

BOOKREVIEWS/ BOEKBESPREKINGS

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ZULU KINGDOM: THE CIVIL WAR IN ZULULAND 1879-1884

JEFF GUY

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The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The civil war in Zululand 1879-1884, was originally submitted as a Ph.D dissertation in History at the University of London in 1975.

Professor Jeff Guy, a well known historian on Zulu history and the present head of the History Department at the University of Natal, Durban branch has divided his work into three main parts. In the first part, entitled the "Invasion" he details the foundations of the Zulu Kingdom, the political structure of the Kingdom during the reign of Cetshwayo kaMpande, the invasion of the Zulu Kingdom by the British army supported by colonial forces, and the Anglo-Zulu war which ended up with the capture of Cetshwayo, the last king of the independent Zulu Kingdom established by Shaka.

Following the Anglo-Zulu war, Cetshwayo was exiled and the Zulu military system was terminated. Zulus began to leave their homesteads in large numbers to work on the farms, railways, mines and in the homes of neighbouring colonies. Following the invasion, the foundation upon which the Zulu Kingdom was based was destroyed.

The second part of the work is entitled "The Civil War" and focuses on the division of Zululand following the capture of Cetshwayo. Guy shows how the 1879 division set Zulu against Zulu and initiated a civil war which finally destroyed Zulu independence. Following the defeat of the Zulus during the Anglo-Zulu war, Sir Garnet Wolseley formulated a plan to divide Zululand. He appointed 13 independent chiefs and a boundary commission to demarcate Zululand amongst themselves as a replacement for the exiled king. After the demarcation of Zululand, most members of the Zulu royal

family, their homes and their property fell under two appointed chiefs namely Hamu and Zibhebhu.

The two chiefs started to seize royal property and harass members of the royal house and its supporters as their most obvious rivals and men whose power and pretensions had to be reduced. The Usuthu movement was revived. Before the war of 1856 the name Usuthu was given to Cetshwayo's following within the nation. After his accession it became a national cry and after the war it was used to identify the faction which worked to revive the influence of Cetshwayo's lineage in the Zulu clan. It rejected Hamu and Zibhebhu's authority and visited Bishopstowe, the residence of John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal to seek advice.

The Usuthu with the help of Bishop Colenso started to make representation to Natal Government which culminated in the visit of the exiled king to London. Cetshwayo was informed (whilst in London) by the British Government that he could be restored to that part of Zululand which would accept his authority. A Special Commission was appointed to partition Zululand again in 1883, and it recommended that Zibhebhu be left independent of Cetshwayo. The Usuthu was not happy with the partition of Zululand. It wanted the king to be restored to the whole of Zululand and not just a section. The division of Zululand between Cetshwayo and Zibhebhu ended in a civil war which claimed the life of Cetshwayo and ended the Zulu kingdom.

The third section of the work is entitled "Kwafa inyoni enkulu kwabola amaqanda" (When the Great bird died the eggs became rotten). It focuses on the Zulu kingdom following the King's death. The Abantwana (princes - the children of the king) and their allies (Usuthu) avoided a recurring theme in Zulu history, a disputed succession. They continued working for the recognition of royal lineage by vesting the succession in Cetshwayo's son, Dinuzulu. Guy further shows how Zibhebhu after Cetshwayo's death attacked the Usuthu who fled into the forests, caves and swamps. Early in 1884 an agreement was reached between the Boers living on the Transvaal border and Usuthu leaders to raise a force which would assist the latter in their battle against Zibhebhu.

The Boers agreed to help and install the 16 year old Dinuzulu as Cetshwayo's successor and then

demanded Zibhebhu's submission to his authority in exchange for certain portions of Northern Zululand. Zibhebhu tried to get assistance from Natal and the British Government who appointed him to counter Cetshwayo's authority but they refused to help. He was later defeated by the Usuthu and the Boer forces. Following his defeat Zululand was partitioned between the Boers who established the New Republic and the British who established British Zululand. The once independent Zulu nation was now faced with two options, to become labour tenants on its own land which was now in the possession of the Boers or to accept British rule in British Zululand, with hut tax and the administration of its affairs by white magistrates.

The book is by far the most thorough research product available on the destruction of the Zulu Kingdom. Guy makes his work even more powerful by his inclusion of rare photographs and maps, giving the product an immediacy which permits modern readers to return to Zululand during the civil war of 1879-1884. Of added value too is the glossary of

Zulu words and their English meanings placed at the beginning of the book and the appendices at the end which provide additional information on biographical notes on the various people mentioned in the work. He could have however used a photograph of Cetshwayo kaMpande on the cover of the book (which appears between pages 152 and 153 in the book). That could have attracted readers with an interest in Zulu history or South African history in general to read the book as the present black cover is not attractive.

The work is highly recommended to military historians as it gives an analysis of Zulu military structure in the days of its independence. It is also recommended to scholars with an interest in the History of Natal and Zululand. Guy's book is useful in the understanding of the origins and development of Zulu Nationalism in the eighteenth century, a force that will still affect the course of South Africa's history.

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