

THE NATAL VOORTREKKERS AND THEIR WAR WITH THE ZULU¹

Introduction

Ferdinand Krauss was born in 1812 in Stuttgart where he grew up in modest circumstances. He showed a marked interest in the natural sciences for which at that time the German Universities offered no fixed further education, except to students of medicine. To acquire further scientific knowledge, Krauss became an apothecary. After having served his apprenticeship and after working as an apothecary, Krauss decided on further studies at the University of Tübingen and then at the University of Heidelberg where he obtained a Ph.D. *summa cum laude*.

On his return to Stuttgart, he tried in vain to find a teaching appointment in science. He met, however, the by then already famous Baron von Ludwig from Cape Town. Von Ludwig was on a visit to the country of his birth (Württemberg) and engaged young Krauss to help him with the sorting of the numerous scientific collections which the Baron had brought with him from South Africa. Soon the elderly Ludwig persuaded his newly found friend Ferdinand Krauss to come with him to Cape Town and then to explore South Africa scientifically.² They sailed from England in February 1838 and landed at Cape Town in May 1838, where Krauss stayed as a guest of the Baron till later in the year. He then decided to proceed by ox-wagon across the country collecting botanical, geological and zoological specimens for at least six collections en route. By the middle of 1839 he had reached Port Elizabeth from where he continued his journey by sea to Port Natal. Krauss spent the next nine months in the young

1. The original article written by Ferdinand Krauss appeared under the title *Der Krieg der Ausgewanderten Kolonisten mit den Kaffern* in the periodical *Das Ausland* published by Cotta, Stuttgart, XIV Jhg., 1841.
2. For a detailed description of the Krauss-Ludwig friendship see: F. R. Bradlow, *Baron von Ludwig*, Balkema, Cape Town, 1965 and Ernst Schüz, *Baron von Ludwig in Kapstadt und seine Briefe an Ferdinand Krauss in Port Natal, 1839*, Stuttgart, Th. Ver. vaterl. Naturkunde. Dec. 1967, pp. 47—62.

A Few years ago Prof. E. Schüz discovered among the Krauss letters several unpublished Mss relating to South Africa. *A description of Cape Town and its way of life* was translated by O. H. Spohr and published in *Quart. Bul. of S.A.L.*, XXI, No. 1, pp. 2—16, No. 2, pp. 39—50, 1966. In an addendum a bibliography of Krauss's publications on South Africa is cited. Krauss compiled a journal of his scientific exploits and wanderings in South Africa. It has so far remained in Ms, and is likely to appear in an English translation in 1969.

republic of Natal. In the years to come Krauss published several books and many articles of scientific observations which he had made during his two year stay in South Africa. The exception to the rule is his article about *The Natal Voortrekkers and their war with the Zulu*. This historical report by a young German scientist is remarkable insofar as it is one of the few contemporary ones and principally collected from participants whom Krauss got to know well during his stay in Natal. Krauss had become a friend and admirer of these early Natalians and wrote the article chiefly in defence of the Voortrekkers against unfavourable reports in circulation at that time.

Early in 1840 Krauss spent another few months with Baron von Ludwig and finally left Cape Town on the 22nd April 1840 via England for home. To his great disappointment the *Naturalien-kabinet* (Natural History Museum) in Stuttgart offered him only a minor appointment. As the years went by Krauss worked hard and eventually became the director. When he died as Professor Ferdinand von Krauss in 1890 in Stuttgart the scientific world mourned the loss of a great authority. The influence which South Africa exercised on the young Krauss was very considerable and helped to establish his name as a scientist.

The Natal Voortrekkers and their war with the Zulu

Much has been written about the emigration of the colonists of the Cape Colony and the resulting war with the Kaffirs.

During my stay amongst the colonists I gathered a great deal of material which I would like to bring to public notice in view of the fact that a lot of distorted and false information has been circulated by British missionaries and their followers to the detriment of the colonists.

The colonists, Afrikaaners, as they like to be called, are mainly descendants of Hollanders, who had settled in the Cape during the rule of Holland; the rest are descendants of Germans and French who had left their homes for political and religious reasons and found a new home in the Cape. It was a harmonious and closely knit relationship; not far from the Cape they lived a solitary and independent life, hunting, raising cattle and sheep and farming. The first large party of British Settlers arrived in 1820, only after the Colony had become a British possession following a proclamation by parliament earlier in the century. They settled in the eastern districts near the Kaffir border, where they farmed and traded.

As the number of colonists grew every year their farms en-

croached more and more onto Kaffir territory. English mission stations were established for migrating Hottentots, forts were built, and soon Grahamstown, a few miles from the Great Fish River, was founded. This is today the second trading town, seat of a magistrate and head quarters of a military force stationed there for the defence of the borders.

Close contact with the border Kaffirs soon led to trouble. There was disagreement over the ownership of the land; the farmers complained of ill-treatment of colonists who had crossed the border while hunting or trading. The large cattle herds of the colonists tempted the greedy Kaffirs to frequent predatory invasions into the Colony. The English missionaries and philanthropists tried to convince the government by prejudiced reports that these attacks were the fault of the colonists and not of the natives, and therefore no action was taken against the Kaffirs.

This hazardous emigration was motivated by a number of serious grievances: the insecure conditions on the eastern border, the lack of protection by the government against the increasing aggression of the Kaffirs, who ruined the colonists by driving off their herds, destroying their fields and farms; the lack of effective laws protecting the colonists against marauding bands, who were being sheltered by the mission stations; Lieut-Gov. Stockenström had recently entered into an agreement granting privileges and protection to the Kaffirs, but no provision was made to indemnify the colonists for their past losses nor for future prevention of the daily devastations and cattle robberies, nor was there compensation for the considerable losses suffered by the colonists on account of the emancipation of the slaves.

A number of colonists were now ready to leave their homes, and a commission, consisting of Jakob Uys, Stephan Maritz, Hans de Lange and others rode with twelve wagons and ca. 20 men in a north-easterly direction along the coast as far as the Bay of Natal. The land's fertility and suitability pleased them so much that, as it was uninhabited, they there and then decided to take possession of it. Back in the colony their reports were received with enthusiasm, and the majority of the border-colonists prepared for a speedy emigration.

During the last days of 1834 while the colonists were busy with their preparations, suddenly, and in the midst of peace, hordes of Kaffirs invaded, just to indulge in their lust for murder and robbery.

They attacked the badly equipped border-colonists murdering, plundering and burning their houses, devastating their fields, and driving their cattle off before they could put up a resistance. In a few days thus 7000 people became homeless and dependent upon the charity of the government that had to provide them with their daily bread; the wail of the widows and fatherless children echoed throughout the land. The losses suffered through this attack were incalculable. 455 houses, 58 wagons were burnt; 5438 horses, 111,418 head of cattle and 156,878 sheep were driven away or destroyed. Soon after the termination of hostilities, in February 1835 the first party of emigrants consisting of 20 families, left the colony. Their leader was Louis Trichard, a burgher from the Albany District. In the circumstances a trek through Kaffir territory would have been too dangerous, and so they travelled across the Orange river, the largest river in Southern Africa, first in a north-eastern direction along the Quathlamba mountain range, (Drakensberge) dividing Kaffirland from Bechuanaland, intending to turn east to reach Natal. Indescribable were the obstacles and dangers meeting the travellers on their trek through a country the geographical outline of which was a complete mystery. The small groups of natives living in this country did not disturb them much. The climate, however, and impassibility of the country and lack of water were all the more difficult to overcome. Often they trekked through vast arid plains, inhabited by innumerable herds of springbok, wildebeest, hartebeest, quaggas, ostriches etc. that had left hardly sufficient food for their animals; no fuel could be found for the preparation of warm food; neither tree nor bush, to shelter them against the merciless sun. Then again huge rivers with deep beds, bottomless abysses and insurmountable mountains impeded their advance; these were impassable for human beings and out of the question for wagons and herds of cattle, the latter often being attacked by wild animals like lions, leopards and hyenas.

Despite all these hardships, however, they preferred to carry on rather than go back to their unhappy home. Courageously they searched for a pass across the innumerable pyramidal summits of the Quathlamba range, which falls in precipitous walls towards the east.

After four months of wandering they had reached the Zoutpansberg (26° and 27°) in May. The salt pans at its foot had given it its name. They camped in this fertile but uninhabited land, next to a broad and beautiful river, which according to their reports joins

the Limpopo river and flows into Delagoa Bay. To reach the country of Natal from here would have been possible only with great additional dangers and hardships because they would have had to traverse the whole domain of the much feared Zulu king Dingaan. As they had found all they needed for their livelihood here, Trichard decided to settle.

Half of the emigrant party was, however, not satisfied with this decision. Under Hans van Rensburg they decided to search for a way to Delagoa Bay. Three weeks after their departure from Trichard they were attacked by the Matonka, or knob-nose Kaffirs, armed with poisoned arrows, and all were murdered.

Trichard and his party remained at the Zoutpansberg until August 1836; the need of a life with more companionship and the wish to see their fellow citizens again, in the end impelled them to leave this deserted part. They also went in the direction of Delagoa Bay, which they reached after an extremely strenuous journey, having taken a different road from that of their unfortunate brothers. On occasions they had to battle their way through thick jungle, which they had to clear with axes, and then again the mountains were so steep that they had to take the wheels off their wagons in order to slide the vehicles down the slopes. But the most powerful enemy they had to contend with was the unhealthy climate. As soon as they had descended into the low planes of Delagoa Bay they began to lose day by day more and more of their cattle, in the end bringing only 4 cows and about 100 sheep to the Bay. Because of the lack of cattle they were unable to do the return trip across country, and the possibility of obtaining a ship to Natal or to the Colony did not exist either. Here amongst the suspicious and deceitful inhabitants of Delagoa Bay they had to eke out a miserable existence. Soon the fever had killed all men leaving the helpless widows and orphans. Their ultimate deliverance came only in July 1839, when the emigrants in Natal eventually heard of the plight of their countrymen and chartered a ship to bring the poor creatures to their new homes. Three widows and 22 children, all that was left of the 98 persons who had left with Trichard, arrived at the Bay of Natal, where they were received with love and kindness by their compatriots. Never shall I forget the gruesome sight I witnessed: lack of food and the fever had changed them into skeletons, the impression emphasized by their waxen pallor.

More fortunate were those emigrants who started to leave the

colony after Louis Trichard; although they too had their full measure of hardship.

A great number collected their families and numerous herds of cattle at the Orange river, leaving the colony soon after the unfortunate Trichard. They trekked in a northerly direction to the lush banks of the Likwa, also called the fallow river, (Vaal) where they decided to remain on account of the magnificent grazing for their cattle until they had inspected the interior of the country and would be in a position to make new plans. For this purpose two parties under J. S. Bronkhorst and H. Potgieter respectively, left the emigrants' camp, turning northeast. They visited Trichard, who at that time was at the Zoutpansberg, and penetrated through lovely, fertile and uninhabited country near to Delagoa Bay. Delighted with the discovery of this beautiful country they took a short cut to their camp, and found it completely destroyed, their herds carried off and the ground covered with the mutilated bodies of their friends and relatives. Three days before their return the remaining emigrants had been attacked by the Matabele under Moselekatse and 28 were murdered.

Under this powerful chief, the land of the Matabele or Abaka-Zulu reached to the north as far as the 25° south latitude line and to the south along a border from the Likwa river between 27° and 28° south. Hottentot tribes living further south frequently attacked them from this side, but especially the Griqua, who carried off their cattle. To prevent these devastating invasions Moselekatse had prohibited entry from the Likwa river, and stationed strong detachments of his warriors at the border. On the other hand he was prepared to meet travellers as friends as long as they entered his country from Kuruman, the capital of the Bechuana, a more northern tribe, especially if they were recommended by the missionary Moffat, stationed there.

In these circumstances Moselekatse must have for a long time watched with suspicious and greedy eyes the emigrants with their many and well-fed herds of cattle. As they had approached from the forbidden side they were a welcome target for the avaricious Kaf-firs.

After this disaster the emigrants moved south for approximately 4 days and camped at the mouth of the Nama Hari river, which joins the Likwa River here. Here they remained blindly con-

fidient in their imaginary safety without opening friendly negotiations with this powerful paramount chief. There at the end of October, before they had really recovered from the previous onslaught, they received news that Kalibi, Moselekatse's principal chief, was advancing with an even greater number of warriors. Quickly they arranged their 50 wagons closely into a circle, to form a barricade of wagons (laager), blocked all openings with thorn bush, and secured their women and children by a second barricade in the middle of the 'laager'. After these hurried preparations were finished they mounted their horses to meet the enemy with their big guns. They soon met the enemy, 5000 of them. The weapon of the Matabele is a spear, 'unkonto' called 'assagai' by the colonists. It is not a throwing spear, but is used in hand-to-hand fighting. It is a formidable weapon against one not armed with a gun, but it could be used with only limited success against the mounted emigrants. The natives advanced with terrific yelling and piercing whistles. In order to get a sure shot the emigrants usually jumped from their horses, shot and rode back again. Re-loading rapidly they then repeated their assault with the same manoeuvre. Heavily outnumbered by the natives the courageous riflemen were, however, driven back into their 'laager' to their terrified womenfolk, where they were then violently attacked. Driven back by well aimed fire, the Kaffirs attacked again and again with renewed fury, even trying to climb the wagons, until eventually the guns loaded with coarse shot succeeded, and they retreated with a loss of 150 men. Before they could be prevented, however, they had driven the emigrants' complete herd, numbering 6000 head of cattle and 41,000 sheep and goats away with them. Apart from this the emigrants had lost two of their fellow-citizens and there were twelve severely wounded.

The camp on this unlucky Likwa river was quickly broken up. After they had acquired oxen again they retreated as far as the Modder river, 29° S. where they camped near Thaba Uncka, (Thabanchu) a mission station run by the English (Methodist) missionary (James) Archbell. A new and strong detachment of emigrants soon re-inforced their number. Their leader was Gert Maritz, a sensible and well-to-do burgher from Graaff-Reinet. This brought the strength of their party up to 250 wagons and 1800 people. Gert Maritz was chosen the leader of all the emigrants. His first step was to take revenge on Moselekatse, and to retrieve the herds he had stolen.

For this purpose he gathered a commando in the beginning of January 1837 consisting of 107 emigrants, 40 Griqua on horseback

and 60 Hottentot Bastards. A Matabele warrior who had been taken prisoner during the last attack led them along the permissible Kuruman-road, from which side the Matabele least expected an attack, to Mosega, a town of Moselekatse's warriors, situated between the 25° and 26° parallels. At daybreak on January 17th they attacked the 400 warriors who were quite unaware of impending danger. These grabbed their weapons after the first panic had subsided, and defended themselves courageously, but after a short while they were defeated and massacred. In this way Moselekatse, who lived 50 miles further north, in no time had lost the nucleus of his troops, and the emigrants regained most of their cattle and reached their main laager on the Modder river without pursuit. The news of this victory acted like a magic formula on the Afrikaaners who had remained in the Colony.

The recent very dry years added to the aforementioned reasons had increased their discontent considerably. Now emigrants, not only from the Eastern Districts, but also from the Western, and those near Cape Town prepared to share the destiny of their comrades, and build new homes. From all sides numerous parties moved towards the Orange river, taking with them their oxwagons and their best herds. Only now did the consequences of this emigration begin to show seriously, the farms of the colonists went for a mere song. The price of draught and slaughter cattle increased. The price of corn had risen considerably because of the absence of farmers and labourers were unobtainable even for twice their former wages. In vain the government tried to persuade the emigrants to remain; and it was in vain that by severe prohibition on the export of powder and lead they attempted to curb this calamity for the colony.

Piet Retief, an excellent Veldcornet from the district of Uitenhage, later so unfortunate, was the leader of one of the most important group of emigrants, who camped near the laager under G. Maritz. About 1000 wagons and 1600 armed men with their women and children had gathered there, and P. Retief was chosen unanimously as the leader. His first office was to establish suitable laws, to nominate subaltern officers and to conclude agreements with neighbouring chiefs. All these were deadly enemies of Moselekatse, of which Sinkonyela, chief of the Mantati, Moroko, chief of the Barolongo, and Peter David, leader of the Hottentot Bastards, were the most important.

When all had been settled in May 1837 they again moved towards the Likwa river, the land of their earlier misfortune, and camped on the Vet river, south of the Likwa. A strong commando was supposed to advance against Moselekatse in order either to enter into a pact of friendship with the now humbled chief, or to destroy him completely. Dingaan, king of the Zulu, however, forestalled this plan. He had heard of the defeat of the Matabele at Mosega and had sent a strong unit of warriors to destroy the whole tribe. These, however, weakened by a long march and by horrible privations, were lustily received by the Matabele and defeated after a murderous massacre. The remainder, who managed to reach Zululand were killed by order of this hideous tyrant, not rewarded for their tenacity and loyalty, but so treated for their inability to defeat the Matabele.

These and other natives attacks had reduced Moselekatse's power so much that he was forced to retreat northwards. As there was nothing to be feared from him any longer, the attack by the emigrants, which had already been arranged, was called off.

Piet Retief and his party, wary of the vast distance and the unhealthy climate, did not follow Trichards road, but were luckier than their predecessors in finding the only possible place for crossing into Natal. Having, however, the devastating invasions of Moselekatse still fresh in their minds, and since they were keen to live in peace with the natives, Retief trekked with a small detachment of his people to Unkinkinglove, the residence of Dingaan, the Zulu king. They crossed the pass of the Quathlamba range, which they called the Drakensberge, to make a pact of friendship with Dingaan, and to ask him for the uninhabited country from the Tugela to the Umzimvubo river, bordered on the west by the Quathlamba mountains and on the east by the ocean. To this Dingaan agreed on condition that they returned his cattle that had been stolen by Sikonyela, chief of the Mantati.

Retief had such trust in the friendship of the sly Dingaan, that he persuaded his comrades to cross the Drakensberge. In January 1838 they courageously set out and crossed this 5000 feet high mountain range, suffering tremendous hardships which were made all the worse by the caravan being such a large one, with heavy wagons and numerous herds of cattle. Eventually they set up camp at the foot of the mountains on the banks of the mighty Tugela river. Piet Uys and his followers, who had not been satisfied with Retief's and

G. Maritz' form of government, remained on the other side of the Drakensberge.

Retief now not only fulfilled his promise given to Dingaan by bringing back the cattle which Sikonyela had stolen, but he even brought the chief himself, and got ready for a second visit to Dingaan. He demanded 200 men for his escort, intending to impress the chief with such a strong detachment of horsemen, and to give the ratification of their treaty greater importance. Maritz and others, who could not forget the treachery of the Kaffirs, advised against it. They feared that Dingaan, as soon as they trusted him, would not miss the opportunity of dealing a deadly blow. Maritz even offered to go with one or two men to Dingaan, arguing that if they were murdered, the company would at least only lose a few members. Retief, however, insisted on his escort, only reserving that the men who formed it were to do so of their own free will.

Cautioned to be most careful, and never to enter the kraal of Dingaan without arms, Retief left his friends and relatives at their camp on the Tugela in the beginning of February with 64 men, 30 servants and about 200 horses. At Dingaan's residence they were welcomed most cordially and entertained according to Kaffir custom. He managed to lull their suspicions by false friendliness so much, that they remained another two days after signing the ratification of the treaty and even entered the inner fence of the royal huts without arms. There, at the moment when they wanted to take their leave, at a given signal, they were surrounded by warriors and murdered in the most cruel manner — this were the thanks for having brought back the cattle stolen by Sikonyela.

According to the story of an eye witness, the missionary F. Owen, who was supposed to try and convert these incorrigible Kaffirs, and was stationed with Dingaan, the following happened. On the morning of February 2nd a strong detachment of Zulu each in full war dress and armed with unkonto and a large shield entered the kraal, pretending to give the molungus (white men) a war dance. On the invitation of Dingaan the emigrants went unarmed to the kraal which was specially erected for such occasions. Dingaan light-heartedly watched the semi-circle of dancing warriors and their nimble movements. Soon the signal was given, the helpless emigrants were overpowered by a tenfold majority of warriors and mercilessly massacred, with not even one escaping to bring the sad tidings to their brethren.

When the time, which Retief had given for their return had passed, the remaining emigrants at the Tugela sent a small group of men for reconnaissance. They had in the meantime heard from a Kaffir whom they had caught, that all the white men had been murdered, so that now under the pretext of a buffalo hunt they went in the direction of Dingaan's residence. On their way they met an old Zulu and let themselves be talked into taking a different road from the one where at the time a larger number of the assassins hired by Dingaan were moving off. Of course they found nothing, and on their return they pacified the alarmed, going so far in their carelessness that they even laughed at the dubious ones and accused them of cowardice. But oh, their doubts were only too justified. Two days later the Zulu attacked at dawn. Through spies they were informed of the position of the loosely scattered laager on the Tugela and the laager at the Blaauwkrans and Boschjesmans river, only a few hours distant. They surrounded the wagons and murdered the peacefully sleeping, and those hardly awake, to close their eyes for ever. Not satisfied with piercing the breasts of the defenceless women and the suckling babes, they cut off the breasts of the women and smashed the heads of the poor innocent children on the iron bands of the wagon wheels.

This attack was so sudden and complete that emigrants camping near-by thought, on hearing the few shots which were made, that Retief's party was announcing their return by firing a volley. No preparations for defence were made until dawn convinced them of the approach of the enemy. Everyone took up arms and a brave resistance was offered. Here one could see men in their night shirts, defending themselves against a strong detachment of Zulu, there women helped to carry ammunition and cheered their men to fight; even children were not too discouraged to follow the example of their fathers and mothers. So for instance goes the story of G. Maritz' ten year old son, who, when his mother ordered him to hide himself, replied "I do not know of a place to hide; give me a pistol and let me shoot too".

Fourteen men, driven by about 1000 Zulu fled to a small hill, from there they managed to keep the ever attacking horde in check for more than an hour by well sustained firing. When their ammunition was exhausted, two would fight their way through the masses of savages to the next laager to replenish. After a short while the two heroes returned with ammunition, bringing with them a small group of men to aid their hard-pressed comrades. Many

such feats were performed on this sad day by the defenders against an enemy outnumbering them tenfold.

At last when the Zulu were driven back from all sides, Maritz and 50 men followed them, hoping to retrieve the 20,000 head of cattle which had been driven away by the Zulu. The flooded Tugela and the darkness falling prevented them, and they had to give up their plan. From the other side of the bank they had to witness how the barbarians carried off their possessions.

Without medical help they spent the next days looking after the wounded, few of whom, however, were to recover. The number of wounds on some of them was unbelievable; there was a woman with 22 and a child with 30 unkonto stabs still alive.

40 men, 56 women, 185 children and about 250 servants, mostly coloured people employed by the emigrants, were murdered. The Zulu had lost approximately 500 men apart from those who were drowned crossing the Tugela river high in flood.

The number of men capable of wearing arms amongst the emigrants was severely diminished after the latter unfortunate incidents; the nucleus of the troop had been murdered and their staple food carried away by the Kaffirs. They now decided to send a message to their comrades on the other side of the Drakensberge calling for immediate help; this was promised to them.

Piet Uys who in the meantime had left the Colony together with 400 men, many horses and numerous herds of cattle started off immediately for the journey across the Drakensberge. He camped on the Tugela two hours away from the indigent remnants of the other parties, who were now combined in the Modder camp on a plain near the Blaauwkrans river. How great, however, was the surprise of the emigrants who had already crossed the Drakensberge, and who called themselves now 'Natal-emigrants', when the others, who had promised to follow soon, and whom they judged to be about 500 men, sent 8 men together with a wagon full of clothing, telling them that the Natalians did not stand in such urgent need of them at the moment, but that they were prepared to follow them in a couple of months' time.

Without awaiting this re-enforcement, the Natalians who were now about 800 men, young and old, decided to try their luck alone with Dingaan, who in the meantime had had sufficient time to gather his warriors from far and near.

Soon 347 people had come together but there was no supreme commander. G. Maritz offered his services, but those people, who had arrived with P. Uys insisted on serving under him only. Hendrik Potgieter, who had also arrived with a considerable number from the colony, did not want to follow his command. There was great dissension but when Maritz resigned voluntarily, it was decided that Uys and Potgieter were to be in command together.

On April 5th they left the laager, and already on the third day they sighted the Zulu; these retreated for two days until they had lured them into a narrow valley which was absolutely unsuitable for a mounted body of men. Here they split; P. Uys with one half of the men attacked the Zulu from the side of the mountain where they were waiting for them on the top. They were so successful that after a short resistance the Zulu fled. Potgieter, who was supposed to attack the opposite hill with his men, did nothing. 16 men, dissatisfied with this, went on their own after the Zulu, but these, far superior in number soon forced them to retreat. Returning to their commandant they fled down the valley with the remainder of the men. Uys, who knew nothing of this ignominious flight of his commandant, followed up the fleeing Zulu. All of a sudden he found himself surrounded by Zulu who had been in hiding, and who should have been attacked by Potgieter; he was mortally wounded. He pulled the javelin from his wound, but lost so much blood that he had to be held by his fourteen year old son, who was riding next to him, and by another man. Soon he became so weak that he asked to be put down on the ground. He said: "Save yourselves, I must die here." His son had hardly ridden a hundred paces, when he saw his dying father surrounded by Zulu. This was too much for him. Alone he turned his horse, shot three Zulu before he was overpowered and murdered.

Under great difficulties the rest of Uys' party slowly retreated in close order through the many groups of Zulu. The emigrants had lost 14 men, and amongst these their brave commandant and his son; the loss of the Zulu was estimated at between 500 and 600.

The Uys party again camped on the Modder river and Potgieter, despised by all for his cowardice during the former unfortunate encounter, moved with a part of his men back across the Drakensberge.

G. Maritz, a sensible man, well versed in legal affairs, now tried to restore and maintain order and the unity of the community by suitable laws. He aimed at a Volksraad consisting of twelve mem-

bers, who should exercise supreme authority in peace time.

In June of the same year a number of groups from the Modder camp and from the Tugela river started on their first expedition to the Bay of Natal. After endless hardships through a completely untrodden country and across a plateau with sudden precipices, Jakob Uys and his men camped at the Umlaas river, about an hour from the Bay, and Karl Landmann on the Umgeni river about three hours from the Bay; a small group remained at the Bay and entrenched themselves behind palisades, and founded the Congella camp.

During this time another group separated from the above-mentioned large laager under Hans de Lange and moved once more towards the Boschjesmans river. In August they were again attacked by a strong horde of Zulu, whom they, however, completely defeated, killing many of them. Their only victim was one man, who was searching for his sheep in the veld, and he was murdered. After this encounter they settled again at the big camp on the Tugela river. It is incomprehensible that these people did not seem to learn their lesson from these frequent disasters, and went on dispersing their strength in forming several camps.

When Andries Pretorius heard of the new Kaffir assaults in Natal he left his laager on the other side of the Drakensberge and arrived at the Tugela with a strong force of mounted men. With the arrival of these heroes on Natal soil a new life began for the hard-pressed Natal emigrants; their good fortune returned once more and the real foundation was laid for this once prospering country. Unanimously Pretorius was elected chief-commandant and soon there was a force of 460 mounted men. On orders received from the Volksraad he left the camp on November 27th 1838 in order to retrieve the stolen cattle and the other possessions from Dingaan. Throughout the whole commando he used the greatest circumspection, which such a dangerous operation demanded. Every evening the 57 wagons were arranged to form a laager, all openings were blocked up with bush after the horses and cattle were secured inside the laager, and well-directed patrols were sent out throughout the night. Every evening the various commandants gathered round the commandant-in-chief to discuss and get briefing for the next day. Apart from that, prayers were said every night, and Sundays were kept sacred as a day of rest and divine service.

After an arduous campaign through fertile grasslands with many rivers and brooks they arrived, on December 15th, within reach

of Dingaan's residence. On their way they had caught a number of spies and had also met small groups of Kaffirs, who either fled or were killed in battle. In the evening, however, the patrols reported, that they had discovered a strong Kaffir force. All preparations for an attack next day were made and all patrols recalled by firing the alarm cannon. No sooner had dawn broken on December 16th the advance sentries sighted the approaching Kaffirs, and no sooner had they taken cover in the laager when about 10,000 Kaffirs well disciplined in regiments each under a chief, attacked from all sides with appalling yelling and whistling. A well-aimed volley from the rifles and the four small mortars into the masses stopped them for a moment; with renewed fury, however, they attacked the laager. Despite the firing being kept up by the emigrants and creating carnage amongst the thick mob of Kaffirs, after two hours of battle they still did not budge. Now Pretorius ordered the men to mount their horses, and open the entrances to the laager. This attack was so successful that the Kaffirs fled in all directions; chasing a Kaffir whom he had missed, the chief-commandant in a hand-to-hand fight was stabbed through the hand. With the spear through his left hand he threw the Kaffir down, held him until at last another emigrant freed him from this perilous position. Apart from Pretorius a few were wounded, but the Kaffirs lost about 3000.

The next day they broke up camp and continued their march to Dingaan's residence. Four days later they arrived there but found the town deserted and the huts of the king burnt. They camped near the spot where the unfortunate Retief and his people were murdered earlier in the year. It was a sad and heartrending sight for the friends and relatives to find the mutilated bones on which they could still clearly recognize the thongs with which they had been tied together. They recognised Retief from the half-decayed clothes, and in his portmanteau, amongst other papers, they found the contract with Dingaan, which read as follows:

"As Piet Retief, Chief Commandant of the white emigrants, returns my cattle which were stolen by Sikonyela, I, Dingaan, King of the Zulu, declare that I make over and sign away the Natal land on the Tugela to the Umsimvubo and from the coast inwards as far as it is serviceable and in my possession, as their eternal property."

The signature of Dingaan was marked by a cross. Umkinkinglove, February 4th, 1838.

After this main encounter there was another battle a few days later in which the emigrants lost six men and had to retreat on account of unfavourable terrain. Dingaan with the main part of his men and all his cattle fled into the mountains, where a mounted unit could not follow him. The commando returned with a small booty of 5000 head of cattle and some of the saddles of Retief's party from the Tugela camp.

Pretorius crossed the Drakensberge once more with all his people, broke up the old camp there, and joined the laager at the Tugela with all his wagons. Gert Maritz the former commandant had developed dropsy, and died soon afterwards. With him the company lost a most circumspect adviser in peace time, and a brave commander in war; it was he, who defeated Moselekatse, who made the first laws, and he who constituted the Volksraad.

Soon all left this ill-fated spot and camped at the foot of the Boschjesmans Rand. This is a mountain range running from north-east to southwest with a table plateau and a fertile valey with luscious grass and an abundance of water 15 hours northwest of Natal Bay. In honour of the late Gert Maritz, P. Grehling founded here the town of Pieter Maritzburg, the present seat of the administration and of the Volksraad. The spot was carefully surveyed, divided into regular quarters, and each burgher was given a certain portion for building a house and establishing a small garden. Apart from this every burgher received 3000 morgen of land which he was free to choose in any part of Natal.

Pretorius immediately left for his land given to him by the Volksraad; it was a few hours from Pieter Maritzburg, and to begin with, he planted mainly maize with a little corn and vegetables. Others moved nearer the coast and camped in small groups along the Umkamas under P. Grehling and Hans de Lange on the upper Umlaas river, nine hours from the Bay, and they there too tilled the soil surrounding their laager for the most essential means of subsistence.

Their staple food they obtained by hunting buffalos, rhinos and antelopes, which were very numerous and whose flesh is very tasty. The ivory of the elephants and rhinos as well as the skins of the buffalos were used as barter goods for the necessities of life and for some luxuries, which were now brought by sea from the Colony (Cape).

The colonists now thought of improving their administration and called all burghers entitled to vote for a general discussion while a new Volksraad was being elected. The members of the Volksraad, representatives of the people, numbered twelve. They were to be elected anew every year, and for each meeting, which was to take place once every month, a president was to be elected from their midst. The Volksraad could choose the local judges, of which there were now one for the laager along the coast, one for Pieter Maritzburg and the other laagers. Each judge had six assessors, chosen by the respective laager, and confirmed by the Volksraad. The Volksraad also elected a commandant for each laager, and in case of war a chief-commandant for the whole force. The actual administration, laws and institutions were mainly on the lines of those of the Colony under the early Dutch Government. It is amazing that people who had had hardly any education because of the great distances from Cape Town, and many of whom could hardly write, managed so well. Although their main activity was farming and hunting, their common sense enabled them not only to be statesmen but also to overcome the greatest hazards and to keep order by effective and sensible laws.

In December 1838 the English government sent a military detachment of 100 men to Natal under the pretext of preventing further bloodshed by the emigrant and the Kaffirs, but they were there mainly, however, to prevent the import of arms and ammunition. They camped at the entrance of St. Michaels Point, an arid sand hill, and remained there until January 1840 without achieving anything.

During March and April 1839 Dingaan repeatedly sent offers of peace to the emigrants, informing them that he was prepared to return the stolen cattle and horses, and that he considered himself defeated. For this reason he would be satisfied with whichever part of the country they would leave him, and that he begged for peace and friendship. The Volksraad decided therefore to collect the cattle, and Pretorius was ordered to move with a commando to the Tugela, the border of Dingaan's country. Made wise by earlier experience they sent only three men to Dingaan's residence on May 24th. They were very well received, and after consultation about their mission they were told that he and his people were frightened to bring the cattle to the Tugela river. In short it appeared as if he was not yet really in earnest in his offer of peace and the release of the cattle, and thus they had to return to the laager without achieving any-

thing. Dingaan, however, in the first days of June sent 1500 head of cattle, 500 sheep, 52 rifles and 43 saddles with the message that a further 19,300 head of cattle were ready for delivery. Pretorius sent a message that they would be prepared to accept elephant teeth in lieu of cattle.

As the cattle still had not appeared at the border Pretorius eventually threatened him, that unless his promise was fulfilled within twelve days, he would come with his commando into the chief's country. Soon preparations were made to implement this threat. It was during this time that measles broke out in Natal after having travelled all the way from Cape Town, where the disease had been brought by a ship from Europe. Only those who had had measles 30 years earlier were spared. Ignorance of the disease, lack of medicines, but mainly too the condition of the poorly constructed huts, and the raw food, aggravated the disease so much that complications set in in most cases, and many died. The Zulu were not spared either, which was lucky in so far as the emigrants, in their helpless condition, would not have been able to resist an attack. Then in September, when a second commission of five men was on its way to Dingaan to attempt once more to arrange for peace and the return of the cattle, it became known that strong hordes of Zulu had crossed the border. The commission was recalled, the laager newly fortified, and all preparations made to receive them. At night sentries were placed and patrols were sent out.

These soon brought the news that Mpanda, brother of Dingaan had fled across the Tugela and sought sanctuary with the emigrants because his brother Dingaan had arranged to have him killed.

Those Kaffirs, who were humanely inclined and were dissatisfied with Dingaan's cruelty for a long time, had taken the opportunity and had followed Mpanda. Amongst these were the regiments Hlomenhlini, Janduna, Intinteto with their induna (chief), approximately 6000 including their women and children. They brought large herds of cattle with them and had temporarily camped along the Umsluti, nine hours from the Bay.

Mpanda immediately met Roos, the local landdrost of the Bay of Natal and asked for protection and permission to live on Natal soil until the end of hostilities. After discussion with the Volksraad this was granted until such time as a commission had investigated the whole matter thoroughly. Although Mpanda's open attitude and

his various visits to the Bay and Pieter Maritzburg had instilled a certain amount of confidence, they, however, did not trust him altogether, and the thought that all the foregoing might just be another trap laid by Dingaan to take the emigrants unaware, was not easily overcome.

Towards the end of October a commission consisting of Roos, the resident landdrost of the Bay, various members of the Volksraad and burghers were sent to Mpanda's camp to make a treaty and to recognise Mpanda as the chief of the emigrated Zulu.

Mpanda received the commission in a friendly manner and gathered the larger part of his people, who after the ceremonies performed dances. It was strictly forbidden to the new ally either to start hostilities with any of the neighbouring tribes before having obtained consent from the Volksraad, or to murder woman and children during wars. He was further informed that he had to bear part of the debt incurred by Dingaan's thefts and invasions. Further he had to withdraw beyond the border of the Tugela as soon as hostilities with his brother Dingaan were over. After Mpanda had given his solemn promise, protection by the emigrants was granted to him; his chiefs, Noncolaas, Emmelin and Panga Zuaka were called upon to see to the personal safety of their chief; they were to be responsible for all insults and disloyalties against the Volksraad, whereupon Mpanda retired to his hut with obvious signs of satisfaction and pleasure.

Soon afterwards a dreadful row started amongst some of the Zulu present. They were dissatisfied with Panga Zuaka, whom they accused of being secretly in league with Dingaan. His death, which followed this revolt, set up agitation among the friends and enemies of the murdered Panga Zuaka, and Roos had the chief called to settle the dispute. He appeared immediately and expressed to his people his dissatisfaction over the rash action, and blamed them severely for this murder in the presence of the white men to whom they had just given their promise to refrain from such atrocities. In fact, the demeanour of the chief was of the power and dignity one does not expect to find in a savage.

In order to end this unpleasant argument Roos reminded the chief of the folkdance he had promised them; this dance he arranged immediately. The dance was a most singular sight. A couple of thousand black people all in a row in front of their king, accompanied by an endless monotonous chant and a rhythmical clapping of the

hands and stamping of the feet, executed the most peculiar movements.

The good results of this commission helped to pacify the minds of the emigrants and gave them more confidence in the loyalty of their ally, but nevertheless they did not stop being on their guard. They protected themselves by stronger fortification of their laager and by continually being on guard against a possible assault.

A rumour came from the Colony that Bannister intended to land British emigrants from England in Natal. This occupied the mind of the emigrants and the Volksraad to such an extent that they put aside the Zulu affairs and the preparation for a commando against Dingaan, because they believed that these emigrants were being sent to drive them from their country for which they had paid so dearly. In view of this the Volksraad made a proclamation declaring that emigrants who landed without the permission of the Volksraad would be considered as enemies. Should this, nevertheless, be attempted by military force, they would retreat into the forests and mountains surrounding the Bay, and from there they would defend every foot of soil. At the same time a commando of 40 men was stationed on the Berea, a hill near the Bay and the sea.

A ship which arrived in January 1840 to collect the English troops entrenched on St. Michaels Point, however, soon convinced them that the rumour was false. No sooner had the troops embarked when a detachment of 25 men took official possession of the camp on Michael's Point on orders of the Volksraad. They hoisted their flag, and with 21 mortar shots they announced to the English after they had set sail the fact that they had taken possession of this spot.

A guard of 20 men was permanently installed for the control of the coast, a harbour with harbourmaster and customs house was organised. High duty was to be paid for alcohol, especially brandy and all luxury articles, and little or none for foodstuff and articles necessary for the development of the new republic.

Eventually on January 14th 1840 the last commando of 350 men under A. Pretorius re-enforced by Mpanda's force, moved against Dingaan. The emigrants never came into action, but Mpanda's force which was to attack Dingaan from the rear, defeated the enemy completely. More than 2000 Kaffirs were massacred. Dingaan himself fled with scarcely 100 men while the remainder joined Mpanda.

Thus ended the power of Dingaan, a tyrant feared throughout the whole Zululand, whose reign from the very beginning was one of continual bloodshed either amongst his own people or their neighbours. He had forced his way to the throne over the dead body of his brother, Chaka. Mpanda was now proclaimed king over the whole Zulu nation and was bound again as an ally.

36,000 head of cattle were the booty of the emigrants. This was used in part to pay for the expenses of the last commando, the balance was distributed amongst the emigrants as compensation for their earlier hardships.

Chief-Commandant Pretorius in the name of the Volksraad took possession of Dingaan's country, who had fled across the border, and extended the possessions of the Zuid Afrikaanche Maatschappij from the Tugela to the Umfilus Umjana river.

A proper and fairly accurate narrative of the last commando against Dingaan taken from a Dutch Journal appeared in the September issue of the "Ausland".

The cessation of hostilities, especially the flight of Dingaan — according to some he died — was the beginning of a considerable exodus amongst the Afrikaaners in the Colony. Everyone who was not bound to the Colony by a position or special private interests was getting ready to follow the example of their former fellow-citizens. One might well assume the Natal, not only on account of its unbelievable fertility, but also due to its favourable position, will, within a short time, be one of the most prosperous areas in Africa.

Translated from the German by O. H. Spohr in co-operation with A. W. Crouhurst.