

**The Life, Work and Influence of**  
**JOHANNES JULIUS AUGUST PROZESKY**  
**(1840-1915),**  
**Missionary of the Berlin Missionary Society**  
**in South Africa**

**Thesis submitted by**  
**OSKAR EDUARD PROZESKY**  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Johannes Julius August Prozesky (1840-1915) spent 34 years (1866-1900) as a missionary of the Berlin Missionary Society in Natal. At the Königsberg mission station which he founded south-west of Newcastle in 1868 he attempted to create a model Christian community governed by his own strict paternalistic discipline and characterized by his motto "Work and pray". Notably pro-Boer, he was tried and found guilty of high treason by the British during the Anglo-Boer War and sentenced to a heavy fine and a year's imprisonment. After two years in Germany (1901-1903) he returned to South Africa to work in a substitutionary capacity in the Cape Colony at Amalienstein (1903-05) and Laingsburg (1905-07). In semi-retirement in Heidelberg, Transvaal (1908-13) he acted as assistant to his son-in-law, Rev. Hermann Müller.

Prozesky was a missionary in the fundamentalist, pietist, eschatological mould: his chief concern was to save as many souls as possible from perdition before the Judgement Day which he believed to be imminent. In the practical sphere he attempted to prepare the blacks under his care for the life of manual toil which he believed would remain their lot in white-dominated South Africa.

This thesis provides the following conclusions about Prozesky's Natal ministry:

1. He was least successful in converting those traditionalist Swazi/Zulu at Königsberg who had most to lose by embracing

Christianity: the chiefs Mafofe, Mkankonyeke and Tinta, their councillors, the heads of *imizi*, *izinyanga* and traditionalist men in general.

2. From 1884 an increasing number of traditionalist women at Königsberg found a new freedom as Christians, liberated from the subservience of Nguni marriage and the indignity of polygyny. They were followed by men who were commoners.
3. Through his conversion of Johannes Mdiniso, the later "Apostle to the Swazi", Prozesky was instrumental, albeit indirectly, in introducing Christianity to Swaziland.
4. A considerable number of *oorlams* blacks found a safe haven at Königsberg where they could live as peasant tenants free of servitude.
5. As a doctor practising homoeopathy and minor surgery, Prozesky brought healing or relief to countless people, white and black, free of charge, for a third of a century.
6. Through his friendship and example he influenced many Boer neighbours to accept and even advance mission work and to see blacks as fellow human beings.

## **PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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This entire thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work.

## **GLOSSARY OF ZULU AND OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN WORDS**

*dagga* = cannabis, hemp

*donga* = erosion gulley

*idlozi* (plural: *amadlozi*) = ancestral shade or spirit

*ilobolo* = bridewealth, cattle paid for a wife

*induna* (plural: *izinduna*) = chief's councillor

*inkosi* = chief, king, white man, especially the magistrate

*inyanga* = doctor

*inyanga yokubhula* = diviner, witch-doctor

*inyanga yemiti* = herbalist, doctor of medicine

*kholwa* = believer, black Christian

*laager* = Boer encampment, often a ring or square of wagons for defensive purposes

*oorlams* = westernized black in South Africa

*sjambok* = short, semi-rigid riding-crop

*ukulobola* = securing of a wife by means of a bridewealth payment, usually in cattle

*ukulobolisa* = giving of a daughter or other female dependant to a man in marriage for *ilobolo*

*umuzi* (plural: *imizi*) = kraal, homestead

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Daunting problems beset any attempted assessment of the impact made by a European missionary on the South African people among whom he lived and worked. These problems were compounded in this specific investigation by the fact that the titular subject is my paternal great-grandfather. The natural bond of blood obviously tended to predispose me in favour of the missionary, and I had constantly to check and compensate for this bias. Assumptions of religious, cultural or moral superiority needed to be abandoned at the outset if the truth was to be discovered.

The investigator in a study of this nature is confronted by an extremely complex set of historical circumstances which it cannot be his task to unravel. All he may do with confidence is to compare the life led by pre-colonial societies with that thrust upon them by European colonialism or brought to them through the zeal and concern of Western European Christianity. But even this is difficult; the subject is vast and the symbiosis of colonialism and Christianity is too complex and organic for the two components to be clinically separated and examined in isolation, each with its respective effects on the indigenous African people. Trends in historiography biased in favour of either whites or blacks further complicate the task. In my own interpretation of the past I have attempted to bear in mind that history is not the record of the struggle between the "angels" and the "devils", but rather of the interaction of forces generated by the complex

motives of human beings, groups and societies, some at times more avaricious/generous, cruel/kind, unjust/just than others. As a post-christian I stand between Prozesky and the Nguni traditionalists among whom he worked, sharing the specific beliefs of neither. I have attempted to look at all parties concerned with fresh eyes and an open mind, noting the attributes of all, as measured by the yardstick of the simple categorical imperatives of justice and compassion.

The method I have employed in this investigation has been to observe the conditions and the forces at work in South Africa before and during the lifetime of the missionary, and to assess against this background the impact the missionary had on the real lives of those among whom he lived and worked. Were they materially better off, healthier and freer than they would otherwise have been?

August Prozesky worked for a third of a century (1866-1900) as a missionary in Natal among traditionalist Zulu-speaking people and semi-westernized Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking blacks (so-called *oorlams* people) of mainly Nguni descent. Some members of his congregation were people of "coloured" or mixed descent. There are references to "Hottentots" and "Bushmen" (Khoikhoi and San, or more probably people of mixed Khoikhoi and San descent) living on his mission station Königsberg. As an artist, Prozesky was particularly interested in the rock-paintings of the earlier San, exam-

ples of which were to be found near the mission. Much of his medical work was done among whites: Boers and English-speaking farmers and others in northern Natal, the north-eastern Orange Free State and the south-eastern Transvaal - to whose black servants he also ministered both spiritually and medically. In the Cape Colony (1903-1907), his work lay mainly among Khoikhoi/"coloured" people. In the evening of his life (1908-1912) he worked among blacks in the southern Transvaal who were already largely westernized.

Part 1 of this investigation looks at the South African subcontinent to which Prozesky came, at its peoples, their origin, geographical distribution, culture and religion, and at the interaction between and among them, with particular reference to relations between white and black in Natal and Zululand from 1835 to 1866. It is against this background that the life of Prozesky is traced chronologically in Part 2 and his work and influence are assessed in Part 3.

Working as he did in relative isolation and largely unobserved by historiography, Prozesky has perforce to be accepted as the chief chronicler of his own life. His *Tagebücher*, the journals he was obliged to keep and send copies of to Berlin, provide the only coherent, detailed account of his labours. Written from day to day and unedited in the original drafts in the possession of this researcher, they are more accurate than the memoirs he wrote in

old age under the title *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben eines alten Mannes*. A considerable collection of letters written by and to the missionary provides further insights into his relations with his colleagues and superiors in particular. The minutes of conferences and synods held by the Berlin missionaries in Natal portray the Königsberger in deliberations with his immediate colleagues. The *Missions-Berichte* (mission reports) of the Berlin Missionary Society, based as they are on the journals submitted by the men in the field, are second-hand sources but provide a valuable context in which the work of individual missionaries should be seen. In the absence of an alternative account of Prozesky's life, his thoughts and deeds must to a great extent be observed through the medium of his own words. While fully aware of the tendency of any diarist to portray his life in a light favourable to himself, the present writer is satisfied after an extensive and critical study that Prozesky reported reliably in his journals. The frank tone and God-directed perspective of thousands of pages of entries correspond to those of the letters and are too consistently sustained to be anything but truthful. The absence of self-contradiction (except here and there in the memoirs which were written when the missionary's memory and eyesight were failing and he could presumably not consult his early journals which were written in a minuscule hand) points in the same direction. Whether or not one shares the presuppositions of Prozesky's faith or approves of his methods, following him in his

journals day by day and week by week for a timespan of more than forty years, one cannot but be impressed by the sincerity with which he lived and wrote.

The reading and rereading of thousands of pages of manuscript in the now obsolete German cursive was a taxing prerequisite for this study. To acquaint myself thoroughly with the primary sources, I translated the entire *Erinnerungen* and the *Tagebücher* up to 1884 into English. The later journals, written in a larger hand, were more easy to consult directly.

**PART 1**  
**BACKGROUND**

## **CHAPTER 1**

# **THE PRE-COLONIAL INHABITANTS OF SOUTH AFRICA**

### **THE SAN OR BUSHMAN HUNTER-GATHERERS**

Archaeological research indicates that the hunter-gatherer way of life was pursued for at least two million years by the earliest inhabitants of southern Africa.<sup>1</sup> Scattered groups, the ancestors of the San or Bushmen, formed the sole populace of the subcontinent for approximately 8000 years, until about 2000 years ago when they first encountered Khoikhoi herders (self-styled "men of men" or "genuine people") migrating southward. According to Bredekamp and modern scholarship, intermarriage and acculturation which occurred over centuries between the San and the Khoikhoi (and to a lesser extent even with the Bantu-speaking blacks who were later arrivals from the north) resulted in the development of Khoisan communities along the Cape coast and in the interior which were in some ways related to, and in other ways distinct from one another. Although the San were generally smaller in stature than the Khoikhoi, modern anthropologists hesitate to classify the two groups as belonging to different races. For the sake of convenience, the hut-dwellers of larger physique who kept cattle and sheep are regarded as Khoikhoi, and the diminutive hunter-gatherers who lived in caves or rude temporary shelters as San.<sup>2</sup>

The hunter-gatherers are perhaps best known for their exquisite and unique rock art, which has survived for thousands of years,

either as rock-engravings or as paintings in natural pigment protected from the elements under overhangs and in caves. Much of this art, especially of the rock paintings, is interpreted today as being a depiction of the visions experienced by medicine men in the trance state.<sup>3</sup>

Despite their skill as hunters, the San apparently regarded domestic stock as fair game, and this turned the hands of the Khoikhoi in the west and the blacks in the east against them. Some San did serve Khoikhoi as clients, receiving food and protection in return for scouting, hunting and other services, and refraining from plundering their specific overlords, but the free San were everywhere at enmity with and in fear of the herders. Although there is archaeological evidence of economic co-operation between the Stone Age San and Iron Age blacks in eastern South Africa, close contact would not have been the norm, given the extreme conservatism of the San who clung to their free hunting life with great stubbornness. Some cultural contact, even intermarriage, did occur, as is indicated by the Khoisan clicks absorbed into the Nguni languages and by the fact that some Nguni peoples adopted the San custom of cutting off the little finger at the final joint.<sup>4</sup> The Xhosa employed the San as rainmakers and trading partners, exchanging cattle and dagga (cannabis) for ivory, and some San became tributary to Xhosa chiefs, yet there is also evidence of great brutality on the part of the Xhosa to-

wards the San, and vice versa,<sup>5</sup> and it may be assumed from their geographical distribution at the start of the colonial era that the great majority of them would have been forced to inhabit the wilder, more mountainous terrain in South Africa, leaving the better grazing-lands to the more assertive herder peoples.<sup>6</sup>

The social and economic systems of San communities are of indirect but nevertheless noteworthy significance for the purposes of this study - for two reasons: because they contained egalitarian features not found in other systems in Southern Africa, and because they were displaced and ultimately replaced by systems without these features. Where the influence of a European and Christian missionary is under investigation, the investigator does well to bear in mind that the scenes of the missionary's labours in northern Natal, in the central Cape and the southern Transvaal were originally, before the coming of black or white, part of the ancient hunting- and gathering-grounds of the San.

The San were as unencumbered by possessions as human beings can possibly be. There was in their life-style no way of accumulating property, no way for some to become rich and others to feel disadvantaged or envious. There was also little need for coercion or domination of any kind - even women were full and important members of the family or band and not relegated to a secondary or subservient status. Mutually dependent on one another for survival in an uncertain and often hostile environment, the San shared

their meagre physical wealth communally.

Despite early marriage among the San, relatively few children were reared because of the strenuous nature of the hunter-gatherer life. Infanticide through abandonment and exposure kept the population small and prevented over-exploitation of resources. The old, once they became infirm, were similarly left to die.<sup>7</sup>

The San way of life precluded the formation of populous tribes or hordes. There was thus no power structure as found among the Khoikhoi, the blacks and whites. The San lived in smallish groups which usually consisted of a number of siblings with their families and, perhaps, their parents. Bands might unite temporarily with other bands in times of plenty, only to split up again when food became scarce. Under normal circumstances every band had a territory in which its exclusive gathering rights were traditionally recognized by other bands. As has been seen, this did not prevent them from plundering and killing their neighbours, the Khoikhoi and blacks, if opportunity arose. They are also known to have killed white hunters or the survivors of shipwrecks on the south-east coast.<sup>8</sup>

### **THE KHOIKHOI HERDERS**

Like the San and unlike the darker negroid people, the Khoikhoi are yellow-skinned. It is thought likely that the first Khoikhoi were hunters in what is now Botswana who acquired cattle and sheep from the first agriculturists to enter the region from the

north (possibly Bantu-speakers), and thus became herders. According to the theory of Richard Elphick, the earliest Khoikhoi herders moved from Botswana through the northern Transvaal, along the Harts River to the Orange River. Here they parted: one group moving down the Orange to its mouth, from where the ancestors of the Nama trekked northwards and those of the Namaqua southwards. The other group moved southwards in the direction of the Fish and Sundays Rivers. The Gonaqua settled in the east, beyond these rivers, while the ancestors of the Attaqua, Hessequa, Cochoqua and Peninsular Khoikhoi moved westwards past the present Mossel Bay until they reached the vicinity of St Helena Bay. These were probably the herders encountered by Portuguese, Dutch and English sailors on the west and south coasts of the Cape after 1487. In the eastern Karoo were the Inquas. There is evidence that the Gonaqua were living among the Xhosa as far east as the Buffalo and Kei rivers. As cattle-owners, the Khoikhoi appear to have avoided the more arid interior.

Elphick's theory, while fitting the actual distribution of the Khoikhoi as found by the Dutch, does not explain why the herders chose to move in a westerly direction into the drier half of the subcontinent rather than eastwards into the best grazing lands. It is possible that Khoikhoi did settle on the eastern seaboard, only to be overtaken, driven south-westwards and/or assimilated by the black Bantu-speakers. Conversely, blacks might already have been in possession of the east, leaving the Khoikhoi no op-

tion but to move westwards. While there is no archaeological evidence of such early settlement of the east by Iron Age people, the first black settlers might have been the Stone Age Ngoni and Kheoka of oral tradition, possibly the same people from whom the Khoikhoi are presumed to have received their cattle.<sup>9</sup>

Like the San, the Khoikhoi were hunters and food-gatherers, and like them they used poisoned arrows, but these pursuits were of secondary importance to them: they were first and foremost pastoralists. Frequently migrating seasonally from grazing-ground to grazing-ground, they were semi-nomads who recognized no individual rights to ownership of land but nevertheless regarded certain areas as belonging to their group. Cattle and sheep formed the wealth of the Khoikhoi: the number of these which they possessed determined their rank in the hierarchy of Khoi society. Possession of this commodity made some more wealthy than others, and force had consequently to be employed to safeguard it. Khoikhoi society, if more comfortably organized for some, was thus less equal and sharing than that of the San.<sup>10</sup> There was no bride-wealth/bride-price as among the Bantu-speakers. The bride owned her own hut and her own stock, which remained her property as distinct from that of her husband. Women, if not the equals of men, were thus at least persons in their own right among the Khoikhoi. Pregnancies were spaced and one of a pair of twins was commonly exposed. If the mother died, a young child could be

buried alive with her.<sup>11</sup>

The Khoikhoi sacrificed sheep or cattle as part of certain religious rites. The slaughtering could be cruel, with the animal's viscera being removed while it was still alive. Feuding and raiding between hordes was a characteristic of Khoikhoi life. Although the hordes were independent of one another, alliances between them for war took place, the losers often being impoverished when their livestock was confiscated. Like the San, the Khoikhoi knew of no commandments forbidding theft or murder outside their clan or horde. Prisoners could be tortured or beaten to death.<sup>12</sup>

The descendants of the Khoikhoi among whom Prozesky worked were already westernized, but the circumstances of their lives need to be seen against the background of pre-colonial Khoikhoi culture and economy if their situation in colonial society and in the colonial economy is to be properly understood.

## **THE BANTU-SPEAKING BLACKS**

### **Prehistory**

Archaeological evidence indicates that Iron Age people distinct from the Khoisan had reached coastal Natal, the Tugela valley and the northern and central Transvaal and established themselves there before 300 AD. The negroid iron-smelters, who were also agriculturists and herders of cattle, sheep and goats, reached the Fish River by approximately 700 AD, but moved no further west-

wards, possibly because the land in that direction did not suit their lifestyle as far as climate and vegetation were concerned. Cultivating grains (mainly sorghum), legumes, calabashes, melons and plants of the pumpkin family, the Bantu-speakers led a more settled life than the semi-nomadic Khoikhoi and San. Maize, probably introduced through trade with Delagoa Bay, was added to their crops by the seventeenth century but only became a staple by the nineteenth. Dependent as they were on crop production and ignorant of irrigation methods, the blacks restricted themselves to the area east of about the 200mm summer rainfall line which roughly bisects South Africa. This line thus formed a natural, ecological boundary between the black communities to the east of it and the Khoisan hunter-gatherers and herders to the west. As has been noted, there was some interaction across this invisible border, chiefly in the form of trade.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Early contacts between black and white**

The survivors of European ships wrecked on the east coast of South Africa during the pre-colonial period experienced both hostility and hospitality at the hands of the black inhabitants of this region. Some were attacked, plundered, killed or left to die, while others were graciously received and supplied with food and livestock in exchange for pieces of iron and other goods of European manufacture. Survivors are also known to have been assimilated by local groups.<sup>14</sup>

### **Segmentation and differentiation**

Two distinct processes determined and shaped the history of the Bantu-speaking peoples in southern Africa: segmentation and differentiation. Segmentation, as explained by J.B. Peires, was the subdivision which occurred when the sons of a domestic group reached adulthood and left to form their own households elsewhere. Peires maintains that black expansion through segmentation did not imply the ejection of the earlier (Khoisan) inhabitants in its path, but that these were incorporated in black society by trade, intermarriage, military alliance and mutual aid during drought and famine. He admits that competition for water and pasturage often led to raiding and armed conflict, but submits that these took place less frequently than the peaceful contacts. Whatever it was that happened, by the beginning of the colonial period the Khoisan - except for the mountain San and the Gona - had effectively disappeared as distinct peoples from eastern South Africa. The occupation of the south-east by black settlers - through steady encroachment, cattle-wealth, weight of numbers and military conquest - was irreversibly consummated by the cultural absorption of those in its path.<sup>15</sup>

Differentiation, as explained by Peires, was the process by which certain individuals came to secure political, economic and social power over others. Three distinct social categories evolved among the blacks: those of chiefs, commoners and clients. To these

Peires neglects to add a fourth, namely women. All four among the Nguni were based on the primary social and economic unit, namely the *umuzi* (kraal or homestead). The head of the *umuzi* was the oldest man, who enjoyed considerable power and authority in the spheres of religion, the economy and social relations. This authority he derived from his genealogical seniority. The other men in the *umuzi* similarly depended for their status on their genealogical rank. Women, like children, had rights and obligations, but were regarded as minors all their lives and had no formal voice in the affairs of the *umuzi*.

Although the black peoples believed in a creator God, he was remote from their lives and they looked rather to their ancestors to aid and protect them against evil and supernatural forces. The religious status of the head of a lineage or clan derived from his being the living person most closely related to the semi-mythical founder of the clan. This conferred on him the right to petition the ancestral spirits by means of sacrificial offerings. His economic dominance, too, derived from his role as the bridge between dead and living generations. Through his father he had inherited the accumulated wealth of his ancestors, which he in turn would bequeath to his sons. Thus he had the right to allocate tasks, the use of fields, and livestock as he saw fit.<sup>16</sup>

Chieftainship was a replication on a larger scale of the power and prestige of the head of an *umuzi*. Chiefs formed a rich and

powerful class distinct from commoners, from whom they could levy tribute and whom they could command to labour for their chiefly benefit. All lands and livestock belonged to the chief and this gave him enormous power. Chiefs could demand hospitality of the head of any *umuzi*, extending even to the sexual use of his daughters. As the supreme judiciary, a chief could confiscate the cattle of commoners; this was often done by manipulating accusations of witchcraft against the chosen victims. These people, "smelt out" by so-called witch-finders, would be "eaten up", i.e. lose all their possessions; they might also be banished or put to death by torture. A wise chief kept the majority of his followers contented and consulted them, either formally, as with the *pitso* (general assembly) among the Sotho-Tswana, or informally through his counsellors. Criticism of chiefly conduct or policies could be voiced in some societies by the *umbongi* or praise-singer. It should not be imagined, however, that the Bantu-speakers enjoyed a democratic system of government. There was no way except murder to replace a chief, and his power to grant favours created a clique of grateful supporters prepared to foist his will on those less favoured. Succession to the chieftainship was also often the cause of fraternal strife and conflict. Laws of succession were frequently flouted and brother fought brother, while mothers and uncles intrigued on behalf of their candidates. This was particularly likely to happen when the lawful heir was a minor, and a regent - often a disgruntled older brother - had to act for him.

In such cases the loser and his faction might break away and settle elsewhere.<sup>17</sup>

Clientage among the Bantu-speakers was the system by which a poor man contracted to work for a chief or a rich man in return for payment in kind. It involved varying degrees of labour exploitation: from voluntary and temporary service to permanent servitude which was almost slavery. Whole groups, especially of dispossessed and destitute people, could be accepted as clients. When they observed different customs, the clientage relationship could acquire an ethnic tinge. The most extreme form of labour exploitation was the *botlhanka* system found among the Tswana. *Botlhanka* clients were usually children captured in war. Their status, which amounted to slavery, was permanent and hereditary, but people were not sold by the Tswana.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century the black Bantu-speakers had by slow migration through segmentation produced a complexity of different but related cultures and societies in eastern South Africa, most of them absorbed into greater or lesser chiefdoms. Two main language and cultural groups had emerged: on the inland plateau lived the Sotho-Tswana peoples whose languages were closely related; inhabiting the regions between the coast and the escarpment were the Nguni-speakers whose languages were also very similar to one another.<sup>19</sup>

### **Nguni life before the rise of the Zulu power**

Nguni life laid great emphasis on cattle and cattle-ownership. Cattle were the measure of wealth and served as currency in important transactions such as *ukulobola* (wife-purchase/bride-wealth - see pp.20-21 and Chapter 21). As sacrificial beasts, cattle also had religious significance. There was a measure of cruelty in their killing, their cries being considered pleasing to the ancestors. The cattle-kraal formed the centre of each homestead, but cattle were a male preserve, herded by youths and milked and tended by men. To the women, besides the care of children, cooking and cleaning, was allocated the hard labour of cultivation, the gathering of fuel and the fetching of water.<sup>20</sup>

Before the coming of the whites, the establishment of the Shakan Zulu kingdom and the *Mfecane* (the wars which devastated large parts of the Highveld interior and north-eastern regions during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century)<sup>21</sup>, the black inhabitants of South Africa lived an ordered if sometimes insecure life in close-knit family, clan and chiefdom relationships. Their religion linked them with the supernatural world in a way which could be both reassuring and oppressive, but which provided continuity between dead and living generations. The communalistic economies of the Bantu-speakers and the emphasis they laid on kinship tended to prevent the social isolation or destitution of any individual or group. Lacking religious commandments against murder, they did not, however, regard human

life as sacred, as was observed by various European travellers and missionaries. The Zulu "helped home" the senile aged. Besides goats and cattle sacrificed to the ancestors, animals were also killed for ritual purposes - some with great cruelty.<sup>22</sup>

### **The status of women**

Common to all patrilineal black societies were polygyny and the subservient status of women. Only chief wives, particularly as old matrons, and diviners (*izangoma* among the Zulu) achieved anything like the status enjoyed by men. Women had little or no freedom of choice in marriage, but often went to the suitor who had most cattle to offer for their purchase. Marriage was a contract between families or sibs, and the wife remained a minor who was expected to serve and satisfy the husband and his lineage. Zulu women could acquire and hold property for the use of their houses, but could not inherit or bequeath such property. Normally they had no voice in the affairs of their group but were subordinate all their lives - to their fathers, husbands and sons in turn. A woman who opposed the wishes of her male guardian could be beaten or tortured. Rivalry between co-wives sometimes led to accusations of witchcraft, especially against the wife most favoured by the husband. The rivalries and quarrels were shared by the offspring of the various co-wives. Some women committed suicide to escape the torment of their lives. It is of symbolic significance that black women carried heavy loads - firewood, pots

of water and possessions - for long distances balanced on their heads. Indicative, too, of the lowly status of women among the Zulu is the fact that women, from pubescence until they were past child-bearing age, were regarded as unclean during the *qhumbuza* (ear-piercing) and *thomba* (puberty) ceremonies which marked a boy's progress towards manhood, and had to be avoided. Men officiating in these ceremonies had to abstain from sexual intercourse. There were no similar taboos regarding men in the puberty ceremony of girls. Women, too, were affected to a far greater extent by the Zulu custom of *hlonipa*, which required them to avoid certain - mainly male - relatives-in-law and even the mention of their names. In the ancestor veneration of the Zulu, male ancestors were of far greater consequence than female ones. That this should have been so in societies which were awed by power and governed by patriarchal custom and superior male force, is hardly surprising.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Belief in magic and supernatural powers**

Common, too, to all the Bantu-speakers was the fear inspired in them by belief in magic and supernatural powers, and the injustice often committed as a result of false charges of witchcraft brought against innocent people. No illness, accident or death - not even damage to property, injury or death by lightning - was regarded as having occurred by natural causes. Witchcraft, invoked by the malignant ill-will of some person, was always regarded as being to blame, and the guilty parties had to be dis-

covered and punished. To find them out was the task of the witchfinders, who produced no proof but relied on their intuition and observed the reactions of the assembled people to their preparatory "smellings". This arbitrary system was wide open to abuse, and the result, as has already been noted, was the confiscation of cattle belonging to its victims, their banishment or torture and execution. Magic was sometimes also linked to cannibalism, with victims being murdered for the sake of organs or tissue believed to possess virtue which could be assimilated. Twins were considered unlucky and infanticide was the result.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Inter-group raiding and stock-theft**

A trait shared by most black societies in eastern South Africa was their practice of inter-group raiding and the theft of stock in particular. Just as the San and Khoikhoi were often at war over cattle, so too the blacks indulged in the organized lifting of cattle, raiding and inter-group warfare. These practices were not condemned (except by the victims) but rather encouraged as exploits worthy of manly enterprise.<sup>25</sup> To societies organized communalistically, the theft of cattle might have been a permissible practice, but the matter assumed an aspect of extreme gravity when those robbed were white stock farmers. The results in some parts of South Africa were to be calamitous for the blacks. They were to find the whites no less adept than themselves at warfare, at retaking - and taking - cattle, and at seizing land.

## CHAPTER 1: THE PRE-COLONIAL INHABITANTS OF SOUTH AFRICA

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cation ... would be determined by 'blood' - i.e. whether  
a man was of royal descent or a commoner - by age and by  
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The American missionary Lewis Grout saw the abuses in Zulu law by chiefly fiat as being: intrigue, flattery, prejudice, covetousness and force. The principle of collective responsibility and the practice of collective reparation, usually by a fine of cattle, even for such crimes as adultery, rape, arson, assault or homicide, prevented the development of the concept of personal guilt or innocence and personal responsibility for moral conduct. Most pernicious of all, in his view, was the caprice and despotism of kings, which made the Zulu live lives in constant fear of the monarch's displeasure, which would mean confiscation of goods and even death. That Grout was no unfair critic of the Zulu is clear from his further statement that he found it a wonder that there was nevertheless so much mental integrity, so much ability to discern truth and justice, and so much regard for these principles in the daily intercourse of the Zulu with one another. (Grout, L., *Zulu-Land*, 128-130)

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Lewis Grout, a first-hand observer, saw the Zulu woman, with her pick and basket, as the plough and cart, ox and horse of the Zulu economy. (Grout, L. *Zulu-Land*, 99)  
Robert Moffat observed the same phenomenon among the Tswana. (*Missionary Labours and Scenes*, 251-252)
21. For early reports of the *Mfecane*, see Robert Moffat's *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, 187-188.  
The publications of Julian Cobbing on the subject of the *Mfecane* do not convince this researcher, who agrees with

- J.D. Omer-Cooper's most recent assessment (see Bibliography).
22. The traveller Burchell and the missionary Moffat observed among the Tswana peoples that murder did not carry the stigma that it did in European society. (Moffat, R., *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, 463-464)  
 Krige, E.J., *The Social System of the Zulu*, 160, 173 & 181
23. The nice distinction made by J.B. Peires when he says that Xhosa women were "controlled" but "never exploited" (*The House of Phalo*, 41), will not bear objective scrutiny. A sober assessment of Zulu marriage and of the position of girls in traditional Zulu society is to be found in Vilakazi, A., *Zulu Transformations*, 32-37 & 40, but the attempt made by the same writer to explode the "myth" of *ukulobola* as bride-purchase (Vilakazi, 63-68), while possibly applying to more modern usages, does not explain away the ugly side of this practice observed by Prozesky and his colleagues in the late 19th century. Vilakazi himself quotes an old man in Zululand as affirming that "in the past, it was quite proper for the father of the girl to give his daughter away to even an old man who had cattle" (Vilakazi, 71). Monica Hunter confirms that forced marriages occurred among the Pondo, that girls were thrashed if they would not comply, that some committed suicide rather than submit, and that there was a double standard of morality in marriage. Also that Pondo women could not inherit or bequeath property and that jealousy between co-wives caused friction. (*Reaction to Conquest*, 24, 32, 42, 120, 189 & 203).  
 Lewis Grout saw Zulu women treated *de facto* "as property, - so many cattle", whatever their *de jure* position might have been. (Grout, L., *Zulu-Land*, 117)  
 For the *qhumbuza*, *thomba* and *hlonipa* practices and for the property rights of women and the unimportance of female ancestors, see Krige, E.J., *The Social System of the Zulu*, 30-31, 81-103, 120, 154, 169 & 177  
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 David Welsh quotes a Zulu source according to whom Zulu women had been able to inherit and bequeath property before the codification of Natal Native Law, but the examples he gives are exceptions rather than the rule. (Welsh, D., *The Roots of Segregation*, 169)  
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 For examples of the abuse of "smelling-out" at Königsberg,

see Chapters 6 & 10 of this thesis.

25. For Xhosa theft of cattle from other groups, see letter of W. Shaw quoted by J.B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 42, and Monica Hunter's *Reaction to Conquest*, 132. For Tswana theft of cattle, see the testimony of the traveller Thompson quoted in Moffat's *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, 255. In the compilation of this chapter the writer encountered the odd argument that the theft of cattle among the Nguni was no theft at all because it was done in the interests of the group. A claim was also made that it was not theft because the Nguni did not see it as theft. These same arguments could be used, as falsely, to condone imperialism, colonialism and expansionist fascism.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE EUROPEAN IMPACT ON SOUTH AFRICA, 1652-1866**

#### **THE COLONIZATION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa was colonized by Europeans - the Dutch and British in turn - starting from its most south-westerly corner, the Cape of Good Hope peninsula. From 1657 to 1834 there was a gradual movement of white farmers, followed by colonial authority, into the interior. The extreme aridity of the north-west deflected this expansion of the Cape Colony increasingly towards the east and north-east. Friction with the Xhosa in the east and a desire for freedom from British rule (imposed in 1806) redirected the onward migration of the Dutch Boers northward in the Great Trek (1834-1840). White traders and missionaries penetrated Xhosaland, Tembuland and Pondoland, but British conquest and domination of the south-eastern seaboard was held up and was to come only incrementally during the next five decades. The Trek meanwhile brought whites into contact with groups to the north: the Griqua, Korana, Sotho and Tswana peoples in the Trans-Orange region, the Ndebele of Mzilikazi, the Tswana, Ndebele, Pedi and Venda in the Trans-Vaal, and the Zulu and Swazi in the transmontane, east-coast Natal-Zulu-Swazi region. The Boers defeated the Ndebele and Zulu in battle and Boer republics were founded in Natal (1838), the Transvaal (1852) and the Orange Free State (1854). The Natal republic was short-lived, as this territory was occupied by the British in 1842, but European

influence was in the ascendancy in the entire south-eastern sub-continent from the Cape to the Limpopo by 1850. Nominally Christian, the Dutch and British colonial powers had as few scruples about taking possession of the land and holding it by force as the indigenous African peoples had about displacing others weaker than themselves.

### **THE COLONIAL IMPACT ON THE KHOIKHOI**

Conquest by the Europeans spelt disaster for the Khoikhoi. They lost their independence and their free and leisurely way of life, they were dispossessed of their ancient grazing-lands, they were decimated by disease, and in time their language and culture disappeared. Some Khoi voluntarily entered the service of whites. Discriminated against on racial, cultural and religious grounds, politically divided and unorganized, and unused to labour and innovation, they were unable to hold their own against the energetic and forceful Europeans. Rarely baptized in colonial society, as Giliomee points out, seldom married to colonists, and never granted burgher status, they came to form an inferior caste.<sup>1</sup> Neither exterminated nor absorbed into the ranks of their conquerors, they continued to exist as a largely subordinate, landless class of people in the colony, ultimately becoming with emancipated slaves part-ancestors of the "coloured" people, westernized and predominantly Christian, but relegated to the crowded, poor and sometimes squalid quarters of Cape farms and towns.<sup>2</sup>

## **THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FREE KHOISAN**

Not all the Khoikhoi submitted to European rule. Some moved away northwards and eastwards, while others joined the San who resisted the Dutch encroachment on their ancient hunting-grounds. The farmers mounted commandos to recover stolen stock and to kill or capture the hunters. Raids and counter-raids, the so-called "Bushmen wars" which persisted for most of the eighteenth century on the northern and north-eastern border of the colony in the Bokkeveld, Roggeveld, Nuweveld, Camdeboo and Sneeu-berg mountains, are seen today as protracted resistance by the Khoikhoi as well as the San to their dispossession of the land by the Dutch. A feature of Khoisan tactics was the killing or maiming of stock which they could not remove successfully. With their firearms and horses, the Boer commandos were able to achieve ultimate victory. They did not, however, follow a policy of complete extermination of their enemies. Certain farmers persuaded San bands to enter their service as clients. Attempts were also made - without success - to pacify the San with presents and to set them up as stock-breeders. While individual San managed to adapt, the San as hunters could not.<sup>3</sup> The San who survived as servants of the whites were assimilated into the ranks of the "coloured" people, but the disaster of white colonization to the free, hunting-gathering and raiding San was almost total. Within two centuries the game upon which they had depended for survival was practically exterminated from the plains of the Cape interior by the de-

structive power of white firearms. Unable to adapt to the new circumstances by becoming herders, the free San chose to resist to the death and were hunted down like wild animals and shot out. A similar fate was to befall the raiding San in the Drakensberg in Natal during the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

## **SLAVERY**

Perhaps the worst aspect of European colonisation was the introduction of slavery to the Cape. Both the Dutch and British imported slaves, and with them the entire brutal apparatus required to keep human beings docile in lifelong servitude. Relatively few slaves were manumitted at the Cape, and little was done to convert them to Christianity. To the British belongs the credit of ending this cruel institution: they banned the slave trade in 1808 and emancipated the Cape slaves in 1834. Judicial torture and cruel executions, features of the Dutch colonial period, were also abolished by the British.

## **THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Very little by way of Christian mission work was attempted among the Khoisan during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The general opinion among officials and colonists alike was that it was impossible to christianize the free Khoi.<sup>5</sup> Missionaries, when they did at last appear on the scene, were to come mainly from Europe, where the pietistic movement provided the motivation required for people to forsake their homes and remove to distant

and often dangerous continents and climates to spread their faith. The pietists emphasized personal piety, an acceptance in the heart of the merciful love of God to sinners, and action in the world consistent with this conviction. The movement was a reaction against the formalism of the contemporary churches. A German Lutheran pastor, Philipp Jacob Spener (1635-1705), gave the first impetus with his book *Pia desideria*. Those moved by his ideas formed conventicles within existing congregations for private, mutual edification and charitable undertakings.<sup>6</sup> From these and similar beginnings such as Methodism in England grew the evangelical movement in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Practical expression of its desire to share the Christian gospel with the "heathen" of particularly Asia and Africa was found in the establishment of missionary societies - in Herrnhut (1732), London (the Baptist society in 1792, the London society in 1795 and the Wesleyan society in 1814), Edinburgh (1796), the Netherlands (1797), Basel (1816), Berlin and Paris (1824), Barmen in the Rhineland (1829), Hamburg (1835), Dresden (1836), and Hermannsburg (1849). Societies were also founded in Denmark and in the North American states. These institutions all sent out missionaries to overseas colonies.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE MORAVIAN AND LONDON MISSIONARIES**

The pioneer missionaries in the Cape Colony were the Moravians of the *Brüdergemeine* of Herrnhut (1737-1743, resumed in 1792), who were zealous in establishing habits of industry in their congre-

gations and teaching their converts trades.<sup>8</sup> They were followed by men of the London Missionary Society in 1796, missionaries of a different stamp who were less interested in encouraging their converts to work, and some of whom attempted to adapt themselves to the culture of the Khoikhoi/"coloured" people rather than impose European standards on them. The Londoners, notably Dr J.T. van der Kemp, James Read and Dr John Philip, championed the cause of the Khoikhoi in the colony against their white masters, securing a greater measure of justice and freedom for them. In the process they antagonized a large section of the white colonists who resented the false accusations brought against some of their number and the loss of what they regarded as proper control of their servants. They also feared - not without reason - that greater freedom of movement for the Khoikhoi would lead to vagrancy, theft of their property and insecurity in the colony. To many Boers, particularly in the eastern parts, the term *zendeling* (missionary), as applied to the Londoners, became synonymous with enemy and intriguer against their interests, but most were not opposed to mission work as such.<sup>9</sup>

The anger of most white colonists against Philip was fuelled by his book *Researches in South Africa* which appeared in 1828. An indictment of the colonists and local officials, this work also contained serious inaccuracies. Enjoying the support of influential liberal philanthropists in England as he did, the zealous

superintendent manipulated the strings of power and played an important part in the formulation of policy for the government of the colony in London. Largely as a result of his influence, a Select Committee on Aborigines of the House of Commons brought out a report in 1835 which portrayed the indigenes of South Africa as virtuous and peaceable people who were oppressed and goaded to acts of retaliation and revenge by continual depredations and annexations of territory on the part of the white colonists and officials. The Frontier War of 1834-35 in particular was regarded as having had such causes, and the forceful measures taken by Governor D'Urban at its conclusion were reversed by the Colonial Secretary in London, Lord Glenelg. In their place a system of treaties was instituted which would prove a costly failure to all concerned. The more balanced opinion of Wesleyan, Glasgow, Moravian and even other London missionaries actually working in the Xhosa territories was ignored in favour of that of Philip.<sup>10</sup>

### **CONFLICT BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER**

The conflict on the eastern frontier of the colony between the colonists and the Xhosa was one for which there was no easy solution. Both parties were pastoralists, but they had differing conceptions of land ownership. The Xhosa regarded land as community property, while the whites practised individual ownership. Competition for pasture very soon led to friction. Attempts were made

by the Cape government to define boundaries between the colony and Xhosaland, but these were not respected and inter-group tensions led to wars between the colony and the Xhosa and to the inexorable shifting of the boundary further and further eastwards as the Xhosa lost ground to the Europeans. So great were the differences between the two groups - in race, culture and religion - that almost no social absorption on either side took place, despite the fact that Xhosa worked for white frontiersmen from an early date. Xhosa stock-theft and intimidatory begging posed a threat to the very existence of the white farmers, while there were also raids on Xhosa cattle by whites, albeit on a much smaller scale. White farmers are also known to have abducted Xhosa children and sold them, as some also did with Khoisan children. The basic dispute, however, was about land and cattle. It is difficult to see how the Xhosa and the white colonists could ever have co-existed peacefully, given the land-hunger of the whites on the one hand and the need for new land for further Xhosa segmentation on the other.<sup>11</sup>

### **WESLEYAN MISSIONARIES IN XHOSALAND, THEMBULAND AND PONDOLAND**

The hunters and traders who were the first whites to penetrate Xhosaland, Thembuland and Pondoland were followed by missionaries who saw in the populous tribes of the south-eastern seaboard a vast field for evangelisation. Between 1820 and 1825 the Wesleyan William Shaw and his colleagues founded a chain of mission sta-

tions stretching from west to east, from the district of Albany (Grahamstown) almost to the boundary of present-day Natal. The stations became centres of Christian life and teaching which spearheaded the thrust of European cultural and political dominance into the region. The Western, Christian way of life, which included European dress, living in European-style cottages around a church, the adoption of individual land tenure and the European work ethic, cultivation by men, the use of the plough and irrigation furrows, as well as the abandonment of *ukulobola*, witchcraft and traditional ceremonies, increasingly undermined chiefly authority. The development of roads and transport, of trade with, and employment and government by whites - all these things, as time passed, drew the Xhosa ever further from their traditional roots.<sup>12</sup>

### **MISSIONARIES OF OTHER SOCIETIES IN THE CAPE COLONY**

The Methodist pioneers were followed by missionaries of other societies: the Glasgow society (later affiliated with the Free Church of Scotland), the United Presbyterian Church, the Rhenish and Berlin societies, and the Anglican Church. The first missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church was examined and admitted as such by the Cape Synod in 1826. Opposition in inland churches in particular to sharing Holy Communion with coloured people led the 1857 synod to adopt "temporarily" the policy of administering the sacrament separately to white and coloured people "as a result of the weakness of some". This led to the forming of separate con-

gregations and in 1881 to a separate synod. The Dutch Reformed Inland Mission expanded its work considerably after 1850.<sup>13</sup>

### **MISSIONARIES NORTH OF THE ORANGE RIVER**

Missionaries north of the Orange River had meanwhile been playing an important part in opening up the interior to Christian and European influences. Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society devoted half a century (1821-1870) to the Tswana at Kuruman. Missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society were invited by the astute chief Moshweshwe to settle among his people, the emerging Sotho nation. Moshweshwe allowed himself to be guided to some extent in political matters by the Frenchmen, who served him well. The Wesleyans, too, worked in the Orange-Vaal region after 1822.<sup>14</sup>

### **BERLIN MISSIONARIES ESTABLISH BETHANIEN**

While there were already Trekboers living with their herds in Trans-Orangia before the Great Boer Trek, they were relatively few in number. Large tracts of land were uninhabited except by Korana bands. It was among some of these Khoikhoi that the Berlin Missionary Society founded its first mission station Bethanien in 1834. The station, which survived repeated attempts by both Korana and Boers to claim its extensive lands, was consolidated and administered between 1836 and 1884 by Missionary C.F. Wuras. As the Great Trek brought white farmers to the area, the nomadic Korana trekked away westwards to the Vaal River, and Bethanien

became a mission station for the Tswana.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE GREAT BOER TREK**

The *Mfecane*, documented in part by the early missionaries north of the Orange River, set the stage for the settlement of whites on a large scale in Trans-Orangia by clearing huge areas of the Highveld of their black population.<sup>16</sup> Glenelg's reversal of the measures taken by D'Urban after the Frontier War of 1834-35 in the Cape Colony made many of the Boer frontiersmen decide to emigrate. In their despair of ever living peaceful lives unmolested in the region, they abandoned homes and farms and all that was familiar to them and ventured into the regions to the north which investigation had found apparently largely empty of black inhabitants. Between 1834 and 1840 some 15,000 Boers, later known as the Voortrekkers, left the eastern frontier region of the Cape Colony in tented ox-wagons with their herds and occupied lands in the Trans-Orange, the Trans-Vaal and Natal. In the wars on the northern and eastern Cape frontiers their colour prejudice, which had been a factor in inter-group relations in the colony for more than a century, had hardened. This prejudice was exacerbated by the experiences they were to have of violent conflict with the Ndebele and Zulu.<sup>17</sup> Militarily they could cope, but a greater problem presented itself in a peaceable form. Their arrival emboldened many of the earlier inhabitants who had fled the *Mfecane* to return or emerge from hiding, and soon the Trekkers found

themselves the overlords of black populations larger than their own. The reappearance of these people after the Trekkers had broken the power of the Ndebele and Zulu is clear evidence that the arrival of the whites was a deliverance to them. Their new overlords permitted some of them to live among them so as to provide cheap labour, while others congregated in areas unclaimed by white farmers. Another result of the Boer Trek was that black polities besides the Zulu and Ndebele could recover and continue to exist. Black population growth after the establishment of Boer (and later British) authority increased and has continued to increase ever since. Cannibalism was wiped out and those blacks retained on Boer farms were exposed to Western influences, just as the Khoisan had been in the Cape Colony. They, too, in time formed a class of *oorlams* people who often spoke Dutch/Afrikaans as well as their native tongue, and they, too, in their new, de-tribalized state, would prove receptive to Christian teaching by missionaries who came to Natal and the interior after 1838.<sup>18</sup>

### **THE ORANGE FREE STATE**

Besides Bethanien the Berlin Missionary Society established mission stations in the Orange Free State at Pniel on the Vaal River and at Adamshoop in the Jacobsdal district.<sup>19</sup> The Free Staters discouraged blacks from moving to their towns. Those in the service of white townspeople were accommodated in locations situated apart from the white residences. Vagrancy laws required blacks to carry passes if they wished to travel. Their freedom of movement

was further curtailed by restrictions placed on the number of blacks allowed on white farms. In 1856 a law was passed imposing stringent restrictions on the indenturing of black children. A hut tax, later replaced by a poll tax, placed pressure on blacks to work for whites.<sup>20</sup> The first mission work by Afrikaners in the territory was undertaken in Bloemfontein by Dominee Andrew Murray (Jun.) of the Dutch Reformed Church after 1849. Dominee A.A. Louw was another pioneer in this respect at Fauresmith after 1855.<sup>21</sup>

### **THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

In the South African Republic the Transvaalers had serious opposition to their authority to contend with from blacks, both on their borders and internally. Not only were there many groups of black people living in the area they regarded as belonging to their republic, but some of these groups proved to be formidable adversaries. As in Natal, large numbers of blacks had returned to the territory after the terror of the *Mfecane* was terminated, in this case by the defeat and expulsion of the Ndebele of Mzilikazi. In 1852 there were approximately 100,000 blacks and 15,000 whites living between the Limpopo and Vaal rivers. As in the Free State, the blacks were excluded from citizenship and the franchise in the South African Republic, and denied the right to own immovable property. Tribal lands belonged to the tribes and not to individuals. Blacks were expected to work for whites, and whites often lived by preference near concentrations of black in-

habitants for the sake of their labour. Besides paid workers, there were also indentured labourers, as in Natal and the Free State. A magistrate or field-cornet had to be satisfied that indentured children had been obtained lawfully, but the system was open to abuse and children were in fact often taken by force. This led to accusations of slavery, especially from the missionary David Livingstone.<sup>22</sup>

### **BERLIN MISSIONARIES IN THE TRANSVAAL**

Suspicious of the motives of British missionaries, the Transvaal *Volksraad* initially permitted only German missionaries to operate in their territory. The Hermannsburg society began work in the western Transvaal in 1858. The Berliners Merensky and Grützner attempted to settle among the Swazi in 1860, but the hostility of the chief Mswati forced them to withdraw hastily from Swaziland. They were given permission by the authorities of the South African Republic to do mission work among the Kopa in the eastern Transvaal, and founded the mission station Gerlachshoop near Lydenburg in the same year. Initially friendly, the chief Maleo soon opposed their activities and did his best to prevent his subjects from becoming Christians. He and many of his people were killed in a Swazi attack in 1864. Merensky and Endemann founded a mission station among the Pedi at Khalatlolu in 1861. A third station in the Transvaal, Phatametsane, was founded by Endemann in 1863, and a fourth at Ga Ratau, manned by Merensky and Sachse, in 1864. The Pedi chief Sekwate was well disposed towards the mis-

sionaries, but his son Sekhukhune persecuted their converts and forced missionaries and converts to flee his land in 1864. All four mission stations had to be abandoned. The fugitives found refuge on a farm bought for them by the missionaries in 1865 and aptly name Botshabelo (the Refuge). Here a fort, a church and dwellings for the missionaries were erected. For some years the Pedi and Kopa Christians lived in fear of attack by the Pedi or Ndebele, but Botshabelo survived to become the mother station of the Berlin Missionary Society in the Transvaal, a centre of education and Christian life. The "non-political" approach of the Berliners to mission work and the control they maintained over their converts won the approval of the Transvaal Boers.<sup>23</sup>

### **MISSION WORK BY THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE TRANSVAAL**

By the 1860s the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape had also begun to play a part in the evangelisation of the blacks living in the Transvaal, particularly among the Kgatla Tswana.<sup>24</sup>

The Boers in the northern republics, in accordance with their attitude of racial superiority and their policy of political domination over the blacks in their territories, also maintained social and religious segregation. Neither the Dutch Reformed Church nor the Gereformeerde Kerk and the Hervormde Kerk in the Transvaal would admit blacks to their ranks. The Gereformeerde Kerk (Doppers) did embark on mission work despite strong internal op-

position, but the members of the Hervormde Kerk were to oppose mission work strongly for many more decades.<sup>25</sup>

These were the conditions obtaining in the Cape Colony, Orange Free State and South African Republic when Prozesky arrived in South Africa in 1866. In the next chapter the interaction between black and white in Natal and Zululand will be more closely examined.

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## **CHAPTER 3 ZULULAND, NATAL AND THE NEWCASTLE DISTRICT, 1835-1866**

### **THE FIRST NATAL MISSIONARIES**

Attempts were made to christianize the Zulu even before the arrival of the Boer Trekkers in Natal. Captain A.F. Gardiner was in Natal for this purpose from 1835 to 1838. Six missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, namely Newton Adams, George Champion, Aldin Grout, Daniel Lindley, Alex.E. Wilson and H.L. Venable, came to the territory during the same period with the intention of converting the Zulu. Rev. Francis Owen of the Church Missionary Society in England went to the Zulu capital eMgungundlovu itself, where for some months he acted as secretary to the Zulu king Dingane while attempting to teach the rudiments of Christianity. The king showed little interest, except in the use of firearms. Owen, who would not oblige him in this respect, was already in disfavour when the king ordered the murder of the visiting Boer leader Retief and his party in February 1838. After some days of great anxiety, the clergyman and his party left the capital and made their way to Port Natal. Dingane let them go unmolested, but the war which followed between the Zulu and the whites in Natal and their black followers made the missionaries decide to abandon mission work among the Zulu. All of them left Natal, some never to return.<sup>1</sup>

## **THE ZULU-BOER WAR, 1838-1840, AND THE REPUBLIC OF NATALIA**

Eleven days after the murder of Retief, Zulu warriors attacked the unsuspecting Trekkers encamped along the Bushmans and Bloukrans Rivers, massacring approximately 500 people and seizing 25,000 head of cattle and thousands of sheep and horses before being beaten off by the main body of Trekkers in fortified wagon laagers. Neither women nor children were spared. This trauma was to leave a scar on the Boer memory and to plant a distrust of the Zulu so deep in the mind of Natal whites that its results would be felt for generations.

The Boers under a new commander, Andries Pretorius, avenged their dead when they defeated the Zulu impis decisively at Blood River on 16th December 1838. Pretorius invaded Zululand and drove Dingane from his capital. A second invasion in 1840, with the aid of Dingane's disaffected brother Mpande and a large Zulu force, expelled the king from his country. He was put to death by the Swazi.<sup>2</sup> No Boer reprisals were taken against Zulu women and children, but a number of Zulu children were taken as "apprentices", 41,000 head of cattle were seized by the Boers in compensation of their losses, and the territory between the Tugela and Black Umfolozi rivers was annexed.<sup>3</sup> The defeat of the Zulu opened the way for the establishment of the Boer Republic of Natalia in 1838. Mpande was recognized as the new Zulu king, but as a vassal to the Boers. The town of Pietermaritzburg was laid out as the Boer

capital. Recognition of the milder rule of the Boers was provided by the reappearance in Natal of thousands of its former black inhabitants who had been in hiding or in exile during the reigns of Shaka and Dingane in Zululand.<sup>4</sup> The Boers attempted to regulate white-black relations according to their own convictions: through differentiation between the races, allowing the blacks among them no status but that of servants, and segregating the "surplus" black population from the white component territorially.<sup>5</sup>

### **THE BRITISH SEIZURE OF NATAL**

The republic was short-lived. The British Government consistently refused to recognize the Boer state, maintaining that the Boer emigrants remained British subjects. The decision of the *Volksraad* in August 1841 to relocate thousands of blacks south of Natal alarmed the Cape Governor, Sir George Napier, who feared a destabilization of the Cape's eastern frontier. He also feared that foreign powers might gain a foothold in Natal if the Boers continued to hold Port Natal. Representations by missionaries that the blacks needed protection against the Boers strengthened his resolve to intervene. Natal was consequently taken from the Boers by force in 1842 and became a separate district of the Cape Colony in 1845. Large numbers of Trekkers, including Pretorius, trekked once more, settling in the Orange-Vaal territory and in the Trans-Vaal. Only some sixty Boer families remained in Natal, which became a separate British colony in 1856.<sup>6</sup>

## **BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE BLACK POPULATION**

When Natal was wrested from the Boers by the British in 1842, Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for War and Colonies, defined what would not be tolerated in the territory: slavery, private parties raiding into adjacent territories, and any distinction of colour, origin, race or creed. The first two intentions were honoured, but the realities of the situation made distinctions between white and black, and black and black, unavoidable. Henry Cloete, the commissioner sent to Natal from the Cape by the British to implement this policy, dismissed the Boer plan to settle most of the Natal blacks to the south of the territory. Instead, he wished to confirm blacks with well-founded claims in the possession of their lands and place the remainder in scattered locations. Humane superintendents would keep order and dispense justice, and missionaries would be encouraged to work in the locations.<sup>7</sup>

## **SHEPSTONE AND THE LOCATION SYSTEM**

Martin West, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Natal (1845-49), appointed three commissioners, William Stanger, Newton Adams and Theophilus Shepstone, to settle the blacks in suitable locations. Shepstone was the dominant person in the commission and, as Diplomatic Agent to the Natives from 1846 and Secretary for Native Affairs from 1853, was to bear almost sole responsibility for the government of the territory's black inhabitants for almost thirty years. There were some 100,000 blacks as opposed to only 2,500

whites in the colony in 1845 and immigration from Europe was never to alter this disproportion significantly. The commission recommended direct white rule of the locations through magistrates with wide powers, but the Colonial Office in London insisted for reasons of economy that the blacks should be ruled by their traditional chiefs. Shepstone protested in vain and had to improvise the management of the Natal blacks with the means at his disposal.<sup>8</sup>

An unhappy result of chiefly rule in the locations was that Natal henceforth had two systems of law: English Law and customary Native Law. In time this proved to be a problem for Christians in particular, the so-called *kholwa* or believers on mission reserves and elsewhere, who found themselves suspended between two worlds and two judicial systems. Educated blacks who lived in the European style could apply for exemption from subordination to Native Law and thus to Shepstone's administration, but only a few score actually succeeded in being granted this exemption. Laws made in 1864 and 1865 to regulate this process ensured by their complexity that few blacks would become enfranchised citizens.<sup>9</sup>

The white colonists of Natal received a measure of self-government in 1856 when a Legislative Council with a majority of elected representatives was instituted. This body regularly expressed opposition to the continued existence of the large locations and mission reserves. The colonists whom it represented feared the

concentration of large numbers of blacks in these places and also wished to see those living there in traditional style forced to work for them. Shepstone, the African-born son of a missionary, had a thorough knowledge of the Nguni languages and knew the people he worked with intimately. Although an advocate of firm government of the blacks, he knew that the stability of the colony depended on satisfactory black access to land, and his system protected them from dispossession as long as they submitted to his overall authority. He did accede to requests by the white colonists for black labour through various measures. In 1852 he remitted the taxes of blacks in white employ, and a Refugee Law passed in 1854 made black immigrants liable to three years of service at fixed wages. Nevertheless it was Shepstone and Lieutenant-Governor Scott who created the Natal Native Trust in 1864, thus reserving all location land in trust for the black population as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

To control the reserves in the absence of magistrates and an effective police force, Shepstone applied the principle of tribal responsibility. This meant that every chief was responsible for criminal actions performed by members of his tribe, and every tribe was responsible for the misdemeanours of its chief. Chiefs who refused to hand over felons to colonial justice were liable to any punishment Shepstone saw fit to impose. Similarly, any tribe which harboured a disobedient chief could suffer punishment

collectively for doing so. To make the system work, Shepstone had to create chiefs where there were none. In mission reserves elected or appointed chiefs reported to local magistrates.<sup>11</sup>

A practical problem which plagued the system was that the boundaries of reserves and locations did not always coincide with those of magisterial districts. Tribes also tended to fragment across such boundaries. As a remedy, *izinduna* (councillors) were appointed as deputies for their chiefs in scattered tribal units. All blacks were also required to carry passes when crossing district boundaries.<sup>12</sup>

The system of tribal responsibility succeeded to a large extent in keeping the chiefs submissive to colonial authority, probably because it was the kind of system they were familiar with from pre-colonial times. Shepstone made examples of various fractious chiefs much as a black paramount might have done, and these salutary examples sufficed to cow the other chiefs. Offences punished included raids on other groups, the insulting of Shepstone's messengers, refusals to obey summonses, and refusals to hand over people accused of murdering alleged witches/wizards. Fines of cattle were imposed on lesser chiefs, but the chiefs Sidoyi and Matshana were attacked and their people scattered in 1856. Sidoyi fled across the southern border of Natal and Matshana escaped to Zululand.<sup>13</sup> These measures may seem harsh and indiscriminate to modern observers, as indeed they were, but the consequences of

tolerating chiefly disobedience might have been a chaos ruinous to all the inhabitants of the colony. Shepstone's system and his actions must be weighed not only against an ideal of perfect justice unattainable on earth, but also - and more fairly - against the justice it was possible to dispense under the conditions prevailing at the time.

By virtue of his office, Shepstone was also responsible for Natal's relations with the independent Sotho, Mpondo and Zulu on the borders of the colony. He was an imperialist, expansionist and white supremacist at heart, but was never to be given the opportunity of expanding the colony to include any of the adjacent black territories. His self-confident and hectoring approach did keep Natal's borders free of conflict during his long term of office, but his interference in the affairs of Zululand may be seen as the precursor of the British conquest of that country in 1879.<sup>14</sup>

### **CHRISTIAN MISSION WORK IN NATAL AND ZULULAND**

By 1842 Natal had 42 locations covering over 2,000,000 acres, and 21 mission reserves covering almost 175,000 acres. Approximately two-thirds of the black population of the territory lived outside these areas, however, on crown and private land. It was in the reserves and locations of Shepstone's Natal and in the towns of the young colony that Christian mission work was undertaken between 1844 and 1866 on a scale possibly unequalled anywhere else

in the world. Thirty-six mission stations were founded in the colony during this period. Fifteen more were established in Zululand. This was the state of affairs when Prozesky arrived in South Africa. Another fifteen mission stations in Natal and seven in Zululand were to be founded between 1867 and 1877. This work, begun with high expectations by missionaries of various missionary societies, encountered strong resistance from the blacks of Natal and Zululand. By 1880 - forty-five years after the first attempt made by Gardiner - Christian blacks in Natal numbered not more than 10,000, considerably less than 10% of the total black population. In Zululand the converts to Christianity were numbered in hundreds.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES**

If Gardiner and Owen who withdrew permanently from Natal and Zululand are discounted, it was the Americans who pioneered this work. Adams and Grout returned to Natal after the fall of Dingane. Their second attempt to penetrate Zululand was thwarted when Mpande broke up Grout's station in 1842, seeing it as a threat to his own supremacy. Lindley ministered to the Boers in Natal for six years before returning to the service of the American Board in 1847. By 1850 the Americans had founded twelve stations near the coast in northern and central Natal and had fourteen missionaries at work on these stations. A further two stations were established near the Natal south coast after 1850.<sup>16</sup> As Etherington points out, the Americans wished initially to con-

vert not individuals but nations, and they were reluctant to attempt to christianize blacks living among white settlers. Once they had encountered the strong Nguni resistance to conversion, however, they altered their opinion and began to look to white (British) imperialism as a means of overcoming this resistance. Aldin Grout prayed continually for the extinction of the Zulu nation, recognizing that the Zulu state kept the Zulu tied into the fabric of Nguni religion and custom and hostile or indifferent to Christianity. Nevertheless, the Americans did important work in Natal, especially in the field of education. Their secondary schools, for boys at Amanzimtoti (Umlazi) and for girls at Inanda, were the best for blacks in Natal for many years. The Americans were also prominent in the translation of the Bible into Zulu.<sup>17</sup>

### **THE BERLIN MISSIONARIES IN NATAL**

The Americans were followed in the Natal mission field by German missionaries of the Berlin society. Wilhelm Posselt, Ludwig Döhne and Friedrich Güldenpfennig, who had been forced to leave Kaffraria during the War of the Axe in 1846, came to Natal at the invitation of Shepstone in 1847 and founded the mission station Emmaus in the Khahlamba location near present-day Bergville where Zikhali, the chief of the Ngwane (settled here beneath the Drakensberg by Pretorius), had requested that a missionary be sent to his people. The talented linguist Döhne left the service of

the Berlin Missionary Society to be Lindley's successor as minister to the Boers in Pietermaritzburg. In 1849 he joined the American Board. He published a good Zulu-English dictionary and played a part in the translation of the Bible into Zulu. He returned to the service of the Berlin society in 1861 to devote himself chiefly to the task of Bible-translation, only to resign again in 1871. Posselt accepted an invitation by the German settlers of New Germany near Durban to be their pastor in 1849. He combined this office with mission work among the local blacks. He and fifty black adherents moved to Emmaus in 1852, but returned to found the mission station Christianenburg adjacent to New Germany in 1854. Posselt became chairman and later superintendent of the Berlin mission in Natal and served in this capacity until his death in 1885. For this reason, and because of its proximity to the coast and harbour, Christianenburg became the mother station for the Berliners in Natal. In 1852 Gldenpfennig, too, resigned from the Berlin society, to become minister to the Boers at Weenen. It was left to a new arrival, Carl Zunckel, to devote a lifetime of work (1850-1899) to Emmaus. Gldenpfennig returned briefly to the service of the Berlin society - but only long enough to found a third Berlin station, Stendal, in 1858. The name Stendal was transferred to a new location nearby in the hot thornbush country near Weenen in 1860. This mission station was manned temporarily by Missionaries Albert Neizel and Carl Nauhaus, and then by Adolf Schumann for almost a third of a century

(1865-1897). Emangweni, a fourth mission station, was founded by Neizel among the amaNgwe of Phuthini, also in the Khahlamba Location, in 1863. Neizel laboured here until 1896 - for a full third of a century. The work of the Berliners on these four stations had not as yet borne much fruit when Prozesky and his colleagues Glöckner and Richter arrived in Natal in 1866.<sup>18</sup>

### **THE METHODIST MISSIONARIES**

The Methodist James Archbell ministered to the whites in Natal as early as 1842, but the Wesleyans commenced mission work among the blacks of the territory only in 1847. The pioneers of this mission were W.C. Holden and James Allison. Holden began gathering converts near Durban. Allison, who like Holden had formerly been active in Trans-Orangia (from 1832), attempted to bring the Christian gospel to the Swazi in 1844. Accompanied by his wife and twelve Sotho assistants, he established himself at Mahamba near the kraal of the great chief Mswati. His reception was most friendly and he was soon preparing thirty converts for baptism, but then disaster struck. The adherents of one of Mswati's brothers, a rival claimant to the chieftainship, had assembled around the mission station. To eliminate them, Mswati, assisted by a Boer contingent, attacked the station in 1847. His warriors massacred men, women and children, sparing only the whites and two or three girls whom Mrs Allison succeeded in covering with part of her clothing. Deeply shocked, the Allison family led their Swazi converts in a migration to Natal, settling at Indaleni. Alli-

son subsequently founded the Edendale mission station near Pietermaritzburg in 1851. Six other stations were founded by Wesleyans before 1874. With the exception of Driefontein in the north and Upper Umzimkulu in the south, all these stations were in central Natal. The Wesleyans made swifter progress than other societies because they baptized quickly without lengthy preparation and because they allowed black lay-preachers to travel about the colony with considerable freedom.<sup>19</sup>

### **THE NORWEGIAN MISSIONARIES**

The Norwegian Missionary Society in the person of Hans Schreuder attempted to commence mission work in Zululand in 1844, but was initially refused permission to do so by Mpande. Schreuder went to China, but returned to South Africa in 1848. He was joined by three countrymen and colleagues, Oftebro, Larsen and Udland, and their first mission station was founded near the Zululand border at Mpumulo in 1850. Shortly after this, Schreuder treated Mpande for some illness. The king recovered and in gratitude invited Schreuder and his society to come to Zululand. Six mission stations were founded before 1866, followed by five more by 1882 - all in Zululand. Progress was very slow, as Mpande allowed attendance at Christian services but nothing more. Converts came mainly from among the Zulu servants of the missionaries. By 1873 the number of baptized Christians amounted to only 245.<sup>20</sup>

## **THE HERMANNSBURG MISSIONARIES**

A third major Lutheran mission to south-east Africa was launched by followers of Ludwig Harms of Hermannsburg in Germany. Harms believed that entire Christian communities of celibate men should be planted in heathen countries to serve as models of Christian life and to act as leaven to the non-Christians around them. They were to live a sort of democratic socialism through equality and community of property. The first missionaries and artisans were intended for Gallaland in East Africa, but failed to reach the Galla and settled in Natal instead, founding the station Hermannsburg in 1854. Six further stations were established in Natal before 1866, all of them in the Natal midlands. Seven stations were founded in Zululand before 1866, five of them clustered near the coast of central Zululand and two inland in the far north of the territory. Four more stations were founded in Natal after 1866 and two more in far northern Zululand. The Hermannsburgers thus had four distinct areas of activity in Natal-Zululand. They soon discovered that celibacy and the communal mission settlement did not work, and their mission stations came to be manned by individual married men scattered like those of other societies. The concentration of the Hermannsburg stations in large black locations and in Zululand where there was no material incentive for people to attach themselves to them and much to discourage them from doing so, made the work of the Hermannsburg missionaries more difficult and their congregations smaller than those

of other societies. In 1862 there were only 25 baptized converts at Hermannsburg. Like their colleagues in other societies, the Hermannsburgers soon discovered that their white and black congregations had to be separated for practical reasons, particularly for reasons of language and culture.<sup>21</sup>

### **THE ROMAN CATHOLICS**

The Roman Catholic Church made no theoretical distinction between mission work among blacks and among whites. Bishop Jean Francois Allard of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate came to Natal with a band of French village priests in 1852. They founded a mission station with the name S. Michel near Richmond in 1856 and set about preaching orthodox Roman Catholic doctrine with no allowances for Nguni custom or tradition. Thus they refused to tolerate polygyny or *ukulobola*, regarding the latter as female slavery. Converts were baptized only after a long and strictly monitored probation. There was little response and the mission station was given up, but then re-established. Allard attempted to use access to land as a lever to persuade the blacks to attend his sermons, but without success. A section of the people moved away as a result of inter-tribal tensions. Allard followed them in 1860 and a second mission station with the name Notre Dame de Sept Doleurs was founded. But here, too, success eluded the bishop, and he left the "hard-hearted" Nguni to minister to the "simpler, poorer" people of Basutoland.<sup>22</sup>

## **MISSION WORK BY THE ANGLICANS**

A very different approach was followed by Natal's first Anglican bishop, John William Colenso, who arrived in the colony in 1853 and established the first Anglican mission station Ekukhanyeni (Bishopstowe) near Pietermaritzburg in 1855. Colenso held views enlightened far beyond those of most of his fellow Christians. In various printed works he questioned the literal truth of parts of the Bible and rejected the notion of hell and damnation as inconsistent with the fatherly love of God. As a result, his own church found him guilty of heresy and attempted to depose him in 1863. A successful appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London in 1864 enabled him to retain his bishopric, but split the church in Natal. W.K. Macrorie was appointed "Bishop of Maritzburg" by Bishop Gray in Cape Town and enjoyed the support of some of the Natal clergy and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Colenso was cut off from funds with which he might have implemented his plans for extensive mission work in Natal. It was his view that the Nguni should be weaned gradually and sympathetically from their "heathen" way of life, with the retention of what was "good" in that life. Accordingly, although polygynists would not be eligible for offices in the church, he did not require polygynist converts to renounce polygyny and dismiss all but one of their wives. With his friend Shepstone, Colenso planned to establish numerous mission stations in the native reserves, but few of these ever came

into being. Besides Ekukhanyeni, where he started a school for the sons of chiefs, only four stations were established in Natal before 1866. Two mission stations were founded in Zululand during the same period, both in the central part of the country. Three further Anglican mission stations in Natal and two in Zululand came into being after 1866, some of them founded by the opposing faction.

Despite Colenso's accommodating approach, the Nguni failed to respond any more favourably to his teaching than to that of most other missionaries. The boarding school for the sons of Zulu notables at Ekukhanyeni closed in 1861 after only five years, and some of Colenso's celebrated converts reverted to the traditional Nguni way of life. The printing operation at Bishopstowe remained important for the dissemination of Christian literature in Zulu, but by 1880 the station had a congregation of only 86, with 20 communicants, and a day school with 79 pupils.<sup>23</sup>

The Rev. Henry Callaway, one of Colenso's lieutenants, also approached the christianization of the Nguni with open-mindedness and sympathy. Initially he believed that the influence of the whites was corrupting to the traditionalist blacks, but his experiences in the mission field made him change his mind. He was repulsed by the conservatism of the Zulu and by their lack of interest in Christianity, progressive farming methods and manual skills. He came to see polygyny and *ukulobola*, the mainstay of

the Zulu economy, as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of the mission. By 1866 he was recommending that every mission station be surrounded by white settlers. Not surprisingly, he was to see the British invasion of Zululand in 1879 as a "God-sent power" to effect the necessary change.<sup>24</sup>

The first Anglican missionary to Zululand, the Rev. Robert Robertson, similarly attempted to work through rather than against traditional Nguni society. His hopes were pinned on influencing Mpande's heir Cetshwayo, but he was unable to achieve even recognition of Christian converts as loyal subjects of the Zulu monarch. The mission stations in Zululand remained isolated from the Zulu people at large. In his disappointment, Robertson, too, came to desire the destruction of the Zulu kingdom. He was to supply the British authorities with information during the crisis which would lead to war in 1879, and he was to join the invading British forces as chaplain.<sup>25</sup>

### **OTHER MISSIONARIES**

The only other denominations to undertake mission work in Natal and Zululand during the 19th century were the Scottish Presbyterian Church, the Swedish Lutherans and the Dutch Reformed Church. The Presbyterians entered the field when James Allison was expelled from the Methodist ministry and accepted an invitation to affiliate himself with the Free Church of Scotland in 1867. Scottish missionaries joined him and two stations were

founded in northern Natal.<sup>26</sup> The Swedes came to Natal only in the late seventies and initially established only one mission station - at Rorke's Drift in northern Natal on the Zululand border.<sup>27</sup>

The Dutch Reformed Church started mission work at Ladysmith in 1858 and at Greytown in 1869.<sup>28</sup>

### **NGUNI RESISTANCE TO CHRISTIANITY**

Nguni resistance to Christianity in Natal differed from that in Zululand only in that traditionalist blacks living under white authority could oppose the new teaching with the combined force of their collective opinion alone, whereas in Zululand the state could and did act to limit missionary activity. The initial curiosity of the Nguni brought them in large numbers to listen to the missionaries, but their interest was soon replaced by hostility or indifference. Many asked shrewd and sceptical questions about the Bible and Christian theology. Their traditional concept of right and wrong differed from the righteousness and sin taught by the Christian Europeans. At an early stage they recognized that the new religion posed a danger to their traditional way of life, and powerful community pressure was brought to bear on would-be converts. Magic and even physical force were sometimes used to keep them away from the missionaries. There was much anxiety about the missionaries' condemnation of *ukulobola*, which was the cement of Nguni society. Its removal, they sensed, would change both their social and economic worlds irrevocably. For most Nguni, the missionaries simply asked too much of them and offered

earthly rewards too scant to warrant conversion. For Nguni men and chiefs in particular, embracing Christianity meant the loss of their authority, of their role as "priests" in their ancestor cult, and of most of their cherished privileges. Only those already detribalized and seeking a place in the new white-dominated order could be tempted by material considerations to become Christians. In the early years only a relatively small number of the northern Nguni felt a genuine spiritual attraction to Christian teaching.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, chiefs in Natal asked for missionaries with surprising frequency. They appear to have had three main motives for doing so: to strengthen their position in relation to powerful neighbours, to improve relations with white authorities, and to obtain certain welfare services. Missionaries came to serve as intermediaries between the chiefs and the colonial authorities. They also helped chiefs to purchase land. Traditionalist blacks often expected them to make rain or heal the sick through prayer, which they regarded as magic - requests which embarrassed the missionaries who taught that all things were possible through prayer but could nevertheless not guarantee answers to prayer. Those who had medical training gained access to potential converts through the practice of medicine and the extraction of teeth. The missionaries also proved useful to black communities by introducing European technology such as the plough. Literacy,

which could be gained in mission schools, was also desired, but the indoctrination in Christianity which took place in these institutions made black traditionalists unwilling to undergo or allow their children to undergo instruction. Greater interest in education became noticeable in the late 1860s, but the general opposition to Christianity continued. A lack of proper discipline at some mission stations led to immorality among the inhabitants, which gave mission stations in general a bad name and caused traditionalists to distance themselves from the *kholwa*.<sup>30</sup>

In Zululand the Christian missions were even more isolated than in Natal. Very little had been achieved by the Norwegians, Hermannsburgers and Anglicans by 1866 - or indeed by 1879. Mpande and his son Cetshwayo appear to have sanctioned the establishment of mission stations in the 1860s largely for political purposes: to enhance prestige and influence in their extraordinary rivalry and in the question of the succession, and as a defence against the Boers on their northern border. Both rulers were openly opposed to Christianity, however, and Zulus who became Christians lost the right to *khonza*, i.e. to give allegiance to the king. The Zulu regarded the *kholwa* with contempt, calling them *kafula* (kaffirs). Baptisms could only take place with the permission of the ruler, and converts were more often removed violently from the mission stations than in Natal.<sup>31</sup>

## **THE KHOLWA**

Most of the traditionalists who went to live on mission stations did so of their own volition. Exceptions were children entrusted to the care of the missionary for various reasons (sometimes for their safety), cast-off wives and the elderly or infirm whose relatives could or would no longer care for them. The refugee laws also brought less than willing apprentices to the mission stations. Minor criminals and their dependants were assigned to mission stations by magistrates to relieve pressure on the colony's goals. Besides those who came voluntarily because they had a genuine spiritual interest in Christianity, there were many who came for the sake of wages and access to land. Others took refuge on the stations to escape distasteful arranged marriages, or fled to the missionaries for safety after being smelt out as witches or wizards. In some cases missionaries even paid the *ilobolo* required to free girls from the insistence of their families that they marry unwelcome suitors. Children, too, were sometimes paid for by missionaries to ensure that they be brought up as Christians. More rare were those who sought the help of missionaries to escape a calling to be diviners. A strong component of *oorlams* blacks and people of Khoikhoi or San descent was attracted to many mission stations. Their familiarity with European ways made their acceptance of Christianity relatively easy.<sup>32</sup>

Despite being held in contempt by the traditionalist Nguni as well as by many white colonists, the *kholwa* advanced rapidly,

materially and educationally, especially in the 1860s and 1870s. Living in European-style houses, wearing European clothes and using goods of European manufacture, they became part of the worldwide capitalist economy. As the dignity of labour was recognized and the Christian and European work ethic was accepted, men took over cultivation from women and began to plough, and the traditional subsistence economy of the Nguni was replaced by the market-orientated production of commodities, particularly of maize. In this way a black peasantry emerged in Natal. Many *kholwa* acquired ox-wagons and became traders and transport-riders and, with increasing prosperity, owners of land. Some combined these vocations with that of evangelist, catechist and, later, minister of religion. In the coastal areas black Christians planted sugarcane, initially with help from missionaries and the government but also independently, and co-operated in erecting mills to process it. Remarkably few *kholwa* became artisans such as blacksmiths, shoemakers and wagon-builders, as they experienced difficulty securing employment in these trades in competition with whites and at the rates whites were paid for the same work. There was more money to be made in trading, farming and transport. When Natal experienced its first major economic depression between 1865 and 1869, the *kholwa* and other blacks had their first taste of involuntary unemployment.<sup>33</sup>

Not all *kholwa* accepted European Christianity to the total exclu-

sion of Nguni customs and beliefs. Thus the inhabitants of mission stations sometimes attended traditional dances and beer-drinks and smoked dagga. Many also continued to believe in witchcraft, in the ancestral spirits and in traditional Nguni medicine. Converts could be tempted to take part in traditional sexual practices regarded as licentious by white Christians, and many clung stubbornly to polygyny and *ukulobola* until the churches succeeded in stamping out these customs in their congregations. Even then mission-dwellers were often allowed to pay *ilobolo* for a non-Christian wife. As time passed, the *kholwa* on some mission stations were to assert an independent spirit, to press for self-administration and even to undertake mission work independent of their white missionaries. As early as 1863 *kholwa* leaders addressed a petition to Shepstone, denouncing Native Law and requesting English Law for their people. This request was to be repeated in 1875. These appeals may be seen as the beginnings of political consciousness among blacks and the forerunner of a black nationalism in South Africa which would cut across tribal divisions.<sup>34</sup>

### **INDIAN IMMIGRANTS**

By 1866 all the main components of the population of present-day Natal were in place. Indians had been brought to the colony as indentured labourers to work on the sugar plantations from 1860, and by 1866 some 6445 of them had arrived.<sup>35</sup>

## **HISTORY OF THE KLIP RIVER COUNTY**

At the time of Prozesky's arrival in 1866, there was only one mission station in Natal north of the Tugela; this was the Anglican mission at Ladysmith, founded by Wilhelm Illing, a former Berlin missionary, in 1858. The triangular territory between the Tugela, the Drakensberg in the west and the Buffalo or iNyati River in the east, some 10,500 square kilometres, formed the Klip River County and had been part of the British colony since 1845, despite an attempt made in 1847 by the Boers living in the region to establish a Klip River Republic under the sovereignty of the Zulu king Mpande. Won from the Zulu by conquest in 1838, the region had been part of the short-lived Republic of Natal until 1842. Prior to the rise of the Zulu state the land beneath the northern Natal Drakensberg had been inhabited by the eMbo Nguni Hlubi people. At some time between 1818 and 1821 the Hlubi were attacked and defeated by their eastern neighbours, the Ngwane under Matiwane, who were displaced in their turn by the Ndwandwe of Zwile from even further east. The Hlubi chief Mthimkhulu was killed and his chiefdom broken up. One group of Hlubi fled southward, joining the refugees known as the Mfengu in present-day Transkei; a remnant group remained in the Drakensberg foothills and was for a while incorporated in the Zulu state before moving to upper central Natal at the start of the colonial period; a third section of the Hlubi, led by Mpangazitha, fled up the Drakensberg onto the Highveld. Mpangazitha was followed in 1822 by

the Ngwane who had briefly occupied the Hlubi territory before being driven across the Drakensberg by a Zulu attack. The displaced Hlubi under Mpangazitha and the Ngwane under Matiwane formed the vanguard of the *Mfecane* which devastated large parts of the Highveld interior during the 1820s. After their departure from the later Klip River County, the region probably remained largely uninhabited for the duration of the reigns of Shaka and Dingane, forming part of a depopulated border zone maintained by the Zulu power. Small, isolated groups hid in the wooded kloofs of the mountains, not daring to cultivate crops or graze cattle on the more level lands below. Cannibalism occurred. When the land was settled by the Boer Trekkers, these fugitives and other Nguni emerged or returned from exile and entered the relatively more benign era of white domination. Less fortunate were the San who had lived in the area for centuries even before the coming of the Nguni. Harried by Nguni and European alike and deprived of their hunting livelihood by the shooting-out of the game by the white newcomers, they disappeared entirely as a free people during the 19th century and had long been gone from the northern Drakensberg at the time of Prozesky's coming.<sup>36</sup>

### **GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY OF THE LADYSMITH AND NEWCASTLE DIVISIONS**

Natal north of the Tugela and east of the Buffalo is divided physically in two by the Biggarsberg, a spur of the Drakensberg. To the south, drained by the northern tributaries of the Tugela,

lie the environs of Ladysmith; to the north those of Newcastle, drained by the western tributaries of the Buffalo. The two basins have relatively flat terrain, undulating grassy plains broken only by occasional hills, dongas and streams. The climate and the composition of the soil make arable farming possible but hazardous: there are frequent droughts and floods. Consequently the area is best suited to stock-farming. The grazing is not ideal, however. In the south-west between the thornveld and the highlands the tall grasses provide good grazing for about eight months in the year. North of the Biggarsberg the short grasses of the sour highland sandveld become unpalatable to cattle as the summer advances, providing good grazing for only five months of the year.<sup>37</sup>

### **THE BOER INHABITANTS**

These conditions dictated the size of white farms in the region. The Boer settlers knew the conditions well enough to claim large units. It was one of their grievances in 1847 that the British authorities considered their claims exorbitant. When they were seen to be leaving Natal in large numbers, the British administration changed its policy and allowed large land-grants of an average size of approximately 6000 acres. To accommodate the disgruntled Boers further, no locations for blacks were established in the territory except in the extreme south-eastern and south-western corners.<sup>38</sup> At the time of Prozesky's arrival there were already Boers with established farms in the Newcastle area, such

as the Adendorffs who had occupied Hope Farm to the south-west of the town as early as 1842.<sup>39</sup> A considerable number of Boers had also come to Natal from the Cape Colony between 1855 and 1857.<sup>40</sup>

### **BRITISH IMMIGRANTS AND THE FOUNDING OF LADYSMITH AND NEWCASTLE**

The town of Ladysmith was founded as an administrative, military and market centre in 1850. English-speaking immigrants came to play an important part in its growth as merchants, traders and inn-keepers; they also began to take up quitrent farms like the Boers. In 1862 the county was divided into two magisterial districts: the land to the north of the Biggarsberg became the new division of Newcastle, and a seat for the magistracy with the same name was founded near the road to the Transvaal in 1864. The first resident magistrate was Melmoth Osborn. At the time of Prozesky's arrival in Natal, Ladysmith was still only a village and Newcastle consisted of little more than a court-house, a store and a number of houses.<sup>41</sup>

### **BLACK AND WHITE IN THE NEWCASTLE DIVISION IN 1868**

A large portion of the Newcastle Division still consisted of "vacant" crown land at this time, especially along the Drakensberg slopes where grazing was poor, and to the east of Newcastle and in the iNgagane River valley where there were large numbers of blacks. More intensive white settlement of the district was to coincide with the founding and growth of Prozesky's mission station in and after 1868. The average size of farms was to be only

approximately 2000 acres, although there were some much larger units. The white population of the Newcastle Division was to overtake that of Klip River (Ladysmith) in the 1870s. Fully two-thirds of the whites were Boers. Relations between them and the English-speaking colonists and officials were cordial and inter-marriage took place, but the Boers were closer in culture and lifestyle to the Boers in the two republics, to whom many of them were related. The Natal Boers by their very presence in the colony accepted British rule and were reasonably content; their main grievances as perceived by Lieutenant-Governor Pine when he visited Klip River in 1850, and as set out in two memorials presented to him in 1854 and 1856, concerned restrictions affecting the acquisition of land, and the lack of proper control over the movement and settlement of blacks in the territory.<sup>42</sup> There were as yet no churches, clergy or schools in Newcastle and district at the time of the founding of Prozesky's mission station.

### **FARMING IN THE NEWCASTLE DIVISION**

Almost all the Boers were stock farmers who also cultivated grain crops on a limited scale - mainly maize, but also wheat and oats - for local consumption. In 1855 lung-sickness drastically reduced cattle-herds, but these were being built up again. Those who could afford it owned farms in the Orange Free State or Transvaal as well and moved their herds to the highveld in the summer, bringing them back for the milder Natal winters. Stock required

shelter and fodder even in the winters of northern Natal, however, and where these were not available there were often heavy stock losses. Transvaal and especially Free State Boers also bought or leased land in the two divisions of northern Natal for the purpose of wintering their stock. Sheep were kept, but in smaller numbers than cattle, and more in the Klip River division than in Newcastle. Goats were kept on the stonier, more arid parts of farms in the Newcastle district. Horses, which were susceptible to horse-sickness, especially in February and March, were also sometimes removed to the highveld of the neighbouring republics in late summer. Runaway fires when the grass was dry in the winter were a serious hazard to farmers and stock alike.<sup>43</sup>

### **COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE AND MINING**

Communications in northern Natal were still very poor in 1866. What roads there were, were little more than wagon-tracks, and no bridges over the Tugela, Sundays and Buffalo rivers existed. The rivers were frequently in flood in the rainy spring and summer months, and fording them then was often impossible or extremely hazardous. Both Ladysmith and Newcastle were involved in a modest trade in wool and hides from the republics and in the forwarding of manufactures and farm produce from Natal to the interior. As has been seen, a serious depression gripped Natal from 1865 to 1869, and this affected trade negatively and retarded the growth of the towns.<sup>44</sup>

Outcrops of coal of a superior quality were abundant, particularly in the eastern part of the Newcastle Division. The coal was being mined commercially on the farm Dundee by 1864, and by 1865 it was being sent by wagon for sale to Pietermaritzburg. It was also used locally by both blacks and whites as fuel.<sup>45</sup>

### **POLITICAL CONDITIONS**

The white settlers in the Ladysmith and Newcastle divisions lived in constant apprehension of danger from Zululand, which remained a powerful military state. The Boer Trekkers remembered the massacre of 1838 and harboured a deep distrust of the Zulu - and indeed of all blacks. Recurrent alarms in and on the borders of Zululand did little to allay their fears. Nevertheless, and ironically, some chose to live under Zulu rather than British overlordship. In 1848 Mpande granted grazing rights between the Buffalo and Blood rivers to die-hard Boers who refused to remain in British Natal. These Boers proclaimed the pocket Republic of Utrecht and lived in it, governing themselves somewhat insecurely under a Zulu sovereignty they would gladly have shaken off. On the northern border of Zululand there was friction between Boers of the South African Republic and the Zulu over land. Wars between white and black on the Orange Free State-Basutoland border (1865-66 and 1867) and in the South African Republic (1867) compounded the uneasiness felt by the whites in northern Natal.<sup>46</sup>

## **THE BLACK INHABITANTS**

The blacks in the Newcastle and Klip River divisions posed little threat to the white colonists. They consisted of very fragmented groups, forming no particularly large homogeneous concentrations, and lived scattered on crown land and on white-owned farms where they provided labour in return for the right to small-scale cultivation and stock-keeping. They, too, had unpleasant memories of Zulu domination and feared a Zulu invasion as much as their white masters or neighbours.<sup>47</sup> To the south-west of Newcastle there was a considerable black population of Swazi extraction settled below the Drakensberg. These people under the chief-regent Mafofe or his father Nyamayenja had apparently left Swaziland after the attack on Allison's mission station in 1847; they knew Allison and spoke appreciatively of him.<sup>48</sup> Essentially pastoralists, they lived in the time-honoured Nguni manner in hemispherical huts of woven grass, keeping cattle and goats which they slaughtered for ritual purposes and for food. A breed of sheep, good only for eating, with dark-brown hair mingled with scanty wool, was also kept. The Swazi/Zulu women traditionally cultivated crops, and cattle remained the measure of wealth and the currency used by the men as *ilobolo*.<sup>49</sup> It was to bring the Christian message to the people of Mafofe that Prozesky came to found his mission station in 1868. The site chosen lay beneath the indigenous forest called the uMlumbe, close to the headwaters of the iNcandu and uMpondo (Horn) rivers, at the foot of the Drakensberg.

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16. Grout, L., *Zulu-Land*, 209-221  
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**PART 2**

**THE LIFE OF J.J.A. PROZESKY**

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DESCENT AND EARLY LIFE**

#### **THE PROZESKIS OF BRANDENBURG, EAST PRUSSIA**

The origins of the Prozesky family are obscure. The records of the Lutheran church in the market town of Brandenburg in the district of Heiligenbeil, East Prussia, when they still existed, traced the family back only as far as 1730. The tailor Johann Prozetzke whose marriage was recorded at that date<sup>1</sup> was not a native of East Prussia but had apparently come from Poland as a fugitive from religious or political persecution of some sort.<sup>2</sup> His son, grandson and great-grandson were all craftsmen in Brandenburg: a master tailor, a carpenter and a master shoemaker respectively. His great-great-grandson Johannes Julius August Prozesky was born in Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, on 18th July 1840, the first child of the master shoemaker Johann Gottfried Prozeski (1806-1880) and Anna Maria Prozeska, born Böhm, (1812-1876).<sup>3</sup> August's parents were devout church-goers whose home, as he described it, was "governed by the spirit of prayer".<sup>4</sup> They had three further children, Johanna Caroline (1843-1855), Johann Carl (1846-1927) and Johann Friedrich (1850-1895). Although Gottfried spent his best years at the shoemaker's last, he and his wife ran an infant school in later life, from 1856 to 1876.<sup>5</sup>

During the years 1847-53 the Prozeskis were often in need, as work was scarce and the necessities of life were expensive. On

occasion Gottfried had to leave his family and look for work elsewhere. When August was not quite 12 years old the same circumstances obliged him to leave home as well and to work as a cattle-herd for strangers. He was badly treated, but prayer to God in the lonely hours he had to spend with only the beasts for company helped to make tolerable the unhappy summer he spent in service. He returned to his family and resumed his schooling.<sup>6</sup>

### **APPRENTICESHIP IN KÖNIGSBERG**

August was confirmed on 24th September 1854. His schooling probably ended in 1854 or 1855. Possessing artistic talent, he was apprenticed to the artist and house-painter R. Reissner in Königsberg in March 1855. Reissner, who was harsh and anti-Christian, must nevertheless have had his apprentice's interests at heart. He showed examples of August's drawing ability to a merchant named Rast, who in turn showed them to the director of the Königsberg Academy of Painters, Dr Rosenfelder. Rosenfelder offered the young Prozesky free tuition at the Academy. Rast in his turn was prepared to give him the necessary drawing and painting materials for the entire course. To his sorrow August was unable to accept these generous offers: his parents were too poor to pay for food, lodging and clothing for him in the city.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE JOURNEYMAN PAINTER**

August's apprenticeship thus ran its full course of five years. On 1st May 1860 he embarked on the next phase of training in his

chosen craft and set off on his travels as a journeyman, traveling by rail, fourth class, to Danzig and then continuing westward on foot. At Stolp in Pomerania he took service for a few weeks with the master painter Buckow. It was while he was working here that the direction of Prozesky's life was changed dramatically. Drenched in a thunderstorm, he became seriously ill and lay in his attic room, unable to get up or take any food. In this condition he prayed fervently and read the Acts of the Apostles in his little New Testament. The book seemed to have new meaning for him and, kneeling beside his bed, he entered into a covenant with God, promising that if he recovered he would become a missionary "to the heathen". Returning to his bed, he slept for an hour and then awoke feeling weak but quite well. He knelt once more to thank God for healing him and to ask for help in keeping his vow. Then he dressed and went downstairs to return to work. His master insisted that he rest that day, which he did, but the next day he resumed his duties.<sup>8</sup>

The young journeyman pressed on via Köslin and Stettin to Berlin, where he found work and lodgings and began to save for a passage to a "heathen" country. Realizing that he would require training for his new vocation, he took lessons in English and began to attend Sunday afternoon classes for aspirant student missionaries at the *Missionshaus* of the Berlin Missionary Society in the *Sebastianstrasse*. With the written consent of his parents he was accepted as a student by this institution in September 1861.<sup>9</sup>

### **TRAINING IN THE MISSIONSHAUS, 1861-65**

The *Missionshaus* in which Prozesky spent four years of study was a product of the Prussian Pietism which had come into existence after the trauma of the Napoleonic Wars and in reaction to Romanticism and to the Rationalism of the Enlightenment. Its adherents, from simple folk such as the Prozeskis of Brandenburg to the Prussian king himself, shared a burning devotion to the biblical gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and his blood. Deeply concerned about those whom they regarded as benighted and consigned for their sins to eternal perdition, they saw it as their duty to promote mission work among the "heathen". The Berlin Missionary Society, founded in 1824, trained young men free of charge for the mission field, giving them in the *Missionshaus* an extremely thorough grounding in Biblical Studies, Exegesis, World, Church and Mission History, Dogmatics, Homiletics, Symbolism, Ethics and Liturgy, Hebrew, Greek, Latin and English. In addition, students were required to take music lessons, as well as instruction in handicrafts such as the repair of clothes and shoes, carpentry, metalwork, smithery, book-binding, gardening and brick-laying. The normal length of the training course was five years. Prozesky revered his teachers, particularly Inspector Wallmann, the head of the institution until 1863, and *Diakonus* Kratzenstein, both of whom stood in a paternally affectionate relationship towards their students.<sup>10</sup>

The *Missionshaus*, a structure thus aspiring generously to the

light of divine love, was paradoxically built on a foundation of abysmal darkness. The God to whose honour instruction was given in it was also considered a merciless avenger, capable of consigning millions of human souls to eternal torment if they refused the atonement offered by his incarnate Son or were unfortunate enough never to have heard of him. This was the view held by almost all Christians at the time. Six thousand miles to the south, in the British colony of Natal, Bishop John Colenso (1814-1883) had in the year of Prozesky's admission to the *Missionshaus* written in his commentary on *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: newly translated and explained from a missionary point of view* that the doctrine of everlasting torment after death "quite shuts out the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, the Fatherly relation to us of the Faithful Creator." While admitting that he did not know the answer to the question of the afterlife, he rejected the official Christian one as a perversion of the Christian message. Apart from his disagreement in principal with this teaching, he had found in practice that, far from frightening the Natal natives into belief, it created an aversion to religious instruction in them. This was the beginning of public theological dissent on Colenso's part which was soon to be branded as heresy in the Anglican Church.<sup>11</sup> Prozesky and his Berlin teachers and colleagues, too, would reject it as such.

With his entry into the *Missionshaus* Prozesky began to keep a

journal, mainly as a vehicle for spiritual outpourings, some of them in verse. Although he claimed in old age to have been extremely happy as a student and gave convincing evidence of this in a large number of fondly remembered anecdotes,<sup>12</sup> the student journals tell a somewhat different story. Even after making allowance for the pietist's exaggerated awareness of sin, the modern reader is disturbed by the excess of agonized introspection which these writings convey, and by the strong suggestion that their writer was over-sensitive and prone to moods of both elation and depression, particularly the latter. Key-words used repeatedly to describe his state of mind were *unruhig* (restless), *trübe* (sad) and *düster* (dark).<sup>13</sup> A particularly striking reversal of mood is to be noted in the journal entry for 12th November 1861, written in the quaint English which Prozesky was bravely practising at the time. He appears to have been assailed by doubt, what he called "great blasphemes in my soul". These, he believed, were mercifully dispelled by Christ, and from being "very sorry indeed", "in great tribulation, nearly fallen in desperation", he was now "full of joy", his heart leaping with gladness. A week later he still felt he had the strength "to spring also over walls, and rocks, and the highest, yea the utmost highest topps of the largest mountins." This is the language of elation, but there is little of it in the journals.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, the main impression of life in the *Missionshaus* given by both Prozesky's memoirs and the journals is one of dedi-

cation, harmony and happiness. There is also no further hint of religious doubt in his writings. Prozesky was a good student and a year of the course was remitted in his case so that he was able to take his final examination, successfully, in June 1865.<sup>15</sup>

During his four years of study he returned home on holiday three times. It was in the summer of 1862 that he made an important acquaintance in Königsberg in the person of the devout and wealthy master paver F.W. Grunewald. A spontaneous friendship was formed between the young student and the venerable older man which was to remain hearty and unclouded until Grunewald's death eighteen years later. During a fourth and last visit to East Prussia by Prozesky in the summer of 1865, Grunewald prayed with him and promised to send him the money needed if and when he came to found a mission station in Africa.<sup>16</sup> During this vacation Prozesky must also have taken leave of his family. He was never to see his parents again. Returning to Berlin, he spent three months in the Charité Hospital, acquiring knowledge of medicine and surgery.<sup>17</sup> He and his fellow students Theodor Glöckner and Carl Richter were commissioned to service in South Africa on 14th November by the new head of the *Missionshaus*, Dr H.T. Wangemann. As the Director of the Berlin Missionary Society, Wangemann accompanied the three young missionaries to Hamburg and saw them aboard the small steamer *Planet*. They sailed for England on 17th November.<sup>18</sup>

## **PROZESKY'S ENGAGEMENT**

Six days earlier, on 11th November 1865, Prozesky had become engaged to the nineteen-year-old Caroline Wilhelmine Richter of Rawitsch in Posnania.<sup>19</sup> Nothing is known of any courtship between them. The Berlin society, aware that suitable wives were not easily found in South Africa, encouraged their young missionaries to find brides before they left Germany, and August and Caroline had most probably been introduced to each other by Caroline's brother, Carl Richter. A photograph of the couple taken at this time shows two childlike young people. Almost strangers to each other, they were to be separated by two continents for almost four years before they could be married.

In Natal Bishop Colenso had completed the fifth part of his seven-part work *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* in 1865. In this work he exposed the early books of the Bible as clearly unhistorical, and many aspects of them as statistically impossible. Although his claims were not new (and he did not pretend they were), he insisted that the church should admit the truth of them openly and honestly. The church would not. Colenso's own faith in the loving goodness of God remained unwavering, but he was attacked as an underminer of Christian faith and a sower of doubt. He was excommunicated by the Bishop of Cape Town, Dr Robert Gray, on 5th January 1866 when young Prozesky, an implicit believer in the divine inspiration of every word of the Bible, was still on the high seas.<sup>20</sup>

## CHAPTER 4: DESCENT AND EARLY LIFE

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17. *Ibid.*, 70 Prozesky was a dutiful son. From 1868 he had 50 taler sent to his parents annually for their support. (Letter by Prozesky to H.T. Wangemann, Botshabelo, 14th January 1868, Letter 1, *Acta Königsberg*, BMA)
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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **NATAL AND THE TRANSVAAL, 1866-68**

#### **ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Prozesky, Richter and Glöckner sailed from London in the sailing-ship *Umgeni* on 30th November 1865. After 84 days at sea the ship made a perfect landfall at Durban on 20th February 1866. The passengers could be landed only on 23rd, however, because rough seas were breaking on the Bar. Prozesky's first impulse towards the Natal blacks he saw was a generous one: he wished he knew their language so that he could speak to them. Their "nakedness" appalled him, just as he felt that they were spiritually without "the cloak of Jesus' blood and righteousness". Finding a private hollow between two sandhills, he knelt down and thanked God for bringing him to South Africa. He asked for grace to win at least one native soul to salvation, and renewed the vow he had made.<sup>1</sup>

The three young missionaries visited Missionary Döhne at Wartburg near Durban and Missionary Posselt at Christianenburg, and spent Easter with the Hanoverian missionaries at Hermannsburg. They had instructions to proceed to Botshabelo in the South African Republic, but news of war in the Transvaal and fears of a possible Zulu invasion of that territory made them change their plans and stay in Natal for the time being. Döhne procured a wagon and oxen for them. In Pietermaritzburg they were met by their other Natal colleagues: Zunckel, Neizel and Arroneet, whom they accompanied to Emmaus. It was agreed that Glöckner should remain at Emmaus

with Zunckel while Prozesky and Richter joined Neizel at the nearby Emangweni. Arroneet was assisting Schumann at Stendal.<sup>2</sup>

### **EMANGWENI, 1866-67**

Prozesky and Richter helped Neizel to build a wagon-house and a stable and to plant trees. They also began to learn Zulu. Emangweni had been founded in 1863, but there was as yet little sign that the spiritual seed sown diligently by Neizel had taken root. It was the beginning of Prozesky's disillusionment as far as the susceptibility of the Nguni to conversion was concerned. The missionaries had no cause to complain of unfriendliness: from the chief Manzezulu and his councillors to the humblest of his subjects, the amaNgwe were most obliging, but none showed any real interest in the Christian message. After waiting in vain for some weeks for them to come to the Sunday services, Prozesky began to ride out to *imizi* on Sundays instead. He would speak the few Zulu sentences he had prepared and then play hymns on his violin, singing the words to some of them. In time, the children at some *imizi* began to sing the hymns he taught. At home he taught a young servant named Qoboza to read and write.<sup>3</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S ORDINATION, 1867**

On 14th August 1867 Glöckner, Richter and Prozesky were ordained at Emmaus by Dr Wangemann, who was on the last leg of an extensive journey of visitation to all the Berlin mission stations in South Africa. They felt, wrote Wangemann, "by the prayers of the

assembled brothers and the power of the words of Paul in his pastoral letter," the Holy Spirit blowing upon them like a wind.<sup>4</sup>

The director determined that Richter (and Schubert who had arrived from Berlin at the beginning of 1867) should proceed to the Transvaal. Glöckner was to found a new mission station in the location of the chief Zikhali (which he did in 1868, the station receiving the name Hoffenthal). Prozesky, who was earmarked to found a mission station in northern Natal as a half-way house between Durban and the Transvaal stations, was to travel to the Transvaal to acquaint himself with conditions there. He was also to decorate the new church at Botshabelo with his painting skill before returning to Natal.<sup>5</sup>

### **WITH WANGEMANN TO DURBAN**

But first Prozesky had another journey to undertake: as part of Wangemann's escort on the last stage of his South African visitation. The director was at Emangweni from 15th to 18th August, when he left with his entourage to visit the Hermannsburg mission station Empangweni. Their host, Missionary Hansen, took them to see Langalibalele, the chief of the numerous Hlubi people. Beertipsy and surly, Langalibalele complained of having too little land. He also claimed that British law prevented him from attacking the San who raided his location from the Drakensberg. Wangemann felt sorry for Hansen for having to deal with a chief so negatively disposed towards Christianity and harbouring such an

obvious grievance against white rule. All the disadvantages of a mission station in a black location where there was a strong traditional chief were evident at Empangweni. The Berlin director already favoured town stations at this stage, perceiving that the blacks in their tribal environment were largely impervious to Christian teaching. He was apparently not yet aware of the disadvantages of town stations: the pernicious influence of unscrupulous whites, access to strong drink, and sexual immorality.<sup>6</sup>

Wangemann and his band of missionaries proceeded to Stendal, and via Hermannsburg and New Hanover to Pietermaritzburg. On 29th August the director breakfasted in the capital with Theophilus Shepstone, the Natal Secretary for Native Affairs. Shepstone promised his support for the establishment of a chain of Berlin mission stations between Natal and the Transvaal. He supplied the figure of 5000 for the black population attached to the chief Mafofe near the village of Newcastle in northern Natal where the first of these stations was to be founded. Wangemann also met Governor Keate, a Roman Catholic, who while friendly, believed that the blacks would benefit more from humanist civilisation and the learning of English and trades than from Christian teaching.<sup>7</sup>

From 9th to 12th September 1867 the Berlin director and his Natal missionaries held a conference at Christianenburg and Wartburg, during which the restless young Arroneet left the service of the society. His "excessive" sympathy for the blacks and his attempts

to fraternize with them met with the disapproval of all his colleagues, but they were nevertheless sad to see him go. Posselt was instated as chairman of the local conference.<sup>8</sup>

Prozesky accompanied Wangemann on visits to the American Board mission stations at Inanda and Amanzimtoti on 16th and 17th September. Although relations with the Americans were hearty, the Berlin director privately disapproved of the education they were offering black boys at the Amanzimtoti institution. He gave preference to the practical training of individual black evangelists and teachers under the eye of his missionaries rather than to an academic training which would, he believed, be of little benefit to the mission cause. The Berlin approach was a conservative one of tight control and slow but steady growth. Prozesky was to subscribe to this view himself. At Amanzimtoti Wangemann came to an agreement with the Americans regarding Döhne's further co-operation with them in the translation of the Bible into Zulu. Prozesky saw Wangemann on to the steamer at Durban which would take him back to Germany, then returned to Emangweni.<sup>9</sup>

### **A JOURNEY TO THE TRANSVAAL, 1867-68**

Prozesky's journey by ox-wagon to the Transvaal was commenced in October 1867. Huge herds of game still grazed on the Highveld at that time and on two occasions the outspanned oxen were swept away by stampeding antelope and could only be recovered hours later. At Botshabelo Prozesky must have felt that he had arrived

at the real African mission field at last. As a student he had heard and read the stirring story of the persecution of the Pedi Christians by Sekhukhune; now he met and spoke to the sufferers of 1864 who had been beaten, starved and subjected to freezing temperatures before being driven from the chief's domains. In the very "Place of Refuge" itself he could hear the story again from the lips of Merensky who had lived through the perilous times with his congregation.<sup>10</sup>

In mid-November a welcome opportunity presented itself for the young missionary to see the northern parts of the South African Republic. Missionary Koboldt was leaving Botshabelo to found the station of Waterberg (Modimolle), and Prozesky travelled with him and his wagon. In the bushveld an enclosure of thorn-trees had to be built every evening and two large fires kept burning at night to keep away lions. Once or twice the missionaries touched at little houses belonging to poor Boer farmers and were hospitably received. Some of these people were dressed almost entirely in clothing of skins and lived largely on venison. It took the wagon ten days to reach the place where the station Modimolle was to be built. From there Prozesky rode north to Lekalekale in the company of a Boer. There was war between the Boers and black tribes and the region was desolate. Missionary Moschütz and his wife at Lekalekale had been forced to flee from the station some months before and had returned only recently.<sup>11</sup>

From Lekalekale Prozesky visited the three mission stations situated close to each other further north: Ga Matlale where the Grütznern and Beyer were working, Malokong where the Endemanns were stationed, and Thutloane where the bachelor missionary Kühl, a friend from Prozesky's student days, was in charge. On his way back to Lekalekale the visitor encountered a body of armed blacks and was lucky not to be mistaken by them for a Boer and killed. The war had flared up again and he had unwittingly ridden into the eye of the storm. A Dutch schoolmaster named Bronkhorst whom he met at the Moschützes' was in fact killed that same afternoon. That night the missionaries found themselves in the middle of a battle as the Boers and blacks fired at each other over the roof of the Moschützes' house.<sup>12</sup>

Moschütz, a sickly man who was unpopular among the Boers, was bullied by them the next day. He was accused of being in league with the blacks and of having taken them a bag of gunpowder during the night, and he was threatened with death. The next day he was summoned to their camp once more, but this time the young Prozesky went with him. Moschütz was given a message to deliver to the blacks. While he was away, Prozesky protested so effectively against the Boers' treatment of Moschütz, who was a Prussian subject, that the commandant, S.J.P. Kruger, apologized to the older missionary when he returned.<sup>13</sup>

Prozesky left Lekalekale and travelled south to Pretoria, where

he spent Christmas of 1867 with the Knothes and his prospective brother-in-law, Carl Richter. He and Richter rode back to Botshabelo together. On this journey Prozesky ill-advisedly attempted to swim his horse through a swollen river and was almost drowned. At Botshabelo he decorated the interior walls of the church with his paints and covered the windows with painted canvas before returning to Natal. He left Botshabelo on 17th March and arrived safely at Emangweni on 1st April 1868.<sup>14</sup>

## **CHAPTER 5: NATAL AND THE TRANSVAAL, 1866-68**

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*Erinnerungen*, 79, 80; 81-82, 84 & 94-96
2. Letter: *Auf dem Atlantischen Ozean*, 16-20  
*Erinnerungen*, 96-99 Arroneet had in fact left Stendal without authorisation and was at Emangweni. (Wangemann, *Die Berliner Mission im Zulu-Lande*, 241)
3. *Erinnerungen*, 100-114
4. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr*, 558-562 & 564
5. *Erinnerungen*, 115 Kratzenstein, E., *Kurze Geschichte*, 191
6. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr*, 563-570
7. *Ibid.*, 570-594 *Erinnerungen*, 72-75
8. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr*, 598-601 and *Die Berliner Mission im Zulu-Lande*, 241-242 Arroneet attempted to live in a grass hut among the traditionalists, but gave this up. He left Stendal without permission and went to Emangweni where he was not needed. After leaving the Berlin society, he attempted to work independently, but changed his mind drastically about the "amiability" of the blacks and left Africa for good.
9. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr*, 605-610 See p.80, note 17 Wangemann's successor Gensichen was to oppose the provision of secondary academic education to black children on the grounds that it would create false horizons for them - a view shared by Prozesky. (Gensichen, M., *Bilder von unserm Missionsfelde*, 216)
10. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr*, 613-614 *Erinnerungen*, 115-121
11. *Erinnerungen*, 121-123  
Wangemann, H.T., *Die Berliner Mission im Bassuto-Lande*, 240

12. *Erinnerungen*, 123-124  
Wangemann, H.T., *Die Berliner Mission im Bassuto-Lande*, 241
13. *Erinnerungen*, 125-129  
Wangemann, H.T., *Die Berliner Mission im Bassuto-Lande*,  
241 & 242-246 Wangemann makes no mention of Prozesky's  
presence, but their respective accounts of the incident are  
compatible and Prozesky's intervention explains the changed  
attitude of the Boers, which Wangemann could only call "a  
miracle of God".
14. *Erinnerungen*, 129-133 *Tagebuch* 4, 9  
Merensky, A., *Erinnerungen aus dem Missionsleben*, 278

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE FOUNDING OF KÖNIGSBERG, 1868-1871**

#### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MISSION STATION KÖNIGSBERG**

At a conference of the Natal Berlin missionaries at Emmaus in April 1868 it was decided that Prozesky should proceed with the laying out of a mission station near Newcastle. The site had been chosen by Wangemann and Merensky the previous year and the projected station was to serve a dual purpose: it was to be a half-way station for missionaries travelling between Durban and the Transvaal, and the incumbent was to work among the people of the chief Mafofe.<sup>1</sup>

Prozesky arrived with his wagon at the designated site on the Horn (uMpondo) River at the foot of the northern Natal Drakensberg on 11th June 1868. The picturesque spot was surrounded by a number of *imizi* of up to 40 huts each, the closest 800 paces and the furthest a half-hour's ride away. Here he began to build a little house of grass sods. The local blacks were friendly and he rode out to their *imizi* on Sundays and preached to them in his still elementary Zulu. A crowd of curious children visited him in turn. A furrow to bring water from a nearby fountain was dug. The station was initially called Empondo (On the Horn), but received the name Königsberg sometime in the second half of 1869. The missionary immediately began a programme of tree-planting which would in time transform the grassland aspect of the station into one of woodland. Runaway grass-fires in the winter when the grass

was dry were to be a perennial problem. More than once flames would threaten to engulf the station.<sup>2</sup> The sod-walls of Prozesky's house, warped by wind and rain, had to be abandoned and he began to build a second, smaller one of sandstone. Timber for its woodwork was fetched from the nearby Drakensberg forest.<sup>3</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND THE CHIEF-REGENT MAFOFE, 1868-1871**

On 24th June the young missionary was visited by Mafofe, who made a good impression, expressing pleasure at his coming and promising to send men to help him with his work. He said that he wished to be taught and that his children would be sent to school. Prozesky had heard that he had seventeen wives; he was privately sceptical of his chances of converting such an arch-polygamist, but he nevertheless dared to hope that God would give him this eminent soul to bring to salvation. He was later to learn that the chief was of royal Swazi blood.<sup>4</sup>

Mafofe's initial "quite regular" attendance at the missionary's Sunday services appears to have been a mere gesture, as the chief showed no real interest in Christianity or book-learning. While he welcomed the missionary's medical care and (initially) his advice in temporal matters, and provided labour when required, he continued to hold court in time-honoured fashion, calling in diviners to "smell out" evil-doers and "eating up" those indicated as witches. By early 1870 he was staying away from church. A

clash over the dispossession of a man named Mashinashina, who had been smelt out as the "murderer" of Mafofe's consumptive brother, appears to have been a watershed in the relations between missionary and chief. Although he remained polite and attended the odd service, Mafofe began to resist the missionary increasingly. By August 1871 he was planning to leave the area. Unwilling to relinquish the chieftainship to the rightful heir, his younger brother Mkankonyeke, he was considering breaking away with the faction which supported him. Prozesky's attempts to mediate between the brothers were unsuccessful, and the Newcastle magistrate referred the dispute to the Secretary for Native Affairs for arbitration.<sup>5</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND THE CHIEF DESIGNATE MKANKONYEKE, 1868-1871**

Mafofe's indifference and increasing hostility contrasted with the interest shown by his rival, the youth Mkankonyeke, in being instructed by the missionary. In October 1868 he began to come for lessons and to attend the Sunday services, often being given a reading lesson before or after the service, and by February 1869 he was learning to write. His regular attendance at church continued throughout 1870 and 1871. On 21st November 1870 he presented himself for instruction in the Christian religion. When the rivalry between him and Mafofe came to a head in late 1871, Prozesky secretly hoped that his protégé would be installed as chief, as his example could lead to the conversion of many of

his people. At the same time he feared that the lure of polygyny might prevent the youth from becoming a Christian.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE REACTION OF THE NGUNI TO PROZESKY'S TEACHING**

Following Mafofe's lead or sharing his conservative attachment to their traditional beliefs, most of the Nguni at Königsberg showed little interest in attending Prozesky's Sunday morning services. These were held in the open air or in a large grass hut erected towards the end of 1868. After a period of mild interest or mere curiosity, the numbers of those attending dropped. Prozesky's use of the concept of eternal torment in the afterlife for those who did not accept redemption through Christ was clearly not effective - and might well have been counter-productive as observed by Colenso. By mid-1869 it was being said that the missionary "told lies".<sup>7</sup>

Another factor, one beyond Prozesky's control, contributed to the growing estrangement between him and the traditionalist blacks. A new Natal law introduced in 1869 and levying a tax of £5 on every traditional marriage between blacks had the traditionalists in a ferment. The missionary was convinced that it had changed the attitude of blacks towards whites for the worse. By August 1871 there were ominous signs that the traditionalists at Königsberg were no longer willing to live near the missionary. Not a single piece of land was being prepared for cultivation.<sup>8</sup>

### **THE MISSION SCHOOL, 1868-1871**

Prozesky's morning school for children, begun hopefully for the children of the *imizi* in 1868, showed similar vicissitudes.

When there were dances few children came to school, and even their normal attendance was erratic. Sometimes there were almost forty children, but at other times a mere handful. Nevertheless, progress was made initially in the instruction of those who did come, in reading, writing, hymn-singing and Bible texts and stories. The morning scholars were initially mainly little girls. The boys, who probably had herding duties during the day, came with youths and older girls to evening classes. The growing estrangement between the missionary and the traditionalists was reflected in the school attendance of their children: the numbers dwindled until the morning classes had to be suspended in 1871. The children were discouraged and even beaten by their elders if they wished to go to the white teacher. The evening classes were held regularly during the period July 1869 to December 1871, but the children were increasingly kept away in 1871. Those who had attended regularly were able, by the end of 1870, to read passably, they knew a number of Bible texts, the Ten Commandments and Bible stories and could sing a number of Zulu hymns.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE FIRST BAPTISMS AT KÖNIGSBERG**

An equally important facet of Prozesky's teaching was his preparation of adults for baptism and his instruction of those already baptized. Two Pedi Christians from Botshabelo who worked for him

in the period 1868-70, Salomo and Jacobus, fell into the second category. Salomo even helped to teach beginners their letters and interpreted on occasion. From January 1869 Prozesky prepared three other Pedis from Botshabelo, Letebele, Ramatene and Schediwe, for baptism, instructing them in Dutch in the evenings. On Christmas Day 1869 he baptized Letebele, who chose the name David for himself. Ramatene was angered at not being baptized as well, and left to find a missionary who would baptize him without further ado. Prozesky's extreme thoroughness in his preparation of catechumens was apparently too much for him. Schediwe was more patient and, after attending classes for nineteen months, was baptized on 14th August 1870, receiving the name Johannes. He returned to the Transvaal in December 1870. David went to the diamond-fields in January 1871.<sup>10</sup>

### **BLIGHTED HOPES**

Prozesky's first catechumen from among the traditionalists was a young woman named Ntombazane, Mafofe's half-sister, whose instruction commenced in October 1868, in Zulu. She and a number of friends came for classes in the afternoons. One of these was Kumpukadi, Mafofe's cousin. A man named Thekwane joined the class in January 1869. That there was opposition to the wish of the young women to become Christians soon became clear and both of them lapsed under pressure from their elders. By the end of 1869 most of the candidates for baptism had been either forced or

persuaded to give up their instruction. Thekwane died in January 1870 of an unspecified wasting disease.<sup>11</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S FIRST CONVERT FROM AMONG THE NGUNI**

The missionary's early attempts to win souls from "heathendom" at Königsberg seemed doomed to failure, yet there was one bright star which gave him hope. Mkankonyane (not to be confused with Mkankonyeke), a very intelligent boy of thirteen, pursued knowledge of Christianity with avidity from October 1869 and was baptized as Matheus Ngwenya on Christmas Day 1870. Despite pressure from his family he remained steadfast and, after spending 6-7 months in service in Pietermaritzburg, returned and became a pillar of the young congregation, even undertaking evangelisation among the *imizi* with a fellow Christian, Philippus Pieters, as early as 1871.<sup>12</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MARRIAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A LARGER HOUSE**

It was to the rude little stone dwelling which also served as his schoolroom that Prozesky brought his bride Caroline on 21st June 1869. They had been married by Missionary Posselt on 28th May at Christianenburg in a double ceremony with Carl Richter and Elizabeth Anna Winter. With his marriage, the loneliness and depression which Prozesky had suffered were at an end. In December 1871 he and his young family moved into one half of the roomy new mission house he was building, largely with his own hands, as he believed that black men should be taught to work by example. Con-

struction of the house, begun in January 1870, was to be completed only in 1874.<sup>13</sup>

### **KÖNIGSBERG CONSOLIDATED**

The continued existence of the mission station was ensured when 100 acres of land were granted to the Berlin society by the Natal Government and were surveyed in December 1869. Application was made to purchase a further 500 acres (with money supplied by Grunewald) and these were surveyed in March 1870 in such a way as to enclose the original 100 acre grant. In October 1871 a further 4000 adjoining acres, mainly to the west and north, were added, making Königsberg a sizeable farm. The money for this land was also supplied by the generous Grunewald.<sup>14</sup>

### **THE ADMISSION OF OORLAM'S BLACKS TO THE MISSION FARM**

The possession of a large mission farm, so the missionary hoped, would make the mission largely self-supporting in agricultural produce. At this stage when many of the traditionalists seemed likely to move away, Prozesky's hopes of populating it with Christians must have been directed elsewhere. An *oorlams* "Hottentot" named Paulus Adam Pieters had brought his family to live at Königsberg in September 1869, accepting as pre-conditions compulsory church attendance for the family and school attendance for his five children. The entire family attended baptism classes and were baptized, together with Mkankonyane, on Christmas Day 1870. With Prozesky's help, Adam built a little house some 100

paces from the mission house. Another *oorlams* man named April brought his wife and two children to live as catechumens at Königsberg in June 1871.<sup>15</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S WORKING ROUTINE**

A basic routine had been established at Königsberg by the end of 1871. On Sundays a Zulu service was held in the morning and a Dutch one in the evening. On weekdays there were communal devotions, morning and evening, for the mission family, the baptized and unbaptized members of the congregation and the servants. The baptism classes were also held in the evening.<sup>16</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION**

The missionary rode about extensively to evangelize and to treat patients when called upon to do so. He was so successful that he became known and sought after as a doctor in the large rural area to the north, west and south of Newcastle and even as far east as Utrecht. His application of medicine was always accompanied by prayer, and he made a point of preaching to the black servants of his white patients. On his journeys he rarely passed a black person without speaking to him/her about God and Jesus. So fixed was this rule that his horse Jack automatically left the road when he saw black people and would not move on until the required words had been spoken.<sup>17</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS WHITE NEIGHBOURS**

From the outset Prozesky made friends among the white farmers in the area. Besides treating the ailments of his neighbours, the missionary was sometimes called upon to marry couples, baptize babies and conduct funerals on their farms. From 1869 it became a fixed roster for Prozesky to hold the Zulu service at Königsberg and then to visit Newcastle on the first Sunday of the month and the farm Elandsklip of Gert van Niekerk on the third Sunday. In Newcastle he would hold a service for the prisoners in the gaol and then another for 20-30 *oorlams* blacks, while approximately 30 blacks would attend the services at Elandsklip. The German also made English friends in the village; among them were the merchant Dixon and the magistrate Melmoth Osborn.<sup>18</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S ROLE IN THE "DISCOVERY" OF SAN ROCK-ART**

When he had time, Prozesky did a little sketching and painting. During a short holiday visit to the Van Niekerks in May 1871 he was shown San paintings on a rock-face on their farm. One of them depicted a man riding on the neck of an elephant. The missionary later made water-colour copies of some of these paintings and sent them to Berlin, where they were to be reproduced by the anthropologist Von Luschan in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* in 1906.<sup>19</sup>

### **KÖNIGSBERG AS A HALF-WAY HOUSE FOR TRAVELLING MISSIONARIES**

As envisaged, Königsberg became a half-way house between the coast and the Transvaal mission stations of the Berlin Missionary Soc-

iety. The main road to the Transvaal passed between Königsberg and Newcastle at that time, approximately an hour's ride from both. Travelling missionaries would turn off the road and spend days or even weeks resting with their hosts or awaiting further transport. Missionaries and ministers of other societies and denominations also visited Königsberg, as did many weary travellers of all descriptions. All were hospitably received.<sup>20</sup>

### **BERLIN MISSIONARY CONFERENCES**

During the period 1868-71 Prozesky also attended five conferences of the Natal Berlin missionaries, his young family accompanying him on the two journeys undertaken in 1870.<sup>21</sup>

### **CHAPTER 6: THE FOUNDING OF KÖNIGSBERG, 1868-1871 REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch* 4, 9      *Erinnerungen*, 133      Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr*, 550-552      Wangemann, H.T., *Die Berliner Mission im Zulu-Lande*, 311      Minutes of Natal conference, Emmaus, 20th-24th April 1868      Instructions from Berlin to Prozesky to found his station in the town of Newcastle rather than at the designated spot arrived too late to deflect him from the previously determined course. (Letter from Wangemann to Prozesky, Berlin, 1st October 1868, *Acta Königsberg*, Letter 2)
2. *Tagebuch* 4, 3-5, 9-10, 23-25, 47 & 48      *Tagebuch* 5, 62  
*Tagebuch* 6, 35      *Tagebuch* 7, 1      *Erinnerungen*, 133-137 & 142  
The memoirs claim that the blacks were hostile, but the more reliable journal stresses their friendliness. The only blacks who were nasty (*hässlich*) were some living further away and not belonging to Mafofe (*Tagebuch* 4, 27).
3. *Tagebuch* 4, 4-8, 11-14, 17-19      *Erinnerungen*, 151-153
4. *Tagebuch* 4, 6 & 36      *Tagebuch* 11, 21      *Erinnerungen*, 149  
In fact Mafofe had nine or eleven wives at this stage.
5. *Tagebuch* 4, 23 & 38      *Tagebuch* 5, 7-8, 22, 24-30, 31, 32, 43, 44, 58 & 64      *Tagebuch* 6, 9-10, 14, 16, 19-20, 27, 43 & 52      *Tagebuch* 7, 38 & 51      Mafofe did in fact relinquish

the regency, but he was charged by Mkankonyeke with planning to take cattle belonging to the young chief with him when he left for New Scotland with his adherents. (Letters by the Newcastle magistrate Melmoth Osborn to Shepstone, 16th November and 4th December 1871, SNA I/3/21)

6. *Tagebuch* 4, 31, 33, 34, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50 & 51  
*Tagebuch* 5, 3, 6, 10, 22 & 51     *Tagebuch* 6, 3, 7, 45, 47 & 52  
*Tagebuch* 7, 4, 14, 19, 38, 41-42, 44, 48 & 51
7. *Tagebuch* 4, 27, 28, 32 & 36 and *Tagebücher* 4-7, *passim*  
*Tagebuch* 5, 64
8. *Tagebuch* 5, 42 & 45     *Tagebuch* 6, 5-6     For an exposition of Natal Law 1 of 1869, see D. Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation*, 67-96     *Tagebuch* 7, 37     It is possible that failed harvests were a factor in Mafofe's later decision to move away.
9. *Tagebuch* 4, 6-8, 25-26, 28, 31-32, 35, 38-41, 44 & 50  
*Tagebuch* 5, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10 & 21     *Tagebuch* 6, 31  
*Tagebuch* 7, 8-9, 21, 25, 58, 61 & 62     *Erinnerungen*, 146  
The school still exists today, 125 years later.
10. *Tagebuch* 4, 8, 15, 23, 25, 27, 28, 34, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50 & 51  
*Tagebuch* 5, 3, 5, 7, 22, 34, 40, 58 & 62-63  
*Tagebuch* 6, 2, 5, 17, 26, 39, 45 & 51     *Tagebuch* 7, 1, 9, 13-14 & 58     Although people from elsewhere were already flocking to the diamond-fields (*Tagebuch* 6, 50), the lure of good wages there had not yet changed the agricultural economy of the Nguni at Königsberg in 1871.
11. *Tagebuch* 4, 31, 32, 38, 39, 44, 46-48 & 50     *Tagebuch* 5, 1, 3, 4-6, 32, 34, 45, 51, 54-55 & 64     *Tagebuch* 6, 2-4, 14, 22 & 48
12. *Tagebuch* 5, 40 & 62-63     *Tagebuch* 6, 34, 38 & 40  
*Tagebuch* 7, 2, 6-7, 9, 11-12, 16-17, 18, 24-25, 40, 41 & 61
13. *Tagebuch* 5, 16-19     Zöllner, L. & Heese, J.A., *The Berlin Missionaries*, 378     Letter from Theodor Glöckner, Christen-  
anenburg, 25th May 1894     *Tagebuch* 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 26-29, 31-37 & 44     *Tagebuch* 7, 10, 11, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 27-31, 33-37, 39, 42 & 44-52     *Tagebuch* 8, 9  
*Tagebuch* 9, 23     *Tagebuch* 11, 7 & 13     *Erinnerungen*, 159-160
14. *Tagebuch* 5, 29, 33 & 57-61     *Tagebuch* 6, 17, 31, 32, 36 & 38-39  
*Tagebuch* 7, 36-38, 41 & 59     Use was in fact not made of the grant, the entire farm being bought from the government.
15. *Tagebuch* 4, 33     *Tagebuch* 5, 33 & 36     *Tagebuch* 6, 7  
*Tagebuch* 7, 2, 6, 7, 11, 34, 58 & 61
16. *Tagebuch* 5, 61     *Tagebuch* 6, 34, 35 & 51     *Tagebuch* 7, 10, 39 & 58     In his half-yearly report at the end of 1871 Prozesky wrote "Abends kafrisken Gottesdienst", but this must have been a slip of the pen as there is no other record of Zulu evening services.
17. *Tagebuch* 4, 24, 42 & 43     *Tagebuch* 5, 4, 11-16, 19, 23-26, 29, 34-35, 45, 55, 56, 61 & 65-66     *Tagebuch* 6, 2, 7, 11,

- 47 & 48     *Tagebuch* 7, 4     *Erinnerungen*, 231-232
18. *Tagebücher* 4-7, *passim*     *Tagebuch* 4, 41, 43-44 48 & 49  
      *Tagebuch* 6, 7     *Tagebuch* 7, 22 & 24
19. *Tagebuch* 4, 8, 28 & 44     *Tagebuch* 7, 31-33     One of these  
      paintings was rediscovered by B. Woodhouse and R. Steel a  
      hundred years later. (Woodhouse, B., *The Bushman Art of*  
      *Southern Africa*, 92-93 and Woodhouse, H.C., "Some Rock  
      Paintings of North Western Natal", *South African Journal of*  
      *Science*, June 1972, 171-176)
20. *Tagebuch* 4, 8 & 46-47     *Tagebuch* 5, 15-16, 19, 23 & 29  
      *Tagebuch* 6, 15, 28 & 51-52     *Tagebuch* 7, 1-5, 7, 26, 33,  
      39-40, 44 & 46-48
21. *Tagebuch* 4, 29-30     *Tagebuch* 5, 29-30     *Tagebuch* 6, 21-22  
      & 50-51     *Tagebuch* 7, 40

## **CHAPTER 7 PROZESKY AND BAULING, 1872-1875**

### **PROZESKY AND BAULING**

Prozesky was assisted at Königsberg for two periods, 1872-3 and 1874-5, by Christian Gottfried Bauling (1843-1912). The two men worked together harmoniously from the outset. The presence of the younger missionary was intended to free his senior colleague to do more evangelizing further afield, but initially much time was taken up by his instruction in Zulu. He nevertheless began to hold services on his own at an early date and proved to be a useful and efficient lieutenant in other ways. From February 1873 to November 1874 he was away at Christianenburg, deputizing for Posselt who was on leave in Germany. He returned to Königsberg as a married man on 4th December 1874 and the two missionary families shared accommodation in the mission house "in heartiest love and accord". He was fluent in Zulu by now and could consequently render greater assistance than before, overseeing the station when Prozesky was ill or away. He also took charge of the morning school until October 1875. The Baulings left Königsberg in November for Lydenburg in the Transvaal.<sup>1</sup>

### **A JOURNEY TO THE ORANGE FREE STATE AND THE DIAMOND-DIGGINGS**

From 1st March to 7th May 1873 the Prozeskys undertook a holiday journey to the Orange Free State and the diamond-diggings, proceeding by ox-wagon via Bethlehem and Winburg to Bethanien, where

they visited Carl and Elizabeth Richter. The Richter family accompanied them further to the diamond-diggings (Dutoitspan and New Rush) and to Pniel on the Vaal River. Prozesky was appalled by the worldliness and lack of discipline he encountered at Bethanien and his criticisms were to be a source of some ill-feeling and to earn him the censure of the Mission Committee. He returned to his own station determined that it should develop very differently. On the return journey he visited President Brand in Bloemfontein.<sup>2</sup>

### **MAFOFE AND MKANKONYEKE, 1872-73**

The dispute between Mafofe and Mkankonyeke was settled in January 1872 in favour of Mkankonyeke. Unwilling to submit to his younger brother's authority, Mafofe instigated a mass exodus of his followers from the area. He waited until Bauling had left for Christianenburg and the Prozeskys were away on their holiday journey in 1873 and then moved with his adherents to the farm of a Boer eight hours away on the border of the Transvaal. As Prozesky had feared, the new young chief, although personally strongly inclined to become a Christian, was not able to resist the attractions of traditional chiefship. By late 1874 he already had six wives and was exhibiting an indifference to Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

### **THE NGUNI TRADITIONALISTS, 1872-75**

Prozesky continued to visit the *imizi* during this period, taking Bauling with him, but there was little response to their message.

Most of the youths and men had gone to the diamond-diggings where they were paid £2-3 a month besides rations, and these unheard of earnings promoted a self-content which, together with an aversion to the Christian teaching of sin and the need for repentance, made them unlikely candidates for conversion. Money, beer and the blood of slaughtered animals flowed freely. An opinion formed among the people that Prozesky was not the real owner of the mission farm but merely the servant of some other lord and as such had nothing to say to them as earlier inhabitants of the region. Their stock entered and damaged the mission maize-fields so often in late 1872 that Prozesky suspected wilful provocation. Irked by these and other instances of disrespect towards him, he took the first step towards sterner discipline at Königsberg by impounding offending animals.<sup>4</sup>

Descriptions denoting low church attendance preponderate in Prozesky's journals for the years 1872-75, and not a single person from among the traditionalists was baptized during these years.<sup>5</sup> The people also kept their children from attending the mission school. Both the morning and evening schools were consequently suspended temporarily at times during 1872. The morning school was resumed in 1873, but was held mainly for the 8-10 children of the *oorlams* congregation, as few children from the *imizi* attended the classes. The evening school classes (held after the baptism class and devotions) were also resumed in May 1873. This provision of basic literacy to the adult catechumens was to become a

permanent feature of the mission work at Königsberg.<sup>6</sup>

At this time Prozesky was looking more and more to *oorlams* blacks who came to settle on the mission station for converts, and he was inclined to begin placing the traditionalists under tighter control. At the end of 1875 he informed them that they would in future have to pay a money contribution to the station treasury or work at maintaining the station.<sup>7</sup>

### **KÖNIGSBERG AND ITS CONGREGATION, 1872-75**

The number of *oorlams* families living at Königsberg increased by 12 to 14 during the years 1872-1875. All these people joined the baptism class, and the Sunday afternoon services in Dutch were held primarily for their benefit. Although they had to feed themselves at Königsberg, they were willing in addition to contribute a tenth of their harvests to the station treasury and to provide unpaid labour for works undertaken on the station: digging furrows, maintaining roads and helping with the construction of buildings. They even supplied oil for the lamps used for their evening classes. The head of each household had to build a cottage for his family, and by June 1875 Königsberg already had the appearance of a small village. Besides the mission house and its out-buildings, there were nine cottages belonging to members of the congregation. Six adults and their twelve children were baptized on Christmas Day 1874 and eight adults and ten children on Christmas Day 1875.<sup>8</sup> This enlargement of his congregation re-

lieved the gloom Prozesky had felt because of his lack of success in converting the traditionalists. What he now envisaged was the slow but steady gathering of converts to form in time a model Christian settlement characterized by piety, Christian morality and sobriety, discipline, order and industry. Immorality of any kind was sternly punished - after a public inquiry and with the concurrence of the members of the congregation. Besides expulsion from the station, floggings were inflicted, particularly on young offenders - an aspect of Prozesky's work which would later provoke criticism.<sup>9</sup>

The foundations for a church were measured and marked out on 13th May 1873, but little construction had taken place by the end of 1875. An additional 600 acres of land were added to Königsberg in 1874, bought with money donated by Grunewald. This increased the total area of the station to 5200 acres.<sup>10</sup>

### **OUT-STATIONS, 1872-75**

Prozesky continued to hold services at Elandsklip on the third Sunday of the month in 1872, but attendance was poor and the out-station was given up in 1873. A new out-station was established on the farm Millbank of the German Bierbaum in 1875.<sup>11</sup>

### **THE LANGALIBALELE AFFAIR, 1873**

Outwardly Königsberg remained untouched by the widespread unrest and anxiety occasioned by the Langalibalele "war" in the months

of October to December 1873. The Hlubi chief ignored repeated orders to licence the many firearms which his warriors were bringing back with them to Natal from the diamond-fields. He also refused to report to Pietermaritzburg when required to do so, fearing that he would be apprehended. Prozesky blamed the British in Griqualand West for allowing the sale of firearms to blacks, but he had scant sympathy for Langalibalele, whom he described as "an old rascal". It was his impression that the colony's blacks were in a state of excitement and might rise up *en masse* against the whites. The fact that fourteen of the Newcastle magistrate's servants absconded and "fled" to Langalibalele seemed ominous. So widespread was the panic among whites that people from the Newcastle area fled for safety to the Orange Free State and Transvaal. Plans were made at the height of the scare to build a redoubt on the hill behind the mission station, and Prozesky asked Osborn for guns so that his people - presumably the Christians - could defend themselves. The magistrate did not acknowledge that there was any danger to his division and the request was refused. In November it was feared that Mkankonyeke intended to revolt in concert with Mafofe, but Prozesky discounted this rumour. Nevertheless, the Boers who remained in the district went into laager some five hours' ride from Königsberg. The capture of Langalibalele in December 1873 and the scattering of the Hlubi and amaNgwe peoples ended the affair. Prozesky was satisfied that the chief had been punished thoroughly. A number of Hlubi later found their

way to Königsberg.<sup>12</sup>

### **AN AUDIENCE WITH SIR GARNET WOLSELEY**

On 7th July 1875 Prozesky had an audience with the new Natal Governor Sir Garnet Wolseley in Newcastle and presented a petition to him containing two requests. He and Bauling asked for a grant of 100 acres, as the original 100 acre grant had been bought along with the rest of the land. They also requested the amendment of the marriage law so as to exempt such blacks as married without *ukulobola* from the £5 tax. Wolseley was very friendly and promised to consider the requests. The marriage tax was in fact abolished that year, but no land grant was made.<sup>13</sup>

### **NEWCASTLE AS AN OUT-STATION, 1872-75**

On his monthly visits to Newcastle, Prozesky continued to preach faithfully to the prisoners in the gaol. The services he held afterwards in the town were attended regularly by 20-30 *oorlams* blacks. By the end of 1875 four of the most devout families had moved to Königsberg, where some of them were among the eighteen people baptized on Christmas Day. The remaining adherents of the Lutheran in the town had all in some measure succumbed to the temptation of alcohol, and it appears to have been Prozesky's strategy at this stage to remove the others to the relative isolation of the mission station.<sup>14</sup>

On three occasions in 1875 Prozesky, having been asked to do so, preached to the English-speaking people of Newcastle. Donations

towards the building of the Königsberg church totalling more than £6 were forthcoming from the white townsfolk.<sup>15</sup>

## **CHAPTER 7: PROZESKY AND BAULING, 1872-1875**

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2. *Tagebuch* 8, 20-27 & *Tagebuch* 9, 1-13, 15 & 23     *Tagebuch* 10, 4     Prozesky reported to the Natal conference held at Emmaus from 10th-12th October 1873 on the conditions he had observed at Bethanien. His Natal colleagues urged him to report his findings to Berlin, which he did. (Minutes, Natal Archives Depot, A1060, Vol.4 and letters by Prozesky to Wangemann, Königsberg, 24th October 1873 and 22nd December 1874, *Acta Königsberg*, BMA)
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4. *Tagebuch* 7, 56, 69, 73 & 76     *Tagebuch* 8, 2-3     *Erinnerungen*, 309
5. The descriptions "none/very few/only a handful/not good/few /only a few/not many/not numerous/quite a few/some/a number" appear 43 times. "Fair/quite well attended/quite a number/a good number/ quite a large number" are found 18 times. "A goodly number/a considerable number/an abundance/ a large number/many/a large crowd/larger than usual/exceptionally large/a really large number" appear only 16 times. *Tagebuch* 7, 76     *Tagebuch* 8, 3 & 14-15     *Tagebuch* 9, 17, 18 & 20     *Tagebuch* 10, 2, 5, 12, 20 & 27     *Tagebuch* 11, 11, 16, 20 & 28     *Tagebuch* 12, 5, 6-7 & 16     *Tagebuch* 13, 2-3
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- 13, 6, 8, 10, 18 & 21
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*Tagebuch* 12, 9            *Tagebuch* 13, 10 & 24
  12. *Tagebuch* 10, 22-28    *Erinnerungen*, 381-385    Zunckel and  
Glöckner had to take refuge in defensive wagon-laagers dur-  
ing the hostilities, but Neizel could remain at Emangweni.  
The Berliners approved of the punishment of Langalibalele,  
but thought that the amaNgwe had been punished too severe-  
ly. (Wangemann, *Die Berliner Mission im Zulu-Lande*, 290)
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  15. *Tagebuch* 12, 27-28    *Tagebuch* 13, 7 & 10    *Tagebuch* 14, 2

## **CHAPTER 8**

# **THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KÖNIGSBERG CHURCH, 1876-1880**

Most of the construction of the mission church at Königsberg took place in the period March 1876 - December 1878. The bricklaying was done chiefly by an *oorlams* man Petrus July and Prozesky himself. The walls rose painfully slowly as delay followed delay. Fired brick was used for the exterior of the walls and air-dried brick for the interior cladding, but the tower had a sandstone base. The walls were completed and the roof assembled by the end of 1876, but then the work stood still for long periods - either because there was no money to buy food for the labourers, or due to illness or other causes. At the end of 1878 the interior of the church still awaited completion.<sup>1</sup>

Little work was done during the Zulu War of 1879, but from May 1880 an intensive effort was made to complete the project. A German bricklayer named Kuschke, the brother of Prozesky's new assistant, Hermann Kuschke, did much of the final work. Prozesky painted texts in gold lettering on a red marbled background on the interior walls. Pews were made, the windows were glazed and a gallery of yellowwood was erected. The finishing touches were put to the interior at midnight on 28th September and the little whitewashed church was consecrated the next morning. Some 80-90 whites and hundreds of blacks attended the festive ceremony at which addresses were given by Mr Kidd, a Newcastle merchant, and

the Boers Dr Aveling, his son-in-law Adendorff and his son G. Aveling. Prozesky preached on the new heaven and the new earth.<sup>2</sup>

The one guest whose presence would have given Prozesky the greatest joy could not be there. Friedrich Wilhelm Grunewald had died in Germany on 25th September 1880, only four days before the consecration of the church. Prozesky's Boer and English friends and members of his congregation had donated £150 towards the total cost of £598 16s, there was a surplus of £10, and the balance - £458 16s - had come from Grunewald. A portion of this amount had been spent on the purchase of three bells and of sacred vessels for the church.<sup>3</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1876-80**

There was no dramatic growth in the size of the baptized congregation at Königsberg during the years 1876-78. In July 1876 two more *oorlams* families came to live on the mission station. The family heads accepted the station rules and undertook to pay an annual contribution of 10 shillings to the station treasury and to work without pay for twelve days each year. The monetary contribution was an innovation, part of Prozesky's plan to make the station economically self-sufficient. Hans Fourie, a "coloured" man who was engaged to do carpentry for the church, was baptized on Christmas Day 1876, but more than two years passed before there were adult baptisms again. It was a joyful day for the missionary when he could baptize no less than 34 *oorlams* people,

adults and children, on Sunday 27th July 1879. Their baptism brought the number of Christian households at Königsberg to 16.<sup>4</sup>

The baptized Christians and the catechumens generally lived lives which the missionary regarded as good, and for which he was deeply grateful. Besides minor transgressions, there were occasionally serious moral ones, but these were sternly punished and Königsberg remained a disciplined mission station unlike others in Natal where laxity of control led to sexual licence and immorality. Even the local Boers, who had a poor opinion of missionaries in general, were approving witnesses of Prozesky's strictness. As a measure to tighten discipline further, Prozesky and his new assistant Kuschke drafted new station rules on 20th September 1879 and read them to the assembled congregation. The people voted their approval of them, and pledged with solemn handshakes to submit to them as long as they remained on the station. Money-fines were to be paid in future for several types of sin. The majority of the people were in favour of making the penalties even heavier - an attitude which pleased the missionaries.<sup>5</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND KUSCHKE**

Missionary Hermann Kuschke (1853-1927) assisted Prozesky at Königsberg for fourteen months - from January 1879 to March 1880 - before being transferred to Botshabelo in the Transvaal. Fluent in Dutch, he could take over the morning school directly, while being instructed in Zulu in the afternoons. A reliable, steady,

likeable young man, he restarted the evening school for adults which Prozesky had been unable to sustain during the previous three years while building the church.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1876-80**

Although suspended temporarily from March to mid-October 1876, from 22nd April to 11th June 1878 and for a week in July 1878 to allow Prozesky to work on the church, the morning school continued to provide the 23 or 24 children of the *oorlams* congregation with a basic education. By mid-1878 a number of them could read "properly", a few could write "reasonably", and in biblical history, the catechism and singing all but the youngest were "reasonably proficient". The children apparently enjoyed learning, as they came to school gladly. The government was supplying an annual grant of £25 for the school at this stage, and the parents contributed approximately £1 10s per month in school fees. This money was earmarked for a new school building. Kuschke's place as teacher of the school was taken by a young former missionary seminarist named Groeger. Unfortunately, he suffered from a chest ailment and was very weak, and his condition worsened.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1876-78**

The traditionalists living at Königsberg remained indifferent if not hostile to Prozesky's teaching. Only a small number - and sometimes none at all - attended the Zulu services on most Sunday mornings, and not a single soul was converted to Christianity in

the years 1876-78. In April 1876 it was said that Mkankonyeke had forbidden his subjects to attend the mission services. He denied this, but the missionary was not convinced of his honesty. As the traditionalists were doing no work for the mission, Prozesky introduced a rental of f1 on every hut and made the chief sign a contract accepting it before the Newcastle magistrate on 11th July 1876. There were at this stage approximately 100 huts on the mission station. The members of the congregation living in European-style cottages were exempt from this rent, as they paid their annual contributions of 10 shillings and the men worked for 12 days per year without pay.<sup>8</sup>

Relations between Prozesky and the traditionalists were extremely strained at this time - for this and other reasons (see Chapter 21). The missionary reported that Mkankonyeke had taken to drinking brandy and never came to services any more. When the rent contract had to be renewed on 26th July 1878, he and a few of his subjects indicated that they wished to move away rather than pay their dues, but no mass removal took place as yet.<sup>9</sup>

Some small comfort to the missionary was brought by the awakening of faith in a few black women at Königsberg during 1878. A ray of hope was a former catechumen, the intelligent girl Mafundosi, whose family had left Königsberg with Mafofe in 1873. Returning with her husband in September 1878, she resumed attendance of the baptism classes.<sup>10</sup>

## **THE ZULU WAR, 1879**

Towards the end of 1878 the British colonial power, to further its imperialist and expansionist plans, provoked a war with the Zulu state of King Cetshwayo. Although he prayed for peace as 1879 began, there was no doubt in Prozesky's mind as to which side he favoured when the British invaded Zululand later in January. To him, the Zulu kingdom represented a nation enslaved by sin and ignorance and bound by barbaric practices and the despotism of its ruler. In his view, conquest of them by a Christian European power could only be a blessing from God. He was far removed from those few white Natalians such as Colenso who deplored the invasion and would later work for the restoration of the Zulu monarchy.<sup>11</sup>

News of the British defeat at Isandlwana reached Newcastle and Königsberg in the night of 23rd-24th January and caused panic. Women and children from the black population fled into the forested kloofs of the Drakensberg for safety, and the next morning the assembled men of the mission station were all in favour of trekking up the mountain into the Free State. Having no guns, they were afraid that they would be "slaughtered like dogs" if the Zulus came. Treks of Boers began arriving from early in the morning with their cattle and wagons, and the exodus continued all day. Sometimes there were ten wagons, one behind the other, crossing the mission station towards Muller's Pass and the Orange Free State. Girls on ladies' saddles were driving the cat-

tle in some cases. On the same day the mission servants ran away in their panic. The next morning, Saturday 25th January, the Prozeskys' wagon, two other wagons belonging to station people, and two laden sleds left Königsberg and moved up the mountain.<sup>12</sup>

For ten days the Königsberg people remained on the Drakensberg heights, for part of this time within view of the mission station below. Most of the Boers trekked on deeper into the Free State, rejecting Prozesky's suggestion that they build a redoubt on the summit. Rain made life unpleasant, and the cold it brought caused illness in the party and stock losses. An awning was made to provide additional shelter, but it could not keep the wet out of the crowded wagon. A child was born to members of the congregation under one of the other wagons. On 27th January the missionary and his guest Dr Haevernick rode down to the mission station, where a few wagons from more distant parts of the district were still passing by on their way to the Free State. The next day Prozesky took a led horse and rode to Newcastle to fetch Kuschke, who had arrived most inopportunistically in the eye of the storm to be his assistant. The senior missionary tried to secure guns for his people, but without success.<sup>13</sup>

On 3rd February the decision was taken to return to Königsberg. A letter had confirmed that, although the British had been forced out of Zululand, the Zulus were reluctant to invade Natal. The dangers of illness and exposure on the mountain seemed greater

now than the supposed Zulu menace. Accordingly, the missionaries trekked down home on 5th February.<sup>14</sup>

A large number of Zulu fugitives under the chief Mbenda, mainly women and children whose menfolk were fighting on the side of the British or improving roads for them, were sent by the magistrate to live temporarily near Mkankonyeke's *umuzi*. Prozesky visited these people. He promised them a sack of maize as well as medicine for those who needed it, and invited them to attend the Sunday services. At one of Mkankonyeke's *imizi* a boy of about fourteen had apparently become mentally deranged from sheer terror of the Zulu *impis*. The missionary brought him to the mission house and attempted to cure him, but without success.<sup>15</sup>

On Saturday 29th March 1879 Prozesky was in Newcastle, where he had breakfast with Sir Bartle Frere, the Cape Governor and British High Commissioner for South Africa, at his hotel. He found him a "very amiable old gentleman". Frere showed a sympathetic interest in mission matters and wanted to hear the missionary's views on the war, on the Zulus and how to deal with them. When they parted, he asked Prozesky to pray for him.

"One is almost moved to pity," wrote the missionary, "when a man so genial and pious is so severely criticized in the newspapers for his politics which have brought so much misfortune upon the colonists of South Africa. I think politicians are persons with a dual nature: privately pious, but when it suits them politically, officially not pious."<sup>16</sup>

It would thus appear that the missionary was critical of the im-

perialist policies represented by Frere.

On 5th April Prozesky came across a number of local men dressed for war. They were levies ordered against Cetshwayo by the government. The missionary was concerned for their safety. Two days later a troop of approximately 50 armed levies, dressed in leopard skins and feather headdresses and armed with shields and assegais, passed the mission house on their way to war.<sup>17</sup>

Further journal entries during April 1879 show that Prozesky heard within a week of the reverse inflicted by Wood on the Zulus at Khambula on 29th March, that he knew that Pearson's column was besieged in Eshowe, and of its relief by Chelmsford. The loss of life, and particularly the idea of so many souls going unprepared into eternity, appalled him.<sup>18</sup>

By May the war scare had abated to such an extent that Prozesky and possibly his family and/or Kuschke could attend the missionaries' conference held at Emmaus. On 8th June Prozesky reported the death in action of the young Prince Napoleon and expressed the fear that the conduct of the war had lowered the government in the opinion of the local blacks. He believed that they might become troublesome if the Zulus were not seen to be crushed militarily - a belief shared with many missionaries and colonists who feared a general rising of blacks in southern Africa against white authority. A few families from Lüneberg were living as refugees at Königsberg at this stage.<sup>19</sup>

In August 1879 all the black men and youths at Königsberg capable of bearing arms were called up by the government to drive wagons or cattle or both for the army. The missionary prayed that none of his people might fall. There were rumours of Zulu successes, but these were false. On 12th September Prozesky could record the news, gathered from newspaper reports, that the British had captured Cetshwayo and divided Zululand among "indunas" (chiefs). He was canny enough to pose the question, "... but will the peace last for long?"<sup>20</sup>

Whatever the prospects of peace in Zululand, the war had certainly freed those living in Natal, black and white, of the danger they had perceived as inherent in the old militaristic Zulu kingdom. In a journal entry for 8th December 1879 Prozesky reflected on the downfall of Cetshwayo - and of Sekhukhune, who had been defeated by Wolseley in the Transvaal in that same month. While he hoped that better times would come for both the Pedi and the Zulu, and saw their conquest as part of God's plan of salvation, he nevertheless felt obliged to ask the question with reference to the Zulu: "Why is no salvation preached to these captives, no release to these in bondage?"<sup>21</sup> The concept of liberation clearly had only the meaning of Christian salvation to the missionary.

In his report written at the end of 1879, Prozesky pointed out negative effects which the war had had on blacks in Natal.

"Since the outbreak of war," he wrote, "a spirit of dissatisfaction with the existing conditions has prevailed

in the entire country, a desire to earn much money for meagre services rendered, a satiety in spiritual matters, a slowness to works of righteousness - and it makes its influence felt here as well."

Nevertheless, he gave thanks for the preservation of the station, of house and home and church, from harm.<sup>22</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1879-80**

The most remarkable candidate for baptism at Königsberg was Ma-fundosi, who had to abandon her child to its grandparents to "follow the Word of God" - to the astonishment of the women at Mafofe's *umuzi*. This modest success was the only one which Prozesky achieved among the traditionalists at this time. The Sunday morning services in 1879 and 1880 were generally very poorly attended. The traditionalist people remained largely indifferent to the missionaries' teaching. Mkankonyeke stayed away and then, in Prozesky's absence in November 1879, moved away to the Free State with his followers, taking his huts with him. The ostensible reason for this move was that more food could be harvested in the Free State. The people had in fact had ten good seasons out of twelve since 1868, and had often been able to sell surplus maize, but the prevailing shortage of this staple commodity and the fierce droughts of 1878 and 1879 might well have been factors influencing Mkankonyeke's decision. A simple desire to live the traditional Nguni life unhindered by the Christian missionary was at least as likely a cause of the chief's departure. It was another serious reverse for Prozesky's mission, but one which he

did not recognize - or did not wish to recognize - as such. Many other inhabitants of the station were away at this time, looking for maize. Prozesky was asked by various blacks why it did not rain so that planting could commence. When told that human sin was the cause, they laughed, as they "knew better". Both Langa-libalele and Cetshwayo had been famous rain-makers, and both had been captured and deported by the British; both were taking revenge in this way. Prozesky's argument that defeated chiefs could hardly control the heavens, did not impress them.<sup>23</sup>

Königsberg lost more of its people in August 1880 when a man named Silavu moved to the Free State with three huts. He said he was sorry to have to go, but he had harvested nothing at all for two years. For the first time Prozesky admitted in his journal that he was disturbed by the large number of people who had moved away. "It is to be hoped," he wrote, "that others will come to live here in their turn." His hopes must have been pinned on more *oorlams* people.<sup>24</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1876-80**

Despite his dismay at the disaffection of most of the traditionalists, Prozesky continued to visit and treat the sick at the *imizi*, and to recommend faith in the triune God to all whom he encountered. His healing skills were much in demand, both at Königsberg and further afield. During a typhoid epidemic in early 1880 he spent much of his time on visits to sick people. People

also came from far and near to be treated by him.<sup>25</sup>

### **NEWCASTLE AS AN OUT-STATION, 1876-80**

Newcastle remained the main out-station of Königsberg, but there was little spiritual progress among the *oorlams* blacks there, according to Prozesky, and widespread abuse of alcohol. The missionary temporarily suspended the services held for these people in 1876 because of the drunkenness of the men, and of the American Indian Smith, in whose house the services were held, in particular. He resumed the services in 1877 and continued to preach in the gaol monthly. On 11th April 1879 he baptized a child of the Smiths, which he had to bury on 6th September. On 29th July 1879 he married an *oorlams* couple in the town.<sup>26</sup>

The Königsberg missionary held services for the English-speaking white townsfolk on a regular basis from 1877 to 1879. The immoral behaviour of some white townspeople dismayed him and Kuschke. An Englishman was in gaol for theft and for the rape of a child, while a prominent inhabitant staggered up and down the street, intoxicated. Prozesky thought it no wonder that the traditionalists, seeing this behaviour, met the gospel with resistance or indifference.<sup>27</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS WHITE NEIGHBOURS, 1876-80**

The missionary's relations with the white farmers who were his neighbours continued to be excellent. He was a friend, doctor, advisor and spiritual comforter to them. He married couples, bap-

tized their children, held services for them, attended them on their sickbeds and deathbeds and buried them, not only in Natal but in the Orange Free State as well. In June 1877 he undertook a short holiday journey with his family, visiting a number of these neighbours and being received most heartily by them. It was on this holiday that he made copies of San paintings on the Van Niekerks' farm. These relics of a lost race intrigued him.<sup>28</sup>

The neighbour Prozesky visited most in these years was the German Bierbaum, whose farm Millbank was the out-station he visited on the third Sunday of the month during 1877 and 1878. Relatively large numbers of blacks attended the services he held there. The Zulu War interrupted this preaching routine. By December 1880 many of Bierbaum's blacks had moved away to the Free State.<sup>29</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS COLLEAGUES, 1876-1880**

Like many of his colleagues, Prozesky objected to the installation of superintendents for the various regional synods of the Berlin society. Typically, he voiced his objections, incurring the disapproval of the Mission Committee. In a letter to him, Wangemann attempted to pour oil on troubled waters by pointing out that the synods or conferences were there to limit the power of the superintendents. Prozesky was never to reconcile himself fully to the new system, which appears to have damaged the hearty brotherly co-operation of equals that had existed before its introduction.<sup>30</sup>

**CHAPTER 8: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KÖNIGSBERG CHURCH,  
1876-1880  
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12. *Ibid.*, 5-8
13. *Ibid.*, 8-13    *Erinnerungen*, 392
14. *Tagebuch* 22, 14-15    *Erinnerungen*, 392
15. *Tagebuch* 22, 15-20 & 25    *Erinnerungen*, 392    The fugitives numbered 104 men and 358 women and children. They had 794 cattle, 185 sheep and 489 goats. (*Tagebuch* 22, 18)
16. *Tagebuch* 23, 1-2    *Erinnerungen*, 392-393    For a fair assessment of Frere's motives, see Laband, J., *Kingdom in Crisis*, 7-14
17. *Tagebuch* 23, 3 & 4
18. *Ibid.*, 3-5
19. *Ibid.*, 8, 9 & 10
20. *Tagebuch* 24, 2-3

21. Ibid., 14-15
22. Ibid., 22 & 25
23. *Tagebücher* 22-25 & 27, *passim* *Tagebuch* 23, 7, 18 & 20  
*Tagebuch* 24, 13-24 *Tagebuch* 25, 13 *Tagebuch* 27, 9 & 10  
*Tagebuch* 28, 16-19
24. *Tagebuch* 27, 6
25. *Tagebuch* 15, 8-11, 32-33 & 35-36 *Tagebuch* 16, 5-7, 16  
& 19 *Tagebuch* 17, 5-7, 14, 16-20 & 22-23 *Tagebuch* 18,  
25-27 *Tagebuch* 19, 12-14, 22-24, 26 & 27 *Tagebuch* 20,  
1-2, 8-9, 11 & 17-20 *Tagebuch* 21, 8, 21-23 & 25  
*Tagebuch* 23, 11, 12, 23 & 28 *Tagebuch* 24, 1-3, 6 & 15-16  
*Tagebuch* 25, 8-9, 11, 12, 15, 18-19 & 21-22  
*Erinnerungen*, 190-191
26. *Tagebuch* 15, 6, 21 & 29-30 *Tagebuch* 17, 5, 15 & 27  
*Tagebuch* 18, 1-3 & 6 *Tagebuch* 19, 1, 4, 7, 19 & 29  
*Tagebuch* 20, 4, 9-10, 15, 19, 20 & 26-27  
*Tagebuch* 21, 5, 11 & 15 *Tagebuch* 23, 4, 7-8, 18-19,  
& 23-24 *Tagebuch* 24, 2 & 12-13 *Tagebuch* 25, 2, 12  
& 18 *Tagebuch* 27, 2-3 & 16 *Tagebuch* 28, 1  
Wangemann, H.T., *Die Berliner Mission im Zulu-Lande*, 319
27. *Tagebuch* 17, 19 *Tagebuch* 18, 6 *Tagebuch* 19, 4 & 7  
*Tagebuch* 20, 4, 9-10 & 19 *Tagebuch* 21, 5  
*Tagebuch* 23, 4 *Tagebuch* 25, 6
28. *Tagebuch* 16, 1, 6, 7 & 8 *Tagebuch* 17, 8-9, 10, 14-15  
& 27 *Tagebuch* 18, 2-5, 10 & 28 *Tagebuch* 19, 3 & 6  
*Tagebuch* 20, 18 *Tagebuch* 21, 14
29. *Tagebuch* 15, 20 *Tagebuch* 17, 16 & 19 *Tagebuch* 18, 2  
& 27 *Tagebuch* 19, 3, 5 & 12 *Tagebuch* 20, 5, 17, 21 &  
27 *Tagebuch* 21, 3, 7 & 13 *Tagebuch* 23, 11, 16, 21 & 27  
*Tagebuch* 24, 5-12 *Tagebuch* 25, 5, 9, 14-15 & 25 *Tage-*  
*buch* 27, 7 *Tagebuch* 28, 7-8
30. Letter by H.T.Wangemann to Prozesky, 7th October 1879  
Richter, J., *Geschichte der Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*,  
186-187 The majority of the Natal missionaries were not  
in favour of the appointment of a superintendent for their  
region, and Prozesky in particular had serious reservations  
about the powers to be granted to superintendents. (Minutes  
of the conferences at Königsberg, 12th-14th October 1877  
and Christianenburg, 28th April - 1st May 1878, Natal Arch-  
ive Depot, A1060, Vol.4)

## **CHAPTER 9 KÖNIGSBERG, 1880-1883**

### **THE FIRST BOER WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1880-1881**

When war broke out in December 1880 between the Boers of the Transvaal and the British who had annexed the territory in 1877, the border was closed and no fewer than seven Berlin missionaries were obliged to remain at Königsberg for some time as guests. Newcastle was the bridgehead for the reinforcement of British authority, and this area became the main theatre of war.<sup>1</sup> Prozesky's sentiments were decidedly pro-Boer. He believed that British greed for the gold discovered in the Transvaal had been the motive for the annexation. These sentiments, which he continued to hold, were to determine his course of action during the Second Boer War of Independence 19 years later - with grave consequences.<sup>2</sup>

The British led by General Sir George Pomeroy Colley attempted to force their way into the Transvaal to relieve their besieged garrisons, only to suffer severe defeats at Laing's Nek (28th January 1881) and Schuinshoogte (8th February), no great distance from the mission station.<sup>3</sup> The Transvaalers occupied the Drakensberg heights on the Natal/Orange Free State border. Prozesky sent word to them that he was prepared to treat any sick or wounded they might have, but that he would do the same for the British. Various Boer commandos, large and small, came to Königsberg, but all behaved extremely well. Prozesky met Combat-General Nicolaas

Smit who had led the Boers at Schuinshoogte, and Commandant Frans Joubert who had commanded the Boers at Bronkhorstspuit.<sup>4</sup> Blacks were continually coming to hear what news there was. One of them said that they had Prozesky's past hospitality and help to the Boers in times of illness to thank for the fact that the Boers were "sparing" them.<sup>5</sup>

The missionaries heard of the disastrous defeat dealt to the British on Majuba mountain on Sunday 27th February and of the death of General Colley in action when Prozesky and his colleague Düring rode to Newcastle on business the next day. They found the townspeople "in a state of great agitation and exceedingly downcast". Fortunately, an end to the war was being negotiated. Colley's successor, Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, and Commandant-General Piet Joubert held talks at O'Neill's cottage near Majuba, later facilitated by President Brand of the Free State, acting as intermediary. When it became known that only one Boer had died during the battle on the mountain, Prozesky was convinced that God had given the Transvaalers the victory.<sup>6</sup>

President Brand visited Königsberg on his way back to the Free State, and Prozesky had an hour of conversation with Paul Kruger at a Newcastle hotel on 26th March. Kruger, too, believed that God had given the Boers their victory. From Newcastle Prozesky proceeded to Majuba to visit his colleague Merensky who had been acting as the Boer's surgeon. On his way back home he encountered

Kruger again at a hotel and shared a meal with him. On 17th May 1881 General Sir Evelyn Wood and a number of his officers including Colonel Redvers Buller visited Königsberg. In the following months Prozesky had various other meetings with Wood, Buller, Kruger, Joubert, Pretorius, Brand, and Jorissen. He was pleased when it became clear that hostilities would not be resumed.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1880-1883**

There were 102 Christians and catechumens living at Königsberg in 18 houses in 1881. On 21st February of that year Prozesky introduced a democratic element into his church administration by allowing the men of the congregation to elect three elders to hold office for one year, to settle disputes and to help watch over the congregation. Ironically, this innovation appears to have had a negative effect on the Königsberg Christians. Possibly the war had unsettled them, because a spirit of resistance to the authority of the missionary took hold, culminating in their blunt refusal on 26th April to sign the station rules. They claimed that the rules were intolerable and made slaves of them, and that Prozesky was harder on them than the worst Boers. When asked to specify their hardships, they were "unable to do so". They nevertheless continued to behave disrespectfully towards the missionary, refusing to greet him, apparently believing that if they stood together they could force him to accede to their wishes. Even Matheus Ngwenya joined the general revolt. It was thought that the missionary

could be dispensed with; they would hold their own services, teach their own children and buy a farm for themselves where they could live free of his supervision. Prozesky was aghast but stood firm, telling them that they were free to leave if they so chose. The revolt collapsed when the people discovered that a farm would cost from £5000 - £7000, and that farmers required a rent of up to £25 per family per annum. One by one they submitted to Prozesky's authority. By 12th June all had signed the station rules. In 1882 they rented some 800 acres of government land, and this made some of them feel independent of the mission, but this experiment was apparently of short duration.<sup>8</sup>

No adults were baptized at Königsberg during 1881, but on Sunday 12th March 1882 Prozesky could baptize three adults and a child and confirm a youth. One of the adults was an old woman named Mfananeke ("He has found her"), who was renamed Hanna. The other two adults baptized were *oorlams* youths who had formerly been in the service of Boers. In March 1883 13 adults and 9 children were christened, and in June of that year another 3 adults. On Sunday 14th October 1883 a man of 63 named Joseph, a former slave from the Cape Colony, and his two youngest children, girls of 15 and 13, were baptized. A young traditionalist woman was also baptized in 1883 and named Margaritha, one of the few converts from the *imizi*. The extremely slow growth of the congregation through baptisms was not augmented during this period by the arrival of new settlers willing to embrace the Christian faith. Indeed, one woman

and two men and their families from the congregation left the mission in 1881. Some 100 - 150 people attended the Sunday services in 1883.<sup>9</sup>

Despite some serious lapses in moral behaviour and the general rebelliousness shown in 1881, most of the members of the congregation led Christian lives and earned a living doing honest manual labour. The missionary held his people on a tight rein. At a meeting of the congregation on 3rd July 1882 the station rules of 1879 were unanimously amended to reintroduce corporal punishment for the fleshly crimes of drunkenness, dagga-smoking, fighting, fornication and adultery. The congregation showed their affection for their missionary by beginning in these years what was to become an annual tradition at Königsberg: on a pre-arranged day they combined to hoe his maize-fields - before they hoed their own.<sup>10</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1881-83**

After Groeger's departure Prozesky himself resumed the teaching of the school on 1st April 1881. The 38 scholars attended "quite regularly". Later that year the 11-year-old Mariechen Prozesky began to substitute as teacher when her father was absent. Although some of the children were older than she was, they nevertheless obeyed her. This arrangement continued in 1882 and 1883, freeing Prozesky to undertake short preaching journeys further afield. The number of scholars increased to 75, of whom 60 came with some regularity. Famine in the colony during 1883 prevented

most of the parents from paying school fees, and attendance was irregular. The forty children of the congregation came, but almost all the children from the *imizi* stayed away. The average attendance was 50 and the enrolment 80.<sup>11</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI AT KÖNIGSBURG, 1881-83**

There were 238 traditionalists (47 men, 56 women, 29 youths, 23 adult girls and 83 children) living in 76 huts at Königsberg in 1881. After initial good attendances early that year, fewer people from the *imizi* came to church. Attendance was "generally satisfactory" at an average of about 80. The church was packed again in December 1881, making Prozesky wonder whether it might not soon prove to be too small, but the services drew fewer people in 1882. A relatively small section of the traditionalist Nguni at Königsberg apparently enjoyed coming to the services, but they showed no real interest in the theology of salvation offered to them. Church attendance declined again in 1883. Prozesky blamed this change on the visit of Superintendent Posselt which had taken place some time between June 1882 and July 1883. Posselt had apparently said in the presence of many of the traditionalists that church attendance was poor on all the mission stations and that "if the Spirit of God did not draw the hearts, they did not come." This statement was used by the local Nguni to justify their reluctance to come to church. Prozesky was not satisfied with this state of affairs. The mission station, he told the assembled men, was there to pro-

vide for Christians from among the heathen, to provide a place where they might live undisturbed under good laws and hear God's Word. Those who were not interested should go and live elsewhere. The men said that they loved Prozesky and did not wish to move. Unimpressed, he decided that he would at least compel them to pay their rent. He did not see why poor people in Germany should deny themselves to support "such lazy people". While he had no intention of prosecuting the old and infirm, Prozesky was determined to enforce payment by those who could pay but would not.<sup>12</sup>

In August 1882 the traditionalists "signed" an additional article to the contract they had with the missionary society, undertaking to send their children to school and to come to church regularly themselves. This attempt by the missionary to regulate their behaviour proved to be fruitless, as it certainly could not be enforced. In the second half of 1883 the missionary's relations with his tenants were particularly bad. He felt that the Natal blacks were "much worse" than they had been when he arrived in the colony. At a meeting with the men of the station *imizi* on 5th September, he read the contract they had entered into with him and pointed out that all of them were in breach of it. He demanded that they adhere to its conditions in future, and added two clauses forbidding both beer-drinks and wood-gathering on Sundays. Those who had no money or maize with which to pay their debt to the station could work it off. They would be allowed a month's grace to pay or begin working. Those who did not comply would have

to leave, and an agent would collect what they owed.<sup>13</sup>

The men's unwillingness to work disgusted the industrious missionary. Even the minor chief Tinta who had come to live at Königsberg after the departure of Mkankonyeke, claimed that he could not pay his rent; he needed his resources to *lobola* more wives. Prozesky made an example of him by engaging an agent to collect the £10 he owed for his ten huts. This had the desired effect: by late October Tinta had paid and others had followed suit. Efforts were made by some to pay or to work off their debt, but others moved away secretly to relatives in the Orange Free State.<sup>14</sup>

Having asserted his authority, Prozesky was able to exercise discipline in other ways, such as by adjudicating minor civil and criminal cases among the Königsberg Nguni, rather like a traditionalist chief, either fining the parties he found guilty, or referring more serious cases to the Newcastle magistrate. Tinta himself brought such cases to him.<sup>15</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1881-83**

If Prozesky's spiritual mission to the Nguni thus far had been largely unsuccessful, his medical mission - which he did not see as important in its own right - was certainly a success. Measles, which was rife in the area in late 1881 and early 1882 and which prostrated the entire Prozesky family and their servants, claimed no lives, and a boy who had typhoid recovered. There was much

illness again in the early months of 1882 and towards the end of 1883, causing deaths, but none of the patients treated by the missionary died. During outbreaks of smallpox in the district in 1882 and 1883, the magistrate commissioned Prozesky to inoculate with lymph all who had not yet been inoculated.<sup>16</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG OUT-STATIONS, 1881-83**

Throughout the period 1881-83 Prozesky's preaching out-stations remained Newcastle (on the first Sunday of the month) and Millbank (on the third Sunday). Some of his Newcastle people attached themselves to a black Wesleyan lay-preacher holding services in the town, but the German did not mind, as long as they "got to know the Lord Jesus". On occasion Prozesky proceeded from Millbank to the farms Cundycleugh or Beginzel.<sup>17</sup>

### **KÖNIGSBERG FARM, 1881-83**

Floods and droughts in 1882 and 1883 caused the harvests at Königsberg to fail in both years. This factor, although as yet not recognized, was to prove an important one in limiting the growth of the mission station.<sup>18</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS COLLEAGUES, 1881-83**

Prozesky's relations with his superiors were unhappy ones during this period. His objections to being superintended by Posselt were shared by other Natal missionaries such as Schumann. Merensky, the Transvaal superintendent, whom he found it hard to like, was recalled to Germany in 1881, having lost the confidence of

his fellow missionaries in the Transvaal as a result of his handling of the war crisis in 1880-81. Prozesky's criticism of conditions at Botshabelo earned him charges which he regarded as compromising his good name, and he requested an enquiry into the "frivolous wasting" of mission money. It irked him that Wangemann took the part of his brother-in-law Merensky. Various missionaries were leaving the society at this time, and there was a very real possibility that Prozesky, who sympathized with them in their rejection of the superintendency, might follow suit. Fortunately, despite an acrimonious exchange of letters between Prozesky and Merensky, their dispute appears to have been shelved after Merensky's departure from South Africa.<sup>19</sup>

## **CHAPTER 9: KÖNIGSBERG, 1880-1883**

### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch 28*, 5, 7-12 & 21    *Tagebuch 29*, 1 & 2    Van Jaarsveld, Van Rensburg & Stals, *Die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog, 1880-1881*, 130 & 143
2. *Tagebuch 28*, 5
3. *Tagebuch 29*, 2-4    Ransford, O., *The Battle of Majuba Hill*, 38, 40 & 54-59    Van Jaarsveld, Van Rensburg & Stals, *Die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog, 1880-1881*, 147, 155 & 172
4. *Tagebuch 29*, 10-19    Joubert told Prozesky that he had led 130 men against 200 British soldiers. These figures are at variance with those commonly accepted by historians today. Joubert also said that the Boers had lost one dead and three wounded. Of the British, 40 were taken prisoner, 70 wounded and the rest killed. These were whites only; many blacks who were driving the wagons were also killed. Modern scholarship gives the number of British in Anstruther's column as 9 officers and 252 other ranks, and the number of black drivers and leaders as 60. J.E.H. Grobler accepts a figure of 300 Boers as likely.
5. *Tagebuch 29*, 18
6. *Tagebuch 30*, 2-6 & 15-19

7. Ibid., 20-21, 26-35, 39-44 *Erinnerungen*, 405  
*Missions-Berichte* 1881, 392 Merensky had hastened up the mountain immediately after the Majuba battle, expecting to find much work to do, but there had been only six wounded Boers for him to attend to. He had amputated the arm of one of the wounded, a young man whom Prozesky knew, but the man had died. Statistics supplied by Merensky as the Boers' chief medical officer were:

	killed	wounded	died of wounds
Laing's Nek	14	20	2
Schuinshoogte	8	10	2
Majuba	1	6	1.

Kruger told Prozesky that, as far as he knew, the Boers had lost 45 killed since the beginning of the war. He also said that a Commission consisting of Wood, the Cape Governor and the senior Cape judge would be sitting to determine the eastern boundary of the Transvaal, but added that he would not surrender an inch of Transvaal territory. *BMA Tagebuch* 1881, 100, 108-109, 113-114, 116 & 122 Letter by Prozesky to Wangemann, Königsberg, 11th May 1881

8. *Tagebuch* 29, 22 *Missions-Berichte* 1881, 392 *BMA Tagebuch* 1881, 94-125 167-168, *Acta Königsberg*
9. *Tagebuch* 33, 20-21 & 35-37 *Tagebuch* 36, 43 *Tagebuch* 37, 42 *BMA Tagebuch* 1883, 20 & 35-36, *Acta Königsberg* By mid-1883 170 people (adults and children) had been baptized at Königsberg (*Missions-Berichte* 1883, 467 & 468).
10. *Tagebuch* 37, 23 & 25 *Tagebuch* 33, 2, 46 & 49-50 Prozesky, J.J.A. & Kuschke, H.F.L., *Schoolplaats-Wetten*, 20th September 1879, amended 3rd July 1882 *BMA Tagebuch* 1882, 83-91 & 99 *BMA Tagebuch* 1883, 6, 8 & 35
11. *Erinnerungen*, 356-357 *Tagebuch* 33, 2, 4, 20, 31-34, 37-40, 41, 44, 45, 47, 53 & 55 *Tagebuch* 36, 1-4, 6, 9, 14, 16, 17-21, 26, 34, 42 & 44 *Tagebuch* 37, 1-2, 7, 14, 16 & 23-24 *Missions-Berichte* 1883, 466 & 468 *BMA Tagebuch* 1883, 13
12. *Tagebuch* 33, 3-7, 16-20 & *passim* *Tagebuch* 36, 6-9 & 18 *BMA Tagebuch* 1881, 167-168
13. *BMA Tagebuch* 1882, 66 *Tagebuch* 36, 21-29
14. Ibid., 28-35 & 37-42 *Tagebuch* 37, 1, 4 & 24-25
15. *Tagebuch* 37, 7, 9-10 & 18-19 *Tagebuch* 33, 48 & 50
16. *Tagebuch* 33, 6-8, 21-22, 23, 25-27, 29 & 54 *Tagebuch* 36, 37 *Tagebuch* 37, 3, 10, 12, 14-15 & 17 *BMA Tagebuch* 1882, 72 *BMA Tagebuch* 1883, 5 & 7
17. *Tagebuch* 33, 2, 19, 23-24, 29-30, 33, 34, 53-54 & 59 *Tagebuch* 36, 3, 14-15, 18-19, 34-35, 42 & 44 *Tagebuch* 37, 2-4 & 6-7
18. *Tagebuch* 37, 13, 24 & 27
19. *Tagebuch* 33, 3, 5-14, 27-29, 33 & 60 *Tagebuch* 37, 4-5, 8 & 11-12 Richter, J., *Geschichte der Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*, 255 The Natal synod was taken to task from Berlin for sympathizing with Missionary Regler who left the

society over the superintendency issue. (Minutes of the Natal synod, Christianenburg, 15th-17th May 1881) Fortunately, Prozesky and Merensky were reconciled in later years. (Letters by Prozesky and Merensky, 1893-1899, *Acta Prozesky*)

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **KÖNIGSBERG, 1884-1889**

Königsberg had already had four failed harvests by 1883. Severe droughts, excessive rain or disastrous hailstorms caused the harvests to fail yet again in 1884, 1885, 1887 and 1888, bringing famine to the mission farm. The missionary was besieged with appeals for help from his tenants, and had to make debt to feed hungry black children and elderly people. Those who were stronger began to leave in search of food and employment. In 1885 Prozesky wrote an appeal for aid to the mission community in Germany. Printed in pamphlet form, it depicted graphically the series of natural disasters which had brought the Königsberg people to their knees. The response was to be good, but slow in coming. As a farm, Königsberg fared better in 1889 than in previous years, yet there was little relief for the inhabitants, and a drought in the winter and spring prompted the missionary to write to the Governor in early October, suggesting that a day of repentance be held. The Prozeskys shared the poverty of their congregation: in 1885 all their children were wearing patched clothing and all, with the exception of the two eldest daughters, went barefoot except on Sundays.<sup>1</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1884-89**

The Christian congregation at Königsberg showed some growth in 1884. Twelve adults were baptized that year and another 14 continued in the catechism class. In July 1885 Prozesky communicated

a decision of the Natal synod and Director Wangemann to the congregation, namely that every adult member was in future to pay 6d a month as a church contribution. There was considerable initial resistance to the new contribution, manifested in quite a rebellious spirit, but it was not of long duration.<sup>2</sup>

Prozesky began to count those present at the Sunday afternoon services at Königsberg during 1886 - a sign that he was pleased with their numbers. An average of 79,7 people were at church on the sixteen Sundays when a count or estimate was made. There were 38, 63 and 55 communicants at Holy Communion in January, June and August respectively. Prozesky reported that the members of his congregation lived as Christians, if in some frailty, working quietly to support themselves and their large families. The mothers had developed a virtuosity in mending clothes, patch upon patch. When they held the services in Prozesky's absence, Matheus Ngwenya and Petrus July had to do so barefoot and in patched clothing. The people had no money with which to pay their church dues, but were prepared to work off the annual six shillings.<sup>3</sup>

The congregation grew during 1887 through baptisms as well as by the arrival of two new tenant families. Thirteen children of Christian parents were christened. Fewer people attended the Sunday afternoon services in Dutch, mainly because many were away working elsewhere. By the end of that year there were 30 Christian families at Königsberg, 20 of *oorlams* and 10 of tradition-

alist origin.<sup>4</sup>

Although many of the men of the congregation were still away, working elsewhere, the Sunday afternoon services were generally well attended in 1889. The church was often full and the average attendance was approximately 80. Mariechen Prozesky taught the Sunday school between the morning and afternoon services. By mid-1889 there were 244 members of the Königsberg congregation, 47 men and youths, 69 women and 128 children. Of these, 116 were communicants.<sup>5</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1884-89**

A new school building was erected at Königsberg during 1887 and 1888, but school classes continued to be held in the church until September 1888. When the Prozeskys were away at synod early in 1884, the children were taught by the youngest daughter of Paulus Adam Pieters, but otherwise Mariechen or Martha Prozesky did the teaching when their father could not.<sup>6</sup>

In April 1884 Prozesky introduced an innovation. Aware that the shilling per month which the parents were supposed to pay as school fees would not be forthcoming that year, he bought sickles and let a number of the scholars cut grass in the orchard. Others carried it away, and in twenty minutes a sizeable area had been cleared. From then on the children worked for twenty minutes after school each day.<sup>7</sup>

The famine affected school-attendance adversely, and the numbers remained small. Prozesky regretted the absence of compulsory schooling in Natal. On a journey to the coast in December 1887 he fetched a young black teacher named Banane whom he had engaged for the school and who came highly recommended from the American Board seminary at Amanzimtoti. The missionary planned to teach religion himself and leave the other subjects to the new man. Banane taught the school regularly during 1888. He was industrious at first and introduced a service for the children at mid-day on Sundays in which he went through the morning sermon with them catechetically, but towards the end of the year he proved "too weak" and became "sleepy", so that Prozesky felt obliged to dismiss him. There were 79 names in the register and the average attendance for the year was 54.5. The new schoolroom was completed by the end of September and opened officially on 1st October 1888 by Zunckel, the new superintendent (Posselt having died in 1885). It had room for 150 pupils and Prozesky had painted texts on the walls inside and out.<sup>8</sup>

The missionary himself taught the school during 1889, Mariechen deputizing for him when he was indisposed or away. All the older children had been withdrawn to work at home or for whites, so that only those aged 5-8 years remained. The enrolment was 70 and the average attendance 43.5. A sewing-school was held by Caroline Prozesky and her daughters for 20-25 girls on one afternoon every

week at this time.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1884-89**

The year 1884 was a modest turning-point for the better in the history of Prozesky's mission to the traditionalist Nguni at Königsberg. The trend detected in the later months of 1883 for more traditionalists - mainly women and children - to come to the Sunday morning services, continued into 1884, the church being full or almost full on various occasions. Some traditionalists even attended the Dutch afternoon services. People from the *imizi* - again predominantly women - were also presenting themselves for instruction with a view to baptism. On 23rd March 1884 the missionary baptized a very old woman of at least 80, and on 14th September 16 people were christened. These included Mafundosi as well as four adults and four children from Millbank.<sup>10</sup>

On 27th June 1884 before the magistrate, Prozesky renewed the contract he had with his traditionalist tenants. Thirty-seven heads of households made their mark on the document. He interceded on behalf of the poor in 1885 when they were pressed by the government to pay their hut-tax, addressing a petition for relief to the Governor. More than half the 400 souls living at Königsberg and cultivating 300 acres left the mission station that winter in search of food elsewhere, some of them for good. The missionary did what he could for those who remained. Relief money from Germany was used to employ them to build stone-wall enclosures. Be-

lieving that "when the flesh suffers, man stops sinning", the German saw the loving, chastising hand of God in the famine<sup>11</sup>

The trend for Christianity to gain ground at Königsberg - for no specific or apparent reason - continued in 1885. In January Prozesky baptized nine people: five adults from among the traditionalists and four children. One of the adults was a remarkable woman named Manisa, who received the Christian name of Renata. She had been a catechumen for about two years and had been ridiculed and beaten repeatedly and cruelly by her husband for her faith - until at last he gave in, impressed by her single-minded endurance. He was present at her baptism and had bought her clothes for the occasion. These successes made the missionary optimistic. He was elated two days later when his baptism class grew from seven to twenty-two members. With the exception of one man from a neighbouring farm, the new catechumens were all traditionalist women and girls.<sup>12</sup>

Another indication of greater interest in Christianity on the part of the traditionalists in 1885 was the good attendance at the Zulu Sunday morning services. The church was sometimes overfull and the missionary estimated the average attendance in the second half-year to have been approximately 180. Some of those who came walked long distances from other farms to be there.<sup>13</sup>

The year 1886 saw the baptism of 10 more adult catechumens and 16 children, six of these of Christian parents. Perhaps because of

the unfavourable farming conditions, Tinta and his people moved away from the mission station in September 1886 after a stay of 3-4 years. The departure of this body of people, the third emigration from Königsberg, was a blow to Prozesky's expectations, despite the casual way in which he mentioned it in his journal. He appeared to be more concerned about the inroads Wesleyan preachers from Driefontein were making in the neighbourhood. Their methods agreed better with the blacks than his own, he noted. He deplored what he saw as the superficiality of their conversions, their practice of allowing non-christians - men, women and children - to pray publicly, and what he saw as their lack of sobriety, diligence and fortitude in learning.<sup>14</sup>

In his report written in July 1887 Prozesky estimated that there were approximately 450 souls living on the mission farm and another 200-250 within a radius of 7 1/2 km, of whom some 186 or 30% attended the Zulu services on Sundays. No fewer than 31 traditionalists joined the Christian congregation by baptism during that year. One of them was Mjiba, the husband of Renata. Four of their children were baptized with him. One of the men baptized had two wives, one of whom he renounced. All the men had to declare that they abandoned the practice of *ukulobolisa* (the acceptance of cattle as *ilobolo* for a daughter or other female dependant given in marriage).<sup>15</sup>

Prozesky continued to visit the *imizi* and recommend his faith to

the inhabitants. Some of the men of the congregation also occasionally visited *imizi* as evangelists on Sundays. The Natal government empowered the missionary to issue passes to blacks wishing to move from one farm to another. This office brought no income to the mission, yet he performed it gladly as it brought people to him whom he would not otherwise have reached. He also continued to act as an unofficial sub-magistrate, judging minor cases, both civil and criminal, where the parties involved wished him to do so. In September 1888 an *inyanga yokubhula* smelt out a non-christian man named Semo as a witch. Semo asked the missionary for a letter to the magistrate to lay a charge against the diviner. Prozesky obliged him by pouring scorn publicly on the supposed abilities of the *inyanga* and having him detained until he was fetched by the police.<sup>16</sup>

The missionary claimed an average attendance of 200 at the Sunday morning services in 1888. The church was sometimes too small for all the people who came, and there were never fewer than 100 people present, even in inclement weather. Most of the male catechumens were away on the diamond-fields or gold-fields, and no adults from Königsberg proper were baptized during 1888.<sup>17</sup>

By 1889 the missionary was thinking of enlarging the church. Two Boer friends, J.J. Müller and Dirk van Rooyen, collected the sum of £80 for this purpose. English friends also promised support. The church was in fact never enlarged because many people left to

work on the gold-fields. With the permission of the donors, the money was later used for repairs and other purposes.<sup>18</sup>

The Christian congregation showed vigorous growth during 1889. Sixteen adults and seventeen children were baptized on 30th June 1889. In the second half of the year two young women from out-stations and an old woman on her deathbed were baptized.<sup>19</sup> Some traditionalists were hostile towards the *kholwa*. A non-christian on a neighbouring farm struck a woman from Königsberg in the face for being a Christian. When he would not come to have the case judged, the missionary gave the woman a letter to take to the magistrate.<sup>20</sup> In March 1889 a young woman from one of the *imizi* escaped from her father and brother who had beaten and bound her and driven her towards the Free State to marry a man she did not love. She found refuge with the Prozeskys. The signs of the assault on her were clearly visible and the missionary refused to give her up to her brother and father who came in turn to fetch her. Instead, he wrote to the magistrate for instructions, knowing that the law in Natal forbade the marrying of women against their will. Two policemen came to fetch the victim, her father, mother and brother two days later. A fine of £1 each was imposed upon the two male relatives.<sup>21</sup>

Prompted by information from Mr Davidson, the proprietor of the Salisbury Hotel in Newcastle, that the Natal Governor had expressed interest in Prozesky's views on the education of blacks, the

missionary submitted these to Sir Charles Mitchell in November 1889 under the title *Thoughts about Civilizing the Natives*. Predictably, his recommendations centred upon the conversion of the blacks to Christianity, but he also stressed the dangers of false civilization which would assail them through the agency of unchristian whites. He wrote *inter alia*:

"Civilizing the Natives is to impart to them a fund of mental knowledge to judge for themselves, to compare their own state with that of the Whiteman; to impart to them a certain moral feeling, to awaken the slumbering conscience and show them where to get strength to stand when assailed by temptations arising in their own hearts and coming to them from unprincipled Whitemen with whom they associate, that they may not add to their own stock of evil another stock of worse."

He defined the danger of mere knowledge without moral direction in the following words:

"... selfishness where one uses his knowledge only for his own welfare, without caring for his weaker fellowmen (notice the swindling on the Goldfields, in selling worthless scrip for much money) - selfishness which commits crimes, the more knowledge the cleverer the crimes are planned and executed (notice the crowded prisons!)"

His recipe was for the blacks to be given a modicum of education (to enable them to read the Bible) and further to be taught to "pray and work".<sup>22</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG OUT-STATIONS, 1884-89**

The Newcastle congregation dwindled during these years - partly as a result of the activities of Wesleyan "native assistants" in the town - until it consisted of only two women in 1888. Prozesky held services in the gaol there and for the *oorlams* people on an

average of 7-8 Sundays a year. Some 10-20 people assembled for worship. From 1885 he took to holding services for his friends the Loxtons, their servants and the black workers in their coal-mine, when he stayed overnight in Lennoxton. He had fewer black hearers there as well by the end of 1889, as Indians were replacing blacks in the mine.<sup>23</sup>

Bierbaum's farm Millbank was visited as a preaching-post by Prozesky on an average of 3-4 times per year during this period. Dinkelmann's farm Beginzel received an average of 4-5 visits per year. Another preaching-place was the house of a man named Klaas at Millbank. A man (possibly Klaas), three women and four children from Millbank were baptized at Königsberg on 14th September 1884. In July 1885 Prozesky baptized Klaas's blind old mother. Many blacks moved away from the southern out-stations during this period, with the result that very few people attended the services which were held. By the end of 1888 there was only one man who still adhered to the Lutherans at Elandsklip; the others had all gone over to the Wesleyans. Prozesky could nevertheless baptize a girl from Elandsklip at Königsberg in September 1889. On all his preaching journeys southward he visited *imizi* and preached there as well.<sup>24</sup>

Following seven of his preaching visits to Newcastle in 1886, Prozesky proceeded to the farm of his friend Fritz Adendorff at Schuinshoogte to hold services for about 20 blacks there. On

three of these rides in the latter part of 1886 he visited the *umuzi* of Kabane, a minor chief, where some 50-60 people listened attentively to what he had to say. He preached at Schuinshoogte and Kabane's kraal four times in 1887, but abandoned these rides when many of the blacks moved away and others joined the Wesleyans. A "loud-mouthed" woman preacher was appointed in this area by the Methodists in 1888. The Berliner felt that they were harvesting where they had not sown, and he disapproved of women preachers as unscriptural. In 1889 he heard that Adendorff had expelled the Wesleyans from his farm. Prompted by the missionary, Fritz Adendorff's son Frikkie, a devout young man, began to hold services for the blacks on his father's farm. The missionary had shown him how to read Zulu, which he spoke fluently.<sup>25</sup>

In July 1888 Prozesky first visited the Buffalo River region to hold services for blacks living there on farms and crown land. He preached there on two further occasions that year, but only once in 1889.<sup>26</sup> The year 1889 also saw Prozesky opening two new fields of mission work: one at Wakkerstroom in the Transvaal and the other in the north-eastern Orange Free State.<sup>27</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1889**

In 1889 Prozesky encountered opposition to his medical mission for the first time when one of the Newcastle doctors threatened to prosecute him for practising illegally as a doctor. As he possessed no formal medical qualification, his practice of medicine

among whites in Natal would practically come to an end during the next decade - to the detriment of many poor rural people.<sup>28</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S RELATIONS WITH HIS COLLEAGUES, 1884-89**

Prozesky had mixed feelings about the impending visit of Director Wangemann in 1885. While he looked forward to seeing him again, he felt that he was still in disfavour. Fortunately all his suspicions were swept away when the director finally arrived on 6th April 1885. The two men embraced and Prozesky wept. The visitation was unmarred by dissension and Wangemann won the hearts of "all" the inhabitants. He reported that the houses of the Christian congregation were neat and friendly, built some distance from the mission house and spaced widely apart.<sup>29</sup>

From 10th-29th April 1885 Prozesky accompanied Wangemann and Glöckner via Harrismith, Hoffenthal, Emmaus, Emangweni, Estcourt, Weenen, Stendal and Pietermaritzburg to Christianenburg. Synod was held with the dying Superintendent Posselt, whose son Johannes, an untrained teacher, was ordained as a missionary in his father's bedroom. On 6th May Wangemann embarked on the steamer *Melrose* in Durban. At the request of the Posselt family, Prozesky remained at Christianenburg when the other missionaries dispersed to their home stations. Superintendent Posselt died on 12th May 1885, holding Prozesky's hand and that of his wife.<sup>30</sup>

The Königsberger's relations with Zunckel, Posselt's successor as superintendent, were not to be without friction. Zunckel's first

visitation to Königsberg in September 1886 went off very well, but he annoyed Prozesky in 1887 by taxing him with exaggerating the poverty of the Königsberg people when they could not pay their church dues. Prozesky did not hesitate to write frankly and sharply to him, rejecting the charge and one made by Zunckel's son Hermann that he had seen people at Königsberg "luxuriating" in coffee and white bread. Nevertheless, Prozesky's relations with his colleagues were happy ones during 1888. He and the other Natal missionaries deliberated harmoniously at the Stendal synod of November 1888, when he executed a number of mural texts in the new Stendal church.<sup>31</sup>

In November 1886 Prozesky suggested that one or two of the elders from each mission station should attend the synods in future - to confer among themselves and for half a day with the missionaries. Johannes Posselt supported this motion, but it did not meet with general approval.<sup>32</sup> During 1889 Prozesky submitted to his colleagues a draft of uniform rules for all the mission stations of the Berlin society in Natal. In his accompanying letter, he said that he knew that some of them would disagree with him concerning the provision for corporal punishment for certain transgressions and the proscription of *ukulobolisa*, but he asked them to approve the rules as formulated - they could always be lenient in practice if they so chose, while less strict rules and less severe punishments would tie the hands of those like himself who

exercised a sterner discipline. It is paradoxical that the Königsberger was in favour of bringing the elders into the synodal deliberations - a step towards church democracy for which most of his Natal colleagues were not yet prepared - while he nevertheless maintained a stricter, more patriarchal control of the members of his congregation than they did of theirs. To what extent flogging was practised by his colleagues in South Africa remains a subject for future scholarship, but it is clear that the majority of the Natal Berliners were not in favour of corporal punishment for adults, as provision for it was not made in the uniform rules. *Ukulobolisa* was forbidden. Of the Natal Berliners, only Neizel was not totally opposed to it. Wangemann saw it as slavery and degrading to women.<sup>33</sup>

## **CHAPTER 10: KÖNIGSBERG, 1884-1889**

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2. *Tagebuch* 39, 66-69 & 70
3. *Tagebuch* 40, 6, 17, 18-19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34-35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 44, 48, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 60, 65, 66, 67 & 68 *Tagebuch* 41, 3
4. *Tagebuch* 41, 7, 16, 17, 23, 56, 59, 100, 102 & 106 *Tagebuch* 42, 20 & 43 Prozesky, J.J.A., *Report on Mission Work done at Koenigsberg, Newcastle Division*
5. *Tagebuch* 42, 113 & 123 *Tagebuch* 43, 2, 11, 15, 17-18, 19, 25, 33, 35, 39, 42, 44, 47, 57, 60, 61, 64-65, 74, 75, 81, 89, 91, 95, 98, 99, 102, 104-105, 107 & 110 The Königsberg people were valued as servants. A letter from J. Prillewitz, Heidelberg, Z.A.R., 8th July 1889, praising one Klaas who was in his service and requesting another good

- labourer, is testimony to this.
6. *Tagebuch* 37, 36 & 41     *Tagebuch* 38, 3, 19, 45, 46, 77-78, & 81     *Tagebuch* 39, 5
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  10. *Tagebuch* 37, 30-31, 32, 34, 37, 42, 43 & 44     *Tagebuch* 38, 20, 61, 72 & 78     *Tagebuch* 39, 3, 12 & 13
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The 37 household heads were: Mazimbane, Umdeliza, Umkantya, Umvukusana, Somcuba, Gevebu, Miyebuka, Dundubalo, Umdiza, Umgatyana, Umgoba, Tinta, Umxagaza, Undiyane, Ungulubu, Mazimbane, Pezulu, Manzane, Nsomcuba, Masipula, Mayebuka, Umcakaza, Usemo, Vuguzana, Lohai, Shlafela, Umkantye, Lutyani, Umkuka, Sompofu, Isicatulo, Betya, Tyisizela, Umfefe, Nguyanguya, Ujim, Umbetya.     *Tagebuch* 39, 43-44, 46, 60, 64-65, 66, 70-74, 79-81, 88 & 90     *Tagebuch* 40, 11 & 12-14
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  13. *Tagebuch* 39, 20, 31, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 56, 57, 58, 60, 65, 70, 71, 72, 74, 79, 86, 87 & 90     *Tagebuch* 40, 3
  14. *Tagebuch* 40, 33, 38, 41, 52 & 60     *Tagebuch* 41, 4, 10, 98-99, 108-109 & 114-116
  15. *Tagebuch* 41, 7, 56, 105-106 & 107
  16. *Ibid.*, 13, 23-26, 28, 30-36, 43, 48, 65 & 115  
*Tagebuch* 42, 11, 66-69 & 97-98     The story of Semo and the witch-finder is told less accurately but with great relish in Prozesky's memoirs. (*Erinnerungen*, 194-202)
  17. *Tagebuch* 42, 1, 3, 4-6, 12, 15, 18-21, 23, 25-28, 34-37, 43, 46-48, 56, 58, 60-62, 65, 68-71, 76, 88, 93, 96, 99, 104-106 & 109     J.J.A. Prozesky, *Report on Mission Work done at Koenigsberg, Newcastle Division*.
  18. *Tagebuch* 42, 43, 66 & 112     *Erinnerungen*, 237-239
  19. *Tagebuch* 43, 16, 21, 55-58, 89, 104-105 & 110
  20. *Ibid.*, 47-48     *Tagebuch* 42, 124
  21. *Tagebuch* 43, 20-24     This story appears in entertaining but inaccurate form in the memoirs (*Erinnerungen*, 296-301)
  22. Letter from J.J.A. Prozesky to Sir Charles Mitchell, Governor of Natal, Königsberg, 2nd November 1889     Prozesky, J.J.A., *Thoughts about Civilizing the Natives*, unpublished monograph, 2nd November 1889
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## **CHAPTER 11 PROZESKY AND FRANKE, 1890-1892**

### **JOHANNES FRANKE AT KÖNIGSBERG (1)**

Young Missionary Johannes Franke (1862-1892) arrived at Königsberg in January 1890 to be Prozesky's assistant. His senior colleague instructed him daily in Zulu, which he mastered so quickly that he was able to hold both Sunday services on 24th August. It was a blow when he had to leave in June 1891 to accompany the Berlin Missionary Society's expedition to Lake Nyassa, but he was not to be gone long. Both he and Merensky, the leader of the expedition, became ill with fever, and he returned to Königsberg in November. Everyone was very glad to have him back, and Prozesky was happy to leave him in charge of the mission station when he travelled to Germany in February 1892.<sup>1</sup>

The Prozeskys' sons Christian and Otto both wished to become missionaries, and it was decided that they should go to Germany to improve their education before entering the *Missionshaus* as students. Prozesky himself was summoned to Germany to report at mission festivals during the European summer, and this made it possible for him to travel with them. Shortly before their departure, Johannes, the eldest of the Prozesky boys, who had been mentally retarded all his life, drowned in a stream at Königsberg.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1890-92**

The congregation grew modestly but steadily during these years -

mainly on the Free State out-stations opened in 1889. Prozesky added 127 souls to his larger congregation between 1890 and early 1892. At the end of that year the congregation numbered 372 souls - 175 adults and 197 children - of whom about two-thirds were living at Königsberg itself.<sup>3</sup>

Church attendance during these years was good. The last reference to a planned enlargement of the church was made in the journals in July 1890, so it would seem that the size of the Königsberg congregation plus interested traditionalists stabilized during this period at a figure for which the church contained adequate seating - approximately 300. An average number of 86 people partook of Holy Communion during this period. A considerable number of men and youths were away, working on the gold-fields.<sup>4</sup>

The members of the congregation led lives which the missionary regarded generally as "good", but there was such serious misbehaviour on the part of a number of people in August 1890 that he wrote to the Mission Committee, asking them to transfer him north of the Limpopo. On Sunday, 17th August after the morning sermon he read out the letter he had written. In it he suggested that Königsberg be sold and the proceeds used to establish two mission stations in Matabeleland. He did not hold a service that afternoon but rode to see a sick man at Leokop and to hold a service there instead. Consternation reigned among the people. The elders spoke to them earnestly that afternoon, and the next day a depu-

tation of the men of the congregation and some non-christians came to implore the missionary not to send his letter to Germany. They promised to see that no further misbehaviour took place. Prozesky relented. He hoped that proper discipline would return to the station and was glad that the society owned the land, as he would not have been able to exert the same pressure on the people if they had been living in a location.<sup>5</sup>

This was by no means the end of the misbehaviour. On 9th November 1890 two women quarrelled and fought after the afternoon service. Prozesky believed that the two-year-old Natal law forbidding the flogging of women was to blame and foresaw dire consequences. He later sent the two culprits to the magistrate, but the matter was finally settled on the mission station. There was worse to come. Two days later one woman stabbed another in the head. She was tried in Newcastle and sent to prison. This misdeed coincided with Prozesky's otherwise happy jubilee celebrations and he did not renew his threat to leave Königsberg.<sup>6</sup>

At some stage before January 1892 a Bible-study class was instituted at Königsberg. It met on Thursday evenings. When Prozesky took leave of his congregation at a special service on Thursday 18th February before going to Germany, the church was full. Afterwards he said good-bye to each individual. Many wept and kissed his hand. Some thought that he would not return.<sup>7</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1890-92**

The missionary rode far and wide in the years 1890-92 to treat the sick and comfort the dying. He also dispensed medicine at the mission, particularly after the Sunday services. A sad feature of this period was the number of men and youths who returned mortally ill from the mines.<sup>8</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1890-92**

The school was taught by Franke for most of the first half of 1890, and by the black teacher Banane, who returned at Prozesky's request, for the remaining months. He remained in charge until June 1891, when Prozesky had to let him go. Martha Prozesky took charge of the school from July 1891. The inspector Plant reported favourably on the work done. Nothing came of Prozesky's dream of establishing a trade-school at Königsberg because the Mission Committee were not able or willing to send out a trained artisan to lead it. The advance of £35 received from the government for this purpose in 1887 was regretfully returned.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1890-92**

On 23rd August 1891 a man named Mpikелеle Mgubene and his wife Novula came to Königsberg from an *umuzi* in the Free State more than 60km away. The couple, who were sickly, had heard Prozesky speak twice more than six years before, and his words had worked upon them until they felt compelled to come to see him. They were baptized in time, together with the man's old mother.<sup>10</sup>

The traditionalists in the area were remarkably well-behaved during the years 1890-92, although Prozesky saw a general increase in crime in the colony, due, he believed, to the too lenient treatment of thieves by the government. Reflecting on the granting of responsible government to the colony in 1891, he was pleased that Britain had not delivered the blacks into the hands of the colonists but had retained their control as its prerogative. On a practical level, he hoped that the law excluding the blacks from the free purchase of spirituous liquor would remain in force. He wrote a letter to the *Newcastle Herald*, in which he suggested drastic changes, including the abolition of Native Law and the tribal system and the institution of compulsory education. A scathing comment by an anonymous correspondent on the supposed danger of these suggestions appeared in *The Times of Natal* on 12th February 1892.<sup>11</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG OUT-STATIONS, 1890-92**

Services for the vestigial *oorlams* congregation in Newcastle were abandoned in February 1891. Prozesky continued to hold services for both black and white prisoners in the Newcastle gaol on the first Sunday of most months and services for about 15 whites and 15 blacks at Lennoxton.<sup>12</sup> Schuinshoogte and the Buffalo River were visited only four times during this period. On one occasion Prozesky gave communion to four people and baptized three children at the home of a man named Salamo Shabalala.<sup>13</sup>

Millbank changed hands and was lost to the Lutherans by 1891 because the Wesleyans had moved into the area. The same thing was happening at Beginzel. The Berliner preached to small numbers of blacks at Beginzel five times in 1890, four times in 1891 and once in 1892. He was at Elandsklip only once in 1890 and again in early 1892. Only two Lutherans still adhered to him there.<sup>14</sup>

It was the new western out-stations in the Orange Free State which showed real growth and promise during this period. Prozesky and Franke undertook a missionary journey to this territory from 24th to 29th July 1890, visiting various farms and holding services for the blacks living there, some of whom were baptized members of the Königsberg congregation. There were a considerable number of blacks desirous of hearing the Christian message in these parts, and Prozesky felt most encouraged. He paid frequent visits to this region before his departure for Germany in 1892, preaching on many farms and at *imizi* along the way. He even visited the town of Vrede once and held services there. Johannes Fourie acted as an elder on De Villiers' farm Strathmore, catechizing the people and calling them together for the missionary's visits.<sup>15</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS COLLEAGUES, 1890-92**

In mid-July 1890 Prozesky was in Pietermaritzburg to attend a General Missionaries' Conference. He addressed his fellow Natal missionaries on *ukulobola* and *ukulobolisa* and was applauded en-

thusiastically for his opposition to these practices by all except one unnamed missionary. His paper was published in *The Natalian* in August.<sup>16</sup>

The Natal synod of the Berlin Missionary Society met at Königsberg in September 1890 and conducted its business in brotherly harmony. There is evidence of some friction between Prozesky and Superintendent Zunckel in March 1891, however, apparently on the old point of difference, namely the superintendent's insistence that the people of Königsberg pay their dues, regardless of their extreme poverty. Little by way of contributions was received that year, as the people lost their crops to hail.<sup>17</sup>

With the coming of the railway to Newcastle in 1890 and the extension of the line to Charlestown on the Transvaal border the following year, Königsberg's function as a half-way house for travelling missionaries was to be increasingly bypassed.<sup>18</sup>

### **FARMING AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1890-92**

Königsberg produced a harvest in 1890, but torrential rain and then hail in 1891 destroyed most of that year's harvest. Almost all the youths and men had left Königsberg at this stage to work elsewhere - on the railways and the gold-fields. Climatologically, Königsberg was on average simply not suited to the growing of crops, and the scarcity of food which had become endemic had effectively checked the growth of the mission population.<sup>19</sup>

## **PROZESKY'S VISIT TO GERMANY, 1892**

Prozesky was away from Königsberg from February to December 1892. In Germany he took his sons to school in Rawitsch in Posnania before plunging into a hectic schedule of travel and talks at mission services and mission festivals in Lutheran congregations throughout northern Germany. He preached or spoke more than 180 times at 120 different places during the European summer - a considerable feat - recounting anecdotes from his mission work and showing his audiences his paintings and the Zulu artefacts he had brought with him. The mission festivals were often held in the open air. He returned to Natal via England.<sup>20</sup>

## **JOHANNES FRANKE AT KÖNIGSBERG (2)**

In Prozesky's absence, Missionary Franke's health deteriorated to such an extent that he died at Königsberg on 10th October 1892, only five months after his marriage.<sup>21</sup>

## **CHAPTER 11: PROZESKY AND FRANKE, 1890-1892**

### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch* 44, 6, 7, 9, 18, 25, 43, 56, 61, 66, 78, 87, 116, 129 *Tagebuch* 45, 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11-13, 18, 79, 83-84, 88, 96, 97, 99 & 115 Letter from J. Franke to Prozesky, Mandala near Blantyre, 14th August 1891 Merensky, a capable but unpopular man in the field, spent the rest of his working life as a mission inspector in Berlin.
2. *Tagebuch* 44, 51, 64 & 115 *Tagebuch* 45, 2, 3 & 4-5, 10-11, 48 & 109-115 *Tagebuch* 46, 4, 6, 8-9 & 22
3. *Tagebuch* 44, 2, 4, 15, 22, 25, 42, 125 & 128 *Tagebuch* 45, 8, 11-12, 17, 21, 28-30, 76, 77, 80, 84, 94-96, 100-101 & 105 *Tagebuch* 46, 3, 6 7 88 Kratzenstein, E., *Kurze Geschichte der Berliner Mission*, 199
4. *Tagebuch* 44, 1-2, 12-13, 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 40, 41, 42,

- 52, 58, 60, 67, 89, 93, 110, 116, 124, 127 & 128  
*Tagebuch* 45, 10, 11, 15, 21, 57, 61, 84, 85, 87, 100, 104,  
 106 & 116     *Tagebuch* 46, 3 & 6
5. *Tagebuch* 44, 42-43 & 52-56     Whether he really meant to send the letter, is not known. He was certainly very upset by the repeated instances of misbehaviour.
  6. *Ibid.*, 66, 67-71 & 88-89
  7. *Tagebuch* 46, 2 & 7
  8. *Tagebuch* 44, 4, 8, 10, 22, 31, 39, 40, 55, 62, 106, 126, 128     *Tagebuch* 45, 1, 2, 14, 19, 23, 57, 61, 82, 85, 87, 98 & 99     *Tagebuch* 46, 2-3, 6 & 9-10     *Erinnerungen*, 344-350
  9. *Tagebuch* 44, 2, 43, 57, 58 & 94     *Tagebuch* 45, 18, 63, 67, 88 & 96-97     *Erinnerungen*, 168-171     Cheque of The Natal Bank, paid to the Secretary, Council of Education, 18th February 1888     On 10th December 1891 Prozesky wrote to the Board of Education, setting out his views on black education. He did this rather than fill in a questionnaire which he thought would take him twelve hours. (Draft of letter to Sidney Herbert Esq., Königsberg, 10th December 1891)
  10. *Tagebuch* 45, 60-61     This story is told in greater detail and with kindly humour in Prozesky's memoirs. (*Erinnerungen*, 264-267)
  11. *Tagebuch* 44, 129     *Tagebuch* 45, 16-17, 85 & 86     Cutting from *The Times of Natal*, 12th February 1892
  12. *Tagebuch* 44, 2, 6, 8-9, 14, 31, 44, 51, 65, 88, 98-99, 114 & 119     *Tagebuch* 45, 8-9, 15, 47, 64, 69 & 87  
*Tagebuch* 46, 5
  13. *Tagebuch* 44, 14, 16-17, 88 & 119-120     *Tagebuch* 45, 47, 48, 87-88 & 116
  14. *Tagebuch* 44, 5, 13, 18-19, 29, 39, 50, 56, 62, 75, 130-132  
*Tagebuch* 45, 48, 57-58, 71, 80-81     *Tagebuch* 46, 1-2
  15. *Tagebuch* 44, 49-50, 67, 75-85 & 95     *Tagebuch* 45, 16, 22, 24-25, 32-35, 70, 71, 75-76, 77 & 89-91
  16. *Tagebuch* 44, 45-46     "Ukulobola and Ukulobolisa" by the Revd. A. Prozesky, *The Natalian*, 9th and 16th August 1890  
 Not all Prozesky's colleagues agreed with him in his opposition to the practice of *ukulobola*. Missionary W. Beste of Stutterheim in British Kaffraria pointed out that it was not mere wife-purchase, as the husband could not resell the wife - a naive argument in the light of the fact that women were in fact often sold to those who offered most cattle for them. He admitted that the practice led to evils, but believed that the institution could be refined and hallowed by Christianity for the sake of the insurance it offered wives against ill-treatment and abandonment. He appeared not to see how inextricably the practice was bound up with traditionalist religion. (Letter from W. Beste to Prozesky, Stutterheim, 27th November 1890)
  17. *Tagebuch* 44, 58, 121 & 123     *Tagebuch* 45, 5 & 98

18. *Tagebuch* 45, 81
19. *Tagebuch* 44, 17, 21, 39, 43, 61, 92, 96, 107, 108, 110, 111, 116, 117-121, 124, 128, 129, 132    *Tagebuch* 45, 6, 19, 85, 91 & 98    *Tagebuch* 46, 1, 3 & 4
20. *Tagebuch* 48, 22-32 and *passim*    Letter by Pauline Schwarz to the Prozeskys, Rawitsch, 14th September 1891    Pastoral letter XLI of the Mission Committee, Berlin, 6th December 1892    *Tagebuch* 50, 1    Letter by Caroline Prozesky to her husband, Brack Hoek, 11th April 1892    *Erinnerungen*, 476ff.
21. *Tagebuch* 50, 15    Letters by C. Zunckel to Caroline Prozesky, Emmaus, 30th September and 13th October 1892    Zöllner, L. & Heese, J.A., *The Berlin Missionaries*, 84    Francke, J., *Tagebuch* 1892, *Acta Königsberg*

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **KÖNIGSBERG, 1893-1895**

#### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1893-95**

Prozesky's Sunday services were well attended during this period, but the average number of communicants in these years was only 67, mainly because so many people were away. Family life on the mission station began to be noticeably disrupted by the absence of so many husbands and sons working as migratory labourers on the gold-fields. A resultant sad feature of the times was the death of infants whose fathers had never seen them. Some of the men and youths fell prey to evil influences on the mines, and a number of them returned without a penny, having squandered the good pay (£3-5 a month) they had earned. Others such as Matheus Ngwenya saved their earnings and wrote regularly. Matheus was holding Sunday services for believers in Nigel in the Transvaal. When he heard that the church was being replastered, he collected £2 3s from the other members of the congregation on the gold-fields and sent it to Prozesky.<sup>1</sup>

Only one adult, an *oorlams* man named Piet Rylands, was baptized in 1893. On 14th January 1894 Prozesky baptized 11 adults (5 youths and 6 women), 10 children of traditionalists, and 1 child of Christian parents. He also confirmed 8 girls from the congregation. Twenty-nine souls were baptized on 24th February 1895 and 8 youths and girls were confirmed. A woman was baptized at Kliprivier in the Free State on 1st October 1895. At that time the

congregation consisted of 463 members.<sup>2</sup>

Youngsters returning from the gold-fields brought a secular spirit to Königsberg which was not to Prozesky's liking. On the evening of 25th January 1894 he surprised a house full of his people drinking beer and dancing to a concertina played by one such youth. The house was empty within seconds. The missionary went home, but returned twenty minutes later with his little riding-sjambok. The dance had restarted. This time the Prussian laid about him and ended the party unequivocally. In March 1894 a man was excluded from the congregation and told to leave when it became known that he had secretly accepted 12 head of cattle for his daughter when she was married 1½ years before.<sup>3</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1893-95**

The school showed a slow but steady growth during these years. Mr Plant inspected it annually and was consistently satisfied. In 1894 he recommended that the grant be increased from £40 to £60, and this recommendation was approved. It was on the occasion of this visit that Plant photographed the school and took another five photographs of the mission station which were made into postcards (see Illustrations). There were 84 children in the register in 1894, and an average of 66 attended classes daily, but all were 6-12 years old, as the parents needed those older than 12 or 13 to help them earn a living. Fortunately, the scholars could read the Bible - Prozesky's main purpose in teaching

them - by the time they left school. Those who remained were doing seven hours of manual labour every week, the boys with spades and hoes, the girls with sickles. By September 1895 there were 92 children in the school. The new teacher Benjamin Gule was being paid £45 p.a., and Lieschen Prozesky £12 p.a. for teaching sewing and mending. Gule, who had been trained by the Methodists, was described by Prozesky as modest and faithful.<sup>4</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1893-95**

The missionary dispensed medicine, extracted teeth, comforted the sick and dying and took sick communion to those of his patients who were baptized. In a community in transition he sometimes treated Christians at traditionalist *imizi*. On one day in 1895 twenty-two people came to the mission to fetch medicine.<sup>5</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1893-95**

To the traditionalists living at Königsberg, the missionary's authority was firmly established and had quite replaced that formerly enjoyed by the chief. He did not hesitate to make it felt in combating what he saw as the evils of the Nguni tradition. In August 1893 a former catechumen named Mtyisizela wished to take more wives. Prozesky gave him notice to leave. As an unofficial justice of the peace, he also acted as an intermediary between the people and the Newcastle magistrate and settled disputes between traditionalists about fields and gardens. He sometimes even took a personal hand in apprehending felons.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE METHODIST INFLUENCE, 1892-95**

Despite the efforts of Petrus July and Matheus Ngwenya to keep the out-stations going during 1892, Schuinshoogte, Leokop and Beginkel were lost to the Methodists, whose evangelists visited these places and held services every Sunday, whereas the Berliners could come far less often. By 1894 the Wesleyans had placed black catechists at many of Prozesky's former preaching-places. The Berliner was glad that so many people were hearing the Christian message, and saw the harvest as God's and not his or that of the Methodists.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG OUT-STATIONS, 1893-95**

Although Prozesky still visited the gaol in Newcastle and preached to the prisoners on some first Sundays of the month, proceeding to Lennoxton to hold services there afterwards, he no longer did this with the regularity of former years.<sup>8</sup> A small congregation located at two preaching-places was retained near the Buffalo River. Prozesky held services for those attached to Salomo Shabalala and Andreas Malevu twice in 1893, three times in 1894 and four times in 1895. He baptized eight adults and eight children during this period, and married a couple of catechumens. Sadly, Salamo and Andreas's wife committed adultery in 1895 and had to be excluded from the congregation.<sup>9</sup>

Prozesky visited the members of his congregation living in the Free State west of Königsberg only once in 1893, three times in

1894, and twice in 1895. A man from Kliprivier came to Königsberg on 26th July 1895 with the news that the community there would have to break up to comply with the *Plakkerwet* (Squatter Law) in the Orange Free State. According to this law, white farmers were permitted to have only five black families living on their farms. By the time Prozesky went to Kliprivier again in October, many of his people had already left.<sup>10</sup>

A new out-station was established by Prozesky in 1895 on the farm The Falls belonging to a man named Dooyer in the Volksrust district of the Transvaal. Assaf, a man from Königsberg living on a neighbouring farm, had been teaching the people there for two years, and Dooyer was very keen for the work to be promoted.

A school was established for some 20 children in his wagon-house, and with his help the local people began to build a small church-cum-schoolroom. The pupils were taught Scripture, the Lutheran catechism, reading, writing and singing for three hours every day by a young woman from Königsberg. True to Prozesky's philosophy of "work and pray", they had to do manual work for an hour after school each day. Assaf held Sunday services.<sup>11</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS WHITE NEIGHBOURS, 1893-95**

As he had not yet been expressly forbidden to act as a doctor, the missionary continued to do so for some years. In 1893 he rode to other farms nine times to treat white patients, spending more than 80 hours in the saddle. In 1894 he did the same thing eight

times for a total of 19 hours, and in 1895 nine times, riding for more than 37 hours. He also continued to perform baptisms, marriages and burials for white farmers. On 11th December 1894 he settled a dispute between two brothers who jointly owned a neighbouring farm and could not agree on how to divide it. His old friend Abraham Spies was ahead of his time and amazed him in June 1895 when he paid for the missionary to come to his farm near Ladysmith to baptize the child of Moses Shabalale. Spies and his wife stood as godparents and paid the baptism fee.<sup>12</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND HIS COLLEAGUES, 1893-95**

Superintendent Zunckel paid an official visit of inspection to Königsberg in September 1893. Although Prozesky reported that they had spent pleasant days together, he expressed the private hope in his rough journal that the "great visitor" had been satisfied. This sarcasm was an indication that he was still not reconciled to the system of superintendence.<sup>13</sup>

When Wangemann died in 1894, it was with relief that Prozesky heard that Superintendent Martin Gensichen, whom he had met in 1892, had been appointed director. He and others had feared that Merensky might succeed Wangemann.<sup>14</sup>

In July 1894 Prozesky attended the General Missionaries' Conference in Pietermaritzburg and was elected president despite his protestations - evidence that he was highly thought of by the missionaries of the colony. He gave addresses on 11th and 12th in

English and Zulu respectively.<sup>15</sup>

### **KÖNIGSBERG AS A FARM, 1893-95**

Königsberg suffered three failed harvests in a row because of excessive rain and flooding in the growing seasons of 1893, 1894 and 1895. Had there not been alternative sources of income for the people elsewhere, there would have been famine. There were stock losses in 1893 as well, as a result of foot-and-mouth disease. Hail destroyed crops in December 1894 and frost did damage in early October 1895. Huge swarms of locusts appeared in October and continued to plague large parts of Natal and the republics throughout November and December.<sup>16</sup>

The mission house remained a free hotel to travellers. From January to October 1893, for example, 952 guests were entertained with meals and approximately one-third of them with beds for the night - an astonishingly high number.<sup>17</sup>

### **CHAPTER 12: KÖNIGSBERG, 1893-1895 REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebücher 50 & 51, passim*
2. *Tagebuch 50, 24 & 31*      *Tagebuch 51, 16, 41 & 44-45*
3. *Tagebuch 50, 12, 13, 35-38, 40-41, 42, 43, 44-45, 47-50, 56, 57 & 63*      *Tagebuch 51, 7, 11, 12, 35, 43 & 44-45*
4. *Tagebuch 50, 3, 20, 41, 49, 58, 59, 59, 65, 66 & 72*  
*Tagebuch 51, 3, 4, 12, 42, 48 & 49*
5. *Tagebuch 50, 2, 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, 23, 45, 51, 53, 54, 59, 592 & 69*      *Tagebuch 51, 13, 27, 33, 34, 35, 41, 42, 53, 54-55 & 56*
6. *Tagebuch 50, 12 & 14*      *Tagebuch 51, 4-6*
7. *Tagebuch 50, 17, 23, 56 & 66-69*      *Tagebuch 51, 36-39*
8. *Tagebuch 50, 8, 10, 11, 31-32, 38, 41, 48, 50, 55, 58 & 59*

- Tagebuch 51*, 2, 10, 11, 14-17, 26, 28-33, 38 & 55
9. *Tagebuch 50*, 3, 7-8, 18, 31-32, 55 & 71     *Tagebuch 51*, 6, 12, 26-27, 39, 46 & 54
  10. *Tagebuch 50*, 6, 18, 47, 50, 53, 64 & 67     *Tagebuch 51*, 3-4, 32, 34, 40-41 & 46
  11. *Tagebuch 51*, 35-36, 38, 46-47 & 48     *Erinnerungen*, 245  
In his memoirs, Prozesky said that a Miss Dooyer prepared girls and women for baptism.
  12. *Tagebuch 50*, 4, 6, 6-8, 11, 47, 50, 57 & 70  
*Tagebuch 51*, 1, 2, 3, 12-13, 26, 32, 34, 35, 41, 53 & 56
  13. *Tagebuch 50*, 14, 20 & 21
  14. *Ibid.*, 2, 20 & 56     Prozesky and Düring had in fact agreed some time before that they would resign if Merensky succeeded Wangemann. Düring suggested that they revoke their pact. He was not sure that he would be able to work under Merensky, but wished to be free to act as he saw fit. (Letter from H. Düring to Prozesky, Woyentin, 25th May 1894)  
*Tagebuch 51*, 9     Wangemann died on 18th June 1894.
  15. *Tagebuch 50*, 55
  16. *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 19-21, 28, 32-33, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 47, 53 & 54-56     *Tagebuch 51*, 5, 6-8, 13, 14, 16, 26, 36, 37, 40, 42, 43, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53 & 55
  17. *Gefangenschaft*, 197-198

## **CHAPTER 13**

### **KÖNIGSBERG, 1896-1897**

#### **NATURAL CATASTROPHES**

The year 1896 began on a sombre note with news of the Jameson Raid. The imperialist fervour whipped up by the newspapers made Prozesky believe that war in the Transvaal would come sooner or later.<sup>1</sup> Ominous though the Raid was, it paled into insignificance beside the invasion of South Africa by locusts that same year. Immense numbers of these creatures, swarm after swarm, descended on Königsberg from January to August, while new swarms of hoppers emerged where they laid their eggs. No amount of noise, chasing, lighting of fires or trampling by driven cattle could dislodge them, and they destroyed almost every vestige of greenery. It was a catastrophe. There were failed harvests throughout the subcontinent and the result was famine - the worst in Prozesky's 30 years in Africa. Many people at Königsberg had no food at all in early September. The missionary had written to Sir John Robinson, the prime minister, as early as January, asking the government to import maize. Expensive maize from America and bread-flour from Australia helped to feed the people of Natal.<sup>2</sup>

In August 1897 the dreaded cattle-disease rinderpest from the northern interior broke out in the Newcastle district. Despite efforts to vaccinate with gall or lymph from so-called salted animals which had recovered, the mortality among cattle everywhere was staggering. At Königsberg the dead animals could still

be buried, but elsewhere the stench of putrefying carcasses was unbearable. Prozesky's remedies appear to have been more effective than most: he had lost only 7 of 18 beasts, the society 14 of 26, and the Prozesky children 8 of 13 by the end of September when the worst was past. Another two animals died in October and November, raising the mortality rate from 50.9% to 54.4%. The black station inhabitants suffered more severely, despite help from the missionary. Those living at the foot of the Drakensberg lost almost all their cattle. The result was poverty and misery. Prozesky saw the rinderpest as God's punishment of sin.<sup>3</sup>

Good rain in the growing season ensured that the Königsberg people harvested good crops in 1897 such as they had not had for years. What the fields gave, the rinderpest took away, however, and there was no milk or butter to be had in September.<sup>4</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1896-97**

The church was usually full or almost full and sometimes even over-full during 1896 and 1897, especially for the morning services. Holy Communion was celebrated on six occasions, with an average of 76 communicants.<sup>5</sup>

Only one adult, a young woman, was baptized at Königsberg during 1896. Four other young women were confirmed on the same day. At the end of 1896 there were 481 members of the greater Königsberg congregation: 89 men, 154 women and 238 children. A number of men

had been followed to the gold-fields by their wives and children, so that houses on the mission station were standing empty. Fortunately, something of a breakthrough occurred during the next year and no fewer than 51 people, including 14 children, were baptized, bringing the number of members of the greater congregation at the end of that year to 529, of whom 270 were communicants.<sup>6</sup>

During 1896 Prozesky introduced a new regulation, requiring his tenants to pay 1/- annually for grazing per head of cattle, 2/6 per horse and 6d per goat. He had no intention of collecting these new fees under the circumstances of the time, however, believing that to do so would be sinful.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the people proved extraordinarily quarrelsome during 1897, but Prozesky succeeded in reconciling the parties in various disputes. Jacob Rasmus and his daughter Lisi chose to give up their faith and leave Königsberg when Lisi became pregnant by a Muslim "Arab" (Indian) and married him. Jacob required and was paid £40 as *ilobolo* for his daughter. Besides Lisi Rasmus, four other young unmarried women from the congregation became pregnant. It seemed to the missionary as if none could be married honestly any more. A young woman who married a traditionalist was excluded from the congregation, and so was a man who took a second wife. It was perhaps a sign of the times that various cases of theft occurred among the Christians on the mission station in 1897.<sup>8</sup>

At a meeting on 21st June 1897 - before the rinderpest struck - the people were reminded that they had to pay their dues. There was a storm of protest. Prozesky said they could part amicably if that was their wish. Johannes Bosket promptly asked for a letter to enable him to go and live on another farm. The missionary advised the tenants to reconsider. Some of them did inquire about places to live on neighbouring farms, but none except Bosket actually moved away. Even he was cautious about it. Together with some Wesleyans, he bought a small farm, but he asked for time to pay for the grazing of his stock and intended to go on paying for his house so that he could return if necessary. On 19th July people were coming all day to pay their dues.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1896-97**

Benjamin Gule taught faithfully in 1896 and Lieschen Prozesky continued to teach handwork to the girls. There were 105 children in the register, of whom 89 were baptized and 16 the children of traditionalists. In 1897 there were fewer pupils: 73 baptized and 18 unbaptized children. Only 15 were over 12 years of age. Gule relinquished his post from 1st July 1897. He did not leave Königsberg permanently, but returned in October and continued to live on the mission station. Prozesky's daughters taught in the second half of the year, with the missionary himself giving religious instruction and geography. The grant was retained, but reduced to £48 for reasons of economy by the government.<sup>10</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1896-97**

Prozesky was very pleased when the wife of Matimbane, a most respected man among the traditionalists and the nephew of Mswati, the Swazi king, joined the baptism class. A daughter of theirs was already baptized and a son was a catechumen, albeit away on the gold-fields. The missionary hoped that Matimbane himself would yet become a Christian. Seven of the children baptized in January 1897 had traditionalist fathers who nevertheless asked Prozesky to baptize their children together with the mothers. They promised to see that the children received a Christian upbringing through Christian godparents if required. Some of these fathers subsequently became catechumens themselves.<sup>11</sup>

Other traditionalists remained unmoved by the trend towards conversion. Lohayi, whose wife and children were baptized, wished to take a second wife in November 1896. Prozesky tried to dissuade him from this step, but failed and was obliged to give him notice to leave. He felt sorry for the wife and children, but dared not break the rule that only polygamists who had been such before the station was founded might be allowed to live at Königsberg.<sup>12</sup>

The missionary was not sympathetic towards those who felt that the rent they had to pay was too high. He believed the rate was good, compared to those charged on other farms. Poor people in Germany contributed towards the financing of the mission, and he felt that the poor on the mission farm should do the same. The

good harvest of 1897 provided the traditionalists with enough sorghum for beer, and many beer-drinks were held, often resulting in quarrels and fights.<sup>13</sup>

That Prozesky protected even non-christians is illustrated by his action in a dispute in November 1897. A man named Sicatu complained to Prozesky that a Boer neighbour had forced him to sell him a salted ox for £4 10s. Sicatu took back the money, but the farmer would not accept it. Prozesky advised Sicatu to take the matter to the magistrate. He did so and Mr Jackson found in his favour.<sup>14</sup>

During 1896 Prozesky crossed swords with the system of native administration in Natal when he objected strenuously to the needless harassment by petty officials of blacks in the process of obtaining passes to enable them to travel. He believed that his letters - one to the prime minister himself - and other representations brought a measure of relief to the victims.<sup>15</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1896-97**

There was much illness at Königsberg during 1896 and 1897, particularly influenza, dysentery and chicken-pox, and the missionary had much doctoring to do. A woman was very badly burnt in a grass fire in July 1896. Prozesky treated her burns and was amazed by the extent to which she had recovered by October.<sup>16</sup>

## **CHAPTER 14**

### **KÖNIGSBERG, 1898-1899**

#### **THE CENSUS OF 1898**

On 5th January 1898 Prozesky conducted a census at Königsberg. The Christian congregation of 334 already preponderated at that date, making up 57.8% of a total of 578 people. There were 244 traditionalists. The Christians consisted of 50 men, 74 women and 210 children. The traditionalists showed a more balanced ratio of the sexes, with 49 men, 57 women and 138 children. Of 50 cottages built in the European style, 20 were so furnished as to be exempt from hut-tax. The cattle census, when compared to that at the beginning of 1897, made grim reading. Of 641 head, only 166 remained. This meant that 475 head, or 74% had been lost.<sup>1</sup>

#### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1898-1899**

The grain harvest of 1898 was a poor one, but fortunately for the poor mission tenants the harvest of 1899 was quite good.<sup>2</sup> Prozesky began to hold the Sunday afternoon services in Zulu in September 1898, as there were too many people attending these services who did not understand Dutch. It was the end of the *oorlams* period at Königsberg. Holy Communion was celebrated on six occasions in the church in 1898 and 1899, with an average of 82 communicants. The congregation grew considerably during this period, as Prozesky baptized more than 30 adults in his wider parish in 1898 and 22 during the first nine months of 1899. By 1899 there were 650 souls in the missionary's care, some 327 of them communicants

of good standing.<sup>3</sup>

Prozesky was generally pleased with the lives led by his congregation in 1898 and 1899. By constant vigilance and tight discipline, he had succeeded in creating a Christian community very different to the Bethanien of 1873, thus confuting the contention of his colleagues there that Königsberg would develop along the same lines.<sup>4</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL, 1898-99**

A new teacher, a married man named Raimund Msimang, arrived at Königsberg on 31st July 1898. Hannchen Prozesky had been teaching the children for some months. In 1899 there were 118 scholars, 80 of them baptized children.<sup>5</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION, 1898-99**

Prozesky had much illness to cope with on the mission station in the winter of 1898: measles, influenza, typhoid fever and dysentery. Two adults and a number of children died. In September 1898 he vaccinated his own family, that of G.J. Aveling, and the Königsberg servants against smallpox with cow-lymph sent by Dr Gubbins in Newcastle. An epidemic of the dreaded disease had already claimed many lives in Natal, the Free State and the Transvaal. There was much illness again at Königsberg and on the surrounding farms during the first nine months of 1899.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1898-99**

A number of traditionalists still came to church regularly in these years, drawn, Prozesky believed, by the message he preached. He did not press them to become catechumens, believing that the Spirit should move them to this step. He nevertheless foresaw a time when only Christians would be living at Königsberg.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG OUT-STATIONS, 1898-99**

Prozesky held services in the gaol in Newcastle on ten occasions during 1898 and 1899, and nine times at Lennoxton. In 1898 he became a friend of the Dutch Reformed minister Dominee Bosman.<sup>8</sup>

The missionary held services at Volksrust and The Falls on four occasions in 1898 and baptized 15 adults and 5 children at these two places. His two evangelists, Andreas Malevu and Jesaias Assaf prepared the catechumens. Establishing a permanent presence for the Berlin society in Volksrust was a priority at this time. He wrote to the Committee in Berlin in February, asking them to purchase erven in the town and grant £48 p.a. as a stipend for Andreas. A sum of £75 was granted in May for the purchase of four erven, and £24 for Andreas.<sup>9</sup>

Prozesky preached at Volksrust and The Falls five times during 1899 and baptized 11 people. The purchase of the erven in Volksrust was finalized on 5th April. Energetic, sober and happy in his work, Andreas Malevu was receiving invitations from many quarters to preach to labourers on farms. The Boers attended his

services on many farms, and at one place even asked him to hold a service for them in Dutch. Although nervous, he complied with this request. Prozesky issued him with a letter of authorisation to preach, containing a request to farmers to allow him to do so and to observe his sermons and behaviour and to certify by their signature that all was well. Andreas also had three youths who wished to preach. The missionary tested them and authorized them to itinerate and preach, without payment. One of them went to Mafofe in the New Scotland district.<sup>10</sup>

Besides the twin out-stations in the Transvaal, the most hopeful prospect at this time was the Ingogo preaching-place for the people of Mkankonyeke. Prozesky preached there four times in 1898. Benjamin Gule went there to work as an evangelist and teacher on 22nd July of that year. By September he had 7 catechumens and 28 scholars. He was visiting two preaching-places to hold Sunday services in the morning and afternoon alternately. Prozesky went to the Ingogo out-station only once in 1899, in February when he held a service for 150 of Mkankonyeke's people. The chief himself was present, wearing western clothes, but the missionary heard that he was discouraging others from becoming Christians. Eighteen children were attending the morning school, and 10 more came in the evening because they worked by day. Du Buisson was pleased with Gule.<sup>11</sup>

No mission work in the Free State could be done from Königsberg

during 1898 and 1899, as Prozesky did not know where most of his former parishioners in the republic were. In June 1898 a Boer and an Englishman asked for evangelists to be stationed on their Free State farms, but Prozesky was unable to oblige them.<sup>12</sup>

The missionary paid only one visit to the Buffalo River out-stations in 1898. Most of the former members of his congregation in the area were scattered beyond his reach. Rothman of the farm Vaalbank asked for an evangelist to preach to the blacks on his farms and to teach the children. Amos Mtabele and his wife Margaritha, who had both grown up at Königsberg, agreed to go. They were very well looked after by the farmer. Prozesky paid two visits to the Buffalo River during 1899. He baptized two people.<sup>13</sup>

The Königsberg missionary paid a visit to his people at Nigel on Sunday 22nd January 1899. All except three attended the service he held. He was given 21/6 towards his travelling expenses.<sup>14</sup>

### **WAR-CLOUDS GATHER**

Prozesky thought a planned visit by Director Gensichen to South Africa in September/October 1899 a mistake, given the preparations for war which were going on. He blamed the superintendents for not warning the director that the time was unpropitious.<sup>15</sup>

Prompted by his concern for Natal and its people, the Königsberger wrote a letter to *The Natal Witness*. Published on 11th July 1899, it suggested that Natal should remain neutral in case of

a war between Britain and the Boer republics.<sup>16</sup>

Benjamin Gule came to Königsberg from the upper Ingogo on 15th September. All the English and blacks had fled from that area to Newcastle and he did not want to be idle. This was the first negative effect of the coming war on Prozesky's work. Gule said that it had been a sad sight to see the road filled with fugitives. The missionary was glad that there was no panic among his own people.<sup>17</sup>

At the request of the magistrate Mr Jackson, 18-year-old Paul Prozesky went to work at the Newcastle magistrate's office on 5th October. Boer forces were massing on the borders of northern Natal, but the British were not preparing to defend the town. Another son of the Prozeskys, 21-year-old Traugott, a telegraphist in the service of the South African Republic, informed his parents by telegram that he had been sent to Utrecht.<sup>18</sup>

On 7th October Prozesky had a 56ft pole planted on the hill behind the mission. A large white flag with a red cross was prepared for hoisting as soon as hostilities commenced. Thus matters stood on the eve of the outbreak of a conflict which was to bring calamity to so large a part of the population of South Africa.<sup>19</sup>

**CHAPTER 14: KÖNIGSBERG, 1898-1899**  
**REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch 56*, 16-17
2. *Ibid.*, 21-24 & 30-32 & 34     *Tagebuch 57*, 37, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 63 & 66     *Tagebuch 60*, 69-70
3. *Tagebuch 56*, 13, 21, 25, 28-29, 30, 32 & 33     *Tagebuch 57*, 3, 4, 13-14, 16-21, 25, 26, 28, 32, 33, 46, 49, 51, 54, 57, 58, 62, 73 & 75     *Tagebuch 58*, 2, 6, 7, 8, 21 & 31  
*Tagebuch 60*, 65 & 66     Gensichen, M., *Bilder von unserm Missionsfelde*, 249
4. *Tagebuch 8*, 24-25     *Tagebuch 56*, 15-16, 19, 20, 22-23, 28 & 33-34     *Tagebuch 57*, 14, 27-28, 33 & 36     *Tagebuch 58*, 2-3, 6, 12-14     *Tagebuch 60*, 66
5. *Tagebuch 57*, 18, 35 & 41     Gensichen gives the number of baptized scholars as 82 and those unbaptized as 38, making a total of 120 (Gensichen, M., *Bilder von unserm Missionsfelde*, 249). The discrepancy is puzzling.  
*Tagebuch 58*, 9-11     *Missions-Berichte* 1900, 315
6. *Tagebuch 56*, 31, 33, 34 & 36     *Tagebuch 57*, 4, 10, 22, 25, 26, 36, 44, 49, 50, 54-56, 57, 58, 62, 68, 69, 70 & 75  
*Tagebuch 58*, 7, 8, 8-9, 10 & 12     *Tagebuch 60*, 70
7. *Tagebuch 56*, 32     *Tagebuch 57*, 32-33, 36, 49, 50 & 51  
*Tagebuch 60*, 65
8. *Tagebuch 56*, 15 & 34-36     *Tagebuch 57*, 4, 11, 15, 42, 50-51, 63, 65, 66 & 69     *Tagebuch 58*, 10
9. *Tagebuch 56*, 22 & 28-30     *Tagebuch 57*, 7, 11, 20, 33 & 40  
Letter to Prozesky from Gerlach, Berlin, 4th May 1898
10. *Tagebuch 57*, 53, 54, 57, 59-60, 60-61, 632-64 & 65-66  
This may have been Johannes Mdiniso, later called the "Apostle to the Swazi".
11. *Tagebuch 56*, 26-27     *Tagebuch 57*, 1, 9, 10, 11, 17, 22-23, 26, 34, 54-55 & 70
12. *Tagebuch 57*, 12 & 34-35
13. *Ibid.*, 11-12, 18, 33, 34-35, 38, 63-63, & 74  
*Erinnerungen*, 246-248
14. *Tagebuch 57*, 52
15. *Ibid.*, 73 & 75     *Tagebuch 58*, 8 & 11-12
16. *The Natal Witness*, Friday, July 11, 1899.
17. *Tagebuch 58*, 17-20
18. *Ibid.*, 25, 26-27 & 29     Letter from S.P. Kidd to Prozesky, Newcastle, 5th October 1899
19. *Tagebuch 58*, 31-33

## **CHAPTER 15**

### **THE SECOND BOER WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, OCTOBER 1899 - MAY 1900**

#### **THE BOER INVASION**

On 12th October 1899 the Boers invaded northern Natal. Two days later Prozesky hoisted the red cross flag. Blacks kept coming to the mission for news. Prozesky told them to be calm and to plough and sow. Many, especially elsewhere, were fleeing south, and the missionary believed that if he were to do the same, all the blacks would follow suit - with tragic results. The Königsberg church was filled to capacity on Sunday 15th October, as many of the migratory labourers had returned from the Transvaal.<sup>1</sup>

The missionary accompanied his son-in-law Hermann Müller to Newcastle the next day. The streets were full of armed Boers, old ones with white beards and mere boys, but there were hardly any townsfolk to be seen. Müller introduced his father-in-law to Dr Hohls, who was in charge of the field ambulance to which he was attached. Beyond the iNcandu River, in the main Boer laager where 8 large guns had been drawn up, Prozesky was introduced to Lt.-Col. Trichardt, the commander of the Transvaal State Artillery, to whose staff Müller and Hohls belonged.<sup>2</sup>

The next day Prozesky paid a visit to Commandant-General Piet Joubert, whom he found sitting with a number of his men beside his wagon on the market square. The German requested that his son

Paul, who was under house-arrest, be allowed to return home. Joubert asked how old Paul was and, hearing that he was 18, commanded him to assist the local field-cornet with clerical work. This was a shock, but it was better for Paul than commando duty. A greater shock followed. Worried by the disorderly and criminal elements among the blacks returning from the mines, the missionary asked Joubert to provide him with some sort of authority to maintain order at Königsberg. The commandant-general agreed that this was very necessary - and had a letter of authorisation written by his secretary. Prozesky was alarmed at the extensive powers given to him, but, believing as he did that the Bible required of Christians obedience to the authority set over them, there was no way he could refuse them. The field-cornet Pretorius supplied him with a number of handcuffs and a foot-chain. A British subject by naturalization, Prozesky had nevertheless accepted a position of authority, albeit unpaid, under the government of the invading enemy.<sup>3</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S COLLABORATION WITH THE BOERS (1)**

On 18th October the German explained to the assembled men of the mission station that they were subject to the government of the South African Republic for the time being and had to obey it as the authority set over them, according to the biblical commandment. He nominated Matimbane and the church elders as his *izin-duna* (councillors), little guessing that one of them disagreed with his view of their situation and had already secretly taken

steps to show his loyalty to the British. Prozesky's first measure to ensure a return to peaceful conditions at Königsberg was the institution of a dusk-to-dawn curfew and a night-watch of four men and youths.<sup>4</sup>

A Mr J.H. Moodie was appointed resident *vrederechter* of Newcastle by the South African Republic. He asked Prozesky to supply him with a servant and 5-6 men to perform police duties in the town. A youth at Königsberg declared himself willing to work for the *vrederechter*, and six volunteers went to work as policemen in the town, taking with them two youths whom the missionary had arrested on suspicion of horse-theft.<sup>5</sup>

On 28th October black youths fought with knives and kerries on the mission farm. Some sustained injuries that were ugly but did not seem life-threatening. With Matimbane and the elders as his assessors, Prozesky heard the case on 31st. All the youths were found guilty and sentenced to a flogging - a punishment no longer permitted in Natal except by the courts. This decision was received with acclaim, according to Prozesky, a few of the older men expressing satisfaction that discipline would now be restored.<sup>6</sup>

Towards evening the missionary's court held another hearing. A young man had beaten his wife, his mother and brother and struck his father. In the ensuing fight with two brothers he had fled into a hut and armed himself with an assegai. Rather than face

its point, the brothers had begun to undermine the hut, but they had then given it up. Prozesky ruled that the chief culprit should give his father one of his two horses and also receive 15 lashes with a thong. The other two brothers were to receive 5 lashes each for taking the law into their own hands.<sup>7</sup>

On his way to Newcastle on 17th November the missionary met his son Paul who had a letter from Moodie, asking for 15 men to be sent to work on the telegraph-line. Paul spoke to the men at Königsberg and 21 reported for duty the next day, two of them to act as porters in Newcastle. Prozesky appointed two foremen and exhorted the group, most of whom were baptized, to behave like Christians.<sup>8</sup>

Sekwate, one of the youths injured in the brawl on 28th October, died of lockjaw on 1st December. Prozesky reported the matter to Moodie, but the *vrederechter* declined to prosecute anyone. On 4th December the missionary handed over Hayane, one of the labourers who had run away from the Boer laager, to the watch. On 6th he judged two blacks who had wounded each other in a fight. They were sentenced to give each other five lashes. Towards evening some of the young men who had been working on the telegraph-line near Ladysmith returned. They reported that they had been well treated and in no danger. On 12th Prozesky sent two more youths, Piet Plaatje and Paul Duba, who had run away from their work at Ladysmith, to Newcastle with the request that they should not be

punished too severely.<sup>9</sup>

President Kruger determined that 17th December should be observed as a day of thanksgiving for the Boer victories at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso. The Newcastle Dutch Reformed minister Dominee Bosman was not available to hold the service of thanksgiving in his church, but Moodie asked Prozesky to officiate, and unwisely he consented. He preached, very unwisely, on the text Exodus 15, 9-13: "It is God who humbles the proud."<sup>10</sup>

On 28th December *Vrederechter* Moodie and a roads inspector named De Villiers came to hire men at a wage of 2/- a day. Significantly, the Königsberg men were unco-operative, claiming that they still stood under the authority of their chiefs and of the police appointed by the magistrate. Moodie told the people that those who wished to belong to the British should go to them. Despite this threat, only some of the 25 men and youths nominated by Prozesky for work on the roads reported for duty the next day.<sup>11</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S POLITICAL OPINION, JANUARY 1900**

The missionary commented in his journal on Saturday 6th January:

"The English will not give up until they are thrown out of South Africa; they want to bring more than a hundred thousand men here; these are to come from all the colonies. - But I think: all God's creations have a purpose, the Afrikaners have simply become a nation, and until they have fulfilled their mission, hundreds of thousands of English will not destroy them."<sup>12</sup>

On 11th January he penned an appeal to the people of England and sent it to the Johannesburg newspaper *The Standard and Diggers'*

*News* in the hope that it would help to end the carnage and bring peace. It was an indictment of British policy and condemned in no uncertain terms what the missionary saw as the grasping greed of the capitalist speculators.<sup>13</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, JANUARY 1900**

Prozesky prepared his congregation for Holy Communion by private interviews and confession from 17th to 20th January. The church was full on Sunday 21st, yet only 77 people took communion. On Friday 19th a case had to be heard. Two brothers-in-law had come to blows. The missionary and his assessors July and Aron found one of them guilty. He was given 15 lashes with a thong. There was great joy on the evening of 23rd January when the 17 youths who had gone to work for the Transvaalers on 21st December returned hale and hearty. They had worked on a road near the Tugela. Only once had shells passed over their heads. Not one of them had absconded and each one brought home £3, a greatcoat and a blanket. When they were some 1000 paces from the mission house, they began to sing, and they danced before the house for a good half-hour before greeting Prozesky in chorus with "*Inkosi!*" as if they were a war-party returning victorious to their chief.<sup>14</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S COLLABORATION WITH THE BOERS (2)**

Towards the end of January 1900 the missionary travelled to the Transvaal. Although it was not the main purpose of his journey, he visited President Kruger at his residence in Pretoria, con-

doled with him on the loss of his grandson and wished him God's blessing upon the successes the Boers had achieved. He expressed the wish that the president would be permitted by God to experience an honourable peace.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, FEBRUARY 1900**

On Sunday 11th February Prozesky visited the few families of his congregation who still remained in Nigel. Back at Königsberg, he had unpleasant cases to deal with on 19th. The youth Andreas July had to be expelled from the farm for stubbornly refusing to pay his church dues. The teacher had to be dismissed and four other people excluded from the congregation for moral offences.<sup>16</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S COLLABORATION WITH THE BOERS (3)**

From 21st to 28th February Prozesky visited his son-in-law Hermann Müller at the main artillery laager of the Transvaal forces besieging Ladysmith. They visited various positions on the Tugela front, including the battlefield on Spion Kop, and held services at the laagers of various Boer commandos. Near Spion Kop they encountered Acting Commandant-General Louis Botha. Back at the main artillery laager, Prozesky had various meetings with Commandant-General Joubert, from whom he obtained a letter authorizing him to take into his safe-keeping all property belonging to his relatives, friends, neighbours and acquaintances and not under their control. On 28th February the missionary witnessed the break-through of the British forces on the Tugela and the

beginning of the Boer retreat northwards from Ladysmith. He returned to Newcastle by train the same evening.<sup>17</sup>

### **KÖNIGSBERG, MARCH - MAY 1900**

Prozesky returned to Königsberg on 3rd March. He had to investigate a case of assault among the blacks after dark that evening. A man had been stabbed in the head and needed stitches. On Monday 5th the missionary began to teach the school again. The teacher had left in disgrace, having beaten his wife "frightfully" for going to say good-bye to Caroline Prozesky. There were few pupils; the people were agitated by the flight of the Boers, which continued throughout that week. Some very rough Boers harassed inhabitants of the mission station later that month, causing Prozesky to write to Acting Commandant-General Botha, asking for a watch of four men to be re-instituted at Königsberg.<sup>18</sup>

The missionary gave judgement in a last case on Tuesday 17th April. Two men had fought; the one who had started it had a "hole in the head" and a sore hand. Both were ordered to give each other 5 lashes with a thong.<sup>19</sup>

Prozesky had influenza in the week from 9th-15th May. On 9th he nevertheless had to deal with a baptized woman who was estranged from her traditionalist husband. She would not be reconciled with him and chose to leave the mission station. On 11th the missionary was so ill that he thought he would die. He was too weak to

hold the services on Sunday 13th.<sup>20</sup>

### **PROZESKY ARRESTED BY THE BRITISH**

The Boers withdrew from Natal in early May. Paul Prozesky was still in Newcastle, his father having told him not to go to the Transvaal with the other officials but to come home - or to keep the keys of the magistrate's office until the British came. On 18th May the British forces entered the town. Towards midday on 19th May two uniformed British intelligence officers came to the mission. They were hospitably received and behaved pleasantly. At about 4 p.m. that day an officer named Humbleby, accompanied by a black man in uniform, arrived and told Prozesky that General Buller wished to see him, to speak to him about his son Paul, who was a prisoner. Despite his physical weakness, the missionary rode to the town, accompanied by a youth on horseback. He suspected that Buller was luring him to town to have him arrested, and he was right. It was the end of his 32-year-long ministry at Königsberg.<sup>21</sup>

### **CHAPTER 16: THE SECOND BOER WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, OCTOBER 1899 - MAY 1900**

#### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch* 58, 33-38, 43 & 46-52      Letter from R.D. Kidd to Prozesky, Newcastle, 12th October 1899      *Gefangenschaft*, 20-21
2. *Tagebuch* 58, 54-61
3. *Ibid.*, 71-76      *Tagebuch* 59, 1-3
4. *Tagebuch* 59, 9-13
5. *Ibid.*, 14, 17 & 21-26
6. *Ibid.*, 67-68
7. *Tagebuch* 60, 3-11

8. Ibid., 71-73
9. Ibid., 76 *Tagebuch 61*, 4-5, 7-9, 15-18 & 24 Letter from J.H. Moodie to Prozesky, Newcastle, 7th December 1899
10. *Tagebuch 61*, 31-32 Letter from J.H. Moodie to Prozesky, Newcastle, 16th December 1899 Telegram (in the handwriting of Traugott Prozesky), State President to Resident *Vrederechter*, Pretoria, 15th December 1899
11. *Tagebuch 61*, 35-36
12. Ibid., 53
13. Ibid., 56-59, 63 & 65 *Gefangenschaft*, 43, 45 & 46, including cut-out of the letter to the press, "An Earnest Address to the People of England", *The Standard and Diggers' News* of approximately 20th January 1900
14. *Tagebuch 61*, 63, 64-68 & 70-71
15. Ibid., 71-74
16. Ibid., 74-76 & 68-70
17. *Tagebuch 62*, 1-25 For a copy of the text of Joubert's letter, see *Gefangenschaft*, 22.
18. *Tagebuch 62*, 25-28, 39 & 42-43 Draft of letter to Acting Commandant-General Botha, Königsberg, 26th March 1900, pasted between pages 42 & 43
19. *Tagebuch 62*, 59
20. Ibid., 66, 71-73
21. Ibid., 73-75 & 77-80 Letter from Traugott Prozesky, Glencoe, 13th May 1900, and letter from Paul Prozesky, Newcastle, 15th May 1900, both attached to p.74 *Aufzeichnungen*, 1-5 *Verhör*, 13-14

## **CHAPTER 16**

### **ARREST, TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT, MAY 1900 - OCTOBER 1901**

#### **PROZESKY AS A PRISONER ON PAROLE**

Accused by an angry General Buller of being a "chief rebel", Prozesky was locked up in the Newcastle gaol, where he found 21 other political prisoners, his son Paul among them. He was not there for long, as he suffered a minor stroke and permission was given for him to be nursed by his wife at the parsonage of Dominee Bosman. Physically extremely weak, with his legs partially paralyzed, the missionary was to remain at the parsonage as a prisoner on parole for almost five months.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting on what had happened since the war broke out, he saw his having remained at Königsberg in a biblical light: he had not fled like a hireling, leaving his flock to the wolf. He and his wife felt very keenly the lack of sympathy shown to them in their unhappy situation by Director Gensichen, who was in South Africa, and by their fellow Berlin Missionaries in Natal.<sup>2</sup>

On 26th May 1900 towards evening Ezeri Hlomuka, his wife and his mother-in-law Renate from Königsberg brought Ezeri's little son to Prozesky to be baptized. Despite his weakness, the missionary performed the baptism - his 999th - the next day.<sup>3</sup>

#### **THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**

Prozesky appeared at the Newcastle court-house for the prelimin-

ary examination of his case on Tuesday 12th June. It was a great shock to him when the elder Petrus July testified against him. July had gone to the deposed magistrate as early as 16th October 1899 and volunteered to spy for the British. Worse still, from the missionary's point of view, the testimony he gave was false. He claimed that Prozesky had forced men from Königsberg to work for the Boers, and that he had hoisted the red cross flag as a signal to the Boers to come and shoot the blacks. It was, Prozesky wrote later, the worst day of his life, and its worst moment came when Matheus Ngwenya, his first convert whom he loved like a son, entered the room and gave the same testimony that July had given. So negative, one-sided and co-ordinated were the statements made by July and Matheus that the Prozeskys were convinced that they had been intimidated - or bought - and coached by the British authorities.<sup>4</sup>

The next day, 13th June, a third elder, Jesaias Assaf, testified against the missionary, as did another four members of the congregation, Niclaas (or Klaas), Elias Umgwenya (sic), Martinus Nxumalo and Albert Pretorius. The testimony delivered by all five was identical. Prozesky asked one of them whether they had agreed to testify as they had. The prosecutor disallowed this question - and forbade further questions at that stage.<sup>5</sup>

On 14th June the traditionalist Mxilo testified that Prozesky had had his sons flogged without cause and had made one of his sons

give up a horse as a fine. Questions put by the accused brought the truth of the matter to light. (See pp.207-208.)<sup>6</sup>

The presiding magistrate found on 18th June that the missionary should stand trial before a special tribunal of the Supreme Court on a charge of high treason. He allowed him to return to house-arrest at the parsonage.<sup>7</sup>

### **A VISIT FROM MISSIONARIES GLÖCKNER AND STREIT**

Various sympathetic postcards were received from the wife of Missionary Manzke of Stendal, but there was no support forthcoming from any of the other Natal missionaries. The magistrate's clerk Gebers, who had visited Christianenburg, reported that Superintendent Glöckner was very angry with Prozesky. Caroline Prozesky was privately scornful; it was her opinion that Glöckner would have run away and left the congregation to its fate, had he been in her husband's position at the outbreak of war.<sup>8</sup>

On Thursday 28th June Superintendent Glöckner and Missionary Streit visited Prozesky. Although the brother missionaries kissed each other, the encounter was not very hearty. Glöckner did not pray with Prozesky, but reproached him for having received Boers into his house. Gensichen, who had visited all the other Natal stations and attended the Natal synod, sent no greetings to the Prozeskys. Glöckner and Streit proceeded to visit Königsberg, but they did not investigate the matter of the testimony given by the elders at the preliminary examination.<sup>9</sup>

### **MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION VISIT THE PROZESKYS**

Various members of the Königsberg congregation - mainly women - came to the parsonage in Newcastle to see their missionary. According to his parole conditions, he could not speak to them, but Caroline was able to do so. News reached the missionaries in this way that immorality and dissension were racking the congregation. Many of the people were calling Matheus, Petrus and Jesaias Judases for testifying against their old teacher. They said that he was suffering for their sakes, as he had protected them from exploitation during the Boer occupation. Petrus July had said in the church that the Königsberg witnesses had had no choice but to testify as they had: they had been threatened by the *inkosi* (magistrate or officer). They had also been told not to look at the missionary while testifying. Prozesky was angered to hear that Glöckner had publicly appointed July and Matheus to hold services at Königsberg - despite having been told by Caroline that they had testified falsely against her husband.<sup>10</sup>

### **PROZESKY PREJUDGED BY HIS SUPERIORS**

A letter was received from Gensichen at last, dated 7th August and written while he was at Kimberley. The director claimed that he had been unable to write until he had reliable news of Prozesky's situation. To the Königsberger it seemed clear that the "reliable" news came from Glöckner; Gensichen repeated the superintendent's opinions: that Prozesky had been rash and had not been strictly neutral in all his public actions and pronouncements. He suggested

that he ask God for forgiveness. Prozesky felt prejudged; he believed that both sides of the argument should be heard.

Glöckner and Caroline Prozesky exchanged letters about bail, but the superintendent did nothing in this regard besides referring the matter to the Committee in Berlin.<sup>11</sup>

Cruel news was received from Berlin on 2nd October. The Mission Committee had decided on 5th September that Prozesky was not to go back to Königsberg "as all the people were against him". He was to be replaced by Manzke. The old couple were stunned. They felt it keenly that the Committee could have taken such a step without hearing a word from him in his own defence. Yet even in this his bitterest disappointment, Prozesky was able to pray for friend and foe alike. He decided to accept the bitter cup as coming from God's hand.<sup>12</sup>

### **THE TREASON TRIAL**

Prozesky's trial started on 8th October in the Newcastle town hall which had been specially furnished to serve as a court-room. Chief Justice Sir William Smith, presided, assisted by Judges Mason and Broome. Prozesky was not required to stand in the dock but was allowed to sit at the interpreters' table. He pleaded not guilty to all five charges of high treason brought against him:

1. That he had joined the enemy in Newcastle on 17th October 1899 by accepting an office as magistrate or some other official under the enemy;

2. That he had tried and punished certain blacks at Königsberg during the months of October, November and December 1899, namely Zelelo, Muzinyati and Langabalela, sons of Xelo (sic), and issued passes to William Foster, Charles Collyer and Nathaniel Collyer to enable them to proceed to Newcastle under the protection of the enemy;
3. That he had in October 1899 at Königsberg compelled one Klas (sic) and five other blacks by threats and authority to proceed to Newcastle, there to perform the duties of policemen on behalf of the enemy;
4. That he had at Königsberg in November 1899 compelled one Elias Umgwenya and twenty-four other blacks, by threats and authority, to proceed to the Tugela River to lay a telegraph wire and to perform other works on behalf of the enemy;
5. That he had at Königsberg in December 1899 compelled one Albert Pretorius and seventeen other blacks, by threats and authority, to proceed to the Tugela River to make a road and to perform other works on behalf of the enemy.<sup>13</sup>

The witnesses for the Crown, the same ones who had testified at the preliminary hearing, all gave the same testimony as before. Petrus July claimed that the missionary had declared himself "koning" (king) at Königsberg. The resident magistrate Mr Jackson declared that after his suspension as magistrate by the Boers, people from Königsberg had come and complained to him that Prozesky was ill-treating them, but that he had not seen anything of that sort. He had been Prozesky's friend up to the time of the occupation and the missionary had done good and thorough work and kept good order among the blacks. Prozesky was glad that all the Königsberg witnesses said when questioned that they had been with him for more than 20 years and that he had always treated them

well.<sup>14</sup>

Mr Patrick O'Hea, pro Deo defence for the accused, did his best on Prozesky's behalf, but a number of Crown witnesses lied under oath. The white witnesses were allowed to follow the proceedings before testifying, and the black witnesses, although kept out of the court-room until they testified, were then allowed to mingle with those who had not yet been in the witness-box. The result was a foregone conclusion. On Monday 15th October 1900 Prozesky was found guilty on all five charges of high treason and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of £500. A further nine months' imprisonment was suspended on condition that the fine was paid. The five months spent by the accused in custody awaiting trial were not subtracted from his prison term.<sup>15</sup>

### **PRISON, OCTOBER 1900 - OCTOBER 1901**

Prozesky spent the first two weeks of his sentence in the Newcastle gaol which he had visited so often in a pastoral capacity. He could still not walk unaided, and his young fellow-prisoners vied for the honour of supporting him on his perambulations. On these walks he attempted to comfort those who were suffering anxiety and sorrow. The trial of his son Paul was concluded during this time. He, too, was found guilty of high treason, but was fined a mere £20. On 31st October Prozesky senior and eight other prisoners were transferred to Pietermaritzburg.<sup>16</sup>

Prozesky was in the Pietermaritzburg prison from 1st to 27th Nov-

ember. Despite his unenviable position he felt a deep sense of peace which enabled him to write to Missionary Manzke and ask him to tell the false witnesses at Königsberg, if their consciences troubled them, that he forgave them. He repeated this request when Manzke visited him on 22nd November.<sup>17</sup>

On 27th November Prozesky and thirteen other prisoners were sent to the gaol in Eshowe in Zululand, where the missionary was to spend the remainder of his sentence. His health was restored completely during this period and he could soon walk quite normally. For most of the time he shared a cell with a young man named Stoffel Lotz, whom he instructed daily at his request in English, arithmetic and other subjects. Lotz was like a son to him, doing all the physical work required and sparing the older man in every way he could. The missionary also instructed two other young men, Cronje and Degenaar, in the reading of Zulu which both spoke fluently. Both wished to preach to the blacks on their farms when they were released. True to his calling, the German also secretly instructed and converted a Zulu notable named Mapela who had been condemned to death. A black policeman named Sinkwe often listened when Mapela was being taught. At his request, Prozesky taught him to read. From then on he was never without the Zulu New Testament which Prozesky lent him, and began to share his new-found faith with others. The missionary gave him the New Testament when he left Eshowe.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the members of the Königsberg congregation, including Matheus Ngwenya and Petrus July, wrote to Prozesky in prison. The elders did not ask him for forgiveness, but he was sure that they had repented. Director Gensichen visited Königsberg, baptized children and celebrated Holy Communion, but he did not come to Eshowe, something which Prozesky took deeply amiss. The founder of Königsberg believed that Gensichen should have investigated his case on the mission station, reported the truth to the government and then visited him as he would have done for Christ. In a letter to the director he reproached him for not having come to see him.<sup>19</sup>

Ten head of cattle and a scotch-cart belonging to the missionary were attached by the Crown. Sold by public auction, they realized the sum of £123 14s. The balance of the £500 fine was paid by the children and friends of the convicted traitor. On 14th October he left Eshowe by post-cart, escorted by a member of the mounted police. He spent his last night as a prisoner in the Durban prison and was released on 15th October 1901.<sup>20</sup>

**CHAPTER 16: ARREST, TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT, MAY 1900 - OCTOBER 1901**  
**REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Verhör*, 6, 15 & 18-36    *Defence*, 1    *Aufzeichnungen*, 2-6  
Letters by Prozesky to his children and friends, and to his wife, Newcastle Jail, 20th & 21st May 1900
2. *Verhör*, 56, 57, 65 & 70-72    *Aufzeichnungen*, 22-28 & 30
3. *Verhör*, 41-42 & 44-45
4. *Verhör*, 73-76    *Aufzeichnungen*, 28-29    *Defence*, 5-6
5. *Verhör*, 77
6. *Ibid.*, 79-80
7. *Ibid.*, 81-82    *Aufzeichnungen*, 35-39 & 42
8. *Verhör*, 12 & 80-83    *Aufzeichnungen*, 30-35 & 39-43
9. *Aufzeichnungen*, 54-60    *Verhör*, 11-12, 89-90, 92 & 93
10. *Aufzeichnungen*, 60-62, 67-75, 77-79, 84-85, 89-90, 155 & 163  
*Verhör*, 7-8, 17, 32, 93-94, 106, 108, 110, 156, 171-173, 185 & 204-205    *Gefangenschaft*, 196    The inkosi had said that they would receive 50 lashes and be sentenced to 10 years' hard labour in chains if they testified that they had worked for the Boers voluntarily.
11. *Verhör*, 111-112 & 114-117    Letter from M. Gensichen to Prozesky, Kimberley, 7th August 1900    Letters from Th. Glöckner to Caroline Prozesky, Christianenburg, 22nd August 1900 & 3rd September 1900
12. *Verhör*, 205-209    *Aufzeichnungen*, 183-185
13. *Verhör*, 221-222    *Aufzeichnungen*, 195-196    *Notice of Trial and Summons to Appear*, affixed to *Gefangenschaft*, 37
14. *Verhör*, 222    *Aufzeichnungen*, 196
15. *Verhör*, 226 & 228    *Aufzeichnungen*, 200-201    *Gefangenschaft*, 30, 32, 34, 38-39 & 42
16. *Gefangenschaft*, 48-60 & 64-66    *Erinnerungen*, 424
17. *Gefangenschaft*, 2-5 & 67-85
18. *Ibid.*, 11-12, 56-57, 86-89, 93-95, 112-113, 116-117, 119-121 & 127    *Erinnerungen*, 217-220, 427-429 & 431    Postcard by Prozesky to his son Traugott in Ceylon, Eshowe Gaol, 31st December 1900 and 1st January 1901    Much later (circa 1913) Prozesky was to meet a Zulu from Eshowe who told him that Mapelela had died a *kholwa*. Sinkwe had become a Christian teacher. (*Erinnerungen*, 220-221)
19. *Gefangenschaft*, 125-126, 130-132, 144, 177, 196 & 210-218  
Gensichen, Streit and Manzke, accompanied by Vause Marshall, the Prozeskys' son-in-law, were at Königsberg on 30th April and 1st May. Some 26 children were baptized and there were 90 communicants. (Gensichen, M., *Bilder von unserm Missionsfelde*, 249-250    *Missions-Berichte* 1901, 318-320)  
Draft of a letter by Prozesky to Rev. M. Gensichen, Berlin, Eshowe Gaol, 2nd July 1901, pasted to p.142 of *Gefangenschaft*
20. *Gefangenschaft*, 134-135, 140, 150, 157-158, 160, 170-176 & 219    Letter 36 by Prozesky to his son Traugott in Cey-

lon, Eshowe Gaol, 9th September 1901      Hermann Müller and Christian Prozesky had had an interview with the Natal Governor on 10th October and requested a reduction of the fine. The Governor's angry answer was, "Not a sixpence! Because Prozesky is the most dangerous man in the whole colony - by what he does, what he says and writes. The punishment he has received was too lenient; he should have been hanged. Even that would have been less than he deserves. And you, gentlemen, should be ashamed to be here in his cause - or to have anything to do with him!" They had bowed stiffly and left. (Letter by Hermann Müller to the Reverend Committee, Christianenburg, 11th October 1901, *Acta Strafsache des Missionars A. Prozesky*, BMA)

## **CHAPTER 17**

### **PORT SHEPSTONE AND GERMANY, 1901-1903**

#### **PORT SHEPSTONE, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1901**

A friend of their son-in-law Hermann Müller, a Herr Albers, had offered to have the Prozeskys to stay at his home near Port Shepstone. They were his guests from 16th October 1901, but pressure from the British military authorities forced them to leave at the end of November. Although he had served his sentence, Prozesky was apparently regarded as a dangerous man.<sup>1</sup>

The missionary wrote a letter to Matheus Ngwenya from Port Shepstone, asking him whether the congregation could not collect some money for him, seeing that he had lost all his possessions during the war. Matheus's answer reflected the divisions in the congregation at the time. Some of the people wanted to donate money to help their old missionary, and they did so. Others did not wish to contribute and tried to discourage donations. Missionary Manzke effectively forbade the collection. Matheus informed Prozesky that the spiritual life of the congregation was "not good".<sup>2</sup>

#### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (1)**

The Prozeskys decided to go to Germany, but they were obliged to spend a few weeks at New Germany-Christianenburg before they could take passage on a suitable ship. Prozesky blamed Glöckner for the unhappy turn of events. The Port Shepstone magistrate Hugo told Albers that Glöckner had visited him and used the term

"chief rebel" to describe Prozesky. It is difficult to see what other objective this visit could have had but to apply pressure on Prozesky to leave the colony. Under these circumstances, the first encounter with Glöckner was very awkward. The superintendent told Prozesky that he had received a letter from the Mission Committee written to Prozesky and sent to him, but that he had lost it. He could tell him from memory that they had advised Prozesky to be careful about what he said. This was a timely warning, thought Glöckner. He had also received a letter from Manzke at Königsberg, which he read to Prozesky. Its contents were such that the founder of Königsberg, in his own words, "almost had a stroke". Manzke wrote that he had read a letter written by Prozesky to Matheus Ngwenya from prison. In it he allegedly called the English *Satansknechte* (servants of Satan) or the Zulu equivalent, and promised to send the Königsberg people men who would rouse them to rebellion. Manzke wondered whether he, as a loyal British subject, should not report Prozesky to the government so that he could be put back under lock and key. If he wrote like that from prison, how would he not write once he was in Germany? To Prozesky it seemed clear that Manzke had hoped that the censors would read his letter and act against him (Prozesky). By chance the letter had not been censored. Although Prozesky's letters to Matheus from prison have not survived, the supposed contents of the one cited by Manzke is entirely out of character with all the other letters he wrote - and indeed with

the one which Manzke himself later submitted in translation to his superiors as evidence. It would appear that either Manzke's Zulu was very poor and his judgement of possible consequences to his letter equally deficient, or he wrote what he did maliciously. Whatever motivated Glöckner's response, it was hardly brotherly or fair towards Prozesky. Nor was his refusal to allow him to make a copy of Manzke's letter.<sup>3</sup>

### **RETURN TO GERMANY**

The Prozeskys, their daughter Hannchen, the widowed Hermann Müller (his wife, the Prozeskys' eldest daughter Mariechen, had died the previous year) and his young daughter Dolly left Natal on 24th December 1901 on board the steamer *Herzog* for Germany. At some stage Prozesky instructed his son Christian, who was now the missionary in charge of Stendal, to write to Matheus Ngwenya and ask him to send him the letter in which Manzke had read such allegedly terrible things.<sup>4</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (2)**

A pleasant three-roomed apartment with a kitchen and bathroom awaited the Prozeskys and Müllers at the *Missionshaus* in Berlin. Less pleasant was the reception which awaited Prozesky when he went to see the director on 8th February 1902. Gensichen tried to bully him into a confession of sin, dictating a letter to this effect to him for his signature. Believing that Gensichen wished to use the letter to have him dismissed, he would not sign it.<sup>5</sup>

Prozesky wrote to the Mission Committee on 11th February, asking them to give him an opportunity to defend himself against accusations which had apparently been made against him in letters written to the Committee by colleagues of his in Natal. He also asked for all the letters to be put at his disposal. His request was refused. He repeated it more than once while he was in Berlin, but was steadfastly refused. He did get to read some of the letters nevertheless - through the kind offices of Mission Inspector Sauberzweig Schmidt. Of Prozesky's administration of Königsberg in the latter years, Glöckner wrote that "the rod of the driver" had ruled. He said that Prozesky was unsettled ("zerrüttet") in body and mind, and that he had treated him (Glöckner) and his wife unworthily. He went so far as to question Prozesky's keeping of honest accounts.<sup>6</sup>

Back in Natal, Christian had written to Matheus and received the answer from him that he had sent the supposedly treasonable letter to Glöckner, who had asked him for it. Christian told Glöckner this and asked him whether he had received the letter. The superintendent said that he had. Christian requested to be allowed to read it so that he could see whether his father had indeed written what Manzke had accused him of writing. His request was refused. This made the Prozeskys believe that Manzke had deceitfully mistranslated the letter to Matheus and that Glöckner had made himself an accomplice in this dishonesty by writing deceit-

fully himself to the Committee about Prozesky. Instead of trying to get to the bottom of the testimony given at Prozesky's trial by the Königsberg witnesses, as was his duty as Natal superintendent, Glöckner forbade Otto Prozesky (then missionary at Emmaus) to visit Königsberg and forbade both Christian and Otto to write to any of the members of the Königsberg congregation.<sup>7</sup>

In two letters, Christian attempted to prepare his father for what seemed certain to him to happen: that the Committee would not allow him to return to Africa. The Natal synod had voted un-animously against Prozesky's return to Natal, the two Prozesky sons having been allowed no vote on this issue and having been forbidden to speak in their father's defence. The majority had pointed out that the Committee had told the Natal government in an (unanswered) petition for clemency in 1900 or 1901 that Prozesky would not be sent back to Natal. In a private interview which Christian and Otto had with him, Manzke had struck the table with his fist and said, "Your papa will not return to Königsberg!" He maintained that Prozesky would not even be allowed to return to Natal. Yet Matheus had told Christian in a letter that there had been nothing (dangerous) in Prozesky's letters. According to him, only Manzke and Petrus (July) thought so.<sup>8</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S WORK IN GERMANY, 1902-1903**

From February 1902 to October 1903 Prozesky travelled 25,061km by train and 2000km by carriage in Germany, giving 454 addresses at

approximately 300 places and raising 6879 marks in collections for the Berlin Missionary Society - no mean feat for a man supposedly unsettled in body and mind. Everywhere he went he enjoyed the heartiest hospitality, friendship and love from supporters of the mission high and low. Even Gensichen became friendly and obliging when he realized what support the Königsberger enjoyed.<sup>9</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (3)**

Matheus Ngwenya continued to correspond with Prozesky, and once the war in South Africa ended on 31st May 1902, the Königsberg people began to ask the Mission Committee for Prozesky to be sent back to them, thus disproving the motivation which that reverend body had given for his removal in 1900. Individual members of the congregation also wrote to him, asking him to return.<sup>10</sup>

Prozesky and Manzke exchanged acrimonious letters in late 1902, Manzke refusing to admit having wronged Prozesky, and Prozesky pointing out that if there had been anything injurious in his letters, Glöckner would have allowed his sons to read them. It was galling to Prozesky to have been replaced even temporarily at Königsberg by a man who, according to reports, was not furthering his work. Manzke was neglecting the out-stations Volksrust and Vaalbank, and the evangelists Amos Mbuyisa and Johannes Mdiniso joined the Ethiopians, as no white missionary visited them for 3 years.<sup>11</sup>

### **TRAUGOTT PROZESKY IN EUROPE, 1902**

The Prozeskys' son Traugott had been a Boer prisoner-of-war in Ceylon from 1900 to 1902. Released together with non-African prisoners, he and Willie Karsten consulted the Boer generals Botha, De Wet and De la Rey in the Netherlands on behalf of their fellow-prisoners concerning the oath of allegiance to King Edward VII required of Boer prisoners before they could be repatriated. The generals advised all prisoners to sign a declaration of loyalty to the British king. All three promised that they would settle matters with the British yet. The advice concerning the declaration was telegraphed to Ceylon. Traugott went on to Germany, where he was reunited with his parents and sister at the *Missionshaus* in Berlin.<sup>12</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (4)**

Unfortunately, with Gensichen, Glöckner, the entire Natal synod (with the exception of his sons), and the imperialist British in Natal against him, Prozesky was not to be treated justly. On 28th January 1903 the Mission Committee wrote to him while he was still in the *Missionshaus* in Berlin, informing him that he was no longer a member of the Natal Synod and that Manzke, who had been inducted by Glöckner on 12th January 1902, was regarded as the missionary at Königsberg and not merely as Prozesky's temporary replacement. The Committee repeated its opinion that Prozesky had acted wrongly during the war, but expressed approval of the way he was pursuing his duties in Germany.<sup>13</sup>

Prozesky continued to hanker after a return to Natal, but according to Christian, the other missionaries had said at synod that his return would be a hindrance to their work. The young Prozeskys had defended their father, but were told that they had no say in his case. Christian had written to the Natal government and received an official reply early in May 1903, informing him that the government would raise no objection to his father's return to the colony.<sup>14</sup>

Reports were received from various sources that all was not well at Königsberg: there were beer-drinks, drunkenness, fighting and quarrelling among the inhabitants. Members of the congregation continued to petition for Prozesky's return. In August 1903 Petrus July himself sent such a petition to Christian Prozesky, who translated it and sent copies to both his father and Gensichen in Berlin. The missionary did not know whether the Mission Committee ever read these petitions, but they certainly had no effect.<sup>15</sup>

#### **SUPPORT FROM THE SYNOD OF THE SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL**

Rejected for unexplained - presumably political - reasons by his own synod, Prozesky must have been greatly comforted to receive a letter of sympathy from the synod of the Southern Transvaal. This body of colleagues assured him that they found nothing blameworthy in his conduct during the war, and nothing which made him unfit to be a missionary.<sup>16</sup>

## PROZESKY INSTRUCTED TO GO TO AMALIENSTEIN

On 16th October 1903 the Mission Committee wrote to Prozesky, granting his request to return to South Africa and instructing him to proceed to Amalienstein in the Cape Colony to substitute for his brother Carl Prozesky who had been granted a year's leave in Germany.<sup>17</sup>

## CHAPTER 17: PORT SHEPSTONE AND GERMANY, 1901-1903 REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Gefangenschaft*, 178, 180, 182 & 183 See note 20, p. 224.
2. Letter by Matheus Ngwenya, Königsberg, 27th November 1901, to Prozesky, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 219-220
3. *Gefangenschaft*, 183-187 Letter by Prozesky to his son Traugott in Ceylon, Port Shepstone, 30th November 1901, pasted between *Gefangenschaft* pages 198 & 199  
Letter by Manzke to Glöckner, 12th December 1901 and translation by Manzke of letter by Prozesky to Matheus Ngwenya, Port Shepstone, 2nd November 1901 (Both in *Acta Strafsache des Missionars A. Prozesky*, Nos. 81 & 104, BMA)
4. *Gefangenschaft*, 187 & 190
5. *Ibid.*, 190-194 *Tagebuch 66*, 42 Postcard by Hannchen Prozesky to her brother Traugott in Ceylon, Hamburg, 7th February 1902 Letter by Prozesky to his son Traugott in Ceylon, *Missionshaus*, Berlin, 13th February 1902 Letter dictated to Prozesky by Gensichen, 8th February 1902
6. Letter by Prozesky to the Mission Committee, *Missionshaus*, Berlin, 11th February 1902 *Gefangenschaft*, 180-182  
Ironically, it was Glöckner who was later found guilty of dishonesty in matters financial and demoted from his position of superintendent. (Letter by Gerlach, Berlin to Glöckner, Christianenburg, 17th December 1905, Natal Archives, BMS papers, A1060, 6-7)
7. *Gefangenschaft*, 187-189
8. *Ibid.*, 189, 196-197 & 205 Copy of letter by Christian Prozesky to his parents in Berlin, Stendal, 4th March 1902  
Letter by Christian Prozesky to his parents in Berlin, Stendal, 11th March 1902, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 190  
Letter by Christian Prozesky to his parents in Berlin, Stendal, 29th April 1903
9. *Gefangenschaft*, 195 Undated list of collections taken in Germany since February 1902, in Prozesky's handwriting

10. *Gefangenschaft*, 196-199 Letters by Matheus Ngwenya to Prozesky, 15th April and 4th August 1902, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 221-222 & 223
11. Letter by A. Manzke to Prozesky in Berlin, Königsberg, 13th August 1902, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 187 Letter by Prozesky to A. Manzke at Königsberg, 26th October 1902 Letters by Matheus Ngwenya to Prozesky in Eshowe gaol, 16th September 1901 and 10th October 1901, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 210 & 218 Neither of these letters contains any hint of a reaction to anything seditious. Letters to Prozesky in Berlin by Andreas Malevu, Volksrust, 18th July 1902 and 19th January 1903, and Amos Matebula, Vaalbank, 15th November 1902, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 222-223, 223-224 & 225-226
12. Sworn statement by Traugott Prozesky, 1942
13. Copy of letter to Prozesky by the Mission Committee, 28th January 1903, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 206
14. Letter by Christian Prozesky to his parents in Berlin, Stendal, 29th April 1903 Letter from the Colonial Under-Secretary C. Bird to Chr. Prozesky, Pietermaritzburg, 1st May 1903
15. *Gefangenschaft*, 65 Letter from R.H. Marshall to Prozesky in Berlin, Cleveland, Dundee, 2nd April 1903 Letter by Jabez Marshall? to Hannchen Prozesky and Lill Marshall in Berlin, East Lynne, 4th July 1903 Letter by J.J. Müller to Prozesky in Berlin, Eikenhof, Newcastle, Natal, 7th July 1903, attached to *Gefangenschaft*, 194 *Gefangenschaft*, 206-207, including the text of July's petition
16. Letter by G. Eiselen, Pietersburg, 2nd September 1903, to Prozesky in Berlin, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 207
17. Letter from Mission Committee to Prozesky in Berlin, 16th October 1903, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 206/207 Pass certificate No.259, Berlin, 19th October 1903, from the British Ambassador to the German Emperor, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 199 Letter by Prozesky to Mission Committee, 31st October 1903

## **CHAPTER 18**

### **AMALIENSTEIN AND LAINGSBURG, 1903-1907**

#### **AMALIENSTEIN**

The Prozeskys were at Amalienstein in the Cape Colony from 7th December 1903 to 12th April 1905. Carl Prozesky and his family, for whom they were substituting, were away in Germany for 12 of these 16 months, from 16th March 1904 to 25th March 1905. August Prozesky was most unhappy with the conditions he found among the "coloured"/Khoikhoi inhabitants of the mission station. The discipline exercised by his brother was far too lax for his liking. Women with illegitimate children were not effectively censured, there was much idleness and drunkenness, and young people misbehaved during the church services.<sup>1</sup>

#### **PROZESKY DENIED RE-ENTRY INTO NATAL**

A letter from Inspector Sauberzweig Schmidt received early in 1904 informed Prozesky that the Natal government had refused him re-entry into Natal. The Königsberger wrote to the Governor of Natal, pointing out that he had already been punished, and claiming the right as a naturalized Englishman who had the King's Pardon to return to the colony. He asked to be tried if there was any new charge against him. His appeal was unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup>

#### **REFORMS AT AMALIENSTEIN (1)**

Left in charge of the mission station, the elder Prozesky immediately set about introducing sterner discipline at Amalienstein.

Many of the people made a very good impression on him, but the daughter of a deacon had three illegitimate children and the daughter of an elder at the out-station Calitzdorp no fewer than seven. Carl had apparently excluded these women from the congregation each time and then re-admitted them when they asked for forgiveness. Taxed by the sterner Prozesky with their responsibility for their households, both the deacon and elder laid down their offices. Supported by the Amalienstein elders, the missionary also took action against the abuse of alcohol, expelling various drunkards from the mission station.<sup>3</sup>

A letter from the Mission Committee received on 29th April 1904 spoke of the society's urgent need to retrench, as there was a deficit of £15,000. Prozesky saw a ripe field for financial reform in the local school. There were seven teachers, yet the people had contributed only £9 13s 6d towards school expenses during the previous year. He consulted the congregation and, apparently with their concurrence, dismissed the two young women most recently appointed as teachers. He also spoke to two of the other lady teachers and suggested that they share one post, teaching month and month about. One of them preferred to stop teaching.<sup>4</sup>

On 25th May 1904 Prozesky received a letter written to him by Missionary Göldner at the behest of Schmidt, the Cape superintendent. It advised him not to introduce innovations, as his brother was the main missionary at Amalienstein. He decided as a matter

of conscience to ignore this advice and in God's name to make the changes at Amalienstein which he regarded as essential.<sup>5</sup>

During June 1904, with the help of the elders and the water-corporal, he measured the size of the people's gardens and fixed an annual rental for each ranging from 6/- to 15/-. Most of the people were willing to pay, but some murmured because they had never paid rent before. The missionary told them they were free to go; there were bound to be others who would be glad to take over their houses (and gardens). He believed that the idle inhabitants who allowed weeds to grow in their allotments needed an incentive to cultivate them and to work for wages, and he was supported in this view by the miller David Michels who often needed labourers but could get none. Prozesky senior also began to enforce payment of church dues at this time, refusing to marry a couple until they paid what they owed.<sup>6</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S HALF-YEARLY REPORT, JULY 1904**

In the half-yearly report which he wrote in July 1904 Prozesky compared the people of mixed descent living at Amalienstein unfavourably with the Nguni at Königsberg. He defined the drinking of brandy stoked by white farmers and supplied by them to the people as one of the main problems of the men of the station. There had been quite a good harvest of grain, beans, maize and potatoes, but there was nevertheless much poverty and illness. The people were strangely resigned to a very low standard of life

and showed little initiative. They were generally very friendly and respectful, and the church services were well attended by an average of about 250 people.<sup>7</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (5)**

On Friday 29th July there was a letter from Carl Prozesky, who was upset by the minutes of the meeting his brother had held with the congregation. The director had authorized him to tell his substitute that he should leave things as they were at Amalienstein. The elder Prozesky was scornful of this directive. He failed to see why the entire mission community should be exhorted to make "endless" sacrifices while things continued at Amalienstein in the same "disgraceful" (wasteful) way as before.<sup>8</sup>

Both Andreas Malevu and Amos Mbuyisa wrote to Prozesky in August 1904 from Volksrust, asking him to return to his people.<sup>9</sup>

Sad news was received on 21st September: Glöckner's daughter Hedwig had died on 15th. Her many letters to Prozesky in prison had brought him joy, and both he and his wife wrote heartfelt letters of condolence to her parents. Ironically, Hedwig's death brought about reconciliation between her father and Prozesky. In his response, Glöckner asked the Prozeskys to forgive him for the pain he had caused them. He was a broken man and intended laying down the superintendentship. Prozesky was only too glad to write back in the same spirit.<sup>10</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S VIEW OF THE AMALIENSTEIN ECONOMY**

In mid-October the missionary inspected the Amalienstein lands. He made careful enquiries of various croppers and established that their overhead costs - especially for the rent of ploughs and oxen - made their small-scale farming uneconomical. As they owned few or no oxen themselves, they also had no manure for their fields. He concluded that they would be far better off working for farmers who paid both in food and wages. It was his strong conviction that the entire economic system at Amalienstien should be changed so as to make the farm pay for itself.<sup>11</sup>

### **SYNOD AT RIVERSDALE, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1904**

All the Cape missionaries with the exception of Kottich and Superintendent Schmidt were present at the Cape synod from 21st October to 2nd November. Schmidt died on 25th and this disrupted the synodal proceedings, as Prozesky, Göldner, Gerneke and Müller travelled to Worcester on 26th for his funeral. They returned on 28th. At synod Prozesky brought up the matter of a reprimand he had received from the Mission Committee for the changes he had made at Amalienstein. He argued that he had simply been carrying out instructions from the same Committee to raise revenue and save as much money as possible. The synod endorsed his actions unanimously.<sup>12</sup>

In a letter to the Mission Committee, Prozesky assured the reverend fathers that he had no wish to oust his brother, but point-

ed out that he had not been told that his brother stood above the rules of the society and that if he was sent instructions by the Committee, he should ignore them until they were approved by his brother. He warned that unless the inhabitants of Amalienstein were made to pay a rental - even a small one - they might be able to claim ownership of the land once they had occupied it rent-free for thirty years.<sup>13</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S HALF-YEARLY REPORT, JANUARY 1905**

In his half-yearly report written in January 1905, Prozesky mentioned that there was a "secret" undercurrent at Amalienstein flowing against the interests of the Berlin society. Instead of allowing him to act energetically against it, he complained, the Reverend Committee had tied his hands. This was known on the mission station, and a "secret" meeting had been held at which the society's ownership of the land had been questioned. He believed that if the people were made to pay rent, and if thieves, whoremongers, whores and adulterers were banished, the rebellious spirit would disappear.<sup>14</sup>

### **REFORMS AT AMALIENSTEIN (2)**

On 1st January 1905 the missionary heard that there had been dancing and brawling at various places on the mission station the previous night. The station rules were read at a meeting of the congregation in the church on Monday 2nd January. Prozesky raised the subject of the dancing. He was told that there was no station

rule forbidding dancing, so he promptly made one. He appears to have felt that if he was to spend more time at Amalienstein he would have to drop all pretence of maintaining the *status quo ante*, because he told the people there and then that anyone who had not paid 2/6 for garden land and 2/6 for a house-plot before 14th January would lose both. Only a few people had paid rent since May. The result of this ultimatum was that quite a number of people paid before the due date.<sup>15</sup>

### **CARL PROZESKY RETURNS**

Instructed by the director, the missionaries Göldner and Ecker came to Amalienstein in March 1905 to investigate the extent to which Prozesky had supposedly antagonized the people of the mission station. Carl Prozesky himself returned on 25th March. Before he left two weeks later, August had convinced his brother that the changes he had made had been necessary. Ecker and Göldner, too, were in agreement that those who owed rent for their lands should be made to pay what they owed.<sup>16</sup>

### **THE PROZESKYS GO TO LAINGSBURG**

During his year-long period of substitution, August Prozesky had visited the out-stations Calitzdorp, Kruisrivier and Rietvlei regularly and treated a great many sick people at Amalienstein and elsewhere without charge. When he and his wife and daughter left for Laingsburg on 12th April 1905, they were given many presents of food and money by grateful members of the congregation.<sup>17</sup>

Prozesky was inducted by Göldner as his substitute at Laingsburg on Easter Sunday 23rd April. Göldner and his two young sons having left for Germany on 28th, Prozesky held morning and evening services in the mission church on Sunday 30th, and an afternoon service for blacks in the location. This was to be the pattern of his Sunday services when he was at home. What made Laingsburg an oddity among mission stations was that its congregation lived not only in the town but at 10 out-stations and more than 30 gangers' cottages along some 680 kilometres of railway-line. Laingsburg was different to Prozesky's former postings in another respect: there were two doctors in the town and he was therefore not required to practise medicine.<sup>18</sup>

### **LAINGSBURG AND ITS OUT-STATIONS (1)**

The nature of Prozesky's itinerant work from Laingsburg is represented by his movements during the month of May 1905. From 6th to 8th May he was at the out-station De Aar, a railway junction 460 km north-east of Laingsburg, where he held three services in the Wesleyan school and celebrated Holy Communion with 31 communicants. Back at Laingsburg, he taught biblical history for an hour each morning in the mission school. He was away from home again later that month. On 25th he held a service in the cottage of a ganger at Grootfontein. On 26th he was at Touws River, giving Communion to 43 communicants and baptizing four children and an old man. From Touws River he proceeded via Worcester to Breede

River and Ceres Road where he held a service for some 60 people in the Rhenish church. On 30th May he was at Piketberg Road, but found no Berliners there. He returned to Laingsburg on 31st.<sup>19</sup>

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AT LAINGSBURG**

The missionary found the same socio-economic problems in the congregation at Laingsburg that he had encountered at Amalienstein: poverty, squalor, addiction to alcohol and sexual immorality.

There were two canteens selling spirits in the town and he did not hesitate to upbraid the owners for ruining the "coloured" people physically and spiritually. To reach those who did not come to church, he took to attending the funerals of people who did not belong to any church and introducing a Christian element to them. A large number of couples were living together unmarried. Prozesky would not allow them to join his baptism class unless they were married. Many consequently took this step.<sup>20</sup>

### **LAINGSBURG AND ITS OUT-STATIONS (2)**

On Sunday 4th June the missionary went to the railway-halt Geelbek and held a service for 12 "coloured" and 8 white people. He was at Grootfontein again on Saturday 10th. An old habit was resumed when he visited the Laingsburg gaol on Sunday 11th and held a service there for four very attentive prisoners. On 14th he went to Matjesfontein, on 16th to Touws River, on 17th to Hex River. These journeys entailed no inconsiderable hardship: Prozesky had much waiting to do in cold waiting-rooms and much walk-

ing to reach the cottages of the gangers to whom he ministered. On 29th he was at Fraserburg Road and preached to 50 people.<sup>21</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (6)**

On 1st July 1905 Prozesky received a letter from his son-in-law Vause Marshall which informed him that Mr Bosman, M.L.C. for Utrecht, had spoken to the Governor of Natal about his case. The Governor had said that he had nothing against Prozesky personally, but his influence on the blacks was so great that he could incite them to war against the whites. If anyone knew Prozesky, his brother-missionaries should, and they had spoken against him. Prozesky saw this as clear confirmation of ill-will on the part of his former colleagues in Natal against him.<sup>22</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S REPORT, SEPTEMBER 1905**

In his annual report written in September 1905, Prozesky mentioned that an elder Adrian Jacobs and a member of the congregation named Hendriks held the services at Laingsburg when he was away. The schoolteacher and Hannchen Prozesky taught the Sunday school. Jacobs and a Mosotho named Jan Jantje held the services in the location. The congregation was not strong financially. The general depression following the war had resulted in the lowering of wages, and many of the Laingsburg people could not pay their church dues, rent or school fees.<sup>23</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (7)**

Various Boers and English people in northern Natal sent a peti-

tion to the Natal Governor in early 1905, requesting that Prozesky be allowed to return to the colony. As a result, his banishment order was lifted later that year. By November he was asking for a transfer from Laingsburg. Both his wife and daughter had been very ill and his wife missed her other children sorely. He did not wish to return to Königsberg or to the Natal synod, but asked to be sent to Volksrust in the southern Transvaal.<sup>24</sup>

In early 1906 Caroline and Hannchen Prozesky went to Mossel Bay for a rest cure. Both found the extreme, dry heat of summer in the Karoo oppressive. Caroline went to Amalienstein in November 1906 for the same reason. Worried by the ill-health of his son Christian at Stendal, another place with extremely hot summers, Prozesky requested the Mission Committee to transfer Christian to Volksrust. This was not done; instead, the Committee merely suggested that Christian work less hard at Stendal.<sup>25</sup>

### **A CHURCH BUILT AT DE AAR**

The Lutherans whom Prozesky visited every three months in De Aar, numbering some 30-40 communicants and 120 adults and children in all, were provided with a chapel in a remarkable way. Prozesky wrote to the Friedländer brothers, merchants in the town, asking them to donate a stand to the Berlin society. They kindly complied, making a piece of land in the town, 120x40ft in extent, available in June 1906. The missionary wrote an appeal to the mission friends in Germany for funds to build a small church. He

pointed out that the donors of the land were Jewish. Money was forthcoming from donors in South Africa and abroad, from Christians and Jews alike, and the church could be built and consecrated in 1907.<sup>26</sup>

### **A PERIOD OF LEAVE, 1906-1907**

Prozesky's wife and daughter continued to suffer ill health in Laingsburg. Caroline had two light strokes and her physician, Dr Stephen, recommended that she go to a cooler, grassland climate. The missionary requested a transfer to Volksrust and also asked for three months' leave. The Mission Committee declined to send him to Volksrust on grounds of expense, but offered to appoint him as missionary at Kratzenstein, formerly Nelson's Kop, in the eastern Orange River Colony. They authorized him to travel to Kratzenstein and investigate the circumstances there. Missionary Klonus was sent to Laingsburg to substitute for him. The Prozeskys were in northern Natal, the eastern Orange River Colony and southern Transvaal from December 1906 to April 1907. They visited Königsberg, but were not very heartily received by Missionary Manzke. Nothing came of the proposed Kratzenstein posting.<sup>27</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (8)**

Untactfully, Prozesky took Manzke to task for various practices of which he did not approve, angering the younger man who was well aware that the Königsberg people disliked him and wanted their former missionary back.<sup>28</sup>

Reluctantly, Prozesky returned to Laingsberg alone in mid-April 1907. He lost no time, however, in writing to Von Gerlach, the president of the Berlin society, protesting against the enforced separation from his wife and daughter who had remained in Natal. His letter contained a less than veiled reproach aimed at Gensichen, who, he believed, was his enemy and did not have his interests at heart. He requested Gerlach to authorize his return to Natal, mentioning that the Natal Translation Committee had asked him rejoin their ranks and participate in an evaluation of the new Zulu Bible translation.<sup>29</sup>

Inexplicably, if not heartlessly, the reverend fathers appeared to blame Prozesky for the fact that he was separated from his wife and daughter. They ignored the urgent reports he had sent, backed by a medical certificate stressing that his wife and daughter could no longer live in the Karoo, and seemed to think it quite in order for the old man to live alone for some time. Prozesky saw the hand of Gensichen in this unkind treatment.<sup>30</sup>

### **PROZESKY SAVES A SQUATTER COMMUNITY FROM EVICTION**

On his visits to Matjesfontein the missionary lodged at the home of Senator Schreiner and became a trusted friend of his and of his niece, Mrs Katie Stuart. When Prozesky was there in late June 1907, Mrs Stuart solicited his help on behalf of the "coloured" people living in the local location. Because they had built their

huts on government land without permission, the authorities had ordered them to leave within three weeks. It was winter and bitterly cold. The local whites had petitioned on their behalf, but to no avail. As the spiritual father of more than half the "coloured" population, Prozesky wrote his own petition, which was laid before the Governor and the Surveyor-General in turn by Senator Schreiner. Bowden, the latter official, who alone had the power to rescind the eviction order, refused to do so at first, but changed his mind when he heard who the petitioner was. He explained to Schreiner that the Prozeskys had shown him hospitality when he was a young man in Natal, unemployed and despondent.<sup>31</sup>

### **PROZESKY BECOMES ILL AND LEAVES LAINGSBURG**

By the time his health failed in August 1907, Prozesky had logged 26,970 miles of train travel on pastoral journeys during his term at Laingsburg. On at least two occasions he had visited Cape Town and held services for Lutheran "coloured" people there. An attack of influenza which he suffered became inflammation of the trachea, lungs and kidneys. Seriously ill, he was nursed by the mission schoolmaster, his wife and a number of parishioners, and attended by Dr Stephen. For two weeks he was delirious or unconscious. Carl and Augusta Prozesky came from Amalienstein to look after him, and then, on 19th September, his son Christian arrived from Natal to take care of him. Somewhat recovered but still very weak, he took his leave of the congregation on 29th September. His condition was such that the train journey to Natal had to be broken at De Aar,

Kimberley, Johannesburg and Heidelberg. Dr Stephen had prescribed six months of total rest. It was the end of Prozesky's ministry in the Cape.<sup>32</sup>

## **CHAPTER 18: AMALIENSTEIN AND LAINGSBURG, 1903-1907**

### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch 63*, 3-53      *Gefangenschaft*, 69
2. *Tagebuch 63*, 33-36, 38 & 44      *Gefangenschaft*, 197-201 & 204  
Letter by R.U. Tanner, private secretary to the Governor of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 4th February 1904, to Prozesky, Amalienstein, Cape Colony, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 202
3. *Tagebuch 63*, 3-43, 50-51 & 63-66
4. *Ibid.*, 63-64 & 68-71
5. *Ibid.*, 72-74
6. *Ibid.*, 74-77, 82 & 83
7. *Ibid.*, 84-88
8. *Ibid.*, 95-96
9. *Gefangenschaft*, 209      Letter by Andreas Malevu, Volksrust, 17th August 1904, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 226-227      Letter by Amos Umbisa/Mbuyisa, Bushmanskrants, P.O. Brereton via Volksrust, 31st August 1904, *Gefangenschaft*, 227
10. *Tagebuch 63*, 110 & 115      *Gefangenschaft*, 228      Letter by Th. Glöckner, Christianenburg, 30th September 1904
11. *Tagebuch 63*, 120-122
12. *Ibid.*, 122-123      Draft of address to synod/letter to the Reverend Committee, (October?) 1904
13. *Tagebuch 63*, 127-128      Draft of letter to the Mission Committee (October?) 1904
14. *Tagebuch 63*, 145
15. *Ibid.*, 141-142 & 147-148
16. *Ibid.*, 155-157      *Tagebuch 65*, 40      Letter by Prozesky to the Mission Committee, Amalienstein, 29th March 1905
17. *Tagebuch 63*, 157-158 and *passim*
18. *Ibid.*, 158-161 & 178      *Erinnerungen*, 471      Appeal to mission friends in Germany, July 1906
19. *Tagebuch 63*, 162-164
20. *Ibid.*, 164-165, 181 & 182      *Tagebuch 65*, 58
21. *Tagebuch 63*, 165-169
22. *Ibid.*, 169      Letter by Prozesky to Mr Bosman, M.L.C., Utrecht, Laingsburg, 18th July 1905. In the lean years after the Anglo-Boer War, rumours that the blacks were about to rise against white rule were rife. Prozesky was possibly regarded as too dangerous a man to have in Natal at this time because of the great influence he had among

- the blacks in the north of the colony. If so, the official view of the missionary was quite wrong, but the feared rising did in fact occur after the introduction of the poll-tax in 1906. (Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 144)
23. *Tagebuch* 63, 179 & 183
  24. Letter to Prozesky by *Schatzmeister* Schlunk, Berlin 19th July 1905, and Prozesky's answers in rough draft on the same paper      The petition was in fact signed by 250 people. One Boer offered £5000 as surety for Prozesky's good behaviour. (*Tagebuch* 66, 44)      Letter by Prozesky to *Geheimer Rath* Berner, Laingsburg, 16th November 1905
  25. Letter by Gerlach to Prozesky, Berlin, 15th February 1906  
*Missions-Berichte*, January 1907, 6
  26. *Erinnerungen*, 471-473      Letter by Prozesky to the Mission Committee, Laingsburg, 11 July 1906      Copy of deed of gift, Friedländer Bros. to the Berlin society, 28th June 1906      Surveyor's sketch of the De Aar property      Draft of appeal by Prozesky to the mission friends in Germany, July 1906
  27. *Erinnerungen*, 221 & 269      Letters by Prozesky to the Mission Committee, Laingsburg, 27th August and 16th November 1906      Letter to Prozesky by Gerlach, Berlin, 19th October 1906      Three letters by Gerlach to Prozesky in Heidelberg, Transvaal, 23rd and 27th February and 20th March 1907      Two letters by Prozesky to the Mission Committee, Laingsburg, 22nd and 23rd April 1907      *Missions-Berichte*, February 1907, 81
  28. Letter by Prozesky to Manzke, East Lynne, 7th March 1907
  29. Letter by Prozesky to Gerlach, Laingsburg, 23rd April 1907
  30. Two letters by Gerlach to Prozesky, Berlin, 24th May and 6th June 1907
  31. *Erinnerungen*, 221-226      Mrs Katie Stuart was the eldest daughter of Olive Schreiner's eldest sister Katie Findlay. Senator Schreiner was the writer's brother.
  32. *Erinnerungen*, 465 & 474-475      *Tagebuch* 65, 1-8      *Missions-Berichte*, December 1907, 523      BMA *Tagebuch* 1906, 86-88  
BMA *Tagebuch* 1907, 12-14, *Acta Laingsburg*

## **CHAPTER 19**

### **THE FINAL YEARS, 1907-1915**

#### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (9)**

Prozesky recovered slowly, with the Marshalls at East Lynne near Dundee from 12th to 31st October and at Emmaus from early November 1907.<sup>1</sup> With returning health, his sense of having been ill-used by his superiors reasserted itself. He had suffered what he saw as the false accusations, slights and neglect of Director Gensichen for almost eight years, and his patience was at an end. A letter received from Gensichen early in 1908 was the last straw which broke the camel's back. From East Lynne he replied, reproaching the director bitterly. What had angered him most in the letter from Berlin were the words, "It will certainly not be easy for you to give up finally (the hope of) reappointment to your beloved Königsberg". To Prozesky, who had not asked to be sent back to Königsberg, this was a gratuitous taunt. He reminded Gensichen that when the Committee had decided not to send him to Kratzenstein, he had asked for a modest cottage to be built for him and his wife in Heidelberg. Whoever went to Königsberg next would, he asserted, have a very hard time, as Gensichen's "capable and faithful" Manzke had "got the cart thoroughly stuck in the mud".

Prozesky objected strenuously to Gensichen's pretended solicitude for his well-being, as expressed in another sentence of his letter which read, "We cannot expect you at your age to undertake

such a large and heavy burden as required at Königsberg and Volksrust, even if we were to give you your son Christian as assistant." Prozesky described the work he had done at Laingsburg and that which Christian had done at Stendal, and compared it with what he knew of Manzke's energy. It galled him that Gensichen could suggest that the two Prozeskys together could not do what Manzke did.

Having decided to have his say, Prozesky did not hold back. He proceeded to catalogue what he saw as Gensichen's sins.

- (1) He had not done his duty by Prozesky when he was in Natal in 1900 by engaging legal counsel for him.
- (2) He had not visited Prozesky in prison.
- (3) He had refused to listen to Prozesky's complaint in Germany in 1902 that Glöckner and Manzke had wanted him back in prison. During Prozesky's 20-month stay in the *Missionshaus* he had never so much as invited him for a cup of tea to discuss his experiences during the war.
- (4) After the peace was concluded he had not investigated the matter of Prozesky's trial to establish the truth.
- (5) He had known that the Natal missionaries had slandered Prozesky to the Natal government, but had done nothing about it.
- (6) The late Superintendent Nauhaus had lost thousands of pounds of the society's money by "crazy speculations", yet he was lauded by Gensichen as a faithful and honourable man.
- (7) Gensichen had sent Prozesky to the Cape Colony to punish him, yet good had come of his evil intentions, as Prozesky had uncovered the wasteful administration of Amalienstein. Neither the superintendent nor the director himself had noticed it, nor had they done anything to end the idleness of the Amalienstein people and their squalid way of life. Worse still, Gensichen had seen fit to forbid Prozesky to

make any changes at Amalienstein and had sent Missionaries Göldner and Ecker to see what he was doing.

- (8) No one but Prozesky had seen that the Amalienstein property was endangered and that those who had lived there for 30 years without paying rent could claim ownership of the land. Yet Gensichen had seen fit to forbid him to charge rent.
- (9) Although Prozesky had lost almost everything during the war, there was apparently no money to build him a cottage for his retirement.

The Königsberger threatened to publish all the facts of his case in a pamphlet for distribution among the mission supporters in Germany unless the society made good his losses.<sup>2</sup>

In a separate letter written to the *Schatzmeister* (treasurer) of the society Prozesky declined to accept the post of mission agent in Silesia - on the grounds of his wife's ill-health in Germany. He repeated the threat to publish the facts of Gensichen's treatment of him and claimed that Königsberg was in a state of decay. Manzke had fewer preaching-places than he, Prozesky, had had. He asked for £500 to build a cottage on the stand he owned in Newcastle and for his full salary in retirement (as had been granted to Inspector Wendland). He also asked for Christian to be sent to Königsberg in Manzke's place.<sup>3</sup>

In yet another letter, Prozesky, emboldened by his anger, now asked to be sent back to Königsberg with his son Christian as his assistant. He reminded the reverend fathers that it had been Grunewald's wish that Prozeskys should be stationed at Königsberg if possible. He also asked for at least £200 to enable him to set up

a home for himself and his wife.<sup>4</sup> On 11th May a cablegram from Berlin brought the news that a house would be built for the Prozeskys in Heidelberg in the Transvaal.<sup>5</sup>

### **A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE**

An unsolicited vote of confidence came from F. Meyer of the farm Leokop, who wrote to Prozesky on 19th May 1908, offering to lay a resolution before the *Newcastle Boeren Vereeniging*, calling upon the Berlin society to restore Prozesky to Königsberg. The resolution called the society's treatment of the old missionary unfair and unchristian. Meyer intended sending it to all the farmers' societies in Natal. Mollified by this time, Prozesky thanked him by letter for his good intentions, but asked him not to intercede on his behalf, as he and his wife were looking forward to a quiet retirement in Heidelberg.<sup>6</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S WORK AT HEIDELBERG**

The Prozeskys arrived in Heidelberg on 17th June 1908. Their daughter Hannchen was already there and was to live with them in a rented house while their new house was being built. Almost immediately Prozesky began to work as assistant to his son-in-law Hermann Müller. Besides holding services in the mission church in Heidelberg, taking the Dutch confirmation class and holding the Wednesday evening prayer-meetings, he visited both the local gaol and Emmasdale prison to hold services for the prisoners. He also visited Nigel and held services for Matheus Ngwenya and other

Lutherans. Despite his age, he spoke up to five or six times on a Sunday, to various groups in prisons, churches and homes. He made himself practically useful as well, painting Bible texts on the interior walls of the Heidelberg school and church, visiting the sick, dispensing medicine and performing funerals. He also held services for the Dutch Reformed congregation, whose minister was away. He and his wife and daughter moved into their new house *Abendruh* (Evening Rest) on 9th October 1908. The Mission Committee granted them £113 15s for the purchase of furniture and a cow.<sup>7</sup>

A new prison was opened at Houtpoort near Heidelberg in 1908. Prozesky was to be a regular preacher there during the following years. In August 1909 he was granted £40 per annum by the Transvaal government to act as chaplain to the prisoners at Houtpoort and the boys of what had become the Emmasdale reformatory. In the year from August 1909 to July 1910 he visited Houtpoort 62 times and gave 244 addresses.<sup>8</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S DISPUTE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AND SUPERIORS (10)**

Prozesky and Manzke appear to have patched up their quarrel in 1909. In April of that year Prozesky travelled to Natal. He was at Königsberg from 6th to 8th May and was received by the Manzkes in a friendly way. He held a service in the church and found that the people remembered him and his family fondly. The buildings were in good repair.<sup>9</sup>

Prozesky received a loving letter from Berner, the president of the Berlin society, in June 1909. In it he was urged to take the initiative and write a conciliatory letter to Gensichen. He wrote back, describing the treatment he had received from the director since 1900. He pointed out that the dispute between them had in no way been resolved, and asked Berner to advise him as to how he could write to Gensichen in a conciliatory way without being a hypocrite. There was to be no answer to this letter.<sup>10</sup>

Berner wrote to Prozesky again in 1910, urging him once more to be reconciled with Gensichen. This time Prozesky complied, suggesting to the director in a letter written on 18th February that they bury the hatchet as they were both getting old, and asking Gensichen to forgive him for any wrong he had done him. Gensichen wrote back, expressing great happiness but not confessing any wrongdoing on his own part or asking for any forgiveness. Berner, too, wrote to Prozesky, thanking him profusely for his letter to Gensichen.

According to a new rule of the Berlin Missionary Society, Prozesky should have retired after the age of 70, but an exception was made in his case and the Mission Committee asked him to continue with his work in Heidelberg. This he did.<sup>11</sup>

In Germany the widowed Christian Prozesky had remarried - into the German nobility. His wife, Amalia von Schmidt-Hirschfelde of the castle Wustrau in Silesia, returned with him to Natal, where

they were stationed at Hoffenthal for a while before being transferred to Königsberg in 1911. Thus the wish of Prozesky senior - to see one of his sons as the missionary at the mission station he had founded - was fulfilled.<sup>12</sup>

### **THE PROZESKYS MOVE TO NEWCASTLE**

Christian's appointment to Königsberg possibly awakened a desire in his parents to return to Natal. They moved to Newcastle in 1913 after failing eyesight and illness had made Prozesky retire at last. With the help of their children they built a house - another *Abendruh* - on the stand they owned in the town.<sup>13</sup>

### **DEATH**

It had always been Prozesky's desire to be buried at Königsberg, and this wish, too, was granted. He and Caroline were visiting their son Christian and his family when he died on 19th June 1915. For two nights members of the congregation held a wake in the church he had built, singing until dawn. He was buried in the churchyard, honoured by black and white alike. Caroline Prozesky survived her husband by only three months. She died on 26th September 1915, was given a similar wake by the congregation, and was buried beside her husband.<sup>14</sup>

## **CHAPTER 19: THE FINAL YEARS, 1907-1915**

### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Tagebuch* 65, 6, 8-13, 32 & 49
2. Draft of a letter by Prozesky to Gensichen, East Lynne, 11th February 1908, *Tagebuch* 65, 14-49 & 72

3. Draft of a letter by Prozesky to the *Schatzmeister*, East Lynne, 5th February 1908, *Tagebuch 65*, 59-60, 68 & 72-84
4. Draft of a letter by Prozesky to the Mission Committee, East Lynne, 17th February 1908, *Tagebuch 65*, 84-93
5. *Tagebuch 65*, 100
6. Letter by F. Meyer, Leokop, to Prozesky, 19th May 1908  
Letter by Prozesky to F. Meyer, East Lynne, 26th May 1908
7. *Tagebuch 65*, 107-110, 112, 116, 130-131 & *passim*  
*Tagebuch 66*, 8, 9 & *passim* Letter by Berner to Prozesky, Berlin, 3rd November 1908
8. *Tagebuch 66*, 8, 18, 24, 55, 61-70, 75 & 124
9. *Ibid.*, 28-29
10. Draft of a letter by Prozesky to Berner, Heidelberg, 11th June 1909, *Tagebuch 66*, 34-46
11. Draft of a letter by Prozesky to Gensichen, Heidelberg, 18th February 1910, *Tagebuch 66*, 93-95 Letter by Berner to Prozesky, Berlin, 15th March 1910 Letter by Gensichen to Prozesky, Berlin, 23rd March 1910 Letter by Berner to Prozesky, Berlin, 8th November 1911
12. Letters by Gensichen to Prozesky, Berlin, 26th December 1910 and 20th November 1911
13. Letter by Christian Prozesky to his parents, Volksrust, 13th October 1912 Obituary for Prozesky, *Missionsberichte*, September 1915, 154-156 Letter by Adolf Wundram to the Prozeskys, Piet Retief, 15th September 1913  
Letter by Caroline Prozesky to the Marshalls, Newcastle, 13th March 1914 *Berliner Missionsberichte*, June 1914, 133
14. Obituary for August Prozesky, *Missionsberichte*, September 1915, 154-156 "Caroline W. Prozesky ('t Verscheiden ener Moeder)", obituary by Traugott Prozesky in *De Volkstem*, 15th October 1915

**PART 3**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF  
PROZESKY'S WORK AND INFLUENCE**

## INTRODUCTION

In assessing Prozesky's work and influence it is necessary to take into account the extremely critical view of early Christian missions in South Africa which has become fashionable in recent times. Unfortunately, much of modern mission critique is so politically engaged and so biased in its judgement of the pioneer Christian missionaries in South Africa as to be almost worthless to any investigator interested in discovering the truth about these figures. Fortunately, on the other hand, there are signs that this phase in missiological writing is passing.

Before proceeding to an analysis of Prozesky's impact on his contemporaries, this study considers some examples of the trends mentioned.

In the chapter of his book *Trapped in Apartheid* dealing with "Imperialists and Missionaries", Charles Villa Vicencio, while admitting that the debate on missionary activity in southern Africa is a complex one, nevertheless adopts a simplistic view of the missionaries in the colonial period. He takes cognizance of the fact that there are those who see the missionaries as worthy and honourable pioneers, but does not share this view. He finds it particularly blameworthy in the missionaries that they were *themselves* and as such represented their European culture and civilisation. Worse still, even in the poverty most took upon them, they were, in his opinion, active collaborators with or

unwitting tools of colonialism, capitalism and commerce. Villa Vicencio's language betrays his bias. As far as he is concerned, the missionaries were not merely industrious people who believed in, demonstrated and taught the ennobling dignity of labour; they were far more sinister figures who "hammered out a work ethic" for the Africans "in collusion with the colonial administrators and traders".<sup>1</sup> No fair-minded person who has read a tenth of Prozesky's journals could write a sentence so unjustly and sweepingly false.

Villa Vicencio can admit that "the missionaries sought on many occasions to act as the conscience of the settlers by speaking out on behalf of the indigenous people in the struggle for land, human rights and social justice,"<sup>2</sup> yet even this admission contains revealing political jargon ("settlers" for white people, even those African-born), as well as, and more importantly, the inadmissible suggestion of guilt by association (the tarring of "settlers" and missionaries with the same brush). This technique is inverted when less than flattering admissions have to be made about traditionalist African society. "It would be wrong," writes Villa Vicencio, "to romanticize pre-industrial African society. It had egalitarian features, but political and economic differences were manifest between the chiefs and the people, between different groups among the people, between men and women, and between generations." Lest this should appear unkind, he

hastens to add, "It would, in turn, be disparaging to regard traditional African society as static and incapable of generating change from within, and evidence suggests that African pre-industrial society was interrupted by colonial forces at a time of crucial transition and expansionism."<sup>3</sup> Yet Villa Vicencio hardly hesitates to be disparaging when writing about the white missionaries who brought his own religion to Africa.

"There is, of course," he concedes, "another aspect to the story of the role played by the churches in the development of the country. This is the story of the establishment of hospitals, social services and schools." And he adds, "This cannot be denied and ought not to be belittled."<sup>4</sup> Yet the trend of the entire chapter is exactly that: to belittle the achievements of the missionaries at every turn. Significantly, he has little to say about the missionaries' cure of African souls, the forgiveness of sins, or about the kingdom of God which was the main theme of the teaching of Jesus and of most missionaries.

The main thrust of the chapter "The Critique of Missions and Missionaries" in James Cochrane's book *Servants of Power* is to the effect that the churches in South Africa have not been critical enough of their missionary antecedents. This is probably so, but ironically Cochrane himself is not critical enough of his own assumptions and standards of comparison. His critique of the pioneer missionaries has anything but a politically neutral

basis. Like Villa Vicencio, he views pre-colonial black society in South Africa through rose-tinted spectacles, apparently unaware that black women often formed a dominated, oppressed and exploited class. His only mild admission in this direction, a reference to "pressures" on tribal black women, comes in a footnote.<sup>5</sup> He ignores the intrinsic injustice of polygyny (which denied women equality with men and disqualified poor men from marrying) and the very real temptation there was in the system of *ukulobolisa* for men to sell their dependent female relatives for cattle. Further, he is largely uncritical of the evil aspects of chiefly rule as observed by contemporary witnesses: the often corrupt apparatus of grateful favourites, and the capricious dispossession, banishment and even death by torture of people "smelt out" as witches. That these unhappy features of traditionalist black society were "bad news" and worthy of replacement by the "good news" of Jesus' teaching, does not appear to convince Cochrane.

Nor is this all. Following the lead of Majeke's book *The Role of Missionaries in Conquest*, Cochrane is happy to generalize about the missionaries, describing them as one "among the waves of invading (European) conquerors".<sup>6</sup> The following question raised by this type of mission critique needs to be answered: Exactly how much do/did the writers really know about the early missionaries? Relatively few detailed studies of the lives and work of the many hundreds of missionaries, men and women, who devoted their lives

to South Africa, have been undertaken. How then, in fairness, can such sweepingly negative assumptions about them be made? It will be seen in this thesis that Prozesky, for example, even despite his faults, does not fit the unflatteringly generalized profile which Majeke, Cochrane and others attempt to impose on "the missionaries".

In the preface to their book *Of Revelation and Revolution*, the Comaroffs, Jean and John, by describing Christian missionaries as "among the earliest footsoldiers of British colonialism", betray the slant which characterizes their approach.<sup>7</sup> Dealing largely in this work, as they do, with concepts, values and perceptions and the use, appropriation and misuse of language for partisan purposes, the writers might reasonably be expected to be more critical of their own employment of words loaded with tendentious meaning. While aware that Robert Moffat disapproved strongly of the "unhallowed union" of religious duties and political functions as having "no warrant from Scripture", they point out that missionaries were in fact often involved in matters of a political nature.<sup>8</sup> It is the impression of this researcher that most missionaries who became politically engaged did so coincidentally and usually only if and when they felt it to be in the material interests of their mission. This is, however, a thesis which remains to be tested by thorough and objective research. As will be seen, Prozesky's one disastrous venture into active political partisanship was quite untypical of the general

tenor of his life and mission. No two missionaries were exactly alike. How then could Moffat and Prozesky, for example, be grouped together and called footsoldiers of anything except evangelical Christianity?

What applies to Villa Vicencio, Cochrane and Majeke applies to the Comaroffs as well: they employ the same unscientific methods of over-simplification and generalisation. They are also guilty of the most basic misrepresentation. While it is so that the missionaries were unable to "deliver the new society promised in their evangelical message",<sup>9</sup> as pointed out by the Comaroffs, it is equally true that their teaching placed this new dispensation in another world, something not pointed out by the Comaroffs. The Comaroffs' critical scrutiny of missionary use of African language is interesting, but their uncritical attitude towards traditionalist black societies skews their perspective and makes their book largely unhelpful. One claim they make, namely that in the long run "the missionaries" were largely ineffectual in the political arena,<sup>10</sup> is of interest. An untested sweeping statement like so many others, it nevertheless also appears to be a (possibly unintended) rebuttal of the many attacks made on the supposedly important political role played by the missionaries.

More honest is Bill Freund's book *The Making of Contemporary Africa*. Frankly Marxist and materialist, this writer at least sees that colonialism had both progressive and regressive features

and that (even his) materialist history "cannot possibly be reduced to anti-colonial polemic".<sup>11</sup> He is also able to recognize that black women in certain areas, especially among cattle-owners, were harshly exploited, and that the typical ruler in black Africa, while expected to be a father and protector to his people, nevertheless often systematically appropriated goods produced by cultivators to perpetuate his ruling class.<sup>12</sup> "To what extent we can speak of class societies and struggles in pre-capitalist Africa," he writes, "has barely been addressed by historians, yet it is a fundamental question."<sup>13</sup> Indeed.

Willem Saayman's recent rethinking of the concept of Christian mission history in South Africa (*Missionalia* 23:2, August 1995) contains elements which are to be applauded and which, it is hoped, will lead to a more balanced appraisal of the part played by the early missionaries. I refer firstly to his quotation of this definition from a thesis by J.N.J. Kritzinger.

Mission is ... the attempt to embody God's liberating presence [incarnation] in every human situation. It ... searches to discover the meaning of the Good News in each context."<sup>14</sup>

The following points by Saayman are also well taken, despite the fact that, in the absence of written sources, practical application of the second recommendation is extremely difficult in the context of Prozesky's ministry.

"The responsibility of Christian mission is therefore the identification of the bad news in every context, and the presentation of God's good news in such a way that it is comprehensible and attractive. ... Furthermore, ... the mission history of Africa should not be narrated primarily from the vantage point of Western missionaries. It should much rather reflect the creative reception and incarnation of the gospel in the various regions and ... communities of Africa."<sup>15</sup>

In the following chapters both the good and bad news in the circumstances of Prozesky's life and work are considered.

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6. Ibid., 13
7. Comaroff, Jean & Comaroff, John *Of Revelation and Revolution*, xi
8. Ibid., 252-254
9. Ibid., 254
10. Ibid., 27
11. Freund, Bill, *The Making of Contemporary Africa*, xiii
12. Ibid., 23 & 25
13. Ibid., 36
14. Saayman, W., "Christian Mission History in South Africa: Rethinking the concept", from *Missionalia* 23:2, 188
15. Ibid., 199

## **CHAPTER 20**

### **PROZESKY'S THEOLOGY, MISSIOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY**

#### **THE INFLUENCE OF HIS PARENTAL HOME**

The home in which Prozesky grew up was steeped in the spirit of pietism and based on the twin foundations of belief in the Bible as God's inspired and infallible Word, and of prayer as the individual's direct link with the all-knowing and all-powerful Deity. The home was complemented in this regard by attendance of Sunday services in, and the sacraments of, the local Lutheran *Landeskirche*. Sermons were read at home on Sunday afternoons, often in the company of like-minded friends, and discussed. The Prozeskys of Brandenburg, East Prussia appear to have combined their intense religiosity with the practical, down-to-earth cast of mind of the fourth-generation artisans they were and the infant-school teachers they became.<sup>1</sup>

#### **THE INFLUENCE OF THE *MISSIONSHAUS***

The young Prozesky appears to have come under some more emotional pietist influence during his training as a missionary in Berlin from 1861 to 1865. A considerable amount of excessive religious yearning, self-doubt and pleading for divine mercy is to be found in the diaries he kept and the verse he wrote while in the *Missionshaus*. It would appear from his later descriptions of life in this institute that these private excesses did not have their origin in the teaching programme of the seminary, which was rath-

er of a serious but cheerful and practical nature. The official, optimistic and businesslike approach of Prozesky's teachers and, later, the harsh realities of Africa, were to dispel this introverted and melancholy tendency in the young man. What the *Missionshaus* did instil in him was the urgency of their shared mission. The Berlin Missionary Society was one of a number of German missionary societies which had come into being in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as a result of the *Erweckung* (religious revival), which was in its turn a reaction to the rationalist *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment). As such, its teachings were intimately bound up with eschatological kingdom theology. There is ample proof in Prozesky's writings that he saw his mission in this light. In expectation of the imminent coming of the kingdom of God, it was his duty to obey the commandment ascribed to the risen Jesus in Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This was the text written large on the facade of the *Missionshaus* itself, the motto of the society and its members. Because there was thought to be little time left before the end of the world, there was a burning urgency in the zeal of the Berliners to snatch as many souls as possible from the jaws of perdition before it was too late.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THE BERLIN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

By the time Prozesky was sent to South Africa, the Berlin society had been active in the subcontinent for more than thirty years.

Its mission stations were generally manned by one or two missionaries, usually married men. The typical Berlin mission station was rural and consisted of a dwelling for the missionaries, a church of sorts, sometimes a separate school building, and more rarely a shop. The indigenes had their huts nearby and converts were encouraged or obliged to build themselves small, European-style cottages and adopt a Western lifestyle. The missionary taught from the Bible and by example: through prayer, hymn-singing and hard manual labour. The vernacular was learnt as soon as possible, and as hymns and portions of scripture were translated, these were used and taught. The constant goal of the missionary's labours was the winning of individual souls. Conversion was thought to be a gracious gift of the Holy Spirit, yet in some way also dependent on an act of free will by the sinner. The convert was required to acknowledge his sinfulness and accept Jesus as his saviour. Baptism after an often lengthy and thorough preparation set the seal on the process and entitled the convert to full membership of the Lutheran Church and access to its sacraments. While signs of penitence in the form of weeping and self-accusation were welcomed, sustained emotionalism was not. God was seen as an inscrutable being, interventionist when he chose, both an infinitely loving and merciful Saviour and also a wrathful Father apt to punish - by drought and flood, hail and pestilence, illness, accident and death. In imitation of their God, the Berlin missionaries employed the same duality of method: their care of

and concern for the indigenes to whom they ministered were often loving and self-denying to the point of heroism, but simultaneously personal and communal discipline were required, with the missionaries often judging and punishing transgressions of their rules and of the biblical commandments.<sup>3</sup>

Neither the teachers in the *Missionshaus* nor the young men they sent out to South Africa (and China) would have identified themselves with the *missio politica oecumenica* regarded by many today as the *ne plus ultra* of the missionary task. In the tradition of Zinzendorf, the founder of Herrnhut, they eschewed all political involvement. To them their commission was a spiritual one and other considerations could only be of secondary importance. Finding in the life of Jesus, their pattern and example, no overtly political engagement to imitate, they accepted the political *status quo* in the African colonies and states without question. They did indeed see the entire *oikoumene*, the entire inhabited world, as their parish (shared with missionaries of other societies world-wide), but they did not perceive it as their duty to reshape that world politically. There was simply too little time for such utopian plans before the second coming of Christ, the Last Judgement of God and the creation of a New Heaven and a New Earth. That they were in fact politically involved even if only by their very presence in South Africa and by their propagation of the dominant Western culture as part and parcel of their message, is beyond dispute. Willem Saayman, a present-day South African

missiologist, is critical of the "entanglement" of mission and colonialism in the nineteenth century and believes that it has had "extremely damaging" effects on Christian mission in the sub-continent. Yet he sees that

"we cannot simply convict the missionaries for their entanglement with colonialism. That would be very easy to do today, with our benefit of hindsight. But we have to evaluate this phenomenon within its own historical context, and then we come to the conclusion ... that the missionaries did what they did not because they were scheming, half-witted or malicious, but because they were of their time, of their place, and in an advantaged position in an expanding political economy increasingly characterised by a capitalist hegemony (Cochrane 1987:37)."<sup>4</sup>

It is indeed within their historical context that the Berliners - and Prozesky among them - need to be evaluated. The critics who so easily condemn the role that they and other missionaries played in introducing western culture to African blacks should perhaps also consider the phenomenon of the attractive force of European-American inventiveness and technology which has in the last century and a half transformed even countries like Japan which have never been colonized by Europeans and who have experienced a minimum of contact with Christian missionaries. Now that the poverty and inhumanity of communist imperialism have been revealed for what they are, the time has surely also come for a less hostile assessment of western capitalism.

### **THE BERLINERS' ECCLESIOLOGY**

While the Berliners were Lutheran in heart and soul and committed to Lutheran practice and the extension of the Lutheran Church

in foreign parts, they saw themselves, as J.C. Hoekendijk points out, not primarily as churchmen but rather as missionaries of Christ, just as the first disciples were.<sup>5</sup> Their prime purpose was not the foundation of churches, but the gathering in of a harvest of souls into makeshift barns in expectation of the great harvest festival of the second coming of Christ and the judgement of mankind by God as prefigured in the parables of Jesus and the Revelation. As some sort of church order was obviously required, the first Berlin missionaries sent out to South Africa in 1833 were given a Lutheran *Kirchenordnung* (set of church rules) as a basis for their work. In 1859 missionaries going to South Africa were instructed to base their work on the Bible and on the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's catechism. It was only in the revised *Missionsordnung* of 1882 that greater attention began to be paid to church formation.<sup>6</sup> This shift from eschatology to ecclesiology was to have some influence on Prozesky's practice, but as a member of the old school he remained eschatologically directed. As he grew older, he appears to have expected the end-time less immediately than before, but it remained the focus of all his hopes and aspirations.<sup>7</sup>

This eschatological faith was also the source of Prozesky's interconfessionalism. The Berliners, among others, did not wish to transfer confessional differences to the mission field, as observed by P.J.S. de Klerk.<sup>8</sup> The 1824 constitutional statute of the society expressed approval of "the brotherly co-operation of ev-

angelical Christians of all confessions who have proclaimed the Word of Truth according to the Scriptures without human additions and without disputes concerning non-essential differences of opinion."<sup>9</sup> While not going as far as Zinzendorf who wrote, "Let us reform ourselves and live in love with all the brethren and with all the children of God in all religions,"<sup>10</sup> Prozesky was an early ecumenist who saw all Christian missionaries - with the notable exception of the Roman Catholics - as labourers with him in the same vineyard. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he saw no reason why Protestant fellow-Christians should not come to his communion-table. So, too, he could preach happily from Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed pulpits.<sup>11</sup>

### **THE INFLUENCE OF J.C. WALLMANN**

It is noteworthy that Wallmann, whom Prozesky revered, encouraged his missionaries not to dismiss the customs and beliefs of the indigenes but rather to seek to transform them by giving them a Christian content. Some of Prozesky's colleagues in South Africa made such attempts, but he himself did not follow Wallmann in this respect. Whether or not it was a pity that Prozesky did not make similar attempts, is hard to say. In the absence of comparative scientific studies of attempts made by other missionaries in this direction, and their results, little beyond conjecture on this point is possible. Once again, it must be stressed that the lives of most missionaries have yet to be adequately investigated, and that generalized pronouncements at

this stage about their influence for good or evil have little by way of substantial foundations.<sup>12</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND COLONIALISM**

It is possible that Prozesky was influenced by his teacher C.H.C. Plath (1829-1901) who saw colonization and mission as two instruments of God to bring salvation to the world. The Königsberger approved of the British conquest of Zululand in 1879 and wrote enthusiastically about the possible establishment of a German colony in Tanganyika in the early eighties, but he criticized the subjection of the Swazi people by Europeans in 1898. It would thus appear that he modified his views on colonialism in later life - possibly after having seen that contact with whites was not an unalloyed blessing to African people.<sup>13</sup>

### **THE CONCEPT OF THE *VOLKSKIRCHE***

The concept of *Volkskirchen*, that is to say, new young churches for the various peoples or nations brought to Christianity by the missionaries, was developed by Dr Gustav Warneck (1834-1910). Warneck believed that attention should be paid to the individuality of peoples in mission work and in the establishment of churches adapted to their cultural norms and needs.<sup>14</sup> Although these ideas were to influence the thinking of H.T. Wangemann and, through him, that of later Berlin missionaries, they had little impact on Prozesky. While the Königsberger did move in his later years towards the employment of elders and evangelists to perform

church functions, he continued to see European supervision and leadership in any emergent local church as essential. Nowhere in his writings did he use the concept *Volkskirche*; his church remained a European church in Africa, led spiritually and administered paternalistically by Europeans. The idea that young African churches should be *bodenständig* (indigenous) was not one that he subscribed to, and he opposed the Ethiopian movement. It is easy with hindsight to criticise him on this count, but in his defence it must be said that most of what he saw of church activity on the part of blacks, especially Wesleyan evangelists, unsupervised by whites during his lifetime did not seem to him to promise the advancement of the sort of spirituality he had come to Africa to promote.<sup>15</sup>

## **CHAPTER 23: PROZESKY'S THEOLOGY, MISSIOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY**

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3. *Ibid.*, 91-175
4. Saayman, W., *Christian Mission in South Africa*, 34-35  
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6. Richter, J., *Geschichte der Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*, 67-68      Wangemann, H.T., *Motive und Erläuterungen zu der Missions-Ordnung der Berliner Gesellschaft*, 7, 33 & 69, quoted by Von Sicard, S., "The Understanding of Church and Mission among the Berlin Missionaries in the Southern Highlands", Annual Report 1991 of *Uppsala Studies of Mission*, 31-54

7. From a letter written to Prozesky by his teacher Kratzenstein in 1887, it is clear that both men expected the anti-christ to appear and for the events prophesied in Revelation to come about in the 20th century. (Letter by E. Kratzenstein to Prozesky, Berlin, 13th December 1887) In December 1891 Prozesky wrote, "We are approaching the last days." (*Tagebuch* 43, 11) In October 1898 he recorded his vision of "one holy people from all races, free of sin and death, perhaps soon". (*Tagebuch* 57, 30-31) Prozesky thus appears not to have participated fully in the classic shift from eschatology to ecclesiology as defined by F. Ehrenfeuchter in his *Praktische Theologie* (1859) (quoted by J.C. Hoekendijk in *Kerk en Volk*, 58-59).
8. De Klerk, P.J.S., *Kerk en Sending in Suid-Afrika*, 73, quoted by Van der Walt, I.J., *Eiesoortigheid en die Sending*, 371
9. Richter, J., *Geschiede der Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*, 67 (my own translation)
10. Quoted by Stewart, J., *Dawn in the Dark Continent*, 93
11. For Prozesky's resignation to Wesleyan encroachment on the grounds that it was God's harvest, not his or that of the Wesleyans, see *Tagebuch* 37, 3 and *Tagebuch* 50, 68. Gensichen did not agree with this view. He wrote: "Christ is not preached thus, and one may not harvest thus." (*Bilder von unserm Missionsfelde*, 242-243) Prozesky's ecumenical views were shared by missionaries such as James Stewart of Lovedale, who pilloried the refusal of some denominations to admit Christians of other churches and missionary societies to their communion tables. (Stewart, J., *Dawn in the Dark Continent*, 127-132)
12. Richter, J., *Geschiede der Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*, 158-159
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## **CHAPTER 21**

### **PROZESKY'S IMPACT ON THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI**

#### **PROZESKY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS NGUNI CULTURE AND CUSTOMS**

The young missionary who came to Africa in 1866 was appalled by the "nakedness" of the first traditionalist Nguni whom he saw. As a child of Northern Europe, he was unable to see that traditional Nguni dress was eminently practical in the hot summers of Natal. In common with almost all European missionaries, he was to require the adoption of western clothing as concomitant with conversion to Christianity. At Emangweni, from 1866 to 1868, he began to learn Zulu, which he found to be a delightfully expressive and melodious language. He was also impressed by the honesty and friendliness of the amaNgwe. Other characteristics of the Natal blacks impressed him less. In the early years of the Königsberg mission he expressed repeated abhorrence of the beer-drinks and dances which took place at the *imizizi*, with the brawling and *ukuhlobonga* (pre-marital, intercrural sexual intercourse) which often attended them. He was and would always remain totally opposed to the drinking of alcohol except as a medicine, and the only dancing he could approve of as scripturally sanctioned was dancing to the glory of God. The custom of *ukuhlobonga* in particular was a heathen abomination to him, sinful and immoral and the very opposite of the chastity before marriage which was the Christian ideal. He was far from seeing it as an honest and harmless way of

providing an outlet for the sexuality of unmarried people while still protecting the institution of marriage. His own religious and moral code ignored this problem in a way which was hardly honest. Realizing that sorghum beer was a nutritious drink, Prozesky in later years permitted its brewing for home consumption at Königsberg, but, as has been seen, he acted energetically against members of his congregation and even against traditionalists who brewed too much beer for his liking, upsetting the beer-pots of both groups and dispersing those Christians who gathered for clandestine drinking and dancing.<sup>1</sup>

### **NGUNI RELIGION**

Prozesky was curious about the religious beliefs of the people among whom he worked, seeking similarities between Nguni and Christian cosmology to use as starting-points in his instruction of the people in his own faith. From the Berlin mission literature which existed and from his own investigations, he soon informed himself and grasped the essentials of Swazi/Zulu religion. The traditionalist northern Nguni were no atheists, he discovered, but knew of a creator of heaven and earth. This creator or *uNkulunkulu* (First One or Great One) was not near and present in his creation, however, but distantly removed. He did not concern himself with what he had made, and the Nguni did not concern themselves with him. It was not man's sin which had brought death into the world, as in the Christian teaching; it was the envy and caprice of *uNkulunkulu* which were to blame.<sup>2</sup>

Nguni religion contained no conception of sin as an affront to a perfect divine being, and it was Prozesky's constant observation that the traditionalist Nguni were little troubled by their consciences. He experienced their complacency in this regard as a powerful hindrance to his teaching. Perhaps the best example of this lack of a sense of own wrongdoing was provided by a very intelligent old man whom Prozesky engaged in conversation near the Bloukrans River in 1888. This individual claimed never to have committed a sin in his entire life. That he understood the concept of sin at least as wrongdoing which troubled the memory is clear from the fact that he modified his claim and admitted to remembering regretfully having thrown children into the air as a young warrior and caught them on the point of his assegai.<sup>3</sup>

Prozesky believed that the Bantu-speakers and the Zulu in particular were of mixed descent and partly Hamitic and Semitic in origin. He noted Jewish features among the Natal blacks, as well as cultural similarities such as the numerous washings and purifications practised on occasions such as births and deaths and during illnesses, also sacrifices of cattle and goats, the taboo on the eating of pork, and the custom of levirate marriage. Both the Nguni and the Semitic peoples practised or had practised circumcision.<sup>4</sup>

Where Nguni religion and custom differed markedly from that of the Jews and from Christian beliefs and usages was in their vene-

ration of their ancestors. The focus of their religion was not in any god, nor was it in idols, but in the *amadlozi*, the shades of their ancestors. The living were not spiritually free and their own masters, but dependent on the *amadlozi* for their well-being. The spirits watched them with indifference for the main part and sent prosperity if animals were sacrificed in their honour, but could be displeased and jealous. Being more powerful than their living descendants, they were able to bring all manner of harm and misfortune upon them - or to prevent or remove it.<sup>5</sup>

It was believed that when people died their souls, which were identical to their bodies, went to a place under the earth where the souls of all the departed were gathered according to family and nation. There a continuation of life took place, but children were no longer born. Some said that the souls of wicked men were placed in the bodies of girls yet unborn so that they would have to live as girls. (That this was seen as a punishment is a noteworthy criticism of the treatment of women by Nguni men.) Evil women remained evil women, even after death.<sup>6</sup>

The *amadlozi* were able to appear to the living to preserve them from accidents, heal them from illness or reveal what was hidden. They could also reveal the identity of *abathakathi* or witches, and had to obey such mortals as had power over them, these being the *izinyanga zokubhula* or diviners. The *amadlozi* appeared as large black snakes which spoke with human voices. The thought of

these spirits made the Nguni fear the dark. They avoided walking lonely paths at night, preferring to wait until morning if possible. Otherwise they sang loudly and incessantly because the *amadlozi* had been known to fear brave men. It was to win the favour of these shades or to placate them that animal sacrifices were made. Prozesky believed that they were in fact demons, which explained the fear they inspired and the supernatural knowledge they had. The Bible acknowledged the existence of such powers, but forbade any consultation with them.<sup>7</sup>

### **NGUNI DOCTORS**

Although he appears initially to have confused the various types of traditional Nguni doctor, Prozesky soon learnt to distinguish between the traditional medicine-man, herbalist or *inyanga yemiti* and the traditional diviner, witch-finder or *inyanga yokubhula*. (He never used the terms *isangoma* or *isanusi* for the latter type, nor did he ever mention a woman diviner in the Königsberg area.) His initial confusion was understandable, as the functions of the two types of doctors overlapped to some extent. Once he had distinguished between them, he differentiated in his attitude and behaviour towards the two types of doctor. As a homoeopathic doctor himself, he showed a lively scientific interest in the healing arts of the herbalist and medicine man. As a Christian, he was from the start and remained an implacable enemy of the diviner. In his earliest years at Königsberg he observed at first hand how diviners "smelt out" alleged *abathakathi* or witches for hav-

ing supposedly brought illness, harm or death upon others. He perceived immediately how arbitrary and unjust this process was and how it lent itself to manipulation by chiefs who had an interest in the "eating up" (the dispossession, persecution and banishment) of people they disliked or envied. He clashed with both Mafofe and Mnkankonyeke over such "eatings up" and made a point of challenging diviners in an attempt to expose them publicly.<sup>8</sup>

The missionary soon displaced the local doctor at Königsberg, a man who seems to have possessed few skills and to have practised charlatanry rather than medicine or magic. The German treated him and two of his children successfully when they were ill and rescued another sick child from his crude ministrations. Discredited in the eyes of his former patients, who took to calling him *umfo kaSatan* (brother of Satan) in imitation of the missionary, the doctor apparently stopped practising altogether, acknowledging Prozesky as the better healer. The missionary's growing fame as a doctor was to leave little space for traditional healers in the Königsberg area during the last third of the nineteenth century. As his grip on the local traditionalists tightened, he also acted with greater confidence against diviners. As a result, open "smellings out" by witch-finders came to an end at Königsberg. There can be little doubt that in combating the *izi-nyanga zokubhula*, Prozesky performed a service to the local peo-

ple, freeing them from the dread of being "smelt out" under which they had constantly lived before.<sup>9</sup>

While he opposed the "smelling out" of supposed witches, Prozesky was grudgingly impressed by the clairvoyant powers possessed by some diviners. In his journals and memoirs he recorded various interesting cases involving such clairvoyance which he had experienced. As with those of the *amadlozi*, he believed that these powers were evilly inspired.<sup>10</sup>

### **POLYGYNY, UKULOBOLA AND UKULOBOLISA**

Prozesky was totally opposed to these customs from the start, sensing that they were at the very heart of Nguni cultural, religious and social life, and as such barred the way to the introduction of Christian belief and western norms which alone represented the good in his view. He regarded the Natal law on native marriage introduced in 1869 as a godless legitimization of both polygyny and *ukulobolisa* (the giving of a female relative in marriage to a suitor for *ilobolo* cattle). In line with these views, he believed that Nguni men should learn to work. He led by example, doing a large part of the manual work of constructing the mission buildings himself.<sup>11</sup>

The traditional Nguni system of betrothal was shown in an unflattering light at Königsberg in December 1885 when a girl was beaten by a man at one of the *imizi*. She had been "bought and paid for", but the marriage had not yet taken place when she took up

with another man. This angered the bridegroom, who beat her. Prozesky could apparently do nothing in this case; according to Nguni custom the man was quite within his rights. That wife-beating was relatively common among the traditionalist Nguni is evident from the number of cases which came to Prozesky's notice. That Nguni women sometimes hanged themselves in their misery was attested by the suicide of a woman on the mission farm in July 1886 and by the fact that another woman wanted to hang herself as well the very next month. Prozesky was aware of many other similar cases elsewhere. Nowhere did he report the suicide of a man - by hanging or by any other method.<sup>12</sup>

The missionary insisted that traditionalist men whom he baptized declare publicly that they abandoned the practice of *ukulobolisa*. Polygamists had to renounce all but one wife. The Berliners were aware of the practice of Bishop Colenso who allowed polygamists to remain married to more than one wife when they were baptized, but they opposed it implacably. As has been seen, Colenso was not particularly successful in converting the Nguni to Christianity. Whether the Berliners' practice was cruel, as claimed by some critics, is a matter for debate - it may well have been so in cases where husbands loved both of (or all) their wives and were loved by both (or all). That polygyny itself was cruel - by causing jealousy among co-wives - and essentially unjust - because it made marriage impossible for poor men - is an argument

little heard. The virulent critic of the missionaries Nosipho Majeke (Dora Taylor) has nothing to say on this subject. Had she been a black woman, she might have seen some virtue in the opposition of most missionaries to this custom. On Prozesky's station the wives dismissed by polygamist converts were usually Christians already and as far as is known had no objection to becoming single matrons or remarrying monogamously. An example was the case of the convert Msutu and his two wives. In 1889 Msutu wished to let the elder of his two wives go and to marry the younger in church. Both wives were also catechumens. The older one, with whom Msutu had not cohabited since joining the baptism class two years before, was in agreement and intended to remain at his *umuzi* as a matron. The Newcastle magistrate advised Prozesky to write to the Secretary for Native Affairs, requesting a legal divorce for the husband and the first wife. This he did, but the request was refused. All three parties were baptized on 30th June 1889. Msutu declared before the congregation that he regarded himself as divorced. Both the wives had three children, who were also among those baptized, as was Msutu's old mother. After the baptisms the missionary blessed the marriage that remained. He regretted the colonial government's failure to aid the missionaries in rooting out polygyny.<sup>13</sup>

In this way, as Christianity gained ground at Königsberg, so the traditionalist men lost the exploitative grip they had on their womenfolk. The tendency for women to enjoy greater freedom was

not restricted to the mission station, but was also a product of a general process of westernisation that was taking place among blacks in Natal. Thus two nubile young women from elsewhere could leave their homes in 1888 and come to Königsberg to be instructed without being promptly fetched home.<sup>14</sup>

That some women nevertheless clung to traditional customs is attested by the insistence of the daughter of a catechumen in January 1889 that the rites be observed to mark her attainment of nubile status. She threatened to commit suicide if this was not done, and in this way succeeded in having her way. Another woman, the wife of a traditionalist, kept running away to beer-drinks, to the annoyance of her husband who brought her to the missionary for a scolding. It was an ironic situation, as the woman had been a scholar of Prozesky's, but had been removed from Königsberg by her father because he wished to *lobolisa* her.<sup>15</sup>

It is significant that radical historians and missiologists engaged in writing in the service of black liberation theology show little inclination to face squarely and honestly the issue of the oppression of traditionalist black women by black men. Whites, both colonists and missionaries, are spared no criticism and are even demonized (as by Majeke), but the glaring injustices perpetrated by black men against their womenfolk are glossed over with euphemisms such as "indigenous custom". Prozesky, who was a witness of the Nguni social system in operation, had no such il-

lusions. The worst example of the exploitation of an Nguni woman by her male relatives at Königsberg was provided in March 1889 by the traditionalist father and brother who tortured a young woman in an attempt to make her consent to marry a man of their choosing (see p.159). It was an extreme case, although by no means an isolated one in Natal, and it further illustrated the sexist brutality latent in the system.<sup>16</sup>

The rules which Prozesky drafted for the Berlin mission stations in Natal in 1889 forbade the practice of *ukulobolisa* by members of the Christian congregations and allowed *ukulobola* only in cases where a Christian had to pay for the daughter of a traditionalist with cattle. In such cases none of the ceremonies which usually attended the transaction was permitted.<sup>17</sup>

In the paper on *ukulobola* and *ukulobolisa* delivered to his fellow Natal missionaries in July 1890, Prozesky pointed out the suffering it caused to many women. He was convinced that many of the suicides among Nguni women were caused by despair at the prospect of loveless, forced marriages. *Ukulobolisa* was no better than slavery, he maintained - indeed, it was worse, because slavers at least did not sell their own flesh and blood. "We missionaries know," he continued,

"that the women of the natives are slaves of their husbands. The wife is not the better half of her husband but his drudge. How many times have we heard, when husband and wife were quarrelling, the man say: *Ukulumanina? Tula manje, wena u yinto nje!* (What are you talking? Be

quiet now, you thing!) I have bought you and paid for you."

It was his conviction that no vestige of the custom could be allowed to exist in Christian congregations. He quoted the argument he had heard from some quarters, namely that there was no word in the Bible expressly forbidding *ukulobolisa*, and pointed out that the same was true of cannibalism. Some missionaries wanted the custom abolished by degrees; Prozesky thought this a dangerous and dishonest compromise with evil. He exhorted his colleagues to root out the custom in their congregations, and proposed two measures which, he believed, would end both polygyny and *ukulobolisa*. The first was that only cattle received by traditionalists on or before the day of the marriage should be recognized in these transactions by the courts of the colony. The second was that the government should, from a certain date, recognize only the children of a traditionalist's first wife as legitimate (this would not apply to the children of wives to whom men were married before that date).<sup>18</sup>

A sad example of the implications which Native Law and Nguni custom could have on women in the transitional stage to Christianity was the lot of Mukasi, the "widow" of a man named Teophilus Ngwenya. In February 1896 Prozesky discovered that she had in fact never been married to Teophilus, but had simply lived with him. The truth came to light when her real husband, a traditionalist, sent for her and her two children. The daughter especially was a dear child, according to the missionary, and industrious at

school. There was nothing he could do, however, to prevent the woman and her children from being forced back into a non-christian environment. Even an appeal to the magistrate was in vain, as women were not free, independent persons under Native Law. The misery of Mukasi made a deep impression on Prozesky.<sup>19</sup>

### **MAFOFE AND HIS PEOPLE**

The traditionalist Swazi/Zulu of the chief-regent Mafofe were living in time-honoured style in *imizi* of hemispherical grass huts on crown land beneath the Drakensberg when Prozesky founded his mission station in 1868. As has been seen, their initial friendliness towards the missionary changed to indifference and even hostility within a few years and Mafofe left Königsberg with his following in 1873 and settled on a Boer farm on the border of the Transvaal. To what extent this move was motivated by a desire to escape the influence of the missionary cannot be ascertained, but it seems certain that this was a factor. Although the missionary paid various visits to these people, they effectively removed themselves from Christian teaching, moving further and further away from Königsberg. Sought out by Prozesky's evangelists in the New Scotland district of the Transvaal in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mafofe was apparently gratified by the missionary's unrelenting concern for his well-being. In 1898 he sent word to him, asking for an evangelist to be sent to his people. A young man was sent from the Volksrust out-station, but it

is not known whether Mafofe and most of his adherents were ever converted to Christianity. What is known is that Johannes Mdiniso, a convert of Prozesky's, played an important part in bringing Christianity to Swaziland, and is sometimes referred to as "the Apostle to the Swazi". This may have been the same man who was initially sent to Mafofe. The baptism of Mdiniso at Volksrust may well have been the single deed which had the most profound long-term consequences in Prozesky's entire career.<sup>20</sup>

It is not without significance that young women - Mafofe's half-sister Ntombazane, his cousin Kumpukadi and the intelligent girl Mafundosi were among the most prominent of Prozesky's early catechumens. Nor is it surprising that on visits to Mafofe's *imizi* in 1878 and 1881, Prozesky was welcomed with enthusiasm by the women in particular.<sup>21</sup>

The most remarkable convert from among the people of Mafofe was Mkankonyane/Matheus (see below). He and Mafundosi were exceptions, however, and Prozesky's mission to Mafofe and his followers must be seen as an almost total failure. The German's lack of success was itself no exception: other missionaries in Natal at this time met with similar resistance.

### **MKANKONYEKE AND HIS PEOPLE**

The lure of chiefship forced the young Mkankonyeke to give up his aspirations to become a Christian. His disaffection had the further effect that it strengthened the traditionalist opposition to

the missionary's teaching at Königsberg. Even as chief, Mkankonyeke continued to attend Sunday services regularly for some time, but it was soon evident that he could not sit on two stools. In February 1873 he attempted to defy Prozesky in a domestic matter and was reprimanded by the Newcastle magistrate. In July 1874 he "ate up" a man for supposedly being the wizard who had "poisoned" his (Mkankonyeke's) mother. The missionary set aside the man's expulsion, but the collective force of the traditionalist belief in witchcraft was so strong that it seemed likely to make life at Königsberg intolerable for the victim. As has been seen, Mkankonyeke and his followers moved away to the Orange Free State during Prozesky's absence from Königsberg in November 1879. It was another serious reverse for the mission.<sup>22</sup>

Very little of the chief was seen during the next 18 years. In 1887 the missionary found him "completely indifferent, fat and thick, his heart like fat grease". The world and the flesh had taken complete possession of him, thought the German. He already had 30 living children at that stage. In January 1892 he sent a policeman to fetch 20 head of cattle from a man at Königsberg, as well as a widow who must have been a relative because he wished to *lobolisa* her again. Prozesky thought that God would judge traditionalist chiefs more leniently than other people: the bonds that held them were simply too strong for flesh and blood.<sup>23</sup>

Mkankonyeke only turned to Prozesky in 1897, and then only be-

cause Methodism was disrupting the traditional lifestyle of his people. As has been seen, the teacher Gule was placed among them, but the Anglo-Boer War brought an end to his work. Mkankonyeke and his fugitive following apparently found somewhere to stay near Newcastle during the Boer occupation of the upper districts of Natal. The chief applied to testify in Prozesky's favour during the missionary's trial, but was not permitted to do so. He earned the gratitude of Natal rebels at the end of the war when he made his wagon available to transport the wives and families of men who were still prisoners to their farms. He is also known to have lent cows to at least one of these families so that they could have a supply of milk in the difficult days when they were re-establishing themselves on their farm.<sup>24</sup>

Prozesky saw Mkankonyeke again in 1907 and 1908. The chief seemed very glad to see his old missionary antagonist, but as far as is known he never became a Christian. He died in 1909. Few of his adherents were converted to Christianity.<sup>25</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1868-1879**

This period was a lean one as far as Prozesky's mission to the traditionalist Nguni was concerned. Besides the exodus of Mafofe and Mkankonyeke and their respective adherents, there was also almost no positive reaction to his message from those who remained behind. The German was far from divining that his theological teaching might simply have appeared strange, illogical and cruel

to the traditionalists. Most of them stayed away from his services and kept their children away from his school. Some boldly disputed his teaching. His contention that God had punished the people with famine was met with the argument that those who went to church had fared no better than those who did not, while all had harvested abundantly in the more recent good season. The complacency of the Nguni and their aversion to the idea that human beings were sinful and required salvation caused Prozesky genuine distress. Not a single traditionalist was converted to Christianity during the years 1871-1881.<sup>26</sup>

Relations between the missionary and the traditionalists were at a particularly low ebb in 1876. The introduction of rent that year was not popular, and matters worsened when Prozesky prosecuted a boy for maiming a horse, and an unknown person retaliated by stabbing the missionary's bull. The Prussian was bitterly disappointed that the people he had ministered to in sickness and health for 8 years could show so little gratitude, but he was determined that cruelty to animals would not be tolerated.<sup>27</sup>

An important development during 1878 was the awakening of faith in a few traditionalist women at Königsberg. Two women who began to believe and went to pray secretly in the veld were beaten severely by their husbands for doing so. Prozesky summoned the parties. The women came with weals on their backs and arms, but the men stayed away. The missionary exhorted the women to perse-

vere and endure, and sent a warning to their husbands that they would be prosecuted if they beat their wives again. Rather than allow their wives to continue to attend services at the mission, the men chose to move away.<sup>28</sup>

### **THE ZULU WAR OF 1879 AND THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG**

It is significant that the traditionalists at Königsberg were as alarmed as the whites after Isandlwana and fled up the Drakensberg or into its wooded kloofs. This indicated no great degree of trust in the clemency of their fellow traditionalists from Zululand.<sup>29</sup> With hindsight, the crushing of the Zulu power appears to have had favourable results for Christian missionaries in Natal. It entrenched white authority powerfully in the minds of the blacks and was the beginning of a process which would bring Zululand firmly within the sphere of European cultural and economic domination. After 1879 there was no possibility of a return to the old Nguni social, economic, political and military order - and the Natal Nguni knew this. Although the old ways died hard, the traditionalists would find it increasingly advantageous to accommodate themselves to the ways of the whites.

### **THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1879-1883**

The results of the war were not immediately discernible at Königsberg. Church attendance by the traditionalists actually declined in the years 1881-83. In the second half of 1883 the mis-

sionary's relations with his Nguni tenants were particularly bad. Ironically - just before the breakthrough he had been praying for for years occurred - he recorded his conviction that the Natal blacks were "much worse" than they had been at the time of his arrival in the colony in 1866. The Newcastle magistrate Beaumont was too lenient with the local people, he believed, and the colonial legal system was inadequate to discipline them properly. He almost wished a "stern" Boer government on them. It was at this stage that he began to tighten his control over his traditionalist tenants: by engaging an agent to collect outstanding rent, and by making new station rules forbidding beer-drinks and wood-gathering on Sundays. Having thus asserted his authority, he began to exercise discipline more formally, adjudicating minor civil and criminal cases among the local Nguni and ruling the mission station in a paternalistic, almost patriarchal way.<sup>30</sup>

### **THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG, 1884-1899**

The year 1884 was a turning-point in Prozesky's mission to the local Nguni. In the preceding 15 years he had converted only a handful of traditionalists, but now there were suddenly numbers of them - mainly women - presenting themselves for instruction in the Christian religion. Attendance of the Sunday services improved remarkably. This trend was in line with the experience of missionaries elsewhere in Natal at the time. It is possible that, following the Zulu War and the First Boer War, the Natal Nguni were resigning themselves increasingly to the colonial order of

things, and that those who had formerly been intimidated by group pressure now found that they had greater freedom to exercise religious choice.<sup>31</sup>

A steady stream of traditionalists - women, but also and increasingly, men - were baptized at Königsberg and its out-stations. Statistics for this period speak for themselves. At the end of 1892 the Königsberg congregation numbered 372 souls: 175 adults and 197 children; of whom about two-thirds were living at Königsberg itself. By the end of 1895 the congregation consisted of 462 members, and by the end of 1897, 529. The greater Königsberg congregation grew from 599 souls in 1898 to 650 in 1899. Hardly any of the new converts were *oorlams* people.<sup>32</sup> What had previously been unthinkable happened: in 1885 a man named Mtyisizela brought Prozesky his head-ring, the sign of mature manhood among the traditionalist Zulu, to signify that he wished to believe in earnest.<sup>33</sup> By 1891 traditionalists elsewhere who had in earlier years often said "*Suka - voetsek!*" ("Get out!" in the tone used for dogs) to the visiting missionary, now asked him why he did not come more often.<sup>34</sup> It was a remarkable cultural revolution, as hundreds of formerly skin-clad Nguni put on European dress, came to church in family groups of two parents plus children, abandoned their grass huts and began to build themselves rectangular cottages. Husbands and wives worked side by side in their fields for the first time, sat down to meals together at a table for the

first time, and prayed together. Children read to their illiterate parents from New Testaments and Bibles in their own language. Daughters no longer feared old polygamists who owned many cattle, and sons could look forward to marrying without years of preceding toil to earn *ilobolo* cattle. The terrors of the *amadlozi* no longer haunted the nights, and the dread shadow of the *inyanga yokubhula*, the smeller-out of supposed witches and wizards, no longer fell at Königsberg. It is a supreme irony that this work of liberation was going on at a time when black people in general were being bound ever more firmly as a subservient class into an oppressive political, social and economic system in Natal and the neighbouring republics. It is also an irony that apparently escapes the radical critics who have no good word to say for the missionaries.

### **PROZESKY'S VIEWS ON MISSION WORK, 1889**

In his memorandum *Thoughts about Civilizing the Natives* submitted to the Natal Governor in November 1889, Prozesky described the native condition of the traditionalist (men) as one of "indolence, laziness, filthy habits and barbarous customs". This was an extreme view, typical of those held by many missionaries of the time, but it was not an accurate formulation of his true and full assessment of traditionalist life. Elsewhere he wrote less harshly of some aspects of Nguni life. He certainly did disapprove of the lazy lives led by the men, and proceeded in his memorandum to express the wish that they would come to see work not as a curse

but as a blessing and benefit to them and their community, to see that laziness degraded and that work ennobled. Nevertheless he rejected the virtual slavery favoured by some whites. His own recipe was "Pray and work!" He believed that few blacks would be able to improve their positions in society in the future and was opposed to encouraging them to "unsound" competition with whites. While this would seem to indicate that he was a child of his time, it is not proof that he did not wish to see blacks advance through private initiative, as many *kholwa* were already doing, financially at least, as transport-riders and peasant farmers.<sup>35</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S VIEWS ON MISSION WORK, 1896**

In the paper, *The Missionary Outlook*, which he delivered to the assembled Natal missionaries on 8th July 1896, Prozesky looked at the blacks of Natal, past, present and future. He believed that the native population, except in the locations, had not improved as a whole but had become degraded - by the immoral example of non-missionary whites generally. Crime had increased vastly and theft, for example, was punished far too lightly. He advocated lashes and fines of stock for thieves rather than imprisonment which threw first offenders together with hardened criminals. The authority of masters over their servants had also, in his opinion, been undermined by the proscription of corporal punishment. It is certain from other writings of his that he believed that the Boers in the republics disciplined their black populations

far more effectively - by flogging offenders. Prozesky thus saw the situation in Natal in 1896 as one which was deteriorating. As far as the future was concerned, he saw severe overcrowding and a shortage of work for those blacks forced off the land. With electricity, wind- and wave-power (sic) replacing steam, manual labour would be less in demand. Because of racial prejudice, most blacks would have no option but to do manual work, however, thus being caught in a vicious circle. It would be the task of the Christian missionary, besides converting the blacks, to prepare them as best he could for this bleak future.<sup>36</sup>

It may be argued that the German supported flogging because it underpinned the authority of the ruling white class, and that his missionary policy was aimed at keeping the black population subservient. While he was certainly an advocate of law and order and feared the overthrow of the existing order in Africa and in Europe by the forces he identified as revolutionary and chaotic (the French revolutionaries and the Social Democrats were his particular bugbears in the European context), there is no proof that he supported the exploitation of blacks because of their skin colour. The critical observations he made of the treatment of blacks in the Johannesburg mine compounds (pp.194-195) in fact prove the opposite. His advocacy of corporal punishment (he used a stick on his own children) must be weighed against the very real problems he - and the colonial authorities - faced in maintaining law and order among people only semi-civilized at that time. It must also

be weighed against the kindness he showed all people, irrespective of colour, and against his undramatic but real and sustained confrontation of racial prejudice by everyday devotion to the well-being of black people.

### **THE TRADITIONALISTS AT KÖNIGSBERG AFTER 1900**

Prozesky's arrest by the British in May 1900 removed him effectively from Königsberg. The old missionary was to have no further influence on the Nguni on the mission station - except insofar as his work had become self-perpetuating through the church he had founded. One of the witnesses at his preliminary examination and at his trial was the traditionalist Mxilo. His false testimony was easily upset when he was questioned. It had to do with the flogging of his sons, and it is possible that he was anti-Boer and resented the reintroduction of flogging as a punishment at Königsberg.<sup>37</sup>

Prozesky's successor at Königsberg, Missionary Manzke, reported in 1903 that almost all the (formerly traditionalist) women at Königsberg were already baptized. Many men still "refused to take the step of formal acceptance of Christianity", arguing that they might need to take more wives when their present wives grew old and could no longer work for them.<sup>38</sup>

### **MKANKONYANE/MATHEUS NGWENYA**

Prozesky's earliest success among the Königsberg Nguni was also

his most remarkable. Mkankonyane, a very intelligent youth from among the people of Mafofe, took the decision for Christianity when he was only thirteen. Baptized on Christmas Day 1870 after a preparation of only fifteen months and renamed Matheus, he withstood considerable pressure from his family and effectively gave them up to stay with Prozesky when they moved away from the mission station. As early as 1871 he was doing the work of an evangelist at the surrounding *imizi*, and while still a youth became a pillar of the little mission congregation. Matheus worked on the diamond-fields and in Bloemfontein for two years, corresponding regularly with Prozesky. For about a year he taught the Königsberg school with great enthusiasm, also holding services during the missionary's absence.<sup>39</sup>

Matheus disappointed Prozesky by joining the general resistance to his authority in 1881. He returned to his former loyalty, however, and under his guidance the Christians on the mission station began to hold evening school classes in 1884. He was also one of three appointed elders who held the Sunday services when Prozesky was away. In May 1886 he was one of the elders elected by the congregation. He, too, was impoverished by the natural disasters that struck Königsberg in the mid-eighties. In 1887 Prozesky described him and Petrus July holding services, barefoot and dressed in patched clothing. The missionary called him "an excellent/lovely man" ("*einen prächtigen Mann*").<sup>40</sup>

Matheus was away, working on the diamond-fields in early 1889, but he was substituting for Prozesky again in church later that year. In April 1890 his house burnt down, but with the help of the congregation he and his wife could re-establish themselves. In 1891 the missionary sent him to preach to the people of Mkan-konyeke. During Prozesky's absence in Germany in 1892 he preached a number of times at out-stations and, with the other elders and the school teacher, helped Caroline Prozesky run the mission when Franke was ill.<sup>41</sup>

In 1893 Matheus went to work at Nigel on the Transvaal gold-fields, where his family joined him. Throughout the nineties he held Sunday services for the members of Prozesky's congregation living there. He wrote regularly and collected money for repairs to the church at Königsberg and as offerings to the missionary to defray his travelling expenses when he visited the Nigel Lutherans. That he returned to Königsberg at times seems indicated by the fact that he rode with Prozesky, July and Gule to visit Mkan-konyeke in December 1897.<sup>42</sup>

When the Anglo-Boer War broke out in 1899, Matheus returned to Königsberg. He was one of the elders who assisted Prozesky in keeping order among the black population during the Boer occupation. He accompanied the missionary as an escort when he rode up the Drakensberg on 24th October 1899 to hold a service for the Boer commando in laager there. They had time to talk and Prozesky

was pleased to find that he had retained the childlike faith which had characterized him since his conversion.<sup>43</sup>

Why Matheus, Prozesky's first convert whom he loved like a son, testified against him at his trial, cannot be ascertained with certainty. Both he and Petrus July had acted as the missionary's councillors during the Boer occupation; if Prozesky was guilty of collaboration with the invaders, then they, too, were guilty. Both were intelligent men, capable of understanding the missionary's belief that the Bible required obedience to the secular authority. Neither of them mentioned this in his testimony. It is possible that they were promised immunity from prosecution if they testified for the Crown. From everything else that is known of Matheus, who was intensely loyal and no dissembler, it would have been very unlike him to volunteer to testify against his benefactor and spiritual father.<sup>44</sup>

Matheus tried to see Prozesky in Newcastle on 27th August 1900, but under the missionary's parole conditions this could not be allowed. Although he never apologized to Prozesky or asked him for forgiveness, he answered letters which the missionary wrote to him from prison, and these letters testified to the bond of love which continued to exist between them. He remained at Königsberg until the end of the Boer War, returning later to Nigel, where he continued to act as a lay-preacher and elder among the Königsberg people living and working there. He maintained contact with Pro-

zesky by letter, and a happy coincidence brought them together again when Prozesky ministered to the people in Nigel from Heidelberg after 1908.<sup>45</sup>

As far as is known, Matheus remained faithful all his life to the religion he chose. Besides his behaviour in 1881 during the rebellion of the congregation, and the hostile testimony he gave in 1900, he was never to disappoint his missionary in any way. The fact that a young man of his talent and devotion was not educated further, seems regrettable. Nowhere did Prozesky himself express regret in this regard, and it could be argued that the missionary did not encourage him to aspire to higher learning. No evidence supports this argument, however, and what is known is that Math-eus chose to go to the diamond-fields and later to the gold-fields rather than to teach at Königsberg. He also married young and soon had a family to support. Prozesky appears to have respected his freedom of choice. As a lay-evangelist, content to work manually, and without pretensions, he was in more than one way the embodiment of Prozesky's ideal *kholwa*.

### **THE MISSION SCHOOL AND THE KÖNIGSBERG TRADITIONALISTS**

The school at Königsberg, begun in 1868, was a powerful instrument used by the missionary to influence traditionalist society on the mission farm and neighbouring farms and crown land. Besides being taught to read and write, the children from the *imizi* learnt Christian hymns and Bible texts and stories. The hymns

were particularly popular among people who loved to sing. Prozesky saw the children as the most hopeful and likely target for conversion to Christianity because they were, in his opinion, as yet unspoilt by "all the horrors and abominations of heathendom" which "hardened the hearts of the adults".<sup>46</sup>

The traditionalists soon recognized the danger threatening their life-style from this quarter. They began to discourage their children from going to the missionary, and then to forbid them to go. The numbers dwindled until both the morning and evening classes had to be suspended. The morning classes were resumed in 1873 mainly for the children of the *oorlams* people who came to live at Königsberg, and for many years the school was to be Dutch rather than Zulu in character.<sup>47</sup>

From 1884 an increasing number of children of former traditionalists became pupils of the school, so that it became a Zulu school again. In accordance with government policy, much emphasis was laid on regular manual labour, and by 1894 the children were doing seven hours of work with spades, hoes and sickles every week. They also swept the yard, and watered flowers and trees during the droughts. The scholars, most of whom were 6-12 years old, were able to read the Zulu Bible by the time they left school. This, Prozesky believed, was the most important qualification he could give them. In 1899 there were 80 baptized and 38 unbaptized children in the school. For the latter group, the school contin-

ued to perform an important evangelizing function.<sup>48</sup>

### **BIBLE-TRANSLATION AND THE PROVISION OF LITERACY**

Prozesky played a part, albeit a minor one, in the translation of the Bible into Zulu. He is known to have helped to revise some of the texts produced by his colleague Döhne and the missionaries of the American Board.<sup>49</sup> He and his Berlin colleagues also prepared a Zulu hymnal together.<sup>50</sup> More importantly, he introduced these texts to the people of Königsberg in church and school, and taught the schoolchildren to read them.

It is part of modern radical, anti-white (and sometimes anti-christian) criticism to ignore or undervalue the gift by European missionaries to the peoples of Africa of orthographies for their previously exclusively oral languages, and of the Bible, hymns, prayers, catechisms and even African folklore in those languages. A refreshing reassessment is that of the missiologist Lamin Sanneh, who makes the following points.

1. By translating the Bible into vernacular languages, missionaries asserted that the recipient cultures were "authentic destinations of God's salvific promise" and had "an honoured place under *the kindness of God*".<sup>51</sup>
2. "Missionaries paid huge *vernacular* compliments to Africans, enabling many peoples to acquire pride

and dignity about themselves in the modern world."<sup>52</sup>

3. "Although missionaries did not consciously intend to occupy a secondary position, their commitment to translation made that necessary and inevitable."<sup>53</sup>
4. "The seeds of the divergence between mission and colonialism were sown with the translation enterprise."<sup>54</sup>
5. "Translatability ushered in a revolution in both the religious and the cultural spheres", revitalizing the indigenous languages and cultures in conjunction with grammars, dictionaries and other lexical works, and stimulating investigations in anthropology, historical research, linguistics, customary law, primal religions, musicology and other fields.<sup>55</sup>

One does not have to be a Christian to recognize the common validity of these points, but one does have to be fair-minded to acknowledge it.

In the sense of Lanneh's theses, Prozesky at Königsberg helped to prepare his scholars and the members of his congregation for the struggle that lay ahead of them and their descendants for recognition of their human rights and dignity. As simple and unsophisticated as his school and church seemed, they armed the Swazi/Zulu and *oorlams* people who attended them with the most powerful

of cultural weapons: the ability to read and write Zulu - a weapon which would enable them in time to achieve both cultural and political empowerment.

### **CASUAL ENCOUNTERS WITH TRADITIONALISTS**

During his Natal ministry Prozesky spoke to countless traditionalist blacks whom he met by the roadside, always recommending Jesus to them as the saviour of mankind. On one or two occasions he was to hear that his words had not fallen on barren ground. In July 1889 he was greeted in a Durban street by a black Christian who told him that he had received the first impulse towards believing from him some years before while passing near Königsberg. Many of the blacks in the Newcastle area converted by the Methodists also received their first knowledge of Christianity through Prozesky's itinerant preaching at *imizi far and wide*.<sup>56</sup>

### **SUMMARY**

Ballard and Lenta point out that the granting of large tracts of land in Natal to mission societies gave many thousands of blacks a chance to escape working for low farm wages.<sup>57</sup> In the case of Königsberg, the land was bought and not granted, but the effect was the same: the traditionalists could live undisturbed - except by the missionary - and pursue their time-honoured economic life as long as the farm could provide a living for them. During his 32-years of mission work there, Prozesky was thwarted by the exodus of a large number of traditionalists, but he succeeded in

creating a growing community of Christians who forsook the Nguni way of life and embraced the Lutheran faith. Those traditionalists who remained, did so by choice, and it cannot be said that Prozesky oppressed them. Majeke and other radical critics of the missionaries would perhaps claim that Prozesky was merely part of the white capitalist-colonial apparatus which exploited the blacks.<sup>58</sup> While he undoubtedly believed that his traditionalist tenants needed white Christian guardianship and even subjugation by force if necessary - to prevent a resurgence of what he saw as heathen barbarism - Prozesky was neither a racist nor a capitalist nor did he approve of many aspects of colonial administration. A man who could take black children into his home, who impoverished himself to feed hungry blacks in time of famine, and who challenged oppressive practices in the governing of black people does not deserve the dismissive condemnation implied in the sweeping and simplistic judgements of Majeke in particular. Certainly, he was not without his faults. One of these was an inability to see and value the positive and creative aspects of Nguni culture adequately. The missionary at Königsberg nevertheless well understood his position between the helpless black under-class and the privileged white ruling-class of nineteenth century Natal. While preparing his converts for a better life to come, he also prepared them and their children for life in the white-dominated towns, mines and cities of the later Union of South Africa, giving them an ethic for moral survival in an en-

vironment which would not prove friendly - and also the priceless gift of literacy in their own language. The question conspicuously absent from the writings of the radical critics of missions is: what would colonialism have been like without people like Prozesky?

## **CHAPTER 21: PROZESKY'S INFLUENCE ON THE TRADITIONALIST NGUNI**

### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. Prozesky, J.J.A., Letter: *Auf dem Atlantischen Ozean*, 16, 1865-66 *Erinnerungen*, 100-112 *Tagebuch 4*, 28 *Tagebuch 5*, 21, 43-45, 51-52, 55-56 & 58 *Tagebuch 6*, 32 *Tagebuch 7*, 19 & 27 *Tagebuch 42*, *passim* *Tagebuch 43*, 19 & 51-54 *Tagebuch 50*, 33-37
2. *Erinnerungen*, 181-184 Prozesky knew the famous story of the divine messengers, the chameleon Nwabu and the lizard Ntulo, which purported to explain man's mortality.
3. *Tagebuch 42*, 83 *Erinnerungen*, 307-308 Bishop Colenso delved somewhat deeper into this question and ascertained that the Zulu spoke of two hearts - the *ugovana*, which told them to lie, steal, covet, kill and commit adultery; and the *unembeza*, which "bade them leave all that". (J.W. Colenso, *Bringing Forth Light*, 86)
4. *Erinnerungen*, 178-181
5. *Ibid.*, 185-186 Krige, E.J., *The Social System of the Zulus*, 283 & 289
6. *Erinnerungen*, 186
7. *Ibid.*, 186-187
8. *Ibid.*, 213-216 *Tagebuch 4*, 41-43 *Tagebuch 5*, 8 & 43 *Tagebuch 6*, 14, 16 & 19 *Tagebuch 11*, 26 Bryant, A.T., *Zulu Medicine and Medicine-Men*, 13 Krige, E.J., *The Social System of the Zulus*, 297-320 Prozesky was to have no experience of the other types of *inyanga* found elsewhere in Natal and in Zululand, the so-called heaven-herds or heaven-doctors, the rain-doctors or rain-makers, or the whistling ventriloquist diviners.
9. *Tagebuch 5*, 13 & 22-23 *Tagebuch 42*, 28-29 & 66-69 *Erinnerungen*, 194-202
10. *Tagebuch 25*, 18-19 & 21-22 *Erinnerungen*, 190-194
11. *Tagebuch 5*, 42 & 45 *Tagebuch 6*, 5-6 *Tagebuch 13*, 7-8 *Erinnerungen*, 159-160
12. *Tagebuch 39*, 87 & 89 *Tagebuch 40*, 24, 45-46 & 48-49

- Tagebuch* 20, 15-16      *Tagebuch* 60, 9
13. *Tagebuch* 43, 55-58
  14. *Tagebuch* 41, 106 & 107      *Tagebuch* 42, 76
  15. *Tagebuch* 42, 124      *Tagebuch* 43, 27-28
  16. *Ibid.*, 20-24      *Erinnerungen*, 296-301      The American A. Grout witnessed the forced marriage of a girl at Umvoti in 1869. This caused him to change his mind about the practice of *ukulobolisa* and to oppose it. (Dinnerstein, M., *The American Board Mission to the Zulu*, 176)
  17. Prozesky, J.J.A., *Entwurf einer Gemeinde-Ordnung und Stations-Gesetze für die Stationen der Berliner-Missionsgesellschaft in Natal* (3 drafts, one including notes to his colleagues and dated 2nd January 1889)      The American missionaries had made *ukulobolisa* a disciplinable offence in their congregations as early as 1874 - after the departure of Daniel Lindley, a notable apologist of the custom. (Dinnerstein, M., *The American Board Mission to the Zulu*, 176)
  18. *Tagebuch* 44, 45-46      "Ukulobola and Ukulobolisa" by the Rev. A. Prozesky, *The Natalian*, 9th and 16th August 1890
  19. *Tagebuch* 51, 70      *Erinnerungen*, 272-273      In his memoirs Prozesky quoted a similar case related to him by a fellow missionary, in which a traditionalist came to claim the Christian widow and children of a deceased elder brother, according to the Nguni levirate tradition. This brother-in-law brutally tore off the woman's dress and made her put on the traditional cow-skin skirt. (*Erinnerungen*, 273-275)
  20. *Tagebuch* 4, 3-6, 9-10, 23 & 36-38      *Erinnerungen*, 133-137 & 150      *Tagebuch* 5, 22, 58 & 62      *Tagebuch* 6, 14, 16, 19-20, 27, 43 & 52      *Tagebuch* 7, 19, 21, 23, 27, 38, 51, 56-57, 68, 73, 77-78, 90 & 91      *Tagebuch* 8, 1, 9 & 19      *Tagebuch* 9, 15-16      *Tagebuch* 11, 21      *Tagebuch* 20, 10, 15 & 27      *Tagebuch* 21, 1      *Tagebuch* 33, 4      *Tagebuch* 57, 61      Lehmann, H., *150 Jahre Berliner Mission*, 135
  21. *Tagebuch* 4, 31, 32, 38, 39, 44, 46-48 & 50      *Tagebuch* 5, 1, 3, 4-6, 32, 34, 45, 51 & 54-55      *Tagebuch* 6, 14, 22 & 48      *Tagebuch* 19, 1      *Tagebuch* 20, 10, 15 & 27      *Tagebuch* 21, 15      *Tagebuch* 25, 13      *Tagebuch* 27, 9 & 10      *Tagebuch* 28, 16-19      *Tagebuch* 33, 4      *Tagebuch* 38, 78
  22. *Tagebücher* 4, 5 & 6, *passim*      *Tagebuch* 6, 45 & 52      *Tagebuch* 7, 41-42, 51, 56-57, 68, 73, 77-78, 90 & 91      *Tagebuch* 8, 1, 9, 11 & 19-20      *Tagebuch* 9, 15-16, 17 & 23-24      *Tagebuch* 10, 4, 22 & 28      *Tagebuch* 11, 20 & 26      *Tagebuch* 12, 4-6      *Tagebuch* 14, 8 & 15      *Tagebuch* 15, 7-8, 9, 21-23, 29 & 31      *Tagebuch* 18, 6-7 & 26      *Tagebuch* 19, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 21, 23 & 27-28      *Tagebuch* 20, 3, 9, 11, 14, 23 & 24      *Tagebuch* 21, 8 & 19-20      *Tagebuch* 23, 20      *Tagebuch* 24, 13-14      *Tagebuch* 25, 8
  23. *Tagebuch* 36, 2, 3 & 18      *Tagebuch* 41, 98      *Tagebuch* 44, 59-60 & 107      *Tagebuch* 45, 106      *Tagebuch* 53, 15
  24. *Tagebuch* 56, 10-12 & 26-27      Gensichen, M., *Bilder von unserm*

- buch 62, 73
44. *Verhör*, 75-76
  45. *Ibid.*, 32, 110-111, 172-173, 185, 205, 206 & 222  
*Gefangenschaft*, 156, 160-161, 177, 186-188 & 196 *Erinnerungen*, 146 Letters by Matheus Ngwenya to Prozesky, 15th April and 4th August 1902, pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 221-222 & 223
  46. *Tagebuch* 4, 7, 10, 26-28, 30-32, 35, 38-41 & 43-51 *Tagebuch* 5, 2, 5-8, 10, 15, 21 & 43-45 *Tagebuch* 7, 25 & 28 *Erinnerungen*, 146
  47. *Tagebuch* 6, 31 *Tagebuch* 7, 8-9, 25, 58, 61-62, 65-66, 71, 75, 78 & 85 *Tagebuch* 8, 6, 8-9 & 15 *Tagebuch* 9, 22-23
  48. *Tagebuch* 38, 8 & 62-63 *Tagebuch* 40, 9-10 *Tagebuch* 43, 110-111 *Tagebuch* 50, 49, 582, 592 & 66 *Tagebuch* 51, 48 Gensichen, M., *Bilder von unserm Missionsfelde*, 249 The Königsberg school was considerably larger than most of the mission schools which received the grant-in-aid in Natal. The average enrolment at such schools in 1885 was 59,1 and in 1901 56. (Figures calculated from statistics quoted by Shula Marks from *Native Departmental Reports* 1900, and *Reports of Department of Education* 1901 and 1904, *Reluctant Rebellion*, 55)
  49. Letter by W.C. Wilcox, Chairman of the Bible Revision Committee, Ifafa, to Prozesky, 24th February 1904 Letter by Prozesky to Gerlach in Berlin, Laingsburg, 23rd April 1907
  50. *Tagebuch* 39, 85
  51. Sanneh, Lamin, *Translating the Message*, 31
  52. *Ibid.*, 172
  53. *Ibid.*, 161-162
  54. *Ibid.*, 111-112
  55. *Ibid.*, 206-207
  56. *Tagebücher* 4-62, *passim* *Erinnerungen*, 230-234 *Tagebuch* 43, 73-74 & 113
  57. Ballard, C. and Lenta, G., "The Complex Nature of Agriculture in Colonial Natal: 1860-1909", Guest, B. and Sellers, J.M., *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony*, 124
  58. Majeke, N., *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*, *passim*

## **CHAPTER 22**

# **PROZESKY'S INFLUENCE ON THE OORLAM'S BLACKS AND THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION**

### **PAULUS ADAM AND JOCHEBETH PIETERS**

The first *oorlams* man to bring his family to live at Königsberg was Paulus Adam Pieters. He and his wife Jochebeth and their five children settled on the mission farm in 1869 and were baptized on Christmas Day 1870. Adam played an important part in the construction of the mission house. As a skilled thatcher he thatched and maintained the roofs of the buildings which arose on the mission station. He and Jochebeth became stalwarts of the Christian congregation and supports to the Prozeskys in times of illness and need. Their son Philippus began hopefully, even going to *imizi* as an evangelist at an early age, but working on the diamond fields turned him into a drunkard and wastrel. Their daughters Martha and Maria married Hans Fourie and Matheus Ngwenya respectively, both of whom later became elders of the greater Königsberg congregation. Their youngest daughter Sanna taught the mission school on occasion, but was later involved in an unfortunate dispute concerning the paternity of a child conceived out of wedlock. Any assessment of the value of Prozesky's work must include recognition of the scope he provided for this family to live peaceful and useful lives in an environment where they were recognized as people of dignity and value.<sup>1</sup>

### **OTHER OORLAMIS PEOPLE**

Others did not seize the same opportunity. A "Bushman" named Boy and his wife were accepted as catechumens in 1871, but were expelled soon after when Boy stole meat and also refused to work. Other *oorlams* families found the station rules too restrictive and went in search of more liberal missionaries elsewhere. A man named April brought his wife and two children to live at Königsberg, but he was prone to the abuse of alcohol, and was expelled from the mission farm for drunkenness and adultery in September 1873. He was re-admitted in June 1874, but expelled once more for drunkenness two months later. Re-admitted, he was expelled yet again in 1875.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION, 1870-1880**

The number of *oorlams* families living at Königsberg increased to 16 by 1880. The head of each household was required to build a European-style cottage, and by June 1875 there were already nine such cottages. Some 86 people, adults and children, all of them *oorlams* with the exception of Matheus Ngwenya, were baptized during this period. On 31st August 1879 24 black communicants partook of Holy Communion.<sup>3</sup>

The construction of the Königsberg church provided a good opportunity for Prozesky to implement one of his main teachings, namely the dignity of labour. By an agreement with the men of the congregation there were three men assisting him at all times un-

him in the Newcastle gaol later, but found him quite unrepentant. He blamed the missionary for his imprisonment and claimed that a man could do as he pleased with his own wife.<sup>14</sup>

Disappointments notwithstanding, Prozesky was generally pleased with his parishioners in 1898 and 1899. He had succeeded in creating a Christian community very different to that which he had seen at Bethanien in 1873. The Königsberg people appeared content and even happy with his supervision and it certainly provided them with a safe haven from harsher conditions elsewhere. Whether they were all in fact genuinely submissive to him is open to question. On Sunday 2nd July 1899, after the afternoon service, the missionary read a letter to the congregation. According to his son-in-law Hermann Müller, the missionary in Heidelberg, Martinus Sewushane, one of the Pedi who had broken away from the Berliners at Botshabelo in the Transvaal, had stated before many blacks on the Highveld that the Königsberg congregation had sent a delegate to him to ask him whether they might join his church, as Prozesky oppressed them. Sewushane had said that they should let him know how many of them wished to leave Prozesky and join him. He would then come and take over Königsberg. The people denied knowledge of Sewushane and of such a conspiracy. That there might have been disgruntled elements with a desire for freedom from European control, does not seem unlikely, however, particularly in the light of events which followed during the Boer War, only months later.<sup>15</sup>

## **THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION DURING THE BOER WAR AND AFTER**

The Königsberg people enjoyed security throughout the Boer occupation - due largely to Prozesky's prestige among the Boers and his energy in enforcing law and order. Only when the Boers were retreating from Natal were some of the mission people harassed by lawless elements among the Boers.<sup>16</sup>

There is clear evidence that the congregation was divided in its loyalty to their missionary during the time of his arrest, trial and imprisonment. In contrast to the hostile testimony given by some of the elders and others, various women in particular were supportive and attempted to see him in Newcastle. When the difficulties involved in travelling and the unpopularity of showing alleged rebels any sympathy at that time are borne in mind, these attempts assume significance as proofs of courageous loyalty on the part of at least some of the Christians at Königsberg towards Prozesky.<sup>17</sup>

While he was a prisoner in Eshowe the missionary received letters from Matheus Ngwenya, Johannes Aron, Petrus and Betty July at Königsberg and from Andreas Malevu and Johannes Mdiniso at Volksrust. Amos Matebula and another member of Prozesky's congregation each contributed £1 towards the payment of his fine.<sup>18</sup>

There is thus ample evidence that it was simply not true that all the people at Königsberg were against Prozesky, as the Mission Committee were given to believe when they decided that he should

not return to his station. As has been seen in an earlier chapter, people petitioned repeatedly after the war for his return. In the assessment of this researcher the opposition to Prozesky, such as it was, was largely a product of the war and politically inspired. A latent desire among the black inhabitants of the mission station to be free of white control cannot be ruled out, however, particularly when the short-lived revolt of 1881 is borne in mind.

### **PETRUS JULY**

The *oorlams* man Petrus July, who came to live at Königsberg with his wife and two children in June 1873, was to play an important role in the life of the congregation. Petrus had been the virtual slave of a Boer in the Transvaal until he escaped and finally found a refuge at Königsberg. He and Prozesky did most of the bricklaying in the construction of the mission church from 1876 to 1878. The missionary was deeply grieved in May 1879 when he had to expel July from the mission farm for adultery. He was allowed to return to Königsberg on 7th August, was given 10 lashes and excluded from the congregation until such time as he repented in a satisfactory manner. He disgraced himself further in September, however, when he was suspected of giving a woman "poison" (presumably a love-filtre) which he was supposed to have obtained from an *inyanga*. Prozesky was aghast when he suggested that a "real doctor" should smell out the poisoner. July was expelled from the

mission station once more.<sup>19</sup>

At Easter in 1880 July came to Königsberg because a child of his who was at school there had broken a leg. Still debarred from Holy Communion, he confessed to Prozesky that he had committed adultery and had also made a "shameful" suggestion to one of the women, but he swore that the accusation of poisoning was false. He was readmitted to the congregation in November 1880, and rehabilitated himself to the extent that he became an elder once more. In this capacity he held services and took the baptism class in the missionary's absence during the eighties. He was away working on the diamond-fields during the first part of 1889, but acted as an evangelist later that year, holding services at Kliprivier in the Free State and instructing those there who desired baptism. Fourteen adults whom he had prepared were baptized together with three children in 1890.<sup>20</sup>

July accompanied Prozesky when the missionary surprised beer-drinkers in 1889. He was also one of the elders who took members of the Königsberg congregation to task in 1890 for the misbehaviour which had made Prozesky want to leave the mission station. He, together with the other elders and the schoolteacher, helped Caroline Prozesky to keep order on the station while Prozesky was in Germany in 1892. July and Matheus preached a number of times at the out-stations during that period. It is an irony that he should have been one of the people caught by Prozesky at the noc-

turnal beer-drink in 1894. For the second time he was stripped of his office as elder.<sup>21</sup>

Once again July rehabilitated himself and became an elder. There is little mention of him in Prozesky's journals between 1894 and 1899, and it may be assumed that he performed his duties faithfully. The elder appears to have had strong anti-Boer feelings - perhaps as a result of his period of servitude in the Transvaal. Whatever his motives were, he acted upon them decisively if surreptitiously. Within days of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War and the Boer invasion of the district he went secretly to the deposed magistrate Jackson in Newcastle and offered to spy for the British at Königsberg. There is dramatic irony in the fact that it was he who interpreted Prozesky's letter of appointment from Commandant-General Joubert when it was read to the assembled men of the mission station on 18th October 1899, two days after his visit to Jackson - and in the fact that he was one of the elders appointed by Prozesky as *izinduna*. In this capacity he helped to uphold law and order at Königsberg during the Boer occupation. In February 1900 his son Andreas was expelled from the mission station for refusing to pay his church dues. This may or may not have been cause for Petrus to feel resentful towards the missionary. What is certain is that he was glad when the Boers were driven from Natal. His feelings about the arrest of Prozesky by the British are not known. On 11th June 1900 he visited the missionary at the Dutch Reformed parsonage in Newcastle. He brought

him a present of oranges and wept. Prozesky's horror and dismay were that much greater when July testified falsely against him at his preliminary examination the next day. His claim that Prozesky had forced men from Königsberg to work for the Boers was a deliberate slander, as he had heard Prozesky explain to the men of the station that the Bible required them to be obedient to the authority which had power over them. His testimony that the missionary had hoisted the red cross flag as a signal to the Boers to come and shoot the blacks was sheer nonsense, but the reference to the Boers shooting blacks is significant. July was later to tell the congregation in church that he and the other witnesses had been forced to testify against Prozesky. While the circumstantial evidence points to the truth of this statement, there can be little doubt that July's voluntary service as a spy for the British was the starting-point of the use made of the Königsberg witnesses by the British to secure Prozesky's conviction.<sup>22</sup>

July repeated his hostile evidence at Prozesky's trial, claiming that the missionary had declared himself "*koning*" (king) at Königsberg. There is a maliciously sarcastic ring to this statement which makes it sound like the expression of personal animus rather than mere perjury under duress. July's plea of duress forfeits further credibility when his later behaviour is scrutinized. He was apparently one of the faction that did not want Prozesky back at Königsberg in the years 1900-1902 - despite his fair-seeming

letters - but in August 1903 he, too, joined those who were petitioning for Prozesky's return. It would seem that he had changed his mind by then, possibly after realizing that the majority of the people on the mission station wanted their old missionary to return. Petrus July appears to have been an able, forceful character, but not one transformed by the Christian teaching of love in the way that others were. He was certainly not a transparently honest man. The unhappy experiences of his early life as a virtual slave to Boers may well have helped to make him the man he was. It should not be forgotten, however, that it was at Königsberg that he found refuge from servitude and a place where he could unfold his undeniable talents and assume a role of leadership.<sup>23</sup>

### **THE KÖNIGSBERG SCHOOL AND THE CHILDREN OF THE CONGREGATION**

From 1873 onwards the mission school at Königsberg was taught largely for the children of the *oorlams* congregation. Initially they numbered only 8-10 pupils, but by the end of the decade there were 23 to 24 scholars. By mid-1878 a number of them could read "properly", a few could write "reasonably", and in biblical history, the catechism and singing all but the youngest were "reasonably proficient". The children apparently enjoyed their schooling, as they came gladly. In 1881 there were already 38 scholars attending the school "quite regularly". There were an almost equal number of others who came less regularly.<sup>24</sup>

After 1884 the children of traditionalist catechumens and converts swelled the enrolment. There were 70 children in the register in 1877, but most of the older ones who could work had been taken out of the school to help support their families. Fynney, the school inspector, was critical of some aspects of the running of the school that year. He wished the missionary to ensure that all the children wore clothes (some had blankets only) and that the clothes of all the children were clean. Privately, Prozesky was irked by some of the restrictions attaching to the government grant. He thought it pointless to teach the children English grammar and advanced arithmetic. Even writing, which was used by the the youngsters in love-letters, could be dispensed with. Fynney admitted that the young blacks did not require the more formal subjects to equip themselves for their adult lives.<sup>25</sup> With the hindsight provided by a hundred years, one cannot but censure the colonial system which made this assessment by the missionary and school inspector accurate. Prozesky's views on a suitable education for his charges were shaped by the conditions of the time as well as by his eschatological belief according to which there was little earthly future for anyone, black or white. Perhaps as a result of this belief he initially made little provision for the education of his own children.

In June 1897 there was a meeting of the parents at which the poor school attendance was discussed. Many were opposed to the child-

ren's having to perform manual labour, but Prozesky told them that it was prescribed by law. He reminded them that they were fortunate to have free schooling.<sup>26</sup>

Opinion might differ as to whether the Christian religion taught in the Königsberg school was an advantage or a disadvantage to the pupils who were inculcated with its theology, but this researcher has little doubt that the Christian ethos of love and forgiveness transmitted by the school and the mission as a whole was a benefit. The school also equipped the children to adapt to the European-dominated economic and social system which many of them would encounter when they went as adults to earn a living in the towns and mines of Natal and the Transvaal. Prozesky was accurate in predicting that there was little prospect besides manual labour for most of them, and in this respect his emphasis on regular manual work in the school was correct. Although he allowed in theory for the academic training of the more gifted black children (at institutions elsewhere), in practice none of his own pupils ever followed this road. At one time the missionary had high hopes of establishing a trade school at Königsberg, but nothing came of this project. It was possibly a blessing in disguise, as there was to prove to be little scope for black tradesmen in colonial Natal. The sort of education which the Natal *kholwa* came to desire for their children to enable them to get ahead financially, namely one which was commercially orientated, was not the education the missionary felt himself called to pro-

vide. It could be argued that in this sense he contributed towards keeping the blacks of the colony economically disadvantaged, but it would scarcely be fair to expect a missionary who saw money as the root of most evils to take the lead in preparing the children under his care to make money. In the event his approach proved to be the one which achieved - to a lesser extent than he had hoped - the goal he pursued, namely the shaping of simply devout working-class people directed towards heavenly rather than earthly rewards. It was also one which prepared his pupils for the hard realities of life as a subservient class in the society and economy of both colonial Natal and the later Union of South Africa. Ironically, as indicated in the previous chapter (pp.308-310), the missionary, without intending to do so, also provided his pupils with the one accomplishment which would lead to the ultimate empowerment of their descendants, namely literacy.

### **SUMMARY**

As pointed out by Ballard and Lenta, Natal blacks were able to escape working for low farm wages on mission land. This was true of both the traditionalists already living on the land which became Königsberg and the *oorlams* blacks who settled there. The same writers point to natural calamities as a factor which accelerated the process of the impoverishment of the black Natal peasantry and their urbanisation.<sup>27</sup> This is certainly what happened at Königsberg. While he would have liked to have kept the members

of his congregation in the sheltered environment he had created for them, Prozesky was thwarted in this desire by the sustained poor harvests at Königsberg, by the locust plague of 1896 and the rinderpest of 1897. He was glad that the mines and railways existed to provide his people with an alternative source of income. In time even the families of some of the migratory labourers from the mission station joined them on the gold-fields. While aspects of Prozesky's administration of his congregation may be questioned (his use of corporal punishment, for example), those whose lives were shaped by him and by his example received an affirmation of their humanity as well as education in Christian *caritas* - a gift which defies quantification.

## **CHAPTER 22: PROZESKY'S INFLUENCE ON THE OORLAMS BLACKS AND THE KÖNIGSBERG CONGREGATION**

### **NOTES AND REFERENCES**

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2. *Tagebuch* 7, 38 & 44-45    *Tagebuch* 10, 16 & 18-21    *Tagebuch* 11, 6, 14, 22 & 27-28    *Tagebuch* 12, 16    *Tagebuch* 13, 4 & 15    *Tagebuch* 14, 2
3. *Tagebuch* 8, 8    *Tagebuch* 9, 21-23    *Tagebuch* 10, 7-9    *Tagebuch* 12, 14    *Tagebuch* 13, 6 & 14    *Tagebuch* 14, 5    *Tagebuch* 15, 27    *Tagebuch* 17, 4-6 & 11    *Tagebuch* 19, 19    *Tagebuch* 21, 26    *Tagebuch* 22, 28    *Tagebuch* 23, 2, 5, 9, 10, 16 & 21-22    *Tagebuch* 24, 1 & 23-24
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5. *Tagebuch* 17, 6 & 25-26
6. *Tagebuch* 15, 12    *Tagebuch* 20, 18-19    *Tagebuch* 24, 19, 20 & 23-24
7. *Tagebuch* 29, 22    Declaration dated 24th April 1881  
*Missions-Berichte* 1881, 392

8. *Tagebuch* 33, 20-21 & 35-37     *Tagebuch* 36, 43
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10. *Tagebuch* 33, 26, 31-33, 36, 41, 45 & 55     *Tagebuch* 36, 4,  
5, 18 & 44     *Tagebuch* 37, 2, 7-8, 10, 16-17, 23 & 25  
*Erinnerungen*, 356-357
11. *Tagebuch* 37, 33 & 41     *Tagebuch* 38, 1, 16, 38, 32-33, 63,  
66, 68, 73, 75 & 82     *Tagebuch* 39, 1, 3, 6, 9, 13 & 16
12. *Tagebücher* 37-43, *passim*     *Report on Mission Work done at*  
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*buch* 42, 37-38     *Tagebuch* 50, 24     *Tagebuch* 56, 16  
*Tagebuch* 57, 26
13. *Tagebuch* 44, 39-40 & 44
14. *Ibid.*, 2, 25-29, 33-34 & 116     *Tagebuch* 45, 94
15. *Tagebuch* 8, 24-25     *Tagebuch* 56, 15-16, 19, 20, 22-23, 28 &  
33-34     *Tagebuch* 57, 14, 27-28, 33, 36 & 74     *Tagebuch* 58,  
2-3, 6 & 12-14     *Tagebuch* 60, 66
16. *Tagebuch* 61, 64-65     *Tagebuch* 62, 39, 42-45 & 57-59
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98-99, 104-109, 110-111, 204-205 & 218-220     *Aufzeich-*  
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89-91, 102, 119-122, 124, 126-127 & 192-193     *Defence*, 5-6  
*Erinnerungen*, 172     Letter by Paul Enderson to Prozesky,  
pasted to *Gefangenschaft*, 210
18. *Gefangenschaft*, 4, 156, 160-161, 177, 196, 210-219     Let-  
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19. *Tagebuch* 9, 22     *Tagebuch* 15, 5, 20, 27     *Tagebuch* 16, 18  
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15     *Tagebuch* 9, 22-23     *Tagebuch* 15, 31     *Tagebuch* 17,  
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## **CHAPTER 23**

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION**

#### **PROZESKY ESTABLISHED AS A HEALER**

Prozesky began to treat the Nguni living at or near Königsberg with homoeopathic medicine and simple surgery almost as soon as he arrived in the area. Within months he was established as a healer and within a few years he was sought after as a doctor by black and white alike in the large rural area around Newcastle. He rode about extensively to treat patients when called upon to do so, and had a remarkable success rate which he ascribed to the prayer which invariably accompanied his ministrations. On 12th July 1869 he put splints on the broken arm of the chief Mafofe himself and treated the arm with cold-poultices. He was intrigued to see how the traditionalists were straightening the fractured arm when he arrived on the scene: the arm had been buried and tamped securely in a narrow, vertical hole dug for this purpose. It was then withdrawn rapidly by the simple expedient of pulling the chief away bodily. In the same month the young missionary could already claim to have a considerable influence over the local people through his medicine.<sup>1</sup>

#### **HIS VIEW OF HIS MEDICAL MISSION**

Prozesky's medical work was a natural part of his ministry; he did not see it as something separate from his preaching or as a mission in its own right, but rather as his simple Christian duty to those in need of his healing skills. Although he nowhere used

the Greek words in his writings, *kerygma* (the preaching of the Word) and *diakonia* (practical service to others) were sides of the same coin to him, essentially one and indivisible. He would certainly have agreed with the modern formulation of D.J. Bosch: "Without *diakonia* the gospel proclaimed is not the gospel of God's love."<sup>2</sup> Based as his life was on the commands he believed the risen Jesus to have given his followers to go out and spread his message, he is bound to have applied the words contained in Mark 16:18 to his own mission: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that, while he saw the treatment of the sick as an opportunity to recommend his religion to them, he never demanded professions of faith from his patients. He did on occasion represent illness or injury to people who had scorned his preaching as punishments inflicted on them by God, and he continued to see physical suffering as chastisement of sin by the divine being, but in his practical compassion for all sufferers his deeds outdid his words. Initially (until 1878) he accepted no payment, and the only consistent way in which he used his medical skills as a lever was in requiring of white farmers that they assemble their black labourers and tenants for him to preach to them.

### **THE EXTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS MEDICAL WORK**

There are countless references in his journals to Prozesky's treatment of the sick and injured: to babies delivered, fractures

set, wounds sutured, burns treated, teeth extracted and medicine dispensed. People came from near and far to consult him. While his teaching forms the main focus of this work, it must be borne in mind that his alleviation of pain and disease was a daily part of his labours at Königsberg. Where it may be argued that his theology introduced a new dimension of fear into the minds of the Nguni, his healing was pure release to those who came to him ill or injured. In an age when European missionaries are seen simplistically by some as the mere handmaidens of colonial oppression, this practical liberation from very real suffering must not be forgotten. Nor must the liberation by practitioners of Western medicine like Prozesky of the South African indigenes from the thralldom of belief in witchcraft as a cause of accident and disease be discounted. It is true that fundamentalists like the Prussian replaced witchcraft with the "will of God" in this context - an aetiology less logical and more perplexing than the native one - but their practice nevertheless, regardless of their theory, did much to free medicine in the African mind from both religion and magic. In this sense at least, although he saw himself generally as - and acted as - the paternalistic lord and guardian of his congregation, Prozesky was not the mere master of his people, but also their servant, their *diakonos*.<sup>4</sup>

An interesting facet of the missionary's medical work was his development of an antidote to snake-bite. Natal is notoriously snake-infested and there were frequent cases of death or serious

injury to man and beast at Königsberg through the venom of the puff-adder (*Bitis arietans*), night-adder (*Causus rhombeatus*) and rinkhals (*Hemachatus haemachates*). Prompted by Lutze's textbook of homoeopathy which claimed that snake-bite could be cured by a thirtieth part of the tincture of snake-venom, he prepared his own antidote by drying, roasting and pounding to powder the heads of puff- and night-adders. The resultant powder, administered internally in solution, proved invariably successful in the treatment of humans as well as dogs, horses and cattle bitten by snakes. Prozesky claimed that it was also used to cure people bitten by mad dogs, spiders, scorpions and even other human beings. A black *inyanga yemiti* whom he questioned about his medicine for snake-bite, explained that he burnt the head, heart, lungs, liver and gall of cobras and mambas (very venomous snakes found elsewhere in Natal) and ground them to powder. This powder was mixed with urine and given to the patient to drink. A few transverse cuts were made about the wound and the same medicine was rubbed into them. Compared to the primitive treatment of snake-bite by white doctors at the time - whose ordinary practice amounted to little more than disinfection of the wound - those of Prozesky and his black colleague were well in advance of orthodox Western medicine.<sup>5</sup>

A further proof of Prozesky's skill as a doctor is the fact that all ten of his children survived infancy and grew to adulthood -

in a time when infant mortality was high. That his skill had its limits, is illustrated by his inability to cure his eldest son Johannes of the brain-illness he contracted as a little boy and which retarded his mental growth and caused epileptic seizures. In common with all doctors, he was also often faced with people who were terminally ill. Nevertheless, he did what he could to ease and comfort the dying, both physically and spiritually. From the fame he earned in northern Natal, the north-eastern Orange Free State and the south-eastern Transvaal, it would nevertheless appear that he had a natural healing gift. He was to use it again at Amalienstein in the Cape Colony and in semi-retirement at Heidelberg in the Transvaal. Many people owed their lives to him, but he consistently gave all the credit to his God. To what extent the ultimate success of his Königsberg ministry was attributable to his healing skills, cannot be ascertained, but in the light of the central position given to healing in the twentieth century black Zionist churches, this facet of his mission must be accorded considerable importance.<sup>6</sup>

### **CHAPTER 23: PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION REFERENCES AND NOTES**

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3. *Ibid.*, 50
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## **CHAPTER 24**

### **PROZESKY'S INTERACTION WITH THE BOERS**

#### **FIRST MEETING WITH PAUL KRUGER, 1867**

As has been seen, Prozesky stood up for his colleague Moschütz when the latter was bullied by a Boer commando in the northern Transvaal in 1867. It was his first encounter with S.J.P. Kruger, who was so impressed by the young Prussian's protest that he apologized to Moschütz. This unpleasant experience was counter-balanced by the hospitality and kindness which the young missionary was shown by many Boers on his journey to the Transvaal.<sup>1</sup>

#### **BOER FRIENDS IN NORTHERN NATAL, 1867-75**

Two Boers, Dr C. Aveling and his son-in-law Adendorff of Hope Farm, helped Wangemann and Merensky in 1867 to locate the site on the Horn River where Königsberg would be founded by Prozesky a year later. They were also two of the earliest friends the young missionary made in the area. Dr Aveling in particular was to become a dear friend to the Prozeskys, as well as the missionary's own physician. Other friends made were the Germans Adolph and Dietrich Dinkelmann of Beginzel, Bierbaum of Millbank, Heckler and Jacob Walther, and the Boers Andries and Gert van Niekerk of the farms Donkerhoek and Elandsklip respectively. Millbank, Elandsklip and Beginzel became Prozesky's early out-stations. Another preaching-place was the farm Normandien of the Boer Gert Adendorff. Further afield Prozesky met and became a firm friend of the prominent Klip River farmer Abraham Spies and people named

Krogmann who lived near Ladysmith. To the farmers living near Königsberg, Prozesky became an unofficial pastor and doctor. In their turn, they provided him with hospitality on his preaching journeys, and a number of them provided help of some sort in the construction of the mission house. Some occasionally attended services at Königsberg, and Aveling, Walter and Gert van Niekerk stood as godfathers to some of the Prozesky children.<sup>2</sup>

### **BOERS IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE, 1873**

On their holiday journey to Bethanien and Pniel in the Orange Free State in 1873, the Prozeskys met with great kindness from Boers along the way. The missionary was obliged to hold services on various farms and to preach in the Dutch Reformed church in Bethlehem. In Bloemfontein he was introduced to President Brand and discussed the British annexation of the diamond-fields with him. Brand recognized the futility of war against Britain. He was satisfied that the £90,000 the British had paid the Free State had settled much of the public debt and said, "*Alles sal regkom*," ("All will be well").<sup>3</sup>

### **BOER FRIENDS IN NORTHERN NATAL, 1876-90**

Chapter 8 has shown that Prozesky's Boer friends contributed towards the cost of construction of the Königsberg church and were present when it was consecrated on 29th September 1880. Dr Aveling, his son G. Aveling and one of the Adendorffs were among those who made speeches. Later, when Prozesky was considering

enlarging the church in 1889, two Boer friends, J.J. Müller and Dirk van Rooyen, collected £80 for this purpose.<sup>4</sup>

### **PRESIDENT BRAND VISITS PROZESKY**

On his way back to the Free State from O'Neill's cottage where he had acted as mediator between the Transvaal Boers and the British after Majuba in 1881, the President of the Orange Free State came to Königsberg to see Prozesky, making a detour of some six kilometres to do so. On his way to O'Neill's he had had difficulty crossing the swollen iNcandu River, and Prozesky had sent men with thongs to his aid. On 18th May of the same year the missionary in his turn visited President Brand in Newcastle.<sup>5</sup>

### **SECOND MEETING WITH PAUL KRUGER, 1881**

The missionary's second meeting with Paul Kruger took place in Newcastle on 26th March 1881. Kruger made a far better impression on this occasion, enjoying an amusing anecdote of Prozesky's, expressing the conviction that God had given the Boers the victory in the war against Britain, and showing determination not to yield an inch of Transvaal territory. In the months that followed, while details of the peace were being hammered out, the missionary had various other meetings with Kruger.<sup>6</sup>

### **A YOUTH RESCUED FROM SLAVERY IN THE TRANSVAAL, 1889**

Prozesky was pro-Boer in his political thinking, and it is quite possible that he was influenced by his Dutch-speaking neighbours

in his treatment of the black people at Königsberg, particularly in the matter of discipline. He certainly favoured the corporal punishment they administered judicially to refractory blacks above the sentences of imprisonment imposed by the Natal magistrates. Nevertheless he held no brief for Boers who treated blacks unfairly. A member of his congregation named Joseph September had an adult son in the Transvaal who, ill-treated on the farm where his mother had left him, ran away to his father at Königsberg. The Boer Engelbrecht applied through his field-cornet for him to be returned, and a black Transvaal policeman abducted him from the mission station. Prozesky appealed on September's behalf to the Newcastle magistrate, who wrote to the landdrost of Utrecht. The missionary, accompanied by one of the young Adendorffs of Hope Farm as a witness, visited Engelbrecht and discovered that he had no legal hold on the youth, who had been given 15 lashes and sent with sheep into the interior. Regarding the case as one of kidnapping and slavery, Prozesky wrote a letter for the magistrate to send to the Natal government. The youth was released less than two months later and came to Königsberg.<sup>7</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S INFLUENCE ON THE BOERS' ATTITUDE TO MISSION WORK**

For more than three decades Prozesky, by his very presence in their midst as a missionary and by his constant ministering to their own spiritual and physical needs, exercised a mellowing influence on the Boer population for many miles around Königs-

berg. With few exceptions, all liked and respected him. One or two remained stubborn in their rejection of the idea that blacks had souls and could go to heaven. The missionary softened the heart of one of these with music and then persuaded him to accept that blacks had immortal souls by assuring him that they would be changed into beings of light once they entered bliss. Other Boers were enlightened masters. One of them surprised Prozesky pleasantly by fetching him from a considerable distance to treat a sick servant, whom he found being nursed in the farmhouse kitchen while the Boer woman had moved her cooking outside to spare him the smoke from the stove. Generally, however, the Boers were stern masters who cared little for the spiritual welfare of their servants, whom they regarded as subhuman or, at best, with tolerant amusement or even affection as useful but troublesome "*schepsels*" (creatures).<sup>8</sup>

### **FRIKKIE ADENDORFF**

In the circle of Prozesky's acquaintances and friends, this changed. As has been seen, Prozesky encouraged Frikkie Adendorff, the son of his best Boer friend, the devout Fritz Adendorff, to undertake mission work on his father's farm Schuinshoogte and later on the farm of his father-in-law Badenhorst near Amersfoort in the Transvaal. Despite the mockery he had to endure from some of his fellow whites, he remained steadfast. The result was the donation by the Dutch Reformed church council of Amersfoort of a plot of land for mission purposes.<sup>9</sup>

### **BOERS IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE, 1890-99**

On Boer farms in the eastern Orange Free State the missionary found the farmers even more kindly disposed towards their black labourers and tenants. It pleased Prozesky to notice in the early 1890s that the whites almost everywhere knelt down for prayers with their servants - something they would never have done 20 years before. Where he had previously had to apply the lever of his medical help to be allowed to preach to the farm blacks, the farmers now assembled them spontaneously. Some even brought them into their living-rooms to hear the missionary - something unheard of in the early days of Prozesky's mission.<sup>10</sup>

### **ABRAHAM SPIES**

Prozesky's dear old friend Abraham Spies was ahead of his time and amazed him in June 1895 when he paid for the missionary to come to his farm to baptize the child of Moses Shabalale. Spies and his wife stood as godparents and paid the baptism fee.<sup>11</sup>

### **ROTHMAN AND DOOYER**

As has been seen, the Transvaal farmers Dooyer and Rothman asked Prozesky to establish out-stations on their farms The Falls (1895) and Vaalbank (1898) respectively. Both supplied suitable buildings for this purpose and welcomed the missionary heartily when he came to preach.<sup>12</sup>

### **A PROFOUND CHANGE**

Indicative of the profound change which took place in the atti-

tude among the Transvaal Boers towards mission work among the blacks was the contrast between the refusal of the Wakkerstroom Dutch Reformed church council in 1889 to allow their minister Dominee Ackermann to lend Prozesky his wagon-house for mission services, and conditions in 1899. By the latter date the brother of Dooyer of Volksrust could recommend Prozesky's method of doing mission work to the *ringsvergadering* (meeting of the presbytery) of the same church at Ermelo. What pleased the Boers about his method was that he taught the blacks not only to pray but to be obedient and to work. Prozesky's evangelist at Volksrust, Andreas Malevu, was also welcome on Boer farms, and the Boers themselves attended his services on many of them. At one place the Boers even asked Andreas to hold a service for them in Dutch, which he did despite his nervousness.<sup>13</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND THE BOERS DURING THE ANGLO-BOER WAR**

Prozesky's pro-Boer stance before and during the war of 1899-1902 and the excellent relations he had with the Boer invaders have been described. He held services for them, showed them hospitality and was prepared to treat their sick and wounded. His enthusiasm for their cause led him to cast caution to the winds and identify himself with their struggle. He was not uncritical of Boers who misbehaved, however, and condemned sharply the looting in which some of them indulged. When the tide of war turned against the Boers, he blamed the looting for what he saw as God's withdrawal

of his help from the republicans.<sup>14</sup>

### **THIRD MEETING WITH PAUL KRUGER, 1900**

The missionary's third meeting with Kruger, now President of the South African Republic, took place when he paid him a visit at his home in Pretoria on 31st January 1900. Prozesky condoled with him on the death of his grandson in action, wished him God's blessing on the victories won, and expressed the wish that Kruger would be permitted to experience an honourable peace.<sup>15</sup>

He was to see the President once more, but not to speak to. At Dannhauser on 1st March 1900 while the Boers were retreating from Ladysmith, Prozesky saw and heard Kruger attempting to put heart into his men from his railway carriage.<sup>16</sup> He was not to know that his own son Traugott would soon accompany the President as his telegraphist on his last journey in South Africa before his departure from Delagoa Bay for the Netherlands.

### **SHARED HARDSHIP, 1900-1901**

The seal on Prozesky's affinity with the Boers was set by his arrest and trial. Sharing his pre-trial detention were many of the Boer men of the district, and their sympathy with and affection for him are clear from the pages of the manuscripts he wrote describing his trial and imprisonment. The fact that he was taken in by the Dutch Reformed minister of Newcastle, Dominee Bosman, when he became ill, brought him into even closer contact with those whose political views he shared. He was never to forget the kind-

ness of the Bosmans. In prison, too, he grew to identify himself further with the Afrikaners - and influenced some of them in his turn. In the Eshowe prison he taught two young Zulu-speaking Boers, Cronje and Degenaar, to read Zulu. Both of them intended to preach to the blacks after the war.<sup>17</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND THE CAPE AFRIKANERS, AMALIENSTEIN, 1903-05**

At Amalienstein Prozesky disapproved of the sale of brandy stoked by white farmers in the Little Karoo to the "coloured" people of the mission station. This drink had a devastating effect on the people in his charge. He attempted to get the sale of brandy to non-whites prohibited by the local licensing board, but in vain, and noted that two of its members were elders of the Ladismith Dutch Reformed church. Some farmers nevertheless impressed him by their kindness and committed Christianity, particularly Van Tonder of the farm Buffelsfontein, who placed his new wagon-house at the disposal of the Berliners for mission services.<sup>18</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND THE NATAL AND TRANSVAAL BOERS, 1907-09**

The hospitality extended to the Prozeskys by their Boer friends in Natal when they were homeless in 1907 and 1908 was an indication of the affection they enjoyed in that quarter, as was the vote of confidence in Prozesky expressed by F. Meyer who wished to organize a petition for Prozesky's return to Königsberg. It is not surprising that the old missionary was asked to preach to a few hundred Afrikaners/Boers at a Dingaan's Day festival at

Rietvlei near Heidelberg in the Transvaal in December 1909.<sup>19</sup>

### **AFRIKANER MISSIONARY ZEAL, 1908**

In the evening of his life it pleased Prozesky to note the fervour among Afrikaners for the mission cause. The Transvaal Afrikaans Women's Missionary Association held a conference in Heidelberg in November 1908, and the German heard the octogenarian Dr Andrew Murray speak. Murray was on a journey through South Africa to stimulate interest in missions. Money was being collected zealously for the support of mission work at home as well as further afield in Africa. It was a far cry from the early years of Prozesky's ministry.<sup>20</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

There can be no doubt that Prozesky had a profound influence on his Boer neighbours during his 32 years at Königsberg. As a German, he was more acceptable to them as a missionary than an Englishman would have been. He earned their gratitude by treating their sick and injured without cost. His knowledge of Dutch made him acceptable to them as an informal pastor, and his judgement was valued to the extent that he was requested to settle disputes and quarrels among them. The strict control he exercised over his converts won their approval, and servants from Königsberg became valued for their industry and obedience. While many remained sceptical of the eligibility of blacks for salvation, many others were won over. It is not too much to say that Prozesky changed, to

some extent at least, Boer thinking on this subject in the extensive sphere of his influence during the last third of the nineteenth century.

## **CHAPTER 24: PROZESKY'S INFLUENCE ON THE BOERS**

### **REFERENCES AND NOTES**

1. *Erinnerungen*, 125-133
2. *Tagebücher* 4-7, *passim*    *Tagebuch* 13, 10 & 24    *Tagebücher* 15-28, *passim*    *Polyglotten-Bibel*, Vol. IV, fly-leaf
3. *Tagebuch* 8, 20-27    *Tagebuch* 9, 1-15    *Erinnerungen*, 377
4. *Tagebuch* 27, 12    *Erinnerungen*, 237-239    *Tagebuch* 42, 43, 66 & 112
5. *Tagebuch* 30, 20-21    *Erinnerungen*, 377 & 405    Letter by Prozesky to Wangemann, Königsberg, 25th February 1881, *Acta Prozesky* 3P/15, BMA    BMA *Tagebuch* 1881, 116, *Acta Königsberg*
6. *Tagebuch* 30, 26-35 & 43-44    BMA *Tagebuch* 1881, 100, *Acta Königsberg*
7. *Tagebuch* 43, 81-88 & 101
8. *Erinnerungen*, 240-242 & 250-261
9. *Tagebuch* 39, 4-5    *Tagebuch* 44, 85-87 & 107-108    *Tagebuch* 45, 81    *Erinnerungen*, 234-236
10. *Tagebuch* 45, 24
11. *Tagebuch* 51, 32
12. *Ibid.*, 35-36 & 47    *Tagebuch* 57, 11-12, 18 & 33  
*Erinnerungen*, 245-248
13. *Erinnerungen*, 249    *Tagebuch* 57, 59-61    Some modern Christians might object to Prozesky's teaching of obedience, but the missionary was following the injunction given in Ephesians 6:5-8.
14. See Chapters 15 & 16.
15. *Tagebuch* 61, 72-74
16. *Tagebuch* 62, 24-25
17. *Verhör* and *Gefangenschaft*, *passim*    For Cronje and Degenaar, see *Gefangenschaft*, 113
18. *Tagebuch* 63, 84-88, 134, 150-151 & 153-154
19. *Tagebuch* 65, 6, 8-13, 32, 49 & 98-100
20. *Tagebuch* 66, 1-3

## **CHAPTER 25 PROZESKY'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE**

### **ENGLISH-SPEAKING FRIENDS IN NEWCASTLE, 1868-81**

Within the first few years of his ministry at Königsberg, Prozesky had earned the liking and respect of the Newcastle townsfolk. The magistrate Melmoth Osborn became a friend, as did the merchant Dixon, who extended hospitality to the German missionary. On three occasions in 1875 Prozesky preached to the English-speaking Christians in the town. The esteem in which he was held is further reflected by the fact that donations of money towards the cost of building the Königsberg church were forthcoming from the English in Newcastle. At the consecration of the church in 1880 the merchant Kidd was one of the guests who made a speech.<sup>1</sup>

### **ENGLISH-SPEAKING FARMERS, 1868-81**

The farming population of the Newcastle district was predominantly Boer/Afrikaans, but Prozesky found friends among the scattered English-speaking farmers as well. These included Duff and Gibson of Cundycleuch, and Twyman and Allison, also to the south of Königsberg.<sup>2</sup>

### **PROZESKY AND THE ENGLISH IN NEWCASTLE, 1881-1899**

A foretaste of the enmity Prozesky was to experience from British imperialists during the second Boer War was given by a half-drunken Englishman in Newcastle during the first Boer War on 19th

February 1881. The man insulted the missionary for having had Boers in his house and reproached him for not putting strychnine in their coffee. Prozesky noticed no difference in the attitude of the "decent" English towards him.<sup>3</sup>

The missionary had good relations with a succession of Newcastle magistrates. The magistrate Beaumont visited Königsberg in 1884 and called the station "a picture of beauty". The merchant Kidd was a very good friend to the missionary and Prozesky often spent nights under his roof when he had cause to stay in Newcastle. Another friend was Loxton, the owner of the farm and coal-mine Lennoxton adjacent to the town. From 1885 the German took to holding services for the Loxtons and their black labourers on his Newcastle Sundays before doing business in the town the next morning. Loxton died in 1895, but Prozesky continued to visit the family and hold services for them. He visited Johannesburg as a guest of Mrs Loxton's sons-in-law James and Draper in 1897.<sup>4</sup>

### **ENGLISH-SPEAKING FARMERS, 1881-1899**

Many of the English farmers were devout men, but in 1888 the missionary had occasion to reprimand a young Englishman who was living on a farm with two black women by whom he had various children. He advised him to marry one of the women and let the other go while providing for her until she, too, found a husband. The man listened, good-humoured and unabashed, and ignored the advice. He claimed to love both women.<sup>5</sup>

### **PROZESKY'S MINISTRY TO THE PRISONERS IN THE NEWCASTLE GAOL**

A remarkable feature of Prozesky's ministry was the concern and compassion which led him to visit the prisoners in the Newcastle gaol and hold services for them on the Sundays when he came to preach in the town. He began to do this in 1870 and continued to do so for 30 years until he himself became a prisoner in the same gaol. He preached to the black prisoners in Zulu, but often had white prisoners to speak to as well, English-, Dutch/Afrikaans- and German-speakers, and for these he held short services in their own languages. Many were grateful for his interest and the words he spoke.

### **PROZESKY AND THE ENGLISH DURING THE ANGLO-BOER WAR**

The missionary was never anti-British as such, but anti-imperialist. When the Boers occupied Newcastle he visited his friend, the deposed magistrate Jackson. He also saved the horse belonging to Dr Ormond which the Boers wished to commandeer. During the occupation he was of service to various loyalists. The Loxton womenfolk with their stock spent almost a month at Königsberg, and hospitality and advice were extended to others such as Bid-dulph of Hope Farm and Whipp from the Orange Free State. Jabez Marshall and George Mitchell were released from gaol by the Boers through Prozesky's intervention and spent months as his guests. Prozesky also prevented Bierbaum, Sander and the Collyer brothers from being commandeered forcibly by the Boers.<sup>6</sup>

When the Boers left Natal and Prozesky was arrested and charged with treason, many erstwhile friends forsook him or even became enemies in the anti-Boer atmosphere which followed the British camp. Reinstated as magistrate, Jackson trod a wary line between loyalty to his friend and official coldness. To his credit, he gave Prozesky a fine testimonial in his testimony at the missionary's trial and said that he regretted the accused's position. Jabez Marshall wished to testify for Prozesky, but was prevented from doing so. George Mitchell repaid Prozesky's kindness with hostile and false testimony. The Collyer brothers, too, who possibly owed him their lives, were ungrateful and lied under oath.<sup>7</sup>

It is a measure of the affection some of Prozesky's English-speaking acquaintances had for him that even in the prevailing anti-Boer climate some of them stood by him as far as they were able, even after his conviction on a charge of high treason. Mr Louis, the gaoler, refused to issue him with prison-clothes. The Anglican Rev. Clark visited him in the Pietermaritzburg prison and wept. General Sir John Dartnell, the Natal Inspector of Prisons, had a chair and table made for him in the Eshowe gaol. The respect the old missionary earned from the warders in Eshowe made the birthday he had in prison something of a triumph of love and forgiveness over chauvinism and bitterness.<sup>8</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Prozesky's influence on the English-speakers in northern Natal was less dramatic than his influence on its Boers, mainly because as a German he found more ready acceptance among the Boers. That he nevertheless made the English friends he did, and roused their enthusiasm for his mission work, speaks for itself. Multilingual in his fluent command of English, Afrikaans/Dutch and Zulu, he was something of a bridge-builder between the cultural communities of the area, and it seems a great pity that the war-politics of 1896-1900 brought an end to his function as such.

## CHAPTER 25: PROZESKY'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Tagebuch* 4, 5-6 & 20    *Tagebuch* 6, 7, 12 & 46    *Tagebuch* 7, 9, 22, 24 & 58    *Tagebuch* 12, 27-28    *Tagebuch* 13, 7 & 10  
*Tagebuch* 14, 2    *Tagebuch* 27, 12    *Erinnerungen*, 237
2. *Tagebuch* 18, 2    *Tagebuch* 19, 5    *Tagebuch* 20, 5, 17-18 & 27  
*Tagebuch* 21, 3    *Tagebuch* 25, 15    *Tagebuch* 33, 29-30
3. *Tagebuch* 30, 7
4. *Tagebuch* 39, 25    *Tagebücher* 39-51, *passim*    *Tagebuch* 53, 16 & 24-36    *Tagebuch* 54, 1-32
5. *Tagebuch* 44, 98    *Erinnerungen*, 275-277
6. *Tagebuch* 58, 33-36 & 63-69    *Tagebuch* 59, 9-13    *Tagebuch* 60, 3, 36-37 & 44-47    *Tagebuch* 61, 3, 7-9, 17, 22-27, 31-32 & 37-41
7. *Verhör*, 79-80, 82-83 & 222-225    *Gefangenschaft*, 26, 33, 46 & 52    *Aufzeichnungen*, 198-200
8. *Erinnerungen*, 424    *Gefangenschaft*, 77, 140-143, 151

## **CHAPTER 26**

### **PROZESKY AND HIS MISSIONARY COLLEAGUES**

Prozesky's life bears testimony to the heartiness with which he accepted his fellow missionaries (with the exception of the Roman Catholics) as co-workers in the same vineyard. This is not to say that he always agreed with their practice - he was in fact highly critical of the methods of some, even of fellow Berliners. The relative isolation of Königsberg fortunately made it possible for him to pursue his own *modus operandi* without too much friction with colleagues about differences of method.

#### **RELATIONS WITH THE MISSIONARIES OF THE AMERICAN BOARD**

Most of the American mission stations were situated near the Natal coast, which meant that Prozesky had little to do with them. He did visit Inanda and Amanzimtoti with Wangemann in 1867, and shared his director's disapproval of the academic education given to black boys at the latter station. The Prussians felt that this kind of school merely concentrated vices best isolated as far as possible. Prozesky would later oppose purely academic training as impractical. He believed that it prepared the boys for no realistic future in colonial Natal and merely made them disinclined to do manual labour. In 1887 he nevertheless employed a teacher trained at Amanzimtoti. He also co-operated with the Americans among others in the revision of the Zulu Bible. In their turn, the Americans supported him staunchly in his opposition to *ukulobolisa*.<sup>1</sup>

## **RELATIONS WITH THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS**

The people of Mafofe and Mkankonyeke had been associated with the Wesleyan Allison in Swaziland before their removal to Natal. In this way Prozesky presumably inherited the name *Mineli* from Allison (although this was a common Nguni corruption of the Dutch *Mijnheer*). In the early years of his work at Königsberg, Prozesky had little contact with any Methodists except Rev. Blencowe who came to Newcastle from Ladysmith at times to hold services for the white Methodists in the town.<sup>2</sup>

The Methodist mission station Driefontein founded in 1867 near Ladysmith was the station closest to Königsberg in Natal, and it was from there that Wesleyan "native assistants" began to make their presence felt in Newcastle and district in the early 1880s. Some of Prozesky's *oorlams* adherents in the town attached themselves to a black Wesleyan preacher in 1883, but the German did not mind, as long as they "got to know the Lord Jesus". This was the correct attitude, seeing that Prozesky himself had preached at the farm of a Mr Allison, south of Driefontein and visited a number of houses at Driefontein itself in 1882.<sup>3</sup>

In May 1884 some of Prozesky's congregants attended a service held by the Methodist "native assistant" in Newcastle. They were not edified by it, and reported that the people had "screamed and roared and rolled about on the ground". This made the Berliner regret that his own society had not established a station in the

town. Some of his catechumens attached to Klaas at Millbank grew impatient with his lengthy preparation in 1884 and joined the Methodists who baptized them promptly. Prozesky's attitude towards the Methodists nevertheless remained a generous one. He wrote of their activities,

"The Wesleyans have quite a number of young people who visit the kraals. Each one receives £2 a month and they do their best to rouse the kaffirs. In many it will unfortunately be only temporary, but many will be won for the Kingdom of Heaven whom I cannot reach and will never have been able to reach. ... May the entire land come to knowledge of the Lord, whether through us, through the Wesleyans or through another society. After all, we all preach the same Saviour."

As has been noted, evangelists from Königsberg began to preach at distant *imizi* in December 1884, almost certainly in partial imitation of the Methodist practice.<sup>4</sup>

As the Methodists made increasing inroads into his southern outstations Elandsklip, Cundycleuch, Millbank and Beginzel, Prozesky began at times to feel less charitable towards them. Their methods agreed better with the blacks than his own, he noted, deploring what he saw as the superficiality of their conversions, their practice of allowing non-Christians - men, women and children - to pray publicly, and a lack of sobriety, diligence and fortitude in learning, as well as of the quiet prayer which he advocated. In May 1887 he referred to their successful proselytizing at Elandsklip as the result of "the devil's having laid an egg" there. He thought that Wesley himself would not have recognized many of his nominal followers as his own. By the end of 1888 all

the Lutherans but one at Elandsklip had gone over to the Methodists. The Prussian nevertheless found at least one of the Wesleyan evangelists "an earnest, dear man", and tried to see the harvest as God's, whoever might sow the seed.<sup>5</sup>

In 1888 he learnt that the Methodists had baptized some of the people at Schuinshoogte and had appointed a "loud-mouthed" woman as their preacher there. Disapproving as he did of women preachers as unscriptural, he was not displeased when Adendorff expelled the Wesleyans from his farm in 1889.<sup>6</sup>

The Methodist minister from Ladysmith, Rev. Metcalf, was at Königsberg in March 1890. He promised to instruct his black assistants not to preach there, but he had no scruples about baptizing the converts they had made at Millbank and Beginzel - farms which Prozesky regarded as falling in his sphere of activity. Schuinshoogte, Leokop and Beginzel were lost to the Wesleyans in 1892, and by 1894 they had black catechists at many of Prozesky's former preaching-places: Keteni near Schuinshoogte, Newcastle, Lennoxton, Buffalo River (two), Allcock Spruit, Ingagane, Elandsklip, Beginzel (two), and in the Free State at Annfield, Strathmore and Kliprivier. The Berliner felt he could not blame the people for going over to the Methodists. It was difficult for them to come to Königsberg, as they could not afford the shilling which a pass would have cost them. Had there been two active missionaries at Königsberg, things would have been different, he be-

lieved.<sup>7</sup>

The way in which the Wesleyans indirectly played a part in securing an out-station for Königsberg at upper Ingogo for the people of Mkankonyeke in 1897 has been described in Chapter 13. Prozesky's disapproval of the Methodist method of evangelisation was strengthened by what he observed of it in Newcastle in 1898. The Wesleyan blacks in the town wandered around at night to *thandaza* (pray). Dominee Bosman's servants were out all night for this purpose and could not work properly the next day. Prozesky planned to bring up his objections to the Methodist methods at the next Natal Missionaries' Conference. He believed that the missionaries with "sober" views would support him.<sup>8</sup>

### **RELATIONS WITH ANGLICANS**

The only known contact which Prozesky had with Anglican missionaries was with Illing of Ladysmith, formerly of the Berlin society. He liked this curiously eccentric colleague whom he saw quite frequently, as Ladysmith lay on the wagon-road to Pietermaritzburg. The Königsberger disapproved decidedly of Bishop Colenso's views on polygyny and of the exclusivity of the Anglicans in the matter of Communion. Nevertheless, he knew and liked Dean Green of Pietermaritzburg who in his turn arranged for the Prozesky girls to go to St Anne's College at a reduced rate. He never forgot the visits paid to him in prison by Rev. Clark, formerly of Newcastle, and Bishop Carter of Zululand.<sup>9</sup>

## **RELATIONS WITH HERMANNSBURGERS**

The Berliners and Hanoverian Hermannsburgers shared close bonds of nationality, language and confession. Because most of the Hermannsburg mission stations were far from Königsberg, Prozesky had little to do with these colleagues, but they were always particularly welcome visitors on their journeys between Natal and the Transvaal. Prozesky in his turn visited Hansen of Empangweni (near Emmaus and Emangweni) a number of times when he was in the Kahlamba area. The two men shared a no-nonsense approach to their task.<sup>10</sup>

Ironically, the Hermannsburgers, who might have been expected to be in communion with their Lutheran colleagues, refused to allow the Berliners to preach in their churches. This assumption of exclusivity was taken even further. In 1898 Prozesky's daughter Martha and her husband Adolf Wundram were placed under church censure by their Hermannsburg pastor H.C. Schulenburg of Lüneburg for taking Communion from the Berliner Prozesky. This excessive sectarianism outraged the Königsberger, who exchanged letters on the subject with the Hermannsburg director E. Harms. When Harms supported Schulenburg's narrow denominationalism, Prozesky accused both men and Harms's late father of an unlutheran particularism motivated by Hanoverian annoyance at having been incorporated in Prussia. He pointed out that the Bible in its references to the Last Judgement made no mention of confession as a criterion: it was the works of people and the love they had shown which

would be decisive.<sup>11</sup>

The Hermannsburg missionaries Stallboom and Otte showed Prozesky kindness by visiting him in gaol in Eshowe and sending him presents of food.<sup>12</sup>

### **RELATIONS WITH NORWEGIAN MISSIONARIES**

Prozesky had little contact with the Norwegians except at Natal missionary conferences. As fellow Lutherans they were not far removed in their practice from the Berliners. Missionaries Rodseth, Astrupp and Gunderson of Zululand supplied Prozesky with fruit, vegetables and other foodstuffs while he was a prisoner in Eshowe.<sup>13</sup>

### **GOOD RELATIONS WITH FELLOW BERLINERS**

Prozesky had excellent brotherly relations with most of his immediate colleagues. Special friends among them were his brother-in-law Carl Richter, Hermann Düring of Heidelberg and later of Woyentin, Schumann of Stendal, Neizel of Emangweni, his student friend Kühl, the two younger men who were his assistants, Bauling and Kuschke, and his son-in-law Hermann Müller. Until the unhappy estrangement during the Anglo-Boer War, he loved his contemporary Glöckner like a brother. In the Cape he and Ecker understood each other well. It is clear from these friendships and from Prozesky's election as president of the Natal Missionaries' Conference in 1894 that Prozesky was not unpopular or a difficult man to work with *per se* - a consideration which must carry weight in any

assessment of his relations with those of his colleagues with whom he clashed.<sup>14</sup>

### **POOR RELATIONS WITH FELLOW BERLINERS**

On more than one occasion Prozesky roused the ire of colleagues by less than tactful criticism. The Königsberger had high ideals as to what a Christian mission station should be like. He was appalled and deeply disappointed by the worldliness and lack of discipline he encountered at Bethanien in 1873 and did not hesitate to criticize the way the station was run. The resultant ill-feeling between him and Wuras was serious enough for the Mission Committee to become involved and for Prozesky to fear dismissal at one stage, but he stood by his criticism.<sup>15</sup>

His independence of thought, strengthened no doubt by the position of authority he enjoyed on his own mission station far removed from Berlin, made him a decided opponent of the system of superintendentship imposed on him and his colleagues in the late 1870s. Like many of his colleagues - and like Robert Moffat in the London Missionary Society - he objected to being supervised in this way. Typically, he voiced his objections, again incurring the disapproval of the Mission Committee. Wangemann attempted to pour oil on troubled waters by pointing out that the synods were there to limit the power of the superintendents, but Prozesky almost left the service of the society over this issue and was never to reconcile himself to it fully. His sentiments were shared

by Schumann and Neizel. Relations between these men and the Natal superintendents Posselt and Zunckel in turn were to be soured to some extent by the system. Prozesky managed to co-exist with the two older men in this capacity, but much of their former collegial affection was lost.<sup>16</sup>

Things were worse in the Transvaal, where the superintendent, Merensky, was disliked to the extent that a number of the Berliners left the society. From Natal Prozesky criticized what he saw as the wasting of mission money at Botshabelo, and this led to acrimony between him and Merensky in 1881. Prozesky believed that Wangemann, who was Merensky's brother-in-law, took his part. He was determined to take the matter to the secular courts if he was dismissed without an impartial body having investigated his claim. Fortunately Merensky, having lost the confidence of his subordinates in the Transvaal, left South Africa and the matter was dropped. Merensky went to Berlin and became a mission inspector. Relations between Wangemann and Prozesky were cool until the director came to Königsberg in 1885 and the two men were apparently reconciled. Although Prozesky and Merensky, too, were reconciled in later life, Prozesky nevertheless believed to the end that Merensky had influenced Wangemann in Berlin to veto his plan to establish a trade-school at Königsberg in 1888. As has been seen, Prozesky and Düring considered resigning from the society if Merensky were to succeed Wangemann as director.<sup>17</sup>

The extraordinary enmity which Prozesky experienced from Gensichen, Glöckner and his younger Natal colleagues after his arrest in 1900 (Schumann had retired and Neizel had died), has been traced in Chapters 16-19. It is significant that the Southern Transvaal synod supported Prozesky to the hilt and that Königsberg was very near the Transvaal in a part of Natal which was predominantly Boer. The division would then appear to have been largely political, with the other Natal missionaries adopting a pro-British stance and wishing to dissociate themselves from the "rebel" Prozesky once he was arrested. Prozesky also lent towards the Boer way of maintaining discipline among the blacks on his mission station, whereas Glöckner and the younger men were opposed to corporal punishment. Hence Glöckner's claim that the "rod of the driver" ruled at Königsberg. Even if these differences are taken into consideration, however, Glöckner's behaviour towards Prozesky in his trouble still appears loveless and unbrotherly. It is possible that besides being unsympathetic and angry with Prozesky for not remaining strictly neutral during the Boer occupation, he was simply too timid to stand by a colleague when it would have been extremely unpopular to do so - Prozesky and his wife certainly thought he was a coward. The fact that Glöckner asked them to forgive him for the pain he had caused them only when he himself was in pain and trouble, devastated by the death of his daughter, and when they had shown him loving sympathy, would seem to support this explanation of his behaviour. Gensichen as direc-

tor of a missionary society with large interests in British South Africa was also pro-British and was careful not to provoke British hostility by being seen to sympathize with a convicted rebel by visiting him in prison. In his typically forthright manner, Prozesky reproached both men for not obeying the Christian commandment - and they did not like it. The extraordinary hostility of Missionary Manzke probably had the same basic cause, but he at least visited Prozesky in the Pietermaritzburg prison. His apparent attempt to have Prozesky re-arrested may have stemmed from insecurity in his position as Prozesky's surrogate at Königsberg, and later - when he became aware of the attachment of most of the station people to the Prozeskys - from jealousy. It was a sad chapter in the history of the Natal Berlin mission. Gensichen's further hostile behaviour towards Prozesky, his attempt to coerce him into signing a confession in 1902, his apparent change when he saw how popular the Königsberger was in mission circles in Germany, his neglect of the Prozeskys when they were ill and homeless in 1906-08, the haste with which he provided them with a home when Prozesky threatened to publish the facts of his behaviour since 1900, his unwillingness to admit that he had ever wronged Prozesky even when the latter obeyed the president of the society and held out an olive branch to him - all these things hardly redound to his credit. Nor does the fact that a Prozesky was placed at Königsberg again - in accordance with the wishes of the benefactor Grunewald - only after the marriage of Chris-

tian Prozesky into a noble German family. If Prozesky was tactless and stubborn, he was at least transparently honest. Gensichen, by contrast, showed himself capable of deviousness and spite. Lest it be thought that Prozesky antagonized the entire Berlin Mission establishment, the staunch friendship he enjoyed from the Mission Committee member Dietrich, and later Sattler, and the sense of fair play which made Mission Inspector Sauberzweig Schmidt allow him access to the letters of Glöckner and others, should be borne in mind.

That Prozesky's quarrels with his own society were not merely petty bickering from a querulous, self-righteous man, but the product of serious concern for what he saw as the interests of the Kingdom of God, seems borne out by the fact that he did not spare even his own beloved brother Carl in his criticisms of the way Amalienstein was being run in 1903-05.

A similar divergence of opinion about Prozesky as existed in the ranks of the Berliners in 1901 was to be found among the Natal missionaries in general. At the Natal Missionaries' Conference of that year Rev. Allsopp and others wanted Prozesky's name removed from the roll for political reasons, but others, Rev. James Scott in particular, vigorously opposed this step as unchristian. Prozesky wrote to Scott from prison to thank him.<sup>18</sup>

The obituary which appeared for Prozesky in the *Missions-Berichte*

when he died in 1915 was a fine tribute. Only one sentence in it was less than laudatory. The writer, Mission Inspector Wilde, gave as part of his opinion this criticism: "A strong natural passionateness often made it not exactly easy for his colleagues abroad and at home to work with him." Happily he added, "No one would dispute at his graveside that he expended his rich talents without sparing himself, restlessly and with total devotion, in burning love and service to his Saviour and to the souls committed to his charge. May God always give to our mission men of his love of our Lord and of his mission zeal!"<sup>19</sup>

From the vantage point of the present time, almost eighty years after Prozesky's death, it is possible to see him - admittedly still largely through the medium of his own writings - more objectively than his colleagues and contemporaries could. His failings cannot be overlooked: an autocratic, sometimes severe administration of his mission station, a tendency towards intolerance of views other than his own, stubbornness, tactlessness, an unwillingness to bear supervision or hear criticism, naivety in his political views and imprudence in his actions during the Anglo-Boer War. The common denominator of most of these shortcomings, a very strong will, was, ironically, also one of his best attributes. In combination with his unshakable faith in God, his basic honesty and compassionate heart, his extraordinary will-power made him the powerfully attractive and driving force - largely for good - which he was in South Africa for almost fifty years.

## CHAPTER 26: PROZESKY AND HIS MISSIONARY COLLEAGUES REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr in Süd-Afrika*, 605-610  
Prozesky, J.J.A., *Thoughts about Civilizing the Natives*  
(1889) and *The Missionary Outlook* (1896) *Tagebuch* 41,  
103 *Tagebuch* 42, 58
2. On Sunday 5th March 1871 services for three denominations  
were held for the first time in Newcastle. Afterwards the  
Lutheran Prozesky, the Dutch Reformed Dominee McArter and  
the Wesleyan Blencowe met for lunch at the home of the mer-  
chant Dixon. (*Tagebuch* 5, 44)
3. *Tagebuch* 37, 2-3 *Tagebuch* 33, 30
4. *Tagebuch* 38, 30 & 40 *Tagebuch* 39, 4-5 & 9
5. *Tagebuch* 41, 3-4, 10, 42-43, 98-99, 108-109 & 114-116  
*Tagebuch* 42, 96-97
6. *Tagebuch* 43, 100-101
7. *Tagebuch* 44, 19-20, 56-57, 130-132 *Tagebuch* 50, 17 & 66-69
8. *Tagebuch* 56, 34-36
9. *Tagebuch* 40, 54 & 58-59 *Gefangenschaft*, 77 & 131
10. Wangemann, H.T., *Ein Reise-Jahr in Süd-Afrika*, 569
11. The Natal synod which met at Christianenburg from 11th-15th  
October 1889 discussed the Hermannsburgers' refusal to  
share pulpits with them. (Minutes, 1889)  
Letters: H.C. Schulenburg, Lüneburg, 3rd January 1898, to  
Adolf Wundram, Piet Retief J.J.A. Prozesky, Königsberg,  
11th March 1898, to E. Harms, Hermannsburg E. Harms to  
Prozesky, 28th March 1898 Prozesky to Harms, 14th April  
1898
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## **SUMMATION**

### **PROZESKY'S FAITH**

August Prozesky spent his South African ministry in constant expectation of the Second Coming of Christ and God's Judgement of humanity. He was an earnest man who devoted most of his considerable energy to the creation in advance of a small corner of the Kingdom of God, as he saw it, at Königsberg in Natal. His was not a dour religion, however; he had a fine sense of humour, and the happy home he and his wife Caroline created together provided the basis for a life of steady, cheerful work. Prozesky had a sensitive nature and a compassionate heart. His journals show that disappointments and setbacks among his people grieved him deeply. While he was sometimes frankly puzzled by the cruelties of life, he believed passionately that God's wise governance of the world would in the fulness of time be revealed. In his view, it was the part of people to acknowledge their own share in the evil of the world, to confess Christ as their Saviour and then to trust simply in the fatherly providence of God.

The belief in hell and everlasting torment for souls not saved in the prescribed Christian way, taught by Prozesky, introduced a dimension of terror into the lives of his converts which this researcher can only deplore. On various occasions he gave scoffers a taste of hell-fire by placing their fingers in the glowing bowl of his pipe or by focussing the sun's rays on to their skins with

a burning-glass. In his defence, it should be noted that his teaching released the same converts from the terrors of their former belief in the often malevolent interference in their lives by their ancestral spirits or by the evil powers of witchcraft. The question should also be considered, whether Christianity would ever have taken root among the Nguni (or for that matter among the European peoples) without its negative, spiritually intimidating component. Bishop Colenso had scant success in his mission to the Zulu, his pointed omission of the concept of eternal punishment for unbelievers notwithstanding. What is manifestly clear is that Prozesky's entire mission was powered by his burning concern for the welfare of souls. Belief in the fatherly goodness of God and belief in the damnation of unsaved sinners seem mutually exclusive to this researcher, but he has to acknowledge that together they motivated the missionary to energetic and sustained, largely benevolent action.

### **PROZESKY'S CHAMPIONSHIP OF CHRISTIANITY AGAINST NGUNI TRADITION**

The Prussian believed that no compromise was possible between Lutheran Christianity and traditionalist Nguni religion. Because the latter was inextricably bound up with other facets of the Nguni lifestyle, he implacably and consistently opposed almost all forms of traditionalist culture. A noteworthy exception to this rule was his adoption and love of the Zulu language. His ministry at Königsberg was increasingly shaped and directed in

the vernacular, which undoubtedly contributed towards its relative success. The Swazi/Zulu who took the momentous step into Christian and Western culture under his guidance could at least do so in their own familiar language. In teaching them to read and write it, he helped to place their feet on the road which would ultimately lead to empowerment for their descendants.

### **PROZESKY'S FAILURE AMONG THE NGUNI TRADITIONALISTS**

The traditionalist chiefs Mafofe, Mkankonyeke and Tinta were the least receptive of the Nguni to Prozesky's teaching. All three of them in turn moved away from Königsberg with their adherents and, although they also had other reasons for going, their opposition to the missionary's message was almost certainly paramount. Besides the disinclination which people tend to have to relinquish their beliefs and customs in favour of foreign ones, there were other factors which made Christianity unattractive to them. Conversion would have meant the loss of comfortable privilege for these men and their *izinduna*, not least of which was the possession of a plurality of wives who worked to create wealth for them. Of those who remained, some were never converted in Prozesky's time, and the men in particular resisted conversion for many years. It is argued by some that it was harder for the men, as guardians of the *amasiko* (customs) of the group, to convert, as their actions had more far-reaching consequences than those of women. While this argument has merit and explains why some men allowed their womenfolk to become Christians without following

suit, it is in itself an indictment of the system. Only after 1885 were increasing numbers of traditionalist men added to the Christian congregation by baptism - often with their children, the wives and mothers usually having preceded them. Other traditionalists upon whom Prozesky made little impact were those living on his out-stations, Elandsklip, Millbank, Cundycleuch and Schuinshoogte. Very few converts were made on these farms, largely because Prozesky could visit them so rarely. A number of those to whom he preached there were nevertheless baptized by the Methodists.

### **PROZESKY'S SUCCESS AMONG THE TRADITIONALISTS**

The traditionalists who remained at Königsberg were freed by the missionary's agency of the fear under which they had previously lived of being "smelt out" as witches. They were also liberated from exploitation by the chiefly clique and could rely on the missionary for fair arbitration in disputes and a fair hearing or referral to the Newcastle magistrate in criminal cases. The mission station was a safe haven where they could live in time-honoured fashion without having to work for wages on white-owned farms or in the white-dominated towns. Although he tried to make church-attendance compulsory, Prozesky did not pester his traditionalist tenants excessively to become Christians. He was content to invite them to church and to recommend his faith to them at their *imizi* or elsewhere when opportunity arose. He acted as

their physician without payment, and fed the elderly and children in times of famine.

It is the strongest recommendation of this thesis that the traditionalist women who converted to Christianity at Königsberg in increasing numbers after 1884 found new dignity in the new religion and the social system surrounding it. The fact that women were willing to suffer beatings and intimidation for their newfound convictions emphasizes the attraction that the new way of life had for them. When they married Christian men or when husbands converted, the wives came to enjoy the status of more equal partners in monogamous marriage and were relieved by their menfolk of the hard manual labour of cultivation. Wives released from polygynous marriages continued to live in their family groups as unattached matrons. On at least one occasion Prozesky rescued a young woman from the misery of a forced traditionalist marriage. While he was no feminist in the modern sense (he regarded women preachers as unbiblical), the plight of black women concerned him deeply. This researcher believes that Nguni women generally were an exploited, subordinate and subservient class in traditionalist Nguni society. Black women are beginning to discover this and it is to be hoped that, as feminism gains ground in historiography, male historians - even those who regard themselves as radically enlightened - will follow suit. While there were exceptional cases, it could be said that half the population of pre-colonial Nguni society - the female half - was oppressed

by the other half. Christian missionaries such as Prozesky who observed the hardship, indignity and suffering of black women at first hand played an important part in their liberation - a liberation which has by no means yet been fully accomplished. Prozesky's life and work give the lie to the simplistic condemnation of missionaries by such critics as Majeke who see them as mere lackeys of colonialism and oppressors of the indigenous people of South Africa.

Perhaps Prozesky's most impressive success was his conversion of the youth Mkankonyane, who as Matheus Ngwenya became a pillar of the Königsberg congregation and later the spiritual head of the Königsberg Christians living and working on the gold-fields at Nigel. The work-ethic cultivated at Königsberg stood him and many of the other converts in good stead when they were forced for economic reasons to enter the colonial labour market. From Prozesky they also received a faith and ethos to sustain them morally in their new, often unfriendly, working environment.

It is difficult to determine with certainty why it took fifteen years and more for the Christian message to find wide acceptance at Königsberg. Other missionaries had similar experiences. It is possible that the traditionalist Nguni in Natal as a whole had by that time begun to accept the inevitability of white domination and Western acculturation. Significantly, all the large, independent black polities in South Africa - with the exception of the

Swazi kingdom - had been decisively defeated by 1880.

### **SUCCESS AND FAILURE AMONG THE OORLAMIS BLACKS**

The *oorlams* blacks who settled by choice at Königsberg found a sheltered environment where they, too, could live as peasant tenants without having to work for whites. The station offered them in addition a spiritual home in an ordered community of fellow-believers, schooling for their children at low cost, free medical treatment in time of illness or injury, and relief in time of famine. During the years 1868-80 a number of simple but devout Dutch-speaking *oorlams* families came to provide the core of the mission congregation. The example of their lives is bound to have influenced the traditionalist tenants towards conversion. Relatively few of the *oorlams* settlers left Königsberg, and most of those who did were expelled for serious misbehaviour which the missionary regarded as a danger to the well-being of his flock. A few found the station rules too restrictive and left of their own volition, but Prozesky's mission to the *oorlams* blacks may be described as successful.

### **PROZESKY'S ADMINISTRATION OF HIS CONGREGATION**

The German did not countenance merry-making in the form of dancing and beer-drinking in his congregation, and it may be said that he dampened the natural exuberance of his people in this respect. The Königsberg Christians cannot, however, be said to have lived joyless lives. Besides the satisfaction they had of working

their allotments to support themselves and their families, there was the church to satisfy their need for both music and oratory. Descriptions of Christian weddings and other festivals at Königsberg provide evidence of simple, rural pleasures and a generally happy spirit.

The members of the mission community were no angels, and transgressions of the Christian code of sexual behaviour in particular were very common. These were sternly punished and the mission station consequently did not become the by-word for immorality which some other Natal stations were. The corporal punishment meted out to younger offenders may seem harsh to modern critics, but it was in line with disciplinary practice in many families and on many farms at the time. Significantly, the congregation endorsed it on more than one occasion. Transgressors who proved incorrigible or intransigent were expelled from the station. In this way and because the Berlin society owned the farm, it was possible for Prozesky to weed out elements which might otherwise have brought his station into disrepute. He was nevertheless quick to forgive and re-admit those who were genuinely penitent. There is ample evidence that his blend of strictness and kindness was highly effective. A considerable section of the people certainly loved and respected him and his family, as was indicated by their dissatisfaction with his successor Manzke, and repeated petitions for his return.

Prozesky's church administration was unashamedly paternalistic, but from an early date he made use of men like Matheus Ngwenya and Petrus July to hold services, devotions and baptism classes in his absence. These men and others later served as nominated and then elected elders. In his later years at Königsberg, the missionary began to rely less exclusively on himself and more on appointed evangelists to man his out-stations and carry the Christian message abroad to *imizi* further afield. In this sense he was moving, albeit very gradually and unintentionally, towards the independent, largely black Lutheran Church which has since developed from the mission churches founded by him and his colleagues. While he did his best to make his church self-supporting (adverse farming conditions thwarted him in this respect), and began to make it self-expanding through his evangelists, he would certainly have stopped short of wanting to make it self-governing according to the concept of the "three selves" prevalent in Anglo-Saxon missions and supported by Warneck. The elders at Königsberg never formed a church-council with a voice of its own during his time. His success in creating a sizeable congregation at Königsberg can be read from the statistics: the greater mission community under his care numbered 650 baptized souls in 1899, and by 1900 he had performed 999 baptisms. Less quantifiable, but of equal significance was the education in *caritas* which he gave to his adherents, and its affirmation of their humanity and personal worth at a time when black people all too often experienced in-

difference or contempt from whites in the outside world.

### **THE INFLUENCE OF PROZESKY'S SCHOOL**

Apart from providing the local children with nurture in the Christian faith and the ethic of neighbourly love, the Königsberg school provided them with basic literacy, numeracy and some knowledge of history and geography. As such, it was a door to the integration of a simple, peasant people into the urbanized and more technically advanced world of the 20th century. Prozesky did the children in his charge the kindness of not offering them advanced academic training unsuited to their prospects in life. By teaching them to work cheerfully with their hands, he served them well, as all of them would have to earn a living in this way. The values inculcated by both school and church and also by the Prozeskys' daily lives: love, compassion, honesty, sobriety, responsibility and respect for authority, would stand the children in good stead wherever they went in later life. It is of interest that the Königsberg school still exists today (1995), long after the mission station has ceased to function as such.

### **PROZESKY'S MEDICAL MISSION**

The missionary did not see his healing skills (part of his *diakonia* or practical service to others) as something essentially apart from his teaching (*kerygma*). The treatment with homoeopathic medicines which he dispensed and the simple surgery and dentistry which he performed for countless people, black and white,

in northern Natal, the eastern Orange Free State and the southeastern Transvaal for almost a third of a century were a natural implementation of the love of Christ to humanity taught by him. If the teaching component of his mission was only partly and relatively successful, the medical component was an almost unqualified success. Thousands of people who had no other access to medical care found relief or healing through him. He asked for no payment and made no distinction between Christian and non-Christian. What he did do was to pray for every sufferer and to recommend his God to each one. He also insisted that his white patients assemble their black servants for him to preach to them. An important result of his medical work was the liberation it brought to traditionalist blacks from the thralldom of belief in witchcraft and the influence of the dead as causes of accidents and disease. In the place of these causes he introduced the concept of "the will of God", a perplexing and, to this researcher, reprehensible idea, but one which was paradoxically balanced to some extent by his belief that it was God and not himself who performed healing.

### **PROZESKY'S CHAMPIONSHIP OF BLACKS AGAINST OPPRESSION**

In 1889 Prozesky acted energetically to free a black youth, the son of one of his parishioners, held in virtual slavery by a Boer farmer in the Transvaal. In 1896 he took steps to bring relief to blacks subjected to petty harassment by officials responsible for

issuing passes. On another occasion he secured the release of people from Königsberg wrongfully arrested in Newcastle, and the repayment to them of fines imposed by the magistrate. The missionary would not have been the man he was, had he not intervened in these cases. What is equally remarkable is that such injustices came to his attention so very rarely, despite the extensive network of potential informants he had among the black population of a very large area in northern Natal and the two adjacent Boer republics.

### **PROZESKY'S INFLUENCE ON HIS BOER NEIGHBOURS**

The German won the approval of his Boer neighbours by the strict discipline he exercised on his mission station. He became the doctor, counsellor, pastor and friend of many of them and persuaded them to tolerate and even to support his mission work. His concern for the souls of, and his practical care of all people who needed his help, regardless of colour, undoubtedly helped some Boers to see blacks as fellow human beings rather than as mere sub-human *schepsels*. This is not to say that all the Boers were harsh masters, even before his coming. Indeed, he was impressed by the care taken by some Boers of their black tenants and retainers.

### **PROZESKY AND HIS COLLEAGUES**

The Königsberger enjoyed good relations with missionaries and clergymen of all denominations and was elected president of the

Natal Missionaries' Conference in 1894. He was also on good terms with most of his Berlin colleagues, although he did not hesitate to criticize those of whose missionary practice he disapproved. His tactlessness in this regard caused bad blood between him and the Transvaal superintendent Merensky in particular, but Prozesky stood by his criticisms, believing that they were in the best interests of the society and of the greater cause. He would later criticize even his own brother for tolerating conditions at Amalienstein which he regarded as disgraceful. The dispute with Merensky clouded Prozesky's relationship with Merensky's brother-in-law, Director Wangemann. Prozesky's opposition to the system of superintendents also caused friction between him and the Natal superintendents Posselt, Zunckel and Glöckner. The unhappiest dispute he had with colleagues was politically coloured and began when he was arrested, tried for treason and sent to prison by the British during the Anglo-Boer War. His Natal colleagues, notably Superintendent Glöckner, treated him with astonishing lovelessness in the time of his trouble. He was unfairly removed from the station he had built up with great devotion, and was given no fair hearing by either Glöckner or Director Gensichen. The Natal synod, with the exception of Prozesky's sons, did their best for years after the war to keep him out of Natal. Prozesky was deeply hurt and angered by this treatment from those he had regarded as his brothers. He forgave them, but it took him years to overcome the shock and disappointment they had caused him. With the ex-

ception of Glöckner, none of them ever showed the least remorse.

### **PROZESKY'S TREASON**

Although he enjoyed the moral support of his Transvaal colleagues for his stance during the war, it would appear that Prozesky did make himself guilty of rebellion and treason. Believing that the Boer occupation and annexation of northern Natal absolved him of his obligation of loyalty to the British crown, he aided and supported the Boers openly and palpably. Ironically, he may have been technically innocent on the specific charges brought against him in 1900. His continued steadfast denial that he had been disloyal to the Queen was the result of his naive, literal interpretation of the biblical commandment requiring obedience to temporal authority - and his perception that the British government had been unable to protect him and his people when the Boers invaded the colony. Prozesky's trial awaits competent analysis by an expert in Roman-Dutch and International Law and falls outside the scope of this study.

### **PROZESKY THE ARTIST**

Prozesky's status as a painter and his position in South African art history have yet to be determined. His works, some of which belong to his descendants, need to be traced, catalogued and studied by competent art historians. This facet of his work, too, falls outside the scope of this investigation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Prozesky's life and work at Königsberg from 1868 to 1900 was of benefit to almost all those with whom he came in contact. Exceptions were the traditionalist Nguni chiefs and those of their adherents - mainly men - whose positions of privilege were most threatened by the new religion and lifestyle which the missionary represented. Most of these people consequently moved away. Those who gained most through Prozesky's mission were traditionalist black women who became Christians - especially those whose husbands joined them - and who thus escaped from a system of grinding sexual discrimination and oppression. All the Königsberg tenants, Christians and non-Christians alike, enjoyed free medical care. On the mission station they were sheltered from the less benevolent social and economic conditions which would have been their lot elsewhere, and their dignity was confirmed by the love and concern of the missionary and his family. This love acted as a leaven in the entire area, influencing the way people saw each other and bringing a more enlightened view of blacks to the Boers in particular. The Newcastle district and large areas beyond it would undoubtedly have been the poorer had Prozesky not devoted most of his life to the people living there.

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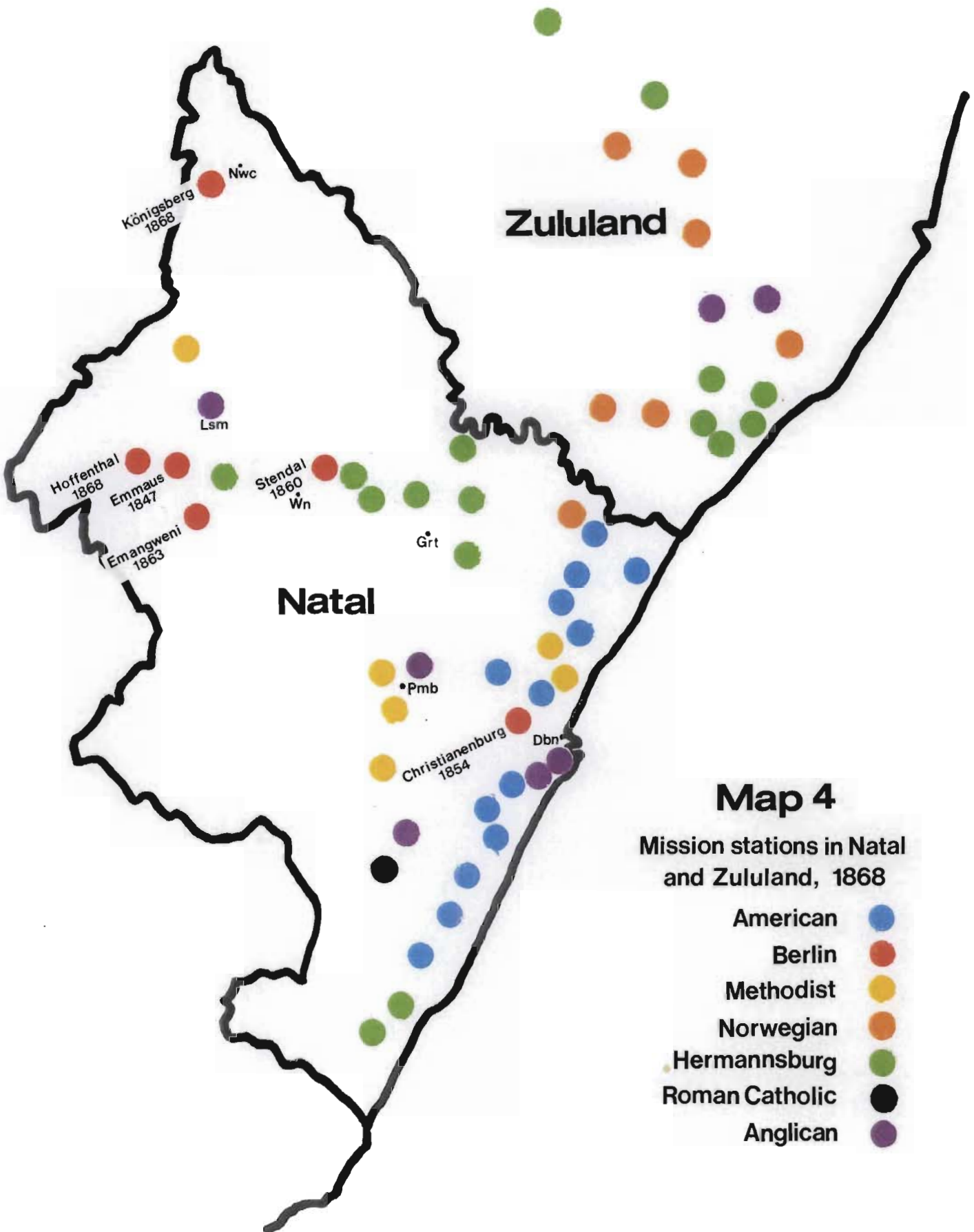
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## **MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**



Königsberg  
1868

Nwc

Hoffenthal  
1868

Emmaus  
1847

Emangweni  
1863

Stendal  
1860

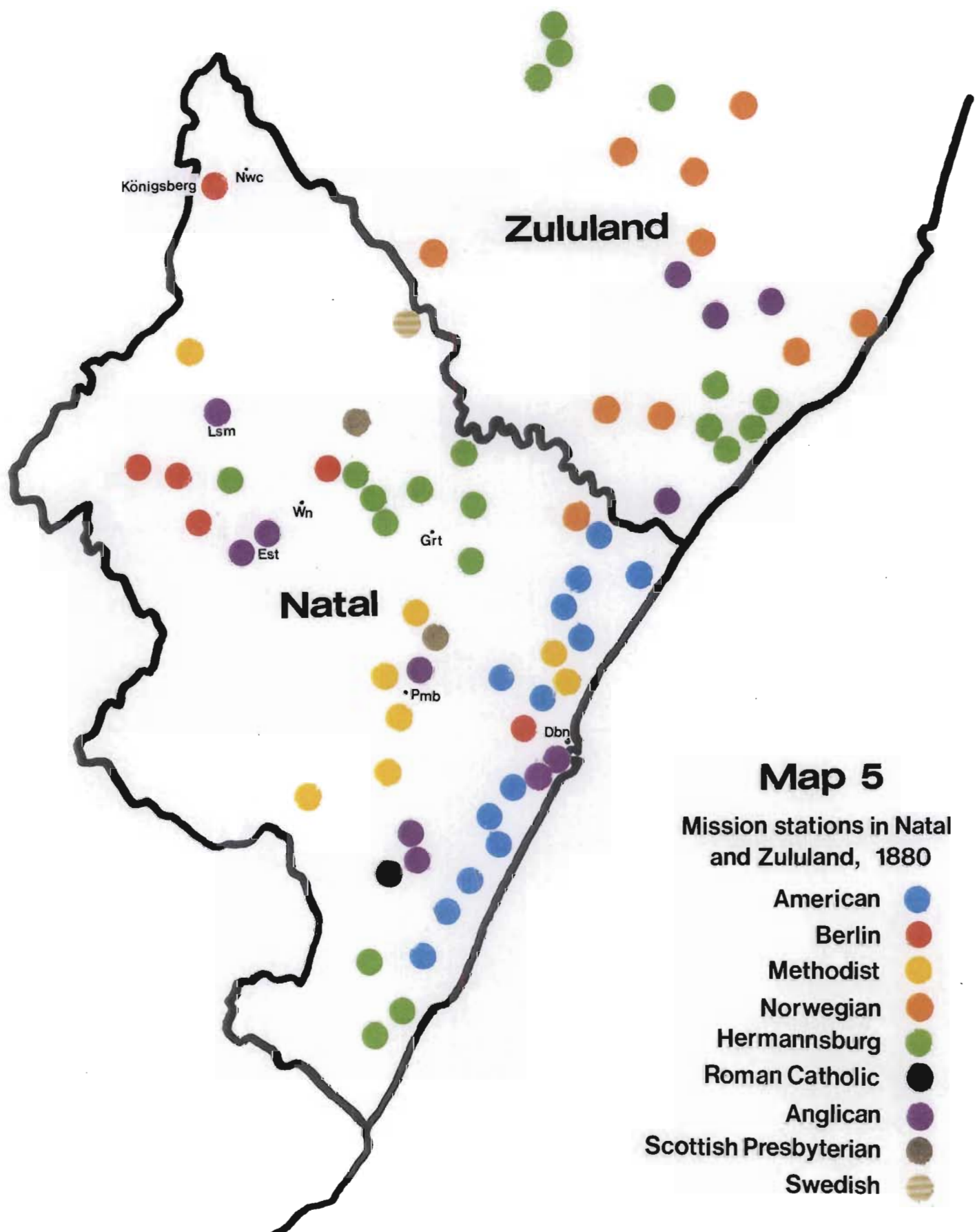
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Christianenburg  
1854

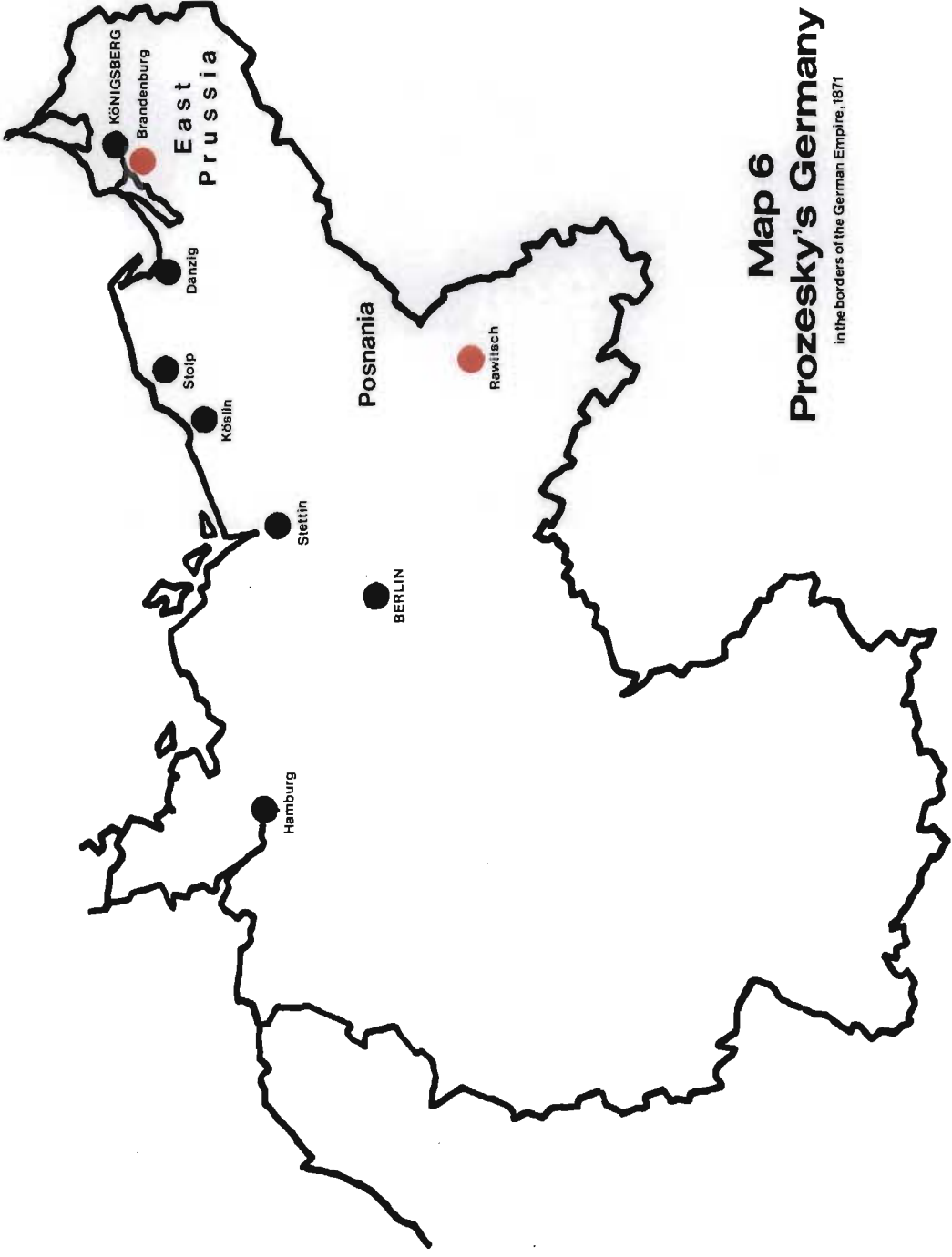
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### Map 5

Mission stations in Natal and Zululand, 1880

- American ●
- Berlin ●
- Methodist ●
- Norwegian ●
- Hermannsburg ●
- Roman Catholic ●
- Anglican ●
- Scottish Presbyterian ●
- Swedish ●



**Map 6**  
**Prozesky's Germany**  
in the borders of the German Empire, 1871

Maassstab der Entfernung: Zwischen Capstadt und Mankopane ungefähr 200 deutsche Meilen.

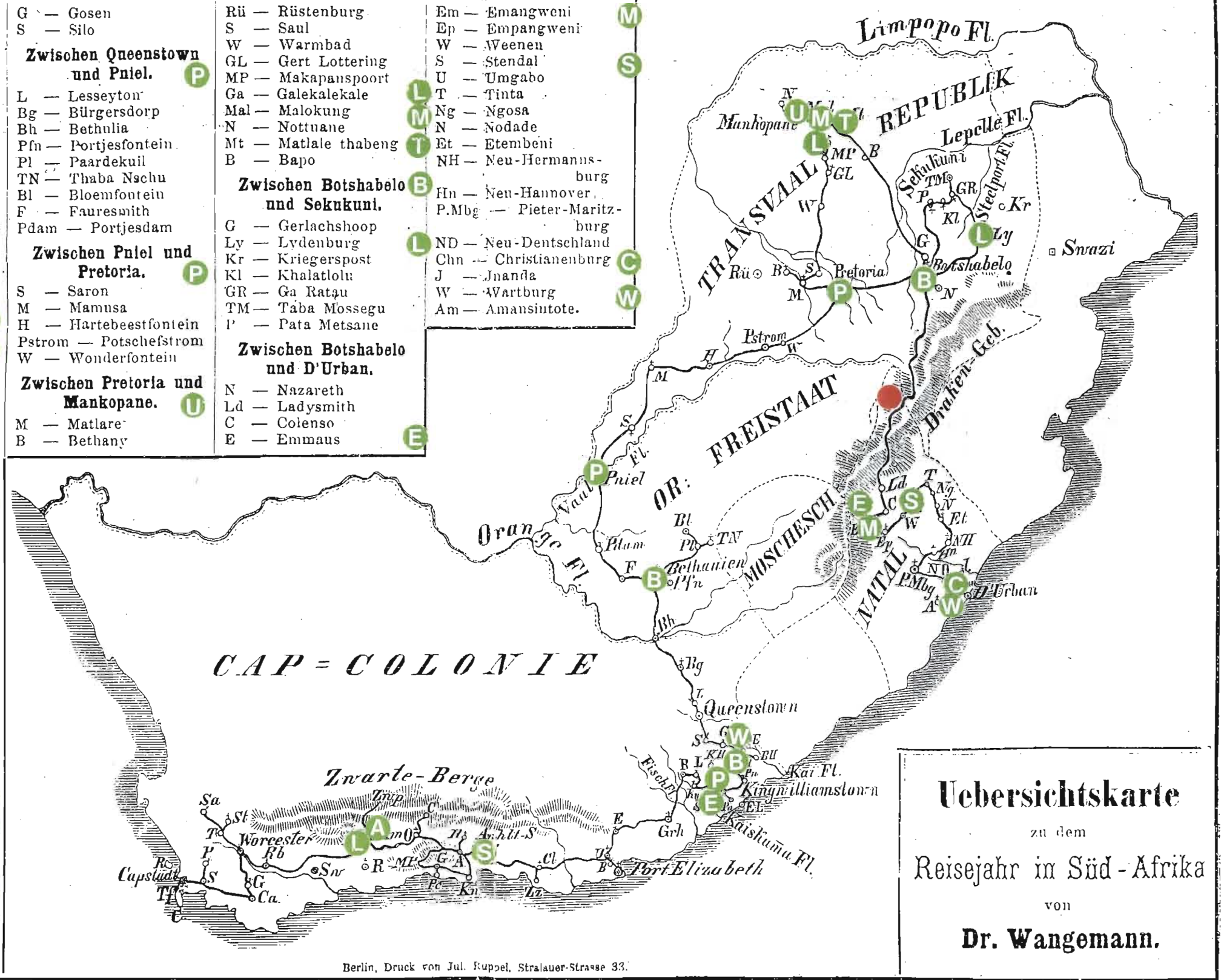
Erklärung der Abkürzungen.

- Bei Capstadt.**  
 R — Robben-Island  
 Tf — Tafelberg  
 C — Cap d. gut. Hoffn.  
 S — Stellenbosch  
 P — Paarl  
 Ca — Caledon  
 G — Gnadenthal  
 Worcester  
 T — Tulbagh  
 Sa — Saron  
 St — Steinthal
- Zwischen Worcester und Port Elizabeth.**  
 Rb — Robertson  
 Sw — Swellendam  
 R — Riversdale  
 L — Ladysmith  
 Z — Zoar  
 Am — Amalienstein  
 Zwp — Zewenweekspoor  
 O — Oudshorn  
 C — Cango  
 MP — Montague-Pass  
 G — Georgstown  
 Pc — Pacaltsdorp  
 Kn — Kneisna  
 A — Avontuur  
 H — Hopedale  
 Anhalt-S — Anhalt-Schmidt  
 Hl — Haarlem  
 Cl — Clarkson  
 Zz — Zizzikamma  
 B — Bethelsdorp  
 U — Uitenhagen
- Zwischen Port Elizabeth und King-Williamstown bis Queenstown.**  
 E — Enon  
 Grh — Grahamstown  
 B — Beaufort  
 L — Lovedale  
 Kn — Knapshope  
 S — Siwane  
 E — Emdizeni  
 P — Petersberg  
 Po — Potsdam  
 EL — East London  
 KH — Keiskammahock  
 Pn — Peulton  
 Bl — Bethel  
 W — Wartburg  
 E — Eluxolweni  
 BH — Bunge's Hütten

- Zwischen Queenstown und Pniel.**  
 L — Lesseyton  
 Bg — Bürgersdorp  
 Bh — Bethulia  
 Pfm — Portjesfontein  
 Pl — Paardekuil  
 TN — Thaba Nschu  
 Bl — Bloemfontein  
 F — Fauresmith  
 Pdam — Portjesdam
- Zwischen Pniel und Pretoria.**  
 S — Saron  
 M — Mamusa  
 H — Hartebeestfontein  
 Pstrom — Potschefstrom  
 W — Wonderfontein
- Zwischen Pretoria und Mankopane.**  
 M — Matlare  
 B — Bethany

- Zwischen Botshabelo und Sekukuni.**  
 G — Gerlachshoop  
 Ly — Lydenburg  
 Kr — Kriegerspost  
 Kl — Khalatlolu  
 GR — Ga Ratau  
 TM — Taba Mossegu  
 P — Pata Metsane
- Zwischen Botshabelo und D'Urban.**  
 N — Nazareth  
 Ld — Ladysmith  
 C — Colenso  
 E — Emmaus

- Rü — Rüstenburg  
 S — Saul  
 W — Warmbad  
 GL — Gert Lottering  
 MP — Makapanspoort  
 Ga — Galekalekale  
 Mal — Malokung  
 N — Nottuane  
 Mt — Matlale thabeng  
 B — Bapo
- Em — Emangweni  
 Ep — Empfangweni  
 W — Weenen  
 S — Stendal  
 U — Umgabo  
 T — Tinta  
 Ng — Ngosa  
 N — Nodade  
 Et — Etembeni  
 NH — Neu-Hermannsburg  
 Hn — Neu-Hannover  
 P.Mbg — Pieter-Maritzburg  
 ND — Neu-Dentschland  
 Chn — Christianenburg  
 J — Jnanda  
 W — Wartburg  
 Am — Amansiutote.

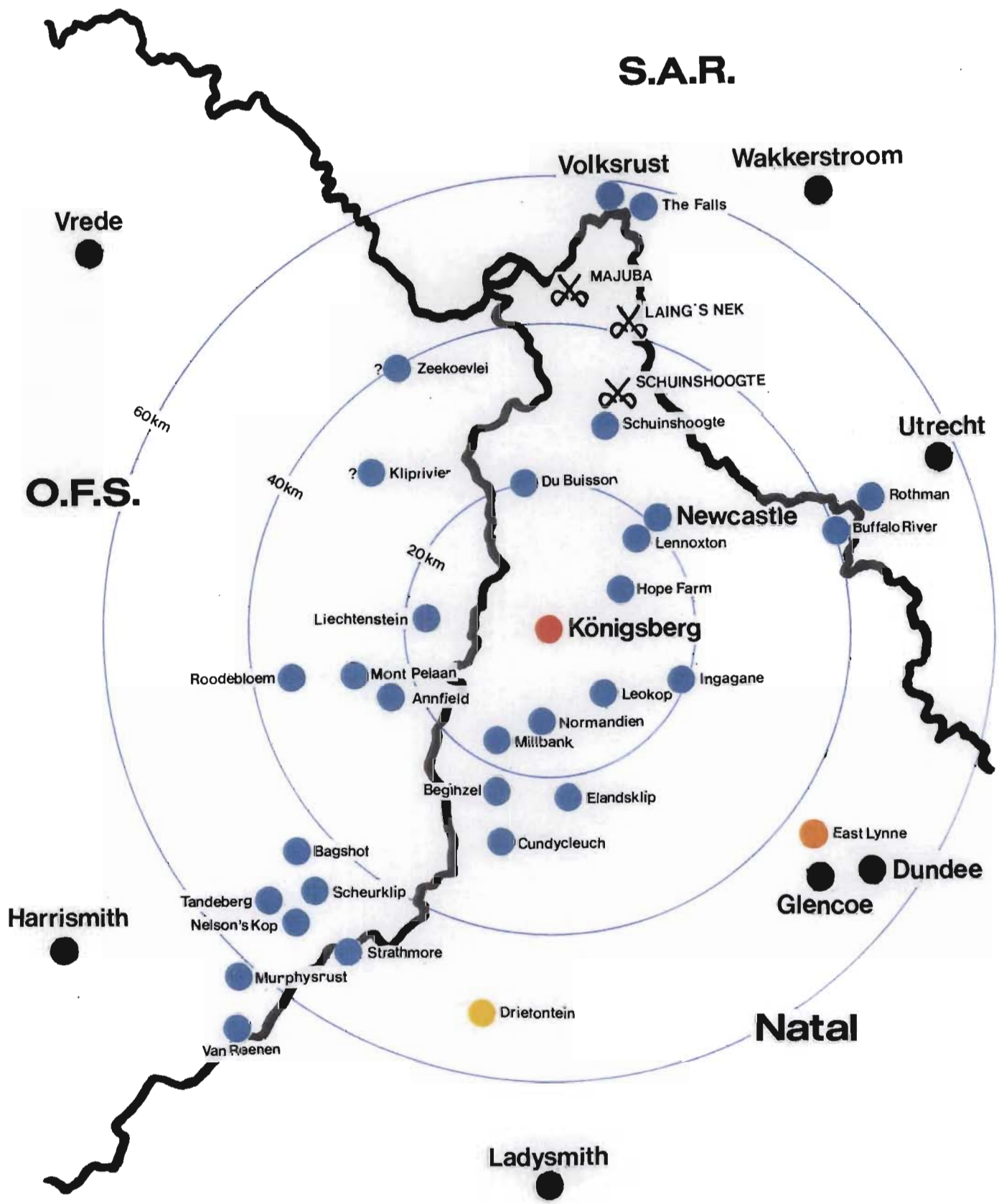


**Uebersichtskarte**  
 zu dem  
 Reisejahr in Süd-Afrika  
 von  
**Dr. Wangemann.**

Berlin, Druck von Jul. Ruppel, Stralauer-Strasse 33.

Der zurückgelegte Reiseweg ist durch den fortlaufenden schwarzen Strich bezeichnet.

Map 7: Wangemann's journey, 1867 Berlin mission stations ● Site for Prozesky's station ●



**Map 8**

● Königsberg and its out-stations and preaching-places, ● also showing the battlefields of 1881

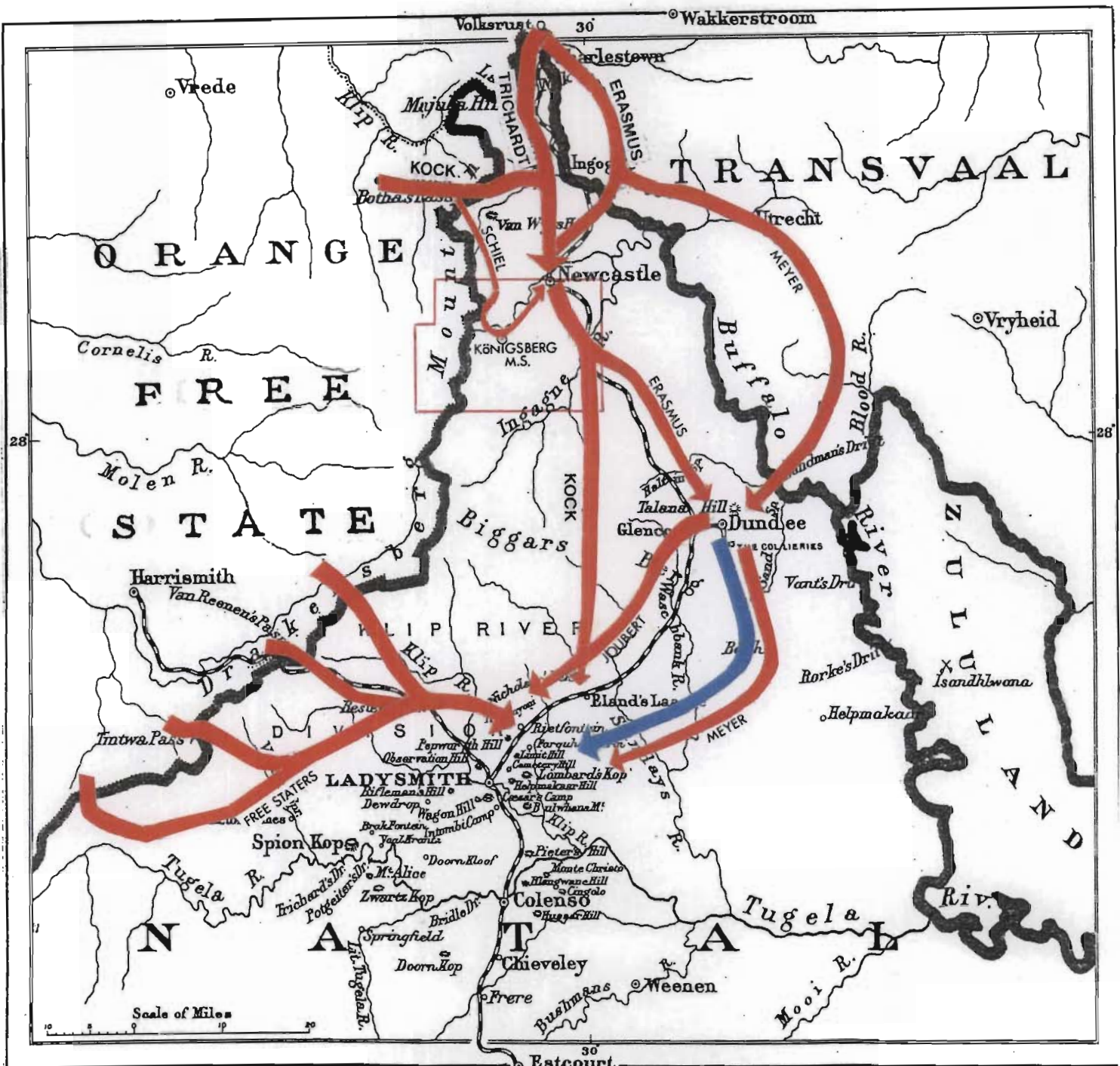


**Map 9**  
**Königsberg and the Zulu War, 1879**

← FLIGHT OF MISSIONARIES

FIRST BRITISH INVASION

SECOND INVASION



## Map 10

The Boer advance into Natal, October 1899

Yule's retreat from Dundee



Block including Königsberg enlarged on Map 11  
 Based on a map from A. Conan Doyle's The Great Boer War

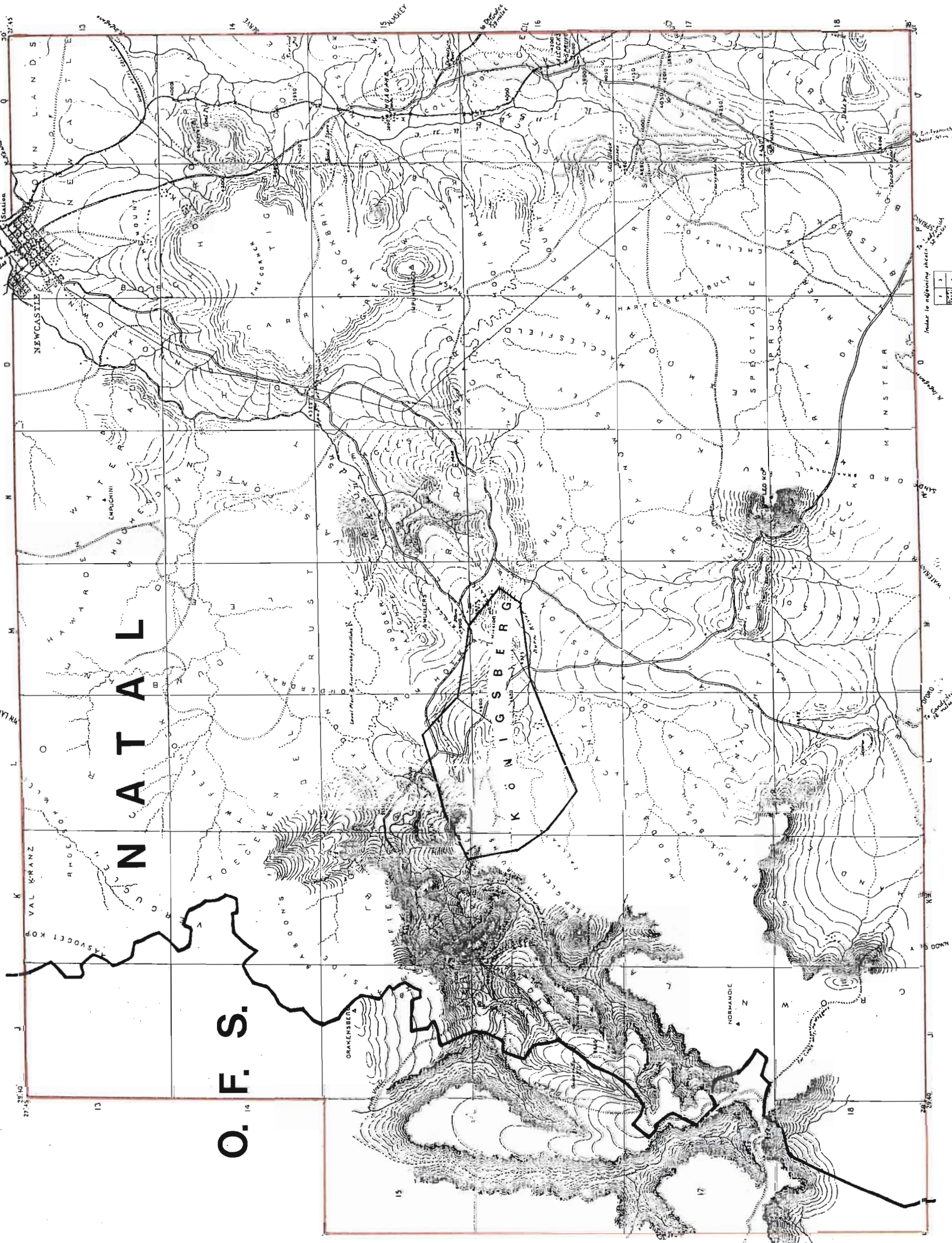
# Map 11

Block delineated in red on Map 10  
enlarged

## MILITARY SKETCH BIGGARSBERG COMMUNICATIONS IN NATAL

NORTH OF THE LATITUDE OF LABYSMITH

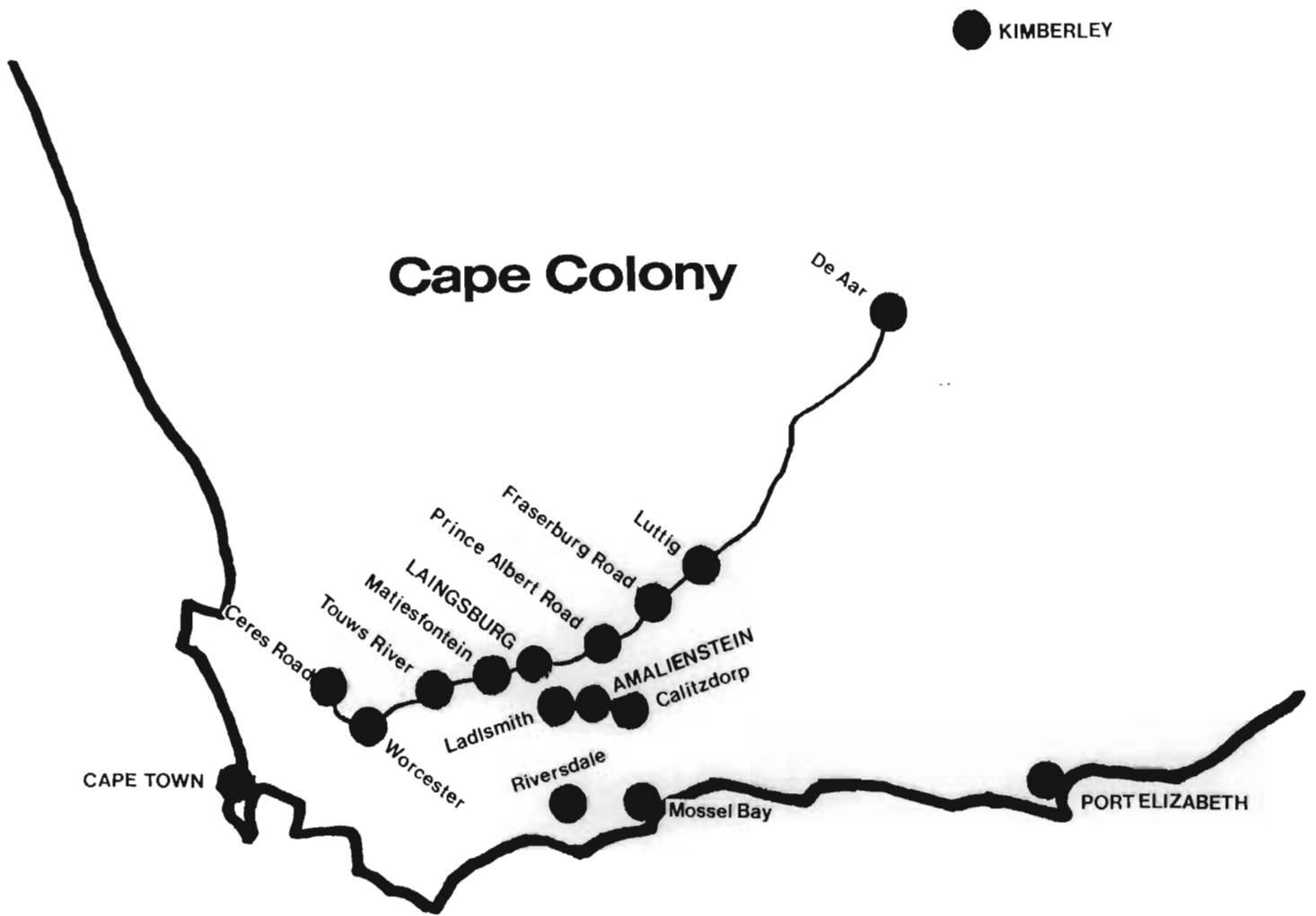
Sheets 4 & 5



Government Station Roads	.....
Other roads and tele lines	.....
Telegraph	.....
Topographical points	.....
Form names	.....

Scale 1:250,000 or 1 inch = 1 mile

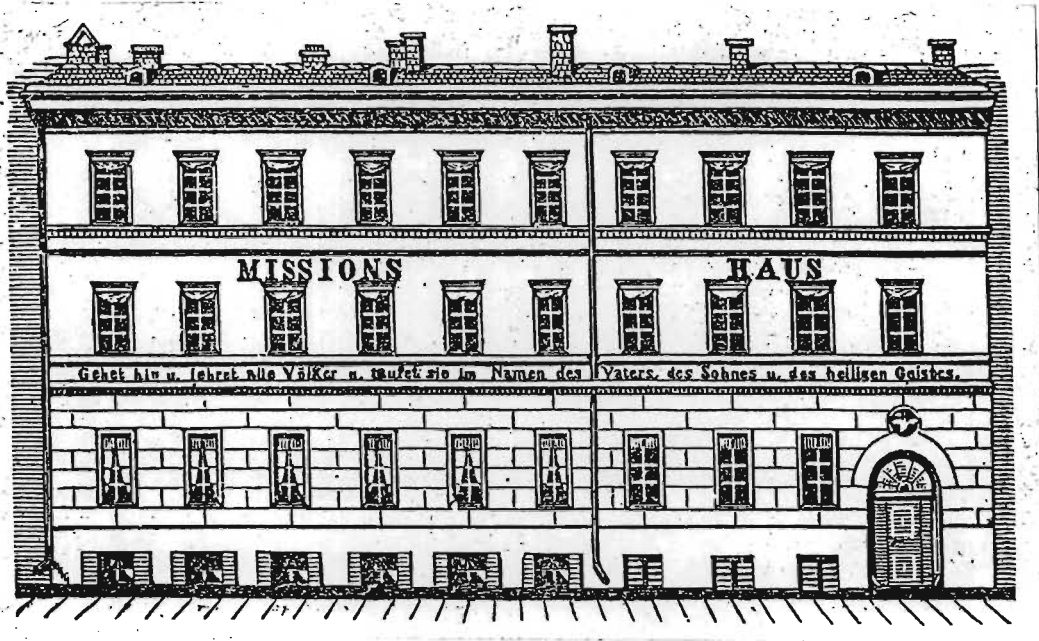
Published by the  
Director-General of the  
Survey Department  
April, 1922



## Map 12

Prozesky in the Cape Colony, 1903-07

The Laingsburg railway parish ●—●—●



The Berlin Missionshaus in the Sebastianstraße



Dr E. Kratzenstein, 1823-96, lecturer and mission inspector, 1858-96



Dr H.T. Wangemann, 1818-94, director of the Berlin Missionary Society, 1865-94



R. Marowsky

Charlottenburg

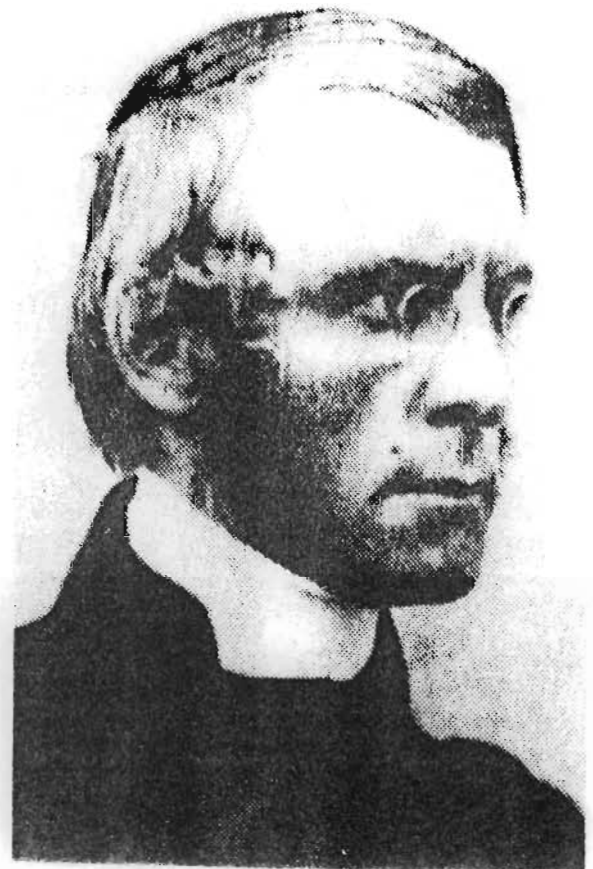
Caroline Richter and August Prozesky as an engaged couple, Berlin 1865



The Richters of Rawitsch, ca. 1865: Caroline centre, Carl back row second from left



Theodor Glöckner



John Colenso

Berlin missionaries in Natal, 1866



Jacob Ludwig Döhne of Wartburg



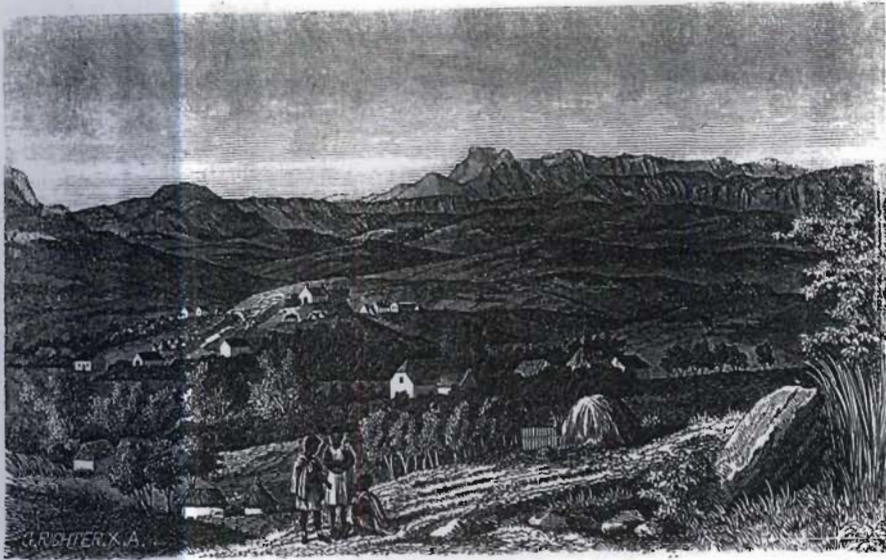
Carl Wilhelm Posselt of Christianenburg



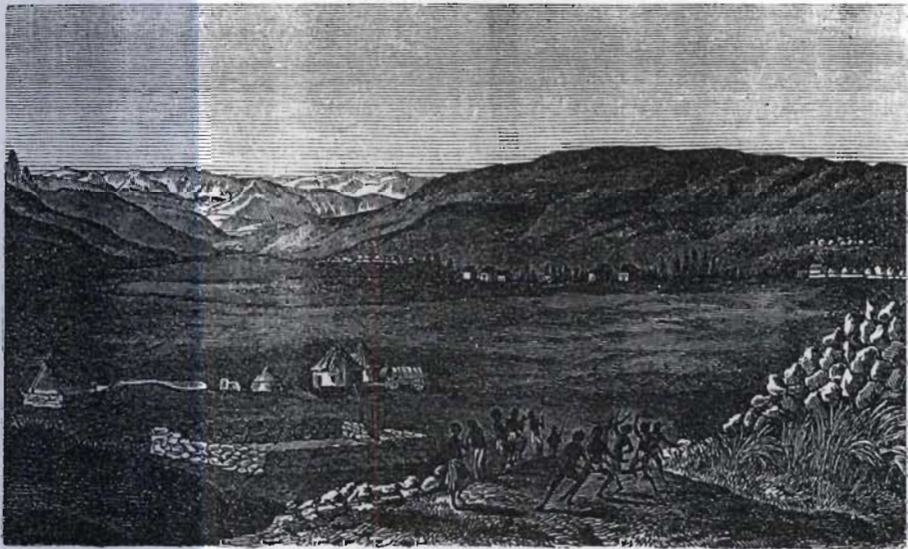
Carl Zunckel of Emmaus



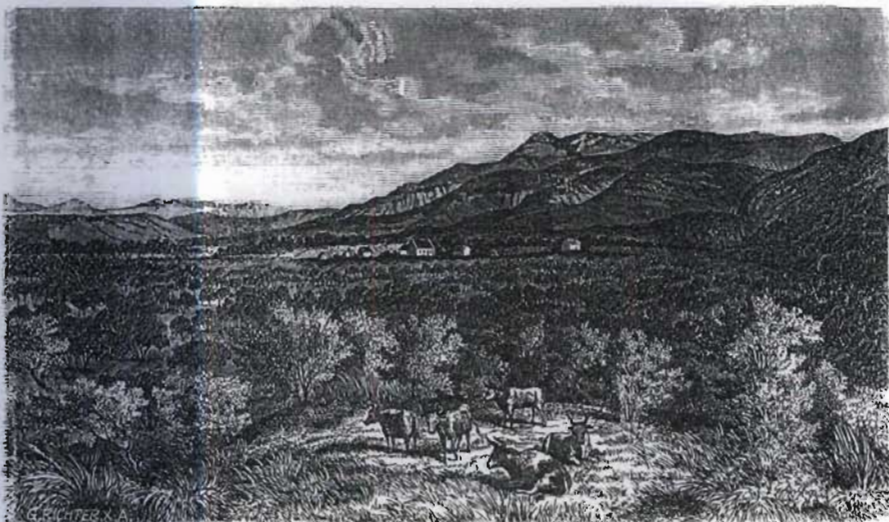
Albert Neizel of Emangweni



Emmaus



Emangweni



Stendal

Two views of Botshabelo, one showing the original church, the other the larger church which Prozesky decorated with mural texts



Wohnhaus von Merensky.

Botshabelo.

Kirche.

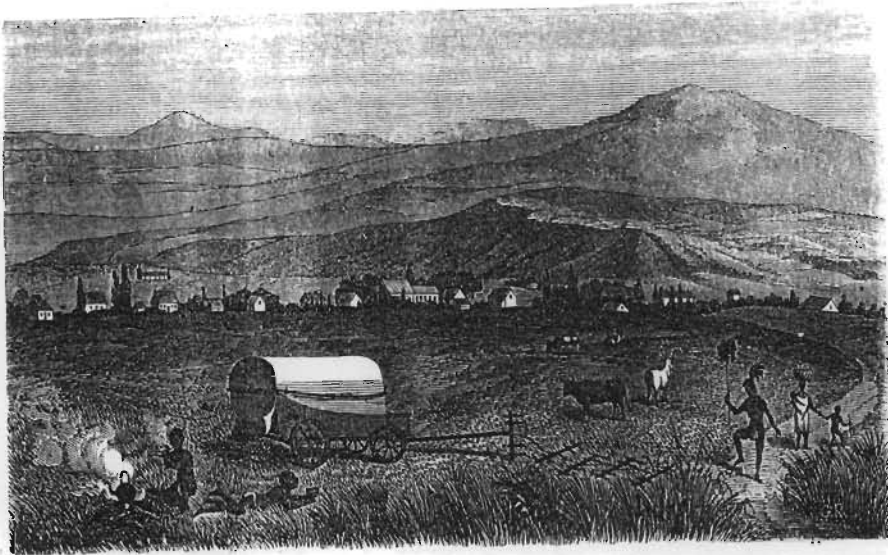
Schanze.



Alexander Merensky, ca. 1867



Paul Kruger, ca. 1867



Newcastle in 1867



Melmoth Osborn, the first Newcastle magistrate



Rev. James Allison



Rev. George Blencowe

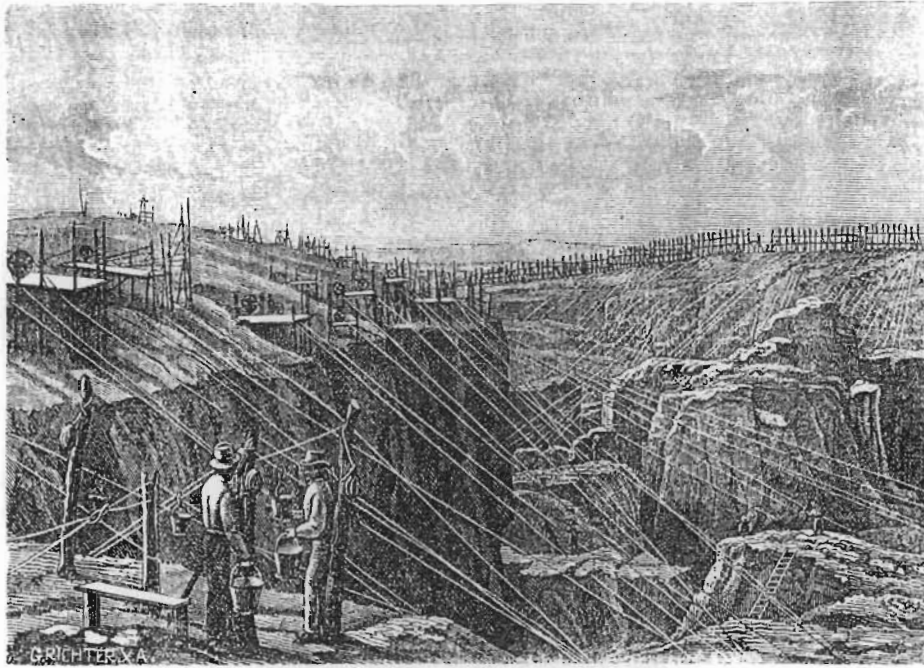


The merchant Edward Dixon



Carl Richter and Elizabeth Winter, and Caroline Richter and August Prozesky, married in a double wedding at Christianenburg on 28th May 1869





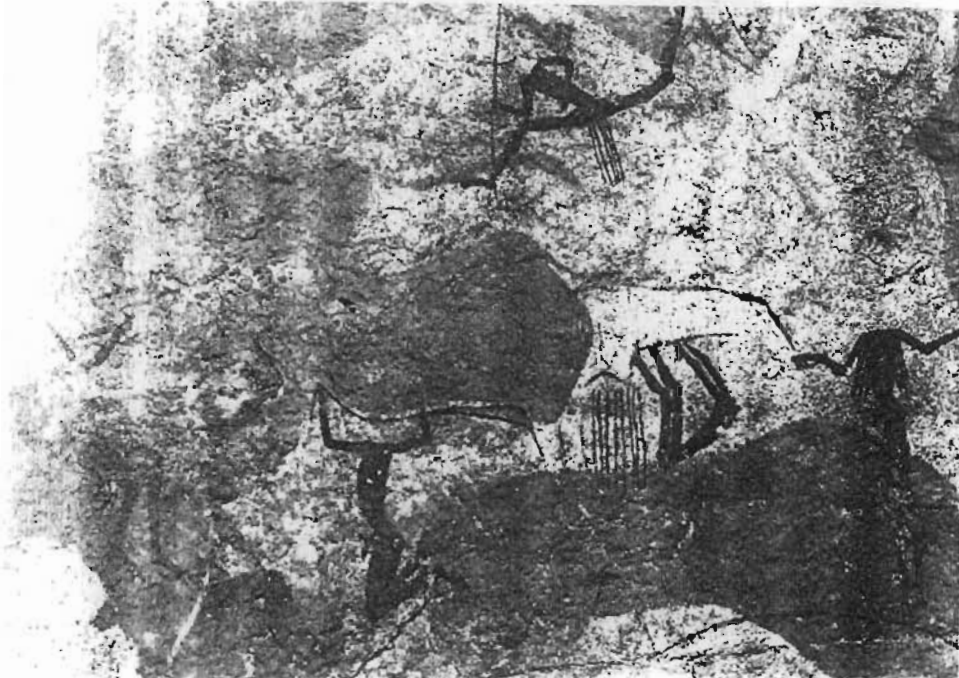
The open mine at New Rush, ca. 1873



Christian Bauling and his wife



Sir Garnet Wolseley



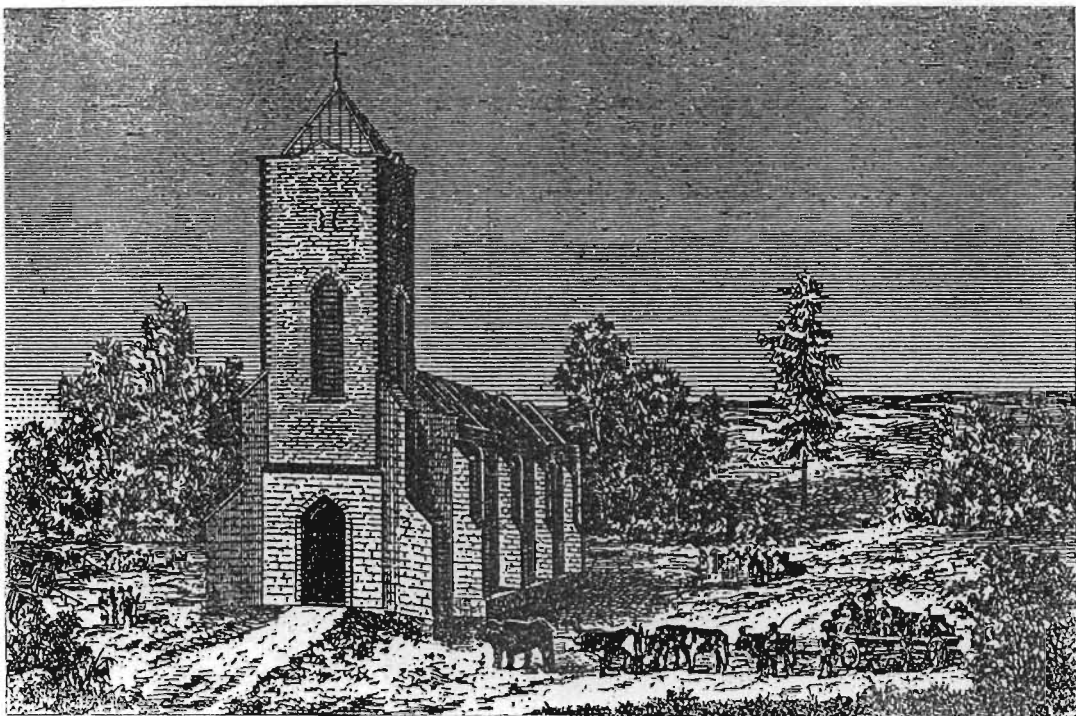
A San painting copied by Prozesky on the farm Clifford in 1877



Hermann Kuschke and his second wife in later life



Sir Bartle Frère



The Königsberg church, 1880 The wagon and oxen are not to scale.



Sir Theophilus Shepstone



Combat-General Nicolaas Smit



Commandant Frans Joubert



Paul Kruger ca. 1881



General Sir George Pomeroy Colley



Alexander Merensky in mid-life



Der Direktor. Dr. Wöchner.

Dr. Prozesky.

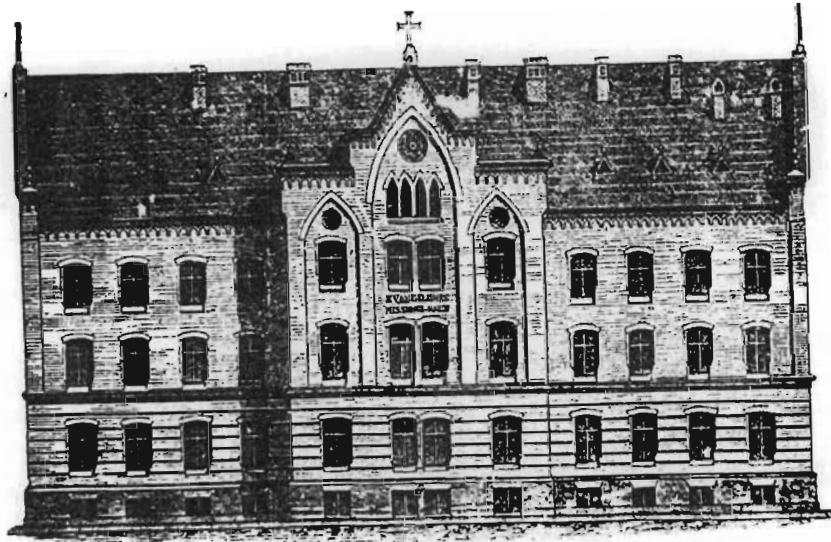
Wangemann's party between Harrismith and Hoffenthal, April 1885



Carl and Adelheid Prozesky and their daughters  
Issie and Hannchen, ca. 1888

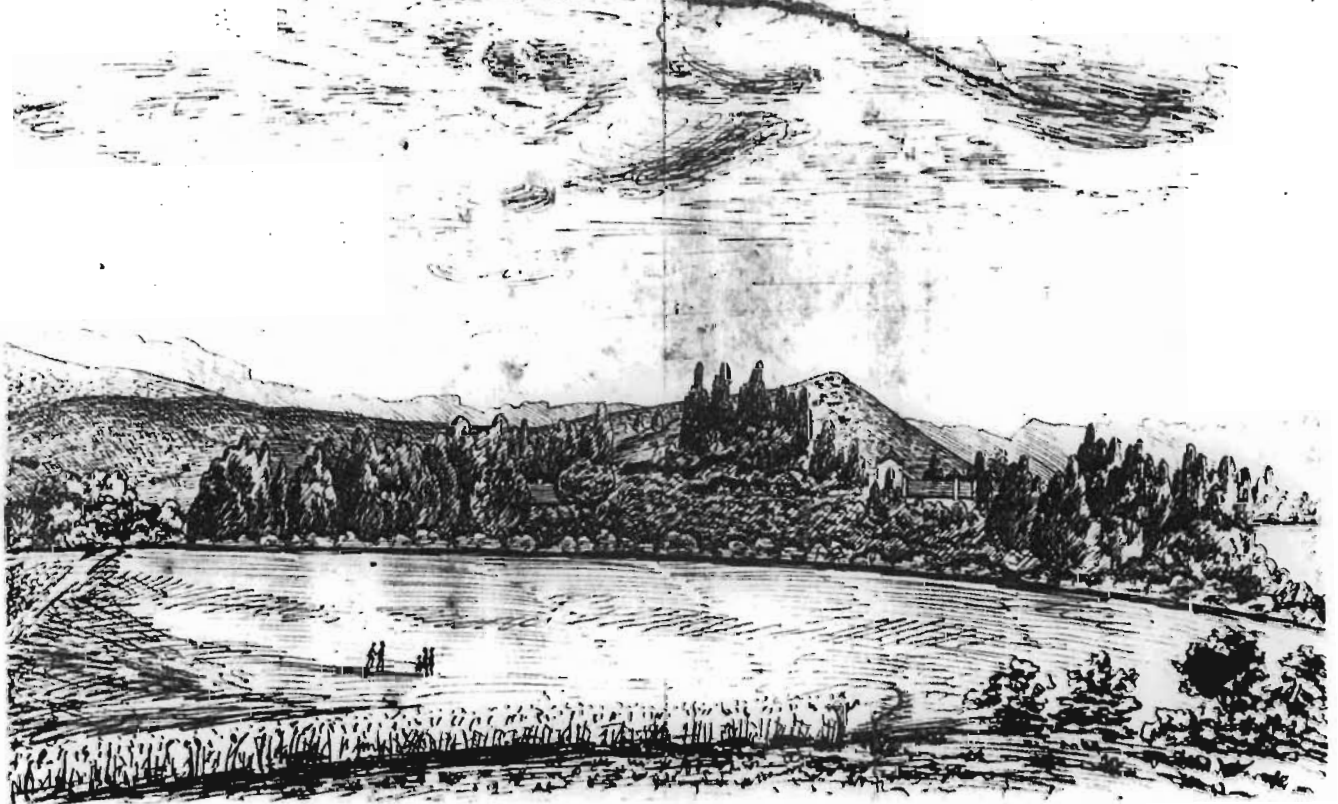


The Prozeskys' eldest daughter Mariechen,  
Hermann Müller and their first child Dolly



The new Missionshaus in Berlin, 1873

Missionsstation Königsberg in Natal in Süd-Afrika von Süd-Osten aus gesehen und gezeichnet von A. Franke.



Königsberg as seen by Missionary Johannes Franke, ca. 1890



August Prozesky in 1892



The Prozesky family in 1891

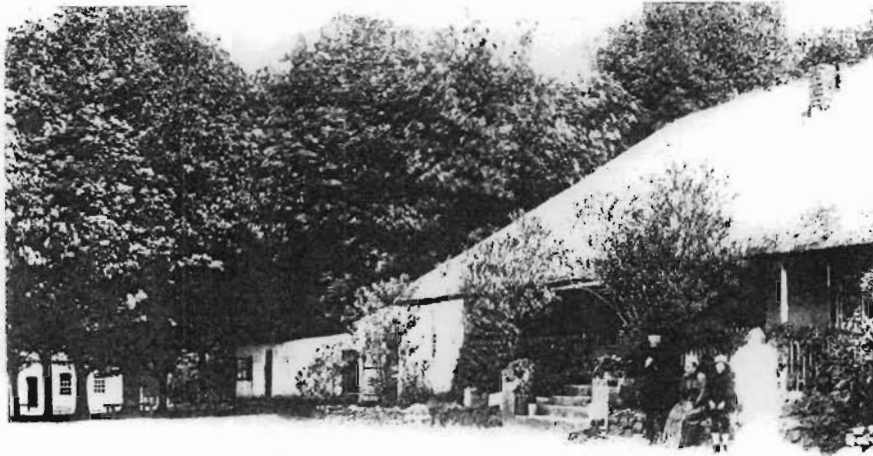


Adolf Wundram and Martha Prozesky on their wedding day



Lieschen/Lill and Hannchen Prozesky, ca. 1895

Photographs of Königsberg taken by Mr Robert Plant in 1894



Wohnhaus mit Eichenhain, durchschimmernd die Schule zu Königsberg. Natal.

Verlag d. Buchhandlung & Berl. ev. Missions-Gesellsch., Berlin N.O. 13, Georgenkirchstr. 70

31

The mission house, guest-cottage and school



Ansicht vom Wohnhause zu Königsberg. Natal aus gesehen.

Verlag d. Buchhandlung der Berl. ev. Missions-Gesellsch., Berlin N.O. 13, Georgenkirchstr. 70



32

View from the mission house



Wohnhaus zu Königsberg. Natal. Ansicht von der Straße.



Kirche zu Königsberg in Natal.

Verlag d. Buchhandlung d. Berl. ev. Missions-Gesellsch., Berlin N.O. 48, Georgenkirchstr. 70.



Plant's photograph of the Königsberg church, 1894



The church with its second tower



Verlag d. Buchhandlung d. Berl. ev. Missions-Gesellsch., Berlin N.O. 48, Georgenkirchstr. 70.

Schule zu Königsberg in Natal.



The mission school in 1894 Lieschen Prozesky at left, August and Caroline Prozesky with their youngest son Erwin, centre, and Benjamin Gule, right



Berlin missionaries in Natal, 1897:  
Top:  
Centre: Prozesky and Glöckner  
Bottom:



Wedding party of Vause Marshall and Lieschen/Lill Prozesky, Königsberg, 2nd February 1898



*C. St. A. Wundram,*  
THE STUDIO,  
PIET RETIEF.



Left: August Prozesky shortly before the Anglo-Boer War  
Wundram and Hannchen

Right: Caroline Prozesky and her daughters Martha



Left: Lieutenant-Colonel Trichardt, commander of the State Artillery of the South African Republic

Centre: Dr Hohls of the Transvaal field ambulance

Right: Commandant-General Piet Joubert and his staff in Newcastle on 17th October 1899 when Prozesky had his fateful interview with him



Above: British prisoners-of-war at Newcastle station Front, left, Vrederechter Moodie; right, Field-cornet Chatterton Left: Paul Prozesky



Armed Boers in Newcastle, Traugott Prozesky among them



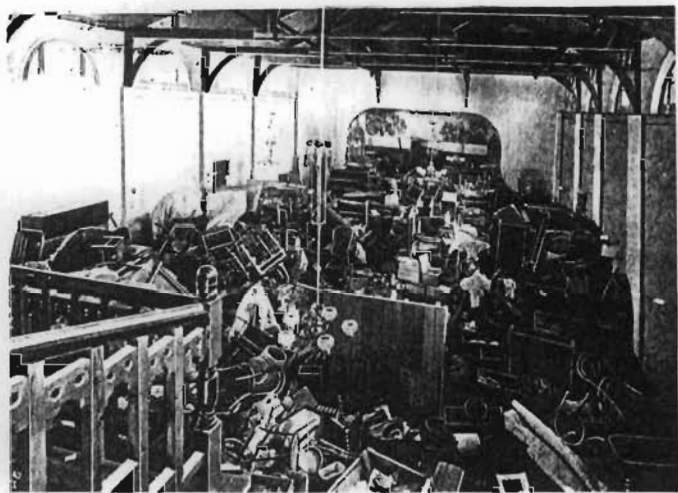
President Kruger in 1899



Acting Commandant-General Louis Botha



General Sir Redvers Buller



Furniture stored in the Newcastle town hall for safety



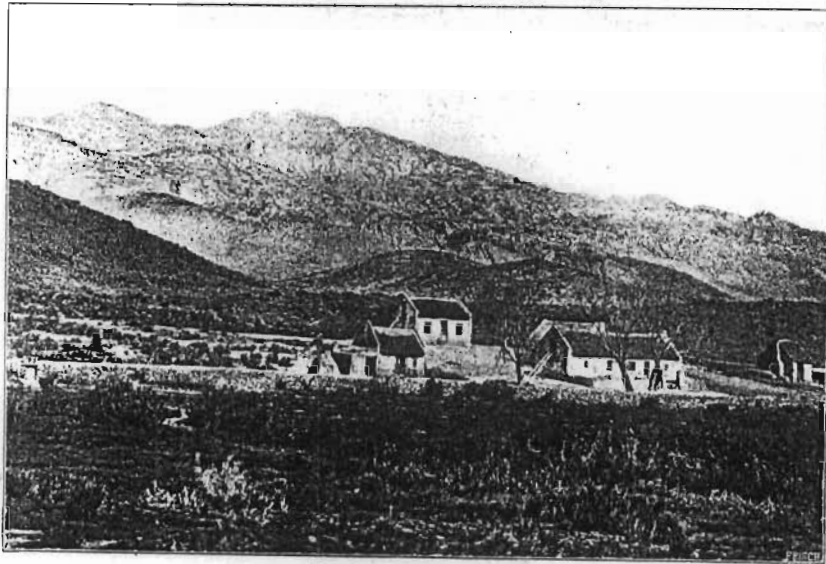
Traugott Prozesky with fellow Boer prisoners-of-war,  
Diyatalawa Camp, Ceylon



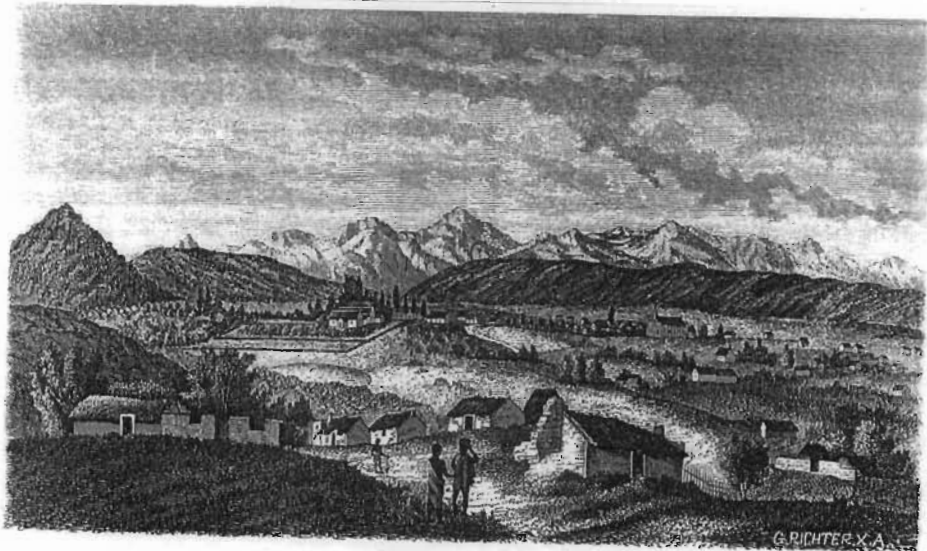
The Boer generals DeWet, De la Rey and Botha,  
consulted in the Hague by Traugott Prozesky



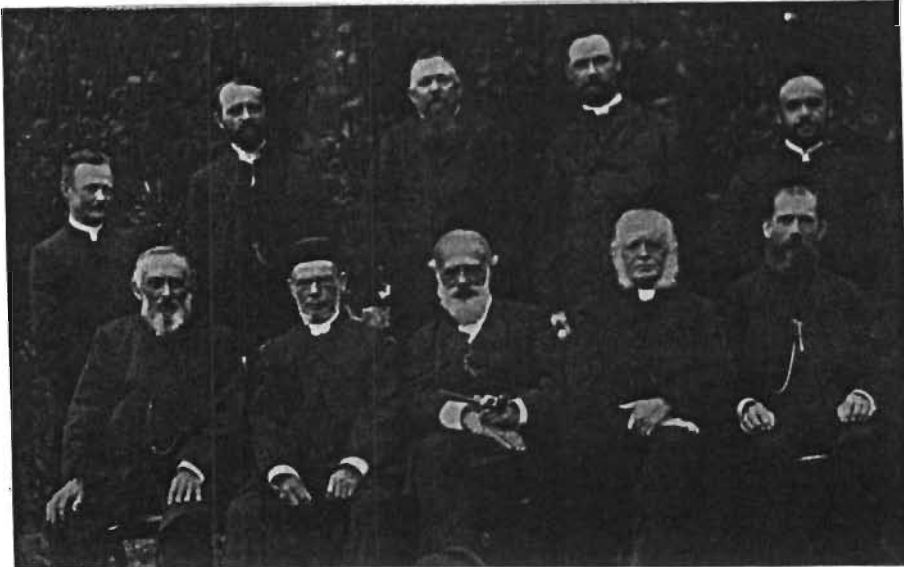
Berlin 1902 Back row: Hermann Müller, Hannchen and Traugott Prozesky  
Front row: Dolly Müller, Caroline and August Prozesky



Rietvlei out-station



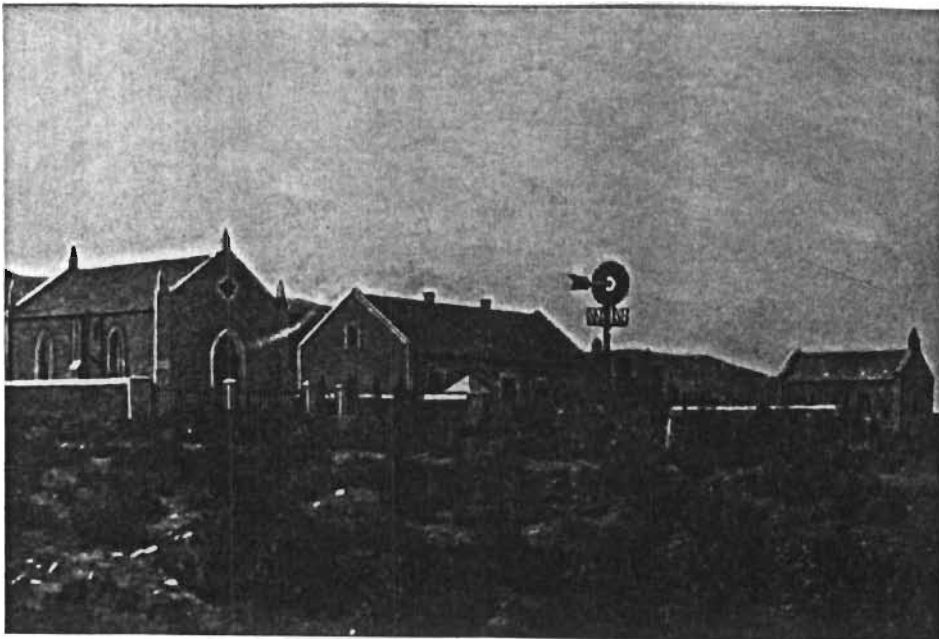
Amalienstein



Berlin missionaries of the Cape synod with Director Gensichen, 1899  
Carl Prozesky front row, right



Berlin 1904 Back row: Issie Prozesky and Hermann Müller  
Front row: Hannchen, Auguste and Carl Prozesky



Laingsburg church, missionhouse and school



Amy Frazer and Christian Prozesky,  
who were married in 1902



Luise Weidemann and Otto Prozesky,  
married in 1903



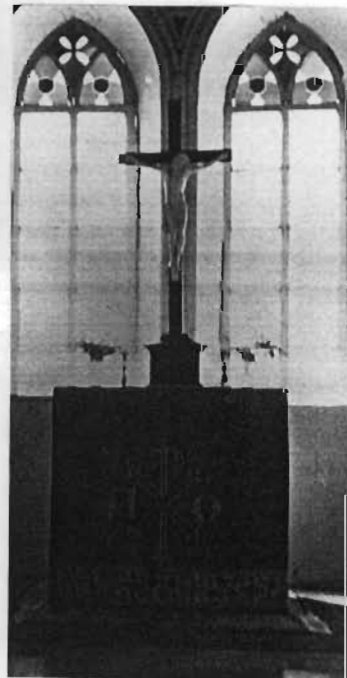
Mariechen Düring and Traugott Prozesky as an engaged couple, 1908



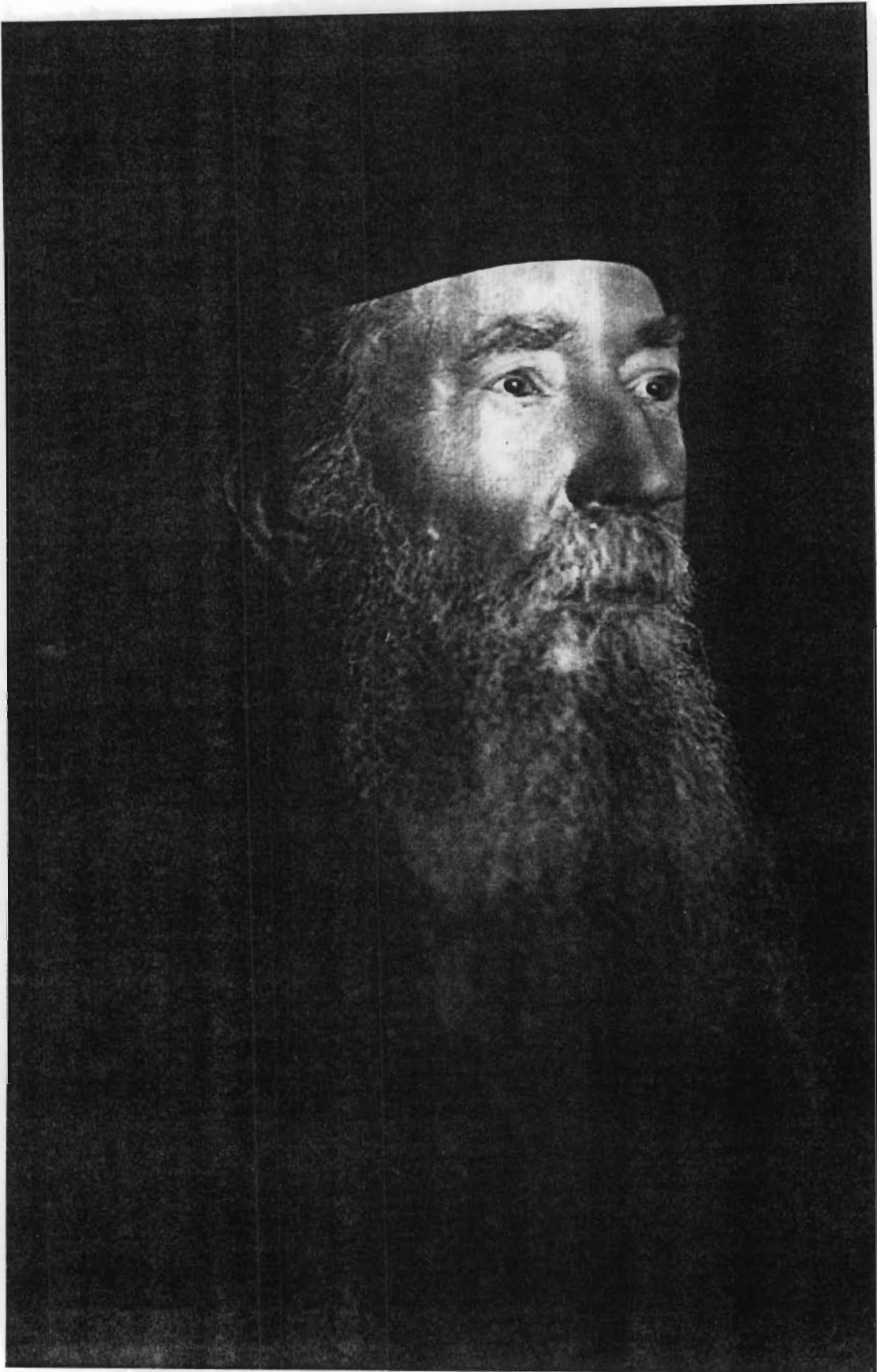
Wedding party of Paul Prozesky and Lettie Pretorius, Heidelberg, 1908  
August and Caroline Prozesky, front left



Left: Melly von Schmidt-Hirschfelde and Christian Prozesky on their wedding day at Wustrau in 1910



Interior with chancel and altar of the Königsberg church



August Prozesky in old age