

THE CHAOS CAUSED BY ZIBHEBHU'S RESETTLEMENT IN ZULULAND 1887-1888

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After the British victory over the Zulus in 1879, Sir Garnet Wolseley divided their land into thirteen districts and banned Cetshwayo. This, however, did not bring about a satisfactory solution.

In 1883 Cetshwayo was allowed to return to Zululand. He was, however, to have authority only over a part of Zululand. The other part was given to his British-supported enemy, Zibhebhu. Consequently, the ground for unrest was laid down because war soon broke out between the Usuthu and the Mandlakazi. The Civil War continued until February 1884, when Cetshwayo died in a kraal near Eshowe. In an attempt to avenge his father's death and to regain the Usuthu lands taken by the Mandlakazi, Dinuzulu solicited for Afrikaner aid. In May 1884, a party of Afrikaners from the Transvaal under Coenraad Meyer recognised Dinuzulu as the new King. Consequently, the Usuthu supported by the Afrikaners decisively crushed Zibhebhu's forces at the Battle of Tshaneni on 5 June 1884. Unfortunately the British authorities were against the revival of the Zulu kingdom, hence the annexation of Zululand in May 1887 and the resettlement of Zibhebhu in the Ndwandwe district.¹

Before the arrival of Zibhebhu at his old tribal lands, R.H. Addison, the magistrate who was described by Fairfield of the Colonial Office as "an injudicious young man, and one of the most potent causes of the Zulu rebellion",² immediately built a ground fort which could accommodate fifty policemen. That fort was strategically situated within a few miles from Dinuzulu's kraal and that of his uncle Ndabuko. It overlooked and was to control the main paths to Zibhebhu's territory, in the Ndwandwe district and to Somkheli's territory, in the district of Lower Mfolozi.³ Addison was thus determined to see that the resettlement of Zibhebhu was orderly done.

In spite of the thorough preparations for Zibhebhu's resettlement, there are many reasons why his orderly resettlement failed. It has to be borne in mind that after the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879, the Zulus began to look upon the British authorities as their greatest enemy. They also saw how their king suffered at the hands of the British. Consequently, Zibhebhu's alignment with the British authorities and the Civil War which followed in which he fought for the destruction of the royal family, could

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1. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, unpublished M.A. dissertation, UOVS, 1971, p. 72; C.T. Binns, *Dinuzulu: The Death of the House of Shaka*, London, 1968, p.107; E.H. Brookes and C.B. Webb, *A History of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg, 1967, p. 153; S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, Oxford, 1970, p. 69.
Minute on C.O. 427/20/2261, Gov. to Sec. St., 11.1.95, cited by S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 94.
 3. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 69.

not be forgiven by the Zulus. The Zulus had always been loyal to the royal family and therefore looked upon Zibhebhu as the enemy of the people.

The Zulu hatred towards Zibhebhu was aggravated by his selling of the Usuthu maids to the Natal Zulus. The maids had been captured by him in the Battle of Tshaneni and sold for ten cows each.⁴ Zibhebhu had attacked and wounded Cetshwayo. The Usuthu maintained that they could not have him among them.⁵

When Dinuzulu heard the news of Zibhebhu's resettlement in the Ndwandwe district, he warned that unless the governor (Sir Arthur Havelock) was deliberately plotting for violence between the Mandlakazi and the Usuthu, he would not mix them.⁶

There was also a mystery about the lands to be occupied by Zibhebhu which were according to Havelock, "those old tribal lands and sites occupied by them before the war of 1879".⁷ Melmoth Osborn, however, gave his own interpretation to Havelock's instruction by endeavouring to resettle Zibhebhu in the territory from which he and his people were removed in 1884.⁸ In that manner Osborn, Resident Commissioner, was purposely ignoring the fact that, as a result of the Battle of Tshaneni, that land was now occupied by the Usuthu, and that Zibhebhu's old tribal lands before the war of 1879 had no clear delimitation.

Wolseley's territorial arrangement of 1879, when Zibhebhu was one of the thirteen Chiefs, had his territory clearly delimited. In the West, South and the South East, the Ivuna, the Black Mfolozi, and a straight line of the confluence of the Black and White Mfolozi, northwards to the Hluhluwe river, respectively, formed the boundaries.⁹ It was in the western and southern part of his territory where he, at the same time, obtained authority over Ndabuko, Dinuzulu and Ziwezu.¹⁰ During 1883, this territory was given back to the Usuthu and Zibhebhu was compensated for his loss by Mgojana's territory, in the north-western corner including the territory bordering on the Phongolo.¹¹ The Usuthu was not satisfied with that delimitation and was not willing to co-operate with E. Fannin, the Surveyor who fixed the boundary.

It was from the territory which was ascribed to him in 1883 where Zibhebhu was removed by the Usuthu and the Afrikaners, and it was that territory which Osborn, in 1887, regarded as Zibhebhu's "old tribal lands". Zibhebhu's followers were also to be resettled on the strip between his 1884 south-boundary and the Black Mfolozi which belonged to the Usuthu and their followers.¹²

It was against this background that Zibhebhu left the Bond's Drift on the Tugela on 24 November 1887, with 700 men. Accompanying him was F. Galloway, a white superintendent of roads, who was to be Zibhebhu's adviser and helper. Most

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.* p. 70; S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 94.

6. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 72.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 73; S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 91.

8. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 73; G.D. Scholtz, *Die Oorsake van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog 1899-1902. I. Universitas*, 1947, p. 131.

9. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 74.

10. S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 86.

11. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 74.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 75; S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 92.

unfortunately F. Galloway was unfit for that position as he was described as a man who would not like to see Zululand settled too soon.¹³ Zibhebhu and his men were armed to the teeth with assegais, shields, even with guns and ammunition. They had neither provisions nor stock with them, but had to live on whatever food they could get on the way. A few women accompanied them to go and plant the fields and the rest of the women were to follow in winter. Zibhebhu's 700 men were later reinforced by 300-400 warriors of Sikizana from Swaziland.¹⁴ Sikizana was a staunch supporter of Zibhebhu and had run to Swaziland when the latter was defeated at Tshaneni. Zibhebhu and Sikizana's men were to meet at Banganomo, Zibhebhu's chief kraal.

Zibhebhu had, in the meantime, approached one of Dinuzulu's kraals, Mpisendlini, and divided his men into three groups in accordance with Zulu traditional military strategy of attack. They were singing Zulu war songs and war cries about the death of Cetshwayo, adding that Ndabuko, Dinuzulu and Ziwedu were still living.¹⁵ In other words those three men were also to be killed.

Zibhebhu eventually reached Banganomo on 5 December 1887,¹⁶ and, at that time, his men were so hunger-stricken that they were a great menace to the Usuthu kraals. Zibhebhu's plight was, however, attributed to Dinuzulu by the British authorities in Zululand on the grounds that : he (Dinuzulu) was refusing to relinquish Zibhebhu's territory and was threatening to attack him (Zibhebhu).¹⁷ In other words, according to the British in Zululand, Dinuzulu was the cause of suffering.

It was against this background that Zibhebhu, supported by the British officials and the Zululand Police, began a systematic campaign of persecution against the Usuthu and their followers: The Usuthu were immediately labelled as squatters on their territory on which Zibhebhu had been defeated in 1884; they were driven away from their huts and kraals and hundreds had to hide miserably in the forests; some were consequently forced to kill their tribal companions. According to W.Y. Campbell, the attorney, several Usuthu members were killed.¹⁸ Unfortunately the Afrikaners could no longer come to Dinuzulu's rescue, as Bulwer had earlier explained to Derby: "In this way a new situation has been created in Zululand ... which if we accept it, puts altogether an end to the relations as hitherto existing between us and the Zulu country and people. It puts an end to whatever rights we had and we undoubtedly had both rights and obligations by virtue of the war of 1879 and of the terms and conditions made with Cetshwayo in 1882 ..., and it brings us face to face with a new situation."¹⁹

From Melmoth Osborn and R.H. Addison's other correspondence, it is apparent that the Usuthu kraals were ravaged by order of the British officials because the

13. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 93.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

16. C.T. Binns, *Dinuzulu: The Death of the House of Shaka*, p. 117.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

18. S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 92; A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 81; C.T. Binns, *Dinuzulu: The Death of the House of Shaka*, p. 117.

19. C 4191, p. 89, cited by G.D. Scholtz, *Die Oorsake van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog 1899-1902. I*, p. 131.

former were not giving way to Zibhebhu;²⁰ that some of the Usuthu were fined by the acting magistrate of the Ndwandwe district, L.E.N. Tyrrell, because they had refused to leave the territory where Zibhebhu was to be resettled;²¹ and that Zibhebhu's men plundered the Usuthu kraals and looted their stock.²²

The campaign of persecution against the Usuthu was waged over a period of several months and in the process thousands of them were driven out of their land. Campbell, the attorney, estimated the number of the Usuthu members driven out at more than 3 000,²³ whereas Fokothi kaMaphitha, Sigidi kaMaphitha and Hlazo kaMsongwane's explanation was that about 3 389 Usuthu members were driven out of their kraals. From the lists of the 1891 Boundary Commission, however, it appears that nearly 5 000 people were rendered homeless by Osborn's decision.²⁴ Against this was Osborn's explanation that only 718 Usuthu members were removed from their territory and that of that number 208 left on their own free will.²⁵

The Natal Mercury mentioned nothing about the chaos caused by Zibhebhu's resettlement: "We are told that the return of Usibepu has already had a marked influence on the Zulu mind ... cheerful obedience has taken the place of sullen disaffection."²⁶ The same paper described Zibhebhu "as a hawk poised in the air, ready to pounce in an instant upon any object of prey".²⁷ Zibhebhu did pounce on the Usuthu.

Addison endeavoured to make some attempts at reconciliation with Dinuzulu. He accepted an invitation from the latter for a hunting expedition on 31 December 1887. Shortly thereafter he became afraid of tribal friction. Zibhebhu had on 2 January 1888 assembled 1 000 armed followers at Addison's magistracy. He was urging the removal of the Usuthu squatters. On their way to and from the magistracy, the Mandlakazi were in a bellicose mood. They purposely walked on the Usuthu's planted fields and consequently destroyed their young crops. Addison, instead of punishing Zibhebhu, became critical of Dinuzulu. The latter's followers from the New Republic had, in the meantime, turned up for the hunting expedition and were on their way to Dinuzulu's kraal Osuthu.²⁸ They were immediately met by the Usuthu members fleeing from Zibhebhu who was threatening to kill them. They were running away with their stock.²⁹ The hunting expedition was consequently called off by Addison's order and 22 of the Usuthu followers from the New Republic were later arrested by Addison's police. They were arrested on their way to the New Republic. One was beaten half unconscious and left on the veld. The rest was taken to Addison's

20. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 81.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, p. 93.

25. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 82; S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, pp. 92-3.

26. *The Natal Mercury*, 5.12.87, cited by A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 83.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

29. *Ibid.*

court where, "drie van hulle elk 12 houe met 'n kats toegedien is, waarop almal met 'n "Slaan dood die kwaaddoeners" met klippe en stokke verwilder is".³⁰

Addison did reduce Zibhebhu's territory which he had occupied before the war of 1879 in the north-west, but increased it in the south-east up to the Black Mfolozi, while the boundary line in the east stretched through the Thonga territory up to the sea.³¹ The Coastal Strip was not the territory which Zibhebhu had occupied before 1879 but was just added to his territory.

Dinuzulu was not in favour of the new boundary line and the fact that the Usuthu's planted fields were according to the new delimitation given to the Mandlakazi. In a message to Havelock, he pronounced these almost prophetic words:

"In the days to come, when we of this generation are all dead ... this story of Usibebu's present behaviour will appear to be but a fairy tale ... they will look upon Dinuzulu as having been a very foolish, weak chief."³² This message is very true. Many Zulus today do think that Dinuzulu was a weak king. This is caused primarily by our ignorance of the issues involved at that time and the obstacles Dinuzulu was to encounter for his survival against the British-supported Zibhebhu and the British authorities in Zululand.

Zibhebhu's territory was later slightly reduced in that the Thonga territory was cut off his territory, but the new delimitation did little to improve the position of the Usuthu. They had already lost large territory during Addison's delimitation.³³

Zibhebhu was not only used to destroy the Royal family but he also played an important role against the Afrikaners during the Anglo-Boer War, when Col. Bottomley armed the Zulus to loot Afrikaner stock in the Vryheid district.³⁴

When war broke out, he sent his messengers to the magistrate of the Ubombo district with a view to knowing the line of action the Mandlakazi was to take in the event of Afrikaner forces approaching the Ubombo district.³⁵

On 9 November 1899, he instructed his messengers to clear the path leading to the Mandlakazi stronghold in the Nkunzi Poort. They were also instructed to clean the stronghold to prepare it for his women and children in case of need.³⁶ He alleged that persistent reports came to him "to beware of the Boers" and he therefore intended preparing for all eventualities, and expressed his intention to avoid the "Boers and Osutu" by retreating to Thongaland if necessary.³⁷

After being instructed by Col. Bottomley to send his Mandlakazi followers to loot whatever Afrikaner stock they could find in the Vryheid district,³⁸ he became deeply

30. *Ibid.*

31. G.H.Z. 710, No. 2151/88: Dinuzulu's message by Mtokwana et al. to A.E. Havelock, 14 March 1888, cited by A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 95.

32. A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, p. 92-3.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

34. S.J. Maphalala, "The Murder at Holkrantz (Mthashana) 6th May, 1902", *Historia*, 22(1), May 1977, p. 41.

35. S.N.A. 1/4/7: Confidential papers, magisterial reports 1899-1900. U.B. 518/1899, Cr. 196/99, 2.11.99.

36. *Ibid.*, U.B. 519/1899, Cr. 198/99.

37. *Ibid.*

38. S.J. Maphalala, "The Murder at Holkrantz (Mthashana) 6th May, 1902", *Historia*, 22(1), May 1977, p. 41.

involved in the looting across the Transvaal border. He was assisted by some of the Mandlakazi followers living in the Vryheid district and his reward was to be 10% of the stock looted.

It is also important to note that Zibhebhu operated within his defined district in Zululand as he was instructed to be careful not to interfere with the Usuthu.³⁹ Bottomley's instructions concerning Zibhebhu's looting were explained by Bottomley's agents to Mkhondo, Zibhebhu's chief induna.

Conclusion: In conclusion, it is important to note that the re-establishment of Dinuzulu's authority in Zululand, by the defeat of Zibhebhu in 1884, was not welcomed by the British authorities who were aiming at the destruction of the Royal family and the unity of the Zulu people. Consequently, regardless of the tremendous loss of lives, Zibhebhu was resettled in the Ndwandwe district with a view to undermining Dinuzulu's authority in a territory which belonged to the Usuthu. This makes one agree with what appeared in *The Times of Natal* of 21 November 1888, that : "The future historian of South Africa will probably find it difficult to decide between the claims of wickedness, weakness, and folly for dictating the political history of Zululand." ⁴⁰

39. S.N.A. 1/6/25: Miscellaneous papers regarding Bottomley's actions 1901-1902, Telegram no. 2, 3, 4. 01.

40. *The Times of Natal*, 22.11.88; cited by A.J. van Wyk, *Dinuzulu en die Usutu-opstand van 1888*, (preamble).