

Book Reviews

GANDHI AND SOUTH AFRICA: PRINCIPLES AND POLITICS

by JUDITH M. BROWN and MARTIN PROZESKY, Eds.

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1996. xii, 131pp. illus. R71,82 (hard cover) R54,72 (soft cover)

This interesting set of papers consists of some of those presented at the Gandhi Centenary Conference, held at the Alan Paton Centre for the study of the Literature and Politics of Conflict and Conciliation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, in June 1993, at a time when South Africa was struggling to come to terms with political and social change. Local circumstances made Gandhi's message of non-violence particularly relevant at this time.

The 1990s have brought a renewed interest in M.K. Gandhi and his philosophy of *satyagraha*, or non-violent action, in both the written word and in films and documentaries. In June 1893, Gandhi, who had been called to the English bar the previous year, left his home in Porbandar, in western India, and travelled to South Africa to represent the merchant Dada Abdullah in a court case against a Pretoria-based Indian merchant. The incident in which he was ordered off the Durban-Johannesburg mail train at Pietermaritzburg station soon after his arrival is well known and was commemorated on the centenary of the event by the unveiling of a statue of Gandhi in the centre of Pietermaritzburg. Gandhi described the incident in his writings as the beginning of his 'active non-violence', seeing the action of the conductor both as a racial slight and as an injustice, since he was a British subject travelling with a valid first class ticket. In addition, like thousands of Indians since then, he was angry that he, an educated man, should be publicly humiliated by an unimportant official who ignored his protests and refused to listen to reason. His subsequent decision to fight racial discrimination on behalf of his countrymen was at least partly the result of this experience.

Gandhi and South Africa includes six of the papers delivered at the conference and another two, Judith Brown's second contribution entitled 'The vision of non-violence and the reality' and A.J. Parel's specially written essay 'The origins of *Hind Swaraj*'. It is attractively produced with twelve photographs, endnotes and an index.

Colonial society, in which Gandhi found himself in 1894, was generally opposed to the presence of Indians, except as indentured labourers, while a fairly large number of whites had objected to the whole indentured labour system from as early as 1855. Professor Bill Guest provides a graphic description in Chapter 2 of the development of Natal's political economy, the place of Africans and Indians within this economy and the increasingly stringent laws and regulations introduced after responsible government was granted in 1893, coinciding with Gandhi's arrival.

Professor Judith Brown, a keynote speaker at the conference and the Beit Professor of Commonwealth History at Oxford, took as her theme the effects of Gandhi's South African experience, lasting from 1893 to 1914, on his subsequent

career in India. She argues that his absence from India during his most formative years as an adult enabled him to look at India from the outside and perceive the problems and issues with greater insight and clarity than the local politicians could do. His contacts with India had grown during the central period of *satyagraha* (1908–1913) when he received moral support from the Indian National Congress in his opposition to the pass laws, and this helped him to find his niche in Indian politics when he finally returned there. Brown discusses Gandhi's struggle to discover the nature of Indian-ness, the position of Indians under colonial rule and the effects – in his view all negative – of modern western civilization. In South Africa Gandhi, particularly when he associated himself with their struggle against discriminatory legislation, was thrown among Indian indentured labourers from both south and north India, people from a wide variety of castes, speaking several languages and holding different religious beliefs. It is extremely improbable that this would have happened had he remained in India within his own Gujarati-speaking Bania group. His South African stay, then, broadened his experience and understanding, making him aware of the sufferings of the poor and oppressed and leading to his interest in doing something for the untouchables and the peasants who were at the mercy of the landlords. It also provided experience in handling people, in the organisation of marches, non-violent protest and setting up Tolstoy farm and Phoenix settlement, forerunners of his Indian *ashrams*. Gandhi describes himself as 'timid, inexperienced and painfully shy of public speaking' when he arrived from India; the twenty years he spent in South Africa changed him into a confident leader of men.

A.J. Parel contributes a chapter on Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, described as his seminal work on Indian politics. It was first published in *Indian Opinion* in 1909 and in it Gandhi concentrates on the nature of modern civilization. Parel sets out to explain Gandhi's association with the Transvaal British Indian Association from 1903 to 1910 and the discovery of the special techniques of *satyagraha*.

Karen Harris's chapter on Gandhi's relations with the Chinese community deals with a largely unresearched topic. The Chinese were the only non-white group, suffering under the same discriminatory laws, to join Gandhi's passive resistance campaign in the period between 1906 and 1911. Their position was weaker than that of the Indians in that they were not citizens of the British Empire but claimed to be subjects of 'an ancient civilization and independent sovereign nation' (p.82). Representatives of both groups travelled to London in 1906 to protest against the Asiatic Law Amendment Act but separately, and, although an informal alliance was formed between them in 1907, relations were complicated by differences of emphasis and the Chinese community's continued objection to fingerprinting, long after the Indian leadership had moved on to other subjects of protest. The Chinese saw the practice of fingerprinting as insulting as well as being objectionable on religious grounds. Despite the Chinese support for the Indian passive resistance campaign, Harris believes they were kept apart by 'their respective cultural chauvinism' (p.89). This is a paper covering new ground in many respects.

Margaret Chatterjee's chapter on the Gandhian heritage deals with South Africa's significance for it. The details of his life here, his legal practice, his relations with and experience of other groups such as Jews and Christians, but particularly the African people, are strangely lacking. His legacy is remarkably varied, ranging from the search for truth, non-violence, the brotherhood of all men, equality, the position of women in society, to complicated and idealistic suggestions for 'an oceanic circle'. Gandhi comes across as a mixture of the practical politician cum social reformer and the visionary who believed that religious and social differences could be overcome in unity and brotherhood. How he worked to reconcile these two aspects of his

character and way of life is discussed in the final chapter by Judith Brown, entitled 'The vision of non-violence and the reality'.

This is a stimulating, scholarly collection of papers which unexpectedly suggests fresh fields of study in the already extensively researched topic of Gandhi's years in South Africa.

J.B. BRAIN

TRADITION IN TRANSITION: THE STORY OF HILTON COLLEGE 1968–1995

Written and edited by JAMES NISBET, assisted by William Russell.

Pietermaritzburg, The Hiltonian Society, 1996. 250pp. illus. R125,00 (hard cover). This publication, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of Hilton College, is the third history of the school, following on A.F. Hattersley's *Hilton Portrait* (1945) and the centenary publication (to which this is a companion) *Lift up your hearts* by Neville Nuttall, which tells the story to 1968. Its form was shaped by the need to collect, before they were lost or forgotten, available sources for future historians, and it aimed to give an interpretation of the events of the period – of the people involved, of the successes and failures.

The interpretation of the successes and failures is essentially contained in Part I (60 pages), which focuses in turn on the five headmasters from 1967. This is supplemented by further information in Part II dealing with sixteen aspects of the school, including its huge estate (probably a unique treasure for a school) as well as its academic and non-academic activities and facilities. Part III provides a group of warmly appreciative but not uncritical reminiscences. Part IV is a 48-page register recording names in a wide range of categories from the Roll of Honour (from the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 to the Angolan Campaign of 1975), to school leavers 1967–1995. The story is told from the inside – Nisbet was a member of staff for almost the whole period, and other staff contributed to Part II – and presents a closely and sympathetically observed account of developments in the wide range of activities promoted at Hilton and among the varied groups which make up the 'Hilton family'.

No doubt most institutions have to take care in navigating the waters between tradition with its tested and comfortable familiarity, and transition with its unproven and often conflicting imperatives to change course. Schools – perhaps boys' private boarding schools particularly – are likely to find the waters rough from time to time, partly because there is such variety in the wider school community, united chiefly in claiming a loyal but proprietary interest in the course to be followed. *Tradition in Transition* records a variety of changes: in the curriculum from a stress on European languages to one on the sciences, then the humanities and again to life skills; in support structures for effective teaching, both administrative and technological (in the latter, especially, Hilton became a leader) and in amenities, including a superbly equipped theatre, which has become a focal point for an annual festival catering to a wider non-Hiltonian community. Two very different occasions stand out: an order by headmaster Slater to abolish initiation and other related practices; and an attempt by Todd, his successor, to establish within Hilton something resembling the sixth-form colleges then being established successfully in Britain. The former was successful, in spite of opposition; the latter was not, though Todd subsequently established independent LEAF colleges in South Africa. Even where the head is not the initiator of change, his role is clearly crucial, and in this work there are some insights into the head's relationship to staff, pupils, governors, old boys and parents, and its effect on the success of proposed developments. It pays much less attention

to the currents in society at large and the often conflicting admonitions of educational fashion, perspectives which the divisions into parts and sections (and sub-divisions within these) obscures.

This arrangement makes for a somewhat discontinuous read, at least for this relative outsider. Though the styles are never obscure, the divisions and sub-divisions tend to interrupt a view just as it is opening to the imagination. And – probably because a purpose was to provide for future historians – some of the sections in Part II contain details (e.g. about the chapel organ) which are likely to be intelligible only to the expert: but the index has references only to Part I. Readers from within the Hilton community will provide their own continuity, and – where they are interested – expertise. They will also find their memories clarified (perhaps corrected) and refreshed. They and others will find a proud but unsentimentally told record of how a school – privileged in many ways – has faced the challenge by Nicholas Oppenheimer at a speech day in 1982 to ‘. . . play a meaningful role in the development of education and so in the country.’ The leavers in the book’s final list will largely play their most significant roles in the twenty-first century; one hopes that South Africa will be the stage for a high proportion of them.

TONY BARRETT

THE PEOPLE’S CITY: AFRICAN LIFE IN TWENTIETH CENTURY DURBAN

Edited by PAUL MAYLAM and IAIN EDWARDS

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press and Portsmouth, N.H., Heinemann, 1996. xiii + 313 pp.

The South African city, created by the white man, was shaped and reshaped so as to marginalise and control the black population attracted to the economic opportunities it offered. This idea was central to segregation and apartheid and it is hardly surprising that when a modern, politically committed generation of historians, liberals and radicals looked for suitable subjects of study, race and the city were high on the agenda. The American Africanist Fred Cooper’s collection, *The Struggle for the City*, when it came out in 1981, seemed to mark an analytical milestone that gave international importance and relevance to South African urban material. Yet new literature on the city then and later actually revolved around the Reef. Much of this had to do with the role of the History Workshops which were largely based at the University of the Witwatersrand and inspired the work of talented historians who reflected the new issues, whether labour in the early 1980s, community protest issues a little later, or women at the end of the decade.

Durban, today South Africa’s second largest urban agglomeration and certainly the second biggest African urban population in the country, attracted some important scholarship as well, but it has been a scholarship that has required probing in university dissertations and scholarly journal articles to appreciate. Probably the main value of the collection under review is that it brings together at long last, around the struggle theme, a range of some of the best-known scholarly writers on the history of Africans in the city of Durban. These include two writers to whom tribute is rightly paid in the introduction by Paul Maylam: Maynard Swanson and David Hemson. Swanson, who died recently, was an American scholar who pioneered urban history in South Africa with his influential articles on the Durban system and what he called the sanitation syndrome, both implicated in the evolution of a particular system of control and racial separation for Africans in the city. He happened to have chosen Durban for his Harvard Ph.D. study of the early 1960s. Hemson was a Natal student

who helped pioneer the revival of the trade union movement a decade later. In exile, he wrote a thesis for the University of Warwick which covered the long history of Durban dockworkers. In insisting on the importance of class, he made a signal contribution to analysis of African activity and consciousness while his rich imagination and wide historical sweep opened up much further potential writing on African working life and politics in the city.

One should, however, also mention the contribution of the co-editors of *The People's City*. As a lecturer and then professor at the University of Natal, Durban, Paul Maylam took up the subject of the African in the city in a systematic way and particularly contributed to our understanding of the changing nature of urban African administration. Iain Edwards's Ph.D under Maylam explored many of the themes that emerge in an examination of perhaps Durban's most dynamic African neighbourhood, Mkhumbane, Cato Manor, dead when Edwards was doing his research but now brought back to life by today's squatters. In Cato Manor during the 1940s, a varied African community, living alongside other sections of the Durban population and with different occupational and class strata juxtaposed, took shape. It was the ideal space to study in order to understand the deeper social processes behind African urbanisation.

This volume contains contributions by all four as well as a number of other scholars associated with them and/or the University of Natal. The volume is really an exploration of themes that stem from ideas shared in this association rather than a coherent set of propositions about African life in Durban. Nonetheless, Maylam provides an interesting introduction, strongest perhaps on material before 1960. Back in the early twentieth century there emerges a sense of flux and openness owing to the relative weakness of the local state, when African people, largely men, drifted in, around and out of the colonial port town exploring ways to find rewards for themselves and their rural households. Poising oneself on the edge of the urban economy and the urban landscape offered possibilities that orderly proletarianisation did not. Control over the periphery of the city was shadowy and worried generations of city fathers, culminating in the annexations of 1932 and the consequent restructuring of space before and after the Group Areas Act of 1950 descended from Pretoria. Maylam argues that this poisoned chalice was by no means met with hostility by the local authorities.

In the late 1920s, Durban somnolence was broken by a wave of African resistance, focusing on the Durban system and its apparently successful and lucrative control of beer brewing in the town. This is the subject of an essay by Wits historian Paul la Hausse which captures some of the flavour of African life in Durban before the economic dominance of secondary industry. If resistance was stilled after the violent episodes at that time, the Durban system was never fully and effectively reconstituted thereafter.

The rapid economic growth of the late 1930s and the war years enabled African workers to organise trade unions and (more tentatively) create a trade union culture. Tim Nuttall carefully maps out the phases and evaluates the organisational capacity and efficacy of the early African trade unions up through the SACTU period. David Hemson, by contrast, looks at the dockworkers in a quick sweep of history that takes us through phases of quiescence and militancy (often quite outside any rhythm discernable at the national level) up to the period after containerisation and the turbulent 1980s. Once the core of the urban proletariat, contemporary dockworkers with their strong rural roots now seem relatively marginal to the city. If the dockworkers fail to fit the pattern of unprecedented black urban organisation and militancy in the 1980s, Ari Sitas, in his history of the Dunlop workforce, sketches the

kind of workforce that was at the vanguard of FOSATU and then COSATU insurgency, making Durban as much a union town as any in the country. Perhaps the strongest thing in Sitas' essay is his interview-based account of the life experiences of a number of long-term Dunlop workers. Mention must also be made of Ros Posel's informative essay on the ricksha pullers and their place in the city's workforce, significant precisely because they were contradictorily symbolic of Durban to the world of white South Africa, a "decorative" part of the black working class.

Moving from workplace to residence, Iain Edwards gives us the story of Mkhumbane and especially the second great war over beer, this time involving the women of Cato Manor, in 1959. During the 1940s and 1950s, the population of African women and children grew rapidly in Cato Manor and an irreversible urbanisation process took shape, while continuing to bear strong traces of the earlier, more fluid social patterns. Although Edwards's piece bubbles with suggestive material on social and political life in this uncontrollable and vibrant slum, it focuses most on the importance of a distinctive women's politics in shaping the conflicts of the late 1950s. In some ways, the African men were complicit with the state's attempt to remove Africans to more distant, manageable and patriarchally structured Kwa Mashu. A real absence in the volume is the lack of a carry-through chapter on Kwa Mashu and Umlazi, the established hearts of the contemporary African urban population of metropolitan Durban.

Instead we have short essays on three neighbourhoods which belong to the urban periphery. Maynard Swanson charts the growth of Clermont, an African freehold community near Pinetown, from the 1930s. It represented a model for him of spontaneous development with a naturally emergent leadership—at least until state intervention becomes too heavy-handed—a legitimate home for Africans in the city. Lamontville, created by the local state as a small community for African families south of Durban at the start of the 1930s, is surveyed by Louise Torr. She suggests that struggles to establish similar possibilities as existed in Clermont tended to achieve less under the firmer hand of the state in Lamontville. Finally a brief essay by Heather Hughes sketches the distinctive rural community of Inanda north of the Umgeni and the stages of its incorporation into Durban on unfavourable and harsh terms. For Hughes, the city actually "undermines" a solid rural community through this process.

One finally needs to mention the remarkable essay on African music in the city of Durban and its wider cultural strands by the German anthropologist Veit Erlmann. Erlmann knows how to cast his net in such a way as to reveal a subtle grasp of his historical subject and its context that is not usual in a study of music. He captures, for instance, some of the sense of difference and commonality amongst a population compressed together in the eyes of the law until the abolition of apartheid. More than any other contributor, he avoids the convenient and conventional trap of seeing African life always in the prism of control or resistance. He argues instead for the distinctiveness of a Durban African musical style and for the role of public musical performance in shaping social life. For those who follow modern South African history, the work of Erlmann and Swanson will be the least familiar. Most other contributors have published related material elsewhere; nonetheless we are in the debt of the editors for making it available to us as a base for reflection and further research. Provocative captions frame an interesting collection of photographs that illustrate continuing themes from the book. There are struggles in *The People's City* that have fundamentally shaped the city of Durban and Paul Maylam's opening comments on the need to make black Durban seen, felt and heard in the historical literature are beginning to be realised.

BILL FREUND

BEARING WITNESS: THE NATAL WITNESS 1846-1996

By SIMON HAW.

Pietermaritzburg, *The Natal Witness*, 1997. 372 pp., hardcover, R142,50.

When Stan Eldridge was editor of the *Natal Witness* he kept a small billiard table in an otherwise bare room adjacent to his office. When he wanted to ruminate he would invite a member of his staff to join him there — never mind what the staffer was doing.

While he dominated the table in both skill and physique, Eldridge would air his two recurring themes. “We are half-artists, boykie,” was one of his thoughts. “If we were real artists we would be artists. But we are not, so we are journalists.”

His other theme was more sombre. He wanted to write an editorial calling on all South Africa’s judges to resign. Nobody, he believed, could apply apartheid laws and call themselves a judge. But Eldridge knew he would be prosecuted if he did and the paper might be severely damaged: Balthazar John Vorster was the Minister of Justice at that time and contempt of court was more stringently interpreted than it is now.

In this feeling, however, Eldridge echoes the sentiments of a long line of *Witness* editors. The present editor, John Conyngham, is not stretching credibility too far when he writes: “In essence the *Witness* is a humanitarian paper, placing above everything else the dignity and sanctity of human life. It is not party-politically aligned but champions generosity, tolerance, freedom, the rule of law and opposes authoritarianism of any sort.” With few exceptions and only occasional lapses, the editors have been humane men who opposed authoritarian rulers and sided with the disadvantaged, when they remembered them, whether they were black, Boer or Indian — the last two being notoriously unpopular causes in white Natal, if not in KwaZulu-Natal.

Simon Haw has mined 150 years of newspapers, a wealth of private sources and books and a string of interviews to write a history of the *Witness* editors and their editorials, knitting them to the events of the day and the management of the newspaper. His two previous histories are of Natal institutions, Maritzburg College and the Natal Education Department, and he is at home on this ground. But he uses his wide selection of sources to fix events and dates rather than to offer any overarching theory of the progress of the region from frontier colony to province in a newly-democratic South Africa, or of the role of the newspaper in this saga. How the newspaper reflected, reflected on and neglected the events of its times is his primary concern.

A professional journalist would have written a different history of the newspaper. An academic historian would have written another. But there is no certainty that they would have produced anything more readable, or more accurate.

The journalist might have avoided the admonitions about “hysterical” and “sensational” reporting and some minor aberrations: there is nothing “lowly” about the work of sub-editors (p 184); the “stone sub” was a member of the editorial staff, prevented by “strictly enforced union rules” from touching type, which was the job of compositors (p 299); the *Witness* was not the “last remaining independent daily” at the 1994 election (p 342) but from December 1995 when the *Daily Dispatch* was taken over by Times Media Limited.

More credit for the survival of the Pietermaritzburg paper against interlopers from the larger and wealthier Durban might have been given to its unsung departments: advertising and circulation. When a newspaper is profitable or its sales are growing, the credit belongs as much to them as it does to editors, accountants or printers, the more so when they are trapped forever in second place.

But retired and sacked editors, who generally write such books, tend to produce self-serving accounts, rich in anecdote and poor in self-criticism or irony. Joel

Mervis's history of Times Media Limited, *The Fourth Estate*, for example, quite apart from its dulling title, offers little excuse for the ruthless exploitation of the divorce courts by his *Sunday Times*, or for its conservative politics, except as an explanation of its success. Historian Donald Read's otherwise digestible *The Power of News: The History of Reuters* chokes its reader with numbers.

Haw avoids these traps and keeps his eye firmly on the people who made the newspaper and the news. His assessments of the *Witness* editors and owners are always thorough and not always complimentary. Some are scalding. He provides convincing characterisations of the five I happen to have met: Mark Prestwich, the mildly eccentric professor of history and politics who wrote such brilliant leaders; Stan Eldridge, the buffalo with the billiard cue; Richard Steyn, the meticulous and demanding lawyer; David Willers, the dilettante, and John Conyngham, the writer. (Haw avoids the popular explanations for the appointments of Eldridge and Steyn, if he is aware of them. Perhaps they are no more than urban myths and should be left at that.)

A weakness, which Haw readily admits, is the volume of material he managed to assimilate in the eight months he had to assemble this history. Unavoidably, it is strong on the early years and the long editorship of David Dale Buchanan and on the recent editors, from Eldridge to the present, where he has been able to interview living associates. He has gone to some lengths to fill the gap in between, but some puzzles remain unsolved.

It is a comment on the different mortalities of owners and editors that the newspaper has had only three owners in its 150 years of existence: Buchanan, the Davis family and the Craib family. It has had 23 editors. Owners, it seems, found dynasties, editors come and go through swing doors.

Haw has laid fertile ground for other researchers. He has also provided the *Witness* with a useful submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, should it choose to go that route. On balance, it has done a better job of telling its readers what they ought to be concerned about, more consistently and over a longer time than most other newspaper in this country can claim.

It is a credit to the short list of owners that the *Witness* editors were given the freedom to do this job and that Simon Haw was allowed a similar freedom in compiling this commissioned history. Together they have raised a worthy monument to an exceptional newspaper.

I have to correct only one story, if the author and I happen to be thinking of the same incident. The inebriated drama critic referred to on page 273 was in fact a lowly reporter. He arrived at the school production after interval, not before, and he did not leave by taxi. His present position, however, prevents him disclosing how he returned to the office.

GAVIN STEWART

THE ANATOMY OF THE ZULU ARMY FROM SHAKA TO CETSHWAYO 1818-1879

By IAN KNIGHT

London, Greenhill Books, 1995, 282pp. illus. R179,95

This book is an addition to Ian Knight's others on the subject of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. He has meticulously and successfully written a book which not only discusses battles, but the contexts in which they took place. His description of the Zulu military system is valuable in the sense that he goes back to the period before the 1870s – the period for which he is well-known as a specialist.

His first chapter presents a very clear idea of the purpose of the book. He uses the

battles of the late 1870s to illustrate his points about the military system of the Zulus. However, most of what he says is familiar to most people who are familiar with the history of Natal and Zululand during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. There is some repetition, which may be understandable in view of the fact that he is writing for a diverse audience, not only specialist historians.

The way in which the author clarifies the nature of the Zulu army and its relation to the society as a whole gives greater insight into what the old Zulu order was like. In Chapter 2 he traces the formation of *amabutho* to the social organisation of the Zulu kingdom of the 18th century. He describes, step by step, the processes involved in the making of an *ibutho*. In the later chapters he concentrates on weaponry, dress, rituals, war preparations, battle tactics and combat rituals. His description of the shields and spears, as well as when, how and why they were used, really shows the extensiveness of his research. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the failure of the Zulus to adapt to new challenges when a new, formidable enemy with different weaponry and military tactics began to threaten, and finally subjugate, the Zulu kingdom. He uses the battles fought during the Anglo-Zulu War and the civil war as examples.

Chapter 4, which adds much to our understanding of the Zulu military system and society, deals with *UmKhosi* – ancestor worship – and the *inkatha*. His description of these rituals, which were normally performed at the King's main *ikhanda*, attempts to offer explanations as to how the Zulu kingdom was organised and how the army operated in peace and war.

The author points out that the Zulu army was composed of adult males who could be called by the King not only for war purposes, but also to serve as labour in times of peace. The *amabutho* were indeed central to the system, but were not oppressive machinery in the way some British settlers in Natal viewed them.

To add to his readable style, Knight includes many eyewitness accounts from both Europeans and Zulu warriors themselves. His questioning of these sources and the way he sets them against each other, adds to the interest of this book. His illustrations also enrich the book. On page 57, however, he has incorrectly located the King's hut at Mgungundlovu, which was Dingane's Great Place during the 1830s. Actually, the hut should be on the right.

Though the author specialises in the history of the Anglo-Zulu War, and repeatedly uses events of the 1870s to illustrate his points, his attempt to go back to the formation of the Zulu kingdom in the early 19th century is commendable. His appropriate and correct use of Zulu names and translations adds to the depth and richness of the work.

Knight ends by discussing the Zulu military system in the 1880s, when it was on the verge of collapse, and some attempts were made to revive it. There is also a section (pages 259–272) which is helpful to readers with regard to Zulu names, *amabutho*, campaigns and Zulu commanders from 1818 to 1879.

Although I do not see this book as a breakthrough, it makes a valuable contribution to our understanding not only of the Zulu military system, but also of Zulu society as a whole during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. He draws on familiar work done on Natal and Zululand history by archaeologists, anthropologists and historians. It is a landmark in the study of the history of the Zulu kingdom and its military system, which was inextricably woven into the fabric of Zulu life. Its absorbing look at the history of the Zulu army and society makes it an indispensable asset to any historian or ordinary reader who wants to understand the dynamics of the Zulu kingdom and its military system from 1818 to 1879.