

ROOF WETTING OF H.M. THE KING'S NEW PALACE

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Mr Master of Ceremonies; Your Majesty and Members of the Royal family; Mr Ian Alexander and his colleagues; Honourable colleagues in the KwaZulu Cabinet and Honourable Deputy-Ministers; the Secretary of the Department of Works; the Secretary-General and other Secretaries of Departments and other officials present; ladies and gentlemen.

This is a truly historic occasion, for today we are gathered here for the roof wetting of our King's new palace. But we are not here merely to attend the roof wetting ceremony of his new palace but to celebrate the return of the Zulu King to Ondini. It was here at Ondini that my nephew and our King Goodwill's great-grandfather King Cetshwayo, built his Royal Residence Ondini.

Ondini was therefore a place of Kings. It is a historic site for the Zulu people. It is etched in the memory and history of the Zulu people. But while Ondini was a place for Kings it was also a place of sorrow. It was here that the British razed King Cetshwayo's palace to the ground.

The King's Royal Residence at Ondini was razed to the ground at the time of the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879. When the King returned from exile "Ondini" was rebuilt on another site (Undi-Olumahlikhlikana) only to be burned down by Mandlakazi Regiments when the King was again attacked. This was the occasion on which the King himself sustained a wound in his thigh, and when the Who-is-Who of the Zulu Nobility was killed by the same Mandlakazi Regiments.

It was after the Battle of Ulundi, that the British vowed that they would destroy the Zulu people forever. Because they knew the Zulu King was revered by his people, they decided that there were to be no more Zulu Kings. King Cetshwayo was to be the last Zulu King.

But as you can see, our present King is living proof that- . King Cetshwayo was not the last Zulu King. He provides evidence that his lineage has survived in spite of all the efforts to destroy it. He is a direct descendant of a great leader of the Zulu people. While the British might have conquered the Zulu people in 1879, today the Zulu people have survived and prospered. We have risen as a people out of the ashes of Ondini, to continue to be the proud and noble people that we are today.

In building this palace here, we have proved that while we might have lost the battle we have won the war, which only began in 1879. Thus Ondini stands testimony to our struggle to remain a proud people - a people who fought the greatest army in the world for the right to rule over ourselves; a people who will continue to fight until our enemies know that we will not give in. Because Ondini is a symbol of our resistance it is therefore only fitting that, ' our King's new palace be built here, in the KwaZulu capital. King Mpande ruled the Zulu Nation from KwaNodwengu just across from here for more than 40 years.

Today you see the beginning of a new palace. This palace will however be very different from that of King Cetshwayo. Let us remind ourselves of how our great King Cetshwayo lived here all those years ago. Let us remind ourselves of what King Cetshwayo's palace looked like. During his rule, Ondini was graced by 1000 to 1500 izindlu. This settlement was larger than most others and served to illustrate just how important Ondini was to the King.

Like all Amakhanda or military barracks, Ondini was modelled on the traditional circular or elliptical umuzi. At the upper end was the Royal enclosure where the King lived with his Queens and entourage. The King was the only male who slept in the isigodlo at night, and the whole area was treated with great reverence. From it on either side there were two wings of the great place (uhlangothi) in which the warriors were housed and which surrounded the large parade ground.

It was on the parade ground that the King inspected his men and performed the various ceremonies and rituals which were close to him. At the upper end of the parade ground was a small cattle enclosure sacred to the King. Behind the isigodlo (or seraglio) and outside the main complex, stood two small homesteads where the Royal women bore their children, and where the King's grain and milk cattle were kept.

This great occasion would not be complete without me telling you of the great battles that took place between the regiments of King Cetshwayo (who was my maternal great grandfather) and whose Commander-in-Chief was my paternal great grandfather and Prime Minister, Mnyamana Buthelezi, and Her Majesty Queen Victoria's armies led by Lord Chelmsford.

As you know, the British suffered a great defeat at the hands of the Zulu nation. Nowhere in all of Britain's colonies around the world had they suffered so great a defeat. It was after this defeat that Lord Chelmsford decided that he was going all out to conquer the Zulu nation. It was in this light that Ondini assumed great significance for both leaders.

For the Zulu nation Ondini was of great importance because it was the base of the Zulu Kingdom. It held pride of place amongst the amakhanda. Lord Chelmsford knew therefore that if he were to destroy Ondini, that it would be a great blow to the Zulu people. The destruction of Ondini would represent a symbolic crushing of the Zulu nation. It would represent a crushing blow to the spirit and resolve of the King's amabutho. It would demoralise the mighty Zulu nation. It would demonstrate what Sir Bartle Frere had set out to do - i.e. 'to destroy Zulu power' as he said, 'once and for all'

But it was not only because Ondini held great symbolic value that Lord Chelmsford wanted it razed to the ground. The amakhanda here was not only the centre of the King's authority and rallying points for the amabutho, but this also was the depot for supplies for the people. Lord Chelmsford knew that the destruction of each ikhanda, leading to that of Ondini, would destroy our King's ability to resist his attack. This would make it impossible for the King to rule over his people.

But Lord Chelmsford knew that even though he had the advantage of guns and other sophisticated weapons, the Zulus would not be easily beaten. We are a proud people and will fight to the end. We are born warriors and are ready to fight and die for a noble cause. For this we must be proud and grateful. This Lord Chelmsford knew; he knew only too well that the Zulu people would not be easy targets. This was driven home to him at the Battle of Isandlwana where the British suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Zulu nation.

But Lord Chelmsford also knew that the only way to defeat the Zulu nation was through our stomachs. He therefore set about destroying the imizi and the grain stores as well as capturing all the cattle. It was with this intention in mind that he decided to raze Ondini to the ground.

You will remember that after the defeat of King Cetshwayo, the Natal Colony government and the British Generals, after consultation with the Crown, . resolved to divide KwaZulu up into 13 pieces. If that was not bad enough they appointed a Kinglets who would be obedient to the Crown to rule over the people. This led to a civil war where Zulu fought Zulu. It was a sad moment in our history.

By Zulu fighting Zulu . we were playing into* the hands of the British. This enabled them to eventually annex Natal/KwaZulu. The British then set up magistratures. They allowed white farmers to penetrate deep into Zululand. And to add insult to injury Zulus could only live in Tribal Reserves. This crowded our people into overpopulated and barren areas where we could not live the life which our forefathers led.

The fate of King Cetshwayo was no less ignominious. You will remember how he was arrested and imprisoned first in the dungeons of the Fort at Cape Town and then later kept in exile on a farm in the Cape.

.The might of the Zulu army was therefore destroyed with the defeat of King Cetshwayo. The throne was dismembered and the traditional leadership of the Zulu nation was disrupted. We became a beggar nation.

But I am not here to commemorate the war between the Zulu nation and the British. I am not here to mourn about a sad chapter in our history. Today is a joyous occasion. It is an occasion which like the destruction of "Ondini, is significant. The building of the King's new palace represents for me a new beginning. Hopefully it will represent the building of bridges between our divided communities. Hopefully it will represent to our troubled people the symbol of hope and peace.

By Zulu fighting Zulu during and after the Anglo-Zulu war, we played into the hands of the British.. Today Zulu is still fighting Zulu. This must stop. By killing each other we are playing into the hands of our enemies.

Our enemies want to dismantle KwaZulu and destroy the Zulu kingdom. We must not allow this to happen. By joining together and facing the threat together we will overcome their plans.

It was my strong belief that the Zulu nation did not want to be ruled by others, that drove me to set up the Buthelezi Commission, and to give the go ahead for the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba. It was this belief that led the KwaZulu government to adopt a federal constitution for the State of KwaZulu/Natal last year.

It was my belief that federalism would allow us to realise our right of self determination that drove me to demand a federal system of government for Natal/Kwazulu. We did not want to be ruled by the British. We did not want to be ruled by the Nationalists. We do not want to be ruled by anyone else who wins the election. I can with confidence speak for the Zulu nation when I say we want to rule over ourselves and do not want to be ruled over by anybody else. If we are not allowed to rule over ourselves, then I am sure that the Zulus as I know them, will be quite prepared to fight for that right as they have done in the past, whether it was with the British or the National Party.

But if we are to fight those who want to rule over us, if we are to prevent the present collusion between the ANC and the National Party from destroying the Kingdom of KwaZulu, then we must join together. Therefore let us return to our homes and tell our people that we must forget about our hate and intolerance for each other. We must together help build the Zulu nation to be the proud people that they once were. And, together with other South Africans, build a new and prosperous South Africa.

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