

NGIDI, MESHACH

29.11.1921

File 62, nbk. 88, pp. 1-13.

1 Meshach (Mishaka) Ngidi ka Madhlakazi ka Solibomvu ka Mnguni ka Kuzwayo ka Hlomuka ka Ngidi.

AmaLala. We came down by means of a grain basket (sehla nge silulu). The amaNtungwa bukuzela 'd by means of their own grain baskets.¹ We were not associated with them. They came down by means of a grain basket; we did so independently of them by the same means.

I know the eulogies of Mnguni (the above), Madhlaka alias Faku, Solibomvu. Madhlaka was of Dingana's Dhlambedhlu regiment. [I have ascertained that he *bonga's* Madhlaka, his father, also Solibomvu, very slightly, four and two lines respectively.]

The first coming of the Ngidi tribe to Zululand from the north.

The old people say that we came down by means of a grain basket. When they had arrived, the chief went to build at eGqalabeni, at eHalambu (this was Hlomuka). After this it was said that the amaNgidi were at eHalambu.

The amaNgcobo are of our people. They were caught by Hlomuka in a bog, in a reed-bed at the Mvoti, above Mgungundhlovana.² The chief had organized a hunting party. He saw people running away; they had been sitting in the sun. He saw them
 2 *running away; they ran into the muddy place. The chief then called off the hunting party. The next day he told it to go along the river, close to the river, to the place where the people had run away. Some went along the other side of the river; they surrounded the place. Those who were coming from above caused the people who were sitting in the sun to take fright. They tried to run away, but ran into those who were at the river. They were caught. The chief's people brought them back; they brought them to the temporary shelters which they had erected. After this they were called the people of the place of Nkunziyomfula, the people of Siwutiwulu (i.e. Nkunzinkulu). The chief went off with them and crossed the Tugela; he went to eHalambu. He settled them in an uninhabited area (engudwini).*

I hear that Kuzwayo [p. 1] was of the age-grade of Senzangakona.³

3 Tshaka's attack on Mnguni, chief of the Ngidi tribe, and how that tribe came to flee from Zululand.

Tshaka called (biza) Kuzwayo. He said that he should come with his people so that they could put on a display of dancing for one another. Mnguni said, 'There is no chief who has ever called another (A yik' inkos' e-k' i biz' enye). 'The envoy returned home. He came again to Mnguni and said, 'The chief asks who you think you are to refuse.' Mnguni replied, 'I have asked for nothing among the Zulu. Go and tell him that I shall not come.' The envoy did so. That is how the quarrel began.

For a time nothing happened. Tshaka remained still; he did not bring on his army. Then there was fighting; it was begun by Bovungana ka Mavela. He attacked us at eHalambu. There was fighting; our men caught Bovungana, the chief of the amaNgcobo. After this the men of the abaseMbo were called out, the people of Kabazele ka Mavovo. Fighting took place. They caught Kabazele ka Mavovo and killed him; they killed him in a reed-bed.

4 *That was the end of the fighting among the amaLala. After that, Tshaka attacked. His army was seen when it was on the other side of the Mhlatuze. Mnguni called out that the amabuto should assemble. He said that the people should collect up their possessions and that the women and the old people should go across the Tukela with the cattle. They camped at eWutshini, at the Tukela. The amabuto of Mnguni went to the iNkandhla; they went in from the east. Tshaka's spies saw where they had gone in, for Mnguni had left a small herd of cattle to lure them on. The next day, when the spies saw them, they went back to report that the cattle were standing there alone and that the amaLala had run away. Then the inkosi, Tshaka, came up. Fighting took*
5 *place in the Nsuze river, right there in the water. They fought until it was dark, until it was pitch dark. Then they left off fighting. At this point Mnguni sent his force into the forest at the iNkandhla, while the Zulu force retreated across the Mhlatuze. The next day they fought again; they fought there on the Mhlatuze. Again they fought until it was dark. Mnguni's army was called off when it was dark; again it went into the forest at the iNkandhla.*

During the night Tshaka called out his men and ordered them to arm. Mnguni had done the same. Tshaka ordered his men to return with Mnguni's head. They fought for a third day; they fought until it was dark. The darkness caused them to draw off. The Nsuze and the Mhlatuze were red. On the fourth day they fought to a finish. They began in the morning, and fought until the sun went down. It was the
6 *darkness which caused them to draw off; there was no one who ran away. On the fourth night Mnguni said to his amabuto, 'Let us go to Hlobane, for if we go to the women who are with the cattle, Tshaka will take the cattle; it is they that he wants. Let us cover up our trail and go off; he will follow us.'*⁴

They went to Hlobane. They were there for two days, then Tshaka's forces came up. They fought there in the night and in the day; the country at Hlobane mountain was red. When Mnguni saw that his men had had enough of fighting he told them to leave that place, to make their escape. They did so. They fetched their womenfolk and and their cattle. They left the country of the Zulu; they settled below the Drakensberg (uNdi) to the west of the Mnambithi river.⁵ Some time after they had settled there,
7 *spies from the Zulu country were seen. At once Mnguni said, 'People must get their*

possessions together;⁶ let us go.' They climbed onto the cattle (*ba kwela pezu kwe zinkomo*) and went along the Drakensberg. They went off to the Orange (*iSangqu*) river, and settled there. I shall end the story of the fighting there. They did not fight a third time; they made off.

.... <Praises of Mnguni kaKhuzwayo omitted - eds.>

- 11 *The army was commanded by Mnteli, a son of Mnguni. Mnteli died at the Mhlatuze. They cut off his head and took it to their chief, Tshaka. Then Mnguni said that they should go off.*

Tshaka is not praised by Mnguni, for he ran away.⁷

Nkuna was the induna of Mnguni. The imVoko was an ibuto of the girls of Mnguni. Mnguni had not been buta'd by Tshaka.

They said that there was a stronghold (inqaba) at Hlobane. That was the reason for the tribe running off there.

I am of the Hayelwengwenya regiment.⁸

Massacre of Piet Retief and party.

- 12 *My father said that when it was dark the Boers armed themselves, and went to surround the umuzi of eMgungundhlovu. They failed to do so. The guards saw them, and told the king. The king said, 'What is to be done?' The men said, 'The king should invite them to an exhibition of dancing. They should not come with their guns; they should come with empty hands.'*

For a second time the Boers tried to surround the umuzi. The guards saw their tracks. The grass was worn away; it was worn away by the hooves of the horses. The king then sent the izinduna to go and see what the guards had told him. They saw, and told the king so. The king said, 'What is to be done?' The izinduna said, 'The king should invite them to an exhibition of dancing. They must leave their weapons behind; they must not come with them.' The Boers came. They went into the umuzi at eMgungundhlovu. A dance was put on for them. The king then made a plan, to the effect that when he stood up and left the enclosure the men were to cease their iwawa (a kind of song), seize the Boers, and beat them with knobbed sticks.

- 13 *My father told me this before the fighting between Dinuzulu and Zibebu had taken place, not long before [i.e. about 1886].⁹ Madhlaka (my father) died long ago. He said that he was present at the time. He was not hurt. He said that he was among those who killed Piti's people; he too killed them.*

Meshach says he has often heard the above given as the reason why Piet Retief and party were put to death. Meshach is about 49 years of age, for he is of the Hayelwengwenya regiment (*which follows after the Felapakati*).

Meshach's wife, Ida Dhlamini, says she has also heard the above given as the reason why Dingana put the Boers to death.

William Ngidi, Colenso's great informant, was *ubabekazi*, i.e. my uncle.¹⁰

13.12.1921

File 62, nbk. 88, p. 14.

- 14 Mbiyana ka Mjaleki ka Duzana ka Mnguni *of the Ngidi people* - closely connected with Ngcobo tribe.

13.12.1921

File 68, item 13, pp. 1-12.

<The originals of the notes which follow were recorded by Stuart in pencil on a pad of small sheets of scrap paper in often highly telegraphic form. At some points we cannot decipher them. We render them here with minimal editorial intervention. - eds.>

1 Mbiyana.

Americans. First *studied* at Amanzimtoti, at Adams.¹¹ Left there and went to Abram at eMapumulo, American missionary, too.¹² Then left and to eHlimbiti river, at hill, Situndu, between Mvoti and Hlimbitwa.¹³

I knew Mjaleki - was I think of Wombe regt., but uncertain; died about 1895.

Mbiyana about Kandempemvu.¹⁴ At Hlimbiti was still under Abram. When *kolwas* got numerous, he left and got a place at Noodsberg, and got from Mngapangapa ka -- <sic>, Ngcobo tribe, a place for *kolwas* and self. There had been two <illegible> there when Zulu War broke out.

I was born and grew up at that station. Mbiyana did not sever communication with Americans.

The Noodsberg station was on the Noodsberg, looking towards sea, between Faye and Nsuze streams.¹⁵

Mbiyana then went to Zululand. During Cetshwayo's reign to *ask for a place for preaching* at Nondweni. Went of own accord. Sirayo's (Ngobese) people.

C. gave him 100 cattle.

He started church. Came back with the cattle - left for Natal, putting Daniel Ngidi there.

Mbiyana was away 2 years there on Noodsberg.

- 2 Missionary *reproved* (*sola'd*), who said, 'Preach in Zulu.' He said, 'The spirit which is within us says that I must preach to the whole world.' They denied him this, saying, 'Do not go there without our permission.' Again he went off, this time to preach at Emkambatini.¹⁶ (Had established place there too, still there, now controlled by white people.) He also started at Ecubu at Ntunjambili.¹⁷ Objection here too. There were Germans who *preached* there. Mbiyana *refused*, said Jesus said, 'Go ye into all the world,' etc. They *argued* so much as to turn up the Bible, St. Matthew, xxviii, 2nd verse. The chairman, Rood, said Mbiyana not to be blamed. There was then an end.

After Rood left, then came Goodenough. He then forbade Mbiyana from teaching in Zululand, at Ecubu and at Table Mountain. Mbiyana however declared he would teach. They said, 'If you go you cannot belong to our communion.' Mbiyana said, 'That's all right, if you say so.' He went off to go and preach. He went to Noodsberg

to hold communion (e yo kwenz' isitebe).

Thomas Sigoba was sent by Goodenough to teach at Noodsberg and so oust
 3 Mbiyana. Went Mbiyana, came Thomas. Shut his church and refused to let Mbiyana
 in. The *youths* however opened the door. Thomas called Goodenough, who went to
complain at Mapumulo magistracy. Case was sent on to Pietermaritzburg. Inquired,
 'Is Mbiyana a *minister*?' Goodenough admitted this. 'Has Mbiyana a certificate of
 ordination (*the day he was anointed - gcotshwa*)?' Goodenough said, 'No.' In
 Pietermaritzburg the *nkosi* asked Mbiyana if he had letter of ordination. He exhibited
 it. The *nkosi* said that the document in order as *written* by Rood. The *nkosi* said
 would send to Rood to ascertain if really ordained (*gcotshwa*). Reply came, and
 admitted had been *ordained* and *was not at fault*.

Mbiyana and the others called to Pietermaritzburg and the document returned to
 Mbiyana. Mbiyana was told not to *teach* in mission reserve but to ask chief wherever
 he wanted to teach, and if he taught on farm to ask owner there. Was forbidden to
 marry people, as was not under control of white missionary. Was given permission to
teach anywhere on these conditions.

4 He accordingly *taught*. Said as, when he set up at Noodsberg, he was working
 under auspices of American Mission, he could not claim to own the buildings there.
 Mbiyana agreed to vacate them. He then *began to put up another building next to the*
school. Mr Goodenough complained, saying that it was not right that there should be
two churches at one place. The white inkosi said that it could be built. Then
Goodenough said, 'Does the inkosi not know that the courthouse at Mapumulo is
built on a piece of land of the reserve? There should be a glebe at Noodsberg, and
the courthouse should buy its own piece of land.'

Government agreed. Goodenough then told Mbiyana to go outside of the land
 given as glebe. Mbiyana then went to Swayimana ka Zipuku and asked for land.¹⁸ S.
 gave him land. Mbiyana then went to Gordon at Mapumulo, as government had said
 Gordon was to approve of the site. WRG inspected and approved - place there called
 eCibini. *He proceeded to build there. When the building was finished, Mbiyana died.*
He died of natural causes (wa zi fela nje).

Mbiyana left Charlie Bengu there. *CB took the umuzi and went with it to the*
 5 American missionary, viz. Taylor.

There is a station, Nambitana, also belonging to Mbiyana, near Noodsberg. This
 and another station at Insuze did not join the American Mission.

The umuzi at eCibini was wanted by Mbiyana's ministers.

Israelites.

Dance <illegible>. They then kiss one another - on Saturdays.

They hold services (sonta). They speak contemptuously of the church of white
people, and church of black people - for Mbiyana's church is also spoken of with
contempt because propaganda work learnt from whites.

I attended service in 1917, and today still do this.

One at Sweetwaters.¹⁹ It is of the Jews (*e la kwa Juda*); may not have joined with
 Israelites.

The Israelites say there is a prophet. William Grout, in America. We say, 'Have you ever seen him?' They say, 'No; only in photos.' 'Never comes here?' 'No.' We then say, '*They are doing something which they don't understand.*'

- 6 Jerusalem - services on Sunday. Established at Cedara and Mgwenyana.²⁰ They *have services (sonta)* - have a prophet; their prophet is Zandile (man) *of the Nkabinde people*; don't know where this tribe is. The Almighty is about to *descend*, a little in front of Scottsville.²¹ The time <illegible> has gone. They have tied up their bundles in preparation to go there. All told to buy *izimboko sticks of msimbiti wood*,²² even girls and women. When bought, go about with it. They put on bright red clothes - skirt red, red patch on breast. They too *speak contemptuously (jivaza) of the churches of whites* and of natives.

Government arrested Zandile; gone to Edendale.²³

Jews (Juda) - *hold services* on Saturdays. Sweetwaters. Not had experience of these.

This is *very bad*. *The form of worship (nkonzo)* must be wrong to *speak insultingly* of the European church and native church.

A man appoints himself a priest - not sent.

Should be well kept watch over, for it is *ruining worship*. For will have no rudder or helm.

- 7 They make no reference to *the ancestors (amadhlozi)*.

They teach what conflicts with what we were taught.

Israelites make but slighting references to Jesus.

Holding of services for ancestors (isonto la se madhlozini) - also in Pietermaritzburg. *Their leader is at Emkambatini. They have joined iBume which does this work.* They on Moors [?] land, Table Mountain.

When starting their service *they pray to the God of their fathers, the spirit (umoya) of the dead of their people. They say they have nothing to do with the God who is said to be the God of Abraham. That God is the God of the white people. It is that God who has caused the white people to take the land. They do not believe in Jesus; they have nothing to do with him. They no longer have cattle or goats, for they pray to the God of Abraham. They also sacrifice to their ancestors; they make great sacrifices to them.*

- 8 When they *baptise a person, they baptise him in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy ghost.* We see that they are inconsistent, for they do not baptise in name of *ancestors* but in that of father, son and Holy Ghost.

They are childish - don't all assemble and find how really to effect junction between Umvelinqangi and *ancestors*.²⁴

Mbiyana was the first to break away from European control.

Mbiyana did no wrong, nor was wrong done to him by missionaries, to cause him to go and teach on his own responsibility. He felt on the Biblical text he right to go out.

The missionaries tried to restrain him from going forth to preach. That was an offence to him. Hence his breaking away.

I myself spoke to Mr Goodenough (now at <illegible>, planting *sugar cane*).²⁵ I asked him at Johannesburg what wrong Mbiyana had done. He said, 'Mfundisi, Mbiyana did no wrong.²⁶ He was directed to carry on work at a given <sic>.

9 Mbiyana, however, refused, and went forth.' 'But,' I asked, 'was that *wrong (icala)?*' He said, 'No, but it was the *rule* of our church to do this.' I said, 'What had, God said?' He said, 'Jesus was given all might in heaven and earth. Go and teach every nation.' I asked, '*Was it necessary for you to separate from him because of this?*' He said, 'No, but it was our *rule*, set up at a big meeting at eMsunduze.' I said to him, 'Then he committed no offence.' G. replied, 'No, he had no offence.'

He then asked, 'What church are you?' I said, 'I am of Mbiyana's.' He said, 'Then go to Mbiyana's and *worship* there.' I then did so. I *left* Goodenough's *communion (isitebe)*.

Reconciliation was brought about after Mbiyana's death. Offices were exchanged, baptisms etc. Settlement arrived at 1898.

10 Mbiyana's church is still independent of European control, but the parent church and it and its branches are on amicable terms, and carry on services inter se.

Mbiyana did not go across the sea to learn, only to Amanzimtoti.

He died 1898.

Abram (European) came to Mapumulo mission station, and whilst setting it up there, Mbiyana came and set up at Hlimbiti, but under Abram's instructions. When there became a number of *Kolwas* at Hlimbiti, he went on his own accord and independently of the American Mission to set up at Noodsberg.

I was born about 1877, and it was in that year or 1878 that Noodsberg was established. My father and mother accompanied Mbiyana from Hlimbiti to Noodsberg.

My father died whilst I was still very young, say 10 or 11 years old.

ECube (river - enters Hlimbiti) is one of Mbiyana's stations, between Hermansburg and Krantzkop.

Mbiyana went to Sikunyana ka -- <sic>, of Mkize tribe, kraal. Boers used to go to Mbiyana's services when conducted at Sikunyana's. *They worshipped (kolwa)*.

11 *Afterwards they called others who lived nearby. They put up their own place of worship. The Boers later dispersed; they left; they went to Pretoria. When they were in Pretoria they called Mbiyana, asking him to come up and give them communion. He did so. I think he stayed in the town itself. He worked there for five months, preaching there. The name of the church was Harriville church.*

Daniel Ngidi, after 7 years in Zululand, returned to Natal, upon which Mbiyana went and definitely built a church on the site, he then being independent of European control. Daniel went to Emkambatini. Daniel is dead - died 1895.

The government confirmed the grant of land made by Mbiyana to Cetshwayo. Government said he was to receive at his station people who were running away
12 from Zululand, and those who stole cattle on south side of Mzinyati.²⁷ That he was to prevent cattle thieving. His station in Zululand was called Kwa Kamisile, *for numbers of people ran away to it.*²⁸

NGIDI

William Ngidi - Colenso's informant. Had home at Pomeroy, Umsinga. He had house *at the place of Sobantu*, Bishopstowe. Was Colenso's interpreter, also helped with Grammar and Dictionary.²⁹

William was an uncle of mine.

[Meshech <sic> has married two wives. Does not see what he has done amiss by taking two. Quotes David and Solomon and their many wives. I know both his wives.]

[Meshech is given 18 double sheets of ms paper to write up proverbs, anecdotes etc.]

Notes

¹For discussion of the terms 'Lala' and 'Ntungwa', see Hamilton & Wright, 'The making of the *amalala*'; Wright & Hamilton, 'Ethnicity and political change before 1840'. Bryant, *Dictionary*, p. 54, gives *ukubukuzela* as 'Go bulging or "swelling" along (from the weighing down of the flesh at each step), as a very fat man when walking'.

²Mgungundlovana was the Zulu name for Greytown.

³Senzangakhona was ruler of the Zulu chiefdom in the early nineteenth century.

⁴Hlobane lies fifteen kilometres north-east of present-day Vryheid.

⁵The Mnambithi or Klip river rises in the Drakensberg west of Ladysmith and joins the Thukela to the south-east of that town.

⁶'*A ku botshelwe*' in the original.

⁷The sense here is presumably that the fight with Shaka's force is not mentioned in Mnguni's praises because the latter's force was defeated.

⁸According to Bryant, *Olden Times*, p. 646, the uHayelwengwenya *ibutho* was formed by Dinuzulu in 1902 of youths born in the 1870s.

⁹Zibhebhu kaMaphitha was head of the Mandlakazi, who were closely related to the Zulu royal house. His forces fought pitched battles with those of Dinuzulu in 1884 and 1888.

¹⁰John William Colenso was Anglican Bishop of Natal from 1853 to 1883. Bryant, *Dictionary*, p. 14, gives *ubabekazi* as 'Any brother or half-brother of my or our father...'

¹¹Adams College was established by the American Board Mission near present-day Amanzimtoti in 1853.

¹²Andrew Abraham of the American Board Mission worked as a missionary at Maphumulo from 1849 onward. Maphumulo lies halfway between Stanger and Kranskop.

¹³The Hlimbithi or Hlimbithwa river joins the Mvoti south of Maphumulo.

¹⁴The uKhandempemvu *ibutho* was formed by Mpande, probably in the later 1860s.

¹⁵Noodsberg is a locality some fifty kilometres north-east of Pietermaritzburg.

¹⁶Emkhambathini is marked on most maps as Table Mountain. It lies twenty kilometres to the east of Pietermaritzburg.

¹⁷Ntunjambili is a hill overlooking the Thukela valley north-east of Kranskop.

¹⁸Swayimana kaZiphuku was chief of the Nyuswa in the Mapumulo and Umvoti divisions. He should not be confused with Swayimana kaManyosi, who was chief of the Gcumisa in the New Hanover division, or with Swayimana kaSocabango, who was chief of the Qamu in the Inanda Division.

¹⁹Sweetwaters is a locality on the western outskirts of Pietermaritzburg.

²⁰Cedara is a locality fifteen kilometres north-west of Pietermaritzburg.

²¹Scottsville is a suburb of Pietermaritzburg.

²²Bryant, *Dictionary*, p. 43, gives *ubhoko* as 'Long walking-stick or staff, such as used by old men ...'.

²³Edendale is a locality on the south-western outskirts of Pietermaritzburg.

²⁴Mvelinqangi was one of the words for God coined in the Nguni languages by early Christian missionaries.

²⁵The illegible word in this sentence could be either 'Manzini' or 'Manzim.'.

²⁶*Umfundisi* means minister of the church.

²⁷The Mzinyathi river is marked on most maps as the Buffalo.

²⁸The name KwaKhamisile, meaning the place where the mouth was opened, derives from the verb *ukukhamisa*, to open the mouth.

²⁹Bishopstowe, ten kilometres east of Pietermaritzburg, was the home of Bishop Colenso (Sobantu).