zululand and settle in the area of Natal.¹⁵ Chief Ngoza of eba Thenjini followed and on his way ousted the ema Khuzeni from their holdings.

The Ndwandwe, though repulsed for the moment, still posed the greatest threat. Shaka's northward thrust was therefore blocked for a while and this opened the way for a south-bound attack. This meant a clash with the Cube (Shezi) under Zokufa who had joined up with Zihlandlo's eMbo clans. "Without raising a shield in defence, they meekly submitted and were left in peace."¹⁶ It must be noted that Shaka was personally commanding his forces at the time and, decided to move on down the Thukela valley. He met with the emaKhabeni who immediately vanished from sight. Shaka then left it to Zihlandlo ka Gcwaba whom he had enlisted as his lieutenant, to subjugate the emaKhabeni. Zihlandlo carried Shaka's instructions with delight and won himself a position as regional governor in Shaka's administration of that ever-expanding kingdom. Mbokodo ka Silulekile said Shaka took a fancy to Zihlandlo, referring to him as his brother "mnawe wami" and taking him along on his military expeditions against Sikunyane and against the Pondo to the south.¹⁷ Zihlandlo continued to organise some minor campaigns in a bid to consolidate his position as a strong satellite.

¹⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mqaikana, p 23.

¹⁶ Bryant, History of the Zulu, p 50.

¹⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mbokodo, p 6.

Among those he incorporated were the Dunge under Chief Boyiya and the Njilo of Chief Noqomfela. According to Ndabazwe ka Mfuleni, his clan of the Dhladhla, an offshoot of the ama Mbatha, went willingly to live under Zihlandlo.¹⁸ It is important to note that the Lala and eMbo people under Zihlandlo were regarded as different from the Nguni. Mbokodo ka Silulekile agrees that they originated from Swaziland, having left that country on account of fighting and quarrelling.¹⁹ This evidence gives credence to John Lambert's speculation that the Mfecane might have started in Delagoa Bay (Maputo) as a consequence of slave raids unleashing havoc in the whole region.²⁰ The series of devastating conflicts has often been attributed to Shaka's raids.

In 1818 Shaka faced the powerful Phakathwayo ka Khondlo's Qwabe people and defeated them at the Hloko-hloko Ridge near Eshowe. This is confirmed by Mmeni ka Nguluzane who tells about the origin of the quarrel between Shaka and Phakathwayo.²¹ Having incorporated the Qwabe into the growing Zulu chiefdom, Shaka crossed the Hloko-hloko Ridge and embarked on his second Natal campaign, that saw the Zulu march down to the Mzimkhulu River to the south. He first had to deal with Sirayo ka Mapholoba of the Nyuswa among the Ngcobo. Nathaniel Isaacs was correct to say that "Chaka was the bold and daring monarch of the Zoolas, whose name struck a panic among the neighbouring tribes".²² This statement was confirmed when Chief

¹⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 4, evidence of Ndabazwe, p 183.

¹⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 3, evidence of Mbokodo, p 6.

²⁰ John Lambert, Betrayed Trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995), p 7.

²¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 3, evidence of Mmeni, p 240, also see Bryant, History of the Zulu, p 61.

²² Nathaniel Isaacs "Travels and adventures in Eastern Africa", quoted in Ruth E Gordon and Clive J Talbot (eds) From Diaz to Vorster: source material on South African history 1488-1975 (Goodwood, Nasou Ltd, 1977), p 170.

Mahwale's Ngongoma people sacrificed their cattle and imizi and fled into the forests further to the south.²³ Many of them ended up living like wild animals, surviving on whatever the veld or forest could yield.

Shaka's southerly conquest also forced the Somini people of Chief Moyeni ka Nomadayi along with their neighbours the Ngcolosi of Chief Mepo, who were living along the Mandlalati stream, to succumb. And, like sheep before a pack of wild dogs, the hapless Dunge – the Mkateni and Chiliza – were scattered. Fragments of ejected clans, and small remnants of families, “in mortal fear of each other roamed the veld and hills, and caves in search of some edible substance for survival.”²⁴ Shaka, for his part, brought home incredible victories; bloody and bloodless victories, each of them carrying an increment of territory and power, so that by 1819, all notable rivals had been eliminated and Shaka controlled an enormous territory. He then set about creating a single Zulu nation, with all the trappings of nationhood, out of the many hitherto autonomous chiefdoms. He deviated from Dingiswayo's idea of a loose confederation of semi-autonomous chiefdoms.²⁵

From then onwards, the “traditions of the Zulu royal lineage became the traditions of the nation; the Zulu dialect became the language of the nation; and every inhabitant, whatever his origins, became a Zulu, owing allegiance to Shaka”.²⁶ White people gave numerous accounts of Shaka as a warrior king and an empire-builder or black Napoleon. All kinds of legends, fables and place-names came into being because of what Shaka said or did. These have been left behind for posterity to ponder.

²³ Bryant, History of the Zulu, p 69.

²⁴ Ibid, p 75.

²⁵ Ritter, Shaka Zulu, p 150.

²⁶ Wilson and Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870, p 345.

Shaka could mobilize some 20 000 battle-hardened men at any one time. Graham Mackeurtan, however, says Nathaniel Isaacs saw about 30 000 of his warriors on parade when he paid the king a courtesy visit in 1826. Mackeurtan, one of the writers with a gift for exaggerating the perceived negative qualities of Shaka, in describing the king, said that as a result of his military genius and lust for power, Shaka “turned over twenty-thousand square miles of fertile coast and rolling uplands, in a few years, from a populous pleasant land into a shambles, covered with bloody corpses and smoking ruins”.²⁷ The truth in this statement is that indeed Shaka had devastated much of the area in Natal and all the conquered peoples became part of the Zulu kingdom and the Zulu nation, except for those like the amaMfengu, abaThembu and amaHlubi who hurriedly removed themselves from Shaka’s proximity.²⁸ Outside the kingdom’s administration and control were also those living in the hills, caves and forests of southern Natal and the eastern Cape. Mbovuka Mtshumayeli mentions the ama Cele, ama Tuli, ama Mbili, ama Komo and ama Kwela who lived on the Bluff and were the first to encounter the British hunter-traders in 1824, when they landed at the Bluff.²⁹

The story of King Shaka and the Zulu people has been the subject of many a narrative fiction as well as history. Most of the initial writing flowed from the pen of the young Jewish boy, Nathaniel Isaacs who, like the other pioneer settlers, had dealings with the Zulu King. Generally historians agree that the Zulu were a “powerful and widely feared

²⁷ Graham Mackeurtan, The cradle days of Natal (London, Longman Green, 1930), pp 118-119.

²⁸ Bryant, History of the Zulu, p 48.

²⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mbovu, p 33.

nation that conquered and spread devastation throughout the present Natal and Zululand".³⁰ Indeed, the making of the Zulu kingdom was a spectacular epoch in the history of South Africa.

At present when the cinema, television, literature, newspapers and magazines want to create and resurrect heroes, idols, icons, saints and stars, the story of Shaka comes up almost all the time. In this regard Carolyn Hamilton reminds scholars of their responsibility to uproot the fiction that pass as history in today's South Africa where the population is experiencing a massive social transformation, yet again. Hamilton debunks the legend of a despotic and inhuman Shaka who was, she believes, demonised by the British traders after his assassination in 1828 mainly to boost their own prestige.³¹

Be that as it may, Shaka had, as Bismarck and Cavour did in Germany and Italy respectively, brought about the unification of the IsiZulu-speaking chiefdoms into a single, wealthy and self-reliant state. Almost unexpectedly, in 1824, in a world dominated by the Zulu kingdom and its king, a white settlement was started at Port Natal (today Durban/ eThekweni). This establishment was destined to entangle the Zulu kingdom irrevocably in the tolls of the political economy of Imperial Britain. Raw materials from pre-industrial Zululand would feed the industries in Great Britain and in turn traditional Zululand would provide a market for British manufactured goods. In that way Shaka's country would become a cog in the British economic machine. The homestead economy would soon give way to the more advanced and bigger capitalist economy of the west. Young men leaving for the mines and towns added to the destruction of the homestead economy.

³⁰ Leo Marquard, The story of South Africa (London, Faber & Faber, 1955), p 120.

³¹ Carolyn Hamilton, Terrific majesty: the powers of Shaka Zulu and the limits of historical invention (Cape Town, David Philip, 1998). P 112.

The transition would be effected as hunter-traders, missionaries of the Christian religion, government officials and ordinary British settlers made progressive contact with the Zulu, sometimes through peaceful interchange, but more often “through war, dispossession and subjugation”.³²

The basic starting point of this work is to ask the question: How did the British occupation of land in Natal and Zululand affect the lives of the Zulu people and with what political and economic consequences? The question begs answers principally from the Zulu themselves. Attention is thus devoted to identifying particular forms of colonial penetration that had a significant impact on the traditional social, economic and political life of the Zulu and the reaction of the Zulu to these.

Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson have divided the period of transformation of the Phongola-Mzimkhulu region into three phases: The first phase comprises the African traditional system that had existed for centuries, which was, from the late 1700’s, being revolutionized from within. The second, they contend, began with the arrival of the Afrikaner Voortrekkers who defeated the Zulu and carved out a settlement for themselves in the Natal region. The inauguration of the third phase involves the British intervention and annexation of the territory, bringing with them the cultural, religious, economic and political changes that had far-reaching consequences for the Zulu.³³ From the burnt-out ashes of battle against the Voortrekkers and the British the Zulu emerged as brave warriors who fought in defence of their domains. To expect the Zulu to have given up their land and life without a fight was like asking Victorian Britons to turn England into a nudist colony.

³² Laband, Rope of sand, p 29.

³³ Wilson and Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870, p 334.

The British settlers who came to Port Natal in 1824 were only small community. Their main interest was to trade in ivory and hides. Perhaps because of their number, they adapted easily to the Zulu way of life and were never a threat to the Zulu Kingdom. But as soon as the Voortrekkers arrived, the scenario changed altogether. The Voortrekker vanguard crossing the Drakensberg constituted a much more serious threat to continued Zulu hegemony in Natal and Zululand.³⁴ Misunderstandings, suspicions, accusations, counter-accusations and intrigues led to war between the Trekkers and the Zulu. Having subdued the Zulu in the battle of Blood River (Ncome) the Trekkers soon settled south of the Thukela and acknowledge King Mpande's rule to the north in Zululand. Warhurst insists, they helped create "a landless class" which was the source of many of South Africa's economic problems in subsequent years.³⁵

Wilson and Thompson maintain that the Trekkers, just like their forefathers, established claims to farms wherever there were good grazing grounds and perennial water.³⁶ However oral testimony collected by Gustav S Preller in his research publication, Voortrekkermense, sheds some more light on the activities of the Trekkers which require a re-assessment especially in view of their relations with Blacks. The story of the Trekkers is kindly, systematically and sympathetically sketched out in CFJ Muller's 500 years book. He has also written numerous articles on the subject. Oliver Ransford's Great Trek gives a complete picture while almost all general histories of South Africa contain this important episode with a variety of interpretations. There is no doubt, however, that the advent of the Voortrekkers in their Republic of Natalia greatly influenced the course of events and the lives of the Zulu people. The followers of the slain King Dingane became fugitives in their homeland, whilst King Mpande and his subjects retained friendly relations with the Voortrekker Volkraad.

³⁴ C C Ballard, "The transfrontiersman: the career of John Dunn in Natal and Zululand, 1834-1895" (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Natal, 1980), p 45.

³⁵ PR Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1982), pp 104-105.

³⁶ Wilson and Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870, p 364.

The story of the Trekkers in Natal ends abruptly with the British relief of Congella in 1842. Following their occupation of Port Natal, the British annexed the Voortrekker Republic of Natalia in 1843. In 1845 when the British Government officially took over the administration of Natal Colony, two crucial problems faced Lt. Governor Martin West and his government, namely, the chaos resulting from Voortrekker land policies and the resettlement of the large number of Zulu fugitives returning to their homes on Natal soil. In resolving these matters the British, influenced greatly by Theophilus Shepstone, decided to allow white settlers to buy and sell the available arable land, but the Zulu were to live in nine communal holdings called "locations" or "reserves", most of which were in outlying areas of the country.

A study of the findings of the 1846 Land Commission gives us an inroad into how Shepstone and his colleagues sought to keep the distance between the whites and the "others" in what increasingly became known as the "Shepstone system". Britain's inability to fund the Colony led to Shepstone taking total control of the affairs in Natal. Lacking money and manpower, Shepstone was compelled to depend on traditional Zulu social structures for government in the locations. Hereditary chiefs were recognised and given minimal traditional powers to resolve civil disputes and greater judicial powers were given to white resident magistrates. Norman Etherington has done a splendid study of that experiment in social engineering which essentially meant the shovelling of people around like sand, ultimately leaving them without land and a livelihood. John Lambert and Benedict Carton have added their research findings to this very important subject. According to Carton in the whole of Natal "clusters of British immigrants had carved out vast holdings, and government magistrates exerted tighter jurisdiction over African affairs"³⁷ The segregationist system introduced by Shepstone was to ensure White economic prosperity at the expense of the landless black population.

³⁷ Carton, Blood from your children p 1.

The returning Zulu chiefs, finding no land for their people, confronted the magistrates and claimed the land they had once occupied before the wars of Shaka and Dingane.³⁸

But there was no land available that the magistrates could offer the chiefs.

The land policies of neither the Trekkers nor the British accommodated the Zulu. Finding the locations congested and agriculturally unproductive, the Zulu chose to settle on land to which they had no legal claim, that is, privately-owned land and Crown land. Here they continued to cultivate crops and feed their families. The authority of the chiefs meanwhile continued to be weakened by the fragmented nature of their chiefdoms.³⁹ Their adherents began to engage in criminal activities. Cattle-stealing was the order of the day. Magistrates in Richmond, Klip River, Upper Mfolozi and elsewhere reported handling such cases almost continuously.⁴⁰ The stealing was a clear manifestation of the lack of authoritative control that was increasingly affecting the people.

However, the most crippling effects of the colonial advance on the social, economic and political life of the Zulu people expressed themselves most directly in the loss of land. Colin Bundy, in his Rise and fall of the South African peasantry, traces the emergence of an agricultural peasantry among the Zulu in Natal Colony, contending that “the emergence and the decline of African peasants was a crucial element in the transition of farmer-pastoralists into a reservoir of cheap, rightless and largely migrant labourers”.⁴¹

³⁸ See SNA, File 1/7/1, Native complaints and statements, September 1850 – February 1852.

³⁹ J. Lambert, “From independence to rebellion: Africa society in crisis 1880-1910 – in A Duminy and B Guest, Natal and Zululand from earliest times, p 374.

⁴⁰ See SNA, File 1/7/2, Shepstone’s reports, 35-61, 1852-1854.

⁴¹ Colin Bundy, The rise and fall of the South Africa peasantry (Cape Town, David Philip, 1988), p3.

Dingane had tried outright military resistance against the Voortrekker settlers, but the Zulu were not sufficiently united, nor were they well-enough armed to resist such a formidable and daring adversary effectively.⁴² The Zulu people then realised the fruitlessness and the suicidal nature of armed resistance and decided to play along with “Somtseu”, as they called Shepstone. For as long as they had gardens to plough and feed their families and sometimes received a share of the booty from punitive expeditions organised by him, they remained silent.

Paradoxically, the failure of the location system to totally segregate the Zulu people from the white community, resulted in huge economic advantages for the fledging economy of the Colony. As the agricultural and industrial resources of the Colony had not developed, the government used African revenue to bolster its finances by means of the hut tax and the customs duties charged on items which were mainly used by Africans.⁴³ John Laband has investigated the Shepstone system from the point of view of the Zulu. As a result, his work Rope of Sand had to be consulted extensively for this thesis, which takes a similar stand regarding the position of the Zulu in the complex puzzle called the “Shepstone System”.

In the quiet that characterised Mpande’s regime, missionary work also flourished. The initial hiccups were overcome when necessity dictated new and viable moves.

There is consensus among historians that mission work “prospered throughout South Africa due to a steady diminution of African political and economic independence and to the gradual erosion of cultural and religious observances in black societies under the impact of forces released by expanding white political and

⁴² Leonard Thompson, A history of South Africa (Sandton, Radix, 1990), p 78.

⁴³ Lambert, “From independence to rebellion”, pp 374 – 375.

commercial interests".⁴⁴ Natal, where nine different missionary societies operated, became one of the most evangelised territories in the world. Because some of the missionaries had easy access to influential government officials in the early years of the Colony, their missions benefited greatly from the land allocation made by the Locations Commission in 1846. Encouraged by these missionaries, Christian Africans in turn, made rapid economic transformation and progress, to the amazement of many European observers.⁴⁵

Historians have generally stressed the destructive impact that colonial rule had upon traditional African agriculture. But Colin Bundy, leading the "revisionist" or "radical" historians, has argued that they obviously overlooked the initial period of prosperity in areas of peasant production in the whole of South Africa. He has also demonstrated, as fully as possible, that there was a positive response by many Africans to market opportunities. Instead of entering wage labour on terms dictated by white colonists, Africans adapted their farming methods and thereby satisfied the new demands of the state and of the landlords. This line of argument has been debated at great length by Delius, Beinart, Keegan and Bundy through their studies of the various African chiefdoms in South Africa. With regard to Natal, specifically Etherington, Bundy, Lambert, Laband and Colenbrander have written substantially about the agrarian transformation that took place particularly on the mission stations that were spread throughout the Colony. All of them throw increasing light on the transformation of rural society in the region, following the advent of industrial capital. They point out that industrialization accompanied by urbanization resulted in the proletarianisation of vast numbers of Zulu.

⁴⁴ James Kiernan, "African and Christian: from opposition to mutual accommodation" in Martin Prozesky (ed) *Christianity in South Africa* (London, Southern Publishers, 1990), p 19.

⁴⁵ Norman Etherington, "African economic experiments in colonial Natal 1845-1880", in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds) *Enterprise and exploitation in a Victorian colony: aspects of the social and economic history of colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1987), p 266.

The process of “growth and decay” in peasant agricultural communities is fully explained by Bundy and the others. Basing their research on the theory of underdevelopment, their findings reveal that decay set in by the turn of the century, as those who favoured the development of a black peasantry, mainly merchants and missionaries, lost ground to those who sought to undermine peasant production and peasant independence.⁴⁶ At the zenith of peasant prosperity Whites were generally reluctant to admit that they were so “degenerate” as to rely on “kaffir farmers”. This factor provided much of the impetus behind the drive to suppress peasant farming. This is the conclusion reached by Keegan in his study of the Highveld, and Stan Trapido in his study of the Transvaal.

In their search for an effective strategy to break the traditional homestead economy, the British authorities compelled the Zulu “to give up more land, labour and taxes. Slipping further into poverty, the great majority of ordinary subsistence producers, “amaBhinca”, strained to uphold homestead practices like polygamy ... Even the rare commercially successful farmers of the small African Christian community “amakholwa”, saw their progress shelved”.⁴⁷ Scholars have emphasized the rigid control of Zulu wives and youth in pre-colonial society as a vital factor in traditional homestead production and reproduction. John Lambert in Betrayed Trust, examines the colonial incursions that sought to undermine the homestead economy, and the authority of the chiefs and homestead heads (abanumzane) in the late nineteenth century. The homestead economy, which underpinned Zulu society, leads to an understanding of that society, a factor that was recognised and supported by Shepstone in his endeavour to control the Zulu politically and economically.

⁴⁶ Tim Keegan, Rural transformation in industrializing South Africa: the southern highveld to 1914 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981), p 199.

⁴⁷ Carton, Blood from your children, pp 1-2.

Benedict Carton in Blood from your children seeks to understand the dynamics of family life that the government aimed at re-aligning in the direction of wage labour, in an attempt to undermine the homestead economy.

The homestead remained the primary unit of the social and economic life of the Zulu people. Children were born and bred in it, adults returned to it when they got married or were demobilised. Inhabitants of a homestead owned the cattle and produced crops for home consumption and for the nation. For as long as the traditional homestead was left intact, there was no hope for the white farmers to gain any black labourers. Lack of agricultural land and imposed taxation were used “to squeeze” the Zulu out of the homestead into wage labour. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson together with Jeff Guy, John Laband and Colin Bundy have all made their contributions in this discourse.

While these internal developments were taking place in Natal, Shepstone had his eyes fixed on the Thukela River, a territory he thought would alleviate the heavy congestion in the locations he had created in Natal. The wrangles between two of Mpande’s sons, Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi, were seen as a golden opportunity by Shepstone and his officials to make inroads into Zululand affairs. R L Cope discusses in detail the relationship between the Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours, Natal and the Transvaal. In particular he explains why the cordial relations between independent Zululand and colonial Natal, after almost forty years, deteriorated so rapidly and ended with the British invasion of Zululand and the destruction of the Zulu kingdom.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ RL Cope, “The Zulu Kingdom and its white neighbours, 1824-1879”, centenary lectures to Friends of the University of the Witwatersrand, February, 1979.

The intrigues orchestrated by Natal Colonial officials in fuelling the ultimate conflict at Ndongakusuka, are well documented by Jeff Guy.⁴⁹ In his little book, S J Maphalala puts the blame for the Battle of Ndongakusuka squarely on the white settlers,⁵⁰ while a number of Stuart's informants still remembered the conflict. Some of them were actually participants. After the massacre at Ndongakusuka an important political problem emerged when a younger brother of Mbuyazi, named Mkhungo, was discovered to have escaped to Natal. The colonial authorities were happy to give him refuge for they realised that his stay in Natal could give them leverage in the affairs of Zululand. Mpande also wanted to use him and his Natal patrons to make Cetshwayo uneasy, in his quest for the kingship. For as long as Mkhungo remained in Natal, Cetshwayo could not be sure of becoming king. Another complicating factor presented itself when the Boers began encroaching into Zulu territory from the Utrecht district. They had captured Mthonga, another of Mpande's sons, and handed him over to Cetshwayo with the hope of getting a grant of land.

The period after 1861 thus became dominated by territorial disputes between the Transvaal Boers and the Zulu monarchy. While the Boers insisted that Cetshwayo had ceded land to them, Cetshwayo vehemently denied having made such cession of land. Though the Battle of Ndongakusuka invested Cetshwayo with the recognition as future king, it did not give him power over his father, Mpande, who was still the ruling king. The right to allocate land was his prerogative. The Boers strove to exploit the rift between Cetshwayo and King Mpande who favoured Mbuyazi and Mthonga as his successors rather than Cetshwayo.

⁴⁹ Jeff Guy, "The role of colonial officials in the destruction of the Zulu kingdom", in A Duminy and C Ballard (eds) The Zulu war: new perspectives (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1981), pp 148 – 168.

⁵⁰ S J Maphalala, The participation of white settlers in the Battle of Ndongakusuka, 1856, and its consequences up to 1861 (Kwa-Dlangezwa, a publication of the University of Zululand, 1985), p 1–29.

Despite the flimsiness of their claim, the Trekboer tradition “om selfstandig te boer” persisted stubbornly, with the sons of every Boer expecting to have farms of their own. This resulted in constant pressure on the frontier.⁵¹ The reliance of the Zulu on the Natal government’s support in connection, first, with the Cetshwayo-Mbuyazi succession dispute and, second, with the territorial wrangle with the Boers, led the Zulu to “ a very submissive posture towards Natal,” with Mpande declaring that he was faithful to the British government and that he belonged to it.⁵² This led to Shepstone taking advantage to preside over the coronation of Cetshwayo in September 1873, after the death of King Mpande.

The Boers, in 1861 started spreading rumours that the British were preparing to invade Zululand. In March of 1861 they held a meeting with Cetshwayo in which they recognised him as the rightful heir to the Zulu throne. Within a few months, the British who felt left out, also gave him full recognition. It has been firmly established that the Boers aimed at persuading Cetshwayo to recognise their land claims. Shepstone and his officials also had their own designs on the western border-land of the kingdom. Laband, Guy and Van Zyl⁵³ are authoritative on many aspects relating to the minimization of Zulu territory towards the end of the nineteenth century.

In the Natal colony, the Whites, numbering some 18 000 souls, owned most of the land, controlled the Legislative and the Executive arms of government and were the only employers of labour. Their endeavours and schemes fused with the hopes and disappointments, experiences and adventures of the earlier settlers. The sum total of these, created the fundamental character and spirit of those foundation years in Natal and

⁵¹ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours”, p 4.

⁵² Ibid, p 5.

⁵³ M C van Zyl, Die uitbreiding van die Britse gesag oor die Natalse noordgrensgebied 1879-1897 (Archives Year Book, 1966).

Zululand The 6 000 or so Indians, lately arrived, were beginning to exploit opportunities which, though limited, were greater than those that had been available to them in their over-populated and poor country of India. Whites and Indians were interlocked in the master-servant relationship. The Zulu, on the other hand, still had partial autonomy in the locations; others were occasional wage labourers and “all were experiencing the effects of white power and influence, which limited the authority of chiefs, imposed taxes, created new material needs, eroded traditional values, and insinuated new ones”.⁵⁴

Towards the end of Mpande’s reign the Boers encroached a great deal, both to the east and the north. They built homesteads and settled on the Zulu side of Utrecht, in the Luneburg district, where the Zulu normally gathered wood. The Boers were constantly reminded that they were on Zulu soil, but they kept moving in, claiming that Cetshwayo had ceded the land to them. As they moved in, they treated the Zulu who were living along the border with severe harshness.⁵⁵ The British in Natal, on the other hand, relentlessly demanded to be supplied with cheap African labour. An experimental “Isibalo” or forced labour system was instituted in which the chiefs were expected to send a certain number of their men to work for the government in the construction of public roads.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the British settlers’ demands for labour could not be satisfied as long as there were Zulu men “able-bodied and sitting idle” in Zululand. The opening of the diamond mines added to the shortage of available labourers. Young Zulu men chose to go to the mines to seek employment mainly because guns were available for sale out there.

⁵⁴ Wilson and Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870, p 390.

⁵⁵ Thomas B Jenkinson, Amazulu. The Zulus: their past history, manners, customs and language (London, WH Allen, 1882), p 142.

⁵⁶ Vide Carolyn Hamilton’s Terrific majesty for Shepstone’s attempts to legitimise colonialism. The central argument here being that the Zulu traditionally supplied their chiefs with labour and therefore could do the same with the British authorities.

From the middle of the 1870's a number of officials in Britain started to support the view, put forward by Natal officials like Shepstone, that war with the Zulu kingdom was necessary to pave the way for the expansion of British influence into the interior of southern Africa. The idea was given a boost when Lord Carnarvon's federation scheme was launched in 1874 and a further impetus added with the arrival at the Cape of Good Hope of a new High Commissioner in the person of Sir Bartle Frere in 1877. After the annexation of Transvaal, Frere was convinced that the subjugation of the Zulu kingdom was a political priority.⁵⁷ The eventual invasion of Zululand in 1879, became the most written about aspect of Zulu history. To the present day, there seems to be no end to the production line of books on all aspects of the Anglo-Zulu War. Books on the subject, both scholarly and popular, written by historians and journalists, adorn library shelves and bookshop stalls as a clear indication of the popularity of the episode which paved the way to the destruction of the Zulu kingdom.

On the occasion of the Centenary Lectures (1979) organised by the Friends of the University of the Witwatersrand, Jeff Guy and Richard Cope shared their knowledge of the war. Cope discussed the Zulu kingdom's relations with its neighbours, the Transvaal and Natal, while Guy delved into the war's aftermath. Other works on the subject include Cope's Ploughshares of war, an in-depth study of the origins of the conflict. Magema Fuze wrote from the oral evidence of Zulu around him. He also wrote from personal experience as a convert at Ekukhanyeni with Bishop Colenso. Jeff Guy looks at the Destruction of the Zulu kingdom as a result of the civil war that followed the Anglo-Zulu war. His study of the life and times of John William Colenso in the book The Heretic is a very valuable source on the Zulu Kingdom, Cetshwayo and problems facing the nation.

⁵⁷ C W de Kiewiet, The imperial factor in South Africa (London, Frank Cass, 1965), vide chapter 10, pp 210 – 231.

Colin Webb looks beyond South African borders to Great Britain's policies towards Natal Colony. Donald Morris' Washing of the Spears is renowned as the most detailed account of the war.⁵⁸ John Laband, in line with the Afro-centric view taken in this thesis, gives an account of the Zulu response to the invasion. There were also at the turn of the century a number of eye-witnesses of the event who were alive to tell James Stuart their side of the story especially on King Cetshwayo's conduct.

Laband in his Kingdom in crisis, confined himself to examining how the Zulu people, within the possibilities and experiences available in their culture, responded to the invasion. He tried to expose the working of the Zulu political order that inevitably led ultimately to its military and political failure.⁵⁹ Laband, the devoted scholar of Zulu history that he is, has also written an article on the shifting of boundaries leading to the ultimate annexation of Zululand as British territory in 1887.

His arguments centre around the fact that incompetent British officials were placed in positions of power over a docile and subject people which resulted in the destruction of their nation. Deputations of trusted Zulu headmen and chiefs sent to present the Zulu side of things were suspected and ignored, while the British went on with the war and the destruction of their country.

It was an unfortunate war, a war whose underlying motive was nothing more than just greed for power and glory. British officials, naïve and inexperienced in matters African, in their quest for federation, brought the war about. Pushed into war in 1879, the Zulu came out of it and found themselves compartmentalized into thirteen chiefdoms or kinglets that were to be ruled by "thirteen unpopular nobodies", who according to Wolseley would "rule

⁵⁸ R L Cope, "The Zulu Kingdom and its White neighbours, 1824-1879", Centenary Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 1979.

⁵⁹ John Laband, Kingdom in crisis: the Zulu response to the British invasion of 1879 (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1992), read the introduction.

with justice and mercy”.⁶⁰ The demarcation of the boundaries of these kinglets, known as the “Wolseley Settlement”, was unrealistic and extremely provocative. Ballard, among other historians, has condemned the post-war settlement of Zululand as “destructive, ill-conceived and unworkable in the light of the political circumstances that existed in a Zulu Kingdom that had just suffered military defeat at the hands of the British army”.⁶¹ Of interest though, would be to note that Wolseley, when imposing his settlement had stated that the British Queen had no intention of depriving the Zulu of their country or of annexing any portion of it.⁶² But, that was not to be, as the British knew that the independence of the Zulu people depended on the availability of land, that “traditional homestead economy could not survive without the unrestricted access to land”.⁶³ They, therefore, sought to limit their movement in both Natal and Zululand by taking control of the land.

No historian worth his salt, has come out in praise of the Wolseley settlement. No sooner had the British troops left the country than the new rulers were at each other’s throats. The more powerful of the chiefs embarked on a systematic plundering of their weaker neighbours. The settlement became an object of sharp criticism both from Britain and from inside South Africa. Realising the flaws in his arrangements, Wolseley quickly removed himself from the Zululand cauldron, leaving behind Melmoth Osborn as British Resident Commissioner. Initially, Osborn had restricted powers though he was expected to supervise and maintain order among the chiefdoms. With central authority removed, it was unlikely that peace would prevail.

⁶⁰ Brian Roberts, Ladies in the veld (London, John Murray, 1965), prologue to the story of Queen Eugene in search of the scene of death of her son, the Prince Imperial of France.

⁶¹ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 224.

⁶² Roberts, Ladies in the veld, p xx.

⁶³ John Lambert, Betrayed trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995).

Among the more controversial of the appointed chiefs were Zibhebhu of the Mandlakazi, Hamu of the Ngenetsheni and John Dunn, Cetshwayo's turn-coat white councillor and gun runner, who had served the king loyally "but failed to keep his trust during the weeks leading up to the war".⁶⁴ Not only did the list of the appointed chiefs show a contemptuous disregard for the age-old, well-established Zulu hierarchy, but also paved the way for the worst type of position mongers ever seen on Zulu soil. The era of "justice and mercy" that was expected to follow the overthrow of Cetshwayo was substituted by faction fighting of the bloodiest kind. Looting and burning of homesteads characterised the period of the absence of the king.

The war and its aftermath left Zululand a greater threat to peace and stability than during Cetshwayo's reign, nor did it help matters in the Transvaal Republic either. Far from making the Boers to appreciate British protection after Shepstone's annexation in 1877, it had in fact, left them with great surprise at the deficient way the British had fought the Zulu in 1879. They thought they could have done better. Led by Kruger and Joubert, they soon demanded their independence, but cleverly waited until the most of British troops in Natal had sailed back home. As soon as that was done, the First Transvaal War of Independence broke out.⁶⁵ The Boers made good of their knowledge of the South African landscape to defeat the British at Ingogo, Laing's Nek, and Majuba. The Boer commandos rode over the familiar hills with nonchalance and won easy victories.

The Battle of Majuba Hill (27 February 1881) was a serious humiliation inflicted on the British army after Isandlwana. Cetshwayo, while in captivity in Cape Town, noted with

⁶⁴ TRH Davenport, South Africa: a modern history (Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1987), pp 168-169.

⁶⁵ Oliver Ransford, The Battle of Majuba hill: the first Boer War (London, John Murray, 1970), prologue.

concern the speed with which a settlement was reached with the Boers and complained about the unequal treatment the Zulu had received. C de B Webb and J B Wright have edited the speeches and sentiments expressed by the king in exile. How he had trusted the British as a justice-loving people and how he was disappointed is eloquently translated.⁶⁶ RRR Dhlomo has expressed a similar perception that the British were not seen by the Zulu as a land-hungry people aiming to destroy their country,⁶⁷ but were disappointed to realise that it was the British who had set out to destroy them.

Cetshwayo was eventually called to England where it was decided that he be restored as potentate to Zululand. His ultimate restoration arrangements were muddled up by incompetent British officials in Natal Colony. The Zulu king was, as a result, restored to a divided kingdom. Inevitably, restlessness and chaos continued in Zululand.⁶⁸ The Transvaal government, aiming to extend its rule to a natural harbour on the east coast, took advantage of the situation and raced, land-grabbing, towards St Lucia Bay under the banner of the New Republic, led by Coenraad Meyer. They needed a corridor through Zulu territory to the Indian Ocean.

It was a period of the “Scramble for Africa” and the British were anxious to maintain their influence in southern Africa without becoming too expensively involved.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ C de B Webb and JB Wright (eds): A Zulu king speaks: statements made by Cetshwayo ka Mpande on the history and customs of his people (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1978).

⁶⁷ RRR Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1968); and u Dinuzulu ka Cetshwayo (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1968); also CT Binns, Dinuzulu: the death of the house of Shaka (London, Longman Green, 1968)

⁶⁸ Jeff Guy, “The role of colonial officials in the destruction of the Zulu kingdom” in A Duminy and C Ballard, The Zulu War: new perspectives (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1981), p 148.

⁶⁹ Thomas Pakenham, The scramble for Africa (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1991). See also DW Krüger: Die Weg na die See AYB, 1938, I and HEW Backeberg: Betrekkinge tussen die S A Republiek en Duitsland..., AYB, 1949, I.

No doubt, they remembered the blood-stained disasters of the Zulu War and the embarrassing skirmish with the Boers at Majuba Hill. The Zulu had tried to return to normal life after the war as a consequence of Wolseley's message "that if the Zulu people laid down their arms and returned to their homesteads then they would be left in possession of their cattle, their property and their land".⁷⁰ Nonetheless, from then onwards, the British administration of Zulu affairs was often marked by high-handed behaviour and lack of sympathy for reasonable Zulu aspirations and those of the local White farmers in Natal Colony.

John Laband's article on the British boundary adjustments provides a fluent, and impressively comprehensive analysis of the step by step loss of territory suffered by the Zulu from 1879 to 1904.⁷¹ John Laband's Afro-centric approach to the problems of the Zulu kingdom in his Rope of sand confirms that Zululand had been broken and consigned to a bitter civil war and thereafter annexed piecemeal, as its land was given to white farmers. The subject of the loss of territory by the Zulu kingdom has been well documented and presented by Jeff Guy, John Laband and Paul Thompson and also by Colin Webb. They all seem to agree that the Shepstone system had destructive consequences for Zululand.⁷² All the boundary adjustments and political settlements failed to bring about the desired peace and the British decided to annex the remainder of Zululand in 1887. They agreed with the Transvaal

⁷⁰ Jeff Guy, "The role of colonial officials in the destruction of the Zulu kingdom" in Duminy and C Ballard(eds) The Zulu War: new perspectives (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1981), p 148.

⁷¹ John Laband, "British Boundary Adjustments and the uSuthu-Mandlakazi conflict in Zululand, 1879- 1904" South African Historical Journal (30 May 1994), pp 33-60.

⁷² See John Laband and Paul Thompson, "The reduction of Zululand, 1874-1904" in Duminy and Guest (eds) Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910: a new history (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1989); Colin Webb, "Great Britain and the Zulu people, 1879-1887" in Leonard Thompson (ed) African societies in southern Africa (London, Heinemann, 1969).

Boers who also took home a share of the cake with the incorporation of the New Republic into the Transvaal Republic.⁷³ In February 1887 a strife-torn and demoralised Zulu people accepted annexation by the British Crown. In the words of a contemporary British magistrate, J Y Gibson, the “primary official aim was to establish British sovereignty over the people, and to eradicate affection for that which had been declared extinct”.⁷⁴ What was declared extinct, in this case, was the hegemony and sovereignty of the Zulu royal family. The Boers gave up their vague claims to sovereignty over Dinuzulu and Zululand, and the land was declared a British Reserve Territory in May 1887. It was, in the words of DR Morris, “seven years too late to do any good”.⁷⁵ At that time a large number of Zulu were disillusioned with the British government and were not eager to welcome her protection anymore.⁷⁵

In June 1887 the establishment of British Zululand was announced at Eshowe by the Governor of Natal, Sir Arthur Havelock, who was to rule the country by proclamation as Supreme Chief. The appointed Resident Commissioner and Chief Magistrate was Melmoth Osborn. Local magistracies were established in the districts of Eshowe, Nkandla, Nquthu, Mtonjaneni, Ndwandwe and the Lower Mfolozi.⁷⁶ The imposition of the new colonial order and the collection of hut tax was placed in the hands of magistrates appointed to the districts. Some of the magistrates were still young and their handling of Zulu affairs did not always bring about contentment. In trying to exert their authority, some of them became unreasonably harsh. Though they were a hardworking lot, their knowledge of the Zulu social systems was deficient.

⁷³ TRH Davenport, South Africa: a modern history (Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1987), p 170.

⁷⁴ J Y Gibson, The story of the Zulus (London, Longman Green, 1911), p 294.

⁷⁵ Shula Marks, Reluctant rebellion: the 1906-8 disturbances in Natal (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970), pp 91–92.

⁷⁶ Van Zyl, Die uitbreiding van die Britse gesag, p179.

The laws which were in force in the Colony of Natal were to be extended to the territory of Zululand.⁷⁷ Whites were allowed to retain farms in a part of the Colony known as Proviso B. The Shepstonian magistrates sought to establish their authority in the face of resentment of the Usuthu leadership. Usuthu antagonism flared when the Governor was persuaded by local officials to allow Zibhebhu and his followers, together with an ally, Sokwotshata ka Mlandela, the Mthethwa chief, to return to ill-defined areas in Zululand from which they had been expelled.⁷⁸ Zululand slipped into near anarchy in 1888.

Dinuzulu's Usuthu trounced Zibhebhu at Ivuna and as British troops moved into Zululand, there were confrontations at Ceza and Hlopenkulu. There were upheavals, too, in the Lower Mfolozi.

Although the chiefdom was the "prototype of polity", throughout the southern African region "the Zulu structure was an instance of a much larger political structure which bore testimony to the organisational ability of the Zulu".⁷⁹ The kingdom established by Shaka was for the most part, seen through the eyes of imperialistic British journalists and historians whose motives and intrigues have not been revealed. But, by drawing on surviving testimonies of intelligent observers, the history of the Zulu people may thus be presented in a new light.

⁷⁷ CT Binns, Dinuzulu: the death of the house of Shaka (London, Longmans, 1968), p 101.

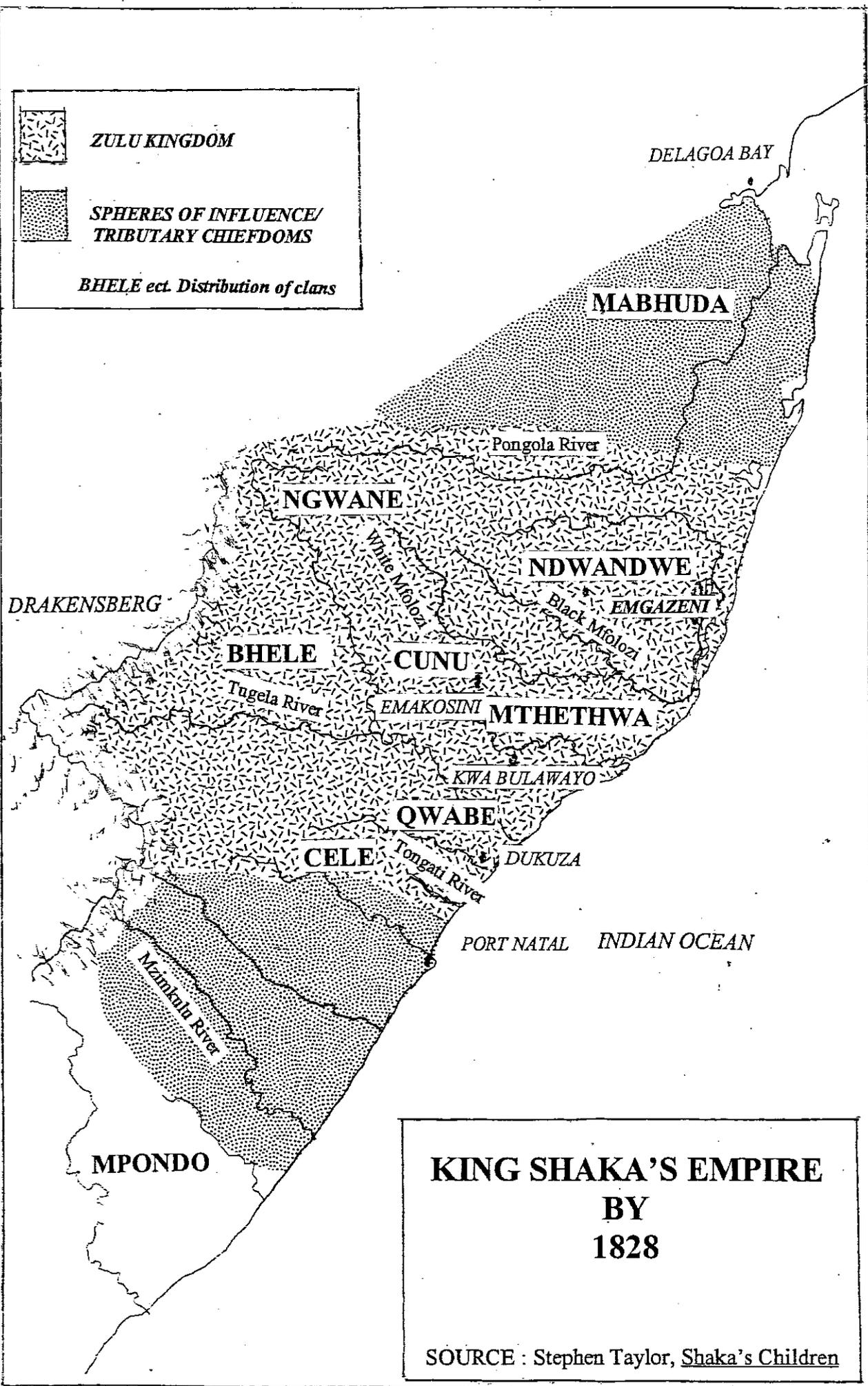
⁷⁸ Harriette Colenso, Cases of six Usuthu : punished for having taken part in the disturbances of 1888 (Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1996), p ix.

⁷⁹ David Hammond – Tooke, The roots of Black South Africa (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1999), p 83.

 **ZULU KINGDOM**

 **SPHERES OF INFLUENCE/
TRIBUTARY CHIEFDOMS**

BHELE ect. Distribution of clans



**KING SHAKA'S EMPIRE
BY
1828**

SOURCE : Stephen Taylor, *Shaka's Children*

CHAPTER 1

1. EARLY ZULU ENCOUNTERS WITH WHITE PEOPLE

1.1 Pioneer hunter-traders

Occasionally, South Africa's white population is accused of having stolen their land from its indigenous peoples. This happens only occasionally, though, since even her most outright critics are constantly reminded that every nation harbours such skeletons in their closet. It is maintained that only by successive occupations, conquests and thefts that modern nations have acquired their rich and diverse cultural heritage.

The Natal and Zululand story of "occupations, conquests and thefts" began in March 1824 when Lieutenant F G Farewell, an adventurer-trader, chartered two vessels, the Julia and the Ann at Table Bay, in order to proceed to Port Natal.¹ Among Farewell's recruits for the expedition was one remarkable man named Henry Francis Fynn. He was a young man of twenty one years of age, the son of the owner of the British Hotel in Long Street, Cape Town, full of expectations of adventure and fulfilment. Fynn's enthusiasm for the journey was the result of his experience of the east coast while on board the Julia in 1823.² The intrepid young fellow was destined to play an important role in the development of Port Natal.³ With him in command of a crew of six men which was on board the Julia, a quick voyage to Port Natal was accomplished, without any hindrance. A smooth and uneventful trip was concluded when they sailed into the port at the end of March 1824. It has to be noted that besides the crew of six, there were Xhosa and Coloured servants with them.

On landing at Port Natal, du Buisson believes it was a paradise they saw right before their bewildered eyes. They found "a large turquoise lagoon with room enough to house

¹ Ritter, Shaka Zulu, p 255.

² Brian Roberts, The Zulu kings (London, Hamish-Hamilton, 1974), p 19.

³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 83.

an armada, surrounded by primal forests as old as time, dressed in lush tropical foliage”.⁴ After taking a good look at the wondrous sight, Fynn and his men set about building barricades to protect themselves against possible attackers. Fynn then set out in search of inhabitants accompanied possibly by Jacob Msimbithi, his interpreter.

According to Dinya ka Zokozwayo, the first white man arrived with Nhlamba, his Xhosa interpreter, at the home of Sinqila ka Mpipi, chief of the AmaNyati an offshoot of the Cele. Sinqila had been away looking for his beast which had calved in the veld. On his return he found his women and children running away from a white man mounted on a horse. The women said his hair was like cattle tails, and the horse some strange bogey. This European Dinya says, must have been Fynn.⁵ Incredibly fascinating stories of first encounters between whites and Zulu people abound.

Sinqila is said to have reported the incident at once to his chief, Magaye. The chief immediately sent for the principal members of the chiefdom who all agreed that the white man be brought to Magaye to see. Presently the stranger arrived, mounted on a horse, with hat on head, gun in hand, hair like cattle tails and all that. All those present were consumed with wonder and awe. Magaye ordered that an ox be presented as food for the stranger and accommodation for the night made available at his brother, Mziboneli's homestead. At Mziboneli's kraal, the stranger proposed to kill the beast by shooting it. To the amazement and shock of the native people, with a loud bang, he did it. After all the wonders, Magaye decided to report to Shaka all he had seen. Mtshwebwe ka Magaye concurs except that he says it was Kombiswayo ka Mpipi and not Sinqila who first saw the white man.⁶ But he also agrees that Magaye's men advised him to report to Shaka

⁴ Louis du Buisson, *The white man cometh* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1987), p 44.

⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Dinya, p 96.

⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshwebwe, p 158.

in person, whereupon Magaye ordered Nhlasingyana to take a detachment of some 40 men with him and conduct the white man to Kwa-Bulawayo. Magaye raced ahead of them.

When the contingent arrived at Kwa-Bulawayo, King Shaka, who was already waiting, came out to meet them. He saw the white man. With his limitless curiosity, he began giving orders to the bystanders as regards making the white man perform certain acts to prove he was a man. In the end Shaka was impressed with the man. He named him "Mbuyazi (Mbulazi) of the Bay, the long-tailed finch that came from Pondoland".⁷ Fynn was presented with cattle to enable him to set up home at the port or Bluff (Esibubulungu), as it was the custom to help all those who "khonza'd" and were accepted as citizens of the kingdom. He returned to Port Natal a happy man.

Farewell was still waiting at Table Bay for Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor of the Cape Colony, to give the expedition his blessings. Most of Farewell's capital for the venture came from John Thompson, a merchant in Cape Town. He was also sponsored by his wife's step-father, Johan Peterson and another Cape colonial trader named Josias Hoffman. These men were persuaded to support the venture by Farewell's very colourfully painted report of Natal and the prospects the land held.⁸ Farewell told tales of a "savage king who built his cattle kraals with ivory; of rivers glistening with gold, of a countryside teeming with elephant and of a multitude of Zulu consumers crying out for British merchandise".⁹

His pioneering traders were going to act as agents for the merchants who sought a large and ready market among the Zulu with the hope of obtaining from them ivory and hides, including hippopotamus tusks. Ballard has accepted the argument that the traders founded

⁷ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.I, evidence of Dinya, pp 96-98.

⁸ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, pp 18-19.

⁹ Du Buisson, *The white man cometh*, p 42.

the settlement at Port Natal for purely economic motives and that their trading interest transcended any other consideration, be it missionary, political, military or otherwise.¹⁰

There is no reason to doubt this conclusion at first glance, but subsequent developments proved otherwise, at least in the eyes of the Zulu.

After a while, Farewell joined his fellow traders at Port Natal. He and his party arrived in the brig Antelope in July 1824, full of hope and great expectations. Nevertheless, the hardships that are generally associated with the establishment of new settlements, soon caused most of the party to return to Cape Town, so that by December of the same year, the settlement was reduced to six men: Farewell, Fynn, John Cane, Henry Ogle, Joseph Powell and Thomas Halstead, who continued with the task at hand.¹¹

While Farewell and his traders were founding the settlement, James Saunders King, had not been idle. He had secured control of the brig Mary and sailed to St Helena with a cargo consigned to Mr S Solomon. There he found Nathaniel Isaacs, a sixteen year old nephew of Solomon, ready to answer the “call of the sea” – for it represented adventure, travel and the excitements naturally attractive to any young red-blooded man. That same “call” is felt today by those who fly jets or drive racing cars, and whether it be 1824 or 2004 – human nature does not change. Hence, Isaacs needed no amount of persuasion, with a ready pen and a good command of English, he joined King and so they sailed for the Cape.¹² Only in October 1825 did King join the traders at Port Natal. King and Farewell were to disagree on a number of issues which Isaacs did not write about. Just before his death, King wrote to the South African Commercial Advertiser explaining the mysterious quarrel which divided the settlers into two camps, Farewell’s and King’s.

¹⁰ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 27.

¹¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 29.

¹² Mackeurtan, Cradle days of Natal, p 126.

Meanwhile, Farewell and Fynn had recognised the fact that they were beyond the boundaries of British authority and therefore needed to establish relations with the legitimate authority of the land they were occupying. To start with, Farewell wrote to Lord Charles Somerset at the Cape requesting that the British government should annex Natal, but when the request was turned down he and Fynn made overtures to Shaka from whom they “requested and received permission to occupy and exercise authority over land surrounding Port Natal”.¹³ According to Eric A. Walker, Farewell and James King “bought a block of land round Port Natal, 100 miles by 30 from Chaka, who claimed the whole of Natal as his”.¹⁴ But Warhurst concluded that Shaka “the cruel and ambitious Zulu chief, who by this time had established a military despotism from Delagoa Bay to the Mzimvubu River, ceded to Farewell 780 000 hectares of land in the vicinity of Port Natal”.¹⁵ Undoubtedly, the seeds for future land troubles between the Whites and the Zulu were sowed here.

The settlement at the port became the nucleus for the future expansion of white settlement in Natal. In the words of Charles Ballard, a frontier zone had been established.¹⁶ As the traders moved into the area beyond the limits of British control, existing cultural and racial attitudes were transformed in response to new and often stressful situations created by contact with the Africans. Unlike the American frontier where total dispossession of the Cherokees, Sioux, Cheyenne and other Indian chiefdoms took place, the South African situation was a true “melting pot”. As de Kiewiet had noticed about the South African

¹³ Quoted from Brookes and Webb’s History of Natal by Ballard, The “transfrontiersman”, p 27.

¹⁴ Eric A Walker, A history of southern Africa (London, Longman Green, a revised new impression, 1962), p 177.

¹⁵ Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 95.

¹⁶ Charles C Ballard defines a “frontier” as a geographical region where an advancing European settlement interacts with the indigenous inhabitants on a social, political and economic level. “Transfrontiersman”, p23. Others define a frontier as a zone of interaction between at least two competing societies. See Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, The Frontiers in History, Chapter 1.

frontier, the Natal frontier zone was “much less a line of separation than an area of absorption and fusion. It was a gateway in which the Zulu entered European society”.¹⁷

The idea that Shaka “ceded” the territory to Farewell has been a subject for debate by numerous scholars of Zulu history. For, in accordance with Zulu custom the king made land available to his subjects in the Zulu belief that “inkosi yinkosi ngabantu” (the institution of kingship is the people’s institution). Maphalala says a dimension of this belief is shown by the fact that no Zulu king had the right to alienate land because land belonged to the nation.¹⁸ The grant of land in the Zulu tradition was a “royal prerogative which could be terminated, extended or transferred”.¹⁹

The king’s approval of the traders’ occupation and use of the land prompted the spontaneous reaction among the dislodged Zulu to seek sanctuary from the traders as their protective “chiefs”. As a result “white chiefdoms” came into being around Port Natal. The followers of these chiefdoms were increased by “deserters from both the British and Zulu armies, as also by Bastards and Hottentots from the Cape Colony”.²⁰ Melapi ka Magaye said people came out of the bushes to join the settlement and were very grateful for the protection offered. Evidence of their thankfulness and allegiance to the Whites is found in the custom of swearing by Farewell, “they made oath by Febana”, said Magaye.²¹ The constant influx of these people forced the traders to organise their growing African communities along Zulu social lines. The Africans who joined the settlements accepted

¹⁷ C W de Kiewiet, The imperial factor in South Africa a study in politics and economics (London, Frank Cass, 1965), p 2.

¹⁸ Maphalala, The participation of white settlers, p 5.

¹⁹ Ballard, The “transfrontiersman”, p 27.

²⁰ George Russell, History of old Durban (Durban, P Davis and Sons, 1899), pp 7-8.

²¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 3, evidence of Melapi, p 73.

the white hunter-traders as the leaders of their community and the traders also became aware of the demands made upon them as chiefs. As a requirement for the position and status, they began making arrangements to take more wives, “vying with each other to see who could build up the biggest clan”.²² Each one aimed at being “inkosi inkulu”, which meant “more cattle, more wives, more ivory”.²³ They were, however, expected to understand the “residual rights” of land use and occupation in the Zulu tradition along with the other laws and customs associated with “ukukhonza” that they adopted as alternatives to European codes.²⁴

Shaka had given a blanket amnesty to all the Zulu living in Farewell’s designated territory. When word spread that there was a sanctuary at Port Natal, many “hungry and frightened refugees” flocked there,²⁵ fleeing from unbearable conditions of “an ideal Spartan commonwealth” inside the Zulu kingdom.²⁶ Shaka was too great a king to require extradition. He regarded his deserters with lofty contempt saying: “They have gone to my friends, not my enemies”.²⁷ The traders on the other hand had their reasons for welcoming these homeless people, but more than any other reason, the refugees provided a ready source of labour. Moreover, the settlers were no farmers, but traders, hunters, exporters of ivory, skins and hides and, according to Lambert, exporters also of “possibly slaves from the south-east African hinterland”.²⁸

²² Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 71.

²³ Russell, History of old Durban, p 7.

²⁴ “Ukukhonza” meant that they were expected to pay allegiance to and be loyal to the king, fight his wars and generally serve the interests of the kingdom.

²⁵ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 71.

²⁶ Thomas J Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers (New York, Negro Universities Press, 1969), p 131.

²⁷ Russell, History of old Durban, p 8.

²⁸ John Lambert, Betrayed trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal, (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995), p 7.

The refugees therefore were made to provide fresh agricultural produce for the settlement. The white chiefs also adopted Zulu names such as Febana (Farewell), Jana (John Cane), Wohlo (Ogle) and Damuse (Halstead). Henry Fynn (Mbuyazi), Cane and Ogle built several homesteads in villages scattered around the port. To Ogle belonged Bekana his principal homestead, Kwa-Toyana and Zembeni. Cane built Esi Nyameni and Fynn built Mpendwini beyond the Isipingo at the Mbokodwe. The dwellings of the settlers were ordinary Zulu huts, but they also owned differently constructed houses not far off, where they actually lived and at which they received European visitors. According to Dinya, Wohlo and Mbuyazi had the largest number of wives and homesteads. Peterman (Pitimane) had a homestead on the north side of the Mlazi River under the forest, called Esibanyeni. Gardiner received adherents (that is, refugees) from Zululand at his establishment named Vimbindlela.²⁹ Farewell's home was described by Mackeurtan as a "barn of wattle and daub with a thatched roof and a reed door but without windows".³⁰

The settlers, however, did not forget their mission of defrauding the Zulu.

"The unctuous sense of self-righteousness which inevitably wells up in an Englishman's soul whenever he is engaged annexing the property of others – and notably so when it be the land of the primitives – is to the unbiased observer, sometimes as astounding as amusing", writes E A Ritter when considering the early attempt by the British to defraud the Zulu of their natural birthright. To authenticate the story Ritter chose to quote the account given by Dr A T Bryant. The veteran Bryant had stated that Farewell drafted a false deed of cession and made the unsuspecting Shaka sign it, as well as his induna Mbikwane, Msika, Mhlope and Hlambamanzi who countersigned as witnesses.

²⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.I, evidence of Dinya, p 111.

³⁰ Mackeurtan, Cradle days, p231.

The contents of the document state that Shaka delivered to Farewell one-seventh of the country of Natal.³¹ The reason for this generous gift being “a reward for his kind attention in my illness from my wound”.³² It is, however, very doubtful if the king understood the contents of that document whose terms were unbelievably vague.

It goes without saying that an astute leader such as Shaka would not have contemplated any of the absurdities contained in that document. J.I Rademeyer also concludes that such a transaction would not have seriously taken place. He contends that: “of Shaka werklik bereid was om die gebied aan die Engelse af te staan, is te betwyfel, maar die dokument is op 8 Augustus 1824 onderteken. Shaka se naamtekening was ‘n gekrap oor die papier, aangesien hy ‘n “groot koning was. Hy het geweier om ‘n kruisie te maak”.³³ The argument about the signature is hardly tangible enough and is far from convincing. But Farewell had faith in his own creation and used the document to prove to others that the land they occupied had been legitimately acquired and that he was “verantwoordelik vir alle wet en orde binne sy distrik”.³⁴

The position of Farewell’s dwelling was where the Town Gardens of Durban now stand, the site of his fort was near Cato’s Creek. Arriving with King, the young Isaacs found the climate “congenial and salubrious” and the rivers were “condusive to the propagation of herbs, and the growth of all vegetable matter”. He was amazed by the “calabash and castor oil trees, growing in splendid clusters” and the “spreading tendrils” of the pumpkins which grew in “innumerable and extensive patches”.³⁵ This was the land that now “belonged” to Farewell. Isaacs appreciation of

³¹ Ritter, *Shaka Zulu*, pp 266-268

³² Ritter, *Shaka Zulu*, p 267.

³³ JI Rademeyer, *Shaka* (Pretoria Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, ongedateerd), p 31.

³⁴ Rademeyer, *Shaka*, p 37, Ritter, *Shaka Zulu*, p 268.

³⁵ Mackeurtan, *Cradle days*, pp129-130.

the land was marred only by an unfortunate incident on their landing, namely, the wreck of the brig Mary upon a sandy bar at the Point on 30 September (1825).³⁶

The struggle to fix the vessel took its toll, but the shortage of medicines and other necessities by April 1827, compelled James King to choose to send 14-year old John Ross to Delagoa Bay to get supplies. Nathaniel Isaacs was tasked with the responsibility of making preliminary arrangements with King Shaka for this important trip. When the young Ross was presented before the king with only two companions for the journey, “Shaka was met bewildering vervul vir die seun se moed, en daarom het hy hom nog ‘n geleide van ‘n paar Zoeloe krygers gegee, asook voedsel”.³⁷ Inkosi Langalibalele and the 30 Zulu warriors who were to escort Ross were provided freely by the king. So much for Euro-centric historiography which hardly mentions the fact that Shaka inspanned military as well as economic support to make the journey possible. Surely, it did not occur to Shaka that the Whites living at the port were already in another “country” as a consequence of Farewell’s document. To him they were in the land of the Zulu. AE Cubbin points out that the only known observation made by John Ross regarding that epic journey, was his explanation of the “acculturation process undergone by the White traders at Port Natal in those early years”.³⁸ He said nothing about Shaka providing him with aid.

The commander of His Majesty’s sloop, the Helicon, Lieutenant Wood, arrived at Port Natal on 9 April 1826. He and his midshipman and four sailors rowed ashore and found the traders “in good spirits”.³⁹ The Europeans were living in harmony with the Zulu in those “very primitive, rude-looking structures”.⁴⁰ Wood reported back home in England that the settlers in Natal were

³⁶ Manfred Nathan, The Voortrekkers of South Africa (London, Gordon and Gotch, 1937), p 53.

³⁷ Rademeyer, Shaka, p 38.

³⁸ AE Cubbin, “On the trail of John Ross”, Kleio, xxvii, 1995, pp 63-66.

³⁹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 95.

⁴⁰ Laband, Rope of sand, p 33.

“supplied by the natives with cattle, they have abundance of Indian corn, which they cultivated themselves, also plenty of milk and vegetables...the harbour abounds with fish and there appears to be no danger from want of food”.⁴¹

Within a short space of time the hunter-trader settlement at Port Natal had undergone a minor agricultural revolution inside the Zulu traditional system of agriculture. The Zulu refugees were quick in realising the higher yield potential of maize as opposed to sorghum. Henry Fynn’s induna, one named Juqula ka Nqawe of the Emampemvini, introduced this crop to his homestead and by 1835 the majority of the homesteads in the harbour area were growing more than enough maize to supply the needs of the entire community.⁴² The observant Gardiner was to note the conditions suitable for agriculture and the abundance produced by the Zulu cultivators. He is quoted by Ballard as saying that “The soil, in general is a light sandy loam, not favourable for large timber, but yielding excellent crops of Kafir (sorghum) and Indian corn (maize), ground beans and sweet potatoes; and so abundant are the corn crops that although it is only cultivated in patches, and that by natives alone turning up the surface with their hoes, a great quantity has been purchased during the present year (1835) for exportation to Mauritius”.⁴³

The traders saw themselves, first and foremost, as British subjects but they demonstrated their flexibility by accepting Zulu political authority in return for trading privileges and the knowledge that they were accepted and secure in a foreign country. In their reports to the Cape merchants who funded their activities, they indicated their contentment. However, people like Robert (“Moral Bob”) Godlonton of the Graham’s Town Journal, tended to exaggerate their struggles

⁴¹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 95.

⁴² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.I, evidence of Dinya, p 99.

⁴³ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 33.

in an attempt to persuade the British government to annex the territory. Isaacs is said to have been a gifted writer with very keen powers of observation that permitted him to write down some of the most bizarre incidents in the most vivid manner.⁴⁴ Shaka had made available to them the land and the abundance of nature, between the Phongola and the Mzimkhulu rivers, the traders hunted and traded freely. The king's generosity inspired James King to make moves to persuade the British government to transfer the 1820 settlers from the Cape Colony to Natal. This was the first tangible step taken by the settlers to undermine Zulu sovereignty.

Traditionally, when homestead heads "abanumzane" were not satisfied with a particular chief, they moved to another who allocated them land.⁴⁵ It is, therefore, not surprising that some Zulu joined the traders and accepted them as their chiefs soon after Shaka had given them recognition as chiefs. Shaka promised to supply the settlers with cattle and corn "so that they would not go hungry". John Ogle ka Wohlo told Stuart that Shaka used to warn them when his armies advanced towards Pondoland and he would take his father, Wohlo, along with the troops.⁴⁵ As his client chiefs, Shaka expected them and their followers to render service to the country, either of an economic or a military nature. As a result, on two occasions he summoned the "white chiefs" to assist in his military campaigns against his enemies. They were, after all, his subjects living on his land. Their own adherents held the same view with regard to the king.

Roberts has stated that, "however barbarically Shaka ruled his own people, his attitude towards the whites was always hospitable".⁴⁷ The Whites for their part, also recognised the legitimacy of Zulu rule in Natal. It is obvious that the traders had no alternative to this in the face of Zulu military power coupled with the British government's refusal to

⁴⁴ Mackeurtan, *Cradle days*, pp 130-131.

⁴⁵ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 32.

⁴⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 5, evidence of John Ogle, p 218.

⁴⁷ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, p 42.

extend its sovereignty beyond the borders of the Eastern Cape.⁴⁸ It is also appropriate to recall the intimation made by John Thompson, one of the sponsors of the Farewell settlement, who confidentially told some of his co-sponsors that Shaka “cannot of course, foresee that the admission of a few mercantile adventurers may perhaps ultimately lead to the subjugation of his Kingdom”.⁴⁹ This could not have been more prophetic. And Shaka, in his hour of death pointed this out. According to Dinya ka Zokozwayo, Shaka said: “You are killing me, but the land will see locusts and white people come!”⁵⁰ Lunguza ka Mpukane’s words were: “Children of my father, you are killing me, I who am of your house and king of the Zulu? Your country, children of my father, will be ruled by white people who will come up from the sea.”⁵¹

James Saunders King, Shaka’s latest appointed leader at Port Natal, died on 7 September 1828, and the leadership passed on to Nathaniel Isaacs. Shaka said of King, that he was “a white man, and a chief too [who], lived a long time in my country without molestation from myself and my people, and that he died a natural death. That will ever be a source of satisfaction to me”.⁵² Those were Shaka’s last words to be heard by a white person. Within days he was dead, leaving royal authority in a state of flux, greatly undermined as the refugees “from the rough justice of the kingdom” increasingly realised that they could find asylum among the Whites at Port Natal. At that time, perhaps a thousand or more Zulu “had opted for the white man’s authority in preference to that of the king”.⁵³

⁴⁸ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 28.

⁴⁹ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 86.

⁵⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.. I, evidence of Dinya, p 96.

⁵¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Lunguza, p 307. The humanity or inhumanity of the king has been the focus of many a writer. His hospitality vis-a-vis the greed for land possession by the British and their unscrupulous ways have not been seriously analysed.

⁵² Du Buisson, The White man cometh, p 98.

⁵³ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 98.

The historian Leonard Thompson asserted that when Nandi died in 1827 “hundreds of innocent people were killed in a wave of mass hysteria that he (Shaka) encouraged”.⁵⁴ Baleka ka Mpitikazi said Shaka killed his own mother for hiding a child and Baleni ka Silwana said he did not know the cause of Nandi’s death. But his elder, Mretsheni ka Mkiwane had told him that Shaka had himself caused the death of Nandi and insisted on others crying.⁵⁵

It was fairly widely known that Shaka was responsible for his mother’s death. Jantshi confirmed this assertion and that it led to the royal family, both male and female, beginning to hatch a plot to assassinate him.⁵⁶ This, however, is doubtful since Nandi was not much of a favourite in the royal circle.

On 24 September 1828 when the Zulu army was away on a campaign to the north to attack the renegade Ndwandwe clan under Soshangane, his personal servant, Mbopha ka Sithayi, and two of his brothers Dingane and Mhlangana, assassinated him. Baleka ka Mpitikazi mentions another brother, Gququ, as having been present.⁵⁷ The Izinyosi regiment consisting of inexperienced and yet untrained boys was the only one at Kwa-Dukuza remaining to protect the king, hence the assassination went off smoothly.⁵⁸ Dingane subsequently eliminated his co-conspirators who appeared to be his rivals, and took over as king of the Zulu nation. To a large extent, he maintained his half-brother’s domestic and external policies, though, according to Thompson, he lacked Shaka’s originality and panache.⁵⁹ Essentially, however, Dingane was a man of peace.

⁵⁴ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 85.

⁵⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Baleni, p 30.

⁵⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Jantshi, p 194.

⁵⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Baleka, p 6.

⁵⁸ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 85.

⁵⁹ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 100.

Dingane's great izimbongi, Sikhihle and Magolwana hailed him hopefully as:

“U Vez’ u Nonyanda,
UMgabadelì,
Owagabadel’ inkundla yakwa Bulawayo,”⁶⁰

(The One who will bring life – give birth to the nation,
He who stealthily overthrew the House of Bulawayo).

The king, whose house of Bulawayo it was, had been brutally assassinated.

The news of Shaka's death threw the white community into a frenzy as they did not know anything about Dingane or Mhlangana. To allay their fears, Jacob Msimbithi (alias Hlambamanzi), the interpreter acting on behalf of the princes, sent a message, assuring them there was nothing to fear. The coup, he said, was an internal matter that would not affect relations with the Whites. The settlers, however, remained restless anticipating the worst to happen to them. The uncertainty prevailed over Zululand proper, as well. But, when the army returned “limping from a disastrous invasion into Mozambique, in which thousands of his men had died in battle, from malaria and from starvation, Chief Mdlaka was faced with a *fait accompli*. He had no choice but to accept the new king”.⁶¹

With the army behind him, Dingane assumed the kingship with some confidence. But, he still had to deal with his real and imagined or potential enemies. Dingane was a traditionalist in the classical mould, a Zulu patriot who was enormously proud of

⁵⁹ Du Buisson, *The white man cometh*, p 101.

⁶⁰ Sibusiso Nyembezi, *Izibongo zamakhosi* (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1981), p 45.

⁶¹ Du Buisson, *The white man cometh*, p 100.

everything Zulu, particularly his army which by then numbered some fifty thousand warriors, armed and ready. In an attempt to re-arrange the political affairs of Zululand, he entrusted the affairs of state to his chief councillors, Ndlela and Dambuza. Ndlela ka Sompisi of the Ntuli clan came from the Ama Bele people. He achieved distinction as a warrior under Shaka and subsequently rose to become Dingane's principal induna.⁶² Nzobo (alias Dambuza) ka Sobadli of the Ntombela people was a member of the Izi Wombe regiment. Mangati ka Godide said this was the man who caused people to be killed in every direction, especially those with property, cattle or girls.⁶³ Nevertheless, these are the men whose loyalty to Dingane would be proven under unbelievably trying circumstances over a period of time.

In dealing with his enemies and potential rivals, Dingane's first victim was Mbopha ka Sithayi. He had to die for killing the king. Mkabayi, Dingane's aunt and Nomcoba, his sister, ordered the killing of Mhlangana who, they said, had used a lethal weapon against the king. They said that Dingane should rule for, although he was involved in the assassination he did not use a lethal weapon.⁶⁴ Ngwadi ka Gendeyana, another son of Nandi, followed and the other sons of Senzangakhona were killed, only Mpande remained. Ndlela ka Sompisi said to Dingane: "Why do you concern yourselves about the scrofulous little thing (umbobolwana)? What is in this thing of Songiya (Songiya ka Ngotsha of the Hlabisa people, was Mpande's mother). This caused Dingane to desist from killing Mpande."⁶⁵

⁶² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 2, evidence of Mabonsa, p 39.

⁶³ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 2, evidence of Mangati, pp 201-202.

⁶⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 4, evidence of Ndukwana, pp 291-292.

⁶⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 3, evidence of Mmemi, p 266.

Shaka's favourite izinduna who were immediately killed were Nxazonke who was buried with Shaka at the same place. Mxamama ka Sotshaya and Ntendeka who were both izinduna in the area of Kwa-Dlangezwa were speedily eliminated.⁶⁶ Dingane saw that Zihlandlo would lament the death of Shaka for they liked one another. Dingane then sent an impi that first attacked Sambela ka Nkukhu at eKwaneni. Many Embo people died in the bushy valley of eKwaneni and those who survived took refuge at eLwandlwazi. Zihlandlo was killed at his Simahleni homestead. His heir, Siyingele, fled and settled about the Umlazi River in Natal.⁶⁷

Shaka was feared and respected and those close to him would die. And so they did. Okoye is quoted by Ballard as saying that "hatred of the enemies of the state was in large measure responsible for the destructive murders which characterised Dingane's domestic policy".⁶⁸ In attempting to legitimise his rule, Dingane met with a lot of resistance internally which he tried to eradicate by means of executions and the confiscation of property. The internal discord and dissention within the Zulu kingdom forced some Zulu to flee to Port Natal for safety.⁶⁹ At the height of the discord, Nqetho ka Kondlo of the Qwabe led a secession from Dingane's Zulu kingdom.⁷⁰ He came to Mtshumayeli and said, "Never shall we live under Dingane, now that Shaka is dead!" He also went to Magaye ka Dibandlela, chief of the Cele. Magaye said: "This evil-doer (itshinga) will kill me on the road". Melapi tells the story of the life of the favoured Magaye who had

⁶⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 64.

⁶⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 3, evidence of Mbokodo, p 7.

⁶⁸ See Felix Okoye's re-appraisal in Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 38.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p 38.

⁷⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 3, evidence of Mbovu, p 46.

formed the young Injanduna regiment that Shaka took from him. For being too close to Shaka and to Nqetho, Dingane's Hlomendlini regiment killed him.⁷¹ The death of Shaka brought to an end the most spectacular era in the history of Natal and Zululand and indeed of southern Africa. In a short period of ten years, a powerful kingdom had been established and "the outward radiations of this process were felt down to the Cape frontier, across the Drakensberg and the highveld to the fringes of the Kalahari, and deep into Central and East Africa".⁷² Natal south of the Thukela and a greater part of the plateau "had been emptied of people by a cataclysmic disaster which Black Africans still speak of with awe as the Mfecane – the crushing"⁷³ True though that the place was not totally "empty".

When Dingane took over the reigns, organised community life had virtually ended in Natal, south of the Thukela and in much of the Free State. Settlements had been abandoned, livestock seized, agricultural lands had ceased to be cultivated and several empty places lay littered with human bones.⁷⁴ These are the areas that attracted the Voortrekkers who left the Cape Colony in the mid-1830's in search of land and freedom. Only a few thousand Zulu-speaking individuals could be found in Natal, "seeking shelter in the mountains and the bush, living off the land and human flesh".⁷⁵ For those who were still alive "deprivation and suffering were the norm. Ruined stone-walls of cattle-enclosures and homesteads bore mute testimony to the pre-Difaqane population".⁷⁶ From all accounts, it seems reasonable to believe that Natal was Piet Retief, the charismatic Voortrekkers leader's first choice as the

⁷¹ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 3, evidence of Melapi, p82.

⁷² Cameron, *An illustrated history*, p 119.

⁷³ Ransford, *The Great Trek*, p 26.

⁷⁴ Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 85.

⁷⁵ Cameron, *An illustrated history*, p 121.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p 121.

destination of the trek. King Dingane dealt severely with those chiefdoms that sought independence from Zulu authority. The Qwabe, Qadi, Thuli and Cele chiefdoms ultimately took refuge with the British traders at Port Natal. These are the people who had no love for the king and never thought of themselves as Zulu. They are the ones who were, to a large extent, responsible for the worsening of relations between Dingane and the white traders for they incessantly and maliciously spread the rumour that the Zulu monarch was marshalling his warriors secretly preparing them for the final onslaught on everything that was white.⁷⁷ In the region south of the Thukela, organised community life had largely been destroyed by groups like the Bhele, the Thembu, the Chunu and others who had moved southwards to distance themselves from the all-conquering Zulu military power in the first phase of its expansion. In the mid-1820's Zulu armies conducted their raids as far south as Pondoland in their search for wealth in cattle, maidens and young men for the king's army. In 1826 Shaka moved his capital from Kwa-Bulawayo, near the present town of Eshowe, to Kwa-Dukuza near what is now Stanger. He went on to colonize the coastal region between the Thukela and Mkhomazi rivers stationing regiments in a number of amakhanda (army barracks) and establishing a string of royal cattle posts in them.

On his second expedition to the south, Shaka placed his cattle at the place of Lukilimba, a notable warrior who lived at the Ntumbankulu on the Mzimkhulu. Other herds were placed with district indunas such as; Bebeni ka Jama of the Langeni, living between the Itafa and Mzinto; Mzobotshi ka Tambusa of the Ndelu people at the Lovu River; Matubane at the Isibulungu and with Msekelo ka Ntambo of the Majola among the Canu people. Melapi informed Stuart further, that some more cattle were stationed at Ngoyi across the Emahlongwa at the cattle post called Mpiyakhe; and also among the Cele at Kwa-Shiyabantu. These cattle posts stretched from the Mzimkhulu to the Mvoti rivers.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 39.

⁷⁸ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 3, evidence of Melapi, p 83. Ian Knight, Anatomy of the Zulu army from Shaka to Cetshwayo 1818-1879 (London, Greenhill Books, 1995), p 36. He explains the move to establish uMgungundlovu.

This extension of Zulu authority placed rich resources of agricultural and grazing land at the disposal of the monarchy, and brought it closer to the British settlement at Port Natal. The few coherent chiefdoms that were still found in the lower Thukela valley and in the coastal regions, were clients or satellites of the Zulu state.

Dingane decided to move further away from the coast, establishing his capital, known as Mgungundlovu in the spectacular EmaKhosini valley, in an attempt to reduce the Zulu presence south of the Thukela River. However, in a brilliant diplomatic manoeuvre that went a long way towards “smoothing over the transition and uniting the nation”, he appointed the respected Chief Sothobe ka Mpangalala, the late king’s right-hand man, as governor of the country south of the Thukela River.⁷⁹ Dingane was convinced that proximity with the settlers gave them “an inordinate degree of influence over the affairs of Zululand”.⁸⁰ Oral evidence confirm that the settlers were, in fact, disloyal subjects who were trying to establish the port and the surrounding areas as an autonomous base for “the unrestricted commercial penetration of the hinterland”.⁸¹ Indeed, the presence of the British traders at the port was beginning to spread disruptive influences in the kingdom. Commercial goods that were once reserved for the Zulu aristocracy were becoming more and more commonplace and could no longer be used to give the royal family a coercive hold over the Zulu population. Authority was also being undermined by the very existence of Port Natal, as refugees from the “rough justice of the kingdom” continued to seek asylum among the traders.⁸²

⁷⁹ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 101; Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Ndukwana, p 292.

⁸⁰ Laband, Rope of sand, p 73.

⁸¹ Ibid, p 73.

⁸² Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 98.

It is said that when Nathaniel Isaacs paid a visit to Mgungundlovu, King Dingane ratified the land grant that King Shaka had made to the traders. Isaacs was pleased because he had become the “owner” of Natal, having been granted exclusive rights to trade with the Zulu king. He was also given assurance that all the available ivory in Zululand will come his way. A great many writers suspect that Isaacs had a gun-running agreement with Dingane which Isaacs tried by all means to conceal. Nevertheless, Dingane and his councillors remained worried about the state of affairs in the land. Dingane replaced most of his brother’s favourite councillors with his own. Ndlela ka Sompisi was raised to the position of chief Councillor (uNdunankuku) or Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief of the national army. Nzobo, otherwise known as Dambuza ka Sobadli was raised to prominence second only to Ndlela. These are the men who were at the helm of the Zulu ship of state which was at the time dominated by suspicion and fear and anyone not in Ndlela or Dambuza’s good books lived in the dark shadow of death. Death came anytime, unexpectedly and finally. Most of the killing being attributed to Dambuza.⁸³

At the time of Dingane the population of Natal had grown to something in excess of four thousand adult Africans. Henry Fynn’s clan was by far the biggest and still rapidly growing. Isaacs, Cane and Ogle had substantial clans of their own and were competing to increase them.⁸⁴ Not only did the numbers of the refugees swell, but a growing proportion of them came from Zululand itself. Colenbrander has said that in 1834 an entire Zulu regiment defected. No doubt then that by the mid-1830’s Port Natal already “harboured a significant concentration of political mal-contents, and the threat which they posed could no longer be dismissed lightly, especially as there was a growing disinclination

⁸³ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 2, evidence of Mangati, pp 201-202.

⁸⁴ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 117.

among the settlers ... to conform to their earlier role as loyal subordinate chiefs".⁸⁵

The Europeans, having studied the situation and pictured their chances, "sought to teach the natives a proper degree of submission to them, at the same time judiciously and humanly to instruct them in those duties which lead to civilization".⁸⁶ It was indeed, a strange turn of events. Du Buisson has argued that the blacks of Natal would soon find out what the whites had in store for them, and how "judiciously" the British could be in dealing with Africans.⁸⁷

In June 1837 the news of the impending Voortrekker move to Natal caused great excitement and stimulated the British traders to consider joining forces with the Voortrekkers. The traders announced that when the Voortrekkers arrive they "intend to form an internal government of our own, free from the false measures and wavering policy of the neighbouring colony (the Cape Colony) and we have no doubt but that everything will then go smoothly".⁸⁸ In a few months Gerrit Maritz, Piet Retief and their people crossed the Drakensberg and entered Natal region, "settling down in the well-watered plains of the foothills, which they found to be empty, and on both sides of the upper Tugela, where there were only small scattered pockets of settlement".⁸⁹ Retief aimed at approaching King Dingane to ask for a deed of cession for a stretch of land, but in contemplation his people had already entered the land. Retief was still to learn that Dingane had given some land away already, to the missionary Allen Gardiner at Port Natal. He was not worried because he knew that the British Government

⁸⁵ Peter Colenbrander, "The Zulu kingdom, 1828-79" in A Duminy and B Guest (eds) Natal and Zululand from earlier times to 1910: a new history, p56.

⁸⁶ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 118.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p 118.

⁸⁸ Mackeurtan, Cradle days, pp 202-239; Ballard, "The Transfrontiersman", p 144.

⁸⁹ Marq de Villiers, White tribe dreaming: apartheid's bitter roots as witnessed by eight generations of an Afrikaner family (London, Penguin Books,1987), p130.

was unwilling to spend money on less valuable areas of southern Africa and wanted to abstain from the never-ending inter-group feuds and wars. Retief was convinced that the land south of the Thukela should belong to those who needed it most and could best make use of it. Surely, the Zulu did not need so much land and could hardly appreciate its value. Logically, therefore, the Voortrekkers had a right to occupy and use the land.⁹⁰ This was their Promised Paradise which the Zulu king, Dingane, was believed to retain unoccupied as “a happy hunting ground and an appendage to Zululand”.⁹¹

The Trekker leader, being aware of Lord Gleneg’s policy of treaties with African leaders and British administrators, wanted to come to a legal agreement with King Dingane. However, Dingane and his councillors’ suspicion, emanating from the prophecies of Msimbithi, had crystallized into an unshakable conviction that white people were in the country for no good purpose. The many and mysterious things that white people did convinced the Zulu leadership that these people were wizards (abathakathi), capable of taking the land right under their nose. Shaka and Msimbithi could not be wrong in their predictions.

During his brief stay at Port Natal, Retief saw that the British settlers had abandoned all self-respect and lowered themselves to the level of the environment. This encouraged him to work even harder at getting the land for the future of the Voortrekkers. The Trekkers, as expressed in his Manifesto, published in the Graham’s Town Journal, deserved their freedom from British rule. On the northern side of the Thukela, however, attitudes had already hardened against the British settlers. The missionaries were not very welcome and also the Voortrekkers.

⁹⁰ De Villiers, White tribe dreaming, p 130.

⁹¹ Russell, History of old Durban, p 7.

1.2 REPUBLIC OF NATALIA

Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the Governor of the Cape Colony, noted with regret that a large number of Dutch farmers on the Cape eastern frontier "had emigrated carrying with them all their property and possessions as well as such movables as cattle, sheep and horses-never to return."¹ That massive exodus of the Voortrekkers, as they came to be known, ushered in the period of the Great Trek. The historian C F J Muller, concluded that the Great Trek "transformed the nature of the white settlement in the southern-most part of the African continent".² Indeed, as a result of the Trek, white people explored the vast interior of southern Africa and established landmark settlements there. "Ook het die Trek die hervestiging en verspreiding van die nie-blankes beïnvloed sodat die huidige patron van swart- blank verspreiding tot op sekere hoogte deur die Groot Trek terug te voer is".³ The Great Trek was "onteenseglik 'n georganiseerde, fisieke landverlating van duisende Afrikaans-sprekende grensboere.....uit die Britse Kaapkolonie na aangrensende gebiede in die noorde en die noordooste, bewoon deur groot getalle nie-blankes".⁴

W M Macmillan labelled the Trek "the great disaster of South African history", probably because of the wars which followed in its wake. De Kiewiet saw the Trek as an incident that "indissolubly linked the future of all South Africa with the Boer race".⁵ Among the early Afrikaner historians, Gustav Preller saw it as a "nasionale beweging".⁶ Among others,

¹ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 161.

² Muller, 500 years, pp 146-147.

³ Van Jaarsveld en Scholtz, Die Republiek van Suid Afrika, p 43.

⁴ C F J Muller, "Die groot Trek" in B J Liebenberg, Opstelle oor die Suid-Afrikaanse historiografie (Pretoria, Unisa, 1975), p 99.

⁵ Muller, 500 years, p 147.

⁶ J J Oberholster, "Die neerslag van die Romantiek op ons Geskiedskrywing – Gustav S. Preller", in B J Liebenberg, Opstelle, p 52.

Preller is viewed by J S du Plessis as the historian of the Great Trek, who wrote about the “Afrikaner se stryd vir eie bestaan, eie reg, eie ontwikkeling” which undoubtedly was “op die ou end die eintlike Leitmotiv van al Preller se waardevolle historiese werke”.⁷

There was another, perhaps the most notable Great Trek historian, CFJ Muller, of whom Theo van Wijk writes in a tribute that: “Ek wonder of daar iemand anders was of nog is wat die hele trekgeskiedenis in soveel diepte en breedte geken het”.⁸ Muller in his writings, has agreed that “De Kiewiet se vertolking van die Groot Trek was beter in perspektief en wetenskaplik fyner as dié van Macmillan”. He said further that De Kiewiet was correct to say: “When fully carried out (the Great Trek) was a manoeuvre that carried the colonists beyond the range of British influence and enabled them to strike at the vital resources of the natives at numerous points”.⁹

The leaders of the Great Trek or mass migration knew that internal wars among the African inhabitants had virtually de-populated the territory. Their “Commissie Treks” returned full of enthusiasm for the places they had visited. They said that there was “land for the taking, land where their countrymen could set up independent states...”.¹⁰ Their leaders, therefore, believed that the remaining African groups would welcome them as protective allies and that they would acquire fertile land cheaply, with the Africans providing the labour force.¹¹ However, internal dissention within the Zulu Kingdom which became evident as soon as Dingane became king, had forced many Zulu who were opposed to his rule, to flee to Port Natal for refuge. By the time the Trekkers arrived, Port Natal was seen by many Zulu as a sanctuary,¹²

⁷ J S du Plessis, “Dr Gustav Preller as historikus van die Groot Trek”, in B J Liebenberg, Opstelle, p 60.

⁸ Theo van Wijk, “C F J Muller, ‘n persoonlike getuienis”, Kleio, xxv, 1993, p 9.

⁹ Muller, “Die Groot Trek” in B J Liebenberg, Opstelle, pp114-115.

¹⁰ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 23.

¹¹ Muller, 500 years, p 158.

¹² Russell, History of old Durban, p 8. Also Laband, Rope of sand, pp 31-46.

away from conditions that can be described as “an ideal Spartan commonwealth” in the Zulu Kingdom.¹³

Much to his surprise Retief was welcomed with open arms by the British settlers. A large section of them was firmly anti-Gardiner and to them the arrival of the Voortrekkers was providential. They thought that this was a force that could help keep Dingane in check. Although the settlers were a divided community, all of them were agreed in their resentment of Dingane. Insecurity and anxiety among the settlers after Shaka’s death had led to some of them fleeing the country. Febana (Farewell), Mbulazi (Fynn) and others made off to the Cape. Wohlo, Jana, Damuse and Diki were those who remained of the original settler group.¹⁴ But, they also, “remained in a state of unpleasant suspense and alarm”.¹⁵ The Trekkers meanwhile obtained valuable information about the country, the surrounding area and its people and about the Zulu King. Interesting information about a missionary named Francis Owen, who had arrived at Mgungundlovu, the Zulu capital, and had been cordially received by the king, did not miss them. Retief immediately took the opportunity of writing a letter for Rev. Owen to translate to the king. In the letter Retief indicated that the Trekkers desired peace and wished to meet the king to arrange a place for their future residence in the “empty country” adjoining the Zulu territory.¹⁶ It needs to be pointed out that modern day historians generally agree that despite the Mfecane wars of destruction, the land into which the Trekkers moved, was by no means “empty” because “tribal wars were not as destructive of life as has sometimes been asserted”.¹⁷ Van Jaarsveld has also agreed that:

¹³ Thomas J Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers (New York, Negro Universities Press, 1969), p 131.

¹⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 2, evidence of Maziyana, p 267.

¹⁵ Peter Becker, Rule of fear: the life and times of Dingane King of the Zulu, (London, Longmans, 1964), p 35.

¹⁶ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 106.

¹⁷ Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 105.

“Die land wat hulle binnegetrek het, was nie absoluut leeg nie”.¹⁸

According to Owen, Dingane received Retief’s letter on 26 October 1837 when he, Owen, was called upon to read it. Dingane’s reply is said to have been sympathetic, but no mention of land was made.¹⁹ Dingane and his chief advisors had been following the Trekker advance with growing foreboding. News of the Trekkers and their activities on the highveld reached them in relay and none of it was good.²⁰ To make matters worse, Jacob Msimbithi or Hlambamanzi who had come to Zululand in Shaka’s time and had made an impression on the Zulu king with his knowledge of the white people and their language,²¹ told Dingane how cruelly these Trekkers had enslaved him as a child and of “their contempt for the dignity of blacks”.²² Hlambamanzi’s prophesy that these people will “gradually drive the Zulu into the hinterland and eventually kill the king,”²³ caused quite a stir. As the Trekkers had recently smashed the power of Mzilikazi, Dingane and his counsellors could not fail to be impressed by the strength of these people.²⁴

Retief did not wait for the reply to his letter. He immediately rode off to Mgungundlovu to personally discuss his proposals with King Dingane. He rode with his fifteen horsemen and two British settlers, among them Halstead, who was to act as guide and interpreter.²⁵ The negotiations with Dingane are said to have gone off very well. The Zulu king assured Retief that he was “almost inclined” to grant land between the Thukela and Mzimvubu rivers and the

¹⁸ Van Jaarsveld en Scholtz, Die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, p 48.

¹⁹ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p 94.

²⁰ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 194.

²¹ JC van der Walt, “Reflections on yesteryear,” The Zululand Observer, 12 April 2004, p 6.

²² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mbovu, p25. Also Du buisson, The white man cometh, pp 194-195.

²³ Van der Walt, “Reflections of yesteryear”, The Zululand Observer, 12 April 2004, p 6.

²⁴ Davenport, South Africa, p 78.

²⁵ Wilson and Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870, p 358.

Khahlamba mountains, provided Retief returned to him the cattle which Sekonyela, the Tlokoa chief, had stolen from the Zulu. It has been argued that this condition was supposed to be proof that it was not the Voortrekkers who were responsible for the theft.²⁶ It was, in fact, Retief who, during the negotiations, laid the blame on the Tlokoa, a small but powerful chiefdom perched on the mountains near present-day Harrismith. He claimed that they dressed like white people and possessed horses and guns.²⁷ Dingane then assigned him to retrieve the royal cattle.

The subsequent activities of the Trekkers no doubt exacerbated Dingane's anxiety. Even before Retief carried out his side of the bargain, messengers carried the good news of the negotiations to the waiting Trekkers on the Drakensberg. In jubilation and without taking proper caution, the Trekkers hurriedly moved into Natal as their Promised Land. "A hundred wagons a day came rumbling down the steep passes and fanned out across the landscape".²⁸ This was alarming enough in itself, but was made more so when the Trekkers set up laagers, virtually taking possession of the land. In the assured confidence of ownership, they started giving Afrikaner names to the ancient landmarks in the country and also started seizing grain from neighbouring homesteads.²⁹ The Sithole people who lived in the area, terrified by the invaders, wasted no time in collecting their possessions and fleeing in panic. Very few of them had seen white people before. King Dingane himself was alarmed at the news of the "invasion". This unfortunate move was without doubt "fatal to the immediate safety of the Trekkers".³⁰

Dingane's growing fears for the safety of his kingdom were further heightened by a threatening

²⁶ Cameron, An illustrated history, p133. Also Wilson and Thompson, A history of South Africa to 1870, p358.

²⁷ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p197.

²⁸ Ibid, p199.

²⁹ Peter Colenbrander, "The Zulu kingdom, 1828-79" in A Duminy and B Guest (eds), Natal and Zululand from earliest times, p93.

³⁰ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p100.

letter from Retief, dated 18 November 1837. The letter, translated into English by Rev. Daniel Lindley read: "From God's great book (we learn that) kings, who do such things as Moselekatsi (has done) are severely punished, and not suffered long to live and reign. And if you wish to hear more fully how God treats such wicked kings, you can enquire of all the missionaries in your country...³¹. Meanwhile Retief and a commando of fifty men rode into "Wild Cat" country on 28 December 1837. There, on a flat-topped mountain overlooking the modern day town of Ficksburg, Retief met Sekonyela in the garden of Mr. Allison, the chief's missionary.³²

Sekonyela was subsequently tricked and hand-cuffed by the Trekkers. He was kept as a prisoner for three days while the cattle were being rounded up, the Zulu who accompanied the expedition being used to identify the royal cattle.³³ Sekonyela was told he would not be released until he had handed over the cattle he stole from Dingane. According to a kholwa (Christian convert) named Ezra Msimango, the missionary had just preached about the "sin of the theft" and Sekonyela had regretted stealing the beasts and intended to restore them when suddenly the Trekkers pounced on him.³⁴ The truth of that statement is hard to establish, though. Eventually, however, Retief fined Sekonyela more heavily and informed Dingane in a letter, rather foolishly, that "to punish Sekonyela he had made him deliver 100 head of cattle and also 63 horses and 11 guns for without those he could not have accomplished his theft".³⁵

The punitive expedition left Sekonyela's country with the loot and on 11 January 1838 Retief was back at the Trekker camps. At a meeting to discuss the wisdom of his second visit to

³¹ Voortrekker Argiefstukke 1829-1849, pp22-23 in Ruth E Gordon and Clive J Talbot, From Diaz to Vorster : source material on South African history (Goodwood, Nasou, 1977), p176.

³² Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, (Cape Town, Books of Africa, 1966), p99.

³³ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p102. Also Fisher, The Afrikaners, p79.

³⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ezra Msimango, p46.

³⁵ Ransford, The Great Trek, p120.

Mgungundlovu, feelings of foreboding were expressed quite openly all round. Retief, however, brushed aside all the arguments against the trip, confident that everything would go well.³⁶ He and 70 volunteers together with 30 coloured grooms and the young Thomas Halstead, who was to act as interpreter, set out for Mgungundlovu and approached the capital with a large herd of cattle. The Zulu poured out of the gates of the capital to meet them. Even the Rev. Francis Owen came down from his dwelling to meet and chat with them. Retief told Owen about the expedition and Owen was pleased that there had been no bloodshed and that Sekonyela's life was spared. To Dingane, however, it was unpardonable that the Trekkers had not brought Sekonyela with them, and the ease with which Retief retrieved the cattle worried him.³⁷ From this, it is tempting to conclude that Dingane dealt with the Trekkers on suspicion and fear. Msimbithi's prophesies must have continued to haunt him since Retief arrived. Added to this was the fact that Dingane had been receiving perplexing advice from all manner of people,³⁸ namely, his own chief counsellors, Ndlela and Nzobo, the missionaries, the traders and other aristocratic Zulu.

"Getrou aan hulle beginsel om grond ter bewoning deur onderhandeling in besit te kry, het die Trekkerleier Piet Retief... 'n traktaat van grondafstand... onderteken."³⁹ Halstead and the others witnessed the signing of that agreement on 6 February 1838, this after Retief had been rebuked for retaining the horses and guns and letting Sekonyela live. All this happened whilst warriors were being organised with food and drink, for a feast to celebrate and show Dingane's appreciation for the return of the Zulu royal cattle. Some Zulu writers have questioned, though without much evidence, the authenticity of that agreement or treaty.

³⁶ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p103.

³⁷ De Villiers, White tribe dreaming, p130.

³⁸ Bulpin, Natal and Zulu country, p100.

³⁹ FA van Jaarsveld, Van Riebeeck tot Verwoerd, 1652-1966: (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1971) p127.

Dingane said: "I shall not order the men to carry assegais in case the Boers become suspicious". His two chief councillors listened with interest. "Ndlela, gather the men of the army. They must carry dancing shields (amahawu), and not war shields (izihlangu) and also (izikhwili) sticks. I shall hold a dance for them (the Boers)."²⁹

The warriors danced and sang:

"Izinkondlo zethu zimbili zintathu
 Zingamashwilishwili, zishwilene ziphi,
 Sizawu khetha ngale, sijike ngale" (chorus)
 "Nawe nhlanganisa wakaphik' inkani,
 Wa uthi asiku shis ' u Mhlahlandlela, awasekho.
 Hi ya ya. Ye ya ya, Ya ya ya ya –e
 Babenyakuzithel' obisini, muntu wami wakwa Zulu,
 Abafokazana babethi asisakungena eNgome.
 Bangena. Hi ya ya"³⁰

(We have two, three izinkondlo dances; they wind about; they turn all over the place; we shall dance this way, and not that way) (chorus)

(You too, at the first engagement, were very obstinate; you said that we would not burn uMhlahlandlela, and it is there no longer. Hi ya ya! Ya ya ya ya-e. They were going to throw themselves into the milk, my man; in the Zulu country the common people said that we would not enter at eNgome; they entered. Hi ya ya).

From the lyrics of the song, the warriors, it seems, were once again getting ready to do the unexpected. The army commanders must have had a hint from Ndlela.

²⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Nduna, p 7.

³⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, song as sung by Nduna to Stuart, p 10. The Zulu orthography has been modernised.

That night the Trekkers enjoyed themselves around their fires dreaming of the farms they would soon acquire.³¹ The festivities continued the following morning. Perhaps King Dingane had something in mind for as the Voortrekkers were preparing to leave Mgungundlovu, having purchased their “Promised Land” with a few raided cattle, Dingane ordered them killed.³²

Various reasons have been given for Dingane to act as he did. Magolwana told the story that the king had come to feel that the Boers would surround his homestead and shoot him.³³ His induna had informed him that the Trekkers had been riding their horses measuring the size of the capital during the night. Nozulela ka Hlangwana said that his brother, Mxamama, had told him that the guards saw the Boers making an effort to surround the capital.³⁴ The Trekkers themselves looked elsewhere for the cause. Van der Walt and others have stated that: “In die bitterheid van hul gemoed was die geloof onder die Trekkers algemeen dat die moord plaasgevind het op aanstigting van ‘n paar Engelse”. After all, Gardiner and Owen had influence over Dingane whom they told “om geen grond aan die Trekkers af te staan nie” and also that “die Boere nie Britsgesind was nie”. Even then, these Afrikaner historians agree that “daar bestaan geen bewyse dat hulle (Gardiner and Owen) hom tot moord aangehits het nie”.³⁵

From the records of those woefully dishonest days, it would seem to be fair to accept Davenport’s and also Bulpin’s explanations that Dingane had doubts about the Voortrekkers (or did he fear them?) after their dealings with Mzilikazi and Sekonyela and that he was unsettled by the large numbers of Trekkers who came down the Drakensberg into his

³¹ T V Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, 1966), p 101.

³² Cameron, An illustrated history, p 133.

³³ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 112.

³⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of Nozulela, p 149.

³⁵ A J H van der Walt, J A Wiid, A L Geyer, Geskiedenis van Suid Afrika (Kaapstad, Nasou Pers, 1979), p 212.

country without prior consultation with him.³⁶ Their invasion of his land could easily have reminded him of Shaka's prophesy that the white people were going to take over the land, hence he felt obliged to prevent such an occurrence. It is well to note that he was also angered by Retief's letter threatening him with a God who punishes all kings who act like Mzilikazi. The failure of Retief to hand over the guns saying that "he is not a child", must have been the last straw. No king would have tolerated that, and in Zululand such arrogance was punishable by death. Some Zulu writers hold this view, e.g. Dhlomo.

The Trekkers, attracted by the sweet grass of the open veld, were spread out over a large area along the Bloukrantz and Bushmans rivers. They were in a vulnerable position, open to attack by their enemies. As it turned out, after the killing of Retief and his fellow riders, Ndlela marshalled some three regiments to the area where the Trekkers lay exposed and unsuspecting.³⁷ On 17 February 1838 the Zulu army surprised them and the result was a massacre estimated at 500 white men, women and children, including some 250 coloured servants. According to Warhurst, only four white people escaped.³⁸ But Meintjes says: "apart from livestock, nobody and nothing was spared".³⁹ Afrikaner historian F A van Jaarsveld stated that at Mgungundlovu "70 blankes en 30 kleurlingbediendes (is) om die lewe gebring" and only a few days later "deur 'n onuitgelekte aanval op die niksvermoedende en onvoorbereide groepies Voortrekkers ... 'n verdere tol van sowat 280 blankes en 200 kleurlingbediendes se lewens geëis, en ongeveer 25 000 beeste buitgemaak is".⁴⁰

³⁶ Davenport, South Africa, p 78; Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 104.

³⁷ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p 112.

³⁸ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 133.

³⁹ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p 113.

⁴⁰ F A Van Jaarsveld, Van Riebeeck tot Verwoerd. pp127-128.

“Die Nuusbode” dated 6 April 1838 reported the incident of Sunday 18 February 1838 at Doornkop with the headlines “Zoeloes se Bloeddorstige Aanval op Boere-Laers”.

According to this report “duisende langs die Tugela -, Bloukrans-en Boesmansriviere en hul sytakke aangeval en 40 mans, 56 vroue, 185 kinders en oor die 200 gekleurde bediendes uitgemoor het”.⁴¹

At Mgungundlovu, Magolwana ka Mkatini, the king’s chief imbongi, as observant as ever, pointed out that the king had an exceptional ability to hide his feelings:

“Isizib’ esise Mavivane Dingane

Isizib’ esinzonzo sizonzobebe”

(Even though he cannot be easily noticed, King Dingane, under certain circumstances, becomes extremely angry and bitter:

“Indiha lebabayo enjengesibhaha”

It is perhaps this hidden anger that might have been aroused by the actions of the Trekkers led by Piet (uPiti) Retief, leading to the killings:

“Owadi’ u Piti kuma Bhunu

Wamudla wantshobotshela.

Odi’ uMzibhelibheli kuma Bhunu,

Wadi’ u Phuzukhuhlokoza kuma Bhunu,

Wadi’ utlwahwini kuma Bhunu.

Except for Piti the other names are not real names of the Trekkers. The poet invented these

⁴¹ A J Bōeseken, Die Nuusbode (Kaapstad, Nasou Beperk, ongedateer). This is a collection of 200 historical articles in the form of news items depicting the first 300 years of South African history put together by Dr Anna Bōeseken.

names to express the plurality of the killing of the Trekkers.⁴² European writers have continued to insist that it was the king himself who uttered the words “Bulalan’ abathakathi” and set the murderous roller-coaster on the move resulting in the deaths of so many innocent Trekkers, their women and children. However, according to Sibusiso Nyembezi, the Zulu people say it was Dambuza (Nzobo) ka Sobadli who made the announcement.⁴³ (But there is no doubt that King Dingane had planned the sordid act up to its last minute execution.)

Dingane’s action was seen by many as essentially affronting and disgusting. He was described as a “savage” and the re-incarnation of classical Emperor Nero for conducting his affairs in such a cruel manner. Even African writers such as S M Molema, in his Bantu, Past and Present (1920) suggested that Dingane’s rule was “extremely savage and hostile”.⁴⁴ It was an act that created so much bitterness among the Afrikaner community and was not to be easily forgotten for a long time there after. The report of the 1852 Native Commission, suggested that Dingane must have repented of his cession of land to the Dutch farmers when he saw them arrive and settle in large numbers or that he had from the very beginning already contemplated their extermination. The commission came to that conclusion because King Dingane followed up his treacherous act with repeated attempts to destroy or expel them from his country.⁴⁵ Later, the Trekkers would hold on to the land up to the Thukela and Mzinyathi (Buffalo) rivers by right of conquest. The flame of resentment for Dingane burned deeply in their hearts. It is, therefore, not hard to imagine their desire for revenge.

⁴² Nyembezi, Izibongo zamakhosi, pp 45-62.

Magolwana held the exclusive right to declaim praises when ancestors were being addressed, when the armies went to war and on other state occasions. See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 71.

⁴³ Nyembezi, Izibongo zamakhosi, p 57

⁴⁴ C F J Muller, “Die Groot Trek” in B J Liebenberg, Opstelle, p 117.

⁴⁵ Native Commission to look into the past and present condition of the Natives, 1852-1853. Report of Commission, p 7.

The “Weenen massacre” or “Bloukrantz murders” resounded through Transorangia and the Transvaal. In Natal Gerrit Maritz, supported by women, did all he could to make the survivors (mostly those who camped at the foot of the Drakensberg) stand fast and not leave Natal as many then intended. Under him the Trekkers re-grouped, sending out patrols to make sure that they were not taken by surprise again. They discovered that the settlers at the port were preparing to join them in battle against the Zulu. Just then, they were joined by Hendrik Potgieter and Piet Uys who had just descended the Drakensberg.⁴⁶

On 6 April 1838 a Boer commando of 347 horsemen under Potgieter and Uys, joined up with Maritz’s men and crossed the Thukela in the direction of Mgungundlovu, severely outnumbered by approximately one to a hundred. Meintjes says: “The whole thing was so daring that it verged on folly”, the leaders were “over-confident and careless”, thinking that it would be like the punitive expedition against Mzilikazi at Marico. The Trekkers must have trusted their commandants which included Karl Landman, Gert Rudolph, Hendrik Potgieter, Hans Dons de Lange – and the Almighty.⁴⁷

Incensed by the injustice and cruelty of King Dingane, they rode for five days in a deserted area, but unlike the Matebele, the Zulu knew that they were coming and were on the alert. On the other side of the Mzinyathi River, at Italeni, they were led into an ambush where Piet Uys and his gallant young son, Dirkie, were both killed as well as other members of the expedition. Potgieter, who had never approved of the Natal venture in the first place, having been criticised harshly for the hasty and careless attack, led his followers back to the Highveld. There he founded Potchefstroom in December 1838 as the first permanent settlement of whites north of the Vaal River.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 82.

⁴⁷ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p 119. Also Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 82.

⁴⁸ Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 101.

The British settlers John Cane and Robert Biggar, who were supposedly angered by the unwarranted killing of Thomas Halstead, decided to support the Voortrekker cause. They mustered some fifteen other settlers and a thousand and a half Zulu into an undisciplined rabble of armed men. The Rev. H Hewetson, who had arrived at Durban to join Owen in the midst of the excitement, has described a section of this rabble army as “a strange set of warriors” of about 400 Zulu bellowing a war song which sounded exactly like the noise of angry bulls. They had flags and banners flying, on one of which was written “IZINKUMBI” (the locusts) on another was the curious inscription “FOR JUSTICE WE FIGHT”. The British opportunists called their small band “The Grand Army of Natal”.⁴⁹

Whilst King Dingane’s army was laying in wait for the approaching Trekkers near Italeni on 2 April 1838, the ramshackle army, in support of the Voortrekkers and wishing to avenge Halstead, took a Zulu homestead belonging to Nombanga ka Ngidli of the Thusi people, “the men being absent, and seized all the cattle, given as up to 700, and the women and maidens”.⁵⁰ The cattle were subsequently shared out at Malinda. On their return home to Port Natal, Bob Biggar said to Ogle and Cane that they were cowards for not advancing to Mgungundlovu to “eat the horns of the elephant”.⁵¹ This must have incensed the traders for more adventure for , a few days later the “Grand Army” crossed the Thukela into enemy territory. Ngidi ka Mcikaziswa called the adventure a “cattle-raiding expedition”⁵², while Ransford had no doubt that this army was more interested in “some cattle rustling while the impis were engaged with the Boers”.⁵³

⁴⁹ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 108; also Ransford, The Great Trek, p 140.

⁵⁰ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p 121.

⁵¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of John Ogle, p 218.

⁵² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 110.

⁵³ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 141.

After much disagreement, Ogle and a number of other traders refused to go, but Robert Biggar promptly succeeded to organise the second raid. The outfit that set out for Zululand was a miscellaneous collection of eighteen traders, thirty Coloured and three thousand Zulu followers. Among these were also some old men who could hardly walk, but hobbled off on sticks determined to get their share of the spoils.⁵⁴

Dambuza who had rushed across the country with some 10 000 men lay waiting for them. As the Grand Army crossed the Thukela, one regiment hurried to the river to cut off possible retreat and, according to Ngidi, the Imihaye regiment shouting Haye! Haye! Haye! fell like a thunderbolt upon the enemy on the plains of Ndongakusuka.⁵⁵ An estimated one thousand of Biggar's Zulu contingent perished, thirteen Britons including Cane and Biggar were killed and the few survivors fled back to Port Natal with Dambuza's warriors in hot pursuit.⁵⁶ The settlement at the port was destroyed and the few who survived including the missionaries, Owen and Lindley, sought refuge on board the Comet, a coaster which had providentially arrived at Port Natal.⁵⁷ A few days later the ship sailed away. The land of the Zulu was under their control once again, but not for long.

The Voortrekkers drew together again, refusing to give up hope of settling in Natal and ruling themselves.⁵⁸ This time, however, they had to make do without their veteran leaders like Jakobus Uys, who had died in July and Gerrit Maritz who died unexpectedly in

⁵⁴ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 107.

⁵⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 75.

⁵⁶ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p 121.

⁵⁷ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 82.

⁵⁸ To create a "State where no equality between whites and coloured should be preached and practised". D W Kruger, The making of a nation (Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1975), p 7.

September 1838 of a complaint diagnosed as fever.⁵⁹ Though disorganised, leaderless and dispirited, the Trekkers kept the road to Port Natal open. In October a ship, the Mary, docked at the port loaded with provisions for the Trekkers, sent to them by well-wishers in the Eastern Cape.⁶⁰ Alexander Biggar and J P Muller received the goods and sent for wagons to come down to the port to collect them. In that same month, amid the gloom and uncertainty, the Trekkers courageously began to lay out the foundations of a new settlement on the Msunduzi stream. It was to be (Mgungundlovu),⁶¹ Pietermaritzburg, the capital, named after their deceased leaders Piet Retief and Gerrit Maritz. Nombashini ka Ndlhela said that the ground on which the town was built was formerly occupied by Macibise ka Mlifa who died in the area that later became known as Edendale.⁶²

The gloom that laid so heavily upon the Trekkers since the death of Maritz began to lift when on 22 November 1838, Andries Pretorius, another Trek leader from the Cape Colony, arrived with his party. The Trekkers welcomed him with relief and enthusiasm and immediately took him into their confidence. His arrival brought decisive leadership to the disorganised Trekkers.⁶³ On 25 November he was appointed Commandant-General without opposition or competition as was usually the case among the Trekkers in the past. From that moment the story of the Great Trek is dominated by the name of Andries Pretorius. The Zulu called him “Ngalonkulu” (brawny arms). Under him the Boers were united.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 83.

⁶⁰ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 143.

⁶¹ Named after Dingane’s capital as the centre of power. See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Sijewana, p 332.

⁶² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Nombashini, p 144.

⁶³ De Villiers, White tribe dreaming, p 133.

⁶⁴ Cameron, An illustrated history, p 134.

While Pretorius was preparing his men for a showdown with the Zulu, Sir George Napier, the Cape Governor who had succeeded Sir Benjamin D'Urban, dispatched Major Samuel Charters with a hundred soldiers to Port Natal. They landed at the port on 4 December without any opposition. Twelve days later, after building Fort Victoria, Charters hoisted the Union Jack at the port. Meanwhile inland, on Sunday, 9 December, the Voortrekkers took an oath, administered by Sarel Cilliers, that "if victory attended their arms, they would build a church and keep the anniversary as a day of thanksgiving".⁶⁵ Across the Thukela King Dingane's chief herbalist, Sobekase ka Tshoba and the old inyanga, Mqayana ka Mhlongwe, who had done much for Shaka's warriors, were moving from one ikhanda (regimental headquarters) to another doctoring the king's amabutho. They started by weaving the inkatha of war. When completed the inkathas were taken to a deep, still pool of the river. There the warriors opened them and phalaza'd upon them and once that was done, Dingane ordered the troops to go to Senzangakhona's grave to perform a dance there, also to sharpen their assegais on the old king's sharpening stone, that is, the stone of the assegai.⁶⁶

The Trekkers finally made their base wagon laager between the Ncome, a tributary of the Mzinyathi River, and a large ditch, where Ndlela attacked them on the night of 15 December 1838. John Fisher has stated that the Zulu were a "force of 11 000 men against 460 Afrikaners", but on the next day the Trekkers were decidedly victorious, "some Zulus were shot as they ran for cover. Others croached beneath their shields ... some sought refuge in the river ... Perhaps three thousand Zulus were killed".⁶⁷ Ngidi ka Mcikaziswa confirmed

⁶⁵ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 101; Muller, 500 years, p 167.

⁶⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 77.

*Inkatha was a coil of grass made according to special rituals in preparation for battle. Warriors were sprinkled with intelezi (muti) after the inkatha ritual had been done.

⁶⁷ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 83.

the defeat when he said: “We Zulus die lying facing the enemy – all of us – but at the Ncome we turned our backs.”⁶⁸

The battle of Blood River (Ncome), as the encounter came to be known, signified the collapse of Zulu power. The Voortrekkers, in jubilation, hurriedly advanced to Dingane’s Mgungundlovu. At uPhathe, near a stream of the same name which flows from the Mthonjaneni range into the White Mfolozi, one Bhongoza Ngcobo led them into an ambush. Consequent to their surprise defeat the Trekkers left their guns on the battlefield and these were picked up by the king’s regiments. Dingane thereupon formed a new regiment which he called the Isithunyisa (gun).⁶⁹ The larger section of the Trekker punitive expedition, however, succeeded to reach the royal palace which they destroyed by fire. Dingane had by then been whisked away to Emvokweni ikhanda (military quarters) by the uKokoti, Amankamane and Amankentshane regiments. He was in the company of the royal aristocracy namely, Ndlela, Dambuza, Klwana ka Ngqengelele and Ngungwini ka Menziwa.⁷⁰

The news of the British military occupation of the port greeted the “Wenkommando” on its return from Mgungundlovu at the close of 1838. It was indeed a pleasant thing for the Voortrekkers that the British came late into the Natal region and could not interfere with their victory over Dingane. They were also relieved that the British had not outrightly annexed Natal, as this would mean that they were directly under the British government again. Sir James Stephen, the British philanthropically-minded Under Secretary of State for Colonies, gave the reasons why Britain was not willing to annex Natal at that moment. He said that “it is

⁶⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 39.

⁶⁹ H C Lugg, A Natal family looks back (Durban, T W Griggs, 1970), p 42
The uPhathe is a long sloping ridge resembling a vessel with flattened sides overlooking the White Mfolozi.

⁷⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 76.

ill policy to enlarge this ill-peopled and unprofitable Colony (the Cape Colony), and that to make a new settlement at Port Natal ... would be merely to throw away so much money, and to multiply our relations and responsibilities towards barbarous tribes, from which nothing could ever come, but the consumption of treasure, the waste of human life, and a warfare alike inglorious, unprofitable and afflicting".⁷¹ On their part, the Voortrekkers decided that the best thing would be to ignore the soldiers drilling at the port. They started drawing up a constitution as though the British did not exist.⁷² They named their country Republic of Natalia, the "first Boer state properly so called" and elected a governing body, the "Raad van Representanten van het Volk" (Volksraad) to conduct its affairs.⁷³

The Trekkers were pleased to see the unpopular Charters hand over his command to the more understanding Capt. Henry Jervis.⁷⁴ Jervis made it clear from the start that he would act as mediator between the Trekkers and Dingane and was not interested in contesting Voortrekker governance of Natalia. But the observant French adventurer and scientist, Delegorgue, believed that the real intention with the occupation was different.⁷⁵ Preller argued that the Cape Governor, Sir George Napier, "het op alle moontlike maniere geprobeer om die Boere hul trek te belet, en te belemmer. Hy het die uitvoer van ammunisie verbied, en volgehou dat hulle Britse onderdane bly, wàar hulle ook mag heentrek".⁷⁶

Jervis, helped by Henry Ogle, began negotiations with the Zulu for peace between them and the Trekkers. A delegation of Zulu led by Gambushi arrived at the port on 23 March 1839.

⁷¹ Muller, 500 years, p 170.

⁷² Ransford, The Great Trek, p 163.

⁷³ Davenport, South Africa, pp 78-79

⁷⁴ Laband, Rope of sand, p 108.

⁷⁵ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p48.

⁷⁶ Preller, Daglemier in Suid Africa, p206

They brought with them 316 horses that had been taken from the Trekkers between February and August 1838. Jervis notified the Trekkers about the Zulu envoys. Though Pretorius was unhappy with Jervis' involvement in matters between the Zulu and the Trekkers, he nevertheless travelled to Port Natal to meet the emissary on 29 March 1839.⁷⁷ From the answers to questions put by Pretorius to the envoys, it became clear that Dingane had instructed them to admit defeat, to express the Zulu desire for peace and to pledge the payment of reparations, but to say nothing regarding land. Pretorius stated clearly that the Trekkers would not accept the intervention of Jervis or Ogle or any other representative of the British government and that they preferred the Zulu to deal directly with the Trekker government. He demanded also that Dingane should send all the cattle stolen from the Trekkers directly to Pietermaritzburg, the Zulu would then be told how much reparation was expected from them,⁷⁸ and then peace could be concluded.

By December 1839 when Jervis and his troops left Natal, the Volksraad had already found an ally in Mpande ka Senzangakhona, thus strengthening their position against Dingane. The Zulu speak of the incident as "the breaking of the rope" (ukudabuka kwegoda). Mtshepi ka Noradu asserted that the breaking was caused by Mathunjana ka Sibaca who had been sent together with Nxagwana ka Zivalele by Dingane to present a hundred beautiful young cattle to Mpande. The two izinduna presented the cattle at Mpande's Ntolwane homestead. It was planned that Mpande should come over to Mgungundlovu to give thanks, in which event he would be killed. On their way back, Mathunjana turned back to Ntolwane to inform Mpande about Dingane's plan. He advised him to escape. Mpande subsequently informed all his senior men who organised Mpande's adherents and together they crossed the Thukela southwards to the country which was already under the Trekkers.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ BJ Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal (Pretoria, Academia, 1977), p58.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p58.

⁷⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Mtshapi, p67. But Mangati ka Godide, JSA, vol.2, p200 and Mtshayankomo ka Magolwana, JSA, vol.4,p108. both testified that it was Ndlela who warned Mpande, though he did not cross with the prince but remained with Dingane.

Mpande who had deserted Dingane, moved south and encamped near the Tongathi river within striking distance of Port Natal. He immediately opened diplomatic communications with the Trekkers, professing his peaceful intentions.⁸⁰ Despite Mpande's "pliable and unaggressive" projection of himself, the Trekkers were suspicious. They wished to drive him and his people back across the Thukela, but for the 25 000 head of cattle. The Trekkers wanted to lay their hands on them. Ultimately the Landdrost of Congella, Roos, suggested that a special commission be sent to Mpande.⁸¹

Delegorgue tells of a Trekker delegation that met Mpande at the Tongathi where an alliance against Dingane was concluded.⁸² This alliance, followed immediately by the withdrawal of the British troops, opened a new phase in the politics of Natal and Zululand. Mpande was given the opportunity to present his case before the Volksraad at Pietermaritzburg.⁸³ Finally, protection was promised him on condition that he agreed to withdraw beyond the Mfolozi and also to assume all of Dingane's liabilities in terms of a treaty signed on 13 May 1839. Mpande was subsequently allowed to settle south of the Thukela temporarily until the score with Dingane had been settled. It was agreed that the Trekkers would give Mpande full protection if he behaved properly as an ally. Satisfied, Mpande left for his new village, Kwa-Mahambehlala.⁸⁴ An entourage of Trekker representatives led by Landdrost Frans Roos, followed Mpande and in a ridiculous ceremony, under the Volksraad flag, Mpande was made to repeat his assurances of subservience to Voortrekker overlordship, where upon he was crowned the "Reigning Prince of Emigrant Zulus". The indemnity that Dingane was to pay was raised from 39 000 to a round

⁸⁰ Laband, Rope of sand, p 114.

⁸¹ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p83.

⁸² Ibid, p84.

⁸³ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, p156.

⁸⁴ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p105.

figure of 40 000 head of cattle. That was the price Mpande had to pay, including the loss of land, for the coveted Zulu crown.⁸⁵ According to the treaty Mpande was not to wage war against any group without the consent of the Volksraad. As soon as it was reasonably safe, he and his people would move back across the Thukela. When Dingane has been dealt with, Mpande would be king and he would have to give up part of Zululand up to St Lucia Bay to the Trekkers.⁸⁶

Once the alliance with Mpande had been concluded the Trekker leaders planned to pick a casus belli for a war with Dingane, and this was not a difficulty since the king had been slack in returning looted cattle. While Jervis was preparing to withdraw from Port Natal, the Trekkers began taking the law into their own hands. "Marauding bands of Boers were scouring the country side, raiding crops and confiscating cattle from the Zulus, Natal blacks and white settlers alike."⁸⁷ Freed from unwelcome British tutelage, the Voortrekkers, equipped with Mpande's assurances were prepared to implement their own principles and policies. At Pietermaritzburg, they busied themselves finalizing their strategy against Dingane. The bottom line was that "Zululand, with her rich bounty of cattle, was theirs for the plucking" and they were not prepared to waste any more time in making themselves rich.⁸⁸

Early in January 1840 the Voortrekkers sent an ultimatum to Dingane, demanding 40 000 head of cattle as compensation for Dingane's aggression. The price was to be paid by the next full moon, otherwise there would be war. Dingane flew into a rage when the news of the demand reached him. Nevertheless, he tried a diplomatic way out of the dilemma. He sent Dambuza and chief Khambazana to Pietermaritzburg to reason with the Trekkers, hoping that at least, cordial relations could be maintained. They brought along with them 200 of the finest Zulu

⁸⁵ Meintjes, The Voortrekkers, pp 156-157.

⁸⁶ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 237.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p 238.

⁸⁸ Laband, Rope of sand, p 115.

cattle, but the Trekkers arrested them instead, charging them with the murder of Piet Retief.⁸⁹

Preller observed that: “Die meeste historici neem aan dat Tambuza afgesant’ was van Dingane” but he believes that “hulle teenwoordige sending slegs spionasie ten doel het” and according to a member of the War Council (Krygsraad), Izak de Jager, “dat hulle veroordeel word weens spionasie”,⁹⁰ when their case came up for a hearing.

Meanwhile the Trekker plans for the invasion of Zululand were being concluded and on 19 January 1840, Pretorius and 400 of his men invaded Zululand. But, on 27 January, while they were still on their way, news reached them of a Zulu army under the command of Nongalaza ka Nondela, Mpande’s General, advancing on the new Mgungundlovu from the south. The Trekkers decided to slow their pace and plodded gingerly until they reached the site of the Battle of Blood River which was still strewn with bones of Zulu warriors who died there.⁹¹ It was at that spot where Pretorius decided to hold a meeting of the Krygsraad to try chiefs Dambuza and Khambazana, his regal prisoners, whom he had dragged along all the way naked.⁹² Delegorgue remarked that the “Poor devils, their only protection was the skin which their creator had given them”.⁹³ Mpande found himself admitted to a seat on the Council where he failed to hold his resentment of the two accused and flew into a rage accusing Dambuza of having instigated the killings. Dambuza admitted to the guilt of all his crimes, but said that Khambazana, his co-accused, was innocent and did not deserve death as he did. Mpande hastened to say he was equally responsible for some of the crimes. Finally, the two chiefs were sentenced to be

⁸⁹ Du Buisson, *The white man cometh*, p 243.

⁹⁰ Preller, *Daglemier in Suid-Afrika*, p 213.

⁹¹ Du Buisson, *The white man cometh*, p 243.

⁹² Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.3, evidence of Mmemi, p 258.

⁹³ Delegorgue, *Travels in southern Africa*, p 112.

executed by firing squad.⁹⁴ “Die getuienis van Mpande, Zikhali en ander Bantoes het geen twyfel gelaat oor Dambuza se aandeel in die moord op die blankes nie”.⁹⁵ Delegorgue lamented that he had never seen such a brave end on the part of the prisoners. “These men “ he said “know how to die”.⁹⁶ He remarked on their bravery before the firing squad.

Just then, news reached the Voortrekkers that Nongalaza was gaining victory over the armies of Dingane and that the Zulu army was down to three or four thousand men. The commando immediately resumed its march, but they were already too late. A messenger arrived the following morning to inform them that the Zulu impi under Ndlela had been defeated and that Dingane had fled into Swaziland.⁹⁷ According to Mtshapi ka Noradu, the Dhlangubo regiment known as Amagovu, fighting with the Mlambongwenya forces, drove back the Zulu at Amaqonqo Hills.⁹⁸ On 10 February 1840, at a curious ceremony watched by the commando and a gathering of warriors, Pretorius simply climbed on a large stone, turned and faced Mpande and then announced: “I now appoint you to be King of the Zulu race that remains....Maintain peace with my people as long as you live. Then I give you as a concession, for it is my territory, conquered by my weapons, the Kingdom of Zululand.”⁹⁹ Roberts agrees that these were strange words indeed which the new Zulu King accepted meekly. The Trekker commando then fired a twenty two gun salute. An imbongi must have immediately burst out eulogising, most probably Magolwana ka Mkhathini of the Jiyana section of the Mtshali people who went on to become Mpande’s principal imbongi.

⁹⁴ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 114.

⁹⁵ Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal, p 80.

⁹⁶ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 114

⁹⁷ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 328.

⁹⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 70.

⁹⁹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 329.

The opening lines of Mpande's izibongo graphically describe the situation:

“Umsimud’ owavela ngesiluba
Phakathi kwama Ngisi nama Qadasi
U Nowelamuva wawo Shaka”¹⁰⁰

Mpande profusely thanked the Commandant-General and promised to adhere to all the stipulations of their treaty. Having settled the affairs of Zululand to their satisfaction, Pretorius and his commando drove away some 31 000 head of cattle, “leaving Mpande, the vassal king of an impoverished and diminished kingdom, bleeding from the unhealed wounds of the civil war”.¹⁰¹ On 14 February 1840, Pretorius on behalf of the Volksraad, annexed all the territory between the Thukela and the Black Mfolozi up to the Drakensberg, including St Lucia Bay and the coastal belt and harbours between the Mfolozi and Mzimvubu rivers.¹⁰² The Zulu were to continue to live in Zululand under their new king, Mpande, “but the southern half of the territory now belonged to the Boers, as well as all of Natal. This was the Republic of Natalia”.¹⁰³

The year 1840 was notable for a general sense of security and prosperity for the infant Republic of Natalia. An appreciable number of buildings were erected and farms allocated. Voortrekker boys, as young as sixteen years of age were entitled to one farm for habitation, another farm for grazing and a plot in town.¹⁰⁴ The soil was tilled and gardens were laid. The town of Durban was expanded and Weenen was proclaimed the third town. The first state Christian church, the “Church of the Vow” or “Geloftekerk”, as promised by Sarel Cilliers before the Battle of Blood River, was built right at the centre of the capital, Pietermaritzburg. The first clergyman to take charge of the church was Daniel Lindley, who had returned to Natal particularly to serve the Trekker community. According to Muller, “the Trekkers had finally found, after a search which

¹⁰⁰ Nyembezi, *Izibongo zamakhosi*, p 63.

¹⁰¹ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 124.

¹⁰² Meintjes, *The Voortrekkers*, p162.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p 163.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p 166.

began in 1834, a northern territory suitable for their cattle farming and agricultural pursuits".¹⁰⁵

The period of settlement could now begin. The mobile phase of the Great Trek had ended. A federal bond with the "Overberg" Trekkers was established and the few British settlers at the port were of no consequence and hence could be ignored. Most of all, the Zulu danger had been permanently removed and large numbers of after-trekkers or late comers were pouring into their new-found country.¹⁰⁶ The white population rose above 4000, prompting that a land office be opened as a matter of urgency to survey and allocate farms. The Volksraad, in the meanwhile, set about drawing the constitution of the Republic of Natalia. It was an elementary constitution. Its fundamental law was the "Grondwet" of Natal which was originally formulated in 1838. In it the principle of differentiation was basic, "n skerp verskil tussen 'n blanke en 'n nie, blanke gemaak het, en op grond van hierdie verskil kan daar geen sprake van gelykstelling wees nie - nòg juridies, nòg polities, nòg godsdienstig, nòg sosiaal".¹⁰⁷

The enforcement of the policy of segregation looked as though it had the potential to solve the problem of the Zulu entering the Republic. However, since the Zulu were unorganised as squatters, they presented a serious problem.¹⁰⁸ Pretorius as Commandant-General "was verantwoordelik vir die uitvoering van die Volksraad se Bantoe-beleid".¹⁰⁹ He raised the question of the Africans in the Volksraad, complaining of "die wangedrag van die kaffers..." whereupon the Volksraad decided "dat die Natalse Bantoe hulle op die plase van die Blankes moet gaan vestig en dat diè wat weier, uit Natal moet padgee".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Muller, 500 years, p167.

¹⁰⁶ Ransford, The Great Trek, p170.

¹⁰⁷ Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal, p116.

¹⁰⁸ Ransford, The Great Trek, p171

¹⁰⁹ Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal, p116.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p119.

The number of squatters on each farm was to be five families, enough to provide the required labour.¹¹¹ Pretorius, however failed to urge the chiefs to persuade their adherents to take up farm labour. On 5 August 1840 Pretorius once again complained of the “omleggende kaffirs” and upon his request, the Volksraad agreed that patrols against chiefs’ villages be made and those arrested be kept in chains and forced to do public work.¹¹² The Blacks in the vicinity of Port Natal were to be told not to plough their fields anymore because by December 1840, they would be removed to either live on white farms or be placed in another area.¹¹³ Liebenberg admits that “Die Trekkers se optrede teenoor die Bantoes in Natal was dus, ten minste wat hierdie aspek betref, nie so regverdig as wat sommige geskiedskrywers meen nie”.¹¹⁴

According to Muller, the Natal Voortrekkers were constantly exposed to direct and indirect pressure from the British Government which intended to subject them once again to its control.¹¹⁵ In reality, the British had come to realise the futility of expecting the Trekkers to return to the Cape Colony and had decided that the solution would be the annexation of Natal. This view gained momentum when it was discovered that Natal had coal deposits that would be invaluable with regard to the sea route to the east. Sir George Napier himself, had long been in favour of annexation, “as several factors convinced him of the necessity”.¹¹⁶

In December 1840, a commando led by Lombard attacked a Baca chief, Ncapayi. As stated by Ndongeni ka Xoki, the cause of the quarrel was that Ncapayi “had stolen two cows, a red and a

¹¹¹ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 171.

¹¹² Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal, p 119.

¹¹³ Ibid, p 119.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p 120.

¹¹⁵ Muller, 500 years, p 167.

¹¹⁶ Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 107.

black, each with a calf, from a Boer homestead at Weenen".¹¹⁷ Mqaikana ka Yenge, on the contrary, said it was chief Fodo who induced the Trekkers to attack Ncapayi.¹¹⁸ Some three thousand cattle are said to have been taken in that raid. On their return the Trekkers gave Fodo's people ten goats and a barren cow. The servants of King and Ogle, the four "voorlopers" of which Ndongeni was one, were given an ox. The next thing was that Fodo was accused of stealing the goats. His people were flogged. Fodo was arrested and made to sleep under a wagon with his hands tied behind his back. He, however managed, after four days, to escape. With Fodo's people deserting, Dambuza ka Mpiki drove the cattle across the Mkomazi to the Republic's Capital Pietermatitzburg. King and Ogle were rewarded by the Volksraad for their part but the two were not happy with the treatment they received. Ndongeni swore that it was in regard to the Ncapayi expedition that the conflict arose between the Boers and the British. "That was the true cause", he concluded.¹¹⁹

Besides capturing the cattle, the Trekker commando had killed forty people during the foray and took with them seventeen children to be used as "apprentices" on their farms in the Republic. Voortrekker aggression was so excessive that it disturbed the AmaMpondo chief, Faku and the Wesleyan missionaries W H Garner, Sam Palmer and Thomas Jenkins, who were working in the area.¹²⁰ Consequently, the Wesleyan Superintendent, the Rev. William Shaw, complained to Governor Napier and requested that the Ama Mpondo people be protected by British troops from such treatment in the future. While Napier was pondering the question and the next move,

¹¹⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndongeni, p 240.

¹¹⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Mqaikana, p 3.

¹¹⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Ndongeni, p 241.

¹²⁰ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 107.

the Trekkers once again, on 14 January 1841, sent their request to the British Government to recognise their independence. They pledged to keep trade flowing on an even keel with the Cape Colony and that they would not practise slavery or “increase their boundaries to the detriment of adjacent tribes”.¹²¹

In this case “adjacent tribes” meant the Zulu, the Baca and Ama Mpondo. How far this assurance was true did not take long to be tested. Thousands of Zulu had flocked back into the Republic once the Dingane menace had been eliminated by the “Wenkommando” and the “Beestekommando”. The former homesteads and graves of ancestors of the returning Zulu lay on farm-lands that had recently been marked out for the Trekkers. For proper control, the Volksraad decided to limit the number of Zulu farm occupants whom they called “squatters” to a maximum of five families per farm. The number was seen as satisfactory for the labour needs of one farm.¹²² In August the Volksraad, in its austere application of policy, moved thousands of Zulu to the southern boundary of Natal.¹²³ The Volksraad intended moving all “superfluous Blacks from the Republic into the land between the Umtamvuna and the Umzimvubu Rivers.”¹²⁴ The move was seen by Napier as a threat to the stability of the Cape eastern frontier which thing a great number of governors dreaded. He immediately dispatched Major T.C. Smith with 150 soldiers to Pondoland. From this base, troops would be further dispatched to occupy Port Natal.¹²⁵

Sir George Napier who had long been interested in extending British sovereignty over Natal, was encouraged to take action by merchants in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown who feared that trade might pass out of their hands into those of American

¹²¹ Meintjes, *The Voortrekkers*, pp 169-170.

¹²² Ransford, *The Great Trek*, pp 171-172.

¹²³ Muller, *500 years*, p 171.

¹²⁴ Warhurst, *Geen's the making of South Africa*, p 107.

¹²⁵ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 4, evidence of Ndongeni, p 260.

and Dutch traders.¹²⁶ An American brig, the Levant, commanded by Captain Holmes, conducted trade with Port Natal in August 1841, this caused anxiety in British commercial circles. When the Dutch vessel the Brazilia under the command of Captain Reus docked at the same port in March and April 1841, suspicion ran high in British diplomatic circles that France, Britain's colonial rival, was behind the Dutch visit with the aim of undermining British supremacy in the area.¹²⁷ All these factors strengthened Napier's conviction that Natal should, of necessity, be annexed by the British. Captain T.C Smith was subsequently ordered to proceed to Port Natal and in May Smith raised the Union Jack at the port.

According to Ndongeni, when the heifers seized from Ncapayi were pregnant, the Trekkers announced that the British had come over the sea and were at Durban. The Trekkers then armed and went to Durban. They found but few troops. They shut them in.¹²⁸ The Trekkers who had been led to expect Dutch intervention by Johan Smellekamp, in the event of British interference by, Johan Smellekamp, decided to resist Captain Smith's invasion. Smellekamp who came on board the Brazilia, though subsequently disowned by the government of the Netherlands, had told the Trekkers that the Dutch were prepared to support them. Open conflict ensued between Trekkers and the British.

The Trekkers repulsed Smith's clumsily organised night attack at Congella and inflicted a sizeable weight of casualties on the British force. The Trekkers then besieged the camp. While Smith struggled to withstand the siege, Dick King and his servant Ndongeni made the memorable escape and horse ride to the Eastern Cape to solicit assistance in the form of reinforcements.¹²⁹ "It was only when I crossed the Mzimkhulu that King told me that

¹²⁶ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 107.

¹²⁷ Muller, 500 years, p 171.

¹²⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Ndongeni, p 160.

¹²⁹ Muller, 500 years, p 172.

he was going to his people to raise the alarm. He then reminded me of the Ncapayi affair where we nearly died” said Ndongeni who further informed Stuart that when he was feeding the horses across the Mkhomazi, a boy told him that the Boers had seen their spoor, they then whipped their horses up, hearing that the Boers were in pursuit. They went through the night and day dawned just after they had crossed the Mzimkhulu. After crossing they rode through day and night. There were no imizi in that part of the country then, only Mbulazi of the eziNkumbini people at eMhlunga between Mtwalume and Mzumbe.¹³⁰ They got to the British troops at Mgazi, just south of Mzimvubu. “My body was swollen, I was three days there. They then sent dispatches to Smith.”¹³¹

Late in June 1842 a British relief force under Lieutenant A J Cloete landed at Port Natal. The raising of the siege ended the military resistance of the Trekkers in Natal. Very little political resistance was offered. A petition signed by some 400 Trekker women declaring that they would “rather walk barefoot across the Drakensberg” than submit to the British, did not help as the Volksraad agreed to sign the terms of capitulation and accepted British authority on 15 July 1842 at Pietermaritzburg.¹³² The Voortrekker venture into Natal had thus come to naught. The “long and exhausting wandering, the arrival in the smiling valleys, the wars, the massacres, the blood oaths, the victory ... (the Republic), the raids and counter-raids, the stealing of cattle, (the glory), they had come and they left”.¹³³ The Voortrekker venture left Mpande with a stump Zulu kingdom and the British authorities to deal with the roots of the tree.

¹³⁰ (120) Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Ndongeni, p 243.

*Mbulazi was H.F. Fynn, his African adherents were called izi Nkumbi (locusts), they had settled at Itafa under the chieftainess, Vundlase, whom Fynn’s younger brother, Frank (Phobana), married, p 261).

¹³¹ Ibid, p 243.

¹³² De Villiers, White tribe dreaming, p 138.

¹³³ Ibid, p 138.

On 8 August 1843 the Republic of Natalia came to an end. Written into the articles of annexation was the missionary inspired phrase: "There shall not in the eye of the law be any distinction of colour, origin, race or creed; but that the protection of the law in letter and in substance, shall be extended impartially to all alike." The British annexation, nonetheless, did nothing good for the Zulu, it only proved that British colonial realities were very different from philanthropic dreams.¹³⁴

These philanthropic dreams made up the face of British imperial policy, which was designed to construct a specific national identity. In this case the identity or image was projected to the Zulu to contrast with the presumed or real brutality of the Trekkers whose position of authority the British were occupying. The task was often carried out by the missionaries. An example is Delegorgue's recorded incident when Adams was used by Colonel AJ Cloete, at the time of the assertion of British rule, as a messenger to convey to the local Africans a request that they assist in rounding up Trekker cattle and horses.¹³⁵ There is no doubt here that the British were signing a blank cheque for the Zulu to pillage. Obviously the exercise was meant to buy their favour.

The Natal Zulu who possessed very little in the line of cattle or property of any kind, saw the British administration as a golden opportunity, perhaps a chance to re-establish themselves in the land of their forefathers. Some of them regarded the British as "sweet people".¹³⁶ In Zululand proper, Aldin Grout who Mpande had admitted into his kingdom, began to manipulate the king's subjects in an attempt to deprive the king of his influence. Aspirant and potential converts began to be called "people of the missionary".

¹³⁴ De Villiers, *White tribe dreaming*, p 138.

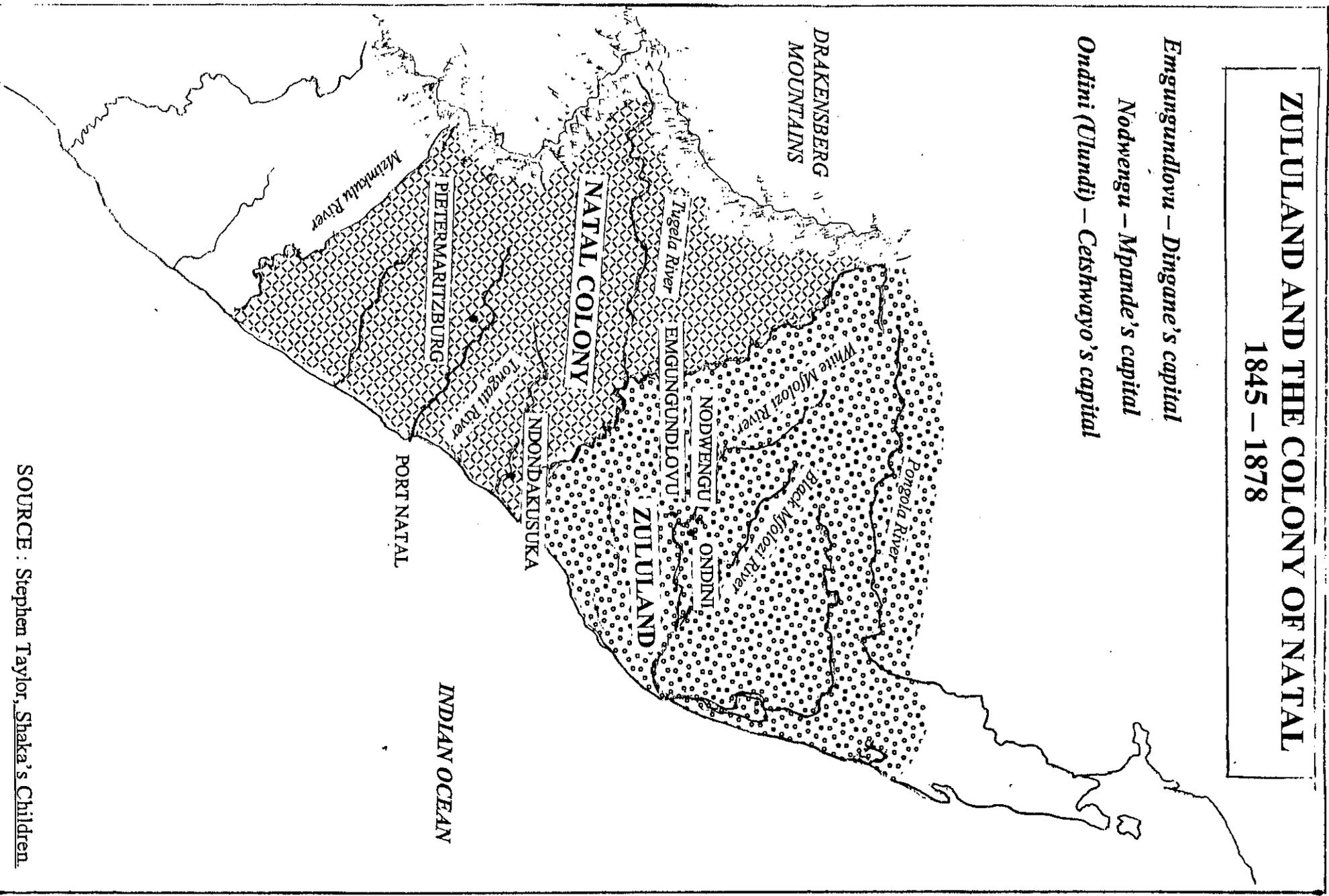
¹³⁵ Delegorgue, *Travels in southern Africa*, p 334.

¹³⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 3, evidence of Mkondo, p 155.

Mpande discovered his dealings and sent him packing out of the country. By 1843, therefore, one may conclude that on both sides of the Thukela there were doubts about the British Government. Unfortunately there is not enough evidence to pronounce those doubts. The available literature, both religious and circular, is silent about the position taken by the Zulu. The years following the annexation would reveal the hidden agendas.

ZULULAND AND THE COLONY OF NATAL 1845 – 1878

Emgungundlovu – Dingane's capital
Nodwengu – Mpande's capital
Ondini (Ulundi) – Cetshwayo's capital



SOURCE : Stephen Taylor, *Shaka's Children*.

CHAPTER 2

2. ZULU RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AFTER 1843

2.1 The new administration and the Shepstone system

Here we face a deceptively simple question of how the Zulu perceived and responded to the British colonial advance which meant the loss of land and consequently the loss of a livelihood on their part. In answer to the question, we first need to examine the pre-conceptions that the Zulu cherished about the British before their annexation of Natal. Secondly, we need to appreciate the response of the Zulu by drawing on the economic, political and social realities in the context of their cultural and socio-historical background. Practically, therefore, it would be appropriate to open the investigation with a brief look at the Voortrekker government of the Republic of Natalia. Though the Republic was short-lived, it would be of interest to know what kind of footprints it left on the sands of Natal and Zululand.

Clearly, the problem of the Zulu "refugee" majority, in the eyes of the Volksraad, stood out like a sore thumb in the political affairs of the Republic. Thousands of Africans had flocked into the Republic once the Zulu menace had been removed by the "Wen-Commando", and the "Beeste-Commando".¹ This means that the Trekkers had in fact brought peace and security to an otherwise chaotic part of the Zulu country. Conditions had become favourable for the aboriginal inhabitants to return to their old homes. However, on arrival, they discovered that huge tracts of territory had been alienated after the defeat of Dingane.² The problem was to find land to settle the returning population, and the inexperienced Volksraad, lacking resources, was faced with a mammoth task.

¹ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 171.

² Ian Knight, Anatomy of the Zulu army: from Shaka to Cetshwayo. 1818-1879(London, Greenhill Books, 1995), p 37.

The Voortrekkers, having established their Republic of Natalia, immediately set up an impromptu land office which worked overtime surveying and dishing out tracts of land as farms to the Trekkers as more and more of them descended the Drakensberg into Natal.³ De Villiers has said that the Trekkers “never understood that the land was never theirs by right of cession, nor did they understand that the land had never been “empty” except by Zulu conquest and policy”.⁴ As far as the Trekkers were concerned, the Zulu and their king were only a hindrance, causing difficulties on the land that was providentially designated for their exclusive occupation and use. However, the Trekkers in Natal could not really feel secure until Dingane’s power had been finally eliminated. Thus, Trekker resentment of the huge influx of Zulu into Natalia is somewhat justified when one considers the hugely precarious position they were in. The problem of insecurity was uppermost in their minds. The Rev. Daniel Lindley wrote that the Trekkers were “more afraid of his treachery than of all his warriors, and on this account are perhaps more uneasy now than when they were at open war with him”.⁵

According to Van Jaarsveld, “Die maagdelike land was die nuwe ‘Eden’ of Beloofde Land, ‘n land vloeiende van melk en heuning en hulleself was Israel wat uit die Egiptiese slawehuis deur die ‘woestyn’ of wildernis uitgelei is na die Beloofde Land”.⁶ The Trekkers saw as “interlopers the blacks who returned to their homes after the Zulu power had been broken”.⁷ That these people were possibly remnants of displaced chiefdoms who had taken to the hills and caves for fear of the Zulu armies did not occur to them. They “regarded the

³ John Lambert, Betrayed Trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995), p 8.

⁴ De Villiers, White tribe dreaming, p 48.

⁵ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 165.

⁶ F A van Jaarsveld en G D Scholtz (eds) Die Republiek van Suid-Afrika: agtergrond, ontstaan en toekoms (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerspers, 1966), p 45.

⁷ De Villiers, White tribe dreaming, p 48.

natives as blood-thirsty Zulus, and not as sons of the soil, whose traditions were all of peace and not of war".⁸ For the defence of their coveted Republic, they did all in their power to keep the Africans out. However, their resources were too limited to accomplish that huge task.

After the Battle of Maqongqo Hills the Voortrekker view was that: "Die Zulu-mag was nou vir goed gebreek en hulle sou die land in vrede kon besit en bewoon, terwyl ook die Engelse besetting teruggetrek was".⁹ The complicating factor of the British occupation in relation to both the Trekkers and the Zulu requires an in-depth analysis. For example, when Delegorgue, a neutral observer, arrived at Port Natal in May 1839, he found the Trekkers and the British settlers "astonished to find themselves thrown together in a new land, surrounded by the same dangers, extending the hand of friendship to each other without *gritting their teeth*".¹⁰ At the same time there was Captain Jervis with his contingent of one hundred soldiers prepared to throw "these hundred men into the balance on the side of the Caffres".¹¹ The Cape Governor, Sir George Napier, had viewed the Great Trek as a vote of no confidence in British rule and was determined to halt the trek through the annexation of Natal, which the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg opposed.¹²

The Rev. George Champion observing the progress of the Great Trek commented that God was "making use of them as scourges of the natives; and perhaps when they shall have accomplished this, they will be mutual scourges of each other. Their ignorance, their parties, their ungodliness make it improbable that they can unite in any good form of

⁸ Robert Russell, Natal, the land and its story (Pietermaritzburg, P. Davies and sons, 1910), p 194

⁹ Preller, Daglemier in Suid-Afrika, p 214.

¹⁰ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 49.

¹¹ Ibid, p 48.

¹² Fisher, The Afrikaners, pp 84-85.

government”.¹³ Such a negative view of an entire people gives the impression that the missionaries, though some of them were Americans, were opposed to the Trekkers and the ideals of the Trek, and therefore, could not write any good about them. But, it is also true that some of the actions of the Trekkers against the Zulu were appalling, which early Afrikaner historians such as Preller tried to conceal. Liebenberg’s conclusion of the discussion on “Gustav Preller as historikus” points out that “’n mens kan talle voorbeelde uit Preller se werk lig waar hy alleen daarop uit is om die Afrikaners te verdedig en die Engelse en Bantoes aan te val”.¹⁴ Without any doubt, the Trekker form of government was bristling with objectionable elements.

Be that as it may, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, had issued a brief to the effect that there be no colonization of Natal. Hence, Jervis pulled out while creating the impression that the measure was not dictated by exigency, pretending that Britain “had no interest in Port Natal and its territories and never would have”.¹⁵ As soon as the British left, the Trekkers raised their republican flag at Port Natal, only for the British to show sudden interest and come back again when Lord John Russell became Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁶ No doubt, the territory on the east coast of the sub-continent, must have had its inherent attractions for the British as well.

Some historians have asserted that the creation of the Republic of Natalia was a potential threat to the strategic security of Britain. Hence Napier wanted, by its demise, to prevent the Trekkers from gaining an outlet to the sea; to prevent them from creating diplomatic

¹³ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 88.

¹⁴ Liebenberg, Opstelle, p 134.

¹⁵ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 50.

¹⁶ Fisher, The Afrikaners, pp 85-86.

relations with France and the USA, and also to stop them from disturbing the peace with the Africans on the eastern borders of the Cape Colony.¹⁷ The Voortrekker movement, the Great Trek, which took them to territories beyond the reach of British authorities was viewed as an affront to the majesty of Queen Victoria.¹⁸ The Trekkers for their part, followed every possible legal route in appealing to the British to recognize their independence. Undoubtedly, the British imperial dealings with the Trekkers was a lot shadier than it has been made up to be. De Kiewiet has argued that “not the penetration into the shadier and more obscure processes of imperial action can seriously disturb the conviction that there was in England a genuine feeling of concern over the native tribes”.¹⁹

The Zulu, it has been said, looked forward to British rule. In the words of Mkando ka Dhlova, the Zulu rejoiced at the coming of the British who they thought were “sweet people”. Mkando says “peace smiled on the land with their coming thus inducing the Zulu from Zululand to come to the English”.²⁰ It was precisely according to Jacob Msimbithi’s prophesy: the missionaries had come, as he warned they would. As soon as the missionaries build houses, other white people would come.²¹ Indeed, white people were steadily drifting into the country and some Zulu, who remembered the prophesy began to wonder how long it would take before these people took over the land. The influx of Zulu people into Natal from the Zulu Kingdom was intensified by “the crossing of Mawa” in 1843.²²

¹⁷ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, pp 50-51. Also Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 107.

¹⁸ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 85.

¹⁹ De Kiewiet, The imperial factor, p 6.

²⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mkando, p 155.

²¹ Van der Walt, “Reflections on yesterday”, Zululand Observer, 12 April 2004, p 6.

²² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mmemi, p 243.

The incident took place when Mpande began to re-organise and re-establish the unity of the Zulu state. He began the process by removing his competitors. One such competitor was Gqugqu, one of Senzanzakhona's lesser known sons, who had to be eliminated.²³ In the wake of that clean-up campaign, his aunt, Mawa, apparently in anger, left Zululand for Natal. She set out from the Gingindlovu district, known then as Entonteleni, whose chief was Manyana ka Nokuphatha. The chief together with Tamboloqolo of the Maphumulo people, joined Mawa with a large herd of cattle.²⁴ Throughout the length and breadth of the of the kingdom, the Zulu noted that she had "crossed the Thukela to the white man's country". The people noted also that the crossing took place at a time when the comet ubhaqa appeared in the sky.²⁵

The massive crossing over of Mawa unleashed a steady flow of Zulu refugees into the territory of Natal. Mpande, immediately upon hearing of the flight, dispatched his Izingulube regiment to put a stop to the exodus, but the flow continued unabated.²⁶ The British, like the Voortrekkers before them, had to deal with the situation as best they could. "It was neither just nor practicable to send them back", remarked Brookes and Webb sensibly, considering the supposedly humane justice of the British.²⁷ In the same year, 1843, Henry Cloete, the Land Commissioner, arrived and called a large meeting of Voortrekkers "waar hy die doel van sy sending uiteengesit en probeer het om hulle van die weldadigheid van die Britse bestuur te oortuig".²⁸ It was a fruitless exercise.

²³ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.2, evidence of Mangathi, p 216.

²⁴ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.2, evidence of Mmeni, p 243.

²⁵ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.4, evidence of Ndukwana, p 305.

²⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.2, evidence of Mangati, p 216.

²⁷ Brooks and Webb, *A history of Natal*, p 58.

²⁸ Van der Walt, et al, *Geskiedenis van Suid Afrika*, p 228.

The meeting became uncontrollably rowdy with the Trekkers refusing to co-operate. The Trekkers were anxious to leave Natal.²⁹ They could not imagine themselves under British rule once again. The burden was to fall on the Zulu this time around.

On 31 May 1844, Natal, which had been annexed by Britain on 12 May 1843, became an autonomous district of the Cape Colony.³⁰ Almost half of Shaka's kingdom was now a British colony, the other half "left to the tender mercies of their own king".³¹ As a result of British intervention members of the Volksraad were expected "to swear another form of oath", reported the Natalier newspaper. But the Trekkers just continued in practice to run their own affairs almost until the end of 1845 when a Lieutenant – Governor arrived.³²

Lieutenant- Governor Martin West was immediately faced with the task of bringing the Trekkers under British control. It was no easy task since the Trekkers were opposed to the race policies of the British and added to that was the fact that not all their land claims had been admitted. The size of the colony was considerably smaller than the Republic of Natalia. To the south-west beyond the Mzimkhulu River, a large slice of territory was ceded to the Mpondo and north-wards, the suzerainty over the Zulu was forsaken and Mpande was allowed to rule an independent Zululand across the Thukela and Mzinyathi rivers.³³ To deal with the situation, West could rely on the assistance of his Executive Council comprising Theophilus Shepstone, who was appointed the Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes; Walter Harding, the Crown Prosecutor; Dr. William Stanger; the Surveyor-

²⁹ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 182.

³⁰ Balard, "The transfrontiersman", p 50.

³¹ Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers, p 132.

³² Natalier, 13 September, 1844 quoted in Bird, Annals of Natal, p 434.

³³ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 88.

General and the Secretary to Government, Donald Moodie.³⁴

While Martin West battled, attempting to entice the Trekkers to stay in the country, “the Lieutenant - Governor had also the land question to arrange in regard to another class of settlers, much more numerous and possessed of stronger rights to the soil than either the English or the Dutch”.³⁵ Robert Russell, one of the early colonials, pointed out that the ancestors of these settlers “had lived on the Umvoti or the Tugela, or Umtwalume for untold “moons” and long before the white man had set foot in South Africa. Justice, therefore, required that their dwelling places should be firmly secured to them”.³⁶ The perennial problem had come up again needing a British solution this time.

Goethe once wrote:

“What thou has inherited from thy fathers,
Acquire it, in order to possess it.”

These lines find their most perfect application and explanation in the case of the Zulu of Natal who like “the Jews (who) were transported to a foreign land by Nebuchadnezzar were coming back home to claim their own.”³⁷ Thousands of Zulu flocked into the Colony as a land of opportunity or simply to re-occupy the land they had abandoned during the turbulent times of Shaka’s conquests. Muller states that the Zulu refugees were about 100 000 in 1845 and these multitudes were “a burden and a threat to Whites”, because they “squatted everywhere, even on Boer farms, went about armed, thieved and were reluctant to enter service contracts”.³⁸

³⁴ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 179.

³⁵ Russell, Natal: the land and its story, p 198.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p 198.

³⁷ Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers, p 132.

³⁸ Muller, 500 years, p 214.

This blatantly pro-Afrikaner historical view, could be applied in equal measure with regard to the British who had no definite policy towards Africans, but copied and adopted what the Trekkers had started. An appropriate, Afro-centric response would be that the Zulu could have described the Afrikaners and the British in much the same terms, that for most of the African refugees coming back to their homes, it was the white people who had “streamed into Natal, were squatting on their land, did go about armed, did thieve, and were undoubtedly a burden and a threat” as Shula Marks would put it.³⁹

In November 1844, Major Smith wrote to the Cape Governor about the continued tranquility of the country which he hoped would remain until the government was firmly established.⁴⁰ The Zulu were still in the throes of the post-Mfecane dislocation with ever-increasing numbers coming back to Natal. This should account for their inability to unite and organize any form of residence. Mainly they came from Faku’s country with families and enlarged horizons; as refugees they had struggled, survived and, in some cases, prospered; they spoke variations of the same language- IsiZulu.

Thousands flocked into the Colony in search of opportunity among the ruins and ashes and graves.⁴² Dispossession and the agony of rejection began to be felt by many of them. It remained for a British government with “genuine feeling of concern over the Native tribes” to help the returning Zulu to re-build their homesteads in the land they once called home, alongside the graves of their forefathers. Any observer would have expected that the

³⁹ Shula Marks, “African and Afrikaner history”, *Journal of African history*, xi, 3 (1970), p 436.

⁴⁰ John Bird, *Annals of Natal*, Major Smith to Lt-General Sir Peregrine Maitland, Governor of the Cape, 30 November, 1844, p 445.

⁴¹ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 167.

⁴² *Ibid*, p 167.

British sense of justice would prevail. The kind of justice which was embodied in the annexation proclamation, stating that “there should not be in the eye of the law any distinction or disqualification whatever, founded on mere distinction of colour, origin, language or creed, but that the protection of the law, in letter and in substance, should be extended to all, impartially, alike”.⁴³ However, Natal was a white settlement, a fact, according to the Commission of 1852, that “seems to have been overlooked when this Proclamation was framed”.⁴⁴

The former Resident Magistrate for the Albany District, Martin West, on 31 March 1846, responded to the call of duty and appointed the Locations Commission consisting of Theophilus Shepstone, William Stanger, Lieutenant Gibb of the Royal Engineers and Dr. Adams and Rev. Daniel Lindley, both of the American Mission.⁴⁵ The object of the commission was to make the locations policy practicable, that is, practically to carve out certain areas of Natal where these locations would be established for the exclusive occupation by Blacks.⁴⁶ In reality the segregationist policy of the Volksraad was being maintained, albeit in freshly coined terms. The Zulu would be settled in these locations and governed apart from the Whites. They were to live in little chiefdoms under recognized chiefs. At the beginning Theophilus Shepstone as Diplomatic Agent in charge of the affairs of African chiefdoms, acknowledged the authority of the fifty chiefs that existed within the

⁴³ Natal, Proceedings of the Commission appointed to inquire into the past and present state of the Kafirs.....1852-53, p 10.

⁴⁴ Muller, *500 years*, p 214.

⁴⁵ Cameron, *An illustrated history*, p 173.

⁴⁶ Brooks, and Webb, *A history of Natal*, p 58.

In Natal the name “Location” was used to denote rural reserves as well as urban African villages. Elsewhere in the other provinces of South Africa, throughout the 20th century, it was used for urban Black townships only.

district. He allowed them freedom to exercise control over their people, but did restrict them access to certain lands.⁴⁷ In the conditions of 1846 the location system seemed inevitable,⁴⁸ and almost desirable as the only solution to the existing problems of administering a transient population. In addition to the creation of the locations, the Commissioners made several recommendations for the control of the locations and the erection of schools to help “civilize” the Zulu. Zwartkop, Mvoti, Mlazi and Inanda were among the first locations to be demarcated.⁴⁹

Generally these locations were, in the words of Robert Russell, “the most barren, wild, and broken parts of the country. Only small portions here and there are adapted for cultivation, and much for the habitation of the eagle and the baboon”.⁵⁰ Parts of these locations were set aside for utilization by Christian missionaries as their mission reserves. More locations and mission reserves were added so that by 1864 there were 42 locations comprising 2067 057 acres (8000 000ha) and 21 mission reserves comprising 174 862 acres (70 700ha).⁵¹ According to Mkando ka Dhlova, the land was divided and cut up into islands (iziqhingi) with the creation of the locations. “On this”, he said “a great grievance arose”.⁵² The Zulu complained that when they built homesteads on white farms the owners would claim something from them in respect of what they built. Mkando told of the confusion among the Zulu as a result. He said that they felt they were being pulled from two sides, the

⁴⁷ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 25.

⁴⁸ Brooks and Webb, A history of Natal, p 59.

⁴⁹ Muller, 500 years, p 214.

⁵⁰ Russell, Natal: the land and its story, p 198.

⁵¹ Cameron, An illustrated history, p 173.

⁵² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 3, evidence of Mkando, p 156.

government side and the farm owners' side and did not know which side to turn to.⁵³ All the hopes of the British being better rulers gradually dissipated among the Zulu. The white immigrants coming into Natal Colony from the British Isles and the Cape Colony regarded the Zulu as a source of "cheap labour, not as fellow citizens".⁵⁴ In their view, therefore, there was to be no equality between themselves and the African native inhabitants.

During this period Britain was experiencing what came to be termed the "hungry forties" which resulted in the formation of schemes aimed at colonization, principally "to relieve the distress among the poor in the cities and towns, and to reduce the burden on the rates".⁵⁵ Many of these schemes were directed towards the United States of America and a few to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Natal, on the other hand, with her cheap land, servants and an extremely good climate, appealed first to individual emigrants and then, to the private organizers of groups of emigrants. The most prominent of the organizers was Joseph Charles Byrne of Dublin who had visited the Cape Colony in 1843. The British government, for their part, did not view the Natal Colony with much enthusiasm from the economic point of view.⁵⁶ The government was reluctant to add territory and responsibility that would make financial and administrative demands on the mother country's otherwise strained resources.⁵⁷ The very idea of British involvement in the "savage barbarism of internecine warfare" among African chiefdoms was repugnant.⁵⁸ Therefore, it would require more compelling reasons to induce the British to take an interest in Natal.⁵⁹

⁵³ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.3, evidence of Mkando, p156.

⁵⁴ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p168.

⁵⁵ Warhurst, *Geen's the making of South Africa*, p124.

⁵⁶ Cameron, *An illustrated history*, p172.

⁵⁷ Du Buisson, *The white man cometh*, p 186.

⁵⁸ Cameron, *An illustrated history*, p 172.

⁵⁹ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, pp 262 – 263.

Earl Grey, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, responded to the Report of the 1846 Locations Commission by saying that it was “a very able document”, but for the heavy demands on the Treasury.⁶⁰ Thus the hope of making the locations agencies of British civilization had to be abandoned. The lack of funds meant that methods of government that would be effective without British civil servants, had to be adopted. Shepstone had to fall back on the tribal system which the Zulu invasions had destroyed. Shepstone’s system of “indirect rule” saved the day and also entrenched itself as a permanent feature in the South African political arrangement with regard to the settlement of the African population.⁶¹

The Natal system of government was born out of necessity and the only general criticism coming from the colonists against it, was that the locations were too big.⁶² Shepstone and his colleagues proposed to divide the Zulu “into bodies of ten or twelve thousand each, to be located in various parts of the country” whereupon Andries Pretorius “solemnly warned the Government that it was delivering up the province to a future reign of general havoc, slaughter, robbery, and conflagration”.⁶³ Just about that time, Sir Harry Smith succeeded Sir Henry Pottinger and in February 1848 he visited Natal Colony. In sympathy with the plight of the Trekkers, he dissolved the Locations Commission and nominated the Land Commission, consisting of Lieutenant-Colonel Boys, Captain J N Boshof and P H Zietsman.⁶⁴ This commission was to investigate and ascertain “all claims to land, and putting the settlers in possession of their farms”.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Natal, Report of the Commission ... 1852, p 15.

⁶¹ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 59.

⁶² Natal, Report of the Commission... 1852, p 13.

⁶³ Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers, p 144.

⁶⁴ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 60.

Andries Pretorius, the leader of the Voortrekkers, declined nomination.

⁶⁵ Natal, Report of the Commission ... 1852, p 12.

Sir Harry Smith intended that the Commission should modify regulations in a way that would appeal to the Trekkers and persuade them to remain in the Colony. The Commission was to make sure that “Kaffir allotments were separated from the estates held by white men”. Also that “an efficient police was established to check robbery and other Kaffir disorders”.⁶⁶ The composition of the Commission appealed to the white settlers as it comprised of “some colonists of extended local experience” who were well positioned “to investigate and report on the Kafir Question”.⁶⁷ As it was expected, the Commission arrived at conclusions that were widely different from the proposed plans of the previous Locations Commission regarding the locating of the African population. Reporting on 30 August 1848, the Commission recommended the removal of a portion of the Africans to several locations, under government control, to be formed in the south-western part of Natal between the Mzimkhulu and Mzimvubu rivers.⁶⁸ The land problem was deepening,⁶⁹ but the authorities seemed inexplicably unable to engage King Mpande for a solution of the problem than to drive the Zulu out of the Natal Colony. The new proposal was, however, disapproved by Earl Grey in a communique of 1849, on the grounds that “the policy of isolating the natives would too probably end, sooner or later, in their expulsion or extermination”. He referred to the experience of the USA and Australia on this point.⁷⁰

Another recommendation was that the powers of the African chiefs be restricted. The Commission also “deprecat[ed] the intermingling of Kafir locations with the properties of the white inhabitants”.⁷¹ However, these were times of fluidity in Natal and the authorities

⁶⁶ Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers, p 146.

⁶⁷ Natal, Report of the Commission ... 1852-53, p 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p 15.

⁶⁹ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p71.

⁷⁰ Natal, Report of the Commission ... 1852-53, p 16.

⁷¹ Natal, Report of the Commission ... 1852-53, p 16.

were unable to assert authority over the overwhelming Zulu population. Consequently, most chiefdoms were able to function without government interference. The chiefs who grew in stature were able to control their people and as a result were emboldened to resist intolerable demands made on them by the government.⁷²

As regards all the Zulu within the boundaries of the Colony, it was directed by the Letters Patent creating the Natal government in 1848, that “their social organization, such as it was in a state of barbarism, should not be altered by the interference of British authority; that no law, custom, or usage prevailing among them should be stopped, except so far as the same might be repugnant to the general principles of humanity”.⁷³ In Earl Grey’s communiqué was included the recommendation that “the kafirs should not be located as a pastoral people, nor as a people depending mainly for support on their flocks and herds, but on the contrary, that they should be placed in circumstances in which they should find regular industry necessary for their subsistence”.⁷⁴

Byrne’s business through the Natal Emigration and Colonization office in London, started to bear fruit in 1849. The first Byrne immigrants arrived on 16 May and on 1 August 1849 Martin West died from a long illness.⁷⁵ After a brief period of the administration headed by the Lieutenant-Colonel Boys, Benjamin Chilly Campbell Pine, previously Acting Governor of Sierra Leone, replaced Martin West. In the meantime the “Byrne settlers”, as they came to be known, were pouring into the country. It is estimated that between 1849 and 1852 some 5 000 British and Irish immigrants arrived in Natal.⁷⁶ The new-comers found upon arrival in Natal that land companies and speculators owned a very huge proportion of the

⁷² Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 29.

⁷³ Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers, p 147.

⁷⁴ Natal, Report of the commission ... 1852-53, p 16.

⁷⁵ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 64.

⁷⁶ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 8

best agricultural and grazing land in the Colony. The land companies and the many absentee-landlords kept the price of land very high and as a consequence many of the new comers “found it difficult, if not impossible to purchase enough productive land to earn a living.”⁷⁷

From the British Isles, these immigrants were mostly middle class people with no farming background. Their initial experiments in an unfamiliar environment could be equated with those of the 1820 Settlers in the Cape Colony. Most of them failed as farmers and decided to return to England or to try their luck on the highveld, still others became townspeople in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, involved in trading activities.⁷⁸ It was, the Yorkshire lads, according to Russell, “who viewed their lands with other eyes, and, full of wise saws and modern instances, set to work to till the land and utilize the ox and his brother the native.”⁷⁹

The Zulu whose traditional homestead economy had been destroyed, were streaming back to their old home lands only to find that the British like the Trekkers before them, were claiming ownership of the land. These new claimants, that is, the land companies and speculators started renting out their vacant lands and the Zulu grabbed the opportunity to make good use of the land. They produced maize, sorghum, vegetables and livestock and began selling their surpluses on the open market in the major towns.⁸⁰ The suffering experienced during their wanderings must have taught the Zulu that resorting to violence to solve their immediate problems against formidable adversaries was, perhaps, not the best choice. More so, the majority of them preferred the British to the Trekkers and were

⁷⁷ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 58.

⁷⁸ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 97.

⁷⁹ Russell, History of old Durban, p 89.

⁸⁰ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 58.

to “squat” on their farms and on the vacant Crown Lands. The marginal and the helpless were soon attracted to the mission stations where the Christian missionaries were re-establishing themselves.⁸¹

Alongside the political changes, British rule also necessitated the return of the missionaries. Dr John Philip and the Rev. Dr Faure wrote to the Prudential Committee, giving their views and urging the American Board to continue the mission among the Zulu.⁸² Grout and Adams immediately returned, and they were to play a significant role in the transformation and development of the Colony, especially among the Zulu. They were immediately called upon as commissioners on the Locations Commission, helping to establish locations and mission reserves and stabilizing the northern boundary.⁸³

West’s administration, which ended with his death in August 1849, was not a success. According to Muller, West’s “personality was weak, his health poor” and he found himself “fighting insurmountable problems”.⁸⁴ Hattersley says people like Donald Moodie took the initiative and involved the colony in difficulties regarding the distribution of land.⁸⁵ At the beginning of 1851 the Zulu within the District of Natal “assumed a position of rebellious independence towards the Local Government”.⁸⁶ The Zulu, already discontented with their taxes were further irritated by the reported intention of the government to take a census of their numbers and the number of their cattle. And when that decision was to be enforced

⁸¹ Vide Thomas Kiernan, “African and Christian: from opposition to mutual accommodation” in Martin Prozesky (ed) Christianity in South Africa (London, Southern Publication, 1990), pp 9-26.

⁸² Rev Lewis Grout, Zulu-land, or life among the Zulu-kafirs of Natal and Zulu-land. South Africa (Philadelphia, Presbyterian Publication Committee, undated), pp 213-214.

⁸³ Davenport, South Africa, p 165.

⁸⁴ Muller, 500 years, p 217.

⁸⁵ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 73.

⁸⁶ Natal, Report of the commission ... 1852-53, p 25.

with a demonstration of military power, their dissatisfaction was greatly increased. At this time, even the Colonial Office realized that African affairs in Natal needed urgent attention.

The Colonial Office instructed Benjamin Pine to investigate and Pine subsequently appointed a Commission to look into the past and present conditions of the Africans living in the colony of Natal in September 1852.⁸⁷ The Hon. Walter Harding, the Crown Prosecutor, was appointed President and the members of the Commission were: John Bird, the Surveyor-General; Theophilus Shepstone, the Diplomatic Agent, Jacobus N Boshoff, the Registrar of the District Court, R R Ryley, Dr Addison, PAR Otto, H Milner, J Henderson, G C Cato, Fred Scheepers, Field Commandant of the Mooi River Division, Solomon Maritz, Field Commandant of the Klip River Division and Dr Boast.⁸⁸ After a while the authorities added Captain Struben, Theunis Nel., Carl Landman., Evert Potgieter., Edmund Morewood., Dirk Uys., Abram Spies., Casper Labuschagne., Walter Macfarlane., John Moreland., and Charles Barter. The Secretary of the Commission was Edmund Tathan and H F Fynn was the official interpreter.⁸⁹

In the Letter of Instruction, the Lieutenant-Governor gave twelve heads of inquiry, among them were: to determine the number of "aboriginal natives" and distinguish them by the names of their chiefs. Those not aboriginal must be detected as to country of origin and reasons for their coming into the Colony, and determine also the means to prevent future encroachments.⁹⁰ It is estimated that some 35 per cent of the 100 000 Africans found in Natal were "deserters" from Zululand. Aboriginal referred to the descendants of chiefdoms

⁸⁷ Colonial Office (Natal), Government Notice, No. 64 of 1852, 25 September, 1852.

⁸⁸ C.O. (Natal) Government Notices Numbers 72, 74 and 75 of 1852.

⁸⁹ C.O. (Natal) Stephen B Gordon, Acting Secretary to Government, 27 September 1852.

⁹⁰ C.O. (Natal) Stephen B Gordon, Acting Secretary to Government, 27 September 1852.

resident in Natal prior to Shaka's devastating raids.⁹¹ Pine's administration was determined to stop the influx of more "deserters" into the Colony. The most obvious reason being the unavailability of land, while "lavish land grants" remained in the hands of speculators and withdrawn from the "market of available land for British immigrants."⁹²

The absence of the missionaries from the list of commissioners was anticipated. The principal reason for their exclusion was that the settlers had complained about the composition of the Locations Commission and missionaries were blamed for suggesting that large tracts of land be allocated to the Africans in the locations.⁹³ A curious point was the inclusion, later, of so many Afrikaners in the Commission. Nonetheless, the Commission's results were very minor. Of importance was that Shepstone assumed the title of Secretary for Native Affairs.⁹⁴ In this new position, Shepstone worked to model his segregationist policy which the British government later adopted for use in colonial tropical Africa and called it "Indirect Rule".⁹⁵

Theophilus Shepstone, the son of a Methodist missionary, after an impressive career in the civil service of the Cape Colony, at the age of 28 in 1846 became the Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes in Natal.⁹⁶ He was the one man who was expected to prepare the thousands of Zulu who were still living in primitive traditional ways, for the complex requirements of an industrial society. The question of how to enforce British rule over

⁹¹ Alan F Hattersley, An illustrated social history of South Africa (Cape Town, A A Balkema, 1873), p 194.

⁹² Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 64.

⁹³ Natal, Report of the commission ... 1852-53, p 14.

⁹⁴ Muller, 500 years, p 217.

⁹⁵ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 98.

⁹⁶ Norman Etherington, "The Shepstone system in the colony of Natal and beyond the borders" in A Duminy and B Guest (eds) Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910: a new history (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 19889), p 170.

these new subjects in the 20 000 square miles of territory that had suddenly become British, was “to throw up an intriguing experiment in colonial rule”.⁹⁷ Indeed, Shepstone’s inclusion in the Locations Commission gave him a headstart in the affairs of the Zulu. The fact that there would be no funds for the administration of the country, rendered the system of locations desirable and prompted Shepstone to improvise. Shrewdly aware of the existing Zulu conception of rulership articulated in the image of Shaka, he drew on it to establish a model for colonial rule.⁹⁸ He realised very early that the Zulu in Natal still expected to be ruled by an *nkosi* (king),⁹⁹ and argued therefore, that “the successful administration of Zululand depended on the Zulu monarchy and the patrimony of Shaka”.¹⁰⁰ He sought to place himself in a position similar to that of Shaka and in the final analysis he was the one man who loomed large over the affairs of the Zulu in Natal “almost as much as the shadow of Shaka”.¹⁰¹ According to Taylor, Shepstone succeeded because he extolled African virtues, defended traditional society and “created a model for ruling aboriginal peoples that was widely admired and copied elsewhere in the Empire”.¹⁰²

When he assumed office only one third or half of the African population were living under hereditary chiefs in Natal, while others continued to come in. Shepstone, after grouping them in accordance with the old recognised and well-established

⁹⁶ Norman Etherington, “The Shepstone system”, p 170.

⁹⁷ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 167.

⁹⁸ Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific majesty: the powers of Shaka Zulu and the limits of historical invention* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1998), p 73.

⁹⁹ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 169.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 73.

¹⁰¹ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 168.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p 168.

chiefdoms, he located them in the reserves.¹⁰³ However, chiefdoms, in times past, had been “fluid communities” with an improperly defined jurisdiction in which homesteads were bound together by ties of neighbourliness, clientship, kinship, marriage and relations of friendship.¹⁰⁴ Re-grouping them was, no doubt, a difficult undertaking.

At the beginning Shepstone recognised the authority of the 56 existing hereditary chiefs and did very little to interfere with their control over their people, “except to try to restrict them to specific lands”.¹⁰⁵ Where no chief existed, to fill the gaps, Shepstone made up chiefdoms to which he appointed chiefs of his own. In some cases he brought together individuals and fragments of chiefdoms and placed them under existing chiefs. But, in the majority of cases, he tended to reward his loyal “izinduna” by making them chiefs over his newly created chiefdoms.¹⁰⁶ Mbovu ka Mtshumayeli confirms that at the time of Shepstone’s arrival many people who were living in the bushes about the Mngeni and the Berea, and about the Mlazi, Ilovu and Mkomazi were formed into chiefdoms.¹⁰⁷ Sometimes force was used to remove the chiefdoms to the “rugged fastnesses” allocated them.¹⁰⁸ But Shepstone recognised that, lacking the means of enforcement, he could not impose his decisions upon the stronger chiefs. He learned the lesson as early as 1847 when he tried to depose Fodo ka Nombewu, chief of the Hlangwini.¹⁰⁹ Shepstone was forced to re-instate Fodo when his replacement was rejected by the people.

¹⁰³ Hattersley, *An illustrated social history*, p 194.

¹⁰⁴ Lambert, *Betrayed trust*, p 24.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p 25.

¹⁰⁶ Etherington, “The Shepstone system”, p 178.

¹⁰⁷ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 3, evidence of Mbovu, p 28.

¹⁰⁸ Natal, Report of the Commission ... 1852-53, p 17.

¹⁰⁹ Lambert, *Betrayed trust*, p 26.

Chiefs Langalibalele and Phuthini ka Matshoba also refused to obey orders to remove their chiefdoms from the Klip River Division, on land that was assigned to the Trekkers.

Shepstone used a police force drawn from the Sithole, Thembu, Chunu and Ngwane chiefdoms to force them to move.¹¹⁰ This proved that the government depended on the appointed chiefs to subdue the rebellious ones. The authorities in turn provided them with the support that made them rise to positions which rivaled those of the hereditary chiefs. Examples were: Ngoza ka Ludaba, Shepstone's induna, who was appointed to the Qhame chiefdom. The chiefdom absorbed so many fugitives and remnants of chiefdoms that by the time Ngoza died in 1869, it was the biggest chiefdom in the Colony.¹¹¹ Zashuke ka Mbheswa of the Ngubane people was given Sidoyi's chiefdom when that chief was deposed by the government in 1857.¹¹²

Customarily, Shepstone invited the chiefs to his court in the open air, under a tree, where he listened to their grievances. A jury among them was permitted great liberty of cross-examination in trials before him.¹¹³ In this way he was able to persuade them to accept him as the vital link between the government and themselves. The "Great White Father" or "Somtseu", as they called him, made British rule appear dependent on the co-operation of the magistrates of his Department of Native Affairs, the chiefs and the homestead heads (abanumzane).¹¹⁴ It worked very well. Chiefs and abanumzane who professed loyalty to the British government were expected to accede to Shepstone's policies.

¹¹⁰ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 26.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p 26.

¹¹² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of John Shepstone, p 321. Magema M. Fuze, The Black people and whence they came, p 102, gives Zashuke as a headman under Ngoza and Sidoyi ka Baleni as chief of a section of the Nhangwini people.

¹¹³ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 75.

¹¹⁴ Carton, Blood from your children, p 30.

Whereas generations of European colonizers sought to colonize the African people's consciousness by drenching them with the aesthetics of an alien culture, making Europeans out of them, Shepstone worked to shield the Zulu of Natal from such influences.¹¹⁵ He created a "kingdom" within a "kingdom" for himself where he encouraged his subjects to think of him as "Father of the People".¹¹⁶

Somtseu made the chiefs appear important and in so doing, he got them to agree to his new policy of partitioning Crown Lands into locations. These locations being unsurveyed tracts of land populated by homesteads, but shunned by white people because of their poor arability and their remoteness from settler towns. Many writers have said that Shepstone succeeded mainly because he "knew the native mind".¹¹⁷ To a very large extent this assertion can be said to be true. According to Carton, one headman from the Thukela Basin remarked about Shepstone's open air meetings, the ibandla, saying that the invitation of any man to state their grievances or any other matter that concerned them openly, was the kind of system that suited the people exactly.¹¹⁸ Hattersley expressed the view that Shepstone was a man with a "kindly temperament allied to great strength of will and a gift of sympathetic understanding" which he contends explains the unique influence he had with the Zulu people of Natal.¹¹⁹ Shepstone allowed them the kind of democratic participation the Zulu people were used to.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p 74.

¹¹⁶ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 169.

¹¹⁷ Etherington, "The Shepstone system", p 170
Colenso was deeply impressed with the reception accorded Shepstone by Phakade's people who hailed him: "Thou art the great "black" one!" which signified his greatness as chief of all the Blacks.

¹¹⁸ Carton, Blood from your children, p 31.

¹¹⁹ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 71.

Though it had been necessary, in some instances, to use force to persuade some groups to move to their designated locations, Shepstone's management of the process "produced a remarkable measure of internal quiet".¹²⁰

Shepstone dominated the administration of Zulu affairs in Natal, from the formulation of policy down to its implementation and enforcement. Practically alone, he moved some 80 thousand Natal Zulu into the locations. From his office in Pietermaritzburg, he directed the affairs of the Zulu and trained administrators in his own image.¹²¹ Basic to his "native policy" was the location experiment which he hoped would promote "civilization" with its attendant mechanical and agricultural skills, as expressed in the Report of the Locations Commission of 1846. These changes were to take place without disrupting the traditional system.¹²² Earl Grey agreed with him in thinking that the Zulu who had flocked to Natal for protection afforded Natal "a noble opportunity for the diffusion of Christianity and civilization which it would be a disgrace to this country to neglect".¹²³ He wrote to Sir Harry Smith again emphasizing the need "to bring a large African population under the improving influence of a civilized government".¹²⁴ On hearing about this, Shepstone must have been greatly encouraged.

With all the boundaries of the locations drawn and available magistrates appointed to some of them, the government needed to raise funds to be able to conduct the affairs of the country. The government required the collection of taxes by the magistrates with the help of the chiefs and homestead heads in accordance with the Shepstone plan. In 1848 a hut

¹²⁰ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 75.

¹²¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 154.

¹²² Ibid, p 154.

¹²³ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 68.

¹²⁴ Earl Grey to Sir Harry Smith, 24 December 1849 in Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 69.

tax was imposed on every homestead “according to the number of households in a domestic compound, essentially the number of wives and their huts”.¹²⁵ In the collection of these taxes Shepstone recognised that the homestead head was to be made solely responsible for the whole extended family. In line with the custom, he knew he had to introduce the matter to an open conference of chiefs and headmen and allow them to air their views on it.¹²⁶ He had observed the Zulu social system within homesteads and concluded that it reinforced the position of women and the youth as wards of the homestead head. As a result of this, Shepstone put together indigenous customs and traditions and the British legal system and wove them into a tapestry he called “Native Customary Law”.¹²⁷ His magistrates made sure they understood this “hierarchical, patriarchal arrangement” and put it into practice in their courts. It was Shepstone’s contention that “native law and custom” should be preserved in order “to save the soul of the people”, which translated into the preservation of institutions such as chiefship, polygamy and lobolo.¹²⁸

Juridically, Shepstone created a pyramid-type of hierarchical authority. At the base of the pyramid indunas and headmen decided minor cases brought before them. At a slightly higher level, hereditary and appointed chiefs declared the law, but gradually these, had their authority tested and undermined as more often cases were referred to the magistrates at a higher level. This is evident from the number of cases reported by magistrates to the

¹²⁵ Carton, Blood from your children, p 18.

¹²⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of S. O. Samuelson, p 262.
It is often regretted the H D Winter, Minister of Native Affairs in Natal, 1805-1806, did not adopt this plan to explain the poll tax before the Bambata disturbances of 1806.

¹²⁷ Carton, Blood from your children, p 30.

¹²⁸ Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p 88.

Secretary for Native Affairs annually.¹²⁹ Magistrates became the appeal courts against decisions taken by the chiefs. Shepstone also forbade all the chiefs from forming amabutho (age regiments) as these would threaten the white colonists. Pitched at the apex of the pyramid, were Shepstone and the Lieutenant-Governor, who was the Supreme chief.¹³⁰ Laws affecting Africans were issued by decree from that quarter.

Shepstone justified ruling by decree on the premise that Zulu monarchs, especially Shaka, had possessed absolute power, and that now, the Lieutenant-Governor stood in the place of the king. With all its flaws, the system worked because the Zulu developed confidence in Shepstone. They believed he was on their side, protecting their interests, especially when they saw him open up more and more reserves. In this vital section of government dealing with the administration of Zulu affairs, Shepstone became more accustomed to acting largely on his own. Benjamin Pine found on his arrival, that Shepstone had managed “the whole native business” of the district single-handedly and a conflict between them developed.¹³¹ Nonetheless, the status quo remained in place and even John Scott, in his term of office as Lieutenant-Governor, tried to have a greater say in the formulation and implementation of “Native Policy”, but Shepstone’s authority remained strong and untouchable.¹³² Not only Earl Grey at the Colonial Office, but also the Bishop of Natal, John William Colenso, was convinced that Shepstone’s policy worked for the advancement of the Zulu towards civilization.¹³³ And, although the system of locations continued to be

¹²⁹ SNA, 1/7/2 Reports by Secretary for Native Affairs December 1852-February 1855, Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.

¹³⁰ Etherington, “The Shepstone system”, p 173.

¹³¹ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 74.

¹³² Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 56.

¹³³ Jeff Guy, The heretic: a study of the life of John William Colenso, 1814-1883 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p 64.

unpopular among the settlers who persisted with their demands for cheap Zulu labour, many white Natalians came to see “Shepstonianism” as synonymous with control and security.¹³⁴

Suddenly, unexpectedly, from the calm waters of Shepstone’s Native Affairs Department, came a shockwave that reverberated across the Colony and shook Shepstone badly. The Zulu came out united and vehemently opposed the marriage regulations promulgated in 1869. The reaction to the regulations marked a turning point in Zulu attitudes towards the British colonial government and to Shepstone personally. They referred to the regulations as “Umbhidli ka Somsewu”, literally meaning “the multitude of Somsewu”.¹³⁵ His office was inundated with complaints and accusations of betrayal. One Zulu man stated explicitly that: “We thought you belonged to us, but you have gone over entirely to your cousins and abandoned us. You have the power of persuading words, and you use that power in the interests of your relatives to ruin us”.¹³⁶ A threshold had been reached and Zulu perceptions of British overlordship changed and would never be the same again.

Shepstone, the pessimist that he was, began to tread lightly and gingerly on decrees directed at the Zulu, especially after the Langalibalele uprising which followed not so far from the storm caused by the marriage rules. He did all he could to avoid provoking a general rebellion with the result that policy towards the administration of the affairs of the Zulu, whether economic, social or political, suffered stagnation. Shepstone, the shaker and mover, was immobilized. The high-handed methods adopted by the Natal authorities in dealing with Langalibalele led to “a chorus of protest in which the voice of Dr J W Colenso, Bishop of Natal, was strongest”.¹³⁷ Colenso, who had hitherto refrained from

¹³⁴ Lambert, *Betrayed trust*, p 56

¹³⁵ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 5, evidence of Nzabiyana, p 23.

¹³⁶ Lambert, *Betrayed trust*, p 56.

¹³⁷ Warhurst, *Geen’s the making of South Africa*, p 152.

interfering and had accepted trustingly all Shepstone's accounts of Zulu affairs, was moved to vow to bring the truth to light.¹³⁸ The inevitable consequence of his search for the truth led to the break up of friendship with Shepstone.

Shepstone's reputation as the only man capable of controlling the Zulu, prevented the Colonial Office from seizing the opportunity to bring about changes. Robert Herbert, a permanent official in that office, warned against interfering with Shepstone's control of policy and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, heeded the warning. He subsequently "insisted on mitigation of Langalibele's sentence, compensation for his dispossessed followers, and a restoration of the Ngwe lands, he made Lieutenant-Governor Pine the scapegoat for the miscarriage of justice and exonerated Shepstone from blame".¹³⁹ Shepstone subsequently resigned as Secretary for Native Affairs to take up the position of Administrator of the Transvaal when he was sent to annex that territory in 1877. Nevertheless, his policies were continued by his brother John after him. But the Zulu were not impressed. They thought John Shepstone was worse than Somtseu.

Already in the time of Theophilus Shepstone the Zulu were beginning to resent the entrusted worthiness of the British officials working among them. John Shepstone, not surprisingly, met with a lot of resistance. Chiefs Mawele, Zipuku and Homoi accused him of aloofness and indifference to their problems.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Ruth Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation", Journal of Natal and Zulu history, 111, 1980, p 19.

¹³⁹ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 57.

¹⁴⁰ Natal Native Commission 1881, evidence of Mawele, p 198.

2.2 The destruction of the homestead economy and the Zulu peasantry's responses.

Victorian writers and journalists expressed the conviction that Black Africa had produced no civilization of much value, had no written culture and its customs were primitive and in the main, repulsive. They entertained preconceptions that “colonial African society was essentially unprogressive and incapable of change”.¹ These views were held by settler society and admitted by historians such as De Kiewiet.² But, according to Stephen Taylor, the novelist, Anthony Trollope, who toured South Africa in 1877, was rare among Englishmen to write “a perceptive and sympathetic account of the country ... perceiving the Zulu with a simple and direct humanity that had nothing to do with their land or their souls”.³ Otherwise English literature on the Zulu people is cluttered with images of savage barbarism, backwardness and primitive obnoxious behaviour.⁴ The image of the Zulu army as a merciless, regimented, celibate, man-killing machine began to fill the pages of newspapers, magazines and books as the British imperial forces penetrated deeper and deeper into the Zulu country.

However, to understand the Zulu one needs to look into the social and political organizational structure of Zulu society in order to appreciate the actuality of the life that fed the European literature.⁵ An intense and deliberate study of the Zulu polity would reveal the inexhaustible richness and beauty of eighteenth-century Zulu culture which

¹ Lambert, Betrayed trust, prologue.

² In the introduction to his The imperial factor in South Africa: a study in politics and economics, De Kiewiet admits that the “oppositeness of colour rules the facts dogmatically, elevating what is white and depressing what is black”.

³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 15.

⁴ Read Stephen Leech, “Aggressive by nature, depraved and like Nazis”: images of Zulu violence”, Kleio, xxx, 1998, pp 89-108.

⁵ Vide Julie Pridmore, “Pioneers’ and ‘natives’: establishing the Natal metanarrative”? Kleio, xxvii, 1996, pp 50-61.

eluded the English writers. Luckily, more and more historians have come to realise that the Zulu emphasis on customs and traditions was a natural recourse of people who lacked the means to record their political and legal codes on paper, and did not mean that they had no real history. Archaeological findings reveal that the Zulu led meaningful lives and fully exploited their natural environment in all its facets.⁶

Admittedly, Shaka's Zululand was a unique case. It could neither be explained nor compared. Nathaniel Isaacs, who wrote in a somewhat florid style, fashionable in those days, described the form of government as "Zulucratical".⁷ A system of government which was to be admired as a rarity and a gift from Providence. Its social life began and was centered around the homestead (sometimes called a "kraal") which was the basic unit in their political economy.⁸ In fact, generally, in all pre-capitalist, mixed-farming African economies, most production took place in the homestead.⁹

In the land of the Zulu, the mixed-farming communities built "non-portable huts of saplings or stone, depending on what was available".¹⁰ Bryant described their hamlets as the "quaint human habitation" that dotted the landscape on every hillside in Zululand. Each consisting of a circle of bee-hive-like huts pitched around a central cattle-enclosure.¹¹ Those quant structures formed the nucleus of Zulu social and political life and were a microcosm of the kingdom's national economy.

⁶ Cameron, An illustrated history, p 44.

⁷ Manfred Nathan, The Voortrekkers of South Africa: from the earliest times to the foundation of the republics (London, Gordon and Gotch, 1937), p 54.

⁸ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 22.

⁹ John Pampallis, Foundations of the new South Africa (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1991), p 5.

¹⁰ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 21.

¹¹ Rev A T Bryant, Olden times in Zululand and Natal: containing political history of the eastern-Nguni clans (London, Longmans Green, 1929), p 71.

There is evidence that, each homestead was a self-supporting “patriarchal and polygamous colony consisting of a man, his wives, their children and, perhaps, a network of dependant relatives, along with their livestock”.¹² Brothers of the homestead head (umnumzane) together with their wives and children sometimes added to the group, but in the majority of instances, homesteads were made up of no more than ten or twelve huts.

Each hut in the homestead, was the one-roomed residence of one wife and her children. Some of the huts were allocated separately to grown up boys and girls, those who had already attained puberty.¹³ Structurally, a hut is an insulated beehive-shaped shell made of wattle saplings and covered with thatch. It served as a kitchen, a living room and a bedroom, essentially, it was a sanctuary from the hot summer sun and the cold winter frosts especially in high altitude areas.

The organization of the pre-capitalist traditional household “held strong gender and generational divisions”.¹⁴ The homestead head expected and received, without fail, complete obedience from everyone in that small community. His role as head of the homestead (umuzi) was mainly organizational and supervisory.¹⁵ His principal business and responsibility was “husbanding the society’s treasure, its cattle”.¹⁶ The socio-political economy rested upon cattle as a medium for a variety of usages.¹⁷ The household

¹² Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 29.

¹³ Magma M Fuze, The Black people and whence they came: a Zulu view (Translated by H C Lugg and edited by A T Cope, Killie Campbell Africana Library – Durban, 1979), pp 30-32. There are certain procedures that are followed when boys “have emissions”. Puberty rites (ukuthombisa) are also performed in regard to girls to help them to mature and to warn them against shameful behaviour.

¹⁴ Carton, Blood from your children, p 7.

¹⁵ Pampallis, Foundations of the new South Africa, p 5.

¹⁶ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 30.

¹⁷ See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, Ceremonial, pp 51-52; fines, forfeits, and reparations, pp 40,140; gifts and presentations, pp 271-2, 264-5; ukukleza, pp 12, 58, 60; and trade, p 225.

head also cleared the land to be cultivated. He was skilled in the erection of huts and the crafts of skin-tanning and making clothes.¹⁸ Hunting was another serious part-time occupation for all the men who could still take part, age allowing. The man saw himself as a part of the larger community not as an individual, all by himself. This concept embraced not only his immediate family but the environment upon which they depended. "An individual's interests were submerged in those of the community and the fate of both was in the hands of the ancestral spirits."¹⁹

To the wives and their daughters fell the duty of keeping house, ploughing, weeding and tending the fields, cooking the meals and seeing to the general welfare of the family.²⁰

Mothers taught their daughters habits of industry, rules of etiquette, respect for elders and other persons and their properties all this in preparation for womanhood and marriage.²¹

The making of household appliances such as tools, clothing, pots and calabashes was shared between males and females.²²

Young boys from different homesteads came together to herd cattle and other livestock.²³

Pixley ka Isaka Seme argued that the practice of looking after cattle was a great school for boys, pointing out that they had their own leaders (izingqwele) who gave them orders,

¹⁸ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 22.

¹⁹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 32. - They shared the belief that their common destiny was in the hands of a "Dlozi" who was always watching over the conduct of each individual.

²⁰ See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, index of subjects, p 409.
Agricultural produce from the homestead fields included: corn, melons, nuts, beans, tubers, maize, pumpkins and gourds.

²¹ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 22.

²² Pampallis, Foundations of the new South Africa, p 5.

²³ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Ntazini, p 190.

like soldiers, and were obeyed by all the other boys.²⁴ They used clay (idonga, ibumba) to make cattle and also played a variety of games while enjoying the sunshine and the free life of the open veld. They spent the day hunting on the hills and feeding on wild roots and berries, and wild rats and rabbits. Yet all the time they had to be watchful, guarding the livestock against beasts of prey and also preventing them from grazing in someone else's garden.²⁵ Each of the boys carried an added weight of responsibility according to age. Those who were getting ready to be grouped into regiments (butwa'd) would gather at a military post (ikhanda) and as cadets (ikwebane) they drank milk directly from the cow's udders (kleza).²⁶ Thungu ka Matshobana said boys ate sour milk (amasi) but they left off when they were butwa'd.²⁷ Boys were generally expected to associate with the menfolk of the homestead, to learn from them and grow up manly.²⁸

A T Bryant, that remarkable collector of Zulu oral tradition, summed up the situation of the homestead and the division of labour thus: "In the Zulu social system every kraal is self-contained and self-supporting... It is the peculiar province of the male to provide and maintain the fabric of the kraal; of the female to provide the family and to support it; in other words, to find the food. The men function as the artisans and pastoralists; the women as the housekeepers and agriculturalists".²⁹ This is in contrast with the view held by historians such as Muller who contend that the women were "enslaved", doing all the

²⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of Seme, pp 271-272.

²⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol 4, evidence of Ndukwana, pp 265-266.
Male knowledge and attachment to cattle is developed here and boys are taught the use of cattle in marriage agreements.

²⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.I, evidence of Lunguza, p 301.

²⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of Nungu, pp 212-214.

²⁸ See Colenbrander, "The Zulu kingdom" in A Duminy and B Guest (eds) Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910: a new history, pp 83-100. Also Taylor, Shaka's children, pp 23-28.

²⁹ Bryant, Olden days in Zululand and Natal, p 74.

work whilst the men sat idle. According to Thompson, and this has been supported by oral evidence that, “women’s work was neither so tedious nor so inequitable as white commentators have tended to assume.”³⁰

As regards the division of work, Delegorgue says that the Zulu believed that a man is born to make war and to hunt and, if it should happen that he builds huts or cuts wood, this is simply because male strength may be required for these activities and because the use of the axe is the prerogative of the man. “But the Cafre-Zoulou would consider himself dishonoured if he touched the hoe used in agriculture; tilling the land, hoeing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, preparing food, fetching water, gathering wood, cleaning the hut, all these are women’s work”.³¹ However, only the “abanumzane”, men with many wives, could afford to be exempt from all these duties. Lesser men “abafokazana”, with one or no wife helped carry out these functions. More wives meant more children which translated into more work done and an economically self-sufficient homestead.

Generally, people in the homesteads owned personal equipment apart from livestock, as their wealth. They owned such things as weapons, axes, hoes, mats, household utensils, clothing and ornaments. Over and above that, men owned cattle and the grain in the silos, which gave them economic power over everyone else.³² Wise and skilful men possessed large herds of cattle and married many wives while unsuccessful ones had no cattle and had to be content with a single wife. However, no one owned the land, for it belonged to all the people – to the nation. In the period between planting and harvesting, a person’s crop was protected but thereafter, the land was open for grazing by all.³³ The

³⁰ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 22.

³¹ Adulphe Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, vol II. (Translated by Fleur Webb, Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban, 1997), pp 116-117

³² Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 23.

³³ *Ibid*, p 23.

livelihood of the people was basically dependent on the land that was communally held, and fortunately for the Zulu, their physical environment was well suited for their needs.³⁴

The devastating wars of conquests, the Mfecane, led to the virtual depopulation of the region between the Thukela and Mzimkhulu rivers. The politically motivated raids sweeping southwards towards the Mzimkhulu frequently resulted in the cessation of agriculture and the rearing livestock. The Zulu resident in the area fled in all directions in search of refuge, but the less fortunate were either killed or sold into slavery.³⁵ The process of destruction led to the reshaping of the landscape and that promoted the “subsequent” settlement of white farmers on Natal’s well-watered grasslands.³⁶ As early as the 1820’s, the Zulu fleeing the disruptions, found shelter among the traders at Port Natal and there they learned to adapt their traditional homestead economic practices to meet the needs of white society.³⁷ By 1835 the majority of homesteads in the harbour area were growing more than enough maize to supply the needs of that whole community.³⁸ In 1843 the Union Jack followed the British traders and Natal was annexed after several earlier proposals had been rejected.³⁹ By then there were extensive homesteads around the port “cultivating large tracts of land and supplying produce to the small urban market”.⁴⁰

³⁴ Laband, Rope of sand, p 3.

³⁵ Clifton Crais, The making of the colonial order: white supremacy and black resistance in the eastern Cape, 1770-1865 (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1992), p 97.

³⁶ Bill Guest and John M Sellers, Enterprise and exploitation in a Victorian colony: aspects of the economic and social history of colonial Natal (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1985), p 2.

³⁷ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 10.

³⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.I, evidence of Dinya, p 99.

³⁹ Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and exploitation, p 3.

⁴⁰ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 10.

Within a short time the Port Natal settlement had undergone a minor agricultural revolution inside the traditional homestead system of agriculture.⁴¹ Meanwhile the small established population of Zulu exiles started gradually to swell by the tens, hundreds and thousands who flocked into the young colony from its eastern border. On the western side the opposite was happening as the Trekkers trekked back across the Drakensberg. The trek was momentarily stopped by Sir Harry Smith the new Governor and High Commissioner who promised to put things right for the Trekkers.⁴² Smith, reasonable as he was, came rather too late to reverse the trek. The Cape Governor set up a new Land Commission to which West respectfully protested seeing two million acres of land shared between land companies. Lavish grants of land were now in the hands of speculative purposes.⁴³ For the white people in Natal the land, it appeared, was for a gamble whilst for the Africans who were predominantly rural, the land remained a central pre-occupation.⁴⁴ To be landless was to be without the ability to produce wealth or to sustain life independently.⁴⁵

The land which the British frontiersman acquired could be leased to the Zulu either in whole or in part.⁴⁶ White ownership of land, in many cases, “developed into a veneer of white ownership, superimposed upon actual African land use”.⁴⁷ It was, however, the most rewarding way of getting a return on the land.

⁴¹ Ballard, *The “transfrontiersman”*, p 33.

⁴² Brookes and Webb, *A history of Natal*, p 63.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p 64.

⁴⁴ Lambert, *Betrayed trust*, p 8; Also Donald Denoon with Balam Nyeko, *Southern Africa since 1800* (London, Longman, 1972), p 130.

⁴⁵ Denoon with Nyeko, *Southern Africa since 1800*, p 128.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p 128.

⁴⁷ Denoon with Nyeko, *Southern Africa since 1800*, p 129.

The Lieutenant-Governor, Benjamin Pine's rule was described as "a period of abounding vitality" with British immigrants pouring into the country, replacing the Trekkers "who had left with resounding finality".⁴⁸ From January 1849 until June 1852 some five thousand English and Irish immigrants came into Natal, making up for the bulk of the Trekker population. Their settlement on the land was different from that of the Trekkers, for most of them chose to settle around Durban and Pietermaritzburg and others established villages such as Richmond, Howick and Verulem rather than settle on the farms. A few of them took advantage of the 20 acres of land provided under the emigration scheme but the 45 acres extra provided by Pine failed to attract any significant number.⁴⁹ Meanwhile the growing colonial demand for grain increased the need for more land and the land-owners leased it to productive African peasants who devoted a far greater proportion of time and land to agricultural purposes.

Shepstone, in the meantime, was vigorously engaged in settling chiefdoms in the designated locations and creating even more of them. This led to an outcry from the European settlers and even Pine complained about "so many Kafirlands in the midst of a Colony which had been held as a field of Emigration for Her Majesty's British subjects".⁵⁰ The Trekker leader, Andries Pretorius, as a parting shot, "solemnly warned the government that it was delivering up the province to a future reign of general havoc, slaughter, robbery, and conflagration".⁵¹ He was warning the British against creating locations for the Africans. His protest met with a haughty and scornful attitude of indifference which made the Trekkers even more resolute to quit Natal.

⁴⁸ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 65.

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp 65-66.

⁵⁰ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 69.

⁵¹ Lucas, The Zulus and the British frontiers, p 144.

Though the Trekker leader might have exaggerated a bit, the attitude of the white people towards African ownership or occupation of land was clearly evident. In fact, as Brookes and Webb contend, the 1850's Natal witnessed the drawing of lines between three sets of white attitudes – official, settler and missionary.⁵² Theophilus Shepstone stood conspicuously as the embodiment of official opinion. Even Pine who challenged him, could not alter that reality. Ordinance No.12 of 1845 titled “Ordinance for establishing the Roman Dutch Law in and for the District of Natal”, stipulated that the Supreme Chief, that is, the Lieutenant-Governor, was vested “with full power to appoint and remove the subordinate chiefs or other authorities among them”.⁵³ This proclamation was used by Shepstone to manipulate the situation in favour of his appointed chiefs.⁵⁴ Since real power, regarding Africans, rested with Shepstone, it was he who established and destroyed chiefdoms when it suited him.

While some of the hereditary chiefdoms, for example, the Cele, Thuli and Hlangwini lost cohesion and significance, chiefs such as Langalibalele and his Hlubi people, Phakade ka Macingwana of the Chunu, Nodada ka Ngoza of the Thembu and Zikhali ka Matiwane of the Ngwane took advantage of the changed conditions in Natal to entrench themselves and enrich their followers.⁵⁵ Nodada's and Phakade's chiefdoms were allocated the Impafana reserve in the remote north-eastern corner of the colony. The sparse settlement of white

⁵² Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 69.

⁵³ Natal, ... Proclamation No. 12 of 1845 [Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg].

⁵⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, Appendix 3, p 389. Notes relating to Theophilus Shepstone, naming Zatshuge, Ngoza, Mqundane (Jantshi), Mahlanya, Mdeba, Teteleku, Hemuhemu, Lazarus Xaba, Mnyakanya as among those who had dealings with Shepstone.

⁵⁵ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 27.

people in the area led to greater freedom and the disregard of the boundaries set for them. They were able to extend their influence over the surrounding Crown Lands which were more “richly blessed with arable and grazing land than was the arid Impafana reserve that had been allocated to them”.⁵⁶

The 1852-53 Commission complained about “the large section of the country, where the kafir is left unimproved and unrestricted, to follow his own devices”. The Commission report cited Phakade and other chiefs who, “lay personal claims to land of the Locations they occupy, and also the cattle and people of their tribes; and, in fact, have been allowed by degrees virtually to assume the position of independent powers”.⁵⁷ According to the Commission these were dangerous pretensions that needed to be controlled or stopped. And to do this, the hereditary powers of the chiefs ought to be abolished.⁵⁸ It is well to remember that Pine appointed this Commission “to review the existing policy and to make recommendations for suitable changes,” after a flood of complaints that the locations were “too large”.⁵⁹

Pine, in encouraging a review of the situation, had not taken into account the fact that the land to be occupied and used by the Zulu was “rugged in the extreme” and was “not suitable for cultivation or even for pasturage”.⁶⁰ Besides chiefdoms such as those of Phakade or Langalibalele, the numerous other Zulu belonging to virtually crumbling

⁵⁶ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 27.

⁵⁷ Natal ... Report of the commission ... 1852-53, p 34.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p 27

⁵⁹ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 69.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p 69.

hereditary chiefdoms, chose not to live in the reserves at all, but on Crown lands or on land owned by whites, to whom they paid rent.⁶¹ On these lands they adapted their farming methods and produced marketable crops.⁶² The Zulu, as it was sometimes grudgingly admitted by some of the whites, were “not bad citizens” though they were most of the time seen as “unreliable workers”. Clearly, the Zulu were unwilling “to settle down to fixed industrial pursuits”, as the colonists would have desired.⁶³ But until the 1870’s the white landowners continued to make money from “Kaffir farming” than from their own efforts at farming, either agricultural or pastoral.⁶⁴

The Zulu peasantry, that had developed in Natal, in line with the traditional homestead economy, could only flourish where there was free and sufficient access to land.⁶⁵ With the growing population in the reserves, the chiefs were increasingly finding difficulty in allocating land to homesteads and access to grazing land was seriously diminishing. It was critical for the sustenance of the homestead economy considering that the lands “so generously” apportioned to the Zulu were “fit only for the eagle and the baboon”, rugged, dry and isolated.⁶⁶ Many chiefs started supplying labour to the settlers by directing their young men to seek employment on farms. More and more chiefdoms disintegrated and remnants were scattered in “hopeless confusion” through the farms, villages and towns in the interior.⁶⁷ The authority of the chiefs was further weakened when the white farmers,

⁶¹ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 97.

⁶² Bundy, The rise and fall of the South African peasantry, p 10.

⁶³ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 171.

⁶⁴ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 97.

⁶⁵ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 71.

⁶⁶ Russell, Natal, the land and its story, p 198.

⁶⁷ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 33.

driven by the “eager and insatiable desire to control and enforce the gratuitous labour of the Kafirs”,⁶⁸ began to encourage their employees to disobey the chiefs. As a result of this, the lands of the chiefs in the reserves could not be serviced because of the lack of manpower. “Squatting” on white-owned farms became the order of the day. Although the Shepstone system is known for setting up the locations, it seems that there were, in fact, more Zulu living outside the locations than within them. “Crown Lands, settler farms, and the property of the land speculators, were occupied by Africans who paid rent in the form of labour, cash, or in produce”.⁶⁹

The 1855 Proclamation against unauthorized squatting was almost entirely ignored.⁷⁰

The locations could not contain the ever-increasing Zulu population. The Zulu became tenants and the landholders welcomed them as a means of drawing profits upon their land. The economic conditions of the squatters, that is, the peasants outside the locations or mission reserves, varied in accordance with the category of land on which they lived and the amount of rent or labour demanded of them. But, generally, the condition of some squatters on Crown Lands and on private land seem to have been better than those in the locations.⁷¹ Rather than offer their services on the open labour-market, the Zulu chose to farm the land and maintain an independent existence. They were determined to continue producing an agricultural surplus that more than equipped them to pay their rent and to meet the demands made upon them through various forms of taxation.⁷²

⁶⁸ Natal, Report of the commission ... 1852-53, p 26.

⁶⁹ Jeff Guy, The heretic: a story of the life of John William Colenso, 1814-1883 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p 41.

⁷⁰ Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and exploitation, p 8.

⁷¹ John Lambert, “The impoverishment of the Natal peasantry, 1893-1910” in Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and exploitation, p 289.

⁷² Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and exploitation, p 8.

Shepstone who claimed to be working towards the goal of a self-sufficient peasantry, encouraged his government to sponsor the sale of ploughs to the Zulu peasant farmers on credit. Etherington argues convincingly that this programme, more than any other of his schemes, contributed to the material progress of the Zulu people of Natal Colony.⁷³ As their chiefdoms were gradually disintegrating, these Zulu became receptive to elements of colonial culture. The government sponsorship assisted them to adapt and a great many of them became Natal's progressive Zulu small farmers, disproving the theory that "Africans were hindbound traditionalists" who were "slow to adapt to a dynamic settler economy".⁷⁴ Africans were made to believe that "the Queen will certainly not allow them to be treated unjustly, deprived or despised, or to be driven forcibly from the lands on which they are settled by her permission."⁷⁵ But the belief proved hollow in the final analysis.

While the Zulu were adapting to European social and economic practices in Natal, the social habits of the Zulu people across the Thukela did not remain undisturbed. In the Zulu kingdom, the intrusion of merchant capital was beginning to shape the process of production as well as the emerging social, political and economic relations. As the control of hunting and trading within Zululand was becoming largely a white dominated enterprise "cattle assumed even greater importance as a medium of exchange among the Zulu".⁷⁶ As long as the Zulu were able to establish agricultural plots and to freely move their cattle between summer and winter grazing fields, the homestead economy was not threatened,⁷⁷

⁷³ Norman Etherington, "African economic experiments in colonial Natal, 1845-1880" in Guest and Sellers, enterprise and exploitation, p 268.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p 265.

⁷⁵ Fuze, The black people, recorded as Izindaba zase Natal, 51, by Bishop Colenso, p 88.

⁷⁶ Peter Colenbrander, "External exchange and the Zulu kingdom: towards a reassessment" in Guest and Sellers (eds) Enterprise and exploitation, p 98.

⁷⁷ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 71.

instead it continued to meet the needs of the homesteads concerned. However, the Zululand economy was greatly weakened as many refugees brought cattle with them into Natal Colony from Zululand. With these, they strengthened the chiefdoms that they joined in Natal.⁷⁸

White trading in Zululand led to the sale of many cattle. Catherine Barter tells the story of an Englishman, probably E F Rathbone, who traded in the country where “people gladly brought him cows and oxen in exchange for blankets and beads, and looked upon him as a benefactor”.⁷⁹ This is the position that encouraged Catherine and her brother Charles to embark on the same venture to acquire cattle “at tolerably reasonable prices”, and also “to barter cats for heifers”.⁸⁰

European traders and hunters with their “heavy ox-drawn wagons laden with blankets, rolls of salemore cloth, trinkets, beads and knives had lumbered through the tumultuous hills and valleys of the Zulu country beyond the Tugela River boundary” to acquire more cattle.⁸¹ Hunters like John Dunn who viewed cattle in a commercial way got involved in the trade.⁸² It was also at this moment that Shepstone, realizing the problem of location overcrowding in Natal, began to show an active interest in the affairs of Zululand with the view to creating another “location” in the western territories of that country.⁸³

⁷⁸ An example is that of the crossing of Mawa who fled with numerous followers and large herds of cattle in 1843. See evidence of Mqaikana in Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, p 13.

⁷⁹ Catherine Barter, Alone among the Zulus: the narrative of a journey through the Zulu country (Edited by Patricia L. Merrett, Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban, 1995), p 18.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp 22-27.

⁸¹ Oliver Walker, Proud Zulu (London, Werner Laurie, 1949), p 13.

⁸² Ibid, p 18.

⁸³ Taylor, Shaka's children, pp 178, 184-187.

In 1856 Britain declared Natal a colony of the Crown with its own representative government, thus altering its relations with the Cape Colony. From then onwards, the Natal Colony felt more secure about protecting its own borders, it also became more confident to single-handedly promote immigration to offset the ratio between black and white. This could be done with a promise of generous grants of land to prospective settlers, especially as Europe was experiencing an economic depression.⁸⁴ The scheme was attractive to a large number of British people resulting in a population growth of nearly 14 000 Whites within the Colony's borders. But, still, it was far less than the 156 000 estimate of the African population that was continuing to grow at a fast rate. The growth of the Zulu population was taking place despite huge setbacks in the form of cattle losses through lung-sickness.⁸⁵ The loss of cattle inevitably meant the loss of control over their young men who would otherwise look obediently to their fathers for lobolo cattle.⁸⁶ Youth disobedience had an adverse effect on the homestead economy which was essentially a family undertaking with all the members having a part to play.

White Natalians did not always act in a fair and equitable manner. The unscrupulous among the landlords, had adopted the habit of evicting their tenants as soon as the crop was ripe and ready for harvesting.⁸⁷ From the side of the Christian mission, the homestead economy was also attacked, for whenever the Zulu became Christians, they left their chiefs.⁸⁸ On the whole it seems Macmillan was correct to say that "the incorporation of

⁸⁴ Carton, Blood from your children, p 34.

⁸⁵ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 48.

⁸⁶ Etherington, "The Shepstone system", p 174.

⁸⁷ Natal Native Commission, 1881-1882, evidence of Jonas (U) Mlaba, p 152.

⁸⁸ Natal Native Commission, 1881-1882, evidence of Stephanus Mini, p 137.

Africans into a larger economic system through dispossession, trade and the insatiable demand for native labour, resulted in the collapse of the traditional homestead economy and the consequent impoverishment of a large section of the Zulu population.⁸⁹ Those largely affected were the traditionalists who were not part of the new technology and modern European agricultural practices. Otherwise those with a Christian mission background were able to flourish as peasant farmers producing marketable crops on freehold property that they continued to purchase.⁹⁰

The process of “growth and decay” in the peasant communities show that decay set in towards the end of the nineteenth-century, that the Zulu of Natal had displayed a rare resilience and ingenious innovations in adapting to European ways. However, in the final analysis, those who favoured the development of an African peasantry, mainly merchants and missionaries and some colonial officials, lost to those who sought to undermine peasant production and peasant independence.⁹¹

In the case of Natal, a section of the peasantry was “proletarianized almost as soon as the peasant class emerged as an identifiable element in the political economy”.⁹² Proletarianization occurred when the rural Zulu population of pastoral-cultivators were converted into sub-subsistence rural and town dwellers dependent on wages earned in white industrial employment or upon labour on white farms.⁹³ In Natal during the 1870’s, it became

⁸⁹ Thomson, A history of South Africa, p 130.

⁹⁰ John Lambert, “African reasons for purchasing land in Natal in the late 19th, and early 20th centuries”, Kleio, xxxi, 1999, pp 33-34.

⁹¹ Marion Lacey, Working for Boroko: the origins of a coercive labour system in South Africa (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981), p 12.

⁹² Bundy, The rise and fall of the South African peasantry, p 10.

⁹³ Ibid, read the introduction.

almost impossible for the Zulu as well as the settlers to purchase more land. The Zulu population had grown threefold since the late 1840's with some 150 000 Zulu living in the reserves where chiefs were battling with the problem of allocating land for homesteads, and also for grazing. People were forced to graze their cattle on the same lands and to cultivate the same gardens, year after year, with the result that the grasslands rapidly degenerated and turned into a desert.⁹⁴ Chief Teteleku complained of the "sterility of the soil, which causes famine", when asked about the conditions in the locations.⁹⁵ Only in 1852 had the magistrate of Impafana location referred to the Zulu there as "the only real peasantry of South Africa", being able to provide the inhabitants of the towns with supplies of fowls, eggs, milk and firewood.⁹⁶ The scarcity of available land had altered the situation drastically by the 1880's.

To make matters worse, resident farmers started restricting the land available for labour tenants and absentee-owners also began evicting rent tenants or increased rental such that tenants could not afford to pay. As the last resort, tenants turned to their chiefs in the locations, the very locations that could not meet the needs of those who were already there. Chiefs appealed to Shepstone's Department of Native Affairs for help, but their request for the enlargement or the opening of new reserves were rejected. As a result the chiefs began to re-assess their position as regards land ownership. Unlike the Christian converts, they decided against individual ownership in favour of group ownership in the name of the chiefs, as individuals they felt unprotected.

⁹⁴ Lambert, "African reasons for purchasing land". p 43.

⁹⁵ Natal Native Commission, 1881-82, evidence of Chief Teteleku p 186.

⁹⁶ John Lambert, "From independence to rebellion: African society in crisis, c. 1880-1910", in Duminy and Guest (eds) *Natal and Zululand*, p 375.

During the 1870's it became difficult for the Zulu as well as for the settlers to purchase more land. There was no more land for purchase except land belonging to the Crown which could not be bought as from 1873. These lands were open for sale in 1878 after the Land and Immigration Board had sanctioned the sales.⁹⁷ With the opening of the Crown Lands for sale, many chiefs responded positively and began to organize to buy the land made available to them.⁹⁸ The Natal government had hoped that they would use the opportunity to buy land particularly next to their reserves where their followers were already living. Those chiefs who had been crying out for more land especially in the south-western districts, bought the land and held it in trust or through missionaries.⁹⁹

Unfortunately, Crown lands soon dwindled and prices rose sharply. More and more non-Christian Zulu and their Kholwa counterparts found that their capital resources were too slender for the competition that resulted with the Whites. Those Zulu living on Crown lands were badly affected when the land went up for sale and they had to be evicted. Even those few who were fortunate to remain on the land had their gardens and grazing fields drastically reduced. Often, they had to labour for the new owners of the land.¹⁰⁰

The protection of the Natal Zulu should have been a concern of the governors at this particular time, yet, both Sir Henry Bulwer (1882-1885) and his successor, Sir Arthur Havelock (1885-1889), preoccupied themselves with the politics of Zululand across the Thukela border and neglected Zulu people within the Natal colony.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Lambert, "African reasons for purchasing land", p 41.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p 44.

⁹⁹ William Beinart et al (eds) Putting a plough to the ground: accumulation and dispossession in rural South Africa, 1850-1930 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986), p 44.

¹⁰⁰ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 58.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p 58.

However, Bulwer together with the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, John Shepstone, did instruct magistrates in 1882 to advise the Zulu people to bid for lots when land came up for sale. Dr Sutherland, the Surveyor-General, was also a strong supporter of African purchases, but then Africans could no longer afford the high prices.

White farmers with significant state support, forged an alliance with capitalists enabling them to revolutionize production on their farms so that by the close of the nineteenth-century, their farms “stood in stark juxtaposition to the overcrowded and impoverished African reserves”.¹⁰² State intervention in regulating markets, providing credit and controlling the use of land gave the settlers tremendous advantage over the Zulu peasantry. Lambert agrees that the “development of settler agriculture in the last two decades of the nineteenth-century had far-reaching consequences for the homestead economy and for African society as a whole”.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Beinart, Putting a plough to the ground, read the introduction.

¹⁰³ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 89.

CHAPTER 3

3. ZULU OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MISSIONARY ENTERPRISES

3.1 The early days

“It was a savage age.” With these words Louis du Buisson opened his impressive and informative little book: The white man cometh. He pointed out that England, the most “civilized” country in the world, still practiced capital punishment whereby offenders were sentenced to death by public hanging, where “boys were sent out to sea at the age of six; children were made to labour for sixteen hours a day, seven days a week, in mines and cotton mills”.¹ It was the age of Charles Dickens, portrayed in his novels such as Oliver Twist and David Copperfield, the essence of which lay in the conflict between good and evil, light and darkness working through more or less ignorant and well-meaning characters against diabolical opposition. Yet, in that very age of doom and gloom, Western Europe witnessed “a great burst of cultural and spiritual vitality” of immense proportions.²

In Great Britain where for ages Christianity and the practice of slavery were not thought to be in conflict, a movement for the abolition of slavery got underway. As from 1830 the Whig commitment to reform extended to both the English and the Irish churches, thereby making religion a major party political issue.³ Led by Christians such as Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce, the movement gained momentum and culminated in the Reform Parliament enacting legislation in August 1833, by which the institution of slavery was to be abolished throughout the British Empire as from 1 December 1834.

¹ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 1.

² Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 54.

³ David Hempton, Methodism and politics in British society 1750-1850 (London, Hutchinson University Library, 1987), p 179.

Throughout the nineteenth-century European colonists carried their religious and cultural vitality as well as their political beliefs and practices to far-flung corners of the world. The colonists believed in the superiority of their technology, their faith in Christianity and their systems of government and jurisprudence.⁵ They also held the view that Europeans and the white race in general were inherently superior and far more advanced than the non-white races. In Britain, the new English theology perpetuated by the writings of such intellectuals as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, William Wordsworth and others found fertile ground in the churches.⁶ Driven by a vocal middle class and influenced by a number of individuals in the upper classes, a great majority of the English people were inspired and their political outlook drastically changed in a radical way.⁷ Many young English men and women were intensively moved away from the old evangelized faith to the new one.

A radical evangelicalism, which the historian Andrew Toss defined as “the belief that social and political issues were central to the concerns of a Christian”, filtered to the colonies.⁸ In 1819 the London Missionary Society sent one of its directors, Dr John Philip, to supervise mission work in South Africa. Britain, more than any other colonial power, seem to have imbued her citizens with a patriotic zeal and an ardent belief that their political, cultural and religious institutions were of a higher order than those of other nations. One patriotic British historian, named Lecky, wrote about the “unweary,

⁵ Norman Etherington, “Christianity and African society in nineteenth-century Natal” in Duminy and Guest (eds) *Natal and Zululand*, p 276.

⁶ Guy, *The heretic*, pp 21-34.

⁷ Warhurst, *Geen's the making of South Africa*, p 54.

⁸ Quotation in Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 59.

unostentatious and inglorious crusade of England against slavery” that may be “regarded as among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations.”⁹ In the words of John William Colenso, the future Bishop of Natal, “in evangelizing the world”, English men and women had “a far higher calling than others, the first and foremost post of duty”.¹⁰

Saturated with all these notions of superiority, the British carried their ideals and prejudices with them to Britain’s colonial territories throughout Africa and Asia. Victorian cultural and religious imperialism was given expression in the activities of the Aborigines Protection Society (APS), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the London Missionary Society (LMS), and numberless individual British settlers, merchants and government officials who came into contact with African and Asian peoples.¹¹ A good number of them did all they could to spread British ideas.

John Philip, the radical evangelical, whilst working at the Cape for the welfare of all South Africans, Boer and Briton, slave and Khoikhoi, received a letter from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1833. The letter was enquiring about the prospects of missionary work in South Africa. Writing a reply from his headquarters at Mission House in Cape Town, Philip outlined the condition and character of the Zulu in these words: “ ...they are the most warlike and courageous people we have heard of in Africa in modern times ... should the churches of America think of assisting us in South Africa, I would strongly

⁹ Quoted in Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 65.

¹⁰ Ruth Edgecombe (ed), Bringing forth light: five tracts on Bishop Colenso’s Zulu mission (Durban, Killie Campbell African Library, 1982), p xiv.

¹¹ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 54.

recommend that they should send a mission to them".¹² Philip's frequent visits to LMS mission stations within and without the borders of the Cape, made him understand South African conditions better than most of his contemporaries.¹³ Though his Researches in South Africa was found to be blotted with inaccuracies, the historian WM Macmillan could still describe the hard working priest, as the best of them all.¹⁴ Exactly eighteen months after his reply, on 22 November 1834, six missionaries and their wives stood confidently in a packed Park Street Church in Boston Massachusetts, United States, to receive their final instructions from their superiors. George Champion, Aldin Grout and Newton Adams were destined to work among Dingane's Zulu while Daniel Lindley, Alexander Wilson and Henry Venable were to go to Mzilikazi's Ndebele.¹⁵

They were specially chosen individuals, well-groomed and dedicated to the service of their fellow men. They were aware of the challenges that lay ahead but were strengthened by the assurance that Philip, who was waiting for them at the Cape, would be their mentor and guide. John Philip's interest in politics at the Cape led to his opposition to Lord Charles Somerset's autocratic rulership and that culminated in the appointment of Commissioners Colebrooke and Bigge who were to inquire into the state of affairs at the Cape. As a radical evangelical, Philip was committed to fighting for the freedom of the oppressed classes.¹⁶ It was earnestly hoped that the good qualities in the person of Philip would, as mentor, rub off on the Americans.

¹² Taylor, Shaka's children, p 124.

¹³ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 58.

¹⁴ Ibid, p 58.

¹⁵ Muller, 500 years, p 122.

¹⁶ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 59. Thompson has quoted Ross, Philip's biographer as having stated that Philip was a controversial figure in South African historiography but has sadly been underrated by both conservative and Marxist historians.

The six missionaries and their wives sailed from Boston on 3 December 1834 and arrived at Cape Town on 6 February 1835. They arrived when the Sixth Frontier War was in progress, making overland travel to Natal impossible. The men and women destined for the Zulu had to remain at the Cape for six months.¹⁷ But while the Americans had to endure the long sea voyage to the Cape, and having to wait for the end of the war, one man was carrying the gospel into the Zulu country in January 1835. That man was Captain Allen Francis Gardiner of the Royal Navy, known to history as the “Patagonian Martyr”.¹⁸ He was attached to no missionary society or church, but was driven by his passion to open the way whereby the ministers of the Christian gospel would find access to the Zulu and be “the means of introducing true religion, civilization and industry into these benighted regions”.¹⁹

Allen Gardiner, whose life is described as having consisted of a series of deeply felt, but unresolved impulses, was a man of profound gifts. He was energetic and possessed an enormous sense of duty supported by a willing spirit. He was a deeply, almost fanatically religious man. Only his love of travel and adventure equaled his unquestioning piety.²⁰ At twenty-nine he had a wife, Julia Reade, and his five children. His wife died in May 1834, an incident that shook Gardiner so much he swore to give his life to the conversion of primitive people in Africa.²¹

¹⁷ Edward C Tabler, Pioneers of Natal and Southeastern Africa, 1552 – 1878 (Cape Town, AA Balkema, 1977), p 3.

¹⁸ Russel, History of Old Durban, p 9. The name was gained in consequence of his being starved to death in that bleak and inhospitable country.

¹⁹ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p. 152. Peter Becker states that after reading the writings of Robert Moffat and John Campbell he decided to follow in their illustrious footsteps, in the LMS, Rule of Fear, p161-162

²⁰ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 238.

²¹ *Ibid*, p 239.

The Zulu Kingdom aroused much curiosity among the Christian people of Europe and America.²² Greatly consumed by the spirit of the times, Gardiner set sail from England on 6 September 1834 and on board ship he met one named Berker who agreed to accompany him to Natal. On 13 November 1834 they reached Cape Town and immediately organized horses and rode to Grahamstown. In preparation for their journey to Natal, Gardiner bought two wagons and oxen and hired George Cyrus as his interpreter.²³

It was here in Grahamstown that he met Henry Francis Fynn who engaged him in discussion about the Zulu country and its possibilities. Subsequently, Fynn approved of Gardiner's mission and offered him advice on how to conduct himself when they met with Dingane. His party departed for Natal on 12 December 1834, and on their way called at mission stations of Butterworth, Morley and Buntingville. At the rain-swollen Mzimvubu River, Gardiner and Cyrus left Berker with the wagons and with a pack of riding horses they pushed ahead to reach Port Natal on 29 December 1834 where they were given a warm welcome by Collis.²⁴ He found that though the settlers had been there for exactly eleven years, no single permanent structure had been erected. The natural environment was very appealing, nonetheless. The ramshackle little settlement was situated in green and fertile foliage in thick overgrown hills which fascinated him. He was quick to name the territory the District of Victoria. Fired with religious zeal, he could not wait to meet King Dingane.²⁵

²² Etherington, "Christianity and African Society", p 275

²³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 126.

²⁴ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 49.

²⁵ TV Bulpin, Shaka's country : a book of Zululand (Cape Town, Howard B Timmins, 1952), p 60.

Gardiner spent only two days resting at Port Natal. From there he borrowed a wagon from Collis and set off, very much determined to reach Dingane's capital. His arrival at Mgungundlovu marked the breaking of a new record for overland travel. Though his entourage lay scattered along the long route from Pondoland to Zululand, Gardiner had made it to his chosen pastorage.²⁶ Mgungundlovu, the royal place at the time of Gardiner's arrival, was bristling with life showing an exuberance of wealth displayed in brass pieces and beads, printed cotton, calico and blankets. The isigodlo at the centre, looked like a treasure trove, bursting to the seams with presents from the traders.²⁷ But all the outward show of beauty and affluence could not conceal the seething discontent beneath the superficial splendour on the surface. The kingdom's coherent structure was beginning to show cracks. The king spent most of his time lying on a reedmat, his dog Makwilana beside him, watching women dance for him.

The affairs of the Zulu state were firmly in the hands of Ndlela ka Sompisi and Nzobo ka Sobali (Dambuza), the king's two chief councilors. When Dingane assumed power he made sure to eliminate all his enemies, real and imagined.²⁸ Since then, deaths occurred so frequently that Mgungundlovu, the centre of authority, gained a wicked reputation as "a place of death".²⁹ The nation's pride, the armies (amabutho), rarely went out and hence could hardly win any victories to their credit. Between 1834 and 1835 no campaign was undertaken, consequently "loyalty to the army declined along with efficiency".³⁰

²⁶ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 127.

²⁷ Peter Becker, Rule of fear: the life and times of Dingane King of the Zulu (London, Longmans 1964), p 165

²⁸ Fuze, The Black People, izindaba zase Natal, 25, p 72

²⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, Vol 1, Evidence of Lunguza, p 308

³⁰ Fuze, The Black People, izindaba zase Natal, 25, p 73. See also Webb and Wright, JSA, Vol 4, evidence of Mqaikane, p 26

This was the situation in Zululand when the first missionary in the person of Allen Francis Gardiner, arrived at Mgungundlovu on 10 January 1835. On his way to the king, he had stopped at the military quarters, Hlomedlini, which was commanded by the great warrior, Nongalaza ka Nondela. Messengers were quickly sent out to the capital to report the white man's arrival, while the missionary and his servants were made to enjoy the best of Zulu hospitality.³¹ A few days later senior envoys from the capital came to Hlomedlini to inform the missionary of the great welcome awaiting him, and was cordially warned not to keep the king waiting unduly. Without any further delay Gardiner was on his way to Mgungundlovu where he met Ndlela who ushered him to the king's presence in the afternoon of 10 January 1835.

In the period of his sojourn, which included a visit to Dingane's great military quarters, the Mbelebeleni, Gardiner explained with difficulty that he, unlike all the others, was not a trader nor was he a hunter, that he had come to teach the word of God.³² He tried very hard to explain Christianity and the inherent advantages it has for heathen people.³³ A white man who had no interest in ivory and cattle was something Dingane and his people found hard to imagine. According to Walker: "Their minds were heathen, their way of life arcadian in its naked brown simplicity".³⁴ Christian teaching was too alien to their way of thinking and to their organized existence to have any serious meaning.³⁵ To them a man was a hunter and women tilled the land for crops. The Zulu worshipped their ancestors and believed in witchcraft. Unbeknown to Gardiner, the Zulu had been cautioned about the coming of

³¹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 129.

³² Becker, Rule of fear, p163.

³³ Ibid, p164.

³⁴ Oliver Walker, Proud Zulu, (London, Warner Lauries, p 1949), preface.

³⁵ Martin Prozesky, Christianity in South Africa, (London, Macmillan, 1990), p 12.

missionaries by Jacob Msimbithi, hence every effort he made to find a way to the king's heart was stonewalled and frustrated by Ndlela and Nzobo.

King Dingane admitted that he could not see the necessity of teaching people the functions of a new God when "for countless generations they had been adequately protected by the spirits of illustrious ancestors" who were honored and celebrated annually in the nation's most important religious event, the Umkhosi or ceremony of the first fruits.³⁶ Nzobo told Gardiner quite blatantly that the Zulu did not take kindly to strangers teaching them and in any case they would not understand his "message from the Book". Nzobo suggested, with Dingane's approval, that Gardiner could serve the Kingdom best if he were to teach the workings of firearms. Nonetheless, an agreement was made that the missionary could teach the Book to the people at the Bay first.³⁷ Disappointed, Gardiner returned to Port Natal. The settlers welcomed him enthusiastically hoping that with him in their midst, the British government might regard them more seriously and annex Natal.³⁸

Gardiner selected a site for his mission station on a ridge overlooking the bay which he named Berea. There he conducted his first service for the thirteen whites who attended. And, that very afternoon, he held a service for Africans which a hundred and fifty of them attended.³⁹ This was the first community of Zulu to have ever attended a church service. Within a week he opened a school with two boys and two girls all Zulu children. Before he could start teaching, however, he gave his first learners some printed calico so that they could appear in class decently dressed.

³⁶ Becker, Rule of fear, pp 164 – 166.

³⁷ Fuze, The Black people, p 74. Also Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 49.

³⁸ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 160.

³⁹ Ibid, p 160.

Zulu children, at the time, went about naked until they reached the age of puberty. What is significant, however, is that for the first time Zulu children were being exposed to western type education which was bound to change their lives and those of generations after them.⁴⁰

Only some time later, in his conversation with the Port Natal traders, did Gardiner become aware of the reasons why Dingane was suspicious of him and his teachings. He was told of Jacob Msimbithi's prophecies in which missionaries were depicted as witches and the forerunners of the British army. He was also told of the long standing conflict between the king and the settlers over Zulu deserters and refugees harboured at Port Natal. The traders were fully convinced that Dingane was planning a military confrontation against them. Nevertheless, on 25 April 1835, the settler community decided on a negotiation agreement with the king.⁴¹ Gardiner was unanimously elected to carry out the mission. He keenly accepted and subsequently set out to meet Dingane at his winter home, Kwa-Khangela near present day Eshowe. After their long and businesslike talks, Gardiner's assessment of Zulu religious beliefs was that they were "a remnant of pre-Christian Judaism" and therefore not much of an obstacle in the way of conversion since the connections would not be hard to establish.⁴² He was also impressed by Dingane's intelligence and willingness to accept and consider new ideas.⁴³ The king agreed to give Gardiner the go-ahead to build his mission station at Hlomendlini near the Thukela River if he kept his word and did not allow refugees to settle anymore at Port Natal.⁴⁴ Dingane found an opportunity to thank Gardiner

⁴⁰ Du Buisson, The White man cometh, pp 160 – 161.

⁴¹ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 40.

⁴² Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 277.

⁴³ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 49.

⁴⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 131.

for the telescope gift that he found so useful.⁴⁵ He also expressed his gratitude at having to deal with an honorable man like Gardiner, a man he could trust, especially with regard to bringing order and discipline to the settlement around Port Natal.⁴⁶ King Dingane's view of the hunter-traders was that they were an undisciplined rabble of drifters.

True to his word, on 21 May 1835, Gardiner and George Cyrus set out to deliver to King Dingane some four refugees captured by Collis and Cane.⁴⁷ Etherington, however, argued that it was "a group of people charged with crimes against the king".⁴⁸ Nonetheless, Gardiner had proved his truthfulness to Dingane. On his way back to Port Natal, according to Taylor, he selected a spot for the first mission station in Zululand where he built a series of grass huts about thirty kilometers south of Shaka's old capital, Kwa-Bulawayo, which he called Kalula (easily, freely).⁴⁹ Instead of staying on at the mission station, to take care of purely religious matters, he remembered that he had other responsibilities, of a secular nature, at Port Natal. He proceeded to the port with claims that Dingane had "ceded" to him personally, the whole district from the Mngeni to the Mzimkhulu river, some twelve thousand square kilometers of land, including the Port.⁵⁰ Even from a man of God, the greed for land superceded the desire to preach the gospel. Jacob's prophesy was being fulfilled. On his arrival at the port, Gardiner turned his enormous energies to the establishment of local government. He called a meeting of the white inhabitants and proposed that they build a proper town. The settlers co-operated and signed a petition to Sir

⁴⁵ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, vol I, p 193

⁴⁶ Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 277.

⁴⁷ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 49.

⁴⁸ Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 277.

⁴⁹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 132.

⁵⁰ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 171.

Benjamin D'Urban, the Cape Governor, in which they outlined the prevailing conditions and the prospects of the desired town that would be named D'urban in his honour.⁵¹ They pointed out that it had been their wish over many years to be annexed by Britain and recognized as a separate colony. The envisaged colony's territory would stretch from Mzimkhulu River to the Thukela River, an area they claimed, they already "owned". In their letter, they wrote: "We hold in our possession extensive tracts of excellent land, a considerable portion of which has long been under cultivation", in motivation of their request.⁵² Their claims were false, but they do make one understand their desire to take the land from the Zulu long before the Voortrekkers arrived on the scene. And this makes one understand also the type of characters the settlers were. The Zulu were not so foolish as not to realize who they were dealing with.

Gardiner knew he had no real authority to rule Natal, that is why he decided to engage the Governor with the view to the appointment of a British agent who would regulate trade and conclude treaties with Dingane.⁵³ The agent would also be able to determine the diplomatic relations with Britain that the Zulu kings had been so anxious about. In truth and according to the Zulu political structure, Gardiner had been appointed "chief" over all the people in the area.⁵⁴ When he presented the letter to the Governor at Grahamstown, Benjamin D'urban was impressed and promised his support.⁵⁵ "Chief Gardiner" was only reluctant to expend his energies in the service of King Dingane, he preferred to work to develop Natal for the benefit of the British government and the British people.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Mackeurtan, Cradle days, p 51.

⁵² Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 170.

⁵³ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 49.

⁵⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 132.

⁵⁵ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 50.

⁵⁶ TV Bulpin, To the shores of Natal (Cape Town, Howard Trimming, undated), p78

On his way to Cape Town before leaving for London to solicit assistance for his missionary endeavours, Gardiner met the American missionaries Grout, Adams and Champion at Port Elizabeth.⁵⁷ He must have been delighted to discover that they were bound for Zululand, his own chosen pastorage. At Cape Town he sailed off to England on 20 December 1835 while the Americans continued with their journey to Port Natal on board the brig, Dove. They rounded the Bluff and landed at the Point on 22 December 1835. Though they had been attacked in the Graham's Town Journal by its editor, Robert Godlonton, accusing them of being agents of American imperialism, the American Christian missionaries doggedly stood their ground and followed their calling.

In the Zulu Kingdom the Americans soon discovered that Dingane and his people “had erroneous views in regard to [their] work”. An impression created by Gardiner had led to negative perceptions among the Zulu.⁵⁸ The work of the Christian mission was viewed with suspicion and foreboding as a result. Dingane, as he had done with Gardiner, agreed that they could teach in Port Natal first and if the experiment worked, they could then come and settle in Zululand.⁵⁹ Champion remained in Natal and selected a site at Umlazi while the others went to fetch their families from Port Elizabeth. Sadly, at Bethelsdorp, tragedy befell the entourage when Mrs. Grout died. When they eventually reached Champion at Umlazi and arranged to settle down to work, an invitation from Dingane was received. They immediately set out for Mgungundlovu and arrived there on 6 July 1836. Having enjoyed Zulu hospitality, the missionaries described Dingane as “amiable” and that he treated them well and “gave them leave to found two missions, one in Natal and one in Zululand”.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 132.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p 133.

⁵⁹ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p 3.

Gardiner arrived in London on 20 February 1836 and immediately engaged the Church Missionary Society persuading them to send an ordained priest to work as a missionary among the Zulu. The organization appointed Rev. Francis Owen. Gardiner, who had been preparing a book about Zululand since 1835, got it published as the Narrative of a journey to the Zoeloe Country, in his native England.⁶¹ To crown it all, he got married to a Miss March. He and his new wife and the three children from his first marriage, were joined by Rev. Owen and his family and together they sailed to the Cape on 24 December 1836, arriving on 2 March 1837.⁶² Having been vested with some authority under the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act, Gardiner returned to Natal as Justice of the Peace. The settlers, however, were not impressed. They repudiated his new-won authority mainly because he criticized their unconventional living habits as being un-Christian, particularly the taking of African wives.⁶³ He subsequently left the Berea to build and settle in a new mission station which he named Hambanathi (Go with us) on the Tongathi river between the bay and the Mngeni river.

When Gardiner took Owen to Dingane, the king was delighted. When he looked at Gardiner, he saw a white man worthy of his trust because of his ability to keep his word. As a result Francis Owen was permitted to teach at Mgunkundlovu. His home was immediately constructed on a hill opposite the royal capital and very near the central authority. It was from there, almost a year later, that Owen witnessed that “dreadful day in the annals of the mission” when Piet Retief and his fellow Trekkers were killed.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Edgecombe, Uplifting the Zulus, p 6.

⁶² Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 50.

⁶³ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 41.

⁶⁴ Sir G Cory, Owen’s Diary (VRS), p 106 recorded in Gordon and Talbot, From Diaz to Vorster: source material of South African history, p 178.

On 30 August 1836 Rev. Aldin Grout, Rev. and Mrs Champion with interpreters Brownlee and Kirkman, who had joined them in the Eastern Cape, left Umlazi to begin mission work in Zululand. They were given land on the Msunduzi River where they built the Nginani Mission Station (Nginani, meaning "I am with you").⁶⁵ The station was situated near Gardiner's abandoned Kalula Mission Station in the district of Hlomendlini. At that time Lindley, Venable and Wilson who had a hard time working among the Ndebele, retracted their footsteps back to Grahamstown from where they then took the direction of Natal.⁶⁶ This means that by mid May 1837, the American missionaries had all congregated in Natal and Zululand, making the area the most evangelically active territory in Africa.

The troubles that occurred between the Voortrekkers and King Dingane leading to the Battle of Blood River in 1838 were witnessed by a good number of missionaries. They also got a bit involved which thing led to their disfavour and expulsion. In 1839 when the French traveller, Adulphe Delegorgue, arrived in Natal, he remarked and said that: "Except for the Moravians, all the missionaries I have seen, met, or heard of in southern Africa, belong to the reformed religion. There is not a single Catholic. They are English, German, American or French and all enjoy equal protection from the British authorities to whom they are all equally loyal in return".⁶⁷ Obviously, his remarks were based on his observations largely in the Cape Colony. But, he was quick to add on what he saw particular in Natal leading him to conclude that these missionaries "appear not to be scrupulous as to the means they employ to gain their ends".⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 4.

⁶⁶ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 134.

⁶⁷ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p 40.

After the death of Dingane, the coast looked clearer since King Mpande was more welcoming. Those missionaries, like Grout and Adams who had left, returned. Grout went on to establish a mission station on the banks of the Mhlathuzi River. However, his stay was short-lived as Mpande quickly ordered him to leave.⁶⁸ Meanwhile his colleague, Daniel Lindley, continued his work among the Trekkers at Pietermaritzburg. With Natal becoming a British possession in 1843, many missionary societies followed the example of the Americans, seeking to influence the Zulu religiously. The Norwegians sought to replace Grout in Zululand and Mpande eventually permitted Hans Schreuder to establish a mission station at Empangeni. Not to be out-done in their own sphere of influence, the British intensified their evangelization crusade. In 1854 John William Colenso came as the Bishop of Natal with the belief that “the lands which our warriors have conquered, become the fair possessions of the Prince of Peace”.⁶⁹ To Colenso British imperialism was not a “rapacious intrusion” into the lives of the Zulu, but rather a noble process entailing both duties and rights”.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 40.

⁶⁹ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p 16.

3.2 The work of the Christian missionaries.

An important part in the fostering of emigration from the British Isles to Natal was played by Christian missions and other people, who were otherwise in touch with the English humanitarian societies engaged in promoting European civilization and Christian religion, in overseas colonies. The early English missionaries, Allen Gardiner and Francis Owen and the Americans, Aldin Grout, George Champion and Newton Adams can be said to have been totally innocent of any ulterior motives in their attempt to evangelize Natal and Zululand. From their first appearance in 1835 to the time of the British annexation of Natal in 1843, not much had been achieved in the way of conversion. Nevertheless, more and more Christian missions were attracted to the region with the result that Natal and Zululand became the site for the most evangelizing on the continent of Africa.

Missionaries came from many different countries and from different denominations:

Anglicans, American Congregationalists, Scottish Presbyterians, English Methodist, French and German Catholics, Lutherans from Saxony, Prussia and Scandinavia.¹ They came from all Christian comers of the world. It was a concerted effort, an earnest endeavour so aptly expressed by Moorhouse, who said that it was like “an order of battle, almost as much as any that was ever issued by a military commander in time of war. The troops were recruited, the enemy was clearly recognized, the strategy was devised, the ultimate victory was sure, the scouts had reported back and the first few skirmishes had mottled the Christian soldiery. Now the army began to march forward in earnest”.² The target was Africa. Christians were hell-bent on winning the Africans to Christianity and capitalism and to fight illiteracy.

¹ Etherington, “Christianity and African Society”, p 275.

² Prozesky, Christianity in South Africa, p 15.

The attraction towards the country of the Zulu was provided by the healthy and congenial climate that the region offered at the time when much of Africa south of the equator was beset with serious problems of “disease, communications and religious hostility”.³ Hunters’ tales told of a Natal, one-third the size of Wales, an area blessed with warm summers and plenty of rainfall⁴, its elevation above the sea being insufficient to cause a harsh winter climate.⁵ In general, Africa tended to be seen as an empty landscape to be settled and exploited by the British.⁶

The unification of all the Nguni clans and chiefdoms into a formidable and well-disciplined Zulu state provided an added fascination to a Europe that only thought of Africa as a jungle. Judged as primitive savages, the Zulu were presumed to possess no civilization and were without any organized religion that might stand in opposition to the preaching of the Christian gospel. Crais discovered that the same attitude as had been carried towards the Cape Xhosa dominated European thinking. “Whites believed that the African had no knowledge of the true God and, in fact, had no knowledge of any God true or false”.⁷ In Natal and Zululand, however, a few surprises awaited them. The Zulu resisted them unaware that the chief objective of the philanthropic missionaries was to teach the Zulu and help to raise their standard of living. The final aim being to convert them into “healthy Protestant individuals”, who would be able to determine their own lives and

³ Etherington, “Christian and African society”, p 275.

⁴ Guy, The heretic, p 40.

⁵ Adulphe Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, vol. II, (Translated by Fleur Webb, Killie Campbell Africana Library Publication, Durban, 1997), p 112.

⁶ Catherine Barter, Alone among the Zulus: the narrative of a journey through the Zulu country, South Africa (Edited by Patricia L Merrett, Killie Campbell Africana Library Publications, Durban, 1995), p 28.

⁷ Crais, The making of the colonial order, p 101.

ultimately “to transform them into a free and self-reliant peasantry”.⁸ However, the encounter was not to be as smooth as anticipated by the overbearing missionaries. Mutual incomprehension characterized most of the dealings between the civilized Christian missionary and the Zulu heathen.⁹ The missionaries were completely unaware of the central position of the king in the religious and spiritual arrangement of Zulu society as a result a great many misconceptions were held by both sides.

Dingane offered them space to establish themselves and teach the “Book”. There is argument that he did so because he hoped to get what he wanted most, their guns. It is said that he and his trusted councillors, Ndlela and Nzobo were convinced that the white teachers would provide them with firearms and also explain their workings.¹⁰ The conviction arose out of the apparent generosity of the missionaries with gifts and presents, without anything in return. The men of God did not want to trade or to hunt as was known to be the case with all the whites who arrived earlier, and had any dealings with the Zulu.

Having received grants of land, the missionaries began their work in earnest. The Rev. Francis Owen preached at Mgungundlovu, his target audience being the royal circles, with the hope that it would radiate and spread from the centre.¹¹ Rev. Daniel Lindley began work at Umfumi on the Ilovo River in October 1837.¹² Dr. Adams resided near the Umlazi River, at a site “beneath the sheltering branches of the large “Umtombe” tree.”¹³

⁸ Prozesky, Christianity in South Africa, p 133.

⁹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 133.

¹⁰ Ibid, p 133.

¹¹ Etherington, “Christianity and African Society”, pp 277 – 278.

¹² Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 4.

¹³ Edgcombe, Uplifting the Zulus, pp 7-8.

Champion and Grout were established at Ginomi whilst Wilson and Venable started the Themba Mission Station on the Mbayo River near the Dlangezwa outpost. The mission to the Zulu was not successful, however. Various reasons have been advanced, and historians are at variance in strengths of their arguments.

King Dingane's suspicions of the missionaries is often blamed for the indifference and sometimes hostility shown by his subjects towards Christianity. It is believed that the ordinary people were scared to attend or to listen to the missionaries.¹⁴ Hattersley says that the Zulu "resolutely, defiantly and, at times, aggressively resisted and opposed conversion seeing it as an act of cultural treason and political defection".¹⁵ This apparent hostility towards the missionaries and Christianity was widespread in Natal and Zululand.

After the trickle of European traders and missionaries into Natal, there came a stream, when hundreds of Voortrekkers crossed the Drakensberg in 1837, and pushed into the Western Thukela basin.¹⁶ A Voortrekker delegation, in an effort to acquire land west of the Thukela, went to negotiate with Dingane. Dingane's suspicions were heightened by the way these Voortrekkers conducted themselves.¹⁷ They seemed to be more aggressive. The last straw which broke the proverbial camel's back came when Piet Retief, on his way to retrieve Dingane's cattle from Sekonyela, wrote to warn Dingane that kings who behaved like Mzilikazi were severely punished (by the white man's God) and that Dingane should ask the missionaries as to the truth of his assertions.¹⁸

¹⁴ Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 5.

¹⁵ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, pp 89-90.

¹⁶ Carton, Blood from your children, p 25.

¹⁷ See Laband, Rope of sand.

¹⁸ Voortrekker Argiefstukke, 1829-1949, pp 22-23 in Gordon and Talbot, From Diaz to Vorster: source material, pp 176-177.

When Dingane made enquiries about the Voortrekkers, Owen and Gardiner told him: "These men have removed themselves from the authority of their king. They would not behave in this way if they were good subjects. They are tramps who would make dangerous neighbours. They will repay the good you do them with evil".¹⁹ If this was really true, one would deduce that the missionaries intended to secure Natal and Zululand as a British sphere of influence. More than missionary work there was also the imperial factor. The Trekker delegation were subsequently killed and the events that followed dramatically brought an end to missionary work in the area as the last of them boarded the Comet and sailed away at the end of 1838.

The Republic of Natalia established by the Trekkers after their victory over Dingane, was short-lived. During its time thousands of Zulu who had settled north of the Thukela after they had been incorporated into Shaka's fold, returned to their ancestral lands in Natal.²⁰ To the British the move constituted a threat to the stability of the Eastern Cape frontier, hence in 1843, after clashing with the Trekkers at Congella, they issued a proclamation annexing the territory. People like Dr. Faure and Dr. Philip saw this as an opportunity to once more re-establish mission work in the area. They immediately wrote to the Prudential Committee in the United States urging the Board to continue the mission among the Zulu.²¹

While Champion, Venable and Wilson returned to America, after their expulsion from the Zulu country, Adams and Lindley remained to carry out the mission.²²

¹⁹ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, vol II, p 63.

²⁰ Carton, Blood from your children, p 27.

²¹ Revd. Lewis Grout, Zulu-land or life among the Zulu-Kafirs of Natal and Zulu-land, South Africa (Philadelphia, Presbyterian Publications Committee, 1864), pp 213-214.

²² Tabler, Pioneers of Natal, p 5.

Many others joined them after the annexation, coming as it were, from all over the globe. One of them, J Walton came from the remote Dominica with that burning desire for evangelization. Others, however, were driven by the pressure of selfish economic and financial interests. Unable to find profitable outlets for investments at home, business moguls encouraged missionaries to open the way for their commercial ventures. Prominent and influential philanthropists brought Natal conspicuously to the notice of the Wesleyan Congregation in Britain. "There is a question", wrote the editorial of The British Friend, "that Natal could supply the greater part of the cotton required" by the Lancashire mills. Widely read, this article convinced one farmer, named W J Irons, to promote a liberal number of Methodists to Natal.²³ Consequently, the commercial world and capital investors rode on the backs of missionaries to promote their wares. The Missionary, Robert Moffat, commented to the effect that: "Missionaries to a barbarous people deserve a vote of thanks from the commercial world".²⁴

In 1840 Mpande requested that at least one missionary should be stationed with him, hoping to learn from them and benefit his people from their skills. Aldin Grout went over to Zululand and started work near Empangeni. Whilst working there, Grout through some careless utterances on his part, is said to have caused "irreparable damage to the cause of evangelization".²⁵ Instead of working hand in hand with the king, Grout allowed his mission to become a political threat to the state. Mpande broke up the mission in 1842,²⁶

²³ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 90.

²⁴ Edgecombe, Uplifting the Zulus, p 13.

²⁵ Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 278.

²⁶ Barter, Alone among the Zulus, p 27. She records the incident as an attack on the Inkanyezi mission (Empangeni), because it was viewed as a threat to Mpande's authority.

saying that the people called “themselves the people of the missionary and refuse to obey him”.²⁷ The American mission withdrew from Zululand with Rev. Grout in a state of great despair. He thereafter, fervently prayed for the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, an emotion shared by many missionaries who came to identify with the advance of capitalism, imperialism and white domination.²⁸

In 1846 Lieutenant-Governor Martin West instituted the Location Commission in which he included Adams and Lindley, the purpose of the Commission being to carve out large areas of Natal called locations or reserves where the Zulu would be settled and governed apart from the Whites.²⁹ The Commission subsequently recommended, among other measures, that parts of the locations be set aside as mission reserves.³⁰ In these locations and mission reserves, the first of which were Zwartkop, Umvoti, Inanda and Umlazi, the missionaries began to expand their mission work.³¹ Adams continued at Umlazi. His Sabbath school numbered from three hundred to five hundred, and his day school about a hundred. On 15 August 1847, the Rev. JC Bryant reached Umlazi and in September, he left to establish a station at Ifumi where Lindley had begun to labour ten years before. Unfortunately, there were no traces of the former occupation to be found. Nevertheless, Bryant re-established the station and continued to labour there for two years, although he was suffering from an affection of the lungs. He was relieved by Mr. Ireland in 1849.³²

²⁷ Etherington, “Christianity and African society”. P 278.

²⁸ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 167.

²⁹ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 173.

³⁰ For details read Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, pp 54-59.

³¹ Muller, 500 years, p 214.

³² Grout, Zulu-land or life among the Zulu-kaffirs, p 216.

In the earlier part of that year, Lindley started a mission station at Inanda. At about the same time, Rev. Lewis Grout reached Natal and was immediately given the task of establishing a mission station at Umvoti, whilst Dr. Adams was transferring from Umlazi to the new station at Amanzimtoti.

Outstanding work was done at Amanzimtoti by the more pragmatic Adams, especially in the areas of education, medicine, theology and the printing press.³³ Dr. Adams died here in September 1851, remembered as “a pioneer missionary, whose faith and patience never failed”.³⁴ At the same time as the Americans were spreading out, other missionary societies were coming into the country. The Norwegian Mission Society’s Hans Schreuder arrived at Durban on 1 January 1844. He spent a year at Adams’ mission station at Amanzimtoti where he studied the indigenous language – IsiZulu.³⁵ Thereafter, he made attempts to get permission to work in Mpande’s kingdom, but was refused. The Natal administration gave him a site at Maphumulo where he began work in the area under Chief Mkhonto, one of those chiefs that were installed by Theophilus Shepstone. Formerly a servant of Hans “Dons” de Lange³⁶, Mkhonto was a great friend of Mpande. When Mpande was ill, the chief sent Schreuder to attend the royal patient. Schreuder endeared himself to Mpande as an able physician and was invited to resume work where Grout had left in 1842.³⁷ The missionary was overwhelmed with joy.

Driven out of British Kaffaria by the Eastern Frontier War of 1846, the missionaries,

³³ Edgecombe, *Uplifting the Zulus*, pp 8-12.

³⁴ Grout, *Zulu-land or life among the Zulu-kaffirs*, p 217.

³⁵ Edgecombe, *Uplifting the Zulus*, p 14.

³⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.5, evidence of John Shepstone, p 311.

³⁷ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 183.

Dohne, Posselt and Guldenpfennig came into Natal, and through Shepstone's assistance, they settled near the Amangwane Location at a station that became known as Emmaus.³⁸ Soon after their arrival, Dohne and Posselt moved to work with white congregations and only in 1850 did Rev. Zünckel come to relieve Guldenpfennig. For 46 years Zünckel laboured with patience, tact and industry, leaving as it were, a lasting impression upon the Zulu.³⁹

The Wesleyans, as stated earlier, were sponsored by commercial interest to come to work among the white population of the new colony. In 1847 Rev. WC Holden arrived in Durban and whilst working among the Whites could still devote some time to tending the Zulu. In that very year Rev. James Giddy had started work at Mparani and he had also worked with Rev. Johan Bertram at Mahamba Mission station, while he busied himself with the writing of SiSwati.⁴¹ Owing to internal disputes and war, he and his converts left Swaziland for the Zulu country where they settled at Indaleni, on land granted by Shepstone's government. A misunderstanding between Allison and the Wesleyans led to their separation in 1851.

Allison moved to the farm 'Wilverdiend' bought from the Voortrekker leader Andries Pretorius and renamed Edendale.⁴² It was here at Edendale that dramatic changes to the lives of Christian converts, with regard to the knowledge of the ownership of land, would take place. Allison first erected a watermill, trained his followers to be skilled carpenters, masons, thatchers and hedgers, and permitted them to take responsibility for their own

³⁸ Edgecombe, Uplifting the Zulus, p 17.

³⁹ Ibid, p 17.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p 19.

⁴¹ JSM Matshebula, A history of Swaziland (Cape Town, Longman SA, 1987), p 41.

⁴² Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 90.

village allotments with neat upright cottages and beautifully cultivated gardens.⁴³

By 1848 the American mission ran eight stations, namely: Umlazi or rather Amanzimtoti, Inanda, Ifumi, Umsunduzi, Amahlongwa, Itafa and Umkhambathi or Table Mountain. Their missionaries were: Adams, Aldin Grout, Lindley, Bryant, Lewis Grout, M'Kinney, Rood and Marsh.⁴⁴ In 1849 the mission was enlarged with the addition of Ireland, Abraham, Tyler and Wilder. Abraham was given a new station at shadowy Maphumulo. Wilder took charge of the printing press for some time at Umbilo but was later given the station, Mtwalume. Tyler went to Esidumbini mission station.⁴⁵ At this time, large numbers of British immigrants, the so-called Byrne settlers, started pouring into the country with all their prejudices and influences that were to affect mission work in Natal.

Besides making Natal the most evangelized territory in Africa, the settlement of so many missionary societies inevitably began to re-shape the Natal landscape.⁴⁶ These Christian settlements "re-organized" the place and built chapels and square houses that stood in stark contrast to the old world of homesteads (imizi). The re-organization of space was followed by the re-organization "of time". The missionaries put up church bells which quietly tolled away, conjuring up a central feature of mission life. Crais has drawn the parallel that, "if the spartial organization of the station inculcated the notion of private property, the bell imparted capitalists' conception of time".⁴⁷ To plant the roots of

⁴³ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 90.

⁴⁴ Grout, Zulu-land or life among the Zulu-kaffirs, p 219.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p 219.

⁴⁶ Norman Etherington, "African economic experiments in colonial Natal, 1845-1880", in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds), Enterprise and Exploitation in a Vitorian colony, p 265.

⁴⁷ Etherington, "African economic experiments". P 265.

capitalism, the missionaries were left with the mammoth task of teaching industrious habits and what was termed the “dignity of labour”, among their prospective converts.

The most conspicuous change brought about by the re-organization of space and time and the general programme of missionary work, had to do with agricultural output.⁴⁸ The missionaries soon laid out gardens and orchards. Farming was organized in a fenced and controlled area and upright European style houses were built. Meanwhile American and Norwegian missions still concentrated their efforts in trying to convert the royal circles, as the first move towards getting the whole nation into the Christian fold. The Hermansburg Missionaries established villages in the rural areas of Natal, and, generally, the Methodists, Lutherans and Anglicans purchased extensive farmlands when the land was still cheap. These lands would serve the needs of their people in the years that followed.⁴⁹ Missionaries had easy access to influential officials in the government during the early days of the Colony. And, as commissioners on the Locations Commission of 1846, they made sure that missions benefited from the land arrangements that were made.

The Natal region, after the Mfecane, became a trade-based territory. Such territories welcomed missionaries as trading agents and knowledgeable partners who were willing to teach the African inhabitants all the mysteries of European technology. On the other hand, those entities that emerged from the Mfecane as military-based states, such as Zululand, had no reason, at first, to engage in trade with the British or to adopt any aspect of European culture or technology, simply because they were economically self-sufficient and strong militarily. They viewed the Christian missions with scepticism, hence it took some

⁴⁸ Crais, The making of the colonial order, p 103.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p 103.

time for King Mpande to recall the missionaries that he dismissed in 1842.⁵⁰

Economically, in the early years, the Colony of Natal was so unchallenging or unprofitable that only a few hardy individual settlers could flourish. Prospects of commercial advantage were not completely and wholly absent, if only Africans could be induced to undertake the cultivation of sub-tropical products such as flax and cotton.⁵¹ Yet no one took serious advantage of the climate conditions. Nonetheless, a sizeable number of speculators who harboured a fair amount of faith in the future of Natal Colony, bought up farms from the Voortrekkers when these hurried away at the end of their republic.⁵² The immense tracts of land that the speculators acquired were simply left to idle, while the owners extracted rent from African squatters who lived on the land.⁵³ The coming of the missionaries altered the picture completely. Mission stations mushroomed all over the district and began to attract the attention of individuals, of chiefdoms and of governments. British colonial interests were to underpin much of the activities of the missionaries.

Generally, the missionaries and a large number of government officials adhered to the same creed as their counterparts in the Cape Colony. They felt it was their moral duty to civilize and Christianize the Zulu people, making sure that they forsake any vague pagan conception of religion that they might cherish. They introduced religious, educational and ideological aspects of their own culture in order to transform the Zulu and make them adopt a different identity from that of their forebears.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 268.

⁵¹ Taylor, Shaka's children, pp 167-168.

⁵² Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 67.

⁵³ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 108.

⁵⁴ T V Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, (Cape Town, Books of Africa, 1966), p 155.

The chiefs who considered the missionaries as important and sometimes as indispensable intermediaries with the colonial world, continued to accept them as neighbours in the reserves. Notwithstanding, they completely forbade their people from associating with the white people's customs which tended to undermine their chieftainship.⁵⁵

Etherington has argued that in Natal, outside the reserves, where chiefly or royal barriers to the spread of Christianity did not exist, missionaries encountered resistance at the grass roots of Zulu society.⁵⁶ The rate of conversion was discouragingly low in both Natal and Zululand. Natasha Erlank has made a very penetrating remark with regard to the encounter between missionary and Xhosa on the eastern frontier, that much of the historiography "tends to concentrate on the missionary side of the Xhosaland encounter and little of it deals comprehensively with the issue of the transmission of faith from both a historical perspective and from the perspective of potential converts".⁵⁷ The only people who seemed to be attracted to the mission stations were from further away from where the stations were situated. For various reasons these people came from far to join the missions. Some were running away from accusations of witchcraft and others were escaping forced marriages.⁵⁸ There were those, however, who saw an opportunity to access land. With the shortage of land resources everywhere the land in the reserves remained an attraction for some people. Away from kith and kin and from their traditional neighbours, their isolation spurred many of them towards material and educational progress. Some of them became shining examples

⁵⁵ Bundy, The rise and fall of the South African peasantry, p 9.

⁵⁶ Crais, The making of the colonial order, p 103.

⁵⁷ Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 280.

⁵⁸ Natasha Erlank, "Re-examining initial encounters between Christian missionaries and the Xhosa, 1820-1850: the Scottish case," Kleio, xxxi, 1999, p 6.

of the goodness of mission work. One was Stephanus Mini of Edendale who was born in Zululand but came to Natal from Swaziland, and another was Johannes Kumalo of Driefontein who came directly from Zululand. They sought security in an uncertain environment but, as strangers they were unlikely to be troubled by any kind of disapproval from the traditional communities in the neighborhood.⁵⁹ And to find an identity for themselves, they adopted the lifestyle of their mentors, the missionaries.⁶⁰ Those who came to listen to their sermons convinced the missionaries that they were an intelligent people, hungry for instruction. The missionaries realized that they had been misled by the racial prejudices back home “to expect simple-minded docility” to contend with among the Zulu.⁶¹

While the Zulu continued with their adopted policy of isolating the missions, the Christian Church attracted society’s misfits, the riff-raff who were referred to as “ama-Khafula” (those spat out) by the traditionalists.⁶² Missions became stigmatized as places of disrepute where renegades were housed and nurtured.⁶³ The immorality of the mission converts was much talked about. Duvana, giving evidence before the Natal Native Commission, said he was against missionaries because they spoiled children,⁶⁴ while Hloba, in the same area of Umvoti, said mission stations “make whores of our children”.⁶⁵ As early as 1858, a Resident

⁵⁹ Etherington, “Christianity and Africans society”, p 283.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p 283.

⁶¹ John Lambert, “The attitude of the Kholwa petty bourgeois elite to the franchise and authority in the late colonial Natal”, Kleio, xxvii, 1995, p 72.

⁶² Etherington, “Christianity and African society”, p 280.

⁶³ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 282

⁶⁴ Natal Native Commission (NNC), 1881-2, evidence of Duvana taken by the Sub-commission for Umvoti county, p 36.

⁶⁵ NNC, 1881 - 2, evidence of Hloba, p15.

Magistrate pointed out that missions were not “particular about the character of the natives they admit to reside on their stations”.⁶⁶ Some of the missionaries did acknowledge that there was some truth in the accusations, that indeed their mission stations were shelters for characters of the worst description. Others, however, were good people who had escaped accusations of witchcraft or forced marriages in their communities.

The Anglican priest, Henry Callaway’s mission station at Springvale, provides a fitting example of the social mix which characterized the early African Christian communities. At Springvale there were representatives of the San and Griqua as well as the Xhosa and the Zulu, brought together by a variety of circumstances and needs. In an attempt to paint a better picture of the mission stations, missionaries frequently emphasized the strictly religious motives of their converts. They emphasized their strict adherents to disciplined conduct. But, their own reports, sent from time to time to their sponsors, reveal that many other forces were at work. Most notable was the fact that people in need of land knew they could get it from the missionaries, who owned large tracts on private farms and on mission reserves and glebes.⁶⁷ The Natal settlers were not generally well-disposed towards the missionaries and their work. One of the most trumpeted about complaint was that the missionaries were indifferent and totally disregarded their need for land. The 1852 Native Commission report pointed to the fact that “it had been a tragic mistake to appoint foreign missionaries” to the Locations Commission of 1846.⁶⁸ This was because the missionaries had suggested more land for African reserves.

⁶⁶ Etherington, “Christianity and African society”, p 282.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p 283.

⁶⁸ Natal, Report of Commission...1852 – 53, p 27.

The organiser of emigration schemes, the enigmatic Joseph Byrne, used his public meetings in Durban and Pietermaritzburg to attack the American missionaries of “seeking land for Africans that ought to have been reserved for white colonists”.⁶⁹ In 1862 a Select Committee of the Natal Legislature criticized Lieutenant –Governor Scott’s plans of placing the control of African land in the hands of appointed trustees, partly because they thought it would lead to the missionaries taking control of these lands and spreading their influence.⁷⁰ Another complaint was that the missionaries made the Zulu useless as labourers.

The 1852 Native Commission stated in its report that some of the missionaries, “like some of their brethren in the Cape Colony, have been engaged in trading operations with the kafirs”.⁷¹ The report stated that the usefulness of the missionary was much impaired by his engaging in such practices. It would be proper to note that the missionaries complained about here were not British. This was noted by the French traveller and explorer, Adulphe Delegorgue, first at Groene Kloof (Darling) in the Cape Colony, that some mission stations were self-supporting and did a lot to “instill in their pupils a love of industry”.⁷² He stated that the British government did not afford them the official protection which it gave to the Protestants, the “Welleys”, who were “all equally loyal in return”.⁷³

Clearly the missionaries were not operating on an even keel. The British authorities encouraged some of them and merely tolerated the others. Nevertheless, with the

⁶⁹ Natal, Report of Commission.....1852 – 53, p 27.

⁷⁰ Etherington, “Christianity and African society”, p 285.

⁷¹ Ibid, p 285.

⁷² Natal, Report of the Commission....1852 – 53, p 27.

⁷³ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, p 39.

encouragement of the missionaries the Zulu Christian converts effected an economic revolution and amazed European observers with the rapidity of their progress.⁷⁴ This made traders such as Catherine Barter to advocate strongly for the absorption of English culture and education by the Zulu so that they could adopt a middle class lifestyle. In this respect, she differed from many Natal colonists who saw Africans simply as a potential proletariat.⁷⁵ She differed from her brother Charles who, like the colonists, would not have approved of a scheme that allowed Zulu people to purchase land. Initially, however, Natal officials recommended individual tenure and the Locations Commission advocated for the introduction of such a tenure in the already established reserves. But Theophilus Shepstone feared that this could lead to the loss of Zulu territories should the Zulu owners sell their lands to White settlers.⁷⁶ Shepstone's belief in the need to maintain the homestead system in the reserves was shared by some of his government colleagues and the merchants. With Shepstone's insistence, traditional concepts of tenure remained in force in the locations administered by the Natal Native Trust. This to the utter annoyance of the white colonial population. Missionaries, however, for the future welfare of their converts urged purchase of land by their adherents.

Settler agriculture, meanwhile remained backward and under-developed through the 1870's. This was largely because the settlers depended on homestead supplies of produce. Added to that was the fact that absentee landowners accumulated wealth from rentals paid by African tenants. Stephanus Mini giving evidence to the Natal Native Commission of

⁷⁴ Delegorque, Travels in southern Africa, pp39-40.

⁷⁵ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 266.

⁷⁶ Catherine Barter, Alone among the Zulus, p (15).

1881-1882 pointed out that “the rentals charged the Natives are so high”.⁷⁷ And sometimes, according to Jacobus Matiwane “they have been sent away when their crops were ripe”.⁷⁸

The colonists had resorted to such dirty tactics simply because they could not compete with the Zulu in agriculture. To a large extent the Zulu had copied the example set by the mission stations and adapted to the use of the “missionary’s wife” (a name they had given to the plough).⁷⁹ The government itself had begun to look to the Africans for its revenue by way of taxes.⁸⁰ Lambert believes that before the 1880’s it would have been folly for the Government to “undermine homestead independence and stability”.⁸¹ For as long as the Zulu imizi produced enough for their own needs and there was less interference, there was no likelihood of Zulu military organization and insurrection. Even Shepstone had earlier impressed it upon his colleagues in the Location Commission that the Zulu would not stay peaceful unless they were given enough land to support their families.⁸²

There was another section of colonial society which did not view the continuation of the homestead system favourably, and that was the missionary societies. They believed that the development of a peasantry based on individual tenure would help promote the supply of agricultural produce to the colony much better than the homestead system. However, with state assistance, it was decided that land grants be allocated to Christian Africans on their

⁷⁷ Natal Native Commission (NNC), 1881-1882 evidence of Stephanus Mini, p 133.

⁷⁸ Natal Native Commission (NNC), 1881-1882, evidence of Jacobus Matiwane, p 142.

⁷⁹ The adoption of the plough was like the discovery of the wheel.....

⁸⁰ John Lambert, “African reasons for purchasing land in the late 19th and early 20th centuries”, *Kleio*, xxx1, 1999, p 37.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p 37.

⁸² *Ibid*, p 37

reserves.⁸³ The existence of mission reserves gave the missionaries the opportunity to encourage the growth of an African peasantry. Around each mission a nucleus of Christian families distinctly recognized as the Kholwa, had grown since the 1830's.⁸⁴ The missions contained a threat to the continued viability of the homesteads economy. Individual tenure became attractive to the kholwa simply because they came to the missions as individuals or as small family units which was a clear and significant break away from the traditional polygamous extended families of the Zulu.⁸⁵ For them, there were no traditional social imperatives or rituals to observe or practice. Their family circumstances fitted in well with the conviction of the missionaries that the nuclear family (that is, the small family of a husband, wife and children) cultivating its own plot of land was the ideal. It also helped to emphasize the differences between their homes and the heathen imizi in the immediate neighbourhood. Indeed their homes stood in sharp contrast across the veld. Kholwa homes were upright, imposing in well-cultivated gardens.

Even after Grout had caused the failure of the missionary endeavour in Zululand, the Americans stayed on in Natal. Encouraged by Shepstone's generous offer of privileged sites for mission reserves on large locations, they continued with their intended missionary programme. By 1850 work had been established at Amanzimtoti, Umvoti, Inanda, Imfume, Umsunduze, Esidumbini, Mapumulo, Itafamasi, Table Mountain, Amahlongwa, Ifafa and Umtwalume.⁸⁶ Hundreds of still-unconverted Zulu came to their mission chapels to listen

⁸³ Etherington, "The Shepstone system", p 171.

⁸⁴ Lambert, "African reasons for purchasing land", p 38.

⁸⁵ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 16.

⁸⁶ See Carton, Blood from your children, introduction and also Mackeurtan, The cradle days of Natal, chapter vii.

to their sermons delivered in less than perfect IsiZulu. It was then that they realized the Zulu were intelligent people, hungry for instruction, knowledge and progress. Also that they were not the “simple-minded docility” they were made to expect⁸⁷ by colonial minded people and a radically eskewed literature.

The beginnings of group landownership and the successes of individual tenure at Edendale encouraged the American Board missionaries to promote small scale agricultural settlements on their lands. In the early 1860’s they started giving out one-acre village and 15 acre agricultural allotments to their converts on three of their reserves, namely, Umvoti, Amanzimtoti and Ifumi.⁸⁸ On these estates lay the potential for peasant production of sugar. Altogether they apportioned 3 644 acres. Their converts took up the allotments and very enthusiastically started producing for the Durban market. At the time, sugar was becoming an important coastal crop and many of the individually-owned lots started growing the crop.⁸⁹ The colonial administration and the missionary societies gave valuable assistance and encouragement for the success of these early ventures.

The Berlin Missionary Society also showed great progress in improving the lives of their African Christian adherents at their mission station which they called New Germany. Allison’s Methodists had led the way at Edenvale and Driefontein and also at their smaller station at Verulam where, a significant number of converts had by 1876 “made a transition from wage-earners to employers of non-Christian black Labour”.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Edgecombe, *Uplifting the Zulus*, p 8.

⁸⁸ Etherington, “Christianity and African society”, p 280.

⁸⁹ Peter Richardson, “The Natal sugar industry, 1849-1905: an interpretative essay”, in Guest and Sellers, *Enterprise and exploitation*, p 188.

⁹⁰ Lambert, “African reasons for purchasing land”, p 39.

The Anglican mission at Ladysmith, though relatively poor, made reasonable progress and “boasted several residents with incomes exceeding £ 400 per annum by 1876”.⁹¹ These converts whose total population had grown tremendously by the year 1880, all of them needed land to practice what the missionaries had taught them, and that is, peasant farming. The mission stations could not contain them any longer in the Colony of Natal.

On their mission station bases, the Kholwa practiced new farming methods which produced a surplus they could sell in the open market. The missionaries gave them a hard, decisive and unrelenting shove in the direction of more intensive and mechanized agriculture.⁹²

Until the 1880's, more and more Zulu were able to adapt to the colonial economy without deserting their own traditional agriculture and without dislocating the homestead economy.⁹³ They continued to be the main producers of maize and sorghum.⁹⁴ A major transformation in the homestead economic system was the introduction of the plough. The ox-drawn plough was the one implement that drew the men, as custodians of cattle, closer to the fields. At Springvale Africans “were quick to acknowledge the virtues of their missionary’s “wife”, as they called the iron plough whose merits he preached almost as strenuously as the gospel”.⁹⁵ Also, as a result of the introduction of the plough, far greater tracts of land were cultivated and the difference between rich and poor Zulu families began to appear.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Etherington, “Christianity and African society”, p 287.

⁹² Ibid, p 287.

⁹³ Etherington, “African economic experiments”, p 268.

⁹⁴ Bundy, The rise and fall of the South African peasantry, introduction.

⁹⁵ John Lambert, “From independence to rebellion: African society in crisis C. 1880-1910” in Durnani and Guest (eds) Natal and Zululand, p 378.

⁹⁶ Etherington, “African economic experiments”, p 268.

The relatively few mission-educated Zulu, numbering 7 500 souls by the year 1881, were leaders in the field.⁹⁷ The growing prosperity of these European - trained agriculturalists is demonstrated by the amount of freehold land in their possession.⁹⁸ John Lambert has provided the following table⁹⁹

Table I African-owned land in 1878 (acres)

Coastal divisions		Midland divisions		Inland divisions	
Alfred	39	Umngeni	15 291	Klip River	49 729
Alexander	100	Ixopo	735	Weenen	11 167
Victoria	4 842	Upper Umkhomazi	1 340		
TOTAL	4 842		17 366		60 896

(Originally taken from Natal Government Gazette, Supplement, March 1881).

Of the missionaries who came to evangelize among the Zulu, the most controversial was John William Colenso. He landed in Natal in 1854 brim full of missionary zeal to share his knowledge and British culture with the people of Natal and Zululand, black and white. On board the Jane Maurice, Colenso left Liverpool as friends, relations and well-wishers crowded the quay side to bid him farewell, on a journey that meant so much to him. As a man of letters he had seen much of the industrial revolution, the conditions of child labour and the social consequences of the "Hungry Forties". These conditions must have left a profound impression on him.

⁹⁷ Lambert, "From independence to rebellion", p 378.

⁹⁸ Natal Native Commission (NNC) 1881-2, Report of commission, p 33.

⁹⁹ See Crown lands Commission, 1886, Report of Commission.

On his arrival, Shepstone sent to all the chiefs telling them of “a great teacher sent by the Queen to take charge of the province”.¹⁰⁰ Colenso was “a man of all seasons”, who left his mark indelibly on “mission work, education, theology, biblical criticism, history and the Zulu language”.¹⁰¹ Upon his arrival the white settlers did not fail to inform him that the colony of Natal was founded in a region that had been devastated and emptied of human life by the marauding Zulu warriors of King Shaka. He was told that the area was only made safe by the sacrifices of the Whites and as soon as they had achieved that, an African population started streaming in for safety, running away from Zulu tyranny.¹⁰² There was a measure of exaggeration by the settlers in an attempt to justify Natal’s policies towards the African inhabitants but Colenso would soon find “Justice” and “Truth” himself.¹⁰³

All the missionaries steadfastly insisted that polygamous relationships were un-Christian and therefore should be ended. The Bishop stood alone in favour of upholding the social and moral basis of Zulu society while inculcating European values and tightening British control over the Zulu.¹⁰⁴ He strongly believed that British imperial rule was ordained by Providence, so that “the lands which our warriors have conquered become the fair possessions of the Prince of Peace”.¹⁰⁵ Broadly, this meant that the Church and the state had a parental role in Christian society. In simple terms the church was to work with the government to promote the standard of living among the aboriginal inhabitants, socially

¹⁰⁰ Fuze, The Black people, p ii.

¹⁰¹ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 175.

¹⁰² Guy, The heretic, p 40.

¹⁰³ Ruth Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation” Journal of Natal and Zulu History, iii, 1980, p 15.

¹⁰⁴ See Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 51.

¹⁰⁵ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 16.

and spiritually. Shepstone and Colenso became friends immediately on the latter's arrival. Although they came from different backgrounds, they had a lot in common. Their responses to social problems were essentially compatible. They both believed in the "utilization of older social forms".¹⁰⁶ One was a religious philanthropist and the other a humanist-administrator. "Colenso rejected the idea of hopelessly fallen man, Shepstone the totally barbarous one".¹⁰⁷ It was upon these principles that their friendship was founded. These two men were destined to impact significantly on the social and political development of Natal Colony and Zululand.¹⁰⁸

Colenso's missionary work was disturbed for a while by the religious and theological controversy that developed between him and his church elders back home in England. But on the question of land, it was revealed by William Ngidi to the Native Commission that Colenso had given land to Chief Ngoza and that the chief and his people practiced peasant farming on that land.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, Magera Magwaza, who became the Bishop's chief printer at Bishopstowe attested to the fact that he and others had come to the Bishop mainly to learn a trade.¹¹⁰ This further explains the motives of some of the converts which were not always religious or spiritual. Many had come for personal advancement. Many Africans recognized the advantages of learning the white man's ways for survival in a world that was rapidly changing. It was increasingly becoming difficult to cling to the old traditional ways.

¹⁰⁶ Guy, *The heretic*, p 42.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p 42.

¹⁰⁸ See Guy, *The heretic*, "War to the knife", pp 193-213 and "Humbled and Deceived", pp 215-232.

¹⁰⁹ Natal Native Commission (NNC) 1881-2, evidence of William Ngidi, p 158.

¹¹⁰ Natal Native Commission (NNC) 1881-2, evidence of Magera Magwaza, p 167.

Although Colenso lacked money and manpower as a result of his theological convictions and the consequent clash with his superiors, he did all he could to advance the cause of missionary endeavour. He did great work at his Ekukhanyeni mission station where he recorded Natal Affairs (1856) and these were re-told by Fuze as Izindaba zase Natal-tracing the origins of the black people.¹¹¹

North across the Thukela, despite the fact that missionaries and traders became established in the area in the 1840's, the Kingdom during Mpande's reign remained politically intact, and relatively isolated from its white neighbours.¹¹² Many of the settlers in Natal depended on hunting and trading within the Zulu kingdom mainly for economic survival.¹¹³ Their only original exports were the products of the huntsman and the Zulu trader.¹¹⁴ White influence, nevertheless, remained minimal in the Zulu country. After the withdrawal of the Americans from Zululand in 1842, the opportunity to evangelize the Zulu fell to the Norwegians only in 1850.¹¹⁵

Rev. Hans Schreuder had originally established his mission on the Natal side of the Thukela River in 1848. Intent on crossing over to Zululand, the Norwegian patiently waited for King Mpande's change of heart.¹¹⁶ It is said that the opportunity presented itself when Mpande suddenly fell ill, sometime in 1850, and sent to Schreuder for medical help. Chief Ngozo facilitated the meeting between the king and the missionary.

¹¹¹ Fuze, The Black people, pp 1-24.

¹¹² Julie Pridmore, introduction to The journal of William Clayton Humphreys, pxii.

¹¹³ Delegorgue, Travels in southern Africa, pp 169, 172-173.

¹¹⁴ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 84.

¹¹⁵ Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 278.

¹¹⁶ Pridmore, The Journal p xi.

Schreuder responded positively to the call and his work won him the king's pleasure. He was invited to establish a mission in Zululand which he did at Empangeni in 1851.¹¹⁷

Seeing that he and his assistant T Udland and their wives were not enough for that vast country, Schreuder invited the German Lutherans of the Hermansburg Missionary Society to join him. Later, in 1861 when Afrikaner encroachment on Zulu soil became a problem, Mpande decided to invite missionaries of the Church of England who would use their influence with the British government and persuade them to intervene. Bishop Colenso, the head of the Natal church, was known to be a friend of Theophilus Shepstone.¹¹⁸ The first Anglican missionaries Robert Robertson and SM Samuelson, besides their missionary programme of converting the Zulu "pagans", had to ensure that they demonstrated by word and deed that they were loyal to King Mpande and the Zulu royal family.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Pridmore, The Journal, p xi.

¹¹⁸ Etherington, "Christinty and African society", p 279.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p 279.

3.3 The Kholwa: land issues and political expectations.

The Amakholwa experience in Natal Colony and Zululand started with the arrival of the missionaries who came from different countries and belonged to different denominations, all of them with one objective; that of winning the Zulu people into the Christian fold. The Natal settler administration granted them reserves and glebes from which to spread their Christian message. Beside the land grants offered by the colonial government, they also bought extensive tracts of land when this was still available and cheap. Nine different missionary societies built mission stations on the land and embarked on their programmes of Christianizing and “civilizing” or westernizing the Africans.

There is a great deal to be learned from the records of early contact between Christianity and what was peculiarly African. James Kiernan has argued that from the first contact astute Africans “realistically measured the material gap between the two cultures and unerringly identified the areas in which Whites were superior,” and set themselves the goal of imitating them.¹ Royal and chiefly and patriarchal authority, however, did not permit individual choice hence the spread of Christianity among the Zulu took on a snail’s pace, failing to attract sufficient numbers of Zulu over a period of time.² The leadership was scared of losing followers as soon as their people adopted the Christian faith. Williams, Etherington and others seem to agree that “doubts generally arose in the minds of African rulers over the more subtle influence of missions on the political order”.³ These doubts emanated from the very fact that religious practices among the Zulu centred around the political authority wielded by the king and his lieutenants in a patriarchal arrangement.

¹ Kiernan, “African and Christian”, p 12.

² Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 209.

³ Davenport, South Africa, p 179.

The Zulu were generally impressed by the white man's technology especially the gun, and, then there was the plough. The impact of the plough on traditional agriculture was phenomenal.⁴ Missionaries introduced the plough, irrigation schemes, new crops, planting in rows and the use of manure, in this way revolutionized agriculture. The Zulu and other in-migrant Africans who gathered in the melting pot of the mission station came to develop a certain sense of fraternity with the people from different home villages. People who would otherwise have been strangers to each other, now shared the common bond of a single culture, a process that led to the emergence of a spirit of ethnic solidarity that was unknown among Africans in the past.⁵

From the mission stations that had mushroomed all over the colony, this "new ethnic group" of Africans, the Kholwa, gained much from the priestly agricultural knowledge that was dished out to them. This pioneer group of Christian African families used their access to land as the starting point to self-realization. Exposure to and subsequent adoption of settler values and technology helped these converts "to carve a niche for themselves in colonial society".⁶ The Kholwa needed very little encouragement to respond to the opportunities available to them in mid nineteenth-century Natal. In words and deeds they had to rearrange their lives in accordance with missionary standards. They had to take their wives out of agricultural labour in the first place.

On virtually all the reserves at the mission stations they adopted the homestead mode of production in order to grow cash crops on the land that had been parceled out for individual

⁴ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 268.

⁵ Robin Hallet, *Africa since 1875* (Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 1974), pp 721-722.

⁶ John Lambert, "The attitude of the kholwa petty bourgeois elite to the franchise and authority in late colonial Natal", *Kleio*, xxvii, p 71.

tenure. Missionaries argued in favour of individual tenure and the kholwa farmers seized the opportunity granted by commercial growing with both hands.⁷ They saw Christianity as a stepping stone to status and advantage. Many of them thought that by embracing the Christian faith and adopting European ways and ultimately turning their backs on traditional life, they would automatically be accepted into the European Community.⁸ Unfortunately for them, the whites continued to discriminate against them. Generally, local settlers were more prejudiced towards the converts than they were towards traditionalists who were “no copy-cats” of whites. Even Shepstone was one of these. The white farming sector was particularly against the converts especially because they started to prove themselves as capable competitors.⁹

Kiernan has argued, however, that it would be naïve to expect that converts would be exact replicas of the missionaries who were responsible for their conversion or that they would be similar to European Christians. His argument rested on the premise that “their roots in a distinctive African way of life, the vibrancy and resilience of their own religious heritage” meant that they would remain different.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Zulu Christians adopted European-style houses and became teachers and preachers in the manner of their mentors. “Fired with the ideals of progress and the dignity of labour, amakholwa also made industrious workers”.¹¹ In their quest for knowledge they discovered the reward system of modern capitalism and gradually they too, started vigorously to push their way into the commercial

⁷ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 284.

⁸ See Lambert, *Betrayed trust*, p 143.

⁹ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 283.

¹⁰ Kiernan, “*African and Christian*”, p 24.

¹¹ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 284.

world in Natal as traders, shopkeepers, clerks and above all as farmers.¹² And, when the business of transport-riding opened, making Natal a colony of carriers, some of the more affluent Kholwa took part in the “lucrative occupation”.¹³

Hardly less profound in their impact on older patterns of thought than the new religion, the new technology and economics, were the new political concepts which developed in the period of colonial rule.¹⁴ In pre-colonial Zulu society the hierarchy of authority was well established – the positions of the homestead head, the chief and the royal establishment was well known and respected.¹⁵ The new political structures erected by the British also involved new sets of allegiances. Missionaries were not agreed on the positions of State and Church. For most missionaries the propagation of the Christian religion was an absolute priority. The Methodist instruction of 1821 which stated that they were “teachers of religion and that alone should be kept in view”, was their guide.¹⁶ Nonetheless, a sharp divergence of approach over the issue of political control existed between them. For example, Colenso in Natal and the Wesleyans in the person of C D Helm in Pondoland, promoted the extension of British political authority but the Norwegians under Schreuder opposed it ever so vehemently.¹⁷

However, in the majority of cases, the missionaries encouraged their converts to develop a sense of loyalty to the “mother country” even at the expense of turning their backs on own

¹² Taylor, Shaka's children, p 284.

¹³ D H Heydenrych, “A colony of carriers: transport-riding in nineteenth-century Natal”, Kleio, xxiii, p 17.

¹⁴ Hallett, Africa since 1875, p 721.

¹⁵ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 164.

¹⁶ Davenport, South Africa, p 179.

¹⁷ Ibid, p 179.

“fatherland”. But because the Kholwa were able to enrich themselves through their willingness to accept and adopt European codes and of using the colonial presence to create wealth and authority for themselves as individuals, they were more than willing to accept white political hegemony. Johannes Kumalo represented the majority when he said that they had “left the race of our fathers....and have clung to the white. We imitate them in everything we can. We feel that.....when we became converts to their faith we belonged to them”. It was a one-way journey of no return, like “a stone thrown into the water, impossible to return”.¹⁸ Stephanus Mini’s son, Stephen, giving evidence before the South African Native Affairs Commission later, expressed an age-old belief and said that they “have interests in common, and are one with the white people”.¹⁹

Unfortunately for the hopeful Kholwa, the whites wanted labour and saw the Zulu as available cheap labour not as fellow citizens. Sir John Scott, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, is said to have once reflected ruefully: “It seems impossible for a body of white men to live in proximity to the coloured races without adopting the conviction that as the dominant people they have the right to command the services of the less civilized”.²⁰ There is evidence that some individual whites did not have respect for the Zulu and their customs, that the idea of equality was definitely out of question. The belief that Shepstone was a protector of the Zulu against exploitation by white landowners had been modified by Etherington who claims that the Secretary for Native Affairs was, in fact, the promoter of the flow of labour from Zululand into Natal.²¹ It is also said that far fewer black people

¹⁸ Lambert, “The attitude of the kholwa”, p 73.

¹⁹ SANAC, 3, evidence of Stephen Mini, p 968.

²⁰ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 168.

²¹ Davenport, South Africa, p 123.

found their way to the towns in Shepstone's day. When they did, he was quick to see them as an imminent social problem and to nip it in the bud, he came out in 1874 with a schedule of "togt" (casual labour) regulations, one of the earliest examples of modern day influx control.²²

Notwithstanding all the rebuff and negative reception by the white establishment, the Kholwa, to prove their conformity to settler society and their loyalty to the British, they chose the British side in their war against Cetshwayo's Zulu armies in 1879. Within a few days of the call by the Natal Native Horse, Johannes Kumalo, besides his two sons whom he sent to join the Edenvale contingent, further provided 25 men from Driefontein.²³

Annals of the war indicate that they acquitted themselves well. But the question remained of whether the whites accepted them in their scheme of things, whether they would share advantages and privileges with them. To make sure of their position, the Kholwa continued to make demands on the white colonial establishment and were continually rejected until such time that some of them began to question Christian motives.

Christianity did take a hold on the Zulu, especially on those living in Natal in close proximity with numerous mission stations established there. But among the rural folk, God always remained a remote presence, it was the "ancestors who were seen as all-present and all-loving".²⁴ In order to be legally free from any association with traditional society, the Kholwa had clamoured for exemption from African law. They felt that African law was an

²² Lambert, Betrayed trust, p 94.

²³ Lambert, "The attitude of the kholwa", p 73.

²⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 166.

embarrassment and perennial annoyance that confronted them on a daily basis in their transactions of trade and land deals.²⁵ Jacobus Matiwane, giving evidence before the Commission of 1881, said: “We are anxious to get out of Native Law, because we find that although we have adopted the ways of the white man, we are treated as ordinary Kafirs”.²⁶

Indeed their social life had changed, the Zulu were experiencing the effects of white power and influence which had “limited the authority of chiefs, imposed taxes, created new material needs, eroded customary values, and insinuated new ones”.²⁷ Some of the more progressive Kholwa had become employers of labour and were, to all intents and purposes, a separate or exclusive people. “The outside Natives look upon us coldly. Some heathen natives work for us”, said an obviously distraught Matiwane.²⁸ Eventually Act No. 28 of 1865 was passed granting converts the right to live under the Common Law affecting the whites in the Colony. However, because of Shepstone’s opposition to it, it was never made known to the public and the first time that it was translated into IsiZulu was in 1876, done, even then by a missionary. Magistrates only publicized the law in 1883 after much insistence from the Colonial Office in London.²⁹

The converts demanded exemption with the hope that it would lead to enfranchisement as it was the case in the Cape Colony. According to the 1856 Charter, granting representative government status to the Colony, the franchise was open to males over twenty-one years

²⁵ Lambert, “The attitude of the kholwa”, p 74.

²⁶ Natal Native Commission (NNC) 1881-2, evidence of Matiwane, p 145.

²⁷ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 100.

²⁸ Natal Native Commission (NNC) 1881-2, evidence of Matiwane, p 145.

²⁹ Lambert, “The attitude of the Kholwas”, p 74.

of age who owned immovable property valued at 50 pounds or who rented property to the annual value of 10 pounds. The Charter did not discriminate on grounds of race. The franchise qualification was primarily designed to accommodate the converts who were the only Africans owning individual property. The protection of the Africans was therefore, initially ensured. However, the political landscape in Natal Colony was different from that of the Cape Colony.

During the 1860's land ownership by Zulu people became common on African-owned land and on land belonging to the American and Methodist missions. Constitutionally, these land owners were to vote as soon as they won their exemption from African Law. But the scenario left open "the theoretical possibility of a government elected and ruled by Natives".³⁰ In short whites feared that they would be swamped by the overwhelming majority of Zulu around them, hence they chose the Shepstone route of racial segregation. Shepstone had made no secret of his preference for traditional society. According to Taylor, he once told converts: "The white people praise their spirits, you should praise your own".³¹ Nevertheless, land buying continued into the 1870's with the Edendale Kholwa example appearing near Ladysmith, also on the Umlazi River and along the upper Mzimkhulu. A phenomenon that led to the Rev. Joseph Allsopp remarking that the Kholwa were "forming companies and taking land", since it had become common to find them bidding for Crown Lands, the same as the white people were doing.³²

Etherington has stated that: "In spite of their early success in agriculture, trade and self-

³⁰ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 288.

³¹ *Ibid*, p 289.

³² Etherinton, "Christianity and African society", p 288.

organized commercial education, the further emergence of the kholwa as a prosperous peasantry and embryonic middle class was effectively blocked by denying them the land necessary to support their increasing numbers and by stifling their various enterprises with legal restraints".³³ Their initial success should have consolidated their position as a prosperous peasantry and enabled many of them to find for themselves a place in the nascent bourgeoisie of Natal.³⁴ Failure to achieve all this was due mainly to the fact that they were denied land.

What aggravated the situation later in the century was that the people could not voice their grievances, for, unlike Sir Theophilus Shepstone, his brother John did not make himself available for consultation and advice. Many Zulu witnesses testifying before the 1881-1882 Natal Native Affairs Commission stated their dissatisfaction with his failure to represent their interests. "But where is he?" asked Chief Mawele, "He should have been our ears and brought us here. But we do not see him", stressed the old chief.³⁵ According to Lambert the situation became worse when Henrique Shepstone, Theophilus' son, took over from his uncle John. "When black people began to complain about the way we were governed when Gebuza ka Somsewu entered office", Chief Matiwane of the Qadi told James Stuart in 1905.³⁶

Land shortage remained the greatest stumbling block to Kholwa economic and social advancement, but, with or without land, they also required legal protection in the colonial

³³ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 264.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p 278.

³⁵ Natal Native Commission (NNC) 1881-2, evidence of Chief Mawele, p 198.

³⁶ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 279.

market place. "Instead they were hamstrung by the separate uncodified legal system called Native Law which Shepstone had devised to meet the "special needs of the Nguni".³⁷

Getting exempted from this law was another uphill. Nearly all those that ultimately won exemption before the 1880's were Christians. Some of these men, contends Etherington, were able to mention in their applications property holdings that could have shamed most settlers in Natal. It is said that in 1881, for example, Rev Daniel Msimang owned two houses that stood on 89 acres of land at Edendale and that he also owned a large block of shares in the co-operatively owned farms of Driefontein and Kleinfontein.³⁸

It was already too late when the converts realized that their continued prosperity depended on the political position they were in. Missionaries had been reluctant to encourage them to seek a political voice because they feared it could alienate the white settlers. "The inhibitions imposed upon their further economic advancement, and the sense of insecurity to which these gave rise, spawned a new generation of Kholwa who turned to political activism as the means to a better future, in place of the capitalist entrepreneurship which had been effectively frustrated by white political influence".³⁹

³⁷ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 279.

³⁸ Etherington, "Christianity and African society", p 288.

³⁹ Etherington, "African economic experiments", p 264.

CHAPTER 4

4. ZULU PERCEPTIONS OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM BEFORE 1879

4.1 Shepstone and British imperialism.

As the last remnant families of the Voortrekkers drove their creaking wagons over the Drakensberg to join their fellow men on the Highveld, leaving the sad memories of Natal behind them, a fresh new wave of some five thousand British immigrants, known as the Byrne settlers, poured into the Colony. Between 1849 and 1851, mostly middle class people, who had paid a small deposit for the voyage to Natal and the promise of twenty acres of land, arrived at Durban. ¹ It was to be the middle class, so the agents were told, since men of the working class “would not be able to compete with cheap native labour”.² People with a little capital were preferred. Besides those from the British Isles, other settlers came from the West Indies and Mauritius, and, though they were few in number, they were significant as pioneers who were destined to start the sugar industry in Natal. ³

The Byrne settlers were set to re-shape the socio-political and cultural landscape of the young colony. Their understanding of their passage condition was that “skill and intelligence to direct labour rather than labour itself” was all that was needed. ⁴ As a result there was a marked contrast between the early hunter-trader British settlers and the new colonial ones in their respective attitudes towards the Zulu. The new settlers displayed a racial and cultural superiority that had never been seen among the pre-colonial Port Natal traders. They disapproved of and despised Fynn, Cane and Ogle who

¹ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 97.

² Hattersley, An illustrated social history of South Africa, p 189.

³ Warhurst, Geen's the making of South Africa, p 125.

⁴ Hattersley, An illustrated social history of South Africa, p189.

had married African wives and sired coloured children.⁵ In their view blacks were “uncivilized” and “pagan”. They thought of blacks as being in the infant stage of cultural development and considered it their natural duty to guide, goad, and, if necessary, coerce their “childlike” wards along the path to civilization.⁶ This attitude permeated every aspect of white colonial life. The settlers built churches, schools and libraries, formed social clubs and trading associations and transfused into these institutions the British character, only it was coloured by this creed of superiority. They adopted a settler identity where their colour was associated with authority in the region.⁷

To emphasize the point, Godlonton, writing from the Cape, used Natal as an example of the need for British rule over “pre-colonial anarchical societies”.⁸ In 1851 the English – speaking settlers started the Natal Society to encourage literary and historical writing and to promote other settler interests. Settlements that resemble villages in England sprang up along the coast and in the interior bearing English village names such as Verulam and Richmond.⁹ In 1852 the *Natal Mercury* followed the *Natal Witness* which had been started in 1846. Donald Moodie, the Government Secretary, was moved to say that the British arrival was “the beginning of the process of civilization in Natal”.¹⁰ A report of George Macleroy, a government immigration agent, issued on 25 October 1850 stated

⁵ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 56.

⁶ See Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, pp53-55.

⁷ Pridmore, “Pioneers” and natives, p 57.

⁸ Ibid, p 54.

⁹ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 53.

¹⁰ Pridmore, “Pioneers” and “natives”, p 56.

that the land the immigrants were offered was refused by them as inferior in quality and unsuitable for subdivision into small allotments.”¹¹

In reaction, the Lieutenant–Governor issued an Ordinance, “To prevent unlicensed squatting, and to regulate the occupation of Land by the Natives”. According to this law, Africans were to be removed from Crown Lands that were not within the locations.¹²

Magistrates were given the power to carry out the law, but the lack of an effective machinery to remove these people resulted in their numbers growing even further.

Throughout the 1850’s pressure from the rapidly growing settler population came to bear on Shepstone to break up the traditional system and dismantle the locations which made the Zulu “to follow idle, wandering and pastoral lives or habits, instead of settling down to fixed industrial habits”.¹³ Colonists complained that an influx of Zulu from all directions had been allowed and that land had been “recklessly and extravagantly granted to blacks, three – fourths of whom were foreigners” who could not be depended on.¹⁴ They blamed the whole arrangement on the 1846 Locations Commission saying that “its composition was imperfect, that no settler of experience, or possessed of landed property, was placed on it, but it consisted entirely of officials and foreigners, namely, one military man, two government officials and two foreign missionaries”.¹⁵

¹¹ Taken from AF Hattersley, More Annals of Natal, p 59 A` Gordon and Talbot (eds) From Diaz to Vorster p 285.

¹² VR Ordinance, Under Her Majesty’s Order in Council of 19 June 1850 (Natal Archives).

¹³ Taylor, Shaka’s Children, p 171.

¹⁴ Natal, Report of commission.....1852 – 53, p 13.

¹⁵ Natal, Report of commission.....1852 – 53, p 14.

The settlers were convinced that a body constituted such as this one, could not be said to be able to represent fairly the opinions of the white population on a subject in which they were so deeply interested. Thus the Commission failed to give general satisfaction mainly “on the lines that the locations were too large, not that they were unnecessary”.¹⁶ The criticism against the location system was that it resulted in the drying up of “the source where an abundant and continuous supply of Kafir labour for wages might have been procured”.¹⁷ The commissioners appointed to the 1852–1853 commission to enquire into the past and present state of blacks were predominantly settlers. They unanimously agreed that it was fortunate that the home government in Britain had refused to advance money for the implementation of the recommendations of the Locations Commission with regard to black administration.

The commission of 1852 – 1853 generally applauded the work of the 1848 Land Commission, a board originally appointed by the British High Commissioner and Governor, Sir Harry Smith, said to have comprised “colonists of extended local experience”, instructed by the local government to investigate and report on the Black question.¹⁸ This board arrived at conclusions widely different from those of the Locations Commission, which resulted in prices of land dropping sharply.¹⁹

They reported that of the 100 000 Zulu in the Colony of Natal, three-quarters of them were foreigners and had no claims to any land. Also that “the location of so many would

¹⁶ Brookes and Webb, A history of Natal, p 59.

¹⁷ Natal, Report of the commission.....1852 – 53, p 15.

¹⁸ Natal, Report of the commission.....1852 – 1853, p 15.

¹⁹ Hattersley, The British settlement of Natal, p 78.

require the surrender of so much land, as would be found, to prevent the settlement of an European population sufficiently numerous to protect themselves".²⁰

From these reports it becomes crystal clear that the white population lived in fear of the numerically superior Zulu around them. It is in the context of this fear that Theophilus Shepstone looked around to find a "dumping place" for the "excess", "three fourths" of the black population that the Commission specifically complained about.²¹ Although the settlers complained about too much land being given to the Zulu peasants, Cameron says Shepstone had always been aware that the locations he had created were inadequate for the accommodation of all Natal's black population.²²

As late as the opening of the twentieth century, Chief Ndunge of the Ama Cele at Umvoti was asked about problems he and his people were experiencing. He expressed contentment with everything except land shortage. "There are no matters which I can specify as giving me and my people any trouble except one thing: I have not got enough room for my people, the land is too small for my tribe", he told the South African Native Affairs Commission.²³ He explained further that at the time when Shepstone's locations were created, in terms of claims and chiefdoms, many people were driven off privately owned land, and forced to join their brethren in the crowded locations. As a result there was no land left for cultivation.

²⁰ Natal, Report of commission.....1852 – 53, p 15.

²¹ Natal, Report of the commission.....1852,53, p15.

²² Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 177.

²³ South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), vol. 3, evidence of Chief Ndunge (Cape Town, Government Printer, 1905), p 948,

De Kiewiet's assertion sets the tone for this discussion, that the Zulu in Natal Colony were protected "against entire dispossession" by the Shepstone system which sought to maintain the "native locations", and expand into new territories as a safety valve for black people and also to extend British influence.²⁸ On the other hand, the settlers desired the total destruction of these locations. They put the blame for their existence not only on the Locations Commission but more so on the American missionaries. They said that the Commission "did not at first intend to grant such enormous tracts of country to the kafirs, but that the extensions originated in the suggestions of the missionaries in the District".²⁹

It is a curious thing that at that very moment, 1853, Bishop John William Colenso was invited to settle in Natal, becoming the colony's first Anglican Bishop.

Probably, the move was calculated to counteract the influence of the "foreign" American missionaries. Colenso believed that "the extension of British imperial rule was ordained by Providence", so that his view of British imperialism was that, it was not "a rapacious intrusion into the lives of conquered people; but a noble process entailing both duties and rights".³⁰ His convictions about the relations between church and state paved the way for his friendship with Theophilus Shepstone. Their "responses to the social problems with which they were confronted were essentially compatible".³¹

Edgecombe says between 1854 and 1873 the two friends "devised schemes for the

²⁸ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 177.

²⁹ Natal, Report of the commission.....1852 – 1853, p 14.

³⁰ Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation", p 16.

³¹ Guy, The heretic, p 42.

creation of black kingdoms, first south of the Mzimkhulu river, then in Zululand itself and finally in Basutoland.³² Colenso was deeply impressed by the reception given to Shepstone as they toured the black settlements on his arrival. Phakade's people had referred to Shepstone as "Thou that art the great black one".³³ Given the apparent influence over the Zulu that Shepstone had, it is not surprising that Colenso believed that they could do great things together. It is significant to note that Colenso "conceived a high regard and esteem for Mr. Shepstone, whom he gladly hailed as the man specially endowed and ordained for the grand work of civilizing the native race, and the zealous assistant of religious missionary effort".³⁴

The two endeared themselves to the Zulu by their "gradualist and tactful" approach.³⁵ to the task of educating, evangelizing and governing the black population of Natal.³⁶ The "kingdoms" that were envisaged south of the Mzimkhulu were to be kingdoms in which the two friends would personify Church and State.³⁷ They would perhaps take advantage of the position the two of them came to occupy in the hearts of the Zulu people. Colenso was respectfully and lovingly called Sobantu "Father of the People", while in the same vein of reverence and affection, Shepstone was called Somtseu, "The Great White Father".³⁸ John Kumalo frequently visited Bishopstowe and testified as to

³² Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nations", p 17.

³³ Edgecombe, *Bringing forth light: five tracts on Bishop Colenso's Zulu mission*, p xv.

³⁴ Lucas, *The Zulus and the British frontiers*, p 153.

³⁵ Cameron, *An illustrated history of South Africa*, p 175.

³⁶ Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation", p 16.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p 17.

³⁸ Edgecombe, *Bringing forth light*, p xv.

the Bishop's ability to identify with the Zulu. He "was so much the natives friend," he told Stuart.³⁹ Kumalo went on to state that as a result the Bishop's closeness to the Zulu led to his hatred by Europeans. Colenso is said to have written or prophesied in a little book about Columbus' voyages, that the whole world will yet bend the knee, saying "Amen" and give their allegiance to Africa.⁴⁰

At this time the white population of Natal was engulfed by vast and increasing numbers of Zulu people. The influx reached flood proportions during a series of disturbances in the Zulu Kingdom where Mpande continued to enroll young Zulu men into age-regiments. At the beginning he was successful in bringing about the unity of the state, but in the 1850s factions began to grow around two of his many sons, Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi, who were rivals for the succession to the kingship.⁴¹ While in exile with the Trekkers in Natal, Mpande proclaimed Cetshwayo as his successor. On his return to Zululand in the 1840s Mpande busied himself with the work of consolidating his position over the Kingdom that he had so unexpectedly inherited. The first two kings had seized power by force and he, the third, had done the same. It was therefore imperative that he should close all the loopholes to ensure that his reign was unassailable.

Mpande made a careful selection of his senior counsellors and established his capital at Kwa-Nodwengu in the Mahlabathini area, north of the middle reaches of the White Mfolozi. Cetshwayo's mother, Ngqumbazi Zungu, was put in charge of the homestead, Kwa-Gqikazi, near present day Nongoma, while Cetshwayo remained with other

³⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of John Kumalo, p 216.

⁴⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of John Kumalo, p 216. Appendix 3 in the same volume elaborately deals with the life of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, therein the work of Bishop John Colenso feature quite prominently – pp 388-407.

⁴¹ Thompson, A history of South Africa, p 97.

members of the family at the Mlambongwenya homestead. Here at Mlambongwenya, Cetshwayo grew to early manhood and in about 1850, he was recruited into the newly formed ibutho, the Thulwana regiment, together with Mbuyazi and five other of his peer half-brothers. The illustrious membership of the Thulwana regiment ensured that it would be a crack unit.⁴²

The Thulwana was headed by one of the kingdom's great men, Mnyamana ka Ngqengelele, a man who, "the boisterous young princess, would stand in awe of".⁴³ There was a fierce rivalry for honours in chivalry between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi. Cetshwayo tried to dissuade his brother from quarreling, according to Fuze ka Magwaza, but Mbuyazi's younger brother, Mantantashiya, urged his brother and his followers on.⁴⁴ Together with Dhlomo, many Zulu witnesses say the king himself was behind the instigation for a final clash between his sons, saying: "Uyadela u Makhasana owabona izingqungqulu zishayana".⁴⁵ However, when the Thulwana regiment was given a chance to wash their spears, on a rare foray against the Swazi in 1852, Cetshwayo returned a bloodied hero and Mbuyazi did not.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, this act of bravery failed to win his father's heart. What followed was, according to Taylor, "a case study in twisted paternal love".⁴⁷

⁴² Taylor, Shaka's children, p 175.

⁴³ Ibid, p 175.

⁴⁴ Fuge, The black people, p 98.

⁴⁵ R R R Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter.) p 8.

⁴⁶ Read Matsebula, A history of Swaziland – Queen Regent File the successor to La Zidze, Mswati's mother. Her reaction to Mpande following the Zulu raid, pp 55 – 56.

⁴⁷ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 175.

After the Swazi campaign the rivalry between the two brothers gathered momentum. Each began to mobilize followers on a massive scale. Benedict Carton believes that “the sibling rivalries within the royal Zulu patriarchy weakened the cohesion of forces that could have resisted colonial intrusion, at least for a time”.⁴⁸ But the clash became inevitable, as it seemed that the King favoured Mbuyazi as his heir. He was only afraid to make it public because of the opposition he would have faced from some powerful chiefs in the kingdom who favoured Cetshwayo. The schism between the two princes developed into a gulf that divided the nation by 1856. Dhlomo suggests that Mpande promoted the clash hoping that the two elephants would fight to the death leaving the throne open for Mthonga,⁴⁹ another of his younger sons by Nomantshali, “the wife whom he loved dearly”.⁵⁰

To keep them apart and in a way to fuel the simmering fires, Mpande built a homestead for Cetshwayo at Mangweni near the Lower Mhlathuze River – an area predominantly settled by Usuthu,⁵¹ Cetshwayo’s adherents. Mbuyazi was placed near Nhlazatshe, a hundred kilometers inland near the Black Mfolozi River with his adherents, the IziGqoza. Nkuku ka Cangesa of the Dhloko regiment and Mbuyazi’s incekusaid they also went by the name Igobangqongqo which means one who causes strong men to bow down.⁵²

⁴⁸ Carton, Blood from your children, p 27.

⁴⁹ Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo, p 8.

⁵⁰ Fuge, The Black people, p 61.

⁵¹ The name Usuthu originating from the Sotho-type cattle captured by the Zulu army from the Pedi of the eastern Transvaal in 1850.

⁵² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Nkuku, p 136.

Perhaps it was mere political expediency for Mpande to acknowledge Cetshwayo as his heir in 1839 when he sought assistance from the Trekkers against Dingane. Fuze says “Even the Boers, they who installed Mpande as king, knew him whose ear they had pierced and marked”.⁵³ Mpande had turned to say that “Mthonga was his heir, whom he had fathered as a king, and that those whom he had fathered as a commoner, before he had partaken of the medicines of kingship, could not become kings”.⁵⁴ Whilst the arguments raged on, the mobilization of warriors continued apace. The Trekkers’ recognition of Cetshwayo in 1839 gave him a foothold in the affairs of the Zulu kingdom. He grew “into young manhood confident of his grand destiny as the next king, and inevitably attracted an ambitious following about himself, eager to attach themselves to the rising star”.⁵⁵ Dhlomo says there are many intriguing things that were happening in Zululand through Mpande, that were going to affect Cetshwayo’s rule in the future.⁵⁶

In the ensuing struggle for the kingship, Cetshwayo commanded a much larger group of supporters. These included men of weight in the Kingdom, such as Masiphula ka Mamba, Mpande’s chief advisor, who publicly opposed the king on the issue of succession. There was Maphitha ka Sojijisa, who as head of the Mandlakazi lineage of the royal family, was without doubt the most powerful man in Zululand. Besides the big men, the rank and file in the army together with their commanders, stood behind Prince Cetshwayo.⁵⁷

⁵³ When Mpande pointed out Cetshwayo as his heir, the Boers pierced his ear and marked him for future identification, states Fuze, The black people.

⁵⁴ Fuze, The Black people, p 61.

⁵⁵ Laband, Rope of sand, p 136.

⁵⁶ Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo, p 9.

⁵⁷ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 175.

What had started as a minor and normal sibling conflict had developed to explosive proportions aggravated mainly by factors and persons pursuing their own interest. Taylor's argument that the "succession struggle of 1856 handed to the kingdom's enemies the instruments with which to bring about its downfall",⁵⁸ lends much credibility. The Secretary for Native Affairs, Theophilus Shepstone, was one of those persons, with the conflict taking place, as it did, precisely at the time when he sought a "safety valve" for his superfluous Zulu in the colony of Natal.

Historians seem to agree that Shepstone faced a huge problem of over-crowding in the Colony's reserves by year 1855 and wished to find territory in which to settle the extra Zulu population. Some regard the extension of uniform control over the colony's neighbouring state as a way of checking its growing political power, and also as a measure of reducing the black population within the borders of Natal.⁵⁹ White Natalians viewed Mpande with suspicion, and Humphreys' comment is a typical colonial one, "The (Zulu) Country belongs to his highness King Panda, one of the most cruel, bloodthirsty and despotic monarchs I ever heard of. He can muster 50 000 warriors and is continually quarreling and fighting with the neighbouring nations."⁶⁰

With comments such as these, it is clear that Shepstone must have had to bear great pressure from his fellow settlers. Additional territory would make it easier to enforce such measures as the abolition of polygamy within Natal, and those opposed to change would then move into Shepstone's envisaged "Kingdom".

⁵⁸ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 173.

⁵⁹ Colenso, Bringing forth light, p xxi.

⁶⁰ Julie Pridmore (ed) The Journal of Willaim Clayton Humphreys. being a personal narrative of the adventures and experiences of a trader and hunter in the Zulu country, during the months July – October 1851, p x.

All indications point towards western Zululand as the target area. Shepstone saw this slice of Zulu territory as strategic for white settlement with the extra Zulu providing the man-power requirements of that settler community.⁶¹ The idea impressed Colenso who noted that: “At this moment, the Zulu people wd. hail with delight the presence of Mr. Shepstone... Messengers came yesterday from Cetshwayo, imploring him to come, & settle their distractions: and, humanly speaking, there can be no reason to doubt, that with his aid, the whole of the Zulu people might, with their own full assent & the direct order of their chief, be brought at once under civilizing & Christian Influences... If Mr. S went a vast body of natives would go from this colony after him...”⁶²

This kind of excited argument was carried with the pragmatic view that the creation of Shepstone’s kingdom would also block Trekker expansion to the sea. As an avowed imperial visionary and expansionist, Shepstone believed that Natal was the gateway to Central Africa, and Zululand lay on the way. Ballard agrees that Shepstone cast his acquisitive eye on Zululand and “wanted to annex a triangle of land between the Zulu Kingdom and the South African Republic”.⁶³ The conflict between the princes, therefore, offered the controversial Shepstone the opportunity of involvement in Zulu affairs across the Thukela. He hoped, as in Natal Colony, to incorporate chiefs into his administration and ultimately reduce their status and eliminate them.

⁶¹ Norman Etherington, “The meaning of Shepstone’s coronation of Cetshwayo “ quoted in Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 171.

⁶² Guy, *The heretic*, p 87.

⁶³ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 171.

Simon Maphalala has blamed the outbreak of the civil hostilities between Usuthu and IziGqoza on the involvement of white settlers and the Natal government in the dispute. In his little book, Maphalala points out that the “intrigue against Cetshwayo achieved its tangible form on 15 November 1856 when a meeting took place between Rathbone and a delegation from Mpande who supported Mbuyazi”.⁶⁴ Rathbone proposed that Mbuyazi and the delegation, which consisted of five royal princes and a few induna, proceed to Natal to discuss with Captain Joshua Walmsely, Shepstone’s Border Agent, the possibility of military assistance. The delegation was in Natal Colony for three days at the end of which, John Dunn, Walmsely’s constable and interpreter, was ordered to lead a contingent of 135 men in support of Mbuyazi against Cetshwayo.⁶⁵

“Like the seed carried by birds, rumours of the impending fight between the Zulu princes were scattered far and wide through the Colony of Natal in the weeks before the armies clashed”.⁶⁶ To ignite an already volatile situation, Mpande advised Mbuyazi and his adherents to go and settle on a tract of land to the south-east of the country. By this action Mpande hoped that Mbuyazi would be able to recruit more followers in an area with a tradition of loyalty to himself. He also secretly hoped that they would be close to the British in Natal to be able to solicit military aid as he had done himself seventeen years before,⁶⁷ when he sought help from the Trekkers.

⁶⁴ SJ Maphalala, “The participation of white settlers in the Battle of Ndongakusuka, 2 December 1856 and its consequences up to 1861”, University of Zululand Publication, Series B, No. 56, 1985 p 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p 5.

⁶⁶ Walker, Proud Zulu, p 13.

⁶⁷ Laband, Rope of sand, p 141.

The Zulu were fighters, but as long as they fought among themselves it did not matter, so some of the settlers thought, but those that had been in the Colony longer, thought differently. They were there in 1839 when Dingane sent his warriors down to Durban to wash their spears in the blood of the settlers. They remembered the scramble to the boats, and the safety of the brig Comet.⁶⁸ One man who remembered vividly was John Dunn as “he stood beside the swelling flood of the Tugela” watching the ferrymen “rowing a difficult, wavering passage across to the Zulu side”.⁶⁹

Some 16 kilometers to the north of the Thukela lived EF Rathbone, u Gqelebana, as the Zulu called him. As a hunter trader, he moved between Natal and Zululand on a regular basis and knew of the civil war that was brewing in the Zulu country. As an interested outsider, he was very pleased when suddenly Mbuyazi and his adherents came seeking advice and support.⁷⁰ It is important to note that he had been very close to Mpande at the time; building wagons and presenting the king with various gifts. Mpande, in desperation had advised Mbuyazi to “go to the country of the Whites. I too was brought to power by them.”⁷¹ Mbuyazi tried to emulate his father’s road to success, and fled to the Natal border.⁷² Unfortunately the Thukela was in flood and impossible to cross. Meanwhile Cetshwayo’s messengers had raised a formidable army of supporters. As they swept through the south of the country, Mbuyazi fell back the Thukela River with his

⁶⁸ Walker, Proud Zulu, p 14.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p 14.

⁷⁰ Laband, Rope of sand, p 176.

⁷¹ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 176.

⁷² Knight, Anatomy of the Zulu army, p 40.

IziGqoza. The advancing Usuthu chanting their rhythmic war cry “Usu...thu” numbered between 15 000 and 20 000 men.⁷³ Dunn’s men were re-inforced by other Whites who were undoubtedly motivated by the prospect of booty. There were Afrikaners led by Gorewse, two sons of Pond du Preez, the du Preez brothers, John Strydom, Thomas Morris and T Caplin and others. There were also about 40 coloured and black hunters, all armed with rifles.⁷⁴ Dunn told Rathbone, A Moore and F Jackson that he had been sent by Walmsely to give support to Mbuyazi with arms and that he also expected the Natal government to send an armed force from Pietermaritzburg.

Suddenly, before the expected full moon which was the time the IziGqoza thought the Usuthu would attack, the thunder of beating shields and the drawn-out rhythmic chant “Usu...thu”, the rallying war cry of Cetshwayo’s adherents, was heard from far across the ridges and valleys.⁷⁵ The battle of Ndongakusuka had begun. Ndongakusuka – a hill on the north bank of the Thukela river, the scene of a fight between a Zulu force led by Dambuza, and a raiding party from Port Natal (eBodwe) in April 1838.⁷⁶ On this 2 December 1856 it was a scene of another and more bloody clash. Pressed against the river with the deadly assegai the IziGqoza fought back desperately; their women “threw their bundles down and took up assegais and stabbed the enemy,”⁷⁷ They fought hard

⁷³ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 176.

⁷⁴ Maphalala, The participation of white settlers, p 7.

⁷⁵ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 177.

⁷⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, Vol. 5, evidence of Rangu, p 258.

⁷⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA. Vol. 5, evidence of Ngidi, p 69.

but Usuthu were too much for them. The battle is described by Roberts as “a massacre, one of the worst to occur in Zululand’s blood-stained history”.⁷⁸ It was swift, bloody, merciless and conclusive. Laband has concurred and stated that “it was certainly among the most deadly”.⁷⁹

In the melee Mbuyazi died hurling himself into a pack of foes. John Shepstone told Stuart that he was shown by John Dunn the spot of Mbuyazi’s death near Mangete.⁸⁰ Others, however, believed he was concealed in one of the wagons.⁸¹ Five other sons of Mpande were instantly killed. Those who escaped the assegai were driven back into the overflowing Thukela, to be swept out to sea.⁸² For many days thereafter, bodies were washed up on the coast down to Durban. Others remained where they had fallen with the scavenging vultures feasting to their satisfaction. For many years afterwards, the area around the mouth of the Thukela was known as “Mathambo” or “place of bones”.⁸³

On their way back to Cetshwayo’s Mangweni homestead the victorious Usuthu were chanting the prince’s new songs that he had instantly composed. The first song was about the Whites who were responsible for hurrying the inadequately prepared IziGqoza forces against Cetshwayo, and the second was a statement about the peaceful intentions of the Prince.

⁷⁸ Roberts, The Zulu kings, pp 339 – 340.

⁷⁹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 135.

⁸⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 5, evidence of John Shepstone, p 392.

⁸¹ The story of Mbuyazi’s escape continued for a time with the people believing he was planning to come back with the help of Shepstone.

⁸² Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 177.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p 178.

They went like:

Caller: Bayaziphangisa, wayeqale bani na?

Response: O! Wo! Hhaye!

Caller: Sivimba ngomkhonto eNdongakusuka

Response: O! Wo! Hhaye!

Caller: Sanqoba ngomkhonto e Ndongakusuka

Response: O! Wo! Hhaye!

[Caller: They are hurrying them away, who had he provoked?

Response: Well done!

Caller: We bar with the assegai at Ndongakusuka

Response: Well done!

Caller: We conquered by means of the assegai at Ndongakusuka

Response: Well done!]⁸⁴

Second song:

Caller: Izwe lonke!
Oka Ndaba uzithulele!
Kaqali muntu
Nango-ke uzithulele

Response: Eyaye!
Sinik abafo
O! O! Sinikabafo

[Caller: The whole Land hark!
The son of Ndaba is keeping his peace!
Does he provoke anyone?
There now is the Peaceful One!

⁸⁴ Maphalala, The participation of white settlers, p5.

Response: Well done!
 Give us our enemies,
 Yes, Yes, Give us our enemies.]⁸⁵

Maphalala says the hypothetical question being asked in both songs is why Mbuyazi allowed himself to be pushed into the fight, and the answer is that he was urged and spurred on by the Whites. Both songs emphasize the peaceful intentions of Prince Cetshwayo, who was not responsible for provoking the fight. The armies sing contentedly that at Ndongakusuka justice was done. Oral tradition has preserved the incident for posterity in Cetshwayo's own izibongo (praises).

“Uzulu Laduma obaba!

Lapha kungemunga kungemtholo

U Mahlamvan' abhul' umlilo eNdulinde.

Ubaswe abamhloph' abelungu,

Ubaswe u Mantshonga beno Gqelebana.

[*Thou, Heaven which thundered for no reason!*

Where there is no “munga” and “mtholo”⁸⁶

The small branches which quenched the fire at Ndulinde

Kindled by the White people,

Kindled by Walmsely and Rathbone]⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Maphalala, *The participation of white settlers*, p 5.

⁸⁶ In Zulu tradition the trees “munga” and “mtholos” are associated with thunder and lightning. These are said to be excellent conductors of lightning and therefore it is very dangerous to come near them in a storm. In the praises there were no such trees that might have attracted the conflagration, but the Whites. Walmsely and Rathbone (Mantshonga and Gqelebane their Zulu names) were to blame.

⁸⁷ Sibusiso Nyembezi, *Izibongo zamakhosi* (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1981), p 83.

There was a great loss of life at Ndongakusuka. For Usuthu and the multitude of its supporters this was in defence of Zululand. Mbuyazi and five of his brothers were among the dead, namely his full brothers Mantantashiya and Madumba, and half brothers Shonkwane, Somkhansoma and Dabulesinye. Thousands of IziGqoza including women and children were trapped between the charging Usuthu impi and the flooded Thukela. Those who escaped the assegai were stampeded into the Thukela to drown or be devoured by crocodiles.⁸⁸ On the side of Usuthu, the number of those who died is uncertain but it has been acknowledged that John Dunn and his men “had done great execution with their firearms”.⁸⁹

Among the herds of cattle swept up by Usuthu were a thousand owned by Waugh, Rathbone and other traders. They blamed John Dunn for their loss and threatened to kill him if nothing was done to retrieve their cattle. Captain Walmsely was not impressed and told the traders whom “he despised as glorified peddlers and smouses” that appropriate action will be taken by the government at Pietermaritzburg.⁹⁰ Political uncertainty in Zululand following the Battle of Ndongakusuka led to a massive exodus of Zulu into the Colony of Natal compelling the Natal government to issue a hurriedly compiled proclamation that became known as the Refugee Regulations to stop the flow. Nonetheless, the estimates reveal that about 4 000 people and 10 000 head of cattle had entered the Colony by the middle of 1857.⁹¹ Whatever the side effects may have been, the most compelling was the effect on the Zulu Kingdom’s economy.

⁸⁸ Roberts, The Zulu Kings, p 340.

⁸⁹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 146.

⁹⁰ Walker, Proud Zulu, p 27.

⁹¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 146.

4.2 The rise of Cetshwayo and the resulting tension in Natal.

After the Battle of Ndongakusuka in December 1856, Cetshwayo became the most powerful personality in Zululand and still, Mpande was reluctant to nominate him as his successor. However, formal nomination by the king had become superfluous because already Cetshwayo was widely accepted by the kingdom's subjects as their future king.¹ In his political struggle with his brothers and his father, Cetshwayo sought support outside the kingdom. Whilst Mpande set out to win the backing of the missionaries whom he allowed back into the kingdom in increasing numbers, after the civil strife, Cetshwayo endeavoured to build alliances with the traders, chief of whom was John Dunn. John Dunn was in the forefront of a horde of white traders who were penetrating Zululand in the 1850s when the country was "still politically independent, economically self-sufficient and physically remote".² Cetshwayo recruited Dunn after the Battle of Ndongakusuka while Dunn was conducting negotiations for compensation to the traders who suffered material losses during the conflict, acting on behalf of the Natal government.³

Cetshwayo's choice was typical of his personality, for he was a man devoid of the ability to hold grudges. When Dunn was down and out seeking economic survival, Cetshwayo invited him to his isigodlo (head quarters).⁴ Dunn was then in his early twenties, "a lean rangy man with dark eyes and a full beard", keen to amass cattle: "Cattle were the ambition of the white man. They were the soul of the Zulus."⁵

¹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 340.

² Merrett (ed), Catherine Barter's, Alone among the Zulu's, p (12).

³ Ballard, "The transfrontierman", p 70.

⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 182.

⁵ Walker, Proud Zulu, p 17.

As an inducement and proof of his good intentions, Cetshwayo gave Dunn a gift of cattle and a tract of land in the area of Ongoye. He knew of the part played by Dunn in support of Mbuyazi but did not mention it. He studied the young white man intensely “and decided that he fitted the bill”.⁶ It was only much later when he said that “John Dunn and his riflemen did great execution. They also very gallantly covered the retreat for some distance but, in the end, had to ride for their lives”.⁷ It served Cetshwayo’s political purpose to give Dunn control of the region that had been depopulated during the civil conflict. Significantly this area had been the stronghold of Mbuyazi’s adherents. Attracted by Cetshwayo’s offers, Dunn resigned from Walmsely’s service and removed to Zululand permanently in May 1858.⁸

Still worried about the Natal Colonial government’s intention with regard to Mkhungo, fearing a British invasion and sustained by Boer support, Cetshwayo decided to take action against his rivals, in particular against his much younger brother Mthonga.⁹ Mthonga had suddenly become Mpande’s favourite as a result of the King’s love for his mother, Nomantshali. Cetshwayo dispatched a reliable detachment of the Ngobamakhosi regiment led by his trusted induna, Bhejana ka Nomageje to attack Nomantshali’s Mdumezulu homestead in the Mahlabathini area, their main target being the fourteen-year-old Mthonga.¹⁰ Mthonga escaped the net and fled to the Transvaal via Natal.

The Boers in the Transvaal knew immediately that they “had been delivered a trump-card and

⁶ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 182.

⁷ C de B Webb and JB Wright, *A Zulu king speaks: statements made by Cetshwayo ka Mpande on the history and customs of his people* (Pietermaritzberg, University of Natal Press, 1978), p 177.

⁸ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 96.

⁹ Cameron, *An illustrated history of South Africa*, p 177.

¹⁰ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 151.

they were determined to play it for all it was worth”.¹¹ The trouble for Mthonga started when Mpande said “ The king is still among the calves”.¹² At this time the Boers used to make frequent visits to King Mpande and they came in big numbers, claiming they were afraid Cetshwayo would kill Mpande and involve the whole country in warfare.¹³

Shepstone had taken Mkhungo under his wing. He had learned from the Boers and Mpande how “ a prominent refugee could be put to good use”.¹⁴ So when he received Mkhungo, he quietly discussed with his friend Colenso, the safe-keeping and education of the young prince. But, just as the British had Mkhungo as an ace up their sleeve, the Boers had theirs in Mthonga, who had run to them when Cetshwayo’s induna Bhejana hunted him down. Taylor has succinctly summed up the situation, saying that “a covert cynical game of land-grabbing and king-making was now played out”.¹⁵ Shepstone was grooming Mkhungo for the role of puppet king while the Boers were more to the point. They knew exactly what they wanted and went for it. Within hours of Mthonga’s arrival, the Boers made their move and surrendered the young prince to Cetshwayo in an exchange for a land agreement, and, in so doing, they implicitly recognized Cetshwayo as the Crown prince.¹⁶ The Treaty of Waaiohoek, so fatal for the future of the country was concluded with Cetshwayo, Siwedu and Sitheki, giving away land to the Boers.¹⁷

¹¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 152.

¹² See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 130.

¹³ Ibid, p 130.

¹⁴ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 184.

¹⁵ Ibid, p 185.

¹⁶ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 177.

¹⁷ Laband, Rope of sand, p 152.

In 1854 we saw how the idea of ruling an African population outside the borders of Natal Colony had captured Bishop Colenso's imagination, how he had been mesmerized by Shepstone's plan to establish a "Black kingdom" across the Mzimkhulu River to the south. Though the project failed as a result of being rejected by the British authorities, to the Bishop it still remained a viable proposal.¹⁸ In the wake of the missionary enthusiasm engendered by David Livingstone's "report back" from his adventures in Africa, delivered at Cambridge in 1857, Robert Gray wished to open an Anglican bishopric in Zululand. Colenso was ecstatic and immediately proposed to send Dr. Callaway to Zululand. Gray, however, wished to send Archbishop Mackenzie, Colenso's ardent critic, whereupon Colenso threatened to resign from Natal and take up the Zululand position himself. He even went as far as inviting Shepstone "to join him and do his best for the land".¹⁹

In September 1859 Colenso eventually set off for Zululand to negotiate a land grant with the Zulu royal authority for the establishment of the new mission, and also to discover what he could about the Kingdom.²⁰ He was accompanied by William Ngidi, his informant and interpreter who also helped with the Grammar and the Dictionary.²¹ With them was Magemu Magwaza Fuze, son of Matomela of the Ngcobo chiefdom, but Mkhungo was not with them as originally planned by the Bishop. The expedition was closely watched by Shepstone. All mention of things political was to be avoided and the

¹⁸ Guy, *The heretic*, pp 84 – 85.

¹⁹ Edgecombe, *Bringing forth light*, p xxii

²⁰ Guy, *The heretic*, p 88.

²¹ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.5, evidence of Meshack Ngidi, p 123.

exclusion of Mkhungo was his suggestion. This was shrewd advice “for Colenso found Zululand afloat with strange suspicions”.²² The dream of the Black Kingdom had been revived by Sir George Grey, the British High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape who intended “to partition Zululand into three areas under Shepstone, Cetshwayo and Mkhungo”.²³ But, as a consequence of his expedition to the Zulu country, Colenso postponed the possibility of becoming Bishop of Zululand for he was impressed with the strength of Cetshwayo’s support and the weakness of Mkhungo’s claims.²⁴ There was also the rumour current among the Zulu that Mbuyazi did not die at Ndongakusuka. There were those who declared without hesitation that he was alive and had been taken under the protection of the white people in Natal Colony. This tended to pollute the peaceful atmosphere in Zululand.²⁵

From 1861 there was no doubt, at all about Cetshwayo’s pre-eminence in the affairs of Zululand. He had come to exercise many of the political prerogatives formally held by his father. It was in that year when rumour became rife about the British plan to invade the Zulu country, with the purpose of installing Mkhungo. The Boers, Cetshwayo was made to understand, had no such treacherous intentions in their mind. The Boers were agreed that under the right conditions they were willing to surrender the young Prince Mthonga to the Zulu and “put Cetshwayo in the Royal Hut”.²⁶ For his part Cetshwayo would cede a stretch of land around present-day Utrecht and also guarantee the young

²² Edgecombe, *Bringing forth light*, p xxiv.

²³ Edgecombe, *Bringing forth light*, p xxv.

²⁴ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 18.

²⁵ Fuze, *The Black people*, p 100.

²⁶ The 1839 Boers-Mpande episode was being replayed: See Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 184.

Mthonga's safety. To these conditions, Cetshwayo reluctantly agreed.²⁷ When news of the agreement between Cetshwayo and the Boers reached Shepstone, he realized he had been beaten to it. It was a serious blow indeed. He quickly began making arrangements to go and meet Cetshwayo too. At their meeting, however, Cetshwayo humiliated Shepstone and sent him packing back to Natal. Though Shepstone did his bit to suppress his true feelings, privately he nursed a hatred for Cetshwayo.²⁸ The silent, secretive and reticent Shepstone who, according to Rider Haggard, observed everything and forgot little, though outmaneuvered by Cetshwayo, kept the question of annexation of a portion of Zululand alive in his mind. He had little knowledge of Zululand in 1861, but he made up for this by co-opting a number of frustrated missionaries from Zululand into his espionage network. "Bishop Schreuder and OC Oftebro of the Norwegian Society; Robert Robertson and RC Samuelson of the Anglicans, and Karl Hohls of the Hermannsburg Missionary Society, willingly supplied the Secretary for Native Affairs with their own prejudiced but fairly accurate accounts of political and economic conditions in Zululand."²⁹ More importantly, Shepstone considered exploiting John Dunn, who had great influence on Cetshwayo. He began to channel almost all his messages through Dunn to the king. He was, however, always uncertain of his loyalties until Dunn was forced by extreme circumstances to make a choice when the Anglo-Zulu War broke out in 1879.³⁰

What captured the attention of both king and prince after 1861 was not their personal rivalry but the land-hungry Boers on the western front. Cetshwayo's rather hasty and

²⁷ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 185.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p 186.

²⁹ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 176

³⁰ *Ibid*, pp 176 – 177.

clumsy agreement of 1861 at Waaihoek was soon exploited by the Transvaal Boers who started making claims for land. By 1864 they began beaconing off a boundary line between their farms and what they considered to be Zulu territory.³¹ According to Ballard the British government, through Shepstone's visit, had pressured Mpande to recognize Cetshwayo as his lawful heir to the throne, and the king had grudgingly agreed out of fear of further Boer interventions in Zulu domestic affairs.³² At that very time, when Theophilus Shepstone was at Mangweni and Nodwengu, even before Cetshwayo became king, John Shepstone, who was Acting Secretary in his brother's absence, informed Stuart that there already were rumors of a scheme by Cetshwayo to bring together the Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa to "sweep the white man out of the country".³³

The blatant display of arrogance on the part of the Boers was resented by both King and Prince and a host of other affected Zulu. It was reported that the Boers forced their way into the field of Diyakana with their horses.³⁴ Diyakana ka Hlanyana of the Mbatha people said that they had taken their horses into his crops. The king instructed Cetshwayo to investigate. In turn Cetshwayo sent izinduna, Bejane ka Nomageje and Gqibisambane to do so. They went off and soon returned to report that the horses had flattened the amabele (corn) and broken them to pieces.³⁵ An angry Cetshwayo immediately gave orders to his people to remove the beacons and, at the same time, sent off messengers to Pietermaritzburg to request the Natal government to intervene in the dispute.

³¹ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 158.

³² Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 109.

³³ Webb and Wrought, JSA, vol.5, evidence of John Shepstone, p 312.

³⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 128.

³⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4 evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 129.

Cetshwayo was obviously adopting a new line of policy, which he followed for the next few years, asking the Natal Colonial government to intervene.³⁶

During this time, the decade of the 1860s, Cetshwayo was willing to cede a strip of land to Natal Colony as a buffer between the Boers and Zululand. The Natal government urged on by Theophilus Shepstone, would probably have accepted the offer had it not been for the Colonial Office's continued reluctance to be involved in further political and economic entanglements that such a territory would bring. Meantime, Cetshwayo was using John Dunn's trading connections to obtain firearms and gunpowder, the very commodity that he so glaringly lacked at Ndongakusuka. By 1870, however, several hundred of his adherents, the Usuthu, were armed with guns, which they could effectively use.³⁷

Cetshwayo's pathway to the kingship was smoothed in 1867 when Mpande granted the Thulwana regiment permission to marry. In 1868 his wife Nomvimbi Msweli gave birth to his first-born son, Dinuzulu.³⁸ One more son, Manzolwadle and six daughters, namely: Sililo, Simiso, Sabede, Siyela, Bekisile and Nomandlambi, followed.³⁹ Just then, diamonds were discovered in a country contiguous to and claimed by both the Transvaal and the Free State. Though this did not direct Boer attention, the development did determine Britain's return to a more aggressive policy in South Africa in 1867. Basutoland was made a British protectorate in 1868 and the land along the coast was progressively made British territory thus frustrating any hope of the South African

³⁶ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 348.

³⁷ Laband, Rope of sand, p 158.

³⁸ R R R Dhlomo, u Dinuzulu ka Cetshwayo (Pietermaritzburg, Shunter and Shooter, 1968) p 16.

³⁹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 158.

Republic gaining an outlet to the sea.⁴⁰ This inevitably brought animosity between the Boers and the British and as a result arbitration in a Boer - Zulu conflict could not be expected from the British.

When diamonds were also discovered at Du Toit's Pan, near present day Kimberley, in September 1870, animosity between Boer and Briton grew to fever pitch. The Keats arbitration proceedings that followed in October 1871 "took a disastrous turn for the South African Republic, leaving MW Pretorius no option but to resign as president of the Republic".⁴¹ While Boer and Briton were contesting the diamond fields the question of the "disputed territory....remained a dangerous and unresolved quarrel between the Zulu and the Boers, and it was allowed to simmer on with ultimate tragic consequences for the Zulu kingdom".⁴² To the diamond fields the Zulu together with other African groups, went to labour "for one artifact in particular – the gun".⁴³ In 1869 the Boers of the South African Republic in the Transvaal went so far as to allot farms to their brethren on the land east of the Ncome River.⁴⁴ This was followed, early in 1870 by Paul Kruger attempting to swindle Mpande into making further land concessions. For so long on his guard against the land hungry Boers, Mpande died peacefully in September 1872.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Oliver Ransford, The Battle of Majuba hill: the first Boer war (London, John Murray, 1970), p 9.

⁴¹ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, pp 166 – 167.

⁴² Laband, Rope of sand, p 160.

⁴³ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 168.

⁴⁴ Laband, Rope of sand, pp 159 – 160.

⁴⁵ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 186.

The king was dead. However, as custom dictated, the king was said to be indisposed (ukudunguzela) or that he was ill (ukugula), even though they knew he was dead.⁴⁶ As soon as he had died, the fact was reported to Cetshwayo. A beast, a young red deer, was slaughtered and its skin was used to wrap the king's body in. He was buried within the precinct of Nodwengu by Ntinto ka Mavana, Mundula ka Nomansala, Mvubu ka Gwazindlu, Kwabithi ka Thiwana and Mpezeni ka Gala who were selected to carry out the task.⁴⁷ It is significant to note that no people were put to death on that occasion. Cetshwayo directed that a small herd of oxen should be slaughtered in order that those at Nodwengu might partake thereof.⁴⁸

After the burial of Mpande, Cetshwayo was to accede to the throne, obviously. However, he knew that there were those inside and outside the kingdom who were prepared to contest the position. To deal with them, he sought first the support or at least the neutrality of the Natal government. Following the burial and official national mourning of the king in February 1873, Cetshwayo called on John Dunn and some senior royal aristocrats at Mangweni.⁴⁹ The royal circle and the Prince's chief advisors were to decide on the course of action to be taken concerning the investiture of the new king.⁵⁰ The boundary dispute with the Boers was also discussed. Cetshwayo saw the Boer

⁴⁶ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 121.

⁴⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Baleni, p 43.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp 42 – 43.

⁴⁹ There was no crying or lamentation on the death of a king. Such a procedure was in accordance with custom. A king is not mourned for. Mpande's wives only shaved their heads. (Baleni ka Silwana gave evidence before Stuart, vol. I), p 43.

⁵⁰ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 177.

encroachment as being more serious than any pompous pretensions by Shepstone to interfere in Zulu domestic affairs. It was decided that Shepstone should be invited as representative of the Natal government to recognize Cetshwayo as king. It was hoped by this that a British commitment to Zulu interest might be secured as a check on Boer claims to the north-western marches of the land.⁵¹

In February 1873 the Zulu leaders sent a delegation of three envoys together with Cetshwayo's John Dunn to Pietermaritzburg to ascertain the Natal government's attitude towards the new regime and to invite Shepstone as "Father of the King's children" to participate in the installation of Cetshwayo; as they put it, "to establish what is wanting among the Zulu people".⁵² Cope argues quite convincingly that the reliance of the Zulu on the support of the Natal government with regard to the succession problem and the territorial dispute led them to a very sub-missive posture towards Natal.⁵³ Many times had Mpande said that "he was faithful to the British Government" and that "he belonged to it". Cetshwayo had also said that he wished "to shape all his actions in accordance with the wishes and advice" of the Natal government, "as protectors of the house of Chaka" and upon himself as "a child of the Natal Government".⁵⁴ It became obvious, therefore, that Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary of Native Affairs in Natal Colony, should be asked to oversee the formal installation of Cetshwayo as king after Mpande. The events and circumstances of Cetshwayo's investiture marked a watershed in the relations between the Zulu Kingdom and the British.

⁵¹ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 177.

⁵² Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p 75.

⁵³ RL Cope, The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbors, 1824 – 1879 Centenary Lecture, Friends of the University of the Witwatersrand, 1979.

⁵⁴ Ibid, Lecture.

Shepstone was quick to accept the invitation which he saw as his opportunity to advance the cause of British imperialism and influence in the Kingdom. He regarded it as the one never-to-be-missed chance to extend British political control over the hitherto independent Zulu state. His friend, Colenso shared the same vision that “his intervention in the political affairs of Natal was demanded by the obligations placed upon him as a missionary bishop...who held that the tenets of the Christian religion had to be revealed in the actions of men and women, and whose defense of English colonial rule was that it brought civilization and justice to the colonized”.⁵⁵

Shepstone planned to enter the Kingdom, taking a route that goes past Cetshwayo’s Mangweni residence, and there, in his own words, “take possession of him, and present him to the assembled nation and then proceed to install him as king”.⁵⁶ Sir Benjamin Pine, who had arrived in Natal in May to serve his second term as Lieutenant Governor, gave his blessings and allowed Shepstone to proceed to Zululand.⁵⁷ On 8 August 1873 Shepstone crossed the Thukela River, leading 110 officers and men of the Volunteer Corps. Two field-pieces accompanied the Royal Durban Artillery and over 300 African levies brought up the rear.⁵⁸

Shepstone’s plan to assert a form of British suzerainty in Zululand was pre-empted when part of the ceremony was carried out while the Shepstone entourage was on its way to the set rendezvous. Cetshwayo with an organized entourage of about 9 000 followers

⁵⁵ Guy, *The heretic*, p 194.

⁵⁶ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 76.

⁵⁷ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 178.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p 178.

arrived in the Ntonjaneni Valley on 18 August 1873. The ceremony was to be held in that ritually significant Emakhosini area, alongside the graves of the early kings, and the site where Shaka was installed.⁵⁹ The 19 August was the most crucial day of the coronation proceedings as the hitherto uncertain critical loyalties of Hamu, Zibhebhu and Mnyamana were tried and dissolved. The royal rivals “hailed Cetshwayo as heir in an unusual display of national and family unity”.⁶⁰ In that large gathering of the Zulu nation at Mtonjaneni Valley, all the rituals of investiture were completed and the elder councillors promoted by Masiphula ka Mamba, gave Cetshwayo the royal solute, “Bayethe!” and proclaimed him King of the Zulu. The historian Carolyn Hamilton is correct to say that historians have tended to overlook this earlier ceremony and its significance in the understanding of Zulu politics.⁶¹

Masiphula ka Mamba of the Mgazini people, the principal officer to the late King Mpande, pre-empted Shepstone and satisfied the vast majority of Zulu “who looked upon Natal’s blessing as gratuitous interference into the affairs of a sovereign state”.⁶²

Shepstone himself recognized the fact that it was “derogatory to Zulu dignity to call in the assistance of foreigners to install a Zulu king”.⁶³ The crowning of Cetshwayo was the last act of service by Masiphula to the Zulu monarchy that he had served during the reigns of Dingane and Mpande. After the ceremony he took ill and died later that evening.

⁵⁹ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 76.

⁶⁰ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, pp 178 –179.

⁶¹ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 76.

⁶² Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 179.

⁶³ RL Cope, “Political power within the Zulu Kingdom and the coronation laws of 1873,” *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, p viii, 1985, p 11.

When Shepstone arrived at Mthonjaneni, he found the area deserted. He later confessed that “the situation was embarrassing”.⁶⁴ He demanded an explanation from the Zulu authorities. It was then that he received the news of Masiphula’s death. Envoys informed him further that the earlier ceremony was no slight on him, nor was it a substitute for the forthcoming coronation. They emphasized that no one could carry out the actual, official coronation but himself, for he had “come as Shaka”.⁶⁵ For his part Shepstone entertained the idea that his ascendancy over the king would be sealed by his role in the coronation ceremony.

The Zulu rulers did not mean to involve Shepstone in the ritual part of the installation ceremony, they merely offered him the public platform to sanction what was already there. The Zulu elders, according to evidence given by Mtshayankomo ka Magolwana, feared that Shepstone might install another claimant to the throne.⁶⁶ Indeed the promotion and installation of own candidates rather than the recognized heirs was a feature in Shepstone’s policy in Natal, and doubtless he would not have hesitated to play the same game here. Mnyamana ka Ngqengelele sarcastically remarked: “So he is a good man, one who pisses with his legs apart; he plants one leg on the other side of the Thukela, and the other in the Zulu country”.⁶⁷ Carolyn Hamilton believes that the reason for inviting Shepstone can be found in the statement the Zulu made in their first deputation, that “Chaka many years ago sent an embassy to the Cape, and thereby

⁶⁴ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 76.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p 73.

⁶⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 127

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p 127.

decided which way the Zulus should look, and they have determined to look only as their chief Shaka directed them".⁶⁸ The Zulu repeatedly invoked this connection dating back to Shaka whenever they sought the support of the British against the Boers.

While Shepstone was still confused by the turn of events regarding the coronation ceremony, the king and his councillors advised that the venue for the crowning be shifted to Mlambongwenya homestead. The change of venue to an unimportant site undoubtedly downgraded Shepstone's role in the affair. He, at first, refused to accept the new venue but Cetshwayo re-assured him that Shaka himself had stated that the English were his superiors, thus affirming Shepstone's paternal status.⁶⁹ Shepstone was, nevertheless, well aware that he and his entourage were at Cetshwayo's mercy while in Zululand.⁷⁰ After Shepstone's anger had been soothed by John Dunn, who had been dispatched by Cetshwayo for the purpose, discussions with the new king resumed and culminated in the coronation of 1 September 1873.⁷¹

At Mlambongwenya, the king, seated in a "broad-backed colonial armchair that had been set out that morning on the green early spring shoots of the Mahlabathini plane", Shepstone performed his coronation ceremony, described by Taylor as a "caricature".⁷² In his address, he formally conveyed British recognition of Cetshwayo as the Zulu king. It was the only important message for the day. His utterances about Cetshwayo having

⁶⁸ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 80.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p 77.

⁷⁰ Cope, "Political power within the Zulu kingdom", p 16.

⁷¹ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 179.

⁷² Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 193.

to behave like British kings and that in future people should not be killed without a fair trial and also that people should not be killed when suspected of witchcraft, all meant nothing to the Zulu and to Cetshwayo. Cope referred to these utterances as the “coronation laws”.⁷³ Later, Cetshwayo was to ask: “Did I tell Mr. Shepstone I would not kill? Did he tell the white people I had made such an agreement?”.⁷⁴ According to Taylor: “Nothing had been done to suggest that the Zulu king had surrendered his right of independent action. The adoption against killing, so far as everyone was concerned, was just another of Somtseu’s little homilies”.⁷⁵

Cetshwayo, reserved and softly spoken, but nonetheless forthright and assured, built his great palace at Ondini, not far from Nodwengu. He took up his position as king of the Zulu with great respect for the Zulu past, and was determined to uphold the ancient principles which had governed his people. More than anything else, it was his royal duty to preserve the land of his forefathers.

⁷³ See Cope, “Political power within the Zulu Kingdom”, p 18.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p 16.

⁷⁵ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 195.

4.3 The road to war, 1873 – 1879.

Indeed, the year 1873 was a watershed in the history of Zululand's relations with the British and a dramatic turning point in the lives of the Zulu people. Except for the massacre of Mbuyazi and his IziGqoza faction by Usuthu at Ndondakusuka in 1856, Mpande's reign had given the Zulu people a long period of relative peace and quiet. But, as soon as his son, Cetshwayo, began to ready himself for the kingship, cumulus clouds of war started gathering. The colonists in Natal lived in constant fear of an imminent Zulu invasion while the Boers in the Transvaal Republic were equally apprehensive.¹

Whether justified or not, the fear of Cetshwayo mounted after his coronation in 1873. Shepstone, the "king maker", had crowned Cetshwayo in a ceremony never seen before in the Zulu country. The five-year old Dinuzulu, Cetshwayo's son, witnessed the amazing events of his father's coronation. An extra-ordinary "spectacle embodying a mixture of Zulu pageantry at its best and of the military discipline and might of the British army".² It was, perhaps, a bad omen for the boy because soon there-after the pace of events quickened unbelievably towards war and the eventual destruction of the Zulu kingdom that he was destined to inherit.

Even as he crowned him, Shepstone realized he was dealing with no ordinary Zulu chief, and after their discussion he was obliged to admit that the new king was an impressive personality who had conducted his side of the discussion with great ability and frankness. He wrote in the coronation report that Cetshwayo "ranks in every respect far above any native chief I have had to do with".³

¹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 343.

² CT Binns, Dinuzulu: the death of the house of Shaka (London, Longman, 1968), p1.

³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 195.

He fitted the role of warrior king to the letter and his natural manly dignity impressed all who met him. There was no doubt that “he possessed all the qualities of the man he most admired - his uncle Shaka”.⁴ Whatever may have been his ambitions, his chances of emulating his great uncle as a nation – builder, were doomed from the outset. “Hemmed in by his formidable white neighbours, his power was limited and his authority uncertain.”⁵ De Kiewiet has also noted that: “The political disharmony of English and Dutch was really never a true measure of their relationship; for they were at all times more sincerely bound together by common interest than they were separated by their misunderstandings. In native matters it is impossible not to be impressed by the bundling of their interests and the knotting of their roots.”⁶ Against Cetshwayo, they were both equally dangerous.

When Shepstone and his entourage left for Natal with gifts of cattle from the king, only one thing had changed in Zululand, and that was that Britain had officially recognized Cetshwayo as king of the Zulu. Otherwise, “nothing had been done to suggest that the Zulu king had surrendered his right of independent action”.⁷ Dhlomo agrees that Zululand was still ruled according to the laws of Zulu kings such as Jama and Phunga which were not going to be shifted aside at the wink of an eye.⁸ Cope has quoted a missionary working in Zululand at the time who stated shortly after the coronation that he was following a policy of “undermining the power of the great Zulu chiefs, which has

⁴ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 341.

⁵ Ibid, pp 341 – 342.

⁶ CW De Kiewiet, The imperial factor in South Africa: a study in politics and economics, (London, Frank Cass, 1965), p 3.

⁷ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 195.

⁸ Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo, p 24.

long been a menace to the throne, by seeking out the heirs of pre-Shakan chiefs whose power had declined, or possibly clan-heads who were not chiefs, and desiring them to rebuild the houses of their ancestors – thus reviving ancient legitimacy as a counterpoise to present wealth and power”.⁹

From his capital Ondini in the Mahlabathini district, the king took steps to build the administrative and political power of the royal house. Mnyamana, the respected chief of the Buthelezi, who had known Cetshwayo since he was a boy and had been his commanding officer in the Thulwane regiment, was appointed Ndunankulu (Prime Minister), a position his father, Ngqengelele, had occupied in Shaka’s reign. With that part settled, Cetshwayo moved on to revitalize the conscription of young men and women of the kingdom into his age-regiments and to tighten up the controls that the Zulu monarchy exercised over the country’s populace.¹⁰ As pointed out by Harriette Colenso, the organization was “a national rather than a military system, the chief part of the soldiers “drill” consisting in hoeing the kings fields of mielies and kafir corn”.¹¹

Between 1872 and 1875 a great number of the nation’s cattle died in an epidemic of lung sickness. The king looked to Swaziland to replenish the nation’s depleted herd, but Dunn advised against the wisdom of such a move as it had the potential to raise an outcry among the settlers in Natal.¹² Dunn knew that the underlying motive of the settlers was “land and cattle and labour”.¹³ Understandably, therefore, for economic reasons,

⁹ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours”. Lecture.

¹⁰ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 225.

¹¹ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 25.

¹² Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 205.

¹³ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours”. Lecture.

an agreement was concluded with Shepstone to assist in the recruitment of migrant labourers for Natal from the Thonga country. The Natal settlers were crying out for labour while the Natal Zulu hungered for land. "If a person had a sufficient amount of money I suppose he could buy land. We have leased land, and after getting it in good order another person came and we had to leave."¹⁴ John Kumalo told the Commission in 1881. Because of these problems Shepstone proposed that the Colony should look beyond its borders. But beyond the Thukela Cetshwayo and Dunn were working on a plan to make up for the loss of cattle. The recruitment of labourers came as a viable alternative to the invasion of Swaziland.¹⁵

In terms of the agreement with Cetshwayo, prospective Thonga migrant labourers were to be allowed free passage through Zululand to Natal; in return Cetshwayo was to receive a fee for every one of those labourers who became registered in Natal. In addition, the Zulu king imposed his own tax on the Thonga migrants. On their return from Natal, the migrants were required to part with *one third of their earnings to the king*.¹⁶ From 1874, several thousand of the Thonga passed through Zululand and boosted the Zulu treasury with their taxes. The coastal trade route to Delagoa Bay that had been used for political, economic and strategic reasons by past Zulu leaders even before Shaka was again being given attention. From Dingiswayo through to Mpande, in varying degrees of utility, the route remained open, but Cetshwayo turned this old route to his political advantage by making it a prominent feature of his foreign policy.¹⁷

¹⁴ Natal Native Commission (NNC), 1881 – 1882, evidence of John Kumalo, p 152.

¹⁵ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 138.

¹⁶ Ibid, p 134.

¹⁷ Ibid, p 138

Cetshwayo, with the advice and assistance of his agent, John Dunn, secured the coastal route in order to allow for the free flow of arms into his domain. He appointed Mzizima ka Mahlantula as the king's messenger to work among the "amarubu" or foreigners, "amahlwenga"¹⁸, so-called by the Zulu. He was to collect arms from the Delagoa Bay port, as arranged by Dunn, and then use these people to carry them to Zululand.¹⁹

Cetshwayo was personally responsible for the acquisition, control and distribution of the guns to the Zulu populace.²⁰ Donald Morris' statement that "Cetshwayo ruled from month to month with no firm policy" and also that "no rudder steered the Zulu ship of state", has been dismissed by Ballard as a baseless Euro-centric distortion of the Zulu political acumen.²¹

John Dunn's role in the firearms trade was that of a middleman. From his home, Mangete on the north coast, Dunn set up a gun-running network which brought thousands of guns to Zululand.²² Cetshwayo paid Dunn for the guns in cattle which were sent to Durban where they were sold to reimburse the merchants who provided the capital.²³ Zululand's foreign policy centred around her relations with Britain. Zulu leaders looked to Natal for the country's prosperity and peace, especially when Boer encroachment into Zulu

¹⁸ "Amarubu" – literally means 'liars' or deceitful persons. "Amahlengwa" means beggars, it is a term of contempt connoting unworthy foreigners. These terms were used by the Zulu to the Thonga and other chiefdoms to the north-east of Zululand, the area of Ngwavuma and beyond.

¹⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of Bikwayo, p 63.

²⁰ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 134.

²¹ Ibid, p 134.

²² Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 205.

²³ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 135.

territory became problematic. Dunn was Cetshwayo's white ambassador to Natal Colony. Between 1861 and 1876 the Zulu monarchy had made 18 requests for Shepstone to intercede with the Transvaal Republic over territorial violations. "Somtseu was sympathetic ...but was able to give little practical help and encroachment continued".²⁴ At one stage he did warn the Boers that he would not forever restrain Cetshwayo from taking action against them.

In the Colony, the principles of equality embodied in the 1856 charter fell to nothing as the settler population increased. This condition could be partly attributed to the Zulu who refused to work for wages, but more importantly it was the fear of being swamped by a black majority that made the whites hostile towards the Zulu. Guy is of the opinion that "any attempt by the settlers to drive Africans on to the labour market and dispossess them of their lands would lead to violent resistance which the whites did not have the means to control".²⁵ The Langalibalele affair illustrates this viewpoint quite vividly.

Langalibelele was a chief of some seven thousand Hlubi people who were refugees in Natal from Mpande's Zululand.²⁶ Shepstone had settled them on "90 000 acres of green foothills under the shadow of the often snow-capped Drakensberg range".²⁷ Cameron believes that Shepstone had settled them there as "a buffer against raids from the San".²⁸ Despite their anti-missionary stance, the Hlubi had prospered, doubly discomfoting their

²⁴ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 198.

²⁵ Guy, *The heretic*, p 195.

²⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 5, evidence of John Shepstone, p 138.

²⁷ Thomas Pakenham, *The scramble for Africa* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1991), p 47.

²⁸ Cameron, *An illustrated history of South Africa*, p 174.

white neighbours. Taking their cue from the converts in nearby mission stations, they used modern ploughs to grow enough mielies and sell their surplus, undercutting white farmers. Consequently, there was no need for any of their number to take the low wages offered by white farmers.

In the 1870's those among them who wanted cash went off to the mines at Kimberley and "returned from there in ever-increasing numbers, armed with guns".²⁹ According to legislation passed for the Zulu populace in Natal, firearms were to be registered with the magistrates, but common experience revealed that registration meant confiscation.³⁰ In 1873 Langalibalele failed to respond positively to repeated orders of the local magistrate to register the guns possessed by some of his followers, as well as summonses to appear in Pietermaritzburg where he was expected to explain his conduct. This led to Shepstone dispatching an armed force to arrest him. A skirmish ensued involving the Ngwe chiefdom nearby. Both chiefdoms were subsequently broken up and their land and livestock taken away.³¹ Having been arrested, in a travesty of justice, Langalibelele was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island, while the colonists shouted for him to be "strung up from a tree".³²

Bishop Colenso, realizing the unsavoury role played by his friend Shepstone, decided to break up their friendship. From then onwards it was "war to the knife".³³ Before this, the Bishop had not interfered in political matters and had accepted Shepstone's accounts of

²⁹ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 174.

³⁰ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 199.

³¹ Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation", p 19.

³² Taylor, Shaka's children, p 200.

³³ Guy, The heretic, pp 193 – 214

Zulu affairs. Doubtlessly, he had always taken Shepstone as a champion of the Zulu. “Shoulder to shoulder, the two men had fought to protect the African reserves in Natal from the hands of land-hungry settlers”.³⁴ Now, he found it necessary to gather information about the Zulu from the Zulu themselves, then he discovered that Shepstone’s behaviour was as arbitrary as any chief’s and that he “was a bully and a liar”, and that he had also been “hand in glove with the settlers”.³⁵

Colenso started pleading Langalibalele’s case with the British authorities in London. However, it was Shepstone who was listened to much more attentively at the Colonial Office. In his discussion with Carnarvon, Shepstone is reported to have said: “That ultimately this (strip of territory) will also be occupied by Europeans cannot be doubted, but if the land can be acquired, and put to the purpose I have suggested, the present tension in Natal will be relieved...”³⁶ It is Ballard’s strong conviction that Shepstone’s point of view was adopted as policy by Carnarvon (Twitters – his contemporaries chose to call him). He convinced Carnarvon that through the annexation of the “disputed territory” in north-western Zululand the “unhappy Africans in Natal would find happier homes”.³⁷

Carnarvon was subsequently convinced that federation of the South African states “would best be approached along the lines of seeking a “Native Policy” on a South African-wide scale”.³⁸ As regards native policy, there was no doubt in his mind that

³⁴ Pakenham, The scramble for Africa, p 49.

³⁵ Ibid, p 49.

³⁶ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 184.

³⁷ Ibid, p 184.

³⁸ Warhurst, Geen’s the making of South Africa, p 151.

Shepstone was an expert, a fact that had be proven beyond doubt. “Here was a man”, he told Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, “heaven-born for the object in view”.³⁹ Shepstone impressed on Carnarvon the danger that Sekhukhune and Cetshwayo might unite to attack white supremacy in South Africa. The Transvaal had to be annexed and Sir Theophilus Shepstone⁴⁰ was dispatched to carry out the operation.

It was the revolt of Langalibalele’s Hlubi in 1873 that made these schemes a matter of urgency. The incident aroused feelings of insecurity amongst Natal’s white minority and these were made even worse by the presence on Natal’s borders of an “independent African military kingdom”.⁴¹ As a result of the apparent weaknesses in the administration of Zulu affairs in Natal, Carnarvon appointed Sir Garnet Wolseley as Special Commissioner with wide ranging powers to revise the constitution and to overhaul the administration.⁴² The work that was done by Shepstone was transferred to the Native Affairs Commission and the governor was empowered to appoint white and black officials to administer civil justice. In that way the paternal rule of Shepstone gave way to the rule of officials. The loss of personal contact between the rulers and the ruled became the major defect in the system which followed Shepstone’s retirement.⁴³ Chief Teteleku complained about this to the Commission in 1882.⁴⁴

³⁹Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 203.

⁴⁰ Instead of being brought to book for his part in the Langalibalele affair, Shepstone was showered with praises and knighted for his services to the British Empire.

⁴¹ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours” – Lecture.

⁴² Warhurst, *Geen’s the making of South Africa*, p 151.

⁴³ Ibid, p 151.

⁴⁴ Natal Native Commission, (NNC), evidence of Teteleku,

By the middle of the 1870s the land dispute with the Transvaal had become acute and Cetshwayo continued to appeal to Natal for intervention. Shepstone tended to sympathize with the Zulu because Boer encroachment posed a threat to the extension of British influence beyond the northern borders of the Colony.⁴⁵ The Secretary at the Colonial Office, failing to win over the Transvaal Boers by diplomatic means, soon embarked on a course of deliberate coercion. He sent Shepstone to annex the bankrupt and badly organized Transvaal state. To coincide with the annexation, he appointed Sir Bartle Frere “’n persoon wat wye administratiewe ervaring in Oos-Afrika en Indië opgedoen het” as South African High Commissioner with wide-ranging powers to effect his federation dream.⁴⁶

In order to prepare the way to a showdown with the Zulu as a means of furthering the new colonial policy, Frere with Shepstone’s assistance, set about depicting Cetshwayo as a bloodthirsty autocrat and the Zulu nation as a threat to security in the region. To achieve this end, Frere used various examples of a moral, political and economic nature to impress upon the British authorities the “barbarism” of Cetshwayo’s rule.⁴⁷ Cetshwayo’s ambition, Frere was made to believe, was to “emulate the sanguinary fame of his uncle Shaka...whose history is written in characters of blood”.⁴⁸

Meanwhile the British annexation of the Transvaal Republic in April 1877 had abruptly changed Shepstone’s perspective regarding the legitimacy of claims for the possession

⁴⁵ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 178.

⁴⁶ MC van Zyl, Die uitbreiding van Britse gesag oor die Natalse noordgrensgebied, 1879 – 1899 (Archives Year Book, 1966), p 1.

⁴⁷ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, pp 203 – 204.

⁴⁸ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 344.

of the disputed territory. He reasoned and acted on the presumption that a pacification of the Boers depended very much on the British government's recognition of their claims for land in that territory.⁴⁹ At a conference between Shepstone and a Zulu deputation in October 1877, the matter could not be resolved as Shepstone had suddenly favoured the Boer side and branded the Zulu as the aggressors. In the words of one Colonial official, Shepstone had "turned his coat in the most shameless manner".⁵⁰ The Zulu made no secret of their feelings and told him openly that they were disappointed. The Zulu delegation comprised the most senior officials of the Kingdom led by Mnyamana Buthelezi, the Prime Minister. The man they met at Ncome River was no longer the Somtseu they knew so well. Now, as Administrator of the Transvaal, the former Secretary of Native Affairs, had new loyalties.⁵¹ He contradicted his earlier avowed pronouncements on the issue and told the delegation that the Boer claims were legitimate. One unnamed induna stood up to say: "Somtseu, we do not understand you", where after the delegation told him in no uncertain terms that they had lost all confidence in him. Nonetheless, the deputation reported Shepstone's change of attitude to Cetshwayo who, in turn, appealed to Colenso and to Sir Henry Bulwer for their intervention.

Bulwer, the Lieutenant Governor of Natal, was anxious to avoid the outbreak of war. He made an offer of mediation to Cetshwayo in December 1877. Cetshwayo accepted the offer with alacrity. A boundary commission was appointed in March 1878 comprising Michael Gallway, Natal's first Attorney General. John Shepstone, the Acting Secretary

⁴⁹ Ballard, "The fransfrontiersman", p 343.

⁵⁰ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 178.

⁵¹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 206.

for Native Affairs and Anthony Durnford who was then promoted to Lieutenant – Colonel.⁵² Cetshwayo was delighted, because again and again he had begged the British authorities to arbitrate.⁵³ Frere had his doubts about the Commission but Shepstone assured him that there was enough evidence in favour of the Boers getting full title of the land. And that “two of his family were going to smooth things along; his brother John, as one of the commissioners, and his son Henrique, as one of the Transvaal delegates. In these circumstances, it was clear to Frere that Cetshwayo would, as a result of losing territory, lose his head and precipitate a crisis that could lead to war”.⁵⁴ The war that he so desperately wanted.

The three commissioners camped for weeks at Rorke’s Drift on the Mzinyathi River, taking evidence from the Zulu and the Transvalers. Incredibly, the Boers failed to produce any documentary proof of the Transvaal title. The “most incontrovertible, overwhelming, and clear” evidence⁵⁵ promised by Shepsone was nowhere to be seen. On the contrary, convincing evidence went to confirm the Zulu title. So, the commissioners gave the award to Cetshwayo.⁵⁶ The Commission reported to Bulwer in June 1878 and in July the news came to Frere like a thunderbolt. Frere tried to keep the news a secret with the hope of persuading the commissioners to change their minds. He then proceeded to Colenso and “all he wanted from the Bishop was his silence”.⁵⁷

⁵² Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 208.

⁵³ Pakenham, The scramble for Africa, p 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p 53.

⁵⁵ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours,” lecture.

⁵⁶ Pakenham, The scramble for Africa, p 53.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p 55.

Frere withheld the publication of the Report whilst he dispatched Lieutenant General Theisiger (later Lord Chelmsford) to Natal to start planning the invasion of Zululand. This was followed by a large build-up of troops in the Colony.⁵⁸

The missionaries in Zululand, deeply frustrated by their inability to convert the Zulu, soon joined the campaign against the Kingdom especially in the press. King Cetshwayo generally frowned upon their work. Like his father, Mpande in 1842, he saw their work as militating against state order and their mission stations as places designed for the “comfort of misfits, social outcasts and criminals”.⁵⁹ The severest critics of the Zulu regime, the Rev. Robert Robertson of the Anglicans and Oftebro of the Norwegians, made no attempt to understand the social and religious system of the Zulu. As a consequence, they wrote exaggerated accounts of Cetshwayo’s oppressive actions against Zulu converts in the kingdom. This happened especially after the death of three converts, which led to the evacuation from the country of all missionaries, who were undoubtedly encouraged by Shepstone.⁶⁰

Relentlessly, Shepstone and Frere skillfully played on the colonist’s fear of African rebellion by accusing Cetshwayo of being in league with rebel chiefs Kreli and Sandile in the Cape Colony.⁶¹ Not only these two Xhosa chiefs but the rest of southern African chiefdoms were implicated in the so-called Cetshwayo’s scheme. Sekhukhune was prominent among those named. With the war clearly approaching on the horizon, Dunn’s

⁵⁸ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 178.

⁵⁹ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, pp 205 – 206.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p 206.

⁶¹ Morris, The washing of the spears, p 286.

influence with the king began to diminish, Cetshwayo started to view his erstwhile ambassador's motives suspiciously, and as Dunn's influence waned, that of the more militant councillors grew. Most prominent were Sihayo and Rabanina who constantly urged the king to defy the Natal government's demands. Dunn's presence became more and more untenable at the royal capital as the preparations went under way with warriors arriving from all corners of the kingdom to be doctored for war.⁶²

One incident that served as a casus belli occurred on 26 July 1878 when two adulterous wives of a border chief, Sihayo ka Xongo, crossed into Natal with their young lovers. Sihayo's son, Mehlokazulu, and another youth crossed the Thukela after them, seized them and returned across the river with them only to kill them.⁶³ According to Zulu law and practice adultery was punishable by death but the Natal authorities viewed this differently. A clash of interests led to more ominous tension. Cetshwayo tried ways of compensating for the boys' action but failed. Bulpin says that already war was "hanging in the air like a thunder cloud in a drought – stricken land, occasionally shedding threatening drops".⁶⁴ It was those "threatening drops" that Cetshwayo frantically tried to contain to avoid a torrent. The Zulu king, to save his land and people, was begging the British "to desist from laying Zululand to waste for the sake of two foolish children".⁶⁵ But then Frere wanted his war.

⁶² Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 209.

⁶³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 208.

⁶⁴ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 193.

⁶⁵ Webb and Wright, A Zulu king speaks, p 54.

CHAPTER 5

5. CETSHWAYO'S DILEMMA AND DIVISION WITHIN ZULU SOCIETY**5.1 The fall of Cetshwayo and the land demarcation and placement of chiefs in Zululand, 1879 – 1882.**

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 is evidently the best known and undoubtedly the most written about episode in the history of Zululand and of the Zulu people.¹ It was not just another of those frontier wars which were deemed necessary for the expansion of the British Empire. For a while it gripped the attention of the world and directed it to Zululand. It kept tongues wagging and persons who were “ignorant of colonial matters and unknown in colonial history” stood up in the House of Commons to state their views on imperial policies.² War correspondents accompanying the British soldiers had sent back home stories and illustrations of the war which “throbbed with shameless patriotism”.³ Jeff Guy, however, on the occasion of the centenary of the war, in a lecture presented to his friends at the University of the Witwatersrand, expressed the conviction that the invasion of Zululand continued to be shrouded in myth and misconception which was created by the British officials who brought about the war.⁴

Sir Bartle Frere went to war spurred on by Sir Theophilus Shepstone's assurance of Zulu fragility. “One touch and the whole thing would disintegrate”, was what he was banking on to get the war over in two months as agreed with Frederick Thesiger, the commander of the British forces.⁵ The assurance was made double sure by signals coming from

¹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 346.

² De Kiewiet, The imperial factor in South Africa, p 235.

³ Phillip Gon, The road to Isandlwana (Johannesburg, AD Donker, 1978), p 258.

⁴ Jeff Guy, “The centenary of the British invasion of Zululand”, lecture.

⁵ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 212.

Hamu ka Nzibe, that he was prepared to defect to the British side. Hamu was the biological son and genealogical nephew of Mpande, leader of the Ngenetsheni royal house and a rival of Cetshwayo for the kingship in Zululand.⁶

The imperial ultimatum expired on 11 January 1879. British troops, eager for victory and buttressed by hundreds of armed Africans in the volunteer Natal Native Contingent, streamed into Zululand. On the following day, the Transvaal Boers met at Wonderfontein and “made a solemn league and covenant to regain their lost independence”.⁷ At Ondini the Zulu army captains were dividing their regiments into companies (*amaviyo*) as they reported from the various *amakhanda*. The induna, Bhejane ka Nomageje had been tasked with the job of calling out the warriors. “Ayi hlome!” (Take up arms), it was announced at all the regimental quarters, and when a reasonable number had gathered, Cetshwayo addressed them, making sure those without guns were provided for.⁸ The great induna, Ntshingwayo ka Mahole of the Khoza was in charge of the army. According to Morris, he “shared the supreme command with Mavumengwana”.⁹ Mavumengwana ka Ndlela was an induna of the Thulwana regiment.¹⁰ His name was not, however, mentioned by Cetshwayo in his letter to the Cape Governor wherein he stated that Ntshingwayo was “at the head of these troops” sent against the British at Isandlwana.¹¹

⁶ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 104.

⁷ Walker, *A history of southern Africa*, p 378.

⁸ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol. 3, evidence of Mpatshana, p 305.

⁹ Morris, *The washing of the spears*, p 361.

¹⁰ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 77.

¹¹ C de B Webb and JB Wright, *A Zulu king speaks: statements made by Cetshwayo ka Mpande on the history and customs of his people*. (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1978), p 57.

After their initial spectacular victory over the British at Isandlwana, the Zulu warriors suffered their final defeat at Ondini.¹² To the last Cetshwayo had appealed for peace. On 15 May 1879, midway through the hostilities he had sent an anxious and somewhat bewildering message: "What have I done? I want peace, I ask for peace." But the British officers regarded these messages as "peaceful lies" and continued the destruction of the Kingdom.¹³

The remnants of the once mighty army were seen dispersing midway through the morning, making their way back to their own homesteads. There was no need for the commanders to bellow out any orders. The king's homesteads had been destroyed and it was now time to look to their own. For some of them, there were burned homes to rebuild and for most there were cattle to tend and gardens to cultivate.¹⁴ Guy, in his lecture, pointed out quite correctly that, "Africans" at the time did not think the Zulu considered that they had suffered a crushing defeat.¹⁵ Colenso, on the other hand thought that, from a political point of view, there was "no clear evidence" that the defeat "had broken the spirit of the nation".¹⁶ After the battles fought at Rorke's Drift, eDudusini, Ombane and Gingindlovu, when Cetshwayo realised that so many of his people had died, he called together his troops at Ondini. He said: "O Zulu, I see that the white people have indeed come on again",¹⁷ referring to the horrifying retaliation of the British.

¹² Walker, A history of southern Africa, p 380.

¹³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 237.

¹⁴ Ibid, p 242.

¹⁵ Guy, "The centenary of the British invasion", lecture.

¹⁶ Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation", p 25.

¹⁷ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 72.

He then pointed at numerous herd of oxen of the Inyonikayiphumuli as an offering for peace. Matatshile ka Masiphula of the Mgazini people objected saying that the Khandempemvu regiment was far from finished. Cetshwayo retorted: “Matatshile, what do you mean by far from finished?. Where is Zikode ka Masiphula (Masiphula’s chief son)? Where is Mhlazana ka Ngoza ka Ludaba, where is Ntshodo ka Ntshingwayo ka Marole? Where is Gininda ka Masiphula?”¹⁸ The king rested with the troops in perfect silence, listening to their king.

The king’s word was the last word. “If the white men keep advancing when so many of them have been killed, and when so many of us have been killed, what is there to stop them?”¹⁹ No one said a word and the cattle that Cetshwayo had pointed out were taken away. That afternoon Zibhebhu ka Maphitha went to investigate what the enemy were doing at the Mfolozi. Zibhebhu was the chief of the Mandlakazi royal homestead. At the Mfolozi he observed some of the white soldiers swimming in the river. He crept up to them through the bushes, aimed his gun and fired at them. At once they set off in pursuit. His pony galloping at high speed, Zibhebhu rode until he reached the Ndabakawombe regimental quarters (ikhanda). There the British soldiers left off the pursuit and turned back.²⁰

The Battle of Ondini was fought the following day. Ndabakawombe, Nodwengu, Ondini, Mlambongwenya, Mdumezulu and other regimental quarters, were burnt to the ground. “A thick haze of smoke covered the country. We saw that day our country was destroyed” said Mtshapi.²¹

¹⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 72.

¹⁹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 153.

²⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 73.

²¹ Ibid, p 73.

Khandempemvu followed the king for some distance as he fled from Ondini, but this action was judiciously and quickly countermanded on the ground that it would attract attention to the king and reveal to the enemy his whereabouts.²² Though Ondini was the final battle ground, Guy is of the opinion that the significance of the battle was created by Chelmsford and his associates in a desperate bid to restore their military reputations, and their views were accepted in England “to save Britain’s face and pocket”.²³ Otherwise the Zulu state was, to a large extent, still intact.

Altogether some six thousand Zulu warriors had died in the war for one thousand and eighty white soldiers and nearly six hundred Natal Zulu. Homesteads had been burned and cattle taken, which is, according to Roberts, “a natural consequence of the wastage of war”.²⁴ Colenso preached about “a bloody, but barren victory”.²⁵ Historians have continued to argue, that Zulu independence was not destroyed by the war especially because their “material and social continuity had not been broken by the invasion”.²⁶ The war succeeded in truncating and dismantling the centralized political organization and in inflicting a terrible suffering on the Zulu people but, nonetheless, it left them in possession of most of their land and only a few of their leaders had been lost in the conflict.²⁷

²² Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.4, evidence of Mtshapi, p 73.

²³ Guy, “The centenary of the British invasion”, Lecture.

²⁴ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, p 345.

²⁵ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 25.

²⁶ Jeff Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom: the civil war in Zululand, 1879 – 1884* (London, Longman, 1979), p 239.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p 239.

When Cetshwayo was captured at the Nkandla forest, he was brought to Mfolozi where the troops were, and was asked where his children were and what he wanted done with them. Ndabazwe says Cetshwayo said he wanted Zibhebhu to look after them, including Dinuzulu.²⁸ Upon this, the British army authorities set apart a hundred cattle for Zibhebhu saying that they were for “feeding” Dinuzulu and the umdlunkulu (i.e. his mothers etc.) Zibhebhu then rode off with Dinuzulu to Banganomo.²⁹ Ndabuko, Ziwehu, Mahanana, Mnyamana and other Usuthu leaders followed on foot. After going a little way, Ndabuko declared that they, being the house of Senzangakhona, would not consent to eat off the dishes of the house of Sojiyisa.³⁰ A message was then sent to Zibhebhu to say that Dinuzulu and the women were to come to them, together with the cattle. When Zibhebhu heard this, he was greatly surprised and distinctly opposed to complying with their wish, seeing he had been nominated guardian of Dinuzulu and the rest of Cetshwayo’s family by Cetshwayo himself in the presence and with the consent of the Whites.³¹ Zibhebhu called together a council of his men who, after full discussion, advised him to accede to Ndabuko’s wishes. He did so, but refused to surrender the cattle. All he did when sending Dinuzulu back, was to send along with him two oxen saying they were food for the journey; the rest of the cattle he kept.³² Usuthu demanded the cattle, but Zibhebhu would not yield.

²⁸ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndabazwe, p 192.

²⁹ Banganomo was Zibhebhu’s royal homestead in the Mandlakazi district, to the north-east of the kingdom.

³⁰ Sojiyisa ka Jama was Zibhebhu and Cetshwayo’s grandfather who established the royal home of Mandlakazi under the rule of Shaka. See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Nombango, p 141.

³¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndabazwe, p 192.

³² Ibid, p 192.

Cetshwayo was escorted to Port Durnford, there to be transferred to a ship, the Natal to take him to exile in Cape Town. A day after the king's departure, Wolseley addressed a gathering of all the principal chiefs of the kingdom at Ondini. Sir Garnet Wolseley, the "imperial factotum", who had replaced Frere as High Commissioner and as Governor of Natal and the Transvaal, was sufficiently empowered to decide the fate of the Zulu people.³³ Acting on those powers, Wolseley introduced the so-called settlement terms to the men only after he had harangued them and chastised them on the misdeeds of King Cetshwayo. He told them that the king had broken his coronation vows and had therefore lost his kingdom.³⁴ He also expressed the view that the British Queen had nothing bad against the Zulu people and would not annex any portion of their land. Zululand, he said, would be divided into thirteen separate districts. Over each unfortunate district he placed a "chief" which was the name given to the thirteen kinglets appointed by the British.³⁵

*It seems that there was nothing to be gained by Britain in the invasion of Zululand. All that had been achieved thus far, was superiority in the field because the burning of homesteads had no significance for the Zulu or any strategic advantage for the British.*³⁶ Among the few who condemned the campaign was William Howard Russell of The Times who wrote to Colenso confiding his shame in a war that was "discreditable to our arms, disgraceful to our civilization and injurious to our good name; making any right thinking Englishman despair of ultimate good to see such a Saturnalia of wrong-doing".³⁷

³³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 244.

³⁴ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 349.

³⁵ RRR Dhlomo, u Dinuzulu ka Cetshwayo (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1968), p 283.

³⁶ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 243.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p 249.

William Gladstone took up the fight in his election campaigns entreating the British voters to remember the rights of the “savage” and the inviolable happiness of his humble home.³⁸ But then, the question facing historians is not the moral justification of the war, but the assessment as to how far the “savage’s” home and his independence had been destroyed by the war. Rightly, it seemed, and according to Wolseley, the Queen would not deprive the Zulu of “any portion of their land”, which was commendable.

It is a common historical assumption that nations go to war over their perceived vital interests. It is in the light of British interests that one has to view the reasons for invasion and more importantly, the settlement after the war. De Kiewiet believes that the war was fought to secure the allegiance of the Transvaal and remove the obstacles of black unrest from the way of confederation. Regrettably, it achieved neither end.³⁹ Morris, on the other hand, has focused on the fall of the House of Shaka and the Zulu empire, now that Cetshwayo was a “homeless refugee”.⁴⁰ But Ballard opposed this view by stating that Cetshwayo had “made no serious attempt to alter the basic fabric of Zulu society in the face of European pressure on the spiritual, economic and political life” of the Zulu state.⁴¹ Guy says the British invasion “instead of fragmenting the kingdom, (it) united the Zulu people in support of Cetshwayo and independence”.⁴² The Zulu would come together and demand the restoration of their king and their land. The British would then realize that Cetshwayo was no ordinary “savage king”.

³⁸ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 249.

³⁹ De Kiewiet, The imperial factor in South Africa, p 247.

⁴⁰ Morris, The washing of the spears, p 575.

⁴¹ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 228.

⁴² Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 239.

True enough, the Zulu nation had lost its army and its king; it had no voice or a will of its own for the moment and therefore ready to submit to the dictates of the Queen. Because it was still territorially intact, it thought of itself as a nation. While the nation knew that the king had been deposed and the country was to be divided, the details of the terms of the settlement came as a shock.⁴³ Undoubtedly, the people who influenced the settlement could not have been the Zulu themselves.

The fragmentation of the kingdom came with Wolseley's thirteen chiefdoms, the problem being the choice of the thirteen chiefs. Wolseley's fancy was mostly people whom the Zulu generally considered to be traitors who had served the British in the war and were then rewarded by their appointments.⁴⁴ Roberts has argued that "whoever was responsible for proposing the chiefs named by Wolseley could hardly have made a worse selection".⁴⁵ Looking through the crystal glass, one can see that disloyalty and treachery were the highest qualifications needed for appointment. High on the list was Dunn, the king's "white chief" who had, without shame, turned against Cetshwayo when he needed him most. As a reward, he was given the largest district. Hamu, for his defection, had his area of the Ngenetsheni enlarged for him. Zibhebhu, another member of the royal family, ruler of the Mandlakazi and one of Cetshwayo's most able commanders, was also appointed, perhaps because he had just had a tiff with the Usuthu leadership. A Sotho chief, Hlubi of the Tlokwa and two other lesser chiefs who were supposedly rulers of "pre-Shakan" chiefdoms, namely Mlandela of the Mthethwa and Mgojana of the Ndwandwe were appointed. Otherwise, the rest, namely; Faku, Ntshingwayo, Gawozi,

⁴³ Morris, The washing of the spears, p 596.

⁴⁴ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 283.

⁴⁵ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 350.

Mgitshwa, Mfanawendlela and Somkhele may be classified simply as nonentities who had very little roles to play.⁴⁶ De Kiewiet refers to Wolseley's chiefs as "thirteen unpopular nobodies" whose political impotence and social inferiority was open to abuse by unscrupulous whites.⁴⁷ According to Wolseley the thirteen were to keep peace and apply the law in accordance with the "ancient laws and customs of their people".⁴⁸ Clearly, Wolseley did not know what laws and customs he was referring to, since the judicial, administrative and spiritual center of the kingdom was in exile. Morris argues with De Kiewiet that as soon as the British army authorities left, the inevitable happened when the little kingdoms were "at one another's throats like so many kilkenny cats".⁴⁹ Even Shepstone, who had favoured the invasion in the expectation that Zululand would be annexed and the Zulu subjected to his administrative system, was disappointed. He criticized what he saw as "the simple devise of practically leaving them to themselves, after we have taken away their head, and advising them not to hurt each other".⁵⁰

Wolseley justified his arrangement by arguing that he had destroyed Zulu tyranny in favour of the much-lamented for pre-Shakan chiefdoms; that the man whose aggression had precipitated the war had been captured and exiled and that the people for whom the war had been fought had achieved their freedom.⁵¹ It was all hog-wash. Not long after Wolseley had left for the Transvaal, to vindicate Shepstone's misgivings, a usurper

⁴⁶ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 298.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p 226.

⁴⁸ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 69.

⁴⁹ Ballard, "The transfrontiersman", p 247.

⁵⁰ Taylor, Shaka's children, pp 247 -- 248.

⁵¹ Guy, The heretic, p 282.

named Stimela appeared in Zululand in 1881.⁵² Stimela claimed he was the son of Somveli and therefore the rightful chief of the Mthethwa.⁵³ He claimed to possess extraordinary powers that “if attacked by Europeans bees and wasps would sting them”.⁵⁴ He attracted a considerable following which successfully ousted Mlandela. Of importance here is that it was not British authority or power that restored Mlandela but the armies of an alliance of hostile chiefs.⁵⁵ The implication noted by Webb was that “the conqueror of 1879 had declined to be master over Zululand. Questions of mastership were therefore, left to be decided by the Zulu themselves fighting it out”.⁵⁶ The Zulu generally regarded the appointed chiefs as indunas of the British government rather than as independent rulers. But gradually a disposition grew to resent the uncontrolled authority of those under whom they found themselves, who were, more over, not always the chiefs they had been accustomed to obey.⁵⁷ Taylor reminds us that the king had been the administrative and spiritual head of his people. He was the head of the army, the supreme court and the source of mystical power which alone kept in check the jostling and ambitions of chiefly rivals. Without the king the cohesion and discipline was therefore lost and the clashes of personal interests among the chiefs would lead to civil war and the ultimate destruction of the Zulu kingdom.

⁵² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of Nsuze, p 183.

⁵³ Somveli, Dingiswayo’s chief son, joined Soshangane with a section of the Mthethwa. Stimela claimed to be his son but was not accepted by all the people for they knew nothing of his birth. JSA, vol. 5, evidence of Nhlekile, p 127.

⁵⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of Nsuze, p 156.

⁵⁵ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.5, evidence of Nsuze, p 183. See also Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, pp110 – 111.

⁵⁶ Colin Webb, “Great Britain and the Zulu people 1879 – 1887” in L. Thompson (ed) African societies in southern Africa (London, Heinemann, 1969), p 308.

⁵⁷ JY Gibson, The story of the Zulus (London, Longman Green, 1911),

The boundary commission whose duty it was to sub-divide the kingdom, pointed out that some of Wolseley's kinglets lacked the proper credentials. Wolseley ignored their input and like a whirlwind, as Taylor expressed it, he moved over to the Transvaal, leaving behind him turmoil and a fine setting for a civil conflict.⁵⁸

Mkhosana ka Zanzwana, the king's friend and advisor, shared his exile together with a small party of personal attendants which included four women of the royal household. Cetshwayo was kept at the Castle in Cape Town as a prisoner of war in the custody of the British military authorities. Meanwhile, back home, Sobantu who had made a study of "Cetshwayo's character and the nature and functioning of Zulu society",⁵⁹ was protesting strongly, asking what Cetshwayo had done to be so punished, seeing he had not crossed the Thukela river to attack the British.⁶⁰ At the same time, some of the "chiefs" were finding difficulty in exercising their new-found powers as they were meeting with opposition from those closely associated with Usuthu and Cetshwayo. Zibhebhu and Hamu are a case in point. Melmoth Osborn, the British Resident, upon receiving complaints, sided with the appointed chiefs, to the detriment of Usuthu.⁶¹ As a result, on 24 May 1880 about 200 high-ranking Zulu arrived at Bishopstowe headed by the princes Ndabuko and Shingana. Since they were to travel to a country they had just gone to war with, Shingana expressed their trepidation saying that they felt like "throwing themselves over a precipice, not knowing what they might find at the bottom".⁶²

⁵⁸ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 248.

⁵⁹ Edgecombe, "Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation", p 24.

⁶⁰ Fuze, The black people, p 115.

⁶¹ Jeff Guy, "The role of colonial officials in the destruction of the Zulu kingdom", in A Duminy and C Ballard (eds) The Zulu war: new perspectives (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1981), pp148 – 149.

⁶² Guy, The heretic, p 296.

They were coming to complain about the actions of some of the chiefs and to request from the authorities the “bones” of their “dead” king.⁶³ Colenso sent them forth to the government at Pietermaritzburg . They proceeded to the office of the Secretary of Native Affairs where they were told to report such matters to the British Resident in Zululand. They returned home empty-handed, but at least their request for the restoration of the king was recorded. Significantly, the visit was a sign of a new post-war political movement among the Zulu. The leadership of Usuthu was responding to the actions of particularly Hamu and Zibhebhu,⁶⁴ giving impetus to the revival of the royalist Usuthu party, whose significance the British authorities sought to undermine.⁶⁵

In November 1880 the Bishop and his daughter Harriette visited the king in Cape Town. From their interview more light was thrown on the Zulu past and they realized to what extent Frere had poisoned the minds of the British people.⁶⁶ Despite all the activities around him, Cetshwayo’s mind remained focused on his return to Zululand. All his energies were directed to the recruitment of influential people and keeping contact with supporters at home. In February 1881 he was transferred from the Castle to civil custody and moved to the farm Oude Molen on the Cape Flats where he shared adjoining proximity with Langalibalele ka Mthimkhulu, the Hlubi chief, also an exile in custody since his conflict with the Natal government in 1873.

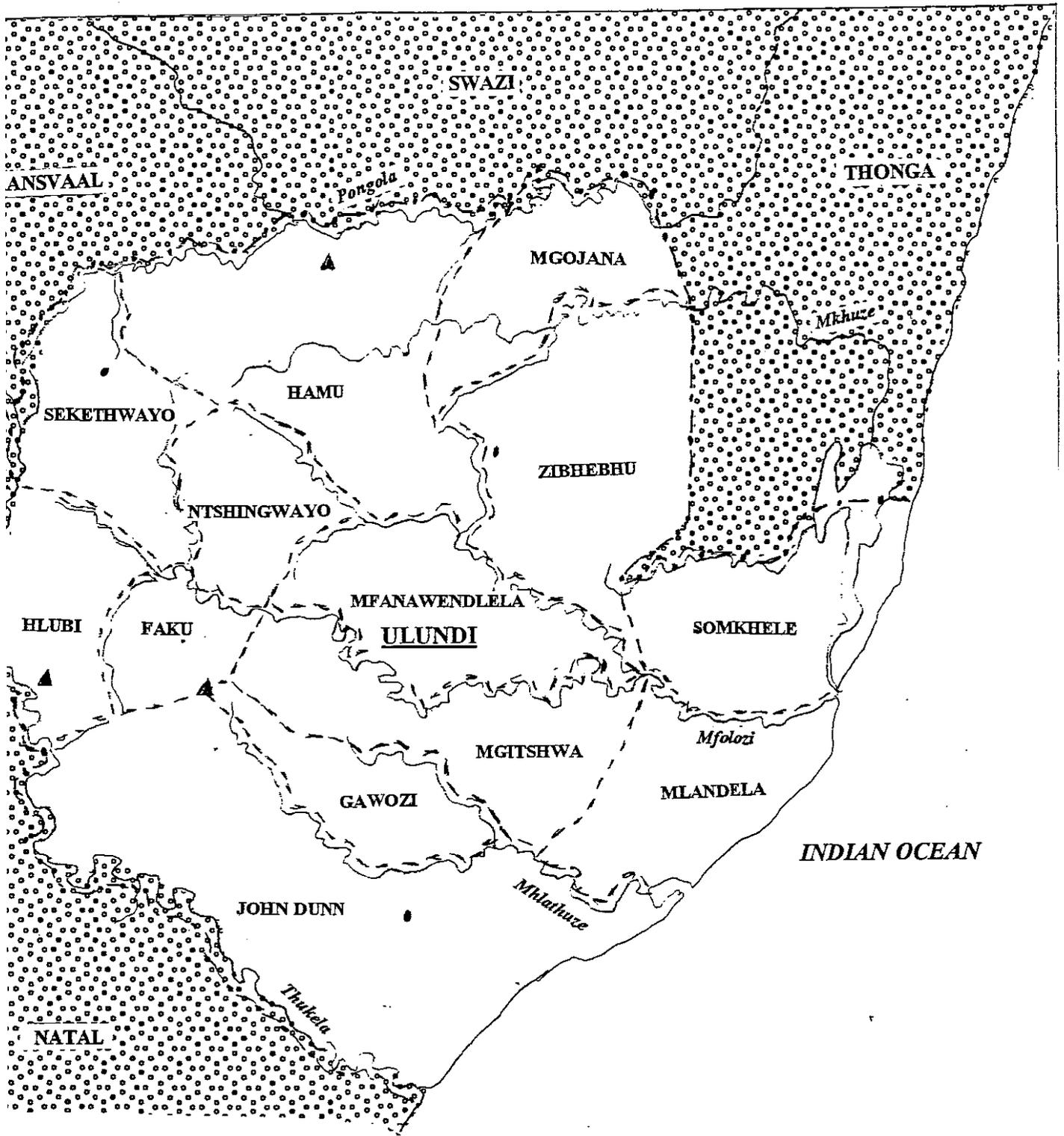
Encouraged by influential friends such as Colenso, the king redoubled his efforts to gain

⁶³ The “bones” of their “dead” king meant “in whatever condition he might be”.

⁶⁴ Guy, *The heretic*, p 297.

⁶⁵ Guy, “The role of colonial officials”, p 149.

⁶⁶ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p27.



**THE THIRTEEN ZULU CHIEFDOMS
ESTABLISHED BY WOLSELEY, 1879**

Source: Jeff Guy, The Heretic

permission to go to England to see Queen Victoria.⁶⁷ In London the king wanted to personally present his case and plead to be returned to Zululand. In a letter to Sir Hercules Robinson, the Cape Governor, signed by himself as son of Mpande, J Storr Lister his custodian and Samuelson, the interpreter, he asked that a message be sent to Mnyamana "to pick out four competent chiefs" to accompany him to England.⁶⁸ The Lieutenant-General L Smith, the Deputy Governor, transmitted the message to the Earl of Kimberley on 15 July 1881 in which he mentioned Cetshwayo's often repeated statement that "he was a friend of the English, and had always been so, and that he never would have attacked them had they not invaded his country".⁶⁹ News of the impending anarchy in Zululand reached him and just then his personal servant (inceku) hanged himself. This incident so disturbed Cetshwayo that he wrote again to Governor Robinson threatening to follow the example of his inceku and kill himself.

Though Wolseley had said that Britain would not annex any portion of Zululand, the Blood River territory that was claimed by the Boers before the war, but recommended for award to the Zulu by the Gallway Commission in 1878, was to be ceded to the Transvaal.⁷⁰ As a condition of their appointment, the chiefs agreed to respect their new boundaries, to abolish the Zulu military system and to keep the peace within their respective boundaries. The defect of this arrangement, however, was that their boundaries cut indiscriminately across the social and political groupings that had developed during the reigns of the Zulu kings.⁷¹ This particular discrepancy was to lead to problems

⁶⁷ Fuze, *The Black people*, p 115.

⁶⁸ British Parliamentary Papers (BPP) C.2950 June 1881, Oude Molen May 2, 1881.

⁶⁹ BPP June 1882, Deputy Governor, Lieutenant-General L Smith to the Right Hon the Earl of Kimberly (received August 8, 1881).

⁷⁰ Webb, "Great Britain and the Zulu people", pp 305 – 306.

⁷¹ Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom*, p 239.

between the people and those in authority who were, otherwise “not always the chiefs they had been accustomed to obey”.⁷² From the outset, Colenso had predicted, and he was correct, that Wolseley’s arrangement would prove a “total failure” unless a large peace-keeping force was to be stationed in Zululand.⁷³

Wolseley was not unaware that the settlement could create anomalies and for that reason, he instructed the commissioners to make it clear to the people that if they had reason to object to the chief appointment over them, they were permitted to move to another chief’s territory. The Commission was soon to discover that the people they questioned seemed to prefer an unwelcome ruler to changing their historic homes.⁷⁴ The significance of this finding was that the people had a very close affinity with the land. Guy has correctly asserted that “economic necessity and emotional and religious links tied the Zulu to the districts”.⁷⁵ The British, on the other hand, promised not to take their land, but only “to make South Africa safe for federation under the British flag”.⁷⁶

Many historians and journalists have come out in condemnation of Wolseley’s Ulundi settlement and only a few think of it as an “astute device” to set Zulu against Zulu thus consummating military victory without further cost or responsibility. Guy agrees that indeed the settlement had the effect of setting Zulu against Zulu in initiating a devastating civil war which finally destroyed Zulu independence. But he disagrees with the notion

⁷² Gibson, *The story of the Zulu’s*, p 223.

⁷³ Edgecombe, “Bsihop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 26.

⁷⁴ Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom*, p76.

⁷⁵ Ibid, pp 76 – 77.

⁷⁶ Webb, “Great Britain and the Zulu people”, p 305.

that it happened in the manner and for the reasons that Wolseley intended.⁷⁷ In the memorandum that Theophilus Shepstone wrote when asked to comment on the settlement by the Colonial Office, he stressed that the future of Zululand and Natal could not be treated separately.⁷⁸ He then strongly criticized the terms of the settlement both in terms of justice and practicality. In essence, Shepstone advocated for the extension of his “system” to Zululand. He did not criticize the idea that the Zulu be left in possession of their land; he did not object to the king being exiled nor did he disapprove of the appointment of “new” chiefs. These were the hallmarks of his system.⁷⁹ The essential fundamentals of his system were that Africans should not be forced off the land, that they should be administered through customary law by their own chiefs and that the authority of the chiefs be checked by magistrates acting as courts of appeal. And, to cover the costs of the administration, the hut tax would be imposed. Melmoth Osborn, his old friend, “a typical example of a Natal official, domineering, prejudiced and wholly sympathetic to Shepstone’s ideas,”⁸⁰ was to supervise all this and make sure that the Shepstone system is transmitted to Zululand without a hitch.

The settlement granted both Hamu and Zibhebhu territories north of the Black Mfolozi. Not only were their followers concentrated there, but so were the most ardent royalist adherents of the Usuthu party. Hamu was put over the royalist Aba Qulusi and also over Mnyamana, the ex-Prime Minister, and most of the Buthelezi people. The firebrand,

⁷⁷ Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom*, p 240.

⁷⁸ Guy, “The role of colonial officials”, p 153.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p 154.

⁸⁰ Guy, *The heretic*, p 303.

Zibhebhu, on the other hand, was placed in an area that included the homesteads of Ndabuko, who had since assumed the leadership of Usuthu, and Ziweddu another of Mpande's sons, who lived at eZimfabeni.⁸¹

In trying to exercise their authority Hamu and Zibhebhu encountered opposition from Usuthu. Wolseley had anticipated this kind of trouble but was confident that Zibhebhu "would prove an ideal instrument for suppressing Usuthu aspirations".⁸² In fact, historians agree generally, that the use of collaborators to counter-balance the influence of rebellious individuals in a colonial setting was a common feature in British imperial administration. In the case involving Usuthu and Zibhebhu, the British Resident, Melmoth Osborn, intervened and ordered Ndabuko and Ziweddu to remove together with their nephew Dinuzulu to Dunn's area. This order caused an outcry among the royalists who demanded the immediate restoration of their king.⁸³ War broke out when Zibhebhu and his Mandlakazi tried to drive out the royalists.

Meanwhile in the northern districts Hamu was busily engaged in dispossessing the ex-Prime Minister of the king's cattle⁸⁴ and keeping most of them for himself. Hamu claimed that Mnyamana had refused to recognize his authority and was therefore being fined in cattle as punishment. The intensely loyalist Aba Qulusi were also heavily fined by Hamu to which they protested to Osborn. In response, Osborn blamed the Usuthu loyalist as the trouble-shooters.

⁸¹ Webb and Wright, *JSA*, vol.4, evidence of Mtshayankomo, p 131.

⁸² John Laband, "British boundary adjustments and the Usuthu – Mandlakazi conflict in Zululand, 1879 – 1904" *South African Historical Journal*, 30 (May 1994), p 37.

⁸³ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 251.

⁸⁴ Wolseley had ordered that the king's cattle be collected and handed over to the British Resident. This order formed part of the Ulundi settlement on 1 September 1879.

The two chiefs' ill-treatment of members of the royal family was a deliberate policy to destroy their influence. Osborn supported this policy because of his hatred of the king whom, he told Shepstone, had "proved himself unfaithful to all..." and deserved the worst "punishment that he can be subjected to in this world".⁸⁵ This hatred was aggravated by the loss of his son-in-law at Isandlwana.

Osborn received instructions to sort out the problems in Zululand, and this was the reply to the delegation in Pietermaritzburg. On 22 June 1880 Ndabuko, Shingana and Mnyamana reached Osborn at Nhlazatshe, his headquarters, to tell him that they were informed in Natal that all complaints have to be forwarded to him.⁸⁶ In his address Ndabuko hinted that justice could still be done and the damage repaired. He requested that Cetshwayo be returned. Osborn passed their complaints to Sir George Pomeroy Colley who was now in charge of Natal. The final decision came out in favour of the chiefs, giving them the confidence they needed to deal with their royalist rivals. As a result, at the end of 1881, some of the leading royalists were expelled from their homesteads and over a thousand of their people killed. This onslaught led to the revival of Usuthu who were joined by many Zulu who looked to the restoration of Cetshwayo as the only viable solution to their difficulties.⁸⁷ The Usuthu revivalist movement saw the British as enemies of the Zulu nation.

The collapse of order and the violence on the eastern border of the Transvaal was a cause for worry at the Colonial Office. The British government had just granted the Transvaal independence on the assumption that British authority would confine the Boers to the

⁸⁵ Guy, *The heretic*, p 303.

⁸⁶ Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom*, pp 100 – 101.

⁸⁷ Guy, "The role of colonial officials", p 149.

interior. The British government therefore desired to restore order and a stable self-sufficient Zulu state between the sea and the Transvaal.⁸⁸ The Usuthu became impatient and in April 1882 a large delegation of some two thousand Zulu marched on Pietermaritzburg. More complaints were made about the oppressions of Zibhebhu and Hamu and, again they asked for the king's return. Repeatedly, their spokesman expressed their bewilderment at the failure of their British conquerors to then accept them as subjects. One of the leaders made an analogy and said "when a man beats his child he afterwards wipes his child's tears".⁸⁹

The situation had become unbearable and the people yearned for a lawful and orderly government. The absence of the king was deeply felt. Fortunately for them, the skillfully orchestrated literary offensive of Bishop Colenso and Lady Florence Dixie was starting to bear fruit. Gladstone's Liberals were increasingly embarrassed "by the telling points raised in public concerning the injustice of the king's imprisonment and the disastrous state of affairs in Zululand".⁹⁰ Cetshwayo had then been in exile for two years. Two years of hard bargaining on his part, to bring his case before the British authorities. The federation policy was now being reversed and this had just been seen in the retrocession of the Transvaal after the Battle of Majuba.⁹¹ Reports of violence in Zululand indicated that the Ulundi settlement might be breaking down. Officials therefore began thinking that the exiled king may have a role to play in the administration of that country.⁹²

⁸⁸ Guy, "The role of colonial officials", p 149.

⁸⁹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 253.

⁹⁰ Laband, Rope of sand, p 346.

⁹¹ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 118.

⁹² Shula Marks, Reluctant rebellion: the 1906 – 8 disturbances in Natal (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970), p 89.

5.2 The Return of Cetshwayo and further unrest in Zululand.

“I am still writing to you, Sir Hercules Robinson. For what am I staying here and serving you if it is not in behalf of my family and country. The news that I get from the papers about Zululand, that my people are fighting among themselves, and especially that Undabuko and Usibebu are fighting, does not allow me sleep.”¹ This was one of many pleas by Cetshwayo to the British authorities to give him a chance to put his case personally to the Queen of England. The situation in Zululand had become worse. The civil war was devastating the country making the officials at the Colonial Office in London realize that the arrangement made by Wolseley in Zululand was not working. In the absence of any central authority the country was sliding into anarchy.

In a telegraphic message to the Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, dated 22 September 1881, the Earl of Kimberley instructed that Cetshwayo be informed “that his wishes have been considered”, but due to the approaching winter his visit to England would be postponed to a more favourable date.² In further correspondence Cetshwayo requested that he be allowed to bring along a delegation of chiefs from Zululand. The chiefs requested for were; Mkhosana, Shingana, Mqonwana, Ndabankulu and Sirayo. Mnyamana, Tshingwayo and Seketwayo were not to be worried because “they are too old to travel by sea”.³ In his letter of thanks to Lord Kimberley, dated 10 November 1881, Cetshwayo expressed hope that his case would be treated in such a manner that ultimately it would receive “English justice” for which the country of England was renowned.⁴

¹ BPP, June 1882, Enclosure in NO.10, Oude Molen, October 18, 1881.

² BPP, June 1882, No.7, The Right Hon, the Earl of Kimberley to Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, GCMG. 23 September 1881.

³ BPP, June 1882, Enclosure in No.6, Oude Molen, July 7, 1881.

⁴ BPP, June 1882, Enclosure in No.14, Oude Molen, November 10, 1881.

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In another letter to the British authorities, dated 21 December 1881, Cetshwayo accused Malimade (Melmoth Osborn) of choosing to listen to Zibhebhu and not his brother Ndabuko, who carried the wishes of the Zulu nation. He stated that his family had been driven out of their homes and plundered by Zibhebhu, apparently with the blessing of the British authorities. He asked the Governor, Robinson, to inform Lord Kimberley about the true state of affairs in Zululand. For peace to come to Zululand, he proposed that he be restored and “a good man from England be put as Resident Magistrate in Zululand with a gentleman like Mr. Grant, as his assistant”.⁵ In asking for a man from England the king must have been aware that the officials in Natal sought to destroy the Zulu kingdom. No doubt, a large number of them were highly influenced by Theophilus Shepstone and could not be impartial in dealing with Zululand affairs.

After a long delay which, according to John Laband, was caused by “unsympathetic officials”, Cetshwayo eventually set sail for England in July 1882.⁶ Of his experiences in South Africa, Anthony Froude is quoted as having written that: “Plants of slow growth endure the longest, and the final consummation, however devoutly to be wished, can only be brought to wholesome maturity by the deliberate action of the South African communities themselves.”⁷ The Colonial Office was now convinced that Fraude was right. The idea of confederation was to be dropped and left to be initiated spontaneously by the people of the colonies themselves. On his arrival, Cetshwayo made an extremely good impression both on the British public and on Queen Victoria.⁸

⁵ BPP June 1882, Enclosed in NO. 17, Oude Molen, December 21, 1881.

⁶ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 346.

⁷ Walker, *A History of southern Africa*, p 387.

⁸ Marks, *Reluctant rebellion*, p 89.

His chiefs, who had joined him on this epic journey to England, all the way from Zululand, together with Gebhuza ka Somtseu (Henrique Shepstone), the interpreter, were always at his side. The chiefs were Phosile ka Manyosi of the Mbatha clan, Ngobozana ka Vukuza of the Mpungose and Mkhosana ka Zangqwana of the Zungu people.⁹

The British public was taken by storm with the arrival of the Zulu king. London inhabitants flocked to have a glimpse at the “savage potentate of a race of black Spartans”.¹⁰ The visit was an enormous public success which produced a wave of sympathy for the king. Queen Victoria who had been under the influence of the military men against Cetshwayo, nevertheless, accorded him a courteous welcome and told him that she respected him as a brave enemy and trusted that henceforth they would be firm friends.¹¹ After exchanging the customary salute with the Zulu Bayethe!, the king was given leave to proceed to the Colonial Office. Meetings with the officials of that office proved to be even more fruitful. The king would be returned to his country, but it was already impossible to return to the situation as it obtained in 1878, before the war. A number of vested interests had come up and the British were bound by their agreements to protect the interests of the chiefs who were “loyal” to them. Consequently, a large reserve was to be put aside, as a sanctuary, for Dunn and Hlubi and for others who had no desire to return to Cetshwayo’s jurisdiction. North of the Black Mfolozi, Zibhebhu and Hamu were to be secured in their possessions.¹² On 15 August 1882, Cetshwayo was officially told of the “inevitable” partitioning of his country.

⁹ Fuze, The black people, p 115.

¹⁰ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 253.

¹¹ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 155.

¹² Marks, Reluctant rebellion, p 89.

When he protested against part of his country being taken away from him, Lord Kimberley advised him to wait and see how much of the land was to be cut off before worrying much about the division. Cetshwayo agreed to the advice though reluctantly and even mistakenly. In this way the details of the partition remained undisclosed.¹³ But what was clear was that the Zulu had lost their land and the possibility existed that they would still lose more land. This alone “buried him (Cetshwayo) up to his knees again”.¹⁴ With nothing more left to be said, arrangements were made for Cetshwayo and his people to be transported back to South Africa and to a bleeding but anxiously waiting Zululand.

Cetshwayo sailed back home not knowing what was in store for him, except that he was going back home to his people. On the way, everyone “noticed that the king was extremely quiet and preoccupied”.¹⁵ On 23 November 1882 they arrived in Cape Town and were taken to Oude Molen once again. The Natal government was still arranging to inform the Zulu of his return to avoid chaos on his arrival especially from those who did not desire his return.¹⁶ The Natal officials were determined that Cetshwayo should be restored with “severely eclipsed wings”.¹⁷ They succeeded in persuading the British government that his authority be confined to the central portion of his former kingdom, a far cry from the Zululand his uncle Shaka had established. The detailed terms of the restoration were worked out in Cape Town. The arrangement was that Cetshwayo would lose half of his former kingdom including some of the best cattle country in the land.

¹³ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 354.

¹⁴ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 154.

¹⁵ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 354.

¹⁶ Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo, p 112.

¹⁷ Laband, Rope of sand, p 350.

To ensure what the Natal government thought was a balance of power, Zululand was divided into three parts. On the map, as far as Taylor is concerned, the arrangement “looked quite straightforward”.¹⁸ The northern part was allocated to Zibhebhu, the king’s perceived worst enemy; the southern part became a “Zulu reserve” or “Reserve territory” to be administered by a British Resident Commissioner, and King Cetshwayo was left to rule the truncated central part.¹⁹ Cetshwayo realized that the partition of his former kingdom would most probably perpetuate the existing state of civil strife in the land to which enmity of Zibhebhu was paramount. The warning signs were clear for any one to see. The bitterness that had accumulated in the king’s absence was ready to burst into open conflict once again.²⁰

However, to bring an end to his exile Cetshwayo had to assent to the conditions as presented to him. On 11 December 1882 he signed the document and promised to keep the peace with Zibhebhu, and to administer the affairs of his people with the advice of the British Resident. His exile over, Cetshwayo set sail for Zulu country early in January 1883, wondering how his subjects would welcome him. Zibhebhu had spread the conviction that Cetshwayo would not come back to Zululand, and when it was stated that he was returning, Zibhebhu explained that it would only be his image (isithombe), and not a reality.²¹ Hence when, as a matter of fact, Cetshwayo was brought by Theophilus Shepstone to Emthonjaneni, accompanied by Fynn, large numbers if not the majority of

¹⁸ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 254.

¹⁹ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, p 354.

²⁰ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*. Pp 254 – 255.

²¹ *Ibid*, p 310.

Zulu believed that a mere isithombe (statue or wax-work) had been brought. It was not until they saw the figure reputed to be Cetshwayo, move forward and begin to address the assembly somewhat after his old manner, when it was discovered that a reality and not a phantasy was before their eyes.²²

On the afternoon of 10 January 1883, Cetshwayo stepped ashore on the land of his forefathers to which he had once been the supreme authority. He had been gone for three years. As he landed, he found, "There to meet him, like a dark shadow from the past, was Sir Theophilus Shepstone, out from retirement to oversee the restoration."²³ This time, however, the arrangements were not to be conducted in the name of Shaka, but rather to discredit the legacy of the old king.²⁴ Surprisingly, at Port Durnford, to the king's dismay, there were no Zulu to welcome him. Shepstone had kept the date of his arrival a secret, his reason being, to avoid possible demonstrations by his followers. It was Shepstone's plan to escort the king with a detachment of British troops to eMthonjaneni where the senior men of the country were to assemble to witness the installation and hear for themselves what else the British government had to say. The whole enterprise, however, met with extreme suspicion as most of the people expected that the authorities "would present some counterfeit instead of Cetshwayo himself".²⁵

Once at eMthonjaneni Shepstone and Cetshwayo had to wait for twelve days before the chiefs could give their word about their participation in the ceremony. Meanwhile

²² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mpatshana, p 310.

²³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 254.

²⁴ Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p 108.

²⁵ Ibid, p 108.

they secretly negotiated with the king regarding the policy to be adopted. His homecoming was to usher in another period of turbulent and fierce fighting among the contending groups. The bitterness that had built up in the country during his absence became apparent.²⁶ His own Usuthu followers sought to settle old scores, and there was nothing the king could do to stop them. With limited authority and no effective army, his power to control the situation was almost zero.²⁷

“I did not land in a dry place. I landed in the mud... You speak of my coming and fighting ... I came and found long-standing feuds and bitterly opposed enemies. There are no new feuds since I came”,²⁸ Cetshwayo admitted to a European visitor. That Zululand had become chaotic was partly attributed to the settlement terms imposed by Sir Garnet Wolseley and his appointment of Melmoth Osborn. From the moment of his arrival to take up the position of British Resident, Osborn had expressed his dissatisfaction with the whole arrangement. Writing to Shepstone, he stated: “I entirely concur with your view of the Zulu settlement and do not see how it can possibly stand as it is. More power of control & machinery therefore are necessary.....”²⁹ He subsequently appealed to the authorities for more power which he eventually received, authorizing him to “enquire judiciously” into the disputes. The Usuthu, who had been turned away from Pietermaritzburg and directed to him, ultimately met him at his Nhlazatshe residence in August 1881 and presented their grievances with great care. But

²⁶ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, p 354.

²⁷ Ibid, p 355.

²⁸ Webb, “Great Britain and the Zulu people”, p 316.

²⁹ Guy, “The role of colonial officials”, p 156.

Osborn shocked them when he decided in favour of Zibhebhu and Hamu.³⁰ From then onwards, confident that the British authorities were on their side, the two chiefs turned on the people who had made complaints against them, which resulted in the turmoil that prevailed in the country.

And then, despite all the doubts about the reality of the king, the restoration ceremony at last took place on the afternoon of 29 January 1883 on the Mthonjaneni Heights overlooking the middle reaches of the White Mfolozi from the south.³¹ Among the dignitaries present, Dhlomo mentions Ziweedu, Mnyamana, Qethuka, Hemulana, Sitshaluza, Godide, Sihayo and others.³² According to Ndabazwe ka Mfuleni, Ndabuko and other Usuthu failed to come because, having just been punished by Zibhebhu, they were afraid of venturing into the open, for many of them had taken to the bushes. Zibhebhu also, could not attend, though he obeyed the summons to be present, he did not agree to meet and speak to Cetshwayo.³³

Somtseu then declared the conditions under which Cetshwayo was being restored to Zululand, namely, that he was to live between the Mhlathuze and White Mfolozi, which were to be his new boundaries, and within which he was to try cases, not kill off indiscriminately, and refrain from recruiting regiments. South of the Mhlathuze River were to live "those in trouble who belonged to the government" (izihlupheki zika Hulumeni).³⁴ Among the rules, Hamilton mentions also the prohibition on controlling

³⁰ Guy, "The role of colonial officials", p 157.

³¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndabazwe, p 195.

³² Dhlomo, *u Cetshwayo*, p 117.

³³ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndabazwe, p 192.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p 192.

the timing of marriage,³⁵ which was undoubtedly one of the causes of Cetshwayo's disfavour leading to his downfall. Over forty Usuthu leaders took turns to voice their protestations against the terms of the king's reinstatement. The great men of the kingdom, the princes (abantwana), the aristocrats (izikhulu), and the leadership of note (izinduna), were all there listening attentively to their once beloved Somtseu.

When their turns came, the more tactful ones started by thanking Shepstone and the British Queen for "returning the bone of Senzangakhona".³⁶ Taylor has quoted one induna from the people of Buthelezi who openly attacked Shepstone saying: "Even today in bringing him back you are killing him, killing him, I say, as you have done all along. Did you not take him to his mother (Victoria) and now do you cut off the land saying it is for those dissatisfied?" The silence was deafening as the unnamed induna continued. "You are his enemy from the beginning! You are the author of all our troubles! Why don't you enquire about those kinglets of yours, those murderers? You have sent them away and allowed them to keep all the king's property! How will you deal with us? We shall arm and seize the cattle, and stab those who try to keep them. For we have learned that with the government one who spills blood is not blamed; on the contrary he is praised, and is given the women, and the cattle, and the land of the peaceful ones!"³⁷ The induna summed up the Zululand situation scathingly but truthfully as well as prophetically. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the tenacious good listener, must have felt the sting of those words, but in public he remained stiff-necked and impenetrable.

³⁵ Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p 109.

³⁶ This phrase is normally used among the Zulu to refer to a person who has died being brought back to his home so that he will be an idlozi that watches over the people in the home. Taylor, Shaka's children, pp254 – 255. See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. 4, evidence of Micah Msimanga, p 41.

³⁷ Taylor, Shaka's children, 255. Also Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 173.

They succeeded only in enraging Shepstone who told them he had no authority to change any of the conditions. Sitheku ka Mpande, a half brother of the king, said he was very pleased that the king came back alive. He advised him to settle down and rest and after sometime take off to Pietermaritzburg to face the government about the conditions of his restoration.³⁸

Zibhebhu did come after all. He came on horseback accompanied by forty of his Mandlakazi adherents, all armed to the teeth. They had not come to greet the king but Somtseu. Mfanawendlela ka Manzini of the Zungu did the same.³⁹ Anyone with a knowledge of colonial behaviour would agree that the actions of these chiefs were orchestrated by Whites to set black against black. All sorts of intolerable anomalies had been perpetuated by the partition. Proud chiefs such as Mnyamana who “refused to be one of Sir G. Wolseley’s kinglets”,⁴⁰ had been reduced to the status of vassals to people they considered as traitors, such as Hamu. Ndabuko had been placed under Zibhebhu, whereas previously he had been second only to the king.⁴¹

Immediately after the re-crowning ceremony was over, Shepstone stepped on his horse and rode off to Natal with his people, leaving Cetshwayo to his fate.⁴² The king and his retinue of royal women and their attendants together with a large number of supporters set off to Mahlabathini plain where the re-building of the capital, Ondini, got promptly

³⁸ Dhlomo, u Cetshwayo, p 117.

³⁹ Ibid, p 117 – 118.

⁴⁰ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndukwana, p 300.

⁴¹ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 286.

⁴² Laband, Rope of sand, p 265.

under way. The ruins of the burnt down capital were not far from the new buildings. Of the new arrangements, Taylor has said that "In trying to dispose of previous sources of instability, however, the partition created new and even more potent ones".⁴³ A large number of Usuthu adherents still remained in Zibhebhu's territory and the British had now included the Mgazini and sections of the Buthelezi. Within weeks of the king's return, Zululand drifted further into civil anarchy.

According to the new dispensation, to the south of the Mhlathuze, a reserve was created out of the land of Dunn and Hlubi, where other chiefs who were not willing to accept Cetshwayo could find sanctuary. It would also serve as a buffer with Natal Colony and also as a reservoir of labour. It seems to have been in line with Shepstone's original plans, for he had criticized Wolseley's settlement precisely because it had failed to make provision for such a reserve. For the moment, however, the territory posed grave problems of its own.

Fuze has asserted that generally there was joyful celebration amongst the people who were rejoicing because their king had been restored by the Queen. However, John Shepstone, who was in charge of the reserve territory, wasted no time in ordering the Zulu either to submit to his authority or to move over to Cetshwayo's area. Most of the inhabitants chose to remain where they were as they did not want to leave their ancestral homes. But, as they still looked upon Cetshwayo as their king, they paid their allegiance to him. The majority of the chiefs continued to visit the king at Ondini. Young men periodically crossed over to serve their king. The real danger lay in the north where Zibhebhu insisted that his subjects acknowledge his authority or move to another area.

⁴³ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 254.

Realizing that there were numerous pockets of resistance, Zibhebhu began to apply force. Ndabuko and Mnyamana, who were at Ondini at the time, were highly disturbed by the news coming from the north. Both had their homesteads in that area. They left Ondini in a hurry with the purpose of organizing an army to attack Zibhebhu.⁴⁴ It is uncertain whether the king gave his consent though it is unlikely that he could have agreed to such a dangerous move, one that was sure to offend the British.

Throwing caution to the wind the two leaders assembled an army of some 5000 warriors of the Usuthu from the Mgazini and Buthelezi people. They all gathered at Mnyamana's Ekushumayeleni homestead on the Sikhwebezi river. Impatient to get hold of Zibhebhu, Prince Ndabuko did not heed Mnyamana's advice to wait for reinforcements from the Qulusi. Led by Ndabuko the loosely-organized and undisciplined riff-raff army of unprepared and untutored warriors entered Zibhebhu's territory burning and plundering. On the other side, the Mandlakazi, only a third of the Usuthu, boasted one man in their camp, namely Zibhebhu. Clearly "a formidable fighter, a veteran of Isandhwana who had mastered the essentials of the new military culture, cavalry and firearms, in a way that his opponents still had not".⁴⁵

On 30 March 1883, the Usuthu were surprised in an ambush by the more tactful Mandlakazi who were armed to the teeth with guns.⁴⁶ Fierce fighting ensued. This was the battle of Msebe Valley. Webb believes that there was "a greater loss of life than that sustained in any other battle in Zulu history".⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 255.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p 255.

⁴⁶ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 365.

⁴⁷ Webb, "Great Britain and the Zulu people", p 316.

The few survivors fled to the forests and caves leaving their crops and homesteads to be burned. Just across the Thukela, “colonial officials whose actions had brought matters to this pass, washed their hands and looked away”.⁴⁸ When Hamu heard of Zibhebhu’s overwhelming victory he joined him in harrying the defeated royalists who fled in all directions. Thereafter, the Mandlakazi and Ngenetsheni forces systematically combed the northern districts, looting grain and cattle and leaving their enemy to face starvation.⁴⁹

With the advantage of mounted men and firearms, traded from the whites especially from the unscrupulous Johan Colenbrander, with whom he was on such good terms, Zibhebhu was able to inflict such an overwhelming defeat on his enemies.⁵⁰ The extent of the defeat discredited the Usuthu leadership and demoralized their followers. It was clear the Usuthu lacked a general to match Zibhebhu in all departments of military ability. In the midst of all this confusion of a deeply harrowing civil strife, Bishop Colenso died. Sobantu, who was “so much the native’s friend, so much did he identify himself with them, that people (Europeans) disliked him on that account”.⁵¹ The uncompleted work of struggling for the Zulu to be decently treated was left to Harriette, his daughter, to continue to do.⁵² Especially for the Zulu king, whom he knew personally, Colenso had done what he could to preserve his position.

⁴⁸ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 256.

⁴⁹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 267.

⁵⁰ Davenport, South Africa, p 169.

⁵¹ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol. I, evidence of John Kumalo, p 216.

⁵² Guy, The heretic, p 345.

“His mission in the world was to follow in the steps of his Master, and to labour for the truth and for humanity, wherever he saw the need arise...for the truth against all falsehood, for justice against tyranny, for pity and mercy against cruelty and revenge”.⁵³ His daughter, Frances whom the Zulu called Dhlwedhwe, wrote these fitting words as she endeavored to carry on the work of her father. Lazarus Mxaba and John Kumalo, Colenso’s converts at Ekukhanyeni told James Stuart that it had been the Bishop himself who was the place of light.⁵⁴ Frances’ elder sister Harriette, with the support of the rest of the family, took up her father’s cause as a “sacred trust” and fought tirelessly to prevent the breaking up of the Zulu nation.⁵⁵

Mercifully, the Bishop had been spared “the holocaust that followed a few weeks later”. On 21 July 1883 Zibhebhu “with his lop-sided little head-ring” advanced on Cetshwayo’s new capital Ondini. Fuze says the sons of McAllister and some other venturesome whites accompanied the Mandlakazi.⁵⁶ The Usuthu were caught completely unaware and hopelessly unprepared. The king instructed Godide ka Ndlela to organize the regiments of the Thulwana, Mcijo and Ngobarnakosi but there was no time, the Mandlakazi were already there. A massacre followed. But, according to Guy the real tragedy “lay not so much in the magnitude of the slaughter...but in the number of Usuthu leaders who were killed.”⁵⁷ For, at the time of the attack, the king had gathered round him the most important and loyal of his supporters.

⁵³ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 15.

⁵⁴ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 256.

⁵⁵ Edgecombe,, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 39.

⁵⁶ Fuze, The black people, p 119.

⁵⁷ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, pp303 – 304.

Most accounts concur as regards the more than fifty of the most influential men in the kingdom, who were summarily wiped out on that occasion.⁵⁸ Luckily, the king escaped, but was stabbed twice with assegais in the thigh; this happening whilst he was in hiding from the Mandlakazi forces. From there he was rescued by the Nkominophondo regiment belonging to Zweekuka of the Cube clan. He was taken to their stronghold at Manziphambana in the Nkandla forest in the British controlled reserve territory.⁵⁹ There, at Nkandla forest, Cetshwayo kept out of view.

Zibhebhu and his Mandlakazi were on a rampage and there seemed no way of stopping them and bringing order to the country. Cetshwayo refused to go back to his territory, as a result, Central Zululand had no government. Cetshwayo, by remaining in the Reserve, became the focus for further disruption.⁶⁰ Natal authorities became concerned and started seeking advice. Lord Derby, the Secretary at the Colonial Office, telegraphed back to Natal the following poignant words: "We prefer if possible to leave the Zulus to settle their own affairs".⁶¹ It was this attitude that aggravated matters for Zululand.

Cetshwayo did not live to see the Zulu settle their own affairs. Whilst he was at Nkandla, Osborn made attempts, sending messages to Sigamanda, Chief of the Cube, requesting that the king be sent to him at Eshowe. Cetshwayo refused because he had not been on friendly relations with Osborn.⁶² The matter remained in a stalemate until the arrival of

⁵⁸ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 304.

⁵⁹ Fuze, The Black people, p 119.

⁶⁰ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 355.

⁶¹ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 259.

⁶² Fuze, The Black people, p 119.

Mr. Grant who had been persuaded by Bishop Colenso to help the Zulu. The king himself had earlier approved of Mr. Grant's intervention.⁶³ King Cetshwayo remained at Nkadla until October 1883 when Henry Francis Fynn (junior) took him to Eshowe, the capital of the Reserve territory. Here he was kept under the supervision of Melmoth Osborn. It was a most humiliating experience, for the two had never agreed.

In the afternoon of 8 February 1884 Osborn and his medical officer, Dr. Harvey Scott, found Cetshwayo stretched on his back in his hut, cold and dead.⁶⁴ The death of the king virtually marked the end of the last vestiges of Zulu authority, opening the way for British penetration and land appropriation.

⁶³ Fuze, The Black people, p 119.

⁶⁴ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 355.

CHAPTER 6.

6. ZULU RELATIONS WITH THE BOERS, 1848 – 1887.**6.1 The Klip River and Utrecht Republics.**

If the British shrank from involvement in Zululand, the land-loving Boers of the Transvaal Republic did not. Three months after Cetshwayo's death, they reached an agreement with Usuthu leaders, acting on behalf of the king's heir, Dinuzulu, who was only fifteen years of age. In return for Boer recognition of Dinuzulu as king and protection against his enemies,¹ the Zulu leadership agreed to hand over an unspecified amount of farmland in the north of the Kingdom, to the Boers who would help them.² A familiar scenario indeed; a replay in the history of Zulu relations with the Dutch settlers. From the time the British took over control at the Cape, the Voortrekkers could not contain their desire for land. They embarked on the Great Trek in search of their own land.

Their encounter with the Zulu in 1837 was spectacular, to say the least. The Trekkers had already been hardened by the frontier, and had developed immense energy and independence of spirit. They were farmers and to them cattle meant wealth and life just as much as to the Zulu. Moorhouse has expressed the compelling view that "all the ingredients of racial tragedy were there in the confrontation of two exceedingly proud people, both with fighting instincts standing sharply above natural toughness, both prepared to struggle into death for the possession of land and cattle".³ King Dingane is recorded as having once confided to one of the settlers at Port Natal, "I see that every white man is an enemy of the black, and every black man is an enemy of the white; they do not love each other and never will."⁴

¹ The enemies were presumed to be Zibhebhu, Hamu, Dunn and the British.

² Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 259.

³ Moorhouse, *The missionaries*, p 69.

⁴ Ransford, *The Great Trek*, p 110.

With the Trekkers determined to “leave no stone unturned” to get the land they so desperately wanted, pitted against the Zulu who were accustomed to dictating to everyone, the stakes were high. So Piet Retief rode down to Mgungundlovu with a few friends to get in touch with Dingane.⁵ The subject of their business was land, what Retief saw as he descended the Drakensberg was a fertile “Promised Land” to be acquired for Afrikanerdom. Misunderstandings and a lack of diplomacy, complicated by Shaka’s prediction of the coming of white people to take over the land, soon led to the infamous “Retief murder”. Re-organization and the resolve to avenge the dead, that is, Retief and his comrades, led by Andries Pretorius, culminated in the Battle of Blood River. To celebrate their victory the Voortrekkers established the Republic of Natalia between the Thukela and Mzimkhulu rivers, though these two rivers as boundaries meant very little to most of them.

The establishment of the capital, Pietermaritzburg, was indeed a sign of the permanency of their sojourn, though they were still uncomfortable in someone else’s land. Liebenberg has stated that “Dit was uit vrees vir die Zoeloes, wat by Bloedrivier wel verpletterend verslaan is, maar nog heeltomal sterk genoeg was om wraak te neem, dat die Trekkers in omheinde kampe of laers bymekaar bly woon het.”⁶ It was a precarious situation.

The Trekkers gained a measure of comfort when news reached them that “inderdaad ‘n burgeroorlog onder die Zoeloes uitgebreek het” and that “volgelingen van Dingane se half-broer Mpande was, wat uit vrees vir Dingaan oor die Tugela gevlug het”.⁷

⁵ Walker, *A history southern Africa*, p 205.

⁶ Liebenberg, *Andries Pretorius in Natal*, p 52.

⁷ *Ibid*, p 63.

Mpande subsequently became an ally of the Trekkers. At his temporary homestead, Kwa-Mahambehlala, he was assured of Trekker friendship and was later installed as the “Regerende Prins van die geemigreerde Zoelas tot tyd en wyl hy Dingane se plek sou inneem”.⁸ Subsequently, Mpande’s followers led by Nongalaza, defeated Dingane’s impi at Maqongqo Hills. Unfortunately, to make their fledging young Natalia Republic economically sound, the Trekkers found it morally expedient to “milk” their ally, Mpande, of cattle. These cattle were supposedly expected from Dingane as reparations.⁹

The British, haunted by the anxiety that the French might take over the Cape, occupied it in 1806, taking it from the Dutch. Then, in Natal “haunted by anxiety” lest the Trekkers opened Port Natal to the Dutch or other foreign power, as a trade centre, they decided to annex Natal from the Voortrekkers.¹⁰ After all there had been Americans and Dutch at the port. The British government, especially through Sir George Napier, consistently refused to recognise Natalia as an independent sovereign state. The British government continued to see them as British subjects and therefore liable to the conditions laid down in the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act. For various reasons the British authorities interfered in the affairs of the young republic and so irritated the Trekkers who decided to take up arms to defend the sovereignty of their Republic. For the sake of the beautiful fertile valleys of Natal the Trekkers were prepared to lay down their lives against superior arms and numbers, and accept the inevitable.¹¹ On 15 July 1842 the Volksraad at Pietermaritzburg signed the conditions of submission and the

⁸ Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal, p 64.

⁹ The number of cattle to be paid by Dingane as reparations varied from 13000 to 19000, sources are not unanimous.

¹⁰ Fisher, The Afrikaners, p 85.

¹¹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 336.

Republic of Natalia was annexed by the British to be administered as a district of the Cape Colony under a Lieutenant-Governor. "Pretorius' sweeping seizure of southern Zululand was mollified. Mpande was no longer considered a vassal, and the Tugela and Buffalo rivers were recognized as the boundaries between the Zulu and the British administrations."¹² This incident alone, among others, aroused a mutual feeling of Voortrekker togetherness. They felt themselves more than ever to be one people. A burning sense of nationality had developed as a result of the trek, the "horrors of Bloukrans, the heroism of Marthinus Oosthuizen, the death of Dirkie Uys...the victories at Blood river and Congella...bound them together as a valid community".¹³

In December 1845, the Republic of Natalia ceased to exist when Lieutenant-Governor Martin West arrived at Pietermaritzburg. According to Ransford, the moment was a saddening one. "Long years after they had quit (the) Cape Colony, Pharoah, in the shape of a British official, had finally caught up with the Voortrekkers."¹⁴ To many of them it meant that conditions in Natal would be the same as they existed in the Cape Colony, before the Voortrekker exodus. Gradually the Trekkers came together in numbers, around their town of Weenen, probably to gather strength from the magic memories that the little village had come to represent. Eventually, having decided against Natal, they trekked away "driving their creaking wagons up the Drakensberg passes which they had descended with such relish and visionary hopes five years earlier".¹⁵

¹²Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 337.

¹³ Randford, The Great Trek, p 180.

¹⁴ Ibid, p180.

¹⁵ Ibid, p180.

The swing towards Potgieter's fief on the highveld was not particularly attractive to Andries Pretorius who did not relish the idea of living under his arch-rival. He stayed on in Natal with the hope of obtaining better terms from the British. In September 1847 he rode to Grahamstown to present his people's case to the Governor, Sir Henry Pottinger. Unfortunately for him, Pottinger refused to hear him out. Disappointed and greatly angered, Pretorius returned to Natal. He sold his farm "Welverdiend" and joined his brethren on the Highveld.¹⁶

Sir Harry Smith succeeded Pottinger, just about that time. Being a man of some experience with the Trekkers, he sympathized with their condition and hurried to try and stop the exodus. Smith assembled the Trekkers on the Drakensberg. Through Pretorius, he listened to their grievances. Among the complaints they told the High Commissioner, "Our friend Colonel Smith", was that the "Kaffirs have been located on our lands and intermixed with us".¹⁷ The Trekkers had accepted that Natal was now British, but clearly, it was unacceptable to them that the Zulu pagans could have land whilst they, a civilized and Christian people, were without land, despite the fact that they deserved the land. Determined to entrench their power over the Zulu, some desperate land-hungry Trekkers chose to remain mainly in the northern parts of Natal.¹⁸ As the white population grew in the early 1840s, white settlement in towns and villages expanding, the British officials in charge realized how dependent the colony

¹⁶ Ransford, The Great Trek, p181.

¹⁷ Walker, A history of southern Africa, p 232; Ransford,

¹⁸ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 182.

was on the homestead economy, especially with regard to food supply. In 1846 Martin West appointed the Locations Commission to determine the best way in which the colonial government could administer the African population.¹⁹ In 1847 the administration accepted the Commission's recommendations, but fearing to trigger needlessly a further exodus of the Voortrekkers who were still in the country, they decided to allocate reserves or locations in areas which were not desired by white farmers. As a result only one location, the Klip River reserve, was demarcated in the Voortrekker stronghold of northern Natal.²⁰

Intent on owning a part of Zululand, some of the Boers moved into the territory between the Thukela and Mzinyathi rivers, at first declaring a semi-independent principality in the area, under the overlordship of King Mpande of the Zulu. Later, in January 1847, they proclaimed the independence of the Klip River Republic in the area.²¹ Andries Spies, one time Landdrost of Weenen, claimed to have bought the land for 75 pounds from Mpande. Payment to Mpande, however, was never made. This made Mpande realize the bad position he had put himself in by agreeing to oversee a Boer settlement, though its chances of being a real state were zero from the outset. The so-called Klip River Republic, nonetheless, continued its precarious existence until July 1847 when a stern message from Lieutenant-Governor Martin West instructed that the agreement be

¹⁹ Lambert, Betrayed trust, p10.

²⁰ Ibid, p 10.

²¹ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 172.

nullified and the Republic be ended forthwith. Mpande promptly repudiated the agreement with Spies. The Boers tried to resist. They dispatched Andries Pretorius to conduct talks with Mpande in an attempt to persuade the Zulu monarch to uphold the agreement. King Mpande clung to his decision to align himself with the British cause.²² The Boer's stubborn resistance finally gave way when the British authorities exerted pressure in January 1848.

Although King Mpande was not much of a military man, his existence as king still depended on the military system that was initiated by Shaka. Whilst he busied himself with consolidating his power and authority in the kingdom, young men had to be conscripted and new regiments formed and "opportunities had to be found for them to wash their spears in battle".²³ His first regiments were the Sangqu, followed by the Ngulube and then the Amaphela.²⁴ The much needed opportunity for initiating these newly formed regiments presented itself in 1848. The Hlubi under their leader, Langalibalele, were accused of plundering the royal cattle in the Phongola River area. Mpande called up the impi and invaded the Hlubi territory on the upper Mzinyathi river.²⁵ The campaign was a brief affair. The Zulu army returned to Nodwengu with some herds of cattle as was expected, but the Hlubi fled into Natal. Shepstone, after a brief resistance, succeeded in settling them "on the slopes of the Drakensberg...to act as a buffer against raids from the San", and also as part of his location system.²⁶

²² Laband, Rope of sand, p 127.

²³ Roberts, The Zulu Kings, p 338.

²⁴ Fuze, The Black people, p 95.

²⁵ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 338.

²⁶ Cameron, An illustrated history of South Africa, p 174.

When Sir Harry Smith stopped the trek on the Drakensberg, he promised the Trekkers 6000 acres of land each, according to a more generous formula than that offered by Commissioner Cloete. Some of them accepted the new terms and returned to Natal, where “they provided a border guard and a stable population for the Klip River Division”.²⁷ At that time the Lieutenant-Governor was putting a lot of pressure on those who were resisting the dissolution of what they termed the Klip River Republic. But with the collapse of that abortive republic, a group of irreconcilable Trekkers who chose not to remain under British control, began to lay out farms and build their houses in the wide grassy plains between the Mzinyathi and Ncome rivers in 1852. These expanses of land, according to Laband, were in Zululand proper as recognized by the boundary agreement of 1843 signed with the colony of Natal.²⁸

The land the Trekkers were occupying was the territory left empty in 1848 when Langalibalele’s Hlubi people fled the invading young armies that Mpande was initiating. The Boers therefore moved in with relative ease and by 1854 that “narrow wedge of land” between the two rivers contained 200 families of the Trekkers, enough “to discourage any Zulu attempt to dislodge them”.²⁹ In that year 1854, the reluctant British government abandoned the Orange River Sovereignty by the Bloemfontein Convention and by that act, the Klip River Natalians found encouragement to petition for sovereign independence.³⁰ That proposal, however, could not be entertained by the British.

²⁷ Walker, A history of southern Africa, p232.

²⁸ Laband, Rope of sand, p150.

²⁹ Ibid, p150.

³⁰ Walker, A history of southern Africa, p269.

Mpande, at first decided to ignore them but in September 1854 he ceded the farms to the Boers. Again, under the lordship of Mpande, the Boers declared the area the Republic of Utrecht, even though they were not sure of the security of their tenure.³¹ The land-hungry Boers of the Utrecht Republic soon began to encroach east of the Ncome and laid claims to land that Mpande had not ceded them. The Boers “with their eyes firmly on the eastern horizon and determined to spill over the borders deep into Zululand, began to play a subtle game”.³² They were aware of Cetshwayo’s suspicion of the Natal government’s intentions with regard to Prince Mkhungo who had escaped from Zululand to safety in Natal as soon as it was clear that the IziGqoza would be defeated. Shepstone was grooming the young prince “for a role as puppet king”.³³ Cetshwayo suspected this. Just as Shepstone had Mkhungo, the Boers had Mthonga, who had taken refuge with them.³⁴

Cetshwayo was aware of the games being played on both sides, and while anxious about his position, a Boer envoy arrived at this homestead early in 1861. They informed Cetshwayo that the British were busy preparing to invade Zululand whereupon Prince Mkhungo would be installed as king. They, on the other hand, were prepared to hand over Mthonga to the Zulu and also “put Cetshwayo in the Royal Hut”. The condition was that Cetshwayo should cede a stretch of land in northern Zululand and guarantee Mthonga’s safety. Taylor contends that though reluctant, Cetshwayo did agree.³⁵

³¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p150.

³² Ibid, p150.

³³ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p184.

³⁴ Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Mtshapi, p63.

³⁵ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p185.

However, the details of the land agreed upon were later denied by both sides.

Nevertheless, the Boers had met Cetshwayo and that prompted Shepstone to quickly do the same in May of the same year. King Mpande was subsequently pressurized to name Cetshwayo as the heir to his throne. But, of paramount importance at this stage was the agreement with the Boer adventurers. Cetshwayo's hastily made arrangement with them demanding "an extensive grant of Zulu territory in the same Blood River district that Shepstone coveted..."³⁶ laid the basis for further claims by the Boers.

At the end of 1864 the Boers began to assert what they saw as their land rights by beaconing off a boundary line between their farms and Zulu territory. The Boers claimed that according to the Treaty of Waaihoek, signed in March 1861 between themselves and Cetshwayo together with his brothers Ziwedu and Sitheku, they were entitled to the land.³⁷ Upon hearing of the activities of the Boers in the Ncome area, an angry Cetshwayo immediately gave orders to his people to tear down the beacons. At that same moment he dispatched messengers to Pietermaritzburg to request the Natal government to intervene in the dispute. This was a new line of policy on his part, and over the next few years he made several more of such requests. Just then, in December 1864, Mpande ceded the Transvaal Boers "an avenue down the Thukela to the sea in return for the promise of their military support".³⁸ It was this continuing Boer expansion and Mpande's co-operation with them that compelled Cetshwayo to open ready Communications with the Natal administration.

³⁶ Ballard, *The transfrontierman*, p 171.

³⁷ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p152.

³⁸ Taylor, *Shaka; s children*, p159.

His brief friendship with the Boers was definitely over. But the Boer migration continued to open the country.³⁹ Relations with Natal Colony continued to blossom to the late 1860s.³⁹ Cetshwayo was the effective ruler of Zululand at this moment. Cope has described the situation by declaring that it might have been supposed that with the ruler of Zululand secure in his position, Natal would lose its influence over Zululand, but this did not happen. "Just as the period before 1861 was dominated by the power struggle within Zululand, so the period after 1861 was dominated by the territorial dispute with the Transvaal."⁴⁰ With regard to both these cases, Natal was a vital factor and highly desired as a counter-weight.

In 1867 Mpande gave permission for the Thulwana regiment to get wives and wear the head-ring. The tranquility that pervaded the kingdom, like a breeze of fresh air, continued to be disturbed by uncontrollable external forces that the king and Prince Cetshwayo had conjured up during the struggle for the succession. As before, the Boers continued to encroach on Zululand's fertile grasslands on the western border. Their claims were seemingly gaining credence, thanks to the ill-conceived Treaty of Waaihoek of March 1861.⁴¹ The essence of the debate, however, lies in the fact that in March 1861 Prince Cetshwayo was not the king, he was not even the acknowledged heir and therefore had no right to cede land. President Pretorius of the South African Republic recognized this fact when he approached King Mpande in June of that year, to obtain ratification of the so-called "cession" of land.⁴² But, Mpande and Cetshwayo, working together for a

³⁹ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p187.

⁴⁰ Cope, "The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours", Lecture.

⁴¹ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p158.

⁴² Cope, "The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbours", Lecture.

change, both denied that Cetshwayo had ceded land, and Mpande refused to cede any land himself. Pretorius thereupon concluded that “the people of Utrecht...have misrepresented the matter to us and that the Kafirs have proved the people to be liars...”⁴³ The Pretorius report, according to Cope, was not presented to the Gallway Commission which met to examine the disputed border question in 1878.

Despite the unacceptability of the Transvaal claims to land that were persistently pressed, the Trekboer tradition “om selfstandig te boer” which had developed in the eighteenth-century Cape, was continued in Natal and on the highveld. The sons of every Boer expected to have farms of their own and this resulted in putting pressure on the borders. The Zulu response to this pressure was to urge the Natal authorities to intervene. In a message to the Department of Native Affairs in 1869, Mpande and his son Cetshwayo said, “when the boundary is fixed by agreement with the English, there it will remain”.⁴⁴ The implication was that the British kept their word whereas with the Boers, agreements changed with times and circumstances, and therefore undependable.

This reliance of the Zulu leaders on the Natal government’s support led them to a very submissive posture towards Natal. Mpande even declared that he was “faithful to the British government”, and that he “belonged” to it.⁴⁵ Cetshwayo stated that he wished

⁴³ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbors”, Lecture.

⁴⁴ Ibid, Lecture.

⁴⁵ Cetshwayo remembered this in his exile and wrote to Sir Hercules Robinson, the Cape Governor, clarifying his and his father’s position regarding their relations with the English. See Webb and Wright, A Zulu king speaks.

“to shape all his actions in accordance with the wishes and advice” of the Natal government. When Mpande died in 1872, it was natural that the Zulu would want the Natal government to be involved in the installation ceremony of Mpande’s successor. Shepstone was there in September 1873.

At all costs the Boers of the South African Republic had to be kept out of Zululand. A take over of Zululand by the Transvalers would exclude British Natal from the land and give the Boers an outlet to the sea. In fact, according to the 1874 federation scheme, introduced by Lord Carnarvon, “there was no place for backward, unprogressive Afrikaner Republics and African kingdoms”.⁴⁶ It became British policy towards the Voortrekker republics and the surviving independent black states, such as Zululand.⁴⁷

At that moment, Sekhukhune who became paramount chief of the Pedi in 1861, felt dissatisfied with his western border with the Boers, where, just like the Zulu of western Zululand, the Pedi lived cheek by jowl with encroaching white farmers. Consequently, hostilities broke out in May 1876 between the Boers and the Pedi. Inevitably, the British saw this as a confirmation of the desirability of a union and a common “native policy” in South Africa.⁴⁸ The British conjured up all the tricks. Shepstone was called to London, knighted, and sent home with secret orders and a free hand to effect the annexation of the Transvaal peacefully.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cope, “The Zulu kingdom and its white neighbors”, Lecture

⁴⁷ Laband, Rope of sand, p187.

⁴⁸ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p204; Laband, Rope of sand, p187.

⁴⁹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 204.

6.2. Dinuzulu and the Boers.

“Dinuzulu, heir to his father’s kingdom, was also heir to all the problems which had beset Cetshwayo in the last year of his life.”¹ In the ominous quiet that followed the death of his father, the young Dinuzulu, only sixteen years of age, looked about him in serious bewilderment. The king’s sudden and unexpected death caused great confusion throughout Zululand² and, perhaps, even across the boundaries of the kingdom. Zululand lay in ruins; homesteads “were burnt and cattle and crops wantonly destroyed, with all that peculiar bitterness of feeling which belongs entirely to a civil war”.³ The Zulu population was divided. Zibhebhu and Hamu had a large following. Osborn and, no doubt, Dunn had assembled a huge force of traitors amambuka, which the Usuthu partly destroyed at Amatikulu river on the occasion of Cetshwayo’s burial.⁴ On the whole, the Zulu kingdom was gone.

The clashes between Zibhebhu and his Usuthu uncles haunted the young man. He brooded on the loss of his position and on the partisanship shown towards Zibhebhu by the British officials.⁵ Dinuzulu was an intelligent and muscular boy who had entered adolescence when the amabutho were broken at Ondini. He inherited all the pride of his forefathers and, in the words of Bishop Colenso’s daughter, Frances, he “trode the earth as if he owned it”.⁶ He grew up under the influence of his mother oka Msweli and his uncle,

¹ Marks, Reluctant rebellion, p 85.

² CT Binns, Dinuzulu:the death of the house of Shaka (London, Longman Green, 1968), p 7

³ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 293.

⁴ Fuze, The Black people, p 121.

⁵ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 272.

⁶ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 5.

Ndabuko ka Mpande whose hatred for Zibhebhu was limitless. Novimbi Msweli, Dinuzulu's mother is described as a very powerful woman.

His "izibongo" testify to this:

"Mamba emnyama ka Jininindi"
 (The black mamba of Cetshwayo)
 "Ithole lakoka Msweli"
 Elanyisa liguqile"⁷
 (The calf of oka Msweli that sucks kneeling down).

Encouraged by Ndabuko the young man focused his thoughts chiefly on revenge even against the wiser counsel of old Mnyamana⁸. Fuze says in his farewell message Cetshwayo had said: " And I say to you, Dinuzulu, as soon as you have buried my body, mobilize the Zulu nation to attack Zibhebhu and fight against him. You will defeat him, for I will be in the midst of my army."⁹ Dinuzulu, therefore grew up in the clutches of Zibhebhu, the man the Usuthu regarded as a puppet chief of the British.

By the time Cetshwayo died, the Usuthu were on the brink of a terrible disaster. Zibhebhu's Mandlakazi forces were already dominant in all the territory north of Mhlathuze river, and the Usuthu were threatened with starvation and ultimate extinction.¹⁰ Sir Henry Bulwer, the Governor of Natal, worried about the situation in Zululand, again urged the British authorities to annex the country.¹¹

⁷ Nyembezi, *Izibongo zamakhosi*, p 113.

⁸ Dhlomo, *u Dinuzulu ka Cetshwayo*,.....Also Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 2.

⁹ Fuze, *The Black people*. P 123.

¹⁰ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 369.

¹¹ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 7.

The whole of his administration in Natal was still floundering about uncertainly, torn between the local officials and farmers' desire to bring the Zululand chaos to an end by imposing British authority, and the vacillating, disinterested policy of the home government.¹² But for Bulwer, it was no easy complacency in the face of the horrifying reality that the Zulu king's flight and subsequent death had left Central Zululand without government. Bulwer was strongly against the idea of "leaving the country to itself and to anarchy". He realized if that was to happen, the country would fall into the hands of the land-hungry Boers of the Transvaal.¹³

The Boers, in the meantime, were watching the run of events very closely. From what they saw, they concluded that Cetshwayo's death presented them with a golden opportunity to intervene in the affairs of Zululand.¹⁴ Just before he died, Cetshwayo had been pressured to accept Boer help to counter-balance the whites who were assisting Zibhebhu. Cetshwayo refused, saying, "Do not dare to treat with the Boers for if you once get them into the country you will never get rid of them".¹⁵ Nevertheless, Cetshwayo did maintain friendly relations with them. When pressured by Zibhebhu he informed the Boers through his induna Lugagani that "Zibhebhu was killing him". Though he tried to stop them, his messenger, Mboxaludaka reported that the Boers were coming to help him against Zibhebhu. Then came his sudden death. But Ndabuko remembered the king's warning and sent a message to the Boers telling them to engage

¹² Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 293.

¹³ Webb, "Great Britain and the Zulu people", p 317.

¹⁴ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p 6.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp 6-7.

the Natal government in seeking a solution to Zululand's problems. As Bulwer had predicted, the Boers started entering the country offering to install Dinuzulu as the undisputed paramount chief of the Zulu. According to Laband, it was Mehlokazulu, Sihayo's energetic and self confident son together with Ndabankulu, the assertive Ntombela chief, who had initiated the move to get Boer assistance from across the border.¹⁷ Dinuzulu and his uncles, Ndabuko and Ziwedu discussed the Boer offer of assistance with chief Mnyamana. The pros and cons of the situation were looked into and the advantages and disadvantages of Boer involvement thoroughly assessed, but finality on the matter could not be reached. All were nervous, for Cetshwayo had occasionally dabbled with the idea of enlisting Boer aid, but always put it off with the argument that once in, the Boers would never get out.¹⁸

At that moment, however, there did not seem to be any alternative course open which held out a promise of peace and order. Even Mnyamana was put under pressure by Boer messengers who persistently urged him to agree to Boer aid with the assurance to crush Zibhebhu and his Mandlakazi. Eventually and grudgingly, Mnyamana gave way and so Meyer and Van Staden, the Boer messengers, rode off with Dinuzulu to Wakkerstroom in the Transvaal.¹⁹

It seems that the aim of taking Dinuzulu to the Transvaal was to remove him from the influence of the Zulu leaders so that the Boers could exert pressure on him to agree to a

¹⁷ Laband, *Rope of sand*, pp 369-370.

¹⁸ Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu country*, p 294.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p 294.

cession of a portion of his country in return for their services.²⁰ No doubt, Dinuzulu could easily be persuaded to accept their terms. After all, he was only a boy. Before riding off, Van Staden and Meyer had, before the Zulu leadership, gathered “a heap of stones, placed a stick with a hat on top and swore a solemn oath that they told the truth and that the Transvaal government would, within one month, subdue all the enemies of the Zulus and restore to them their kraals and cattle, further that they wanted neither cattle nor lands”.²¹ It was upon these assurances that the Zulu agreed to the Boers leaving with Dinuzulu.

Behind them, confusion continued with Resident Osborn’s forces under Mansell getting into the fracas. Ndabazwe tells of a black policeman, Tomu ka Mampuya, in command of a force of policemen and messengers backed up by those traitors amambuka from south of the Mhlathuze. They were posted at the pass of the iBomvu near Robertson’s mission station (Kwa-Mzimela) with orders from the government to prevent those in the Reserve territory from going across to join Usuthu. The Usuthu party, coming from the Nkandla forest, surprised Tomu and his men and killed them and seized the cattle which they had been collecting from Usuthu loyalists.²² Ndabazwe told Stuart that it was then that Dinuzulu sought help from the Boers. The Usuthu were able to prevent John Dunn, and Colenbrander from linking up with Zibhebhu in the north. Dunn, Colenbrander and a group of filibusters calling themselves the “Stanger Disreputables” then went on a rampage in the Reserve territory, burning homesteads and carrying off herds of cattle.²³

²⁰ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 27.

²¹ Ibid, p 13.

²² Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.4, evidence of Ndabazwe, p 193.

²³ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 22.

While raids were being carried out in the south, events of great moment were taking place in the north of the country. A large number of armed Boers rode into Zululand. Taking Dinuzulu with them, they set up camp near the Hlobane mountains.²⁴ Here they named themselves “The Committee of Dinuzulu’s Volunteers”,²⁵ and began drafting letters to Zibhebhu and Hamu informing them that Dinuzulu, the rightful heir is with them in pursuit of peace. They instructed the two leaders to lay down their arms to be able to enter into negotiations with them. Leading Boers from Wakkerstroom and Utrecht joined the Committee. Since such prominent Boers as Lucas Meyer, the Landdrost of Utrecht, had joined up, many thought that the South African Republic authorities had approved.²⁶ However, not all of them were Afrikaners; adventurous men of British and German origin were also interested. Some like Louis Botha (later Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa) came from as far as the Free State. Thus Harriette Colenso called them “a rabble of land-grabbers”, but some of them were, in fact, rich farmers already who were out in search of, perhaps, a little adventure.²⁷

Immediately the programme of the Committee became known, especially that “they would take land for their services”, several hundred Boers from the Transvaal and the Free State flocked to Hlobane “with no other object than that of pegging claims to farms in Zululand”.²⁸ It was obvious that many of them were prepared to enforce the decisions of the Committee, by force of arms, if it came to a push. The fact that they came “fully

²⁴ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 294.

²⁵ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 22.

²⁶ Laband, Rope of sand, p 391.

²⁷ Ibid, p 371.

²⁸ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 24.

armed” bears proof of their determination, despite the injunction issued by the Acting President of the South African Republic, PJ Joubert, forbidding inhabitants of the Republic from taking part in the venture. The State Secretary of the Republic wrote another letter to the British Resident in Zululand wherein the attitude of the British authorities towards Cetshwayo was condemned and their inability to settle matters in Zululand was regretted, which allowed the Boers a free hand in Zululand.²⁹

The Boers were not prepared to waste any time for, while they conducted negotiations with all the relevant stakeholders, they went on with the preparations for the crowning of Dinuzulu.³⁰ It is said that agreements with Dinuzulu were entered into without the use of any threat or pressure on the part of the Boers. It may be so, for there is no evidence to the contrary. But, surely threats were used against the Usuthu leaders. Esselen is reliably recorded as having said: “If the Kafirs don’t want to give the land we must take it and bring them to their senses.”³¹ On 20 May 1884 word went round that the young prince would be crowned the next day. His uncles Ndabuko, Ziwezu and Shingana were already there at Zalflaager where the Boers had pitched camp, “doctoring” the young prince in preparation for the big day. Uppermost in their minds was to avenge Cetshwayo’s death and to regain the Usuthu lands taken by the Mandlakazi.³² Hamu and Zibhebhu’s messengers also arrived bearing messages of acknowledgement and acceptance of Dinuzulu as king of all Zululand.³³ On the morning of 21 May 1884 the coronation

²⁹ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 25.

³⁰ Webb, “Great Britain and the Zulu people”, p 317.

³¹ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 71.

³² Marks, *Reluctant rebellion*, p 89.

³³ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 28.

scene was set. A soap box turned up-side down was to serve as a throne. A blue and white flag fluttered above “with deliberate symbolism”. It was similar to the one which the Boers had flown at Mahambehlala, when they crowned Mpande some 45 years before, after the Battle of Maqongqo Hills.³⁴ After the official opening, in Boer fashion, the coronation ceremony began. Dinuzulu knelt on a wagon before some 9000 Zulu warriors and 350 Boers who had assembled there. Mnyamama was conspicuously absent.³⁵ One of the Boers read out the terms of peace between Usuthu and their enemies, Zibhebhu and Hamu. For their part the Boers promised a Boer Protectorate over Dinuzulu’s kingdom and in return for their services they “were to be allowed to remain in Zululand with farms on which to graze their cattle”.³⁶ When the ceremony was over the amabutho accorded him the royal salute “Bayethe!” and the Boers felt justified to say: “You all know that his grandfather, Mpande, was appointed by us”.³⁷

The significance of the ceremony was that four Boers led by one Andreas Laas had “anointed him with castor oil, placed their hands on his head, and declared him to be the rightful Zulu king”.³⁸ At least he was not crowned with some ridiculous crown that Shepstone foisted on Cetshwayo in 1873.³⁹ The ceremony was short and makeshift but was very expensive. According to Roberts, just the next day the Boers presented their

³⁴ Laband, Rope of sand, p 371.

³⁵ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 28.

³⁶ Webb, “Great Britain and the Zulu people”, p 318.

³⁷ Fuze, The Black people, p 123.

³⁸ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 359.

³⁹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 372.

bill. They were awaiting the award of an unspecified amount of land in north-western Zululand in return for their protection and assistance against the enemies of Dinuzulu.⁴⁰

Shula Marks contends that: "Dinuzulu soon found himself in the position of the young bride who went for a ride on a tiger; Boer claims for a reward in cattle and land were so exorbitant as to threaten to swallow up even more of his domains than Zibhebhu's ambitions."⁴¹ As the Boers and the Usuthu leadership discussed the Boer demands, it came out that the Usuthu desired some more assistance to finally subdue Zibhebhu.⁴²

Seemingly, Zibhebhu was also busy making contacts with white friends in preparation for an onslaught on the Boer-Usuthu combination. Evidence of this was apparently found in letters sent by Zibhebhu to Dunn that the Usuthu had intercepted.⁴³

Reports of Zibhebhu's preparation for war quickly spread among the Boers and put pressure on the Committee. On the other hand, it had become clear to the Committee that the Disputed Territory would be insufficient land for all their farms. The number of Boers needing farms had drastically increased. Friends and relatives had been flocking into the Laager, all anxious to share in the allocation of the farms.⁴⁴ It also came out that the Zulu still needed help. The Boers agreed that if that help was to be given it would be a good excuse to press for more land. The Committee was consequently told that when they draw up the treaty, they should make the amount of land indefinite so that more could be

⁴⁰ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 372.

⁴¹ Marks, *Reluctant rebellion*, p 90.

⁴² Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 31.

⁴³ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 372.

⁴⁴ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 32.

claimed later.⁴⁵ Surprisingly, the Zulu leaders agreed to an indefinite boundary and on 23 May Dinuzulu signed the Treaty. The Treaty contained the following: "I (Dinuzulu) bind myself with the advice of my councillors and headmen to cede to the principal leaders of the Boers a tract of country from the north-western part of Zululand bordering on the South African Republic and as large as above-mentioned principal leaders may consider necessary for establishing an independent self-government according to agreement."⁴⁶ He further agreed that the Zulu living upon that land would remove to other parts of Zululand and also that he would not involve any other power or foreign government without the consent of the Boers.

With the Treaty in their pockets, the Boers demanded from Zibhebhu immediate compliance with the earlier agreement. To their delightful astonishment Zibhebhu was defiant.⁴⁷ 10 000 men from Mnyamana's ekuShumayeleni homestead met a hundred Boers led by Lucas Meyer with a small number of Germans led by Adolph Schiel.⁴⁸ The Usuthu really needed this kind of external assistance "knowing from experience how often they had been outwitted and out-generalled" by Zibhebhu. Full of hope and confidence they marched towards the Mkuze river where Zibhebhu⁴⁹ had retreated. In the deep gorge of the Lebombo mountains the wily general lay in wait. There the Usuthu were repulsed momentarily and the mounted Boers moved in. As a result the battle was

⁴⁵ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 32.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p 33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p 33.

⁴⁸ Adolph Schiel, a young German who had settled among other Germans around Luneberg joined the fight at Tshaneni in command of a contingent of Transvaal Africans. For these services he was entitled to a picked farm.

⁴⁹ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 37.

quickly over with aba Qulusi levelling the enemy. But, unable to find Zibhebhu himself, who escaped, the Usuthu turned on the trading stations belonging to those whites who were in league with him and ruthlessly looted their stores and burned them down.⁵⁰

Driving before them some 60 000 head of cattle and winking hundreds of women and children out of their hiding places, the Usuthu marched on.⁵¹

The rabble element among the Boers, in the meanwhile, swept over Central Zululand. They attacked homesteads, "killed the occupants, seized their cattle, opened up their grain pits and loaded the contents onto their wagons irrespective of the fact that this meant starvation to an already impoverished people who had not been able to plant their crops for many months owing to the unsettled state of the country".⁵² News of the vandalism done by people who were not among those that helped subdue Zibhebhu made the Zulu leaders feel bitter. It somehow helped them strengthen their resistance against the extravagant claims made by the Boers after their victory over Zibhebhu. After ducking and diving and hiding, eventually on the evening of 12 June 1884, three tired horsemen rode into Eshowe. Zibhebhu, Eckersley and Darke came to report to Osborn the sad story of their misfortune and eloquently to appeal for British support.⁵³

On the other side of the border, "the Boers claimed 3 million acres of the best cattle country in the healthy upper state of Zululand, stretching to the natural harbour of St Lucia Bay".⁵⁴ Dinuzulu and the Zulu elders immediately complained that the Boers were

⁵⁰ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 39.

⁵¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 374.

⁵² Binns, Dinuzulu, p 39.

⁵³ Laband, Rope of sand, p 374.

⁵⁴ Marks, Reluctant rebellion, p 90.

exaggerating their claims and that the documents which were produced as evidence of their claims were fraudulent. Ndabuko, Shingana and Mnyamana once more appealed to the British to intervene.

The Boers had succeeded to restore Dinuzulu to his country, but, in the words of Tom Bulpin, they had failed to restore the country to him.⁵⁵ The Boers were demanding a third of the former kingdom; a territory that contained the homesteads of the most ardent supporters of Usuthu, the Buthelezi, the Qulusi and the Mdlalose. It was to become a new Boer country known as the New Republic.⁵⁶ All the Zulu homesteads, as concluded by treaty with Dinuzulu, were to remove to another area of the kingdom. Shula Marks saw the situation in much the same way as Bulpin where he likened Dinuzulu to “the young lady who went for a ride on a tiger”.⁵⁷ In accepting the help of the Boers, despite his father’s warning, Dinuzulu had indeed entangled himself in a huge web of diplomatic intrigue he could not extricate himself from. After all, he was still a boy. Posterity would judge him in that light.

The New Republic was proclaimed on 5 August 1884 and Boer leader, Lucas Meyer, assumed the presidency of the infant republic. The survey and demarcation of farms for the multitude of Boer claimants was vigorously undertaken and intensified. The Zulu, watching these activities could only voice out their protestations and nothing more.⁵⁸ It is also true that not only the Boers were responsible for the state of anarchy in Zululand,

⁵⁵ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 311.

⁵⁶ Taylor, Shaka’s children, p 260.

⁵⁷ Marks, Reluctant rebellion, p 90.

⁵⁸ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 91.

that other factors contributed towards the general upheaval. The British traders from Durban were getting rich from the sale of food and useless old firearms that were otherwise “more dangerous to the holder than his assailant”.⁵⁹ Again, Bulwer’s preference for Zibhebhu and his constant support of him, angered the Usuthu leadership beyond imagination. It must be remembered that many of the Reserve Zulu, the so-called “loyal” element constantly crossed the Mfolozi and raided Usuthu cattle in Central Zululand, but no action was taken against them nor were they ever held responsible or condemned for their deeds. Bulwer unfailingly made it his duty to blame the Usuthu leaders for all the trouble; Shepstone and Osborn did the same if not worse.⁶⁰

While the British officials were blaming Dinuzulu and his advisors, the Boers continued with their expansionist programme. “The grasping meanness of these Boers passes all comprehension,” commented Cardew, the Sub-Commissioner of Zululand, as Boer territory extended over the burial sites of the Zulu kings.⁶¹ However naïve the young Dinuzulu might have been, it is highly unlikely that he could have given away such sacred places as the graves of his forefathers.

In the midst of the chaos another figure returned to the scene to make the waters even murkier. William Grant re-emerged from obscurity in Durban to take up the post of advisor to the Usuthu leaders. This man had first entered Zulu affairs during the last months of Cetshwayo’s life when he held a similar post under that unfortunate king.⁶²

⁵⁹ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 68.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p 69.

⁶¹ Guy, “The role of colonial officials”, p 150.

⁶² Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 44.

After at first ignoring Grant, the Boers later accommodated him in the talks. When the Usuthu leaders remained inflexible the Boers ignored them and subsequently conducted proceedings with Grant and Dinuzulu alone and that facilitated the signing away of a large piece of Zulu territory to Boer occupation.

6.3 The annexation of Zululand, 1887.

Zululand from the time of the Wolseley settlement to the ultimate British annexation of the country in 1887, can be described as “a zone of severe political instability within a sphere of nominal imperial influence”.¹ Historians such as Jeff Guy, have blamed the Wolseley settlement for having created the climate that was conducive for factional strife, personal jealousies and the civil war that followed it. The placing of members of the royal family under the authority of appointed chiefs was without doubt, a formula for disaster. The alliance of Hamu, Zibhebhu and Dunn presented the fiercest opposition to the restoration of the king and, therefore, order. Forces outside Zululand fuelled the political violence.² Humanitarians led by Bishop Colenso and the Aborigines Protection Society championed Cetshwayo’s restoration while the Natal government officials and settlers opposed the return of the Zulu king and strove to create stumbling blocks on the way of Usuthu. Bulwer made it difficult for anyone to discover what his personal feelings, and his official intentions, were.³

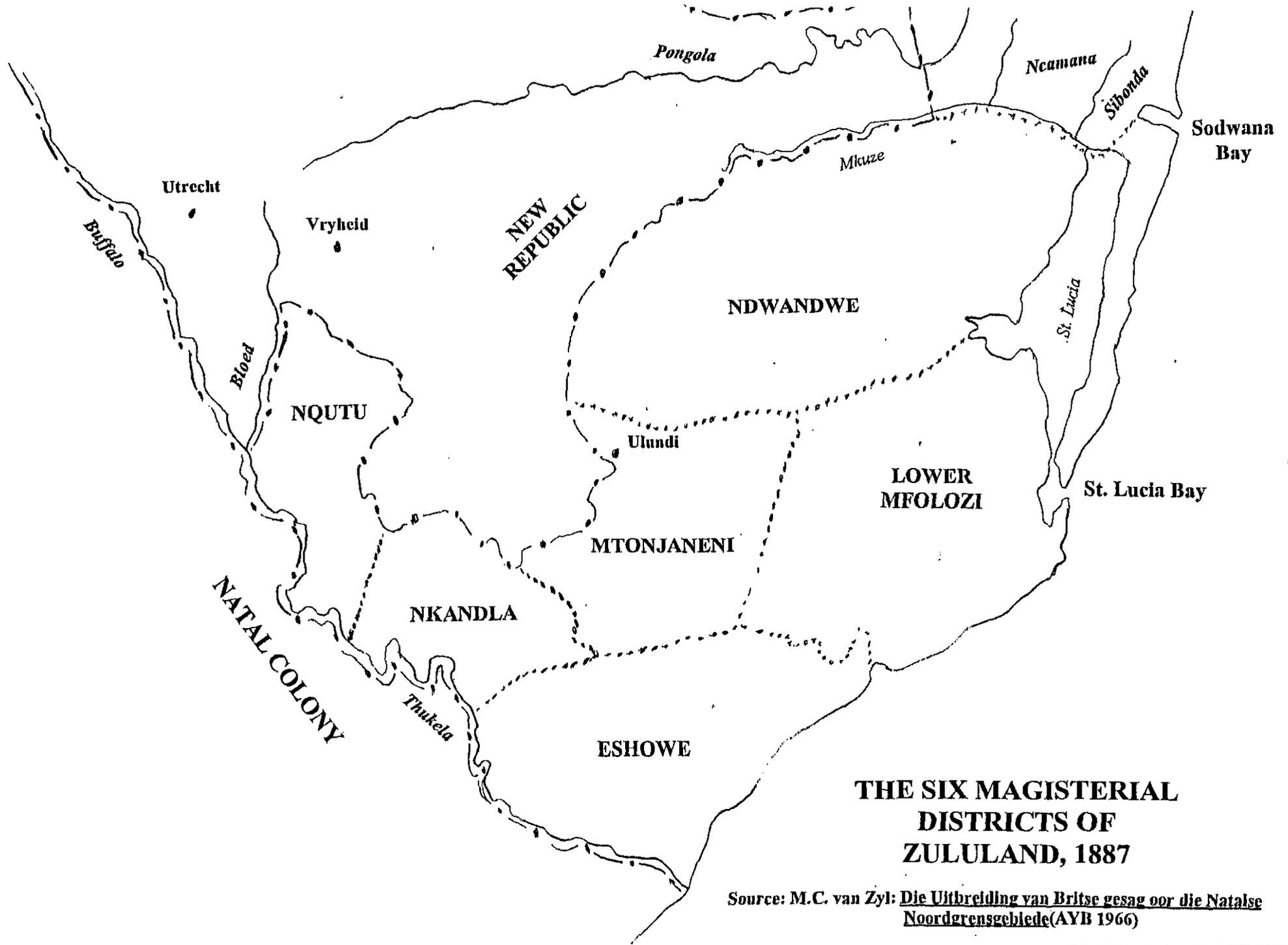
The return of Cetshwayo to a divided kingdom did not help matters either, mainly because of the actions of the British Resident, Melmoth Osborn. “Osborn’s intervention between the supporters of the Zulu royal house, and the appointed chiefs, Zibhebhu and Hamu, was a major factor in the development of the civil war,” contends Jeff Guy.⁴ His actions were partisan in support of the appointed chiefs, which made them engage in more violence with impunity. The death of Cetshwayo and the continued violence in

¹ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 365.

² Ibid, p 366.

³ Guy, The heretic, p 320.

⁴ Guy, The destruction of the Zulu kingdom, p 105.



**THE SIX MAGISTERIAL
DISTRICTS OF
ZULULAND, 1887**

Source: M.C. van Zyl: *Die Uitbreiding van Britse gesag oor die Natalse Noordgrensgebiede* (AYB 1966)

Zululand encouraged the Boers, who were always hanging on the wings, to take advantage of the situation. And then, as the Boer occupation of the greater part of Zululand went steadily forward, increased pressure was brought to bear on the British government to intervene before it was too late. Requests urging the British to do so were coming in from all sides. Cetshwayo himself had stated that he was “ a child of the English”. His father, Mpande, had belonged to the English and when anything happened he used to report to the English and he, Cetshwayo, had done the same.⁵ The Bishop, William Colenso, from after the conclusion of the hostilities, had urged that the peace terms be sought on honourable grounds, more especially because Cetshwayo’s motto appeared to be “Defense not Defiance”.⁶

While Cetshwayo was in exile, the Usuthu leaders led by Ndabuko and Mnyamana, pleaded for his return. After his death in February 1884, they pleaded for British intervention to halt the violence that had engulfed their country.⁷ All this time Colenso and the leaders of Usuthu asserted that the majority of the people of Zululand wished to be ruled by the king, but a group of officials in Natal concealed this fact from the British government by constantly refusing to report truthfully on Zulu attitudes and the events taking place in their country.⁸ Bulwer had been opposed to the restoration of Cetshwayo and had made his existence as King intolerable. His hatred for Cetshwayo influenced his reports to the Colonial Office and when the king died and Dinuzulu was nominated as the

⁵ Webb and Wright, (eds) *A Zulu king speaks*, p 62.

⁶ Edgecombe, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu nation”, p 25.

⁷ Webb, “Great Britain and the Zulu people”, p 316.

⁸ Guy, “The role of colonial officials”, p 150.

next king, Bulwer “continued to display the same spirit of hostility”.⁹ He was also openly hostile to the idea of having an interview to discuss grievances reported against the appointed chiefs.¹⁰ The historian Brian Roberts has said that history in Zululand had the uncanny thing of repeating itself.¹¹ Dinuzulu, in an attempt to avenge his father’s death and to regain the lands taken by the Mandlakazi, invited the Boers to assist. Just like the Voortrekkers of the Republic of Natalia had done to his grandfather, Mpande. The Transvaal Boers led by Coenraad Meyer, installed Dinuzulu as king of the Zulu and asserted their suzerainty over him whilst promising to offer the assistance he needed.¹² After victory over the Mandlakazi the Boer claims for a reward in cattle and land were very exorbitant, threatening to swallow up his domains and impoverish the nation even more than Zibhebhu’s ambitions.¹³

Dinuzulu and his counsellors objected at the exaggerated demands. Ndabuko, Shingana and chief Mnyamana appealed to the British for intervention. After initially rejecting British intervention the Boers agreed to a boundary with Zululand, creating their New Republic.¹⁴

The Boundary Commission set up under Melmoth Osborn completed its work of delimiting the New Republic’s borders on 25 January 1887. Dissatisfied, the Usuthu continued to petition the British government “against the alienation of so much Zulu

⁹ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 68.

¹⁰ Ballard, “The transfrontiersman”, p 318.

¹¹ Roberts, *The Zulu kings*, p 359.

¹² Marks, *Reluctant rebellion*, pp 89-90.

¹³ *Ibid*, p 90.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 90.

territory and the loss of so many royalist adherents to Boer jurisdiction".¹⁵ Ardent Usuthu loyalist such as the Qulusi, Mgazini, Buthelezi and Ntombela had fallen under Boer control and these people refused to take the oath of "personal service" that would turn them into quasi-serfs, that the Boers required of them. They alternatively moved into the Reserve Territory to add to the misery of the hungry, "dislocated and turbulent inhabitants" of that area.¹⁶ A delegation of Usuthu set off to Osborn on behalf of Mnyamana and other chiefs, to appeal for protection by the British against the aggressive proceedings of the Boers. Even Osborn himself had come to realize the terrible state of the country and was compelled to support this appeal.¹⁷ Bulwer, for his part, did not permit "agitation"; he regarded "deputations" from the Zulu as outright "demonstrations" organized deliberately by Colenso and his supporters in order to disturb the peace.¹⁸ But, however bad Bulwer might have been, to his credit, he always stood for "effective British intervention",¹⁹ and when he left in 1885 the duty of intervention fell on his successor, Sir Arthur Havelock. When approached Havelock referred the matter to the Legislative Council. They, followed by the Durban Chamber of Commerce, stated that in their opinion, it was necessary that British authority be extended over the whole of Zululand, and that this was long overdue.²⁰

¹⁵ Laband, Rope of sand, p 377.

¹⁶ Ibid, p 377.

¹⁷ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 72.

¹⁸ Guy, The heretic, p 312.

¹⁹ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 73.

²⁰ Ibid, p 73.

Meanwhile, in the north of the country, the Boers had become even more aggressive.

Armed groups of men went out to collect taxes from Usuthu homesteads. Where payment was not readily available, the tax-collectors exerted heavy fines in cattle and in some cases merciless floggings were resorted to. "For God's sake, my Lord, in common justice and mercy take the whole of the land and RULE IT..." wrote Mckenzie the Anglican Bishop of Zululand, to the Colonial Secretary.²¹ Not only from Natal and Zululand but from outside South Africa, criticism also mounted from capitals of Europe against British policies. But the Colonial Office only started to be shaken by the quest for annexation of Zululand in 1885 when German agents were reported to be seeking rights and land concessions in Zululand. Bulwer thought that Bismarck was about to repeat the trick he played in South West Africa before making that country a German protectorate. He raised the alarm with the Colonial Office and that led to the British press trumpeting a shrill cry that Britain's interests were in danger. Lord Derby, "catching the panic" asked his colleagues in cabinet to agree to the annexation of the whole of Zululand but, because of party politicking, only St Lucia Bay was annexed, then Britain stalled until 1886 when Edward Stanhope took over the Office for Colonies.²² Stanhope took up the negotiations that Lord Granville had started.

The British asked the New Republic to send a deputation to Durban to discuss the issue of annexation. The planned meeting was a failure since the Boers refused to discuss anything to do with Zululand's independence or the curtailment of their borders. To them

²¹ Binns, *Dinuzulu*, p 73.

²² Webb, "Great Britain and the Zulu people", p 321.

the Zulu were squatting on Republican soil and therefore subject to taxes and manual labour.²³ They were not amenable to any measure of compromise. Again in May 1886 Dinuzulu complained to the British authorities that the Boers were desecrating the Zulu royal graves and were driving away the traditional guardians of those sacred institutions. Early in October, Dabulamanzi followed up seeking to protest the behaviour of the Boers and was shot dead at point blank range. Dinuzulu's Ulundi homestead was burnt down,²⁴ Just when war seemed imminent, Britain organized another meeting for 18 October 1886. Meanwhile the Boers were collecting money to send Secretary of State, Esselen, to Germany to persuade the Germans to support them in their demands for St Lucia Bay and Zululand.²⁵ Appeals for outright annexation continued to pour in, this time, from the British officials in the Reserve area, who found that they were powerless to deal with a steadily worsening situation. Bishop Colenso's daughters added their voice.²⁶

Esselen's trip to Germany was a failure. After also failing to meet the British Colonial Secretary, he left behind in London a "Memorandum of facts". A document froth with "inaccuracies, many of them subtly worded to cover up the numerous misdeeds of his fellow country men".²⁷ The memorandum claimed, inter alia, that "ample room has been left for the Zulus to exist comfortably". Meanwhile Lord Stanley had, a few days previously, received a dispatch from Bulwer stating that the Zulu were in a very unsettled

²³ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 298.

²⁴ Ibid, p 298.

²⁵ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 70.

²⁶ Marks, Reluctant rebellion, p 91.

²⁷ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 71.

state, and that the Boers were getting ready to face a confrontation. The negotiations set for the 18 October 1886 with the Boers led to a recognition of their independence in most of the land they wanted except St Lucia. At least a portion of the country was left for the Zulu and Boer suzerainty over them was abandoned.²⁸ The Zulu were unhappy with the whole arrangement and made their dissatisfaction heard but there was nothing else they could do. On 4 December 1886 the Boundary Commission started the demarcation of borders and by the 15 January 1887 their work was completed.²⁹ Then, on 5 February 1887 Osborn called together the leadership and informed them that their part of the country was to be a British Protectorate.³⁰ This was Osborn's own initiative which was defended by none other than Shepstone who argued that as a result of Britain's "feeble and hesitating policy towards Zululand the old trust is badly shaken. (that) The Zulu were reluctant to commit themselves to British rule, however much they might secretly wish it".³¹ While the Zulu were digesting the news and considering its implications, Melmoth Osborn found time to ask for ratification on the basis that it had become necessary to avoid a complete breakdown of order.³² He was sure that the Zulu, for their part, would be "glad of the step taken".³³

On the basis of information received from Osborn as the British Resident, on 9 May

²⁸ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 298.

²⁹ Ibid, p 298.

³⁰ The formular applied in Basuthuland was being tried belatedly in Zululand, when too much land had been lost already.

³¹ Guy, "The role of colonial official's, p 161.

³² Ibid, p 161.

³³ Ibid, p 161.

1887, the British government decided to annex the country entirely.³⁴ Sir Arthur Havelock, the Governor of Natal Colony, became governor of the new territory as well and the laws of Natal were applicable. Using his newly acquired powers, Havelock appointed Melmoth Osborn to be Resident Commissioner and also Chief Magistrate of Zululand. On 20 May 1887 Osborn raised the Union Jack at Eshowe which was to be his capital.³⁵ In the words of the historian, DR Morris, it was “seven years too late to do any good”, because a large number of the Zulu people were already disillusioned with Britain and were not eager for her protection anymore.³⁶

The editor of the Natal Witness, according to Binns, commented on 21 May 1887 that: “The best thing for the Zulus is to accept with as good or grace as possible the final termination of what must surely be one of the most disgraceful episodes of British administration and diplomacy in any part of the world.”³⁷ To inform the Zulu of the new status of their country, a ceremony was called for 21 June 1887 where the Zulu were invited through their chiefs. Osborn made available fifty-two head of cattle to the chiefs to slaughter for the feast in honour of the occasion. Many of the important chiefs were present: Zibhebhu, Tshingwayo, Sigananda, John Dunn and others. However, Dinuzulu and Ndabuko were noticeably absent.³⁸ Laws and regulations for the future administration of Zululand were made known to the Zulu chiefs.

³⁴ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 298.

³⁵ Laband, Rope of sand, p 379.

³⁶ Marks, Reluctant rebellion, pp 91-92.

³⁷ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 100.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p 101.

On that occasion Osborn formerly assumed his office as Resident Commissioner and Chief Magistrate. He was entrusted with the authority to take any measures he deemed suitable to promote peace and good governance in the land. Sir Arthur Havelock was to rule the country by proclamation as Supreme Chief. Local magistracies were established in the districts of Eshowe, Nkandla, Nquthu, Mthonjaneni, Ndwandwe and the Lower Mfolozi.³⁹ Magistrates appointed were: AL Pretorius for Nkandla, Major Mckean for Nquthu, JL Knight was appointed at Mthonjaneni, but he established himself at Mfume on the farm of WJ Orlett, which later became the town of Melmoth.⁴⁰

The imposition of the new colonial order and the collection of hut tax was placed in the hands of the local magistrates, and the laws in force in the colony of Natal were to be extended to the territory of Zululand.⁴¹ The Commissioner and the magistrates were expected to enforce their authority through a paramilitary force that was recruited among the Zulu themselves. George Mansel, helped by three young white sub-inspectors, took charge of what became known generally as the Zululand Police.⁴² The whole arrangement was essentially an extension of the “Shepstone system” which, for its success, would depend on the mollification of the royal family.

Dinuzulu’s absence from official occasions was a sign of protest. He was known to be complaining bitterly about the inclusion of so many Zulu into the New Republic. There

³⁹ Van Zyl, Die uitbreiding van die Britse gesag, p 179.

⁴⁰ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 299.

⁴¹ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 101.

⁴² Laband, Rope of sand, p 380.

was nothing, in his view, which pointed to an acceptance of the new dispensation for Zululand.⁴³ The precise extent of the change in his position would perhaps, have been difficult for him to understand. He was never consulted about any changes that were made, hence he continued to rule his people in the same manner as had previously been the practice.⁴⁴ At that moment it was established that a meeting had been held at Usuthu and a resolution arrived at to once more appeal to the Boers at Vryheid to proceed against the British, who had deposed Dinuzulu. Dinuzulu went personally to Vryheid accompanied by Ndabuko and another uncle, Mahanana, chief Mabhoko of the Mgazini, Chief Bantubensumo of the Buthelezi and other chiefs and headmen.⁴⁵

Havelock had chosen his men. They were men of extensive experience in the administration of Africans, they spoke fluent IsiZulu, they were familiar with military command and these were tough men with "stamina and pluck".⁴⁶ But they were young, most of them from Natal and from the start acted aggressively towards the chiefs who did not obey their instructions in their respective districts.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the authorities were concerned about the attitude of Dinuzulu and Ndabuko in the Ndwandwe district where the magistrate, Richard Addison, reported that they were defying his authority. Charles Saunders at Eshowe District, Arthur Shepstone at the Lower Mfolozi and the others, though working under extremely difficult conditions, all still found gratification in

⁴³ Laband, Rope of sand, p 279.

⁴⁴ Gibson, The story of the Zulus, p 287.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p 288.

⁴⁶ Laband, Rope of sand, p 380.

⁴⁷ Guy, "The role of British official's", p 162.

working among “a people who accorded them semi-royal respect”.⁴⁸ Osborn was very suspicious of Dinuzulu’s constant visits to the New Republic where the king’s most ardent followers were to be found. The Resident Commissioner was sure that Dinuzulu was intriguing with the Boers once again. According to Shula Marks, Osborn may have been right.⁴⁹ The Governor, Sir Arthur Havelock, was disturbed by the reports he received about the conduct of Ndabuko and Dinuzulu, especially about their constant visits to the New Republic. He was also worried about their attitude towards the Resident Commissioner and the way they handled his messengers. He called them to the new capital, Eshowe, threatening them with a charge of treason if they failed to attend the meeting.⁵⁰

In November 1887 the Governor travelled to Zululand to inform Dinuzulu and Ndabuko personally that “the House of Shaka was a thing of the past like water that is spilt”, and to penalize and fine them for their rebellious activities since the British annexed Zululand. At the end of their meeting, Havelock made a chilling announcement. Chilling because it was the most unexpected kind of thing to come from the British. He announced that “Zibhebhu was to be returned to his territory”.⁵² It was indeed the maddest thing to do; a thing that was undoubtedly going “to prove a disastrous expedient”.⁵³ Osborn, through his numerous telegrams to the Governor, “had persistently been pressing for the return of

⁴⁸ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 380.

⁴⁹ Marks, *Reluctant rebellion*, p 92.

⁵⁰ Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu country*, p 290.

⁵¹ Gibson, *The story of the Zulus*, p 292.

⁵² Guy, “The role of British official’s”, p 162.

⁵³ Laband, “British boundary adjustments”, p 44.

his old favourite, Zibhebhu, to his former territory".⁵⁴ Richard Addison, the local magistrate for the Ndwandwe District was appointed to determine the new boundaries. He was to remove the seat of his magistracy to a point sandwiched between Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu.⁵⁵ The spot chosen was situated on a high wind-swept ridge known as Nongoma (the place of the diviner). On 18 November 1887, Addison and fifty men of the Zululand Police (Nongqayi) arrived at the appointed place and began building the new magistracy. The magistracy was, at first, called Vuna, the name originating from the stream that flowed nearby. But after some time, it was officially known as Nongoma.⁵⁶

At Vuna, Addison soon found himself almost immediately beset with real problems. In his footsteps followed Zibhebhu, on 3 December 1887 with seven hundred hungry followers of the Mandlakazi from their exile in the Reserve Territory. From that day onwards a note of trouble was sounded.⁵⁷ The story of unrest and bloodshed and boundary disputes that ensued belongs to another chapter in the sad history of Zululand.

⁵⁴ Binns, Dinuzulu, p 107.

⁵⁵ Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu country, p 300.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p 300.

⁵⁷ Gibson, The story of the Zulus, p 294.

6.4 The demise of the Zulu Kingdom 1880 – 1887.

The defeat suffered by the British at Isandlwana persuaded the British government to block Frere's further attempts to extend Britain's responsibilities in the Natal – Zululand region. The home government was, however, prepared to release reinforcements to ensure British prestige, military reputation and that the position of the white man in the eyes of Africans were maintained.¹ Finally, the war was won by the British, leaving the social and economic life of the Zulu severely disrupted. However, winning the war was one thing; but putting together a workable peace was something entirely different.

As early as April 1879, Frere heard that the Disraeli ministry had censured him for his Zulu policy.² Officials at the Colonial Office began to realize that the war had been a mistake. Disraeli's Tories faced with an election within months, needed a speedy settlement which would not be costly to the Exchequer. Sir Garnet Wolseley appeared to be the most outstanding candidate to take Britain out of the mess created by Sir Bartle Frere. Indeed, Wolseley's settlement was cheap and speedy.³ Cetshwayo was his priority. He had to be punished for breaking his "coronation vows" and removed from his subjects. Wolseley revived the pretext for the invasion of the Zulu country. He also claimed that Britain wanted to liberate the Zulu from the brutality of the tyrannical king of the Zulu.

Wolseley was inundated with all sorts of suggestions. Eventually, on 1 September 1879, he decided to divide the country into thirteen chiefdoms with appointed chiefs for each

¹ Guy, The Heretic, p 272.

² Walker, A history of southern Africa, p 379.

³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 244.

one of them. Superficially, Wolseley's Ulundi settlement seemed viable to the average Zulu and to some of the minor chiefs because it did not interfere with the homestead economy.⁴ There were no reparations to be paid and the independence of the Zulu people from outside control was guaranteed. For a short time after the settlement there was the uneasy calm that usually precedes a storm. Below the otherwise quiet surface there was a seething mass of discontent. External forces also began to exploit the cleavages that existed, thereby initiating a disastrous civil war. The civil war "so weakened Zulu society that within ten years of the war, outsiders had gained control of Zululand and its people".⁵

Cetshwayo, who had disgraced Britain was exiled and never, under any circumstance, to be allowed to return to his native land. In Zululand, traitors like Hamu were placed over proud chiefs like Mnyamana, who had been Cetshwayo's Prime Minister. Ndabuko, brother to the king, was placed under Zibhebhu whereas before the war, he had been second only to the king.⁶ To assert their new-found authority, the chiefs demanded full homage and collected cattle from the rich people under them. By 1880 Ndabuko could not stand it any longer. He quietly slipped off to Pietermaritzburg to petition for the return of Cetshwayo.

Even before the war was ended, Cetshwayo had played his part. Midway through the fighting he had dispatched his messengers to the Bishop of Natal, John William Colenso, informing the Bishop that whatever may happen, it would not be his fault.

⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 246.

⁵ Guy, "The centenary of the British invasion", lecture.

⁶ Bulpin, Shaka's country, p 190.

While the king was in the Castle at Cape Town, Colenso sent him a message of goodwill in October 1879. Cetshwayo thanked him and asked him to “speak well for him”.⁷ Indeed the Bishop set out to find the truth and fight for the king’s restoration. Reading from the *Blue Books* and interviewing the Zulu themselves, he found that the responsibility for the ghastly happenings in Zululand lay with men who flouted the principles of English justice and was prepared to expose them.⁸ It came out that John Shepstone was a liar and that there was nothing to fear from Cetshwayo. The belligerence of the Zulu, so much trumpeted about in colonial newspapers, could not be proved.

WD Wheelwright who became the first British Resident with the responsibility to adjudicate in all quarrels was well aware of what was brewing in Zululand and because he had very little power, he resigned. He was replaced by Melmoth Osborn in March 1880. In September 1880 Osborn’s powers were extended to Chief Magistrate over all British subjects in Zululand. People like Theophilus Shepstone and John Dunn criticized the wisdom of such a settlement. Trouble soon came. The chiefs were at each other’s throats. Fighting broke out in a number of places. A serious clash being that of Hamu’s attack on the Qulusi, the king’s ardent followers. The arrival of Stimela in the Mthethwa district, contesting Chief Mlandela’s position, also led to considerable bloodshed. As a result of the ongoing upheaval and confusion in Zululand, Shepstone also began to advocate for the reinstatement of King Cetshwayo. He pointed out the folly in the basis of *Wolseley’s settlement* which was the exclusion of all persons who were associated with the Zulu royal house from all official positions and power.⁹

⁷ Guy, *The Heretic*, p 289.

⁸ *Ibid*, p 288.

⁹ Marks, *Reluctant rebellion*, p 87.

He insisted that “Zulu authority had to be located in a single source”, stressing the importance of the Shakan legacy within the Zulu Kingdom. In his campaign for the reinstatement however, he carefully avoided including in Cetshwayo’s control the strip of land south of Zululand which he hoped to populate with his “surplus Natal Africans”. Reserves in Natal Colony were over populated.¹⁰ Any settlement in Zululand required that Natal Colony be kept in mind, reasoned Shepstone.

Although Shepstone effectively retired in 1880, he still continued to work to promote the “Shepstone system” of “Native policy” through what Colenso called the “Shepstone Clique”. Members of the clique were identified as Melmoth Osborn, Sir George Pomeroy Colley, Sir Henry Bulwer and Sir Arthur Havelock. Also included were Sir Theophilus Shepstone’s brother, John and his son Henrique.¹¹

The Hamu-Qulusi and the Mlandela-Stimela episodes were only curtain raisers for what was to follow. The whole country was buzzing with rumours and threats of violence. Loud complaints came from aristocrats about Zibhebhu and Hamu taking all their cattle.¹² On 31 August 1881, Sir Evelyn Wood, Governor of Natal visited the British Residency at Nhlazatshe. It was just after the British defeat by the Boers at Majuba which reduced British prestige to a very low ebb. When he met the chiefs, Hamu refused to hand over the cattle and Zibhebhu replied by expelling Ndabuko from his lands. Ndabuko the king’s most senior brother and leader of the royal family and Usuthu, withdrew

¹⁰ Guy, The Heretic, p 317.

¹¹ Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p 108.

¹² Bulpin, Shaka’s country, p 191.

to Mfanawendlela's territory and there started plotting revenge. Hamu returned to Ngenetsheni and on 2 October 1881, he attacked the Qulusi and drove them into the Transvaal. Zululand was a mess.¹³ In April 1882 a huge delegation of chiefs, headmen and other loyalists marched on Pietermaritzburg. They complained about Hamu and Zibhebhu's oppressions and also expressed their bewilderment at the unwillingness of the British to embrace them as subjects.¹⁴ Finally after much persuasion Lord Kimberley informed Bulwer that Cetshwayo was allowed to visit London to present his case personally. On 12 July 1882, Cetshwayo left Cape Town on board the Arab for London. In the meantime Bulwer informed the Colonial Office that Cetshwayo could return only if part of Zululand was taken away from him to be "a special native territory under Natal government rule".¹⁵ Clearly the influence of Theophilus Shepstone could be detected from such a statement. A way was being paved for the so-called "surplus Africans" from Natal Colony to be settled in Zulu territory.

The Queen received the Zulu visitors courteously and handed them over to the Colonial Office. Kimberley had decided to restore the king to an area of Zululand that could not be determined immediately. This was to be done in order to set aside an area for the "loyal chiefs who could not accept Cetshwayo's authority".¹⁶ The chiefs who had been appointed would resist the restoration. The traditional Shakan arrangement of a central authority had been destroyed. Shaka, in his time, became not only the civil administrative and military head of his people, but their spiritual head as well. In him were centralized all the

¹³ Bulpin, *Shaka's country*, p192.

¹⁴ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 253.

¹⁵ Guy, *The Heretic*, p 327.

¹⁶ Taylor, *Shaka's children*, p 253.

powers of state. In place of that arrangement, the settlement introduced a superficial division of the kingdom. Cetshwayo was to return to a divided country. He was told of this arrangement formerly on 15 August 1882. Which part of the country would be his, Kimberley could not tell. Ultimately the new Zululand was divided into three parts. Cetshwayo's kingdom lay in the centre; to the north Zibhebhu retained his Mandlakazi country and to the south, a reserve territory was created out of the lands of chiefs Dunn and Hlubi. On the way to his installation, Cetshwayo told his supporters to disregard the proposed partition. At the coronation venue on 29 January, the king observed how mixed the feelings of his people were. Hamu failed to attend while Zibhebhu only came to meet Theophilus Shepstone who had come out of retirement to install the king. Still, Cetshwayo settled down and rebuilt his Ondini homestead. The story is told that Shaka's spirit, *idlozi*, had returned to the kingdom and attended Cetshwayo.¹⁷

The British installed Henry Francis Fynn as Resident with Cetshwayo. Osborn became Resident Commissioner in the Reserve area. In April 1883 a force of fifty Zulu under Inspector G Mansel was raised in order to support Osborn. The force was known as Nongqayi. In the north, Zibhebhu and his white adviser, Johan Colenbrander, were busy planning. Zululand was in ferment; all around there was violence. It was only weeks after the king's return that a group of Usuthu loyalists near the Ngome forest marshalled an army about 5000 strong and invaded Zibhebhu's territory. They burnt Zibhebhu's Nkungwini homestead without much opposition.¹⁸ They then marched on Bangonomo, but at Msebe valley they met their Waterloo. Zibhebhu, the first class general had been

¹⁷ Hamilton, *Terrific majesty*, p 109.

¹⁸ Bulpin, *Shaka's country*, p 195.

waiting for them. On 20 July Zibhebhu followed his enemies to Ondini where he destroyed most of the Usuthu leadership that had congregated there.¹⁹ Cetshwayo managed to flee and hide in Reserve Territory's Nkandla forest. In August 1883 Mnyamana tried to solicit aid from Natal in brokering peace between Usuthu and the Mandlakazi.²⁰ However, British policy remained that of leaving the Zulu to settle their own affairs.²¹ Meanwhile Zibhebhu refused to allow the Buthelezi to plant their crops, rejoicing at their degradation. He continued to hunt the Usuthu down through the desolate country.²² From his refuge in the Nkandla forest, Cetshwayo tried in vain to rally his supporters. The Mandlakazi were ravaging the whole area, destroying food stocks and homesteads and taking with them women and children.

Although Osborn was a die-hard enemy of the Zulu royal family and its aspirations, nevertheless, Cetshwayo realized he could achieve very little without his assistance. His people needed to settle down and plant for the coming season. With that in mind, Cetshwayo allowed himself to be conducted by Fynn to Eshowe on 15 October 1883. He and Osborn detested one another, therefore his going to Eshowe was "the final and most galling humiliation" for the unfortunate Cetshwayo.²⁴ Once again fate was unkind to the man. The British, he and his father had trusted, again deserted him. As he lay dying at

¹⁹ Laband, "British Boundary Adjustments", p 43.

²⁰ Laband, Rope of sand, p 369.

²¹ Webb, "Great Britain and the Zulu people", p 317.

²² Laband, Rope of sand, p 369.

²³ Ibid, p 367.

²⁴ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 258.

Eshowe, he is said to have instructed his half-brother, Dabulamanzi, to look after his son Dinuzulu and grow him well.²⁵ He died on 8 February 1884 under mysterious and still unkind circumstances. Dinuzulu inherited the problems of his father. The young man grew up “in the clutches of Zibhebhu, the man seen by the Usuthu as a British puppet”.²⁶ The fighting between Zibhebhu and Usuthu preyed on Dinuzulu’s mind forcing him and his uncles to seek Boer assistance. In May 1884, Boer fire-power was used to destroy Zibhebhu and a Boer protectorate was established over Dinuzulu’s kingdom. In return for their services, the Boers were allowed to remain in Zululand with farms on which to graze their cattle.

The Boers and Usuthu conducted a follow-up operation and defeated the Mandlakazi at Tshaneni, forcing Zibhebhu to seek sanctuary in the Reserve Territory.²⁷ However, the Usuthu found themselves “standing in Pyrrhic triumph amid the ashes of everything that had been the Zulu Kingdom”.²⁸ There was nothing for Usuthu to celebrate. On 5 August the Boers proclaimed the New Republic and began demarcating farms against the clamour of protestation from Usuthu. Sir Arthur Havelock succeeded Bulwer in 1885 and immediately listened to opinions regarding Zululand and British intervention. On the basis of the information received, the whole of Zululand was declared a British Reserve in May 1887. In June 1887 British Zululand was announced at Eshowe and Havelock was to rule the country by proclamation as the Supreme Chief. That finally brought an end to the Zulu Kingdom.

²⁵ Laband, *Rope of sand*, p 368.

²⁶ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 271.

²⁷ Laband, “British Boundary Adjustments”, p 43.

²⁸ Taylor, *Shaka’s children*, p 260.

CHAPTER 7

OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF ZULU PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS.

Historians have stressed the significance of land and the dependence of the Zulu upon the land. Laband has stated that the relationship between the Zulu and “the land upon which they depended for their livelihood was immediate,” and that the physical environment was well suited for their way of life.¹ Rivers and streams criss-cross one another in almost all directions. In short, the land is well watered. The pastures for their cattle were extensive and fertile. As tillers of the soil and herders of cattle, the Zulu were indeed a fortunate people. Game “abounded in great variety and unimaginable quantity”, overseen by myriads of bird species.²

Politically motivated raids southwards towards the Mzimkhulu led to the cessation of agriculture and the rearing of cattle. People fled in search of refuge and this process undoubtedly facilitated the subsequent settlement of whites on Natal’s well-watered grasslands.³ The advent of Shaka and the establishment of the Zulu dynasty brought political stability to the area between the Phongola and the Mzinkhulu rivers. Rival clans and chiefdoms were brought together into one Zulu nation with a central authority. Shaka and his regiments were the main factor throughout that vast kingdom, all other rivals having been eliminated. Those clans and chiefdoms which escaped incorporation into the Zulu nation continued to live a disorganised and precarious existence, seeking refuge in caves and forests, afraid to keep stock or till the soil. The Cele and Thuli chiefdoms were scattered around the bluff while the others were spread out southwards.

¹ Laband, Rope of sand, p 3.

² Ibid, p 4.

³ Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and exploitation, p 2.

The 1820s witnessed new challenges and threats and also new possibilities, appearing as they did, from the sea and from the Drakensberg into Natal. In 1824 Shaka welcomed the first white people into the kingdom and that marked the beginning of troubles of a vastly different kind to plague an independent Zululand that Shaka was busy consolidating. The Whites sought protection, hunting and trading rights, and these were freely given to them for as long as they were prepared to pay allegiance to the Zulu king. And, like all other subjects, they were expected to take part in the activities organized by the king, be they of an economic, social or military nature.

It was at this time that the western world started hearing stories about the magnificent Zulu and their amazing king. The British settlers regularly sent reports to their sponsors at the Cape. They wrote about the land and its trade possibilities. Frank Emery has pointed to the risk that “the richness of the Natalian cornucopia would be exaggerated in promotional literature, aimed narrowly at attracting prudent capitalists and industrious settlers”.⁴ Most blatantly, colonists were misled with regard to sizes of farms and the supply of labour but not on the nature of the place. Natal was indeed a beautiful place, “at least as far as hill and hollow, green trees and grass could make it...landscape covered with small hills, as steep as the old braes of Scorland”.⁵ Taylor writes of the green rolling land that tumbles away from the mountains of the Drakensberg east to the Indian Ocean.⁶ The port settlers, especially Nathaniel Isaacs, who wrote his bestseller, which he titled:

⁴ Frank Emery, “Early colonists perceptions of Natal”, Journal of Natal and Zulu History, VIII, 1985, p3.

⁵ Ibid, p3.

⁶ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 23.

Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa and had it published in 1836, were responsible for shaping images of the Zulu Kingdom that continued to influence generations of European settlers.⁷ Julie Pridmore has singled out Robert Godlonton, an Eastern Cape landowner and journalist who was not only interested in the commercial potential of Port Natal, but was also looking at the possibilities of a permanent British settlement in the Indian Ocean hinterland.⁸ In his Grahamstown Journal, Godlonton printed material that highlighted the economic potential of Natal. Letters from the settlers at the port were published, most of them containing negative descriptions of King Shaka and later King Dingane who were seen as reasons for the need for British rule to be extended to Natal presumably to protect the British traders from the “enterprising spirit” of American whalers who were seen operating off the east coast.⁹

The British authorities in London, were not eager to spend money on these native territories simply because they did not envisage any economic advantage accruing from the venture at that time. Nonetheless, the story about Shaka being a pitiless and savage conqueror continued to fill the pages of newspapers, magazines and hunting story books. Very recently, Dan Wylie has argued that the essential features of the traditional Shaka story can still be detected in each literary contribution coming from those with a “Euro-colonial mentality”.¹⁰ Carolyn Hamilton is one of those historians that debunk the legend

⁷ Taylor, Shaka’s children, pp 11-13.

⁸ Pridmore, “Pioneers” and “natives”, p 54.

⁹ *Ibid*, p 54.

¹⁰ Dan Wylie, Savage delight: white myths of Shaka (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 2000), p 64.

of a despotic King Shaka and disregards much of the literature that portray Shaka as a tyrant. She traces the details of his atrocities to dubious sources, believing that they all, most probably, originated from the stories of the traders who depicted Shaka as a demon after his assassination in 1828.¹¹ Paradoxically, the selfsame settlers, on their meeting the Zulu earlier, had described them as a civilized and dignified people.¹²

In his book on Zulu kings, Brian Roberts has asserted that: "The story of the Zulu kings is largely a story of territorial conflicts." He further argued that from the outset, "the fortunes of the Zulu dynasty were inextricably linked with a struggle for land" and also that "Shaka's claim to supremacy owed as much to territorial aggrandizement as it did to military superiority".¹³ In an earlier History of the Zulu and neighbouring tribes, AT Bryant had stated that: "The banks of the Tukela.....were thickly populated by numerous clans.....To these Shaka now hied himself and won victories such as he had never won before- bloodless victories, yet each withal bringing its increment of territory and power".¹⁴

For as long as the Zulu Kingdom remained territorially intact, the dominance of the Zulu kings was assured and the independence of the kingdom guaranteed. This statement might appear obvious, however, its intrinsic significance needs to be appreciated. That land could represent power was a revolutionary concept in traditional politics, it having

¹¹ Hamilton, Terrific majesty, p72.

¹² Taylor, Shaka's children, pp 77-95.

¹³ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p356.

¹⁴ Bryant, History of the Zulu and neighboring tribes, p49.

been responsible for the rise of the Zulu nation as well as its eventual downfall. The loss of territory meant the loss of power and the end of Zulu dominance in Natal and Zululand.¹⁵

Threats to the land of the Zulu were evident from the very early settlement of the British hunter-traders at Port Natal where King and Isaacs and Farewell were outmaneuvering each other to get Shaka to sign off grants of land to them.¹⁶ This was not a new thing done by Europeans. Ever since Roman times, Europeans had been “nibbling at the mysterious continent to the south”.¹⁷ To them Africa was “vacant” and open for European occupation. So that these men, who were scarcely the cream of their society, nevertheless, represented the interest of their country-Britain. The interests of Great Britain being the acquisition of more and more land in colonies in Asia and Africa.

Shaka’s welcoming friendliness was demonstrated by his appointment of King to head his diplomatic mission to King George of Great Britain. Other members of the mission being Chief Sotobe, a trusted insider; Chief Mbozamboza, an elder statesman in the royal court, and Jacob Msimbithi an interpreter.¹⁸ Before realizing the fruits of the mission, Shaka died in a violent setting, leaving half of the land of the Zulu in the hands of Europeans who were to rule it with a different kind of violence. Landlessness, poverty, forced labour and migrant labour, characterized the new order.

¹⁵ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 356.

¹⁶ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 24.

¹⁷ Pakenham, The scramble for Africa, p xv.

¹⁸ Du Buisson, The white man cometh, p 24.

The Trekkers established their Republic of Natalia between the Thukela and Mzimkhulu rivers and decided that the Zulu who were “new” to the area be removed to make way for every “Voortrekker seun” to own sufficient land to pursue their farming interests. The violence of deprivation, impoverishment and the expropriation of their land impacted negatively on the Zulu. On the other hand the new condition of the Trekkers as large landholders, well supplied with cheap labour, did not stimulate them “to apply the effort and the sacrifice and the courage of the Trek to their farms”.¹⁹ They failed to be pioneers in equal measure to the Great Trek and to the settlement.

The government of the Voortrekkers in Natal was short-lived mainly because of its failure to consolidate authority over the dislocated Zulu refugees in an orderly and peaceful manner.²⁰ Clashes between the Trekkers and their Zulu and Mpondo neighbours threatened the stability of the whole subcontinent, a situation that convinced Sir George Napier of the need for British intervention.²¹ Historians have not researched the attitudes and feelings of “hope” among the Zulu as the Voortrekker order was being terminated. A number of Stuart’s informants made him aware of the general feeling among the Zulu that the British were a better choice. To the Trekkers Natal, in the end, appeared to be something of a disappointment. The lush grasslands had proved less productive than expected.²² Conflict and bloodshed became the order of the day.

¹⁹ De Kiewiet, A history of South Africa: social and economic, p183.

²⁰ Ballard, The transfrontiersman, p 47.

²¹ Lambert, Betrayed trust, pp 7-8.

²² Ransford, The Great Trek, pp 180-181.

According to Clifton Crais the passionately mythological “Great Trek” was nothing but a continuation of an earlier pattern of “expansion, trade, plunder and settlement” among the Dutch farmers.²³ Sadly, their battle-won Republic was shortlived.

The death of Dingane marked the end of the Zulu kingdom in real terms. The strong, independent, all-conquering monarchy, built block for block by Shaka, no longer existed. From that time onwards the Zulu kings “reigned in the shadow of their white neighbors and that shadow was constantly shifting and always threatening”.²⁴ Mpande, “proud and corpulent” with a much reduced kingdom, accepted the position of a vassal to the Volksraad at Pietermaritzburg.²⁵ However, the legacy of the glory days lingered on like the melody of music long after the tune was played, and even the lethargic King Mpande could not resist the formation of amabutho in the numerous amakhanda spread throughout all the districts of the kingdom.²⁶

By 1848 Mpande’s regiments were ready for a taste of blood in battle. They attacked Langalibalele’s Hlubi and drove them into the hands of Theophilus Shepstone in the Colony of Natal. The Zulu army had been badly reduced at Blood River and again at Maqongqo when the Zulu fought against the Zulu. Consequently, Mpande was rebuilding the strength of the kingdom-its army, but circumstances had been greatly altered.

²³ Crais, The making of the colonial order, p 96.

²⁴ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 335.

²⁵ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 170.

²⁶ See Webb and Wright, JSA, vol.3, evidence of Mkando, p149; Also the evidence of Mpatshana, p 328.

Across the Thukela in the Colony of Natal, immigrants were taking their share of the land, establishing towns and villages, in the English tradition. Historians who write the history of Natal handle the developments within the white community much more assuredly than those taking place among the Zulu. An inevitable reflexion of where the direction of research has been so far. Hence the history of the district is started with lacunae – a huge jig-saw puzzle with a lot of missing parts.

Shula Marks has warned that a history that recounts the activities of white people in South Africa since 1652 to the present cannot legitimately claim to be the history of South Africa.²⁷ The same is applicable to Natal and Zululand. EH Carr, a great historian, had earlier warned that facts do not speak for themselves, they speak only when the historian calls on them. It is therefore the historian who decides which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context. In the case of Natal and Zululand, history has been pre-determined and pre-arranged by people who were imbued with a particular point of view and concentrated on the facts which supported that view.

The Trekkers deprived Mpande of some 31 000 head of cattle, the very pride of the Zulu people. Weakness had come to characterize the Zulu throne especially with regard to relations with Europeans who had guns. The land-hungry whites, on the other hand, capitalized on the weakness and fear displayed by a hopeless, subject race. The Zulu victims of the Mfecane, realizing that their lands were no longer under the control of the Zulu dynasty, soon returned to re-establish their homes. Instead of empty lands, they

²⁷ Marks, "African and Afrikaner history", p 435.

found that the Trekkers were occupying every inch of their land. Some of them were taken in as labour tenants on Trekker farms and those who could not be absorbed into the system of five families per farm were declared “surplus kafirs”, to be driven out of the Republic. However, the Trekker administration failed to achieve their intended policies because they lacked the resources. The burden of the extra Zulu was quickly taken off the shoulders of the Volksraad by the British. As early as September 1841 Sir George Napier had written that “Her Majesty has desired me to inform the emigrant farmers that she cannot acknowledge a portion of her own subjects as an independent Republic”.²⁸ The British thereafter manufactured enough reasons to justify a war at Congella in 1842 which resulted in the Republic falling “apart like a soggy piece of blotting paper”.²⁹ Their faithful ally, Mpande who had already seen which way the wind was blowing, gravitated towards the British and actually offered to help attack the Trekkers.³⁰

In December 1845 the Republic of Natalia ceased to exist when Lieutenant-Governor, Martin West arrived at Pietermaritzburg. The formal annexation of Natalia meant the introduction of the “Shepstone system” of locking up Africans in barren areas called “reserves” or “locations”. These areas were expected to be the only lands the Zulu of Natal could regard as their own. Of the twelve million acres of land that made up Natal, these locations comprised only two million acres. Unfair when juxtaposed with the population that stood at 100 000 Africans and about 2500 Whites. Confirmed by almost

²⁸ Warhurst, Geens the making of South Africa, p 106.

²⁹ Roberts, The Zulu kings, p 179.

³⁰ Ransford, The Great Trek, p 179.

every government commission that the lands so generously granted the Africans were for the most part “fit only for the eagle and the baboon”.³¹ However, Shepstone did the best of a bad situation and earned the friendship and affection of the Zulu who were at peace except that more Zulu were crossing over to seek a better life in Natal, thus exposing Zululand to exploitation as more British traders and hunters penetrated the Kingdom.

RL Cope, in his centenary lecture, discusses the relationship between the Zulu Kingdom and its white neighbours, in particular, to try and explain why the peaceful and even amicable relations between the Zulu and the British should, after almost forty years, have ended with a British invasion of Zululand and the destruction of the Kingdom.

Cetshwayo, right up to the end of his life, was puzzled by the same question of why the British attacked him and destroyed his country.³² The answer lay in the possession of land and political control through federation.

The British khonza'd under Shaka and soon adapted to the Zulu way of life. In Taylor's words they “penetrated to the nations core, to its camp-fires, its councils, and its hearths”. They took part in King Shaka's campaigns as his trusted “white indunas”. They advised the king and were held in awe by the multitude of the king's subjects. A witchdoctor named Credo Mutwa, was to write many years later, that “to the Bantu, pale green or blue eyes seem super-natural, able to pierce the very soul”. No wonder they were regarded as a source of riches, of magic and power.³³ It is to men like John Dunn that Taylor referred

³¹ Russell, Natal, the Land and its story, p 198.

³² See Webb and Wright, A Zulu king speaks.

³³ Taylor, Shaka's children, p 7.

when he wrote; "So influential was he, it seemed unthinkable that many still living could remember a time when his existence was unknown". Cetshwayo brought him under his wing. But like his countrymen, to him empire came before "trust" or "integrity" or anything else. Hence he unashamedly turned against his mentor and protector exactly when Cetshwayo needed him most. Otherwise, it cannot be denied that by the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Englishman was no longer recognized as an enemy by the Zulu despite some obvious warnings. Not surprisingly, Lord Carnarvon's federation scheme met with opposition. Harris states quite correctly that: "All of the European colonial powers confronted resistance from Africans, and in several cases, the resistance was violent, long and costly to both Africans and Europeans. That the two sides were willing to pay the price for their actions is some indication of the stakes involved".³⁴ The Zululand scenario was no different. For the British, the stakes included economic rewards added to local and international political power. For Cetshwayo and his Zulu, the stakes amounted to nothing more than the preservation of the nation's institutions and the way of life, indeed, their freedom from alien encroachment and control.

The Zulu Kingdom was invaded, according to radical revisionist historians, to bring its land and labour within the reach of developing white South Africa. The discovery of diamonds created a source of indigenous capital and a host of new demands; demands for agricultural produce, for manufactured goods, for new roads and railways and for a free flow of mainly cheap labour.³⁵

³⁴ Joseph E Harris, Africans and their history: a major work of historical re-evaluation (New York, New American Library, 1972), p 161.

³⁵ Guy, "The centenary of the British invasion of Zululand", lecture.

“Defeated, dislocated and confused” the Zulu gravitated towards the white establishment seeking employment. Still keeping their Zulu traditional pride intact, they had refused to do field work (women’s work) in the sugarcane fields. Natal’s sugar farmers had to look elsewhere for labour, which in 1860 had come in the form of indentured workers from India. But gradually the conditions of life changed. The prohibition of African land-ownership outside the demarcated and under developing reserves inhibited any peasant development.³⁶ *This condition resulted in the Zulu losing control of their destiny and becoming cogs in the European economic machine.*

Driven by sheer economic necessity the Zulu were compelled to leave their homes to seek work in the mines, towns and cities. Bewildered and confused by the complete change of environment and a completely different type of existence, the strict laws of obedience to parents and those in authority, the sanctity of the home with its high moral standards, its honesty and helpfulness to one another – all were soon forgotten and life assumed an entirely different pattern.³⁷ By the 1880s the goldfields of the Witwatersrand were attracting an enormous supply of labour causing shortages in Natal Colony and driving up the prize of labour. The annexation of Zululand was the one thing needful. The government railway was advancing fast in northern Natal towards the Transvaal. In 1888 the Colonial Engineer and the Secretary for Native Affairs applied to the Resident

³⁶ Martin Legassick, “South Africa: capital accumulation and violence”, *Economy and Society*, vol. iii, 1974, p 267.

³⁷ CT Binns, *The warrior people* (Cape town, Howard Timmins, 1974), p 277.

Commissioner in Zululand to provide labour for the construction of the railway line.³⁸ Bundy has pointed out, quite accurately, that the time of the mineral revolution was a crucial period in the transformation of the bulk of the rural Africans from their pre-colonial existence of pastoralist-cultivators to their precarious present existence as subsistence inhabitants on eroded and overcrowded homelands, dependent for their survival on wages.³⁹ *Not only did the revolution change the lives of people, it also* changed the colonial policies of the British government. In 1887 the otherwise reluctant British Colonial Office suddenly convinced about the benefits of territorial expansion, agreed to the annexation of Zululand. Zulu people, on both sides of the Thukela, were then crammed in the same boat of British hegemony, which meant landlessness and hopeless poverty for them.

³⁸ Guy, "The role of colonial officials", p 167.

³⁹ Bundy, The rise and fall of the South African peasantry, preface.

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