

OF ORTHODOXY, HERESY AND THE DIFAQANE

by C. de B. Webb.

Writing in 1933, Eric Walker made the bold declaration: 'The Great Trek is the central event in South African history.'<sup>1</sup> Forty years later, the doctrine of the centrality of the Trek remains, for many white South Africans, a cardinal dogma of historical orthodoxy.

Yet centrality cannot be fixed and absolute. It is a variable that depends on the structure and limits of what is being studied, and on the vantage point from which the observations are made.

Despite the findings of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Newton, there is a sense in which the earth remains the centre of the universe; for in terms of what man knows of the starry sky, the earth is still the point from which the lines of observation radiate out, equidistant, in every direction. Yet because that is so, no-one still claims that the earth is structurally at the centre of the vast stellar system. It is, we know, a tiny satellite, revolving round a not very splendid sun, which is central only to our own planetary system.

And what is true of the physical world is equally true of history. What is central to the social historian may be quite peripheral to the historian of science. The event round which the Muslim builds his historical narrative may be handled as a marginal incident by his Christian counterpart. What the black scholar sees as the heart of the matter may be touched on only for anecdotal interest by the historian writing from the viewpoint of white society. And that is not all. Beyond the relativities produced by particular viewpoints and by the variant structures of the disciplines within which the historian works, centrality also shifts with the onward process of history itself. No doubt there was a time when the reign of King Alfred could be regarded as the central event in the history of the British Isles, but it is doubtful whether it would be seen in that light today.

And so it is with South African history. Already the onward course of events is altering paerspectives. Already the

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heterodox are voicing opinions which the orthodox rise angrily to anathematise. Already there is a large and potentially influential following for a heresy, which places the Difaqane, an episode in the history of the Bantu-speaking peoples, in the position of centrality hitherto held by the Trek.

While not denying the importance of the Trek, the heretic argues that the Difaqane was more important. Like the Trek, it produced a radical redistribution of population, but on a scale so vast as to dwarf the demographic significance of the emigration from the Cape. Like the Trek, it contributed to the consolidation of new societies, but the areas affected by these developments (stretching from the Cape in the south to the great lakes of central Africa) far exceeded those affected by the emergence of the Trekker republics. Like the Trek, the Difaqane was stained by war and bloodshed, but the destruction was overwhelmingly greater than anything produced by the white thrust into the interior. In the words of J.D. Omer-Cooper:<sup>2</sup>

Whole tribes were massacred and even more died in the famine which followed in the wake of the desolating hordes. Still greater numbers abandoned their ancestral lands and sought refuge in difficult mountain country or elsewhere, where geographical features held out hope of asylum.

As a result, large areas, previously settled by Bantu-speakers, were left practically denuded of human population; in other parts, where the terrain favoured survival, kingdoms and political paramountcies emerged of a sort unknown before.

And because this great upheaval ran its course in the lands surrounding the Cape before ever the white exodus began, it is arguable that, but for the Difaqane, the Trek would not have been the event it was; it would have have worn a wholly different aspect. To understand why the country came to be peopled as it was in the nineteenth century; why certain areas fell to the white man, and why in others his advance was deflected; to understand the accompanying wars between black and white, the bitter and sustained struggle for good land - a whole range of experiences that profoundly affected the consciousness of the emergent Afrikaner people - it is not enough to look at the

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will and determination of the Trekkers. The context in which this clash of interests occurred was one already whittled and shaped by the Difaqane.

Thus whether or not the Difaqane is rightly to be regarded as the central point in South Africa's history, it was certainly an event of transforming significance, and it is strange (positively sinful according to the more self-righteous heretics) how brazen South African historians have been in shutting their eyes to this truth. George McCall Theal - always conscious, despite his prejudices, that the history of South Africa is the history of all its peoples - devoted some sixty pages to the upheaval in the first volume of his History of South Africa Since 1795. But that was produced in 1915, and for half a century thereafter no-one showed any disposition to follow his lead. Partly, perhaps, because it was a phase of our history featuring the Bantu-speaking peoples, partly because the evidence as to what happened is not readily accessible in archives and libraries, Theal's successors either skirted gingerly round the edges of the Difaqane, or ignored it completely.

Recently, however, the position has changed. Accounts of the Difaqane have been published that make it a comprehensible and teachable aspect of South African history,<sup>3</sup> and detailed studies of specific features of the upheaval have appeared in large numbers.

That being the situation, it is not the purpose of this paper to review the Difaqane in all its multifarious ramifications and extensions, but rather to focus attention on the problem of its origins in the early years of the nineteenth century among the Nguni peoples of what is now the Zululand area of Natal.

#### The Problem of Origins

In the eighteenth century this northern Nguni area, bounded roughly by the Tugela and Pongola rivers, was occupied by numerous small chiefdoms, related in language and custom and also often in origin - a congeries of small independent polities riven by feuds and rivalries, but no more war-like in their relations with one-another than their counterparts elsewhere in

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southern Africa. Disputes and tensions within a chiefdom were commonly resolved by fission - by the dissidents hiving off, usually under the leadership of a member of the chiefly house, to establish their independence on unoccupied land - and when warfare was resorted to, it seems mainly to have been an instrument of the feud, a device for paying off old scores and extracting reparations, not an instrument for annihilating neighbours or stripping them of their lands and independence.

Early in the nineteenth century, however, this old order underwent a fundamental change. Warfare began to be turned to new ends. It ceased to be an instrument of the feud, and became instead an instrument for conquering neighbours and absorbing them into larger political structures. And within a decade or two of that change, yet another followed; for from approximately 1818 onwards warfare took an even more destructive turn. It ceased to be used simply for subordinating neighbours and absorbing them into larger polities: it began to be used also for annihilating neighbours and driving those who resisted into exile.

Thus in the early decades of the nineteenth century the peoples living to the north of the Tugela found themselves caught up in a power struggle which not only revolutionised the old political order, but also, in its second more destructive phase, sent refugee groups fleeing to the north, the west and the south, where they in turn became raiders and conquerors, extending the area of dislocation over a large part of southern Africa.

And it is this that has to be explained. Why was it in the lands to the north of the Tugela that the turmoil began? What went wrong in this region? Why did the relatively peaceful chiefdoms of the eighteenth century become the epicentre of a military and political earthquake, the shocks and repercussions of which were to be felt hundreds of miles away?

Those are the questions. But, as so often in history, it is easier to formulate the problem than provide an answer.

Until the 1960s the most widely accepted explanation was that the disruption was initiated by the sudden appearance on the

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scene of a man of transcending personality - Dingiswayo, chief of the Mthethwa - a sort of black Charlemagne, uneducated but receptive to new ideas; a warrior chief moved by the noble vision of a Pax Mthethwana which the feuding and squabbling of the past would be suppressed and controlled under his own benign overlordship. In the words of A.T. Bryant,<sup>4</sup>

....a man of progressive and praiseworthy ambition enlightened and constructive in his policy of social improvements and political reform; an able military organiser and a clean fighter.

Knowledge of this remarkable man's career, though limited, is sufficient to permit a brief biographical sketch. He was born in the second half of the eighteenth century, probably about 1770, and was the son of Jobe, chief of the Mthethwa, whose territories were located just to the south of the Mfolozi and to the west of the present village of Kwambonambi. At some point in his early manhood, probably in the 1790s, he fell under suspicion as plotting to usurp the chieftainship from his aging father. With his life in danger, he fled into exile, but returned some years later, mounted on a horse and armed with a gun, seized the chieftaincy from a brother, Mawewe, who in the interim had succeeded old Jobe, and then embarked on the career that was to leave the old order transformed. One after another he began to conquer and subordinate the neighbouring chiefdoms until he had built up, south of the Mfolozi, an empire of a sort unknown before.

So stated, Dingiswayo's career is not a matter of dispute. Where the problems do arise is in respect of the motivation or inspiration that lay behind the revolutionary changes that he initiated after his return from exile.

The most widely held view until recently was that the inspiration derived from a white source. Dingiswayo, it was believed, used his period of exile to visit the Cape, and there, in the words of Theophilus Shepstone,<sup>5</sup>

....he acquired the information, or made the observations, which were to effect the great changes in his native land and the surrounding countries....He learned the strength of standing armies, the value of discipline and training..., (and) he had no sooner got possession of power than he set to work to organise his tribe in accordance with these ideas.

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Thus according to Shepstone and those who have accepted his account, the trigger that unleashed the early nineteenth century revolution north of the Tugela was the experience gained by a wandereing exile in the white society of the Cape. But as soon as this thesis is examined critically, difficulties begin to bristle up. For one thing, the military system that Dingiswayo developed bore little resemblance to anything in operation at the Cape. It resembled neither the commando system of the Boers, nor the regimental system of the Dutch and British. Dingiswayo's system was one based on age-grades, yet in neither the Boer commandos nor the regiments of regulars was age an organisational feature. And beyond that is another problem: the sheer improbability of the story that an exile, ambitious to succeed to the Mthethwa chieftainship, should have put himself right out of touch with affairs at home by wandering off some seven or eight hundred miles until he happened to reach the Cape.

There is, however, another version of the same episode in Dingiswayo's career - an older version, first recorded by Henry Francis Fynn, one of the pioneer traders at Port Natal, and also a slightly more probable one.<sup>6</sup> According to this, Dingiswayo did not go to the Cape. He remained squarely where one would expect him to have been - in the near vicinity of his own home territory - and there met up, not with European regiments, but with a solitary white traveller, from whom he acquired his horse and gun, and the new ideas that were to inspire his career.

Altogether it is a more plausible story, but still not a wholly convincing one. For even if Dingiswayo did meet up with a lone white traveller trying to make his way towards the coast, it remains questionable whether this brief encounter would have provided a revolutionary schooling in new military methods and political concepts. Stray whites were no novelty to the peoples living along the coast of south-east Africa. Since the commencement of Portuguese trade with the Indies they had appeared repeatedly, often in large numbers, the victims of shipwrecks and maroonings. In many cases they had been given hospitality; some had chosen to settle down and remain with those who sheltered them. But nowhere is there any evidence that these strangers, with their exotic military and political ideas, precipitated change and upheaval. Had they done so, it would have been

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strange indeed, for the historical record of other societies leaves little doubt that ideas do not shake up social and political stability unless the circumstances are such as to give them an immediate relevance. And if these earlier sojourners had no disrupting effect, it is difficult to see why the impact of Dingiswayo's white man should have been so different. Beyond that, however, is another consideration, and an important one, for the evidence that survives from the early nineteenth century revolution north of the Tugela indicates that Dingiswayo was not the only chief to embark on a career of conquest at this time. Simultaneously, two other chiefs, Zwide of the Ndwandwe and Sobhuza of the Dlamini-Ngwane, began to turn warfare to the new purposes of conquest and political consolidation. But nowhere is there any suggestion that these men were motivated by ideas derived from white tutors or from intercourse with white society.

Thus even if Dingiswayo gained some advantage from meeting up with a European, 'white inspiration' is not in itself a sufficient explanation of the dramatic upheaval that began among the peoples living north of the Tugela in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

What is necessary is an approach to the problem that goes behind personalities and ideas to the circumstances that gave the personalities and ideas their relevance and efficacy. Yet obvious as this approach may be, it was not until recently that it was attempted, and then, not by an historian, nor even by a scholar working in South Africa, but by an anthropologist, Professor Max Gluckman, of the University of Manchester.<sup>7</sup> From the evidence provided in genealogies of the repeated splitting of chiefdoms, and from the records left behind by shipwrecked mariners and travellers, Gluckman deduced that there was a significant increase of population in the Nguni area over the centuries, and that by the last decades of the eighteenth century this increase had probably reached a critical point, characterised by acute shortage of land. Whereas previously, tensions within a chiefdom could be resolved by fission, by the end of the eighteenth century this was, in all likelihood, ceasing to be possible, for to all intents and purposes the land was fully occupied. Thus

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Thus disputes would have become more bitter, warfare more intense and serious; chiefs would have become more inventive and resourceful in their military planning, and in the attempt to provide themselves with greater security, would have begun to conquer and subordinate neighbours for the purpose of building larger, more powerful political structures.

All in all, it is a more convincing explanation than the old 'white inspiration' theory which would make one of the greatest of all upheavals in our history hinge on a black man's chance encounter with a white. But for all that, problems remain. One is left wondering, for example, why it should have been in the lands between the Tugela and Pongola, specifically, that the point of critical population density was reached with such explosive effect. Why not in other parts of Bantu-speaking Africa that had been occupied equally long? No less important, if a 'land crisis' was the spark that ignited the explosion, as Gluckman suggests, then one would expect the wars of Dingiswayo, Zwibe and Sobhuza to have been campaigns of extermination, fought for the purpose of driving out rivals and creating new space into which their own cramped followers could move. But that was not their nature. The wars of devastation came in the second phase of the upheaval, not the first. The peoples whom Dingiswayo, Zwibe and Sobhuza conquered were not converted into homeless refugees, nor even deprived of portions of their land. In almost every case, they were allowed to continue in full occupation of all that they had previously held. And in most cases their chiefs were upheld in office: they had their independent powers cut down; they became the 'vassals' of the conquerors who had defeated them; but within these limits they continued to exercise the functions of chieftainship in the lands that were ancestrally theirs.

Thus the modus operandi of the conquerors suggests strongly that lebensraum - the quest for habitable land - was not the paramount consideration in the first phase of disturbance north of the Tugela. Rather the purpose seems to have been the establishment of power blocs that would enable the conquerors to exact tribute and military service from previously independent peoples.

And this emphasis on tribute and military service, in its turn, suggests that the genesis of the upheaval is to be traced to

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two very specific features of the situation north of the Tugela in the early nineteenth century: in the first place, competition for a monopoly of the resources that were needed to secure a share of the trade with Delagoa Bay and hold it against rivals; and secondly, the need to prop up damaged economies if, as seems probable from evidence that is beginning to accumulate, the chiefdoms that turned to conquest had been struck by some adversity, such as drought or stock disease, in the early years of the century.

Of these two possibilities, the trade theory has so far enjoyed the better press. First hinted at by H.F. Fynn, it later received fresh emphasis in the work of Professor Monica Wilson, while recent research by an American scholar, Alan Smith, has brought to light fascinating new evidence of the importance of the Delagoa Bay trading system for the neighbouring peoples living to the south.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, the issue of economic adversity has only recently begun to be explored.<sup>9</sup> The central feature of this thesis is that in terms of environment and natural resources, the three conquering chiefdoms resembled one-another remarkably closely - far more closely than they did almost any of the other chiefdoms in the northern Nguni area. All three, for example, were situated either on, or close to, the transition between Zululand thornveld and expansive tracts of lowveld; all three had access to at least one additional vegetational zone; all three were close to large rivers and good alluvial soil. But in all three, the extensive lowveld regions, on which the herds depended for good winter pasturage, were vulnerable to overgrazing, drought and cattle disease. Thus simply in the reduplication of similarities there lies a strong probability that if adversity struck one of these chiefdoms it would have struck all three, setting them on similar courses of warfare and conquest. And the evidence of such adversity, though it needs fuller exploration, is already sufficient to demand serious attention. From Zulu informants, A.T. Bryant picked up references to a great famine, sometimes called the 'Madlatule', which struck just after the turn of the century, and he, like Theophilus Shepstone, records 'that the great test of victory' in Dingiswayo's mind 'was the power of feeding his army on the grain stores of the conquered'.<sup>10</sup>

Where the emphasis will eventually come to rest, it is

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impossible yet to say. But one thing is clear: in the assessment of factors that may have contributed to the onset of disruption north of the Tugela, population increase, competition for trade, and economic adversity are in no way mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they may well have been interacting aspects of a larger crisis. For if the Mthethwa, the Ndwandwe and the Dlamini-Ngwane were struck by sudden calamity, then to the problem of heavy population density, and rivalry for trade with Delagoa Bay, would have been added a sharp new incentive to break the independence of weaker neighbours and reduce them to tributary status.

although the evidence is not yet conclusive,  
Thus, what is beginning to emerge is a picture of three chiefdoms pushed into courses of militarism by the hard-edged pressures of economic need. And a picture containing such features corresponds far more closely to what most men recognise as reality than does one constructed around the chance exchange of a few ideas.

#### The Dingiswayan Revolution

By the time of Dingiswayo's death, c. 1818, the people in the area affected by this three-cornered struggle had already been swept into a revolutionary new order. The lands between the Tugela and the Pongola were divided between the paramountcies of Dingiswayo and Zwide, each the overlord of a score or more of previously independent chiefdoms. North of the Pongola, Sobhuza, by similar methods of conquest and subordination, was laying the foundations on which the Swazi kingdom was later to emerge.

And with all this, a new and much more formidable military system had been initiated. For as the war-lords conquered so they enrolled younger men of the defeated chiefdoms in composite regiments that cut across the old political divisions. Thus, in effect, armies organised on a non-territorial age basis began to take shape; and although on the surface this was a small change, an organisational detail, its implications were profound. Whereas military call-up in the old pre-conquest chiefdoms had been locality based, each headman supplying his chief with a small contingent of men, there were now coming into existence much larger military units that could be trained and deployed on the field of battle according to maturity and experience. Instead of fighting with a conglomerate force of territorial units (a hodge-podge of old men, youths and warriors in their prime), the military commander

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could now order the field of battle in such a way as to ensure that there would be crack units of warriors at their fighting peak for the main engagement, with the auxiliary work being done by older and younger men.

And there was a further advantage in all this - a political one - for with centrally enrolled regiments, chiefs who had been reduced to tributary status found themselves stripped of the fighting services of young men in training or on call-up, and the force at the disposal of the paramount chief was always superior to that of any of his subordinates.

Great as these changes were, however, they were a small beginning compared with what was to come. In this first phase of the upheaval, the main participants had remained unchanged, and the greater part of Bantu-speaking southern Africa had not been affected. What seems to have transformed the situation was the capture and execution of Dingiswayo by the Ndwandwe, c. 1818, followed by the threat of his confederacy south of the Mfolozi disintegrating, and the petty chiefdoms that composed it being overrun by the forces of Zwile. For with that crisis there came to the fore the Zulu chief, Shaka, who turned the hostilities into a determined struggle for the destruction of the Ndwandwe and the elimination of any incipient nucleus of power that might rival his own.

#### The Career of Shaka

As is to be expected there are many shadowy patches in the story of Shaka's early life and rise to power, but the main features are reasonably distinct. Born some time round about 1787, he was the son of the Zulu chief Senzangakona, and of Nandi, a daughter of the chiefly house of the neighbouring Langeni people. But he was an illegitimate child, born before Senzangakona had undergone the rituals that were the necessary prelude to marriage; and it is clear that childhood for Shaka was a time of insecurity and unhappiness. Shortly after his birth, Nandi appears to have taken her place in Senzangakona's household; but a few years later she was expelled, and there followed a long period, spanning the greater part of Shaka's childhood and youth, during which he and his mother were exiles and dependent on the charity of others. The influence of these childhood experiences upon the shaping of his

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domineering, ambitious, sadistic adult personality is a matter for speculation. But one thing is beyond any doubt: when Shaka moved to the Mthethwa country it was a turning point in his career, for it placed him in a position where he was bound to be caught up in the great forces of change that were at work north of the Tugela. At some point, c. 1810, he was drafted into the Mthethwa army, and within a short time he had begun to make his mark as one of the star warriors among Dingiswayo's young fighting men.

Again one can only speculate, but it seems probable that as a warrior Shaka found a fulfilment that he had never known before. Regimental life seems to have provided him with the companionship that he had lacked in boyhood, while the battle-field provided an arena in which he could display his talents and unleash the violent ambitions pent up within him. Certainly, whatever the explanation may be, militarism became for him a way of life. He was fascinated by problems of strategy, and he was an experimenter and innovator in matters of battle tactics. Within a few years he had been promoted to positions of command within the Mthethwa army, and by 1816 he had become one of Dingiswayo's special proteges.

Then his career took a new turn. For round about 1816, his father, by then one of Dingiswayo's vassals, died; and with Dingiswayo's connivance a plot was hatched to assassinate the successor and secure the Zulu chieftainship for Shaka himself.

Thus, by the time he was about 30, Shaka had not only become a military commander of distinction; he had also become one of Dingiswayo's principal vassals. And it was on this basis that he was to begin his own great career of war and conquest.

With Dingiswayo's death, probably in 1818, Shaka began rapidly to counter the disintegration that threatened south of the Mfолоzi, by making his own Zulu chieftainship the centre of a new military confederation. When Zwide's Ndwandwe invaded across the Mfолоzi, hoping to capitalise on the advantage gained by Dingiswayo's death, Shaka's military resources were already sufficient to repulse the invaders in a fierce battle fought at Gqokoli hill, probably late in 1818. This triumph brought him fresh adherents, enabling him to consolidate his position still further, and when Zwide's forces returned to the attack a year or so later, Shaka was

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able to shatter Ndwandwe power in an encounter that may be regarded as the epicentral disturbance in the Difaqane; for it was this smashing of one of the newly-formed power blocs north of the Tugela that unleashed the shock waves that were to be felt hundreds of miles away.

One of Zwide's military commanders, Shoshangane, veered north with a large following to the hinterland of Delagoa Bay, conquering on his way, and eventually establishing a new hegemony in the form of the empire of Gaza, with its headquarters in the highlands of the central Sabi. Two other Ndwandwe leaders, Zwangendaba and Nxaba, followed initially similar courses, but after clashing with Shoshangane and later with one-another, they thrust forward on paths of conquest, first into what is now Rhodesia, then on to the great lakes of central Africa. Back in the south, Zwide and his own immediate following, in their retreat from the victorious armies of Shaka, fell with devastating impact upon the Ngwane people of Matiwane, living in the vicinity of present-day Vryheid; the Ngwane, in their turn, attacked and defeated the Hlubi peoples, dislodging them from their lands, and by 1821 a large body of these refugee Hlubi had crossed the Berg and launched themselves against the Tlokwa people of Sekonyela.

Thus by 1821 the lines of disruption were extending deep into the interior. And at the epicentre of the disturbance, new shock waves were being generated. For with the Ndwandwe supremacy broken, there was virtually nothing to stand in Shaka's way. One after another neighbouring chiefdoms were brought under his rule; and those who resisted were hounded out of their territories. People who escaped the Zulu armies were attacked by fleeing hordes such as the Thembu. Natal south of the Tugela suffered large-scale depopulation; refugees gathered south of the Mzimvubu upsetting the equilibrium in the area of the Mpondo chiefdom of Faku; others passed on further to the south and the east to become the Mfengu, or Fingo, of frontier history. The Ngwane, who had sent the Hlubi spilling over the Berg, followed in their victims' tracks in 1822, after finding themselves threatened by Shaka's power. Zwide's people regrouped for a time on the upper Mkomati, where they disrupted the peace of the Pedi chiefdoms of the eastern Transvaal. And in 1822, Mzilikazi of the Kumalo, after falling foul of Shaka, embarked on the career of conquest that was to culminate in the

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establishment of the Ndebele (Natabele) kingdom of Rhodesia.

No less important, the kingdom which Shaka was welding together was a political structure of a new type. He was not a paramount chief; nor were his territorial subordinates the rulers of semi-autonomous tribal chiefdoms. His was a centralised monarchy. By keeping the men of fighting age on permanent service, he ensured even more effectively than Dingiswayo and Zwibe had done that the forces at the disposal of the central authority were overwhelmingly greater than those available to any territorial subordinate.

At the same time, through the agency of the regimental system, a national ethos was being created that cut across the older traditional loyalties, and a fighting machine was being constructed that was to make a powerful impact on subsequent nineteenth century history. Previously, armies had done at least some of their fighting by hurling assegais from long distance. Shaka's training of his regiments was for close in-fighting. The long-shafted, javelin-type assegai became virtually obsolete; instead the men of the regiments were armed with short stabbing-spears suitable only for close-combat. The shield was developed so that it could be used as a weapon of attack for disarming the enemy; strategies were devised for trapping opponents so that they would have no choice but to face the Zulu forces in hand to hand combat; and to ensure that Shaka's own men would not funk the terrors of a face to face stabbing match, displays of cowardice were made punishable by death.

#### Assessment

No doubt in time, with the refinements yielded by more intensive research, some of the details of the career of Shaka, and of the events that unleashed the Difaqane, will be modified and revised.

It seems probable, for example, that the system of age-regiments will be found to have been more fluid than hitherto it has been supposed to be, while the picture of Shaka's kingdom as a rigidly centralised structure may well be modified by evidence of delegation of authority and power, particularly in the marches or borderlands where close supervision could not be

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maintained. Again, it seems possible that the role of Zwide in the first phase of the revolution may come to be recognised as having been more important than that of Dingiswayo; and it may even be that what is here called 'the first phase of the upheaval' will be found to have been the second, as evidence accumulates of earlier movements towards consolidation prior to the rise of the great supremacies of Zwide, Dingiswayo and Sobhuza.

But all history is liable to revision; and the fact that adjustments may be made should not deter those responsible for the teaching of South African history from giving this transforming event the attention which it deserves.

At the same time, let us take care. If the Difaqane is to be given its rightful place in the syllabus and the standard text-books, let the lessons of the past not be lost. It would be sad, indeed, if a new dogma of centrality were to take the place of the one that is now crumbling. For there is no heresy more dangerous to history than orthodoxy.

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NOTES

1. Walker, E.A., The Great Trek, p. ix
2. Omer-Cooper, J.D., The Zulu Aftermath, p. 4.
3. The following are particularly useful: Omer-Cooper, op. cit.; Wilson, M. and Thompson, L. (eds.), The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. I, chs. viii and ix.
4. Bryant, A.T., Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 171. See also Stuart, J. and Malcolm, D. McK. (eds.), The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, p. 9.
5. Shepstone, T., 'The Early History of the Zulu-Kafir Race of South-East Africa' in Bird, J. (ed.), The Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 163.
6. Stuart and Malcolm, op. cit., pp. 2 - 8.
7. Gluckman, M., 'The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa' in Fortes, M. and Evans-Pritchard, E.E. (eds.), African Political Systems, p. 25; and Gluckman, 'The Rise of a Zulu Empire' in Scientific American, April 1960, vol. 202, no. 4, p. 166. See also Wilson and Thompson, op. cit., p. 340 n.
8. Stuart and Malcolm, op. cit., pp. 10-11, 47-48; Wilson, M., Divine Kings and the 'Breath of Men', pp. 23-24; Wilson and Thompson, op. cit., pp. 339 and 340 n.; Smith, A., 'The Trade of Delagoa Bay as a Factor in Nguni Politics 1750-1835' in Thompson, L. (ed.), African Societies in Southern Africa, pp. 171-189; Smith, A., 'Delagoa Bay and the Trade of South-Eastern Africa' in Gray, R. and Birmingham, D. (eds.), Pre-Colonial African Trade, pp. 265-289.
9. Daniel, J.B.McI., 'A Geographical Study of Pre-Shakan Zululand' in The South African Geographical Journal, July 1973, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 23-31; Webb, C. de B., 'Environment and History: the Northern Nguni Example', paper presented to Conference on the History of the Transkei and Ciskei, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, February 1973; Guy, J.J., 'Cattle-keeping in Zululand', paper presented to Language and History in Africa Seminar, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
10. Shepstone, op. cit. in Bird, Annals, vol. I, p. 163; Bryant, op. cit., pp. 63, 88, 99-100.



SELECT READING LIST

- Bird, J. (ed.), The Annals of Natal, vol. 1, Pietermaritzburg, 1888. (Includes a reprint of T. Sherstone's article on 'The Early History of the Zulu-Kaffir Race....', as well as other excerpts containing information about the chiefdoms of the Natal-Zululand area in the time of Dingiswayo and Shaka.)
- Bryant, A.T., Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, London, 1929. (Difficult reading, but an invaluable source-book based on Zulu historical evidence.)
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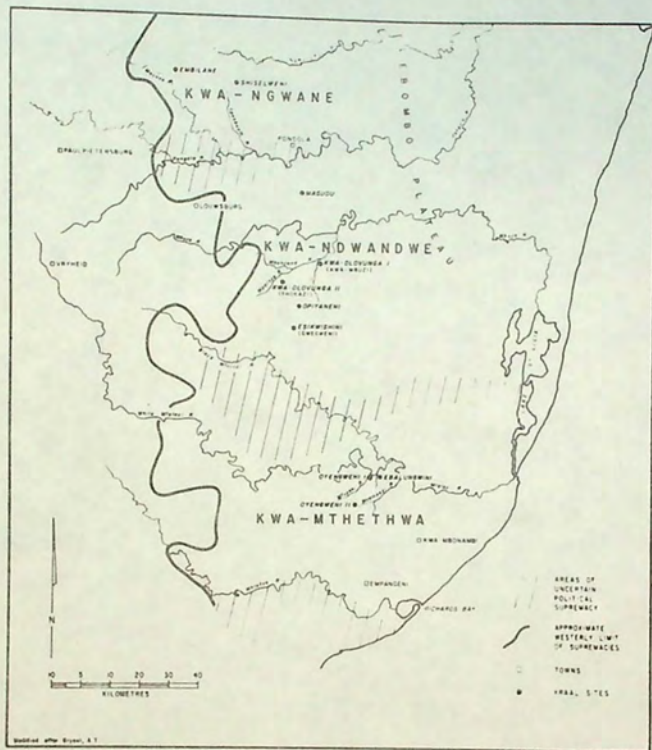


FIG. 1. PRE-SHAKAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND MAJOR KRAAL SITES OF THE NGWANE, NDWANDWE AND MTHETHWA.