

Dinizulu and Bhambatha, 1906: An invasion of Natal and an uprising in Zululand that almost took place

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Introduction

The rising called historically the Zulu Rebellion and now officially the Zulu Uprising of 1906, was the last major act of indigenous resistance to colonial rule in South Africa. The rebellion had many causes arising from the discordant interaction of settler and native societies, but the immediate cause was the imposition of a poll tax, which fell most heavily on and aroused the opposition of the native population. It ended in complete political and military victory for the colonial regime, but latterly it has come to be seen as an early moral victory for the forces of liberation.¹

The rebellion is conventionally divided into three successive phases in different geographical areas. The *first phase* occurred in February/March 1906 in the southern part of the Colony of Natal. It began with a clash between police and tax protesters near Richmond and led to the proclamation of martial law and partial mobilisation of the colonial militia. The militia made an extended demonstration which deterred overt resistance.

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1. The rebellion is variously called the Zulu Rebellion, Natal Rebellion, Natal Native Rebellion, Bhambatha or Bhambatha's Rebellion, Poll Tax Rebellion, and several other names. See J. Stuart, *A History of the Zulu Rebellion 1906 and Dinuzulu's Arrest, Trial and Expatriation* (Macmillan, London, 1913), pp 504–11, on the question of whether it was a rebellion or an insurrection. Stuart also used the generic term *rising*, as indeed did others at the time, notably the governor of Natal, Sir Henry McCallum. *Rising* at least covers the variety of acts of resistance that occurred at different times and in different places in 1906. *Rebellion* denotes a rising with intent to overthrow legitimate authority, and has become established in the literature and common parlance, despite Stuart's (and this author's) misgivings about it. The present dispensation rejects it, and since 2001 *uprising* has been used by official and dependant agencies. While technically they may concede the constitutionality of the colonial regime, they do not recognise its political or moral legitimacy. Uprising connotes a popular rising, more or less spontaneous and, potentially at least, mass-based, and may be applied categorically to appropriate events of the South African liberation struggle, e.g. Soweto Uprising. This creates a problem: what are the participants in the uprising to be called? English has no word *upriser*. It is awkward to have to fall back on *rebel*, when the name rebellion has been denied. The author has reservations about both *rebellion* and *uprising* here, since there are instances of both types of revolt to be found, e.g. Bhambatha and Siganda make it clear by word and deed they were in rebellion, but in Maphumulo the combination of several chiefs in proximity to raise their people has every appearance of an uprising. Yet neither term accurately covers the entire spectrum of violence in February–July 1906. The current use of *uprising* is distinctly presentist, and outside a circle of cognoscenti it still lacks preciseness with regard to the event, whereas the use of *rebellion* is well established in the literature and does not give rise to any doubt about which event is meant, and for that reason the author continues to use it.

The *second phase* occurred in April-June in the middle Thukela region. It began in the Umvoti Division of Natal with the rebellion of a deposed chief of the Zondi tribe, Bhambatha ka Mancinza,² who attacked the local magistrate and the police in the Mpanza valley, and fled to Zululand before the remobilised militia could catch him. The aged chief Sigamanda of the Chube people in Nkandla threw in with the rebels and called on other chiefs in the district to join them. Bhambatha and Sigamanda claimed that they were fighting against colonial rule, not just the poll tax, and that they did so in the name of Dinuzulu, former king of the Zulu nation an influential chief in the north, and ambitious to regain lost power in Zululand. Most of their support indeed came from the chiefdoms which had supported Cetshwayo's Usuthu faction in the Zulu civil war and rebellion in the 1880s. The rugged terrain and primeval forests of the Nkandla district made an ideal defensive position, and it became the centre of fighting. The colonial militia, reinforced by special service units raised in Natal and the Transvaal, contained and finally broke the rebel forces in a massacre at Mome on 10 June 1906.

The *third phase* of the rebellion occurred in June-July, in the Maphumulo district of Natal. It was something of an aftershock to the Nkandla operations and has always been difficult to explain. The rebels were drawn from several tribes with historic connections to the Zulu royal house, although they had been loyal to the colony during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. They were in an exposed position, lacked cohesion and had no hope of success. The colonial militia moved quickly and defeated the various tribal units in a series of battles, culminating in another massacre at iZinsimba on 8 July. The colonial forces were then demobilised, except for a few special service units needed for policing operations.

Most of the principal leaders and many of the rank and file were brought quickly to trial, and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment and hard labour, and martial law was lifted at the beginning of October. The rebellion was over, although unrest continued in Zululand until Dinuzulu was arrested in December 1907. He was tried for high treason a year later, was found guilty for having given aid and comfort to certain rebels, and was deposed and banished.

The history of the Zulu Rebellion as we have it is found in just four books: *The Natal Rebellion* by Walter Bosman, published in 1907;³ *The History of the Zulu Rebellion* by James Stuart (1913);⁴ *Reluctant Rebellion*

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2. In this article the modern orthography is used for Zulu names and words, except in the case of historic official place names, e.g. the Nquthu district, but the Nqutu Division, and proper names in citations in the notes, e.g. Lubudlungu instead of Lubudlungu. Similarly modern terminology is used, except when the contemporary terminology provides precise definition, e.g. assegai, kraal, tribe; and "native" is used in contradistinction to "settler".
 3. W. Bosman, *The Natal Rebellion of 1906* (Longmans, Green, London; Juta, Cape Town, 1907).
 4. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, see note 1.

by Shula Marks (1970);⁵ and *Remembering the Rebellion* by Jeff Guy (2006).⁶ It is remarkable that the body of literature regarding an event whose centenary was marked by a large public celebration is so small.⁷ It may be explained by the very unpleasantness of the subject.

Many official documents appeared contemporaneously and have been available ever since. These are the published British Parliamentary Papers' selections of correspondence on native affairs and disturbances in Natal,⁸ complemented by one of the Natal government.⁹ Stuart and Marks particularly used them. There are also the daily and weekly reports in the newspapers, notably the local *Natal Mercury* and *Natal Witness* and *Times of Natal*, which contain a wealth of information, but do not seem to have been used much.

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5. S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906–1908 Disturbances in Natal* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1970).
 6. J. Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion: The Zulu Uprising of 1906* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2006).
 7. Omitting private publications which rank as samizdat, the only other books generally available were T. Magwaza, Y. Seleti, and M.P. Sithole (eds), *Freedom Sown in Blood: Memories of the Impi Yamakhanda: An Indigenous Knowledge System Perspective* (Ditlou, Thohoyandou, 2006) which is focused on Mpanza and has very little on the rebellion; and J. Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2005) treats the third phase of the rebellion. C.T. Binns, *Dinizulu: The Death of the House of Shaka* (Longmans, Green, London, 1968) is superficial and inadequate. B. Carton, *Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2000) is well researched and contains useful information, but its approach precludes any comprehensive narrative. L. Berge, *The Bambatha Watershed* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala, 2000) is focused on the transitional experience of certain mission stations. Relevant theses are mentioned in note 23. Several scholarly articles have a bearing on the topic, namely. P.S. Thompson, "Bhambatha and the Zulu Rebellion", *The Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 26, 2008, pp 32–59; "'Crossroads of War': The People of Nkandla in the Zulu Rebellion of 1906", *Scientia Militaria: The South African Journal of Military Studies*, 35, 2, 2007, pp 95–127; and "The Zulu Rebellion of 1906: The Collusion of Bhambatha and Dinuzulu", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 36, 3, 2003, pp 533–557. S. Redding, "A Blood-Stained Tax: Poll Tax and the Bambata Rebellion in South Africa", *African Studies Review*, 43, 2, November 2003, pp 98–108 is largely hypothetical and of little use. K.G. Gillings, "The Bambata Rebellion of 1906: Nkandla Operations and the Battle of Mome Gorge, 10 June 1906", *South African Military History Journal*, 8, 1, June 1981, pp 1–31, is now dated but has some useful information. J. Wassermann, "'Sowing the Seeds of Rebellion': Chief Bhambatha ka Mancinza and the Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902", *African Historical Review*, 39, 2, November 2007, pp 91–106, gives an interesting insight into the rebel chief's wartime career.
 8. *Command: Papers* 2905, 3027, 3247, 3888, 3998, 4001, 4194, whose titles vary slightly from each other.
 9. Colony of Natal, *The Natal Native Rebellion as Told in Official Despatches from January 1st to June 23rd 1906* (Davis, Pietermaritzburg, 1906) (hereafter *OD*). It also appears as a supplement in *The Natal Government Gazette*, No. 3568A, 2 October 1906: Government Notice 592, 1906, "Correspondence Relating to the Native Disturbances in Natal".

The thesis

It is unfortunate that the extant literature leaves out important parts of the story of the rising – the reason for this will be explained presently. This article focuses on one of the lacunae, rebel activity in Zululand in early June of 1906, during the second phase of the rebellion, and fills in some of the missing information.

The thesis is that the rebellion reached a decisive point at this time, which has gone unnoticed in the accepted history of the rebellion, except for the action at Mome. It is contended that an ambitious movement was afoot. Dinuzulu had a good idea of what the rebel leaders were doing and intervened to give encouragement and significant direction. The rebel leaders were about to expand their operations when two unexpected events upset their programme. These two events were the disaster at Mome and the colonial governor's summoning of Dinuzulu to the colonial capital.

The significance of this thesis cannot be exaggerated. If the rebel plans had been realised, the rebellion would have expanded greatly. The colonial government would no longer have been able to contain it, and Britain would have had to intervene. The subsequent history of Natal (and possibly South Africa) would have been quite different, and Dinuzulu very likely would be more hero than martyr today.

There is an enormous gap between the accepted (or received) version of this rebel activity and the revised one presented here. The reader will ask, what newfound evidence warrants the revision? It consists in the main of the records of the Natal colonial government and the papers of the Colenso family in the KwaZulu-Natal Archives repository in Pietermaritzburg. These have been accessible for some time and have been used by many historians, more or less, with the exception of the magistrates' archives, which have only become available more recently.

It is not so much that the evidence is new, but that new use has been made of it. First, there are the many civil and military reports, including the most useful daily collations of intelligence reports. Second, the magistrates' archives, including the martial law case books of the rebellion. Third, the evidence presented before the special court which tried Dinuzulu for high treason. The writers do not seem to have consulted the transcript, but to have relied on the addresses and judgement of the court in *The Trial of Dinuzulu* (1910).¹⁰

10. Colony of Natal, *The Trial of Dinuzulu on Charges of High Treason, at Greytown Natal 1908–09* (*Times*, Pietermaritzburg, 1910). It also appears as an unnumbered *Command* paper in the British Parliamentary Papers. Unfortunately, for practical purposes the judgement has placed a seal on further inquiry into Dinuzulu's conduct. The judge president, Stuart and Marks point out that the defence had only to cast doubt on the prosecution's case and not prove its own. None the less, the defence's success in discrediting most of the charges has left an impression that it won and that Dinuzulu is really innocent.

The accepted history of events

Let us look at rebel plans and operations in late May and early June, in so far as they are described in the literature.

The rebel *impi*¹¹ in Nkandla was in disarray and demoralised. The Zululand Field Force under Colonel Duncan McKenzie had captured and destroyed the rebel camps in the Nkunzana valley and on Macala hill. Much livestock and food stores had been lost. Worse, the rebels had been caught by surprise and unable to offer effective resistance. They were now hiding in the forests nearby. Siganda obtained a short truce, ostensibly to give him time to surrender, but it was a blind. Mangathi, leader of the *impi* at Macala, determined to go to oSuthu and find out from Dinuzulu about the help which the rebels believed he was going to give them. Bhambatha accompanied him.¹²

Dinuzulu told Mangathi and Bhambatha that if they wanted to fight, to go and join Mehlokazulu, an important chief in the Nquthu district. Dinuzulu had heard that Mehlokazulu had just rebelled. Then they could go to join Siganda, and, if necessary, go on fighting until they got to Natal.¹³ They followed his advice, and eventually the forces of Mehlokazulu, Bhambatha and Mangathi, and Siganda combined at Macala hill – some 1200–1500 armed men – and Mangathi announced that Dinuzulu had appointed the headmen Macala and Mganu to command.¹⁴ Meanwhile the centenarian Siganda, who had been left alone in the Nkandla forest, called for the *impi* to come to him.¹⁵

Instead the *impi* moved down to the Thukela. The object was to kill the Natal chiefs on the other side, Gayede and Hlangabeza, who were loyal to the government, and to raise their people. Mangathi tried in vain to persuade Gayede's son to join the rebels. Macala and the other rebel leaders strongly disapproved of this course, and the *impi* returned to Macala hill.¹⁶

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11. In this article Zulu words are used sparingly, but there are exceptions. *Impi* means a discrete military unit, but its size and function depend on circumstances; and also fighting or a battle, the battlefield on which fighting is taking place, and even the theatre of operations. Sometimes the meaning changes in the same document e.g. see note 126. Therefore the Zulu word is retained and the reader may surmise. *uSuthu* is the name of the Zulu royalist faction dating back to Cetshwayo before he was king; but also refers to the Zulu tribes and locations under Dinuzulu and Ziwedu at this time. The locative *oSuthu* is used for Dinuzulu's great place, the kraal where he resided, and thus is used occasionally as a metonym.
 12. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 241–243, 245, 246, 249, 313; Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, pp 41–44, 47–50, 52; Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, p 216; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, pp 110–111.
 13. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 313–314; Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, p 285; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, p 111.
 14. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, p 79; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 314, 316.
 15. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 314; Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, p 223; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, p 120.
 16. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 315.

The *impi* moved towards the Nkandla forest on the night of 9/10 June. It expected find shelter in the forests of the Mome gorge,¹⁷ and to ambush and destroy the small government forces before they could be reinforced. More, they would rest a day, and then launch attacks on neighbouring loyalist chiefs, killing them and seizing their stock, as Shaka had, intimidating their people into joining the them.¹⁸

A little before midnight the *impi* arrived at the mouth of the Mome gorge. It did not go in, but camped outside. It did not post sentries, for no government forces were supposed to be nearby. In the dark morning hours reports were received that the enemy was approaching, but Mehlokazulu and Bhambatha dismissed them. Mangathi and other leaders did not, and took their men into the gorge.¹⁹ The enemy surrounded the camp and attacked at dawn. In the ensuing massacre, Bhambatha and Mehlokazulu were killed.²⁰ The number of rebel dead was estimated as high as 575.²¹

The survivors were scattered and demoralised. Organised resistance ceased. Within days they were surrendering in droves. The fighting in Nkandla was over, except for some mopping up.²²

The revised version

The revised version follows the same outline as the accepted version. It relies on Bosman and Stuart in places, and makes use of some of the same sources, but it adds much new information from the archival sources mentioned. Most important, it reinterprets rebel plans and strategy.

Meeting of rebel leaders at oSuthu

Dinuzulu knew that he could not be king again, but he wanted to be paramount chief in Zululand, and ever since his return in 1898 he had pursued an active but secretive diplomacy to this end. He was supposed to report the visits of important persons from outside who visited his Usuthu location in the Ndwandwe Division to the resident magistrate at Nongoma, but he often did not. Whether or not Dinuzulu connived at insurrection or rebellion before the poll was imposed cannot be established, but he showed an engaging interest in it thereafter.²³ He did not tell the magistrate about

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17. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, pp 79–81; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 296; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, pp 120–121.
 18. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, p 72; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 315–316.
 19. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 315–316; Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, p 224.
 20. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, pp 85–91, 103; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 302–310; Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, pp 223–224; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, pp 121–122.
 21. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, p 93. See also Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 311.
 22. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, pp 95–108; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 335–340.
 23. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 484–489, 507–512, contends that Dinuzulu aimed to gain paramountcy through intervention of the British Crown by

Bhambatha when he visited oSuthu in March, and he did not tell him about Bhambatha and Mangathi when they visited in May. He may have told him something about a deputation sent by Sigananda to report that the militia was burning grass near his father Cetshwayo's grave in Nkandla, but, if so, he was not clear, otherwise he would have been ordered to arrest them.

On trial for high treason in 1909, Dinuzulu admitted that Sigananda's delegation and Mangathi had visited oSuthu, and rationalised his failure to report or arrest them on the grounds that he gave them no encouragement, but reproved them for their errancy. He denied flatly that Bhambatha came to oSuthu. The evidence of Dinuzulu and his chief counsellor Mankulumana is inconsistent and implausible. We are thrown on the evidence of Mangathi and Bhambatha's wife, Siyekiwe, who was also present at oSuthu at this time,²⁴ and will continue with their version in order to make sense of the events which followed.

Bhambatha and Mangathi arrived at oSuthu on 23 May. Shortly after their arrival they were ushered into Dinuzulu's office.²⁵ Mangathi spoke first: "I have come to hear why it is that we are fighting and receiving no

creating or using circumstances which made restoration of his authority indispensable to maintain order in the colony. See also P.S. Thompson, "The Chief who Would be King Again: Dinuzulu, 1898–1906", Unpublished paper presented at 55th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Philadelphia, 29 November–1 December 2012. A very proactive role in this respect is attributed to him by I.M. Perrett, "Dinuzulu and the Bambata Rebellion", MA, University of Natal, 1961; however, S.J. Maphalala, "The Policies of the Transvaal and Natal Governments towards Dinuzulu 1897–1913", PhD, University of South Africa, 1989, rather urges passivity with a measure of opportunism. M.M. Hadebe, "A Contextualization and Examination of the *Impi Yamakhanda* (1906 Uprising) as Reported by J.L. Dube in *Ilanga Lase Natal*, with Special Focus on Dube's Attitude to Dinuzulu as Indicated in his Reportage on the Treason Trial of Dinuzulu", MA, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2003, is reflective rather than analytical of events.

24. Note that all the archival records cited in this article are in the KwaZulu-Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository therefore no particular reference is made again to its citation. Mangathi's several statements vary in detail and his evidence before the special court departed from these, yet in all cases he insisted Bhambatha was with him, which Dinuzulu and Mankulumana, his chief counsellor, categorically denied. Siyikiwe and two of Bhambatha's children with her are also inconsistent in their statements and evidence, but do agree on Bhambatha's being there. The following account is based on the evidence of Mangathi in Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (hereafter PM), 104: C238/06, 23 November 1907; Archives of the Lieutenant-Governor and Governor of the Colony of Natal (Government House, hereafter GH) 1462; Archives of the Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter SNA) I/6/29, 18 December 1907; Archives of the Attorney-General's Office (hereafter AGO) I/7/54, 8 November 1908; Archives of the Registrars of the Supreme Court (hereafter RSC) III/3/4: 2793-5, 2810, 2837-9, 2842-5; Mazwi in AGO I/7/70, 10 December 1908; and Ndabayake in RSC III/3/2: 457-8, 461-3. Also see RSC III/3/7: 5583, Gaqakili. The records of the Special Court: Zulu Rebellion are in III/3/1-30.
25. In his statements of 23 November 1907 (PM 104: C238/07) and 8 November 1908 (AGO I/7/54), Mangathi said that Mgwaqo was present, but in that of 18 December 1907 (GH 1462 and SNA I/6/29) that he came the following day. See also AGO I/7/54: Ncwati, 27 September 1908, and Colenso Collection (hereafter CC), Box 115: Sicoto, 21 January 1909.

assistance, which Siganda promised us would be forthcoming from you". Dinuzulu replied:

What do I know about the fighting? Why do you all come running to me? Today Siganda has sent Njinjini and Ntshingwayo to me about the same business. Did you not come to me, Bhambatha, about the poll tax? And did I not tell you that I had paid the poll tax? If you people want to fight, why don't you all unite and fight the whites?

"We have united", answered Bhambatha:

There are people from Ngobizembe, and many other tribes in Natal, with Siganda in the Nkandla forest, also many people from the tribes in Zululand. Gayede [in Natal] is ill. I passed through his people on my way to Nkandla, and they would have joined me if he had not been ill.

"Son of Godide", said Dinuzulu to Mangathi, "if you people desire to fight, go and do so. It is not my doing. Go and join Mehlokazulu. I hear he is also fighting, and has been joined by people from Natal."

The following day Bhambatha and Mangathi were summoned again to the office, and Dinuzulu repeated what he had said the evening before:

Go and fight your battles. Go and join Mehlokazulu, and when you have joined him, you must all go and join Siganda. You must all combine. If necessary, go on fighting until you get to Natal. Mehlokazulu has reported to me that he has started fighting, and gone into the Mangeni. Siganda's messengers are here now, and they report that the white people have burnt my father's grave, and are unearthing my father's bones. I tell you now, go and join Mehlokazulu, and do what he tells you.²⁶

Bhambatha also spoke to his family about his visit. He told Siyikiwe that he had sent Sukabhekhuluma, an emissary of oSuthu, who had escorted him back to Natal and then to Nkandla, to tell Dinuzulu he had carried out his instructions and was in the Nkandla forest, and to ask why Dinuzulu was delaying with reinforcements. Sukabhekhuluma had returned with the reply that Siganda had been instructed to reinforce him. Siganda had done so, but they had failed against the whites. He came now to ask Dinuzulu why he delayed with the Usuthu *impi*. Dinuzulu instructed him to go back to Nkandla and remain there. He would keep on reinforcing with successive tribes as needed. He should go to Mehlokazulu, and Mehlokazulu would come to his assistance soon. The Usuthu *impi* would move last. Dinuzulu had authorised him to take Mangathi and all the Zulu about the Nkandla to assist him.²⁷

26. Mangathi states (AGO I/7/54: 8 November 1908) that he was present, without giving the day, when Njinjini and Ntshingwayo came in and told Dinuzulu that the troops had exhumed the body of Cetshwayo. This annoyed Dinuzulu, who left the hut.

27. Siyikiwe in AGO I/7/61 (12 July 1907), 67 (23 December 1907), and RSC III/3/2: 252-9, 266-8, 271, 2754-9, 284, 313-6. See also Kholekile in SNA I/4/19: C284/07 (13 December 1907); RSC III/3/2: 359-65, 367-9, 378; and Ndabayake in RSC III/3/2: 451-8, 461-3, 491.

On 29 May 1906 the Nongoma magistrate George Armstrong telegraphed a statement to the commissioner for native affairs in Zululand, Charles Saunders. Armstrong had just taken this statement from a native who said that he had been at oSuthu at the weekend, when there had been a gathering of headmen representing chiefs south of the Mfolozi River. They said that they were tired of waiting and wanted instructions. Dinuzulu told them that he wanted them to arm without delay. The British had deliberately burnt his father's grave and plainly meant to challenge him. He intended to take up the challenge about the time of the full moon. He was almost ready to take to the field, and would issue orders to his own people (in the Ndwandwe), but first he wanted to get two of his attendants²⁸ out of the gaol at Nongoma, the seat of the magistracy. Bhambatha was said to have spent four days at oSuthu and left on 26 May accompanied by one of Dinuzulu's mounted men. He had come to ask Dinuzulu to give him six companies, to be raised from his adherents about Nkandla, with which he would march down as far as Pietermaritzburg and create such a disturbance that the British force in Nkandla would be recalled. Dinuzulu's adherents would then wipe out the natives loyal to the government in Nkandla and then throughout Zululand. Dinuzulu gave Bhambatha the authority he asked for, and told him that he would follow him shortly, after he had got his men out of gaol. He told the headman of his kraal at Nobamba, who was present at oSuthu, to assist Bhambatha to return to Nkandla.

The informant said that at oSuthu Bhambatha was called the son of Godide from Eshowe; also that Bhambatha's chief wife and two sons and a daughter were said to have been at oSuthu for several weeks; and that Dinuzulu was said to have instructed Mehlokazulu to send all his force to Nkandla at once.²⁹

Whether or not Dinuzulu assembled a force to take the field cannot be established definitely. The veil of secrecy which surrounded oSuthu is still difficult to pierce.³⁰ The receipt of this information determined the

28. Lokotwayo and Mpoqo.

29. The original telegram sent by Saunders, the commissioner of native affairs (hereafter CNA) is in PM 102: C229/06. Armstrong's has not been found.

30. At Dinuzulu's trial his former secretary, Anthony Daniels, stated that during the first week of June there was a large assembly of armed men – eight or ten companies – who arrived over several days. When the moon was almost full they were doctored for war. They were going to fight the Colony of Natal, not the king of England (see RSC III/3/3: 1206-14, 1286, 1354, 1364-8, Daniels). Dinuzulu denied Daniels' story (6: 4079), and the court rejected it as "an absolute invention", ostensibly because no other evidence corroborated it (see *Trial of Dinuzulu*, Judgement, p vi). Intelligence reports by their very nature would not be admissible as evidence. At the trial the magistrate's secret informant was a non est. Armstrong was not asked and said nothing about him. He did however say that on 11 June – five days after the moon was full – he saw a company (about 100 men) armed with assegais and shields at oSuthu (RSC III/3/3: 1966, 1975, F.A. Freeman; 5: 3647, Armstrong). This was, of course, after the first week in June. On 5 June, Armstrong informed Saunders that a company and a half of young men was at oSuthu and had been there for about three weeks reaping corn; which was not unusual at that season (see Archives of the Resident Commissioner and Chief Magistrate, Zululand [hereafter ZA], 28: CNA to Officer Commanding Zululand

government to summon Dinuzulu to Pietermaritzburg, of which more will be said later.

Sedition in southeastern Zululand

If Dinuzulu was going to put an *impi* in the field, where was he going to use it? The fighting was in Nkandla, and it would make military sense to augment the forces there for the offensive – unless there was a good reason to divert it elsewhere. There is evidence to suggest an insurrection was brewing in the southeastern divisions of Zululand about this time. This evidence consists largely of magistrates' and police reports based on local reports, much of it hearsay and rumour, which civil and military analysed more or less critically.³¹

The militia and police occupied strong positions north and south of the Nkandla forest, but not to the east and west, and rebels in the forest communicated with outlying sympathisers across the Mhlatuze and the Mzinyathi. The posting of militia at Helpmekaar in Umsinga in late April and then the advance of a field force into Nquthu in mid-May, reduced the rebels' scope to the west, but the porosity of the Mhlatuze valley remained. There were only small garrisons of infantry at Fort Yolland, Eshowe and Ginginhlovu.³²

Field Force, 5 June 1906.) Armstrong did warn Dinuzulu at the end of June to disperse the four or five companies reported to be at oSuthu, lest people outside the division say that he had an army there (see AGO 1/7/ 78: F13, Mgt Nongoma to Dinuzulu, 28 June 1906). Bearing indirectly on the question is the mention of the emissary Sukabhekhuluma (whom the government and press persisted in calling "Cakijana", a settler's nickname for him), in two independent statements but not at the trial, that the rebel *impi* at Nkandla on or about 9 June received a report from messengers that Dinuzulu's *impi* was at Matshensikazi, about 25 kilometres to the north. The report was false, but at the time it may have been believed, which suggests that those at Nkandla were primed for it (see AGO 1/7/68: *Rex v Cakijana-ka-Gezindaka*, Resumé of the statement made by CAKIJANA at Krantzkop, on the 20th May 1908 immediately prior to the reading over to him of the statement made by him, and taken down by Mr J.S. Hedges; CC 111: Statements by Sukabekuluma alias Cakijana ka Gezindaka taken by Mr R.C.A. Samuelson, 9 and 12 March 1908. (These are cited hereafter as Resumé and MRS and MRS rev, respectively.) And so the answer to the question about Dinuzulu's *impi* is yes and no, depending on how strict one wants to be with the meagre evidence.

31. The sedition extended to adjacent Natal (Victoria County), but to consider it here would overextend the length of the article. The literature contains no mention of a direct connection, but the intelligence reports for the period are very suggestive: see GH 1466, 19, 33, 38, 66, 84, 87, 101, 102, Synopses for 28/29, 30/31 May, 31 May/1 June, 8/9, 12/13, 14/15, 17/18, 18/19 June 1906, respectively, for the reports of the Mgt and OC Mapumulo; and PM 102: C230/06, Synopsis 19/20 and 26/27 June 1906 for the OC and Mgt Mapumulo, respectively.
32. Detachments of the Natal Police (23) and Natal Naval Corps had been left at Fort Yolland on 16 May (see Archives of the Colonial Secretary's Office, hereafter CSO, 2599: C147/06, Diary of Natal Police, hereafter NP Diary). On 7 May Eshowe had 259 Durban Light Infantry, 30 Natal Mounted Rifles and 12 Departmental Corps, and Ginginhlovu 70 DLI and 8 Departmental Corps (see Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 547). There were 89 DLI at Eshowe and 18 others, including the sick (CSO 3040: OC ZFF to Militia, 29 May 1906).

At the end of McKenzie's truce (23 May) with Sigananda some of Sigananda's men joined the rebels of Lukulwini's and Hashi's tribes at Sibhudeni, raising rebel strength there to between three and five companies. On 25–27 May they raided loyalists' kraals. Militia and police detachments from the camp at Cetshwayo's grave chased the raiders back to Sibhudeni, but dared not attack the stronghold. Consequently Lukulwini's and portion of Hashi's loyal levies escorted their people and livestock to a safe place between Entumeni and Eshowe.³³

During May the magistrates in the east received reports of incipient insurrection in the southeastern divisions. There appear to have been three springs of sedition in the region, and the dominant chiefs were associated historically with the Usuthu faction. One was Sitheku's ward, between Melmoth and the Mhlatuze, in the Emtonjaneni Division. Sitheku was Dinuzulu's uncle and chief of the large Zulu tribe (769 kraals) in the division.³⁴ He was infirm and senescent (the magistrate thought), but he seemed to be loyal to the government,³⁵ although his conduct had been very unsatisfactory.³⁶ Militia intelligence had reported as early as 11 May that messages were passing between Dinuzulu and Sitheku, and that Mabika, one of Sitheku's headmen, was said to have visited Bhambatha,³⁷ and to have gone to the Eshowe Division to incite rebellion.³⁸ Mabika was arrested and subsequently tried for inciting rebellion in the Umlalazi Division.

Another source was Sukane's ward in the Eshowe Division. Sukane, another son of Mpande, was chief of the smallest of the Zulu tribes (29 kraals).³⁹ Sukane had been warned by the magistrate about getting himself into trouble. Lupondo, a man purporting to be his emissary, appeared in Sukane's and his neighbour Ntshingwayo's wards on or about 17–19 May, and tried to raise an *impi* to join Bhambatha. He said that Sukane had sent him to Dinuzulu for news, on receipt of which Sukane sent him to tell Ntshingwayo and others to call up men for a hunt in the Mhlatuze valley. The old men would go home and the young men would go to Bhambatha in

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33. See R.H. Addison to CNA, 26 and 31 May 1906, in ZA 28 and PM 102: C141/06; NP Diary; and *Natal Witness*, 2 June 1906, "Reported Rebel Success".
34. Colony of Natal, Department of Native Affairs, *Annual Reports for the Year 1905* (*Times*, Pietermaritzburg, 1906) (hereafter *AR*), 127.
35. *OD*, p 167: CNA to PM, 5 June 1906. See also ZA 34: R700/1905, Mgt Emtonjaneni [to CNA], 8 May 1905; also ZA 34: CR624/06, Mgt Emtonjaneni [to CNA], 15 May 1906, and *OD*, p 155: CNA to PM, 5 June 1906.
36. ZA 35: CR624/06.
37. GH 1465, 142, and PM 102: C226/06, OC Troops Eshowe to Defence.
38. PM 102: C226/06, OC Troops Eshowe to Def., 11 May 1906. ZA 34: CR624/06, Report of Mgt Emtonjaneni Division on state of affairs in the Division, 15 May 1906. See also GH 1466, 80: Synopsis of Wires received from 6 PM 11/5/06 to 6 PM. Also 12/5//06, DO Stanger's report that 150–200 natives had gone by rail from Natal to Zululand in the last 12 days, and reports of Mgt and OC Mapumulo about an imminent crossing into Natal of a force under Bhambatha. Synopses of wires received are hereafter given as Synopsis with the appropriate dates.
39. SNA I/1/343: 1886/06, Mgt Eshowe to CNA, 11 June 1906. Also *AR* 1905, 147.

the forest. Lupondo was arrested at the beginning of June for spreading false reports and charged with sedition.⁴⁰

The third source of sedition was Bhejana's ward, near Empangeni. Bhejana was the chief of the larger (91 kraals) of two portions of the Cebekhulu tribe in the Lower Umfolozi Division. He was an elderly man, but still fit, and a pillar of the Usuthu.⁴¹ According to reports, in mid-May armed men were passing up and down the valley from Ngokwana's tribe in Umlalazi to join the rebels in Nkandla;⁴² and the chiefs Ngokwana, Ntungelizana and Mgedi were planning to attack the loyal chief Zimema, take a position in the Ngoye forest, and await the arrival of an *impi* either from the north or Nkandla.⁴³ Ngokwana was said to be communicating with Dinuzulu through Bhejana,⁴⁴ but he and Ntungelizana declared their loyalty to the magistrate at Umlalazi on 18 May.⁴⁵ Bhejana was not to be heard from; he was said to have gone to Nobamba after hearing about the fire at Cetshwayo's grave.⁴⁶

The magistrate at Eshowe reported on 30 May that men claiming to be Dinuzulu's messengers were prowling about trying to induce the people to rise, and the situation was getting worse every day.⁴⁷ It would appear that many persons were going about the country inciting people to rebel at this time.⁴⁸

One of them was Mkebeni kaDabulamanzi, a subject of the chief Bagibile of the Eshowe Division, who was living at oSuthu in 1906. Mkebeni says that on 30 May Dinuzulu ordered him to go tell the chiefs Bagibile and

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40. Archives of the Magistrate and Commissioner, Eshowe, in KwaZulu-Natal Archives, Durban Archives Repository (hereafter 1/ESH) 1/4/1/1: 21/06. See also SNA I/1/343: 1886/06, Mgt Eshowe to CNA, 11 June and 27 July 1906. Lupondo denied everything, but subsequently was found guilty and sentenced to twelve months hard labour and twenty lashes.
 41. Bhejana was an old headman of Mpande and Cetshwayo. He was called upon to perform the rites when the sacred coil (*inkatha*) was transferred to Gcikazi to near oSuthu in 1905. See AGO I/7/78: F10, Interview between the Attorney General and Daniels on 14 January 1907, at the Attorney General's request. According to Dinuzulu (AGO I/7/78: F13, Dinuzulu to Mgt Nongoma, 14 December 1905) Bhejana had been the organiser of the wedding ceremony of the chief Maboko and Dinuzulu's sister Simisi in March, because he was the only one who had been with Cetshwayo (see RSC III/3/5: 3618, Armstrong.)
 42. A police patrol on the 16th found no evidence of armed men in transit (see CSO 3040: Mgt Umlalazi to PM, 15 May 1906); GH 1465, 146: Synopsis 13/14 May 1906, report of Mgt Eshowe; 148 15/16 May 1906, report of Mgt Melmoth. See also PM 102: C226/06, Mgt Eshowe to PM, 14 May 1906; ZA 34: CR624/06, Report of Mgt Emtonjaneni, 15 May 1906.
 43. PM 102: C226/06, Mgt Umlalazi to PM, 17 May 1906. Also *Natal Mercury*, 18 May 1906: "Ngokwana's Ward".
 44. *Natal Mercury*, 18 May 1906: "Ngokwana's Ward".
 45. GH 1465, 149 and 150: Synopses 16/17 and 18/19 May 1906, reports of Mgt Umlalazi. ZA 34: CR624/06, Report of Mgt Emtonjaneni, 15 May 1906. See also *Times of Natal*, 23 May 1906: "Bambatha's Methods".
 46. RSC III/3/7: 6005, Bejana.
 47. GH 1466, 28: Synopsis, 29/30 May 1906.
 48. SNA I/1/343: CNA to Cdt, 31 July 1906.

Mbango in the Eshowe Division that he was in league with them and to arm their *izimpi*; also to contact the Eshowe gaoler to release the prisoners of war and arm them with firearms seized there. Mkebeni arrived in Bagibile's ward on 1 or 2 June and did as he was told, but Bagibile refused to act because he was too closely watched, and the gaoler said the same. Mbango refused to act until Dinuzulu did. Mkebeni received a message that Sitheku's *impi* (seven companies) was armed and poised to attack Eshowe. One of the messengers said that Dinuzulu had ordered them to do so. The messengers appeared to be expecting his *impi*. Mkebeni told them that Dinuzulu's *impi* had not started, and to disperse theirs. He returned to oSuthu probably on 4 or 5 June and told Dinuzulu what he had done. "Whew, there is Mkebeni, do something important", said Dinuzulu, and went into his tent.⁴⁹

The government saw that the situation was deteriorating in this quarter, but could not take forces away from Nkandla. A police field force of 50 men, under Assistant Commissioner William Clarke, was ordered to Nongoma, but diverted to Empangeni to deal with a "very defiant" chief and his tribe. Evidently Bhejana had returned from Nobamba. Early in June he was reported to have instructed a number of chiefs to send to him every fourth day for news from Dinuzulu, whose agent he purported to be.⁵⁰ Ngokwana held a meeting of kraal heads and was rumoured to be ready to rebel if Bhejana joined him.⁵¹ The police moved about the country to reassure the loyal natives, visited the Kwambonambi mission on the coast, and then worked their way north to the railhead at Somkele.⁵²

Sukane was summoned to appear as a witness at the trial of Lupondo for sedition,⁵³ and disappeared on 6 June. His headmen said they did not

49. AGO I/7/54: Mkebeni. This statement is quite singular, and is necessarily treated with reserve.

50. PM 102: C226/06; CSO 3040, Mgt Empangeni to PM, 7 June 1906.

51. GH 1466, 50: Synopsis 4/5, June 1906, report of Mgt Umlalazi.

52. W.J. Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", transcript in Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, II, pp 18–19. The forester reported on the 7th that an armed native told one of his men to look out for the 9th. At dusk on the 8th three armed men passed the railway station and headed west. During the night a number of natives passed his house; he could not see whether or not they were armed. On the 9th two of the forester's men, both members of Bhejana's tribe, arrived at work armed. Yet nothing happened on the day (see PM 102: C226/06, Mgt Empangeni to PM, 9 June 1906.); Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 203, 347, does not mention Sukane, and only mentions Sitheku as a possible instigator of rebellion in Maphumulo. He indicates (pp 339–40, p 389 note) that Bhejana posed some threat, enough at least to warrant McKenzie's considering the despatch of three squadrons to deal with it. Yet Stuart treats the two separately and attaches no greater significance to them. He does not draw the two together, nor does he suggest (not even hint) that they were part of a larger movement in southeastern Zululand.

53. SNA I/1/343: 1886/06, Mgt Eshowe to CNA, 27 July 1906; CNA to Cdt, 31 July 1906; Proceedings *R. v. Sukane*, 26 July 1906.

know where he had gone, but the magistrate suspected that it was to oSuthu, and alerted the magistrates to the north.⁵⁴

The great scare

The magistrate at Melmoth, Adrian Maritz, reported on 4 June that a general rising of the Zulu nation would take place before the moon waned.⁵⁵ (The moon would be full at 11.12 pm on 6 June.) Dinuzulu had called up his regiments and they were being doctored. On 5 June Maritz reported that the stroke would occur sometime *during* this moon, i.e. before 22 June. The Usuthu would take Nongoma and Mahlabatini; then Ngobozana's Mpungose would join them to "wipe out" Melmoth. Meanwhile Sitheku's, Bagibile's, Mbango's and Nkomo's tribes would attack and take Eshowe. Sitheku had sent messengers "to remonstrate" with Dinuzulu. Evidently they had not returned yet, but Dinuzulu was not expected to heed Sitheku.⁵⁶

McKenzie at Nkandla received information from prisoners which tended to support the rumour Dinuzulu was about to break out. Colonel Woolls-Sampson, his chief staff officer, was also persuaded that this was the case.⁵⁷ He left Empandhleni on 2 June to go to Pietermaritzburg⁵⁸ for a meeting with the commandant and ministers, and passed through the southeastern district, telling people in the area that there would be a general rising before or at the full moon.⁵⁹

The settlers in the Emtongjaneni Division were mostly Boer farmers. A few men were in the Active Militia and had been called away for service, but the Reserves had built a laager at Melmoth, to which 180 women and children had repaired by the end of April.⁶⁰ Now they crowded into the laager again.⁶¹

Saunders was in touch with Sitheku, whose messengers apparently knew nothing of such a move. Sitheku's people paid hut tax on 6 June at Melmoth without incident.⁶² Magistrate Armstrong at Nongoma reported on the 5th that there were no signs of unrest in his division and he had men all over: the only people at oSuthu were a company and a half of young men who had been there three weeks reaping crops. (Yet on 6 June he sent away the women and children who were at Nongoma.) Boast at Eshowe, Clarke at Hlabisa, and Gibson at Mahlabatini, also reported no signs of

54. SNA I/1/343: 1886/06, Mgt Eshowe to Mgt Melmoth and others, 7 and 9 June 1906.

55. OD, p 166: Mgt Melmoth to Cdt, 4 June 1906.

56. OD, p 166. Mgt Melmoth to Cdt, 5 June 1906.

57. GH 1466, 32: Synopsis 30/31 May 1906, report of OC ZFF; OD, p 159: Gov. to Secretary of State for Colonies, 8 June 1906.

58. Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, p 68. See also Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 285.

59. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 7 June 1906; ZA 28: CNA to PM, 12 June; to Mgt Nqutu, 14 June; and to Addison, 16 June 1906.

60. *Times of Natal*, 1 May 1906: "Zululand To-day".

61. ZA 28: CNA to PM, 12 June 1906.

62. OD, p 167: CNA to PM, 6 June 1906.

unrest in their divisions.⁶³ The rumour reached Eshowe by the morning of 5 June.⁶⁴ The moon was full on the 6th, and there was no rising. Nevertheless, on the 7th the people of Eshowe went into laager.⁶⁵

Saunders reported that the rumour was without substance. Sir Henry McCallum, the governor, supported him, although he deemed Dinuzulu's recent conduct less than satisfactory.⁶⁶ Yet the panic of the settlers was demoralising the natives.⁶⁷ The member of the legislative assembly for the district called for militia to garrison the settlements. Maritz's persistent reports could not be ignored, Saunders informed McKenzie, and requested that 50–100 mounted men be sent to Melmoth to reassure the people.⁶⁸ The prime minister ordered Saunders to go in person and deal with a panic among the settlers.⁶⁹ Saunders left Empandhleni on 8 June, and went to Melmoth and on the 9th to Eshowe.⁷⁰ He calmed the settlers, and blamed the scare on Woolls-Sampson.⁷¹ He reported that the alarm was groundless. Maritz was convinced that it was not. The government suggested on 9 June that Maritz be removed, but Saunders decided against it.⁷²

Saunders was too sanguine. There was no denying seditious elements were at work, with a rising in view. It is not unlikely one was being planned, albeit in a disjointed manner. Yet the would-be rebels were not to be moved until a force or forces from outside arrived to support them.

The abortive invasion of Natal

Mehlokazulu, chief of the Ngobese (Qungebe) tribe in the Nqutu Division, rebelled on 20 May, when he mustered over 500 armed men, belonging to his own and neighbouring tribes in the division and across the Mzinyathi in Natal, at Hlajakazi hill and doctored for war. On the night of 22/23 May he raided the Sibindi valley in Natal. Colonel Mackay, commander of the Helpmekaar Field Force, reacted by crossing into Zululand on 26 May, and striking before Mehlokazulu could perfect his arrangements, precipitating the *impi's* move into Nkandla.⁷³

63. OD, pp 166–7; ZA 28: CNA to OC ZFF, June 5, 1906. RSC III/3/5: 3647, Armstrong.

64. ZA 28: CNA to OC ZFF, 6 June 1906.

65. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 7 June 1906.

66. OD, p 159: Gov. to S/S, 8 June 1906.

67. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 7 June 1906; ZA 28: CNA to PM, 12 June 1906.

68. ZA 28: CNA to OC ZFF, 5 June 1906.

69. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 7 June 1906. ZA 28: CNA to PM, 12 June 1906.

70. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 8 June 1906. SNA /1/4/14: 3258/08, B. Colenbrander, "A Brief History of the Bambata Rebellion", of which there are MS and TS drafts in KCM 95/4, Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban.

71. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 7 June 1906; ZA 28: CNA to Mgt Nqutu, 14 June, and to Addison, 16 June 1906.

72. PM 102: C233/06, PM to CNA, 1 June, and reply, 10 June 1906.

73. See Synopses 17/18-30/31 May 1906, in GH 1465, 151-7, and 1466, 4-32; CSO 2599: C147/06, Mackay's Report; and Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 266–89. (Stuart was the militia intelligence officer attached to Mackay's column.)

On 29 May the *impi* arrived at Qudeni, and bivouacked in the Ngongoma forest at the head of the Gubazi stream.⁷⁴ Mehlokazulu sent a message to Dinuzulu that he had left home and taken the field with Bhambatha.⁷⁵ On the next day or perhaps on 1 June the various *izimpi* in the vicinity – Mehlokazulu's, Wohlo's, Mangathi's – united in the Kombe forest.⁷⁶

Bhambatha and Mangathi returned to Qudeni on the morning of 30 May.⁷⁷ They found Sukabhekhuluma at the Mfongosi. He was still suffering from the wound he had received a fortnight before. They told him that they had just come from oSuthu. Bhambatha said that Mehlokazulu and Lubudlungu had been given to him, and the *impi* must go to Nkandla.⁷⁸ The next day they joined Mehlokazulu.⁷⁹ The *impi* gathered at Mbuzo's Msamlomo kraal in the afternoon, and Mangathi addressed them:

I am here from Dinuzulu. I have been given the head position over everyone, including Bhambatha and Mehlokazulu. Mehlokazulu is a great man as you know. He is here today by direct orders from Dinuzulu. The magistrate at Melmoth has been killed. Two days will not pass now before you will see Dinuzulu himself. He orders you to obey Bhambatha. Obey him particularly

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74. GH 1466, 32: Synopsis May 30/31 1906, report of OC Umvoti Field Force. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, May 31, 1906. RSC III/3/5: 3280, Zidunge. Archives of the Native High Court (hereafter NHC) V/10/30: 91/07, Lubudlungu 11 July 1907. See also *Natal Mercury*, 4 June 1906: "Native Rebellion".
75. RSC III/3/5: 3279-81, Zidunge. PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 31 May 1906. AGO I/7/54: Tshwipana, 20 December 1908. Archives of the Magistrate and Commissioner, Weenen (hereafter 1/WEN) 1/4/12/1: 20/06, Mcitsho. See also RSC III/3/6:4158, Dinuzulu; 4785a, 4882, Mankulumana. Probably on or about 3 June messengers from Mehlokazulu arrived at oSuthu to report that he had taken the field with Bhambatha and the others (see AGO I/7/54: Tshwipana). Dinuzulu states (see RSC III/3/6: 4158-60) that he did not wish to see the messengers himself and Ndabankulu and Mdumba brought their message. Dinuzulu recalls that Mehlokazulu told him that he was wandering about the hills now, having been driven out of his kraal by the *impi*. He had wanted to go to the magistrate, but a European had advised him that he would be arrested if he did. Now he was prepared to fight and die with the rest. Dinuzulu's reply to Mehlokazulu was that he had nothing to do with the matter; he had told him earlier (when Mehlokazulu had been sent to him about the poll tax) that he had better go and see the authorities. He did not see why he reported to him now. Mehlokazulu's messengers were afraid to return to him because of the dangers involved, and later said that he did not expect any answer; so they remained at oSuthu (see RSC III/3/5: 3281, Zidunge.) Mankulumana explains (6: 4785-5) that they were not turned over to the authorities – because they had not actually been rebels! – they had hidden in Ndabankulu's hut, and were "chased away" later.
76. GH 1466, 32: Synopsis, 30/31 May 1906, report of OC UFF. See also AGO I/7/80: Batshise, 27 April 1908, and CC 111: Mxokozali.
77. Mangathi in AGO I/7/54: 8 November 1908; PM 104: C238/07: 23 November 1907; RSC III/3/4: 2810, 2818, 2820, 2843-4. AGO I/7/70: Mazwe, 10 December 1907; RSC III/3/1: 349, Cakijana; PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 1 June 1906.
78. Sukabhekhuluma in AGO I/7/68: Resumé and RSC III/3/1: 349; and 3: 1633-5.
79. AGO I/7/68: Resumé. I have followed Sukabhekhuluma's account here with some reluctance, for in the accounts it is not clear who joined whom, e.g. see RSC I/1/94: 1/07, *R. v. Uwohlo*, Uwohlo.

on his plans of attack, owing to his success in Natal at Mpanza. Your failure at [the] Bhobe fight was due to your disobeying orders.⁸⁰

Bhambatha came forward. "Mangathi speaks the truth", he said. "These words are Dinuzulu's own. Dinuzulu has also mentioned the indunas who are to be promoted".⁸¹ Mangathi broke in: "I have not forgotten that. I am waiting until the *impi* is altogether. All the *impi* is to arm and go and meet Gayede. I met Gayede's people at the oSuthu".⁸²

The rebels took the offensive.⁸³ On the night of 1/2 June a rebel *impi*, comprising about ten companies, moved down from eKombe, and at

80. AGO I/7/68: Resumé. Mangathi is more succinct at Dinuzulu's trial (see RSC III/3/4: 2869-70): "I came back from the oSuthu. Go on, continue your fighting. Your complaint was that you could not see anybody who had come from the oSuthu. Here you are." He also said that he was angry, and he knew he was deceiving his listeners by telling them he had returned with authority from Dinuzulu to continue fighting. See also Abela, of Kula's tribe, who states (see CC 111) that Mangathi addressed the *impi* at eKombe, and asked those from Nqutu why they had armed. They replied, because of the poll tax; whereupon Mangathi said that Mankulumana had told his *impi* to go home and pay, Dinuzulu had had nothing to do with the rebellion; but Mehlokazulu's men said they would not go home.
81. During one of their interviews at oSuthu Dinuzulu named new leaders for the *impi* in Nkandla. Bhambatha said that the rebels had lost the battle of Bhobe (5 May) because they did not have good leaders. If the *impi* had been organised by him, the outcome would have been different. Dinuzulu said that two leaders should be appointed from each tribe. Bhambatha suggested them. Dinuzulu knew them. Some had been *izinduna* in his father's time. In Siganda's tribe they were Lunyana and Makahleleka and Mganu kaMqalana. In Ndube's they were Macala and Nomandindi. And of course, Mangathi. Siganda had already made him an *induna*, which Dinuzulu confirmed. See AGO I/7/54: Mangathi, 8 November 1908. (I have changed "indunas" to "leaders".) The official who was recording Mangathi's statement (apparently W.S. Bigby, the chief prosecutor for the city of Pietermaritzburg) may have expressed doubt about it, for Mangathi states: "No one could invent a yarn like this, and it would not be possible for me to convey a message from Dinuzulu which was not given". Mangathi seems to be correct, for Sukabhekhuluma and Nsuze bear him out.
82. AGO I/7/68: Resumé. Sukabhekhuluma states (see RSC III/3/3: 1635-6) that they went to Macala, evidently meaning the units then in the forest with Siganda as well; indeed, the leaders whom Dinuzulu had nominated belonged to those units. Sukabhekhuluma states that both Bhambatha and Mangathi spoke and the latter, without relating the above plans, said only: "We shall finish what we have to say when we have collected all the *impi* at Macala". Tulubezi states (see 1: 196) that Mangathi and Sukabhekhuluma, but not Bhambatha, addressed the assemblage. Abela states (see CC 111) that Bhambatha was present when Mangathi addressed the *impi*. Sukabhekhuluma states that after his address Mangathi ordered that they should kill stock for food – probably rations for the march – and after that notice was sent for the men to muster.
83. Mehlokazulu was apparently not in favour of the movement, because he did not want to leave his women and children behind in Zululand (see PM 104: C238/07, Mangathi, 23 November 1907; also RSC III/3/1: 349, Cakijana). However, he did not oppose it. Mangathi and not Mehlokazulu appears to have been in command of this operation. Their objective is not altogether clear. Mangathi says that Bhambatha did his utmost to get the *impi* to invade Natal and start trouble by taking cattle from the Boers (see PM 104: C238/07, Mangathi, 23 November 1907) but Sukabhekhuluma says that the aim was to get Gayede's and Hlangabeza's tribes to rebel. Both Bhambatha and Mangathi said, "Let the *impi* cross over".

daybreak reached the Thukela at the Loza drift. The government river guard – seven men of Gayede’s tribe – ran away and hid at the *impi*’s approach. The mounted men remained on the north bank and off saddled, Mehlokazulu with them. The men on foot crossed the river, but then Mehlokazulu told them to halt, and they sat down under the right bank, made fires and ate their food.

There was no enemy, and there was no fighting. The *impi* waited. The river guard must have given some alarm, for members of Gayede’s tribe started to collect at Gayede’s brother Nomgwaqo’s kraal. Meanwhile the headman Sitoto appeared, and talked to Bhambatha and Mangathi. He advised them not to cross the river. Gayede was ill, and his people were not sympathetic to the rebellion and would not assist them. Bhambatha asked him if they did not know that Dinuzulu was at the back of the *impi*. He proposed that the *impi* go towards Krantzkop, kill the Boers and take their cattle. Sitoto answered that there were four columns of Europeans at the top. The two rebel leaders did not know whether Sitoto was bluffing or not. They considered. It looked as though the whites would cut off the *impi*. They returned to the north side of the river and reported to Mehlokazulu. Sitoto went with them, and talked to Mehlokazulu as well.⁸⁴ For his part, Sukabhekhuluma says that he did not like their remaining there while the whites would move against them. He told Mehlokazulu: “You will kill us and finish us”; and: “You have got us here like this. White people are on both sides. I am a lame man. What is to become of us?” The men on the far side

(RSC III/3/1: 349, Cakijana. In CC 111: MRS, Sukabhekhuluma says that Mehlokazulu, with Bhambatha and Mangathi, said the *impi* should go to meet the Amakabela, but in MRS rev., that Bhambatha and Mangathi decided to do so! See also AGO I/7/68: Resumé and AGO I/780: Mbulali.) Nomgwaqo said that their aim was to recruit men (see GH 1466, 42: Synopsis 1/2 June 1906, report of Mgt Krantzkop; and 45, Mgt Krantzkop to Militia, 2 June 1906), and the headman Sitoto, who parleyed with them, said it also was to capture cattle which Mpumela’s people had moved across the river (ibid, 66: Synopsis 8/9 June 1906, report of Intelligence, Krantzkop). All these aims were compatible, of course. It is also not clear whether the entire *impi* was concentrated for the offensive across the river or divided into several units and that which went to Lozeni was the largest of the lot (see AGO I/7/68: Resumé, GH 1466, 62: Synopsis 7/8 June 1906, report of OC UFF. See also GH 1466, 48: Synopsis 3/4 June 1906, reports of OC UFF and Intelligence, Krantzkop; 50: 4/5 June, OC ZFF; and 53: 5/6 June, OC UFF and Intelligence Nkandla; PM 102: C230/06, OC ZFF to Militia, 5 June 1906. On the 7th the OC UFF reported (GH 1466, 62: Synopsis 7/8 June 1906) that the *izimpi* of Bhambatha, Mehlokazulu and Mangathi were at Manyana, Macala, and Jokweni, respectively.)

84. PM 104; C238/07, Mangathi, 23 November 1907; AGO I/780: Manhlanhlata, 8 May 1908; Mbulali, 13 March and 6 April 1908; Toni Sibisi, 23 March 1908. Tulubezi in AGO I/780: 8 May 1908, and RSC III/3/1: 195-200; *Natal Mercury*, 8 June 1906: “Native Rebellion, News from Krantzkop”; *Times of Natal*, 5 June 1906: “Krantzkop Item”. Sitoto was not bluffing; Gayede was indeed sick and the Umvoti Field Force was encamped at Groenkop, about fifteen km to the south. Gayede asked to be taken up to Krantzkop on a stretcher. See also GH 1466, 42: Synopsis 1/2 June 1906, report of Mgt Krantzkop; 45: Mgt Krantzkop to Militia, 2 June 1906; and 66: Synopsis 8/9 June 1906, report of Intelligence Krantzkop.

of the river were recalled. A few of Gayede's tribe joined them, and said that others would follow, but Gayede was ill.⁸⁵

The *impi* continued down the left bank of the Thukela towards the Manyana stream, spent the night of 2/3 June at Mude's kraal, and returned to eKombe the following morning.⁸⁶ The impact of the demonstration – for that was all that the “invasion” amounted to militarily – on Natal was almost negligible.⁸⁷ It spent the next few days attacking “traitors” in the wards of Mbuza, Mjantsi, Thulwana, and Matshana kaMondisa.⁸⁸

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85. Sukabhekhuluma in CC 111: MRS and MRS rev.; AGO I/7/68: Resumé and RSC III/3/3: 349. If Sukabhekhuluma, a commoner, dared speak thus to Mehlokazulu, Mehlokazulu must seem weak and vacillating indeed. According to Sukabhekhuluma, Mehlokazulu next said: “The *impi* will now be arranged, and officers appointed”. Mehlokazulu did the appointing. He made Sukabhekhuluma an officer, but Sukabhekhuluma declined because of his bad leg. Sukabhekhuluma is a major source of information, but the special court regarded him as an unsavoury character and an unreliable witness, and his evidence has to be treated with the greatest care.
86. See also Sukabhekhuluma in CC 111: MRS and MRS rev.; AGO I/7/68: Resumé, RSC III/3/1: 349, and for what it is worth, A.Z. Zungu, *USukubekhuluma and the Bhambatha Rebellion* (CSSALL, Durban, 1997, transl. A.C.T. Mayekiso, original edition 1933), pp 27–29; AGO I/7/80: Batshise, Ladamuka Mhadu, Manhlanhlata, Mbulali, Toni Sibiya, Tuluzezi; and *Natal Mercury*, 8 June 1906: “Native Rebellion: News from Krantzkop”. A Mudu ka Simelana is no. 151 on the “List, Nkandla Division. Native Compensation Claims Other than Cattle and Huts. Rebellion 1906, dealt with by Magistrate Nkandla”, in SNA I/1/379: 2876/06. Abela states (in CC 111) that the *impi* went to the Thukela and back to eKombe on the same day. There is a doublet in connection with the *impi*'s demonstration at the Thukela, as told by Nsuze to Stuart in 1912 (see C. de B. Webb and J.B. Wright (eds), *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples*, 5 vols (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1976–2001) (hereafter *JSA*) 5, pp 161-162), and reproduced with some embellishments in 1913 (Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 315). It is misdated. Perhaps Stuart did not have time before a publication deadline to check Nsuze's story and make corrections. His own additions are inexplicable.
87. The rebel demonstration at the Thukela on 2 June produced some activity amongst the rebel deserters lurking in Mpanza. Reports of Bhambatha's return to the valley flew about. On the 1 June one said that several mounted men and armed followers had entered the valley. A little later on one of Sibindi's headmen reported overhearing a conversation among women in the hut of Skonyana, one of Bhambatha's tribesmen thought to be loyal to the government, that Bhambatha had slept in the hut on 1 June, at which time he was on the way to Mpanza with a view to raising the tribe and killing his brother and successor Funizwe (see GH 1466, 53; Synopsis 5/6 June 1906, report of OC UFF. See also 53: 5/6 June, report of Intelligence Greytown, about a false report of his being at Mpanza.) The number of men was estimated at about 50, but spies discounted the report of Bhambatha's being there (see *Natal Mercury*, 6 June 1906: “The Illusive Bambatha”). In any event the Umvoti District Reserves mobilised on the evening of the 5th, and next day they and the acting chief Magwababa's levy drove the bush in the valley. They found no rebels (GH 1466, 57; Synopsis 6/7 June, 1906, report of DO Greytown; *Natal Mercury*, 6 June: “The Illusive Bambatha”, and 9, 1906: “False Alarm in Greytown”). Rumour then put the rebels in motion on the night of 7 June towards the farm Waterfall, on the Mhlopeni river about six miles west of Greytown, where loot stock was being kept. A scratch force of Reserves and school cadets on horseback and Natal Royal Rifles on foot, about 100 in all, were dispatched thither on the morning of 8 June, but again, found no rebels (see CSO

The impi moves to Mome

Mehlokazulu's *impi* was having things pretty much its own way. This was not the case with Sigananda's *impi* in the Nkandla forest.

The deputation which reported the burning of the grave to Dinizulu probably returned to Nkandla on 27 or 28 May. It is not unlikely their message dealt with impending offensive involving Mehlokazulu.⁸⁹ This would be gratifying to Sigananda and Ndabaningi, if they understood the significance of a strategic shift in operations. Whether or not they did, the offensive did not begin in time to divert the enemy from destructive operations in Sigananda's ward. From 29 May to 7 June the Zululand Field Force systematically "drove" the Nkandla forests. In most cases the *impi* avoided fighting, knowing they could win. There were sharp engagements at Thathe on the 29 May and Manzipambana on 3 June when difficult ground favoured the defenders.⁹⁰ They were beaten nevertheless, although some regarded Manzipambana a near thing.⁹¹

The destruction wrought by enemy raids and sweeps added another enemy. "We are fighting against famine and the white men".⁹² Livestock could be and often was moved out of the way of the militia and levies, but not all; much was lost. Kraals and gardens could not be moved. Huts, crops

3040: OC Greytown to Militia, June 8, 1906, two telegrams). See also GH 1466, 66: Synopsis 8/9 June 1906, report of OC Greytown; *Natal Mercury*, 9 June 1906: "False Alarm in Greytown".) The number of rebels hiding at Mpanza may have been increased by deserters from the *impi* in Zululand, when Sigananda's and Bhambatha's men shifted from Nkandla to Qudeni on the 6th and 7th of June and, of course, there was an infusion of fugitives after Mome (see PM 102: C230/06, OC ZFF to Def., 9 June 1906.)

88. See GH 1466, 38-9: Synopsis 31 May/1 June 1906, report of CNA; 48: 1/2 June, reports of OCs UFF and ZFF' 50: 4/5 June, reports of OC ZFF and Intelligence Mackay's Column; 53: 5/6 June, reports of OC ZFF and Intelligence Krantzkop; and 62: 7/8 June, report of Intelligence ZFF. Also see Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 330; Colenbrander, "Bambata Rebellion"; AGO I/7/68: Resumé; PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM 6 and 7 June 1906; SNA I/6/26: GH385/06, Mbomana and Ndhlekeza, and 27: GH292/06, Matshana kaMondisa, Borala, Mcololeka; NHC V/10/29: 29/07, Julia; RSC I/1/95: 1/07, Jana and Nqimba; ZA 23: R25/07, Mazombe and Sambana; and Archives of the Magistrate and Commissioner, Nkandhla (hereafter 1/NKA) 1/5/1/2: 21/06, Mapoyisa; and 55: Silosibi.
89. CC 126: *R. v. Sigananda*: Ndabaningi, Njinjini. According to Njinjini Sigananda commented: "This is a matter I know nothing about. How could I know? I am an old man. I merely sent you as I am his man here and the grave has been burnt". Njinjini reported what had been said to Sigananda, and then took Ntshingwayo to him. Njinjini states that Ntshingwayo repeated what he had said, but Ndabaningi states that Ntshingwayo brought back a private message from the king to his father.
90. See Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, pp 60–77; and Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 251–5, 280–5.
91. RSC III/3/3: 1069-70, Mgunguleza.
92. *Natal Mercury*, 24 May 1906: "Starvation Rampant". Six of Ngobizembe's men captured on 1 June said that Sigananda's offer to surrender had been a ruse to get the enemy force away from his grain supplies (see GH 1466, 37: Synopsis 31 May/1 June 1906, report of Intelligence Krantzkop). See also Zungu, *USukubekhuluma*, p 26 on the hunger which followed after the loss of the grave.

and stores were destroyed. The crops had not been fully reaped when the enemy began destroying them.⁹³ It was in these circumstances that Sigananda's *impi* went to Qudeni between 4 and 7 June.⁹⁴

There was reason to be optimistic now that the different forces had combined. The rebel army was stronger than ever before, and presumably Dinuzulu would add more weight soon. There was much talk about taking on the Europeans. Defiant young men spoke contemptuously of the white men. It was said that the British king refused to send his soldiers to fight the Zulus. Therefore they had only to contend with Natal troops, whom they could defeat using the tactics of Mpanza and Manzipambana. Dinuzulu had not taken an active role in the rebellion because Bhambatha had started too soon. Now the crops were in, and Dinuzulu was going to stir up the people. Gayede's and Hlangabeza's people would join in.⁹⁵

The rebels were massed and ready, but they lacked unity of command and, apparently, a clear strategy. Mangathi's effort to implement Dinuzulu's plan to invade Natal had come to naught, and Mehlokazulu was not quite the leader that Dinuzulu and the others had expected. Moreover Dinuzulu himself *still* had not appeared, although Mangathi and Bhambatha made out that his coming was imminent.⁹⁶

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93. See Thompson, "Crossroads of War" (note 9). An example of what could be lost in a kraal is given (CC 111) by one Mtshinane, of Mpumela's tribe, who fled to Natal on or about 5 May, and whose kraal was burnt soon after – by which side is not clear. It contained six living huts and five storage huts; these included clothing, blankets, mats, boxes, and ten bags of maize and ten of sorghum. The hardship and uncertainty wrought by the rebellion are further revealed by the statistics of the hut tax collection statistics for 1906 (see SNA I/1/360: 93/07, Hut Tax Arrears, 1906). In the Colony of Natal, with total arrears of £3923.10s they amounted to £263.4s (7 %) in Umvoti, and £744.2s (19 %) in Krantzkop. In the Province of Zululand, with total arrears of £4407.14s, they amounted to £1936.4s (44 %) in Nkandla, most of it due from convicted rebels, £1119.6s (25 %) in Eshowe, and £652.8s (15 %) in Nqutu.
94. The *impi* began leaving the forest on the night after Manzipambana. Bhambatha's and Ndube's men went first, to Macala. See *JSA* vol 5, p. 161: Nsuze; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 295, 314; CSO 2599: C147/06, McKenzie's Report; 1/WEN 1/4/2/1: 20/06, Mcitsho, Nqakamatshe. GH 1466, 62: Synopsis 7/8 June 1906, report of Intelligence ZFF, and 66: 8/9 June 1906, report of Intelligence McKenzie; *Natal Mercury*, 9 June 1906: "Field Force Resting". Not all went to eKombe. Enough remained near Sibhudeneni to attract the enemy, who made sweeps in that direction on 4 June, and again on the 6th and 7th. The later drives netted very little, and McKenzie stopped them. Makubalo's men were hiding in the bush near their kraals. (see GH 1466, 57: Synopsis 6/7 June 1906, report of R.H. Addison.)
95. GH 1466, 53: Synopsis, 5/6 June 1906, report of Intelligence Krantzkop. *Natal Mercury*, 8 June 1906: "News from Krantzkop". *Natal Witness*, 9 June 1906: "Rebel Operations".
96. Sukabhkehuluma says that messengers came from Dinuzulu, who was with his *impi* at Matshensikazi and told them to go to the forest (see CC 111: MRS and MRS rev.); and that Mangathi said that Dinuzulu's *impi* was at Matshensikazi (see Resumé).

On the night of 8/9 June the *impi* moved from Qudeni to Macala,⁹⁷ a distance of about ten miles over rough and broken country.

The *impi* at Macala was the strongest force the rebels ever assembled in the field. Estimates of its strength range from seven large companies to 35 companies, about 600 and 1 200–1 500 men, respectively.⁹⁸

At Macala, cattle were killed, and the *impi* ate and rested on the 9th. Siganda's son and heir Ndabaningi arrived, accompanied by Ntshingwayo and Maqandlyana, who had been members of the deputation to oSuthu, for the purpose of taking it to Mome. They said they were afraid that the enemy's relentless searching would discover Siganda; unless the *impi* came to his aid he would be captured soon. Bhambatha and Mehlokazulu agreed. The supplicants added that the enemy's troops were wandering about the forest like goats. They could be killed easily, just as they had been at Manzipambana.⁹⁹

The *impi* was reorganised at this time. The men were sorted afresh into regiments, and new leaders were appointed to them.¹⁰⁰

At some point about this time, Mangathi chose to announce Dinuzulu's appointments to command. He had said that he would on the 31st. They applied only to Siganda's *impi*, which had fared badly under the inept Ndabaningi, Siganda's chief son and heir. The new leaders included Makahleka, Lunyana, and Mganu of Siganda's tribe, and

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97. A march by night from eKombe to Mome via Macala, a distance of about 25 kilometers over rough terrain, seems utterly impracticable, yet this is what the colonial accounts in the literature would have us believe. For this reason the rebel accounts bear close examination. See Bosman, *Natal Rebellion*, p 79; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 296–297; Colenbrander, "Bambata Rebellion"; CSO 2599: C147/06, McKenzie's Report; AGO I/7/68: Resumé; AGO I/7/54: Tshwapana; and 70: Elijah Magwaza (also in CD 3998, p 150); RSC I/1/94: 1/07, Wohlo; NHC V/10/30: 91/07, Lubudhlungu; 1/WEN 1/4/2/1: 20/06, Mcoitsho and Nqakamatshé; GH 1466 62: Synopsis 7/8 June 1906, report of OC UFF and 66: 8/9 June 1906, report of Intelligence McKenzie.
98. Addison gives 600 (see PM 101: C156/06, Addison to CNA) and Stuart gives 1200 to 1500 (*History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 316). Addison says seven very large companies (see SNA I/4/16: C205, Addison to CNA, 15 June 1906); Tshwapana about 20 companies (see AGO I/7/54), while Nqakamatshé says "more than 20" (see 1/WEN 1/4/2/1: 20/06), and Sukabhekhuluma says 35 (see Resumé).
99. GH 1462 and SNA I/6/29: Mangathi, 18 December 1907; RSC I/1/94: 1/07, Wohlo; and AGO I/7/54: Tshwapana. Ndabambi kaLurungu states (CC 111) that Siganda sent him to Macala and he fetched them back. See also *R. v. Siganda*: Polomba; CC 111: Makolwa; and PM 101: C156/06, Addison to CNA, 11 June 1906.
100. *JSA*, vol. 5, p 162. Nsuze maintains that just before they started, Bhambatha and Mangathi formed them into companies, and said "that the Felapakati, Hazelwengwenya, Mavalana and Mbokodwebomvu regiments were to be picked out, but the Kandempemvu and other older men were to proceed together". Wohlo states (see RSC I/1/94: 1/07) that the men were sorted out into fresh regiments and leaders were appointed, but he is not precise as to the time and place.

Macala of Ndube's. The precise hierarchy is unclear, but in any case Ndabaningi was left out of it.¹⁰¹

What did the leaders of this *impi* have in mind? Every one of them except Sigananda was present at Macala. Yet there is no clear evidence of a plan of operations. Perhaps they had none. According to Sukabhekhuluma "there was a dispute as to where to move to, some saying to Ngobizembe, some to Bhambatha, and others to other places."¹⁰² Wohlo, who commanded Mbuzo's men, states that the object was to get into the forest, and nothing was said about what they would do next.¹⁰³

The obvious immediate strategy, which Ndabaningi and his companions suggested, was to return to the Nkandla forest and try to destroy the enemy in detail when he entered again, as at Manzipambana.¹⁰⁴ The succour of Sigananda was an incidental matter, whatever its emotional import.¹⁰⁵ The *impi* could not stay at Mome. It would soon starve because there was not enough food.

An alternative strategy was one in conformance with what Dinuzulu had said about taking the offensive and invading in Natal, notwithstanding the contretemps at Lozeni on the 2nd. It was not incompatible with the initiative being taken in Eshowe and farther to the east. Indeed, it might be the catalyst of uprising there. A single statement suggests that Bhambatha intended to attack the enemy at the grave. If so, then the *impi* would only pause at Mome, and then be on its way to the east.¹⁰⁶

According to Nsuze, one of Sigananda's men who was present but would not have been party to the councils of war and six years later was probably repeating garbled hearsay, the plan was to move to the Mome stronghold and rest for a day or two, then issue forth in raids against the traitor chiefs in the vicinity, attacking and killing them as Shaka would have done, and thus gain the allegiance of their peoples. The removal of the

101. See also Sukabhekhuluma in CC 111: MRS; AGO I/7/68: Resumé; and RSC III/3/1: 349, and 3: 1775; Ndabaningi and Maginga in *R. v. Sigananda*, and Mazwe in RSC III/3/4: 2691; also *JSA* vol. 5, p 162, Nsuze; Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 314; and SNA I/6/27: GH284/06, Nkonywana. According to Nsuze, Mangathi said that Dinuzulu had appointed Macala and Mganu to be his *izinduna*, commanding the *impi*. Macala as the older was the general *induna*, and "Mganu was to be [word omitted] Mavalana regiment".

102. See MRS.

103. RSC I/1/94: 1/07, Wohlo.

104. See Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 315, 316; and *Natal Mercury* 18 June 1906: "Native Rebellion: Details of Mome Fight".

105. On Mehlokazulu and Bhambatha coming to the forest to "fetch him out" see GH 569: G585/06, Maj. Gen. T.E. Stephenson's Notes on the Zululand Field Force, May and June 1906, p 156.

106. Addison states (see SNA I/4/16: C205/06, Addison to CNA, 15 June 1906) that a rebel who surrendered at Macala (on the 13th) told him that Bhambatha was in command and decided to attack the camp, which he supposed still to be at the king's grave, but some of the men protested, as they had not put their "kits" in a place of safety; however, Bhambatha paid no attention to them.

enemy camp at the grave to a new site at the Halambu would have encouraged this line of thought.¹⁰⁷

Whatever the long-term plan, no one questioned the first move to Mome. Disaster followed.

The uprising undone and Dinuzulu's quandary

The defeat at Mome appears to have undone whatever plan there was for the uprising in southeastern Zululand.

Mehlokazulu's *impi* was destroyed. Dinuzulu's *impi* was stillborn. The prospect of a greater rebellion dissolved with news of Mome. The magistrate at Empangeni, A. R.R. Turnbull, said that it put his court *induna* "in a sort of ecstasy".¹⁰⁸ Loyal natives could breathe more easily again.

Dinuzulu reported to the authorities on 14 June that the fugitive Sukane had arrived at his kraal – he did not say when. Dinuzulu expressed indignation at Sukane's coming near him, and said that he would hand him over to magistrate at Nongoma.¹⁰⁹ Dinuzulu did send him on the 22nd, after he had "examined him thoroughly". He said that Sukane had been "seized by a fright, which caused him to come up to me, and he also wished to get something to pay in case he may be fined".¹¹⁰

Sukane was returned to Eshowe, where he was charged and tried on 26 July, found guilty, fined £20 (or four months imprisonment), deposed as chief, and ordered to remove from the division.¹¹¹

107. *JSA*, vol. 5, p 177: Nsuzi. Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, p 316. See also Zungu, *USukabekhuluma*, pp 28–29. Nsuzi was a mine of useful information for Stuart, but his memory of events after six years was sometimes faulty, and Stuart repeats some of his mistakes.

108. ZA 34: VR29/06, Mgt Empangeni to CNA, 19 June 1906. Mkonto, chief of the smaller Cebekhulu tribe in the division, asked Turnbull on 13 June to tell the commissioner to keep a force at the magistracy for a month or two, until the present trouble in Zululand was over. He was afraid, because people had threatened to raid his and the Mthethwa chief Sokwetshata's cattle, because they had obeyed him and been first to pay the poll tax. Now that Mehlokazulu was dead, why did Dinuzulu not personally intervene to help suppress the rebellion? (see Mgt Empangeni to CNA, 13 June 1906).

109. *OD*, pp 186–187: CNA to PM, 14 June 1906. Saunders wanted sworn statements about the intimidation of Mkonto, and Turnbull summoned him. Mkonto appeared at the magistracy on 18 June. He said that the threats were based on rumours which women of his tribe told him after visiting the locations of the chiefs Biyela, Mpukunyoni and Ngokwana. Turnbull told Saunders that nothing definite would be obtained from the natives until the rebellion was completely broken (see ZA 34: CR29/06, Mgt Empangeni to CNA, 13 June 1906).

110. SNA I/1/343: 1886/06, Dinuzulu to Mgt Nongoma, 22 June 1906.

111. SNA I/1/343: 1886/06, Proceedings in *R. v. Sukane*, 26 July 1906; Gov.'s decision, 6 September 1906; and Mgt Eshowe to CNA, 11 September 1906. See also *AR* 1906, p 41.

There was still Bhejana, the other Cebekhulu chief in the Lower Umfolosi Division. Clarke's detachment of Natal Police was ordered back from Somkele to Empangeni,¹¹² and the commissioner, who was accompanying Dinuzulu's delegation to Pietermaritzburg, asked Clarke to bring Bhejana to Eshowe.¹¹³ Clarke informed Bhejana that Bhambatha had been killed and Siganda had surrendered,¹¹⁴ and Bhejana agreed to meet him at his kraal.¹¹⁵ On the morning of 17 June the police arrived at the kraal, and were told Bhejana was hiding in the swamps. They drove off 24 head of cattle, which Clarke said he could collect at the magistracy.¹¹⁶

Armstrong at Nongoma informed Dinuzulu on 19 June that Bhejana had run away in the direction of oSuthu and to send him to the magistracy if he appeared there. Dinuzulu replied that he had not seen Bhejana since his sister's wedding in January.¹¹⁷

The police continued to patrol, and visited all the chiefs in the neighbourhood.¹¹⁸ On 20 June, Clarke asked McKenzie for another 50 police. McKenzie replied that a small force would provoke rather than deter an outbreak, and ordered three squadrons of the Transvaal Mounted Rifles to Empangeni. Turnbull protested that the situation was not *that* serious: prompt action would suffice to forestall Bhejana's rallying the malcontents. The commandant cancelled the orders, but McKenzie moved a squadron to Ginginhlovu just in case.¹¹⁹

Meanwhile Saunders returned from Pietermaritzburg with Dinuzulu's delegation. Mankulumana and the others offered to go to Bhejana's hiding place and bring him out. Saunders took them to Empangeni on the 25th. Their presence was enough. He summoned Bhejana, who appeared the following morning. All was quiet. Saunders returned to Eshowe on 27 June with Bhejana in tow, and Clarke returned to Pietermaritzburg, followed by the police detachment a few days later.¹²⁰

112. Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", II, p 19.

113. See Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", II, p 19; CSO 3040 and PM 102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 17 June 1906.

114. Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", II, p 19.

115. CSO 3040 and PM102: C228/06, CNA to PM, 17 June 1906. Clarke and Saunders may be giving different versions of the same thing.

116. Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", II, p 19. Bhejana's account in RSC III/3/7: 5992-4 is confused, but in the main does not contradict the official version given here.

117. AGO I/7/78: F13, Mgt Nongoma to Dinuzulu, 19 June 1906, and marginal note.

118. Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", II, p 19.

119. See also CSO 2599: C147/06, McKenzie's Report; GH 1466, 115, and PM 102: C226/06, Mgt Empangeni to Militia, 21 June 1906; CSO 3040 and PM 102: C229/06, CNA to PM, 22 June 1906. See also Stuart, *History of the Zulu Rebellion*, pp 339-40 and note on p 359, which disagree in details.

120. CSO 3040 and PM 102; C229/06: CNA to PM, 26 June 1906. Also see PM 102: C230/06, Synopsis 25/26 June 1906, CNA's report. Also Clarke, "My Career in South Africa", II, p 19.

On 24 July Bhejana was deposed as chief.¹²¹ In August he was banished from the district.¹²²

Mome came as a surprise and a disappointment to Dinuzulu, but at least the situation in the east had not matured to the point that he could be compromised by it; and, of course, Mehlokazulu and Bhambatha were in no position to reveal anything.

The report of the assembly of headmen and the visit of Bhambatha at oSuthu, which the Nongoma magistrate had transmitted on 29 May, was just the first of a series of similar ones which progressively incriminated Dinuzulu in the eyes of the government. The commissioner and the magistrate wanted to believe that Dinuzulu was loyal. They were astonished by the report. Armstrong vouched for the informant (whose identity still remains unknown) and the import of the report was such that Sir Henry invited Dinuzulu to Pietermaritzburg for an interview. He would give an account of his conduct in person, and his obedience in coming would demonstrate his obedience to the supreme chief, the governor.

A message was despatched to oSuthu on 31 May. In response Dinuzulu expressed his willingness to attend, but pleaded ill health. He would consult his headmen, who had, of course, to be assembled. Five days later the government wanted a firm answer. Dinuzulu said that he had only just met the headmen, and he wanted to meet them again, but had postponed the meeting because one of his children had died. This was too much for Saunders. He sent a written message, demanding a definite reply. The headmen met and insisted that Dinuzulu was too ill to travel. (Also they may have feared that he would be arrested if he went to Pietermaritzburg.) Dinuzulu sent a delegation to Nongoma. He apologised for the delay. He asked that a large deputation be allowed to go to Pietermaritzburg in his stead, and when he was well he would go himself. They invited Armstrong to come to oSuthu and see for himself, which he did, and he agreed with their diagnosis. Saunders supported Dinuzulu's request. On 9 June it was arranged that a delegation of headmen, led by Mankulumana, would go to Pietermaritzburg, with authority to speak for Dinuzulu.¹²³

Dinuzulu's explanations of his delay in answering the supreme chief's summons may be taken at face value, but it should not be forgotten that the train of events elsewhere during the first week of June may well have encouraged him to procrastinate.

121. AR, 1906, p 41.

122. SNA I/1/367: 1116/07, no. 41: Report of Mgt Lower Umfolozi for 1906.

123. OD, p 126, Gov. to S/S 1 June 1906, pp 142–44; CNA to PM, 29 May 1906, pp 164–1655; CNA to PM, 2 June 1906, p 165; CNA to PM, 6 June 1906, p 169; Gov. to S/S, 9 June, 1906, p 171; Gov. to S/S, 12 June 1906, p 182; Gov. to S/S, 12 June 1906, pp 183, 185; CNA to PM, 5 June 1906, pp 191–192; CNA to PM, 8 June 1906. RSC III/3/3: 1472, Daniels, and 1987, Freeman; 5: 3546, Armstrong, and 4083-4, Dinuzulu; and 6: 4732-4, Mankulumana.

On Monday 11 June, Armstrong and clerk of the court Frederick Freeman went to oSuthu to tell Dinuzulu about Mome. Dinuzulu did not seem to be ill, but he was not his usual jolly self. Armstrong offered him a cigar, as he often did, but they did not smoke. Armstrong talked to Dinuzulu with only the *induna* Mahlatini present with him in the tent. He told Dinuzulu about Mome. Dinuzulu seemed slightly distressed by it, but he had a very peculiar expression. The only question he asked was how the Europeans knew that Mehlokazulu had been killed.

Dinizulu asked why Armstrong had sent away the women and children at Nongoma. (He had written privately to Armstrong, probably on the 7th, saying that he hoped it did not signify fear of a sinister design on his part, and, probably when he visited, Armstrong assured him that it did not.) He seemed rather hurt that the magistrate did not trust him. Armstrong answered that his children were going to school; and the others were going on holiday. A white farmer who had left was going to another farm, which belonged to his wife. Not true, said Dinuzulu: they were running away because of a report which was being circulated that there was going to be an attack. Why did the magistrate kill him by letting them go? The government would think that he was going to attack and would believe the story that he had become a rebel.

There followed a general conversation. Dinuzulu says that it was friendly: they sat in the tent talking and laughing until lunch time. Armstrong and Freeman were not prepared for what happened next. Dinuzulu got up from his chair and went outside, where there were many people about. He said: "There is a green snake. Kill it!" or something to that effect. The particular type of green snake, *nyandezulu*, was a non-venomous one associated with ancestors, and tradition did not permit its destruction. "Nyandezulu" was also Armstrong's nickname. Armstrong and Freeman got up and went outside. They asked Dinuzulu what he meant. "Oh! There was a snake which has gone into those rocks", said Dinuzulu. He pointed to some stones by an unfinished building, but Freeman did not see anyone trying to kill a snake there.

The two went to the visitors' house and had lunch, and returned to the tent. There was another conversation. Perhaps it was at this time that they talked about the arrangements for the delegation to go to Pietermaritzburg. Between two and three o'clock Armstrong and Freeman left.

They were waiting for their horses to be brought, when they heard Dinuzulu say to those who were with him: "He gives me things to smoke of which he does not partake himself". Freeman understood this to mean that Dinuzulu may have thought that the cigar was poisoned.

Again there seemed to be a lot of people about. The horses were brought, and the two were about to mount when they saw a company, about 100 men, carrying assegais and shields come running up to the kraal. They formed as the visitors mounted and rode away. They did not salute, but began to sing and dance. Armstrong says that he felt "nervous" and

“uncomfortable”. They rode quickly past the dancers. Freeman thought that Armstrong was afraid that Dinuzulu meant to kill him. Armstrong says that he did not think anything would happen to them at oSuthu, but it might on the way back to Nongoma. The two reached Nongoma that evening without mishap.¹²⁴

Siyikiwe was in confinement, but heard that the *impi* had been scattered at Mome. She sent for Mgwaqo, one of Dinuzulu’s principal counsellors, and told him (outside her hut) to ask Dinuzulu if he could give her any news of Bhambatha. Mgwaqo brought back the reply: Dinuzulu said that he had heard that the *impi* had gone wrong at Nkandla and many had been killed. He did not know if Bhambatha was one of them.¹²⁵

The prospect of an uprising supported by an *impi*, whether real or not, dissolved as a result of Mome and the government’s summons of Dinuzulu. One may well imagine Dinuzulu’s frustration and anger as plans unravelled. He might have wanted to kill Armstrong, but, of course, he dare not do so. In the event he only scared him. As for Bhambatha, it was probably with relief that Dinuzulu learnt, some days later, that he had been silenced in the same manner as Mehlokazulu, and that Mangathi had escaped and was on the run.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to illuminate a hitherto hidden aspect of the Zulu Rebellion of 1906. Its thesis is that matters had reached a critical point by early June. Dinuzulu was now playing an active role in the rebellion, and rebel leaders pursued an ambitious strategy.

This strategy was twofold in character. On the one hand, various forces already in the field were combining in order to take the offensive, with a view to transferring the war to Natal. On the other, an uprising in the southeast of Zululand, which would expand the rebellion and undermine the colonial regime, was being planned. The offensive was directed to the Natal border in late May and culminated in a demonstration at the Thukela on 2 June. Then, as plans for the uprising neared fruition in the first week of June, the *impi* shifted eastward on 8/9 June, probably to support it, but this

124. RSC III/3/3: 1965-70, 1983-4, 1988, 1992, Freeman; 5: 3647, 3649, 3697, Armstrong; 4083-5, Dinuzulu. *OD*, p 191: CNA to PM, June 11, 1906. Armstrong reported that he had found things quiet at oSuthu and going on as usual. Dinuzulu told the court that he remembered nothing about the cigar or the snake, and his people had not been unfriendly. Armstrong and Freeman never went to oSuthu again until after Dinuzulu had been arrested, in December of the following year. On *nyandezulu* see AGO I/7/53: “Oxland’s Explanation of Nyandezulu”, and Colenso’s *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1905), pp 434 and 595.

125. RSC III/3/6: 4227, Dinuzulu. Note the two meanings of *impi*. According to Siyikiwe (see RSC III/3/2: 269, and 365, Kolekile) Dinuzulu told her and Kholekile: “We hear that something has gone wrong with the impi at the Nkandla”. “Where is Bhambatha?” asked Siyikiwe. “I do not know”, he replied. He did not believe the rebels had been so badly beaten.

surmise of the objective depends more on circumstantial than direct evidence.

The destruction of the rebel army at Mome on 10 June undid this ambitious programme. The deaths of between one third and one half its number and of Mehlokazulu, Bhambatha and several lesser leaders precluded any rally. The shock of defeat paralysed the expectant rebels in the southeast, and the uprising did not take place.

The significance of the thesis is that it departs from the accepted history by endowing the rebels, most notably Dinuzulu, with an independence of mind and an offensive strategy which, if realised, would have had far-reaching consequences. Had the rebels succeeded the course of history would have been changed, and Dinuzulu might well be recognised as a leader of the struggle for liberation instead of a victim of colonial repression.

Abstract

During the so-called Zulu Rebellion of 1906 a critical stage was reached when the colonial forces were extended to the limit when fresh rebel forces reinforced those active under Bhambatha and other leaders in the Nkandla district of Zululand. The combined forces moved to the Thukela, prepared to cross into Natal, and then turned back and moved eastward. Their exact objective is not known, but southeastern Zululand was in ferment and rumours of an uprising instigated by the former Zulu king Dinuzulu were rife. Was the rebel army going to raise or support it? In any case, the defeat of the army at the battle of Mome on 10 June destroyed rebel prospects. This article examines these hitherto neglected aspects of the rebellion, using fresh sources, and radically reinterprets the narrative of events.

Key words: Bhambatha Rebellion; Impi Yamakhanda; 1906 Rebellion; Natal Rebellion; Poll Tax Rebellion; Zulu Rebellion; Zulu Uprising; Natal history; Zulu history; Dinuzulu; Bhambatha; Mangathi; Mehlokazulu

Opsomming

Tydens die sogenaamde Zulu Rebelle van 1906 is 'n kritiese fase bereik waartydens die koloniale magte onder groot druk was toe vars rebelle magte, die onder die bevel van Bhambatha en ander leiers, in die Nkandla distrik van Zululand versterk het. Die gekombineerde magte het suid na die Thukela beweeg voordat hul terug gedraai en oos beweeg het. Die presiese doel was nie bekend nie maar die suiooste van Zululand was in rep en roer en gerugte oor 'n opstand aangeblaas deur die voormalige Zulu Koning Dinuzulu het die rondte gedoen. Iedereval, die nederlaag van die Zulu mag op 10 Junie by Mome het al hoop van die rebelle vernietig. In die artikel word tot dusver afgeskepte aspekte van die rebelle aan die hand van nuwe bronne ondersoek.

Slutelwoorde: Bhambatha Rebellion; Impi Yamakhanda; 1906 Rebellion; Natal Rebellion; Kop Belasting Rebellion; Zulu Rebellion; Zulu Opstand; Natal geskiedenis; Zulu geskiedenis; Dinuzulu; Bhambatha; Mangathi; Mehlokazulu.