

# *On a Tough Missionary Post in Zululand*

*The Life Experiences of the Missionary  
Friedrich Volker according to the notes of  
his wife*

HERMANNSBURG 1928

Edited by Charles Ballard  
Translated by Helen Feist

*"I think that we have lost one of our best missionaries. Everything in him was upright and loyal. When I saw him for the first time he made a favourable and trustworthy impression on me. His whole appearance, especially his face had purity, sincerity, loyalty and reliability imprinted on it, as in few other people."*

*G. Haccius.<sup>1</sup>*

## INTRODUCTION

The role of the missionary in Natal and Zululand during the nineteenth century has always been a subject of considerable debate. Natal's settler community had mixed feelings on the proper "place" of the missionary; some colonists felt they exercised a "civilizing" influence over the "heathen" black man and were, therefore, an asset to the community; others were of the opinion that missionaries "corrupted" and "spoilt" the "noble Zulu" making him insolent and unfit for "Kaffir labour". Missionaries and churchmen who became involved in political activities, particularly those who defended Africans against the onslaught of white political and economic expansion and domination, were anathema to settlers and colonial officials. Bishop John W. Colenso and his daughters Harriette and Frances were in the forefront of protest against the maltreatment of Langalibalele, Cetshwayo and Dinizulu by the Colonial government and white settlers.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, the Colensos were extremely unpopular among the vast majority of white Natalians.

Recent studies have focused on the role of missionaries as agents of British expansion in southern Africa. Dachs has shown how the Reverend John Mackenzie of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society pushed vigorously for British intervention in Bechuanaland in the 1870s.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Etherington has revealed how white missionaries living in Zululand actively supported the British invasion of the Zulu Kingdom in 1879. They con-

stituted a small but articulate and influential element of the “war party” in Natal.<sup>4</sup> The Anglican missionary Robert Robertson wrote anonymous letters to the local press branding King Cetshwayo as a cruel and bloodthirsty despot and a foe of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The Rev. O. C. Oftebro of the Norwegian Missionary Society strengthened Sir Bartle Frere’s case for war with the Zulu Kingdom by offering his solution in despatches to the Colonial Office: “Nothing less than the disarming of the Zulus, the breaking up of their military organisation, and the appointment of a British Resident to watch over the strict upholding of treaties, will, in our humble opinion, settle the Zulu question satisfactorily.”<sup>6</sup> Throughout much of his career, the Reverend Friedrich Volker hoped “that England would intervene and restore peace and order” to Zululand. He was a member of the “war party” and it is those passages from his *Life Experiences* dealing with the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the Zulu Civil War of 1883 that appear in this edited memoir.

Friedrich Konrad Volker was born on the 28th April 1826 at Harkenbleck in the Province of Hanover. He was the youngest of five children born to Konrad and Engel Rosina Volker. After serving his apprenticeship in carpentry Friedrich Volker was accepted into the second class of Lutheran missionary candidates of the Hermannsburg Missionary Society in 1853 under the direction of the society’s founder Louis Harms. In October of 1857 Volker and eleven other students were examined by the Royal Consistory in Hanover and ordained two days later by the Konsistorialrat Niemann. On 30th October 1857 King George V of Hanover received Father Harms, Volker and the other missionaries at the Royal Palace and bestowed his blessing on the foreign assignments awaiting them. He assured them that “their King, their Queen and the Royal Family would daily pray for them when they were far away at sea or in the desert or amongst the heathen.”<sup>7</sup>

Volker and his eleven colleagues were assigned to Zululand. Before leaving Hamburg for Durban Volker married Sophie Wilhelmine Auguste Lutz of Northeim, but she only joined her husband in 1860. The Hermannsburgers’ choice of Zululand is not surprising for it was considered a potentially fruitful and attractive field for the propagation of the Gospel. The Zulu Kingdom had a population estimated at between 150 000 and 200 000 souls — all as yet ignorant of the word of Christ. And Zululand was still independent of the nearest colonial power, the British settlement of Natal. Yet, it had the advantage of being near white “civilization”. Furthermore, the Hermannsburgers arrived in Natal in the late 1850s — a time when German colonists were founding settlements in the colony.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the missionaries were relatively close to settlers who shared a common language and culture.

Volker arrived in Durban on the 21st February 1858. In 1860 he established his first station, Emlalazi, near the Inyezane River in southern Zululand. Volker undertook the task of evangelization with great zeal but his labours bore little fruit in the way of converts. In frustration he wrote that the Zulus “were so embroiled and ensnared in their heathen morals and customs, in superstition and animism that they did not want to give those up.”<sup>9</sup> Volker blamed much of the Zulus’ anti-missionary bias on “the prominent ones of the nation” who “agitated against the spreading of the Kingdom of God”.<sup>10</sup> It is a well known fact that King Cetshwayo disliked missionaries because their teachings were potentially subversive to the existing Zulu social and political order.<sup>11</sup> Volker, on the advice of Sir Theophilus Shepstone<sup>12</sup>

and the Hermannsburg Superintendent, Karl Hohls, left Emlalazi for Natal with the approach of war between Britain and the Zulu Kingdom.

Volker was in favour of the British invasion and annexation of the Zulu Kingdom for embedded in Frere's 11th of December ultimatum to Cetshwayo were two clauses demanding that missionaries were to be allowed to go about their proselytizing task unmolested and that those Zulus who wished to convert to Christianity were to be permitted to do so without threat of persecution.<sup>13</sup> Volker was, however, bitterly disappointed by the terms of Sir Garnet Wolseley's Ulundi settlement of 1st September 1879 and the conditions prevalent upon his return to Zululand. Wolseley had given no assurances to missionaries that they could reoccupy their old stations and the lands surrounding them.<sup>14</sup> Volker returned to Emlalazi to find that it had been burned to the ground by the Zulus during the war. Adding insult to injury, John Dunn, the "chief" of the District, had taken possession of the mission grounds on the claim that King Cetshwayo had given him the station after Volker had abandoned it in 1877. Dunn told Volker that no missionaries would be allowed to settle in the territory over which he ruled. Dunn's word was law according to the Ulundi settlement and the bitter and heart-sick Volker was obliged to leave his home of eighteen years.<sup>15</sup>

In 1880 the Hermannsburg Superintendent ordered Volker to move to northern Zululand and rebuild their station Ekuhlengeni, which had also been destroyed during the Zulu War. The Volkert's new station also suffered the ravages of the Zulu Civil War of 1883 fought between the rival factions of Cetshwayo's Usutu and Zibhebhu's Mandlakazi. Ekuhlengeni lay in the very heart of the war zone and was completely destroyed by a contingent of Hamu's warriors. Volker returned and rebuilt the station only to see it destroyed a second time by either the Zulus or careless Boers who had camped there. Volker spun out the remainder of his years at Ekuhlengeni where he ministered to a small but growing number of Zulu converts. At the age of 67 Volker was taken ill with tropical fever and after a short illness died on the 3rd May 1893.<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Volker was survived by his second wife, Dorothea Elisabeth Lutz — who had married Volker in 1872 after her sister had died in childbirth in 1868 — and eight children.

The wealth of new fact contained in Volker's *Experiences* would, alone, warrant its publication. It is one of the first full accounts of a Zululand missionary's life from the beginning of his career until his death yet to emerge. Volker's story is particularly valuable to the social historian for it reveals his "cultural belligerence" — that is, his implicit faith in the superiority of western European cultural norms in the form of Christianity, social behaviour and political institutions — and his intolerance towards all those "benighted" Zulu, the majority of whom rejected Christianity and clung to their "heathen" ways, who refused to don European dress, and who were unwilling to foresake the norms and usages of northern Nguni society for ones so thoroughly alien as those practised by Whites.<sup>17</sup> It was a great deal to ask anyone and it is no mystery that Volker failed to convert any significant number of Zulus to Christianity. Volker also wished to see Cetshwayo deposed and his Kingdom annexed for the Zulu King symbolised all that was darkness and barbarism. Moreover, Volker nursed a hatred for John Dunn, the white hunter-trader who rose to political prominence both before and after the Zulu War. Dunn was an even more vile creature in Volker's

eyes than Cetshwayo, for he was a European who had renounced "civilization" by entering into polygamous marriages with "heathen" women. And, Dunn had a double burden of sin to bear — not only had he rejected Christianity but he "dominated Cetshwayo like an evil spirit"<sup>18</sup> by supposedly inciting the Zulu monarch to drive out all missionaries in Zululand and to persecute converts. Volker's grinding self-righteousness and lack of sympathy for indigenous African cultures were no doubt aggravated by his forced removal from Emlalazi and the repeated destruction of Ekuhlengeni. He was both a witness and a "victim" of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the Civil War of 1883. His own highly personal account of this turbulent period in Zulu history is strongly prejudiced but perhaps that is its most redeeming and valuable quality.

*On a Tough Missionary Post in Zululand* was first published in German by the Hermannsburg Mission Press in 1928. Friedrich Volker's second wife, Dorothea, recounted her late husband's experiences to the Mission Superintendent and veteran Zululand missionary, the Reverend Heinrich Wiese. Dorothea Volker obviously consulted Friedrich Volker's private papers, diaries and official reports for the information appears to be accurate and based on eye-witness accounts. *On A Tough Missionary Post* consists of a total of sixty-three pages divided into twelve very short chapters. For the sake of brevity those chapters concerned with Volker's youth, preparations for the mission service and family and economic life have been omitted here. Much of this information has been incorporated into the introduction. The chapters entitled "In Southern Zululand", "The Horrors of the Zulu War", "In Northern Zululand" and "The Devastations of the Second Zulu War" appear, with four editorial omissions, in their entirety. A few liberties have been taken in the translation in order to render it more readable and comprehensible in English. Every effort has been made *not* to alter the essential meaning or subtlety of the original German. The translator has attempted to convey the profoundly religious nature of Volker, his family and his fellow missionaries by following as far as possible the pious phraseology used in the 19th century narrative of events. Notes and explanatory annotations have been provided and appear at the end of the text.

CHARLES BALLARD

## PART I

### **In Southern Zululand**

Travelling by oxwaggon from the City of Durban, we reached Hermannsburg,<sup>1</sup> our first station in Natal. There was a glad reunion with the first missionaries and colonists and their families, a bodily and spiritual recuperation after the long, arduous voyage. This rest period did not last long. Soon everything was organised and on April 30th 1858 two big waggons, drawn by eighteen oxen each, were standing ready in Hermannsburg; they were to take us on the long journey into Southern Zululand, which had been selected as a mission territory with the permission of the Zulu King Umpande (i.e. the root of a tree), a brother of Chaka and Dingaan. Together with Volker the missionaries Prydtz, Meyer, Ahrens and Wiese as well as the

colonists Helge and Hinze were to be the pioneers of this work. Women and children were also in the party, and after farewell was said in Hermannsburg they climbed into one of the waggons, while the men marched alongside. It was an unbeaten, difficult trail, which led to the decision that once the Tugela River was passed, one of the waggons should return to Hermannsburg. But as King Umpande, on account of the risk of lung sickness (bovine pleuropneumonia), had prohibited oxen or cattle to be brought from Natal to Zululand, which was bordered by the Tugela River, the great mission family would have been unable to reach its goal had it not been for the Norwegian missionary Oftebro, who was already living in Zululand. He very kindly put his trek oxen at their disposal from the Tugela. On May 18th, the caravan approached the River Umlalazi (i.e. grindstone). Here the mission sisters settled and called the station Emlalazi (i.e. at the Umlalazi).

Very strenuous physical and mental activity was now required, since they must house themselves and gain practice in the missionary work. On June 30th, the first mission feast was celebrated in the open, in the course of which Volker preached the sermon for the small German congregation from Corinthians II, 5, 20-21. "On behalf of Christ, then, we are Ambassadors, God, as it were, making the appeal through us. We beg you for Christ's sake, be reconciled to God; God made Him who knew no sin to be made sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might share the righteousness of God."

Finally, after two months, a small log house was ready for occupation and Volker mentioned the fact in his diary with thanks to God that they were now once again living in a house and could hold regular services. The strange language of the Zulus was practised to the best of their ability, but there was so much outside work that only a limited time could be devoted to studying it. Not only must the brothers build and cultivate the land, but they also had to fell trees in the indigenous forests, cut them up, drag them out and convey them home.

By the end of the year Volker received the order to found a new station at the River Inyezane, together with Prydtz, Wiese and the colonist Helge. King Umpande, however, was at first disinclined to give his permission for it and only agreed after the brothers had promised to build him a waggon-house. On May 6th, 1859, they travelled to Umpande and the work of erecting the waggon-house lasted all of six weeks, as practically no labourers were obtainable among the Natives and the missionaries had to cut the thatch themselves, using only their pocket knives, to complete the job.<sup>2</sup> By this time Volker, to his great delight, could begin to hold short services for the Natives in their own tongue.

The house for Enyezane was built in timber in Emlalazi and in October 1859 three of the brothers drove the waggon to this new station, in order to complete the building work. Only in the year 1860 did Volker return to Emlalazi to do missionary work. Further stations were then put up, and occupied by the newly arrived brothers, like Fröhling, Bartels, Küick and Brauel, after these had helped to build a massive house in Emlalazi with a church which was consecrated on January 18th, 1865. In their joy at the completion of their heavy labour, they little suspected how soon the work of their hands would be destroyed.

F. Volker was blessed with the special gift of winning the confidence and devotion of the Natives. Although he had not as yet completely mastered

their language, he could make himself clearly understood. He was never short of Native labour, and it was from amongst them that he saved the first souls for the Lord Jesus. Among the first whom he christened were Daniel Mgadi, later trained as a teacher in the seminary, and his brother Petrus Quabe, who later followed them to Ekuhlengi where he became church warden. In the year 1870 the congregation of Natives at Emlalazi already consisted of twenty christened souls.

Hundreds, or perhaps thousands, entered and left the station, but most of them were so embroiled and ensnared in their heathen morals and customs, in superstition and animism that they did not want to give these up. If they were told of God's word so that they found no other excuses, then they would answer: "Yes, we also want to go to the devil; we want to go to hell". When Volker's daughters tried to convert the kaffir girls, they said: "We are not afraid of Satan because our people simply kill him with the assegai", but in the case of some, the Living Word of God was given witness and the mission work could have taken its blessed course if the proud Zulus, especially the prominent ones of the nation, had not agitated against the spreading of the Kingdom of God. As the small band of christened ones grew, the stronger they became in their faith and the more the heathen showed their hatred and enmity.

The faithful Daniel Mgadi was particularly hated by them and one day ten armed Zulus with loaded guns appeared at Volker's door, claiming that Daniel was an *Umtakati* (sorcerer) and that they wanted to catch and kill him, but he had been warned in time and escaped through the back door, later finding his way to Natal.

It was particularly difficult to persuade Zulu girls to learn. There was no other way than for a Christian to take one of them as his bride and to pay for her with cattle, but even that frequently required a hard struggle. As one of the first girls, after she had become engaged to Joshua, came for instruction, her own father threatened her with death and her brothers took her away from the station again, beating and kicking her and spitting at her; however, she returned and finally her father and brothers did consent because they expected that Joshua would produce a good number of cows for payment.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of 1872 King Umpande died and his son Cetshwayo, who had already been co-regent, became his successor. In 1856 he had destroyed his brother Umbulazi and his dependants in a horrible bloodbath at the Tugela. As prince he had shown himself well disposed towards the missionaries, but as King, Cetshwayo soon displayed a boundless pride. This became particularly apparent after Cetshwayo was proclaimed King of Zululand in 1873 by Theophilus Shepstone in the name of the British Government. It was a clever move by the British, when on the 1st September Shepstone rode with a troop of soldiers to the Royal Kraal, Ulundi, and not only gave Cetshwayo wonderful presents, but robed him with a purple cloak and put a crown on his head. Admittedly certain agreements were later concluded with him, whose non-fulfilment could later become fateful according to International Law.

All might have been well if a certain John Dunn, an Englishman, who, however, lived as a Zulu heathen, had not dominated Cetshwayo like an evil spirit. John Dunn had previously been clerk for the border agent

Captain Walmsley. After he had committed some trespasses against the law, he left Natal to find refuge in Zululand. Soon he had managed to arrange becoming Cetshwayo's frontier- and toll-guard at the Tugela after Umbulazi, on whose side he had fought, had been killed. He and two of his companions had at that time shot down many fleeing Zulus. He knew how to win favours with Cetshwayo and soon obtained a high position. In addition to his White wife, he took several from among the Zulu people and lived like a Zulu.<sup>4</sup> The Natives recounted that he had said to them: "Take no notice of my skin or the fact that I wear clothes. I am a Zulu like you. I have nothing to do with what the missionaries preach." At the time of the war John Dunn already had 16 wives. He had whipped and chased away some of the older ones in order to replace them immediately with younger ones. John Dunn especially hated the Hermannsburg missionaries and amongst them our Brother F. Volker, because he lived in the vicinity of Emlalazi and it is certain that he repeatedly incited Cetshwayo against the missionaries and the christened ones.

One day Cetshwayo ordered Brother Volker and some missionaries to cut some cart-loads of building timber in the woods and deliver them to him. This was no small matter because the work and the journey to the King took a full six weeks, but the missionaries obeyed for the sake of their calling. They were, however, very astonished when on delivery the King still upbraided them saying that some of the trunks were not quite straight.

Soon after this time the Christian ones (*amakolwa*, i.e. believers) were called to work for longer periods for the King, and were then exposed to plenty of derision and contempt, but they kept to their faith and prayed fervently. Fear and horror took possession of all of them when, in the year 1876, one of missionary Fröhling's christened ones at Enyezane, called Joseph, just like Daniel Mgadi, was proclaimed a murderer and poisoner and was charged. Although the defendant was absolutely innocent, he was tortured in front of Fröhling's eyes and finally tied to a tree and ill-treated there. The dear Brother did everything he could to save the innocent Joseph from the hands of his tormentors, but in vain. When he offered them as many of his own cattle as they wanted, they at first made a show of agreement, pretending that they would come along to receive the cows. As soon as Fröhling had turned his back on them, they dragged Joseph away for dead and threw him to the crocodiles which inhabited a section of the Inyezane. Joseph died quietly resigned and praying, but Fröhling's wife was scared to death with fear and horror. For this reason the Fröhling's then left Zululand and moved to Hermannsburg.

The Zulus now moved ever more frequently about the land in wild armed bands and assembled around the King, whose pride now knew no bounds. At times the people came in full war regalia to the station, mirrored themselves in the windows, swinging their clubs, and danced and sang or rather shouted, often with the words: "We Amazulu are as numerous as the grass, we shall make an end of the Whites, and of the small Whites."<sup>5</sup> One day messengers of the King again came in order to call Volker's christened ones to work. They, however, recognised one of the messengers as one of Joseph's murderers and they were so frightened that they fled the country rather than walk into the jaws of the bloodthirsty tiger.

As at that time Superintendent Hohls wrote that the Brothers would have

to decide what must be done, Volker regarded it as his duty to take his family across the frontier for a while until the crisis had passed. Thus Emlalazi had to be abandoned and the small band of Christians as well as the Native labourers came along. In 1877 they found a primitive shelter at Burpham, an abandoned coffee farm on the Sinkwazi River. Only the most necessary things were taken along, the rest were left at Emlalazi as it was hoped to return, but "man proposes and God disposes".

### **The Horrors of the Zulu War**

Hardly had Volker and his family left Emlalazi, after having installed two reliable Natives, Usambulane and Simon, as guards and protectors, before John Dunn hastened to ask King Cetshwayo for the house and the fields, in fact for the whole of the station Emlalazi. Against Cetshwayo's objections, which a Hollander by the name of de Lange personally overheard, he pretended that Volker had left the station for good and should never be allowed to return. He took possession of the station and asked his brother-in-law, a bastard (Coloured) to live in the former mission house. However, the latter was more honourable than his English brother-in-law and refused the offer.

Then Dunn himself appeared one day at the station, bringing a key to the house and opening the doors. The door to the sitting room was the only one he could not unlock. He broke the window and climbed in. Usambulane and Simon confronted him and declared politely that the *Umfundisi* (teacher) had left the station only for a short while and that he would soon return, but they were given short shrift. Finding the house still full of furniture and the pantry and the loft still full of provisions, John Dunn wrote a short letter to Volker as follows:

"As your house and station have been presented to me by King Cetshwayo, I would ask you to take away your effects as soon as possible, failing which I shall not be responsible for them. If you want to fence in the graves (missionary Wendland's grave, the grave of the first Mrs. Volker, of the colonist Ahrens and his wife and of Dorothea Volker), I promise to respect them. I also found three pigs which I want to buy from you, if you do not ask too high a price. Yours, J. R. Dunn."

Volker answered him briefly and politely that he had left the station only for a short time, the effects were well looked after in his own house and that he wanted to slaughter the pigs himself at a later stage.

John Dunn then, without further ado, took possession of the whole property, allowing members of his black family to live in the house, and they helped themselves freely to the missionary's property.

But let us return to Cetshwayo. Robbery and bloodshed became more and more the order of the day; even in Natal girls were kidnapped and their relatives killed. When the government of Natal made representations to him about it, he replied: "Did I ever tell Shepstone that I would not kill? I kill, but I do not think that I have already gone very far in killing. Many people do not obey unless they are killed."

Furthermore Cetshwayo claimed a large stretch of land between the Pongola and the Buffalo Rivers as his territory, had military kraals built there and curtly ordered all those living there, Black and White, to move out. He even demanded the area between Blood River and the Pongola.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone, as Administrator of the Transvaal, came to sort the matter out, but without success. Then Gerhard Rudolph, Magistrate of Ladysmith, was sent to negotiate with King Cetshwayo, but was received very ungraciously. When Rudolph walked a few paces up and down during the discussion — Zulus are expected to sit down as a sign of respect before a superior, i.e. to squat on the floor — the King exclaimed: "What are you always walking up and down for?" Rudolph answered: "Because to stand before the King is not allowed, and I have not been offered a chair to sit down", whereupon Cetshwayo replied insolently: "My envoys also get no chairs to sit down when they call on you."

In September 1878 Sir Bartle Frere arrived by order of the British Government, to arbitrate in the dispute. He carefully prepared an ultimatum which was ceremoniously handed to Cetshwayo on December 11th and explained to him. Most of the territories under dispute were accorded to the Zulus, but Cetshwayo was to hand over the murderers of women kidnapped from the Natal territory and to pay with cattle as a fine for other violations of the border; the missionaries were to return and nobody was to be restrained from converting to Christianity, etc. Cetshwayo must make his decision within thirty days.

When the Zulus discussed this ultimatum among themselves, the word was: "Do not give in; we want to kill all the Whites and occupy Natal." So both sides armed themselves in readiness. Meanwhile, what of John Dunn, Cetshwayo's favourite? Shortly before the declaration of war on the 10th January 1879, Dunn, with two thousand of his supporters, crossed the frontier, the Tugela River, and went over to the British side, thus betraying King Cetshwayo by taking arms against him. The real Zulus were justified in saying: "We are most astonished that John Dunn, who has supplied us for so long with rifles and trained us, has crossed over to the British. We thought that he would live and die with our King, but now we see that he has sold our King in order to take possession of his land."

During these troubled times the Volkers lived at Sinkwazi in Natal, three-quarters of an hour from the Tugela, where every Sunday Volker held services for his people and for others who gathered around him, first in the living room and later in a barn.

Then one Sunday the District Officer, Captain Lucas, came galloping up to Volker's house and called out to him: "How can you calmly stay here instead of taking your wife and children well out of harm's way? Don't you know what terrible things have happened, that the first army, which marched across the Buffalo River in Zululand has already been destroyed? The Zulus have torn them to pieces and only a very few have escaped."<sup>6</sup>

[N.B. There follows an account of the battles of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift. *C.B.*]

After their initial setbacks the British hastened to re-arm themselves and fought bravely on to victory. John Dunn was accepted among the officers and played an important role. At the end of June the decisive battle took place near Ulundi in which 15 000 Zulus were killed or put to flight. Cetshwayo himself also fled but was chased hither and thither until he was taken prisoner on the 28th August 1879 by Major Marter in the forest of

Ungoma [Ngome]. Already on September 1st, Sir Garnet Wolseley, the successor to Sir Bartle Frere could tell the assembled Chiefs and the Zulu people: "Today it is just six years since Cetshwayo was crowned King of the Zulus and only yesterday you have seen how he was taken away from here as prisoner."

Unfortunately only some weeks earlier, on the 7th July 1879, our Brother Filter, who had been acting as Pastor in Lüneburg, had had to witness his promising son Heinrich being stabbed with assegais and dragged away. His body could not be interred in the cemetery. Nor was the outcome of the war agreeable to Brother Volker, as he was permanently barred from returning to his station, Emlalazi.

In the speech quoted above, Sir Garnet Wolseley had the following to say about the mission: "As regards religion, we do not want to force ours on you, and missionary work should not be undertaken against the wishes of the Chiefs and the people wherever missionaries choose to establish themselves. If therefore missionaries come and wish to live amongst the people, they should not be granted any further land, but only a small plot for their house and garden." When on the 8th September 1879 Superintendent Hohls made a petition to the General, in which he proved that the Hermannsburg Mission, through the destruction of ten stations, had suffered damage amounting to about 100 000 Marks, and most humbly asked for compensation, he received the following reply:

"Dear Sir, I have been instructed by General Sir Garnet Wolseley to advise you that he has received your petition of the 8th instant in which you request compensation for the losses suffered by the Hermannsburg Mission Society in the course of the Zulu War. His Excellency instructs me to reply that the activities of your Society in Zululand are purely a private concern and that he is not in a position to find any grounds on which your request for compensation could be based. Herbert."

Sir Garnet Wolseley sent a friendly letter to the Norwegian Bishop Schreuder, in which, however, he remarked, misguided by wicked rumours, "that in reality most missionaries who had hitherto worked in Zululand had been traders."<sup>7</sup> When this letter was published in the daily press there was a general outcry and our missionary Kück published the following letter on the 22nd October:

"His Excellency, Sir Garnet Wolseley, maintains in his reply to Bishop Schreuder, 'that most missionaries who hitherto had worked in Zululand had been traders'. As four other missionaries and I have worked for many years as emissaries of the Hermannsburg Society in the district in which J. Dunn is now Chief, I regard it as my right and duty to give you and your numerous readers a short description of our so-called trading.

When we came to Zululand and began to build with the permission of Umpande and Cetshwayo, we needed workers and they were Zulus. For these workers we needed food and wages; but as they did not know the value of money, we found ourselves obliged to buy goods and to pay our workers with blankets, hoes, etc. We needed trek oxen and cattle for the household and bought these in exchange for goods. Neither my brothers nor I were interested in trading, nor did we send our people out for this purpose. All the cattle we bought were brought to us, and we did not buy them in order to trade with them but for our own use. I ask: 'Who has seen us driving

cattle to Natal in order to sell them there?' I know of no missionary in J. Dunn's district who has sold cattle for trading purposes. I think this explanation should suffice to show you the real nature of our 'trade' during our residence in Zululand. The readers and yourself can judge whether we have been 'traders' and whether our stations were the ones with 'stores' or not. I am most amazed at how the senior official could make such a hasty judgement without prior investigation. He accepted as irrefutable truth what the accuser told him without asking the missionaries accused. I challenge the man who told Sir Garnet Wolseley that nearly all missionaries were traders to come forward and prove what he said." — Nobody came forward.

The letter of Brother Kück already revealed that the increasingly notorious John Dunn had become a Chief in the district where the Hermannsburg Mission Station, and also some of the Norwegian Missions, were situated. Sir Garnet Wolseley had appointed 13 such chiefs over the whole of Zululand and John Dunn had been the first to sign the settlement. When somebody warned the General that this arrangement would result in the Zulus making war among themselves, he replied in truly English fashion: "Just let them kill each other. Then we can hang the last one!"

It is, however, hardly comprehensible that anyone could have appointed such a treacherous and mean man as John Dunn as the first of these chiefs. He started off by writing a letter to the Norwegian Missionary Oftebro saying: "If you should make any attempt to take possession of your station on the grounds of your former right of occupancy, I shall be faced with the unpleasant task of forcibly preventing you from doing so." But later he had to amend this because of pressure from above, and he set out nine strange-sounding conditions which had to be met by the missionaries if they wanted to return.<sup>8</sup>

The Hermannsburg people were particularly hated by him, as they could not and would not condone his godless life. When Brother Volker met him shortly afterwards on a journey to Durban and challenged him about his injustice, he became agitated and said: "What do you want in Zululand and what have you achieved there?" Volker replied calmly: "At the behest of the Lord Jesus, we have preached the Gospel and saved souls," whereupon John Dunn remarked somewhat sneeringly, "We all end up in the same place when we finally go." But Volker did not let him get away with it, and reminded him of God's justice and judgement, whereupon he eventually said meekly: "If I were to allow you back again, I would have to accept all the missionaries and that I will not do."<sup>9</sup> That was the last Brother Volker saw or heard of him. Today (1927) John Dunn himself has long since gone to meet his Maker and the conditions in Southern Zululand have changed in many respects. Younger missionaries have again started to work on the stations and although we still have no title to the stations, we do not have any governmental interference with our ongoing work. According to the Annual Report of the Hermannsburg Mission published in July 1927, 70 persons were christened in the year 1926 at Enyezane together with Emlalazi, Emvutini and Andhlovini: 55 heathen adults and 15 children of heathen (i.e. converted) Christians. The total community numbers 544, viz. 317 adults with 227 children. Yes, the Lord reigns also in adversity. His counsel is wondrous, but He carries it out with glory.

PART II will appear in *Natalia* No. 10. [Editor]

## NOTES

### I Introduction

- <sup>1</sup> H. Wiese (Hgr.), *Auf schwerem Posten im Zululande. Lebenserfahrungen des Missionars F. Volker, nach Aufzeichnungen seiner Gattin.* H. Wiese (ed.), *On a Tough Missionary Post in Zululand: The Life Experiences of the Missionary Friedrich Volker according to the notes of his wife.* (Hermannsburg, 1928). p. 43. Pastor G. Haccius was a Church Mission Inspector.
- <sup>2</sup> Edgar Brookes and Colin Webb, *A History of Natal*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1965), p. 105.
- <sup>3</sup> See Anthony Dachs, "Missionary Imperialism: the Case of Bechuanaland", *Journal of African History* XIII, No. 4, 1972, pp. 648-56.
- <sup>4</sup> See Norman Etherington, "The Rise of the Kholwa in South-East Africa: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland, Zululand", (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1971).
- <sup>5</sup> British Parliamentary Papers (B.P.P.), C - 2220 of 1879, No. 129, p. 340.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Enclosure in No. 129, p. 344. Oftebro to Frere. 12 Oct. 1878.
- <sup>7</sup> Wiese (ed.), *On a Tough Missionary Post in Zululand*, p. 9.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Etherington, "The Rise of the Kholwa", p. 191.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200.
- <sup>13</sup> Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, p. 134.
- <sup>14</sup> B.P.P. C - 1482 of 1880, Enclosure 2 in No. 175, p. 467.
- <sup>15</sup> Wiese (ed.), *On a Tough Missionary Post in Zululand*, p. 29.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 62.
- <sup>17</sup> For a thorough discussion of the meaning of "cultural belligerence". see D. M. Schreuder, "The Cultural Factor in Victorian Imperialism: A Case Study of the British 'civilising mission'", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol IV, No. 3, May 1976, pp. 184-5.
- <sup>18</sup> Wiese (ed.), *On a Tough Missionary Post in Zululand*, p. 16.

### II Part I

- <sup>1</sup> Hermannsburg is approximately forty-five kilometres north of Pietermaritzburg. It was the General Headquarters of the Hermannsburg Mission Society but at present a school for the German community in Natal is maintained.
- <sup>2</sup> Many of the German and Norwegian missionaries in Zululand were carpenters and artisans—skills which they used to win the favour of Mpande, Cetshwayo and prominent Zulus.
- <sup>3</sup> Etherington, "Rise of the Kholwa", p. 191. The overwhelming majority of Zulus treated Christian Zulus with contempt and "they applied to mission station residents the same sneering epithet which white men gave to all blacks. They called them kaffirs."
- <sup>4</sup> Volker is incorrect on this point. John Dunn's first wife was Catherine Pierce, a Cape Coloured, who had been a servant in John Dunn's father's household in Durban. In 1852-53 Catherine ran away with John Dunn to Zululand.
- <sup>5</sup> The Zulus referred to the African mission residents, the *kholwa*, as "small whites".
- <sup>6</sup> Here Volker was referring to the Battle of Isandhlwana fought on 22 January 1879. The sections describing the battle of Isandhlwana and the death of the Prince Imperial are at best second-hand accounts which add nothing new or interesting. These passages have been omitted.
- <sup>7</sup> Sir Garnet Wolseley relied heavily on John Dunn's advice in drawing up the post-war settlement. He was in an excellent position to influence Wolseley's attitude towards missionaries.
- <sup>8</sup> See B.P.P. C - 2482 of 1880, enclosure 1 in No. 175, pp. 466-76. In fact, there were ten conditions the missionaries had to accept if they wished to settle in Dunn's district:
  1. He shall acknowledge my authority as chief.
  2. He shall acknowledge that he has no personal claim or title to land within my territory.
  3. The schools to be established on the mission stations shall be founded on the principle of an ordinary plain English school; both the Zulu and English language being taught; and no undue attention being given to accomplishments such as music etc.
  4. That any natives so inclined shall be taught some trade.

5. That no native shall be allowed to remove from any kraal to settle on a mission station without my consent.
  6. That it be distinctly understood that no native becomes exempt from his duties to his chief by residing on a mission station.
  7. That any native desirous of residing on any mission station shall be bound to erect a dwelling house in European style.
  8. That every encouragement be given to the cultivation by such natives of produce for a market.
  9. That the utmost encouragement be given to industrial pursuits so as in time to make the stations self-supporting.
  10. That the stations shall not be allowed to be made trading stations for dealing in cattle for profit.
- <sup>9</sup> Dunn had good reason for banning missionary activity in his chieftdom; first, Dunn was a supreme individualist who fairly bristled with rage when missionaries, like Volker, condemned him for his polygamous marriages to Zulu women; second, Dunn derived a comfortable income from his trading activities — at the time, most missionaries were forced to trade with the local Black populace in order to supplement their meagre incomes. Therefore, they posed an economic threat to Dunn's own trading monopolies.