

7? ' 3 WW-J'v 1;
9' VRV ANNIVeRSARY ISSUE
Why did lOc
Dingane
kill
Retief?
& other extracts
FROM HIS HISTORY NOTEBOOKS

From
LIONEL FORMAN'S
History Notebooks
CHAPTER ' PAGE
Lionel Forman Preface
Why Did Dingane Kill Retief ? 1
Treason Trials in South
African History 10
The Coloured People -
Political Pioneers 19
Background to the First
African Organisations 27
An Anniversary Booklet

LIONEL FORMAN

At the time of his death on October 19, 1959, Lionel Forman had accumulated much material for the writing of a History of the Peoples of South Africa. From the articles printed in this Anniversary Booklet, his intention to tell the story of all the peoples of South Africa emerges. In particular he wished to record the rich social and political history of the African, Coloured and Indian peoples, giving their rightful place to the past personalities, events and movements normally ignored or falsely depicted in South African history books.

Early in 1959, Professor Thompson, under whom Forman was studying at the University of Cape Town for his Doctorate on the Growth and Development of Non-European Political Organisations, remarked: "He is in such a hurry, he wants to work so quickly," This was so. It was his sense of urgency which enabled him in a short time to illuminate many aspects of the hidden history of South Africa. Much of the material he searched for, found and collated appeared under his name in articles during his lifetime. He published one booklet on early political organisations, and another, on the relations between Black and White after the arrival of Van Riebeeck was published posthumously.

His drive towards, and preoccupation with the achievement of a better life for all the peoples of South Africa enabled him to do this work in addition to putting in a full day in his legal practice, working as a Journalist and assistant editor of the weekly (now banned) "New Age" and pursuing his studies at the University.

It is to be hoped that this work will be carried on by other young people whose imagination is stirred by a forgotten and often deliberately buried past studded with significant and colourful personalities, organisations and even whole movements that in their time had such profound influence on the history of South Africa.

t t i

N..-

vxqs-HY BUT.) EENGANE K ILL
RETIEF '2

EVERY year, on December 16, there is a spate of claptrap from pulpits and platforms and press about how, at Blood River, on December 16, 1838, the forces of civilisation and of light, the messengers of God Himself, destroyed the power of barbarism and darkness in the shape of Dingane's Zulus.

It might be a good idea to arm ourselves in advance against being submerged in the wave of emotion by taking a look at the facts.

It is one of the facts of history up to now that in the relations between tribes or nations, when two neighbouring peoples have had an urgent economic need for something of which there was not sufficient for both, the stronger community has seized by force that thing from the weaker.

It is only when man obtains rational control of his society, and is able by his use of science to satisfy the economic wants of all, that were and all the horrors that go with them will cease to be the stepping-stones of history.

South Africa's history is no different from that of other countries in this respect. In the Quest-for good land for men and cattle, the strong dispossess the weak. They did it by trickery if possible; by brute force if necessary. And those who were defending their land used the same weapons. While the Europeans were establishing their rule in the Cape, the Free State and parts of the Transvaal, the Zulus were establishing theirs in Natal.

ZULU AND ENGLISH MEET

When the first Europeans - Englishmen 7 came in 182H the Zulus gave them permission to settle and establish Port Natal (now Durban). In 1828, the Zulus, disturbed by the behaviour of the Whites, sent some of their men, including a chief, Jacob, to the Cape to study the way the Europeans had behaved towards the Xhosas there.

Jacob reported:

"At first the white people came and took part of their land, then they encroached and drove them farther back...they built houses (missions) among them for the purpose of subduing them by witchcraft...the soldiers frequently asked what sort of country the Zulus had...and said 'We shall soon be after you.' They would then build a fort, when more would come and demand landJ who would also build houses and subdue the Zulus and keep driving them farther back, as they had driven the frontier tribes."

In spite of this explicit (and prophetic) warning, Dingane, who succeeded Tshaka in 1828, took no hostile action against Port Natal, although the white settlers, numbering until 1836, no more than thirty people, were completely at his mercy.

Three times his councillors recommended the destruction of the settlement, and three times Dingane vetoed the proposal.

He did not molest them even though he had cause for resentment because the Port Natal White

-3...

settlement, happy to have black labour and black allies, was proving a haven for the Zulu tribe's outlaws and political refugees. The white settlers were treated as chiefs by no fewer than 3,000 of these people and in the words of Eheal, "exercised power even of death over their followers."

1 "The European settlement" noted the White settler ? H,F. Fynn, "was objectionable not only because it 'was an imperium imperio (i.e. a kingdom within a kingdom) but because it harboured many that could be assumed to have vowed everlasting vengeance... and were consequently plotting to bring about his downfall." In addition the settlers were actively fomenting tribal feuds and disunity.

Alarmed at the possibility that Dingane might attack them, the Europeans held a meeting and agreed to approach the Zulu ruler and give him an assurance that they would not be attacked?

PREDECTION

Dihgahe willingly entered into a pact with the Europeans in April 1835; ea ing at the time, JI will keep n; w rd; but I know that the White people will be the first to break the treatyoh "As the despot himself correctly was indeed broken anl suroricinw7v

__ _; I.

surmised.\$ci

:gocng3

tfnn.oomments;

Vlt

iwo white traders, Laieteid and Sneloer, were, withw in two months, haul 5:11 work in the Zulu 'iiezwfgtory smuggling Zulu women through to Port Natal: where there was a great demand for them among the Europeans. In spite of these infringements, the general effect of the treaty satisfied Dingane.

_ h _

A year of close co-operation between the Africans and the Europeans followed. When in 1836, Dingane launched an attack on the Swazis, one of the colonists noted:

"The whole of the British inhabitants with three or four exceptions have voluntarily joined the Zulu army and by means of their firearms killed and wounded a number of his enemies for which they have been handsomely rewarded with the cattle they have captured," (Those who cite Dingane's wars against defenceless tribes as examples of African savagery should be reminded that Europeans With their guns formed the spearhead of the Zulue in at least one such attack. Savagery knows no colour bar.)

BOERS ARRIVE

In 1837 the Voortrekkers arrived in Natal.

Dingane saw them in a completely different light from the men at Port Natal. He saw the Boers as a threat to the Zulu people. He believed that they would seize the Zulu land as they had seized the land of other people before.

Nevertheless, his first-deelings with the Voortrekkers were friendly. On October 31, 1837, he wrote to the Voortrekker leader Piet Retief telling him that he had discovered another chief in possession of a number of sheep belonging to the Beers. He returned the sheep together with the letter. Retief followed this up with a letter asking Dingane for a grant of land,

"Our country is small, and we, becoming numerous, can no longer subsist there," he wrote.

Dingane replied on November 8, saying that he was

considering the request, but charging the Boers with the theft of his cattle; "A great number of cattle have been stolen from my country by a people having clothes, horses and guns. The Zulus assure me that these people were Boers...the Zulus now wish to know what they have to expect.

"My greatest wish, therefore, is that you should show that you are not guilty of the matters alleged against you, for at present I believe that you are. My request is that you recover my cattle and restore them to me, and if possible, hand over the thief to me. That proceeding will remove my suspicions, and will give you reason to know that I am your friend: then I shall accede to your request. I shall give you a sufficient number of people to drive the cattle that you may recapture for me: and they will remove all the suspicions that the stolen cattle are in the hands of the Dutch."

Retief assured Dingane that it had not been the Boers, but a Basutho chief, Sikonyela, who had stolen the cattle.

Whether or not Sikonyela had stolen any cattle, no one knows. But Retief and his men, accompanied by some Zulus, without further ado, made for his kraal. They were already acquainted with Sikonyela, for he and his tribe had helped to show the Voortrekkers the best way to get their wagons from the Highveld through the difficult Drakensberg mountains into Natal.

RETIEFIS TRICKII

Retief received a hospitable welcome, and in return, offered to demonstrate to the chief a pair of handcuffs he had with him;

Sikonyela was kept bound for three days until his

people had rounded up a sufficient number of cattle for Retief. The helpless tribesmen, according to an account by Dr. John Philip, asked Retief indignantly: "Is this the way you treat the Chiefs of the people ?" ...

"Being answered in the affirmative, with coarse and offensive expressions, he asked, 'Would you treat Dingane in this way were he in your power? '

"To this they made reply: 'We shall treat Dingane in the same manner should we find him to be a rogue.l "

Unknown to Retief, there was one of Dingane's councillors among the Zulus with him.

"From that moment," said Philip's informant, "Dingane's councillor became restless and uneasy, and as soon as it became dark he disappeared, proceeded with speed to Dingane, related his story, along with his own impression; and the chief taking fear from his councillor, made his preparations for the destruction of Retief and his party before their arrival with the cattle."

REASONS FOR FEAR

Though this may have been the deciding factor, other facts have also been cited as confirming the view of Dingane's councillors that the Boers were a very real danger to Zulu security.

The Zulus had heard from Retief's own lips how the Boers had defeated the Matabele and massacred them - and the Matabele were the kinsmen of the Zulus.

And according to the short biography of Dingane_

in Mveli Skota's "African Yearly Register", I Ion more than two occasions reports were brought to him by his spies that the Boers were seen by night on all sides of the village in which the Royal Kraal was situated."

It is also suggested that the Zulus who accompanied Retief on his raid on Sikonyela reported back that the cattle seized there were not those which had been stolen from the Zulus, thus confirming Dingane in the belief that the cattle had been stolen by the Boers, Theal records too, that there were very strong rumour: at the time that one Of the British settlers had influenced Dingane in his decision to kill Retief by telling him that the Boer claim that they were short of land was patently untrue, for they had left good land in the Cape, that they were deserters from British rule, and that the British therefore, would not view their punishment with disfavour.

When Retief and his sixty followers came to Dinganeis Kraal with the cattle, the Chief, who now, in his own words, "had no doubt that they were enemies masQueraw ding under the guise of friendship, " tricked them with professions of friendship, just as they had tricked Sikonyela, and had them killed on the spot. Then immediately the Zulus attacked all the Boer camps in Natal, killing on the Boers! estimates, not fewer than 375 white men, women and children and two hundred of their African servants.

WORST DISASTER

This was by far, very far the worst disaster the whites had ever suffered at the hands of the blacks in South Africa, The Boers and Britons immediately united to counteru attack. Thirty Durban settlers led an army of ove

— 9 —

1,000 Africans against Dingane, while 350 Boers mounted and armed with muskets attacked from Pietermaritzburg.

The Zulus won a series of extremely costly victories and on April 26, the missionary Owen recorded "the whole country is at their disposal."

But Dingane did not follow up this victory. The writer Mnguni says "With Port Natal at his mercy and with the enemy taking to the boats Dingane returned to his capital. This major blunder was due to the fact that he thought still in terms of tribal war ethics. He had shown his superiority and he thought the enemy would now live in peace with him; so he did not extend his sway over the Boers. The British force he had routed, The Boer-British front exploited Dingane's politeness, regrouped, and under Pretorius, killed 3,000 Zulu soldiers at Blood River."

DECEMBER 16

That was on December 16 which the Afrikaners now celebrate as a public holiday to mark what they have been taught by Nationalist historians to believe was the "decisive" battle between white and black.

In fact however, Blood River was by no means a decisive battle. The Afrikaners lacked the military power of the British, to whom must go the dubious honour of having won the engagements which smashed the main tribes, including the Zulus.

It was only in January 1840, when Dingane's treacherous brother Mpande, placed himself at

the head of a number of dissident Zulu tribes, united with the Boers, and led an army of nearly 6,000 Zulu? spearheaded by M00 mounted Boers against Dingane, that the latter was defeated and forced to flee.

The Zulu military machine remained relatively intact but Mpande became a puppet chief in the service of the Boers.

But Just as there was nowhere a black man could go and be left in peace by the white man, so there was nowher' a Boer could go and be left in peace by the British. Within a few months of the establishment of the Boer Republic in Natal, reports reached London that there was valuable surface coal in the territory. At the same time awareness was growing of the value of Port Natal as a naval base.

In 1842, after a short battle with the Boers, the British took over;

For the Zulus it changed nothing.

e t e e

The facts upon which this article is based come from:

McMillan: Bantu Boer and Briton.

Bird : Annals of Natal.

Fynn : Diaries.

Gardiner: Journey to the Zoolu Country.

Skota : African Yearly Register.

Owen : Diaries.

Mnguni : Three Hundred Years.

Theal : The Boers in South Africa,

(December, 1958)

.. 10 . _

t" 3 x "- /"'i E "THE p A C . e- .r f; '

I RE/Abe-N MUM N 3A. HMOHY

A GOOD way of getting to know the details of almost every important stage in the modern history of South Africa would be by a study of the records of her treason trials.

The period of white colonisation and the seizure of the territory occupied by the Africans; the grievances of the Cape Dutch settlers which culminated in the Great Trek; the Boer War and the two world wars; the great 1922 clash between the white workers and the Chamber of Mines and Government - each of these historic landmarks is fully documented in the treason trials which have accompanied it. And in almost every case posterity has taken a different View of the guilt of the accused people than the view taken by the special court judges.

e t e

R. V. MAKANA

In 1818, in spite of frequent solemn declarations by the British in the Cape Colony that the Fish River was the legal boundary of the colony, white settlers crossed the river in force and attacked the Xhosa.

Aided by a renegade Xhosa chief, Gaika, the British burned down all the villages near the river and seized 23,000 cattle. Then after sharing the loot with Gaika and his followers, they returned across the river, leaving Gaika behind as a "gobd boy" chief.

Led by Makana and Ndlambe the Xhosa rose against Gaika, decisively defeated him and his followers, and marched across the Fish River

"following the tracks of our cattle."

Enraged by the burning of their homes and the theft of their wealth, the Xhosa warriors chanted ? song expressing their aim:

"To chase the White men from the earth

And drive them to the sea

The sea that vomited them up at us."

Makana's troops attacked Grahamstown.

This was treason.

Makana was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. A year later he was drowned leading a group of prisoners in a bold attempt to escape.

R. v. DINIZULU

Dinizulu, son of Cetewayo, descendant of Tshak'w has the distinction of being the only South Africa: ever to have been convicted of treason twicg.

In 1887 the British seized the best of the territory occupied by the Zulus and handed it over to white farmers. Dinizulu resisted.

With three others Dinizulu was placed on trial

"During the trial very interesting variations Of'mne famed laws of English Justice were introduced", com? ments Oliver Walker in "Proud Zulu". "Wholesale hasuu say evidence was admitted,"

Harry Escome, who was later to be Prime Ministcfr of Natal described the trial as "a crowning act of persecution." Not satisfied with robbing Dinizulw his land, the robbers put him in Jail for defending his property.

Again, a song was a feature of the trial. Like

Detective-Sergeant von Papendorff reciting "Down by the Riverside" in the Drill Hall, (a reference to the 1956 Treason Trial - ed?) one of his embarrassed forerunners had the task of telling the court that the Zulus were singing a parody of the Natal national anthem "There is a Green Hill Far Away" to these words:

"There is a big jail far away,
Outside the city wall
Where our dear Chief is locked up
Who is ready to die for us all."

As the chief's ten-year sentence was pronounced a voice at the back of the court began to boom out a song of praise to Dinizulu :

"You who are like the rays of the sun, _
You who anticipated the sun before it rose...I
Swiftly the praisemaker was driven out at
bayonet-point by a hated Nonqgai - a Zulu
policeman.

BAMBATA AND DINIZULU

Thirty years later, came the Zulu poll tax rebellion of 1906 which held up for many years the Government's plan to extract poll tax from the people. The rebellion, led by Chief Bambata, was bloodily crushed after a number of bitter battles. Bambata was killed. And Dinizulu was charged with high treason, public violence, sedition, rebellion and homicide.

The chief had not in actual fact played a very heroic part. He had publicly protested his loyalty to the government and declared that he

h 13 _

was prepared to assist in suppressing the revolt.
But he had had the courage to hi de BrmUacoTo
wife ehd childrerL for a full year and had a(tuelly
hidden Bambate himself for a shorlLtime whj.le the
soldiers were looking fol him

,This was treason.

After a campaign led by Bishop Colenso of Natal
to save Dinizulu from certain death at the hands of
a Natal Court, he was taken to the Cape and trje&
there. The Special Court sentenced him to four year
end a GoVerhment Blue Book shows that after an
anxious correspondence with Whitehall it was de'Llide
by the authorities to treat him as a White prsrnner
with a cot, sthe and European diet.

R. v. THE SLAGTERTS NEK REBELS

The grievances of' the Dutch set llers al Llle
Cape against the British policy aimed at wlpunL out
their Culture and language and are fully remee.Led
in the trial record of the participants of t? e rebel
lion of 1815.

This is the eargiest treason trial of which I
have been able to find the complete record - a huge
1,000 page volume.

The origin of the rebellion is to be found in
the bitterness of the Cape Dutch _settlers against
the British Government; all the reasons which twent
years later gave rise to the Great Trek are here
revealed. - , 1

Because part.of the grievances arose Of opr-'
eition to a more enlightened policy towards the Non
Whites, part of one's sympathies lie with the Gove3.m

-ll_L-

ment. But inasmuch as the rebels were pitted against the arrogant imperialist policy aimed at crushing their language and culture, they too had right on their side

l v

. Today the Slagter's Nkomo rebels are African heroes, enshrined in Nationalist Party folklore and it is instructive therefore to notice that the rebels, in their hatred of the British were Erepare to ally themselves with -u-ucu...-q.-a.

the Africans in their struggle deheerhows, in the words of the pingeurar that the rebels sent a message to the Xhosa of Gaika "in order to request help JIQ support in the pro-j.3cled rebellion against the 7 ctrs troops, and to entice their aegis with promises, not only of such trifles as tiesetbelbarlevlere fond 01, but 8'180 of the battle both 01 the troops and peaceable 1h teams) and finally the District of the Zuuzzt xpw which the ei'irL'Lere Deen 61.1ven new fun; ya ;3 ago with so mL7Ch the euDLe 31nd expeue "

r

r

(l

f.

L,

LI.

u')

8 W619 (.951 ;L)I'1

Unfortunately for the Dutch rebels, (1113, 13 we have already seen, was a Government man, he declined to join in and told the rebels law comically; "You fight if you want to. Then he warned the GOVERNMENT, (M ;L W mje ht -well have been a little different if the rebels had it and not a Gaika in power,) battle the Sialierie Nah rebels length; eeluwrvly and 4thei;v six Ah a nice little 31en1 tge hanged out the court creezed he made fest around the neLzL to

.. 15 -

the gallows and exposed to the public view, and together with the other prisoners, to witness the execution; "

The gallows broke under the weight of the six men, so they were lifted up and hanged again, one by one.

THE REFORM COMMITTEE

The full background to the Boer War is to be found in the records of the trial for treason of Sir Lionel Phillips and other members of the Reform Committee which plotted on behalf of Britain and the Chamber of Mines, the overthrow of the Transvaal Republic.

Together with Cecil Rhodes these men planned and organised the Jameson Raid, which, had it not proved a farce, would have saved the British the trouble of the far more expensive piece of imperialist aggression the Boer War. .

This was certainly treason.

But millionaires don't hang, Though sentenced to death, Sir Lionel and his friends were released on the payment of heavy fines.

JOPIE FOURIE

Jopie Fourie was no millionaire, and he hanged the only man to die for treason since Union.

Fourie had some small understanding, as did many Afrikaner nationalists at the time, that South Africa's troubles were caused by foreign capitalism

Pointing to the Pretoria Club, headquarters of the local mine magnates, he is reported by his official Nationalist biographer as sayingw
"There, yes there, the main laws of our country are cooked up in consultation with the capitalists."
Jopie Fourie still wanted to continue fighting the Boer War a full twelve years after his country's defeat. He saw the outbreak of the First World War as the opportunity to break free of Smuts' Government, which, he believed, was betraying his country to foreign imperialism by its alliance with Britain in the war against. Germany. 80 he took up arms against Smuts.

This was treason,
And Fourie Was tried, sentenced and hanged.
Today, like the men of Slagteris Nek, he is a Nationalist hero.

THE BAND STRIKE

The story of the struggle of the White miners on the Rand against the Chamber of Mines and the whole power of the State can be found in the full records of the trial for treason of two of the workers' leaders, Erasmus and Viljoen.
The strike was an epic of class battle - between the Chamber of Mines and the Smuts Government on the one hand and the White Mine Workers - betrayed by the right-wing trade union leadership, on the other. But it was a battle in which admiration of the strikers' heroism is tempered by amazement at the main slogan upon which the fight was based: "Workers of the World, Unite and Fight for a White South Africa,"

_. 17: _

The Appellate Division decisions in Erasmus and Viljoen's cases, incidentally, are the main decision in our law defining treason, and if R. v. Luthuli goes to trial we shall hear R. v. Erasmus and R. v. Viljoen 1923 A. D. quoted time and again. (Written in 1957 - ed.)

ROBEY LEIBRANDT

This man's history is too recent in our memo; to be dealt with at length. A former member of the South African Police Force, he went to Germany and liked what the Gestapo did. He joined the Nazi Army and was landed in South Africa by submarine. Here he embarked on a campaign of terror and anti-Semitism - with the aim of bringing our country into the Nazi empire.

This too was treason.

The Nationalists let Robey Leibbrandt loose as soon as they got into power.

R. v. LUTHULI AND 155 OTHERS

This is the largest trial for treason our country has ever known and the first time that Black men and White men, Afrikaner and non-Afrikaner, have stood together as co-accused. And like the previous trials in our history it marks a new stage in South Africa's development. History will judge whether, like the Slegter

_ 18 _

Nek trial it involves freedom from tyranny;
whether like the trial of Makana it involves
the assertion of national independence;
whether what Erasmus and Viljoen fought for
has its parallels in the action of the leaders
of the South African Congress of Trade Unions;
and whether, like the Zulu Chief Dinizulu,
Zulu Chief Luthuli will be found guilty of
trying to overthrow the State.

There is an echo of the freed Robey
Leibrandt in the trial too. For the defence
has declared in court that the accused will
aim to show that the trial is patterned on
the Reichstag Fire Trial model - the trial
which brought to Germany the Nazi rule
Leibrandt wanted to see in our land.

t e t

(March 19579)

Te E L L REE) f-E OPEE __1__1_

POUTQCAL P1 ANFFPK

THERE are among the South African people, huge reserves of mass support for political emancipation which have not yet been brought into the struggle, but which will inevitably be brought into it. As they come to reinforce the ranks, its strength will be doubled and redoubled.

Perhaps the greatest reservoir which is as yet almost untapped, is the million-strong, highly industrialised; highly literate, Coloured population, among whom the South African Coloured People's Organisation had begun its great task of purposeful, political organisation.

There has been a lull in militant political organisation among the Coloured people during the past years. Many of those who will yet be fine leaders have in the past diverted into the futile talk-a-lot, shout-a-lot, do-nothing politics of the Unity Movement.

This lull among the Coloured people - which has been the most important factor explaining the weakness of the entire Congress Movement in the Western Cape is all the more remarkable because the Coloured have such a remarkable tradition of pioneering militance.

The fact is that the first political organisation of the Coloured people - the African Political Organisation - 'was the pioneer of the Congress movement' They were the first political organisation of

- go _

Europeans on a national level, functioning years before the African National Congress was formed. (Sol Plaatje, one of the A. N. C.'s founders, was an active member of the Kimberley Branch of the African Political Organisation - the A.P.O. - before the A.N. C. was conceived.) And they were the first nation-wide political organisation to demand full equality for all South Africans.

t - t

Independent Coloured political activity goes back to a period as early as the 1870's. At that time the Coloured people enjoyed full political rights in the Cape, but Britain was already considering forcing confederation on the various South African communities. The Coloureds were alert to the possibility that Britain would be happy to sell their rights as the price of unity, and therefore, as an anonymous Coloured historian put it in the A.P.O.'s newspaper in 1909, "The more intelligent of the Coloured people saw that in such an event it would be necessary to safeguard their interests, or there would soon be no interests to safeguard." The confederation movement died and "the temporarily awakened activity of the few intelligent Coloured people...became extinct also. Matters went on in happy-go-lucky fashion year after year, until it really seemed that political thought was not only dead, but had been buried so deeply that resurrection was practically impossible, But that was not so."

The end of the Anglo-Boer war of 1899 -1902

brought new ideas of federation and new threats. As a result, in the opening months of 1902 a group of Coloured leaders formed the African Political Organisation in Cape Town. The President was W. Collins, the Secretary, P. Eckstein. Soon there were branches in Johannesburg, Graaff-Reinet, Cradock, Beaufort West and several other towns in the Western Province. A conference was called, and it elected Matt. J. Fredericks as Secretary; Fredericks' name is the first to stand out; a Coloured political leader of importance. He is today to be forgotten as so many others in South African history, whose lives might inspire us, are forgotten.

'The A.P.O.'s second conference was in Graaff-Reinet in April 1904. It had 30 - 40 delegates from branches all over what became the Union of South Africa.

Then there was dissension in the A.P.O. The disputes were largely personal, and the issues are today forgotten, but to save the organisation, Fredericks effected a coup d'état and assumed complete control. As a result the A.P.O. came out of its crisis stronger than before.

Fredericks and others now asked Dr. A. Abdurhaman, a member of the Cape Town Municipal Council to assume the presidency, and at a conference at Somerset East, at Easter 1905, Dr. Abdurhaman was elected President.

Abdurhaman - for all his faults - is undoubtedly one of the giants in the history of the liberation movement. After Gandhi, he stands out among the U' of the early years of this country. It is utterly

shameful that no one has yet written his biography. With the Doctor at the helm "the whole organisation seemed to throb with new energy and vitality infused into it by the President. Branches were formed, often in quite unexpected places, and the membership roll showed a most gratifyingly large increase" to use the words of the writer of the A.P.O. history in 1909.

In 1906 when the British handed power back to the Transvaal whites, leaving the Non-Europeans without any political rights, the A.P.O. put forward the demand for the vote for the Africans and Coloureds, When this was rejected as "ridiculous", the A.P.O. called at least for the vote for the Coloureds, and adopting the method pioneered by Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress, sent Dr. Abdurahman, Fredericke and its vice-president, P.J. Daniels to England to present their case to the British public.

.All the Non-European organisations persevered with the deputation type of struggle until as late as 1920. It is not correct to sneer at these deputations. In the circumstances of the times, they marked a stage of development of a militant approach, they were supported by the most advanced political leaders and strongly opposed by the Government and its stooges.

In 1907, the A.P.O. accepted an invitation to attend a joint conference of Africans and Coloureds at Queenstown in November to agree to a common attitude to the Cape elections of 1908. This was of great importance as the first serious attempt to fuse the Africans and Coloureds in one political whole.

There were about 120 delegates to the conference. The African delegates favoured support for the Unionists in the elections. The A.P.O. reserved its decision until its next conference at Indwe in January 1908 and then decided to adopt the same election policy, but only after every candidate of the Unionists had given the pledge to oppose any tampering with the political rights of the Non-Europeans.

How well organised was the A.P.O. ? Everything indicates that it reached a level of organisational stability and efficiency which has never again been reached by any of the liberatory organisations which followed, with the possible exception of the Communist Party.

. The A.P.O.'s official organ - unimaginatively titled "A.P.O." - which was published fortnightly; had 16 glossy well-printed pages, containing well-written articles, well-argued discussion, and comprehensive coverage of branch activities.

It is the news from the branches which is most impressive. Everywhere - Kimberley, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bulawayo, Worcester, Rondebosch, Goodwood, Uitenhage, Murraysburg, Knysna, Carnarvon, Stellenbosch.... A.P.O. branches were meeting, and what more, sending in full reports to the newspaper.

Perhaps this is partly a sign of a more leisurely age, but that cannot be the whole explanation. It is also a sign that the A.P.O. was functioning amazingly well and had stable, nationwide support. It

First of all, how militant was the A.P.O.

Was it a left-wing organisation ?

The answer is that the A.P.O. was - at least in its earlier years - decidedly sympathetic to socialism. Its 1908 conference met in the Socialist Hall in Buitenkant Street, Cape Town. It supported A.W. Noon, a Cape Town Municipal Councillor "a true friend of all workers of every class and creed and colour...With declared socialistic Views . And in Kimberley the A.P.O. played a conspicuous part'in the return of militant white Socialist J.F;- Trembath to the Municipal Council. This A.P.O. - Socialist friendship came to an abrupt end in 1910 when the Labour Party betrayed Socialism by adopting the white labour policy, and as a result the socialist movement and the Non-European organisations moved from friendship into a period of active hostility.

Trembath stood for Parliament as a member of the Labour Party. He refused to dissociate himself from the Labour Party's Colour Bar policy, and the A.P.O., which had backed him for so many years, threw its weight behind the Unionist candidate (roughly equivalent to the modern Liberal) who was pledged to resist any attacks on the rights of the Coloured people. Trembath Was defeated, largely as a result of the A.P.O. opposition.

The fault lay squarely with the Labour Party. This is the unbelievably vile stuff the "Worker", organ of the Labour Party wast writing about the A.P.O. :

"A.P.O., the mouthpiece of black, brown, snuff and butter, should have the seat of its pants kicked through the top of its peppercorn head...after a nigger has absorbed the

poison into his head he will reckon that the white woman is his game... The A.P.O.'s editor,...should get 25 of the best (lashes)". -

The A.P.O. leadership had a relatively advanced attitude to the class struggle. During the 1909 strike of white railway workers, the A.P.O. said of those who scabbed:

"It is impossible to conceive a more reprehensible and disreputable manner of obtaining work than by that which is called blacklegism... Let it be hoped that in seeking work men will never forget their moral obligation to their fellow-men, be they white or black."

An extract from an A.P.O. editorial, written on the approval by Britain in 1909 of the Colour Bar Act of Union will give an idea of how far advanced the A.P.O. in fact was.

"The struggle has not ended. It has Just begun. We, the Coloured and Native peoples of South Africa, have a tremendous fight before us. We have the war of wars to wage. No longer must we look to our flabby friends of Great Britain.

"Our political destiny is in our hands; and we must be prepared to fight with grim determination to succeed...

"How are we to set about it? In Our opinion there is but one Way and that is the economic method. Undoubtedly the Coloured and Native races of South Africa hold the strongest weapon ever placed in the hands of any

class The very stability, the prosperity, even the continuance for but a few days Of the economic existence of South Africa, depends on the labour market; and we are the labour market.

"It may ere long come about that the necessity will be imposed on us, not in any isolated sphere of labour, or in any particular district, but in every sphere and throughout the whole sub-oontinent, to bolster up the economic fabric of the people who refuse us oolitice al freedom That would bring the selfish White politicians to their knees.

"It would even go far to show the White manual workers the value of combination which is the only weapon whereby they will free themselfes from the shackles of that cursed wage system, which is sapping the independence of the people, weakening the national love Of honour, and increasing the severity end extent of poverty for the production of a few sordid millionaires.

These words, written almost.certainly by Dr. Abdurahman, are as true to-day as they were then, and show how far ahead of his time was this Coloured leader in his early years.
June 1958.

Mm mam THE FIRST AFRMN ORGANISAM

Moshoeshoe built the Basutho people by a process of amalgamation from a small clan into a great tribe able to withstand the attacks even of their previous all-powerful neighbours, the Zulus.

After his first clashes with the advancing Eurtu peans Moshoeshoe, according to Basutho tradition, dreamed of an even greater amalgamation - that of all the black peoples of Southern Africa, to make a united stand against the white advance.

Conditions, however, were not yet ripe for the fulfillment of such a dream. On the contrary, some of the very tribes which Moshoeshoe had hoped to well together with his own, became allies of the EurOpee and assisted in the attacks which reduced Basutho power. All over South Africa inter-tribal conflicts hastened the conquest of the Africans; and all over South Africa tribes joined with the whites in the conquest of other tribes.

But in 1870, as Moshoeshoe lay on his deathbed, the young men of Basutoland_were beginning to stream tOWards the new diamond fields at Kimberley, over two hundred miles away.

There, tribal barriers were crumbling as men from tribes spread far and wide over Southern Africa came together as Workers. Before that they had only known tribal ties. Now a new bond began to be forge - a bond cutting across the tribes.

The white men had always thought of the black:

the whites must unite to establish mastery a not merely of particular tribe but of the "natives" as a whole.

But it was not until 1870 that the Africans too began to be in a position to think of themselves, not in tribal terms, but also as one entity _ as Africans.

At Kimberley there was the first large scale manifestation of this supra-tribal unity: the unity of black men as Africans, bound together by the one great thing they had in common - their political disabilities as Africans.

-_____-
began to evolve.

This was a new political phenomenon. Within the next few years a host of new little organisations of Aigigag churches, teachers, farmers; organisations whibh cut across tribe, organisations of gfgigag churches, teachErs, farmers; and finally, political organisations aimed at the emancipation of all Africans.

t a t

KIMBERLEY

Before 1870, there had been nothing at all where Kimberley was to stand. In 1871 Kimberley's population Was estimated at 50,000, It was the second biggest town south of the Sahara, for, though most of the dwellings were tents, a town it was 1 with two churches, a neWSpaper, a hospital, a theatre, a prison, shops. More white people had gone there than had spread far and wide in the course of the Great Trek. More Africans came to town that one year than had been to town in all the years that had gone before.

-29..

The mining of diamonds at Kimberley began the transformation of South Africa from a collection of poor agricultural communities into a single industrial state.

Before that "South Africa had been an almost purely agricultural country relying on its wine, cattle and sheep, a little wheat, a few oranges, some dubious tobacco, a dwindling amount of ivory and a slowly increasing supply of wild ostrich feathers. Secondary industry there was none, nor any mining worth naming other than that of copper in the wastes of the North-Western Cape Colony. H. Wool was the most important single export commodity, and between 1860 and 1870 it was wool production which was the main factor in South Africa's growth.

There were only 69 miles of railway, the poorest of communications by road, hardly twenty towns or villages with populations of more than 1,000.

Diamonds brought an industrial revolution.

"In the first dozen years after 1870 the mine exported a greater value in diamonds than the agricultural and pastoral industries together had been able to export in a period three times as long before the discovery.

..eSignificance was the Cape's strength and position on the London money market. The capital which before 1870, had been reluctant to come at 6 per cent, now was glad to come first at 5 per cent, and then at 4 per cent.'

There was capital for the building of railways for the development of harbours and roads. Railway lines from Wellington, Durban; Port Elizabeth and Pietermaritzburg.

.J

Elizabeth to Kimberley were all under construction by 1873 to 187A.

The number of African workers at Kimberley in 1872 was estimated at at least 20,000, Their wages averaged &1 per month.

The workers, by their own choice, stayed only for three to six months at a stretch, frequently only for long enough to save up the price of a gun. Then they went back to their tribal farming.

De Kiewiet remarks that:

"Though the individual labourers still returned whence they came, South Africa had now to face a new and serious complication... the dependence of a growing proportion of the native population upon European employment for existence, and the creation of a detribalised and landless urban proletariat."

The Kimberley Africans were not, however true proletariene, who, by definition, are men who have no way of earning a livelihood except by the sale of their physical labour. They were still men with rights to the land, and they could live even without going out to work for the white man.

They were not then forced to go to the mines, as they were soon to be. They went of their own free will. Perhaps the only existing description of this new African working class, as seen by an African, is that of Gwayi Tyamzaehe, who in 1872 was the first African to complete his whole course of Theological studies at Lovedale, and who had gone, immediately on his qualification, to preach at the Diamond Fielder

"When they are at work you can hardly distinguish the Whites from the Coloureds, for they all resemble the diamondeiferous soil they are working" he wrote. "There ere Bushmen, Koranhas, Eottentote, Griquae, Batlapire, Damerae, Barolong, Barutse, Bakhatle, Bakwena, Bamangwatu, Bapeli, Magalaka, Batsvetla, Baganana, Besutu, Magwata, Mazulu, Maswazi, Matewetswa, Matonga, Matabele; Mabeca, Mampondo, Mampengu, Batembu, Maxosa and more," Tyamzashe wrote.

Having no lungege in common the men conversed in hDutch, Sesutu or Kaffir."

"Those coming from far up in the interior... come with the sole'purpose of securing guns. They stay no longer here then is necessary to get some &6 or &7 for the gun. Hence you will see hundreds of them leaving the Fields, and as many arriving from the North almost every dayr"

Among the Baeutho "are to be found specimens of what I would call extreme berberism and ignorance. Many of them never heard the name of Jesus Christ until they came to the diggings... The Bapelis, I think, are among the most easily taught of these tribes."

The Cape was badly represented. "Instead of the brave and warlike Kaffir, we have the helpless and cowardly Matlaping. Instead of our shrewd and cautious Red Kaffir, we have.the dull and ignorant Koranna.n

Smaller concentrations of African workers began to be established elsewhere in the Cape too, as the harbours, railways and road multiplied and grew.

The number employed at the East London

' harbours and railways works in 1875 was 670, half Kaffir and half Fingo . The harbour work was done principally by Africans - 266 convicts and 135 free Fingoes paid at 2/6d. per day, "But" the 1876 Blue Book reported, "the last batches which arrived will not work for less than 3/- per day." 15 of the workers were literate. Headmen were paid 5/-d. per day if they simply supervised, 7/6 if they joined in the-Work. The workers generally remained for about three months.

The chief characteristics of this newly born African working class were its lack of cohesion, stability or education. Nowhere were the workers in a position yet to form the basis for an African political movement.

Therefore, although Kimberley, with its big concentration of African workers, created the economic conditions for the emergence of an African political consciousness Kimberley was not itself the birth-place of the first African organisations,

Nor did they begin in the Transvaal, in recent years the heart of African political activity, or in the Free State or Natal. In these territories there was as yet hardly any trace of a capitalist economy even among the Whites. The Africans had not been conquered and subjected to White rule; there was very little integration of Africans within the White economy, Whites and Blacks co-existing side by side within the same territory and sharing sovereignty in it, and there was not even a handful of literate Africans.'

t t t t

TIYO SOGA

It was in what is now the Eastern Province of the Cape that the first African organisations came into being.

' The Lovedale Missionary Institution had been opened in 18H1, and by 1870 a tiny but important new_stratum of Africans had come into being composed mainly of preachers, teachers and clerks, men transformed in a single generation from herdboys in a primitive tribal Society to white-collar workers in a capitalist state.

This new African petit-bourgeoisie was the basis of the first African political associations. Before it emerged such organisations were impossible.

Standing out as the great forerunner of this class is the name of Tiyo Sega, One of 39 children of his father's eight wives, he was born in 1829, at a station of the Glasgow Missionary Society in the Tshume Valley, Eastern Province. At school his superior abilities were seen and the local missionary sent him to Lovedale. After two years there, he was, in 18u6, taken by a Scottish missionary, Rev. Govan, to Glasgow, where he spent two years at a Church Normal School.

Returning to South Africa as an Evangelist and teacher, he created so good an impression on his superiors that they'gecided to send him back to Glasgow to University there. Enrolling at Glasgow University in 1851, he was almost certainly the first African from South Africa to enter a University. Graduating in theology after five years he'married a Scotswoman and returned With her to South Africa, where the

1 3h 1

mixed marriage apparently passed without comment. Several of their seven children had outstanding academic or public careers.

In 1866 Segal completed the translation of the "Pilgrim's Progress" into Xhosa. Apart from the missionary translations of the Bible, this was the first literary work to appear in an African language, and it was described by Charles Brownlee the Cape Secretary for Native Affairs as "9 perfect masterpiece of easy idiomatic writing " He also served on the Church 5 Board of Revision of the Xhosa translation of the Bible

An indication of his stature is obtained from these press notices of his death, on August 12, 1871 :

HA lereford L gentleman 1 said the Cape A2gus, in a long obituary ending: HHe was one of the most_ intelligent and best-informed men we ever knew and many an hour have we spent with him, in which one utterly forgot his nationality or his colour " wrote 51he Jew_rhall 3 "The mental gr: spirit ehdmoral capabilities of J he Kaffir 1&0; are demonstrated in him: len cannot despise Lhe stiff race as they contemplate himo WithOLL hance-pattern or precedent the first of his people. often strangely alone surrounded and pressed upon by peculiar difficulties, he has nonfully and successfully wrought his way up to Lhe CCLJparetivelJ high level of educated English Christian life The Conquered has become the conqueror." ' ____1('

"A more loyal subject, or a more ardent lover of our Queen was not to be found

in Her Majesty's Dominions",
said the Somerset and Bedford Courant.'
Soga's good and loyal life is described at some
length because the men who created the first African
organisations were men whose lives followed this
pattern very closely.

John Tengo Jabavu, Elijah Makiwane, John
Knox Bokwe, Nehemia Tile, Saul Msane, Mpambani
Jeremiah Mzimba, Walter B. Rubusana, Isaac Wauchope,
Paul Ziniwe - every one of the men associated with
the formation of the earliest African associations
came straight from a tribal environment via the
mission institutions into the detribalised petit_
bourgeoisie.

They had a great deal in common. They were all
outstanding men, men whose capabilities stood out
enough to draw the attention of the missionaries to
them; men who were able to overcome their immense
initial educational and environmental handicaps. In
addition they were completely dependent on the good-
will of the missionaries. Once incur their displeasure
and all hope of emergence into the new world would
disappear.

No wonder that this generation "constitutes a
landmark in the Native ministerial records of saintly
lives." No wonder too, that in the main, but with
some outstanding exceptions - these men were confor-
mists, steering close to the course set for them by
the missionaries.

As a result of the new economic developments,
the dependence on the missionaries was lessened a
little. By 1876 there was a demand for white-collar
Africans in the towns of the Eastern Province. Percy
Nightingale, the Victoria East Civil Commissioner,

noted in 1876 :

"They are now to be found in government and newspaper offices, in mercantile establishments; indeed every walk of life appears to be opening to them. From all parts the raw material is merging towards the great educational and civilising manufactory at Lovedale, an establishment worthy of all the aid the Government can bestow."

As may be seen in later years, the more outspoken of the African leaders were to be those who were able to free themselves from dependence on the missionaries.

The earliest evidence of the existence of at least a rudimentary African petit-bourgeoisie was the successful establishment, for the first time of a newspaper for Africans:

On the initiative of Dr. James Stewart, the Lovedale Missionary Institute issued the first number of the "Kaffir Express - Isigidimi Sama Xosa " on October 1st, 1870, '

"The period when newspapers begin to live in the history of any people is an important era"

the editorial of the first issue commenced. Both the timing of the foundation of the paper and the idea expressed in this opening sentence are evidence of Dr Stewart's perspicacity. For 'Isigidimi' did mark the commencement of a new era in the history of the African people and indeed the paper played a significant part in stimulating the development of African political consciousness.

e e e

' (February 1959)

Produced by S. Formah, 8 Park Avenue
Camps Bay, Cape Town.
October, 1964.

