

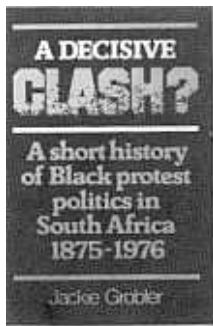
There are also some points of criticism. The artistic layout could have been better. The attempt to base the artwork on the original *Gedenkboek* of the company (issued in 1895), is, to a large extent, a failure. More attention should have been given to a functional layout which might have saved considerable costs.

Furthermore, it may have been easier for the reader if the illustrations had been numbered, with suitable references in the text where they are visually relevant. In Chapter 1 there are a number of illustrations of steam locomotives which might have been discussed more comprehensively in a separate section elsewhere in the book.

The policy of supplying additional information in footnotes is impractical and clumsy. A lot of excellent information is lost to the average reader who does not consult footnotes. Blocks of information could have been fitted into the text without disturbing the artistic character. The conventional usage of a footnote implies that it is a device of reference to sources consulted.

Finally, it is a pity that the publisher — as a result of current printing costs and the prevailing demands of the market place — did not deem it fit to publish *NZASM 100* in Afrikaans too, or maybe even the Dutch language. Perhaps a fund-raising campaign could be launched by the South African Transport Services to finance a translated version for which there might well exist a demand.

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J. GROBLER. *A decisive clash?: A short history of black protest politics in South Africa 1875-1976*. Acacia: Pretoria, 1988. 219 pp. R24,00 (exclusive). ISBN 0 86817 052 6.

Jackie Grobler's aim was to provide a short, balanced account 'for the uninformed reader' of the politics of modern black protest from its beginnings in the eastern Cape last century to the Soweto uprising. This was a worthwhile project, for much detailed work has been done on particular aspects of that protest. A short general account can, besides educating the uninformed, also show connections and — through periodization and reflective comment — advance understanding of the field as a whole. Grobler does synthesize much of the relevant literature; his bibliography reflects wide reading in primary as well as secondary sources. He furthermore adds useful biographical notes on 28 key black leaders.

*A decisive clash?* does not, however, make any substantial contribution to an understanding of the history of black protest, despite the 93 footnote references to a remarkable range of original archival material in various collections in the United States, Britain and South Africa. Not only are the complexities of the politics of black protest frequently lost in this sketchy history, but the framework into which the author has chosen to set his book is unfortunate, while in other ways the result is flawed.

The title — an extremely odd one for a work of history — is taken from the last sentence in the book, in which the question is posed: 'Are the leaders of Black and Afrikaner nationalism earnestly looking for a solution or will the situation inevitably result in a decisive clash?'. The idea that there might be such a clash goes back at least to the 1870s, when many whites predicted a 'war of the races', which would either lead to the establishment of white domination for all time or, less likely, to the whites being swept into the sea. Grobler not only seems to believe that there will be a 'decisive clash' of 'nationalisms' in the future; he writes of a 'never-ending confrontation' (p. 174) between black and white, suggesting that black protest has in the past been essentially racial and that black and white have, as blocs, been antagonistic to each other through history. Evidence in his own book, let alone elsewhere, challenges such an interpretation.

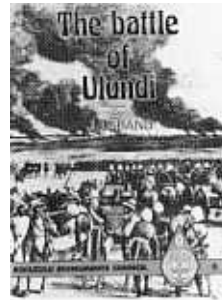
'Black' politics is here almost entirely African politics, with coloureds and Indians getting only occasional mention. Grobler can however not ignore the fact that whites have, both in South Africa and outside, associated themselves with the cause for which blacks were fighting. As is now well known, Africans long struggled for the most modest concessions from their white rulers, and vainly used constitutional and legal forms of protest. Grobler's account shows why, after repeated rebuffs, protest took violent forms, in response to violence by the authorities. But much of his conclusion is highly problematic, such as the assertion (p. 175) that 'Black political protest' after 1976 was 'a fully-fledged nationalist movement'. Despite his own evidence to the contrary, Grobler stresses the 'solidarity' forged

among blacks by the late 1970s, and plays down the issues that divided them. For many blacks, of course, the goal of protest remained the establishment of a non-racial, democratic system of government, a goal which even the ruling National Party came round to professing in 1989.

*A decisive clash?* not only displays a lack of analytical rigour at key points, but also contains many oddities and errors. We are told in the preface that 'Because of security legislation no direct references could be made to banned documents', but various banned items, including the ANC periodical *Sechaba* (e.g. p. 142), are cited. What is one to make of Grobler's statement that by the late 1970s 'Every Black individual in South Africa was, as far as possible, being forced to take part in the struggle - in the same way that every single White male was forced to defend the system' (p. 175)? It is hardly true that overseas organizations and countries 'openly declared their full support for South Africa's Blacks' (*ibid.*). What such organizations and countries did want to see was a more democratic dispensation. It is misleading to say that Odendaal points out that the South African Native Congress 'had its origin in the ethnical [sic] enmity between the Mfengu and other Xhosa-speaking groups in the Eastern Cape' (p. 20); the ethnic factor was one among many. Grobler also fails to note the role of the squatter movements, and especially Mpanza's Sofasonke Party, in pushing the ANC towards more direct action in the 1940s.

There are a number of typographical errors: the title of the second part of the book is correct on p. v, for example, but incorrect on the contents page and again on p. 77. More seriously, Grobler's remarks on the Robben Island prison with its 'healthy, moderate climate' (p. 137), pretend to be objective, but appear apologetic. *A decisive clash?* may inform some readers, but as a reliable short survey of the history of black politics it is an opportunity missed.

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J. LABAND. *The Battle of Ulundi*. Shuter & Shooter: Pietermaritzburg, and Kwazulu Monuments Council: Ulundi, 1988. 56 pp. Illus. R11,70 (exclusive). ISBN 0 7960 01189.

*The Battle of Ulundi* is a fascinating account told by a trained historian and author of history books and several articles on Zulu history.

The reader is made aware of the determination of the British troops to avenge the Isandlwana disaster, and the killing of the disabled Zulus is blamed on the Natal Native Contingent (p. 40). What is not told is that this contingent was led by white officers. The question is:

who ordered the contingent to kill the disabled? During the British invasion it was common knowledge that the British troops did kill the wounded. This fact was accepted by Governor H. McCallum during the 1906 Bhambatha uprising. He stressed that 'at the battle of Inyezane it was reported both by Europeans and Natives that the greater proportion of the wounded had been killed and that very few if any prisoners were taken.'

In Laband's book the reader is given the incorrect impression that the Zulu king's word was final (p. 5). The Zulu kingdom was semi-federal in nature, with all the *amakhosi* (chiefs) having full jurisdiction in their areas, subject to allegiance to the *isilo* (king). They were members of the *isigungu* or federal parliament and could refuse to co-operate without punishment forthcoming from the king. A good example is the refusal of Prince Hhamu and his followers to defend the Zulu kingdom against the invaders.

Laband correctly states that 'By June all the major coastal chiefs were negotiating with Crealock, and many were to submit even before the battle of Ulundi was fought' (p. 4). This shows the degree of independence the *amakhosi* had from the king. It was thus not all the *amabutbo* who defended the oNdini homestead, since it was the *amakhosi*'s duty to supply them. It is incorrect to state that the *amabutbo* ignored the king's orders and 'stayed at home' (p. 47).

What should be stressed is the breakdown in communication between the king and the *amakhosi*. The Zulu kings, except Shaka, solicited and encouraged dissenting or alternative viewpoints since by custom they must rule by consensus. They were the arbiters of disputes and as such they were supposed to be impartial.

The use of the words *ikhanda* and *amakhanda* is wrong. The *amakhanda* (military homesteads) were, strictly speaking, referred to as the *amadlangala* (temporary shelters). Those homesteads where the king had stationed his wives, grandmothers or the *isigodlo* were not the *amakhanda* in the sense