

THE LEVYING OF FORCED AFRICAN LABOUR AND MILITARY SERVICE
BY THE COLONIAL STATE OF NATAL

by

INGRID MARY MACHIN

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ABSTRACT

The exaction of labour and military service from the Africans in colonial Natal formed the corner-stone of domination and control over them.

Theophilus Shepstone conducted so-called 'Native Affairs' by applying his own idiosyncratic ideas on an ad hoc basis and he and the Natal authorities allowed themselves much room for discretionary action.

Demands for labourers and levies were made in the context of British metropolitan and Natal colonial attitudes to race, colour, class and the work ethic.

The disruption in the lives of people in Natal gave prospective colonisers the opportunity to propagate the myth of an 'empty' Natal.

When Britain annexed Natal, locations were established to accommodate those African people not already settled as labourers on former Trekker farms. Isibhalo labour and military service could be drawn from these locations. Both these demands, it was maintained, were based on the model of the Zulu king's traditional right to call up men for labour and military service. The governor of Natal was likened to the Zulu king and could make the same exactions.

When more isibhalo labourers were needed, labour was drawn from categories not included in the original system, and beyond the districts and counties in which the labourers lived.

African men from the locations were called upon to provide military levies to prevent not only the establishment of power bases alternative to that of the Natal government, but also the destabilisation of the Natal border areas.

Levies and/or labourers were raised in the Anglo-Zulu War, the First Anglo-Boer War, in the Second Anglo-Boer War and Bambatha's 'rebellion'. The effective use of the levies was severely hampered by the fear of arming Africans with firearms.

The hostility generated against the Natal government by years of oppression found an outlet in resistance even before the end of the colonial period. The Kholwa became leaders in covert political opposition which became increasingly intense as further deprivations impoverished and marginalised the African people in Natal. The system of raising forced African labour and military levies was a major factor in this disintegration.

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Note: All the maps were prepared by Helena Margeot and Toni Bodington of the Cartographic Unit, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. My thanks are due to them and to those from whose original maps some elements of these maps have been adapted, with their kind permission, as follows:

2. Professor J.B. Wright, for the barrier locations contained in Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1971, endpaper.
3. James Byrom, for his adaptation of the official map of these operations which is contained in Pearse, R.O., Barrier of Spears. Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1973, p. 231.

4. Professors J.P.C. Laband and P.S. Thompson for their frontispiece map contained in War Comes to Umvoti, Department of History, University of Natal, Durban, 1980.

5. Professor B. Guest and Mr J. Sellers for their endpaper map contained in Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1985.

ABBREVIATIONS

BPP British Parliamentary Papers

CSO Colonial Secretary's Office, Natal

GH Government House

NBB Natal Blue Books

NCP Natal Colonial Publications

NGG Natal Government Gazette

NPP Natal Parliamentary Papers

RM Resident Magistrate

SNA Secretary for Native Affairs

GLOSSARY

isibhalo	compulsory labour exacted from each chiefdom
ibutho/amabutho	age-group/s of men or women; regiment/s
induna/izinduna	officer/s of state or army
kraal/s	homestead/s
umfana/abafana	boy/s
ukungena	to marry a brother's widow to perpetuate his lineage
ihashi/amahashi	horse/s
ikhanda/amakhanda	military headquarters
ikhehla/amakhehla	man/men with head-ring/s
ikholwa/amakholwa	believer/s; Christian/s
laager	mobile waggon fortification
ukukhonza	to offer allegiance to a chief
umkhosi/imikhosi	first-fruits ceremony/ceremonies
ikhulu/izikhulu	person/s of rank at the Zulu court
ukulobola	to hand over cattle or goods to supplement a marriage
ilobolo	a marriage consideration in cattle or goods
uphuthu	thick porridge
amasi	curdled and fermented milk
ukusisa	to place livestock in the care of dependant who then has rights of usufruct
umuzi/imizi	homestead/s

Modern Zulu orthography has been used in this dissertation, except that the colonial terms used for counties and districts have been retained, as have the methods of spelling of Zulu names in quotations and footnotes.

'Zulu' has been used throughout without adding the English plural 's'. The Ngwe people have been referred to as amaNgwe for greater fluency.

PREFACE

In studying the Anglo-Zulu War period over several years, I was struck by the somewhat cavalier treatment of the role of Natal African military levies, which ranged from indifference to contempt. The research which followed revealed the arbitrary application of the system of raising not only levies but also labourers for public works in the colonial state of Natal, which study I have further pursued in this dissertation.

I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Professors W.R. Guest and D.R. Edgecombe, my supervisors, who have been unfailingly supportive and encouraging while I have been engaged in researching and writing this dissertation. Their constructive suggestions have been invaluable.

The archivists at the Natal Archives depot in Pietermaritzburg and the librarians at the Killie Campbell Africana Library were always patient and helpful.

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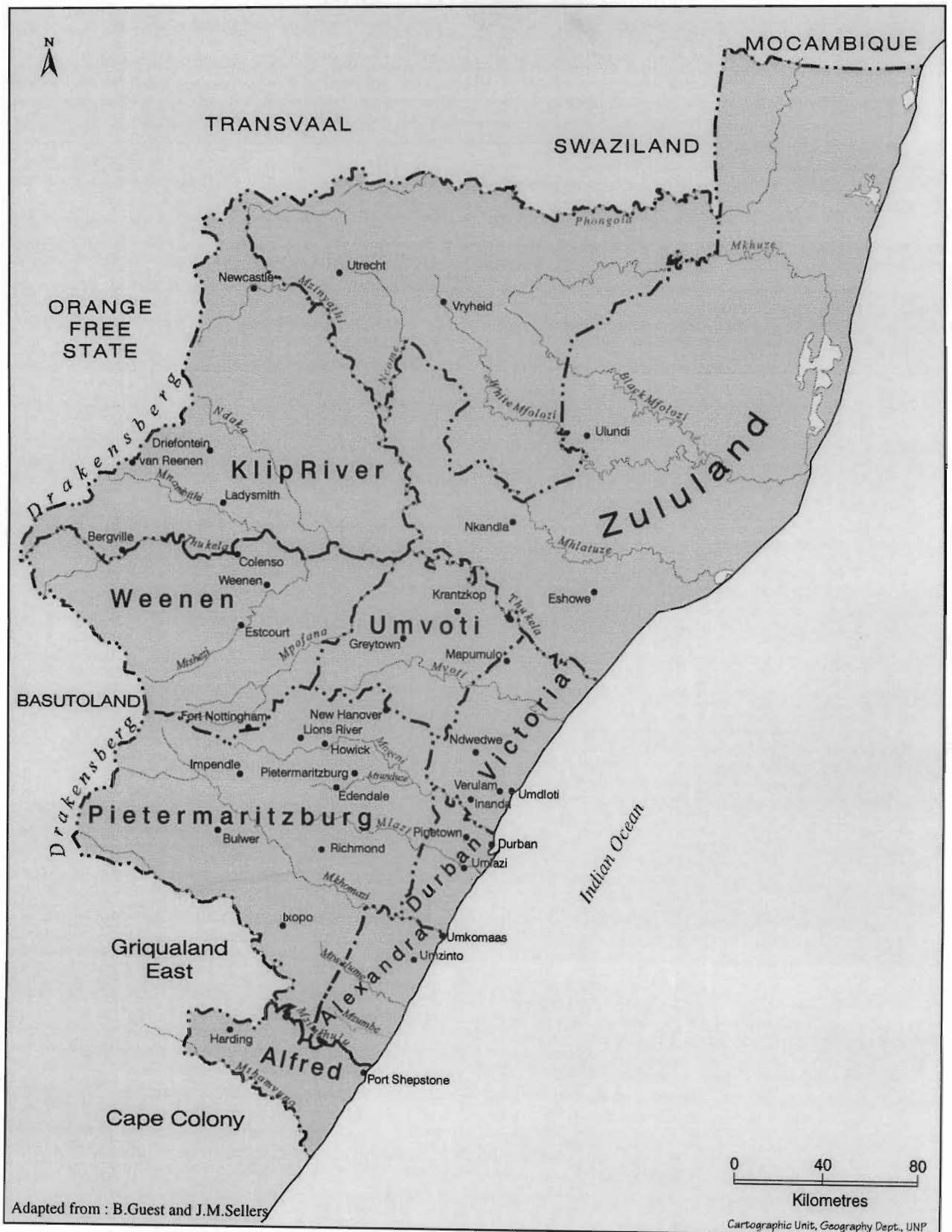
Finally, I am most grateful to my family for their interest and encouragement. I am especially indebted to my husband, Alec, retired major, Royal Highland Fusiliers, for introducing me to the traditions and ethos of the British army; and to my sister-in-law, Kate Perrett, and my nephew, Keith Perrett, for their assistance in proof-reading.

I declare that this dissertation is my own original work, and that it has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.

Pietermaritzburg

I.M. Machin

December 1995



Adapted from : B.Guest and J.M.Sellers

Cartographic Unit, Geography Dept., UNP

COLONY OF NATAL (with county boundaries)

CHAPTER I

British metropolitan and Natal colonial attitudes to race, colour and the work ethic

Although the British government decided in December 1842 to annex Natal, the final proclamation to that effect was published only in August 1845; and Martin West was appointed first Lieutenant-Governor of Natal in December of that year.

The new British colonial presence was numerically small, both in terms of officials and settlers. Two challenges faced this new government, *viz.* the establishment of an infrastructure, especially of roads; and the establishment of a military presence to maintain law and order within the territory and resist aggression from without. These challenges required men for labour and military service. The metropolitan and colonial attitudes to race, colour, the work ethic and the spread of civilisation produced a mindset, reinforced by previous conquests of pre-industrial peoples and the annexation of their territory, which allowed the intruders to regard colonisation as justifiable. It is not surprising therefore, that the British in Natal turned for both these requirements to the aboriginal population who could be coerced into military service as levies and forced labour on public works. The word isibhalo, used for this forced labour, is derived from bhala, meaning 'to write', as the labourers were registered when they were sent forward by the chiefs.

The demand for African labourers and military levies in the colony of Natal from 1845 onwards was an integral part of European colonialism, set in the broader context of the

inexorable expansion and migration of human beings over the earth, resultant upon the relentless increase in human population. Before the Christian era no excuses were offered for conquest, the annexation of the land of conquered peoples for settlement, the competition for mineral and agricultural resources and the exploitation of human resources in the form of labour. Once European Christians had persuaded themselves of the concept of a 'just war', in wars of aggression as well as defence, and had rationalised conquest and annexation as the justified spread of civilisation and Christianity, the colonising of land occupied by militarily or economically weaker peoples proceeded apace.

As far as British colonisation was concerned, the metropolitan attitude towards colonies and their indigenous peoples, and the colonial attitude towards them, further shored up this justification, as did the attitude of Christian missionaries. Interwoven with the metropolitan attitude were firmly held ideas about class, Social Darwinism and the work ethic, whereas the expanding industrialisation of Britain, requiring increasing supplies of raw materials, made colonisation a necessary economic activity. By late Victorian times colonial expansion, linked with military endeavour, which included the incorporation of conquered peoples as subordinate military allies, came to be accepted as the norm, and even romanticised, as in this effusion written by a Daily Mail journalist on 22 June 1897 during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations when a march-past of Imperial troops took place:

And you began to understand, as never before, what the Empire amounts to ... we send out a boy here and a boy there, and the boy takes hold of the savages ... and teaches them to march and shoot ... and believe in him, and die for him and the Queen.¹

¹. As quoted in E. Longford, Victoria R.I. (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 549.

Until the end of the eighteenth century, the terms 'common people' or 'lower orders' were used to denote those in British society who were regarded as inferior, intimating that this categorisation was part of a natural social order. Thereafter the term 'lower classes' was commonly used.² Mason has pointed out that, although the concept of class in English society was undoubtedly strong, it was not legally defined. One could move up the scale by buying land and other property with money acquired in trade, and the 'taint of trade' would be nearly forgotten by the third generation.³

An example of this is provided by the fortunes of the family of Frances Colenso, wife of Bishop J.W. Colenso. Her grandfather, Thomas Bignold, was a Norwich merchant and banker, and her father, Robert John Bunyan, was a businessman. The Bunyan children moved easily into Harrow and Cambridge for the boys, and the Academy for Young Ladies in Cheltenham for Frances: educational institutions favoured by the privileged social classes.⁴

By the end of the eighteenth century, when labour was in great demand for industries, those in the upper levels of the class structure had developed a work ethic for all those in the hierarchy who did not have inherited wealth, which included landed property. Those

2. A. Briggs, The Age of Improvement (London, Longman, 1959), p. 65.

3. P. Mason, Patterns of Dominance (London, New York, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 30, 31.

4. W. Rees (ed), Colenso Letters from Natal (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1958), pp. 17 - 19.

'lower classes' should be forced to work, it was said, 'by moral compulsion and the hard facts of economics.'⁵

Briggs identifies four main elements which were held up as ideals in Victorian times: the gospel of work, seriousness of character, respectability and self-help; and he quotes Carlyle's dictum that 'Properly speaking, all true Work is Religion.'⁶

As Wellington points out,⁷ nineteenth century British attitudes to race, even in the metropolitan area, involved considerations of class values and class-consciousness, and in the wider sphere, ethnocentrism and imperialism. Racism (or racialism), with its doctrine that some races are naturally superior to others; and the ethnocentric belief that one's own cultural group or society is superior, reinforced xenophobia: the fear or hatred of things foreign. The supporters of the theory of polygenesis (that the races of man are derived from more than one original stock) as opposed to those who supported the monogenesis theory (that only one original stock provided the ancestors of man) could point to this theory as the reason for the differences in the races evident in appearance and culture.

5. R. Ross, 'The Origin of Capitalist Agriculture in the Cape Colony: a Survey,' in W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido (eds), Putting a Plough to the Ground (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986), p. 80.

6. As quoted in Briggs, Age of Improvement, p. 450.

7. N.M. Wellington, John William Colenso and early and mid-Victorian attitudes to race. 1840 - 1875, Unpublished B.A. Honours thesis, University of Natal, 1980, preface, p. (i).

By the nineteenth century, racism and colour prejudice began to converge.⁸ Mason makes the point that ‘colour prejudice is older than European imperialism’; and he suggests that this prejudice is possibly linked with ‘the symbolism and metaphor of colour’, equating darkness and blackness with evil, and lightness and brightness with good.⁹ Racism, too, has a longer history than Victorian imperialism, as is evident in William Shakespeare’s Othello and The Merchant of Venice. Racism usually implies the right of the so-called superior group to rule the so-called inferior group and discriminate against it. In the 1860s, the anthropologist James Hunt, of the London - based Anthropological Society, founded in 1863, maintained that there was a hierarchy of man, and that the negro was the lowest form of man, and was, indeed, the link between human and anthropoid life,¹⁰ and therefore inferior to the white race. Racists could argue that this placed Africans in a natural position of subservience.

Much of the anthropologists’ concern with the origin of man was based on Charles Darwin’s researches, published in his Origin of Species (1859) and his The Descent of Man (1871). His conclusions in the former work, concerning the survival of the fittest and a natural selection of breeding in the many species of living organisms, had been anticipated by other scientists,¹¹ and the anthropologists’ interest in the origin of man was known to the educated. Social Darwinists embroidered on Charles Darwin’s

8. C. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, and Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 207.

9. Mason, Patterns of Dominance, pp. 30 - 31.

10. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes, p. 211.

11. Ibid, p. 10.

conclusions concerning natural selection, and the survival of the fittest. Mason has stated that their argument was that

... it was natural - and right because it followed the pattern of nature - for a stronger group of men to dispossess, exploit, and indeed destroy, one less fit to survive.¹²

What had been the propounding of the results of research and observation was regarded by the Social Darwinists as a categorical imperative. Sir Bartle Frere, in the 1880s, in the Journal of the Anthropological Institute,¹³ gave examples of the conquest of inferior by superior peoples¹⁴ as a natural law.

Darwin's major works were published some fourteen and twenty-six years respectively after the establishment of the British colony of Natal, but many of the colonisers were already imbued with strong views about class and race as well as the assumption of the cultural superiority of the Europeans, to the detriment of the weaker and exploitable African peoples. The work ethic, race, class and ethnocentrism formed a paradigm of nineteenth century Britain, and became more intense as Britain moved into the Victorian era after Queen Victoria's accession in 1837, and when Social Darwinists put forward their own interpretations of Charles Darwin's work. However, most of the early hunter-traders in Natal escaped these cultural bonds as they were neither class-conscious nor

¹². Mason, Patterns of Dominance, p. 32.

¹³. The Royal Anthropological Institute was a union, in 1870, of the Ethnological Society of London (founded 1843) and the Anthropological Society (founded 1863).

¹⁴. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes, p. 21.

colour-conscious, and some of these hunter-traders were absorbed into African society and culture.

As Miles points out, migration might locate people into a different class site,¹⁵ and this may well have occurred in Natal. The acquisition of landed property by settlers in Natal placed them in a position of upward social mobility. Denoon states that

... permanent class divisions had no fixed place in the settler societies, and it may even be true that there was more social mobility in settler societies than in most others.¹⁶

This would, however, not include the African people who would be forced to remain permanently in a lowly position. Bishop J.W. Colenso recognised this translocation and social mobility by suggesting the immigration to Natal of some 10 000 English people in three classes: 'young gentlemen', with money enough 'to become at once large landed proprietors'; 'small farmers' with less money, who could rent farms and eventually become prosperous enough to buy land for themselves, and 'honest and industrious labourers', who would earn large wages and eventually also become independent farmers and landowners.¹⁷ Henry Francis Fynn, who moved from the barefoot hunter-trader incorporated into Zulu culture, to the respected magistrate of later years, is an example of this mobility. From the colonists' enhanced social position, which was in some

15. R. Miles, Capitalism and Unfree Labour (London and New York, Tavistock Publications, 1987), p. 6.

16. D. Denoon, Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 227.

17. J.W. Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal (Cambridge, Macmillan and Co., 1855), pp. 79 - 80.

instances acquired, they were willing to relegate the Natal Africans to a permanent position of submissive inferiority; and racial and ethnocentric statements reached a ready audience.

The colonists themselves did not escape the disdain of those who regarded Natal as only a temporary home before they returned to the mother country. Bishop Colenso's daughter, Frances, put the following words into the mouth of Atherton Wylde: 'I .. determined to try that last resource of the desperate - a life in one of the colonies.'¹⁸

Sir John Robinson, first Prime Minister of Natal, 1893 - 1897, and himself a colonist, was aware of social gradations within colonial society, and affected to despise those colonists who did not hold aloof from the Natal Africans; and, displaying class and race-consciousness, wrote: 'It is impossible to mix only with savages for weeks and months and years, without sinking in the social scale.'¹⁹

Censure of colonials, voiced by the Colenso family, especially after the Langalibalele affair, rested essentially, though justifiably, on reprehensible colonial actions during this episode, and not on considerations of class or a disparagement of colonials per se.

¹⁸. M.J. Daymond (ed), Atherton Wylde (Frances Colenso), My Chief and I (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1994: reprint; originally published 1880), p. 2.

¹⁹. (Sir) J. Robinson, A Life Time in South Africa (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1900), p. 186.

The poor conditions suffered by isibhalo forced labourers and the military levies formed part of the exploitation which was regarded as justifiable in dealing with supposedly inferior people, and accounted for the colonial resistance to the provision of better shelter, clothing and general working conditions for both labourers and levies; and to the provision of better weaponry and training for the levies. The colonial fear of the Kholwa (Christian) self-improvement, of their growing entrepreneurial skills and their political aspirations was rooted in a disapproval of any attempts at incorporation into privileged European society; and the prosperity of both the Kholwa and the Hlubi, another powerful group, was regarded as a threat, since they provided economic competition as commercial farmers and in other enterprises. The colonial ideal, of which Social Darwinists would have approved, appears to have been to make sure that these African people remained in perpetual subservience. During the 1914 - 1918 World War, this view surfaced again when the South African Labour Corps was to render service in France. Misgivings were expressed that this service would raise the political expectations of the African men and would expose them to social conditions 'not commensurate with their status in the Union.'²⁰

Not all colonials and other observers were swept into the grossest attitudes towards African people in Natal. Some, the Colenso family in particular, protested against the treatment meted out to them, but even the Colensos did not attack imperialism and colonialism; only their application in Natal. Bishop Colenso himself, vociferous though he was in his attempts to protect the powerless,

²⁰. I. Gleeson, The Unknown Force (Rivonia, Ashanti Publishing, 1994), p. 26.

... never reached a deeper insight into the nature of colonialism or realised he was observing and protesting against not an aberration but the essence of the system.²¹

Natal as a source of raw materials, especially hides and ivory for export to Britain, was exploited by English hunter-traders from the 1820s. In a reversal of the later situation, they came to Natal not as conquerors but as clients of the Zulu kings, Shaka and Dingane. Being in a position of weakness, they were unable to demand labour, as the colonial authorities did later. The labour they needed consisted of bearers to transport their trade goods on foot, and this was not forced labour; and the allies who assisted them on such military expeditions as were led by Cane and Ogle to Ntunjambili, and by Cane to the Thukela in 1838, were men from their own settlements around Port Natal, who hoped to gain captured cattle from the Zulu.

Far from demanding military levies to assist them, some of the hunter-traders were themselves conscripted to assist the Zulu king, Shaka, in shooting elephants and in joining in military campaigns against the Ndwandwe chief, Sikhunyana, and against Mlotshwa and Beje, two chiefs formerly subject to the Ndwandwe chief, Zwide.²² This situation was reversed once the Europeans gained the ascendancy in Natal, and they maintained this position of power throughout the colonial period.

²¹. J. Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1982 : reprint), p. 91.

²². J. Stuart and D. McK Malcolm (eds), The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1950), pp. 120, 122 - 129.

The early days of indulgence, by Natal Africans, of foreigners, rested initially on the reciprocal advantages to be gained from trade and interaction between a pre-industrial and an industrial society. Those fugitives from Shaka and Dingane, who clustered around the traders at Port Natal, regarded the traders' small settlement as a refuge, and were not in awe of them as a superior race. The take-over by whites and their shift into a position of dominance took place when they gained the military initiative, even if this was achieved by using surrogates such as allied or subordinate Africans. The Africans in Natal, including those who left Zululand, lost any position of power they might have had when, before the British annexation, Mpande kaSenzangakhona fled across the Thukela and sought alliance with the Boers in 1839. Even when the Boers capitulated to the British, and Natal was annexed, there was no significant resurgence of power among the Natal Africans, and the British retained the ascendancy previously held by the Boers.

The Christian missionaries who came to Natal and Zululand from Britain brought with them the assumption that the civilisation, to which they referred as being inseparable from their spreading of the Gospel, was that of their own values and ideals and the whole framework of their society, which they regarded as unquestionably the best and which should be imposed on others. They were not content with propagating the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, but added considerably to this teaching by their interpretation of how these tenets should be applied. This application, not surprisingly, encompassed their own social mores and cultural paradigm, which rather quaintly, included their notions of suitable clothing.

Many of the missionaries also perpetuated the perception that all Africans were inferior and belonged to the class on whom the work ethic should be imposed. Captain A.F. Gardiner stated that the object of his mission journey to the Zulu people was to open a way for Christian ministers to introduce ‘... true religion, civilisation, and industry, into those benighted regions.’²³ The Methodist missionary, the Rev. W.C. Holden, held strong views about the position and treatment of Africans, which reflected his ethnocentric opinions on race and class:

The Kaffirs are children of a larger growth and must be treated accordingly - children in knowledge, ignorant of the relationships of civilized society ... the great difficulty in governing them is, to treat them as men - children, teaching them to submit and to obey are essential to their own welfare ... many of them are unable to appreciate or understand our excess of civilized kindness, being strangers to those refined feelings which operate in the breasts of Christians.²⁴

By 1887, Holden’s arrogant views on the Natal Africans showed greater distaste: ‘They were’, he wrote, ‘simply naked barbarians, living and rioting in all the abominations of heathenism.’²⁵ Holden also made his views on the work ethic clear. He held that indolence was one of the greatest barriers to man’s improvement. This indolence could be eradicated by a system of compulsory labour or slavery on the one hand, or by creating such artificial wants that the idle person would submit to continuous labour to supply these

²³. A.F. Gardiner, Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa (facsimile reprint, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1966; originally published 1836), p. 1.

²⁴. W.C. Holden, History of the Colony of Natal (facsimile reprint, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1963; originally published 1855), p. 215.

²⁵. W.C. Holden, ‘History of Methodism and Missions in South Africa’, part II, p. 431, as quoted in G. Russell, The History of Old Durban and Reminiscences of an Emigrant of 1850 (Durban, P. Davis and Sons, 1899), p. 106.

wants.²⁶ The American missionary, Josiah Tyler, writing in 1891, commended ‘the just and benign authority of England’ as a means to raise the African people in Natal and Zululand ‘gradually but surely to a high standard of Christianity and civilization.’ He approved of Zulu in the service of Europeans as ‘generally obedient and peaceful.’²⁷ It is clear that for Tyler the natural niche to be occupied by the Zulu was as servants, with the British as mentors.

These missionaries reflected the general British and colonial opinion that the African people were inferior and must be obedient and industrious in the service of the white man. However, in 1874 a more sinister point of view emerged. On 26 January 1874, in the European Mail, misgivings were expressed about the conduct of the colonial authorities during the Langalibalele affair and the subsequent harrying of the amaNgwe. Sixty-nine Natal clergymen signed a memorial sent to Lieutenant-Governor Pine protesting against an article appearing in this publication, entitled Atrocities in Natal. ‘These misstatements’, they wrote, might cause the Home government and Imperial Parliament to prevent the Natal government

from using those repressive measures which are sometimes necessary to protect a Christian Government, and civilize a people deeply sunk in barbarism and sensuality.²⁸

²⁶. Rev. W.C. Holden, The Past and Future of the Kaffir Races (Cape Town, C. Struik, 1963; first published London, 1866), pp. 420 - 421.

²⁷. Rev. J. Tyler, Forty Years among the Zulus (Cape Town, C. Struik, 1971; facsimile reprint; first published Boston and Chicago, Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1891), pp. 292 - 293.

²⁸. BPP C1119 No. 18. Pine to Carnarvon, 1 June 1874, enclosing memorial from Christian Ministers and Missionaries in Natal.

Not only was 'just and benign authority' to be imposed to convert and civilise, but merciless 'repressive measures' were defended.

All these views accorded well with the colonial attitude towards the Africans in Natal, and gave the colonists the approval of the Church in regarding the African people as inferior beings whose role was to work for the colonists and to be exploited and repressed. Frances Colenso, Bishop Colenso's daughter, recognised this attitude and recorded the reaction of the Africans to it: '... the black man did not care to be the white man's slave, and the white man could not endure the black man in any other position.'²⁹ However, Bishop Colenso himself, who was later to become a champion of the Natal Africans, could not detach himself entirely from his own class-consciousness and belief in the work ethic as a path to civilisation. He wrote:

...I hope we shall be enabled to practise the younger natives in trades of various kinds, to teach them to cultivate the soil, and learn the value of land and adopt the habits of civilised life. We shall also ... train servants, male and female, for domestic purposes..³⁰

He appeared not to have noticed that Africans were crop-farmers who certainly appreciated the value of land. He later returned to the theme of the value of the work ethic, regarding some of Chief Phakade's people as more advanced 'in respect of civilization' because 'many of them are, from time to time in service.'³¹

29. Daymond (ed), Colenso, My Chief and I, p. 46.

30. Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, p. 73.

31. Ibid., p. 110.

Many colonists expressed their attitudes in action rather than in writing, as, for instance during the Langalibalele affair, the crushing of the amaNgwe and during Bambatha's 'rebellion'. Some attitudes were, however, recorded in writing and show a similarity to those expressed by missionaries. The editor of the Natal Witness wrote on 15 January 1847, 'The other class of our colonial population consists of men in a state of infancy as regards civilization.'³² This paternalistic view was reiterated by Holden whose words were quoted verbatim by the ethnologist, W.A. Squire, in 1906. Squire added further disparaging remarks:

He [the Natal African] is thriftless, thoughtless of the future, lazy and independent, his sole thought being of food and drink for himself.³³

The 1852 - 53 Commission expressed the paternalistic colonial views in similar vein:

... the true relation of a civilized Government towards its barbarian subjects is of a parental character ... a civilized Government is found to take the most complete charge of such a population, to direct it, and exercise the most rigid control over its every action..³⁴

In 1859, in Dr. R.J. Mann's The Colony of Natal, characteristics more sinister than childlike were attributed to the Natal Africans, and their supposed inferiority was stressed:

³². As quoted in C. Ballard, 'Traders, Trekkers and colonists' in A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds), Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910 : a new history (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press and Shuter and Shooter, 1989), p. 132.

³³. W.A. Squire, 'The Native Races of Natal' in Twentieth Century Impressions of Natal, Its People, Commerce, Industries And Resources (Durban, Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Co., 1906), pp. 218, 219.

³⁴. NCP 8/3/1 Proceedings of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal 1852 - 1853 (Pietermaritzburg, Archbell, 1852), p. 29.

The anger of the wild Kafir is blind and unreasoning rage ... in this respect uncivilized barbarians very much resemble the lower and irrational members of creation ... In many of their social relations and habits the Kafirs are addicted to practices ... not consonant with the higher and more enlightened morality of civilization.³⁵

The remedy for the Africans' supposed fecklessness was at hand:

He likes to roam free over his wild hills and to sit and dream at his own pleasure in his kraal; but he can be made to bend to the rein and the spur..³⁶

In this statement the colonists' real reason for supporting the 'civilising' of the Natal Africans becomes apparent: their need for labour and their anger at any resistance to their demands. The colonists deplored any attempts by the Natal Africans to escape their assigned proletarian status. They must supply labour and only their labour power should be for sale. No other niche in society and the economy should be allowed them.

Natal Africans were discouraged or prevented from acquiring skills to equip them to function in industrial society. Those directly controlled by the Natal government and the colonists, *i.e.* those in the locations or on European - owned farms were economically marginalised as unskilled or, at best, semi-skilled labour, and their poverty and powerlessness were perpetuated. The Kholwa, however, not bound by many of the restrictions which applied to location- and farm-dwellers, adapted to and took advantage of changing circumstances, but their way to the ultimate prize they sought,

³⁵. R.J. Mann (ed), The Colony of Natal (London, Jarrold and Sons, 1859), pp. 45 - 46.

³⁶. Ibid., p. 217.

enfranchisement, was blocked by almost insurmountable conditions attached to the granting of the franchise.

Harsh measures were proposed to enforce the subservience of Natal Africans. Sir Garnet Wolseley, Governor of Natal in 1875, added his views:

I am convinced that for the management of a barbarous people the only punishments ever likely to be effective for keeping them in order are flogging and death.³⁷

In 1879, after the Anglo-Zulu War, Duncan Moodie, a South African colonial writing of the war, approved of the actions taken by the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, and Sir Garnet Wolseley against the Zulu people. His assertions indicate that he was imbued with all the racist and ethnocentric attitudes which prevailed at the time:

... when a power superior in arts and civilisation finds it necessary to subjugate a comparatively barbarous one ... the temporary evils attendant upon conquest are greatly overbalanced by the blessings of ultimate good.³⁸

In 1899, another colonist, G. Russell, also advocated a heavy hand to compel submission: '... I quite concur in the views of the enlightened Boer that a modified form of slavery - or serfdom - is good for the Natal African, that is, until he is "tamed".'³⁹ In the same year, Lord Milner encapsulated British colonial ambitions in Southern Africa, underlining the importance he attached to the provision of African labour: 'The ultimate end is a self-

³⁷. A. Preston (ed), Sir Garnet Wolseley's South African Diaries (Natal) 1875 (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1971), p. 204.

³⁸. J. Laband (introducer), D.C.F. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War (Cape Town, N & S Press, 1988), p. 220.

³⁹. Russell, History of Old Durban, p. 4.

governing White Community, supported by well-treated and justly governed black labour from Cape Town to the Zambezi.⁴⁰ Dr R.H. Lamb's views, put forward in 1908, echoed some of the sentiments already expressed by Wolseley and by colonists:

... the native population ... must either be civilised or exterminated ... they represent the intellectual childhood of the human race ..⁴¹

The recurring themes that Africans were inferior, that they should be kept in subjection, that they should be forced to supply labour and that they had no other place in society than as labourers, permeated the attitudes towards them expressed by not only colonists who required their labour in towns and on farms, but also colonial administrators and even missionaries. If the ingrained prejudice expressed by the powerful, literate and articulate revealed these racist and ethnocentric views, others whose confidence in their own class position was more fragile, no doubt held similar views even more coarsely expressed.

It has been pointed out that the settlers were ignorant of the ingenuity and appropriateness of problem-solving in traditional African society; of their social and moral rules; of the rational structure of 'tribal' life which provided for the protection of the individual and the equitable distribution of food and land.⁴² Western Europe emphasised the value of technology as perhaps the most important characteristic of civilisation, but what settlers

⁴⁰. As quoted in T. Pakenham, The Boer War (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1979), p. 118 - 119.

⁴¹. J. Lambert (introducer), R.H. Lamb, Hard Times in Natal and The Way Out (Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1992), p. 14.

⁴². C.W. de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa, social and economic (London, Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 86.

failed to perceive was the importance of the extended family 'with its close network of obligations.'⁴³

In an African society, housing and clothing, both derived from materials at hand in the immediate environment and adapted to the climate, were singularly appropriate. Social and economic cohesion was apparent in these three examples from Natal/Zululand: the distribution of land; the ukusisa practice and the ngena custom. Land, which belonged to the king or chief as the representative of the nation, was apportioned to each homestead head, for his use but not ownership, by the induna of his district. Every man, therefore, had the means to provide himself and his household with a livelihood. A man who owned numerous cattle might, in accordance with the ukusisa practice, distribute some of these to other households, where the inmates would be able to use the milk produced (an important source of protein in the form of amasi), and the oxen for ploughing (once ploughs had been introduced into the territory). The holders of the cattle might be rewarded for increasing the original stock by the gift of a beast. A woman, with her children, would not be left without security if her husband died. According to the ngena custom, a year after her husband's death, a widow might marry one of her husband's brothers and thus gain his protection.⁴⁴

⁴³. W.E.F. Ward, 'Colonial Rule in West Africa', in J.C. Anene and G. Brown (eds), Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press and Walton-on-Thames, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1966), p. 309.

⁴⁴. E.J. Krige, The Social System of the Zulus (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1965; Longmans Green and Co. Ltd., 1936), pp 176 - 177, 186 - 7, p. 168;
G.M.B. Whitfield, South African Native Law (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Juta and Co., 1946), p. 156.

The Natal Africans were placed in a predicament of impoverishment, deprived of their traditional means of survival and way of life, with land and resources diminished not only by the disruption and dispersion of the early nineteenth century, but also by the Boer and the British colonial conquests. Their lifestyle, as witnessed by European observers in the nineteenth century, was forced upon them by these circumstances and was the result of their efforts to regroup and recover. The land and its resources had in the past provided them with materials for their houses and their clothing; grazing for their cattle and fields for their crops to provide food; as well as cattle and grain as commodities for trade. Hunting had augmented their sources of food and clothing. So many of these resources had been reduced or appropriated that, for many, the only recourse that remained was to sell their labour. Few protests were made by colonists against these deprivations since it suited them to have the Africans' labour made available to them. However, as late as June 1906, Joseph Baynes objected to the passing of a Bill 'To consolidate and amend the laws relating to game'. He pointed out that this law would bear hard on the African people, and with other impositions, was

... fast turning a light hearted, liberty-loving, courteous, honest, and virtuous race into a criminal, sullen, felonous, and bitterly discontented people.⁴⁵

Polygamy was regarded by the colonists as the norm among Africans in Natal/Zululand. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century this practice was a strategy to provide for the surplus of women caused by the loss of men in warfare, and reveals remarkable adaptation to circumstances and protection of the individual. The erroneous perception that all Natal

⁴⁵. J. Lambert (introducer), Joseph Baynes, Letters addressed to His Excellency the Governor of Natal and His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies (Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1992), p. 8.

Africans and Zulus were polygamous has been repeated, with some reservations, ever since. Krige consistently discussed a plurality of wives.⁴⁶ Bryant threw some doubt on it.⁴⁷ Guy writes of 90% of Zulu homesteads at the time of Cetshwayo kaMpande being those of commoners and 'consisting of a man .. two or three wives..', which would give an unlikely proportion of men to women of 1:2 or even 1:3.⁴⁸

The normal demographic distribution of male and female births is roughly equal, but more females than males survive childhood, and females generally live longer than males. Since it was unusual for any African adult to remain single, and divorce was infrequent, polygamy was probably more common in the early period of disruption in the nineteenth century than it was later on. J. Lambert acknowledges this, but points out that in the 1860s the marriage of young women to much older men, who could afford to pay a large lobolo, was not uncommon.⁴⁹ Bishop Colenso recognised the disparity in numbers, especially among the Hlubi. He wrote:

Mr Shepstone told me ... this tribe had suffered more by war than any other in the district, having been dreadfully cut up by Shaka and Dingaan, and this may, in some measure, account for the great number of women in proportion to men, and for the extensive practice of polygamy among them.⁵⁰

46. Krige, The Social System, pp. 39 - 44.

47. A.J. Bryant, The Zulu People as they were before the white man came (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949), p. 576.

48. Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom, p. 22.

49. J. Lambert, Betrayed Trust (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995), p. 46.

50. Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, p. 123.

That widespread polygamy was a colonial myth is shown by the Weenen county magistrate's report of December 1879. This was written shortly after the Anglo-Zulu War in which many men from this county were killed. Of the adults (over fourteen years old) 47% were men and 53% women.⁵¹ This would have allowed only 6% of the men (probably chiefs or headmen or men rich in cattle) to have two wives, or only 3% to have three. In 1901 this demographic distribution of 47% men and 53% women was repeated for the whole colony of Natal.⁵² Even by 1879 the African population in Natal had recovered, not only from the destructive internecine wars of the early nineteenth century, but also from their losses during the campaign against the Hlubi and the amaNgwe, and, despite the Anglo-Zulu War losses, had returned to the normal demographic pattern.

The colonists sought in various ways to remedy the Natal Africans' unwillingness to provide labour for them, and some desired to capitalise on the practice of polygamy. The Rev. W.C. Holden, in 1855, declared that the abolition of polygamy would

send thousands to work who are at present supported in independent idleness by their wives ... But let the Kafir have only one wife, and he will be obliged to work.⁵³

Twenty years later, Wolseley pointed out that this perception still prevailed, and that colonists pretended to deplore polygamy on moral grounds,

⁵¹. NCP 8/1/13/2/1 Reports on Native Affairs contained in Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1879 - 1882. Report of Weenen magistrate.

⁵². NCP 8/2/1 Statement of approximate number of natives who entered service in the colony during the year 1901. (Appendix I).

⁵³. Holden, History of the Colony, p. 182.

but the real objection they have to polygamy is ... that when a Kaffir becomes possessed of several wives he will work no more for the white man ... as his wives will thenceforth work for him.⁵⁴

The perception of general polygamy played a part in plans for the taxation of the Natal Africans, which was a further device not only to raise revenue but also to keep them in subjection and proletarianise them. Theophilus Shepstone's memorandum of June 1849 proposed a hut tax which would not only discourage polygamy but also be a property and income tax, as well as being practicable and simple to collect. It was to be levied only on hut-owners on location land, and not on private farms.⁵⁵ When the Hut Tax of 7/- per hut was promulgated by Law No 6, 1857 of 10 July 1857 (increased to 14/- per hut by Law No. 13, 1875 of 17 December 1875), huts on European-owned land, where the occupants were in service and receiving wages, were not subject to the tax. Another exemption, which re-echoed the opposition to polygamy, was that Hut Tax was not payable on 'houses of European construction, inhabited by natives having one wife, and otherwise conforming to civilised usages...'⁵⁶

The colonists approved of taxing the Natal Africans, and favoured increasing the burden '... to compel the natives to work for wages, and with that end in view to increase the taxation upon them ...'⁵⁷ Although one purpose of the taxation of the Natal Africans

⁵⁴. Preston, Sir Garnet Wolseley's Diaries, 1875, p. 165.

⁵⁵. CSO 20 No. 24. Shepstone's memorandum forwarded to Moodie, Secretary to Government, 14 June 1849.

⁵⁶. NCP 5/1/1 Law No. 6, 1857, 10 July 1857.

⁵⁷. Robinson, A Life Time, p. 301.

was to compel them to work for the white man, it was, of course, also intended to raise revenue to pay expenses occasioned by their administration and contribute to the general revenue of the colony. In 1849, Shepstone estimated that a hut tax would raise £10 500 in revenue, while the expenditure necessary to manage the locations would be only about £5 500. Some of this revenue would not initially be in cash. Cattle or other 'saleable substitutes' could also be used in payment, and would be sold for cash.⁵⁸ This would further impoverish the Africans in Natal, stripping them of cattle and, presumably, grain, the latter as a 'saleable substitute.'

Equitable taxation from which all citizens benefit equally is an accepted principle, but little more than half of Shepstone's proposed hut tax would be used in African administration. After the 1857 Hut Tax was doubled in 1875 there was, no doubt, some resistance, and an ingenious justification was put forward some years later. The Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter cited as SNA) advised that

In informing Natives for the first time of the intention to impose a tax it would be advisable to inform them that it is in accordance with their own Customs that this tax is in lieu of the tribute which they used to pay their own Supreme Chief..⁵⁹

The later promulgation of the Poll Tax in 1905 (to be collected from 1906) threw the net wider, in order to raise more revenue and also to force more Natal Africans into the labour market and the cash economy.

⁵⁸. CSO 20 No. 24. Shepstone's memorandum to Secretary to Government, 14 June 1849.

⁵⁹. SNA 1/1/104, 1888/57 SNA to H.C. Koch, 18 January 1888.

In painting an attractive picture of Natal for prospective settlers, John Robinson, in 1872, as editor of The Natal Mercury, drew attention to the inequitable system of taxation in Natal. Receipts of taxation, he wrote,

are derived from customs and excise duties, harbour dues, land sales, quit-rents, transfer and auction dues, native taxes, postage, fees and fines and a few minor charges. There are no direct taxes on the white population levied by the Government except the stamps on legal processes..⁶⁰

Natal Africans at that time paid direct taxes such as the Hut Tax, Dog Tax, the Marriage Tax as well as various fees and fines. By 1875, all these impositions accounted for about 75% of all revenue.⁶¹ The Natal Africans were, in addition, discriminated against in the payment of import duties. For example on ‘... Kafir Picks or Hoes or any pieces of iron made or fashioned so as to be easily convertible into Kafir Hoes or Picks...’ the import duty was double that on hoes or adze hoes ‘not classified as Kafir Hoes’.⁶² In spite of these impositions, direct or indirect, Colonel Pearson, as Commandant of Troops, made the statement in March 1878, that the African people in Natal contributed little towards the colonial revenue.⁶³

⁶⁰. J. Robinson (ed), Notes on Natal: An Old Colonist’s Book for New Settlers (Durban and London, Robinson and Vause, 1872), p. xxi.

⁶¹. N. Etherington, ‘The Shepstone system in the Colony of Natal and beyond the borders’ in Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. 175.

⁶². NCP 7/1/13 Natal Blue Book 1865. Import duties chargeable from 3 March 1864.

⁶³. NCP 8/5/14 Papers relating to the supply by native chiefs of native labour on public works. Opinion of Commandant of Troops, 22 March 1878.

Robinson's disinformation for the benefit of intended settlers, about the Natal Africans, changed little between 1872, on the eve of the Langalibalele affair, and 1900, six years before Bambatha's 'rebellion'. In 1872 he wrote of their numerous herds, prolific cornfields, light burdens, the men spending their lives in beer-drinking, dances and hunts, interrupted only by a brief period of 'work amongst their white neighbours' to pay the Hut Tax and purchase wives.⁶⁴ In 1900, he wrote that '.. native administration in Natal .. has ..produced a contented, loyal, and light-hearted population', on whom taxation imposed little burden.⁶⁵ These effusions failed to take into account the relentless efforts of the Natal government and the colonists to proletarianise the African population of Natal. Robinson recognised this pressure but attributed it to the colonists' desire 'to attack the main citadels of barbarism - polygamy, wife-barter, witchcraft and idleness', although he did admit that the opponents of Shepstone's policies wished to introduce measures '.. to compel the natives to work for wages, and with that end in view to increase the taxation upon them ..'⁶⁶

The lack of success in this regard is clearly shown in the 1901 statement of those who entered service in Natal (Appendix 1),⁶⁷ which would have included Zululand, annexed to Natal in 1897. Since in 1901 most Africans in service were males, it is more meaningful to analyse the figures given in relation to them rather than to the total of men

64. Robinson, Notes on Natal, p. xxvi.

65. Robinson, A Life Time, pp. 316 - 318.

66. Ibid., p. 301.

67. NCP 8/2/1 Statement of the approximate number of natives who entered service in the colony during the year 1901. (Appendix I).

and women together, except perhaps with regard to domestic servants among whom there might have been some women, although far fewer than are generally employed in this capacity today. Of the Africans who entered service in that year, approximately 22% of the total population, or 47% of the men were engaged. The average numbers in service at any one time were 8,9% of the whole, or 18,8% of the men. Not all of these worked for the Natal government or the colonists, but in coal-mining, factories, railway works and harbour works run by or contracted out to private companies. Ricksha pullers worked for none of these, since they were independent once they had obtained their pullers' licences.⁶⁸ Africans employed by colonists in town and country (domestic servants, 'togt' labourers, agricultural labourers) amounted to 6,4% of the whole African population or 13,5% of the men; 5,4% of the men worked for the government (this figure included those employed as isibhalo labourers, military levies and in the police force); 9% in mines, factories and on railway or harbour works; and 2% as ricksha pullers.

The question arises as to how many of those in service were free labourers and to what extent even some of these were unfree in that they were not able to detach themselves from their employment. Weber has stated that free labour occurs when 'the services of labour are the subject of contractual relationship which is formally free on both sides'⁶⁹ This definition could well be relevant to those who offered their services to mines, factories and contractors engaged in railway and harbour construction; urban domestic

⁶⁸. R. Posel, 'Amahashi: Durban's Ricksha Pullers' in M.G. Spencer and P.R. Warhurst (eds), Journal of Natal and Zulu History, volume XIII, 1990 - 1991, p. 51.

⁶⁹. M. Weber, 'Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology' (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978) pp. 127 - 8 as quoted in Miles, Capitalism, p. 1.

servants, 'togg' labourers and even the police, while, as we have seen, ricksha pullers were self-employed.

Individual isibhalo labourers and military levies, sent forward by their chiefs, had no choice in their employment. Labour tenants on farms were generally unfree, since magistrates' reports reveal that there were very few formal contracts between landlords and tenants; merely oral agreements to supply labour in lieu of rent.⁷⁰ In addition, employers from Underberg and Estcourt (and no doubt, this occurred elsewhere) were reported to advance wages to labourers to ensure future service, and even advance cattle as lobolo for tenants' wives, to be paid off in labour for up to three years,⁷¹ which locked the men into a cycle of debt-induced servitude.

Nevertheless, the numbers in service in 1901 reveal that, for all their efforts, the Natal government and the colonists were able to exercise compulsion to work for them on a relatively small number of Africans. Since so few were in formal employment within the colony, it can be concluded that many were engaged in their traditional farming in the crowded locations, or had escaped, in increasing numbers, to seek work or for other reasons outside Natal. In 1889, a total of 3667 African men left Natal to seek work.⁷²

⁷⁰. SNA 1/1/365, 1907/793 USNA to Secretary, Native Affairs Commission, 27 March 1907, commenting on magistrates' reports.

⁷¹. SNA 1/1/365, 1907/856 USNA to Secretary, Native Affairs Commission, 27 March 1907, commenting on magistrates' reports.

⁷². NCP 4/1/2/18 LC No. 16, 30 May 1889. Number of Natives who have, during the year 1889, obtained Passes to leave the Colony in search of work.

In 1894 more than 21 499 Africans left Natal for this purpose.⁷³ By 1908 this number reached 39 397.⁷⁴ The Natal government and colonists, for all their efforts to compel the supposedly inferior African people to provide labour for them, were unable to do this, because, disadvantaged though they were, many of the Africans in Natal retained their freedom to choose their employment. Short of imposing a system of outright slavery, complete success in proletarianising the Natal Africans was not possible.

In view of their background of ingrained class and race attitudes, the British colonisers of Natal, supported by those missionaries intent upon introducing the kind of civilisation which they perceived as being an integral part of their Christian mission, imposed on the Natal Africans the roles of labourers under compulsion and of conscripted military levies. Before this could be achieved, it was found necessary to justify annexation by putting forward humanitarian motives and the need to 'civilise' the inhabitants, whom the colonisers were at pains to portray as fugitives to an 'empty' Natal.

⁷³. NCP 4/2/1/2 LA No. 22, 5 July 1894. Return of number of passes to leave the Colony issued to Natives by the several Magistrates and Administrators of Native Law for the year ended 31st March 1894.

⁷⁴. SNA 1/1/420, 1909/136 Statement shewing the number of Natal Natives who took 'Outward' passes for labour and other purposes during the year 1908.

CHAPTER II

The British annexation of Natal. The establishment of locations from which to draw labourers and levies to serve the white colonial interests.

Early British interest in Natal as a potential colony predated its final annexation by some twenty years. In the 1820s reasons put forward to support the acquisition of Natal were more honest in their avarice and less blurred by rationalisation than those put forward subsequently. Lieutenant F.G. Farewell, in September 1824, suggested that a British colony be established in Natal 'for civilising and establishing a trade with the interior of South Africa; which ... will eventually occasion a large consumption of English staple manufactures.'¹ In May 1829, Mr Saxe Bannister, formerly Attorney-General of New South Wales, wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in support of Farewell's desire to see Natal annexed by Britain. He urged that Britain establish 'civil government' in Natal in order to increase trade, particularly in ivory and the produce from cattle. Primary produce such as butter, beef, tallow and 'similar commodities' could reach the colonial market, and in return the African people could consume 'proportionate quantities of manufacture': the classic colonial exchange of raw materials for manufactured goods. The expense of defending the Cape frontier would be lessened by establishing and

¹. J.C. Chase, The Natal Papers (facsimile reprint, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1968; originally published 1843), part I, pp. 17 - 19. F.G. Farewell to Governor of the Cape, September 1824.

encouraging missionary enterprise in Natal with a view to 'civilising' the African people and 'rendering peace with them less insecure.'²

Brookes and Webb, however, do not favour an economic motive in the later annexation of Natal, averring that Sir George Napier, the Cape Governor, at least, was motivated by humanitarian and strategic considerations.³ The latter factor was no doubt prompted by the December 1840 Voortrekker attack on Ncaphayi, son of Madikane, the Bhaca chief, and the possibility of the destabilisation of the eastern Cape frontier.⁴ That Natal was already occupied, albeit sparsely, and that any large-scale settlement or annexation would encroach on the rights of these inhabitants, was not taken into account.

The first English hunter-traders arrived in Natal five years before Bannister's letter was written. They came as clients of the Zulu king, Shaka kaSenzangakhona, then at the height of his power, Natal, or at least the coastal areas, at that time being part of the Zulu hegemony. From him they obtained concessions with regard to the use of the land around the bay of Port Natal, and were favoured in their trading endeavours which centred around ivory and hides. Their small number precluded them from building up a power base of their own, except that they welcomed fugitives from Shaka's rule and from other disruptions of the fugitives' lives, and when these refugees clustered around their

2. Ibid., pp. 24 - 27 S. Bannister to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12 May 1829.

3. E.H. Brookes and C. de B Webb, A History of Natal, (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1965), pp. 44 - 45.

4. M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds), The Oxford History of South Africa (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969), vol. I, p. 370.

settlement, this gave the hunter-traders slight status as minor chiefs. Shaka allowed this, regarding the traders as being subject to him. The possession of superior weapons conferred upon them an aura of power which attracted fugitives to their domain. Since their numbers were small, however, conflict with the Zulu was not an option open to them, and they turned instead to trade and interaction. Examples of this were Henry Francis Fynn and, later, John Dunn, whose marriages to African women assisted them in securing their trade routes.

The position of the hunter-traders became precarious when Shaka's brother, Dingane, who was less friendly towards the hunter-traders than Shaka had been, became king after the latter's assassination in 1828. In June 1835, Captain A.F. Gardiner stirred the settlers out of their lethargy and called a meeting to establish the town of D'Urban, and sought recognition for the area between the Thukela and the Mzimkhulu rivers as a colony to be named Victoria. Ulterior motives were now veiled and the reasons for this proposed step were loftily stated as

..for the sake of humanity, for the upholding of the British character in the eyes of the natives, for the wellbeing of this increasing community, for the cause of morality and religion..⁵

⁵. J. Bird, Annals of Natal 1495 - 1845 (facsimile reprint, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1965; originally published 1885), vol. I, pp. 311 - 312. Petition of householders of the Town of D'Urban, Port Natal, 23 June 1835.

Although Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the Cape Governor, favoured the establishment of a British settlement in Natal, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, was discouraging, but requested the appointment of Gardiner as Justice of the Peace at Port Natal.⁶

With the advent of the Voortrekkers to Natal, Governor Napier sent Major Charters with a force of about a hundred men, to Port Natal, to prevent these 'emigrant farmers', still regarded as British subjects, from establishing an independent government, controlling the port and attacking the 'native tribes.'⁷ The capture of 'apprentices' by the Trekkers, which was thinly disguised slavery, was viewed with unease by the British, since slavery had been abolished in the British Empire in December 1834, with a four-year phasing-out period for the slaves as apprentices to their former masters until December 1838.⁸ Charters's force was too late in coming and too ineffectual to prevent Andries Pretorius's commando from setting out to defeat Dingane's forces at the Blood River battle. Although Captain Jervis, left in command by Major Charters, mediated between the Trekkers and Dingane, by the time he left, in December 1839, the Trekkers regarded Natal as their own territory.⁹ Their dubious claim rested on the Dingane-Retief treaty which, in Dingane's understanding, granted only the use of the land between the Thukela and the Mzimvubu.

6. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 313. Despatch from Secretary of State to Sir B. D'Urban, 26 September 1836, p. 315. Enclosure 7, Despatch 46, Extract of minutes of Executive Council, 20 March 1837.

7. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 418. Despatch from Sir George Napier to Lord Glenelg, 16 October 1838.

8. E.A. Walker, *A History of Southern Africa* (London, Longmans, 1957; originally published under the title 'A History of South Africa', 1928), p. 172.

9. Brookes and Webb, *History of Natal*, p. 35.

This was based on the assumption that Dingane ruled Natal south of the Thukela as Shaka's successor and by right of his conquests. The African inhabitants of Natal were not consulted.

For the effective settlement of a mainly stock-farming community in a pre-mechanised and pre-industrial society, the Trekkers had to address the two questions of land and labour. Once they had recovered from the Bloukrans massacres and were able to turn their main attention away from the rehabilitation of the survivors, the chief concerns of the Natal Volksraad were the distribution of land to the Trekkers, the provision of labour on the farms thus granted, and the re-settlement of those African people, already in occupation of this land, who exceeded their labour requirements. To this end the Volksraad passed resolutions in June 1839, granting to each adult male Trekker and to widows, if they were resident in Natal before 1 December 1839, two farms in perpetual ownership on payment of twelve rixdollars per annum.¹⁰ Labour was to be limited to five African families on each farm, the Commandant-General alone having the privilege of being allowed more than five families.¹¹ Those African families regarded as surplus were to be resettled between the Mzimvubu and the Mthamvuna rivers,¹² which suggests that at that time the

¹⁰. G.S. Preller (ed.) Voortrekker Wetgewing (Pretoria, J.L. van Schaik, 1924), p. 3 Resolution No. 1 of 27 June 1839; p. 4 Resolution No. 3 of 27 June 1839; p. 6 Resolution No. 6 of 28 June 1839; p. 7 Resolution No. 10 of 29 June 1839. Between 1841 and 1847, only 227 Trekkers had taken advantage of this land allocation. J.Y. Gibson, The Evolution of South African Native Policy (Pietermaritzburg, P. Davis and Sons, 1919), p. 20.

¹¹. Preller, Voortrekker Wetgewing, p. 37 Resolution No. 4 of 5 March 1840; p. 50 Resolution No. 3 of 4 June 1840; p. 59 Resolution No. 4 of 5 July 1840.

¹². Ibid., p. 138 Item No. 3 of 2 July 1841.

African inhabitants of Natal seemed not an impossible number to remove forcibly: a false assumption never put to the test.

When the British annexed Natal after the capitulation of the Volksraad, the allocation of land and labour was somewhat different. All land was presumed to belong to the state, to be retained as Crown Lands, or to be granted as locations or as mission reserves, or to land development companies and individual immigrant settlers, with labour available. The African people not required as farm labourers and not regarded as original occupiers of the land were to be swept into locations. From these, isibhalo forced labour on public works, and military levies were to be drawn; for the British, unlike the Trekkers, who had a well developed commando system, found it necessary to raise African levies for peace-keeping and defence.

In order to provide some gloss of legitimacy and respectability to this annexation of land and the levying of forced labour and military service, the British authorities in Natal supported the notion that Natal had been devastated and vast numbers of people slaughtered rather than dispersed by the depredations of Shaka and the destabilisation of much of the hinterland, and that those African people who settled there later were immigrants with no real claim to the land. Early observations recorded by Chase, if taken at face value, appear to give credence to this view. However, Chase's selection of documents appears to be a deliberate attempt to support the idea of an 'empty' Natal. In this way he contributed to what amounted to a willing conspiracy of inaccuracy which would justify colonisation.

In 1824, Lieutenant F.G. Farewell declared that territory in Natal, the use of which had been granted to him by Shaka, was 'nearly depopulated, not containing more than three or four hundred souls.'¹³ Major Charters, obtaining his information from H.F. Fynn, stated that 'not less than 1,000000 human beings were destroyed' by Shaka who put to death all those he could overtake, and drove out fugitives 'leaving the countries which he passed over a solitude and waste.'¹⁴ Frontier journals (unnamed), pressing for British annexation, described Natal as an 'unproductive wilderness.'¹⁵ Bannister continued in this vein:

The country around the harbour and for two hundred miles westward towards the colony to a considerable depth inland, is uninhabited except by a few scattered individuals, the wrecks of the tribes exterminated by the desolating wars of the Zoola chiefs.¹⁶

Dr Andrew Smith, in 1834, urged the establishment of a British settlement in Natal 'now lying waste.'¹⁷ Piet Retief, the Trekker leader, in his first interview with Dingane, in November 1837, is reported to have added his voice to this perception in referring to the land which he coveted to the south of the Thukela as 'a large country which lies waste and

13. Chase, The Natal Papers, part I, p. 18. Farewell to Governor of the Cape, September 1824.

14. Ibid., p. 20. Major Charters's report, n.d. The area thus depopulated was not only Natal, but much of the present Transvaal and Orange Free State as well, according to Chase; Ibid., part II, pp. 288 - 289 footnote.

15. Ibid., part II, p. 77. Frontier journals, n.d.

16. S. Bannister, 'A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir hordes into the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope 1834 - 35, p. 163 et seq., in Chase, Natal Papers, part II, pp. 31 - 32.

17. Chase, Natal Papers, part I, p. 37. Dr A Smith's notes, 6 May 1834.

unoccupied from the Drakensberg to the sea..¹⁸ J.C. Chase approved of the May 1843 British declaration of the District of Natal, and reiterated the statement, traceable to H.F. Fynn, that Shaka had destroyed a million people.¹⁹ Josiah Tyler, in 1891, accepted these statements and repeated them:

The country was once thickly populated, but that despot [Shaka] so devastated it by his armies that only here and there could be found a few stragglers, and they were in a state of starvation.²⁰

J.A. Wahlberg, the Swedish naturalist and independent observer, referred to the depopulation of Natal in the area along the Mtshezi (Bushman's) and Thukela rivers, in two entries in his journal: 'A number of deserted Kaffer kraals of stone or earth;' 'Many deserted Kaffer kraals, as on the preceding days,' to which he added 'Two farms at the Tugela.'²¹ These farms may have been cleared of their African owners by the Boers and not by marauders from across the Thukela.

H.F. Fynn, in giving evidence before the 1852 - 53 Commission, again described the devastation and depopulation of Natal on his arrival in 1824: a perception which had been accepted from him and repeated for nearly three decades. He referred to

.. the extent of the devastation occasioned by the wars of Chaka on this side of the Drakensberg Mountains: for from the Itongati River, 25 miles N.E. of Port Natal,

¹⁸. D.P. Bezuidenhout's narrative, from the 'Orange Free State Monthly Magazine,' December 1879, in Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 368.

¹⁹. Chase, Natal Papers, part II, pp. 288 - 289, footnote.

²⁰. Tyler, Forty Years, p. 269.

²¹. A. Craig and C. Hummel (introducers and editors), Johan August Wahlberg: Travel Journals (and some letters) South Africa and Namibia/Botswana 1838 - 1856 (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1994), p. 58.

up to within a few miles of the Umzimvubu, I did not find a single tribe, with the exception of about 30 natives residing near the Bluff .. There were neither kraals, huts, Kafirs, nor corn. Occasionally I saw a few stragglers, mere living skeletons, obtaining a precarious existence on roots and shell-fish.²²

This view was accepted in the report of the 1852 - 53 commissioners who added that 'the whole country was a desert..'²³ The descriptions referring to a devastated Natal were generally concerned with depopulation rather than the degradation of the land. J. Boshoff's account of the prospects for settlement in Natal, after his visit to the Natal Trekkers in May and June 1838, provided a most favourable account of the climate, vegetation and soil of Natal, as well as the prospects for mining coal and for stock-farming;²⁴ certainly enough to arouse the cupidity of prospective colonisers.

In 1843, when the British authorities made the first move towards the annexation of Natal, they accepted the perception of an 'empty' Natal, and maintained that the vast majority of the African inhabitants there had no clear right to the land, being immigrants. This argument was used to justify the levying of forced labour and military service, supposedly owed as a debt of gratitude for the granting of location land as living-space.

Hendrik Cloete, Her Majesty's Commissioner in Natal in 1843, accepted the statements on the depopulation of the country made by those who, in his opinion, 'appeared to

²². Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 103. Evidence of Henry Francis Fynn before the Native Commission, 1852.

²³. NCP 8/3/1 Proceedings of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, 1852 - 53, p. 6.

²⁴. Chase, Natal Papers, part II, pp. 31 - 33. J. Boshoff's account of the emigrant farmers, 1 September 1838.

possess the best sources of information,' and who declared that, on the arrival of the Trekkers, between two and three thousand 'natives, widely scattered in small parties in fastnesses near Port Natal.. constituted the entire population of the country.' Since the final defeat and death of Dingane in 1840 a reflux of African people had taken place. Cloete disagreed with the Trekker plan to re-locate those not wanted on farms or settled in locations, in an area beyond the Mthamvuna river. He drew a distinction between those originally in the country and later immigrants from Zululand,²⁵ regarding the latter as by far the more numerous, and as having no right to the land. Bryant has refuted Cloete's assumption, pointing out that many of these supposed immigrants were in fact returning to their ancestral lands after captivity in Zululand or from their refuges to the south of Natal. Claiming that he based his information on his own investigations, and that he had obtained evidence from the African people themselves, Bryant calculated that probably 65% of the Natal African population at that time was aboriginal, 25% from Zululand, and 10% were aliens, such as Swazi, Tsonga and Sotho.²⁶

It was no doubt the defeat and death of Dingane, coupled with the 1843 - 45 power vacuum in Natal between the collapse of Boer power and the final British annexation, which accounted for the vast influx of people into Natal after 1840. Most of these had originally lived in Natal. This was confirmed when John Scott, Lieutenant-Governor

²⁵. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. II, pp. 310 - 312. Cloete to the Hon. J. Montagu, Secretary to Government, 10 November 1843; Gibson, Evolution of South African Native Policy, p. 19.

²⁶. It would seem, however, that much of Bryant's information was second-hand, based on Fynn's and Shepstone's statements. A.T. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal (facsimile reprint, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1965; originally published 1929), pp. 239 - 241.

1856 - 64, directed that evidence be taken from elderly 'natives' who had personal knowledge of the African inhabitants of the area before Shaka's time. Taking into account the possible fallibility of oral evidence, especially if leading questions are asked, it would appear that there had been at least ninety-four 'tribes' in Natal before the Shakan period.²⁷ Of these, forty-three were 'ancient tribes of the country, which never had any other home, except during the turmoil and disruption caused by the ambition and aggressive acts of the Zulu chief Tshaka.'²⁸ Bryant calculated that there were at least fifty separate clans with about 100 000 members in Natal in pre-Shakan times.²⁹

These people, according to Theophilus Shepstone, 'lived so close together, that tribal change of residence was difficult, if not impossible.'³⁰ As archaeological evidence shows, the population increase accelerated, possibly on account of the introduction of maize from east Africa, since this cereal could be grown successfully in large quantities,³¹ and was resistant to bird depredation. The closer settlement which followed led to friction and competition for land and other resources such as wood and water, as well as succession disputes. Another explanation of the disruption and pressure in this area has been posited by Cobbing: that, especially in the first quarter of the nineteenth

27. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 124 - 153. Enclosure No. 1 in Lieutenant-Governor Scott's Despatch No. 12, 26 February 1864. This enclosure is attributable to Theophilus Shepstone.

28. Gibson, Evolution of South African Native Policy, p. 19.

29. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 236.

30. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 156. Theophilus Shepstone's paper published by the Journal of the Society of Arts, 29 January 1875.

31. T. Maggs, 'The Iron Age farming communities,' in Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, pp. 42 - 43.

century, the people were much agitated by the turmoil to the north and west, occasioned by widespread activity to obtain slaves to be shipped out through Delagoa Bay or even taken to the Cape.³² This theory is contradicted by Eldredge as being anachronistic and lacking in evidence.³³ Wright points out that the decline in the productivity of the land caused by poor farming methods rather than an increase in population has been postulated (by Guy) and denied (by Hall), to account for the disruption in Natal.³⁴

The appearance of leaders, among them Shaka, responding to this destabilisation, and willing to go to war over these issues, led to violent disturbances and the dispersion of groups of people. The increased and well organised militarisation of the amabutho and the campaigns of conquest undertaken by Shaka and other leaders created a demand for cattle to feed their armies as well as enhance their prestige, and even, possibly, to supply beef to ships calling at Delagoa Bay. In the case of Shaka, this exaction far exceeded the former tribute paid by subjugated peoples. His amabutho were engaged in warfare away from their home bases - the amakhandanda - where food would have been supplied locally and, in part, by their own families. This plunder of cattle further impoverished the victims of the Zulu aggression.

32. J. Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle: The Slave Trade and the Early Zulu,' passim, in Workshop on Natal and Zululand in the Colonial and Precolonial Periods, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, October 1990.

33. E.A. Eldredge, 'Delagoa Bay and the Hinterland in the Early Nineteenth Century: Politics, Trade, Slaves, and Slave Raiding,' in E.A. Eldredge and F. Morton (eds), Slavery in South Africa (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, Westview Press and University of Natal Press, 1994), pp. 153 - 154.

34. J.B. Wright, The dynamics of power and conflict in the Thukela - Mzimkhulu region in the 18th and early 19th centuries: a critical reconstruction, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, p. 28.

Although in most accounts of the disruption of the northern Nguni, Shaka is cited as the main agent, it is clear that he was only one of the leaders, albeit the most powerful, in this area, who hastened the expansion and dispersion of its inhabitants. Earlier, Dingiswayo kaJobe of the Mthethwa and, in the Shakan era, Zwide kaLanga of the Ndwandwe, and Mzilikazi kaMashobana of the Khumalo, caused considerable realignment and dispersion of groups, although not necessarily wholesale slaughter.

The careers of Matiwane KaMasumpa and his son, Zikhali, of the Ngwane people, although these two men were not as powerful as the aforementioned leaders, are examples of the numerous encounters and conflicts which affected individuals and groups of people, causing them to flee and, in some cases, then to marshal their forces and return to an area where they had previously lived. The Ngwane were involved in actual or threatened conflict with Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa, Zwide of the Ndwandwe, Shaka and Dingane of the Zulu, Mpangazita of the Hlubi, Mzilikazi of the Khumalo (later Ndebele), Moshweshwe of the Sotho, British forces under Dundas, Sekonyela of the Tlokwa and Sobhuza of the Swazi,³⁵ all of whom were attempting to expand and consolidate their own power bases.

According to Lieutenant-Governor Scott's information, provided by Theophilus Shepstone, some of the Natal groups dispersed by Shaka's raids or, in a ripple effect, by those directly attacked by the Zulu amabutho, never returned to Natal as distinct groups.

³⁵. N.J. Van Warmelo (ed), History of Matiwane and the Amangwane Tribe (Pretoria, Department of Native Affairs Ethnological Publications, Government Printer, 1938), pp. 16 - 152, passim; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 137 - 146.

Individuals from these groups, who did return, attached themselves to more powerful aggregations who had retained their identity. Some, like the Mphumuza, the Nxamalala and the Thembu, were temporarily absorbed by the Zulu, but detached themselves and returned to Natal. Others, like the Bhaca, were driven southwards, but some of these returned as a distinct group to Natal after it became a British colony. The peregrinations of the Hlubi people have been well attested, some moving to the south, some joining the Zulu and some, under Langalibalele kaMthimkulu, re-entering Natal.³⁶

It is clear that, in this turbulent period, no single group south of the Thukela was able, for some years, to offer significant resistance to Boer or British colonisation, since all alike were in disarray. Their own best interests dictated that they should acquiesce to the demands made upon them by the British colonial authorities, after annexation, in the form of forced labour and military service. Collaboration was not a policy common to all groups, and where it was accepted, different groups showed various degrees of enthusiasm, depending on the regional and economic situation of each. It would be imposing European xenophobia on the Natal Africans to suppose that their instinctive attitude towards the European colonial power was inimical. Self-interest and their own powerlessness were important factors, and frequently the African people in Natal perceived that their best interest lay with the power base of the colonial authorities in

³⁶. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 124 - 153. Enclosure No. 1 in Lieutenant-Governor Scott's Despatch No. 12, 26 February 1864; W.R. Guest, Langalibalele: The Crisis in Natal 1873 - 1875 (Durban, Department of History and Political Science, University of Natal, Research Monograph No. 2, 1976), passim; J. Wright and A. Manson, The Hlubi Chiefdom in Zululand-Natal: a History (Ladysmith, Tugela Press (Pty) Ltd, 1983), passim.

protection against Zulu aggression, or in enhancing their economic progress or even, in the case of the Kholwa, in achieving their possible political advancement within the colony.

Some groups, notably the Mphumuza under Thetheleku kaNobanda and the Nxamalala under Lugaju kaMatomela, occupied land so near the British seat of power, Pietermaritzburg, that it was to their advantage to accept alliance with the colonial authorities and derive as much benefit as they could from this link and from the fact that their position in the Swartkop (Zwartkops) location, in close proximity to Pietermaritzburg, allowed them to engage in profitable market-gardening. As early as 1844, the Rev. A. Faure noted that those African people living near Pietermaritzburg were bringing firewood and garden produce into the town to sell.³⁷ In July 1876 Lady Barker remarked on the sale, in the town, of poultry and eggs from a nearby homestead.³⁸ Durban, too, offered similar opportunities. G. Russell, writing of the situation in Durban in the 1850s, recorded that bundles of reeds were brought into the town for sale by African women, as were firewood, grass brooms, mats, fruit and vegetables.³⁹

Chiefs farther afield, such as Phakade kaMacingwane of the Mchunu, and other chiefs in the Weenen location, were able to build up their own power bases but remain ostensibly loyal to the colonial power, According to the 1852 - 53 Commission, Phakade and these other chiefs (unnamed) increased the number of their adherents and their importance by

³⁷. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. II, p. 362. A. Faure to the Honourable John Montagu, 4 January 1844.

³⁸. Lady Barker, A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa (London, Macmillan and Co., 1894), p. 261.

³⁹. Russell, History of Old Durban, pp. 91, 100, 502.

adding, as largely as possible, from extraneous sources. This was so marked that the commissioners, four-fifths of whom were colonists, complained that Phakade in particular was given too much latitude by the local magistrates.⁴⁰ It was from the locations farthest away from Pietermaritzburg and Durban, the inhabitants of which could not expect to provide produce for the markets in these towns, that many migrant labourers left Natal to seek work.

In all this early turmoil it would have been difficult for Commissioner Cloete, in 1843, to define precisely which groups or individuals could be termed 'Zulu.' An increasing population, competition for grazing, water and land for tillage had caused groups of people over the centuries to move southwards between the Drakensberg and the sea. Considerable acceleration was occasioned by expansionist military leaders bent on conquest. It was only with Shaka's conquest, absorption and consolidation of those Nguni living to the north of the Thukela river that a distinct and powerful Zulu nation came into being, if one disregards his father Senzangakhona's small chiefdom. Shaka and his brother and assassin, Dingane, held sway over many people beyond the consolidated group, and exacted tribute from them. Commissioner Cloete was referring to those northern Nguni who had been directly ruled by Dingane and his brother and successor, Mpande, when he wrote about 'a most alarming influx of Zulus .. within the last three or four years.'⁴¹ These fugitives included Mpande himself in 1839,⁴² Phakade of the

⁴⁰. NCP 8/3/1 Proceedings of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, 1852 - 53, p. 34.

⁴¹. Bird, *Annals of Natal*, vol. II, p. 311. H. Cloete to the Honourable J. Montagu, Secretary to Government, 10 November 1843.

Mchunu in the latter part of Dingane's rule,⁴³ and Mawa⁴⁴ in 1843, with their adherents. Perhaps they were taking the option referred to by Holden:

This is, however, one law of considerable importance ... if a person or family is dissatisfied with his or their chief, they can leave their own tribe and place themselves under the protection of another chief...⁴⁵

This view was contradicted by Lieutenant-Governor Pine in 1874 in connection with the Langalibalele affair. Advised by Theophilus Shepstone, he declared that leaving the jurisdiction of the Supreme Chief without his sanction was looked upon as treason.⁴⁶

Whichever of these statements was correct, there is no doubt that the fugitives from Zululand to Natal were hostile to the Zulu authorities of that time, but were themselves Zulu.

In the period 1839 - 43, to which Cloete referred, the first significant, although not numerous, influx of Swazi took place when Chief Mswati's half-brother, Malambule, sought refuge with the Wesleyan missionary, James Allison, among the Nene people under their chief, Sigweje kaMngayi. Mswati cast out Allison and Sigweje's people, who entered Natal. They purchased land near Waschbank.⁴⁷ Later in 1851, a hundred families of Swazi, Griqua, Rolong, Sotho, Tlokwa and Hlubi moved with Allison to

42. A. Delegorgue, Travels in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1990; originally published 1847), vol. I, p. 82.

43. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 272.

44. Ibid., p. 43.

45. Holden, The Past and Future of the Kaffir Races, p. 339.

46. BPP C1121 No. 5 Pine to Carnarvon, 16 July 1874. Enclosure in No 5. Minute by SNA on the late Operations against Langalabelele. (sic)

47. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, pp. 326 - 327.

Edendale from Indaleni which he had established in 1847.⁴⁸ They were not part of the location system, and, being Christian and literate, applied for exemption from 'Native' law. They were, therefore, strictly speaking, not subject to the demands for forced labour and military service, although attempts were made from time to time to involve them. Not being assigned to locations, they were able to occupy land suitable for farming, since they had purchased it and had some say in its selection.

These Kholwa were the forerunners of other Christian landowners who entered Natal and settled down at Edendale, Driefontein and Kleinfontein, not only as enterprising commercial farmers, but also as traders, carriers and artisans.⁴⁹ They became so prosperous through these enterprises that they were able to provide notable voluntary military assistance to the British during the Anglo-Zulu War. Their ambition to gain the franchise in reward for this aid was, however, to meet with failure and, in later years, after the colonial period, the Kholwa, in their disillusionment, produced many leaders of political action against the South African government.

Tsonga traders were present in the Zulu domain from early times, trading between the Zulu and Delagoa Bay. An influx, into Natal, of Tsonga on a large scale belongs to a later period when, from the 1870s, John Dunn obtained the services of gangs of Tsonga

48. A.F. Hattersley, The British Settlement of Natal (Cambridge, University Press, 1950), pp. 89 - 90; S. Meintjes, 'Edendale 1851 - 1930' in J. Laband and R. Haswell (eds), Pietermaritzburg 1838 - 1988 (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1988), p. 66; C. Ballard, 'Traders, Trekkers and colonists' in Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. 131.

49. N. Etherington, 'Christianity and African society in nineteenth - century Natal,' in Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, pp. 287 - 288.

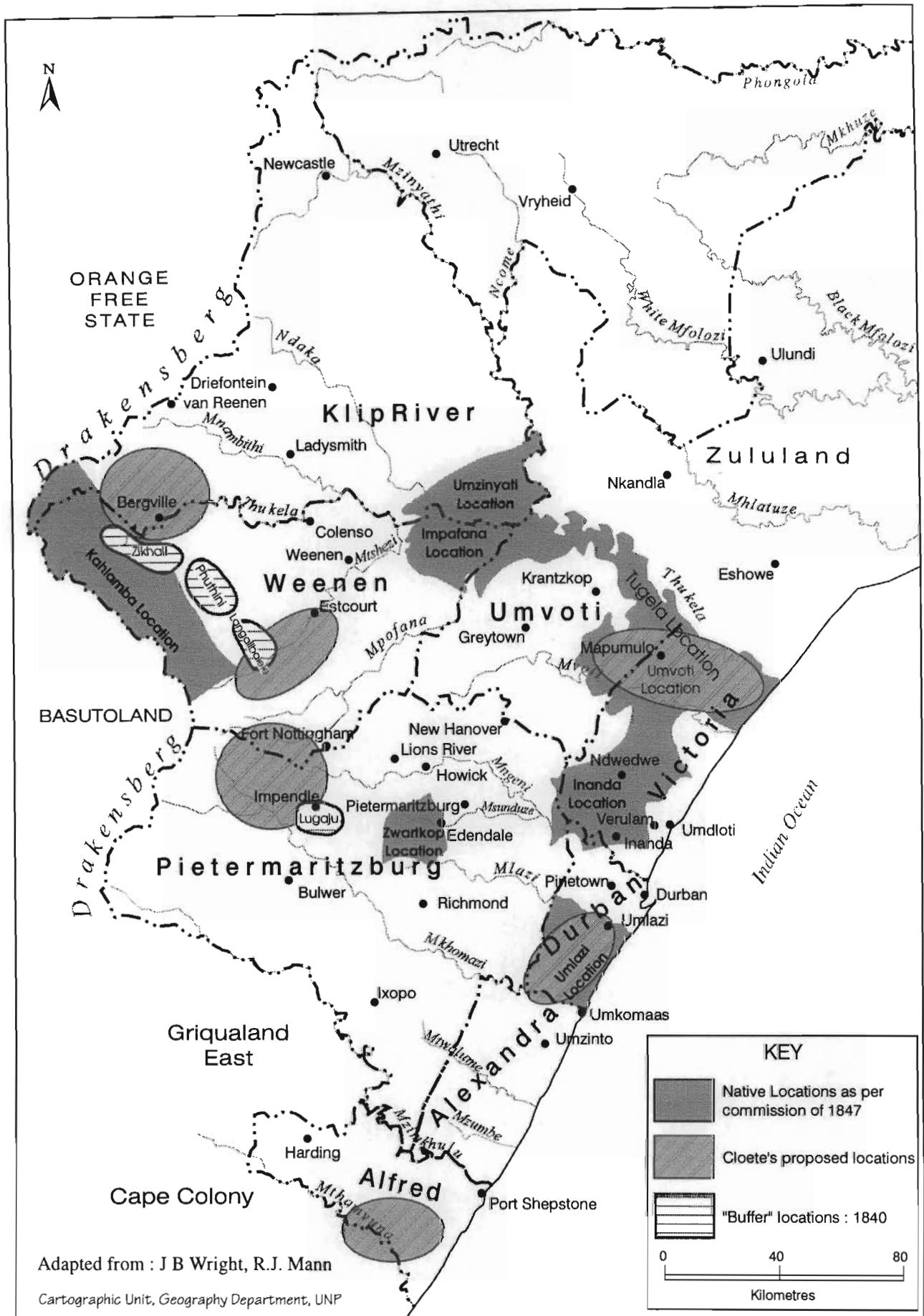
labourers, especially on railway construction and on large sugar estates.⁵⁰ Otherwise, the 10% aliens of Bryant's estimate, which included Sotho, were mainly small groups and individuals who had entered Natal.

As early as November 1843, Commissioner Cloete suggested, with regard to the homesteads and lands of the African people who were originally in Natal, that 'certain tracts of land should be inalienably vested in the chiefs of such kraals..' He proposed further, the settlement of the 'number of intruders in the colony,' *i.e.* those whom he regarded as having no right to land in Natal, in six or more locations at a distance 'from the contaminating influence of the chief town and port,' *i.e.* Pietermaritzburg and Durban. He favoured Dr Adams's Umlazi as one of these locations; another two might be established near the Mzimvubu, and a third, controlled by the missionary Aldin Grout, on the banks of the Tongati river or the Mvoti river; a fourth at the upper sources of the Mkhomazi river; a fifth at the Mtshezi (Great Bushman's) river or the Mpofana (Mooi) river; and a sixth at the upper end of the Great Thukela (Tugela). Since the Umlazi and the Umvoti locations would be controlled by the missionaries Adams and Grout, the future British colonial government could, in Cloete's view, expect 'a gradual improvement in the habits and morals of this benighted people..' ⁵¹

The other four proposed locations would be remote from both Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and would serve as labour pools for farmers farther afield, as well as sources of

⁵⁰. C. Ballard, John Dunn (Craighall, A.D. Donker (Pty) Ltd, 1985), pp. 106 - 107.

⁵¹. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. II, pp. 313 - 5. Commissioner H. Cloete to the Honourable J. Montagu, Secretary to Government, 10 November 1843.



The Colony of Natal showing locations and proposed locations

isibhalo labour and military service. Originally, in 1846, it was recommended to the location commissioners that they establish markets in the towns 'for the sale of the produce grown on all the locations..' as this would stimulate the industry of the location-dwellers to sell their surplus crops at a lower price than would be demanded by European farmers.⁵² However, any chance that the location-dwellers might have been able to build up their own prosperity in competition with the white farmers was negated by the resistance of these farmers and by the poverty of the location land assigned to the Africans. Later, in the 1870s, the Hlubi, by expanding their lands beyond the locations assigned to them, were to challenge this notion, as they produced surplus, reasonably durable and marketable produce.

It was left to the British officials of the new colony of Natal, annexed to the Cape as an autonomous district in 1845, to carry out Cloete's suggestions. It would seem that, in establishing the locations, the Natal government wished to confine the 'intruders' within limited and defined areas, rather than give them favourably situated farming land adequate for their needs and future prosperity. This establishing of locations would have had the effect of forcing them on to the labour market as wage labour. The paucity of their share of land is shown by the fact that, initially, the approximately 80 000 - 100 000 African people to whom the locations were assigned, received some two million acres (809 400 hectares) i.e. about eight to ten hectares each, and one-sixth of the total area of Natal.⁵³ The remaining five-sixths of the land was Crown Land, or was allocated to land

⁵². M.J. Eldridge (ed), Records of Natal Government House Despatches, vol. I, 1845 - 1846 (Pretoria, Government Printer, 1987), p. 390.

⁵³. NCP 8/3/1 Proceedings of the Commission, 1852 - 53, p. 14.

development companies; to white farmers, many of whom were absentee landlords; or as mission reserves. Further locations and mission reserves (some of the latter being carved out of existing locations) were later proclaimed, until, by 1864, there were forty-two locations and twenty-one mission reserves. By 1889, the area covered by these was 2 198 546 acres (889 751,56 hectares): not a great increase in the area of land considering the African population growth in over forty years.⁵⁴

In establishing the locations the Natal government forcibly removed some African people from land suitable for pastoral farming and agriculture. Holden wrote of the choice of location land and the forced removals, and he attempted to justify these actions:

The large tracts of country, thus selected, were such as Natives alone could use, being exceedingly rugged and mountainous, and only fit for such people to occupy: but in the more open parts, if a farm happened to be claimed by a Native, the claimant was to have another farm given in some other suitable place by government, so as to allow the locations to remain entire.⁵⁵

The first Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, Martin West, arrived in December 1845, and by the end of March 1846 he had appointed the Natal Native Commission of 1846 - 47 to report on 'Native Affairs' and the possibility of establishing locations for the African people who had returned to Natal. This commission's most important instructions were to locate the 'natives,' divide the Natal territory into districts and fix sites for European townships.⁵⁶ The commission consisted of Theophilus Shepstone, 'Diplomatic Agent

⁵⁴. NCP 4/1/2/18 Fifth session, twelfth council 1889, LC No. 13, 20 May 1889.

⁵⁵. Holden, History of the Colony, p. 177.

⁵⁶. Eldridge (ed), Records of Natal Government House Despatches. vol. I, 1845 - 1846, Document No. 100, Enclosure 1, 8 December 1846, p. 388.

to the Native Tribes'; Dr William Stanger, the Surveyor-General; and Dr Newton Adams, an American missionary. They were joined, in December 1846, by the Reverend D. Lindley, an American missionary, and Lieutenant C.J. Gibb, R.E. It would be Shepstone's task to carry out the placement of the African people in these locations; Stanger would define the position and boundaries of the locations; and the missionaries would be expected to supervise them, since West recommended that each location be 'under the pastoral care of one or two missionaries.'⁵⁷ In establishing towns, the commissioners were instructed to 'secure occupation of the country intervening between the several locations', *i.e.* to intersperse the locations among European settlements. Lieutenant Gibb was to give his 'professional opinion with regard to situations [of towns] in a military point of view, as susceptible of defence..⁵⁸

The 1846 - 47 Commission's recommendations for the organisation and control of the locations included a superintendent or resident agent for the government, with assistants; a police force; a 'model mechanical school'; and agricultural instruction. The commission originally planned ten locations. The allocation of land would take into account the nature of the ground and the preferences of the African people.⁵⁹ The reality was somewhat

⁵⁷. E.H. Brookes, White Rule in South Africa 1830 - 1910 (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1974), p. 43.

⁵⁸. Eldridge (ed), Records of Natal Government Despatches, vol. I, pp. 390 - 391.

⁵⁹. E.W. Smith, The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley (London, The Epworth Press, 1949), pp. 252 - 253.

different. Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, turned down most of the Commission's recommendations on the grounds of expense.⁶⁰

The first location, proclaimed in November 1846, was the Zwartkops location (later, the spelling 'Swartkop' came into use), in which 8 000 people were settled, 3 000 of them under chiefs originally settled there. This indicates that even those people who were accepted as aboriginal inhabitants of Natal, were placed in locations. In March 1847, the Umlazi, Umvoti and Inanda locations were proclaimed. The Land Commission of 1848, which replaced the so-called Location Commission, made an unsuccessful attempt to reduce the size of these four locations. In April 1849, three more locations were established: the Umzinyati, the Impafana and the Kahlamba.⁶¹ With regard to the quality of the land granted to location-dwellers, much of it was unusable for stock-farmers and crop-farmers. Lindley, in 1854, voiced his misgivings about the location system when he wrote, 'I did not think this way of settling the Natives the wisest that might have been adopted,'⁶² and when he first visited the Inanda location in March 1847, he was appalled at the quality of the land, and stated, 'A more broken, worthless region could hardly be found.'⁶³

Increasing population, added to the unsuitable and insufficient land, soon caused the location-dwellers to be severely overcrowded on marginal or exhausted land, and many

⁶⁰. Ibid., p. 258.

⁶¹. Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, p. 60.

⁶². Smith, Lindley, p. 253.

⁶³. Ibid., p. 254.

were forced to look for a livelihood elsewhere, seeking work in the towns or with white farmers. Those who remained on the land were not all settled on location land with secure communal tenure, but little prospect of prosperity; some lived on occupied farms where they were bound to give their labour to the owner for at least part of the year, while others occupied Crown Lands from which they could be summarily evicted; and some were illegal tenants on farms unoccupied by their owners; while others lived on mission reserves.⁶⁴

In the 1890s, John Bird attempted to explain why the locations were in broken country. He wrote that not only had the Boers taken most of the open ground, but the returning African people preferred to 'remain as much as possible unseen and unnoticed' because of their earlier persecution, and therefore chose 'the very broken tracts, almost fastnesses, that still form the great part of the kafir locations.'⁶⁵ There may have been some truth in this before the defeat and death of Dingane, but not to the same extent after 1846, when the locations were selected. However, Holden did find, as late as 1850, that the Thuli people under Chief Mnini KaMabone were still inclined to seek the safety of dense bush about six miles (10,6 km) from Durban Bay.⁶⁶

John Robinson, writing in 1872, while admitting to the rugged nature of the location land, attempted to justify the choice. He wrote:

⁶⁴. Gibson, Evolution of South African Native Policy, p. 30.

⁶⁵. J. Bird, Natal : 1846 - 1851 A Chapter in Supplement of Historical Record (facsimile reprint: Pietermaritzburg, Prontaprint 1988; originally published 1891), p. 3.

⁶⁶. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 506.

Fully 2,000,000 acres of Natal are taken up by Native locations ... These are mostly situated in broken and bushy country, which the kafir seems to prefer to more open ground.⁶⁷

He became lyrical about this supposed choice when he wrote, in 1900:

Natal offers ... regions of picturesque beauty and grandeur, whose depths of craggy bushland and rock-bound mountain and shadowy valley seem made to be the happy abiding-place of untutored savages.⁶⁸

Russell, in 1911, was more realistic in taking into account the fact that the location-dwellers were pastoralists and crop-farmers, when he wrote:

The native locations are generally the most barren, wild and broken parts of the country. Only small portions here and there are adapted for cultivation, and much of the land is not fitted for pasturage but only for the habitation of the eagle and the baboon.⁶⁹

By the time the location commissioners established the first locations in 1846, land had already been claimed by those Trekkers who had remained in Natal, although only those claimants who could prove twelve months' continuous occupation were permitted to remain on their farms.⁷⁰ Many Trekkers sold their land to Cape land speculators,⁷¹ such as F. Collison, E. Chiappini and J.C. Zeederberg, who promoted emigration from Britain to Natal. Collison sold two large 6 000 acre (2 428,2 hectare) farms to J.C. Byrne

⁶⁷. Robinson, Notes on Natal, p. xvi.

⁶⁸. Robinson, A Life Time, p. 298.

⁶⁹. R. Russell. Natal The Land and its Story (new edition: Durban, T.W. Griggs and Co (Pty) Ltd, 1972; originally published 1911), p. 198.

⁷⁰. Hattersley, British Settlement of Natal, p. 62.

⁷¹. Ibid., p. 76.

who was in partnership with the shipping firm of Marshall and Edridge. Byrne bought more land, and set up his Natal Emigration and Colonisation Office in London, offering assisted passages for emigrants to Natal.⁷² His land in Natal was surveyed in May 1849 to provide twenty-acre (eight-hectare) plots to settlers. Before the first Byrne settlers arrived in 1849, other settlers, in groups or as individuals, had increased the settler population to about 2000.⁷³ From January 1849 until June 1852 some 4 806 immigrants came to Natal, most of them under the Byrne scheme.⁷⁴

Some of the allotments granted to the British settlers were not much better in quality or situation than the land allotted to location-dwellers, and their early struggles as commercial farmers were comparable.⁷⁵ However, this problem was soon alleviated, in theory, for those settlers who were financially able to take advantage of Lieutenant-Governor Pine's increase in the potential size of the settlers' allotments so that each adult could claim forty-five acres (eighteen hectares) with twelve and a half acres (five hectares) for each child. In practice, there were considerable difficulties and much dissatisfaction.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the settlers had some room for manoeuvre and some political advantages, while the location-dwellers were locked into their unenviable position if they wished to

⁷². Ibid., p. 103.

⁷³. Ibid., p. 92.

⁷⁴. Ibid., p. 315.

⁷⁵. C. Ballard and G. Lenta, 'The complex nature of agriculture in Colonial Natal: 1860 - 1909,' in B. Guest and J.M. Sellers, (eds), Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1985), p. 123.

⁷⁶. Hattersley, British Settlement of Natal, pp. 209 - 210; R.E. Gordon, Dear Louisa (Durban, T.W. Griggs and Co. (Pty) Ltd, 1976), p. 1.

continue farming. One option, open to and exercised by both groups, was to move to the towns and seek work.

Unlike the land allotted to British settlers, which does not appear to have been deliberately chosen for any reason other than that it was available for purchase, location land does seem to have been chosen for specific reasons advantageous to the colonial state. A map published in 1859⁷⁷ indicates that an important motivation in the choice of the Umzinyati, Impafana and Tugela locations was to provide a buffer area against Zulu raids from over the Thukela. This motivation was expressed in January 1854 when Theophilus Shepstone described those residing in the northern and north-western border locations as being 'useful bulwarks to Natal against invasion.'⁷⁸ The Kahlamba location was deliberately placed below the Drakensberg to ward off San raids.⁷⁹ The selection of Swartkop, Umlazi, Umvoti and Inanda suggests that the availability of labour in reasonable proximity to towns and farms was probably a factor. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the disgruntled commissioners of 1852 - 53, twenty of whom were land-owning colonists while only five were officials,⁸⁰ this aspect had not been considered, since they complained that the size of the locations, which would provide a refuge for many potential

77. R.J. Mann (ed), The Colony of Natal (London, Jarrold and Sons, 1859), frontispiece.

78. SNA 1/1/5 No. 39. Shepstone's memorandum, 23 January 1854.

79. Shepstone papers. T. Shepstone's diary, 16 - 20 April 1849; CSO 20(1) No. 8. T. Shepstone to D. Moodie, 24 April 1849; Shepstone papers, T. Shepstone's diary, 29 April 1849.

80. Brookes, White Rule, p. 53.

labourers, was such that they ‘dried up the source whence an abundant and continuous supply of Kafir labour for wages might have been procured.’⁸¹

The commissioners complained bitterly, too, of the

suicidal illiberality in respect of land towards the white inhabitants, British subjects .. and the reckless extravagance of the projected grants, amounting to two millions of acres, to the Kafirs..⁸²

Since, in 1852, the settler population, with five-sixths of Natal available to them or to the colonial government, amounted to about 7 000, while the African population of some 80 000 to 100 000 or more was confined to one-sixth of the land, this statement is widely prejudiced. The desire for land and labour is further shown by the commissioners when they deplored the fact that ‘no settler of experience or possessed of landed property’ had been on the Location Commission, and the commissioners, ‘failed to give general satisfaction,’ because the locations were so large that they trespassed on ‘the private rights of proprietors of farms.’⁸³

Already the conflict between officialdom and the settlers was evident: the officials concerned with a potential source of labour from the locations which they could tap for public works and military service - both isibhalo labourers and military levies had been called upon by this time - and the settlers requiring labour in towns and on farms. Both

81. NCP 8/3/1 Proceedings and report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, 1852 - 53, p. 14.

82. Ibid., p. 13.

83. Ibid., p. 14.

the Natal government and the settlers were increasingly to lose labour to other areas as time went on, especially after the discovery of diamonds and then gold. This is made clear by returns showing the rising number of African men from Natal who obtained passes to leave the colony. In 1889, 3 667 African men left Natal in search of work,⁸⁴ and between April 1893 and March 1894, 21 499 African men were granted passes to leave Natal.⁸⁵ By 1908, nearly 31 000 African men from Natal took outward passes to look for work in adjacent territories, while some 8 465 left 'for other purposes' bringing the total to 39 397.⁸⁶ The loophole in the compulsion to provide labour and military service was being exploited by African men from Natal in search of free and more remunerative labour, giving rise to a pattern of migrant labour, with all its social disruption and economic drawbacks.

In confining the African people in Natal to limited and, eventually, unprofitable and exhausted locations, the Natal government was not providing the limitless labour pool it had hoped for, but was producing an impoverished people, many of whom sought the opportunity to escape. The land originally assigned to location-dwellers, even in 1847, was insufficient for much more than subsistence farming unless it was close enough to the towns to be used as market-gardens.

⁸⁴. NCP 4/1/2/18 LC No. 16, 30 May 1889, Fifth Session, Twelfth Council, 1889.

⁸⁵. NCP 4/2/1/2 Legislative Assembly, Second Session, First Parliament 1894, 9 July 1894.

⁸⁶. SNA 1/1/420, 1909/136 Statement showing the number of Natal Natives who took "Outward" passes for labour and other Purposes during the year 1908, 28 January 1909.

When the recommendations of the 1846 - 47 Commission, with regard to the administration of the locations, were not accepted, and no funds were made available to administer them, Shepstone, as Diplomatic Agent, turned to the Zulu pattern of chiefs to provide the lack. Where 'tribes' were well established in Natal under hereditary chiefs, and were regarded as indigenous, these leaders and their followers were allowed to remain as distinct groups. Where no recognised chief over a consolidated group existed, Shepstone appointed a chief over this 'tribe'.⁸⁷ The 'unborn' chief thus appointed was given authority but, initially, no remuneration for the office, which provided the Natal authorities with indirect control over the Natal Africans at little or no cost. 'Unborn' chiefs, since they owed their position to the Natal government, were more likely to be amenable than the original hereditary chiefs. Later, this distinction blurred and 'unborn' chiefs or their descendants who had succeeded them were, on occasion, hostile to the Natal government. All the chiefs formed part of the chain of command in raising levies and isibhalo labourers.

As early as 1854, Shepstone was uneasy about the efficacy of the location system in Natal, since he proposed that he should take those 'Natives', residing in Natal, who were willing to follow him to the country south of the Mzimkhulu. These would exclude those from the northern and north-western border locations who were required for defence. He gave his reasons for this migration, but realised the difficulties attendant upon forced removal and the fact that the African people were less compliant than they had been:

⁸⁷. Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, p. 59.

Natal requires a population outlet to her ever increasing Black Population, this will furnish it, to attain the same by a forced removal would be as unjust as it is physically impracticable.⁸⁸

The migration did not take place.

Shepstone's plan to give legal security and some political power within the locations to the location-dwellers by granting separate titles for each location to a Board of Trustees, led only to the establishment of the Umnini Trust, in May 1858. This comprised the SNA ex officio, the chief of the Thuli people also ex officio, and one non-official member. The scheme was not pursued, as the Natal government would have lost its power to re-allocate land and to manoeuvre within the system. Instead, the Natal Native Trust was created which, from June 1864, held all other location land in Natal in trust for the African population as a whole. The Trust was the Natal Executive Council acting in a particular capacity.⁸⁹ As no chiefs or location-dwellers were members of this Trust, any possible autonomy or part in decision-making by them was precluded, as was individual ownership of land.

The acquiescence of the African people in the tyranny of the Natal government can be partly explained by the fact that grants of land were vitally necessary for their livelihood as pastoral and crop-farmers. They were accustomed to the authority of their own chiefs on whom they depended for the apportioning of land, and the position of the Natal government in this regard seemed at first no different. Some, like Mpande, Phakade and

⁸⁸. SNA 1/1/5, No. 39. Shepstone's memorandum, 23 January 1854.

⁸⁹. Brookes, White Rule, p. 55.

Mawa, who were formerly under the sway of the Zulu king, detached themselves only when their lives were in jeopardy. These then transferred their allegiance to the power base of the Boers and then the British. When, in later years, demands for taxes and isibhalo labour became excessive, and employment in towns, on farms, in the transport business and on mines offered an alternative to pastoral farming and agriculture, many African men from Natal left the locations. This led to the weakening of the mesh of dependency of young men on their fathers and their chiefs; and traditional respect and indebtedness broke down.

The Natal government had defined and limited the land occupation of African people in Natal. In administering these areas, this government exploited them by drawing from them labour for public works, and military service. To ensure and justify compulsion in these matters, an elaborate fabrication was devised to vindicate this levy. However, since the British Colonial Office was not fully aware of the system until the beginning of 1876, no explanation was offered or demanded until 31 May 1876.⁹⁰

Having confined the homes and farming operations of the African people in Natal to the locations, Shepstone exploited these location-dwellers as a source of labour and military service, as an obligation in supposed gratitude for their being granted land. It was left to later officials in 1876, and Shepstone himself, who by this time had left Natal, to attempt

⁹⁰. SNA 1/1/27 Statement quoted by A. Browning in his communication with the SNA, 27 July 1876; NCP 8/5/14 Papers relating to the supply by native chiefs of native labour on public works. Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Sir Henry Bulwer, 31 May, 1876.

to justify the linked levy of isibhalo and military service as being in accordance with Zulu custom, although the parallel which they drew between the two systems was inaccurate.

CHAPTER III

Attempts to justify the isibhalo system as being derived from the Zulu king's labour demands.

By the time that the Natal officials were required, in 1876, to explain on what basis the exaction of isibhalo labour on public works rested, the linked isibhalo and military levy system had been in operation for almost thirty years. It had been applied arbitrarily by Theophilus Shepstone in 1847 and 1848; with marginally more legality from 1849 and 1850; and was to be applied with official clarity only in 1891. Military levies were first required in 1847, and isibhalo labour on public roads was first used in 1848.¹

Shepstone's actions were on a firmer footing from June 1849 when Native Customary Law superseded Roman-Dutch Law in ruling the African people in Natal;² and in 1850 when the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal was recognised as the Supreme Chief of the 'Natives' in the Colony.³ This gave some legality to the calling up of levies and labourers, although precisely what the powers of the Supreme Chief were, was not explained. Until statutory law clarified these powers in 1891, the SNA and the magistrates acted on the

1. NCP 8/5/14 Papers relating to the supply by native chiefs of native labour on public works, 1875 (hereafter cited as PNNL). Enclosure in No. 16. Report of J.W. Shepstone, Acting Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter cited as SNA), 5 June 1877; J.B. Wright, Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg 1840 - 1870 (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1971), p. 64.

2. Brookes, White Rule, p. 50.

3. NCP 4/1/2/21 LC No. 4, 17 February 1892.

basis of custom, which in practice was, to a large extent, arbitrary. As late as 1870 it was stated that

.. the right of the Supreme Chief, in other words, of the Government under Native Law to order out, through the Magistrates, Natives to labour on public works has always been recognised and acted upon.⁴

In the Natal Legislative Council meeting of 17 February 1892, the SNA, attempting to give the established system retrospective legality, stated that the officer administering the Government of Natal (the Lieutenant-Governor or Governor) had 'exercised the powers of a Supreme Chief over the Native Population' since 1845,⁵ but it was only when Lieutenant-Governor Martin West's proclamation was embodied in Ordinance No. 3 of 1849, ratified by the Queen-in-Council in 1850, that it was formally stated that the Lieutenant-Governor held all the power and authority enjoyed by 'any Supreme or paramount Native Chief.'⁶ This was reiterated in Law No. 44, 1887;⁷ but only in the passing of Law No. 19 of 1891 was this power unequivocally defined to include the calling up of military levies and of labourers on public works. Law No. 19, 1891, laid down:

The Supreme Chief has absolute power to call upon Chiefs, District Headmen, and all other Natives, to supply armed men or levies for the defence of the Colony, and for the suppression of disorder and rebellion within its borders, and may call upon such Chiefs, District Headmen and all other Natives to personally render such military and other service.

4. NCP 4/1/1/3 Document No. 35, 1870 - 71.

5. NCP 4/1/2/21 LC No. 4, 17 February 1892.

6. NCP 5/1/1 Ordinance No. 3, 1849, 21 June 1849 Proclamation by Lieutenant-Governor M. West.

7. R.L. Hitchins (comp. and ed), Statutes of Natal (Pietermaritzburg, P. Davis and Sons, 1901), vol. II, Native Law, p. 9 - 11.

[and]

The Supreme Chief has power to call upon all Natives to supply labour for public works or for the general needs of the Colony.⁸

The Supreme Chief's power with regard to calling up military levies and labourers was thus legalised forty-four and forty-three years respectively after it was first applied. The persons authorised to call up levies and labourers were designated in the same law as:

.. the Secretary for Native Affairs, or .. the Administrators of Native Law, or ... other officers authorised for the purpose .. as the deputies or representatives of the Supreme Chief, or of the Supreme Chief in Council..⁹

This authority, on the local level, descended to chiefs, as 'minor' deputies of the Supreme Chief, who were responsible for supplying military levies, and labourers on public works.¹⁰

The supposed powers of the Supreme Chief in Natal were, therefore, vaguely defined until 1891, and the lack of a statutory foundation for the call-up for isibhalo and military service provided the Natal government with room for discretionary and even arbitrary powers on an ad hoc basis, whether this was the intention or not. In 1876 it was not difficult for the Natal officials to persuade the Colonial Office in London into accepting their explanations, emanating as they did from the supposed experts on the spot. The basis on which these explanations rested was that, just as the Zulu king had the authority to call up young men to work for him and provide him with military service, so the

⁸. Ibid., Law No. 19, 1891, chapter II, clauses 35 and 36, pp. 14 - 15.

⁹. Ibid., chapter II, clause 38, p. 15.

¹⁰. Ibid., chapter IV, clause 46, pp. 15 - 16.

Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, as Supreme Chief of the Africans in Natal, had the right to do the same. There were numerous inaccuracies in this analogy, which would not have been evident to the British Colonial Office. What the Natal colonial officials presented was a static Zulu system which was inaccurate in many respects and which did not take into account the fact that Zulu society had undergone dynamic changes in response to altered circumstances from pre-Shakan times, and to the existence of first the Boer and then the British colonial power on its border. The officials extracted only those aspects which were advantageous to the Natal government and took little account of changes.

On 31 May 1876, Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, requested Sir Henry Bulwer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, to supply him with information regarding the isibhalo system of labour on public works in Natal.¹¹ Bulwer used reports from J. Ayliff, the Acting SNA; J.W. Shepstone, his successor; and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the former SNA, to compile his own report. Ayliff, in his report, considered to what extent the isibhalo system and the linked calling up of levies were in accordance with the traditional Zulu practice.¹²

Ayliff's minute failed to give any indication that the Zulu military and labour exactions were inextricably part of the political, social and economic order, and not simply occasional and arbitrary impositions. Early observers and later apologists for the system of forced labour and military service in Natal, of whom Ayliff was an example, distorted

¹¹. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL. Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Sir Henry Bulwer, 31 May 1876.

¹². Ibid., Enclosure in No. 6. Minute by J. Ayliff, Acting SNA, 15 September 1876.

this reality. Some later writers such as Bryant and Omer-Cooper, in describing Zulu society, relied heavily on earlier, possibly inaccurate descriptions, while more recent analysts have been able to comprehend the whole intertwined nature of Zulu society, which changed in many respects over the years. Enough has not, however, been made of the dynamic nature of Zulu society which responded to the demands made upon it by successive leaders in reaction to their own circumstances. To state that the Natal system was based on the Zulu model takes little account of these changes.

Shaka's militarisation of the amabutho came about not only as a result of his pursuit of power, but also, no doubt, as a defence against external pressures. It was the Zulu society of Shaka's day which Henry Francis Fynn described. On his first visit to Shaka, he was reluctantly impressed by the sight of ordered ranks of gesticulating and dancing warriors and women; and multitudes of cattle, and remarked, 'It was a most exciting scene, surprising to us, who could not have imagined that a nation termed "savages" could be so disciplined..' ¹³ Later, Fynn, describing Zulu society in Dingane's day, was more analytical, recognising that regimental headquarters, which housed the king's regiments, were also royal residences, presided over by prominent members of the king's family. From a military point of view, a general was in command of the regiment accommodated there. The regiment was divided into battalions led by captains. Fynn touched on the economic importance of the numerous regimental centres since the men there also took care of the king's cattle taken as plunder in warfare, ¹⁴ cattle being of paramount importance as a sign of wealth. The generals from these amakhanda had a political

¹³. Stuart and Malcolm, The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, pp. 71 - 74.

¹⁴. Ibid., pp. 283 - 284.

function as well, according to Fynn. They would discuss matters which affected them all, taking care not to propose anything in opposition to the king.

Manual labour for the local chief, on which the isibhalo was supposedly based, consisted, wrote Fynn, of people drawn from groups of ten or twenty homesteads, building the chief's homestead and, once a year, cultivating his fields.¹⁵

Isaacs, who left Natal in June 1831, confined his attention mainly to the situation in Shaka's time. Although he dismissed the Zulu government as 'most incomprehensible', he outlined the hierarchy as being led by the autocratic king, who appointed two principal chiefs, who in turn appointed minor chiefs 'at all the kraals throughout his dominions'. Like Fynn, Isaacs declared that Shaka brooked no opposition.¹⁶ However, in considering Dingane's rule, Isaacs maintained that the king was in awe of the power of his warriors under the command of their chiefs, so that he 'had merely the shadow of power,'¹⁷ which indicates that, in this aspect at least, Isaacs did recognise change in Zulu society.

15. Ibid., p. 289.

16. L. Herman and P.R. Kirby (eds), Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa descriptive of the Zoolus, their manners, customs, with a Sketch of Natal by Nathaniel Isaacs (Cape Town, C. Struik, 1970; originally published 1836), p. 295.

17. Ibid., p. 288.

Although Isaacs mentioned Shaka's division of his army into regiments,¹⁸ the regimental headquarters - the amakhanda - were, to Isaacs, shelters for captured cattle; and the rising generation, who took care of them, accompanied the old warriors as servants on campaigns, eventually becoming warriors themselves, and being formed into regiments. In this description of military matters, Isaacs was chiefly concerned with providing a sensational representation of Shaka as a 'horrible and detestable .. savage.'¹⁹

Captain A.F. Gardiner, in his account, recognised that Zulu customs changed from pre-Shakan times to the Dingane era, in respect of the delay which first Shaka and then Dingane imposed on the marriages of their soldiers; the power of life and death held by every principal councillor - induna - in Shaka's time, reduced to only three councillors - izinduna - in Dingane's day; and Shaka's abolition of circumcision. Gardiner also took cognisance of the different grades of men in the Zulu regimental system, viz. headringed and without headrings, although his naming of the different ranks is confused. He stated that the men were called up for half a year 'principally for the practice of dancing, which is considered as a military exercise.'²⁰ None of Gardiner's statements provided any firm basis on which to rest the system of calling up isibhalo labour and military levies in the form applied by the Natal government.

Both Fynn and Isaacs stated that Shaka's power was absolute, in spite of the devolution of power implied by the hierarchy which they described. The Rev. W.C. Holden

18. Ibid., p. 149.

19. Ibid., p. 151.

20. Gardiner, Narrative, pp. 92 - 94.

recognised this modifying effect, stating that the assembly of district heads - the umphakati - had the authority to sustain or control the power of the chiefs,²¹ indicating that, at that level, there were checks on the power of superiors.

Theophilus Shepstone, as Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes in Natal from 1845, was concerned with adopting the Zulu military system, as he perceived it, and adapting it to serve the Natal colonial interests. In a draft letter of August 1848, Shepstone outlined the 'Zulu organization and the customs that are considered necessary to uphold and consolidate the military power of the Zulu..,' describing the periodic formation and naming of age-set regiments, with appointed leaders from older regiments; the building of military settlements; the apportioning of cattle from the king to the regiments; the provision of shields and assegais; and the organisation of these regiments into a body available to the king for military service for three to six years. Even after the men were allowed to marry, they retained their regimental home, and might be called up again. Although Shepstone maintained that elements of this model could well be adopted by the Natal government, he warned that in Natal the power of compulsion was absent and would be dissipated by the fact that men could enter the employ of the colonists, earn money and escape the draft.²²

Shepstone's outline of the enrolment of recruits by the Zulu king and his military organisation included labour for the king in building military settlements as well as the

²¹. Holden, The Past and Future of the Kaffir Races, p. 324.

²². SNA 1/1/1 Miscellaneous letters and papers. Theophilus Shepstone's draft letter to Secretary to Government, 2 August 1848.

availability of the regiments in warfare. These two aspects alone were to be extracted by the colonial government from the complex Zulu system. In 1851 Shepstone repeated his recommendation of a military levy in Natal, based on the Zulu model, and continuing in this vein, referred to his earlier letter:

The Zulu organization is of a much more perfect nature and in describing it .. I have recommended the adoption of that part of it which I think would tend to remind the Natives periodically of their duties of allegiance and obedience.²³

A Zulu custom which Shepstone, in 1848, described and regarded as being another model worthy of adoption to strengthen the Natal government's position vis-a-vis the Africans, was the umkhosi, the major ceremony of the First Fruits, when all male subjects gathered to dance before the king and renew their vows to defend and die for him. These protestations, wrote Shepstone, produced a spirit of rivalry and emulation between the different regiments which could be turned to advantage in warfare. The umkhosi fostered unity and loyalty to the king. Shepstone declared that this annual muster was of major political importance, and '.. its adoption in a modified form would be productive of much good..' as it would excite feelings of unity and nationality.²⁴

Shepstone's proposal no doubt stemmed from his knowledge that Shaka had used the umkhosi as a method of centralising power in himself; and other chiefs within his hegemony were not permitted to hold their own imikhosi for fear of detracting from his position as leader. Shepstone's August 1848 suggestion was not pursued. In the unsettled

²³. SNA 2/1/2 Papers relative to the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, 1852 - 53. Diplomatic Agent to Secretary to Government, 7 April 1851.

²⁴. SNA 1/1/1 Miscellaneous letters and papers, Theophilus Shepstone's draft letter to Secretary to Government, 2 August 1848.

state of the country, if all Natal Africans were involved, it would have been more likely to produce a riotous assembly than a demonstration of loyalty.

Before 1875, the Natal colonial authorities were content to allow Shepstone to conduct the affairs of his office as Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes from 1845 to 1853, and as SNA from 1853 to 1875, without any particular curiosity about the original basis on which the isibhalo and military levy system operated. The 1849 adoption of Native Customary Law, and the 1850 recognition of the Lieutenant-Governor as Supreme Chief provided the only statutory basis for these demands. Shepstone's organisation of the Natal Africans from 1850, when magistrates were first appointed in Natal, rested on a hierarchy which devolved power from the Supreme Chief to the SNA, and from him to the magistrates. In calling up levies and labourers from the locations, responsibility but not power descended upon the district chiefs and from them to homestead heads who were required to select men for these tasks.

At the end of 1875 the first serious investigation initiated by the British Colonial Office, was set in motion to inquire into the isibhalo system of forced labour on public works. The investigation gave details of its application, and revealed attempts to rationalise the system. By that time there were serious flaws in the system of obtaining labourers and also military levies, which had been applied since 1848 and 1847 respectively, on an ad hoc basis.

In December 1875, A. Browning, engineer to Wythes and Jackson, contractors to the Natal Government Railways, informed the SNA of the intention to commence work on the

proposed new railway line on or about 1 January 1876, and applied for fifty Natal 'Kaffirs' to be employed near Congella. They would be paid at a rate of wage to be determined by the SNA.²⁵ The SNA accordingly notified the Resident Magistrates of Umlazi and Inanda, requesting 'the Chiefs under your jurisdiction to induce men' to enter the service of the Natal Government Railways.²⁶ Umlazi and Inanda were populous locations conveniently near Durban. As late as 1888 they were able to supply their own labour requirements,²⁷ and certainly in 1876 the request for labourers for this railway work would have placed no strain on their resources.

Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was informed of the request of the SNA, for labourers for the railway, in a letter from J.F. Clark of Natal.²⁸ This stated that 'orders have been given to the Chiefs to send in Kafirs to work on the Railway whether they will or not.'²⁹ As a result of this letter, which drew his attention to a matter about which he felt he had been ill informed, Lord Carnarvon requested the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer, in a Confidential Despatch of 31 May 1876,³⁰ to furnish him with information regarding the supply of men for government

²⁵. SNA 1/1/26 A. Browning to SNA, 9 December 1875.

²⁶. *Ibid.*, SNA to RMs, Umlazi division, Durban county, and Inanda division, Victoria county, 11 December 1875.

²⁷. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Memorandum C on native labour, n.d. (Appendix IV).

²⁸. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Henry Bulwer, 31 May 1876.

²⁹. SNA 1/1/27 Statement quoted later by A. Browning in his communication with the Acting SNA, 27 July 1876.

³⁰. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Carnarvon to Bulwer, 31 May 1876.

works, i.e. the isibhalo. He expressed his grave misgivings. He instructed the Natal government to proceed with the utmost caution, to define strictly the principle of requiring labour, and to specify distinctly cases in which it might be applied. He also wished to know how this obligation was regarded by the 'black' people. Did they accept it as an ordinary incident of the relation in which they stood to the government and to the Governor as Supreme Chief; and did they comply cheerfully?

Because Carnarvon had had no report from Bulwer on the subject of the forced labour system, and Bulwer's predecessors had referred to it on only one or two occasions, he was unaware of how entrenched the system had become after thirty years of colonial rule. 'I can hardly suppose, however' he wrote, 'that the system can have had more than a very limited trial.' He was particularly concerned about the provision of labour to the railway which was being built by contractors, although, from 1874, the railways in Natal had become a state and not a private enterprise.³¹ Carnarvon continued:

You will not fail to perceive that it would be impossible for Her Majesty's Government to sanction the saving of the expense to the Contractors by their procuring cheap labour, if in any way compulsory, on terms not distinctly beneficial to the workers, as might easily be done by making arrangements with the Chiefs.³²

Bulwer reassured Carnarvon³³ that this supply of labour to the railways was an interim arrangement at the commencement of the railway works, as five to six months would elapse before labour was introduced from India and Mauritius 'or elsewhere'. Two parties

³¹. H. Heydenrych, 'Railway Development in Natal to 1895' in Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and Exploitation, p. 48.

³². NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Carnarvon to Bulwer, 31 May 1876.

³³. Ibid., Bulwer to Carnarvon, 8 August 1876.

of workers had been supplied through the Colonial Engineer for this purpose: twenty-five men each from Umlazi district and Inanda district at 15/- per month, with rations, for six months.

After obtaining a requested minute from J. Ayliff, Acting SNA, Bulwer again wrote to Carnarvon,³⁴ forwarding the minute and stating that men had been employed on public works from 1850. The system had fallen into disuse for a while but had been resumed in 1858. Further investigation revealed that in 1872 the pay for isibhalo workers was 7/6 per month in the counties of Pietermaritzburg, Weenen and part of Klip River i.e. near the areas where road works were in progress, while in other counties it was 10/- per month. In 1875 Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Durnford, the Colonial Engineer, recommended³⁵ that there should be two rates of pay and one scale of rations, viz. 15/- per month in the counties of Victoria, Durban, Alexandra and Pietermaritzburg, and 10/- per month in other counties. Rations were at that time 3 lbs (1,4 kg) maize meal per day, salt at discretion and 10 lbs (4,54 kg) beef per month, this being distributed on the hoof when, twice a month, on Saturdays, a beast was killed by the work-party. 'The natives,' wrote Durnford patronisingly, 'like this. They eat up every bit, except the hide and the horns, and this little feast tends to keep them in good humour.' This rate of pay and scale of rations was officially approved on 9 August 1875.

³⁴. Ibid., Bulwer to Carnarvon, 10 October 1876.

³⁵. Ibid., Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Durnford, R.E., Acting Colonial Engineer, 22 July 1875.

Pursuing the matter further, Bulwer then required certain officials to report on the isibhalo system. Information on the subject had already been received from J. Ayliff, Acting SNA,³⁶ and was now provided by his successor, J.W. Shepstone,³⁷ and by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, former SNA.³⁸ Sir Henry Bulwer compiled his minute³⁹ from these reports in which the officials set out their perceptions of the isibhalo system of forced labour as it had evolved, and their opinions of its justification and efficacy.

J. Ayliff was at pains to defend the system, declaring that

in the demand we thus make upon them for labour, we are not influenced by caprice or mercenary inducements, but are engrafting, upon a recognised system, a higher one in which their social education, and moral elevation is regarded, while we endeavour to ensure, by the maintenance of wholesome restraints, the attainment of peace and good order among native races..

Ayliff wrote that Zulu refugees ‘from the despotic tyranny of an irresponsible chief, on entering Natal, find themselves at once transformed into freed men, in the occupation of land.’ All that was required of them, he wrote, was a fixed amount in direct taxation, the payment of duty on luxury goods, and ‘the limited supply of labour for public works..’ In a florid paragraph (No. 7) Ayliff compared life under the supposed reign of terror in Zululand with the fugitive’s later position in Natal, when, after he had been

³⁶. Ibid., Minute by J. Ayliff, Acting SNA. Enclosure in No. 6, 15 September 1876.

³⁷. Ibid., Report of J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA. Enclosure in No. 16, 5 June 1877.

³⁸. Ibid., Memorandum of Sir Theophilus Shepstone. No. 18, 28 September 1877.

³⁹. Ibid., Minute by Sir Henry Bulwer. No. 19, undated; c. March 1878.

rendered reckless by danger, he makes the desperate resolve, and, if successful, as the morning light flashes on the broad waters of the Tugela, they roll behind him, tyranny and oppression are past, and he stands at last a freed man upon British soil..

However, wrote Ayliff, after the first flush of gratitude is past, the man, obliged to perform isibhalo labour ‘forgets the lesson .. that the State which protects him has some claim upon him.’

Ayliff went on to consider to what extent the isibhalo system was in accordance with traditional Zulu practice. Describing the system he wrote of ‘troops garrisoning the royal residences ... the erection of new residences, of barracks and cattle folds,’ and maintained that

no food is implemented or clothing supplied them, and the probability is, that after a hard day’s work, they retire to sleep without ever having broken their fast, or the cravings of their hunger are cruelly mocked by a minute distribution of beef from their Chief, and the revolting spectacle may be observed of two warriors, who have shoulder to shoulder dared death in many a hard fought fight, now quarrelling over a fragment of bone..

Having drifted into the realms of fantasy in describing the Zulu regimental system, Ayliff contrasted that system with the isibhalo arrangements, with a similar departure from reality. He wrote: ‘.. we accord them liberal wages, while ample rations, and comfortable quarters are assigned them.’ Ayliff saw further advantages for the African men in the isibhalo system. . He maintained (paragraphs 10 and 11) that it was the duty of ‘a highly refined and civilized Government’ to ‘benefit and civilise’ (*sic*) and to ‘elevate and restrain.’ This could be done, he declared, by creating and supplying artificial wants and a craving for luxuries, to pay for which the isibhalo system would provide the men with cash.

Ayliff deplored the fact that the wants of the Natal Africans were few and could easily be supplied, and therefore they were reluctant to offer themselves as labourers. The labour of the women on the land around the homesteads produced grain for food and beer; the production of milk and meat was the domain of the men. The sale of surplus poultry and crops provided cash to buy blankets and ornaments and to pay their Hut Tax. A young man could easily earn enough in a month, Ayliff maintained, for his annual needs. In order to acquire lobolo for a wife, he would have to work for longer. Isibhalo could well provide this work.

In tracing the history of the forced labour system, Ayliff stated that the first recorded call-up appeared to have been dated 16 November 1850 when labour was required to work upon the high road between Durban and Pietermaritzburg; and that the practice lapsed for a while in disturbed times.⁴⁰ It was resumed, Ayliff wrote, in 1858,⁴¹ being described by Lieutenant-Governor John Scott in Despatch No. 38, paragraph 7, 2 June 1858:

The making and repair of the Public Roads and other works of the Government are done by the Natives. Whatever number may be required for these purposes, is obtained by an order from myself as Paramount Chief. This order is obeyed cheerfully, and is a matter of duty.⁴²

⁴⁰. J. Stuart states that this troubled period was 'after 1854.' J. Stuart, History of the Zulu Rebellion 1906 (London, Macmillan and Co., 1913), p. 25.

⁴¹. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Minute by J. Ayliff, Acting SNA. Enclosure in No. 16, paragraph 12, 15 September 1876.

⁴². Ibid., as quoted in paragraph 12.

J.W. Shepstone, in his report,⁴³ gave the date of 1848 for the first demand for isibhalo labour for public works, i.e. for the repair of the road between Pietermaritzburg and Durban. As traffic increased, so did the demand for labour to work on the roads. Difficulties arose as many African men from the locations, from which they could be summoned by the chief or headman, moved to private farms under contract to work for the owner or occupier at a slightly better rate of pay. Here they were exempt from isibhalo demands. The labour supply for the isibhalo was further diminished, wrote Shepstone, when more remunerative employment became available on the diamond-fields, the gold-fields⁴⁴ and at Algoa Bay. J.W. Shepstone pointed out further that ‘as they are at liberty to choose their own employers, they cannot be compelled to work for the Government.’

The memorandum from Sir Theophilus Shepstone was written in September 1877.⁴⁵ It was during his term of office as Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes, from 1845 to 1853, that the isibhalo system was first applied. As SNA from 1853 to 1875, Shepstone was closely involved in the development of the system, but he did not support his statement that ‘the Natives of Natal have always recognised the right of the Government to their services, on Public Works, and as soldiers,’ by reference to any legislation or

⁴³. Ibid., Report of J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA. Enclosure in No. 16, 15 June 1877.

⁴⁴. This no doubt refers to the eastern Transvaal gold-fields, and possibly the sites of the ephemeral strikes in Natal on the Mthwalume, Mhlangwa and Mfongosi rivers. T.V. Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu Country (Cape Town, Books of Africa, third edition 1977), pp. 231 - 237 passim.

⁴⁵. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Memorandum of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, 28 September 1877.

even any specific decisions of the Natal government on the subject. Such legislation would have given the system some legitimacy, and Lord Carnarvon would not have stated, underlining his continuing concern:

.. very little information, or rather none at all, has ever been afforded to this Department upon a system which, whatever its merits, is clearly one open to abuse in itself, and to misapprehension on the part of scantily informed observers.⁴⁶

Shepstone could have countered this statement by citing Clause 4 of Ordinance No. 3 of 1849, which embodied the proclamation by Lieutenant-Governor Martin West. This stated:

.. that the Lieutenant-Governor of this District, shall hold and enjoy over all the Chiefs and Natives in this District, all the power and authority which, according to the Laws, Customs, and Usages of the Natives, are held and enjoyed by any Supreme or paramount Native Chief..⁴⁷

In this proclamation, it could be argued, the power to call up men for labour and military service was implicit. However, the British Colonial Secretary may not have been aware of this, nor of the arbitrary and unwritten powers which the Zulu king might wield.

It should be emphasised that the two dates - 1848 and 1850 - given for the inception of the isibhalo system were nearly thirty years before Lord Carnarvon's enquiry requesting clarity. In all these years, Carnarvon claimed, the Colonial Office had received no exact official information on the system which provided the labour for public works in the

46. Ibid., No. 8. Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Henry Bulwer, 25 December 1876.

47. NCP 5/1/1 Ordinance No. 3, 1849, 21 June 1849. Proclamation by Lieutenant-Governor M. West.

colony. The system was to continue until 1910⁴⁸ or 1911⁴⁹ with a stronger basis in legislation, but it was breaking down, and there was a need to look to other sources of labour.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone's memorandum recognised this weakening. He pointed out that changing circumstances in the country as well as changing social conditions and ideas about the obligations to labour on public works had made the enforcement of the isibhalo increasingly difficult. He suggested that legislation be passed to give the chiefs authority over all their people, even those no longer living in the locations but on private farms. He emphatically recommended that no change should be made in the principle that the government had the right to call up labour.

Sir Henry Bulwer, in his minute on the supply of isibhalo labour,⁵⁰ referred to and commented upon the reports of J. Ayliff, J.W. Shepstone and Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Bulwer outlined the conditions of isibhalo employment: young, unmarried men were chosen; the wages were 7/- per month from 1848, increasing in 1854 to 10/- per month; and the period of service was six months. Since 1875, he wrote, wages had been increased to 15/- per month, with rations '.. upon a very liberal scale .. 3 lbs [1,4 kg] of mealies [maize] a day, and 4½ lbs [2 kg] of meat during the week.'

48. E.H. Brookes, The History of Native Policy in South Africa from 1830 to the Present Day (Cape Town, Nasionale Pers, 1924), p. 418.

49. Stuart, Zulu Rebellion 1906, p. 25.

50. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Minute by Sir Henry Bulwer. No. 19, undated, c. March 1878.

Bulwer pointed out that the obligations exacted from the African men in locations were military service and labour on certain public works. The ordinary laws of supply and demand did not apply in this case, and compliance with the exactions was obligatory. Bulwer did not agree that the system was implemented because it taught ‘the advantages of labour and of regular habits.’ He recognised that this labour was exacted ‘for our own benefit.’ He deplored the fact that the obligation fell ‘unequally upon the Native population..’ since it drew labour only from men living in the locations. Even of these, he wrote, many had left the locations for several months at a time to seek more advantageous employment on sugar plantations and other farms, in trade, transport and domestic service as well as on the diamond-fields, the gold-fields and the railway. The system, reported Bulwer, was breaking down and should be abandoned in its present form. The Public Works Department should go into the labour market where labour was dependent on ‘the ordinary rules of demand and supply.’ Nevertheless, the Supreme Chief, he maintained, should retain and reserve the right to call up men ‘in cases of great public necessity or emergency.’

In March 1878, His Excellency-in-Council commanded that all the papers reporting on the isibhalo system, including Bulwer’s own report, be sent to each member of the Natal Executive Council in turn for his opinion on the system.⁵¹ Reports were returned from H. Connor, the Chief Justice;⁵² Colonel C.K. Pearson, the Commandant of Troops;⁵³

⁵¹. Ibid., Minute by C.A. Butler, Acting Clerk, Executive Council. No. 20, 13 March 1878.

⁵². Ibid., Opinion of Chief Justice. No. 21, 18 March 1878.

⁵³. Ibid., Opinion of Commandant of Troops. No. 22, 22 March 1878.

B.P. Lloyd, Acting Colonial Secretary;⁵⁴ J. Bird, the Colonial Treasurer (this included an enclosure dated 6 March 1873, expressing Bird's unease about the system in a minute to the SNA, written when Bird was Resident Magistrate of Pietermaritzburg);⁵⁵ from A.C. Hawkins, the Acting SNA;⁵⁶ A.H. Hime, the Colonial Engineer;⁵⁷ and M.H. Gallwey, the Attorney-General.⁵⁸

The Chief Justice advised that the system should be continued, with some alterations, *viz.* that the area from which labourers could be requisitioned should include all huts liable to Hut Tax; that the magistrates, not the chiefs, be responsible for the supply of labourers, having been informed before the Hut Tax collection how many labourers would be required from their districts; the period of service should be no longer than six months in two years, and no more than three periods in all; the men could offer substitutes if these were willing; wages should be the same as those prevailing in the neighbourhood, but rations be better; and that tents or huts be provided. The Chief Justice favoured the retention of the principle that the Supreme Chief could summon labourers.

Colonel Pearson considered that the system should be continued. He maintained that if the obligation to provide labour for roads and other public works were withdrawn, it

54. Ibid., Opinion of Acting Colonial Secretary. No. 23, 28 March 1878.

55. Ibid., Opinion of the Colonial Treasurer. No. 24, 2 April 1878; and Enclosure in No. 24, 6 March 1873.

56. Ibid., Opinion of the Acting SNA. No. 25, 16 April 1878.

57. Ibid., Opinion of the Colonial Engineer. No. 26, 4 May 1878.

58. Ibid., Opinion of the Attorney-General. No. 27, 9 May 1878.

would be regarded as an act of weakness, and the 'black' people of Natal would lose respect for the government. He recommended that 'no unmarried Native should be exempt,' whether living on a location or not, unless he could prove other permanent employment. He regarded the obligation to provide labour as 'a most fair and just one' because, he wrote, the 'black people contributed little towards the revenue of the colony, and they were British subjects.' Pearson's statement, about the Africans producing little revenue, was untrue. By 1875, 75% of all revenue in Natal came from them.⁵⁹

B.P. Lloyd, the Acting Colonial Secretary, differed in his views. He regarded the system as 'full of evil', and advocated its discontinuance in anticipation of 'the complete breakdown of the system.' Although the right of the Supreme Chief to call out men should be retained in principle, he wrote, it should be allowed to lapse, and labour should be obtained in the general labour market.

J. Bird pointed out in his submission that if Natal had been a settlement for 'Natives' only there would have been no difficulty in raising labour at the bidding of the chief, but since others in the colony could 'choose their own masters and their own modes of earning wages,' those called up for isibhalo labour wished to evade it. He was of the opinion that the government should obtain labour in the public market.⁶⁰

⁵⁹. J. Lambert, Africans in Natal 1880 - 1899. Continuity, Change and Crisis in a Rural Society. D. Litt. et Phil. thesis, U N I S A , June 1986, p. 105; N. Etherington, 'The Shepstone system in the Colony of Natal and beyond the borders' in Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. 175.

⁶⁰. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Opinion of Colonial Treasurer. No. 24, 2 April 1878.

In Bird's enclosure,⁶¹ written five years before, he pointed out the difficulties in procuring isibhalo labourers to work on the roads. He then described, more realistically than the other respondents who had been required by Bulwer to report on the system, the conditions under which these labourers worked. It was, he wrote, 'the hardest labour performed in the Colony.' The men were lodged in tents which let in continuous rain even when new, and, he wrote, the rains had been especially heavy in the previous six months. The men were provided with no planks or stretchers on which to sleep, but only mats. The 10 lbs (4,54 kg) of meat per month provided was quite inadequate considering their hard work, even though the meal ration was plentiful. They were exposed to constant damp and discomfort and liable to rheumatism. For this they were paid 7/6 a month, little more than the wages of a herd boy whose duties were light. Men in the towns, in domestic work or caring for horses, could earn 10/- to 15/- per month, and be comfortably housed and adequately fed, while a waggon-driver could earn £2.10/-. Ox-leaders employed on ox-waggon journeys into the interior faced discomfort and exposure similar to that endured by isibhalo labourers, but their labour was lighter, the period of employment was two to three months, and the pay was 25/- per month.

Bird suggested that isibhalo wages should be from 15/- to £1 per month, with rations of 1 lb (453,6 grams) of meat per day. Sound tents with plank flooring should be provided. In addition, the road superintendents who supervised the labourers should be 'of high character.'

⁶¹. Ibid., Enclosure in No. 24. J. Bird to SNA, 6 March 1873.

A.C. Hawkins, the Acting SNA, was of the opinion that the system should be discontinued, otherwise it would collapse. In the earlier colonial days, the system was not felt by the 'black' people to be a hardship and was 'cheerfully and readily complied with,' declared Hawkins. As conditions and circumstances in the colony changed, it was considered an irritation, particularly as the obligation to provide labour fell only on those living in locations. The difficulties, Hawkins suggested, could be overcome if the government offered wages which could compete with those paid by sugar planters and railway contractors, or the problems of a labour shortage could be overcome by employing Tsonga or Zulu men.⁶²

Captain A.H. Hime, the Colonial Engineer, whose task it was to organise the building and repair of roads, could be expected to present a forceful case for whatever system would provide an adequate supply of labour for this purpose. He disagreed with the statements that the difficulties with regard to forced labour were so great that the system would break down. He asserted that only about three or four magistrates, one of whom was notably the magistrate of Upper Umgeni, had been unable to supply their full quota. Judging by the number of men available in the Upper Umgeni magistracy (taken from the Blue Book of 1876) he believed that there should be no difficulty in obtaining labour. However, he declared, magistrates had insufficient power to force the chiefs to supply this labour. He suggested that chiefs probably accepted bribes from those men who were unwilling to work.

⁶². Ibid., Opinion of the Acting SNA. No. 25, 16 April 1878.

The solution, Hime maintained, would be to invest the magistrates with more power. Having estimated that there was ample labour available, Hime conceded that even in the free labour market, this was difficult to obtain. The railways were employing men from Zululand, and labour was also being obtained from Delagoa Bay and India. Hime suggested that new legislation should be passed to give more power to the magistrates and chiefs, determine clearly who should be liable, and the period of work required, and lay down set wages. He was, therefore, not willing to question, in the broader framework of changed conditions, e.g. the greater availability of alternative, more remunerative work in towns and on mines, why it was difficult to obtain labour, but proposed that the existing system be more firmly enforced.⁶³

M.H. Gallwey, the Attorney-General, was, like Hime, in favour of the exercise of greater compulsion. He, however, made some cogent observations about flaws in the system. He pointed out that the traditional unpaid labour for the chief was for that chief's personal benefit, not on public works. He also pointed out that the white inhabitants of Natal did not have to provide forced labour; that the road overseers were harsh; and that chiefs often selected men as a punishment for offending them or the labourers' white employers. Gallwey recalled that this punitive aspect seemed evident when, in 1863, a Bill was introduced (but not passed) to employ convicts on public works alongside the isibhalo labourers. Gallwey warned that, if the system continued, stronger compulsion would have to be exercised and heavy penalties imposed for disobedience.⁶⁴ Gallwey, of all the

⁶³. Ibid., Opinion of the Colonial Engineer. No. 26, 4 May 1878. For discussion of labour practices in other contemporary British colonies, see conclusion.

⁶⁴. Ibid., Opinion of the Attorney-General. No. 27, 9 May 1878.

respondents, was the only one who did not equate African people automatically with workers; a principle accepted by the others, although many criticised the details of the application of the isibhalo system.

The members of the Executive Council thus, in giving their opinions, highlighted what they perceived as the problems in the application of the isibhalo system, and suggested solutions. Most of them regarded the system as unfair, since labourers were drawn only from locations and only from among the African people. Wages, rations and living conditions were regarded by some as inferior to those prevailing in other employment; road superintendents were often not of good character; the work was regarded as degrading and in some cases even punitive; and other men outside the locations could choose more advantageous employment. It was generally agreed by most respondents that the system was near breakdown and should be allowed to fall into abeyance; nevertheless, the principle that the Supreme Chief had the right to call up labour should be retained.

In spite of these recommendations and criticisms, the isibhalo system was not substantially altered or improved at this time. It provided relatively cheap, if not plentiful labour, and the more expensive alternative of using only free or imported indentured labour, was therefore avoided.

The documentary evidence on the military levy and isibhalo systems, in some instances, supports the perceptions voiced by these reports, that the Zulu king exacted labour and military service, but other evidence refutes them, especially with regard to the circumstances under which the Zulu king's traditional authority was exercised.

In 1878, F. Fynney, concerned with informing Lord Chelmsford of the pattern of organisation in the army of the Zulu king, Cetshwayo, and not with drawing any parallel between the levy system and that of the Zulu, did not indicate what measures of compulsion, if any, were exercised on new recruits.⁶⁵ C. Vÿn, in his journal first published in 1880, did consider the matter of compulsion. He described the recruitment system in Cetshwayo's day: boys voluntarily presenting themselves to be called up to form a new regiment or be incorporated into one already formed, with only social pressure exerted on them to join; their building of a new military settlement; their being allowed to come and go freely; and their periodic call-up for special duties.⁶⁶

Cetshwayo himself, however, indicated that compulsion was exercised when he required men to renovate settlements that had become 'old and dilapidated.' If men did not come he would 'send men to stir them up' and on such occasions there had been killings.⁶⁷

To justify compulsion in calling up levies and labourers, by comparing the Natal system with that of the Zulu, it would have been necessary to prove this compulsion in the Zulu system. It would seem that compulsion was not consistently applied and whether it was or not depended on the exigencies of a particular time. Cetshwayo, like Vÿn, indicated

⁶⁵. F.B. Fynney, The Zulu Army and Zulu Headmen (Pietermaritzburg, British army publication, 1878), p. 3.

⁶⁶. J.W. Colenso (translator and editor), C. Vÿn, Cetshwayo's Dutchman: Being the Private Journal of a White Trader in Zululand During the British Invasion (London, Greenhill Books, 1988, facsimile edition; first published 1880), pp. 189 - 190.

⁶⁷. C. de B. Webb and J.B. Wright (eds), A Zulu King Speaks (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press; Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1978), p. 60.

that it was usually social pressure which activated the young men to serve him, and he declared that they 'can go to the king and serve as they please, and return home as they like. The young men are not forced to be soldiers.'⁶⁸

It was on the broad basis of the Zulu king's authority that the frequently repeated justification of the isibhalo and levy systems rested. The analogy between work for the Zulu king and the practice in colonial Natal, of calling out labourers, can be seen to be false. In the Zulu polity the king was indeed most powerful and had a right to call up men for labour and military service; but the rights and privileges and, especially the participation of the Zulu people in decision-making, an integral part of the Zulu traditional system, had no parallel in the colony of Natal. In Natal, surplus labour in the form of isibhalo service was not 'drawn from every homestead in the land,'⁶⁹ but only from the homes of African men in locations. Not one chief in Natal was consulted nor his agreement sought in imposing the isibhalo system; hence there were no izikhulu without whose agreement the Supreme Chief could make no decisions of national importance.⁷⁰ There was no devolution of state power in any significant form through the chiefs and headmen to the resident homestead heads. The Supreme Chief, vis-a-vis the location-dwellers in Natal, in considering a bad law, would not 'change it if the chiefs of the land

⁶⁸. Ibid., pp. 83, 95.

⁶⁹. Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom, p. 29.

⁷⁰. Webb and Wright (eds), A Zulu King, p. 82.

were willing...'⁷¹ nor would he consent to abolish laws 'because the whole nation agreed to it;⁷² which Cetshwayo declared was the position in the Zulu kingdom.

It can be seen, therefore, that the Natal system of raising levies and labourers from the location African men had been removed from the context in which it might have been acceptable to those on whom it was imposed. In addition, as with the general acceptance of the system, by colonial administrators and observers of colonialism in the colony of Natal, although some voiced their disquiet about its application, it was nevertheless accepted that African people were naturally of a lower class and should therefore be proletarianised. Where there were protests, they were about the application of this principle and not the principle itself.

⁷¹. Ibid., p. 67.

⁷². Ibid., p. 68.

CHAPTER IV

The increasing difficulty in obtaining sufficient

isibhalo labour for public works

At the beginning of the colonial era in Natal, potential labour appeared to be plentiful. The arrival, from the end of the 1840s, of British settlers who required labourers on their allotted farms had not, by the early 1850s, had a significant effect on the availability of labour. In a statement made before the Native Commission of 1852, J.H.M. Struben, Resident Magistrate (hereafter cited as RM) of Klip River division, suggested on 2 November 1852:

.. that a list of unmarried people of each Location shall be in the hands of the Resident Magistrate; that the Resident Magistrate shall have the power to call on the Chiefs for these unmarried men, to send them out to service, either as apprentices or otherwise, under the guarantee that they shall be while on such service, properly treated, fed and paid.¹

There seemed to be no desire to reserve these labourers for isibhalo service, but to regulate their employment generally; nor was there a suggestion of an acute shortage of labour at this time.

As the network of roads was extended throughout Natal, and work on the Durban harbour went ahead, increased numbers of labourers were required for these public works, while, at the same time, men were becoming less readily available. The colonial economy was

¹. SNA 2/1/2 Papers relative to the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, 1852 - 53. Evidence of J.H.M. Struben, 2 November 1852.

expanding, and work more remunerative than isibhalo labour presented itself, both within the colony and beyond its borders. The difficulties experienced by the Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter cited as SNA) in supplying labour to the Colonial Engineer for public works steadily increased. As the settlers became better established and increased their commercial farming activities, they vied with the public sector for labour.

Resistance to labour demands arose as early as the 1860s, affecting the supply when the need for labour was becoming greater. In 1861 Chief Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu of the Hlubi people failed to supply required labour. However, this may well have been part of that chief's defiant attitude towards the government and his desire to build up his own power base, rather than his inability to raise the men.² Public works continued apace in the 1860s. In February 1863, Weenen required men to repair roads.³ In January 1864, replacements were requested for labourers working on the harbour;⁴ and again in February,⁵ April,⁶ May⁷ and June.⁸ The June request was repeated⁹ when no men were forthcoming and a further requisition was sent in October.¹⁰ Requests for road

². SNA 1/3/10 pp. 127 - 8 Macfarlane to SNA, 3 June 1861.

³. SNA 1/1/13 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 3 February 1863.

⁴. SNA 1/1/14 A. Taylor, Harbour Works, Durban, to SNA, 8 January 1864.

⁵. Ibid., 10 February 1864.

⁶. Ibid., 8 April 1864.

⁷. Ibid., 11 May 1864.

⁸. Ibid., 21 June 1864.

⁹. Ibid., 30 June 1864.

¹⁰. Ibid., 8 October 1864.

party labourers were sent in during 1864 for the Inchanga Cutting,¹¹ the Zwartkop Valley road,¹² the road between Durban and Pietermaritzburg at Parson's Farm,¹³ and between Pinetown and Durban.¹⁴ The road between the harbour town of Durban and the capital, Pietermaritzburg, was an important route for trade and colonial administration.

In June 1864, chiefs in the populous Inanda district, where there were numerous huts on location land, were experiencing real difficulty in meeting the demand for labour. In July, the Colonial Engineer complained to the SNA¹⁵ that, of the seventy men applied for in April from the RM, Inanda, for road works in Victoria county 'not one half have been supplied.' These men were urgently needed for the road at Lower Umgeni Bridge. He added that some men who had reported for duty had subsequently deserted. The RM, Inanda confirmed that he had '.. the utmost difficulty in this Division of getting native labour for public works.'¹⁶ No doubt potential labourers from Inanda were finding more lucrative employment in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, their location being conveniently close to both centres.

11. SNA 1/1/14 C. McGill for Colonial Engineer to SNA, 2 May 1864.

12. SNA 1/1/14 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 10 May 1864.

13. Ibid., 28 May 1864.

14. Ibid., 9 June 1864.

15. Ibid., 25 July 1864.

16. SNA 1/1/14 RM, Inanda's report, 5 August 1864.

During 1864 further road works needed labourers: at New Guelderland,¹⁷ Upper Umkomazi¹⁸ (sic), Newcastle,¹⁹ Umvoti between Mapumulo and Greytown and Fort Buckingham,²⁰ Victoria county,²¹ Pietermaritzburg,²² and Umvoti on the road between Pietermaritzburg and Greytown.²³ These requests are an indication of the direction in which roads were being built; along the north and south coasts; from Pietermaritzburg to Greytown; and from Pietermaritzburg to the Transvaal border. In May and June 1864 two requests for labour for public works other than roads were received: in May, twenty men were required to work on the construction of a military post at Fort Buckingham;²⁴ and in June, thirty men were called up to assist in constructing a harbour at the mouth of the Mzimkhulu river.²⁵ The Colonial Engineer was thus concerned with the defence of the Zulu border and the further extension of communications in Natal. The use of isibhalo labourers for tasks other than road-building became more common from the 1880s.

17. SNA 1/1/14 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 10 June 1864.

18. Ibid., 15 June 1864.

19. Ibid., 24 June 1864.

20. Ibid., 29 June 1864.

21. Ibid., 25 July 1864.

22. Ibid., 22 July 1864.

23. Ibid., 8 August 1864.

24. Ibid., 14 May 1864.

25. Ibid., 18 June 1864.

The isibhalo system, with doubtful specific legislation to support it, was unsatisfactory long before the 1870s, and was to become more so during the rest of the colonial period. When the chiefs were unable to obtain the required labour from the locations, they looked outside for men formerly under their authority but now in other employment to supply the need. These men would still be expected to khonza, i.e. pay their respects to the chief. When employers complained that their servants were being taken, the official response was inconsistent because there seemed to be no clear policy,²⁶ as the following examples show. In the case of Umcana and his nephew Macheba, both regarded themselves as no longer under the authority of Chief Makula as they were both privately employed. In June 1864, Makula called up Macheba. Umcana, his homestead head, refused to give him up. The Durban magistrate ordered Umcana to produce Macheba for service, or go on the roads himself, or find a substitute. Umcana petitioned the Supreme Chief for exemption. Makula was himself in a difficult position as the RM, Durban had reported that only five of the ten men required of him had been sent; the rest were in the employ of white masters. In July 1864, Theophilus Shepstone, the SNA, in commenting on this case, suggested that homestead heads be fined 60/- if they failed to produce men for the road parties.²⁷ Only a month later, when E.A. Horton applied for the release of his servant who had been on sick leave when summoned by the chief, the SNA gave instructions for the man's release.²⁸

26. Confusion should not have arisen as to who was in private employment, as Ordinance 2 of 1855 made annual returns obligatory. Vide Hitchins, Statutes, vol. II, Natives (in general), p. 2, Clause 6.

27. SNA 1/1/14 Memorial of Umcana, 9 July 1864; RM, Durban to SNA, 13 June 1864 (sic); SNA's decision, 15 July 1864.

28. SNA 1/1/14 E. Horton to SNA, 15 August 1864; SNA to RM, Durban, undated c. September 1864.

In October 1864, when C.P.F. Lotter applied for the release of three of his servants from road work, the SNA made no decision but referred the matter to the Attorney-General for his opinion.²⁹ In March 1865, W.L. Hester requested the release of his servant who had been put to work on the roads. After enquiries were made, the RM, Verulam pointed out that if all house servants were exempted the magistrates would not be able to provide isibhalo labour;³⁰ and presumably he was not released.

In his report on the public works of the colony, 1 January 1864 - 1 June 1865, the Colonial Engineer, P. Paterson, pointed out weaknesses in the isibhalo system. He made suggestions for improvement, especially in the light of the pressing need for roads to develop colonial trade, particularly to the Transvaal and from Richmond to Umzimkulu. He suggested the construction of huts every 6 - 8 miles (9,6 - 12,8 kms), of sods or loose stones, roofed with galvanised iron, instead of tents. The whole system, he declared, needed revising. The roads should be repaired by contractors, not 'hired road parties under salaried overseers,' with punishment meted out to those who refused to work or were lazy or insolent.³¹

It became increasingly evident in the 1870s that there was a general shortage of labour, even for private employers, possibly because of the discovery of diamonds. By the end

²⁹. SNA 1/1/14 C.P.F. Lotter to SNA, 28 October 1864; SNA's decision, 16 November 1864.

³⁰. SNA 1/1/15 W.L. Hester to SNA, 8 March 1865; SNA to RM, Verulam, 14 March 1865; RM Verulam to SNA (undated).

³¹. NCP 4/1/1/2 Legislative Council, Natal, Document No. 32, 1865. Report of Colonial Engineer upon the public works of the Colony from 1 January 1864 - 1 June 1865; presented 23 June 1865.

of 1872, P.C. Sutherland, the Surveyor-General, despairing of finding sufficient labour for public works, made a special plea through the Natal Colonial Secretary, D. Erskine, to the Lieutenant-Governor.³² Sutherland complained that he could get no labourers from the RM, Pietermaritzburg, as the magistrate could only intimate that labourers were required, not demand them. Here again, the locations were well populated, but their proximity to the town of Pietermaritzburg allowed potential labourers to seek work in the town, or make a living from market-gardening, without their having to make themselves available for isibhalo labour.

Sutherland tried to persuade the Lieutenant-Governor to restore the magistrates' power to command men to work. He wrote:

His Excellency is too well aware of the fact that the barbarous tribes of South and Eastern Africa do not of their own spontaneity enter upon steady employment... But it is well known that when ordered out in proper numbers, treated with humanity, fed, sheltered and worked, under measures which have the sanction of the highest sanitary authorities, they not only do not suffer from this change in their circumstances, but are found to improve physically as well as morally.

Referring to those men who sought work voluntarily with white employers, Sutherland extolled the virtue of this work: 'In thus learning to work they have acquired such habits of subordination as render them amenable to paternal or feudal authority.' Not only was work good for them, it seemed, but it would tame them into usefulness and proletarianise them. Sutherland continued his plea with the argument that, by not commanding African labour for public works

.. the Government is virtually withdrawing no small share of the power by which barbarism may be materially repressed, and the violent energies of the young men

³². NCP 4/1/1/2 Surveyor-General to Colonial Secretary, Natal, 14 December 1872.

of many tribes may be subdued and conducted into channels of usefulness ... On the one hand the natives are growing up in voluntary idleness, on the other the roads and public works of the Colony are falling hopelessly into arrear.

The Surveyor-General needed labour urgently to rebuild the weir at Uys Doorns (between Durban and Pietermaritzburg) which had been washed away. So urgent was this requirement that, on 23 December 1872, the Colonial Secretary authorised him to employ whatever labour he could procure, 'white or black';³³ and a few days later, informing Sutherland that he had instructed the RM, Pietermaritzburg to provide the labourers, the Colonial Secretary added a comment on the treatment meted out to isibhalo labourers:

.. the Lieutenant-Governor directs that you shall be acquainted that his attention has been directed to the gross brutality with which kafirs are in many cases treated by the road overseers, from which His Excellency has no doubt this difficulty arises.³⁴

The poor treatment of isibhalo labourers was certainly a factor which made it difficult to recruit willing labourers, but it is noteworthy that it was the RM, Pietermaritzburg, who was having most trouble, and this was a centre where informal trading and market-gardening provided alternative sources of income.

While the events which led to the enquiry, requested by Lord Carnarvon in May 1876, were unfolding, and subsequent to them, it was evident that the difficulties in providing isibhalo labour were increasing. In response to the Colonial Engineer's Departmental requisitions for labour through the SNA, magistrates frequently reported their inability to meet the demands in full or in part and gave reasons for their failure. These mainly

³³. Ibid., Colonial Secretary to Surveyor-General, 23 December 1872.

³⁴. Ibid., Colonial Secretary, Natal to Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer, 28 December 1872.

revolved around their not being permitted to draw labour tenants from private farms; they did not have the authority to enforce obedience; and potential labourers were drained away to other, more lucrative employment. The magistrates suggested remedies for the situation. The magnitude of the problem can be seen in the following examples. In January 1876, Colonel A.W. Durnford of the Colonial Engineer's Department, complained that only five of the twelve men requisitioned for Pietermaritzburg in November 1875 had been received;³⁵ on 15 January 1876 he noted that not one of the twenty-five men requisitioned in December 1875 for road works near Estcourt had been supplied.³⁶ On 19 January 1876, the Colonial Engineer, A.H. Hime, sent in a general return stating that, since 26 October 1875, of the 537 men applied for, only 255 had been provided;³⁷ and on 31 January 1876,³⁸ he reported that the twenty-five men for the Isipingo road works, requested on 13 January 1876, had not been supplied.³⁹

In January 1877, the difficulty in obtaining labour from the Klip River division was ascribed to the fact that most of the able-bodied African men lived on private farms.⁴⁰ According to the Attorney-General's report of 22 May 1877, this problem could not easily be resolved because the right to engage labour by leasing private farms had been

³⁵. SNA 1/1/27 A.W. Durnford (for Colonial Engineer) to SNA, 4 January 1876.

³⁶. Ibid., 15 January 1876.

³⁷. SNA 1/1/27 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 19 January 1876.

³⁸. Ibid., 31 January 1876.

³⁹. SNA 1/1/27 A.W. Durnford (for Colonial Engineer) to SNA, 13 January 1876.

⁴⁰. SNA 1/1/29 Minute paper from Colonial Engineer, 25 January 1877.

sanctioned by Law 15, 1871, sections 20 - 29, and penalties could be imposed on African tenants who neglected to work for their landlords. Not only did this preclude the men from being called up for isibhalo labour, but Ordinance 2, 1850 CV sections 1 and 2 imposed penalties for interference with servants and for inducing them to leave their masters. However, those living on private farms but not under contract to work, were subject to the Supreme Chief's order.⁴¹

In September 1877 the Colonial Engineer reported that over fifty men required for road works in the Umgeni division had not been supplied.⁴² The Acting RM, Umgeni, accounting for his difficulty in obtaining labour, declared that the order was simply disobeyed, and the magistrate was powerless to enforce obedience. Under Law 26 of 1875, the Lieutenant-Governor had the power to command the chiefs to supply labour. On the matter of non-supply the Attorney-General's opinion, stated on 6 November 1876, had been that His Excellency as Supreme Chief could punish disobedience of this order 'by fine or otherwise.'⁴³

From January 1878, the RM, Estcourt was again having trouble in supplying men for the road works. His sources of supply were limited to men from the locations and Crown Lands, mainly from the chiefdoms of the Mchunu (Chief Phakade), the Thembu (Chief Umganu) and amaNgwe (Chief Phuthini). Since large numbers of the unmarried young

⁴¹. Ibid., Attorney-General's report, 22 May 1877.

⁴². SNA 1/1/29, 1877/709 Report from Colonial Engineer, 12 September 1877.

⁴³. Ibid., Acting RM, Umgeni division to SNA, 13 September 1877, and Attorney-General's opinion, 16 November 1876.

men from these chiefdoms were going to the diamond-fields, the towns, the railway works and coastal districts where the wages were much higher, the magistrate told the chiefs they must send amakhehla (men who had assumed the heading of marriage and were homestead heads). The chiefs did not comply. The magistrate asked for permission for the chiefs to fine the men who refused the call-up; and if the chief himself refused to fine the men, he should be fined.⁴⁴

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, although of short duration, affected the isibhalo labour supply for road works. Many men were diverted into the Natal Native Contingent and the Natal Native Pioneers. In January 1879, Umvoti was unable to supply thirty men for road works in the county as there were only old men in the homesteads, all the others being with the Natal Native Contingent.⁴⁵ Military service did not, however, exempt men from later isibhalo service, as is shown by the case of Buja, who lived on the farm of T.A. Harmsworth, and who was called up for the road party after serving with the Natal Native Pioneers for six months during the Anglo-Zulu War.⁴⁶

In the first invasion of Zululand in 1879, according to Norris-Newman, a total of 9 000 African levies and volunteers were in service. Norris-Newman complained that

⁴⁴. SNA 1/1/30, 1878/136 RM, Estcourt to Acting SNA, 29 January 1878; SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1251 RM, Estcourt to Acting SNA, 20 September 1878.

⁴⁵. SNA 1/1/33, 1879/100 SNA to Acting RM, Umvoti County, 21 January 1879, and Acting RM, Umvoti to SNA, 23 December 1878.

⁴⁶. SNA 1/1/34, 1879/1613 T.A. Harmsworth's plea to RM, Inanda, 10 August 1879, and RM, Inanda to SNA, 28 August 1879.

.. Kafirs were called out from farms who were working as servants, whereas there were over 200 000 other natives living on locations in the colony under our protection, from whom the entire number necessary ought to have been drawn..⁴⁷

This suggests that most of the men who fought were farm-workers who were not liable to be called up for isibhalo labour or, presumably, military service. However, there is abundant evidence, which will be dealt with later, that most of the men drawn for military service as levies were from the locations.

After the Anglo-Zulu War, difficulties in supplying isibhalo labour continued, although military levies would have been released by this time and were, no doubt, enjoying the higher pay which they had earned while employed by the British army. In December 1879, the RM, Upper Tugela, was unable to provide the thirty men called up in November, as too many men formerly under the authority of the chief to whom he had applied, lived and worked on private farms.⁴⁸ In May 1880, the Colonial Engineer reported that the RM, Umsinga, had provided only four of the forty men requested.⁴⁹ In April 1881, the RM, Weenen, could not supply the men required of him because many were away at work or were in employment on private farms. He suggested that it should be made a condition of residence in locations that each homestead provide one man or more for road works, on pain of a fine.⁵⁰

47. C.L. Norris-Newman, In Zululand with the British throughout the War of 1879 (London, Lionel Leventhal, 1988, facsimile reprint; first published 1880), p. 4.

48. SNA 1/1/35, 1879/2318 RM, Upper Tugela to SNA, 11 November 1879.

49. SNA 1/1/38, 1880/256 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 1 May 1880.

50. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/180 RM, Weenen County to Acting SNA, 4 April 1881.

He reiterated this suggestion in October 1881 when he was able to supply only eighteen of the thirty men required for the Weenen road party, and explained the difficulties magistrates and chiefs faced:

I am doing all I can to get men, but you are aware how Magistrates' hands are tied nowadays - we are forbidden to force men to turn out and it requires considerable care to put sufficient pressure upon the Chiefs to induce them to try to get men .. as their authority is very vague and indefinite. If as I have recommended it was made a condition of occupancy of locations that each kraal should in rotation furnish labor (sic) there would be no difficulty.⁵¹

The evidence on the isibhalo system, collected by the 1881 - 2 Natal Native Commission, shed no new light on the problems experienced by the chiefs and the magistrates.⁵² W. Macfarlane gave evidence on 5 January 1882.⁵³ He had been elected to the Legislative Council of 1857 and had later succeeded Donald Moodie as Speaker. His brother, J. Macfarlane, had been the Estcourt magistrate since 1855. He would therefore have been familiar with official deliberations and decisions concerning the isibhalo system, as well as colonial opinion. He stated that the isibhalo labourers did not like road work because they worked in gangs under an overseer, and the work was harder than farm work. W. Macfarlane stated that they were, however, better fed than farm labourers and their wages were good. He maintained that petty chiefs had greater demands for labourers made upon them because African policemen were snubbed by the 'indunas' (izinduna) of larger groups or were bribed to call upon the smaller groups for labour. He was of the opinion that it

⁵¹. SNA 1/1/47, 1881/364 RM, Weenen to Acting SNA, 12 October 1881.

⁵². NCP 8/3/20 Evidence taken before the Natal Native Commission 1881 - 2, appointed 5 December 1881.

⁵³. Ibid., Evidence of W. Macfarlane, 5 January 1882.

should be a penal offence for a chief to call out men from private farms, and that the government should call out these men only in the event of war.

Most of the African men who gave evidence regarded isibhalo labour as heavy work which was poorly paid, and the chiefs complained of their great difficulty in supplying the number of labourers demanded, since many men had evaded their jurisdiction by living on private farms.⁵⁴ Chief Thetheleku, of the Swartkop location near Pietermaritzburg, regarded military service as acceptable, but not isibhalo labour. He stated:

To go to war is a thing that taxes a man's courage, and they prefer it because they go with a savage feeling. They know they may get killed. It is different to digging roads.

The headman of Chief Mafogonyana stated that although in the olden days (i.e. under the Zulu kings), men who were called out did not receive wages but only a beast (i.e. food), this was generously given: when men were called out by the chiefs 'large troops of cattle were given us.'

Two of the African men who gave evidence were less condemnatory. Capie, of the 'Uncolosi' (Ngcolosi) people near Verulam, was content with the new coastal rate of 15/- instead of 10/-, although, he said, pay from private individuals was between 25/- and 30/-

⁵⁴. Ibid., Evidence of William Ngidi of Umsinga and Magma Magwaza of Bishopstowe; Teteleku, Umgeni Division; Mawele, Zipuku and Homoi, chiefs, Umvoti County; headman of Chief Mafogonyana, Lower Tugela Division; Kukulela, Chief of Makuza tribe, Ixopo District; Godide, Induna at City Magistracy; Umneli of Zwasi tribe; Umganu, Chief of Abatembu tribe.

per month.⁵⁵ Umgakama, regent of the late Chief Chaka Ogle of Alexandra county, stated that he had no difficulty in raising the men required for road-party work.⁵⁶

The easy availability of African labour in Alexandra county, in or near which sugar growing was well established, can perhaps be explained by various factors. African men regarded the hoeing and weeding required in sugar production as women's work. The demand for African labour on sugar farms was seasonal, depending on the planting and cutting requirements of the farms. Permanent workers were generally indentured Indians, while African workers were employed in small numbers at busy times. The sugar industry was at a low ebb between 1878 and 1885 because of over-production in the world market. In addition, the Anglo-Zulu War caused disruption in farming because waggons and animals were requisitioned to move supplies for the army.⁵⁷

Most of the colonists, from Klip River (where there were no locations) and Weenen, who gave evidence, saw no injustice in the isibhalo system, and made suggestions about obtaining labour from areas other than locations. They also maintained that the government, in addition, had an undeniable right to call men out for military service.

55. Ibid., Evidence of Capie, p. 384.

56. Ibid., Evidence of Umgakama, regent of the late Chief Chaka Ogle, Alexandra County, p. 207.

57. P. Richardson, 'The Natal Sugar Industry 1849 - 1905: an interpretative essay,' pp. 191 - 192; J. Brain, 'Indentured Free Indians in the economy of colonial Natal', p. 206. in B. Guest and J.M. Sellers (eds), Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1985).

J.C. Adendorff of Newcastle (where there were no locations) maintained that landowners should release men for road work if they were not in service, and all should be liable for military call-up. J.C. Donovan wanted those on private farms called up for military service only if they were not currently employed. M. Adendorff agreed with regard to military service, but disapproved of drawing isibhalo labour from private farms. James Ralfe of Estcourt, unlike the others who gave evidence, reported on the labourers' dissatisfaction with road work at the inland rate of 10/- per month, which was not the market rate of wages.⁵⁸

Umvoti county farmers reported that they were unaware of discontent among isibhalo labourers. However, W.D. Wheelwright, the RM, declared that labourers did not like road party work. In addition, he reported, white men complained if workers were taken from their farms. He regarded the wage of 10/- per month as inadequate.⁵⁹

It was clear by the 1880s that the availability of more lucrative employment for Natal Africans had led to a hardening of the attitude of resistance. The Natal government had abundant evidence available that the isibhalo labour system was unsatisfactory, but was unwilling to take radical steps to rectify the position. Subsequent events indicated that the reiteration, before the 1881-2 Commission, of grievances and problems similar to those existing earlier, was largely disregarded, and the difficulties in raising isibhalo labour

⁵⁸. NCP 8/3/20 Evidence before the sub-committee for Weenen and Klip River counties, 20 January 1882.

⁵⁹. NCP 8/3/21 Natal Native Commission 1881 - 2. Sub-commission for Umvoti County, March 1882. Evidence of A.L. Pretorius, J.T. Martens, T. Varty, G. Van Rooyen, E.W. Newmarch and W.D. Wheelwright.

continued. It would seem that for all its inadequacies the system provided cheap, if not plentiful, labour. Poor pay and living conditions, and the exaction of hard physical labour were ignored by a government apparently unwilling to impose unwelcome taxes on the white population.⁶⁰ The extra revenue which would have resulted from these taxes might have been used to attract African labourers in the open market with better pay and improved conditions.

Even the use of labour-saving devices, which would initially have been expensive, was ignored. George Loveday had written to Lieutenant-Governor Musgrave as early as September 1872,⁶¹ enclosing a catalogue referring to stone-crushing machinery and a traction engine to be used for crushing stone and for rolling and consolidating metal roading. This machine, Blake's Patent Stone Breaker, could crush 192 cubic yards (151 cubic metres) of fine stone metalling in twenty-four hours. This kind of device was not considered by the Natal government until 1889 when, as a result of enquiries instituted by the Executive Council into the increasing difficulty in obtaining isibhalo labour, Acting Colonial Engineer Barnes informed the Colonial Secretary that he had ordered two portable stone-crushers which would replace 200 - 300 men.⁶²

^{60.} In 1882, the white population - who paid no direct taxes - numbered 30198. Vide Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. 375.

^{61.} NCP 4/1/1/3 Document No. 53, 1873 - 74, presented 8 January 1874. Correspondence between the Surveyor-General and the Government on the subject of the labour for public works.

^{62.} SNA 1/1/114, 1889/429 Meeting of the Executive Council, 24 April 1889; Acting Colonial Engineer to Colonial Secretary, 17 May 1889.

In 1880, there was an amelioration in the harsh conditions of the labourers when each man was issued with a blanket which was discarded after two years and given to its last owner. In 1889, greatcoats were issued in lieu of blankets. Presumably these would be used as blankets at night. R. Paterson, a road party overseer, suggested that each man be given both a blanket and an overcoat, with or without an increase in pay. Only the increase in pay was granted, to 12/6 per month.⁶³

While the Natal Native Commission of 1881-2 was collecting evidence on the isibhalo system, the RM, Umgeni, was having difficulty in raising men from Chief Mahoiza of the Qamga people, who complained that he had too few men living in his location at Table Mountain, and that he was not allowed to call them up off private farms where many of them lived, nor was he allowed to fine those who disobeyed him.

The Acting SNA sidestepped this issue by recommending that Mahoiza's two headmen, Manyosi and Mbobo, who were unsuccessful in finding labourers but who had willingly supplied levies during the Anglo-Zulu War, should be allowed to separate from the chief, so that he would be in charge only of men living on private farms. This should have relieved him from being called upon for road party labourers,⁶⁴ although, at that time, it seemed that men on private farms were not exempt. However, in August 1882, the

⁶³. SNA 1/1/114, 1890/90 R. Paterson to Colonial Engineer, 8 June 1889; Acting Colonial Engineer to Colonial Engineer's Department overseers, 6 June 1889 and 7 June 1889.

⁶⁴. SNA 1/1/53, 1882/124 RM, Umgeni to SNA, 13 March 1882; Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 24 March 1882.

Acting SNA laid down that a man who was a regular employee on a farm should be released from the isibhalo obligation.⁶⁵

The question of the low wages paid to isibhalo labourers frequently appeared. This was again discussed in March 1884 when the Colonial Engineer, A.H. Hime, informed the SNA that he would have to discharge road overseers if he could not get more labour. The SNA, H.C. Shepstone, as a result, informed the Governor that in his opinion the time had come for the question of the calling out of labour to be reconsidered.⁶⁶ He pointed out that the wages for this labour were still the same as they had been in 1876 (i.e. 10/- per month inland and 15/- per month at the coast and near the principal towns),⁶⁷ whereas in private employment men could earn double that or more. Shepstone was not sure that raising the wages of isibhalo labourers would solve the problem, as the repugnance felt for this type of labour was strong. After some enquiries, Shepstone reported that raising the monthly wage to 20/- would improve the position.⁶⁸

⁶⁵. SNA 1/1/55, 1882/342 Acting SNA's statement, 29 August 1882.

⁶⁶. SNA 1/1/109, 1884/176 SNA (H.C. Shepstone) to Governor, 19 March 1884.

⁶⁷. SNA 1/1/75, 1884/507 Colonial Engineer to Acting SNA, 7 December 1883.

⁶⁸. SNA 1/1/109, 1884/176 SNA to Bulwer, 20 July 1884.

The call to duty,⁶⁹ and gratitude for the ‘social education’ and ‘moral education’; the ‘liberal wages’, ‘ample rations’ and ‘comfortable quarters’;⁷⁰ the rations ‘upon a very liberal scale’;⁷¹ being ‘treated with humanity, fed, sheltered and worked under measures which have the sanction of the highest sanitary authorities,’⁷² spuriously claimed by J. Ayliff, Sir Henry Bulwer and P.C. Sutherland, the Surveyor-General, did not induce men to offer themselves willingly for exploitation as isibhalo labourers. The Natal government was therefore compelled to consider more practical strategies to ensure the supply of labour needed by the Colonial Engineer for public works.

The imposition of fines on chiefs who failed to produce the required number of men was, as we have seen, a possible line of action. Under Law 26 of 1875, the Lieutenant-Governor had the power to direct that the chiefs supply men, and the Attorney-General was of the opinion that this allowed him, as Supreme Chief, to fine disobedient chiefs.⁷³ In 1880, the Acting RM, Umlazi, pointed out that, according to the judgement in the case of Supreme Chief versus Chief G. Ogle, no magistrate was empowered to carry out a sentence on a ‘native’ chief for non-compliance with the law, unless this sentence was

⁶⁹. SNA 1/1/112, 1889/104 J.F.E. Barnes, Acting Colonial Engineer to SNA, 12 March 1889.

⁷⁰. NCP 8/5/14 Papers relating to the supply by native chiefs of native labour on public works, 1875. Enclosure in No. 6 Minute by Acting SNA, J. Ayliff, 15 September, 1876.

⁷¹. Ibid., Minute by Sir Henry Bulwer, No. 19, 13 March 1878.

⁷². NCP 4/1/1/2 Surveyor-General to Colonial Secretary, Natal, 14 December 1872.

⁷³. SNA 1/1/29 Acting RM, Umgeni Division to Honorary SNA, 13 September 1877; and Attorney-General’s opinion, 6 November 1876.

confirmed by the Governor,⁷⁴ In 1882, the Acting SNA declared that 'natives' could be punished by the magistrates for disobeying the orders of the Supreme Chief,⁷⁵ presumably after confirmation of the sentence. This is borne out by the suggestion, put forward by the RM, Lions River, that recalcitrant chiefs be fined;⁷⁶ the threats of a fine made by the Administrator of Native Law, Mapumulo, to ensure obedience;⁷⁷ the request by the RM, Lower Umkomanzi, for authority from the Governor to fine chiefs;⁷⁸ and the query about fining directed by the RM, Umlazi, to the SNA, who refused to allow the chiefs to be fined.⁷⁹

The reasons for the lack of consistent and forceful action against chiefs who failed to supply men required for isibhalo service may be found in the memorandum written by the SNA, H.C. Shepstone, in 1888.⁸⁰ He was of the opinion that the isibhalo system was unpopular because it was obligatory for some, but not equally compulsory for all, as those

74. SNA 1/1/43, 1880/754 Acting RM, Umlazi to Colonial Secretary, 8 December 1880; transferred to SNA, 14 December 1880.

75. SNA 1/1/56, 1882/478 Acting SNA to Colonial Engineer, 15 December, 1882.

76. SNA 1/1/68, 1883/919 RM, Lions River to SNA, 31 December 1883; SNA 1/1/71, 1884/189 RM, Lions River to SNA, 24 March 1884; SNA 1/1/75, 1884/574 RM, Lions River to SNA, 20 August 1884.

77. SNA 1/1/108, 1888/686 Administrator of Native Law, Mapumulo to RM, Lower Tugela, 14 September 1888.

78. SNA 1/1/108, 1888/691 RM, Upper Umkomanzi to SNA, 23 August 1888.

79. SNA 1/1/122, 1890/57 RM, Umlazi to SNA, 13 January 1890; SNA to RM, Umlazi, 14 January 1890.

80. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 SNA's memorandum, 10 December 1888, contained in the report, presented on 20 December 1890, of the committee comprised of Officer Commanding Troops, SNA and Colonial Engineer.

men living on private farms and Crown Lands were exempt. He pointed out that the demand for labour for public works had more than doubled, which made the government's position, as regards labour, more critical. Men were, however, less available as they preferred to offer their labour on the diamond-fields, the Transvaal gold-fields and the government Railway Extension Works where wages were more than double those paid by the Colonial Engineer. Because of the men's strong aversion to isibhalo labour, Shepstone had not insisted that the magistrates give 'any positive orders for the men required' because their order might be disregarded or disobeyed. A situation of confrontation was to be avoided at all costs because there was no sufficient force in the colony to compel obedience. This fear of violent opposition from the chiefs was repeated in 1880 when the RM, Umsinga, required to send in twenty-five men to work on the Botha's Pass road to the Orange Free State, reported that he could not do so, and he added, 'It is dangerous to try to force so many in this way..'81

Continuing his memorandum, H.C. Shepstone compared the old Zulu system of calling up young men for labour with the Natal government isibhalo system, which was being justified as supposedly based on the Zulu tradition. He pointed out that under the old system the 'Supreme Native Chief,' when calling out men, required them to be away from home for one to two months a year. The Colonial Engineer required them for six months at a time. The government demands far exceeded those of the 'Supreme Native Chief.' In addition, the isibhalo system caused friction between the chiefs and their people, and

81. SNA 1/1/122, 1890/177 RM, Umsinga to SNA, 6 February 1890 and 18 February 1890.

between the chiefs and the magistrates. In view of all these factors, the SNA suggested that the system be reconsidered.⁸²

The authority of the chiefs was severely undermined by their inability to compel obedience. A situation, unknown in traditional society, had arisen, where men had access to wage-earning employment and could therefore defy their chiefs who were no longer in a position of power as the givers of cattle for lobolo or to be sisa'd. The colonial authorities treated some chiefs with disdain, which seriously affected their prestige in the eyes of their followers, and reduced their own self-respect.

Law 19 of 1891⁸³ clarified the position and powers of the Supreme Chief and his deputies and representatives, and their power to punish disobedience. This, rather belatedly, strengthened the chiefs' authority. This law laid down the Supreme Chief's and the local chiefs' powers of punishment for disobedience. According to part II, chapter II, clause 39:

The Supreme Chief .. has authority to punish by fine or imprisonment or both, for disobedience of his orders or for disregard of his authority.

The local chiefs' punitive power, laid down in part I, chapter IV, clause 52 was more closely defined and less discretionary:

In carrying out or causing to be carried out, any order or request of the Supreme Chief, all Chiefs act as his minor deputies, and when so acting may impose a fine not exceeding Two Pounds Sterling for any act of disobedience.

⁸². SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 H.C. Shepstone, 10 December 1888.

⁸³. R.L. Hitchins, Statutes, vol. II Native Law, pp. 14 - 19.

The execution of the provisions of Law 19, 1891 revealed a margin for interpretation. In October 1898, the SNA declared that chiefs were not to be punished for failure to supply labour. Only the men who refused to comply were to be punished. The disobedient chief was to be reported by the magistrate.⁸⁴ In 1905 the old, infirm Chief Mqawe, Ndwedwe division, was to be fined again for failing to supply men for public works.⁸⁵ Chief Kula, Umsinga division, was also fined, as was his district headman for failing to supply men for the Public Works Department.⁸⁶ Yet the magistrate of the Ndwedwe division, early in the next year, suggested that headmen be punished as well as the chief,⁸⁷ indicating that this was not a generally accepted procedure.

The power to fine or otherwise punish appears to have remained the prerogative of the Supreme Chief. In July 1905, the magistrate of Ndwedwe dealt with the case of Dikwayo who was to be removed from location lands for troublesome behaviour, including the refusal to do road work. His removal was finally effected in September by order of the Supreme Chief in terms of Section 39 of the Code of Native Law (Law 19, 1891) and Section 9, Act 47/1903.⁸⁸ The Supreme Chief's authority was again invoked, in May

⁸⁴. SNA 1898/1948 Circular No. 20/1898, 28 October, 1898, contained in NCP 8/5/58.

⁸⁵. SNA 1/1/330, 1905/3182 Under SNA to Minister for Native Affairs, 28 November 1905.

⁸⁶. SNA 1/1/331, 1905/3427 Magistrate, Umsinga to Under SNA, 13 December 1905 and 30 December 1905.

⁸⁷. SNA 1905/3463 Magistrate, Indwedwe to Under SNA contained in SNA 1/1/334, 1906/242, undated.

⁸⁸. SNA 1/1/323, 1905/1711 Minute paper concerning Dikwayo, 8 July 1905.

1906, when Chief Mbedula was fined £5 by his order for being in arrear with one man;⁸⁹ and, in August, Chief Mabuna was informed that he would be reported to the Supreme Chief for not supplying men.⁹⁰ In November, Chief Luvalo asked the magistrate of Umvoti to arrest and punish disobedient men, whom he had already fined the £2 maximum. An anomaly arose because these men could now also be punished by the magistrate who could fine them up to £20 or impose six months' hard labour,⁹¹ presumably with the Supreme Chief's sanction. In August 1907, the magistrate, Ndwedwe, reported two chiefs, Mbedula and Kamanga, for failing to supply their full quota.⁹² It would appear that he could not summarily fine them.

While the Natal government was attempting to impose its authority in the matter of the isibhalo, Natal chiefs were marshalling their own forces to employ a counter-strategy to resist the power of the government and increase their own might by holding imikhosi for their people. Before this build-up of power could be fully effective, opposition to the Natal government was an expression of defiance rather than a serious attempt to oust the colonial authority.

⁸⁹. SNA 1/1/340, 1906/1386 Minute paper concerning Chief Mbedula, 4 May 1906.

⁹⁰. SNA 1/1/346, 1906/2500 RM, Alexandra to SNA, 6 August 1906.

⁹¹. SNA 1/1/357, 1906/4001 Statement by Hlofu, Chief Luvalo's induna, Umvoti, 6 November 1906; report by Sergeant C.D. Robbins to Inspector Rose, Natal Police, 30 November 1906.

⁹². SNA 1/1/375, 1907/2368 Minute, Magistrate, Ndwedwe to Under SNA, 15 August 1907; SNA 1/1/375, 1907/2369 Minute, Magistrate, Ndwedwe to Under SNA, 15 August 1907.

From the 1880s, the Native Affairs Department increasingly dealt with requests from chiefs to hold their own imikhosi. This in turn was thwarted by strict controls on these festive gatherings, as is shown by the refusal of permission to chiefs to involve any but their own homesteads. Permission had to be sought, through the magistrates, from the SNA as deputy of the Supreme Chief, according to the Code of Native Law (Law 19, 1891).⁹³ In March 1889, before this law was passed, the RM, Ixopo, pointed out that imikhosi might not be held without permission, to prevent large gatherings without government knowledge.⁹⁴ In 1902, a later RM, Ixopo, disapproved of the holding of an umkhosi because it gave the chief the opportunity to assemble his 'tribe' and, possibly, if of hostile intent, to mobilise military forces; and it interfered with the labour supply.⁹⁵

There is no doubt that some chiefs did use the holding of the imikhosi to strengthen their power bases. In January 1898, the RM, Umsinga, reported that Chief Kula of the Qamu people had, without permission, called up all male members of his people to form new regiments. He was rebuked but not punished for being in contravention of section 260 of the Code of Native Law.⁹⁶

⁹³. Hitchins, Statutes, vol. II, Native Law, Law 19, 1891, section 260, p. 38.

⁹⁴. SNA 1/1/113, 1889/208 RM. Ixopo to SNA, 27 March 1889.

⁹⁵. SNA 1/1/295, 1902/383 Magistrate, Ixopo to Under SNA, 4 February 1902.

⁹⁶. SNA 1/1/279, 1898/4 RM, Umsinga to SNA, 3 January 1898; SNA to Colonial Secretary, 3 January 1898; report of interview between Chief Kula and SNA.

Chief Msikofeli of the Ixopo district, who in 1906 was fined for the suspected involvement of some of his people in Bambatha's 'rebellion', was reported to have held an umkhosi without permission in February 1907, but no action was taken as there was insufficient evidence against him.⁹⁷ He repeated this in 1908.⁹⁸ Again, in 1909, he celebrated the umkhosi, but with permission.⁹⁹ It was regarded as bad policy, as early as 1889, to refuse permission to hold an umkhosi unless the chief had behaved disloyally in the past.¹⁰⁰ This suggests that the Natal government did not feel secure enough to be dictatorial in refusing permission. It would appear that, in the case of Chief Msikofeli, the authorities were acting most circumspectly.

The Natal officials' inconsistent handling of resistance to the raising of isibhalo labour and their vacillating approach to the granting or withholding of permission for the imikhosi celebrations showed not only a desire to leave room for arbitrary action, but also a fear of being so harsh as to evoke a violent response. Their inconsistency with regard to the calling up of labour left the magistrates and chiefs uncertain of their powers and rights; while their hesitancy regarding the imikhosi as rallying points for resistance was vindicated by the outbreak of Bambatha's 'rebellion' in 1906. It was clear, however, that despite African resistance, the Natal government, in its continuous quest for cheap labour for

⁹⁷. SNA 1/1/363, 1907/556 Magistrate, Ixopo to Under SNA, 22 February 1907.

⁹⁸. SNA 1/1/391, 1908/335 Magistrate, Ixopo to Under SNA, 11 February 1908, opposing Msikofeli's application.

⁹⁹. SNA 1/1/421, 1909/201 Magistrate, Ixopo. to Under SNA, 18 January 1909.

¹⁰⁰. SNA 1/1/121, 1889/1265 Minute paper, 21 November 1889.

public works, was determined to explore every avenue within the isibhalo system as well as turning to external sources of labour.

CHAPTER V

The further search for isibhalo labour from categories not included in the original system

The Natal magistrates' hands were tied by the lack of clear and unequivocal regulations which could be applied to all problem cases. They were expected to analyse the reasons for the inadequate supply of labour, and in some cases, apply ad hoc solutions. They put forward, from time to time, suggestions to ensure the labour supply; to make the chiefs more willing to cooperate; to make the labourers more contented; and to prevent men from leaving Natal for more remunerative employment. Not all these suggestions were implemented. For instance, in 1884, the Resident Magistrate (hereafter cited as RM), Weenen county, unsuccessfully reiterated his suggestion, first made in 1881, that it should be made a condition of residence in a location that each homestead provide one man or more for road works. If this were not done, the homestead would be fined.¹

Increased wages had been suggested many times, and this question was again addressed in February 1889, when Klip River was required to send in seventy-six men. This proved difficult as forty of these were called up from a private farm, and when this fact was reported to the SNA, he ordered them to be sent back. The RM, Klip River, complained that many men from his district had been given passes to work on the gold-fields at 10/- per week. The SNA discussed this matter with the Colonial Engineer and reported to the

¹. SNA 1/1/73, 1884/386 RM, Weenen to Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter cited as SNA), 20 June 1884.

Governor that the isibhalo wage should be at least 15/- per month. Although this was only half the usual wage in private employment prevailing in the district, it might lead to less competition from private employers.²

Again, in April 1889, the SNA advised the Acting Colonial Engineer to increase wages offered to Chief Thetheleku's men. Chief Thetheleku, who testified against the Hlubi chief, Langalibalele, in his trial early in 1874, and was responsible for him on his return to Natal, was much favoured by the Natal government, hence the suggested pay concessions to his men. This chief, along with Ncwadi of the Ngwane and Mqawe of the Qadi, identified themselves with white interests and gained power in this way.³ As we have seen, this chief's people, from the Swartkop location near Pietermaritzburg, had little incentive to seek work away from their location where they were able to engage in profitable market-gardening.

In September 1889, a committee of the Executive Council was appointed to discuss the isibhalo system of labour on public works,⁴ and some improvements were suggested. The committee recommended that the rate of wages be raised from 10/- and 12/- per month to 12/6 per month, which was the general rate of pay throughout the colony. In

2. SNA 1/1/112, 1889/189 Minute paper, 21 February 1889.

3. SNA 1/1/113, 1889/339 Minute paper (undated) SNA to Acting Colonial Engineer, 2 April 1889; J. Lambert, Africans in Natal 1880 - 1899: Continuity, Change and Crisis in a Rural Society, D. Litt et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, 1986, p. 36.

4. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Report of committee (Officer Commanding Troops, SNA, Colonial Engineer), 20 December 1890.

addition, a bonus should be paid to those men working in divisions other than their own.

Five years later, in 1894, the question of the issue of clothing for isibhalo workers was raised again, not from any humanitarian motive, to improve their conditions, but because four men had been arrested for being insufficiently clothed. The Roads Superintendent, Umvoti county, declared that even sackcloth was better than nothing 'as Europeans object to seeing nude natives on the Public roads of the Colony.'⁵

In order to stem the tide of labourers leaving Natal, it was recommended that no more passes should be issued. Passes were usually issued by the magistrates to men leaving for the diamond-fields and gold-fields. This exodus of men from Natal made the chiefs' task more difficult, as they had fewer men to call upon for labour. In November 1889, the RM, Weenen, wrote that he had stopped the issue of passes to the gold-fields in an attempt to solve this problem in his district;⁶ and in March 1891, he suggested the implementation of this measure as a step towards preventing labour from leaving Natal from all magistracies.⁷

5. Memorandum, Superintendent of roads, Umvoti County to Administrator of Native Law, Lower Tugela, 23 February 1894.

6. SNA 1/1/118, 1889/915 RM, Weenen to SNA, 19 November 1889, contained in minute paper, 4 September 1889.

7. SNA 1/1/139, 1891/262 RM, Weenen to SNA (undated) in reply to SNA to RM, Weenen, 17 March 1891.

In order to maintain, from within the colony, a supply of labour for public works, those men owing some allegiance to chiefs but not living in the locations and therefore not liable for isibhalo service, or others not usually liable, attracted the attention of the colonial authorities. These were men living on mission reserves; Kholwa (Christians) living elsewhere; men on Crown Lands; under-age boys; married men; and those living on private farms, all of whose numbers attracted attention. In 1894, the return (Appendix II) showing the number of huts in all divisions in Natal listed separately those men on location lands, mission reserves, Crown Lands and private farms.⁸ Excluding Umvoti, which sent in no return, the location lands, at the rate of one man for every thirteen huts⁹ (the rate as from 1894), should have yielded 2833 men, while the other categories could have provided 4577 men. Had these latter numbers been readily available they would have gone a long way towards easing the Colonial Engineer's task.

In 1885, the RM, Umsinga, (H.F. Fynn) suggested that those men living on Crown Lands or farms along the foot of the Drakensberg, who paid rent in lieu of labour,¹⁰ should be called out. Four years later, in 1889, J.F.E. Barnes of the Colonial Engineer's Department suggested that labour be raised from grazing lease lands in the north; from mission reserves, especially those along the coast; and from farms unoccupied by their

⁸. SNA 1/1/180, 1894/70 Return showing number of huts. This excluded Umvoti, a populous division, which inexplicably, 'Could not compile return without assistance' (Appendix II).

⁹. Vide NCP 8/3/75 Natal Native Commission, 1906-07, Annexure p. 1008.

¹⁰. SNA 1/1/80, 1885/17 RM, Umsinga to Colonial Engineer, 21 May 1885.

owners, especially those belonging to the Natal Land and Colonization Company;¹¹ all hitherto not liable. However, those who were settled on private or Crown Lands were not, according to the SNA in January 1894, available for call-up. He informed the Colonial Secretary: 'The tribes occupying private or Crown Lands are not called upon for Public Works.'¹²

When, in 1891, the supervisor of Inanda Location reported that Chief Hodoba (Rodoba) had called out young Kholwa men to serve on the roads, the SNA declared that Kholwa living in a location or on mission reserves (but not glebe land) were subject to call-up. The Governor agreed.¹³ In 1893, another case involving a Kholwa was put to the Governor for his ruling. Peter Butelezi, a Kholwa of the Gordon Memorial Mission, living in a location, was summoned for road party labour. The Rev. Dr J. Dalzell objected. The RM, Umsinga, requested the SNA to present to the Governor the question of the liability of Kholwa men to be called up. The SNA pointed out that men could be called out not only from locations but also from mission reserves and, with the consent of the owners, from private farms. The Governor therefore refused to release Butelezi.¹⁴

11. SNA 1/1/112, 1889/104 J.F.E. Barnes to Colonial Engineer, 11 February 1889.

12. SNA 1/1/180, 1894/70 SNA to Colonial Secretary, 3 January 1894.

13. SNA 1/1/142, 1891/637 Minute paper, 6 June 1891, including Supervisor's diary, 6 June 1891, SNA to Governor, 10 June 1891 and Governor to SNA, 10 June 1891.

14. SNA 1/1/166, 1893/122 Rev. Dr Dalzell to RM, Umsinga, 27 January 1893; RM, Umsinga to SNA, 30 January 1893; RM, Umsinga to Rev. Dr Dalzell, 9 February 1893.

This ruling appeared again in 1897 when an enquiry from the Chief Native Commissioner, Bulawayo, received the reply from the Under SNA, Natal, that isibhalo labour could be called up not only from locations but also from mission reserves.¹⁵ Again, in 1901, when Chief Mtambo called out Kholwa for service, they petitioned against this and the SNA's ruling was that Christians were liable for isibhalo service.¹⁶

The regulations with regard to mission reserves, as presented in evidence before the Native Affairs Commission 1903-5, seemed quite clear: the Supreme Chief had the power to call on all 'natives' on locations and mission reserves to supply labour for public works, and this was done systematically at the rate per annum of one man for every eleven huts. This new rate had been established in 1898. The order was served on the chief who then named the men. Refusal to serve was punishable under section 262 of the Code (Law 19 of 1891). The fine for refusing to turn out was £1 or £2.¹⁷

In April 1906, men on the Tafamasi Mission Reserve were under the impression that they were not liable for service. The chief was told to turn out those men from this reserve who had not paid their Poll Tax.¹⁸ The matter was, however, still not cleared up by

¹⁵. SNA 1/1/263, 1897/2439 Telegram: Chief Native Commissioner, Bulawayo, to SNA, 31 October 1897; Under SNA to Chief Native Commissioner, Bulawayo, 2 November 1897.

¹⁶. SNA 1/1/293, 1901/1971 and SNA 1901/1577 filed with it. Minute paper, 26 August 1901. Petition from Amakholwa; SNA to R.D. Goulding, 21 August 1901.

¹⁷. SNA 2/4/1 Minutes, correspondence, etc., 1903 - 1905. Evidence of Natal Witnesses before Native Affairs Commission. Evidence of S. Harrison.

¹⁸. SNA 1/1/340, 1906/1291 Magistrate, Ndwedwe to Minister for Native Affairs, 23 April 1906; reply, 16 May 1906.

September 1906, when A.C. Varty, Superintendent of Mission Reserves, raised the question of whether residents on mission reserves were exempt from isibhalo labour, as Chief Rodoba had asked for permission for residents to work on the roads. On 27 September 1906, the RM, Ndwedwe, informed the Secretary, Natal Native Trust, Pietermaritzburg, that he had sent a message to Chief Rodoba that he could not legally order men residing on mission reserves to render isibhalo service.¹⁹ The question should not have been at issue, since 'Authority was granted in 1902, rendering Natives resident on Mission Reserves liable to be ordered out. This authority was cancelled when the Mission Reserve Regulations came into force, on 26th September, 1904.'²⁰

On a few occasions chiefs tried to meet the isibhalo requirements by sending under-age boys. In 1888, when Klip River was required to supply men to replace time-expired workers, the RM, Klip River, reported that he could not provide these as the chiefs were sending him young boys unfit for the work required.²¹ In 1905, a circular was sent from the SNA's office informing magistrates that an increasing number of boys were being received by the Colonial Engineer, Public Works Department, and that the Supreme Chief had specified that only men be sent.²² Nevertheless, in 1906, the Under SNA rebuked the RM, Weenen, for allowing 'mere boys' to be registered, especially in view of Circular

19. SNA 1/1/352, 1906/3427 Weekly report from Superintendent, Mission Reserves to Under SNA, 15 September 1906; Magistrate, Ndwedwe to Secretary, Natal Native Trust, 27 September 1906.

20. NCP 8/3/75 Natal Native Commission 1906-07 Annexure p. 1008.

21. SNA 1/1/110, 1888/918 RM, Klip River to SNA, 26 October 1888.

22. NCP 8/4/58 Circular No. 4/1905, 25 January 1905.

SNA No. 4/1905. The Weenen magistrate excused himself by stating that they were 'young men somewhat under the build of men.'²³

It became customary for chiefs and magistrates to waive the original criteria for an isibhalo labourer, i.e. that he should be a young and unmarried man. As early as 1878, the RM, Estcourt, reported that, because of the chiefs' difficulties in supplying the men required, he had instructed them to send 'kehlas' (sic)²⁴ (i.e. amakhehla: married men or old men). In 1894 Mzumeni kaSikunyana requested his release from service on public works as he had to build two more huts to house his two junior wives. He was exempted, but not because he was married.²⁵ In the same year, Mchitwe, a married man, was exempted because his employer vouched for his being in regular employ; again, not because he was married.²⁶

Earlier, in 1894, Undhlumhlope, a 'kraal head' and therefore a married man, applied for his release from isibhalo labour on these grounds. The RM, Estcourt, declared, 'It is not correct that there is any rule exempting heads of kraals from service on public roads...', and he pointed out, further, that at least 15% of those isibhalo labourers serving in the

²³. SNA 1/1/337, 1906/771 Under SNA to RM, Weenen Division, 10 March 1906; RM, Weenen to Under SNA, 14 March 1906.

²⁴. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1251 RM, Estcourt to Acting SNA, 20 September 1878.

²⁵. SNA 1/1/189, 1894/963 Minute paper, 4 August 1894. Petition of Mzumeni ka Sikunyana praying for release from service on public work during 1894, 4 August 1894.

²⁶. SNA 1/1/193, 1894/1309 Minute paper, 13 October 1894. J. Harwin to SNA, 13 October 1894.

Lower Tugela division, were 'kraal heads.'²⁷ Again, in 1907, this question arose when Nobekwa claimed exemption on the grounds that he was a 'kraal head'. The RM, Krantzkop, wrote: 'I presume Kraalheads are not exempt from serving on public works.'²⁸

From time to time, as we have seen, chiefs called up men who owed allegiance to them, for isibhalo service, from private farms or from other private employment. Two factors determined a man's liability to be called up in this situation: one was whether he was in fact employed or merely claimed to be so, but was on leave from work; and the other was whether the employer objected strongly enough to have the call-up cancelled. As early as 1878, the RM, Newcastle, reported that taking men from private farms was 'objectionable to the owners.'²⁹ In 1879, when an employee of Ireland and Co., Pietermaritzburg, was called up and the company objected, the Acting SNA informed the Colonial Engineer that the man could not be taken as he was actually working.³⁰ In 1885, when John Haynes objected to having men from his farm called out by the RM, Estcourt, the principle was established that the chiefs could call out men from private employment if they were not actually working at the time.³¹ Further clarification

27. SNA 1/1/275, 1897(sic)/3030 RM, Estcourt to SNA, 22 September 1894.

28. SNA 1/1/366, 1907/1082 Magistrate, Krantzkop to Under SNA, 12 April 1907.

29. SNA 1/1/30, 1878/663 RM, Newcastle to SNA, 29 May 1878.

30. SNA 1/1/35, 1879/2172 Certificate from Mr Ireland to Colonial Engineer, 18 November 1879.

31. SNA 1/1/80, 1885/96 J. Haynes to SNA, 7 February 1885; RM, Weenen to SNA, 11 February 1885; SNA to RM, Weenen, 16 February 1885.

concerning men living on private farms was sought by the RM, Estcourt, in April 1885, when he requested the SNA to give definite instructions as to the position of men residing on private land 'with regard to their obligations to the Supreme Chief.'³²

In 1891, the Governor laid down that even if a man was on contract to an employer but was on leave, he could be called out as he was not actually working.³³ This principle was applied when J. Culverwell requested the release of his servant, home on leave,³⁴ and also when H.J. Compton did the same.³⁵ In 1894, Mrs J. Barnes, whose servant was on a visit to his home, failed to have him released,³⁶ nor was H. Pennefather's servant, home on leave, released in 1896.³⁷ In 1897, however, R. Acutt was informed that his servant, home on leave, would be released if a substitute was found.³⁸

It appears, from these cases, that private employers were competing for labour with the isibhalo call-up. The attraction to private employment, which provided better pay and

³². SNA 1/1/82, 1885/276 RM, Estcourt to SNA, 15 April 1885.

³³. SNA 1/1/147, 1891/1180 J.B. Farrer to SNA, 15 October 1891; Governor to SNA, 22 October 1891.

³⁴. SNA 1/1/157, 1892/601 J. Culverwell to SNA, 6 June 1892.

³⁵. SNA 1/1/157, 1892/632 H.J. Compton to RM, Impendle, 21 May 1892; SNA to his office, 26 June 1892.

³⁶. SNA 1/1/181, 1894/117 A Barnes for Mrs Barnes, to SNA (undated; received 30 January 1894); Under SNA to his office instructing letter to Mrs Barnes, 31 January 1894.

³⁷. SNA 1/1/235, 1896/2104 H. Pennefather to RM, Polela, 3 December 1896; SNA to RM, Polela, 17 December 1896.

³⁸. SNA 1/1/245, 1897/965 E. Acutt to SNA, 1 June 1897. Acting Engineer, Public Works Department to Minister of Lands and Works, 18 June 1897.

conditions of work, was to prove so strong a magnet that by 1901, at any one time, there were 31 569 domestic servants employed in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and the rural districts. Among these were 13 068 farm labourers, while only 2 000 men were employed by the Public Works Department.³⁹

Men living permanently as tenants on farms unoccupied by their owners could not claim that they were in employment, and this group attracted the attention of the SNA. In 1888, he suggested that these men be called out.⁴⁰ This was reiterated by J.F.E. Barnes of the Colonial Engineer's office in 1889,⁴¹ and by the Commission of the Executive Council.⁴²

In 1902, applications for exemption on the grounds of private service were formalised and had to be submitted to the SNA's office.⁴³ The power to call out men from private farms was retained by the Supreme Chief but not used, according to the evidence of S. Harrison, given before the Native Affairs Commission 1903 - 1905.⁴⁴

39. NCP 8/2/1 Statement of approximate number of natives who entered service in the colony in the year 1901. (Appendix I).

40. SNA 1/1/110, 1888/912 SNA to Governor, 11 November 1888.

41. SNA 1/1/112, 1889/104 J.F.E. Barnes to Colonial Engineer, 11 February 1889.

42. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Commission of Executive Council, proposals, 5 October 1889.

43. NCP 8/4/58 Extant circulars issued to magistrates by the Department of Native Affairs, Natal, 1880-1905 (publisher's name obliterated), p. 32. Circular No. 14/1902.

44. SNA 2/4/1 Minutes, correspondence, etc, 1903 - 1905. Evidence given by Natal witnesses before the Native Affairs Commission.

The numerous requests, over the years, for rulings on particular cases concerning isibhalo labour, with sometimes contradictory responses, suggest that the authorities may well have desired to leave the way open for discretionary powers. Even when the call-up was confined to the locations, the chief was informed of the numbers required, but it was left to his discretion whom he selected.

This power of the chiefs was often misused and the call-up in some instances became a punitive measure. In 1890, the RM, Inanda, stated:

Often the chief exercises his power to turn out men for work as a weapon with which to punish anyone who may have come into conflict with him in any way, judicially or privately.⁴⁵

This echoed a similar statement made by the Attorney-General in 1878.⁴⁶ When, in 1892, Chief Manyosi ordered his Upahla regiment to thunga, i.e. to don headrings, those who refused to do so or to pay certain fees to him, were called out to work on the roads.⁴⁷ In 1894, when Undhlumhlope applied for his release from road-party service, he claimed that he had been called up by his chief as a punishment.⁴⁸ Ukoko, in 1895, made a similar accusation, which was that his chief, Tshutshutshu, had summoned him through spite as he supported a rival claimant to the chieftainship;⁴⁹ and in 1906, Mbele

⁴⁵. SNA 1/1/123, 1890/209 Report from RM, Inanda, 3 March 1890.

⁴⁶. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL. Opinion of Attorney-General, 9 May 1878, No. 27.

⁴⁷. SNA 1/1/136, 1892/1250 Statement of Manyosi, chief of Amaqanya, before RM, Tafamasi, 2 December 1892.

⁴⁸. SNA 1/1/275, 1897(sic)/3030 R.M.K. Chadwick, attorney, for Undhlumhlope to RM, Estcourt, 29 August 1894.

⁴⁹. SNA 1/1/331, 1905/3248 Magistrate, Umvoti to Under SNA, 5 December 1905.

kaMbila also accused his chief, Zungu, of paying off a grudge by sending him to the roads.⁵⁰ Periodically, too, farmers used road work as a punishment for labourers who had displeased them.⁵¹ On occasion, isibhalo labour was known to have been used as a punishment by magistrates,⁵² by the Administrator of Native Law, New Hanover,⁵³ and by the Native High Court.⁵⁴

Lieutenant-Governor Martin West's proclamation in 1849 had laid down that the Lieutenant-Governor's powers and authority over 'all the Chiefs and Natives' in Natal were those 'enjoyed by any Supreme or paramount Native Chief.'⁵⁵ This was vague enough to allow considerable latitude in interpretation, since the powers of 'any Supreme or paramount Native Chief' were neither static nor statutory. Although it might have been tacitly understood that the isibhalo labour raised by any chief should have been used in his own district, this was not specifically stated.

⁵⁰. SNA 1/1/354, 1906/3636 R.C. Samuelson to SNA, 29 October 1906.

⁵¹. SNA 1/1/116, 1889/922 Minute paper, 6 September 1889. Answers to circular SNA 863/89, 15 August 1889 concerning farmers' applications to order men out to serve on roads.

⁵². SNA 1/1/112, 1889/104 RM, Klip River to SNA, 25 January 1889; SNA 1/1/113, 1889/325 Minute paper, 26 March 1889, R. Paterson, Colonial Engineer's Department, Ladysmith, to Acting Colonial Engineer, 26 March 1889.

⁵³. SNA 1/1/217, 1896/359 Minute paper, 12 March 1896, concerning petition of Janje.

⁵⁴. SNA 1/1/109, 1889/927 Minute paper, 6 September 1889, concerning Umtshiwa.

⁵⁵. NCP 5/1/1 Ordinance No. 3, 1849, 21 June 1849. Proclamation by Lieutenant-Governor M. West.

In pursuing the analogy of Zulu king and Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, the Attorney-General M.H. Gallwey pointed out, in 1878, that the traditional labour for a chief was for that chief's personal benefit, not on public works;⁵⁶ and this would preclude the use of isibhalo labourers beyond their own districts. Nonetheless, it became increasingly common for labourers to be drawn from districts where there were populous locations, to work in districts where labour was scarce and the need was great because of the extension of the networks of roads in Natal. These roads served as arteries of trade not only within Natal but also to link Natal with the Transvaal, the eastern Cape and the Orange Free State.

From the 1870s, the main areas of difficulty, where this measure of transfer was applied, were in the north in the Newcastle and Klip River divisions of Klip River county where a road was necessary to reach the Transvaal; in the Upper Umkomanzi division of the Pietermaritzburg county to link Pietermaritzburg with Richmond and beyond; and in the Lions River division of the Pietermaritzburg county where road works were necessary to construct the Pietermaritzburg-Howick (and Karkloof) - Estcourt road. It is clear from the table from 1894 (Appendix II),⁵⁷ showing the number of huts in the Natal districts, that there were no locations in the Klip River and Newcastle divisions of the Klip River county; and those in the Lions River and Upper Umkomanzi divisions of the Pietermaritzburg county were not densely populated. In 1878 Africans in the northern Natal counties of Klip River and Weenen owned some 73% of the total area of land owned by African people in Natal. By 1890 there was an increase in African land-owning in these

^{56.} NCP 8/5/14 PNNL Opinion of Attorney-General, 9 May 1878, No. 27.

^{57.} Based on SNA 1/1/180, 1894/70 and SNA 1/1/161, 1892/1013.

counties, and after the Anglo-Boer War, Africans purchased over 14% of the land available for sale in the Newcastle and Dundee divisions. Many of these farms were later to be termed 'black spots' and forced removals from them took place.⁵⁸

The Umlazi division of Durban county had problems peculiar to itself, and did not fit into the pattern described above. It had a large location population, but the rapidly developing town and port of Durban provided so many more lucrative work opportunities to the men from the location that in 1883 the RM, Umlazi, complained that he had difficulty in supplying men in his own district, when he was required to do so. The Acting SNA passed on the request to the RM, Alexandra, who pointed out that Umlazi, according to the Hut Tax returns, had only one third less in population than Alexandra. The request went back to the RM, Umlazi, who declared that his difficulties arose from the poor pay offered to isibhalo labourers.⁵⁹ The Zulu pattern of a chief's calling up men for his own district had clearly been abandoned, unless one argues that the Supreme Chief's district was the whole of Natal.

As early as May 1878, the RM, Newcastle, found it difficult to obtain labourers as most of the African people in that division were on private farms, and those on Crown Lands had duties to perform in return for the privilege of living there. Those men who did turn

⁵⁸. J. Lambert, Betrayed Trust; Africans and the State in Colonial Natal (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995), pp. 73, 78, 164; L. Platzky and C. Walker for the Surplus People Project, The Surplus People (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985), pp. 79, 115, 120, 121.

⁵⁹. SNA 1/1/67, 1883/876 Acting SNA to RM, Alexandra County, 7 December 1883; Colonial Engineer to SNA, 12 December 1883; RM, Umlazi to Acting SNA, 14 December 1883.

out, he wrote, did so 'reluctantly and unwillingly.'⁶⁰ In 1880, when Newcastle was unable to supply thirty-two men required,⁶¹ and then ten men for the Newcastle road party,⁶² the Colonial Engineer asked that these requisitions be transferred to Umsinga, for forty men urgently required.⁶³ Although the Umsinga location was very large, the magistrate found it difficult to provide thirty-two men for the Newcastle road party because so many men had gone to the railway works and diamond-fields,⁶⁴ where they were better paid.

Poor pay for isibhalo workers was a factor which was often discussed. In March 1884, as we have seen, this was regarded as critical.⁶⁵ However, in July of the same year, when it was suggested to the Acting Colonial Engineer, G. Nicholls, that the monthly wage be increased, he, anxious not to increase the expenditure of his department, hastened to point out that only Newcastle, Lions River and Upper Umkomanzi divisions had difficulty in raising isibhalo labour because few location 'natives' resided in these divisions. Umsinga, he wrote, had been providing labour for Newcastle, whereas Lions River and Upper Umkomanzi could not draw from other divisions. It is clear that his

⁶⁰. SNA 1/1/30, 1878/663 RM, Newcastle, to SNA, 29 May 1878.

⁶¹. SNA 1/1/42, 1880/640 SNA to RM, Newcastle, 23 October 1880; RM, Newcastle to SNA, 29 November 1880.

⁶². SNA 1/1/43, 1880/721 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 24 November 1880; RM, Newcastle to SNA, 1 December 1880.

⁶³. SNA 1/1/42, 1880/640 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 2 December 1880.

⁶⁴. SNA 1/1/63, 1883/489 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 6 August 1883; Acting RM, Umsinga to SNA, 28 September 1883.

⁶⁵. SNA 1/1/109, 1884/176 SNA (H.C. Shepstone) to Governor, 19 March 1884.

reluctance to accept the true situation arose from the expected consequences of increased wages, since he stated that the payment of wages at 20/- per month would increase expenditure on the roads by £6 000 or £7 000.⁶⁶ These sums could have been met by taxing the white people in Natal.

The three magistracies which Nicholls mentioned were not alone in their difficulty. Ladysmith, in the Klip River division of the Klip River county, like Newcastle division, which was also in the Klip River county, had encountered a further difficulty in raising labour in 1883, not only because they had no locations, but also because of the poor pay offered.⁶⁷ Nor was Umsinga the only division from which Newcastle drew isibhalo labour.

Umsinga was able to supply fifteen men to Newcastle in 1885,⁶⁸ perhaps because this was a small number. However, when, in 1888, the SNA directed the RM, Umsinga, to supply fifty men for Newcastle, the magistrate called on Chief Mawele⁶⁹ to supply half of these, and requested the RM, Umvoti, to provide the remaining twenty-five. Umvoti, although well populated, was quite unable to supply these. Again, the RM, Umsinga, pointed out that his difficulties were due to the exodus to the diamond-field, gold-fields

^{66.} SNA 1/1/109, 1884/176 Acting Colonial Engineer to SNA, 29 July 1884.

^{67.} SNA 1/1/59, 1883 SNA to RM, Klip River, 16 March 1883.

^{68.} SNA 1/1/80 Minute: Colonial Engineer to SNA, 20 January 1885.

^{69.} By what authority the RM, Umsinga, could call on Chief Mawele for labour is not clear, since this chief, of the Bomvu people, resided in the Umvoti county, Tugela Valley district, and not in Umsinga. Vide SNA 1/1/174, 1893/1086 Lists of payment to Native Chiefs under Law No. 13, 1875.

and elsewhere. The SNA then sent to Weenen for seventy-five men, and advised the Colonial Engineer that higher wages would make supply easier. Again, the Colonial Engineer opposed an increase in pay for men working in the Klip River and Newcastle divisions, from 15/- to 20/- per month, as this would cost his department £5 000 more per annum, and in any case the railway extension works offered even higher wages.⁷⁰ Umvoti, in spite of its difficulties in 1888, supplied forty-eight men to Newcastle between April and July 1889.⁷¹

Just how far afield the SNA was forced to go to find labourers for Newcastle and Klip River divisions became evident later in 1889. In October, the Acting Colonial Engineer suggested that, because of the long distance to be travelled, men being sent from the coast to these areas should be transported by rail.⁷² When these men, from Lower Umzimkulu, were told that they would be sent by rail from Durban to Klip River, they informed the RM, Umzimkulu, that they refused to go unless promised 30/- per month. Some asked for 35/- per month. In spite of warnings of punishment they 'steadily refused' and were sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour. They were to be

⁷⁰. SNA 1/1/110, 1888/912 Minute: Colonial Engineer to SNA, 20 October 1888; SNA to RM, Umsinga, 22 October 1888; RM, Umsinga to RM, Umvoti, 25 October 1888; RM, Umvoti to RM, Umsinga, 29 October 1888; RM, Umsinga to SNA, 30 October 1888; SNA 1/1/110, 1888/963 Minute paper, 31 October 1888; SNA to Colonial Engineer, 31 October 1888; SNA 1/1/110, 1888/912 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 6 November 1888.

⁷¹. SNA 1/1/116, 1889/672 SNA to Colonial Engineer, 1 July 1889.

⁷². SNA 1/1/119, 1889/1087 Acting Colonial Engineer to SNA, 8 October 1889.

employed, for this period of penal servitude, by Mr Bazley on the Harbour Works at Umzimkulu.

This incident evoked a request from the Governor to inform him how many men were called out for duty in districts other than their own, and the Governor directed that the SNA restrict expatriations as much as possible. Clearly, the opposition, from the men called up for transfer, was very strong. The Acting Attorney-General gave as his opinion that prisoners could be employed on the Umzimkulu harbour works when sentenced to hard labour. However, he added that it was undesirable for the Supreme Chief to call men out of one division to work in another,⁷³ which action had led to the sentencing of the prisoners. As a result, the SNA refused to accede to the Acting Colonial Engineer's request, in the following month, that fifteen men supplied by the RM, Alfred, be sent to Newcastle.⁷⁴

The Klip River division of Klip River county, as we have seen, had difficulties similar to those of Newcastle as regards the availability of local labour, since neither had locations, although Klip River had a larger population.⁷⁵ Klip River division obtained most of its labour for road works from Weenen county, which included Phakade's location district

⁷³. Vide Appendix IV SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Memorandum C 1889; SNA 1/1/122, 1890/81 Minute paper, 13 January 1890: RM, Umzimkulu to SNA, 13 January 1890; Governor to SNA, 21 January 1890; Acting Attorney-General's report on SNA 90/81, 20 January 1890.

⁷⁴. SNA 1/1/122, 1890/55 Minute paper, 13 January 1890: SNA to Colonial Engineer, 7 February 1890.

⁷⁵. SNA 1/1/161, 1892/1013 This return for the Blue Book, July 1892 showed that Klip River had 14 894 African males in the division, while Newcastle division had 6 949.

and Upper Tugela district;⁷⁶ but not without complaint. The RM, Weenen, pointed out, in 1884, that the large amaNgwe group in his county was reserved solely for Klip River labour.⁷⁷ In October 1888, he declared that he was unable to supply more men as the diamond-fields, the gold-fields and the railways had claimed large numbers,⁷⁸ and since he had already supplied Klip River with seventy men, he was unable to provide men for his own Weenen county road party.⁷⁹

By early 1889, the SNA was forced to cast his net more widely to provide the Klip River road party with enough men. In February, the SNA, having been supplied with thirteen men by Chief Ncwadi kaZikhali of Upper Tugela, Weenen county, for road service in the Ladysmith division, reported to the RM, Estcourt, (Weenen county) that the men had deserted and gone to the gold-fields. Chief Ncwadi sent replacements. When the Administrator of Native Law, Upper Tugela, was required to send twenty-five more men, Chief Ncwadi could send no more, and men were sought from Zikhali's location, from which 148 men had been sent in 1888. Most of the men were out working to be able to pay their Hut Tax,⁸⁰ which indicates that they could not do this with isibhalo wages.

⁷⁶. SNA 1/1/59, 1883/96 SNA to RM, Klip River, 16 March 1883.

⁷⁷. SNA 1/1/73, 1884/386 RM, Weenen to SNA, 20 June 1884.

⁷⁸. SNA 1/1/110, 1888/918 RM, Weenen to SNA, 23 October 1888.

⁷⁹. SNA 1/1/111, 1888/1067 RM, Weenen to SNA, 5 December 1888.

⁸⁰. SNA 1/1/112, 1889/177 SNA to RM, Weenen county, Estcourt, 17 February 1889; Administrator of Native Law, Upper Tugela to Acting RM, Weenen County, 25 February 1889.

When Klip River division itself, Weenen and Umsinga were unable, in February 1889, to provide men for the Klip River road party, Polela, Ixopo and Richmond were approached, but could not accede to the requests.⁸¹ By March, Umvoti was able to send men to Ladysmith.⁸² In April, when the SNA requisitioned for 105 men from Umsinga, the RM, H.F. Fynn, declared emphatically that he could not supply them, because, when the chief called upon them, 'they flee escaping to other parts of the Colony, Gold and Diamond Fields' [Fynn's underlining] 'whence large numbers - nearly all young, able-bodied men - have gone.' The SNA then called upon Umvoti again to send the men.⁸³ In June, when the Colonial Engineer requested the SNA to provide fifty men, he protested that Weenen, Umsinga and Umvoti had, since April 1889, already provided large numbers of labourers for Newcastle and Klip River. The RM, Weenen, pleaded his inability to provide more men because of a '..very large exodus of native laborers(sic) to the Goldfields..' By October, none of the fifty men had been sent forward.⁸⁴ Umsinga, Weenen and Umvoti continued to be called upon for labour for Klip River, with little

⁸¹. SNA 1/1/112, 1889/40 SNA to Colonial Engineer, 13 February 1889.

⁸². SNA 1/1/113, 1889/325 Colonial Engineer's Department, Ladysmith, to Acting Colonial Engineer, 26 March 1889.

⁸³. SNA 1/1/114, 1889/368 SNA to RM, Umsinga, 17 April 1889; RM, Umsinga to SNA, 29 April 1889; SNA to Colonial Engineer, 8 May 1889.

⁸⁴. SNA 1/1/116, 1889/672 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 27 June 1889; SNA to Colonial Engineer, 1 July 1889; RM, Weenen to SNA, 16 August 1889; Colonial Engineer's Department to Colonial Engineer, 30 October 1889.

success: all three areas in 1890;⁸⁵ Weenen and Umvoti in 1891,⁸⁶ Umsinga in 1892;⁸⁷ and Umsinga again in 1906.⁸⁸

Clearly the problem experienced by chiefs in sending forward isibhalo labourers was due not to intransigence on their part but to the relentless pressure of the alternative, more lucrative employment readily available to men on mines and in the private sector.

The difficulties experienced by magistrates in sending forward men, especially to divisions other than their own, were exacerbated by the fact that the increased activities of the Public Works Department, in its efforts to provide an infrastructure of roads, led to a marked increase in the overall number of labourers required. As A.H. Hime, the Colonial Engineer, reported to the Governor in August 1889, the system of calling up men outside their own districts was a necessity. He pointed out that the Ixopo, Alexandra, Umvoti and Umsinga areas needed relatively few labourers, while the African population in their locations was large, whereas, in the Klip River and Newcastle divisions, with small numbers of men available, the Public Works Department required large numbers of labourers. The overall increase in the number of men demanded may be exemplified by

⁸⁵. SNA 1/1/122, 1890/35 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 8 January 1890; SNA 1/1/126, 1890/654 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 2 June 1890; RM, Weenen to SNA, 7 August 1890; SNA 1/129, 1890/944 SNA to his office (undated; circa August 1890).

⁸⁶. SNA 1/1/130, 1891/130 Acting RM, Weenen to Administrator of Native Law, Pakade's location, 24 January 1891; SNA 1/1/146, 1891/991 SNA to RM, Weenen, 17 August 1891; SNA to his office, 11 September 1891.

⁸⁷. SNA 1/1/168, 1893/314 RM, Umsinga to RM, Ladysmith (copy; undated; circa February - March 1893).

⁸⁸. SNA 1/1/343, 1906/1883 SNA to RM, Umsinga, 27 June 1906.

details from the returns for 1887 and for June 1888 - June 1889. In 1887, Umvoti and Umsinga were required to send in 116 and 237 men respectively, while, in 1888 - 1889, 1890 and 714 men respectively, were required of them. Klip River needed 155 labourers in 1887, and 3043 in 1888 - 1889.⁸⁹

Memorandum B (Appendix III) on native labour, 1889, shows the heavy demands made on most magistracies. Only one, Lower Tugela, was required to supply fewer men than the 9% which would indicate a call-up of one man for every eleven huts.⁹⁰ Memorandum C (Appendix IV) may have been true for most districts in 1888,⁹¹ but certainly after that men were sent to districts much farther afield than those indicated and even before 1888, Umvoti had been called upon twice (in 1884) to supply Lions River.⁹²

In supplying the Newcastle and Klip River divisions of Klip River county, most of the transfers of labour took place from the adjacent division of Umsinga and the county of Weenen. A.H. Hime, the Colonial Engineer, pointed out, in 1888, that Umsinga had once been part of Klip River division, and the isibhalo labourers, therefore, could not complain about being called up for Klip River and Newcastle.⁹³ The SNA soon turned his

⁸⁹. SNA 1/1/109, 1889/846 A.H. Hime, Colonial Engineer, to Governor, 16 August 1889.

⁹⁰. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Memorandum B on Native Labour, 1889. (Appendix III).

⁹¹. Ibid., Memorandum C (undated).

⁹². SNA 1/1/72, 1884/266 Assistant Colonial Engineer to SNA, 1 April 1884; SNA 1/1/75, 1884/536 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 4 August 1884.

⁹³. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Memorandum from A.H. Hime, Colonial Engineer, 19 November 1888,

attention from the relatively close Umsinga and Weenen to magistracies at a greater distance from Klip River county. As we have seen, Umvoti, beyond Weenen, was required to supply Newcastle in 1888 and 1889, and Klip River in 1889, 1890 and 1891, and in 1889, men were to be sent by rail from the coastal districts to Newcastle and Ladysmith.

The Howick road party (Lions River division), like Klip River and Newcastle, also experienced difficulty in raising isibhalo labourers locally, but for a different reason: Howick was so close to Pietermaritzburg that men sought better work opportunities there. From 1884, therefore, it became necessary to call up men for Howick from Umvoti;⁹⁴ in 1888, from the Impendle location (Lions River division), which promised ten men of the twenty-three required and sent five;⁹⁵ again in 1894;⁹⁶ and from Weenen in 1889. Weenen passed on the requisition to Phakade's location in the Weenen district.⁹⁷ Serious problems had arisen in 1888, when, for the Howick-Karkloof road party, Lions

^{94.} SNA 1/1/71, 1884/189 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 19 March 1884;
SNA 1/1/72, 1884/266 Assistant Colonial Engineer to SNA, 1 April 1884;
SNA 1/1/72, 1884/262 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 28 April 1884;
SNA 1/1/73, 1884/399 SNA to RM, Lions River, 4 June 1884; RM to SNA, 20 June 1884;
SNA 1/1/75, 1884/536 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 4 August 1884.

^{95.} SNA 1/1/111, 1888/1097 Administrator Native Law, Impendle to RM, Howick, 22 February 1889 and RM, Lions River to SNA, 14 March 1889.

^{96.} SNA 1/1/183, 1894/390 SNA to Administrator Native Law, Impendle, 2 April 1894.

^{97.} SNA 1/1/112, 1889/25 SNA to Acting RM, Weenen, 26 February 1889 and Acting RM, Weenen to Administrator Native Law, Pakade's location, 27 February 1889.

River, Umgeni, Weenen, Umsinga, Umvoti, Lower Tugela, Inanda, Alexandra and Ixopo all declared they could not raise the ten men required.⁹⁸

Polela, with the Impendle location situated between it and Lions River, was called upon to send men to Howick in 1890. The RM, Polela, complained that he had to supply his own road party, and had the greatest difficulty in supplying other districts as well. In the subsequent correspondence, it appeared that an incentive had been offered to men working away from their own locations, but without marked effect. Authority had been given for men who had satisfactorily completed their service at a distance from their own location or division to be given an extra allowance: 2/- per month served, for Umvoti men and for men from Polela working in the Lions River division.⁹⁹ In 1891, the Administrator Native Law, Impendle, could not supply men for Lions River, nor could the RM, Umgeni, as their men were out earning Hut Tax; nor could the Acting RM, Polela, supply men for Lions River because of the increased demand for labour on the Dronk Vlei road.¹⁰⁰

Upper Umkomanzi drew men from the adjacent Ixopo division in 1880,¹⁰¹ but in 1891, men required for the Richmond-Dronk Vlei road could not be supplied by Ixopo or Upper

⁹⁸. SNA 1/1/110, 1888/992 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 7 November 1888 and papers to be laid before the Governor; Colonial Engineer to SNA, 6 December 1888.

⁹⁹. SNA 1/1/127, 1890/848 RM, Polela to SNA, 17 August 1890; Assistant Colonial Engineer to Colonial Engineer, 22 August 1890.

¹⁰⁰. SNA 1/1/137, 1891/60 Administrator Native Law, Impendle to SNA, 3 March 1891; RM, Umgeni to SNA, 9 March 1891; Acting RM, Polela to SNA (undated).

¹⁰¹. SNA 1/1/41, 1880/533 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 16 September 1880.

Umkomanzi. The RM, Umlazi, eventually supplied the men without demur, in spite of the distance.¹⁰² The Colonial Engineer's department continued to have difficulty in raising men for the Richmond road party, and the SNA took the RM, Upper Umkomanzi, to task for his inaction when his demands were met with contempt by the chiefs, and for accepting their lame excuses. This rebuke led to the supply of five men.¹⁰³ When the Colonial Engineer, in January 1893, required more men for Upper Umkomanzi (thirty from Ixopo and ten from Upper Umkomanzi), five men were still due in February.¹⁰⁴

From time to time, when isibhalo labourers were required, men were called up for a general pool, and not for any specific division. In March 1884, when Umsinga could not supply thirty-five men 'for public service' (no destination given) the requisition was passed on to Umvoti.¹⁰⁵ By April 1884, there were still too few men forthcoming, and the Colonial Engineer urged the SNA to try to obtain them from Lions River or Umgeni. When neither of these districts could supply the men, the requisition was to be sent on to Umvoti or 'any other magistracy.'¹⁰⁶ By July, the Colonial Engineer needed ninety men for the labour pool and he had only thirty-two. He asked the SNA to try to obtain

¹⁰². SNA 1/1/147, 1891/1164 RM, Ixopo to SNA, 9 October 1891; SNA to RM, Umlazi, 26 October 1891; RM, Umlazi to SNA, 4 December 1891.

¹⁰³. SNA 1/1/148, 1891/1218 SNA to RM, Upper Umkomanzi, 15 March 1892 and 1 April 1892.

¹⁰⁴. SNA 1/1/165, 1893/30 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 7 January 1893; SNA to office, 18 January 1893, telegram: Wallace, Colonial Engineer's Department to Colonial Engineer, Pietermaritzburg, 13 February 1893.

¹⁰⁵. SNA 1/1/71, 1884/166 SNA to RM, Umsinga, 10 March 1884; RM, Umsinga to SNA, 10 March 1884; SNA to RM, Umvoti, 10 March 1884.

¹⁰⁶. SNA 1/1/72, 1884/262 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 28 April 1884; RM, Umgeni to SNA, 5 May 1884; RM, Lions River to SNA, 10 May 1884.

more men from Lions River or Umvoti.¹⁰⁷ In order to supply only eighteen men in 1885, the SNA called on three divisions: Lions River, Umvoti and Upper Umkomanzi.¹⁰⁸ In 1893, when Umvoti could not send men for the general pool of labourers, the requisition was transferred to Inanda.¹⁰⁹

Whatever expedients the SNA turned to in order to raise enough isibhalo labourers for road party work, resistance was common in the form of leaving the location for other employment. Being sent beyond one's own district was especially resented, and the small extra remuneration (2/- per month for Umvoti and Polela men working in Lions River¹¹⁰ and a suggested 1/6 per month extra for all men drafted from a distance)¹¹¹ was not persuasive.

In his evidence before the Natal Native Commission 1906 - 1907, the Rev. J.D. Taylor stated that he did not think 'the present system would be so unfavourably regarded if men who were called up were kept at work in their own districts.'¹¹² Stephen Mini, a

¹⁰⁷. SNA 1/1/74, 1884/430 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 3 July 1884.

¹⁰⁸. SNA 1/1/84, 1885/494 SNA to RM, Lions River, 5 August 1885; RM, Lions River to SNA, 6 August 1885; SNA to Acting RM, Upper Umkomanzi, 8 September 1885.

¹⁰⁹. SNA 1/1/177, 1893/1312 SNA to RM, Umvoti, 8 November 1893; RM, Umvoti to SNA, 10 November 1893; SNA to his office, 12 November 1893.

¹¹⁰. SNA 1/1/127, 1890/848 Assistant Colonial Engineer to Colonial Engineer, 22 August 1890.

¹¹¹. SNA 1/1/150, 1891/1452 J.F.E. Barnes, Colonial Engineer's Department, Ixopo to Colonial Engineer, 8 January 1892.

¹¹². NCP 8/3/75 Evidence before the Natal Native Commission 1906 - 1907, p. 74. Evidence of the Rev. J.D. Taylor, 8 November 1907.

Kholwa, in his evidence, stated that he did not favour forced labour as the men were torn from their homes, leaving families unprotected and unprovided for.¹¹³ This situation was much worse if they were far from home.

The calling out of isibhalo labour for public works from the locations in the early years, showed Theophilus Shepstone at his most enigmatic and arbitrary. A convenient vagueness allowed for an ad hoc application of procedures which were not clearly formulated until 1895. There was, however, a need felt for a more systematic call-up. In evidence taken before the Natal Native Commission, 1881, Chief Thetheleku, in reply to a question put to him, stated that the registration of potentially available labour in locations would be helpful when chiefs were called upon to supply men for isibhalo service.¹¹⁴ In 1890, the SNA, Henrique Shepstone, pursuing this idea, suggested to the Colonial Engineer that, at the beginning of each year, his department should furnish the SNA with a statement showing the probable number of isibhalo labourers required for that year. This was done.

The suggestion arose as a result of reports from magistrates and administrators of Native Law. The RM, Inanda, W.H. Beaumont, suggested that each magistrate should state the number of huts and the total number of men available in his district. This information would make a more systematic call-up possible. The magistrates took this opportunity to point out the difficulties which they encountered in calling out men, as many left for the

¹¹³. Ibid., Evidence of Stephen Mini, 4 December 1906.

¹¹⁴. NCP 8/3/20 Evidence taken before the Natal Native Commission 1881, appointed 5 December 1881. Evidence of Chief Teteleku, Umgeni district, 14 February 1882.

gold-fields and Durban to earn higher wages. When the Hut Tax was pending, all the available working population, Beaumont wrote, went off to earn money to pay it. Also, at planting and harvest-time, it was difficult to obtain labour. Parental and tribal authority was breaking down; and chiefs used the isibhalo call-up as a punishment for those who offended them.¹¹⁵

In March 1891, the RM, Weenen, declared he could supply no more men for the Colonial Engineer's Department, Weenen. Correspondence followed which led to a suggestion from Mr Logan of this department, that the RM inform chiefs in his area that, say, 200 men would be required on a certain date. Each chief would have to contribute men, according to the size of his 'tribe'. These men would work for six months, after which 200 more would be in readiness.¹¹⁶ In August of the same year, Law No. 19, 1891 made clear the chiefs' obligation to provide isibhalo labour.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, the calling up of men continued to be arbitrary, as when the SNA, on 22 June 1892, requested the RM, Inanda, to supply fourteen men for the Inanda division road party. The RM reminded the SNA of a promise made to him, on 14 June, not to call out men from Inanda for some time. He was still, he stated, trying to find the twenty men requisitioned for 7 June 1892. On 24 June, the SNA insisted that fourteen men be

¹¹⁵. SNA 1/1/123, 1890/209 SNA to Colonial Engineer, 19 April 1890; Acting Colonial Engineer to SNA, 21 April 1890; containing excerpts from reports from magistrates and Administrators of Native Law.

¹¹⁶. SNA 1/1/139, 1891/262 SNA to RM, Weenen, 3 March 1891; Mr Logan, Colonial Engineer's Department, Weenen to Colonial Engineer, 10 March 1891.

¹¹⁷. Hitchins, Statutes, vol. II, Native Law, part I, chapter IV, clause 46(b).

supplied but removed the obligation for the twenty men to Lower Tugela. By this time, however, the RM, Inanda, had already supplied eighteen of them.¹¹⁸

Some organised system was emerging by February 1894, after Responsible Government became effective from July 1893, when the SNA called for the approximate number of men each chief could supply annually in order to 'establish some definite scheme of demand and supply' which would facilitate the process of obtaining the men when required.¹¹⁹ In March 1894, the SNA called for a return from each magistracy, of the number of huts situated on location land, on which Hut Tax was paid.¹²⁰ By 1895 the principle on which men could be called up was firmly established at one man for every thirteen huts shown on the return.¹²¹

Circulars continued to be issued to regularise and clarify the isibhalo system. SNA circular No. 3, 1895, 8 May 1895, approved payment to messengers who brought in men called out for public works.¹²² SNA circular No. 27, 1898, 6 December 1898, increased the supply of labour to the Public Works Department to one man to every eleven huts.¹²³ SNA circular No. 21, 1899, 2 August 1899, disallowed the issue of an

118. SNA 1/1/157, 1892/667 SNA to RM, Inanda, 22 June 1892; RM, Inanda to SNA, 23 June 1892; SNA to RM, Inanda, 24 June 1892; RM, Inanda to SNA, 25 June 1892.

119. SNA 1/1/194, 1894/1450 SNA Circular No. 5, 1894, 6 February 1894.

120. Ibid., SNA Circular No. 8, 1894, 17 March 1894.

121. SNA 1/1/209, 1895/1223 Minute paper, 9 October 1895. SNA requests return respecting native labour supply for 1896.

122. NCP 8/4/58 Extant circulars to magistrates, pp. 16 - 17.

123. Ibid., p. 23.

outward pass to any man who failed to satisfy the magistrate that he was not in service,¹²⁴ thus ensuring that he was available for isibhalo service. SNA circular No. 14, 1902, 21 April 1902, directed that applications for release from the obligation to render isibhalo because a man was already in regular employment, were to be submitted first to the SNA's office.¹²⁵ According to SNA circular No. 33, 1904, 24 October 1904, the order of the Supreme Chief for the supply of labour was to be communicated to the chief personally.¹²⁶ Lists of 'tribes' or sections of 'tribes' in each division were to be provided, and also the number of huts occupied by each 'tribe'.¹²⁷ Circular No. 4, 1905, 25 January 1905, laid down that men and not abafana (boys) were to be supplied to the Public Works Department.¹²⁸

While the SNA's office was attempting to make a success of the system of calling up men from the locations for labour on public works, suggestions were made for strategies to obtain willing labour from within Natal. In 1885, the Acting RM, Newcastle, fatuously suggested that he would try to obtain men who would voluntarily agree to work as isibhalo labourers, rather than be ordered out.¹²⁹ In 1888, J.F.E. Barnes, Acting Colonial Engineer, was of the opinion that the solution to the problem lay not in better wages, as had frequently been suggested, but in a better definition of power and the general relations

¹²⁴. Ibid., p. 25

¹²⁵. Ibid., p. 32.

¹²⁶. Ibid., p. 43.

¹²⁷. Ibid., p. 45.

¹²⁸. Ibid., p. 46.

¹²⁹. SNA 1/1/80, 1885/17 Acting RM, Newcastle to SNA, 23 March 1885.

of the chiefs with the RMs, and the RMs with the SNA and the Supreme Chief.¹³⁰ Law 19 of 1891¹³¹ addressed this problem. In 1889, J.F.E Barnes made a further suggestion which, he felt, would circumvent the demand for higher wages by appealing to the labourers' altruism: 'As regards wages, I hold to the principle that the natives should realize, that they work for the Government as a duty and not for personal gain..' ¹³²

In 1894, the SNA reiterated the recommendation, made in 1878 by Sir Henry Bulwer, that the Public Works Department should go into the public market for their labour supply. The labourers should be paid improved wages and the extra funds needed should be raised by increasing the Hut Tax to 24/- per hut per annum.¹³³ A circular was issued to magistrates in pursuance of this idea and to sound them out on their opinion of the isibhalo system at this juncture.¹³⁴

The magistrates were more or less evenly divided between acceptance and rejection of the system at that time. More than half of them stated that the 'natives' in their divisions, viewed the system with disfavour. The responses to the question as to complaints received

¹³⁰. SNA 1/1/110, 1888/963 J.F.E. Barnes, Acting Colonial Engineer to SNA, 2 November 1888.

¹³¹. Hitchins, Statutes, vol. II, Native Law, part I, chapter IV.

¹³². SNA 1/1/112, 1889/104 J.F.E. Barnes, Acting Colonial Engineer to SNA, 12 March 1889.

¹³³. SNA 1/1/180, 1894/70 SNA to Colonial Secretary, 31 January 1894.

¹³⁴. SNA 1/1/214, 1896/42 Circular from Colonial Secretary, Natal, to magistrates, and responses from the magistrates.

from chiefs and headmen revealed that those which did arise were concerned with the difficulties of implementing the system rather than with the system per se. The acceptance of the isibhalo obligation as a return to Government for benefits such as protection and land was to be found among the chiefs and the older men, while the mass of the people, and the young men in particular (who would personally have borne the main burden of the system), rejected it.

Many magistrates were doubtful about the acceptance by the 'natives' of the substitution of an increase in the Hut Tax for the isibhalo system, i.e. increased revenue to attract free labour. Their rejection was based on the grounds that the increase would also affect those not liable for isibhalo service.

When the twenty-one magistrates gave their personal views on the isibhalo system in general and on the proposed increase in Hut Tax, ten favoured the retention of the system; six approved of an increased Hut Tax; and four advised the abandonment of the isibhalo system and the employment of free labour at current rates, with road work put out to contractors. Two magistrates suggested that, in order to raise more revenue, the Marriage Tax should also be raised, and one of these advocated the imposition of a Poll Tax as well. It is noteworthy that not one magistrate suggested raising extra revenue by taxing

the white population, who were the main beneficiaries of the construction and maintenance of roads.¹³⁵

Although two magistrates suggested harsher measures of compulsion by advocating that men be obliged to obtain permission to leave a location, others did suggest improvements. Two magistrates suggested an increase of the isibhalo monthly wage to £1, and one of these advocated better tents for the workers. Another suggested that men should not be sent more than 50 miles (80 km) from home, and that checks be placed on possible favouritism shown by chiefs in selecting labourers.

In most of these responses, the main problems associated with the isibhalo system, which had been apparent almost from its inception, were not squarely addressed. These problems were the compulsory nature of the service and its application to location-dwellers only, low wages, very hard work, poor working and living conditions, the chiefs' arbitrary and sometimes punitive choice of individual labourers, the sending of men beyond their own areas and far from home, and the fact that the original attempted justification had worn so thin as to be almost non-existent.

¹³⁵. The 1891 census revealed that the white population numbered 46 788. They paid no direct taxes. 37% were gainfully employed. Vide Z.A. Konczacki, Public Finance and Economic Development of Natal, 1893 - 1910 (Durham, Duke University Press, 1967), pp. 5, 61. Had the wage-earners paid even a limited direct tax, more money could have been devoted to paying better wages to the isibhalo labourers.

Although most of the isibhalo workers were employed on road work, some worked for a short period on railway works in the mid-colonial period; on military building (Fort Buckingham and the Bluff fortifications);¹³⁶ and for a while on harbour works.¹³⁷

Some tasks assigned to a relatively small number were less arduous than those requiring heavy manual labour. In 1888, under the supervision of the Colonial Veterinary Surgeon, some worked at the government sheep-dip station at Van Reenen's Pass.¹³⁸ When the rinderpest struck in 1896, isibhalo men were employed as quarantine guards, but there seemed some doubt about whether this use was legitimate.¹³⁹ In 1902, however, men were requisitioned for rinderpest control using the same official form as that for isibhalo labour,¹⁴⁰ and this continued.¹⁴¹ From 1901 to 1905, 354 men were sent to the Agricultural Department to be employed by them; 104 to the Postal Department and thirty-seven to the Railway Department¹⁴² (this last may have involved heavy manual labour). In 1906, chiefs were required to supply men, at 30/- per month, as East Coast Fever

¹³⁶. SNA 1/1/14 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 14 May 1864; SNA 1/1/114, 1889/375 Colonial Engineer to SNA, 11 April 1889.

¹³⁷. SNA 1/1/14 A Taylor, Harbour Works, Durban to SNA, 8 January 1864; Ibid., 11 May 1864.

¹³⁸. SNA 1/1/111, 1888/1121 Colonial Veterinary Surgeon to SNA, 15 December 1888.

¹³⁹. SNA 1/1/225, 1896/1192 RM, Upper Tugela to SNA, 27 July 1896; SNA to Attorney-General, 27 August 1896.

¹⁴⁰. SNA 1/1/297, 1902/2392 Order, 23 January 1902 to RM, Estcourt.

¹⁴¹. SNA 1/1/297, 1902/2504 Minute paper, July 1902.

¹⁴² NCP 8/3/75 Native Affairs Commission 1906 - 1907 Annexure on Natives employed on Public Works, p. 1008.

guards;¹⁴³ and, by 1907, postal runners (at 35/- per month), mapping parties and game guards were drawn from the ranks of isibhalo labourers.¹⁴⁴

In the report of the Native Affairs Commission 1906 - 1907,¹⁴⁵ the isibhalo system was again compared to the Zulu traditional system, and the incorrectness of this comparison was pointed out; as was the comparison with the eighteenth century French *corvée*. The arbitrary nature of the chief's choice of individuals called up to serve was at last squarely addressed in Clause 118:

Chiefs are requisitioned to supply men according to the size of their tribes... There is no proper system of rotation or limitation of calls, much being left in the way of selection to the whim, caprice and partiality of the Chief and his indunas, who are known to call out the same men over and over again, while favourites and those who bribe them (often substantially) escape altogether.

The recommendation of the Native Affairs Commission was that the system be abandoned and its place taken by more efficient taxation to pay for free labour. However the powers of the Supreme Chief to call men out 'in times of emergency or for service in the public weal..' remained intact.

In spite of all the recommendations against the isibhalo system of raising labour for public works in Natal, it limped on throughout the colonial period. Not only that, but the Acting Attorney-General, in June 1910, was of the opinion that the isibhalo principles applied to

¹⁴³. SNA 1/1/353, 1906/3527 Under SNA to RM, Krantzkop, 24 October 1906.

¹⁴⁴. NCP 8/2/8 Colony of Natal, Annual reports, Department of Native Affairs, 1907.

¹⁴⁵. NCP 8/3/75 Report of Native Affairs Commission, 1906 - 1907, 25 January 1907. Clauses 116 - 121.

Zululand as well.¹⁴⁶ However, its abolition was effected early in the Union period, before this could be fully implemented.

In considering the extant records of the isibhalo system of forced labour in colonial Natal, a dark picture emerges of a repressive, inefficient practice. Nevertheless, the roads were built, so from the colonial point of view the system was not entirely unsuccessful. Although this dissertation has focused on the use of isibhalo labour, it was not in fact a major portion of the entire work force in 1901. Appendix I (to the original of which have been added ordinal numerals) indicates this. A comparison with the numbers of men who worked as ricksha pullers in Durban and Pietermaritzburg is revealing. In 1901, the total number of men who entered isibhalo service in Natal was 4112, while in the same year, there were 5500 ricksha pullers in Durban and 2000 in Pietermaritzburg.

The problem of raising enough labour for public works in an expanding economy was a very real one for the Natal government. From early colonial times, use had been made of labourers who owed no allegiance to the chiefs in the Natal locations at the time of their employment. These were refugees, convicts, political prisoners, and contract labourers. In addition, the colonial authorities took measures to regulate the efflux of men to work on mines outside Natal. One such measure was the passing of the 1896 Labour Tout Regulation Act which prohibited agents from recruiting labour without permission of the magistrate or, on a private farm, the owner's consent. This was followed in 1901, by the

¹⁴⁶. Vide NCP 8/3/75 Natal Native Commission 1906 - 1907, Annexure p. 1008.

stricter Labour Touts Act which prohibited touting for labour to be used outside the colony.¹⁴⁷

As the settler population of Natal expanded their commercial farming and industrial enterprises, so their need for abundant and reasonably cheap labour increased. At first they competed with the state for labour, but when this source became insufficient, they looked to alternative sources of labour. The railway and mines employed contract labour not called up from the locations.

As early as October 1851, colonists who found African labour unreliable were considering importing labour from the East Indies for the sugar industry. Two prominent sugar farmers, Edmund Morewood and William Campbell opposed this, declaring that plentiful African labour was easily available. Morewood, in January 1853, wrote to The Natal Times to point out that those planters who found difficulty in attracting labour did not 'treat the natives properly', and provided 'small pay and cheap food.'¹⁴⁸ By 1854, the colonists' labour needs were being met when refugees from Zululand began entering Natal in great numbers, peaking at 4 500 by 1856.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷. J. Lambert, 'The impoverishment of the Natal peasantry' in Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and Exploitation, pp. 295 - 296.

¹⁴⁸. R.F. Osborn, Valiant Harvest: The founding of the South African Sugar Industry 1848 - 1926 (Durban, The South African Sugar Association, 1964), pp. 33, 131.

¹⁴⁹. J. Brain, 'Indentured and Free Indians in the Economy of Colonial Natal' in Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and Exploitation, p. 200.

Although at first this refugee labour was not intended for employment by the Natal government on public works, it was officially regulated. A Zulu refugee entering a district with the intention of remaining there, was to appear before the magistrate and submit to being bound to serve a farmer or other 'respectable' person for three years at a monthly wage fixed by the magistrate.¹⁵⁰

By 1855, Dr. W.H.I. Bleek declared that these refugees had to work for the government for three years or 'on government instruction for a farmer..¹⁵¹ This statement followed a discussion about Ngoza kaLudaba, Theophilus Shepstone's induna,¹⁵² who became an 'unborn' chief of the Qamu people, most of whom were Zulu refugees. The men from this chiefdom and others near the Zulu border eventually became subject to the isibhalo levy. Chief Ngoza's son, Chief Kula, defied the Natal government between 1898 and 1906 in the matter of raising isibhalo labour,¹⁵³ but he was certainly subject to this obligation.

In 1873, Major A. Durnford proposed a project which envisaged the utilisation of Zulu clans within the colonial borders. This was the formation of a Corps of Pioneers of 500 men for a two-year period of service, for employment in the construction and upkeep of roads and bridges in the colony, organised along military lines. The colony would thus

¹⁵⁰. SNA 1/1/5 Circular to magistrates enclosing revised regulations relative to refugees, undated; circa November 1854.

¹⁵¹. O.H. Spohr (translator), The Natal Diaries of Dr W.H.I. Bleek 1855 - 1856 (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1965), p. 27.

¹⁵². Bryant, Olden Times, p. 330.

¹⁵³. Stuart, Zulu Rebellion, p. 320.

secure the services of an organised force for employment on public works, 'gradually trained in the habits of order and industry,' and the men would also be available for offensive and defensive military operations,¹⁵⁴ i.e. as both labourers and military levies. This project was not put into practice as Durnford planned, possibly because the Langalibalele affair followed shortly afterwards. During the later phase of the Anglo-Zulu War, a Pioneer Corps was raised for labour.

Many Zulu refugees were indentured to farmers for the required three years, and some were drafted into railway work,¹⁵⁵ but by 1885 a significant number were being sent directly to work on the roads. Correspondence ensued with regard to their clothing. A distinction was made between 'all natives working on the roads,,,' i.e. the normal isibhalo draft, and the refugees, indicating that they were in a different category. A court ruling of 1885 laid down that refugees were to be monopolised by the government for three years of isibhalo labour. However, the Refugee Regulations were well-nigh impossible to implement, and Atkins describes them as 'an abysmal failure.'¹⁵⁶

Between 1860 and 1866, 6 445 Indian men, women and children were brought to Natal, as indentured labour, to work on sugar, indigo and cotton plantations, and as domestic servants. Some were assigned to government-controlled departments such as the Port

¹⁵⁴. NCP 4/1/2/2 Report by Major Durnford on a project for the formation of a Corps of Pioneers for employment in the construction and upkeep of roads and bridges in the Colony, 27 October 1873.

¹⁵⁵. SNA 1/1/33, 1878/666 Record of Zulu refugees received from RMs, Estcourt and Weenen.

¹⁵⁶. K.E. Atkins, The Moon is Dead! Give us our money! (Portsmouth, Heinemann and London, James Currey, 1993), pp. 21, 22, 25.

Captain's office, the Durban Corporation and the Natal Railway Company;¹⁵⁷ but not on the roads.

Before 1860 and between 1869 and 1876, when there was a temporary cessation of Indian immigration, Tsonga labourers were brought into Natal in considerable numbers. Recruiters of Tsonga labourers from the Delagoa Bay hinterland paid Cetshwayo, the Zulu king, a capitation fee for their transit through Zululand. This labour was intended for the sugar farms and railway construction, not for work on the roads. However, from 1874 it was regularised by the Natal government when John Dunn was appointed as Protector of Immigrants. He was directed to set up feeding and resting places along the way through Zululand to Natal. In 1874, nearly 2 500 Tsonga labourers entered Natal, and in 1878 this immigration peaked at 5 000.¹⁵⁸ In the 1870s the railway contractors, Wythes and Jackson, were importing two-thirds of their labourers.¹⁵⁹

While the settlers were attempting to solve their labour problems by importing labour, the Natal government continued to draw labour from local sources. Political prisoners were exploited as labour for the Colonial Engineer after the Langalibalele affair when amaNgwe

¹⁵⁷. B. Ellis, 'The impact of white settlers on the natural environment of Natal, 1845 - 1870,' p. 76; J. Brain, 'Indentured and Free Indians in the economy of colonial Natal,' p. 202, in Guest and Sellers, Enterprise and Exploitation.

¹⁵⁸. Ballard, John Dunn, pp. 87, 104, 106 - 109.

¹⁵⁹. C.C. Ballard, 'Migrant labour in Natal, 1860 - 1879' in A.H. Duminy and P.R. Maylam (eds), Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. I (Durban, University of Natal, 1978), p. 40.

prisoners were employed by Major Durnford in blowing up passes in the Drakensberg.¹⁶⁰ After Bambatha's 'rebellion' in 1906 some political prisoners were employed on the roads, as were ordinary short service prisoners.¹⁶¹

Isibhalo labour continued to be drawn mainly from the locations, and difficult though it was, it could not have been entirely unsatisfactory, or the Natal government would have drawn labour from sources utilised by the colonists.

The one sure resource left to the Natal Africans was their labour, and this they wished to sell in employment of their own choice. Their own social and economic structures had to a large extent been destroyed and new adaptations had to be made in order to acquire cash for taxes and new needs. Many young men sought cash wages in the best market in order to buy cattle which would allow them to pay lobolo for wives, and release them from dependence on their fathers (who traditionally assisted in this obligation.)¹⁶² As the Natal colonial government continued to request labour for public works, so the potential labour from the locations, perhaps more effectively, evaded government demands by seeking more advantageous employment within Natal and beyond its borders.

¹⁶⁰. Guest, Langalibalele, pp. 45 - 46; R.O. Pearse, Barrier of Spears (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1973), p. 42.

¹⁶¹. SNA 1/1/343, 1906/1889 Minute paper, 20 June 1906. Minister Native Affairs to T. Braithwaite, 22 June 1906; Assistant Commissioner of Police to Minister of Justice, 28 June 1906; NCP 8/3/75 Evidence before Native Affairs Commission, 1906 - 1907, of J.F.E. Barnes, Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, 30 November 1906.

¹⁶². Atkins, The Moon is Dead!, p. 35.

CHAPTER VI

Military levies : the period of acquiescence.

For the first thirty years of the existence of Natal as a British possession, her insignificant position within the wider context of the British colonial empire is indicated by the appointment, as lieutenant-governors, of officials of relatively minor importance. Martin West had been the Resident Magistrate at Grahamstown before his appointment; Benjamin Pine had been temporary Governor of Sierra Leone before his first term as Lieutenant-Governor of Natal; John Scott was transferred from Labuan off the north west coast of Borneo; J. Maclean, R. W. Keate and A. Musgrave were mediocrities; and Pine, knighted in 1856 after he had left Natal, spent the intervening years before his return for a second term, on the Gold Coast and in the Leeward Islands of the West Indies.

Pine's second term of duty as Lieutenant-Governor of Natal saw him preside over the Langalibalele affair. This military crisis brought Natal into focus sufficiently for Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, G.C.M.G., K.C.B, to be sent out to Natal. He had gained military renown in various theatres of war, and had worked closely with Lord Cardwell, the British Secretary for War, in effecting army reforms.¹ As Special Commissioner from April to September 1875, Wolseley stifled the development of the colonial legislature by postponing the attainment of responsible government. Before his visit, which lent some consequence to Natal, the colony had been left to solve its own problems of peace-keeping and defence with little assistance or interference from the British Colonial Office. The

¹. Morris, Washing of the Spears, pp. 236-242.

colony was not important enough to warrant the deployment of a large Imperial military presence.

The British annexed Natal when African people living there were weakened and in disarray. The regrouping of forces and the building up of power by any sections of these people were regarded as dangerous tendencies which had to be stamped out, for fear of the establishment of power bases which could challenge that of the Natal colonial government.

Defence and the maintenance of peace in this disrupted society were perceived as major problems which faced the British colonial authorities after their annexation of Natal. Initially these concerns were in the hands of a small British military force which soon needed to be augmented. The discredited commando system adopted by the Boers was ineffectual when it was tentatively applied in Natal, as widely scattered farmers feared leaving their farms and livestock open to raids by the elusive and persistent San. The Natal government, with few regular troops available, fell back on the use of African auxiliaries: the Natal Native Police, and levies raised by chiefs from among their followers. Although from 1855 white volunteer units came forward, the levy system remained, despite rising protests from the African population in Natal as increasing opportunities for wage labour became available in work for settlers in town and country and, later, on the diamond- and gold-fields, and men were reluctant to leave their employment to answer the call for levies.

In July 1842, only two months after the arrival of the British in Natal, Colonel A.J. Cloete reported on his use of African auxiliaries. He wrote to Sir George Napier, the Cape Governor, that in order to strengthen his position vis-a-vis the Natal Boers, whose power he wished to weaken preparatory to an offensive against them, he had 'required of the Kafirs to bring .. in as many horses and cattle as they could get.'² The consequence of this plunder of the Boers set him against any future use of these forces. He wrote '.. that the Kafirs had begun to set upon the Boers, and that three had been killed by them.'³ He advised:

.. if England will not put down the Boers by her own legitimate means, it were better to abandon the project altogether, and submit even to the insult we have received, than to adopt the degrading process of enlisting the savage in our cause, or call upon the Zulu assagais (sic) to commit all the atrocities of indiscriminate bloodshed and spoliation.⁴

Cloete's reservations about the use of African auxiliaries to assist the British in Natal were ignored in the colonial period when it was deemed expedient to employ them, although white leaders were appointed in the sometimes vain belief that they would act as a guiding and restraining influence.

The levying of military service from allies and subject peoples supposedly under an obligation to their rulers is, of course, of ancient origin. European colonial powers, in later times, routinely made use of levies raised from subject or allied peoples. The

2. Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. II, p.38. Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. Cloete to Sir George Napier, 3 July 1842.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

4. Ibid., p. 39.

employment of sepoy in India, and the use of Mfengu levies in the eastern Cape are two well known examples. In colonial Natal where the governed vastly outnumbered the governors and the white settlers, levies were raised from among the subject African people to enlarge, with minimal cost, a paltry military and policing force to keep the peace in Natal and to protect her borders when trouble loomed beyond them.

This raising of levies in colonial Natal was preceded, in the early days of Lieutenant-Governor Martin West's administration, by reliance upon a small regular military force of 508 men, thirty-five of whom were cavalry. Of these, about 200 men were at Port Natal and the rest in Pietermaritzburg.⁵ The farmers living beyond these two towns were at times prevented by the British authorities from taking the law into their own hands and raising commandos to deal with continual San raids, nor were they always willing to go on commando at the bidding of the government.

Not only did the Natal colonial government have to turn its attention to keeping the peace among the African people, but the ousted San, deprived of their hunter-gatherer way of life which required access to shifting hunting grounds and sources of plant food, were perceived as a dangerous nuisance against whom military action was necessary. The San, many of whom had, by the nineteenth century, partly turned to stock-farming, raided livestock in Natal, descending unpredictably, albeit in small numbers, upon white farmers and African stock-owners alike. Since they were numerically and militarily inferior to the African people and the Natal colonial forces who had appropriated their territory, they

5. J.B. Wright, Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg 1840 - 1870 (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1971), p. 49.

waged guerilla warfare against them. African levies were employed against the San from early Natal colonial days. Those who lived in areas exposed to possible San attacks or who had themselves suffered stock losses were interested parties who came forward willingly, eager to add their support to punitive measures.

In January, February, September and December 1846, there were San raids on the Mooi River district, on the Mkhomazi river and in the Elandskop and Karkloof areas.⁶ It was clear that the British troops in Pietermaritzburg and Port Natal could not effectively come to the aid of farmers who had lost stock, as they were insufficiently mobile at that distance to take swift retaliatory action against the San, especially as only thirty-five of them were mounted. Clearly, a military force, in closer proximity and of greater effectiveness, was necessary.

In September the Natal government plan to raise a white commando against the San from the two wards of the Umgeni came to nothing.⁷

By October, a small military post was planned for the Elandskop district, manned by one non-commissioned officer and ten privates of the Cape Mounted Rifles,⁸ who could

⁶. Ibid., pp. 51, 52, 53, 63.

⁷. Ibid., p. 57.

⁸. Ibid., p. 59 and p. 111, footnote 48. These were regular troops from the Cape. Most of them were 'Coloureds'.

launch swift strikes against the San at close range. In 1847 these two possibilities, a standing force or a mobile commando, were to be tested.

A well organised expedition led by Walter Harding, Resident Magistrate of Pietermaritzburg, was to be deployed early in 1847, with between forty and fifty white burghers called up by the field cornets of Pietermaritzburg, Lower Umgeni and Little Tugela.⁹ In January 1847, only six Cape Mounted Rifles horsemen and seventeen burghers reported for duty. Clearly, neither the Cape Mounted Rifles nor a commando of white burghers could be depended upon to provide an effective force. To bring it up to full strength, Harding's commando was to be reinforced by twenty-nine levies from the Nxamalala people under Chief Lugaju kaMatomela who joined the force near the Lotheni River. Although Lugaju was a chief from the Swartkop-Howick region of the Umgeni district,¹⁰ some of his people were on the Mkhomazi River near the Lotheni. Shepstone regarded it as his right as Diplomatic Agent to call up Lugaju's people, some of whom lived in the Swartkop location proclaimed in November 1846.

The commando was successful in recapturing most of the stolen cattle, but some of the African levies returned home before the mission was completed, and the burghers also were unwilling to proceed with follow-up operations. It was apparent from the conduct of this expedition that the government had little real authority over its surrogate forces, both

⁹. Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰. J. Wright, 'Before Mgungundlovu', in J. Laband and R. Haswell (eds) (Pietermaritzburg 1838-1988) (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1988), p. 21.

African and white, as Wright has pointed out.¹¹ The expedition against Fodo kaNombewu was being launched at the same time under Theophilus Shepstone himself, and the need for a concerted and well organised defence system was clear from these two incidents.

In general, as has been pointed out by Beinart and Bundy, '... the maintenance of colonial rule across wide tracts of Africa with "a thin white line" of officials was only possible because of the extent of collaboration'.¹² In particular, the levy system used in colonial Natal from 1847 onwards, which rested partly on the supposed gratitude and obligation which the location chiefs owed for being settled on the locations, whether they were hereditary chiefs or those who had been appointed by Shepstone, would have been impossible without the collaboration of the chiefs and, through them, of their followers. 'Unborn' chiefs, who owed their position to the Natal government and who might be deposed for disloyalty, could be expected to induce the men under their control to serve as levies. Inter-group rivalry and enmity were sometimes utilised in quelling disruptive behaviour, members of one group being called out 'to correct' another group.¹³ Rewards were offered as incentives for collaboration, and punishment was threatened for refusal to serve. The African people of Natal were frequently reminded that they had a duty to support the Natal government. Some or all of these expedients were employed by the Natal colonial authorities whenever it was thought necessary to augment its military

¹¹. Wright, Bushman Raiders, pp. 63-65.

¹². W. Beinart and C. Bundy, Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa (Braamfontein, Ravan Press, 1987), p.27.

¹³. Gibson, Evolution of South African Native Policy, p. 25.

forces. Some groups had further motives for supporting the Natal government or for opposing the call-up. Lugaju of the Nxamalala provided levies to augment the commandos of Harding (1847), Proudfoot (1862), and Allison (1869) against the San. As we have seen, his people on the Mkhomazi river near the Lotheni were themselves vulnerable to San attacks. Those Nxamalala in the Swartkop location were near enough to Pietermaritzburg to engage widely in market-gardening. Tilling was traditionally in the hands of women, and men could more easily be released for migrant labour or to act as levies, although isibhalo labour was despised.

In 1869, also against the San, Chief Hlubi's people were interested parties as they were near the border areas raided by the San. In this encounter, levies from the Mphumuza people under Thetheleku from the Swartkop location, took part. Thetheleku's people, like the Nxamalala, were near the capital, and their women, similarly, could supply produce for the Pietermaritzburg market, leaving some men available as levies.

The expedition against Chief Fodo kaNombewu of the Nhlangwini, in January-February 1847, led by Theophilus Shepstone, the Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes, was successfully carried out. In this action African levies formed part of the force which otherwise consisted of white and Cape Mounted Rifles horsemen. Fodo was an enemy of the Bhaca people who, under Ncaphayi's leadership, had killed his father Nombewu some thirty years earlier. In the year of Nombewu's death (c. 1828) Fodo had settled with his followers in the Mkhomazi valley and southwards toward the Mzimkhulu.¹⁴ The Natal government action against Fodo resulted from his December 1846 attack on and

¹⁴. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 387.

plundering of Bhaca people fleeing from Faku, the Pondo chief,¹⁵ with whom Fodo had been in alliance for some years.¹⁶ Fodo's action was likely to unsettle the southern Natal border which over the years had been a storm centre, and the stability of which could again be disturbed. The horsemen and their African allies, in a show of force which lasted six weeks,¹⁷ overawed Fodo to prevent further attacks on the Bhaca. Ten years later, in 1857, the campaign against Sidoyi kaBaleni, also of the Nhangwini, similarly aimed to prevent the destabilisation of the southern border area, especially as Sidoyi's defiance suggested that he might be building up his power to the detriment of the Natal government.

The Natal Police Corps (Natal Native Police) was formed in February 1848, to assist in defence. The men, drawn as volunteers from various African groups in Natal, were led by two lieutenants: John Shepstone (Theophilus Shepstone's brother) and James Melville. These police played a prominent role in expeditions against San raiders and against African groups in Natal. They were armed with firearms and were regularly drilled. Their employment was not periodic as was that of the levies.¹⁸ This police force was quite inadequate to deal with all the defence needs of the colony; it did not have the full confidence of the white settlers and it was short-lived, being disbanded in 1851, partly

15. Wilson and Thompson, The Oxford History, vol. I, p. 376.

16. Chase, Natal Papers, vol. II, p. 173. President and Secretary of the Natal Volksraad to Sir George Napier, Governor of the Cape, 7 April 1841.

17. Wright, Bushman Raiders, pp. 65-66.

18. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

because it was expensive to maintain,¹⁹ being well equipped and organised along European military lines on a permanent basis, and partly because of the Natal government's and the settlers' fear of arming African people with firearms. Natal would have to look elsewhere for defenders sufficiently numerous and bound to her by loyalty or duty to provide her military muscle, and these could be found in the locations.

Between 80 000 and 100 000 African people were placed in the first Natal locations which were proclaimed from 1846 to 1849 under the control of Theophilus Shepstone as Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes. This increase in the number of locations augmented the number of men whom he could call upon to render labour and military service to the Natal government in return for their being settled on the land. That the men in the locations could be registered so that they might be readily available for call-up as levies, was suggested in the report of the Locations Commission in 1847. It was proposed that the Superintendent of each location should complete a registration of every man, woman and child in his location. It was estimated that the total number in all the locations was approximately 100 000. It was pointed out that 'By a careful registration, the male population of each location becomes to a certain extent organised; and it would require but little exertion to render them as efficient defenders of the district.' It was also, the commissioners declared, desirable to register all possessors of firearms and '... some distinguishing costume or other mark would be necessary in time of War to prevent

¹⁹. Wright, Bushman Raiders, p. 112 footnote 94. In 1849 nearly 12% of the total government expenditure of Natal was spent on the Natal Native Police.

confusion and secure the ready management of the natives when their services in a Military capacity would be required.’²⁰

Three regions of Natal emerged once the Natal Africans came under British colonial control : the southern region; Swartkop near Pietermaritzburg, and Umlazi and Inanda near Durban; and the broad border region along the Thukela. The southern region, still in disarray, was much influenced by the Bhaca, but its power focus was not yet clearly established. The expeditions against Fodo and Sidoyi counteracted the possibility that these chiefs might create a new power base and destabilise the frontier area. The locations near the major towns found it to their advantage to align themselves with the colonial government. In the border region along the Thukela, some groups were antagonistic towards the Zulu power, while others had firm links with the Zulu across the river. Matshana kaMondise was in the latter category.

This regionality had an important bearing on the support or hostility which the Natal government could expect, and on the government’s attitude to the chiefdoms, from which labourers and levies were to be drawn.

From 1850, when resident magistrates were appointed, Shepstone was able to delegate to these magistrates the task of raising levies and isibhalo labourers from the locations, but he continued to play an important central role in the conduct of ‘Native Affairs’. His power was more firmly entrenched after 1853 when he became Secretary for Native

²⁰.

C S O 42 Report of Locations Commission to D. Moodie, Secretary to Government, 30 March 1847, p. 42 and p. 47.

Affairs, although it later declined as a result of the Langalibalele affair. Under Lieutenant-Governor John Scott (1856-64), further locations were proclaimed until by 1864 there were forty-two, and Shepstone had the authority to spread his net more widely in requesting levies from the magistrates.

More alarming, to the Natal government, than the prospect of curbing troublesome African groups or San raiders, who would have been relatively poorly armed, was the prospect, early in 1848, of pitting Natal colonial forces and African levies against well armed and mounted Boers. In January 1847 Mpande, the Zulu king, had signed a treaty granting, to Klip River Boers, land bounded by the Thukela and the Mzinyathi rivers and the Drakensberg. This contradicted the treaty fixing the Mzinyathi as Mpande's western boundary. Lieutenant-Governor Martin West, in July 1847, pointed this out to Mpande and the Klip River Boers, but they refused to accept West's authority over them.²¹ Theophilus Shepstone, deploring the Natal government's lack of military power, reported on 1 January 1848:

The prospects of the opening year are gloomy and unpromising - Rebellion in the Subjects and weakness in the Government are very apparent and threaten serious consequences - the dreadful alternative of employing the Natives to defend themselves and their Government against white men appears inevitable - but may God forbid its coming to that.²²

²¹. Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, p. 63.

²². Shepstone Papers, Theophilus Shepstone's diary 1846-1849, 1 January 1848.

Messengers from Mpande confirmed Shepstone's fears, as they reported the Boers' plan to attack 'the District' (Natal) with Mpande's aid.²³

Shepstone was instructed to prepare to assemble levies to resist the Boers and '.. to warn all the Chiefs to be in readiness to march their men provisioned to any given point in the event of being called upon - also to assemble all natives who have or can use guns.'²⁴

He acted on these instructions by sending off messengers:

.. to every chief in the district and to Job Pakade and Zikali in particular - to all the other chiefs the message was - Reports of invasion are rife we know not whether they are true or not - it behoves men to be ready for every emergency - therefore be ready that when I call upon you, you may assemble provisioned at such points as I shall select. Send up all your men that can use firearms to me at once - let those who have got them bring them - and those who can use them come
_25

Having alerted the chiefs to have their men in readiness, Shepstone, on 20 January, held a review of the men in the Swartkop location. 1 200 men turned out, and Shepstone noted that 'the Lieutenant Governor and most of the Townspeople out to see it.'²⁶ The fear of arming African levies with firearms does not seem to have been an issue at this time.

Sir Harry Smith, Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner, travelled overland to Natal to negotiate with the Natal Boers, reaching the Bushman's River on 23 February

²³. Ibid., 3 January 1848.

²⁴. Ibid., 12 January 1848.

²⁵. Ibid., 13 January 1848.

²⁶. Ibid., 20 January 1848.

1848, where Shepstone met him.²⁷ Smith's attempts to pacify the Klip River Boers and reconcile them to the Natal government were unsuccessful and the majority of them had moved back across the Drakensberg by April 1848.²⁸ Shepstone had no need to lead his levies into action against them, as the situation had been defused by the emigration of the Boers.

Later in 1848 Lieutenant-Governor Martin West, concerned that the defence of Natal should be placed on a firmer footing, recommended 'that all the efficient natives be organised into bodies similar to the Zulu armies themselves', and the Secretary to Government, Donald Moodie, requested Shepstone to report on the measures he thought necessary to this end. Shepstone, in response, described the Zulu organisation of the amabutho in detail, as he perceived it, as a possible model for employing the Natal Africans in colonial defence. It would be necessary to legislate to make a certain period of military service obligatory. Until further locations had been established to facilitate this proposed military organisation, Shepstone suggested that in an emergency each chief should send in a division commanded by a European or 'native' appointed for the purpose 'at the seat of Government'.²⁹

²⁷. Ibid., 21 January 1848 and 23 February 1848.

²⁸. Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, p. 64.

²⁹. SNA 1/1/1 Miscellaneous letters and papers. Theophilus Shepstone's draft letter to Secretary to Government, 2 August 1848; CSO 44(2) No. 48 Theophilus Shepstone to D. Moodie, Secretary to Government, 3 August 1848.

In describing the Zulu system of the amabutho, Shepstone omitted any mention, in his letters of 2 August and 3 August 1848, of the Zulu king's obligations to his people, other than the provision of cattle for their subsistence while on duty as soldiers, and for rewards for 'particular services and paying the principal officers'. When, therefore, in June 1849, Lieutenant-Governor West's Ordinance No. 3 was proclaimed, the emphasis was placed on the claim that the Lieutenant-Governor should hold all the power and authority held and enjoyed by any Supreme or paramount Native Chief,³⁰ and the obligations of the 'Supreme Chief' towards his people were not mentioned.

On 20 August 1848, Theophilus Shepstone was appointed as Captain in Chief over all the 'native' military forces in Natal. He wrote to the Secretary to Government in September that he was to organise them in such a manner as to enable him to carry out any directions of the Secretary to Government 'for the concentration upon any point of a sufficient force to repel aggression upon our territory'. He estimated that the whole force amounted to 16 500 men who could be divided into seven divisions or moveable columns. Some 7 000 to 8 000 men would be excluded as being unfit for active service.³¹ He proposed the appointment of commandants over 'native' forces in these seven divisions. These commandants, he wrote, were 'not born chiefs and consequently not liable to the jealousy of the hereditary leaders of the various tribes'. They were regarded by the African people

³⁰. NCP 5/1/1 Ordinance No. 3, 1849, 21 June 1849.

³¹. CSO 44(2) No. 64 Theophilus Shepstone to Secretary to Government, 6 September 1848.

'as superior men from their bravery and prudence as evinced on various occasions in former times.'³²

In his memorandum of 6 September 1848,³³ included in this correspondence, Shepstone listed the chiefs whose followers were to be called upon to provide levies; some groups with chiefs unnamed; and the areas from which the levies were to come; the number of men in each division; and their commanders. Most of these were traceable with the aid of the lists of chiefs, 'tribes' and their localities for the years 1849 and 1853, despite differences in spelling, as one can see from the accompanying table.³⁴

On 6 September 1848, when Shepstone presented his memorandum, the only locations already proclaimed were those of Zwartkops (Swartkop), Umlazi, Umvoti and Inanda. It can clearly be seen from Mann's 1859 map of the locations that the areas from which each of the seven divisions of levies was to come did not have the same boundaries as the locations, although some men of the First Division came from the Swartkop location; and the Second Division area included the Inanda and Umvoti locations but extended beyond them; and the Sixth Division included the Umlazi location but extended farther southwards. Shepstone was,

³². SNA 1/1/1 Miscellaneous letters and papers. Captain in Chief over native forces to Secretary to Government, 6 September 1848.

³³. CSO 44(2) No. 64 Memorandum for the Organization of the Native Forces in the District of Natal into Divisions or Moveable columns, 6 September 1848. [Appendix VI]

³⁴. Spohr, Natal Diaries, pp. 42-46; accompanying table : Appendix VI.

therefore, intending to draw men from areas of Natal other than the proclaimed locations of that time. This negated the principle of drawing men into the system because they owed the government a debt of gratitude for being settled on locations. Clearly, this principle was not to be applied consistently. In April of the following year (1849) the Umzinyati, Impafana and 'Kahlamba' locations were proclaimed. It was from these areas that Shepstone intended drawing some levies for the Third and Fourth Divisions.

Shepstone wasted no time in organising the divisions of levies. On 18 September 1848 he went to Mr Allison's to organise the First Division. On the following day he installed Nobanda as commandant; and on the next day reviewed 'in order of Battle' the division, which numbered 1 300 men³⁵ (2 000 were expected). On 11 November he reviewed 1 000 men of the Second Division (3 500 were expected) and installed Mankayana as commandant,³⁶ and two days later reviewed a further 300 or more men under Musi and Umkonto of the same division.³⁷ He reviewed 1 200 men of the Third Division (2 000 were expected) on 22 November and installed Umkizwana as their commandant.³⁸ The number who reported for duty in these three divisions fell far short of Shepstone's expectations; instead of 7 500 men, only 3 800 came forward. This must have given him some idea of how many men he could rely on in case of emergency: little more than half. It might also have indicated that the chiefs in this area, which straddled the Inanda, Umvoti and later Tugela locations might be of dubious loyalty.

³⁵. Shepstone papers. T. Shepstone's diary, 18-20 September 1848.

³⁶. Ibid., 11 November 1848.

³⁷. Ibid., 13 November 1848.

³⁸. Ibid., 22 November 1848.

After Shepstone's 1848 plan for raising levies had been put into practice against the Hlubi and amaNgwe (in 1849) and levies had been called up for the Cape eastern frontier, he referred, in 1851, to this organisation in his report for the Native Commission. He wrote:

Their military organization has been on the principle of forming the tribes inhabiting any particular locality into divisions under Native commandants, so as to form bodies of from 1 500 to 2 000 men in each. The Zulu organization is of a much more perfect nature and in describing it .. I have recommended the adoption of that part of it which I think would tend to remind the Natives periodically of their duties of allegiance and obedience.³⁹

In the absence of any real, perceptible power, this arrogated right of the Supreme Chief to demand military service and isibhalo labour from African men in Natal whenever they might be required, could perhaps be said to provide some means of strengthening the tenuous hold of the Natal government over them. In addition, Shepstone's levy system made provision for the defence of the state of Natal against rebellious acts of African people within its borders, to be undertaken by military levies drawn from the African people themselves, under white leaders, in support of regular troops and police. Thus the Natal Native Police and military levies were deployed in 1849 in relocating the Hlubi and amaNgwe when they were reluctant to move as instructed.

The Hlubi, once powerful along the Mzinyathi from its source to its confluence with the Thukela, were dispersed during the upheavals in the early nineteenth century, leaving a small number of their people near the junction of the Mzinyathi and Ncome (Blood) rivers. Here the related amaNgwe, under Phuthini kaMasoba, incurred the wrath of Mpande; and

³⁹. SNA 2/1/2 Papers relative to the Native Commission 1852. Diplomatic Agent (T. Shepstone) to Secretary to Government, Natal, 7 April 1851.

the Hlubi, under Chief Langalibalele kaMthimkulu, also uncomfortable under Mpande's regime, fled with them across the Mzinyathi into the district along the upper Mnambithi (Klip) River during 1848. The incursion of these two groups who had, after Shaka's time, built up their power afresh, posed a threat to the Natal border area into which they had moved. Not only might there be friction with the white farmers now settled in this area, but Mpande could well have followed up the defectors. The Hlubi, supported by the amaNgwe, might also become a new power focus. At this time, however, they had not consolidated their power base. The Natal colonial authorities resolved, therefore, to move the Hlubi and amaNgwe to new locations, the Hlubi eventually being settled around the sources of the Msuluzi (Bloukrans) river, and the amaNgwe on the upper Njasuthi. There they would be remote from the Zulu border and could, in addition, act as a barrier against the San raiders from the Drakensberg.

In August 1848, Theophilus Shepstone, as Diplomatic Agent, had been given instructions to inform Langalibalele that he was to remove his 'tribe' from the Klip River district to

the country along the base of the Draakenberg (sic) from the source of the Umcomaas (sic) to that of the Mooi River, where during the good behaviour of his people and upon their always assisting in preventing depredations by Bushmen, they will be allowed to remain until further notice.⁴⁰

The Hlubi and amaNgwe at first passively resisted this forced removal, delaying their departure. Shepstone therefore called up 2 000 levies from the chiefs Jobe of the Sithole from the Umsinga district, Phakade of the Mchunu, also of the Umsinga district, Nodada of the Thembu of the Klip River district, Ndabankulu of the Baze from the Umzinyathi

⁴⁰. CSO 2296 No. 139 D. Moodie, Colonial Office, Natal to Diplomatic Agent, 10 August 1848.

location, and Zikhali of the Ngwane from the northern foothills of the Natal Drakensberg.⁴¹ All these men were hereditary chiefs from the Fourth Division organised by Shepstone in September 1848. These levies were to act in support of some eighty Natal Native Police sent forward by Shepstone.⁴² In effecting the removal, two other chiefs, Radarada and Umnangalala, were also to be removed from the Klip River district. Shepstone reported on 15 April that he had sent messengers to the chiefs Langalibalele, 'Putili' (sic), Radarada and Umnangalala to remove without delay to the country under the mountains on the sources of the Bushman's, Mooi and Mkhomazi rivers.⁴³ It may well be that Jobe, Phakade, Nodada, Ndabankulu and Zikhali viewed the removal of the Hlubi and amaNgwe, potentially too powerful as neighbours, with some relief.

John Bird, then a surveyor, who recalled this action against the Hlubi and the amaNgwe over forty years after the event, accompanied Shepstone and the force he had raised. Bird recorded that the chiefs 'obeyed the requisition without delay', and he noted the verve and enthusiasm shown by their men, and their striking appearance. The amaNgwe were soon flushed out of their caves in the Mbulwane hill and the

chief men did not hesitate to submit, and to ask to be forgiven; and their offence was pardoned on condition that they were to be obedient to British authority, that they were to be located near the Drakensberg and should avoid all encroachment on the property of the Europeans.⁴⁴

41. Shepstone papers. T. Shepstone's diary, 23 April 1849.

42. Guest, Langalibalele p.23; Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, p.39.

43. CSO 20(1) No. 7 T. Shepstone to D. Moodie 15 April 1849.

44. J. Bird, Natal : 1846-1851 : A Chapter in Supplement of Historical Record (facsimile reprint, Pietermaritzburg, Prontaprint), 1988; originally published 1891), pp.21-22.

This show of force by the police and levies, and Shepstone's presence were at that time sufficient to cow the Hlubi and amaNgwe into obedience as their power had not yet become entrenched, and thus their possible attraction for local chiefs as a powerful rallying point, was nullified. Shepstone's first use of one of his seven divisions as set out in his September 1848 memorandum had been successful, and the levies acted willingly. The chiefs who responded to Shepstone's call were duly rewarded with gifts of cattle as well as having cattle equivalent in number to those provided by them on various forays returned to them, according to Shepstone's perception of the Zulu model. He wrote that he had sent

.. 21 head of cattle to Pakade and his Chiefs in acknowledgement of his prompt obedience to my summons for a force to join me in the Klip River - I paid also the several lots of cattle which have been furnished by the various Chiefs for the supply of the Police Corps on different marches such as the pursuit of the Bushmen etc and some pressing claimants for payment for services rendered to the Govt (sic) and for which no adequate means for payment have been in my hands .. The various Chiefs in the District look to such occasions as opportunities for the Govt (sic) to express its approbation or otherwise of their past conduct as is customary among themselves and I would recommend that when the claimants for actual service are satisfied a proportion of the cattle remaining be appropriated towards rewarding the most deserving of the Chiefs in the name of the Govt (sic).⁴⁵

In this action only Chiefs, not individual levies, were rewarded. Since Chief Langalibalele and others who were hesitant in moving or refused to do so, were fined in cattle,⁴⁶ the expedition was self-funding as these cattle could be used as rewards. Some individual levies, however, could expect to gain from sisa'd cattle.

⁴⁵. SNA 1/8/1 pp. 159-166. T. Shepstone to Secretary to Government, 20 May 1849.

⁴⁶. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 24.

The settling of the Hlubi and amaNgwe near the Drakensberg was in accordance with a plan to establish locations along the foot of the Drakensberg to act as a barrier against San attacks. These locations were astride the annual migration routes of the San in pursuit of the depleted game, and to harvest plant resources.⁴⁷ From 16 April 1849 until 20 April, Shepstone noted in his diary that he began his examination of the country near the sources of the Mtshezi (Mooi) and Mpofana (Bushman's) rivers with a view to arranging for its protection against the inroads of the San by establishing a police force in that area or by settling a 'native population' there. He favoured the latter option,⁴⁸ and wrote to D. Moodie: '.. I have visited the base of the Draakenberg (sic) and find that this part of the District may be effectually guarded from the Bushmen by locating natives in places which I have selected.'⁴⁹

Once the operation against the Hlubi and amaNgwe had been completed, Shepstone noted that:

All having now submitted and removed .. will place at least one thousand men between the Bushmen and the farmers instead of 50 or so [the number of police or Cape Mounted Rifles at a post] independent of Lugaju's tribe 400 strong which I propose to place between the Spioen Kop and Draakenberg (sic) ..⁵⁰

The task of removal was, however, not immediate and was completed only in September 1849. Nevertheless the 'Kahlamba' location was established in 1849, as was a new

47. A.R. Willcox, The Drakensberg Bushmen and their art (Winterton, Drakensberg Publications, 1984), p. 9.

48. Shepstone papers. T. Shepstone's diary, 16-20 April 1849.

49. CSO 20(1) No. 8 T. Shepstone to D. Moodie, 24 April 1849.

50. Shepstone papers. T. Shepstone's diary, 29 April 1849.

location farther south for Chief Lugaju in 1859, according to this plan. After 1849 the Natal government could call upon the chiefs, Langalibalele and Phuthini, to provide levies to assist in keeping the peace in Natal and protecting its borders, relying partly on their self-interest.

When the Natal Native Police were disbanded in 1851 the need to raise levies from the locations became more urgent. By this time more British settlers had entered Natal and offered cash wages to African labourers and, as a result, levies came forward with less alacrity. This was apparent when levies were requisitioned to fight on the eastern Cape frontier in 1851.

On 24 December 1850 a force of 600 men, sent by Sir Harry Smith to patrol into the Amathole mountains against the Ngqika people, was ambushed at the Booma Pass. Two days later Sir Harry Smith, the Cape Governor and High Commissioner, wrote to the Lieutenant- Governor of Natal to send 'into British Kaffraria to attack the rear of the Ngqikas, one, two or three thousand Zoolahs'.⁵¹

The Natal government answered the call by proposing to raise levies for the frontier against the Ngqika people.⁵² This was outside Natal, and the attitude of the Natal government to the use of its armed forces beyond its borders had not been encouraging

⁵¹. J. Milton, The Edges of War (Cape Town, Juta and Co. Ltd, 1983), p.187.

⁵². O. Geysers, 'Die Bantoebeleid van Theophilus Shepstone' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1966), p.156.

in 1847 when Shepstone took action against Fodo kaNombewu.⁵³ The white population in Natal showed 'fear and panic' at the attempt to raise a 'native' commando.⁵⁴ Nor did all the chiefs who were called upon to supply levies respond willingly. Chief Matshana kaMondise of the Sithole, from Umsinga, refused to supply men.⁵⁵ Allegiance to the Natal colonial government, the threat of punishment for failure to supply levies and the promise to return to the levies the same number of cattle as they had provided for their maintenance were all invoked.

Early in 1851 Chief Somahashe of the Bomvu people and Chief Magedama of the Kabela people, both from Shepstone's Third Division, from the Impafana location, were called upon to send forward levies to fight on the Cape eastern frontier. Somahashe responded loyally to the requirement, reporting that he had 'prepared all he had, informing the Magistrate, Mr Peppercorne of his having done so'. He stated that he had received a message from Chief Magedama that he and other chiefs would refuse to obey. Somahashe's reply to these chiefs was 'that upon no ground whatsoever could they refuse to proceed on the Expedition - If military service is ordered by the Great House it must be given'.⁵⁶

53. Wright, Bushman Raiders, p.65

54. L.M. Young, 'The Native Policy of Benjamin Pine in Natal 1850-1855', in Archives Year Book for South African History, vol. II, p.262.

55. Ibid., pp. 257-258.

56. SNA 2/1/3 Message from Somashashi to Diplomatic Agent, concerning 'native' force for the frontier, 8 March 1851.

Shepstone reported on the manner of raising this levy, on threatened punishment for disobedience, and rewards for compliance: ‘.. I proposed to call upon the Chiefs to furnish only such a number of men as in their judgement they are of the opinion can be spared.’ He pointed out that men would have to be provided ‘on pain of being "eaten up" should any disobey ..’ Recompense would be offered for cattle supplied:

.. the Chiefs and headmen as is customary with them furnish cattle for the maintenance of the force until it shall arrive at the scene of action and that they have the first claim to reimbursement out of the cattle captured in proportion to the number furnished by them.⁵⁷

The calling up of some of the levies originally required for the Cape eastern frontier was cancelled. On 15 March 1851, D. Moodie, Secretary to Government, informed Shepstone, the Diplomatic Agent, that those levies to the north of the Mkhomazi would no longer be required, although those to the south of the river ‘are to march’.⁵⁸ One of the chiefs south of the Mkhomazi who was called upon was Dumisa of the Duma people, of Shepstone’s Fifth Division. He was reluctant to provide men for the frontier commando.⁵⁹ The plan to send levies to the Cape eastern frontier came to nothing.⁶⁰

While the war was in progress on the Cape eastern frontier (1850-1851) Major Warden, the British Resident in the Orange River Sovereignty, aroused the hostility of Moshweshwe

⁵⁷. SNA 2/1/3 Diplomatic Agent to Secretary to Government, 9 March 1851.

⁵⁸. CSO 2297 No. 711 D. Moodie to T. Shepstone, 15 March 1851.

⁵⁹. Young, ‘Native Policy’, p. 267.

⁶⁰. Walker, History of Southern Africa, p. 251.

of the Sotho who defeated him in battle at Viervoet on 30 June 1851.⁶¹ It was in the interests of Natal to assist Warden and prevent disruption on her western border. J.G. Ringler Thomson, the Umzinyathi magistrate, was instructed to act as levy leader of the 400 - 500 levies to be raised from the Klip River district, being nearest to the Sovereignty,⁶² to join a contingent to oppose Moshweshwe. The response was not consistent.

Nodada of the Thembu, of Shepstone's Fourth Division, who had acted against the Hlubi and amaNgwe in 1849, was called upon to send forward levies. Nodada lived on the Mnambithi (Klip) river, having returned from Pondoland after the death of his father Ngoza who had fled southwards during Shaka's rule.⁶³ Also required to send levies was Ndabankulu of the Baze people from the Umzinyathi location. Both these chiefs responded willingly: '...Nodada .. immediately prepared to carry out his orders. 150 men belonging to him and 50 of Dabankulu marched for Ladismith (sic) ..'⁶⁴

About 200 military levies were reluctantly sent forward from Chief Langalibalele's Hlubi, with some men from Chief Phuthini's amaNgwe and Chief Zikhali's Ngwane from the barrier locations on the western border of Natal below the Drakensberg. The reluctance

⁶¹. Wilson and Thompson, Oxford History of South Africa, vol I, p. 419.

⁶². Young, 'Native Policy', p.272.

⁶³. Bryant, Olden Times, pp.258-259; M.M. Fuze, The Black People and whence they came, translator H.C. Lugg (Pietermaritzburg University of Natal Press, 1979), p. 19.

⁶⁴. SNA 2/1/3 Reports of messengers sent to Chiefs Nodada and Ndabankulu, 24 August 1851.

shown by Chief Langalibalele of the Hlubi, and of the related amaNgwe, as well as Chief Zikhali, may be attributed to the fact that they were establishing their power bases at this time and were not eager to become embroiled in warfare against the Sotho. Certainly, as early as 1851, Langalibalele was beginning to assert himself against Shepstone's demands.⁶⁵ Chief Phuthini's men had originally been excluded from the draft, but obeyed a later order to accompany the expedition. Because provisions were short, Ringler Thomson asked Phuthini's men to withdraw. They at first refused, but then decided to return home as Chief Phuthini's son was ill. Thomson acted against them as deserters and followed them with a Cape Corps rifleman. Phuthini's grandson was shot dead by Thomson when he raised his assegai to the magistrate in a threatening manner.⁶⁶

After taking no part in hostilities the levies returned home, having received no payment. The pay promised to them was 6d per day plus 3 pounds of meat (1.36 kgs). It was discovered that Ringler Thomson had embezzled the money allocated for paying the levies. He was found to be of unsound mind and was committed to a lunatic asylum in Cape Town.⁶⁷ By 1854 the levies had still not received any payment. Only after first the amaNgwe and then the Hlubi and Ngwane threatened not to pay their taxes unless they received their promised reward, did the Natal government, in 1854, agree to settle the levies' claims for remuneration.⁶⁸ The manner of distributing this payment does not seem to have been made clear as W.C. Sargeant, the Government Secretary, in

⁶⁵. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, p. 42.

⁶⁶. Young, 'Native Policy', p. 272.

⁶⁷. Ibid., pp. 275-6.

⁶⁸. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, pp. 41-42.

November 1854, asked for suggestions as to a satisfactory way of settling claims, since the men had probably dispersed.⁶⁹

Towards the end of 1854, military levies were again required from chiefs in Natal, but were not in the end mobilised. Chief Mdushane kaSonyangwe of the Bhaca, for whom his father's brother Ncaphayi had acted as regent, moved in 1844 with some of his people into Natal above the sources of the Mzumbe river.⁷⁰ Ten years later, in November 1854, Mdushane was accused of stocktheft, and a burgher force was to be sent out against him to fine him and to recover the stolen cattle. Walter Harding was to lead these volunteers. The chief was to be reminded that the Natal government had protected him against Faku, and he was urged to act loyally. Mdushane's power had waned between 1849 when his people had 804 huts, and 1853 when they had only 125.⁷¹

The two magistrates between the Mkhomazi and the Mzimkhulu, Fynn and Steele, were to be prepared to bring levies to the assistance of the force. Fynn was to instruct Chief Dumisa of the Duma people, and Steele, Chief Sidoyi of the Nhlanguwini, to be ready with men. These were, however, to be used only if necessary, as Sidoyi's people in particular, were 'known to be friendly disposed towards the Amabaca..' In addition, a detachment of Cape Mounted Rifles was to be stationed at Mr Steele's residence, to be employed only

⁶⁹. SNA 1/1/5 W. Sargeant, Government Secretary, Colonial Office, Natal, to SNA, 26 October 1854.

⁷⁰. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 402.

⁷¹. Spohr, Natal Diaries, p. 42.

in 'extreme necessity.'⁷² In the event, the levies and the men of the Cape Mounted Rifles were not needed. Lieutenant-Governor Pine himself led the expedition of burghers and fined Mdushane 700 head of cattle as well as taking 338 head in compensation for the stolen cattle.⁷³ Mdushane was powerless to oppose this force successfully. The pattern of cattle fines was well established by this time and where levies were employed these cattle provided a substantial source of rewards, without calling on the colony's financial resources.

Sidoyi kaBaleni and his Nhlungwini were next to incur the displeasure of the Natal colonial government for attacking another group. This branch of the Nhlungwini joined their distant kinsmen under Fodo kaNombewu on the Mkhomazi in about 1843. They had been routed by the Natal Trekkers in alliance with Mpande from their territory to the right of the upper Thukela, Dingane having given them permission to occupy their original lands in that area.⁷⁴

In April 1857, a punitive force of Cape Mounted Rifles and levies was assembled against Sidoyi. The levies and Cape Mounted Riflemen considerably outnumbered Sidoyi's fighting men. This may have been a deliberate over-reaction to impress the Nhlungwini with the colonial power. According to the SNA, Sidoyi had taken upon himself the 'office

⁷². CSO 2299 No. 585. W.C. Sargeant to Walter Harding 4 December 1854.

⁷³. Young, 'Native Policy', p. 331.

⁷⁴. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 388.

of witchdoctor in addition to that of chief'.⁷⁵ A quarrel arose between Sidoyi's people and the weaker Memela people under Chief Umshukangubo who lived between the Mzimkhulu and the Mkhomazi.⁷⁶ Chief Umshukangubo was killed in the conflict and his body was mutilated. The magistrate, A.C. Hawkins, summoned Sidoyi to appear before him. The chief refused to obey. Lieutenant-Governor John Scott instructed the SNA, Theophilus Shepstone, to assemble a force of some 800 levies who would be accompanied by a small force of Cape Mounted Rifles under Captain McDonnell. They were to arrest Sidoyi and seize all his people's cattle; depose him and appoint a new chief.⁷⁷ On the same day the Natal Colonial Secretary instructed Colonel Cooper of the 45th Regiment of the British military garrison in Natal to direct that the whole available force of Cape Mounted Rifles⁷⁸ proceed to join the SNA 'who with a force of 500 Natives has been instructed to carry out the objects of the expedition.' In addition, a small party of infantry was to be stationed at the Mkhomazi drift in case of need.⁷⁹

Theophilus Shepstone, following the Lieutenant-Governor's instructions, duly assembled two forces of approximately 400 men each, under J. Shepstone and B. Moodie

⁷⁵. NCP 4/1/1/1 SD 1857 No. 30. Report of SNA concerning the commando against Sidoyi, 27 May 1857, presented 10 June 1857.

⁷⁶. Spohr, Natal Diaries, p. 44., In 1853 Umshukangubo's people had 144 huts, while Sidoyi's Nhlanguwini had 569.

⁷⁷. NCP 4/1/1/1 SD 1857 No. 47. Instructions from Lieutenant-Governor J. Scott to SNA concerning proceedings against Sidoyi, 13 April 1857.

⁷⁸. These totalled 43 in 1857. Vide J. de Villiers, The Imperial Cape Mounted Riflemen in Natal - a preliminary survey, unpublished workshop paper, University of Natal, October 1990, p. 8.

⁷⁹. SNA 1/1/7 Colonial Secretary to Colonel Cooper, 45th Regiment, 13 April 1857.

respectively. According to Bryant, these levies were 'the warriors of his umTintandaba tribe under the generalship of Mfulatelwa, son of Ludaba (of the Majosi clan)..'⁸⁰ Shepstone's headman, Ngoza, was also a son of Ludaba.⁸¹ Presumably the levies belonged to a 'tribe' created by Shepstone, since it does not appear in Bryant's list of 800 clans and sub-clans.⁸² The levies and the Cape Mounted Rifles were to meet on the Mkhomazi at Saltpans Drift. By 29 April the forces had swept the country, capturing cattle, goats and horses, and Theophilus Shepstone met the senior men of the Nhlungwini with a view to a settlement. Sidoyi, who had escaped to the Orange River, was deposed and replaced by the induna Zatsuke.⁸³ In follow-up operations, when Shepstone was informed that young men were guarding and concealing Nhlungwini cattle, he despatched 250 men under a 'Native Commander' to disperse them.

Theophilus Shepstone praised the levies who had taken part in the action against the Nhlungwini:

I had every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the Natives employed on this service; both the officers placed over them bear testimony to their zeal and obedience and I had seldom to find fault.⁸⁴

⁸⁰. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 352

⁸¹. Ibid., p. 330.

⁸². Ibid., pp. 681-697.

⁸³. NPP No. 235 of 1858. The Natal Government Gazette, 5 January 1858, vol. 10. Government notice No. 98, 1857. Lieutenant-Governor J. Scott's proclamation, 30 December 1857.

⁸⁴. NCP 4/1/1/1 SD 1857 No. 30. Report of SNA on the commando against Sidoyi, 27 May 1857, presented 10 June 1857.

The levy leader, B. Moodie, however, did not escape Shepstone's censure. In May 1857 the SNA made enquiries from Moodie about a report that during the Sidoyi affair several levies were lost and, wrote Shepstone, 'public rumor (sic) attaches more or less blame to you as having unnecessarily caused this.'⁸⁵ B. Moodie, in reply to this allegation, reported that when his men captured 800 head of cattle from a section of Sidoyi's people under a petty chief, Sidoyi's men attempted to retrieve them. Moodie ordered his men to charge and two of Sidoyi's men died in the resulting skirmish. On another occasion, when Moodie's men captured a large number of cattle, their owners retrieved them during the night. When Moodie's men went to the homestead which was holding them 'a scuffle ensued' and two of the homestead men were killed. He made no mention of the death of levies, only of the Nhlangwini.⁸⁶

That an accurate record was not kept of the details of the Sidoyi expedition is evident from the fact that Shepstone relied on 'public rumor' (sic) about the loss of levies in the encounter. Also, the rewards given to the levies were explained only some months after the affair, when enquiries were made concerning a claim on the Natal government for reimbursement of expenses to the Commissariat Department. The Acting Colonial Secretary, Natal, in responding to the question about cattle being appropriated to reward the levies wrote: 'I am to explain that these were given to the Natives as pay, and proportionate to the number of days they were employed.'⁸⁷

⁸⁵. SNA 1/1/7 S N A to B. Moodie, 30 May 1857.

⁸⁶. SNA 1/1/7 B. Moodie to SNA, 4 June 1857.

⁸⁷. NCP 4/1/1/1 SD 1860 No. 16 Acting Colonial Secretary, Natal to High Commissioner, Cape of Good Hope, 8 September 1857.

Shepstone's commendation of the behaviour of the levies in this action against Sidoyi indicates that they acted willingly and their morale was high. Rewards in cattle could be expected to be adequate if not liberal considering the scope of the confiscation of livestock from Sidoyi's people. In none of the conflicts for which military levies were raised by the magistrates up to this time, was their opposition formidable and launched from a settled power base with well organised forces. Shepstone's ad hoc arrangements were sufficient to subdue any whose actions appeared to threaten peace in Natal and the pre-eminence of the Natal government.

CHAPTER VII

Military levies : the period of stricter control and harsher penalties for supposed intransigence.

By the 1850s, the Natal government regarded the Hlubi chiefdom of Chief Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu and related amaNgwe as potentially dangerous as a possible alternative power base. Family ties with the amaNgwe, and Langalibalele's widespread dynastic marriages to women from other chiefdoms strengthened his power base, as did the possession of unlicensed firearms held by many of his own people. The problem of threats to colonial government power within Natal and on its borders remained unsolved in the 1850s and the colonial government turned its attention to the possibility of raising white colonial volunteer units to retain its ascendancy. In 1848 the Yeomanry Corps of volunteers had been established, but was short-lived.¹ There was a possibility that the Crimean War, which broke out in 1853, would take British troops away from Natal. Volunteer units of colonists were to be encouraged and to this end, in November 1854, the Natal government promulgated the enabling Ordinance No. 310 of 21 November 1854. The first officially recognised volunteer units, the Durban Volunteer Guards and the Natal Carbineers were formed in January 1855, to be followed by others.² These units served in actions against the San and African people such as Matshana kaMondise and

1. M. Coghlan and H. Paterson, 'The Natal Carbineers and Pietermaritzburg' in Laband and Haswell, Pietermaritzburg 1838-1988, p. 114.

2. Wright, Bushman Raiders, p. 139.

Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu; and volunteer units became increasingly important throughout the colonial period as Natal took over a larger share in its defence.

Not long after the Sidoyi affair, the Sithole chief, Matshana kaMondise, living at Umsinga, incurred the displeasure of Theophilus Shepstone. Matshana was the grandson of Jobe. Jobe had ingratiated himself with the Boers in 1840³ and had later provided levies for the Natal colony. Like Jobe, Matshana was prepared to act in his own self-interest by increasing his power in the border regions and, when he fell foul of the Natal government, to defect to Zululand. His people were numerous, occupying 1033 huts in 1849 and 1063 in 1853,⁴ and he was steadily building up his power base. In 1850 he had been fined 500 head of cattle for having his uncle Vela with his two sons put to death in a purge of wizards and witches.⁵ Later, in November 1850, Shepstone substituted the death penalty for cattle fines formerly imposed for murder, declaring, '... He who intentionally kills another, whether for Witchcraft or otherwise, shall die himself.'⁶

When, therefore, in 1858, Sigatiya of the Cube people was beaten on the orders of Matshana and died of his injuries, Shepstone called Matshana to account. A force of regular troops, mounted volunteers and mounted levies from Langalibalele's Hlubi people,⁷ led by John Shepstone, was sent out to arrest Matshana. The chief was

3. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 260-261.

4. Spohr, Natal Diaries, p. 45.

5. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 261.

6. Morris, Washing of the Spears, pp. 174-175.

7. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, p 55; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 261.

summoned to a meeting at which, it was agreed, neither side would be armed, but Shepstone and some of his men produced weapons which they had concealed, and attempted to capture Matshana. In the affray which followed there were some casualties, including the killing by the Hlubi levies of thirty of Matshana's men. He himself escaped across the Mzinyathi,⁸ where he prospered under Mpande's rule.⁹ His chiefdom in Umsinga was broken up. Since the Sithole had provided levies in 1849 to support the Natal Native Police in removing the Hlubi and amaNgwe from the Klip River district to the foothills of the Drakensberg, Langalibalele's levies were no doubt not averse to being called up to assist in disciplining the Sithole.

Although Chief Lugaju's people had been called up in 1847 against the San, they were not themselves robbed of stock until 19 January 1856, when some seven or eight San raiders stole 300 head of cattle from their herds near the upper Mkhomazi, to which area these cattle had been sent to escape the lung-sickness epidemic.¹⁰ It is not surprising that in 1862 Lugaju's men willingly joined William Proudfoot's commando against the San,¹¹ although in small numbers. By 1859 Lugaju had been established in a buffer location at what is now Mpendle,¹² and the levies would have come from this location.

8. N. Etherington, 'The "Shepstone system" in the Colony of Natal and beyond its borders' in Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. 179.

9. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, p. 55.

10. Wright, Bushman Raiders, p. 142 and p. 199.

11. Ibid., pp. 157-158.

12. Ibid., p. 153.

On 17 February 1862, San raiders stole sixty-seven cattle and eighteen horses from R. Speirs's farm in the upper Mngeni valley.¹³ The Natal Colonial Secretary sanctioned the use of a party of volunteers to set out against the raiders. The expedition was to be led by Captain William Proudfoot of the Karkloof Troop of Carbineers. Proudfoot, in describing the fortunes of this commando, reported particularly on the high morale of his men under difficult circumstances. His party included twenty-six volunteers who assembled at Chief Lugaju's homestead on the upper Mkhomazi on 4 March 1862. There they were joined by twelve men of Lugaju's people and five of Chief Dumisa's men.

The spoor of the stolen cattle led the party for eight days through wild country, after their ascent of the Drakensberg, but the men failed to track down the stolen cattle. One of the colonial volunteers, Hodgson, was accidentally shot and subsequently died, and, to add to their troubles, the commando and levies were running out of food. Proudfoot stated in his report that they had to prepare to return home as 'The Natives had been without food for about two days and several Europeans were little better off.' Since each man had to carry his own provisions there was a limit to the period of time which could be spent campaigning. Robert Speirs's cattle were not recovered, although the commando returned with twenty-nine horses and a San boy captive. In spite of the commando's lack of success against the San, Proudfoot praised his men lavishly, reporting to the Acting Colonial Secretary: "... I feel assured His Excellency would be proud to think that at any time when required he can command the services of such a body of men as those I have had

¹³. Ibid., pp. 157-158.

the honor (sic) to lead."¹⁴ In all these expeditions for which levies were called up, their obedience to the call was assumed to be a duty, as in the case of the isibhalo labourers, because of their obligation to the Natal government for settling them in locations. Rewards were haphazardly paid and apart from payments in cattle or perhaps the promise of cash received from the sale of plundered cattle, there seemed to have been no fixed reward, or clear plans for their organisation or deployment. The Natal Blue Books 1852-57 list military expenditure for colonial volunteers, but no separate military expenditure is shown for levies.¹⁵ It is clear that cash payment to levies was not provided for in the budget, although cash remuneration was given to them after the Langalibalele affair.

In 1867 a proposal was put forward to include a regular force of African men in the defence system of Natal. This plan indicates that both the fear of providing African men with firearms and the desire to incur minimal expense remained important. The raising of 'a small body of Troops from the native population of Natal' was to be considered. It was stated cautiously that 'Arms should be efficient but of a class that would always leave the superiority in European hands'. Uniforms were to be 'of a very simple description' and barracks were to be 'very simple and inexpensive buildings'. Rates of pay were to be as follows: four 'native' lieutenants at 3/- per day; four sergeants at 2/- per day; four corporals at 1/- per day; 240 privates at 6d per day.

¹⁴. CSO 146 No. 39 W. Proudfoot to Acting Colonial Secretary, Pietermaritzburg, 25 March 1862.

¹⁵. NCP 7/1/1 Natal Blue Book 1852 - 7/1/6 Natal Blue Book 1857.

Rations for the 248 'native' non-commissioned officers and men were at the rate of 3d per day.¹⁶ However, this remained a suggestion and was not implemented.

The magistrates were not alone in calling for military assistance from the chiefs. In 1869 the farmer, William Popham, of the farm Meshlynn in the Weenen county, successfully called upon local chiefs to assist in following up San raiders. On 24 July 1869 Popham lost cattle and horses, and the neighbouring Africans lost horses to the San. Chief Hlubi and his followers, who lived near the border and were thus vulnerable to San attacks, went after the thieves. Popham requested Lokwayo, Dedeleka (Thetheleku) 'and the minor chiefs in the neighbourhood' to follow.¹⁷ Macfarlane's communications with Shepstone stated that Popham had lost 118 cattle and fifty horses, and that he had been assisted in his foray against the San by Chiefs Hlubi, 'Dideleko' (Thetheleku) and the people of Lugaju.¹⁸ An official expedition was approved in August to follow up the San into their mountain hideouts.¹⁹

The official expedition set out under A.B. Allison on 1 September and routed the San, killing a number of them, including women.²⁰ The willingness of the levies raised for this expedition (some 200 in number) is shown by their fierce attack on the San²¹ whose

16. SNA 1/1/17 Notes on Volunteer and Colonial Forces in Natal, 1867.

17. SNA 1/3/19 W. Popham's report, 31 July 1869.

18. SNA 1/3/19 J. Macfarlane, Weenen, to SNA, 30 July 1869.

19. SNA 1/3/19 J. Macfarlane to SNA, 11 August 1869.

20. Wright, *Bushman Raiders*, pp. 172-175.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

raids they had suffered in the past. Possibly to direct attention away from their killing of non-combatant San, Allison praised them warmly for their courage and endurance. He wrote:

Scantily clothed and exposed at times to severe cold and storms, without cover of any kind except such temporary shelter as could only now and then be obtained, weary and with their feet cut and bruised by the continual fording of rivers, marching by day and watching by night, these men have held on without a murmur through a march of more than six hundred miles, through a difficult and all but impassable country ..²²

The next conflict, in which levies were employed on a vaster scale than before, was against the Hlubi and amaNgwe in 1873. Major factors in the crushing of Chief Llangalibalele's Hlubi people and the amaNgwe were the fear of power in the hands of an over-mighty subject whose growing material prosperity was a matter for envy; and the ever-present and deep-seated aversion to the possession and use of firearms by African people, which was shown by the colonists and colonial government of Natal.

From 1857 when the first Legislative Council with a majority of elected members met in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of 1856, the interests of the colonists came increasingly to the fore and they became more vocal in expressing their opinions. Law 3 of 1875, which lapsed in 1880, evened up the elected and official members of the Legislative Council for a time, but thereafter the number of elected members increased until, in terms of Law 5 of 1889, there were twenty-four. The Llangalibalele affair, therefore, occurred at a time when colonist influence was strong. However, until the passing of the Constitution Act of 1893 which gave Natal Responsible Government, the

²². SNA 1/3/19 A.B. Allison to J. Macfarlane, Director of Orange River Expedition, 3 November 1869.

lieutenant-governors of Natal were responsible to the British Colonial Office,²³ and this acted as a check on the colonists. Nevertheless, the views held by Lieutenant-Governor Pine and the colonists on the question of the necessity to destroy Langalibalele's power by any means appear to have been remarkably congruent. Pine, in justifying the actions against Langalibalele wrote to Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary, after the Bushman's River Pass clash:

The Chief of the Tribe fled from the Zulu country years ago for protection in this Colony. He had there and he has here always been a contumacious and treacherous man. Even during my former administration he gave the Government trouble and anxiety.²⁴

When the Hlubi were removed from the Klip River district and settled around the sources of the Msuluzi (Bloukrans) river by October 1849, their location covered an area of about 350 square kilometres. This included open grasslands, suitable for crop-farming and grazing, as well as grazing land in the foothills of the Drakensberg. It was too limited an area to support Langalibalele's following of about 7 000 people. Since its boundaries were not clearly defined, and the Hlubi needed more land, they soon began to encroach on unoccupied settler farms (where they would have had to pay rent in cash or in kind) or on occupied farms (where rent in labour would have been required) and on state lands. By the mid-1860s Langalibalele's people, now about 8 000 in number, occupied nearly 600 square kilometres.²⁵ The once powerful Hlubi were again building up their power,

²³. J. Verbeek et al (compilers), Webb's Guide to the Official Records of the Colony of Natal (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1984), p. XIX.

²⁴. GH 1218 1871-74. Pine to Kimberley, 13 November 1873.

²⁵. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, pp.39-40.

although Langalibalele's control was dissipated with regard to those living outside his location.

Claiming ultimate authority over them was the Natal government. Langalibalele soon began to assert himself, and to clash with successive magistrates appointed from 1850 in the Weenen County, and even, in 1851, to test his strength against Shepstone, pointing out to him that as leader of the Hlubi people he was 'a great and influential chief.' In 1851, too, Langalibalele had shown reluctance in providing levies for the proposed action against Moshweshwe. The appointment, in 1855, of John Macfarlane as the new Weenen magistrate heightened the tension, as has been pointed out by Wright and Manson.²⁶ Macfarlane, himself a Weenen landowner, supported the farmers in their opposition to the African chiefs. Shortly after his arrival he acted in a high-handed manner against Langalibalele's people when the chief disobeyed instructions to enforce the removal of cattle affected by lung-sickness. Some of the Hlubi became threatening, and Macfarlane led a commando of thirty men against them. The Hlubi were at this time in no position to issue any serious challenge to the Natal authorities, weakened as they were by the two poor seasons of 1853-54 and the lung-sickness epidemic of 1855. Nevertheless they may well have been regarded as a pivot around whom others could coalesce to form a new power base.

After 1855 the Hlubi began to prosper again, not only in their allotted location but beyond it. The 1849 Hut Tax was first levied on the Hlubi at a time when surplus cattle which could be sold to pay this tax were not available to them, recently settled as they were on

²⁶. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

their location. The alternative was for men to enter the wage-labour force, and this option was taken by many of the Hlubi men. Not only would this enable them to pay their Hut Tax from their wages, but they had a small surplus with which to buy consumer goods.

The Hlubi herds were increasing by the late 1850s and surplus cattle could at that time be sold for cash. Manson has shown that the ownership of cattle by African stock-owners in the Weenen district, about a third to a half of whom were Hlubi, was steadily increasing from the late 1860s to the early 1870s.²⁷

By the early 1860s crop production had increased and the Hlubi were selling surplus maize.²⁸ The arrival among them, in 1863, of J.R. Hansen of the Hermannsburg Missionary Society, who encouraged the use of the plough and the development of commercial agriculture along European lines, gave a further impetus to Hlubi prosperity. This was practised on mission lands first, but spread to other Hlubi lands. The use of ploughs in place of hoes would have brought more land under cultivation and increased crop production. Hansen recorded in 1873 that the Hlubi were using ploughs instead of hoes in three-quarters of their cultivated land.²⁹ Since the use of ploughs involved cattle, this task would have been in the hands of men, not women, who traditionally practised hoe culture and did not have a hand in stock-farming. When a profitable surplus

²⁷. A. Manson, 'A People in Transition : The Hlubi in Natal 1848-1877' in Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. II, 1979, p. 19.

²⁸. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, p. 45.

²⁹. Ibid., p. 47.

of crops was being produced, more men would have remained at home rather than offer their services elsewhere.

By the early 1870s, Langalibalele's Hlubi had increased in numbers to between 9 000 and 10 000, and their location covered over 700 square kilometres. Their cattle numbered some 15 000.³⁰ The Hlubi prosperity caused the white farmers in the Weenen and Klip River counties to view them with envy, resentment and fear, as Manson has suggested.³¹ While the Hlubi prospered, the European sheepfarmers were badly hit by blue tongue disease among their sheep. Their losses coincided with the slump of 1865 which made it impossible for them to raise adequate loans to assist their economic recovery.³² White farmers, therefore, were likely to favour any action which might reduce the economic competition of the Hlubi.

In other ways the Hlubi and Langalibalele, their chief, had consolidated their power. The chief's father, Mthimkhulu, and Langalibalele after him, adopted the Zulu practice of forming amabutho, age-sets of men and women drawn from the whole group. This gave the chief tighter control over agricultural and pastoral production by the amabutho, as well as over the marriage age of his people, and thus over the setting up of independent homesteads. In addition Langalibalele annually held the umkhosi festival of the first fruits, usually associated with chiefs who held sway over many clans. Langalibalele's reputation

³⁰. Ibid., p. 50.

³¹. Manson, 'People in Transition', pp. 19-20.

³². Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chiefdom, pp. 46-47.

as a rainmaker and his dynastic marriages had further increased his power and prestige.³³

By the 1870s the Hlubi, like many other groups, had acquired considerable numbers of firearms, a fact which contributed to the colonists' distrust. Law No. 5, 1859 was promulgated in June 1859 by the Natal government 'For preventing the Sale of Gunpowder and Firearms to, and prohibiting the possession of the same by Natives.' Anyone who engaged in this trade in firearms could be fined up to fifty pounds and sentenced to up to two years' imprisonment; and the firearms would be confiscated. Nor was any 'native' allowed to possess a firearm. Contravention of this clause earned the same penalties. However, there were exceptions, if written permission had been obtained from the Lieutenant-Governor; and firearms thus legally held were to be marked and registered by the Resident Magistrate.³⁴

After 1867, when diamonds were discovered, the Hlubi, conveniently near to the diamond-fields, looked beyond Natal for wage-labour, especially as it became known that firearms were to be obtained with wages earned there, and that employers were willing to give labourers certificates for the purchase of these desired articles.³⁵ These firearms were thus legally acquired beyond the borders of Natal. Within Natal, Law No. 5 of 1859, Clause 3, allowed for the seizure and confiscation of firearms 'in the possession of any

³³. Guest, Langalibalele, pp. 29-30.

³⁴. Hitchins, Statutes, vol I, Section : Arms and Ammunition, p. 1, Law No. 5, 1859.

³⁵. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 31.

person of the native tribes of this Colony .. without the written permission of the Governor .. whether the said gun or pistol be marked and registered or not ..' It is not surprising that firearms acquired from the diamond-fields were, if possible, not brought in to be registered, although a circular of 14 February 1872 to Resident Magistrates instructed them to register all firearms presented to them as being lawfully acquired on the diamond-fields, and the Lieutenant-Governor would, on their recommendation, grant the necessary permit.³⁶ A.B. Allison, the Border Agent at Oliviershoek, reported uneasily ten days later that African men were eager to obtain firearms on the diamond-fields 'and all these arms will eventually be smuggled into the Colony.'³⁷

The question of the registration of firearms gave the Natal government and Macfarlane a firmer pretext for a confrontation with Chief Langalibalele and the Hlubi than had been presented by their refusal to move cattle affected by lung-sickness. Guest has suggested that Macfarlane, in insisting on the registration of Hlubi guns, may have intended to make an example of Langalibalele whose reputation as a rain-doctor and whose family connections would have publicised widely the magistrate's action against him³⁸ and, presumably, those who were insufficiently submissive would be warned. The Hlubi were not alone among the Natal Africans in possessing unregistered firearms, nor was their reluctance to register their guns any different from the attitude of other chiefs and their followers, as Guest has pointed out.³⁹

³⁶. NBB 31 Langalibalele Revolt. Introduction p. 1X.

³⁷. SNA 1/6/9 Report from A.B. Allison, Olivier's Hoek, 24 February 1872.

³⁸. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 34.

³⁹. Ibid., p. 33; NBB 31 Langalibalele Revolt. Introduction, p. X.

The sequence of events which followed Macfarlane's clash with Langalibalele when he failed to send in firearms acquired by the Hlubi, to the Weenen magistrate, and did not respond positively to the summons issued on the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor as Supreme Chief, to appear before the SNA in Pietermaritzburg, has been described by Guest, amongst others.⁴⁰

The original ostensible purpose of the police action against Chief Langalibalele was to force him to deliver up unregistered firearms, but the campaign developed far beyond that. When Langalibalele dispersed his old men, women and children, as well as some of his cattle among the amaNgwe (frequently referred to as the Putini or Putili) preparatory to his flight into Lesotho with the younger men and considerable numbers of cattle, the Natal government forces swung into action. This was later justified by Lieutenant-Governor Pine on the advice of Theophilus Shepstone in these words: 'It is a well-recognised maxim of native law that a Chief or tribe cannot leave the jurisdiction of the Supreme Chief without his sanction.' Pine enclosed Shepstone's view on the subject. He supported Pine by writing: '.. desertion is looked upon and treated as treason .. according to tribes of South Africa.'⁴¹ This contradicts Holden's 1866 statement that dissatisfied adherents of a chief were free to leave the chieftom.

⁴⁰. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 35-43; Morris, Washing of the Spears, pp. 217-222; R.O Pearse Barrier of Spears (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1973). pp. 228-245.

⁴¹. BPP C1121 No. 5 Pine to Carnarvon, 16 July 1874. Enclosure in No. 5: Minute by SNA on the late Operations against Langalabelele (sic).

In mobilising the colonial forces against the Hlubi chief and his allies, the Natal government planned to make use of 6 000 levies. Lieutenant-Governor Pine intended that these levies should take the major policing role in the proceedings against the Hlubi, to punish them for their intransigence. He wrote to Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary:

My general design, that the Kafer (sic) Tribes whom I deem it safe and proper to employ against this Tribe shall for this purpose be considered as the Civil Police who have been entrusted to capture the Chief Langabalele (sic) and bring him to justice, and that should they be beaten back the military and Volunteers should take action.

Since the regulars and volunteers would take action only if the levies were 'beaten back', Pine did not wish them to initiate any attack. For this reason, he explained, he gave the order to Durnford not to fire the first shot in any early encounter. After the disaster to Durnford's force (which did not include levies) at the Bushman's River Pass, Pine wrote to Kimberley:

I had .. given orders that the military should not fire the first shot. This order was in strict conformity with the spirit of the plan that the military should play the secondary part of supporting the Civil force sent to arrest the chief and tribe.⁴²

The map of the plan of operations was originally drafted by Macfarlane, presented by Colonel Milles, Commandant Natal,⁴³ to Pine, and enclosed in the Lieutenant-Governor's 13 November 1873 despatch to Kimberley. It shows the cordon which was to be placed around the locations of the Hlubi and the amaNgwe and the positions of the troops sent out against them. It shows 'Regulars', 'Carbineers' and 'Natives', *i.e.* levies,

⁴². BPP C1025 Pine to Kimberley, 30 October 1873.

⁴³. GH 1218 1871-1874 Lieutenant-Governor Pine to the Earl of Kimberley, 13 November 1873.

in positions linking all these positions, and surrounding the Hlubi and amaNgwe locations. Not shown is Captain Hawkins in reserve between the Mkhomazi and the Mzimkhulu, with volunteers and levies. Since Pine intended mobilising 6 000 African levies and African volunteers, 300 white volunteers and 200 regular British troops, these would have been adequate to patrol the approximately 130 kilometre circumference of the cordon.

The white volunteers were Frontier Guards under Captain Lucas, Resident Magistrate at Ladysmith (Klip River county) who were to take up their position at David Gray's farm; the Weenen Yeomanry and Weenen Burghers under Captain Macfarlane, Resident Magistrate at Estcourt (Weenen county) in position south-west of Estcourt between the Little Tugela and Bushman's rivers; and Captain Hawkins, Resident Magistrate of Upper Umkomanzi, with the Richmond Mounted Rifles. In addition, Carbineers of the Pietermaritzburg Troop and the Karkloof Troop, led by Captain Charles Barter, Officer Commanding, Karkloof Troop, were at Meshlynn, Popham's farm, where Pine, in overall command of the expedition, set up his headquarters. The British regular troops consisted of a force of the 75th Regiment under Captain Boyes, with the Corps of Royal Artillery (with two six-pounder guns). Pine was accompanied to Meshlynn by his private secretary, William Beaumont, and Theophilus Shepstone, Chief of Staff to Lieutenant-Colonel Milles, Commandant Natal.⁴⁴

The African levies, called up by their various chiefs, were vastly in the majority in the force against Chief Langalibalele, and were intended to be the cutting edge of the expedition. Lucas and Hawkins were resident magistrates who called up men from Klip

⁴⁴. Guest, Langalibalele, pp. 40-41; Pearse, Barrier of Spears, pp. 230-231.

River county and Lower Umkomanzi division respectively. The men called up by Lucas were those of Chiefs Tinta, Umvungela and Phakade. By the end of 1873, 120 of Tinta's men and 100 of Umvungela's were disbanded and sent to Ladysmith. The rest, eighty-one of Phakade's men, were handed over to Captain Allison to join his force.⁴⁵ Neither Lucas nor Hawkins took an active part in the first encounter with Langalibalele.

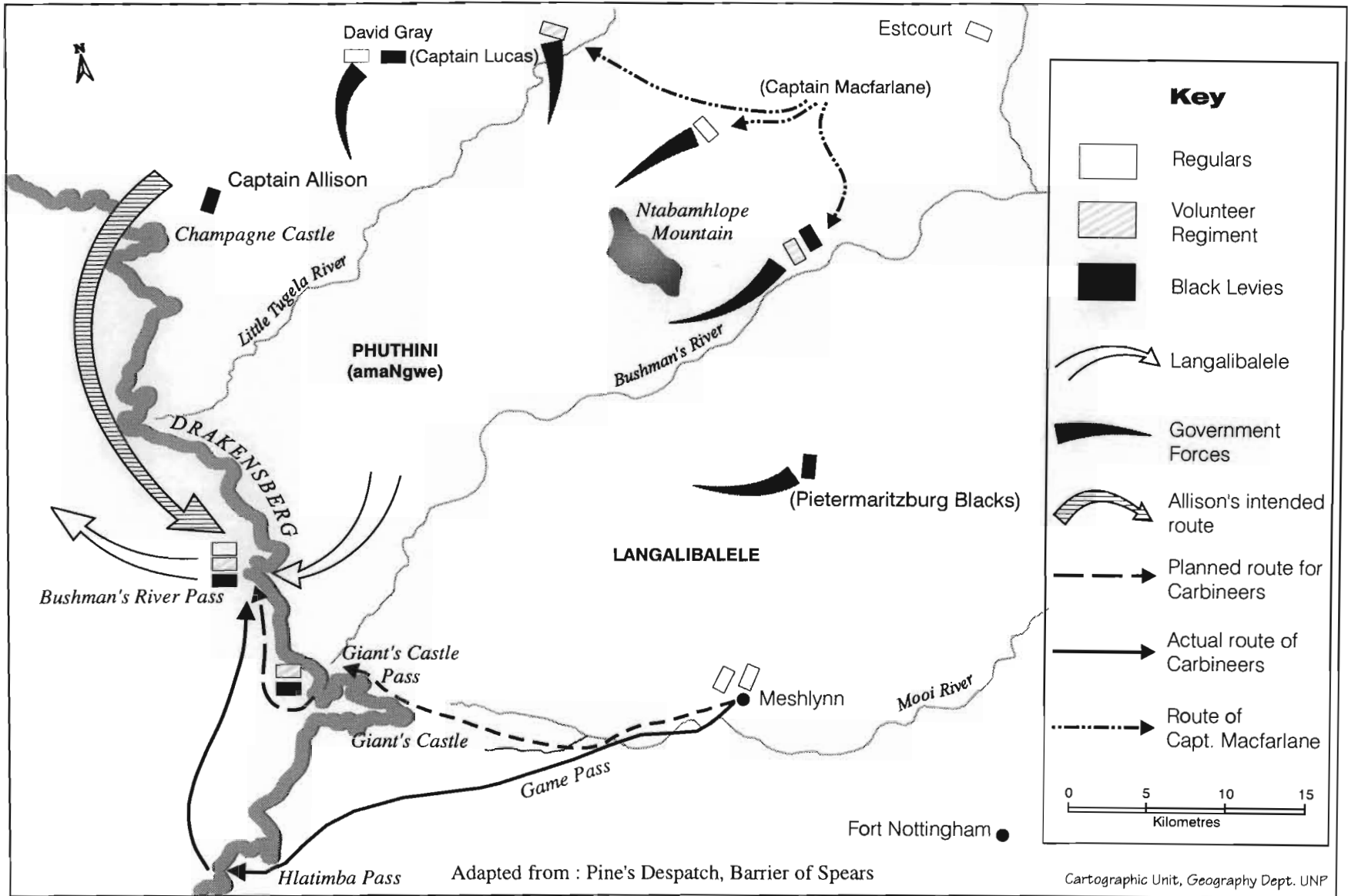
Captain Allison, Border Agent at Oliviershoek, who had a prominent part to play in preventing Langalibalele from moving into Lesotho, was expected to call up 500 levies. In fact, he had with him 300 men of the Ngwane under Chief Zikhali.⁴⁶ The Ngwane had an old grudge against the Hlubi, whose chief, Mthimkhulu (father of Langalibalele), had refused to return cattle which Matiwane, the Ngwane chief and father of Zikhali, had entrusted to him. Matiwane, in about 1825, defeated Mthimkhulu.⁴⁷

As part of the plan to apprehend Chief Langalibalele before he left Natal, Captain Allison, in November 1873, was ordered to take his force of Ngwane up a pass at Champagne Castle and, moving southwards along the Drakensberg escarpment, link up with the men under Major Durnford (who had been placed in authority over Captain Barter) at the top of the Bushman's River Pass, to prevent Langalibalele's escape. This proved to be impossible, as he reported to Lieutenant-Colonel Milles:

⁴⁵. SNA 1/1/24 A. Shepstone to SNA, for information of Lieutenant-Governor, 3 January 1874.

⁴⁶. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison, Administrator of Native Law to SNA, 22 September 1874.

⁴⁷. J. Henderson Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1930), p. 409.



Langalibalele Rebellion

I find there is no pass at or near Champagne Castle. I had a guide who is well acquainted with the country, and marched the men from daylight to sundown in vain attempts to find an opening.⁴⁸

The Ngwane did not, therefore, take any part in the initial action against Langalibalele, and Durnford's small party of men bore the brunt of the skirmish which followed their attempt to prevent Langalibalele's escape.

Captain Macfarlane, whose Weenen magistracy included the Hlubi and amaNgwe locations, called up levies from other groups such as those from the Impafana location viz. Somahashe and Magedama, as had been done before. In 1869 William Popham, a Weenen farmer, was assisted by Chiefs Hlubi, 'Dedeleka' (Thetheleku) and Lugaju in tracking down San raiders.⁴⁹ Lugaju and Thetheleku were chiefs in Shepstone's First Division of 1848.⁵⁰ Although they joined Popham in the Weenen county their people would not have been available officially to Macfarlane as they lived in the Pietermaritzburg county. Chief Hlubi was a Sotho border chief. When the Hlubi were driven out of their lands by Mpande, the Zulu king, some of them settled in Lesotho where they were absorbed into the Tlokwa people. Chief Hlubi's people were not subject to being called up as levies by the Natal government,⁵¹ although they were employed as guides by Durnford and took

⁴⁸. R.O. Pearse et al, Langalibalele and the Natal Carbineers (Ladysmith, Ladysmith Historical Society, 1973), p. 69 Captain Allison, Commanding Zikhali's Tribe to Lieutenant-Colonel Milles, 4 November 1873.

⁴⁹. SNA 1/3/19 W. Popham's report, 31 July 1869.

⁵⁰. CSO 44(2) No. 64. Memorandum, 6 September 1848.

⁵¹. Pearse, Langalibalele, p. 10 footnote.

a prominent part in the Bushman's River Pass skirmish. They too would not have been available to Macfarlane.

Levies from Pietermaritzburg were also involved. These would have been drawn from Shepstone's 1848 First Division and would have included men from Lugaju's and Thetheleku's people. They were to be positioned between Macfarlane's force and Meshlynn. F.E. Colenso, in describing the force which set out in October 1873 from Pietermaritzburg for the headquarters at Meshlynn, was unflattering to the levies, whom she regarded as '.. an entirely unorganised and useless addition of untrained Natal natives ..',⁵²

Other Africans who were not levies were mobilised for the action against Langalibalele. These were twenty-five mounted Basotho guides from Chief Hlubi's people, and Elijah Khambule,⁵³ Major Durnford's interpreter, who was a Kholwa from Edendale. These men were with Durnford, who took charge of one of the two flying columns (the other was a force under Captain Boyes of the 75th Regiment). Durnford's force also included fifty-five colonial volunteers of the Pietermaritzburg and Karkloof Troops of the Natal Carbineers. Durnford was ordered to ascend the Giant's Castle Pass and then proceed northwards along the Drakensberg escarpment to Bushman's River Pass in order to reinforce Allison and his levies who would be in position by 3 November. Allison never arrived, and Durnford's small force, after a disastrous ascent of the Hlatimba Pass (not, as planned, the Giant's Castle Pass) was engaged against the Hlubi at the head of the

⁵². Colenso, History of the Zulu War, p. 24.

⁵³. Pearse, Barrier, p. 233.

Bushman's River Pass. This encounter and the rout which ensued is described by several eyewitnesses.⁵⁴

On 11 November, after the Bushman's River Pass debacle, when the situation was considered to be grave, Martial Law was proclaimed, as a general conflagration was feared. Guest has documented the reports of Langalibalele's friendly communications and some intrigue with chiefs outside Natal: Cetshwayo in Zululand; chiefs in the Transkei, notably Chief Zibe, closely related to Langalibalele; Basotho chiefs, Masopha and Malapo; and even the Griqua, Adam Kok. Guest has suggested that Langalibalele may have been concerned about escaping from Natal, not about fomenting rebellion in concert with these chiefs.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, fears of a general uprising led to the mobilising not only of forces in Natal, but also beyond its borders. H M S Rattlesnake sailed from the Cape with 200 men of the 86th Regiment under Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Cunynghame, Officer Commanding Her Majesty's forces in South Africa; and 200 men of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police rode up from King William's Town. J.M. Orpen, British Resident in Nomansland and C.D. Griffith, the Governor's Agent in Basutoland, were ordered to take severe steps against Langalibalele or any of his people and those who might shelter them, if the rebels sought asylum in their territories. Orpen and Griffith were to assist the Natal forces in arresting Langalibalele. Orpen, with Adam Kok's assistance, raised a mounted force of more than 600 men. Griffith requested scouts from Paramount Chief Letsie, and visited Malapo at Leribe to gain his support against Langalibalele.⁵⁶ A

⁵⁴. Pearse, Langalibalele, pp. 9-43 passim; pp. 55-58.

⁵⁵. Guest, Langalibalele, pp. 37-38.

⁵⁶. Ibid., pp. 49-51.

situation which Pine had judged could be settled by a show of force, with levies acting first, then, if the necessity arose, volunteers and regulars moving up in support, had become a major crisis.

From Natal itself, two flying columns were sent out immediately to apprehend Langalibalele in Lesotho if he remained there, or prevent his taking refuge in Transkei. One column, under Captain Allison, moved into Lesotho from the Mont-aux-Sources area (Zikhali's location) and a second, under Captain Hawkins, was sent to the south towards the St John's River. The instructions to Hawkins from Theophilus Shepstone throw some light on the later behaviour and motivation of the levies, whose other leaders no doubt received similar instructions, in their inexorable pursuit and harrying of Langalibalele and his Hlubi people, as well as of the amaNgwe. There were rewards to be gained, as can be seen:

.. Give your men orders to take prisoner every woman and child and bring them out - also that 20/- for each able bodied man taken and kept prisoner will be paid, every one that resists will be killed - 100 head of cattle to anyone who captures, or if he refuses to be captured, kills Langalibalele...⁵⁷

Hawkins, finding no sign of Langalibalele to the south, returned to Natal, ascended the Drakensberg and joined Allison on 7 December, on the east branch of the Orange River, with his forty-six men of the Richmond Mounted Rifles, and 350 levies. Some of the latter were sent home and Hawkins proceeded with the Europeans and seventy levies.⁵⁸

⁵⁷. A.C. Hawkins Papers N A 1/2/4 Order T. Shepstone to Captain Hawkins, 8 November 1873, in Guest, Langalibalele, p. 45.

⁵⁸. Pearse, Barrier, p. 248.

Allison's force of fifty mounted men of the Natal Frontier Guard and Weenen Yeomanry and over 1 500 levies ascended the Drakensberg at Bushman's River Pass on 29 November in pursuit of Langalibalele. The levies, Allison recorded, 'consisted of men from different tribes - some of the same tribes were detached for duty in Natal .. (for instance 150 of Pakade's men under Mr L. Lloyd at the Bushmans Pass ..)'⁵⁹ These men were raised by Chiefs Zikhali (269), Goza (852), Faku (231) and Phakade (164) and in addition there were the seventy men of Hawkins's contingent.⁶⁰

The Hlubi chief and eighty-four of his followers were led by Malapo's son Jonathan to Leribe, where they were arrested, on 11 December, by Griffith and Major Bell, the Leribe magistrate, with a force of fifty Frontier Armed and Mounted Police under Inspector Surmon.⁶¹

Allison praised his men and those of Hawkins for their behaviour during their arduous journey from the Orange River:

The native force of 1600 men has also behaved loyally and well. They suffered much in the mountains from want of proper clothing, but no murmuring reached me, and there has only been one case of punishment for neglect of duty.⁶²

The Natal forces under Allison took charge of the prisoners and captured livestock in Lesotho. 7 000 head of cattle and 260 horses were confiscated from Langalibalele and his

⁵⁹. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison, Border Agent, Olivier's Hoek to SNA, 2 January 1874.

⁶⁰. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison, Administrator of Native Law to SNA, 22 September 1874.

⁶¹. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 51.

⁶². BPP Natal 1873-74 (C1025) Enclosure 1 in No. 35. A.B. Allison to SNA, 20 December 1873.

people. Allison paid 2 000 head of cattle 'as repayment to the Basutos for their services ..'⁶³ With the prisoners and the rest of the livestock Allison and his men returned to Natal, reaching Pietermaritzburg on 31 December 1873.

Meanwhile, in Natal, Major Durnford was carrying out instructions of a different sort. Beaumont records the decision 'To send a party under Major Durnford to re-open the Bushman's Pass, to bury the dead and to block up the Pass.'⁶⁴ On 18 November Major Durnford, with sixty men of the 75th Regiment, thirty Basotho and 400 levies, which included some of Chief Thetheleku's men of the Mphumuza people living in the Swartkop location, accompanied by William Beaumont and the Reverend George Smith of Weston, occupied the Bushman's River Pass and buried those who had died in the engagement of 4 November.

Before Allison left on his expedition to Lesotho and while the operation against Langalibalele was taking place following the Bushman's River Pass incident, the colonial forces in Natal launched a campaign to crush the remaining Hlubi and in this action levies played a major part. On 8 December Theophilus Shepstone informed the Colonial Office:

Mr McFarlane (*sic*) reports that the forces under himself, Capt. Lucas and Capt. Allison commenced operations yesterday. Some cattle captured and rebels shot. These forces consist of the Weenen Yeomanry, Weenen Burghers and the Natal Frontier Guard, with 3,500 natives.⁶⁵

⁶³. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison, Administrator of Native Law, Olivier's Hoek to H Shepstone, Commissioner, counties of Weenen and Klip River, 9 July 1874.

⁶⁴. William Beaumont's report in Pearse, *Langalibalele*, p. 82.

⁶⁵. Theophilus Shepstone to Colonial Office, 8 November 1873 in C.F. Shuter, *Englishman's Inn* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1963), p. 94.

Those Hlubi left behind in Natal after Langalibalele had fled with most of his fighting men were 'most of the women and children, the sick and infirm, with a few ablebodied men to watch over them ..' These 'had taken refuge in holes and caves ..'⁶⁶

Not only were these fugitives to be rounded up, but their neighbours the amaNgwe were to be punished too, and in this action the colonial volunteers and levies were again involved, as they had been against the Hlubi. Pine wrote to the Colonial Secretary to justify this measure:

The neighbouring tribe of Putili .. had aided in the rebellion of Langalibalele's tribe by firing on parties of our forces; by receiving and sheltering some of the people and cattle of the tribe, and in other ways ..

He reported that the Putili (amaNgwe) 'have been by an admirable movement conducted by Mr Macfarlane the Resident Magistrate of the County of Weenen, under the order of Colonel Milles, surrounded and disarmed without loss of life.' He added: '.. we have earnestly tried to conduct the operation, with as much humanity as possible.'⁶⁷

Frances Colenso gave expression to the outrage which was to be echoed in protests from the Anti-Slavery Society, the Peace Society and the Aborigines Protection Society, when Hlubi non-combatants were rounded up and taken prisoner. She wrote:

"The English soldiers will not touch the children", was the expression used. So far, however, was this idea from being realised, that the remainder of the expedition consisted of a series of attempts, more or less successful, to hunt the unfortunate "children" out of their hiding-places and take them prisoner ..

⁶⁶. Colenso, History of the Zulu War, p. 29.

⁶⁷. GH 1218 1871-74 Pine to Kimberley, 22 November 1873.

Fugitives, she continued, were smoked to death or killed by rockets in caves; women and children were killed, men tortured, and prisoners were put to death. She made the accusation:

.. a white commander of native forces is said to have given the significant information to his men that he did not wish to see the faces of any prisoners; and it is reported that a prisoner was made over to the native force to be put to death as the latter chose.

Frances Colenso also accused Trooper Moodie of shooting an unarmed prisoner. With regard to the women who had been sheltering in caves she wrote: 'So many women were injured in dislodging them from the caves that Major Durnford, on his second return from the mountains, instituted a hospital tent where they might be attended to ..'⁶⁸

'These acts,' she wrote, 'were chiefly committed by the irregular (white) troops and native levies ... undisciplined or savage troops ... disorganised masses of "friendly natives" ..'⁶⁹ She omitted to mention that the bombarding of the cave with artillery fire was carried out not by volunteers and levies but by regulars under Lieutenant Clark, Royal Artillery,⁷⁰ with their two field-guns.

Pine took the side of the colonists and the levies. He praised the 'good conduct of the native forces.' 'Not a woman nor a child,' he wrote to Kimberley, 'has been intentionally injured, though it used to be a settled maxim with the Zulu tribes that it was just and right to kill the women and offspring of a hostile tribe ..'⁷¹

⁶⁸. Colenso, History of the Zulu War, p. 33.

⁶⁹. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁷⁰. Beaumont's report in Pearse, Langalibalele, p. 80.

⁷¹. BPP C1025 No. 55 Pine to Kimberley, 17 March 1874.

Neither Pine nor Frances Colenso was present when the Hlubi and amaNgwe were hunted down, but Captain G.A. Lucas, Resident Magistrate, Klip River, certainly was, and his alleged actions and those of his levies were such that he was required to explain them. He reported that he had initially taken the field on 30 October 1873 against Langalibalele and the 'Putili' with the Fourth Division of forces employed (which appears to coincide with Shepstone's 1848 Fourth Division who were drawn from the Klip River area). This division was made up of 2 000 'loyal Zulus' and the Frontier Guard. He denied the atrocities attributed to them, declaring that the 'Putili' cattle were taken with the loss of one man to the rebels, and no men, women or children prisoners were killed. He stated that injured women were given medical attention, and his men were reminded not to injure women and children, nor were they to take prisoner any man who threw down his arms. He declared that it was untrue that his men 'ravished and otherwise maltreated' captive women.⁷²

Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, was not satisfied with these denials of the actions of Captain Lucas and his men. His attention had been drawn to a statement that Lucas had handed over a number of women to the 'Native Chiefs' who were serving under him. Carnarvon's invitation to Lucas to refute this was met with a further denial. Lucas declared that women and children had not been given to chiefs as spoils of war, but had been placed under their guardianship.⁷³ On the question of suspected slave labour, Pine, in the following month, forwarded a petition to Carnarvon signed by 1 683 residents of

⁷². BPP C1119 1875 No. 5 Captain G.A. Lucas, to Colonial Office, 7 June 1874.

⁷³. BPP C1119 1875 No. 9 Colonial Office to Captain Lucas, 7 June 1874.

the Colony of Natal. They denied 'slanders' about apportioning Hlubi prisoners as labourers. They declared: '.. the people of the rebel tribe, including the women and children basely deserted and left to their fate by their natural protectors, have been and still continue to be, fed and sheltered by the Colonial Government.'⁷⁴ Certainly, assistance had to be given to the broken Hlubi and amaNgwe, and by April 1875 over £ 4 700 had been spent on supplies for them, and even small cash advances.⁷⁵ This was a relatively modest outlay considering that the sales of their captured stock and other confiscations realised over £ 25 000.⁷⁶

Concerning captive women, statements subsequently taken from levies contradicted Lucas's statements. Sikunyana, a relative of Chief Phakade, declared that two young women of the amaNgwe were given by Lucas to Ngabangaye, a son of Phakade, to be his wives. One of the women pleaded to be released from this man, first with the Estcourt magistrate and then with Theophilus Shepstone himself in Pietermaritzburg, but she was told: 'Captain Lucas said that you were to be his wife ..'⁷⁷ and her plea was disregarded.

⁷⁴. BPP C1121 Pine to Carnarvon, 10 July 1874. Enclosure in No. 2.

⁷⁵. BPP C1158 Enclosure in No. 23 Statement showing amounts paid out of the Treasury for supplies to the Amahlubi and Amangwe Tribes of Natives, 12 April 1875.

⁷⁶. BPP C1158 Enclosure in No. 35. Receipts and payments on account of the Langalibalele Expedition, 31 May 1875.

⁷⁷. BPP C1121 Enclosure in No. 23, Bishop of Natal to Colonial Office, 13 November 1874.

Bishop Colenso collected further allegations against Lucas regarding the treatment of the Hlubi. Faku, a Weenen chief who provided levies, stated that the orders from Captain Lucas were 'to bring the women but he (Capt. Lucas) did not wish to see the face of any of the men.' Faku stated that there was a wounded man who was 'brought out of his hiding place and by the order of the officer in command shot' on the plea that 'the man was so wounded that it was a mercy to put him out of his misery.' Colenso also alleged that attempts were made to smoke fugitives out of a cave, and some of them were suffocated. The bishop recorded a statement by Umlanduli that his wife had been given to one of Shepstone's men and her sister to Mahoyisa (the Government induna).⁷⁸

Undoubtedly in some instances the volunteers and the levies with them acted with great harshness. Letters from colonial volunteers who had taken part in the campaign give evidence of this.⁷⁹ Guest has suggested that the Natal colonists acted out of a sense of insecurity and fear as to the extent of the disaffection, and he cites the offers made and assistance given from outside Natal to aid the colony against the Hlubi. This concern indicates that the fears were not confined to Natal. The Orange Free State and the South African Republic rounded up 'rebels'. President Burgers raised a force to prevent Langalibalele from reaching Cetshwayo's territory through the South African Republic; and diggers from the diamond-fields offered their services.⁸⁰ Harsh military action may

⁷⁸. BPP C1141 Langalibalele and the Amahlubi Tribe. Remarks upon the official record of the trials of the chief, his sons and induna and other members of the Amahlubi tribe by the Bishop of Natal, January 1875.

⁷⁹. For example, The Natal Mercury, 18 November 1873. Letter from Trooper Bucknall. Vide Guest, Langalibalele, p. 46, footnote 7.

⁸⁰. Guest, Langalibalele, pp. 47-48.

well be ascribed to fear, but the determination to crush the Hlubi may also have been motivated, as Wright and Manson have pointed out, by a desire to take over their land and force them into farm labour;⁸¹ and to reduce their economic competition.

The levies who took part in the campaign could expect punishment if they did not come forward when summoned, but they were also promised rewards for their services. Not only were they to be paid in cash, but they could expect a share in the cattle captured from the Hlubi and amaNgwe who were wealthy in cattle. When it was resolved by the Council of War called by Pine after the Bushman's River Pass engagement that a flying column was to be sent over the Drakensberg in pursuit of Langalibalele, it was to consist of a few picked European volunteers and 1 500 levies 'who were to be rewarded out of captured cattle.'⁸²

This obligation to the levies could be easily met, as Allison captured 7 000 Hlubi cattle in Lesotho, as well as 260 horses. He left behind 2 000 head of cattle to pay off the Basotho and returned to Natal with the rest of the livestock, herded by the levies. In September 1874 the Acting Colonial Secretary requested the Acting SNA to provide the Legislative Council with a return of the number of cattle given to 'Kafirs' for assisting in the suppression of the 'late rebellion.'⁸³ Some cattle given to the levies merely replaced cattle supplied by them for rations. Allison sent in an account for cattle supplied by Zikhali's Ngwane for rations for his 302 levies raised initially. These were paid back out

81. Wright and Manson, Hlubi Chieftdom, p. 72.

82. Beaumont's report in Pearse, Langalibalele, p. 82.

83. SNA 1/1/24 Acting Colonial Secretary to Acting SNA, 10 September 1874.

of the captured amaNgwe herd.⁸⁴ Of the 5 000 head of cattle which Allison's men drove back into Natal, he proposed that 2 000 be distributed to the levies of his pursuing column. He suggested that the number of cattle to be assigned to each 'tribe' be handed to their chief or headman for distribution to their levies.⁸⁵

Cash was also to be paid to the levies. Ninety men from Zikhali's people, who were told that they would be paid, and who were the last to be discharged, were paid £ 117 10/- (about £ 1 6/- each).⁸⁶ Later on, a further payment was made to the full number of levies raised by Zikhali, *viz.* 269. This amount, £ 403 10/- (about £ 1 10/- each) was acknowledged by Allison in May 1874.⁸⁷ He presumed, in a later letter, that the other men of the contingent had been paid by their respective magistrates.⁸⁸ All told, over £ 10 000 was paid out to 'volunteers' (of whom there were about 300) and 'natives' (of whom there were between 5 000 and 6 000) out of total expenses of over £ 36 000.⁸⁹ The levies were engaged in military service for approximately two months. The cash which they received was little more than the 1873 rate for *isibhalo* labourers, *i.e.* 7/6 per month, which was regarded by John Bird, Resident Magistrate, Pietermaritzburg, as being

⁸⁴. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison, Administrator of Native Law, Olivier's Hoek to SNA, 5 October 1874.

⁸⁵. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison to SNA, 2 January 1874.

⁸⁶. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison, Administrator of Native Law, Olivier's Hoek to SNA, 4 April 1874.

⁸⁷. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison to SNA, 30 May 1874.

⁸⁸. SNA 1/6/9 A.B. Allison to SNA, 22 September 1874.

⁸⁹. BPP C1158 Enclosure in No.35. Receipts and payments on account of the Langalibalele Expedition, 31 May 1875.

inadequate for the work performed.⁹⁰ Cash rewards, therefore, were poor although by April 1875 the cash realised from the sale of the Hlubi and amaNgwe property (cattle, houses, sheep and goats; mealies and 'Kafir-corn'; hides and other property) and £ 16 5/- in cash taken from them, amounted to £ 25 525.⁹¹ The cattle sold did not include cattle taken from the Hlubi and amaNgwe herds to reward the levies.

The Langalibalele affair was far more costly than the Natal authorities expected it to be, and had far wider repercussions than they could have imagined. It was a more extensive test of the levy system than any earlier campaigns had been. The levies were called up in the same way as the isibhalo labourers, but where there were numerous protests against the isibhalo call-up there were fewer objections, on the part of African people, to serving as military levies, although the rewards were not great. Theophilus Shepstone maintained that where there were many objections to performing isibhalo labour,

These objections or difficulties are wholly absent in the case of requiring military service; the call to arms made by competent authority is looked upon as paramount to all others, and the question of living on private lands or Native locations is disregarded.⁹²

⁹⁰. SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876 Legislative Assembly. Papers relating to the supply by native chiefs of native labour in connection with the Public Works of the Colony. Enclosure in No.24; J. Bird, Resident Magistrate, Pietermaritzburg, to SNA, 6 March 1873.

⁹¹. BPP C1158 Enclosures in No.33. Statements showing amounts realized for the Sale of Property confiscated from the Amahlubi and Amangwe Tribes of Natives.

⁹². NCP 8/5/14 Papers relating to the supply of native chiefs of native labour on public works 1875, No. 18. T. Shepstone's memorandum, 28 September 1877.

In spite of Shepstone's statement, in some instances, as we have seen, chiefs did express reluctance, especially when required to go beyond the borders of Natal, and were threatened with punishment if they disobeyed. That levies appear to have come forward willingly against Langalibalele may be ascribed partly to the hope of a share in the expected cattle plunder. Another reason for the willingness of levies to come forward was that military service, unlike *isibhalo* labour, appears not to have been regarded as degrading. Chief Thetheleku of the Mphumuza people from the Swartkop location, whose men were involved as levies in the campaign against Langalibalele, expressed his views on the subject after the Anglo-Zulu War. He declared that, when called upon for military service, 'All those who are in a position to leave would join in a day for Government military service.' When asked whether they made a distinction between military service and compulsory labour, he replied, 'Yes. To go to war is a thing that taxes a man's courage, and they prefer it because they go with a savage feeling.'⁹³

The Natal government's use of African levies to augment its military forces had not been altogether successful in keeping the peace in Natal during the Langalibalele crisis. It had been necessary to enlist the aid of military and police forces outside Natal to bring Langalibalele and his followers back to Natal. The levies achieved the rounding up of the amaNgwe with ease, and the harrying of the Hlubi men, women and children who had sheltered in caves provided no difficulty. The treatment of the hapless Hlubi and amaNgwe, which provoked an outcry from Britain; and the shock of the Bushman's River Pass debacle, cast serious doubts on Natal's ability to handle the keeping of peace within

⁹³. NCP 8/3/20 Evidence taken before the Natal Native Commission 1881, appointed 5 December 1881. Thetheleku's evidence.

her territories and the defence of her borders. Certainly, without the active collaboration of the chiefs and the levies they sent forward, the 200 regular soldiers and 300 white volunteers would have been totally inadequate to conduct the campaign.

The consequences of the Langalibalele crisis, as Guest has pointed out,⁹⁴ had major repercussions throughout South Africa as well as in Natal. Earlier conflicts with African people in Natal had had more localised effects. The Langalibalele affair left a more indelible impression. Goodfellow maintained that the Langalibalele crisis gave Carnarvon the opportunity to reduce Natal's ability to obstruct his Confederation policy.⁹⁵ From the Natal government's point of view it was clear that Natal could not defend herself unaided but there was no doubt some relief felt at the elimination of the potential power base of the Hlubi. As far as the African people in Natal were concerned, not only were the Hlubi and amaNgwe disastrously crushed, but levies drawn widely from groups in Natal were also profoundly affected.

Durnford was of the opinion that '... It will take a long time (perhaps a life time) to restore anything like confidence in the native mind in their white rulers ...'⁹⁶

At the beginning of the colonial period, Shepstone had raised levies on an ad hoc basis whenever there seemed a possibility that any action on the part of any San or Natal African group or individual chief would adversely affect the Natal colonists' prosperity.

⁹⁴. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 94 et seq.

⁹⁵. C.F. Goodfellow, Great Britain and South African Confederation 1870-1881 (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 209.

⁹⁶. Guest Langalibalele, p. 94.

When the Hlubi and amaNgwe were building up what appeared to be an alternative power base; when the power of Matshana kaMondise of the Sithole on the Zululand border was growing; and when Sidoyi of the Nhlangwini appeared to threaten the southern Natal frontier, the Natal government took action, involving their surrogates. Levies raised from the locations were cajoled with the promise of rewards or threatened with punishment to enlist their aid, in order that the Natal colony could remain in the most powerful position.

CHAPTER VIII

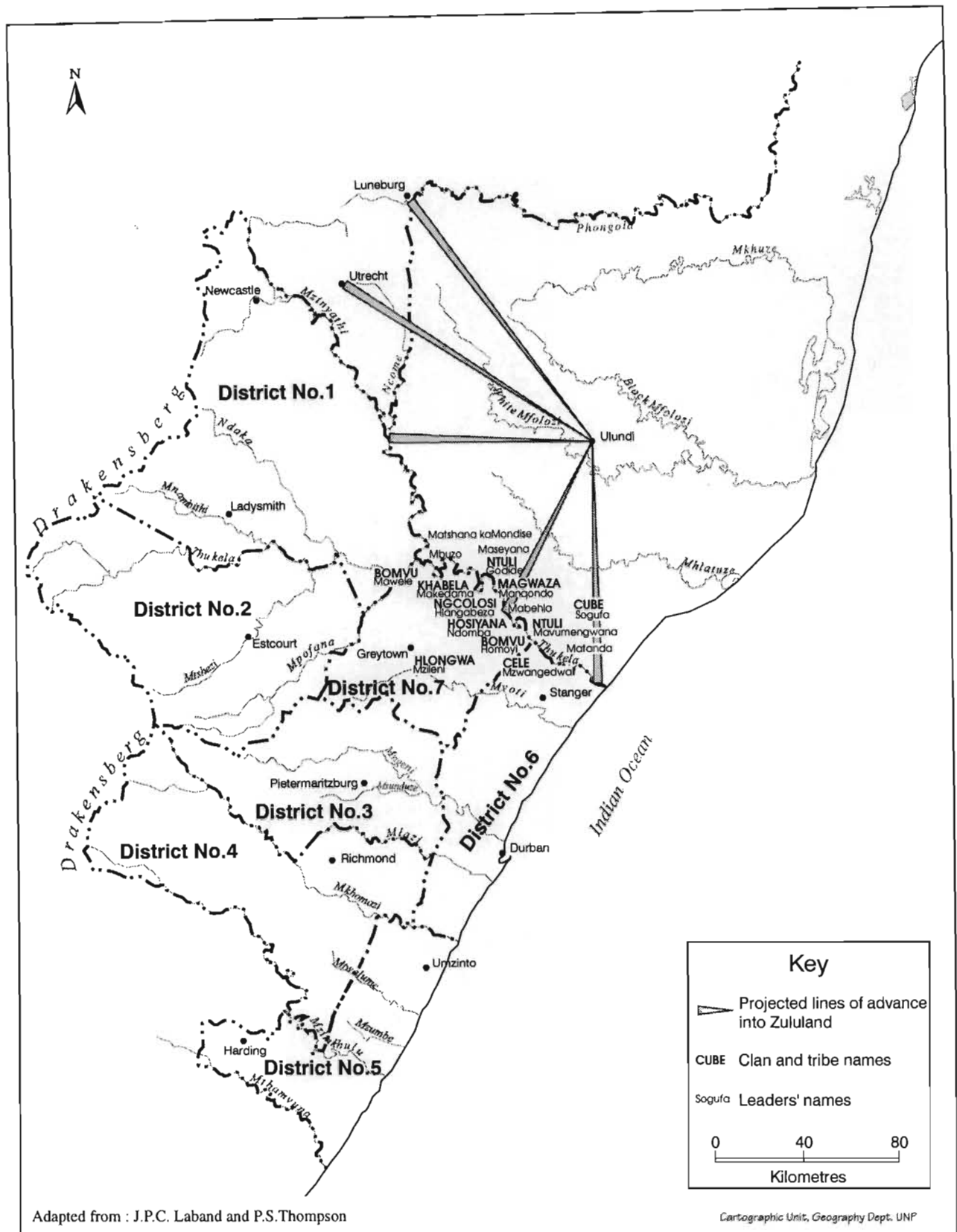
The use made of Natal African military levies during the first phase of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879

When the British and Natal colonial governments embarked on a war against the Zulu kingdom in 1879, African levies from Natal were involved on a larger scale and for a longer period than ever before, since reinforcements in sufficient numbers were not made available by the Imperial government before the second invasion of Zululand. Initially, however, there were not many more levies than were mobilised against Chief Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu in 1873, in which conflict 6 000 African levies were involved.¹ The levies, as subjects of the Supreme Chief, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, were conscripted by the Natal government to serve in Zululand with the invading British army as mounted troops, foot-soldiers, members of a Pioneer Corps, hospital bearers and military labourers. The authorities paid little attention to their effective leadership, equipment or training, especially of the infantrymen, and then castigated them for their indifferent performance.

Limited Imperial interest and commitment had been evident in Natal before the Langalibalele crisis of 1873. After that, and especially after 1878, the grand design of confederation (or perhaps more properly, federation²) led to intensified Imperial intervention in Natal because of the perceived necessity to weaken or even eliminate, by

1. Guest, Langalibalele, p. 39.

2. Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, p. 124, footnote 1.



Natal & Zululand 1878 - 1879, showing Colonial Defensive Districts, Chiefdoms along the Lower Tugela and projected lines of British Advance

force of arms, the Zulu power before federation could be achieved. The Natal authorities were swept into a wider Imperial dynamic which required them to raise African military levies for a purpose other than keeping the peace within the Colony and on its borders. Since British and colonial forces to be used against the Zulu kingdom would be insufficient in numbers to achieve a convincing victory, these levies were to act in support of them.

In January 1874, the imperialist Benjamin Disraeli chose the Earl of Carnarvon as his Secretary of State for the Colonies. If Carnarvon supported a move towards the federation of the British colonies in South Africa, this would transfer the cost of administration and internal security from Britain to the new federation; would close the last frontier in southern Africa, leaving a consolidated block of British-controlled states in the region; would strengthen the Egyptian and Cape links in the strategic trade route to India; and allow for the future extension of British hegemony.³

To this end, Carnarvon's Federation Despatch of May 1875 was followed by the Confederation Conference of August 1876 in London. Stumbling-blocks were evident, and measures were taken to remove them. In 1877, Carnarvon appointed Sir Bartle Frere, who had served with considerable ability and distinction in British India, as Cape Governor and High Commissioner for Southern Africa, with a view to his smoothing the path to South African federation. This dual role bestowed upon him far-reaching

³. Goodfellow, Great Britain and South African Confederation, pp. 70 - 71, pp. 208 - 209; J. Laband, Kingdom in Crisis (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1991), pp. 5 - 6.

discretionary powers which stretched beyond the Cape.⁴ He was to play a major role in the machinations which preceded the Anglo-Zulu War. In January 1878, Lieutenant-General Sir Frederic Thesiger (who became the second Baron Chelmsford in October 1878, and who will hereafter be cited as Lord Chelmsford) who was more amenable to Frere's plans, was appointed in place of Sir Arthur Cunynghame as Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial forces in South Africa.

The Cape Colony was unlikely to enter a federation which might mean sharing the burden of war against the powerful Zulu nation. Frere's subsequent actions support the view that, in order to facilitate federation, he was determined to subjugate the Zulu and nullify this threat. He inveighed against the supposed tyranny of Cetshwayo and his menace to Natal, in order to justify military aggression against him.⁵

Although Frere's over-riding motivation in fomenting war against the Zulu was to effect federation, the causes of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 were a not unusual multifarious conglomeration of imperial, colonial and personal motives, with here and there an overlay of ostensible altruism. A factor of underlying importance was the need for a supply of labour for the mines, following the mineral revolution; for the public works undertaken by the Natal government; and for the colonial settlers on farms and in towns. All these

4. The original October 1846 appointment of a High Commissioner (Sir Henry Pottinger) was 'for the settling and adjustment of the affairs of the territories ... adjacent or contiguous to the ... frontier.' Walker, History of Southern Africa, p. 229.

5. BPP C2222, No. 6 Frere to Hicks Beach, 5 November 1878, paragraphs 14, 15, 28, 35; Enclosure in No. 42; Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, p. 129.

activities were labour intensive. Frances Colenso's view of the situation was that the colonists favoured war because of

the revenue to be derived from a hut-tax levied upon the Zulus, and the cheap labour to be obtained when their power and independence should be broken..⁶

It was desired to achieve the increased labour supply by loosening the Zulu king's hold on both Zulu and Tsonga labourers to make them more readily available in Natal. The isibhalo system had failed to provide the public sector with adequate labour. Both this system and the expectation of more lucrative labour opportunities for Natal Africans in transport-riding to the diamond-fields and in labour for the mines, increasingly drained men away from the private sector which clamoured for labour.

Frere's ostensible desire to replace supposed Zulu barbarism with Christianity and European civilisation, which would placate any objections to aggression against the Zulu, is shown in his commendation of the work among them of the Norwegian missionary, Bishop Schreuder.⁷ Bishop Colenso included this motive when he identified Frere's intentions.⁸ Far from objecting to the proposed conquest of Zululand, two of the missionaries from that country, angry at having to withdraw from Cetshwayo's kingdom, supported Frere's intentions. The Reverend Robert Robertson stridently accused the Zulu

^{6.} Colenso, History of the Zulu War, p. 6.

^{7.} A.H. Windquist, Scandinavians and South Africa (Cape Town, Rotterdam, A.A. Balkema, 1978), p. 134.

^{8.} Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, p. 128.

king of atrocities,⁹ and the Reverend Ommund Oftebro wrote to Frere suggesting a remedy for the situation which accorded well with the High Commissioner's plans:

.. nothing less than the disarming of the Zulus, the breaking up of their military organization and the appointment of a British resident to watch over the strict upholding of treaties will .. settle the Zulu question satisfactorily.¹⁰

Alleged Zulu violations of the Natal border were seized upon to enhance the British case against the Zulu, as were methods of punishment of those who fell foul of the Zulu king.

Once having resolved upon war with the Zulu, Frere had to circumvent the change of policy adopted by the Colonial Office. Its momentum towards federation had slowed, and British attention was now focused on Russian designs on Afghanistan. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who succeeded Carnarvon in February 1878, did not favour war against the Zulu, except in defence,¹¹ hence the early lack of reinforcements. Frere, however, was eager to attack the Zulu in their own territory. He took advantage of the fact that, on account of the slow communications between Britain and Natal, his despatch concerning the December Ultimatum to the Zulu king would arrive too late to be countermanded.

Chelmsford does not appear to have been enthusiastic about a war against the Zulu.¹² However, his personal views were relatively unimportant since his task as Commander-in-

⁹. Morris, Washing of the Spears, p. 282.

¹⁰. As quoted in Windquist, Scandinavians, p. 136.

¹¹. BPP C2220 No. 92A Hicks Beach to Frere, 17 October 1878.
BPP C2220 No. 119 Hicks Beach to Frere, 21 November 1878.
BPP C2222 No. 17 Hicks Beach to Frere, 18 December 1878.

¹². J. Mathews, Lord Chelmsford: British General in Southern Africa, D. Litt. et Phil., unpublished thesis, University of South Africa, 1986, p. 52.

Chief was to carry out the military campaign as ordered by Frere, his political chief, of whose bellicose intentions he was probably aware as he had been Frere's guest in Cape Town during July 1878.¹³ After this visit, Chelmsford had accepted Frere's opinion that war against the Zulu was inevitable.¹⁴ Early in August, he arrived in Natal to plan the invasion of Zululand.

Before this invasion could become a reality, Frere and Chelmsford would have found it necessary to consider the British chances of success and be confident of ultimate victory. This would require forces superior to the Zulu in training, tactics and weaponry, although not necessarily in numbers. The possible exploitation of internal divisions in Zululand would no doubt also have been considered.

Since further Imperial reinforcements were not immediately forthcoming, the British forces available to Chelmsford in August 1878 were quite inadequate to embark on a full-scale war of aggression. In March of that year the Imperial troops in Natal consisted of the 2/3rd (the 'Buffs') and the 80th (Staffordshire Volunteers) regiments.¹⁵ These troops would have needed to be considerably augmented even if only for the defence of the Natal and Transvaal borders against the Zulu. Colonial volunteers such as those deployed

¹³. Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁴. Morris, Washing of the Spears, pp. 265 - 266.

¹⁵. Intelligence Branch of the War Office, Narrative of the Field Operations connected with the Zulu War of 1879 (London, Greenhill Books, 1989; first published 1881), p. 5.

against Langalibalele; and the Natal Mounted Police (formed in 1874),¹⁶ could be made available.

When the Colonial Secretary was eventually persuaded that the Zulu threat warranted the sending of further Imperial reinforcements, British troops were despatched from the Cape. These arrived in time for the first invasion of Zululand. These would still have been insufficient to launch a campaign against the Zulu without the addition of thousands of African levies called up by the Natal chiefs on the orders of the Supreme Chief, Sir Henry Bulwer.¹⁷ The success of the campaign would depend to a large extent, at this early stage of planning, on the effective mobilisation of the levies.

Both Frere and Chelmsford had experience of the employment of levies. Frere, in India during the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, had raised local levies in Sindh¹⁸ to keep the peace south of the Punjab but some 750 kilometres from the main centre of the troubles. Chelmsford had made use of Mfengu levies against the Xhosa in the Ninth Frontier War, which ended in May 1878. In this war, Chelmsford's experience of the lack of military qualities among the dispersed and weakened Xhosa had ill prepared him for a true assessment of these qualities in the Zulu.¹⁹

¹⁶. Morris, Washing of the Spears, p 302.

¹⁷. BPP C2222 Enclosure No. 2 in No. 12 Lord Chelmsford to Secretary of State for War, 11 November 1878.

¹⁸. Morris, Washing of the Spears, p.246.

¹⁹. S. Clarke, Invasion of Zululand, 1879 (Johannesburg, The Brenthurst Press, 1979), Appendix F, p. 252.

Sir Henry Bulwer and the Natal government were tardy in giving permission for the required levies to be raised, until they accepted that the Colony might be in danger from Zulu incursions. Although on 10 September 1878 Chelmsford gained the consent of the Natal Executive Council to establish seven defensive districts in the Colony,²⁰ it was not until the end of October that he was given permission to raise 7 000 African levies 'for service within or without the border.'²¹ This was to be the Special Native Contingent.

The mobilisation and organisation of the Natal levies was to be the responsibility of Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Durnford, R.E., not Bulwer. Frances Colenso objected strongly to the plan. No doubt referring to the Langalibalele crisis, she wrote that Durnford

had had ample opportunity of learning, by experience, how utterly and mischievously useless was the plan .. of employing disorganised bodies of natives as troops under their own leaders, without any proper discipline and control.

She declared, further, that these levies would be useless except as messengers, servants and camp-followers, and that they were likely to commit lawless violence on wounded or captured enemies:²² prophetic words indeed.

²⁰. J.P.C. Laband and P.S. Thompson, War Comes to Umvoti (Durban, Department of History, University of Natal, 1980), frontispiece map; p. 28.

²¹. BPP C2222 Enclosure in No. 12 Lieutenant-General commanding Her Majesty's forces in Natal to Secretary of State for War, 11 November 1878.

²². F.E. Colenso, History of the Zulu War, pp. 250 - 254.

Durnford's plan²³ for the control, training and equipment of the levies under the leadership of European officers and non-commissioned officers, was designed to obviate the problems predicted by Frances Colenso.

When Sir Henry Bulwer, in November 1878, reluctantly allowed levies to be called up,²⁴ little time remained to equip and train them. The delay in raising levies was partly responsible for the employment of men who were poorly trained, equipped and motivated, and lacking in cohesion, and whose morale was therefore generally low. The Acting SNA, John Shepstone, was directed by Bulwer to call up the required levies.

Originally 6 844 levies were raised: 2 022 for the Native Contingent on Line No. I (the Coast Line), under Major Barton and Commandant Nettleton; 2 293 for Line No. II at Fort Buckingham under Captains Cherry and Montgomery and Major Bengough; and 2 529 for Line No. III at Rorke's Drift under Commandant Lonsdale.²⁵ These men were to be attached to the British forces poised on the Natal/Zululand border.

Although these levies had little choice in obeying the call-up, some of them may have been encouraged by the promises of captured cattle and better pay than isibhalo labour provided. In addition, those who were antagonistic towards the Zulu might have

²³. E. Durnford (ed), A Soldier's Life and Work in South Africa 1872 to 1879 (London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1882) Appendix A (Vide Appendix V).

²⁴. SNA 1/1/32, 1878/118 Report of Acting SNA on tour through county of Umvoti and divisions of Lower Tugela and Inanda, 13 November 1878.

²⁵. NCP 4/1/2/8 LC No. 9 Original return of Native Contingents, 17 November 1879.

welcomed the opportunity of attacking them in the company of a military force more powerful and better equipped than they were.

The African levies were raised from the chiefs under false pretences. J.W. Shepstone reported that he had informed the chiefs that the necessity might arise for him to call upon 'all or a great part of our people to defend the country, that the Govt (sic) had no desire to make war.'²⁶ Even the prospect of their followers acting on the defensive was received by the Umvoti chiefs with misgivings, and they stated 'that the young men who had grown up in Natal had never seen war and they did not know how they would behave in battle.'²⁷ Their reluctance would no doubt have been even greater had they known that the British army intended using the levies as part of the invading force and not only in defence.

In the wake of the Langalibabele crisis, the defence of the border against possible Zulu incursions had been a concern of the Natal government, and to this end units of mounted volunteers had been formed: the Buffalo Border Guard in October 1873; the Durban Mounted Rifles in November 1873; the Natal Mounted Police in March 1874; and the Newcastle Mounted Rifles in October 1875;²⁸ while in December 1877 the Newcastle

26. SNA 1/6/11 No. 9 J.W. Shepstone to Colonial Secretary from Greytown, 3 November 1878.

27. SNA 1/1/32, 1878/118 Report of Acting SNA, 13 November 1878, appendix showing chiefs called upon and numbers required.

28. J.P.C. Laband and P.S. Thompson, The Buffalo Border 1879 (Durban, Department of History, University of Natal, 1983) Research monograph No. 6, p. 21; Guest, Langalibalele, p. 96.

RM, Charles Boast, was instructed to call out African levies under white levy-leaders,²⁹ to guard the Mzinyathi (Buffalo) border.

Those farmers, white and African, near the border, although they realised that defensive measures might be necessary, were reluctant to leave their homes which would then be vulnerable to attack from Zulu who could slip past border posts. However (by January 1879), when war was inevitable, the RM of Newcastle, W. Beaumont, had established five Border Guard posts above the Buffalo border line, with a standing reserve of 100 African levies at each, and with a further 200 African men in the neighbourhood to relieve them, so that the guard of 100 men changed every three days. One man in ten was armed with a rifle.³⁰ These border levies were raised in addition to those sent forward for the three regiments, with a total of seven Natal Native Contingent (hereafter cited as NNC) battalions, attached to the British army invading Zululand.

The border along the Thukela was to be defended similarly. W.D. Wheelwright, RM of Umvoti and Commandant of Defensive District VII, had a standing reserve of 500 African men in readiness in case of Zulu raids across the river, with further men available when a raid was imminent.³¹

Chelmsford was certainly not intending to act only on the defensive. His letter of 11 November 1878 to the Secretary of State for War, urgently requesting reinforcements,

²⁹. Ibid., p. 22.

³⁰. Ibid., p. 35.

³¹. Laband and Thompson, War Comes, pp. 32 - 33.

makes it clear that he planned to attack the Zulu, although a month was to elapse before the Ultimatum was presented to the Zulu envoys. He declared that once across the border 'the first blow struck should be a heavy one.' For this offensive, he pointed out, the troops at his disposal were inadequate. The colonial forces which he planned to use would consist of 125 Natal Mounted Police; 400 mounted volunteers not yet called out; and 'the whole of the able-bodied male native population who are liable to be called out under the orders of the Supreme Chief..' He wrote that three months before, on his arrival in Natal, the male African population had had no military organisation and no arms provided by the government, and most of the European officers would have had to be brought from the Cape.³²

By November, Bulwer was under no illusion as to Chelmsford's intentions, and the Lieutenant-Governor stated that he was prepared to call out further African levies 'in case of an advance into Zulu country by the attacking column.' He suggested a possible second line of levies: a further defensive contingent of 10 000 men, with 2 000 men from each of Districts No. I, II and VII, and 4 000 from District No. VI, that is, from a solid block of more than half of Natal adjacent to Zululand. District No. III was to call up 2 000, District No. IV, 5 000, and District No. V, 3 000: another 10 000 in all from the districts farthest away from Zululand.³³

³². BPP C2222 Enclosure 2 in No. 12 Lord Chelmsford to Secretary of State for War, 11 November 1878.

³³. NCP 4/1/2/9 LC No. 7 Extract from Confidential Minute by His Excellency Sir Henry Bulwer, 20 November 1878.

The Acting SNA required from the chiefs not only levies for purely military service with Chelmsford's force and for the Border Guard along the Thukela and Mzinyathi (Buffalo) rivers, but also waggon-drivers, ox-leaders ('voorlopers'), hospital bearers, men to work for the Commissariat, and Pioneer Corps personnel for road-building and repair, and for other fatigues.³⁴ The original draft has been recorded: Transport Service 500, Hospital Corps 161, Commissariat 75 and Pioneer Corps 300.³⁵ These numbers were augmented during the war. A comparison indicates that levies for military service were in greater demand than these auxiliaries, many of whom were no doubt transferred from isibhalo duties.

The Pioneer Corps men organised by Durnford were, unlike the other auxiliaries and even the African infantrymen, well equipped. Durnford described them in a letter to his mother on 8 December 1878:

.. 300 pioneers, natives, dressed in Royal Engineer caps, red tunics, and white knickerbockers, each man carrying a tool slung, and rifle and bayonet.³⁶

³⁴. SNA 4/1/2/8, LC No. 9/35 pp. 66 - 67 provided by J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 17 November 1879;
SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1501 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 18 November 1878.
SNA 1/1/33, 1879/60 SNA to RM, Umgeni Division, 10 December 1878;
SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1607 RM, Alexandra to SNA, 16 December 1878;
SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1610 Acting RM, Umgeni to SNA, 18 December 1878;
SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1611 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 18 December 1878;
SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1638 Report of Acting SNA, 27 December 1878 on minute of Lieutenant-Governor, 26 December 1878.

³⁵. NCP 4/1/2/8 LC No. 9 Original return of Native Contingent furnished to the Military Authorities by the Acting SNA, 17 November 1879.

³⁶. Durnford, A Soldier's Life, p.199.

The interface between isibhalo labour and military service was evident in January 1879 when Frere pointed out to Bulwer that, for military purposes, four roads required attention and should be repaired under the direction of the Colonial Engineer, viz. the coast line to the Thukela; between Botha's Hill and Pietermaritzburg; from Pietermaritzburg to Greytown; and from Pietermaritzburg to Helpmekeer via Estcourt and Ladysmith. Bulwer passed on this observation to the Colonial Secretary for the attention of Captain Hime, the Colonial Engineer. That this was to be dealt with as part of the military strategy was apparent since the expenses entailed were to be met by the Imperial government.³⁷

Since the number of military levies and labourers required was far in excess of the 1878 isibhalo rate of one man for every thirteen huts,³⁸ the Acting SNA would have had to call on many men other than those in the locations to provide the requisite numbers. In 1877, Sir Theophilus Shepstone had stated that African men living on private lands as well as those on locations were subject to military call-up.³⁹ The Attorney-General's opinion on this point was that 'Any native not exempted.. [from Native Law] is under the power of the Supreme Chief ..' even if he was the servant of a white man.⁴⁰ The Acting RM, Umgeni, in January 1879, reported:

³⁷. NA 1/6/11 No. 62 Frere to Bulwer, 30 January 1879, Bulwer to Colonial Secretary, 30 January 1879.

³⁸. NCP 8/3/75 Natal Native Commission 1906 - 1907 Annexure p. 1008.

³⁹. NCP 8/5/14 Papers relating to the supply by Native chiefs of native labour on public works (hereafter cited as PNNL). Sir Theophilus Shepstone's memorandum, 28 September 1877.

⁴⁰. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1638 Attorney-General's opinion, 28 November 1879.

In carrying out the order they [the chiefs and headmen] were told to exhaust the locations first and then if the number was not complete to take unemployed natives from private land.⁴¹

By carrying out these instructions, the SNA ran the risk of antagonising white farmers. In 1881, W. Proudfoot, a farmer, stated that this was indeed the case during the Anglo-Zulu War, and 'this could not be permitted long. It would create great dissatisfaction among the farmers if it was often done.'⁴²

Some chiefs, in an effort to complete the numbers required, called up their adherents from other divisions. This action was queried, but it was pointed out that it was in order.⁴³ Chiefs and headmen punished or threatened to punish men who refused to obey the call-up, by fining them in cattle, because 'compulsion in one form or another is necessary, and .. unless they made some show of authority, the required number would not be forthcoming.'⁴⁴ The chiefs were then instructed not to fine men but to report them to a superior authority.⁴⁵

⁴¹. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1638 Acting RM, Umgeni to Acting SNA, 21 December 1878.

⁴². NCP 8/3/20 Evidence taken before the Natal Native Commission 1881, appointed 5 December 1881.

⁴³. SNA 1/6/11 No. 17 Comment of Acting SNA on minute of Lieutenant-Governor, 31 December 1878.

⁴⁴. SNA 1/6/11 No. 19 H.C. Campbell, Acting RM, Umgeni division to SNA, 2 January 1879.

⁴⁵. SNA 1/6/11 No.19 A Mitchell to SNA for Lieutenant-Governor, 17 January 1879.

Summary punishment by the chiefs to enforce obedience was therefore made impossible and the chiefs' lack of power widened the rift between them and their followers. Not only did chiefs have difficulty in locating enough men for their quota, but many of those men called up showed reluctance to obey the order. The raising of an efficient and well motivated army of levies was crucial to the success of Chelmsford's plans.

In negotiating rough terrain, horsemen would be invaluable to Chelmsford's three columns, because of their greater mobility. Far from showing the same unwillingness to serve as the foot-soldiers did, some of the African mounted men came forward willingly, for example the Hlongwe (Tlokwa) under Chief Hlubi from the Weenen district,⁴⁶ and Kholwa living on mission lands. In September 1878, Captain Barrow applied for thirty horsemen of 'the Basutu tribe under Chief Hlubi .. if required for active service in either this colony or country adjacent.'⁴⁷ The original return of 307 mounted 'natives' sent forward shows that, under the leadership of Captain Shepstone, there were fifty-two of Chief Hlubi's Tlokwa and fifty-two Edendale Kholwa. Also under Captain Shepstone were 157 of 'Sikhali's men' (Ngwane), while Major Barrow had, under his control, forty-six men from Chief Jantje (Mqundane) of the Ximba people.⁴⁸ The Ngwane and the Ximba men were from locations and therefore subject to the levy.

⁴⁶. NCP 7/1/27 Magistrate's report from Weenen county for 1879.

⁴⁷. SNA 1/1/32, No. 123 Report of Acting SNA on report of Captain Barrow, 27 September 1878.

⁴⁸. NCP 4/1/2/8 LC No. 9, 17 November 1879. Original return of Native Contingents; SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1611 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 18 December 1878. Acting SNA's list of mounted men for Middle or Fort Buckingham line, and Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford's return of 30 December 1878.

These horsemen received superior equipment and better treatment than the foot-soldiers, and this resulted in their greater self-respect, cohesion and higher morale. In addition, their being on horseback gave them an advantage over men on foot, as most of the Zulu were.

The military involvement of Natal levies has been well documented in a considerable body of edited and published contemporary accounts, letters and official compilations as well as in numerous recent secondary works. These have not been especially concerned with the extent of the unrelenting and callous exploitation of the African adult male population of Natal to serve as military levies and labourers during the Anglo-Zulu War. The opposition, by African men, to this exploitation may be indicated by the number of levies initially wrung from the African people of Natal in comparison with the early over-sanguine expectations of the number which could be raised.

Just as the original rule, that any military or labour levy should come from the ranks of unmarried men living in locations, had been waived in the raising of the isibhalo levy, so it was ignored in raising military levies for war against the Zulu. Even then, some chiefs and magistrates had difficulty in raising the levies called for. The RM, Umsinga, for example, complained that the RM, Weenen, had called out some of Chief Mganu's and Chief Phakade's men resident in Umsinga to make up their required numbers.⁴⁹ This may have arisen because most of Chief Ndomba's men in the Weenen district were not available as they lived on private farms or had gone to work on the diamond-fields or in

⁴⁹. SNA 1/1/33, 1879/19 RM, Weenen to Colonial Secretary, 23 November 1878.

other parts of the colony.⁵⁰ The objection to calling out men from other districts was swept aside, when the Acting SNA declared that ‘.. any chief has authority when ordered by the Supreme Chief to call out men of his tribe even should they be resident in another division.’⁵¹ By 11 January 1879, perhaps by poaching his men from other districts, Chief Phakade had raised more levies (732) than the 600 he was required to send forward.⁵²

In November 1878, the Acting SNA confidently reported that for service with the regular troops on the Lower or Coast Line, he could raise 2 000 men from the Inanda and Lower Tugela magistracies, of whom 500 each would come from the Chiefs Mqawe (Qadi) and Musi (Qwabe).⁵³ By the end of November only 866 men had come forward, including 313 from Mqawe and ninety-seven from Musi.⁵⁴ From the Weenen magistracy, of the 2 000 men called for, only 1 400 had come forward by 18 December 1878.⁵⁵

There were some men who came forward willingly for reasons other than loyalty to the Natal government. 1878 was a year of severe drought followed by torrential rains; and

⁵⁰. SNA 1/1/33, 1879/3 RM, Weenen to SNA, 13 January 1879.

⁵¹. SNA 1/6/11, No. 17 Report of Acting SNA on minute of Lieutenant-Governor of 31 December 1878.

⁵². SNA 1/1/33, 1879/3 RM, Weenen to SNA, 13 January 1879;
SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1678 RM, Weenen to SNA, 31 December 1878.

⁵³. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1501 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 18 November 1878.

⁵⁴. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1611 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 29 December 1878.

⁵⁵. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1678 RM, Weenen to SNA, 31 December, 1878.

cattle diseases, especially lung-sickness (bovine pleuropneumonia) and redwater, were rife.⁵⁶ Both crop-farmers and cattle-farmers faced hard times; and there was a land shortage.⁵⁷ Pay for levies, in cash and captured cattle, was an attractive prospect to men whose economic circumstances were uncertain.

A strong motivation for some of the chiefs who raised levies was their animosity towards the Zulu kingdom. Two such chiefs were Phakade kaMacingwane of the Mchunu people and Mkhungo kaMpande, whose hostility was of long standing. Macingwane, Phakade's father, had fled from Shaka. His sons, including Phakade, had returned to Zululand in Mpande's time, but Phakade, fearing persecution, fled into the Umsinga division of Natal towards the end of Dingane's rule.⁵⁸ Mkhungo, Mpande's son, escaped from Cetshwayo to Natal in the 1850s⁵⁹ and, after a period at Bishop Colenso's Bishopstowe mission station, became a chief in the Weenen district, where he was called upon to raise 300 levies.⁶⁰ Sikhota, his brother, who had also fled from Zululand, likewise brought levies from the Weenen district to join the 3rd NNC. Norris-Newman remarked on the hostility to Cetshwayo shown by his brothers Mkhungo and Sikhota of the isiQoza faction who

⁵⁶. S. Clarke, Zululand at War (Johannesburg, The Brenthurst Press, 1984), p. 16.

⁵⁷. Ibid., p. 37.

⁵⁸. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 267 - 273.

⁵⁹. Morris, Washing of the Spears, p. 199.

⁶⁰. SNA 1/1/31. 1878/1611 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 18 December 1878.

.. seemed only too anxious to get into Zululand and have a brush with their soi-disant and blood-thirsty relatives, Cetywayo and his warriors.⁶¹

Also motivated by hostility towards the Zulu were the 300 men of the inDluyengwe, led by their induna, Mvubi, who left for Natal after the quarrel between the inGobamakhosi and uThulwana regiments in January 1878 over the incorporation of the new draft into the latter ibutho.⁶² These men, called up by the Weenen magistrate,⁶³ formed companies 8, 9 and 10 of Hamilton-Browne's battalion of the NNC. The 8th company under Mvubi took a major part in the successful attack on Sihayo's stronghold in January 1879.⁶⁴

Durnford, in his memorandum,⁶⁵ had proposed detailed provisions for the equipment, training, pay and rations of the military levies. The realities of the situation were very different, and the short time available to make the levies battle-ready exacerbated the problems. Early in 1878, the Acting SNA advised that the levies should be armed with weapons with which they were familiar; and that they should be commanded by white men known to them, who would take an interest in their welfare.⁶⁶ A hundred men called up from Richmond were ordered to turn out in 'war' dress with shields and assegais.⁶⁷

⁶¹. SNA 1/6/11, 1878/16 Report of P. Paterson, RM, Weenen, 29 December 1878; Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 22.

⁶². Morris, Washing of the Spears, p. 324.

⁶³. SNA 1/1/33, 1879/3 RM, Weenen to SNA, 13 January 1879.

⁶⁴. Morris, Washing of the Spears, p. 324.

⁶⁵. Durnford, A Soldier's Life, Appendix A (Vide Appendix V).

⁶⁶. SNA 1/1/32, 1878/150 Report of Acting SNA on minute of His Excellency the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Forces, 3 October 1878.

⁶⁷. SNA 1/6/11 No. 13 Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Durnford to [illegible: possibly Assistant Military Secretary], 19 December 1878.

In thus arming the infantry levies inadequately, the seeds of poor morale, lack of cohesion and ineffective action were sown early. The subordinate status of the levies is made clear in this statement:

In order to reduce the risk of thus arming possible enemies, rifles were only issued to 10 per cent of the rank and file, while a strong white element of 95 officers and non-commissioned officers per battalion was introduced, and no use was made of the tribal organisation under which the natives are accustomed to dwell.⁶⁸

It would seem either that the fear of arming these men with firearms overrode any consideration of their effectiveness, or that the British and colonial military authorities were confident that their own fire-power was sufficient to make up for any deficiencies in these auxiliary troops. Also, the Zulu forces were underestimated. Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Harness, writing in 1880, makes this point clear:

It is certain that none of us valued, to its proper extent, the many military qualities possessed by this savage nation: their discipline, their undoubted bravery, their disregard for life, and their powers of endurance.⁶⁹

Although the short time between the mobilisation of the levies and the advance into Zululand was no doubt a contributory factor in the poor arming and equipping of the levies against the Zulu, this was no worse than it had been in previous actions when levies had been used against less powerful groups. Perhaps it is an indication that the Zulu were regarded as being not much more menacing than these groups.

The inadequacies of the equipment and rations provided for the levies placed them in a position where they were treated by some observers with ridicule and contempt. A jocular

⁶⁸. War Office, Narrative of Field Operations, p. 15.

⁶⁹. Clarke, Invasion of Zululand, Appendix F, p. 252.

and condescending tone is evident in descriptions of the levies, and reflects their generally shabby treatment. Lieutenant Coghill described the levies wading through the Mzinyathi (Buffalo) at Rorke's Drift with the mounted men as being 'amusing to look at .. with their shields, sticks, blankets, feathers and other paraphernalia entering the cold water..'70 The British infantrymen crossed on the punts. This derisory tone is repeated in a letter from an officer of the Natal Native Pioneers in describing, with some contradiction, the levies' rations:

Beef rations are issued to them monthly. They would eat up a whole bullock or two in one day, and then go without; they are not particular as to its being gamey, which in this hot climate it generally is.⁷¹

The 'ordinary and recognised' ration for one day for a hundred men was one full-sized beast.⁷² Here again, the levies were treated with contempt, as this was not made available to them, according to the Weenen men of the 3rd NNC, whose spokesmen were the Chiefs Mkhungo, Sikhota, Ndomba, Mganu and some representatives of Phakade.⁷³ These men complained that only a quarter of a beast was issued daily for 100 men, and a small pannikin of meal each,⁷⁴ and the butchers sold the offal instead of giving it to them.⁷⁵

70. As quoted in F. Emery, The Red Soldier (London, Hodder and Houghton, 1977), p. 72.

71. Anonymous officer of the Natal Native Pioneers writing for 'The North Devon Herald,' 22 May 1879, as quoted in Emery, Red Soldier, p. 53.

72. SNA 1/1/31, 1879/1641 RM, Upper Umgeni to SNA, 25 December 1878.

73. BPP C2318 No. 7 Report of Sir Henry Bulwer, 7 February 1879.

74. This meal, when cooked, formed a 'substantial porridge' (uphuthu). Emery, Red Soldier, p. 53.

75. BPP C2318 No. 9D Report of RM, Weenen county, 4 February 1879.

Pay in cash is recorded for the levies. On enlistment, Mganu's and Phakade's men from Umsinga were promised 20/- per month to serve in Commandant Lonsdale's contingent.⁷⁶ The Commissariat Department was to pay £3 per month for drivers and £1 10s for 'foreloopers' (ox-leaders) as well as their rations.⁷⁷ Men called up for the Pioneers, whether drivers, 'foreloopers' or labourers, were informed that they would be paid £1 per month. The Military Transport Department, however, paid more: drivers of Pioneer carts received from £3 to £5.⁷⁸ These rates were not markedly higher than the highest *isibhalo* monthly rate of 15/-⁷⁹ in 1875, and the 1873 waggon-driver's rate of £2 10s and ox-leader's rate of £1 5s per month.⁸⁰

The expectation of pay in cattle, which would certainly have been an incentive to serve, was evident when, after the Anglo-Zulu War, the Inanda magistrate, instructed to pass on the Supreme Chief's commendation to chiefs for their good work, reported that they mentioned captured cattle promised to them by J. Shepstone and a Mr. Drummond.⁸¹ This payment had not been forthcoming.

⁷⁶. SNA 1/1/33, 1878/548 RM, Umsinga to RM, Weenen, 6 March 1879.

⁷⁷. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1607 RM, Alexandra to SNA, 16 December 1878.

⁷⁸. SNA 1/1/35, 1879/2014. A.H. Hime, Colonial Engineer, to SNA, 27 October 1879.

⁷⁹. NCP 8/5/14 PNNL No. 19 Minute by Sir Henry Bulwer, undated, c. March 1878.

⁸⁰. *Ibid.*, PNNL Enclosure in No. 24, J. Bird to SNA, 6 March 1873.

⁸¹. SNA 1/1/35, 1879/2158 Comment by Inanda magistrate on Circular Minute from Supreme Chief, 24 October 1879.

The role of African levies in the expected conflict with the Zulus was perceived by Sir Michael Hicks Beach as being that of soldiers effectively drilled and equipped to provide for the defence of Natal against 'native attacks.'⁸² Chelmsford regarded them as 'troops in the field.'⁸³ Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford stated that the levies called out from Richmond, 'should be told they are Fighting Men,'⁸⁴ However, with little in the way of equipment or training to make them battle-ready, the African infantrymen were used mainly to reconnoitre;⁸⁵ to flush out the enemy and bring them to battle (as Lonsdale's Mfengu levies had been instructed to do in the Amathole mountains in March/April 1878);⁸⁶ to assist the Pioneer Corps in the making and repairing of roads;⁸⁷ to escort baggage waggons;⁸⁸ to seek out and pursue the fleeing enemy;⁸⁹ and to capture and round up enemy cattle.⁹⁰

82. BPP C2220 Sir Michael Hicks Beach to Lieutenant-Governor Sir Henry Bulwer, 21 November 1878.

83. BPP C2318 Frere to Hicks Beach, 21 February 1879. Enclosure No. 6 Chelmsford to Frere, 31 January 1870, p. 7.

84. SNA 1/6/11 No. 13 Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Durnford to [illegible: possibly Assistant Military Secretary], 19 December 1878.

85. War Office, Narrative of Field Operations, pp. 26, 29, 40; Major W. Ashe and Captain E.V. Wyatt-Edgell, The Story of the Zulu Campaign (Constantia, N & S Press, 1989; originally published 1880), p. 44.

86. P. Gon, The Road to Isandlwana (Johannesburg, A.D. Donker, 1979), p. 157.

87. Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 43.

88. Ashe and Wyatt-Edgell, Zulu campaign, p. 43.

89. War Office, Narrative of Field Operations, p. 36.

90. Ibid., p. 30;
Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 47.

The report on the disbanding of Lonsdale's 3rd Regiment, NNC, reveals the levies' own expectations and their perceptions of their role, and their grievances when these were not realised. Their spokesmen indicated their expectations with regard to looted cattle, but '... when they captured cattle and asked for some to kill and eat, according to their custom, they were refused.'⁹¹

After their disbandment, the 3rd NNC cited further reasons for discontent with their role and conditions of service. Grievances of this nature may well have been common to most of the levies employed as foot-soldiers, and they would undoubtedly have affected their morale. They declared that they could not understand the officers' orders since many of these spoke no Zulu. The men were punished by flogging of from six to twenty lashes for urinating or washing at certain places, although they had heard no orders concerning these matters.

Further complaints by the Weenen men of the 3rd NNC revealed that they were deployed into Zululand in conflict with their own traditions but without their being absorbed into the European military milieu. What drill was attempted was incomprehensible and pointless to them; their own system of fighting was ignored as was their explanation of Zulu fighting tactics; and when out in the field the men were divided into small units and dispersed, making them more vulnerable. They were not allowed to kill wounded men.⁹²

⁹¹. BPP C2318 No. 9D RM, Weenen's report on the 3rd NNC, 4 February 1879.

⁹². Ibid.

The 3rd NNC men from Klip River made similar statements regarding their reasons for returning home after Isandlwana.⁹³

Hurried into the Zulu campaign with little training and equipment, organised in unfamiliar ways by European officers and non-commissioned officers, it is surprising that Lonsdale's 3rd NNC levies acquitted themselves reasonably well in the attack on Chief Sihayo's homestead. Commandant G. Hamilton-Browne's 1st Battalion (four companies of Chief Mganu's Thembu, and three companies of the isiQoza faction) was to lead the assault, with four companies of the 1st battalion, 24th Regiment, under Captain W. Degacher, supported by Commandant Cooper's 2nd battalion, 3rd NNC (six companies of Phakade's Mchunu).

Cooper's men arrived after the main action was over, and were then employed in burning Chief Sihayo's umuzi and rounding up about 200 head of cattle.⁹⁴ After this first onslaught, No. 8 company of Mvubi's Zulu, led by Captains Dunscombe and Murray,⁹⁵ under Commandant Howard-Browne, kept up a constant fusillade. Chief Sihayo's Zulu retreated into caves and poured out a heavy fire which broke No. 8 company's line and many of them 'turned and ran'. This last statement suggests low morale, but, of the casualties, two levies were killed and sixteen wounded (only two white men were

⁹³. SNA 1/1/33, 1878/148 RM, Klip River to SNA, forwarding levies' reasons for 'desertion', 3 February 1879.

⁹⁴. I. Knight, Zulu: Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift 22nd - 23rd January 1879 (London, Windrow and Green, 1992), p. 11; Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 38.

⁹⁵. Morris, Washing of the Spears, p. 324.

wounded) and minor casualties 'occurred exclusively among the Native Contingent',⁹⁶ which suggests that the NNC were in the forefront of battle.

From the commencement of hostilities against the Zulu, the difference in the morale of the African infantrymen and their mounted counterparts was marked. In the case of the horsemen their higher morale may be ascribed to their greater motivation (as far as the Kholwa volunteers were concerned) and their better equipment, as well as their more sympathetic leadership by such men as Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford, Captain George Shepstone and Lieutenant Davies.

Norris-Newman described the Kholwa from Edendale, under Lieutenant Davies, as fine-looking and well mounted, with their own tents, horses and saddles, but with the rest of their kit supplied by the government. These men, he wrote, 'did most excellent service.. they were all armed with breech-loading rifles; and this, together with the fact of being mounted, gave them the confidence which the others always lacked.' He added that Captain Barton's Hlongwe horsemen (Chief Hlubi's men) '.. did not look as smart as Lieutenant Davies's troop.'⁹⁷

If contemporary photographs and reliable written evidence are to be trusted, the following description of the African infantrymen appears to be erroneous and must refer to mounted men:

⁹⁶. Norris-Newman, *In Zululand*, pp. 39, 40.

⁹⁷. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 27.

It is a great error to suppose that these were without arms, dress or discipline. On the contrary, a great many of them came to us well armed with serviceable-looking rifles .. their uniform was neat and .. workmanlike, and consisted of a corduroy tunic, or rather patrol jacket, and breeches, with long boots of untanned leather, and a broad-leafed sombrero as a head-dress.⁹⁸

A contemporary photograph of a group of thirteen NNC levies⁹⁹ (possibly from Bengough's 2nd battalion, 1st Regiment) shows men more typical of African infantrymen. All of the men in the group are in traditional dress, all with shields, all with assegais, only two with firearms (but not bandoliers) and nine of the men have rags tied around their foreheads (these were no doubt the red rags issued to all levies, to distinguish them from the Zulu). Eight of the men were head-ringed, i.e. married homestead heads, which confirms the fact that the Natal government had long abandoned the principle of calling on only unmarried men to provide isibhalo labour and military service.

The morale of the African infantrymen has been slightly referred to in many primary and secondary sources. As they approached the Zululand border for the first invasion they were understandably nervous. As the 3rd NNC of No. 3 column drew near to the Helpmekaar camp, the British forces, marching through dense fog, were constantly on the alert and the levies, according to Norris-Newman, 'were rather apprehensive of meeting any large body of Zulus who might perhaps have crossed over the Border and be prowling about.' Nevertheless, Norris-Newman showed admiration for the more usual cheerfulness of the 3rd NNC on the march:

⁹⁸. Ashe and Wyatt-Edgell, Zulu campaign, pp. 24 - 25.

⁹⁹. M. Barthorp, The Zulu War: a pictorial history (Poole, Blandford Press, 1980), p. 34.

Very few horses can walk with them, and it is capital fun marching with a lot, as they are not only amusing in their manners and speech, but are also constantly enlivening the march by war songs, extempore and otherwise.¹⁰⁰

On the night of the 21 - 22 January, the force of Natal Mounted Police and other colonials under Major J.G. Dartnell and sixteen companies of Lonsdale's 3rd NNC¹⁰¹ were bivouacked on the eastern slope of the Hlazakazi heights. The men were tired and had no blankets or food: a recipe for low morale. On the opposite hill (Magogo) a large number of Zulus held a strong position, with many fires blazing. Within the British hollow square formed on three sides by the 3rd NNC and on the fourth by the Mounted Police and Volunteers, with horsemen in the centre, the men were tense. At about midnight, a few shots from an outlying picket led to a rush of No. 1 company, 1st battalion 3rd NNC, who trampled across the square and stampeded the horses. Men of the other battalion on the opposite side '... stood firm and freely used their assegais.'¹⁰² A further minor alarm took place during the night. The majority of the NNC men had stood firm.

With the main body of No. 3 column, augmented by the forces of the No. 2 column under Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford, in the vicinity of Isandlwana camp, there were two companies of the 1st battalion, 1st NNC (240 men), two companies of the 1st battalion, 3rd NNC (200 men) and two companies of the 2nd battalion, 3rd NNC (200 men):¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰. Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 30.

¹⁰¹. Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰². Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰³. War Office, Narrative of Field Operations, p. 156.

640 infantry levies in all. By 1 p.m. on 22 January, the Zulu attack being at its height, all the British and colonial forces were ranged in defensive order in an arc facing away from the Isandlwana mountain. Captain R. Younghusband's company was north of the mountain, with Captain W.E. Mostyn's and Lieutenant C.W. Cavaye's companies to their right and Lieutenant C.D'A. Pope's company farther right of the line. Mounted men left behind in the camp and those who had retreated with Durnford to a defensive position were beyond Pope to the south-east. Two companies of the NNC were on Cavaye's right and the 'remainder of the Native Contingent was somewhat in the rear of the defensive line, and was to have been employed to pursue the enemy when recoiling from the attack..'

Far from recoiling, the Zulu advance 'continued steadily and without check or halt.' Soon after 1 p.m. the Zulu ranks, outnumbering the defenders by six to one, were within 180 metres of the NNC men 'who then turned and fled.'¹⁰⁴ Earlier, when the Zulu left horn overwhelmed Major F.B. Russell's rocket battery, Captain C. Nourse's No. 4, D company, 1st battalion, 3rd NNC, sent out in escort, were far behind and returned to the camp at the double.¹⁰⁵ When the Zulu forces reached the camp, Captain Krohn's No. 6 company, 1st battalion, 3rd NNC, in front of the tents, fled.¹⁰⁶ In the last Zulu rush No. 9 company, 1st battalion, 3rd NNC under Captain J.F. Lonsdale were ordered to retire. With Lieutenant Pope's C company of the 2nd battalion, 24th Regiment, they

¹⁰⁴. Ibid., pp. 35 - 36.

¹⁰⁵. Morris, Washing of the Spears, pp. 360 - 368.

¹⁰⁶. Knight, Zulu, pp. 84, 85.

formed a new line and made a brief stand with Captain C.A. Erskine's No. 4 company, 2nd battalion, 3rd NNC (Phakade's men) and the Ngwane.¹⁰⁷

They then joined the fugitives streaming down towards the Manzimyama river. The Ngwane, horse and foot, fell back, while Captain Barry's Mchunu (Phakade's men) of No. 5 company, 2nd battalion, 3rd NNC stood firm until the Zulu were about 275 metres away, then fled.¹⁰⁸ Colonel Bray's report, gathered from fugitives the next day, declared, 'The Natal Native Contingent, both horse and foot, retired fighting but were overpowered by the Zulus.'¹⁰⁹

The African infantrymen, at a severe disadvantage, since only one man in ten had a firearm and only five rounds of ammunition, can hardly be blamed for taking to their heels. The mounted men of the Natal Native Mounted Contingent from Durnford's No. 2 column, were as we have seen, much better equipped in every way to present a more resolute face, and this they did.

P.S. Thompson has described how the three units, comprising three troops of Ngwane ('Sikhali's Horse') under their induna Nyanda (Zikhali's son) and led by Lieutenants C.D. Raw, J.A. Roberts and R.W. Vause; one troop of Hlongwe Sotho under their chief, Hlubi,

¹⁰⁷. Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰⁸. J. Laband (introducer), D.C.F. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War (Constantia, N & S Press, 1988; first published 1879), pp. 25 - 30
The Mchunu lost 240 men, including Gabangaye, Phakade's son; the Ngwane 103. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, p. 69.

¹⁰⁹. BPP C2252 Enclosure 5 in No. 21 Colonel Bray's report, 23 January 1879.

and Lieutenant A.F. Henderson; and one troop of Edendale Kholwa under Sergeant-Major Simeon Kambule and led by Lieutenant H.D. Davies, 'preserved their organization, helped cover the retreat of the disorganized troops, and retarded the pursuit of the enemy.'¹¹⁰

At Nyezane on 22 January 1879, the same day as the Isandlwana battle, the African levies in Colonel C.K. Pearson's No. 1 column initially behaved creditably in battle, but were hampered by their inadequate weaponry. Having led the column, a company of the 2nd Regiment, NNC, dispersed Zulu scouts on Majja's hill. Later, when a large body of Zulu appeared on the hill about 365 metres away and directed a heavy fire on them, they 'could make no effective reply as only ten in the company, besides the European non-commissioned officers, carried rifles ..,' and the company beat a 'hasty retreat.'¹¹¹

Not all retreated, however. Four NNC men died. Pearson reported that few of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the NNC could give orders in Zulu. Presumably basing his statement on information received from other NNC levies, he reported:

.. it is feared that these men who lost their lives by gallantly holding their ground, did so under the impression that it was the duty of the contingent to fight in the first line, instead of scouting only, and after an engagement, to pursue.¹¹²

110. P.S. Thompson, 'A Fighting Retreat: The Natal Native Mounted Contingent after Isandlwana' in Journal of Natal and Zulu History, volume XIII, 1990 - 91, pp. 27 - 31 *passim*.

111. War Office, Narrative of Field Operations, pp. 23, 24.

112. Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 289 Appendix C Colonel Pearson to Military Secretary to His Excellency the High Commissioner, 23 January 1879; Ashe and Wyatt-Edgell, Zulu campaign, p. 40.

This hardly suggests low morale in spite of the levies' disadvantages. After the battle, with some companies of the British 3rd Regiment (the Buffs), the 99th Regiment and the cavalry, the NNC assisted in dispersing the enemy.¹¹³

The disaster to British arms at Isandlwana on 22 January was not only viewed with horror by the survivors but also with dread by the whole Colony. Chelmsford, reporting on the defeat, wrote:

The effect of this disaster throughout the Colony has already shown itself, and the European colonials generally are in great alarm.

The result of this had been to produce a similar effect upon the native mind, and our Native Contingents are beginning to lose heavily by desertion.¹¹⁴

Ripples were felt everywhere. The RM, Umsinga, was unable to supply twelve men to work the punts at Rorke's Drift because 'the natives have been in a state of panick (sic) ..'¹¹⁵ Norris-Newman reported that he found large numbers of government and hired baggage waggons stuck at Mooi River because drivers and ox-leaders refused to go forward after hearing the 'alarming reports' from Native Contingent fugitives from Isandlwana who 'had created almost a panic along their road of flight.'¹¹⁶

The 3rd NNC who had been with Hamilton-Browne and had missed the main battle at Isandlwana, were ordered on their arrival at Rorke's Drift, to man the pickets behind the

¹¹³. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, pp. 97 - 98.

¹¹⁴. BPP C2252 Enclosure 2 in No. 22 Chelmsford to Secretary of State for War, 27 January 1879.

¹¹⁵. SNA 1/1/33, 1879/110 SNA to RM, Umsinga, 23 January 1879.

¹¹⁶. Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 72.

mission station while their white officers and non-commissioned officers were entrenched behind the barricades. Many of the 3rd NNC had deserted by morning, and Commandant Lonsdale disbanded the rest. Their meagre kit, except for their blankets, was taken from them.¹¹⁷ Early in February 1879, their grievances were aired¹¹⁸ and some of these were redressed.

Considerable official correspondence followed Glyn's statement that the 3rd NNC had deserted at Rorke's Drift, followed by the hospital bearers.¹¹⁹

Bulwer's minute gave possible reasons for this action which included the depressing effects of the Isandlwana disaster and the cavalier treatment of the levies at Rorke's Drift.¹²⁰ He evaded the underlying causes of the low morale of the NNC: poor leadership, training and equipment; as did Chelmsford. Bulwer and Chelmsford were side-tracked into an acrimonious discussion about the respective merits and demerits of the 'tribal' and British military organisation.¹²¹

¹¹⁷. BPP C2318 Enclosure No. 4 Bulwer to Frere, 29 January 1879.

¹¹⁸. Ibid., No. 9D, RM, Weenen's report on the 3rd NNC, 4 February 1879.

¹¹⁹. Ibid., Enclosure No. 1 Glyn to Chelmsford, 24 January 1879.

¹²⁰. Ibid., Enclosure No. 4 Bulwer to Frere, 29 January 1879.

¹²¹. Ibid., Enclosure No. 5 Frere to Chelmsford, 30 January 1879; Enclosure No. 6 Chelmsford to Frere, 31 January 1879.

Bulwer and Chelmsford also made much of the men's fears for their 'homes and families'¹²² and their anxiety about 'their property and belongings.'¹²³ This line of thought was pursued when a meeting was called of Major-General Lloyd and the RM of Weenen County with the Chiefs Mkhungo, Sikhota (a survivor of the Isandlwana battle), Chiefs Ndomba and Mganu and some representatives of Chief Phakade whose men had belonged to the disbanded 3rd NNC. There now appeared to be a new use to be made of the levies which would find them better motivated than they had been in the first invasion of Zululand: the border chiefs were to be involved in strengthening the defences of the Natal/Zululand border.

The chiefs, on being consulted on the matter of preventing a possible inroad of Zulu into their territory, declared 'they would resist any invasion to the utmost..' and asked that they be allowed to fight 'in their own way,' with the assistance of a few white leaders who would understand them; and they requested that they be supplied with arms and ammunition. Lloyd responded to the chief's requests by suggesting a constant watch on the Natal/Zululand border. As a result, Chief Phakade's men were to guard the left bank of the Mpofana (Mooi) river to its junction with the Thukela. Chiefs Ndomba, Mganu, Mkhungo and Faku (of Weenen county) would form a continuous chain along the Thukela, from Colenso to the crossing of the Greytown and Newcastle roads.¹²⁴ No doubt, having seen the Zulu in action, these men would be more resolute in defence of their homes than they had been in attack.

¹²². Ibid., Enclosure No. 1 Bulwer to Chelmsford, 24 January 1879.

¹²³. Ibid., Enclosure No. 6 Chelmsford to Frere, 31 January 1879.

¹²⁴. Ibid., Enclosure in No. 7 Bulwer's minute, 7 February 1879.

The first phase of the use of levies by the British and Natal authorities during the Anglo-Zulu War ended with the salutary lesson of Isandlwana. Mistakes made were identified: the Zulu had been underestimated and could not be opposed by levies on foot, whose morale was low because their leadership, training and equipment were inadequate; nor should these African foot-soldiers be used as front-line troops. The emphasis should now be placed on mounted troops and auxiliaries. Regulations were now clearly laid down for their leadership, conditions of service, pay, rations, equipment, compensation for the loss of horses, and even badges, instead of the haphazard and inefficient arrangements which had existed since levies had first been raised in the 1840s. As a result, the Natal levies performed more effectively in the second phase of the Anglo-Zulu War.

CHAPTER IX

The changing role of the military levies during the second phase of the Anglo-Zulu War; the First and Second Anglo-Boer Wars; and Bambatha's 'Rebellion'

The second invasion of Zululand during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 ushered in a new phase in the use of African levies from Natal. In view of the Isandlwana experience, it was necessary for the Imperial government to provide larger numbers of British troops to bring the war to a successful conclusion,¹ and ensure the imposition of colonial government throughout the Zululand-Natal area. Less reliance was to be placed on African levies whose role was now regarded in a different light.

In the nervous months following the Isandlwana rout, the folly of expecting efficient martial action from poorly armed and untrained levies had become clear. Measures were taken locally along the Mzinyathi (Buffalo) border to strengthen the levies, who were to be employed in defensive positions, with better arms and training. At Ladysmith, the RM, D. Moodie, drilled the African levies in the Laager Guard and trained them in the use of firearms. At Fort Bengough, built between Umsinga and Sandspruit, with a garrison of 1 000 men, which included levies, 300 more Martini-Henry rifles and 200 Sniders were issued, and rifle practice was introduced. At the end of March, Bulwer himself ordered

¹. In the first invasion, about 7 000 white troops and 9 000 African men were engaged; in the second invasion, some 15 660 and 6 885 respectively. Norris-Newman, *In Zululand*, pp. 4, 174.

that Enfield rifles be sent to the Umsinga border levies.² The 3rd battalion Natal Native Contingent at Kranskop was armed with Sniders and muzzle-loaders.³ The weakness in weaponry and training was at last addressed, but only to a limited extent, in strengthening the border defences. General regulations regarding these matters were still to be put into effect.

A major conflict of interests and opinions arose between Bulwer and Chelmsford regarding the control and use of the levies,⁴ especially in border defence and cross-border raids. The military objective was to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion; while the civil authority, reluctant to go to war in the first place, was more concerned about the immediate local consequences of the measures proposed by Chelmsford, and favoured a defensive stance only. Chelmsford, for his purpose, required full control over all combatants whether in Natal or Zululand, so that levies could, if necessary, raid into Zululand at his command. Bulwer, on the other hand, claimed that, as Supreme Chief and Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, he should retain authority over at least the District Commanders of the defensive districts, the Police and Border Guard, although he had surrendered authority over the NNC engaged in Zululand under Chelmsford.⁵

2. Laband and Thompson, The Buffalo Border, pp. 50, 54, 57.

3. War Office, Narrative, p. 170.

4. BPP C2318 Enclosure No. 4 Bulwer to Frere, 29 January 1879; Enclosure No. 6 Chelmsford to Frere, 31 January 1879.

5. Laband and Thompson, War Comes, pp. 45, 46.

Chelmsford continued to gnaw at the controversy over the respective merits and demerits of the tribal and regimental systems of organising the levies, and the question of who should ultimately be in command of the Natal levies involved in the war: the Lieutenant-Governor as Supreme Chief or Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford as military commander.⁶ This vacillation continued in spite of Frere's earlier directive that no more time should be lost. In addition, as far as the levies were concerned, Chelmsford was instructed to indicate what measures should be adopted by the colonial forces for defence, and to specify the levies whom the Natal government should call out for offensive purposes, *i.e.* for the second invasion of Zululand. Also, that he 'should describe the organisation and armament' he thought 'requisite in either case.'⁷

The question of who was in command of the levies was finally resolved when the Secretary of State for War, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, supported Chelmsford's claim and, on 19 May, declared that the full command of all troops, whether 'black or white,' lay with Chelmsford.⁸ The Lieutenant-General was later to change his views, relying on the additional African levies raised after Isandlwana to defend the border, while the First and Second Divisions of the British invasion force (which included the NNC and Mounted Volunteers) advanced against the Zulu.⁹

6. BPP C2318 Enclosure No. 13 Chelmsford's memorandum to Bulwer, 4 March 1879.

7. BPP C2318 Enclosure No. 13 Frere's memorandum. 20 February 1879.

8. Laband and Thompson, War Comes, p. 47.

9. War Office, Narrative, p. 61; Laband and Thompson, War Comes, p. 54.

There was clearly a need to call out further levies, but their role, organisation, equipment, pay and rations needed to be regularised and not be dependent upon ad hoc and localised decisions. Early in February, a Mr. Bowker advocated a levée en masse of the whole of the African [adult male] population in three divisions under major chiefs and other men of influence, led by white, Zulu-speaking officers, to defend the border and their own locations. Although Bowker's plan was for defence, not attack or invasion into Zululand, the Acting SNA, in his comments, wrote that those who fought in Zululand, might have a share in looted cattle.¹⁰

At the end of February, Arthur Mesham of the SNA's office put forward a more detailed but similar scheme designed to raise 48 000 levies.¹¹ Although the suggested number of levies which could be raised was put at too high a figure, Sir Henry Bulwer, as a result of Mesham's suggestions, required the SNA's office to draw up rules and regulations for 'the government of native levies,' and a regular scale of pay and rations.¹²

Within a few days this was carried out. The Acting SNA, J.W. Shepstone, issued regulations regarding pay: liberal for a European officer (the highest pay in this category was £1 10s per day and rations for himself and his horse for a commander of a 'native' corps of not less than 500, while the lowest pay was 10/- per day and rations for a European sub-leader of a 'tribe'). Pay for African levies who formed the rank and file

¹⁰. SNA 1/1/33, 1879/238 Mr Bowker's scheme; Acting SNA's comments, 6 February 1879.

¹¹. SNA 1/6/12, No. 31 Mesham's scheme for raising levies, 25 February 1879.

¹². SNA 1/6/12, No. 31 Lieutenant-Governor to Acting SNA, 1 March 1879.

was less generous: from £5 per month for a chief or headman to £2 per month for a mounted trooper and £1 per month for an ordinary levy on foot.¹³ These distinctions reflect ingrained British class as well as racial categories: officers and men, and white and African were not to receive equal treatment. Of course, the responsibility of an officer was greater than that of lesser ranks, and should presumably have been rewarded accordingly.

Rations of meat and meal for 'Native Officers' and 'Natives' were laid down by regulation, and were no longer dependent upon the whim of the commissariat. A chief or headman received 4 lbs (1.8 kg) of meat per day and 1½ lbs (681 grams) of meal, while 'each Native' received 1 lb (454 grams) of meat and 2 lbs (908 grams) of meal per day.¹⁴ Badges and equipment for levies remained minimal: red bands around their heads; guns or assegais and shields; blankets or greatcoats; and cooking pots.¹⁵ The Acting SNA (A. Mesham at this time) issued regulations for the 'Internal Government of any Native Corps or Tribe.' He devoted three paragraphs to their leadership and organisation, and laid down procedures to deal with any complaints. The second and larger portion of the document dealt with punishment to be meted out to levies in the event of

¹³. SNA 1/6/14, No. 33 Regulations for the pay of European officers, native officers, and natives of the Natal Native Levies while on active service. J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 4 March 1879.

¹⁴. SNA 1/6/13 Enclosure in No. 4 Regulations regarding the rations to be supplied to the 'Native Officers' and 'Natives' of the Natal Native Levies while on active service. J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 4 March 1879.

¹⁵. SNA 1/6/13 Enclosure in No. 4 Regulations for badges, equipment, etc. J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 4 March 1879.

neglect of duty or misconduct.¹⁶ Mesham's recipe for an efficient, professional force was concerned with punitive measures rather than incentives or training.

Investigations after Isandlwana into complaints made by levies and the realisation of their ineffectual use made it clear to the authorities that no victory over the Zulu would be possible if the army had to rely on African levies equipped and organised as they had been during the first invasion of Zululand. Frere, Bulwer and Chelmsford were among those involved in considering improvements in arms, pay and compensation for the loss of horses.

Bulwer maintained that 'a far larger proportion of men must be armed with firearms in fighting against the Zulus.'¹⁷ Colonel A.H. Mitchell wrote that 1 700 more Enfields were being obtained from the Cape to arm levies, but he inclined to the view that 'the assegai is a more deadly weapon than the firearm in native hands.'¹⁸ He took no cognisance of the report that he himself had forwarded to the High Commissioner, which stated that a large number of Ngwane footmen of Zikhali's chiefdom had been marched into action at Isandlwana armed only with assegais which they had had no opportunity of using and that they had therefore been only targets for the enemy.¹⁹

16. SNA 1/6/14 Enclosure in minute paper No. 45 Regulations for the Internal Government of any Native Corps, or Tribe, that is called out for Active Service. A Mesham, Acting SNA, 8 March 1879.

17. BPP C2318 Enclosure in No. 12, p. 16 Bulwer to Colonial Secretary, 17 February 1879.

18. *Ibid.*, A.H. Mitchell, Corresponding Secretary to Frere, 18 February 1879.

19. *Ibid.*, Enclosure No. 12 A.A. Allison, RM, Upper Tugela to Colonial Secretary, 7 February 1879.

After Mitchell had made his statement, Sir Henry Bulwer also doubted the efficacy of firearms rather than assegais in the hands of levies, although he conceded that the possession of firearms gave the men more confidence.²⁰

Mitchell also reported an increase in pay and presumed that those who had lost horses would be compensated,²¹ as indeed they were from the end of April. However, again there were distinctions between rates paid to European officers (£20), 'native officers' (£15) and 'natives' (£10) for horses lost by death in action, by accident or sickness.²²

Towards the end of March, Frere summed up the role and capabilities of the levies as he saw them, reducing them to auxiliaries only, and not front line troops:

... they can be disciplined to act with European troops, and to be most efficient as light troops to skirmish, to examine difficult ground and thick cover, to feel positions, and to act as outlying posts and prevent surprises.

But to stand an attack of overwhelming numbers they are of course not equal to Europeans.²³

Since there was no marked overall improvement in the levies' arms, incentives and training, their role had to be modified. Frere's analysis of this role did not, however, include one aspect which became evident as the second invasion advanced: the pursuit of

²⁰. Ibid., Enclosure No. 17 Bulwer to Frere, 7 March 1879.

²¹. Ibid., Enclosure No. 12 A.H. Mitchell, Corresponding Secretary to Frere, 18 February 1879.

²². SNA 1/6/14 No. 47 J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 30 April 1879.

²³. BPP C2367 No. 7, p. 13 Frere to Hicks Beach, 24 March 1879.

the fleeing enemy and the killing of the wounded. Another use made of the levies is clear from this statement:

Two companies of natives made up the force, which perhaps was the largest patrol ever furnished in this war for such a duty as the burning of kraals.²⁴

When the news of the Isandlwana debacle reached Britain, reinforcements were sent from the United Kingdom, Ceylon, St. Helena and Mauritius to strengthen Chelmsford's forces, the first troops leaving from February 1879. A total of 9 548 officers and men arrived in Natal during March and early April and some 866 reached Durban only on 4 June.²⁵ While, in the first invasion of Zululand, 44% of the troops had been white and 56% African, this proportion, in consequence of these reinforcements, was very different in the second invasion, being 69% and 31% respectively.²⁶ Chelmsford's plea for reinforcements received a response so overwhelming that transport and supply became major problems;²⁷ and the new emphasis on 'white troops underlined the distrust in our native levies'²⁸ arising from their relatively poor performance in Glyn's column.

The arrival of the reinforcements provided a considerable stiffening for Chelmsford's army in the second invasion of Zululand. No doubt his hopes were high that victory would be achieved and the Isandlwana memory blurred by a preponderantly British and white

24. Ashe and Wyatt-Edgell, The Story, p. 329.

25. War Office, Narrative, Appendix B.

26. Norris-Newman, In Zululand, pp. 4, 174.

27. J. Mathews, Lord Chelmsford and problems of transport and supply during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1879.

28. Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 103.

colonial army. However, Chelmsford was to find out that extreme nervousness of the expected ferocity of the Zulu was not confined to the African levies from Natal, and that, on the contrary, these levies fought effectively when well armed.

On 12 March, not long before the bulk of the reinforcements began to arrive, Lieutenant H.H. Harward of the 80th Regiment, by no means a raw recruit, galloped off to Luneburg, ostensibly to obtain reinforcements, when his men were surprised by a large Zulu force on the banks of the Ntombe river. His explanation was accepted by the Court-Martial of 20 February 1880, and he was acquitted of cowardice. However, when the case came before Sir Garnet Wolseley for review, he recorded his disapproval of the verdict:

The more helpless the position in which an officer finds his men, the more it is his bounden duty to stay and share their fortune, whether for good or ill.²⁹

By 29 March, Chelmsford was ready to send two brigades to the relief of Eshowe, besieged since 23 January: the advance division under Lieutenant-Colonel Law, R.A, and the rear division under Lieutenant-Colonel Pemberton, 60th Rifles, with Chelmsford himself accompanying them. On their way to Eshowe, at the Gingindlovu battle of 2 April, in which these divisions were engaged, the NNC,³⁰ in their role as support troops and in pursuing the fleeing Zulu, behaved with considerable spirit. In the pursuit, Major Barrow's Mounted Infantry, using their sabres, were followed by the NNC on foot. After half an hour only wounded Zulu remained behind, 'most of whom,' wrote Norris-

²⁹. War Office, Narrative, pp.70 - 71 and footnote; Morris, The Washing, pp. 474 - 475.

³⁰. 800 men of the 4th Battalion and 1 200 men of the 5th Battalion. War Office, Narrative, Appendix A, p. 162.

Newman, 'were unfortunately killed by our natives.'³¹ By this time, the 4th Battalion NNC, at least, was armed with Martini-Henry rifles, which, wrote Norris-Newman, '... put them more on a footing of equality with the enemy, and certainly gave them more confidence and pluck.'³²

After the relief of Eshowe, which was effected on 3 April, Chelmsford's column started back towards the Thukela. Early on the morning of 6 April, a sentry of the 91st Regiment³³ fired a shot at what he thought were Zulu. A picket of the 60th Rifles³⁴ and some of John Dunn's scouts³⁵ raced back into the entrenchment. The men of the 60th Regiment within the fortification shot or bayoneted five of their own men and nine of Dunn's scouts.³⁶

Further examples of this kind of apprehension regarding the Zulu, especially after Isandlwana, were evident on other occasions, and were not confined to African levies from Natal. Lieutenant-Colonel Evelyn Wood wrote slightly of the African men under his command after the battles of Hlobane and Khambula:

³¹. Norris-Newman, *In Zululand*, p. 140; War Office, *Narrative*, p. 65; Moodie, *Moodie's Zulu War*, pp. 137, 140, 143.

³². War Office, *Narrative*, p. 170; Norris-Newman, *In Zululand*, p. 132.

³³. This regiment formed part of the reinforcements, arriving in Durban on 17 March. War Office, *Narrative*, Appendix B.

³⁴. Also new arrivals, on 20 March. War Office, *Narrative*, Appendix B.

³⁵. These were Zulu followers of the frontiersman, John Dunn, appointed as chief of the Intelligence Department. Norris-Newman, *In Zululand*, p. 110.

³⁶. War Office, *Narrative*, pp. 82 - 83; Moodie, *Moodie's Zulu War*, p. 142.

... I confess to being somewhat weary of struggling with demoralised Blacks who desert every time a Zulu dog barks..³⁷

These men with Wood have been confusingly identified as 'Native Contingent,'³⁸ which seems to indicate that they were levies of the NNC. In fact they were Wood's Irregulars, who were mainly Swazi, led by Major Leet and Commandant Loraine White; and Zulu defectors of Chief Hamu kaNzibe's people, under Lieutenant Williams.³⁹ They were employed in capturing cattle,⁴⁰ and, after the battle at Khambula on 29 March, in pursuing the fleeing Zulu, of whom 'great numbers were killed with assegais.'⁴¹ Also with Wood were seventy-four 'Mounted Basutos'⁴² (probably most of these were from Chief Hlubi's Hlongwe - Tlokwa -). These formed part of Lieutenant-Colonel Buller's force of 669 horsemen and were doubtless in the pursuit. They later acted with considerable courage at Ulundi.⁴³

By mid-April, most of the reinforcements from Britain and the colonies had arrived.⁴⁴

Further African levies and volunteers had been sent forward. It was now Chelmsford's

37. Colonel Evelyn Wood to Sir A. Horsford, 6 April 1879, as quoted in F. Emery, The Red Soldier (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), p. 176.

38. Ashe and Wyatt-Edgell, The Story, p. 21. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, pp. 107, 113, 114.

39. War Office, Narrative, Appendix C, pp. 159, 161.

40. Ibid., p. 75.

41. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, p. 113.

42. War Office, Narrative, Appendix C, p. 161.

43. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, p. 199. F. Emery, The Red Soldier, p. 236.

44. War Office, Narrative, Appendix B.

task to reorganise his forces, and to assign African horsemen, foot-soldiers and auxiliaries such as pioneers and waggon-drivers to various sections of his army. He divided his forces into new divisions. No. I Division (formerly the No. I or Coastal Column), under Major-General H.H. Crealock, consisted of two brigades, one at Gingindlovu and one on the lower Thukela. This division included some 2 000 men of the 4th and 5th battalions, NNC,⁴⁵ Jantze's Native Horse from Ixopo (from mid-May),⁴⁶ and Mafunzi's Mounted Natives,⁴⁷ as well as the 'Amazuma Corps' of fifty mounted men from Chief Lugaju's Nxamalala people, who owned numerous horses.⁴⁸ No. 4 Column under Wood became Brigadier-General Wood's Flying Column [Wood had been promoted], and now included Captain Cochrane's Natal Native Horse (117 men) from the Edendale Mission, and Captain Nolan's non-combatant Natal Native Pioneers (104 men) based initially at Khambula.⁴⁹ No. II Division, under Major-General Newdigate in the north, included 900 men of the 2nd Battalion NNC ('Bengough's Natives') and Shepstone's 'Basutos'.⁵⁰

45. Ibid., Appendix A, pp. 146 - 147.

46. Laband and Thompson, War Comes, p. 53.

47. War Office, Narrative, Appendix D, p. 169. 'Jantzi's' men can be identified as Ximba people of Chief Mgundane (or Mqundane), Chief Jantzi's successor. Vide., O.H. Spohr (ed), The Natal Diaries of Dr W.H.I. Bleek (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1965), p. 46, while 'Mafunzi's' men were those sent by Chief Hemuhemu of the Fuze people. Vide SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1611 RM, Umgeni's return of 'natives' who could be assembled, 20 February 1879; NCP 4/1/2/8 LC 9, p. 66. Original return of mounted 'natives', J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 17 November, 1879.

48. NCP 4/1/2/8 LC 9, p. 67. Further return of mounted 'natives', J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 17 November 1879; A.T. Bryant, History of the Zulu and neighbouring tribes (Cape Town, C. Struik, 1964), p. 58 - 59; SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1611 RM, Umgeni's return of number of natives who could be assembled, 20 February 1879.

49. War Office, Narrative, Appendix A, pp. 149 - 150.

50. Ibid., Appendix D, p. 169.

The Cavalry Brigade, eventually attached to the 2nd Division, was encamped near Lord Chelmsford's headquarters in Durban, and had 108 'natives attached,' listed as 'Amangwani Scouts' and 'Amatonga' (or Amaboma).⁵¹ These 'natives attached' were Ngwane and Bomvu respectively.⁵²

In the first invasion of Zululand, which led to the Isandlwana defeat of British and colonial troops; and their signal victory at Rorke's Drift, the British could afford to be supercilious about the comparison between the often poor morale of the African levies and the stand made by the seasoned troops, especially of the 24th Regiment, at both battles. These men had been welded together in their campaign in the eastern Cape. Major C.F. Clery, Staff Officer to Colonel Glyn, referring to the night scare of 21 - 22 January on the Hlazakazi heights, could write in February 1879:

The certainty that the first result of a night attack would be that our native allies would at once bolt was not reassuring. They fully confirmed this estimation of their character by actually attempting to do so when one of our guns went off by accident.⁵³

In the second invasion of Zululand many of the young soldiers, sent out to Natal with the flood of reinforcements for the British army, were untried raw recruits whose morale was suspect even when stiffened by the presence of veterans. Some of the veterans had already encountered the ferocity of the Zulu warriors, and no doubt stories of their warlike

⁵¹. Ibid., pp. 84 - 85. Appendix A, pp. 146 - 151; Appendix D, pp. 168 - 169.

⁵². NCP 4/1/2/8 LC 9, p. 67. Further return of mounted 'natives,' J.W. Shepstone, Acting SNA, 17 November 1879.

⁵³. Clarke, Zululand, p. 86. Major C.F. Clery to Colonel Harman, 17 February 1878 [sic., should read 1879].

propensities lost nothing in the telling when related to the new arrivals. It is not surprising that Frank Russell remarked after Ulundi:

What strikes one more than anything is the extraordinary funk which the Zulus inspired between Isandlwana and Ulundi. After the disaster there seems to have been utter prostration..⁵⁴

The young recruits and the NNC were blamed for several night scares which occurred while the British and colonial troops were advancing on Ulundi. It would appear, however, that senior officers were not immune to the general nervous apprehension. Major C.F. Clery, at this time staff officer to Wood, writing from 'Fort Funk' [Fort Newdigate] described a 'disgraceful scare' on 6 June. In this incident heavy firing from both artillery and infantry came from the pickets whose field officer had ordered the firing of volleys, and from N. Battery, 6th Brigade, RA, whose commanding officer, Major F.L. Le Grice, had ordered his battery to open fire.⁵⁵ Frightened transport mules, plunging about in the laager, added to the confusion, which had been caused by clouds crossing the moon 'which had somewhat the appearance of advancing bodies of men..⁵⁶

With the men's nerves on edge, it is not surprising that, as they moved nearer to Ulundi, further night alarms took place. One such occurred on 1 July. A sentry fired at NNC officers returning from visiting their outposts. The shots alarmed the NNC outside the laager, and they rushed in naked over men of the 24th, who took them for Zulu. The

⁵⁴. Ibid., p. 267. Frank Russell to Sir Archibald Alison, 31 July 1879.

⁵⁵. Ibid., p. 206. Major C.F. Clery to Sir Archibald Alison, 17 May [should read June] 1879.

⁵⁶. I. Bennett, Eyewitness in Zululand (London, Greenhill Books, 1989), p. 103. Campaign Reminiscences of Colonel W.A. Dunne.

young soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 24th Regiment, left their position and got under the waggons.⁵⁷ A similar alarm took place on the night of the 3 - 4 July, not surprisingly, since the Zulu were heard all night 'singing war songs and making a curious weird humming noise, firing guns, etc.'⁵⁸ enough to unsettle the strongest nerves.

The blame for the low morale of part of the invading army was laid on the presence of untried young men who had arrived with the reinforcements; and to the short-service system. In order to encourage volunteers, Lord Cardwell, Secretary of State for War, in his Army Enlistment Act of 1870, had provided for enlistment for twelve years: six with the colours and six with the reserve, although men living in Britain could pass into the reserve after only three years. Earlier, enlistment had been for ten years, with the option of serving twenty-one years in order to qualify for a pension.⁵⁹

Major C.F. Clery declared that 'the young soldiers who have recently come out are in a mortal funk of the Zulus.'⁶⁰ Major Robinson wrote '.. one could not help feeling that the young soldiers were unwholesomely afraid of a sudden night attack.'⁶¹ Again, on

⁵⁷. Emery, Red Soldier, p. 222. Lieutenant-Colonel J.T.B. Brown, Royal Artillery Journal, 1885, pp. 146 - 158; Clarke, Zululand, p. 231. J.N. Crealock to Sir Archibald Alison, 2 July 1879; Norris-Newman, In Zululand, p. 209.

⁵⁸. Clarke, Zululand, p. 237. Major C.W. Robinson to Maud Lefroy, 6 July 1879.

⁵⁹. C. Barnett, Britain and her army, 1509 - 1970 (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 280, 304.

⁶⁰. Clarke, Zululand, p. 206. Major C.F. Clery to Sir Archibald Alison, 17 May [sic, should read June] 1879.

⁶¹. Ibid., Major C.W. Robinson to Maud Lefroy, 6 July 1879.

8 July, Major Clery wrote to Alison about the evident weaknesses of the new draft: ‘... the exceedingly low morale of our young soldiers and all those in the new regiments out here.’ He put this down ‘to their being so very young and having no nucleus of old soldiers to form their characters on..’ He also blamed the system of laagering every camp, adopted since Isandlwana, as ‘.. the reinforcements .. have been taught to consider themselves in danger whenever they were outside strong entrenchments.’⁶²

Other critics, analysing the situation later, also deplored the short-service system and the quality of the new arrivals, some of whom, it appears, arrived independently. Not only were the regular army men affected by them, but also the African levies, according to Frank Russell. He wrote:

Every sort of scapegrace and ne'er-do-well in England seems to have turned up here, and nearly all got employment in the native levies or elsewhere, and to this I trace very much the failure of the auxiliaries..

He deplored the short-service system and the

horrid practice of filling up regiments by volunteers from others. They are always the scrapings who have no esprit de corps and come to regiments where they are known neither to officers nor to non-commissioned officers..⁶³

Captain C. Lacon Harvey added his voice to this disapproval of ‘The evil of young soldiers..’ and maintained:

⁶². Ibid., C.F. Clery to Sir Archibald Alison, 8 July 1879.

⁶³. Ibid., Frank Russell to Sir Archibald Alison, 31 July 1879.

An army constituted entirely of short-service volunteers without the tone and individuality which general conscription gives to it, cannot I believe, be a reliable force.⁶⁴

Even harsher criticisms of the morale of the young, short-service British soldiers were recorded. They were described as

raw, sickly, unseasoned and untutored boys, who, being the sweepings of half the regiments in her Majesty's service, could not possibly have any feeling of communion, or traditional sympathy, with the corps into which, before a formidable enemy, they found themselves pitchforked... they had the appearance of a mongrel pack, unused to discipline, and useless in the field...⁶⁵

The reasons for the poor morale of the new recruits in the British reinforcements were thus given: fear of the Zulu, their youth, their inexperience in war, the short-service system which partly accounted for their inexperience and for the lack of the steadying influence of long-serving men and of *esprit de corps* as the men were not known to officers and non-commissioned officers in regiments into which they were newly drafted.

Except for the matter of youth, all these characteristics can be seen in the African levies and the system which enlisted them. Some, from personal experience, had good reason to fear the Zulu. Called up for a brief period before hostilities began, and given minimal training, they were inexperienced in war itself, as well as being unfamiliar with its discipline and rationale as waged by the British. Their service was short indeed, being the few months of the duration of the war. The only veterans among them were those who had served, very briefly, as levies against chiefdoms, especially the Hlubi, who had

⁶⁴. *Ibid.*, Captain C. Lacon Harvey, 71st to Sir Archibald Alison, 4 August 1879.

⁶⁵. Ashe and Wyatt-Edgell, *The Story*, pp. 298 - 299.

fallen foul of the colonial authorities. When few officers and non-commissioned officers in command of the levies could speak Zulu, loyalty and esprit de corps could hardly be expected. The African infantry levies were not volunteers, as the British recruits were, but conscripts who were not always enthusiastic about the job in hand. However, even some of these, in spite of these disadvantages, came in for some praise. On reconnaissance towards Isandlwana, during the second invasion, the actions of Major Bengough's 'native' battalion (part of the 2nd Battalion, NNC) under Major Black are thus recorded: 'The manner in which Bengough's well-trained men scoured and scouted was most gratifying to observe'.⁶⁶

Again, in the second phase of the war, the mounted African troops, better equipped, armed and led than the African infantrymen, and with a record of successful enterprises in the past, performed military actions with panache. On the approach to the site chosen for the Ulundi battle, Buller's men of the Frontier Light Horse were 'well supported by Shepstone and his Basutos, who skirmished splendidly..'⁶⁷

Some of the horsemen of the Ixopo Native Contingent (hereafter cited as the INC) raised for border defence in March, proved to be an exception to the general rule that the morale of the mounted levies was higher than that of those on foot. Recruited from District No. 4 on the Mpondo border, they lived too far away from the Natal-Zulu border to have any pressing motivation in defending it.⁶⁸ They started with a flourish, but their enthusiasm

⁶⁶. Ibid., p. 253.

⁶⁷. Ibid., p. 345.

⁶⁸. Laband and Thompson, War Comes, pp. 42 - 44.

soon waned, and by the end of April, the RM, Ixopo, forwarded the roll of deserters from the INC: 253 footmen and 112 mounted men.⁶⁹ Once these men had returned home, the remaining INC levies, horse and foot, assisted, with some success, in defending the Natal-Zulu border and taking part in Major A.C. Twentyman's raid on 20 May.⁷⁰

At Ulundi, the last significant encounter of the Anglo-Zulu War, the steady training and discipline of even the short-service British troops, the importance of mounted troops, including African men, and the reduced role of the African infantry levies, were all evident. The Gatlings and heavy guns of the artillery were placed on the perimeter of the hollow rectangle formed on the open plain. In line with these were the British infantry companies in close formation preparatory to taking up the traditional positions of the British 'square'. Bengough's levies of the 2nd Battalion, NNC and Wood's Irregulars were in the centre of the rectangle, with the ammunition and tool carts and the 'Bearer Company' (presumably the Natal Pioneers and 'natives attached' to the medical corps). This formation moved forward shortly before 8 a.m. on 4 July, with the horsemen of Wood's Flying Column, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Buller; and the 17th Lancers and 1st Dragoon Guards under Colonel Drury-Lowe in support. By 9 a.m. all the mounted men had retired within the rectangle.⁷¹

Battle commenced when the Zulu advanced in their crescent attacking formation, and the artillery opened fire, followed by the ordered volleys of the British infantry. According

⁶⁹. SNA 1/6/14 No. 2 M. Stuart, RM, Ixopo to Acting SNA, 28 April 1879.

⁷⁰. Laband and Thompson, War Comes, pp. 56, 57, 60, 61.

⁷¹. War Office, Narrative, pp. 114, 115, 116, 164, 165.

to Archibald Forbes, 'Lads of the new regiments, who had never seen a shot fired in anger, were as cool as the seasoned veterans of the 13th and 80th.'⁷² Their discipline and drill stood them in good stead in a situation for which they had been trained.

When the Zulu attack began to falter, the horsemen prepared to act. Chelmsford ordered Drury-Lowe's men out of the 'square' in pursuit. The Zulu, faced with the terrifying charge of the arme blanche, were dispersed. Buller's men followed up the British cavalry and joined in the rout, picking off the fleeing Zulu.⁷³ Among them, the Natal Native Horse, under Captain W.F.B. Cochrane of the 32nd Light Infantry, who had fought with success at Hlobane and Khambula, now 'distinguished themselves .. by their dash.' They exceeded their duty when Colonel Buller ordered them to draw the Zulu closer to the 'square.' An account in the Cape Journal describes their exploits:

Instead of firing a few shots and falling back, they made a stand and poured volley after volley into the advancing masses of the enemy. When told to retreat they asked their officers what was now to become of them? They were under the impression that they had to remain outside the square, and wait patiently until they were all killed ... The Basutos retreated sullenly. They thought it would be more exciting to die fighting than when flying, but when they drew near the glittering line of bayonets and saw the veteran 13th open a way for them to enter into the square, they saw that they were not to be aimlessly sacrificed ... A few minutes after the Lancers swept out .. the Basutos dashed out..⁷⁴

The British cavalry and the African horsemen had thus played a vital role in winning the battle, and the latter certainly showed no signs of low morale.

⁷². As quoted in Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, p. 202.

⁷³. War Office, Narrative, p. 116.

⁷⁴. As quoted in Emery, Red Soldier, pp. 236 - 237.

Chelmsford's terse description of the role assigned to the African levies on foot indicates how much this role had been reduced. Having taken no active part in the battle proper, 'The Native Contingent forming a part of the garrison were sent out after the action, and assisted in the pursuit,'⁷⁵ that is, they pursued the fleeing enemy and killed the wounded.

Further changes in the use of African levies took place after the arrival in Natal, on 28 June, of General Sir Garnet Wolseley. He superseded Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner, Sir Henry Bulwer as Governor of Natal, and Lord Chelmsford as Commander-in-Chief of the British army in South Africa, and none of these men could gainsay him. Arriving too late to rob Chelmsford of his Ulundi triumph, Wolseley's task as he saw it, was to put his stamp on the final demise of the Zulu power and the submission of all the Zulu chiefs. In order to achieve this, his plan was to capture the Zulu king and pacify north-western Zululand.⁷⁶ He also intended to solve the major problems of transport and supply which had plagued Chelmsford. In all these endeavours, African levies raised from the Natal chiefdoms were to take part.

Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Clarke's column, formed from the disbanded 1st Division, and including Jantze's Native Horse, Mafunzi's Horse, the 4th Battalion NNC (Barton's 'Natives') and Lieutenant-Colonel Baker Russell's⁷⁷ column (which eventually added two

⁷⁵. Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, p. 192. Lord Chelmsford to Secretary of State for War, 10 July 1879.

⁷⁶. J. Laband and P. Thompson, Kingdom and Colony at War (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1990), pp. 16 - 17.

⁷⁷. War Office, Narrative, p. 169.

companies of Barton's 'Natives' to its numbers, and included Shepstone's Native Horse), were to assist in capturing the Zulu king and inducing the Zulu chiefs to submit to Wolseley in person. Major R.J.C. Marter of Clarke's column was ordered to pursue Cetshwayo into the Ngome forest to which he had fled. With Marter were two companies of the 4th NNC, useful for searching through rough terrain where horsemen could not ride. In the last few hours before the capture of Cetshwayo, one of these companies, with Major Marter, entered a steep valley on foot and assisted in surrounding the KwaDwasa homestead, where Cetshwayo was captured.⁷⁸

Lieutenant-Colonel Baker Russell's column, made up from Wood's disbanded Flying Column, moved on to pacify north-western Zululand. There, trouble was expected from the Quluzi and from Manyonyoba, a former Swazi chief owing allegiance to Cetshwayo. Russell was to be supported by a column from the Transvaal under Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable G. Villiers, stationed at Luneburg; a Swazi force; and Hamu's men. With Russell were Major Bengough's 2nd Battalion NNC and Shepstone's Native Horse, Jantze's 'natives' and Mafunzi's 'natives,' and later, Thetheleku's Horse.⁷⁹

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Black, under Russell's command, was ordered to advance against Manyonyoba on the Ntombe river, with a force of mounted infantry and Thetheleku's Horse. Thetheleku, chief of the Mphumuza people in the Umgeni division, had, in

⁷⁸. Ibid., pp. 126 - 129, 133 - 135.

⁷⁹. War Office, Narrative, pp. 120, 154; Laband and Thompson, Kingdom and Colony, p. 205.

February 1879, been expected to raise a hundred horsemen and fifty footmen.⁸⁰ Two hundred and fifty-three men came forward and were placed in the Reserve Levies to defend the Mzinyathi river border.⁸¹ With the Natal Native Pioneers they had formed part of the garrison at Fort Melvill in August 1879.⁸²

In the operations against Manyonyoba, Thetheleku's men, on hearing a shot fired, acted with brutal enthusiasm by killing Zulu prisoners left in their charge,⁸³ thus spoiling the chance of negotiation. The behaviour of the Natal levies in this instance and in other engagements when the British were in control of a situation, especially after a battle such as Ulundi, where they were victorious, and their earlier less assured behaviour when the Zulu appeared to be an overwhelming and invincible force, suggests that there was some truth in Major C.F. Clery's statement early in the war. He declared that

... it was well known that our natives could not be relied on to face the Zulus - from their traditional dread of them - and that it was only when it was apparent that we were winning in any fight that they could be got to fight at all. So though the natives magnified our numbers, they were under certain conditions a decided source of weakness; yet, on the other hand, it was expected that when we were successful they would be most useful in following up the enemy.⁸⁴

80. SNA 1/1/31, 1878/1611 RM, Umgeni's return of natives who could be assembled, 20 February 1879.

81. NCP 8/1/13/2/1 Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1879-1882. RM, Umsinga's report, p. 31.

82. Laband and Thompson, Buffalo Border, pp. 111 - 112.

83. Laband and Thompson, Kingdom and Colony, pp. 205 - 206; C. Vyn, Cetshwayo's Dutchman, p. 102 Bishop of Natal's notes.

84. Clarke, Zululand, p. 121. C.F. Clery to General Sir Archibald Alison, 18 March 1879.

In spite of the robust behaviour of Russell's column, north-western Zululand was finally pacified only as a result of Wolseley's settlement in September 1879.

Wolseley's attempt to solve the transport and supply problem began when, on 30 June, he met seventy Natal chiefs and outlined his plan for providing carriers whom the chiefs agreed to raise among their followers. These men were to retain what weapons they had, i.e. assegais, were to carry a load of approximately twenty-five kilograms, would be paid 30/- a month besides rations, and be provided with a blanket and a soldier's coat. Two thousand of these porters were to come from Captain Lucas's force of 3 500 on the lower Thukela, many of whom had been raised to defend the border. Initially, they were to join Crealock's First Division under the control of seven European officers and twenty izinduna.

Carrying maize bags on their heads, they were marched from the lower Thukela at Fort Tenedos, to Fort Chelmsford. There were some desertions en route. From Fort Chelmsford their commander, Major Schwabe, took them to Port Durnford, since they were to ply between this port and St. Paul's, bringing supplies inland. They were disbanded in September 1879.⁸⁵ This arrangement worked well in rough country, but was wasteful compared to ox-waggons on a good road.⁸⁶

⁸⁵. War Office, Narrative, p. 169; Colenso, History of the Zulu War, p. 359; Moodie, Moodie's Zulu War, p. 213; A Preston (ed), Sir Garnet Wolseley's South African Journal, 1879 - 80 (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1973), p. 47; Norris-Newman, In Zululand, pp. 225 - 226.

⁸⁶. War Office, Narrative, p. 123 footnote.

Although they were armed, these African levies had virtually become labourers, as were the Natal Native Pioneers raised earlier in November and December 1878, who served with No. 1, 2 and 3 Columns in the first invasion of Zululand, while some served later with Wood's Column.⁸⁷ Perhaps this emphasises the British and colonial perceptions of the Natal African people as being primarily a labour force to be exploited.

Although the Natal African levies had their limitations for reasons already discussed, and many of the men called up failed to appear, it is remarkable that no chiefdoms, especially those near the Zulu border, who had social links with the Zulu over the river, took advantage of the situation to mobilise against the colonial power and join the Zulu. The fear that this might happen was certainly in the minds of some Natal colonists. As Dean Green pointed out:

After Isandlwana, new-comers like the military thought our natives would rise; but their wives, children, waggons, cattle, etc., were in the colony, so they made common cause with us, and showed themselves zealously loyal.⁸⁸

The Newcastle magistrate confirmed this:

All through the War the Natives behaved admirably. Every movement was watched with the greatest anxiety, and thoughtful men saw and understood the magnitude of the struggle which was going on, and what the dreadful results of a reverse or invasion would be; and yet, there was never a shadow or thought of desertion or treason. They felt that our interests were one.⁸⁹

^{87.} War Office, Narrative, p. 169.

^{88.} Colenso, History, p. 486. Letter from Dean James Green, Dean of 'Maritzburg [sic] to the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, published in The Guardian of 10 December 1879; written 27 September 1879.

^{89.} NCP 7/1/27 Report of Magistrate, Newcastle Division for 1879.

This was again confirmed in the statement by the Lower Tugela chiefs following the announcement to them of the Legislative Council's resolution which expressed appreciation for the levies' services.⁹⁰ They conveyed

the assurance of their continued loyalty as well as that of the natives under their charge and their determination to uphold the authority of the Government.⁹¹

The emphasis on African levies as labourers and, to a lesser extent, mounted scouts, was again evident during the First and Second Anglo-Boer Wars. However, in 1906, when defence and warfare were placed in the hands of the Natal authorities during Bambatha's 'rebellion,' a dramatic return was made to the use of levies as front line troops at the beginning of hostilities.

In pursuance of Lord Carnarvon's confederation scheme, but with doubtful wisdom, considering the destabilisation and opposition to which this act would give rise, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner, annexed the South African Republic in April 1877.⁹² At that time the republic was too weak to evict Shepstone, but by December 1880, the decision was made to resist the loss of independence. The republican forces invaded Natal, inflicting a severe defeat on the British troops at Majuba on 27 February 1881. Pressure from the Gladstone government in Britain led to the

⁹⁰. SNA 1/1/35, 1879/2322 Colonial Secretary to Acting SNA, 13 December 1879.

⁹¹. SNA 1/1/36, 1880/61 Administrator and Border Agent, Lower Tugela to Acting SNA, 24 January 1880.

⁹². Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, pp. 127, 156 - 7.

cessation of hostilities, and, in August 1881, to the Pretoria Convention which restored self-government to the Republic.⁹³

Until the signing of this treaty, the British forces were to remain in readiness for further acts of war. To this end not only Natal European colonial troops but also African men were called up throughout Natal as cot-bearers for the medical department, drivers and ox-leaders for the Imperial transport department, and as mounted scouts. At first the most pressing need appeared to be for men to serve as grooms, waggon-drivers and ox-leaders,⁹⁴ in order to keep the army mobile and well supplied. However, by the end of March, there was no longer an urgent demand for African auxiliaries for service with the Imperial transport service,⁹⁵ no doubt because a settlement with the South African Republic was expected. However, those who had been employed for three months by the Imperial government were to be replaced.⁹⁶ Cot-bearers for the medical department

⁹³. R.E. Gordon and C.J. Talbot (compilers and editors), From Dias to Vorster (Goodwood, NASOU, 1977), pp. 271 - 272.

⁹⁴. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/109 Men for Imperial transport requisitioned, 6 January 1881. Supplied by Umsinga, Umgeni, Umlazi, Inanda, Umvoti, Alexandra, Ixopo between 24 February 1881 and 10 March 1881; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/13 District Commandants-General, Natal and Transvaal to SNA, 12 January 1881; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/29 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 22 January 1881 (Umsinga); SNA 1/1/44, 1881/46 Acting RM, Ixopo to SNA, 26 February 1881; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/96 SNA to RM, Inanda, 2 March 1881; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/85 RM, Umsinga to SNA, 4 March 1881; SNA 1/1/45, 1881/117 Minute paper, 10 March 1881 (Umgeni, Estcourt, Ladysmith).

⁹⁵. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/172 Transport office, Pietermaritzburg to SNA, 28 March 1881.

⁹⁶. SNA 1/1/46, 1881/255 Sir Evelyn Wood to Colonial Secretary Mitchell, 20 May 1881.

were less in demand.⁹⁷ Only a handful of mounted scouts were called for. Chief Ncwadi of the Ngwane supplied seventeen,⁹⁸ and Chief Thetheleku from Umgeni sent forward scouts who were presumably mounted, but they were unsatisfactory and 'more intelligent men' were requested as replacements.⁹⁹ This indicates that the chiefdom's enthusiasm for the war was not great as the best men were not sent. Pay was low. 30/- per month with rations was offered for commissariat grooms and men attached to the Imperial transport department in January and February;¹⁰⁰ but in March, pay offered to first class drivers was from 60/- to 80/- per month, while the pay for ox-leaders remained 30/- plus rations.¹⁰¹ Perhaps the reluctance of some African men to serve¹⁰² accounted for this new incentive for drivers.

A further interface between levies and isibhalo workers and an indication of the emphasis placed on Natal African men as little more than an exploitable labour force is evident when 'pioneers' were required urgently for work on the roads in the colony, necessary

⁹⁷. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/109 Cot-bearers requisitioned. Supplied by Umsinga, Alexandra, Ixopo in March; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/29 Acting SNA to Lieutenant-Governor, 22 January 1881; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/85 Minute, RM, Umsinga to SNA, 4 March 1881; SNA 1/1/45, 1881/170 One cot-bearer supplied by Umsinga, 1 April 1881.

⁹⁸. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/170 List of 'natives' supplied to Imperial Government from Upper Tugela, 1 March 1881.

⁹⁹. SNA 1/1/44, 1881/48 Governor to SNA, 3 February 1881.

¹⁰⁰. SNA 1/1/44, 1881/13 District Commandants-General, Natal and Transvaal to SNA, 12 January 1881; SNA 1/1/44, 1881/46 Acting RM, Ixopo to SNA, 26 February 1881.

¹⁰¹. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/117 Minute paper, 10 March 1881.

¹⁰². SNA 1/1/44, 1881/85 Minute paper, 4 March 1881, RM, Umsinga to SNA; SNA 1/1/46, 1881/249 Minute paper, 30 May 1881.

from a military point of view. When magistrates asked questions about service, pay and rations, they were ordered, in a peremptory manner, to comply with the order and send forward 200 men from Inanda, Tugela, Ixopo and Alfred.¹⁰³

Throughout the First Anglo-Boer War, except for a limited number of mounted scouts,¹⁰⁴ the role of Natal levies was seen as that of a labour force. Before the Second Anglo-Boer War, major changes had taken place, affecting Natal's political position as well as her situation vis-a-vis her African population. In 1893 the Imperial government had granted responsible government to Natal. Imperial troops were to remain in Natal for another five years to allow the colony time to organise her own defences. Thereafter there was to be a gradual withdrawal of the Imperial forces. The passing of the Volunteer Act of 1895 was part of the Natal scheme to arrange for her own defence.¹⁰⁵

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899 - 1902, because considerable deposits of gold had been discovered in the Transvaal, involved men and materiel on a vast scale to ensure military success and the possession of the gold-mines. Again, Natal Africans were called up as military labourers,¹⁰⁶ but direct involvement as fighting men seemed too inflammatory.

¹⁰³. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/130 Minute paper, 12 March 1881.

¹⁰⁴. SNA 1/1/45, 1881/170 List supplied from Upper Tugela, 1 March 1881; SNA 1/1/45, 1881/117 Minute paper, 10 March 1881; SNA 1/1/46, 1881/255 Sir Evelyn Wood to Colonial Secretary Mitchell, 20 May 1881.

¹⁰⁵. Stuart, History of the Zulu Rebellion, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶. SNA 1/1/289, 1900/736 Minute paper, Ministry of Land and Works, 18 May 1900.

In September 1899, before the outbreak of the war, all chiefs and headmen in the Zululand Province and in fourteen of the Natal magistracies were informed:

That, in the event of war breaking out between the English and the Dutch, the Queen wishes the Natives to remain within their own borders, as the war will be a White-man's war, but they may, of course, protect themselves and their property against attack or seizure by the enemy.¹⁰⁷

In reporting this directive and 'the general conduct and loyalty of the Natives of this Colony' the SNA underestimated the magnitude of the involvement in the war of African levies and volunteers from Natal.¹⁰⁸ He mentioned 'services for intelligence purposes and in various other ways' and that African men were sent to Ladysmith with letters and despatches. He did not, however, reveal, or perhaps at that time did not know, that Lord Kitchener had armed African men with rifles, supposedly to protect stock and occupied blockhouses, but in reality to adopt an offensive stance; and their numbers were considerable. Kitchener himself admitted that 4 618 of the men came from Natal.¹⁰⁹

African scouts were promised bronze medals, and to this end, 2 000 medals were sent to the SNA, G. Leuchars, in April 1903. This gives some indication of the numbers of men involved as scouts. That many of these were levies from the chiefdoms and not Kholwa, and that they served for the duration of the war is indicated in this letter from J. Gumede of Chief Ncwadi kaZikhali's chiefdom. He knew that Leuchars had a list of levies who had been employed, and that he had not distributed the medals. Gumede wrote:

¹⁰⁷. NCP 8/1/13/1/1 Report of SNA, 17 July 1901.

¹⁰⁸. There were 13 250 Africans in military employment in the colony in 1902. D. Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 194.

¹⁰⁹. Pakenham, *Boer War*, p. 547.

This gentleman after receiving these lists, kept them in his office, stating that the Natives do not want medals only the Christian Natives gives (*sic*) all the trouble asking for medals. So we shall not get the long promised medals any more; after we served the Military from the beginning to the end of the Anglo-Boer war.¹¹⁰

The failure to distribute the medals referred to in this letter was one of the many ungenerous acts which caused disillusionment among Kholwa and levies alike, although, in spite of this, some came forward voluntarily to serve at this time.

The distinguished and disciplined conduct of the Kholwa during the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879 turned the attention of the colonial authorities to employing them as scouts during the Second Anglo-Boer War. Levies from the chiefdoms were less likely to come forward willingly. R.C.A. Samuelson, appointed on 3 October 1899 to raise these scouts, collected 150 men, some mounted, some on foot, from Chief Johannes Kumalo's Driefontein settlement;¹¹¹ further scouts from Chief Timothy Gule at Nyanyadu;¹¹² and others from Chief Stephen Mini's Kholwa at Edendale.¹¹³ With these men, all Kholwa, Samuelson established a line of scouts along the Drakensberg¹¹⁴ to watch for Boer invaders.

¹¹⁰. SNA 1/1/310, 1904/784 Minute paper from J.F. Ingram, Late Officer in charge of Field Intelligence, 19 April 1904, enclosed letter from Chief Native Scout J. Gumede to Lieutenant J. Forsyth Ingram, 28 March 1904.

¹¹¹. Thirty-five kilometres from Ladysmith.

¹¹². North-west of Dundee.

¹¹³. SNA 1/1/301, 1903/1658 List of 1 782 men supplied as scouts 1899/1902 by Samuelson as deserving of war medals. SNA to Prime Minister, 8 June 1903.

¹¹⁴. R.C.A. Samuelson, *Long, Long Ago* (Durban, T.W. Griggs and Co., 1974; originally published 1929), p. 138.

By September 1901, when reports reached Major-General Lyttelton, Officer Commanding the British forces in Natal, of General Louis Botha's intention to invade Natal and march on Dundee,¹¹⁵ Lyttelton planned a three-pronged counter-attack through Utrecht in the north, Dundee in the centre and Greytown in the south. The forces which were gathered in Greytown and Pietermaritzburg were not Imperial troops but local volunteer forces commanded by the General Officer Commanding Natal, Major-General Sir J.G. Dartnell.¹¹⁶ Volunteer staff officer, Major H.T. Bru-de-Wold, on 23 September 1901, requested Samuelson to organise a communication line of scouts for the Mobile Column on its way to Greytown and Krantzkop with the help of Acting Chief Sibindi's Bomvu levies¹¹⁷ and levies provided by other chiefs¹¹⁸ living in the area. These were not mobile units like the Kholwa scouts but carriers of supplies from Ntingwe and Qudeni.¹¹⁹ They were stationed at their own imizi, with much at stake if the Boer invasion succeeded. Botha, however, was repulsed before the scouts could be involved with the Boers.

Bambatha's 'rebellion' of 1906 involved Natal Africans as levies on the side of the Natal colonial government and as rebels opposed to the government. The collection by the Natal government of the Poll Tax of £1 per annum from January 1906, affected African adult

¹¹⁵. D.M. Moore, General Louis Botha's Second Expedition to Natal (Wynberg, Historical Publication Society, The Rustica Press, 1979), p. 36.

¹¹⁶. Ibid., pp. 38 - 39; H.C. Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949), p. 43.

¹¹⁷. Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, pp. 169 -170.

¹¹⁸. Ibid., pp. 171 - 174.

¹¹⁹. Ibid., pp. 172 - 173.

males not subject to the Hut Tax, which in effect meant unmarried men. This imposition provided the flash-point following on sixty-five years of exploitation and deprivation of the Natal African population, and was to lead to the rebellion spearheaded by Chief Bambatha kaMancinza of the Zondi people. The grievances laid before the Natal Native Commission of 1906 -1907,¹²⁰ for which some sought a solution in rebellion, ranged from dissatisfaction with their governance at the highest level in Natal, to the disintegration of their daily family lives, caused by legislation. The status of chiefs, the political machinery of the chiefdoms, the landholding of the African people, their chances of economic advancement as peasant farmers, and even their human dignity and self-respect had all been subjected to an inexorable grinding away over the years.

Such a smouldering accumulation of grievances could be expected to produce spontaneous outbursts against those regarded as being responsible for the wrongs which had elicited the complaints. Some African people, in both Natal and Zululand, when ordered to pay the Poll, refused to pay as it seemed to be the ultimate burden. The objectors, some wearing the tshokobezi headdress¹²¹ and shouting the warcry 'uSuthu!' were defiant and abusive

¹²⁰. SNA 1/1/388 PM 1907/829 Report of the Natal Native Commission, 25 July 1907.

¹²¹. The bushy part of a beast's tail worn around the head. This was adopted by adherents of Dinuzulu. Vide Stuart, Zulu Rebellion, pp. 75.

towards the magistrates, although they did not attack them.¹²² Only eleven of the chiefs named by the magistrates in these demonstrations were held personally responsible for the behaviour of their followers.¹²³

By 1906, the Natal authorities were not in a strong enough position to call up levies unless there was a reasonable chance of obedience. For instance, Sibindi, the Bomvu chief, who had been a court induna in the employ of Major T. Maxwell, the Umsinga magistrate,¹²⁴ and who had assisted the colonial troops in September 1901, owed his position to the Natal government and could be expected to remain loyal. Acting Chief Tabhane, son of the 'loyalist' Ngwane chief Ncwadi and grandson of Zikhali, both of whom had provided mounted scouts in the past, was requested to raise scouts again.¹²⁵ Loyalty in the past was, however, not always an indication of present loyalty. Some

122. Ibid., pp. 121 - 122; ZA 34 Confidential Correspondents, 1903 - 1906. Confidential Report 1906/4. Magistrate, Umlalazi to Commissioner for Native Affairs, 24 January 1906. [Concerning men of Chief Ngokwana]; SNA 1/1/335, 1906/372 Report from Magistrate, Mapumulo, 29 January 1906. [Concerning men of Chiefs Swaimana, Mahlubu, Gobosi, Luvale Mdungazwe, Meseni]; SNA 1/1/335, 1906/459 Sergeant C. Matthews, Natal Police, reports from Empangeni to Inspector George, Natal Police, 25 January 1906. [Concerning men under four unnamed chiefs and six unnamed izinduna representing chiefs]; SNA 1/4/15 SNAC 1906/48 Report by Sergeant L'Estrange, Natal Police, Mapumulo to Sub-Inspector Clifton, Natal Police, 22 January 1906; SNA 1/1/336, 1906/568 Report on Poll Tax by Minister for Native Affairs, 23 February 1906.

123. These were Matomela, Charlie Fynn, Kula, Tilonko, Matshwili, Gobizembe, Ndhlovu kaTimuni, Msikofeni, Sikukuku, Ngokwana and Meseni; SNA 1/1/355, 1906/3785 Colonels McKenzie and Leuchars during operations: statement asked for by Mr. R.H. Tatham, undated.

124. S. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 318.

125. Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, p. 197.

chiefs and their people, or some of their people who had been former allies of the British government and its heir, the Natal government, had changed their allegiance over the years because of their grievances and changed circumstances. Some had pressing personal reasons for shifting their allegiance away from the colonial government and becoming restive or rebellious.

Although many Natalians were complacent about their ability to deal with a large-scale rising of the African people,¹²⁶ the excessive and even savage punishment meted out once the unrest had surfaced, suggests that the perpetrators were, to a large extent, motivated by fear. Examples of this are the execution at Richmond of the killers of Sub-Inspector S.K. Hunt and Trooper G. Armstrong after a drum-head court-martial, even though it seems that Hunt fired the first shot at a handcuffed prisoner;¹²⁷ the heavy fine imposed on Chief Charlie Fynn (1161 head of cattle and 1163 sheep and goats) whose people had demonstrated against the imposition of the Poll Tax, but had not rebelled; the heavy fine imposed on Chief Ngobizembe¹²⁸ for his people's defiance of the Mapumulo magistrate, and the subsequent shelling of his umuzi by Colonel Leuchars because the chief had not handed over all the demonstrators.¹²⁹ Leuchars's action was approved by Governor H. McCallum when he wrote:

¹²⁶. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 182.

¹²⁷. Ibid., p. 176, footnote 2.

¹²⁸. SNA 1/1/355, SNA 1906/3785 Statement asked for by Mr. R.H. Tatham, undated.

¹²⁹. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 199; Stuart, Zulu Rebellion, p. 149.

His idea of destroying the kraal by artillery fire instead of by the match, although perhaps somewhat theatrical, has had a splendid effect.¹³⁰

Imizi of disaffected Africans were burnt on a considerable scale during Bambatha's 'rebellion', on the pretext that rebels obtained food and shelter there.¹³¹ The shelling of Ngobizembe's umuzi was a refinement intended to terrorise.

Since the Natal chiefdoms were often divided and even their grievances had not given them enough common ground for a concerted rising, Bambatha's 'rebellion' failed. The number of levies employed from the Natal and Zululand chiefdoms was probably between 2 000 and 3 000. Those who were on foot came mainly from near the area of operations and were from the chiefdoms of Ntuli (Chief Mfungelwa),¹³² Tembu (Acting Chief Ngqamuzana),¹³³ Qadi (Chief Mqawe),¹³⁴ Bomvu (Acting Chief Sibindi),¹³⁵ and Mchunu (Chief Silwane).¹³⁶ Mounted men came from the Ngwane chiefdom, some distance away.

¹³⁰. GH vol. 1234 no. 37, p. 2 Governor to Secretary of State, 9 March 1906.

¹³¹. Stuart, Zulu Rebellion, p. 217 - 218.

¹³². Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 216.

¹³³. Ibid., p. 317; SNA 1/1/341, 1906/1452 Major H. Blew, Commandant of militia to SNA, 12 May 1906.

¹³⁴. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 334.

¹³⁵. Ibid., pp. 222 - 223; SNA 1/1/341, 1906/1452, Blew to SNA.

¹³⁶. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 318; SNA 1/1/341, 1906/1452, Blew to SNA.

Those chiefdoms who sent forward levies found it expedient to side with the colonial power base as more likely to triumph than the rebels. Others clung to the forlorn hope that their lot might be improved if they, with Bambatha, could receive the support of the Chief Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo of the Usuthu, regarded by some as being the natural heir to the Zulu kingdom.

Some Kholwa were reluctant to volunteer to support the Natal government because they had been cheated of their promised medals in previous campaigns,¹³⁷ as had the levies from the locations. The latter, however, were not given the option of volunteering or not. Many Kholwa Africans from Natal were, in addition, disillusioned with the Natal government to the extent that they took part with the rebels in the insurrection.¹³⁸ The killers of the two policemen, Hunt and Armstrong, at Trewirgie near Richmond¹³⁹ on 7 February 1906, were Ethiopian Christians. Nevertheless, Kholwa men from Edendale, Driefontein and Nyanyadu came forward with the Ngwane horsemen, to form the Natal Native Horse under Major G.Moe and Captain R.C. Samuelson.¹⁴⁰

The infantry levies provided little more than an increase in numbers for the organised colonial troops engaged in quelling Bambatha's 'rebellion'. From a military point of view their role had reverted, to a large extent, to that of the levies used at the beginning of the

¹³⁷. SNA 1/1/316, 1905/107 Minute paper concerning native scout medals, containing minute from Commandant of Volunteers to Minister of Justice, 2 September 1903, and Army Order No. 94, April 1901.

¹³⁸. Stuart, Zulu Rebellion, pp. 420 - 421.

¹³⁹. Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁴⁰. Ibid., pp. 62, 557.

colonial period, acting as ill-armed but mobile support troops in rough country. Poorly equipped and inadequately armed, the levies were again objects of contempt to the colonial forces. With limited financial resources, the Natal government could not consider the issue of blankets or even firearms as standard equipment for the levies.¹⁴¹

Colonel Leuchars was especially disparaging of the levies, regarding them as useless as a fighting force (except for Sibindi's men), useless at 'skirmishing down broken, bushy valleys;' but useful as scouts and camp followers.¹⁴² Where it was necessary for the levies to be effectively trained and adequately armed, they were not, and they could not therefore come up to the unreasonable expectations of Leuchars. Although they purported to be fighting men during Bambatha's 'rebellion', in reality, as in the second phase of the Anglo-Zulu War and in the Anglo-Boer hostilities, their main use was as a labouring force. In the use made of them, the forced isibhalo labourers and the military levies had converged.

¹⁴¹. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 318.

¹⁴². Stuart, Zulu Rebellion, p. 418 - 419.

CONCLUSION

The unique characteristics of colonial Natal in the nineteenth century with regard to labour practices and to the provisions made for defence and the repression of possibly destabilising actions may be more clearly identified by way of comparison with developments in other contemporaneous British colonies such as Australia and New Zealand, where the colonial context had some similarities. A comparison might also serve to highlight the exactions of forced labour and military service as major factors in the Natal colonial drive to dominate and control the indigenous people.

Although the British had finally annexed Natal and established a colonial government by 1845, the indigenous inhabitants were dispossessed of their land in a process which gradually unfolded rather than became immediately effective.

Natal, Australia and New Zealand all had European settler populations originally outnumbered by the indigenes. However, in Australia by 1860, as a result of further immigration, imported diseases such as smallpox,¹ and the relentless killing of large numbers of Aborigines, the European population exceeded the pre-invasion number of Aborigines.² In New Zealand, disease reduced the Maori people considerably, and soon

1. W.J. Lines, Taming the Great South Land (Berkeley and Los-Angeles, University of California Press, 1991), p. 42.

2. Ibid., p. 92.

the European settlers outnumbered them.³ In Natal, however, the African people maintained their numerical superiority and survived the invaders, partly by becoming their 'indispensable servants.'⁴

All these colonies sought to acquire land at the expense of the indigenous people. As in Natal, the early explorers and settlers of Australia perpetuated the myth of an 'empty' land and 'unpeopled wilderness.'⁵ In the future Victoria district of Australia, Surveyor-General Mitchell, in his diary, recorded daily encounters with Aborigines, sometimes in groups of more than 200, on his journey with Aboriginal guides, but in his official report, he described the land as 'still without inhabitants.'⁶ This perception would appear to justify land dispossession which was of paramount importance to the colonisers in gaining domination over the indigenes.⁷

Each group of invading Europeans sought to develop, along European lines, the colony established by the dispossession of its original inhabitants, and all required a body of manual labourers to use their muscle power to build up the infrastructure of their colony.

3. A.W. Crosby, 'Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon,' in D. Worster (ed), The Ends of the Earth (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 111.

4. Ibid., p. 106.

5. Lines, Taming the Great South Land, p. 50.

6. Ibid., pp. 70 - 71.

7. W.R. Jacobs, 'The Fatal Confrontation: Early Native-White Relations on the Frontiers of Australia, New Guinea, and America - A Comparative Study' in Pacific Historical Review, vol. 40, 1971, p. 285.

In 1788, in Australia, Botany Bay and Sydney Cove in New South Wales had been established as a convict settlement, with convicts and soldiers forming the first labour force.⁸ The Aboriginal inhabitants were overwhelmed by what became a large-scale intrusion of Europeans, whose concept of land use and ownership differed from their own, 'which was governed by the ecology of their habitat.'⁹ The newcomers ruthlessly annexed and exploited their land,¹⁰ threatening the economic and even spiritual component of their society.¹¹ Their conflicts with the Europeans left those who were not subjected to 'purification by force,' *i.e.* being killed, to a pauper's existence in the lowest socio-economic level of Australian society.¹² They were not, however, drawn into any large-scale, government-organised system of providing labour and military service for the colonial government, as in Natal.

Some discharged convicts and military officers who were given land grants and provided with convict labour, became farmers.¹³ In the 1840s, when the lack of a plentiful and reliable labour force became a problem, it was proposed that New South Wales should

8. F.L.W. Wood, A Concise History of Australia (Sydney, Dymock's Book Arcade Ltd, 1943), pp. 31 - 33.

9. Jacobs, 'The Fatal Confrontation', p. 283.

10. P. Taylor, Australia: The First Twelve Years (Sydney, London, Boston, George Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp. 38 - 39.

11. Jacobs, 'The Fatal Confrontation,' p. 285.

12. Encyclopedia Britannica Macropaedia (U.S.A., 1981), vol. II, pp. 424 - 429.

13. Wood, Concise History, pp. 40, 43.

again become a penal settlement. When the settlers strenuously objected, the plan was shelved in 1849.¹⁴

Western Australia initially employed free labourers from among its own settlers, but in 1849 the colony became a penal settlement when the colonists petitioned the British government to send convicts to work on public buildings, roads and bridges:¹⁵ work which almost paralleled isibhalo labour in Natal.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the British theorist on colonisation, maintained that a reliable labour force was crucial to the development of South Australia. He suggested bringing out wealthy English squires with free English labourers to work for them.¹⁶ This plan was similar to that proposed by Bishop J.W. Colenso in Natal¹⁷ in the 1850s. The South Australian colony faltered for a while, but in the 1840s wheat-farming and sheep-grazing as well as the invention of the automatic harvester brought the colony prosperity, using only free labour.¹⁸

At no time was any significant reliance placed on the indigenous people of Australia as a labour force or as subordinate military levies, as it was in Natal. Some of the indigenes, who survived widespread slaughter, withdrew from the vicinity of European settlements

¹⁴. Ibid., pp. 112 - 113.

¹⁵. Ibid., p. 88 - 89.

¹⁶. Ibid., p. 92; Lines, Taming the Great South Land, p. 64.

¹⁷. Colenso, Ten Weeks, pp. 79 - 80.

¹⁸. Wood, Concise History, pp. 92, 98.

to areas which were inhospitable to any but hunter-gatherers. Those in Tasmania were unable to retreat. They were reduced to two hundred in number, were rounded up and sent to Norfolk Island, where they died.¹⁹

In Queensland, as in Natal, sugar planters required cheap and plentiful labour, and from the early 1860s they applied the same solution to this problem as did the Natal sugar planters: they imported indentured labourers (in this case, Melanesian Kanakas from the South Pacific). These were not repatriated until 1906 - 07.²⁰

In the early settlement of New Zealand, the New Zealand Company planned to purchase land and transplant a hierarchy of English social classes, following Wakefield's colonisation model.²¹

In 1840, Britain assumed the sovereignty of New Zealand. Boundaries between land appropriated by European settlers and the unalienated land of the Maoris were more clearly defined after the Maori War of 1843 - 1847.²² The British settlers relied on their own labour, and, against the spirited resistance offered by the Maoris in the Maori Wars of 1860 - 1872, employed only British troops and colonial volunteers.²³ No

19. Ibid., pp. 102 - 103.

20. Ibid., pp. 189, 191; Lines, Taming the Great South Land, pp. 142 - 143.

21. Encyclopedia Britannica Micropaedia (U.S.A., 1981), vol. II, p. 311.

22. J.A. Hammerton (ed), The Universal Encyclopedia (London, the Educational Book Co. Ltd, newly revised edition, undated), p. 5196.

23. Encyclopedia Britannica Micropaedia, vol. II, p. 589.

indigenes were employed as labourers or auxiliary troops, as in Natal, nor was any attempt made to introduce labourers under compulsion from beyond New Zealand.

In the colony of Natal, labour was urgently needed. There was a large African population rendered powerless by the dislocations of the early nineteenth century, and unable effectively to resist or evade the demands made upon them for labour and military service. They could not retreat into the interior as the survivors of the indigenous Australian people could, nor had they a separate, although limited area of settlement in which no colonial demands could be made upon them, as the Maoris had. The influx of white settlers to Natal was limited in number and there were too few of them to provide a distinct labouring class. They therefore turned to the indigenous African population to provide this need.

The exactions of labour and military levies in Natal were made possible by metropolitan and colonial attitudes. These included perceptions of the distinctions in colour and class; of the work ethic for those in the lower ranks of society; and the drive to spread European civilisation. These attitudes were reinforced by some Christian missionaries who equated the Christian ethic with their own cultural attitudes and mores. This led to a drive to 'civilize' and proletarianise the African people in Natal to serve the interests of the colonisers, as occurred in Australia.²⁴

In order to build up an infrastructure of roads and bridges in Natal, the colonial government required a plentiful and regular supply of labour. To prevent any attempt to

²⁴. Lines, Taming the Great South Land, p. 41.

build up any power base in competition with the colonial power, an effective military force was necessary. These two requirements led to the system of forced labour (isibhalo) and military service exacted from the Natal Africans.

The coercion of African men in locations to serve as isibhalo labourers for public works (mainly the building of roads) became a regular practice throughout the colonial period. The periodic raising of military levies was intended to subdue any African group showing signs of building up an alternative power base, or of destabilisation by inter-group hostilities; and to guard against threats of destabilisation along the Natal borders.

In order to justify, to themselves and others, the exaction of labour and military service and, perhaps, colonisation itself, the British colonisers of Natal repeatedly declared that Natal had been devastated and virtually depopulated on their arrival. They maintained that the African people who subsequently entered 'empty' Natal were immigrants with no claim to the land.

The colonial government therefore, established locations to settle these supposed intruders, for which land grants the location-dwellers were to show their gratitude by providing isibhalo labourers for public works, and military levies to act as surrogates in keeping the peace and defending the borders. The exactions served as measures of control and domination, with power and responsibility being delegated from the Lieutenant-Governor as Supreme Chief to the magistrates; while responsibility but no palpable power descended from the chiefs, through the homestead heads, to the dependent unmarried men who initially provided labour and military service.

In some cases the Natal Africans were acquiescent collaborators, partly because they saw that some benefit might accrue from the demands, or because they were powerless to resist the government exactions effectively. However, as new opportunities opened up for them in free employment in towns and on private farms as well as on railways and mines, an increasing number of men evaded the government demands for isibhalo labour in particular and, to a lesser extent, military service.

In 1876, an official enquiry from the British Colonial Office about the isibhalo system elicited from the Natal government officials an elaborate fiction to justify the requirements not only for isibhalo labour, but also for military levies. They declared that this system was exactly parallel to the exactions imposed by the Zulu king, to whose position that of Supreme Chief in Natal was likened. The inaccuracies in this analogy are evident in considering the checks and balances imposed by the Zulu system on the king and his advisers, whereas in colonial Natal the chiefs and all their people were powerless, until some of them found ways of becoming free labourers.

As opportunities opened up in more lucrative employment, and at the same time more isibhalo labourers were needed for expanding public works, the Natal government called on labourers from categories other than those originally tapped. There was abundant evidence that the isibhalo system was unsatisfactory in supplying the colonial labour needs; with inadequate pay and poor working conditions. The Natal government was reluctant to improve the position by raising taxes from the white population.

Resistance to colonial demands, and the realisation of their waning power caused several chiefs to attempt to build up their power bases in opposition to the colonial authority. This took the form of rallying and controlling their people by holding imikhosi: annual ceremonies designed to consolidate the chiefs' power and control over their followers.

As time went on, the Natal government needed even more men to labour on public works, while more potential labourers evaded the government demands. The Natal authorities then abandoned the fiction that each chief was calling up his followers to work for him, and transferred isibhalo labourers from one division and even one county to another.

Until 1891, with little clear legislation to restrict or define the power of the Natal government to call up labourers, the SNA was able to apply ad hoc solutions to his labour requirements. With only some twenty years of Natal colonial rule left, at last Law 19 of 1891 clarified the hierarchy of power and the isibhalo system. By this time it was too late for the system to operate satisfactorily as far as the Natal government was concerned. The commissioners of the 1906 - 1907 Commission admitted that the isibhalo system was unsatisfactory, and recommended that it be abandoned.

With the advent of larger numbers of British settlers from 1849, early in the colonial period, the Natal government and the colonists competed for labour. As the colonists became more firmly established, they turned to imported Indians, Zulu and Tsonga to satisfy their labour demands. When isibhalo labour was insufficient for their needs, the officials of the Native Affairs Department also relied on labourers other than those called up through the isibhalo system. Zulu refugee labourers, and political prisoners after the

Langalibalele affair and Bambatha's 'rebellion' augmented the labour supply for the Colonial Engineer's department. When Natal joined the Union of South Africa in 1910, the isibhalo system was abandoned.

In the first thirty years of British colonial rule in Natal, San raiders drove off the cattle of white and African farmers, because the areas from which they derived their own sources of food in hunting and gathering had been wrested from them. It was not difficult for the colonial government to raise levies from the African people to augment their own forces against the San, as they had borne the brunt of raids, and the colonial demands were on a limited scale.

In 1848, however, when some African chiefdoms, in becoming more powerful, appeared to be a challenge to the colonial government, Theophilus Shepstone organised the Africans in the Natal locations into divisions so that he could call upon the leaders whom he had appointed, to send forward levies. He paid particular attention to any perceived threats to the stability of the Natal/Zululand border and of the southern border.

In 1847, before Shepstone had organised the chiefdoms into military divisions, the actions of Chief Fodo kaNombewu of the Nhlangwini on the southern Natal border, gave cause for alarm. Shepstone prevented him from launching further attacks on the Bhaca and thus destabilising the southern border.

In the following year, 1848, the Hlubi and amaNgwe, massing on the Natal/Zululand border in their flight from the Zulu king, Mpande, presented a possible threat in this area.

Shepstone used his military organisation into divisions to force the Hlubi and amaNgwe to move away from the border, and to exercise control over them. At the same time, their re-settlement in the country at the foot of the Drakensberg provided a barrier against San raids.

A further perceived threat to the stability of the southern Natal border presented itself in 1857 when Chief Sidoyi kaBaleni of the Nhlungwini quarrelled with the Memela chief. With the assistance of military levies, Sidoyi was deposed and all his cattle seized: severe measures intended to overawe, and to restore colonial control.

Having settled the southern border, the colonial forces, reinforced by levies, turned their attention, in 1858, to subduing Chief Matshana kaMondise of the Sithole, who was viewed as a possible threat to peace on the Natal/Zululand border. This chief fled to Zululand with his people, and thus escaped colonial domination.

Even more alarming to the Natal government than the possible destabilisation of the Natal borders was the fear of any chiefdom which presented insidious competition to the colonial government or settlers in the realm of economic prosperity and as an alternative power focus. The Natal government perceived the Hlubi as such a threat. In 1873, British military forces and colonial volunteers, with some 6 000 levies called up from the Natal chiefdoms, launched a campaign against the Hlubi on the pretext of their being in possession of unlicensed firearms. When the Hlubi chief, Langalibalele kaMthimkulu, fled across the Drakensberg with his fighting men, leaving the old men, the women and the children with the amaNgwe people, they were pursued and savagely punished, as were the

amaNgwe. Except in a brief skirmish with Durnford's men, Langalibalele, like Matshana of the Sithole, offered no determined resistance. Both chiefs were fleeing from Natal, and this action could hardly be construed as rebellion, unless one defines rebellion very loosely, to include removing oneself from the authority of the Supreme Chief.

To provide labour to develop communications in Natal, and an auxiliary military force to support the colonial state in exerting its power and control over a subject people, the Natal government drew African men from the locations on the pretext that this was the custom in the Zulu state. A different situation arose when the Anglo-Zulu War was planned in 1878. Although similar methods were employed to raise both labour and levies for the prosecution of the war, they were not to be used only for the benefit of the Natal colony and to sustain its domination over Natal Africans. They were to support a broader plan set in train by the Colonial Office and War Office in Britain.

Having underestimated the military capabilities of the Zulu, the British army obtained, from the Natal colonial government, the services of some 7 000 levies and labourers to support its offensive against Cetshwayo's people. The military levies on foot were ill equipped and inadequately armed, with minimal training. Not surprisingly, they generally performed badly in the early phases of the war. The levies in the field were, perhaps deliberately, given no opportunity to build up any esprit de corps or pride in their regiments, as this might have enabled them to strengthen any antagonism they might have harboured against their oppressors.

The mounted levies and mounted Kholwa volunteers were, in contrast, well armed and equipped, and performed well. The men from the chiefdoms near the Zulu border were set to guard their families and homes against possible Zulu incursions in the second phase of the war. These men were better motivated and better armed.

In this phase of the war the poor performance of the inexperienced British recruits, in some measure, could be attributed to reasons similar to those which accounted for the poor morale of the levies, *viz.* their inexperience and lack of *esprit de corps*.

In the last phase of the war, many of the Natal levies on foot became little more than labourers. Sir Garnet Wolseley made use of them to alleviate the transport and supply problems which faced the British.

In the first and second Anglo-Boer Wars, the role of levies, with some exceptions such as mounted scouts, remained that of labourers. However, in the 1906 'rebellion' of Bambatha, the infantry levies reverted to the role formerly assigned to them, *viz.* as auxiliary troops, since Imperial forces had been withdrawn. According to the exigencies of a situation, the roles of military levies and *isibhalo* labourers, drawn from the same population group by the same methods, were interchangeable.

In order to control the Natal Africans and perpetuate their subservient position, the colonial authorities and settlers used their collective political and economic power to prevent effective competition from such Natal Africans who showed signs of economic prosperity, *e.g.* the Hlubi; and to prevent the incorporation of the Kholwa into European

society. Any signs of the establishment of a power focus alternative to that of the existing colonial power base were severely suppressed. In these endeavours the Natal colonial authorities made the most of existing weaknesses and divisions among the Natal Africans on the 'divide and rule' principle. The subjugated Africans, for their own survival, sought some accommodation within the system.

Only in 1906, at the end of the colonial period, was the breaking-point reached, when aggressive attitudes and actions, levelled at the Natal government authorities, surfaced. By this time, the Natal Africans had lost much of their social cohesion, their chance to acquire economic prosperity and their traditional roles in their African polity. Nonetheless, much of the energy engendered by their oppression was to surface even before the end of the colonial period, transformed into covert political opposition. The Kholwa, especially, frustrated in their hopes of ultimate enfranchisement, provided leaders in this opposition.

APPENDIX I

**STATEMENT OF THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF NATIVES WHO
ENTERED SERVICE IN THE COLONY DURING THE YEAR 1901**

Total estimated population:

Males	370,903
Females	<u>416,009</u>
	786,912

Description of Service	Average No. of Natives in Service at one time		No. of Natives who entered Service	
DOMESTIC SERVANTS				
1. Rural Districts	21,730	(1)	43,460	(1)
2. Durban	5,716	(4)	16,000	(3)
3. Pietermaritzburg	4,123	(6)	13,345	(7)
TOGT LABOURERS				
1. Durban, 48,530 Monthly Licenses	4,000	(7)	12,000	(8)
2. Pietermaritzburg 17,220 Monthly Licences	1,435	(11)	4,000	(11)
'RICKSHA PULLERS				
1. Durban, 21,884 Monthly Licenses	1,800	(10)	5,500	(9)
2. Pietermaritzburg 7,973 Monthly Licences	664	(14)	2,000	(13)
AGRICULTURE	13,068	(2)	26,000	(2)
COAL MINES	2,035	(8)	4,000	(11)
FACTORIES, &c.,	6,475	(3)	14,000	(6)
POLICE	1,332	(12)	1,332	(15)
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT	2,000	(9)	4,112	(10)
MILITARY WORKS	-		14,483	(4)
RAILWAY WORKS	4,700	(5)	14,100	(5)
HARBOUR WORKS	717	(13)	1,400	(14)
	69,795		175,732	

Adapted from NCP 8/2/1

APPENDIX II

Division (County in brackets)	Location lands	Mission Reserves	Crown Lands	Private Farms	
				Occupied	Unoccupied
Umgeni (Pmb)	4018	549	294	3192	557
Lions River (Pmb)	439	Nil	93	3173*	
Umlazi (Dbn)	4916	296	Nil	324	Nil
Klip River (KlipR)	Nil	Nil	407	4937	1995
Newcastle (KlipR)	Nil	66	590	375	Nil
Inanda (Victoria)	4333	5264	Nil	466	540
Lower Tugela (Victoria)	5853	1541	231	2747	3496
Umvoti (Umvoti)	Could not compile return without assistance				
Weenen (Weenen)	4073	277	502	4488	4161
Alexandra (Alexandra)	1992	737	1747	525	618
Alfred (Alfred)	324	Nil	104	75	Nil
Lower Umkomanzi (Pmb)	800	69	36	2990	200
Ixopo (Pmb)	2356	174	1382	3294	799
Umsinga (KlipR)	5642	0	23	268	
Ipolela (Pmb)	2140	Nil	360	1094*	
Lower Umzimkulu (Alexandra)	2	Nil	44	23	Nil
Dundee (KlipR)	1	-	70	4227	75
	36826	8973	5883	Combined Total 44639	

* Both occupied - unoccupied

APPENDIX III
MEMORANDUM B

Magistracy	Approximate No. of natives liable to be called out	Number called out from 1 Jan to 30 Sept 1889	Per centage called out
Umgeni	1504	191	12 3/4
Lions River	395	44	11
Umlazi	1576	246	15 1/2
Klip River		127	
Newcastle	-	-	-
Inanda	1812	212	11 3/4
Lower Tugela	4392	235	5 1/4 (below 9%)
Umvoti	2602	275	10 1/2
Weenen	1919	393	20 1/2
Alexandra	1702	161	9 1/2
Alfred	1532	196	12 3/4
Upper Umkomanzi	350	91	26
Ixopo	2731	278	10 1/4
Umsinga	2130	283	13 1/4

Based on SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876

APPENDIX IV

MEMORANDUM C NATIVE LABOUR

Umgeni	Supplies its own works
Umlazi	Do
Inanda	Do as well as those of Umvoti
Lower Tugela	Do Do
Umvoti	Supplies Klip River and Newcastle Divisions
Weenen/Umsinga	Supply their own wants and those of Klip River and Newcastle
Alexandra	Supplies its own wants as well as Harbour Works
Alfred	Supplies its own wants
Upper Umkomanzi	Do
Ixopo	Do as well as Lions River and assists Upper Umkomanzi
Lions River	Supplies its own wants.

Based on SNA 1/1/109, 1888/876

APPENDIX V

SCHEME FOR NATIVE CONTINGENT CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF DITTO

NATIVE CONTINGENT

In the event of a Zulu war, it is proposed to raise a force of 5 500 fighting men consisting of 500 Mounted Basutos, and 5 000 Natal Zulus (infantry). Their duties, to lead every column, acting as light troops.

Staff

Organization

- 1 Commandant
- 1 Staff Officer
- 1 Interpreter
- 5 Asst.-Commandants
- 6 Medical Officers

The Commandant and Staff Officer should be soldiers, and as many of the Asst.-Commandants as possible. It is desirable that the Medical officers should speak Zulu. The Interpreter must be a thorough good Zulu talker. The Commandant commands the whole Contingent and especially the Mounted Men. The Staff Officer acts as Major of Brigade, &c. The Interpreter attends the Commandant. Each Asst.-Commandant commands a Regt., and has attached to him one Medical Officer. To be raised from all classes in Natal.

Officers.

Farmers' sons speaking Zulu, brought up with, and known to the men of the Contingent. Traders and Hunters in the Zulu country. Men who have served Her Majesty, either as officers, soldiers or seamen. All officers to be mounted, finding their own horses, &c. To be armed with the same weapon as the men for the sake of uniformity of ammunition, and to be dressed in the same general style, to avoid loss of life, at their own cost.

Mounted Men

Five troops of Basutos of 100 men each. Each troop of 5 sections of 20 men each. Each section (20 men) being led by a white man. Each Basuto brings with him horse, saddle, and bridle.

Infantry

Five Regiments of Natal Zulus of 1 000 men each. Each Company of 10 sections, of 10 men each. Each section (10 men) being led by a white man, necessary to efficiency, where the Natal Zulu is concerned.

Mounted Men

Dress:	Scarlet Serge or Blanket Jumper
	Flannel Shirt
	Cord Trousers

	Glengarry, or other cap
	Half-boots
	Spurs
	Soldier's Great-coat
Arms and accoutrements	Westley-Richard's Carbine
	Butcher's knife
	Waist-belt with 2 pouches for 30 rounds each, supported by suspenders over the shoulders
	Blanket
	Havresack
	3 Great-coat straps

Infantry

Dress:	Scarlet Serge or Blanket Jumper
	Flannel Shirt
	Corduroy or Canvas Knickerbockers
	Glengarry, or other cap
	Soldier's Great-Coat
Arms and accoutrements	Snider Rifle
	Bayonet
	Waist-belt, with 2 pouches of 30 rounds each, to carry also bayonet and knife, supported by leather suspenders over the shoulders
	Havresack
	Great-coat Straps
	The Native Contingent require no tents for either officers or Tents, &c. for man.

Commissariat

No Commissariat arrangements are required, except the provision of meal and slaughter-cattle, whilst the Contingent is in a friendly country, and perhaps for a few days in that of the enemy; after which, it is hoped, it will be self-supporting.

Officers make their own arrangements for everything, once in the enemy's country; until which, rations as per equal grades in the Regular Forces.

Ammunition, Mounted Men

Each troop of 100 Mounted Men is to have, as Regimental Reserve, 6 pack-horses (private property), each led by a mounted lad ($\frac{1}{2}$ pay boy) to carry each about 700 rounds of ammunition, weighing some 70 lbs., and packed in raw-hide bags, and 5 pack-horses for the use of officers. This will give the troop

In possession per man	60 rounds
Regimental Reserve	<u>42</u> rounds
Total	<u>102</u> rounds

Infantry

Each company of 100 men to have on its strength 16 well-grown lads as carriers ($\frac{1}{2}$ pay boys), one for each officer, to carry his blankets, &c., and one for each double section of 20, to carry the cooking-pot for porridge (iron pots being replaced by Kaffir clay-pots as soon as possible). One being a spare lad to replace casualties.

These lads to carry one assegai, one knobkerrie, and one stick each. Each company of 100, to have on its strength 12 young men as ammunition carriers, each armed with one stabbing assegai, one knobkerrie, and one stick. Each ammunition carrier takes 350 rounds of ammunition, sewed up in raw hide, which is perfectly waterproof, and travels well on the head or shoulder, as may be desired by the carrier, weighing about 35 lbs. This will give the company:

In possession per man	60 rounds
Regimental Reserve	<u>42</u> rounds
Total	<u>102</u> rounds

The Regimental Reserve is to be completed, as occasion requires, from the First Field Reserve.

Medical arrangements

Each Medical officer should have with him a "Medical Field Companion" carried by a Native orderly (taken from the ranks) [weight 12 lbs].

Discipline

Patriarchal. The only kind suitable to this class of white men and natives.

Drill

Shooting (as steadily as possible) - advancing - moving to the right or left. Increasing or diminishing front. The Native is a born skirmisher.

Recruiting

For officers: By the selection of the Commandant.

For men: Natal Basutos and Zulus. Ordered out for service by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony according to Native custom, and placed under orders of the Commandant; each clan or section accompanied by its chief and head man. The clans to be ordered out being:

Hlubi	}	Basutos
Sikali		
Putini		
Ama-Hlubi		
Pakadi		
Jantji		
Teteleku		
Lugacha		
		Natal Zulus

Basutos from British Basutoland may best be recruited by the Commandant of the Force, with the sanction of H.E. the High Commissioner.

Officers and Sub-Officers

In recruiting the officers, it will be necessary to visit the localities from which the clans are to come, so that it may be ascertained who, of the young Farmer Class, are at home; and this on account of the migratory character of this class of people, who are at home to-day, and at the Diamond or Gold Fields to-morrow.

The Hunter and Trader Class, equally migratory, are to be met with all over the Colony, but chiefly along the Coast country.

Men who have served the Queen, everywhere - all to be enlisted or engaged as sub-officers, and promoted according to deserts.

All engagements to be for six months, with six months renewal if required.

Discharge at pleasure.

Arms, accoutrements, ammunition, and "Medical Field Companions" from Imperial stores.

Staff

- 1 Commandant - Nil.
- 1 Staff Officer - A soldier, £1 a day, in addition to his Cost, Regimental Pay, or £365 a year.
- 1 Interpreter - £365 a year.
- 5 Asst.-Commandants - If soldiers, £1 a day each, in addition to Regimental Pay. If civilians, each £500 a year.
- 6 Medical officers, each £500 a year.

Total cost of Staff, £5,555 or £6,230 a year, which covers everything.

Captains, £365; sub-officers, £250.

Officers

525 Officers and sub-officers, at an average of £300 a year each, £157,500.

Mounted Men (Basutos)

Pay: Fighting men, 500 at 2s. 6d. a day each; per year, £22,812 10s.

Pack-horses, each led by a mounted lad, 55 at 3s. a day for lad, horse, and pack-horse, £4,015. Mounted lad 2s. 6d. a day, Pack-horse 1s. 6d. a day.

Clothing: Two complete suits in the year, for 555 men and lads, at £10 each, £5,550.

Infantry

Pay: Fighting men, 5000 at 1s a day each; per year, £91,250.

Carriers, 800 at 6d. a day each; per year £7,300.

Ammunition carriers, 600 at 1s. a day each; per year £10,950.

Clothing: Two complete suits a year, for 6400 men and lads, at £6 each, £38,400.

FIGHTING MEN**Summary of cost, including officers, for one year**

14 Staff	£5,555 or £6,230
525 Officers and sub-officers	£157,500
500 Mounted Men	£22,812
5000 Infantry	£91,250

AUXILIARIES**Mounted Men**

55 Pack-horses and 55 Mounted Leaders	£4,105
---------------------------------------	--------

Infantry

600 Ammunition Carriers	£10,950
800 Carriers	£7,300

Clothing

555 Mounted Men	£5,550
6400 Infantry	£38,400

Grand total for one year, for a force of 14 staff, 525 officers and sub-officers, 500 mounted men, and 5000 infantry, all fighting men, with 1455 auxiliaries, £343,332 or £344,007, according as Military or Civil Asst.-Commandants are employed. Which gives about, per month, £28,667, or nearly £3. 6d. a head a month all ranks included.

General Remarks

Two suits of clothing are estimated for each man for one year, as in the absence of war clothes wear out.

The Contingent are dressed in scarlet: (a) To impose on the enemy. (b) To ensure safety from the British side. The cost of provisions is not included, as the force, once well in the enemy's country, should keep itself.

Per diem: 3 lbs meal, 5/7 meat

But until then, it may be put down at 1s. a head a day for officers, and 8d. a head a day for men.

In addition to this estimate of the cost of the Native Contingent, gratuities should be given for death or wounds; and compensation for loss of horses, to Mounted Men.

Honours and Rewards

At the end of the Campaign, each man should receive a proportion of the cattle captured by the force, according to a scale to be laid down, and at the discretion of the Commanding Officer; and those who had displayed conspicuous valour should be decorated, Native fashion, with the Head-ring, and permitted to carry an assegai at all times.

Want of time from pressure of work must be my excuse for this very imperfect Memorandum.

A.W. Durnford, LT.-Col. R.E.
17 August, 1878.

Lieut.-Colonel E. Durnford(ed), A Soldier's Life and Work in South Africa (London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), pp. 333 - 339.

APPENDIX VI

Theophilus Shepstone's divisions of levies, 1848

Division	Shepstone's list of chiefs and some 'tribes'	Hut tax lists of chiefs 1849 and 1853	'Tribe'
First	Quenge*	(untraceable)	amaMpumuza
	Lugajo	uLugaju	amaXamalala
	Dibinyika	uDidileka (Thetheleku)	amaMpumuza
	Nocasa	uMacansa (1849) unocasa (1853)	amaFoze
	(Inhlangwini)*	-	Inhlangwini
	<u>Commandant: Nobanda</u>		
Second	Mahlukana	uMahlukana	amaDubu
	Musi	Musi	amaCwabi
	Dubulana	uDubiana	amaNyuswa
	Sipunhla	Sipanhla	amaNgongoma
	Nomsimekwana	uNosimikwana (1849) unomsimikwana (1853)	amaCosele
	Manzini	Manzini	amaNganga and amaNcolosi
	Faku	Faku	amaNcolosi
	Mnyeka	umYeka	amaPepeta
	Mngeni	-	-
	Mapumlo	-	-
	Timuni	utimuni (1853)	Tetwa
	<u>Commandant: Mankayana</u>		
<u>Third</u>	Pakade	uPakade	amaCunu
	Somahashe	uSomahatye	amaBomvu
	Magedama	uMakedama	amaKabela
	Langalibalele	Langalibalele	amaHlubi
	Putile	uPutini	amaNgwe
	<u>Commandant: Umkizwana</u>		
Fourth	Nodada	uNodada	abaTembu
	Zikali	uZikali	amaNgwane
	Job [whose son was Mondise and grandson, Matshana]	Matyana	abaTembu- Sithole
		<u>Commandant: Not Named</u>	

Division	Shepstone's list of chiefs and some 'tribes'	Hut tax lists of chiefs 1849 and 1853	'Tribe'
Fifth	Siyingela	uSiyingelau	amaSihlamhlu- Abambu
	Dumisa	Dumisa	amaDuma
	Dontsela	uDontsela	amaDunge
	Magidigidi	uMagitigiti	amaCele

Commandant: Homoi

* Yenge kaNontshiza, regent for Nobanda kaNgwane (see J. Wright, 'Before Mgungundlovu' in Laband and Haswell, Pietermaritzburg, p. 21).

Sixth	Xabashe	uXabash'	amaCele
	Makuta	uMakuta	amaKanya
	(Tolane)*	Ogle	Totani
	(Izembe)*	Ogle	iZembe

Commandant: Nondinisa

Seventh	Tungwana		
	Dushane	uDushane	amaBaca
	(Umbusi)*	No chief; on private land	UmBusi
	(Isinyama)*	uKayityana	esiNyameni
	(Inkumbi)*	uVinhhlazi	izinKumbi
	Hlwatika	uHlwatika	amaHlubi

Commandant: Zulu kaNogandaye

* These are 'tribes', not chiefs

Based on CSO 44(2) No. 64 and Spohr, Natal Diaries, pp. 42 - 46.

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I Manuscript Sources

- (i) Unpublished Official Papers
- (ii) Private Papers

II Official Printed Sources

III Unofficial Contemporary Printed Sources

- (i) Newspapers
- (ii) Books; General Accounts; Autobiographies; Memoirs; Reminiscences

IV Later Edited, Annotated and Printed Contemporary Sources

V Later Printed Sources

- (i) Bibliographical Guides
- (ii) Books
- (iii) Compilations of documents printed after 1900.
- (iv) Journal Articles
- (v) Unpublished Theses and Conference Papers

Notes on Sources

In this study, the Secretary for Native Affairs file proved to be an abundant and valuable source of information regarding the system of raising isibhalo labourers and military levies. The often arbitrary nature of these exactions is unconsciously revealed, as few magistrates and officials saw anything reprehensible in the system. This may account for the lack of care in identifying clans and chiefs exactly, although at that time Zulu orthography was not firmly established.

Official sources were less concerned with the ramifications of the system, which may account for the relative paucity of official material and the late definition of the system.

Subsequent publications on Natal history have been more concerned with the colonial dynamic and the fury of war than the hardships experienced by both labourers and levies, and the consequences of the Natal government exactions.

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