

Spilt Water;
The Zulu Royal House 1883-2012

By Ian Knight

In 1887, the Governor of Natal, Sir Arthur Havelock, took the opportunity to admonish the Zulu king, Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo, who had objected to the recent British annexation of Zululand, with the warning that, as far as the British were concerned, 'Dinuzulu must know, and all Zulus must know, that the rule of the House of Shaka is dead; it is a thing of the past. It is like water spilt on the ground'.

As a comment on official British policy towards the power and influence of the Zulu Royal House in the aftermath of the invasion of 1879 it was certainly an appropriate and rather chilling summation. Dinuzulu, still young, aggressive and hankering for the days of independence he had known in his father's time, was to refuse to accept the British position, and in 1888, for a second time, Zulu warriors took to the field against British redcoats. And for a second time they were defeated, and for a second time a Zulu king had endured the humiliation of capture and exile. The Zulu people now lay exposed to the full consequences of conquest, to the complete lack of influence in their own administrative affairs, the denigration of their customs and beliefs, the expropriation of their lands and their enforced involvement at the lowest levels in the burgeoning settler industrial economy.

Yet throughout this period, despite Governor Sir Arthur's hopes, so far from passing quietly into history, the Zulu Royal House continued to gain currency as a symbol of cultural identity, of both the continuation of tradition and of potential resurgence in the future, to African communities in KwaZulu-Natal, some of whom had never been subjects of the Zulu kings in the hey-day of their independence.

Although minor skirmishing had continued for some weeks afterwards it is probably fair to say that the capture of King Cetshwayo by Major Marter's Dragoons in the Ngome forest on 28 August 1879 had marked the real end of the British invasion of Zululand. Cetshwayo was taken first to oNdini, to meet General Sir Garnet Wolseley at his camp within sight of the burnt-out ruins of the king's royal homestead, and then taken to Port Durnford on the coast, destined for exile at the Cape. Wolseley, working under advice from proponents of the invasion like Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Natal's Secretary for Native Affairs and a firm believer that the Zulu kingdom had been held together by little more than the mystique of the Zulu kings themselves, sought to reduce Zululand's capacity to resist British interests by a classic policy of divide and rule. The power of the king was to be entirely negated and the countryside was divided up among thirteen chiefs, selected either because they represented important lineages from the days before Shaka - who were presumed therefore to welcome the chance to retain their former influence - or because they were loyal to the British. Amongst the most powerful groups in the new order were the Mandlakazi of Zibhebhu kaMapitha, a collateral lineage of the Royal House who traced their descent to Shaka's grandfather, Jama, and the Ngenetsheni, the followers of Cetshwayo's estranged brother, Prince Hamu. Whereas Zibhebhu had fought loyally for the king in 1879 - he had commanded the Zulu scouts during the iSandlwana campaign and had orchestrated the ambush on Redvers Buller's force on 3rd July - he was astute and ambitious and heavily involved in trade with Europeans beyond Zululand's borders. Prince Hamu, on the other hand, had been the only member of the Royal House to defect to the British while the war was in progress; both groups, therefore, had strong reasons to resist any lingering influence of the Royal House.

Although Wolseley's post-war settlement has often been described as a disaster - friction between the thirteen chiefs, and particularly between them and their subjects who had fought so hard to resist the British just months before, soon broke into open violence - it certainly succeeded in its central aim, that of encouraging divisions within the country. Nevertheless, the gradual escalation in violence, and the fear that it might spill over into British Natal, alarmed the new Liberal administration in London so that within a couple of years the British Government was contemplating an extraordinary *volte face*. King

Cetshwayo, meanwhile, had been languishing in exile, imprisoned first in the old Dutch Cape Castle and then on the farm Oude Moulou. From there, aided by white sympathisers, he had mounted a shrewd campaign aimed at undermining the negative impression of him which prevailed both in Government circles and in the British press. By the beginning of 1882 it was being seriously mooted that the king's return to at least part of Zululand - shorn of the props of his old military power and carefully watched-over by white officials - might be preferable to the growing instability in Zululand. In June 1882 Cetshwayo was allowed to visit London to argue his case - curious crowds, expecting to see the ferocious savage depicted at the time in the British press, were at first surprised and then delighted to find he cut an impressive figure in Western dress and his public rehabilitation was complete - and after carefully stage-managing a show of Imperial might, to curb any lingering feelings on his part of defiance, the Government agreed to his restoration.

There was, however, a catch. When Cetshwayo landed again on Zulu soil in February 1883 he found that not only was he expressly forbidden to revive the old amabutho system but that great swathes of both the north and south of the country were set aside in a de facto recognition that many of the groups who had been raised up by the British in his absence could not realistically be expected to live peacefully under him now. This was particularly true of both Prince Hamu's Ngenetsheni and Prince Zibhebhu's Mandlakazi in the north. No sooner was the king back at oNdini - rebuilding a new royal homestead half a mile from the one destroyed by the British - than his followers began to seek revenge on their tormentors. Within months a civil war had broken out and on 21 July 1883 Zibhebhu's followers launched a surprise attack on the new oNdini complex. Caught unprepared, Cetshwayo's followers collapsed and were ruthlessly pursued across the Ulundi plain. Cetshwayo himself was wounded but managed to escape but many of his most senior advisors, men who had held important posts within the kingdom since Mpande's time, were killed. Among them was Ntshingwayo kaMahole, who had commanded the army at iSandlwana, and Sihayo Ngobese, whose errant sons had topped the British 'most wanted' list in the ultimatum of 1878.

Cetshwayo took refuge in the southern part of the country, which was now under direct British control, and surrendered to the British Resident based at Eshowe. Here he was allowed to live in a small royal homestead, kwaGqikazi, nearby. Defeated a second time, however, his power was broken and royalist fortunes sunk to their lowest ebb as the triumphant Mandlakazi and Ngenetsheni harried them across the country.

Then, on 8 February 1884, Cetshwayo suddenly collapsed and died. A British doctor was allowed only a cursory examination of the body and reported officially that the king had died of heart failure, commenting privately that he might have been poisoned.

With Cetshwayo's death the hopes of the royal family settled on Dinuzulu, his 16 year-old son by Queen Nomvimbi. Despite his youth, Dinuzulu was already a tough and resourceful young man who had witnessed the disastrous consequences of the British invasion and had been present when oNdini was sacked by Zibhebhu (he had been led to safety by his uncle Prince Dabulamanzi, the unsuccessful Zulu commander at Rorke's Drift). Dinuzulu and the surviving royalist old-guard recognised that only extreme action could save them from complete collapse and Dinuzulu took the drastic step of opening negotiations with the Transvaal Boers, offering a reward of land in return for military support against Zibhebhu in particular. In May 1884 a force of Boer volunteers, accompanied by Dinuzulu and an impi of armed royalists, invaded Zibhebhu's territory. Zibhebhu prepared a careful ambush for them between the foot of the Tshaneni Mountain and the Mkhuze River but his men revealed their position prematurely and were driven back by concentrated Boer rifle-fire. Zibhebhu himself gathered up the remnants of his followers and fled across country, ironically appealing for British protection at Eshowe, as Cetshwayo had once done.

The battle won, the Boers presented their bill, claiming a vast swathe of country which extended from the old 'disputed territory' of the 1870s deep into the heart of Zululand. Dinuzulu was appalled but was powerless to stop them. The Boers declared the area the Nieuwe Republiek - the New Republic - and laid out a new township as its capital. Situated between the old 1879 battlefields of Hlobane and Khambula, they called it Vryheid - Freedom.

The extent of the Boer claims troubled the British, however, who were concerned not at the hardships it afforded the Zulus so much as the strategic threat it afforded British interests. In particular, the proximity of the new Boer holdings to the eastern seaboard raised the spectre of a direct link between the Republics of the interior and the outside world, and with it the possibility of rival world powers exerting strategic and economic interests over an area Britain regarded as its back-yard in Africa. In October 1886 the British Government intervened, offering to recognise the New Republic so long as the Boers drew their borders closer to Vryheid. Rather than face a new open conflict with the British - the Transvaal Rebellion had occurred just five years before - the Boers agreed. Britain then stepped in and annexed what remained on Zululand.

King Dinuzulu was aghast. He had never excepted the invasion of 1879 as an absolute defeat and now found that not only had the British and the Boers stolen his country from under him but the British - who now claimed jurisdiction over him - refused to accept his status as Cetshwayo's heir. The British, indeed, continued to pursue the old Shepstonian policy of lending their support to rival groups within the Zulu kingdom to undermine the influence of the Zulu Royal House. In November 1887 the British allowed Prince Zibhebhu and his followers to return to northern Zululand from their exile in the Eshowe district in a deliberate attempt to counter-balance support for Dinuzulu.

It was a serious mistake. Zibhebhu's homestead at Bangonomo was not far from Dinuzulu's own settlement at Nongomo and Dinuzulu was furious at finding himself living so close to the man he considered responsible for the death of his father. Dinuzulu began gathering armed followers at the stronghold of Ceza Mountain and, when the British sent armed police to order him to disperse, he chased them off. Zibhebhu moved his own followers close to a British outpost at iVuna hill but on 23 June 1888 Dinuzulu attacked them. Riding ahead of his men with a group of companions on horseback Dinuzulu, still only 20 years old, led a fierce charge which scattered the Mandlakazi under the very walls of the British fort. Zibhebhu and the survivors fled and the British immediately hurried troops into Zululand to confront Dinuzulu.

Yet in fact the Dinuzulu Rebellion of 1888 was a pale shadow of the struggle of 1879. The policy of 'divide and rule' had fatally damaged Dinuzulu's ability to resist and where once the kingdom had presented a united front against the invasion of 1879, many influential Zulu figures now held aloof or sided with the British. Although the fighting spluttered on for several months Dinuzulu was never in a position to inflict the sort of defeats upon the British his father had done and after the dispersal of a Royalist force at Hlopekhulu Mountain, near Ulundi, on 2 July 1888, Dinuzulu and his uncles Ndabuko and Shingana fled to the Transvaal Republic. The Boers denied them sanctuary and instead the fugitives crossed into Natal and surrendered to the British authorities.

Dinuzulu and his uncles were tried for High Treason, found guilty, and all three were sentenced to varying periods of exile on the island of St Helena, which served as a British political prison. The royal party was allowed to take wives with them and Dinuzulu took two, Silomo and Zihlazile. They were to live in three residences during their time on the island and the British Government allowed a stipend for their maintenance. For the first time, members of the Royal family were exposed to British culture and Dinuzulu, in particular, was still young enough to enjoy the experience. He learned to speak and write English, to wear Western clothes, and to play the piano. Queen Silomo bore him two sons on the island, the princes Solomon Nkayishana Maphumuza and Arthur Edward Mshiyeni, while Queen Zihlazile bore him two sons, David Nyawana and Samuel Bhekendaba, and a daughter, Victoria Mphaphu.

During Dinuzulu's absence, the reality of British conquest became increasingly apparent to the Zulu people. In 1893 Natal was granted 'responsible government' by the British which, in effect, allowed it much greater control of its own affairs without intervention from London. In 1897 Zululand was formerly incorporated into Natal and made available for extensive white settlement and over the following decades the best agricultural land was set aside for settler use and the Zulu population required to move. The traditional economy, meanwhile, was already under pressure from a series of natural calamities - drought,

rinderpest and plagues of locusts - and was further damaged by the imposition of a taxation system specifically designed to end African rural self-sufficiency by forcing them to take paid labour for white interests, and with the rapid development of the mining industry in the Transvaal Republic, the foundations were laid for the migrant labour system which is still such a feature of South African economic life.

Dinuzulu's sentence expired in 1898 and he returned to a Zululand already changed and impoverished. Sensitive to his potential as a symbol of African discontent, the Natal authorities remained determined to undermine his influence. They refused to acknowledge his claim as King and instead regarded him as no more than one of many local chiefs whose salary they paid - and whose compliance they demanded in return. Dinuzulu built himself a new homestead, oSuthu - a name associated with his father's followers since the 1850s - at Nongoma in northern Zululand.

In 1899 the Anglo-Boer War broke out but, although some of the fiercest fighting of the war took place in Natal, both sides were keen to maintain the fiction that it was a 'white man's war' and were nervous of inflaming any lingering Zulu hostilities. Nevertheless, the British were acutely aware that Zululand represented a back-door route into Natal by way of Vryheid, and indeed in late 1899 and early 1900 the Boers made sorties as far as Nquthu and Nkandla. With limited forces available to repel them, the British unofficially - and ironically - pressurised Dinuzulu into tacitly supporting them by patrolling the borders and collecting intelligence. A number of Zulu chiefs - including both Mehlokazulu and Zibhebhu - were allowed to arm their followers and, following the withdrawal of Boer forces at the end of 1900, they were given permission to further harass the Boers by raiding deserted farms in the old New Republic. By this time the larger Boer concentrations had been broken up but small guerrilla bands continued to raid into Zululand, looting Zulu livestock and attacking small British outposts. With the war turning steadily against them, Commandant Louis Botha again opted to invade Zululand in September 1901, pushing down from Vryheid towards Babanango. The British reinforced posts at Fort Prospect, near Melmoth, and Fort Itala, south of Babanango, to try to stop him. Botha decided to attack both positions simultaneously, late on the evening of 25 September, but the positions were more heavily fortified and better defended than he expected and both attacks failed. The garrison at both forts included small detachments of the Zululand Native Police - the Nongqayi, who had first been formed as a bodyguard to the British Resident in 1883 - and who were employed against the Boers as scouts. At the height of the attack on Fort Prospect, Sergeant Itshelegumbi Ngonyama hurried forward from an outpost four miles away at the head of 13 men who broke through the Boer lines and reinforced the British garrison. Sergeant Itshelegumbi was later presented with an engraved magazine rifle in recognition of his actions, and this is now on display at the Fort Nongqayi Museum in Eshowe.

The defeats at Forts Itala and Prospect checked Botha's advance and he retreated north towards Vryheid. By this stage the remaining Boer commandos across South Africa were suffering heavily from the British counter-insurgency techniques. Vryheid, however, remained a centre of pro-Boer sympathies and, encouraged by Botha, Boer commandos continued to operate in the surrounding countryside into early 1902. To counter this, the British reinforced their presence in the area and called upon Dinuzulu to supply an impi to support them. Dinuzulu further instructed Sikhobhobo, the military induna of the abaQulusi people - who had himself played a prominent part in the British defeat at Hlobane Mountain - to supply a contingent of warriors to the enterprise. This further contribution by the Zulus to the British cause infuriated the Boers, particularly those whose farms lay in the Vryheid area, and were looted by the Zulus on British orders. At the end of April 1902 the Vryheid and Utrecht commandos burnt down the principle Qulusi homestead, ebaQulusini, rounded up Qulusi cattle and shot down the herdsmen. Sikhobhobo appealed to the British force garrisoning Vryheid for help but was told that tentative peace negotiations were under-way and that the British were reluctant to risk derailing them by attacking the errant commandos. When he heard of Sikhobhobo's appeal, the Field-Cornet of the Vryheid Commando, Jan Potgieter, sent an insulting message to the Qulusi damning them as 'chicken lice' and challenging them to recover their cattle. On the night of 5 May the Vryheid Commando was

camped in the open at the foot of Holkrans hill, some fifteen miles north of Vryheid and just before dawn came up on the 6th, Sikhobobho and 300 Qulusi arrived to answer Potgieter's challenge. After a desperate battle in the pre-dawn gloom the Boers were over-run and 65 of 70 of them killed.

The Qulusi victory at Holkrans deeply shocked those Boers still under arms and is widely believed to have contributed to their willingness to negotiate surrender to the British since it raised the terrifying spectre of a wider rising directed by the African population against the scattered Afrikaner commandos and communities. The battle still remains controversial and a monument to the Boer dead outside the church in Vryheid describes them as 'murdered' rather than 'killed in action'. The abaQulusi, however, still talk of the earlier Boer attacks upon their homesteads in similar terms.

Despite his willingness to support the war effort, the British victory brought Dinuzulu no political advantage after the peace, and indeed the African population of Natal and Zululand had been deeply disturbed by the passage of the war which, coming on top of the recent natural disasters, had left them with a growing sense that their way of life was under threat. In an attempt to both balance its books and force more African labour onto the market - the post-war resurgence of the mining industry in the Transvaal had left many settlers unable to compete with the wages offered - the Natal Government introduced a new Poll Tax of £1 per head to be paid by the African population. This move was bitterly resented, not merely for the extra economic burden it imposed but also because it was perceived as a tax upon life itself. Resentment was particularly strong in Natal where the burdens imposed by colonial rule had been endured the longest. Some groups refused to pay the new tax and protest flared into violence. In the rugged district of Msinga, lying between Greytown and the Zulu border, the young chief of the Zondi people, Bhambatha kaMancinza, decided not to pay. This set him on a course of confrontation with the Government, and Bhambatha secretly went with his family to visit King Dinuzulu to seek his support. After witnessing two catastrophic defeats at the hands of white troops, however - in 1879 and 1888 - Dinuzulu refused but did nonetheless offer to accommodate Bhambatha's family. Bhambatha returned to Msinga and called out his young men; when a Police patrol was sent into his district Bhambatha attacked it on 4 April 1906. The Police retreated to Greytown and Bhambatha and his followers fled across the Thukela into Zululand where, over the following weeks, they sought to use King Cetshwayo's grave, in the broken wooded country of the Nkandla forest, as a rallying point. In fact, few chiefs in Zululand were prepared to join the rebellion but among those who did were the venerable Chief Signanda Shezi, who was in his 90s and in whose territory the grave lay, and Mehlokazulu kaSihayo, a noted warrior who, as a young man, had fought at iSandlwana.

The colonial response was to surround the Nkandla area and sweep through the forests. They received information that Bhambatha and Mehlokazulu had joined forces and that on the night of 9/10th June they were planning to enter the steep, narrow Mome Gorge as a refuge. Troops moved rapidly at night across very broken country and surrounded the gorge and, as dawn came up on the 10th, the rebels could be seen bivouacked at the entrance. The troops opened fire with a storm of machine-gun, artillery and small-arms fire and the rebels broke, fleeing into the gorge. But the sanctuary they once hoped for was now a trap and, with no way out, they were exposed to a merciless fire from the troops on the heights above them throughout the day. About 600 rebels were officially said to have died in the 'battle' but the toll was probably a good deal higher. On the Government side just one officer was killed and two more mortally wounded. Among the dead were both Mehlokazulu and Bhambatha himself. The troops sought out Bhambatha's body and, since it lay in the deepest part of the gorge, cut off his head as proof of his death. Despite this, rumours have persisted ever since that the troops were deceived, and that Bhambatha had escaped the massacre.

The defeat at Mome effectively crushed the rebellion in Zululand although it spluttered on in Natal until finally and ruthlessly suppressed. Throughout, although Dinuzulu had made outward sign of support for the Rebellion, the Natal Government, with their deep-seated suspicions of the Zulu Royal House, were convinced that he had secretly been its prime instigator. When Bhambatha's wife surrendered and admitted that she had been living at oSuthu throughout most of the rebellion, the authorities felt they had the evidence they

needed. In December 1907 Dinuzulu was arrested and tried with 23 counts of High Treason. His defence was orchestrated by Harriett Colenso, daughter of Bishop Colenso, and, after a protracted trial, Dinuzulu was eventually found 'not guilty' on twenty of the most important counts but 'guilty' on lesser charges, that he had harboured Bhambatha's wife and had failed to keep the authorities informed when rebel leaders had contacted him. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment and incarcerated in Pietermaritzburg gaol.

During Dinuzulu's time in prison, the political landscape of southern Africa underwent a further radical change. Since the end of the Anglo-Boer War, the Cape, Natal and the old Transvaal and Orange Free State had all been granted responsible government by the British but in 1910 they were drawn together in a single dominion under the title of The Union of South Africa, with the former Boer guerrilla leader, Louis Botha, as its first Prime Minister. In order to promote the Union the British Government had felt compelled to placate hard-line Boer opinion by allowing almost no representation to black Africans or Indians and, from the first, the Union administered South Africa in the interests of the white ruling minority.

Louis Botha was, however, an old friend of King Dinuzulu's, having been part of the Boer Commando that had defeated Zibhebhu on Dinuzulu's behalf in 1884. Botha arranged for Dinuzulu to leave gaol and settle on a farm near Middleburg in the Transvaal. The price of his relative freedom was permanent exile, for he was forced to sign a document agreeing never to return to Zululand.

Dinuzulu's final years were tragic. Denied any say in the affairs of his people, isolated and weighed down by the national and personal consequences of defeat, he became increasingly dependant on alcohol and he died on 18 October 1913. Despite official disapproval, his followers took his body by train to Vryheid and thence by wagon to kwaNobamba - the vicinity of a homestead established by the Royal House long before King Shaka's time - in the emaKhosini valley where he was laid to rest in the most sacred spot in all Zululand.

Dinuzulu was survived by two potential heirs, his sons Solomon Nkayishana and David Nyawana, both of whom had been born on St Helena. Although Prince David was the elder and had initially been championed by Dinuzulu's surviving attendants he was unpopular within the Royal House and at Dinuzulu's funeral it was Solomon who was called forward to lay the first stone upon his father's grave - a duty given only to the appointed successor.

Solomon was about twenty at the time of his succession. He was the first Zulu king to have been baptised and be raised a Christian and he was the first, too, to have no personal experience of the independent days before the conquest. He was a quiet and easy-going man who preferred to dress in European clothes and enjoy the comforts of a Westernised lifestyle who was nonetheless deeply committed to his people and to the concept of the Royal House as a unifying force.

His position as king was, of course, officially denied by the Government which continued its long-established policy of hostility towards the Royal House but who nonetheless did not scruple to try to appropriate and exploit its mystique when it was useful to them. Solomon - and indeed those kings who came after him - was therefore required to walk an uncomfortable tightrope throughout his reign, attempting to assert a degree of autonomy in the face of an administration upon which he was ultimately dependent for both recognition and the paid stipend which went with it.

And the challenges Zululand faced in the early twentieth century were largely insuperable. Not only was Zululand still suffering from the divisions engendered during the post-war settlement by the British - and in particularly the lingering enmity between royalist supporters and the Mandlakazi and Ngenetsheni - but it was under further assault from an unsympathetic and exploitative white government. In 1913 - the year Dinuzulu died - the Union Government had passed the Natives Land Act which had not only consolidated ownership of the best farm land in white hands but enforced the removal of those Africans already living on those lands who were surplus to the owner's labour requirements. The objectives of the act were to segregate land ownership, to undermine the ability of rural Africans to be self-sufficient and to force them instead to seek paid labour, notably in the burgeoning mining industry. The Act had a catastrophic effect on traditional family

relationships and authority and drew many young Zulus away from a traditional lifestyle and into the westernised economy.

Solomon's response was to try to heal divisions within the country by re-asserting the central roll of the king - he raised several age-set regiments, *amabutho*, although their function was symbolic rather than military - and he married his sisters and daughters to prominent chiefly families across the country. As his standing within Zululand grew as a result, the Union Government was reluctantly forced to recognise that it needed Solomon's support in Zulu affairs and Solomon himself traded this for concessions. Thus, when South Africa joined the First World War on the side of the Allies - despite the opposition of hard-line Afrikaners, many of whom had fought bitterly against the British little more than a decade before - Prime Minister Botha found that he needed Solomon's support when recruiting African volunteers for the war effort. In fact, the Union Government thought sending armed Africans to the front was too much of a risk, and instead authorised the raising only of a Native Labour Corps which was to be sent to France but strictly segregated from white troops. In 1916 Solomon gave his agreement to the scheme in return for official recognition as head of the royalist faction, the uSuthu, which he was finally granted in 1917.

Solomon also found himself courted by the newly emergent African middle class many of whom, particularly in Natal, were *amakholwa*, Christian converts. These had traditionally been supporters of colonial rule - some had, after all, fought for the British in 1879 - but were now becoming increasingly disillusioned as they found themselves just as dispossessed by the 1913 Act as their heathen and uneducated counterparts. The *amakholwa* saw in Solomon - who was at once progressive and Westernised and yet the head of an immensely powerful thread from the past - a chance to legitimise their aspirations in the face of more radical populist movements which were gaining ground among the dislocated urban populations. In 1912 *amakholwa* aspirations were articulated in the formation of the South African Native National Congress - which would later become the ANC - under the presidency of Natal-born John Langalibalele Dube. Dube was essentially moderate in his outlook and by the 1920s his style of leadership was under pressure from more radical elements within the SANNC. Dube saw the advantages of allying *kholwa* interests with those of the Royal House and in 1923 a new organisation called *Inkatha kaZulu* was formed, and Solomon was invited to be its head. The name *Inkatha* was deeply symbolic, an allusion to an artefact of great mystical significance, a coil of rope bound in python skin which was said to embody the unity of the old Zulu kingdom from the time of King Shaka. The original *inkatha* had been closely guarded by successive Zulu kings but had been destroyed when the British burned the principle royal homesteads during the war of 1879. By choosing this name the founders of *Inkatha* were expressing the hope that the Zulu kingdom would rise again to its former glories.

In fact there were significant differences in the hopes of the *amakholwa* and King Solomon, and indeed *Inkatha* ironically also attracted significant support from white sugar planters who were keen to support a traditional *status quo* which ensured them a constant supply of cheap Zulu labour. Nevertheless, throughout the 1920s *Inkatha* served as a significant voice for a variety of Zulu political opinions which could not find expression or influence elsewhere.

Perhaps Solomon's greatest achievement was his exploitation of a meeting with the British heir apparent, Edward, Prince of Wales, in June 1925, to enhance his claim to recognition as King of the Zulu people. The Prince - the future Edward VIII - was on a Royal Tour of the Union and was scheduled to visit Eshowe. Despite the reservations of the Native Affairs Department, permission was granted for Solomon to meet him. Solomon orchestrated an extraordinary display of Zulu unity - perhaps the last true gathering of the 'old Zulu order' - and some 60,000 Zulus attended, many of them in traditional dress. Solomon carefully and publicly included among his entourage representatives of groups who had fought against the Royal House in the bitter years since 1879, notably Bokwe, the son of Zibhebhu of the Mandlakazi. Solomon, wearing a British style uniform trimmed with leopard-skin, formally presented Prince Edward with gifts before the assembled crowd before the two retired for a private meeting. The contents of that meeting were never officially revealed but it was firmly

believed among Solomon's supporters that Solomon and Edward had met as 'king' to 'king', and that privately Edward had acknowledged Solomon's position as the hereditary ruler of his people.

Yet, far from improving his standing in the eyes of the Union Government, such rumours merely increased official suspicion of Solomon and of the emotional pull of the Royal House. The Union Government refused adamantly to confer the title 'king' while the Inkatha movement began to lose ground under the divided agendas of its founders and in the face of radical opposition from the growing number of Zulus living in urban areas, away from the pull of traditional authority. Solomon gave way to occasional bouts of irrational or confrontational behaviour born of his frustration, and of his increasing dependence on drink. His personal style, always flamboyant and designed to present an impressive image to the world - he enjoyed smart cars and employed a white chauffeur - outstripped his government stipend and led him into increasing debt. In 1930 Inkatha collapsed amid accusations of financial mismanagement.

Among Inkatha's last acts was a proposal to erect a monument to King Shaka on the site of his grave at KwaDukuza (Stanger). With no other monuments to Zulu heroes, or even the dead of 1879, then in existence the project soon achieved an important emotional significance to a wide cross-section of Zulu society, both traditional, Christian and urban. Money was raised by public subscription and such was the enthusiasm that further monuments to other Zulu kings were commissioned from the stonemasons. By the time the monument was built in 1932, however, there were complaints of financial mismanagement and the other monuments were never completed. The authorities agreed to allow an unveiling ceremony for the Shaka monument, but only once they were satisfied that the bills had been properly paid. As a result it stood swathed in sheeting for years until finally exposed by the elements - it was not officially unveiled until September 1954, during the reign of Solomon's successor, King Cyprian.

Solomon himself - who had backed the Shaka project - died at the height of the fiasco. Despite his increasingly poor health he had continued his policy of reconciling former enemies within the kingdom and in early March 1933 he had gone to visit the home in northern Zululand of Chief Kambi kaHamu of the Ngenetsheni in an attempt to resolve a dispute between two of Kambi's sons. Here he suddenly collapsed and died.

Solomon was scarcely forty years old and his demise, like that of his father Dinuzulu, had undoubtedly been hastened by his dependence on alcohol. His body was taken to Nongoma, in the heart of the Usuthu district, and accorded a royal burial. Throughout his life he had struggled to achieve official recognition for the role of the Zulu monarchy, and while his failure to do so was undoubtedly a bitter disappointment, he had nonetheless managed to heal many deep fissures and old wounds engendered as a result of the British conquest in 1879.

At the time of his death Solomon's sons were all minors. His senior son Cyprian, by his first wife, Chistina Sibiya, had been born in August 1924 and was just nine years old and a regent, Dinuzulu's son Prince Arthur Edward Mshiyeni, was appointed until Cyprian and other princes became of age. Under Mshiyeni's strict eye Cyprian grew up among companions of his own age - including Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, whose mother, Princess Magogo, was a daughter of Dinuzulu, and whose father, Mathole, was chief of the Buthelezi. As Cyprian grew to adulthood, so too did his brothers, two of whom emerged at various times to challenge his claim to the throne. In 1944 a special commission was established to resolve the issue and, after Queen Christina produced a letter written by Solomon in 1930 nominating Cyprian as his heir, the succession was resolved in his favour. In 1948 Cyprian was formally installed as chief of the Usuthu.

South Africa had, of course, changed hugely in the two decades since Solomon's death. In 1948 - the year of Cyprian's accession - the Nationalist Party had triumphed in the national elections, ushering in an age of rigid racial segregation and white supremacy. Under the Bantu Authorities Act of 1952 the existing limited means by which black South Africans could influence parliamentary affairs were abolished and, instead, a series of measures were introduced to confine African influence to rural areas designated according to supposed 'tribal

origin'. This was the so-called doctrine of apartheid, or 'separateness'. In pursuit of the ideological belief that black South Africans were comprised of distinct immutable groups, and that their culture and traditions made them innately inferior to white South Africans, the Nationalist Government denied the majority population any form of democratic representation but recognised instead only 'traditional' leaders, many of whom they rendered compliant by their dependence on state recognition and funding. Although the planned 'Homeland' of KwaZulu had no territorial integrity - it consisted of many scattered segments, some of them based on the old colonial reserves or 'locations', whilst the most economically profitable areas in between remained in the hands of white farmers or industrialists - the concept of a Zulu monarch was essential to the fiction that it was a separate viable state. In 1952, in accordance with this ideological approach, Cyprian was finally officially recognised as King by the Government - the first of his family since Cetshwayo to be so.

For the most part the Zulu leadership in the 1960s sought to oppose the imposition of the apartheid system from within the structures it established, a position which earned them the criticism of more radical elements within the country but which nonetheless frustrated and exasperated the Nationalist Government. King Cyprian himself continued to encourage an adherence to Zulu custom but he was a more retiring personality than his father and he was plagued with ill health - like Dinuzulu and Solomon before him he drank too much and by the time he was forty he was suffering from both diabetes and cirrhosis of the liver. He died in September 1968.

His successor, Goodwill Zwelithini, was born in July 1948 in Nongoma. As he was just eighteen when his father died, a regent was appointed until he had finished his education and married. Zwelithini married his first wife, Sibongile Dlamini, in December 1969 and the royal family made arrangement for his installation shortly afterwards. A traditional coronation took place at Nongoma on 4 December 1971. It was attended by 20,000 Zulu people and climaxed in the traditional bull-killing ceremony, in which Zwelithini himself delivered the coup de grace after a black bull was wrestled to the ground by young 'warriors'.

Zwelithini's early reign, like those of his forebears, was characterised by a struggle to find a role in a hostile political landscape. As the Nationalist Government pressed forward with plans to make the Homelands - including KwaZulu - notionally independent, it offered executive powers to traditional leaders such as Zwelithini. This move was opposed by Zulu political leaders such as Chief Buthelezi who saw it as part of Pretoria's attempt to manipulate the Zulu monarchy, and who advocated a constitutional role for the Royal House instead. This was the start of an uneasy relationship between the King and Chief Buthelezi which intensified as Buthelezi became increasingly involved in KwaZulu politics. In 1975 Buthelezi founded a new version of Inkatha - later the Inkatha Freedom Party - inspired by King Solomon's attempts to focus Zulu unity in the face of outside intimidation. King Goodwill himself has moved between supporting Inkatha and distancing himself from it, and has always claimed to be king of all Zulus, whatever their political allegiance.

With the collapse of apartheid in the early 1990s and the emergence of a democratic South Africa, King Goodwill has had more freedom to explore his role as a focus for Zulu culture, tradition and history. He has revived a number of national ceremonies, some of which it had not been possible to perform properly since the nineteenth-century, including the First Fruits ceremony, the Reed Dance and the Bull Killing Ceremony, and he has used his position as a platform to call - sometimes controversially - for a return to Zulu traditional values.

Bibliography and further reading;

A useful - if uncritical - study of the Zulu Royal House from King Shaka to King Goodwill can be found in Charles Ballard's 'The House of Shaka' (Durban, 1988). John Laband's seminal 'Rope of Sand' (Johannesburg, 1995; republished in 1997 in the UK under the title 'The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom') provides a detailed account of Dinuzulu's warrior youth in the 1880s, while Jeff Guy's 'Remembering the Rebellion' (Scottsville, 2006) assesses his involvement in the 1906 Rebellion. Nicholas Cope's 'To Bind The Nation'

(Pietermaritzburg 1993) provides not only an insightful biography of that most intriguing of the later kings, Solomon, but also a telling exploration of the pressures on Zulu society at that transitional time. Peter Becker's 'Trails and Tribes in Southern Africa' (London, 1975) covers the last days of King Cyprian and provides a photo-essay of the coronation of the present monarch, King Goodwill. An authorised biography of King Goodwill, 'King of Goodwill', was published in 2003.