

To what extent was the Anglo-Zulu War 1879 an Unnecessary and Cruel Invasion by the British against a friendly Native Nation?

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Abstract

The very short Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 has fired the imagination of thousands of people, particularly the British who know it for the glorious deeds of British soldiers in defeat and adversity, when in reality it was about a small sovereign Kingdom standing up to a global empire. Despite the vast amount of research, there has been little coherent scrutiny of one relatively neglected area, which is whether Britain's invasion of the Zulu kingdom was necessary and whether British conduct of the war and its aftermath was cruel.

This dissertation considered these questions by examining primary and secondary source material, reviewing the historical, social and cultural context from both a British and Zulu perspective, noting contemporary views on race and the conduct of war. It particularly considered the individual motivations of the British behind the invasion, both from its Government in London and its colonial offices in Southern Africa. Having analysed the causes of the invasion and the effects on the Zulu nation, the clear conclusion of this research is that the invasion and its aftermath were indeed unnecessary and cruel. These findings will thus add to Anglo-Zulu history, both socially and culturally, adding some balance to the existing historiography.

The following timeline will help the reader understand the key personalities, contributory factors and chain of events taking place in South Africa prior to and after the Anglo-Zulu War:

1816	Shaka succeeds his father, inkosi Senzangakhona as inkosi (Chief or King)
1824	British settlers establish Port Natal
1828	(24 September) Shaka assassinated and succeeded by Dingane
1834	Start of the Great Trek (Boer migration from the Cape Colony). Boer-Zulu War ensues
1840	Mpande and Boers defeat Dingane
	(10 February) Mpande made King by Boers. Cedes part of Zululand to Boers
	(March-April) Dingane murdered
1856	Battle of Ndongakusuka – Cetshwayo defeats Mbuyazi
1872	(October) King Mpande dies
1873	Cetshwayo crowned King by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs, Colony of Natal

1874	(21 February) Henry Herbert, 4th Earl of Carnarvon appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies
1876	(16 May 1876 to 15 February 1877) Boer – Pedi War
	(August) Carnarvon’s Confederation conference in London attended by Shepstone from South Africa
	(14 September) Telegram from High Commissioner, Sir Henry Barkly, warning of Transvaal’s imminent collapse in war with the Pedi
	Carnarvon appoints Shepstone to be Special Commissioner to the Transvaal
	(23 September) Shepstone departs UK to return to South Africa
	(October) Carnarvon appoints Sir Bartle Frere to be Governor and High Commissioner to the Cape Colony
1877	(16 February) Shepstone receives Sekhukhune’s letter
	(31 March) Bartle Frere arrives in South Africa
	(12 April) Shepstone issues Transvaal annexation proclamation
	(9 May) Shepstone’s ultimatum delivered to Sekhukhune
	(September 1877 to July 1878) Ninth Frontier War.
	(18 October) Shepstone’s meeting with Zulu delegation at Conference Hill
1878	(February – October) First Anglo-Pedi war
	(4 February) Carnarvon resigns. Sir Michael Hicks Beach replaces him as Secretary of State for the Colonies
	(February) Lieutenant General Frederick Thesiger arrives in South Africa to command the British forces. Immediately involved in the Ninth Frontier War. (He becomes 2nd Baron Chelmsford in October on the death of his father.)
	(26 February) Bulwer, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, appoints a commission to report on the boundary question, which meets at Rorke’s Drift
	(March and April) Shepstone directs Captain M Clarke to deal with Sekhukhune and the Pedi. 5th April Clarke’s assault on the BaPedi fastness fails
	(20 June) Boundary Commission finds in favour of the Zulus
	(28 July) Sihayo incident.
	(mid-September) Smith and Deighton incident (British surveyors who had strayed into Zululand and were seized by the Zulus temporarily).
	(September and October) (3 – 7 October) Invasion of Sekhukhuneland by British under Colonel Rowlands. 3rd October, the march to Sekhukhune’s stronghold begins but fails; Rowlands withdrew his forces on 6th October

	(11 December) Boundary Commission results revealed. Frere issues ultimatum to Zulus.
1879	(6-11 January) British invasion of Zululand.
	(12 January) Raid on Sihayo's stronghold.
	(22 January) Battle of Inyezane, Zulu forces retire defeated. Battle of Isandlwana, Decisive Zulu defeat of the British.
	(22 – 23 January) Siege of Rorke's Drift.
	(28 March) Battle of Hlobane. British forces retire defeated.
	(29 March) Battle of Kambula. Decisive British defeat of the Zulus.
	(2 April) Battle of Gingindlovu. British defeat Zulus.
	(4 July) Chelmsford and British forces defeat Zulus at Ulundi.
	(15 July) Lt Gen Sir Wolseley supersedes Chelmsford
	(28 August) King Cetshwayo captured in Ngome Forest.
	(1 September) Wolseley partitions Zululand.
1883	(10 January) King Cetshwayo returns to Zululand.
	(30 March) Zibhebhu routs King Cetshwayo's Usuthu in northern Zululand.
	(21 July) Cetshwayo defeated at Ulundi by rival chiefs, Zibhebhu and Hamu.
1884	(8 February) King Cetshwayo dies.
1897	(30 December) Zululand annexed by British and becomes a province of Natal.
1903	All of Zululand brought under control of Natal authorities.

Introduction:

The British invasion of Zululand in 1879 was conducted with the intent of being a short, swift campaign. Officially a step towards the Confederation of Southern Africa, the unofficial intention was to conclude it before the central British government, already embroiled in a bloody war in Afghanistan and thus wishing to avoid further colonial conflicts, truly understood the events that were taking place. This however was not to be, as the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 (Zulu War), a seemingly '... insignificant little campaign that was fought in an economically insignificant territory adjacent to a remote and almost irrelevant British colony',¹ was a disaster, having a profound effect on Britain, both politically and socially; the war captured the imagination of the British public, whilst permanently altering British foreign policy in South Africa. This perhaps explains the plethora of books, articles and

¹ David Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon: The Story of the Anglo-Zulu War 1879*, Fugitives' Drift Productions (DAVCD 001 1994) [on CD].

essays written on this short war, with interest being revived more recently by inaccurate films such as 'Zulu' (1964) and Donald Morris's scholarly work 'The Washing of the Spears' (1965). That it was a British invasion rather than Zulu aggression which caused the war seems to have been obscured by the well-publicised heroic deeds of British soldiers. The war became infamous for the disastrous defeat at Isandlwana (22nd January 1879) and the dramatic reversal of fortunes less than twenty four hours later at the legendary British defence of Rorke's Drift (22nd – 23rd January 1879). After the conclusion of the war, which inevitably finished with Britain as the victor, Victorian Britain glorified in the brave deeds of the British Army, with many books and memoirs being written from a British perspective. The resulting history was thus unbalanced in two respects. It did not thoroughly examine the reasons for the invasion or the decision-making behind it, which would have been awkward for the senior officials involved (Sir Bartle Frere and Lord Chelmsford).² Instead history painted an inaccurate picture, showing that the British invasion of Zululand was caused by the threat posed to Natal by the hostile, warmongering Zulu savages.³ Literature giving the Zulu perspective was at best lacking, partially as a result of Zulu illiteracy and their culture of oral history. Consequently it was not until Morris wrote '*The Washing of the Spears*' that a new standard of accuracy was established in the historiography of the war, triggering further research and writings by other scholars and historians. With greater access to primary source material, modern historians have been able to contradict and refute key aspects of the traditional works on the conflict. Research and understanding of the Zulu perspective revealed that the Zulus not only wished to avoid war with Britain, but actively avoided attacking the colony of Natal,⁴ demonstrating that the invasion was unjustified and unnecessary. Furthermore, now better understood is the impact of the British treatment of the Zulu Kingdom after the war, which from a modern perspective seems heartless and cruel, but which in the context of the time can be partially understood. These aspects are less well covered in the historiography of the war and therefore this dissertation seeks to identify whether these events were the result of deliberate infelicitous thinking, or superficial careless thinking driven by events.

In coming to a judgement it is necessary to understand the context of the time, illustrated by three key points. First, it was the time of imperial expansion, second, European attitudes towards other races affected how the expansion was conducted and third, how Europeans and the Zulus had different views of the Zulu ritual of disembowelling their foes, known as qaqqa. In his introduction to 'The Scramble for Africa 1876-1912', Thomas Pakenham describes many different motivations for this imperial expansion: Anglo-French rivalry was a substantial cause; Commerce (greed); Christianity (missionaries); Civilization (social progress); with romantic nationalism pervading all of them; and Conquest (for prestige)

² Adrian Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War* (Tenterden: Debinair Publishing Ltd., 2016), p. 5.

³ Charles L. Norris-Newman, *In Zululand with the British Army: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 through the First-Hand Experiences of A special Correspondent* (London: Leonaur Ltd., 2006), p. 12-17.

⁴ Philip Legg, 'Were the Zulus a real threat to British hegemony in South Africa between 1860 and 1880?', *Anglo Zulu War Historical Society*, 16 (2004) <<https://azwhs.publishpath.com/journal-16>> [accessed 24 January 2018].

gradually predominating.⁵ In his 1996 introduction to Colonel Calwell's 1896 classic 'Small Wars', Douglas Porch makes the point that 'Imperialism moved forward [...] mainly because men on the periphery, many of whom were soldiers, pressed on to enlarge the boundaries of empire, often without orders, even against orders'.⁶ He also notes that it was a time when European governments at home were sometimes indifferent and even hostile to expansion, showing reluctance to commit forces to expensive expeditions, and that if expeditions were to be mounted they were to '... deliver quick, decisive results'.⁷ Regarding European attitudes, Calwell's book is of its time, referring to native people as 'savages' and Chapter II now seems arrogant in describing why imperial powers had cause to mount campaigns of conquest, subjugation or annexation. Moreover, socially engrained views of Africa, which were inherently racist, spread throughout Europe, the result of theories which evolved into social Darwinism, with a view that nothing but relentless severity towards native subjects would lead to success.⁸ In part these racist views might have been shaped by knowledge of how the Zulus conducted war. The brutal reign (1816-1828) of the great King Shaka would, probably, have fascinated and appalled European society, particularly the lurid details of qaqa. However, to the Zulus qaqa was not an act of wanton mutilation, but a very important act relating to the way Zulus viewed the universe and the world of the living, wherein they believed that a bloating decomposing body signified spirits trying to escape the corpse, thus disembowelment released the spirits of their foes, preventing them from haunting the man who had killed them.⁹ These contextual points need to be borne in mind when trying to understand why the British invaded Zululand and justified doing so.

⁵ Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa 1876-1912*, (George Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991), p. xxiii to xxv.

⁶ Colonel C.E. Calwell, *Small Wars Their Principles & Practice* (Bison Books: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. v.

⁷ Calwell, *Small Wars*, p. ix.

⁸ David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2010), p. 10.

⁹ Ian Knight, *A Companion to the Anglo-Zulu war* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2008), p. 72-73.

The Origins of the Anglo-Zulu War: Was it really necessary?

The majority of modern historians maintain that the Zulu War occurred for a number of complex reasons, the two major ones being Britain's policy of Confederation (enacted in 1874) in southern Africa,¹⁰ with the trigger being Sir Bartle Frere's surprise ultimatum to the Zulus presented alongside the findings of the boundary commission in December 1878. However, this author would contend that there was another event between the two that was the catalyst, it being the assault by the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, or Transvaal as it was commonly known, on King Sekhukhune and the BaPedi (Pedi) people in Sekhukhuneland in 1876.¹¹ Whilst it is clear that the British did not plan to invade Zululand until after the appointment of Frere as the British High Commissioner for the Cape Colony (1877), it can be ascertained that the events precipitating the Zulu War arguably began with the Boer invasion of Sekhukhuneland.¹² The Boer-Pedi conflict between 1876 to 1878 served as a precursor to the Zulu War, and subsequent British actions towards the Boers and Pedi in this period demonstrate a number of unsettling similarities, with the subsequent build up to and invasion of Zululand demonstrating that unnecessary British action was not limited to the Zulus, nor was it uncommon in the period.

Sekhukhuneland was a nation of little consequence to Britain prior to 1876, therefore the Boers' invasion of Sekhukhuneland seemingly did not affect British interests and policy regarding South Africa, however the events that unfolded soon proved the opposite. The Boer campaign in Sekhukhuneland was a crushing failure, resulting in military, financial and political disaster for the Transvaal.^{13 14} However, in the aftermath the Boers were still able to starve the Pedi into suing for peace under favourable, yet contentious terms:

Sikukuni [sic] readily agreed with the first two articles (that is, that he has to give up 2,000 head of cattle, and to acknowledge a new boundary), but he refused to enter upon the third one, that is, to become a subject of the Republic and to obey its laws.

Your Excellency is aware that he is considering himself still as an independent Chief. Notwithstanding he was allowed or asked to sign the document which contained all three of the mentioned articles. He said he would sign if it was understood that he signed only for the first two stipulations; this was granted to him, and so he signed.¹⁵

¹⁰ R. L. Cope, 'Strategic and socio-Economic Explanations for Carnarvon's South African Confederation Policy: The Historiography and the Evidence', *History in Africa*, 13 (1986), 13-34 (p. 13).

¹¹ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

¹² Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

¹³ Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War*, p. 6.

¹⁴ R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians. The official Mind of Imperialism*, 2nd edn. (London: The Macmillian Press Ltd), p. 61.

¹⁵ London, Parliamentary Archives, U.K. Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence respecting the War between the Transvaal Republic and neighbouring Native Tribes, and generally with reference to Native Affairs in South Africa. C 1776, Enclosure 2, no. 111.

<<https://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers/result/pqpdocumentview?accountid=14680&groupid=95628&pgld=c37b7bd2-396d-47a4-9e06-8b8ef8d86427&rsld=161C384FB50>> [accessed 25 February 2018] (p. 143).

However, whilst the Boers had arguably gained from the dubious conclusion of a contentious treaty with the Pedi, they were about to lose much more than they received, as this conflict attracted the attention of the ever expanding British empire.^{16 17} Playing directly into the hands of the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Henry Herbert, 4th Earl of Carnarvon, it arguably set into motion the chain of events which led to the destruction of the Zulu Kingdom.

With his appointment in 1874, Carnarvon introduced a policy of Confederation in Southern Africa, undoubtedly wishing to replicate his success in Canada in 1867,¹⁸ looking to build a strong, self-governing and loyal dominion out of a chaotic subcontinent behind the indispensable bastion that was Simon's Bay.¹⁹ However, Carnarvon's thoughts were arguably not just his own, but rather included those of the Colony of Natal's veteran Secretary for Native Affairs, Sir Theophilus Shepstone.²⁰ Shepstone, aided by his border agents, was able to ensure Carnarvon '...absorbed the distinctly Shepstonian, Natalian view of southern, central and eastern Africa',²¹ so that '... the perceptions of Shepstone and the expansive interests of Natal became [...] British imperial policy'.²² This colonial influence begins to demonstrate that policies enacted in South Africa were not performed in the interest of Britain, but rather to satisfy the ambition of individuals,²³ with events that occurred not being necessary.

Despite this new Confederation policy breathing fresh life into colonial affairs, by 1876 it had not made significant headway in Southern Africa and thus when the Boers' invasion of Sekhukhuneland floundered and the Pedi disputed the terms of their treaty with the Transvaal, it resulted in King Sekhukhune requesting that Britain protect him from the Boers:

I BEG you Chief come help me, the Boers are killing me, and I don't know the reasons why they should be angry with me.²⁴

Carnarvon saw an opportunity to make a decisive move towards Confederation by annexing the Transvaal,²⁵ a nation whose independence Britain had pledged to respect at the Sand River Convention (1852).²⁶ This annexation was to be the first step in a British master plan for South Africa, which included peacefully and more importantly, bloodlessly, persuading

¹⁶ K. W. Smith, 'The fall of the Bapedi of the North-Eastern Transvaal', *The Journal of African History*, 10.2 (1969), 237-252 (pp. 242).

¹⁷ U.K. Parliamentary Papers, C 1776, Enclosure 2, no. 111, p. 143.

¹⁸ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon*, (DAVCD 001 1994).

¹⁹ C.F. Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African Confederation 1870-1881* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 70.

²⁰ R. L. Cope, 'Local Imperatives and Imperial Policy: The Sources of Lord Carnarvon's South African Confederation Policy', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 20.4 (1987), 601 – 626 (pp. 603).

²¹ Cope, Local Imperatives and Imperial Policy, p. 603.

²² N. A. Etherington, 'Labour Supply and the Genesis of South African Confederation in the 1870s', *Journal of African History*, 20 (1979), 235 – 253 (pp. 239).

²³ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1880 – 1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 224.

²⁴ U.K. Parliamentary Papers, C 1776, Enclosure 1, no. 111, p. 142.

²⁵ Cope, 'Strategic and socio-Economic Explanations for Carnarvon's South African Confederation Policy', p. 13.

²⁶ Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876 – 1912* (London, Clays Ltd., 1992), p. 41.

the Transvaal and Orange Free State to join the British Empire, allowing for the federation of the colonies of Natal and the Cape, a plan that did not include Zululand.²⁷

Consequently Britain increased its propaganda campaign against the Transvaal,²⁸ using missionaries and officials to sway the Boer public whilst also condemning Boer aggression against the Pedi;²⁹ 'The attack on Secocoeni [sic] was quite indefensible',³⁰ using it as an excuse to intervene.³¹ Moreover, Carnarvon appointed Shepstone, a bully, liar, loner and yet also a leading Zulu expert with 32 years of experience in the government of Natal as Administrator of the Transvaal (1876).³² It is highly probable that Carnarvon appointed Shepstone not for his experience (for Shepstone knew very little of the workings of the Transvaal),³³ but because Shepstone had made a great impression on Carnarvon; he had picked the right man to annex the Transvaal, but possibly the worst man to administer it. Shepstone was dispatched to the Boer Republic to ostensibly examine the problems of the Transvaal,³⁴ whilst in reality negotiating the annexation of the Republic for the British Empire.³⁵ However, by the time Shepstone arrived in the Transvaal, the threat the Pedi posed to the Transvaal had subsided and the opportunity to annex it was shrinking rapidly. Yet Shepstone knew that what the Pedi could not provide, King Cetshwayo and the Zulus could and thus the Zulus were dragged into the murky affairs of annexing the Transvaal.³⁶ Shepstone, using his considerable influence with Cetshwayo and the Zulu people, convinced Cetshwayo to muster a significant portion of his army on the border he shared with the Boer republic.³⁷ As a direct result of these manoeuvres, Shepstone, aided by pressure from the English-speaking citizens of the Transvaal and the potential threat of bankruptcy,³⁸ was able to threaten the Boer leadership with the menace of a Zulu invasion and the need for British protection,³⁹ enabling him to annex the Transvaal on 12th April 1877 without firing a single shot.⁴⁰ 41

²⁷ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 41.

²⁸ Michał Leśniewski, 'The Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877: The First Boer Reactions', *Werkwinkel*, 12.1 (2017) 35-48 (pp. 36).

²⁹ Leśniewski, 'The Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877', p. 36.

³⁰ The National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations 'The Transvaal: Facts concerning the Annexation, and the War in 1880-1; and the Results of Liberal Policy' <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/60224979.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:0f593040afb83be38f86391171a82fa9>> [accessed 28 February 2018] (p. 3).

³¹ Adrian Greaves, 'The role of King Sekukuni in precipitating the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879', *Anglo Zulu War Historical Society*, 30 (2011) <http://azwhs.publishpath.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_30/Sekukuni.pdf> [accessed 11 April 2018].

³² Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 41 & 49.

³³ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 51 - 52.

³⁴ Smith, 'The fall of the Bapedi of the North-Eastern Transvaal', p. 242.

³⁵ Adrian Greaves and Ian Knight, *Who's Who in the Zulu War 1879: Volume 2: Colonials & Zulus* (London: CPI Group Ltd., 2007), p. 102.

³⁶ Donald Morris, *The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation under Shaka and its fall in the Zulu War of 1879* (Chatham: PIMLICO, 1994), p. 250.

³⁷ Adrian Greaves and Xolani Mkhize, *The Tribe that Washed its Spears* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2013), p. 76.

³⁸ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 41.

³⁹ F. E. Colenso, *History of the Zulu War and its Origins* (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1880), p. 123.

⁴⁰ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon*, (DAVCD 001 1994).

Concurrently, Carnarvon pulled from retirement ‘...the most outstanding figure of the ten years after the mutiny’,⁴² Bartle Frere, appointing him as British High Commissioner for Southern Africa with the charge of implementing the Confederation policy.⁴³ ⁴⁴ A worrying similarity between Carnarvon’s appointees for Administrator of the Transvaal and High Commissioner for Southern Africa was their unsuitability for their respective roles.⁴⁵ Shepstone was an expert on the Zulus, yet knew very little about the Transvaal and the Boers, and for a job that required effective administration it is clear he was the opposite.⁴⁶ Similarly Frere, an India man, knew next to nothing about Africa having made his career in a very different environment,⁴⁷ arguably only taking on the position for money and to end his career with one final success.⁴⁸ The result of these appointments were dire for frontier communities, leading to ‘... recurrent warfare...’ and ‘...steady repression by European power’.⁴⁹

Concurrent with Frere’s arrival in Cape Town (March 1877), Shepstone was in the final stages of annexing the Transvaal, with Frere not learning of this annexation until after it had happened,⁵⁰ by which point he had not even contacted Shepstone,⁵¹ having barely had time to find his feet.⁵² Whilst it is clear that Frere was shocked by Shepstone’s actions and clearly unaware that they were sanctioned by Carnarvon, he was not in an established position to assess the events taking place in the Transvaal and thus gave Shepstone his approval:⁵³

It seems to me that, as matters now stand, criticism as to what Shepstone is doing is as misplaced as suggestions how to hold his paddle would be to a man shooting a rapid. Our best course is cordially to support him in all reasonable ways as long as he appears to be doing his best to carry out our views and instructions.⁵⁴ If Shepstone can be admired for anything it was his single minded determination to see ‘...the Triumph of British influence’

⁴¹ Geo. P. Moodie, *Annexation of the Transvaal: A Reply to Sir Bartle Frere’s Letter to “The Times,” 25 Feb., 1881. (Reprinted from “the Times,” 8 March, 1881.) and A Letter on the Subject of Alleged Slavery in the Transvaal (Reprinted from “The Daily News,” 23 Feb. 1881.)* (London: William Ridgway, 1881), p. 5-12.

⁴² Adrian Greaves and Ian Knight, *Who’s Who in the Zulu War 1879: Volume 1: The British* (London: CPI Group Ltd., 2006), p. 97.

⁴³ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon*, (DAVCD 001 1994).

⁴⁴ Greaves and Knight, *Who’s Who in the Zulu War 1879: The British*, p. 98.

⁴⁵ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 41 - 43.

⁴⁶ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 51.

⁴⁷ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 43.

⁴⁸ Greaves and Knight, *Who’s Who in the Zulu War 1879*, p. 97.

⁴⁹ Emery, p. 348.

⁵⁰ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 42.

⁵¹ John Martineau, *The life and correspondence of the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere* (London: J. Murray, 1895), p. 179.

⁵² D.P. O’Connor, ‘Sir Bartle Frere and the Zulu War’, Anglo Zulu War Historical Society, 8 (2000)

<https://www.anglozuluwar.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_8/J8j_Sir_Bartle_Frere_-_D_P_O'Connor.pdf> [accessed 15 October 2017].

⁵³ Cornelis Janse Uys, *In the era of Shepstone: being a study of British expansion in South Africa (1842-1877)* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1933), p. 392 – 393.

⁵⁴ Martineau, *The life and correspondence of the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere*, p. 180.

and he almost certainly thought he was doing just that by annexing the Transvaal.⁵⁵ However, Shepstone's actions undoubtedly restricted how Frere was able to conduct Confederation, as the diplomatic equilibrium between Natal, the Transvaal and Zululand was shattered by the very man who had worked so hard to create it.⁵⁶ Indeed much like the Jameson raid nineteen years later, Shepstone's eagerness to annex the Transvaal quickly was '...one of those short cuts that turn out to be the longest way home'.⁵⁷

The unintended consequence of the Transvaal's annexation was that it led to Britain inheriting its new, quasi-British subjects' legacy of conflict and bitterness with the Pedi,⁵⁸ and a long-standing border dispute with the Zulus, these disputes accordingly becoming British issues.⁵⁹ Shepstone consequently performed an extraordinary, yet unsurprising, volte-face in British native policy in South Africa. He abandoned allies he had spent decades befriending,⁶⁰ as it was no longer convenient to erode the Boers' already weakened position, or support nations who had opposed the Transvaal as being part of the British Empire meant different considerations now applied to the Republic.^{61 62 63} Thus Shepstone set about reversing British policy relating to Sekhukhune and more significantly the Zulus in his capacity as Transvaal's administrator. Against the Sekhukhune, Shepstone began enacting every deed that Britain had protested against when the Boers had enacted them,^{64 65} demanding war indemnities, whilst also imposing taxes upon the Pedi as they were supposedly British subjects.⁶⁶ More significantly though, in October 1877 Shepstone met Zulu representatives at what is now known as Conference Hill to discuss a territorial dispute between the Zulus and the Boers; the outcome altered the way Shepstone, and therefore Frere, viewed and interacted with the Zulus to a catastrophic degree.

For 22 years the relationship between Britain's government in Natal and the Zulus had been friendly.⁶⁷ That was, arguably, in no small part due to a strong friendship, spanning over a

⁵⁵ Greaves and Knight, *Who's Who in the Zulu War 1879: The British*, p. 98. & Greaves and Knight, *Who's Who in the Zulu War 1879: Colonials & Zulus*, p. 103.

⁵⁶ Edgar H. Brookes and Colin De B. Webb, *A History of Natal* (Cape Town: University of Natal Press, 1965), p. 126.

⁵⁷ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, p. 126.

⁵⁸ Adrian Greaves, 'The role of King Sekukuni in precipitating the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879'.

⁵⁹ Greaves and Knight, *Who's Who in the Zulu War 1879: Colonials & Zulus*, p. 102.

⁶⁰ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 42.

⁶¹ F. W. Chesson, *The war in Zululand: a brief review of Sir Bartle Frere's policy, drawn from official documents* (London: P. S. King, 1879), p. 4.

⁶² Nadia Davis, 'History's Lost Voices', *Anglo Zulu War Historical Society*, 8 (2000)
<https://azwhs.publishpath.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_8/J8g_History's_Lost_Voices_-_ND.pdf>
[accessed 24 February 2018].

⁶³ John Laband, *Zulu Warriors: The Battle for the South African Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 73.

⁶⁴ U.K. Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence respecting the War between the Transvaal Republic and neighbouring Native Tribes, p. 143.

⁶⁵ Gavin Brown Clark, *British policy towards the Boers: An Historical Sketch* (London: William Ridgeway, 1881), p. 17 – 18.

⁶⁶ U.K. Parliamentary Papers, C 1776, Enclosure 2, no. 111, p. 143.

⁶⁷ Robert Spence Watson, *The history of English rule and policy in South Africa* (1879)
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/60247624.pdf?refreqid=search%3Af38e54f66a40d0e90af4c6e36e384bd6>>
[accessed 04 April 2018] (p. 28).

decade, between Somtseu (the name given to Shepstone by the Zulus) and Cetshwayo,⁶⁸ although Shepstone did treat the Zulus in a patronising manner.⁶⁹ Moreover, Shepstone was on record for supporting the Zulus' claim to a stretch of territory on the border between the Transvaal and Zululand that had been disputed by the Boers and Zulus since Mpande, Cetshwayo's father, had reigned. However, Shepstone's support for this claim changed with the annexation of the Transvaal. Unaware, Cetshwayo welcomed the successful British annexation of the Transvaal:

I am glad to know the Transvaal is English ground; perhaps now there may be rest.⁷⁰

Moreover, Cetshwayo supported the British, positioning warriors on the Transvaal border (doubtless as a result Shepstone's influence), offering to attack.⁷¹ It is argued by traditional authors that at this stage Cetshwayo began to be openly hostile to the British as their motivation to maintain their friendship with Britain (protection from the Transvaal) had gone.⁷² However, it is now clear that it was quite the opposite; the Zulus were no longer of use to men like Shepstone, and it slowly dawned on the Zulus that Somtseu, the embodiment of the crown in Natal for the past 15 years, now spoke for the Transvaal Boers.⁷³ Not only did Shepstone order Cetshwayo to remove his warriors from the Transvaal's border, after probably convincing Cetshwayo to deploy his troops in the first place,⁷⁴ but Shepstone then took to Conference Hill to inform the Zulus that he was championing the Boers' claim to the disputed territory. It can be understood why Shepstone switched his support from Zululand to the Transvaal, given his new responsibility for representing the Boers. His growing unpopularity and decreasing support in the Transvaal combined, he needed a way to re-establish British authority and improve his popularity, and the disputed territory was an ideal way to do that.

The repercussions of Shepstone's short sighted actions against the Pedi and Zulus were dramatic. Shepstone's demands were too much from the Pedi, who maintained they were an independent nation, resulting in resistance to British attempts to establish authority over them,⁷⁵ culminating in full blown rebellion against not just Britain, but against anyone who was white.⁷⁶ Conversely the Zulus' reaction to Shepstone's volte-face did not directly lead to violence, yet it undoubtedly had greater consequences. Shepstone departed Conference Hill exasperated as the Zulus, who had once called Shepstone father, now called him a fraud and cheat.⁷⁷ The wound to Shepstone's pride festered, more so due to it uncovering that his

⁶⁸ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, p. 95.

⁶⁹ Ron Lock and Peter Quantrell, *Zulu Victory: The Epic of Isandlwana and the Cover-up* (London: Greenhill Books, 2005), p. 23.

⁷⁰ Henry Rider Haggard, *Cetywayo and his white neighbours; or, remarks on recent events in Zululand, Natal, and the Transvaal* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1896), p. 29.

⁷¹ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 270.

⁷² Norris-Newman, *In Zululand with the British Army*, p. 13.

⁷³ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 270.

⁷⁴ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 251.

⁷⁵ Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 185 - 187.

⁷⁶ Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War*, p. 6 - 7.

⁷⁷ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 52.

assertion of being a supporter of the Zulus was a sham,⁷⁸ to the extent that he drew the conclusion that Cetshwayo must go and his anachronistic regime removed, otherwise there would be no hope for progress in South Africa.⁷⁹ Consequently Shepstone fired off a furious report to Britain, which was also read by Frere:

Cetewayo [sic] is the secret hope of every ... independent chief hundreds of miles from him, who feels the desire that his colour shall prevail. [...] The sooner the root of the evil [...] which I consider to be the Zulu power and military organisation, is dealt with, the easier our task will be.⁸⁰

This message, coming from an expert on the Zulus, would not have been dismissed lightly in London. However, Shepstone was arguably lying, or at the very least being deceitful, as he had reported on Cetshwayo and the Zulus previously, concluding then that they offered no threat to Britain: Mr. Shepstone was convinced that he [Cetshwayo] was too old and too fat to aspire to military renown [...] the Zulu tribe was a materially less formidable power [...] than it was on the arrival of the English settlers ... during the reign of Dingaan.⁸¹ However, to Frere, who knew very little about the Zulus, Shepstone's more recent assessment would have been influential, affecting the way he perceived the Zulus and interacted with them.

Since his arrival in South Africa Frere had been bombarded with numerous problems, revolts and disputes, ranging from discontent in the Transvaal to the AmaXhosa (Xhosa) revolt (August 1877 – June 1878) which proved difficult to suppress yet,⁸² until Conference Hill, Frere had identified the Transvaal Boers as his main priority, not the Zulus.⁸³ Frere's focus however shifted as the highly influential Shepstone set about convincing him of the need to overthrow Cetshwayo and his Kingdom.⁸⁴ Shepstone's argument to Frere was so successful that he convinced Frere (and himself) that some form of Black conspiracy was taking place, with the aim of driving out the whites,⁸⁵ Cetshwayo at its head and with Chiefs such as Sekhukhune acting as his lieutenants.⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ Furthermore, Frere had taken offence from Cetshwayo's reluctance to submit to British demands for Zulu labour to work in Natal and the Transvaal.⁸⁸ Consequently by 1878 Frere set about highlighting his new found concerns to the British government:

⁷⁸ Ian Knight, *Brave Men's Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Military, 2005), p. 39.

⁷⁹ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 52.

⁸⁰ London, The National Archives, *Colonial Governors, etc. South Africa (Sir Theophilus Shepstone, etc.)*, PRO 30/6/23.

⁸¹ Henry Brooks, *Natal; A History and Description of the Colony* (London: L. Reeve & Co., 1876), p. 259 – 260.

⁸² O'Connor, *Sir Bartle Frere and the Zulu War*

⁸³ O'Connor, *Sir Bartle Frere and the Zulu War*

⁸⁴ Greaves and Knight, *Who's Who in the Zulu War 1879: Colonials & Zulus*, p. 103.

⁸⁵ U.K. Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence respecting Affairs of S. Africa. C 2222, No. 45.

⁸⁶ <https://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers/result/pqpdocumentview?accountid=14680&groupid=95628&pgld=d6c4ce04-936d-4216-9100-aaf40567742a&rslid=161EC936095#0> [accessed 01 April 2018] (p. 185).

⁸⁷ Martineau, *The life and correspondence of the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere*, p. 235.

⁸⁸ Peter Delius, *The Life Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Transvaal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 225.

⁸⁹ Adrian Greaves, 'The role of King Sekukuni in precipitating the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879'.

... gradually an irresistible body of evidence from every part of South Africa, all pointing to one conclusion convinced me that though there might be no definite agreement between any two tribes, there was a common purpose and a, general understanding that the time was now come for the black races to shake off the domination of the white and to expel them from the country, and that, though Kreli might be the leader among the Amaxosa [sic] races, Cetywayo, as King of the most powerful Kafir tribes, was the head and moving spirit of the combination. [...] Cetywayo [sic] is generally regarded by our own natives, as well as others, as the greatest potentate in Africa, and as the Sovereign with whom lies the decision of peace or war.⁸⁹

Whilst modern historians now conclude that there was no collusion between the native races of South Africa, indeed Sekhukhune was advised by his council to ‘ arrange his own affairs’ and avoid being dragged into Cetshwayo’s disputes with Britain,⁹⁰ it is also clear that at the time Shepstone and Frere were adamant that Cetshwayo and chiefs such as Sekhukhune were working hand in glove.⁹¹

At this point in events it is reasonable to presume that any well informed colonial official in South Africa, dealing with the Transvaal, would have been aware of Sekhukhune’s determination to remain an independent ruler and therefore it is likely they would have known that Sekhukhune would not work under Cetshwayo’s supposed orders, as that would mean surrendering that independence. Thus whilst Shepstone and Frere were not suited for their respective positions, they were intelligent men who had carried out their past roles diligently and effectively, and given their interests in the Transvaal and Confederation it is probable that they too would have known of the Pedi’s fierce resolve to remain independent. However, they still chose to lump Sekhukhune and all the other rebellious chiefs in South Africa together under the supposed leadership of Cetshwayo. This was, arguably, because both Frere and Shepstone were pursuing their own ambitions to the detriment of Britain’s best interests. Frere wished to end his career on a high, and Shepstone arguably wished to not only add to his reputation, but also to salvage it as well as gaining revenge on the Zulus for their treatment of him at Conference Hill. Thus both these men saw the subjugation of Zululand as the means to achieving their personal goals, with Frere using the official pretext of Confederation to justify his actions, although rhetoric rarely focused on this,⁹² instead concentrating on the purportedly threatening attitude of Cetshwayo.⁹³ Yet Frere lacked the *causis belli* that he needed to justify a war with the Zulus, to not just the British Government, but himself.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence respecting Affairs of S. Africa. C 2222, No. 45., p. 185.

⁹⁰ Mary Monteith, ‘Cetshwayo and Sekhukhune 1875 – 1879’ (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1978), p. 170 – 176.

⁹¹ Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 76.

⁹² Henry Hallam Parr, *A Sketch of the Kafir and Zulu Wars: Guadana to Isandhlwana* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880), p. 163 – 173.

⁹³ Rodney Ashwood, *For Queen and Country: The Zulu War Diary of Lieutenant Wilfred Heaton, 24th Regiment of Foot, 1879* (Brecon: Delfryn Publications, 2011), p. 12.

⁹⁴ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p. 53.

In addition to finding a legitimate reason to justify war with the Zulus, Frere also needed to bring the general public of Natal on his side by making them believe that the Zulus were a threat. Moreover, Frere soon discovered he needed to convince not just the colonists and officials in Natal that war against the Zulus was necessary, but the British Government too.⁹⁵ ⁹⁶ Although there was active support for Confederation during Carnarvon's tenure as Colonial Secretary,⁹⁷ South African foreign affairs were not his main concern by 1877 as rising tension with Russia and a conflict brewing in Afghanistan occupied his attention.⁹⁸ Consequently whilst Carnarvon accepted that military action might be necessary, he made it clear to Frere that now was not the time:

I hope this does not mean we will have great pressure put on us to annex Zululand. This must and ought to come eventually, but not just now. There are signs, however, to this tendency.⁹⁹

However, politics intervened in Frere's favour as Carnarvon resigned in early 1878, in protest at the handling of the Balkan crisis and his growing disillusion with his foundering Confederation policy.¹⁰⁰ His successor, Michael Hicks-Beach, was in a similar situation to Frere when he had arrived in South Africa, because he had '... imperfect knowledge' of the events rapidly unfolding in South Africa and thus left Frere to act with '... very wide discretion'.¹⁰¹ ¹⁰² Consequently Frere had the carte blanche needed to act as he wanted, yet he still felt it necessary to craft the darkest possible situation on the ground in Natal and Zululand, to win and maintain government and Natalian support and justify his actions.¹⁰³

Frere thus engineered a propaganda campaign against the Zulus.¹⁰⁴ Similar to the campaign waged against the Boers in the Transvaal, Frere utilised missionaries (who needed no encouragement as they also wished to discredit Cetshwayo for his opposition to and discouragement of their mission work) and officials to turn the colonists in Natal against the Zulus, reducing opposition to an invasion.¹⁰⁵ However, achieving this additional support was easier said than done. Whilst Frere had allies in the likes of Shepstone and, by early 1878, brevet Lieutenant-General Frederic Thesiger, Cetshwayo had allies in two of Natal's most influential men, Lieutenant-Governor Henry Bulwer and John Colenso, Bishop of

⁹⁵ Ashwood, *For Queen and Country*, p. 12 - 13.

⁹⁶ Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising: The Epic Story of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift*, London: Pan Books, 2011), p. 146 – 147.

⁹⁷ Ashwood, *For Queen and Country*, p. 12.

⁹⁸ Knight, *Zulu Rising* p. 147.

⁹⁹ Knight, *Zulu Rising* p. 147.

¹⁰⁰ David Clammer, *The Zulu War* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1975), p. 22.

¹⁰¹ Clammer, *The Zulu War*, p. 23.

¹⁰² Clammer, *The Zulu War*, p. 23.

¹⁰³ Ashwood, *For Queen and Country*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Neil Thornton, *Rorke's Drift: A new Perspective* (London: Fonthill Media Limited, 2016), p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ R. L. Cope, 'Written in Characters of Blood? The Reign of King Cetshwayo 1872 – 9', *The Journal of African History*, 36.2 (1995) 247 – 269 (pp. 250 – 251)

<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/182312.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:3f46e1e05bda6f95b0a007a2909c615c>> [accessed 02 April 2018].

Natal.¹⁰⁶ Indeed men such as Bulwer had views which clashed directly with Frere's and their advice generally erred on the side of avoiding conflict with the Zulus.¹⁰⁷ Consequently as Frere's increasingly disturbing anti-Zulu sentiments threatened to brew into war, both the Zulus and pro-Zulu British attempted to find an appropriate solution to prevent an unnecessary conflict from happening.¹⁰⁸

Frere and his clique had painted the Zulus as bloody aggressors, led by a supposedly bloodthirsty Cetshwayo,¹⁰⁹ who threatened British subjects and thus British interests. It was clear to the pro-Zulu Bulwer that a solution needed to be found which would not end in conflict.¹¹⁰ Thus the level-headed Bulwer provided a compromise to Frere, which was that Britain would establish a boundary commission and finally offer belated mediation on the disputed territory (although this dispute could have been solved over the previous 16 years through mediation).¹¹¹ ¹¹² Indeed this stretch of land had been offered to Natal by Cetshwayo's father Mpande as a buffer zone, as a means of providing the Zulus security from Boer encroachment,¹¹³ however British officials maintained they were neutral in the matter, until it benefited them. Consequently when a way to possibly resolve the conflict presented itself Frere agreed, the British and their Boer subjects agreed, thinking the Commission would find in their favour, and the Zulus agreed for they had nothing to lose; Boers had already settled into this territory and this Commission could return it without bloodshed.¹¹⁴ However, what the Zulus or pro-Zulu British could not foresee was Frere's determination to have this war, regardless of the findings of this Commission.

Convening between March and June 1878, the independent boundary commission heard evidence from both the Boers and Zulus between March 21st and April 13th, and it soon became abundantly clear that 'incontrovertible' and 'overwhelming' evidence of the Boers was either false, forged or never materialised.¹¹⁵ Thus, even with an undoubtedly biased John Shepstone (brother of Theophilus) sitting on the commission,¹¹⁶ it soon became obvious, much to the angst of the British, that the disputed territory belonged to the Zulus. It is clear that the actions Frere took in the wake of these findings emphasise that the Zulu War was not necessary and Frere's actions unjust. Frere was horrified by the findings of the Commission, ordering Bulwer to not publish them. Frere arguably took this course of action out of fear that there would be a revolt in the Transvaal, which he believed would escalate into a native uprising, if the Commission's findings were published.¹¹⁷ However,

¹⁰⁶ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 271.

¹⁰⁷ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁸ Ashwood, *For Queen and Country*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ Thornton, *Rorke's Drift*, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

¹¹¹ Kevin Smith, *Dead Was Everything: Studies in the Anglo-Zulu War* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2014), p. 18.

¹¹² Greaves and Mkhize, *The Tribe that Washed its Spears*, p. 76.

¹¹³ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 52.

¹¹⁴ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

¹¹⁵ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 271 – 274.

¹¹⁶ Greaves and Knight, *Who's Who in the Zulu War 1879: Colonials & Zulus*, p. 98.

¹¹⁷ Anthony C. Brewer, 'Sir Bartle Frere: Colonial Administrator of the Victorian Period' (unpublished thesis, University of Nebraska, 1972), p. 93.

undoubtedly the real reason behind Frere's actions was that he wished to buy himself time to find the *causus belli*, which still eluded him, needed to declare war on the Zulus.¹¹⁸

Even as these events were taking place, significant military events unfolded, one further committing Frere to war with the Zulus and the other further demonstrating the lengths Frere, and by extension the colonial government of South Africa, was going to, so that war with the Zulus was inevitable. Since the middle of 1877 Britain had been fighting against the Xhosa in the Ninth Frontier War, another war which Frere had a hand in causing.¹¹⁹ By March 1878 the British had failed to quell Xhosa resistance, but this changed with the arrival of Theisiger on 4th March. Theisiger set about rapidly quelling Xhosa resistance and by the end of May it had petered out, yet it soon became clear to him, after he had conferred with Frere, '... that active steps will have to be taken to check the arrogance of Cetshwayo [sic]'.¹²⁰ Similarly to Frere, Theisiger had enjoyed a successful career, albeit heavy on staff and administrative duties and lacking in any real field experience.¹²¹ Moreover, like Frere, Theisiger was not rich (he had exploited the Army's purchase system to further his career at significant personal expense) and a successful, well-reported war was needed to sustain him (the pay system had been abolished in 1871). Thus the vilified Cetshwayo and his savage subjects in Zululand offered the perfect opportunity for Theisiger to further his career.

Before this could be considered there was a more immediate problem to tackle. By 1878 Britain was involved in numerous conflicts and disputes throughout South Africa, more than ever before, with another conflict brewing in Sekhukhuneland. Since his annexation of the Transvaal, Shepstone had attempted, in vain, to bring King Sekhukhune and the Pedi under the authority of the British Transvaal administration.¹²² By 1878 he had failed and was faced by what he considered to be open rebellion, with the Pedi attacking anyone who was white as well as disrupting British lines of communication.¹²³ To make matters worse the Boers were now clamouring for British protection from Pedi raiders,¹²⁴ with an early British attempt to pacify the Pedi failing embarrassingly and Shepstone was unable to conclude the matter due to manpower and financial constraints.¹²⁵ However, with the successful conclusion of the Ninth Frontier War, Theisiger turned his attention to preparing for the inevitable war against the Zulus,¹²⁶ concluding that the Pedi had to be dealt with first as they posed a threat to his northern supply lines into Zululand.¹²⁷ ¹²⁸ Thus the British invaded Sekhukhuneland, entering on 3rd October.¹²⁹ However, due to poor planning, uninspiring

¹¹⁸ C. T. Binns, *The last Zulu king: The life and death of Cetshwayo* (London: Longmans, 1963), p. 99 – 100.

¹¹⁹ Philip Gon, 'The Last Frontier War', *The South African Military History Society*, 5.6 (1982)

<<http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol056pg.htm>> [accessed 10 April 2018].

¹²⁰ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 265.

¹²¹ *Lords Chelmsford's Zululand campaign 1878 – 1879*, ed. by John P.C. Laband (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), p. xxiii.

¹²² Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 185 - 187.

¹²³ Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War*, p. 6 - 7.

¹²⁴ Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War*, p. 6 - 7.

¹²⁵ Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 189 - 190.

¹²⁶ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 266.

¹²⁷ Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War*, p. 6.

¹²⁸ Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 191.

¹²⁹ K. W. Smith, *The fall of the Bapedi of the North-Eastern Transvaal*, p. 246.

leadership and effective Pedi resistance, the British force withdrew only 4 days later, after having had Sekhukhune's stronghold in sight.¹³⁰ The reaction to this military failure is remarkable for two reasons: the lack of reaction from the British to another humiliating failure, and the influence it had on Cetshwayo's decision to fight the British.¹³¹

Thesiger's confident assurances, based on the experience of his victory in the Ninth Frontier war, convinced Frere that the Zulus would be an easy nut to crack. However, the British blunders against the Pedi in the Northern Transvaal should have caused Frere and Thesiger (who became Baron Chelmsford in October on the death of his father) to rethink their ambitions regarding the invasion and subjugation of Zululand. As Frere demonstrated throughout his tenure as High Commissioner, he chose to ignore events which indicated that war with Zululand was not sensible, not least because he finally had his *causis belli*. As events unfolded in the Northern Transvaal and concluded in the Ninth Frontier War, crisis was brewing in between Zululand and Natal:

A body of Zulus belonging to a Zulu Chief named Sirayo [sic], and under two sons of that Chief, crossed the Buffalo River into Natal territory and took by force out of the hut of a Natal native, one of the Government Native Border guards, a Zulu woman who appears to have fled for refuge, into Natal some days before. The Zulus who committed this outrage were armed with guns and assegais. The woman was taken across the river back into Zululand, and, it is believed, there shot.¹³² This raid had resulted in the apprehension and execution of not one but two of Sihayo's miscreant wives.¹³³ It is clear that this border violation would have been a minor one prior to Frere's tenure as High Commissioner, a similar incident occurring in 1876 which did not cause a diplomatic crisis and, equally, Natal police regularly encroached on Zulu soil to arrest criminals,¹³⁴ yet now the British would not tolerate violations of the boundary agreements. Moreover a further incident occurred as two Englishmen, a surveyor called Smith and trader named Deighton, were briefly being detained and questioned as they crossed into the Zulu half of a stream,¹³⁵ although Bulwer blamed the incident on the British and their provocative mission.¹³⁶ In fact Smith played down the significance of the incident¹³⁷ and Frere and Hicks-Beach both agreed '... in attributing no special importance to the seizure and temporary arrest of the surveyors, which was partly due

¹³⁰ Adrian Greaves, *Crossing the Buffalo the Zulu War 1879* (London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 2006), p. 107.

¹³¹ Greaves and Mkhize, *The Tribe that Washed its Spears*, p. 87.

¹³² London, Parliamentary Archives, U.K. Parliamentary Papers, Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of South Africa. C 2222, No. 40.,

<https://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers/result/pqpdocumentview:pdfevent?pgId=f10a84a6-0696-4122-8655-8d234a920b75&rsId=162248BFC78&pdf=/app-bin/parliamentary-paper/4/0/2/6/1878-055343_01-766.pdf> [accessed 13 April 2018], p. 125.

¹³³ John Laband, *Kingdom in Crisis: The Zulu response to the British invasion of 1879* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 25.

¹³⁴ Saul David, *Zulu: The Heroism and Tragedy of the Zulu war of 1879* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2005), p. 44.

¹³⁵ Joye Brown, 'Reconstructing the past Using the British Parliamentary Papers: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879', *History in Africa*, 31 (2004) 117-132 (pp. 122) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4128521>> [accessed 05 April 2018].

¹³⁶ David, *Zulu*, p. 44.

¹³⁷ Greaves and Mkhize, *The Tribe that Washed its Spears*, p. 89.

to their own indiscretion, and was evidently in no way sanctioned by the Zulu authorities'.¹³⁸ Yet by December 1878 Frere had changed his tone towards the Smith-Deighton incident as he would use it along with the Sihayo incident to justify war.¹³⁹

Frere's warmongering had not gone unnoticed in the Colonial Office in London, however much he attempted to pull the wool over the eyes of Hicks-Beach.¹⁴⁰ Even as Hicks-Beach attempted to throw '... as much cold water as possible upon his [Frere] evident expectation of a Zulu War'¹⁴¹ it became clear that the Colonial Office lacked the means to control Frere:

I have impressed this view upon Sir B. Frere, both officially and privately, to the best of my power. But I cannot really control him without a Telegraph – (I don't know that I could with one) – I feel it is as likely as not that he is at war with the Zulus at the present moment.¹⁴²

Thus by December 1878 the likelihood of war was high with Frere concluding to Hicks-Beach on December 10th 'I can find little ground for any such hope of avoiding a war with Cetshwayo [sic]'.¹⁴³ It is undeniable that Frere made this statement fully knowing that he had already set into motion the events which would make war unavoidable and he knew the Colonial Office could do nothing to stop him. On 11th December the findings of the Boundary commission were published, much to the Zulus' delight, however delight soon turned to dismay as the findings were accompanied by an ultimatum. Through this ultimatum Frere was able to use the incidents such as the molestation of Deighton and Smith to issue fines and make demands which Cetshwayo could not possibly meet, the most significant demand being the disbanding of the Zulu army and abandonment of the Zulu military system. The demands could not possibly be achieved in the time allowed, due to their importance to the social system of Zululand (indeed there would have been social upheaval if Cetshwayo attempted to comply with this demand).¹⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁵ Consequently this meant that on 11th January 1879 the British could legitimately enter Zululand to enforce the terms of their ultimatum,¹⁴⁶ although the invasion had in fact begun on 6th January, before the ultimatum had expired.¹⁴⁷ Anthony Trollope had visited Southern Africa in 1877 commenting: 'I have no fears myself that Natal will be overrun by hostile Zulus; - but much fear that Zululand

¹³⁸ Parliamentary Papers, Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of South Africa . C 2222, No. 119., p. 320.

¹³⁹ Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The civil war in Zululand, 1879 – 1884* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1979), p. 49.

¹⁴⁰ Guy, *The Destruction of Zululand*, p. 49.

¹⁴¹ Paul Williams, *Custer and the Sioux, Durnford and the Zulu: Parallels in the American and British defeats at the little Bighorn (1876) and Isandlwana (1879)* (United States: McFarland Co. Inc, 2015), p. 27 - 28.

¹⁴² Victoria Alexandrina Hicks-Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach (Earl St. Aldwyn)* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1932), p. 103.

¹⁴³ Parliamentary Papers, Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of South Africa . C 2222, No. 45., p. 185.

¹⁴⁴ Brown, *Reconstructing the past Using the British Parliamentary Papers*, p. 122.

¹⁴⁵ T. O. Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558 – 1995*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 202.

¹⁴⁶ Guy, *The Destruction of Zululand*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁷ Greaves, *Maps of the Anglo-Zulu War*, p. 8.

should be overrun by hostile Britons',¹⁴⁸ a statement which was oddly prophetic as that was exactly what happened.

The Invasion of Zululand and its Aftermath: Was it Cruel?

The inescapable interim conclusion is that the war was unnecessary, so was it cruel? The answer requires understanding the contemporary British point of view regarding the Zulus and what the British saw as cruel. The late 1870s was a time which saw the development of scientific racism and rise of theories on race and nationalism.¹⁴⁹ In British society, as a means of promoting ethnic pride,¹⁵⁰ individuals such as Cecil Rhodes contended in his 1877 'confessions of faith' that the Anglo-Saxon race was '...the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race'.¹⁵¹ Rhodes' views were shared by many throughout Britain as well as in their colonies, many colonists seeing themselves as superior to their 'despicable' native neighbours.¹⁵² Indeed, the poor treatment of the Zulus in Natal at the hands of their white neighbours, undoubtedly encouraged by missionaries who had been expelled from Zululand (Ronald Hyam identifies the Zulu Chief's complaints towards missionaries, as they attracted criminals and elopers, wishing to avoid justice),¹⁵³ showed Natal as the 'tyrannical [...] hooligan of the British Empire'.¹⁵⁴ Thus it is clear that many in the British Empire were not averse to the aggressive conduct of the British invasion. However, it is also clear that there were people across the British Empire who held contrary views, with Bernard Porter arguing that '... less casual illusions of race were often more complementary' and individuals such as Bishop Colenso,¹⁵⁵ who had gained his notorious free thought from the Zulus,¹⁵⁶ championed the Zulus' cause prior to the war and until his death (1883). Indeed the public outcry after news of the war broke clearly demonstrates that some of the British public were against the war, shown by Gladstone's Liberal Party's victory over Disraeli's Conservatives.¹⁵⁷ Thus it can be deduced that although there would have been many who condoned the actions undertaken by Chelmsford's forces, there were also many who were disgusted by them and who would have seen these actions as cruel.

¹⁴⁸ Anthony Elliot-Smith, 'The impact of white expansionism on the Zulu Nation: A comparison of Professor Coupland's seminal thesis (1930) with views of current historians and writers, supported by personal visits to Zululand's battlefields', *Anglo-Zulu War historical society*, 6 (1999)
<http://azwhs.publishpath.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_6/J6j_The_Impact_of_White_Expansionism_on_the_Zulu_Nation_-_AG.pdf> [accessed 10 May 2018].

¹⁴⁹ Stuart Ward, 'Imperial Identities Abroad', in *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, ed. by Sarah Stockwell (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), pp.219 – 244 (p. 227).

¹⁵⁰ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group identity and social practice, 1875 – 1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 78.

¹⁵¹ Cecil Rhodes, "Confession of Faith" (1877) in John E. Flint, *Cecil Rhodes* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), p. 248.

¹⁵² Flint, *Rhodes*, p. 250.

¹⁵³ Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 188.

¹⁵⁴ Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, p. 322.

¹⁵⁵ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 132.

¹⁵⁶ George J. Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1892), p. 86 – 7.

¹⁵⁷ Knight, *Brave Men's Blood*, p. 213.

As this dissertation has already established, Frere and Chelmsford had been planning the invasion of Zululand months before Frere issued his ultimatum to Cetshwayo, with regiments being dispatched to Natal in the middle of 1878,¹⁵⁸ something that would not have been undertaken ‘...without something to show for it’.¹⁵⁹ One of the most significant documents which can be used to determine if the British set out to conduct this invasion in a cruel way came from Chelmsford:

Officers commanding columns are requested to have it clearly explained to the native portion of the force under their command that any native convicted of wilfully killing a woman or child or a wounded man, will render himself liable to be hanged. No huts in Zululand are to be burnt except under the special orders of the officer commanding the column [...] any soldier, European or native, transgressing this order will render himself liable to a flogging.¹⁶⁰

Chelmsford’s memorandum is important because it demonstrates that the war was not to be conducted against non-combatants and their homes, yet also reveals that should the need arise and special orders be given, then the previous point was to be overruled. This dissertation argues that although Chelmsford did not intend to wage an inhumane war against the Zulus, he was willing to stoop to that level as his holograph to Shepstone demonstrates: Half measures do not answer with the natives – They must be thoroughly crushed to make them believe in our superiority [...] I shall strive to be in a position to show how hopelessly inferior they are to us in fighting power.¹⁶¹ The holograph and memorandum show that Chelmsford knew the British would have to wage the war inhumanly from its beginning, as by crushing the Zulus into submission it would not just establish British superiority over them, but also all the inhabitants of South Africa. This view is supported by the British attack on Sihayo’s homestead and its destruction, an event which took place within twenty four hours of entering Zululand.

On 12th January 1879, the day after the British had officially begun the invasion of Zululand, Chelmsford’s central column marched to attack Sihayo’s homestead;¹⁶² upon crossing the Buffalo River Chelmsford had concluded that he would punish Sihayo, to test his Natal Native Contingent (NNC) and provide the British with some entertainment.¹⁶³ The British forces entered the valley where Sihayo’s homestead and kraals were situated and, after a heated skirmish, cleared the valley, burning Sihayo’s homestead and great kraal (under

¹⁵⁸ Henry Curling, ‘25th June 1878 Kei Road to Mama’, in *The Curling Letters of the Zulu War: ‘There was Awful Slaughter’*, ed. by Adrian Greaves and Brian Best (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2009), pp. 57 – 59 (p. 57)

¹⁵⁹ Curling, ‘3rd August 1878 Kokstadt to Mama’, in *The Curling Letters of the Zulu War*, ed. by Greaves and Best, p. 62.

¹⁶⁰ Augustus Thesiger, ‘Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford to Colonel W. Belliars’, in *Lord Chelmsford’s Zululand Campaign 1878 – 1879*, ed. by John P. C. Laband (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), pp. 51 (p. 51).

¹⁶¹ Augustus Thesiger, ‘Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford to Sir Theophilus Shepstone’, in *Lord Chelmsford’s Zululand Campaign 1878 – 1879*, ed. by John P. C. Laband (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), pp. 5 (p. 5).

¹⁶² David Payne and Emma Payne, *The Writings, Photographs & Sketches of Henry Charles Harford, 1850 – 1937* (Llandysul: The Ultimatum Tree Limited, 2008), p. 116.

¹⁶³ David Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon: The Story of the Anglo-Zulu War 1879, Fugitives’ Drift Productions* (DAVCD 002 1994) [on CD].

Chelmsford's orders),¹⁶⁴ destroying the Zulu grain pits and capturing some 500 cattle.¹⁶⁵ Whilst these actions were nothing less than cruel, Chelmsford made it clear in his dispatch to Frere that '... none of the other huts were touched [...] not a native touched a woman or child',¹⁶⁷ ordering these prisoners to be returned to their homesteads.¹⁶⁸ However, whilst this might have been true, the Zulus who were left behind had little to no food as it had been taken or destroyed. The slightly restrained attitude shown by the British there disappeared in the aftermath of Isandlwana.

22nd and 23rd January saw three engagements between the British and Zulus, resulting in one of the bloodiest twenty four hour periods in both Zulu and British colonial history. On the morning of 22nd January the coastal column under Colonel Pearson was engaged, prematurely, near Inyezane River by the left horn of a carefully planned Zulu ambush.¹⁶⁹ Over the next 80 minutes the British held the field losing 12 men, with a further 20 wounded, whilst the Zulus streamed away leaving perhaps 400 men in the field.¹⁷⁰ ¹⁷¹ This engagement saw the British improvise a resounding victory out of a potential disaster, yet it was overshadowed by the events that unfolded three hours later,¹⁷² nevertheless Inyezane is significant because of the behaviour of Pearson's forces in the aftermath. They did not pursue their vanquished foe, the Zulus were not slaughtered, but rather the British were moved by the stoicism of the wounded, giving them water and medical treatment and the prisoners were released.¹⁷³ All this was done despite the Zulus having stabbed the corpses of the deceased British, a ritual performed to claim '... some of the honour of a dangerous kill',¹⁷⁴ to such an extent that one description stated a corpse was '... so riddled with assegai wounds that it would have been impossible to place your hand anywhere on his body without covering one'.¹⁷⁵ This humane behaviour towards the Zulus would not be repeated as, just 50 miles away, calamity befell the British.

Events surrounding the Battle of Isandlwana are a source of debate for a plethora of reasons,¹⁷⁶ ¹⁷⁷ however it was undeniably a catastrophic defeat for the British as 1,350 British troops died.¹⁷⁸ ¹⁷⁹ Aside from being seen as the greatest military disaster sustained

¹⁶⁴ Augustus Thesiger, 'Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford to Sir Bartle Frere', in *Lord Chelmsford's Zululand Campaign 1878 – 1879*, ed. by John P. C. Laband (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), pp. 51 - 62 (p. 60).

¹⁶⁵ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 002 1994).

¹⁶⁶ Alexander Wilmot, *History of the Zulu War* (London: Richardson and Best, 1880), p. 34.

¹⁶⁷ Thesiger, p. 60.

¹⁶⁸ Norris-Newman, *In Zululand with the British Army*, p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ Brian Best, 'The Battle of Inyezane 22nd January 1879', *Anglo-Zulu War historical society*, 4 (1998)

<http://azwhs.publishpath.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_4/4_The_Battle_of_Inyezane_-_BB.pdf> [accessed 10 May 2018].

¹⁷⁰ Best, 'The Battle of Inyezane 22nd January 1879'.

¹⁷¹ Ian Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1998), p. 94.

¹⁷² Best, 'The Battle of Inyezane 22nd January 1879'.

¹⁷³ Best, 'The Battle of Inyezane 22nd January 1879'.

¹⁷⁴ Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906*, p. 85 - 86.

¹⁷⁵ Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906*, p. 86.

¹⁷⁶ Mike Snook, *How can man die better: The secrets of Isandlwana Revealed*, revised edn. (London: Frontline books, 2014), p. 148.

¹⁷⁷ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 002 1994).

¹⁷⁸ Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the conduct of War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 77 – 78 & 86.

under Queen Victoria's reign,¹⁸⁰ it is noted for the Zulus' actions in the aftermath of the battle; they '... took no prisoners and spared no lives, despite pleas for mercy'.¹⁸¹ Yet, the British were far more troubled by the Zulu ritual of qaqqa than the defeat.¹⁸² The reaction to the Zulu actions and rituals was drastic, yet understandable, as in the aftermath of the British victory at Rorke's Drift the next day, hundreds of Zulu prisoners were beaten, speared or bayoneted to death by the British,¹⁸³ as they '... took some revenge for Isandlwana'.¹⁸⁴ Isandlwana hardened the attitude of the British towards the Zulus and they developed '... an unofficial understanding that no prisoners were to be taken; defeated warriors were thereafter to be hunted down and killed'.¹⁸⁵ This revenge was repeated over the following months at the battles of Kambula, Gingindlovu and Ulundi, as when the Zulus began to flee the British forces pursued them with a savagery, killing everyone, including the wounded.¹⁸⁶ ¹⁸⁷ Whilst this aggressive action towards the Zulus is understandable, it is still undoubtedly cruel and the actions of British troops when it came to Zulu food and homesteads suggests they punished the Zulus for more than just their rituals.

Separately, British raiding actions against the Zulus makes less sense and undoubtedly warrants condemnation. It is clear that the Zulus never intended to invade Natal; Cetshwayo wished to fight a defensive war and ordered his warriors to repulse the British invasion, but he would not let his Impis loose on Natal, an order which was adhered to, with one notable exception.¹⁸⁸ Comparatively the British set about raiding Zululand, stealing cattle, destroying crops and burning homesteads in an attempt to draw out Zulu forces, destroy their rallying points and to deal with troublesome chiefs as well as raising British morale whilst lowering that of the Zulus.¹⁸⁹ ¹⁹⁰ ¹⁹¹ These raids became increasingly ruthless as the war progressed,¹⁹² but yielded few beneficial results,¹⁹³ many ending with British failure or retreat and more drastically caused counter-raids by the Zulus.¹⁹⁴ ¹⁹⁵ A key example of

¹⁷⁹ Lock and Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, p. 229.

¹⁸⁰ Greaves and Best, *The Curling Letters of the Zulu War*, p. 92.

¹⁸¹ David M. Crowe, *War Crimes, Genocide, and Justice: A Global History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 75.

¹⁸² David M. Crowe, 'War Crimes and Genocide in History, and the Evolution of Responsive International Law', in *Crimes of State Past and Present: Government-Sponsored Atrocities and International Legal Responses*, ed. by David M. Crowe (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 4 – 54 (p. 13).

¹⁸³ Crowe, 'War Crimes and Genocide in History, and the Evolution of Responsive International Law', p. 13.

¹⁸⁴ Alan Baynham Jones and Lee Stevenson, *Rorke's Drift by those who were there* (Brighton: L. Stevenson Publishing, 2003), p. 55.

¹⁸⁵ Best, 'The Battle of Inyezane 22nd January 1879'.

¹⁸⁶ Lock and Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, p. 285.

¹⁸⁷ Crowe, *War Crimes*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁸ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 002 1994).

¹⁸⁹ C. H. Melville, *Life of General the Right Hon. Sir Redvers Buller: V.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.*, Vol. 1 (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1923), p. 109.

¹⁹⁰ Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906*, p. 132.

¹⁹¹ Melville, *Life of General the Right Hon. Sir Redvers Buller*, p. 109.

¹⁹² Brian Best, 'The Coastal Column', *Anglo-Zulu War historical society*, 3 (1998)

<http://azwhs.publishpath.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_3/J3n_The_Coastal_Column_-_BB.pdf> [accessed 11 May 2018] (p. 4).

¹⁹³ Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906*, p. 133.

¹⁹⁴ Evelyn Wood, *From Midshipman to Field Marshal*, Vol. 2, (London: Methuen & Co., 1906), p. 69.

¹⁹⁵ Best, 'The Coastal Column', p. 4.

such a counter raid was the Zulu attack on white owned farms near Luneburg, which resulted in avoidable deaths.¹⁹⁶ The only reason that such raids did not occur in Natal was because of Bulwer's decision to resist Chelmsford's demands for raids into Zululand:¹⁹⁷

In the opinion of this Council the proposition that raiding expeditions should be made into the Zulu country by the natives of this colony is unadvisable of adoption, as being an impolitic and undesirable system of war, as being calculated to provoke retaliation, and as tending to demoralize the people engaged in it.¹⁹⁸ These raids did little to the Zulus other than depriving them (especially the women and children) of food and shelter, indeed Bishop Colenso argued 'The Burning of Ulundi & other kraals means nothing in Zulu eyes, as I hear from natives',¹⁹⁹ and the retaliation clearly shows that the raids were not worth the effort and lives they cost. Yet these attacks still occurred, arguably performed out of greed and to a lesser extent in retaliation for Isandlwana,²⁰⁰ rather than for strategic reasons, which is perhaps why blunders such as the engagement at Hlobane occurred.²⁰¹ It is therefore clear that the British actions towards the Zulu people during the Zulu War, whilst understandable to a degree, were undoubtedly cruel and yet they were not finished when they burned the Royal homestead and Kraal in Ulundi on 4th July 1879, with the aftermath of the war resulting in the fracturing of the Zulu Kingdom and the deaths of thousands more Zulus.

The Times aptly identified that '...if Lord Chelmsford's invasion had been successful, Sir Bartle Frere's conduct would have been condoned',²⁰² yet Chelmsford did not succeed, losing the faith of the British public and Government.²⁰³ Thus a change in command was required and for this task Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had been Bulwer's predecessor as Lieutenant-Governor of Natal (1875), was dispatched. Appointing Wolseley as Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief for Natal made logical sense as he was an exceptionally capable officer renowned for his '... efficiency' and '... administrative skill' as well as his '... impatience, quick temper, conviction that he was always right, and confidence in his own powers of judgement'.²⁰⁴ ²⁰⁵ ²⁰⁶ Wolseley had liaised closely with Shepstone during his tenure as governor in 1875 and it would be the basis of these conversations which led Wolseley to conclude that war with the Zulus was likely to happen and it was this

¹⁹⁶ Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906*, p. 132.

¹⁹⁷ Augustus Thesiger, 'Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford to H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge', in *Lord Chelmsford's Zululand Campaign 1878 – 1879*, ed. by John P. C. Laband (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), pp. 145 - 148 (p. 147).

¹⁹⁸ Alexander Wilmot, *History of the Zulu War* (London: Richardson and Best, 1880), p. 113 - 114.

¹⁹⁹ Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 58.

²⁰⁰ Adrian Greaves, 'Cattle Raiding by British and Colonial troops', *Anglo-Zulu War Historical Society*, 6 (1999) <http://azwhs.publishpath.com/Websites/azwhs/images/Journal_6/Cattle_Raiding_by_British_and_Colonial_troops.pdf> [accessed 11 May 2018].

²⁰¹ Greaves, 'Cattle Raiding by British and Colonial troops'.

²⁰² Edmund Yorke, *Isandlwana 1879* (Stroud: The History Press, 2011), p. 147.

²⁰³ Halik Kochanski, *Sir Garnet Woleley: Victorian Hero* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1999), p. 95.

²⁰⁴ T. A. Heathcote, *The British Field Marshals 1736 – 1997: A Biographical Dictionary* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2012), p. 312.

²⁰⁵ J. Howell Hughes, 'Life of Sir Garnet Wolseley. Cetewayo, the Zulu king. Zululand and the Zulus. A brief summary of the Zulu war. Brief memoir of the Prince Imperial' in *Various*, ed. by J. Howell Hughes (Caernarfon: Argraphwyd Gan W. Gwenlyn Evans, 1900), pp. 60 – 90 (p. 76).

²⁰⁶ Heathcote, *The British Field Marshals 1736 – 1997*, p. 314.

relationship that led Wolseley to rely on Shepstone's advice upon his return to South Africa in 1879.²⁰⁷

Wolseley was to clean up Chelmsford and Frere's mess, but upon his arrival in Cape Town on 23rd June 1879 it was revealed that Chelmsford had, spurred into action by the news he was to be superseded, launched the second invasion of Zululand in an attempt to salvage what was left of his military reputation.²⁰⁸ Chelmsford defeated the Zulus decisively at Ulundi on 4th July 1879, much to Wolseley's chagrin and in spite of his efforts to halt Chelmsford:

Concentrate your force immediately and keep it concentrated. Undertake no serious operations with detached bodies of troops. Acknowledge receipt of this message of this message at once and flash back your latest moves. I am astonished at not hearing from you.²⁰⁹

Ulundi signalled the end of the Zulu war, yet despite '... the destruction of property and catastrophic loss of life' it did not directly destroy the Zulu Kingdom itself, ²¹⁰ instead it was Wolseley's decision to divide Zululand into 13 independent chiefdoms which destroyed it. In the aftermath of Ulundi, Wolseley encountered a problem he had rarely had to deal with in his career: he did not know what to do. Wolseley was to make peace with the Zulus, once favourable to Disraeli's government, yet he was hamstrung by the very same government's resolution that 'there was to be no annexation of Zululand nor interference in the administration of the country beyond what was necessary to secure peace and safeguard the interests of its neighbours'.²¹¹ Moreover, as Bishop Colenso had predicted,²¹² there was still Zulu resistance to the British and it would not cease until Wolseley could capture the elusive Cetshwayo.²¹³ Consequently whilst British troops attempted to capture the Zulu King, Wolseley '... efficient, ambitious, and self-seeking' began to draw up plans for the re-settlement of Zululand,²¹⁴ seeking advice from local officials, missionaries and traders,²¹⁵ with two being particularly influential. The first was John Dunn, the 'White Zulu' who had been a friend and beneficiary of Cetshwayo, the only adviser to gain Wolseley's trust, Wolseley noting:

...he is a power in Zululand and I intend making as much use of him as possible.²¹⁶

The second character who strongly influenced Wolseley was John Shepstone, acting Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal and Theophilus's brother, who whilst being seen by

²⁰⁷ Kochanski, *Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p. 79 - 82.

²⁰⁸ Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 58.

²⁰⁹ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 556.

²¹⁰ David Glyn-Fox, 'The Anglo Zulu War Unnecessarily Destroyed the Zulu nation'.

²¹¹ Kochanski, *Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p. 101.

²¹² Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 58.

²¹³ Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 260.

²¹⁴ James O. Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. 102 - 103.

²¹⁵ Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 70.

²¹⁶ *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley, 1879-1880*, ed. by Adrian Preston (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1973), pp. 130.

Wolseley as a ‘Stupid man’ associated with treachery,²¹⁷ provided a much more important service to him. Whilst Dunn gave Wolseley the ‘...civilising influence of a White man’ over the Chieftdom next to Natal,²¹⁸ offering a buffer zone between Natal and the other ‘...barbarous districts of Zululand’,²¹⁹ 220 John Shepstone, undoubtedly influenced by his brother, suggested which chiefs be appointed as well as giving Wolseley the rationale with which he justified the settlement.²²¹ Indeed Theophilus Shepstone’s influence, through John, proved so great that Wolseley, who had originally ‘...intended to divide Zululand into about five or six territories’,²²² listened to Shepstone’s remarks and instead split Zululand into thirteen chieftainships.²²³ Thus on 1st September 1879 (Cetshwayo had been captured on 28th August) Wolseley, with John Shepstone translating, addressed hundreds of Zulus, informing them that Cetshwayo had been sent into exile and that they were to be ruled by thirteen independent chiefs, appointed by the British, one appointee being Dunn, Wolseley’s trusted advisor.²²⁴ 225 These Chieftdoms had been designed in such a way as to ‘exaggerate political stresses inherent in the old kingdom’ thus preventing Zululand emerging as a united people in the future.²²⁶ In this regard Wolseley’s plan could be hailed as a success, much to the joy of Disraeli and the conservatives:

All he [Wolseley] has promised and proposed he has fulfilled. I [Disraeli] entirely approve of everything he has done and look upon him as a first-rate man.²²⁷

However, for all the political satisfaction over the settlement, socially disaster loomed as Bishop Colenso prophetically predicted ‘There will be trouble yet’.²²⁸

During the entire Zulu War some 6,000 Zulus had lost their lives in battle, although this number is likely much higher,²²⁹ whilst many more succumbed to their wounds, yet these losses were matched over the following years as a direct result of Wolseley’s settlement. The 1880s saw the physical destruction of Zululand,²³⁰ as the divisions that Wolseley wanted to exaggerate in Zululand grew, unrest brewing between Cetshwayo’s Usuthu who, largely suppressed by their new chiefs,²³¹ clamoured for the return of Cetshwayo, whilst chiefs such

²¹⁷ Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 71.

²¹⁸ Preston, p. 130 - 131.

²¹⁹ Preston, p. 130 - 131.

²²⁰ David Glyn-Fox, *The Anglo Zulu War Unnecessarily Destroyed the Zulu nation’*.

²²¹ Preston, p. 78 -79.

²²² Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, p. 103.

²²³ See Map 3.

²²⁴ Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 69.

²²⁵ Norris-Newman, *In Zululand with the British Army*, p. 268.

²²⁶ Ian Knight, *“By the orders of the Great White queen”: Campaigning in Zululand through the eyes of the British Soldier, 1879* (London: Greenhill books, 1992), p. 260.

²²⁷ Alfred E. Gathorne-Hardy, *Gathorne Hardy, first Earl of Cranbrook, a memoir with extracts from his diary and correspondence*, Vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, 1910), p. 122.

²²⁸ Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, p. 102.

²²⁹ Mike Snook, *Like Wolves on the fold: The Defence of Rorke’s Drift* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2010), p. 216.

²³⁰ Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 245.

²³¹ David Glyn-Fox, *The Anglo Zulu War Unnecessarily Destroyed the Zulu nation’*.

as Zibhebhu opposed them.²³² These divisions grew to such an extent that clashes between these groups occurred and after several deputations pleaded for the return of Cetshwayo, the Zulu king was repatriated back to Zululand (only after the British government realised that Wolseley's settlement was rapidly disintegrating),²³³ although he was left with a kingdom a third of its original size surrounded by enemies to the north and the British to the South.²³⁴ By then it was too late and Cetshwayo's return only worsened the situation,²³⁵ with hostilities breaking out into civil war, all whilst the British looked on, uninterested in the rapidly deteriorating situation.²³⁷ Events spiralled out of control more rapidly than ever, with Cetshwayo dying in 1884 and with him 'The last hope of independence for the Zulu people'.²³⁸ Yet civil strife in Zululand was far from over as desperate Zulus turned to the now independent Transvaal Boers for help against their kin, at the cost of much of Zululand and by 1887 British troops once more marched into Zululand,²³⁹ 240 241 this time to annex what remained of the shattered nation,²⁴² ending what little independence remained of the once proud Zulu kingdom, although the fighting, death and destruction did not.²⁴³ 244

Conclusion

Was the Anglo-Zulu War unnecessary and cruel? The simple answer to both questions is 'Yes', but when this question is considered in the context of the time that it occurred, it is clear that many British people saw the war as necessary and condoned the treatment of the Zulus. Concurrently however there were many distinguished and respected British and colonial figures who dissented, notably Natal's Lieutenant-Governor Bulwer and Bishop Colenso, both of whom had a good understanding of regional reality. It is also clear that Hicks-Beach would have forbidden the invasion had he been fully briefed; it has been established that Foreign Office did not want another colonial war, so why then did it happen? In his enthralling and evocative narration, David Rattray, echoing Douglas Porch's point that 'Imperialism moved forward [...] mainly because men on the periphery [...] pressed on to enlarge the boundaries of empire, often without orders, even against orders', concludes that 'Disraeli had [...] given far too much latitude to petty government officials in the British Colony of Natal, and that those fellows acting with far too much *carte blanche*'.²⁴⁵

²³² Ian Knight, *Voices from the Zulu War: Campaigning in Zululand through the eyes of the British Soldier, 1879* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2011), p. 260.

²³³ David Glyn-Fox, 'The Anglo Zulu War Unnecessarily Destroyed the Zulu nation'

²³⁴ Greaves and Mkhize, *The Tribe that Washed its Spears*, p. 181 – 182.

²³⁵ See Map 4

²³⁶ Ian Knight, *Nothing Remains but to Fight: The Defence of Rorke's drift, 1879* (London: Greenhill books, 1993), p. 145.

²³⁷ Greaves and Mkhize, *The Tribe that Washed its Spears*, p. 185.

²³⁸ Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, p. 607.

²³⁹ Guy, *Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 231.

²⁴⁰ See Map 5.

²⁴¹ Knight, *Voices from the Zulu War*, p. 260.

²⁴² See Map 5.

²⁴³ Knight, *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906*, p. 193.

²⁴⁴ Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 280.

²⁴⁵ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

It is irrefutable that Cetshwayo and the Zulu Kingdom sought to avoid war and truly posed no threat to the Empire they saw as their friends, however, triggered by Carnarvon's direction for Confederation (although his decision was possibly based on flawed briefing by Shepstone), this meant nothing to those 'petty government officials' who engineered the war.²⁴⁶ Compounding this situation was the pervading British Darwinian view of 'savages', itself fed by knowledge of Shaka's brutal reign and Cetshwayo's bloody attainment of his throne, and one can imagine Victorian British viewing qaqqa as uncivilised and appalling. This view manifested itself in the way the Zulus were treated; whilst the slaughtering of Zulu wounded at Rorke's Drift and subsequent battles can be explained by red raw emotion amongst British soldiers in the aftermath of Isandlwana, the decision to break up Zululand was conscious and calculated.

There are many people who can be held to historical account for this war and its conduct, yet there are four individuals at the heart of it. Frere, motivated by Carnarvon's direction for Confederation and a desire to end his already commendable career with one last triumph, was knowingly deceitful in briefing Hicks-Beach. Chelmsford, motivated by furthering a career which had, until then, been administrative in its nature, was complacent and arrogant in how he viewed the Zulus. Wolseley too was arrogant, compounded by his ignorance of the complex nature and makeup of the Zulu Kingdom, leading him to rely on individuals who did not have the best interests of the Zulu people, nor British Empire, at heart. Above all was Theophilus Shepstone, the flawed character who Rattray aptly summarised as a man who '...loved playing God with the natives [...] without the sanction of the British Government'.²⁴⁷ For a man who was the most junior of the four, Shepstone had the most influence on this war, directly and indirectly, his briefings having a profound effect on Carnarvon, Frere and Wolseley. It is a sad, almost poetic, irony that Shepstone reaped what he sowed as his son George, whilst serving with the Natal Native Horse, was killed at Isandlwana. It is extraordinary to realise that such a small group of British men could have such a major impact on history, their actions leading to a campaign that descended into military and political disaster. These 'savage' Zulus humbled an Empire, directly causing the downfall of the incumbent British government as well as causing a dramatic change in British foreign policy and, along with the Pedi, acted as the spark which caused the First Boer War and thus Britain's loss of the Transvaal. In the 1870s the Zulu Kingdom, itself a sovereign imperial power, was relatively stable and under Cetshwayo's seemingly wise and firm leadership had no end in sight, but it was destroyed by Britain's great imperial empire, still expanding to its zenith. British losses were arguably insignificant; however the last word should be left to the Zulus. In his 2005 foreword Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi wrote '...the facts reveal that those colonial officials within South Africa who engineered this war committed grave injustices against the Zulu people and their King, the effects and legacy of which are still with us to this day'.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

²⁴⁷ Rattray, *The Day of the Dead Moon* (DAVCD 001 1994).

²⁴⁸ Lock and Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, p. 15.

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