

'HAMMERING IN THE WEDGES':  
THE POLITICAL PRAXIS OF HARRIETTE COLENZO  
IN ZULULAND AND NATAL, 1884 TO 1913.

BY

SIZAKELE GUMEDE

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**SUPERVISOR:** PROFESSOR CAROLYN HAMILTON

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## Abstract

This dissertation tracks and analyses the praxis of the political actor, Harriette Colenso, in support of Africans in the struggle against imperialism, in Natal and Zululand, between 1884 and 1913. It examines the interplay between Colenso's political praxis and the rapidly changing colonial political contexts in which she operates, scrutinising her participation in the developing colonial political order, and looks at the ways in which her political activity imaginatively challenged its boundaries. It argues that she thwarted successive colonial governments' attempts to obliterate the Zulu royal house and the institution of Zulu kingship. With the Zulu already under British subjugation, Colenso was not engaging with the big political questions so much as she was concerned with safeguarding King Dinuzulu and preventing the Usuthu's political situation from worsening. She achieved this by continually countering the colonial governments' political activities, which this study refers to as her 'hammering in the wedges.' The study shows that she had a series of small successes that in the long-term contributed in important ways to political gains by the Zulu monarchy. The study highlights the characteristic features of Colenso's political praxis, particularly her activity and success in driving wedges between the colonial and imperial officials and authorities. This dissertation is the first scholarly work to examine Colenso's entire active public political life. It also reviews and offers re-interpretations of aspects of her life dealt with in prior scholarship. Its novelty lies in the centring of Colenso as a political actor in her own right, rather than, as is the case in the study by Jeff Guy, using her as a lens on larger political affairs. It augments this innovative perspective with research based on previously untapped archives, offering a fresh look at its subject and hoping to stimulate further research.

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A special dedication goes to my adorable granddaughters:

**NTOMBIZENALA SELLO, SIYAMTHANDA GUMEDE AND NOMANDLA MHLANZI**

You will grow up, and you will come across this work.

Just as you have inspired me, may the EFFORT this dissertation embodies,

Inspire you too, to pursue whatever you wish for in your lives.

## Introduction

This dissertation tracks and analyses the praxis of the political actor, Harriette Colenso (1847-1932), in support of Africans in colonial Natal and Zululand in the period from 1884 to 1913. She was the daughter and oldest of five children of John William Colenso (1814-1883), the first Bishop of the Church of England in Natal from 1853 to 1883. Her father, Bishop Colenso, was renowned for his defence of prominent Africans in the struggle against imperialism, among them Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu who led amaHlubi<sup>1</sup> in the 1870s, and the Zulu monarch, King Cetshwayo in the 1880s.<sup>2</sup> On the bishop's death, Harriette Colenso assumed his political mantle. This is a study situated in the last lap of Natal's African struggle against imperialism, prior the establishment of the Union of South Africa. It argues that Harriette Colenso thwarted the efforts of successive colonial governments, that aimed to wipe out the Zulu royal house and abolish the institution of Zulu kingship. Her political activities impacted on governments and were interventions with effects on the exertion and the challenging of political power and authority. Although she was influential and interacted extensively with political figures in the colonial and imperial governments, she never held a formal position or political office.

This study is not a biography. It is a small and tightly focussed study of Colenso's political praxis. It gives attention to changing colonial political practices of this period and to an emerging colonial political order that was developing a mode of political practice with increasingly routinised ways of doing things. At the same time it examines how Harriette Colenso both participated in what was being imagined as the colonial political order, and imaginatively challenged its boundaries through her political activity. The notion of praxis focuses attention on changing political discourses and practices of the time, as well as on what Colenso was saying and doing. It looks at the mutually shaping effects of discourse and practice, changing colonial politics and her activities. The study delineates Colenso's political praxis through an examination of her political activities, forms of political engagement, and accumulation and deployment of personal political capital.

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<sup>1</sup> 'AmaHlubi' is used instead of the anglicised 'the Hlubi' to align with the cause of resistance to imperial domination, in which Bishop Colenso played a significant role.

<sup>2</sup> This study follows the convention of attaching the title 'King' at first mention and then using name proper.

More decisively than other scholarly works on Harriette Colenso, this study disentangles her from the shadow of her politically powerful father, William Colenso, the famous Bishop of Natal. It shifts previously gendered interpretations by placing her on par with contemporary political actors of her stature and moves away from the patriarchal framing of casting Harriette Colenso as her father's daughter. It offers a view on what it meant to be an activist woman during that period in a colonial setting and on the gender tensions and taut agency of womanhood in that time and place.<sup>3</sup> This is the first study in the historiography on Harriette Colenso to make her central to the narrative, a point underscored by addressing her by surname, a convention often reserved for males. Therefore, while prior scholarship addresses her as 'Harriette Colenso' (as Jeff Guy does in his study)<sup>4</sup> or uses a female denoting prefix and refers to her as 'Miss Colenso' (as Lionel Swart does in his thesis)<sup>5</sup> or just 'Harriette' (as in Brenda Nicholls' thesis),<sup>6</sup> this study refers to her as 'Colenso.' To avoid confusion with other Colenso family members mentioned in the text, it refers to her father as 'Bishop Colenso' or just 'the bishop,' while in the few instances of the mention of her siblings, they are distinguished by use of their first names.

Colenso has been the subject of four scholarly works that to varying degrees have been useful to this study. In 1963 Shula Marks published a journal article that provided Colenso's core biographical details and a broad outline of her performance in the responsibilities she inherited from her father: support for Africans, and the continuity of his church.<sup>7</sup> Swart's thesis completed in 1968, attempted to show Colenso as a dynamic supporter of King Dinuzulu's cause.<sup>8</sup> Its examination of her role during his second treason trial of 1908 to 1909 has provided valuable information for this dissertation, particularly around her sponsoring Dinuzulu's defence. Nicholls' doctoral dissertation of 1997 investigated Colenso's defence of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu<sup>9</sup> during the decade of British Zululand, 1887 to 1897, and concluded that despite her vigorous efforts, she achieved little because in practice Dinuzulu

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<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to the Examiners' Reports for the succinct phrase 'taut agency of womanhood' and for the sharp focus that the phrase facilitates.

<sup>4</sup> Guy, Jeff. *The View Across the River: Harriette Colenso and the Zulu Struggle Against Imperialism*. Cape Town: David Philip, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Swart, Lionel. 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso in Relationship to Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo Culminating in the Treason Trial on 1908-1909'. MA thesis, University of Natal, 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholls, Brenda. 'The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context, 1887-1897'. Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Marks, Shula. 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus, 1874-1913'. *The Journal of African History*, 4 (3), (1963), 403-411.

<sup>8</sup> Cetshwayo's heir and successor.

<sup>9</sup> The royalist core of the Zulu, followers of Cetshwayo, and subsequently of Dinuzulu.

was never accorded the position of trust for which Colenso had hoped.<sup>10</sup> This thesis provides useful material on Dinuzulu's first treason trial of 1889 and Colenso's campaign in Britain in the 1890s. It carries a valuable appendix of the nicknames of the members of the Colenso family; without knowing them, trawling through the Colenso archives would be a struggle.<sup>11</sup>

In 2001 Jeff Guy published a 449-page tome which he described as in part a biography<sup>12</sup> of Colenso, in which he, like other scholars, viewed her within the larger narrative of the destruction of the Zulu kingdom. Guy introduced this book as an extension of his 1979 analysis of the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, in which he examined the British diversion of the productive capacity of the former Zulu kingdom and the continued resistance to the imperial conquest, which as he noted in the preface, '... directs and controls the structure of the story told here.'<sup>13</sup> Guy concluded that Colenso achieved little, but he ascribed her failure to external factors that were beyond her control: being a female, during the imperial era, and pursuing the autonomy for Africans. He did, however, credit Colenso for the continued existence of the Zulu royal house and kingship.<sup>14</sup>

Different from Nicholls and Guy's scholarly works, this dissertation repositions Colenso as a formidable political actor in her own right, whereas they used her as the lens on broader political affairs. While other works in the historiography on Colenso are broadly biographical, this dissertation is the first to employ the innovative political praxis approach that provides a unique lens on her political activism in relation to rapidly changing colonial rule and political practice of this period. Nicholls and Guy's studies concentrate on Colenso as the interlocutor for Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. Wherever appropriate this study draws on their insights into her interlocutions. However, in many places, this study goes beyond noting her interlocutory activity to explore interlocution as a form of political praxis, capable of effecting political shifts notably in opening up opportunities. This study, in contrast to Nicholls and Guy, further explores her full political repertoire and looks at a variety of other activities undertaken by her and other political roles assumed by her, and extended to

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<sup>10</sup> Nicholls, 'The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context', xxvi, xxviii.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, xxvi, footnote 2. Colenso had at least four nicknames: uDhlwedhlwe (walking stick), uMatotoba (slow, careful one), Inkanisi (source of brightness), and uMandiza (flying one).

<sup>12</sup> More than half of this book provides an extensive historical background on which Guy then situates Colenso's biography that is in part because it ends in 1897 whereas Colenso's active public political life ended in 1913 and she died in 1932.

<sup>13</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, ix.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 297, 380, 448.

Africans in general. This study is the first to span the entire period of Colenso's active public political life, from 1884 to 1913. Consequently, it is the first study to cover both the 20-year apart Dinuzulu treason trials.<sup>15</sup> This extended scope enables reviews and re-interpretations of some prior scholarship's claims, impressions, and conclusions. Also, due to the parameters of this study, it is augmented with research based on previously untapped archival material.

Primary research was done at the Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban and the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, drawing liberally from Colenso's private papers. Therefore, this study reflects Colenso's voice and perspectives; African voices are heard through her archive, albeit sometimes with glaring gaps, as pinpointed later in this study. Dinuzulu and the Usuthu belonged to an oral society, they left no archives. But they sometimes calculatingly did so, covering their tracks by not sharing<sup>16</sup> or hiding<sup>17</sup> their activities. In the historiography on Colenso, this is the first study, on a small but impactful scale, to extend research to consultation of isiZulu texts and primary sources located at the St Helena Government Archives.

In this study the words 'king' and 'chief' require explanation. The study refers to Dinuzulu as the 'king'<sup>18</sup> instead of the 'chief.' Although the colonial authorities did not officially recognise him as the 'king,' the Zulu people acknowledged him as the son and heir of the previous king, Cetshwayo, and thus as being more than simply one chief amongst others.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Dinuzulu's first treason trial of 1889 is discussed in Nicholls and Guy's works, and the second trial of 1908 to 1909 is discussed in Swart's thesis.

<sup>16</sup> During Dinuzulu's second trial when his chief advisor, Mankulumana, was queried on whether the Usuthu leaders had told Colenso about the presence of Bhambatha's family at Osutu, his response was, 'no – after all she is a white woman.' See Marks, Shula Eta. 'Black and White in Self-governing Natal: An Assessment of the 1906 – 1908 Disturbances'. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1967, 28.

<sup>17</sup> When Dinuzulu had become literate and employed secretaries, sometimes he practised secrecy tactics: insisted on verbal communication and used different messengers in chains of same messages. See Thompson, Paul. 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy, 1898–1906', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 49 (3), (2016), 315-316.

<sup>18</sup> This study acknowledges that the indigenous concept of 'inkosi' (often translated as 'king'), differs from the British idea of 'king'. The term 'king' is used in this study understood that its preciseness of meaning is compromised by the connotations of colonialism.

<sup>19</sup> In September 1879 Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Special Commissioner in Natal, divided the Zulu kingdom among thirteen powerless chiefs (hereafter 'Wolseley's petty chiefs'). They could only appoint headmen subject to magistrates' approvals, and the governor had powers to dismiss them without trial. See Map of the chiefdoms in Guy, Jeff. *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, 1994, 73.

Likewise, the study refers to Ndabuko kaMpande<sup>20</sup> and Tshingana kaMpande<sup>21</sup> as the ‘Usuthu leaders’ rather than the ‘chiefs.’ This study rejects the practice by works in the historiography on Colenso,<sup>22</sup> of referring to Ndabuko and Tshingana as Dinuzulu’s ‘uncles,’<sup>23</sup> or by the incorrectly applied term ‘umalume.’ Rather it follows an isiZulu convention in referring to these senior brothers of Cetshwayo as Dinuzulu’s ‘fathers.’<sup>24</sup>

In the period under review, Colenso’s political praxis was closely tied up with political developments in the Zulu royal house, as her active public political life coincided with the reign of Cetshwayo’s son, Dinuzulu. It was a critical period. The Zulu monarchy faced annihilation. Cetshwayo had died in 1884 and left to Dinuzulu, his teenage heir and successor, a Zulu kingdom that was under enemy attack, with the Usuthu ‘facing the possibility of extinction.’<sup>25</sup> The British had defeated Cetshwayo in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, carved up the royal domain, and in a series of manoeuvres undermined the king’s authority. The Boers also coveted Cetshwayo’s land. A civil war had ravaged Zululand and Cetshwayo’s arch-enemy, Zibhebhu kaMaphitha,<sup>26</sup> had defeated the Zulu king and hounded him to death.

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<sup>20</sup> Ndabuko was the son of Mpande, a full brother of Cetshwayo. See Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 250. Individuals whose monarchical links explain and enhance their profiles, at first mention are linked to their fathers – for example ‘Ndabuko kaMpande’ – and thereafter referred to by their names – for example ‘Ndabuko.’

<sup>21</sup> Tshingana was the son of Mpande, and one of Cetshwayo’s half-brothers. See Webb, Colin de B, and Wright, JB (eds.). *A Zulu King Speaks: Statements Made by Cetshwayo kaMpande on the History and Customs of His People*. University of Natal Press, 1978, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Examples being Guy’s book (2001); Marks’ thesis of 1967 – see Marks, ‘Black and White’, 101, 106, 119, 565. This usage also occurs in the writings of Dinuzulu’s defence team – see Dumat, Frank Campbell and Escombe, Harry. ‘A Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs’. London: 1889, Killie Campbell Africana Library (hereafter ‘KCAL’); Colenso in her pamphlets in the 1890s – see as an example Colenso, Harriette. Pamphlet. 1890. ‘Zululand: Past and Present’, ZUL/1, 1-20. KCAL; and is even used by Dinuzulu’s grandson, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, in his speech in 1981 – see Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. ‘King Dinuzulu kaMahelana kaCetshwayo, 1868 – 18 October 1913, King of the Zulus’. Speech delivered at Mahlabathini, KZN, 29 August 1981 at 9 am, on the occasion of the ceremony to unveil King Dinuzulu’s tombstone, 1-43.

<sup>23</sup> In English, ‘uncle’ refers to both the paternal and maternal sides of the family. In isiZulu, ‘umalume’ refers only to the maternal side.

<sup>24</sup> In Zulu people’s context, brothers to a father are referred to as ‘obaba’ (fathers). By preference, one may specify and refer to ‘ubab’ omncane’ (junior father) or ‘ubab’ omdala’ (senior father), or just ‘ubaba’ (father).

<sup>25</sup> Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 218.

<sup>26</sup> Zibhebhu was of the lineage of Zulu kings.

Contrary to imperial intentions, the defeat of the Zulu people<sup>27</sup> in the Anglo-Zulu War did not end their power and independence. The central unifying elements – the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship – continued to exist albeit unofficially. Successive colonial governments endeavoured to destroy those remnants of the Zulu kingdom, no longer in battle but through subtle processes that exploited divisions and raised surrogate forces within the kingdom.<sup>28</sup> Colenso challenged that trajectory and achieved small successes that accumulated and in the long term translated into big gains.

Colenso thwarted successive colonial governments' attempts to annihilate the Zulu royal house and kingship, by 'hammering in the wedges.' The dissertation's title and refrain, 'hammering in the wedges,' refers to Colenso's default response to political developments, of preventing or trying to prevent the worsening of political situations and circumstances for Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. A wedge has a narrow edge and a thicker edge and it works by changing the direction of a force. Wedges are used to break things apart or to hold things together. The phrase 'hammering in the wedges' that the dissertation uses to frame Colenso's praxis, is adopted from the letter she wrote in 1890 when in Britain, excitedly updating people back home in Natal, that for the campaign on behalf of Dinuzulu she was securing a lot of support from prominent British politicians. The phrase 'driving in the wedges' refers to Colenso's exploiting the differences between the colonial and imperial governments, for the purpose of causing or worsening conflict. This Colenso's letter is further discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.<sup>29</sup>

By the time Colenso's active public political life began in its own right in 1884, she was already skilled, experienced, and equipped to support and defend Africans. She had worked as her father's assistant and from him learnt the importance of diverse communication channels, mobilising of the press and the Aborigines' Protection Society,<sup>30</sup> and dealing with factions in governments and among parliamentarians and pressure groups. She had inherited

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<sup>27</sup> This study uses the term 'Zulu people', aware that it is contested because of the way in which what it refers to changes across time, perceived and applied differently by different people in different periods in history.

<sup>28</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, ix, 53, 297.

<sup>29</sup> Colenso to Fuze. Letter. 7 May 1890, Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (hereafter 'PAR').

<sup>30</sup> The Aborigines' Protection Society was a pressure group that opposed the exploitation of indigenous people in British colonies.

well-established networks both in Britain and Zululand – the Usuthu intelligence resources supplied information and evidence of events that were taking place in Zululand.

Chapter one examines Colenso's political praxis from 1884 to 1886 when she politically engaged as Dinuzulu and the Usuthu's literate ally and interlocutor. She possessed political capital she inherited from her father, and capital which she personally earned when working as his assistant. During that period, she had established a relationship with the Zulu royal house, had become familiar with a number of important political figures, and was introduced to understanding ways of conducting political activity in Zululand and Natal. The chapter documents her initial loss of political capital when she committed the error of judgement that led to the Usuthu losing their land. However, she succeeded in positioning herself to start driving a wedge between the Governor of Natal and Special Commissioner for Zululand, Arthur Elibank Havelock (1886-1887), and the British Resident in Zululand, Melmoth Osborn (early 1880s to 1887), over misleading colonial reports about events taking place in Zululand and Natal. She 'hammered in the wedges' by mitigating the effects of and safeguarding the Usuthu from being misrepresented to the Colonial Office, and by supporting the Usuthu in the land dispute that erupted between them and the Boers. The chapter identifies the bedrock of her praxis as the principle of endeavouring to align her political activity to 'the Zulu point of view.'<sup>31</sup>

The second chapter analyses Colenso's praxis as she supported the Usuthu's attempts to resist the British annexation of Zululand in 1887, and defended Dinuzulu during his trial in 1889. By then, the chapter suggests, she had accumulated significant political capital such that the colonial and imperial officials and authorities recognised her continued steadfast support to the Usuthu. The Zulu leaders had begun to trust her, not because of the relationship they had with her father, but because in her own right Colenso was available, reliable, and did not impose her views upon them. She earned further political capital by being able to drive wedges in the highest echelons; both in the colony at governor level, and in Britain dealing with the Colonial Office. She empowered Dinuzulu and the Usuthu to adjust to rapidly changing political contexts and to continue being united against their political opponents. She successfully agitated for a Special Court of Commissioners to try Dinuzulu, and her support saved him from the gallows.

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<sup>31</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 106.

Chapter three charts a shift in Colenso's praxis as she became more engaged in forms of activism. She campaigned in Britain on behalf of Dinuzulu, for his repatriation and recognition as heir to Zulu kingdom by being appointed to a position higher than those of the Wolseley's petty chiefs. She continued driving in the wedges: when the Natal authorities visited London, she publicized and exposed what she claimed were their transgressions of malpractice and abuse of power in Zululand and Natal. Her political praxis proved resilient as her campaign continued in the face of perpetual financial struggles and gender-related hurdles. In Natal, in the mid-1890s, her political opponents exploited her political weight and manipulated her into supporting their political agendas, while sabotaging her campaign. The chapter further points to a loss of political capital as a result of manifest naivety in believing she could influence political appointments in Responsible Government. However, she enjoyed success when another of her wedges resulted in Dinuzulu being repatriated from exile and not demoted to the level of Wolseley's petty chiefs.

Chapter four examines Colenso's political praxis from 1898 to the early 1900s. It challenges impressions that Colenso's campaign in Britain in the 1890s was a failure or achieved little, and that her political support was limited to Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. Yet again, it shows her successfully intervening by driving in a political wedge among the authorities to secure for Dinuzulu a position that recognized rather than obviated his royal status. Analysis of her defence of the Embo prisoners shows that her praxis extended beyond the Zulu royal house, to other Africans. She proved to be resourceful: after exhausting the legal route for the release of the Embo prisoners, she appealed for the governor's clemency to be granted to prisoners to mark the coronation of King Edward VII. Her defence of the Embo prisoners presumably prepared her for the defence of Dinuzulu in his second trial, which in turn contributed to the survival of the Zulu royal house and kingship.

The fifth chapter covers Colenso's involvement in Natal African politics in the 1900s. It tracks the waning of her political capital with the emergence of an African intelligentsia that was politically competent and that did not require her mentoring and interventions. Nonetheless, she remained resilient and her interventions continued to be relevant in various unprecedented changing political contexts. She petitioned against the taxation and the execution of African men, respectively in 1905 and in 1906. Her political praxis showed flexibility: from previously operating solo, she joined organized politics in the Natal Native Congress, and she collaborated with the 'loyal' Africans of Edendale. The chapter discusses

examples of politics that seemingly transcended her gender and race. She played an intermediary role in conflicts involving Dinuzulu and his former employees. She intervened in the succession dispute between Dinuzulu and his half-brother, and thereby foiled the possible imploding of the Zulu royal house and divisions within the Usuthu.

The final chapter examines events that occurred from 1908 to 1913. Colenso continued effectively to utilize the strategy of driving in the wedges: she secured the Colonial Office intervention that stopped the colonial authorities from obstructing the work of Dinuzulu's defence team; she contributed to the agitation that led to a Judge President from outside Natal presiding over Dinuzulu's trial. Her indefatigable political praxis saw her mount a defence for Dinuzulu's trial despite financial problems. Her role in resolving the succession dispute after Dinuzulu's death, contributed to obviating the implosion of the Zulu royal house and factionalising the Usuthu. However, the major political shifts of the time – white people uniting to establish the Union of South Africa, and Africans uniting and founding the African National Congress – rendered Colenso's particular form of political praxis redundant. Simultaneously her relevance in the Zulu royal house diminished after her protégé Dinuzulu dies. Having lost political capital both in the political sphere at large and in relation to the Zulu monarchy; she exited public political life.

## Chapter 1: 1884-1886

### Introduction

Chapter one of this study provides a background discussion of Colenso's early life and a summary of her political activities undertaken mostly in conjunction with her father, Bishop Colenso, up to his death in 1883. The chapter tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis from 1884 to 1886, during what for the Usuthu was a politically fraught period. It was a confusing phase evident in the Usuthu's loyalties that kept shifting, sometimes alternating and on other times divided between the British and the Boers. During that period was also emerging the colonial order; with the colonial bureaucratic processes having begun to replace the old order of politics that had been characterised by proceedings conducted through spoken negotiations and envoy diplomacy. This chapter argues that as a literate ally of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders, Colenso contributed to preventing the worsening of their political situation, which based on the developments during this period, could have led to them becoming marginalised and relegated into obscurity.

This chapter is broken down into two parts. Part one introduces Colenso in relation to her father's work in defence of Africans, and then situates her involvement in the affairs of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. She improved chances for the Usuthu's voices to be heard, and frustrated the weaponizing of information against them. Part two tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis as she played a mainly interlocutory role and supported Dinuzulu and the Usuthu in their alliance and land dispute with the Boers.

### Part 1: Harriette Colenso: historical background, up to 1884

Harriette Colenso was born in 1847 in Norfolk, England. In 1853 her father John William Colenso was appointed as the first Bishop of the Anglican Church in Natal, South Africa. He then relocated with his family from Britain and established the family's home, Bishopstowe, on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal. In the 1860s the bishop became embroiled in the theological controversy that splintered the Anglican Church and led to the formation of the Church of the Province. In addition to being the leader of the church, the bishop was also involved in Natal politics. He defended Africans in the struggle against

imperialism, prominent among them being Langalibalele the leader of amaHlubi in the 1870s and the Zulu King Cetshwayo in the 1880s. The bishop also influenced the colony's administration of Africans. He challenged Theophilus Shepstone<sup>32</sup> for punishing Africans by applying a law that did not exist in written form and was in his head and known only by him, 'usekanda kuSomtseu kupela, loku aze waqama [waqamuka] ngokubuzisisa kukaSobantu, ebuza ukuti, kuyini kona loku okuhleze kuti lapa kubekwa icala kumuntu, kutiwe kwenziwa ngomteto wabantu, ubhalwe-pi lowo mteto wabantu na?'<sup>33</sup> Those bishop's queries in the 1870s led to Natal's initial attempts to legalize the code of Native Law.<sup>34</sup> The bishop's political activities did not imply that Africans did not have agency. They were an oral society and they exercised agency through delegations and demonstrations.

Some of the historic delegations and demonstrations the Usuthu orchestrated were in the early 1880s when they demanded Cetshwayo's repatriation from exile in the Cape, and the restoration of authority that the Zulu royal house had lost after the war.<sup>35</sup> However, although the Usuthu proceeded with oral protests, they had become aware of the limitations and vulnerabilities of oral communication: that it could be misinterpreted, distorted, and lacked permanence. As early as in the 1870s they had begun to appreciate the value of the written word and started to depend on Bishop Colenso as their literate ally. When the British attack was imminent in the late 1870s, they approached the bishop with the copy of the Blue Book that contained Shepstone's official account of Cetshwayo's coronation in 1873, seeking for him to pinpoint the promises recorded in that Blue Book, that Cetshwayo had broken, that justified the invasion of Zululand.<sup>36</sup>

This dissertation begins with Colenso's active public political life in its own right, five years after the Anglo-Zulu War during which the British defeated Cetshwayo. In the aftermath of that war Cetshwayo was demoted, his land and kingdom divided among thirteen kinglets,<sup>37</sup> and exiled to the Cape. In exile (1879-1883) Cetshwayo mobilised the written word to

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<sup>32</sup> Shepstone was the Secretary for Native Affairs for thirty years, until 1875. See Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 41.

<sup>33</sup> *Ilanga lase Natal*, 'Law No. 19, 1891, To Legalise the Code of Native Law Laid Before the Legislative Council According to the Provisions of Law No. 44, 1887,' 7 November 1919.

<sup>34</sup> The African customary law was eventually codified in the Natal Code of Native Law in 1891.

<sup>35</sup> Guy, Jeff. *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814-1883*. Pietermaritzburg & Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1983, 296, 312, 337.

<sup>36</sup> Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 88.

<sup>37</sup> One of those kinglets was Cetshwayo's arch-rival, Zibhebhu.

exercise his agency. He dubbed correspondences as his new-found assegais and used them to secure support from leading figures in Southern Africa and England. He dictated to the officer in charge of his captivity, Captain J Ruscombe Poole of the Royal Artillery, scores of letters and the history of the Zulu people and his version of political events and the war of 1879 in Zululand. In February 1880 the London's influential *Macmillan's Magazine* published some of Cetshwayo's narratives and in that way his views reached large audiences in Britain.<sup>38</sup> In 1881 Cetshwayo wrote to the Governor of the Cape, Sir Hercules Robinson, pleading for the review of his political circumstances and for his version of events to be heard in parliaments both in the Cape and in Britain.<sup>39</sup>

When Cetshwayo returned from exile, he entered a partitioned Zululand and was made to occupy a curtailed area between his enemies: Zibhebhu's territory in the north and the Zulu Native Reserve in the south.<sup>40</sup> That set-up was unsustainable and before long sporadic raids and affrays broke out along the borders and escalated into a civil war. In March 1883 at Msebe, Zibhebhu's followers called the Mandlakazi, defeated Cetshwayo's Usuthu in a battle that holds the record for more lives lost than in any other in Zulu history.<sup>41</sup> Then on 21 July, Zibhebhu attacked Cetshwayo's kraal at Ulundi and massacred nearly all the king's izikhulu,<sup>42</sup> the great chiefs of the old Zulu kingdom (before the British defeated the Zulu people in 1879). Cetshwayo escaped from that attack and took refuge at Nkandla. Later, left with no alternative, he sought refuge from the British Resident at Eshowe and ended up dying there six months later, on 8 February 1884,<sup>43</sup> under mysterious circumstances. His ally, the bishop, had already died on 20 June 1883.<sup>44</sup>

The generational shift begat by the deaths of the bishop and the king marked the end of an era and heralded the new generation of their immediate descendants. In her mid-30s, Colenso inherited her father's responsibility, which was then in the form of the defence of Dinuzulu.

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<sup>38</sup> Webb and Wright, *A Zulu King Speaks*, 1-40.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-64.

<sup>40</sup> An area set aside for people who objected to being placed under Cetshwayo's authority. See Guy, Jeff. *Theophilus Shepstone: And the Forging of Natal: African Autonomy and Settler Colonialism in the Making of Traditional Authority*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2013, 512; Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 161 for the map showing the partition of Zululand: Zibhebhu's territory, Cetshwayo's territory, and the Reserve.

<sup>41</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 71.

<sup>42</sup> Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 204.

<sup>43</sup> Colenso, Pamphlet, 1890. ZUL/1. 'Zululand', 9. KCAL.

<sup>44</sup> <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/23rd-june-1883/1/the-bishop-of-natal-died-on-tuesday-last-in-the> (accessed 24 May 2023).

Aged fourteen, Dinuzulu was a minor even by Zulu standards; he had not reached the age to assume political responsibilities or even enrol in a regiment.<sup>45</sup> The generational shift on the king's side was a transfer of Zulu kingdom from an experienced and adult Cetshwayo, who had ruled over an independent kingdom and had been an intimidating opponent in war against the British, to an inexperienced teenager. That situation advantaged the colonial and imperial governments as it sharply diminished the threat of the resuscitation of the Zulu kingdom, that was then an obstacle to the British empire's ambition of extending its authority over southern Africa. The Zulu royal house was devastated; however, it was not finished.

Colenso embraced the responsibility of taking over the defence of Dinuzulu: two days after Cetshwayo's death she wrote to her brother Frank in England, affirming the continuance of their father's support and political activity for 'justice for the Zulu people and its legitimate rulers.'<sup>46</sup> By that time she had already recommitted the Colenso family's continued support to the Usuthu.

Colenso's being a young British female did not present any difficulties or awkwardness in her working closely with the Usuthu. She had inherited her father's political capital – a figure whom the Zulu people venerated as of good reputation and credibility. They already knew her, from working as her father's assistant. It was they who recognised her efforts and nicknamed her 'uDhlwedhlwe,'<sup>47</sup> which as her mother explained, meant she was 'the rod held in his right hand, partly to guide, partly to support his steps.'<sup>48</sup> From the Usuthu's side, when the bishop died the expectation was there that Colenso would take over the responsibility of politically supporting them. In his condolences to the bishop's family, Cetshwayo had stated, '... my trust now is in you. I will agree that it is his garments only which are buried, and that he himself is still there, since you are there.'<sup>49</sup>

In 1884 Colenso's immediate role was as the Usuthu's literate ally: checking, translating, tracking, and monitoring their communication, most of which went through the colonial authorities and the imperial governor, to the Colonial Office. The Usuthu required those

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<sup>45</sup> One qualified to join a regiment after their first nocturnal emission, Dinuzulu's emission occurred in November 1884. See Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 218, 228, endnote 3.

<sup>46</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Werner. Manuscript. KCM 65631, KCAL.

<sup>48</sup> Werner. Manuscript. 'Harriette Colenso'. c1932. KCM 65630. 12. KCAL.

<sup>49</sup> Guy, *The Heretic*, 345.

services immediately on Cetshwayo's death when his five brothers approached Osborn and announced Dinuzulu as his successor. They made an oral declaration while Osborn took dictation. He then read the pronouncement back to them to confirm its accurate capturing. For the brothers of Cetshwayo, that was the most they could do. They were cognisant to the fact that the authorities could still interfere and distort their statement through omissions and translations. It was at that point that the Colenso family as their literate ally, intervened and checked the accuracy of their statements. The bishop's strategy as the literate ally for the Usuthu had been reactive. He had monitored the Usuthu's communication when it was already published in Blue Books and the press, and challenged and corrected it, if it was incomplete, inaccurate, or incorrect.<sup>50</sup> Different from the bishop, Colenso's strategy as the literate ally for the Usuthu was proactive. She positioned herself as the middleperson between the Usuthu and the colonial authorities, correcting and supplementing correspondence in Natal, before it was dispatched to Britain.

That being the period when proceedings were beginning to be conducted less in oral form, Colenso assisted the Usuthu to adjust to that changing political context. She led the evolution of the Usuthu's way of communication:<sup>51</sup> from primary resistance to secondary resistance.<sup>52</sup> For the Usuthu that meant engaging less in oral demonstrations and delegations, and increasingly communicating through the written word.<sup>53</sup> This study argues that what Colenso was doing then in the early 1880s, gave impetus to the tradition of resistance that developed and contributed to the origins and evolution of African nationalism and political consciousness that culminated to the formation of the South African Native National Congress in 1912. This argument draws from the historical inquiry into epistolary networks that the academic and historian Vukile Khumalo conducted focusing on the Ekukhanyeni letter writers. Khumalo established that such epistolary networks were not limited to being

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<sup>50</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 3-9.

<sup>51</sup> Colenso was continuing and advancing what her family had already initiated. Since the 1860s the Colenso enclave had positioned itself to give voice to the Zulu royal house, converting selected of their orally rendered communications to written form.

<sup>52</sup> These terms originated from the African historians who in the late 1950s deliberated on the struggle for independence from colonialism. Primary resistance referred to use of traditional ways and methods, and secondary resistance referred to adopting the conquerors' ways and methods, with understanding that these categories could overlap. See Guy, Jeff. *Remembering the Rebellion: The Zulu Uprising of 1906*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2006, 8-9.

<sup>53</sup> The advantages of written communication include permanence, commanding authority, and tending to be perceived as reliable. See Hamilton, Carolyn. 'James Stuart and "the establishment of a living source of tradition"', Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand Institute for Advanced Social Research, 1 August 1994, 19.

lines of communication; they were spaces for intellectual deliberations about issues that affected lives, and of engaging the political discourse of the Natal colonial state. Letter writers – including preachers, wagon-makers, migrant workers, scholars, and prison inmates – commented, reflected upon, and articulated views on social, political, intellectual, and economic situations in the colony. Khumalo linked the value of the role the epistolary networks played to the then prevailing spirit of the ‘new order of things’ as per Pixley ka Isaka Seme’s award-winning speech delivered in 1906 entitled ‘The Regeneration of Africa.’<sup>54</sup> Although Seme did not unpack the details of the ‘new order of things,’ such epistolary networks like that of Ekukhanyeni resonated with the part of his speech when he said, ‘Oh, if you could read the letters that come to us from Zululand – you too would be convinced that the elevation of the African race is evidently a part of the new order of things that belong to this new and powerful period.’<sup>55</sup> This study views Colenso’s contribution to transforming the Usuthu’s communication in the early 1880s, like the Ekukhanyeni epistolary network, to have contributed to the emergence of African nationalism.

Then in the early 1880s, to evolve the Usuthu’s communication, Colenso devised a procedure that the messengers of the Usuthu leaders followed. On arrival in Pietermaritzburg to deliver oral communication or isiZulu written correspondence to government authorities, they first reported to Colenso at Bishopstowe. She transcribed and translated communication and by the time it was delivered to the authorities, it was already both in isiZulu and English written versions. The same applied vice versa, with communication from the authorities to the Usuthu leaders. Before leaving Pietermaritzburg for Zululand, the messengers reported to Bishopstowe. By so doing, Colenso prevented the colonial authorities from silencing the Usuthu’s voices and misrepresenting them to the Colonial Office. Also important in that process of safeguarding the misrepresentation of the Usuthu to the Colonial Office, was the matter of the translation of the Usuthu-related communication.

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Ekukhanyeni’ meaning ‘a place of enlightenment’, was Bishop Colenso’s mission station. See Khumalo, Vukile. ‘Ekukhanyeni Letter-Writers: A Historical Inquiry into Epistolary Network(s) and Political Imagination in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa’, 113-115, 128-129, 139, endnote 8 in Barber, Karin (ed.), *Africa’s Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Seme, Pixley ka Isaka. ‘The Regeneration of Africa’, *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 5(20), (July 1906), 407.

From the bishop's politicking, Colenso had learnt that translation was central to safeguarding the Usuthu against misrepresentation. She knew of the colonial authorities' tendency to misrepresent the Usuthu and was aware how different political players manipulated translation to affect political outcomes. This point was first recognised by Guy: 'Control of Africans meant controlling the African voice. The challenge for Harriette Colenso was how to break this monopoly of the word.'<sup>56</sup> Colenso broke that monopoly by making translation an explicit part of her political praxis, especially because the decision makers in Britain understood and responded to the English versions of correspondence.<sup>57</sup> Like her father whose proficiency in isiZulu had advantaged him over Theophilus Shepstone, Colenso was also advantaged over the colonial officials and authorities. The political effect was thus greater than simply the breaking of the colonial monopoly of the written word: this was one of the first instances where Colenso's intervention hammered in a wedge, opening space and creating leverage for the Usuthu to begin to participate effectively in colonial politics.

Colenso was skilled in translations, and astute and shrewd in the ways of exploiting them in politics. She grew up in a missionary environment, among the Zulu people, and with her father involved in Zulu affairs. Translations were the basis of executing missionary work. As a result, a lot of missionary work at Bishopstowe involved both the English and isiZulu languages. Translation at Bishopstowe reached the complicated levels of translating concepts. When her father was still alive, Colenso grasped the skill of translation and using it in politics, and the understanding of factions and playing them off against each other. After her father's demise, Colenso effectively put those skills into use and obstructed the colonial and imperial officials and authorities from getting rid of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship.

Colenso was highly proficient in isiZulu. Colenso's proficiency in isiZulu surpassed that of her father who was the author of a grammar book and a dictionary in that language. As Guy noted, Colenso's expertise went beyond the language, to her being skilful in understanding the Zulu methods of communication and accreditation. She could appropriately deal with information depending to the source, whether they were: a Zulu messenger, a witness, an observer, or a representative.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 127.

<sup>57</sup> The bishop had already begun breaking that monopoly of controlling Africans, during the period of Shepstone who controlled communication between the Africans and the colonists. See Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, 407.

<sup>58</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 170.

As part of monitoring the Usuthu-related communication, Colenso outmanoeuvred the colonial authorities and interposed and infiltrated herself into using the official colonial-imperial communication system, for her correspondence and that of the Usuthu to be transmitted to the Colonial Office alongside the Natal's official reports. She counteracted the colonial authorities because even when they chose to do their own translations, they dared not entirely exclude her translations from reaching the Colonial Office. Guy detailed an incident whereby the Governor of Natal and Special Commissioner in Zululand, Sir Henry Bulwer (1882-1885), rejected one of Colenso's translations and instead tasked the Secretary for Native Affairs, Henrique Shepstone<sup>59</sup> to redo the translation from the original Usuthu's isiZulu correspondence. Even then, Bulwer could not entirely exclude Colenso's translation, it also went along with the rest of correspondence and reached the Colonial Office. The governor tolerated Colenso, presumably realising the futility of trying to stop her, that could also backfire. If stopped, Colenso could complain and use that as ammunition to hype and promote her ongoing campaign for Dinuzulu to be appointed to a position that recognised him as heir to Zulu kingship. Such action could garner sympathy for her while generating criticism for the colonial and imperial governments. Also, obstructing Colenso would have been ineffectual because she had other avenues at her disposal. Her well-established network in Britain – the Aborigines' Protection Society and the liberal press that included the *London Daily News* – could synchronise her correspondence and reports to get published coinciding with the publishing of the colonial reports in Blue Books or when Zululand and Natal affairs happened to be topical in the British public discourse.<sup>60</sup>

In this part of the chapter, Colenso's political praxis is shown to be skilled, experienced, and equipped with networking structures to support and defend Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. She understood the political context: that the authorities aimed to wipe out the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship, and that their strategy to control Africans depended on effectively silencing their voices and weaponizing information against them. For the Usuthu to be heard, she spearheaded the change of the Usuthu's communication from oral to increasingly in

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<sup>59</sup> Henrique was the son of Theophilus Shepstone. Although Theophilus retired in 1875, he remained influential in Natal politics. Osborn continued implementing his policies. He was the informal advisor to governors in Natal. He was called out from retirement for special assignments like: the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, meetings with Zulu deputations in the early 1880s, and the coronation of Cetshwayo in January 1883. Also, most officials in Natal were his previous juniors or relatives. His brother John Wesley Shepstone held positions as Resident Magistrate, Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, and Judge of the Native High Court. See Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 78-79, 83.

<sup>60</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 44, 128-129.

written form. To safeguard against the Usuthu's misrepresentation to the Colonial Office and counter weaponising of information against them, she monitored communication between the Usuthu and the authorities, and became active in the contested terrain of translation.

In this part Colenso's political engagement was as the Usuthu's literate ally; as political developments continued unfolding, her political activity expanded, and she engaged in a wider range of political roles.

## Part 2: The land dispute between the Usuthu and the Boers, 1884 to 1886

In 1884 the Boers were self-governing. In the late 1850s they had proclaimed Transvaal as their republic, then on 12 April 1877 the British annexed it, and that led to the first Anglo-Boer War (December 1880-January 1881) that ended with the English defeated. The Pretoria Convention of 3 August 1881 that was negotiated to end that war, did not reinstate the full independence of the Transvaal. It granted nominal British suzerainty over that state, supervisory control of its foreign affairs and its internal legislation over black societies. That British suzerainty ended with the signing of the London Convention on 27 February 1884.<sup>61</sup>

In 1884 Dinuzulu and the Usuthu were subjugated to the imperial government by virtue of conquest in the Anglo-Zulu War. They opposed the demotion of their kings to the same level as Wolseley's petty chiefs, and demanded that Dinuzulu be installed as the king of the Zulu people. They also still wanted to avenge against Zibhebhu for Cetshwayo's defeat at the Battle of Msebe in March 1883. Osborn ignored their concerns, and they perceived him to favour the Mandlakazi over them. To appropriate what was left of Cetshwayo's land,<sup>62</sup> the Boers took advantage of that strained relationship between the Usuthu and the British. They plotted to enter an alliance with the Usuthu and then exploit their feuding with the Mandlakazi.<sup>63</sup>

Before approaching the Usuthu, the Boers started by conducting a survey among prominent British colonial figures, to establish the political consequences of their intentions. Among

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<sup>61</sup> Pretorius, Fransjohan. 'The Boer Wars.' 29 March 2011.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/boer\\_wars\\_01.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/boer_wars_01.shtml) (accessed 6 January 2022).

<sup>62</sup> In the aftermath of the Anglo-Zulu War the British had confiscated some of Cetshwayo's land and cattle.

<sup>63</sup> Marks. 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulu', 407.

those who participated in the survey were William Grant who represented the Aborigines' Protection Society, the Natal's Attorney-General Michael Gallwey, and Theophilus Shepstone. The survey and the speech Prime Minister Gladstone made on 19 May in London,<sup>64</sup> assured the Boers that their plan would have no political ramifications. Apparently because the priority for the British was to keep the Boers landlocked, without outlet to sea. Marks suggested that the British also hoped to gain from the alliance that the Boers proposed; they viewed it as their opportunity too, to penetrate and grab land in Zululand.<sup>65</sup> This study suggests that it be not ruled out that the British may have not blocked the alliance, for the purpose of using the Boers as their surrogate force to assist towards destroying the Zulu monarchy and splitting the Usuthu.

After the Boers entered the alliance with the Usuthu, they swiftly delivered. On 21 May 1884, three and a half months after Cetshwayo's death, about 9 000 Zulu people and 350 Boers assembled and witnessed the Boer leaders proclaim Dinuzulu as the king. On 5 June the Boers assisted Dinuzulu to defeat Zibhebhu at the Battle of Etshaneni and drive him away from his land. After that battle the Boers then demanded a compact with the Usuthu, that stipulated the amount of land that was their reward for the support they had rendered. From the beginning of the alliance up to that point, it is not clear what role Colenso played, if any. In 1884 she attended to her family's affairs that included winding up her father's estate. She resurfaced in the Usuthu affairs at the time of the signing of the pact, and recommended Grant to assist them. Subsequently, the Boers and the Usuthu signed the land agreement at Hlobane on 16 August.<sup>66</sup>

Colenso had known Grant for several years. His initial acquaintance with the Colenso family seemed to have been satisfactory. In March 1880 the bishop had introduced him to leading liberals in England, referring to him as his friend and 'lover of light and justice.'<sup>67</sup> But later when Grant was employed as Cetshwayo's secretary, he had recklessly handled the king's

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<sup>64</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 93, 99.

<sup>65</sup> Marks. 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulu', 407. According to Colenso reflecting in 1890 on events in this earlier period, the land grabbers were not only the Boers but white people in general – European adventurers, Dutch Boers from the Free State and Transvaal, and some British subjects from Natal. See Colenso, Pamphlet, ZUL/1. 'Zululand', 9. KCAL. Guy also warned that, the term 'Boers' was in the land grabbing context, loosely used to label a diverse group of people. See Guy, *The View Across the River*, 94-95.

<sup>66</sup> Binns, Charles Theodore. *Dinuzulu: The Death of the House of Shaka*. London: Longmans, Green & Co Ltd, 1968, 29, 36, 54.

<sup>67</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 102.

confidential matters, shared them with the colonial authorities, and some appeared in the newspapers. That conduct had appalled Colenso and driven her to report Grant to Frederick Chesson of the Aborigines' Protection Society (Secretary, 1866-1888).<sup>68</sup> This study considers Grant to have been unbecoming to assist the Usuthu because he was not a legal expert, just a failed business person. Also, Grant had participated in the Boers' pre-alliance survey, and was therefore conflicted. Colenso seemed to be coming into her own, she was responding to unprecedented political contexts and challenges, and the Usuthu's alliance with Boers happened to be one of them.

It can never be known with certainty as to how the bishop would have reacted to the Usuthu's alliance with the Boers. The bishop had believed in British rule, at some point even equated it to God's rule. He had viewed his Christian mission as a British Empire's civilising project.<sup>69</sup> Even when disillusioned with the injustices that the imperial regime inflicted upon Africans, he had rather blamed the representatives of the British government and did not seem to have blamed that government itself. With that background, some may view Colenso's support for the alliance to have been an aberration to the bishop's legacy.

Colenso's supporting the alliance may not necessarily be viewed as had been a bold political undertaking because during that period the political climate was permissive, the imperial government had not yet exerted firm control over Zululand. Also, Colenso may not be viewed to have been ill-judged because the British themselves knew about that alliance when it was still a proposal but had not opposed it.

After the Usuthu and the Boers signed the land agreement, Colenso's family suffered a disaster. On 3 September strong winds fanned a veld fire and it razed Bishopstowe and the family's printing press, abruptly halting Colenso's printing of political commentary.<sup>70</sup> Many months passed before she purchased a second-hand printing press and political commentary resumed. Around that time Bulwer passed the Native Passes Bill that controlled and restricted mobility of Zulu people between Zululand and Natal. The Colenso family viewed it as part of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Colenso Gwilym, 'The Colenso Papers: Documenting "an extensive chain of influence" From Zululand to Britain', *African Research & Documentation*, No. 115, 2011, 3. British historian Gwilym Colenso – a distant relative of Bishop Colenso, apparently the bishop was a cousin of his great-great-grandfather.

<sup>70</sup> Her political commentary entailed supplementing, challenging, and correcting the press, Blue Books, and the colonial official reports about the Usuthu affairs and political developments in Zululand and Natal.

the attempts to sabotage their interactions with the Usuthu, they dubbed it the ‘Colenso Extinction Bill.’<sup>71</sup>

Immediately after the signing of the land agreement, problems arose. A horde of Boers approached the Usuthu and demanded land rewards. The Usuthu insisted that only a small number of Boers had assisted them in the Battle of Etshaneni.<sup>72</sup> Soon the uncontrolled land grabbing began. The Usuthu made numerous appeals imploring the British to intervene and end that land dispute. Amid that crisis, Colenso’s attention was again divided between the Usuthu and her domestic affairs. Most of her family members suffered from typhoid and she had to spend time nursing them. The lung sickness attacked and her family lost cattle.<sup>73</sup> While she attended to those family adversities, the Usuthu continued exercising agency through delegations. They appealed to the authorities for Dinuzulu to be recognised as heir to Zulu kingship, for the Boers to be removed from the lands they had appropriated, and stopped from beating them up and desecrating the Zulu kings’ graves.<sup>74</sup> When Colenso resurfaced, an aspect of her relations with the Usuthu leaders played out, that showed that she campaigned on behalf of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders as a unit, and avoided encroaching into their internal divergent viewpoints.

Leadership of the Usuthu was not limited to Dinuzulu, there was also the elder Mnyamana kaNgqengelele<sup>75</sup> who was powerful and influential and also took decisions on behalf of the Usuthu. Sometimes the decisions between Dinuzulu and Mnyamana were in conflict, like when the Boers’ frenzied land grabbing confounded the Usuthu into hastily convening a meeting to plot their response to that crisis. The meeting ended up with the Usuthu leadership polarised. Hence in March 1885, while Dinuzulu approached the Boer leadership to negotiate for the land grabbing to stop, Mnyamana was presenting the Usuthu’s predicament to the British – to Bulwer. Both attempts failed. The Boer leadership refused to assist Dinuzulu;

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<sup>71</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Colenso, Frank. Letter. 8 September 1884, in Nicholls, Brenda. Natal Society Foundation, *Natalia*, 21(1991), 30, note 13; Guy, *The View Across the River*, 129.

<sup>72</sup> One estimation is that about 60 Boers helped the Usuthu but a thousand demanded the land reward. See Buthelezi, ‘King Dinuzulu kaMahelana kaCetshwayo’, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 140.

<sup>74</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 77.

<sup>75</sup> Mnyamana was the chief of the Buthelezi people. He had been the chief counsellor of Cetshwayo. His father had been King Shaka’s confidential counsellor. See Nicholls, ‘The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context’, 514.

Bulwer rebuffed Mnyamana blaming the Usuthu for having created the situation they were finding themselves in.

While the British government continued temporising and not intervening in the land dispute, Colenso tried to rope in Grant to assist the Usuthu. She found that he was incompetent to the extent of not even being able to comprehend in practical terms the amount of the Usuthu's land he had allowed to be signed away.<sup>76</sup>

Several reasons may have delayed the British government's intervention in settling the land dispute between the Usuthu and the Boers. Guy suggested that it was because the Usuthu were a spent force and no longer a priority. This study argues that even if that was the case, it was in the interest of the successive imperial governments not to allow that land dispute to fester and escalate to levels that threatened Zululand with anarchy and political instability. This study suggests that the delay may have also been due to political turbulence in Britain, evidenced in four changes of imperial governments alternating between the Liberals and the Conservatives, in the period 1884 to 1886. That resulted with four different Colonial Secretaries,<sup>77</sup> a situation that rendered it difficult for decisions to be taken and seen to implementation within brief tenures. That was the case with the Colonial Secretary, The Earl of Granville. He supported the Usuthu but his intervention attempts were cut short when his tenure ended, it lasted only five and a half months.<sup>78</sup>

Pressure continued piling up for the British government to intervene in the land dispute – from the Natal Legislative Council, the Durban Chamber of Commerce, the Anglican Church<sup>79</sup> and through a petition from over 2 000 leading citizens in Natal. Several European governments also decried the mishandling of that land dispute.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 126. On 4 August 1886 the Usuthu leaders dismissed Grant from the position of being their representative, by then calling him the 'torpid snake' that once warmed in their bosom 'woke up and bit us.' They told the governor: 'With regard to Grant we were deluded; he beguiled us with good words ...' See Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 85. No evidence has been found indicating the Usuthu's response towards Colenso for having recommended Grant to assist them.

<sup>77</sup> Edward Stanley, Frederick Stanley, the Earl of Granville, and Edward Stanhope.

<sup>78</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 75; Colenso, Pamphlet, ZUL/1. 'Zululand', 9. KCAL.

<sup>79</sup> Not Bishop Colenso's church but the splinter church under Bishop McKenzie.

<sup>80</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 62, 73.

Apparently, the British government eventually intervened on the land dispute when Edward Fairfield, who worked in the Colonial Office, warned of a threatening war between the Usuthu and the Boers. He reported to have observed heightening tensions. When the Boers attempted to drive the Usuthu away, the Usuthu were no longer fleeing but resisting and mobilizing counterattacks.<sup>81</sup> The Colonial Office resolved to intervene by ending the land dispute and then implementing firm control over Zululand – either a British protectorate status or the annexation. Because Bulwer's term was about to end, that action was deferred to be implemented by the governor who would succeed him. However, events overtook those Colonial Office plans.

Before Bulwer left Natal, the land grabbing pandemonium grew and the attacks on the Usuthu intensified. There were increased reports of evictions, demands for labour, whipping of people and destruction of crops. Havelock, the new Governor of Natal and Special Commissioner for Zululand, arrived on 22 February 1886.<sup>82</sup> His arrival did not deter the flogging and eviction of the Usuthu and the destruction of their crops, even Dinuzulu's fathers, Ndabuko and Tshingana and their councillors, had to flee their homes in March 1886.<sup>83</sup>

On Havelock's arrival, Colenso swiftly exploited the opportunity that presented itself when he fell down some stairs, was injured, and had to stay home recuperating. To Colenso it was critical and urgent to place 'on the record'<sup>84</sup> the views and versions of the Usuthu regarding political developments in Zululand, up to the then land dispute between them and the Boers. She was determined not to let Havelock rely only on the information he would receive from the colonial authorities. Colenso's sister, Ellen, whose book had just been published, sent Havelock a copy, *The Ruin of Zululand: An account of British doings in Zululand since the invasion of 1879* that outlined the history of the Zulu kingdom up to Cetshwayo's return from exile in 1883.

To settle the land dispute, Havelock decided to negotiate only with the Boers, his explanation for excluding the Usuthu being that they were in a powerless and incapacitated position and

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<sup>81</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 131.

<sup>82</sup> Bulwer left Natal on 23 October 1885; Sir Charles Mitchell was left in charge until Havelock arrived.

<sup>83</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 141.

<sup>84</sup> This phrase is put in quotation marks to set it apart because in this study it holds a special meaning as one of the tactics that Colenso's praxis adopted.

could not participate in the talks. Colenso again engaged the tactic of getting things ‘on the record.’ She circumvented Havelock’s attempt to silence the Usuthu; she un-muted them. On 30 March 1886, Havelock received from Colenso a written submission of the Usuthu’s perspective and views about the land dispute, for consideration during the negotiations. On 9 April after his sick leave, Havelock invited Colenso and Ellen to the Government House for lunch and discussions about the Zululand politics.<sup>85</sup>

Colenso’s introducing herself to the governor as the authority in Zulu affairs, in all probability earned her significant political capital. In the history of the Colenso family, that was a first for any of its members to forge such a close proximity to a governor. The stage was set, Colenso had managed to insert herself between Havelock and Osborn, and was well-positioned to begin what would become a dominant feature of her political praxis – driving in the wedges between the colonial and imperial officials and authorities, the tactic through which she would safeguard Dinuzulu and the Usuthu from fading into oblivion.

On 22 October Havelock signed the land dispute agreement with the Boers, giving them half of the Usuthu’s land.<sup>86</sup> He had engaged the legal approach by focusing on the signed land agreement. Colenso had proposed that he followed a political approach that analysed the injustices inflicted upon the Zulu people from the war of 1879 up to then in the mid-1880s; Havelock had dismissed that proposal saying those were the extraneous ‘matters of history.’<sup>87</sup>

From the sidelines of the land dispute negotiations, Ndabuko raised a legal argument invalidating the land agreement, that neither Dinuzulu nor Grant were empowered to have signed it. Dinuzulu for being a minor who had no authority to cede land without the leaders of the nation acquainted with that action.<sup>88</sup> Grant for having signed the land agreement as the representative of the Zulu people before he was legally appointed: the agreement was signed on 16 August 1884, whereas the Zulu people appointed him on 11 September.

Both Colenso and the Usuthu learnt about the signed land dispute agreement from the newspapers. Both immediately acted against it – Colenso dispatched a letter of protest to

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<sup>85</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 143.

<sup>86</sup> Dumat and Escombe, ‘A Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs’, 7.

<sup>87</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 144.

<sup>88</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 54, 80-81.

Havelock, while Tshingana sent one to Her Majesty the Queen.<sup>89</sup> Notable from Colenso and Tshingana's responses to the land dispute agreement was that, without a discussion between them, each acting on their own, they both promptly reacted in the same way: opposed the land dispute agreement. That could be viewed as Colenso to some extent achieving in aligning her political activity to 'the Zulu point of view.'<sup>90</sup>

Colenso and Tshingana's instantaneous protest letters made it clear to the colonial authorities, that the Usuthu's revolt was imminent. Mnyamana had also begun to organise the Usuthu deputation to be dispatched to Britain to plead against that land dispute agreement. To counter the Usuthu, Havelock hastily conferred with Osborn and Shepstone, and they planned to force the Usuthu to accept the agreement as a *fait accompli*. To strengthen their plan, Havelock sought and received from the Colonial Secretary, an authoritative statement that emphasised the finality of the land dispute settlement, and an upfront declaration that the Queen would not receive any Zulu deputation pertaining to that matter.<sup>91</sup>

In this part of the chapter, Colenso's political praxis seemed to be insufficiently skilled considering her injudicious recommendation for Grant to assist the Usuthu. Later her praxis became bolder and effective. She un-muted the Usuthu when Havelock tried to silence by excluding them from the land dispute negotiations. Her political praxis showed to be strategic: she became close to Havelock, thus inserting herself between him and Osborn, which was an ideal position from which she could begin driving a wedge between them. In this part emerged some features of Colenso's praxis: the tactic of placing matters 'on the record' and the principle of aligning her political activity to 'the Zulu point of view.'

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<sup>89</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 159-160.

<sup>90</sup> Colenso endeavoured to align her political activity with the principle she referred to as 'the Zulu point of view.' Guy's interpretation was that the phrase meant 'It was her task not to speak for the Zulu, but to discover and relate the situation from 'the Zulu point of view.' See *Ibid*, 127.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 159, 170, 172.

## Conclusion

In this chapter Colenso as Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders' literate ally, 'hammered in the wedges' by contributing to preventing further deterioration of their political situation. This was achieved by focusing on their communication related matters, and by empowering them. She improved and closely monitored the Usuthu's communication, obstructed their misrepresentation to the Colonial Office, and outsmarted Havelock's attempts to silence them. Silenced Usuthu's voices threatened to exclude them from the political matters that affected them, and that had the potential to diminish their strength and spirit, and make it easy for them to be disregarded and discarded.

For the Usuthu's voices to reach the Colonial Office undistorted, Colenso became instrumental in evolving their communication to being less oral and increasingly in written form. Aware that the colonial officials and authorities could intentionally (to disadvantage the Usuthu) or unintentionally (due to lack of skill) produce inaccurate translations, Colenso became active in the terrain of contested translations. She also monitored the Usuthu-related correspondence before it left Natal destined for Britain, in that way positioning herself as the middleperson between the Usuthu and the authorities. That monitoring entailed transcribing, checking, correcting, supplementing, and translating correspondence. Additionally, she managed to get the Usuthu-related correspondence to be transmitted to the Colonial Office alongside the colony's official reports.

Colenso empowered the Usuthu to adjust to the changing political contexts so that they were not marginalised and sunk into obscurity. Her empowering manifested in the Usuthu leaders increasingly communicating by correspondence. They engaged more by employing the legal approach: they entered into signed agreements, as they did for their land agreement with the Boers; made formal appointments, as they did when Grant became their representative; and made legal arguments, as Ndabuko did when he invalidated the land agreement, based on that both Dinuzulu and Grant who had signed it, had not qualified to do so. They began to keep abreast with political developments through the press, as happened with Tshingana who learnt about the British and the Boers' signing of the land dispute agreement from a newspaper. They began writing protest letters: Tshingana despatched one to the Queen opposing the land dispute agreement.

Colenso's praxis is shown to be strategic. Her attained propinquity to the governor suitably positioned her to drive a wedge between him and Osborn. She began applying the tactics of placing matters 'on the record,' and aligning her political activity to 'the Zulu point of view' – in this chapter that was evident when she did not get involved when the Usuthu leaders disagreed on their response to the crisis of the Boers seizing their land.

At some point it seemed Colenso's praxis was insufficiently skilled and that she blindly relied on her father's legacy connections, leading to her injudicious recommendation for Grant to assist the Usuthu, which led to them losing their land. However, later Colenso accumulated political capital as the Zulu leaders began to trust her, not because she was Bishop Colenso's daughter, but in her own right. By the end of this period Colenso's political praxis confirmed to the colonial and imperial governments, and assured Dinuzulu and the Usuthu, that the Colenso family's work on defence of Africans had not ended with the bishop's death.

## Chapter 2: 1887-1889

### Introduction

Chapter two focuses on the British attempts to exert control over the Usuthu. It tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis as she supported Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders in their attempts to resist the British annexation of Zululand in 1887, and during their trial in 1889. The annexation of Zululand introduced the period of a political shift that dismantled the colonial Shepstonian mode of direct tribal rule and replaced it with magisterial districts. During the period of this chapter, Colenso politically engaged as the interlocutor, sponsor, and champion for prisoners. This chapter argues that Colenso contributed to preventing the abrupt obliteration of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship, that was a threat in 1888 when Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders were in flight after the civil war, and in 1889 when they were subjected to trial under a very high probability for them to be sentenced to death.

This chapter is composed of two parts. Part one tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis as she supported the Usuthu: to resist the annexation, and then to adjust to changed political contexts introduced by the British annexation of Zululand. The study then examines Colenso's praxis particularly in the aftermath of the civil war between Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu as her praxis shifted to the domain of law. Part two tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis as she supported Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders during their treason trial.

### Part 1: The British annexation of Zululand, 1887

After the British and the Boers signed the land dispute agreement on 22 October 1886, the Usuthu revolted. They were aggrieved that the agreement ceded large tracts of their land for white settlement, including their cherished Emakhosini Zulu kings' burial area. To suppress that Usuthu's protest, Melmoth Osborn – the British Resident in Zululand – pressurised for the British protectorate status to be extended over Zululand. The Colonial Office agreed on condition that the Usuthu consented. Osborn then called the Usuthu to a meeting. On 3 January 1887, hoping to obtain the required Usuthu's consent, he informed them about the impending extension of control over Zululand. The Usuthu vehemently opposed the proposal

and accused Osborn of stealing their land.<sup>92</sup> They were opposed to any outcome which derailed and would possibly halt their campaign for Dinuzulu to be installed as the king of Zulu people. Dinuzulu being appointed on the same level as Wolseley's chiefs, would deny him recognition as heir to Zulu kingship; and the members of the royal family would also lose the special status attached to being Zulu royalty. Despite that Usuthu's response, Osborn misled Governor Havelock into believing that they had consented. Then on 5 February,<sup>93</sup> Osborn unilaterally announced that Zululand was from then onwards a British protectorate. Colenso was opposed to any kind of control over Zululand, whether a British protectorate status or the annexation. To the authorities' claim that British control was required as the solution to end anarchy in Zululand; Colenso insisted that Dinuzulu was the solution, that he just required to be granted royal powers to start restoring order.

Osborn's protectorate status did not last long, the Colonial Office withdrew it because that form of control created responsibilities but did not provide resources for their implementation. The British government then decided to annex Zululand.<sup>94</sup>

With the annexation of Zululand impending, new forms of political engagements were introduced, and they prompted shifts in Colenso's political praxis. Previously she had dispensed advice to the Usuthu relying on her own evaluation of the likely play out of the situation as well as her understanding of the approach of the authorities. Notably, with the annexation of Zululand imminent, Colenso no longer issued advice based on her own reading of the situation, she guided the Usuthu in using the courts and the law to get results.<sup>95</sup>

Ending anarchy in Zululand – as the authorities claimed – was not the only reason for the annexation. The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886 had increased demand for cheap labour and accelerated the extension of white domination over Africans. In that regard, the annexation would confirm Natal and Zululand's boundaries and forestall Transvaal's expansion into those regions.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the annexation would subdue the then growing

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<sup>92</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 171-172.

<sup>93</sup> Buthelezi, 'King Dinuzulu kaMahelana kaCetshwayo', 17.

<sup>94</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 174.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 81, 192. During this period, Colenso was assisting the Usuthu while in a state of bereavement, her sister Ellen had died in Britain on 29 April 1887. See Marks, Shula. *Reluctant Rebellion: the 1906-1908 Disturbances in Natal*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 67.

<sup>96</sup> Nicholls, 'The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context', xxx.

discontent from the ‘loyal’ Africans of Edendale. They were aggrieved that the colonial government had not incentivised them for the assistance they had rendered to capture Langalibalele in 1873, and to defeat Cetshwayo in war in 1879. That community was becoming a threat to the colonial authorities, it was getting united and organised when presenting grievances.<sup>97</sup> Generally, from the *Inkanyiso* newspaper,<sup>98</sup> there was a noted growth of African discontent against the policies of the Natal native administration.<sup>99</sup>

On 11 May 1887, the Colonial Office granted authority for Zululand to be annexed. On 19 May, Havelock annexed Zululand.<sup>100</sup> Havelock was then declared Governor of Natal and Governor of Zululand (1887-1889) and granted authority to proclaim the law and appoint officers of the law. Zululand was divided into six magisterial districts headed by Resident Magistrates who were young white men from Natal. The magistracies had courts authorised to try civil and serious criminal cases like rape and murder. Osborn remained the senior official in Zululand, with his position retitled as Resident Commissioner and Chief Magistrate of Zululand (1887-1893), his court being the court of appeal.<sup>101</sup> At that point the Usuthu were double aggrieved by: the land dispute agreement of 1886, and the annexation of Zululand in 1887.

To enforce the annexation, the colonial authorities twice – on 21 June and on 7 July – organized loyalty ceremonies. Dinuzulu did not attend them, even when the invitation came with stipend offers for him, his prominent fathers, and Mnyamana – to be backdated six months, amounts that ranged between £60 to £300 a year.<sup>102</sup> Dinuzulu’s boycotting the loyalty ceremonies left the Usuthu confused, uncertain whether to support the annexation or not. Clarification of the Usuthu’s position regarding the annexation, became urgent as the new magistrates began to issue orders to chiefs in Zululand. Mnyamana convened a meeting; it was held in August but ended without agreement. Mnyamana and the older members proposed the acceptance of the annexation, while Dinuzulu and the younger Usuthu chose to

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<sup>97</sup> Meintjes, Sheila. *In The Shadow of the Great White Queen: The Edendale Kholwa of Colonial Natal, 1850 – 1906*. Pietermaritzburg: Occasional Publications of the Natal Society Foundation, 2020, 141. In 1887 the ‘loyal’ Africans of Edendale established a political society called Funamalungelo, to lead the fight for their rights.

<sup>98</sup> Incwadi yezindaba zabantsundu – newspaper for African affairs.

<sup>99</sup> Hamilton, ‘James Stuart’, 5.

<sup>100</sup> Colenso, Pamphlet, ZUL/1. ‘Zululand’, 1. KCAL.

<sup>101</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 175.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 178.

resist it. Dinuzulu approached the Boers for assistance to resist the annexation, they refused reminding him of his betrayal of seeking British intervention against them during the land dispute of 1884 to 1886.

Throughout those developments of the Usuthu struggling with the annexation, Colenso does not seem to have been involved. She may have been occupied with her family or church's affairs. It may have been the emphasis of the nature of her political praxis of treating and defending the Usuthu as a unit and not getting involved in their decision-making or embroiled in their internal disagreements – her endeavour to align political activity to 'the Zulu point of view.'

While the Usuthu wrestled with the annexation, Osborn steadfastly enforced the new order of British Zululand, ensuring that Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders no longer acted as if they still had authority to continue with such practices as imposing fines on people. When they fined people, Osborn overruled their decisions and fined them back. In one instance he humiliated them by ordering that they returned the cattle they had fined, to their owners.<sup>103</sup> While that was going on between the Usuthu leaders and Osborn, Colenso was interlocuting<sup>104</sup> on behalf of the Usuthu leaders, actively making their grievances known to the authorities – placing them 'on the record.' She drove a wedge between Havelock and Osborn by introducing to the governor the alternative versions and supplementary information about events occurring in Zululand, which was information that Havelock was not receiving from the colonial officials and authorities.

Colenso had sufficient political capital that drew the governor to repeatedly visit her. On 24 October a frustrated Havelock arrived at Bishopstowe to canvass Colenso's input on the Usuthu affairs. Their discussion included the case of the murdered uMfokozana Ntshepheka's wife whose body parts were reportedly used for medicinal purposes.<sup>105</sup> That discussion highlighted another feature of Colenso's praxis. While the authorities were typically

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<sup>103</sup> Buthelezi, 'King Dinuzulu kaMahelana kaCetshwayo, 21.

<sup>104</sup> This study has chosen to make use of 'interlocute' as a verb to draw attention to the complexity of the communicative acts in which Colenso was engaging. Oftentimes she was neither simply speaking for nor simply translating. Her interlocution involved elements of either or both of those activities, alongside interventions and engagements of her own.

<sup>105</sup> Ntshepheka was convicted for witchcraft and sentenced to death. When the party arrived at his home to execute the sentence, he was not there, so the squad killed his wife and confiscated his cattle. See Buthelezi, 'King Dinuzulu kaMahelana kaCetshwayo, 19-20.

aggressive and responded to issues by engaging the punitive approach, Colenso's approach was practical and constructive. While the governor vowed and threatened to hang both Dinuzulu and Ndabuko if they were found to be implicated in the murder of uMfokozana Ntshpheka's wife; Colenso offered a different view, that instead of hanging the leaders, the governor considered the solution of placing doctors in Zululand, whom people would consult and be gradually weaned off witchcraft practices.<sup>106</sup>

While Colenso engaged with the governor in Natal, in Zululand the Usuthu's revolt against the annexation incessantly continued. To divert the Usuthu's attention from resisting the annexation, Osborn and Shepstone proposed for Zibhebhu to be returned to his former lands which he occupied prior the Battle of Etshaneni in 1884. They hoped the Usuthu would then be distracted and be preoccupied in hostile relations with Zibhebhu's faction. For Osborn, the return of Zibhebhu would also subdue the Usuthu and even make it easier to collect tax from them. For Shepstone, Zibhebhu's return would 'at once throw the balance of Zulu power into the hands of the Government.'<sup>107</sup>

Havelock and the Colonial Office were against Zibhebhu's return; they understood that it had potential to ignite enmity and possibly the recrudescence of war between Zibhebhu and Dinuzulu. Despite that view, eventually they succumbed and acquiesced to Osborn and Shepstone, and permitted Zibhebhu's return.<sup>108</sup> In November, Havelock travelled to Zululand to inform the Usuthu leaders about Zibhebhu's imminent return, and to reprimand them for intransigence and continuing to oppose the annexation. Possibly emphasizing the futility of their resistance, he lashed out: 'Dinuzulu must know and all the Zulus must know that the rule of the House of Shaka is a thing of the past. It is dead. It is like water spilt on the ground. The Queen now rules Zululand and noone else.'<sup>109</sup> Trying to create divisions among the Usuthu leaders, in that meeting Havelock publicly divulged that Mnyamana, Tshingana, Ziweddu and Sitheku<sup>110</sup> had privately accepted his stipend offer – that which was made at the time of invitations to attend the 7 July annexation loyalty ceremony.<sup>111</sup> At that point the

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<sup>106</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 192-193.

<sup>107</sup> Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, 516.

<sup>108</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 191.

<sup>109</sup> Hamilton, Carolyn. *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*, Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1998, 110-111.

<sup>110</sup> Ziweddu and Sitheku were the sons of Mpande, Cetshwayo's half-brothers. See Webb and Wright, *A Zulu King Speaks*, 3.

<sup>111</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 194.

Usuthu were triple aggrieved by: the land dispute agreement of 1886, the annexation of Zululand in May 1887, and the return of Zibhebhu in November 1887.

In this section Colenso's political activity aligned to the principle of 'the Zulu point of view' by her not getting involved in the Usuthu leaders' disagreement when they resisted the annexation. Her praxis was flexible and adaptive: with the introduction of the annexation, she discontinued dispensing advice to the Usuthu and then referred them to lawyers. Her political capital drew the governor to repeatedly visit and consult her on political matters. She drove a wedge between Havelock and Osborn, over the colonial misleading reports submitted to the Colonial Office. As it became apparent in the case of the killing of Ntshepeka's wife, Colenso's praxis was practical and constructive, while the authorities engaged the punitive approach.

This section incrementally piled up the Usuthu's suppressed grievances, up to when they were triple aggrieved by: the land dispute agreement, the annexation, and Zibhebhu's return. This highlights the events that preceded the civil war, so that it is not viewed – from the Usuthu's side – to have been solely about Zibhebhu, but that there were also pent-up frustrations with the authorities.

### **The civil war between Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu, 1888**

On 24 November 1887, Zibhebhu returned to his former lands. Marching in military formation, he attacked and drove away the Usuthu he found settled in the area and re-peopled it with his followers. Keen to assert his power, he claimed more tracts of land than his former territory.<sup>112</sup>

The Usuthu perceived the authorities – particularly Osborn and some magistrates – to be supporting Zibhebhu over them. One such instance, from which that perception arose, occurred in January 1888. The Mandlakazi congregated at Magistrate Addison's office at Nongoma and started chanting war songs. The Usuthu responded by rallying; according to

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<sup>112</sup> Guy. *Theophilus Shepstone*, 516.

them, assembling for safety. According to Osborn, the Usuthu were congregating to mobilise to attack the Mandlakazi.<sup>113</sup>

By that time, a year had passed with Colenso having disappeared from the Usuthu affairs. She had taken time off to attend to the affairs of her father's church, and to write parts of his biography.<sup>114</sup> When she resurfaced in March 1888, she found the Usuthu having compiled information about Zibhebhu's provocative actions towards them, which they planned to submit to the governor as evidence to support their pleas for protection from the Mandlakazi.

She continued as their literate ally, transcribing isiZulu statements, then translating them into English, and submitting to the governor. In March, from some of those reports Havelock was confronted with the details of Osborn mishandling Zibhebhu's return. He was disturbed by the reports of Zibhebhu plundering from the Usuthu and evicting them and destroying their homesteads. Noticing discrepancies and omissions in the authorities' official reports, he sought permission from Colenso to use her reports to expose to the Colonial Office the transgressions that the Natal colonial officials and authorities were committing in Zululand.<sup>115</sup> That rendered the reports on which Colenso had worked, influencing the governor in Natal, and that influence extended to the Colonial Office in Britain. Her driving in the wedges between Havelock and Osborn, was escalated to being between the colonial and imperial governments.<sup>116</sup> From such incidents, Colenso probably earned political capital because the governor using her reports, rendered her a trusted source of information about the Usuthu and Zululand affairs.

In 1888 Colenso's driving in the wedges between Havelock and Osborn intensified. The governor's visits to Bishopstowe continued. On 21 March he arrived accompanied by his wife and private secretary. As in previous visits, the governor offloaded his frustrations, confiding to Colenso about the intractable Osborn whose handling of Zibhebhu's return he disapproved. He divulged to her information undisclosed even to his officials, including that

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<sup>113</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 201.

<sup>114</sup> The bishop's biography was in two volumes, the Colenso siblings authored the political part and Sir George Cox wrote about the theological matters.

<sup>115</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 205.

<sup>116</sup> This is an example of the Colenso family's 'extensive chain of influence from Zululand to Britain'. Colenso, 'The Colenso Papers', 3-23. Marks used this phrase in her thesis in 1967. See Marks, 'Black and White', 29.

he intended to compensate the Usuthu for the losses they had suffered from Zibhebhu's afflictions. He shared his plans to propitiate Dinuzulu and win over his confidence by commissioning an independent inquiry into the events that had occurred in Zululand since Zibhebhu's return. He implored Colenso to coax Dinuzulu into cooperating with him and to accept his invitation to a meeting in Pietermaritzburg.<sup>117</sup> This study does not discount that the governor's visits to Bishopstowe may have been his tactic of trying to weaken Colenso's endeavours in defence of the Usuthu. If that was the case, those attempts failed because Colenso continued with unrelenting trenchant criticism against imperialism.

Before the planned meeting between Havelock and the Usuthu leaders materialised, Osborn inflamed tensions between the Usuthu and the Mandlakazi, leading to confrontations that rapidly escalated to hostilities. On 2 June 1888, Osborn dispatched police and troops to Ceza where the Usuthu had gathered. A skirmish ensued and the Usuthu repulsed Osborn's troops. Then Zibhebhu killed Msushwana Mdletshe, the Dletsheni chief who was one of the few izikhulu of the Usuthu then still alive.<sup>118</sup> To prepare to avenge the killing of Mdletshe, about 4 000 Usuthu members converged at Ceza. Belligerence escalated into a civil war between the Usuthu and the Mandlakazi. Gibson JY who was for some years a magistrate in Zululand, described that war's 'awe-inspiring clatter of assegais,' and the brief 'mortal combat' at Ndumu on 23 June, that ended with the Mandlakazi giving up and fleeing.<sup>119</sup> Among the fatalities were included Zibhebhu's nine brothers.<sup>120</sup>

Colenso's praxis was not limited to challenging and seeking to influence the authorities; she also intervened in public discussions of developments. After the 2 June confrontation between the Usuthu and Osborn's troops at Ceza, the *Times of Natal* reported that Dinuzulu had issued an instruction for all white men in Zululand to be killed. On 11 September 1888, that newspaper published the letter Colenso wrote to its editor refuting and repudiating that report. She drew attention to the Usuthu leaders' translated statement that expressed regret that two of Osborn's regular soldiers had died during the Ceza melee, arguing that had Dinuzulu aimed 'to kill all the white men in the country,'<sup>121</sup> he would have not issued that

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<sup>117</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 206.

<sup>118</sup> Dhlomo, Rolfes Robert Reginald. *uDinuzulu kaCetshwayo*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1968, 52.

<sup>119</sup> Gibson, JY. *The Story of the Zulus*. London: Longman, Green & Co, 1911, 307-308.

<sup>120</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 230.

<sup>121</sup> Colenso to the Editor, *Times of Natal*. Letter. 11 September 1888. KCAL.

statement of regret. Of interest to this study, was Colenso exhibiting profound insight and understanding of the reliability levels of sources, and the stages the generation of news went through, during that period in Natal. She pointed out that at the time the article was published, the information could have only been obtained from the extremely unreliable sources – the deserters and spies.<sup>122</sup> That showed Colenso did not take the news at face value, she was discerning and scrupulously assessed information.

In this section Colenso's political praxis has been demonstrated by her interlocuting on behalf of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders engaging the governor, and through an incident of public discourse – her letter to the editor of the *Times of Natal*. She drove a wedge between Osborn and Havelock, and it escalated to be between the colonial and imperial governments. Her empowering of the Usuthu showed results: instead of the Usuthu being confrontational when Zibhebhu provoked them, they engaged the legal approach of compiling evidence to submit to the governor to support their case. Colenso had sufficient political capital that continued drawing Havelock to visit and consult her on political matters – with the relations between them intensified into her becoming his trusted broker and confidant, the governor sharing with her confidential political plans and information undisclosed to the colonial officials and authorities. Colenso showed to be a percipient consumer of information when she rejected the report of the *Times of Natal*. She did not take information at face value; she evaluated it based on timing, sources, and other existing evidence.

## Part 2: King Dinuzulu's first treason trial, 1889

After the civil war of 23 June 1888, Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders fled the authorities. Colenso got to know that the authorities planned to prosecute them, and that prompted her to start preparing for their then looming trial. With the annexation having introduced new forms of political engagement, Colenso's political praxis shifted to the domain of law, and she assisted the Usuthu to do the same. Her strategy was to start by having Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders on the right side of the law, by convincing them to surrender and be subjected to trial. She did that through an impassioned plea, in a letter that exceeded a thousand words, dated 31 July 1888.<sup>123</sup> Her approach was to give the options and their consequences, and

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> This letter is reprinted and covers four pages in Guy's book. See Guy, *The View Across the River*, 243-246.

leave decision-making to them. She impressed upon them that remaining in flight made it easier for their enemies to kill them without their version of events ever heard. Quickly adding that she would continue supporting them irrespective of the decision they took, lamenting that if they got killed, ‘I can say nothing; I can only mourn.’<sup>124</sup> That Colenso’s approach would become one of the characteristic features of her relations with the Usuthu leaders – respecting their independent political judgement, while supporting them unconditionally. The approach also fed to her principle of aligning her political activity to ‘the Zulu point of view.’

At that point another of the features of Colenso’s praxis became apparent, that she was the bulwark against patronising of the Usuthu leaders. She demanded that as Zulu royalty, they had to be afforded a dignified treatment and befitting reverence. After she appealed to the Usuthu leaders to surrender, she spent her political capital by approaching the commanding officer of the troops in Zululand, Colonel Stabb, and ‘privately, as a friend,’<sup>125</sup> arranged with him to avail himself to personally receive them if they heeded her advice and surrendered. Events unfolded differently. Ndabuko surrendered on 16 August to Colonel Martin at the military post at Nhlophenkulu.<sup>126</sup> Tshingana was arrested at his kraal on 6 November.<sup>127</sup> Dinuzulu proceeded to Bishopstowe with about twenty of his followers and surrendered there on 15 November. Colenso was not at home; her mother and her sister, Agnes, received him. They too ensured that he was treated with dignity even under the circumstances of his arrest. Instead of being handcuffed, he was provided with a horse, and rode himself to the police barracks.<sup>128</sup> Havelock handed Dinuzulu over to the Zululand Police and he was taken to Eshowe, the seat of government in British Zululand, where the trial was to be held.<sup>129</sup> By that time Colenso had already spent months and done a lot of work in preparation for Dinuzulu’s trial.

Colenso was shrewd and influential and that manifested in the way she secured the legal services of the Natal’s most eminent advocate, one of the colony’s most illustrious politicians, Harry Escombe. When she initially approached Escombe, he agreed to defend

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>127</sup> Gibson, *The Story of the Zulus*, 316.

<sup>128</sup> Rees, Wyn. *Colenso Letters from Natal*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1958, 422-423.

<sup>129</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 137.

Dinuzulu but later tried to backtrack claiming to be overcommitted. Probably because of her political weight, she exploited his political ambitions and successfully convinced him to recommit. On 27 September 1888 she drove a wedge between the colonial and imperial governments by convincing Escombe – a colonial politician – to view defending Dinuzulu in court as the opportunity to expose the Zululand British appointees' malpractice and maladministration, which would boost Natal's lobbying for Responsible Government (self-rule) to be granted to Natal, a government which Escombe could be part of.<sup>130</sup> The language she used in her letters made it difficult for Escombe to turn her down. Navigating the issue of legal costs, on 22 October she wrote: 'I am a poor woman, and you a rich man ... You are also a political magnate and the benefit of your countenance to the Zulus, which I solicited, is far and away out of the region of payments.'<sup>131</sup> Escombe ended up rendering his services *pro Deo*.<sup>132</sup> That was an example of Colenso effectively deploying her political capital to make up for the financial resources she lacked. She did not end by organising defence for Dinuzulu, she also intervened in the type of court that would try him.

Colenso exploited her political capital to influence the top echelons in governments – both in the colony and in Britain. Dinuzulu's case was within the jurisdiction of the British Zululand's courts. Colenso agitated on the point of bias, that no Zululand court would be objective to Dinuzulu, also taking into account that – under British Zululand – Osborn's court was the court of appeal. She drove a wedge between the colonial and imperial governments by influencing for Dinuzulu to be subjected to trial by a Special Court of Commissioners. Her agitation consisted of a series of letters she wrote to Havelock, the newspaper reports she initiated, the debates her allies raised in British parliament, and the Aborigines' Protection Society's letters that flooded the Colonial Office. On that matter of a British Zululand court not suitable to try Dinuzulu, Escombe also supported Colenso, likely motivated by what his political career stood to gain from that trial. They convinced Havelock based on the point of bias against Dinuzulu. Havelock also had his own reason to prefer an alternative court: that during the trial the Zululand magistrates could be implicated and summoned to take the stand

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<sup>130</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 248. Indeed, in July 1893 Escombe was appointed as the Attorney-General in the Responsible Government's first cabinet. See picture in *Ibid*, 359.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 249.

<sup>132</sup> Colenso, Harriette. Pamphlet. 12 August 1893. 'The prospects of three chiefs still in exile at St Helena', SR 968.3, ZUL/17, 3. KCAL.

as witnesses. Havelock in turn convinced the Colonial Office,<sup>133</sup> which also viewed an alternative to a British Court as preferable as it would be means to distance that Office from the Zululand and Natal's officials, which Colenso and the Aborigines' Protection Society had recommended. As a result of all that effort and rationale, Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders were subjected to trial by a Special Court of Commissioners. The colonial authorities were put out by that, they viewed the Special Court as elevating Dinuzulu to unwarranted significance, especially because the British government had utilised that Court for the high-profile trial of Charles Parnell of the Irish Nationalist League, for his criminal political activity in Ireland.<sup>134</sup>

The Special Court of Commissioners was instituted on 16 October 1888. Its members were Mr Justice Walter Wragg of the Natal Supreme Court and the colony's magistrates GM Rudolph and JE Fannin.<sup>135</sup> It sat from 15 November to 5 December, and again from 23 January to 27 April 1889. It allowed counsel for the accused. Attached to it was a condition that the Colonial Office would confirm its sentences before they were implemented. The trial commenced from 23 January for Ndabuko, from 13 February for Tshingana, and from 14 March for Dinuzulu.<sup>136</sup> That trial introduced a new challenge for Colenso, that her father was spared: money began to be a critical resource in supporting Africans against imperialism. In that trial, the government funded the prosecution while Dinuzulu's defence costs devolved to Colenso. Based on that, prior scholarship has claimed that Dinuzulu's trial ruined Colenso financially. This study suggests differently.

This study suggests that Dinuzulu's trial exacerbated Colenso's already existing financial woes. This study has traced and established that the Colenso family's financial problems had begun in the 1860s – thirty years before Dinuzulu's trial – when the Church of England's Bishop Gray of Cape Town deposed and excommunicated Bishop Colenso on charges of heresy.<sup>137</sup> Although Bishop Colenso had retained the title of being the bishop and kept the

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<sup>133</sup> This is another example of the Colenso family's 'extensive chain of influence from Zululand to Britain.' Colenso, 'The Colenso Papers', 3-23.

<sup>134</sup> Dumat and Escombe, 'A Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs', 3.

<sup>135</sup> The defence team was aggrieved that it was Havelock who appointed those members of the Special Court, arguing that he was conflicted because it would be his political career that would be ruined if Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders were acquitted. See Dumat and Escombe, 'A Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs', 2.

<sup>136</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 280-282.

<sup>137</sup> Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 404.

properties of the Church of England in Natal, the missionary wing of that Church, called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, discontinued its financial support to him.<sup>138</sup> Not much money was made at Bishopstowe; the acreage did not yield surplus, only funds enough for the home's self-sufficiency. The Colenso family's attempt to publish the bishop's biography to safeguard his legacy, *The Life of John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal* (1888), turned into a financial disaster. The critics dismissed or ignored it, and the publisher ended up recouping from the family the funds expended in publishing it. In September 1884 a fire destroyed Bishopstowe and the printing press. When Colenso's brother, Robert, was unsuccessful in his medical practice in Durban, he took the Colenso capital to Johannesburg where he invested and lost it. He then joined his brother – Frank the solicitor – in London where they continued struggling financially, to the extent of sometimes turning to their mother and sisters or their uncle Charles Bunyon – their mother's younger brother – for assistance with living expenses.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, when Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders' trial commenced, Colenso had no money.

Colenso's financial struggle during Dinuzulu's trial frustrated even Escombe and drove him to, on 27 February 1889, appeal to the Colonial Secretary – Lord Knutsford – on her behalf writing, 'The prosecution is supported by State funds, the costs of the defence are made to fall on a woman,<sup>140</sup> who, whatever may be said of her right to interfere on behalf of the Usutus had shown the courage of her convictions at a cost of fully £2,000 ...'<sup>141</sup> Escombe may have quoted a conservative estimate because other sources mentioned a ballpark figure of more than £3 000.<sup>142</sup> From Swart's mentioning that 'Escombe's eloquent appeal to the Imperial authorities for financial assistance on her behalf bore no fruit,' this study presumes that Escombe's attempt was unsuccessful or yielded a negligible result.<sup>143</sup> Colenso's support was not limited to financing Dinuzulu's defence.

During the trial Colenso organised the Ekukhanyeni graduates to do some of the investigations and to manage the witnesses' lineup. She assisted the press and the defence

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<sup>138</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 66.

<sup>139</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 243, 278.

<sup>140</sup> Escombe was probably trying to induce sympathy by engaging gendered emotional manipulation by use of 'woman', as during that period politics was still a males' domain.

<sup>141</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 17, footnote 2.

<sup>142</sup> *The Women's Gazette and Weekly News*. 20 July 1889. British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>143</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 17.

team as the scribe, advisor on Zulu conventions, and did translations and interpretation.<sup>144</sup> She organised for the Usuthu izinduna to attend the trial so that they were orientated on the operation of the then newly introduced colonial court and judicial systems. When she came across a case that put the colonial administration in bad light, she exploited it to influence public perceptions to favourably view Dinuzulu's side in that trial. For that case to reach many people, she ran a press campaign to expose the British appointees' maladministration. The case was based on the event that took place in November 1888. L Tyrrell who was the Acting Resident Magistrate of the Ndwandwe district, stumbled upon people building and preparing land for planting. Believing they were invading Zibhebhu's territory, he had them flogged and fined.<sup>145</sup> Colenso used that illegal flogging as evidence of maladministration. Tyrrell's action also had shown favouritism towards Zibhebhu (presumably over the Usuthu). To reinforce credibility and have that case gain traction far and wide, in January 1889 Colenso had the account of that published in a Natal newspaper. Then she forwarded that newspaper article to Charles Hancock who was a lawyer in the committee of the Aborigines' Protection Society in Britain. Hancock in turn published a letter about that Tyrrell's illegal flogging, in the London *Daily News*.<sup>146</sup> In that way, Tyrrell's act of maladministration attracted publicity both in Natal and in Britain.

While the trial was continuing, Colenso empowered the Usuthu by demonstrating that despite the British annexation, they could still continue creatively uniting against their adversaries. Presumably aggrieved by something during the court proceedings, she mobilised the Usuthu to protest by ditching European clothing and reverting to wearing their traditional attire; on 23 January 1889 writing to her mother saying, 'and (they) have quite fallen in with my idea of having dirty rags to be the sign of the other side and appearing in Zulu costume.'<sup>147</sup> Remarkable about that demonstration, was Colenso's inventiveness during what was the period of firm British control and legal contestations. She engaged the Usuthu in a 'safe' protest that the authorities could neither stop nor charge them for, because a choice of attire was no contravention or crime.

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<sup>144</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 19, 262.

<sup>145</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 140.

<sup>146</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 277. This is another example of the Colenso family's 'chain of influence from Zululand to Britain.' Colenso, 'The Colenso Papers', 3-23.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, 277, 477, chapter 20, endnote 1.

Also, during that trial was demonstrated another incredible strategy that showed Colenso's political praxis as strategic, pioneering, and capable of outmanoeuvring and circumventing obstacles. She used the term 'Zulu National Party' to describe the Usuthu. Marks and Binns, in their publications of the 1960s, mentioned the Zulu National Party in passing, without giving information on its formation or performance. It is though understood that the label emerged when the Usuthu were resisting the implementation of Wolseley's settlement of petty chiefs.<sup>148</sup> In 2001 Guy introduced the Zulu National Party as the label Colenso used to address the Usuthu,<sup>149</sup> not necessarily as a properly formed political party. Based on information accessed to date, Colenso was the first to use this label publicly and repeatedly, to provoke the authorities and evoke nationalistic sentiments among the Usuthu. That produced results because to an extent the colonists and authorities were threatened. She provoked Havelock who on 14 June 1888 lashed out saying, 'There is no national party with Dinuzulu. His followers represent an insignificant section of the Zulus ...'<sup>150</sup> Viewed broadly, the scope of using the Zulu National Party label, extended beyond the Usuthu to promoting the unity of the former independent Zulu kingdom. Notable, was that Colenso was using the Zulu National Party label in the late 1880s, importing and modelling after the political parties then existing elsewhere in the world,<sup>151</sup> her action preceding the founding of the first surviving political party in Africa – the African National Congress – by more than twenty years.

Eventually the trial of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders came to an end. Ndabuko, Tshingana and Dinuzulu who were convicted of high treason, were on 27 April 1889 respectively sentenced to fifteen, twelve and ten years of imprisonment.<sup>152</sup> On that day played out one of the examples that demonstrated relations between Colenso and the Usuthu, that among them she could direct and become in charge without experiencing gender related hindrances. To mark the end of that Dinuzulu's trial, Colenso had close to five hundred Usuthu men form a circle around her as she prayed, those being men who likely were not even Christians. She then addressed them, informing that the trial had ended, and instructed them to disperse.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 88; Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 14, 19.

<sup>149</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 150, 276.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 218.

<sup>151</sup> Pioneering in this context refers to African politics. There were other minor initiatives like that of Escombe's Forward Party. See *Ibid*, 348.

<sup>152</sup> *The London Illustrated News*. 26 April 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>153</sup> Guy. *The View across the river*, 294.

After the trial Dinuzulu and his fathers were held at the Eshowe jail while the Colonial Office reviewed their sentences. During that period Colenso obtained permission and started literacy lessons for them,<sup>154</sup> an initiative perceived as among the first acts that shifted Zulu leadership to the bureaucratic realm.

In June 1889 members of the defence team, Escombe and Frank Campbell Dumat, published to place ‘on the record’ the transgressions they claimed were committed during Dinuzulu’s trial. Their list included that, Proclamation No. IV of 1888 that constituted the Special Court of Commissioners, had used language condemning the Usuthu leaders before the trial even began; that there had been non-adherence to Proclamation II of 1887 as the judicial oath had not been taken within the territory where the trial was held and; that during the trial the defence had required Havelock and other members of the Special Court to give witness but they had refused. Also, the Special Court had admitted the messengers’ hearsay as evidence – on the grounds that it was part of established practices of the region and thus comparable to letters or telegrams – but had not provided measures to detect probable discrepancies between the messages sent and the messages delivered. Some of the Usuthu’s witnesses had not testified – and therefore critical evidence against Zibhebhu not heard – because the Special Court did not have protection against self-incrimination. That defence team’s remonstrance was supported by other peoples’ experiences.

WY Campbell who had been part of Dinuzulu’s defence team, withdrew his services when on 30 November 1888 the state declined to grant additional time that the team requested to prepare for the case. However, after Campbell resigned, that time was suddenly availed, the state adjourned court on 5 December and reconvened it on 23 January 1889.<sup>155</sup> Also, SO Samuelson who was the court’s interpreter, withdrew his services citing that ‘his sense of justice was outraged by the proceedings.’<sup>156</sup>

According to Guy, Colenso’s support ‘may well have saved the leadership of the Zulu royal house from the gallows,’ suggesting that she had secured for them rulings relatively lighter than the then highly probable death sentences.<sup>157</sup> That Guy’s assertion was not far-fetched:

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<sup>154</sup> Fuze to Colenso. Letter. 9 September 1889. PAR.

<sup>155</sup> Dumat and Escombe, ‘A Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs’, 2-5.

<sup>156</sup> Nicholls, ‘The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context’, 523.

<sup>157</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 296.

the British Zululand courts were issuing death penalties and executing people. On 12 November 1888, a week before the Special Court of Commissioners commenced trials, three prisoners – including Nkowana, the chief of Nzuza people – were executed at Eshowe. It had not assisted that Havelock and the Colonial Office had opposed those death sentences. The governor had even reviewed the sentences, confirmed capital punishment only for Nkowana and commuted the other two prisoners' death sentences. Despite that, Osborn had proceeded and hanged all three prisoners.<sup>158</sup> Further evidence that a death sentence was a real and serious threat to Dinuzulu, is in the Hansard. On 8 March 1889 the Colonial Under-Secretary, Baron Henry de Worms, responded and calmed down the concern raised around the possibility of a capital punishment for Dinuzulu. He informed that the Lord Chancellor had also been 'under the impression that if the trial proceeded and sentence of death were passed [*sic*], Dinuzulu might be executed before the appeal could be heard,' and gave assurance that 'This, however, is not the case, as distinct instructions have been long ago sent to the Governor that no sentence passed on any of the accused chiefs is to be carried out until the proceedings have been reviewed by the Secretary of State.'<sup>159</sup> That condition attached to the Special Court, that the imperial government would confirm that Court's sentences before they were implemented, was a proactive provision for the eventuality of Dinuzulu being sentenced to death, to stop the colony from executing him before the appeal was heard.

In this part of the chapter, Colenso's political praxis aligned political activity to 'the Zulu point of view,' the Usuthu leaders made their own decision on whether they chose to surrender or not. Her political capital drew repeated governor's visits to Bishopstowe, and she convinced Havelock and the imperial government to have Dinuzulu subjected to trial by a Special Court of Commissioners instead of a British Zululand court. She made up for lack of economic capital by deploying political capital, as evidenced when she secured Escombe's legal services, and funded Dinuzulu's defence. Her being astute and media-savvy showed when she worked on swaying public opinion by packaging and distributing Tyrell's case both in Natal and Britain. Being strategic, she empowered the Usuthu to be vigilant under British Zululand. With the political engagement shifted to the domain of law, she demonstrated a legally safe protest, and another way that to some extent improvised for the then abolished age-regiment system. It was her being strategic when she empowered the Usuthu: orientated

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 257-258.

<sup>159</sup> Dinuzulu. HC Deb 08 March 1889 vol 333 c1288 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1889/mar/08/dinizulu> (accessed 6 January 2022).

them in the functioning of the colonial court and judicial systems, and started literacy lessons for Dinuzulu and his fathers.

## **Conclusion**

Colenso as the interlocutor, sponsor, and champion for prisoners; obstructed the then threatening abrupt obliteration of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship. Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders were at the risk of being killed while in flight after the civil war; Colenso removed that threat by convincing them to surrender and be subjected to trial. During the trial, the probability for the Usuthu leadership to be sentenced to death was very high; Colenso counteracted by securing for them the best legal service, influencing the kind of the court that tried them, and funding their defence. Those were among the efforts that Colenso is credited for, for having possibly saved Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders from the gallows. Had the Usuthu leadership been killed, whether while in flight or through capital punishment, that would have swiftly and decisively ended the Zulu royal house and kingship.

Colenso's praxis is shown to be persistent and resilient. Unprecedented in the Colenso family's history of supporting Africans against imperialism, Dinuzulu's trial introduced the necessity for financial resources. She took up the responsibility of sponsoring Dinuzulu's defence while she was struggling financially. She made up for lack of economic capital by exploiting political capital, as evident when she secured Escombe's legal services. During the trial Colenso operated at different levels: prepared evidence on the ground, orientated the trialists to the new order and what was expected from them and their evidence, debated in the media in Natal and in London, mobilised public opinion, and played on the differences between imperial agenda and the local colonial one.

During the period of this chapter Colenso and the Usuthu adjusted to the new forms of political engagement that the annexation of Zululand introduced, and part of that was a shift to the domain of law. Examples being Colenso ceasing to dispense advice to the Usuthu and then referring them to lawyers, and the Usuthu starting to employ the legal approach of compiling evidence to support their cases.

Colenso possessed sufficient political capital that drew Havelock to repeatedly visit Bishopstowe and consult her on Zululand affairs. She safeguarded the Usuthu from being misrepresented to the Colonial Office by – over the colony’s misleading reports – driving a wedge between Havelock and Osborn, that escalated to be between the colonial and imperial governments. As the trusted source of information on Zululand affairs, she carved for herself the mediator position between the Zulu and British officialdoms.

Colenso’s praxis showed to be strategic, she empowered the Usuthu to adjust to the changing political contexts: organised for their orientation on the functioning of the colonial court and justice systems, demonstrated creative and legally safe ways to protest, and started shifting Zulu leadership to the bureaucratic realm through literacy lessons.

Her praxis continued aligning political activity to ‘the Zulu point of view,’ the Usuthu made their own decisions on matters related to the annexation and surrendering. This chapter revised the prior scholarship’s claim that Dinuzulu’s defence ruined Colenso financially, to that: Dinuzulu’s defence exacerbated Colenso’s already existing pecuniary distress.

## Chapter 3: 1890-1898

### Introduction

Chapter three tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis from 1890 to 1897. During this period Colenso was committed to campaigning for Dinuzulu to be appointed to a position befitting a Zulu king's son and heir to – albeit then defeated and divided – the Zulu kingdom. This chapter argues that Colenso's political engagement as the campaigner, prevented the discontinuation of the Zulu royal house and Zulu king, by preventing Dinuzulu from being demoted, which would have been the case had he been appointed on the same level as Wolseley's petty chiefs.

Colenso campaigned in Britain in two stints broken by about a year and a half period that she spent in Natal. The 1890s were the period during which the political landscape in which Colenso operated was radically transformed. She earned and possessed political capital that to a large extent she spent to good effect, sometimes invested for later use, and occasionally lost or misspent.

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one examines Colenso's praxis as she campaigned in Britain from 1890 to 1893. It begins with an overview of Colenso in Britain, followed by her political engagements and campaign's political activity, and ends when Colenso returned to Natal. Part two tracks and analyses Colenso's political activity in Natal where the colonial authorities fed off her hard work and political insights to support their political agendas while sabotaging her campaign. The rest of the chapter is about the repatriation of the exiles from St Helena to the Natal colony.

#### Part 1: Harriette Colenso's campaign in Britain, 1890 to 1893

Gibson, one of the magistrates in Zululand, described the end of the trial for Ndabuko (about forty years old), Tshingana (aged over fifty), and Dinuzulu (about twenty); to have marked the beginning of the period of peace 'during which the house of Zulu had no share in the direction of affairs.'<sup>160</sup> That silencing of 'the house of Zulu' raised Colenso's prominence to a

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<sup>160</sup> Gibson, *The Story of the Zulus*, 316.

scale larger than before, and ushered in a period which may be viewed as the height of her active public political life.

Colenso believing that Dinuzulu's trial was rigged, she decided to go and campaign in Britain, where the decision makers on Zululand affairs were – the Colonial Office and imperial governments. When she left Natal, her campaign's demands were for the Usuthu leaders' convictions and sentences to be invalidated (after the Usuthu leaders were exiles, this demand became more about lobbying for their repatriation), and Dinuzulu appointed to a leading and central position in Zululand. On 3 January 1890 she left Natal on board the *Grantully Castle*, accompanied by her sister Agnes and their mother Sarah Frances.<sup>161</sup> Then on 7 February, Dinuzulu and his fathers left Natal on board the SS *Anglian*, and exiled to the island of St Helena.<sup>162</sup>

### **The overview of Colenso's period in Britain**

Colenso and her sister and mother – the Bishopstowe women – arrived in Britain having no money. They seemed to have hoped to depend on their relatives for upkeep: Colenso's brothers Robert and Frank, and their uncle, Bunyon – their mother's younger brother. With both brothers struggling financially, Bunyon ended up accommodating the Bishopstowe women. Judging by the pressure he put on Colenso to find streams of income, he seemed to resent hosting them. He promptly introduced Colenso to the Colonial Secretary, Henry Holland Knutsford (1887-1892), and accompanied her to their first meeting, urging her to raise the issue of financial compensation for her political activities. After some time, the Bishopstowe women left Bunyon's home and started living in rented rooms, several times changing addresses when lease agreements expired. As Guy said, when Colenso left Natal for Britain, she 'embarked on a financially catastrophic political venture.'<sup>163</sup> Colenso showed a ruthless attitude that prioritized politics over family. She uprooted Agnes and their sick and aged mother from the comfort of Bishopstowe, to live poorly in Britain where they sometimes survived on donations. Beyond upkeep, Colenso discovered unexpected needs for money in Britain.

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<sup>161</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 307.

<sup>162</sup> Colonial Secretary's Office, 'Removal of chiefs from Eshowe to Durban', 1890. PAR.

<sup>163</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 314.

Unlike with her political activity in Natal, in Britain Colenso had to mount a campaign, and that included her delivering public talks and operating in formal environments – the parliament and the Colonial Office. That required for the unsophisticated Colenso who in Natal dressed in ensembles of utilitarian garments and men’s hats, then to project an authoritative image, the main part of which was to be clad in formal presentable clothing. For her first meeting with Knutsford, she borrowed her Aunt Eliza’s (Bunyon’s wife) coat. The metamorphosis hastened, a few days later Colenso arrived at some breakfast political socialising session wearing a dress with a train, over which she had draped Aunt Eliza’s long furry coat. In addition to funding upkeep and a new wardrobe, Colenso also required money to support her campaign: to produce publicity materials, procure administrative services, and travel throughout England delivering public speeches and conducting lectures. She received lots of invitations to deliver talks but the events’ organisers paid her stipends enough to defray her travel expenses. At some talks a collection was taken, however, people donated small amounts. In attempts to assist, at some point Frank and her allies set up the Zulu Defence Committee. It performed poorly; when wound up after two years, it had collected about £350.<sup>164</sup>

In Natal Colenso had experienced being restricted as a female only in the church, as certain roles and functions were reserved for males,<sup>165</sup> as her mother confirmed, ‘her sex proved a hindrance in the Church of England affairs.’<sup>166</sup> In politics she had been at liberty to participate, and she had engaged with the colonial authorities and the Usuthu. The situation was different in Britain in the 1890s; public speaking and politics were male preserves. Single women who ventured out into public life were denigrated and spurned as sexually frustrated.<sup>167</sup>

### **Colenso’s campaign in Britain**

Colenso’s campaign in Britain appeared to be in two prongs. On one side, she lobbied allies, provided alternative information, offered rebuttals, and became increasingly skilled in

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 314-315, 317, 323, 329, 348, 351.

<sup>165</sup> Marks, ‘Harriette Colenso and the Zulus’, 404.

<sup>166</sup> Merrett, Patricia Lynne. ‘Frances Ellen Colenso, (1849-1887): Her Life and Times in Relation to the Victorian Stereotype of the Middle Class English Woman’, MA thesis. University of Cape Town, 1980, 275.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 271. In parliament Colenso sometimes tolerated objectionable gender prejudiced language, but suffered silently, prioritising politics over herself. Guy, *The View Across the River*, 331.

developing conduits for information: through the press and by pamphleteering and lecturing. On the other side, she allied herself with fellow campaigners.

When Colenso arrived in Britain, although the bishop had been dead for many years, he remained in the memory of the British, because of the controversy he caused in the Church of England in Natal in the 1860s. Colenso secured political and intellectual heavyweights as allies, most of them having known and experienced positive connections with her father when he was still alive. Among them were the politicians Leonard Courtney and James Bryce, a Professor of International Law at Cambridge – John Westlake,<sup>168</sup> and Francis Edward who was Cetshwayo's former advisor and was then settled in England.<sup>169</sup> Colenso was receptive to their proposals and suggestions. She had arrived in Britain aiming to expose the wrongdoings in Zululand and hoping that the culpable officials and authorities would be removed from their positions and reparations made to the Usuthu.<sup>170</sup> They convinced her to abandon that approach of pursuing the impeachment of rogue officials, advising that it was ineffective because politicians had propensity to protect their own. Colenso had brought to Britain a 93-page pamphlet – 'Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs' – which she planned to use as her flagship publicity material. They convinced her to abandon it because it was too detailed and difficult to understand for those who did not have prerequisite knowledge and insight about Zululand affairs.<sup>171</sup> Colenso's allies instead encouraged her to deliver public talks and conduct lectures, and campaign in parliament. An important ally that Colenso secured, who was not connected to her father, was Alice Werner, a radical young journalist and lecturer at the School of Oriental Studies. Colenso also secured many MPs as her allies.

The phrase 'hammering in the wedges,' positioned in the Introduction as a frame for Colenso's praxis, was adopted from the letter she wrote encouraged by the support that her campaign was getting in Britain. She wrote the letter on 7 May 1890, to Magema Fuze, one of the Ekukhanyeni graduates who was then employed at Bishopstowe. She updated him saying:

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<sup>168</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 316.

<sup>169</sup> Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 404.

<sup>170</sup> *The Birmingham Daily Post*. 25 January 1892, British Newspaper Archive; Colenso, Pamphlet, ZUL/1. 'Zululand', 1890, 19-20. KCAL.

<sup>171</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 316.

But what is true is that I am very glad because of the way in which some of the amadoda here (MPs) are taking hold of the matter. I think that in three weeks you will perhaps hear a telegram in the newspapers about their words. Mr Hanbury will begin the speaking and Mr Bradlaugh will follow, and hammer in the wedges (you printer know what that means, or Miss Giles will tell you). There are plenty of others who will help, but these two are to lead the talking.

Everyday I write or talk with some M.P. Yesterday I talked to three new ones, and they all said that they will help. But now it is getting to be six months from the time when I left KwaKiti, and you will all want to know about our coming home. Truly every morning when we wake we say to one another 'How nice it is at Bishopstowe. Do you not wish to be there.' Said so it is, there are plenty of friends in England, who make no welcome, because we belong to Sobantu, and that we like. But Sobantu's own place, and his people, white and black, and his work are all out in Africa and that is our home which we love. So you may all be sure that we shall not delay to please ourselves. But I see that this is a long fight, I see that at the end of the six months my field will be full of young green plants just kahlela ing, and I must not leave it or it may be all spoilt and wasted. I cannot tell today how much longer I must stay. I think that perhaps I shall see better when this debate (speaking) is done. Perhaps it will be like rains in spring time, and will help us to guess if our harvest will be ripe early or late.<sup>172</sup>

In this extract, Colenso referred to 'hammering in the wedges' in the context of a printer. This study has adopted this phrase to refer to maintaining the status quo, Colenso's endeavours preventing or trying to prevent from worsening, the political circumstances of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. Charles Hanbury and Charles Bradlaugh who Colenso mentioned, were prominent British politicians. From this letter transpired that the MPs assisted Colenso by introducing to parliament and leading debates related to her campaign on behalf of the Zulu monarchy. Colenso's letter was written informally because Fuze (the recipient) was as close to her as family, otherwise Colenso was competent to write formally in isiZulu.

Most of the MPs who were Colenso's allies, were from among the nonconformists and radicals predominantly from the Irish, Welsh, and Scottish nationalists.<sup>173</sup> In the

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<sup>172</sup> Colenso to Fuze. Letter. 7 May 1890, PAR.

<sup>173</sup> The support the MPs rendered to Colenso may have not suggested that they wholly supported the Zulu cause. MPs associate with people and causes for different reasons, that may include boosting their political

parliamentary precinct Colenso also associated herself with pressure groups – like the Women’s Local Government Society that facilitated election of women to the country councils – from which she accessed administrative support and learnt to navigate the realm of the bureaucratic parliamentary processes and procedures.<sup>174</sup>

Colenso’s campaign provided alternative information, different from that which the Natal authorities publicised. In Britain she continued driving in the wedges, then between the Natal authorities who visited London and the Colonial Office. She mounted special campaigns that targeted those authorities: piggybacked on the hype and press coverage of their visits, included herself in their meetings, delivered public talks, and organised her campaign’s parliamentary debates. In 1891 when Osborn visited London, Colenso prepared the Irish MP, Alfred Webb, to introduce and lead her campaign’s debate in parliament. That also happened in January 1893 when Governor Mitchell (1889 to 1893) came to London.<sup>175</sup>

Colenso also campaigned through rebuttals in the press. In January 1891 *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* published her letter that dismissed Knutsford’s reply to a memorial from Sheffield that prayed for the Zulu exiles’ repatriation. Knutsford had stated: ‘There has not been a termination of friendship between Zululand and this country.’<sup>176</sup> Colenso refuted and challenged his use of the word ‘friendship,’ which she claimed was ‘quaint to describing relations between a people which has been violently conquered, and subsequently dismembered.’<sup>177</sup>

Colenso also campaigned by pamphleteering. She authored hard-hitting and in-depth pamphlets that were sometimes used to frame questions for her campaign’s debates in parliament. Her pamphlets responded to political developments as they happened. One of the first pamphlets she published after her arrival in Britain, titled ‘Zululand: Past and Present,’ contained the speech she delivered on 1 October 1890 when she addressed the members of the Manchester Geographical Society. It called for the removal of certain authorities on two grounds:

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careers, impressing their constituencies, frustrating political opponents, or building reciprocal work relationships.

<sup>174</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 319.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 330, 347.

<sup>176</sup> *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 16 January 1891, British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

That a change of policy is necessary for the safe government of the Zulus, and to restore confidence in England's intentions among surrounding native races; and that no change of policy is possible without the removal of those responsible for the old policy, and most prominently identified with it.

That the removal is claimed of such officials only as shall be proved before any disinterested tribunal to have been personally guilty of deliberate maladministration, of acts of bad faith and cruelty, and unlawful violence, unfitting them to hold responsible positions in any of Her Majesty's dominions.<sup>178</sup>

When Osborn's retirement was announced in 1893, with the Natal authorities submitting to the Colonial Office a glowing performance assessment that commended him for leaving the colony in a 'very healthy and satisfactory' financial situation, Colenso countered that assessment by publishing the pamphlet titled 'Mr Osborn as a Source of Confusion in Zulu Affairs.'<sup>179</sup>

On 12 August 1893 when Colenso was on board the 'Grantully Castle' travelling from Britain to Zululand, she penned a pamphlet titled 'The prospect of three chiefs still in exile at St Helena.' It was a quick warning to the supporters of the Zulu, informing them that the authorities proposed:

to continue the punishment of the two uncles (Cetshwayo's brother and half-brother) as (1) having been responsible for much of the trouble of 1888, and (2) likely therefore to cause trouble in the future; and to release 'before very long,' and send back to Zululand, their nephew Dinuzulu (Cetshwayo's son), as more likely to be amenable to British authority, if released thus alone.

Writing in third person, Colenso made known her position:

From Miss Colenso's point of view, the return of Dinuzulu while his uncles remained in exile would be fatal. It would not only empty that return of all value, but would form in itself a flagrant example of the cowardly and un-Christian policy of breaking up the Zulus by dividing them against themselves.

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<sup>178</sup> Colenso, Harriette. Pamphlet. 1890. 'Zululand: Past and Present', ZUL/1, 19-20. KCAL.

<sup>179</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 344.

Her warning to friends of the Zulus was that the proposal:

would be no workable compromise, but in complete opposition to all her representations, and likely to be mischievous in its results to the interests of peace and order, that she feels bound to put thus on record that she would be no consenting party to any such plan.<sup>180</sup>

Colenso also campaigned by public speaking and lecturing to people at grassroots level and to organisations that included societies, church congregations, clubs, and branches of women's associations. By November 1890 she had delivered 24 lectures and had sixteen scheduled.<sup>181</sup> She crisscrossed England lecturing in London and surroundings, including Northampton, Cambridge, Nottingham, Coventry, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and Preston.<sup>182</sup> She even addressed men in the assembly of Legislators in the House of Commons Committee Room, and delivered speeches in several gatherings of Manchester businessmen. Of her public speaking, Frank asserted that '... she pursued an unceasing campaign throughout England, never refusing an invitation to lecture upon Zulu affairs.'<sup>183</sup> In 1892 her public speaking was elevated to national level platforms when she delivered talks assisting a British political party, the Liberals, in their election campaign in Finsbury.<sup>184</sup> The Liberals' enlisting of Colenso attested to the political capital she possessed. Her political profile was doubtlessly enhanced, and she accumulated even more political capital as that election campaign turned out to be historic. The Liberals' candidate, Dadabhai Naoroji, won and became the first Indian to be elected to British Parliament.<sup>185</sup>

In Britain Colenso was one of the many campaigners who pursued different causes. She allied herself with the fellow campaigners, markedly to amplify her voice by accessing their contacts and building sympathy for her cause – which in all probability was a reciprocal practice among campaigners. Although she sympathised with other causes like that of the suffragists, she was not always available to lend her support to them, as she was mindful to prioritise her own campaign. Because of her spirited campaign, her fellow campaigners

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<sup>180</sup> Colenso, Pamphlet, 12 August 1893, 'The prospects of three chiefs', ZUL/17, 1, 3. KCAL.

<sup>181</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 322.

<sup>182</sup> Colenso to Zulu Chiefs. Letter. 6 February 1892. PAR.

<sup>183</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 18; *Herald & Lakes News*. 4 September 1891. British Newspaper Archive; *Western Mail*. 3 February 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>184</sup> Merret, 'Frances Ellen Colenso', 276.

<sup>185</sup> Chaggar, Jasleen. Seminar Paper. 'Contesting Imperial Citizenship: The Election of Dadabhai Naoroji as an MP in 1892', 29 March, 2021 Columbia University, Department of History, Undergraduate Senior Thesis, 42, 44.

actively sought to be associated with her. In March 1892, even after she declined the invitation to chair meetings of the Pioneer Reform Association at which a female franchise was to be discussed, that Association's pamphlet proceeded listing her alongside the well-known emancipationists including Annie Besant and Emmeline Pankhurst.<sup>186</sup> When in 1893 she was a delegate at the national conference of the Women's Liberal Federation, that was one of the rare occasions when she lent support to other causes.<sup>187</sup> It may be the case that she indirectly supported campaigns related to women's rights and causes because she was a role model they could cite, of what women – given opportunity – were capable of. Colenso had mainly relocated to Britain to be closer to the decision-makers on Zululand affairs: the imperial government through the Colonial Office.

In Britain Colenso campaigned directly to the Colonial Office. She became a notorious persistent critic. The officials preferred to engage her through meetings, she instead bombarded them with lengthy intimidating letters. Even Prime Minister Gladstone unsuccessfully tried to stop the deluge of her correspondence. Even her ally, Westlake, intervened in attempts to restrain her agitation to 'reasonable' levels.<sup>188</sup> In addition to the Colonial Office, Colenso also worked closely with the Aborigines' Protection Society.

The Colenso family had worked with the Aborigines' Protection Society since the 1870s. In Britain that Society hosted Colenso's campaign. She was actively engaged in its political activities from arrival. On 21 May 1890 she addressed that Society's 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and was the sole female speaker among twelve highly esteemed males including the Earl of Dundonald, the former Governor of Mauritius, and other speakers who were the knighted and the esquires.<sup>189</sup> Colenso possessed political capital adequate for her to remain independent and not succumb or be overpowered to risk compromising her moral approach to politics, and that applied even to that Society. In May 1891 Cecil John Rhodes of the British South Africa Company, a prominent British businessman and politician, who at the time was the Cape Prime Minister, delivered a speech in which he mentioned he 'preferred land to niggers.'<sup>190</sup> When Colenso urged Henry Richard Fox Bourne, the Society's Secretary (1888-1909) to condemn that Rhodes' speech, and he seemed to lack courage, Colenso then of her own

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<sup>186</sup> Merrett, 'Frances Ellen Colenso', 277.

<sup>187</sup> Nicholls, 'The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context', 199.

<sup>188</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 345.

<sup>189</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Colenso, Agnes. Invitation Card. Aborigines' Protection Society. May 1890. PAR.

<sup>190</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 327.

accord published a letter that condemned Rhodes' speech as 'a glaring contradiction to the pleasant theory upheld by the Aborigines' Protection Society.'<sup>191</sup> She also chastised Fox Bourne, writing 'I am very sorry to have vexed you, but I do feel very strongly that while an A.P.S. exists, it ought not to have been left to me to protest against Mr. Rhodes' infamous declaration ...'<sup>192</sup> Colenso then ended her relationship with Fox Bourne. She continued delivering political work for the Society – which by then she nicknamed the 'Rhodes' Protection Society'<sup>193</sup> – but her personal fallout with Fox Bourne was irreconcilable.<sup>194</sup>

### **Colenso returns to Natal, 1893**

During the first stretch of campaigning in Britain, Colenso zealously exploited innumerable opportunities and was throughout busy, even signing off letters to friends and family by labelling herself as 'The overloaded one.'<sup>195</sup> However, despite the weightiness of the effort, in 1893 she returned to Natal disappointed as she viewed her campaign as had failed. It had not achieved its objectives: Dinuzulu remained languishing in exile and not appointed to the position she had campaigned for.

On 4 July 1893, before Colenso left Britain, the imperial government granted Responsible Government to Natal.<sup>196</sup> The Colonial Office had then mandated that new government to prioritise working on recommendations about Dinuzulu's future. In that colonial government, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson (1893-1901) was the governor of both Zululand and Natal. Harry Escombe became the Attorney-General, which was the appointment that Colenso viewed as her strategic political connection with that colonial government. Colenso viewed Escombe as her family's long-standing friend; he had also defended Dinuzulu in 1889. With Theophilus Shepstone dead, and Osborn retired and replaced by Sir Marshall Clarke, Colenso was encouraged. She hoped Clarke would do away with Shepstone's policies and as he had

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 328.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 330.

<sup>194</sup> When leaving Britain to return to Natal, she declined the farewell party that Fox Bourne tried to organise for her, claiming there was nothing to celebrate as her campaign had achieved little. See Guy, *The View Across the River*, 350. When back in Natal and her mother died in 1893, she snubbed Fox Bourne's condolences by not responding to his letter. See Ibid, 377. She only reached out to him in January 1895 when she needed a political favour, and even then, that was at the behest of Escombe.

<sup>195</sup> Colenso to Zulu Chiefs. Letter. 6 February 1892. PAR.

<sup>196</sup> Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 130.

valued traditional leadership in his previous position, he would replicate that approach in Zululand by recognising the Zulu royal house.<sup>197</sup>

When Colenso returned to Natal in 1893, she found Clarke preoccupied with investigations, compiling recommendations about Dinuzulu's future and the co-existence of the Usuthu and anti-Usuthu in Zululand. She was a godsend to Clarke who had lamented to have arrived in Zululand and found people 'cowed and depressed,' which he stated had left him struggling to get 'any independent expression from them on any subject.'<sup>198</sup> Colenso was not intimidated to talk, and for her that was a valuable opportunity to influence the Zululand policy towards favouring Dinuzulu and the Zulu royal house. Clarke invited her to his residence, and they together spent several days discussing Zululand affairs.<sup>199</sup> But then when Clarke submitted his report to Britain, he did not share its contents with Colenso.

Clarke's report emphasized that Dinuzulu's repatriation was critical to settling the Usuthu and anti-Usuthu turmoil in Zululand. It highlighted the political quagmire: that Dinuzulu could not rule over everyone as some chiefs and non-hereditary leaders could not be put under his control,<sup>200</sup> and he also could not be appointed at the level of Wolseley's petty chiefs as that could cause major upheavals as then the Usuthu still continued contesting and not accepting that demotion.<sup>201</sup> Clarke's report recommended that a compromise dual-capacity position be created for Dinuzulu.<sup>202</sup> That Clarke's recommendation turned out to be similar to the demand that Colenso already made during her campaign. He plagiarised the specifications for Dinuzulu's position that Colenso already campaigned for, and the details of which she already published before even Responsible Government was granted to Natal and Clarke

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<sup>197</sup> As the administrator of Basutoland, Clarke had worked in cooperation with Moshoeshe I's family. See Guy, *The View Across the River*, 346. Colenso repudiated the Shepstonian philosophy of 'divide and rule' and segregation. She also did not support the Cape liberal school of thought that believed in complete and rapid integration of the African into European ways. See Marks. 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulu', 406.

<sup>198</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 98-99.

<sup>199</sup> Colenso, Harriette. 'Zululand, the exiled chiefs, Natal, and the Colonial Office: 1893-5', n.d. SR 968.3. ZUL/18, 1-25. KCAL. 4-6.

<sup>200</sup> Some of those chiefs were: Hamu kaNzibe and Zibhebhu kaMaphitha (both members of the Zulu clan) and John Dunn (a white trader). They were the trio that betrayed Cetshwayo by defecting to the British during the Anglo-Zulu War (1879). The other chiefs included Hlubi Molife (a member of the Sotho group called the Tlokoa) and Faku (a member of the inferior lineage of Ntombela); who both – during that war – served as the Natal government's mercenaries. See Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, 72-75.

<sup>201</sup> Thompson captured this situation succinctly: 'Politically there was no longer a place for a king in Zululand, yet to Zululand the former king returned'. See Thompson, Paul. 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 305.

<sup>202</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 361.

appointed into his position.<sup>203</sup> On receipt of Clarke's report, the governor and the Colonial Office endorsed the recommendation he presented, of a bipartite position for Dinuzulu: as chief over the Usuthu and advisor to government, with a house built for him at Eshowe and an annual salary of £500.<sup>204</sup>

In this part of the chapter, Colenso relied on her father's legacy connections to secure allies. Her praxis showed to be flexible as she was receptive to her allies' suggestions which she implemented by upgrading the political activity she was used to in Natal, to being an effective campaign. She persistently continued campaigning despite money and gender-related hurdles. She showed to be bold; she was not intimidated by Rhodes – a prominent figure in the British Empire. She was industrious and conscientious and that was evident in her campaign, in the many opportunities, methods and approaches she used, through a variety of platforms. Her praxis showed to prioritise politics over family and personal relationships: she brought her old and sick mother to Britain, and she severed relations with Fox Bourne over Rhodes' speech.

## Part 2: King Dinuzulu's repatriation from exile, 1894 and 1898

From 1893, Natal on being granted Responsible Government, began demanding to annex Zululand, apparently to protect itself from the expansion of Cape colonialism, Boer republicanism and Rhodes' imperialism;<sup>205</sup> and also to gain control over Africans to exploit them for economic benefit.<sup>206</sup> The Colonial Secretary, George Frederick Ripon (1892-1895), was not outright opposed to Zululand's junction to the colony, but was sceptical of Natal's readiness for that undertaking.<sup>207</sup> The colony was in an economically impecunious status due to natural disasters and dwindled income from the hut tax. There also remained some unresolved tensions between Natal and the Transvaal. Therefore, instead of the Colonial Office attending to Natal's annexation proposal, it started by implementing Clarke's recommendation for Dinuzulu's repatriation from exile.

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<sup>203</sup> Colenso, Harriette. Pamphlet. 6 March 1893, 'The present position among Zulu, with some suggestions for the future', ZUL/11, 29. KCAL.

<sup>204</sup> Ripon to Hely-Hutchinson. Extract from a Secret Dispatch dated 30 October 1894, St Helena Government Archives (hereafter 'SHGA'). Chapter four carries more analysis on Dinuzulu's post-exile position.

<sup>205</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 362.

<sup>206</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 102.

<sup>207</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 362.

On 23 August 1894, Ripon informed staff in the Colonial Office that the British government had approved the repatriation of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders.<sup>208</sup> In October the Colonial Office notified St Helena's Governor Grey-Wilson to expect from Hely-Hutchinson a lengthy document in isiZulu, which he was to keep under lock and key until further instruction. On 6 December, Clarke and Hely-Hutchinson dispatched a cable from Zululand to the Colonial Office confirming that the preparations for the exiles' repatriation were completed. On that same day the imperial government sanctioned the return of Dinuzulu and his fathers from exile.<sup>209</sup>

According to the plan, the exiles would be informed about their repatriation only after the ship from St Helena to London – the last before their repatriation – had left, to avoid news picked up and prematurely transmitted to Natal.<sup>210</sup> Colenso was not to be informed lest she orchestrated with the Usuthu, and they hijacked and claimed credit for the repatriation. The colonists were not to be informed, to forfend the risk of them being afforded opportunity to mount resistance and agitate against Dinuzulu's return, just as they had done when Cetshwayo was repatriated from the Cape in 1883. Clarke, the governors of Natal and St Helena, and the Colonial Office were to keep the repatriation secret. Everyone was to be informed about it when Dinuzulu was about to land in Durban. Clarke knew about all those details when Colenso had an unexpected encounter with him.

On 7 December Colenso bumped to Clarke on the street in Pietermaritzburg and discomfotingly accosted him demanding news about the exiles' return.<sup>211</sup> Clarke declined to share what he claimed was government's confidential information. On 30 December, Colenso wrote to Hely-Hutchinson,<sup>212</sup> informed him that she would be leaving Natal to visit the exiles at St Helena,<sup>213</sup> and wanted to know when they would be repatriated, so that she did not take that trip only to find that the exiles were no longer on the island. The governor reiterated what had become standard response, that he was not able to discuss that matter with her.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 364.

<sup>209</sup> Colenso to Sir John Robinson. Letter. 3 December 1896. PAR.

<sup>210</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 366.

<sup>211</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 24 November 1893. PAR; Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 9. KCAL.

<sup>212</sup> Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 10. KCAL.

<sup>213</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 368.

<sup>214</sup> Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 10-11. KCAL.

Although the repatriation was supposed to be kept secret, news about it were leaked to the Natal Ministry (the Ministry).<sup>215</sup> The Ministry then weaponized Dinuzulu's return to pressurise the Colonial Office to fast-track the incorporation of Zululand to Natal. On 11 January 1895 the Ministry issued a unanimous ultimatum to Hely-Hutchinson, demanding for the annexation of Zululand to precede Dinuzulu's repatriation.<sup>216</sup>

Throughout those developments, Colenso was oblivious to that Dinuzulu's repatriation was approved and already set in motion.<sup>217</sup> Around that time Escombe recruited and convinced her to support the Ministry's ultimatum, making her believe that the governor also supported it, and that it would expedite Dinuzulu's repatriation.<sup>218</sup> Colenso's agreeing to support the Ministry's ultimatum was another example of the flexibility of her political praxis adjusting to changed political contexts. Whereas in 1887 she had opposed the annexation of Zululand (to Britain), then in 1895 she supported it (to Natal).

Escombe urged Colenso to canvass support for the Ministry's ultimatum from the Aborigines' Protection Society and her other allies in England.<sup>219</sup> On 23 January he urged her to repeat the plea. Colenso did so the following day, she telegraphed the Society pleading, 'Tell Lord Ripon, Courtney, and friends, chiefs return better, if Zululand first and at once joined to Natal.'<sup>220</sup> By then the governor had implored John Robinson, the Prime Minister of the Ministry, to try to convince the ministers to withdraw the ultimatum, but they had refused.<sup>221</sup> Considering that the repatriation arrangements were continuing and not called off, it may be concluded that there apparently was hope that the ministers could still be made to withdraw the ultimatum. That hope was dashed when Escombe produced evidence – the telegram Colenso had dispatched on 24 January to the Society and her other allies in Britain – proving that she supported the Ministry's demand.<sup>222</sup> Robinson remarked, 'Miss Colenso's interference has changed everything, and her action has thrown obstacles in the way ...'<sup>223</sup> To avoid the perceived potential political turbulence in the colony if Dinuzulu was returned, the

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<sup>215</sup> Details on how that leak occurred has not yet been found.

<sup>216</sup> Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 132.

<sup>217</sup> Colenso to Sir John Robinson. Letter. 3 December 1896. PAR.

<sup>218</sup> Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 12. KCAL.

<sup>219</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 377.

<sup>220</sup> Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 13. KCAL.

<sup>221</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 369.

<sup>222</sup> Colenso to Sir John Robinson. Letter. 3 December 1896. PAR.

<sup>223</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 371.

imperial government then suspended Dinuzulu's repatriation. The news of the suspended repatriation reached St Helena without much explanation, just when the exiles were finishing packing their belongings preparing to leave the island.<sup>224</sup> As for Colenso, it was only after the repatriation had been called off, and she was already en route to St Helena, that she learnt for the first time that there had been an attempt to repatriate Dinuzulu.

The route for the ship from Natal to St Helena went via Cape Town. While the ship was docked loading cargo at Port Elizabeth, Colenso received a telegram from Escombe prevaricating: 'You will hear in Cape Town what was not known to me until last Tuesday ...'<sup>225</sup> The message Colenso received in Cape Town was from Hely-Hutchinson, dated 2 February 1895, informing her that there had been an attempt to repatriate Dinuzulu and his fathers, but it had been suspended due to the Ministry's demand for Zululand to be incorporated to Natal prior Dinuzulu's return.<sup>226</sup>

At St Helena, on 5 February the HMS *Swallow* delivered to Grey-Wilson a dispatch from Hely-Hutchinson dated 21 January 1895, advising, 'I hear that Miss Colenso is going to St Helena by the *Pretoria*. She does not know that arrangements have been made to bring back Dinuzulu; I can say state for your information but in strict confidence that the change of plan is due entirely to a doubtless well-meant, but peculiarly unfortunate, interference in Natal politics on her part.'<sup>227</sup> In that dispatch Hely-Hutchinson was blaming Colenso for the collapse of the exiles' repatriation.

Colenso arrived at St Helena on 15 February 1895.<sup>228</sup> Perturbed and with unanswered questions about the collapsed repatriation, after spending some time with the exiles she left St Helena for London. There, in a rare show of a united front between the perpetually at loggerheads colonial and imperial governments – represented by Escombe and Knutsford – she learnt they scapegoated her for the deferral of Dinuzulu's repatriation.<sup>229</sup> Typical of Colenso, she was self-sacrificial and prioritized politics at her expense. While she seethed

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<sup>224</sup> Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 16-17. KCAL.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 13-14.

<sup>227</sup> Governor Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Grey-Wilson, William. 21 January 1895, Dispatch, SHGA.

<sup>228</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 373.

<sup>229</sup> There had been even the suggestion that Colenso had intended to influence Dinuzulu to refuse repatriation if the Ministry's demand was ignored. See Marks, 'Black and White', 128-129.

that Escombe had betrayed and manipulated her to support Natal's demand for the annexation of Zululand, and in that process had sabotaged her campaign as Dinuzulu's repatriation had ended up cancelled, Colenso did not end relations with Escombe. She chose to invest political capital by maintaining cordial relations, because of her perceived Escombe's political value to her, particularly as the link that kept her abreast with developments in Responsible Government.

In 1896 Colenso confirmed that she would have not supported the Ministry's demand had Escombe not manipulated her by withholding critical information – that Dinuzulu's repatriation was approved, and execution already begun. In the letter she wrote to Robinson and the then new Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain (1895-1903), she nullified the support she had given to the Ministry, to the extent of saying she was 'sweeping away the very ground on which it was given.'<sup>230</sup> Guy's research came to the same conclusion that Escombe manipulated Colenso to support the Ministry.<sup>231</sup> Therefore, the updated version based on the archives as accessed and consulted to date is that: Dinuzulu's repatriation in 1895 was mired in the incorporation of Zululand to Natal, and its deferral was the consequence of political wrangling between the colonial and imperial governments. That is, the cancellation of the repatriation was not due to Colenso's 'error of judgement.'<sup>232</sup>

### **Colenso at the crossroads about English justice**

In the late 1890s Colenso found herself at the crossroads about English justice. She was revolted after some Ndebele leaders were shot for requesting a fair hearing, and that atrocity directly linked to the imperial government. On 19 April 1896 she wrote to Sir George Cox, her father's biographer, criticising the British justice for, 'the rights of the Matabele and the Mashona people that had been ...' handed over '... to a chartered Company' (referring to Cecil John Rhodes' company).<sup>233</sup> On 13 September she wrote anguished, in deep regret that

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<sup>230</sup> Colenso to Sir John Robinson. Letter. 3 December 1896. PAR; Colenso, Harriette to Chamberlain, Joseph. Letter. 4 December 1896. PAR.

<sup>231</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 379.

<sup>232</sup> The notion of the deferral of Dinuzulu's repatriation to have been Colenso's 'error of judgement', seems to have initially appeared in Marks' seminal journal article of 1963. Marks informed that she authored that article deprived access to some of the archives that were then in government storage, unsorted and unavailable for consultation. See Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus, 403.

<sup>233</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 401. Colenso's distress was probably compounded by her knowing Rhodes' attitude towards Africans, from his 'preferred land to niggers' speech of 1891 – as detailed earlier in this chapter.

she had misled the Zulu people to believe in British justice.<sup>234</sup> In distraught, more than ever before, she wished for the Africans to rise against their invaders.<sup>235</sup> That was evident in the letter she wrote to Agnes on 9 July 1897 saying, ‘I feel increasingly that the present state of things cannot last perhaps not one’s lifetime. The natives must before long have more to say in the management of the affairs of their own continent.’<sup>236</sup>

### **The incorporation of Zululand to Natal, 1897**

After the failed attempt to repatriate Dinuzulu in 1895, three years passed before he was returned to Zululand. The delay was partly due to change of government in Britain in 1895. Chamberlain, the new Colonial Secretary, had a different view from that of his predecessor, Lord Ripon, on the incorporation of Zululand to Natal. While Ripon had been concerned with lack of Natal’s readiness to annex Zululand, Chamberlain’s priority was to swiftly offload the expense of Zululand from the imperial government, by letting Natal annex that region. Knowing that Natal preferred to annex Zululand prior Dinuzulu’s return, to speed up the annexation, Chamberlain fast-tracked Dinuzulu’s repatriation. In August 1896 he urged the Governor of Natal to start the process of repatriating the exiles. There was resistance. On 16 July 1897 Chamberlain announced his intention to release the exiles before the end of that year.<sup>237</sup> Again there was no action from the colonial government. Then on 20 October Chamberlain issued the ultimatum stating: ‘I regret that I cannot consent to postpone the return of Zulu exiles beyond the end of the year. The good faith of the British Government is involved in the matter.’<sup>238</sup> Only then did the Natal government hastily begin working on the Zululand annexation Bill. It was still busy with that Bill when the exiles left St Helena sailing home on 24 December 1897.<sup>239</sup> Colenso had returned from Britain to St Helena to accompany them home. On 29 December when the Natal government passed the law that

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<sup>234</sup> See Ibid, 401, 484, chapter 28, endnote 15.

<sup>235</sup> That shift in Colenso’s view of English justice, probably rendered her more receptive to the change of political focus that her praxis was about to experience in the early 1900s; that is, the emergence of African nationalism and organised Natal African politics.

<sup>236</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Colenso, Agnes. Letter. 9 July 1897. PAR. Colenso did in her lifetime witness the awakening of African political consciousness, and was also partly involved. She saw the nascence of African nationalism, the formation of the Natal Native Congress in 1900, and the founding of the African National Congress in 1912.

<sup>237</sup> Nicholls, ‘The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context’, 442.

<sup>238</sup> Swart, ‘The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso’, 22.

<sup>239</sup> *St Helena Guardian*. 30 December 1897. SHGA; Governor of St Helena to Natal Government. Minute Paper. 7 January 1898. PAR; Colonial Secretary’s Office. Receipt for beef, vol 1548, 24 December 1897, PAR.

incorporated Zululand to Natal, Dinuzulu was at sea.<sup>240</sup> The exiles' ship, the SS *Umbilo*, reached Durban on 5 January 1898.

In this part of the chapter, Colenso's political praxis showed that she sometimes committed errors of judgement. She lost political capital due to naivety and lack of political adroitness: for believing Escombe could influence Clarke's appointment as the supreme authority in Zululand after the annexation; or that Clarke would voluntarily demote himself and become a colonial officer.<sup>241</sup> The conclusions of this study concurred with Guy's findings, that the suspension of Dinuzulu's repatriation in 1895 was not due to Colenso's error of judgement. Colenso prioritised politics over herself; she continued cordial relations with Escombe who betrayed and manipulated her, as an act of political expediency.

## Conclusion

In this chapter Colenso as the campaigner contributed to prolonging Zulu kingship by blocking Dinuzulu's demotion to petty chief level. Had she not relocated from Natal to Britain where her campaign was markedly amplified and reached large audiences, and she enjoyed close proximity to put pressure on the Colonial Office, Dinuzulu may have ended up appointed on the same level as the petty chiefs in Zululand, and that would have diminished his (relative) recognition as heir of Zulu kings, and in all likelihood led to the kingdom's central unifying institutions – the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingdom – ceasing to exist.

Colenso's campaign continued in Britain despite gender hurdles. She silently suffered gender-related objectionable language, and forged ahead with public talks and lectures to both males and females. She continued driving in the wedges by mounting special campaigns that coincided with the visits of the Natal authorities to London. The adjustments she underwent to conduct an effective campaign in Britain – her image make-over, learning new skills like public speaking, and being creative in designing publicity material – showed that her political praxis was not intimidated by new environments, and was flexible and

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<sup>240</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 23.

<sup>241</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 392. After Natal annexed Zululand, Clarke left to work in Southern Rhodesia. Charles Saunders replaced him as the Chief Magistrate and Civil Commissioner in Zululand. See Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 108.

resourceful. She became increasingly alive to bureaucratic politics in the parliamentary environment, and adept in political mobilisation and press debates.

Colenso's praxis also showed to be persistent as her campaign continued despite her stressful financial situation. In Britain she required money for upkeep, new wardrobe, travelling to deliver public talks and lectures, and for producing publicity material. She responded in different ways to her financial hardships. She had arrived in Britain having lodged some complaints with the Privy Council, and because they were expensive to pursue, she abandoned them. She had arrived having no suitable clothing, so at the beginning she borrowed items of clothing from her aunt. In the parliamentary precinct she associated herself with the pressure groups so that she accessed administrative services. Throughout her stay in Britain, she lived frugally, sometimes depending on donations. She lived in rented lodgings, and relocated at least three times, probably that linked to financial constraints. These experiences highlighted that Colenso's political praxis was persistent and resilient because her relentless campaign continued until she left Britain.

As she had done in Natal, Colenso made up for her financial difficulties by effectively deploying her political capital. The Liberals enlisted her help in their election campaign in 1892, and her fellow campaigners desperately sought to be associated with her. Her praxis showed to be focused, sometimes she declined invitations to support other campaigners, because she was mindful to prioritise hers.

In this chapter emerged one of Colenso's failings, her ruthless attitude that prioritized politics over family, personal relationships, and even herself. She uprooted her aged and sick mother from Bishopstowe to live poorly in Britain. Rhodes' controversial speech led to her severing relations with Fox Bourne. She continued cordial relations with Escombe who sabotaged her campaign, due to her perceived Escombe's political usefulness to her – particularly as a link to Responsible Government.

## Chapter 4: 1898-early 1900s

### Introduction

Chapter four tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis from 1898 to the early 1900s. It challenges two impressions pertaining to Colenso's praxis. The first is that Colenso's campaign in Britain in the 1890s was not a success or achieved little. This impression emanates from the interpretation of some of the prior scholarship's assertions. This study argues that Colenso's campaign in Britain was a success because it achieved its objectives. The study further argues that actually the post-exile position that Colenso secured for Dinuzulu, played an important role beyond Dinuzulu, to the Zulu kingdom itself (whatever remained of its former self): it prolonged the life of Zulu kingship. The second impression is that Colenso's support and defence was limited to Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. This impression is created by the historiography on Colenso that is currently limited to works focused on her supporting the Usuthu – this study is the first work to explore Colenso's political praxis beyond the Usuthu. This study argues that Colenso's support and defence was not limited to Dinuzulu and the Usuthu; it extended to Africans in general.

This chapter consists of two parts. Part one analyses Colenso's political praxis in relation to Dinuzulu's post-exile position, from its conception to incumbency. The study highlights the confusion around Dinuzulu's post-exile position, by looking at both how that position was defined on paper and what it entailed in practice. The second part tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis as she supported and defended a group of people that was not part of the Usuthu. The whole case of the Embo prisoners provides evidence that Colenso's support also extended to Africans in general. This study being the first in the historiography on Colenso to examine her political activity beyond the Usuthu, the case of the Embo prisoners is entirely reconstructed from the previously untapped archives.

### Part 1: King Dinuzulu's post-exile position, from 1898 onwards

Nicholls wrote, 'The Colensos failed both in regard to the Zulu and in regard to the Church of England. Dinuzulu returned to Zululand in 1898 but he was never in practice accorded the

position of trust for which Harriette had hoped.<sup>242</sup> This statement, by its mentioning failure, alongside Dinuzulu's post-exile position, is presumed to be among prior scholarship's assertions that have – possibly unintentionally – created the impression that Colenso's campaign in Britain in the 1890s was unsuccessful. This chapter sets out to clarify that Colenso's campaign was actually a success.

The study's point of departure is, in relation to Dinuzulu's post-exile position, to identify what was within Colenso's control, and what was beyond. The study then abandons what was beyond Colenso's control, because it would be futile to pursue. The study looks closely at what was within Colenso's control, and explores and evaluates her praxis based on that.

The conceptualising of Dinuzulu's post-exile position, underwent several revisions. At some point Colenso envisaged Dinuzulu's position situated in the utopian world of racial and political unity, with white authorities harmoniously working together with African traditional leaders in a just and sane society. As Nicholls asserted, such a political unity among races was not only unrealizable in Colenso's generation but was destined to be elusive throughout the succeeding generations.<sup>243</sup> For Colenso to have believed that the colonial and imperial ruling would at some point abandon political aspirations and opt to be guided by religious sentiments or moral standards, was her viewing a political matter through the prism of morality. That unrealizable dream position was beyond Colenso's control.

Colenso then envisaged a supreme (paramount) position for Dinuzulu, over the Zulu people. Dinuzulu also did envision this level position. But by that period in the 1890s, the idea of Dinuzulu holding a paramount position over Zulu people, granted a restoration with full powers under the Queen, was simply not possible. The teenage Dinuzulu could not, by any means, reverse the outcome that even the adult and experienced Cetshwayo could not stop. Nor could Colenso. Therefore, in cases when that position was mentioned, whether by Colenso or Dinuzulu, it was as an ideal that was just worth stating even if its realisation was unlikely.<sup>244</sup> The reality had to be faced, the political developments post the Anglo-Zulu War (1879) precluded a position at paramountcy level. The British had already dismantled Cetshwayo's unitary kingdom and replaced it with thirteen chiefdoms who were ruled by the

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<sup>242</sup> Nicholls, 'The Colenso endeavour in its context', xxviii.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, xxxvi.

<sup>244</sup> Colenso, Harriette. Pamphlet. 1897. 'The problem of the races in Africa', ZUL/22, 14. KCAL.

British appointees. There was no way that Colenso could achieve a paramount position for Dinuzulu.

Colenso was left with no alternative but to consider a compromise position for Dinuzulu.<sup>245</sup> Even when considering a lower ranking position for Dinuzulu, Colenso was uncompromising in that it had to recognise him as heir and successor to Zulu kingdom. The distinguishing factor she settled with, was that the position acceptable for Dinuzulu would have to be different and higher than Wolseley's petty chiefs. That then rendered the imperial construct that the Wolseley's petty chiefs were, to become the criterion for Dinuzulu's position. Throughout that process, Colenso's contemplation and propounding for Dinuzulu's post-exile position highlighted that the assertion of ideals and simultaneous navigation of compromise was the essence of her political praxis, a combination far from exceptional, that has seemed to be missed by prior scholarship that cast Colenso as naïve, that assumed to be possibly a gender bias in the scholarship itself.

Colenso detailed the specifications for Dinuzulu's compromise position, in the pamphlet<sup>246</sup> she authored and published on 6 March 1893.<sup>247</sup> Her submission to the governor proposed that the Zululand policy be changed to include that:

... there shall be a Head-Induna appointed in the name of the Queen at a salary of four hundred a year, who shall hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure. Such Head-Induna shall aid and assist in the government of Zululand by carrying out the orders and instructions of the Governor of Zululand as conveyed to him by the Chief Magistrate.<sup>248</sup>

and that

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<sup>245</sup> This study could not find evidence of Dinuzulu's view on what ended up being his post-exile position.

<sup>246</sup> Colenso, Pamphlet, 6 March 1893, 'The present position among Zulu', ZUL/11, 1-32. KCAL.

<sup>247</sup> It seems Colenso conceived ideas and the colonial authorities claimed them as their own. Members of the first cabinet of Responsible Government, Escombe and Clarke, both claimed to have conceived Dinuzulu's post-exile position that Colenso campaigned for. Escombe's claim is cited by Guy without providing a reference that may be checked for confirmation. See Guy, *The View Across the River*, 348. Clarke plagiarised the specifications for Dinuzulu's post-exile position. See more details in chapter three, under sub-heading 'Colenso returns to Natal, 1893.'

<sup>248</sup> Colenso, Pamphlet, 6 March 1893, 'The present position among Zulu', ZUL/11, 29. KCAL.

Dinuzulu's appointment need not necessarily interfere with any of the "petty chiefs" now recognised, while they obey the law. But it is essential that the wide spread feeling for him should not be roused to rivalry by his being put on the same footing with any of them.<sup>249</sup>

Colenso's proposal was both a request and a subtle warning, that if Dinuzulu was not appointed to the position as specified, and instead the authorities appointed him on the same level as the Wolseley's petty chiefs, that would rouse rivalry and provoke unrest. The position that Colenso stipulated, was the position she campaigned for in Britain, and was the position that Dinuzulu was appointed to when he was repatriated from exile. Therefore, this study concludes that Colenso's campaign was a success: what Colenso campaigned for, is what Colenso achieved. Dinuzulu's position was distinguished from and was higher than the petty chiefs' level because attached to it was a special responsibility of – on native affairs – working as advisor to government.

Dinuzulu's appointment in that position was a pyrrhic victory; it harnessed his authority to colonial administration.<sup>250</sup> His receiving a salary put him in the colonial government's payroll, and that rendered him a government employee, and signalled that a government had successfully vanquished the monarchy. At that time in history, even with those drawbacks, that was the position that Colenso could secure and Dinuzulu presumably conceded to settle with. Therefore, Colenso delivered; her campaign was a success. The question then becomes, where did the notion of Colenso's campaign to have failed come from? What had Colenso to do with that Dinuzulu 'was never in practice accorded the position of trust for which Harriette had hoped?'

This study suggests that the impression of Colenso's campaign to have failed, may be resulting from the confusion between Dinuzulu's position 'in theory' (as per the terms of his repatriation) and Dinuzulu's position 'in practice' (how the colonial authorities utilised Dinuzulu in that position – which was neither within Colenso's control nor was it her responsibility). Therefore, to clarify the confusion that beleaguered Dinuzulu's post-exile position, this study briefly analyses the position as defined on paper, and then how it

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>250</sup> Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 132.

unfolded in practice. Irrespective of Dinuzulu's terms of repatriation,<sup>251</sup> part of his position being the advisor to government, was confirmed by the perks that were provided to him, and by the occasional authorities' recognition of treating Dinuzulu as at a higher level than the petty chiefs.

This study postulates the confusion about Dinuzulu's post-exile position to have originated from the failed attempt to repatriate him in 1895. The secret dispatch dated 30 October 1894 stipulated that Dinuzulu would be 'taken into the service of the Government of Zululand, his position being that of a Government Induna and Advisor.' As Government Induna he would be 'liable to be employed in native affairs which have been referred to, or brought under the notice of the Resident Commissioner, especially land disputes, questions of inheritance, and others, on which it may be desirable to obtain independent evidence as to fact or native opinion; but he would, of course, not be made use of in cases where the interests of rival chiefs were concerned.'<sup>252</sup> That was the description of Dinuzulu's post-exile position in 1894. But then the political wrangling that ensued between the colonial and imperial governments, over the incorporation of Zululand to Natal, ended up with Dinuzulu's return that was planned for 1895 being suspended, and Dinuzulu eventually repatriated in 1898. The pace and the timing of the incorporation of Zululand to Natal contributed to the confusion. When Dinuzulu began his repatriation trip, he left St Helena on 24 December 1897, and on that day, Zululand was annexed by the British. The Responsible Government passed the law incorporating Zululand to Natal on 29 December while Dinuzulu was at sea – a week after he left St Helena, and a week before he reached Durban. When Dinuzulu's repatriation trip ended, he arrived in Durban on 5 January 1898, and on that day, Zululand was annexed by Natal.

Nicholls and Guy confirm that in July 1897, Escombe and Chamberlain, respectively representing the colonial government and the Colonial Office, reviewed Dinuzulu's terms of repatriation. They re-affirmed Dinuzulu's appointment as an induna and chief of the Usuthu, without any authority over the petty chiefs, and that he would govern the Usuthu under the same laws and form of government as the petty chiefs. Judging by later developments, their discussion was inadequate and that contributed to the confusion. Nicholls noted that

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<sup>251</sup> This study – and seemingly prior scholarship too – relies on the authorities' dispatches that were exchanged discussing those terms.

<sup>252</sup> Ripon to Hely-Hutchinson. Extract from a Secret Dispatch dated 30 October 1894, SHGA.

Dinuzulu's 'appointment as government induna, made initially in 1895, was not cancelled in 1897.'<sup>253</sup> In some discussion in 1897 there was mention that the word, 'confidant' or 'advisor' would not be included in the terms of repatriation.<sup>254</sup> Swart mentioned that there were differences between the terms read to Dinuzulu at St Helena, and those read to him in Durban – but Swart did not specify those differences.<sup>255</sup> What is certain, is that Dinuzulu was offered and he did enjoy the perks – the house and the salary.<sup>256</sup> This study's arguments are not affected by how the terms of repatriation were expressed. Dinuzulu's receiving the perks confirmed the 'advisor' part of his position, and that gave him a special recognition that contributed to sustaining the life of the institution of Zulu kingship.

Swart questioned the feasibility of Dinuzulu's dual-capacity position: his residing at Eshowe while in charge of the Usuthu that was close to two hundred kilometres away.<sup>257</sup> The confusion that prevailed in relation to Dinuzulu's post-exile position suggested that it was seemingly not unpacked – neither by the colony nor the Colonial Office – to clearly define what it entailed in practical terms. It seemed the imperial government had appointed Dinuzulu, however, the colonial government refused to accept that appointment and therefore did not utilise him in that position; Guy reflected on that Dinuzulu's situation and summarised it as 'an imperial promise emptied of content by Natal's opposition.'<sup>258</sup> Dinuzulu's own actions suggested that he was aware of the confusion around his position. He attempted to seek clarification but was repeatedly denied opportunity and platform to do so. Promptly on his return from exile, when he disembarked from the SS *Umbilo* in Durban on 6 January 1898, he requested to immediately have a meeting with the governor. That request was declined, and several others that followed were ignored. The first time Dinuzulu met with the governor was after a whole year since his repatriation, at a meeting held in Pietermaritzburg on 20 January 1899. The governor summoned Dinuzulu to that meeting to admonish him for his continued feuding with Zibhebhu;<sup>259</sup> there was no discussion about Dinuzulu's work.<sup>260</sup> This study's arguments are not affected by whether Dinuzulu's position

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<sup>253</sup> Nicholls, 'The Colenso endeavour in its context', 456.

<sup>254</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 426.

<sup>255</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 23, footnote 4.

<sup>256</sup> Ripon to Hely-Hutchinson. Extract from a Secret Dispatch dated 30 October 1894, SHGA.

<sup>257</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 29.

<sup>258</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 443.

<sup>259</sup> On 4 June 1898 Saunders unsuccessfully tried to have Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu reconciled. See Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 306.

<sup>260</sup> Secretary for Native Affairs, Minute Paper. 'Report of Interview Between His Excellency the Governor and Dinuzulu'. 20 January 1899, 1-9, SNA 156/1899. PAR.

was unpacked to clarify what it entailed or not, the position's mere existence recognised and prolonged the life of the institution of Zulu kingship.

Other works suggest that it was Dinuzulu who abandoned his 'advisor' position. Apparently that he relinquished it because he did not like the Eshowe residence and had after six weeks abandoned it in favour of his Osutu homestead.<sup>261</sup> Others mention that initially there existed an arrangement for Dinuzulu to regularly report at Eshowe – apparently to do his 'advisor' work – but those visits were later discontinued.<sup>262</sup> This study's arguments are not affected by whether Dinuzulu rendered the advisory services or not. His position was distinguished and differentiated from the petty chiefs, and that recognition continued the life of the institution of Zulu kingship.

Amid the confusion around Dinuzulu's post-exile position, was added the authorities' inconsistencies, and the wrangling that continued between the colonial and imperial governments. Occasionally there were incidents of the authorities treating Dinuzulu as occupying a higher level than the Wolseley's petty chiefs.<sup>263</sup> One of those was the imperial government that during the Anglo-Boer (South African) War of 1899 to 1902, unilaterally enlisted Dinuzulu to be of service in operations in the Vryheid area.<sup>264</sup>

This study acknowledges that in its attempt to clarify issues concerning Dinuzulu's post-exile position, it may have scratched the surface because there exist vast amounts of untapped Colenso archives in Pietermaritzburg and in Britain.<sup>265</sup> What this study has established as untrue, is the prevailing tendency of referring to Dinuzulu as had been one petty chief among many. Dinuzulu was neither a king nor a paramount chief nor a petty chief (in the context of this study). Even the fact that his position remained shrouded in ambiguity, points to that he

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<sup>261</sup> Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 307.

<sup>262</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 28.

<sup>263</sup> Thompson mentioned that Dinuzulu and other chiefs were ordered to be of imperial service during that war. This study's interpretation is that those 'other chiefs' functioned under the leadership of Dinuzulu because Thompson adds in relation to Dinuzulu, that the other chiefs regarded him as superior, 'looked to Dinuzulu as the paramount chief.' See Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 309, 311.

<sup>264</sup> Swart encapsulated that as 'Dinuzulu's unofficial paramountcy' – officials and authorities occasionally using him to their benefit when it suited them. See Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 30, footnote 2.

<sup>265</sup> The Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository holds collections that make up thousands of pages of correspondence that fill 164 large boxes. See Colenso, 'The Colenso Papers', 9.

was not simply a petty chief. Colenso secured for him the position that recognised rather than obviated his royal status.

In this part of the chapter, Colenso's political praxis showed to have sometimes viewed politics from the perspective of morality, when she envisaged Dinuzulu's position situated in a racially and politically united society. The specifications for Dinuzulu's position showed her accurate grasp of politics – her understanding of what was possible at that time in history. From the process of her formulating Dinuzulu's post-exile position, the assertion of ideals and simultaneous navigation of compromise showed to be the essence of her praxis.

## Part 2: Harriette Colenso's defence of the Embo prisoners, 1898 to early 1900s

This part of the chapter argues that while the existing historiography is focused on Colenso as the interlocutor and campaigner on behalf of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu, her political engagements and activity were not limited to the Usuthu. She also supported other causes, on behalf of other Africans, through an expanded repertoire of roles – as demonstrated through the case of the Embo prisoners that occurred from 1898 to about 1902. The details of this case are reconstructed from the previously untapped archives and are, through this dissertation, for the first time considered for what they contribute in relation to Colenso.

### Background on the case of the Embo prisoners

On 24 January 1898 a fight broke out among – to use the colonial terminology – men of the Embo tribe.<sup>266</sup> It occurred in the Umlazi district, in the area today known as Umbumbulu, south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. In that fight two men were killed, Nomzimane and Futshela.<sup>267</sup> Initially thirty men were charged for murder.<sup>268</sup> On 16 June, 18 of them were convicted and sentenced.<sup>269</sup> In 1899 two died in jail, Matete on 19 March and Nyati on 2 April.<sup>270</sup> That left 16 prisoners in jail.<sup>271</sup> The sentence for six of them was initially capital

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<sup>266</sup> Instead of the currently adopted 'Mbo', this study has chosen to use 'Embo' – the orthography that appears in archival material.

<sup>267</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 27 October 1899. PAR; Colenso to Attorney-General. Letter. 18 August 1898. PAR.

<sup>268</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 10 August 1899. PAR.

<sup>269</sup> Colenso to The Magistrate of the Supreme Court. Letter. 23 July 1899. PAR.

<sup>270</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 27 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>271</sup> Colenso to The Attorney-General of Natal. Letter. 17 July 1899. PAR.

punishment, later commuted to life. Their names were Nonkafu, Nkulukundhleni, Umese, Mini, Mqayekana, and Ngqovu. The other ten prisoners were each sentenced ten years of imprisonment with hard labour, named Mavuso, Nguzu, Diki, Mnukwa, Mtyikatyika, Maziyana, Ciba, Veli, Mbuyana, and Madala.<sup>272</sup> This case of the Embo prisoners is based on a corpus of correspondence spanning from 12 July 1898 to 29 June 1902.

No evidence was uncovered of Colenso being involved in the case of the Embo prisoners when it was still heard in the courts. Colenso seemed to have become involved and defended the prisoners at the appeal stage, when anything further about it was then dependent on the politicians' decisions.<sup>273</sup> As a result, for the most part Colenso dealt with the Attorney-General and the governor, who in turn involved the ministers in the Legislative Assembly. Also, no evidence was uncovered that enlightened on the circumstances around the prisoners' death sentences that were commuted to life. It could also not be established – and is irrelevant for this study – as to what triggered the murder (later turned characterised as a faction fight), or whether the prisoners belonged to the same faction or not.<sup>274</sup> Based on the timing of the skirmish and drawing from literature on the history of the Embo (Mkhize) people, this study presumes that this case of the Embo prisoners was part of the intra-Embo feuding that originated in 1895, when Chief Ngunezi Mkhize died having not nominated a successor, and that having led to his sons Tilongo and Sikhukhukhu contesting the Mkhize chieftaincy.<sup>275</sup>

The main point of contention between Colenso and the state was the issue of whether the prisoners had been involved in a 'murder' or a 'faction fight.' The state had convicted and sentenced them based on the crime of 'murder,' whereas Colenso insisted that they had been involved in a 'faction fight.'<sup>276</sup> This study uses the term 'faction fight' because it appears in archival material, cognisant to ongoing debates related to the problematic aspects of the definition of this term.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Governor's Private Secretary to Colenso. Letter. 4 October 1899. PAR; Colenso to Attorney-General. Letter. 3 October 1898. PAR.

<sup>273</sup> Under Responsible Government, the governor attended to appeals. He could engage the assistance of the colonial ministers, but he was the final arbiter and could exercise the prerogative of mercy.

<sup>274</sup> Despite these gaps, the archives that could be accessed fulfil this study's purpose.

<sup>275</sup> Hadebe, Moses Muziwandile. 'A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda (1906 Uprising) as Reported by J. L. Dube in *Ilanga Lase Natal*, with Special Focus on Dube's Attitude to Dinuzulu as Indicated in His Reportage on the Treason Trial of Dinuzulu', MA thesis, University of Natal, 2003, 69-71.

<sup>276</sup> The prisoners' crime mattered because it determined the sentences.

<sup>277</sup> Today the term 'faction fight' is eschewed for being generalised to refer to violence among African people, whereas research has established that non-African players also contribute to faction fights.

### Colenso's involvement in the case of the Embo prisoners

The earliest letter found in the archives related to the case of the Embo prisoners informs of Colenso who had started conducting investigations and had already twice visited the scene of the Richmond fight (or 'murder,' as according to the authorities). Based on that investigation, she believed that out of the 16 men jailed, seven had alibis – and five out of that seven were from the group initially condemned to death. Colenso wanted to conduct further investigations and she wrote to the Attorney-General, Henry Bale, seeking permission to visit the prisoners in jail.<sup>278</sup>

Colenso's praxis impacted on and intimidated the colonial government. That was evident when she commenced investigations preparing to appeal on behalf of the Embo prisoners, as that prompted the Under Secretary for Native Affairs, SO Samuelson, to also start his own investigations, most likely to counter Colenso's appeals. From 9 December 1898 to 8 June 1899, Samuelson collected statements from the prisoners. During that process he created ammunition that Colenso used against the state.<sup>279</sup> Colenso painstakingly analyzed all forty-one statements that Samuelson collected, and then produced the list of transgressions she claimed he had committed.<sup>280</sup> That it had been wrong for Samuelson to make utterances such as that 'all the prisoners are implicated.'<sup>281</sup> Colenso argued that Samuelson 'had not to give any judgment in the matter, nor to come to any decision, he had only to collect the evidence.'<sup>282</sup> She pointed out also, that Samuelson had solely relied on his general acquaintance of the geographical features of the crime scene and not consulted the 'Plan of District surrounding scene of Fight at Umlazi,'<sup>283</sup> that the state had in February 1899 commissioned to be created specifically for the investigation of that case. She noted that Samuelson had ignored the then already available evidence: the information which was already provided to the Supreme Court, the information that Colenso had collected from the

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Research has also disproved this term's definition of limiting it to local-level disputes, as faction fights also occur at national levels. See Sithole, Jabulani. 'Land Disputes, Social Identities and the State in the Izimpi Zemibango in the Umzinto District, 1930–19351'. *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 27(2009), 60-61; Mathis, Sarah M. 'From Warlords to Freedom Fighters: Political Violence and State Formation in Umbumbulu, South Africa'. *African Affairs* 112 (448), (July 2013), 422, 438.

<sup>278</sup> Colenso to Attorney-General. Letter. 12 July 1898. PAR.

<sup>279</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 27 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>280</sup> Samuelson to Colenso. Letter. 28 September 1899. PAR.

<sup>281</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 4 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Samuelson to Colenso. Letter. 15 September 1899. PAR.

prisoners after the trial, and also the information which the witnesses Bontshisi and Mambelebele had provided and which supported the cases of four prisoners – Nkulukundhleni, Mese, Mavuso and Mini.<sup>284</sup> She reported also, that Samuelson had collected statements from the prisoners who were without legal representation,<sup>285</sup> after their advocate was elevated to the Bench of the Native High Court.<sup>286</sup>

Typical of Colenso's political praxis, she capitalized on expertise. As she conducted the investigations, she was making queries on matters she did not understand. Among the archives exists an exchange of correspondence between her and the authorities – including the Magistrate and the Registrar of the Supreme Court – when she was raising queries and seeking clarification on matters of interpretation and application of legislation.<sup>287</sup>

Part of Colenso's defence of the prisoners was to monitor and hold the authorities accountable when they tried to renege on decisions that favoured the prisoners. Close to a year after sentencing, a game-changing development played out. The Attorney-General introduced evidence that proved the state to have erroneously indicted the prisoners for 'murder,'<sup>288</sup> whereas as Colenso had insisted, they should have been charged for a 'faction fight.'

The Attorney-General's minute partly read, 'If the evidence now in the possession of the crown had been disclosed prior to the trial the prisoners would be in all probability have been tried for Faction Fighting, in which case the sentences would not have exceeded the Magistrate's jurisdiction.'<sup>289</sup> Based on that evidence, the authorities resolved to change the prisoners' charge from 'murder' to 'faction fight.'<sup>290</sup> But two weeks passed without implementation of that decision.<sup>291</sup> When Colenso followed up,<sup>292</sup> the Attorney-General

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<sup>284</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 4 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>285</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 10 August 1899. PAR.

<sup>286</sup> Colenso to The Magistrate of the Supreme Court. Letter. 23 July 1899. PAR.

<sup>287</sup> Colenso to The Registrar of the Supreme Court. Letter. 2 August 1899. PAR. One of the queries was about the interpretation and application of section 50 of Act 39 of 1896, regarding the effect that the delays in the Embo case had caused in approaching the Full Bench.

<sup>288</sup> The Attorney-General's Minute could not be found in the archives. Also, no objections against its contents were discovered to have been raised.

<sup>289</sup> Bale to Colenso. Letter. 18 July 1899, PAR; The highest sentence would have been two years hard labour. See Colenso to Werner. Letter. 5 July 1899. KCAL.

<sup>290</sup> Bale to Colenso. Letter. 18 July 1899, PAR.

<sup>291</sup> Colenso to Werner. Letter. 5 July 1899. KCAL.

<sup>292</sup> Colenso to The Attorney-General of Natal. Letter. 17 July 1899. PAR.

informed her that the Legislative Assembly had decided to set up an inquiry and change the prisoners' nature of crime based on that inquiry's outcomes.<sup>293</sup> Aggrieved by that news, Colenso attempted to drive a wedge. She approached the governor and pressurized him to overrule the Legislative Assembly's decision by immediately changing the prisoners' charge from 'murder' to 'faction fight.' She tried to intimidate the governor by telling him that the expected change – of 'murder' to 'faction fight' – had already unofficially become public knowledge 'to every native who could read or get a friend to read to them a newspaper,' and that the prisoners' friends and relatives were already celebrating that news. She ended by poking holes on the Legislative Assembly's proposed inquiry, discrediting it by drawing attention to that it was already conflicted before it even started because the person earmarked to lead it was the same person who had prosecuted the prisoners.<sup>294</sup>

To weaken the state's case, Colenso also discredited its witnesses.<sup>295</sup> Like when she put under the spotlight, state witness Anthony Frara's sworn statement dated 17 April 1899. It accused prisoner Mqayekana to have threatened Futshela on the eve of the murder. Colenso questioned the reason for that statement to have not been brought up during the trial, and instead Mqayekana only accused for striking Nomzimane.<sup>296</sup> To further invalidate Frara's statement, she produced an alibi for Mqayekana.<sup>297</sup> By 10 August 1899, Colenso already submitted seven prisoners' alibis to the governor, and agitated for their immediate release from jail.<sup>298</sup>

Colenso attempted to drive a wedge between the governor and the colonial officials and authorities, by exposing the incompetence<sup>299</sup> of the colonial court and justice systems. That played out through the case of Mini, one of the prisoners initially sentenced to death. In jail on 22 September 1899 a doctor's diagnosis disclosed that Mini suffered from 'hypertrophica [*sic*] of the heart' (cardiac hypertrophy) and his health was declared beyond

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<sup>293</sup> Bale to Colenso. Letter. 18 July 1899, PAR.

<sup>294</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 10 August 1899. PAR.

<sup>295</sup> Colenso to Bale. Letter. 21 July 1898. PAR; Colenso to Attorney-General. Letter. 18 August 1898. PAR.

<sup>296</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 27 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>297</sup> Colenso to Bale. Letter. 21 July 1898. PAR.

<sup>298</sup> Colenso to Bale. Letter. 11 August 1898. PAR; Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 10 August 1899. PAR.

<sup>299</sup> This study does not rule out that it may have not been incompetence, but political suppression, or any other reason.

recovery. Consequently, the authorities released Mini on a ticket-of-leave.<sup>300</sup> Colenso then took Mini to another doctor for a second opinion. That doctor confirmed that Mini suffered from a long-standing heart disease, even suggesting that under favourable circumstances he would possibly live for only about a year or two. When Colenso approached and made enquiries from Mini's friends; they too confirmed to have known about his severe illness. On 4 October, Colenso armed with that concurring information from various and diverse sources, she presented her findings and conclusions to the governor, drawing his attention to that Mini's diagnosis suggested that, for several years he could have not been able to violently exert himself or run for a kilometre and a half at full speed without suddenly dropping dead.<sup>301</sup> Colenso argued that if the state witnesses could lie about Mini – in view of his health condition – nothing would have stopped them from lying about the other prisoners.<sup>302</sup>

Sometimes when Colenso submitted her findings and evidence for the colonial ministers' consideration, they declined to deliberate on them, in which case she then turned to driving in the wedges by involving the governor. She would prod him to act against the ministers by exercising his prerogative of mercy. That Colenso's urging exposed the governor's powerlessness as despite her repeated appeals for him to act independently, he continued delegating decision-making to the colonial ministers.<sup>303</sup> That repeated when Colenso interloquuted on behalf of other people. In November 1899 two Embo headmen, Mkamangana and Mkalipi, approached and requested her to, on their behalf, petition the governor to grant tickets-of-leave to the few prisoners who still then remained in jail.<sup>304</sup> The governor declined that petition, at the same time distanced himself from that decision, claiming it came from the ministers.<sup>305</sup> Probably the outcome was the same with the following petition of 20 June 1900, when Colenso interloquuted on behalf of the former Embo prisoners, and petitioned the governor for the release of the four prisoners then remaining in jail.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Daumas FC. Mini's doctor's certificate. 15 December 1899. PAR; Samuelson to Colenso. Letter. 22 September 1899.

<sup>301</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Petition. 20 June 1900. PAR.

<sup>302</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 4 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>303</sup> Governor's Private Secretary to Colenso. Letter. 9 October 1899. PAR; Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 10 August 1899. PAR; Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Letter. 27 October 1899. PAR.

<sup>304</sup> Colenso to Moor. Enclosure II. 8 November 1899. PAR. Although confirmation could not be found from the archives, it seems by then most of the prisoners were already released from jail.

<sup>305</sup> Governor's Private Secretary to Colenso. Letter. 7 December 1899. PAR.

<sup>306</sup> Colenso to Hely-Hutchinson. Petition. 20 June 1900. PAR. That petition's outcome could not be found in the archives, and because Colenso continued pleading for the release of some prisoners in 1902, it is presumed that it was also declined.

It seems in 1902 Colenso had exhausted the legal route, or hoped the new Governor McCallum would be more decisive than his predecessor. She became inventive and interpolated the release of the prisoners by pleading to McCallum to grant clemency of substantial remissions to the prisoners of all races,<sup>307</sup> as part of marking that year's august occasion – the coronation of King Edward VII. Her motivation demonstrated her adept persuasion skills. She highlighted what would be the benefits for the imperial government if the prisoners were granted clemency. She reminded of the Africans' high reverence for British celebrations, making the example of the Jubilee of 1897 and the Duke and Duchess of York's visit in 1901, which she claimed were etched in their memories. Putting pressure on the governor, she claimed that a precedent of release of prisoners was already set, quoting the Dutch prisoners of war and those who had been held in Ceylon and St Helena.<sup>308</sup> She discredited proposals that potentially competed with hers, particularly devaluing the gifting of medals to the chiefs as would be a repeat of the Jubilee programme of 1897. Further drawing attention to the limitations of medals, that they were a gesture of less impact as they did not touch people at large but only the few medallists. She justified the wide clemency as appropriate for King Edward VII's coronation, because it would be the first accession to the throne since Natal became a British Colony in 1843.<sup>309</sup> Colenso's praxis proved to be effective: the 16 Embo prisoners who were sentenced life or ten-year imprisonment of hard labour, through her efforts they ended up released within a period of about four years.

In this part of the chapter, Colenso showed that she was also drawn to the people she supported by her sense of justice, not necessarily by their identities. While previously she had supported the prisoners by bailing them out of jail, then with the Embo prisoners her political

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<sup>307</sup> Colenso's appeal for the prisoners of all races was not a gimmick; evidence exists confirming that she did also assist white people. During that same year – 1902 – she pleaded to the Acting Prime Minister on behalf of three Dutch prisoners, for them to be relocated from Pietermaritzburg to serve the remainder of their sentences in Greytown where it would be easier and cheaper for their families to visit them. See Colenso to Acting Prime Minister. Letter. 29 September 1902. PAR. Although not widely published, the Colenso family generally assisted white people. Magma Fuze who worked in that family's printing press for most of his life, he estimated that on a weekly basis at least three or four poor white people arrived at Bishopstowe seeking help and Bishop Colenso gave them money. See Fuze, 'Isimilo sika 'Sobantu', *Ipepa lo Hlanga*, 12 July 1901. Five Hundred Year Archive, UCT. <http://emandulo.apc.uct.ac.za/metadata/Fuze/4611/4612/4615/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2023); Fuze, 'USobantu', *Ipepa lo Hlanga*, 19 July 1901. Five Hundred Year Archive, UCT. <http://emandulo.apc.uct.ac.za/metadata/Fuze/4611/4612/4616/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2023).

<sup>308</sup> The Boer prisoners of war referred to, held at Ceylon and on St Helena, were released because the Anglo-Boer (South-African) War had ended, not as clemency for the king's coronation. See POW camps in Ceylon during the Boer War

<https://libcom.org/article/pow-camps-ceylon-during-boer-war> (accessed 6 January 2022).

<sup>309</sup> Colenso to McCallum, Henry. Letter. 29 June 1902. PAR.

praxis had shifted, her support was hands-on. She repeatedly attempted to drive a wedge between the governor and the colonial ministers, albeit without success, but that did provide further evidence of the characteristic powerlessness of the imperial governors (as also observed in the past chapters), that they failed to control the colonial officials and authorities in Natal. She was industrious, executed with zeal and thoroughness, that evident in the large quantities of evidence she generated and the high volume of statements – by the colonial authorities, by the courts, by state witnesses – that she analysed. The experience Colenso gained from this case, likely contributed to preparing her for Dinuzulu's court case in later years.

## **Conclusion**

In the first part of this chapter, prior scholarship's view of Dinuzulu's post-exile position was that it was underwhelming and insignificant. Different from that, the chapter's analysis showed that in the bigger scheme of things, regardless of the level of power that the position held, it played a crucial role. Its existence kept the legacy of Zulu kingship alive, at the time when it was at the risk of possibly fading to oblivion, had Dinuzulu ended up demoted to the level of Wolseley's petty chiefs. Had Colenso not proposed the position she ideated for Dinuzulu, it is improbable that the government would have bothered to create a special position for him. Therefore, Colenso's conceiving, drawing up the specifications, and campaigning for Dinuzulu's post-exile position, was an act of 'hammering in the wedges' that contributed to thwarting the colonial authorities' attempts to obliterate the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship.

To prior scholarship and as evident in this study, Dinuzulu's post-exile position was beset by confusion. This chapter has argued that the position's mere existence recognized Dinuzulu as the heir and successor to Zulu kingdom, and that prolonged the life of the institution of Zulu kingship. That argument remains valid irrespective of how the terms of repatriation were phrased, whether Dinuzulu's position was unpacked to clarify what it entailed or not, or whether Dinuzulu rendered the advisory services or did not.

In this chapter Colenso's praxis has shown to capitalise on expertise, her conceiving Dinuzulu's post-exile position was a testament to her political acuity and grasp of Natal and

British political affairs. Its specifications showed that she understood that what was achievable for Dinuzulu then, was a diplomatic face-saving compromise position. The process she underwent when contemplating Dinuzulu's post-exile position, evidenced that the assertion of ideals and simultaneous navigation of compromise were the essence of her praxis.

In the case of the Embo prisoners, Colenso's praxis shifted from activism she had concentrated on during most of the 1890s, to her interlocuting within the role of being the champion for prisoners. Colenso had assisted prisoners before, but previously her role had been limited to bailing them out of jail; then with the Embo prisoners she was hands-on – conducting investigations and pursuing cases as per individual prisoners' circumstances. This chapter detailed the case of prisoner Mini, who Colenso took to a doctor and interviewed his friends and family, to obtain the evidence she required to build the case to appeal for the release of the prisoners.

Colenso's political praxis was persistent and resourceful and that showed when in 1902, after she (presumably) exhausted the legal route, then she appealed to the governor for the remission of the prisoners' sentences to mark King Edward VII's coronation.

From Colenso's involvement in the case of the Embo prisoners, she probably became more knowledgeable and gained additional experience as the champion for prisoners during the period of Responsible Government, which probably assisted with Dinuzulu's second trial as it was also held under that colonial government (whereas Dinuzulu's trial of 1889 had been under British Zululand, in terms of the Special Court of Commissioners).

## Chapter 5: Early 1900s-1907

### Introduction

Chapter five tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis from the early 1900s to 1907 when she was involved in Natal African politics, mediated in conflicts involving Dinuzulu, and supported him as he navigated and assimilated into the colonial order. The study continues the argument that began in the previous chapter, that Colenso's praxis extended beyond Dinuzulu and the Usuthu, to supporting Africans in general. Some of the cases discussed in this chapter supplement the historiography on Colenso as they are based on information accessed from the previously untapped archives.

The chapter argues that Colenso's playing the intermediary role in conflicts that involved Dinuzulu, contributed to obstructing the implosion of the Zulu royal house and possibly also prevented the splintering of the Usuthu into factions.

The chapter is broken down into two parts. Part one tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis as she participated in the embryonic stages of the African nationalist movement in South Africa and in the formation of the Natal Native Congress, and when she mounted solo protests opposed to the taxation of Africans in 1905 and the execution of African men in 1906. Part two examines Colenso's political praxis as she supported Dinuzulu by playing the intermediary role in conflicts between him and his former employees and half-brother. The study ends by analysing Colenso's political activity as she endeavoured to sustain Dinuzulu's presence in the colonial landscape, and to improve the attitudes of the colonial authorities towards him.

### Part 1: Harriette Colenso in Natal African politics, from early 1900s to 1907

#### **The embryonic stages of the African nationalist movement in South Africa**

There does not seem to exist studies that focus on Colenso when she was involved in the early African nationalist movement in South Africa; this study briefly tracks and analyses her political praxis during that period.

It was a period of an unprecedented change to Colenso's relations with Africans. The cohort of the African intelligentsia that burgeoned, had good grasp on political affairs and did not require her mentoring or guidance. Colenso's political praxis was resilient, she continued to be politically relevant under changing political contexts. From 1899 she began to sit in meetings with the African political leaders like Martin Luthuli,<sup>310</sup> Saul Msane<sup>311</sup> and Josiah Tshangana Gumede<sup>312</sup> – men who later became prominent in Natal and national African politics. Colenso particularly found political congruence with John Dube who also became close to Dinuzulu.<sup>313</sup>

The Responsible Government responded to the nascence of the African nationalist movement by intensifying constraints and political oppression. That exacerbated political tensions and prompted Africans to get organised and demand political rights. During that period the colonial government was also beginning to lose loyalty from its ally, the Edendale community of amakholwa (the Christianised educated elite). That community was disillusioned that it had supported the colonial government but was not incentivised: the latest expected incentive was for the assistance rendered to the British to defeat the Boers in the Anglo-Boer (South African) War. The community had expected to be granted full citizenship of the colonial order, on par with white people; instead, the community had continued suffering economic hardships and the colonial state continued racially discriminating against it.

When the African intelligentsia surfaced in Natal, there existed the Funamalungelo Society that was limited to amakholwa and a few educated Africans. It was not strong enough to deal with the then growing and intensified challenges that Africans contended with under Responsible Government. To fill that gap, the Africans in Natal found the Natal Native Congress (the Congress) that, compared to the Funamalungelo Society, had more political weight.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Founding members of the Natal Native Congress and multiple times its chairperson. See Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 68-69.

<sup>311</sup> Vice-president of the African National Congress in 1912. See Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 409, footnote 38.

<sup>312</sup> President of the African National Congress from 1927 to 1930.

<sup>313</sup> John Langalibalele Dube was the first president of the African National Congress in 1912.

<sup>314</sup> Meintjes, *In the Shadow of the Great White Queen*, 140-141, 207.

The Congress held its first meeting on 3 August 1900. Dube described it as ‘Umlomo wabantu ezintweni ezitinta bona ngasembusweni nasenhlalweni yabo emazweni’ (loosely translated – the people’s voice on matters affecting them in relation to their governance and welfare).<sup>315</sup> The Congress did not aim to demand full political rights, but just to be allowed to have sympathetic white people to represent Africans in parliament.<sup>316</sup> It had a critical balance to strike: to gain political weight and earn legitimacy in government’s eyes, while assuring that it had no intentions to be radical, hostile, or anti-white. To achieve that, it followed the proposal Mark Radebe<sup>317</sup> made in its inaugural meeting, ‘to enlist the sympathy of English gentlemen’ as part of demonstrating to the colonial authorities that it was not anti-white.<sup>318</sup> Although the Congress targeted ‘gentlemen’ to be its advisors, in that recruitment drive it made an exception. It also recruited a female, Colenso, likely due to her reputation and track record as the outspoken champion of African causes.<sup>319</sup> In that way Colenso crossed gender lines. Her being a female was not hindering her from operating among men of different races, just as it had not impeded her from directing and becoming in charge over the Usuthu men, one such example having played out at the end of Dinuzulu’s trial (chapter two). In addition to being one of the advisors of the Congress, Dube also co-opted Colenso to serve in the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903 to 1905 that was established to gather ‘accurate information on affairs relating to the Natives and Native administration.’<sup>320</sup>

In this section Colenso’s political praxis showed resilience. Despite the radically transformed political context – from her supporting Dinuzulu, to her being involved in organized Natal African politics – she continued to be politically relevant. She also survived the patriarchal political environment, sometimes politics seeming to transcend her gender. Her praxis was not intimidated or affected by her changed relations with Africans, a shift from dealing with the Ekukhanyeni graduates she guided, to interacting with the African intelligentsia that did not require her political guidance. Also, Colenso’s relations with Dinuzulu remained intact despite Dube joining her in dealing with the affairs of the king and the royal house.

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<sup>315</sup> Hadebe, ‘A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda’, 15.

<sup>316</sup> Hamilton, ‘James Stuart’, 5.

<sup>317</sup> Radebe was involved in politics and later edited and published the newspaper *Ipepa lo Hlanga*. See Ngqulunga, Bongani. *The Man Who Founded the ANC: A Biography of Pixley ka Isaka Seme*. Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2017, 63.

<sup>318</sup> Hamilton, ‘James Stuart’, 5.

<sup>319</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 68-69.

<sup>320</sup> Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 154.

### **Protest opposed to the Native Personal Tax Bill, 1905**

Although considerable literature has dealt with taxation of Africans at the beginning of the twentieth century, Colenso's contribution has not received much academic attention. This section tracks and analyses her political praxis when in 1905 she petitioned the Legislative Assembly opposing the Native Personal Tax Bill 'To repeal the Native Hut Tax Law, and to impose a personal tax upon Natives.'<sup>321</sup> The introduction of a poll tax of one pound sterling paid by every African male adult who lived in Natal, replaced the hut tax of fourteen shillings yearly per hut. Remarkable about Colenso's opposition to taxes was that – without trivialising that part – it extended beyond the economic burden. She exposed the deleterious consequences that resulted from the colonial government exploiting taxes to manipulate African practices. Her examples included the wife tax, that it criminalised lawfully contracted marriages, and because some could not afford to pay it, then it also promoted immoral acts – illicit connections, sexual permissiveness, and prostitution – that contributed to the moral and physical degeneration of the race. She highlighted that the taxation imposed on young men collapsed the traditional hierarchy of authority, as sons then bypassed their fathers and directly reported and became obligated to government. That taxation also promoted proletarianization as young men signed up for labour so that they could be able to fulfil tax obligations. Colenso also accentuated the onerous indirect taxes on Africans; one of her examples being that, when Africans became Europeans' employees, they were forced to buy and wear European clothing.<sup>322</sup>

In this section Colenso's praxis demonstrated to be competent to agitate in a wide range of methods: while in 1894 she accosted and embarrassed Clarke on the street in Pietermaritzburg, then in 1905 she formally petitioned the Legislative Assembly. Her cogent petition, impeccably researched and underpinning her advocacy, was the testament of her incredibly rich insights, expertise, and outstanding grasp of both African and colonial politics.

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<sup>321</sup> Colenso, Harriette and Colenso, Agnes. 'The petition of Harriette E Colenso and Agnes M Colenso', 31 July 1905, 2. KCAL.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 2-3, 5.

## Petition against the execution of African men, 1906

In the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer (South African) War, several developments heightened tensions between Africans and the colonial government. Africans who had assisted the British in that war were not incentivised. From 1902 to 1904 the colonial government implemented the Land Delimitation that prepared land for white settlement, in 1904 it conducted a census, and in 1905 introduced a poll tax.<sup>323</sup> The case of Colenso petitioning (or attempting to petition) against the execution of African men arose from the incident when the authorities began collecting poll tax.

The skirmish identified to have marked the beginning of the Zulu Uprising occurred on 8 February 1906 on a farm called Trewirgie, south of Pietermaritzburg.<sup>324</sup> Two policemen were killed while trying to arrest protesters. The following day Governor McCallum proclaimed martial law and troops scoured the scene of the clash searching for the culprits. On their blitz they burnt people's homesteads, confiscated livestock, destroyed food stores, executed two African men (on 12 February), and captured more than twenty African men who were accused of killing the two policemen. The men were tried: twelve of them received long sentences and floggings, the other twelve were sentenced to death by a firing squad. Those death sentences perturbed McCallum and he tried to stop them. On 27 March he telegraphed the Colonial Secretary, Victor Alexandra Elgin (1905-1908), pleading for the intervention that would overrule and set aside or commute those death sentences.<sup>325</sup>

Elgin instructed Natal to suspend the executions to afford him time to attend to that matter. The Natal Ministry responded by resigning and accused the Colonial Office of bullying it by ignoring its constitutional status as a self-governing colony. Natal protested through meetings and the press and garnered sympathies from other colonies, including Australia and New Zealand. The Colonial Office confronted with that groundswell of resistance, it capitulated.

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<sup>323</sup> Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 319. That was aggravated by the colonial authorities marginalising Dinuzulu and not informing him about those developments. See Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 29, endnote 3.

<sup>324</sup> This study uses the term 'Zulu Uprising', instead of 'Bhambatha Rebellion', influenced by Marks' analysis of the 1906 disturbances; she concluded that they were more about the poll tax than being a rebellion against white British authority. See Ivey, Jacob Mckinnon. 'The Making of Natal: Defensive Institutions and State Formation in Nineteenth Century Southern Africa.' Ph.D. thesis, West Virginia University, 2015, 9.

<sup>325</sup> Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 37, 39, 40, 45.

It was not only the Colonial Office that attempted to stop the executions. In Britain, Frank organised a group that consisted of MPs and lawyers, including a South African law student named Alfred Mangena.<sup>326</sup> It appealed to the highest court of the British Empire, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but was unsuccessful. Then, with the Colonial Office and that group having failed to stop the executions, the Natal authorities proceeded and executed the twelve men (the Richmond Twelve) on 2 April. Winston Spencer Churchill, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (9 Dec 1905 – 24 Apr 1908),<sup>327</sup> incensed with those executions, lashed out calling Natal a ‘wretched colony’ and ‘the hooligan of the British Empire.’<sup>328</sup> That failure to stop Natal’s executions rendered the imperial government the object of derision. A humiliating cartoon, ‘Dignity and Impudence,’ that *The Mosquito* newspaper published on 5 April portrayed a huge but scared dog labelled ‘imperial government,’ with its tail between its legs stealthily walking away from a tiny dog with the inscription ‘Natal,’ that fed from a dish marked ‘Responsible Government.’ The writing accompanying the cartoon was of Britain saying, ‘I did not know the little beggar could bark.’ The caption read: ‘A colonial victory: a cartoon celebrating Natal’s decision to execute the Richmond Twelve without interference from London.’<sup>329</sup> After that imperial government’s spectacular failure and ignominy, Colenso came along and had the audacity to think she could succeed in stopping the executions in Natal.

After the execution of the Richmond Twelve, other death sentences followed linked to the same Trewirgie incident of 8 February. Three men who had been badly injured and were not tried with the earlier group, after they recovered, they were tried and sentenced to death. That time around the executions even exasperated some of the colonists. The Ministry refused to grant a reprieve claiming that a pardon would upset the ‘loyal’ Africans. To save those three men from execution, Colenso had to disprove that Ministry’s claim. She set out to find the ‘loyal’ Africans who could openly oppose the Ministry’s statement and were unlikely to suffer repercussions. She found those ‘loyal’ Africans to be the Edendale community that had a lengthy track record of supporting successive colonial governments.

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<sup>326</sup> Mangena later became the first black attorney in South Africa. See Ngqulunga, *The Man Who Founded the ANC*, 70.

<sup>327</sup> <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/reference/churchills-political-offices-1906-1955/> (accessed 16 July 2023).

<sup>328</sup> Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 41-42, 45-47.

<sup>329</sup> This cartoon is reprinted in *Ibid*, 40.

The 'loyal' Africans of Edendale had assisted the colonial governments since the arrest of Langalibalele in 1873. The colonial government had shown to trust that community, when during the expedition of 1873 Major Durnford got killed, an Edendale 'loyal' African, Simeon Kambule, replaced him. Later the colonial government promoted Kambule and another 'loyal' African Jabez Molife, to the rank of Sergeant Major, then a senior rank in the army. Molife accompanied Theophilus Shepstone to the coronation of Cetshwayo in 1873 and was among those who escorted Shepstone when he annexed the Transvaal in 1877. After the Anglo-Zulu War (1879), Kambule was decorated for 'Distinguished conduct in the field' for having rescued a European officer. Those were among the factors that probably convinced Colenso that the Edendale 'loyal' Africans would not suffer for collaborating with her to create the petition that opposed the executions.<sup>330</sup>

When Colenso approached the Edendale 'loyal' Africans, that community welcomed her. Prominent figures – the likes of Reverend Elijah Ndolomba and Chief Stephen Mini – assisted her to collect the signatures for her petition.<sup>331</sup> Although that cooperation may have been due to Colenso's political capital, the timing was coincidentally favourable. She approached the Edendale 'loyal' Africans at the time when they were embittered and disenchanted with the colonial authority and were receptive to shifting to working with African allies. It had dawned on them that their survival lay in political alliances with the chiefs and other African communities. Owing to Colenso's solid track record as the champion of the African struggle against imperialism, the Edendale community likened their working with her to having a political alliance with Africans.

Colenso's plan was to drive a wedge by delivering the petition to McCallum, who would then be compelled to confront the colonial authorities with it. At that time, with the imperial government having already dismally failed to stop the executions, it may be presumed that McCallum was reluctant to experience a repeat mortification.

Colenso armed with the petition that carried the signatures of the Edendale 'loyal' Africans, she proceeded to deliver it to McCallum, only to find that he had taken a trip and left the colony. The governor had left the colony for what seemed a relatively unconvincing reason

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<sup>330</sup> Meintjes, *In the Shadow of the Great White Queen*, 202-205.

<sup>331</sup> Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 172.

for him to be outside Natal during that period of a political crisis. He had gone to Mozambique for a hunting trip. In his absence to receive and act on Colenso's petition, there was nothing further for her to do to stop the executions. Consequently, on 10 October the colonial authorities proceeded and hanged Mjongo kaMphuma, Mjuju kaMcindo and Ruwana kaMpongwana.<sup>332</sup>

In this section Colenso's political praxis showed to be flexible. After working solo on the defence of Africans, she entered a collaboration with the 'loyal' Africans of Edendale. The dominance of politics in her praxis appeared to cross racial lines as the Edendale community viewed their collaboration with her as comparable to a political alliance with Africans. Her praxis was bold for her to attempt to stop the executions after the imperial government had tried and dismally failed, possibly that was because she considered herself to possess what had more weight than political power – her 'being in the right.'<sup>333</sup> That was another example of Colenso viewing politics through the prism of morality, as in her world, what was right had to succeed.

## Part 2: Harriette Colenso's support to King Dinuzulu, from early 1900s to 1907

During the same period that Colenso was active in Natal African politics, she played the intermediary role in conflicts that erupted in Dinuzulu's inner circle and risked jeopardising the image of Zulu royalty. As separate cases, Dinuzulu was embroiled in conflict with his former employees Magma Fuze and Anthony Daniels, and his half-brother Manzolwandle. In the case of the former employees, Colenso's intervention seemed to have aimed to protect Dinuzulu from reputational damage which threatened to be caused by the commoners publicly suing him, and having potential to succeed. In the case of the half-brother, Colenso keeping under control the strife between him and Dinuzulu possibly averted the implosion of the Zulu royal house, and indirectly baulked the colonial authorities' attempts to fuel conflict between Cetshwayo's sons with intent to create divisions and scatter the Usuthu to disappearance.

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 449.

## The case of Magma Fuze versus Dinuzulu, 1904-1905

Magma Fuze was the Ekukhanyeni graduate, Bishop Colenso baptised and gave him the name 'Magma.' He was trained as a printer, worked at Bishoptowe and in 1862 was appointed as the head printer at the mission's press. The Colenso family trusted him, when it left Natal and returned to England for three years (1862-1865), it was him and William Ngidi who remained in charge of Bishopstowe and its operations. During Dinuzulu's trial of 1889, Fuze was one of the scribes who assisted Colenso. He also, together with Colenso, tutored Dinuzulu and his fathers when they were held at Eshowe prison from 1889 to early 1890.<sup>334</sup>

When Dinuzulu and his fathers were exiled to St Helena, the authorities employed Anthony Daniels as their interpreter. Colenso unsuccessfully tried to get Fuze into that position. According to Guy and Mokoena, Colenso's request was rejected because the authorities viewed Fuze as was notorious.<sup>335</sup> According to extant correspondence, a month after Dinuzulu his fathers were dispatched to St Helena, Colenso wrote to Knutsford appealing for Fuze to join the exiles on the island.<sup>336</sup> Knutsford decline that request, his stated reason being that it was no longer possible as Anthony Daniels was already appointed as the interpreter.<sup>337</sup>

For five years Fuze was in Zululand in charge of handling correspondence between the Usuthu and the exiles at St Helena. He worked closely with Mjwapuna kaMalungwana, the Usutu headman who the Zulu commissioned to remain in attendance at the seat of government in Natal while Dinuzulu was in exile.<sup>338</sup> Mjwapuna coordinated people who brought stories and reports, which they dictated to Fuze who transcribed them in isiZulu and then, as per the Colonial Office's instruction, translated them into English.<sup>339</sup> Fuze performed that job until Dinuzulu called him to St Helena to work as their secretary and tutor. He arrived at St Helena in July 1906 through Dinuzulu's private arrangement and as his employee, unlike Daniels who was employed and paid by government. When the exiles were repatriated, the government no longer required Daniels' services, his employment was

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<sup>334</sup> Mokoena, Hlonipha. *Magma Fuze: the making of a Kholwa intellectual*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2011, 30-32, 37-38, 140.

<sup>335</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 335; Mokoena. *Magma Fuze*, 37.

<sup>336</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Lord Knutsford. Letter. 11 March 1890. PAR.

<sup>337</sup> Lord Knutsford to Colenso. Letter. 18 March 1890. A204, PAR.

<sup>338</sup> Colenso. Pamphlet, ZUL/18. 'Zululand', n.d. 9. KCAL.

<sup>339</sup> Fuze, Magma Magwaza to Dinuzulu, 1 February 1904. PAR.

terminated. Dinuzulu let go of Fuze and employed Daniels to continue working as his interpreter. Several years later, Dinuzulu and Daniels had a fallout. Dinuzulu then summoned Fuze to come and work for him at Osutu as the teacher and interpreter. Fuze reported for work but found Daniels still having not left. Fuze was not given any duties to perform and also received no salary.<sup>340</sup>

On 1 February 1904, Fuze who was then in his mid-60s, initiated action against Dinuzulu demanding the amount of £156:5:9 (156 pounds, five shillings, and nine pence) for unpaid salaries for work done at St Helena and the period he had spent at Osutu.<sup>341</sup> Dinuzulu ignored that demand. In May, Fuze pursued relief by lodging the case with the Nongoma Resident Magistrate. Instead of attending to Fuze's case, the magistrate advised him to first consult with Colenso before he continued with legal action against the king. Colenso welcomed the magistrate's proposal, but was also unsuccessful in getting Dinuzulu to pay Fuze. Eventually she settled the debt on 17 November 1905. Out of £156:5:9 that Fuze demanded – assumed preceded by negotiations and agreement – she paid him '£100 in full settlement of all claims.'<sup>342</sup> It may be presumed that the magistrate rerouted the case to Colenso possibly recognising her as better equipped to deal with it than them – the colonial officials and authorities. Irrespective of the reason, that rerouting verified that the colonial authorities recognized Colenso's political relevance in certain cases in the colony – and that rendered Colenso who held no political office, to be unofficially part of them (that is, the colonial officials and authorities).

In this section Colenso's political praxis was focused on ensuring the continuity of Zulu kingship by protecting its regal image. Her settling Dinuzulu's debt to Fuze may be interpreted as her desperate act of managing perceptions to protect Dinuzulu's reputation, so that he did not lose the dignified image that was crucial for him to continue commanding respect from his followers.

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<sup>340</sup> Mokoena. *Magama Fuze*, 37-38.

<sup>341</sup> Fuze to Dinuzulu. Letter. 1 February 1904. PAR. In the previous year, Fuze had praised the colonial justice system in the newspapers, particularly for its affording people opportunity to state their case before they were killed. See Fuze, 'Umteto', *Ipepa lo Hlanga*, 10 July 1903. Five Hundred Year Archive, UCT. <http://emandulo.apc.uct.ac.za/metadata/Fuze/4611/4625/4627/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2023).

<sup>342</sup> Fuze to Colenso. Letter. 26 October 1896. PAR; Payment Receipt/Statement. 17 November 1905. PAR.

### The case of Anthony Daniels versus Dinuzulu, 1906-1907

Anthony Daniels was an exempted African educated at Lovedale and held a Cape Teacher's Certificate. When Dinuzulu was exiled to St Helena, the colonial government employed him as his assistant guardian and interpreter.<sup>343</sup> During that period the government paid Daniels' salary. Post exile, Dinuzulu employed Daniels as his interpreter. Then his salary was Dinuzulu's responsibility. On 8 August 1906, Daniels then in his mid-30s, instituted action against Dinuzulu demanding £95.12.6 (95 pounds, twelve shillings, and six pence), mainly for unpaid salaries and rations, and other work that included making children's coffins.<sup>344</sup> Like Fuze, Daniels started with a letter of demand, which Dinuzulu ignored. Daniels then approached the court. On 21 August the court of the Magistrate of the Ndwandwe Division issued summons for Dinuzulu to appear before it at Nongoma on 29 August. Dinuzulu did not attend in August, and also did not attend on the following 4 September appointment, claiming to have had transport difficulties. The case was then rescheduled to be heard on 13 September, that time around a certificate having been issued confirming that Dinuzulu could travel to Ndwandwe Division Office on a light donkey-wagon. Again, Dinuzulu did not attend, then reporting ill-health. A Provisional Judgement was issued against him, and he responded praying for its reversal or alteration. On 17 December, Dinuzulu's prayer was heard. He denied all Daniels' claims: some for having become prescribed, some he claimed were paid, some he invalidated on grounds that they were work that Daniels performed without the existence of a contract, and other work he claimed was part of Daniels lending assistance as employees sometimes normally did. The rest of the other work, Dinuzulu claimed was part of Daniels' duties as the employee. He explained the deduction of £4 from Daniels' salary of November 1902, to have been the reimbursement for his unauthorised absence from work that had compelled for another person to be employed and paid for executing the duties that Daniels had abandoned. Dinuzulu ended his prayer with a counter claim of £10 against Daniels, in lieu of the notice he had quit having not served, as required of monthly employees.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> *St Helena Guardian*. 27 February 1890. SHGA; Colonial Secretary's Office. Appointment letter for Anthony Daniels. vol 1546, Ref-1898/254, R81/1898, PAR.

<sup>344</sup> Daniels to Dinuzulu. Letter. 8 August 1906. PAR. Daniels claimed to have made 24 children's coffins. In 1899 he had also complained about the irregular salary payments. See Daniels to Dinuzulu. Letter. 18 March 1899, PAR.

<sup>345</sup> Acting Clerk of the Court, Ndwandwe Division to Dinuzulu. Civil summons. 21 August 1906, PAR; Acting Clerk of the Court, Ndwandwe Division to Dinuzulu. Court record. Y 6 September 1906, PAR.

During Daniels' case, Colenso empowered Dinuzulu by introducing him to acquiring and retaining lawyers' services so that he maintained his kingly dignity by having professionals handle his legal matters rather than representing himself.<sup>346</sup> She assisted Dinuzulu to compile evidence, in one instance locating a receipt for £30 that proved that despite Daniels' denials, Dinuzulu had indeed paid some money to him.<sup>347</sup> That proof may have somewhat discredited Daniel's case. In February 1907, Dinuzulu was again supposed to appear in court; he requested postponement, his reason being that February was a month of heavy rains.<sup>348</sup> When Daniels' lawyers Fraser & McGibbon proposed settling out of court,<sup>349</sup> Colenso advised Dinuzulu to agree, but he refused, and the case continued dragging in court until Daniels lost.<sup>350</sup>

The case of the commoners Fuze and Daniels suing the king through the colonial court and justice systems was symbolic, a watershed in the history of Zulu kingship. It publicly registered at the grassroots level, by individuals close to Dinuzulu, the shift of power and authority from the Zulu monarchy to Natal government. Fuze and Daniels' cases confirmed Dinuzulu's demotion in practical terms. His demotion had previously been viewed as externally imposed by the colonial and imperial governments, while Africans resisted it by continuing treating Dinuzulu as their king. The cases of African commoners suing the king through the colonial courts, was an abomination because that colonial system treated king and subject as equals. It complicated and collapsed authority at the highest level – as the king was at the apex – of traditional leadership. Incidentally, Fuze and Daniels' cases highlighted that different from previous Zulu kings, Dinuzulu was materially impoverished; a struggle to pay employees was symptomatic of the struggle to self-sustain. That Dinuzulu's situation was partly the consequence of the imperial government that had after the Anglo-Zulu War

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<sup>346</sup> Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 7 January 1907. PAR.

<sup>347</sup> Acting Clerk of the Court, Ndwanwe Division to Dinuzulu. Letter. 3 November 1906, PAR; Dinuzulu to The Clerk of The Court. Letter. November 1906. PAR; Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR.

<sup>348</sup> Dinuzulu to Renaud, F. Letter. 2 February 1907, PAR.

<sup>349</sup> Renaud, Robinson & Co. to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR.

<sup>350</sup> Fraser & McGibbon to Mr Renaud, Robinson & Co. Letter. 22 March 1907. PAR; Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR; Magistrate Ndwanwe Division to Dinuzulu. Letter. n.d. PAR; Nongoma Magistrate's Office to Dinuzulu. Letter. 30 April 1907, PAR; Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 6 May 1907. PAR.

confiscated Cetshwayo's cattle,<sup>351</sup> and that resulted with Dinuzulu not inheriting any wealth on his death.

In this section also – as in Fuze's case – Colenso was concerned that Daniels' case would besmirch Dinuzulu's reputation, who she kept propping up to maintain an upright and dignified image fit for a leader of the Zulu people. Colenso's praxis showed to adhere to the principle of 'the Zulu point of view,'<sup>352</sup> she continued supporting Dinuzulu even after he rejected her advice to settle out of court with Anthony Daniels.

### **The case of Manzolwandle kaCetshwayo versus Dinuzulu, 1905-1907**

On 1 December 1905, Manzolwandle instituted a claim that it was him – and not Dinuzulu – who was Cetshwayo's chief son and heir.<sup>353</sup> Manzolwandle was Cetshwayo's oldest posthumous son; his claim rested on that his mother was Cetshwayo's chief wife.<sup>354</sup> Telltale signs suggested that the colonial authorities intended to exploit and fuel that festering conflict. Without the courtesy of informing Dinuzulu, they appointed Manzolwandle as the chief of a Ward in the Ngqutu Division,<sup>355</sup> only informing Dinuzulu about that appointment by letter on 22 January 1907, with Manzolwandle's installation ceremony already scheduled for the following day.<sup>356</sup> The colonial authorities also resolved to present Manzolwandle with a shotgun similar to the one they previously gifted to Dinuzulu, 'together with a similar quantity of ammunition.'<sup>357</sup> That ministers' attention to detail of matching the gun gifts to the extent of ammunition quantities could be interpreted as intentionally treating the royal brothers as equals, probably intending to antagonise Dinuzulu.<sup>358</sup> The royal brothers

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<sup>351</sup> Chief Native Commissioner and Mazongwe (messenger from Manzolwandle). Interview. 7 August 1915, PAR. The imperial government distributed the cattle expropriated from Cetshwayo, among the different clans for keeping. See Marks, 'Black and White', 496.

<sup>352</sup> The principle of 'the Zulu point of view' is discussed in chapters 1 and 2 in this dissertation.

<sup>353</sup> Magistrate Ndwandwe Division to Dinuzulu. Letter. 1 December 1905. PAR. Apparently, he had hoped on Zibhebhu's support, but he died in August 1904. See Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 176.

<sup>354</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 8. During that period existed understanding that the chief wife bore the king's heir and successor.

<sup>355</sup> In exchange of his appointment, Manzolwandle had to renounce all further claims to heirship. See Nongoma Magistrate's Office to Dinuzulu. Letter. 22 January 1907. PAR.

<sup>356</sup> Nongoma Magistrate's Office to Dinuzulu. Letter. 22 January 1907. PAR.

<sup>357</sup> Secretary for Native Affairs. 27 May 1907. PAR.

<sup>358</sup> It may be the case that not every colonial authority was into inciting conflict, considering that Saunders convinced Manzolwandle not to name his homestead after any Zulu royal kraal, as that could stir up friction. See Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR. This study acknowledges that Saunders could have been playing 'good cop'.

demonstrated that Colenso possessed political capital; they separately each approaching her on their own, sought her intervention in their strife. She managed their opposed expectations with wisdom and political maturity. Manzolwandle pleaded for her to facilitate a peaceful co-existence between him and Dinuzulu.<sup>359</sup> Dinuzulu expected her to support his continued resistance to Manzolwandle's peace advances.<sup>360</sup> Colenso kept the royal brothers' succession strife under control, achieving that mostly by calming down Dinuzulu. She convinced him to accept Manzolwandle's appointment as the chief. In response to the rumours purporting that Manzolwandle was going around to people announcing himself as Cetshwayo's rightful heir,<sup>361</sup> Colenso convinced Dinuzulu to reject those rumours, reminding him of the cases whereby people had lied about him also, spreading rumours that he was treasonous to government.<sup>362</sup> By restraining that dispute between Cetshwayo's sons, Colenso frustrated and forestalled the colonial authorities' attempts to stir up conflict. In that way she averted the implosion of the Zulu royal house which could have threatened the Usuthu's (relative) unity.

In this section Colenso's political praxis focused on the objective of the continuation of the Zulu royal house and the (relatively) united Usuthu. That showed in the way she handled the succession dispute between Manzolwandle and Dinuzulu. She was cautious not to worsen their relationship; by being heedful to be impartial in her intervention, and by obstructing the colonial authorities' attempts to inflame conflict between them.

### **Harriette Colenso mentoring Dinuzulu, 1900s**

During the 1900s Dinuzulu's survival and relevance depended in his assimilating and adapting to the colonial order. Colenso mentored and empowered him in the ways of negotiating and navigating the colonial system.<sup>363</sup> She used her political capital to access high-powered networks of the colonial authorities, political figures, and top-ranking government officials – the likes of Charles Saunders, then the Commissioner for Native Affairs of the Zululand Province; and Robert Moor, then the Prime Minister of Natal and

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<sup>359</sup> By then Manzolwandle was apologetic, claiming to have demanded recognition just because he wanted the government to provide for his livelihood.

<sup>360</sup> Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR; Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 2 June 1907. PAR.

<sup>361</sup> Dinuzulu to Colenso. Letter. 10 February 1907. PAR.

<sup>362</sup> Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR.

<sup>363</sup> This mentoring does not suggest that Dinuzulu was timid or indecisive. Other scholarly works dispel that image and suggest that Dinuzulu was the opposite, that he knew what he wanted and was pursuing it. See Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 305-306.

Privy Councillor. She convinced them that Dinuzulu was no longer a threat or rallying point for resurgent Zulu nationalism.<sup>364</sup> She introduced Dinuzulu to Saunders and coached him to use such connections to his advantage; hence when writing to Daniels, Dinuzulu intimidated him by copying correspondence to Saunders.<sup>365</sup> Those Colenso's strategic tactics produced results. When Daniels spread rumours that attempted to implicate Dinuzulu as the mastermind in the murder of Stainbank, the Mahlabathini magistrate; that plan misfired. Colenso successfully convinced Moor to dismiss those allegations.<sup>366</sup> In 1907 Colenso got Saunders to facilitate Dinuzulu's visit to Pietermaritzburg to meet with the governor.<sup>367</sup> Saunders even purchased the clothes that Dinuzulu wore for that appointment. Notable then, was that Colenso was encouraging for Dinuzulu to be dressed up in European clothing, probably responding to the rhetoric of colonialism that withheld citizenship from the so-called uncivilised. Dinuzulu attired in European clothing somewhat gained him acceptance as civilised and legitimate in the colonial order.

In this section Colenso continued with the Usuthu empowerment as she mentored Dinuzulu to be able to some extent to independently handle his affairs directly with the colonial officials and authorities – and not always depend on her as the intermediary. Her praxis was inventive and that could be observed in the way she used European clothing for political purposes, repurposing it under different periods and contexts, to achieve different results. In 1889, 1905 and then in 1907; using European clothing respectively as protest item, an example of poverty-drivers in African communities, and for Dinuzulu's assimilation into the colonial order.

### **King Dinuzulu's arrest, 1907**

The supposed lull in Dinuzulu's relations with the authorities was disrupted by his arrest in 1907. From September 1905 when the poll tax law was promulgated, rumours had circulated suggesting that the Zulu people planned to revolt against that tax. Dinuzulu was in an

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<sup>364</sup> This is debatable. According to other scholarly works, from 1898 to 1906 Dinuzulu actively sought political paramountcy: created subversive networks with African leaders, attempted to raise regiments, and provocatively built his Nobamba homestead in the Babanango Division where the Zulu kings were buried. See Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 305, 311, 315-317.

<sup>365</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 108; Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 25 March 1907. PAR.

<sup>366</sup> Colenso to Dinuzulu. Letter. 7 January 1907. PAR.

<sup>367</sup> Saunders to Dinuzulu. Letter. 15 March 1907. PAR.

invidious position. Although officially he had returned from exile to be the Usuthu's chief, many Africans who identified themselves as the Zulu people regarded him as their king, and they turned to him for leadership especially in times of crisis.<sup>368</sup> For that reason, when the authorities commenced collecting poll tax and were met with defiance, Dinuzulu as the person to whom people generally looked up to as their leader,<sup>369</sup> he became the prime suspect as instigator of that resistance.<sup>370</sup>

It took many months for the authorities to find evidence that linked Dinuzulu to the Zulu Uprising. That happened when at the end of 1907 the wife and children of Bhambatha, the alleged leader of the poll tax resistance, surrendered to the magistrate at Mahlabathini and divulged that Dinuzulu had sheltered them at his headquarters Osutu for almost a year and a half.<sup>371</sup> On 3 December 1907 martial law was declared in Zululand and troops deployed under Colonel Duncan McKenzie. With Dinuzulu's arrest imminent, apparently Colenso tried to reach him, but the troops turned her away.<sup>372</sup> On the advice of Dube and Colenso, Dinuzulu surrendered to the authorities on 7 December 1907.<sup>373</sup> Colenso then immediately began to mitigate on Dinuzulu's behalf. She telegraphed the British government and drew attention to that Dinuzulu's act of surrendering was indicative of his innocence. That was an act of attempting to drive a wedge as she was then involving the imperial government into viewing the colonial government's arrest of Dinuzulu as erroneous. Noted in Dinuzulu's inner circle during that period, were occasional contretemps that flared up between Dube and Colenso. One of those was when Dube faulted Colenso for referring to Dinuzulu as the king. Dube claimed that labelling Dinuzulu as the king would raise the wrath of his enemies into thinking that he agitated to re-establish the Zulu kingdom.<sup>374</sup> Despite such tensions, they continued working well together in support of Dinuzulu. Dube's presence did not diminish Colenso's unique position in the Zululand political landscape. Colenso had political weight in the colony, there were things only her could achieve. An example being the case of Chakijana who was rumoured to be Bhambatha's assistant.

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<sup>368</sup> Hadebe, 'A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda', 81.

<sup>369</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 51.

<sup>370</sup> Irrespective that he had set a good example as his men had paid that tax early, in mid-January. See Thompson, 'Dinuzulu and the Quest for Zulu Paramountcy', 326.

<sup>371</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 115, 144, 256, 259-260.

<sup>372</sup> Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 407, footnote 27.

<sup>373</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 263.

<sup>374</sup> Hadebe, 'A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda', 113-114.

The unfolding of events around Chakijana highlighted that Colenso was a trusted broker. In 1907 Chakijana was the most wanted person by the police, for his alleged participation in the Zulu Uprising. The police failed to capture him, even after a reward of £100 was offered to any member of the public who could capture him, no one did. Chakijana remained in flight until on 9 March 1908, on his own accord, he surrendered to Colenso at Bishopstowe. Colenso took down his statement and then delivered him to the police.<sup>375</sup> Chakijana's case highlighted the incomparably powerful role that Colenso had carved out for herself in Zululand and Natal's political landscape, that enabled her to achieve what the officials and authorities struggled with.<sup>376</sup>

In this part of the chapter, Colenso showed to be a trusted broker to Africans. Chakijana's surrendering to her showed that she occupied a unique position in the region, that there were areas in which only her could achieve. Her attempt to drive a wedge after the colonial government arrested Dinuzulu, showed that she was not always successful in her endeavours but did not give up.

## Conclusion

In this period Colenso played the intermediary role and contributed to obstructing the obliteration of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship by mediating in conflicts between Dinuzulu and his employees and half-brother. Conflict between Dinuzulu and the employees Magma Fuze and Anthony Daniels threatened to harm the king's reputation; Colenso's intervention in settling those conflicts, protected Dinuzulu's regal image. The conflict between Dinuzulu and Manzolwandle was the first time Colenso was involved in a Zulu monarchy succession dispute. She contained the dispute by calming down the royal brothers, assisted by that she had sufficient political capital that commanded obedience from both of them. Without Colenso's intervention, that dispute could have festered – especially so as the

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<sup>375</sup> Binns, *Dinuzulu*, 247; Hadebe, 'A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda', 156-157; Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 276-277. Colenso had constantly sent messages appealing for Chakijana to surrender, as she believed his remaining in flight was blocking the authorities from granting a general amnesty to other people. See Marks, 'Black and White', 466.

<sup>376</sup> Chakijana later supported government and testified against Dinuzulu, whose defence team he said wanted to 'use me as soap in order to wash the dirt off those whom they are defending.' See Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 176.

colonial officials and authorities also fuelled it – and possibly escalated to hostilities or bloodshed, and that led to the implosion of the Zulu royal house and the factionalised Usuthu.

Conspicuous in this period was Colenso's resilience as she became involved in what to her was an unprecedented political terrain. In the early 1900s she continued to be relevant in the colonial political landscape during the fledgling stage of the African nationalist movement, the advent of the politically competent African intelligentsia, and the founding of the Natal Native Congress. Her monopoly as the only person with a particular set of competencies around Dinuzulu remained intact, despite Dube having entered that king's inner circle.

In this period it seemed the tendency of Colenso to prioritise politics rendered her in turn to be primarily viewed in the context of politics, and with that sometimes leading to politics seeming to transcend her gender and race. When the Congress set out to recruit white males as advisors, Colenso was included – whereas she was a female. The 'loyal' Africans of Edendale perceived collaborating with her as comparable to them having a political alliance with Africans – whereas she was white and British.

Colenso's political praxis continued showing that she capitalised on expertise, that evident in her well-founded and compelling petition that opposed taxation imposed on Africans. Her petition evidenced her profound grasp of political issues, and showcased her adeptness in persuasion and communication skills. Her arguments against taxation extended beyond the monetary burden, to highlighting the undesirable ramifications that included: societal moral and physical degeneration, collapsed lines of authority, and broken families as young men left their homes because of proletarianization. Colenso's political praxis also showed to be flexible: after operating solo for many years, in the early 1900s she became active in the emergent organized Natal African politics, and in 1906 collaborated with the 'loyal' Africans of Edendale. The resourcefulness of her praxis was exemplified by the way she repurposed and exploited the same item – European clothing – under different political periods and contexts, and for diverse political gains.

This chapter showed that Colenso was bold and believed in her moral stance, in 1906 she made the attempt to stop the colonial authorities from executing African men. She did that after a group of MPs and lawyers in Britain, the governor, and even the Colonial Office; had all tried to stop those executions but had failed. That Colenso's action may be attributed to

her viewing political developments through the lens of morality and justice. She probably was convinced that her power of ‘being in the right’<sup>377</sup> could do better than the political power that those before her (in attempts to stop the executions) may have relied upon. The persistence in Colenso’s praxis showed as even when her endeavours faced obstacles and were not achieved – like when McCallum’s unavailability sabotaged her petition against the executions – that did not dampen her fervent support to Dinuzulu and the Usuthu.

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<sup>377</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 449.

## Chapter 6: 1908-1913

### Introduction

Chapter six tracks and analyses Colenso's political praxis from 1908 to 1913, as she supported Dinuzulu in his second treason trial of 1908 to 1909, and then became involved in the succession dispute that followed his death in 1913. The chapter argues that Colenso as the champion for prisoners and mediator, contributed to preventing the obliteration of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship, by supporting Dinuzulu during his trial and through the role she played in resolving the succession dispute between his sons. This study being the first scholarly work in the historiography on Colenso to cover both Dinuzulu's trials, it proposes for a revised and expanded interpretation of the outcomes of his court cases.

The chapter is broken down into two parts. Part one analyses Colenso's political praxis during Dinuzulu's trial, particularly as she navigated the funding of his defence. It ends with Colenso's eviction from Bishopstowe in 1910. The second part tracks and analyse Colenso's role in the succession dispute that erupted between Dinuzulu's sons, David and Solomon, in 1913. The study ends by exploring Colenso's waning influence in the Zulu royal house and her being asphyxiated by major political shifts of that period – the Union of South Africa replacing Responsible Government in 1910, and the African National Congress founded in 1912 – and rendered politically redundant.

### Part 1: King Dinuzulu's second treason trial, 1908-1909

For Dinuzulu's trial in 1908 to 1909, Colenso was responsible for the same as she had been for Dinuzulu's first trial in 1889: recruiting, funding, and supporting the defence team. Initially she secured the services of a London lawyer, EG Jellicoe, to lead the defence team, working with Eugene Renaud and Robert Charles Azariah Samuelson. Jellicoe arrived in South Africa in January 1908 but resigned in less than six weeks, claiming to be frustrated by the difficulties and obstructions that the defence team experienced when it tried to do its work – like being blocked when trying to access the witnesses and collect data.<sup>378</sup> Although Swart

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<sup>378</sup> The Trial of Dinuzulu. *HC Deb 19 February 1908 vol 184 cc804-6* <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1908/feb/19/the-trial-of-dinizulu> (accessed 6 January 2022).

suggested that Jellicoe left due to friction between him and Renaud, apparently over disagreement on the strategy to be followed for defence work, there exist recorded incidents confirming that the state did frustrate the defence team's work.<sup>379</sup> Early in 1908, the Minister of Justice, Mr TF Carter, refused permission for Colenso to visit Dinuzulu in jail, accusing her of wanting to create content for some newspaper article. Colenso then drove a wedge by approaching the Colonial Office for intervention. The matter ended at the Supreme Court with Carter overruled.<sup>380</sup> The defence team was then allowed access to the witnesses and Colenso permitted to visit Dinuzulu. But the frustrations did not end there, in May 1908 when the defence team members visited Dinuzulu, Carter issued a magisterial injunction that prevented Colenso from interpreting for them, describing her as 'totally unsuitable' as a person and 'likely to defeat the ends of justice.'<sup>381</sup>

After Jellicoe returned to London, the Cambridge-trained William Philip Schreiner took over. He was a distinguished Cape politician and counted among the most brilliant South African advocates. In 1893 he had become the Attorney-General and in 1898 served as the Premier of the Cape Colony.<sup>382</sup>

There exist several versions about what motivated Schreiner to join Dinuzulu's defence. Apparently, it started with the Durban firm Renaud, Robinson & Co, which invited Schreiner to lead Dinuzulu's defence, but he was disinclined.<sup>383</sup> At that time he was a nominated member of the Cape delegation that was to be part of the National Convention, which was to be held in Durban to deliberate on the establishment of the Union of South Africa.<sup>384</sup> After that law firm's unsuccessful bid to secure Schreiner's services, Colenso then approached him. She employed the tactic she had previously successfully used to convince Escombe to defend Dinuzulu in 1889. She highlighted the benefits for Schreiner and convinced him to view Dinuzulu's defence as of greater duty that affected the whole of South Africa – and the deal was clinched.<sup>385</sup> The value of the other following version of how Schreiner ended up

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<sup>379</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 72-73.

<sup>380</sup> Dinuzulu. *HC Deb 24 February 1908 vol 184 cc1351-4* <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1908/feb/24/dinizulu> (accessed 6 January 2022).

<sup>381</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 270.

<sup>382</sup> Dominy, Graham. 'Limitations on Liberalism: A Tale of Three Schreiners', The 2017 Alan Paton Memorial Lecture. *The Journal of the Helen Suzman Foundation*, 81(2017), 40-41.

<sup>383</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 74.

<sup>384</sup> Dominy, 'Limitations on Liberalism', 41.

<sup>385</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 75; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 177.

defending Dinuzulu, is in its exhibiting Colenso being caught up in political wrangling between the colonial and imperial governments. According to historian and academic Graham Dominy, at the behest of Churchill – the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies – who apparently viewed Dinuzulu’s arrest as based on spurious charges, the governor, Sir Matthew Nathan (1907-1909), approached and convinced Schreiner to lead Dinuzulu’s defence team.<sup>386</sup> According to the Hansard, Churchill acted at the behest of the British politicians who demanded for the imperial government to monitor Dinuzulu’s trial.<sup>387</sup> That meant, Colenso’s organizing Dinuzulu’s defence was her, in a way assisting the imperial government – against the colonial government – that could not be directly involved, for fear of being accused of interfering in the affairs of a self-governing colony.<sup>388</sup> This study adds another possibility for Schreiner to have led Dinuzulu’s defence: that he was pursuing to advance his political ambitions. He was ideally positioned to be aware of the political proficiencies that would be in demand in the then changing political context, which likely included competencies or the experience of working closely with Africans or familiarity with their affairs.<sup>389</sup>

As in 1889, Colenso again agitated for the second trial to be objective to Dinuzulu. She drove a wedge by supplementing the submission of the Natal Native Affairs Commission of 1906 to 1907, with evidence that revealed gross biases that the colonial authorities had committed against Dinuzulu. Consequently, a Judge President from outside Natal was appointed to preside over Dinuzulu’s trial.<sup>390</sup>

After Dinuzulu’s arrest in 1907, eleven months passed before his trial commenced on 19 November 1908. Contemporary newspapers billed it as one of the greatest trials in the history of South Africa and the most important event to ever occur in Greytown.<sup>391</sup> By the time of that trial, Colenso had grown in expertise as the champion for prisoners. She had collected

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<sup>386</sup> Dominy, ‘Limitations on Liberalism’, 41.

<sup>387</sup> Dinuzulu. *HC Deb 31 March 1908 vol 187 cc310-2* <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1908/mar/31/dinizulu> (accessed 6 January 2022). The Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, on 15 February 1908 sent a dispatch to Sir Nathan writing, ‘Dinuzulu from the outset must have the highest legal assistance in S.A.’ See Swart, ‘The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso’, 74.

<sup>388</sup> As it had happened when the colony was executing African men. See chapter 5 in this dissertation.

<sup>389</sup> Indeed, when the Union Parliament came to power in 1910, it nominated Schreiner as the Senator representing the views of Africans. See Dominy, ‘Limitations on Liberalism’, 42.

<sup>390</sup> Marks, ‘Harriette Colenso and the Zulus’, 408.

<sup>391</sup> *Standard*. ‘Death of Dinuzulu’, 20 October 1913. KCAL. The trial took three months, with over 160 witnesses appearing, and court records more than 6 000 pages. See Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 177.

immense experience and knowledge in 1889 under British Zululand, and again when she defended the Embo prisoners under Responsible Government in 1898 to 1902. *The Witness* newspaper of 14 December 1907 confirmed that writing, ‘Miss Colenso is strongly endowed with the judicial faculty and ... her grasp of the intricate points of trials and cases in which natives have been involved has often astonished able and experienced lawyers.’<sup>392</sup>

As in the trial of 1889, again Colenso attached herself to the defence team. She conducted some of the investigations, did interpretation and translation work, and together with Agnes set up the Defence Shelter in which they accommodated the witnesses.<sup>393</sup> But most of all, Colenso was responsible for the funding of Dinuzulu’s defence.

In this section Colenso’s political praxis continued capitalising on expertise: the contemporary local newspaper acknowledged her competencies in operating within the legal sphere. Her praxis continued demonstrating masterly persuasion skills that secured the legal services of the initially unwilling Schreiner.<sup>394</sup> Colenso not only secured Schreiner’s services, but also gained his famous and influential sister’s support.

While campaigning in Britain in the 1890s Colenso had a distant relationship with Olive Schreiner (1855-1920); a feminist and socialist writer and social theorist, and one of the most important – and radical – social commentators of her day.<sup>395</sup> The two women encouraged and admired each other, were both engaged in public critique of imperialism and Rhodes, the difference being that they acted in different spaces and engaged different methods. Olive’s deep personal and psychological distress about political matters mainly erupted in intense creativity that engaged the mode of writing.<sup>396</sup> Colenso was driven by a combination of morals of being a Christian, belief in English justice, personal sense of obligation, and her father’s legacy.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Marks, ‘Harriette Colenso and the Zulus’, 403.

<sup>393</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 259, 270; Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion*, 179.

<sup>394</sup> The same had happened with Escombe in the 1889 trial: he too was initially unwilling to defend Dinuzulu but ended up rendering his legal services pro Deo, even assisting Colenso to seek finances (albeit with negligible results).

<sup>395</sup> The Olive Schreiner Letters Online. <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?page=295> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

<sup>396</sup> First name used to distinguish her from her brother William.

<sup>397</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 413.

Olive offered to be used in any way desired, particularly by writing and publicising events around that court case. She advised Dinuzulu's defence to hire a person to record the proceedings of the trial, as from her experience, newspaper reports tended to be selective or inaccurate.<sup>398</sup> Although concerned that due to the period set for the trial her brother would miss the political convention in Durban and be away from his business for an extended period,<sup>399</sup> she fully supported his being part of Dinuzulu's defence, and when writing to her close friend Robert Muirhead, shed some light on her views around that trial saying:

All my thoughts & interests are just now centred on the Dinuzulu Trial in Natal, in which my brother Will is defending Dinuzulu & my dear friend Miss Colenso is straining ever nerve to see justice done. It will be a terrible mis-carriage of justice if he is not brought in innocent; for not only his own people but all the natives if South Africa know he was innocent, but that it was he & he alone who prevent a general a rising when the Natalians began their wicked little game, he simply would not let his people move. If he is brought in guilty every scrap of faith in English justice will die, & I don't know what will happen. This closer Union movement here is really a plan on the part of the two white races to combine so as to wipe out the natives more easily, & take away the Franchise from them who have it. It's rather terrible to live in such a country.<sup>400</sup>

As the trial continued, Dinuzulu's defence team updated Olive by correspondence, also sending her photos and newspapers.<sup>401</sup> At some point Olive's support seemed to have attracted the authorities' unfavourable attention; she raised suspicions that her correspondence with Colenso was being intercepted.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Schreiner, Olive to Colenso, Francis (Frank) Ernest. Letter. 23 September 1908. Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, Rhodes House, University of Oxford. <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=142&letterid=1> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

<sup>399</sup> Schreiner, Olive to Schreiner, William Philip. Letter. 18 October 1908. NLSA Cape Town, Special Collections. <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=67&letterid=4> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

<sup>400</sup> Schreiner, Olive to Muirhead, Robert Franklin. Letter. 16 November 1908. MacFarlane Collection. <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=126&letterid=21> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

<sup>401</sup> Schreiner, Olive to Schreiner, William Philip. Letters. 21 November 1908 and 1 December 1908. UCT Manuscripts & Archives. <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=100&letterid=64> and <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=100&letterid=66> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

<sup>402</sup> Schreiner, Olive to Murray nee Molteno, Carolin. Letter. 10 February 1908. UCT Manuscripts & Archives. <https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=100&letterid=7> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

### Funding for King Dinuzulu's defence, 1908-1909

Colenso was responsible for the funding of the defence team in the trial of 1908 to 1909, there was no contribution from Dinuzulu.<sup>403</sup> Although in 1898 she had together with him opened a joint account at the Natal Bank branch at Eshowe, no money had been accumulated in that account. Dinuzulu claimed that on his arrest a member of McKenzie's raiding party had stolen over £700 he had saved and kept in a steel trunk at Osutu.<sup>404</sup> His financial situation was worsened by that on his arrest the colonial government had stopped paying his salary of £500 per annum – as per the terms of his repatriation.<sup>405</sup>

The colonial government's stopping to pay Dinuzulu's salary became another point of wrangling between the colonial and imperial governments. According to Dinuzulu's terms of repatriation, the colonial government was required to obtain permission from the Colonial Office before stopping to pay Dinuzulu's salary. The colonial government did not do that, it claimed Dinuzulu was a government employee, and insisted on treating him as per the procedure that applied to the rest of the government employees. According to that procedure, when an employee was arrested with a view to criminal proceedings, they were suspended from carrying out government services and their salary payment stopped.<sup>406</sup> When Dinuzulu tried through the lawyers to have his salary reinstated, the colonial government frustrated them. It was uncooperative: it did not respond to queries and did not provide information, and that rendered Dinuzulu's lawyers unable to pursue further legal action or approach the Supreme Court.<sup>407</sup>

Because Dinuzulu received no salary, on top of funding his defence, Colenso paid his medical expenses and for the special foods she supplied to him and his izinduna during the trial. Additionally, she incurred debt defending other Usuthu members, examples including

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<sup>403</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', xiii, 139-140.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid, 141. In 1949 a Dr Pearson of Durban who had been a young trooper under McKenzie, and Magogo the daughter of Dinuzulu who claimed to have been present and witnessed the ransacking; they both corroborated Dinuzulu's account. See Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 60.

<sup>405</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 142.

<sup>406</sup> Stoppage of Dinuzulu's Salary. *HC Deb 01 June 1908 vol 189 cc1551-5*

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1908/jun/01/stoppage-of-dinizulus-salary> (accessed 6 January 2022); Hadebe, 'A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda', 153.

<sup>407</sup> The Secretary to the Law Department, Pietermaritzburg. Letter, 're: Dinuzulu's Salary', 30 June 1908. PAR.

those who were charged for the murder of Magistrate Stainbank.<sup>408</sup> Others were the likes of Mbombo kaSibindi Nxumalo who was arrested for ‘war-doctoring’ in 1907, was found guilty on a charge of sedition and sentenced to imprisonment. From the Stanger prison he sent a message seeking Colenso’s assistance, and she responded by bailing him out.<sup>409</sup> There were also the influential chiefs of the Ntabankulu district of the Vryheid division: Mabeketshiya who was Dinuzulu’s paternal cousin, and Tshibela who was a staunch supporter of the Usuthu. They were allegedly arrested when they were caught preparing to assist Dinuzulu to resist arrest in 1907. Mabeketshiya was fined £50 or nine months with hard labour, and Tshibela fined £100; Colenso bailed both out of jail.<sup>410</sup>

During Dinuzulu’s second trial, Colenso was still in the same financial situation as she had been during the first trial of 1889, and during the 1890s when she campaigned in Britain. The defence team endured irregular short payments. That situation affected them differently. In January 1909, Samuelson threatened to withdraw his services due to non-payment. Schreiner realizing the threatening collapse of the defence team, assisted Colenso by in his own name applying from the Standard Bank of Pietermaritzburg for a £2 000 bank overdraft, while also dispatching a strongly worded letter to the governor enquiring about the imperial government’s promised financial support for Dinuzulu’s defence. Schreiner’s letter was responded to within two weeks with an amount of £2 100 made available. Those Schreiner’s efforts were a mere pittance; Colenso continued to owe large amounts to the whole defence team.<sup>411</sup>

To further lighten Colenso’s financial plight, Schreiner halved his fees, then stopped demanding payments, then waived the balance of moneys due to him. Swart, Binns and Marks viewed those Schreiner’s acts as were of ‘generosity’ and ‘kindness.’<sup>412</sup> This study’s view is that Schreiner was not desperate for money. It contextualises his circumstances and reminds that he was the least negatively affected by Colenso’s financial distress. His

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<sup>408</sup> Swart, ‘The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso’, 143-144.

<sup>409</sup> Guy, Jeff. *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2005, 1-3.

<sup>410</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 265-266.

<sup>411</sup> Marks, ‘Harriette Colenso and the Zulus’, 408.

<sup>412</sup> Swart, ‘The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso’, 143.

reputation as the internationally renowned lawyer,<sup>413</sup> implied that his law practice was not jeopardized and could successfully resume anytime he decided to. Differently for Samuelson, his law practice suffered as the settler community ostracized him socially and professionally for being part of Dinuzulu's defence.

Dinuzulu was charged on 23 counts of high treason. The trial lasted 73 days, with 95 witnesses called for prosecution and 68 for defence. The judgement was delivered on 3 March 1909 and found him guilty on three counts: harbouring Bambatha's family, sheltering Mangati and Bambatha, and sheltering other 125 rebels.<sup>414</sup> He was fined £100 and sentenced to four years' imprisonment.<sup>415</sup> Although Dinuzulu had lost that court case, the *Natal Witness* of 5 March observed that the judgement reflected badly on the state. Dinuzulu had been found not guilty on major counts and out of 23 counts, 20 of them had failed.<sup>416</sup> Even the stenographer, Atkinson, on 17 March 1909 wrote to Colenso saying, 'Of course the Ministry is trying to put a bold face on but it is well known that they are terribly disappointed at the result ...'<sup>417</sup>

Colenso viewed that judgement in her own way, through the prism of morality. Although undoubtedly she would have preferred acquittals, she is quoted to have famously claimed Dinuzulu's legal losses as moral victories. This study views the outcomes of both Dinuzulu's trials, differently.

Enabled by the fact that this is the first single scholarly work to cover both Dinuzulu's court cases, this study introduces into the historiography on Colenso, the argument that although he lost in both his court cases of 1889 and 1909, Dinuzulu enjoyed a degree of political success because the losses did not lead to the end of the Zulu royal house and kingship, as the colonial authorities presumably intended.

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<sup>413</sup> The London's newspaper, the *Spectator* of 6 March 1909, described Schreiner as 'the ablest counsel in South Africa.' See <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/6th-march-1909/2/the-trial-of-dinuzulu-ended-at-greytown-on-wednesd> (accessed 24 May 2023).

<sup>414</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 152, 278; *Standard*. 'Death of Dinuzulu', 20 October 1913. KCAL.

<sup>415</sup> Dinuzulu (Sentence). HC Deb 04 March 1909 vol 1 cc1575 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1909/mar/04/dinuzulu-sentence> (accessed 6 January 2022).

<sup>416</sup> Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 293.

<sup>417</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 138.

The cost of Dinuzulu's defence was reckoned between £11 000 and £13 000. The Natal government contributed an insignificant amount of £500 that made scarcely any difference. Swart, Marks and other scholars claimed that the cost for Dinuzulu's defence ruined Colenso financially.<sup>418</sup> As this study began challenging this claim in chapter two, it continues to do so in this chapter and emphasizes the revised assertion: that financing Dinuzulu's defence was not solely responsible for Colenso's financial ruin, Dinuzulu's defence rather exacerbated her already existing economic hardships. This study has identified possible origins for the tendency to link Colenso's money problems to Dinuzulu's defence. The initiatives that Colenso's inner circle organized to assist her financially, may have perpetuated that perception, doing that by the words they used when appealing for donations from the public. This was exemplified by Werner, Frank and the British MPs who started a Defence Fund after Dinuzulu's trial. One of their appeals projected the fund as needed to assist the Misses Colenso<sup>419</sup> 'in measure for the great pecuniary sacrifices – amounting to £6 000, their entire fortune – made in defence of the Zulus and their chief.'<sup>420</sup> Swart quoted Marks to have stated that Dinuzulu's trial '... ate up all her private resources.'<sup>421</sup> Those statements assumed and gave the impression that, prior to Dinuzulu's trials, Colenso had 'some fortune.' This study has not found evidence suggesting that the Colenso sisters received funds from any of the conventional sources of missionary income. Instead, when Colenso struggled to pay the stenographer, Atkinson, she explained to him in the letter dated 12 December 1909 that '... we do not draw and never have drawn a penny from church funds.'<sup>422</sup> This leads to the conclusion that the Church did not financially support the Misses Colenso. Agnes further depleted the Colenso family's paltry amounts of money by spending it on the medicines she dispensed to needy people who came to Bishopstowe. The books that the bishop authored – including a Zulu-English Dictionary and a Zulu Grammar book – did not yield much in royalties. The Natal Bank financially exploited Colenso by perpetually keeping her in debt, availing to her extended credit and unending overdraft facilities that remained outstanding for months and even years, banking on that at some point she would receive funds from her overseas allies and pay it back with interest. On 4 December 1908, at the time Dinuzulu's

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid, 140, 145; Marks, 'Black and White', 561.

<sup>419</sup> The Misses Colenso refer to Harriette and Agnes. They were the only members of the Colenso family who lived at Bishopstowe. The bishop had died in 1883, their sister Ellen died in 1887, and their mother Sarah Frances died in 1893. Their two brothers lived in Britain, and Frank died in 1910. This study has chosen to use 'the Misses' – instead of 'Misses' – as appearing in archival material.

<sup>420</sup> *Daily News*. 'Reimbursing the Misses Colenso', 31 December 1910. PAR.

<sup>421</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', xiii.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid, 140.

trial was starting, Colenso's overdraft at the Natal Bank stood at £527.18.0. (527 pounds and 18 shillings).<sup>423</sup>

The Defence Fund that was established after Dinuzulu's trial performed poorly.<sup>424</sup> It received meagre donations and had only collected £3 446 by the end of 1910 and required additional donations to put the Misses Colenso into a position of solvency.<sup>425</sup> But around that period the Colensos suffered further vicissitudes.

In this section Colenso's political praxis continued showing to be determined, persistent and resilient. She assumed the responsibility of funding Dinuzulu's defence in the trial, despite lacking financial resources. She contributed to influencing for Dinuzulu to be tried by a Judge President from outside Natal. As it had happened with Escombe, again her political praxis made up for her lack of money – Schreiner halved his fees, then stopped demanding them, and then waived the balance.

### **Harriette Colenso's eviction from Bishopstowe, 1910**

In 1910 the Natal parliament passed the Church Properties Act that ended Bishopstowe as the Church of England's mission station.<sup>426</sup> The Misses Colenso were then required to vacate the property so that it could be sold. Colenso and her sympathisers viewed that Act as Natal parliament's political vengeance against her for having – relatively – successfully defended Dinuzulu. Some of her political opponents confirmed that view. Carter, then the Natal Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, divulged that 'the Church Properties Bill would never have gone through but for Miss Colenso. It had been done to spite her.'<sup>427</sup> From the Church's side, according to Arthur Hamilton Baynes who had been the bishop of the Church of England from 1893 to 1901, Colenso was removed from Bishopstowe because of her supposed pervasive 'immense and unparalleled influence' with Africans, which was feared would be a barrier to the unity that was then planned to be introduced in the Church. That

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>424</sup> As had done the Zulu Defence Committee in the 1890s.

<sup>425</sup> *Daily News*. 'Reimbursing the Misses Colenso', 31 December 1910. PAR.

<sup>426</sup> The Church of England Spoliation Act IX of 1910 was gazetted on 8 February 1910.

<sup>427</sup> Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 405. This quote should be treated with circumspection. It refers to 'spite' directed to Colenso, and historical works have lifted it from Colenso's diary entry of 4 March 1910.

Colenso was influential had begun to be confirmed earlier, in 1907 *The Witness* newspaper had pronounced her as probably the most influential person to Africans in the colony, writing: ‘There is probably no person in the colony whose influence on the natives is greater.’<sup>428</sup> Despite various problems that she experienced, the indefatigable Colenso continued as the indomitable force in both the responsibilities she inherited from her father: the work on the defence of Africans and the continued existence of his church. The impact of her political praxis intimidated both the political and religious worlds. In 1910, in a united front, that conglomerate of the state and the church struck by evicting her from Bishopstowe. The political side passed the law, the Church Properties Act. The religious side, the Anglo-Catholic Church of the Province of South Africa, implemented that Act.

The downtrodden Colenso fought back in the best way she knew, by publicly placing ‘on the record’ the events as they unfolded. That was prompted by the actions of the new trustees of the Anglo-Catholic Church of the Province of South Africa, of attempting to mislead the public by concealing the insensitive and uncompassionate approach they had engaged to evict the sisters. When they sold Bishopstowe lands, they circulated or did not stop or distance themselves from the circulated misleading reports purporting that the Misses Colenso supported those sales. Colenso quelled the rumours by having published in the *Natal Witness*, the exchange of correspondence between her and the trustees, that documented the blow-by-blow of the sisters’ eviction. Uncovered from the epistolary evidence was that within a period of 18 days the sisters experienced deaths of their friend Katie Giles and their brother Frank, while receiving at least five letters from the trustees that harassed them to vacate Bishopstowe.

The first trustees’ letter dated 13 June 1910 notified the sisters that the Anglo-Catholic Church of the Province of South Africa required for them to vacate so that the Church could take possession of Bishopstowe. Three days later, before the sisters responded to the first letter, parts of the Bishopstowe lands were advertised for sale in the newspaper. The trustees’ second letter dated 21 June demanded for the sisters to state the date on which they would exit Bishopstowe. On 22 June the sisters replied to the trustees and explained that their delayed response was due to the first letter having arrived while they were nursing a friend

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<sup>428</sup> Marks, ‘Harriette Colenso and the Zulus’, 403, 405.

who had subsequently died.<sup>429</sup> On 30 June, Frank died in Britain.<sup>430</sup> Without further negotiation, the final trustees' letter dated 1 July instructed the sisters to leave Bishopstowe by 1 October.<sup>431</sup> Colenso who had previously fought a series of battles on behalf of the Church of England, against the attempts of the Anglican Church of the Province to appropriate Bishopstowe, by then she was no longer in a position to fight, as she confided to Werner: 'The spirit is willing but I simply have no money.'<sup>432</sup>

When the Misses Colenso were evicted from Bishopstowe, they were compensated with £400. Each sister was to receive the Church of England Missionaries' pension of £150 per annum.<sup>433</sup> That eviction ended the Ekukhanyeni press that had become the epicentre of Zulu literature and had since 1855 produced numerous titles that included the *Three Native Accounts*, *Izindatshana Zabantu* (People's Stories/Histories), and the bishop's religious and political tracts that among other things, contributed to breaking Theophilus Shepstone's monopoly of power in Zululand. In addition to that grounding to a halt of the Ekukhanyeni press, Frank's death ended Colenso's network in Britain. Those were among the reasons and events that ended the era of the Colenso family's active and uninterrupted political activity that had spanned close to forty years.

On being evicted from Bishopstowe, the Misses Colenso did not immediately have their own place to stay. The evidence discovered to date, suggests that for at least two years they stayed at Giles' house at Boshoff Street in Pietermaritzburg. A letter that Colenso wrote to the *Natal Witness* on 22 November 1912 bore the Boshoff Street address. From that letter it transpired that despite the setbacks she had experienced in 1910, and her then unsatisfactory living conditions, Colenso was continuing being a player in the political discourse and still attracted media attention. The *Natal Witness* published that letter in which she was objecting to what the *Ilanga lase Natal* had taken from the *Natal Mercury* and published in isiZulu, which was

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<sup>429</sup> That was Katie Giles who died at the age of seventy. She bequeathed £700 to Colenso. She was a close friend of the Misses Colenso, their mother considered her to have been at her daughters' level, superior to the average colonial women. Giles had become part of the Bishopstowe household and shared in the work of teaching African youngsters. Reportedly her grave in Pietermaritzburg is close to those of the Colenso women, with the epitaph on its tombstone that reads: 'A Brave Woman and a Faithful Friend'. See Nicholls, 'The Colenso endeavour in its context', 502.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid, 479. On 17 May 1910, 44 days before Frank's death, his wife Sophie lamented to Werner, blaming Colenso for worsening her husband's sickness by stressing him out with long distressing letters about the African affairs and demanding his assistance.

<sup>431</sup> *Natal Witness*. 'The Misses Colenso, to leave Bishopstowe', 7 July 1910. KCAL.

<sup>432</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 149.

<sup>433</sup> Marks, 'Black and White', 561.

claimed to be a part of her interview in relation to the politician JBM Hertzog's segregation proposals. She was rejecting reportage that suggested she was in accord with the planned segregation of the natives. She was also denying that she had said the Union Government was following the example of Natal of treating the natives badly.<sup>434</sup>

In this section Colenso's praxis contributed in 'hammering in the wedges' by her support to Dinuzulu during his trial, leading to him getting a less severe sentence, which would reduce the risk of the disintegration and scattering of the Usuthu as it meant he would be away from his people for a shorter period. The extent of Colenso's political weight as a political actor showed in her intimidating both the political and religious worlds. They retaliated by evicting her from Bishopstowe in 1910, probably their combined attack aimed at crippling her political activity and rendering her powerless.

## Part 2: King Dinuzulu's death and the succession dispute, 1913

At the end of Dinuzulu's second treason trial of 1908 to 1909, he was fined and sentenced to be jailed for four years. In 1910, the Union of South Africa's first Prime Minister, Louis Botha, released him from jail to banishment at a farm in the Transvaal.<sup>435</sup> Scholars including Marks have credited Colenso's agitation for that release.<sup>436</sup> Dominy credited Schreiner, that he had on joining the Union Parliament, made Botha promise to release Dinuzulu.<sup>437</sup> Other sources suggested that Dinuzulu's release was just part of the about 4 500 prisoners who were during that period granted a general amnesty to mark the establishment of the Union.<sup>438</sup> Dinuzulu spent less than three years in banishment and then died on 18 October 1913. According to Dr H Cockerton's letter, he died from Bright's disease and commencing pneumonia. Some Zulu people believed he had been poisoned.<sup>439</sup>

Dinuzulu's death was the harbinger of the end of Colenso's active public political life. Her swansong in the Zulu royal house was her intervention in the succession dispute that erupted

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<sup>434</sup> Colenso, Harriette. 'Segregation: Miss H. E. Colenso's views'. *Natal Witness*. 5 January 1913. KCAL.

<sup>435</sup> *Daily Express*, 'Dinizulu to be released: First Act of the new union cabinet, £500 pension', 2 June 1910. KCAL. At this time Dinuzulu began earning his salary again.

<sup>436</sup> Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 408.

<sup>437</sup> Dominy, 'Limitations on Liberalism', 42.

<sup>438</sup> Hadebe, 'A Contextualization and Examination of the Impi Yamakhanda', 38, footnote 60.

<sup>439</sup> Swart, 'The Work of Harriette Emily Colenso', 152.

between two of Dinuzulu's sons: his oldest living son, David Nyawana (born on 24 March 1892), and Solomon Nkayishana Maphumuzana (born on 8 January 1893).<sup>440</sup> The events in the matter of their succession contest were dramatic and characterized by political intrigue. At Dinuzulu's funeral his Ndunankulu, Mankulumana kaSomaphunga Nxumalo,<sup>441</sup> announced David as the heir and successor, the sixth king of the Zulu people. Lokothwayo Xulu who was one of Dinuzulu's closest aides, corroborated that announcement claiming that Dinuzulu had confided in him that David would be his successor. The following day Solomon submitted to Colenso a document he claimed Dinuzulu wrote nominating him as his successor.<sup>442</sup> Apparently only Colenso saw that document: 'No letter was ever produced – at least not in public.'<sup>443</sup>

Colenso being credited for a significant role in the succession dispute of 1913, invites for her to be considered in relation to senior royal women like Mkabayi kaJama.<sup>444</sup> Both Colenso and Mkabayi shaped successions and are associated with the phrase, 'female interference in male inheritance,'<sup>445</sup> as they were females involved with male rival contenders to the throne. This study is not attempting to bracket Colenso, a white female British commoner; with Mkabayi, a senior Zulu royal – but the resonance is illuminating. Mkabayi was involved in the Zulu monarchy's succession disputes in the nineteenth century when the kingdom was still independent. She was involved in the installation of Shaka and later influenced his

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<sup>440</sup> Baptismal Register. 1894, 23, No. 200 & 26, No. 201, SHGA.

<sup>441</sup> Mankulumana kaSomaphunga, of the Ndwandwe chiefly line, was Dinuzulu's great induna (uNdunankulu). On Dinuzulu's birth, Cetshwayo appointed Mankulumana as his guardian who would die where Dinuzulu died, 'afe lapho kuyofela khona uDinuzulu.' See Dhlomo, *uDinuzulu kaCetshwayo*, 21. He stayed with Dinuzulu in banishment from 1910 up to the king's death in 1913. See Nicholls, 'The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context', 512.

<sup>442</sup> Ngqulunga, *The Man Who Founded the ANC*, 108-109.

<sup>443</sup> Cope, Nicholas. 'The Zulu Royal Family under the South African Government, 1910-1933: Solomon kaDinuzulu, Inkatha and Zulu Nationalism'. Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1985, 63-64. This study notes that, apparently Colenso's involvement in Solomon's ascension to the throne, has so far been researched by a single historian – Cope – mainly consulting the Chief Native Commissioners' Correspondence, located at the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository. Later researchers and historians seem to have repeated the assertion of Colenso's significance in the succession dispute of 1913, based on Cope's research. This study acknowledges that it may have not been required for those other works to do in-depth research on this controversial topic. See Costa, Anthony. 'Custom and Common Sense: The Zulu Royal Family Succession Dispute of the 1940s'. Seminar Paper, University of Witwatersrand, Institute for Advanced Social Research, 6 May 1996, 9, 20, endnote 65; Guy, *The View Across the River*, 447, 486, chapter 30 endnote 24; Ngqulunga, *The Man Who Founded the ANC*, 108, 263, chapter 5 endnote 40. This study raises this point to highlight the seemingly existing further research gap around the succession dispute of 1913.

<sup>444</sup> The paternal aunt to three Zulu kings: Shaka, Dingane and Mpande. See Shongwe, Acquirance Vusumuzi. 'King Dingane: A Treacherous Tyrant or an African Nationalist? Ph. D. thesis, University of Zululand, 2004, 101.

<sup>445</sup> Hamilton, *Terrific uMajesty*, 122.

disposition and schemed for his killing, and that paved the way for Dingane to replace him. On the other side, Colenso was involved in the twentieth century, when the Zulu people were under British subjugation. She was involved in disputes between the sons of Cetshwayo – Dinuzulu and Manzolwandle, and between the sons of Dinuzulu – David and Solomon. Other historians have already acknowledged Mkabayi and Colenso's roles in the continuity of the Zulu royal house and kingship. Shongwe referred to Mkabayi as the citadel of power, 'the doyenne of the royal household as she held responsibility for the continuity of the Zulu royal family.'<sup>446</sup> Guy referred to Colenso as her family's leader in saving the Zulu people's history during the years that 'its continuity hung by a thread.'<sup>447</sup> This dissertation is the first single scholarly work, in the historiography on Colenso, to bring together and accentuate Mkabayi and Colenso's roles in the Zulu monarchy's succession disputes. While Mkabayi's involvement in the Zulu monarchy's succession disputes is understood because she was part of Zulu royalty, the investigation of the power and influence that rendered Colenso – a commoner British white woman – to end up presiding over sensitive and intimate affairs of directing succession in the Zulu monarchy, still awaits execution.

Colenso's involvement in the succession dispute of 1913 caused a rift between her and Dube, who in turn had a fallout with Seme. Dube had preferred for David to be Dinuzulu's successor, while Seme supported Colenso and Solomon. That left Dube feeling betrayed. He considered himself as a senior to Seme whom he had assisted to obtain education abroad. The two worked closely together in the African National Congress: Seme as the founder, and Dube as the first president.

The succession dispute also deteriorated the relationship between Dube and Colenso. Fraught tensions developed between them, one of their disagreements was over the timing of announcing to the authorities that Solomon was Dinuzulu's successor. Colenso wanted the announcement to be made immediately; Dube wanted it to be delayed until after the mourning period.<sup>448</sup> Such clashes rendered the environment in the inner circle of the Zulu royal house intolerable to Colenso. This study argues that even if Dinuzulu had continued to live, his political dependence on Colenso had receded, what continued keeping them together

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<sup>446</sup> Shongwe, 'King Dingane', 116.

<sup>447</sup> Guy, *The View Across the River*, 297, 448. This study interprets the history they saved to refer to the Zulu royal house and kingship, as it is these remnants of the Zulu kingdom that were during that period at the risk of extinction.

<sup>448</sup> Cope, 'The Zulu Royal Family', 79.

were their historical experiences and the legacies of their fathers. Solomon did not need Colenso's counsel or defence, he no longer contended with the challenges that his father Dinuzulu had experienced. For advisory purposes, Solomon had both Dube and Seme available to him. At close to seventy, Colenso had also aged. In 1915 she remarked to Werner, 'I am getting almost too old for excursions into Zululand and such proceedings.'<sup>449</sup> These were among the circumstances that influenced Colenso to exit the Zulu monarchy's affairs.

On the political side, major shifts occurred in South Africa and rendered Colenso's political praxis obsolete and her political capital redundant. In 1910 the Union of South Africa replaced the colonial government. In 1912 the African National Congress was founded, and it incorporated the African traditional leaders. Africans were then struggling against unprecedented political challenges that Colenso was unfamiliar with – problems related to urbanisation and industrialisation<sup>450</sup> – that her knowledge, skills and experiences could not assist with. Old and poor,<sup>451</sup> Colenso withdrew from active public political life and lived quietly a further twenty years before dying on 2 June 1932.

#### *Relationship between Colenso and Dinuzulu*

This study carries examples of Colenso acting as Dinuzulu's political advisor, mentor, and sponsor. She advised him to surrender and be subjected to trials both in 1889 and in 1907, and financed his defence. She shielded his reputation from being tarnished when his former employees, Fuze and Daniels, sued him through the colonial courts. Post-exile, she mentored him as he navigated the colonial order.

At least thrice Colenso obstructed the colonial and imperial authorities from separating Dinuzulu from his fathers. She viewed their attempts as were aimed to alienating him from the mentorship of his fathers, which could weaken and split the Zulu leadership, and that in turn create disunity within the Usuthu, leading to the wiping out of the Zulu royal house and

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<sup>449</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>450</sup> Marks, 'Harriette Colenso and the Zulus', 411.

<sup>451</sup> Agnes died in July 1932. The winding up of the estates of the Misses Colenso left to their ab intestate heirs, one nephew and four nieces, each an amount of £113. See *The Estate of the Misses Colenso*, KCM 65629, HEC File 6, Copies of Last Will and Testaments of Harriette and Agnes Colenso, certified copies made on 12 December 1968, KCAL.

its institution of kingship. The authorities proposed for Dinuzulu to leave his fathers at St Helena and pursue studies in England.<sup>452</sup> While all three exiles requested to visit England, the authorities were willing to allow only Dinuzulu to make that visit.<sup>453</sup> In 1893 the authorities proposed to repatriate only Dinuzulu while his fathers remained exiled on St Helena.<sup>454</sup>

At least twice Colenso stopped Dinuzulu from being involved with St Helenian women. She felt that would alienate him from his people and distract from the priority of preventing the annihilation of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship. In January 1896 she devised a plan to forestall Dinuzulu's then rumoured intentions to marry St Helenian women.<sup>455</sup> In December 1897 when Dinuzulu was being repatriated, she stopped him from taking to Zululand, a St Helenian woman whose bags were already packed for the journey.<sup>456</sup>

In 1897 Colenso gave a glimpse that she viewed herself as an aunt to Dinuzulu, and was specific from which side of his family. She was visiting the exiles at St Helena and wrote telling Agnes that for sleeping arrangements Dinuzulu had moved out of his own bedroom to accommodate her, of which she approved saying, 'My position towards him being that of a paternal aunt the arrangement is strictly proper.'<sup>457</sup>

Dinuzulu seemed to have viewed Colenso as an elder, a representative of both Cetshwayo and Bishop Colenso, and a friend of the Zulu royal house. The nature of their relationship was also evident from the way they addressed each other in correspondence. Colenso addressed Dinuzulu and the other exiles by their names, 'Kuye uDinuzulu, uNdabuko noTshingana!' or just 'Kubo abakithi!' (to those who are part of us). Dinuzulu and his fathers addressed Colenso as 'Nkosazana' (a formal, polite, and affectionate address for a woman of any age). Towards the end of Dinuzulu's life, when banished to the Transvaal, they began addressing each other as Father and Son. Colenso addressed Dinuzulu as 'Ndodana' and he addressed her as 'Baba.' An example being Colenso's letter to Dinuzulu dated 16 October 1911. Colenso addressed it: 'Kuye uDinuzulu ka Cetshwayo, Ndodana' (to Dinuzulu ka

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<sup>452</sup> Nicholls, 'The Colenso Endeavour in Its Context', 208.

<sup>453</sup> Tshingana and Ndabuko to Colenso, Harriette. Letter. 6 July 1893. A204, PAR.

<sup>454</sup> Colenso, Pamphlet, 12 August 1893, 'The prospects of three chiefs', 89, 1-3. KCAL.

<sup>455</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Colenso, Agnes. Letter. 2 January 1896. PAR.

<sup>456</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Johnstone, Mary. Letter. 17 December 1897. PAR.

<sup>457</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Colenso, Agnes. Letter. 17 October 1897. PAR.

Cetshwayo, Son), and closed it off writing, ‘Yimina ke Ndodana, uyihlo njalo, H.E.Colenso’ (it is me, you father forever).<sup>458</sup>

Despite intimacy and mentoring, this study argues that from Colenso’s side, the basis of their relationship was political. That Colenso’s actions were about preventing the wiping out of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship. That Colenso was not defending Dinuzulu as an individual, but as the symbol that embodied their fathers’ legacies. This study is of the view that any other person in Dinuzulu’s position would have received from Colenso the same treatment, support, and defence. When a succession dispute fermented between Dinuzulu and Manzolwandle, Colenso did not take sides, she intervened for the purpose of maintaining unity within the Usuthu, to ensure the continued existence of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship, that being the responsibility she inherited from her father.

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<sup>458</sup> Colenso, Harriette to Dinuzulu. Letter. 16 October 1911. PAR.

## Conclusion

In this chapter Colenso as the champion for prisoners and mediator contributed to preventing the obliteration of the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship, by supporting Dinuzulu during his trial, and by playing a significant role in resolving the succession dispute between David and Solomon. In this chapter it was for the second time that Colenso became involved in a succession dispute in the Zulu monarchy.

Colenso's political praxis continued capitalizing in expertise, *The Witness* newspaper lauded her as a knowledgeable and competent prisoners' champion. Her persistence and resilience showed by her taking the responsibility of funding Dinuzulu's defence in court, while she was struggling financially. During the period of this chapter played out an event that highlighted Colenso's impact in Zululand and Natal. That was a show of the extent in which she intimidated the political and religious worlds, they collaborated against her and struck by evicting her from Bishopstowe.

Although Dinuzulu was no longer under a death threat during his second trial, nevertheless Colenso 'hammered in the wedges' by the support she rendered to him. She contributed to the agitation that led to a Judge President from outside Natal presiding over Dinuzulu's trial. As she had done during the first trial, Colenso was responsible for the funding of Dinuzulu's defence. She drove wedges by seeking the Colonial Office intervention, which ruled in her favour, when the colonial authorities obstructed Dinuzulu's defence team from doing its work and were blocking her from visiting Dinuzulu in jail. In that trial, out of 23 counts, Dinuzulu lost only three. Had Colenso not sponsored his defence, Dinuzulu could have possibly received a severe sentence, which could have meant him receiving a longer sentence. Any period of time that his followers were left without his leadership, posed the threat of the disintegration of the Zulu royal house and the Usuthu.

This chapter continued as it had begun in chapter two, challenging prior scholarship's claim, that Dinuzulu's defence financially ruined Colenso. The study again confirmed that: Dinuzulu's trial exacerbated Colenso's already existing financial woes.

## Final Conclusion

This dissertation has tracked and analysed the political praxis of Harriette Colenso, as she supported Africans in the struggle against imperialism, in Natal and Zululand, from 1884 to 1913. It established that, after the Anglo-Zulu War (1879), the colonial and imperial governments aimed to terminate the Zulu monarchy, but Colenso challenged that trajectory and stalled those attempts. She thwarted the colonial officials and authorities, preventing them from obliterating the Zulu royal house and the institution of Zulu kingship. The study centred Colenso as a political actor with multiple strategies whose political activities changed over time, rather than, as prior scholarship has done, using her as the lens on larger political affairs or those of the Zulu royal house. It has achieved this through an examination of her political praxis and by widening discussion of her activity to include political engagements ignored by other authors. It has probed the thinking behind her political activities and engagements, and her accumulation and deployment of political capital. By the period of this study, with the Zulu already under British subjugation, Colenso's political activity was concerned with attempts to safeguard Dinuzulu and the Usuthu's political situation from worsening. Without political office or significant financial means, she used her contacts and particular knowledge as a form of political capital which she mobilised productively. She proved to be especially adept in driving in the wedges between the colonial and imperial officials and authorities. Her political activity resulted in a range of small successes, the accumulation of which amounted to a significant political gain: the survival of the Zulu royal house and kingship. Despite those accomplishments, Colenso's political praxis sometimes exhibited shortcomings.

In 1884 Colenso's political judgement showed to be weakly developed, evident in her injudicious recommendation for Grant to assist the Usuthu, leading to them losing land. Her uncompromising attitude prioritized politics over family, personal relationships, and even herself. In 1890 she uprooted her sickly and aged mother from the comfort of Bishopstowe, to live in hardship in Britain. Frank's wife blamed her for worsening and fast-tracking his death by pressurising him with long distressing letters about African affairs and demands for assistance. Sometimes Colenso evinced lack of political adroitness, as in 1894 she seemed to believe through Escombe that she could influence Responsible Government appointments, or that Clarke would willingly demote himself from being an imperial officer to serving at

colonial level. However, despite such weaknesses, Colenso – a British female who had not undergone conventional schooling, held no formal political position, lacked economic capital, and continually contended with opposition from the colonial and imperial officials and authorities – proved to be skilled in effectively utilising her political capital. This study, throughout its chapters, is replete with examples of her ‘hammering in the wedges,’ thwarting the colonial authorities’ attempts to destroy the Zulu royal house and kingship, and notably chiefly attaining that by outmanoeuvring and playing off her political opponents against one another.

The first chapter showed how Colenso drove wedges between Havelock and Osborn. She supplied the governor with information that supplemented or countered the official reports for the Colony destined for the Colonial Office in Britain. That ‘hammered in the wedges,’ by mitigating and safeguarding Dinuzulu and the Usuthu from misrepresentation to the Colonial Office. Without Colenso’s intervention, the Colonial Office could have based its decisions and policies regarding the administration of Africans on inaccurate or incomplete information, and that would, in all likelihood have intensified and worsened Dinuzulu and the Usuthu’s political difficulties, hastened their scattering and being driven into obscurity, leading to the Zulu royal house and kingship ceasing to exist.

The second chapter traced how Colenso continued to deploy the tactic of driving in the wedges, playing the colonial and imperial officials and authorities like political pawns. She widened the rift between Havelock and Osborn, to the extent of the governor using her reports to expose to the Colonial Office, the misinformed and misleading colonial official reports. She ‘hammered in the wedges’ by continuing to safeguard against the misrepresentation of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu to the Colonial Office, convincing Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders to surrender, influencing for Dinuzulu to be tried by a Special Court of Commissioners instead of a British Zululand court and, sponsoring Dinuzulu’s defence. Here her familiarity with colonial and court practices was decisive in guiding Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders. Without Colenso’s interventions, they might well have been killed while in flight after the civil war, or sentenced to death, an outcome which this study showed was a high probability. The deaths of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders would have abruptly and decisively ended the Zulu royal house and kingship.

The third chapter tracked Colenso as she campaigned in Britain and drew attention to how she drove wedges between the Natal authorities and the Colonial Office. When the colony's authorities visited Britain, she engaged in various forms of publicity to broadcast and expose what she claimed were the transgressions they committed in Zululand and Natal. She also drove wedges between the authorities and public opinion by pamphleteering. She authored and published hard-hitting and in-depth pamphlets that responded to political developments as they happened. Had Colenso not conducted a spirited campaign in Britain, Dinuzulu may have not been repatriated and appointed to a position that distinguished him from the Wolseley's petty chiefs. Had he been demoted to petty chiefs' level; the Zulu royal house and kingship could have slid and faded into oblivion.

Prior scholarship dismissed Dinuzulu's post-exile position as powerless or nominal. Chapter four, however, has re-analysed that position and showed that Colenso's interventions kept alive the recognition of Dinuzulu as the descendant of the Zulu kings, and in that way prolonged the life of the institution of Zulu kingship. The case of Colenso's defence of the Embo prisoners enhanced her profile and increased her expertise both in political and legal spheres. That case may have also benefited Africans in general, possibly to an extent that made the colonial officials and authorities to be cautious with their legal practices – to avoid being challenged by the likes of Colenso – and that reduced the cases of miscarriages of justice.

In chapter five, we saw how Colenso contained the strife between the royal brothers, Dinuzulu and Manzolwandle, while foiling what seemed to be the colonial authorities' attempts to fuel that conflict. Her impartiality in dealing with the brothers, suppressed animosity that could have festered and imploded the Zulu royal house and collapsed (the relative) unity within the Usuthu. Her empowering and mentoring of Dinuzulu as he navigated and assimilated into the colonial order, introduced him to high-powered colonial networks whereby he mingled with high-ranking officials, authorities, and the governor; and that shielded him from being marginalised and becoming inconspicuous in the political landscape of Zululand and Natal.

The final chapter showed how Colenso again deployed the tactic of driving in the wedges by contributing to influencing matters so that a Judge President from outside Natal was appointed to preside over Dinuzulu's trial of 1908 to 1909. When the colonial authorities

obstructed the defence team from doing its work – accessing the witnesses and collecting data – she secured Colonial Office intervention in her favour. Had Colenso not ‘hammered in the wedges’ by financing Dinuzulu’s defence during his trial, he could have possibly received a more severe sentence. Without Colenso’s intervention in resolving the succession dispute of 1913, hostilities may have broken out leading to splintering into factions of both the Zulu royal house and the Usuthu, and that would have marked the end of the Zulu monarchy.

The foregoing chapter summaries confirm that after the thunderous British guns and the clattering Zulus assegais had gone silent, the colonial and imperial authorities’ goal to obliterate the Zulu royal house and kingship, was thwarted by one of their own: Colenso, a British woman. Without having to win battles, her praxis impacted on historical developments that shaped Dinuzulu and the Usuthu’s political situation, and reverberated throughout Zululand and Natal. In addition to driving in the wedges, this study unpacked other strategies and approaches that Colenso engaged, from which became evident numerous characteristic features of her political praxis.

Operating during a period of enormous changes, Colenso’s praxis showed to be flexible and adaptive. As the supporter for Dinuzulu and the Usuthu, it helped that she was a skilled interlocutor, campaigner, translator, and proficient in isiZulu and knowledgeable in Zulu politics and Zulu people’s ways of living. Her interlocution was effective in helping different parties to understand one another. At a time when few in the political arena spoke both isiZulu and English, she translated between those languages. She unpacked and elucidated concepts that were foreign to the respective parties. She interpreted new systems to the Usuthu, an example being exposing and orientating them to the functioning of the then newly introduced colonial court and justice systems. She decoded the Usuthu to the authorities by explaining their way of life, particularly in relation to the then emerging colonial order. She facilitated understanding during Dinuzulu’s trials: explaining Zulu practices to the defence teams, the press, and the court officials. Her insights in both the Zulu and British political affairs rendered her an effective mediator between those officialdoms. She demonstrated adept persuasion skills when she secured the legal services of both the initially hesitant leading legal practitioners of their periods – Escombe in 1889 and Schreiner in 1908.

It also assisted that Colenso was competent to agitate in a wide range of methods. Sometimes she used emotive language. In 1888 when pleading for Dinuzulu and the Usuthu leaders to

surrender, she lamented to them, that if they did not heed her advice, there was nothing she could do, if they got killed, she would just have to mourn. When she did not have money to pay Escombe, she reminded him that she was a poor woman, and he was a rich man. Sometimes she came across as aggressive: in 1894 she accosted and embarrassed Clarke on the street in Pietermaritzburg. She could communicate with people from the grassroots to highest level of government: she delivered many riveting public talks in the 1890s, while in 1905 she formally petitioned the Legislative Assembly through a cogent and impeccably researched petition. She could mobilise: whether it was the Usuthu, or her allies, or the press. But although Colenso had the competitive advantage of such unique expertise, she chronically lacked economic capital. The attempts that her allies made to assist her – a Zulu Defence Committee in the 1890s and a Defence Fund in 1910 – both failed.

Colenso made up for lack of financial resources by effectively deploying her political capital. In both Dinuzulu's trials, the roles ended up reversed when the legal eagles she had hired and was supposed to pay both ended up assisting her to seek funding for Dinuzulu's defence, and neither were paid for their legal services. Escombe rendered pro Deo counsel. Schreiner received a pittance and witnessing Colenso's dire financial straits, ended up waiving payments due to him. Colenso's lack of financial resources did not impede her political activity.

Colenso was constructive and bold; she confronted and challenged the authorities. She responded to their punitive and short-sighted ways of handling issues, with constructive and insightful proposals. In 1886 she questioned the wisdom of Havelock's settling the politically rooted land dispute (that originated from the Anglo-Zulu War) through a legal approach (by considering the land agreement the Usuthu had signed with the Boers). In 1887 when the authorities justified the annexation of Zululand by claiming that it was means to end anarchy, she viewed that as a band-aid solution and insisted that Dinuzulu being granted royal powers was the long-term solution. In 1888 she was less concerned about saving the Zulu leaders' lives when Havelock threatened to hang them if they were found guilty of killing Umfokazana's wife. She instead offered a different view, concentrated on witchcraft as the cause for medicinal killings and proposed placing of doctors in Zululand as avenue to wean people from such practices. In 1905 when she opposed taxation, her concern was far beyond the shillings and the pounds; she opposed the brutal invasion of a people, the colonial government's exploitation of taxes to manipulate and criminalise African practices. She

highlighted the consequential social disintegration as a result of taxes: moral and physical degeneration among Zulu people, collapsed authority hierarchies, and broken families due to proletarianization. This study is of the view that Colenso's support for Dinuzulu was not necessarily about favouring him as an individual, she supported him because she believed he embodied what deserved to be saved from destruction – the Zulu royal house and Zulu kingship – the continuity of amaZulu as a people. This study's conclusion thus suggests being principled was one of the features of Colenso's political praxis.

Colenso's political praxis was both principled and impactful. She was the bastion for morality and justice. Although that perspective conflicted with the attitudes of her political opponents, it was what drove and directed her political endeavours. It was the injustice Colenso perceived that led to her taking up defence of the Embo prisoners in 1898, and petition against taxation and execution of African men in the mid-1900s. The impact and effectiveness of her political activity could be evaluated from what she achieved and the opposition with which she contended. Her achievements included a successful campaign in Britain in the 1890s: Dinuzulu was repatriated and appointed to a special position distinguished from the petty chiefs. Colenso defended 16 Embo prisoners sentenced to life or ten-year imprisonment of hard labour, and they ended up released within a period of about four years. Her being impactful showed in the scale of opposition she was confronted with. In a united front, the colonial and imperial governments – Escombe, Hely-Hutchinson, and Knutsford – scapegoated her for the collapse of Dinuzulu's repatriation in 1895. In a united front, the political and religious worlds collaborated and struck by evicting her from Bishopstowe in 1910. Although Colenso appeared to be the irrepressible agitator and an exceptionally dedicated and tireless campaigner, her political efforts on behalf of Dinuzulu and the Usuthu did not imply that they were deprived or lacked agency.

This study discussed several political situations in which Dinuzulu and the Usuthu acted spontaneously and independently, proving that they were neither docile nor entirely dependent on Colenso, that they were active participants in their affairs. Judging by Colenso's constant empowering, she encouraged and promoted that independence. She empowered the Zulu royals by facilitating and developing their abilities to communicate with the authorities and to understand the political world in which they operated. They made their own political decisions while Colenso mindfully, according to her, stuck to aligning her

political activity to the ‘the Zulu point of view,’ the extent or success of which this study cannot ascertain.

As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, Dinuzulu and the Usuthu’s voices, independent of the Colenso family, are seldom heard. As a result, their voices have been conspicuously absent in some critical parts of this study. As an example, this study could not establish Dinuzulu’s role, involvement, or views on the matter of his post-exile position; it is just assumed that he agreed with Colenso’s proposal. The information that could have been enlightening on views and relations from the Usuthu’s side towards Colenso, could not be found – that being the Usuthu’s response to Colenso for the catastrophe of introducing Grant into their affairs, which was a matter about which they were extremely disgruntled.

Notwithstanding such gaps, this dissertation has expanded and enriched the historiography on Colenso, by being the first scholarly work to examine her entire active public political life. That has enabled reviews and re-interpretations, or proposals for re-interpretations, for some parts of prior scholarship.

This study has reviewed prior scholarship’s claim, that the defence of Dinuzulu in his trials, ruined Colenso financially. It provided the revised assertion, that Dinuzulu’s defence rather exacerbated Colenso’s already existing pecuniary distress. Contrary to impressions created in prior scholarship, this study has argued that Colenso’s campaign in Britain in the 1890s was a success because it achieved its objective: Dinuzulu was repatriated and appointed to a position that distinguished him from other chiefs and recognised his kingly ancestry. This study has challenged the impression of Colenso’s defence and support being limited to the Zulu royal house and the Usuthu. It provided evidence of her defence of the Embo prisoners and her involvement in the embryonic stages of the African nationalist movement and in African politics in Natal. Being the first single scholarly work to cover both Dinuzulu’s trials, has enabled this study to propose a re-interpretation of his legal losses, for them to be viewed as technical victories for the authorities, but also as to some extent political successes for Dinuzulu. This study’s being the first scholarly work to examine Colenso’s political praxis extended over the whole period of her active public political life, has also had some other benefits for the historiography on Colenso.

This dissertation has accentuated certain historic events and previously obscured historical milestones. It revealed that Colenso’s active public political life was broadly divided into two

distinct parts: her political activities before and after Dinuzulu's repatriation. In the first segment from 1884 to 1897, her political praxis was almost exclusively centered on Dinuzulu and the Usuthu. In the second segment from 1898 to 1913, the repertory of her political praxis extended to other Africans. Also, while prior scholarship has concentrated on Colenso's intervention in the Zulu monarchy's succession dispute of 1913, this study has drawn attention to an earlier succession dispute between Dinuzulu and Manzolwandle, that Colenso kept restrained from 1905 until Dinuzulu's death.

Prior scholarship has highlighted that despite the imperial government demoting Zulu kings after the Anglo-Zulu War, Zulu people and other Africans continued looking up to Dinuzulu as the king. This study has accentuated a historic development that may be interpreted as symbolic of people at the grassroots level, through their actions, seeming to change from that stance and starting to accept Dinuzulu's demotion. That development was the case of the commoners, Dinuzulu's employees Magma Fuze and Anthony Daniels, suing him through the colonial court and justice systems, those being the structures that treated subject and 'king' as equals.

This study's extended scope, and research augmented with previously untapped archives, has also revealed recurring political wrangling – throughout the period of this study – that was characteristic of relations between the colonial and imperial governments. This important aspect about relations between these governments is a unique contribution into the historiography on Colenso because it could best be retrieved and unpacked through this study's approach of investigating Colenso's political praxis. Colenso was close to and sometimes involved in those political wranglings, which in this study are contextualised and enriched by some pertinent details and alternative perspectives – unlikely to be found in official government archives – that this study retrieved from Colenso's private archives. In this study, it was those political wranglings that Colenso primarily exploited to drive in the wedges between the colonial and imperial governments.

This study showed that although Colenso struggled in all sorts of ways and suffered chronic lack of economic capital, she effectively deployed her political capital and impacted on historic political developments in Zululand and Natal, particularly in the Zulu monarchy. In relation to succession disputes in the Zulu royal house, this study showed Colenso to have occupied a similar space as Mkabayi, in the politics of the KwaZulu-Natal region. The

succession disputes in which Colenso intervened, between Dinuzulu and Manzolwandle (1907) and between David and Solomon (1913), were relatively mild compared to those of Mkabayi's period – less conspiracy, sans bloodshed. Nevertheless, irrespective of how the disputes between Cetshwayo's sons and Dinuzulu's sons unfolded, they fundamentally threatened the annihilation of the royal house and kingship. This dissertation has flagged as outstanding, the investigation of the power and influence that rendered a commoner British white woman – Colenso – to end up involved in directing succession in the Zulu monarchy. Mkabayi and Colenso being females, this study challenges the perception of viewing Zulu people as simply patriarchal, which misses the fact that women in African societies played significant political roles and understood the importance of governance, power, and authority. This dissertation situates Harriette Colenso among the powerful and dominant women who played decisive political roles in the affairs of the Zulu monarchy.

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