

THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANT FACTOR IN  
SOUTHERN RHODESIA, 1890-1930: THE ORIGIN  
AND INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL ELEMENTS  
IN A COLONIAL SETTING

by

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### DECLARATION

Except for seminar papers, written from the bulk of material gathered by the author for the purpose of this work, none of the material contained in this thesis has been submitted to any other institution before, for academic purposes.

## ABSTRACT

The founding of the colony of Southern Rhodesia created a plural society quite in keeping with the Furnivall model and very much characterized by dissensus, conflict and coercion as features of general interaction between the dominant and the subordinate strata of this newly founded society. In reality, a three-tier social segmental system evolved in the new society, with the foreign African elements representing an interpolating median between the dominant white settler classes and the subject African indigenous societies. Introduced, at first, as simple menials, military auxiliaries and necessary adjuncts to missionary enterprise, the foreign Africans, then largely from South Africa, were gradually reinforced in their numbers by numerous other immigrant groups brought into the country later, at various stages, as labourers, but with various degrees of success. The Abyssinians, Somalis and Arabs from North East Africa and Aden, for example, failed to provide Southern Rhodesia with a perennial external source of labour supply either because these recruits would not accept employment under the chattel labour conditions prescribed by Southern Rhodesia's repressive colonial setting or because of the reluctance of the territory's colonist employers to reform these conditions in question. Indian labour supply would not materialise because the plan obviously ran counter to the relatively liberal political philosophy of the colonial government of India at Simla; a philosophy that was expected to take into consideration issues of relevance to universal British imperial citizenship and trusteeship. Chinese labour supply raised so much controversy and fragmented the white colonial front in Southern Rhodesia so seriously that it had to be abandoned. The Mfengu settlement scheme was only a temporary success, as far as its labour value was concerned. Indeed, in the final analysis, it was only the trans-Zambesian immigrant

labour solution which proved a success, for reasons of political, economic and geographical nature. Once these African immigrants, from below the Limpopo and from across the Zambesi, established themselves in Southern Rhodesia, they began to play a very significant part in the political, social and economic development of their country of adoption. In their dealings with the indigenous African societies, they initiated an intricate pattern of alliances and social relations. Collectively, they played a leading role in the birth and evolution of proto-nationalist associations, labour organisations and other social movements that demanded greater involvement of African initiative and leadership. Individually, the descendants of these African immigrants constituted very important elements in the social development of, especially, the urban and African educated strata of Southern Rhodesia. These descendants took an important role in such matters as education, the professions and even the modern forms of African intertainment. Various historical landmarks in the country today are a symbol of the enduring character of African immigrant influence.

## ABBREVIATIONS

A.N.C.	African National Congress (South Africa)
A.N.C.	African National Council (Rhodesia)
A.M.E.C.	African Methodist Episcopal Church
A.P.S.	Aborigines Protection Society
Ass. N/C	Assistant Native Commissioner
B.C.A.	British Central Africa Protectorate
B.S.A. Co.	British South Africa Company
B.S.A.P.	British South Africa Police
C.A.H.A.	Central African Historical Association
C.C.A.C.Z.	Christian Catholic Church in Zion
Cmd.	Command
C/N/C	Chief Native Commissioner
C.O.	Colonial Office
Dept.	Department
D.O.	Dominions Office
D/R/C	Dutch Reformed Church
E.H.	Edinburgh House
F.O.	Foreign Office
G.Z.E.C.	Gazaland Zimbabwe Ethiopian Church
High/Com.	High Commissioner
H.E.	His Excellency
H.M.S.O.	Her (His) Majesty's Stationery Office
I.C.U.	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
L.M.S.	London Missionary Society
Mss. Afr.	African Manuscripts
Mss. Brit. Emp.	British Empire Manuscripts
Mss. Eur.	European Manuscripts
N.A.D.A.	Native Affairs Department Annual
N/C	Native Commissioner
N/P/A	Native Purchase Areas



O.C.	Officer Commanding
P.E.A.	Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique)
P.E.M.S.	Paris Evangelical Missionary Society
P.M.O.	Principal Medical Officer
P/R/O	Public Record Office
R.A.F.U.	Rhodesian African Farmers' Union
R.B.V.A.	Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association
Res/Com.	Resident Commissioner
R.N.A.	Rhodesia Native Association
R/N/A (Salisbury)	Rhodesia National Archives
R.N.L.B.	Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau
S/O/N	Superintendent of Natives
S.P.C.K.	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
U.B.V.A.	Union Bantu Voters' Association
U.N.V.A.	Union Native Voters' Association
W.N.L.A.	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
Z.A.N.U.	Zimbabwe African National Union
Z.A.P.U.	Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union

## ORTHOGRAPHY AND TERMINOLOGY

Because of the constant changes in African orthography, no specific one has been followed in this thesis, more so as the geographical expanse the research covers is rather extensive. The only claim this author can therefore make, in relation to this work, is that derogatory and condescending terms, generally used in Eurocentric and colonial literature, have been totally excluded. Thus in accordance with the rising African resentment against such terms as "native", "tribe" and so forth, these have been disregarded altogether. However, because of the colonial conception and period which this research is supposed to deal with, I have not been able to use the term "colonial Zimbabwe" for Southern Rhodesia. Indeed, even Zambia, Malawi, and Botswana for instance, are just referred to, in this work, as Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Bechuanaland Protectorate respectively.

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, the study of migrations and migrant and immigrant communities has come into prominence in some parts of Africa.<sup>1</sup> This development which apparently involves systematic research on African migration and immigration themes from, of all things, historical, political and economic perspectives as well, is very interesting in many ways. Hitherto, very little work on the phenomena of migration and immigration in Africa had been carried out by historians and political scientists in particular.<sup>2</sup> Economists and geographers had, for their part, examined the same phenomena, but purely in terms of empirical data on African migrant labour and, therefore, without sufficiently taking into consideration the overall historical and political origins and, indeed, implications of the phenomena under discussion.<sup>3</sup> In fact, on the whole, African migration and immigration remained, for quite a long time, a preserve for social anthropologists and sociologists, along with the serious defects which their thrust had on various fields of African studies. For example, sociologists and social anthropologists, together with geographers, economists and demographers, had the peculiar

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<sup>1</sup>Vide: S. Amin (ed.): Migrations in West Africa: Studies presented at the Eleventh International African Seminar, April, 1972: Oxford University Press: London: 1974. It might also be observed here that when the author arrived at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1976, migration and general distribution of the various African communities in Nigeria, prior to and during the colonial era, constituted the main theme for the dissertations of the final year B.A. (Honours) students in History.

<sup>2</sup>Vide: I. Wallerstein: "Migration in West Africa: The Political Perspective": in H. Kuper (ed.): Urbanization and Migration in West Africa: University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1965: pp 148-59; and B. Pachai: The Malawi Diaspora and Elements of Clements Kadali: C.A.H.A. Local Series: No. 24: Salisbury: 1970.

<sup>3</sup>E. Berg: "The Economics of the Migrant Labor System": in H. Kuper (ed.): Urbanization and Migration in West Africa: University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1965: pp 160-81; J. W. Barber: The Economy of British Central Africa: Oxford University Press: London: 1961; F. E. Sanderson: Nyasaland Migrant Labour in British Central Africa, 1890-1939: M.A. thesis (unpublished), University of Manchester: 1960; W. A. Hance: Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa: Columbia University Press: New York: 1970 and P. Scott: "Migrant Labor in Southern Rhodesia": Geographical Review: Vol. XLIV: 1954: pp 29-48.

trait of treating the African migrant labourer of the colonial period, in particular, essentially on the same basis with the free "proletariat" of the Western world, with very minor concessions on the limitations of the former in relation to his potentialities and alternatives on the labour market.

On the other hand, a greater proportion of those few studies which have hitherto dealt with the political, social and historical perspectives of migration, immigration and immigrant communities in Africa have, however, tended to focus largely on the continent's non-African communities and their influence in those parts of Africa, where they were and are still established. In this connection, we might take into consideration the research of Engholm on the influence of the European and Asian immigrant communities in Uganda and its bearing on the decision-making processes of that protectorate during the colonial period;<sup>4</sup> and the work of Mangat on the history of the Asian peoples of East Africa,<sup>5</sup> as some of the illuminating examples in that part of the continent. In the sub-continent, studies of historical and political nature on the Asian immigrant communities appear to have been largely prompted by primary concern with the rise of Mahatma Gandhi to prominence in South Africa and his subsequent ability to internationalize the problems of the Asians in that complex part of Africa.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>G. F. Engholm: Immigrant Influences upon the development of Uganda, 1900-1952: Ph.D. thesis (unpublished): London: 1968.

<sup>5</sup>J. S. Mangat: A History of the Asians in East Africa: Clarendon Press: Oxford: 1969.

<sup>6</sup>Huttenback, R. A: Gandhi in South Africa: British Imperialism and the Indian Question, 1860-1914: Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London: 1971; and B. Pachai: The International Aspect of the South African Indian Question, 1860-1971: Struik: Cape Town: 1971.

On the whole, the bulk of research that has been carried out in various parts of Africa, with special reference to migration and immigration, especially during the colonial period, has tended to betray either a very strong sociological bias or a social anthropological one. The older generation of scholars, mostly social anthropologists, who have examined the themes of migration, immigration and immigrant communities between the 1940's and the early 1960's for example, was evidently too pre-occupied with the processes of internal social change within the African communities they dealt with, whether in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, in Uganda, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia or South Africa.<sup>7</sup> Because of this pre-occupation with internal social change within the African communities, allegedly induced by both labour migration and immigration, other aspects of these phenomena that carried more weight were ignored. Sociologists of both the older and younger generations were also largely influenced by the bug of their social anthropologist compeers; hence their inordinate concern with, for instance, the issues of psychological and social bearing or even "multiple causes" as major factors in the processes of labour migration, either on inter-territorial

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<sup>7</sup>Vide: I. Schapera: Migrant Labour and Tribal Life: A Study of Conditions in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Oxford University Press: London: 1947;  
I. A. Richards (ed.): Economic Development and Tribal Change: A Study of Immigrant Labour in Buganda: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd: Cambridge: 1954;  
P. H. Gulliver: "Nyakyusa Labour Migration": Rhodes-Livingstone Journal: No. 21: 1957: pp 32-9;  
J. C. Mitchell: "Wage Labour and African Population movements in Central Africa": in K. M. Barbour and R. M. Prothero (eds.): Essays on African Population: Routledge and Kegan Paul: London: 1961: pp 193-244; and  
M. Hunter: Reaction to Conquest: Oxford University Press: London: (2nd Edition) 1961.

level or on the rural-urban circulatory basis.<sup>8</sup>

In essence, the approach of social anthropologists and sociologists to the phenomena of migration and immigration in Africa has been somehow geared towards corresponding research carried out in other parts of the world,<sup>9</sup> where conditions differed, and still differ, quite considerably from the African colonial and post-colonial situations. In fact, sociologists and social anthropologists, like geographers, demographers and economists of the earlier period in Africa, generally fell foul, as a class, in their analysis of the phenomena of migration and immigration, because of their tendency to neglect the political and economic realities of the forced labour economies of both the colonial and neo-colonial phases of Africa.<sup>10</sup> The tendency to ignore the effects of underdevelopment and differential economic development as underlying factors in the processes of labour migration and other forms of population movement in colonial and neo-colonial Africa,<sup>11</sup> can hardly be said to reflect favourably on some of the works mentioned in this

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<sup>8</sup>Vide: J. Gugler: "On The Theory of Rural-Urban Migration: The case of Sub-Saharan Africa": in J. A. Jackson (ed.): Migration: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 1969: pp 134-55 and G. K. Garbett and B. Kapferer: "Theoretical Orientations in the Study of Labour Migration": The New Atlantis: No. 1: Vol. 2: 1970: pp 179-97. See also, in addition, J. C. Mitchell: "The Causes of Labour Migration": Inter-African Labour Bulletin: Vol. VI: No. 1: 1959: pp 12-47; E. P. Skinner: "Labour Migration and Its Relationship to Socio-Cultural Change in Mossi Society": in I. Wallerstein (ed.): Social Change: The Colonial Situation: John Wiley & Sons: New York: 1966: pp 91-106; J. van Velsen: "Labour Migration as a Positive Factor in the Continuity of Tonga Tribal Society": in I. Wallerstein (ed.): Social Change: The Colonial Situation: John Wiley & Sons: New York: 1961: pp 158-67 and P. Mayer: Townsmen and Tribesmen: Oxford University Press: Cape Town: 1971.

<sup>9</sup>Vide: J. Ravestein: "The Laws of Migration" Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Vol. II: 1885: pp 281-96 and J. A. Jackson (ed.): Migration: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 1969.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. G. Arrighi and J. S. Saul: Essays on the Political Economy of Africa: Monthly Review Press: 1973 and R. Harris (ed.): The Political Economy of Africa: Schenkman Publishing Co: Cambridge: Massachusetts: 1975.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Samir Amin's works: "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa:

introduction. The same applies to the failure, by these scholars, to consider the role of either administrative fiat or the conflict situation, which characterized the colonial societies,<sup>12</sup> and how these influenced all forms of African migration and immigration.

In Southern Rhodesia, though some work has been done on the phenomenon of circular labour migration, especially by Mitchell,<sup>13</sup> none, however, has been carried out so far on African immigrant communities. In fact, the little research that has been done on immigrant communities of any kind deals essentially with the Asians and the various classes of the white settler society of the territory.<sup>14</sup> Of course, this general neglect of the African immigrant communities in Southern Rhodesia is by no means strange, since it is apparently in keeping with the overall influence of the governmental policy of the territory towards the subject African societies. With the exception of one or two studies of recent origin,<sup>15</sup> very few works of bona fide academic value dealing, specifically, with the historical, political and economic aspects of any

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Origins and Contemporary Forms": Journal of Modern African Studies: Vol. 10: No. 4: 1972: pp 503-24 and Neo-Colonialism in West Africa: Penguin Books: Harmondsworth (London): 1973.

<sup>12</sup>Vide: L. Kuper and M. G. Smith (eds.): Pluralism in Africa: University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1963 and J. Rex: Race Relations in Sociological Theory: Weidenfield & Nicholson: London: 1970.

<sup>13</sup>Vide: J. C. Mitchell: "Structural Plurality, Urbanization and Labour Circulation in Southern Rhodesia": in J. A. Jackson (ed.): Migration: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 1965: pp/56-80 and some of his works already cited.

<sup>14</sup>Vide: F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: The Indian Minority of Zambia, Rhodesia and Malawi: New Haven and London: 1968. B. A. Kosmin has also written a Ph.D. thesis on the Asian, Greek and Jewish communities in early Southern Rhodesia for the University of Rhodesia. (That is all I know about this research since there is no communication between West Africa and colonist Rhodesia.)

<sup>15</sup>David Chanaiwa and the late Richard Mtetwa (died August 1978), for example, have recently researched on the Nhowe and Duma (Shona) communities respectively.

given African community in the country has been executed at all. Indeed, all the works on the African societies of Southern Rhodesia that the country's historiography has hitherto boasted of are essentially of dubious value, being by nature generalized editions on Shona and Ndebele peoples by ill-informed professional and amateur social anthropologists and sociologists, sub-consciously influenced by that prominent practice of the dominant classes, in racially hierarchical colonial societies, which tended to dehumanize the subject peoples by trivializing their cultures, obviously as a prelude to the imposition of the culture of the dominant classes themselves.<sup>16</sup>

From this point of view, it could, therefore, be said that most of those specious works of dubious academic value on the African societies of Southern Rhodesia by Gelfand,<sup>17</sup> Holleman,<sup>18</sup> Bullock<sup>19</sup> and Nielsen,<sup>20</sup> to name only a few, are very much in accord with the colonist ideology of cultural differences from which the dominant classes of the plural colonial societies generally derived their legitimacy. Perhaps as an apt commentary on the adverse effects of colonist ideology on the study

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<sup>16</sup>Vide: L. Kuper: Race, Class and Power: Ideology and Revolutionary Change in Plural Societies: Gerald Duckworth & Co: London: 1974.

<sup>17</sup>Note Michael Gelfand's works on various aspects of the Shona peoples: Shona Ritual: Juta & Co: Cape Town: 1959; Shona Religion: Juta & Co: Cape Town: 1962; An African's Religion: Juta & Co: Cape Town: 1966; The African Witch: E. & S. Livingstone: Edinburgh and London: 1967; The Genuine Shona: Mambo Press: Gwelo: 1973 and African Background: Juta & Co: Cape Town: 1965.

<sup>18</sup>Vide: Holleman's books: J. F. Holleman: African Interlude: Nasionale Boekhandel: Cape Town: 1958; The Pattern of Hera Kinship: Oxford University Press: London: 1949; Accommodating the Spirit amongst some North-Eastern Shona Tribes: Oxford University Press: London: 1953 and "Some 'Shona' Tribes of Southern Rhodesia": in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds.): Seven Tribes of British Central Africa: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1952: pp 354-95.

<sup>19</sup>Vide: C. Bullock: The Mashona and the Matabele: Juta & Co: Cape Town and Johannesburg: 1950.

<sup>20</sup>Vide: P. Nielsen: The Matabele at Home: Juta & Co: Cape Town: 1928.



of African societies in Southern Rhodesia, it is important to observe here how even more credible academics have been affected by the general thrust of misleading amateur populist writers, with deplorable results.<sup>21</sup> In the final analysis, it can only be said that a greater proportion of such literature on African societies of colonial Southern Rhodesia, as hitherto exists, is only useful to the Ministry of Tourism and Immigration, whose intentions need no further explanation here. For academic value, such literature is totally irrelevant.

On the obverse side however, some of the more generalized recent studies have, indeed, endeavoured to tackle those matters relating to the African societies of Southern Rhodesia as a whole, with all the historical, political and economic implications which such research deserves for a better understanding of the effects of the colonial situation on the African in that territory. In this category we may mention, for instance, the works of Ranger<sup>22</sup> and van Onselen.<sup>23</sup> For the sake of our present

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<sup>21</sup> Amongst those scholars, besides Holleman, whose works have been influenced, either directly or indirectly, by Southern Rhodesian colonist ideology are, for instance, G. K. Garbett: "The Rhodesian Chief's Dilemma: Government Officer or Tribal Leader?" Race: Vol. VIII: No. 2: October 1966: pp 113-28; H. Kuper, A. J. Hughes and J. van Velsen: The Shona and the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia: International Affairs Institute: London: 1954; and J. M. Mackenzie's writings on African labour: "African Labour in the Chartered Company Period": Rhodesian History: Vol. I: 1970: pp 43-50; "The Chartered Africans, Colonial Office, Settlers and B.S.A. Co., Rhodesia 1890-1923": Institute of Commonwealth Studies (University of London) Collected Seminar Papers: Vol. 4: 1972: pp 77-86 and "Colonial Labour Policy and Rhodesia": The Rhodesian Journal of Economics: Vol. 8: No. 1: March 1974: pp 1-15.

<sup>22</sup> For Ranger's works, Vide: T. O. Ranger: Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7: Heinemann: London: 1967; The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia 1898-1930: Heinemann: London: 1970; "The Role of the Ndebele and Shona Religious Authorities in the Rebellions of 1896 and 1897": in E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds.): The Zambesian Past: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1966: pp 94-136; "Traditional Authorities and the Rise of Modern Politics in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930": in E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds.): The Zambesian Past: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1966: pp 171-93; "The nineteenth century in Southern Rhodesia" in T. O. Ranger (ed.): Aspects of Central African History: Heinemann: London: (Reprint) 1973; pp 112-53 and "African Politics in twentieth-century Southern Rhodesia": in T. O. Ranger (ed.): Aspects of Central African History: Heinemann: London: (Reprint) 1973: pp 210-45.

<sup>23</sup> For van Onselen's writings: Vide: C. van Onselen: Chibaro: African

study, it is particularly van Onselen's Chibaro and Ranger's African Voice which come very close to embracing the question of the "foreign African factor" in Southern Rhodesia up to the 1930's. In Chibaro, van Onselen highlights, though in a light manner, the significance of trans-Zambesian immigrant labour in providing a source of cheap labour supply to the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia; a fact which is obviously not ignored by our present research. Ranger's African Voice is even more valuable, in a number of ways, on the role of the "foreign African factor" in the various African movements of the 1910's and the 1920's which became very influential in articulating African grievances at the time.

Whilst the value of Ranger's African Voice is very much appreciated for the purpose of our present research, it has, however, to be sadly admitted, at the same time, that the African Voice is marred by a number of weaknesses which tend to counter-balance its usefulness. In the first place, whilst there is a good deal of discussion on the claims of, for example, the black émigrés from South Africa to privileged status in Southern Rhodesia's colonial society, obviously in accordance with these people's contribution towards the colonization of the territory, there is, nonetheless, no analysis of any kind on the origins and degree of purported contribution of these immigrants to the processes of conquest

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Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933: Pluto Press: London: 1976; "The Role of Collaborators in the Rhodesian Mining Industry, 1900-1935": African Affairs: Vol. 72: No. 289: October 1973: pp 401-18; "Worker Consciousness in Black Miners: Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1920": Journal of African History: Vol. XIV: No. 2: 1973: pp 237-55; "The 1912 Wankie Colliery Strike": Journal of African History: Vol. XV: No. 2: 1974; and "Black Workers in Central African Industry : A Critical Essay on the Historiography and Sociology of Southern Rhodesia": Journal of Southern African Studies: Vol. I: No. 2: April 1975: pp 228-46.

and "pacification" of the territory. Similarly, nothing is provided as background information on the presence of the trans-Zambesian immigrants in the various employment centres of Southern Rhodesia, where they also played, and still play, an important role. The reader is evidently expected to accept the presence of the "foreign African factor" as a fait accompli.

Secondly, whilst the combative character of the black émigrés from South Africa is, for example, well captured in the dealings of these immigrants with the Southern Rhodesian authorities, an impression is also, unwittingly, created that these immigrants were necessarily a monolithic force, obviously, united against the successive colonial governments of Southern Rhodesia. In reality, this was clearly not the case, and the false impression portrayed in Ranger's African Voice arises, naturally, from the work's neglect of those internal social and political forces which, in one way or the other, influenced the general outlook of the black émigrés from the South. Finally, inter-group relations, in terms of social and cultural identificational associations and general political and structural alignment between the African immigrant communities and the indigenous peoples, are not by any means taken into consideration. Thus, because of these shortcomings, it is perhaps little surprising that the role of the "foreign African factor" in the African proto-nationalist associations and other specious social movements in the Southern Rhodesia of the 1910's and 1920's is somewhat exaggerated and blown out of proportion in Ranger's analysis.

It is against this background discussed above, that The African Immigrant Factor in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1930 should, therefore, be viewed. In essence, its function within the context of both Southern Rhodesian and general African historiography is twofold. Firstly, it is expected to counterbalance the social anthropological and sociological thrust which has hitherto characterized academic research on African

migrant and immigrant communities, with very serious deleterious results. Secondly, it is also supposed to add a new dimension to the study of African communities in colonist Rhodesia and, in this way, contribute to the general understanding of the African position in that country's colonial setting. These ideals are very noble, but also quite difficult to achieve. Thus this research can only be regarded as nothing else but an attempt in every sense of the word.

In the main body of the present research, Chapters 1 and 2 examine the original alliance between the white settler society and the "black pioneers" from the South; their subsequent use in the wars of conquest and "pacification" in early Southern Rhodesia (1890-1897) and the subsequent development of dichotomy between these two fronts after 1897. Because of the prominence of the colonist labour demand in the post-1897 period and how it featured in the subsequent chasm between the white settlers and the "black pioneers" in early Southern Rhodesia, it is thus natural that Chapter 3 should deal with the question of foreign labour solutions. The failure of the colonist society to induce both the "black pioneers" and the African indigenous societies to respond positively to the dominant group's labour requirements, inexorably predisposed the former to look for foreign labour supply, for which purpose the Abyssinians, Somalis and Arabs of North-East Africa and Aden were hotly sought after. Indian and Chinese labour solutions were also resorted to, but, like the Abyssinian, Somali and Arab schemes, also turned out a complete failure.

In Chapter 4, the unsuccessful colonist attempt to introduce Mfengu immigrants from the Cape, by establishing a satellite community of these people at Bembesi between 1898 and 1905, obviously as a form of handy reservoir of dependable labour supply, is discussed. Chapters 5 and 6, on the other hand, examine the more successful introduction into Southern Rhodesia of trans-Zambesian immigrant labour from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland between 1903 and 1930, focussing particularly on

such issues as the administrative policies of the respective territories of South Central Africa and how these influenced the ebb and flow of African labour into Southern Rhodesia. Chapters 7 and 8 together analyse the general influence of those foreign African immigrant groups, which made Southern Rhodesia their home, on the overall development of that country. Chapter 7 in particular dwells on the activities of one immigrant community, with specific reference to its relationship with the B.S.A. Co. Administration, whilst Chapter 8 looks at the manner in which the other African immigrant communities interacted with the indigenous African societies and also how these two African fronts together reacted to various pressures generated by Southern Rhodesia's colonial setting. In Chapter 9, this study concludes by a general survey of the genesis and permanence of the "foreign African factor" and its overall implications for Southern Rhodesia's colonial society.

Extensive use was made of various archival sources in Britain and Southern Africa for the purpose of this research. The Public Record Office in London, Rhodes House in Oxford and the Rhodesia National Archives in Salisbury provided the backbone of the documentary material used by the author. But it has to be admitted, however, that the P/R/O sources are too peripheral and very poor in comparison to those of the Salisbury archives. In fact, I have to confess that for the five months (July to November 1975) I carried out my research in the Salisbury archives, I found much more useful and relevant material than I ever did during the previous three years of sustained hardwork in Britain. If to this you add the fact that Southern Africa is literally overflowing with oral evidence relevant to this research, no further comment needs any mention here. Rhodes House (Bodleian Library) was especially useful on personal correspondence between leading black immigrants in Southern Rhodesia and Rhodes or the A.P.S. Edinburgh House (Eaton Gate, London), which houses the correspondence of various missionary societies in Southern Africa, though useful on missionary comments on the state

of race relations, labour, land, African education and many other issues, tends, however, to comprise a greater proportion of documentary sources specifically dealing with missionary enterprise and African independent church movements than on any other matter. For this reason, the presence in these archives of a manuscript copy of Sundker's book,<sup>24</sup> should, therefore, not surprise anybody. In the India Office Records (Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library, Blackfriars, London), the bulk of material on the Asians in Southern Africa deals with the race problems faced by the Indians in South Africa.

As far as printed primary sources are concerned, use was made of the Royal Commonwealth Society Library (London) which has got a very valuable collection of reports of various commissions and departments of the governments of the territories of Southern Africa. These reports were, in turn, supplemented by some few printed documents available in the various branches of the University of London, such as the School of Oriental and African Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. The British Museum (both at Great Russell Street and Colindale) was also consulted in connection with rare secondary sources, diaries, reports and newspapers. Still on secondary sources, one or two books deserve mention on how they influenced this research. These are Cairns' work on race attitudes in Central Africa during the nineteenth century,<sup>25</sup> and Tinker's study on the exportation of Indian labour overseas between 1830 and 1920.<sup>26</sup> But in

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<sup>24</sup>B. G. M. Sundker: Bantu Prophets in South Africa: Oxford University Press: London: (Reprint) 1970.

<sup>25</sup>H. A. C. Cairns: Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890: Routledge & Kegan Paul: London: 1965.

<sup>26</sup>H. Tinker: A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920: Oxford University Press: London: 1974.

the final analysis, it has to be said that the opinions expressed in the research are nobody else's, but the author's own personal perceptions on the tortuous history of Southern Africa.

## CHAPTER 1

### The African Auxilliary Forces of Occupation and Conquest in Early Southern Rhodesia, 1880's-1900

- I The foreign African aides in early missionary enterprise, the Pioneer Column and the Anglo-Ndebele War: c. 1880's-1894.

#### Introduction

Robinson has argued that the expansion and acquisition of overseas possessions in Africa and Asia by European powers was, in large measure, an outcome of the collaboration of non-European elements in these continents. The effectiveness of this collaboration, Robinson further argues, was such that it enabled the metropolitan powers to deploy only a small fraction of their resources in manpower and capital as befitted their stringent financial policies.<sup>1</sup> For the colonizing powers therefore, it is assumed, collaboration provided the cheapest means of promoting imperialism either in terms of the character of territorial acquisition or the administration which later followed, while the collaborators on their part saw the colonizing powers as providing:

... an alternative source of wealth and power; which if it could not be excluded, had to be exploited in order to preserve or improve {their} standing... in the traditional order.<sup>2</sup>

Van Onselen, using the Robinson model of collaboration, has defined the role of the African police, mine compound police and messengers as functionaries of the mining industry in Southern Rhodesia for extracting and controlling large supplies of cheap labour in return for higher wages and other fringe benefits of economic and social variety.<sup>3</sup> In this study, it will be argued and demonstrated that, firstly, the collaborators were victims of gen-

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<sup>1</sup>R. E. Robinson: 'The Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: A sketch for the theory of collaboration' in R. Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (eds.) Studies in the Theory of Imperialism: Longmans: London: 1972: Part V: pp. 117, 120.

<sup>2</sup>Robinson: 'The Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism'; p.121.

<sup>3</sup>Charles van Onselen: 'The Role of Collaborators in Rhodesian Mining Industry 1900-1935' in Journal of African Affairs: Vol. 72, No. 289, October, 1973; pp. 401-8: The privileges of the collaborators included, also exemption from manual labour and passes, sexual favours, free food etc.



eral colonial policies, designed to promote the political and economic objectives of the colonizing powers and their agents. The collaborators were not in a position to influence either the origins or courses of these policies and, on their part, had few alternatives to choose from. Secondly, it will also be demonstrated that collaboration was born of supremacist ideology in which the differences between collaboration and resistance were often blurred in their results, as, in the final analysis, the lot of the collaborator was no better than that of his counterpart.

In Nyasaland, Dachs has shown to what degree Sir Harry Johnston was able to adopt a deliberate policy of collaboration and divide and rule to extend British control in the area, in spite of the meagre financial and military backing that he had. Johnston's campaigns against the Arabs and the Yao chiefs between 1891 and 1896 divided the opponents, by careful calculation, into two camps: the collaborators like the Yao Chief Jumbe, on the one hand, and the resisters like Chiefs Makanjira and Chiwaura, also Yao, on the other. The distinction between collaboration and resistance here was clear-cut. Whilst collaboration was amply rewarded with favours and friendship, resistance invited the venom of British weapons.<sup>4</sup> The same Machievallian policy of divide and rule was also applied, for instance, by the British South African Company (BSACo) in Southern Rhodesia, with regard to the Shona Chiefs during the 1896-97 risings.<sup>5</sup>

On the religious front, collaboration was widely used to permeate African societies with a foreign missionary ideology. Missionaries, like their secular allies, could at first only dangle tangible material inducements in the form of education, trade or protection from attacks by neighbouring foes in order to cultivate sizeable followings within the African communities.<sup>6</sup> Material inducements, on the part of the missionary, came to solve, especially in the pre-colonial period, the tendency amongst African states, in particular, to reject the tenets of Western teaching and

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<sup>4</sup> A. J. Dachs: 'Politics of Collaboration - Imperialism in Practice' in B. Pachai (ed.): The Early History of Malawi: Longman: London: 1972: pp 283-5

<sup>5</sup> T. O. Ranger: Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance; Heinemann; London: 1967: Passim.

<sup>6</sup> Dachs: 'Politics of Collaboration - Imperialism in Practice' pp. 285-6.

culture as unfit for their purposes,<sup>7</sup> and, consequently, a pattern emerged whereby the so-called 'Christian Revolution' of the early colonial period was adopted by African leaders only to keep the forces of colonialism at an arm's length: on the periphery and away from the core of the society as a whole.<sup>8</sup> In a nutshell, the endeavours of both the religious and secular wings of imperialism faced great obstacles as African rulers, then custodians of their people's sovereignty, were not prepared to come to terms with the new forces of change. Those who came to terms with these new external forces, out of a desire to seek alliances against their more powerful neighbours, 'later became hostile when the extent of European ambition was discovered'.<sup>9</sup> Others collaborated as a result of defeat and recognition of the superiority of European weapons, whilst the former servile but negligible social strata, at least in African societies, were the only ones who offered any form of meaningful assistance to foreign forces of change at all.<sup>9a</sup>

In Southern Rhodesia, such collaboration as we have discussed above, did not exist, especially with regard to the Ndebele state before 1893, for instance. The solidity of Ndebele state in the political and military fields precluded any collaboration and, consequently, both the missionaries and

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<sup>7</sup> J. F. Ade Ajayi: 'The Continuity of African Institutions Under Colonialism' in T. O. Ranger (ed.): Emerging Themes of African History: East Africa Publishing House; Nairobi: 1968: Chapter 17: pp. 196-7.

<sup>8</sup> T. O. Ranger: 'African Reactions to the Imposition of Colonial Rule in East and Central Africa' in L. H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds.): Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960: Vol. I: Cambridge University Press: London: 1969: pp. 311-2. Ranger mentions the examples of Khama of Bechuanaland, Lewanika of Barotseland and Mutesa of Buganda, rulers who accepted the so-called 'Christian Revolution' in their states without radically changing the internal structures of their societies.

<sup>9</sup> J. F. Ade Ajayi: 'Colonialism: An episode in African History' in Gann and Duignan (eds.): Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: Vol. I: p. 506.

<sup>9a</sup> The example of the Mfengu in the Cape and slaves in West Africa who assisted the European forces against the African states is a case in point here. For the Mfengu case, Vide: R. A. Moyer: 'Some Current Manifestations of Early Mfengu History' in (University of London) Institute of Commonwealth Studies Seminar Papers: Vol. 3 No. 16: October 1971-June 1972: pp. 144-5.

political agents ab initio met with strong resistance to external influence, whose outcome was a heartbreak particularly to the lone missionary. Indeed the only form of influence Europeans could exert on Ndebele life, at this early stage, was through connubium with Ndebele girls.<sup>10</sup> Collaboration in the Ndebele war of 1893, therefore, had to be sought elsewhere. The African auxiliaries from the South and the Shona here fulfilled the role of collaborators. For the Shona, collaboration against the Ndebele in 1893 was not actuated by rewards to be gained at the end of the journey. They saw the war of 1893 as a continuation of the chronic conflict and struggle between a fairly fresh immigrant national group and themselves as indigeous ones, very similar in nature to the rivalry between the recently arrived but militarily stronger Yao and the weaker indigenous Chewa (Nyanja) people in Nyasaland, at the time of Johnston's exploits.<sup>11</sup> The Shona saw the war in terms of their previous struggle against the Ndebele state before European occupation but now on a bigger scale. The fact that the Ndebele raids did not stop, even up to the eve of the 1893 war itself, must have strengthened this belief among the Shona chiefdoms.<sup>12</sup> The Shona were thus in the category of African peoples who, as Ajayi describes them as we have indicated, were the militarily weaker ones, who exploited the advent of Europeans by allying themselves with the latter against a power that had hitherto harassed them and yet sooner or later they moved from collaboration to hostility, when they perceived and comprehended the implications of colonization.<sup>13</sup>

The collaboration of the emigres from South Africa was, however, different and as such does not fall into the scope described either by Robinson or Dachs. Though by historical origin and by ethnic affinity, a large number of these emigres were closely related to the Ndebele, their longstanding association with the Europeans, either at personal or national level, had created a wide gap between their errant kinsmen and themselves. The social and almost cultural distances that divided them by the 1890's, could

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<sup>10</sup> Vide: H. A. C. Cairns: Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890: Routledge & Kegan Paul: London: pp. 52-7 and N. M. B. Bhebe: Christian Missionaries in Matabeleland 1859-1923: (Unpublished) Ph. D. thesis, University of London: 1972: pp. 114-5.

<sup>11</sup> Dachs: op. cit. p. 286.

not have been easily reconciled. Moreover, the black emigres differed with the Ndebele in outlook and objectives. Whilst the Ndebele were fighting to retain the status quo and obviously the entrails of sovereignty they still enjoyed, the African emigres turned into visionaries, who saw in the creation of a Western-orientated state, dominated by white settlers, some chance in which they too stood to gain. For them, the substitution of a time-honoured traditional African political state by a Western bureaucratic infrastructure provided the openings they were looking for.<sup>14</sup> They collaborated in the 1893 war not primarily because they were seasoned gamblers betting for high or low economic stakes, but largely because they identified themselves ideologically with the settlers whose boots they had borrowed. By volunteering first to accompany the Pioneer Column and their masters, they had placed themselves at the disposal of the colonizer and through their readiness to offer their services and to protect the colonizer's interests they ended up, as Memmi puts it,

...adopting his (colonizer's) ideology, even with regard to their own values and their lives.<sup>15</sup>

But it would be a gross oversimplification to look at the collaboration of alien African auxiliaries in Southern Rhodesia or elsewhere, simply in terms of either master-servant ideological relationship or even economic, social and psychological self-interests. The incidence of this type of alien collaboration must not be viewed in isolation. It was only a twig from the whole branch of imperial and colonial military policies. The alien Africans were a minutiae, and a passive one for that matter, of an overall imperial strategy, through the means of which imperial powers and their agents fought their wars by proxy and, by virtue of this practice, effected economies in the metropolitan budgets. On the strength of this policy, the British Foreign and War Offices, for example, often used African contingents

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<sup>12</sup> D. N. Beach: The Rising in South-Western Mashonaland, 1896-7: Ph. D. thesis (unpublished) London: 1971: pp. 249-50. This explains the Shona activities in rustling Lobengula's cattle during and after the war.

<sup>13</sup> Ajayi: loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Albert Memmi: The Colonizer and the Colonized: Orion Press: New York: 1965: p. 16.

to fight in other colonies or in foreign parts. The Zulus were, for example, proposed for the suppression of the revolt in Uganda in 1898. The Dinkas, Shilooks and other Nilotic groups of the Sudan were used for the same purpose in Uganda and Egypt, while the Hausa of Northern Nigeria were also used with good effect in other parts of West Africa.<sup>16</sup> This policy was equivalent to the more involved one of introducing Indian troops in East and West Africa for either military or police purposes or to the suggested but unsuccessful proposal of employing, in 1898, Zulu troops in Malaya and Hong Kong.<sup>17</sup> Nearer home, this system resembled the French practice of engaging the 'tirailleurs senegals' for the pacification of the rest of the French Western Sudan.<sup>18</sup>

Non-European participation in the colonial wars of conquest and pacification went beyond the issue of simple collaboration. Far from being what Robinson rather glibly calls 'imperialism's voluntary partners',<sup>19</sup> the non-European functionaries were an important factor in the reckoning of the global military policies and strategy of the imperial powers. The argument for their use in these wars was, as the Foreign and War Offices in Britain pointed out, that in this manner the expenses of the Exchequer would be eased, whilst it was also stressed that African and Asian auxiliaries were physically better able to stand the climatic conditions in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia.<sup>20</sup> Thus such participation does not, in

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<sup>16</sup> C. O. 879/53: Francis Bertie, Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office (hereafter FO) to Colonial Office (hereafter rendered as CO) January 17, 1898, Confidential Print, Public Record Office (hereafter called P/R/O), London.

<sup>17</sup> C. O. 897/53; Francis Bertie at F. O. to C. O. January 17, 1898, and Fred Graham at C. O. to F. O. January 28, 1898.

<sup>18</sup> W. F. Gutteridge: 'Military and Police Forces in Africa' in L. H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds.): Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960: Vol. 2: Cambridge University Press: London: 1970: p. 291.

<sup>19</sup> Robinson: op. cit. p. 121.

<sup>20</sup> C. O. 879/53, Memorandum by the Intelligence Division of the War Office, Enclosed in Francis Bertie, at F. O. to C. O. March 1, 1898.

most cases, justify the general conclusion that the adoption of the collaborative mechanism was for reasons of gain. The non-European auxiliary was a 'servant' in the 'master's wars' whose cause and justification he was not always aware of even if he so desired. He might perhaps have been interested in the outcome, provided he survived, only to tell his grandchildren. There is hardly any case, in Africa at least, in which the shortage of African auxiliaries and initiative forced a colonizing power to abandon its military objectives and the vigour with which some of these campaigns were executed,<sup>21</sup> precludes any suggestion that imperialism was a half-hearted ideal, which gained its momentum in step with the rising goodwill of the Asian and African collaborators.

In concluding from the foregoing discussion, it is argued here that in a large number of cases, collaboration by non-European peoples during the heyday of European imperialism, while widespread and common, was not of their making. It was a mechanism carefully formulated by 'high gods' on polished office floors and executed by the military generals on the battlefields. Political states in Asia and Africa caught in the maelstrom, whether intrinsically different in political and social organisation, external and economic relations, military strength and indeed even in geographical location, were juxtaposed and their responses noted. Once this was done, their differences were reckoned and exploited to the advantage of the colonial powers in order to minimize the tedium of resistance to foreign rule. These states lost their sovereignty and initiative and became parts of wider political units, the formation of whose policies they had no power to control. They became parts of a wider political family whose extensive geographical dimensions cut athwart family ties, ethnic identity and national or race boundaries. The role of the individual and individual groups with special skills and aptitudes was limitless in these new macrocosms. Faced with such developments, African groups from below the

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<sup>21</sup> Compare here the British overthrow of the Zulu kingdom in South Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century, in M. Wilson and L. M. Thompson (eds.): The Oxford History of South Africa: Vol. 2: Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1971: pp. 261-71 and the British campaign against the Ashanti confederacy as well as the French overthrow of Samory Toure in West Africa during the same period, in J. D. Hargreaves: 'West African States and the European Conquest' in Gann and Duignan (eds.): Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960: Vol. I: Chapter 6: pp. 199-219.

Limpopo took advantage of the addition of a sister state between the Zambesi and the Limpopo, proceeding there firstly, as menials to the Pioneers; secondly, as military auxiliaries in the wars of conquest and pacification and finally, as a distinct political force to be heard. In the long run, they were reinforced by other African groups from neighbouring countries, who submerged them on the point of sheer numbers and whose objectives and outlook did not always correspond with their own.

(i) Black/White Contact Below the Limpopo up to the 1890's: A Background to the Formative Influences on the 'Cape Boys' and Other Foreign African Groups from the South

The occupation and conquest of Southern Rhodesia by the BSACo at the close of the nineteenth century gave rise to the creation of a composite colonial society.<sup>22</sup> This development across the Limpopo being part and parcel of the world-wide colonial movement was naturally a process of population transfer, whose effects were such that peoples of different racial and ethnic origins as well as national and cultural outlooks were brought together to co-exist and interact in various ways. Whilst the white colonists in this new territory of Southern Rhodesia constituted the major immigrant group by virtue of their dominant political role, they were, however, not the only immigrant peoples the indigenes were destined to contend with. Foreign Africans from South Africa who formed part of this new colonial society of early Southern Rhodesia, though generally treated as a 'forgotten factor' from an administrative point of view, were, in every respect, a significant force not only in the whole process of conquest and pacification of the country, but also in the stages of political and economic development which subsequently followed.

Though Southern Rhodesia may have attracted large numbers of African immigrants at a later period, especially after 1903, most of these

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<sup>22</sup> For the purpose of this study I have used, in reference to the Southern Rhodesian society after 1890, interchangeably the terms 'composite colonial society' as portrayed by Rex in his work, J. Rex: Race Relations in Sociological Theory: Weidenfield & Nicholson: London: 1970: passim; and 'plural society' in the orthodox Furnivall tradition further clarified by Kuper and Smith in Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith (eds.): Pluralism in Africa: University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971: Part I: Chapters 1-2: pp. 7-26 and 27-57.

immigrant communities, however, appear to have been largely overshadowed by the African community from the South of the Limpopo, particularly during the period of Southern Rhodesian history with which this study is concerned. The reasons for this dominance of the black emigres from the South are, of course, quite obvious. In the first place, the colonization of Southern Rhodesia was a by-product of the colonial movement that had been going on in South Africa for many generations and, from this point of view, the new colony had its political and economic origins below the Limpopo. Africans from these areas below the Limpopo were, therefore, from the beginning, distinctly involved with the expansionist movement into Mashonaland and Matabeleland by the 1890's, more so as they came to play the role of allies of the Southern Rhodesian white colonists.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, between 1890 and 1903, a period van Onselen regards as 'the era of speculative capitalism' in Southern Rhodesia, there was little profitable gold mining going on in the country, the various companies and syndicates formed for the purpose were hitherto dependent, as they did, on other economic ventures like land speculation, rent-collecting or trading rather than gold mining.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the introduction of foreign African groups, especially labourers, from surrounding countries appears to have been somewhat delayed by the hectic efforts of the BSACo. Administration and allied mining consortia to bring into the country alien peoples from the horn of Africa (Abyssinia, Somalia and Aden) as well as Asiatics from India and China. These schemes, so suggested and actively pursued between 1898 and 1904, were actually copied from the Rand where they had originated but could not be implemented due to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899. The failure of such schemes, precipitated obviously by the termination of the Anglo-Boer war in 1902 and the subsequent one-sided competition over labour supply between the Rand and the Rhodesian mining industry, naturally meant that the relatively impecunious Rhodesian employers had to look elsewhere for their labour supply.<sup>25</sup> Incidentally, it was on those African sources of labour nearer

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<sup>23</sup> For the role of foreign Africans as allies of the white colonists during the Anglo-Ndebele War (1893) and the risings of 1896-97: Vide *Infra*: pp.39-64; 83-149.

<sup>24</sup> C. van Onselen: Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933: Pluto Press: London: 1976: pp. 14-7.

<sup>25</sup> For a fuller discussion on these external labour schemes; Vide *Infra*: Chapter 3.



home that the Southern Rhodesian employers had to rely; sources which they had hitherto scorned and ignored. In this manner, African immigrants from the South, who had, up to the beginning of the first decade of the twentieth century, remained the only alien African factor of importance to reckon with in early Southern Rhodesia, were thereafter reinforced on a massive scale. But their fellow African immigrants of, especially, the post-1903 era were predominantly of a labouring class orientation, with few notions and pretensions to the superior airs that the largely quasi-middle class black emigres from the South seemed to harbour.

Perhaps of greater significance, for these black emigres from the South, was the fact that by the time Southern Rhodesia was annexed in the 1890's, Africans in the territories below the Limpopo had by then had a long history of contact with the white colonists. Indeed by the 1890's, the third century of black/white contact in South Africa, Africans of that region of the African sub-continent were generally moving towards total integration into an economic, social and political system dominated, to a large extent, by white colonist values and standards. As a matter of fact, it was because of such factors of historical, economic and social significance that even in the later phases of Southern Rhodesian history, the African emigres from below the Limpopo, though fewer in numbers than other immigrant communities, came to wield influence totally out of proportion to their numbers, as this study will show as it unfolds.<sup>26</sup> Therefore in accordance with the laws of historical precedence, not to mention this group's inordinate dominance within the context of this study, it is only proper and fitting to examine those historical processes relating to the presence of the South African black emigres in early Southern Rhodesia, in order to assess and understand more thoroughly the factors that shaped this group's ideals and clientship to the white colonist society and thus inexorably compelled them to cross swords with the African indigenous peoples of Southern Rhodesia.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> On the later-day activities of the black emigres from the South: Vide Infra: Chapters 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> The typology adopted in relation to the term 'immigrant' derives from the Colson theory that once colonization started, boundaries of African states became more permanently defined and the movement of peoples from one place to another became more regulated and restricted than

In any analysis of black/white interaction and sources of group contact influences at the beginning of the colonial period in Africa, three forces are important to consider; namely the missionary, the colonist trader and the administrator. Together these forces came to epitomize not simply the process of colonization, but they also denoted a major phase of social, economic and cultural change. They acted as sources of the disintegrating influences which visibly paralysed and revolutionized African traditional societies and consequently became themselves focal points of new social, economic and political organisations. The church and the school introduced a new ethic whilst the colonist trader, with his material goods, ushered in a new economic order which drastically transformed the African mode of living and grievously undermined the seemingly self-sufficient African traditional economy which had hitherto held the fabrics of these traditional societies together. Acting within a political framework provided by the colonial administrators, after allegedly pacifying the individual African chiefdoms through the deployment of superior military resources, both the missionary and the colonist layman were instrumental in producing what became known in South Africa as the 'school people' or, in the broader sense of the term, the 'dressed people'; the forebears of the African elite and reformers.<sup>28</sup>

For their part, the African societies were influenced in the course of their initial contact with the white immigrants through a number of factors. These included the enormity of external pressure generated by the

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before. Moreover, the African rulers are said to have become more possessive of their land as this asset became scarcer. Vide: Elizabeth Colson: 'Migration in Africa, Trends and Possibilities' in I. Wallerstein: Social Change: The Colonial Situation: John Wiley & Sons: New York: 1966: pp. 107-13. In a way, this typology on the 'immigrant', denoting political status as it does, is similar to Barber's designation of 'de jure migrants' for alien Africans in Southern Rhodesia as opposed to their local counterparts the 'de facto migrants' - the victims of a peculiar economic system. Vide: W. J. Barber: The Economy of British Central Africa: Oxford University Press: London: 1961: p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> The distinction between 'school people' or 'dressed people' and non-Christians was a result of the requirement by the early missionaries in South Africa that their converts should wear European dress as opposed to ochre or later blankets worn by their non-Christian kinsmen. Vide: Monica Hunter: Reaction to Conquest: Oxford University Press: London: (2nd Edition): 1961: pp. 6-7; 548.

colonist immigrants; the geographical location of each particular African state as well as its accessibility and vulnerability to external threats. There was also the strength of internal resistance which each African state or chiefdom could muster and the degree of economic self-sufficiency and viability which underlined this capacity to withstand all or most forms of external pressure, the particular African society thus faced.<sup>29</sup> However, with the military defeat of most of the African societies and the consequent loss of land, cattle and other economic resources to the white colonists at the beginning of the colonial era, both the confidence and economy of yester-year, which these African societies had hitherto enjoyed, were seriously weakened. Instead the African came to appreciate the material culture of the white man, the superior weaponry not excepted, which had been the cause and mystery of colonist victory over the indigenous peoples. Of course, such appreciation of the European culture by the Africans, at the beginning of the colonial era and after, was further strengthened by the fact that those Africans who accepted a large measure of assimilation into the white colonist society received more generous material rewards, in return, than their more cautious compatriots who adopted a policy of selective conservatism.<sup>30</sup>

In a nutshell, it was these developments, indicated above, which created a situation, at the beginning of the colonial movement in South Africa in particular and in white-dominated Africa in general, whereby black/white contact profoundly transformed African societies. The missionary, whose calling was to work exclusively within the African societies, was by far the most active force in the vanguard of the movement for change; a phenomenon which had become quite evident in South Africa by the 1890's when Southern Rhodesia was annexed. From all appearances, the missionaries

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<sup>29</sup> Hunter mentions the geographical position of Pondoland and its inaccessibility from the coast in general as having contributed to its isolation from forces of change which affected other parts of the Cape before the 1890's. Vide: Hunter: Reaction to Conquest: pp. 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> Of course, those 'Europeanized' Africans in South Africa, for instance, like teachers, clerks, interpreters, ministers and their class got the best paid jobs and in this way received more generous rewards from European material culture than their more conservative countrymen. Vide: Hunter: op. cit. pp. 8-9; 548-9.

were certainly quite convinced on the bona fides of the novel culture they were so intent to introduce and spread in Africa and as such the mechanics they employed were thus basically geared towards these convictions. The 'church', the 'school' and education, in general, were some of the more effective means central to missionary commitment in bringing about revolutionary change. Through these means, the missionaries, therefore, provided not only an alternative set of values to their followers, but also introduced a new identity or 'in-group' feeling and, particularly for colonized peoples, a psychological equilibrium to enable them to absorb the cultural shock created by the destruction of these peoples' traditional beliefs and values.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, by the beginning of the twentieth century, missionary influence had established itself as one of the strongest sources of revolutionary change and ipso facto the undisputed parent of the process of African elite formation.

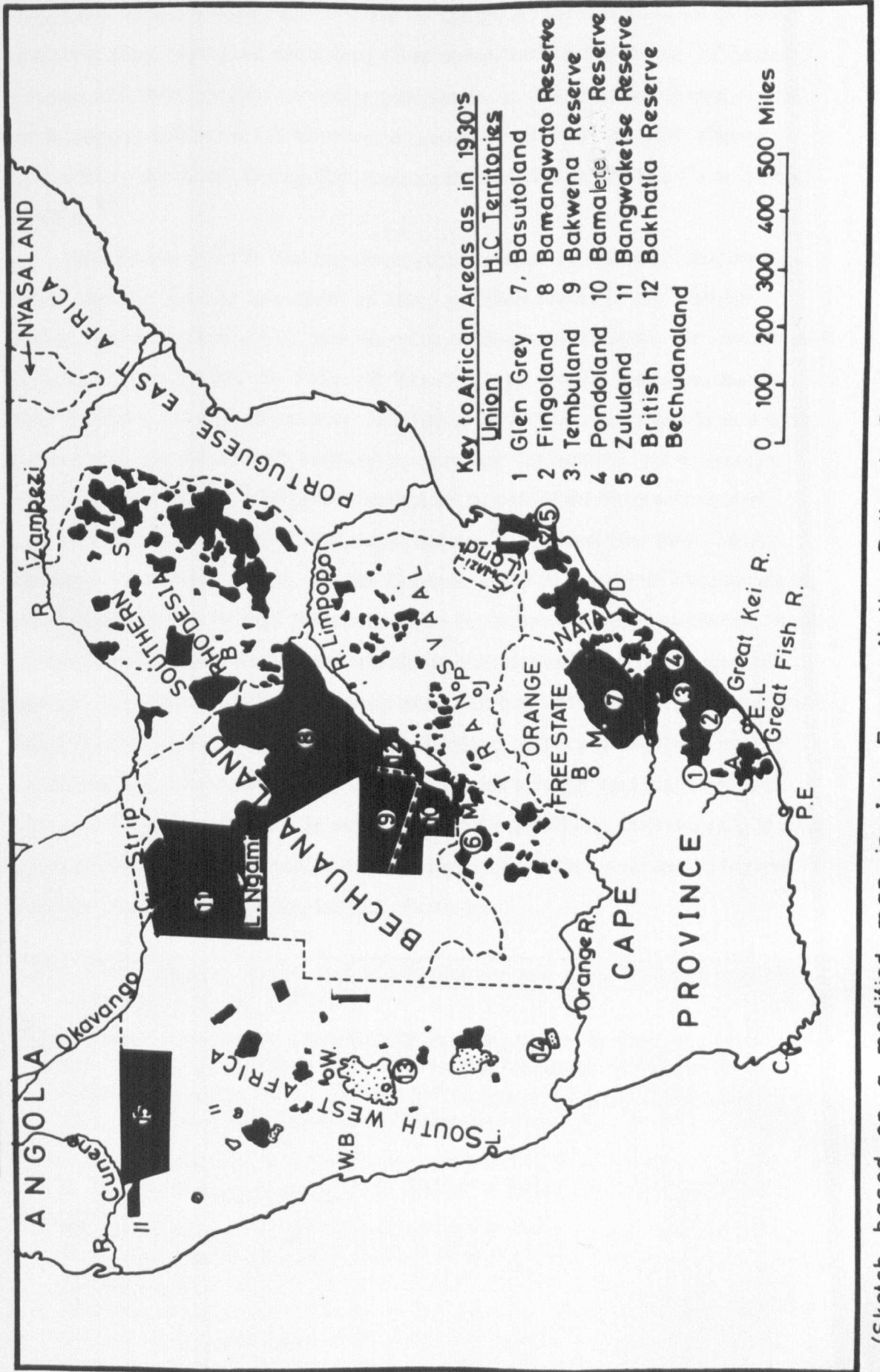
In that part of the African continent below the Limpopo, the response of the indigenous societies to missionary influence was most pronounced amongst those African states which in the nineteenth century surrounded the white colonist society of the Cape.<sup>32</sup> Further away from the borders of the Cape colony, the African societies were not as forthcoming as was expected in their response to missionary enterprise. The Pondo, for instance, refused to have anything to do with the missionaries, right from the beginning of the nineteenth century up to the 1890's, and their rejection of missionary influence had little to do with the revolutionary content of its teaching, as is often assumed. As a matter of fact, Pondo reaction to missionary overtures was essentially dictated by the fact that this African group had had the chance to witness the development of affairs within the Xhosa/Thembu confederacy in the South, especially with regard to the political affinity between missionary enterprise and colonialism and the overall bearing of these factors on African political independence and sovereignty. Thus the Pondo, like the Masai in East Africa,<sup>33</sup> used the politico-religious

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<sup>31</sup> J. S. Coleman: 'Social Cleavage and Religious Conflict' in R. D. Knudten (ed.): The Sociology of Religion: Appleton-Century-Crofts: New York: 1967: pp. 483-4.

<sup>32</sup> A greater part of this chapter is based on a seminar paper given by the author to the History Department, Vanbrugh College, University of York: November 1973, entitled: Missionary Influence and its Impact on Africans below the Limpopo before 1900: 28pp. Vide also: Appendix

APPENDIX I: AFRICAN AREAS AND ETHNIC GROUPS AND THEIR LOCATION BELOW THE LIMPOPO UP TO THE 1930'S



(Sketch based on a modified map in I. L. Evans: Native Policy in Southern Africa: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1934).

model to reject missionary enterprise and what it stood for.<sup>34</sup> In this way, the Pondo were, of course, aided by the geographical position of their country; they remained for a long time untouched by the forces of colonial change and thus became virtually pariahs in an ocean of advancing forces of European influence till they were forced to succumb to such change by military invasion during the premiership of Rhodes at the Cape in the 1890's.<sup>35</sup>

Beyond Pondoland, the northern Nguni states of Zululand and Swaziland, then by far the strongest military polities amongst the African states below the Limpopo, had literally no room whatsoever for missionary enterprise. All what the Zulu and Swazi rulers did, for instance, was to flirt with the various missionary societies of British and American origin before the mid-nineteenth century, merely for diplomatic and economic reasons, though, of course, these missionary societies in question may have made the most out of this regal action.<sup>36</sup> Indeed like their Ngoni kinsmen in Central Africa and the Ndebele state in pre-1893 Matabeleland, the Zulus and the Swazis obviously were in no mood to appreciate the tenets of the revolutionary movement which the missionaries so advocated till the military power of these Nguni states had been either broken or contained. But with the rapid changing political situation below the Limpopo by the middle of the nineteenth century, a movement greatly facilitated by the Mfecane as well and initially set in motion by the Zulus themselves, it was not long before these Nguni states too were compelled to come to terms with the then overwhelming forces of change.

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I (Map): African Areas and Ethnic Groups and their location below the Limpopo up to the 1930's.

<sup>33</sup>The Masai rejection of Christianity in East Africa in the nineteenth century is well captured in F. B. Welbourn: 'Missionary Stimulus and African response' in V. Turner (ed.): Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: Vol. 3: Cambridge University Press: London: 1971: p. 326.

<sup>34</sup>For Pondo rejection of missionary presence in their country, Vide: J. Macdonald: Light in Africa: Hodder & Stoughton: London: 1890: p. 110.

<sup>35</sup>This rejection of European influence by the Pondo people is clearly, though in a somewhat pre-judicial manner, portrayed in Dudley Kidd: The Essential Kaffir: Adam & Charles Black: London: 1904: passim. Kidd, however, fails in this instance to explain the role of the geographical factors which also isolated Pondoland from the processes of black/white interaction and are quite clearly explained by Hunter. Vide: Hunter Reaction to Conquest: loc. cit.

But as has been indicated already, it was on the borders of the Cape Colony that missionary enterprise, as a source of black/white contact influences, had the most telling effects by the middle of the nineteenth century. This was particularly true in relation to the Gcaleka (Xhosa) state of Hintza, where a sizeable number of Mfengu people lived under the conditions that simulated some form of servitude, since the beginning of the century. Given the tendency of missionary teaching to appeal to the down-trodden strata of the African social tapestry like, for instance, the slaves, immigrants and the poor fighting material in the Yoruba and Ibo societies of modern Nigeria; the 'liberated' slave community of Sierra Leone<sup>37</sup> and also the slave settlements of the East African coast,<sup>38</sup> the missionaries operating below the Limpopo during the past century were not slow to apply the same tools, to appeal to the subject Mfengu within the Xhosa society. The main card played by the missionaries in Xhosaland, as in other cases elsewhere in Africa, was, of course, the underlying feature of the Christian faith to appeal to the poor and the 'oppressed' Mfengu as 'the chosen people' to 'inherit the earth', not to mention the obvious role of the new faith in providing a new identity to these subject people: an identity which enabled them to free themselves from the old values and constraints of the dominant societies, which had hitherto regarded them as low and despicable.<sup>39</sup> Obversely, the quasi-egalitarian philosophies advocated by the new faith, which had such a positive impact on the Mfengu elements in Gcalekaland, very effectively alienated the Xhosa people who concluded, rightly or wrongly, that this new faith was a religion for 'their dogs', the Mfengu.<sup>40</sup> Xhosa

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<sup>36</sup> For the early attempts of the Anglican and Methodist missionaries to establish a foothold in Zululand and Swaziland, Vide: P. Hinchcliff: The Anglican Church in South Africa; Darton, Longman & Todd: London: 1963: pp. 19-24; C. T. Loram: The Education of the South African Native; Longman & Co.: London: 1917: pp. 54-5 and J. Du Plessis: A History of Christian Missions in South Africa; Longman & Co.: London: 1911: pp. 344-5.

<sup>37</sup> E. A. Ayandele: The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis; Longmans: London: 1966: pp. 331-4 and J. F. Ade Ajayi: Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite; Longmans: London: 1965: pp. 1-52.

<sup>38</sup> Welbourne: 'Missionary Stimulus and African Response': pp. 333-4.

<sup>39</sup> Coleman: 'Social Cleavage and Religious Conflict': loc. cit.

<sup>40</sup> J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside: History of the Abambo: 'Gazette': Butterworth:

disillusionment with missionary teaching was certainly further intensified by the repeated loss, amongst both the Gcaleka and their Gaika kinsmen, of their lands to the combined forces of white colonists, missionaries and Mfengu collaborators between 1835 and 1878, when total subjugation of the African states in the sub-continent was nearly completed.<sup>41</sup>

Whatever claims and counterclaims may be raised in connection with Xhosa/Mfengu relations at the beginning of the nineteenth century,<sup>42</sup> the Mfengu on their part seem to have made the most out of the advent of the British missionaries in the Xhosa country. They were apparently quite pleased with what they and the missionaries then regarded as 'liberation' from Xhosa domination and, therefore, readily accepted some form of alliance with the British administration of the Cape colony and the missionaries.<sup>43</sup> It was obviously because of these reasons and against such a background that both the social revolution and the process of elite formation amongst the Mfengu began to pick up more rapidly than in any other African society below the Limpopo, at the time under discussion. Mfengu response to the continuum of social change was altogether massive and total, thus justifying, in some way, the view that the whole phenomenon took on a form of some kind of national movement. Yet, ironically, it was in this endeavour to come to terms with the various forces of change in a colonial situation that the

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Transkei: 1912: p. 20 and G. G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth: The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Society: Vol. 4: J. A. Sharp: London: 1921: p. 258. Moyer has however countered the orthodox missionary view in relation to Xhosa/Mfengu relations in the 1820's and 1830's as it would appear that the missionaries deliberately exploited the so-called servile Mfengu status within the Xhosa society for their own ends. Vide: Moyer: 'Some Current Manifestations of Early Mfengu History': p. 145.

<sup>41</sup> The Gcaleka Xhosa lost land around Fort Peddie and Gaga in 1835 for example, which was turned into Mfengu settlements. Worse still they also lost Butterworth, the heart of Gcalekand, in 1857, when Kreli (the son of Hintza) was expelled from the area by the Cape authorities. Vide: J. H. Soga: The Ama-Xosa Life and Customs: Lovedale Press: Lovedale: 1932: p. 116 and Ayliff and Whiteside: History of Abambo: pp. 38-9, 62.

<sup>42</sup> The servile and pusillanimous image of the Mfengu in the Xhosa society at the beginning of the nineteenth century as expressed in J. D. Omer-Cooper: The Zulu Aftermath: Longman: London: 1966: p. 164 and Ayliff and Whiteside: op. cit.: p. 18, is however rejected by Mfengu historians. Vide: Interviews with Chief Morosi Nyilika and Mr. Paul Hlazo: Fingo Location: Bembesi: November 17-8: 1975 and Moyer: op. cit. pp. 148-9.



Mfengu rendered themselves vulnerable to the machinations of collaboration, which they and other African groups of kindred mentality, either consciously or unconsciously, embraced. Sooner or later, they began to translate their association with the Cape authorities and the missionaries into the language they could easily understand. Settled in well organized communities such as those at Fort Peddie and Gaga in modern Ciskei founded for their exclusive occupation in 1835 or later on the periphery of the areas of white settlement, the Mfengu soon entered the maze of settler economy in full force. They assumed the role of traders, with their commodities of exchange with the white colonists consisting mainly of cattle, tobacco, agricultural implements, household utensils and exotic articles like beads, thus eventually acquiring for themselves an apt nickname, 'the Jews of Kaffirland (Transkei)'.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, because of the manner in which they developed partisan interests in all forms of black/white conflict on the Cape frontier, during the course of which they repeatedly notched some material gains in one form or another at the expense of other African societies, the Mfengu certainly went all the way to fulfill the Robinson model on collaboration discussed earlier on in this study.<sup>45</sup>

But whatever character and form these early contacts between the whites and the blacks, discussed above, may have taken, especially within the context of missionary influence amongst the African societies below the Limpopo prior to 1900, there, however, emerged a new class of African leadership and following whose formation the missionaries were largely responsible. Perhaps as an apt commentary on this role of missionary enterprise in African elite formation in this part of the world during the nineteenth century, it may also be quite pertinent here to bring into the picture one or two case studies, as a demonstration of the tangible evidence on African response to both missionary enterprise and white presence in the African sub-continent at the time in question. In the circumstances, no case study on the process of African elite formation below the Limpopo and its positive results can serve a better purpose than the career of John

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<sup>43</sup> This favourable attitude towards the Anglo-Mfengu alliance of the early nineteenth century still survives even amongst the modern Mfengu. Vide: Interview with Mr. Paul Hlazo: November 18, 1975 and Moyer: op. cit. : pp. 148-9, 150.

<sup>44</sup> Ayliff and Whiteside: op. cit. : pp. 18-20, 34.

Tengo Jabavu, the illustrious Mfengu educationist, politician, newspaperman and patriarch of a line of distinguished African scholars in modern South Africa. From very humble beginnings, Jabavu rose, through his association with the Methodist missionaries at Healdtown and their Scottish Presbyterian counterparts at the famous Lovedale institution, both in the Cape colony, to become a leading figure not only in the African social and political circles of the sub-continent, but also a force which even white colonists of all persuasions could not easily ignore. For these reasons, Jabavu's alliances with the Cape liberal politicians at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, not to mention his personal relationship with Rhodes, which led to his invitation as Rhodes's special guest on the first train to Bulawayo in November 1897,<sup>46</sup> constitute one of the most remarkable stories on vertical mobility in a colonial setting. As the career of Jabavu here illustrates, missionary enterprise had by the end of the nineteenth century quite successfully, and whether by accident or design, played midwife to an era of general revolutionary change below the Limpopo: an era which inexorably made the succeeding twentieth century a wholly different affair from its predecessor.

Jabavu's successful career, as discussed above, naturally leads to a logical but all the same false conclusion, that it was only through the educational or religious front that the process of change was effectively precipitated and contact influences widely spread in the nooks and corners of the African societies below the Limpopo, during the period before the 1890's. Indeed it could be said, with good reason too, that white colonist laymen also helped greatly, through both secular and non-academic means, to promote those aspects of black/white interaction which, in the process, facilitated the integration of the Africans into the whole continuum of European colonist economy, thought and values. In this respect, various forms of economic activity could be said to have been the most effective mechanism for compelling the black and white communities of South Africa to

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<sup>45</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 1-8.

<sup>46</sup> The story of Jabavu is here a much shortened version of the one previously written and based on the following works: D. D. T. Jabavu: The Life of John Tengo Jabavu, Editor of Imvo Zabantsundu, 1884-1921: Lovedale Press: Lovedale: 1922; R. T. Kawa: I-Bali Lama Mfengu: Lovedale Press: Lovedale: 1929; N. Jabavu: Drawn in Colour: African Contrasts: John Murray: London: 1960 and E. Roux: Time Longer Than

co-operate in spite of themselves. For the white colonists, firstly, at the Cape right from the early times for instance, influenced by both frontier attitudes and race prejudices as they were, the non-white peoples could only be regarded as one of the two things: enemies or servants.<sup>47</sup> Though these sentiments and views were, of course, bound to influence and aggravate the course of race relations in Africa below the Limpopo for years to come, they, however, failed to reverse the trend of black/white economic interaction.

Black/white economic interaction in South African colonial society, at first took the form of economic co-operation, though on an inequitable basis, either through such direct means as wage employment or indirectly by way of trade and exchange of commodities. Sooner or later, this economic co-operation was replaced by economic competition, the white colonists and the indigenous African groups vigorously competing over natural resources in form of land and cattle. But economic competition, as a form of black/white interaction, obviously, ended with the military defeat of the African societies at the hands of the white colonists.<sup>48</sup> Yet, at the same time, other forms of black/white interaction in the economic sphere, still persisted and, in a way, continued to widen the scope of black/white contact influences in the sub-continent. The demand for labour by the white colonists, firstly, at the Cape and, later, throughout the length and breadth of South Africa, naturally provided the necessary catalysm for a greater degree of racial interaction than either conventions or legislation would have warranted. The rather inherent slavery syndrome coupled by Calvinist doctrines that portrayed the black man as a beast of burden amongst the early white colonists at the Cape and their descendants, certainly engendered a situation whereby the utilization of non-whites for cheap manual work became general and widespread in the sub-continent.<sup>49</sup>

Whilst before the second half of the nineteenth century, wage employment amongst the white colonists in South Africa was essentially agricul-

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Rope: The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison: 1972 (2nd Edition).

<sup>47</sup> Martin Legassick: 'The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography': Institute of Commonwealth Studies (University of London) Seminar Papers: January-March 1969: p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> H. M. Robertson: '150 Years of Economic Contact Between Black and White: A Preliminary Survey': The South African Journal of Economics:

tural in nature, with domestic service coming close second, which altogether could easily be met by either various kinds of servile labour supply at first or, at a later stage, by voluntary recruits from such obliging indigenous societies as the Khoikhoi and the Mfengu who sought employment with the Cape colonists by the 1840's,<sup>50</sup> the situation changed materially with the advent of the mineral revolution, starting in the 1860's. The colossal labour demand which the mineral revolution occasioned and the decline of the political and economic power of the major African states of the region, such as the Xhosa and the Zulus between the 1850's and 1870's, are indeed some of the cogent factors, which, essentially, influenced the course of black/white interaction in South Africa before the close of the nineteenth century. Indeed it may be pertinently observed here that wage employment, as a form of black/white interaction, had become quite dominant as the demand for labour throughout the sub-continent sky-rocketed by the 1860's and 1870's. In Natal where the labour-intensive sugar industry had been started already, the coastal farmers had in fact found local labour supply so inadequate that they had to resort to Indian 'coolie' labour to augment their supply.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, as small-scale diggings in Griqualand and at the Rand began to rapidly give way to deep-level operations by big mining combines or corporations in the 1870's and after 1886 respectively, the demand for labour became so intense that taxation and other forms of fiscal pressure had to be introduced to facilitate the process of labour mobilisation throughout South Africa and thus meet these requirements of the new industry. In this way, the incidence of black/white interaction and exchange of contact influences was also precipitated at the various centres of employment.

The advent of the mineral revolution and the growth of urban and mining centres which this movement occasioned in South Africa inexorably led to the exodus of the African worker from the rural areas to these emerging centres of employment and consequently by the 1880's and 1890's, a new

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Vol. 2; 1934: p. 403.

<sup>49</sup> Legassick: 'The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography': pp. 6-7, 9.

<sup>50</sup> J. T. van der Horst: Native Labour in South Africa: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. : London: 1971 (2nd Edition): pp. 26-8 and Robertson: '150 Years of Economic Contact between Black and White:....': p. 411.

<sup>51</sup> Van der Horst: Native Labour in South Africa: pp. 120-2. Vide also: Infra: Chapter 3.

class of African people was also beginning to appear on the scene. This was a class of people called the amahilihili/amakhumutsha, denoting those workers who went to the towns and never returned to the rural areas at all.<sup>52</sup> What may have obviously made the urban and mining centres more attractive to the African worker below the Limpopo may not be unconnected with the comparatively higher wages of these centres, which distinctively dwarfed those normally obtaining on the farms; the relatively favourable conditions of employment in the urban and mining centres, which contrasted quite sharply from those feudal arrangements existing on the farms and finally, the growing economic dessication of the African areas as they were increasingly by-passed by both economic development and social investment and, in this way, losing to the white-dominated areas. For the educated African too who was often unacceptable to the colonist employers on the farms in their preference for the so-called 'raw natives', the urban conglomerations provided a lot of scope and an environment very much conducive to the emergence of an African entrepreneurial class, composed largely of ex-pupils from mission institutions, spread all over the sub-continent. These ex-pupils from mission institutions were, apparently, setting themselves up in the urban centres as carpenters, wagon makers, printers, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, masons, furniture makers, teachers, journalists, clerks, tailors, policemen and the lot. In this instance, they were, therefore, acting as a counterpoise to the more venturesome Africans in the rural areas who were coming up too as agriculturalists, transport riders and large-scale consumers and producers in general.<sup>53</sup>

In concluding this part of our study, it could, therefore, be said that between the 1870's and 1890's, the processes of African elite formation as well as integration into the social and economic system, dominated by the values and tastes of the white colonists, had become quite pronounced below the Limpopo. The African societies of the region were, perhaps with the exception of the Pondo, very profoundly affected by these events. The rise in demand amongst these peoples for, firstly, blankets in place of karosses and, later, European dress in place of blankets and the general increase in

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<sup>52</sup> Hunter: op. cit. : pp. 526-7.

<sup>53</sup> Van der Horst: op. cit. : pp. 95-6, 105-6.

the consumption of products of European material culture,<sup>54</sup> was in itself indicative of the changing tastes and mode of living within these African societies themselves. In one form or another, this course of events could be said to have given rise to a situation not only favourable to the birth of an African middle class, but one which precipitated the various trends of social and economic change and, at the same time, cemented contact influences between whites and blacks below the Limpopo. The colonist employer, the trader and the administrator, like the missionary, altogether played a significant part in bringing about revolutionary changes within the African societies below the Limpopo by the 1890's. On their part, the Africans of the region, so affected by this movement for change, were no longer content with the superficial constraints imposed by their narrow ethnic and geographical boundaries and, when an opportunity arose for them to employ their skills elsewhere beyond these limits, they naturally took up the challenge.<sup>55</sup>

It was, therefore, against this background of a long history of black/white contact below the Limpopo that the annexation of Southern Rhodesia in 1890 was undertaken, as an extension of the economic, political and social system already existing in South Africa. In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Africans from the South offered their services as an auxiliary force to the colonial movement into early Southern Rhodesia and, in so doing, became an active force for collaboration in the subsequent developments of the new territory. But these black emigres from the South were, however, more or less 'tools' rather than masters of their own destiny in this expansionist movement and, therefore, their activities were dependent, in every sense of the word, on the dicta of the white colonist community. Once these black emigres began to question the character of their client—

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<sup>54</sup> By 1875 products from the Transkei sold in the colony were estimated at about £750,000 annually, whilst consumption of European manufactured goods totalled up to £400,000 a year. Vide Robertson: op. cit. p. 424.

<sup>55</sup> It must be noted here also that by the 1890's, Africans from South Africa were also proceeding overseas in increasing numbers for educational, religious and other purposes, especially to America and Britain and their international awareness was also becoming more easily discernible. Vide: Mary Benson: South Africa: the Struggle for a Birthright; Penguin Books: Harmondsworth: 1966: pp. 15-22 and P. Walshe: The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The Afri-

ship to the dominant white community, a rift between the two communities inevitably emerged.<sup>56</sup> In the proceeding sections of this chapter, we shall accordingly examine the role of these African emigres, firstly, as aides to missionary enterprise in the BSACo. territories of Mashonaland and Matabeleland and secondly, we shall also consider one or two case studies of some of those black emigres who proceeded to the north on their own. In both cases, the presence of black emigres from the South in early Southern Rhodesia was irrefutable evidence of the success of the processes of African elite formation and the permanence of black/white contact influences.

ii Missionaries, Foreign African Agents and Individual 'Black Pioneers' in the BSACo. Territories During the Early Period

Considering the laws of historical precedence, the reliance on the African auxiliaries from the South by the forces of colonization in Mashonaland and Matabeleland was not altogether illogical. The missionary societies below the Limpopo were especially prone to the practice. But it is impossible, in a study of this character, to trace all the cases of African agents, evangelists and missionaries from the South employed by different missionary societies in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. We shall therefore confine our references to a few cases here to illustrate the widespread character of the practice.

The Dutch, German and Swiss missionary societies, which had their bases in the northern Transvaal, had by far the greatest number of workers, especially in Southern Mashonaland.<sup>57</sup> Though not by any means the strongest sources of missionary influence below the Limpopo in the nineteenth

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can National Congress, 1922-1952: C. Hurst: London: 1970: pp. 12-5. See also Evidence of Bishop Levi J. Coppin (black American, AMEC) and Rev. A. H. Attaway (black American), Cape Town: October 14-5; 1903 and Rev. James M. Dwane and Enoch Mamba: Cape Colony: November 12, 1904: all in South African Native Affairs Commission Report, 1903-5: Vol. II: pp. 221-2; 256-7 and pp. 708-16; 1046-7 respectively.

<sup>56</sup> Vide Infra: Chapters 7 & 8.

<sup>57</sup> Rev. Graaf estimates that foreign African evangelists employed by the missionaries in early Southern Rhodesia could not exceed two dozen and that in any case the D/R/C had the biggest number. B. Graaf: Modumedi Moleli: An Account of His Educational Work in Mashonaland 1892-96: Dip. Ed. Thesis, University of Bristol: 1969: pp. 1-3, (but it has since become apparent through Beach's study that the D/R/C alone could easily have commanded over two dozen of these agents).

century and, for that matter, the most favoured within the non-European circles, these bodies, which were in the 1870's operating in the Transvaal, had a variety of advantages in relation to the extension of their work across the Limpopo into the Shona country. The Dutch Reformed Church (D/R/C) and the Berlin Missionary Society, in particular, enjoyed the favourable political atmosphere of the Transvaal Republic in a manner not by any means possible to other missionary bodies and, accordingly, they exploited the geographical advantages provided by the proximity of the Transvaal to Mashonaland. Secondly, the Ndebele/Shona political relations, before 1890 especially, were such that it was not possible for white missionaries, coming through Matabeleland, to work in the Shona country. But African missionaries were unmolested. Such a policy was adopted by Lobengula due to the Ndebele fear of the extension of what Beach has called 'the gun frontier' in Mashonaland. The Portuguese were apparently upsetting the balance of military and political power between the Ndebele and Shona by the 1880's through their extensive commercial and political activities,<sup>58</sup> and, as such, Lobengula feared the repercussions that the presence of white missionaries might produce for Ndebele/Shona relations, once the missionaries converted the Shona to Christian influence; taught them new techniques and sold them firearms.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the growing stream of labour migration from the Shona country to Kimberley in the 1870's and later to the Rand in the pre-colonial era also brought in its trail contacts between the Shona and the patently enthused African evangelists from the South who, on several occasions, accompanied these Shona labour migrants on their return home.<sup>59a</sup>

Whatever the motives and advantages so construed, the African and half-caste evangelists of the D/R/C, the Berlin Mission and the Swiss Mission 'Vandoise' started working in the Shona country in earnest in the 1870's, using their Transvaal operational bases. Indeed they made contacts with the people of Chief Zimuto as early as 1872, in what later became the Victoria district in the colonial era, and, a year later, with those of Chief Chibi of the modern Chibi district. These contacts, which were pursued on

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<sup>58</sup> Vide infra: pp. 42-3

<sup>59</sup> D. N. Beach: 'The Initial Impact of Christianity on the Shona: The Protestants and the Southern Shona' in A. J. Dachs (ed.): Christianity South of the Zambesi: Mambo Press: Gwelo: 1973: pp. 34-40.

<sup>59a</sup> Note the case of the Venda Christian evangelists who accompanied the



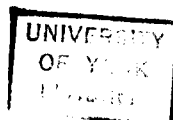
and off up to 1883, were the work of the half-caste Buys brothers, namely Gabriel, Jefta, Michael, Petrus and Simon Buys, whose father Coenraad de Buys, a Boer of the Transvaal, had a large harem of African wives of Khoikhoi, Xhosa and Ndebele origins. The Buys brothers were agents of the D/R/C and were assisted by a host of African evangelists of similar creed. During the period 1872-1883 for example, when the Buys brothers worked in Chief Zimuto's and Chief Chibi's areas, the African evangelists who worked with them were of Sotho, Pedi and Venda origin, largely from the Transvaal and including among them Asser Sehababane (Sotho from Lesotho), Johathan (Pedi) and Aaron, Andreas, Azail, Bethuel, Petrus Kolkodo, Jacob Moemi and Micah Makhato (Makgato), all Sotho from the Transvaal.

But in spite of the blessings and backing these agents received from their respective parent bodies in the Transvaal as well as the goodwill of the Southern Shona Chiefs of the period, their work was unsuccessful by 1883 primarily for a variety of reasons. In the first place, the inclusion of the French missionary, Francois Coillard of the Parish Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS), probably for tactical reasons, during the third trip of these half-caste and African workers to Southern Mashonaland in 1877- 8, was to prove a drawback to their hitherto independent work. By some unforeseeable turn of events, in the winter of 1877 the Mhari people of the Chibi area had inflicted a severe defeat on the Ndebele impi, during the course of which the commander of the Mhari forces, Tagwireyi, won for himself the legendary title 'Tagwireyi chitsiga chomupani' (literally 'Tagwireyi is as strong as the stump of a mopani tree'), so common in Mhari songs of traditional worship.<sup>60</sup> Under the circumstances, when the party of African and half-caste evangelists appeared in the Chibi district accompanied by a white man, Chief Manyumbu Masunda II, of the ever belligerent Masunda royal house of the Chibi dynasty, mistook Coillard for

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Shona labour migrants back from the Transvaal to their home area in Chief Ziki's. Ibid: p. 31.

<sup>60</sup> Interviews with Mr. Isaac Ketiwa Madangombe, August 24, 1975, and Miss Shumbei Madangombe, September 12, 1975, Chibi District. Shumbei Madangombe who was at the time of interview one of the oldest scions of the Madangombe (Mhari) dynasty died of infirmity two days later (September 15, 1975).



a trader in firearms, which the Mhari then needed badly in case of further Ndebele attacks. Chief Masunda naturally became hostile when he discovered that Coillard would not supply the firearms which he (the chief) required. Coillard himself further complicated the matter when, in accordance with the general misconceptions of the time among the whites, especially from the South, he sent an envoy Asser Sehabane to Lobengula, purportedly to announce the missionary's presence in the country. Given the fact that the Ndebele/Mhari relations at the time were then not at their best; that the Chibi paramount, Chief Chibi Madhlangove had already granted the Coillard party protection and that the question of white men's presence in the Shona country was a particularly sensitive subject at Lobengula's capital, Bulawayo, it is not surprising, therefore, that the third mission of these evangelists, accompanied by Coillard, totally failed. Moreover, the fact that the envoy, Asser Sehabane, was himself Sotho, the traditional enemies of the Ndebele, further put the prospects of evangelical work beyond repair.

However, to some extent, these purveyors of missionary enterprise among the Shona were themselves to blame and may have contributed to their own failure to achieve their goals prior to 1883. For example in July 1883, during one of their regular visits to Chief Zimuto's country, the Buys brothers were persuaded to take sides with a party of Boer adventurers from the Transvaal led by one field-cornet Grobler of Waterberg against Chief Zimuto. In the course of the ensuing affray, Gabriel Buys, the veteran preacher was killed, with the result that the Buys brothers dropped out of missionary work in this part of the country altogether.<sup>61</sup>

Whilst these events, mentioned above, may have retarded missionary work in the Shona country during the pre-colonial period, they, however, did not totally stop the activities of the African evangelists from the South. All what happened in the post-1883 period is that the half-caste evangelists dropped out from the movement altogether. Following in the footsteps of their predecessors, Johannes Madima, Paulus Lovengo and Samuel, the

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<sup>61</sup> Beach: 'The Initial Impact of Christianity on the Shona': pp. 25-31; Interview with Mr. Isaac K. Madangombe: August 24, 1975: The version of the Coillard party recorded by the missionary himself is regarded by Chibi historians as calculated mischief. Vide F. Coillard: On the Threshold of Central Africa: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.: London (Reprint) 1971: pp. 20-30.

agents of the German mission (the Berlin Missionary Society) based at Tshakoma in the Transvaal, once more crossed the Limpopo and established footholds for their parent society in the Matibi and Mposi chiefdoms of the Chibi/Belingwe districts and also, in a large measure, paved the way for good relations with other Shona chiefs like Chibi Madhlangove, Zimuto and Chirimanzu between 1886 and 1890. In this manner, these agents prepared the groundwork for the Berlin mission stations at Gutu (1872) and Chibi (1894).<sup>62</sup>

The agents of the Dutch Reformed Church (D/R/C) also played an equally active part in the same area between 1887 and 1892. Their groups, which consisted of predominantly Sotho-Venda workers from the Transvaal, included a number of individuals who later became notable characters in the twentieth century history of Southern Rhodesia. These were Micah Makhatho (Makgatho), Joshua Masoga, Zacharia Ramushu, Simon Nyt, Mikla Choene, Isaac Khumalo, Petrus Morudu, Daniel Molea, Petrus Khobe and Lucas Mokwele (Mokwile). Their work among the Southern Shona covered the chiefdoms of Nyajena, Neshuro, Mugabe, Shumba Chekai and the Hlengwe (Shangaan) of Vurumela, next to the Buby River in the Chibi district. It was this group of evangelists which spread D/R/C influence among the Southern Shona and generally foreshadowed the birth of the D/R/C mission station at Morgenster near the Zimbabwe ruins in the Duma country of Chief Mugabe in 1892. In the subsequent years, this became the principal base of D/R/C influence in the country.<sup>63</sup>

These endeavours of the African missionaries of the Dutch, German and Swiss missions in the Shona country are particularly interesting not only in the manner in which they were able to pave the way for the more effective missionary enterprise of the colonial era, but also because of the enduring influence some of them left on Southern Rhodesian history. We may take a few cases here for examination to illustrate our argument. The

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<sup>62</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 25-31; Du Plessis: op. cit. pp. 349-50; Vide also E. K. Mashingaidze: Christian Missions in Mashonaland, Southern Rhodesia: 1890-1930: PhD thesis (unpublished): University of York: 1973: pp. 37-42; 98-102.

<sup>63</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 32-3; M. I. Daneel: Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches: Vol. 1: Mouton Publishers: The Hague: 1971: pp. 188-9.

Rev. Micah Makgatho (Makgatho) for example, who later became the leader of the black-American led religious movement, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), at the close of the nineteenth century, had a peculiarly eventful career. As he informed the South African Native Affairs Commission in Bulawayo in September 1904, his contacts with the country had actually been longer than those of his white counterparts, dating back to 1882 when he first made his appearance at Chief Zimuto's in Mashonaland with the half-caste preachers, Gabriel and Petrus Buys, as well as a fellow Sotho, Jacob Moemi. Rev. Makgatho subsequently worked in the Nyajena chieftdom in the Victoria district with another fellow Sotho evangelist from the Transvaal, Joshua Masoga, during the years 1887 to 1892, carrying out their work as before in the name of the D/R/C mission under the direction of Rev. Stephanus Hofmeyr of Zoutpansberg in the Transvaal. In the pre-colonial era when Makgatho and his colleagues worked as semi-independent agents of their mission, their work among the Shona had progressed obviously to the advantage of the mission. But the situation soon changed with the coming of colonial rule and the assumption of the command of the D/R/C mission in Southern Rhodesia by the Rev. A. A. Louw.<sup>64</sup>

The D/R/C mission and its associates were not, however, the only missionary societies to take advantage of their connections beyond the Limpopo and further their work by such means in the Company territories. Other societies, though with less geographical advantage than the former religious bodies, also exploited those favourable factors arising from their wide experience and huge followings in the South, which acted as supporting material to missionary work in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in particular, may even have had advantages approximating those of the D/R/C. As a matter of fact, this body was actually able, by leaning on its organisational advantages, to spearhead the missionary movement in South Africa even within the borders of the Boer republics themselves, where the atmosphere was not politically conducive for work by foreign societies. Indeed it had even carried its

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<sup>64</sup> Evidence of Rev. Michael (Micah) Makgatho, AMEC, Bulawayo, September 10, 1904, in South African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. IV: p. 199.

cause right up to the Transvaal by the 1880's and it was from this region that it first drew its early African manpower and, in fact, the Mashonaland province, in the pre-1896 days, was run as part of the Transvaal district, in Methodist parlance. Besides, the WMMS cast its net on a much wider scale and, therefore, some of its African evangelists in early Southern Rhodesia also came from as far as the Cape Colony.

Starting with Michael Bowen, a Xhosa and an able linguist who came with the Rev. Isaac Shimmin, the senior WMMS missionary, to Mashonaland in 1891 and laid down the foundation of a Methodist Station at Chiremba's (Epworth) near Salisbury, further efforts were made by the Methodists to increase the number of its African teachers and evangelists from the South. By 1892, therefore, a fairly large number of these workers were accordingly enrolled from Johannesburg and the rest of the Transvaal. They included among them Modumedi Moleli and his cousin Josiah Ramushu, Samuel Tutani, James Anta, Daniel Mochudi, Hogane (Gogani), Mohgari (Muhari), Fakazi, Morago (Murawu) and Orga Belezi, to name only a few. These workers were, from all appearances, a mixture of Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho (Pedi) and Tswana nationalities. Moleli and Ramushu (Tswana/Rolong) and Mochudi (Tswana/Kgatla) were products of the Good Hope mission in the Zoutpansberg. In fact, Moleli and Ramushu came from Mphahlele village on the foot of the Drakensberg mountains. They had come under the influence of their Pedi kinsman Samuel Mathabane, the Methodist evangelist who had in turn been a disciple of Rev. James Allison of Natal, whom he had encountered on a job-seeking venture thither in 1867. James Anta was a Zulu, whilst the remainder were Xhosa who had been enrolled through Methodist agencies in Johannesburg. But all these agents were fluent in Xhosa, which they generally adopted as a medium of instruction in Mashonaland before 1896. Moleli was stationed at Chief Nenguwo's in the Marandellas district where he laid down the foundation of Nenguwo school (Waddilove) in 1893; James Anta at Hartley in Chief Zvimba's in the Lomagundi district where, among other things, he taught the late Chief Patrick Gusha Chidakwa Zvimba.<sup>65</sup> The remainder were distributed in the Charter district; Orga Belezi working among the Njanja people of Chief Gambiza, whilst

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<sup>65</sup> Chief Zvimba died in February 1976 whilst this thesis was being written.

his compatriots were placed at Chief Kwenda's, where they pioneered what later became the Kwenda Methodist Station.<sup>66</sup>

Anglicans, like the D/R/C and the Methodists, also brought into the country their own African workers from the South. But these Anglican agents were too few in number, the best known being Bernard Mzeki, Frank Zixubu and the Rev. Hezekiah Mtobi. Bernard Mzeki, who became more famous after his death in 1896 and for which reason he is regarded in some Anglican circles as a 'martyr', was a former Mozambique labour migrant to the Cape Colony. Here he managed to find his way into Zonnebloem College, the school founded in 1860 with the blessings of Sir George Grey, the Governor of the Cape who had in mind a programme by means of which he intended to establish peaceful conditions on the Cape frontier through the production of a class of neo-traditional African elites, that is educated sons of African chiefs less amenable to confrontation.<sup>67</sup> Mzeki was therefore one of the many commoners who jostled shoulders with this African nobility at Zonnebloem.

But just as he was unique at Zonnebloem College so also was he different in the group of African pioneer evangelists in Southern Rhodesia before 1896. Because of his Gaza/Ndau origin (Ndau being one of the seven Shona ethnic groups), Mzeki was naturally more acceptable to the Nhowe (Shona) of Chief Mangwende among whom he worked in the Mrewa district. Indeed because of Mzeki's 'tsiwo/Dhliwayo' (rat) totem identity, he found friends and what could be called classificatory relations among the Nhowe. Such relations included the mother of Mahwetu (John) Kapuya, whom Mzeki treated as a 'sister' because she was of the same totem as his; an important factor in the context of the African extended family system. That this relationship between the two had stuck is demonstrated

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<sup>66</sup>This account is based on these works: Graaf: Modumedi Moleli: pp. 1-8, 27-8, 119-22. H. E. Summers: 'The Kwenda Story' NADA: Vol. IX. No. 4, 1967; pp. 3-5; Findlay and Holdsworth: op. cit. pp. 337-40; W. R. Peadar: 'Nenguwo Training Institution and the First Shona Teachers', in Dachs (ed) op. cit. pp. 72-3; C. J. M. Zvobgo: 'The Influence of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missions in Southern Rhodesia, 1891-1923': Ibid. pp. 63-70. (Zvobgo has also written a PhD thesis on this subject for the University of Edinburgh); Vide also: E. K. Mashingaidze: Christian Missions in Mashonaland, 1890-1930; pp. 85-92.

<sup>67</sup>W. L. and L. Rees: The Life and Times of Sir George Grey; H. Brett: Auckland: N. Z., 1892; pp. 186-96; 256-87.

by the fact that Mzeki persuaded John Kapuya's mother, in those days of general indifference to missionary enterprise, to allow the boy to live under his (Mzeki's) custody, in his capacity as the Anglican teacher in the Mangwende Chiefdom, and with the result that Kapuya was later sent for further education at Isandhlwana Teacher Training College in Zululand after Mzeki's death. Moreover, unlike the rank and file foreign African evangelists who despised the Shona people, Mzeki got married to a Shona woman Mutwa Nyatsunga, a grand-daughter of Chief Mangwende; an act which further strengthened his connections with his flock.<sup>68</sup>

The other two Anglican workers, the Rev. Hezekiah Mtobi and Frank Zixubu were not so closely connected with the Shona societies. Father Mtobi, the first African priest in the Anglican diocese of Mashonaland, came from Grahamstown in the Cape Province; proceeding to join the mission in Mashonaland by sea via Beira. Having come through the eastern section of Mashonaland, he naturally started work among the Manyika people of Chief Mutasa and in 1895 laid down the foundation of the Anglican institution of St. Augustine's, Penhalonga, in the area. It was also Rev. Mtobi (Mtobi) who performed the marriage ceremony on the occasion of Mzeki's marriage to Mutwa Nyatsunga, before Mzeki was killed and also before the cleric himself returned home to Grahamstown insane in 1901.<sup>69</sup> Frank Zixubu, the Zulu evangelist and the last man in the Anglican trio, came from Pietermaritzburg in Natal and survived the risings of 1896. It was Zixubu who in fact laid down the foundation of the Anglican mission stations of Epiphany and St. Faith's at Rusape in the Maungwe chiefdom of Makoni. Although he occasionally went to Natal for visits, he remained permanently in Mashonaland, subsequently becoming a wealthy landowner and rancher and generally wielding much influence within the African circles. Like the other proud Africans from the South of his generation, he remained a bachelor and when he died long afterwards, his brother came all the way from Natal to take over the estate.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Jean Farrant: The Mashonaland Martyr: Bernard Mizeki and the Pioneer Church: Oxford University Press: Cape Town: 1968: pp. 52, 138-42 and 228.

<sup>69</sup> Farrant: The Mashonaland Martyr: pp. 82-3; 141-2; 175.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid: pp. 80, 85; 116, 230: Interview with John Khambula (Zulu origin), Chegutu Location, Hartley, November 22, 1975.

Whatever justifications these various missionary societies operating in the Company territories may have applied to introducing an African sub-elite from the South where these respective bodies had worked for decades, if not centuries, before and had large followings as a result, this practice was bound, all the same, to bring about profound repercussions within the local African traditional environment. The African missionary agents acted generally as midwives in the processes of social, economic and political change. But some of them, perhaps carried away by the implications their new role involved, paid too much blind faith to their white-settler allies that they too became somewhat oblivious of the features of maladministration so dominant in the 1890-6 era of BSA Co. rule. This loyalty to the white colonists was the cause of their undoing and consequently they found themselves compelled to pay the debt, which they unconsciously owed the local people, with their lives in the 1896-7 risings. Bernard Mzeki, who of all the individual members of this group of evangelists should have been spared on account of his marriage to a local woman and might have been redeemed by his closeness to the various Shona social systems, paid his debt for collaborating with the officials of the Native Department and other white settlers in their drive to make the Shona respond to what these subject peoples obviously regarded as unbearable hut-tax and labour demands.<sup>71</sup> Modumedi Moleli, working for the Methodists at Nenguwo's, was killed for transgressing the traditions of the local people. He, for example, cultivated a garden under the 'muḽi usina Zita' ('the nameless tree') beneath the Nyachiswa kopje; a tree which represented the perpetuity of Shona traditions and heritage, having been the place where five centuries back, Mwene Mutapa Munembiri, the grandson of Nyatsimba Mutota, the Shona ruler of fifteenth century fame, had held court and assemblies of the people. In this regard, this tree, which only withered up in 1930, was of tremendous religious and historical value to the Shona.

Moreover, Moleli's offences did not merely concern the above matter, but also dealt with his abuse of Shona values and traditions which largely alienated those of Chief Nenguwo's people who had hitherto stood up in his

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<sup>71</sup> Farrant: loc. cit.



defence. In addition, Moleli's offer to aid 'his friend' James White, a farmer whom the Shona people had killed at the very beginning of the rebellion, was quite inexplicable to the local people. For one thing, James White was well known in the area for his outspoken negrophobia and, besides, this farmer had previously clashed with Chief Nenguwo over the latter's daughter, Panashe, whom the former required as a concubine in spite of the fact that the girl was betrothed.<sup>72</sup> Thus Moleli was in every way fumbling and stumbling over one obstacle or another in his dealings with the people of Chief Nenguwo.

The problems of the African evangelists in a foreign land were legion. Whilst their white masters generally tended to throw overboard most, if not all, African customs and traditions as inferior, decadent and culturally irrelevant on the grounds of their racial pride, technological and social distance as well as the backing of superior military strength,<sup>73</sup> the African foreign agents, whose justification for their contemptuous attitudes and disdain of local African customs solely rested on their association with the white settlers, were obviously exposing themselves to physical retaliatory attacks during the risings. The case of James Anta, the Zulu evangelist at the Methodist station of Hartleyton, demonstrates this point admirably. The insurgents in the Lomangudi area where Anta worked had, as one of their objectives, the idea of avenging the deaths of three of their chiefs, including the then Chief Zvimba, who had been previously shot by Sub-Inspector Hooper in September 1894, after their removal from a Sunday service then being conducted by the Rev. George Eva. James Anta who was killed in revenge was thus unfortunately exposed to the mishap by his alliance with the white settlers and missionaries.<sup>74</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup> Graaf: op. cit., pp. 53-9; 208-12; The 'muti usina zita' is also mentioned in the biography of a former student at Waddilove Institute in the 1920's: Vide: S. Samkange: The Mourned One: (Heinemann Education Books Ltd., London: 1975): p. 30.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Cairns: op. cit. pp. 38-9.

<sup>74</sup> Peaden: 'Nenguwo Training Institute and the First Shona Teachers': pp. 74-5 and C. F. Andrews: John White of Mashonaland: Hodder & Stoughton: London: 1935: pp. 51-2. Chief Zvimba who was killed by Sub-Inspector Hooper is the father of the late Chief Zvimba (died February 1976) who detained the author on November 22, 1975 during a visit to the Zvimba area to interview the Rev. Sojini.

collaboration of these African teachers with the white forces of occupation therefore rendered them despicable and detestable in the eyes of the local people they intended to convert.

For those African teachers in the Charter district, namely Mohgari (Muhari), Fakazi, Tutani and Morago (Murawu), stationed at the Methodist outpost in Chief Kwenda's, the dimensions of their difficult position in connection with their relationship with the whites were clear enough, as they were scornfully treated by the African insurgents as 'mbeva' (rats) and were sought after by the soldiers of the neighbouring chiefdoms of Masarirambi and Wedza. Their redemption in the event came not from heaven as they had been teaching their converts, but from their patron, Chief Kwenda, who refused to allow the irate insurgent soldiers to carry out their schemes and thus frustrated their intentions further by ordering the foreign teachers to stay among and identify themselves with his people.<sup>75</sup> In a nutshell, the crime of the foreign African teachers and missionaries may have been well summarized by Rev. Micah Makgatho, when he stated in 1904 that

... when I came from my country -(Transvaal)-, I said 'Now I am going under the British Government'. I am still of the same opinion, and am loyal. In all the wars in Mashonaland and here -(Matabeleland)- and with the Dutch Government -(Anglo-Boer War)- I was always with the Government -(BSA Co. ),<sup>76</sup> and I do not know why I should now change.

This loyalty of these African evangelists and teachers to the Company Administration, while the rest of the country was in ferment against Company rule, left these African emigres in an unenviable position indeed in 1896. But those who, by dint of good luck, survived the crisis lived not only to carry out the revolutionary movement they had from the start volunteered to be part of, but also to provide some of the country's leading figures of African opinion. The Tutanis of the Marirangwe African Purchase Area in the Hartley district,<sup>77</sup> and the Ramushus of Bulawayo,

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<sup>75</sup> Summer: 'The Kwenda Story': loc. cit.

<sup>76</sup> Evidence of Rev. Makgatho: loc. cit.

<sup>77</sup> The Tutanis who are the descendants of Samuel Tutani, spared at Kwenda in 1896 include among others, Rebecca Tutani, a pioneer woman teacher, the unpopular police officer (among Africans) Sergeant James Tutani (died in 1974) and many more in the Hartley district: Vide: Peadar: op. cit. pp. 77, 81.

so prominent in the Methodist Church circles in modern colonist Rhodesia,<sup>78</sup> are among the direct descendants of these African evangelists brought along by the pioneer missionaries into the country.

Whilst the missionaries were instrumental in bringing into the Company territories the prototype of the African elite of modern colonist Rhodesia, this should not however be taken as the cause for a general conclusion that only the missionary agencies were responsible for the introduction into the country of this educated African social stratum, which mediated between the white settlers and the indigenous Africans at the time. The secular colonial agencies were also active in this respect, as we shall see later, and the Africans in the South were themselves becoming increasingly aware of the advantages the extension of European influence across the Limpopo offered for those with the necessary skills. Thus some of them were coming up on their own initiative as economically motivated migrants and perhaps as a counter-stream to the Shona and Ndebele labourers already going to Kimberley and the Rand mines even in the pre-colonial days. As the case of these individual African emigres is, by and large, a visible manifestation of the success and fruition of missionary enterprise, we shall discuss their careers in the Company territories at this junction, before we delve into the more involved military auxiliary movement. A few examples to illustrate this point may be well demonstrated, in this instance, by the careers of John Makunga and Karl Khumalo in Matabeleland, who, together with John Jacobs, were at one time or another secretaries of Lobengula before the war of 1893.

John Cummings Makunga, our first case study, was a Swazi of the Dhlamini clan who had been educated at Lovedale during the time of Dr. James Stewart's emphasis on education with a practical bent for non-

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<sup>78</sup>The two Ramushu brothers, the Rev. Oswald D. Ramushu and the Rev. William H. Ramushu both of Mpopoma, Bulawayo, and both ministers of the Methodist Church and maternal cousins of the famous African Nationalist leader, the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, are the sons of Josiah Ramushu (died 1918 of Spanish Influenza) who came from the Transvaal with the missionaries in 1892. Vide N. Sithole: African Nationalism: Oxford University Press, London: (2nd Edition) 1968: p. 20; and Graaf: op. cit. p. 27. (Miss Eileen Buckley of Bulawayo who is researching on the Methodist Church with special reference to African evangelists and workers for the period 1890's-1940's for a PhD thesis with London University may deal best with this.)

Europeans in the 1870's. After taking a course in carpentry, John Makunga went to work for some time with a firm of Kimberley lawyers, before he proceeded to Matabeleland together with Karl Khumalo, in the wake of the Rudd Concession party of 1888. In Matabeleland, Makunga was engaged by Lobengula as one of the Ndebele monarch's personal secretaries, whose job it was to count the money paid to the king in monthly stipends by the newly formed British South Africa Company (BSACo.), as the terms of the Rudd Concession stipulated. This money, so it was asserted, was paid in gold sovereigns and kept in canvas bags (izinjumba) in a wagon at the king's kraal, Esigodhlweni, where it was liable to be misplaced, especially by children, who could not, as a matter of fact, resist the temptation of playing with these shiny and rather exotic metal pieces.<sup>79</sup> It was in this capacity, therefore, that Makunga featured in the story of the so-called 'educated Kimberley natives' at Bulawayo, so scathingly referred to by the BSACo. and the Imperial officials in Southern Africa in December 1890, for their part in allegedly abetting the efforts of the German concession-hunters in Matabeleland in a deal which later gave rise to the Lippert concession.<sup>80</sup> Besides, as Lobengula's secretary, John Makunga also took a prominent part in the diplomatic drive to avoid the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893 and, therefore, is best known as one of Lobengula's envoys to Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner for South Africa in Cape Town. Accompanied on several occasions by old Umshete, one of Lobengula's most senior counsellors who had previously visited England in 1888 with Maud to interview Queen Victoria, this 'Cape native', as Glass condescendingly describes Makunga, tried to salvage the deteriorating relations between Lobengula and the BSACo. in the period preceding the 1893 war but in vain, as will be discussed later in the study.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> C. O. 879/57: Memorandum on proceedings at an indaba held at Govt. House, Bulawayo, on the 12th December, 1898; Personal Communication from Mr. Dodson Makunga, of Selebi-Pikwe, Botswana, December 7, 1974; and also Interview with Mrs. Ruby Adonis (nee Makunga); Mkoba Township, Gwelo, November 20, 1975 (Mr. Makunga is the son of John Makunga and Mrs. Adonis the granddaughter).

<sup>80</sup> C. O. 417/72: J. S. Moffat, Assistant Commissioner to Sir Sidney Shippard, December 29, 1890.

<sup>81</sup> S. Glass: The Matabele War: Longmans: London and Harlow: 1958: pp. 158-61.

During the war of 1893 and for the subsequent period preceding the Ndebele rising in 1896, Makunga appears to have gone underground re-appearing in the course of the risings on the side of the BSACo. forces, when he and John Grootboom later took an active part in bringing about the Matopo peace 'indaba' in August 1896.<sup>82</sup> It is possible that Makunga had undergone this process of transformation during the inter-war years (1893-1896), when he learned to accept that the Ndebele power was no more. Thus Makunga persuaded himself at the same time to adopt, what may have appeared to him, a practical approach to the changed situation by collaborating with the Company against the Ndebele. This practical approach, so adopted by Makunga, is well demonstrated by the story of his career in the post-1896 period.

John Makunga appears to have had a fairly peaceful career in Matabeleland, but his Zulu companion Karl Khumalo, with whom he arrived in Matabeleland from Kimberley just before 1890, had a very turbulent one. This difference may have been a result of the quality of the relationship of these two characters and their loyalty to the Ndebele nation right from the start, not to mention also the manner in which they adjusted to meet the wishes of the new Company Administration in later years. Karl Khumalo, on his arrival from Kimberley, presented himself to the Ndebele as one of them and indeed insinuated to be the son of Zehin, one of the Ndebele indunas who had, for one reason or another, previously left Matabeleland for the South. In this way, he was thus presented to Lobengula by Ishwapa, the induna of what later became the Bubi district. Unfortunately, his story proved unacceptable to a deputation appointed by Lobengula to examine the matter and whose verdict, consequently, was that Karl Khumalo was an undesirable 'impositor'. He was, however, not deported from Matabeleland by pleading that

... being an educated man, he could assist the king, who was then overburdened by correspondence with white men, and required a secretary.<sup>83</sup>

Thus Karl Khumalo's literary skills not only rescued him from the wrath of the Ndebele monarch, but also won him a special place in the sun before the overthrow of Lobengula in 1893.

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<sup>82</sup> Vide infra. 130-9

<sup>83</sup> C. O. 879/57: Statements of Ishwapa and Sikombo (Ndebele indunas) in

Karl Khumalo first came to the attention of the BSACo. in the period between December 1890 and February 1891, during the visit to Matabeleland of the German concession-hunters Hassforth, Lippert and Detelback, as we have already seen in the case of John Makunga. He and John ('Karl') Makunga were referred to by J. S. Moffat, the Assistant Commissioner for Matabeleland and Bechuanaland, as the 'two natives recently arrived from Kimberley... who can also read,' and had accompanied the German Hassforth from 'Emvatsha' (Umvutsha), where the Ndebele king had just signed the document forming the basis of the Lippert Concession, to James Dawson's store where the king's 'Elephant seal' for stamping the official accreditation was kept. On this occasion, Khumalo and Makunga did not, however, fall into the firing line of the Company and Imperial officials, who, of course, strongly resented German competition over Matabeleland. Instead these officials preferred to keep their powder dry for their German rivals. Hassforth in particular, came off worst being referred to as '... a reckless and shameless liar' whose activities and misrepresentations were likely to bring about 'evil effects' on Anglo-German relations. Karl Khumalo and Makunga were readily excused for their lack of understanding of the convolutions of the politics of the scramble for Africa and the implications of Hassforth's activities.<sup>84</sup> During the Anglo-Ndebele War (1893), there was equally little contact between Khumalo and the Company officials; the only occasion for such contact being the time when Khumalo and Dawson were sent with wagons by Dr. Jameson to fetch the wives of the vanquished Ndebele monarch.<sup>85</sup> Such an amicable relationship between Karl Khumalo and the Company did not, however, last long and when the Ndebele rising broke out in April 1896, the point of departure had been

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Memorandum on proceedings at an indaba held at Govt. House, Bulawayo, December 12, 1898.

<sup>84</sup> C. O. 417/72: Moffat to Shippard: December 29, 1890; and Weartherley, Secretary, BSACo. to Sir R. G. Herbert at Colonial Office (hereafter C. O.): February 12, 1891. For Anglo-German Scramble for Matabeleland etc. Vide: R. Robinson, J. Gallagher and Alice Denny: Africa and the Victorians: Macmillan: London: 1961: pp. 221-9.

<sup>85</sup> C. O. 879/57: Statement of Sikombo. ...

ultimately reached.

The underlying thesis of the foregoing study may be summarized simply as that when the colony of Southern Rhodesia was founded, the shortage of both qualified manpower and an obliging African population was made up by the reliance of the agencies of colonization on an external African auxiliary force; a force which fitted the requirements of the 'master' society because of several reasons of historical nature. The missionary societies, which regarded the expansion of their work into the newly acquired Company territories as a spill-over from their main bases across the Limpopo, were among the first to take advantage of their historical connections with territories below the Limpopo and so did the secular agencies, as we shall see below. But while the whole process of political and economic aggrandizement was taking place, the African peoples from the South were also, in many ways, quite conscious of these new developments and those who were prepared to stake their claims in the new colony, as the cases of John Makunga and Karl Khumalo have demonstrated, proceeded to do so. We shall therefore, accordingly, examine some of the more populous African groups from the South and their part in the wars of conquest and "pacification" in Matabeleland and Mashonaland and the implications arising from this participation.

iii The 'Cape Boys', The Pioneer Column and The Anglo-Ndebele War 1890-93

Professor Ranger argues that the colonies of East and Central Africa (the Rhodesias, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda), though annexed by two different colonial powers, were born in the same cradle. Germany and Britain which acquired these territories were ab initio not anxious to allow large-scale commitment of their manpower and capital resources, but in their places allowed private companies to do their jobs for them.<sup>86</sup> These companies were apparently prepared enough to create sufficiently stable conditions for organized exploitation of the resources of these territories and pay requisite dividends to their shareholders. But unfortunately the same companies' enthusiasm could not match the adminis-

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<sup>86</sup> Ranger: 'African Reactions to the Imposition of Colonial Rule in East and Central Africa' in Gann and Duignan (eds.): op. cit. pp. 293-5.

trative demands in manpower and capital outlay required for laying down any meaningful infrastructures. On the surface, the British South Africa Company<sup>87</sup> appeared better off than any of its sister syndicates in the North: the British Imperial East Africa Company in Kenya and Uganda, the German East African Company in Tanganyika and the African Lakes Corporation in Nyasaland. However, this Company's problems too were not made lighter with the extension of its control across the Zambesi and the annexation of the then provinces of North/Eastern and North/Western Rhodesia as well as the subsidies which it provided to Harry Johnston and his doddering Administration in Nyasaland.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, the BSACo. was, therefore, heavily handicapped financially, in spite of its reliance on Rhodes's enormous private fortune. For such reasons, by 1896, the BSACo. had hardly established any satisfactory administrative machinery to meet with its requirements South of the Zambesi. Inadequate provision, especially of the military and civil services for the good government of the country, was destined to cost the BSACo. dearly and, ultimately, it never effectively recovered from these disasters till 1923.<sup>89</sup> In the circumstances, the need to effect economies was uppermost in the calculation of the early Southern Rhodesian Administration, with the result that the military and the police forces were evidently the first targets.<sup>90</sup> In this situation, the role and value of the African auxiliaries as collaborators was inestimable.

Before we explore the role of the African emigres in the wars of "pacification" and conquest in early Southern Rhodesia, it would be only

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<sup>87</sup> Hereafter called the BSACo.

<sup>88</sup> B. Pachai: Malawi: The History of the Nation: Longman: London: 1973: p. 82. BSACo. bought shares in the African Lakes Corp. in 1889 and by 1895 its annual subsidy to the ALC was about £17,500.

<sup>89</sup> J. K. Rennie: Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia 1890-1935: (unpublished) PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1973, p. 165: Rennie argues that the BSACo. 's poverty was due to the fact that it farmed out sub-concessions for the major undertakings to subsidiary companies whose profits went to Rhodes and the directors of these companies rather than to the BSACo. shareholders.

<sup>90</sup> Ian Colvin: The Life of Jameson: Vol. I: Edward Arnold & Co.: London: 1922: pp. 219-20. As early as 1892 Jameson reduced the police from 700 to 40 members thus reducing also the BSACo. 's expenses from £250,000 to £30,000 annually.



appropriate to trace their original association with the white settler community. When the dreams of Cecil John Rhodes to extend the boundaries of British political control into the inner recesses of the African continent came true with the Rudd Concession and the grant of a Royal Charter in 1888/9 to occupy Mashonaland, a Pioneer Column was formed to carry out these objectives in 1890. The Column was intended to represent a new and self-sufficient society befitting a land-locked territory. With this idea in mind, the Pioneer Column was from the start very carefully chosen and in its composition reflected various shades of social and occupational classes of South Africa. Thus the Column not surprisingly included clergymen, doctors, lawyers, farmers, miners, sailors, builders, tailors, butchers and many other classes.<sup>91</sup> Of particular prominence within the Pioneer Column ranks was a rudimentary class of aristocrats; the recruits chosen at the insistence of Rhodes from such leading families of the Cape Colony and South Africa in general as would be capable of exerting pressure onto the British Government to come to the BSACo.'s aid, should any unforeseen disaster befall the Mashonaland venture.<sup>92</sup> The Column also represented a broad spectrum of political groups, both on the South African provincial and inter-provincial levels. Boer families from various parts of South Africa also had representatives in the Pioneer Column to attract Boer sympathies and assuage their feelings against British designs. Last but not least, the Column included a large number of police, the nucleus of the British South Africa Police, and an army of Africa auxiliaries, drawn from the most leading African national entities of South Africa, such as the Zulu, Sotho, Mfengu, Khoikhoi and many others. These were engrafted into the Column at Mafeking where they had converged and were engaged primarily for menial and semi-specialized jobs like wagon-driving, cattle-tending and the like.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Frank Johnson: Great Days: The Autobiography of an Empire Pioneer: G. Bell & Sons: London: 1940: pp. 109-12.

<sup>92</sup> Johnson: Great Days: loc. cit.: Frank Johnson states that this clique from important families called 'Rhodes's Angels' or 'the twelve Apostles' consisted of R. T. Corydon (later Administrator of N/W/Rhodesia and Governor of Uganda); Jack Grimmer, one of Rhodes's Secretaries, Sergeant Schermbrucker, brother-in-law of Sir Charles Coghlan, Rhodesia's first Premier, among many others.

<sup>93</sup> Hans Sauer, one of Rhodes's closest friends in his biography mentions the importance of good wagon-drivers and leaders for trekking. In this light he refers to the short-comings of British 'greehorns' like

However the police and the African auxiliaries to the Column were not chosen with as great care as that shown in the case of the members of the Column, who were supposed to lay down the foundation for permanent white settlement. In fact, the police had only been included at the insistence of the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, who was not altogether convinced on the adequacy of the military muscle in the movement.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, one of the members of this police force described, a few years later, the character of the force in less charitable language, indicating that

... such a mixed lot I have never seen in my life, all sorts of conditions, from the aristocrat down to the street Arab-peers and waifs of humanity mingling together like ingredients in a hotch-potch. Clerks and businessmen of all kinds jostle one another, and one troop is called brokers, though some of the men say they are more broke than broker ...<sup>95</sup>

Thus the occupation of Mashonaland in 1890 witnessed the birth of a totally new society, a society described by Gann, on account of its plural character, as resembling '... a slice of Neapolitan ice-cream'.<sup>96</sup>

The successful occupation of Mashonaland by the Pioneer Column, in the face of Lobengula's protests, created new political problems. While the Shona communities, in the early stages of occupation, saw the pioneers as a new factor in their system of external relations and regarded them either as possible political allies or commercial partners in the perennial Shona game of trade on the existing pattern of their relationship with the Portuguese,<sup>97</sup> the Ndebele, on the other hand, saw settler presence

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Lord Randolph Churchill on trekking. Dr. Sauer was Afrikaner from the OFS. Vide: Hans Sauer: Ex Africa: Geoffrey Bles: London: 1937: pp. 192-5.

<sup>94</sup> Johnson: op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>95</sup> (Major) A. G. Leonard: How We Made Rhodesia: Kegan Paul & Co.: London: 1926: p. 126.

<sup>96</sup> L. H. Gann: A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934: Humanities Press: New York: 1969 (2nd Edition): p. 172.

<sup>97</sup> 'Curio' Brown states that the Shona regarded the Pioneers as 'harmless lunatics... temporarily wandering about, shooting game and searching for gold mines...' but liable to go back to 'Diamond' (Kimberley). The Shona even gave Brown himself a very apt nickname Nyamazana (wild game). Vide: W. H. Brown: On the South African Frontier: Sampson Low & Co.: London: 1899: pp. 195-202.

as a handicap to their erstwhile free military and political reign. However, it must also be pointed out that, as a matter of fact, very few raids appear to have taken place in Mashonaland during the period of settler/Ndebele co-existence 1890-3.<sup>98</sup> The white settlers, although somewhat irritated by the Ndebele pressure, were not in a position to attack the Ndebele state during the early period of occupation, when they were still too drunk with gold fever to think of other matters. But as the gold myths exploded and it began to dawn onto them that they had, after all their efforts, failed to discover the 'Second Rand' they were looking for, their former optimism turned into frustration and frustration into bitterness. They had been promised an El Dorado on enlistment into the Column but the promises had not materialized. Both these settlers and the BSACo., therefore, naturally concluded that as they had not discovered the El Dorado in Mashonaland perhaps Matabeleland provided the answer.<sup>99</sup> Thus it became incumbent on these white pioneers to bring their hopes to reality and it required only one or two tactical errors on the part of Lobengula, the Ndebele monarch, to provide a tangible casus belli for the former to effect the conquest of his kingdom. The seizure of the Ndebele cattle by the BSACo. officials in mid-1893 and the subsequent attack on the Shona community around Fort Victoria, causing anxiety within the settler community there, surely provided the casus belli so required.

As the purpose of this chapter is to examine the part played by the so-called 'Cape Boys' or 'Colonial Natives' and their associates as military auxiliaries of the Company forces, we shall not go into any detail on either the causes of the 1893 war, the course of the war itself and its results, but we shall merely pick out those aspects of the war which neces-

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<sup>98</sup> These raids were, of course, that against Chief Nemaikonde (Lomangudi) in 1891; in Ranger: Revolt in S. Rhodesia: 1896-7, p. 28; that against Chief Chibi in 1892, in Beach: The Rising in South-Western Mashonaland 1896-97: p. 229, and the one against Chief Mutema in 1892, Vide: Rennie: Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia 1890-1935: pp. 152-4.

<sup>99</sup> Ian Colvin: The Life of Jameson: Vol. II: Edward Arnold & Co.: London: 1922: pp. 18-9. The thesis that Matabeleland was the El Dorado the white settlers were looking for was referred to once more by Rhodes and Jameson after the 1893 war at a banquet given at the Imperial Institute in London in January 1895. Vide also: S. Samkange: Origin of Rhodesia: Heinemann: London: 1968: p. 240.

sitated the involvement of Cape Africans or Africans from the South in general. Such an approach is conditioned by a number of factors. In the first place, the Ndebele war (1893) is an involved affair requiring fully-fledged research in its own right.<sup>100</sup> Secondly, there is the question of the patchy character of material on Africans as individuals in early Southern Rhodesia in particular and in Africa in general during the early colonial period, or at least before the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>101</sup> and finally, the influence of racial and supremacist psychology and the irreparable damage this inflicted on African historiography of the pre-colonial and early colonial period. Of these three factors, we may discuss here the implications of the third one on African history and its interpretation, especially, as the views so held had far-reaching consequences in Southern Africa in particular.

The story of the early race contacts between the whites and blacks in Central Africa and the origins of the race problem that influenced the later-day attitudes have been fully examined by Cairns in his valuable study Prelude to Imperialism. Amongst the many souvenirs these contacts and attitudes imprinted onto the African image, so far as the contemporary European reader was concerned, is the generally negative picture which Cairns describes as,

... Hobbesian in its harshness and primeaval in the dominance of nature over man. In ~~(these)~~ European accounts individual Africans emerged rarely from the mass as distinct personalities. As objects of salvation, obstacles to rapid travel, or as faithful followers, they are relegated to a secondary position.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> For such a study note the rather out-moded; Glass: The Matabele War. Whilst this thesis was in progress, Julian Cobbing of the University of Rhodesia was currently researching on Ndebele history up to 1896, with all the possibility of throwing new light on both the Anglo-Ndebele war (1893) and the Ndebele rising (1896).

<sup>101</sup> C. O. 767/5: Weare, Secretary for the S. Rhodesia High Commissioner, to Dominions Office (hereafter called D. O.), December 18, 1925: S. Rhodesia Correspondence, P/R/O, London. This material forwarded by the Dominions Office to the S. Rhodesia High Commissioner has 14 pages of names of scarcely any reference to them in 1893 except in passing. Glass in his book, The Matabele War does not mention any 'Cape Boys' at all, except John Makunga, but then only as Secretary and envoy of Lobengula to the High Commissioner in Cape Town.

<sup>102</sup> Cairns: op. cit.: pp. xii-xiii. For further discussion of these attitudes, Vide: O. Mamoni: Prospero and Calibar: The Psychology of Colonization: (translated by Pamela Powesland): Praeger: New York (2nd Edition) 1964: and also Memmi: The Colonizer and the Colonized: passim.

Such an African image was, of course, forcibly stuck into the mind of the reader by the various erroneous assumptions that were not by any means devoid of patriotic tinsel and generally asserted that qualities of virtue, worthiness, manliness and intellect, to mention only a few, were preserves of the European peoples only, whilst their opposites naturally applied to the Africans.<sup>103</sup> Hand in glove with these early European misconceptions was the treatment of Africans as sub-human and, therefore, as objects of humorous superiority in satirical memoirs and adventure stories of European writers. Thus in accounts of adventurers, Africans rarely emerged as individuals capable of attaining the qualities worthy of admiration. When they did so, they were portrayed as exceptions rather than a general rule, and were, therefore, consequently treated in isolation from their African environment to avoid impinging onto the image hitherto conceived in the mind of the white man. More often than not however, Africans who were charitably treated in European literature had more to give than the writers dared admit.<sup>104</sup> To cap these preceding views, was the rasa tabula theory dominating the writings of these early European travellers, missionaries, hunters and adventurers. By virtue of this theory, it was predominantly believed and accepted that Africa was a 'no-man's land' and that the Africans had no right there at all.<sup>105</sup>

The general effect of this type of logic in both precolonial and colonial psychology was obviously to ignore African presence in the continent not

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<sup>103</sup> Cairns: op. cit., pp. 36—9; Cairns discusses the distortion of the concepts 'gentleman', 'courage' and others by early Britons in Africa through the manipulation of the psychology of superiority to such an extent that these concepts became exclusively descriptive of British character and hence were obviously inapplicable to African peoples.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.: pp. 114—9; This isolation technique was usually applied to shrewd African leaders like Khama, Lobengula, Mirambo, Mutesa - whose wit and shrewdness the European travellers were compelled to admit. These were praised because, by virtue of their positions, they usually held the destinies of the travellers in their hands.

<sup>105</sup> L. H. Gann: 'Reflections on Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa' in Gann and Duignan (eds.): Colonialism in Africa 1870—1960: Vol. I. chap. 3; p. 114; An extreme view in this connection was that of Lord Bryce's that '... the savage... had no more right to claim that the land was made for him than have the wild beast of the forest who roar after their prey and seek their meat from God'. Quoted in Cairns: op. cit. p. 77.

only in the literary sense, but physically as well. Such African presence as was admitted was, therefore, merely in a subservient role, described succinctly by Cairns in the following terms:

Implicit in many of the statements (of early European writers on Africa) was the assumption that to be the first white man was equivalent to being the first man. The African was part of the background in which Europeans carried out their activities. His co-operation might be essential to the accomplishment of European objectives, but the overwhelming emphasis was a European centred approach. The recurring praise for the faithful porter indicates praise for the supplemental rather than the independent role assigned to Africans.<sup>106</sup>

These flaws in early Eurocentric literature on Africa and the African obviously make research on African individuals and groups, at least in the early period, a daunting task.<sup>107</sup> The general tendency of the Eurocentric writings was to submerge African individuality and claims to recognition. In effect, the value of this type of literature was only for its propaganda purposes and like all propaganda technocrats the early white writers were obviously married to the spirit of their age and became widows in the generations that followed. Against this general background, it is, therefore, not surprising that the role of the 'Cape Boys' in the historical development of Southern Rhodesia is seriously overlooked in official literature, more so that the 'Cape Boys' were not only, at the time, a racial anomaly, but were also regarded as administrative misfits.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Cairns: op. cit. p. 30. African historians and writers as well as like-minded Africanists have, however, become increasingly critical of the early trend of historical interpretation by predominantly European writers. See for instance, A. B. Davidson: 'African resistance and rebellion against the imposition of colonial rule' in Ranger (ed.): The Emerging Themes of African History: pp. 183-4; T. O. Ranger: 'The Rewriting of African History during the Scramble: The Matabele dominance over Mashonaland': in African Social Research (University of Zambesi): No. 4, December 1964: pp. 271-81; Lawrence Vambe: An Ill-fated People: Heinemann, London: 1970: pp. 29-30, 123-4.

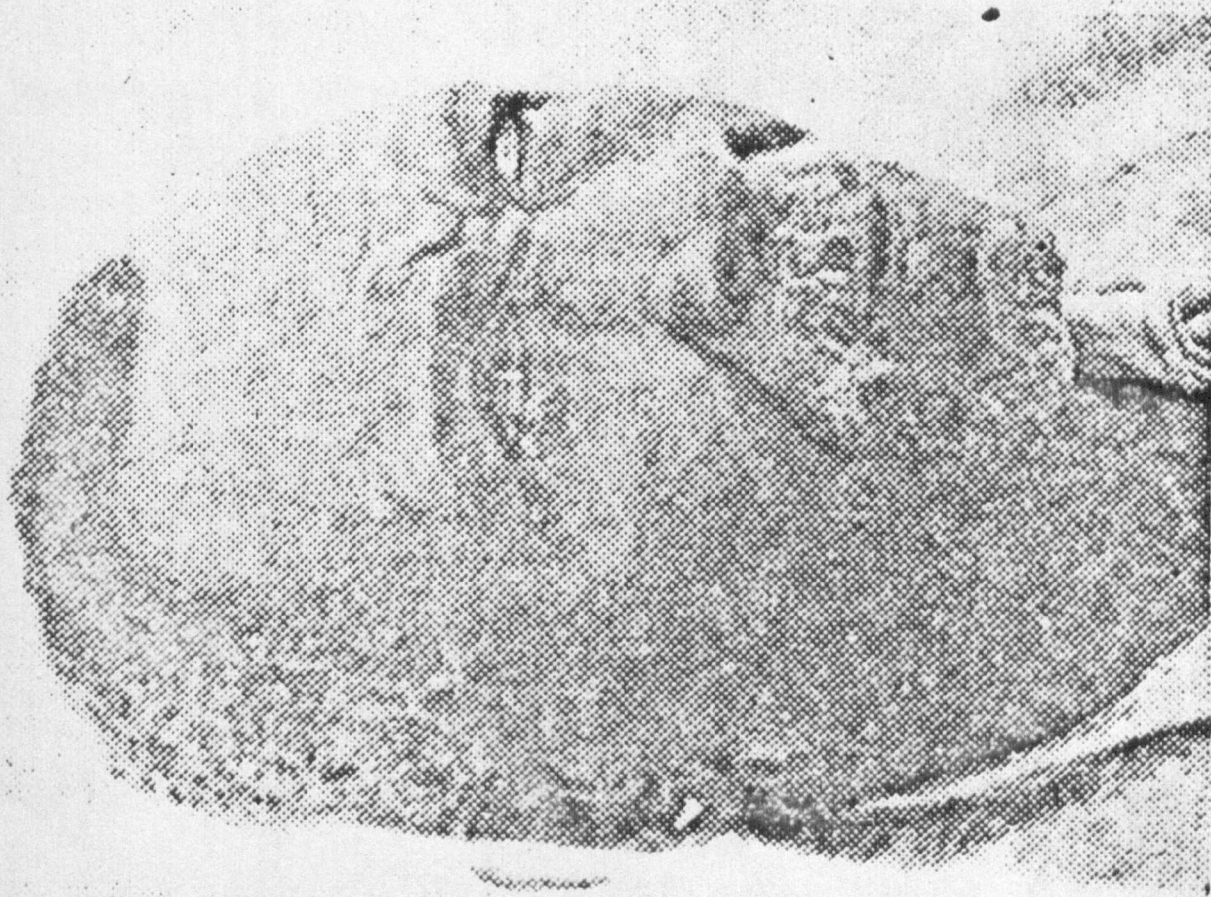
<sup>107</sup> The effects of this discrepancy in early historical literature actually account for the very laboured and time-absorbing character of work on the biographies of early African historical figures: Vide: G. Shepperson and T. Price: Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915: Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh: 1958; Farrant: The Mashonaland Martyr; and Graaf: Modumedi Moleli.

<sup>108</sup> The 'Cape Boys' were not always under the general scope of the N/Cs

The following story was related to me by Kwezane Frank. He states he is a Zulu with isibongo Gumede and that he was born at Eshowe, Zululand of a Zulu father and Swazi mother. He remembers being told that his elder brother was in the Falaza regiment when it fought the Europeans at Hlobane. At this time he was still being fed from his mother's breast. If the fighting at Hlobane refers to the Zulu War of 1879, his age is about 83 years. (1962):

ONE OF THE EARLY ZULU AUXILIARIES  
TO THE SETTLED COMMUNITY: CAME  
TO S. AFRICA IN ABOUT 1893:

C.N.A.D.A.: no. 39: 1962):



We have already seen, at the beginning of this analysis, that the Pioneer Column was a form of multiracial movement with the white members, according to the ideology of the time, forming the primary element within the movement, whilst the African auxiliaries were a subsidiary stratum for menial and quasi-skilled services. These roles were not dismantled once permanent settlement in early Southern Rhodesia was attained. The hierarchical structure was instead entrenched, but with the only difference that in the new settlement area where the African indigenous people formed the majority, the African auxiliaries from across the Limpopo now played a mediating role between the white settlers and the indigenous African majority. In a new state which demanded, for its political economy, the co-operation of the African majority, particularly on labour and other economic matters, it became the duty of the African emigres to translate the wishes of the white settlers to the indigenous African people. The African emigres had their special role and their particular identity and were therefore, for all intents and purposes, called Mapainera (Pioneers) either by their white counterparts; the indigenous African people or later groups of African immigrants.<sup>109</sup> In this way, the identity of the African emigres was directly linked to that of their masters, clearly regarded by the local people as quite different from the pre-1890 white adventurers and hunters termed by the Shona, for instance, Maguvu (sloughs).<sup>110</sup> Notwithstanding the hierarchical social stratification, the occupation and subsequent conquest of Southern Rhodesia was, in all respects, a result of co-opted efforts of a multiracial movement whose members contributed variously towards its success. Let us now examine some of the subsidiary

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when the Native Dept. was later established. Vide: C.O. 417/53: Milton to Milner, December 8, 1897: On legislation against 'Colonial Boys'.

<sup>109</sup> B. J. Wilson: 'Kwezane Frank: African Pioneer' NADA: No. 39, 1962, p. 45 (Vide also picture: plate I): Interview with John Khambula (Zulu origin); Chegutu Location, Hartley, November 23, 1975; and Written Evidence of Rev. John Wesley Sojini to the Author; Sinoia, December 11, 1975.

<sup>110</sup> The term Maguvu (sloughs) may have arisen from the manner in which early Europeans to Southern Rhodesia were constantly on the move thus resembling the way in which snakes discarded their skins, from the Shona point of view. Interview with Mr. Madhlangove Madangombe: Chibi District: July 26, 1975.



functions performed by the African auxiliaries before the 1893 war.

After Frank Johnson had engaged the African auxiliaries at the beginning of pioneer journey at Mafeking, as we have seen, some of them fell out before they even reached Macloutsie in Bechuanaland and their work as labourers was taken over by the Ngwato supplied by Khama for the service. It would appear that the willingness of Khama to cooperate in the venture may have been born out of the longstanding acquaintance between him and Frank Johnson the organizer of the Pioneer Column.<sup>111</sup> Whatever the reasons, Khama was very anxious to oblige and provided a battalion of Ngwato auxiliaries under his brother Raditladi, later of Southern Rhodesian fame. These immediately took over the work of those South African auxiliaries who had deserted and were quite useful in providing services for road-cutting and scouting work with Selous. Unlike the African auxiliaries from the South, the Ngwato also had the singular advantage that they were not a financial liability to the Pioneer Column, as they had their own horses whilst those of the Column were either too few or dying of horse-sickness in large numbers. Besides, the Ngwato auxiliaries provided their own food and were not expected to rely on the Column's supplies.<sup>112</sup>

Of even greater importance was the political significance that Khama's co-operation implied. It was to some measure a political gimmick by Rhodes to woo the support of Exeter Hall and render the occupation of Mashonaland as a move motivated not only by political and economic objectives alone, but one tampered with humanitarian or altruistic ideals too. Indeed the members of the Pioneer Column themselves were well aware of this, but, as far as they were concerned, their racial feelings were too strong to accommodate political and humanitarian gestures. On the contrary, they were greatly offended by what they termed Ngwato 'praying habits' and as such were reluctant to work side by side with these Ngwato helpers, whom they ridiculed as well, indicating that, as 'Curio' Brown puts it:

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<sup>111</sup> Johnson op. cit. pp. 27, 73-4, 123, 130; Johnson had actually been granted a concession by Khama for the formation of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company Ltd. in 1888, which was later absorbed by the BSA Co. He was also involved in the transfer of Khama's capital from Shoshong to Palapye.

<sup>112</sup> Samkange: Origin of Rhodesia: pp. 201, 230.

They -(the Ngwato)- read the bible, sing and pray a great deal; but the men of our expedition who had been at their town, Palapye, all agree that their religion was not deep-seated. <sup>113</sup>

Khama himself also played his part in assuring Lobengula that the Pioneer Column was only proceeding to Mashonaland and did not intend to attack the Ndebele State. <sup>114</sup>

The Ngwato were temporary auxiliaries and once Mashonaland was reached the burden once more devolved onto the few African auxiliaries from the South still in service. This motley lot of menials and aides, some of whom had merely followed their masters from the comfort of settled cities like Johannesburg as servants, became very handy in these early days. They were used in building the forts at Victoria, Charter and Salisbury and the houses of European residents as well as offices for administrative purposes. The roads connecting these posts were also constructed with the labour of these African auxiliaries to the Pioneer Column. <sup>115</sup> The services of these auxiliaries were also indispensable during the period following the dispersal of the Column, when it became necessary for individual members to seek their fortunes as their callings demanded. They apparently accompanied the settlers during the course of these escapades throughout the length and breadth of the territory when the settlers acted as funa-tengas (traders) or funa-sevenzans (labour recruiters). <sup>116</sup> They were used in cutting makeshift roads through the various districts of Mashonaland for conveying goods for exchange with agricultural produce; for, at the early stage of white settlement, the Pioneer settlers were, in every sense of the word, heavily dependent on the Shona food supplies and in this field, contact between the white settlers and local African communities was of such importance that even Rhodes himself often encouraged the pioneers

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<sup>113</sup> Brown: On the South African Frontier: pp. 90-92.

<sup>114</sup> Samkange: loc. cit.

<sup>115</sup> J. R. Duncan, 'The Story of Mugodi Diamond' NADA: No. 36, 1959, pp. 49-51.

<sup>116</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards 'Reminiscences...' II; NADA: No. 38, 1961, pp. 10-11 and J. R. Duncan: 'The Story of Simba Jim' NADA: No. 35, 1958; pp. 99-102; Simba Jim recounts the activities of one 'Mbaimbai' (Mr. Peck) a postal agent and trader at Chatsworth who used to go into the Chilimanzi District with a gang of road-cutting Xhosa to exchange blankets for maize.

to do so, when they complained of the shortage of food supplies.<sup>117</sup> Blankets, beads, salt and limbo were therefore exchanged for upfu (mealie-meal), rice, African beer, tobacco, monkeynuts and honey.<sup>118</sup>

Such trade between the two communities obviously involved contact and communication which the African auxiliary members of the Pioneer Column obligingly facilitated. It must also be borne in mind that the Shona were not in any way acquainted with the whole idea of the Pioneer Column and the occupation of the country and naturally they refused to pay any heed to the demands of these foreigners for obeisance and labour before they were conquered. This reluctance was, to a large extent, reinforced by Shona suspicions on the white immigrants' intentions as it began to appear that their erstwhile visitors were overstaying the visit. Labour requirements in the absence of the use of force by the settlers were consequently negatived.<sup>119</sup> Faced with this situation, the African auxiliary from the South thus became quite an asset to the Pioneers. The foreign African auxiliary, unlike Khama's Ngwato helpers, became a permanent member of the settler society and, together with the white settler, staked his life for the success of the new Colony. Along with his master, the foreign African auxiliary remained to share the fortunes and hazards of frontier life and was, in every sense of the word, quite ungrudging in supporting his master in the military disasters that later followed, when his aid was required of him.

We have already pointed out some of the causes besetting research on

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<sup>117</sup> D. C. De Vaal: With Rhodes in Mashonaland: London: 1896: p. 229.

<sup>118</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: 'Reminiscences' II: loc. cit. and A. Darter: The Pioneers of Mashonaland. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.; London: 1914: pp. 102-3, 108. Darter states that the dependence of the early white pioneers on Shona food supplies was so prevalent that Sir John Willoughby, one of the military leaders was nicknamed 'Monkey Nuts' for issuing this Shona staple food to his troopers as rations.

<sup>119</sup> Duncan: 'The Story of Simba Jim': loc. cit. The famous Head Messenger Mahachi's case at Fort Victoria, is a good example of Shona suspicion towards the pioneer settlers. Mahachi, alias Imbayargwo, who had been engaged for a job herding horses (hence his nickname MAHACHI) in Fort Victoria could not get anybody to assist him in his home area, as Chief Zimuto had forbidden his people to work for the white men. Consequently Simba Jim of Masendeke's kraal in the Chilimanzi district was asked to go and help his brother-in-law, Mahachi, in the new urban settlement.

African groups and individuals in early African colonial history<sup>120</sup> and have also discussed, in a nutshell, the problems posed by the co-existence of the settlers and the Ndebele state.<sup>121</sup> We may here further look at the deterioration of Ndebele/Settler relations during the period before 1893.

The Rudd Concession had been granted by Lobengula to Rhodes's representatives in October 1888 under a cloud of deception, suspicion and mutual hostility. The hurried flight of the main actor in the whole drama, Francis R. Thompson, from Matebeleland (nearly perishing in the bush and desert of exhaustion and privation) and the subsequent extermination of the Ndebele induna Lotshe Hlabangana and his followers, their chicken not excepted, for having espoused the cause of the Rhodes party, are factors which underlined, from the start, the poignant relationship between Lobengula and the BSACo.<sup>122</sup> The repudiation of the Rudd Concession and the despatch of envoys to Queen Victoria by Lobengula, as well as the Rhodes-Johnson plot to assassinate Lobengula; events which followed in the wake of the Rudd Concession, further strained the Ndebele/BSACo. relations. Yet it was in the face of this mutual hostility that the Pioneer Column undertook the occupation of Mashonaland in 1890 and, for three years, co-existed with Lobengula. It is not surprising, therefore, that during the 1890-3 period of uneasy truce, the settlers felt the weight of the Ndebele threat like a millstone around their necks. The Ndebele, on their part, were defiant of white settler presence and carried out military raids in Mashonaland as of old, going even as far as the Melsetter district in the heart of the Ndau territory whither they had never ventured before. The Ndebele thus totally ignored the presence of the white settlers and took advantage of the withdrawal of Gungunyana, the Gaza ruler, from the Melsetter highlands to Bileni on the lower reaches of the Limpopo.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Vide: Supra; pp. 44-6

<sup>121</sup> Vide: Supra; pp. 42-3

<sup>122</sup> Samkange: op. cit. chaps. 7-13; pp. 56-164 and Nancy Rouillard (ed.): Matabele Thompson: An Autobiography; Faber & Faber: London: 1936: pp. 97-189.

<sup>123</sup> Rennie: op. cit. pp. 152-4; The Ndebele raided Chief Mutema in August 1892 after Gungunyana had removed to Bileni in 1889. Before 1889 the Ndebele and the Gaza, these two Nguni states, had recognized the Sabi River as the boundary of their respective operations.

This era of co-existence between the BSACo. and Lobengula, during 1890-3, may also be aptly called the 'period of confusion'. The Shona chiefs who were caught in the mêlée of this political impasse were considerably confused too. For example, whilst the BSACo. Administration imposed taxation in what later became the Victoria Circle in July 1892, the Ndebele simultaneously raided Chief Chibi to settle old scores.<sup>124</sup> The same applied to Chief Nema-konde (Lomagundi) in the Lomagundi district who refused to pay fealty to the Ndebele monarch any longer as his tributary status had previously required. Chief Nema-konde naturally could not pay fealty to Lobengula and at the same time also pay tax to the BSACo.<sup>125</sup> The BSACo. Administration at first took no interest in these Ndebele/Shona relations before 1893 as they did not affect the Company's immediate interests. But by 1893, the situation was changing fast. The failure of the settlers to discover the 'Second Rand' they were looking for and the BSACo.'s shift of emphasis in its economic policies, since the replacement of Archibald Colquhoun by Dr. L. S. Jameson as Administrator in July 1891, largely accounted for this changing political situation.

Soon after the departure of Colquhoun, a laxity in the maintenance of law and order for the sound government of the territory of Mashonaland appeared and with this was born the practice of cattle seizure and confiscation to which Dr. Jameson paid little attention, hence unwittingly encouraging it.<sup>126</sup> This inclusion of cattle as a target of the Company's policy of economic adventurism was destined to clash with Lobengula's interests, as cattle were the basis of the economy of the Ndebele state.<sup>127</sup> Thus when the BSACo. officials seized cattle from the South-Western Shona chiefdoms in 1893,<sup>128</sup> this naturally brought in train a chain of reactions.

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<sup>124</sup> Beach: loc. cit.

<sup>125</sup> Ranger: Revolt in S. Rhodesia: loc. cit.; Beach argues that Chief Nema-konde was raided by Lobengula for conspiring with the Rozvi Chief Sango and signing treaties of alliance with the Portuguese against the Ndebele before 1890. Vide: Beach: op. cit. p. 193.

<sup>126</sup> Ranger: Revolt, pp. 60-7.

<sup>127</sup> Vide: H. Kuper, A. J. B. Hughes and J. van Velsen: The Shona and the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia: International African Institute: London: 1954: pp. 54-9.

<sup>128</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 126-7; Beach lists the tributary chiefs in South-Western Mashonaland, who herded Lobengula's cattle, as Chiefs Nhema

whose effects were to eventually lead to conflict, as the two bulls were now being drawn closer to the arena to measure their respective strengths. This seizure of cattle by the BSACo. must, of course, be seen in its proper context. The Company was infuriated when its telegraph wire had been cut by the people of Makamure near Rungai Hill in the Chibi chiefdom and also by the people of the Godhlwayo division in Matabeleland itself. In return, the BSACo. seized large herds of cattle for compensation, but, in doing so, allowed its cattle-mania to overrule the propriety that the situation required. Moreover, the seizure was made from the wrong people in Chief Chitawudze's in the Bubi/Umzingwane District where Lobengula's herds were lodged and which Chitawudze ('Setouse') herded in return for immunity from Ndebele military raids.<sup>129</sup>

Maximum attempts were, from this point onwards, consequently made between the two political forces, though in different directions, either to avoid the war or to bring it nearer and sooner. The Ndebele had tasted the strength of the white men's weaponry before and had consequently fled from their old home in the Transvaal in the first half of the nineteenth century as a token recognition of its superiority. As another attempt to avoid any conflict with the white men, the Ndebele monarch had ordered his punitive impis sent to the Victoria division of Mashonaland in mid-1893, to avoid conflict with the white men at all costs and deal only with Shona miscreants.<sup>130</sup> On the diplomatic front too, Lobengula despatched envoys to the Imperial officials in the South, but both the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, and his assistant, J. S. Moffat, responsible for Bechuanaland and Matabeleland, would not be moved. These envoys were sent to the South three times and on these three occasions their attempts came to naught.<sup>131</sup> Preparations for war were being mounted and by mid-October

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Banga, Munyikwa (Mhari): Shiku, Chitawudze and Matenda. Chiefs Chirumanzu (Chilimanzi) and Hama paid tribute in labour for repairing Lobengula's huts and Masunda (Shabani area) provided soldiers.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid: pp. 232-4; 32 heads of cattle were seized from Makamure for the 170 yards of wire cut in his area and 100 heads from Khohomera, one of Chitawudze's headman, for 400 yards of wire found in the Godhlwayo district. 'Chitawudze' is the 'SETOUSE' in Lobengula's letter to Sir Henry Loch: Vide: Samkange op. cit. pp. 247-48.

<sup>130</sup> Samkange: op. cit. pp. 244-6.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid: pp. 247-57; Glass: The Matabele War: pp. 152-3; and Personal

1893 it came.

The BSACo. Administration under Dr. Jameson was not unaware of the effort and resources involved in attacking the Ndebele State and so when the conflict came it had gone to its length to raise a sizeable army and mobilize it for action. It scratched the very bottom of its barrel and was compelled to rely on the 'Cape Boys' and Shona levies as an ancillary force to strengthen its front. The company's main fighting forces consisted of the following divisions: the Mashonaland Force (i. e. the Salisbury and Victoria Columns) of 665 strong, under Major Patrick William Forbes, and the Southern Force, the so-called Bechuanaland Border Police, an imperial force under Major Goold-Adams numbering 445 troops. The Southern Force also had a supporting strength of 154 'Colonial Boys' (i. e. Africans from South Africa) and a force of 2,000 Ngwatos.<sup>132</sup> In the Mashonaland Force, Africans from South Africa and 'Coolies' (Asiatics) were also raised and commanded by Captain J. W. Nesbitt, the son of Major Nesbitt of Cape Colony fame, assisted by Lieutenant L. W. Papenfus.<sup>133</sup> These African auxiliaries were obviously quite welcome, as Major Forbes was short of manpower for his military muscle and had expressed doubts from the start on his ability to raise the required quota for the war, estimated at 2,500 white troopers. Indeed in his report to the BSACo., Major Forbes thus admitted the readiness with which he accepted Captain Nesbitt's plan on a non-European supporting force, adding that the Africans from the South and the 'Coolies' were '... of the greatest assistance to us'.<sup>134</sup> It must be borne in mind too that the members of the Mashonaland Force had to be encouraged to fight by dangling rich booty, as described in the terms

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Communication from Mr Dodson Makunga: December 7, 1974.

<sup>132</sup> C. O. 417/136, Report on the Matabele War by Sir John Willoughby, Bart. n. d. Enclosed in Herbert Canning, BSACo. to C. O., March 7, 1894; Africa South Correspondence, P/R/O, London.

<sup>133</sup> W. A. Wills and L. T. Collingridge: The Downfall of Lobengula: The African Reviews Offices: London: 1894: pp. 68-9, 228. A short biographical sketch on Captain Nesbitt and his association with 'alien' Africans in the 1893 war is included here.

<sup>134</sup> C. O. 417/136: Major Forbes's Report on the Campaign in Matabeleland; p. 4: Enclosed in Herbert Canning, BSACo., Secretary to C. O., August, 17, 1894.

of the Victoria agreement, and by the promises that these white volunteers would not be alone in the campaign as they would converge onto Bulawayo with the Southern Force of Major Goold-Adams, proceeding via Tati.<sup>135</sup>

The readiness with which the motley of African auxiliaries was accepted and the variety of duties they were to perform in the war, in a large measure, justified Forbes's action. Alongside the alien Africans were also Shona levies under the notorious John Somerset Brabant of Fort Victoria and Lieutenant Queded. These Shona levies, together with a contingent of domestic servants and grooms of the white settlers, as well as wagon-drivers and leaders, completed Forbes's roll-call of African auxiliaries raised in the hope of making up for the prospective short-fall in military manpower requirements. Their duties in this war included, in the main, serving as pickets at night around the laager; an assignment for which Forbes found them particularly useful and informed London Wall that

I found that the natives were thoroughly reliable for duty at night, and only one native during the campaign was found asleep at his post. . . Their hearing and eyesight are both so superior to a white man's especially at night, -and- I consider them useful in this capacity so long as they feel that they are in touch with and supported by white men.<sup>136</sup>

Such faith, on the part of Forbes, in these auxiliaries was patently justified by the alertness of this subsidiary force and its capacity to bear the rougher aspects of the campaign. At the battle of the Shangani on October 25, 1893 for example, when the Forbes column was confronted by one of Lobengula's famous crack regiments, the Insukameni regiment, the white forces, snug in the comfort of the laager, were nearly overwhelmed, but for the African auxiliaries who slept outside the laager and bore the first wave of attack.<sup>137</sup> Their chores, of course, involved mainly work of the base type or that demanding physical exertion even in the time of war. Thus these auxiliaries were responsible for rounding up captured herds of cattle and

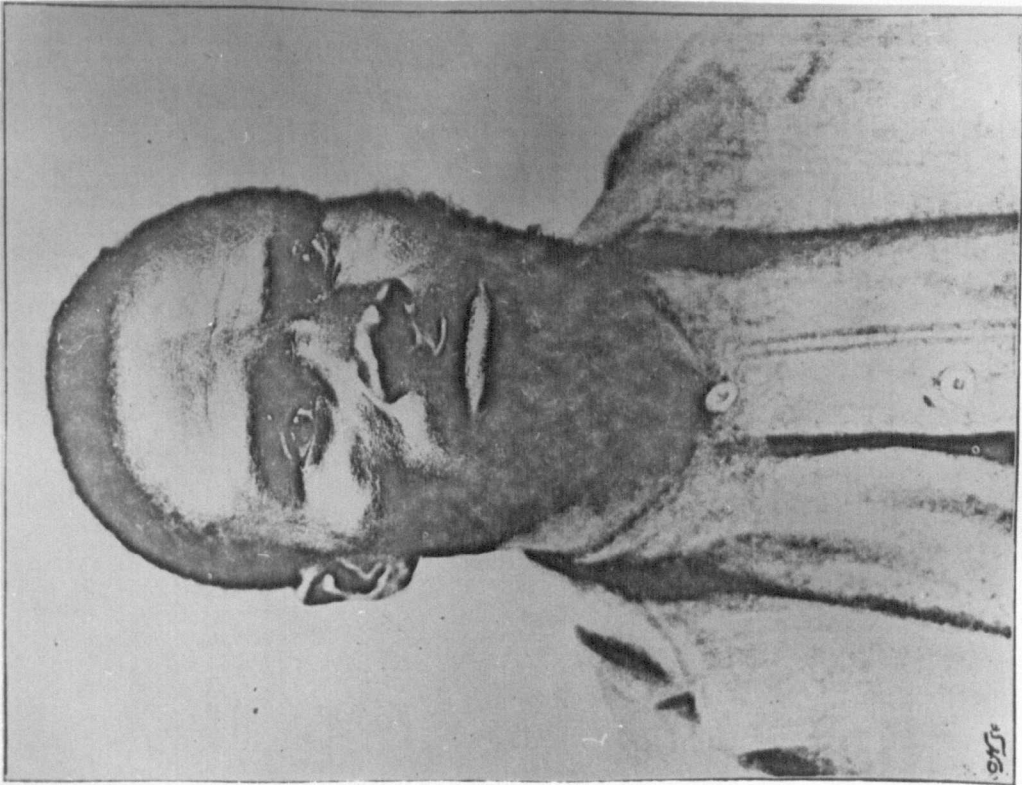
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<sup>135</sup> Ibid: pp. 3-4.

<sup>136</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report on the Campaign in Matabeleland: pp. 10-11, and Wills and Collingridge: The Downfall of Lobengula: pp. 81-2.

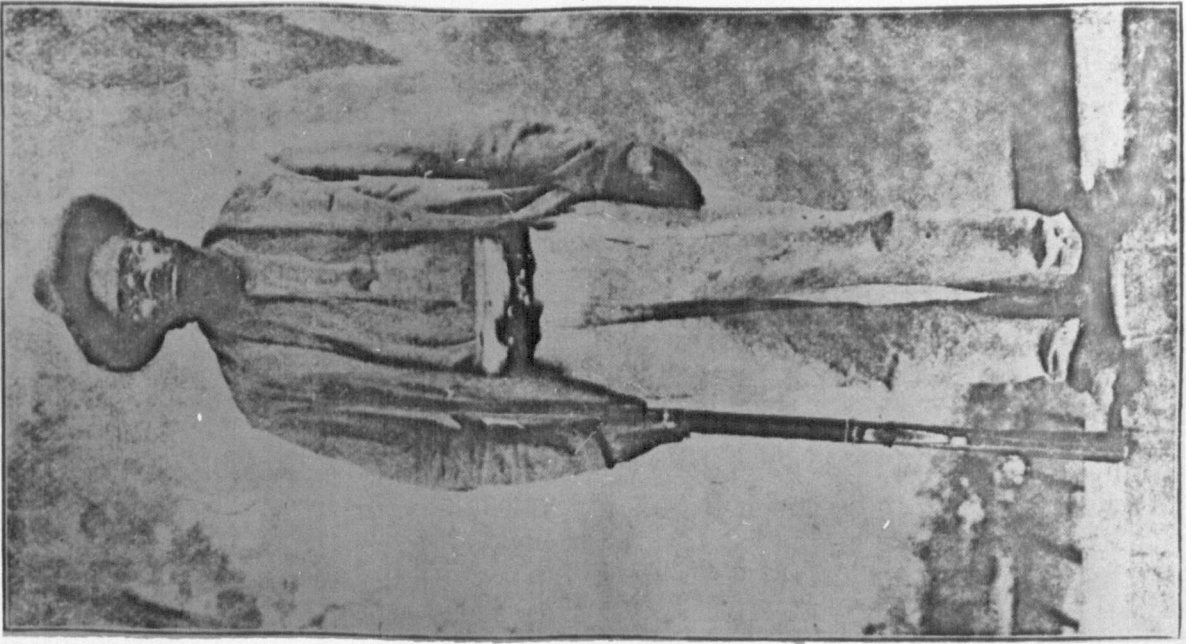
<sup>137</sup> Wills and Collingridge: op. cit. p. 40.





*(died Bulawayo: 1929)*

Extracts from **F.W. Sykes: With Plumer in Matabeleland**, (Constable & Co: London: 1897).



driving them back to Mashonaland; tending of horses, mules, maxim guns and wagons - a special field here for the 'Cape Boy' drivers and leaders; guarding Ndebele prisoners and ferretting out information from them for use by Forbes's officers. On the actual battlefield, especially as far as Captain Nesbitt's contingent was concerned, the African auxiliaries were usually sent forward to drive out the Ndebele 'impis' from rough and rocky locations, inaccessible to the predominantly mounted white troopers, or to carry out any related activities of provocative nature so as to draw the Ndebele into engagements.<sup>138</sup> The auxiliaries were also divided into two parties for the purpose of '...cutting bush and making drifts...' essential for wagon transport.

Finally, as communication between the civil authorities in Salisbury and the forces on the field was essential and Dr. Jameson had particularly insisted that he should be kept informed about the progress of the war, Forbes had to make use of his auxiliaries in this field and accordingly states that after the Shangani engagement with the Insukameni regiment, he despatched 'coloured' runners to Salisbury with reports for Jameson.<sup>139</sup>

But whatever importance may be attached to the role of the Cape Africans and other aliens in the 1893 war as a group, the story would not be complete without reference to individual figures within this sub-stratum. The best example is the case of John Grootboom,<sup>140</sup> who fought in both the 1893 war and the Ndebele rising on 1896 and survived both in the end. A case study of Grootboom's career reveals, in the main, that he was one of the few African figures who almost won the respect of white biographers of his time, in spite of the attitudes that hindered communication and understanding above the racial bracket. When reading about Grootboom, one is time and again forcibly reminded of the heroes of either the Arabian nights, African mythology or classical literature. His escapades, tricks, bravery and many other epics, in the course of the Anglo-Ndebele war, put him some-

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<sup>138</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report... p. 28, 33, 53; Forbes states that it is the 'Cape Boys' who secured the information from the Ndebele prisoners that he had been deliberately misled by the captive son of Magwegwe and thus sent the Wilson patrol to certain death.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid: pp. 13, 23.

<sup>140</sup> Vide: Plates II and III: (pictures).

times even higher up the ladder than some of these mythological compeers. Yet in spite of this, Grootboom is one of the historical figures also very roughly handed by writers, whether his contemporaries or those of succeeding generations. Among the many ethnic identities that Grootboom has unfortunately gained are Zulu, Tembu, Swazi, Xhosa, and 'Fingo'; whilst those who had little stomach for 'complicated' African names contented themselves with the generally descriptive and geopolitical term, popular in its time, and called him simply 'a Cape Native'.<sup>141</sup> This jungle of nomenclature is symbolic of the spirit and psychology of the period, with its characteristic lack of sympathy with and corresponding disdainful attitudes towards African languages and cultural, social and political systems. In short, the effect this had was to once more bring down Grootboom from his peak of achievements, it so they were, to an ordinary level because of his race.

John Grootboom was actually a Mfengu from the Cape Colony who had come up to Matabeleland either before or after 1890, but definitely before 1893. He came up and took employment as a driver to the London Missionary Society<sup>142</sup> minister, the Rev. C. D. Helm of the Rudd Concession fame.<sup>143</sup> Grootboom, like John Makunga, John Jacobs and Karl Kumalo the secretaries of Lobengula, was obviously among those enlightened Africans from the South who saw in the gradual encroachment on the Ndebele State by European forces of change an opportunity to utilize their skills in a new geographical sphere, as we have already seen.<sup>144</sup> John Grootboom, in

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<sup>141</sup> Wills and Collingridge call Grootboom 'a Cape Native'; Vide: The Downfall of Lobengula: p. 288; in Felix Gross: Rhodes of Africa: Cassell: London: 1956: p. 344, Grootboom is 'Swazi'; in J. G. Lockhard and C. M. Woodhouse: Rhodes: Macmillan: London: 1963: p. 352, he is 'Thembu'; in F. R. Burnham: Scouting on Two Continents: William Heinemann: London: 1926: p. 163, Grootboom is 'Fingoe'. In Sauer: Ex Africa: p. 311, the author remains quite faithful to his Boer racial ideology and consequently both Grootboom and Makunga are clubbed together as 'Red Kaffirs (Ama Xhosa)'. Finally Major Forbes called Grootboom a 'Zulu': Vide: C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report on the Campaign in Matabeleland..

<sup>142</sup> Hereafter called L. M. S.

<sup>143</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report on the campaign... pp. 39-40; and Interview with Mr. Paul Hlazo; November 18, 1975. Mr. Hlazo, the son of the famous John Hlazo, was scathing over these misnomers given to his compatriot John Grootboom.

fact, came originally from Alice near Lovedale, the famous educational institution in the Cape, and was related to the dissident Mfengu Presbyterian Minister, the Rev. Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba, well known for crossing swords with the Rev. James Stewart of Lovedale at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>145</sup> Grootboom's real name should have been John Mtimkulu, but it so happened that his father had worked for a Boer employer in the Cape, who changed the family name from 'Mtimkulu' (literally meaning 'big tree') to its Afrikaans equivalent 'Grootboom', for his own convenience.<sup>146</sup> Thus a name given by an uncanny employer, unable to comprehend African languages and without the patience to learn them either, went down into historical usage, an irony of linguistic accident. In some ways, John Grootboom's career resembles that of his Xhosa countryman William Koyi, who was orphaned during the Xhosa cattle-killing of 1857; went into employment as a wagon driver and leader in the Colony; educated himself at Lovedale and finally, ended up as a volunteer with the Scottish pioneer missionaries in Nyasaland. The only difference between these two appears to be that while Koyi expended his energies in bible-verse-mongering and hymn-singing, Grootboom found himself compelled to play hide and seek with the Ndebele warriors on the battlefields of Matabeleland.<sup>147</sup>

There is little information however, about John Grootboom's career during his service with Rev. Helm and on his evolution from a religious fellow traveller to a soldier.<sup>148</sup> Nonetheless, it might be assumed that

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<sup>144</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 35-9

<sup>145</sup> Vide: L. N. Mzimba: Ibali Lobomi nomsebenzi Womfi Umfundisi Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba: Lovedale Press: Lovedale: 1923: passim: (Translation by Rev. Sojini).

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Mr. Paul Hlazo: November 18, 1975; I was unable to find out, due to pressure of work and shortage of time, whether Grootboom was related to Peter Grootboom of the Cape Colony (Vide: Kawa: I-Bali Lama Mfengu: passim). But Mr. Hlazo asserted that during his years at Lovedale 1914-1919, Grootboom's uncle worked in the school's printing shop and used to enquire a great deal about his nephew's health and progress in Southern Rhodesia.

<sup>147</sup> Vide: Pachai: Malawi: The History of the Nation: pp. 19-20; 168-70.

<sup>148</sup> Grootboom, aptly called 'JANI MTHIMKULU' by the Ndebele at Hope Fountain mission station where he also interpreted for and taught the Helms the Ndebele language, appears to have initially won the confidence of the Ndebele, especially his fellow drivers like Mutshweni

Grootboom came to share the views and attitudes of his patron towards the Ndebele state. Rev. Helm's endorsement of the Rudd Concession in 1888, when he knew the deception involved and the subsequent endowments and favours the LMS received from the BSACo. after 1893,<sup>149</sup> can hardly be viewed as symptoms of Ndebele-*philia*. Indeed it is asserted that the LMS missionaries in Matebeleland, frustrated and disappointed over many years of sacrifice without any meaningful results, viewed the destruction of the Ndebele state in apocalyptic terms and concluded that it was the 'wrath of God... -(against)-... -(a)- stiffnecked tribe... -(for)- their constant and persistent refusal' to come to terms with missionary enterprise.<sup>150</sup> The BSACo., on the other hand, was regarded by these missionaries as 'a God-sent deliverer',<sup>151</sup> and was consequently hailed with joy. This atmosphere in which Grootboom worked in Matebeleland, strewn with frustration, bitterness and pre-1893 Ndebele-*phobia* as well as corresponding eulogy for the Chartered Company, might have left Grootboom with little choice to make. Moreover, as a Mfengu, Grootboom would have anyway naturally aligned himself with the side which espoused Christianity as its article of faith. For it has to be recognized that for the Mfengu of that era, Christianity went beyond the matters of an ordinary creed.<sup>152</sup>

As for Grootboom's involvement in the 1893 war, he features after the fall of Bulawayo early in November 1893 when he serves in various capacities. We have already shown Forbes's initial fears about raising a full quota of fighting men for the war and the promises he had made to the members of the Mashonaland Force that, at least, they had some assistance

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Mabena, a driver to the Carnegies, another missionary family. Vide: Iris Clinton: Hope Fountain Story: A Tale of One Hundred Years: Mambo Press: Gwelo: 1969: pp. 10, 22-3.

<sup>149</sup> Rev. Helm, who had been in Matabeleland since 1875, stated in 1904 that his missionary body, the LMS, owned four farms of about 3,000 morgen (6,000 acres) each in extent; a reward from the BSACo. Vide: Evidence of the Rev. C. D. Helm, Bulawayo, September 9, 1904: in South African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. IV: pp. 171-97.

<sup>150</sup> Rev. D. Carnegie to R. W. Thompson, June 27, 1890, LMS quoted in Cairns: op. cit. p. 242.

<sup>151</sup> Rev. Elliott to R. W. Thompson, February 19, 1890, LMS in Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 15-7

coming from the Bechuanaland Border Police.<sup>153</sup> After the fall of Bulawayo it became necessary to co-ordinate the two Columns in pursuit of the fugitive Ndebele monarch. This task was no small affair. The Ndebele impis during the flight had no more towns to guard and consequently concentrated their strength on guarding the person of their king. But before Forbes and Jameson, the latter having come down from Salisbury to accept Lobengula's submission, took any action, attempts were made to locate the position of Goold-Adams' forces. This task was entrusted to the American scouts, Burnham and Ingram, led by Grootboom '... a Zulu boy who knew the road to the South',<sup>154</sup> as Forbes then described him. Khoikhoi and Masarwa (San) trekkers were also set onto the trail of the fugitive king's wagons, under the impression that their knowledge of the desert and the veldt as well as their ability to trace game spoor would pay off in this task.<sup>155</sup> These efforts, however, failed and active pursuit was thus required.

Having failed to save the Ndebele state from the white man's weaponry, Lobengula was apparently now anxious to preserve his royal trappings that were still left. His flight from Bulawayo was therefore part of his efforts in that direction. After leaving Bulawayo, the Ndebele king and the royal party were located somewhere in the bushy area near the LMS mission outpost of Shiloh at a place called 'Thaba-zi-konga'. John Grootboom, a very 'plucky boy', so it was reported, Samuel and Wilhelm, all Africans from the Cape, 'volunteered' to convey Dr. Jameson's letter to the king, requesting the latter to return to Bulawayo.<sup>156</sup> This letter, written in Dutch, English and Zulu and conveyed by the Grootboom party on November 7, 1893, had stipulated a time limit of two days within which Lobengula had to reappear in Bulawayo, but by November 9, 1893, neither the king nor the Grootboom party appeared as expected. In fact, this began to reinforce Forbes's anxiety over the mission which he had, from the outset, described as dangerous and likely to render the envoys vulnerable to attack and massa-

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<sup>153</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 54-6

<sup>154</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report... p. 37.

<sup>155</sup> Burnham: Scouting on Two Continents: p. 163.

<sup>156</sup> Glass: op. cit. pp. 216-22: It is argued by Glass that Jameson and Rhodes were here trying to outwit the 'Imperial Factor' in the peace negotiations.

ore before they reached the king.

Forbes's anticipation was not altogether wrong as the mission to the Ndebele ruler turned out to be a trial of guts. The Grootboom party fell into the hands of the Imbezu regiment, who took the letter and forwarded it to the king retaining the bearers as prisoners. But serious danger to the party was, however, averted by Grootboom's acquaintance with Umjaan, the commander of the Imbezu regiment whom Grootboom had known during his career as a driver and interpreter to Rev. Helm. In the circumstances, this party of foreign Africans managed to get away with Umjaan's reap-  
proach only for siding with the Company forces rather than the Ndebele, as some of their fellow countrymen had done.<sup>157</sup> Umjaan may have here taken the chance to make a comparison between Grootboom's position as against that of the other Africans from the South then still on the side of the Ndebele, like John Jacobs, John Makunga and the rest, though some of these later deserted when it became apparent that the Ndebele would not win the war.<sup>158</sup> However, when the Grootboom party returned from their excruciating mission, they bore a letter to Dr. Jameson, written by Jacobs, then still the king's secretary, indicating the king's wish to return, but, at the same time, confessing that this could not be done as Bulawayo his seat and symbol of authority had been destroyed. It was a surprisingly conciliatory document which ended up ironically with the king asking for paper, pens and ink for writing purposes. The letter, it is alleged, may have reflected the conciliatory mood of the older regiments, which the Grootboom party reported were no longer interested in further fighting. But these 'doves', the Imbezu and Ingubo regiments, were, however, opposed by the younger ones, the Insukameni, Ihlati and Siseba regiments, the 'hawks' which called for fighting to the bitter end.<sup>159</sup>

The effect of the Grootboom mission to persuade the king to return and its subsequent failure were to strengthen the resolve of Jameson and Forbes that the king should be pursued, captured and forced to surrender. For John Grootboom and his colleagues, this meant further involvement on

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<sup>157</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report... pp. 39-40.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid: p. 46: Jacobs for instance later deserted at Bembesi in November 1893 and offered his services to Dr. Jameson to lead the Company forces to Lobengula.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

an even wider scale. The news of the alleged slackening morale of the Ndebele impis and the growing dichotomy within these impis, coupled with the desire to out-play the 'imperial factor' in ending the war, made the whole case a vitally urgent one for Jameson. This urgency was apparent in the impatience with which the Grootboom party's return was treated. A second party of messengers had, in fact, been sent treading on their heels,<sup>160</sup> thus turning the affair into something similar to a relay game. As further military efforts were mounted to achieve maximum submission of the Ndebele people, either on their own or at the king's initiative, Grootboom himself was repeatedly sent forward together with the American Scouts Burnham, his brother-in-law Ingram, and Mayne, whom we have previously come across. These American 'cowboys' were, obviously, greatly valued by the Company for their experience in the Apache and other Amerindian Wars and their somewhat unorthodox or rough-and-ready methods of approach to bush warfare and general frontier problems.<sup>161</sup> But these same Scouts were, unfortunately, neither familiar with the African languages nor the African terrain. For this reason, they relied largely on their 'Zulu boy' companion.<sup>162</sup>

Indeed Grootboom must have greatly impressed Burnham as the latter's descriptions of scenes in Africa, which generally manifest a rabid type of racism, do not include him. Burnham himself confessed that Grootboom was '~~.. (the) bravest, .. black of all my African experiences~~', and in lyrical terms, went on to compare the latter with the Natal writer's, Rider Haggard's, fabled hero, 'Umsplopogaas', stating that:

He ~~(Grootboom)~~ was well known in the country, could speak good English and was one of the pluckiest Negroes I have ever seen'.<sup>163</sup>

This combination of the American and Grootboom scouting parties was

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid: This was the party of the 'Zambesi' envoys sent on November 8, 1893 and which succeeded in commingling with the Ndebele impis pretending to be part of them looking for missing relatives.

<sup>161</sup> Sauer: op. cit., pp. 240-1: Dr. Sauer states that so unorthodox was the approach of these American 'Cowboys' to African affairs that their exploits included the destruction of ancient ruins in the Belingwe district in particular in search for gold. Dr. Jameson allowed them to do so till Rhodes himself intervened. These 'Cowboys' later incurred the disapproval of the High Commissioner when they also tried to rustle cattle from N/W Rhodesia in spite of Lewanika's protests.



actually in itself symbolic of the increasing tempo of the war. The very wide scope of scouting work, in the final stages of the 1893 war, involved securing information not only from the Ndebele captives, but also from within the ranks of the enemy itself by hook or crook, which was quite a hazardous affair; the scouts were responsible for incessant vigils over the Shangani River and its tributaries, checking and tracing the spoor of the fugitive monarch's wagons and, in the case of the Grootboom scouting party especially, they had the added charge of capturing herds of cattle repossessed by their Ndebele owners, removing them, sometimes, even from under the very noses of these owners. Such herds were, of course, very important for the commissariat division of Forbes's army.<sup>164</sup>

In the manner described above, Grootboom and his allies from the South, who had sided with settler forces, met their challenges and were not found wanting. Alongside his compatriots such as John Selous, an old hand of F. C. Selous during the latter's wanderings and hunting trips in Central Africa for which the former earned his employer's surname, Ghert and John Jacobs, who changed sides in mid-course, Grootboom played his part within the context of his situation, as a supplementary factor in the 1893 war and in the overthrow of the Ndebele state. At the end of the day, these African emigres formed what the Colonial Office termed, with some degree of detachment, 'a respectable total' of the casualties.<sup>165</sup> But, unlike their white counterparts in the war, they were not fighting for economic rewards as the Victoria Agreement symbolized, and it is not certain whether some of them knew what the war was actually about, except, of course, within the general context of current Southern African black/white confrontation and struggle for supremacy. To say the least, these auxiliaries were certainly fighting to promote the conqueror's ideology which

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<sup>162</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report... p. 50 and Burnham: op. cit. pp. 163-7.

<sup>163</sup> Burnham: op. cit. p. 163.

<sup>164</sup> C. O. 417/136: Forbes's Report...: pp. 66-8. On account of the extra nerve required towards the end of the war, it is reported that some 'Cape Boys' avoided this kind of engagement by feigning sickness.

<sup>165</sup> C. O. 417/136: Minute by Edward Fairfield to Fred Graham: March 7, 1894.

they had unconsciously borrowed;<sup>166</sup> an ideology under which the whites had no room for sharing political power with the Ndebele along with the social and economic privileges associated with it. It was a war not only to justify the ethos of white supremacy, but also to avenge British patriotic pride.<sup>167</sup>

In the circumstances, it is hard to justify Robinson's collaboration model in which the non-European emerges, in the processes of European aggrandizement in Africa and Asia, as a seasoned calculator, gambling for higher or lower stakes in what inevitably appeared a lucrative venture.<sup>168</sup> This model applies in very few cases within the colonial framework like that of Southern Africa, except, of course, in terms of political and social fission and we are obviously compelled to look elsewhere for a more turgid explanation to this type of collaboration. The 1893 group of aliens had neither cards to gamble with nor stakes to gamble for. They expected very few crumbs, if any, from the conflict and were only a cog in the general military and indeed colonial policy of conquest and "pacification." But the end of the Ndebele war of 1893 was by no means the end of Southern Rhodesia's wars of conquest and resistance, and we shall once more meet our alien African heroes, though in very much swelled numbers, together with the indomitable John Grootboom in the rising of 1896-7.

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<sup>166</sup> Memi: op. cit. pp. 15-7.

<sup>167</sup> Even before 1890, British travellers to Matebeleland and Mashonaland had vigorously resented Lobengula's power and control even for the good government of the country. For this reason Frank Johnson had stated in 1887 that '... To feel oneself under the power of a nigger is worse than being in prison and quite enough to bring on fever.' Johnson's Diary, August 21, 1887: Quoted in Cairns op. cit. p. 259.

<sup>168</sup> Robinson: op. cit. *passim*.

## CHAPTER 2

### The African Auxiliary Forces of Occupation and Conquest in Early Southern Rhodesia, 1880's-1900

#### II The foreign African elements in the Shona and Ndebele risings and after: 1894-1897

##### i Some Causes of the Risings

It is tempting to describe the period of BSACo. rule in early Southern Rhodesia following the 1893 war as one characterized by general lethargy with Company officials and their clients all in varying degrees of inebriation. In a situation of this nature, relationships between the Administration and the Africans and between whites and blacks obviously suffered and inexorably deteriorated. We shall therefore look into some of the features of Company rule in this period, with special reference to the degree in which they were responsible for the outbreak of the risings and the role of the 'alien' African factor as a collaborative mechanism in the story of the suppression of these risings amongst the local African population.

Rhodes's aims and ideals of expanding British political and economic control into the inner recesses of the African continent were magnanimous, but these were also too ambitious to be realistic especially as they did not for example take into consideration the presence of the African peoples of the areas so acquired. This aspect of Rhodes's schemes was well demonstrated by the absence of any defined 'native policy' in the territories administered by his Company; a shortcoming which some of his advisors had tried to point out to him at the early stage of Company rule in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, but in vain. One such advisor Sir Marshall Clarke, later Resident Commissioner of Southern Rhodesia, who had on several occasions warned Rhodes on the problems arising out of this administrative deficiency stated in 1898:

... long ago I tried to induce Rhodes to try something of the sort (re: native policy) but he then had some idea that he could ignore<sup>1</sup> the natives of the country & make a purely white settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> Mss. Afr. S. 211/3: Sir M. Clarke to Sir G. Lagden: Private: December 6,

In the early days of Company rule in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, Rhodes was apparently too pre-occupied with issues of wider imperial concern such as the Beira railway; the treaties with Gungunyana of Gaza-land; the annexation of Barotseland and adjacent territories across the Zambesi and indeed the struggle with the Transvaal Boers, to consider the African factor in the newly acquired territories as worthy of any reckoning. But then it was not only these more ambitious plans which pushed 'native policy' overboard in the Company territories at the time. Rhodes and Jameson shared a kindred feeling of adventurism and a loathing for formality, control and bureaucracy. In view of this, it is quite strange that Archibald Colquhoun, the first Administrator and a former civil servant in Indian Raj, was ever appointed, given all his Civil Service background and orientation. Colquhoun's appointment, wrong as it was, may well have been compensated by the universal contempt in which he was held, symbolized here by the disparaging descriptions of him portrayed by Rhodes's acolytes, who outrightly regarded him as 'one of Rhodes's mistakes' and quite unfavourably compared him with Dr. Jameson.<sup>2</sup> It was basically these reasons, so well reflected within the top-level official stratum of the BSA Co., which were responsible partly for the neo-anarchical state of affairs in the Company territories between 1893 and 1896. The British government for its part did not help matters either on account of its half-hearted policy as then directed especially by Chamberlain at the Colonial Office and one euphemistically termed as that of turning an 'Imperial blind eye' to the Company's activities, despite the vigilance demanded of Downing Street by the Charter.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly it may therefore be surmised here that the complicity of the Imperial government, in allowing the Company a free reign to exploit its political connections and at the same time perpetrate a buccaneer system of administration in the new possessions, might have been the crowning factor to the chaotic situation, aptly baptised by Galbraith with regard to the Jameson era in Southern Rhodesian history as one resembling 'an engine without a driver.'<sup>4</sup> The general con-

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1898. The Lagden Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford. I am grateful to my compatriot Francis Mashasha of Pembroke College, Oxford, for drawing my attention to this material.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson: op. cit. pp. 102-3; 116-7; and also Ranger: Revolt pp. 51-4.

<sup>3</sup> C. Palley: The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia 1888-1965: Clarendon Press: Oxford: 1966: pp. 38-43.

sequences of this absence of a defined 'native policy'; the development of a noticeable taste for adventurism and the lack of Imperial control were, to say the least, rueful as the risings and their aftermath will indicate in this study.

The immediate effect of the absence of a proper mechanism to regulate contacts between whites and blacks was that settlers began to take matters into their own hands in their dealings with the African inhabitants. Even during the short-lived era of Colquhoun (1890-1), who had tried in vain to induce the Company officials in Kimberly and Cape Town to create a viable framework for sound administration, these new arrivals had shown themselves to be less amenable to official control. In March 1891, one Hudson of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company for example, raided the kraal of headman Goredema in the Mazoe area north of Salisbury, burning the dwellings and extorting five heads of cattle in fine for what he allegedly regarded as theft of his goods by Goredema's people. Hudson further justified his actions on the grounds that as Colquhoun had previously refused permission to some of his fellow settlers to flog the Africans or take other actions in the way of redress for misconduct, he (Hudson) had gone ahead with his punitive raid anticipating that the Administrator might prevent him from carrying out such action.<sup>5</sup>

After the departure of Conquhoun in July 1891, dismissed on account of his bureaucratic mentality, this development in the way of free reign for the settlers was given official blessing by the new Administrator, Dr. Jameson. Indeed such acts as that of Hudson mentioned above became more commonplace and were not infrequently undertaken with Jameson's approval and allegedly in the name of law and order. The Negomo affair in March 1892, in which Captain Lendy raided this Shona headman of Chief Mangwende with a patrol force, maxim guns and heavy artillery, killing in the process '21 men' including among them headman Negomo himself and also capturing 47 heads of cattle as a punishment for Negomo's crime over striking one white trader named Bennet and his servant and for allegedly stealing this white man's goods, was only one of the many activities which characterized the

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<sup>4</sup>J. S. Galbraith: 'The Engine without a governor: the early years of the BSA Co. ': Rhodesian History: Vol. I: 1970: pp. 9-16.

<sup>5</sup>Ranger: op. cit. p. 57.

quasi-anarchical nature of the Jameson Administration before 1896 and consequently led to conflict between the Company and the African inhabitants. In fact, Captain Lendy, together with a colleague of his, Captain Graham, had on another occasion also raided headman Goredema in February 1892 in part fulfilment of some punitive and compensatory measures in favour of prospectors and settlers of the Mazoe area who had, allegedly complained of thefts of their property. Thus Goredema, who had been raided previously by Hudson, was once more raided by Captain Lendy now with official approval and during the course of which action the latter subsequently managed to kill seven of Goredema's men; wounded three and, as usual, burnt down the village.<sup>6</sup>

These raids against headman Goredema and others were obviously symptoms of over-reaction on the part of a white colonist administration described by students of colonial psychology as characteristic of 'a Nero complex',<sup>7</sup> and which apparently had various justifications in those early days of black/white contacts. In fact, it is said of such disproportionate punitive measures that they were often carried out as a vindication of the white man's strength and were, at the same time, designed to safeguard the sanctity of the lives and property of the white people. In short, these punitive actions were therefore, naturally, part of a characteristic defensive policy of the early Europeans in Africa; one adopted in their efforts to compensate for their inferior numbers and to protect the myths of the white man's superiority and invincibility, which were together essential for security reasons, given, as in this early Southern Rhodesian case, the larger numbers of the African peoples they so faced. Cairns appropriately says of such actions:

It was widely believed that the numerical inferiority of these early pioneers had to be counter-balanced by a prestige and respect on which... depended not only the influence of the white man, but 'often his very existence'.

In these circumstances, security considerations and racial psychology naturally became entwined together in the process of administration at times defying even the ideal of 'pacification', which most of these colonizing agencies

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid: pp. 63-6.

<sup>7</sup> Memmi: op. cit. pp. 52-3.

<sup>8</sup> Cairns: op. cit. p. 48.

and powers in Africa claimed to have had in mind. Accordingly any inroads into these aspects of colonial administrative psychology, especially by subject peoples, were thus taken as both insulting and dangerous and thus deserving of severe punishment. Cairns once more aptly describes this phenomenon of colonial and racial psychology as explanatory to a state of affairs whereby:

The murder of a white man, the ultimate indication of a breakdown of prestige, was thus an event of great symbolic importance.

The Company officials and the white settlers in Matabeleland and Mashonaland were certainly not unaware of the advantages derived from this ideological background to white colonization in Africa and elsewhere and therefore the activities of Hudson and Captain Lendy were viewed as token reparations to the sanctity of white man's prestige and security to his life and property against any form of ill-treatment by the Shona people of Mazoe and elsewhere. But when the economic motives of the Company also came into play, this process of disorderly activities was carried even beyond the norms of formal colonization requirements.

In any case, whatever methods were adopted by the colonist pioneers in early Southern Rhodesia, the problems of the Jameson Administration were in every sense considerable. Indeed while the BSACo. was prepared to administer the territories in the manner, which, it was hoped, would permit a measure of law and order to effect peaceful exploitation of resources, it could however hardly afford to deploy the necessary capital and manpower resources for the purpose; a problem also characteristic in other parts of East and Central Africa where colonial administration had been left at the mercy of private interests. In Matabeleland and Mashonaland, Jameson was forced to streamline his economies with the result that the police force was abandoned as early as 1891, as we have seen, and the settlers became the backbone of both the defence structure and civil administration of the new territories.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid: pp. 49-50.

<sup>10</sup> Colvin: loc. cit. The white-settler volunteers were engaged for both defence and civil services in return for promises on free provision of horses and protection. In this way the BSACo. hoped to spend as little as £4 per head per annum for defence and police purposes.

But the employment of especially farmers in the civil and defence sections of the Administration of these territories introduced a new element - the burgher law and the injection of personal interests in matters of general concern. The system was naturally copied from a similar one which had been quite popular in the South African colonies in the earlier phases of their history.<sup>11</sup> In the Company territories, the farmers appointed to assume these new responsibilities however began to promote their own and their relations' interests under the rubric of law and order, before they could pay any attention to the requirements for good government in their respective areas. They confiscated African stock and acted as recruiters of labour which they secured in the process by force for their own and the use of those close to them. These farmers-turned-officials also developed a propensity to interfere unnecessarily in African affairs outside the purview of their authority and concern primarily for private gain. Cases of this nature and of abuse of official authority in general were many and varied. The examples of one Bruce, the first magistrate of Umtali (1892), and Dunbar Moodie, the leader of the Boer trekkers from the Orange Free State and himself the first magistrate of Melsetter, were only some of the few glaring examples of this governmental process at work in the eastern areas of Mashonaland.

Moodie, for example, a Boer of Scottish origin, provides a particularly interesting case study. He had been generously rewarded by the BSACo. for his part in the negotiations leading to the Gungunyana treaty with Doyle in 1892 and for bringing into the country what Rhodes considered the proper type of settler, the 'poor whites' from the Orange Free State. These immigrants, it was thought, were most likely to stake their lives in the land in a manner patently different from that of the miners and prospectors and were therefore more liable to stay permanently in the new state, especially given in this case the declining economic situation in the Orange Free State, where the land tenure system could no longer sustain the age-old Boer tradition whereby fathers allocated farms to every son in the family as his inheritance.

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<sup>11</sup>The use of burghers for defence, civil administration and raiding African societies for personal gain had been introduced in the 18th century at the Cape: Vide: M. F. Katzen: 'White Settlers and the Origins of a new society, 1652-1779': in M. Wilson and L. M. Thompson (eds.): The Oxford History of South Africa: Vol. 1: Oxford University Press: London: 1969: pp. 213-32.



This system had apparently become impossible to cope with by the close of the nineteenth century because of the territory's increasing population.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the enormous land rewards Moodie received from the BSA Co., he also acted as courier for private financial interests in the Free State, buying them land in Mashonaland in return for commission.<sup>13</sup> These rewards did not however satisfy this Boer leader, who went on to exploit his official position in the Company's employ in the Melsetter district and made a fortune by charging his fellow white settlers for odds and ends and also acted as judge and jury in African cases, in return for payment in form of money and stock. Besides, he also made extensive use of forced labour on his huge farms for private purposes, compelling in consequence a large number of Africans of the area to leave the Melsetter district and settle in the adjacent Portuguese territory of Mozambique.<sup>14</sup>

Yet Moodie was by no means an exception to the rule. Similar practices were quite prevalent in the Charter and Victoria districts as well, where farmers and field-cornets took advantage of their authority to establish themselves as civil court judges in African affairs and extorted stock in the process. Quite often these officials also deliberately sided with the offending parties in Shona civil cases in order to create a situation of perpetual strife and in this manner promoted further lucrative ventures. The interesting factor in the activities of these farmer-officials is that few of them understood Shona languages and customs.

In the Charter and the Victoria districts in particular, this combined interference in Shona domestic affairs by private farmers and Company officials, especially after the creation of the Native Department in 1894, affected Shona communities to the very core. The policy of Native Commissioner (N/C) Alfred Drew in the Victoria district, for example, of deliberately supporting the Shona junior house heads against their chiefs; N/C Compton - Thompson's activities in the Charter district in forcing Headman Marume to obey a senior chief, Maromo of the Guzho, who had no claim,

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<sup>12</sup>Rennie: op. cit. pp. 170-2.

<sup>13</sup>Moodie was given 21,000 acres in the Marandellas district as reward by the Company in 1892 and one J. J. W. Swanepoel of the Free State gave him a total of £1,650 to buy 12 farms in the Melsettler district: Vide Rennie: op. cit. p. 206.

<sup>14</sup>Ranger: op. cit. p. 59.

whatever, of fealty over him; and N/C Weale's ('Chari's') interference in the Chilimanzi/Hama dispute in favour of the former, whose daughter he had married, as well as his activities in supporting the political claims of the Ngowa royal house against the Mhari house of Matsweru in the Chibi district, were evidently some of the most unsavoury features of the BSACo. Administration in the Shona country prior to 1896.<sup>15</sup> These activities, which were in their time only the tip of an iceberg, were, in all respects, actually the very antonym of the dictum of Pax Britannica.

This process of general interference in African affairs was, however, not confined to the local people's domestic affairs. The ill-formed and ill-equipped Jameson Administration of the pre-1896 era also had other forms of manifesting its presence. The widespread practice of forced labour, which allowed the settlers to venture far and wide in the country quarrying their requisite amounts of recruits, and the introduction of hut tax, which, incidentally, entwined together these two aspects of the Company Administration, were other means of administrative control and exploitation regarded by the settler community and their allies as more scintillating. Farmers and other private settlers who were appointed hut-tax collectors, in form of labour on the roads, money and stock, certainly left no stone unturned in the execution of their duties. Shooting of those who resisted the labour and hut-tax demands by these funa-sevenzazas was not infrequent, and it was especially this practice which forced people to clear away into the bush before or at the arrival of such colonist officials in the villages. A typical example in this respect may here be illustrated by the case of Richard O'Reilly, a farmer and trader in the Rusape district, the territory of Chief Makoni. When O'Reilly was appointed hut-tax collector in June 1894, he overtly took advantage of the situation to promote the sale of his goods to Chief Makoni and the Maungwe people at exorbitant prices, threatening in the process to call the police and burn down this ruler's homestead in the event of non-cooperation. In the Lomangudi district too where a Mining Commissioner was put in charge of the civil administration of the area, this official went about the district securing labour for the prospectors and farmers and on one occasion in March 1894, accompanied by Herbert Eyre a prospector and farmer of the Umvukwes in the same district, ended up shooting some of the reluctant

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<sup>15</sup> Beach: The Rising...: pp. 288-9; Ranger: op. cit. pp. 59-63.

labour recruits. The same methods were apparently pursued by his successor A. J. Jameson, also a Mining Commissioner, whose escapades in search of labour very often ended up in violent conflicts. It was, in fact, one such conflict which led to the shooting of three Shona chiefs, including in this instance Chief Zvimba, by Sub-Inspector Hooper in September 1894, as we have already seen.<sup>16</sup>

But whatever repercussions the above incidents might have produced on black/white relations in the Shona country, they could not, however, in any way exceed in dimensions the Brabant raid on the Budja Chief Gurupira in the Mtoko district in February 1895. John S. Brabant, alias Makuvire, who was the head of the Native Department in Mashonaland, formed in 1894, was particularly liked by his fellow settlers for the generally rough treatment he meted onto his African proteges. On this particular occasion, Brabant requested Gurupira to fill a whole valley with stock for sequestration allegedly in payment of hut-tax. In addition, some 500 Budja men were at the same time conscripted for labour on the mines. This Brabant raid was undoubtedly the highest watermark of the Company's economic policy of free-booting. Similar raids, but on a smaller scale, were repeated throughout the length and breadth of the territory from the Mrewa district in the north to the Victoria Circle in the South and from the Lomangudi in the West to the Melsetter in the East.<sup>17</sup>

Through such activities as these indicated above, the BSA Co. consequently tightened its economic stranglehold on the country at a rate which alarmed even some of those white settlers who were by no means negrophilists, but saw in the Company's activities a growing threat to their own economic interests as well. One such man was Robert Vavasieur, a farmer in the Charter district of Mashonaland and an Oxford graduate himself, who was compelled to contact an old friend Clement Webb of Magdaline College at Oxford in September 1895, with the intention that the latter might forward his complaints against the Company to the Colonial Office. Moreover, Vavasieur was also a grandson of the well known missionary, Robert Moffat, and a nephew of David Livingstone by marriage. He had at first visited the country in the accompany of his uncle, J. S. Moffat, when the latter had called on

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<sup>16</sup> Ranger: op. cit. pp. 67-73: For the Hooper incident: Vide: Supra: pp. 33-4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid: pp. 72-80; 86-8.

Lobengula, prior to the 1895 war on official business. Later on, he took up farming in Mashonaland and fought for the Company in the Anglo-Ndebele War.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently Vavasseur had become disillusioned with the Company's economic policies and therefore his grievances were chiefly of economic kind. He expressed these in a rhetorical manner in September 1895, when he enquired:

Are the Mashuna in Mashunaland (sic) British subjects, and have they the rights of British subjects, or are they the property of the British South Africa Company?

Have they the right to sell their produce, maize, kafir corn, etc., to any one whom they choose to sell it without restriction?

Has the British South Africa Company any right to grant any individual or individuals the sole right of buying such native produce from the natives at their kraals?...

Is it not the fact that all the cattle, sheep and goats which the Mashuna at some kraals in the Charter district possessed before the Matabele war have been taken by the British South Africa Company's Police?

Has the British South Africa Company any right to punish a British subject for buying cattle from the Mashuna?<sup>19</sup>

After posing these prodding rhetorical questions, Vavasseur supplied the facts relating to the Company's activities, which, he thought, did not tally with the basic characteristics of a British colony. He stated:

It is a fact that the British South Africa police have taken all the stock belonging to the Natives in this district (Charter) which they owned before the war, and that not in payment of hut tax but in a simple raid by men who could not even speak the language. The Company have never been at War with these Mashuna, so they cannot call it loot, as they do in the case of the Ndebele cattle. It is only too probable the Natives who have been subjected to this injustice will retaliate and steal the stock of the (white) farmers here.<sup>20</sup>

These aspects of the Company's economic policies, relating to stock seizure, were not the only causes of Vavasseur's worries. The Company as the political and economic power in the country had also granted trade monopolies to certain individuals, with regard to the supply of grain from the Africans in Mashonaland, and by such means tried to corner the market for

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<sup>18</sup> C. O. 879/47: Clement E. J. Webb, Magdalene College, Oxford, to C. O.: April 2, 1896.

<sup>19</sup> C. O. 879/47: Robert Vavasseur, Charter District, Mashonaland, to Clement Webb, Oxford: September 22, 1895.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

African agricultural produce. In the Charter district where Vavasseau lived, this monopoly had been granted to one Salisbury contractor named Homan and it was to him alone that African peasant producers had to sell their grain. Any sales of both grain and stock to anybody else were apparently punishable by the Company which itself claimed the control and monopoly of such sales. To the white settler/traders, this development meant, especially in times of drought like 1895, higher transport costs and prices. Vavasseau and his colleagues in the Charter district who had been for instance excluded from all access to the grain supply market in the Mtekedza and adjacent Shona chiefdoms on which they had previously relied for their supplies, were consequently forced either to buy some from Homan himself, who retailed this grain from the Africans '... at a price of 400 per cent rise... ', or proceed to the Victoria Circle, some hundred and seventeen (117) miles away for the purpose. With the drought and locust conditions of 1895, the Charter district settlers were obviously compelled to tolerate either of the two alternatives, as failure to do so meant shortage of grain for feeding their labourers, horses and cattle. This was particularly because, unlike the neighbouring African communities, the white farmers were unable to employ adequate labour on their extensive farms to counteract the periodic locust invasions as the Africans did in their fields by turning out in whole villages to meet these demands. Moreover, after travelling all the way to the Victoria Circle to secure grain, as Vavasseau bitterly discovered, this commodity cost the Charter district farmers as much as £2.5/-0d per bag, whereas locally they had usually obtained the same at 8/- per bag only. Thus the problem of mixing politics and economics, which had all along been primarily telling on the African population, was now also beginning to have some side-effects on some aspects of white settlers' lives too. Vavasseau, who had become more aware of the involved nature of the problem than most of his colleagues, certainly also appreciated its immensity and thus concluded:

The Company will, of course, deny it-(the accusation)- blankly, as it denies everything - being a corporation, it has no conscience...'<sup>21</sup>

Whilst a section of the white settlers were thus becoming aware of the incongruities of the Company's economic policies and, similarly, were feeling

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

the pinches of the exclusive character of the policies in question, the Africans who had everything to lose and little to expect from the new economic and political set-up were in no way relieved. The Company's stock-seizing activities were, for instance, easily the most hard-hitting feature of BSACo. rule in the Shona country, particularly before 1896. Beach, for example, argues that for the seventeen months between the birth of the Mashonaland Native Department in September 1894 and the outbreak of the Shona arisings in mid-1896, this Department had seized stock amounting to about 2,369 cattle and 3,822 sheep and goats, which was, if translated into percentages, approximately 24% of the total cattle and 19% of the total sheep and goats in only four or so districts on which the calculation is based; namely the Hartley, Charter, Victoria, Tuli and Iron Mine Hill (part of Selukwe) districts.<sup>22</sup> It is even asserted that the collection of stock and grain for hut-tax purposes had to be suspended in November 1895 by Dr. Jameson himself, arguing, as he did, that '... there would be no cattle to collect in a year or two...' whilst at the same time the 1895 drought had virtually made prospects on future grain supply quite oblique. Beach also further quotes Alfred Drew, a prominent official of the Native Department in Mashonaland, corroborating the fact that Company officials were wont, in the early days, to walking into an African cattle kraal, pick out the fattest young heifer and kill it, without prior consultation with the owner, for the sake of its kidneys, liver or some fanciful portion only.<sup>23</sup>

In view of these stock-seizing activities, it is therefore not surprising that 'the white man's rule' became easily the most hated phenomenon in early Southern Rhodesian African history. In the Chibi district of Southern Mashonaland for instance, where Robert Duncan and his colleagues carried out these nefarious activities, songs of protest deploring the loss of Shona cattle wealth were composed and handed down from generation to generation as part and parcel of the people's traditional history. One such song goes:

Ngombe Dzavana baba (x2)  
 Dzapera naMakiwa (x2)  
 Ngombe, Ngombe,  
 Dzapera naMakiwa.

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<sup>22</sup> Beach: The Rising; p. 285.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid: pp. 285-6.

(The cattle of our fathers (x2)  
They're finished by the white men (x2)  
The cattle, the cattle,  
They're finished by the white men.)<sup>24</sup>

To these Shona societies of the Jameson period, who had no means of differentiating between the Company and the settlers, they obviously viewed both in terms of 'white men' and that was enough for them.

Finally, there was the question of local women which further complicated relations between the newcomers and the indigenous peoples. Both the white settlers and their foreign African clients, who had both come without female companions, were quite prone to fall victims to their passions. Whilst some of the whites married these Shona women or kept them as concubines, as they popularly termed the practice,<sup>25</sup> others were content to abuse local women on a hit-and-run basis, with the result that within the Shona societies there developed a tendency among the women to flee at the very sight of these pioneers or their foreign African auxiliaries.<sup>26</sup> This and all the other features of BSACo. rule during the period between 1890 and 1896, created a situation whereby conflict was impossible to avoid and, sooner or later, it came.

The causes of the rising in Matabeleland, as in Mashonaland, were equally the same in character, arising as they did from the Company's mal-administration, following in the footsteps of the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893. But two important factors operative in Matabeleland during the 1893-5 period,

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<sup>24</sup> Recorded at Madangombe, Chibi District, and sung for the author by Messrs. Abisai Madangombe et al. ; September 14, 1975.

<sup>25</sup> In Mashonaland a good number of early Native Commissioners, for instance, married local women. Even F. C. Selous, the famous hunter himself, did the same and his son was actually still living in Salisbury in his father's house, the famous 'Hunter's Lodge' at Kopje by the 1960's. Vide: Vambe: An Ill-Fated People: pp. 205-9, 240. Other white colonists preferred illicit connections with local women behind the scenes, while at the same time playing an innocent role among their fellow whites. For a fictionalized version of this kind of activities, Vide: Olive Schreiner: Trooper Peter Halket Of Mashonaland: T. Fisher Unwin: London: 1897: pp. 39-41. (This aspect of black/white social relations in the early period of Southern Rhodesian history and after has been adequately dealt with in a work concurrently carried out with mine by a fellow Zimbabwean, but complete a few months earlier than this. Vide: I. D. J. Mandaza: White Settler Ideology, African Nationalism and the 'Coloured' Question in Southern Africa: Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Northern Rhodesia/Zambia and Nyasaland/Malawi 1900-1976: D. Phil. thesis (unpublished): University of York: 1978: Vols. I & II.)

<sup>26</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 216, 268 and Ranger: op. cit. pp. 67-8.

however, underlined the basic features of Company rule among the Ndebele in a manner that did not obtain in Mashonaland at the time. The Ndebele after 1893 were a conquered people whilst the Shona were merely 'occupied'. In this respect, the former were made to feel the pinches of military defeat and its accompanying humiliation more painfully than the latter. Such treatment was further engendered by the earlier resentment of the white pioneers against Lobengula's political control of the country which militated against white ambitions. This resentment was well demonstrated by Frank Johnson, the organiser of the Pioneer Column to Mashonaland, who had plotted with Rhodes to assassinate Lobengula as early as 1889.<sup>27</sup> After the 1893 War, the Ndebele were naturally victims of the carry-overs of this pre-colonial bitterness and resentment. The second feature which distinguished the situation in Matabeleland after 1893 was the more vigorous economic approach adopted by the victorious Company and the settlers towards the new territory. This vigorous economic approach which white settlement entailed in Matabeleland was characterized by two factors: firstly, the geographical position of Matabeleland and its proximity to the South African colonial markets and systems of communication which also rendered it vulnerable to total economic warfare after 1893. Secondly, Matabeleland's economic resources had, as a matter of fact, actually been pledged before the 1893 war in form of the Victoria Agreement as a device by the Company to goad the reluctant settlers into the war against Lobengula.<sup>28</sup> Thus after the 1893 war, the land and cattle issues became easily the most dominant preoccupations of the BSACo. Administration in Matabeleland as the Company forged ahead with the economic transformation of the former Ndebele state that was no more.

The land question in Matabeleland was dealt with with such rapidity after the war that by October 1894, when a Land Commission was appointed to look into the matter and distribute the land equally between the two races, there was little suitable land left for the Ndebele. The Company had naturally given away the land as rewards and emoluments to the participants in the war as it had promised. Moreover, various individuals like the rudimentary aristocratic class and other less prominent people lounging in the Company

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<sup>27</sup> Samkange: op. cit. pp. 150-65; and Cairns: op. cit. pp. 48, 236.

<sup>28</sup> Samkange: loc. cit.



territories in quest of fortune and fame, gained considerably from the Company's post-war benevolence, when the cutting of the melon was carried out. An extensive system of land alienation therefore emerged at an early stage, which later became a stumbling block in the administration of the province. The Ndebele were either banished to the remotest and most inhospitable areas of the territory, where two reserves, the Shangani and the Gwaai, were created for them or remained as squatters on their former lands now owned by white landlords.<sup>29</sup>

In the meantime, the appropriation of Ndebele cattle was the more predominant concern of the BSACo. in the period after 1893. The fact that these cattle had been prized before the 1893 war, singled them out as a visible sign of victory on the part of the Company forces. Thus cattle seizure and appropriation started the very day the war broke out and was therefore only carried out to perfection and minute detail after the Ndebele had been defeated. It was in fact on Ndebele heads of cattle that Major Forbes's forces had relied for their commissariat division.<sup>30</sup> A handy pretext, well exploited by the Company in the Ndebele cattle question, was in this case the quasi-anthropological argument that all the cattle had, after all, belonged to the king and the Company being the king's successor by right of conquest was therefore, consequently, entitled to the whole lot. All that the Ndebele rank and file could ever hope to gain, it was argued, was the remainder to which they were entitled only through the benevolence of the Company.<sup>31</sup> Here play was of course being made on the quasi-feudal nature of the Ndebele political and military system. This was a factor which rendered vulnerable not only the Ndebele political and economic system, but also those of the related Nguni/Ngoni states as well. The Nguni emphasis on cattle like the Masai as a form of mobile wealth whilst quite suitable during the periods of continuous and successful military raids and migration, was not however easily commendable in cases of defeat. Like their cousins, the Nguni states of Gazaland in Mozambique and the Ngoni of Mpezeni in what later became the province of North/Eastern/Rhodesia across the Zambesi, the Ndebele were obviously

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<sup>29</sup>Ranger: op. cit. pp. 6; 106-14; Vide Infra: Chapter 7 for further discussion on land.

<sup>30</sup>Vide Supra: pp. 54-6.

<sup>31</sup>Ranger: op. cit. pp. 105-14.

being hoisted by their own petard. Just as the Gaza of Gungunyana lost all their heads after their defeat by the Portuguese in 1895<sup>32</sup> and the seizure of Mpezeni's cattle by the BSACo. after the defeat of the Ngoni of Mpezeni in 1898,<sup>33</sup> the Ndebele fell victims to the potential weakness of their state organization in 1894, as was also to happen to their cousins at later times. As far as Lobengula's herds were concerned, the matter became quite an involved affair, attracting as it did even free-booters from the neighbouring Boer republics across the Limpopo. The BSACo. which wielded both economic and political control over the former Ndebele state was however the principal winner. In the end, it was reputed to have left only 40,930 heads, for use by the defeated Ndebele people, out of the previous total of 280,000 heads existing in pre-1893 Matabeleland.<sup>34</sup>

The BSACo. 's activities with regard to the Ndebele cattle question, like the land issue, naturally had widespread repercussions on Ndebele economic life. Even some of the white settlers who had previously supported the Company's military campaign against the Ndebele in 1893 were also beginning to resent its aggressive economic policies. Robert Vavasour of the Charter district in Mashonaland, whom we have already come across on the same question in that province,<sup>35</sup> once more complained about the Company's seizure of Ndebele cattle, with the same old vigour, querying, as he did, in the process:

Is the Secretary of State for the Colonies aware that the whole of the Matabele cattle, whether the property of the King or of private individuals, has been claimed by the British South Africa Company as loot; whereas in the Zulu wars only the cattle of the King were claimed? That these cattle are still being taken and being sold, till in many Matabele kraals there is no longer any milk on which to feed the young children; that British subjects have been punished with imprisonment for buying private cattle from the Matabele....<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> P. R. Warhurst: 'The Scramble and African Politics in Gazaland' in E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds). : The Zambesian Past: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1966: pp. 60-1.

<sup>33</sup> Rennie: 'The Ngoni States and European Intrusion' in Stokes and Brown (eds.) op. cit. pp. 328-30.

<sup>34</sup> Sir E. R. Martin's Report on the Native Administration of the BSACo., Cmd. 8547; July 1897: (British Parliamentary Papers): pp. 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Vide: Supra pp.

<sup>36</sup> C. O. 879/47: Vavasour to Webb, September 22, 1895.

Native Commissioner 'Wiri' Edwards and a colleague, who had ignorantly bought cattle from the Ndebele in 1894, had apparently to flee in haste to Mashonaland, when they discovered to their surprise that all the cattle in the province were supposed to belong to the Company and not subject to sale to private individuals.<sup>37</sup>

In Mashonaland the prohibitive instrument the Company Administration deployed regarding the sale of cattle by the Shona people was only its enabling legislation, the Sale and Disposal of Stock Regulations (1895). But in Matabeleland the matter was different. Both this legislative device and the Company's claim of ownership over Ndebele cattle by right of conquest operated in such a way that the white settlers and the Ndebele people themselves were bogged down on the cattle issue. Indeed when the Native Department was created in Matabeleland in 1894, it functioned primarily as a cattle-collecting agency and among some of the duties of the Native Commissioners (N/Cs), each of them was instructed, as Sir Richard Martin reported,

... to supply the Government with 50 head of cattle each month,<sup>38</sup> which they did through the agency of the Native Police.

These Native Commissioners and the Native Police in their turn evidently carried out their duties to perfection and the cattle question thus consequently created a situation of perpetual dread and uncertainty within the Ndebele society. The appearance of these officials and their African aides in Ndebele villages, in the course of their cattle-drafting visits in the pre-1895 period, were, to say the least, not occasions for comfort and joy to the Ndebele. As the Rev. David Carnegie of the London Missionary Society in Matabeleland informed Sir Richard Martin after the rising, the Ndebele were no longer certain which herds belonged to them any more, as the Administration made repeated inroads onto those that were left. In short:

They (Ndebele) never knew when the next drain would be made on the herd in their possession, nor how soon they might be deprived of those cattle they considered their own.

The Ndebele were also affected in various degrees by other features of the Jameson Administration between 1893 and 1896. As in Mashonaland, the absence of a defined 'native policy' to act as a directive for the operations of

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<sup>37</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: Reminiscences: II: loc. cit.

<sup>38</sup> Sir Martin's Report on the Native Administration of the BSA Co., p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Sir Martin's Report, . . . : loc. cit.

Matabeleland Native Department was also a severe handicap. In Matabeleland, consequent to the 1893 conflict, the Native Department assumed a peculiarly military character and this military character of the Department was strengthened by the false assumptions of the white colonists that such a machinery was rather parallel to the pre-colonial Ndebele state, then considered essentially dictatorial and oligarchic on account of its military orientation. The reckless characters too chosen to man the Matabeleland Native Department did not alleviate matters either, as far as their Ndebele proteges were concerned. Some of these officials, from all appearances, actually did not even seriously regard the Department as an organ of civil administration, but instead started using it and their official positions to organise Ndebele raids into the Shona country for cattle. Colonel H. M. Heyman, the magistrate of Bulawayo, who organized such raids into the Victoria, Hartley and Selukwe districts, is a good example in this respect.<sup>40</sup> For the Ndebele society too with its previous social and political stratification which had apparently survived the death of Lobengula and the 1893 crisis, the demands it also faced at the hands of this ill-formed Matabeleland Native Department were culturally incompatible and disruptive. The Abezansi (the aristocracy) and the Hole (the commoners) were now being indiscriminately subjected to the same treatment in the process of this Department's efforts to meet colonist labour requirements. The Ndebele were a conquered people now and they had little choice. But they could only tolerate the situation insofar as their patience would permit and when this stock of patience ran out, they rose against the Company's maladministration.

The character of Company rule or more appropriately the Jameson Administration in Mashonaland and Matabeleland before 1896, influenced the whole course of interaction between the white settlers and the African indigenous peoples in the various branches of life as we have discussed above and the effects of these contacts were not the best that could be desired. When the 1895-6 drought, locust and rinderpest disasters came onto the scene, acting as fuel to dry tinder, a cosmic factor was introduced into the saga of black/white relations and to meet the situation, the local peoples consequently appealed to their traditional mythology for means with which to combat the

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<sup>40</sup>Ranger: op. cit. pp. 115-6, 118-9.

impending disasters and in this manner gave a freehand to traditional leaders to assume the leadership. Both the Company's maladministration and the cosmic factor had created a shock situation by 1896 and it appeared only proper that the local people should appeal to their traditional religious belief system to provide the requisite psychological balance.<sup>41</sup>

As the purpose of this study is primarily to examine the role and involvement of foreign Africans in the Shona and Ndebele risings in 1896-7, on the same pattern as we have previously seen in the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893, we shall not here go into the detail of the Shona and Ndebele risings. Having established the quid pro quo of the risings in the first part of this section, we shall proceed to pick out the highlights of foreign African contribution in the course of these conflicts and determine the implications of such contribution thereto in order to understand subsequent historical developments.

ii The African Police, Messengers and Foreign Military Auxiliaries: How they were raised and assisted the white settlers

When the Native Departments were formed in both Mashonaland and Matabeleland, an essential feature of their composition was the role of African the police and messengers. Both branches of this instrument of civil administration had no hard and fast regulations regarding the recruitment of African police and messengers, but appeared to rely on both local and foreign material for these services. In Mashonaland, where the Native Department was headed by Brabant, an illiterate young man from the Cape colony with a strong partiality for African beer and women but who was, all the same, very much admired for his rough qualities by the BSACo. officials

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<sup>41</sup>It might be noted here for observation that this author strongly rejects the revisionist interpretation of historians associated, however tenuously, with the colonist Rhodesian 'establishment', as recently demonstrated by Julian Cobbing, on the role of Shona traditional religion in 1896-7. Vide: J. Cobbing: 'The Absent Priesthood: Another Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896-1897': in Journal of African History: Vol. XVIII: No. 1: 1977: pp. 61-84. Whilst Cobbing is entitled to his own conclusions, I strongly contest and challenge the assumptions and inferences on which such conclusions are based. Vide: E. P. Makambe: 'Colonialism and Racism and their Bearing on the Shona societies in colonial Zimbabwe, c. 1880-1930: The Dimensions of a National Tragedy': Postgraduate Seminar Paper: History Department, Ahmadu Bello University: Zaria: 36pp. (forthcoming).

and white settlers,<sup>42</sup> a general idea on the manner in which this department operated has been given by 'Wiri' Edwards, the former Native Commissioner for the district of Mrewa to the north-east of Salisbury. In his reminiscences, 'Wiri' Edwards describes his boss, Brabant, as a '... rough diamond, but... -(a)- first class N/C... ', who had no room for rules and regulations governing the Department's etiquette except:

Get to know your district, and your people. Keep an eye on them, collect tax if possible, but for God's sake don't worry headquarters if you can avoid it....<sup>43</sup>

The Native Commissioners in Mashonaland were, in this manner, therefore given greater latitude to operate on their own and, in the way they saw fit, to shape matters to suit their particular districts. They raised their quotas of African messengers and police and armed and provided them with uniform of 'cat or monkey skins and feather head-dresses...' or any other accoutrements as befitted the status of these functionaries.<sup>44</sup> These aides, as the case of 'Wiri' Edwards's sixteen messengers and police illustrates, were very effective and instrumental in the process of hut-tax collection, then paid in kind and in form of sheep, goats, cattle or pigs, since there was little currency in circulation to raise the 10/- per hut required by the Company. The African police and messengers were also especially useful on punitive raids to secure hut tax and labour or in mounting attacks against hostile chiefs and their followers, occasions which, in most cases, involved violent conflicts and burning down of homesteads.<sup>45</sup>

But local African messengers and police so employed by the Native Department did not last very long, especially once the risings broke out. However, while they were still in the service of the Native Commissioners, they incurred deep curses symbolized by the names these functionaries earned for themselves, through what their kinsmen regarded as ignominious association

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<sup>42</sup> Ranger: op. cit. pp. 74-6, and Andrews John White of Mashonaland: p. 51. Brabant, whose Shona nickname, 'MAKUVIRE', signifies someone who likes beer (a Shona Bacchus), was however dismissed at the end of 1895, for obtaining the daughter of a certain Shona Chief for carnal purposes by threatening violence to her father.

<sup>43</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: 'Reminiscences' II: op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. and Vide: Plate IV: (picture): Head Messenger, 1898.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. pp. 13, 16-20; and Ranger: op. cit. p. 74

with Company rule. In the Shona country for instance, various distinctive names were coined for these African collaborators. In the Salisbury district, they were called imbga dza vasungute (white men's dogs) or maguhwe (rock rabbits).<sup>46</sup> In the Charter district, these associates of the white people were nicknamed mbeva (rats), a term applied also against foreign African Methodist teachers, as we have seen.<sup>47</sup> The Shona people resorted to these abusive names as a way of venting their spleens on these African quislings, who were then taking advantage of their position to abuse their own people. With their uniforms and sjamboks, these black functionaries openly resorted to excessive abuse of authority and behaved generally as if they were no longer of the same kin as other African people. Their social status had been raised and, not unnaturally, they tended to identify themselves with their masters under the new order. They represented what approximated to a newly assimilated class in a colonial situation, with its characteristic tendency to overplay its new role in order to please the 'colonizer' and, by so doing, gain closer identity with the latter. Indeed such a class of people, as symbolized by the African police and messengers in the pre-1896 era in the Company territories, might have well fitted Memmi's category of the recently assimilated 'colonizers' of whom he says:

They push a colonial mentality to excess, display proud disdain for the colonized and continually show off their borrowed rank, which often belies a vulgar brutality and avidity.<sup>48</sup>

These African auxiliaries may of course have viewed their own position in a different light. With their uniforms and sjamboks, the overt symbols of their collaboration with the white men,<sup>49</sup> these people thus represented what Vambe calls the epitome of the 'the sjambok reign of terror that was unleashed against their own people', as far as their operations in the Shona country was concerned.<sup>50</sup> In view of this, the resentment these African col-

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<sup>46</sup> Vambe: An Ill-fated People: p. 125; Joseph Savanhu: 'The Waharawa History': NADA; No. 3: 1925: pp. 59-62.

<sup>47</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 32-5.

<sup>48</sup> Memmi: op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Van Onselen argues that these uniforms and sjamboks were some of the rewards of the African police for collaborating in Rhodesian mines: Vide: van Onselen: 'The Role of Collaborators. . . .' loc. cit.

<sup>50</sup> Vambe: op. cit., p. 107. For the sjambok reign of terror, Vide also Samkange: op. cit., pp. 240-2.

laborators of the pre-1896 period fomented amongst the local people was obviously proportional to the treatment they meted onto their victims. Among the Shona people of the Chishawasha country in the Salisbury district, Vambe aptly captures the uneasy feelings, that existed between the local people and the African police and messengers, from the oral tradition of the period in question. These feelings, which were by no means friendly, are portrayed by the Vashawasha as:

They (African police) were continually among us. To them we were not people like themselves. . . . They came into the African villages for all sorts of reasons and were a law unto themselves, just as was the European. They used the sjamboks freely. They were arrogant and insulted everybody without cause. Each man in uniform insisted on being addressed as mwana we ngosi, son of the Native Commissioner or Government, a self-aggrandizing title which was accepted as meaning that whatever they did or said had the full backing of the white power that they represented.<sup>51</sup>

Such activities, involving the excessive use of the sjambok by the Company authorities and its police, were commonplace in the Shona country. In the Chilimanzi district, where the African police and messengers were just as eager as their counterparts in the Salisbury region for acts and titles of self-aggrandizement, they were also called Varuwasha (the sons of the chief) and woe betide anyone who denied them the honorific glamour and other social benefits they considered they were so entitled to by virtue of their association with the Native Department.<sup>52</sup>

Bearing in mind these activities of the African police and messengers, it is not surprising therefore that when the risings broke out, the African functionaries and their masters were not spared. As for the local African auxiliaries, some however managed to avoid this unfortunate end to their hitherto successful careers by deserting and joining their kinsfolk in the nick of time. But even then some of their kinsmen were not prepared to accept this belated repentance with ease. The messengers of 'Wiri' Edwards once

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<sup>51</sup> Vambe: op. cit. : pp. 107-8.

<sup>52</sup> Interviews with Mrs. Tsindika Taden and Mrs. Mbevi Tetewende, Madan-gombe, Chibi district; July 26, 1975. (Mrs. Taden, originally of the Chilimanzi district but married in Chibi district, was more acquainted with this early period). The Rev. Graaf in his interviews in the Marandellas district was informed that the African police threatened to go to bed with anybody's mother-in-law, if they were not treated with proper honour, and such type of punishment is unimaginable in Shona custom. Vide Graaf: op. cit. pp. 169-71.



more give us an interesting example on this point. Before the 1896 rising, these messengers and police in the Mrewa district had included in their number the Kahiya brothers, Savanhu and Jacob, the sons of Chirozwa Kahiya of the Seke chiefdom in the Salisbury district. These and other Shona messengers had been quite useful to 'Wiri' Edwards during his escapades to subdue the Maramba section of the huge Mrewa district in the heart of the Fungwi people. Jacob Kahiya in particular had played quite a prominent part in these operations, especially during an affray against one Gamina (the lame one), a limping European labour agent of the Trans-Continental Telegraph Company, who had been wont to raid the Fungwi people and extorting labour by force from them. Jacob had actually been captured by Gamina's horde of labour touts and kept prisoner in the forests of the Mount Darwin area, where the telegraph line had then reached, but later on escaped his captors. Savanhu,<sup>53</sup> his brother, was 'Wiri' Edwards's Head Messenger. But when the Shona rising broke out, all this faithful service was forgotten as the Kahiya brothers made their secret exit, taking along with them their families and firearms without Edwards's permission.

The nature of the departure of the Kahiya brothers from Mrewa is, in many ways, demonstrative of the secretive character and the careful concealment which accompanied the Shona rising. In this instance, at the outbreak of the rising, Chirozwa Kahiya the father of these two local messengers, realizing the contempt and resentment the Shona people reserved for collaborators from within their own communities, left the Salisbury district secretly and went to fetch his sons personally from 'Wiri' Edwards's service in the Mrewa district. Kahiya's approach to the matter of his sons' plight was undoubtedly commingled with stealth and cunning; a line of action adopted by this man perhaps in fear that his miscreant sons might spill the beans and cause general panic within the Mrewa camp. He thus gave it to be understood by his two sons that he had come to fetch them home on account of their sister's serious illness and nothing more. But interesting as

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<sup>53</sup> Savanhu is the grandfather of Jasper Savanhu, the famous Southern Rhodesian African politician and one of the first African MP's during the days of the Central African Federation, starting in the late 1950's. Vide: R. Gray: The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland: Oxford University Press: London: 1960: pp. 318-9.



Kahiya's secretiveness might have been, it is even more intriguing to note that on their way home from the Mrewa district, the Kahiya brothers were only saved from perdition by the differences of opinion within the ranks of Kunzwi-Nyandoro's army, a force which fortunately included some relations of the Kahiya's and had been sent out to deal with the collaborators and their associates in the area.<sup>54</sup>

The recruitment of local African police and messengers for the Native Department differed, however, in the several districts of Mashonaland. In some instances, it was a result of genuine response by individuals to the white men's labour demands, often achieved through direct appeals by the Native Commissioners themselves to chiefs, headmen and house heads to induce some of their relations to take up service in the Department. 'Wiri' Edwards, for example, used this method in appealing to one Katiyo, a Budya headman under Chief Gurupira of the Mtoko district. He had known headman Katiyo during his early days as a trader in the area, before his appointment to the Native Department in April 1895.<sup>55</sup> Some of his colleagues like N/C Weale of the Chilimanzi district, who had married Chief Chinyama Chirumanzu's daughter, exploited this relationship and enlisted the chief's sons and brothers as police and messengers in his service in the Chilimanzi district.<sup>56</sup> But the case was, however, totally different with those foreign Africans in the service of the Native Department.

Initially, there was a decided preference, by the whites of whatever persuasion, for Africans from South of the Limpopo for employment in any ancillary services, whether in private, religious or administrative sectors. This preference for the people with whom the pioneer colonists had come along from the South was not at first unreasonable. But the inclination was at times pursued to fanatical extremes; some of the white circles even indicating their intentions, if so it were possible, to fill all their services with foreign Africans from the South. Such intentions were however frustrated by the small numbers of the foreign Africans then at hand in BSACo. territories in the pre-1896 period. On their part, the foreign Africans so

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<sup>54</sup> Savanhu: 'The Waharawa History' loc. cit.

<sup>55</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: op. cit. pp. 16-20.

<sup>56</sup> Sister Mary Aquina: 'The Tribes in Chilimanzi Reserve and Their Relation to the Rozvi' NADA: Vol. IX: No. 2: 1965: pp. 44-5. Vide: Plate IV: Head Messenger, Mt. Darwin, 1898.

engaged were greatly handicapped by their masters' as well as their own attitudes towards the local people; a situation which in the event created a lot of problems for them and the Administration. The case of the Zulus in the Salisbury district may indeed be of particular interest as an illustration at this juncture. In September 1894, an affray took place between a party of Zulu wagon drivers and leaders and Chief Kunzwi-Nyandoro's people, led by the chief's son, Panashe. These Zulus had apparently let the cattle they were then in charge of stray onto the crops of Nyandoro's people, inflicting heavy damage in consequence. But when the aggrieved party demanded compensation by means of civil action through their chief, the offending Zulus viewed the demand with scorn and disdain, well described by 'Wiri' Edwards in the following terms:

The Zulu drivers considered themselves much superior to the Mashona, and they treated Panashe's demands with contempt. They laughed at the idea of paying them <sup>57</sup>-(the Shona)- compensation.

The Zulu aides could not reconcile their own self-image and misconceptions over the local people to the realities the situation demanded and thus refused to pay the compensation so required. This refusal not unexpectedly led to a violent conflict during the course of which one of the Zulus was killed and Panashe himself was wounded. But as Company rule before 1896 had no regard whatsoever for the welfare and interest of the local peoples, plus the fact that Zulus and other Africans from the South were frequently more favourably treated by the white settlers than their local counterparts in matters of this nature, the Administration charged Chief Kunzwi-Nyandoro twenty heads of cattle for the affray. The judgement in question was delivered in absentia as this Shona Chief refused to recognize the legitimacy of Company rule and, indeed, when Vuta, N/C Archie D. Campbell, one of the youngest men in the Pioneer Column who had been appointed Native Commissioner on the strength of his fluency in Zulu language, went out to enforce the decision of the Company Administration, Kunzwi-Nyandoro assumed a patently belligerent attitude either towards Vuta himself or the messengers subsequently sent on the same errand. In fact, it was even decided that for so treating the servants of the white men, Kunzwi-Nyandoro should be dealt with in the same manner as Captain Lendy had previously dealt with Negomo,

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<sup>57</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: op. cit. pp. 8-9.

the headman of Chief Mangwende, in 1892. But this plan could however not work, as Jameson was already preparing for his raid against the Transvaal and there was therefore no white police to spare.<sup>58</sup> Thus, in this way, the foreign Africans differed in status from their local fellow collaborators. The former enjoyed the patronage of the Administration and their masters, who were somehow convinced that these foreign Africans were of better quality and therefore offered better service to their white employers than the local people. The Company Administration at first also put a very high premium on the value of most foreign Africans in the white men's service and these functionaries were obviously not unaware of this.

Taking advantage of the official blind eye and the favoured treatment the authorities then bestowed onto them in those pre-1896 days, the foreign Africans created a state of terror amongst the local people, during their rounds of labour and hut-tax collection, by exercising powers, which their authority did not warrant them. Their treatment and abuse of local women in the outlying districts turned these auxiliaries into veritable denizens of the local societies, as they went on creating pandemonium in those villages where they put up an appearance.<sup>59</sup> Their relations with the local people, especially women, were a basic feature of the many social problems arising from the practice of recruiting foreign Africans into the country, either as labourers in the mining and farming industries or the police force. The Zulus were no exceptions to this phenomenon. Indeed the case of one Meyiwa, the wife of a Zulu migrant to Mashonaland, brought before the Native Commissioner of the Mapumulo district in Natal in August 1903, is very demonstrative on the social problems of these early Zulus in the Company territories. Meyiwa's husband, Dungumuzi alias Thomasi ka Mnyamana, arrived in Mashonaland in 1893 from Johannesburg, where he had been working, and for some time was virtually not heard of. In Zululand, his wife and relatives had actually given him up for dead, when in 1897 he wrote from Matabeleland, whither he had moved, indicating that he was no longer able to return to Natal as he was busy 'selling his cattle'. In the event, the wife and relatives wanted the Natal Native Department to bring him back by force.<sup>60</sup> Dungumuzi, in fact, had

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 216, 268; and Ranger: op. cit. pp. 78-9.

<sup>60</sup> N. B. 1/1/20: Statement of Meyiwa, wife of Dungumuzi, before J. J. Jack-

initially volunteered for short-term service in the Company territories, but was no longer interested in returning home. In the meantime, he and his compatriots became a social problem to the local people and, in the pre-1896 period, such problems were considerable in both Mashonaland and Matabeleland. It is for these and other reasons therefore that the foreign Africans, lying outside the purview of the local people's social life and cultural norms as they did, were thus killed together with their white masters.

Whilst the recruitment policy for African police and messengers to the Native Department in Mashonaland lacked coherence and the force so recruited before 1896 was consequently a heterogeneous admixture of odds and ends from both the local and foreign African material, the case was altogether different in Matabeleland. Here a uniform policy was pursued with regard to the so-called Native Messengers and Police and their enlistment. Their services in the Matabeleland Native Department, formed in 1894 to deal mainly with the cattle question, were essential, as it was their duty to brand, trace and collect the Company's huge herds in the province. After the 1893 war, the BSACo. officials actually toyed with the idea of importing Zulus from Natal for the purpose and in June 1894, Captain C. W. Breton of the Inniskilling Dragoons was even despatched thither to carry out this task. For this reason, the BSACo. Secretary, Dr. Rutherford Harris, wrote London Wall at the same time outlining at length the basic features of Captain Breton's mission to Natal and the Zulu scheme as follows:

He -(Breton)- shall go to Captain Mansell with a personal letter from Mr. C. J. Rhodes and endeavour to raise a force of 200 trained Zulus. He will communicate to us -(BSACo.)- the pay which they are at present receiving for their services, and also what the suggested increase of pay should be to induce them to volunteer for service with the Company in Matabeleland. If it is necessary in order to obtain volunteers from the present trained Force to promise them that their wives and children shall be allowed to live with them, Captain Breton has the power to do so, but the Company will not be able to send up their wives and children this year but will undertake to do so early next year -(1895)-.

Their uniform and armaments shall remain as it is at present in use, but Captain Breton shall arrange for sufficient clothing for 12 months according to the Regulations in force in the Zulu force.

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son, Magistrate, Mapumulo: August 5, 1903, Enclosed in S. O. Samuelson, Under-Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, to C/N/C, Byo, August 11, 1903: R/N/A: Salisbury.

Captain Breton shall also promise to each man an area of garden ground on which they will be allowed to erect their own huts for their wives and families, - in the case of those who have wives and families - and the use of which ground<sup>61</sup> will be granted to them for gardening and other purposes.

It was consequently within the framework of these instructions that Captain Breton was naturally to carry out the Zulu scheme and, with the help of Captain Mansell of the Zulu Force in Natal, to lay out a plan, for Rhodes's consideration, by means of which those Zulu recruits who remained in the Company's service for a specified period would derive some advantages in return for their services. These advantages, as pointed out by Dr. Harris, included also shares 'from the cattle taken - (from the local people) - by way of fines'. The Zulu recruits were to be sent up by wagon transport from Natal via the Transvaal to Tuli near the Limpopo River, inside the Company territories, where they were to be divided into two sections; one for Bulawayo in Matabeleland and the other for Fort Victoria and Salisbury in Mashonaland. The services of one Mr. Cook, a brother-in-law to the Crown Prosecutor in the Company territories, were also solicited to help Captain Breton's recruiting venture in Zululand, with Cook undertaking such service in the capacity of a clerk and possibly securing permanent placement in the Company territories as an interpreter, should he be successfully persuaded to accompany these Zulu recruits from the South. The BSACo. officials fixed the number of Zulu recruits required for service in the country at 200 all told, but left all the detail relating to things like uniform and other police gadgetry to be arranged between Captain Breton and the military authorities in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. In this way, the Company officials in the Cape Town Office thus made scrupulous arrangements for importing Zulu police recruits from Natal and Zululand for service in their territories in the north. They had even come to an agreement with the Cape Town Agent of the Union Castle to transport these recruits by sea from Durban to Beira, at the rate of 30/- per head, including deck accommodation and rice rations, in case the overland route via the Transvaal turned out a failure.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> CT. 1/4/13: Dr. Rutherford Harris, Secretary, BSACo., Cape Town to London Board: June 1, 1894: BSACo. Correspondence, Cape Town Office: R/N/A: Salisbury.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid: E. Steele, Agent, Union Castle Shipping Co. Ltd., Cape Town to Dr. Harris; June 12, 1894.

However, Captain Breton did not find matters as simple as his superiors had at first given him to understand, when he arrived in Natal on the assignment. In the first stages of his mission, Captain Breton's hopes were exceptionally high, especially after meeting his Natal counterpart, Captain Mansell, and the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, in Pietermaritzburg. The former had apparently promised to give Breton some of his own Zulu police officers to form the nucleus of the proposed contingent and had also assured Breton that the quota of recruits he so required could be raised with ease and at a very low cost. Breton and his BSACo. superiors in their estimation had apparently calculated the rate of pay for these recruits at about £2 per mensem each, while Mansell actually paid them in Natal only £1 per mensem.<sup>63</sup>

From this point of view, Breton's initial optimism appeared quite justified. But the BSACo. envoy had not had any interviews as yet with the other leaders who carried weight in the country; namely the Natal Prime Minister, Sir John Robinson, and Sir Marshall Clarke, the Resident Commissioner of Zululand but later of Southern Rhodesia. When a day later, on June 13, 1894, Breton had held a second interview with Sir Hely-Hutchinson and was informed by the Governor not to proceed with his scheme on account of what the Governor considered very strong objections to it in Natal and thus to wait for further consultations, Breton was understandably embittered and accordingly conveyed his feelings to Dr. Harris in Cape Town in the same vein:

It is a most damnable ~~(and)~~ silly objection & it is this that the, Boys ~~(Zulus)~~ after having served their time in the Chartered Co's (sic) service would come back to Zululand as trained Police and might form a nucleus of disturbances. As I told the Governor why for so many years have they kept the Zulu Police in Zululand as they are only engaged for 1 year & then go off to their kraals, but he did not see it. I dare say can see the real reason as well as I can, they don't want to help Rhodes on account of his attitude towards Natal and they take this way of showing their feelings.

After urging secrecy on the part of Dr. Harris, Captain Breton then continued:

I think myself it is a most rotten objection but I expect it will pace out alright & I will just give the Governor a little more

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid: Capt. C. W. Breton, Pietermaritzburg to Harris, Cape Town: June 12, 1894.



time & then go <sup>64</sup> & see him again as I want to go to Zululand  
& begin work.

Breton's optimism had been dealt a heavy blow, but he would not accept the prospects of failure which now clouded his mission to raise Zulu police recruits for service in the Company's territories. He continued somehow to retain a measure of his former optimism, anticipating that matters might turn out favourably after all and, for that reason, recouped his confidence by harping on assurances previously made to him by Mansell on how easy and cheap it was to raise the requisite force of these Zulu recruits and, consequently, saving, in the process, a larger part of the £1,000 the BSA Co. had deposited for him in the Standard Bank in Pietermaritzburg for the purpose. Perhaps unjustifiably, he also still hoped that he could succeed to mould a Zulu contingent, especially for Matabeleland, in which service Mansell's Zulu officers would form the core. Such determination as Breton showed, even in the face of some early symptoms of failure might of course have been part of his plan to justify an offer of a magistracy, the Company had promised him at the end of his Natal mission. His bitterness over the obstacles arising in Natal was indeed only matched by the corresponding resentment of Rhodes and other Company officials who readily concluded that the objections of the Natal politicians were deliberately disruptive and malicious. Dr. Harris, for instance, informed Captain Breton in commiseration:

If . . . Natal politicians think they are going to annoy him <sup>65</sup>  
-(Rhodes)-, they are very much mistaken. . . .

But the Natal politicians were not the wilful villains the BSA Co. imagined them to be. They, in fact, put forward very forceful arguments to justify their objections to the Company scheme, which did not for instance take their security into consideration. As Sir John Robinson, the Prime Minister, informed the Governor, these objections relating to the state's security were the basic causes of the negative reaction of the Natal politicians to Breton's request. He argued that in the first place, all the colonists in Natal were agreed that they would not approve of any scheme which tended to revive Zulu military instincts, as this could 'be fraught with evil or peril in the future as regards the Native population'. The 'evil and peril' alleged by Sir

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.: Breton to Harris, June 13, 1894.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.: Harris to Breton: Telegram: July 3, 1894.

Robinson lay in the fact that the removal of the Zulu recruits in question to Matabeleland would cause as much confusion within the Zulu population in Natal and Zululand as it would certainly be a dangerous experiment, because, on their return from Southern Rhodesia as trained men, it was feared, these Zulu police recruits would inevitably become a focal point of attraction and trouble, consequently, putting the security of the white colonists at risk. In the second place, Natal was still looking forward to and awaiting the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to incorporate Zululand. The chances of a favourable decision by the Colonial Office could be harmed should a force of Zulus with military training return from Southern Rhodesia to foment disturbances. But it was primarily on the first objection that Sir Robinson put his emphasis; an objection that appeared quite popular with the rank and file colonists in Natal, that the BSACo. scheme:

... would tend to keep alive the military instincts and habits which made the Zulu Nation so formidable a menace in the past to the peace of South Africa. They ~~(colonists)~~ fail to see what guarantee could be afforded that the men thus deputed for what would practically be Military Service might not, sooner or later, return to Zululand, and become there a source of <sup>66</sup> ~~(strife)~~ and trouble.

The basic arguments on which the objections of the Natal politicians and colonists were founded were considered, by the Imperial Officials in South Africa and Britain, sound ones. The Governor of Natal even went on to indicate that similar objections had been previously raised in 1890, when Colonel Curtis attempted to recruit Zulus for Imperial service; a plan then popular with the War Office in London but equally blocked by Natal colonists. <sup>67</sup>

For the BSACo. in 1894, the failure of its Zulu scheme must have been more injurious to its economic strategy than it could have ever been to the War Office which suffered similar reverses in 1890. For one thing, the Company had already started counting its chickens before they were hatched. It had already calculated in advance to minute detail on the manner in which the Zulu police recruits would actually have to be distributed throughout various centres in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Bulawayo in Matabeleland

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid: Sir John Robinson, Prime Minister to Governor, Pietermaritzburg; Confidential, June 19, 1894.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid: Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, Governor, Natal, to C. O.; Confidential, June 25, 1894 and also to Sir Marshall Clarke, Zululand, Confidential: June 21, 1894.

had been supposed to get the biggest number, with a total of about 100 Zulus there, where they were expected to serve with 25 white troopers; Salisbury was to get 60 Zulus serving alongside 15 white troopers and For Victoria 40 of them serving under N/C Brabant. The payments of these Zulu recruits as well as those of white officers, expected to work with them, had also been meticulously planned and estimated in total costs at about £10,200 per annum.<sup>68</sup> But this financially attractive proposal decided upon by the Company with such careful calculations was nonetheless a fiasco. The Company had based its plans on the classical colonial tradition of relying on those African national groups with well known military traits for colonial military and police purposes. The War Office had also previously failed in this respect at least as far as Zulu recruits were concerned as has been indicated, and it was obviously an idle thought for the BSACo. officials, with less leverage on both South African and British seats of power, to have ever imagined that they could succeed in the matter.

The immediate effect of the failure of Breton's Zulu scheme was apparent. The Company was consequently forced to rely on the local material for its police requirements even in Matabeleland, with one or two foreigners also assisting in related fields. London Wall, for instance, treated the question of raising local Ndebele police for the period after 1893 as an urgent matter and therefore insisted that the Administration should raise:

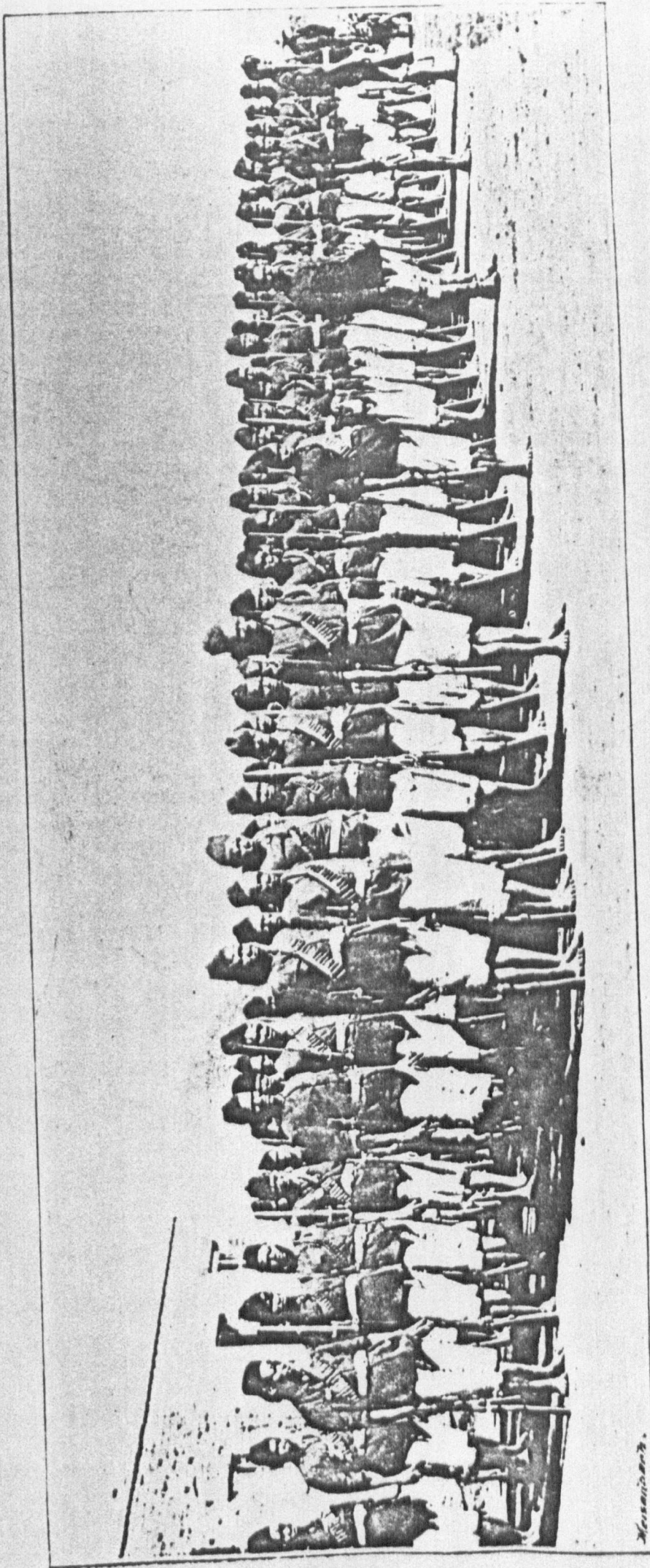
... a thoroughly efficient force on which it (BSACo.) could rely in the case of native troubles arising.<sup>69</sup>

Further pressure on the subject of raising a local African police force was exerted onto the Company Administration and directorate by the impending prospects on extending Company control across the Zambesi; a move later delayed, fortunately for the Company, by the risings. The indeterminate conclusion of the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893 had made the Company Administration in Matabeleland feel somewhat insecure militarily and this factor could be said to have greatly influenced the organization of the Ndebele police raised under the auspices of the Native Department of the province. This Ndebele police force, consisting of 150 non-commissioned

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid: Draft Estimates on Zulu Police: Enclosed in Breton to Harris n. d.

<sup>69</sup> BSACo. Directors' Report and Accounts for the Year Ending March, 1895: p.13



Matabeleland Native Police. 1894.

(Extract from B.S.A. Co. Directors' Report and Accounts For the Year Ending March, 1895.)

Herbertson.

Ndebele officers and men, drawn mainly from Lobengula's two crack regiments, the Imbezu and Insukamini, was moulded by the Chief Native Commissioner (C/N/C), Herbert James Taylor, himself on semi-military lines, perhaps to conform with the volunteer force system then simultaneously instituted among the white settlers of Matabeleland.

In any case C/N/C Taylor was apparently quite determined to make his Ndebele force an exemplary organisation and after putting it through a one-month course of training, posted the recruits to different stations throughout the province. Indeed it would appear that by the end of 1895, Taylor had succeeded in his objectives, as favourable reports were already coming in on the capabilities of his Ndebele force, especially on the shooting skills of what the officials considered a 'smart body of men'.<sup>70</sup> The duties of this force for whose success, so it then appeared, Taylor was thus highly credited, included among other things:

... assisting Native Commissioners in the various districts in collecting hut tax, arresting deserters, branding cattle, tracing hidden cattle, procuring evidence in native cases, and police and detective work generally in connection with the natives....<sup>71</sup>

As far as its work in these police matters was concerned, Company officials were generally agreed that the Ndebele force had been a success. And such success during the 1893-6 period of Company rule, of course, generally meant anything which militated against the interests of local African societies. In Matabeleland for instance, this success may have been obviously reckoned in terms of the numbers of cattle and the amount of labour this Ndebele force procured from within the Ndebele society.

To some extent the Ndebele police force was reinforced in the course of its duties by foreign Africans from the South, some of whom the Ndebele insurgents later complained about so much to Rhodes at the Matopo peace settlement in 1896. Together these African functionaries were largely responsible for the brutal treatment of the Ndebele people; tweaking the beards of the indunas, insulting the young men, ravishing Ndebele daughters and, worst of all, making sexual advances to women of the Ndebele royal house.<sup>72</sup> In

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<sup>70</sup> BSA Co. Directors' Report and Accounts for the Year 1895: p.14  
Vide: Plate: V: (Picture): Matabele Native Police.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ranger: op. cit. pp. 118-24.

short, it was a combined force of this newly assimilated class in a colonial situation and an element which lay outside the pale of the social organisation of the local people that the Ndebele were dealing with and it is from this point of view that Ndebele bitterness towards their collaborating kinsmen must therefore be examined. As for the foreign Africans, Ngangonyi Mhlope aptly summarized the feelings and reactions of the Ndebele people towards them and why, when it became necessary to kill the white men in the Inyati district for instance, the foreign Africans were killed as well. Mhlope and his fellow insurgents, for example, killed a Zulu servant together with the white settlers '...because he was as good as a European'.<sup>73</sup>

By their reactions, the local people in Matabeleland underlined quite clearly that the rising was not a racial war, but a movement to counteract what they saw as unfair and unjust treatment by the Company Administration of the period. To save themselves from certain perdition, the local Ndebele police, who had been perpetrating these iniquities against their own people purely for ideological reasons, deserted en masse and went on to rejoin their own people and, in this way, consequently strengthen the latter's defences by injecting those shooting skills for which they had been, ironically, so much praised by the Company officials before. By this action, the Ndebele police therefore deprived the Company forces of a significant number of local collaborators in the Ndebele rising.

But before we leave the question of the Ndebele police in the period between the war and the risings, it must be pointed out here that the myth, so popular in Southern Rhodesian colonist historiography, that Shona police were raised for services in Matabeleland and vice versa is not in any way proven by facts.<sup>74</sup> Indeed this myth, which has been popularized by some historians, obviously for their own sinister designs, has no factual basis at all except insofar as it is a gross oversimplification of the involved character of the 1896-97 risings. Even after the risings, the question of Shona police serving in Matabeleland or Ndebele ones being conversely engaged in Mashonaland did not apply. In fact, the African police ever employed were found only in Mashonaland where they formed the major part of the 'Black Watch', as the Mashonaland Native Police was called, and it was not at least as late as

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid: p. 130.

<sup>74</sup> Warhurst: 'The Scramble and African Politics in Gazaland': pp. 60-1.

1904 that Matabeleland had any African police at all in the service.<sup>75</sup>

The proceeding study on the Shona and Ndebele risings has so far presented many important arguments. In the first place, we have established the causes of the risings, which, as the preceding argument has shown, were a result of the inherent shortcomings of the Company Administration in Matabeleland and Mashonaland between 1890 and 1896. Secondly, we have discussed the role of the African police and messengers with special reference to how they were recruited and in what ways they collaborated with the white settlers thereby eventually courting their own doom. We have also examined the composition of these African police forces in both provinces with regard to the proportion of local and foreign African elements and their respective influence on the risings as a collaborating factor. In the succeeding part of this chapter, we shall, accordingly, round up our analysis by examining the nature of both local and alien African collaboration in suppressing the risings, starting with the Shona country where collaboration by the local people was the most prominent feature, due to the fragmented character of Shona societies themselves, and how this lack of unity matched with the collaboration practices of the foreign Africans and together played into the hands of the white forces of colonialism.

We have discussed somewhere else in this chapter,<sup>76</sup> the animosity which collaboration excited within the Shona societies at local level, as the scornful nicknames given to collaborators signified. But even with all their contempt of collaboration at local level, the various Shona societies could not prevent collaboration by kindred communities of different persuasion. Indeed in the punitive attacks mounted by the Shona insurgent forces on isolated white settlements, the Shona evinced some of their venom against collaboration with the whites by killing both the foreign and local African collaborators together with their masters. The attacks, at the beginning of the rising, against N/C Mooney of Hartley district; the Nortons in the Salisbury district and James White, the representative of Willoughby's Consolidated Company in Marandellas district all demonstrate this point. Even Shona antipathy towards some of their women, formerly concubines to the white

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<sup>75</sup>Vide: C. O. 417/393: Lt. Col. R. Chester-Master, Commandant, British South Africa Police (BSAP) to C. O. : November 14, 1904; and also C. O. 417/373: Lawley to Chamberlain: August 10, 1903.

<sup>76</sup>Vide Supra: pp. 84-8.

settlers and 'Cape Boys', is also indicative of their resentment towards collaborators and thus these women were retained in captivity under Nehanda's guardianship.<sup>77</sup> Yet in spite of this hostility, the Shona could not harness their animosity to prohibit further actions of collaboration in which it appears sister societies competed to outplay one another and instituted once more a pattern of alliances very much similar in nature to that which they had previously formed to counteract Ndebele and other invasions of the pre-1890 era. In this way the Shona therefore exposed themselves to the machinations of the BSACo. in 1896. The causes of these shortcomings on the part of the Shona societies, it could be said, were endemic to their social and political organization and, in the event, the Shona provided more collaborators from amongst themselves than they could prevent.

Beach may have revealed, in his study of the risings in South-Western Mashonaland, some of the more fundamental aspects of Shona societies which determined to a large extent the nature of Shona resistance and collaboration in 1896-7.<sup>78</sup> The characteristic fission and general disunity which then dominated the Shona country severely handicapped the prospects of a united front in 1896. The absence of a centralized political system and authority since the fall of the Rozvi Empire at the beginning of the nineteenth century also had significant impact in the Shona country, as in the absence of these basic factors united political and military action was impossible to achieve. But even if, as a matter of speculation, unity of action may have been attained temporarily in other fields, like traditional religion, in the course of Shona struggle against white forces of change, this would still have been less meaningful, especially as far as Shona political organisation was concerned. The Shona collateral system of succession to chieftainship for example, unlike the Nguni primogeniture one, made any prospects of political unity at various stages of Shona history quite difficult though not altogether impossible. By its very character, the Shona collateral system of succession provided constant opposition and threat to the new political leadership by entrenching the

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<sup>77</sup> H. M. Hole's Report on the Mashonaland Rebellion: Part II: October 29, 1896: Enclosed in BSACo. Reports on the Administration of Rhodesia: 1896-7: pp.71-2

<sup>78</sup> Dr. Beach has however expressed to the author that since writing his thesis in 1971 he has now changed his views on Shona collaboration in 1896-7: Personal Communication from Dr. Beach, History Department, University of Rhodesia: March 15, 1976.



fact that an alternative leadership was always available and ready to assume command, should circumstances warrant any change. In this way, Shona political leadership, whether real or potential, was therefore easily vulnerable to external overtures from the enemy camp itself. The matter was even more complicated by the institution of polygamy amongst the Shona chiefs, which inevitably multiplied the numbers of royal houses and claimants to chieftaincy.<sup>79</sup>

Whilst in the pre-colonial era such problems were easily solved by cleavage and simple secession from the major chiefdoms due to the absence of physical and political restraints, with dissident royal houses breaking away to form their own independent but related dynasties in different parts of the country and away from the main ethnic groups, this could not however work in the colonial era when boundaries became more fixed and were therefore not liable to fluctuation at the will of the local chiefs. Contending Shona royal houses had to be contained in one chiefdom in spite of their differences in the colonial era. Moreover, it has to be observed that Shona chiefs relied for support on their people's goodwill and not on coercion as what usually happened with the Nguni political systems which tended to rely on military power. The implications of this relationship between the political leaders and their followers in Shona societies were that the chiefs had to depend solely on their own roles as spiritual guardians of the people; roles bestowed onto them not only by virtue of descent but also by their capability to provide land and other forms of economic and social security for their people. Any chief who could not provide such assets in a Shona society was naturally liable to lose his followers as they eventually broke away and joined neighbouring chiefdoms more capable to guarantee these features of Shona life.

Indeed, the position of the Shona chiefs in the absence of coercion was not an easy one. Such a state of affairs was obviously further weakened by the economic impotence of these Shona chiefs who had to depend largely on themselves and the efforts of their own families for economic survival, since no Shona law provided for any levy or tribute as an instrument of political organization. These features of quasi-democratic nature in Shona societies

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<sup>79</sup> In the Madangombe dynasty of the northern part of the Chibi district, to which the author belongs, there are at the present time (1976) 10 royal houses eligible for succession to only one throne.

extended even to military affairs. Without both coercion and compulsory regimentation, this meant that Shona chiefs could only rely on a voluntary citizens' army rather than the regular professional forces which characterized the Nguni military and political systems. This aspect of Shona political organisation even further left the chiefs at the mercy of their followers than any other factor, making it even more imperative for these leaders to have the interests of their people under constant review, lest they might not afford to defend themselves against their foes once most of their people had left and joined neighbouring chiefdoms.<sup>80</sup>

The final aspect of Shona social and political organization which proved a source of weakness was the marital system. Most clans and totems in Shona communities did not allow endogamy and consequently marriage within the same community, where people were most likely of the same totem, was impossible. In this way, the Shona societies became more outward-looking and ready to tolerate the torwa (foreign) element within their ranks, in order to provide wives and husbands for their children and, especially, for the children of the chiefs on whom the societies depended for their cultural and social welfare. A natural development from this outward-looking tendency was that Shona societies became constantly ready to forge new alliances and links with either foreign groups or other distantly related sister societies, with the result that this socially essential practice in the end began to influence Shona political life as well; first with the arrival of the Ndebele and later that of the BSACo. Thus it was obviously this constant search for allies and alliances that rendered Shona societies vulnerable to the collaborative mechanism and the policy of divide and rule in the Southern Rhodesian colonial era before 1896.<sup>81</sup>

In short, Shona societies characterized by the relative lack of autocratic political control, economically and politically impotent chiefs, absence of

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<sup>80</sup> In this respect Shona societies tallied in many respects with the Sotho/Tswana ones. Vide L. M. Thompson: Survival in two Worlds: Moshoe-shoe of Lesotho 1786-1870: Oxford University Press, Clarendon: 1975: pp. 8-16; For the Nguni systems, Vide: Omer-Cooper: The Zulu Aftermath: Chapters 2-4 and 9.

<sup>81</sup> This argument on Shona societies is based on Beach: The Rising: pp. 42-53; A. K. Weinreich (sister Mary Aquina): Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia: Heinemann: London: 1971: pp. 106-10 and C. Bullock: Mashona Laws and Customs: Government Printers: Salisbury: 1913: passim.

regular armies, constant fission and schisms within the same societies to satisfy marital and land-hunger requirements or as a sign of protest by discontented royal houses questioning the legitimacy of the particular political leader in control, were naturally, on account of these features, subjected to chronic disunity and liable to fall victims to the processes of collaboration in the face of external attacks and invasion. Shona tendencies also to resort to external factors or impartial third parties as arbiters to solve their internal problems, especially where contending parties were concerned, did not make matters easier either. The problems of the Rozvi Mambos at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for example, were thus in every way a reflection of the Shona political, economic and military organization at work.<sup>82</sup>

Even the relationship between various chiefdoms within the Shona commonwealth were often liable to collapse in the face of a strongly organized enemy as Shona/Ndebele relations demonstrate before 1893. A veritable system of alliances, resistance and collaboration had been forged in the Shona societies in response to Ndebele military raids. A threefold pattern of alliances had also emerged within these societies on these lines; firstly, a group of Shona chiefdoms which submitted to Ndebele dominance and identified themselves as tributary states of the Ndebele political kingdom, but at the same time retaining the entrails of internal political autonomy they still had. The group which adopted this solution included the Rozvi chiefdoms in the modern Gwelo-Que Que districts, like Rozani (Losani) and Rukuruba (Lukuluba), whose leaders became couriers for the collection of Ndebele tribute from other Shona states. The second group accepted Ndebele tributary status, but unlike the first one did not, however, also accept Ndebele cultural and political ideology. This group essentially provided services to the Ndebele monarch in form of herding Lobengula's cattle, supplying labour to build Lobengula's dwellings or provision of young recruits then engrafted into the Ndebele impis all in return for immunity from regular Ndebele raids. Such chiefdoms in the Shona country, which accepted this form of association with the Ndebele state, were situated mainly in the eastern direction of the latter. Those Shona chiefdoms which accepted herding Lobengula's cattle included the north-

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<sup>82</sup> Beach: op. cit.: pp. 115-25; K. R. Robinson: 'The Archaeology of the Rozvi' and D. P. Abrahams: 'The Roles of the Mhondoro-cults in Shona Political History' both in Stokes and Brown (eds.): op. cit.: pp. 3-27 and 28-46 respectively.

ern Mhari dynasties of Nhema, Banga and Munyikwa in the present Selukwe district, and Mapanzure in the modern Shabani area. Chiefs Chitawudze of the Bubi/Umzingwane area to the South-West and Wozhele, the Rozvi ruler in the Que-Que region, also accepted to undertake the same service to the Ndebele state. Chiefs Chirumanzu and Hama in the Chilimanzi district on the other hand provided labour, whilst chiefs Madangombe, Masunda and Shiku in the Chibi/Shabani area, for example, provided military recruits. In the Nyoka country to the north-west of the Ndebele state, the Shangwe Chiefs Chireya, Pashu and others paid their tribute to the Ndebele rulers in tobacco, the famous Nyoka tobacco of Southern Rhodesian colonial era; hence the saying among the Ndebele that Chireya was 'the king's snuff-box'.<sup>83</sup> The third group of Shona states however remained outside the purview of Ndebele alliances and even military operations and it is this group which was instrumental in bringing onto the scene the Portuguese as a factor in Shona military alliances against the Ndebele.

This state of affairs, regarding Ndebele/Shona relations, while providing a new factor in the Shona system of alliances also presented its problems. Some Shona chiefs began to exploit the situation, using the Ndebele as a new whip-cord to settle their old scores. The Ngowa of the Belingwe district, for example, took advantage of their relationship with the Ndebele through the marriage of Makwa, Lobengula's sister, to solicit Ndebele military aid in attacking their Mhari kinsman, Chief Chibi, across the Lundi river in the present Chibi district as well as against the Dumbuseya of Wedza Mountain in the Shabani area. Even individual Shona aspirants to political leadership were also not unaware of the advantages proffered by the Ndebele factor to further their claims to their respective Shona chieftaincies as Chiefs Bangure Chirumanzu and Chibi Mazorodze did, when they employed Ndebele military power to back their claims against other more acceptable claimants.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 124-31; C. L. Carbutt: 'Reminiscences of a Native Commissioner' NADA No. 2: 1924: pp. 76-82; Paskari Tizirayi: 'The Story of the Chilimanzi People' NADA No. 26, 1949, pp. 36-8; Rufu M. M. Ncube: 'The True Story re:- Chaminuka and Lobengula' NADA No. 39, 1962: pp. 59-66: and Interviews with Mr. Madhlangove Madangombe: July 26, 1975.

<sup>84</sup> Paskari Tizirayi: 'The Story of the Chilimanzi People': loc. cit. ; Johnson H. Tagwireyi: 'The Origins of the Mhari clan': NADA No. 27: 1950: pp. 63-6.

But a far more dominant aspect of these Ndebele/Shona relations however, was the cognisance by various Shona chiefdoms of the serious challenge the Ndebele military threat posed towards the security and welfare of their societies. In the circumstances, the Shona chiefdoms decided to take advantage of their longstanding commercial association with the Portuguese and began to transform these commercial links into political alliances to counteract Ndebele threat. Thus by 1890, through the agency of the Goanese/Portuguese adventurer, Gouveia, Shona/Portuguese treaties became the dominant phenomenon of Shona external politics throughout the length and breadth of the Shona country, involving chiefs as far apart as Nemaikonde and Sango of the Lamagundi district in the West; Mangwende, Mtoko, and Makoni in the North-east and Gutu and Chirumanzu in the South. This realization of the gravity of the Ndebele threat by the Shona chiefs thus brought onto the scene a new factor; 'the gun frontier' in Mashonaland, so christened by Beach and one which prompted Lobengula to treat the Rudd Concession party more favourably than would have otherwise happened a decade earlier.<sup>85</sup>

In conclusion, it is argued that the endemic features of Shona political, social, economic and military organisation were by no means conducive to unity against any foreign enemy, as they showed during the Nguni invasions of the early nineteenth century. In the face of established Ndebele threat before 1893, the Shona chiefdoms could not unite either, to face the common enemy, but devised a complex system of alliances to come to terms with the situation. In the period between 1890 and 1896, the same pattern of alliances was adopted by these Shona chiefdoms to meet the BSACo. threat, especially with the outbreak of the risings in 1896, and the Company was quick to take advantage of this old Shona game. In the process, this ruling authority applied divisive techniques not only against the Ndebele but also against other Shona societies of different and divergent persuasion, as far as their loyalty to the Company was concerned. During the 1890-96 period of Company rule, the Shona chiefdoms could no longer solve their internal differences by migrating to new areas of occupation as the boundaries had become fixed and permanent and therefore could also no longer recede or stretch at the whims of their chiefs. The feuding parties were thus contained within particular

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<sup>85</sup> Beach: op. cit. pp. 124-31 and also Ranger: op. cit.: p. 85.

chiefdoms and when the risings came in 1896-97, some rival claimants saw in them a chance to redress their old grievances. To add to these shortcomings, was the Shona practice of resorting to outsiders to sort their internal differences. This practice whilst workable in the olden days proved the cause of Shona undoing as it played into the hands of a European force, whose general policy of divide and rule was the primary means of its survival in the face of larger numbers of able-bodied men in the opposing enemy camp.<sup>86</sup>

In short, it is argued for the purpose of this study, that Shona societies unlike their Ndebele counterpart, were more vulnerable to European interference and were thus hoisted by their own petard during the risings of 1896-97. When the risings broke out, the BSA Co., pressing on those weaker points of Shona organization, found a greater quantity of material for collaboration against insurgent Shona chiefdoms. A few examples of this Shona collaborating material may suffice to clarify the point in question here. One such case is demonstrated by Brabant's extensive raids against the Budja Chief Gurupira of Mtoko in June 1895 in which Brabant relied largely on the support of Zezuru levies from Central Mashonaland.<sup>87</sup> Gurupira in his turn provided a Budja supporting force to the white troops led by Colonel Alderson, during the latter's attack against Chief Kunzwi-Nyandoro at his stronghold, Domborembudzi. This Budja alliance with white military forces, which was in many ways very effective, lasted till April 1897, when Gurupira himself was killed in action and the Budja abruptly terminated their service with Colonel Harding, reading in this event the punitive hand of the ancestors for what came to be considered culpable activities in assisting the white forces, the greater enemy, against their Shona kinsmen. In the eastern regions of Mashonaland, Chief Mutasa, the Manyika ruler, readily sided with Imperial forces against his old rival Chief Makoni of Rusape, obviously convinced that such military alliance was only another round of the these two opponents' previous conflicts. Similar assistance to the white forces was

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<sup>86</sup> Weinrich: Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia: pp. 120-2. The Mangwende dynastic dispute, dating back to 1880 and lasting up to today (1976), is a good example of European external interference and the vulnerability of the Shona political systems to powerful external forces. Vide: J. F. Holleman: Chief, Council and Commissioner: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., Assen (the Netherlands) 1969; pp. 79-235.

<sup>87</sup> Vide Supra: pp.

also provided by Makoni's cousin and rival claimant to Maungwe chieftaincy, Ndapfunya.<sup>88</sup>

This pattern of Shona collaboration with the white forces against their kith and kin was also repeated in other parts of the Shona country. In South-Western Mashonaland for example, a number of Shona chiefdoms provided assistance against their kinsmen of the Selukwe, Shabani and Belingwe districts.<sup>89</sup> By these means, the Shona were therefore, to some extent, responsible for the collapse of the Shona rising. But in doing this they were not by any means gambling for economic gains. It was especially their political system which was here at fault. The Shona were trying to come to terms with the new forces of change on the basis of old techniques, but when they later realized the extent of white men's ambitions, they moved from alliance to hostility, as has been indicated elsewhere.<sup>90</sup>

Matabeleland provides a different situation to that obtaining in Mashonaland, as far as the incidence of African collaboration is concerned. The Ndebele were essentially united during the rising, a carry-over obviously from the pre-1893 Ndebele state. Although differences of opinion, for example, surfaced between the Umfezela and Nyamanada sections of the Ndebele insurgent forces prior to and during the rising, these differences were more or less characteristics of a generation gap and therefore somewhat similar to the differences of outlook between moderates and militants. The Ndebele differences during the rising, on the strategy and the execution of the military campaign, were merely a reflection of various opinions within the royalist movement behind the scenes, which had been going on since the end of the 1893 war, regarding the ideal successor to Lobengula. In the dispute, senior indunas, the moderate faction, led by Umlugulu, the king-maker, supported Umfezela, whilst the younger ones supported Nyamanda, Lobengula's eldest son. But these differences were however minor and the Ndebele were thus able to reconcile their various views during the course of the rising and shelve the kingship issue, till the enemy had been

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<sup>88</sup> Report of the Rebellion in Mashonaland III: by Percy Inskipp: December 31, 1897: Enclosed in BSACo. Reports on the Administration of Rhodesia: 1896-97: pp 115-6; R. E. Reid: 'The Capture of Chief Makoni' NADA Vol 32, 1955: pp 52-3; C. Harding: The Far Bugles: Simpking Marshall: London: 1969: p 69.

<sup>89</sup> Extracts from Report of Civil Commissioner, Victoria, G. F. Vizard, for Year Ending September 30, 1896: Ibid: pp 137-9.

<sup>90</sup> Vide Supra: Chapter I.

dealt with first. Even those Ndebele loyalist leaders, like Gambo, Mjaan and Faku, who did not come out in favour of the rising to begin with, would not be cowed into acts of overt collaboration against their insurgent kinsmen as was the case in Mashonaland and although some of their people were recruited to serve under C/N/C Taylor as 'friendlies', these leaders were not prepared at all to be used against other Ndebele factions right up to the very end. On the eve of the Matopo peace indaba for example, they even refused to be used in bringing their insurgent countrymen to the conference table.<sup>91</sup>

The solidity of the pre-colonial Ndebele state in the face of missionary onslaught, for three decades (1859-1888), had forced the frustrated missionaries to look elsewhere for a weapon with which to exert external pressure onto the Ndebele society, as we have seen. This external factor and the source of external pressure was the BSACo. whose advent the missionaries of the LMS welcomed with jubilation.<sup>92</sup> In 1896 it was the turn of the BSACo. to look elsewhere for an auxiliary force of collaborators to face a solidly united Ndebele insurgent movement. The foreign Africans who were already in the country and had hitherto survived the ravages of the irate Ndebele forces in 1893 as well as further bands imported from the South on later occasions provided the necessary material in this instance. The Sotho and the 'Cape Boys' were among the more obvious auxiliary forces considered by the Company Administration and officials for further importation from South of the Limpopo for a number of cogent reasons, particularly economic ones.

It must be borne in mind that when the Ndebele rising broke out in Matabeleland in April 1896, the BSACo. was not in an economically strong position to bear the cost of suppressing the malaise of its pre-1896 maladministration. Those who were well acquainted with the Company's economic situation were also quite aware of its problems. In March 1896, when the Company published its Directors' Report and Accounts for the Year 1894-95, the attention of the Colonial Office was immediately drawn to the Company's financial position, which was, as Edward Fairfield, the Under-Secretary in the South Africa department of the Colonial Office, remarked, a 'very precarious (one)-', showing a deficit of £23,540 in administrative expenditure even before the payments to the Johnston Administration in Nyasaland had been made,<sup>93</sup> in accordance with the £10,000 annual payment Rhodes and the BSACo. had promised in

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<sup>91</sup>Ranger: op. cit.: pp. 138-44; 240.

<sup>92</sup>Vide: Supra: pp. 3-4



1889 and had been paying ever since.<sup>94</sup> In view of this economic position, it was concluded that the only hope for the Company lay perhaps in the discovery of gold in its territories. Sir Hartman Just, a senior clerk in the South Africa department of the Colonial Office who shared this optimism, expressed his views as follows:

... it is evident that the financial success of the Company's administration in the immediate future depends entirely upon whether the gold industry proves really remunerative. If sufficient gold is found, the adverse balance on the accounts will easily be overtaken.<sup>95</sup>

Sir Just's optimism was however misplaced, as sufficient gold was never discovered in the quantities so expected even by the end of Company Administration in Matabeleland and Mashonaland in 1923. To make matters worse the Company was reported by May 1896 to be recruiting the more expensive white police to replace the Ndebele ones, previously enlisted from Lobengula's crack regiments, who had just deserted with the outbreak of the Ndebele rising in April 1896.<sup>96</sup> But by far the most serious economic reverse for the Company was the rinderpest plague which had devastating results, as we shall see later.

It was therefore against this background that the Company Administration in Salisbury and the Cape Town Office decided to recruit Sotho and 'Cape Boy' auxiliaries. In April 1896, Lord Grey, who had just replaced A. H. F. Duncan as the Acting Administrator in February, following the incarceration of Jameson, took some action on this issue. He sent Duncan to the South to secure either 'Cape Boys' or Sotho fighting material, taking care to notify the London Board of this move at the same time and indicating that the object of Duncan's mission was to obtain an additional force of '500 white men (and) 250 Cape Boys...' in order to augment the Company's relief force then in Matabeleland to a total of 1,220 white men and 250 Cape Boys.<sup>97</sup> This arrangement was of course independent of the Imperial relief forces then being organised for Matabeleland under Colonel Henry Plumer. The Company resented

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<sup>93</sup> C. O. 417/197: Minute by Fairfield: March 23, 1896.

<sup>94</sup> Pachai: Malawi: The History of the Nation: loc. cit.

<sup>95</sup> C. O. 417/197: Minute by H. W. Just to Fairfield: May 5, 1896.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.: Charter, Cape Town, to BSACo.: Cablegram: April 12, 1896; Lord Grey to Duke of Fife: April 13, 1896.

relying exclusively on Imperial forces which could, it was then thought, be detained by further African risings in Bechuanaland Protectorate, where compulsory slaughter of stock had been enforced to check the spread of rinderpest. Thus Lord Grey thought it advisable to proceed quickly with this alternative plan.<sup>98</sup> But not all Company officials apparently relished the prospects of recruiting 'Cape Boys' for service in Matabeleland. Some actually preferred Sotho levies for this type of work and, accordingly, they approached the High Commissioner with the same demand and one which the latter obligingly conceded to, allowing the Company to raise as many as 500 Sothos for Matabeleland if it so desired.<sup>99</sup>

Grey had, for his part, always been convinced of the capability of the Sotho to provide the services that a regular white force would have provided in the rising. To him, therefore, it was the Sotho who constituted the better solution than the 'Cape Boys' to the Company's economic problems. Relying on the judgement of one Colonel Harris of Kimberley, who had tried to raise a white volunteer force in Kimberley on behalf of Rhodes to the tune of 500 strong but had been prohibited to take them up to Matabeleland by the High Commissioner,<sup>100</sup> Lord Grey concluded that the Sotho were the most suitable force the Company could depend on and consequently empowered his assistant, Duncan, to raise a contingent of these as we have seen.<sup>101</sup> These were to be recruited and sent up to Mafeking under the charge of white officers, generally acquainted with the Sotho people. Grey even emphasized the relevance of the Sotho levies, in his own inimitable way, to his superior, the Duke of Fife, in the following manner:

They -(Sotho)- might remain as permanent Native Police after the trouble is over, and we can give them land. These Basutos will be a much more effective and less costly force than the Colonial Boys and may be trusted -(as)- Police. Caesar's principle of policing Great Britain with his Danube Legion, and the Danube territories with his British Legion was sound and ought to be initiated by us.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid: BSACo. to C. O. February (?), 1896.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid: Charter, Cape Town to BSACo.: Cablegram: April 13, 1896.

<sup>100</sup> F. W. Sykes: With Plumer in Matabeleland: Constable & Co.: London: 1897: p. 85.

<sup>101</sup> Vide: Supra: p. 109

<sup>102</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to Duke of Fife: April 13, 1896.

In Lord Grey's reckoning, the Sotho were not only ideal as far as the Company's primary objective of cutting down military expenses was concerned, but they were also to serve as the foundation stone of the Company Administration's policy on police affairs once the risings were over and done with. They apparently fitted the Company's policy on police matters because of the social and cultural differences between them and the indigenous peoples in the Company territories and these differences, it was concluded, had to be exploited accordingly.

The scheme on raising Sotho levies for Matabeleland was sufficiently popular to win not only official acclaim, but in that it also prompted self-appointed individuals to offer their services as couriers in the plan. One such offer came from Captain P. Furniss of Maseru in Basutoland, a veteran commander in previous wars in the Transkei (1887) and the Sotho Gun War of 1880-81. At the beginning of April 1896, Captain Furniss wrote the Acting Administrator of Matabeleland, Sir Thomas Scanlen, offering his services to raise Sotho levies for the Company. He stated:

I regret to hear that the Natives of -(Southern)- Rhodesia have again risen & more especially that the Native Police have joined them. I would respectfully suggest for your consideration the advisability of raising a Native Police force from some other race than those contained within the limits of the Chartered Company territory. With this end in view I feel sure that with the co-operation of the Imperial Govt. (sic) & the officials here a force of one thousand picked Basutos could be raised for service in the North.<sup>103</sup>

Besides the Sotho levies, Captain Furniss also volunteered to secure 'good strong ponies' for the Company, amounting to the equivalent number of Sotho recruits and some two hundred or more extra remounts to spare. He was quite confident of his ability to obtain these horses at as low a cost as 'eight pounds each', thus, in the process, saving the Company extra expenses.<sup>104</sup> Such a plan was of course obviously to fit in the whole programme of Sotho levies in the sense that these horses would be used for carrying rations and enable the contingent to travel lighter and faster to Matabeleland than would

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<sup>103</sup> C. T. 1/19/2: Captain P. Furniss, Maseru, to Sir Thomas Scanlen, Matabeleland: April 7, 1896.

<sup>104</sup> Captain Beresford of the 7th Hussars who was at the time buying horses in South Africa for the Matabeleland Relief Force was actually paying as much as £18 per beast. Vide: Sykes: With Plumber in Matabeleland: pp. 62-3.

have been possible to do with wagon transport. The Sotho recruits in question were to be conveyed by train as far as Kimberley and then march on foot from there, after the end of the railway line.

In offering to organize and equip the Sotho contingent, Furniss hoped that, once having arrived in Matabeleland, he would naturally be allowed to take charge of the contingent either as its commander or in some subordinate capacity. All that the Company was required to do in the circumstances was to provide saddlery, halters, reins, knee bands and other more expensive equipment for the contingent as well as a few white men, from places like Johannesburg, who were well versed in Sotho language and would therefore act as assistants and corporals in the force. At the same time, Furniss also felt quite convinced that the Company had to see its way through and obtain 'the Basuto pony' for service even if the scheme of raising levies should not materialize. As he informed the Cape Town Office of the BSACo., he was certain that 'the Basuto pony' was more serviceable to the Company in suppressing the rising than any other stamp of horse these officials had previously purchased.<sup>105</sup>

Reactions to Furniss' offer were mixed. Lord Grey, the Administrator, supported the proposal with great enthusiasm and so informed the Cape Town Office, stressing the same reasons he had previously conveyed to the Duke of Fife in private.<sup>106</sup> But the Cape Town Office did not share Lord Grey's enthusiasm and could only give lukewarm support to the Furniss plan at first. It doubted whether the plan would be acceptable to Sir Godfrey Lagden, the British Resident in Maseru, and to Lerothodi, the Paramount Chief of Basutoland. These doubts were evidently based on Lagden's fears and also on the resentment of the President of the Orange Free State to the idea of arming a large fighting force of Africans, which might be construed 'as a sign of weakness on our (Company's) part....'<sup>107</sup>

In a sense, what the Cape Town Office had in mind was to salvage the economic position of the Company without, at the same time, impinging on the myth of white supremacy, which had, as part of its ethos, the invincibility and

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<sup>105</sup> C. T. 1/19/2: Furniss, Maseru to Charter, Cape Town, April 13, 1896.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey, Bulawayo, to Charter, Cape Town, Telegram: April 14, 1896.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid: Charter, Cape Town to Lord Grey: April 14, 1896.

courage of the white men all over Africa. On the credit side, the Cape Town Office felt encouraged by the Imperial officials in South Africa, who urged the Company to give the scheme a trial, but stipulated that the payment of these Sotho levies at monthly rates should not be higher than £6 for sergeants, £5 for corporals and £3 for privates in addition to free clothing and rations. The Imperial authorities also indicated that should these Sotho levies be used for police work in the Company territories after the rising, as Lord Grey had hinted, they were to be engaged initially for two years.

In Basutoland itself however, the scheme was complicated by the problem of labour migration to the gold fields at the Rand and elsewhere, by 1896 estimated at about twelve thousand men per annum. This state of affairs left the Sotho Paramount Chief Lerothodi in a dubious position, as to his ability to raise the five hundred men required for Matabeleland. However, Lerothodi's anxiety was counterbalanced by the attractive land offers then promised to these recruits by the Company in Matabeleland and Lagden's preparedness to see the scheme a success. The latter, like all other white men in Southern Africa, resented the killing of white settlers which had taken place in Matabeleland and was thus more than anxious to help and also provide white officers to the contingent in question, who would, at the end of hostilities, remain in permanent service to the Company and in charge of the Sotho police force.<sup>108</sup>

Despite these isolated misgivings, Lord Grey and the Cape Town Office of the BSACo. were all the same prepared to accept the services of a Sotho contingent in Matabeleland on whatever terms and reiterated once more the land promises they had made for the benefit of the recruits as a reward for their services. Jack Brabant, who had been ignominiously dismissed by the Company from the Mashonaland Native Department at the end of 1895 and was then living in East London in the Cape Colony, was put in charge of these Sotho recruits. Brabant was instructed to lead the Sotho contingent to the Matopo Hills in Matabeleland, where Ndebele insurgent forces had gathered, but no further promises were apparently made regarding his permanent placement with this force.<sup>109</sup> In fact, the command of the force had already been promised to Griffiths of Basutoland at Lagden's suggestion. As a

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid: Sir Godfrey Lagden, Maseru to High Commissioner, Cape Town: Telegram: April 14, 1896.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid: Charter, Cape Town to J. S. Brabant, East London, Telegram: April 17, 1896.

matter of fact, the Company was quite prepared to accept whatever number of recruits seemed feasible to raise in the circumstances even if this had to be as low as only two hundred Sotho levies.<sup>110</sup> Perhaps to compensate for the unexpected shortfall in numbers, Lagden, as obliging as ever, also offered to provide the contingent with horses and part of the equipment, in much the same manner as Furniss had done previously.<sup>111</sup> The rest of the equipment, uniform and armaments was to be supplemented at Mafeking by Kennedy, the Company official there, who had previously arranged for the equipment of the 'Cape Boys' contingent, which had recently also left Mafeking for Matabeleland. The Sotho contingent was to be provided, as far as uniform and other equipment were concerned, by the Bechuanaland Trading Association, a commercial company in which the BSACo. itself held some shares and one which had also supplied the 'Cape Boys' in this respect. Finally, it was Kennedy too at Mafeking who was responsible for the transportation of the Sotho contingent to Matabeleland.<sup>102</sup>

The BSACo. had been caught up in a financial crisis when the Ndebele rising broke out in April 1896. The rinderpest plague which had broken up in February 1896 in Matabeleland, a month earlier than in Mashonaland, contributed its share to the Company's misfortunes, especially in form of compensation to European settlers for the compulsory destruction of their stock as a preventative measure.<sup>113</sup> To solve these problems, the Company required to suppress the risings at as low a cost as was possible and it was for this reason that the Sotho and the 'Cape Boys' had become so handy. With these African auxiliary forces, it thus was hoped the Company would without difficulty effect economies in its campaigns against the insurgents. Yet up to the very end of the Sotho levies scheme, it was riddled and chocked with protests and misgivings. Right up to the eve of this contingent's departure

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to Charter, Cape Town, Telegram (received): April 22, 1896.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid: Lagden, Maseru to Charter, Cape Town: Telegram: April 20, 1896.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid: Kennedy, Mafeking to Charter, Cape Town: Telegram: April 24, 1896.

<sup>113</sup> The BSACo. Administration paid £20,735 in compensation to European settlers for stock compulsorily slaughtered in Matabeleland and £7,402 for the same to Mashonaland settlers. Vide: 'Report of the Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo, E. Ross Townshend, for 12 months Ending September 16, 1896': in Ibid: pp. 123-4.

for Matabeleland, some quarters were not altogether happy with the probable effects of the scheme, which, it was assumed, would be counterproductive. The Cape Town Office of the BSACo. for example, was extremely worried by rumours then circulating in Basutoland where the Sotho had got wind of the rising in Matabeleland through surreptitious channels. In fact, it was feared that the myth of the white man's superiority would be grievously harmed as:

... they -(the Sotho)- may get the idea that the white man cannot fight the Matabele and therefore wants to get the Basutos to fight for them.<sup>114</sup>

Some of the worries on the effects of this scheme were not based on essentially racial considerations, as the Cape Town Office of the BSACo. viewed the case. The government of the Cape Colony was, for example, more worried about the administrative complications the scheme was likely to produce should the Sotho levies in the service of the Company receive higher wages than the Sotho police engaged for service in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. For this reason, it was therefore convinced that the Company scheme was likely to damage the prospects for further recruitment of Sotho police to serve in the Protectorate, due to the unfavourable comparison in salaries.<sup>115</sup> But whatever weight these misgivings might have borne, the Company still went ahead with its proposals. Yet once the recruiting was over and done with, little is heard of the Sotho contingent during the risings, though mention is however made of Brabant's arrival in the Company territories with a force of auxiliaries.<sup>116</sup> We can only assume therefore that the Sotho contingent may have been overshadowed by the two wings of the 'Cape Boys' contingent, whose history we now examine below.

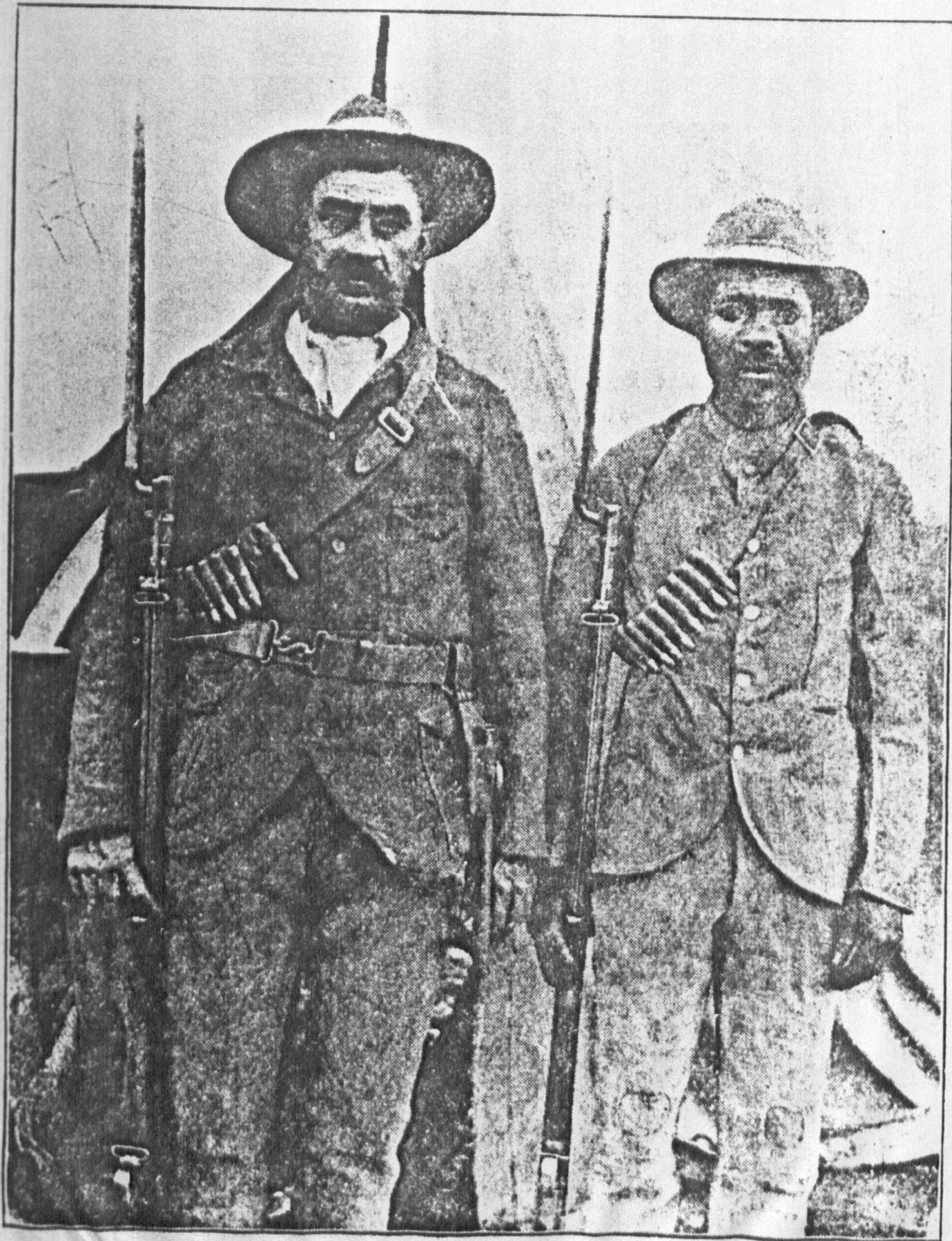
Similar motives, backed however with a different logic, were applied in simultaneously raising 'Cape Boys' contingents. These were apparently as handy as the Sotho levies, but not half as popular as the latter. They were two battalions in number; one under Johannan W. Colenbrander and the other commanded by Major Robertson. Here the confusing term 'Cape Boys' becomes apparent. Whether the term was coined with reference to the genetic

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<sup>114</sup> C. T. 1/19/2: Charter, Cape Town to Kennedy, Mafeking: Telegram: April 24, 1896.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid: Cape Town Govt. to Charter: April 14, 1896.

<sup>116</sup> Andrews: John White of Mashonaland: loc. cit.



TWO MEMBERS OF THE CAPE BOYS CORPS, M.R.F.

Extract from F.W. Sykes: With Plumer in Matabeleland, (Constable & Co: London: 1897).



distinction of the auxiliaries of mixed blood, the half-castes from the South, or as a geopolitical term, simply denoting Africans from the Cape Colony in general, it is quite puzzling to say. The confusing aspect of the matter is that the term also became a derisive name commonly adopted by white settlers for any Africans from the South whom they had cause to dislike for one reason or another and, for that matter, the generic distinction was of little consequence to the settlers, who were not in any way noted for their expertise in ethnic specifics.<sup>117</sup> However, Colenbrander's 'Cape Boys' corps appears to have consisted of a predominantly African membership, with names of Xhosa, Sotho, Mfengu and Zulu identities.

In fact it is Colenbrander's 'Cape Boys' corps which provided the backbone of John Hlazo's 'black pioneers' movement,<sup>118</sup> and it is very likely that Colenbrander may have taken over the leadership of the Sotho contingent from the discredited Brabant and coalesced it with those African auxiliaries already in the country having come earlier on at the same time with the Pioneer Column or at any other period before 1896. Indeed some of the names which later became popular in the cause of the movement of the 'Black Pioneers' are easily discernible in the Colenbrander corps. These include, to mention only a handful, the Mkeezas, Willie Sakuba, Makena, Jack Mponda, John Hlazo ('Ntlago') himself, Phillip Sifuba, Hendrick Maguta and many others mentioned in the despatches for their services in both the 1893 and 1896 wars. In this way the Colenbrander corps of 'Cape Boys', with its sergeants John W. Sabu, Jim M'Keeza, N'nyatigazi, W. M. Beyney, H. Mareta, Moses M'Dhloro and others, appears to have formed the nucleus of what later became the very influential pressure groups of Africans from the South during the 1910's and 1920's.<sup>119</sup> The Robertson corps of 'Cape Boys' on the other hand consisted of a pre-dominantly half-caste membership; a factor which is quite clearly signified in this instance by the nomenclature and to some extent the Johannesburg origin of its individual members. Some

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<sup>117</sup> Vide: Plate VI: 'Cape Boys' of the Matabeleland Field Force (picture). In a discussion between the author and Mr. Mandaza, also of York University, working on the mixed-race community in Southern Rhodesia, there was a general agreement that due to racism of early Southern Rhodesian society there was little distinction in official designation between blacks and half-castes from the South.

<sup>118</sup> NB 1/1/3: Petition of Colonial Natives of Bulawayo Native Location: Enclosed in George P. Mpondo, Acting Secretary to C/N/C, Byo.

of the names of this corps had peculiarly distinctive non-African surnames like Hendricks, Henries, Johnnie, Jacobs, Jereboom, Johnson, Kriel, Lonfgeldt and so on.<sup>120</sup>

Notwithstanding the genetic differences of these groups of 'Cape Boys', they were however treated indiscriminately once they volunteered for service in the Company territories. Moreover, their motives, whether they joined the relief force in Johannesburg, Kimberley, Mafeking or elsewhere, were essentially similar. They were evidently motivated by a common psychological and ideological feeling; a feeling they were quite proud of especially outside the Cape Colony. This was their extravagant sense of pride in their status as 'British subjects'. This sense of loyalty and pride shared by most non-Europeans from the Cape Colony was evidently sufficient to drive them northwards in the service of the Company.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps encouraged by the quasi-liberal 'native policy' of the Cape Colony, which conferred on non-European citizens privileges undreamt of either in the Transvaal, Orange Free State or Natal, the 'Cape Boys' felt obliged to offer their services in 1896 during the risings and, in so doing, further what they considered to be a British cause.<sup>122</sup>

The loyalty and resilience of the 'Cape Boys', in whatever capacity they served the British cause, obviously made them eligible for service when this was considered by the Southern Rhodesian authorities to be desirable. They served as menials and grooms to the Pioneer Column and as auxiliaries in the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893. Besides, some of them had even participated in Jameson's abortive raid against the Transvaal at the end of 1895.<sup>123</sup> In the

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January 31, 1898. Vide also: Chapter 5.

<sup>119</sup> C. O. 767/5: W. Beare, Secretary for the S. Rhodesia High/Commissioner to Dominions Office (hereafter D. O.): December 18, 1925: S. Rhodesia Correspondence, P/R/O, London. This material was revealed when S. Rhodesia was transferred from the Colonial to Dominions Office in 1925.

<sup>120</sup> C. O. 767/5: Beare to C. O.: December 18, 1925.

<sup>121</sup> For this feeling of loyalty and pride in 'British subject' status, Vide: Evidence of Rev. James Mata Dwane and John Tengo Jabavu: Cape Colony: November 12 and 16, 1903 in South Africa Native Affairs Commission: 1903-1905: Vol. II: pp. 708-16 and 727-45 (respectively).

<sup>122</sup> In Southern Rhodesia the term 'Cape Boys' was used in the widest sense of the word and at times included any non-European from the South of Limpopo. Vide infra: pp 165-6

<sup>123</sup> Colvin: The Life of Jameson: Vol. II: p. 61.

circumstances, it was therefore only logical that they should also form part of the relief movement in a colony in whose birth they had taken such an active role before. Indeed it is interesting to note here that most of the 'Cape Boys' engaged for the relief of Matabeleland in 1896 were drawn mainly from Johannesburg and other parts of the Transvaal, where hundreds and thousands of British volunteers had also offered their services in suppressing the Shona and Ndebele risings, perhaps stung by their culpability in having let Jameson down and consequently causing the downfall of Rhodes. Thus some of these 'uitlander' volunteers had indeed to be prevented from enlisting by the High Commissioner.<sup>124</sup> The 'Cape Boy' volunteers may also have been influenced by these extravagant notions of British patriotism, which emerged in the wake of the Jameson Raid as a corollary to Anglo-Boer rivalry and animosity.

In fact, it is interesting to note that the background of these 'Cape Boys' drawn from the Transvaal and engrafted into the Robertson corps, was not a pleasant one.<sup>125</sup> Yet things were not as good either for these recruits on their way to Matabeleland. The treatment they received at the hands of their white counterparts smelt too much of their old Spartan abode in the Transvaal. En route to Matabeleland, it was the 'Cape Boys' who were put in charge of the dreary mule wagon transport which had been introduced by the Company as a substitute to the ox wagon transport, most of the cattle having died of rinderpest. The mule transport was unnecessarily slow and inconvenient and, as if to complicate matters further for this corps, the 'Cape Boys' were also provided with donkeys to carry their supplies, whilst the recruits themselves had to trudge the 600 miles from Mafeking to Bulawayo on foot, reaching their destination in May 1896, footsore, weary and hungry.

To add to this story of woe, the relations between the 'Cape Boys' detachments and the white members of the relief force were tainted with many undesirable features. Indeed the Imperial Staff Officers had to inter-

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<sup>124</sup> C. O. 417/197: Lord Grey to Duke of Fife April 13, 1896. About 5,000 whites volunteered for service from Johannesburg alone: Vide: Sykes: op. cit. p. 57.

<sup>125</sup> The 'Cape Boys' and their ill-treatment as British subjects in the Transvaal actually formed a part of the correspondence between British Imperial authorities in South Africa and the Transvaal government between 1895 and 1899. Vide: C. Headlam (ed.): The Milner Papers: South Africa 1897-1899: Vol. I: Cassel & Co.: London: 1931: pp. 193-6.

vene when 'Cape Boy' deserters began to appear in Mafeking with harrowing stories of ill-treatment. It even became essential for the Chief Staff Officer in Mafeking, for instance, in early May 1896, to instruct the Commander of the Second West Riding Regiment, Lieutenant Fraser, on this subject, taking pains, at the same time, to point out the conditions under which the 'Cape Boys' had been engaged and the separate identity of their detachments which had to be respected, especially as these recruits had their own officers, equipment and other paraphernalia. Through these instructions, the Imperial authorities in Mafeking thus tried to check the growing tendency among the white regulars to abuse the 'Cape Boys' at random and, in this way, the treatment of the latter in relation to the rest of the battery was thus, theoretically speaking, guaranteed.<sup>126</sup>

The 'Cape Boys' and the Matabeleland Relief Column commanded by Colonel Henry Plumer arrived in Matabeleland in the nick of time. The rising had taken the settlers by surprise, breaking out at a time when the country was denuded of colonist troops, which had been arrested and bundled off to England for their part in the Jameson Raid. This state of unpreparedness is clearly manifest in the net total of white casualties throughout the length and breadth of the country, with 390 killed and 150 wounded; a total of ten per cent of the white population at the time and a very high price to pay for people who had always regarded white security and life as sacred.<sup>127</sup> This state of affairs as a result inculcated a spirit of desperation and despondence among those settlers who had survived.

The economic crisis then prevalent in Matabeleland in April 1896, where the rinderpest had broken out first and had consequently taken a higher toll of animal wealth, was a sorry tale of the 1896 colonist disaster at its peak. Food was growing scarce as communication between Bulawayo and the South had been rendered almost impossible by the total decimation of cattle and the subsequent incapacitation of the wagon transport. The little food supply that was then available had actually been brought in at various intermittent times by the slow and unreliable mule transport. Besides the transport

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<sup>126</sup> B. A. 2/9/1: Chief Staff Officer, Imperial Contingent, Mafeking to Lieutenant Fraser, Second West Riding Regiment, Bulawayo: May 12, 1896, R/N/A, Salisbury: and Sykes: op. cit. pp. 73-85.

<sup>127</sup> BSACO, Directors' Report and Accounts for Year Ending: 1896-97: pp. 20-1.

problem caused by the rinderpest plague, the heavy toll in stock meant the deprivation of supplies of fresh meat and milk the settlers had previously relied on. In short, the little food that was then available in the country was insufficient for the settlers' requirements and could only be obtained at famine prices. This shortage also implied frequent scrambles amongst the settlers for the little they could get and the small Asian community which had then devoted its energies to market gardening on the Bulawayo commonage appears to have benefitted a great deal by supplying some of their produce to the beleaguered white colonists. <sup>128</sup>

In addition to these problems of feeding the white population of Bulawayo, the cowed transport riders, once the risings and rinderpest had broken out, were not too eager to risk any dangers to their stock and wagons by bringing the requisite supplies without guarantees of liberal bonuses from the Company officials. Duncan, as Acting Administrator, had offered such guarantees to all transport riders from all known centres where food supplies were procurable in South Africa. His successor Lord Grey also had to provide similar guarantees against the risks of war and rinderpest when he signed contracts with transport riding companies like Messrs J. Weil & Co. and Messrs Zeedberg; two companies which had Transvaal connections. Under these contracts, Weil & Co. were, for example, required to provide quick supplies of food amounting to 350,000 rations then regarded as sufficient to feed a population of 4,000 people for 87 days and 750,000 lbs of grain for horses and mules. These supplies were to come in via the Semokwe Road to the South into Bulawayo. The contract with Messrs Zeedberg bound this company to run a daily coach service from the South to Bulawayo together with 20,000 lbs of food supplies and ammunition in addition to ordinary mail and passenger services, or in the event of the rising spreading and blocking the routes to the Transvaal, to bring the supplies on a weekly basis via Palapye and the Tati road in the South-West.

In spite of these strenuous efforts to keep the Bulawayo population supplied with food, prospects were still grim. By May 8, 1896, the Company's Commissary-General had, in fact, given it to be understood that there was in the Company's Stores 'only 90 bags of flour and 78 bags of meal. . .' for the

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<sup>128</sup> Report of the Civil Commissioner, for Year Ending September 16, 1896;  
in Ibid: loc. cit.

Bulawayo population of 4,000 strong. The only other sizeable quantity then available had, in fact, been reserved for the Gwelo patrol, then sent out to meet the Salisbury Column and Rhodes, on their way from Mashonaland where the rising had not yet broken out. But even this supply could only last for at most ten days.<sup>129</sup> Besides, the restrictive stock legislation then evoked by most governments in the sub-continent as a counter-measure to the plague made the task of supplying food to the beleaguered Bulawayo residents even more enormous. Stock legislation in the South, for example, required spans used for transport riding to the North to be shot at the end of the journey and forbade them to be returned. It was apparently this requirement which most transport riders particularly objected to.<sup>130</sup> All these conditions mentioned above obviously combined to produce the acts of desperation, bitterness and hostility that were later to characterize settler reactions during and after the risings and it was to relieve these conditions that Colonel Plumer and his forces of white regulars and 'Cape Boys' arrived to do in May 1896.

Notwithstanding the overall weight of these misfortunes, the beleaguered white settlers refused to be bogged down by their adversities even before Plumer arrived with the relief forces. Most of the able-bodied men formed volunteer groups such as those which undertook military escapades around the Umgusa River in the vicinity of Bulawayo; escapades which were mainly undertaken during the day-time to keep the enemy at bay and, at the same time, allow the colonists to forage for food from the enemy's grain supplies. Such skirmishes as these initial ones, directed by Captains Maurice Gifford, Macfarlane and a few other leaders, took place mostly during the period between April 4 and April 25, 1896 and the parties involved were composed of white volunteers and the 'Cape Boys' who were already in the country; the survivors of the pioneer and 1893 war era and colleagues of John Groot-boom.<sup>131</sup> The Ndebele forces, once the rising had broken out, apparently

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<sup>129</sup> Vide: Lord Grey's Report on the Matabele Rebellion, November, 1896: in BSACo, Reports on the Native Disturbances 1896-97: pp. 15-6. and also C. O. 417/196: Scottish African Corporation Ltd. to C. O. : June 27, 1896. (The problem of food shortage during the risings led to a general inflation in the prices of commodities - a bottle of milk fetching 30/-, a fowl £1, a bag of potatoes £30 and so forth.)

<sup>130</sup> R. S. S. Baden-Powell: The Matabele Campaign: Methuen & Co., London: 1897: pp. 72-4.

<sup>131</sup> C. O. 417/197: Lord Grey, Bulawayo, to BSACo., Cablegram: n. d. Enc-

aimed at concentrating their military efforts on Bulawayo, which as far as they were concerned, symbolized settler rule and political power and its downfall would thus mean the collapse of Company rule, in much the same manner as Lobengula had previously fallen. Here the Ndebele forces gathered along the banks of the Umgusa to the west of the town. The insurgent forces, drawn primarily from the more militant Nyamanda faction, consisted of 4,000 men from the Jingen regiment of the Inyati area, led by Mtini, the Elibeni regiment of Siginyamatse, the populist Ndebele religious leader, and the Nyamandhlovu regiment of Mpotshwana, who was chiefly in charge of the rising around Bulawayo and the neighbourhood. Mkwati, the representative of the Mwari cult in Matabeleland, Nyamanda and many members of the Ndebele royal family were also present for what may have been set up as a pyrrhic battle.<sup>132</sup>

It was these Ndebele impis that the early Gifford-Macfarlane skirmishing parties came up against. In their military organisation, the latter were made up of the settler-constituted Bulawayo Field Force supported by various ancillary parties such as Captain Grey's 'Cape Boys' Scouts, C/N/C Taylor's Ndebele 'friendlies', Brand's Afrikaner Corps, Meikle's Victoria volunteer force and other individually assembled columns created at the spur of the moment to protect various areas of white settlement, prior to the arrival of Plumer's Imperial force.

At this early stage of the Ndebele rising, the campaigns of these military parties were of a varied kind. They included patrol duties to spy the presence of and reading the movements of Ndebele impis around Fonseca and Colenbrander's farms on the Umgusa River. It was their duty to proceed to places far and near Bulawayo to check on the property of the white settlers and to collect food supplies in form of grain and stock; a field in which the 'Cape Boys' were extensively used and highly valued. Finally, it was also part and parcel of the objectives of these small-scale operations to dislodge the Ndebele insurgent forces from their strongholds where they had dug themselves in preparation for an onslaught onto Bulawayo. By these activities, it was therefore intended to enforce the insurgent forces to give up the whole idea of a total offensive against the Bulawayo laager; an eventuality

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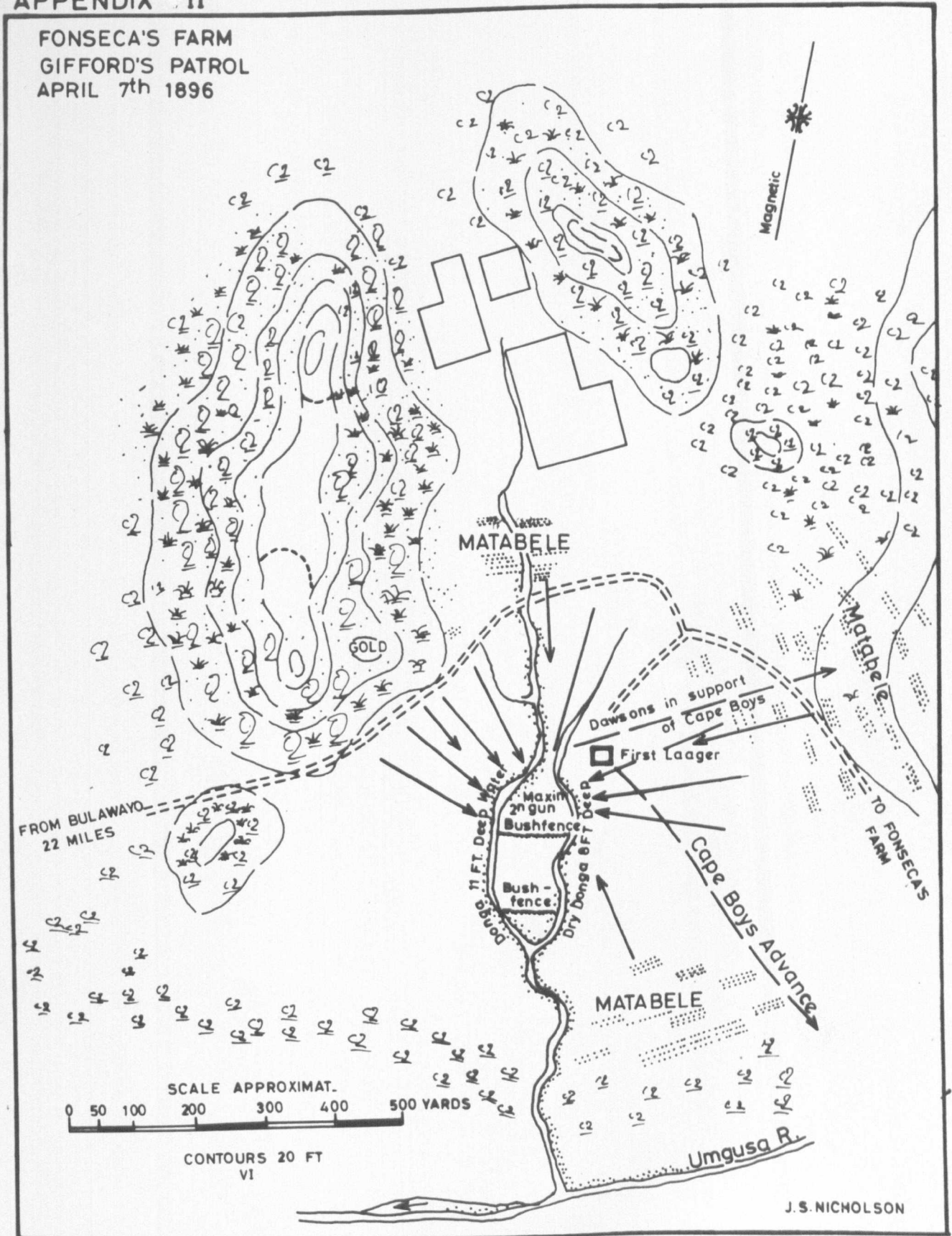
closed in Herbert Canning to C. O. : April 14, 1896.

<sup>132</sup> Ranger: op. cit., pp. 174-5.

# THE 'CAPE BOYS' AND THE GIFFORD/MACFARLANE SKIRMISHES, APRIL 1896

## APPENDIX II

FONSECA'S FARM  
GIFFORD'S PATROL  
APRIL 7th 1896



- ▶ Matabele Impis
- ▶ Cape Boys
- Roads
- ~~~~~ Rivers & Dongas
- \* \* \* \* \* Bush & Forest

(Based on Sketch by Captain J. S. Nicholson in B.S.A. Co. Reports on the Administration of Rhodesia 1896-1900)



already viewed with paranoia by the laager inmates themselves. Aided by the Hotchiss, maxims and other heavy artillery, these early skirmishes apparently proved fatal to the Ndebele insurgent impis. Captain John Sanctuary Nicholson, one of the leaders directing these early operations, admitted that he had found the 'Cape Boys' quite serviceable, but was also of the opinion, then characteristic among his compatriots at the time, that they could only be effective when led by white officers. He also blamed the tendency of these 'Cape Boys' to waste ammunition, contrary to the frugal practices then generally adopted by the white settlers due to problems of communications and supply.

In spite of these minor faults, the 'Cape Boys' were however quite favourably spoken of and certainly better treated than Taylor's Ndebele 'friendlies'. The former were even better equipped for effective participation in the war than the latter, who could only rely on assegais and battle-axes for their fighting kit and were in the process compelled to wear 'red limbo' to distinguish them from their furious kinsmen. The 'Cape Boys' were themselves armed with Martin-Henri rifles, carbines and side-arms, a fact which made the comparison between them and their fellow Ndebele collaborators naturally quite unbecoming.<sup>133</sup> In this capacity, the 'Cape Boys' therefore once more greatly contributed to the cause of white colonization in the Company territories. The success of the April 1896 skirmishes, in which they took such an active part, demoralized the Ndebele insurgent movement and raised the hopes of the beleaguered settlers. Indeed it even created a sense of false illusions in the minds of the Company officials, forcing them to conclude, as they did, that the backbone of the rising in Matabeleland had actually been broken by this time.

What in fact these BSACo. officials feared at this stage of the Ndebele rising was that the Ndebele might resort to guerilla warfare in their mountain strongholds and so prevent the white forces from inflicting the punitive military measures these insurgents deserved; measures then regarded as quite essential for the restoration of the white men's prestige. Indeed Lord Grey

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<sup>133</sup> Report on Military Operations by Captain J. S. Nicholson, n. d. : in BSACo. Reports on Native Disturbances 1896-97: pp. 31-2. Vide also Appendix II (Map): The 'Cape Boys' and the Gifford/Macfarlane Skirmishes, April 1896.

who appeared more convinced after Umgusa than any other Company official on this score had even gone to the extent of informing Sir Richard Martin, the Deputy Commissioner and the Imperial Officer in the Company territories, that there was no longer any dire need for white forces to put down the Ndebele rising and that only African troops were now required for what had become essentially 'bush fighting'.<sup>134</sup> Lord Grey was evidently a man of strong notions. His conclusions, which were primarily motivated by the Company's financial problems, were nonetheless ill-founded. The Ndebele rising was still alive and by June 1896, the situation was made even more complicated by the outbreak of another rising in the Shona country.

In the event, Plumer's Matabeleland Relief Force and the 'Cape Boys' arrived to face this new development as far as military affairs in Company territories were concerned. The Ndebele had given up their plans of an all-out offensive against Bulawayo and taken to defensive warfare in their strongholds, bespattered throughout Matabeleland. The Thaba-zika-Mambo campaign of June 1896 was the first actual taste of warfare in Matabeleland for these new arrivals from the South had and it is of special interest for this study because of the prominent part undertaken by the 'Cape Boys' in the event.

The Ndebele insurgents after the Umgusa skirmishes in April, had given up all ideas on an offensive against Bulawayo and repaired to Thaba-zika-Mambo, the epicentre of the insurgent movement. Here were gathered the leaders of the Mwari priesthood in Matabeleland, Mkwati, Tenkela, his wife, and Siginyamatshe as well as the Ndebele royal and politico-military leadership, represented by Nyamanda, the son of Lobengula, Mpotswana the leader of the Nyamandhlovu regiment, Mtini of the Ngnoba regiment from the Inyati area, Nkomo and the Jingen regiment, not excluding the Ndebele and Shona followers of these various leaders.<sup>135</sup> The attack subsequently mounted against this stronghold by Plumer, starting on July 5 and lasting for several days, was an historic epic in every sense of the word. The problems faced by the white invading force were immense. These were evidently best portrayed by a participant in the event, Frank W. Sykes, whose picturesque description of Thaba-zika-Mambo on that fated day in 1896, remains as

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<sup>134</sup>C. O. 417/197: Lord Grey to BSACo. ; June 9, 1896 and Telegram: May 4, 1896.

<sup>135</sup>Ranger: op. cit. p. 229.

fresh as ever. He stated:

The stronghold itself rises out of -(a)- watercourse, with an almost precipitous face, to a height of from 500 to 600 feet, formed of gigantic boulders with innumerable caves of great dimensions and a perfect maze of thorns and shrubbery. Along the eastern base of this fastness the Insungu River is seen, enclosed by another range of lofty hills, almost as precipitous and equally as high as the stronghold itself.<sup>136</sup> The whole group covers an area of some 25 sq miles (sic).

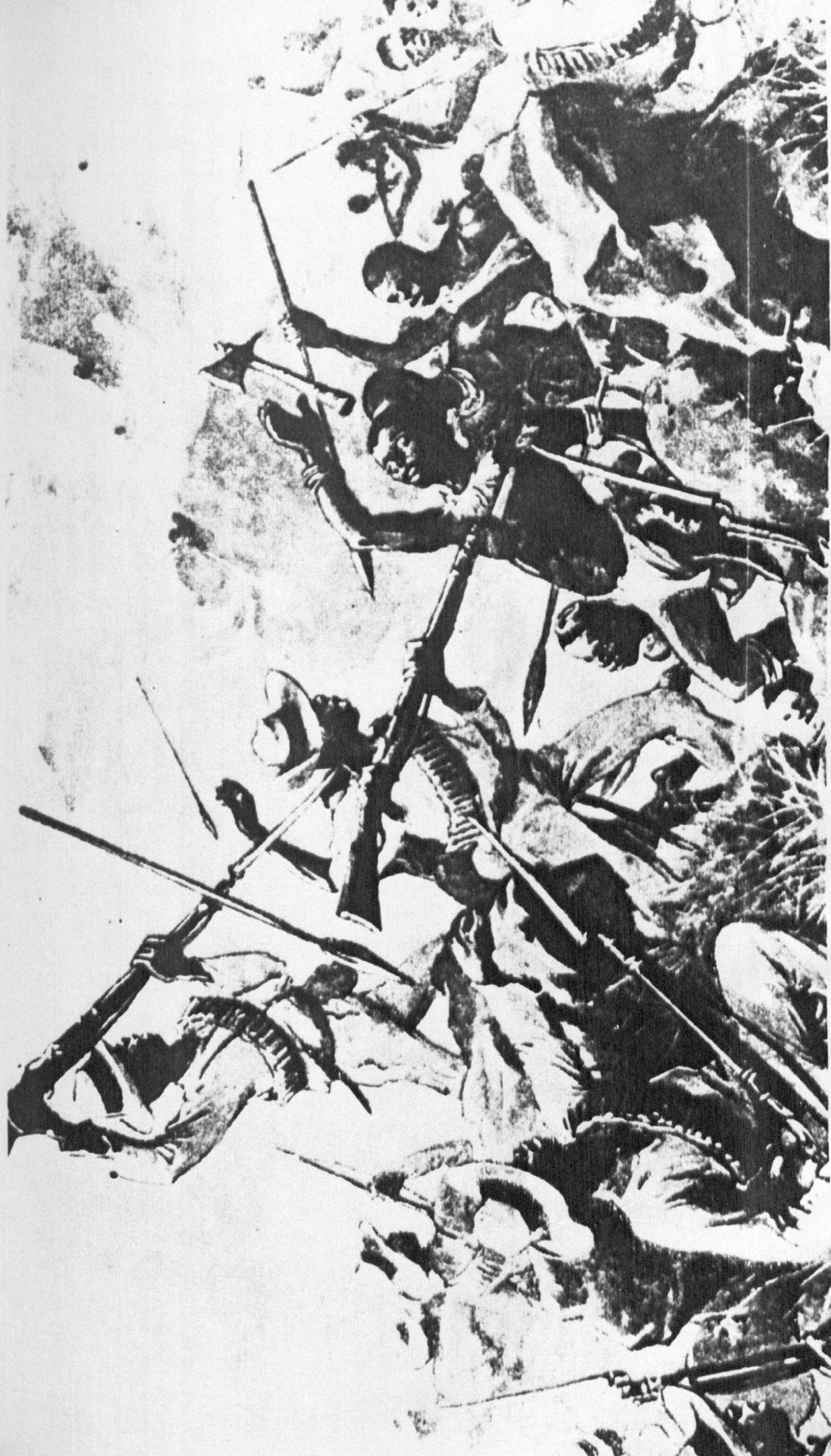
Here geography, nature and military strategy had conspired to defy even the efficiency of heavy European weaponry and the Ndebele were obviously anxious to exploit these physical advantages presented by the Thaba-zika-Mambo stronghold. The white military leaders themselves certainly appreciated the problems involved in an attack of this nature and, accordingly, raised the largest force ever to have fought in the country, leaving only token numbers of troops in charge of matters at Khami and the 100 troopers or so previously sent to Mashonaland under Major Watts to tackle the rising, which had broken out there as well.

In one section of this study dealing with the Ndebele war of 1895, we have referred to the chores of the 'Cape Boys' and their colleagues as having been mainly of the physical and menial variety.<sup>137</sup> In the Thaba-zika-Mambo campaign, the nature of the military operations determined, to a large extent, the level of involvement on the part of these African auxiliaries. Though they were in charge of the forces' cattle, the mobile source of food supply, and were responsible for providing labour for the construction of camps and cattle-folds, it was chiefly through their part in the actual fighting that victory over the Ndebele was achieved at Thaba-zika-Mambo. Amongst the rocks and crevices, which the Ndebele impis were well acquainted with, the progress of the white troops, used to fighting in more comfortable conditions and in set-piece battles, was painfully slow and the task therefore fell onto the 'Cape Boys' under Major Robertson and Captains Ross and Nash to promote the campaign and play hide and seek with the Ndebele on their own home ground and, in this way, generally bear the brunt of Ndebele counter-attacks. One of their more conspicuous duties was, as a matter of fact, that of smoking out the Ndebele from their places of hiding, for which purpose

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<sup>136</sup> Sykes: op. cit. pp. 138-9.

<sup>137</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 55-6.



I The storming of Mkwai's stronghold at Taba Zi Ka Mambo, 5th July, 1896. This contemporary drawing illustrates the important part played in this, as in other engagements, by African troops from the Cape, the so-called 'Cape Boys'.

Extract from T.O. Ranger: Revolt in Southern Rhodesia: (Heinemann: London:1967)

these 'Cape Boys' were instructed to carry armfuls of grass and dry reeds. They also carried out hand-to-hand individual combats with the Ndebele in the course of which bayonets, assegais and battle-axes were used at random registering either defeat or victory. Finally, it was the 'Cape Boys' who captured and herded into custody both stock and human prisoners. Skyes aptly describes the nature of these combats between the 'Cape Boys' and the Ndebele, which he freely admits were responsible for Plumer's victory, as follows:

As the rifle-shots rang out from the valleys and slopes, now far away in the distance, and now close at hand, one was strongly reminded of a day amongst birds at home -(Britain)-; but in this case the <sup>138</sup>beaters were Cape Boys, and the game human beings -(Ndebele)-.

Captain W. J. Boggie, whose all-white military party was assigned the task of covering Major Robertson and his 'Cape Boys' Corps during the course of various vanguard operations, was equally impressed by the role of these African auxiliaries in the campaign. Boggie's compliment is evident in a description of the 'Cape Boys' in action, assigned to him by Sykes and indicating:

...I heard the charging cheer, and saw the Cape Boys with orange coloured purgarees and swarthy faces clear the intervening space with leaps and bounds, and in a briefer space than it takes to tell, they threw themselves upon the Matabele. The fight was between savage negro and semi-civilised half-caste. The intrepid Matabele warriors met the rush with superb bravery, while the Cape Boys dashed forward with reckless indifference to the storm of <sup>139</sup>bullets, assegais, and battle-axes which they encountered.

The Thaba-zika-Mambo battle was such a ferocious conflict that it was being rumoured within the white settler circles, of course with less substance than the credence these rumours received, that the Ndebele had put up such a sustained resistance because they were being led either by some 'civilized' Sotho immigrants or white men living among them.<sup>140</sup> Such rumours may of course have been a product of wild stories based on the knowledge of the social conditions of the pre-1893 Ndebele state, in which white adventurers married to Ndebele girls patronized the state. In this instance, this pre-

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<sup>138</sup> Sykes: op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.: pp. 155-6: Vide: Plate: VII: -(Picture)-: 'The "Cape Boys" in Battle': 1896

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.: p. 159.

colonial state of affairs appears to have combined with the universal hostility amongst the white colonists towards those literate Africans from the South who had refused to side with the Company during the rising, as the story of Karl Khumalo demonstrates. In view of such feelings, it is therefore easier to understand why it became necessary for the Company officials to execute Khumalo, especially as they suspected him of teaching the Ndebele insurgents how to make their own bullets and ammunition.<sup>141</sup> Notwithstanding the rumours and suspicions of the war-weary white forces, everybody was in the end agreed, to some extent, to credit the success of the Thaba-zika-Mambo campaign to the 'Cape Boys'.<sup>142</sup>

In the final analysis, it was essentially the problematic character of the Thaba-zika-Mambo campaign which pre-determined the option for a peace settlement, especially when Plumer's forces were faced with an even worse situation at the Matopo hills, where the Ndebele strongholds were even more imposing than the previous ones. Thus it might be said that the value of the 'Cape Boys' and their fellow collaborators in the Ndebele rising was vindicated beyond doubt during and after the Thaba-zika-Mambo campaign in 1896. Only one man perhaps may have been displeased with such success. This was Captain Ross, whom the 'Cape Boys' had compelled to resign during the campaign, when they reported to Major Robertson that on several occasions when Ross led the attacks against the Ndebele, they had sustained heavy losses and their leader was always the first one to run for shelter. Because of these occurrences, the 'Cape Boys' apparently lost confidence in Ross' leadership and wanted him removed; a move which Robertson consequently agreed to in order, as he put it, to preserve the morale of the 'Cape Boys' Corps.<sup>143</sup>

But before we conclude the story of the 'Cape Boys' and their part in the military operations during the Ndebele rising, it is imperative to examine the cases of individual characters who, as in the 1893 war, made notable contribution to the overall war effort. In the Ndebele rising as in the 1893 war, John Grootboom and John Makunga, to some extent, are worth men-

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<sup>141</sup> Vide Infra: pp. 169-75.

<sup>142</sup> Lord Grey's Report on the Matabeleland Rebellion, November, 1896:  
Ibid: pp. 19-20.

<sup>143</sup> B. A. 2/9/1: Major Robertson, Commander, Cape Boys Corps to Chief-of-Staff, Bulawayo, July 14, 1896.

tioning. The inimitable John Grootboom was, as usual, a special asset to the settler and Imperial forces. His services, especially in the field of espionage and scouting, made him an idol of the white military circles. Frank Sykes, who held an interview with Grootboom shortly after the Ndebele rising at the latter's home, about eight miles from Bulawayo towards the L. M. S. station at Hope Fountain, has this to say of this Mfengu brave:

His ~~(Grootboom's)~~ services as a spy upon the positions and movements of the enemy have been invaluable. Possessing intimate knowledge of the country, and the customs and tactics of the native, combined with courage and self-reliance, he was just the type of man most adapted by nature and disposition for the purposes of espionage.<sup>144</sup>

Grootboom of course undoubtedly had the qualities required for a spy during the Ndebele rising. Aided by his pigmentation, courage and ingenuity, he could easily identify himself with the Ndebele by discarding his dress, shaving his head in popular Ndebele fashion and generally passing for one of them. His knowledge of English, Dutch, Xhosa and Ndebele languages as well as Ndebele customs uniquely qualified this black equivalent of the Scarlet Pimpernel for work requiring a tremendous amount of duplicity.

As early as April 1896, during the first stages of the Ndebele rising before Plumer brought his relief force and their associated 'Cape Boys' into the country, John Grootboom was already engaged in relief work to prevent the beleaguered white settlers of Bulawayo from being cut off from the main centres of supply in the South. He was in this case assigned to Brand's Afrikaner Column, which concerned itself primarily with the task of keeping the Tuli road open, as it was the avenue of communication between Bulawayo and the Northern Transvaal. Grootboom, to whom instructions were given to join the Brand Column at Dawson's Store along the Tuli road some eighteen miles away, was late on the particular April day, due to the distance involved from his residence near Hope Fountain, which he had to undertake on foot. It was during the course of this journey and before he joined with the Brand Column at the Manzamnyama River that he met the test of his career as a collaborator. The difficult circumstances under which he carried out his instructions, with the Ndebele assailants in hot pursuit, bespeak of Grootboom's

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<sup>144</sup>This Grootboom account unless otherwise indicated is based on Sykes: op. cit. Chapter V: pp. 263-9; and Lord Grey's Report on the Matabeleland Rebellion: November, 1896: Ibid. pp. 5-22.

varied qualities and his loyalty to the white forces of colonization. He told Sykes about the occasion:

I followed on as fast as I could and at mid-day came to the place where they -(Brand's Column)- had had breakfast; half a mile on, I met a Matabele. He asked me where I was going. Well you see, I couldn't say I was after the Column, so I told him that I was on the way to where some of my cattle were, among the hills at Mglaba, as I wanted to make sure they were safe. 'Very well' he says, 'I know you, but you had better keep away from the road, as the Matabele are just ahead, being doctored by the M'Limo'.<sup>145</sup>

While this rather friendly Ndebele soldier was prepared to let Grootboom off the hook and would not interfere with the latter's plans, other Ndebele insurgents whom Grootboom subsequently met were however not so equally charitable. They were well aware of Grootboom's commitment to the enemy side and were thus prepared to make him pay for this alliance with his life. What was even more irritating, especially, on this occasion was the fact that the Ndebele insurgents were intent on cutting off the Tuli road, while the Brand Column aimed at having it open and Grootboom was, in this case, actually proceeding to offer his help in the matter. Understandably, the second party of Ndebele soldiers pursued Grootboom with determination and the latter could only manage to escape by exploiting some of his many ingenious scouting techniques, developed over the years. Here he shook off his pursuants by hiding in the tall grass and taking off his shoes, with the result that the irate and barefoot Ndebele insurgents consequently mistook his spoor for one of theirs.

Grootboom's further involvement in the campaign against the Ndebele insurgents was just as equally daring and ingeniously executed, as far as his side of affairs was concerned. During the famous Thaba-zika-Mambo campaign, which we have already discussed, Grootboom had been sent forward six days in advance of Colonel Plumer's forces to espy the positions and strength of the Ndebele impis. Undertaking his mission mainly at night and entering the Thaba-Zika-Mambo stronghold by stealth, Grootboom had the chance to note in most intimate detail all the places in which the enemy camps were located and also managed to lounge by the enemy's fireside to discover the quality, quantity and morale of the Ndebele fighting machinery.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.



It was during this mission that Grootboom is said to have encountered, but without being detected of course, most Ndebele forces which had come over from Matopo and other areas to consult the Mwari priests and the Ndebele leadership at Thaba-Zika-Mambo, giving the whole place a somewhat festive atmosphere.

In spite of this involvement with the white forces during the campaign and contrary to the eulogistic accounts and biographies on Colonel Plumer and the Matabeleland Field Force, Grootboom was not, as far as he was concerned, impressed, in any way, by the manner in which his white allies prosecuted their military operations. He was especially surprised and disheartened by their ignorance on unconventional warfare and thus informed Sykes of his disappointment as follows:

'The Column ~~(Plumer's)~~... would march into the hills, have a fight, and then at night go back to camp. That is no way to fight the Matabele. You must sleep in the hills after the battle and keep on following the enemy from one kopje to another, and kill so many that you break his heart. But instead of that, you ~~(whites)~~ go back to camp, the Matabele think you have had enough of it, and soon they collect together again, and are more confident than ever. No... the white men don't understand fighting among the rocks. They go out in the open and let the Matabele shoot and shoot, and down they fall.'<sup>146</sup>

Grootboom's criticism of the military tactics of the white forces in 1896 is important in many respects. In the first place, it underlines the reasons why the 'Cape Boys' were so heavily committed into the fighting during the attack against the Thaba-Zika-Mambo stronghold in July 1896 and why most whites, including Colonel Plumer himself, were prepared for once to credit a non-European force for the victory, contrary to the spirit of the times. Secondly, Grootboom's criticism demonstrates too that the fatality rate among the white forces was not as low as the general conclusions and estimates given in early Southern Rhodesian historiography would like us to believe.

However, only one man appears to have won Grootboom's admiration during the 1896 campaign in Matabeleland. This was Colonel R. S. Baden-Powell, Grootboom's scouting partner, whom he called 'Colonel Baking-Powder', owing to the linguistic similarity of the two names.<sup>147</sup> Baden-Powell,

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146 Ibid:

147 Ibid:

unlike his fellow countrymen, was more adaptable to the peculiar demands of this type of warfare and was also generally prepared to play hide and seek with the enemy in their hilly strongholds. Of course, such opinions as Grootboom may have held on Col. Baden-Powell had been born of the close co-operation between these two scouts during the rising. Col. Baden-Powell was just as equally impressed by his partner and demonstrated this reciprocal feeling by quoting a white colleague of his, whose racial views had hitherto prevented him from having any direct physical contact with Africans, as saying of Grootboom:

He (Grootboom) is not a proper nigger: his skin is black, but he has a white man's heart. I will shake hands with him.<sup>148</sup>

The colleague in question apparently belonged to the school of thought within the European circles which regarded the qualities of virtue as preserves of the white folk. Nevertheless, the Grootboom/Baden-Powell combination was a formidable front, as far as the white forces were concerned during the risings.

Baden-Powell's biographer actually does not demur on the advantages derived by the famous scout from his association with Grootboom during the campaign. Some of the more outstanding tricks Grootboom taught Baden-Powell were based essentially on the former's knowledge of Ndebele customs, the topography of the country and his previous experience in Ndebele warfare. One such example concerned the Ndebele tricks of lighting several camp fires around their military settlements at night, giving the enemy the false impression that several Ndebele impis were in camp, yet in actual fact all the work was carried out by one or two people, whilst the rest of the forces lay in ambush some distance away. The second trick involved a deductive process by means of which it was possible to pin down the specific locations and logistics of the Ndebele forces by tracing the movement of the Ndebele food supplies and following clues on leaves dropped, especially from Ndebele beer pots. Through these clues Grootboom and Baden-Powell were often able not only to trace the logistics of the enemy forces but also to estimate the size of opposition in terms of military divisions so amassed for battle. The two scouts struck a very interesting working partnership and the tricks learnt by 'Impeesa' (the wolf-that-never-sleeps), as the Ndebele nicknamed Baden-Powell, were later of great benefit to

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<sup>148</sup>Baden-Powell: The Matabele Campaign: pp 171.

The story of John Grootboom's military activities during the Ndebele rising is an interesting one, but it should not be allowed to overshadow the contribution of other 'Cape Boys', especially towards the closing phases of the rising. The part played by the 'Cape Boys' together with Grootboom in bringing about the Matopo indaba and the peace settlement in Matabeleland, is a significant historical contribution often grossly overlooked by uninformed historians and biographers over-enthused in their designs to place the laurels for this feat elsewhere. John Grootboom, John Makunga, James M'kiza and other less illustrious 'Cape Boys' were an indispensable factor in the Matopo indaba. Their importance was engendered not only by their successful persuasion of the Ndebele leaders to come to the conference table but also, to a large measure, by the implications which a quicker finale to the risings meant to the BSACo., Rhodes and other interested parties. The attitude of the militant Nyamanda faction and its worthy spokesman, Karl Khamalo, at the peace talks is a very clear indication that without the services of these 'Cape Boys' who had already established their own relationships with the Ndebele leadership and knew the proper tendons to manipulate, the Ndebele insurgents would not have agreed to participate in the Matopo indaba so easily and face the white people whom they could no longer trust, as Company rule had taught them by 1896. Yet in spite of the work of these African auxiliaries, the Rhodes camp is agreed on one thing and that is, the fact that the main beneficiary to credit with this important feat was Rhodes himself. The 'Cape Boys' are considered as essentially of secondary importance and as having only agreed to participate in the peace negotiations either in return for financial rewards or as functionaries of the Native Department.<sup>150</sup>

These statements indicated above, on the participation of the 'Cape Boys' in the Matopo settlement, are of course purely simplistic overviews which have no relevance whatsoever to the whole saga of foreign African collaboration as it occurred in 1893 and 1896. The role of the 'Cape Boys' was, in fact,

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<sup>149</sup> W. Hillcourt: Baden-Powell: The Two Lives of A Hero: Heinemann: London: 1964: pp. 132-44.

<sup>150</sup> The thesis of financial rewards as the motive for the 'Cape Boys' involvement at Matopo is nullified by Grootboom's refusal of a reward in October 1896 so offered by Rhodes: Vide: Gross: Rhodes of Africa: pp. 338-9.

far more complex than Rhodes's biographers and their kind cared to understand.<sup>151</sup> But whatever their motivation, the 'Cape Boys' concerned carried out their spadework for the peace settlement to perfection. They exploited their previous acquaintance with the Ndebele leaders to maximum potential and it is quite probable that though they were fighting on different sides of the war, they never had cause to renege on this friendship. Makunga for example, who had represented Ndebele interests as secretary of Lobengula in the 1893 war, appears to have remained in close touch with the Ndebele leadership and royal family during and after 1896.<sup>152</sup>

Employing such leverage as they had, Grootboom and Makunga managed to gather a group of leading Ndebele indunas who subsequently met the Rhodes party of four white men on August 21, 1896. These men were Rhodes himself, Dr. Hans Sauer, his Boer friend, Vere Stent, the correspondent of the Cape Times, and Colenbrander, included in the party on account of his knowledge of the Ndebele language and customs and was therefore to act as the interpreter. Other whites, like Rhodes's personal secretary, Jack Grimmer, who wanted to join the party were prevented from doing so by Grootboom. The latter was obviously afraid of infringing the promises he and his colleagues had made to the Ndebele leaders on the number of white men entitled to attend the preliminary indaba to be held at a place five miles into the Matopo stronghold. Evidently there was fear of betrayal on either side. For the Rhodes party, the tense atmosphere of discomfiture and anxiety was not at all helped by the intermittent bobbing up of heads of armed Ndebele 'majaha' from behind stones and rock ledges. Only the appearance of Grootboom and Makunga at the head of a procession of forty-four Ndebele indunas may have dissipated these feelings of fear. The Ndebele indunas were led by Sikombo, Somabulana, Umlugulu, Dhliso, Nyanda and Bidi, the principal leaders of the senior and more moderate faction of the Ndebele insurgent movement.<sup>153</sup> Thus the first indaba, unlike the subsequent ones, was mainly an outcome of Grootboom and Makunga's bridge-building efforts between the two warring sides. In this manner, these two 'Cape Boys' contributed tremendously to a movement which decided the fate of the Ndebele nation and

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<sup>151</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 1-8.

<sup>152</sup> NB 1/1/3: J. C. Makunga, Native Reserve, Bulawayo to W. E. Thomas, Acting C/N/C: January 5, 1898.

<sup>153</sup> C. O. 417/197: Lord Grey to BSACo., Cablegram, August, 22, 1896.

also balanced the BSACo. 's ledger books.

Yet the subsequent success of the Matopo peace settlement should not however obscure the issues then involved, as the risings in both Matabeleland and Mashonaland symbolized by August 1896. This sudden departure in policy on the part of the white forces, which had avowed from the start that their intention was to carry out an exemplary punitive campaign of vengeance, must not be looked at in isolation. For such a sudden deviation in policy and also to appreciate even more the role of Grootboom, Makunga and their associates, we must turn to the economic factor of the 1896-96 risings.

We have already seen, at the outbreak of the Ndebele rising and the rinderpest plague, how the financial problems of the BSACo. forced it to look elsewhere for cheaper alternative means for prosecuting the counter-military campaign by enrolling cheaper African auxiliaries from the South.<sup>154</sup> This state of affairs, as far as the Company's finances were concerned, had not changed and if anything it had even worsened in time scale. The neo-bankruptcy of the Company was by the time of the peace settlement affecting both the Company Administration and the white soldiers engaged to participate in the campaign. The latter were affected greatly at a personal level and had even been informed, right from the start, about this critical economic position, with the result that they developed a spirit of adventurism as a form of response and the only way to meet the shortage, especially in terms of food rations. But not infrequently the practice however landed these soldiers into unfortunate situations, especially when the vandalism they so perpetrated in search for food was against fellow whites.<sup>155</sup> Against Ndebele or other African property, such vandalism did not of course matter and indeed later on it became somewhat professional, particularly in relation to the collection of commodities to replenish the troopers' bully beef and meal rations. Chicken, mutton fat, impfi (dried sugar-cane) and grain were amongst the popular commodities white troopers usually helped themselves to from Ndebele villages to meet the food shortage problem with which they were frequently faced.<sup>156</sup> There was no accountability, either public, collective or personal

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<sup>154</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 108-16.

<sup>155</sup> The troopers were for instance charged for ravaging the property of Bulawayo traders left abandoned en route from the South, due to rinderpest. Vide: Sykes: op. cit. pp. 72-3.

<sup>156</sup> Even Rhodes himself was involved in these food hunting escapades to

for these practices against African villages and this, to some extent, helped to offset the Company's difficulties.<sup>157</sup>

But these problems of shortage of supplies and their general effects on the troopers at a personal level were not significant enough to influence the decisions of top level officials. It is therefore from the hill-top that we should examine the place of the economic factor in the Matabeleland campaign and to what extent 'Cape Boy' contribution was thus significant. Rhodes, who was all along quite aware of the gravity of his and the BSACo.'s economic problems, may well have briefly summarized the position prior to the Matopo indaba when he indicated:

What with Jameson's Raid, rinderpest, famine, and now my house burnt, I feel rather like Job, but thank God, I haven't had sores yet.<sup>158</sup>

If these economic 'sores' had not yet appeared, their intention to do so sooner or later was evident enough to observant economic surgeons. Many people who were then associated with the BSACo, ranging from Rhodes himself, the Company Administration in the territories, London Wall, the Colonial Office and others were all aware of the disastrous economic situation the Company faced then.

As early as April 1896, Henry Labouchere, that persistent critic of the Company, had raised the question of expenses incurred in the risings in the House of Commons requesting assurances from both the War and Colonial Offices that the British taxpayer would not be saddled with the liabilities on risings whose incidence was uncalled for and for which the Company was solely responsible. This move consequently prompted a watchdog mentality within the Colonial and War Offices. By October 1896, the War Office which had hitherto been counting the cost on the matter actually lodged its claim for compensation with the BSACo. over the expenses the former had incurred on various items associated with the risings in the Company territories. These included the transportation of troops from England, local troop movements in

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supplement supplies and this is how he and his party came across old Umzaba, Nyanda's mother, on a chicken-hunting venture at Sikombo's kraal in early August, 1896: Vide Sauer: loc. cit.

<sup>157</sup> The grain which the troopers got freely from Ndebele villages for their own use and that of the horses actually fetched about £10 to £15 per bag in Bulawayo. Vide Sykes: loc. cit.

<sup>158</sup> Hillcourt: Baden-Powell: The Two Lives of a Hero: p. 143.

Southern Africa, payment of allowances to Staff Officers and men as well as expenses on remounts, stores, clothing, rations and forage for the horses. This claim by the War Office amounted to about £184,000 in round figures.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, the Company was held responsible for the pensions of those men wounded and disabled during the campaign.<sup>160</sup>

But as far as the Imperial Government side of affairs was concerned, the BSACo. was fortunate. Its supporters in the Colonial Office, who included in their ranks Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, were prepared to take up cudgels with the War Office and were, in this way, able to reduce the size of this department's claims against the Company. In the end, the Company was held responsible and chargeable only for those troops actually involved in suppressing the risings in its territories and, to some extent, for such troop movements as may have allowed the release of more troops in South Africa for the front. Short of this, as Sir Robert Meade, the Permanent Under-Secretary, argued, the Colonial Office itself would have been prepared to accept the responsibility and charges on some aspects of the war in order to meet the Company half-way.<sup>161</sup> Thus on the Imperial level, a faction of acolytes was not prepared to see the BSACo. founder in economic doldrums.

On the local scene in Southern Africa, matters were however different. The expenses incurred by the Company, prior to the Matopo indaba, had become such a burden that even the efforts of the Company supporters at the Colonial Office to alleviate this burden were scarcely noticeable. The Company Directors were well aware of the gravity of the position and, accordingly, informed their shareholders.<sup>162</sup> In fact, the Colonial Office's offer to meet part of the Company's expenses in relation to Imperial troops did not in any way include those troops retained in the Company territories after the Matopo peace settlement, not to mention the likelihood that the Company could also be held responsible for the 200 more retained at Gaborones in the Protectorate for emergency purposes.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> C. O. 417/195: War Office to C. O. ; October 23, 1896.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid: Minute by Graham to Fairfield: November 5, 1896.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid: Minute by Meade to Fairfield: October 28, 1896 and C. O. to W. O. : November 20, 1896.

<sup>162</sup> BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts for the Year Ending, 1896-97: pp. 83-4.

<sup>163</sup> C. O. 417/195: Meade to Fairfield: October 28, 1896.

For the Company Administration, these additional troop expenses had evidently become impossible to bear. At the peak of the Ndebele rising and prior to the Thaba-Zika-Mambo campaign, the strength of the forces under the command of the Company totalled ~~to~~ 3,500 white troopers, 179 Ndebele friendlies and 250 'Cape Boys'. This state of affairs had never appealed to the local Administration on account of the heavy demands a force of such magnitude exerted on its limited resources and Lord Grey, in particular, was very much disappointed by this turn of events. For this reason, he would not allow the Natal cavalry to be moved to Matabeleland and suggested to Sir Hercules Robinson the High Commissioner that it could be better kept at Mafeking instead. The Administrator was particularly deterred by the difficulties of transport, then still complicated by rinderpest, drought and locusts, which could have made the question of feeding a few more mouths in those troubled times a pretty difficult one.<sup>164</sup>

From Grey and the Company's point of view, they had hoped that after the Matopo indaba in August 1896, the Company might get a chance to balance its accounts. Not unnaturally the Acting Administrator was incensed and bitter over what he regarded as Fabian tactics adopted by the Imperial government to prolong the presence of Imperial troops in the country. In October 1896, Lord Grey therefore put forward proposals in an effort to persuade the Imperial government to reduce these troops by a large proportion. This proposal was twofold. In the first place, he suggested that only 700 troops be retained in the country, of which 400 or 500 would be distributed throughout the various forts in Matabeleland, but with 100 of them stationed in Bulawayo, the central position of the province and ready to go to any point of danger at a moment's notice. The alternative aspect of the proposal involved retaining 200 troops in Bulawayo whilst the remaining 300 or so, supplemented by 200 'Cape Boys', would then be distributed throughout Matabeleland.

The Grey proposals were unacceptable to the Imperial representatives in the country, Sir Richard Martin, the Deputy Commissioner, and Sir Frederick Carrington, the overall military leader. The author of the proposals was thus consequently furious with these two representatives and the Imperial government they stood for. They became the target of Grey's scathing accusations

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<sup>164</sup> C. O. 417/197: Lord Grey to BSACo., Cablegram: October 16, 1896.



and abuse. This anger on the part of Lord Grey and the BSACo. was apparently based on the assumption that the Company was being deliberately ruined by impervious bureaucrats, by being compelled to bear the expenses of a standing army whose services were no longer relevant to the BSACo. Administration. The Company officials argued that they were being decoyed to provide about 26, 000 lbs of grain per day for a force of over 3, 000 men and 3, 000 horses (the horses feeding at the rate of 6 lbs of grain per day each, twice the amount required for a trooper), whereas if the forces were reduced, as proposed, the Company could have a surplus of 13, 000 lbs of grain a day. Such computations understandably angered the Company which was no longer as interested in security matters as it was in its own financial position. Grey therefore considered himself justified in laying the blame regarding the Company's difficulties at the doorsteps of the Imperial government in strong language, indicating that:

It is positively wicked that, by the action of the Imperial authorities, we -(the BSACo.)- should not only be compelled to incur heavy expenditure which the maintenance of these unnecessary troops requires, but that they should be consuming supplies which are required to keep starving people alive.<sup>165</sup>

Rhodes who supported Grey's interpretation of the economic situation also said of these troops that had become the centre of controversy that:

... -(they)- have nothing to do but lie on their backs in dirty flannel trousers reading Tit-Bits.<sup>166</sup>

The Company naturally had awoken too late from its slumber, only to find a horde of economic problems awaiting immediate solution.

When the Grootboom/Makunga indaba took place on August 21, 1896, Grey had understandably telegraphed the following day, with undiluted enthusiasm, misinforming his superiors that the war was over unconditionally.<sup>167</sup> Things had however unfortunately not turned out as Grey and the Company had anticipated and now they were laying an accusing finger on everybody. The hope for the Company in its struggle for economic survival perhaps now lay elsewhere. As Grey subsequently reported, the prices of farms and stands in Bulawayo for instance, had risen by 10% and, by means of land sales, the Company thus hoped to recoup its losses. It was also expected that hut-tax collection would provide an alternative source of revenue and for that purpose,

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to BSACo., October 16, 1896.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid:

<sup>167</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to BSACo.:<sup>138</sup> Cablegram: August 22, 1896.

Grey set the Native Department of Matabeleland on a new and firmer footing with more mature and experienced Native Commissioners engaged for service from Natal to take the places of the younger ones.<sup>168</sup>

The Company's economic problems might have been even worse had the Ndebele rising not ended in the manner it did. The Company could have been faced with prolonged warfare in both Matabeleland and Mashonaland, but for the bridge-building work of the 'Cape Boys', especially John Grootboom and John Makunga, this unfortunate turn of events was checked in time. Yet proper credit for this important contribution was hardly given to these 'Cape Boys' who were responsible for effecting the rapprochement between the Ndebele insurgents and the whites. In characteristic Euro-centric tradition, Lord Grey informed London Wall about the first Matopo indaba, indicating that the Rhodes party '... went at the risk of their lives...' into the enemy stronghold and, in this vein, credited the Rhodes party for the success which it did not really deserve.<sup>169</sup> Rhodes, however, viewed the Matopo events differently, when, in the end, he persuaded Grootboom to name whatever reward the latter felt entitled to. When this was not forthcoming, the founder of the Rhodesias tucked the reward carefully into his Last Will; hence the so-called Grootboom legacy of '100 acres of land, a wagon, a span etc...'.<sup>170</sup> In the end, it was not only Grootboom who benefitted materially, but all the other foreign African auxiliaries who fought alongside white forces in Matabeleland.<sup>171</sup>

In Mashonaland the rising was put to an end in a manner totally different from that adopted in Matabeleland. There was in Mashonaland no dramatic finale in the form of a peace settlement, as the Matopo indaba signified in Matabeleland, hence no Grootbooms to claim credit for the feat. The Shona rising was largely influenced by the absence of a centralized military and political core, Shona collaboration and the more hostile reactions of the white settlers to the outbreak of the rising in the province. Together all these

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to BSACo., October 16, 1896 and Grey's Report on the Matabeleland Rebellion, November, 1896: Ibid: p 22.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to BSACo., August 22, 1896.

<sup>170</sup> Gross: op. cit. pp. 338-9.

<sup>171</sup> C. O. 455/1: Notice by W. H. Milton, Acting Administrator, September 26, 1897: in BSACo. Govt. Gazettes, P/R/O, London.

factors precluded anything resembling a peaceful solution as the watershed between war and peace in the Shona country in 1896-97. We have already discussed the relevance of Shona disunity and the ease with which various political groups and factions, vying with one another, were easily exploited by the BSACo. to provide the collaborating material that was so essential to end the rising.<sup>172</sup> Here we shall look at the role of settler hostility and misconceptions on Shona society and how these affected the trend of events in the Shona rising. We shall also look at the foreign African factor and its obviously minimal role in the Shona rising.

To understand white settler reactions to the Shona rising, we need to understand their general misconceptions on the Shona peoples and how these misconceptions shaped black/white contacts in the Shona country. The occupation of Mashonaland was, from the beginning, undertaken by the BSACo. on the basis of several misconceptions on Shona/Ndebele relations, perpetrated to provide a credible legal justification to the treaties secured by the occupying agency.<sup>173</sup> These misconceptions effectively influenced the behaviour of the white colonist community in Mashonaland to such an extent that they also inculcated a spirit of self-confidence and abandon among these settlers in the course of their early relations with the Shona and thus no premonitions were necessary to persuade these new arrivals that the Shona could ever revolt. Even after the Ndebele rising in April 1896, the settlers of Mashonaland never took heed of the eventuality of a similar occurrence among the Shona. They either volunteered for service in Matabeleland or pursued their day to day occupations with the same type of abandon which had characterised the whole settler community since 1890. This type of behaviour was further engendered by the erroneous conclusion that the Ndebele rising was a carry-over of the 1893 war, then incompletd, and hence there was no cause for alarm in the Shona country right up to June 1896, when the killings started. Thus when the Shona rose up in arms, the reactions of the whites were predictable and were later well captured by Hugh Marshall Hole, the Magistrate of Salisbury and for many years Secretary to the BSACo. , when he stated:

It may be remarked that this sudden departure on the part of

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<sup>172</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 99-107.

<sup>173</sup> For misconceptions on Shona/Ndebele relations: Vide: T. O. Ranger: 'The Rewriting of African History during the Scramble: The Matabele dominance in Mashonaland': loc. cit.

the Mashona tribes has caused the greatest surprise to those who, from long residence in the country thought they understood the character of these savages, and to none more than the Native Commissioners themselves. The Mashona race has always been regarded as composed of disintegrated groups of natives, having no common organization and owing allegiance to no single authority, cowed by a long series of raids from Matabeleland into a condition of object pusillanity and incapable of planning any combined or premeditated action. The result has proved that their intelligence has been underrated, and their cunning - it cannot be called courage - has not been sufficiently appreciated. (sic)<sup>174</sup>

Marshall Hole went on to describe how the Shona secretively organised their rising, taking cue from the leadership of the Mwari cult and the spirit mediums, with devastating effects:

So far from being cowed it is proved beyond doubt that they -(Shona)- have been hording rifles and ammunition for years past - probably ever since the occupation of the country in 1890 with the object, it is presumed, of revolt at a suitable opportunity. With true Kaffir deceit they have beguiled the Administration into the idea that they were content with the government of the country, and wanting nothing more than to work, and trade, and become civilized; but at a given signal they cast all pretence aside and simultaneously set in motion the whole of the machinery which they had been preparing.<sup>175</sup>

But the Shona rising was not so much of the sudden and unusual departure that Hole and his colleagues presented. Indeed what was sudden here was merely the explosion of myths and the general stereotypes held by Britons about the Shona peoples. These myths were, as Cairns indicates, an outcome of pre-1890 missionary and early European contacts with various African national groups. In a bid to win over public sympathy and financial support at home, early missionaries for instance, by design and calculation, cultivated links with particular African groups on the basis of the impact such associations were expected to produce on the public constituents at home thus generating enthusiasm and funds for their enterprise. The Baganda, the Ndebele and the Makololo in Central and East Africa were some of the

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<sup>174</sup> Report on the Mashonaland Rebellion, Part I: by H. M. Hole, Civil Commissioner and Magistrate, Salisbury, October 29, 1896: in BSACo, Report on the Administration of Rhodesia 1896-97: pp.62-3 and also H. M. Hole: The Making of Rhodesia: Frank Cass: London (Reprint) 1971: pp. 367-8. For a fuller discussion on the attitude of the white settlers towards the Shona and Ndebele, Vide: Ranger: Revolt: pp. 1-6.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid:

targets of this missionary courtship, shaped ostensibly on the strength of the danger element which working among these more warlike peoples implied.<sup>176</sup> The Shona and other African groups, which were not as hostile and dangerous as their neighbours were, did not obviously fall within the scope of the reckoning of these early missionaries. Any relationship with this latter group of African nationalities was apparently considered sterile and unprofitable, both in the spiritual and economic sense. This somewhat bizarre method of evaluating the importance of individual African groups certainly had its unfortunate results and historical distortions were naturally some of these many unfortunate products.

In Southern Rhodesia the white settlers were however compelled to come to terms with reality only after the 1896-97 traumatic events, which shattered their previous images, borrowed, without any consideration, from the early European travellers to Africa. 'Wiri' Edwards the Native Commissioner for the Mrewa district confessed on how these myths had disintegrated in relation to the Shona societies after 1896, as follows:

We knew nothing of their (Shona) past history, who they were, or where they came from, and although many of the Native Commissioners had a working knowledge of their languages, none really understood the people or could follow their line of thought. We were inclined to look upon them as a down-trodden race, who were grateful to the white men for protection against the ravaging raids of the Matabele and others, which allowed them to graze their stock and till their gardens in peace.<sup>177</sup>

Such realization was too late to rectify the ill-effects already produced by the hitherto unfounded misconceptions white colonists had on Shona societies. The character of pre-1896 Company rule and the manner in which the Shona rising was suppressed were both, consequently, hinged on these misconceptions and attitudes.

The interesting aspect of these white attitudes is that the Shona peoples themselves were just equally confused about the implications of white-settler and colonial rule. They only began to reconsider their own misconceptions on the white community as colonial rule started to make its presence felt and,

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<sup>176</sup> Cairns: *op. cit.*, pp. 16-7, 40, 112; Cairns gives an interesting example of Livingstone's relationship with the Makololo, especially his porters Susi and Chuma, and how these people as a whole acquired special significance to all the Britons in general and the Scotsmen in particular.

<sup>177</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: 'Reminiscences' Part III: NADA No. 39, 1962: p. 19.

when their perceptions could not conform with the realities of the new political situation, they consequently resorted to a military solution to bridge the gap between realism and illusion. As the Shona old men of Mrewa district indicated to 'Wiri' Edwards after 1896, their own misconceptions on the pioneers were based on assumptions expressed as follows:

We saw you -(whites)- come with your wagons and horses and rifles. We said to each other, they have come to buy gold, or it may be to hunt elephant. They will go again. When we saw that you continued to remain in the country and were troubling us with your laws we began to talk and to plot.<sup>178</sup>

The views of both sides, the Shona and the white settlers, were thus diametrically opposed and obviously irreconcilable. Moreover, the differences in question were too fundamental to preclude conflict in one form or another and when this came about, its repercussions had widespread implications on both sides. Thus in the Shona country the ideological conflict between the blacks and whites was sharper and the methods adopted as a means to an end often cruder than any resorted to in Matabeleland.

We have already seen the main problems arising from the fragmentation of the Shona politics and how these consequently produced negative effects on the Shona societies. But in spite of these drawbacks, the Shona rose up relying chiefly on their traditional religious leadership to provide the necessary liaison between the various Shona ethnic groups. The Shona rising was, in every sense, a war of vengeance and in the *mélée* which ensued it was not only the white settlers who were subjected to attacks, but also the African collaborator - the foreign Africans and those local lackeys of the settler community. In response to these attacks, the foreign Africans, for instance, provided military assistance to the white relief forces, constituted from amongst the white population then in laager in Salisbury.<sup>179</sup> These foreign Africans thus consequently played a role quite congruent to that of the 'Cape Boys' in Bulawayo in April 1896, before Plumer arrived with the major army. In the final analysis, it was these African collaborators, who had not redeemed themselves through last minute repentance by joining hands with the Shona

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<sup>178</sup> 'Wiri' Edwards: 'Reminiscences' Part III: p. 23.

<sup>179</sup> The population of foreign Africans in Salisbury in early 1896 numbered about 200. Vide: Extracts from the Report of the Civil Commissioner, Salisbury; (H. M. Hole), for the Year Ending September 30, 1896: Ibid: pp. 114-5.

insurgents, who found themselves in a very unenviable position. They were killed together with their erstwhile masters; an occurrence on which Hole, the Civil Commissioner for Salisbury, reported in the following unpleasant terms:

At first there were constant arrivals of refugees - many of them wounded, all suffering from exposure and privation - of fugitive Cape and Zambesi Kaffirs, who, equally with the white men, were objects of attack on the part of the Mashona. A large number of friendly kaffirs had been murdered, and many wounded and tortured in a shocking manner. . . .<sup>180</sup>

Shona vengeance on the African allies of the white settlers was unmitigated. It was a symptom of the brutal warfare, though of course the propaganda value of the Hole's report and its author's general negrophobia, conceived in order to ingratiate himself with the Company, must be taken into consideration. However, when settler forces themselves were on the march, they rendered the dictum, that the war was one of 'pacification', a mockery.

In Mashonaland very few foreign Africans from the South were actually engaged to suppress the rising and, in fact, those so engaged were mostly Zulus who had come into the country with the Natal contingent. This force had been formerly destined for Matabeleland when it was diverted for use in Mashonaland, after reaching the Charter district at the time the Shona rising broke out.<sup>181</sup> Consequently, it was the Zulu auxiliary factor which was heavily involved in the Shona country. The Zulu levies formed an essential element in the skirmishing parties sent out from Salisbury into the outlying districts on several occasions, between the end of June and the beginning of July 1896, and variously led by Sergeant-Major Edmonds, Troopers Bell, Franklin and Duncan, before the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel Alderson with the Imperial troops in Mashonaland. The purpose of these skirmishes was to collect grain (measured in wagon-loads) and cattle for feeding the Salisbury population then in laager. After Lieutenant-Colonel Alderson's arrival, a mixed contingent of whites and Zulus under Sergeant Fletcher was, for instance, also stationed permanently at the Chishawasha Jesuit Mission farm to guard the missionaries there.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Hole's Report on the Mashonaland Rebellion: Part I: Ibid: p. 64.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps the relatively limited involvement of foreign Africans here may have been determined by the small-scale and defensive character of warfare in the Shona rising. Even the massive concentration of white forces on the pattern of the Thaba-zika-Mambo attack in Matabeleland was not repeated anywhere in Mashonaland. But on the other hand, the geographically extensive nature of the Shona rising and the fortified mountain strongholds, strengthened over the years, caused no small inconvenience to the white forces and obviously it became essential, in view of the increasing poverty of the Company, to introduce a new factor altogether. This was the dynamite factor, employed with appalling results for the Shona insurgents.<sup>183</sup> In the end, it was this new weapon which won the war very convincingly for the Company, but not without dragging it up to October 1897, when the 7th Hussars, an Imperial force led by Alderson, left for Beira.

The only foreign African historical character to have contributed to the defeat of the Shona rising in a manner approximating the role of Makunga and Grootboom at Matopo may have been Tom Nthamekwana Dhlamini, who was involved in the "capture" of Chief Makoni at the latter's Gwindingwi stronghold, in what later became the Makoni district of eastern Mashonaland. To assess Tom Dhlamini's role in the event, it is also essential to examine the background to his involvement in the rising and his relationship with Chief Makoni.

Chief Mutota Nyamanhindi Makoni belonged to a generation of proud and independent-minded Shona chiefs who came to power before the challenges of white forces of change became apparent. He had succeeded to the Maungwe chieftaincy by thwarting all forms of external and internal opposition and by the beginning of the colonial era in Southern Rhodesia, his external relations were principally intertwined with those of the other Shona chiefs of the region like Mutasa of the Manyika, his main rival, Mangwende of the Nhowe, Makombe of the Barwe, later incorporated into the Portuguese sphere of influence, and Gouveia the ubiquitous Portuguese/Goanese trader. Through a well executed system of alliances, Chief Makoni was able to hold his own in Maungwe during the pre-colonial era and the period of BSACo. rule before 1896. His chieftom lay in an area by all means removed from the purview of either

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<sup>183</sup> Note for instance the dynamite attack on headman Manyepera of the Marandellas district. Vide: Ranger: op. cit., pp. 276-7.



Ndebele influence or military raids; a factor which Selous the hunter and Colquhoun the first Administrator had recognised by signing separate treaties with Makoni and other chiefs of the area in October 1890, to supplement the Rudd Concession, but were subsequently overridden by Rhodes's ruthless concept of power politics; the latter insisting on the adequacy of the Rudd Concession to accommodate all the Shona chiefs.<sup>184</sup> It was thus under these circumstances that the BSACo. laid down the foundations of its administration in Maungwe and when this machinery began to take root Makoni and his people were inevitably affected.

In the Maungwe chiefdom for example, the land-grabbing and hut-tax collection activities of O'Reilly and other white settlers were beginning to pinch onto the people rather severely by 1896. Such actions on an independent-minded ruler like Makoni could scarcely go unheeded and when the 1896 risings broke out, Makoni therefore joined the other insurgents.<sup>185</sup> In fact, Makoni was so confident of the justice of his people's cause and his own capability to drive the white settlers out of the country, when he joined the rising, that he even assumed the nickname Chingaira (the hawk), implying by this allegoric title that he would pounce onto the white settlers like a hawk swooping upon chicken.<sup>186</sup>

When the rising broke out in June 1896, Herbert Melville Taberer, the Chief Native Commissioner for Mashonaland, was in the Umtali district (then also including the Makoni chiefdom). Taberer's immediate reaction as well as that of other Company officials was to try and capture Chief Makoni. Company officials and white settlers had actually been all along aware of Makoni's hostility towards Company rule throughout the years. Taberer, however, abandoned the idea on second thoughts as he could trust neither Chief Mutasa, Makoni's traditional enemy, who had offered his services to the Company for the purpose, nor the African police, of whom many had deserted to join their

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<sup>184</sup> These treaties are enclosed in C. O. 417/136: Herbert Canning, BSACo. to C. O.; June 20, 1894. Makoni himself had signed a treaty with Selous on October 10, 1890, while some of the Shona Chiefs of the region treated with Major Forbes, Doyle, Colquhoun and Bruce; all acting for the BSACo.

<sup>185</sup> Ranger: op. cit. pp. 82-5.

<sup>186</sup> A. D. P. Abrahams: 'The Principality of Maungwe: Its History and Traditions': NADA: No. 28, 1951: pp. 75-6.

own people here and elsewhere in the Shona country. All what Taberer had at his disposal then was a force of white and foreign African volunteers.<sup>187</sup> In the latter group were two prominent aides, Tom Nthamekwana Dhlamini, a Zulu from Natal, and Gabulinyana, a Sotho. Both of these had been working for the Native Department at Rusape; the former serving as a court interpreter when N/C Ross, alias Chinyerere, held his civil courts, while the latter acted as a messenger. These two African immigrants were apparently of the 'black pioneer' class who had come with the Column in 1890.

It was therefore during the period 1890 to 1896 that Tom Dhlamini had struck an acquaintance with Chief Makoni, to whom he was popularly known as the Native Commissioner's Muturikiri, and this was the relationship Dhlamini later exploited during Major Watt's attack against Makoni at Gwindingwi in September 1896. Dhlamini persuaded the chief to come out of the stronghold by playing on the terrible effects of a dynamite attack on his people and their families, who had taken refuge in their reliable stronghold as usual. He even informed the chief that no harm would come to him as Chinyerere (N/C Ross) had given assurances that the soldiers would not harm the Maungwe leader. This discourse between Dhlamini and Chief Makoni is actually well recounted by Manditshona, a Ndebele former Head Messenger who worked with the Native Department at Umtali from 1894 to 1945 and had apparently participated in the Gwindingwi attack but only as a groom for the horses. The chief enquired of Dhlamini from his stronghold: 'Ndi ka buda a ndi urayiwe?' (If I come out will I not be killed?) To this Dhlamini replied: 'There is nothing to fear father. Chinyerere is here to help you.'<sup>188</sup> Using such persuasion commingled with traces of deception, Dhlamini caught Chief Makoni as he was coming out and the latter was hastily tried; tied to a grain bin and shot.

John Khambula, a cousin of Tom Dhlamini and also a Zulu, who came up with the whites as a young man from Natal, was present too on the occasion. Khambula's role however was mainly confined to looking after the horses with some little fighting, when, of course, the opportunity arose. But he asserted to the author that Dhlamini may have actually believed that no harm would

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<sup>187</sup> Hole's Report on the Mashonaland Rebellion: Part (I): October 29, 1896: Ibid. p 73.

<sup>188</sup> R. E. Reid (account by Manditshona): 'The Capture of Makoni': NADA, No. 32, 1955: pp. 52-3; Ranger: Revolt: pp. 273-9.

befall Chief Makoni as he persuaded the latter to come out, indicating that the war was not an individual's responsibility. Yet at the same time it has to be noted that Dhlamini was given a £100 reward by the Company for his services in what later came to be regarded officially as the 'capture' of Chief Makoni.<sup>189</sup> That Dhlamini should have been the only African auxiliary to be favoured in this manner by the Company during the Shona rising, obviously, throws a lot of skepticism on the matter.

Whatever the rights and wrongs Dhlamini's actions might imply, regarding the 'capture' of Chief Makoni, his part in the rising once more highlights the involvement of foreign Africans in the Shona rising as well and in the whole story of the colonization of Southern Rhodesia. Though in Mashonaland foreign African involvement was a relatively minor factor, it was however such incidents as the Dhlamini affair, together with the Grootboom and Makunga case at Matopo and many other forms of assistance to the wars of conquest in early Southern Rhodesia, that established the raison d'etre for the stake these African aides developed in the new country. In Mashonaland it was also this collaborating foreign African factor which allowed the Administration to translate the war era into a peaceful one. The Zulu levies were once more engaged by the newly appointed Administrator, William H. Milton, in quasi-military operations relating to the resettlement of Shona communities, by removing them from the kopje-studded hilly areas, where, it was assumed, they would be able, in the future, to elude the military forces as easily as they had done in 1896. These communities were thus moved into open areas, easier to supervise, and forbidden to return to their old homelands. The scheme was apparently successful and the new areas in question were consequently declared native reserves. Milton himself was on his part quite pleased with the Zulu contingent engaged for the purpose and indeed indicated as he did that they had rendered 'marked good service throughout the operations'.<sup>190</sup> In this manner, reserves like the Manyeni and Narira in the

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<sup>189</sup> Interview with John Khambula: November 22, 1975: At the time of the interview Khambula was in his 90's alleging to have come to Mashonaland at about 15/16 years of age. His mother and Tom Dhlamini's were sisters in Zululand. Khambula also claimed to have known John Grootboom as well, having met him in Southern Rhodesia.

<sup>190</sup> Report of the Acting Administrator, Mashonaland (W. H. Milton) for the Half-Year ending September 30, 1897: Ibid: pp. 33-4.

Charter district as well as the Ganga and Mondoro in the Hartley district were created even at this early stage.<sup>191</sup>

iii: The Results of Foreign African Involvement in the Risings, 1896-1900:

The overall impact of foreign African collaboration in these wars of pacification and conquest was far-reaching. Economically, the BSACo. 's financial position was salvaged, though the Company was left doddering on the verge of bankruptcy.<sup>192</sup> The proposal to raise foreign African auxiliaries had been, from the start, put forward as an economic solution to the Company's problems and was accordingly pursued with eagerness by the Company officials. The difficulties of maintaining a standing army of the size Matabeleland had in June 1896 were for the BSACo. immense, in the face of transport, drought and rinderpest problems. Lord Grey, who, as Acting Administrator, was saddled with the Company's burdens, was naturally well aware of these difficulties. For this reason, the Matopo peace settlement, a brain-child of the Grootboom/Makunga diplomacy, was more than a welcome boon. In Mashonaland, Tom Nthamekwana Dhlamini and his Zulu compatriots played their part, though on a relatively lower key than their 'Cape Boy' counterparts in Matabeleland, in closing the drama of the Company's misfortune.

But, in the final analysis, it was not only the BSACo. which benefitted from an early end to the risings. A small fry of miscellaneous companies was just as anxious to see the risings ended in both Matabeleland and Mashonaland. As early as June 1896, one such company, the Scottish African Corporation, which had financial interests predominantly in Mashonaland in form of trading sites in and near Salisbury, Umtali and Victoria and some mining properties in the Lomangundi district, wrote to the Colonial Office on what its directors saw as a threat to their investments. These directors even suggested that an Indian contingent, the 'Baluchistan' regiment then stationed in Mombasa, be brought down from East Africa to Salisbury where its services were expected to be of great value in speeding up the suppression of the risings.<sup>193</sup> When

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<sup>191</sup> Beach: op. cit., pp. 415-6.

<sup>192</sup> The BSACo. is reputed to have spent over £8,000,000 during the risings: Vide: Ranger: 'African Reactions to the Imposition of Colonialism in East and Central Africa' in Gann and Duignan (eds): op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>193</sup> C. O. 417/196: The Scottish African Corporation Ltd. to C. O.: Telegram: June 26, 1896: [unclear] London.

the suggestion turned out to be unacceptable to the Colonial Office, the Corporation in question was naturally furious against what it regarded as the Colonial Office's spineless policy towards the risings. It accused the latter of 'joking with life & property of men. . .', pointing out, at the same time, to the critical situation already created by the shortage of food and labour supplies.

The Scottish African Corporation was opposed to the absence of a defined policy on the risings on the part of the Colonial Office, especially a policy which would have allowed for the distinction between 'friendlies' and 'rebels' and one whose effects would not need to scare away the labour supply on which financial houses with interests in the country expected to depend. In short, the Scottish Corporation stressed its argument in the following manner:

We need labourers & H. M. Government's (sic) whole policy seems to be to punish all the blacks - so that there would be no work done for two years if this sort of action goes on. <sup>194</sup>

The companies with investments in Mashonaland and Matabeleland were thus worried about the adverse effects the risings were bound to produce and the drawbacks which they were to face in the period after 1897. It is therefore not surprising that even for other private companies, the end of the risings was quite enthusiastically appreciated.

Exeter Hall too, like the financial companies, was not pleased with the prospects of a drawn-out struggle, especially in Matabeleland. But its motives were different from those of the private financial houses. It was, for instance, feared in humanitarian circles that, as Fox Bourne, the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Protection Society, informed the Colonial Office, bloody consequences would result as the white forces, in their quest of revenge, carried out to the very end retaliatory military raids on the insurgents. To the Ndebele, this could only compell them to flee across the Zambesi during the course of which a large number of them, especially their women and children, would perish from malaria and associated hazards. Moreover, it was also feared that should the Ndebele survivors, in their necessitous conditions, be exposed to any contacts with hostile communities across the Zambesi, such as their traditional enemies the Lozi, this might also have unfortunate results. <sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> C.O. 417/196: The Scottish Corporation Ltd. to C. O.: June 27 and July 9, 1896.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid: Fox Bourne, Secretary; Anti-Slavery Protection Society to C. O.: May 4, 1896.

Such speculation as emerged in the corridors of Exeter Hall was not altogether far-fetched, as far as Ndebele history was concerned. At the end of the war of 1893, Ndebele refugees had after all made their way northwards to join their Ngoni (Nguni) kinsman, Mpezeni, in what later became North/Eastern Rhodesia.<sup>196</sup> The same development had been nearly repeated at the end of the Ndebele rising in 1896, when Mpotshwana, the intransigent Ndebele leader, attempted to hive off and cross the Zambesi with a party of Ndebele members of the royal family and senior indunas, but were prevented from effecting their objective by Letia the son of Lewanika.<sup>197</sup>

Equally justified were the fears of humanitarian movements on the punitive aspects of the campaign and the effects this was likely to produce on the indigenous communities. Exeter Hall had been already scared by settler demands at the beginning of the risings to have Rhodes reinstated after his inglorious exit from power consequent to the Jameson Raid. In putting forward these demands, the Bulawayo residents had in the same breath actually expressed their deep resentment to the appointment of Sir Richard Martin by the Imperial government to take over the political control of the Company territories at this period. They felt that without both Rhodes and Jameson, the situation in early Southern Rhodesia was bound to deteriorate and ultimately compel them to resort to desperate measures, with unfortunate repercussions.<sup>198</sup>

In a way, what these white settlers demanded in simple terms was a return to the pre-1896 era in which they had had very little bureaucratic control and had always had matters their own way. Sir Martin's appointment naturally threatened to do away with this time-honoured practice. The Colonial Office was aware of the implications these demands portrayed and was also concerned over cries for a commando system to be introduced to deal with the risings. The bloody character of the commando system was pointed out in Number 12 Downing Street and it was even indicated also that the system had had such unpleasant results during the Xhosa wars in the Cape Colony that it had to be abandoned in 1833. But, at the same, it was, however, admitted in some circles of the Colonial Office that some measure of retalia-

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<sup>196</sup> Rennie: 'The Ngoni States and European Intrusion': pp. 326-7.

<sup>197</sup> Ranger: Revolt: pp. 261-7.

<sup>198</sup> C. O. 417/196: Telegram from Bulawayo residents including Gifford, Napier, Wrey et al. to C. O.: May 10, 1896.

tion in the Company territories during the risings was justified. Edward Fairfield, the Assistant Under-Secretary who held such views, expressed them in the following manner:

... the atrocities committed by natives have been peculiarly cruel and disgusting, and nothing within reason would be too bad for those implicated; but all experience shows that when undisciplined whites -(undertook such operations)-, they followed innocent and guilty alike and some of those who are friendly allies.

In Matabeleland this vicious aspect of the military campaign was however minimized by the Matopo peace settlement organized by Grootboom and Makunga. In Mashonaland where no Grootbooms or Makungas could play a corresponding role to end the rising, the mood in which the campaign was carried out is, of course, well underlined by the dynamite factor, to pick out only one facet of the war.

Even more significant for foreign African involvement in the 1896-7 risings was the military value which some of these military auxiliaries came to be associated with in official eyes. The BSACo. had not been the first colonizing agency to rely on African levies, but after 1896 the technique began to acquire new importance. We have already indicated somewhere else in this study how widespread the practice of employing African auxiliaries was as a cognizable factor in the colonial era in Africa.<sup>200</sup> In French and British colonies in West Africa for example, the rationale for engaging these African levies for military or para-military purposes was the special respect accorded to African national groups with strong martial traditions like the Moslems from West Africa's hinterland. These became eligible for military and police services of the respective colonial powers simply because it was assumed that they were easier to train and discipline. Moreover, it was also assumed that as they had been accustomed to strong traditional leadership, they were quite likely to regard their European officials in very much the same light as they had treated their traditional leaders. Emphasis on such criteria for recruitment to colonial military service was also enhanced in a large measure by the manner in which physical fitness and what became known as the 'best human specimens' were favourably viewed in colonial circles. This strengthened once and forever the myth that particular national groups

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid: Minute by Fairfield to Just, May 11, 1896.

<sup>200</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 1-8.

with peculiar physical qualities were essential for colonial military and police purposes. For the French, these specifications naturally narrowed their recruiting ground to a few nationalities in West Africa such as the Agni of Assinie in the Ivory Coast or the Fouta of Djallon.<sup>201</sup> The British preferred among others the Hausa of Northern Nigeria, as far as West Africa was concerned.<sup>202</sup> In Southern Africa, those African national groups which had provided levies to the BSA Co. military muscle, like the Zulus, the Sotho and the 'Cape Boys', naturally came to be highly regarded for military purposes in foreign parts, in the period after 1896.

But it must be once more stressed here that the criteria for choosing particular African national groups as sources of military auxiliaries and levies were quite complex at the beginning of the colonial era in Africa. Some European colonial powers like the Belgians and the Portuguese for example, had little concern for specific qualifications, whether relating to physique or traditional and military backgrounds, as essential qualities for choosing the desired African collaborating material. But they were compelled by circumstances, either at home or in Africa, to rely on any African auxiliaries available. The Belgians for example could not obviously afford to provide the necessary manpower to subdue a colony like the Congo Free State (Zaire), many times bigger than their own country. Thus from the early years up to 1891 they relied on foreign African auxiliaries from West Africa and Zanzibar. Indeed they only abandoned the practice after they had reached a stage when they were able to compel the African chiefs under their own rule to provide the required military material.

The Portuguese, on the other hand, were luckier than the Belgians, as they could rely on manpower from the motherland, which was prepared to endure the inconveniences of colonial wars as well as the indignities of low wages. This type of Portuguese military material came from convicts and patriotic students; in short, mainly those who could easily be knocked into shape for colonial bush warfare.<sup>203</sup> But even the Portuguese themselves could not rely exclusively on this sub-standard military material in Africa, where the depraved nature of their 'native policies' extensively excited general hos-

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<sup>201</sup> Gutteridge: op. cit. pp. 297, 300.

<sup>202</sup> Ayandele: op. cit. p. 338.

<sup>203</sup> Gutteridge: op. cit. pp. 297, 300.



tility from their African subject peoples. Thus in the wars against the Shona Chief Makombe in the Barwe country in Mozambique towards the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the Portuguese, naturally influenced by their BSACo. neighbours, resorted to South African non-European levies of Sotho, Zulu, Mfengu, Xhosa and other nationalities. But since the Portuguese had no political leverage below the Limpopo to match the BSACo., all they could do was to kidnap these levies with the help of their Boer allies from those urban and mining centres like the Rand where enormous African labour forces were gathered. By such means, these conscripts were consequently put onto trains bound for Delagoa Bay and, from this port, shipped to the Barwe country where they fought in the Makombe war (1901-4) under close guard, lest they escaped into the neighbouring British territory of the BSACo. and publicized their presence as British subjects.<sup>204</sup> This of course was a crude way of realizing the utility of African auxiliaries, as far as the Portuguese were concerned, but was, all the same, a credit to the 'Cape Boys' of BSACo. fame for popularizing the value of the African levies in the sub-continent.

From the above examples, the British and French approach to the question of African collaboration was certainly much more sophisticated than that of their Belgian and Portuguese counterparts. As far as the British were concerned, their approach to the African collaborative mechanism was influenced by a plethora of stereotypes, myths and attitudes of long historical origin and, to some extent, by a tincture of pragmatism. The extensive character of the British Empire, then as it was, naturally required raising local levies for maintaining conditions suitable for colonial administration. Yet the criteria employed in choosing the military or para-military recruits were essentially influenced by a congeries of ill-considered British attitudes towards Africa and the individual African nationalities; attitudes shaped and moulded over the years by the propaganda of early Britons to Africa. In view of this, the British adopted an ambivalent attitude towards the African peoples and the African continent. For example, while they purported that the rationale for British imperialism in Africa was to attain a degree of pacification and

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<sup>204</sup>C. O. 417/371: Sworn affidavits of Tom Magegani, Masodza Dumalengwana, George Bogodza et al. before T. B. Hulley, J. P., Umtali: December 15, 1903. (These African levies from South Africa, kidnapped by the Portuguese, later escaped into S. Rhodesia and ended up working for the railways in Umtali.)

order (Pax Britannica) and subsequently introduce various aspects of Western civilization, they however also admired, like their French opponents, those African nationalities with strong military tradition. In this way they naturally admired African national groups like the Masai, Ndebele, the Galla, the Zulu and others of noticeable military importance, in spite of the fact that these were the groups largely responsible for perpetrating internecine warfare; an evil they allegedly aimed to eradicate.<sup>205</sup> These considerations, indeed, so effectively coloured British recruiting policies that when the 'Cape Boys' attained military distinction in the 1896-97 risings in the BSACo. territories, they too were up-graded and consequently became eligible for similar military activities elsewhere in the Empire.

The first request for those 'Cape Boys', formerly in the BSACo. employ to undertake military service further afield concerned the 1898 rising in Uganda, where the Sudanese troops engaged to suppress the Kabaka Mwangwa revolt had mutinied. This plan was however unacceptable to the BSACo. itself and the 'Cape Boys' themselves regarded the wages offered by the Colonial Office as unnecessarily too low. Indian troops were thus consequently employed in place of the 'Cape Boys'.<sup>206</sup> Here an interesting amalgam between British attitudes and practical demands for a general military strategy evidently emerged. In raising the question of engaging the 'Cape Boys' for Uganda, the Foreign Office for instance argued that this was a 'practicable' proposal by which 'the warlike races of South Africa notably... the Zulus', could be raised to constitute a force for military service in this East African protectorate as had already been tried in the case of other African national groups like Dinkas, Shilooks and other Nilotic groups then constituting the basis of the Sudanese forces in Uganda as well as the case of the Hausa in West Africa. In all these cases, these recruits had been raised to fight in unfamiliar surroundings and were alleged to have proved 'capable of excellent and faithful service.'<sup>207</sup>

The Colonial Office too was in a general way in favour of this proposal of African levies, especially the engagement of Zulus, for Uganda, but was dis-

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<sup>205</sup> Cairns: op. cit. pp. 106-7.

<sup>206</sup> Report by Herbert Canning, Secretary, BSACo.: April 7, 1898: in BSACo. Directors' Report and Accounts, 1897-1898: pp. 121-2 Vide also: J. S. Mangat: A History of the Asians in East Africa: Clarendon Press: Oxford: 1969: pp. 27-62.

<sup>207</sup> C. O. 879/53: Francis Bertie at F. O. to C. O.: January 17, 1898.

couraged by the long list of similar schemes which had failed in the past. Such schemes included for example the request of the East Africa Protectorate in 1889 and that of the Congo Free State the same year to recruit police forces from amongst the Zulus and Swazis. The War Office had also made a similar request in 1890 for a regiment or two from these nationalities of the African sub-continent for service either at Singapore or Hong Kong, without success.

In all these three cases, as Frederick Graham, the Assistant Under-Secretary and head of the South Africa department in the Colonial Office since 1896, pointed out, the proposal had encountered some objections. The Natal colonists for instance were evidently averse to the schemes, stressing, as they alleged, that it would be difficult to persuade the Zulus either to undertake sea-voyages or service in distant lands. These colonists also pointed out, as they had done on the BSACo. scheme in 1894,<sup>208</sup> that their security would be threatened should any attempts be made to encourage Zulu military propensities, especially as by 1898 Zululand had been incorporated into Natal. Graham too was not optimistic on raising Sotho levies for Uganda either, indicating that the Sotho might raise the same objections as those put forward in relation to the Zulus. Similar plans put forward to the Colonial Office to raise the Zulu levies for service in West Africa equally came to naught and, so far as Graham was concerned, the only hope of achieving '... some plan of forming out of one or other South African races a military force available for service in West or East Africa...' was to try the 'Cape Boys' who had already served in Matabeleland. It was this last solution which the Colonial Office considered more feasible than any other and therefore sought an informed opinion on the matter from Sir Marshall Clarke, the former Resident Commissioner of Zululand and Basutoland then expected to come to England on leave at the beginning of 1898 before taking a new post in the BSACo. territories.<sup>209</sup>

Graham's pessimism on raising even Zulu recruits for service either in Uganda and elsewhere in the Empire was however not shared by the War Office. The latter was especially insistent that should the Zulu scheme fail to pull through, because of Natal's objections, it was necessary to approach the BSACo. to release some of the Zulu police then serving in Mashonaland for

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<sup>208</sup> Vide Supra pp. 91-6.

<sup>209</sup> C. O. 879/53: Graham at C. O. to F. O. : January 28, 1898.

the purpose. The Intelligence Division of the War Office, which particularly supported the idea of Zulu levies for Imperial service, indeed waxed lyrical on the qualities of the Zulu force then proposed for Uganda. It stated:

Of all the many native races comprised within Her Majesty's Empire there is perhaps none whose traditions, courage, physique and amenability to discipline mark them as more suitable for military service than the Zulus. The extraordinary success of the military organisation which, under the great Zulu chiefs Chaka and Cetywayo, rendered that nation not only the dominant native power in South Africa, but even a serious menace to white supremacy, is too well known to need more than passing reference, and fully established the high qualification of a Zulu for a soldier's duty. Especially noteworthy is their inborn love of military exercises, their high courage and great powers of endurance, and their loyalty to their leaders, and ready acceptance of the strictest military discipline.<sup>210</sup>

The War Office would not even accept the objections of Natal colonists seriously, especially the fears expressed within the Boer section of the Natal community, on training Zulus in martial arts, which it dismissed on the grounds that most Zulu police, trained and disbanded from the Zululand police force in Natal itself had been able to re-adapt to civilian life. From the War Office's point of view, there was no cause therefore to assume that Zulu recruits raised for Uganda would not do the same on their return after two years of service. Moreover, it was also argued that a reasonable proportion of these Zulus might marry Ugandan women and settle permanently in the East African territory. As for the willingness of the Zulus to serve in distant lands, it was pointed out that such objection was baseless, as the Zulus were a migratory people by nature, a fact demonstrated, from this Office's point of view, by their Ndebele and Ngoni offshoots in Southern and Northern Rhodesia respectively and that even their settlement in Zululand was only of recent origin, as they had come from the North not long before.

To add weight to this argument, the War Office also indicated that Zululand was to some extent already undergoing a process of political and social change in which the power of the 'paramount chief' had been effectively replaced by the authority of the 'Great White Queen', whilst the new wants imposed onto the Zulu society by the wage economy and labour demands were

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid: Memorandum by Director of Military Intelligence: January 20, 1898: Enclosed in R. H. Knox at the War Office to C. O., May 14, 1898.

said to have turned most of the Zulus into labour migrants to the Transvaal mines. Equally unacceptable to the War Office was the objection that Zulus had a natural dread for the sea. This was of course easily dismissed by pointing out to the increasing number of Zulus then working in the Durban harbour by 1898. To give substance to its counter-arguments, the War Office also turned to the reports of Captain de Moleyns, the Commandant of the Mashonaland Police, then also on leave in England. These reports on the Zulu recruits who formed part of the Mashonaland Native Police, the 'Black Watch', were regarded by the War Office as quite encouraging, especially so as these Zulus in question had come into Mashonaland by sea via Beira as well. It was then from the Zulu contingent of the Mashonaland Native Police that the War Office wanted to procure the nucleus of its Uganda regiment, emphasizing at the same time the conditions under which they were to be engaged. Their rate of pay was to remain the same as that paid to them in Mashonaland and it was also indicated that:

... it should be distinctly explained to them -(Zulus)- that they will then be in the immediate service of the Queen, that an attractive uniform should be provided, and that they should not be asked at first to volunteer for more than a short term of service - say two years.

The optimism of the War Office on the Zulu scheme was therefore strong and total and not unnaturally this office concluded its memorandum in an equally optimistic note, indicating that the success of the Zulu scheme could be a great contribution towards solving the military problems of the Empire, particularly in those regions:

where the climatic conditions are unfavourable to the main-  
tenance of large garrisons of white troops.<sup>211</sup>

These views on the crucial importance of the Zulu contingent of the Mashonaland Native Police under the employ of the BSA Co., so strongly advocated by the War Office, were supported by the High Commissioner for South Africa. Sir Alfred Milner was convinced too that these Zulu recruits could be fruitfully employed against the rising in Uganda. Milner also appreciated the problems placed in the way of recruiting such a contingent from Natal itself, but saw no reason why 'Cape Boys', Zulus and other African levies from the South, already in the Mashonaland Native Police, should not be

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid: Memorandum by Director of Military Intelligence: January 20, 1898.

drafted for the purpose. He was confident that the scheme would succeed, because, in the first place, the force was already in existence and secondly, because the objections of the Natal colonists would not apply to Zulus already outside Natal's control.<sup>212</sup>

But as a matter of fact, the War Office itself was not as enthusiastic about the inclusion of the 'Cape Boys' advocated by the High Commissioner as they were on a pure Zulu force. The Director of Intelligence had serious reservations on the character of the 'Cape Boys', though he was well aware that they had obviously acquitted themselves as a credible fighting material. These reservations apparently appeared to hinge on contemporary social and psychological stereotypes held by whites, especially on 'Cape Boys' of mixed blood. The War Office thus argued as follows:

These -(Cape Boys)- did very well in the 2nd (sic) Matabele War. They fight pluckily and are amenable to discipline in the field. They require, however, high pay, probably £3 to £4 a month and rations. Lt-Col. Robertson, who commanded the corps in the second Matibili War, would be an excellent man to organise and command such a regiment for service in Uganda.

Yet whilst the War Office was thus prepared to credit the 'Cape Boys' for their military achievements during the Ndebele rising, it would not altogether recommend the engagement of 'Cape Boys' anywhere else outside the battle field. It regarded their behaviour as generally repugnant in this context. The Intelligence Division of the War Office thus further commented:

There is, however, a serious objection to their -(Cape Boys)- continued employment in that country -(Matabeleland)-. The Cape Boy, although very reliable in the field, becomes difficult to control and troublesome if relegated to garrison duty. He is fond of drink, and drinks to excess whenever the chance offers. His habits are loose<sup>213</sup> and he is likely to raid native villages, rape women, etc.

These views on the character of the 'Cape Boys' advocated here by the War Office naturally poured cold water onto the Imperial scheme in connection with levies from the BSACo. territories to Uganda. With the arrival of Sir Richard Martin from Southern Africa, where he had spent nearly two years (1896-1898) as Deputy Commissioner in the Company territories, further

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<sup>212</sup> ibid: Sir Alfred Milner to C. O. : n. d. Enclosed in Fred Graham at C. O. to F. O. : January 28, 1898.

<sup>213</sup> ibid: Memorandum by Director of Military Intelligence: January 20, 1898.

discouragement was also thrown in the path of the plan.

Sir Richard Martin regarded the plan on 'Cape Boys' and Zulus for Uganda as a problematic one and accordingly indicated this when he informed the Colonial Office about the difficulties he had encountered in raising a force of only 100 Zulus for service in Mashonaland in 1897, in spite of the fact that he had delegated the task to people well acquainted with the Zulus in general and also men whom he thought they could trust. Sir Martin was not equally enthusiastic about the Sotho either, whose recruitment was complicated, so he thought, by the need to provide horses, since the Sotho preferred carrying out their duties mounted. He saw the provision of these mounts as an additional expense which the Imperial authorities could better do without. Finally, this Imperial official was just as dismissive of the 'Cape Boys' as the War Office had been, concluding that 'Cape Boys' were a mixed blessing and that the Imperial authorities would better think twice before recruiting them. As far as this Imperial official was concerned, the 'Cape Boys' were, to say the least, not commendable. He described them in the following unfavourable terms:

Colenbradner's Boys were only odds and ends. Robertson's Cape Boys were a mixed lot. They fight well, but in time of peace are the most awful scoundrels, and get drunk as soon as they get near a town, and play the mischief.<sup>214</sup>

Thus like the War Office and the government of the Transvaal, Sir Richard Martin's objections to 'Cape Boys' were primarily based on stereotypes then currently held on this class of people; stereotypes that were frequently and readily used against 'Cape Boys' in peace times. In the final analysis, it would appear that it was in every sense a distinct advantage to the 'Cape Boys' that the Ugandan scheme was after all unacceptable to their former employers, the BSA Co., especially in the face of all these negative views.

To summarize the implications and general results of foreign African involvement in the Shona and Ndebele risings of 1898-7, let us look at the more conspicuous features of this subject once more. On the local scene, the engagement of this relatively cheap African or non-European auxiliary force allowed the BSA Co. to recoup some of the losses the Company had sustained through the rinderpest plague and the risings. The black/white contacts effected between the invading white forces and the insurgents, especially in

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid: Sir R. E. Martin to C. O. ; January 23, 1898.

Matabeleland, chirped off some of the bitterness the risings had given rise to and created a relatively peaceful atmosphere in which both the black and white camps were able to come to terms with the changed situation of the post-1896 era. This rapprochement, effected chiefly by Grootboom and Makunga's bridge-building activities, assuaged the fears and anxieties of both the humanitarian and financial interests in a way the blind fury and racial animosity manifested during the military campaign would not have achieved. But in Mashonaland matters were quite different even after 1896, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

Secondly, foreign African military involvement in the 1896-7 risings had wider implications than the BSA Co. had actually bargained for on initiating the scheme. Imperial officials began to reevaluate the military potential and actual contribution of African auxiliary levies in matters of global military and imperial strategy within particular geographical foci. But even these imperial calculations were, however, liable to play second fiddle to local interests, with the result that the former were often rendered temporarily or permanently impotent by the latter, as the example of the Natal colonists demonstrates.<sup>215</sup> The third and more interesting result of foreign African involvement in the 1896-97 risings is that it created a permanent 'fifth column' with seemingly strong claims to the development of Southern Rhodesia. Indeed it was this permanence of the claims of the 'Cape Boys' to the history and destiny of Southern Rhodesia that was ultimately to be the cause of conflict with their former white masters and employers. It is also perhaps worth examining at length some aspects of this post-1896 development in the relationship between the 'Cape Boys' and the white settlers once they were out of the battlefields.

We have seen in this study that the 'Cape Boys' were not highly regarded in white colonist circles in many parts of Southern Africa.<sup>216</sup> They were used in the risings in the Company territories simply out of desperation rather than by sheer preference. But once these traumatic events were over, the hypocrisy and hollowness of the alliance between these non-European auxiliaries and their white partners began to surface and the alliance therefore started cracking. The 'Cape Boys', whether black or half-caste, were a

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid: Sir Hely-Hutchinson, Governor, Natal, to C. O.: May 18, 1898.

<sup>216</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 117-8.



cultural and social hybrid group. They were generally literate and, unlike thorough-bred Zulus and Sothos, prided themselves for being the cultural wards of their white masters, especially the British masters, whose citizenship they enjoyed. But the honeymoon period of harmonious relations between the 'Cape Boys' and their masters ended with the risings; a fact which these Creoles of Southern Africa only gradually realized with shock and resentment.<sup>217</sup>

In Southern Rhodesia, the end of the risings meant that a new era of hardships for the 'Cape Boys' was just beginning. Indeed at the close of 1897, Milton, who had just been appointed Acting Administrator of Southern Rhodesia directly from the Cape Civil Service in July of that year, made the first knock on the hitherto privileged role of these 'Cape Boys' and their allies by introducing a restrictive legislation on their manner of living in the country. He was quite convinced on the benefit of the new legislation, at least as far as his Administration's point of view was concerned, and justified the move by pointing out to what he considered the undesirable character of the 'Cape Boys' that:

... in numberless instances Colonial natives wearing discarded police uniforms have visited kraals and arrogated to themselves the powers of policemen and, representing themselves to the Chiefs as having been sent by the Government to collect taxes and settle disputes, they have in many cases been allowed to carry off sheep and goats which they demanded from litigants in payment of their services. 218

It appears that the 'Cape Boys' were taking advantage of their clientship to the white colonist community and in this manner exploited their mediating role to the disadvantage of the indigenous peoples and for their own gain. Yet it was not primarily out of sympathy with the indigenous peoples that Milton found it necessary to introduce his legislation. The legislation was ostensibly based on the distrust and suspicions of the white colonist community that the 'Cape Boys' may have after all played a double role during the risings and incited and led the local people to rise against Company rule. From this point of view, the BSACo. Administration concluded that the presence

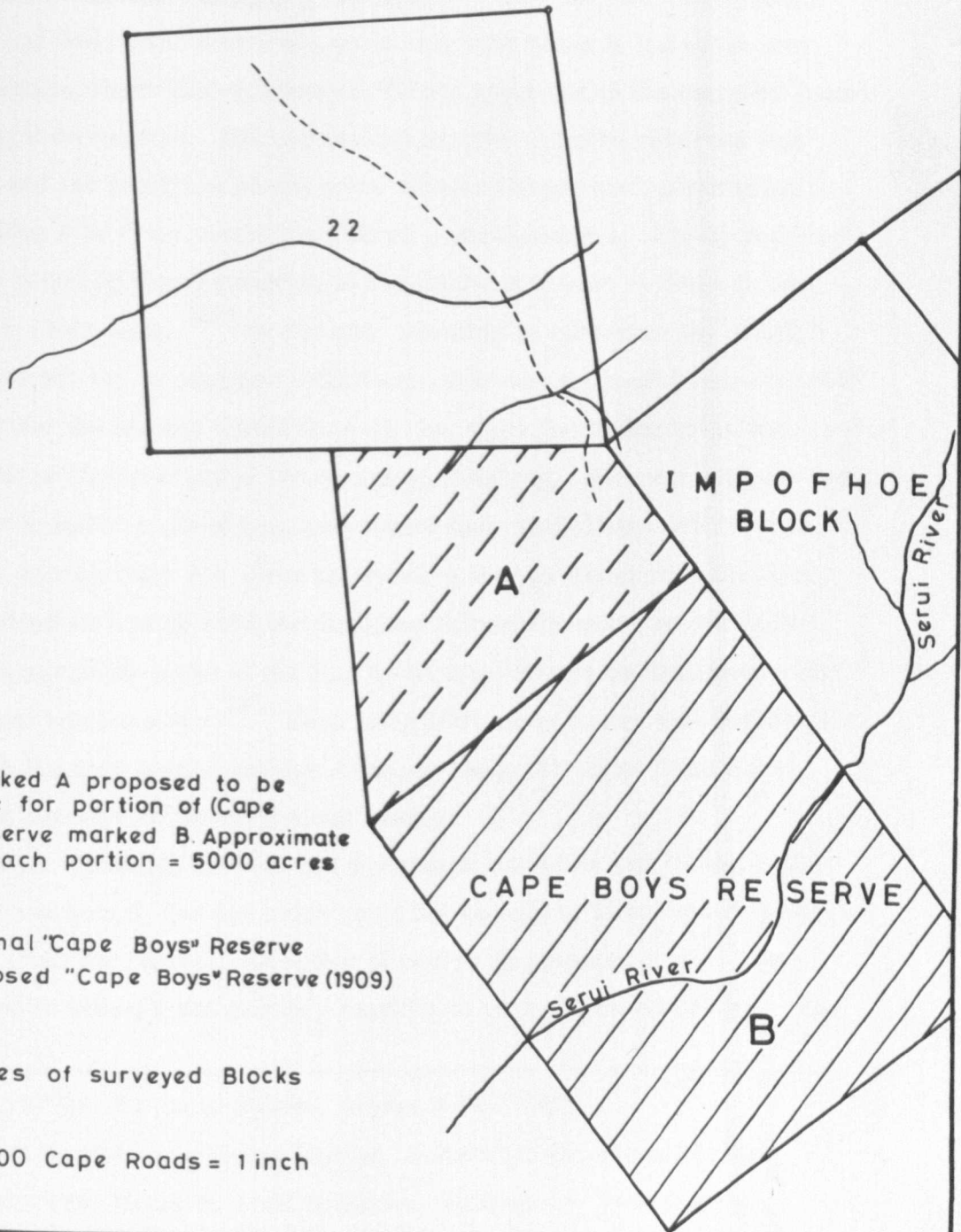
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<sup>217</sup> Compare the position of the 'Cape Boys' in Southern Rhodesia after 1896 and that of the Creoles in Sierra Leone after the 1860's: Vide Leo Spitzer: 'The Sierra Leone Creoles 1870-1900': loc. cit.





<sup>218</sup> C. O. 879/53: Milton, Acting Administrator to Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner: December 8, 1897.

APPENDIX III: THE 'CAPE BOYS' RESERVE: HARTLEY DISTRICT (1909)

PLAN SHEWING PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO 'CAPE BOYS' RESERVE: Hartley District 1909



Area marked A proposed to be in charge for portion of (Cape Boys) Reserve marked B. Approximate area of each portion = 5000 acres

-  B = Original "Cape Boys" Reserve
-  A = Proposed "Cape Boys" Reserve (1909)
-  Rivers
-  Boundaries of surveyed Blocks

SCALE 400 Cape Roads = 1 inch

(Based on diagram in File C. O. 417/465 P/R/O: London)

of the 'Cape Boys' in the country after 1896 was therefore 'a source of constant trouble', hence the need for the new restrictive legislation, namely, The Settlement of Colonial Natives in Kaffir Kraals Prohibition Regulation of 1898, which was renewed in 1901.<sup>219</sup>

An interesting aspect of this legislation is its inclusive character. In its definition of 'Colonial Natives' it embraced any African who was of foreign origin including the Tonga, the so-called 'Zambesi natives', inhabiting both sides of the Zambesi escarpment. Any intercourse between these foreign Africans and their local compeers could only take place in the urban and mining centres, where the restrictions did not apply due to the fear that labour supply might be harmed. But permission to enter African reserves was essential and the foreign Africans were required to get such permission before anything else from respective Native Commissioners. Chiefs and headmen were bound by this legislation to report the presence of these foreign Africans in their areas.<sup>220</sup> In the end, probably to minimize any possible contact between the foreign and indigenous Africans, a reserve was set aside especially for the foreign Africans, to wit the 'Cape Boy Reserve' in the Hartley district of Mashonaland, at the turn of the century. However, the plan does not appear to have received popular support from the foreign African and half-caste communities for whom the reserve was so designed, in the first place. Indeed, as late as 1909, the Company Administration was even compelled to expropriate some of the land from this reserve on the grounds that its residents were too few.<sup>221</sup> Thus after 1897 a new drama was beginning to unfold with the once helpful foreign Africans being estranged from either their white masters or the indigenous peoples.

As far as relations between the indigenous societies and foreign Africans were concerned, the two sides could not be said to have been on amicable terms after the risings, excepting of course at personal level. They needed time to adjust from military hostility to peaceful co-existence. The

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<sup>219</sup> C. O. 417/321: Milton to Milner: August 9-12, 1901.

<sup>220</sup> C. O. 455/1: Notice by Percy Inskipp, Salisbury: November 3, 1898.

<sup>221</sup> C. O. 417/465: Milton to Lord Selborne: January 14, 1909 and C. O. 417/466: Major Fair to Sir Hely-Hutchinson: June 14, 1909. By 1909 there were only 22 tax-payers in the 'Cape Boys Reserve' of whom only 11 were married. Vide: Appendix III (map) 'Cape Boys' Reserve: Hartley District, 1909,

relations of these two sides after 1896 were at times marred by conflicts, such as those which occurred frequently in Bulawayo between the Ndebele and the Xhosa or other South African communities in June 1898. In this instance, the Bulawayo Chronicle reported on a two-day battle between the combatant communities in epic, but derisive language, as follows:

The first fight took place on Sunday in the valley near the location, the Matabele outnumbering the Kaffirs ~~-(Xhosa)-~~ by about three to one ~~-(and)-~~ the weapons used being knobkerries, fighting sticks, and stones. A number of combatants were badly cut about, and it took Corporal Salmon of the BSA Co. Police (sic) and the five troopers under him who ~~-(are)-~~ stationed there all their time to cool the ardour of the dusky warriors by the application of riding whips, which suffered considerably in the process. The police were at the disadvantage of being dismounted, but eventually the tintillation of their black skins, <sup>222</sup> induced the Matabele and Kaffirs to retreat in disorder.

On the following Monday fight, the Chronicle reporter indicated that the numbers of the combatants had been reinforced. Both sides amounted to 300 all told, but with the Ndebele still predominant. The reporter then went on:

The fight started down the railway embankment, and ended in a pitched battle near the station. The Matabele drove back the Kaffirs, the latter rallied and charged back with temporary success, but victory hovered over the knobkerries of the Matabele braves, who were winning the day, when the troopers ~~-(BSAP)-~~ intervened and wrested the laurels from their brows. All the whites in the vicinity had been driven away, but the troopers, three in number, under Corporal Salmon, were not molested. These latter were too few in number to interfere effectively, and as things were getting very warm, showers of stones rattling about the buildings <sup>223</sup> and flying through the air, three horses were sent for.

Though the police always intervened and succeeded in breaking up these faction fights by the liberal use of their sjamboks and horses, these conflicts manifestly damaged relations between the immigrant African communities and their indigenous opposite numbers. In Shona societies too, the 'Cape Boys' and their allies from the South were not liked either and were still viewed as 'white man's dogs' long after the risings. <sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> The Bulawayo Chronicle: June 4, 1898.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Vambe: op. cit., pp. 203-5.

It must be made clear here that this was the kind of conflict which the Administration's restrictive legislation aimed at preventing. The enforced separation of the indigenous and foreign African communities was however not motivated by any quasi-humanitarian considerations at all. Indeed the Administration would have encouraged such conflicts, if only they would not harm the chances of labour supply and the security of the white community in the country. The white settlers' views on these faction fights were generally in favour of such occurrences, as the Bulawayo Chronicle indicated in its advocacy of a Shangaan pilot scheme; one by which a Shangaan community from Mozambique was to be settled in Matabeleland as a labour reservoir in March 1898. The Chronicle expressed its views on African factionalism as follows:

It must also be remembered that bringing in two or three fresh tribes would add to the security of the country. The whites hold Africa by the feuds between various native races, and if we have several thousand Zambesis and Shangaans the Matabele will remain quiescent.<sup>225</sup>

African factionalism was therefore in some ways only another version, albeit a crude one, of Pax Britannica.

Besides security considerations, white settlers were generally opposed to the presence of the 'Cape Boys' in areas occupied by indigenous Africans in the post-1896 era on what seemed to be quasi-moral grounds, tinged with the general race prejudice of their environment. The 'Cape Boys' being either a culturally or racially bastardized community or both, their educational and moral values were constantly under the severe scrutiny of their white masters. In his valuable work on the psychology of colonization, Mannoni has argued, with regard to the French colonial situation in Madagascar, that the atmosphere of growing racial hostility between the white colonizer and the black colonized tended to leave the half-caste community in a great dilemma. The pressures generated by the racial conflict between the two contending communities made the half-caste community more aware than ever before of the mixture of similarities and differences which they symbolized in relation to the two combatant communities. This realization, so argues Mannoni, by the half-caste community of what they were supposed to represent often had

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<sup>225</sup> The Bulawayo Chronicle: March 29, 1898.

disastrous psychological effects as a consequence.<sup>226</sup> In the same manner, the growth of racism in Sierra Leone during the post-1860 period, the Darwin era, equally had disastrous psychological results on the Creoles who had hitherto regarded themselves as 'Black Englishmen'.<sup>227</sup>

In post-1896 Southern Rhodesia, the 'Cape Boys' were equally estranged and loathed once their services were over and done with. Two forms of argument were employed by the white settlers. For the 'Cape Boys' of mixed descent, settler hostility hinged on the moral bona fides of these former aides. As Peter Nielsen, for many years an official with the Native Labour Bureau and the Native Department in Southern Rhodesia, put it, the 'Cape Boys' of mixed descent were regarded either as psychological misfits or 'mongrels, unfit to mingle with the pure parental breeds...'. The educated and hence acculturated African from the South was dismissed as a cultural aberration, aping the ways of the white man which he did not understand. In the case of the latter, a teleological argument then in current fashion was frequently employed to imply that the mental processes of the African brain stopped developing at the age of puberty; hence the African was obviously uneducable and could only understand simple things easily conceivable to his child-like mental state. Moreover it was even further argued that a people's complexion, the sizes of the skulls and intelligence all went hand in hand.<sup>228</sup> Thus the 'Cape Boys' and other Africans from the South who had a long history of educational and European influence behind them, as we have seen and as will be further demonstrated,<sup>229</sup> were, in this way, thwarted and resented in every way by their former white allies after 1896 in Southern Rhodesia.

Private landowners and farmers, as a class, were peculiarly hostile to the presence of these 'Cape Boys' on their properties. W. Napier, of Napier & Weir Ltd, a landowning syndicate in Matabeleland and part of a larger corporation, the Bulawayo Estate and Trust Co. Ltd, for example, wrote to the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, Herbert Taylor, in September 1897, complaining of the presence of 'Cape Boys' on his farms at 'Matzambahlope' and Douglasdale, whom he considered were not only tres-

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<sup>226</sup> Mannoni: Prospero and Caliban: pp. 118-9.

<sup>227</sup> Spitzer: op. cit., pp. 100-6.

<sup>228</sup> Peter Nielsen: The Black Man's Place in South Africa: Juta & Co.; Cape Town: 1922: pp. 10-1, 123-4. Vide also Cairns: op. cit., pp. 158ff.

passing, but also interfering with his local African tenants there. Napier thus requested the Native Department to take action in connection with these 'Cape Boys' to check their activities.<sup>230</sup> The same subject was also taken up by Napier's superior, Percy Bourne, the General Manager of the parent company the Bulawayo Estate and Trust Co. Ltd., who put his request to the Chief Native Commissioner more forcefully by indicating that:

... the behaviour of various Cape Boys and other trespassers on the farm Willsgrove (late Douglasdale) has been unsatisfactory.

They are reported to be interfering with the natives who have been properly located and I think it would possibly save much trouble were you to send out to warn off such Boys who have no right there.<sup>231</sup>

The treatment of other foreign African individuals was also not very encouraging either. Makunga and Khumalo for instance, depict examples of individual African adventurers who fared very differently with regard to their post-1896 relations with the BSA Co. Administration.

When Makunga joined the Native Department after 1896 as a civil servant, he apparently did not forsake the interests of the Ndebele nation, his erstwhile mentors. In his new post with the Native Department, Makunga appears to have tried to mend fences with his new employers, but without breaking totally with the past altogether. For his contribution to the success of the Matopo indaba, Makunga was at first appointed acting 'Registrar of Natives' in Bulawayo in September 1896, before the peace settlement between the Company forces and the Ndebele had been finalized. Subsequently he was appointed to a permanent post as a clerk in the Chief Native Commissioner's Office, Matabeleland, and as an assistant to Francis Joseph Clarke, the chief clerk.<sup>232</sup> It was in this capacity as a civil servant in the Native Department that he is reputed to have rectified the name 'Bulawayo', then incor-

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<sup>229</sup> Vide: Chapters 1 & 8.

<sup>230</sup> NB 1/1/1: W. Napier & Weir Ltd., to C. N. C. Bulawayo: September 20, 1897.

<sup>231</sup> NB 1/1/1: Percy H. Bourne, General Manager, The Bulawayo Estate and Trust Co. Ltd., to C/N/C. Byo: September 21, 1897.

<sup>232</sup> NB 1/1/3: J. C. Makunga to W. E. Thomas, Acting Chief Native Commissioner (C/N/C), Bulawayo, July 16, 1897: and Taylor, C/N/C, Byo, to Lawley, Deputy Administrator: February 23, 1898.

rectly rendered by the whites as 'Buluwayo'.<sup>233</sup>

Of particular interest too is the fact that Makunga continued to further Ndebele interests in their relations with the BSACo. Administration, thus translating his own peculiar brand of collaboration to Ndebele advantage as well. In January 1898 for example, Makunga applied to the Administration on behalf of the Ndebele Queens, the wives of Lobengula, for permission to proceed to the Cape Colony and see their sons who had been sent down there to be educated by Rhodes, 'their present father', as Makunga their interpreter indicated. This royal party desired to proceed to the Cape accompanied by Umjaan, the former commander-in-chief of Lobengula, with Makunga himself as a guide.<sup>234</sup>

From this point of view, it might be safe to surmise that Makunga may have been forgiven by his Ndebele kinsmen for his part in the risings and thus continued to maintain friendly contacts with them in the post-1896 era, contrary to the general tedium of relations between the Ndebele and other groups of African emigres, as we have seen. Makunga is also unique even within the context of the African immigrant communities from the South themselves. For instance, whilst he lived with the most militant vigilante group of pre-1896 African immigrants, the group led by John Hlazo, first in the Ntabazinduma Reserve and later in the Fingo location, he was at the same time not in any manner influenced by the confrontation politics of his countrymen.<sup>235</sup> He remained a faithful civil servant to the very end, serving at various times in Bulawayo, Gwelo and Gwanda with the Native Department.<sup>236</sup>

Whilst the BSACo. Administration had been prepared at first to condone the activities of Karl Khumalo in the Lippert Concession affair on the grounds

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<sup>233</sup> Personal communication from Mr. Makunga: December 7, 1974.

<sup>234</sup> NB 1/1/3: Makunga, Bulawayo Native Reserve, to Acting N/C/N, Byo: January 5, 1898; and Thomas, Acting C/N/C, to Lawley, Deputy Administrator, Bulawayo: January 11, 1898.

<sup>235</sup> S. 924/G. 125/1: Robert Lanning, N/C Bubi to C/N/C, Byo: November 17, 1909: R/N/A, Salisbury.

<sup>236</sup> John Makunga served with the Native Department till his death at Gwanda in 1919. He was also one of the people contacted by the A. P. S. on the Southern Rhodesian land question in 1914. Vide: Mss. Brit. Emp. S 22/G. 185: Rev. J. H. Harris, Bulawayo, to Morgan: Private, January 6, 1915: The A. P. S. (the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society) Papers: Rhodes House, Oxford: and Personal Communication from Mr. D. Makunga: December 7, 1974.



of his lack of understanding on the wider political issues involved in the scramble for Matabeleland before 1890, in the Ndebele rising, the Company could no longer tolerate Khumalo's pro-Ndebele and consequently anti-Company activities. The manner in which Khumalo was subsequently treated was, in a way, a classical demonstration of the attitude of the Company Administration towards educated Africans from outside its territories as well as those within who opposed it. Educated foreign Africans were welcome as long as they were prepared to collaborate and promote the interests of the Company as allies, but once they were seen or thought to be colluding with the local people to the disadvantage of the Company, they became personae non-gratae.

Karl Khumalo, who chose to side with the Ndebele during the risings, found himself a victim of the Administration's overtly vindictive policies. He became the prime target of Company and settler forces who held a universal view that he was 'a notorious traitor' and for that reason carried a prize on his head at the very early stage of the rising, especially as it was thought that Khumalo had somehow taught the Ndebele the technique of making their own bullets and mending rifles. Consequently, when the white forces caught him, they immediately condemned him to execution by firing squad on the outskirts of Bulawayo; an event which Khumalo miraculously survived. The firing squad assigned to carry out the execution did their duty in earnest, but fortunately only managed to stun him, leaving him for dead. He however recovered and escaped.<sup>237</sup> This incident of course had its unfortunate results and not least of all is the fact that Karl Khumalo became one of the staunchest critics of the Company during and after the risings. He immediately took steps to sue the Company for compensation over what he saw as deliberate and malicious attempts by the Company to get rid of him. But his claims were discourteously dismissed by the Company officials.<sup>238</sup> During the Matopo peace negotiations, it was therefore Khumalo, alias Mvulana, with his knowledge of the political and economic situation of the Company, who

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<sup>237</sup> C. O. 417/284: Chamberlain to Milner: February 15, 1901; P. A. Stuart (N/C): 'My Matabeleland Experiences, 1897-1903': NADA No. 19: 1942: pp. 68-9; and also Barden-Powell: The Matabele Campaign: pp. 258-9.

<sup>238</sup> C. O. 417/284: H. J. Taylor, C/N/C, Matabeleland to Lawley, April 21, 1898 and Lawley to C/N/C Taylor, April 25, 1898.

as the leader of the militant Ndebele faction, gave Rhodes and his white colleagues most headaches, till the Rhodes party decided to silence him by bribing him with a 'handsome' financial gift.<sup>239</sup>

At the end of the risings, Karl Khumalo may have got away with his opposition but the BSA Co. had many ways of dealing with its critics, especially if they were African. Probably as an attempt to make up for its failure to nail Khumalo on any charges arising out of the risings as it did with Ndebele insurgents, other crimes of devious nature were laid against him in the post-1896 period. One such allegation concerned Khumalo's actions in introducing the Ndebele to the new techniques of challenging Company decisions in the courts of law. The case arose at the end of 1898, when Umjaan, one of the Ndebele leaders, approached Khumalo for advice on matters concerning the ill-treatment of Ndebele labourers at various labour centres and other general issues related to the land question in Matabeleland. Umjaan himself pointed out to the origin of the charge as:

I was talking with Karl Kumalo (sic). A son of mine had been killed, and died in a shaft near Mlugulu, and our lands had been taken from us, we considered our grievances. Karl then told me that a man called 'Quecha' -(lawyer)- would represent us, and get justice for us. We thought this white man had been sent by Government, and that he would hear our grievances,<sup>240</sup> and represent them to the Queen, and get redress for them.

Umjaan and those Ndebele leaders who had thus approached Khumalo were, in every way, convinced of the latter's ability to guide them to the proper channels through which their grievances could be redressed. This confidence was, in fact, well founded for it was the very reason why Khumalo had been allowed to stay in Matabeleland, in the first place, and was further portrayed in Umjaan's views, quoted by Captain Arthur Lawley, the Deputy Administrator for Matabeleland, as:

... he -(Umjaan)- learnt of the existence of such men as attorneys through Karl Khumalo, who told him that he knew of one. He -(Umjaan)- did not understand the white man's law. No one knew when a man was to be put in gaol, and he asked Khumalo if the attorney would assist in such a case.<sup>241</sup>

When in the event the lawyers in question, Walter Dyason and Elliott St. M. Hutchinson, came to Umjaan's, where they were introduced by Khumalo

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<sup>239</sup> Ranger: op. cit. pp. 247-8.

<sup>240</sup> C. O. 879/57: Statement by Umjaan.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid: Memorandum on the proceedings.

to the aggrieved Ndebele leaders and the character of the Ndebele problems was also explained to them, it was discovered that these grievances were quite genuine and substantial. Umjaan and his people had no land and were actually living as squatters on Sauerdale, the property of Rhodes near the Matopo hills. Lawley himself admitted that the incidence of land shortage among the Ndebele was high, but, of course, did not approve of the new method introduced by Khumalo to the aggrieved Ndebele. He refused to recognise the bona fides of Messrs Dyason and Hutchinson as representing the Ndebele people, taking the opportunity, at the same time, to warn the lawyers in question that only the Native Commissioners had the right to present the grievances of the Ndebele to the Administration. In this instance, it was stressed that it was to the Native Department officials and not to the courts of law that the Ndebele leaders were supposed to take their grievances. As for the question of taking the Ndebele grievances to the Queen, Captain Lawley indicated that 'Mgeni', (Sir Marshall Clarke) the Resident Commissioner, could just as well do.<sup>242</sup>

Perhaps as both a precautionary measure and a general demonstration of the Company's vindictive policies, those Ndebele leaders who had sought the advice of lawyers through Karl Khumalo and had met at Umjaan's to forward these grievances, were deprived of a month's salary each. These indunas included Faku, Mlungulu, Jozana, Mazwi, Hole, Dhliso, Nyameni, Manyakavula and Hewu. Umjaan himself was struck off the role of Government subsidized chiefs on the grounds that he was '... unfit to be a salaried Induna...'.<sup>243</sup> Those Ndebele leaders who had not attended the Khumalo meeting at Umjaan's, obviously intimidated by the drastic actions of the Administration against their colleagues, consequently requested the removal of Khumalo from amongst them. Sikombo, who saw the gravity of this new factor more clearly than his other loyalist colleagues, indicated, with regard to Khumalo's position within the Ndebele society, that:

Coming from the South, and being an educated man, he (Khumalo) very easily leads our people, because they imagine they have grievances, and he invents some story as to how they can obtain redress, and they follow his lead.<sup>243a</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid: Lawley to Messrs Coghlan and Dyason, November 18, 1898.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid: Memorandum... Bulawayo, December 12, 1898.

<sup>243a</sup> Ibid: Statement by Sikombo... Bulawayo, December 12, 1898.

Given this backing by the loyalist faction of the Ndebele traditional leadership coupled with the record of the Company's previous ill-treatment of Khumalo, it is hardly surprising therefore that the Company Administration should have once more resorted to punitive measures of one kind or another against this notable immigrant even in the post-1896 period as well. This move, on the part of the Administration during the years 1898 and 1899, was obviously precipitated here by Khumalo's active support of the movement to resurrect the Ndebele kingship in the person of Lobengula's son, Njube, the heir apparent, then studying in the Cape colony. The fact that it was Karl Khumalo, together with other royalist sympathizers like Somabulana, a leading Ndebele induna, who were not only corresponding with young Njube in connection with his proposed return to Southern Rhodesia, but had even convened a meeting of Ndebele leaders at Somabulana's home on the subject in July 1899, was, certainly, unpleasant news to the Company authorities. And even more unpalatable to the Salisbury and Bulawayo authorities were the rumours and speculations then circulating within the Ndebele society as a sequel to the Somabulana meeting. From the point of view of W. E. Thomas, the Native Commissioner of the Bulalima-Mangwe district, the rumours in question centred on Njube's anticipated return, whereupon he was to be made king of the Ndebele nation, after which 'he would take all the cattle, goats and sheep from all natives in the country who -(were)- not "thorough-bred" Matabele...' and would also treat as enemies 'all those who had remained loyal to the whites during the late rebellion of '96.' Moreover, after the expulsion of the whites from Matabeleland had been effected, which, according to these rumours, would take place soon after the ascendancy of Njube to power, '... the "friendlies" -(were)- to go too - or... Chief Njube -(would)- wipe them out.'<sup>244</sup>

As far as Karl Khumalo was concerned, his crime naturally lay in the fact that he was involved not only in the organisation of the meeting at Somabulana's, but also because he had been in charge of the general preparation for Njube's expected return and subsequent takeover, which, in this instance, also included the undermining of BSA Co. authority by systematically discrediting the Company officials in the country in order to win over the support of the

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<sup>244</sup> NB 1/1/8: W. E. Thomas, N/C Bulalima-Mangwe to Chief Native Commissioner, Bulawayo: July 10, 1899.

rank and file Ndebele. In this particular respect, Khumalo appears to have played his role very successfully. In the words of one, Msindo, a headman in the Matobo-Mawabeni district, who attended some of the proceedings instigated by Khumalo, the following picture is painted in the observer's mind:

Mvulane -(Karl Khumalo)- came to us -(at Somaxegwana's Village)- with a letter in his hand which he threw down in front of all the men saying 'This letter is to separate the people who adhere to the King -(Njube)- from the people who adhere to the white people.' I replied who is the letter from? Is it from Mr. Rhodes? He said that Mr. Rhodes had been put in prison. I said 'Is it from Mr. Taylor -(the Chief Native Commissioner)-?' He said 'Who is this Mr. Taylor of yours? He is only a policeman who is ill-treating us all (Duba).' Mlonjeni a young man of my kraal said to Mvulane that it was a lie that Mr. Rhodes was in prison. I threatened to hit Mvulane -(for the lies)- and told him if I caught him on the veldt by himself I would beat him.<sup>245</sup>

Whilst loyalist Ndebele traditional leaders like Msindo who felt threatened by Njube's alleged imminent return avowed to manhandle Khumalo, the bearer of this unpleasant news, the Company Administration, which also did not relish any prospective developments along these lines indicated above, however, imaginary these might have been, was naturally bound to take reprisal measures over the matter. Such measures were of course in accordance with official opinion, which, in the words of Native Commissioner Thomas, was apparently quite convinced that the proceedings relating to Njube's return were somehow '... indicative of the mischievous intrigue to which the late rebel indunas & the King's son Njube, -(were)- parties.' As an appropriate recipe for dealing with the situation, it was consequently recommended that the very idea that Njube should look upon himself 'as the future King of Matabeleland' had to be removed from the young prince's mind and the thinking of his royalist supporters once and for all allegedly 'for the peace' of the country.<sup>246</sup> For Khumalo however, more serious measures were in the pipeline and, for this reason, when the Anglo-Boer war broke out later that year, he was conveniently imprisoned. This arrest and detention of Khumalo at Fort Usher in the Matopo district at the end of November 1899, immediately after the declaration of martial law all over the country, was certainly an interesting piece of political victimization. Apparently his

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid: Deposition of Headman Msindo before H. M. G. Jackson, J. P. N/C Matobo-Mawabeni: September 16, 1899.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid: Thomas, N/C Bulalima-Mangwe to C/N/C Bulawayo: July 10, 1899.

African co-detainees, at the time, were mostly suspected collaborators with the Boers, arrested in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and thrown into the Bulawayo gaol. But these were sooner or later released before the end of 1899.<sup>247</sup>

Karl Khumalo's case was peculiar and more complicated; perhaps even more so, at this stage, as an interesting piece of collusion between the BSACo. and the Imperial Government consequently emerged. While the Company was rather anxious to exploit the current military state of affairs in the sub-continent to forestall further opposition from people of Khumalo's calibre, the Colonial Office, on the other hand, was in no mood to examine the pros and cons of the matter. It was simply satisfied with the general contention that, as Sir Hartman Just saw it, because Karl Khumalo had given 'trouble long ago', there was no need for the Colonial Office 'to take special notice of him - (Khumalo) -, beyond enquiring the legality of this long detention'.<sup>248</sup> By this time, it was already two years since Khumalo had been detained. But by these means, both the BSACo. and the Imperial Government conspired to frustrate the career of one of the most enterprising members of the African pioneers in the country's colonial era and, in so doing, produced the first political detainee, long before the Nkomos, the Sitholes and the rest in the country's political history.<sup>249</sup>

In one sense, the Karl Khumalo case certainly demonstrates more starkly than anything else the growing chasm between the early foreign Africans and their former white colonist patrons in the post-1896 period. Because of these developments, it might have become evident to this class of immigrants that the implications of colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia were indeed more profound and complex than they could at first understand. Perhaps to widen the scope of white colonist phobia towards the 'Cape Boys' and their associates even further in the post-1896 period in early Southern Rhodesia, it might be pertinent to also compare the genesis of white colonist attitudes in both lay and missionary fields. On the religious side of affairs

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<sup>247</sup> C. O. 417/284: Base Commandants' Office, Bulawayo, to Clarke: October 1, 1900.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*: Minute by H. W. Just to Chamberlain: February 9, 1901.

<sup>249</sup> For the African detainees of the later period of colonist Rhodesian history: Vide: D. Mutasa: Rhodesian Black Behind Bars: Mowbrays: London: 1975.

where the process of African elite formation was, in the early phases of Southern Rhodesian history, a field dominated essentially by black émigrés from the South, it would appear that some of the foreign African missionaries from the South were just as badly treated as their compatriots in secular occupations, in the post-1896 period or thereabout. In this instance, those African missionaries from the South associated, for instance, with the Dutch Reformed Church, particularly in Southern Mashonaland, were in no better position than either Karl Khumalo or other 'Cape Boys', as far as their post-1896 lot was concerned. The racial polarization which characterized the D/R/C mission in early Southern Rhodesia due to its Boer connections was easily the greatest challenge the African pioneer missionaries had to contend with as the number of white workers of this body increased, on account of the more favourable post-1896 conditions of settlement. In the end, it was only natural therefore that by the close of the nineteenth century, some of these foreign African workers should desert the D/R/C mission in frustration and join the relatively freer African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). Rev. Michael Makgatho portrays this kind of reaction to those negative institutional aspects within the D/R/C body politic, when he briefly gave, as his reasons for leaving this church, the following testimony in 1904:

I was a minister with the Dutch Reformed Church; I was sent from the Transvaal with the Rev. Mr. Hofmeyr to Mashonaland, and I was the first Dutch Reformed minister in Mashonaland, even before Mr. Louw was sent there. Mr. Louw followed me and the Rev. S. P. Helm: they -(both)-... followed me to Mashonaland. After the Rev. Helm's return to the Transvaal, the Rev. Mr. Louw was not good to me, he was always against me, and tried to find something against me. A few years later he almost beat me in church on account of the school. Owing to personal differences between myself and Mr. Louw I changed my church.<sup>250</sup>

This unfortunate rupture between Makgatho and his Boer colleagues of the D/R/C mission, which appears to have occurred before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War (1892-1902), may have been prompted by a host of reasons. By 1898, there was already in Southern Rhodesia a sizeable AMEC presence under an African minister from Klerksdorp in the Transvaal whose activities Makgatho should have easily known, as he also came from the same

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<sup>250</sup> Evidence of Rev. Michael (Micah) Makgatho, AMEC, Bulawayo: September 10, 1904: loc. cit.

country. This new church was by then effectively making inroads into the African circles, purporting, as it did, to provide an alternative religious ideology more easily conceivable to the African converts; an ideology characterized by the AMEC's claim to be '... the church of coloured people'; obviously a term borrowed from its Afro-American progenitors.<sup>251</sup> In the second place, African missionaries from the South and especially from the Boer republics, were quite aware of the differences between what they popularly termed 'the British Government' as against 'the Dutch Government.' They knew just too well the various shades of racial attitudes that differentiated these two white races in their dealings with non-European peoples. Conscious as these African émigrés from the South were that the Boers did not wield any political power in Southern Rhodesia and were thus not always likely to have it their own way, as they did in the Boer republics below the Limpopo, it is not surprising therefore that Makgatho and many of his compatriots left the D/R/C in response to ill-treatment and abuse to join the AMEC which was, at least in those early days, dominated by Africans from the South in its leadership and following.<sup>252</sup>

But not all these early foreign African missionaries attached to the D/R/C took the course of action chosen by Rev. Makgatho. Some remained within the D/R/C fold and positively exerted their influence on the course of Southern Rhodesian national developments from within the fold of this mission. Isaac Khumalo for example, a Transvaal Ndebele, who had also come to work in Southern Mashonaland as a D/R/C evangelist in the pre-colonial days, is an interesting case. Khumalo worked among his Nguni kinsmen, the Hlengwe (Shangaan) of the Chibi district, the people of Chief Vurumela, where he had been placed in the period 1887-91. But with the passage of time, he became inexorably involved in other specious developments within his flock and in 1912 was caught up in the tide of Hlengwe nationalism championed especially by Hlengwe labour migrants to the Transvaal, where they had obviously been influenced by the tempo of political affairs amongst the African peoples there. These Hlengwe labour migrants even enlisted the help of the famous Xhosa leader, Dr. Walter B. Rubusana, in their efforts to unite the Shangaan people in Southern Rhodesia, the Northern Transvaal and Mozambique and

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<sup>251</sup> Evidence of Rev. Makgatho: loc. cit.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid: pp. 200-1; Vide (also) Supra: pp. 23-8.



ultimately drive out the Portuguese from their old Shangaan homeland, Gazaland (Southern Mozambique). Though Isaac Khumalo may not have had anything to do with this Shangaan movement, which was in all appearances an external affair, the fact that he was the contact and addressee of correspondence from these dissidents put him into very bad books with the Southern Rhodesian authorities. Both the D/R/C and the Native Department were quite convinced, in their suspicions, on Khumalo's malevolent activities and thus concluded that he should be kept under scrutiny.<sup>253</sup>

Another imposing character from the early group of foreign African missionaries of the D/R/C from the South was Lucas Mokwele (Mokwile), who started work at Madzivire's in the Chibi district of Southern Mashonaland in the period 1889-1892. Mokwile, unlike Makgatho and Khumalo, appears to have been quite successful within the context of the Sotho community of the Victoria Circle as a whole. He was the father of the Johannes Mokwile, the president of the loyalist Rhodesian Native Voters' Association of the 1920's and it was at Madzivire's where Johannes himself was born in 1894, being later educated at the London Missionary Society institute at Tiger Kloof in the Cape.<sup>254</sup>

It is here quite interesting also to observe in passing, the role of these foreign African missionaries associated with the D/R/C in particular, in the process of African elite formation and general black/white interaction in early Southern Rhodesia. Most of them actually later emerged as the nucleus of the Sotho land-owning elite of the Victoria Circle, a role they attained by exploiting their connections with the D/R/C mission to acquire land from Boer private landowners. The British South Africa Company Administration, which was not generally disposed to show a generous attitude to Africans on the land question, could not, in any way, prevent these Sotho people from buying the same from private landowners. The land so acquired consisted of two farms, the Erichsthal and the Niekerk's Rust and it was in the latter that Lucas Mokwile had a share.<sup>255</sup> Thus the D/R/C mission, capitalising on its

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<sup>253</sup> C. O. 417/510: W. C. Palgrave, Assistant Native Commissioner, Victoria, to Chief Native Commissioner, Mashonaland, Salisbury: February 8, 1912.

<sup>254</sup> J. S. Mokwile 'Native Ideals' NADA: No. 2: 1924: pp. 95-7.

<sup>255</sup> Report of the Native Land Board for the Year Ended: March 31, 1933: p. 5 and Mokwile 'Native Ideals': loc cit.

geographical advantages and its bases in the Transvaal, acted as an agency for introducing a constituent African community from the South, somewhat loyal to D/R/C creed and very active in the process of social change. But, at the same time, this process of African elite formation also antagonised white colonist sentiment to a large extent.

It is against this background of a burgeoning African elite and its potential to threaten the interests of the white society, particularly the secondary colonists, that the history of the non-European auxiliaries from the South in post-1896 Southern Rhodesia should therefore be examined. Moreover, a very strong brand of racial hostility had emerged in the post-1896 era as a result of the massacres and excesses of zeal during the risings. The white settlers had become increasingly conscious on matters concerning their security and welfare, whilst the BSACo. Administration had also become particularly hypersensitive to white settlers' views. It was therefore in accordance with this mood that foreign African aides of yester-year, whether lay or religious, became the new foes of the Southern Rhodesian white settlers of post-1896 era and the restrictive legislation against the 'Cape Boys' in terms of their habitation,<sup>256</sup> together with Karl Khumalo's detention under the pretext of the 1899-1902 martial law,<sup>257</sup> are certainly indicative of this changing character of the relationship between these erstwhile masters and servants.

The same deductions discussed above can also be applied to the treatment of another African pioneer from the South, namely the former secretary of Lobengula, the Lovedale-educated Khoikhoi historical character, John Jacobs. Since the end of the 1893 war, Jacobs became easily the most disliked African in the Company territories and his history of political detentions, arrests and deportations by the Company Administration dates back to 1894 till 1923; the very end of Company rule in Southern Rhodesia. In John Jacob's case, characteristic white hatred of educated Africans was here further complicated by the struggle between him and the BSACo. to recover Lobengula's wealth, estimated at '£2,800,000 in coins, 36 bars of raw gold, 10 wagon loads of ivory -(and)- 400 diamonds...'. The burial of this vast wealth had been witnessed by Jacobs and a few Ndebele notables before Loben-

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<sup>256</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 162-3.

<sup>257</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 168-74.

gula's mysterious disappearance in 1893.<sup>258</sup> The Company obviously feared that Jacobs might surreptitiously lay hands on this mystical treasure to his own advantage.

What becomes quite apparent in the post-1896 treatment of the 'Cape Boys' and their associates is that as the Company's military difficulties receded, the former foreign African auxiliaries, especially the 'Cape Boys', gradually sank into oblivion. They had become a spent-force and all what seemed left for them to inherit were settler contempt and animosity. Although these former auxiliaries may have managed to retain some of their traditional occupational roles in the mining and transport industries as wagon drivers and leaders or the Vachairi up to more recent times of Southern Rhodesian history,<sup>259</sup> in social and political terms, settler hostility towards them grew and mellowed with time. Such hostility from their former patron community is well captured in Kingsley Fairbridge's poem The Bastard, which portrays the half-caste 'Cape Boys' in the following manner:

Neither the one nor the other, neither the  
White nor the Black,  
By the side of the dusty wagon outspanned  
on the highveld track,  
Alone by the dung-fed fire where sad-voiced  
night-jars wheel,  
Goliath Witbooi the half-caste partakes  
of his evening meal.

At odds with God in His heaven, at sixes  
and sevens with man,  
The colour showing beneath the white,  
the white beneath the tan,  
Despised and distrusted by the White and  
by the Black; wifeless, childless, and alone -  
Father, how could you have done it! O Mother,  
you might have known. . . .

But no. For hope is still present, and hope  
is a father to all,

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<sup>258</sup> C. O. 417/615: Robert McLagan, of R. McLagan and S. J. Peters, Bulawayo, to Lord Milner: February 25, 1918: C. O. 417/692: Ernest W. S. Montagu, Acting Administrator to Prince Arthur of Connaught, High Commissioner: March 8, 1923 and Extract from The Rand Daily Mail: September 7, 1917.

<sup>259</sup> Vambe speaks of 'Cape Boys' as wagon drivers and leaders in the 1920's and 1930's economic depression in the Salisbury district. Vide: op. cit. pp. 203-5.

And the long road stretches to Northward -  
and he hears the long road call -  
And the Veld is a kindly mother, the  
bullocks doze at the chain,  
Umfaan will return by morning, and he will  
trek on again.

And the fire lights up the wagon, and the smoke  
goes by with the breeze,  
And he dreams of the good North hunting - old  
camps beneath the trees,  
In the timbered low-veld country where the game  
is as thick as stock,  
With never a White Man to scorn him and  
never a Black Man to mock.

Yea, good is the road to the Northward through  
the sun-warmed winter days  
When the fine dust blows to leeward and the  
track leads round the vleis,  
To sit on the fore-part locker and to drone to the  
warm spent wind  
The chant of the New before one and the dirge  
of the Old, behind.

Notwithstanding the derogatory overtones, these lines by the famous Southern Rhodesian colonist poet and founder of the Rhodesia Herald, could be regarded, under other circumstances, as an unsolicited tribute to a hitherto ignored ancillary factor in the history of Southern Rhodesia. What settler hostility implied after 1896 was not so much that the 'Cape Boys' and their allies from the South were undesirable as it was a call for them to divert their energies into new channels. Actually what the white community and the BSACo. Administration required after 1896 were not African soldiers and self-appointed visionaries but African labourers. It is therefore the labour question and the beginnings of an external supply that we shall examine in the next chapters.

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260 Kingsley Fairbridge: Veld Verse and other Lines: David Nutt: London:  
1909: pp. 35-8.

## CHAPTER 3

### Introducing the Abyssinian, Arab and Asiatic Elements: The Ancillary Labour Solutions Which Failed, 1898-1904

#### Introduction

In the previous chapters we have discussed at length how foreign African auxiliaries were used in the wars of conquest and 'pacification' in early Southern Rhodesia. We have also seen how in the post-1896 period, relations between these foreign African auxiliaries and their white colonist patrons eventually turned sour as the latter required labour supply to meet the needs of such labour-intensive operations as the mining industry. Henceforth, it will be argued that it was basically those undesirable features of the labour recruiting activities of the BSACo. Administration and its agencies which ultimately alienated local African labour supply, whose place was subsequently taken up by its foreign immigrant equivalent: thus succeeding, in the process, in turning Southern Rhodesia into both a labour-consuming and labour-exporting country within the context of the geographical and economic set-up of Southern Africa as a whole. In the various sections of this proceeding study, it will be argued that through the deployment of selective labour policies and the general resort by employers to social and psychological stereotypes to influence economic decisions in a composite colonial society, the labour problem was grievously aggravated and the conditions of the Rhodesian labour market distorted out of recognition.<sup>1</sup> By trying to single out ethnic factors as the inherent causes of negative labour response and shortage and hence their economic ruination, Southern Rhodesian employers resorted to far-fetched and somewhat artificial solutions to a situation smacking of a complex admixture of concrete and imaginary problems. Moreover, the drive by these employers to achieve a balance between cost minimization, on one hand, and a more meaningful dependent relationship between master and employee, which did not involve the risks of frequent disruptions, particularly harmful within the context of a low-profit mining industry, on the other,<sup>2</sup> inevitably

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<sup>1</sup>Vide Infra: Chapter 5: pp. 394-404.

predisposed the Southern Rhodesian employers to a more than remarkable degree of reliance on foreign labour and all the advantages it offered over the local sources.<sup>3</sup> Thus was initiated a peculiarly Southern Rhodesian paradox whereby external labour entered the country via the northern Zambasi approaches and, through a bizarre revolving-door mechanism, both locals and foreigners left from the Southern (Limpopo) frontier to the Rand. Abyssinian, Arab, Asiatic and trans-Zambesian factors were among the many external solutions that were tried in early Southern Rhodesia, albeit with various degrees of success, as both employers and officials tried to arrest a labour situation progressively getting out of hand.

i The North-East African and Arabian Peninsula  
Labour Schemes, 1898-1902:

From the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers' point of view, the period between 1898 and 1904 was specially suitable for the injection of all forms of external African and other non-European groups for labour purposes. As has been demonstrated elsewhere in the case of the Selukwe mines, the relationship between the 'colonized' and the 'colonizers' in the post-1896 era was by no means amicable and the question of labour supply and exploitation tended to emphasize only too well the hierarchical relationship between the dominant and the subordinate social segments of the Rhodesian colonial society, with pronounced adverse effects for either the people involved or the employers for whom such labour was required.<sup>4</sup> Given this atmosphere of uneasy truce, poor labour and race relations, as well as what the frustrated colonist employers regarded as a generally negative labour response and the inefficiency of labourers from local African sources, it is obvious that some of these employers lost all hope with regard to procuring requisite labour quotas from the local sources. The Matabeleland employers, in particular, demonstrated such a degree of des-

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<sup>2</sup>Phimister argues that the BSACo. and Rhodesian employers were aware of the poverty of the Rhodesian mining industry as early as the pre-1896 period and that the 1896-7 risings were a result of this poverty. Vide: I. R. Phimister: History of Mining in Southern Rhodesia up to 1953: Ph. D (unpublished) thesis, University of Rhodesia: March 1975: pp. 61-3.

<sup>3</sup>For theoretical analysis on this point: Vide: *Infra* pp. 374-403

<sup>4</sup>The Selukwe case study was dealt with in what was Chapter 3 of the original draft, but dropped in the end because the work had become too long. It will however be prepared for publication purposes.

pondence when they forbade the Labour Board of that province to carry out any recruiting activities in Mashonaland and, accordingly, withdrew their agents from this province between 1900 and 1901.<sup>5</sup> Besides, the failure of the Southern Rhodesian employers to exploit more effectively the labour sources lately abandoned by the Rand due to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War and, in this way, put to good use the temporary suspension of work on these more profitable mines of the South, whilst the war lasted, strengthened the resolve of these employers to cast their nets farther afield.

Although this failure to exploit the former labour sources of the Rand may have been, as in the case of Mozambique, beyond the control of the Southern Rhodesian employers, given for instance the traditional Anglo-Portuguese hostility in the sub-continent,<sup>6</sup> the Southern Rhodesian mining industry itself also undermined any prospects of reasonable labour supply from traditionally Rand-orientated areas even during the course of the Anglo-Boer War. The experiment to introduce labour from the Transkei in 1900 and 1901, labour obviously used hitherto to feed the Rand, crumbled because of the poor labour conditions prevailing in the Selukwe mining district where it had been initiated.<sup>7</sup> Indeed no surgical analysis of the causes of these reverses was undertaken and, in accordance with the then prevailing interpretation of the Southern Rhodesian colonial society, the economic and political aspects attendant to the failure of labour supply from the Delagoa Bay area of Mozambique for example were also under-played and this ill-success, especially that of contracts between Messrs Breyner and Wirth of Lourenco Marques and the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, arrived at in 1900-1, to supply the Rhodesian mining industry with Shangaan labour to the amount of 3,000 recruits per annum, was ascribed to issues of little significance, as far as labour exploitation was concerned.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report, 1901: loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Vide: *Infra*: pp. 184-5.

<sup>7</sup> Vide: Mss. Diary of William Impey Stanform Driver, Assistant Native Commissioner (hereafter Ass. N/C) Upper Gwelo district (Selukwe), Vols. I & 2: October 1896 to June 1898: British Museum: London.

<sup>8</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: p. 30.

Some of the causes of this unsuccessful Mozambique venture were viewed by Southern Rhodesian employers in terms of psychological factors, widely believed to be the main cause of Shangaan labour attraction to the Rand mines. For instance, whilst the Southern Rhodesian mining magnates were prepared to accept, as incontrovertible, the geographical advantages of the Rand, in relation to its proximity to Delagoa Bay and other predominantly Shangaan regions of Southern Mozambique, they could however hardly admit the effectiveness, let alone the appreciation by Shangaan labourers themselves, of the higher wages offered at the Rand, which of course compared quite favourably with those obtainable in Southern Rhodesia. To the Southern Rhodesian colonist employer, the operative factors by means of which the Rand was able to extract about 70% of its labour force from these areas could only be interpreted simply in terms of the social and psychological characteristics of the African labourer. Here for example, the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines belaboured the assumptions that Shangaan labourers were predisposed to proceed to the Rand rather than to Southern Rhodesia not only because of the railway facilities which made it easier for them to reach the Rand mines, but also because of a large number of their countrymen already there, with whom they could share the fortunes and hazards of migrant life, not to mention in this case too the fabled 'pull' of larger industrial and mining centres, 'full of attractions, in which he ~~(the Shangaan labourer)~~ ~~(could)~~ readily gratify his baser instincts.'<sup>9</sup> This state of affairs was not unnaturally a drawback to the Southern Rhodesian colonist employer, where, as C. T. Holland, the President of the Bulawayo-based Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, admitted, the mines were:

... scattered, the gangs smaller, malaria fever often ~~(prevailing)~~ during part of the wet season, no liquor ~~(was)~~ obtainable, and... no town ~~(was)~~ at hand in which<sup>9a</sup> the native ~~(could)~~ indulge in his favourite amusements.

For this exodus of Shangaan labour to the Rand, the Southern Rhodesian employers considered the Portuguese authorities equally blameworthy, because of their alleged collaboration with the Rand employers by exerting their influence to the benefit of the latter in return for 'personal pecuniary benefits'. Moreover, in accordance with general colonist views which por-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid: pp. 50-1.

<sup>9a</sup> Ibid.



trayed the image of the African labourer in negative terms, as then befitting the social and psychological attitudes of racially hierarchical colonial societies, the solutions offered by the Southern Rhodesian employers to remedy this genesis of Shangaan labour to the Rand, obviously to the disadvantage of the Southern Rhodesian mining industry, were essentially psychological and not by any means economic in character. Against a background full of political obstacles imposed by the Portuguese who had forbidden all forms of migration, even clandestine, into Southern Rhodesia from Mozambique and the unfavourable economic competition with the Rand, Milton, the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, saw the provision of 'kaffir beer' as the only viable solution to thwart these obstacles by, in this instance, beating the African labourer at his own game and thus increasing labour supply from this and other sources.

Bearing in mind the legislative restrictions governing the provision of beer in general to the non-European races in the country and the undertakings previously given to humanitarian circles, during the initial annexation of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, Milton therefore suggested to Rhodes, with calculated furtiveness, in January 1902 that:

I am sure that in reasonable quantities & under regulation it ~~-(beer)-~~ would be good for the natives but the mere intention of supplying 'beer' would give Fox Bourne & Co. a fit. If we <sup>10</sup> could only call it 'Rapoko tea' they ~~-(APS)-~~ would be charmed.

But still no labour was forthcoming from Mozambique to meet the requirements of Southern Rhodesian employers, especially given in this case the uneasy diplomatic entanglements which emerged during the Anglo-Boer War. London Wall, after sounding the Colonial and Foreign Offices on the matter had so informed its local officials in Southern Africa in this vein, <sup>11</sup> and perhaps those employers who were gradually pinning their hopes on Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour still had, after all, some card left to chew. <sup>12</sup>

An interesting aspect of the movement to import labour from the horn of

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<sup>10</sup> Mss. Afr. S. 228/CI: Milton to Rhodes: January 25, 1902.

<sup>11</sup> C. O. 417/311: BSACo., London, to Charter, Cape Town, Cablegram: October 2, 1900.

<sup>12</sup> C. O. 468/2: Report of Mr. H. E. Jones, Consulting Engineer, Rhodesia Exploration and Development Co, Ltd., for the Year ending 30th September 1901: Enclosed in BSACo, Reports on Mining in Rhodesia: 1897-1902: p. 320: S. Rhodesia Sessional Papers: P/R/O: London.

Africa, prior to the end of the Anglo-Boer War, was the disdainful attitude the Southern Rhodesian employers adopted towards the then incipient trans-Zambesian immigrant labour supply, especially the Lozi and the 'Zambesis'; a term applied by the white settlers to the Mashukulumbwe, Tonga, Nkoya and other ethnic groups from the Zambesi region of North-Western Rhodesia.<sup>12a</sup> This attitude was of course a defensive measure by the employers concerned to counter the negative reactions of these trans-Zambesian recruits to their various forms of employment in Southern Rhodesia at this early period of labour immigration into the country. Specifically, the reactions of these early trans-Zambesian arrivals were a product of the physical and psychological problems they faced in Southern Rhodesia's strange environment and the arduous frontier situation they encountered. Physically debilitated, sick and flabby on account of the long distance travel and feeding on strange food, prepared somewhat indifferently, and subjected to the impersonal regimen of unfamiliar labour agents and touts, these new and 'unseasoned' recruits, obviously ill-adapted to this type of situation, concluded that the conditions of work in Southern Rhodesia were more than they had bargained for and consequently felt a sense of betrayal by those responsible for their enlistment.

Such conditions as those encountered in Southern Rhodesia by the early trans-Zambesian labourers resembled, to a large measure, those appertaining to indentured 'coolie' labourers in the sugar plantations of Natal, the West Indies and Mauritius. But unlike their Asiatic counterparts, compelled by circumstances to overlook the calls and tugs of their nostalgia and broken hearts, the trans-Zambesian labourers in Southern Rhodesia whose homes were relatively nearer could only apply the weapon whose effectiveness even their employers could not question: that is, desertion.<sup>13</sup> But for this desertion and the relatively discouraging physical condition in which these recruits arrived, some Southern Rhodesian employers therefore naturally considered Lozi and other trans-Zambesian labourers, at this early period, not worthy the expense the scheme required in bringing them down for mine

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<sup>12a</sup> For a general usage of the term 'Zambesis' in reference to some northern Africans and its related confusion: Vide: R. C. Tredgold: The Rhodesia That Was My Life: Allen & Unwin: London: 1968: pp. 30-1 and E. Colson: 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds.): Seven Tribes of British Central Africa: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1952: pp. 94-5.

work, which was even more so in the face of the then promising movement to introduce Abyssinian, Arab, Somali and Asiatic labour from even further afield.

As early as October 1898, the physical aptitude of the Lozi and 'Zambesi' labourers on the mines in Southern Rhodesia had so disillusioned white employers and officials, largely due to the lack of proper care during the course of their recruitment and en route to the South by private recruiters, that their engagement was left in serious doubt. The morbidity rate amongst these recruits was indeed frightful. P. A. Stuart, the Acting Native Commissioner of the Bubi district in Matabeleland and an enthusiastic advocate of forced labour for the local Africans, indeed used this state of affairs to promote his cause. After visiting the Bonsor mine in the Selukwe district and the Queen's Mine, Bulawayo district, where, as he put it, the 'Zambesi -(labourers)- were dying like sheep,' Stuart, who was by no means a negro-ophile, cast himself into the role of a redeemer and, in quasi-evangelical terms, stated:

Is it right? Is it human, Is it Christian, that such a state of things should continue?

I am no great partisan of the 'SPC to Natives', but in case of this sort, I feel I must speak, either from a sense of duty, or for the purpose of proving my argument -(on forced labour)-.

Zambesi - the raw Zambesi - seem to die just the same in summer, as they do in winter, and I cannot - they cannot - explain the cause.<sup>14</sup>

Stuart's views on trans-Zambesian labourers were corroborated by the head of the Native Department in Matabeleland, Herbert Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner, in his report on conditions at the Selukwe mines in July 1900. Commenting on the state of affairs at the Bonsor mine, where, out of a gang of 157 Lozi labour recruits, about 152 deserted and only 5 had remained, and on the Dunraven and Surprise mines, where a very high rate of mortality also prevailed and a large proportion of Lozi and Angoni labourers were in hospital, C/N/C Taylor put the blame on the change of climatic con-

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<sup>13</sup>For comparative conditions of indentured 'coolies' on sugar plantation: Vide: Hugh Tinker: A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830-1920: Oxford University Press: London: 1974: pp. 180-1.

<sup>14</sup>NB 1/1/6: P. A. Stuart, Acting N/C, Bubi to C/N/C Bulawayo: October 22, 1898.

ditions for these labourers from 'the hot latitudes North of the Zambesi' and the negligence of both the Labour Agents and the Labour Board on the question of providing their recruits with adequate warm clothing and food, the lack of which Taylor regarded as a 'shortsighted policy'. In this official's view, these trans-Zambesian labourers were obviously adversely affected by this state of neglect with the result that they:

... arrive in this country -(Southern Rhodesia)- during the winter months unprovided with any clothing whatever to protect them from the climate and consequently numbers of them die on the way down, whilst the majority of those that reach their destination are in such a weak state of health that they are either past recovery or subjects for a long treatment in hospital before they are fit for labour.<sup>15</sup>

Such conditions as these which made the trans-Zambesian labourers generally vulnerable to dysentery, pneumonia and related diseases, invariably debilitating them, compelled Southern Rhodesian employers to conclude as C/N/C Taylor did, that the trans-Zambesian labourer, in point of physique, was 'greatly inferior' to the labourer recruited locally from the province of Matabeleland, hence less valuable and serviceable than the latter. The view gained greater credence amongst the mine managers as they campaigned for Abyssinian, Arab and Asiatic labour.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to these misgivings on the labour value of trans-Zambesians, the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia were infuriated by these labourers' rate of desertion, then a practice by no means confined to trans-Zambesians only. However, this proclivity amongst recruits who had cost the mines 'upwards of £2 per head' to bring them down to work in Southern Rhodesia was, as the Matabeleland (Rhodesia) Chamber of Mines put it, too heavy a loss for the companies involved.<sup>17</sup> Such conclusions by this mining body were of course based on grievances of individual mine managers and other members of this mining organisation. For example, B. G. Byerley, the manager of Morven mine near Bembesi in the Bubi district, complained in June 1901, about the desertion of 143 labourers, out of a labour force of 214 supplied by both Clarke and Nielsen, agents of the Labour Board, stationed at

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<sup>15</sup> C. O. 417/311: C/N/C Taylor's Report on Native Labour on the Mines in the Selukwe District, July 27, 1900.

<sup>16</sup> C. O. 468/2: Report of Mr. C. T. Holland, General Manager, Chartered Goldfields, Ltd, for the year ended 30th June, 1901 in BSACo. Reports... p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report, 1902: pp. 17-8.

the Victoria Falls and Bulalima district respectively,<sup>18</sup> whilst similar objections were also raised by H. W. Hodson of Surprise mine in the Selukwe district. As Hodson indicated to the Bulawayo branch of the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, out of the first gang of 91 Lozi labour recruits supplied to his mine by the Labour Board in July 1901, only 71 had arrived at the mine, the rest having deserted en route. The second group of 41 Lozi recruits did not impress the management of the Surprise mine either, apparently having overstayed their rest days in Gwelo, thus incurring extra expenses with the Meikle Brothers responsible for their food supply, much to the displeasure of these recruits' prospective employers.<sup>19</sup> In the final analysis, the Surprise mine would not be persuaded to take any more Lozi recruits as the mine management were convinced that they '~~could~~ do nothing with them'.<sup>20</sup>

Employers in Mashonaland too adopted similar attitudes towards their trans-Zambesian labour supply, albeit for slightly different reasons. Under a 'gentlemen's agreement' between the two branches of the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, the Salisbury branch was entitled to recruit labour across the Zambesi for Mashonaland employers from those regions east of the line running north and south through Zumbo on the Zambesi, whilst the areas west of this line of demarcation were reserved for Matabeleland.<sup>21</sup> In simple terms, this meant that whilst the Salisbury branch of the Labour Board could not recruit labour from Barotseland and the rest of North-Western Rhodesia, it had, on the other hand, exclusive rights over labour recruited mainly from North-Eastern Rhodesia and British Central Africa (Nyasaland); the home of the Angoni, Bemba, Senga, Chewa, Chikunda and other ethnic groups which later formed the bulk of the farm and mine labour of Mashonaland and patronized the Mtoko-Missale and the Feira-Kanyemba-Mount Darwin routes, connecting the two Rhodesias.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> B. G. Byerley, Manager: The Morven (Rhodesia) Co. Ltd., Bembesi, to Secretary, Labour Board, Bulawayo: June 18, 1901: Ibid: p. 61.

<sup>19</sup> H. W. Hodson, Mine Secretary, Surprise Mining Co., Ltd., Selukwe to Labour Board, Bulawayo, July 1, 1901: Ibid: pp. 61-2.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Currie, Consulting Engineer, The Surprise Gold Mining Co. Ltd., to the Secretary, Labour Board, Bulawayo, September 17, 1901: in Ibid: p. 71.

<sup>21</sup> Salisbury Chamber of Mines Report, 1901: p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Vide infra: Chapter 5; and also: J. A. Barnes: 'The Fort Jameson Ngoni' in Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman (eds): Seven Tribes of British Central Africa: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1951: pp. 244-50.

Yet even at this early stage of external labour recruitment and during the campaign for Arab, Abyssinian, Asiatic as well as the all-time popular Shangaan labour from the Delagoa Bay area of Mozambique, Frank Jolmsen, the president of the Salisbury Chamber of Mines, apparently disillusioned by the desertion of trans-Zambesian recruits at the rate of about 50 per cent out of a total of 1,240 brought into the country in 1900-1 at the cost of '22s 7d per head', was also quite prepared to write off any further prospects of labour supply from across the Zambesi, arguing that such material was '...hopeless... for any immediate solution to our labour problem...'.<sup>23</sup> Here it must be pointed out that the motives of the Mashonaland employers in advocating for external labour supply from the far-flung corners of Africa and Asia were not in any way genuine. In some circles, even the importation of labour from outside the country was regarded as derisory, especially in view of the fact that the population of Mashonaland was considered large enough to meet the labour requirements of the territory and, from the viewpoint of J. A. Woodburn, the manager of the Rezende mine in the Umtali district, such foreign labour as the Labour Board and hitherto supplied offered little advantage over the local supply, being in the main 'uncertain and erratic...'.<sup>24</sup>

What may have strengthened the resolve of the Mashonaland employers to resort to external labour sources other than the trans-Zambesian supply may have been a sense of insecurity amongst these employers; insecurity engendered not only by the problem of desertion and related aspects of negative labour response, but also by the threat posed by the planters of North-Eastern Rhodesia and British Central Africa (Nyasaland). As early as January 1900, these planters, in alliance with the commercial sector of the two territories, objected to labour migration to Southern Rhodesia on the grounds of the moral problems such a phenomenon raised for the African population of the areas concerned and the economic ruination it implied to local agriculture and commerce. Accordingly, such a state of affairs, which could not benefit local economic interests in any way, had to be stopped by administrative fiat.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Salisbury Chamber of Mines Report 1901: pp, 22-3.

<sup>24</sup> C. O. 468/2: Report of J. A. Woodburn, Manager Rezende Ltd., for the Year Ending 30th June, 1901: in BSACo, Reports: p. 306.

<sup>25</sup> A 11/2/8/5: Petition prepared by the Committee of the BCA Chambers of Commerce for presentation through H. M. Commissioner to the Foreign

Although the genesis of this negative attitude amongst the employers towards the incipient labour supply from across the Zambesi had its roots largely in the weaknesses underlying the constraints of a low-profit mining industry, these same employers would not apply such remedies as would have rendered their properties more attractive and less repellent to potential labourers. At the Globe and Phoenix mine for instance, both local and trans-Zambesian labourers had, at this early date, found desertion a useful weapon. Notwithstanding the assertions of the local mine management that such desertion was without '... any reason or cause for complaint...',<sup>26</sup> the Native Department came to view the situation at this mine with askance. The Native Commissioner of the Charter district, W. M. Taylor, observed in May 1902, the poor compound accommodation provided at the Globe and Phoenix mine, which consisted of an iron building, divided into eight rooms 'built on bare ground without any floors to them' and the general dislike of the labourers for this type of accommodation that gangs of labourers actually preferred to live in the huts 'put up roughly' by themselves on arrival. It was to the discomfort occasioned by this compound accommodation and the lack of change of diet that N/C Taylor ascribed the labour problem of the mine, given especially the high percentage of sickness amongst the labourers thereon and, with regard to the 128 desertions amongst the 410 Charter district labourers forwarded thither, Taylor could only comment:

Unless they -(Globe and Phoenix)- have a proper compound, with hospital and surgery in one, and kept properly clean, it is impossible, with the number of natives employed, to work the mine satisfactorily.<sup>27</sup>

The high morbidity and accident rates at the Selukwe mines were also some of the direct causes of their chronic problems there too, however much the mine authorities denounced both local and trans-Zambesian labour.<sup>28</sup> As far as the employers were concerned, their solution was, at this point in time,

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Office, n. d. Enclosed in Robert Codrington, Deputy Administrator, Fort Jameson, to Chief Secretary, BSACo., Salisbury: January 31, 1900.

<sup>26</sup> Theo Haddon, Manager, Globe and Phoenix Gold Mining Co. Ltd., to Secretary Labour Board Bulawayo, n. d. in Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Report 1902: p. 63.

<sup>27</sup> W. M. Taylor N/C Charter to C/N/C Mashonaland, Salisbury: May 1, 1902: Ibid: pp. 71-2.

<sup>28</sup> C. O. 417/311: C/N/C Taylor's Report on Native Labour on the mines in the Selukwe District, July 27, 1900.

twofold. Like their cousins in the Transvaal, the Randlords, who successfully influenced the Secretary for Native Affairs, Sir Godfrey Lagden, and dictated the form of pass legislation they required as an administrative weapon to control African labour in 1904 for the benefit of the Rand mining industry,<sup>29</sup> the Rhodesian colonist employers began to agitate for pass legislation too and, indeed, provided the Administration with their own draft proposals for the purpose in 1901, stipulating in particular compulsory registration for the Africans and an increase in the number of Native Commissioners and the police force to facilitate the detection and apprehension of deserters.<sup>30</sup> The labour requirements underlying this pass legislation, adopted by the Administration of Southern Rhodesia in 1902 and accorded the consent of the Colonial Office in 1904,<sup>31</sup> were never in doubt, given the corresponding resentment amongst the white settlers to a similar measure to regulate their own movements in accordance with the martial law declared at the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War and rescinded in July 1902.<sup>32</sup>

The pass legislation, its vexations not excepted, was viewed by employers as a germane solution in order to keep all forms of labour supply under check and in putting an end to a system under which they considered African labourers deserted '... in large numbers month by month with absolute impunity', while the mining industry had 'to bear the heavy initial cost of importing these men -(Lozi and 'Zambesi')- with no return for work done.'<sup>33</sup> The other solution before the Rhodesian employers, which offered an alternative supply to either local or trans-Zambesian labour, was the Abyssinian, Somali and Arab labour, the so-called 'North East Coast Natives', for which the leading figures in the Rhodesian mining industry were then whipping up support in 1900-1.<sup>34</sup> Thus when the authorities gave a green light to the mining industry

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<sup>29</sup> D. J. Denoon: "'Capitalist Influence' and the Transvaal Government during the Crown Colony Period, 1900-1906': Historical Journal: XI, 2, (1968): p. 308.

<sup>30</sup> Salisbury Chamber of Mines Quarterly Report, July 1901: pp. 76-82.

<sup>31</sup> C. O. 417/409: Instructions to N/Cs, Assistant N/Cs and Clerks for the better carrying out of the Provisions of the Native Pass Ordinance No. 10 of 1902: by Chief Secretary, H. H. Casterns, Salisbury: July 1, 1904.

<sup>32</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1903: p. 22

<sup>33</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1902: pp. 17-8.

<sup>34</sup> Vide: Frank Johnson's speech in Salisbury Chamber of Mines Report 1901: pp. 23, 26.



to proceed on the matter, this North-East African venture was indeed welcomed with enthusiasm at first, especially by those mines considered unpopular locally.<sup>35</sup>

The implementation of the North-East African labour venture in 1900 and the takeover of its architect, John Kusel, by the Rhodesian employers in 1899, demonstrate various crucial aspects of the Southern Rhodesian labour problem and the complex political and ethnic content of its foreign quarry. John Kusel was a German subject, apparently a former resident of German East Africa (Tanganyika), but currently in the employ of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa Ltd., one of the giant mining companies founded by Rhodes and operating on the Rand.<sup>36</sup> Kusel's work as a purveyor for possible labour supply from North-East African to the Rand, for which he had been engaged, was somewhat prematurely put to an end by the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899 and, for this reason, the Southern Rhodesian mining industry took over both the venture itself and its purveyor: most likely with the tacit approval of the Consolidated Goldfields.<sup>37</sup> This development, in a nutshell, demonstrates the reliance of the Rhodesian mining industry on the Rand and how far it was prepared to exploit this relationship to its advantage, as we shall see later. Secondly, the entangled ethnic and political web in the area chosen by Kusel as his zone of operation, greatly complicated the judgements of the employers as to the merits and value of this class of labour supply and, in the end, on account of the diplomatic issues which the recruitment of this labour entailed, consequently frustrated the activities of the purveyor and his colleagues in this region.

Here it is important to observe, in connection with this North-East African scheme, that the common practice of the Rhodesian colonist employers to pigeon-hole the various classes of labour supply under their charge, on the basis of ethnic origin and in accordance with the whims of individual mine managers and officials was undoubtedly thwarted by the complex distribution of national groups in the horn of Africa, which symbolizes those peculiar characteristics of the African boundary problem in the colonial era. The

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<sup>35</sup> Walter Currie, The Surprise Gold Mining Co. Ltd., to Secretary, Labour Board Bulawayo, August 26, 1901: in Ibid: p. 63.

<sup>36</sup> Gross: Rhodes of Africa: pp. 130-1.

<sup>37</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: p. 71.

interchange of peoples between Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and the three Somali territories, namely British Somaliland at Berbera, Italian Somaliland at Mogadishu and French Somaliland (Djibouti), and the historical connection between Ethiopia, Somaliland and the Arabian peninsula as well as the attendant exchange of cultural influences between Christianity and Islam, make it quite difficult to determine what groups of people were actually recruited by John Kusel and other emissaries of the Southern Rhodesian mining industry.<sup>38</sup> In short, the horn of Africa represented a classical conflict between superimposed and anthropo-geographical boundaries and consequently the problem of arbitrary political boundaries which cut across cultural, linguistic and historical features of human settlement.<sup>39</sup> John Kusel and Alexander Tulloch, the first Rhodesian emissaries to North-East Africa, did not pay sufficient heed to these factors on their labour missions and naturally their initial blunders foiled the programme to import regular and permanent labour supply from this region.

Kusel's appointment as any envoy for the Southern Rhodesian mining industry was perhaps justified by the extensive surveys and connections he had made in 1899, in his effort to lay down a solid foundation for permanent labour recruitment from North-East to Southern Africa. In these surveys, Kusel had been able to establish a network of agents and acquaintances, ready to assist him in the process of recruiting labour for Southern African employers, especially the miners, and was thus able to surmount some of the political and diplomatic problems likely to have choked the Abyssinian labour scheme even at this early period of its inception. These acquaintances included among them Manoli, a Greek representative of a New York firm, the Livierato Brothers, whose interests Manoli was in charge of in Harrar: then the capital of Southern Abyssinia (Ethiopia).<sup>40</sup> Manoli, who knew no

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<sup>38</sup> For a background to the complex political, historical and ethnic problems of North-East Africa, Vide: E. Ullendorf: The Ethiopians: An Introduction to the Country and People: Oxford University Press: London: 1965: pp. 32ff and also: M. W. Mariam: 'The background of the Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute': The Journal of Modern African Studies: Vol. 2, No. 2, (1964): pp. 189-219.

<sup>39</sup> For a theoretical approach to the African boundary problem: Vide S. Tagil: 'The Study of Boundaries and Boundary Disputes' in C. G. Widstrand (ed): African Boundary Problems: Almqvist & Wiksell: Uppsala: 1969: pp. 22-5.

<sup>40</sup> A 11/2/8/2: John Kusel, Djibouti, to Watson, Manager, Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa Ltd., November 4, 1899.

English and could only read and write Greek and Arabic, had the added advantage for Kusel in that he had had wide experience in his previous employ on the Arabian peninsula, where he had been chief of the coast guards to counteract all forms of smuggling by Arab dhows in the Turkish-ruled territory of Yemen.

From Manoli's knowledge of the whole region between the horn of Africa and the south-western coast of the Arabian peninsula, Kusel therefore considered him a very valuable asset indeed; more so as this man had consented to act as Kusel's labour agent at Mokka (or Mokha), a sea-base on the Yemen coast. The latter was to recruit and forward Hamil labour recruits from this point to Assab in the Italian territory of Eritrea, one of the two ports chosen by Kusel as the points of embarkation to Southern Africa. But in spite of the very high opinion Kusel held for these Hamil Arabs as suitable material for minework, Manoli could only promise, from the Mokka base, at least an average of 300 recruits per mensem in return for a premium of 5/- per head, due to the inadequate communications system between this base and Assab. Room for increased supply was, nevertheless, left open, in the event of improved transport facilities.<sup>41</sup>

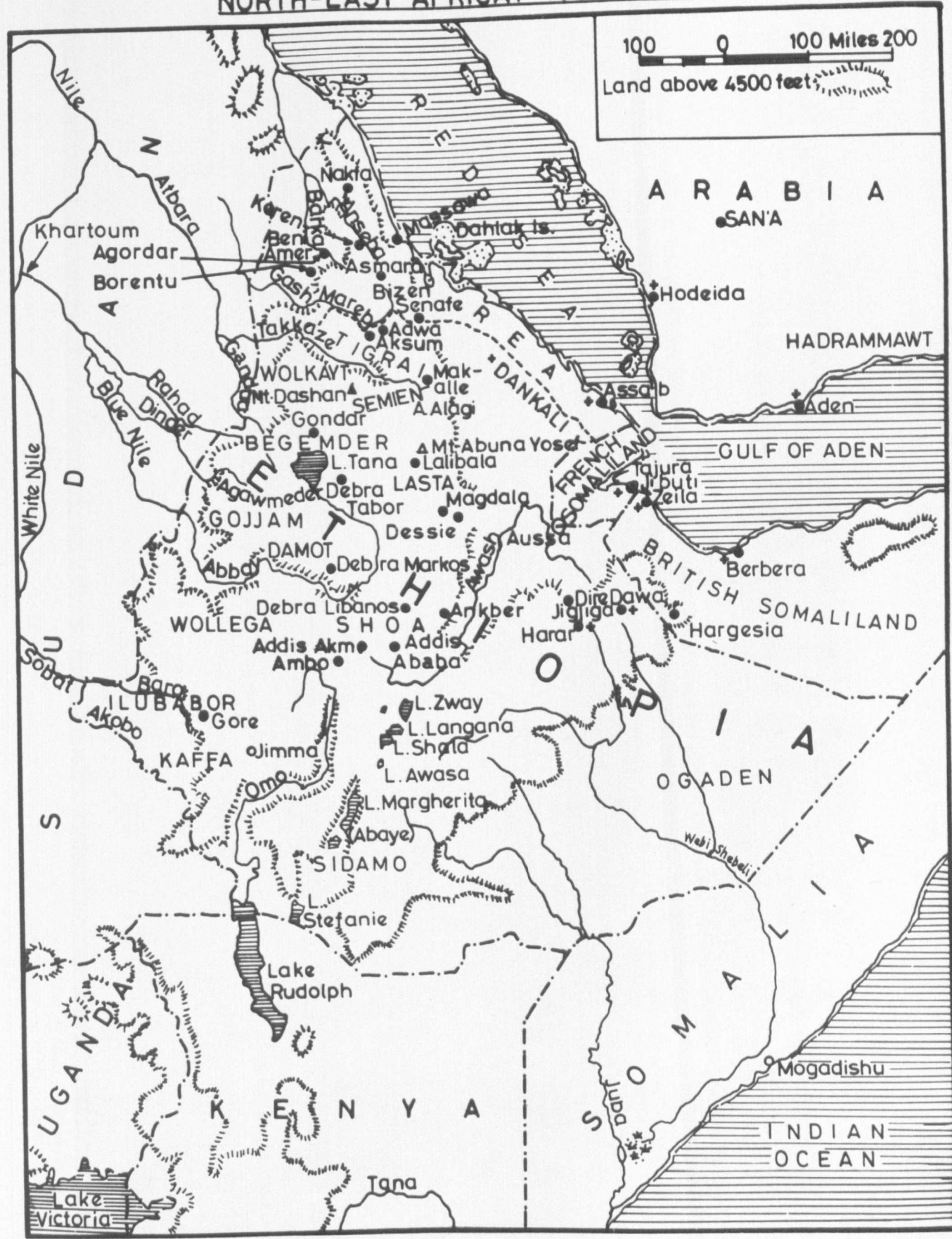
Other contacts who had volunteered their services in promoting Kusel's labour schemes from this part of the world were no less significant. There was, for instance, the British consul in Harrar, John Gerolimanto, who was, like Manoli, connected with the Livierato Brothers, in his private capacity in this part of Abyssinia. Gerolimanto's consent to act as one of Kusel's agents in this heartland of the Moslem population of Abyssinia was important not in the least for the paltry figure of 2000 Somali and Galla recruits that this official promised in return for a remuneration of '41/- per head' so delivered, but primarily for the political advantages Kusel's scheme derived from such co-operation. Kusel's admiration of Gerolimanto's 'personal energy... good relations with the Abyssinia government...'<sup>42</sup> must here certainly be viewed in relation to his earlier pessimistic assertions on the

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<sup>41</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Report of John Kusel to Consolidated Gold Fields of S. A. Ltd., Johannesburg, November (?), 1899. (Vide also Appendix -(map)-VI: 'The Kusel/Tulloch Trips in North-East Africa, 1899-1901').

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

# APPENDIX IV: THE KUSEL/TULLOCH TRIPS IN NORTH-EAST AFRICA: 1899 - 1901



**KEY**  
 + Areas and Centres used by Kusel, Tulloch and their Agents for recruiting and forwarding Labour, Recruits

(Sketch based on a modified map in E. Ullendorff: The Ethiopians: An Introduction to the Country and People; Oxford University Press; London: 1965.)

problems raised by the restrictive policies of the same government, with regards to labour recruitment for service in foreign parts; restrictions which, as Kusel had given it to be understood, he would have run the risk of breaking if only to meet his obligations under this Southern African scheme.<sup>43</sup> The enlistment of the British consul may have thus been expected to exert the necessary leverage on local Abyssinian officials, especially the governor of Harrar, Ras Makonnen, the hero of the battle of Adwa against the Italians in 1896, a cousin and right-hand man of King Menelik and the father of Emperor Haile Sellase.<sup>44</sup> The same may be true of Artu Mercia the governor of Dgialdessa, a sub-division of Harrar, whose consent to supply labour and friendship with Kusel in these ventures appear to have been cemented by copious supplies of cognac.<sup>45</sup>

Other minor leaders also co-operated with Kusel in his labour scheme with varied degrees of success. Sultan Lueta for instance, of whom Kusel spoke in favourable terms as quite influential in Djibouti and 'much patronised by the French government', was also prepared to raise a sizeable proportion of Somali, Abyssinian and Galla labour recruits, at 2 francs per head in remuneration as well as 5/- to 6/- per head in transport expenses, and to forward them in person to Assab for shipment to Southern Africa. Similar offers were apparently made by the chiefs in the neighbourhood of Assab, in connection with labour recruits from the surrounding Danakil peoples. But these offers were unfortunately turned down by Kusel who doubted the fitness of these recruits as manual labourers, in spite of their superficial appearance as 'well built (men) with good muscles and (an) easily contented (nature)....'<sup>46</sup> The Danakils, also known as Afars, may have fallen victims to their historically unpopular image in foreign eyes as 'cruel and merciless'; an image generally associated with their reputation for massacring expeditions and caravans.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid: Kusel, Djibouti, to Watson, Johannesburg: November 4, 1899.

<sup>44</sup> C. O. 417/364: Arthur Keyser, British Consul General, Berbera, to Sir Clement Hill at F. O. : April 24, 1902: Vide also Ullendorff: The Ethiopians: pp. 92-3.

<sup>45</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Kusel to Watson: November 4, 1899.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid: Report by John Kusel to Consolidated Gold Fields... November (?), 1899.

<sup>47</sup> Ullendorff: op. cit. pp. 40-1.

Whatever criteria Kusel may have used in sampling out labour supplies for his employers in Southern Africa and in the process building up bridges to facilitate its extraction, his approach and judgement, however, appear to have been largely influenced by the general trend of European social and psychological stereotypes in dealing with the non-European world. His selection of labour material for the mines in Southern African followed particular specifications of his own creation. Whilst the Danakils could only be recruited in form of 'a small trial batch',<sup>48</sup> other ethnic groups were treated as special priorities and were, therefore, particularly eligible for the Kusel plan. The Hamals (or Hamils) for instance, a nomadic people based in the Yemen who plied both the Arabian peninsula and the horn of Africa and were considered to be 'the low and principal working class' in those parts, had favourable reckoning with Kusel as an appropriate labour material.

Notwithstanding the general opposition of the Turkish authorities in Yemen to large-scale emigration of contract labourers, an official attitude Kusel was apparently quite aware of, he still ran the risk of stationing one of his principal men, Manoli, the Greek agent, at Mokka with orders to 'tip' the governor with presents worth '£30 to £50' at a time, to forestall any obstruction of dhows conveying these Hamal recruits to Assab in Eritrea.<sup>49</sup> The Abyssinians, Gallas and Somalis were ranked second best in Kusel's estimation; the Gallas especially so as they were also regarded as 'the working class in Abyssinia.' Thus such arrangements as Kusel made with Gerolimanto, Artu Mercia and Sultan Mahomed Lueta focussed primarily on the provision of these classes of recruits either from Harrar or Djibouti.<sup>50</sup>

The justification for the criteria applied by Kusel in these preparatory activities may be whimsical, but it was, however, on these conclusions that he had assured employers of labour in Southern Africa on his ability to supply an estimated total of about 700 recruits monthly or over 7,000 labourers annually; with, of course, possible increase in numbers of these recruits should communications between the hinterland and the North-East African littoral improve. The cost of delivery of these recruits from either Aden or Assab

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<sup>48</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Kusel's Report to Consolidated Gold Fields... November (?), 1899.

<sup>49</sup> ibid.

<sup>50</sup> ibid.

to Delagoa Bay in Southern Mozambique, according to arrangements with the 'Konig' or 'Herzog', steamers of the German East Africa (Deutsche Ost Africa) Line, ranged between 80/- and 85/- per head, all costs included. The recruits were to work specially underground on the mines for at least two years at a wage of £1 per month, but with prospects of increase in wages 'as soon as they -(were)- found to be ordinary workers....' Return passage was free at the end of their service, as long as the batches amounted to no less than 300 labourers at a time; a stipulation obviously well calculated to prevent any desertions.<sup>51</sup>

These essential features of the Kusel scheme were retained in October 1900, when the Southern Rhodesian mining industry engaged this German connoisseur and Alexander Tulloch, a pioneer resident of Southern Rhodesia, apparently well respected in white-settler circles,<sup>52</sup> to pick up the pieces of the North-East Africa labour project from the point where Consolidated Gold Fields had left off in January 1900, when the Anglo-Boer war had compelled it to postpone the same 'indefinitely', but at the same time advising Kusel and his contacts 'to keep in touch with sources of supply in order that they may be in readiness.'<sup>53</sup> Indeed, it could be said that the Kusel scheme and its promises of plentiful labour resources in North-East Africa may have largely pre-conditioned the attitudes of these envoys and their Rhodesian paymasters at home with regards to the manner in which they subsequently overlooked all forms of alternative sources of supply en route, notably in East Africa.

In his report to the BSACo. Administration, relating to this North-East Africa mission, Alexander Tulloch hinted on the probabilities of obtaining labour from such areas in East Africa as northern Mozambique, with special reference to the regions bordering on German East Africa (Tanganyika), the Nyassa province and the Mozambique coast. Here in a country inhabited chiefly by the Makua, Yao, Makonde and the 'half-caste Arabs' (Swahili) and

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid: Memorandum by the Joint Management of the Gold Fields of S. A. Ltd., re: Abyssinian Labour: August 26, 1899.

<sup>52</sup> Correspondence relating to the Regulation and Supply of Labour in Southern Rhodesia Cmd. 1200: HMSO: London: July 1902: pp. 57-8.

<sup>53</sup> A 11/2/8/2: E. Birkenruth, Consolidated Gold Fields of S. A. Ltd., Cape Town, to John Kusel: January 5, 1900.

with an adult male population which he estimated at about 50,000 souls, accustomed to work on the adjacent islands of Ibo, Querimba and others constituting the Portuguese off-shore archipelago, Tulloch was confident that, through the co-operation of the Swahili chiefs and the Portuguese authorities, Rhodesian employers could successfully exploit this reservoir of labour supply. Similar prospects were apparent, as far as Tulloch was concerned, with regard to labour recruiting from Buganda and Bunyoro in the Uganda Protectorate as well as from the Hehe country in Tanganyika.<sup>54</sup> But any such prospects as these, which may have appeared somewhat obvious and apparently to the advantage of Rhodesian employers, were not, at least immediately, pursued. The factors responsible for this disregard may have been partly Tulloch's own confessions that the French procured their labour requirements for service in Madagascar from those areas of Mozambique he referred to, whilst the Germans in Tanganyika depended on imported Indian labour for work on the railways.<sup>55</sup> In any case, the Rhodesian employers and the BSACo. were then too enmeshed with Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour to pay sufficient heed to Tulloch's proposals on alternative sources from East Africa and were obviously averse to such types of labour, as they indicated on the proposal of Swahili labourers from Mombasa in 1902, hitherto used mainly to railway rather than underground minework.<sup>56</sup>

The achievements of the Kusel/Tulloch mission of October 1900 to January 1901 were minimal, in spite of the high degree of optimism shown at its first stages by its sponsors, the Rhodesian mining industry and the BSACo. From the start, the whole scheme to recruit labour in North-East Africa for the benefit of Southern Africa was, in a way, shaky. Kusel, the main promoter of the scheme had indicated, as we have seen in his solo surveys,<sup>57</sup> some of the variables likely to determine the outcome of this project. These included the diplomatic problems posed by rival claims of different sovereign states over the control of the movement of peoples, a large proportion of whom were nomadic by occupation and whose allegiance to particular states naturally

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid: A. Tulloch to BSACo., Secretary, Bulawayo, March 1, 1901.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid: Vide also: Mangat: Asians in East Africa: pp. 46-9.

<sup>56</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1902: pp. 96-7.

<sup>57</sup> Vide Supra. pp 194-8.



fluctuated with the course of their activities, not to mention the complex intercourse and distribution of the various cultural, religious, political and linguistic groups in this melting pot of Hamitic (Cushitic), Semitic and Negroid habitation.<sup>58</sup>

Although Kusel had previously assured Consolidated Gold Fields about his capability to out-play the diplomatic factor in November 1899, if needs be, on this occasion he and Tulloch were caught in the grips of this vice. Perhaps to further complicate matters for these envoys, there was also the question of transporting recruits from the hinterland to the littoral of North-East Africa, whence they would forward these recruits to the port of Beira and then to Southern Rhodesia by land. In this particular case, the transport problem was aggravated not only by reasons of its inadequacy, but also by the diplomatic moves and dicta of different political authorities as to where, how and when labour recruits from specific areas could move. The emissaries of the Rhodesian mining industry here thus only weakened their cause by resorting to unorthodox methods of recruiting and forwarding their cargo. Moreover, their scheme had never been strong enough to stand the test of time, as it relied exclusively on the co-operation between the labour agents and the top-level officials in the zones of operation, either out of bribery and exchange of gifts or token friendships at the expense of the labour recruits themselves. Such exclusion of the major partners in the scheme by commercially interested parties inexorably led to misrepresentations and gross misunderstanding with harmful results on all prospects of further labour supply. In short, Kusel's labour-recruiting empire in North-East Africa was built on foundations of clay and any efforts to exploit it to its maximum potential were bound to produce unwelcome results.

Tulloch's brush with the diplomats, in connection with his activities in British Somaliland and Djibouti (French Somaliland), and the dubious manner in which he raised and transported the first batch of Abyssinians, Arabs and Somalis, who arrived in Southern Rhodesia in December 1900, is the first clear indication of the weaknesses which later undermined any prospects of permanence for the North-East Africa labour scheme. Perhaps the Tulloch/Kusel mission may have taken place at an inauspicious time. During this

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<sup>58</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 194-7.

ten-months period, ranging from January to October 1900, many changes, mostly of a political nature, had occurred, especially in Abyssinia, with the result that, as Tulloch confessed, the Kusel arrangements of yester-year were shattered. Besides, the authorities at Aden, a port these agents intended to use for shipping purposes, apparently refused to recognise them officially. Consequently the delays involved cost these two emissaries dearly in recruiting opportunities missed, whilst the number of recruits they had amassed began to dwindle gradually but steadily.

Similarly, the French government in Djibouti refused to allow any form of labour recruitment and emigration to Southern Rhodesia, apparently regarding such actions as a breach of French neutrality in the Anglo-Boer War. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive the possibility of any authorization of labour recruiting for the BSACo. envoys in this territory, military and diplomatic considerations excepted, taking into account that the French themselves used Djibouti to supplement their labour resources in Madagascar, where the Malagasy had proved particularly unco-operative on the labour question.<sup>59</sup>

Given the fact that these BSACo. agents were not allowed to recruit labour in any British possession in North-East Africa as well, not to mention the fact that the employers they represented were not particularly keen to operate within the framework of a restrictive political straight-jacket, it is scarcely surprising, therefore, that these envoys ended up in a tug-of-war with the diplomats. A peculiarly devious mechanism they adopted was one which involved increased participation of local labour touts on whom they, accordingly, relied to forward labour from restricted regions in the hinterland to the coast. One such scheme, which later created enormous controversy, involved a Galla agent, 'George,' formerly employed by the Beira-Mashonaland Railway line running between Beira and Salisbury. George played a crucial part in raising a sizeable amount of Abyssinian, Galla and Somali recruits from Harrar in Abyssinia, thence despatching them on the 2000 miles journey into the French territory of Djibouti, where Tulloch collected them to Zeyla in British territory and then to Aden for embarkation.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid: Tulloch to Secretary, BSACo., Bulawayo, March 1, 1901.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid: Tulloch, Aden to Her British Majesty's Consul General, Berbera: November 23, 1900.

The primary motive in adopting such a circuitous course was not by any means the false assertion made by Tulloch himself that there were better shipping facilities in British Somaliland for forwarding his recruits to Southern Africa.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, in this respect, the British consular officials vouched that Djibouti offered superior shipping facilities than either Zeyla or Berbera not only in terms of accommodation for recruits, but also in respect of regularity of voyages between the mainland and the port of Aden.<sup>62</sup> Tulloch may have had in mind that, in spite of being forbidden to recruit labour in Djibouti and at Zeyla in British Somaliland,<sup>63</sup> once his labour gangs start moving down through these territories, they would, like rolling stones, gather moss as they moved on, whilst the authorities at a British base would obviously be impotent to prevent enlistment of labour recruits from areas outside their sphere of influence. Such a theory was at least accepted by Arthur Keyser, the Consul General for British Somaliland, who urged even greater vigilance in cases like that of Tulloch in 1900-1.

In many respects, Tulloch's choice of a British possession and Zeyla in particular, as a base for his labour forays into neighbouring foreign territories and the subsequent errors of omission that these escapades entailed, appear to have been quite consciously executed. This agent appears to have deliberately taken advantage of the conditions at Zeyla which provided an obvious weak point in terms of political and diplomatic control. Here, at this sub-station of the British Consul in Berbera further south, the consular official was an Indian, Khan Sahib Aderjee Surabjee, who, in spite of his eighteen years' experience as the Superintendent of Her Majesty's Customs, viewed his white customers in terms peculiar to the current racially hierarchical structures colonial societies represented. Thus Khan Sahib Surabjee had been misled by Tulloch's assurances to proceed via Berbera to Aden because he thought Tulloch '... appeared to be a European of position'.<sup>64</sup> Such implicit confidence in the veracity of a white visiting official was certainly enhanced by the fact that the Zeyla post was also manned by other non-

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.: Tulloch to Secretary, BSACo. Bulawayo: March 26, 1900; Vide also File: C. O. 417/337: P/R/O, London.

<sup>62</sup> C. O. 417/364: Keyser, Berbera, to Hill at F. O.: April 24, 1902.

<sup>63</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Aderjee, Superintendent of H. B. M. Customs, Zeyla, to Tulloch: Zeyla: November 20, 1900: Vide also File C. O. 417/337: P. R. O., London.

European officials, mostly Sudanese, and, as Keyser admitted, the visit of a European, such as that of Tulloch and his recruits, was treated with more than average 'interest and curiosity' and aroused 'considerable comment.'<sup>65</sup> Once he had left Zeyla with the recruits for Aden, a locality well removed and independent of all forms of control by the authorities of the British Somaliland Protectorate, Tulloch was bound to be very favourably placed, as the slow and inadequate telegraphic and postal communications between these two citadels of power inevitably safeguarded him against any move to retrieve the labourers.

But it was particularly from the diplomatic point of view that objections were raised against Tulloch's bizarre activities in recruiting labour for Southern Rhodesia. British officials in North-East Africa conceded that whilst the main charge against Tulloch was that of leaving a British port with emigrants for whom no authority had been given, there were even graver issues at stake on the political front. It was indicated here, as we have seen before, that most of the governments of North-East Africa were opposed to any form of labour emigration involving their peoples. In respect of Abyssinians who formed the major proportion of the Tulloch batch of recruits, it was understood that Ras Makonnen, the governor of Harrar, was 'averse to subjects of King Menelik leaving in any numbers.' In any case, it was felt that the proper procedure for enlisting Abyssinian labour for a British Colony like Southern Rhodesia was through Colonel Harrington, the British representative in Addis Ababa, particularly so in a case like this involving as it did, mine labour, which required the approval of both King Menelik and Ras Makonnen, with regard to the terms of service and other agreements. British officials in this part of Africa reacted rather critically to Tulloch's activities, apparently on account of the 'great excitement' that this agent was said to have caused in Djibouti, whilst in Addis Ababa it was reported that:

... persons inimical to Great Britain took immediate advantage to caution the Abyssinian King against allowing his subjects to be recruited for the Transvaal War.<sup>66</sup>

On the local political level, British officials would not treat seriously

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<sup>64</sup> C. O. 417/363: Aderjee Surabjee, Zeyla, to Acting British Consul, Berbera: August 20, 1901.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid: Keyser to Hill, April 24, 1902.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid,

Tulloch's declarations of innocence of all wrong-doing, by asserting, especially, that such recruits as he handled were not British subjects and therefore no concern of British officials. What Tulloch and his sponsors appeared unaware of were the local conventions amongst North-East African administrators with regard to the forms of political control applicable to their nomadic subjects. Thus the activities of Tulloch could hardly be tenable viewed in this context and Keyser accordingly explained that:

As is well known the Somalis are a nomadic race and it is difficult, even for the officials on the coast, to be always certain under which Government individual sub-tribes may dwell, since their stopping place will vary according to the rainfall season of the year.<sup>67</sup>

Wherever they may be they are naturally subject to the laws of the locality whether Abyssinian, French or British..<sup>67</sup>

In the final analysis, Tulloch's labour recruiting escapades in North-East Africa displeased the Colonial and Foreign Offices who took the opportunity to remind the BSACo. Board that its Administration in Southern Rhodesia ran the risk of losing the confidence of the British Government in further labour schemes, should they resort to the type of clandestine methods adopted by Tulloch to promote the BSACo. and Rhodesian mining industry's cause as he did.<sup>68</sup>

Tulloch's tussel with the diplomats was only one feature in the continuum of factors which contributed in several ways to the dismal failure of the North-East African labour supply. Another complicating feature of this external labour scheme was the lack of communication between the recruits and the labour agents and consequently between the labourers and the employers. This unfortunate development was, to say the least, a result of the exclusiveness which foreign labour recruitment entailed as a commercial venture. The rapprochement between employers of labour, the labour agents and officials in the source areas did not always embrace the labourers themselves and, in most cases, the conditions of service and wages were not adequately explained. Indeed, any concrete elaborations to the recruits would have been, after all, contrary to the spirit underlying the whole system of foreign con-

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Martin Goslin, at F. O. to BSACo., November 16, 1901; and C. O. 417/364: Clement L. Hill, at F. O. to BSACo.: December 19, 1901: Vide also File A 11/2/8/3: R/N/A, Salisbury,

tract labourers. For one reason, the very essence of contract or indentured foreign labour was its value as a residue of the slave importation system, designed primarily to benefit colonial magnates, overseas financial houses and middlemen; all of them with vested commercial interests in the venture. The attitudes of the employers who were more interested in the products accruing from the indenture labour system and of labour agents, also more concerned with the nature of the bargains they drove with their sponsors, could hardly be said to have taken into consideration the welfare of the chattels they so handled.<sup>69</sup>

Kusel the chief agent in the North-East Africa labour scheme, whose appointment by the Rhodesian mining industry was prompted mainly by his long years of experience '... as a Labour Agent in Somaliland, Djibout-(i), and adjacent parts of Arabia and the mainland...'<sup>70</sup> naturally, manifested some of those characteristics peculiar to his predecessors of a bygone era. Of special observation on this score, were Kusel's lack of judgement and sensitivity pertaining to the whims and idiosyncrasies as well as the habits and suitability of his recruits for labour on the mines, whither they were bound. Thus the British Consul at Berbera explained to the Foreign Office in April 1902, in relation to the recruitment of Somalis by Kusel and Tulloch for minework in Southern Rhodesia, that:

The Somalis, a pastoral people, are absolutely unfitted for work in the mines. Should they appear to go willingly for that purpose it can only be because such conditions of labour are altogether beyond their knowledge and experience, and in such a case it would be necessary for the officers of the Government to whom they look for assistance and advice to explain to them the work for which they are engaged... Had Mr. Tulloch gone to Berbera (where) the terms of their contract would have been explained to the recruits... it is doubtful if any of the Somalis would have consented to leave even had they been permitted to do so.<sup>71</sup>

What may have been true for the Somali labour recruits appears to have been applicable with equal force to the rest of their kinsmen who comprised the material despatched by Tulloch and Kusel to Southern Rhodesia, particularly

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<sup>69</sup> For a good discussion on the effects of slavery on employers' attitudes towards indentured labour: Vide: Tinker: A New System of Slavery: pp. 19, 178-91.

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum by Jones, Secretary, BSA Co. to C. O.: November 29, 1900 in Regulation and Labour Supply: loc. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid: Keyser to Hill, April 24, 1902.

so in the case of the Gallas with whom the Somali have very close historical relationship.<sup>72</sup>

It is therefore against this background that the 'revolt' of the Abyssinian, Somali and Arab recruits at the port of Beira in Mozambique in January 1901 must be viewed. The incident had significant consequences for the recruits as they woke up to the realities of the kind of situation they had involved themselves into; a classical testimony here of the tragic effect of misrepresentation by labour recruiters, whose lack of vision was apparently obscured by their own vested interests and thus, inadvertently, marred all prospects for further labour supply, much to the disadvantage of their labour-hungry sponsors. Indeed the Beira 'revolt' demonstrates some of the unpleasant aspects of foreign labour recruitment by private agents who, in their dealings with what they considered '... ignorant and gullible natives, and... inexperienced employers...' took to labour recruiting as '... a profitable alternative to big-game shooting or prospecting, -(and were)- lavish in -(their)- promises to employers as well as native ; so long as -(they)- secured a substantial first payment on account for expenses, ...'<sup>73</sup> The subsequent disillusionment of both the recruits and the employers in the circumstances is quite obvious.

The North-East Africans did not take too lightly the descriptions on labour conditions in Southern Rhodesia as given to them by sailors and other passengers aboard the German steamship 'Herzog', engaged for their delivery at Beira. These descriptions obviously did not tally with the promises made to them by Tulloch and Kusel before the recruits left their homelands, more so in this particular case whereby the labour agents had evaded the normal channels which such emigration required them to go through. Moreover, there was no independent arbiter to verify and guarantee the implementation of the promises in question. As reports on the Beira 'revolt' poured in, indeed it was proven beyond doubt that the labour conditions under which these recruits were destined to work were the bone of contention behind the incident. Ralph Belcher, the British Consul at Beira, thus informed Sir Clarke, the Resident Commissioner, on January 5, 1901, that the main problem was that

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<sup>72</sup> Mariam describes Somalis as 'Islamized' and 'Semitized' Gallas; Vide: Mariam: 'The Background of the Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute': pp. 194-5.

<sup>73</sup> G. St. J. Orde Browne: The African Labourer: Frank Cass & Co.: London:

these recruits had been told aboard the 'Herzog' that:

... they were to be taken in chains to work underground in the mines, and that they had been sold as slaves for their lifetime.

Such language and imagery to recruits whose region had served for generations as the epi-centre of the Arab slave trade, evidently had special implications among them. In addition, with the assertions that these potential labourers 'would be badly paid'<sup>75</sup> and that in volunteering to come down to Southern Rhodesia '... they were going to certain death by working in the mines',<sup>76</sup> assertions which were essentially true in many ways,<sup>77</sup> the feeling that they had been badly done-by gained credence amongst the North-East Africans, who had also had the misfortune of travelling as deck passengers from Aden under conditions, described by the Rev. Cripps as 'drippy and wretched...'.<sup>78</sup>

The consequences of the Beira 'revolt' were, willy-nilly, disastrous in terms of physical and political costs, not to mention the damage to the economic goals for which the scheme was primarily designed. The physical aspect was apparent in the carnage and victimization that the incident entailed. Although officials, inclined to view the treatment of subject races as one demanding a firm hand at all times, praised, as the British Consul at Beira did, the Portuguese police for having performed their duty 'with considerable pluck' against recruits who had '... given a lot of trouble and... naturally annoyed' the authorities,<sup>79</sup> less disinterested witnesses did not, however, share such views.

Rev. Cripps, who was then paying his first visit to Africa and was also on the 'Herzog' on his way to join the Anglican mission in Southern Rhodesia,

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1967 (2nd Edition): p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> C. O. 417/319: Ralph Belcher, H. M. Consul, Beira to Clarke, Salisbury (Enclosing Newspaper cutting): January 5, 1901.

<sup>75</sup> Steere: Gods Irregular: Arthur Shearly Cripps: A Rhodesian Epic: S.P.C.K.: London: 1973: p 19.

<sup>76</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: pp. 37-8.

<sup>77</sup> Vide: Infra: Chapter 8.

<sup>78</sup> Steere: God's Irregular: loc cit.

<sup>79</sup> C. O. 417/319: Belcher, Beira, to Clarke, Salisbury: January 5, 1901.



but had gone to sleep during the course of the affray, stated:

The Roman Father -(a companion)- who saw it told me it was a horrible scene. The Portuguese rushed these people with drawn swords and tried to bundle them into a barge.<sup>80</sup>

In consequence, two of the recruits were killed, 10 'severely' wounded and 30 'slightly'. Of the several number who had jumped into the ship's lighter, eight were later picked up, but the rest were swept away by the current. As a punitive measure, about 33 were arrested and goaled as ring-leaders and only 55 out of the original batch of 136 recruits remained on board before they were later taken over by Rhodesian authorities.<sup>81</sup>

The reactions of the Rhodesian employers and the general white public to the Beira incident were bitter and scathing at what they regarded as rank insubordination by labour recruits whose introduction into the country had been prompted, in the first place, by a search for docile labour. Thus they accused this North-East African labour batch of being:

... about the most useless things on the face of the earth, and -(likely to)- die like rotten sheep in Rhodesia.<sup>82</sup>

Employers' reactions naturally reflected their frustration and disillusionment with a labour source they had been awaiting with a marked degree of optimism. Higher placed officials were obviously embarrassed by the Beira incident and the political repercussions it foreshadowed. As far as Milner was concerned, the incident discredited Southern Rhodesia as a field of African labour and manifested the administrative weaknesses so common throughout early Rhodesian history. What he especially deplored was the choice of labour agents in the scheme; a choice which smacked of the 'unsuitable men and methods' employed in the country's past, with the result that all prospects of labour supply from North-East Africa were endangered.<sup>83</sup> Milner's conclusions were vindicated by the intransigence of the Aden authorities over the question of co-operation with BSACo. labour agents.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Steere: op. cit. p. 20.

<sup>81</sup> C. O. 417/319: Belcher to Clarke: January 5, 1901.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.: Milner to Chamberlain, February 6, 1901.

<sup>84</sup> C. O. 417/337: H. M. Hole, Aden, to Wilson Fox: July 9, 1901.

More fundamental than political criticisms and platitudes, was the manner in which the Beira incident pre-determined the modicum of interaction between these new arrivals and their employers in Southern Rhodesia. It was thus their reception and subsequent treatment in Southern Rhodesia rather than anything else which certainly shaped and distinguished the reactions of Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labourers, either on mines, road-work or other areas of employment.<sup>85</sup> The suspicions of Rhodesian employers, who had failed to procure requisite docile and more dependable labour supply, on the one hand, as opposed to an external labour force, utterly disillusioned and despondent about what they considered deliberate trickery and deception by both recruiters and employers, evidently played a part in shaping this unfavourable employer/employee inter-relationship. It was indeed a situation in which only the private labour agent stood to gain and one approximating to that described by Orde Browne in which:

... employers were robbed and furnished with utterly useless labour, natives were cheated and seriously discouraged from further efforts to seek work and, in addition, were rendered suspicious of all promises by strangers in the future;...<sup>86</sup>

In short, it is argued here that the Beira revolt by the North-East Africans demonstrated the potential of these recruits to challenge the authority on which was founded the very essence of a hierarchically stratified colonial society and from which the employers derived their right for dominance over their subordinates. The restrictive measures adopted towards these new arrivals and the accusations directed against them, manifestations of verbalized hostility in a confrontation situation, were attempts to contain this potential threat by the employers and their sympathetic officials.

Indeed, as a residue of the Beira disturbance, the allocation of the 170 Abyssinian, Arab and Somali recruits to the Surprise mine in early 1901, on condition that 'a sufficient body of police' be stationed at the same mine 'to maintain law and order', was a very clear indication of the attitudes of the employers towards these labourers; employers who were still not yet con-

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<sup>85</sup> Van Onselen emphasizes the proletariat solidarity of these labourers at the expense of the ethnic, political and social factors, which is the main concern of this study: Vide: van Onselen: Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933: pp. 81-3.

<sup>86</sup> Orde Browne: op. cit. p. 54.

vinced that these recruits had been sufficiently punished for their misdemeanours.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, it is easy to detect the nervousness amongst these employers and officials over reports that some of these labourers who had been distributed to Beatrice Mine in the Marandellas district, were 'dissatisfied' by insufficient accommodation and poor food conditions under which they worked. A perceptible degree of sensitivity was shown, especially by the officials, who feared any repetition of the Beira incident. The Resident Commissioner for instance, cautioned the Administration and the mining companies in March 1901, advising them to ameliorate the conditions of the North-East African labourers and to ensure regular pay, 'fair treatment' and due attention to their physical ailments.<sup>88</sup> Apparently the Resident Commissioner's drive to ensure a 'peaceful attitude' amongst these immigrant labourers failed to influence the employers and, indeed, before the end of the same month, Sir Marshall Clarke himself was compelled to report on a march by these labourers from Marandellas into Salisbury, whereupon:

... they assumed a threatening attitude and after the police had been called in the labourers in question<sup>89</sup> were allegedly lodged in the gaol compound for the night.

These symptoms of protest on the part of the North-East African labourers reinforced the opposition in some colonist quarters on further importation of this class of labourers. The anti-Abyssinian labour lobby within the white colonist circles in Southern Rhodesia based its agitation against further importation of this class of labour on the grounds that Kusel and Tulloch had recruited their labour from the 'slums' of Aden,<sup>90</sup> whence, as Milner, who also had no confidence in Abyssinian and Arab labour, put it, they, '... literally collected the scum of unsuitable men without any discrimination.'<sup>91</sup>

Such opposition as this, of course, benefitted greatly from some of the unfavourable reports forthcoming from various centres of employment, where the North-East Africans had been distributed. The management of the Surprise mine in the Selukwe district for instance, whilst satisfied with Abys-

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<sup>87</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: loc. cit.

<sup>88</sup> C. O. 417/319: Clarke to Milner: March 15, 1901.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid: Clarke to Milner: March 18, 1901.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid: Milton to Clarke: March 13, 1901.

<sup>91</sup> C. O. 417/319: Milner to Chamberlain: February 6, 1901.

sinians, to some extent, was ostensibly disenchanted by the Somali recruits, amongst the North-East Africans, allocated to their property and were clearly doubtful as to the labour value of this particular group whose physique they considered quite below par for underground work. Thus Edward Dicey, the Manager at Surprise mine concluded in his report in April 1901 that:

... the Somalis are unfitted for either surface or underground work. They have absolutely no energy, and little or no idea of how to exert their strength which at best is very poor, and very few wish to work underground, even with the prospect of receiving a higher wage. They apparently do not value money and are perfectly satisfied as long as they have sufficient to eat.<sup>92</sup>

This trend of opinion amongst the Rhodesian colonist employers towards these foreign labourers, which obviously verges on the extremes of social and psychological stereotypes, was supported by some officials who regarded the North-East Africans generally as 'a failure' and 'practically useless', as the Inspector of Compounds for the Gwelo/Selukwe division, Frederick George Elliott, indicated.<sup>93</sup> Yet with regard to the Somalis for example, the resentment of the employers in Southern Rhodesia against what they considered deliberate misrepresentations by Kusel, the connoisseur on labour matters in North-East Africa, may be viewed in the context that this particular group was peculiarly inadaptable to all forms of labour, essentially nomadic and pastoral as they were by occupation.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, one could conjure only a ridiculous picture of Somali mine labourers, with hind-sights of course, especially in the light of a recent portrayal of the harsh conditions obtaining among the Somali nomads and their environment, as described by Mariam in 1964, that:

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<sup>92</sup> C. O. 417/320: Report by the Manager, Edward C. Dicey, Surprise Gold Mining Co, Ltd., to April 5, 1901.

<sup>93</sup> C. O. 417/320: Special Report by the Inspector of Compounds (F. G. Elliott) regarding the Abyssinian, Arabs and Somalis at present employed on the Surprise mine, Selukwe, April 6, 1901: Vide also File N B 6/5/3/2: R/N/A, Salisbury.

<sup>94</sup> In 1952 and 1955 U. N. Commissions reported that about 70 per cent of the population of Somalia were nomadic and that of the agricultural section in the Southern portion of the country, the larger proportion were of Bantu-speaking and Negroid stock: Vide Mariam: op. cit. pp. 191-2, 193.

Extreme individualism and utter lack of discipline are character traits attributed to the Somali nomads. The acute struggle for existence in this harsh environment often expresses itself in group conflicts<sup>95</sup> over wells or grazing land, with... -(heavy)- loss of life.

The recruitment of this kind of labour in North-East Africa by Kusel and Tulloch in 1900-1, was, to all appearances, an ill-advised ecological revolution unwelcomed by both the labourers themselves and the employers.

Added to the anxieties generally caused by these labourers as a result of the Beira disturbance, the Rhodesian white public and employers were evidently no longer enthusiastic about this class of labour.<sup>96</sup> These hostile colonist attitudes were, to some extent, reflected in the comparatively low wages the North-East Africans received. At the Surprise mine for instance, although it was alleged that some of these recruits, especially the 'Arabs', had proved to be good mine labourers and also shown themselves to be 'equal to Shangaans in the daily footage -(they)- drilled', their wages were still fixed at the following rates:

Surface 'boys'	...	20/- per month
mine 'boys'	...	25/- per month
mine headmen	...	30/- per month <sup>97</sup>

In simple terms, the employers still treated these North-East Africans in the same way they treated local labourers, who were by no means amongst the favourites of the Rhodesian colonist employers, as opposed to the Shangaans, then said to be receiving as much as 60/- in monthly wages at this mine.<sup>98</sup>

Employers in Southern Rhodesia also felt frustrated by the rise in food expenses entailed to meet the food supplies of the North-East Africans. In spite of Kusel's assurances that these labourers would be satisfied with 'ordinary native food', normally issued to African labourers at the cost of '7½d per diem', the employers would not take kindly the refusal by these labourers, especially the Somali, to touch any 'nyauti' and millet meal rations,

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<sup>95</sup> Mariam: op. cit. p. 193.

<sup>96</sup> Vide: Anonymous: 'Notes on the Somali' NADA No. 25, 1948: pp. 85-92.

<sup>97</sup> C. O. 417/320: Report by Dicey to Milton: April 5, 1901.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid: Special Report by Inspector of Compounds (Elliott): April 6, 1901.

preferring as they did, only rice or rice mixed with ghee for their food, which consequently cost their employers about '11½d per diem' in food expenditure per head.<sup>99</sup> Such extra costs were naturally unwelcome to employers who required mere cheap unskilled labour and were not yet assured that this class of labour from areas within the tropical latitudes could stand the colder Rhodesian winter months, more so as a large proportion of them (40 out of 156 by April 1901) had gone down with dysentery, malaria fever and colds on their arrival.<sup>100</sup>

The Southern Rhodesian employers too were still dissatisfied with what they regarded as lack of discipline amongst their new charges and doubted the bona fides of these recruits as labourers. The Inspector of Roads, Mr. Coope, who was in charge of a party of these labourers assigned for road work expressed this characteristic resentment amongst the Rhodesian employers; resentment which was largely tainted by the ill-feeling aroused by the Beira affair. Coope reported to the Labour Board that:

... they -(Abyssinians and others)- do not perform as much work as a local native. They are extremely lacking in discipline & have little or no respect for the white gangers. They are lazy & unreliable & appear to have been drawn from a bad class of people and are mostly loafers who are unaccustomed to honest work...<sup>101</sup>

It was therefore, these attitudes, which, in the final analysis, influenced Rhodesian labour recruiting policy in the horn of Africa and the Arabian peninsula. These negative attitudes also significantly strengthened the views of those officials acquainted with the scheme, but who had been, from the very start, openly pessimistic about the feasibility of what appeared to them a rather far-fetched solution to Southern Rhodesia's labour problems. One such official who had his doubts over the scheme was Lord Cromer of the Egyptian Administration, who expressed these misgivings to Sir Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner for South Africa, in January 1901. Lord Cromer's views were based on the dubious value of Abyssinians as labour material and on the restrictive conditions imposed by the reluctant monarch

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid: Report by Dicey to Milton: April 5, 1901.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid: Special Report by Inspector of Compounds (Elliott): April 6, 1901.

<sup>101</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Inspector of Roads (Mr. Coope) quoted in Secretary, Labour Board, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Dept. of Administrator, Salisbury; Telegram: April 26, 1901.

of Abyssinia, King Menelik, with regard to the recruitment, repatriation and protection of Abyssinian subjects.<sup>102</sup>

In the end, so prejudiced against Abyssinian and other labourers from the horn of Africa were the Rhodesian employers and BSACo. Administration that their future recruiting policy consciously excluded these areas altogether. Indeed, not even late offers by private companies operating in the region could distract Rhodesia recruiting policy, as the Abyssinian Exploration Company Ltd. discovered, when it volunteered in November 1901 to supply Southern Rhodesia with '2,000-very good underground-labourers for a term of three years....'<sup>103</sup> In spite of the assurances by these self-appointed recruiters that the chance was 'too good to be lost', the BSACo. Board in London would not accept this class of labourers whose introduction had already aroused such amount of excitement amongst the Rhodesian employers.<sup>104</sup>

In fact, what the BSACo. and its Administration in Southern Rhodesia had in mind was to restrict any further recruiting activities to the Arabian peninsula, in areas around the Aden Settlement and, if possible, in the Turkish territory of Yemen, where, it was generally believed, Arab labour of good class could be procured. To maximise the chances of success in this second scheme, the Administration itself even assumed all responsibility on the scheme, sending as its envoy, Hugh Marshall Hole, the trusted Secretary of the BSACo. in Southern Rhodesia,<sup>105</sup> who replaced the more abrasive Alexander Tulloch, whose methods had given rise to so much furore within the diplomatic circles.<sup>106</sup> John Kusel was, however, given another chance in the new scheme on account of his knowledge and experience, relating to those parts of the world, and, in spite of the differences of opinion between the Labour

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid: Lord Cromer, Cairo, to High Commissioner, Johannesburg: Telegram: January 29, 1901.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid: Henry St. John Wileman, General Manager, Abyssinia, quoted in G. W. Thompson, Secretary The Abyssinian Exploration (Parent) Co., Ltd., to BSACo., Board, London: December 24, 1901.

<sup>104</sup> Jones, Secretary, BSACo., to Secretary, The Abyssinian Exploration (Parent) Co. Ltd., London: December 31: 1901.

<sup>105</sup> H. M. Hole retired from BSACo. service on pension in November 1913 to devote his time to literary defence of his former employers. Vide File C. O. 417/536: P/R/O: London,

<sup>106</sup> A 11/2/8/3: Milton to BSACo., London: Confidential Cablegram: June 2, 1901.

Board of Southern Rhodesia, then avidly pro-Kusel on the matter, and the Administration, which totally disapproved of his handling of the Beira 'revolt' and consequently put the blame over the affair squarely on his shoulders.<sup>107</sup>

This new move to bring down labourers mainly from the Arabian peninsula apparently enjoyed the support of Rhodesian colonist employers and related private economic interests. Walter Currie, the Consulting Engineer for Willoughby's Consolidated Company Ltd. and consequently of its subsidiary, the Surprise Gold Mining Co. Ltd., was, for instance, quite positive about the attitudes of his managers towards Arab labour supply, provided it was of the same class as what was considered the 'better' material brought down by Tulloch and Kusel and subsequently employed at the Surprise mine. Provided these labourers were capable of standing the Southern Rhodesian winter season, Walter Currie was prepared to proceed with the importation of a further experimental gang of Arab labourers, about 250 of them for the Surprise mine alone, at a cost of £6 per head in recruiting expenses,<sup>108</sup> Perhaps to strengthen the claims of his companies and their stake in the Arab labour scheme, Currie further pressed another order of Arab labourers for the Bonsor mine to the tune of 600 recruits in August 1901, especially as by that time the scheme looked at least feasible.<sup>109</sup>

Similar orders on Arab labour poured in from other mining companies as soon as sufficient guarantees over the implementation and success of the imminent Hole/Kusel mission to Aden were provided by the BSACo. Administration. The Globe and Phoenix mine at Sebakwe (Que Que) also put an order in May 1901 and, like the Surprise Gold Mining Co., was amongst the first mining properties to indicate to the Administration its willingness to bear the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid: A. H. Holland, Administrator's Private Secretary to Chairman, Labour Board, Bulawayo; Telegram: May 16, 1901. (Even the Salisbury branch of the Labour Board was also at first opposed to the appointment of Kusel for the second time till it had to be convinced by the Bulawayo branch that if Kusel were not appointed he would give his services to the Rand instead. Vide A 11/2/8/3: H. E. O. Green, Secretary, Labour Board, Bulawayo to Salisbury Branch: May 7, 1901.)

<sup>108</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Walter Currie, Consulting Engineer, The Surprise Gold Mining Co. Ltd.: to Secretary, Labour Board, Bulawayo: April 12, 1901.

<sup>109</sup> A 11/2/8/3: Labour Board, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Telegram: August 28, 1901.



expenses involved in repatriating these Arab labourers at the end of their three-year contracts, notwithstanding the misgivings previously expressed on the matter by the Labour Board supervising the importation programme.<sup>110</sup> By July 1901, the Ayrshire and the Beatrice mines too submitted their orders, to complete the list of companies with directly vested interests in the Hole/Kusel mission to the Aden peninsula.<sup>111</sup>

Special reference to the application of the Beatrice mine is pertinent here, particularly in view of the earlier issues raised by the allocation of Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labourers to this mining property in the Marandellas district. It was here, as we have seen before, where dissatisfaction amongst the North-East African recruits, regarding food and accommodation, had led to the march by these same labourers into Salisbury to protest in March 1901.<sup>112</sup> The Rhodesian Administration, conscious of the embarrassment such protests had produced previously, was, on this second occasion, more than ever anxious to avoid similar incidents and, in order to procure the co-operation of the London Board, the Colonial Office and the Aden authorities, credible labour conditions were promised to safeguard the welfare of these potential recruits. These conditions concerned the provision of proper compound accommodation and rations and their adoption was considered essential for a permanent and regular supply of labour from the Arabian peninsula. The arrangements between the Administration of Southern Rhodesia, the Portuguese authorities and the officials of the Beira-Mashonaland Railways to construct a compound at Beira, to prevent the Arab recruits from entering the town proper on landing, were also a step in this direction to improve the scheme.<sup>113</sup>

In harmony with these requirements, the management at the Beatrice mine also promised to carry out some reforms to render the engagement of Arab labourers at this property more attractive. The mine had hitherto provided 'a number of huts' to accommodate its labour force, composed mainly

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid: Acting Chairman, Labour Board, Bulawayo, to Milton, Salisbury: May 9, 1901.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid: H. M. Hole, Aden, to Milton, Salisbury: July 19, 1901.

<sup>112</sup> Vide: Supra: p. 210.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid: J. Robertson, Clerk, Executive Council, Salisbury, to Administrator's Private Secretary, Bulawayo: Telegram: June 1, 1901.

of Shangaans, Chopi and other aliens from Delagoa Bay and Inhambane in the Portuguese territory of Mozambique, to which a number of the North-East Africans of the Kusel/Tulloch mission had been added at the beginning of 1901. Their food consisted mainly of 'munga -(mhunga)-' and 'rapoko' rations mixed with salt; an obviously outrageous diet to the rice-eating northerners. But for the success of the Arab labour importation scheme, the Manager at Beatrice mine, Mr. A. Turnbull, was reported to have agreed to institute some reforms, starting with the construction of an iron and wood compound for the labourers, for the purpose of which he had ordered material from the urban settlement of Marandellas.<sup>114</sup>

Notwithstanding this belated liberalization of its labour conditions, primarily to meet the needs of foreign governments and labourers, Beatrice completed the list of those assorted mining companies with a peculiar reputation of their own and which sponsored the Arab labour scheme for a purpose. The labour quotas these mining companies applied for were, in order of precedence, as follows: Globe and Phoenix 500 Arab labourers; Surprise mine 200; Beatrice 300; Ayrshire 250 and Bonsor 600.<sup>115</sup> The significance of this impromptu association of mines, with more than fleeting interest in foreign labour, was that they together symbolized, in one aspect or another, a wide spectrum of what were regarded in local African labour circles as the most unpopular mines in the country. Without assistance from the state or the Native Department, to be more specific, such mines could have hardly secured adequate local labour supply.<sup>116</sup> Foreign labour was therefore a logical option to this class of mines and thus it was primarily for this reason that the North-East African labour scheme ever came into existence.

These mines and their companies mentioned above naturally attached great importance to the Arab labour scheme and accordingly looked forward to its fruition with a noticeable degree of optimism and anticipation. Like the Labour Board, the mining companies in question still retained their confidence in Kusel, Hole's companion on the mission, whose twelve-year

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid: Report on Arab and Native Accommodation at the Beatrice (Rhodesia) Co. Ltd., by R. K. Eustace, Manager, Labour Board of S. Rhodesia: July 6, 1901.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid: A. H. Holland, Administrator's Private Secretary, to Labour Board, Bulawayo: Telegram: September 10, 1901.

<sup>116</sup> Vide Infra: Chapter 8.

experience and expertise in North-East African languages and affairs they greatly valued,<sup>117</sup> whilst the Administration, on the other hand, considered their right-hand man, H. M. Hole, a proper asset on the mission and, in like manner, accredited him to authorities concerned.<sup>118</sup> The success or failure of the Hole/Kusel mission to the Arabian peninsula and of the Arab labour scheme must therefore be viewed against this complex background; a background reflecting generally an admixture of real and superficial problems against which even far-fetched solutions could only produce little impact.

The previous missions to North-East Africa, first by Kusel for the Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa Co. Ltd. in November 1899 and later by both Kusel and Tulloch between October 1900 and January 1901, had led to one conclusion; the need to institute a scheme to procure what these emissaries described variously as 'excellent boys'<sup>119</sup> or 'the pick of the labourers',<sup>120</sup> in their reference to Hamals and other groups of the Arabian peninsula. In their assertions, these emissaries repeatedly also pointed out the importance of Aden as a suitable port of embarkation as well the need for the co-operation of Aden authorities and the Government of India in the venture.<sup>121</sup> Hole and Kusel thus undertook their mission to Aden in June 1901 under the effective aegis of the Administration of Southern Rhodesia and the blessings of the Colonial Office.<sup>122</sup> Quite naturally, it was expected that the co-operation of the Aden authorities and the Government of India would be automatic and forthcoming. Yet it was this factor, among many other things,

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid: Labour Board, Bulawayo, to Milton, Telegram: May 13, 1901.

<sup>118</sup> Milton, Salisbury, to The Political Agent, Aden, June 4, 1901: Vide also Regulation and Labour Supply: pp. 79-90: and also File C. O. 417/337: P/R/O: London.

<sup>119</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Kusel's Report to Consolidated Gold Fields: November (?), 1899.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid: Tulloch, Bulawayo, to Secretary, BSA Co., Bulawayo: March 1, 1901.

<sup>121</sup> The Aden Settlement was ruled as part and parcel of the Bombay Presidency (India) up to 1935. Vide: R. C. Majundar, H. C. Raychaudhuri and K. Datta (eds): An Advanced History of India: Macmillan: London: 1961: pp. 923-4.

<sup>122</sup> C. O. permission in this scheme was given on condition that necessary legislation for the control of these and other foreign labourers were introduced. Vide: Sir M. F. Ommamney to Milner: June 14, 1901: in Regulation and Labour Supply: p. 72.

which significantly influenced the outcome of the mission.

In his correspondence soon after the Rhodesian envoys arrived in Aden at the end of June 1901, Hole was remarkably optimistic about his and Kusel's prospects of obtaining labour from this part of the world. Indeed, it was this optimism which formed the basis of Hole's preparations for the recruiting campaign on the Arabian peninsula, although the British Resident, General Maitland, who had only been one week old in the job, and his junior Major Davies, the First Assistant Resident, appeared more cautious and less enthusiastic about the mission. Hole, however, reported to Milton the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia radiating a tremendous amount of confidence in the scheme and stated

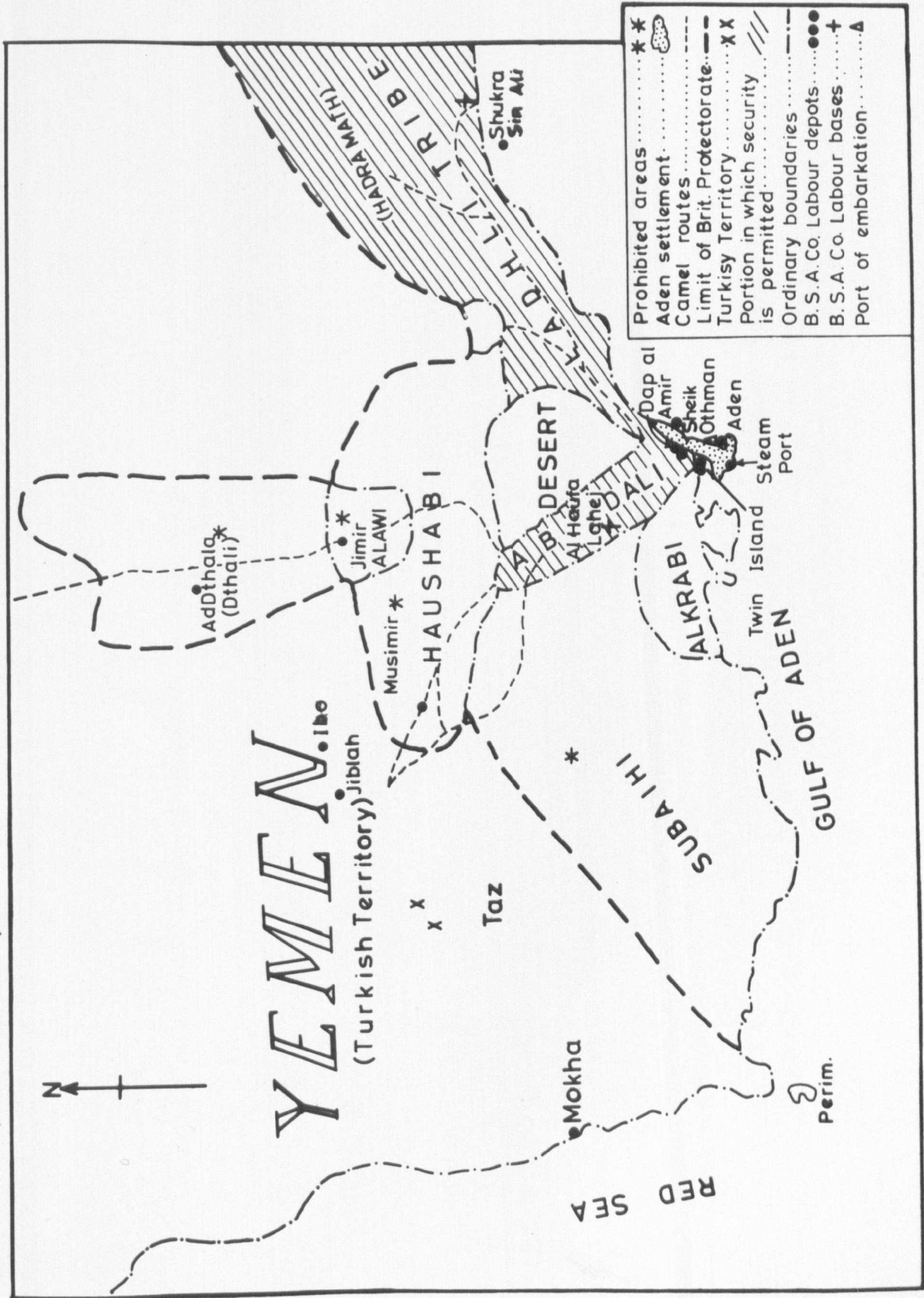
I am certainly feeling sanguine about this labour business. Kusel does know this country thoroughly, and is on good terms with all the leading Arabs as well as the European agents. I think also that he is to be trusted. . . I think we shall induce the shipping companies to carry boys at £2 5s 0d or at any rate £2 10s 0d from Aden to Beira. They are much more interested in the business now that they see there is a prospect of its becoming a big thing now.

Hole was, at this stage, still a greenhorn in the foreign labour-recruiting business and the intricate detail it entailed. He did not sufficiently appreciate the problems facing them even at the very start of their mission. For instance, his first report in June dropped a number of hints serious enough to cause some degree of concern even among his enthusiastic sponsors, especially when he demonstrated the limitations of the mission's field of operations, both in scope and depth. Right from the beginning, only the Arab-controlled territory of Hadra Math, to the north-east of the Aden settlement, appeared to offer tangible promises on labour supply, whilst in the Yemen territory on the South-Western coast of the peninsula, any form of labour recruiting was impossible without some diplomatic understanding between London and Turkey, as was the case in this particular mission, and Hole and Kusel could, therefore, only bank on the whims of the local authorities - the sultans (Chiefs) - whose decisions were fortunately subject to influence, depending on the amount of bribery these officials received. Within the Aden settlement itself, the Rhodesian envoys had to reckon with not only the opinion

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<sup>123</sup>A 11/2/8/3: H. M. Hole, Aden, to Milton, Salisbury, June 30, 1901. Vide also for this correspondence: File C, O, 417/338: P/R/O: London,

APPENDIX V: THE HOLE/KUSEL MISSION TO ADEN: JUNE TO OCT. 1901



(Based on Sketch by Major Davies, First Assistant Resident, Aden: August 28, 1901.  
in File A11/2/8/4, R/N/A, Salisbury)

of the government of India and the India Office, but also with local opposition from the Aden commercial community. For this section of the Aden residents, it was feared that any form of labour recruitment would naturally raise the wage tariff, then described by Hole as 'ridiculously low', and thus consequently ruin their occupations.<sup>124</sup>

Yet whilst the problems mentioned above loomed in the way of the Hole/Kusel mission to Aden and, in several ways, influenced the outcome of this mission, the list of all the obstacles and bottle-necks which the Rhodesian envoys had to reckon with was by no means completed. Hole himself made passing references to these problems in his reports but did not attach much importance to their weight at first. In Hadra Math for example, a territory named by Hole as a suitable recruiting ground with proposed bases at Mkella and Shugra-bin-Ali for the purpose, the expected large supplies of labour were, in mid-1901, seriously threatened by the military conflict between the Sultan of Mkella and the Bedouins of the hinterland. Not unnaturally, the Sultan of Mkella required all his men for the campaign, much to the disadvantage of the Hole/Kusel venture.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, even if recruitment were possible anywhere on the Arabian peninsula, Hole and Kusel were outrightly unable to transport any of the recruits to the port of Beira in Mozambique as the monsoon winds would not permit any transportation of deck passengers then till the beginning of September.<sup>126</sup> Such unexpected obstacles and the delay which they obviously entailed were understandably exasperating to Hole, who conveyed his feelings to Milton at the beginning of July in an unmistakable tone:

... the comparative inactivity imposed thereby on me -(is)-  
exceedingly irritating... for even if we were free to commence  
recruiting at once it would be inadvisable to do so seeing  
that the labourers cannot be shipped until September and  
would be on our hands for the whole of the intervening  
period.<sup>127</sup>

A vastly significant factor grossly underestimated by the Rhodesian envoys to Aden, was the role of the Aden authorities and the government of India whose co-operation on the use of the Aden port and other facilities was

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: June 30, 1901. (Vide: Appendix (map) V: The Hole/Kusel Mission to Aden, June to October 1901.)

<sup>125</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: July 4, 1901.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: July 8, 1901.

crucial for the success of this Arab labour scheme. Perhaps these envoys and their sponsors may have been deluded by their self-confidence having won the support of the Colonial Office on the matter as they had. But this miscalculation on the intransigency and resilience of these authorities grievously impaired the Arab labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia not to mention the accompanying resentment it also brought about in consequence. As far as Hole, the political ambassador of the Southern Rhodesian Administration on the mission, was concerned, this sense of false confidence was apparently a result of the amicable disposition of the new Resident at Aden, whom he described quite favourably, at first, as:

... showing himself anxious & willing to give me all the assistance in his power, but as he has only been here -(Aden)- a week it is natural that he should feel his way a little before allowing me to take any step.<sup>128</sup>

Hole may have understood General Maitland's reactions on a personal basis, but certainly failed to interpret this worthy official's behaviour within the context of official protocol and was therefore consequently ill-prepared to absorb the shock, when the turn of events produced different results altogether.

At an early stage, the Aden authorities, in whose sphere of control no labour recruitment was permissible, had proved themselves overtly opposed to such recruiting activities even in areas on the borders of their settlement. They would not even permit the establishment of a recruiting base at Sheik Othman, an urban settlement about 8 miles from the port of Aden, chosen by Hole for the purpose because of what he regarded as 'the many attractions for Arabs there which -(would)- deter them from running away during the period preceeding embarkation.'<sup>129</sup> For the Aden officials, who proposed the alternative base at Lahej, about 25 miles north of Aden, whence they also procured labour for their own use, their objections were prompted by the medical, financial and administrative responsibilities in which they were likely to enmesh themselves once such co-operation had been agreed upon with the Rhodesian envoys.

It was felt in Aden that, though the BSA Co. had agreed to assume all res-

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: July 4, 1901.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: June 30, 1901.

possibility on the matter, the local Administration could be faced with a situation in which they would inevitably be forced to meet extra expenses in the provision of registration and medical examination facilities as well as policing and sanitary arrangements. Basing their arguments on previous experiences in which case both depot and embarkation facilities were provided to Tulloch and Kusel at Little Aden by the then outgoing Resident, General More McGovern, but were subsequently withdrawn due to the outbreak of cholera in the interior and the influx of people into the Aden Settlement, Aden authorities strongly objected to the use of their territory as a base and depot for labour recruitment on medical grounds. Thus the new Resident informed the Viceroy of India in July 1901 as follows:

...I deprecate strongly the formation of a large coolie depot at Aden annually which is what Mr. Hole's plans would entail.

General Maitland also continued:

Annual formation of ~~-(a)-~~ coolie camp at Aden would add to ~~-(the)-~~ difficulty of preserving ~~-(the)-~~ health of ~~-(the)-~~ settlement and garrison. Impossible to establish depot elsewhere on coast within our Protectorate as separate medical establishment would have to be provided, <sup>130</sup> also police, and probably troops which can ill be spared.

In one respect, the Hole/Kusel mission was perhaps adversely affected by factors beyond the control of either its activists or their sponsors. This was in connection with the political unrest which surfaced in those areas of the Arabian peninsula in which these envoys were specially interested. Just as political upheavals in Hadramath (or Hadra Math) threatened to undermine any chances of labour recruitment in this Arab-controlled domain in the north-east of Aden, similar developments were also taking place in the southern parts of the Turkish province of Yemen, with all the likelihood of spill-overs into the northern regions of the British protected territories north of Aden. Indeed, the movement of troops in both the Turkish and British spheres of control on the peninsula in July 1901 compelled Hole to complain of the 'unsettling' effects such a state of affairs was likely to produce amongst the local Arabs, especially in Lahej and those northern domains where the chances of labour supply for him and Kusel were apparent. <sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid: Summary of a letter by Resident at Aden to Viceroy, India; Quoted in Hole to Milton: July 19, 1901.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton July 19, 1901.



From another point of view, the political unrest and the then imminent military conflict between Turkish and British troops further minimized any hopes Hole and Kusel might have entertained to carry out 'labour poaching' activities in the Yemen province with Aden as their base. Even less likely in this venture was the hope on any co-operation forthcoming from the Aden authorities who had quite sensibly advised the Rhodesian envoys at the very beginning that more labour could be procured from the Turkish territory, as long as these emissaries dealt directly with the Turkish authorities on their own or through the Southern Rhodesian Administration and without either involving or relying in any way on Aden.<sup>132</sup> In the light of this mid-1901 Anglo-Turkish bout of misunderstanding, the Rhodesian emissaries to the Arabian peninsula had very few alternatives left in this quest for Arab labour.

Of particular relevance to the Aden mission in 1901 was the question of principle and the application of British imperial ideals to a part of the world largely under the umbrella of general developments in India, where Indian coolie labour emigration overseas was becoming the focus of opposition, since the restrictive legislative measures imposed under the India Emigration Act XXI of December 1883.<sup>133</sup> The Bombay Presidency, to which the Aden Authorities were answerable, was in favour of extending this legislation and its restrictions to Aden on the occasion of the Hole/Kusel mission, notwithstanding Rhodes's personal appeal to the Viceroy at Simla.<sup>134</sup>

The demands under this Indian government legislation, stipulating that labour recruits should be supplied with written information on the form of employment they were being recruited for and on details concerning wages, not to mention the imposition of penalties on offending employers, were quite out of tune with the general expectations of the sponsors of the Hole/Kusel mission. Indeed, Hole's disappointment with the demands of the Bombay government and the relevance of the India Emigration Act to the Aden peninsula and the Arab labour scheme of which he was the chief ambassador, epitomizes the resentment of his sponsors in general. In this agent's own dramatic description of the controversial Act and what he considered could be the inevitable harmful effects it was bound to produce on any efforts by Rhodesian employers

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid: Summary of a letter by Resident, Aden, to Viceroy, India: July 19, 1901.

<sup>133</sup> Tinker: op. cit. pp. 269-71.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: August 24, 1901.

to procure labour from this part of the world, the legislation was outrightly 'fearful' and its requirements 'appalling in number'.<sup>135</sup> Thus with obvious despondence, Hole could only conclude:

... it is impossible to carry into effect ~~-(the)-~~ requirements ~~-(of)-~~ this Act ~~-(and)-~~ under ~~-(these)-~~ circumstances it will be necessary ~~-(to)-~~ <sup>136</sup> abandon the project if Bombay refuses to alter ~~-(its)-~~ decision.

Imperial intervention however, diluted the demands of the Bombay government and, in this way, enabled the Arab labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia to proceed. The India Office, in particular, compared the Rhodesian labour scheme at Aden with previous demands through the Foreign Office, such as the occasion when the Italian government in Eritrea successfully applied for labour from Aden and was accorded the consent of the India Office on condition that the recruits so engaged should not be 'natives' of India, whilst similar requests by the Ugandan Administration in March 1898, for camel drivers to promote the protectorate's transport system, were also sympathetically treated and approved in deference to 'imperial interests'. It was, therefore, against this background that the India Office agreed to the request from the Colonial Office to allow labour recruitment from the Aden peninsula for the Rhodesian mines, as long as these recruits were freely procured and were neither residents of the Aden settlement itself nor British subjects, whose enrolment would obviously raise a number of issues under the India Emigration Act of 1883.<sup>137</sup>

In accordance with the India Office ruling, the Aden authorities allowed Hole and Kusel to carry out their recruiting activities at the eleventh hour under tightly circumscribed conditions, even more so in the wake of Anglo-Turkish military and political conflicts on the peninsula. The Rhodesian envoys were consequently given the approval to recruit in Lahej (Abdali) and the Hadra Math, but only as far as the town of Shugra-bin-Ali, to avoid, also in this region, those centres like Mkella, where political unrest prevailed. Similarly, in the north of the Aden settlement, no recruitment was allowed in sensitive areas bordering on the Turkish territory to minimize further poli-

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.: Hole to BSACo., London, Cablegram: August 22, 1901; Vide also File C. O. 417/338: P/R/O: London.

<sup>137</sup> C. O. 417/337: Sir Lee Warner, India Office to C. O. June 5, 1901.

tical complications. Thus in this respect, those areas like Dthali, Misimir, Jimil and Subaihi to the northern and western frontiers of Lahej, were essentially out of question as sources of labour for Hole and Kusel, although they fell within the sphere of British settlement of Aden.<sup>138</sup>

For their entry into areas where labour recruitment was permissible, the Rhodesian envoys and their agents had their movements strictly checked by the authorities, through demand for prior arrangements and letters of introduction to the Sultans concerned.<sup>139</sup> This was apparently to avoid the recruitment of labour by coercive means or the exploitation, by the labour agents, of the prospective recruits' ignorance of the conditions under which they were enlisting, consequently leading to misunderstandings as had happened before, especially in 1898, when the Italians were allowed to recruit labour from Aden for Eritrea.<sup>140</sup> These restrictive measures were also clearly explicable in terms of the political consequences the Aden authorities were anxious to avoid and could hardly be interpreted as demonstrating any sort of paternalistic attitude on the part of those same authorities towards their protégés. Indeed, as Hole indicated to Milton, at the beginning of September 1901, the Aden authorities were quite clear-minded as to the line of demarcation between political interests and administrative patronage; at least as far as they were concerned at a personal level. Thus after a conversation with the Resident, Hole summarised the latter's attitude in the following manner:

... in conversation with the Resident (General Maitland) I got him to say that he practically did not care where the boys came from as long as they belonged to the protected tribes and were not Turkish subjects, and that he did not care where our native recruiters went to as long as Kusel and I kept clear of the districts interdicted which were dangerous (sic).<sup>141</sup>

It was, however, in respect of medical and health restrictions and the manner in which the administrative requirements at Aden were laid down that these significantly affected labour recruitment by Hole and Kusel as well as the quantity and quality of their recruits and also their mode of em-

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<sup>138</sup> Vide map: Appendix II.

<sup>139</sup> A 11/2/8/2: Major J. Davies, First Assistant Resident, Aden, to Hole: August 28, 1901.

<sup>140</sup> C. O. 417/337: Sir Lee Warner to C. O.: June 5, 1901.

<sup>141</sup> A 11/2/8/4: Hole to Milton: September 20, 1901.

barkation from Aden to Beira. The medical problem and the fear of outbreaks of epidemic diseases of one type or another, as a result of larger-scale movements of people from the interior into the Aden settlement, had, from the start, formed the lynch-pin of the opposition by Aden authorities to various schemes on labour emigration and recruitment.<sup>142</sup> Given the generally restrictive character of both imperial and local policies at Aden in 1901, especially insofar as these concerned the Rhodesian labour mission, the Aden authorities certainly left no sluice-gates open through which such activities as those advocated by Hole and Kusel could undermine the health conditions of the settlement. For these and similar reasons, the labour depots and centres for medical examination and registration of labourers were decidedly located either on the fringes of the Aden settlement, such as at Sheik Othman, about two miles away from the border and at Dar-el-Amir also about one and a half miles outside the settlement.<sup>143</sup> According to official directions, labour recruits to and from these points required police escorts, who, together with the medical officer, also supervised the sanitary conditions at the main labour depot of the BSACo. envoys at Twin Island, a detached island where conditions were such that:

Once the boys get on to ~~(it)~~ they ~~(could)~~ have no communication with the outside world. . . .<sup>144</sup>

Corresponding restrictions also governed the registration of the recruits.

Hole, as chief spokesman of the Rhodesian mission, did not appear at all opposed to these restrictions and was, at first, quite partial to such actions, insofar as they related to the labour depot on Twin Island, where, as he concluded, the presence of rough old buildings would save them the expenses of constructing camps over and above the equipment these envoys had already bought in form of food utensils, mats, blankets and tents. Even the thorough medical examination prescribed by the authorities did not, at first appear too disadvantageous and Hole actually supported it on the grounds that:

. . . no unsound boy should be passed ~~(as medically fit)~~ otherwise we should import boys who would be likely to knock up shortly after arriving & would be an encumbrance to us.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 221-2.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid: Major Davies to Hole: August 28, 1901.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: September 20, 1901.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

Yet sooner or later Hole was compelled to voice some measure of disapproval due to the expenses which the medical requirements involved and what appeared to him the excessive charges, at Rs. 5 (five rupees) per head, demanded by the medical officer assigned for the duty by the authorities. Given the freedom of movement in respect of the ingress and egress of people from the interior into the settlement, Hole concluded with obvious resentment, that the whole affair was 'a farce'. Finally, Hole could not alter his views over the registration and policing requirements prescribed by the Aden authorities, which obviously meant extra expenses for the BSA Co. envoys. For example, although the registration of the recruits was undertaken and witnessed by a Eurasian friend of Kusel's, Hole was opposed to the idea of moving recruits between Twin Island and Aden harbour, the point of departure, not only on account of the cost in transport costs, but also because of the expenses required to maintain police guards in the process; functionaries desparagingly described by this BSA Co. agent as a 'useless &... expensive encumbrance'.<sup>146</sup>

The above aspects of the Hole/Kusel Arab labour mission, from a bird's-eye view, naturally exercised immeasurable influence on the course of this importation scheme and inhibited any maximum operation that its architects might have had in mind. But in its structure so far, it does not by any means demonstrate the role played by the Arab recruits themselves and to what extent their response to the approaches of the envoys of the Southern Rhodesian Administration and employers contributed either to the success or failure of the project.

In the survey on Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour from North-East Africa, it has been argued that because of the methods adopted by Kusel and Tulloch in carrying out their deals with the officials in that part of the world over the heads of the recruits, these agents failed to take the recruits into their confidence and consequently some measure of misunderstanding could hardly be avoided, as the Beira incident later demonstrated.<sup>147</sup> These distinctive features of the earlier North-East African labour plan were also evident in the succeeding scheme for the Arabian peninsula. Kusel may have had his shortcomings as a private labour agent, otherwise interested only in the com-

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 206-10.

mercial aspects of this venture, but the reactions of Hole to the requirements of the India Emigration Act and its relevance to the Aden peninsula largely manifest, in several ways, the drawbacks of labour importation under the aegis of a restrictive political and economic system, which the BSA Co. Administration in Southern Rhodesia epitomized. It is, therefore, within the constraints of such limitations that the reactions of the Arab labour recruits must be gauged.

As in the North-East Africa scheme, the Arab labour project depended on a network of agents and contacts laid down by Kusel, whose activities attracted so much admiration from his superior, Hole, that the latter was forced to confess:

I am very pleased with Kusel. He is conscientious & although  
very unbusiness-like he is quite at home with these Arabs.<sup>148</sup>

Local officials also played a prominent part as agents in return for economic fringe benefits. Two such leaders whose activities failed to escape Hole's attention were the Sultan of Lahej and Sheik Saleh, with whom the two Rhodesian envoys established contacts in Aden. Indeed it was from Lahej, where, as a matter of fact, the Arab labourers, later forwarded to the Globe Phoenix mine at Que Que, were procured; a labour force consisting mainly of Bedouins and Jebels, described by Hole in somewhat unfavourable terms as 'peasants & hill boys'.

In essence, the part played by the ruler of Lahej, north of Aden, is blurred by what surfaces as some form of misunderstanding between the Sultan and Hole. This misunderstanding was caused by two things; namely, the Sultan's unfulfilled promises to supply the BSA Co. envoys with labour to the tune of 2,000 recruits, yet all he could produce in the end were only 50 men. The second reason may have been the Sultan's demands for commission, at Rs 3 (three rupees) per head for the labourers he forwarded to the Rhodesian envoys, notwithstanding the presents the latter had previously given to this ruler in return for his co-operation. In the end, Hole was openly displeased by the Sultan's commission demands and only paid the same under duress and out of fear of being accused of 'a breach of faith'.<sup>149</sup>

Hole's views on the Sultan of Lahej, as more or less an economic liability

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<sup>148</sup> A 11/2/8/4: Hole to Milton: September 20, 1901.

<sup>149</sup> ibid : Hole to Milton: September 20, 1901.

rather than an asset in labour recruiting there, must not unduly influence the reader on the negative role of this ruler in promoting the BSACo. labour scheme on this occasion. Instead, it should be borne in mind that the accommodation facilities used by Hole and Kusel at their labour depot at Dar-el-Amir, about 2 miles from Sheik Othman, belonged to this ruler. Hole had, in fact, initially expressed himself to Milton as being quite grateful to the Sheik of Lahej for this favour which ruled out any further need for the construction of sheds for the labourers, whilst they waited for their registration at this point in September.<sup>150</sup> From the Sultan of Lahej's point of view, it was obviously logical to expect corresponding favours from the BSACo. envoys.

A more promising labour courier with whom Hole and Kusel established contacts in the final stages of their mission, was Sheikh Saleh, a merchant by trade and a man whose interest in the Arab labour emigration scheme was essentially influenced by the potentialities of the scheme as a permanent economic venture. Although this man's activities on the occasion of Hole and Kusel's visit may have been limited, it was because of Hole's faith in him, however, assisted, in the process, by another agent called Schmuck, that the BSACo. representative had even hoped to establish a permanent Arab labour scheme and a regular supply system from the Arabian peninsula to Southern Rhodesia for future purposes, with Kusel as the scheme's general supervisor based at Aden.<sup>151</sup>

Supplementing this list of officials and agents, was a small fry of messengers and other minor functionaries employed by Hole in the recruiting field on the peninsula and also as leaders of recruits proceeding to Southern Rhodesia. The appointment of these functionaries, however, depended less on imperial criteria than it did on the whims of the chief representative on the Aden mission. Some of these auxiliaries, appointed for one reason or another connected with this Arab labour mission, included Aboukir and Sali Sayyid who were to act as leaders of Arab labourers to and in Southern Rhodesia and whose privileged treatment was regarded as an essential mechan-

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid: Schmuck's appointment as a permanent labour agent at Aden was confirmed by the Southern Rhodesia Labour Board by November 1901. Vide: C. O. 417/338: Milton to BSACo. Telegram: November 15, 1901.

ism for popularizing Southern Rhodesia as a field of labour in these labourers' homeland. For this reason, Hole appealed to Milton on behalf of Aboukir, 'a very superior Somali', formerly engaged as a guide and interpreter to European parties on the Arabian peninsula; skills Aboukir may have placed at the disposal of the Hole/Kusel mission and consequently ingratiated himself in this manner. Hole's pleas to Milton in September 1901, at least betray the pre-existence of this type of relationship, as the former stated:

... Aboukir must be treated with rather more consideration than the ordinary black man. He is a person of standing here -(at Aden)-, and I have seen him sitting down and smoking with white men. He is engaged -(for Southern Rhodesia)- at £10 per month and if he is not required in Mashonaland should be sent back with a 3rd class passage to Aden.<sup>152</sup>

Taking into account the generally negative attitude of the Rhodesian employers towards these recruits, especially the Somalis brought down in the gang of North-East African labourers between December 1900 and January 1901, Hole's testimonial, vouching what he obviously regarded as the superior social standing of this Somali recruit, is quite remarkable; not to mention the distinctive role played here by arbitrary colonist attitudes in influencing economic decisions. Similar favours were to be conferred also on Sali Sayyid of Lahej, another 'superior type' of labourer on whom Hole reported that he had taken 'a great fancy', apparently, for the former's role in helping to promote the engagement of the Lahej labourers forwarded to the Globe and Phoenix mine and over whom Sayyid himself was appointed 'the native head...'. But from Hole's point of view, Sali Sayyid's services were more or less in greater demand as a labour tout in Aden than as a 'boss boy' on the Rhodesian mines. For this reason, it was suggested that Sayyid should be sent back to Aden to report 'after spending a week or two at the -(Rhodesian)- mines....'<sup>153</sup>

The employment of these minor functionaries was significant in many respects. For one thing, their engagement as leaders of their own people could mean not only an effective device in both the exploitation and control of larger labour supplies at little expense,<sup>154</sup> but also the instituting of a buffer

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.: Note that the wages of ordinary Arab labourers ranged between 20/- and 45/- monthly. Vide File C, O, 417/337: P/R/O: London.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Van Onselen: 'The Role of Collaborators in Rhodesian Mining Industry 1900-1935': loc. cit.



system whereby these gangers and touts would act as an interpolating mechanism in a situation which demanded both harsh and exploitative treatment of the labour recruits, much in the same manner as the Indian drivers, sirdas and Kanganis were employed on the sugar plantation to control their fellow overseas Asiatic labourers and thus insulating the planters and managers in the West Indies and elsewhere from charges of barbarous treatment of indentured labourers.<sup>155</sup>

In the case of the Southern Rhodesia Arab labour mission in 1901, the need for intermediaries for the enrolment and control of recruits could hardly be over-emphasized. The Rhodesian emissaries may have found the sultans and other local dignitaries ready to co-operate in reciprocation of mutual favours of one type or another, but this was hardly true in relation to the response of the labour recruits themselves. It appears that in undertaking the second mission to this part of the world, to procure labour for the Southern Rhodesian mines, the envoys in question and their sponsors had underestimated the historical, cultural and geographical links which formed the basis of the symbiosis between the Arabian peninsula and the horn of Africa. They were however crudely awoken to the realities of these links through some of the residues of the Beira revolt of January 1901, in which the labour agents, the Portuguese authorities and the Rhodesian employers failed to appreciate the significant and fundamental aspects of this historic event.<sup>156</sup> Hole and Kusel were in the circumstances, forcibly made heirs to the repercussions of this earlier incident, apparently, as an additional accreditation to their bona fides as torch-bearers in the labour importation scheme they so represented.

The repercussions of the Beira incident nonetheless began to surface as the Rhodesian envoys undertook their recruiting campaign in Lahej in August 1901 and it is quite probable that it was the spirit of Beira which may have contributed to the failure of the Sultan of Lahej's effort to supply the large quantities of labour, he had initially promised Hole during their meeting in Aden. Whatever effects this spirit may have had on the Sultan, it was particularly evident amongst his people and influenced, to a large extent, the response of the Bedouin and Jebel recruits, with devastating results for Hole and Kusel's efforts to recruit labour in the territory. These effects of the

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<sup>155</sup> Tinker: op. cit. pp. 222-3.

<sup>156</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 206-10.

Beira affair were well captured in Hole's reports to Salisbury, in the following manner:

Here -(at Lahejl)- on the first day many boys offered themselves voluntarily. On the second day none came, & those who had engaged the day before cried off. On enquiring I found that one of the Somalis who had mutinied at Beira was there and was concocting all sorts of stories to frighten away the Arabs. I reported him and he was bastinadoed.<sup>157</sup>  
We have had a great many many repetitions of this.

In respect of Lahej recruits, the effects of the reports by these former Beira veterans were, of course, quite decisive. Out of the labour force of about 340 recruits secured by Hole and Kusel in the region, nearly half of them had deserted by the time the recruits arrived at the BSA Co. labour depot at Dar-el-Amir on the borders of the Aden settlement, some 25 miles from Lahej.

These reports on the conditions of engagement and treatment in Southern Rhodesia by the Beira survivors were by no means tantalizing. Even within the confines of the labour depots at Dar-el-Amir and Twin Island, the spill-overs of the Beira affair persisted and made the control of recruits a particularly daunting task. In essence, the reports of these old labourers and their previous experiences in Southern Rhodesia were of the same genre as those factors largely responsible for the Beira revolt. As a resentful Marshall Hole reported after some effort to persuade a group of recruits, reluctant to proceed to the depot of Twin Island, and in spite of his assurances on good accommodation and food supply, the adverse affects of the Beira incident were not easy to overcome, hence the irritation that:

The mischievous Somali had told them -(recruits)- we were going to induce them on to dhows by craft & then take them & sell them as slaves to the Turks.... In fact every moment of the day we have to counteract some absurd notion they got into their heads chiefly prompted by Somalies.<sup>158</sup>

It is evident, in the circumstances, that the fear of misrepresentation on labour conditions in the destination area or of kidnapping through some subtle means by these foreign labour agents, induced the Arab labour recruits to protest in some direct and open way. At this stage of their enlistment, it

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: September 20, 1901, and also Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: pp. 96-7.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

could hardly be said that the BSACo. envoys had acquired the necessary dominance over their charges to expect the latter to acquiesce and resign themselves to their fate in a manner their predecessors did after arriving at Beira and in Southern Rhodesia at the beginning of 1901. These recruits, it must be realized, were voluntary recruits and were, therefore, less committed to labour emigration than either forced labourers or debt-peonage recruits and, from this point of view, were more susceptible to resist and challenge any attempt to press-gang them into a situation whose implications they did not clearly comprehend. Precisely for such resistance, these recruits, like their predecessors from the horn of Africa, ran the risk of crossing swords with the Rhodesian envoys and their sponsors, whose quest for docile labour was a primary objective.

Indeed, as far as the relationship between the Arab recruits and their superiors, the Rhodesian envoys, was concerned, further points of difference were raised by the medical examination and other sanitary requirements, prescribed as pre-conditions to any recruitment by the Aden authorities and, to some extent, supported by Hole as a means of screening the physically weaker recruits.<sup>159</sup> These preconditions and the subsequent discovery by Hole during the medical examination that most of the adult Arab recruits suffered from one medical defect or another, such as enlarged spleens or livers, weak hearts and rupture, allegedly caused by camel-riding and affecting, especially, the genital organs and other lower parts of the body, may have naturally occasioned unusual strictness in the form of medical examination required for these prospective labourers. The statistics on one group at least, the Lahej batch, undoubtedly demonstrate the strictness of this medical examination, as Table I shows below:

Table I:

Original number of recruits engaged at Lahej	= 338
Desertions at Lajeh and en route	= 150
Desertions to avoid examination	= 60
Rejections as medically unfit	= 32
Balance enlisted	= 96
Losses through desertion and examination	= 243

Whilst reports on the unfavourable conditions for which these Arab lab-

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<sup>159</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 185-90.

ourers were thus being recruited had, in consequence, scared a sizeable number and compelled them to desert, the remainder were obviously antagonized by the medical examination requirements, which impinged on the sensibilities of their Moslem traditions and culture. Marshall Hole accordingly reported on these medical problems and Arab response thereto as follows:

The Arabs protested vehemently against the exposure necessary to satisfy the doctor that they were free from venereal disease. It is contrary to their religion & they are a nervous -(and)-highly strung race whose suspicions are easily aroused. It looked at one time as if we should lose them all on account of this scruple.<sup>160</sup>

Hole's conclusions were quite accurate. The Bedouins from Lahej refused to undergo such an examination and, in defiance of the Aden police guarding them, escaped at night. Perhaps even more would have done so had the vigilance of this guard not been increased. The medical requirements represented here an unusual occurrence in foreign labour recruiting circles whereby the common practice of passing as fit all recruits not suffering from obvious physical malformation or showing other conspicuous evidence of disease,<sup>161</sup> was over-riden by the political interests of the host territory and, consequently, conflicted with the national traits of the recruits themselves.

As a final fling against a situation in which those Arab labourers who had engaged for emigration to Southern Rhodesia and satisfied the necessary medical requirements found themselves in, some of the recruits would not be persuaded to embark for Beira, when the time arrived, till the India Office in London stepped in and instructed the hitherto neutral authorities at Aden to rescue the Southern Rhodesian labour scheme and facilitate the transportation of the recruits in question.<sup>162</sup> From all appearances, the Rhodesian envoys had failed on their own to counter the reports, circulating within the circles of these recruits, that they were going to 'be killed, imprisoned, -(and)- ill-treated in Rhodesia,'<sup>163</sup> an obvious development from the Beira incident.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: September 20, 1901.

<sup>161</sup> Vide: infra: pp.

<sup>162</sup> C. O. 417/338: Sir Lee Warner, India Office, to BSACo. October 25, 1901.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid: Hole to BSACo. London: Telegram: October 13, 1901.

<sup>164</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 206-10.

Hole, therefore, could only appeal to his superiors, the London Board, and, through this directorate, to the Colonial and India Offices to authorize the Aden authorities to repudiate what the BSACo. Board considered to be 'wholly unfounded... rumours and... mischievous impressions...' calculated to impair the Southern Rhodesian labour scheme 'in the minds of ignorant and credulous natives...', and, through these authoritative denials, assure the chiefs on the guarantees of fair treatment for their people proceeding to work in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>165</sup>

The involvement of the Aden authorities, who had some measure of dominance over the recruits, clearly indicates that the Arab labourers would neither trust nor readily submit to the demands of foreign labour agents, as the Rhodesian envoys signified in their eyes. Their resistance may not have been as dramatic and vigorous as the mob riots in Delhi and other Indian cities against clandestine recruitment of 'coolies' for the West Indies and other overseas colonies at the turn of the nineteenth century,<sup>166</sup> but, even in this weak form, demonstrated their disapproval of a situation in which they found themselves involved willy-nilly. Moreover, these problems, which marked the relationship between the Rhodesian envoys and their clients, served, to some extent, as harbingers on the futile character of the whole Arab labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia, notwithstanding the optimism of the top officials on its permanence as well as the hopes of its representative official, the so-called Protector of Immigrants.<sup>167</sup>

The reactions of the labour-hungry colonist employers to the arrival of the Arab labour recruits in Southern Rhodesia, in the second half of 1901, were positive at first, but this did not last long. Those mining properties seriously threatened by labour shortage for reasons of their own, were evidently anxious to put to immediate good use these new arrivals and, in this manner, arrest any demands for reforms in labour conditions at their mines. The Ayrshire mine was one of these properties. Its boss, Dr. Hans Sauer of The Ayrshire Mine and Lomagundi Railway Co. Ltd., had apparently written to the Administrator in mid-September 1901, enquiring about the arrival of the Arab labourers on whom his company had placed an order and, at the same time, requesting

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid: BSACo. to C. O. : October 25, 1901.

<sup>166</sup> Vide: Tinker: op. cit. pp. 124-9.

<sup>167</sup> C. O. 417/338: C. O. to BSACo. , August 10 & 28, 1901.

the Administrator to 'use ~~(his)~~ influence with the N/Cs ~~(Native Commissioners)~~ with a view to inducing them to give all the help in their power to our Manager at the mine;'<sup>168</sup> a request which was quickly responded to by the Native Department in form of instructions to the Assistant Native Commissioner of the Lomagundi district to apply some form of pressure and 'use every effort to keep this mine well supplied with labour.'<sup>169</sup> The Ayrshire mine could no longer cope with its anticipation and was here compelled to rely on reluctant local labourers procured by administrative coercion, but still banking on the arrival of the Arab labourers, at the same time.

The Globe and Phoenix mine at Sebakwe, which was entitled to receive the first apportionment of Arab recruits, was equally enthusiastic about the prospect and it was to this property that the first batch of Arab recruits, the Bedouins and Jebels from Lahej, were destined to arrive at the beginning of October 1901.<sup>170</sup> The painstaking arrangements undertaken by both the Administration and the mine management to meet these new arrivals were indicative of the anxieties and optimism of official opinion that the scheme had to work. As the Administrator's private secretary, Alfred H. Holland indicated, in his arrangements with the officials of the Beira and Mashonaland Railways and the Globe and Phoenix mine management, with regard to the issue of conveying and meeting the Arab labour recruits at the end of the railway line in Salisbury,<sup>171</sup> Milton was said to be

... very anxious, ... that there should be no hitch or trouble ~~(in)~~ communication <sup>172</sup> between the Arabs and the people along the ~~(railway)~~ line.

Yet whilst administrative precautions were designed to forestall anything resembling previous violent disturbances amongst these recruits, the Globe and Phoenix mine management was more concerned with the material side

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<sup>168</sup> A 11/2/8/3: Dr. Hans Sauer, for The Ayrshire Gold Mine and Lomagundi Railway Co. Ltd., Bulawayo, to Milton, September 18, 1901.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid: A. H. Holland, for C/N/C Salisbury, to Ass. N/C Lomagundi, September 23, 1901.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid: Hole to Milton: Telegram: September 26, 1901.

<sup>171</sup> There was no railway connection between Salisbury and Bulawayo before 1902, hence no railway transport up to Que Que (Sebakwe) between these two points. Vide: Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1904: p. 31.

<sup>172</sup> A 3/2/8/3: A. H. Holland, Administrator's Private Secretary, Salisbury, to Piper, Gold Fields: Bulawayo: Telegram: September 26, 1901 and Holland to O. Ormsby, Railway Construction Camp, Salisbury: September 30, 1901.

of the welfare of the Arab arrivals and therefore undertook to deal with the provision of food and blankets as well as guides from Salisbury to Sebakwe.<sup>173</sup>

Such pre-occupation with the reception of these Arab recruits at the Globe and Phoenix mine must have been essential for cosmetic reasons on a property where the Inspector of Compounds for the Gwelo/Selukwe division had in July 1901 found the accommodation and general sanitary conditions so poor that he had to issue a warning in form of legal action against the management. Although the Native Department officials had also repeatedly advised the mine authorities that the poor labour conditions at their property were the cause of its unpopularity, desertions and labour shortage,<sup>174</sup> no measures had been taken for a reappraisal of the situation. Indeed, the mine management at the property in question were quite hostile to such criticism as F. G. Elliott, the Inspector of Compounds, discovered. In his report, Elliott had indicated that due to the inadequate accommodation facilities at the Globe and Phoenix mine, the labourers were consequently compelled to live in 'dilapidated grass huts... not fit for human habitation' and that the compound at the property was 'in a most disgracefully dirty state...',<sup>175</sup> that on this account he had to warn the manager, Mr. Allright, that unless satisfactory improvements were undertaken in the form of provision of adequate compound accommodation, hospital and lavatory facilities and the removal of the cattle kraal and rubbish heap, which were situated near the compound, legal action would be undertaken under the relevant provisions of the mining law.<sup>176</sup>

But for the Globe and Phoenix mine management, which was, at this stage, pre-occupied with its own arrangements to secure foreign (Arab) labour, such threats were scarcely heeded and therefore futile. In fact, the London directorate of the Globe and Phoenix mine viewed such analytical examination of labour conditions at its property as unwarranted officiousness which merited

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid: Haddon, for Gold Fields of S. A. Ltd., Bulawayo, to Milton: Salisbury, Telegram: September 27, 1901 and Holland to Piper: Telegram: September 30, 1901.

<sup>174</sup> Vide: Supra: p. 191.

<sup>175</sup> C. O. 417/338: Extract from the Report of the Inspector of Native Compounds, Gwelo/Selukwe District, for July 1901.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid: F. G. Elliott to Allwright, Manager, Globe & Phoenix Mine, July 28, 1901.

little attention. In view of this attitude, it, therefore, discounted the general contention in Southern Rhodesia, especially common amongst the Native Commissioners, that '... Our mine (Globe & Phoenix) has become unpopular with "Boys"...' as 'unfounded', and, at the same time, warned London Wall against the excesses of its officials in Southern Rhodesia whom the Globe and Phoenix directorate regarded as being:

... too exacting or over-zealous, in urging this Company (Globe & Phoenix) to expend money which appears to be utterly useless.<sup>177</sup>

In a nutshell, the Globe and Phoenix Gold Mining Company clearly indicated that it would not get involved in extra expenses over hospital and accommodation facilities which the African labourers did not use or for the sake of pleasing 'numerous local officials who (held) various views....'<sup>178</sup> Given the imminent arrival of this company's order of Arab labourers, it appears the Globe and Phoenix mine was prepared to put all its eggs in one basket and thus rely exclusively on one class of foreign labour or another. The confidence of the Globe and Phoenix mine in Arab labour was, at this stage, shared by other mining companies which had also sponsored the scheme, as we have discussed already.<sup>179</sup>

However, by the close of 1901, the views of the colonist employers in Southern Rhodesia were changing fast and their attitudes were gradually hardening towards their latest foreign labour acquisitions and, once more, the future of the Arab labour scheme became obscure, as it began to appear to these same employers that the Arab labourer, like his North-East African ally, was not after all the 'ideal labourer' they were looking for. In the first instance, it must be pointed out that when the whole issue of importing Arabs, exclusively, as labourers into Southern Rhodesia was raised, after the failure of the North-East Africa project primarily due to the diplomatic problems it had aroused, some officials within the Southern Rhodesian Administration and elsewhere were not pleased by the prospects and had, therefore, advised total abstinence altogether. The Native Department, in particular, was not

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid: J. M. Ramsden, Secretary, The Globe and Phoenix Gold Mining Co., Ltd. to BSACo, London: September 19, 1901.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Vide Supra: p 217.



satisfied by the absence of compulsory repatriation provisions in the contracts and restrictive measures against these potential labour immigrants and for this reason the Chief Native Commissioner of Matabeleland protested in May 1901 against what he called

- . . . allowing these natives to wander about ~~-(the)-~~ country contaminating our natives. . . .

Such Native Department objections as these indicated above were, of course, consistent with corresponding restrictions imposed on African immigrants from the South and elsewhere nearer home, provided by the 1898 legislation for the purpose.<sup>181</sup> But in respect of Arab labourers, most officials in Southern Rhodesia and the Labour Board, in particular, were at first simply nervous about the cost of repatriation involved, which, it was feared, might altogether scare the mining companies then supporting the scheme. As a more obvious pretext, it was also assumed that the recruits in question '~~-(had)-~~ no desire to return ~~-(home)-~~ owing to the crowded state ~~-(of)-~~ their own country.'<sup>182</sup> This attitude however changed, in the long run, due to the promises by the mining companies to the Administration, to bear the repatriation expenses, provided that the Arab recruits had worked satisfactorily and continuously for three years or more.<sup>183</sup>

Humanitarian circles also supported these objections of the Native Department in respect of the importation of labour from both the Arabian peninsula and the horn of Africa, but for different motives. Apart from the traditional resentment of Exeter Hall to labour recruitment under 'suspicious circumstances' from 'a notorious resort of slave traders', as Fox Bourne, the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, pointed out to the Colonial Office in March 1901, humanitarian circles were apprehensive on the risks involved in a foreign labour importation scheme by private contract and enterprise, without strict supervision by either Imperial or local

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<sup>180</sup> A 11/2/8/3: C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, May 10, 1901.

<sup>181</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 162-3.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid: Acting Chairman, Labour Board, Bulawayo, to Milton: Salisbury: May 9, 1901.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid: Holland, Salisbury, to Chairman, Labour Board, Bulawayo: May 11, 1901 and Labour Board to Milton: Telegram: May 13, 1901.

authorities to minimize the incidence of abuses.<sup>184</sup> Thus they requested the Imperial government to make the prevention of abuses in the traffic its main object, should any assistance to the mine-owners and managers be offered in this regard.

Humanitarian circles were obviously concerned about the diplomatic complications caused by Tulloch's activities in North-East Africa and the adverse repercussions of the Beira affair. Thus not unnaturally they emphasized the importance of official and disinterested supervision to avoid:

... the risk of natives being enticed from their own country, under specious promises and spurious contracts (consequently) ... finding themselves, on arriving at their destination, in a condition akin to that of slavery, with small prospect of adequate reparation....<sup>185</sup>

In the circumstances, Exeter Hall felt that tighter imperial supervision could iron out some of the more obvious misrepresentations by private recruiters to their own advantage. But, unlike those of the Native Department, the objections of the APS were hardly taken note of and the Arab labour scheme progressed under shadowy legislative supervision by a less disinterested BSACo. Administration.<sup>186</sup> The mining industry in the circumstances had its own way and eventually emerged the winner in the process.

What in fact the Rhodesian officials and the mining industry did not appear to take sufficient note of, even after their handling of the North-East Africans, was the degree of submission and subordination these foreign labourers were prepared to stand under the legislative restrictions governing their working lives in Southern Rhodesia, which also incorporated some of the more crude requirements of the Southern Rhodesia Master and Servant Ordinance 1901.<sup>187</sup> In what must appear a strange streak of irony, the recipe for a turbulent relationship between the Rhodesian colonist employers and the Arab recruits was apparent even before official approval and co-operation was granted to Hole at Aden. For, as Lord Hamilton, the

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<sup>184</sup> C. O. 879/69: Fox Bourne, Secretary, APS to C. O. : March 26, 1901:

<sup>185</sup> Ibid: Fox Bourne to C.O., March 26, 1901.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Vide: Contracts of the Labour Board with the Arab labourers: Enclosed in C. O. 417/337: BSACo. to C. O. July 23, 1901.

head of the India Office, responsible for Aden and the adjacent protected areas of the peninsula, confessed during a House of Commons debate on the Rhodesian labour mission in August 1901, whilst the Aden authorities and the Government of India had no representative in Southern Rhodesia, hence no means of exercising leverage on the Rhodesian employers to ameliorate the conditions of service under which the recruits were destined to work, it was, however, hoped that these recruits would be capable of looking after their own interests in this respect. For this reason, Lord Hamilton stated:

... these Arabs will not work unless they are well treated; and therefore you have in that fact a guarantee for their good treatment.<sup>188</sup>

In the event, it was their resistance and nonconformity with their restrictive conditions which earned these labourers the disapproval even of their erstwhile sponsors and admirers amongst the Rhodesian employers.

By the end of 1901, the changed mood of the employers and mining companies towards the Arabs together with the rankling disappointment with the earlier Kusel/Tulloch mission to Abyssinia and Somaliland had become somewhat manifest, with general opinion decidedly hostile. Even the former stalwarts of the Arab labour scheme like the Globe and Phoenix and the Surprise mining companies had undergone such a volte-face, with regard to the psychology of employee/employer relationship, that they could hardly be persuaded to entertain the idea of engaging any more Arab labourers at their properties, by December 1901.<sup>189</sup> The reactions of these foreign labourers to labour conditions on those properties in Southern Rhodesia, where reforms were long overdue but were constrained by the marginal profitability of the mining concerns involved,<sup>190</sup> and the general limitations of a restrictive administrative system with less regard for the welfare of the lower echelons of a racially stratified colonial society, were here regarded as simply indicative of low ascriptive or negative traits by the colonist employers and,

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<sup>188</sup> C. O. 849/76: Statement by Lord Hamilton to Sir Charles in: Extract from The Times: August 9, 1901.

<sup>189</sup> C. O. 468/2: Report by Piper, General Manager, Globe and Phoenix Gold Mining Co, Ltd, for the year ended 31st December 1901: (in BSACo, Report, . . . p. 172) and Report by Walter Currie, Consulting Engineer, Surprise Gold Mining Co, Ltd, for the 12 months ended 31st December 1901: Ibid: pp. 390-1.

<sup>190</sup> For the Globe and Phoenix mine case: Vide Supra: pp. 191; 236-8.

therefore, sufficient basis for rejecting this particular class of labourers. The persistence of poor labour conditions as an additional disadvantage to those foreign labourers, who were in no manner acquainted with mining work and were 'more or less nervous about going underground', was in itself a strong deterrent to any attempts to turn these Arabs and their North-East African associates into a permanent mining labour force, and, at the Globe and Phoenix mine in particular, led, by November 1901, to the desertion of some of their more respectable leaders like the interpreter, Jamma Awat.<sup>191</sup> The same state of affairs was reported at the Beatrice mine in the Marandellas district where the Arab recruits had refused to work underground, thus providing the mining companies with good reasons to reject any further importation of these labourers.<sup>192</sup>

At the Surprise mine in the Selukwe district, the reduction of wages in January 1902 by about 6d per shift from the rate these Arab labourers had hitherto received since their arrival, on the grounds that it was 'too high',<sup>193</sup> was the source of strong feelings of resentment during the visit of the Inspector of Compounds and an immediate cause of 34 desertions amongst both local and foreign labourers. From another perspective, these wage reductions may have also contributed to the growing dissatisfaction amongst the Arab, Abyssinian and Somali labourers at Surprise mine, where the labour and health conditions for the non-white labourers as a whole were then said to be deteriorating with consequent adverse effects on the labour force. Amongst those labourers from North-East Africa and the Arabian peninsula for instance, out of the original total of 156 labourers allocated to the property in 1901, by the beginning of 1902, only 89 were still working there; the rest having either died or deserted.<sup>194</sup> Similar developments at the neighbouring

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<sup>191</sup> NB 6/5/3/1: Special Report of Inspector of Native Compounds, Gwelo-Selukwe Division (F. G. Elliott) on certain Natives of the North East Coast tribe employed at the Globe and Phoenix mines (received: Bulawayo): November 5, 1901.

<sup>192</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1902: p. 19.

<sup>193</sup> The wages which were reduced ranged from 25/- to 35/- per month for surface labourers and about 45/- for hammer boys which was contrary to the £1 monthly wage in the contract.

<sup>194</sup> C. O. 417/343: Special Report of the Inspector of Native Compounds, Gwelo/Selukwe Division (F. G. Elliott) on Arabs employed at the Surprise mine from February 1901, to January 1902.

sister property, the Bonsor mine, could hardly be regarded as promising at all due to the resilience of the high mortality and accident rates prevailing there.<sup>195</sup>

In conclusion, it could be argued that though the more unpopular Rhodesian mines had lumped together to exercise maximum effort to promote the Arab and North-East African labour schemes as a solution to their chronic labour problems, their failure to adopt positive labour policies in form of reforms in labour conditions on their properties was short-sighted. Their drive to procure alien contract labourers, isolated from their home environment, families and communities and hence vulnerable to administrative control and economic exploitation, foundered when these alien recruits began to resist all such forms of political and economic subordination. Under the circumstances, the confession by the Rhodesian colonist employers by 1902, that the schemes to import Arab, Abyssinian and Somali labourers had been in every respect fatal errors of judgement based on erroneous impressions,<sup>196</sup> was a proper assessment of the superficial facets of the labour problem in a colonial situation.

Obviously, this somewhat unorthodox behaviour from a subordinate social and economic stratum within the framework of a hierarchically stratified plural society, was unacceptable to the superordinate community, the white settlers of Southern Rhodesia. As a matter of fact, those Arab and Abyssinian labourers, who refused to work in the mines, resorted to one of the following alternatives. They either found their way back to Beira and, after working for some spell in the Portuguese territory, secured passes to their homes, or remained in the country seeking other forms of employment in urban centres as servants, waiters and store-boys, for which occupations they were found to be 'more suited than to work on the roads, railway and mines'.<sup>197</sup> Some found employment with the British South African Police Camp and the

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<sup>195</sup> C. O. 417/382: Special Report by the Inspector of Native Compounds, Division No. 1, (Gwelo/Selukwe) with reference to the death of nine Natives who were accidentally killed at the Bonsor Mine, during September 1902: Enclosed in F. G. Elliott to C/N/C Bulawayo: December 10, 1902.

<sup>196</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1902: loc. cit.

<sup>197</sup> C. O. 417/343: Milton to Milner: February 20, 1902.

hospital in Bulawayo,<sup>198</sup> whilst it was the so-called 'insolent, lazy and incompetent' Somali road party which took up employment with the railway works, after their discharge from roadwork.<sup>199</sup>

Apparently, the Rhodesian colonist employers, disappointed as they were by this class of labourers, were no longer interested in restraining these foreign recruits in their quest for alternative employment where conditions differed in one way or another from those at the mines especially. Indeed, the absence of restraint on Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labourers as they divorced themselves from the specific forms of labour, for which they had initially engaged, is evident in the Administrator's report to the High Commissioner in February 1902, which succinctly portrays the feelings of the Rhodesian employers, with reference to the basis of their spinelessness on the matter, to the effect that:

... a majority of these labourers have proved refractory and worthless and failed to carry out their contracts...<sup>200</sup>

In short, these labourers had proved difficult to control and their former employers were pleased to get rid of them.

One group of Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labourers whose presence in the country did not seem to please the white public had somehow found its way to the town of Bulawayo, where they lived for some time, at the sufferance of their white hosts. According to a report in the Bulawayo Chronicle on August 21, 1901, this group of foreign recruits, a fall-out from the Kusel/Tulloch mission, had 'refused to work' and could not, therefore, get employment without the assistance of the Administration, as employers resented engaging them. In the meantime, they secured some accommodation in Bulawayo's Wilson Street where they lived and shared their quarters, to the number of 10 individuals to a room not larger than 1,000 cubic feet and normally designed for the use of only two people, thus attracting the hostility of their white neighbours, who complained of over-crowding and 'insanitary conditions' in the area.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> C. O. 417/321: Report by C/N/C Taylor re: 'Distribution of Abyssinians', to Chief Secretary, Salisbury, October 2, 1901.

<sup>199</sup> C. O. 417/343: Milton to Milner: February 20, 1902.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> C. O. 417/321: Extract from Bulawayo Chronicle, August 21, 1901: Enclosed in Clarke to Milton: August 26, 1901.

The presence of these North-East Africans, right in the centre of the urban settlement of Bulawayo, was evidently contrary to the spirit of spatial segregation in a racially conscious society and the Bulawayo Town Council thus called upon the Administration, as the one body responsible for these recruits, to help meet the council's pledges, to its constituents, 'to keep (the town) in a good and sanitary condition'; goals which these squatters were obviously wrecking to pieces.<sup>202</sup> For its part, the Administration, through the Native Department, was consequently bound to provide alternative accommodation to these North-East Africans in the Labour Board compound and also some form of employment other than that offered on the mines, for which the recruits in question had refused to re-engage at the expiration of their contracts.<sup>203</sup>

As a by-product of the agitation by the Bulawayo residents, a feeling emerged within the official stratum that adequate control and supervision of the immigrants from North-East Africa and the Arabian peninsula were not exercised in accordance with the restrictive requirements of the Immigration Ordinance of 1901, whose implementation had been made preconditional to the approval of the Imperial government. Thus instructions for tracing the movements and whereabouts of these labourers were issued with the object of satisfying the anxieties of specified diplomatic quarters.<sup>204</sup> The statistics relating to the North-East African labourers alone, issued by the Labour Board in October 1901 with regards to the progress of these people in Southern Rhodesia, in fact, revealed a haphazard state of affairs and a more than average rate of desertion. According to Robert K. Eustace, the Manager of the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, the reckoning of the two groups of labourers, brought down by Kusel and Tulloch between December 1900 and January 1901, was by the beginning of October 1901 as laid down in Table II below:

Table II:

411 original number that left Aden

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<sup>202</sup> Cf. The agitation of the Salisbury residents in November 1913 against the construction of a labour depot by the Labour Bureau on the windward side of the town. Vide: File A 3/18/30/29: R/N/A, Salisbury,

<sup>203</sup> C. O. 417/321: Milton to Clarke: October 4, 1901.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid: Clarke to Milner: October 7, 1901.

385 reached Beira  
 349 left Beira  
 267 reached Salisbury and Marandellas  
 237 sent to mines (Surprise mine) and Road party  
 200 reached Surprise mine and Road party  
     33 deserted en route to Road party and Surprise mine  
     82 deserted en route from Beira  
     29 deserted from Salisbury and Marandellas  
     4 died en route to mine  
 156 reached Surprise mine  
     44 reached Road party (Mr. Coope).<sup>205</sup>

With a total loss of over half the North-East African labour force before their engagement through desertion only, the Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour schemes did not look at all promising. The reception of these recruits, their treatment and reports on labour conditions in Southern Rhodesia seriously prejudiced further efforts to perfect the plans for labour importation from either the horn of Africa or the Arabian peninsula. The unsuccessful introduction of more Arabs by October 1901 could not rectify the serious misgivings underlying the whole movement. The Southern Rhodesian colonist employers on their part were naturally disappointed, whilst the Colonial Office, which had at first concluded that only the provision of adequate food and related amenities would guarantee the success of these schemes,<sup>206</sup> was now at a loss with regard to those recruits, who, as Grindle put it in allegoric language, had simply 'melted away' and thus seriously discrediting not only the whole labour programme, but also the credibility of the Colonial Office before the India Office.<sup>207</sup>

In conclusion, it is argued in this study that the failure of the Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour importation plans was inevitable, given the rationale for its implementation and the restrictive framework of the Rhodesian colonial labour market. As we have already indicated somewhere else, the

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid: Report on 'North East Africans' by R. K. Eustace, Manager, Labour Board, to Milton: October 2, 1901.

<sup>206</sup> C. O. 417/337: Minute by Harris: July 16, 1901.

<sup>207</sup> C. O. 417/321: Minute by Grindle to Ommanney: November 20, 1901 and Graham to India Office: November 30, 1901.



labour problem in early Southern Rhodesia was not necessarily an economic phenomenon, but was a complex admixture of economic, social and psychological factors salient in a racially composite colonial society, whereby economic policies were not infrequently susceptible to non-economic factors arising essentially from those features underlying the inequitable distribution of economic, political and military power.<sup>208</sup> These power differentials influenced not only the character of labour supply, but also the attitudes of the employers, as a dominant social and political segment, towards labourers from subordinate social strata.

Through their resistance, first at Beira and later at the different centres of employment in Southern Rhodesia, the labourers from the Arabian peninsula and North-East Africa proved themselves inamenable to this system of employer/employee relationships and consequently the scheme foundered. Secondly, the informal methods, usually applicable in Southern Rhodesia to procure compulsory labour, were not relevant to an alien environment, whilst the reliance of the Rhodesian colonist employers and Administration on Kusel, a private labour agent whose interest in the venture was based on mercenary motives, and Tulloch, whose integrity was later seriously undermined by divers short-comings in his economic affairs,<sup>209</sup> were, to say the least, serious errors of judgment. In the final analysis, when these purveyors of labour had demonstrated little respect for diplomatic protocol in their activities, neither the Colonial nor Foreign Office would come to their rescue as they showed in connection with requests by the BSACo. to negotiate with the Turkish government on the possibilities of labour supply from Yemen on the Arabian peninsula.<sup>210</sup>

The causes of the failure to bring the Arabian, Abyssinian and Somali labour projects to fruition were therefore a reflection of those features peculiarly endemic to the Rhodesian colonial system and not merely an aberration complicated by alien geographical and political foci.<sup>211</sup> What the Rhodes-

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<sup>208</sup> Vide the discussion on labour exploitation and supply in chapter 5.

<sup>209</sup> Tulloch who was farming in the eastern districts of Mashonaland ended up being sued for bankruptcy in court at Umtali in 1905: Vide File C. O. 417/418: P/R/O: London.

<sup>210</sup> C. O. 417/338: C. O. to BSACo. : August 10 and 28, 1901.

<sup>211</sup> Vide: Mackenzie: 'Colonial Labour Policy and Rhodesia': p. 9.

ian employers and their agents were attempting to do was to adopt their own norms of labour exploitation in an otherwise different arena, with dismal results. The Imperial authorities did not object to labour importation from North-East Africa and the Arabia peninsula out of either meanness or other preconceived vindictive designs, as some writers would like to imagine,<sup>212</sup> but simply disliked the methods adopted by the envoys of the Rhodesian colonist employers and Administration as such. What was now left for these employers to do next was to look for sources even further afield; in this case as far as away as India and China and, by this process, colonist employers tried once more to introduce yet another external factor into Southern Rhodesia.

ii: The Chinese and Indian Labour Solutions, 1898-1904

The movement to import Asiatic labour into Southern Rhodesia, which gathered momentum especially after the Anglo-Boer War, was in many ways similar in racial ideological orientation to some of the parallel movements to import African and sundry non-European groups into other countries of Africa.<sup>213</sup> For one reason, India and China had replaced Africa after the mid-nineteenth century as sources of cheap labour in form of indentured 'coolies'; a substitute for the hitherto more dominant labour transfer institution - the slave trade. In India for example, those regions in the southern part of the country, especially among the Telugu and Tamil ethnic groups, which had also supplied slaves to planters in Mauritius for a long time in the past, later came to serve, given India's vast population, as suppliers of 'coolie' labour to the West Indies, Fiji, the Straits Settlement and Natal since 1835.<sup>214</sup> The same applied to the Kwangtung province of China, which, by the mid-nineteenth century, was the Chinese labour reservoir for not only the planters in the West Indies, but also for the gold mines and other species of employment in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and California.<sup>215</sup> Thus when the employers of Southern Rhodesia, as well as those of South Africa with

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<sup>212</sup> Vide Gann: op. cit. p. 9.

<sup>213</sup> For the genesis of Indian presence in East Africa and Nyasaland: Vide Mangat: op. cit. : chapters I and II.

<sup>214</sup> Tinkers: op. cit. pp. 61-115.

<sup>215</sup> P. C. Campbell: Chinese Emigration to Countries Within the British Empire: P. S. King & Son: London: 1923: chapters I and II.

whom they vied for Asiatic labour, turned to this source of labour at the beginning of the twentieth century, they were taking cue in a long-established tradition, with, at first, little reason to doubt their own chances of success.

In following this long beaten track, the Rhodesian colonist employers were exposing themselves to some of the traditional views and attitudes of British Victorian society towards the Asian world; attitudes which consequently shaped their conclusions in regard to the potential of the Asiatic races as eligible labourers. Basing their perceptions on traditional European Orientalism, it was generally believed, within British circles both at home and in the colonies, especially, in Africa, that the Indian was a more useful colonial subject than his African counterpart on account of the former's 'industrial energy,' appearance and cultural heritage as compared to the African's 'laziness' and 'savagery', which the capital-conscious British colonials could not tolerate.<sup>216</sup> For this reason, the Indian was deemed an essential asset in a polygenetic programme for the development of Africa, thus enabling the white man, in his superordinate position, to confine himself to matters of mere administrative and political concern.<sup>217</sup> From this point of view, the Chinese was even better, as he was ranked higher than the Indian. Indeed 'John Chinaman' being an epitome of all the virtues required of subject races within the hierarchical social and economic structure of the colonial situation, was clearly regarded as '...industrious, expert, obedient and thrifty' in every way.<sup>218</sup>

An interesting connection between this traditional European Orientalism and the movement to import Indian labour, for instance, into Southern Rhodesia was the significance placed on those ethnic groups of Northern and Northern/Western India, as the precise labour material required for the Southern Rhodesian mining industry. Thus the demand by an association of Rhodesian economic interests to import the Moslem Moplas of the Malabar coast in the Bombay Presidency<sup>219</sup> and the voluntary offers by private individuals connected with

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<sup>216</sup> C. Bolt: Victorian Attitudes to Race: Routledge & Kegan Paul: London: 1971: pp. 198-201.

<sup>217</sup> A champion for the exploitation of this polygenetic theory to economic advantage was Sir Harry Johnston of Nyasaland. Vide F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: The Indian Minority of Zambia, Rhodesia and Malawi: Yale University Press: New Haven and London: 1968: pp. 43-7.

<sup>218</sup> Bolt: Victoria Attitudes to Race: loc. cit.

<sup>219</sup> Vide: C. O. 417/382: Memorandum by the Provisional Committee of the

India to recruit ex-Sikh soldiers and policemen as labourers for Southern Rhodesia,<sup>220</sup> were all part and parcel of the same coin. These instances reflected in a nutshell, some of the characteristics pursued in Africa in attributing negative and positive qualities to individual African ethnic groups at the whim of either influential officials or missionaries.<sup>221</sup> Like the British attitude to the Baganda, Ndebele and Zulu in East and Southern Africa, the more belligerent ethnic groups of India, especially the Moslems, were revered and highly regarded in terms of labour and other positive qualities. The Hindus and their claims to Aryan origin were similarly treated in British Victorian scale of human estimation, whilst the aboriginal darker-skinned ethnic groups of Southern India came off worst.<sup>222</sup>

These so-called socially respectable Indian ethnic groups, of course, also provided the material for the army and police services, with the result that the Punjabis, Sikhs and Nepalis of the United Provinces and the Brahmans and Rajputs of Bengal in Northern India were specially associated with these services in British India and were, therefore, ineligible for 'coolie' labour emigration. Consequently, 'coolie' labour emigration for overseas purposes became a predominantly low-caste affair; the poor, the landless and the 'Untouchables' of Southern India, amongst whom the Tamil and Telugu were included, providing the largest proportion.<sup>223</sup> But it was not these socially inferior castes, predominantly from the Madras Presidency, which had hitherto provided Natal with its 'coolie' labour for the sugar plantations, that Rhodesian colonist employers desired. They looked to the North of India and along the Malabar coast for a better class of labourers.

Indian or Asiatic presence in Southern Rhodesia before the beginning of the twentieth century, as such, was insignificant. Although some attempts had been made to bring into the country Indian 'coolie' labour for the construction of the Beira-Mashonaland railway line in 1895, these 500 or so labourers seem to have dissipated, either because of the predominance of malaria fever in the area of operation, which might have been responsible for their decimation, as is normally believed,<sup>224</sup> or through dispersal into the neighbouring

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<sup>220</sup> C. O. 417/308: H. F. Thornton, formerly Major General R. A. Madras, to BSACo. : December 18, 1899.

<sup>221</sup> Cairns: loc. cit.

<sup>222</sup> Bolt: op. cit., pp. 182-90.

<sup>223</sup> Tinker: op. cit. : pp. 52-3 and 59-60.

territory of Mozambique with which Goan Indians and half-castes had a long historical connection.<sup>225</sup> The latter alternative appears to be the more plausible in view of the fact that Asiatic immigration later became such a major concern for the Portuguese authorities that they had to prohibit it in February 1903 under pressure from the colonist traders of Mozambique.<sup>226</sup>

However, the Rhodesian Asiatic community appears to owe its origin mainly to South Africa. In this respect, Southern Rhodesia was to South Africa what North-Eastern Rhodesia (Zambia) appears to have been in its relationship to Nyasaland. These two areas played hosts to the Asian ecological movements from the neighbouring territories quite unlike the well organized Asiatic importation drive for the coastal sugar planters of Natal since 1860 or the administrative fiat adopted by Harry Johnston to recruit Sikhs from India for military and police services in Nyasaland. Thus in early Southern and Northern Rhodesia, Asiatic immigration appears to have taken in form, something akin to 'passenger' (free) Indian movement rather than anything carried out under official aegis altogether.<sup>227</sup>

In fact, as far as Asiatic presence in Southern Rhodesia is concerned, the South African connection is quite interesting. Those Indians who had chosen to come into the country from the South, in the early pioneer period, appear to have shared some of the British imperial citizenship concepts with their white and 'Cape Boy' colleagues; a development arising essentially from the Anglo-Boer rivalry then dominant in the African sub-continent below the Limpopo. Indeed by April 1896, when attempts were made to restrict the privileges of the Indians of Southern Rhodesia to purchase and consume liquor and thus imposing onto them disabilities similar to those affecting the African population, the Indian community of Bulawayo resisted the move, pleading

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<sup>224</sup> A. J. Hanna: The Story of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland: Faber & Faber: London: 1964: pp. 147-8.

<sup>225</sup> Between 1722 and 1735, the Indian population of Mozambique already amounted to between 178 and 200. Vide: M. D. D. Newitt: Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi: Exploration, Land Tenure and Colonial Rule in East Africa: Longman, London: 1973: pp. 140-1. For the activities of the Goanese half-caste Gouveia in Mashonaland before 1890: Vide: Ranger: op. cit., pp. 31, 82.

<sup>226</sup> C. O. 417/378: Martin Goslin, H. B. M. Consun to Lord Lansdowne at F. O. : February 13, 1903.

<sup>227</sup> F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: The Indian Minority of Zambia, Rhodesia and Nyasaland: pp. 27-8.

for their rights as British citizens.<sup>228</sup>

The move against the Rhodesian Indian community on this April 1896 occasion stemmed from their origin. Being primarily a deflection from the predominantly poor and lower-caste immigrants who had made their way to Natal and other parts of South Africa as indentured labourers to escape from the economic problems of a congested environment and the social degradations of the Indian caste-system,<sup>229</sup> they did not earn for themselves as much respect from the white colonists as the more affluent Gujerati traders of the later period and were, therefore, often dismissed as a flotsam of humanity. Thus in taking up this initiative to restrict Indian rights on liquor in Southern Rhodesia, the BSACo. officials argued:

In Rhodesia the Indian community consists almost entirely of a poor class of Coolies, dwelling principally in the lower quarters and outskirts of the town, in gardens beyond the eye of the Police, and in Locations in close proximity to Colonial Natives, to whom they have free access at all hours of the day and night.<sup>230</sup>

For this access to the African communities, especially the so-called 'Colonial Natives', the BSACo. officials were evidently wary about the activities of the Indian community in Bulawayo for instance, where it was argued that because they were 'exceedingly keen traders', these Indians would be consequently 'unable to resist the opportunity of indulging in... illicit trade...' with the Africans, more so that the Cape Africans were, so it was concluded, prepared to pay for the liquor 'at three or four times its proper value',<sup>231</sup> and saw no reason why they should be forbidden to enjoy a privilege at the disposal of the African voters in the Cape Colony.<sup>232</sup> But for the BSACo. Administration, the activities of the Indians and the Cape Africans in connection with liquor traffic could only lead to increasing drunkenness, crime

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<sup>228</sup> C. O. 417/195: Petition of the 'Indian Congregation of Bulawayo' Enclosed in Sir Hercules Robinson to C. O. : April 24, 1896.

<sup>229</sup> Tinker: op. cit. pp. 53-4 and 60: The 'Untouchables' are said to have formed one fifth of 'coolie' emigrants from Southern India.

<sup>230</sup> C. O. 417/197: Lord Grey to Deputy Commissioner, Sir R. Martin, Bulawayo: July 15, 1896.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to Sir Martin: July 15, 1896.

<sup>232</sup> Vide: The trial of Paul 'Magbato' and William Mzinjana in Bulawayo in March 1898 for forging written authority to purchase liquor. Cape Argus: March 3, 1898.

and disturbances in the urban and mining districts, thus posing a source of threat and insecurity to the white settlers which had to be prevented by restricting the chances of collusion between the Indians and the Africans.<sup>233</sup>

On the reverse side of the coin, the Indians were also regarded in 1896 as a positive asset and, in those troubled times, as 'loyal and useful members of the community...'.<sup>234</sup> Their value during the food shortage crisis in 1896, following the rinderpest epidemic and the blockade of Bulawayo by Ndebele insurgents, was well underlined by their role as market gardeners supplying vegetables to the beleaguered white inhabitants.<sup>235</sup> Thus by 1901, these 'passenger' Indians or Asiatics in Southern Rhodesia amounted to the following figures, as in Table III:<sup>236</sup>

<u>Table III:</u>			
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mashonaland	177	10	187
Matabeleland	616	290	906
Totals	793	300	1,093

The predominance of the male element in the Asiatic population is a good illustration of the indentured labour origins of the Indian population of Southern Rhodesia. As it was the male whose services were demanded by the physical character of the employment for which 'coolies' were imported by overseas employers, thus the proportion naturally tended to favour a male dominance.<sup>237</sup>

In any case, Asiatic presence in Southern Rhodesia remained minimal up to 1900, before the dominant Rhodesian economic stratum mounted its efforts to resort to India and China for constant and regular labour supply. As far as India was concerned, these attempts by Rhodesian employers were

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<sup>233</sup> C. O. 417/197: Percy Inskipp, Secretary, Salisbury to BSACo., July 17, 1896.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid: Lord Grey to Sir Martin: July 15, 1896.

<sup>235</sup> Report by E. Ross Townshend, Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo, for the Year ending September 16, 1896, Enclosed in BSACo. Reports...: p 126.

<sup>236</sup> These figures are based on the census taken in March 1901: Vide Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1902: p. 142B.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. From a total of about 50 to 60 Moslem Indians in the Victoria district of Southern Rhodesia in 1905, only 3 were females hence the complaints on 'bastards'. Vide: F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: op. cit. pp. 280-2.

in harmony with the BSACo. conclusions that the Administration of Southern Rhodesia could effect economies by resorting to the vast population of India for its police recruits in the same way as Johnston had done in Nyasaland,<sup>238</sup> and, in so doing, cut down the numbers of the more expensive white manpower within the British South African Police.

The plan to substitute white police, who cost the Company about £200 per head per annum in maintenance, with Sikhs, at the lower cost of about 20 rupees (c. £16) per month or £60 per annum, was sound economic planning, from the BSACo. point of view.<sup>239</sup> But the size of the proposed reduction of about two-thirds of the white manpower, literally leaving a small fraction of this element for headquarters and other central post duties in the provinces, was regarded as too drastic and likely to expose the white settlers in the country to danger in case of insurgency. Accordingly, the scheme was unacceptable to the Imperial authorities.<sup>240</sup> For the employers of Southern Rhodesia however, the Sikh police scheme of 1898 helped to emphasize once more the role of India not only as 'an English barrack in the Oriental seas',<sup>241</sup> but also as a source of labour supply to promote their economic interests in the country. It was, therefore, India, alternating with China, which, henceforth, provided the central point of controversy within the white public in Southern Rhodesia up to 1904.

Other non-European and white sources were also considered, especially regarding their merits and demerits, but with little success. The white labour lobby for instance, suggested Italians, Maltese and other white communities of Southern Europe to counter any moves to introduce Asiatic labour. A positive step in this direction actually came from one William Macnaughtaun of Glasgow in August 1900, whose company, the Mashonaland Agency, owned mining properties in several parts of Southern Rhodesia, especially in the Lomagundi district.<sup>242</sup> In order to promote this introduction of Italian labourers into Southern Rhodesia, a labour purveyor, Alfred Edlmann, was despatched to Florence, on behalf of the Mashonaland Agency, to assess

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<sup>238</sup> Pachai: Malawi: The History of the Nation: pp. 247-8.

<sup>239</sup> C. O. 417/253: Jones, Secretary, BSACo. to C. O. : August 11, 1898.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid: Chamberlain to Milner: August 19, 1898.

<sup>241</sup> Robinson et al: Africa and the Victorians: p. 12.

<sup>242</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 149-50.



the prospects of such a scheme.

From Eldmann's point of view, the advantages of Italian squatter-labourers, working for private companies in return for promises on land-holding rights to both cultivate and later buy pieces of land for their own use as colonists in their own right, were manifold. In the first place, the rural Italian labourer appeared to offer those allegedly positive labour qualities which the Rhodesian colonist employers were looking for in their attempts to import foreign labour. They could easily provide, so it was believed, 'thousands of steady, sober, hardworking emigrants...' not only for working in the mines, but, given sufficient guarantees of settlement in the country, would possibly increase the number of '... a steady, law-abiding, industrious, white and Christian population, ... undoubtedly (more preferable) to a yellow heathen rabble (Asiatics)'.<sup>243</sup> Secondly, because of what was considered the exceptionally prolific regenerative propensities of Italian women, well demonstrated in the case of Italian immigrants in the province of Sao Paulo in Brazil where their population had increased to one million in only ten years towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Italian labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia, therefore, according to its promoters, merited the sympathy of the Imperial authorities, simply on account of the hope it offered to increase 'a large and friendly (population) to overwhelm and be pitted against the Boers.'<sup>244</sup>

This Italian labour scheme had its supporters inside Southern Rhodesia, notably J. P. Finnie, a labour agent and contractor based in Gwelo and associated with the Matabeleland Development Co. Ltd. in these activities since 1894. The successful utilization of Italian immigrant labour in Latin America, especially in Brazil and Argentina was, from Finnie's point of view, cogent vindication for similar moves being adopted in connection with Southern Rhodesia's labour problems. Unlike the Chinese labourer whose importation would entail a legion of social problems, the Italian, it was argued, was, to all appearances, a blessing to the country. For not only was he redeemed before the white colonist public by his racial origin, but also because the Italian came from 'a hardy race' used to working 'under a boiling sun' and was thus

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<sup>243</sup> C. O. 417/311: Alfred Eldmann, Florence, to William C. Macnaughtan, Glasgow: August 20, 1900.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid: Eldmann to Macnaughtan: August 20, 1900.

capable of adapting to the African environment more easily than any of his white counterparts. Notwithstanding the fact that the Italian was a skilled artisan representing a nation that produced some of the finest stone masons in the world, it was still hoped that he could be imported on indenture as cheaply as the Chinese and subsequently be engaged at the rates ranging from 'three to five shillings per day.'<sup>245</sup>

In short, a very favourable picture was painted of the Italian labourer in comparison with labourers of other races in Southern Rhodesia. He could do the work of 'at least two average kaffirs -(Africans)-' without incurring the displeasure of the employers in the same way as skilled artisans of other white races whose only claim for introduction into the country was, Finnie argued, based on the assumption that Southern Rhodesia was:

... the dumping ground for all the most unreliable white labour from other parts of the -(world)-.

These 'unreliable' skilled white workmen, most of whom were of British stock coming and going into the country, did not enchant Finnie. In comparison with the Italians, they were too expensive to engage and did not remain in the country permanently for its benefit. Thus Finnie said of these birds of passage:

The unreliable ones -(white artisans)- work for two or three months, have earned enough money, and then generally give up permanent work themselves and take to employing kaffirs, but they seldom stay long in the country, and very rarely bring their families here. All that they want to do is to make a few pounds in the country to go home -(to Europe)- and start a small business with.<sup>246</sup>

It was therefore with this multi-dimensional aim of replacing inefficient African labourers and unreliable skilled white workers as well as forestalling the social problems which Asiatic labour implied, that the scheme to introduce Italian indentured labourers and their families was put forward.

In its entirety, the Italian labour scheme was not, in its own way, devoid of those racial overtones commonly underlying composite colonial societies. The very idea of introducing labourers of a different nationality, though European as in this case, in a subordinate position smacked of traces of un-

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<sup>245</sup> Statement of J. P. Finnie, Gwelo, in The Labour Problem: Opinion Survey by the 'Bulawayo Chronicle': June, 1901: pp. 48-9.

<sup>246</sup> Statement by Finnie in The Labour Problem: loc. cit.

inhibited condescending attitudes. In this particular case, it could easily be concluded that this move reflected some of the peculiar Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards the Latin races of Southern Europe; attitudes well demonstrated in the relationship between the British colonists in Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese of neighbouring Mozambique at the early period of the twentieth century. The Hyatt brothers, Stanley, Amyas and Malcom for instance, all traders and labour agents in the Ndanga district of Southern Mashonaland bordering on Mozambique, were so singularly disrespectful of the Portuguese institutions and authorities that during the course of the Anglo-Boer war they often carried out their labour recruiting activities and other economic ventures in the Portuguese territory without due authority. Indeed even the idea of approaching the Portuguese authorities for permission was offensive to these Rhodesian colonists and, for that reason, Stanley Hyatt concluded that it was:

... derogatory to a white man's dignity to ask permission of a Portuguese or any other nasty Dago; but European nations have, in their idiocy, recognised the Mozambique territory as Portuguese, and so decent people must make the best of it.

Similarly, the Portuguese port of Beira, the gateway to Southern Rhodesia, was described in the most unfavourable language as nothing but a place of 'vice' where:

With the exception of the small British community, white clad and unutterably weary, the white inhabitants form a perfect collection of samples of polyglot rascality, . . . East and West, North and South have sent specimens of their very worst to that sultry little Gehenna on the shores of the Indian Ocean. . . . 248

In this abysmally unfavourable situation in Beira depicted by these Rhodesian colonists, poverty and squalor were so pervading that the only prosperous man was the Anglican parson, who demanded ' . . . two guineas, payable in advance, for every funeral he conducted. '

The Hyatt brothers may have represented an extreme brand of British chauvinism, but it is essentially through this type of attitudes towards the Latin races that some Rhodesian colonist employers should have dared at all to suggest the Italian labourer as eligible for importation in a gamut of for-

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<sup>247</sup> S. P. Hyatt: The Diary of a Soldier of Fortune: T. Werner Laurie: London: 1910: p. 154.

<sup>248</sup> Hyatt: The Diary of a Soldier of Fortune: p. 162.

eign labour importation schemes dealing largely with non-European peoples.

However, the Italian labour scheme did not, in the end, succeed for various reasons. The idea of introducing white menial labour into a plural colonial society, rife with race-consciousness, was altogether out of question. It cut across the main themes of the sociology and ethics of labour utilization, thus undermining the essential trends of the economic, social and psychological functions of colonization which emphasized the hierarchical relationship between the dominant and the subordinate social segments of one colonial society; the master and the servant as well as the parent-and-child paternalistic analogies on which colonialism derived its legitimacy and the dominant groups their privileged position.<sup>249</sup> For such reasons, in 1903 Milner, accordingly, informed those circles within the white colonist communities in Southern Africa opposed to the importation of Asiatic labour, preferring, as they did, the engagement of white labourers instead, that:

... the white man cannot, or ought not to, work with his hands....<sup>250</sup>

because:

The position of the whites among the vastly more numerous black population requires that even their lowest ranks should be able to maintain a standard of living far above that of the poorest section of the population of a purely white country.<sup>251</sup>

Rhodes too subscribed to Milner's views and, in advising the Rhodesian mining industry against Italian labour, cautioned that white labourers would only end up 'bossing' the non-European labourers on the mines rather than working alongside them.<sup>252</sup>

Other potent factors against the importation of Italian labourers or any other form of white labour were considered in relation to their alleged positive attributes to the Rhodesian colonist employers and ultimately the disadvantages of white labour were regarded as just too great to run any risk of its introduction. The question of these labourers' submission to the

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<sup>249</sup> Vide: Cairns: op. cit. pp. 42-6; and Memmi: op. cit. pp. 48-55.

<sup>250</sup> Milner to Dr. J. E. Moffat: Private and Confidential: April 1, 1903: in C. Headlam (ed): The Milner Papers: South Africa 1899-1905: Vol. II: Cassell & Co.: London: 1931: p. 460.

<sup>251</sup> Milner's address to the White League: June 2, 1903: in Headlam: op. cit. p. 459.

<sup>252</sup> The Salisbury Chamber of Mines Report 1901: pp. 55-6.

nature of employer/employee relationship on a pattern in harmony with their indenture status and in comparison with their non-European counterparts, was obviously an important one here. For one thing, even the most ardent supporters of the Italian immigrant as the ideal labourer for Rhodesian colonist employers began to harbour some doubts on the discipline and manageability of the labour material whose country of origin had already produced the 'Socialists and Anarchists settled near New York' on the American continent by 1900.<sup>253</sup> Such misgivings as these obviously provided the opponents of the Italian labour scheme with the ammunition they required, as they questioned the prospective employers whether

... for every Italian employed, -(the companies)- would be prepared to engaged two policemen to watch him?<sup>254</sup>

By and large, Rhodesian employers were no longer quite as enthusiastic about either Italian or other white labourers as they were on non-white sources of labour supply. Their primary concern was cheap labour, which, to these colonist employers, was naturally in accordance with the objective economic realities of their situation in a generally non-profitable mining industry.<sup>255</sup> Even the more profitable Rand mines were, on this score, in accord with their counterparts across the Limpopo in putting strong emphasis on cheap non-white labour before everything else; a propensity they would not conceal to a party of visiting missionaries at the end of the Anglo-Boer war. Not even mechanization could compensate for the advantages of this cheap non-white labour, from the mining magnates' point of view.<sup>256</sup>

Thus in their campaign to procure external labour from sources far and wide, the employers in Southern Rhodesia would not be persuaded to risk the importation of white labour even on an experimental basis.<sup>257</sup> After their unsuccessful bid to import Abyssinians, Arabs and Somalis, the areas of

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<sup>253</sup> C. O. 417/311: Eldmann to Macnaughtan: August 20, 1900.

<sup>254</sup> Statement by J. Shaw Hunt: in The Labour Problem: p. 45.

<sup>255</sup> C. van Onselen: 'The 1912 Wankie Colliery Strike': Journal of African History: XV, 2, 1974: pp. 275-6.

<sup>256</sup> For the visit of the missionaries to the Rand and arguments on cheap labour and mechanization: Vide: Evidence of the Rev. G. A. Wilder: Salisbury: August 30, 1904: in S. African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. IV: p. 15.

<sup>257</sup> Address by Col. Heman, President: Rhodesia Chamber of Mines: in Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1903: pp. 29-30.

operation now shifted to India and China and their strength of purpose in the face of widespread hostility from the Rhodesian white public towards Asiatic labour, only helped to widen the scope and depth of conflict between the economically dominant mining industry and the less powerful but more numerous secondary colonist class, composed of artisans, small-workers and traders with the support of the missionaries. The fears of these economically impotent sections of the white colonist public of Southern Rhodesia, on the importation of Asiatics, whether India or Chinese, were legion and were largely based on the threats posed by possible economic and structural competition as well as the quasi-mythical assumptions on the characteristic insanitary and immoral habits of the Asiatics; assumptions derived essentially from the social stereotypes and psychological persuasion of their authors. Paradoxically, some of the characteristics of the Asians now under attack in Southern Rhodesia in particular and Southern Africa in general, concerning, especially, the Asiatic labour attributes, had been for a long time the very basis of traditional European Orientalism.<sup>258</sup>

In the years following the construction of the railway line connecting Bulawayo with the South in 1897, the threat of increased economic competition, especially from 'passenger' Indians coming into the country from South Africa as British subjects, took on some new significance for the Rhodesian white community. Hitherto they had put up with Indians merely as market-gardeners or ordinary labourers, such as the Konkani Moslems employed at the Morven mine near Bulawayo, who had also come into Southern Rhodesia via South Africa.<sup>259</sup> But the prospects of further bouts of Indian immigrants of the wealthier class, such as the Gujerati merchants in the years 1898 to 1904, did not at all tantalize the secondary colonist segment of the Rhodesian white society. Their anxieties in this regard, it may be pointed out, were not unfounded. In Natal where Indian 'coolie' labour importation had set the example for other sister colonies in Southern Africa for a fairly long period, anti-Indian sentiment among the white colonists, dating back to the period after the Wragg Commission between 1885 and 1887, was assuming a distinctly virulent form towards the closing phases of the nineteenth century.

The main reasons for such increased anti-Indian sentiment were, firstly,

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<sup>258</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 248-9.

<sup>259</sup> F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: op. cit. p. 141.

the increasing urbanization of the Indian immigrants, thus allowing their movement from the backwoods on the sugar plantations to the urban areas, the centres of white colonist agglomeration; secondly, the fecundity of the Indian immigrants and the rapid growth of the Indian population and finally, the influx of the so-called 'Arab' (Gujerati) traders, whose presence, especially in the retail trade, had begun to be felt by the 1890's.<sup>260</sup> Moreover, as far as Rhodesian colonists were concerned, there was no guarantee that the commercial restrictions imposed on the Indian trading class in the Boer republics in the South, especially in the Transvaal, prior to and after the Anglo-Boer war, would not lead to another source of Indian influx into the Company territories on the basis of the universality of British citizenship then underlying British imperial philosophy. The 'Cape Boys' had, after all, used their disabilities in the Transvaal as a pretext to join the campaign against the 1896 risings in the BSACo. territories and escape from the disadvantages they shared with the Asiatics and other non-white British subjects in that state.<sup>261</sup>

From the point of view of the white Rhodesian public of the period, Asiatic presence and its concomitant threats were, more or less, real rather than fanciful. What they wanted, therefore, were vigilante groups on the pattern of the European defence societies in Natal and later on the Rand,<sup>262</sup> to protect their interests rather than systematized importation of Asiatics even as labourers, as the Rhodesian mining industry intended to do between 1898 and 1904. Indeed, settlers' reactions in form of structural antagonism towards the Asiatic traders were beginning to manifest themselves in a violent character as the Anti-Banyan society of Umtali demonstrated at the beginning of 1899. Here the ingress of 'passenger' Indians into Southern Rhodesia through the neighbouring Portuguese territory, then relatively lax in its legislation on Asiatic immigration,<sup>263</sup> had become a controversial issue and a cause of differences between the white trading community and the civil authorities by mid-1898.

As early as April 1898, the granting of trading licences to Indian mer-

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<sup>260</sup> R. A. Huttenback: Gandhi in South Africa: British Imperialism and the Indian Question: 1860-1914; Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London: 1971: pp. 38-43.

<sup>261</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 117-8.

<sup>262</sup> Huttenback: Gandhi in South Africa: pp. 79, 148.

chants, individually dripping into the country, had begun to cause some furore. In spite of explanations from Cloete, the Acting Magistrate of Umtali, that such actions were in accordance with official policy and the instructions of the High Commissioner that no British subject with satisfactory credentials could be denied such licences, the settlers of Umtali were apparently not impressed. Thus at a subsequent meeting held on April 18, 1898 under the presidency of one Mr. Lister, they protested against actions of such character demanding the introduction of some form of legislation by the Executive Council in Salisbury to prohibit the issue of licences to Indians as well as:

to draw a defining line between Europeans and Asiatics, and place the latter on the same footing as natives.<sup>264</sup>

To strengthen these demands, the Umtali white populace formed the Anti-Banyan Society,<sup>265</sup> with the sole purpose of 'boycotting the Indian and those who assisted him.'

By the beginning of 1899, the protests of the Umtali white community had obviously failed to influence the decisions of the BSACo. Administration, hence they decided to adopt more vigorous measures, similar in character to those of the Ku Klux Klan of American fame at the end of the nineteenth century against the challenge of the competitive aspirations of the black communities to the hitherto privileged position of the dominant white group.<sup>266</sup> Led by some of the prominent names in Rhodesian commercial circles like John Meikle,<sup>267</sup> A. W. Suter, JP; J. Corderoy, JP; A. H. Reynolds and W. H. Marley, also a Lieutenant in the Umtali Volunteers Corps, the residents of Umtali mounted physical attacks on Indian traders in January 1899, demanding their immediate departure from the country. In the circumstances, the municipal police and the British South Africa Police sent from Old Umtali to

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<sup>263</sup> When the PEA authorities introduced their legislation restricting Asiatic immigration in 1903, the British Imperial authorities were actually anxious about its effect on Natal and S. Rhodesia especially: Vide: C. O. 417/378: C. O. to F. O. ; March 12, 1903.

<sup>264</sup> Cape Argus: April 19, 1898.

<sup>265</sup> 'BANYAN' is a term derived from the Hindustani word 'bunia' for a trader used widely in East and Central Africa in reference to Asiatic traders: Vide F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: op. cit. p. 39.

<sup>266</sup> W. J. Wilson: Power, Racism and Privilege: Race Relations in Theoretical and Sociohistorical Perspective: Macmillan: New York: 1973: pp. 128-9.

<sup>267</sup> John Meikle was a member of the famous trading family, the Meikles



reinforce the former, were put in an awkward position. As Inspector Macqueen, the BSAP Officer Commanding in the Umtali district, confessed, the insurgents were not only members of the Umtali Chamber of Commerce but were also the bastion of the town's citizen militia, the Umtali Volunteers, and with the small arms they had, were, therefore, prepared to rout the police force detailed to guard and protect the Indian traders and their property. Only the sympathetic response to their petition by the Administrator in Salisbury helped to cool the tempers of these insurgent residents.<sup>268</sup>

The Umtali fracas was perhaps an extreme manifestation of settler opposition to Asiatic structural competition, especially by the secondary colonists who still felt that small-scale trade should remain in the hands of its proper pliers, namely the lower segment of the white Rhodesian colonial society, described by the Resident Commissioner in 1904, in somewhat unpalatable terms, as being composed mainly of Levantines, Russian Jews and other non-descript entrepreneurs, classified generally as 'Dagos' and exercising 'no good influence upon the natives...' in 'Kaffir truck'.<sup>269</sup> This lower social segment of the white society, with its precarious hold on the country's economic spoils, felt threatened not only by the 'passenger' Indian, the Gujerati merchant, but also by the proposed imported Asiatic labourer whose rate of economic and social mobility they did not easily trust and, therefore, concluded, accordingly, that he also merited total exclusion from the country.

Specifically, what the white traders, artisans and their colleagues disliked about the introduction of Indians as labourers was diverse in character. In a nutshell, these Rhodesian colonists were caught up in a morass of conflicting claims between British imperial philosophy and general European Orientalism towards the British Indian subjects.

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Brothers, headed by Tom Meikle and with trading outposts throughout the country. He was also a brother-in-law to H. U. Moffat, Premier of S. Rhodesia (1927-32), and was himself a member of the Leg/Co, elected on the anti-Asiatic labour ticket in 1903. Vide: A 11/2/8/6: H. M. Heyman, Willoughby's Consolidated Co, Ltd., Bulawayo to Milton: Salisbury: November 10, 1903.

<sup>268</sup> C. O. 879/57: J. S. Nicholson, Commandant-General, BSAP Salisbury to Milner: February 1, 1899.

<sup>269</sup> C. O. 417/391: Clarke to Milner: January 7, 1904.

While the 300, 000, 000 population of India promised to provide a perennial and regular source of potential labour supply to Southern Rhodesia in common with other overseas territories, the Rhodesian secondary colonists felt that the mining industry whose intention to import Asiatic labour they opposed, would not be able to comply with its promises to either repatriate these Indians or restrict them in the nature of their economic activities, since they were British subjects and as such restrictive measures were contrary to British imperial policy. Moreover, India being nearer than either China or Japan, some of the possible sources of importable Asiatic labour, it was felt that the Indians would simply 'over-run' Southern Rhodesia like they were alleged to be doing in Natal.<sup>270</sup> After all, the Rhodesian mining industry had itself confessed its inability to institute a compound system comparable to that at the Kimberley mines where the diamond mines were richer and concentrated in one area and quite dissimilar to the scattered and relatively poorer gold mining industry in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>271</sup> Indeed, even some of the more obdurate supporters of these Asiatic labour importation schemes within the Rhodesian mining circles were quite prepared to express their misgivings on the issue of keeping Indian labourers off '... the side walk, (or) out of trade...' because this ran contrary to British imperial policy.<sup>272</sup>

These forebodings on the incapacity of both the Administration and the Rhodesian mining industry to deal with the Indian labourer as they wished or in such a manner as to minimize structural competition between him and the secondary colonist, were, undoubtedly, a bitter pill for the latter to swallow. Perhaps the anxieties of the secondary colonists may have been well expressed by John C. Collard, the editor of the Bulawayo Chronicle who stated in his commentary on the Asiatic labour issue that:

We could not compound them (Indian labourers) or deport them on the termination of their agreement, or restrict their actions in any way; they would immediately their contract was finished swarm over the country and monopolise many of the occupations now carried on by the whites,

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<sup>270</sup> A 11/2/8/5: William J. Harvey to H. Wilson Fox, for BSA Co.: London: Private and Confidential: January 19, 1900; and also: Salisbury Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: pp. 24 and 39.

<sup>271</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1901: p. 53.

<sup>272</sup> Statement by Major Maurice Heany, Managing Director, Matabele Gold Reefs and Estates Co., etc., in The Labour Problem: p. 9.

while during their term of service they would import their fathers, sons, brothers, sisters and hundred other relations. In short, Rhodesia would become a coolie settlement.<sup>273</sup>

Finally, it was also indicated by other antagonists of Indian 'coolie' labourers that whilst it would be impossible to repatriate these labourers, some of those who remained in Southern Rhodesia would be indulging in what was described as a peculiar trait of the Indian labourer that:

... he hoards his money, which eventually goes out of the country and reaches India...<sup>274</sup>

thus causing serious fiscal drainage from Southern Rhodesia.

But it was in the opposition to Chinese and 'Asiatic' labour in broad terms, that tempers rose and the respective lobbies on the importation of this class of labour into Southern Rhodesia flayed one another in passionate terms. Opposition to Chinese labour importation was based on three dimensions. There were those who based their objections on Australian precedence, whom we might call here the Australian lobby, represented especially by Fred G. Shaw, a Mining Engineer with several mining claims of his own, in addition to land assets, in the country. The second group of opponents of Chinese labour had also some previous experience with this type of labour in America, notably in California where Chinese labour had been introduced some time after the American Civil War for mining and railway construction work. The last class of anti-Chinese activists were mostly of the proto-Rhodesian populist genre, who regarded the Chinese labour scheme as an attempt by international finance represented by the Rhodesian mining industry to thwart their economic existence. The opposition of the last-mentioned lobby to the scheme actually reflected a mixture of British chauvinism and Rhodesian colonist sentimentalism. The champion this last group of colonist opponents was Leopold F. Moore, the chairman of the Anti-Chinese Immigration Committee and a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, who also owned several chemist shops throughout Southern Rhodesia.

The importation of Chinese labourers, as far as Fred Shaw and other ex-Australian colonists were concerned, was a retrogressive step rather than an advantage to the development of Southern Rhodesia. Without doubting the

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<sup>273</sup> Commentary by Editor (J. C. Collard), in The Labour Problem: pp. 1-2.

<sup>274</sup> Quoted in Statement by J. G. McDonald, General Manager, Consolidated Exploration and Development Co. (Rhodesia), Ltd., etc. in Ibid., p. 13.

positive qualities of the Chinese as a labourer, these ex-Australians, basing their arguments on experiences of Chinese immigration, especially in Queensland and Victoria where Chinese services were badly required in the sugar plantations, mines and railways, still had their own anxieties on the feasibility of putting this class of labourers under effective control. As John Swift, then a builder and contractor in Southern Rhodesia, indicated, the Chinese were '... a stubborn, treacherous, -(and)- obstinate people...' with a strong aversion 'to work for a white boss' and he was convinced that should the Chinese labourer be confined 'to a compound as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, ... the experiment -(would)- turn out an expensive and dangerous failure.'<sup>275</sup> Such characteristic traits, on the part of the Chinese, were, Shaw also argued, of course, excusable in the light of human and general historical development. The Chinese felt too superior to endure the restrictive conditions and other disabilities imposed on him as an unskilled manual labourer either in Australia or in Southern Rhodesia, should the mining industry proceed with its importation plans. In short, Shaw summarized the position of the Chinese labourer in relation to his white boss as follows:

It must be remembered that from pride of the most ancient history and descent from a civilisation which existed and founded its ethics hundreds of years before Moses wrote the Ten Commandments, the Chinaman may be forgiven for remembering that centuries after Confucius bequeathed to him his lessons -(and)- his morals, our -(British)- ancestors were the woad-stained roaming coracle-steering savages of Britain, and therefore it must not be wondered at that he -(the Chinese)- considers himself in every way equal, if not superior, to a white man. He will not, unless compelled, work alongside a negro, or take a negro's wages and it is a mistake to imagine that he will;...<sup>276</sup>

For a white colonial community whose rationale for the utilisation and importation of cheap and dependable labour and whose dominance in this stratified plural society depended on alleged technological, cultural and racial superiority, the possibility of egalitarian or competitive claims by any other social segment was naturally a blow to the whole social, economic and political structure of this society. The administrative problems of controlling such diverse social groups were obviously disenchanting. In Southern

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<sup>275</sup> Statement by John Swift, in Ibid: pp. 30-1.

<sup>276</sup> Statement by Fred G. Shaw, in Ibid: p. 15.

Rhodesia, this was even more so especially that a small clique of the white society representing international capitalism was responsible for instituting this potentially problematic situation and was prepared to ride roughshod over the wishes of the white majority. In Shaw's opinion, the Rhodesian labour problem reflected once more the peculiarities and deformities of a situation dominated by a small faction of economic interests who acted not only as hangers-on to Rhodes, the founder of the colony, but also aimed at exploiting their dominant position to carry out their own designs and, in the case of the Chinese labour scheme, influence the Administration to espouse their cause. Given the problems involved in controlling and policing the Chinese labour immigrants in accordance with requisite restrictive conditions, what this economic class thus was driving at, so it was concluded, was to increase the burdens of the Administration and consequently the taxation of the ordinary white settler 'for the sake of a very few of the Mining Companies who ~~(have)~~ lost most of their capital and reputation.'<sup>277</sup>

In one respect, what the Rhodesian mining companies were looking for as a solution to their labour problems was quite amiss, as far as Chinese labour was concerned. The ex-Australian colonists in Southern Rhodesia and their supporters saw the Chinese labour movement as a clandestine attempt by those more unpopular mining companies and properties, represented by the Bonsor mine, whose labour conditions and high mortality and accident rates had inexorably succeeded in scaring away African labourers with dire consequences, but, at the same time, controlled the voting power in the Chamber of Mines to their advantage.<sup>278</sup> However, in spite of the power of these mines and the absence of legal accountability for the management over the accident and mortality rates in Southern Rhodesia, as was then obtaining in Australia, Shaw was doubtful whether '... the Chinkies ~~(Chinese)~~ ~~(were)~~ likely to become more willing martyrs to the students in mine engineering than the Matabele or Mashonas?'<sup>279</sup> What the mining companies ought

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<sup>277</sup> Mss. Afr. S228/C 1: Fred G. Shaw to Rhodes: April 23, 1901.

<sup>278</sup> Shaw was here directing his attacks against, especially, the two largest combines, Willoughby's Consolidated and its subsidiaries, and Matabele Gold Reefs and Estates Co, and its ancillary syndicates too, whose managing directors, Col. Heyman and Major Heany, respectively, were among the strongest supporters of Chinese labour.

<sup>279</sup> Statement by Shaw: in The Labour Problem: p. 17.

to have been doing then was a reappraisal of the labour conditions on their properties, instead of resorting to far-fetched solutions.

Yet with the state of affairs then prevailing in Southern Rhodesia between 1898 and 1904, the stage when more realistic measures could be introduced to solve the country's labour problem without resorting to the Chinese or any other Asiatic source of labour and concentrating only on African and white labour supply to meet the wishes of all sections of the white public, was still far removed. For one reason, whilst white labour could be induced to come into the country from other possessions, especially Australia, under promises of acquiring their own mining claims, which they could work on alternate basis with their engagements to major mining companies and, in so doing, bring capital into the country and also replace 'some green niggers' or confine them to surface work only, as Shaw claimed to have been doing in the Belingwe district,<sup>280</sup> even such a system would, however, not prevail on account of the monopoly system which had grown over the years in Southern Rhodesia. In Matabeleland only, this monopoly had led to the locking up, by the big mining companies, of about 55,000 mining claims by 1901, covering an area of 1,600 miles of reefs and old workings to the exclusion of about 436,000 potential miners.<sup>281</sup> Thus the stranglehold of the mining companies on the country was so strong that it led the opposition camp to the conclusion that in standing up against the Chinese labour issues, they were actually fighting against a plot aimed at driving them out of the colony.<sup>282</sup>

Ex-American lobbyists, most of whom were employed in skilled jobs as engineers by the Rhodesian mining companies, based their opposition to Chinese labour purely on the possibility of structural antagonism likely to ensure, in the event of large-scale importation of these 'coolies'. The Californian case whereby white workers and commercial classes mounted agitation towards the close of the nineteenth century against Chinese immigrants, previously brought into the country during the post-Civil War era for reconstruction purposes,<sup>283</sup> served as a good example to Rhodesian colonists. Indeed, it was the Californian and the Queensland precedents which together

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid: Shaw to Rhodes: April 23, 1901.

<sup>281</sup> Statement by Shaw: in Ibid: p. 16.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid: Shaw to Rhodes: April 23, 1901.

<sup>283</sup> Statement by J. R. Farrell, Consulting Engineer for R. Williams & Co.: Ibid: p. 32.

provided the proto-Rhodesian populist movement with its characteristic emotional dressing and ideological terminology; the hue and cry that the Chinese labourer and his 'aptness, wonderful patience, untiring industry and sobriety' would drive the white men into 'enforced idleness' and consequent economic ruin.<sup>284</sup> Leopold Moore and the anti-Chinese Committee exploited this theme to a remarkable degree in Southern Rhodesia. These age-old virtues of the Chinese labourer were turned into vices and all the positive attributes of this Oriental were thenceforth interpreted by the proto-Rhodesian populists in terms of undisguised subterfuge against the welfare of the secondary colonists. Consequently, the Chinese immigrant virtually became, in the eyes of these colonists, a 'wily, persistent, cunning... unskilled labourer, ... gradually -(working)- his way into every branch of business...' because, as one Bulawayo artisan, T. H. Rickard, indicated:

What white man can compete with a Chinaman who is satisfied with rice to eat and whose expenses are so small?<sup>285</sup>

In the words of a restaurant keeper of pioneer fame, Thomas Constable, the essence of the matter was that:

... the white man has to live and keep up his dignity, demanded by the society he lives in. The Chinaman has no dignity, and no one<sup>286</sup> expects him to have any, hence he can live on sixpence a day.

Thus it was within the constraints of this ideological and economic setting that the artisans, mechanics and general white labourers in Southern Rhodesia carried out their campaign against the importation of Asiatic labour between 1898 and 1904. They wanted to be provided with adequate guarantees from the pro-Asiatic lobby and the Administration on the need for total Asiatic economic exclusion in terms of real estate ownership and acquisition, commerce and skilled occupations in the mining industry and elsewhere, where this lower social and economic segment of the white society held a precarious foothold. To reinforce its otherwise primarily economic cause, the Rhodesian anti-Chinese movement intermingled its economic anxieties with apocalyptic forebodings on the negative implications of Chinese labour importation and their possible effects on the moral and social life of the Rhodesian society as

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<sup>284</sup> For the Queensland anti-Chinese case: Vide: Statement by John Swift: loc. cit.

<sup>285</sup> Statement by T. H. Rickard, in *Ibid*: p. 42.

<sup>286</sup> Statement by Thomas Constable, in *Ibid*: p. 52.

a whole.

The image of 'John Chinaman' painted by the opponents of Asiatic labour was not at all attractive, to say the least. His capability to bring into the country with him pestilence in form of leprosy, cholera and other insanitary diseases which were alleged to have ravaged 'the insanitary cities of China for 6,000 years',<sup>287</sup> was not the only curse which Southern Rhodesia was bound to inherit. The Chinese 'coolies' were, it was argued, 'walking masses of corruption',<sup>288</sup> whose presence in the country could only be regarded as a distinct drawback in terms of their proclivities for opium-smoking 'to a semi-stupefied state',<sup>289</sup> gambling, immorality, thieving and a host of other unspecified crimes with which they were likely to influence the indigenous African population.<sup>290</sup> Missionaries too joined the anti-Chinese campaign on the grounds of moral and social complications likely to ensue,<sup>291</sup> especially given the well publicised fact that no Chinese women would accompany these prospective immigrants and that, in view of the Anti-Chinese Committee, these Chinese labourers would, therefore, prey on 'native girls to be drafted by thousands to the compounds of the Heathen Chinese...',<sup>292</sup> consequently producing a bastardized race similar in every respect to the Mongolian/Aborigine offspring in Australia, considered by this lobby to be 'the worst specimens of humanity in the world.'<sup>293</sup>

In the final analysis, the Chinese labour controversy created a rift and some measure of distrust between the mining industry and the secondary colonist segment in the Southern Rhodesian white society. In view of their concern about Asiatic economic and structural competition expressed in various assertions as we have already discussed above, the colonist artisans,

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<sup>287</sup> Statement by L. F. Moore, in Ibid: pp. 18-9; Vide also C. O. 417/283: Moore, Secretary, Anti-Chinese Immigration Committee, Bulawayo, to Milner: Telegram: July 23, 1900.

<sup>288</sup> Statement by J. B. Dark, in Ibid: p. 44.

<sup>289</sup> Statement by John Swift, in Ibid: p 33.

<sup>290</sup> Statement by Thomas Read, in Ibid: pp. 56-7.

<sup>291</sup> Statement by Bishop William Gaul, in Ibid: p. 53-5.

<sup>292</sup> Statement by Moore: loc. cit,

<sup>293</sup> Statement by John Swift: loc. cit ; These views on the social complications of Chinese labour importation were also advocated in South Africa and Britain. Vide: T. Naylor: Yellow Labour: The Truth About the Chinese in the Transvaal: The Daily Chronicle Office: London: October, 1904: pp. 6-7.



mechanics, farmers and traders could hardly be persuaded against their conclusions that international finance, represented by the mining industry and the BSACo., was deliberately attempting to crucify the secondary colonist sector on the question of Asiatic labour importation. In the circumstances, they began to read in this movement, written in large letters, not only a conspiracy by international capital but also unpatriotic designs destined to undermine the fundamental principles underlying British imperial ideals and objectives. Indeed for the Rhodesian pioneers and settlers who had been called to occupy and conquer the country under the banner of British patriotic pride and chauvinism in the manner Rhodes did,<sup>294</sup> the Chinese labour movement was decidedly an anti-climax in the overall progression of Rhodesian history. Thus the proto-Rhodesian populist in his campaign against Chinese importation began to question and reassess his contribution to the country's colonisation processes and his subsequent betrayal by the Chartered Company and its capitalist associates in a way well demonstrated by Rickard's rhetoric that:

Have the heroes of Matabeleland and Mashonaland who have lost their lives in the exploitation and pioneering of this country, sacrificed their lives to fill the pockets of a few money-grabbing capitalists and to pave the way for the diabolical Chinese, the impersonification of vice in its most hideous forms - the scum of the earth?<sup>295</sup>

Such concern by the anti-Asiatic lobby that the mining industry and international finance or anybody else who advocated the importation of Chinese labour was 'a traitor to the interests of the British race'<sup>296</sup> was enhanced by the apparent determination of the pro-Chinese faction to override the opposition and implement their scheme notwithstanding the vulnerability of the restrictive mechanisms which they intended to initiate to safeguard the welfare of their opponents. The assertions by some of the mine bosses that there was no law in the country to prevent them from importing Asiatic labour and that rigorous restrictions against 'coolie' labourers would

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<sup>294</sup> For the role of Rhodes's jingoism and the birth of the Rhodesias: Vide Gross: op. cit. pp. 160-82; and also Lockhouse and Woodhouse: op. cit. pp. 219-86.

<sup>295</sup> Statement by Rickard, in The Labour Problem: p. 42.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

be too expensive and costly for their companies,<sup>297</sup> were hardly encouraging. Still from a legal point of view, the suspicions of the anti-Chinese lobby that whilst Indian subjects were automatically not subject to restrictive legislation, the Chinese too might not be amenable to those proposed economic and social disabilities due to Sino-British diplomatic and trade treaties,<sup>298</sup> could only add to the anxieties of that section of the white colonist population of Southern Rhodesia which felt threatened.

In a broader context, it should be remembered, in this connection, that the anti-Asiatic labour movement in Southern Africa was specially strong during this period. In the Cape where Asiatic labour had failed previously,<sup>299</sup> the Rhodesian anti-Chinese lobby received support from commercial circles in Kimberley, Cape Town and other centres as well as from Sir Gordon Spring, the Cape Prime Minister.<sup>300</sup> With such backing, the differences between the opposing sides on the Chinese labour issue in Southern Rhodesia could only stiffen rather than recede. For Moore and the Anti-Chinese Committee, their campaign assumed the aura of a cause celebre and accordingly they were prepared to sustain the momentum of their opposition to the scheme to the bitter end, even if such an end meant an armed conflict with 'a few obdurate speculators' determined to turn Southern Rhodesia into 'a plague spot on our (British) Empire.'<sup>301</sup>

From these proceedings, it is evident that the decision by the Southern Rhodesian mining industry to introduce Asiatic labour, in one form or another, at the close of the nineteenth century to solve its chronic labour problems had significant results. The polarization between international capitalism, on the one hand, and the white working class and national bourgeoisie, on the other, was dramatic. The conclusions of the latter classes that the Asiatic labour movement was designed primarily for making 'the rich man richer, and the poor man poorer'<sup>302</sup> and also that the interests of the lower segments of the

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<sup>297</sup> Statement by Felford Edwards, Consulting Engineer: Rhodesia Exploration and Development Co.; etc. in Ibid: pp. 38-9.

<sup>298</sup> Speech by John Kerr, Bulawayo, March 17, 1901; in Ibid: pp. 76-7.

<sup>299</sup> Statement by Shaw: loc.cit.

<sup>300</sup> Cape Times: May 23, 1901 and June 1, 1901.

<sup>301</sup> Statement by Moore: loc. cit.

<sup>302</sup> Speech by Dark at a meeting of artisans in Bulawayo: April 15, 1900: in Ibid: p. 70.

white Rhodesian society were being deliberately over-looked by what they called a 'seven to four' form of government,<sup>303</sup> quite naturally gave vent to increased demands for a more representative form of political administration. In this movement was, therefore, embedded the seeds of the anti-Chartered Company movement whose main battle-cry for fair and equitable economic and political deals in Southern Rhodesia gathered momentum between 1904 and 1922.<sup>304</sup>

The depth and strength of anti-Asiatic opposition within the discontented circles of the Rhodesian colonist society did not however effectively impress the mining industry in its determination to import Indian and Chinese labour. Although Rhodes, as the godfather of the Rhodesian white populist movement, may have found it necessary to reckon the trend of colonist public opinion and thus trod more cautiously on this Asiatic labour scheme,<sup>305</sup> the rest of the mining industry were less sensitive to the demands of the secondary colonist element in the country. The line of action they adopted was that whilst they would proceed forthwith with the importation of Asiatic labourers, token restrictive measures would, nonetheless, be introduced to minimize the more obvious bounds of conflict with the white population opposed to this form of labour.

The basic features of these restrictive measures on Asiatic indentured labourers and immigrants were outlined at a meeting between the Chambers of Mines and Commerce held in Bulawayo on April 11, 1900, where compromises were laboriously worked out between various and divergent economic interests.<sup>306</sup> In essence, the Asiatic indentured immigrants were subjected to

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<sup>303</sup> The jibe was in reference to the 7 nominated members of the BSACo. as against the 4 elected ones in the Leg/Co.; Vide: Speech by Swift at Anti-Chinese Party Meeting, Bulawayo, March 17, 1901: Ibid: p. 82.

<sup>304</sup> Vide: Tawse Jollie: The Real Rhodesia: Hutchinson & Co., London: 1924: Chapter III.

<sup>305</sup> Rhodes, Bulawayo, to BSACo.; London: Cablegram: May 30, 1901; in Labour Supply and Regulation: p. 70: Vide also File C.O. 417/311, P/R/O: London.

<sup>306</sup> It must be pointed out that the Chambers of Commerce and Mines were diametrically opposed in their views on Asiatic immigration. Thus during the Umtali fracas supported by the town's Chamber of Commerce in January 1899, the Umtali Chamber of Mines condemned the activities of the white malcontents so involved. Vide C.O. 879/57: J. S. Nicholson, Commandant General, BSAP, Salisbury to Milner: February 4, 1899.

control on entry into the country, on their movements, nature of employment and social and economic mobility. The rationale for these restrictions reflected not only the antipathy of the white secondary colonist segment, but also the desire by the mining industry to utilise Asiatic labour more cheaply and effectively without incurring some of the problems already occasioned with regard to African labour. Restrictive measures on the movement of the Chinese or any other potential Asiatic labourers to an area, about 'two miles' in perimeter, on the property so engaged and under pain of imprisonment for a term of up to 30 days, with or without hard labour for instance,<sup>307</sup> was, in this regard, therefore, not so much intended to exclude the Asiatic labourer from visiting neighbouring independent shops, as W. Dempster of the Chamber of Commerce feared, as it was primarily to facilitate the processes whereby errant Asiatic labourers could be 'immediately run in' and so prevent any possibilities of desertion.<sup>308</sup> Indeed the stiff penalties prescribed for desertion, absence from work and wilful indolence, all classified as criminal offences in the draft Immigration Ordinance of 1901, demonstrate, beyond any doubt, the intentions of the mining industry to contain this form of labour and maximise its utility within the five-year 'maximum period' of indenture so proposed.<sup>309</sup>

Similarly, the Chamber of Commerce and other more hostile sections of the white community stood to benefit from a whole range of disabilities imposed on Asiatic immigrants and by which these people were excluded from skilled occupations, granting of trading licences, acquisition of real estate and citizenship rights or letters of naturalization. These restrictions, it must be pointed out, were a compromise solution between the demands of various colonist interests. Dempster, the Chairman of the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce and his colleagues, scared by the events in Umtali in

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<sup>307</sup> Vide: Clause 59, Immigration Ordinance No. 18 of 1901: Enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, November 29, 1901: in Labour Regulation and Supply: pp. 113-24.

<sup>308</sup> Speech by C. T. Holland, Chairman: Proceedings at a Meeting held in Bulawayo between the Chamber of Mine and Commerce re:- Restrictive Legislation on Chinese Labour: April 11, 1900: in The Labour Problem: pp. 62-3.

<sup>309</sup> Absence, desertions etc. carried penalties of 21 days imprisonment or £2 fine, first offence; £5 fine and two months imprisonment, for second offence etc.; Vide Immigration Ordinance No. 18 of 1901: Enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain: November 29, 1901: loc. cit.

January 1899 and the presence of skilled Indian labourers at the Morven mine near Bembesi in the Bubi district,<sup>310</sup> had two objectives in mind. They wanted to achieve not only the total prohibition of either the 'Banyan' or the 'Chinaman' from coming into the country 'on his own hook', but also demanded a heavy taxation on any potential free Asiatic immigrants, be they British subjects or not; something akin to the £100 poll-tax of Australia. Of course, total prohibition would have pleased such stalwarts, who argued, like T. H. Thomas, a member of the Executive Committee of the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce, that:

You could never recognise a Chinaman again -(after a twenty-mile journey from Gwelo to Selukwe where)- he would be a free man.<sup>311</sup>

But total prohibition of Asiatic immigration as such, was, however, unacceptable to the mining industry which actually viewed its relatively mild restrictive measures as a favourable gesture towards the white public at a time when there was

... nothing to prevent any individual... from importing Chinaman without restrictive safeguards.<sup>312</sup>

Moreover, the mining industry managed quite well to stall behind Imperial policy towards Asiatics from British possessions and on the fact that Australian legislation having been passed by a self-governing dominion was less dependent on the assent of the Colonial Office than that of Southern Rhodesia. With such half-baked concessions to the antagonistic white public, the Rhodesian mining industry thus placed its case for Asiatic labour importation on such a strong footing that only external intervention in form of action by the Imperial government could effectively challenge and frustrate this Asiatic labour importation programme.

The BSACo. Administration, a very willing partner in the Asiatic labour movement, saw this as an advantage rather than a drawback. With its over-all control over the importation, transport, housing, feeding and other aspects of the Asiatic labour scheme,<sup>313</sup> the Chartered Company as a politico-

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<sup>310</sup> Speech by C. T. Holland; at Anti-Chinese Party Meeting; Bulawayo: March 17, 1901: in The Labour Problem: pp. 80-1.

<sup>311</sup> Speech by T. H. Thomas: Proceedings at a meeting held in Bulawayo: April 11, 1900: in Ibid: p. 67.

<sup>312</sup> Speech by Holland: Proceedings: April 11, 1900; Ibid: p. 68.

economic power in the country, with vested interests in the mining industry, was well placed to play the tune in harmony with the interests of the other mining concerns involved. The probability too of diverting some of this imported Asiatic labour into alternative engagements like public works and railway and road works, may have also tantalized the BSACo. Administration to a reasonable extent.<sup>314</sup> But it was particularly in connection with the proposed creation of the post of Protector of Immigrants and his department, corresponding to that on Native Affairs, that the Administration of Southern Rhodesia came out into the open through its preparedness to take up cudgels with the Colonial Office on behalf of the mining industry.

In shaping this new office of the Protector of Immigrants, the BSACo. legal advisers were quite anxious to exclude the influence of the Colonial Office and thus leave enough living room to the mining companies, under the aegis of the Southern Rhodesia Administration, to extract the maximum reward from the Asiatic labour scheme; their brain-child. Henry Wilson Fox, one of the BSACo. legal brains, thus argued with the London Board in unequivocal terms on the need to keep the new official in charge of immigrants under BSACo. control as opposed to that of the Colonial Office in the following manner:

The Imperial Government already have one Watch-dog ~~(Resident Commissioner)~~ in Rhodesia. If they want another, they should appoint and pay him not ask us to adopt a course quite inconsistent with the organisation of our Civil Service. If the whole Department ~~(of Protector of Immigrants)~~ is to be independent of the Administrator an imperium in imperio would be created and his position would not be enviable.

Fox went on to elaborate the basis of his objections to the Protector of Immigrants being made a protege of the Colonial Office:

... it is derogatory to the position of the Company to take the appointment of its officials out of its hands. It tends to give our enemies a handle against us, as furnishing official proof that the Government ~~(British)~~ still regards us with suspicion.

... I think we should insist on the right of nomination. It is a mon-

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<sup>313</sup> Sir M. F. Ommanney to Milner: June 14, 1901: in Labour Supply and Regulation: p. 72.

<sup>314</sup> A 11/2/8/5: Notes on the draft Immigration Ordinance by H. Wilson Fox to B. F. Hawksley: June 29, 1900.

stros proposal that we should have the paying and the C. O. the patronage.<sup>315</sup>

The resentful attitude towards Imperial control in labour affairs evinced here by the BSACo., could only strengthen the position of the colonist employers and, in this case, concerning Asiatic labour importation, the main benefactors were the Rhodesian mining companies.

Armed with this official backing and its own confidence to outplay internal opposition from within the Rhodesian white public, the position of the Rhodesian mining industry on Asiatic labour importation, at least in Southern Rhodesia itself, was unassailable. The opposition it faced between 1898 and 1901 could only be described as feeble, especially in view of the economic dominance of this single sector as it was then and the amount of influence which it wielded in the country.<sup>316</sup> After the Anglo-Boer war, the movement in favour of Asiatic labour was reinforced by increased labour demand to meet the more intensified competition with the Rand, where massive quantities of labour were required for reconstruction purposes. For one reason, the Rhodesian mining industry could no longer prey on those sources of labour formerly the preserves of the Rand, but abandoned in 1899 due to the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>317</sup> Thus using this competition as a worthy pretext, especially in connection with Mozambique labour, the Rhodesian mining industry harped over and over that its survival after May 1902, the projected end of the Anglo-Boer War, could only lie in the introduction of Asiatic labour.

Indeed, with a corresponding movement gathering momentum at the Rand between 1902 and 1904, the Rhodesian employers were just too pleased to argue their cause in unison with the more genuine case of labour shortage across the Limpopo in the South.<sup>318</sup> Finally, the conclusions of the Bloemfontein conference in March 1903,<sup>319</sup> and the Transvaal Labour Commission

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<sup>315</sup> A 11/2/8/3: H. Wilson Fox, Portree, Isle of Skye, to J. F. Jones: September 1, 1901.

<sup>316</sup> For the predominance and priority of the gold mining industry in Southern Rhodesia, especially up to 1911: Vide: van Onselen: Chibaro: pp. 14-33.

<sup>317</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 185-90.

<sup>318</sup> The formation of WNLA during the course of the War (in 1900) and its operations vis-a-vis Rhodesian labour bodies after 1902 intensified labour competition. Vide: Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1904: pp. 20-1.

<sup>319</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1903: pp. 68-9: (Col. Heyman

appointed in July 1903,<sup>320</sup> indicating that no amount of African labour, either from the British colonies below and beyond the Zambesi, in East and West Africa or in German and Portuguese Africa, could meet the insatiable hunger of the labour-intensive mining industry in Southern Africa, greatly vindicated the cause of the pro-Asiatic labour movement.

The period following the end of the Anglo-Boer war, therefore, added a new zest to the pro-Asiatic labour campaign, either abandoned or taken half-heartedly previously at the close of the nineteenth century. The Rhodesian mining industry which had inherited the Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour scheme from the Rand on account of the outbreak of hostilities in 1899,<sup>321</sup> had apparently not paid equal attention to similar arrangements on Asiatic labour, especially those run by the London-based firm, the Harvey Brothers specializing in Chinese, Japanese and Indian 'coolie' labour supply to the West Indies, Hawaii and other countries in South America. As a matter of fact, these purveyors of Asiatic labour had also been on the brink of establishing concrete arrangements with the Rand employers, when, like Kusel in North-East Africa, the War caught them on the wrong foot and the study visit to South Africa, for the purpose, by William J. Harvey, one of the firm's managers, turned into a fiasco.<sup>322</sup>

Thus what the Rhodesian mining industry could only do in the post-bellum period, was to pick up the pieces of Asiatic labour arrangements hitherto banished into oblivion. With regard to Indian labour supply for Southern Rhodesia, earlier arrangements by private mining companies and individual offers by specialist agents on Indian 'coolie' labour quite naturally formed the basis of the post-1902 revitalised approach. Here for example, were considered the offers previously made by a Glasgow firm, William Ewing and Company, in March 1900, to the BSACo. to supply 'coolie' labour to Southern Rhodesia on the same terms as this firm had carried out, successfully, its arrangements with employers of labour in the West Indies, Natal, Mauritius,

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<sup>320</sup> attended the Bloemfontein Conference in his capacity as President of the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines).

Some of the regions proposed, unsuccessfully, as possible sources of labour supply for one reason or another, included countries as diverse and far apart as Zanzibar, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Cameroons, Congo Free State etc. etc. Vide: Transvaal Labour Commission Report 1903: pp. 1-12.

<sup>321</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 191-3.

<sup>322</sup> A 11/2/8/5: William J. Harvey, to H. Wilson Fox, for BSACo.; Private



the Seychelles and even East Africa between 1894 and 1899. The main sources of labour supply in India suggested in this instance, were the traditional labour reservoirs around Calcutta and the Tamil district in the Madras Presidency, where, it was hoped, limitless supplies could be procured from the impoverished masses of these thickly populated regions. In other areas of India, such as the Bombay Presidency, the Punjab and the French settlements at Pondicherry and Karikal, this firm of Ewing and Company was not overly optimistic, as these areas seemed capable to offer employment locally, thus arresting overseas emigration. This was especially the case in the Bombay Presidency. The Punjab, on the other hand, had already supplied labourers for the Uganda Railway in 1898 and, for this reason, private labour agents could see no way out in a competition with the Imperial authorities for the same commodity.<sup>323</sup>

These offers may not have effected immediate response from the relevant official quarters at the time, but evidently generated sufficient enthusiasm amongst private employers in Southern Rhodesia to sustain related movements to import Indian labour for the mining industry. Notwithstanding the tremendous opposition from the anti-Asiatic colonist circles in Southern Rhodesia, as we have already discussed,<sup>324</sup> the feeling amongst the mining companies that Indian 'coolie' labour could solve their labour shortage problems led to the conclusions that perhaps India, as a source of labour supply, was worth a trial after all. Thus at the height of the Asiatic labour controversy between 1900 and 1901, some of the mine managers and directors had begun to conclude, perhaps basing their theories on the offers already made, that provided relevant working castes were recruited, such as the Moplas of Mysore on the Malabar coast<sup>325</sup> or the belligerent ethnic groups of the North-Western frontier of India bordering on the Afghanistan,<sup>326</sup> the Indian labour scheme might as well do. Accordingly, the first major initiative was launched in

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and Confidential: January 19, 1900.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid: William Ewing, of W. Ewing & Co., Glasgow to BSACo.: March 23, 1900.

<sup>324</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 251-75.

<sup>325</sup> Statement by Holland: General Manager, Charterland Gold Fields, Little Wanderer etc. etc. in The Labour Problem: p. 21.

<sup>326</sup> Statement by David Ferguson, Consulting Engineer to Colenbrander's Matabeleland Development Co., in Ibid: p. 37.

early 1901 by the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, with the approval of Rhodes and the BSACo. Administration, to send one Major Henderson, formerly of the Indian Staff Corps and Assistant Labour Commissioner in Assam, to India for the purpose of assessing the possibilities and implementing the designs of the Rhodesian mining industry to procure labour from Mysore.<sup>327</sup>

The scheme was, however, not successful, most likely on account of two main reasons; firstly, the lack of unanimity between the Bulawayo and the Salisbury branches of the Labour Board; the latter, in particular, expressing its doubts over the value of Indian, as compared to Chinese labour material, for mining work and hence this body's anxiety to avoid unnecessary additional expenditure on the part of the mining industry.<sup>328</sup> Secondly, the Rhodesian colonist employers were still involved with the promotion of Abyssinian, Arab and Somali labour from North-East Africa and the Arabian peninsula between 1900 and 1901 and some of them may have had good reasons to anticipate the success of these sources of foreign labour.<sup>329</sup>

In any case, these initial moves to import labour from the Indian sub-continent, however ill-conceived or fanciful, provided the bridge for more vigorous action in the years after 1902. The faith of the Rhodesian colonist employers that the Indian 'coolies', though less useful for mining purposes than their fellow Orientals, the Chinese, were more used to less pleasant labour conditions and lower wages in their own country than even those earned by African labourers in Southern Africa,<sup>330</sup> must have, in the circumstances, provided a veritable source of comfort to the champions of the Indian labour scheme. For good measure, the activities of the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association, that conglomerate body of Rhodesian financiers, based in London, formed in 1902, and several purveyors and labour agents either appointed and sent to India or originally working in that sub-continent but associating themselves with the labour objectives of the Rhodesian employers, tended by and large, to take cue after their sponsors. They interpreted in the Indian labour scheme that such labour supply was by far the cheapest form

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<sup>327</sup> Statement by David Ferguson Consulting Engineer to Colenbrander's Matabeleland Development Co., in: Ibid: p. 37.

<sup>328</sup> B. T. Carson, Secretary, Labour Board, Salisbury to Labour Board, Bulawayo Branch, March 27, 1901: in Ibid: pp. 97-8.

<sup>329</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 193-248.

<sup>330</sup> Statement by Ferguson: in Labour Problem: loc. cit.

of Asiatic labour material available and also took confidence in the precedence that Indian overseas emigration then symbolized on a somewhat global scale.

Other methods adopted in implementing plans to extract Indian labour, of course, dealt with the alleged attributes of individual ethnic groups and their merits as labourers; an arbitrary practice quite common in the Victorian period regarding British and general European attitudes towards non-European communities in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.<sup>331</sup> As far as the post-1902 Rhodesian labour scheme relating to India is concerned, it is quite interesting to observe that the areas of labour exploitation selected differed totally from those proposed at an earlier period when Rhodesian employers were less enthusiastic about Indian labour supply, namely those areas of traditional supply of Indian 'coolie' labour around Calcutta and Madras, especially among the Telugu and Tamil ethnic groups.<sup>332</sup> After the Anglo-Boer War, Rhodesian hopes for Indian labour seem to have been pinned mainly in the Bombay Presidency and the North-Western provinces, especially among the Moplas and the Punjabis.

In its preference for Moplas, the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association appears to have been influenced to a large measure by that peculiarly inexplicable consideration in colonial Africa and Asia, that national groups with recognisable historical military traits had more to offer to colonial bureaucratic infrastructures than the less militaristic ones, whether in terms of labour utilisation, police and military services or even the recruitment of 'boss boys' and messengers.<sup>333</sup> In this and many other respects, the choice of the Moplas, a formerly belligerent Moslem group on the Malabar coast of India, by the Rhodesian consortium of employers and their henchmen, may have been, indeed, quite a deliberately well calculated move.

In its appeal for Mopla labour to the London Board and the Colonial Office in January 1903, the Rhodesian employers' association argued quite convincingly in favour of the physical qualities of the Moplas, which, it was imagined, were lacking amongst the Southern ethnic groups of India constituting the bulk

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<sup>331</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 248-9.

<sup>332</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 259-65.

<sup>333</sup> Van Onselen makes reference to the recruitment of African compound police on the Rhodesian mines from Zulus, Ngoni, Ndebele and other groups with reputable military background: van Onselen: Chibaro: p. 139.

of Natal's 'coolie' labour for the sugar plantations. The argument that the Moplas were '...nothing more than a turbulent, fanatical and dangerous set of ruffians...' whose recruitment was likely to introduce a 'dangerous' element into Southern Rhodesia, failed to impress the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association.<sup>334</sup> On the contrary, these employers of labour pointed out that the frequent outbreaks of violence amongst this Moslem group were largely due to 'an insufficient regard for their religious feelings' and the 'overcrowded -(and)- distressed' conditions under which they lived, owing perhaps to the faulty system of land tenure in the Mysore region which inexorably bred discontent. Indeed, not even the disapproval of local employers in the Kolar district of India, where some of these Moplas were engaged, could perceptibly discourage the Rhodesian employers and their supporters. The unfavourable attestations that Moplas were 'peculiarly vulnerable to cholera' on account of 'the rotten fish on which they -(fed)-...' <sup>335</sup> also appear to have been, at least in the judgement of the Rhodesian employers, out-balanced by the positive physical attributes of these people, quite favourably compared with their Hindu compatriots. Thus the Rhodesian Association concluded:

All kinds of work requiring pluck, energy, and sustained effort are done by Moplas. Moplas have done the heaviest work and earned the reputation of being the best workmen, steady, tractable and never troublesome while well treated in building bridges over the big rivers of Madras; and in the gold mines of -(Southern)- India, the best miners are the Moplas. They work as Hindus never do.<sup>336</sup>

With this type of confidence in the Mopla Indian labourers, Rhodesian colonist employers needed no further justification for importing Indian indentured labour into the country, particularly so that they had also promised to introduce appropriate guarantees to appease the rival section of the Rhodesian colonial society opposed to all forms of Asiatic labour. Such guarantees were obviously pertinent in view of the likely prospects of procuring even larger supplies of Indian 'coolie' labour than the Rhodesian employers had at first

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<sup>334</sup> C. O. 417/382: Memorandum by the Provisional Committee of the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association; January, 1903: Enclosed in BSA Co. to C. O.; January 6, 1903.

<sup>335</sup> A 11/2/8/8: R. Maguire, Agra, to Jones: January 14, 1903.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid: Memorandum by the Provisional Committee of the Rhodesian Land and Owners' Association; January, 1903.

anticipated, given under the circumstances, the promises on probable additional supply from the Punjabi, vouched by George B. Allen, Rockfort Maguire and J. H. Pollock of the Sikh Infantry in the Punjab region: all associated, albeit in different ways, with the Indian labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia.<sup>337</sup> Besides, one shipowner, Sir George Mackenzie, whose company ran regular passages between Indian and African ports and who also boasted of his contacts in Bombay lately involved with the Uganda Railway contract labourers, offered to deliver any amount of Indian indentured labourers bound for Southern Rhodesia either at Delagoa Bay or anywhere else at a reasonable price.<sup>338</sup>

Against this background of a veritable avalanche of Indian indentured labour and the inexorable conflict which this entailed with the anti-Asiatic lobby whose views were already known though not sufficiently heeded, the sponsors of the scheme found it necessary to assure those Rhodesian colonist sections concerned about the advantages of this Indian labour importation movement. For the commercial section of the Rhodesian white public, the Moplas and other potential immigrants were described as more of 'cultivators' than a trading class and, therefore, any fear of structural and other forms of economic competition were underplayed. This was here also emphasized by the fact that these indentured labourers, in the view of the Rhodesian employers, were after all intended to stay in the country only temporarily, or for three years at least and for that reason would not bring their families with them so as to avoid any propensities amongst them to develop some form of attachment to the country.

From the moral and social point of view, one of the main theses put forward by Moore and his anti-Asiatic colleagues,<sup>339</sup> this technique of discouraging Indian permanent settlement in Southern Rhodesia by introducing only familyless labourers, vulnerable to social and moral pressures, however,

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<sup>337</sup> A 11/2/8/8: T. Blair Reynolds, Chairman, The Rhodesian Land & Mine Owners' Association to H. Wilson Fox: January 9, 1903; Maguire to Jones: January 14, 1903 and J. H. Pollock, Kohat, Punjab to Col. Flint; BSAP, Salisbury; April 14, 1903.

<sup>338</sup> The cost of delivery from Bombay to Delagoa Bay was estimated at £11 per labourer. Vide: C. O. 417/382: Sir George Mackenzie to BSACo. : March 10, 1903.

<sup>339</sup> Vide Supra: p. 270.

appeared to offer little comfort. It smacked too much of the old adage of robbing Peter to pay Paul. But the Rhodesian employers would not be caught in a trap even on moral and social grounds. Consequently, they argued that the type of Indian recruits they intended to bring were used to voluntary emigration to other distant parts of India and to Ceylon, in quest of employment for long periods at a time, without falling victims to the social and moral consequences ascribed to emigration as a general phenomenon.<sup>340</sup> In Southern Rhodesia, the colonist employers hoped that such moral and social strength evinced by these Indian emigrant 'coolies' would be obviously reinforced by the scattered nature of the gold mining districts, thus minimizing any form of Asiatic aggregation and association with the local African peoples, common on the Rand, and, in this way, restricting the areas of contact and conflict between the subject races.

To redeem the faith of the white settlers in the virtues and advantages of a hierarchical colonial society; a conviction which may have been considerably shaken by the growing political consciousness amongst the Natal Indians in 1890's,<sup>341</sup> the sponsors of the Indian labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia assured their constituents about the apolitical character of their potential recruits by pointing out that these recruits, unlike the Natal Indians, were

...not of the same race and they would not, therefore feel injured by the consciousness of different treatment.

What these employers were more interested in, as far as the Indian immigrants were concerned, were essentially sufficient labour supply, efficiency, if any, and economy. The rights and welfare of the Indian recruits were simply peripheral and the very low wages provided for in the contracts drawn by the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association inexplicably emphasized these employers' objectives.<sup>342</sup> On this occasion,

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<sup>340</sup> Given the tendencies of Moslem Indians in East and Central Africa to establish sexual liaisons with local African women, the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association was naturally misleading its opponents. Vide: F. Dotson and L. O. Dotson: op. cit. pp. 280-5.

<sup>341</sup> Huttenback: op. cit. pp. 41-3.

<sup>342</sup> C. O. 417/382: Memorandum by the Provisional Committee January 1903 and A 11/2/8/8: T. Blair Reynolds: Chairman, The Rhodesian Land & Mine Owners' Association to H. Wilson Fox: January 9, 1903. (The wages designed for Indian labourers were as follows: Surface... 15/- per month; underground... 20/- to 30/- and food... 15/- per month.)

Rhodesian employers exploited the poor and congested state of affairs in India, arguing that their labour importation scheme would, to all appearances, provide India with the chance to solve her economic and demographic problems and for this alleged advantage,<sup>343</sup> they were in no position to offer more concrete concessions in form of attractive labour conditions.

In these proceedings pertaining to the importation of Indian indentured labour into Southern Rhodesia in those few years following the termination of the Anglo-Boer War, the pattern adopted by the Rhodesian employers was apparent. They were evidently more concerned with stabilizing their supply of cheap labour than in introducing any kind of reforms to the prevailing labour conditions in the mining industry itself, which inevitably led to an even larger proportion of the local African labour supply proceeding to the South. In consequence, Indian labour, like the North-East African and Arabian labour schemes before it, was, therefore, to provide the external solution to the employers' demand for a permanent and adequate labour supply; a prospect regarded obviously as quite tantalizing in view of India's massive manpower. But the potential Indian labourer was to act only as a cog in the pattern of labour mobilisation rather than as a catalyst and medium for reform. In this logic, lay, therefore, the roots of conflict between the India Office, Imperial policy towards India and the pro-Indian lobby in Britain, the so-called 'Indophiles',<sup>344</sup> and the Indians in Southern Africa, rapidly become conscious of their rights as British subjects since the arrival of the famous lawyer and philosopher, M. K. Gandhi in 1893.<sup>345</sup>

The demand for labour by Rhodesian employers, in association with their colleagues across the Limpopo, was destined for a head-on collision with some of the fundamental aspects of British imperial policy on India, evident

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<sup>343</sup> C. O. 417/386: Milton to BSACo. August 5, 1903: Vide also File A 11/2/8/8: R/N/A: Salisbury.

<sup>344</sup> The term 'Indophiles' was used rather abusely by frustrated employers of labour: Vide: C. O. 417/382: Memorandum by Provisional Committee ... January 1903.

<sup>345</sup> It must be noted here that though Gandhi moved about advising Indians, especially in Natal and the Transvaal, to organise to look after their own welfare, his main contacts in his early years in South Africa were confined mostly to the merchants and other upper classes rather than the ordinary 'coolie'. Vide: C. F. Andrews (ed.): Mahatma Gandhi: His own Story; G. Allen & Unwin: London: 1929: pp. 95-6, 112-3; and Tinker: op. cit. pp. 283-4.

since the 1870's and championed especially by the Liberal Party. Essentially, this policy embraced some traces of universal justice, tolerance, personal freedom and general Imperial trusteeship by which the people of India were supposed to benefit largely from their British connection, whilst India itself was expected to provide a set-book example in Imperial administration.<sup>346</sup>

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising and obviously predictable that the reactions of both the Government of India at Simla and the India Office in London should have been less encouraging to the Rhodesian employers in their requests for labour from India. The Government of India, which, in fact, had already begun to question the vulnerability of the Colonial Office to the influence of the West Indies 'Sugar lobby' over the emigration of 'coolie' labour since the close of the 1890's,<sup>347</sup> could hardly be expected to view kindly the role of India as a labour reservoir for overseas mining industries.

Thus the question of Indian labour for the mines in Southern Rhodesia was considered not only against this background of growing skepticism in Simla on Indian indentured labour overseas, but also within the whole context of official attitudes and policy in Simla towards the welfare of Indian labourers employed in the mining industries in Southern Africa and elsewhere. As the Secretary to the Government of India, J. O. Miller, observed in July 1903, in the wake of the Rhodesian application, the Government of India had been, from the start of 'coolie' recruitment in Natal in 1860, opposed to supplying labour for mining purposes to Southern Africa, confining its permission to simple agricultural labour.<sup>348</sup> Indeed, as a matter of fact, the Natal miners who had set the example for their Rhodesian counterparts, had merely taken advantage of the grey areas in the contracts of the Indian agricultural labourers which did not totally exclude alternative engagements. Consequently, the Indian 'coolies' were surreptitiously diverted from agricultural to mining

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<sup>346</sup> Bolt: op. cit. pp. 180-1.

<sup>347</sup> Tinker: op. cit. pp. 286-7.

<sup>348</sup> Mss. Eur. F 111/258/File 190: Memorandum by J. O. Miller, Secretary, Government of India re:- Employment of Indenture Indians as miners in South Africa: July 11, 1903: The Curzon Papers, European Manuscripts: India Office Records: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library, Blackfriars: London.



work, albeit at increased rates of pay.<sup>349</sup>

These clandestine activities among Natal employers whereby Indian agricultural labourers were thus expropriated by the coal miners, were, by and large, successfully concealed from officials at Simla, who appear to have been rather surprised by the reports in 1899 during the war, indicating that some Indian labourers had been killed by the Boer commandos at Dundee and other mining centres in Natal. Indeed, even the Protector of Immigrants in Natal was reputed to have been opposed to these transactions, but may not have sufficiently influenced individual employers on the matter, as the traffic increased gradually between 1896 and 1902.<sup>350</sup> In the final analysis, Simla was presented with fait accompli, as far as this diversion of Indian agricultural labour for mining purposes in Natal was concerned. Consequently, when Natal miners made their direct application for Indian mine labour from Bengal at the close of the war in 1902, all that the Government of India could do was to adopt a fatalistic view and hope that the scheme might not after all succeed, but possibly fail like an earlier move to recruit Indian labour for the diamond mines at Kimberley.<sup>351</sup>

If the Natal employers succeeded by 1902 to evade Simla's restrictions on the employment of Indian labour on the mines and, by such means, successfully deflected the official directives on Indian labour policy, with regard to overseas emigration, their kinsmen in Southern Rhodesia were not as fortunate. Rhodesian colonist employers were apparently caught up in the stirrups of a movement within the circles of the Government of India to tighten up all the loopholes, in the India Emigration Act, which allowed the engagement of Indian 'coolies' for mining work overseas. This movement which had

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<sup>349</sup> Indian agricultural 'coolies' diverted to Natal coal mines had their wage rates increased to about 2/- extra per month for surface labourers and 5/- extra for underground work. The normal rate of wages was 20/- per month. Vide: Mss. Eur. F. 11/258/16: Conditions of Coolie service in Natal: Enclosed in Robert W. S. Mitchell, C. M. G.; Natal Government Emigration Agent, to Lord Gurzon: February 7, 1902.

<sup>350</sup> The engagement of Indian 'coolies' for the mines in Natal started with 268 in 1896; 472 in 1897; 854 in 1898; 740 in 1899; 522 in 1900; and 1,200 in 1901: Vide: Mss. Eur. F. 111/258/190: Memorandum by Miller: July 11, 1903.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

gained quite some influence in the corridors of power at Simla by mid-1902, may have been aroused by the growing mortality rate amongst Indian overseas labourers working in the mines and was, therefore, purportedly in favour of some drastic action by the Government on the matter; action tantamount, in some ways for instance, to the suspension of Indian labour recruitment for the miners of Cayenne (French Guyana) and Surinam (Dutch Guyana) in the West Indies in 1899.<sup>352</sup>

But whilst it could be said, in one respect, that Southern Rhodesia's Indian labour scheme was launched at an inauspicious period, attention should also be drawn to the over-zealousness of private companies and individuals to push themselves into the limelight on questions where foreign labour supply was concerned. For a government like that at Simla, which had grown increasingly sensitive on matters involving the welfare of its subjects, the active part taken in the campaign to procure Indian labour by such companies as the Globe and Phoenix, the Rhodesia Exploration and Development Company and their allies aroused the suspicions and subsequent disapproval of several of its functionaries. Its objections to the Rhodesian colonist employers' request for labour, therefore, entailed some of those features hitherto peculiar to the Rhodesian politico-economic system, notably the inordinate influence wielded by international capital in both the internal and external affairs of the country.

With due concern, Simla questioned the bona fides of a labour scheme in a country where the implementation of relevant sections of Indian labour legislation, symbolized by the Emigration Act, was in the hands of private companies and contractors and was, obviously, liable to influence by partisan interests and, therefore, concluded that these were not the proper people to trust. In the event, even the Rhodesian legislative mechanism, the Immigration Ordinance of 1901, adopted for the purpose of governing the working lives of foreign labourers in Southern Rhodesia, did not meet with the requirements of Simla as adequate machinery under which to entrust the welfare of its Indian subjects.<sup>353</sup> Such conflict as emerged in the attitudes of the two governments towards the treatment of labourers is more explicable in the light

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<sup>352</sup> Mss. Eur. F 111/258/16: Minutes by Sir Denzil Ibbetson: April 2, 1902 and R. E. V. Arbuthnot: July 21, 1902.

<sup>353</sup> Mss. Eur. F. 111/258/110: Minute by Miller: December 15, 1902.

of Hole's somewhat hostile reaction to the India Emigration Act and its application to Aden in 1901.<sup>354</sup> Hole's conclusion, on this earlier occasion, that the Act was impossible to work under was the exact anti-thesis of the official attitude at Simla towards the Rhodesian application for Indian labour in 1903. The feeling that the anti-Indian lobby in Southern Rhodesia as in Natal was bound to influence the restrictive conditions under which Indian labourers were to live compelled some quarters in Simla to conclude that only two courses of action were possible, in the circumstances; namely, more positive demands for the implementation of the 'health and safety' clauses of the India Emigration Act or the refusal to consider Southern Rhodesia's application for Indian labour.<sup>355</sup>

In a nutshell, the odds against establishing a successful indenture labour supply scheme in India for Southern Rhodesia were too great. The labour supply, in this instance, appeared to be somehow dependent on the orders and whims of interested private companies in the destination territory and, from the Government of India's point of view, was not likely to develop into a large-scale and systematic institution, similar, in some respects, to Indian 'coolie' emigration to other overseas possessions, which, by the virtue of its volume and the constant and unrestricted movement of labourers to and from the areas of employment, in this manner, provided potential emigrants with sufficient knowledge on the labour conditions obtaining thither. Through this type of unrestricted movement backwards and forwards, it was believed that Indian labourers were well provided with an automatic safeguard against poor conditions and ill-treatment in those territories where they were bound to work, since potential labour supply naturally switched itself off should bad reports on the labour market filter back to India through the industrial grapevine.<sup>356</sup> The system had obviously worked well with regards to the perfection of legislation governing the conditions of Indian indentured labourers in Natal since the 1870's.<sup>357</sup>

Indeed the state of affairs, even in India itself, did not augur well from the start, as far as the application for Indian labour by Southern Rhodesia was

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<sup>354</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 223-4.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid: Minute by Arbuthnot, January 24, 1903.

<sup>356</sup> C. O. 417/372: Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Calcutta to Milner: March 21, 1903.

<sup>357</sup> Vide: Huttenback: op. cit. pp. 8-11.

concerned. The combination of private contractors and hostile public colonist sentiment did not seem to match well with the desires of the Rhodesian employers, at least from Simla's point of view, and were further complicated by the general reluctance of Indian labourers at home to work underground, which, in some cases, had led to labour shortages in the Indian mines notwithstanding the vast manpower available. In the case of Rhodesian employers, the anxieties of the Indian Government officials were aroused by what they considered the inadequate legislation to guarantee the safety of labourers working underground and in neighbourhood of shafts and machinery, not to mention Simla's opposition to the compound system by which labourers, as in the case of Africans, were confined to those enclosed quarters, with the result that 'they (could not) leave without permission.'<sup>358</sup> The prospects of Indian labourers being subjected to this system of labour control and their inevitable exposure to all forms of disabilities on the mines in Southern Rhodesia without 'fair remuneration for the more disagreeable & more dangerous nature of employment...',<sup>359</sup> were not quite flattering even to the more sympathetic officials in Simla.

In the final analysis, the Government of India could only follow the advice of one of its officials, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, that the Rhodesian demand for Indian labour merited negative response on the same lines as the fatal blow which had brought down the meticulous arrangements of the German Administration in Tanganyika in their anticipation to avail themselves of indentured Indian labour in 1902.<sup>360</sup> For Southern Rhodesia, this blow by the Indian Government was equally shattering and, in its entirety, reflected not only the growing resentment in Simla on the indifferent treatment meted onto Indian labourers overseas, but also, in a more general way, manifested some of the

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<sup>358</sup> C. O. 417/372: Lord Curzon to Milner: March 21, 1903: For an excellent discussion on the compound system in Southern Rhodesia: Vide: van Onselen: Chibaro: chapter 5.

<sup>359</sup> Mss. Eur. F 111/258/190: Minute by W. Lawrence to Miller: July 13, 1903.

<sup>360</sup> The German plans to import Indian labour followed in the wake of the Agha Khan's friendly visit to Berlin in the 1890's whereupon negotiations were entered into and finalized by 1902. For Tanganyika the arrangements to receive Indian labour at specified depots like Dar-es-Salaam, Bagamoyo, Tanga, Pangani, Khiva and Lindi were a climax of this understanding which however failed to materialize: Vide: Mss. Eur. F 111/258/110: Minutes by Sir Denzil Ibbetson: February 3 and 13, 1903.

fundamental aspects of traditional European Orientalism and British imperial policy towards India and the Indian subjects.

Presented in form of a memorial to the India Office in March 1902, these objections to Indian labour recruiting for Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere in Africa read as follows:

The pioneers of colonial enterprise are naturally and necessarily masterful men - not very squeamish or tender hearted. It is probable that for the control of Africans sterner measures than are needed for Indians are absolutely necessary; and there is always the risk that the distinction between the two races may not be recognized when both are labouring side by side, and that the similarity of colour may be held to justify similarity of treatment, and may obscure the fact that the native Indian and the native African stand on entirely different levels. In an undeveloped and unsettled colony, with a small and scattered European population, the Administration of government is not always sufficiently organized to ensure the full observance of the law; and admirable provisions may be made on paper for the protection of immigrants but the machinery and the opportunity for enforcing them may be lacking.<sup>361</sup>

In this summary of the objections of the Indian government and the shortcomings of the Administration of Southern Rhodesia, Simla made its position quite clear in connection with Indian labour supply to the latter and not even the Colonia Office could sway it from this decision to have nothing to do with the scheme.<sup>362</sup> In the circumstances, the Rhodesian plans to import this source of labour, like those of the Germans in Tanganyika, faced a natural death.

From a wider perspective, the failure of Southern Rhodesia's Indian labour importation scheme was perhaps inevitable and obvious. Evidently, Rhodesian colonist employers had bitten off more than they could chew. The strength of a parallel movement to better the conditions of the Indian community in Southern Africa, especially in the Transvaal and Natal, between 1902 and 1904, was too strong for peripheral mining companies like the so-called 'few

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<sup>361</sup> C. O. 417/372: Petition of Lord Curzon; A. P. Palmer; T. Raleigh; E. F. G. Law; E. P. Elles; A. T. Arundel and Denzil Ibbetson (members of the Indian Government) to Lord Hamilton, India Office: March 27, 1902. Vide: also for the same document: File Mss. Eur. F. 111/258/110: Curzon Papers, India Office Records, London.

<sup>362</sup> C. O. 417/372: Minutes by Graham: June 16, 1903 and Ommanney: June 17, 1903.

obdurate speculators', to borrow Moore's succinct phrase, in Southern Rhodesia, to exert any meaningful pressure to thwart the momentum of this campaign so efficiently monitored by the pro-Indian lobby in London and the Government of India at Simla. Even Lord Milner and the British government were themselves overwhelmed in the struggle for paramountcy, which followed the Anglo-Boer War, between colonial and international capitalism, on the one hand, as opposed to the fundamental political doctrines of British imperialism, on the other.

This conflict of interests in the event was quite an interesting watershed, reflecting, in the first place, orthodox imperialism, represented here perhaps by Rhodes, Chamberlain, Milner and their associates, who viewed the British imperial movement in terms of a series of exclusive white communities spread all over the world and into which Indians and other non-Europeans could only be admitted either as inferior workers or temporary sojourners, whose movements were geared to the interests of colonial and metropolitan capitalism. The new school of thought, represented by the colonial Government of India, symbolized a more liberal approach and, for them, the concept of British citizenship and freedom of movement for the empire's subjects mattered much more than the whims of interested financial groups.

In the case of Indian indentured labour for Southern Africa, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, was hardly impressed, for example, by the argument pursued by Milner and the Imperial government that the need for 20,000 Indian labourers, for railway work and reconstruction purposes in South Africa, was a lynch-pin without which 'the whole situation in South Africa will be seriously affected' in terms of peace, industrialization, British immigration and the grant of self-government to the Boer republics.<sup>363</sup> The gulf between Curzon and Milner and their respective supporters was certainly too great on the issue of Indian labour and the amelioration of the labourers' conditions and treatment in Southern Africa. From all appearances, the Government of India was quite prepared to slog the matter out with the Milner camp and, as Curzon indicated, Simla's case was too apparent:

We are told that public opinion in South Africa is the final arbiter before we must all bow. Why should not public

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<sup>363</sup> Mss. Eur. F 111/258/190: Lord Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, to Lord Curzon: October 29, 1903.

opinion in India be allowed some little weight? It seems to me much more important to conciliate the unanimous sentiment of 300,000,000 of our subjects in Asia than to defer to the prejudices of a small colony of white men in South Africa, the more so as it is we who are asked to confer the favour, not them... Our coolie labour is the one consideration which we have to offer in exchange of treatment which will never be conceded on unselfish grounds. Why should we throw away our solitary pawn?<sup>364</sup>

In between this inter-governmental conflict on Asiatic labour, the problematic nature of the Indian labour scheme for post-1902 Southern Africa was further underlined by the struggle between Sir M. M. Bhownagree,<sup>365</sup> one of the two Indian members of the House of Commons and Sir Arthur Lawley,<sup>366</sup> the Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal; the former as the champion of the pro-Indian lobby and the latter in favour of the anti-Asiatic white settlers. This tug and tussle for either the removal or reinforcement of restrictive commercial and residential segregation; Indian political and civil disabilities and many other issues of racial character, only emphasized the incompatibility between the political philosophy of the Government of India and the interests of colonial and metropolitan capitalism, supported by an ingrained racial ideology serving as a protective membrane for the dominant groups in this colonial setting. In the end, having failed to influence either camp of combatants, even the Imperial Government could not proceed with its own Indian labour plans.<sup>367</sup>

The failure of the Indian labour importation plans in both Southern Rhodesia and the Transvaal was a result of one common factor; the decisive influence of the Indian Government at Simla and its role in attempting to strike a favourable balance between a dominant racial ideology and the concrete economic facts insofar as they affected Indian subjects within a specific geographical and political sphere of the British empire, notwithstanding in this case, the weight of private companies in Southern Rhodesia, the Randlords or

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid: Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton: May 23, 1904.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid: M. M. Bhownagree to Lyttleton: December 21, 1903. Sir Bhow-nagree and D. Naoroji, were the two Indian MPs in the House of Commons by 1903. Vide: Huttenback: op. cit., pp. 169-70.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid: Lawley to Milner: April 13, 1904.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid: Meeting between the C. O. and India Office re: Indians in the Transvaal: June 29, 1904.

the Crown Administration under Lord Milner in the Transvaal, which exercised some considerable influence, in the process. But this does not, however, signify any marked impotence amongst these employers to wield their power to their advantage in the absence of somewhat stubborn political authorities and resilient political principles. The deployment of such political and economic power as they possessed by private employers to precipitate the importation of the next group of Asiatic labourers - the Chinese - between 1903 and 1904, was the next move adopted in both Southern Rhodesia and at the Rand to compensate for the fiasco which indeed Indian labour importation had indeed become.

Of course, the question of Chinese labour was not new either in Southern Rhodesia or the Transvaal by 1903. In Southern Rhodesia, offers to introduce into the country these Oriental labourers had been made at the close of the nineteenth century, but were somehow delayed by several collateral foreign labour schemes. The Harvey brothers, for instance, had offered their services in this regard as early as 1898 after similar moves to the Rand in 1897 had met with Boer hostility and foundered.<sup>368</sup> Arguing that the Chinese labourers would supplement the Fingo pilot scheme then in its first stages at the time,<sup>369</sup> the Harvey Brothers appeared more convincing than their counterparts, the Bowden Brothers of Yokohama, who specialized in supplying Japanese labour for overseas services.<sup>370</sup>

The Chinese labour scheme may have indeed strongly tempted employers in Southern Rhodesia to argue for more positive action on the matter. Its attractions to these employers, desperately scratching every part of the African and Asian continents for cheap and stable labour supply, were apparently decisive insofar as any concrete solutions to the so-called 'labour problem' were concerned. The advantages of the Chinese labourer, as the commercially interested private purveyors of foreign labour supply to employers in distant parts had it, were manifold. Among their fellow Orientals, the Indians and the Japanese, the Chinese labourers were, as the patriotic Harvey

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<sup>368</sup> A 11/2/8/5: W. J. Harvey to L. C. Phillips for the Globe & Phoenix Gold Mining Co., Ltd: October 13, 1899.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid: Lawley, Bulawayo to Milton, Salisbury: Private and Confidential: March 22, 1900.

<sup>370</sup> For the offer of Japanese labour by Bowden Brothers and Co. Ltd., Yokohama, in 1902: Vide: Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Report 1903: pp. 52-3.



Brothers put it:

...like the Scotch or Swiss -(and)- will work regardless of fixed time if they see a prospect of making an extra profit.<sup>371</sup>

Compared with the African labourer, the Chinese was of immense value to the employers of labour. Indeed, this Oriental 'Scotsman' came out quite favourably in juxtaposition to his potential African rival, who, according to the 'target worker' myth popularly adopted by employers on the African continent to justify the utilization of cheap labour,<sup>372</sup> was largely discredited on such occasions when the economic situation so demanded.<sup>373</sup> Thus to strengthen their financial stake in the Chinese labour scheme so vehemently opposed in some quarters of the white communities throughout Southern Africa, the Harvey Brothers undermined the rationale for the deployment of African labour, in the first place, by employers stating that:

When a native has accumulated say £50 which he can easily do at the present high rate of wages - say in three years - he returns to his kraal, buys three or four wives, and lapses into his old life and idle habits.<sup>374</sup>

Given this 'uselessness' of the African labourer, the proximity of Indian and the related difficulties of repatriating British Indian subjects as well as the expenses involved in importing Japanese labourers from their more distant part of the world, the pliers in Chinese labour carefully prepared their ground for what seemed a promising trade in Southern Africa.

However, not even these purported advantages would subdue the anti-Chinese sentiment within the secondary colonist segment as we have seen already,<sup>375</sup> and, along with several intervening foreign labour schemes, Chinese labour importation could only wait for the end of the Anglo-Boer war to surface once more. The requests of the Rhodesian colonist employers on

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid: Harvey to Phillips: October 13, 1899.

<sup>372</sup> For the 'target worker' myth on African labour in Southern Rhodesia: Vide: Harris: 'Ten Popular Myths Concerning the Employment of Labour in Rhodesia': pp. 40-1; and van Onselen: 'Black Workers in Central African Industry': pp. 237-9.

<sup>373</sup> For some tactics used by employers of African labour to ascribe different labour values to their workers according to particular economic situations: Vide: Cairns: op. cit., passim.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid: Harvey to H. Wilson Fox: Private and Confidential: January 19, 1900.

<sup>375</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 265-72.

the matter, especially after the failure of the Indian labour scheme in 1902-3, indicate that these employers of labour were certainly quite convinced that the Chinese labour question would pull through. Armed with an arsenal of facts and figures on the alleged inherent inadequacies of local African labour; the poor physical conditions of trans-Zambesian recruits; competition with the Rand over labour from Mozambique, not to mention the hostility of Portuguese authorities towards Rhodesian employers; the conclusions of the majority report of the Transvaal Labour Commission on the inadequacy of the African adult male population to meet the labour needs of the mining industries and also the risk of the closure of such mines as the Geelong, the Globe & Phoenix,<sup>376</sup> and the 'Red and White Rose';<sup>377</sup> the Rhodesian employers and financiers, represented by the London-based Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association, a mouth-piece for 61,000 shareholders and representing a working capital of £8,000,000 invested in Southern Rhodesia, strove vigorously to convince the Colonial Office and other authorities concerned about the earnestness of their cause for Chinese labour importation.

On the strength of various pretexts, which in every sense resembled extract pages from a Doomsday notebook, the Southern Rhodesian employers and financiers emphasized that:

Unless the full number -(of labourers)- required can be constantly maintained the rate of extraction -(of gold)- will invariably exceed the rate of advance development and sooner or later production must cease. With intermittent working, restriction due to the burden of irreducible fixed charges, it is impossible... to secure any return on the large capital required to open and equip a quartz reef mine.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> The Hyatt brothers, labour agents in the Ndanga district during the Anglo-Boer War, observed that the Geelong and the Globe & Phoenix mines refused to have anything to do with local African labour except Shangaans from PEA. Indeed, two weeks before the closure of the Geelong mine in the Umzingwane district, this mine returned the labour recruits with a 'plethoric' note that the mine had 'more boys than it needed.' But when it was closed down two weeks later, labour shortage was given in the press as the cause of closure. Vide: Hyatt: op. cit. pp. 139-40.

<sup>377</sup> For the appalling labour conditions and the high accident rates at the 'Red and White Rose' mine: Vide: N B 1/1/10: H. A. Elliott, Assistant N/C Umlugulu to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 22, 1900 and Archie A. Campbell, N/C Insiza to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 1, 1900.

<sup>378</sup> C. O. 417/387: Memorandum by the Council of the Rhodesian Land and Mine Owners' Association on Labour for Rhodesia, to C. O. : November 25, 1903.

The commitment and conviction of these Rhodesian colonist employers and financiers in the justice of the Chinese importation scheme was so strong that they were even outrightly scornful of the anti-Chinese opposition which they desired to be ignored. Accordingly, Milton the Administrator informed the London Board in November 1903 that the anti-Chinese lobby in Southern Rhodesia

... may be entirely disregarded as uninstructed and of no force.<sup>379</sup>

The dichotomy within the BSACo. directorate and the white colonist population however, was too great for the ambitious plans of the Rhodesian financiers and employers to come to fruition. The Colonial Office, at least, could not allow this Chinese labour scheme with its divisive tendencies to go ahead. As it was rumoured at the time, only Lord Grey amongst the BSACo. Directors had come out in favour of the Chinese labour scheme.<sup>380</sup> Rhodes was anxious to carry the wishes of the white population in Southern Rhodesia before he died in 1902 and had, therefore toyed, with the idea of a unanimous agreement within the leadership of the Rhodesian mining industry and public endorsement of the scheme by the elective element within the Legislative Council,<sup>381</sup> whilst Jameson and Sir Lewis Michell in the Cape were torn between hostile white public opinion and the financial backing of the pro-Chinese Rand mining magnates to the Progressive Party in the pending elections of 1904.<sup>382</sup> In the Southern Rhodesian elections towards the end of 1903, the views of the white electorate were indeed emphatically opposed to Chinese labour. Out of the four elected members of the Legislative Council, three came from the anti-Chinese lobby and represented the views of the traders, farmers and white workers on the matter.<sup>383</sup> Even more damaging for the Southern Rhodesian pro-Chinese employers and financiers, were rumours circulated privately

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<sup>379</sup> A 11/2/8/6: Minute on the Importation of Labour from China by Milton to H. Wilson Fox, Confidential: November 19, 1903.

<sup>380</sup> A 11/2/8/7: Just to H. Wilson Fox: December 4, 1904.

<sup>381</sup> A 11/2/8/5: Rhodes, Umtali, to Milton, Salisbury: Telegram: July 17, 1900.

<sup>382</sup> A 11/2/8/7: 'Cape Times': December 12, 1903: Vide, also: Naylor: Yellow Labour: pp. 28-9.

<sup>383</sup> Three of the elected members against Chinese labour were Wylie, Meikle and Col. Napier. The fourth, Haddon, promised to support the Chinese labour scheme 'if necessary': Vide: A 11/2/8/6: Col. Heyman to Milton:

that the Chinese labour campaign was a subterfuge movement, designed by the mining companies, primarily, to increase the value of their mining shares on the London stock market and attract capital into the country.<sup>384</sup>

The failure of the Chinese labour scheme in Southern Rhodesia, therefore, was, in the circumstances, a result largely of those weaknesses endemic to the Rhodesian politico-economic system. The mining companies were misrepresenting the facts to their own advantage, but, in so doing, were evidently digging the grave for their Chinese labour designs. Consequently, whilst the Rand was allowed by the Tory government in Britain to send its envoys to Peking to lay down the foundation for Chinese labour supply to the Rand mines in December 1903<sup>385</sup> and for a subsequent diplomatic understanding between London and Peking, which put a seal to the Chinese labour scheme for the Rand in May 1904,<sup>386</sup> the Southern Rhodesian employers could only press the London Board of the BSACo. and the Imperial Authorities in vain.

### iii: Conclusion

The various schemes the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers adopted, between 1898 and 1904, to augment their labour supplies, through the introduction of external labour groups from North-East Africa, the Arabia peninsula, India and China, failed dismally. The reasons for this failure are legion. In the first place, the main purpose for introducing external contract labour in a colonial frontier situation, as we have indicated before, was prompted not only by overt designs to meet the necessary labour demands, but also by

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November 10, 1903.

<sup>384</sup> C. O. 417/374: Minute by Just: January 13, 1904.

<sup>385</sup> Vide: Speech by Sir George Farrar, DSO on the Motion for the introduction of the Labour Importation Ordinance in the Legislative Council of the Transvaal Colony: December 28, 1903: Transvaal Leader Office: Johannesburg: 1904: passim.

<sup>386</sup> A 11/2/8/6: Convention between the United Kingdom and China respecting the Employment of Chinese labour in British Colonies and Protectorates, Cmd, 1956: May 13, 1904. The ratification of the Sino-British agreement mentioned above was followed by the formation in July 1904 of a recruiting organisation known as the Chamber of Mines Labour Importation Agency (CMLIA) amongst the Rand employers to handle Chinese labour specifically. Vide: P. Richardson: 'The Recruiting of Chinese Indentured Labour for the South African Gold Mines, 1903-1908': Journal of African History: Vol. XVIII: No. 1: 1977: pp. 86, 93-9.

covert ones to readjust the labour control situation in favour of the employers through reinforcing the dominance of the latter over foreign labour in a strange environment. Alien labour was by nature more vulnerable to social and economic pressures than their local counterparts.<sup>387</sup> In the case of Abyssinians, Arabs and Somalis, even this mechanism of mobilising and controlling cheap labour would not work in Southern Rhodesia, coming as they did from areas which did not have equivalent hierarchical colonial societies. The Abyssinians from an independent African state and the Arabs recruited from Lahej and those areas outside the Aden Settlement had, of course, little reason to acquiesce in the situation prescribed by employment conditions in Southern Rhodesia's racially stratified colonial society. The resistance of these Abyssinian, Somali and Arab labourers to be treated in the same manner as the local African labourers who had suffered 'the traumatic effects of colonialism', to borrow van Onselen's phrase,<sup>388</sup> was, therefore, in a large measure, a rebuke to both the mechanics of labour extraction and restrictive labour conditions obtaining in Southern Rhodesia between 1898 and 1904.

In essence, the indentured labourers brought down from the horn of Africa and the adjacent Arabian peninsula exposed the drawbacks of the system of labour mobilisation and utilization as well as the poor conditions under which the labourers subsequently worked within the framework of a restrictive colonial economy such as that of Southern Rhodesia was. The recurrent grievances of these foreign labourers on the conditions of service, food and accommodation at those particular mining properties whither they had been sent, in a nutshell, reflected also the chronic plight of their local African colleagues whose bargaining power, unlike that of these foreign labourers, was further weakened by the limitations prescribed under the Masters and Servants legislation. Indeed in the final analysis, the North-East Africans and their fellow recruits from Aden found themselves confronted by a situation in Southern Rhodesia whereby colonist employers, with the support of the Company Administration, very often relied on regular exercise of raw coercive measures to vitiate the bargaining position and rights of non-white workers. It was, therefore, in their attempts to resist such a state of affairs, obviously out of tune with conditions and experiences in their own part of the world, that

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<sup>387</sup> Vide: *Infra*: Chapter 5.

<sup>388</sup> Van Onselen: Chibaro: p. 83.

the Abyssinians, Arabs and Somalis ultimately clashed with their patrons; the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia. The net result was evident as, in the process, these indentured labourers consequently incurred the abject odium of their colonist employers with the predictable outcome that all further plans to procure labour from North-East Africa and Aden inevitably came to a halt.<sup>389</sup>

As far as Indian indentured labour for Southern Rhodesia was concerned, the designs of the territory's colonist employers to promote their own sectional interests, much in the same way as the Natal sugar planters along the coast had been able to successfully ignore and over-ride the anti-Indian sentiment of their colleagues, the up-country farmers and other colonists in the 1860's, unwittingly exposed the unfavourable conditions under which Indian labourers were also likely to be subjected, in an effort by the Rhodesian mining industry to strike a compromise with its more fervent opponents. For the Government of India, faced as it was by the increasing political consciousness amongst the indigenous people at home;<sup>390</sup> a strong pro-Indian movement abroad as well as the fundamental demands of a more credible Imperial policy on British trusteeship and Indian rights as British subjects in India and elsewhere in the empire, the application for Indian labour to meet the needs of private interests in Southern Rhodesia under peculiarly restrictive conditions was, indeed, out of the question. The chasm between the Indian government of the early twentieth century, on the one hand, and Southern Rhodesia's colonial society which required Indian labour, on the other, but was, at the same time, none too repentant on the imposition of civil and commercial disabilities against the Indian community already in the country, as the Dealers' Licence Ordinance of 1901 signified,<sup>391</sup> was clearly unbridgeable.

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid: pp. 82-3.

<sup>390</sup> Lord Curzon was particularly more concerned about satisfying indigenous Indian opinion and press on the better treatment of their brethren in Southern Africa than with satisfying the demands of the mining interests of the region. Vide: Mss. Eur. F 111/258/190: Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton: Telegram: January 2, 1904.

<sup>391</sup> Under this 1901 legislation inspired by the various Chambers of Commerce, Indian traders had no legal or administrative guarantees against systematic deprivation of trading licences by Town Councils. Vide: C. O. 417/399: Lyttleton to Lawley: Confidential: December 1903 and H. Betram Cox to BSA Co.: May 14, 1904.

In the circumstances, any success on the part of the Indian labour scheme for Southern Rhodesia would have been a miracle, more so that Simla did not take kindly to the general run of the anti-Asiatic legislation in Southern Africa as a whole. Indeed as Andrew Cohen, the Counsel for the Government of India, observed on this kind of legislation, it was considered '... a step backward in the advance of civilization...', especially that Simla interpreted the objective of this anti-Asiatic legislation as ostensibly designed:

... to create a special class of persons, deprived of all elementary rights of citizenship, segregated from the rest of their kind, and unable in any way to improve their lot.<sup>392</sup>

In the light of these divergent postures, the decision of the Government of India not to extend labour recruiting facilities to Southern Rhodesia or even the Transvaal after 1902, was thus decisive and unequivocal, serving to redefine once more the principles set out by the architects of British imperial policy towards India at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Chinese labour question was a different species altogether. The fact that it failed to materialize in Southern Rhodesia whilst in the Transvaal it met with some degree of success has little to do with the pros and cons of the closed compound system and its efficacy and applicability to the mining industries of the two countries, as some scholars would have us imagine.<sup>393</sup> Rather the success or failure of the Chinese labour scheme was, more than anything else, determined by the weight of the economic arguments and the amount of leverage these two mining industries were able to exercise on the centres of power in London and Southern Africa.

The Chinese labour importation movement did not, as a matter of fact, mean the same thing to either the Rhodesian mining industry or the Rand. Whilst the Rhodesian pro-Chinese labour movement was patronized mainly by the mining houses to secretly enhance their mining shares on the stock market, the Rand Chinese labour movement, in the post-war years of reconstruction,

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<sup>392</sup> C. O. 879/92: Andrew Cohen, K. C., Counsel for the Government of India: Quoted in Memorandum on Chinese Labour in the Transvaal by Major Seely: February 1901. For a milder view of the India Office on this subject, Vide: A 11/2/8/8: Horace Walpole to C. O.: January 20, 1904.

<sup>393</sup> For the compound system as the cause of the failure of Chinese labour importation into Southern Rhodesia, Vide: J. M. Mackenzie: 'Colonial Labour Policy and Rhodesia': The Rhodesian Journal of Economics: Vol. 8, No. 1: March, 1974: pp. 7-8.

had wider economic and political implications. For example, whilst it might be argued that the Rand mining magnates overtly exercised a dominant influence on the Crown Colony Administration of the Transvaal immediately after the war,<sup>394</sup> vested economic interests associated with the British Treasury under the Tory government should not, however, be ignored here. As the Milner clique in the Transvaal pointed out, the damage sustained by British economic interests on the Rand due to the Anglo-Boer war was obviously global. In statistical terms, it was estimated that out of total capital investments on the Rand, amounting to nearly £200,000,000 by December 1902, British finance houses stood to lose about 25 per cent of their capital, due to the 1903 economic depression caused by labour shortage, depreciation in the market value of the mining shares and the drought and red-water disease conditions. In addition, it was also feared that the British taxpayer was likely to lose as much as £20,000,000 in war loans to Mining Houses in the Transvaal. Thus in the circumstances, the Milner school of thought argued that the question of Asiatic or Chinese labour was one synonymous to a conflict between 'morality' and 'bankruptcy'.<sup>395</sup>

On the local scene in the Transvaal itself, the gold mining industry after the Anglo-Boer war, was indeed in a parlous state. Even before the war, profit accumulation by the Rand capitalists had been dependent on a plethora of contingent factors. These variables, which were geological and economic in kind, included, among other things, the low-grade character of the Rand gold ore; the fixed and stationary price of gold dependent, more or less, on overseas pundits rather than local market factors and finally, the inflationary trends of development and overhead costs which deep-level gold mining at the

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<sup>394</sup> The influence of the 'Randlords' was also enhanced by the rumours on their consent to pay what was called the 'War tribute' to the Imperial government amounting to £30,000,000 to meet war debts and expenses. Vide: C. O. 879/82: Memorandum on the Proposal to Import Asiatic, more particularly Chinese Labour for the Transvaal Mines, by H. W. Just: Confidential: November 1903; and also, Denoon: "'Capitalist Influence' and the Transvaal Government during the Crown Colony Period, 1900-1906': pp. 313-4.

<sup>395</sup> C. O. 879/84: Memorandum on Asiatic Labour for the Transvaal, by G. V. Fiddes: November 9, 1903.



Rand entailed,<sup>396</sup> With the post-war crisis and general dislocation it entailed, the position of the gold mining industry at the Rand did not at all change for the better. Instead, the industry was further plagued by falling levels of gold production either within the industry as a whole or on the basis of individual companies.<sup>397</sup> Yet, at the same time, costs in labour and mine stores were patently rising; a situation induced as much by the diminution of the size of the cheaper African labour force and the corresponding increase in the ratio of the more expensive white manpower as it was precipitated by the decline in the price of gold in relation to other commodities.<sup>398</sup>

It was due to these factors, indicated above, that the Rand employers decided to overhaul the whole cost structure in the gold mining industry by resorting to specific imperatives which made profit accumulation more promising and less elusive. These imperatives included, in the main, minimisation of production costs and maximisation of gold output. In terms of cost minimisation, labour costs easily became the readiest area in which to achieve this desired goal, especially by maximising the supply of ultra-cheap non-white labour.<sup>399</sup> Indeed, it was in regard to this objective that Chinese labour for the Rand mines became a significant factor in enabling the mining industry 'to break wage inflation, restore and maximize output by the most efficient deployment of labour, and thereby reduce working costs in order to restore the level of profitability and encourage capital back into the (gold mining) industry.'<sup>400</sup> Moreover, Chinese labour was considered not only capable of providing an infinite supply to the labour-hungry Rand employers, but was also favourably viewed as 'sufficiently cheap and docile', whilst, at the same time, it had 'the additional advantage of further fragmenting and dividing the working class in its struggle for higher wages.'<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Vide: F. A. Johnstone: Class, Race and Gold: A Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa: Routledge & Kegan Paul: London: 1976: pp. 17-9.

<sup>397</sup> In 1898 gold production at the Rand totalled about 4, 295, 608 ounces but in 1902 this amounted to 1, 690, 101 ounces only. Vide: Richardson: 'The Recruiting of Chinese Indentured Labour for the South African Gold Mines, 1903-1908': p. 87.

<sup>398</sup> Richardson: loc. cit.

<sup>399</sup> Johnstone: Class, Race and Gold: pp. 19-20.

<sup>400</sup> Richardson: op. cit. p. 88.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid: p. 90.

Although Imperial authorities were quite aware of the racial complications the Asiatic labour solution posed in Southern Africa, economic factors, especially in the Transvaal, appear to have shaped the outcome of their decisions on the matter. Thus whilst the Colonial Office was not prepared to allow any undue disregard of white public opinion on the Asiatic labour issue in Southern Rhodesia, as then expressed by the four elected members of the Legislative Council and ipso facto by the colonist electorate in that country, with the result that Number 12 Downing Street would, therefore, not intervene in favour of the mining companies, in the Transvaal, the case was quite different. The Imperial officials were anxious that such expression of white public opinion in the former Boer republic might serve as a vehicle for Boer resentment against British military victory and political control, consequently ruining the chances for the recovery of the gold mining industry. Indeed, in the Cape where such anti-Chinese sentiment was clearly dominant, the Afrikaner Bond was suspected of fomenting the movement to undermine British economic interests.

In simple terms, once the Chinese labour question in the Transvaal was defined in terms of 'British interests and the British race' vis-a-vis the Boers, as Sir George Fiddes, Milner's secretary in that recently acquired Crown Colony did,<sup>402</sup> the chances of success for the British-dominated Rand Chinese labour movement were much more enhanced than those of the free-booting mining companies and individuals in Southern Rhodesia. The argument on the compound system and how far tenable it was, could definitely not impress any Imperial officials as far as Chinese labour for Southern Rhodesia was concerned; not even for a mining centre like the Wankie Colliery on the fringes of the territory and far away from areas of white colonist settlement as well as African habitation.<sup>403</sup> Moreover, it is doubtful whether Southern Rhodesian colonist employers would have been able to bear the cost of importing Chinese labour in the way the Randlords were able to do.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>402</sup>C. O. 879/84: Memorandum on Asiatic Labour... by Fiddes: November 9, 1903: (For similar sentiments amongst the 'Randlords' and the Progressive Party on Chinese labour: Vide: B. K. Long: Drummond Chaplin: His Life and Times in Africa: Oxford University Press: London: 1941: passim.)

<sup>403</sup>C. O. 417/401: D. E. Brodie, Ass. Secretary, BSACo. to C. O.: September 1, 1904.

<sup>404</sup>It is estimated that the overall cost of importing Chinese labourers amounted to about £32 10/- 0d per recruit. Vide: Richardson: op. cit. p. 93.

In the final analysis, the Asiatic labour question was only another form of exploiting ultra-cheap non-white labour by the colonist employers in Southern Africa and, at the same time, consolidating the class structure in the region by reinforcing the economic position of these white employers who enjoyed the rights of private and exclusive ownership of the means of production at the expense of the non-whites who were destined to remain mere workers on the property of these employers and owners. But Asiatic labour for Southern Rhodesia, either in terms of Chinese, Indians, Japanese, Javanese or Kanakas, as some of the bizarre importation schemes put forward indicated, failed dismally. Perhaps this failure may have given the anti-Asiatic lobby in the country, a chance to consolidate its position over the years, as the exclusion of Asiatic immigrants into the country subsequently became the primary concern of the BSACo. Administration's immigration policy after 1904. By 1908 for instance, all forms of Asiatic immigration were heavily circumscribed in Southern Rhodesia,<sup>405</sup> with the result that even the more bona-fide forms of entry into the country like the application of the Indian 'dobbies' in the laundry business in Salisbury in 1912 to have their kinsmen join them from the Indian sub-continent in order to reinforce their establishments, could hardly succeed.<sup>406</sup> Similarly, the web of restrictions surrounding the application of the Union Miniere Haut Katanga for the passage of its consignment of Chinese labour from Beira via Salisbury, Bulawayo and Broken Hill to Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo in 1913,<sup>407</sup> underscores once more the residue of the anti-Asiatic sentiment of the earlier period, which had such marked influence on the country's policies, once the intervention of the Imperial authorities in Rhodesian affairs had proved effective.

In conclusion, it must be re-emphasized that the Abyssinian, Somali and Arab external labour solutions, resorted to by the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers, failed, between 1900 and 1901, because of the inherent

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<sup>405</sup> C. O. 417/452: Milton to Lord Selbourne: October 6, 1905.

<sup>406</sup> C. O. 417/311: Petition of Ranchod Naron et al. to Burns-Begg: Res/Com. : January 29, 1912.

<sup>407</sup> C. O. 417/543: R. M. C. Buxton, Johannesburg, to C. Corner, Acting General Manager: The Beira-Mashonaland and Rhodesia Railways: June 25, 1913.

weaknesses of the Rhodesian labour recruiting mechanisms, whilst these foreign recruits, on their part, defied any attempts by their actual or prospective employers to subdue them to chattel labour conditions and thus consequently managing to upset all the labour schemes relating to that part of the world. With regards to Asiatic labour importation, the sentimental nature of the movement and the depth of divisions of opinion within the various interested sections of the white colonist population as well as the weaker economic arguments of the pro-Chinese lobby in Southern Rhodesia, inadvertently blunted any schemes on this class of foreign labour. The trans-Zambesian external labour solution was, however, the more successful amongst these multifarious devices through which a large foreign presence was introduced into Southern Rhodesia.<sup>408</sup> It is, therefore, the trans-Zambesian and other external solutions from nearby countries that we shall examine in the succeeding chapters of this study.

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<sup>408</sup> Vide: Infra: chapters 5 & 6.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Origin of the Southern Rhodesian Mfengu Community and Other 'Black Settlers' from the South, 1898-1905

#### Introduction:

In the early stages of this study we have examined at length the role played by the African auxiliaries from the South in the process of conquest and "pacification" in the new colony of Southern Rhodesia in various capacities, to wit as military aides, evangelists and general menials to the white forces of both secular and religious colonization. With the end of the initial phases of conquest and "pacification", especially after the 1896/7 risings, the mood of the white colonist society of Southern Rhodesia began to change in the context of their relationship with their former subordinates, whose services were no longer relevant in the military context but in the field of labour, to facilitate the effective exploitation of the resources of the new territory.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, what the former auxiliaries of the pre-1896 era were, therefore, required to do was obviously to readjust the nature and quality of their association with the colonist society and proffer their services as labourers rather than as military men or even mere evangelists, as had hitherto been the case.

In the long run, when these auxiliaries in question had proved either unable or unsatisfactory in re-defining and adjusting their roles to meet the requirements of both the B. S. A. Co Administration and the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, tentative efforts were naturally mounted to introduce into the country, other specious foreign non-white groups to redeem the situation, given, especially, the evident mutual hostility and distrust between the white colonizing group and the indigenous African societies of the territory.<sup>2</sup> In the event, whilst it proved both impossible and impracticable to introduce and sustain a permanent presence of Arab, Asiatic and Abyssinian labouring classes of people in Southern Rhodesia, trans-Zambesian immigration from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, on the other hand, went a long way to meet

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<sup>1</sup> Vide: Supra: Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> Vide: Infra: Chapter 5.

the needs of the colonist society of Southern Rhodesia; a role which was, in more ways than one, largely reinforced by ancillary African groups from below the Limpopo during this period of our study.

ii: The drive to introduce Mfengu and other "Black Settler" Societies from the South by the B. S. A. Co. Administration and its supporters, 1898-1902

The introduction of the "black settler" communities from South Africa into Southern Rhodesia, namely the Mfengu, the Thembu and the Sotho, between 1898 and 1904 is as puzzling as it is bizarre. We have already seen how after 1897, the alliance between the white colonists of early Southern Rhodesia and their black aides from the South had begun to crack asunder as a rift between the two or more groups began to surface and the feelings of mutual antagonism became more evident. In view of these developments, one would have naturally expected an unceremonious closure of all entry into Southern Rhodesia by one African group or another from below the Limpopo, if not for all time at least in the interim. But as events will demonstrate in the course of this chapter, this was however not the case.

Indeed, the ambiguous attitude within the administrative and colonist circles in early Southern Rhodesia towards the pre-1896 "Black Pioneers" from the South, on the one hand, and the later African immigrant groups, the "Black Settlers," on the other, certainly complicates any meaningful analysis in relation to the motivation of the Southern Rhodesian Administration, in particular, on these African immigrant ventures and with regard to one's efforts to outline a general schema on the typology within which to fit in these various related immigrant groups, seemingly subjected to differential treatment. It might, however, be said here that, in a general way, in the post-1896 period, the "Black Settlers" from South Africa were expected, to some extent, to assume in Southern Rhodesia those functions which their predecessors, the "Black Pioneers," had apparently failed to take up, once the Shona and Ndebele risings were over and done with. The agreement between "Matabele" Thompson and the Mfengu in the Cape, the so-called "Fingo Agreement," in April 1898, for instance, sufficiently betrays these designs on the part of Rhodes and the Southern Rhodesian Administration.

In his own way, "Matabele" Thompson was apparently best suited to initiate, implement and impress onto the Mfengu potential migrants in the Cape

the significance of their proposed transfer to Southern Rhodesia not only because of his earlier crucial role in the Rudd Concession and the founding of the colony of Southern Rhodesia,<sup>3</sup> but also because of his experience in African affairs in the Cape and the trust and confidence Rhodes had in him. Thus when Thompson had led a delegation of Mfengu notables to Southern Rhodesia to survey their future place of abode in that country in March 1898, Rhodes had informed Sir Arthur Lawley, the Deputy Administrator (and also Administrator of Matabeleland) that:

He (Thompson) comes with a proposition from here (the Cape) Government will fully support to bring you up at least 1,000 Fingoes with their families who will agree to give you so much labour per annum . . . . He is as you know well acquainted with the native question and has been a successful administrator.

He is a member of the Cape Parliament . . . (and) has been associated with me for twenty years. He is obliging me in undertaking this (Fingo) scheme.

It was, therefore, on the strength of this rapport between the chief actors in the Mfengu immigration scheme from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia that it was from the start expected to succeed.

In essence, Mfengu migration to Southern Rhodesia, in the first half of 1898 as conceived by Thompson and his supporters, was governed by a variety of promises and conditions which the potential migrants were expected to observe.<sup>5</sup> In the first place, the Mfengu gathering at Butterworth in the Transkei was given to understand that three reserves had been chosen, set aside and inspected by the Mfengu delegates to Southern Rhodesia the previous month, and the reserves in question were located at Bembesi, Matopo and Nyamandhlovu, where the immigrants would be settled whilst their reserves were accordingly fenced off free of charge by the B. S. A. Co. Within the confines of these reserves, each Mfengu man of over twenty-five years of age, whether married or single, was entitled to a plot of 10 acres in size for ploughing; a fifty-foot allotment on which to build a house and grazing rights for stock on common land within the fence of the reserve.

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<sup>3</sup> Vide: Supra: Chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> Mss. Afr. S. 227/A: Letter-Book 16: Rhodes to Lawley: March 8, 1898.

<sup>5</sup> This proceeding analysis on the "Fingo Agreement" is based on the following material: C. O. 417/393: "Matabele" Thompson's address to the Mfengu at Butterworth, Transkei, April (?), 1898: Enclosed in Clarke to Milner September 11, 1904 (also contained in File C. O. 417/512, P/R/O, London);

Secondly, to secure one's title to this land, the 'Fingo Agreement' like the Glen Grey Act a few years before it,<sup>6</sup> required each Mfengu land holder to undertake wage labour for at least three (later changed to four) months in the year, in the process of which they were to procure receipts from either the mining companies, the wagon owners, shopkeepers, householders or any other employer indicating that they had carried out their stint. Failure to do this meant, to each Mfengu able-bodied man, a labour tax payment of £3 per year, in addition to the annual hut-tax requirement of 10/- then, generally, levied throughout Southern Rhodesia. On the other hand, any fulfilment of these labour requirements guaranteed to the potential Mfengu landowner not only individual title to his plot during his life-time, but also the fact that after his death the same plot would remain a family possession on a permanent basis, subject to inheritance first by the wife and after her death by the eldest son. Only those Mfengu men who were below 25 years of age and had, therefore, no land allotments of their own and those over 50 (and later 60) years were apparently exempted from what later became popularly known as the 'Fingo Labour Clause'.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, the BSACo. guaranteed to bear the transportation costs of all Mfengu migrants and their property from the Cape to Matabeleland; men, women and children being conveyed between these two points free of charge, whilst the cost on the transportation of stock was liable to repayment to the Company within the first five years of Mfengu settlement in Southern Rhodesia. In 'Matabele' Thompson's own words, 'the charge of the cattle -(remained)- as a mortgage over their -(Mfengu)- plots.'<sup>8</sup> In fact, on this subject of Mfengu transportation to Southern Rhodesia, the railway companies and authorities involved in the process were apparently quite prepared to co-operate with Rhodes and the BSACo. in order to make the whole programme a worthy venture; to successfully re-stock the BSACo. possessions and, in this way, also

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Written Evidence of Colonel Raleigh Grey, January 18, 1905, in South African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. V, Annexure No. 21; p. 39. Vide also Ranger: The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia: pp. 45-6.

<sup>6</sup> Vide: *Infra*: pp. 349-52

<sup>7</sup> The Helese Ginya affair at Bembesi between 1902 and 1905 must surely have accounted for this change from 50 to 60 years. Vide: *Infra*: pp. 365-85.

<sup>8</sup> C.O. 417/393: 'Matabele' Thompson's address to the Mfengu at Butterworth.



redress the harm inflicted by the 1896 rinderpest plague.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, the Cape Government Railway Department was prepared to charge the BSACo. a fairly cheap rate of about 'a farthing per head per mile' for the conveyance of the Mfengu between Queenstown and Vryburg, instead of the normal fare of about 11/- 4d per head for the whole journey. The Bechuanaland Railway Company, responsible for the line between Vryburg and Southern Rhodesia, was, on its part, even prepared to go further and grant concessions on the free transportation of these migrants altogether;<sup>10</sup> a move evidently facilitated by the fact that the BSACo. itself was a large shareholder in this particular railway corporation.

The second group of promises and conditions, spelt out to the Mfengu at Butterworth, dealt with, to a large extent, the organisation and character of settlement in their future abode in Matabeleland as well as the governance of what was later to become the Fingo Location at Bembesi in the Bubi district of that province. Thus in relation to the bureaucratic machinery destined to run the Fingo Location and look after Mfengu welfare in general, 'Matabele' Thompson promised these potential migrants that they would have 'an Officer appointed over their -(affairs)- who -(would)- speak their language and understand their customs', and who would also respect their laws and customs 'so long as they -(did)- not interfere too much with the European law, . . . .'. The official in question was to be assisted in his duties by about ten headmen, appointed on the basis of the recommendation of the Chief Magistrate and his assistants in the Cape, whilst these functionaries were, in their turn, expected to constitute a council through the medium of which matters affecting the rank and file residents either at Bembesi or elsewhere could be treated. In addition, it was these Mfengu headmen who were to take charge of the collection of hut-tax from amongst their followers and compatriots. In return for such services, they were to be rewarded by the BSACo. Administration in form of monthly allowances, at the rate of £20 per annum for the senior headman and £12 for the nine others,<sup>11</sup> and other specious fringe benefits like exemption

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<sup>9</sup> NB 1/1/4: Charter, Cape Town, to Acting Administrator, Salisbury: Telegram: May 31, 1898.

<sup>10</sup> NB 1/1/9: Charter, Cape Town, to C/N/C, Bulawayo, Telegram: September 26, 1900.

<sup>11</sup> NB 1/1/4: Charter to Acting Administrator: Telegram: May 31, 1898.

from the labour tax and landholdings 'double the size of that of the ordinary subject'.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of the social activities in the proposed area of Mfengu settlement, rigorous control by the Company Administration was made abundantly clear and, it would appear, there was a degree of collusion between political and religious authorities to keep out of the future Fingo Location and away from the Mfengu immigrants all or most forms of diversionary activities. Thus perhaps mindful of the opposition of the colonist traders in the Transkei who were said to be generally opposed to Mfengu emigration to Southern Rhodesia, 'Matabele' Thompson laid down a policy whereby this class of people were to be excluded from the location. In 'Matabele' Thompson's own colourful language, the influence of the trader amongst the Mfengu immigrants was seen as a serious challenge to both official authority and missionary endeavour and, for this reason, Thompson, therefore, concluded:

I maintain that it is absolutely wrong to have a shop inside the ~~-(African)-~~ reserves, ... The trader begins - ~~-(a)-~~ very good man, builds a large shop. Having built it has a vested interest in the reserve, ... Anything he does depends upon his vested interest. He may have ~~-(a lot of money and)-~~ the influence of the official is lost when a prosperous trader takes the opposite ~~-(side)-~~. That is ~~-(why)-~~ one of the conditions ~~-(is)-~~: that no shop or trading station shall be ~~-(located)-~~ in the ~~-(Mfengu)-~~ reserve.

Rhodes himself stipulated this in an even more blunt manner, when he turned down the Mfengu request for a trader's shop at Bembesi in September 1900 on the grounds that this could easily lead to the sale of liquor throughout the Fingo Location. In Rhodes's view, 'These traders ~~-(would)-~~ sell boots and blankets at the front door and Cape Smoke ~~-(liquor)-~~ at the back door.'<sup>14</sup>

Whilst perhaps one could here cavil at the manner in which the BSACo. and its sympathizers overtly attempted to consolidate their hold and control over the Mfengu immigrants to Southern Rhodesia by pursuing, even at the very initial stage of the Mfengu scheme, a deliberately exclusive policy, yet, at the same time, it might be pointed out too that not very many Mfengu them-

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<sup>12</sup> C. O. 417/393: 'Matabele' Thompson's address. ...

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> C. O. 417/311: Indaba held at the Bembesi Location by Rhodes with the Fingo leaders: September 6, 1900.

selves would have supported the idea of liquor being made available in the location. Indeed, for the Mfengu who, under missionary patronage, were nurtured in rigid Victorian orthodox Christian teachings on abstinence and moral rectitude; a factor which had naturally compelled them to petition the Cape authorities to abolish, in Fingoland, such traditional customs and practices as those relating to abakweta (circumcision for male adolescents) ceremonies, the intonjane (female initiation) dances and the imgidi (the large African beer-drinking) sessions which accompanied these institutions in the later phase of the nineteenth century,<sup>15</sup> it is not surprising to find that they had changed little by the beginning of the twentieth century. As Captain Veldtman Bikitsha, the leading Mfengu headman and spokesman to the South African Native Affairs Commission indicated in March 1904, the Mfengu were evidently still determined to stick to their prohibitionist ideas and consequently pleaded with the commissioners and other officials concerned that '~~(these)~~ gentlemen now before us, who we feel sure entertain sympathy with our feelings, ~~(would)~~ do all in their power to continue to prevent the liquor coming into this Territory ~~(the Transkei)~~'.<sup>16</sup>

From the proceeding argument, it would, therefore, appear that the requirement of the 'Fingo Agreement' on the restriction of liquor traffic in the proposed Fingo Location was by no means a disadvantage to the Mfengu immigrants who were themselves sympathetic, in every way, to this particular stipulation. Thus if the restrictive part of the 'Fingo Agreement' on liquor achieved anything at all, it was also largely for the benefit of the missionaries and the BSACo. officials involved with the Mfengu scheme, who naturally took the liberty to entrench their hold on the new arrivals in Southern Rhodesia. In the final analysis, the significance of the 'Fingo Agreement' lay not so much in the stipulations that it provided for on liquor traffic or on how and at what cost Mfengu were to be transported to Southern Rhodesia, but on the promise the new scheme offered in solving the labour and defence problems of the new colony. For one thing, it may be pertinent to observe here that Southern Rhodesia was, at this stage and for a long time to come, a politically and culturally plural society in a conflict situation, in the true Furnivall and Smith

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<sup>15</sup> Vide: Supra; Chapter I: pp. 15-8

<sup>16</sup> Evidence of Captain Veldtman Bikitsha, Cape Colony, March 15, 1904: in South African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. II: p. 943.

traditions whereby a dominant white colonist minority wielded power over a variety of subject national and ethnic groups with sheer force majeure and a host of economic, political, and social factors as the main determinants in relation to the imposition of a reasonable degree of inter-group consensus, involuntary integration and co-existence and some form of common weal or values for the sake of making the hierarchical colonial structure and the whole syndrome of colonial domination and subordination more meaningful.<sup>17</sup>

Thus in this kind of aggregate society, both plural and inequitable in nature, as that of Southern Rhodesia symbolized in 1898 and after, the emphasis on politico-economic motivation in form of labour extraction from the subject colonial groups and the defence of the privileged position of the dominant minority by military means as well as the maintenance of all forms of inequality in the name of law, order and stability, was a singularly important theme. 'Matabele' Thompson did not apparently forget these characteristics of the society he represented in the course of his Mfengu scheme for Southern Rhodesia and, accordingly, pointed out to the Mfengu gathering at Butterworth, in early 1898, that:

Now, do not misunderstand me. I am not going to take the Fingoes up there -(to Southern Rhodesia)- to look at. I want two things from them. I want labour and I want defence. That's all I want from them. Understand that clearly. We do not love one another so much as to give land without any return.<sup>18</sup>

From the preceding evidence, it is, therefore, conclusive that the institutional aspect of the plural colonial society in Southern Rhodesia, like anywhere else where the colonial regimen was then prevalent, was quite a primary factor underlying the Mfengu migrant scheme. Besides the labour and defence features of the Mfengu arrangement indicated above, there was also a number of other causes which contributed to make the process of Mfengu transfer to Southern Rhodesia from the Cape, a more plausible affair and these causes are best gleaned from the whole range of apologia and pretexts proffered by various administrative officials, colonist classes and individuals on the matter. In the Cape colony itself, for example, administrative officials and influential

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<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of these features of plural colonial societies in theoretical perspective: Cf. Kuper: 'Plural Societies: Perspectives and Problems' in Kuper and Smith (eds.): Pluralism in Africa; pp. 10-3; and also Smith: 'Institutional and Political Conditions of Pluralism' in Ibid: pp. 28-33.

<sup>18</sup> C. O. 417/393: 'Matabele' Thompson's address....

individuals were, perhaps, inordinately swayed by issues of economic nature. The gradual degeneration of the productive potential of the African agricultural sector in the Cape, noticeable in the later 1880's and the 1890's especially in the Ciskei, Fingoland and the Transkei in general, was quite a potent factor in relation to Mfengu emigration from that country. The fact that this progressive economic decline in these African areas was largely a product of such diverse forces as the extensive land expropriation by the white colonists and its resultant land shortage amongst the African peasants; physical and natural disasters like drought and stock diseases; the growing labour demand in the recently emergent mining industry and its reliance on African migrant labour largely facilitated by legislative mechanisms like the Glen Grey Act, which, through its ethos and principle of 'one man one lot', aimed deliberately at creating a discernible African landless class and, therefore, a sizeable 'migrant African proletariat' as well as the overt acts of economic discrimination against the African areas by the white bureaucracies in terms of market structure and general investment policy,<sup>19</sup> was not altogether convincing in the eyes of the white officials and colonists in the Cape. They looked for other factors to explain away these developments in the African areas.

One factor which the officials and rank and file white colonists in the Cape, of course, held responsible for the acute land shortage and the generally parlous economic conditions of the colony's African areas centred on population growth, over-grazing and African economic conservatism in those areas concerned; views here widely held even by some of the so-called liberal-minded supporters of the African cause at the time.<sup>20</sup> It was obviously against this background that the famous Cape politician and parliamentarian, J. W. Sauer, for instance, justified the removal of the Mfengu to Southern Rhodesia, when he indicated in May 1898 that:

I think this step would be in the interest of the Fingoes if they can find suitable land (in Southern Rhodesia) because that part of the Transkei occupied by them is almost over-populated, very thickly populated, indeed, and with the natural increase of population amongst them - and there being no more vacant

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<sup>19</sup> C. Bundy: 'The Response of African Peasants in the Cape to Economic Changes, 1870-1910: A Study in Growth and Decay' in Institute of Commonwealth Studies (University of London) Seminar Papers: Vol. 3: No. 16: October 1971-June 1972: pp. 29-32.

<sup>20</sup> Vide: Written Evidence of R. W. Rose-Innes, King William's Town, n. d. :

land in the Transkei in that part occupied by natives -<sup>21</sup>  
there would soon be an overflow of population there.

This idea of viewing Mfengu migration as a means of decongesting the Transkei and related African areas in the Cape, which certainly enjoyed a lot of support in white circles both below and across the Limpopo,<sup>22</sup> may have apparently gained some credence amongst the Mfengu themselves and other African groups of the colony who had begun to regard the deteriorating land allocation conditions at the close of the nineteenth century with equanimity. In the 1860's, land allocation amongst the Mfengu and other African loyalist groups of the Cape had been made on the basis of 40 to 80 acres per head; by 1882 this amounted to about 2 to 30 acres (1 to 15 morgen) per man, whilst with the promulgation of the Glen Grey Act in 1894 these holdings were further reduced to 8 acres (4 morgen).<sup>23</sup> Under these circumstances, it was just as well that leaders of Mfengu opinion like Captain Bikitsha, whose son, Charles Bikitsha, was incidentally a member of the Mfengu delegation that accompanied 'Matabele' Thompson to Matabeleland in March 1898 to assess the land promised them and their people,<sup>24</sup> were themselves becoming increasingly aware at the time of the implications of the land shortage problem amongst the African societies and the futility of appealing for further allocation of this commodity by the Cape authorities.

From this point of view, it becomes clearer why the Mfengu should have been by 1904 so insistent on their land in the Transkei being surveyed and individual titles granted to landholders as a sign of security of tenure. Their anxieties on this score were perhaps aptly summarized by Captain Bikitsha's statement in reference to the Ciskei that: 'We know there are places where there is no grazing ground even for a beast - the beast has to be tied up.'<sup>25</sup> But even these survival techniques, which the Mfengu had apparently applied since the founding of Fingoland in the Transkei in 1870 to safeguard their landholding rights, were rapidly becoming irrelevant by the close of the nine-

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in South African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. II: pp. ix, xiv-xv.

<sup>21</sup> Cape Argus: May 4, 1898.

<sup>22</sup> Vide: The Diamond Fields Advertiser: April 19, 1898 and Bulawayo Chronicle: April 20, 1898.

<sup>23</sup> Bundy: op. cit. p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Bulawayo Chronicle: April 20, 1898.

teenth and the beginning of the twentieth century as the land policy of the Cape began to undergo rapid transformation to catch up with those of the other South African territories, especially the Boer republics where the African's access to land tenure and acquisition was heavily circumscribed. In the final analysis, it was, therefore, not only Southern Rhodesia and the High Commission territories, to some extent, which came to serve as safety-valves to the artificial conditions of congestion and over-crowding created in the African areas of the Cape due to the land-hunger of the colonist population there, but the newly acquired domain of Pondoland also provided some necessary lebensraum to the Mfengu and other African landless groups from the Transkei and the old colony, right from the 1890's to the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup>

For the sake of clarity however, it should be pointed out here too that, in a general way, the white colonial governments of the four territories of South Africa tended, as a matter of policy, to treat the newer territories of Southern Africa, particularly Southern Rhodesia and the High Commission territories, as sources of relief to their longstanding problems of black/white conflict and friction so characteristic of plural or composite colonial societies. In this regard it is, therefore, hardly surprising that after the Langeberg Rebellion in the northern Cape, there were hints on the possible removal, in 1898, of the former Tswana insurgents, whose lands around Taungs had been expropriated by white farmers, to Southern Rhodesia; a move which consequently elicited the comment from their Catholic missionary patron, Father Porte, that 'The -(the insurgent Tswana)- do not care to go to -(Southern)- Rhodesia, because they hate the Matabele, ...'<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, when the Rolong succession dispute erupted between the two sons of the late Chief Moroka, the Anglican-backed Samuel Moroka and the Methodist-supported Tshipinare Moroka, the president of the Boer republic of the Orange Free State, J. H. Brand, took the opportunity to expel the former from the territory in the late 1890's because of this claimant's English education and, therefore, his 'English feelings',<sup>28</sup> to which the Boer leader took

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<sup>25</sup> Evidence of Captain Veldtman Bikitsha: March 15, 1904; Ibid: p. 951.

<sup>26</sup> Vide: Hunter: Reaction to Conquest: passim.

<sup>27</sup> Cape Argus: April 23, 1898.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Moroka had been educated in England at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury.

great exception. In the long run, Samuel Moroka was banished to the Ramakwebana area of Bechuanaland Protectorate bordering on Southern Rhodesia.<sup>29</sup> A few years later, plans were afoot also to settle the Tlokwa and Hurutshe communities of the Orange Free State in the Protectorate.<sup>30</sup>

The total effect of these official moves, at one time or another, to transfer African communities from the older territories of white settlement in Southern Africa to the newer ones, apparently to the advantage of the colonists of those older white states, was obviously an important factor in influencing African societies and individuals themselves<sup>31</sup> as well as commercially-motivated syndicates<sup>32</sup> to regard, in a rather bizarre manner, that the problems of land shortage and general African displacement in South Africa proper could best be solved by systematic transfer of the African communities so affected to the neighbouring colonies, especially Southern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. It is, therefore, within this wider context that Mfengu transfer from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia, at the close of the nineteenth century, must also be generally considered.

But whilst the African land shortage problem in South Africa in general and in the Transkei in particular may have acted as a cognisable motivating factor in Mfengu migration to Southern Rhodesia, it was, however, by no means the only cause of this process of population transfer. There was certainly a number of other causes which variously contributed to the origins and implementation of the Mfengu migrant scheme. One such important factor may be apparently ascribed to the Mfengu historical background and modern tradition as what Moyer terms 'the great collaborators' of the Eastern Cape.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Vide: C. O. 417/452: Petition of Samuel Moroka to Acting Lieutenant-Governor, H. F. Wilson, Orange River Colony; February, 6, 1904 and to Lord Selborne: April 26, 1908.

<sup>30</sup> Vide: C. O. 417/437: Lord Selborne to Lord Elgin: August 26, 1907.

<sup>31</sup> Note the application of M. H. Madapuna, an African farmer of the Matatiele district of East Griqualand in 1913 for land in the Ghanzi division of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. C. O. 417/523: M. H. Madapuna, Matatiele, East Griqualand, to Government Secretary, Mafeking: March 26, and April 9, 1913.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. The application by a Johannesburg syndicate, Douglas Wilson and Rusk, to the BSACo. in 1906 to purchase land in Southern Rhodesia for the settlement of African landless groups from the Transvaal. C. O. 417/444: Douglas Wilson & Rusk, Johannesburg, to BSACo., Cape Town, November 8, 1906.

<sup>33</sup> Moyer: op. cit. p. 144.



This Mfengu collaboration with the white colonists and their own self-image as allies of British colonial agencies and power in Southern Africa were obviously developments which became so indelibly imbedded in Mfengu psychology and orientation that nothing could be said to have changed, as far as this African group of people was concerned, by the close of the nineteenth century. If anything, the Mfengu themselves, both below and across the Limpopo, were quite outspoken and sentimental on what they outrightly regarded as their special relationship with the British forces of colonization in the sub-continent, especially in the Cape.<sup>34</sup> For this reason, one Mfengu clerk, William M. Mzinjana, on trial in Bulawayo for forging a pass authorizing himself to purchase liquor in March 1898 could boast, with some justification, that:

I am not a native of Matabeleland, but am a colonial native. I can boast of being a British subject before I was born - (April 1859)-; in fact all and every one of the nation commonly called the Fingoes took the British yoke upon their necks at the first possible opportunity, and have ever since been loyal under the British rule; -(they)- never rebelled whatever.<sup>35</sup>

Similar assertions of Mfengu loyalty to the British authorities were also expressed in 1904 by Captain Bikitsha in relation to how his people came to acquire Fingoland in 1870, on which he stated that:

The -(Cape)- Government gave us this country - made us a present of it - because we were obedient servants; the Government, recognising us as obedient servants, gave us this country. We, especially we Fingoes, were given it because of our obedience to the Government.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, as a demonstration of their loyalty, the Mfengu in Fingoland had even gone to the extent of requesting the Moltano administration at the Cape to impose taxation over them because, as they asserted '... We -(were)- children of the Government and we -(wish)- the Government to understand that we did not wish to break our connection with them, ...'<sup>37</sup>

From the context of colonial societies as plural societies in a conflict situation, whereby the dominant ruling classes could only maintain their position and privileges through wholesale deployment of coercive powers;

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<sup>34</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.

<sup>35</sup> Cape Argus: March 16, 1898.

<sup>36</sup> Evidence of Captain Veldtman Bikitsha: loc. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid: p. 952.

monopoly over political, social and judicial resources as well as immobilization of the subject peoples by suppressive or proscriptive acts of one kind or another,<sup>38</sup> these assertions of loyalty and obedience by the Mfengu were, in every way, an immense boon. The notion of using a loyalist group of people, as typified by the Mfengu, in a colonial setting was certainly appealing and feasible. In both Southern Rhodesia and the Cape colony much play was made on this factor. Thus in May 1898, Sauer had commented on this aspect of Mfengu migration from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia emphasizing not simply the loyalist sentiment of the Mfengu, but also other positive ascriptive qualities which, he judged, were bound to benefit the white colonial society of Southern Rhodesia in the long run. In a nutshell, Sauer indicated:

... if suitable land can be got for them it would help materially towards the development of the gold mines in -(Southern)- Rhodesia, as the Fingoes are very intelligent, and amongst the most industrious of our -(Cape)- native races, with a Scotsman's capacity for making money. They have always been loyal, and are most reliable people. In intelligence and education, of course, they are far in advance of the natives of -(Southern)- Rhodesia, and they could be relied upon, should unhappily any fresh difficulties arise in -(Southern)- Rhodesia, to support law and order.<sup>39</sup>

It was this line of argument, portrayed above, which officials and other supporters of the Mfengu scheme in Southern Rhodesia, at first, also tended to pursue. From the point of view of the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, Mfengu historical background tended to sufficiently guarantee their positive contribution to the processes of development in Southern Rhodesia, because these people '(had)- been brought up in civilization for 200 years'<sup>40</sup> and were, therefore, expected, by virtue of this upbringing, to '... act as a wholesome example for their fellow natives', especially as they were 'in a more advanced state of civilization than the indigenous inhabitants of the country'.<sup>41</sup> One way through which these 'advanced' Mfengu were to demonstrate their

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<sup>38</sup> Vide: Smith: op. cit. pp. 55-6.

<sup>39</sup> Cape Argus: May 4, 1898.

<sup>40</sup> C. O. 417/276: Report on an Indaba held by the C/N/C [Matabeleland] with the Fingoes at the Fingo Location on Thursday, September 21, 1899.

<sup>41</sup> C. O. 879/84: 'Short History of the Native Tribes of the Province of Matabeleland' by C/N/C Taylor: January 11, 1904; Enclosed in Taylor to BSACo. January 16, 1904.

positive cultivation was in the field of labour demand in which they were naturally expected "... (to) take to mining work and thus serve as an object lesson for the inducement of the natives of the country to do likewise, ....". On this score, B. S. A. Co. officials appear to have elicited the support of the Colonial Official on the Mfengu scheme,<sup>42</sup> though at first the labour clause in the "Fingo Agreement" had been dismissed in Number 12 Downing Street as lacking in legal authority since it could not be enforced in law against the Mfengu immigrants.<sup>43</sup> As far as Rhodes was concerned however, Mfengu immigration into Southern Rhodesia also served another useful purpose. The scheme was, from his point of view, a plausible move worth exploiting as a public stunt to validate the B. S. A. Co. policy towards the African subject societies of the country, as Rhodes readily reminded the B. S. A. Co. shareholders' meeting in London in May 1898.<sup>44</sup>

Of course, not everybody was as enthusiastic over the Mfengu scheme as officials in both Southern Rhodesia and the Cape evidently were. Rank and file white colonists as well as those African societies likely to be affected in any adverse manner by the scheme were certainly not pleased in the least. In the Cape colony, white traders were obviously not pleased by the threat which the scheme posed to them as a class, especially in terms of the consequent loss of custom which the whole plan implied. But the opposition of this secondary colonist segment was curtly dismissed as being "actuated by self interest" and their warning to the Mfengu, as liable to have their labour exploited in Southern Rhodesia for no returns, also decried as baseless.<sup>45</sup> In a way, all that this traders' opposition may have, therefore, achieved, in due course, was the manner in which the Mfengu became wary and sensitive to all traces of deception by the B. S. A. Co., especially with regard to land allocation in Matabeleland; a development in which Mfengu notables at the Cape also played quite a significant part.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> C. O. 417/401: Minute by Grindle to Just: July 28, 1904.

<sup>43</sup> C. O. 417/393: Minute by Grindle to Just: November 8, 1904.

<sup>44</sup> Cape Argus: May 18, 1898.

<sup>45</sup> C. O. 417/393: 'Matabele' Thompson's address...

<sup>46</sup> Note here the advice of Jabavu and his paper Imvo to potential Mfengu migrants to Southern Rhodesia in 1898 to make sure that they had all the land allocated to them by the BSACo. properly surveyed for security. Vide: Jabavu: John Tengo Jabavu: loc. cit.

In Southern Rhodesia, on the other hand, colonist opposition to the Mfengu immigration scheme was tied to two main issues; firstly, the demand for an active role on the part of the BSACo. Administration to procure forced labour from the local African societies and secondly, the issue of generous land grants the Company had already made to various individuals and syndicates in the country. Concerning the first issue which constituted the gravamen of white colonist opposition to the Mfengu scheme and its co-relationship with forced labour demand, Southern Rhodesian white colonists were apparently disappointed by what they regarded as the duplicity of the BSACo. Administration, along with the interference of Exeter Hall in Southern Rhodesian affairs, in renouncing forced labour as an aspect of its administrative policy and, by the same breath, designating labour mobilisation an essentially private enterprise, yet, on the other hand, ~~-(stultifying)-~~ itself by arranging to locate several thousands of Fingoes in the country.<sup>47</sup> To these colonists, the question of labour demand was so paramount and forefront in the territory's affairs that it could hardly be solved by half-hearted measures such as the planting of 'native colonies' in the country, as the Mfengu scheme denoted. Accordingly, they condemned the scheme, indicating, in the process, that:

It seems to us bad policy to start at the top of the tree, and this is what the Chartered Company appears to be doing in bringing colonies of Fingoes into this territory ~~-(Southern Rhodesia)-~~. But the Administration is prone to these things, and instead of formulating a far-reaching and definite native policy they tinker at the question. The Fingoes are no doubt a good race of natives as natives go, but we do not think they are much more inclined to underground mining than the Matabele, and ~~it~~<sup>48</sup> is labour for the mines that the country is crying for.

The main reason for colonist attack here, therefore, was necessitated by what they viewed as a bankruptcy of policy on the part of the Southern Rhodesian Administration on local African labour supply. But, at the same time, it should also be noted that these colonists had other ideas in mind. In this connection, they opposed the Mfengu settlement scheme because they were convinced that it was less feasible than the alternative ones they desired, relating to the 'Zambesis' (Tonga), residing on both sides of the Zambesi river, and the Shangaans from the Portuguese territory. In the perspective of

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<sup>47</sup> Bulawayo Chronicle: August 16, 1898.

<sup>48</sup> Bulawayo Chronicle: March 29, 1898.

these colonists, the advantages in establishing 'Zambesi' and Shangaan 'colonies' in the heart of Matabeleland, for the sake of labour supply, did not lie so much in the presumption that they were 'the best mining boys we -(Southern Rhodesian employers)- can get, -(indeed)- far better than the Fingoes,' but also in the fact that, it was considered easier and cheaper to secure 'two or three colonies' of these peoples, since the 'Zambesis' had, in the first place, no paramount chief to hinder their transfer of abode, whilst the Portuguese, under whose control the Shangaans lived, were expected to offer little resistance to the move; an assumption which was here as erroneous as it was optimistic.<sup>49</sup>

In essence, the alternative schemes on 'Zambesis' and Shangaan settlements in Matabeleland, like that on the Mfengu, were expected to achieve one thing; to act as a kind of catalyst among the Ndebele on positive labour response and, by force of example, induce the latter to undertake work on the mines, since, it was presumed, 'when the Matabele saw these men -(Zambesis and Shangaans)- decking themselves out in gay blankets or Piccadilly suits they would hanker after these fleshpots, and would see that the means to obtain them was by labour.'<sup>50</sup> Paradoxically, however anxious colonist employers might have been over their proposed schemes on 'Zambesi' and Shangaan client communities to serve as labour reservoirs, they were, at the same time, quite aware that the success of these plans was heavily circumscribed. In this regard, the second issue of white colonist opposition to Mfengu immigration into Southern Rhodesia was largely responsible for frustrating these foreign migrant designs.

The large-scale alienation of land in the country to private individuals and consortia, leading to a situation whereby a greater proportion of the land was locked in the hands of speculators, was certainly viewed by white colonists as a sour aspect of the BSACo.'s economic policy. The grant of land by the Company to some of its supporters and favourites, like the one made to Captain Arthur Lawley, for example, in the Mazoe district of Mashonaland in February 1898 to the tune of '75 square miles, for services rendered',<sup>51</sup> and was, in this particular instance, criticized by both the Rhodesia Chamber of

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. The failure of Southern Rhodesian authorities to procure Shangaan labour from Mozambique during and after the Anglo-Boer war. Vide: Supra: pp.184-5

<sup>50</sup> Bulawayo Chronicle: March 29, 1898.

Mines and the white colonists, did not certainly augur well for the Mfengu scheme which followed two or so months later. White colonists, in general, could only conclude that the purchase, in April 1898, of the Battlefield block at Bembesi from Asshur by the BSACo. Administration for £7,000<sup>52</sup> as well as the £1,500 deal with a Mr. Pennant over his two farms in the Nyamandhlovu area in November 1898; an arrangement over which the owner in question was quite insistent to see completed as quickly as possible, whilst Rhodes personally thought the farms were quite suitable for Mfengu settlement,<sup>53</sup> symbolized yet another move by the Company to play a generous host to its clients, be they black or white. From this point of view, the Mfengu immigration scheme and the attendant land offers it dangled to these 'black settlers', therefore, inexorably attracted considerable criticism from the white colonists. These critics deplored what they saw as a state of affairs whereby the locking up of the most fertile and desirable land in Matabeleland by syndicates and absentee landlords had created a situation in which this asset could only be purchased at prohibitive prices, whilst, at the same time, 'only black men -(could)- obtain land for settlement, the whites being completely ignored.'<sup>54</sup>

In another respect, it was also felt that the move to attract Mfengu immigrants, though as potential labourers, could only create an erroneous impression, with these 'black settlers' consequently over-estimating their worth in the eyes of Southern Rhodesia's colonist society. The Acting Native Commissioner of the Bubi district in which the Mfengu migrants were to be settled, P. A. Stuart, may have best summarized this colonist view when he stated in October 1898:

Why should we have to import Fingoes -(into Southern Rhodesia)- - give them good fertile land to live on, and in other words, bribe them to come and live here?

They are good workers I am told, but won't they be a great nuisance, knowing as <sup>55</sup>they must do, how highly their labour will be valued here?

Beside white colonist opposition to Mfengu immigration in Southern

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<sup>51</sup> Cape Argus: February 2, 1898.

<sup>52</sup> Cape Argus: April 2, 1898.

<sup>53</sup> Mss. Afr. S. 227/A: Letter-Book 22: Rhodes to Lawley: November 6, 1898.

<sup>54</sup> Cape Argus: March 30, 1898.

Rhodesia, the indigenous Ndebele society too was by no means tantalized by the developments. Indeed, it has already been demonstrated, in the earlier part of this study, how in the post-1896 era relations between the Ndebele and the African communities from the South living in Bulawayo were so strained that they often resorted to violent confrontation.<sup>56</sup> This uneasy truce between these two camps, which was obviously responsible for such overt expressions of Ndebele antagonism as Induna Sikombo's famous description of the 'Colonial boys' as 'monsters' before Captain Lawley in June 1900,<sup>57</sup> may have also largely conditioned the attitudes of the Ndebele host society to the Mfengu arrivals.

In fact, it is pertinent to observe here that one of the major issues discussed by the Ndebele leaders at Umjaan's place on Rhodes's Sauerdale farm in the Bulawayo district in November 1898; a meeting which consequently led to the deposition of Umjaan as a Government-subsidized induna,<sup>58</sup> was that 'the Matabele country was to be handed over to the Fingoes....'<sup>59</sup> In spite of official assurances to the contrary, Ndebele anxieties were certainly deeply embedded, especially in view of the original BSACo. plan to systematically locate the Mfengu at various places 'in the heart of the Matabele fastnesses ...' which, it was hoped, '~~would~~ tend considerably to the maintenance of the present peaceful state of affairs ~~(in Matabeleland)~~.'<sup>60</sup> Ndebele anxieties over Mfengu settlement in Matabeleland were here aptly captured by one of their indunas, Chief Mazwi of the Malema district of that province, who informed Captain Lawley in December 1898:

We don't know how we shall get on with them ~~(the Mfengu)~~.  
They might go over ~~their~~<sup>61</sup> boundaries and encroach ~~(on~~  
Ndebele territory).

In the final analysis, it was not, however, the opposition of either the white

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<sup>55</sup> NB 1/1/6: Stuart, Acting N/C, Bubi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 22, 1898.

<sup>56</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 163-4

<sup>57</sup> C. O. 417/311: Report of an Indaba held at Bulawayo by Captain Lawley with the leaders of Matabeleland on June 21, 1900.

<sup>58</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 170-2

<sup>59</sup> C. O. 879/57: Memorandum of proceedings at an Indaba held at Government House, Bulawayo, on the 12th December, 1898.

<sup>60</sup> Bulawayo Chronicle: May 20, 1898.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid: Memorandum of proceedings at an Indaba held at Government House.

colonists or the Ndebele society to Mfengu immigration which carried the day. What actually appears to have been more important on this score was the reaction of the Southern Rhodesian employers, particularly, the mining industry which was apparently much more concerned with the labour aspect of the Mfengu scheme. Indeed, the enthusiasm of the Southern Rhodesian mining industry over Mfengu immigration was, from the sponsors' point of view, quite encouraging, right from the start. For the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, for instance, which had already placed an order with 'Matabele' Thompson for 700 Mfengu labourers, by May 1898, to arrive by the end of that month in Bulawayo, what this association of employers was more worried about, however, was that the Mfengu in question might not arrive in Matabeleland in time in order to allow particular employers to sort out their priorities as to the engagement of either this form of labour or local supply.

Moreover, the mining companies were also concerned, to some extent, by the nature of the employment conditions under which they had arranged with 'Matabele' Thompson to engage Mfengu labourers. Thus whilst the 35/- monthly wage tariff per labourer, promised the Mfengu, was not subject to review, the mining companies were, however, not at all happy over the privileges conceded in the process, especially in terms of food and other social amenities. In this regard, it was concluded that 'Matabele' Thompson should drop his stipulations on the provision of 'meat, Boer meal, coffee and sugar' to Mfengu labourers by employers and substitute these with alternative rations in form of corn meal and a cash allowance of 2/- per week in place of meat, coffee and sugar. The mining companies as potential employers of Mfengu labour actually feared that by conceding too many privileges to Mfengu labourers, a situation might arise whereby 'other native labour would have to (be) treated in the same way.'<sup>62</sup>

It was, therefore, against this background of considerable support from the BSACo. officials and the mining industry, on the one hand, and rank and file colonist and Ndebele opposition, on the other, that Mfengu immigration into Southern Rhodesia came to fruition by the close of 1898. Their transportation between Queenstown and Bulawayo may not have been the best, characterized as it was, particularly, by loss of property and stock en route, notably at such connecting points along the railway line as Kimberley, Vryburg, Mafeking and

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<sup>62</sup> Bulawayo Chronicle: May 28, 1898.



and Plumtree, where the Mfengu migrants were often required to change trains and thus being inevitably separated from their stock and property with disastrous consequences. Indeed, even the need to detrain the stock, especially for pasturage, for one or two days was just as fraught with problems.<sup>63</sup> But in the long run, what mattered is that by November 1898 the Mfengu had arrived at Bembesi and a nucleus of the future Fingo Location began, henceforth, to take shape.

Although Mfengu political and social organisation was later to assume a certain definitive structure which largely corresponded to these people's pattern of settlement at Bembesi, with Chief Kona at the head of the Amazizi people formerly of the Ketani district in the Transkei; Chief Garner Sojini as the leader of a Hlubi group from Gquba in the Ciskei; Chief Mdani of the Amabhele from Nqamakwe (Transkei); Chief Mtyakisane also leading another Hlubi group from Willowvale (Transkei) and Chief Nqakala also of another Amabhele group from the Nqamakwe district in the Transkei,<sup>64</sup> these various Mfengu groups did not, however, arrive at Bembesi at the same time. The first Mfengu arrivals in Southern Rhodesia in November 1898 were the three chiefs, namely Kona, Mtyakisane and Nqakala, with only a handful of their followers consisting of merely sixteen families;<sup>65</sup> a situation which had hardly improved by August 1899 when the first computation of the Mfengu population at Bembesi recorded an overall figure of 280 men, women and children, of whom 69 were placed under Mtyakisane; 27 under Nqakala; 164 under Kona and the remaining 20 being under another new arrival Headman Mbulawa, the father of Nzimende Mbulawa Ndondo, destined to play a significant role in the genesis of Mfengu history in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>66</sup>

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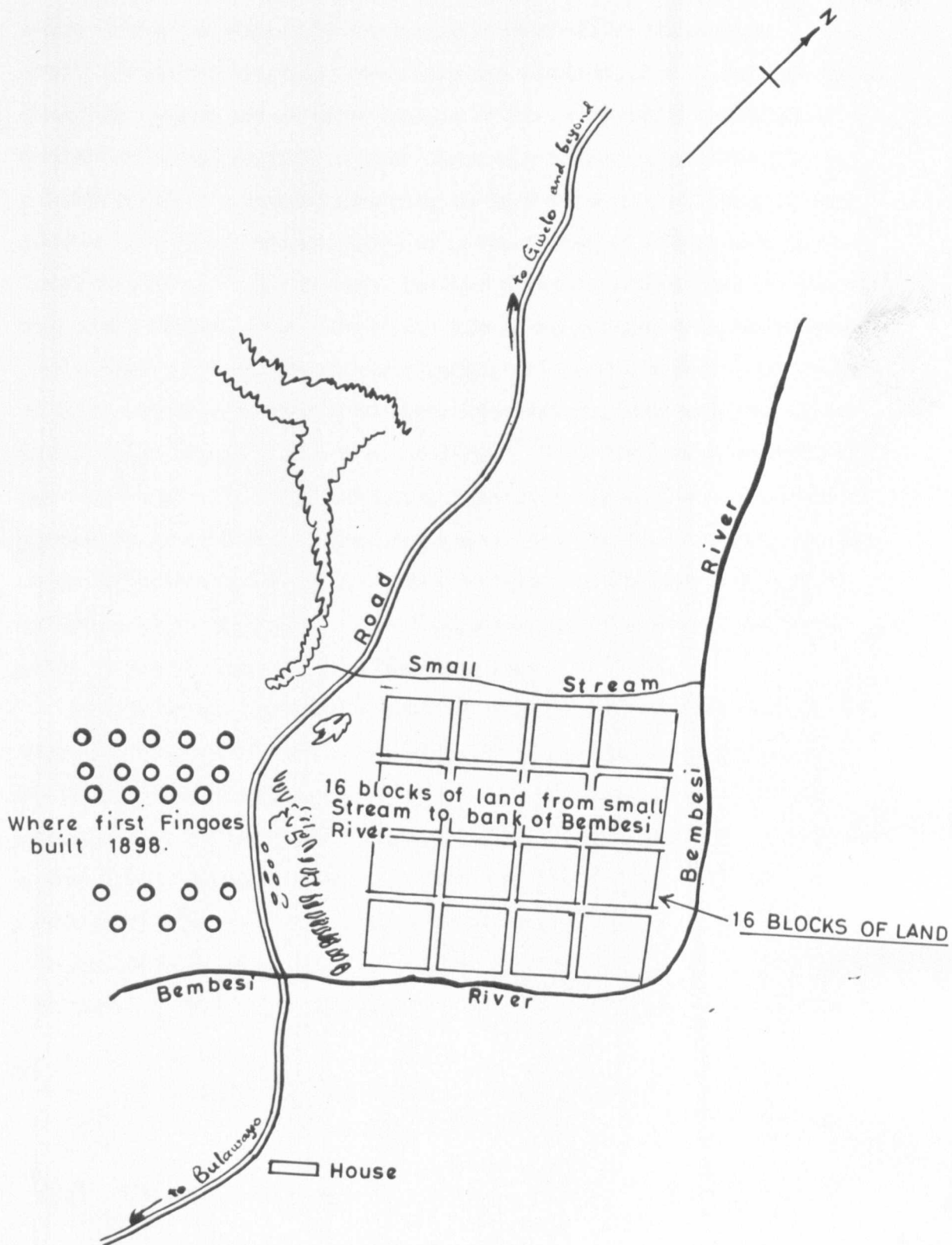
<sup>63</sup> Vide: NB 1/1/6: Statements of Nqamala, Noyenti et al., before W. M. Barnard, Acting Superintendent, Fingo Location: February 4-6, 1902.

<sup>64</sup> This information is based on Interviews with Chief Morosi Nyilika and Mr. Meckson Mpengesi (a former member of the Fingo Council), Fingo Location, Bembesi, November 17 and 18, 1975 (respectively) and also on Written Evidence of Rev. Sojini to author: December 11, 1975.

<sup>65</sup> NB 1/1/6: R. Lanning, N/C, Bulawayo at Shiloh (Inyati), to C/N/C, Bulawayo; November 19, 1898. Amongst the first family heads to arrive at Bembesi were Jim, Siko, Gatju, Popi, Mhlolo, Freddie Kona, Ipsuku, Mhlahlo, John Blanni, Fani, Dukuduku, Silwanyawa and Balekisa. (These names are retained here as recorded by N/C, Lanning.)

<sup>66</sup> Ibid: H. F. Griffith, Superintendent, Fingo Location, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: August 31, 1899.

Appendix V THE FIRST MFENGU SETTLEMENT AT  
BEMBESI November 1898



(Based on sketch by R. Lanning, N.I.C., Bulawayo District  
November 19, 1898 in file N1/1/6 R/N/A; Salisbury;)

Under these circumstances, it was obvious, therefore, that the number of Mfengu immigrants was far below the expectations of the BSACo. officials who had instructed the Native Department in Matabeleland in June 1898 to survey about 800 plots of 10 acres each at Bembesi for the purpose.<sup>67</sup> In the event, the pattern of Mfengu settlement and administration at Bembesi was, at first, both random and carefree because of this short-fall in the expected number of Mfengu arrivals; a point which may have vindicated the BSACo. Administration's action in suspending its land-surveying activities in June 1898 on the grounds of uncertainty as to the number of Mfengu immigrants bound to turn up.<sup>68</sup> In any case, the first arrivals, unlike those immigrants who later followed, were allowed to settle in one compact community, regardless of their group differences and political allegiance, with the only major division represented here by the distinction between their agricultural plots and the area set apart for grazing lands.<sup>69</sup> This compact pattern of settlement was seen as the best way in which these immigrants, who had after all arrived in the middle of the planting season, could be concentrated along the banks of the Bembesi river in order to be better able 'to break up ground with hoes on the river bank so as to get crops quickly and get a return of grain for sowing purposes for -(the)- next season.'<sup>70</sup>

Even after the appointment and arrival of the first Superintendent of the Fingo Location, Hugh Ferrier Griffith, the former Native Commissioner of the Tuli district in Matabeleland, at the end of November that year, this initial pattern of Mfengu settlement was allowed to persist, as it provided the best way in which these Mfengu arrivals could, as a community, cope with the problems of maximum utilization of the team of six oxen and one plough, instead of the three spans (18 oxen) and three ploughs previously promised by 'Matabele' Thompson,<sup>71</sup> supplied them on loan by the BSACo; the sharing of

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<sup>67</sup> NB 1/1/4: Lanning, N/C Bulawayo -(at Inyati)- to C/N/C, Bulawayo; June 21, 1898 and C. L. Carbutt, Acting N/C, Bubi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 24, 1898.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid: Chief Secretary, Salisbury, to C/N/C, Bulawayo, Telegram: June 30, 1898.

<sup>69</sup> Vide: Appendix VI (map) 'The First Mfengu Settlement at Bembesi; November, 1898'.

<sup>70</sup> NB 1/1/6: Lanning, N/C, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: November 19, 1898.

<sup>71</sup> NB 1/1/6: Griffith, Superintendent, Fingo Location, to C/N/C, Bulawayo:

the three rifles placed in the trust of the then three Mfengu headmen at the location for the protection of the Mfengu immigrants and their stock against predators<sup>72</sup> and to facilitate the distribution of medicines, especially quinine and chloroquine, also provided by the Company as a preventive measure against fever, lest the Mfengu immigrants died in sizeable numbers in the first year of their stay in Southern Rhodesia with the resultant 'bad effect on the number who ~~-(intended)-~~ coming up ~~-(from the Cape)-~~ next year ~~-(1899)-~~.'<sup>73</sup>

Other Mfengu leaders of consequence, who made their appearance at Bembesi in 1899 with their people, were Chiefs Garner Sojini, John Hlazo and Mbulawa. But these leaders, however, do not seem to have commanded the same measure of respect from the BSACo. Administration, which their forerunners enjoyed, for a number and variety of reasons. In the first place, the followers of this second category of Mfengu leaders were too few and fell far short of Rhodes's requirement of a following of '100 families' for each Mfengu headman or chief to qualify for the £1 monthly subsidy from the government.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Rhodes's jibe at the Mfengu leaders at Bembesi in September 1900 that 'Some of you only have 12 people under you ~~-(and)-~~ you cannot call that being a Headman... ',<sup>75</sup> was particularly relevant to the cases of Mbulawa, Hlazo and Sojini at the initial stages of Mfengu settlement at Bembesi.

Moreover, the manner in which this second category of Mfengu leaders rose to positions of leadership was not at all credible in the eyes of the officials of the BSACo. Administration. Mbulawa, for example, was in every way overshadowed by his ultra-loyalist son, Nzimende, who had not only accompanied the Mfengu delegates to Southern Rhodesia earlier on to size up the land reserved for Mfengu settlement thither,<sup>76</sup> but was also largely responsible for effecting the necessary arrangements with the BSACo. officials

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November 25, 1898.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid: C. B. Cooke, for C/N/C, Bulawayo, to BSACo.: November 25, 1898.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo, December 19, 1898.

<sup>74</sup> By June 1903 Mbulawa had under him only 20 men; Sojini about 19 men and Hlazo as little as 13. Vide: NB 1/1/19: J. H. MacDonald, Clerk-in-Charge, Fingo Location, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 10, 1903.

<sup>75</sup> C. O. 417/311: Indaba held at Bembesi by Rhodes... September 6, 1900.

<sup>76</sup> NB 1/1/7: Ndzimende Mbulawa, Nqamakwe, Transkei, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 16, 1898.

for his father to come over and, in Nzimende's own words, '... look -(after)- that place you -(C/N/C Matabeleland)- promised me before at the time I was there -(in Southern Rhodesia)-....'<sup>77</sup> In essence, old Mbulawa was, therefore, his son's surrogate.

With regard to the other two Mfengu headmen, Sojini and Hlazo, the similarity of their lot to Mbulawa's appears to have been evoked particularly by the bizarre circumstances under which they came to Southern Rhodesia and the motley of souls constituting their entourages. In Hlazo's case, having come into Southern Rhodesia before 1896 and after participating in the territory's wars of conquest and 'participation',<sup>78</sup> his rights and position as a member of the 'black pioneers' were unquestionable. What apparently seems to have both complicated and, subsequently, strained his relationship with the BSACo. officials was his appearance at Bembesi in August 1899 at the height of the Mfengu settlement scheme and, by so doing, occupying land on conditions simulating those laid down by the 'Fingo Agreement'.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Sojini's point of entry into the mainstream of Mfengu migration to Southern Rhodesia, in the later half of 1899, seems to have cast a lot of doubt on his bona fides as a party to the 'Fingo Agreement' as outlined by 'Matabele' Thompson at Butterworth a year before.

Sojini's claims to have been stranded at Lobatse in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, en route to Southern Rhodesia, as his father's envoy and a representative of 'three hundred families' in the Cape,<sup>80</sup> were not at all convincing, as far as the BSACo. Administration was concerned. This became even more apparent with the discovery by the officials concerned that what later came to be termed the 'Sojini trek' at first consisted of only 1 man, 3 women and 6 children and 30 goats.<sup>81</sup> Under these circumstances, the BSACo. confessed, as Hole the Company's Secretary did, that such small parties, as the 'Sojini trek' symbolized, were a drawback, since it was 'impossible for us -(the BSACo.)-... to take advantage of the special terms allowed by the Cape &

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid: Nzimende -(Ndzimende)- Mbulawa, Nqamakwe, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 1899.

<sup>78</sup> Vide: Infra: Chapter 7.

<sup>79</sup> NB 1/1/6: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: August 14, 1899.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid: Garner Sojini, Lobatse, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 22, 1898.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, BSACo.: December 27, 1898.

Bechuanaland Railways for ~~-(the)-~~ conveyance of the Fingoes.<sup>82</sup>

Under the terms agreed to by these railway corporations with regard to Mfengu transportation, the fare per family was 5/- between Queenstown and Vryburg, provided these Mfengu families were conveyed in full loads and by special trains, whilst over Bechuanaland railway lines transport for people was altogether free. Cattle and other types of stock were to be carried at the 'lowest obtainable rate' and paid for by the BSACo. which expected some refund from the Mfengu migrants within five years of Mfengu arrival in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>83</sup> It was essentially for these reasons, therefore, that railway officials at Lobatse had adamantly refused to allow the passage of the Sojini party to Southern Rhodesia until definite assurances were provided by the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland on the co-operation of the BSACo. to meet the transportation costs.<sup>84</sup>

Perhaps what may have ultimately persuaded the BSACo. Administration to accept overall responsibility over the 'Sojini trek' in 1899 may have been the public avowal by Sojini himself to observe the labour clauses of the 'Fingo Agreement' when he indicated '~~-(I am)-~~ one of the Fingoes ~~-(whom)-~~ the Government so liberally conveyed up to this country ~~-(Southern Rhodesia)-~~ for the purpose of labour in the ~~-(Southern)-~~ Rhodesia mines - ~~-(and)-~~ I have joined the Fingoes under the same conditions.'<sup>85</sup> In the final analysis, it could be said that it was most probably this commitment, on the part of Garner Sojini, to provide what the BSACo. Administration valued most highly - labour supply - that this Mfengu leader may have succeeded in ingratiating himself with the officials of Southern Rhodesia. Otherwise the origins of his followers and their connection with the major Mfengu migrant groups were certainly not credible.

In addition, the manner in which Sojini subsequently proceeded in gathering people around himself, once he had arrived at Bembesi, was just as equally dubious. Various claimants of Mfengu and other African origin in the South appealed to the Administration of Southern Rhodesia between 1899 and 1902, for instance, pleading indigence and, at the same time, claiming for assistance for themselves and their families then striving to join their leader Sojini at Bem-

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid: Hole, Secretary, BSACo., to C/N/C, Bulawayo: January 4, 1899.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid: 'Conveyance of Fingoes': Enclosed in Hole to C/N/C, Bulawayo; January 4, 1899; Vide also: Supra: pp.310-1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid: C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Station Master, Lobatse: Telegrams; September 4

besi, but were allegedly stranded at various points along the railway line between Bulawayo and Kimberley. The Dingiswayo brothers, Paul, Jeremiah and Simon, for example, do offer a good illustration here. Paul and Jeremiah Dingiswayo were, by December 1899, when they applied to join Sojini and other Mfengu at Bembesi, actually employed in Bulawayo; where Paul was engaged as a 'telegraph messenger' and Jeremiah as a messenger in the Resident Magistrate's Office. Whilst these two brothers both pleaded with the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland for assistance to go down to Mafeking and bring up their families and property to Southern Rhodesia, the reasons they gave in order to explain the conditions in which they found themselves were, however, different.

In Paul Dingiswayo's explanation, he had just recently left the Ciskei with the intention of coming to settle in Southern Rhodesia, but his private means could only enable him to proceed as far as Mafeking where he had consequently left his people.<sup>86</sup> In Jeremiah Dingiswayo's case, it is evident that the Dingiswayo brothers were not part of the Mfengu migrants persuaded by 'Matabele' Thompson in the Ciskei and the Transkei to migrate to Southern Rhodesia in early 1898. Rather, they were Mfengu of diaspora who had long before left either the Transkei or the Ciskei to reside elsewhere. Thus Jeremiah confesses as much in his letter to the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland in which he states:

Having ~~-(been)-~~ drawn to the fact that the Fingoes are allowed to come & reside in ~~-(Southern)-~~ Rhodesia I therefore beg to apply for the same permission to be granted to me... I am a Fingo residing at Mafeking at present & subject of Garner Sojini's father.

I agree with the Rules & Regulations made for the Fingoes ~~-(sic)-~~. I also wish to ~~-(ask)-~~ the Government ~~-(of Southern Rhodesia)-~~ to assist me in bringing up my family & I also wish that I would be supplied ~~-(with a)~~ ticket free of charge to go to Mafeking to fetch my family.

The third amongst the Dingiswayo brothers, Simon Dingiswayo, was still based in Mafeking from where he engaged in correspondence with the BSACo. Administration for land between March and July 1899. Whilst, at first,

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid: Sojini, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 22, 1898.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid: Paul Dingiswayo, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo; December 27, 1899.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid: Jeremiah Dingiswayo, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo, Bulawayo: December 29, 1899.

the Southern Rhodesian officials had reacted positively to these requests; reactions which had naturally induced Simon Dingiswayo to make all sorts of promises 'to bring up a good lot of young men to... labour',<sup>88</sup> and to undertake arrangements to forward about twenty families from two points, Taungs near Kimberley and Mafeking, ready to proceed north and occupy the land promised them by the second half of 1899, in readiness for the ploughing season,<sup>89</sup> the BSACo., however, suspended temporarily all forms of Mfengu immigration into the country during the latter part of 1899.<sup>90</sup>

Taken together, the example of the Dingiswayo brothers demonstrates that once the Mfengu scheme was initiated in 1898, shrewd land-hungry Mfengu in other parts of South African also took the opportunity to exploit the situation and proceed to Southern Rhodesia under one Mfengu leader or another. Garner Sojini, in particular, seems to have greatly benefitted from such developments, whereupon he took the opportunity to augment his following in the process. In fact, the presence of a sizeable Mfengu community in locations on the outskirts of Mafeking, quite well-established by the close of the nineteenth century and including within its ranks such famous and commonplace Mfengu families as the Mfazis and the Ngonos,<sup>91</sup> was just too tempting for those Mfengu leaders passing through Mafeking to Southern Rhodesia. Whilst the going between the BSACo. and the immigrant Mfengu community in Southern Rhodesia was still good, there was apparently no harm in these Mfengu of diaspora joining their kinsmen en route to Southern Rhodesia. It was after the honeymoon period of Mfengu/BSACo. relations had ended that individuals like Garner Sojini were picked upon by the BSACo. Administration, as stowaways from Bechuanaland, who did not deserve to enjoy the privileges originally intended for the Mfengu migrants from the Transkei and the Ciskei proper.<sup>92</sup>

In any case, whilst the phase between 1898 and 1899 may be described as having been a hectic one in the genesis of Mfengu immigration into Southern Rhodesia, that between 1899 and 1902 which followed, indicates a noticeable

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<sup>88</sup> NB 1/1/7: Simon Dingiswayo, Mafeking, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: April 12, 1899.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid: Simon Dingiswayo, Mafeking, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: July 8, 1899.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid: Hole, Secretary, BSACo., to C/N/C, Bulawayo: July 11, 1899.

<sup>91</sup> Entries for January 6 and 7, 1900; in J. L. Comaroff (ed.): The Boer War Diary of Sol. T. Plaatje: An African at Mafeking: Macmillan: London: 1973: pp. 70-1.

<sup>92</sup> Vide: N3/10/5: Taylor, C/N/C, Salisbury, to Leo Schreiner, Cape Town: April



decline in official efforts and enthusiasm on the matter. The causes of this decline were legion. In the first place, the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899 presented a real obstacle to the flow of traffic between the Cape and Southern Rhodesia, particularly so that the military authorities required the railway corporations to provide all the available rolling stock for the purpose of transporting troops and stores to the war zones where these were required.<sup>93</sup> On another level, given the customary Mfengu fanatical loyalty to the British cause, the movement of these immigrants along South African railway lines during the course of hostilities was quite likely to expose them to Boer attacks, especially as some of their people were actively involved in the war on the British side.<sup>94</sup>

Secondly, there was some trace of anxiety within the BSACo. official circles that the Mfengu migration scheme was being exploited and abused by private individuals to their own advantage. The example of the Dingiswayo brothers, on the African side of the matter, which has already been examined somewhere else,<sup>95</sup> is a case in point here. On the white colonist side, the Halse Brothers, a firm of contractors hailing from Sterkstroom in the Cape colony, present another good illustration. These contractors who had been engaged by Rhodes in April 1899 to construct a dam on his farm, Sauerdale, in the Bulawayo district, seized the opportunity to import what they termed 'a better class of labourer -(from the Cape)-, known up here -(in Southern Rhodesia)- as the "Cape boy", ' and, in this manner, initiate a process whereby 'a useful and reliable class of labour -(would)- be introduced' in form of Mfengu and Thembu labour migrants.<sup>96</sup>

Under this seemingly altruistic pretext, Messrs Halse Brothers, therefore, wanted to involve the BSACo. Administration in bringing up their Mfengu and Thembu labourers into Matabeleland at minimal cost in transportation and with promises of possible land grants as inducements in very much the same way the 'Fingo Agreement' portended. However, the BSACo. Administration

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16, 1919.

<sup>93</sup> C. O. 417/311: Indaba held at Bembesi by Rhodes... September 6, 1900.

<sup>94</sup> Vide: Entry for October 29, 1899: in Comaroff (ed): The Boer War Diary of Sol T. Plaatje: pp. 2-3.

<sup>95</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.332-3.

<sup>96</sup> NB 1/1/7: The Halse Bros, c/o Palace Hotel, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: April 5, 1899.

would not swallow the bait, arguing as it did that:

We cannot be too careful in the selection of Natives who intend to remain up here -(in Southern Rhodesia)-, as at present there are a great many Colonial Natives in this Province -(Matabeleland)-, the majority of whom are not desirable objects.<sup>97</sup>

On the other hand, the Administration of Southern Rhodesia was prepared to sanction the plan of Messrs Halse Brothers on condition that Rhodes himself agreed to offer the Thembu and Mfengu labourers in question land on his own farm.<sup>98</sup>

A third factor, which may have had considerable influence on the lapse of BSACo. effort and interest in Mfengu immigration between 1899 and 1902, could be ascribed to a combination of two issues; namely, the cost of the scheme to the Company and the changing attitude of the BSACo. officials themselves towards the Mfengu settlers already in the country. Indeed, from the cost-benefit point of view, the report of the Native Commissioner for the Bulawayo district, D. H. Moodie, on the Mfengu scheme and the Fingo Location in May 1900 was by no means enchanting. Up to this date, the BSACo. had spent about £10,943 3s 7d on the Mfengu immigration scheme, of which £8,346 19s 3d went into land purchase and survey whilst the other £1,370 11s 6d was spent on transportation and food expenses for the Mfengu on their way from the South; not to mention the ploughing paraphernalia (six oxen and a plough) as well as the tents supplied to the new arrivals to the value of £105 14s 6d. In fact, what actually may have demoralized the BSACo. over its budget on the Mfengu immigration scheme was that the Mfengu themselves were required to pay back only £1,370 11s 6d out of a total sum of £8,346 19s 3d. Even then, by May 1900, all what these immigrants had managed to pay back was £91 16s 3d, whilst their annual tax contribution amounted to a paltry £100; hardly enough to maintain the Native Department outpost at Bembesi which cost an annual outlay of at least £600 to £700.<sup>99</sup>

In addition, Mfengu response to colonist labour demands was not at all wholesome, from the BSACo. point of view. Though these immigrants were

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: April 8, 1899.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to the Halse Bros., c/o Palace Hotel, Bulawayo: April 17, 1899.

<sup>99</sup> NB 1/1/9: D. H. Moodie, N/C, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: May 8, 1900.

generally regarded as industrious, in terms of their own agricultural work at Bembesi, and though a very high percentage or almost all the adult male population (about 144 men), with the exception of headmen or chiefs, were reported to have gone out to work, between December 1898 and August 1899, at the mines and other places of employment, notably on railway construction work between Bulawayo and Gwelo, the Southern Rhodesian officials were, however, still not satisfied with them on the labour question. In this particular instance, Mfengu preference for wagon-driving, a class of work for which they often earned as much as £5 a month compared to the lower monthly tariff of 35/- which they generally received for actual mining work itself,<sup>100</sup> obviously did not commend these clients to their patrons.

It was, therefore, against this background that a frigid attitude began to surface amongst the BSACo. officials, noticeably towards the end of 1899, with regard to the continuance of Mfengu importation into Southern Rhodesia. Individual applicants like the Dingiswayo brothers were, in the process, the first to suffer the after-effects of this reversal of BSACo. policy. In the Ciskei and the Transkei, whence a greater bulk of the Mfengu immigrants came, this news on the Company's change of attitude, which had obviously arrived there through the grapevine and may have been largely distorted in the process, caused a lot of confusion and consternation. Fred Kona, one of the first Mfengu settlers to arrive at Bembesi at the end of 1898,<sup>101</sup> was actually in the Transkei collecting followers with whom to accompany him back to Matabeleland, when this stunning news reached him there. In his confusion, Fred Kona wrote the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland in May 1900:

... I want to know about this, when I came down here -(to the Cape)- to fetch the people I heard a word that all the natives are no longer wanted. Now the land -(in Southern Rhodesia)- is belonging to the whites. You must tell me whether I can simply -(go)- up alone or with some persons. I -(have)- got some many people here about more than 100. You must answer me soon and explain -(to)- me that we will take the same road... going up -(to Southern Rhodesia)- or not.<sup>102</sup>

It was not only individual potential Mfengu migrants who were thus confused by the sudden volte-face in BSACo. policy, but even officials at the Cape

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid: Report on the Fingo Location by Griffith, Superintendent: August 31, 1900.

<sup>101</sup> Vide: Supra: p.327.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid: Fred Kona, Jujura School, Transkei, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: May 29, 1900.

were themselves thrown off balance by this turn of events. Colonel Walter Stanford, the Secretary for Native Affairs in the Cape colony, was himself compelled to demand for an explanation on the stance of the Southern Rhodesian Administration on the question of further Mfengu emigration from the Cape in the light of rumours to the contrary.<sup>103</sup> In the end, the upshot of these inquiries and demands from the Cape was an arrangement arrived at in Southern Rhodesia whereby a final assault had to be made on the issue of Mfengu immigration from the Cape once and for all time.

In this new arrangement proposed in September 1900, the main features were the appointment of an accredited official agent in the person of C. G. Fynn, a member of a family with longstanding historical connections with South Africa and, therefore, well acquainted with the sub-continent himself,<sup>104</sup> to proceed to the Cape to effect Mfengu emigration from that territory to Southern Rhodesia; the role of the five Mfengu leaders then at Bembesi, namely Chiefs Kona, Mbulawa, Mtyakisana, Nqakala and Garner Sojini, who were to accompany Fynn to the Cape and endeavour to induce their kinsmen to come to Southern Rhodesia by spreading favourable accounts on the country throughout the Ciskei and the Transkei; the need for urgent and water-tight arrangements with the railway and military authorities in the South over the provision of necessary transport facilities in order to convey the Mfengu immigrants, their stock and foodstuffs to Southern Rhodesia as conveniently as possible and finally, the need to station an official of the Native Department of Southern Rhodesia (a duty later assigned to Griffith, the Superintendent of the Fingo Location) at Mafeking to supervise the break in the journey at this juncture, for the benefit of both the Mfengu migrants themselves and their stock as well as to check whether these migrants had brought along with them any 'inferior stock, worthless farm implements or unnecessary impedimenta...'.<sup>105</sup> Another important aspect of the new arrangement on further Mfengu immi-

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid: W. Stanford, Secretary, Native Affairs Department, Cape Town to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 25, 1900.

<sup>104</sup> George Fynn was a descendant of the famous Fynns of pioneer fame in Natal and an expert in African languages below the Limpopo: Interview with Mr. Paul Hlazo: November 18, 1975. For the activities of the Fynns in pre-colonial Zululand, Vide: Omer-Cooper: The Zulu Aftermath: Chap. 2.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, BSACo., Bulawayo: Septem-

gration was promptness, in order to enable the immigrants in question to arrive at Bembesi, where a place was already reserved for a further 1,500 settlers, during the ploughing season. Not surprisingly, Fynn was given an allowance of £250 by the BSACo. for travel expenses in the Cape, especially the purchase of a Cape cart and a horse for traversing the African areas in which he was to operate.

The Fynn mission, it might be noted, was born under the inauspicious circumstances of the Anglo-Boer war and was naturally doomed to fail due to factors beyond the control of either its sponsors, participants or well-wishers. Thus in spite of the impressive and detailed initial reports by Fynn on his activities (and those of John H. MacDonald, a cousin of his he had appointed down there as an assistant) in the Transkei and Ciskei areas of the Cape colony between October 1900 and February 1901, all the migrants and their property Fynn forwarded to Southern Rhodesia amounted to only 795 men, women and children, 205 head of cattle, 1,609 sheep and goats, 28 horses, 22 pigs; a few dogs and fowls, one wagon and several truck loads of personal effects.

According to the report of this envoy, the minimal character of his success was a result of a number of factors which generally militated against the Mfengu immigration scheme. Firstly, the drought which marked the close of 1900 in the Cape colony had such adverse consequences on the African communities there that few people had any food supply at all. Most people, so it would appear, were compelled either to purchase their food or secure the same on credit from local traders at very high prices with the result that these traders would consequently not allow their clients to leave the country for Southern Rhodesia before their debts were settled.<sup>106</sup> Of course, given the negative reaction of the colonist trading class in the Cape colony to Mfengu emigration right from the start of the project in 1898,<sup>107</sup> it is evident here that this form of debt-peonage they so successfully brought into play by 1900/1 was a calculated device not only to influence the decisions of potential emigrants, but also to pin down their constituents to the Cape.

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ber 19, 1900.

<sup>106</sup> NB 1/1/11: Report of C.G. Fynn, Bolotwa, Transkei, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 1, 1901.

<sup>107</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.321.

Secondly, most of the chiefs and headmen in the Transkei and the Ciskei, who had stood security for the food requirements of their followers in relation to these credits from the traders, would not allow their people to emigrate to Southern Rhodesia and leave them to bear the burdens. Thirdly, because of the drought conditions, African stock in most districts of the Ciskei and the Transkei was by 1901 in a generally poor condition and could, therefore, not be moved over long distances from the remote districts to places like the Imvani and Kei Road stations for entrainment to Southern Rhodesia.<sup>108</sup> But it was, however, the final factor, that is the communication and transportation problem in the broader context of the Anglo-Boer war then going on, which had the most decisive impact on the Fynn mission to the Cape. The BSACo. officials themselves, both in Cape Town and Southern Rhodesia, found it so difficult to cope with the stream of potential Mfengu and other migrants that they had to advise patience, on the part of their envoy, due to the shortage of adequate transportation facilities.<sup>109</sup>

From the preceding evidence, it is apparent that whilst the BSACo. Administration was anxious by 1900-1 to undertake one massive and final Mfengu immigration programme into Southern Rhodesia, the move was not altogether well timed and the subsequent postponement of the whole programme by mid-1901 was, therefore, a logical sequel to a scheme which was largely governed by the dictates of the military conditions of the period. Thus whilst Fynn, the purveyor of Mfengu migration in the Cape may have felt disappointed to have to traverse the Transkei and Ciskei areas, once more, explaining to potential migrants and generally dismantling the work he himself had previously set up;<sup>110</sup> and whilst Mfengu chiefs from Bembesi who had accompanied him to the Cape may have also fretted and fumed, as Chief Garner Sojini did, that 'these people ~~-(potential Mfengu migrants)-~~ ~~-(were)-~~ unwilling to stay here ~~-(in the Cape)-~~ any longer' and that 'they ~~-(were)-~~ now ready to start ~~-(for Southern Rhodesia)-~~ because they have no place to lodge in... ' since 'they ~~-(had)-~~ sold their kraals to others who ~~-(could not)-~~ give back their kraals...';<sup>111</sup> all these please would not impress the authorities, both beyond and below the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid: Report of Fynn... February 1, 1901.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid: Fynn, Imvani, Transkei, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: Telegram: November 9, 1900 and Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Fynn, Imvani, November 6, 1900.

<sup>110</sup> NB 1/1/17: Fynn, Fingo Location, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 20, 1902.

Limpopo, to allow the Mfengu immigration scheme to go ahead in 1901. It was, allegedly, to wait for another time.

On the other hand, what Fynn may have succeeded in bringing into the picture during his 1900-1 mission to the Cape was, in fact, the introduction, though at first quite unintentionally, of another dimension of general African migration from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia. This was in the form of Thembu and Pondo migrants who were to supplement the hitherto Mfengu-dominated African immigration from the South into Southern Rhodesia. From Fynn's own correspondence with his superiors, the Administration of Southern Rhodesia, it is evident that these plans to include both Thembu and Pondo groups into the purview of the Mfengu immigration programme of the BSACo. were an impromptu affair rather than a preconceived one. Perhaps, it might not even be out of place to credit here the Chief Magistrate of Tembuland in the Ciskei, Sir Henry Elliott, for stimulating Fynn's interest on the need to include the Thembu in his plans as an agent of the BSACo. Administration on Mfengu emigration from the Cape colony. Indeed, this conclusion is quite tempting and also fitting, especially in view of the fact that it was adopted after Fynn's two meetings with the Thembu followers of Chief Siyabalaba, firstly, in the Hoita Valley in the Kentani district and secondly, at Southeyville near the Glen Grey district.<sup>112</sup>

On the other hand, though the Thembu may not have been as loyal to the British cause and as proud and exhibitionist on the matter as the Mfengu were, they were, however, associated, whether by accident or design, in many ways with the latter, especially on matters of black/white contact influences and general African integration into the continuum of colonist economy and thought. This was particularly true of Emigrant Tembuland where the pace of social and economic change, for instance, was by the late nineteenth century quite favourably compared with that in Fingoland itself.<sup>113</sup> Besides, it should be borne in mind too that when that firm of private contractors, Messrs Halse Brothers from the Cape engaged by Rhodes for dam construction on his farm in Matabeleland, suggested importing Mfengu and Thembu labourers into Southern Rhodesia with government assistance in April 1899, the idea did not

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid: Chief Garner Sojini, Butterworth, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: August 26, 1902.

<sup>112</sup> NB 1/1/11: Report of Fynn... February 1, 1901.

<sup>113</sup> Bundy: op. cit. pp. 27-8.

seem altogether odious from the BSACo.'s point of view, except of course in terms of expenses. In actual fact, the Thembu were highly recommended in some BSACo. official quarters where it was concluded, as the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland did, that these people were 'good mining boys and in this respect ~~-(were)-~~ superior to the Fingoes.'<sup>114</sup>

In any case, whatever factors Fynn may have played upon to positively influence the Administration of Southern Rhodesia on Thembu immigration into that country, they seem to have produced the desired effect. Indeed, before February 1901 was ended, four Thembu delegates, namely Tyesi, Sihuhu, April and Nyanga, were already in Matabeleland to survey the land promised them, whilst the BSACo. Administration on its part was making frantic efforts to settle them on one or the other of the farms bought back by the Company in the Nyamandhlovu area in 1899.<sup>115</sup> Here the Thembu immigrants were to be settled in a location designed on similar lines and under similar conditions of tenure to those appertaining to the Fingo Location already in existence by then at Bembesi. The separation of the two immigrant communities, the Mfengu and the Thembu, was here considered quite vital in official opinion.<sup>116</sup>

These preparatory arrangements in connection with Thembu settlement in the Nyamandhlovu area of Matabeleland also included, in the main, a land grant of about 20,000 acres to accommodate about 1,000 families, made on condition that at least five hundred of these Thembu families would have to arrive in the country before the end of 1901. In fact, as Chief Native Commissioner Taylor once more indicated, the BSACo. Administration by stipulating this condition naturally wanted to avoid a repetition of the problems caused earlier on by the Mfengu immigrants who had come in dribbles and 'thus unnecessarily ~~-(putting)-~~ the ~~-(Southern Rhodesian)-~~ Government to considerable trouble and expense.'<sup>117</sup> For the administration and supervision of these Thembu immigrants in the Nyamandhlovu area, Mr. Parry, highly esteemed by the head of the Native Department in Matabeleland for 'his

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<sup>114</sup> NB 1/1/7: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, Department of Administrator: April 8, 1899.

<sup>115</sup> NB 1/1/12: Hole, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury, February 4, 1901.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid: Hole, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 13, 1901.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, BSACo., Bulawayo: February 26, 1901.



~~(Parry's)~~ intimate knowledge of the country', was chosen for the task.

Judging from the reports of the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, it is obvious that there was much optimism within the BSACo. official circles in Southern Rhodesia with regard to the positive outcome of the Thembu immigration plan adopted at the beginning of 1901. Indeed, in anticipation of the arrival of these 'black settlers' from the Cape, the Ndebele communities which had hitherto lived on the farms chosen by the Thembu delegation and described as 'amongst the finest ~~(land)~~ in the country ~~(and)~~ eminently suited for an agricultural population,' were hurriedly moved out to make room for these potential settlers. This same streak of enthusiasm was also demonstrated by Fynn in September 1902 when he accompanied another delegation of Thembu envoys to Matabeleland to assess the quality and extent of another land offer promised to Thembu potential immigrants in the Bulalima district by the BSACo.<sup>118</sup> With regard to Pondo immigration also proposed by Fynn in 1901 alongside their Mfengu and Thembu compatriots from the Cape, the case was quite different. No amount of persuasion could arouse official interest in Southern Rhodesia on the issue.

However, in the end, all these specious schemes indicated above, whether on further Mfengu immigration or belated fresh Thembu and Pondon settlers from the South, came to naught by 1902. As a sign of the times, the military situation and the problems of transportation constituted the most formidable determinant to the success or otherwise of these migrant schemes. For the potential Thembu migrants to Southern Rhodesia, for example, it could be said that their fate in 1902 on transportation difficulties may have been sufficiently portended by similar but unwelcome developments which befell some of their delegates to Southern Rhodesia a year before, when they and a number of the African commuters from the South were stranded for about six weeks in Bulawayo between February and March 1901,<sup>119</sup> because the railway lines to the South had been closed to passenger traffic by the higher military authorities, leaving the local base commandants at various points in the sub-continent with no room to alter circumstances.<sup>120</sup> During the second half of 1902, a similar

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<sup>118</sup> NB 1/1/17: Fynn, Fingo Location, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 11, 1902.

<sup>119</sup> NB 1/1/12: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Base Commandant, Bulawayo: February 27, 1901; Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, BSACo., Bulawayo: March 28 and April 1, 1901 and Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C Bulawayo: March 1901.

situation had developed with serious implications for any of the migrant schemes the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia then had in the pipeline.

With the end of the Anglo-Boer war in mid-1902, the military and railway authorities once more interposed to procure all the rolling stock available for the return of troops from the military zones to the coastal towns, with the result that the railway corporations could, therefore, not undertake, as the Charter office in Cape Town was informed in July of that year, 'the removal of any large number of natives and their stock to Bulawayo...' until conditions had changed.<sup>121</sup> Besides, by the time when conditions were expected to be changing for the better in the field of transportation, an outbreak of cattle disease was reported in September 1902. In the circumstances, the BSACo. would, therefore, not accept what it called 'the unnecessary expense ... entailed in first bringing up the Fingoes and their families, and then later on sending them back to fetch their stock.'<sup>122</sup> Together these two factors indicated above could thus be said to have drastically affected the course and character of further immigration of 'black settlers' into Southern Rhodesia at the end of the Anglo-Boer war.

Of course, the obstacles to Mfengu and Thembu migration from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia at the close of 1902 may be said to have been real and considerable, though short-lived as they might have appeared. But the same could not be alluded in relation to the failure of the Pondo immigration scheme. Whilst it is safe to assume that in connection with Mfengu and Thembu importation in Southern Rhodesia, the BSACo. Administration was being unwittingly influenced by both ascriptive and achievement criteria with which these two African groups from the South were, rightly or irrationally, associated from an historical perspective, the case is certainly different on the question of potential Pondo settlers.

As a matter of fact, it might be noted that the whole rationale for the proposal to undertake this scheme was altogether shady and flimsy. For example, the main reasons given by Fynn in June 1901 to justify Pondo impor-

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid: Base Commandant, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: March 1, 1901.

<sup>121</sup> NB 1/1/17: J. A. Stevens, Secretary, Charter, Cape Town, to C/N/C, Bulawayo; August 26, 1902.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid: C. L. Carbutt for C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Griffith, Bembesi, July 28, 1902.

tation into Southern Rhodesian centred on the coincidental factor that when the Pondo faction of Mhlangaso Faku, whom Fynn thus recommended for importation, was banished from Pondoland to East Griqualand, during the annexation of this chiefdom in 1894 at the instigation of the Pondo Paramount Chief Sigcau and with the connivance of the government of the Cape colony, Rhodes was then the Cape Prime Minister and Milton, the then Administrator of Southern Rhodesia by 1901, his Secretary. The assumption here was that these two figures who, by 1901, headed and controlled the affairs of Southern Rhodesia, including the 'black settler' importation schemes, would obviously be well acquainted with the Pondo internecine problems prior to 1894 and also eventually show some degree of empathy on the matter.

On the basis of this historical background to the potential Pondo migrants of Mhlangaso Faku, Fynn obviously wanted his first reason to justify the second one, connected, in this case, with assumed positive qualities of the Pondo, who were in this regard very well spoken of. Thus whilst Mhlangaso himself was referred to as 'an intelligent and enlightened native... (who could) certainly exercise a good deal of influence over his people and the establishment of a large Pondo Location in (Southern) Rhodesia (consequently) accomplished with comparatively small cost, ' his followers were equally praised as 'a lot of hardy natives and living as they (did) in a semi-tropical country (Pondoland)'; It was hoped that 'they would be well suited and practically acclimatized to (Southern) Rhodesia.'<sup>123</sup>

Yet in spite of Fynn's recommendation, the Pondo immigration scheme was viewed as unnecessary and inadvisable by the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia, specifically by Milton himself.<sup>124</sup> In the end, it was those more determined individual immigrants and their families who were allowed to come into the country. The case of Joel Sishuba, for instance, the leader of a group of 9 Thembu families from Kamastone near Queenstown with their property in form of 10 cattle, 4 horses, 120 sheep and 2 dogs,<sup>125</sup> is particularly interesting on this score. Having been assured by Fynn, the

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<sup>123</sup> NB 1/1/13: Fynn, Imvani, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 14, 1901.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*: Andrew B. Rankine, Chief Secretary, Salisbury to C/N/C, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: July 2, 1901.

<sup>125</sup> NB 1/1/15: Joel Sishuba, Bulhoek, Kamastone, to Fynn: December 16, 1901.

BSACo. agent to the Cape, in the earlier part of 1901, on the favourable prospects of Thembu immigration to Southern Rhodesia, Sishuba's party left Queenstown in December 1901, only to be stranded for a full year at Mafeking. Even when the necessary permission and financial aid were finally granted to this party of resolute Thembu immigrants in December 1902, this was only because Sishuba had contacted John Hlazo at Bembesi,<sup>126</sup> who, in turn, managed to establish personal rapport with MacDonald, the clerk-in-charge of the Fingo Location, and the latter's cousin, Fynn, by the end of 1902 then Native Commissioner for the Gwelo district. In providing succour to Sishuba and his followers, the BSACo. Administration did so only on the grounds that the party in question had left Queenstown for Matabeleland either in complete ignorance of the changed attitude of the Administration towards further African immigration from the Cape or simply that theirs was an extreme case of enthusiasm to emigrate to Southern Rhodesia just as many of their compatriots had done before them. On this basis, the assistance thus proffered by the BSACo. to the Sishuba party was consequently regarded as purely exceptional.<sup>127</sup>

iii: The End of the Honeymoon Period of Relations between the "Black Settlers" and the BSACo. Administration, 1902-1905

In fact, when all the aspects and issues connected with the immigration of "black settlers" from South Africa into Southern Rhodesia are considered more thoroughly and systematically, especially during the period 1898 to 1902, it becomes evident that two main factors were, in the process, either over-emphasised or simply allowed to run amok in exercising the outcome of decisions relating to the immigration of these "black settlers". In a nutshell, the two factors whose influence was decisive on African immigration from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia between 1898 and 1902 were, firstly, the role of Rhodes in exercising both his personal and official influence on the subject of "black settlers" for Southern Rhodesia and secondly, the exaggerated emphasis by officials concerned, both below and beyond the Limpopo, on the ascriptive and achievement criteria of the potential African migrants from

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<sup>126</sup> NB 1/1/15: Joel Sishuba, Mafeking, to Hlazo, Bembesi: October 16, 1902.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid: J. H. MacDonald, Clerk-in-Charge, Bembesi, to Fynn, N/C, Gwelo: October 21, 1902; and Fynn, N/C, Gwelo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 8, 1902.

the Cape, especially the Mfengu and, to some extent, the Thembu as well. Given the fact that the mining industry in Southern Rhodesia had tried to introduce African labour from the Transkei on the basis of similar assumptions as to the value and potential of the Cape African groups, between May 1900 and February 1901, with disastrous consequences,<sup>128</sup> it is, therefore, not even necessary here to pinpoint the misguided nature of most of the perceptions and conceptions governing the immigration of "black settlers" into Southern Rhodesia before 1902. It was obviously the dawning of the realities of the situation and the gradual dissipation of those far-fetched misconceptions the BSACo. officials and other white colonists had harboured on their ideal Africans from the South that was to dominate relations in Southern Rhodesia between the BSACo. Administration and the white colonists, on the one hand, and the "black settlers" from the South, on the other, during the period after 1902.

With regard to Rhodes and his personal influence on the matter of establishing "colonies" of African immigrants from the South, this may best be demonstrated by examining his relationship with the Mfengu community in the sub-continent. Perhaps because Rhodes so forcefully symbolized British colonial power and presence in Southern Africa at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, he came to be regarded both as a personal friend<sup>129</sup> as well as a benefactor and godfather of the Mfengu people, especially insofar as the Mfengu migrants to Southern Rhodesia were and still are concerned today.<sup>130</sup> The importation of the Mfengu settlers into Southern Rhodesia and the subsequent grant of land to these immigrants in that country were viewed as special favours granted to them through the bounty and goodwill of Rhodes. Conversely, whenever these Mfengu immigrants were acting in a refractory manner before 1902, they were quickly reminded by the Native Department officials in Southern Rhodesia, rather like small children that Rhodes, their godfather and benefactor, would not be pleased with their be-

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<sup>128</sup> Vide: Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Report 1901: pp. 63-5.

<sup>129</sup> During the course of fieldwork research in November 1975, whether at Bembesi or anywhere else in Rhodesia, the author was repeatedly told by individual Mfengu informants of "the land given us by Rhodes"; meaning the Fingo Location.

<sup>130</sup> Note the Mfengu demonstrations in December 1972 against the Fingo Location Bill (1972/3) which sought to transform the land title system over the location. Vide: D. K. Davies: Race Relations in Rhodesia: A Survey for 1972-73: Rex Collins: London: 1975: pp. 289-90.

To a large extent, this avuncular aspect of Rhodes's relationship with the "black settlers" from the South was, of course, greatly enhanced by the deference and regard the Mfengu themselves, for example, reserved for this political figure. Their reverent attitude is certainly quite evident in the tone of a letter written by the famous Mfengu leader in the Cape colony, Captain Bikitsha, in May 1897, welcoming Rhodes from a trip overseas. Captain Bikitsha indicated:

I am glad to hear ... that you {Rhodes} have returned from Europe. My son also has written to tell me about your arrival. I am glad indeed.

The great thing I wish to put before you is the survey of Fingoland. We Fingoes of Butterworth are one in wishing the survey to take place. I know that you are the Greatest friend and father of the Fingoes to help them on this survey question.

We Fingoes are in one feeling with {the Cape} Government to have ... Fingoland surveyed .... The survey will enable the Fingoes to build the fence, cultivate their lots in full trust that {they} belong {entirely} to them; ... But we would beg your kindness to see Sir Gordon {Sprigg, the Prime Minister} and help him. Because he {Sprigg} told us that it was your {Rhodes's} thought and wish to make this good thing {land surveys} for Native nations.

.....  
You will perhaps have heard that several deputations have been sent {to Cape Town} in the name of all Fingoes. It is not so. They are a few red heathen Headmen wishing for their old customs of their several wives and concubines. 132

In a way, the Mfengu view of Rhodes as their guardian and patron to whom they could always look for help, when the need arose, was obviously strengthened by Rhodes's political gimmickry in establishing reasonable rapprochement between himself and leading Africans of the Cape colony, some of whom were of Mfengu origin, like Tengo Jabavu.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, the deliberately misleading assertions by "Matabele" Thompson, Rhodes's right-hand man in the Mfengu immigration scheme, for example, that their trans-

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<sup>131</sup> Vide: C.O. 417/276: Report on an Indaba held by the C/N/C {Matabeleland} with the Fingoes ... on Thursday, September 21, 1899.

<sup>132</sup> Mss. Afr. S. 18/c: Captain Bikitsha to Rhodes: May 3, 1897.

<sup>133</sup> Note for example Rhodes's invitation to Tengo Jabavu to accompany the first train to enter Bulawayo in 1897. Vide: Jabavu: Drawn in Colours: loc. cit.

fer from the Cape was a move undertaken as "absolutely a work of love" for the Mfengu,<sup>134</sup> did not help matters either. From this point of view, it might be argued with some force that the Mfengu of Southern Rhodesia may have been justified to regard their ill-usage at the hands of the BSACo, officials in Southern Rhodesia, after 1902, as arising essentially because of the death of their benefactor, Rhodes, and the appearance of new men on the stage who had, in every manner, an obsessive hatred of the Mfengu as a people.<sup>135</sup>

Of course, the dichotomy between the Mfengu and their official hosts, the BSACo, Administration of Southern Rhodesia, did not appear on the scene abruptly and abrasively. It evolved gradually and, in the process, systematically phased out the honeymoon period of Mfengu relations with the BSACo. The nature of this progressive rupture was, in fact, connected with the fact that once the Mfengu arrived in Southern Rhodesia, their demands and grievances concerning their new locale and pattern of administration were, to a large extent, both minimal and trivial. The Mfengu grievances, at first, consisted, in the main, of such issues as the shortage of food and medicines amongst the new arrivals; the need for Mfengu leaders and family heads to bring up their followers and households from the Cape to join them at Bembesi, particularly so that it was the task of the women in Mfengu society to carry out the thatching of dwellings, or permission to carry guns, especially with regard to those amongst them who had held gun permits in the Cape colony.<sup>136</sup> On an even more absurd level, these Mfengu grievances also included such issues as the establishment of shops in the Fingo Location to enable the immigrants to buy packing cases for making coffins, because, as Chief Garner Sojini indicated, "The Fingoes {were} used to being buried in coffins and {did} not like being buried in blankets like other natives."<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> C. O. 417/393: "Matabele" Thompson's address ....

<sup>135</sup> The Mfengu in Southern Rhodesia blamed C/N/C Taylor of Matabeleland for their post-1902 problems due to what they regard as his racist views and obsessive hatred of the Mfengu in general. Vide: Written Evidence of Rev. Sojini to the author ... December 11, 1975.

<sup>136</sup> C. O. 417/276: Report on an Indaba held by the C/N/C {Matabeleland-} with the Fingoes ... on ... September 21, 1899.

<sup>137</sup> C. O. 417/311: Indaba held at Bembesi by Rhodes .... September 6, 1900.

From the foregoing, it could thus be argued that whilst the grievances of the Mfengu remained confined to an amateurish and less coherent level, the relationship of these "black settlers" with the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia in turn remained good. But once the Mfengu began to challenge the fundamental aspects of the scheme under which they were brought into the country as well as the entrails of power the BSACo. wielded over them, the tone of relations between them and their patrons evidently changed and consequently became strident. In the first place, it may be observed here that there was a faction within the BSACo. official circles in Southern Rhodesia which was, from the start, generally opposed to Mfengu and other forms of African immigration from the South into the country. Such opponents of these schemes on "black settlers" included people like Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, where these people were to be settled; Hole, the local Secretary of the BSACo. and C. H. Tredgold, the Attorney-General. Since these officials were, from the beginning, overshadowed by the opposing camp which favoured the immigration of "black settlers" and, fortunately, included Rhodes himself, they, however, could only, at first, content themselves with wholesome quantities of pessimism and unsavoury forebodings on the matter. It was not until the Mfengu immigrants had begun to direct their feet astray, so to speak, that these forebodings actually began to assume a more meaningful shape.

Between 1899 and 1905, three main issues dominated and affected Mfengu/BSACo. relations. These concerned Mfengu response to colonist labour demands as required under the "Fingo Agreement", governing their introduction into the country; the repayment of the advances made to the Mfengu immigrants by the BSACo. during the course of their migration from the Cape and, finally, the question of Mfengu attitudes towards their BSACo. officials once they arrived in Southern Rhodesia. With regard to labour demands, the feeling in some BSACo. official quarters was definitely that the Mfengu were not responding as positively, on the matter of labour supply, as had been expected. Thus in May 1899, about six months after the arrival of the first batch of Mfengu settlers at Bembesi, the request by Chief Kona that the portion of the Fingo Location occupied by his people should be provided with facilities for adequate water supply, whilst favourably considered, was, at the same time, accompanied by the petulant remark that the Mfengu them-



selves had to provide the labour for sinking the required wells since they "~~had~~ not done a stitch of work up till now, ... "138

Similarly, the request by the Superintendent of the Fingo Location, in August 1899, for a number of bags of grain to be supplied to his wards, who, apparently, had not had the chance as yet to grow enough of their own food since their arrival, was, at first, very contemptuously treated by those BSACo. officials who felt that the Mfengu should then be selling their labour in return for food. Hole, the BSACo. Secretary, for instance, once more commented:

... the Administrator does not see his way to allowing these stores ~~(grain)~~ to be issued to the Fingoes: they have had ample opportunity of earning money and should now be in a position to pay for their own food; the arrangement with the Fingoes was not meant to afford them the means of becoming the pensioners of the Company for all time ..... 139

In the final analysis, it was only on the grounds of destitution as well as the desire to show some measure of consideration to the first Mfengu arrivals, in order to avoid alienating those who were still to come up, that the request to provide the Mfengu settlers at Bembesi with food towards the end of 1899 was granted. 140

What really seems to have irked some BSACo. officials on Mfengu labour responses may have been the pretexts and strong-headedness of the Mfengu immigrants over the word and letter of the so-called "Fingo Labour Clause." The common excuse most of these immigrants tended to proffer on being confronted with the demand for their labour was that they could not leave their families in the location lest they starved, whilst if they took them along to the mine centres, in particular, their women were likely to fall victims to the amorous advances of other non-Mfengu labourers. 141 To a large extent, the arbitrary alteration in 1900, by the authorities concerned, of the "Fingo Labour Clause" from three to four months as the minimum period each in-

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138 NB 1/1/8: Hole, Secretary, BSACo., Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 15, 1899.

139 Ibid: Hole, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: August, 30, 1899.

140 Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 11, 1899.

141 C. O. 417/276: Report on an Indaba held by C/N/C ~~(Matabeleland)~~ with the Fingoes ... on ... September 21, 1899.

dividual immigrant was required to work in a year, may be regarded too as having been the main cause for Mfengu dissatisfaction on the question of labour. Indeed, as the Superintendent of the Fingo Location aptly observed in February 1901, the Mfengu immigrants were, rightly, "very excited" on being informed of this alteration from three to four months of labour per annum, arguing, as they did, that "they are told one thing in the (Cape) colony before leaving and then told something quite different when they arrive here (at Bembesi)".<sup>142</sup>

Moreover, these Mfengu immigrants may have been equally upset by the other change in the labour tax, which, as from 1900, required all Mfengu men of between 16 and 60 years to either work for the prescribed four months a year or pay a sum of £3 in lieu of labour. Before leaving the Cape, the Mfengu immigrants had been assured that all men over 40 years of age would be exempted. As a matter of fact, it was not only the sudden and unwarranted changes in the 'Fingo Labour Clause' so much resented by the immigrant Mfengu community which adversely affected relations between the 'black settlers' and the BSACo. Administration. The differences of opinion between John Hlazo and his followers, on the one hand, who argued that they occupied land at Bembesi on a different footing from the other Mfengu immigrants and, therefore, naturally refused to abide by the requirements of the labour tax,<sup>143</sup> whilst the Company Administration insisted, on the contrary, that this group of immigrants was subject to the same conditions as the rest of the Mfengu community,<sup>144</sup> certainly constitute another aspect of those issues which inexorably complicated Mfengu/BSACo. relations on the question of Mfengu labour supply.

The second issue which characterized Mfengu/BSACo. relations between 1899 and 1905 was, in a way, very much connected with the first one. This second issue dealt with Mfengu debts to the Company. Once the Mfengu had arrived at Bembesi, the BSACo. Administration felt that it could not afford to wait for the five-year period of grace provided by the 'Fingo Agreement' as the limit within which these immigrants were expected to repay the advances

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<sup>142</sup> NB 1/1/12: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 26, 1901.

<sup>143</sup> NB 1/1/14: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 1, 1901.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Superintendent, Fingo Location: October 1, 1901.

made to them for their food and transportation costs from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia. Just like the labour question, there was a feeling in some BSACo. official circles that the obstacle to collecting the debts owed by these 'black settlers' to the Company was the pensioners' mentality ascribed to the Mfengu; a mentality whereby the Mfengu expected the government to do everything for them, whilst they did nothing to help themselves. To Griffith, the Superintendent of the Fingo Location at Bembesi for whom the collection of Company debts from the Mfengu was his main duty, the whole question of these debts was literally a taxing one. As this official was compelled to confess in January 1900, the Mfengu immigrants were, from his point of view, essentially lethargic and nonchalant about the matter, professing, at the same time, either the excuse that 'Matabele' Thompson had assured them at Butterworth that they had five years within which to pay off their debts or that 'they had no money but hoped to pay some of it -(the debt)- off after they had reaped their crops.'<sup>145</sup>

In the long run, the question of BSACo. debts and how quickly the Mfengu were expected and were trying to discharge them became the sole issue around which the regulation of Mfengu affairs at Bembesi revolved. Thus in November 1899 when the Mfengu, like the other African societies of Matabeleland, applied to purchase about 51 head of cattle from the total stock captured in the Anglo-Boer war and subsequently advertised by the Native Department for sale throughout the province, their application was curtly rejected on the grounds that these 'black settlers' should pay off their debts to the BSACo. first.<sup>146</sup> Similarly, an application by one Mfengu individual, in February 1900, to purchase the Government span (six oxen), hitherto used by these immigrants in the Fingo Location on a loan basis, at about £14-10-0d per beast, was equally turned down on account of the fact that the applicant in question owed the Company some money.<sup>147</sup>

On a more insidious level, the Company debt became a useful weapon to the Native Department in monitoring the movements of the Mfengu immigrants either inside the country or to the South. The Mfengu were totally forbidden

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<sup>145</sup> NB 1/1/9: Griffith, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: January 19, 1900.

<sup>146</sup> NB 1/1/11: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: November 1, 1899.

<sup>147</sup> NB 1/1/9: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 10, 1900.

to travel, especially to the Cape, without first checking with the Superintendent of the Fingo Location who ascertained whether the traveller in question had paid off his debt to the Company. It was, therefore, on this score that one Mfengu named Mlondleni was arrested and detained at the railway station in Bulawayo, in January 1900, for attempting to board a train for the Cape without paying off the £1 14s 0d he owed the BSACo. for the food and transportation of his horse from Imvani (Transkei) to Bulawayo a year before.<sup>148</sup>

The same obsession with the Company debt could be said of the hue and cry which followed the discovery, a few months earlier, that three of Chief Kona's men, to wit Alfred Gaju, Ndzanza Klaas and Kelem Zetu, had used the passes they had previously procured from the Superintendent of the Fingo Location, allegedly to seek work inside Southern Rhodesia, for travelling to the Cape instead.<sup>149</sup> What appears to have bothered the BSACo. Administration in this desertion by some of Kona's people at Bembesi was the fact that these men owed the Company some money. Kelemu Zetu and Ndzanza Klaas, both formerly of the Engcobo district in Thembuland, for instance, owed the BSACo. some cash to the amount of £6 18s 9½d and 9/-9½d respectively, whilst Alfred Gaju, formerly from the Willowvale district, was expected by the same Company to pay back the debt of a deceased friend of his.<sup>150</sup>

From the facts indicated above, it is apparent that the BSACo. Administration was bent on exploiting the debts owed by the Mfengu immigrants to the Company not simply as a way of establishing a bond between itself and these immigrants, but also as a means of reinforcing its own peculiar brand of psychological, economic and political domination over these 'black settlers'. In a way, the BSACo. was trying, in a subtle manner, to institute some form of debt-peonage relationship with the Mfengu immigrants, leaving them in a position whereby they were to become hopelessly dependent on the Company as their benefactor. From another angle, the Mfengu debts to the BSACo. became a very useful weapon with which to pursue a patently vindictive policy against these 'black settlers' and, in this way, effectively bring them to book. The manner in which the BSACo. pursued the Mfengu debtors was both relentless

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: January 28, 1900.

<sup>149</sup> NB 1/1/8: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: July 19, 1899.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: August 4, 1899.

and remorseful, rendering somewhat ridiculous the initial posture by this corporation and its functionaries that the Mfengu immigration scheme from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia was simply a charitable exercise.<sup>151</sup>

Indeed, the manner in which those Mfengu who fell foul of the BSACo. Administration over the Company debts were treated clearly demonstrates the sinister designs underlying the Company motives in introducing the Mfengu settlers, in the first place. In July 1899 for instance, one Mfengu labourer, Balekisa, fell sick at Selukwe, whereupon he was sent to Gwelo for treatment, but subsequently died in the process, leaving behind a £3 6s 8d debt to the Company. Since Balekisa's family was still in the Cape colony waiting to join him at Bembesi later, it was to Balekisa's friend, Alfred Gaju, formerly working near Bulawayo, that BSACo. officials looked for the payment of the deceased's debt.<sup>152</sup> It was for this reason, therefore, that the BSACo. officials resented the surreptitious departure of Alfred Gaju for the Cape, a month or two later.

Related to the case of Balekisa, was that of David Joseph Magunya at the end of 1901. Magunya had been working in the Selukwe district as an evangelist for the Methodist church when he fell 'dangerously ill', towards the close of 1901, due to an attack of acute melancholia. Magunya's illness and its link with the debt he owed the BSACo. were aptly portrayed by J. W. Reid, the Clerk-in-Charge in the Native Commissioner's office at Selukwe, who indicated:

He (Magunya) has a delusion that he cannot afford to eat, and nourishment has to be forcibly administered. This is being attended by Doctor Mantell, who informs me the disease may possibly have been brought on by the debt which Magunya owes to the Government (BSACo.) - and which he has been earnestly endeavouring to pay off - preying on his mind. If the Government would remit the small balance of this which still remains owing, Doctor Mantell thinks it might assist his (Magunya's) recovery.<sup>153</sup>

What the Clerk-in-Charge at Selukwe hoped to do to help Magunya was obviously to effect the cancellation of the remaining £3 12s 4d, which the sick man owed the Company, out of an original total of £15 12s 9d of which the rest had been paid off.<sup>154</sup> In fact, so confident was the Selukwe district official over his demand that he went on to quote the good qualities of Magunya to

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<sup>151</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.346-8.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: July 8, 1899.

<sup>153</sup> NB 1/1/15: J. W. Reid, Clerk, Selukwe, to N/C, Gwelo: December 13, 1901.

support his argument, pointing out, in particular, that the sick man in question had, during his stay in the Selukwe district, 'conducted himself in an irreproachable manner, and gained the respect of all persons with whom he (had) been in contact' and that 'his example and teaching (could not) fail to have a good effect on the Natives if he (were) spared to carry on his good work.'<sup>155</sup> Notwithstanding Reid's testimonial on Magunya's behalf, the BSACo. debt was not cancelled. Instead, the task fell onto Magunya's wife to fetch her ailing husband from Selukwe by ox-wagon as well as pay off the Company debt using some funds procured from friends, especially John Makunga.<sup>156</sup>

The Balekisa and Magunya cases demonstrate the ruthlessness with which the BSACo. pursued its Mfengu debtors either as a deliberate measure to bring the Mfengu immigrants to book or to generally in keep with its outlook and motives as a private corporation bent on getting some profit rather than a charitable organisation engaged on a spending spree. But in pursuing these Mfengu debtors with utmost vigour and zeal, including even those beyond the grave, the strain in the relations between the BSACo. as a patron and the Mfengu as wards, became more pronounced. These signs of strain became noticeable not only in the economic field, but in the political sphere as well.

Even before Rhodes's death in 1902, the dichotomy between the Mfengu and the white colonist society in Southern Rhodesia had begun to show in a number of ways. On the official level, it could be argued, in terms of Mfengu-BSACo. relations between 1899 and 1905, that whilst the Company as an economic consortium demanded to see its economic designs met over Mfengu immigration into Southern Rhodesia, the administrative officials on the other hand also desired to see their position of dominance over the Mfengu immigrants preserved and respected. They were certainly loath to see this position challenged by people whom they expected to be more dependable and malleable not only because of their historical background as congenial loyalists and collaborators to the white colonist cause, but also because they were foreigners in Southern Rhodesia where they were expected to be more vulnerable to numerous political and economic forms of pressure.

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid: Fynn, N/C, Gwelo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: November 11, 1901.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid: Reid, Selukwe, to N/C, Gwelo: December 13, 1901.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid: M. W. Barnard, Acting Superintendent, Fingo Location, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: January 3, 1902.

The Mfengu headmen or chiefs were, from the official point of view, just as blame-worthy as their followers over the question of 'proper relations' with their superiors in the country's BSACo. Administration and were, therefore, often subject to official reprimand or overt punitive measures for infringements, allegedly, interfering with the prescribed regimen of hierarchical relations and colonial class structure in Southern Rhodesia's composite colonial society. Chief Kona, for instance, was amongst the first of the Mfengu leaders at Bembesi to fall foul of the BSACo. Administration's requirements and expectations from the newly arrived Mfengu community. His crime derived from his demands for more land for his followers and alleged disrespect for his immediate authority. Chief Kona's problem actually arose from the misconception or false impression he had harboured that the Bembesi location would be set apart solely for his followers, the Amazizi, whilst the other Mfengu groups would, accordingly, be sent to their respective locations in the Nyamandhlovu and Matopo regions.

A basic aspect of Chief Kona's misconceptions here was apparently this Mfengu leader's assumption that since he had taken the most active part in prodding both the Cape and Southern Rhodesian governments to implement the Mfengu immigration scheme, once the scheme had been disclosed by 'Matabele' Thompson in early 1898, he was, therefore, 'the prime mover in the present (1899) migration of the Fingoes from the (Cape) Colony to Matabeleland' and ipso facto was thus entitled 'to have the first choice of ground (in Matabeleland)....'<sup>157</sup> In addition, Chief Kona backed his claim for the reservation of the Bembesi location solely for his Amazizi people on the grounds that not only did he expect to have the largest number of followers (between 600 and 700 people), most of whom were still expected by mid-1899 to come up from the Cape, but also because of his anxiety to prevent structural rivalry amongst the various Mfengu ethnic segments. For this reason, Griffith, the Superintendent of the Fingo Location at Bembesi, indicated, in May 1899, that 'Kona states that... the greater part of his people are still in the (Cape) Colony and that if they hear that they are to be located (in Matabeleland) in the same Location as the other classes (Amahlubi & Amabele) they being Amazizi, they will not come up, and that he (Kona) knows that the

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<sup>157</sup>NB 1/1/8: W. E. Thomas, Acting C/N/C, to Hole: June 3, 1899.

other ~~(Mfengu)~~ classes will feel the same way in this matter. <sup>158</sup>

Of course, some of Chief Kona's grievances over land allocated to him at Bembesi were genuine and, therefore, likely to be accepted by the BSACo. Administration. The demand to separate the various Mfengu social and political segments in Matabeleland, for instance, was not a strange one at all. In fact, the BSACo. Administration itself acknowledged it in principle, especially with regard to the application by Rev. Pambani J. Mzimba towards the end of 1902, on behalf of the Mfengu chiefs and their followers from Alice near Lovedale, to be granted land in Matabeleland. The idea of settling the Mfengu immigrants from the Cape colony proper, as Rev. Mzimba's clients obviously were, together with their kinsmen from the Transkei and other places, did not just appeal to the BSACo. Administration. Indeed, as Fynn, then the Superintendent of the Fingo Location, commented, he thought 'it would not be wise to locate ~~(the Mfengu immigrants from Alice)~~ on the Fingo Location, ~~(because)~~ firstly there would be endless trouble, ~~(and)~~ secondly, ~~(because)~~... they would not agree...'. Instead, Fynn went on to suggest that these immigrants from Alice 'be located elsewhere with surplus Fingoes... who ~~(could not)~~ be found ground on this ~~(Bembesi)~~ location. <sup>159</sup>

But whilst the Administration of Southern Rhodesia, as indicated above, recognized the principle of spatial segregation for different social and political Mfengu segmental groups coming into the country, it would, however, not accept its corollary advocated by Chief Kona on the probability of land shortage, should all the Mfengu immigrants be settled in the Fingo Location at Bembesi permanently. It was, to a large extent, quite prepared to acknowledge the inconvenience caused to Chief Kona's people due to lack of adequate water supply on the location, with the result that his people had to travel a distance of from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles in question of water during the dry season. <sup>160</sup>

Thus whilst the BSACo. Administration was prepared to grant Chief Kona's people and other Mfengu settlers facilities for permanent water supply in the Fingo Location, <sup>161</sup> it would not, however, accede to the request to reserve the

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to Thomas, Acting C/N/C, Bulawayo: May 18, 1899.

<sup>159</sup> NB 1/1/18: Fynn, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 18, 1902.

<sup>160</sup> NB 1/1/12: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: May 7, 1901.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid: Report of Visit of Inspection by C/N/C ~~(Matabeleland)~~ to the Fingo Location, Bembesi: January 28, 1901.



Bembesi location solely for the settlement of Chief Kona's Amazizi branch of the Mfengu. Besides, it was considered absurd and ridiculous by the Company Administration for Chief Kona to ever suggest 'to have the whole (Bembesi)-location to himself' for the sake of 'only six or seven hundred people (expected to be) under him...';<sup>162</sup> a claim which was, in this respect, further weakened by the fact that even up to the death of this Mfengu leader in mid-1903, all the followers he had at his command amounted to barely 40 able-bodied men, excluding their families (women and children).<sup>163</sup> In the long run, what Chief Kona's demand for more land for his people only managed to earn him, were crude reprimands from the authorities that he and his people could go back to the Cape colony, if they were not satisfied with both the amount of land allocated them as well as the pattern of settlement prescribed in the Bembesi location,<sup>164</sup> and also his temporary deposition from the position of leadership, within the Mfengu society, which was immediately effected by July 1899.<sup>165</sup>

If Chief Kona incurred the displeasure of the Southern Rhodesian Administration simply by his demands for the provision of more land to safeguard the security and welfare of his people, Chief Garner's Sojini's crime was, in comparison, quite a serious one. He was accused of both insubordination and general disrespect of his immediate superiors within the Native Department of Matabeleland. In September 1901, Griffith, the Superintendent of the Fingo Location, complained about Chief Sojini's behaviour, especially the latter's frequent refusals to appear at the Bembesi administrative office, when so requested, as well as his tendency to visit Bulawayo without the prior consultation and permission of the Superintendent at Bembesi. In his plea to the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland to 'take serious notice' of Sojini's behaviour and punish him 'in some way as an example', Griffith also commented in the following vein on the character of this Mfengu ruler, that:

This man (Chief Sojini) has a very high opinion of his own importance and I consider his action (in going to Bulawayo without permission) an open defiance of my authority over him.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> NB 1/1/8: Thomas, Acting C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Hole: June 3, 1899.

<sup>163</sup> NB 1/1/19: MacDonald, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 10, 1903.

<sup>164</sup> NB 1/1/8: Thomas, Acting C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Hole: June 3, 1899.

<sup>165</sup> C. O. 417/276: Report on an Indaba held by the C/N/C (Matabeleland) with the Fingoes... September 21, 1899.

<sup>166</sup> NB 1/1/14: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 13, 1901.

But unfortunately for the Superintendent of the Fingo Location, the exemplary punishment he had prayed for from his superiors in the Native Department of Matabeleland over Sojini did not materialize forthwith. All that Sojini appears to have received, at first, was a 'severe reprimand' and a warning that he would be expelled from the Fingo Location 'on the slightest future provocation,'<sup>167</sup>

As far as Chief Sojini himself was concerned, the reprimand and threat of expulsion from the location by the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, in September 1901, do not seem to have effectively cowed him. By the beginning of 1902, immediately after the departure of Griffith from Bembesi, Chief Sojini once more features amongst the Mfengu who attempted to take advantage of the arrival of a new official at Bembesi, W. M. Barnard, the Acting Superintendent for the location, by exploiting this official's ignorance and demanding more land for their settlement. This ruse was, however, frustrated by the Mfengu messengers at the Bembesi office who briefed the new official on the ruling of the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, on previous occasions, in connection with the issue of more land for the Mfengu settlers.

In the event, the antagonism generated, in the process, between the Mfengu messengers and the followers of Sojini was such that it not only sparked off meetings of protests, but also aroused anxieties at Bembesi on the safety of these messengers, whom Sojini's followers had apparently threatened to attack, with the result that the Acting Superintendent had to apply for reinforcements from the headquarters in Bulawayo.<sup>168</sup> In the end, the promised attack from Sojini's people against the Mfengu messengers in question did not materialize. But all the same, official measures were taken to make matters more difficult for Chief Sojini who, under these circumstances, was assured that he would neither be allowed to bring into Southern Rhodesia any more of his followers nor get any additional land grants in the future.<sup>169</sup>

On the lighter side of the Sojini/BSACO. Administration saga between 1901 and 1902, is the contemptuous manner in which this Mfengu chief regard-

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo to Griffith, Bembesi: September 25, 1901.

<sup>168</sup> NB 1/1/16: W. M. Barnard, Acting Superintendent, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 5, 1902.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid: Barnard, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 8, 1902.

ed the official buildings at Bembesi. It was alleged that Sojini had sworn to other Mfengu that he would not take orders emanating from the poor 'Kaffir huts',<sup>170</sup> which then constituted the offices of the Superintendent of the Fingo Location at Bembesi up to 1902. Indeed, as if to support Sojini's misgivings on the efficacy of BSACo. authority at Bembesi, Fynn, the former promoter of the Mfengu immigration schemes from the Cape to Southern Rhodesia, himself burst into apoplectic rage, on his transfer from Gwelo to Bembesi in February 1902, with regard to the scene which met his sight at his new administrative base. The residential quarters for the Superintendent at Bembesi, as seen by Fynn in February 1902, were 'absolutely unfit for human habitation, built of green bricks in 1894... ' and were by 1902 'in a condition of disgraceful dilapidation.' The administrative quarters too were in an equally poor state and were best portrayed in Fynn's description that:

The office here -(at Bembesi)- is an ordinary Kaffir hut about 10 feet in diameter and 12 feet high. Such a building is quite unfit for the transaction of official business and cannot but have a bad effect on natives accustomed to respectable Government offices in the Cape colony.<sup>171</sup>

In a way, Fynn, therefore, paradoxically vindicated Chief Sojini's contumacy and insubordination in the Fingo Location.

The changing character of Mfengu/BSACo. relations between 1899 and 1902, though minimal and less significant than at any other subsequent period of Mfengu history in Southern Rhodesia, was, of course, in harmony with the mood then prevailing within the white colonist circles in the country. The attitudes of both the rank and file colonists and the BSACo. Administration itself were, to a large extent, hardening towards not only the Mfengu, but also towards the black émigrés from the South in a broader sense. Indeed, it might be recollected here that this somewhat hostile attitude within the colonist society had been evident since the end of the Shona and Ndebele risings in 1896/7,<sup>172</sup> but had been temporarily smothered and overridden by the wishes of the Southern Rhodesian mining industry and the personal involvement of Rhodes in the matter of Mfengu and other African importation programmes from the South between 1898 and 1902. Yet in spite of the initial

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<sup>170</sup> NB 1/1/14: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 13, 1901.

<sup>171</sup> NB 1/1/16: Fynn, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 18, 1902.

<sup>172</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 160-80

success of the supporters of the 'black settler' schemes in the country, as a solution to the territory's economic and political ills, this success in no way obliterated all forms of opposition to these initiatives. Perhaps, it could be reasonably argued that opposition to the establishment of 'colonies' of 'black settlers' from the South, was just driven behind the scenes in 1898, only to re-emerge gradually between 1899 and 1902 and progressively gathering potency and momentum after the death of Rhodes in 1902.

Colonist hostility towards the Mfengu and other 'black settlers' from the South during 1899-1902 was manifested in a number of ways. There was, for instance, the case of Mrs. J. M. Engelbrecht, a Boer widow and tenant on the farm of Messrs Fletcher & Espin, Civil and Mining Engineers and Government Surveyors, in the Bulalima-Mangwe district of Matabeleland, who resented the presence of black émigrés from the South on the neighbouring property. In August 1901, she appealed to her landlords indicating that she could 'stick it no longer on account of a lot of Xosas if they do not leave this (neighbourhood)-';<sup>173</sup> a plea which, instantly, solicited the support of her landlords who, in turn, protested to the Native Department over what they called 'the tone these semi-civilized Kaffirs from the (Cape) Colony use towards Europeans who are helpless to defend themselves (and) which tone the natives of this country (Southern Rhodesia would) not be slow to imitate unless checked.'<sup>174</sup>

The subsequent prosecution of the black émigrés from the South, residing on a Mr. Heiman's farm in the Bulalima-Mangwe district, under the Colonial Natives Prohibition Act (1898) for trespassing,<sup>175</sup> was the upshot of Mrs. Engelbrecht's appeal. But most significantly, her feelings were shared by a wide range of sympathizers within the Southern Rhodesian white colonist society. This is particularly true with regard to the case of Ludwig Papenfus, a farmer in the Bembesi area and, therefore, a neighbour to the newly arrived Mfengu community as well as a pioneer and leading participant in the wars of conquest in early Southern Rhodesia, not to mention his outspoken racist views, brought along in undiluted form from the Boer republic of the Orange Free State.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> NB 1/1/14: J. M. Engelbrecht (Mrs.), Matopo Siding, to Fletcher (Translated from Dutch): August 25, 1901.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.: Messrs Fletcher & Espin, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 2, 1901.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.: W. E. Thomas, N/C, Bulalima-Mangwe, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.: Vide: *Supra*: p.54

Papenfus was totally opposed to the settlement and presence of the Mfengu immigrants at Bembesi, arguing, in July 1902, that since he had been 'a farmer for many years in other parts of South Africa I know that farming alongside a native location is very difficult on account of stock thieving. . . (and) trespass which (could) in the near future probably cause me serious loss and. . . a sense of insecurity which renders farming impossible. . . .'<sup>177</sup> For checking, especially Mfengu trespass, and 'its accompanying evils' against his extensive farm, Papenfus requested the BSACo. Administration to speedily fence off the 3½ miles boundary his property shared with the Fingo Location; a request supported by other white farmers in the neighbourhood such as the Rademeyer Brothers, who, in the course of time, even offered their services to carry out the fencing themselves, as long as the government provided the necessary material.<sup>178</sup> In the end, the BSACo. Administration had to face the music and soothe the anxieties of the colonist farmers of the Bembesi region by providing £2,200 worth of fencing material to fence off the Fingo Location.<sup>179</sup>

Within the BSACo. administrative circles, opposition to Mfengu and other 'black settlers' from the South was particularly noticeable amongst the junior officials, though the senior ones were themselves no exception to the rule. Amongst the Native Department officials in Matabeleland, for instance, Archie A. Campbell, the Native Commissioner for the Insiza district, and P. A. Stuart of the Bulawayo district were both quite voluble on this issue concerning the presence of 'black settlers' from South Africa in the province between 1899 and 1902. As far as Campbell was concerned, his views on the subject of the Mfengu settlers were occasioned by the transfer of abode by one Mfengu, Nkohla, and his family from Bembesi to the Insiza district where he had been engaged by a 'Dutch' farmer named W. H. Dowell, 'to plow and look after (the) cattle' on the latter's Bathcline farm, whilst the owner himself lived in Bulawayo.<sup>180</sup> What naturally aroused Campbell's indignation was the fact that whilst the Superintendent of the Fingo Location had considered the arrangement a temporary form of employment and allowed it to go through on that basis,<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> NB 1/1/15: L. M. Papenfus, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: July 26, 1902.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid: The Rademeyer Bros, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 30, 1902.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid: H. B. Dough, Inspector of Public Works, Bulawayo, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: January 19, 1903.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid: W. H. Dowell, Bathcline Farm, to N/C, Insiza: November 4, 1901.

Nkohla himself, on the other hand, viewed the matter from a different angle altogether.

As Nkohla, this Mfengu immigrant himself admitted in October 1901, he had come to regard himself as 'a Nyizane (Insiza) man' rather than a Bembesi one, although he still paid his tax at Bembesi where he retained his plot of land in the location.<sup>182</sup> To Campbell, the idea of the Mfengu immigrants being allowed to move about and settle at random in areas as far as '30 miles' away from the Fingo Location, as the Insiza district obviously was in the case of Nkohla, was just unacceptable. Thus the Native Commissioner of Insiza protested:

I was not aware that Fingoes brought up by the Govt. (sic) & located on a defined Location were allowed to remove their whole kraals in this way, & I regret that it is so, as they (the Mfengu) are a most undesirable people to be mixed with the Matabele.<sup>183</sup>

Campbell's opposition to the Mfengu settlers may be excused on account of the administrative inconvenience which unauthorised transfers of abode by Mfengu individuals entailed on the district level. That of Stuart, the Assistant Native Commissioner of the Bulawayo district, against the Africans from the South, in general, then resident in the town of Bulawayo was, it might be said, in every way, embossed with hard-line racist views and a somewhat callous attitude towards the black subject peoples over which this over-zealous and extremely negrophobic young official from Natal, was particularly noted.<sup>184</sup>

In his contribution to the 1899-1902 debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the presence in Southern Rhodesia of the Mfengu and other 'black settlers' from the South in August 1902, Stuart took the opportunity to give the 'Cape Boys' resident in the Bulawayo location a pretty hard bashing. In the first place, Stuart was very much displeased by the £66 10s 0d hut tax money collected by his office for the year 1901. From his own computation, he estimated that out of a population of about 350 people and 250 huts in the

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 24, 1901.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid: Statement of Nkohla before A. A. Campbell, N/C, Insiza: October 14, 1901.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid: Campbell, N/C, Insiza, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: November 5, 1901.

<sup>184</sup> Vide: Supra: p.324.

Bulawayo location, the Bulawayo district office should have collected, at least, some £150 in 1901, instead of a paltry £66 10s 0d. For this discrepancy, the 'Cape Boys' were held responsible and a new modus operandi, with regard to the collection of hut tax in the Bulawayo location, was, consequently, suggested not only for the sake of augmenting government revenue, but also as a punitive measure against the 'Cape Boys' residing in the location who were to be prevented, by all means, from evading the payment of hut tax. Accordingly, Stuart had concluded that:

... the drastic effects of allowing Colonial Natives of the worst type (which these undoubtedly are) to live in an insolent and immoral state (let alone their total disregard of the Hut Tax Ordinance) will go from bad to worse and that their far-reaching influence will be greater and take firmer root amongst the at present peaceably disposed Natives of this country, than can be easily foretold.<sup>185</sup>

Secondly, Stuart assumed that there was necessarily a co-relationship between the problems of the Native Department in collecting tax from the 'Cape Boys' of the Bulawayo location and the character of these alien Africans. From Stuart's point of view, therefore, the problems of the Native Department officials in Bulawayo in collecting tax were overtly frustrated by 'these Natives -(Cape Boys)- who -(were)- noted for their cunning and deceit and who -(had)- no difficulty whatever in using these vices to their advantage.' In a sense, the 'Cape Boys' in the Bulawayo location were said to have succeeded in carrying out their nefarious activities on the tax issue in league with the 'Zambesi boys' who had no huts of their own in the location but were kept as lodgers by the crafty 'Cape Boys'. But all in all, it was primarily the question of what Stuart considered the 'proper relationship' between the 'Cape Boys', as a subordinate community within a colonial setting, and the BSACo. officials, as representing the dominant segment of the composite colonial society of Southern Rhodesia, which worried this official.

Besides, Stuart feared and warned, once more, against what he saw as the pernicious influence of these 'Cape Boys' on the indigenous African peoples. With this anxiety in mind, the Bulawayo district official thus indicated:

It is not merely the loss of £100 annually (from the Bulawayo Location alone) which requires consideration - that

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<sup>185</sup> NB 1/1/18: P.A. Stuart, Assistant N/C, Bulawayo District, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: August 28, 1902.

is perhaps the least serious view to be taken of the matter - but it is the bad influence which this notoriously insolent and semi-educated race is exercising on the natives of the country. Let that influence but once take firm hold of our native - (who, if a savage, has at least respect for & pays his tax readily to the whiteman) and it will be goodbye to all respect and no inconsiderable revenue, and after that might easily follow riots, strikes and even another rebellion.<sup>186</sup>

Hitherto we have, in our study, examined the changing nature of the relationship between the BSACo. and the Mfengu as well as other related 'black settlers' from the South during the period 1899 and 1902. After 1902, the honeymoon period of amicable relations between the two sides in question effectively died a natural death. Relations between the BSACo. and the Mfengu settlers in particular progressively deteriorated and the case of Helese Ginya, between 1902 and 1905, certainly demonstrates, beyond doubt, this trend of developments more clearly than any other example. Helese Ginya's problems with the BSACo. Administration of Southern Rhodesia had their roots in the domestic and marital difficulties of Chief Zita or Zizi Kona, a kinsman of his and under whom he lived at Bembesi. The decision of Chief Kona to marry, in his old age, Elsie Noveyile Kona, the youngest of his three wives, by Christian rites and, therefore, on monogamous lines in Southern Rhodesia in 1901, had profound repercussions not only for this Mfengu leader himself but also for his immediate relatives and associates.

One such adverse result of Chief Kona's move was the quarrel over succession and inheritance which immediately ensued between the old chief and Mbanga Kona, his eldest son by the chief wife. Mbanga Kona sued for the possession of all his father's cattle in accordance with Mfengu laws and customs, which required a man's cattle, in polygamous households, 'to run at the Chief Kraal' where the chief wife lived;<sup>187</sup> which was apparently quite justified in this respect, since Mbanga lived at Bembesi with his mother, Nokasi Kona. Besides, Mbanga also demanded all the cattle of the other wife, Novili Kona of the 'Right-hand House' who had remained with her children in

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. The origins and significance of the 'Chief Wife' and the 'Senior Wife' as well as the 'Left-hand House' and the 'Right-hand House' each, respectively, gave birth to in terms of succession and inheritance in Nguni societies, in: Wilson and Thompson (eds.): Oxford History of South Africa: Vol. I: Chapter III: pp. 16-30.



the Cape colony, as well as the privilege to have all the cases, handled by his father as chief in the Fingo Location, to be held at his own homestead, which was, as we have already indicated, the Chief Kraal of Zita Kona under Mfengu law.<sup>188</sup>

As far as Griffith, the Superintendent of the Fingo Location, was concerned, Mbanga's demands were not at all out of harmony with Mfengu traditions and thus, after prior consultation with other Mfengu leaders at Bembesi, this official ruled in favour of the plaintiff and, in the process, authorized Mbanga to expropriate most of his father's of cattle, with the exception of eight or so beasts left at the disposal of chief and his Christian wife, Elsie.<sup>189</sup> The Griffith judgement in favour of Mbanga was, however, unacceptable to the other Mfengu parties involved, notably Mbarbe Kona, the son of Chief Kona's 'Right-hand House', who had remained in the Transkei, and those Mfengu supporters of the old chief against Mbanga at Bembesi, who happened to include Helese Ginya.

Top-level officials, both at the Cape and in Southern Rhodesia, were also dissatisfied with the Griffith judgement, since it was assumed that the Common Law of the Cape should have carried more weight in the matter. The Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, for example, indicated in November 1901 that:

All cattle (in the Kona dispute) . . . remain with (Chief) Kona - Kona having married (the third) wife by Christian rites, this wife is the only one that can be recognized. Mbanga's mother can only now be considered as one of Kona's concubines & unless Kona on his death leaves Mbanga or his mother any cattle or other property by will - the question of inheritance can only be settled by the Common Law of the Cape colony - which naturally only provides for legitimate descendants. This law is applicable in this country (Southern Rhodesia) where natives are married in accordance with Christian rites.<sup>190</sup>

Taylor's view was, of course, in tune with that of the Resident Magistrate of the Willowvale district in the Transkei, whence the Konas at Bembesi came and where the others still lived.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> NB 1/1/15: Statement of Mbanga Kona: Enclosed in Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 17, 1901.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 22, 1901.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Superintendent, Bembesi: November 22, 1901.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid: Resident Magistrate, Willowvale, Transkei, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: November 12, 1901.

It was over this judgement that Helese Ginya and other supporters of Chief Kona, against his eldest son, were to suffer at the hands of the BSACo. Administration, particularly after the death of this seventy-five year old Mfengu leader on a trip to the Transkei, in June 1903.<sup>192</sup> As far as Ginya's case was concerned, his problem was greatly complicated by the fact that the administrative officials at Bembesi, tended to support Mbanga Kona's cause, insofar as the Kona family's succession dispute was concerned. For this reason, Helese Ginya and Sifuba Magadlela, the more outspoken opponents of Mbanga, were, naturally, marked men at Bembesi. Indeed, Sifuba had earlier on been severely beaten, to the extent that he lost consciousness, by the supporters of Mbanga Kona, when, at a beer drink in the Fingo Location before the death of Chief Kona, he had, in a careless way, sworn that Mbanga did not deserve to inherit a position of authority after his father,<sup>193</sup> whilst Ginya's opposition had, in turn, aroused the passionate disfavour of Fynn, the successor of Griffith at the Bembesi office.

Thus in May 1902, Fynn had appealed to his superiors in Bulawayo for some punitive action, including expulsion from the Location, to be taken against Ginya on the grounds of non-payment of the £28 7s 9d debt to the BSACo. and lack of respect for administrative authorities in the Location. In short, Fynn regarded Ginya as a man '... whose behaviour and general attitude towards the (Southern Rhodesian) Government officials past and present has been and (was) still most unbearable.' Fynn continued, indicating that Ginya 'absolutely (ignored) this office (Bembesi)... (and) that this Native (was) a very bad character and was turned out of Willowvale District in the Transkei for similar behaviour to the officials of that District.'<sup>194</sup>

This uneasy relationship between Ginya and his administrative supremo at Bembesi did not improve for the better with the passage of time, but worsened in every way. The death of Chief Kona in mid-1903 and the subsequent succession of Mbanga Kona to the leadership of the Amazizi group of Mfengu immigrants at Bembesi later that year, contrary to the Chief Native Commis-

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<sup>192</sup> NB 1/1/9: MacDonald, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 10, 1903.

<sup>193</sup> NB 1/1/14: Statement of Sifuba: Enclosed in Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: September 24, 1901.

<sup>194</sup> A 3/18/24: Report of N. C., Fingo Location: May 26, 1902.

sioner's 1901 ruling, which had, as we have already seen, debarred Mbanga and disqualified all his claims to succession and inheritance of his father's property and position of authority, were bound to bring in another round of clashes between Ginya and Fynn.

Thus by December 1903, Fynn complained that Ginya's 'behaviour to his Headman -(Mbanga Kona)- and his people generally -(was)- unbearable....'<sup>195</sup> A month later, in January 1904, it was further reported that Ginya had 'not yet given his chief and chief's people peace.' He was accused of bringing before the Bembesi office 'endless land disputes' and of having been the primary mover in the dispute between the late Chief Zizi Kona and his son and successor, Mbanga Kona, as well as of instigating Elsie Kona, the chief's widow, to bring her complaints over Chief Kona's cattle, taken over by Mban-ga, before the Chief Native Commissioner himself in Bulawayo and, in the process, by-passing the Bembesi office which exercised immediate control over the Mfengu community. Moreover, it was also indicated, as part of Ginya's allegedly incorrigible character, that he was 'the only man at the meeting called to inform the people who the late Chief Kona's successor was, who did not thank the Government, and ended up making insulting remarks about the Chief -(Mbanga Kona)-.'<sup>196</sup> To add to Ginya's tale of woe, the Native Department authorities at Bembesi were not, in the least, pleased with the slovenly manner in which he was endeavouring to pay off the BSACo. debt. The fact that since May 1902, he had, by December 1903, paid only £3 out of a total sum of £28 7s 9d, whilst disputing the basis of the other £16 7s 9d,<sup>197</sup> was another cogent reason in favour of Fynn's demand for the expulsion of this Mfengu man from the Fingo Location.

Up to the beginning of 1904, Fynn's superiors in Bulawayo had not been sufficiently convinced that there was anything, in this junior official's charges against Ginya, which warranted the drastic actions the former called for against the latter. In fact, Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, had made it quite clear that he could not take any step to invoke the punitive measures demanded by Fynn simply on the basis of 'the bald and wholly inadequate statements that these men (Ginya and Sifuba) -(had)- been

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid: Report of N.C., Fingo Location: December 30, 1903.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid: Report of N.C., Fingo Location: January 6, 1904.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid: Report of N.C., Fingo Location: December 30, 1903.

misbehaving themselves in relation to the Government.<sup>198</sup> The Chief Native Commissioner had required more turgid facts on the misdemeanours of Ginya and men of his persuasion to proceed against them; a request which, it would appear, could hardly be met even by Fynn's appeal to the Cape authorities, formerly acquainted with the Mfengu immigrants, to provide helpful material.

Indeed, as far as M. Leifeldt, the Resident Magistrate of the Willowvale district, was, for instance, concerned, Ginya, in particular, had not been the bad apple that the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia portrayed him to be. If anything, Leifeldt had seen Ginya, before emigrating from the Cape, merely as 'a great nuisance', liable to be 'everlastingly having land disputes with his neighbours' but without committing any serious crime warranting conviction. For these incessant land disputes involving Ginya and his neighbours, Leifeldt was, however, very glad when he learnt, in 1898, that this man had joined the 'Kona trek' of emigrants to Southern Rhodesia.<sup>199</sup>

For all the official attempts to bring Ginya to book, allegedly for acts of insubordination but in reality for differences of opinion between him and Fynn, the Native Commissioner of the Fingo Location,<sup>200</sup> nothing was more effective than the petition of those Mfengu at Bembesi who were dissatisfied by the succession of Mbanga Kona to the leadership of the Amazizi. This petition, sent in April 1904 to Leifeldt, the Resident Magistrate of Willowvale, and which included Helese Ginya amongst its signatories, was, in essence, a final attempt by the anti-Mbanga faction to reverse the decision, whereby the Bembesi authorities had arbitrarily overridden the wishes of some of the Amazizi Mfengu of the location, by imposing on them a candidate, whom they regarded as 'an illegitimate son' of the late Chief Kona on the basis of the 1901 ruling, but was strongly backed by the Native Commissioner at Bembesi. Thus in the appeal to their former Cape authorities, the Mfengu petitioners, led by Ginya, indicated that 'Mr. Fynn appointed Mbanga heir apparent & that was against our views, -(and)- when we objected to him -(Fynn)-, he said he

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, to N/C, Fingo Location: April 6, 1904.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid: M. Leifeldt, Resident Magistrate, Willowvale, to N/C, Fingo Location: May 14, 1904.

<sup>200</sup> The title of the Superintendent of the Fingo Location was changed to that of the Native Commissioner with the arrival of Fynn at Bembesi in February 1902. Vide: NB 1/1/16: Fynn, Bembesi to C/N/C, Bulawayo: February 18, 1902.

-(Mbangwa was)- selected by the Government. . . .<sup>201</sup> Moreover, these aggrieved Mfengu were further enraged by Mbangwa's activities, on ascension to the Amazizi chieftainship, in expropriating all the stock left by his father for the benefit of his step-mother, Elsie Kona.

The results the petition to the Cape gave rise to were certainly not what those aggrieved Mfengu at Bembesi had bargained for. For Helese Ginya in particular, the consequences of this petition to Leifeldt were more profound and evidently far-reaching than he had ever expected. The Native Department officials in Matabeleland took the opportunity to nail Ginya on the charge of forging the names of other petitioners in the appeal to the Cape colony.<sup>202</sup> This charge, so propounded by the officials of the Native Department, was, to say the least, as unrealistic as it was indefensible. The names which the officials in Matabeleland alleged to have been forged by Ginya were, as a matter of fact, those of people who were either his kinsmen or supporters and were, in every way, openly hostile to the idea of Mbangwa being imposed onto them, with a position of authority over them and their families.

A quick glance at these names, for instance, shows that some of the petitioners in question included men like Fayo Mniki, a brother-in-law to Helese Ginya and a man who had acted as Headman of the Amazizi branch of the Mfengu at Bembesi, since Chief Kona's departure from Bembesi in 1902 till his subsequent death in the Cape colony during the course of his visit there in mid-1903 and also up to the appointment of Mbangwa Kona, as successor, shortly after.<sup>203</sup> The commendation by MacDonald, the clerk-in-charge at Bembesi in June 1903, for instance, that Fayo Mniki, the acting Headman, was 'a man much after -(Chief)- Kona's stamp',<sup>204</sup> is obviously indicative that Mbangwa and Mniki were just poles apart in their views; a fact which quite logically may have placed Mniki on a collision course with the Native Department of Matabeleland. Indeed, as has already been pointed out, Sifuba Magadlela, whose name was also included amongst the petitioners, was by no means a fan of

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<sup>201</sup> A 3/18/24: Petition of Helese Ginya, Samuel Kona, Fayo Mniki et al. to Mr. Leifeldt, RMO, Willowvale, Transkei: April 9, 1904.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury, July 18, 1904.

<sup>203</sup> Interview with Mr. Kenneth Kona (grandson of Elsie Kona), Fingo Location, Bembesi, November 18, 1975.

<sup>204</sup> NB 1/1/19: MacDonal, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: June 10, 1903.

Mbanga's, especially in view of the brutal beating the former had earlier on received at the hands of the latter's followers in September 1901,<sup>205</sup> which quite evidently testifies to this effect.

The relationship and connections of other Mfengu petitioners with Helese Ginya are just too clear to make the charge of forgery against this Mfengu dissident altogether ridiculous. Jamane Ginya, one of the petitioners was a brother to Helese; Samuel Kona was a young son of Chief Kona's, who, together with Helese Ginya, Mniki and others, had quite strongly urged and supported the late Chief Kona, prior to leaving the Cape colony and in 1901, to marry his youngest wife Elsie according to Christian rites.<sup>206</sup> For Samuel Kona, who was, as a matter of fact, a full-time evangelist of the Methodist Church in the Bulawayo circuit between 1901 and 1904, before he moved to the Selukwe district in 1905,<sup>207</sup> the temptation to persuade his parents to re-marry according to Christian requirements was just too compelling.

In short, the charge raised by the Native Department of Matabeleland against Helese Ginya was clearly a trumped up one, brought to the fore by desperate officials who were apparently unsuccessful in other respects to bring Ginya to book. Other offences credited to Ginya like the £25 7s 9d Company debt and his conduct, considered, from the official point of view, as 'habitually and persistently truculent and mischievous...',<sup>208</sup> may have carried more weight, had it not been for the fact that these offences were by themselves, primarily, ancillary to the major charge of forgery Ginya was thus being accused of by the Native Department.

But in the process of carrying out the alleged charges against Ginya, the developments which transpired indicate that, to a large extent, both these charges and measures taken by the BSACo. Administration against this Mfengu man were by no means credible. Indeed, they appear to have been, at least, actions largely prompted by sheer pique and extreme vindictiveness on the part of the Native Department officials who considered it their primary function to preserve the 'proper order' of hierarchical relations in the composite

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<sup>205</sup> Vide: Supra: p. 367.

<sup>206</sup> NB 1/1/18: Griffith, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 22, 1901.

<sup>207</sup> Based on notes supplied to author by Miss E. Buckley, Salisbury: October, 1975.

<sup>208</sup> A 3/18/24: MacDonald, Bembesi, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: March 28, 1903.

colonial society of Southern Rhodesia on which the success of the whole syndrome of superordination and subordination depended, especially so, in the words of Cairns, for 'the District Officer whose qualifications were related less to high academic attainments than to the intangibles of character.'<sup>209</sup> To an extent, it could be said that the forgery charge and the ancillary offences brought forward against Ginya were a mere charade in which the actual misdemeanours of this Mfengu individual were greatly exaggerated to cover the misadventures of the officials themselves involved in the matter.

As became apparent later in the appeals of Ginya and Elsie Kona to the Resident Commissioner in Salisbury in October 1904, the Native Department officials at Bembesi and in Bulawayo were not the innocent souls, they proclaimed themselves to be, pitted against a stubborn-headed man persistently encouraging the late Chief Kona's widow to engage in a series of conflicts with the authorities. In fact, these officials of the Native Department, in trying to establish those norms of domination which characterized plural societies where the minority group governed the subject peoples by coercion and repression, resorted quite openly to some very crude methods of doing so. In the case of Elsie Kona, the enthusiasm of the Native Department officials in their support of Mbanga Kona, as the successor of his late father, Chief Zizi Kona, verged on the fanatical and, for this reason, they gave unwarranted support to wanton acts of brigandry and callousness committed by the young chief-elect against his step-mother. The seizure of Elsie Kona's cattle by Mbanga, which she had previously refused to loan, is patently demonstrative of this fact. As Elsie Kona informed Sir Marshall Clarke, the Resident Commissioner, in Salisbury, the alliance of interests between Fynn, the Native Commissioner at Bembesi, and Mbanga was both evident and too strong for her:

A messenger -(of the Native Department)- arrived from Mr. Fynn instructing me to hand over my cattle to Mbanga. I refused to. On my refusing... the messenger returned to the office -(Bembesi)- and came back immediately afterwards and drove off the cattle. I proceeded to try to stop them, I cried and shouted and others -(Mfengu people)- came and called me away. The cattle were driven off. I went and reported the matter to Ginya.

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<sup>209</sup> Cairns: op. cit. p. 93.

<sup>210</sup> A 3/18/24: Statement made to His Honour Sir Marshall Clarke KCMG, Resident Commissioner, Southern Rhodesia, by Elsie Kona, a Fingo woman and widow of Kona Zita, deceased; Salisbury: October 9, 1904.

For his part in this seizure of Elsie Kona's cattle, Fynn was by no means apologetic or evasive on the matter. In spite of an earlier ruling to the contrary,<sup>211</sup> Fynn was curt and dismissive to the pleas of Elsie Kona, indicating in no uncertain terms that 'you ~~(Elsie Kona)~~ may go where you like, the cattle belong to Mbanga, Mbanga having been appointed successor to Kona.' Indeed, even when this widow implored the Bembesi Native Commissioner for permission, in form of a pass, to go to Bulawayo and see the head of the Native Department in Matabeleland on this question of her stock, Fynn was even obstructive; a tactic, of course, also conveniently adopted by Fynn's superior, Chief Native Commissioner Taylor in Bulawayo.

With Taylor's refusal to attend to Elsie Kona, the position of this widow had become virtually desperate due to the concerted acts of the Native Department officials to frustrate all her moves. Thus she had queried the Chief Native Commissioner: 'What can I do? Mr Fynn has ill-treated me, and upon my applying to him for a letter to his superior officer - you ~~(C/N/C Taylor)~~ - he refused to give me a letter and now you won't hear me without first bringing a letter, the position is impossible.' In Bulawayo, Elsie Kona's last resort was to appeal to the magistrate, who could only consider her case provided she had the services of an attorney; a privilege which this widow could hardly afford, as the attorney in question required the payment of a deposit of £20 which Elsie could not afford. In the final analysis, it was to the Resident Commissioner in Salisbury that this widow appealed to over her plight. In her own words, this decision was arrived at under the following circumstances:

...I took a train ~~(from Bembesi)~~ to Salisbury to find out from those in Authority the reason for my being so badly treated. I am starving and my children are starving and instead of being able to plough my land this year ~~(1904)~~ I can do nothing as my cattle have been taken away from me; nor does my son ~~(Pupani Kona)~~ receive the £1 allowance due to him as heir to ~~(Chief)~~<sup>212</sup> Kona. That amount is now being paid to Mbanga by Mr. Fynn.

If the treatment of Elsie Kona by the Native Department of Matabeleland in 1904, represents the high-handed manner in which these officials dealt with those subject people who differed with their decisions, that of Helese Ginya,

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<sup>211</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.365-6

<sup>212</sup> Ibid: Statement made to... Sir Marshall Clarke,... by Elsie Kona,... Salisbury: October 9, 1904.



her guardian, demonstrates, to some extent, how the BSACo. Administration of Southern Rhodesia ruthlessly crushed those individuals who stood in its way. The support Ginya proffered to Chief Kona's widow, during her difficult times against Mbanga Kona and the Matabeleland Native Department, was to prove Ginya's own undoing. As has already been hitherto profusely indicated earlier in this chapter, the Native Department officials, both at Bembesi and Bulawayo, had no love for Ginya<sup>213</sup> and once he actively assumed his guardianship role over Chief Kona's widow, these officials in turn intensified their efforts to crucify this Mfengu individual and, by so doing, set an example to any of his fellow men who dared, in the future, over-step his or her mark in matters concerning BSACo. /Mfengu relations. Indeed, by October 1904, the officials of the Matabeleland Native Department had gone a long way to stress this aspect of their administrative philosophy and attitudes in their dealings with Ginya as one of the subject Mfengu settlers within the Southern Rhodesian colonial setting.

Firstly, as Ginya stated before Sir Marshall Clarke in Salisbury in October 1904, when Elsie Kona complained to Native Commissioner Fynn over the seizure of her cattle, Ginya was accused of instigating her and, for this reason, his home was burnt down, whilst he himself was turned off the Fingo Location. Secondly, a certificate of loyalty previously granted to Ginya, like other Mfengu in the Cape, 'to separate us -(the Mfengu)- from the Xosa, who had fought against the -(Cape)- government', as Ginya himself testified, was arbitrarily cancelled by Fynn at Bembesi. Thirdly, drastic measures were taken against Ginya over the debt which he owed the BSACo. In spite of this Mfengu's protestation that 'I intend, as others -(Mfengu)- in a similar position, to refund this -(debt)- a little every year, £1 or £2 or £3', and that, in some years, he had not been able 'to pay much owing to the drought... and the cattle dying', these excuses could hardly impress the BSACo. Administration. In Ginya's own words, he was literally 'picked out to pay the whole amount -(of debt he owed the Company whilst)- others -(Mfengu were)- not', and, by October, was sued at the Magistrate's court in Bulawayo over the debt in question.

In fact, in pleading, as this Mfengu did, in the Bulawayo court that he had no knowledge of the other £16 7s 9d claimed from him by the Company and thus accepting the payment of only that amount relating to the expenses incurred in

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<sup>213</sup>Vide: Supra: pp.367-71.

bringing up, from the Cape in 1898, his cow and pig as well as the cost of food en route and at Bembesi, Ginya apparently was quite ignorant as to the limit to which the BSACo. Administration was prepared to go, in order to recover its funds. He was to discover this in a hard way, as he was later to admit:

~~(When)~~ I returned to the Bembesi ~~(from the Magistrate's court in Bulawayo two days later I)~~ found Mr. Fynn had confiscated one cow, two pigs, two goats and seven fowls. The door of my hut was also broken open. I heard ~~(that)~~ night my grain was going to be confiscated next morning and I immediately took ~~(the)~~ train to Salisbury ~~(to appeal to the Resident Commissioner)~~.... Even if I owe this money I do not see why the grain with which I feed my children should be confiscated. The amount of goods taken from me is more than the amount owed ~~(the BSACo.)~~ by me. The amount which I owe,...., is £9 17s.... ~~(This)~~ treatment is unfair, for why should I be treated in this manner and not others in a like position.<sup>214</sup>

Ginya's conclusion that he had not been fairly dealt with at Bembesi was shared by a number of top-level officials in Salisbury. In Bulawayo, the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland was, however, quite unrepentant over the whole affair and even went to the extent of rubbing salt into Ginya's wounds, when he gave, as his reason for the cancellation of this Mfengu's loyalty or citizenship certificate from the Cape, that the measure 'precluded ~~(Ginya)~~ from posing further before his ~~(Mfengu)~~ fellows (as he had done in the past) as being especially privileged to defy authority.'<sup>215</sup>

Unfortunately however, Taylor's superiors did not show any enthusiasm over his dismissive and callous disregard in this Ginya affair. The Resident Commissioner, Sir Marshall Clarke; the BSACo. Treasury, F. J. Newton (later Sir Newton); the Attorney-General, C. H. Tredgold, and, to some extent, the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, Milton (also later Sir Milton), all disapproved of the actions of Fynn and Chief Native Commissioner Taylor and the manner in which these two officials of the Native Department had handled the Ginya/Elsie Kona affair.

Various points of criticism were, in the process, privately raised within the top-level administrative circles in Salisbury on the Ginya/Elsie Kona case.

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid: Statement made to His Honour Sir Marshall Clarke, KCMG, Resident Commissioner, Southern Rhodesia, by Helese Ginya, a Fingo: Salisbury; October 9, 1904.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary; Salisbury: October 26, 1904.

Firstly, it was admitted that both Fynn and Taylor had over-played the charge of forgery against Ginya with regard to the Mfengu petition of April 1904 to the Cape in which his name apparently headed the list of the signatories. Thus whilst it was observed within the top-level official circles in Salisbury that the forgery charge against Ginya was overtly made both 'the cause and occasion of his removal -(from the Fingo Location)-',<sup>216</sup> it was, on the other hand, freely accepted that, as the Attorney-General indicated, even if Ginya had attached the names of other dissident Mfengu to the petition sent down to the Cape, this could simply be treated as an act of 'misconduct' and was definitely 'not such a forgery as is cognisable by Courts of Law.'<sup>217</sup> Moreover, top officials in Salisbury felt that the charge of forgery against Ginya was too ill-founded to sound realistic, as it was based simply on loose and unsatisfactory statements by Fynn and Taylor; statements which, it was concluded, could hardly stand any judicial investigation.<sup>218</sup>

Secondly, there was the question of the arbitrary cancellation of Ginya's loyalty or citizenship certificate, granted to him by virtue of the Cape Act 22 of 1867 and which had effectively exempted Ginya from pass laws or other civil disabilities in the colony. In the view of the superior officials in Salisbury, this action by the Native Department of Matabeleland was certainly ultra vires and unjustifiable and had given Ginya a very strong sense of grievance which he exploited with dexterity and to his advantage.<sup>219</sup> As these top-level officials concluded, it would have been enough for the Native Department of Matabeleland to retain Ginya's certificate in question until such a time when it was required by the owner for use outside the territory of Southern Rhodesia, where such certificates were anyway irrelevant.<sup>220</sup>

In the whole debate on the rights and wrongs of the Ginya/Elsie Kona case in 1904, what the top brass officials in Salisbury were mostly paranoid about were two main issues; firstly, the level of awareness amongst the Mfengu immigrants and the extent to which these 'black settlers' were prepared to explore all the possible official and legal channels to arrest all forms of in-

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid: Minute by F. J. Newton, Treasurer, BSA Co., to Milton: December 8, 1904.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid: Minute by C. H. Tredgold, Attorney-General, to Milton: December 9, 1904.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid: Sir M. Clarke to Milton: November 11, 1904.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid: Minute by Newton to Milton: December 8, 1904.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid: Minute by Tredgold to Milton: December 9, 1904.

justice carried out against them, as demonstrated in this particular instance by Ginya's appeal to a firm of lawyers, Messrs Cecil Roberts and Letts of Bulawayo,<sup>221</sup> and to the Imperial official in Salisbury, Sir Marshall Clarke, against the Matabeleland Native Department. Secondly, there was a feeling of uncertainty in Salisbury as to the reactions of the Colonial Office over the Ginya/Elsie Kona affair once the news reached London.

Starting with the second aspect of official anxiety in Southern Rhodesia, it was felt that the junior officials in the Native Department had acted in an unworthy manner in the Ginya/Elsie Kona affair. The treatment of Ginya over the BSACo. debt whereby on this Mfengu's return from the court trial over the issue, he found his homestead in shambles and his property seized, on Native Commissioner Fynn's orders, as compensation for the debt in question, was viewed by the top brass officials in Salisbury as 'prima facie evidence of severe treatment, deserving further enquiry.'<sup>222</sup> The same critical view was adopted with regard to the obstructive actions of both Native Commissioner Fynn at Bembesi and Chief Native Commissioner Taylor in Bulawayo against Elsie Kona, once her cattle had been seized and she wanted to complain over the matter. In the opinion of H. H. Casterns, the Chief Secretary, the obstructive behaviour of these two Native Department officials was out of tune with their primary duty as patrons of their African wards. In Casterns's own words, 'In such cases -(as that of Elsie Kona)- the Native Commissioner and the Chief Native Commissioner should assist rather than to throw obstacles in the way of complaints especially when their own actions are the subject of complaint.'<sup>223</sup>

Whilst the refractory actions of the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland and the Native Commissioner of the Fingo Location were thus considered serious dereliction of duty, the top-level officials in Salisbury were in a dilemma as to what line of action they had to take over the two Native Department officials in question without, at the same time, courting the disapproval of the Colonial Office in London on this Ginya/Elsie Kona affair. Thus while it was freely admitted that Native Commissioner Fynn, especially, deserved

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid: C. L. Carbutt for C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Messrs Cecil Roberts and Letts, Bulawayo: May 18, 1904.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid: Minute by Newton to Milton: December 9, 1904.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid: H. H. Casterns, Chief Secretary, Salisbury, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: November 17, 1904.

some censure for his part in the Ginya/Elsie Kona case, and that, with regard to both Native Department officials, 'one does not like not to support one's own men', as the BSACo. Treasurer stated, it was still felt amongst the BSACo. officials in Salisbury, that this support could not be given easily without some cost to the credibility of the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia. The Imperial authorities were, especially, the cause for anxiety as far as Newton was concerned, pointing out as he did, that the Administration could not count on the approval of Number 12 Downing Street on the matter. Accordingly, the BSACo. cautioned that 'Sir (Marshall Clarke, the Resident Commissioner) may accept the protests (and) declarations (of the Southern Rhodesian Administration) - but if he does not, I think the Secretary of State would take an unfavourable view of the (Native Commissioner's and the Chief Native Commissioner's) actions in the matter (the Ginya/Elsie Kona affair).'<sup>224</sup>

On the question of the level of awareness amongst the Mfengu immigrants, particularly on those matters concerning their rights, however limited, and the appropriate legal procedure to follow in pursuing these rights, it could be said that the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia was here being hoisted by its petard. The exaggerated emphasis the Company and the supporters of the Mfengu and other African immigration schemes from the South had placed on these immigrants' achievement criteria was beginning to tell, with rather unpalatable results for all concerned.

As has already been demonstrated elsewhere in this study,<sup>225</sup> the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia was very much opposed to a state of affairs whereby Africans in the country were granted, with ease, access to the Courts of law to challenge the actions and decisions of either the Administration itself or those of its officials. For this reason, when Karl Khumalo, that enterprising black émigré from South Africa, initiated the Ndebele leaders to the functioning and purposes of the law courts and, in the process, introduced some white colonist lawyers to handle the grievances of the Ndebele people towards the close of 1898, Sir Arthur Lawley, the Administrator of Matabeleland, burst into a fit of apoplectic rage over these developments. In the end, the consequences for all those involved were not in the least favourable. The two white colonist lawyers involved, Elliott St. M. Hutchinson, a Bulawayo

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<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*: Minute by Newton to Milton: December 8, 1904.

<sup>225</sup> *Vide*: *Supra*: Chapter II: pp.170-2

attorney, and Dyason, also an attorney and a partner in the Bulawayo-based legal firm of Messrs Coghlan and Dyason, were ordered, in no uncertain terms, to keep off their noses from the administration of African affairs at all times.<sup>226</sup> Those Ndebele leaders like Umjaan, who were associated with this initiative, were deposed from chieftaincy and Karl Khumalo ran the risk of being deported from the country, only to be detained for political reasons a year later. In Lawley's own words, the Native Commissioners' offices in the districts were the appropriate institutions to which the African subject peoples were expected to direct their appeals and not the law courts.

But whilst the BSACo. Administration could thus effectively hoodwink the indigenous African societies in the manner demonstrated by Sir Lawley in 1898 and, by so doing, allow itself room to carry out some of its bizarre and generally underhand activities in the territory, it could not successfully employ similar tricks against the Mfengu settlers. These new arrivals had been exposed to a long tradition of open judicial procedure in the Cape colony where their access to law courts had never been questioned. Indeed, as some BSACo. officials in Southern Rhodesia were later compelled to admit, this longstanding exposure and access to the law courts amongst the Mfengu had turned them into 'clever natural lawyers' as a group.<sup>227</sup>

It was, therefore, against this background that top-level BSACo. officials in Salisbury cautioned the Native Department in Matabeleland over the manner in which it handled the Mfengu settlers. In Helese Ginya's case, who had by the close of 1904 already appealed to the Imperial official in Salisbury and drawn the attention of his lawyers to the injustice perpetrated against him by the Native Department officials, it was clearly pointed out, as a precautionary measure, that this man was 'a troublesome kind of Educated Kaffir' and that 'all the more care ~~(was)~~ necessary in dealing with his case.'<sup>228</sup>

Tredgold, the Attorney-General, even went further than the Company Treasurer in admonishing the Matabeleland Native Department over the same subject when he indicated:

... that all persons concerned in dealing with this Fingo Loca-

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<sup>226</sup> NB 1/1/6: Arthur Lawley, Deputy Administrator, Bulawayo, to Messrs Coghlan & Dyason, Bulawayo, November 18, 1898.

<sup>227</sup> N 3/10/5: C. T. Stuart, N/C, Selukwe, to S/O/N, Gwelo: November 9, 1912.

<sup>228</sup> A 3/18/24: Minute by Newton to Milton: December 8, 1904.

tion should be advised that they cannot be too careful in dealing with the persons living there. My experience at Bulawayo has proved that these Fingoes are as a whole a source of great danger. They are at the bottom of all sorts of practices, generally egging on others to commit an offence while clever enough to themselves escape the meshes of the law. Making Kaffir Beer flavoured with stronger elements is quite a trade with them. The sale of this has most deleterious effects. Their defiance of authority is almost proverbial, ~~-(and)-~~ as a class they are inveterate liars ~~-(and)-~~ quite unreliable. I can thus sympathize with Messrs Taylor ~~-(the Chief Native Commissioner)-~~ & Fynn ~~-(Native Commissioner, Bembesi)-~~, and advise the most careful dealing with any complaint however trivial. Whenever possible these Fingoes should be removed to the place whence they came.

Judging from Tredgold's strong language against the Mfengu settlers as a community, it is apparent that the feeling in some quarters of the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia was running quite high by 1904. The reasons for this state of affairs are legion. Although up to 1904, very few Mfengu had committed any serious crime meriting this form of approbium and reprimand quoted above, it should be observed that they had by this period become victims of the situation inexorably created in the wake of the growing chasm between themselves and the BSACo. government. Thus whilst it could be frankly admitted that the involvement of some Mfengu individuals like John Petani in beer-brewing or what the British South Africa Police called the maintenance of 'native brothels' and harbouring prostitutes and bad characters along the Wankie Railway Extension,<sup>230</sup> which in this case subsequently led to the burning up of Petani's camp and property at the Lukosi railway station in September 1903,<sup>231</sup> may have by itself given the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia cause for concern over the refractory proclivities of these settlers, the same could, however, not be said of the whole range of accusations arrayed by the officials against these immigrants.

All the accusations hitherto brought forward by the BSACo. officials and, to some extent, by the rank and file white colonists, against the Mfengu were largely based on insubstantial stereotypes, born of the disillusionment of the white front over the dependability of these immigrants as a subject community in a strange environment. Once this disillusionment amongst the BSACo. offi-

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<sup>229</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Ibid: Minute by Tredgold to Milton: December 9, 1904.

<sup>231</sup> NB 1/1/20: Sergeant W. H. Geoffrey, BSAP Wankie, to Acting N/C, Wankie: September 18, 1903.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, to Acting N/C, Wankie: September 14, 1903.

cials and the white colonists began to take root, references to Mfengu and other 'black settlers' insubordination and unreliability became more frequent and the tendency to decry the so-called 'bad qualities' of the Cape Africans (the 'Colonial Natives') became more fashionable, especially as the relations between these 'black settlers' and their white hosts rapidly deteriorated.

Adverting once more to the Ginya/Elsie Kona case as a tangible example of the increasingly poor relations between the BSACo. and its Mfengu clients in the period 1902 to 1905, it is quite interesting to note that in spite of the board-room arguments and disapproval by the top BSACo. officials, with regard to the activities of Native Commissioner Fynn and Chief Native Commissioner Taylor in this particular case, in the long run, these two officials of the Native Department were not, after all, let down. Ginya was not only expelled from the Fingo Location, but was also imprisoned for some months. On his release from jail in January 1905, he managed to procure some land whereupon he could settle temporarily as a squatter, before gathering his family and property to return to the Cape colony. The private land in question offered to Ginya was within the precincts of the Empandeni Mission farm, where Father A. Leboeuf, the head of this Catholic institution was apparently quite ready to provide the succour Ginya required.<sup>231a</sup>

In his letter to the Resident Commissioner after his release from jail and in which he claimed for compensation from the BSACo. Administration, Ginya was obviously quite bitter and unrepentant over the way he had been treated in Southern Rhodesia during the six years he had hitherto lived there. He thus informed the Resident Commissioner:

I have been unable to write to you all this time as I have been wandering about looking for a place to put my children to live; because I was turned off -(the Bembesi location)-.

A European has given me a place to squat on at Plumtree. I went there after I was discharged from gaol.

I have now returned to Bulawayo and wish to -(demand)- compensation -(from the BSACo. Administration)- in order that I may proceed with my children back to the -(Cape)- colony as I don't know why I was dismissed from -(the Fingo Location)-.

I also want you kindly to make my certificate right that was cancelled in Bulawayo. The character given me by -(the

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<sup>231a</sup> A 3/18/24: Rev. Father A. Leboeuf, S. J., Empandeni Mission, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: April 23, 1905.



Cape)- Government ~~(is)~~ that I was a loyal subject to Her Majesty the Queen for fifty years ~~(up to 1898)~~.

... I want you please Sir, to reply this ~~(letter)~~ <sup>as soon</sup> as you get it as I have no place to rest my head. <sup>232</sup>

Faced with these demands by Ginya with regard to his certificate, arbitrarily cancelled by the Native Department officials in 1903, and also on compensation over his property either destroyed or confiscated by the same officials, not to mention this Mfengu's imminent exit from Southern Rhodesia, the BSACo Administration found itself in a rather uncomfortable position. Of course, on the demand for compensation, estimated by Ginya himself at about £27 (£12 for the cost of materials and labour for building his huts and £15 for the trenching of his plot at Bembesi), the Southern Rhodesia Administration would not concede even a dime. On the contrary, it was felt that this Mfengu had 'sustained no direct pecuniary loss by his expulsion from the Fingo Location' as the only property of his worth mentioning had been disposed off by the owner himself. This property included standing crops, said to have been sold for £2 17s 0d, and his doors and windows, valued at 20/- each, removed from his huts by himself; leaving behind valueless structures. <sup>233</sup>

Even more paradoxically, it was alleged by the Administration of Southern Rhodesia that Ginya still owed the BSACo, some money to the tune of £19 19s 3d. Obviously Ginya's remaining debt arose from the £25 7s 9d, which he had previously disputed as a fictitious figure, and an additional £8 6s 3d in costs, also arising from the Company's court action against him in October 1904. All his property (one cow, two pigs, two goats, and seven fowls) previously confiscated by Native Commissioner Fynn to forcibly meet this Mfengu's debt to the BSACo. <sup>234</sup> was alleged to have realized a paltry sum of only £13 14s 9d, thus leaving a balance which Ginya had to settle even after his imprisonment and expulsion from Bembesi. <sup>235</sup>

From the foregoing, it is evident that the BSACo Administration found it relatively easy to dismiss Ginya's claims over compensation arising out of disabilities connected with his fracas with the Matabeleland Native Department.

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid: Helese Ginya, Bulawayo, to Resident Commissioner, Salisbury: January 26, 1905.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo: to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: January 31, 1905.

<sup>234</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to A. H. Holland, Administrator's Private

But on the question of Ginya's imminent departure from Southern Rhodesia, things did not augur so well for the Company authorities. Certainly the soul-searching debates amongst these officials behind closed doors, as to the rights and wrongs of administrative measures taken in the Ginya/Elsie Kona affair, were beginning to bear results. The sense of fear and guilt amongst the Southern Rhodesian officials that once Ginya returned to the Cape, leaving Southern Rhodesia permanently, the state of affairs in the country might be exposed to the public eye was beginning to take root in Salisbury and Bulawayo.

A. H. Holland, the Private Secretary to the Administrator in Salisbury, aptly expressed this concern in a confidential telegram to the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland in March 1905. In Holland's view, one, of course, shared by Milton himself, it was a matter of paramount importance that Ginya should be provided with alternative land for settlement in some other part of Matabeleland rather than be allowed to quit the country since '... this would be much better than his (Ginya's) leaving (the) country (and) telling lots of lies.'<sup>236</sup> Besides, if such land were to be provided, it was significant that this had to be outside the Fingo Location as the Administration would lose face before the other Mfengu settlers by conceding victory to Ginya. In Chief Native Commissioner Taylor's own words, Ginya had to be settled 'in some locality away from the Fingo location as his return would badly influence natives who (know the) circumstances (of his removal)...'<sup>237</sup> The need to keep up appearances on white infallibility, on which the doctrine of white supremacy heavily relied upon to secure the co-operation of the African subject peoples and, in this way, more effectively promote the objectives of colonialism, was, in this particular case, just as important as the BSACo. desire to avoid unnecessary publicity as to the inner detail on the activities of its officials.

Under these circumstances, arrangements were, therefore, made in April 1905 to provide Helese Ginya with a place to settle in the Bulalima district of Matabeleland. The plot so granted was to consist of 'a piece of arable land, ten acres in extent, with sufficient grazing land for ten head of cattle and thirty head of small stock, and a building lot fifty feet square on one of the

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Secretary, Salisbury: Telegram: March 6, 1905.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*: A. H. Holland, Private Secretary to the Administrator, Salisbury, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: Confidential Telegram: March 18, 1905.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*: Taylor, C/N/C Bulawayo, to Holland: Confidential Telegram: March 20, 1905.

Government Farms (unoccupied)... ' in the Bulalima district. These conditions were, in every way, similar to those under which the Mfengu settlers were also granted land at Bembesi, but, at the same time, the Administration cautioned, Thomas, the Native Commissioner at Tegwani, that in the selection of the land in question for Ginya, '... care must be taken that its position lies in one corner or on the boundary of the Government Farm in order that the value of the Farm may not be unduly depreciated by the alienation of Ginya's portion thereof.'<sup>238</sup>

This change of heart thus manifested by the Southern Rhodesian Administration towards Ginya in the early part of 1905, did not, however, impress Ginya himself and Father Leboeuf of Empanjeni Mission, who had been obviously converted to Ginya's cause. Ginya had actually suffered too much at the hands of the BSACo. Administration and by 1905 the wounds inflicted on him as a result of the Company Administration's vindictive policies were still too fresh and his bitterness still unmitigated. Indeed, at the very time the letter on the government offer of land in the Bulalima district reached Empanjeni from the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland in April 1905,<sup>239</sup> Ginya's world had literally gone topsy-turvy. One of his sons was by then 'dangerously ill' at Bembesi, whilst his wife was equally poorly in Bulawayo. In the event, Ginya was compelled to commute between these two places, leaving the rest of his family at Empanjeni under the care of his missionary sympathizers.

For the reasons given above, even Father Leboeuf would not allow this tried Mfengu to entrust himself and his welfare once more into the patronage of the BSACo., however, well-intentioned. It was naturally felt that Ginya and his family would be safer if they either remained as squatters on the Empanjeni Mission farm or accepted an offer of land on a government farm adjoining the mission in question rather than anywhere else.<sup>240</sup> In the final analysis, Ginya, therefore, did not accept the land offered him by the BSACo. Administration in the Bulalima district in 1905 and the authorities were quite prepared to leave the matter at that.<sup>241</sup> When, after seven years, he tried to revive his

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo: to Thomas, N/C, Bulalima District: April 14, 1905.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Ginya: April 13, 1905.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid: Rev. Father A. Leboeuf, S. J., Empanjeni Mission, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: April 23, 1905.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: June 1, 1905.

claim over this Bulalima district land offer in December 1911, the situation had changed and his value as a publicity asset against the BSACo. Administration had considerably deteriorated. In the end, the Administration concluded that their 1905 offer to Ginya had lapsed and could not be renewed except under different considerations altogether.<sup>242</sup>

In assessing the significance of the Ginya/Elsie Kona affair, it may be appropriate to state that this case easily became the most celebrated index reference to the progressive deterioration of relations between 1902 and 1905. The identity of interests between the Mfengu settlers, in particular, and the BSACo., as a representative agency of British imperialism in Southern Rhodesia, was falling into some measure of disarray once the special association which the Mfengu as a community had for generations shared with British interests began to loosen at the seams, especially after the death of Rhodes. Perhaps as an indication of this gradual and steadfast departure in the relationship between the BSACo. and the Mfengu settlers up to 1905, it may be pertinent to point at the manner in which some alternative schemes on other 'black settlers' from the South were put forward for consideration by the Southern Rhodesian Administration as worthy substitutes to the Mfengu. The plan to settle Sotho farmers in Southern Rhodesia between 1901 and 1904 is just what we have here in mind.

Indeed, the idea of Sotho settlers in Southern Rhodesia, seriously considered from 1901 onwards, was not a new one as such. The northern Sotho of the Transvaal had, for instance, been introduced into Southern Mashonaland by various missionary bodies from that Boer republic across the Limpopo in the pre-1890 era; giving rise, in the process, to the nucleus of the Sotho community of the Victoria district.<sup>243</sup> Towards the close of 1898, there was a movement afoot in Southern Rhodesia to introduce a contingent of Sotho settlers, to the amount of about eight hundred families. These Sotho settlers were, like other alien groups from the South, to be located in specified areas of Matabeleland, but they were, however, not particularly enchanted by the places set apart for their habitation. In the Matobo-Mawabeni district for instance, D. H. Moodie, the Native Commissioner of the area, observed this trend of dis-

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*: Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo, to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator, Salisbury: December 9, 1911; and Hole, Secretary, Dept. of Administrator, Salisbury, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: December 12, 1911.

<sup>243</sup> *Vide*: *Supra*: Chapter I: pp.

satisfaction amongst the Sotho delegates and prayed his superiors in Bulawayo to allow the immigrants in question to settle where they preferred, especially in the Tuli district.<sup>244</sup> In the Manzanmyama sub-district, the authorities there were apparently quite prepared to accommodate these immigrants, particularly along the banks of the Tuli river where fertile land was said to be abundant. In offering to accommodate these Sotho immigrants as they did, the authorities of the Manzanmyama sub-district were also anxious to solve, in one way or another, the country's labour problem, even if this meant an open resort to a beggar-my-neighbour policy like this one, as Pieter Nielsen, the Assistant Native Commissioner at Manzanmyama indicated.<sup>245</sup>

In any case, this 1898 plan to settle the Sotho Chief 'Maffatoon' and his followers in Matabeleland does not seem to have come to anything, as the BSACo. Administration became too involved with the importation of the Mfengu and other related settlers from the South during this period. For this reason, any other moves on Sotho settlers had to wait till the end of 1901 when the Southern Rhodesian Administration was becoming disillusioned, in every way, by the various aspects of the Mfengu settlement scheme at Bembesi. Thus in this regard, the application of a group Sotho farmers, in the Matatiele district of East Griqualand in the Cape colony, led by Jass Kortjass in January 1901, to acquire land in Southern Rhodesia, was, to some extent, quite timely.

These Sotho farmers of East Griqualand were apparently motivated not only by the desire 'to trek if we can get land from -(the Southern Rhodesian)- Government cheap' as they indicated,<sup>246</sup> but also by the overcrowded conditions of the African areas in that part of the Cape.<sup>247</sup> Yet at the same time, it could not be easily denied that the waves of African emigration from the Cape colony to Southern Rhodesia, whether officially sponsored or on individual basis, so actively pursued since 1898, did not have their impression throughout the length and breadth of that colony. These precedents on Mfengu

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<sup>244</sup> NB 1/1/5: D. H. Moodie, N/C, Matobo-Mawabeni, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: Telegram: October (?), 1898.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid: P. Nielsen, Assistant N/C, Manzanmyama, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: October 6, 1898.

<sup>246</sup> L 2/2/8: Jass Kortjass, Matatiele, East Griqualand, to C/N/C, Bulawayo: January 8, 1901.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid: Surveyor-General, Salisbury, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: December 21, 1901.

and Thembu emigration to Southern Rhodesia, for instance, appear to have effectively influenced other African groups in the Cape colony, the Sotho farmers of East Griqualand not excepted, on the advantages of transfer of residence.

In Southern Rhodesia itself, official reaction to the application of the Sotho farmers of East Griqualand was both varied and interesting. High premium was, it would appear, placed on these foreign farmers, who were, according to some official quarters in Salisbury, quite desirable. The Surveyor-General's office, for example, summarized this view in a general way, when it indicated:

The location of some Basutos on Government land in the same way as the Fingoes would . . . be useful. They would form a new element and . . . a loyal one; aiding in the civilisation of the natives here ~~(in Southern Rhodesia)~~ and rendering any rising less likely.<sup>248</sup>

This positive attitude of the Surveyor-General's office in Salisbury, on the potential value of Sotho immigrant farmers, was largely given a boost by W. Bellairs, the Resident Magistrate at Matatiele in East Griqualand, on Jass Kortjass and his colleagues. Bellairs's report that Kortjass and other applicants in question were 'Basuto and ~~(were)~~ therefore the best class among the native tribes as agriculturalists and stock-breeders and ~~(were)~~ of a very progressive tendency. . . ,'<sup>249</sup> was quite a credit to these potential migrants and their supporters in Salisbury.

However, whilst the progressive character of these Sotho farmers of Matatiele was thus well appreciated, at the same time, it also served as a source of threat to the white colonists of Southern Rhodesia. The very fact that these Sotho farmers were reported to be creditable landowners, having in their possession in East Griqualand, farms varying in size 'from 500 to 1,500 morgen' and purchased by them from the Cape government on 'conditions similar to farms held by Europeans. . . ,'<sup>250</sup> did not, in any manner, please some colonist quarters in Southern Rhodesia. As Milton, the Administrator himself

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid: F. W. Inskipp, Survey-General's Secretary, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: February 4, 1901.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid: W. Bellairs, Resident Magistrate, Matatiele, East Griqualand, to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad: March 14, 1901.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid: Bellairs, Resident Magistrate, Matatiele, to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad: March 14, 1901.

confessed, there were several objections emanating from within the Southern Rhodesian colonist society which pointed out that whilst 'the Basutos and Thambookies -(Thembus)- and other colonial native farmers -(were)- intelligent and progressive. . . ' and, therefore, quite valuable for Southern Rhodesia, there was, however, the danger that 'the establishment of a class of natives who would be qualified for registration as voters' would appear in every way ominous to the white voters of the territory.<sup>251</sup>

Such anxieties and objections on the part of the Southern Rhodesian colonist society, with regard to the accommodation of Sotho farmers in the country by the close of 1901, may have shaken the confidence of only a few Salisbury officials as to the justification of pursuing the scheme in question to its logical conclusion. But in the end, it would appear that the confidence of those weak-kneed officials, like Milton, was somewhat compensated by the ebullience of those of their colleagues whose faith in these Sotho farmers never even wavered for a moment. J. G. Kotze, the Acting Attorney-General, for instance, was one such supporter of this Sotho settlement scheme whose views on the matter largely helped to both prop the confidence of his half-hearted colleagues and rescue the scheme when it should have foundered. In Kotze's opinion, the significance of a sizeable Sotho presence in Southern Rhodesia could never be over-emphasized in the sense that:

These natives -(the Sotho)- have reached a stage considerably in advance to the native living here -(in Southern Rhodesia)-, and their example may prove of benefit to the latter. The Mashona lead an absolutely idle life to the detriment of the progress of the Territory and of themselves. Any movement which may help directly or indirectly and in however small degree, to an improvement in this respect ought to be encouraged.<sup>252</sup>

To some extent, the Attorney-General's views on the alleged value and importance of Sotho farmers as settlers in Southern Rhodesia were quite in harmony with those of the Surveyor-General, who also believed in this myth on the worth of the Sotho immigrant. Moreover, the Surveyor-General was even prepared to see these Sotho applicants settled not only on the basis of land acquired by themselves through purchase in Southern Rhodesia, but also on a

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid: Milton to Attorney-General: November 25, 1901.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid: Memorandum for His Honour the Administrator re:- Grants of Land to Colonial Native Farmers by Attorney-General, J. G. Kotze, November 5, 1901.

pattern of settlement similar to that initiated in connection with the Mfengu settlers at Bembesi and their Thembu counterparts in the Nyamandhlovu district, where these immigrants were simply allocated locations en block but without any proprietary rights.

According to the BSACo. 's Surveyor-General in Salisbury, who considered both the Mfengu and the Thembu quite inferior in value and potential for the Southern Rhodesian Administration, in comparison with the Sotho immigrants, there was indeed all the justification to allow these Sotho applicants to come into the country and settle them on a location of their own because '... the Basutos would be at least as valuable as either of these tribes -(the Mfengu and the Thembu)- and... more so.' Moreover, this official argued, 'a variety of elements in the population -(of Southern Rhodesia was)- of strategic value and that Basutos would yield more servants - male and female - than the other tribes mentioned.' In conclusion, the Surveyor-General observed:

I wish we had a good location of them -(the Sotho)- near Salisbury; they would lead the way in supplying domestics and other servants.<sup>253</sup> I question whether the Fingoes have done much that way.

To minimize the economic and political threat which, it was feared, the Sotho immigrant farmers posed for the Southern Rhodesian colonists, both the Attorney-General and the Surveyor-General had water-tight solutions to the situation in their sleeves. In a nut-shell, it was felt that the potency of these Sotho immigrants could be easily dissipated, firstly, by limiting the size of the landholdings each of these immigrant farmers could acquire in Southern Rhodesia, say, for instance, by an elaborate administrative policy whereby efforts would be made to avoid granting farms to the tune of 1,500 morgen (about 3,000 acres) to a single Sotho farmer and his family alone.

Secondly, very few of these Sotho farmers were to be introduced, at first, as an experiment and these only after the Southern Rhodesian Administration had been satisfied on such issues as character, means and suitability before their arrival in the country. The idea here was to effectively discourage what the Salisbury officials regarded as 'undesirable elements' from entering the country and, in this way, unnecessarily reinforcing the ranks of the territory's black voters. Thirdly and still connected with the question of the black vote, it was also felt that the fears of the colonist society on the enjoyment of fran-

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid: Surveyor-General to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: December 21, 1901.



chise rights by these foreign Africans could be overcome 'by scattering these -(Sotho)- native farmers, and not having too many of them living in one locality.'<sup>254</sup>

Finally, it would appear that the Salisbury officials were, to some extent, quite confident on the adequacy of Southern Rhodesia's franchise legislation to contain the situation, once the Sotho immigrant farmers were settled in the country. The colonist fear, that these Sotho farmers would take advantage of the 'blank vote' of those poor African tenants living on their property to enhance their voting strength, was the main bone of contention. But the Salisbury officials, however, were evidently contented that this situation could easily be dealt with by official emphasis or even manipulation of the requisite franchise qualifications for the African voter. For example, it was pointed out that whilst the Sotho landlords built their houses 'like Europeans', their African tenants, on the other hand, would obviously 'live like ordinary natives in huts.'

Besides, it was also assumed that even the potential Sotho immigrant farmers themselves could be effectively screened by 'fixing a pretty high price -(of land)- per morgen' which, together with the stipulation under the franchise law that a voter was required to build a house to the value of at least £75, would naturally exclude a sizeable number of potential voters among these people.<sup>255</sup> Thus by manipulating the economic factor in the Southern Rhodesian franchise law, some Salisbury officials concluded that the BSACo. Administration could, in a way, kill two birds with one stone; carry out the plan to accommodate Sotho immigrant farmers in the country, but, at the same time, emasculate them economically to prevent a situation whereby they could pose a serious challenge to the white colonist voter. The Sotho farmers were, in this respect, to take their place in the heterogeneous colonial society of Southern Rhodesia where African immigrant groups, from either below the Limpopo or across the Zambesi, jostled and interacted in various ways with both the white colonist society and the indigenous African communities of the territory.

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<sup>254</sup> Ibid: Memorandum to His Honour the Administrator... by Attorney-General, Kotze: November 5, 1901.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid: Surveyor-General to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: December 21, 1901.

## Conclusion

In assessing the points of import in the origins and fruition of Mfengu and other 'black settler' schemes in Southern Rhodesia between 1899 and 1905, it may be argued that these schemes did not sufficiently meet the expectations and requirements of the BSACo. Administration for a variety of reasons. Too much emphasis was, at the initial stage of these schemes, placed on the ascriptive and achievement criteria of these African foreign groups from the South, whilst little consideration was reserved for the knitty-gritty side of the economic and political issues of the composite colonial society in Southern Rhodesia as in other parts of the world. The white colonist segment in Southern Rhodesia which required politically docile and economically vulnerable foreign African communities in the territory to mediate between itself and the indigenous subject but unco-operative African peoples, had gambled, at least as far as the Mfengu immigrants were concerned, on factors of historical bearing to elicit those requisite qualities amongst the Mfengu, as collaborators of colonial enterprise, to pay off large dividends on the question of African immigration. Arguing from a particularistic point of view, it was felt, amongst the BSACo. officials in Southern Rhodesia, that because of their prior contact with European or colonist influences in the Cape, which obviously gave them pronounced advantages in their dealings with both the white colonist and indigenous African societies of Southern Rhodesia, the Mfengu and other black satellite communities from the South would evidently fit in with those preconceived colonist ideas on the 'ideal society' and 'proper' black/white dependence, whether economic or political, which the dominant white ruling group intended to establish and maintain.

For their part as a privileged medial element within this plural society of Southern Rhodesia, the African immigrant groups from the South were expected to strive to maintain the status quo and, in the process, develop some form of stake in the peculiar colonial setting into which they were thus introduced. As far as the Mfengu in particular were concerned, their suitability in the scheme was hitherto never questioned, due to this African group's tendency to, like the Creoles of Sierra Leone, idealize their special association with Britain and British colonial agencies.<sup>256</sup> Mfengu proclivity to identify with the

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<sup>256</sup> For the Creole case of nineteenth century ultra-loyalty to Britain, Vide: Spitzer: op. cit., pp. 100-4.

aims of British imperialism in the African sub-continent and their concomitant habits of rationalizing such empathy with British interests in terms of gratitude to what the British had done for their Mfecane-riven ancestors, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, or simply to maintain the peculiar perception which missionaries and philanthropists had conceived, in connection with these people, as an important arm of British colonial expansion in Southern Africa as well as living examples of the success of British 'civilizing' endeavours in Africa at a later stage, were, it would appear, sufficient guarantees for the Southern Rhodesian Administration to count on the feasibility of introducing such people into the country.

The nature of BSACo. /Mfengu relations, therefore, suffered due to the misconceptions and erroneous assumptions on which they were founded. Gradually, and especially after 1902, these BSACo. /Mfengu relations inexorably deteriorated as the authors of the misconceptions failed to adjust to the realities of the Southern Rhodesian colonial situation with the result that the Mfengu fell out of grace with the BSACo. officials in Salisbury and Bulawayo as 'the favoured Africans' in that British possession. In the long run, a number of other African foreign groups came into the limelight as substitutes to these fallen Mfengu; the Sotho being the best example. The Sotho immigration scheme, taken up rather seriously in 1901, had its chances of success. As has been pointed out elsewhere in this study, Rhodes was himself an astute opponent to the introduction of the Sotho people in Southern Rhodesia, ostensibly on the grounds that the Sotho having never been subjected to direct colonial rule, were, therefore, spoilt by missionary or other philanthropic patronage.<sup>257</sup>

Thus after Rhodes's death in 1902, more forthright measures were adopted by the Southern Rhodesian Administration between 1903 and 1904 to introduce more Sotho elements into Southern Rhodesia. It was, therefore, in accordance with this view to maximize a loyalist foreign African element that the plan to settle the Phuthi leader, Chief Mocheko Lethuka, the grandson of Chief Morooosi, and his people in Matabeleland in 1903 must be examined. The BSACo. Administration and the Imperial authorities in Southern Africa obviously wanted to exploit the differences between Lerotholi, the Paramount Chief of Basuto-

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<sup>257</sup> Vide: Mss. Afr. S. 211/3: Lagden to Clarke: Private: December 28, 1898.

land, and Mocheko and further the BSACo. 's grand design of establishing a safety belt against future African insurrection in Southern Rhodesia, but the design was unfortunately frustrated by Mocheko's reluctance to accept the offer.<sup>258</sup> Similarly, the attempt to introduce Sotho police levies for Southern Rhodesia in 1904,<sup>259</sup> should be looked at in the same light. After 1902, the Sotho had virtually replaced the Mfengu as the BSACo. 's 'favourite Africans' and were frantically sought after in consequence but with little success. As far as the Mfengu were concerned, their popularity in the eyes of the officials of the Southern Rhodesian Administration could only deteriorate rather than improve after 1902.

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<sup>258</sup>Vide: C. O. 417/394: Petition of Mocheko Lethuka to Milner: March 22, 1904, and H. C. Sloley, Resident Commissioner, Maseru, to Milner: December 31, 1903.

<sup>259</sup>Vide: C. O. 417/393: Milton to Milner: August 5 and 9, 1904.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Immigration of Trans-Zambesians into Southern Rhodesia up to 1930: A Durable Labour Solution:

- (i) Labour migrants from Northern Rhodesia and administrative collusion at work, 1903-1923.

#### Introduction

The labour question in Southern Rhodesia is one aspect of African colonial history which has recently been subjected to severe analysis, with different conclusions to suit various ideological persuasions and academic disciplines. Charles van Onselen, who has emerged as the most prolific writer and analyst of the African labour question in the Southern Rhodesian mining industry between 1900-1933, has concluded, in various articles and publications, that the dominant feature of this industry, during the period in question, was its profitability constraints. This consequently rendered the industry less attractive and competitive in comparison with the giant mines of the Transvaal. To accord with this rather unfortunate course of events, the Southern Rhodesian mining employers, therefore, consequently came to rely heavily on cheap African labour supply, notwithstanding the obvious adverse consequences arising therefrom.<sup>1</sup> The same argument has been pursued by Arrighi who also indicates that cheap labour was an underlying aspect of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in the political economy of early Southern Rhodesia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. van Onselen: 'Worker Consciousness in Black Miners: Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1920': Journal of African History: XIV, 2, 1973: pp. 239-40; 'The 1912 Wankie Colliery Strike': Journal of African History: XV, 2, 1974: pp. 275-6, 286-8; 'Black Workers in Central African Industry': Journal of Southern African Studies: Vol. I: No. 2: April 1975: pp. 240-1. This last article also forms an introduction to van Onselen's research: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia; 1900-1933: D. Phil. (unpublished) thesis: St. Anthony's College, Oxford: November, 1974. (This thesis has since been published under a similar title.)

<sup>2</sup>G. Arrighi: The Political Economy of Rhodesia: Mouton & Co. Publishers: The Hague: 1967: pp. 24-5, 29, and 'Labour Supplies in Historical Per-

Mackenzie, somewhat more sympathetic to white settler ideology and official opinion in Southern Rhodesia, has also singled out the role of cheap labour as a corollary to the spatial segregation movement, symbolized in this instance by the country's land tenure system.<sup>3</sup> Throughout this study, it will be argued that the labour problem and the processes adopted to procure labour supply were a development of calculated eclectic policies very much characteristic and consonant with the functions and designs of composite colonial societies. It will also be demonstrated that the 'labour problem' was essentially an artificial phenomenon created by the superordinate stratum of the Southern Rhodesian colonial society to undermine the subordinate strata and, consequently, flood the country with cheap labour in the form of more malleable external accretions - the 'migrant' factor.<sup>4</sup> Finally, this study contends and will endeavour to demonstrate the fallacy of the 'labour problem' issue and the incipient selective policies of the employers and their preference for workers of specific ethnic groups, especially foreign ones, allegedly well endowed with peculiar working skills, hence distorting the labour supply question. In the final analysis, it was apparently these befogged arguments and practices which determined the success of trans-Zambesian labour immigration into the country.

Colonial society has been described as a plural society in a conflict situation, a vestige of the earlier frontier conditions whereby power resources and differentials determined the character of dominance and subordination and, obviously, excluded equality and mobility between the subordinate and superordinate interacting groups. The inequitable distribution of power between

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spective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia.' Journal of Development Studies: Vol. 6, No. 3: 1970: pp. 197-234.

<sup>3</sup>J. M. Mackenzie: 'African Labour in the Chartered Company Period': Rhodesian History: Vol. I: 1970: pp. 34-6, 48-50; 'The Chartered Africans: Colonial Office, Settlers and BSACo., Rhodesia, 1890-1923': Institute of Commonwealth Studies (University of London) Seminar Papers: Vol. 4: 1972: pp. 79-80, 83; 'Colonial Labour Policy and Rhodesia': The Rhodesian Journal of Economics: Vol. 8, No. I: March, 1974: pp. 12-3. This author does not in any way agree with most of Mackenzie's conclusions which only differ in degree with those of the Native Department.

<sup>4</sup>For my theory on race relations and general group interaction, I have used these works: Rex: Race Relations in Sociological Theory; and Wilson: Power, Racism and Privilege: Race Relations in Theoretical and Socio-historical Perspectives,

these two or more groups, it is argued, influenced the manner of not only the social and political stratification in this composite society, but also the pattern of economic exploitation of the resources of the given colony. Given such power differentials, competition between these groups was undoubtedly out of the question and, instead, the general pattern of inter-group relationship in the economic sphere was one whereby the dominant group sought to exploit the labour of the subordinate segments, often unsuccessfully, with coercive colonial institutions like forced labour, taxation and related labour-inducing devices being liberally applied. In cases of failure, it is further argued in relation to composite colonial societies, the subordinate social groups were invariably the scapegoats and were consequently subjected to punitive policies, whose frequency and severity usually reflected the gravity or regularity of the economic crises facing the dominant political, social and economic segments.

In a situation where these scapegoat groups were racially and physically distinguishable, the punitive policies were often incorporated as well into the value system and culture of the dominant groups. Under these circumstances, the subsequent abuses, psychological stereotypes and other disparaging views were, therefore, not only symbolic of the existing intergroup conflict and strained relations, but also represented verbalised '... forms of aggression resulting from frustration in the objective situation, ..'.<sup>5</sup> These attitudes were naturally a residue of earlier military conflicts, themselves a form of competition for political and economic dominance. From another angle, verbal abuse and racial hostility towards subordinate groups, in a given racially composite colonial society, may be regarded as a prelude to the outright institutionalization of racially stratified social systems and exploitative economic patterns, especially when the interests of the dominant groups may seem to have been threatened by opposition, competition, military revolts or other obstacles. The gravity of these obstacles, in turn, tended to determine the virulence of abuse and the depth of intergroup hostility.<sup>6</sup>

These simple socio-historical theoretical approaches to social and racial stratification indicated above, are peculiarly pertinent to colonial societies in general and to the post-1896 Southern Rhodesian society in particular. Using

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<sup>5</sup>Rex: op. cit. : pp. 29-30, 36, 121-8.

<sup>6</sup>Wilson: op. cit.: pp. 43, 77-80.

such conceptual tools, it will be demonstrated that labour shortage in early Southern Rhodesia, however loud the hue and cry, was over-dramatized by deliberately introducing non-economic factors into the process of labour supply and demand and thus creating a paradoxical situation whereby the same labour demand was, in the first place, responsible for the ingress into the country of large hordes of external supply, especially from the trans-Zambesian territories, whilst, at the same time, local African labour was emigrating from Southern Rhodesia to South Africa. To come to grips with such inconsistencies, we have to examine both the restrictive political system and the ethnic factor as underlying features of the labour problem and also, to a large measure, as a background to the character and quality of early African political response to colonialism in the two provinces, Mashonaland and Matabeleland, in Southern Rhodesia. It is interesting to observe that van Onselen, hitherto the most ebullient writer on African labour in the country, has over-emphasized the process of African working-class formation at the expense of other issues, especially the ethnic factor,<sup>7</sup> while other labour historians have argued in terms not dissimilar to those espoused by the Southern Rhodesian Native Department.<sup>8</sup> The attitudes held in relation to various ethnic groups by colonist employers of labour are of special interest in this study.

We have previously discussed the manner in which early missionary contacts influenced the pattern of attitudes adopted by different later-day colonial governments, especially in South Central Africa, towards various ethnic groups.<sup>9</sup> Official and general white settlers' attitudes towards particular African national groups also inexorably affected the manner in which colonist employers reacted to labour supply, police recruitment and other matters, at least as far as Southern Rhodesia was concerned. These attitudes, especially towards African labourers, were, of course, an extra dimension to the whole character of race relations and social stratification and greatly affected, in the long run, the volume of labour supply as well as labour conditions at various centres of employment particularly in early Southern Rhodesia. The

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<sup>7</sup> Van Onselen: 'Worker Consciousness in Black Miners': pp. 251-2, and 'Black labour in Central African Industry': p. 246.

<sup>8</sup> Mackenzie: 'African Labour in Chartered Company Period': pp. 52-3, 55-8.

<sup>9</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.43-6



case of the Selukwe mines, their labour shortage problem and the attitudes of mine managers to Shona labourers, in a district right in the heart of the Shona country but, at the same time, administered as part of Matabeleland, is a very revealing study on the functioning of psychological attitudes and their immediate bearing on labour supply in a colonial setting.<sup>10</sup>

Although racial hostility after 1896 reached such a pitch in Southern Rhodesia that even the Boer republics across the Limpopo in the South appeared extraordinarily 'liberal' in comparison,<sup>11</sup> the attitudes of the Southern Rhodesian white settlers towards Shona societies in general and, consequently, Shona labour supply in particular, assumed a peculiar brand of their own from the very beginning. These views were commonly shared within the white colonist community, ranging from adventures, clerics, officials to employers of labour. As early as November 1890, 'Matabele' Wilson, a believer in the concept of the superiority of 'Zulu blood' stated:

The world would not have lost much if the whole of the Mashona were gone to make room for a better people.<sup>12</sup>

Such opinions were obviously in keeping with the thinking of other colonists like the Rev. Hartman, the Catholic priest, who had accompanied the Pioneer Column as a chaplain in 1890. As the reverend missionary viewed things, the Shona as a labourer was not a prospect he and his colleagues would have wished to cherish. Accordingly, he had this to say of the physique of this class of labourer:

Has the Mashona a fine physique? By no means. Occasionally one may meet a robust woman or girl, but men and boys are in this respect a disgrace. Exceptions are so rare, that they only serve to bring out more closely what a wretched framework their soul is cased in. Their shoulders are often drawn up in such a way as to give the whole figure a deformed and ugly aspect. By a sort of paradox when a Mashona wants to express the idea that he is not strong, he says andinamapfupa, 'I have no bones'; whilst in fact he is nothing but bones<sup>13</sup> and skin - and the skin is not much to boast of either.

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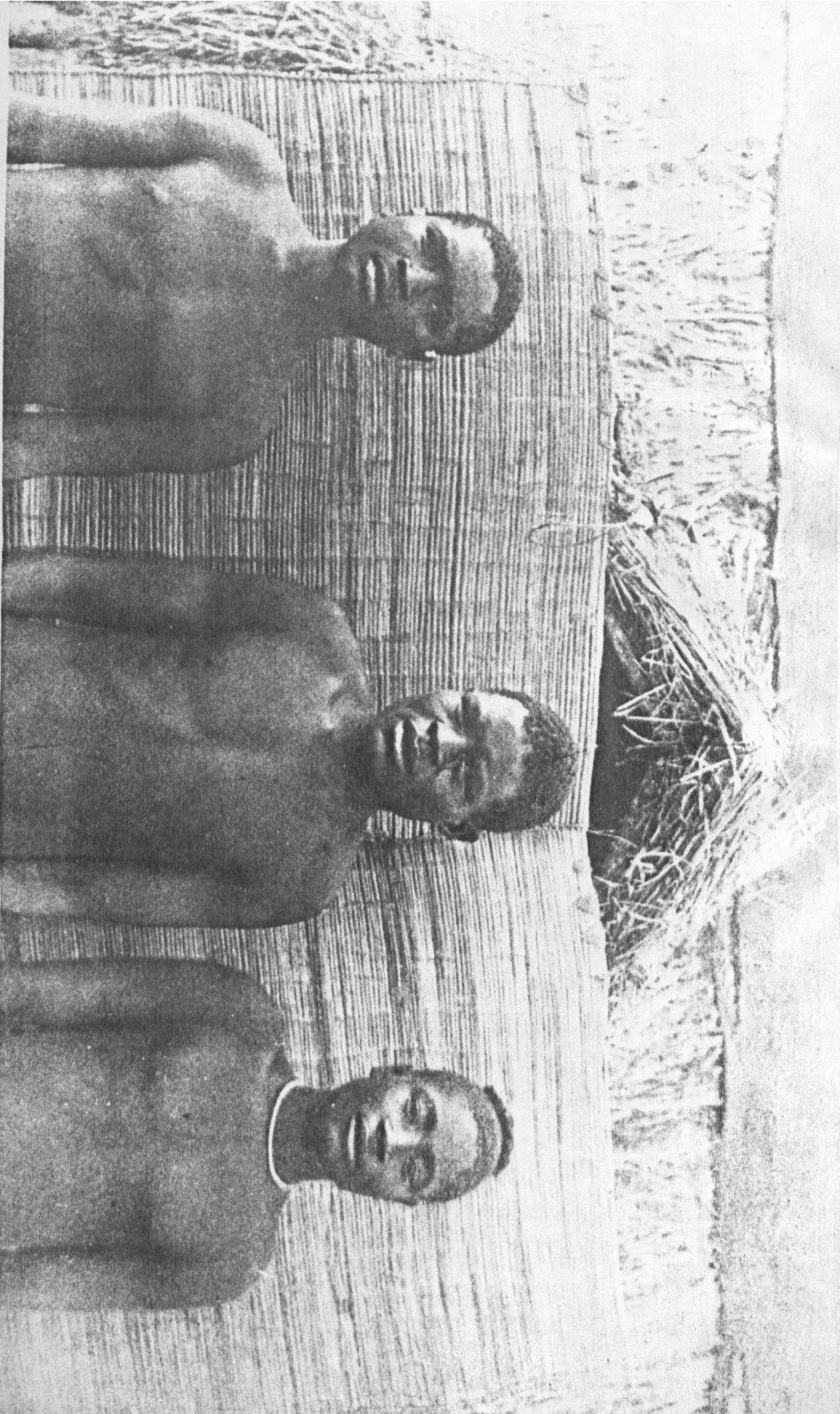
<sup>10</sup> This has been fully dealt with in: Makambe: 'Colonialism and Racism and their Bearing on the Shona societies in colonial Zimbabwe, c.1888-1930.'

<sup>11</sup> Evidence of John Mackendree Springer; Salisbury, September 2, 1904: in South Africa Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. IV: p. 136.

<sup>12</sup> 'Matabele' Wilson's Diary, November 27, 1890: Quoted in Cairns: op. cit. p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. A. M. Hartman: 'The Mashona: By One Who Knows Them': South Afri-

White Settlers' view of African Labour Value and Physique  
(Plate VIII)



Zambesi.

Matabele.

Mashona.

Exrad

Three Types of Laborers, from W.H. Brown: On the South African Frontier: (Zambesi, Matabele, Mashona)

From Father Hartman's standpoint, this lack of physique on the part of the Shona peoples must have also accounted for their 'laziness', which he regarded as a national trait and described in no less disparaging terms as follows:

Is the Mashona industrious? Far from it. . . . Their natural laziness which makes them idle away nine months out of twelve is helped on in many cases by a most ingenious superstition, which makes many of them believe that they are possessed by a spirit of laziness: this is an incubus, preventing them from even making an effort to work. Their witchdoctor is the only man who has the power to drive this devil of sloth.<sup>14</sup>

Yet these obviously undesirable characteristics were allegedly not the only ones that plagued the Shona peoples, from Father Hartman's point of view. The Shona were also portrayed as 'hypocritical', 'selfish', 'liars' and 'thieves', who would not understand even the simple doctrines of Christianity and 'civilization' and, therefore, required 'humanisation' first, before anything could be done with them. Thus Rev. Hartman concluded, accordingly:

We are to humanise them -(the Shona)- first, i. e., to accustom them to order, of which they have no idea; to labour, which they do not like, etc. Primum sit homo, deinde Christianus.<sup>15</sup>

Not all missionaries shared these despondent views about the Shona societies, of course, especially those ones who were opposed, in one way or another, to the general assumptions characterizing white settler ideology and subsequent bitterness over labour shortage. The Rev. Arthur Sharley Cripps, newly arrived in Mashonaland to work for the Anglican Church in 1901, was not so sure about the reports he had previously read on these Shona peoples, especially on their physique, industry and agriculture.<sup>16</sup> The same applied to the Natal-born Rev. George Albert Wilder of the American Board of Colonial and Foreign Missions, based at Mount Selinda in the Melsetter district since 1892, who, for a difference, considered the Shona 'more industrious than the Zulu' basing his conclusions, specifically, on Shona pre-occupation with agriculture and on the absence in Shona societies of the division of labour

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can Catholic Magazine: Vol. 3, 1893: pp. 478-9. Vide: Plate VII, White Settlers' View of African Labour Value and Physique.

<sup>14</sup>Hartman: 'The Mashona: by One Who Knows Them': loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Steere: God's Irregular: Arthur Shearly Cripps: A Rhodesian Epic: pp. 41-2.

between men and women as commonly practised within the Nguni societies, especially in the South.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever the pros and cons of the arguments of various clerics regarding Shona societies, it was these attitudes which, in the final analysis, greatly influenced the employers of labour at the various centres of employment throughout Southern Rhodesia. Indeed, it was this kind of psychological disposition towards the colony's majority indigenous African social segment that made the 'labour problem' in early Southern Rhodesia appear far more worse than it actually was. Thus whilst by 1904, Shona labourers were no longer wanted even by the colonist farmers of Mashonaland,<sup>18</sup> the rank and file white colonist employer in the territory apparently had no regrets at all over this kind of development. On the contrary, the colonist employer exploited this negative attitude towards local labour as an appropriate justification for bringing into the country requisite foreign labour supply. With the failure of some of the foreign labour schemes on Abyssinians, Somalis, Arabs, Indians and Chinese labour as has already been amply demonstrated,<sup>19</sup> it, therefore, became quite popular within the white colonist circles in Southern Rhodesia to decry indigenous African labour in favour of trans-Zambesian immigrant supply. For this reason, 'Curio' Brown, an Ohio-born colonist farmer-cum-mineowner and later the populist mayor of Salisbury, justified this general colonist preference for trans-Zambesian labour supply on the grounds the Shona labourers on his farm, for example, worked for only 'one or two months' and were generally 'a very queer people too, -(who got)- offended at some small thing and -(went)- and -(left)- you -(the employer)- without any Natives to do your work....'<sup>20</sup>

In one respect, the more positive approach adopted by the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers towards trans-Zambesian labour supply after 1903, had its advantages. In addition to the geographical proximity of North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland to Southern Rhodesia in comparison to Abyssinia, Aden, India or China, the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers felt confident that the trans-Zambesian labourer was some-

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<sup>17</sup> Evidence of Rev. G. A. Wilder: Salisbury: August 30, 1904, South African Native Affairs Commission Report 1903-5: Vol. IV: pp. 3-4.

<sup>18</sup> Vide: Evidence of Rev. John White; Salisbury: September 1, 1904; in South African Native Affairs Commission Report, 1903-5: Vol. IV: pp. 83-4.

<sup>19</sup> Vide: Supra: Chapter 3.

how more manageable and less independent on the Southern Rhodesian labour market than his local counterpart.<sup>21</sup> In fact, so strong was this belief amongst the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers that even some of the early African landowners in the territory had become, inevitably, infected by this colonist bug, vouchsafing, as they did, that this class of foreign labour was not only more reliable, but also cheaper, on the whole, than local supply.<sup>22</sup>

Besides, like the American colonists or the Spaniards in Latin America in their relations with the indigenous Indian population, the Southern Rhodesian settler had by 1898 undoubtedly neutralized the resistance of the African indigenous peoples and grievously undermined and disrupted their social, economic and political institutions as well as their cultural organization. Yet at the same time, the former could not, however, achieve the degree of dependent relationship which guaranteed constant and spontaneous flow of labour for specified economic ventures throughout the length and breadth of the country. The Southern Rhodesian colonist employer could not rely on the labour of the indigenous peoples whom he could not effectively control at will in their homeland and, therefore, like the American planter, once more, resorted to an external solution for the purpose. This trend of developments in early Southern Rhodesia is, therefore, comparable to the precedent in the American colonies whereby it became necessary to import African slaves rather than depend on the indigenous Ameri-Indians, as the American planter would have wished. The main reason for this action apparently was:

... not only because the native population was numerically insufficient, but more often, ... because it was difficult or even impossible to obtain a satisfactory degree of control over people who were at home in the local environment. The familyless man or woman recruited in some place and transported to a plantation region where he found himself in strange surroundings and among strange people was more easily made dependent upon an employer.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Evidence of William Harvey Brown: Salisbury: September, 1904: in Ibid: pp. 112-3. For 'Curio' Brown as mayor of Salisbury by 1909, Vide: C. O. 417/491: P/R/O: London.

<sup>21</sup> Vide: Evidence of Col. Raleigh Grey, CMG, Salisbury: August 31, 1904: in Ibid: pp. 62-5.

<sup>22</sup> Indigenous African employers' views on trans-Zambesian immigrant labour were expressed by Maya and Gwabu, two Rozvi landowners at Riverside (6 miles from Bulawayo) in Matabeleland, who were by 1925 longstanding members of the RNLB. Vide: S. 96/1: Evidence of Maya and Gwabu, Bulawayo: March 25 and April 1, 1925; in the Morris Carter Land Com-

Only such an explanation, as this given above, to colonization as a process of population transfer with labour exploitation as a primary objective, can simplify some of the non-economic aspects of the Southern Rhodesian 'labour problem', especially the strange paradox of labour emigration to South Africa in the face of labour shortage on the local market.<sup>24</sup> The more the Southern Rhodesian colonist employer resorted to administrative pressure and coercion to procure labour from local sources, the more he alienated local manpower with uncalled for results in consequence.<sup>25</sup> Thus the 'alien factor', more vulnerable to control and other restrictive conditions imposed by the employer at his own will, became a major feature of Southern Rhodesia's economic, social and political history.

To a large extent, it has to be noted that trans-Zambesian labour supply seemed to fit in with the economic strategy of the BSACo; the overall politico-economic body in charge of the destinies of Southern Rhodesia and its sister states beyond the Zambesi. With the main aim of developing an export-import orientated capitalist economy under its own monopoly in Southern Rhodesia, the BSACo, and its functionaries literally reduced the northern territories across the Zambesi to the role of mere labour reserves or peripheries of the centre of development capital in the South.<sup>26</sup> This state of affairs was of course justified by the fact that the BSACo, had been denied the privilege of assuming total control of either North-Western Rhodesia, where it shared power with the Lozi aristocracy and the Colonial Office,<sup>27</sup> or that of North-Eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, where this Company paid part of the administrative expenses whilst the Foreign Office in London called the tune.<sup>28</sup> In this way, the consequent inequitable economic development in Southern Rhodesia and the trans-Zambesian territories could only result in the gradual dessication of the economies of the latter to the advantage of the

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mission 1925 (Oral Evidence). (Hereafter the Land Commission.)

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Wilson: op. cit. pp. 75-6.

<sup>24</sup> Vide: Infra: Chapter 8: pp.951-8

<sup>25</sup> The question of 'forced labour' up to the more recent times of Southern Rhodesia history and its effects have been fully dealt with in, Makambe: 'Colonialism and Racism and their Bearing. . . .'

<sup>26</sup> S. Amin: 'Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa: Origins and Contemporary Forms': The Journal of Modern African Studies: Vol. 10: No. 4, 1972: pp. 518-9.

<sup>27</sup> Vide: BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts for the Years Ended March

former. Since little effort was made to arrest this state of affairs, at least till the 1920's, the trans-Zambesian territories, therefore, virtually became, in Caplan's phrase, 'living museums'<sup>29</sup>, largely dependent on labour exportation for economic viability.

The marginalist economic theory was here conveniently brought into play to justify the trend of economic development whereby the mobility of labour, rather than that of capital, from one region to another was viewed solely in terms of favourable geographical distribution and the inexorable aggregation, in one region, of the factors of production - namely capital, labour, natural resources and land;<sup>30</sup> a state of affairs which incidentally was also given inordinate consideration in the Company territories before anything else. From the BSACo. 's point of view, this marginalist economic theory obviously fitted into the general pattern of its politico-economic strategy, as far as the economic development of Southern Rhodesia and the trans-Zambesian territories was concerned. For one thing, rather than the Company allowing the transfer of capital, if it had any, to those territories across the Zambesi and inevitably fostering equitable development and economic self-sufficiency on both sides of the river, it encouraged a situation to emerge whereby labour migration from the trans-Zambesian territories came to serve as an ointment to the wheels of the export-import orientated economy of Southern Rhodesia. In this manner, the BSACo. was, to some extent, thus able to meet the administrative expenses of running its vast territories as cheaply as possible, on the one hand, and, at the same time, paying sufficient heed to the increasingly strident call for profit among its own shareholders.<sup>31</sup> For the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, the politico-economic strategy of the BSACo. in its territories was quite welcome insofar as it allowed them chance to

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31st, 1899 and March 31st, 1900: pp. 5-6 and also: G. L. Caplan: The Elite of Barotseland 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province: Hurst: London: 1970: pp. 81-2, 88-90.

<sup>28</sup> An agreement was signed between Rhodes and Sir Percy Anderson at the Foreign Office in 1894, for example, whereby an arrangement was made for the BSACo. to provide a sum of £750,000 in administrative expenses incurred by the F. O. over British Central Africa (Nyasaland) and North-Eastern Rhodesia. Vide: BSACo. Directors' Report and Accounts: March 31, 1894: pp. 28, 36-7.

<sup>29</sup> Caplan: The Elite of Barotseland 1878-1969: p. 138. The same notion is expressed by Amin in S. Amin: 'Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa': pp. 520-1.

import foreign labour more amenable to control and vulnerable to those numerous forces which, in various ways, influenced the labour market in the country.

It is, therefore, against this background that labour migration from the trans-Zambesian territories into Southern Rhodesia must be viewed up to the end of BSACo. rule and beyond. There was apparent, in every sense, a degree of total commitment by the Company towards the economic development of Southern Rhodesia, albeit at the expense of its sister territories in the north, and, by virtue of this commitment, the Administrations of the northern territories, especially those of the former North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia constituting modern Zambia, came to serve primarily as surrogates of their more dominant partner in the South.<sup>32</sup>

i: The RNLB and the Consolidation of its monopoly in the BSACo. territories across the Zambesi, 1903-1914:

In analysing the phenomenon of labour migration from Northern to Southern Rhodesia up to the end of BSACo. rule in 1923, three distinct phases are worth taking note of. These are: firstly, the period between 1898 and 1903, when the territories of North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia were still less organized in terms of their administrative infrastructure and, therefore, provided a haven to freelance labour recruiters. The second phase begins in 1903 ending perhaps with the termination of World War I in 1918. This second period (1903-1918) is of course associated with the birth and ultimate triumph of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), a semi-official organization set up to deal with matters of labour mobilisation and supply, on both sides of the Zambesi, for the benefit of the colonist employers of Southern

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<sup>30</sup> S. Amin (ed.): Modern Migrations in West Africa: Studies Presented at the Eleventh International African Seminar, April, 1972: Oxford University Press: London: 1974: pp. 35-8.

<sup>31</sup> The demand for profit by BSACo. share-holders reached hysterical proportions in 1910 when the shareholders questioned London Wall over the retention of the northern territories (North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia) which appeared more of an administrative burden to the Company than anything else. Vide: BSACo, Report on the Fifteenth Ordinary General Meeting held at Cannon Street Hotel (London) on February 28th, 1910: pp. 17-9.

<sup>32</sup> The issue of the primacy of Southern Rhodesian interests over labour supply from northern territories has been well argued by Henderson. Vide: I. Henderson: Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia 1900-1953: A



Rhodesia mainly and, at a later phase, those of Northern Rhodesia as well. The third and final stage, covering the years 1919 to 1923 and beyond, may be termed, in every sense of the word, the years of decline in the volume of labour migration; a process engendered, in this respect, not only by the growing irrelevance of the RNLB as African peoples, throughout South Central Africa, were gradually integrated into the economic system of the white colonist societies, but one also worsened by the rising importance of the copper mining industry of Northern Rhodesia by the 1920's, with the result that a greater portion of trans-Zambesian labour migrants, hitherto available to the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers, was tied down in their own region. For the purpose of this study, more emphasis will be placed on the last two phases of the periodisation indicated above, that is, the years 1903 to 1918 and 1918 to 1923 and beyond. The limitations of this research not unnaturally dictates those priorities we have to focus our attention on.

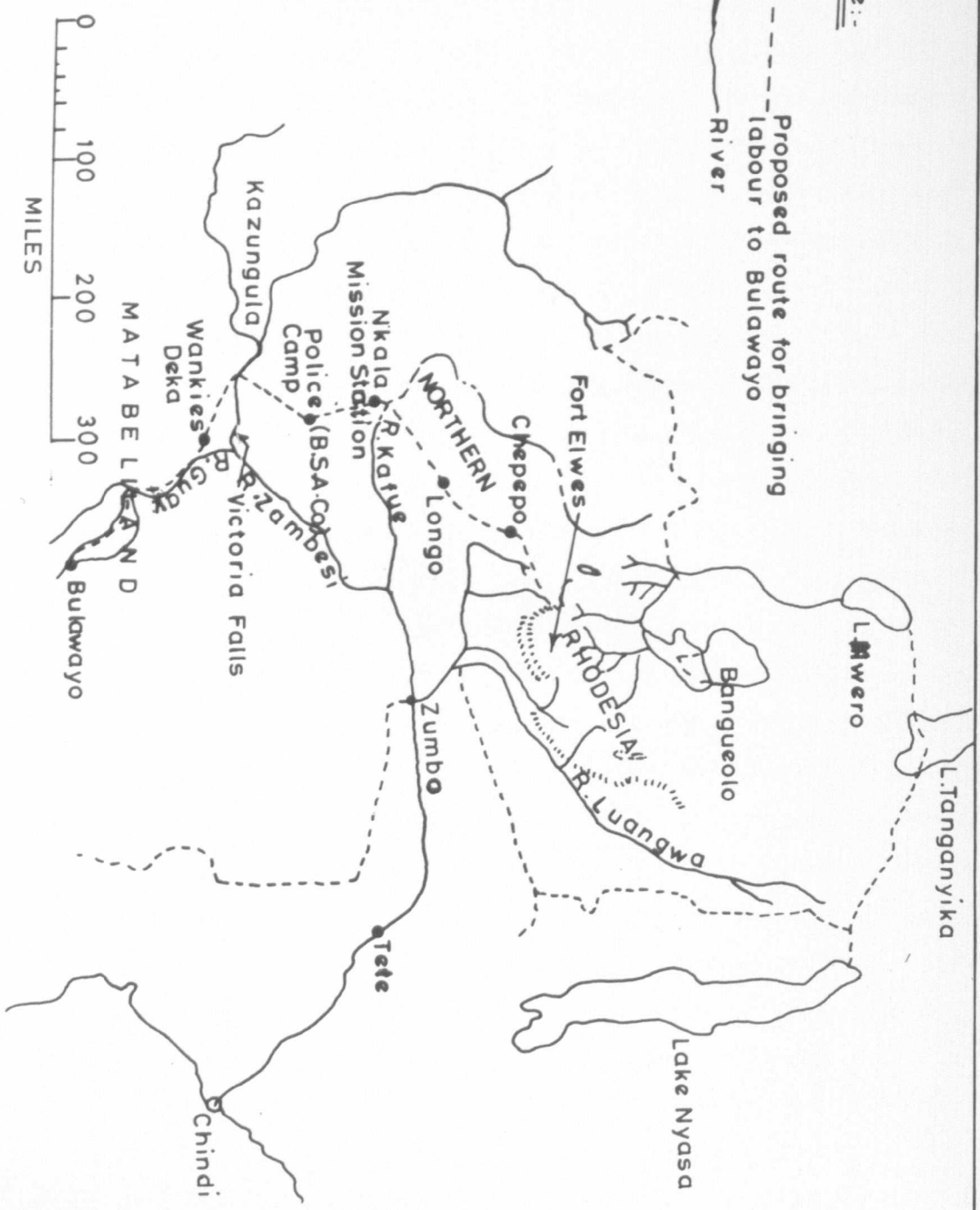
Whilst labour migration from the two Rhodesias across the Zambesi to Southern Rhodesia certainly became more systematized with the establishment of the RNLB in 1903, this does not, however, imply that the movement only began to take root at this particular time. Indeed, long before the RNLB came into existence, trans-Zambesian labour migration into Southern Rhodesia had become an established phenomenon in its own right. A variety of factors were responsible for this development. Firstly, the general streak of optimism, which characterized the colonization of Southern Rhodesia by the BSACo., with regard to the economic potential of the new territorial possessions also embraced the trans-Zambesian region, particularly in connection with prospects for labour supply to colonist enterprise below the Zambesi. For this reason, it is scarcely surprising that, at a very stage, the Company was already despatching envoys to the trans-Zambesian region to examine the economic potential of that part of the world, even before it had secured effective control over the area.

One such envoy was Commander Keane, whose surveys between 1889 and 1892, raised a lot of hope in the official circles concerned, in connection with labour and the general economic prospects of the territory which later became North-Eastern Rhodesia. The Ngoni of Mpeseni and the Chewa of Mwase

SMITHMAN'S SURVEY AND PROPOSED LABOUR ROUTE FROM THE NORTH TO BULAWAYO: DECEMBER (1898)

Note:-

----- Proposed route for bringing labour to Bulawayo  
----- River



(Based on original in file Mss. S.228/C.1: Rhodes Papers: Rhodes House: Oxford.)

Kasungu, residing in the belt around the Luangwa river and was later to become the East Luangwa district of North-Eastern Rhodesia, were the main cause of Keane's excitement in relation to this area's labour supply prospects.<sup>33</sup> A similar report was made over North-Eastern Rhodesia too in 1900 by Lionel Decker, an official of the Tanganyika Company, in which the BSACo. itself was a majority shareholder. Indeed, so extravagant was Decker's eulogy on the labour supply prospects and the economic potential of North-Eastern Rhodesia in general, that this avid BSACo. supporter may, perhaps, be excused for his avowed intention to write seven articles to one of the London papers, The Daily Telegram, in order to publicize the attractions of what he termed 'one of our (BSACo.'s) most valuable assets.'<sup>34</sup>

North-Western Rhodesia, just like its counterpart, North-Eastern Rhodesia, also played a major role in influencing official attitudes towards its economic potential. Just as in the case of North-Eastern Rhodesia, a whole assortment of private, official and semi-official connoisseurs on labour and related economic matters, played a prominent part in pre-determining the character of official policies and attitudes towards this territory. One self-appointed purveyor of labour, named Frank Smithman, played an important role, towards the end of 1898, in contributing to the generally optimistic sentiments shared by the BSACo. officials and the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia over prospects of trans-Zambesian labour supply. During the course of his travels, in December 1898, from British Central Africa (Nyasaland) to lake Bangweulu; then from the Tanganyika plateau and the Luapula Valley through the Kafue region to the Gwembe Valley along the Zambesi,<sup>35</sup> Smithman was able to sort out, though in a rather arbitrary manner, the various ethnic groups of these territories, in terms of their labour value and potential for the labour market in Southern Rhodesia. The African groups in question included such diverse peoples as the Bemba, Bisa and Ushi in the north; the Lenje, Luano, and Lamba in the central region and, finally, the Ila (Mashukulumbwe), Totela, Toka, Tonga, Leya and the Lozi towards the Zambesi Valley.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> BSACo. Directors' Report on the Company's Proceedings and the Conditions of the Territories within the Sphere of its Operations, 1889-1892: pp. 36-7.

<sup>34</sup> C. O. 417/309: Lionel Decker to Rhodes: Telegram: March 21, 1900.

<sup>35</sup> Vide: Appendix VII (Map): Smithman's Labour Surveys and Route to Bulawayo: December, 1898.

On the whole, it could be argued that the main positive contribution of Smithman's labour surveys, across the Zambesi in 1898, lies in the manner in which he was able to outline the general framework of the whole technology of labour importation from these trans-Zambesian territories for the sake of the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia. In a nutshell, Smithman was able to outline quite clearly the procedure on labour recruitment from these domains, cautioning his colleagues, at the same time, on the need for considerate treatment of the first batches of labour recruits in order to create a good impression on these and other potential recruits. He also pointed out the importance of setting up the labour collector's camp in the source areas to avoid inconveniencing the labour recruits by compelling them to travel up and down, unnecessarily, before setting for the journey to the South. In this instance, Smithman, accordingly, recommended locating the labour recruiter's camp at a place 'about two days journey to the North of Chepepos'; a defunct settlement somewhere on the eastern bank of the Kafue river in an area where the habitats of the Kaonde, the Lenje and the Twa met.

In the period following the Smithman survey, a number of individuals and duly accredited officials to the trans-Zambesian territories were to validate his conclusions on the prospects of labour supply in the region, in one form or another. Major Colin Harding, the BSACo. official associated with the creation of the police force in North-Western Rhodesia between 1899 and 1903,<sup>37</sup> was one of those accredited officials whose reports and analysis of the labour supply situation in that region, greatly relieved the anxieties of employers below the Zambesi. By the end of 1899, when Major Harding made an official tour of Barotseland in connection with labour supply, voluntary labour migration to the South had already gone a long way to become an established industry. Indeed, amongst those ethnic groups, on both sides of the Zambesi up to the Mazabuka plateau, like the Tonga, the Ila, the Leya and the Subiya, working in Bulawayo or Matabeleland in general is said to have been popularized since the fall of the Ndebele State in 1893.<sup>38</sup> In fact, it was primarily because of the discovery, by these groups, of the relatively remunerative nature of employ-

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<sup>36</sup> Mss. Afr. S. 228/C.1: Frank Smithman's Report to the BSACo. ; December 7, 1898: Enclosed in Lawley to Rhodes: December 7, 1898.

<sup>37</sup> Harding: Far Bugles: 2 vols. London: B. G. B. 1901. Chaps. XXV+XXVI.

<sup>38</sup> Vide: E. Colson: Social Organisation of the Gwembe Tonga: Manchester Uni-

ment in Matabeleland in the South, that they shunned all attempts by private individuals and officials to subdue them to the rigours of the extremely unpopular portage industry at the close of the 1890's.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the arrival of Major Harding and other BSACo. officials in North-Western Rhodesia in 1898/9 did not seem, in any way, to materially affect the attitude of those groups in the Southern portion of the territory, by then quite used to working in the South. As Major Harding himself indicated, the main problem to potential voluntary labour migrants from North-Western Rhodesia by 1899 was, in fact, the increasing number of unscrupulous private recruiters, who had added a rather unpleasant commercial dimension to the whole phenomenon. It was obviously for this reason that the various African peoples of North-Western Rhodesia were said to be generally opposed '... to being driven down -(to the South)- in a mob like sheep', in the course of which some of them died en route, leading to large-scale desertions amongst their remaining compatriots.<sup>40</sup>

Whilst the optimistic reports of these numerous connoisseurs and accredited officials to the trans-Zambesian region, in the early period of colonization, were appreciated by prospective employers below the Zambesi, overt efforts, within the official and colonist circles, to harness the potential of the said source areas of labour supply did not pick up as quickly as might have been expected. A number of factors may have been responsible for this lack of positive response in the Southern Rhodesian quarters concerned before 1903. Firstly, it has to be noted that in the period between 1898 and 1903, Southern Rhodesian colonist employers were too pre-occupied with the question of importing foreign labour from the far-flung corners of Africa and Asia to pay any attention to the positive aspects of trans-Zambesian immigrant labour. Indeed, if anything, they had a passionate dislike of this class of labour.<sup>41</sup>

Secondly, the political conditions of the trans-Zambesian region were still too fluid, especially in earlier part of the 1898-1903 period. In the territory which later became North-Eastern Rhodesia, it has to be borne in mind

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versity Press: Manchester: 1967 (reprint): pp. 8, 27-9.

<sup>39</sup> Vide: J. R. P. Wallis (ed.): The Barotseland Journal of James Stevenson-Hamilton 1898-1899: Chatto & Windus: London: 1953: passim.

<sup>40</sup> C. O. 879/68: Report of Major Harding in Barotseland to BSACo. Secretary, Bulawayo: December 22, 1899, and also C. O. 417/309: Report of Major Harding to the Chief Secretary, Salisbury: December 22, 1899.

that it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that most of the powerful African states of the region had been sufficiently subdued to colonial control. For example, the Bemba kingdom of Chitumukulu fell only between 1896 and 1899.<sup>42</sup> The Lunda empire of Kazembe, which persistently resisted British domination in the 1890's, could only be conquered in 1900,<sup>43</sup> whilst it was at the beginning of 1898 that the Ngoni of Mpeseni were also brought into the colonial fold.<sup>44</sup> In the circumstances, it was, therefore, only at the beginning of the twentieth century, when African opposition across the Zambesi had been successfully contained, that reasonable administrative structures could be established at all, to the advantage of either the missionary, the trader, the labour recruiter or the colonist employer.

In addition to the fluid political conditions across the Zambesi, at the beginning of the present century, a third factor, very closely related to the second one, may be said to have completed the list of those variables which governed the course of labour migration and recruitment in the trans-Zambesian region for the Southern Rhodesian labour market. This was the transportation issue. The immensity of the problems of communication between the BSACo. territories on both sides of the Zambesi river, at this early period, was such that it required a lot of mettle and daring on the part of both the labourers and labour agents who ventured between these source areas in the North and the labour market in the South. Indeed, the argument that African labourers responded massively to labour migration from the trans-Zambesian territories to labour markets in the South, at the beginning of the colonial era, either out of gratitude to the white man for the benefits of Pax Britannica, which had put an end to slave trade and internecine African wars, or because of an inexplicable wanderlust, which had somehow bred a characteristic racial mania for travel in the African mind,<sup>45</sup> is, in fact, a very simplistic approach to a phenomenon of great and complex dimensions.<sup>46</sup> Trans-Zambesian

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<sup>41</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 185-91

<sup>42</sup> For the subjugation of the Bemba in the late 19th century, Vide: A. D. Roberts: A History of the Bemba: Political growth and change in north-eastern Zambia before 1900: Longman: London: 1973: pp. 269-92.

<sup>43</sup> I. G. Cunnison: The Luapula Peoples of Northern Rhodesia: Customs and History in Tribal Politics: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1959: pp. 28-9.

<sup>44</sup> J. A. Barnes: Politics In A Changing Society: A Political History of the Fort Jameson Ngoni: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1967: pp. 87-8.

Africans may have worked in employment centres in the South, such as Kimberley and the Rand as well as Bulawayo before 1890 and immediately after 1893,<sup>47</sup> but this was on an individual basis and not on the scale demanded of them under the aegis of systematized recruitment as occurred after 1898. The vastly increased labour demand and the equally more intensified efforts to quarry labour supply from the trans-Zambesian regions greatly magnified the immensity of those problems faced by early labour recruits.

Before North-Western and Southern Rhodesia were linked together by a railway connection from Wankie to Livingstone in 1904, the problems of travel between these two territories were, indeed, untold. Traders, transport riders, postmen, labour recruiters and other travellers all had to use ox wagon transport and horse and mule carts for overland journeys, whilst rivers and sizeable streams, that could not be forded, had to be crossed by barges and canoes.<sup>48</sup> As far as the link between North-Eastern and Southern Rhodesia was concerned, the matter was even more complicated in the early period. Actually the transportation system of North-Eastern Rhodesia was, before 1904, wholly orientated towards British Central Africa (Nyasaland) and then the Indian Ocean through Portuguese East Africa. It was only after 1904 that the link between Fort Jameson and Salisbury via Tete began to come into prominent use.<sup>49</sup> In the circumstances, the difficulties faced by migrant labourers from North-Eastern Rhodesia, like those of the Nyasaland labour 'ulendos' to the South,<sup>50</sup> during this period, were immense.

Yet even after completion of the railway connections between the trans-Zambesian territories and Southern Rhodesia by June 1906, when the railway line from Wankie and Livingstone reached Broken Hill (Kabwe), there was

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<sup>45</sup>For these simplistic overviews on trans-Zambesian labour migration, Vide: Gelfand's writings Northern Rhodesia In the Days of the Charter: pp. 94, 106; and 'Migration of African Labourers in Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1890-1914)': The Central African Journal of Medicine: Vol. 7: No. 8: August, 1961: pp. 293-5; and Gann's works: A History of Northern Rhodesia: pp. 101-3; The Birth of a Plural Society: pp. 76-91; and A History of Southern Rhodesia: pp. 176-7.

<sup>46</sup>The complex nature of labour migration and its causes form the basis of Mitchell's article: J. C. Mitchell: 'The Causes of Labour Migration': Bulletin of the Inter-African Labour Institute: Vol. VI: No. 1: 1959: pp. 12-47.

<sup>47</sup>R. Philpott: 'The Mulobezi-Mongu Labour Route': Rhodes-Livingstone Journal: No. 3, 1945: p. 50 and Colson: Social Organisation of the Gwembe Tonga: loc. cit.

General Labour Routes from the North to Southern Rhodesia in Later Times. (Appendix VIII)

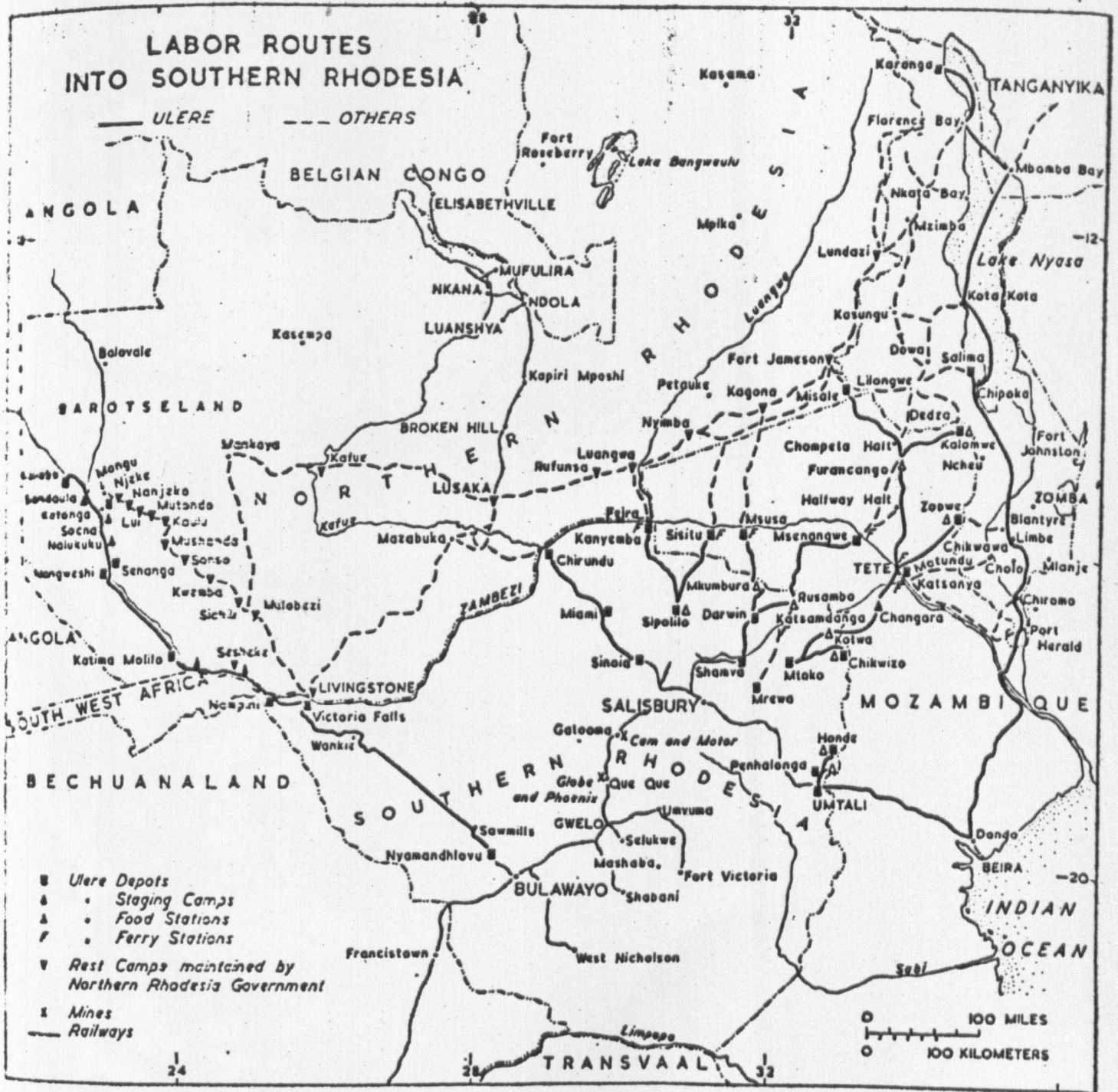
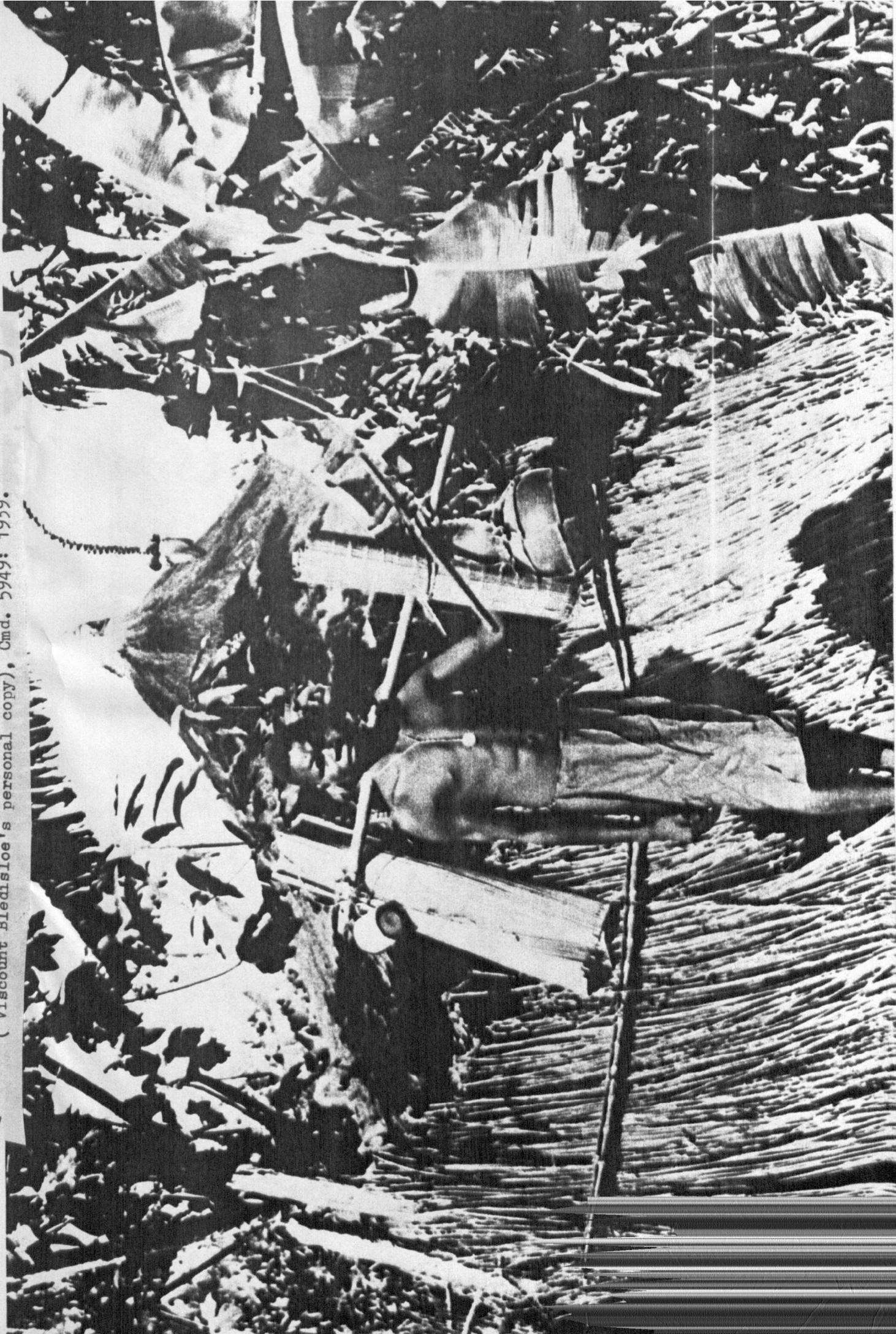


FIG. 2—Ulere and other labor routes into Southern Rhodesia, showing location of depots, camps, food and ferry stations, and mines.

Extract from P. Scott: "Migrant Labor in Southern Rhodesia;" Geographical Review: Vol. XLIV : 1954.



Extract from Report of the Rhodesia-Nyasaland (Bledisloe) Royal Commission:  
(Viscount Bledisloe's personal copy), Cmd. 5949: 1939.





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(a) Barges and Paddles Crossing at the Old Drift (Plate IX)

(b) Clarke's Drift, Zambesi (Livingstone) (Plate X), c. 1905



still no immediate relief for the potential labour migrants to the South. The railway system, which served as one of the most effective inter-territorial links, was planned on the basis of general speculation, to benefit the shareholders in the railway companies involved, rather than to alleviate the everybody's transport problems. In short, the railway system was built primarily to connect areas of industrial development and white colonist settlement and not to serve the African hinterland which remained totally isolated. For this reason, the 1906 railway line to Broken Hill was naturally intended to connect the Copperbelt to Bulawayo and Capetown in the South, whilst Barotseland and other predominantly African-occupied areas were neglected. Under these circumstances, the African labourer and traveller had to wait till the arrival of motor transport on the scene, after World War I, when the African backwoods were consequently connected to the railway belts by dry-weather roads.<sup>51</sup> In most parts of the trans-Zambesian region, even this motor transport did not materially affect the African migrant labourers' mode of travel. In fact, such people had to await the arrival of the bicycle in the later phases of the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup>

Because of this plethora of difficulties related to the absence of a credible communications infrastructure between the northern and southern regions of

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<sup>48</sup> In connection with transportation problems in early Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Vide: Gelfand: Northern Rhodesia in the Days of the Charter: Chapter VIII. For the crossing of the Zambesi and the mode of travel before the advent of railway transport across the big river, Vide: Plate IX: Barges and Paddles Crossing at the Old Drift; and Plate X: Clarke's Drift, Zambesi (Livingstone): c. 1905.

<sup>49</sup> C. O. 417/373: Lyttleton to Milner: July 22, 1904 and also Gelfand: op. cit.: pp. 109-10, 113.

<sup>50</sup> Vide: Infra: Chapter 6:

<sup>51</sup> D. Niddrie: 'The Road to Work: A Survey of the Influence of Transport on Migrant Labour in Central Africa': Rhodes-Livingstone Journal: No. 15, 1954: pp. 37-9. Vide: Appendix VII(Map): General Labour Routes from the North to Southern Rhodesia in Later Times.

<sup>52</sup> For the use of bicycles by labour migrants from North-Eastern Rhodesia to facilitate their travel to and from Southern Rhodesia in the 1940's and 1950's, Vide: M. G. Marwick: 'Some Labour Histories': Appendix B. in H. Heisler: Urbanization and the Government of Migration: The Inter-relation of Urban and Rural Life in Zambia: Hurst & Company: London: 1974: pp. 144-50. Note also: Plate XI: A Lozi Migrant Labourer Returning from the Gold Mines of Southern Rhodesia in the 1930's.

Zambesi, most positive moves to procure trans-Zambesian labour in a more systematized manner were, therefore, doomed to fail before 1903. In addition, even those few attempts by the Southern Rhodesian officials and colonists, to introduce semi-official labour organisations to deal with the question of labour recruitment in the trans-Zambesian region, failed between 1898 and 1903, as occurred in the cases of the Matabeleland and Mashonaland labour boards or the more widely embracing Southern Rhodesian Labour Board.<sup>53</sup> The dichotomy between the colonists of Matabeleland and those of Mashonaland was evidently responsible for this state of affairs.<sup>54</sup> On another level, the 1901-2 inter-governmental agreement between Southern and North-Western Rhodesia on how best to co-ordinate and make more effective, the frantic efforts of the colonist employees of Southern Rhodesia to obtain labour supply from North-Western Rhodesia, was a veritable non-starter. In this instance, the involvement of top-level administrative officials like Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, and Coryndon, the Administrator of North-West Rhodesia, in the process of labour recruitment for colonist employers, did not certainly please the Colonial Office, which had, a year before, passed a ruling against all such forms of official involvement.<sup>55</sup> In the event, the field of trans-Zambesian labour recruitment was, therefore, left open to all and sundry.

An interesting side-effect of this pre-1903 state of affairs, is the manner in which the magnitude of those transportation and administrative difficulties of the period weeded out of the field of labour recruiters, all the feeble-hearted ones, leaving as it were, a class of tough-minded and hardy frontiersmen at best described as '... completely unscrupulous and wholly undesirable parasites...' if not 'a public danger...'<sup>56</sup> under normal politically stable conditions. For the African recruits, their position was worsened by the fact that these freelance recruiters were also convinced that they were '... dealing with ignorant and gullible natives...' and 'so tricks and deceptions of all kinds

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<sup>53</sup>For a history of these successive labour boards in Southern Rhodesia between 1898 and 1901, Vide: Report of the Native Affairs Committee of Enquiry 1910-1911: p. 28.

<sup>54</sup>Vide: van Onselen: Chibaro: pp. 79-80. This rivalry between the white colonists of Matabeleland and Mashonaland was even recurrent. Vide: 'Declaration of Policy by the Visiting Commissioner made in Bulawayo on 19th October 1907' in BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts, March 31st, 1908: pp. 27-31.

were possible.<sup>57</sup> It was under these circumstances, therefore, that individual labour agents mounted their campaign to quarry labour supply from the trans-Zambesian territories, to meet the requirements of the Southern Rhodesian labour market, without any control whatsoever from the governments of the territories concerned.

Firstly, there was the case of G. Farquharson and a Mr. Culverwell, two labour agents based in Matabeleland but operating in North-Western Rhodesia in 1900. Although the activities of these two agents, dealing mainly with the interception of those trans-Zambesian labour migrants entering Matabeleland independently and subsequently forwarding them to the centres of employment in the destination territory as recruits, essentially, brought down under these agents' charge and expense,<sup>58</sup> might not have produced those far-reaching adverse consequences which the officials feared, the methods of operating adopted by these same agents, however, left much to be desired. The idea of sending out African touts, dressed in uniforms similar to those used by messengers of the Native Department, was considered too sinister, by the BSACo. officials, to be allowed to persist. Thus Farquharson and Culverwell, who were also known by their respective Ndebele nicknames, Mfulasebisi and Tababengwa, were severely reprimanded on the matter.<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, there was the case of John Harrison Clarke alias Changa-Changa, whose chequered but interesting career and, especially, his activities in South-Central Africa between 1887 and 1902, represent a very fascinating episode in the history of this part of the world. Clarke (or Clark) was the son of a hardware merchant in the Cape colony, whence he had fled from the long arms of the law, after 'accidentally' shooting dead an African there. Since 1887, Clarke lived in what later became known as North-Eastern Rhodesia, on the banks of the Luangwa and the Kafue rivers, where he competed with the Portuguese muzungos (prazo-holders) to control and dominate an area largely occupied by Chikunda or former Portuguese slave settlements. Here his

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<sup>55</sup> C. O. 417/338: Milton to BSACo.: Telegram: October 10, 1901 and BSACo. to Milton: Telegram: October 11, 1901.

<sup>56</sup> Orde Browne: op. cit.: pp. 50, 53.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> NB 1/1/10: C. B. Cooke for C/N/C, Bulawayo, to N/C, Bulawayo: May 9, 1900.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.: Taylor, C/N/C Bulawayo, to G. Farquharson, Bulawayo: June 2, 1900.

activities appear to have been very low-key before 1891, if only because at this particular time, the partition of the Zambesi Valley between Britain and Portugal had left a large number of Chikunda communities within the British sphere of influence and, therefore, outside the reach and control of powerful Portuguese muzungos like Kanyemba and Matekenya, with whom Clarke had previously contested for the overlordship, if not general devastation, of these Chikunda settlements on the Kafue/Luangwa reaches.<sup>60</sup>

During the decade between 1891 and 1902, when the BSACo. established its boma at Feira, the absence of effective control, by either the British or the Portuguese, created an environment just suitable for Clarke's designs. Constituting himself the sovereign power in the region and backed by armed bands of Ila and Senga followers to execute his authority, Clarke began to collect, for himself, hut and poll tax in kind; seized women and stock of all kinds from the Chikunda communities as well as raising labour for the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia. The offer to supply labour to the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia had been made by Clarke in October 1897, along with assurances that he could immediately raise about '500 boys for work in the Mines and Railway formation', to be subsequently supplemented by several batches of about 1,000 recruits at a time, supplied at intervals. In his own confident words, Clarke had concluded:

I feel confident that, with judicious handling, the much talked of labour question would be a thing of the past, at least as regards ~~(Southern)~~ Rhodesia.<sup>61</sup>

However attractive Clarke's offer might have been, from the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers' point of view, the manner in which the offer in question was to be met could only embarrass the Salisbury officials. This self-appointed 'king' and representative of 'the Great Chief of the English in Salisbury', as he began to call himself at the time, went about his business in that part of the trans-Zambesian region, in which he was based, with the characteristic lack of savoir-faire and ruthlessness common among private labour agents as a class. Because of his nefarious activities on the Kafue/Luangwa reaches, to try and meet both the labour requirements of the colonist employers below the Zambesi as well as to liberally line his own pockets, Clarke ultimately managed only to alienate those Chikunda communities

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<sup>60</sup> Newitt: Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi: pp. 308-11.

<sup>61</sup> C. O. 417/276: J. H. Clarke, Tete, to Administrator, Salisbury: October 14, 1897.

amongst whom he operated. Thus with obvious frustration and resentment, one Chikunda chief, Caetano Francisco Lubrinho alias Chimtanda, whose wives and stock had also been appropriated by Clarke, confessed before the Salisbury authorities in April, 1899 that:

Whenever Clarke sees a girl he fancies, he takes her as his mistress for a few days and when tired of her he sends her home. The fathers and husbands of these girls are constantly complaining to me about Clarke's actions, but I can do nothing as Clarke is a white man and professed<sup>62</sup> to be representing the Government -(of Southern Rhodesia)-.

Clarke's activities may be excused on the grounds that he was a man who had, for a greater part of his life, lived on the fringes of the law and was thus trying to introduce those characteristics of a ragged and carefree frontiersman into a colonial setting. Our third case study of the pre-1903 era, is a somewhat different fry altogether. This was John Hayes, a former member of the British South Africa Police in the North Mazoe (later Mount Darwin) district of Mashonaland. Because of his former official position and location on the north-eastern approaches from the trans-Zambesian region into Southern Rhodesia, Hayes is a very good example of a man, who had had the opportunity to witness the origins and progress of trans-Zambesian labour migration to the labour markets of the South and was determined, for economic reasons, to exploit the situation.

In essence, Hayes's labour recruiting activities in North-Eastern Rhodesia, between 1902 and 1903, provide a very interesting case of a private agent who was prepared to take advantage of the crying labour demand amongst the colonist employers and the absence of credible administrative control to feather his own nest. With regard to the £686 10s 0d profit, which Hayes made out of the 391 Ngoni labour recruits distributed to the Public Works Department in Salisbury and the Globe and Phoenix Mine at Que Que, under dubious promises and with consequently rueful results,<sup>63</sup> it may be argued here that this was a typical case of a private labour agent 'dealing with ignorant and gullible natives, and possibly -(unsuspecting)- employers ...' with the result that he ended up leaving everybody, except himself, in a

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid: Complaint made by Caetano Chimtanda and sworn before Taberer, C/N/C, Salisbury: April 25, 1899.

<sup>63</sup> C. O. 417/373: Clarke to Milner: July 25, 1903 and Lyttleton to Milner: July 22, 1904.

lurch.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the assertion by Milton that the Hayes affair was, essentially, 'a private venture... in which the speculator took his goods to the best market...',<sup>65</sup> is quite fitting, in the circumstances.

Apparently, a very interesting by-product of the Hayes activities, as representing the nature of trans-Zambesian labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia in the pre-1903 era, is the manner in which a commercially-motivated private labour agent was able to create a noticeable degree of misunderstanding between two sister governments on either side of the Zambesi. As far as the government of North-Eastern Rhodesia was concerned, the shambles, which the Hayes affair then represented, were altogether a sad reflection on the unco-operative and negligent attitude of the Salisbury authorities on the question of immigrant labour supply, to which North-Eastern Rhodesia itself was so committed. Given the fact that the Fort Jameson officials had initially contacted their Salisbury counterparts for some of guarantees on the 'fair and considerate treatment' of the Ngoni labourers recruited by Hayes, in order 'to encourage them to seek such (the Southern Rhodesia)- a market for their labour for future years... ', Robert Codrington and his colleagues could naturally not help feeling 'very disappointed' by the actions of the Administration in Salisbury.<sup>66</sup>

It was certainly a sore point for Codrington that, in spite of profuse assurances on these labourers, who had been recruited for a term of only six months, starting in March 1902, nothing had... even been heard of them by December of the same year, when Fort Jameson mounted an enquiry into the matter. Even in the face of this enquiry, the 'vague and general' explanations from Salisbury did not satisfy Codrington. Nor would he understand why, by March 1903, only 149, out of the original official total of 323 recruits, had returned to Fort Jameson, whilst the remainder, the 22 dead excepted, were unaccounted for. Besides, it appeared that very little effort had been made in Salisbury, either to intimate the authorities in Fort Jameson on these 22 labourers who had died or to forward the wages and estates of these deceased to their relations in North-Eastern Rhodesia.

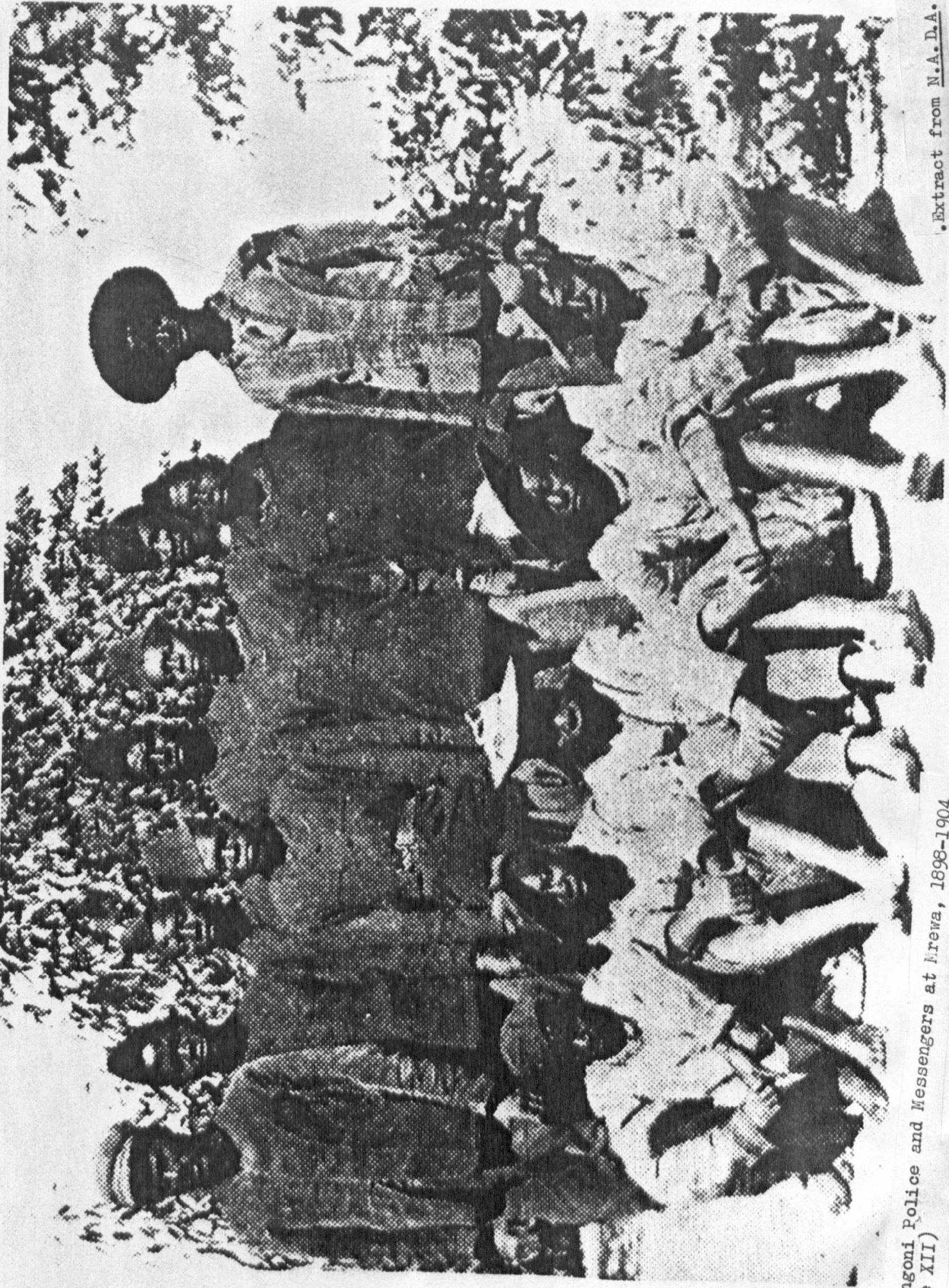
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<sup>64</sup> Orde Browne: loc. cit.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid: Milton to Clarke: July 22, 1903.

<sup>66</sup> C. O. 417/384: Robert Codrington, Fort Jameson, to Milton: Salisbury: March 4, 1903.





The Angoni Police and Messengers at Mrewa, 1898-1904  
(Plate XII)

Taking into consideration that this was the same attitude the Administration of Southern Rhodesia had also shown towards the repatriation of Ngoni police recruits in the 'Black Watch' or the Mashonaland Native Police, between 1898 and 1903,<sup>67</sup> Codrington was, perhaps quite justifiably, frustrated by the condescension of the senior partners in Salisbury towards their junior colleagues in Fort Jameson. To rectify this state of affairs and consequently restore the balance in the relationship of the two governments, Codrington, accordingly, decided to play the only trump card he had, which was to switch off the supply of labour from North-Eastern to Southern Rhodesia. With this view in mind, the Administrator of North-Eastern Rhodesia, therefore, indicated that:

... until more efficient arrangements are made in Southern Rhodesia for the reception of labourers and until some real guarantee is given that ordinary conditions of service (once agreed to) will not afterwards be neglected or ignored, it will be impossible for the Administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia to encourage natives to seek work in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>68</sup>

The course Codrington had here proposed to resort to, in order to secure better treatment for labourers recruited from North-Eastern Rhodesia, whether by private agents or officially accredited workers, was certainly drastic. But this did not, in any way, unduly worry the Salisbury officials, who were apparently well acquainted, at the time, with the increasing volume of labour migration from the trans-Zambesian territories, altogether, to the labour markets of the South. Thus Codrington's threat could only be treated as an empty gesture, whilst the Salisbury officials proceeded to exonerate themselves from all accusations over the Hayes affair.

From another perspective, it may be argued that whilst in South Central Africa itself, officials like Codrington were asserting, in the wake of the Hayes affair, that 'The Angoni of Mpeseni (would) not go down (to the South) again for years to come...' and that in this way '... a useful source of labour (was) dried up...'<sup>69</sup>, top-level opinion in London was beginning to dev-

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<sup>67</sup> C. O. 417/385: Memorandum on the Repatriation of Angoni in the Mashonaland Native Police by R. Codrington to BSACo., April 1, 1903. Vide also: Plate XII: The Angoni Police and Messengers, Mrewa: 1898-1904.

<sup>68</sup> C. O. 417/384: Codrington to Milton: March 4, 1903.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid: Codrington to BSACo.: March 11, 1903.

elop in other directions, on the question trans-Zambesian labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia. In the Colonial Office in particular, whilst one faction or another could glibly dismiss Hayes either as 'an irresponsible agent',<sup>70</sup> or 'a notoriously bad character',<sup>71</sup> there was, however, a general consensus that time had come for the establishment of an 'unofficial organisation' on the pattern of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), for the purpose of taking over all the functions of recruiting and distributing labour to respective employers throughout Southern Rhodesia.<sup>72</sup> The idea was not a new one, having been previously raised in connection with the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia in 1900, when it was argued that an employers' organisation of this kind, would be expected to, of course, cushion the Administration from any political embarrassment arising from labour abuses.<sup>73</sup> The failure of this Labour Board, for a number of reasons internal to the Southern Rhodesian colonist society, was, in the event, directly responsible for the vacuum which the private labour recruiter had tried to fill up to 1903.

In the final analysis, it might also be said that the private labour agent was a very important factor in influencing the course of labour importation from the trans-Zambesian territories whether for the better or for worse. After all, the main idea for introducing foreign labour within the context of a colonial economy and a hierarchically stratified colonial society was to make the most out of the labourer without, at the same time, incurring any responsibility over the labourer's welfare. Indeed, in the case of alien labourers, on account of their vulnerability to social and economic pressures in a strange environment, more was expected of them by their employers in terms of dependability and generally sound employer-employee relations. For a majority of these recruits, who were essentially simple country-folk who had never ventured beyond their villages or chiefdoms before they were press-ganged into dubious contracts by commercially motivated recruiters, they had no preconceptions of any kind about the journey they were to undertake to the South and the world in which they were to work.

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<sup>70</sup>C. O. 417/373: Minute by Ommanney: July 25, 1903.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid: Memorandum on the Hayes affair by Grindle: n. d.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid: Minute by H. W. Just: September 21, 1903.

<sup>73</sup>C. O. 417/320: Minute by Ommanney: July 16, 1900.

Thus the whole process of the transfer of trans-Zambesian recruits from their own environment to a strange labour market could frequently result in shock and alienation of one type or another, especially if, as often happened, these recruits were distributed to the more unpopular mining properties. Left in the hands of strange white men and their black messengers, either on their journey to the South or at the centres of employment, the sense of alienation amongst these recruits was certainly aggravated by their mode of interaction with these strange white men and their aides who had neither scruples nor respect for the traditional etiquette of the African societies from which particular labourers came. Consequently, these alien labourers either resigned themselves to their fate and, therefore, became more dependent on their employers or resisted the new dispensation to which they were thus being introduced by deserting.

From this point of view, it might be said, therefore, that the role of the pre-1903 era was a crucial one, as far as the introduction of trans-Zambesian immigrants into Southern Rhodesia was concerned. Given the half-hearted and, apparently, languid efforts of the various labour organisations of the period, the private labour agent came to feel the vacuum which characterized the history of trans-Zambesian labour migration to the South between 1898 and 1903. Indeed, so effective was the private labour agent on this score that occasionally he even won official recognition either as an alternative to or a substitute for some semi-official labour organisation, formed primarily for the purpose of recruiting and distributing labour. For this reason, a firm of private labour recruiters, like that of Messrs Acutt and Crewe of Bulawayo, was given official recognition by the Administration of Southern Rhodesia to operate as an auxiliary factor in the recruitment of labour in North-Western Rhodesia in 1901 on the recommendation of the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland.

Messrs Acutt and Crewe impressed Taylor in three fields. Firstly, they were prepared to meet the initial capital outlay in the venture to establish a reasonable infrastructure for labour recruiting purposes by establishing food depots along specified labour routes from North-Western Rhodesia. Secondly, they were also prepared to appoint what was known, in official circles, as 'a sufficient number of qualified agents', who were expected to meet with the approval of Caryndon, the Administrator of North-Western Rhodesia, before

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resuming their duties in that territory. Finally, the record of this firm's activities, especially between March and August 1901, was not a bad one, at least as far as the Administration of Southern Rhodesia was concerned. During this period in question, for instance, Messrs Accutt and Crewe had recruited and distributed over 1,600 labourers to various employers in the following batches as indicated in Table IV below:

Table IV:

March	96 recruits
April	73 recruits
May	335 recruits
June	247 recruits
July	378 recruits <sup>74</sup>
August	284 recruits

On the basis of this record and the evident willingness of this particular firm to commit its resources into labour recruiting, Messrs Acutt and Crewe, therefore, came to enjoy a large amount of favours from the Salisbury Administration and, in this respect, played an important role as a handmaid to the mining industry of early Southern Rhodesia. In fact, this firm of labour agents was so confident and set in its operations that, when De Beers appeared on the North-Western Rhodesian scene in early 1902, to recruit labour for the Kimberley mines at the higher wage rate of £4 per month as compared to the Southern Rhodesian rate of only £2, they naturally expected the Administration of Southern Rhodesia to safeguard their monopoly by preventing any form of 'authorized competition' in the territory of North-Western Rhodesia.<sup>75</sup>

Other private recruiters also managed to secure official recognition on the same lines as the firm of Messrs Acutt and Crewe did and were thus similarly integrated into the overall labour recruiting machinery of the Rhodesias. F. J. Clarke, of the Clarke's Drift fame on the Zambesi, was one such private recruiter. By 1900, 'Mopane' Clarke had struck some close relationship with the mining industry of Matabeleland and, for this reason, was backed by this industry, financially, to upgrade his labour-recruiting infrastructure, by establishing a number of rest-houses and food depots, along the labour routes

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<sup>74</sup> NBI/1/14: Taylor C/N/C Bulawayo to Chief Secretary: Salisbury: September 26, 1901.

<sup>75</sup> C. O. 417/373: P. Crewe, for Messrs Acutt and Crewe to C/N/C Bulawayo: January 29, 1902; and Taylor, C/N/C Bulawayo to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: January 30, 1902.

in the region between Bulawayo and the Zambesi. Using a camp, situated at about 30 miles outside Bulawayo, as his receiving and distribution depot for labour supply secured from the Zambesi Valley and the Batoka plateau, Clarke succeeded, to a large measure, to ingratiate himself to the mineowners of the province of Matabeleland.<sup>76</sup>

But unlike either 'Mopane' Clarke or Messrs Acutt and Crewe, another private agent, by the name of Pretorius, betrayed the official trust, he had initially won, by carrying out a veritable reign of terror across the Zambesi in the name of labour recruiting. This agent, attached to the Mashonaland Labour Board and based on the Kafue river by mid-1901, was apparently in the habit of flogging his potential recruits and their traditional leaders in and around the Feira district. One such case of flogging was that against a Chief Chikobongo on the banks of the Kafue, in the Ambo/Nsenga country, after which Pretorius and his messengers narrowly escaped assassination from Chikobongo's people, who were naturally infuriated by the naked humiliation of their ruler. But a far more serious affair was the murder of another African chief called Chiawa, in the same region, by Pretorius' messengers, who had been denied their dubious privilege of procuring sexual favours from this chief's daughters.<sup>77</sup>

The repercussions, arising from this agent's activities, were certainly profound. Officials, either in London or South Central Africa, were generally in accord that no individual, even in the name of a semi-official organisation as Pretorius operated, had the authority to unlawfully issue firearms to his labour touts and, in addition, to license a chaotic situation under the guise of labour recruitment.<sup>78</sup> But what also worried these officials in the Pretorius affair more than anything else, even after Pretorius had been dismissed from the service of the Mashonaland Labour Board, was the proverbial 'unsettling effects' such events were likely to produce within the subject African societies of the colonial set-up. This idea was well demonstrated by the Colonial Office's analysis of the Pretorius case, especially in the light of Southern Rhodesia's inability to take any legal proceedings on offences committed

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<sup>76</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Report 1901: loc. cit.

<sup>77</sup> C. O. 417/321: H. M. Taberer, C/N/C Mashonaland, at Musengezi Village, Lomagundo, to N/C, Feira: July 19, 1901.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid: Milton to Clarke: September 6, 1901.

across the Zambesi, when it was indicated that:

The natives will not grasp the subtleties of our ~~(British)~~ jurisdiction - what they will see is that chiefs may be murdered with impunity as the white men don't ~~(sic)~~ punish the murderers.

In a nutshell, Pretorius was, more or less, in the same class of freelance touts with Clarke and Hayes, whom we have already discussed, in spite of his connections with the Labour Board, and his activities had the unexpectedly mixed blessings that they, willy-nilly, awoke the officials of the trans-Zambesian territories, especially, to their duties.

As a summation of the genesis of labour recruitment from the trans-Zambesian territories for services in Southern Rhodesia between 1898 and 1903, it is argued here that whilst the amorphous semi-official labour recruiting organisations set up during this period were definitely ineffectual and consequently short-lived in most cases, their place was inevitably taken up by the private labour agents. Because the private labour agent was governed by personal motives of commercial nature in this business of trans-Zambesian labour recruitment, the results of his activities often had a tincture of mixed blessings. In one respect, some private labour agents, like Messrs Acutt and Crewe of Bulawayo as well as 'Mopane' Clarke, engaged in the service of the employers of Matabeleland, were quite successful in their profession and, for that reason, their services were sought for by officials, to lend a hand in the process of labour importation into Southern Rhodesia. In this way, the more successful private recruiters were, therefore, incorporated into the semi-official labour organisation in which they continued to promote the labour importation movement, for the sake of the colonist employers of labour, whilst their financial basis was guaranteed within the umbrella of these semi-official bodies.

Thus it could be said that the combined efforts of these private labour agents and the amorphous semi-official labour bodies of the period between 1898 and 1903, were a positive development in the promotion of organised labour recruitment in the trans-Zambesian territories. That these attempts failed to survive beyond 1903 was, more or less, a factor beyond the control of these agents, responsible for serving as pioneers to the trans-Zambesian labour importation movement. If the causes of the failure of these pre-1903

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid: Minute by Grindle to Ommanney: November 1, 1901.

attempts should be sought anywhere, it must be amongst the colonist employers of labour, whose divided attention, during this period, was evidently a drawback to the initiatives mounted by those individuals interested in the trans-Zambesian labour schemes.

In the first place, the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers were more interested in securing government help to extort compulsory labour from the indigenous subject African communities than in anything else and even London Wall itself was well aware of this fact. Secondly, most employers were still engrossed with other labour importation schemes, such as those on Abyssinians, Arabs and Asiatics, which occupied a greater part of the period 1898 and 1904. Because of such expectations amongst a majority of the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers, however misplaced these expectations turned out to be in the end, they had little confidence at the time in the trans-Zambesian labour plans. Indeed, at those centres of employment, where some of the early trans-Zambesian recruits had resisted the employment conditions under which they were expected to serve, the 'Barotse and the Angonis', as they were inclusively termed, became an anathema to the mineowners and managers.

Even those private labour recruiters of the pre-1903 era like Clarke and Hayes, whose activities were classified as patently negative and detrimental to the cause of labour migration from the trans-Zambesian territories into Southern Rhodesia, may here be regarded as having played a significant part in laying down a sound foundation for the future of this phenomenon of labour migration. For one thing, a significant aspect of the activities of all these private labour agents across the Zambesi is that they precipitated a situation whereby a feedback process of communication was effectively established between the source areas of labour supply and the destinations in which the extra-territorial recruits were bound to work. Because of the fact that the awareness of the peoples in the source areas was beginning to emerge, in terms of the process of labour migration and its implications, and because of the state of affairs, in the early phases of migration, whereby real knowledge, on what this labour migration actually entailed, was still mixed with myths and other mysterious stories evidently harmful to any permanent system of labour exploitation in the trans-Zambesian region, the largely negative effects arising out of the activities of unscrupulous agents, certainly, galvanized the

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officials into action to arrest the situation.

It became apparent, within the official circles concerned, that should the proportion of trans-Zambesians labourers, returning to their homes with stories of woe on their experiences to and in Southern Rhodesia, exceed those with good ones, the long-term prospects on labour supply from the region would be harmed irreparably. To counteract this, a programme of action had to be devised whereby the whole technology of labour recruitment had to be reappraised. In the circumstances, the situation called for an intermediate or semi-official labour organisation with an adequate financial base not only for laying down a credible machinery for labour recruiting purposes, but one also capable of running on its own as a self-sufficient department, separate from those of either territory's administration and, at the same time, willing to engage men of sound reputation, with the acumen to get on well with African peoples as recruiters.<sup>80</sup> In essence, the situation by 1903 was ripe for the creation of a new and more meaningful labour organisation to carry out the recruitment of labour on both sides of the Zambesi. This situation was caused as much by the absence of such a body before 1903 as it was by the blunders and chaos emanating from the activities of private labour agents.

From the proceeding argument, it is evident that, by 1903, the climate was quite favourable for the birth of the Rhodesia Native Labour Board (RNLB). Of course, a number of contingent factors were also responsible for this favourable climate, into which the RNLB was born, and may have, in the final analysis, undoubtedly predetermined the success of this labour body, during the next two or three decades. In the years after 1903, the BSACo. had begun to acknowledge what it had hitherto tried to cover, that is, the poverty of the gold mining industry of Southern Rhodesia. For the colonist employers of labour, this acknowledgement by the Company not only heralded the liberalization of the Company's fiscal policies and the general reduction in costs, like the high railway tariffs, they had always complained about,<sup>81</sup> but also established, in their minds, a significant raison d'etre for the formation of the RNLB as an instrument for the collection and distribution of cheap labour to employers who were just beginning to feel the pinches of the 1903-6

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<sup>80</sup> For an analysis on various types of labour bodies and their functions: Vide: Orde Browne: op. cit. pp. 50-6.

<sup>81</sup> C. O. 417/373: C. F. Massy-Swynnerton, Hon. Secretary, Gazaland Farmers' Association, Melsetter, to Clarke: Salisbury: August 4, 1903.

economic recession.<sup>82</sup> The psychological impact of these factors to impoverished capitalists, on the verge of ruination, was naturally inestimable and very well timed.

Another, no less significant, factor which worked to the advantage of the newly formed RNLB, in relation to the importation of cheaper immigrant labour, was the gradual crystallization of the BSACo. administrative structures, then recently laid down across the Zambesi, in the northern territories. The trans-Zambesian region, as it might be pointed out here, was one of the five districts designated by the new labour body for its recruiting activities, since its formation in August 1903. The other four included the Victoria Circle, Southern and Western Matabeleland, Umtali and the Eastern districts of Mashonaland and, finally, the Lomagundi and the road from North-Eastern Rhodesia.<sup>83</sup> The success of Nielson, the Bureau's agent across the Zambesi, operating initially on the Batoka plateau, was heavily dependent on the stable conditions obtaining there and on the goodwill of the northern governments towards the new labour agents.

Of course, the two trans-Zambesian territories, directly under the control of the BSACo., were, naturally, expected to co-operate with the RNLB in very much the same manner as they had lent a hand to the amorphous organisations and private labour agents operating within that region for the benefit of colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, in the pre-1903 years. Yet the determining factor, in realizing the ideals of the RNLB to recruit trans-Zambesian labour, was not so much the paramountcy of Southern Rhodesian interests as the positive measures, the administrations of those two northern territories, adopted in order to meet the Bureau's demands. In this regard, one might, therefore, be tempted to examine the degree to which the northern territories were able to go in applying taxation or fiscal pressure as a weapon for extracting labour supply for the sake of the Bureau. The imposition of the hut-tax in North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia, which only began to materialize after 1903, was a boon for the Bureau in its labour-recruiting activities.

As early as 1901, the two administrations in question had made tentative efforts to deploy this subtle form of administrative coercion, but with mixed

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<sup>82</sup> Van Onselen: Chibaro: pp. 25-6.

<sup>83</sup> C. O. 417/386: Milton to BSACo. September 14, 1903.

results. In North-East Rhodesia, the fall of the more powerful African states, such as those of the Lunda in the Luapula Valley, the Bemba on the Tanganyika plateau and the Ngoni of Mpeseni in the Fort Jameson region, at the close of the nineteenth century, had been followed by a flurry of demands for labour by administrative officials and private employers. This labour could, of course, be easily procured through the imposition of an impost as occurred in 1901. Yet even under these circumstances, whereby only minimal labour supply was demanded, the reactions of African societies in those districts singled out for taxation, six months after the declaration, were quite interesting.

In spite of the fact that tax was collected in kind, only a few areas, like those pockets of Bembaland straddling the Tanganyika, the East and North Luangwa districts, were commended for their positive response to taxation in form of labour. Reports from other districts, which did not seem to have been sufficiently influenced by the pre-colonial tribute labour institution, were not encouraging in the least. By September 1901 for instance, most African communities confronted by the tax demands in North-Eastern Rhodesia had either removed their villages sited near the bomas and transferred them to 'bush country', not easily accessible to officials, or they, simply, did not have the resources, like grain or other agricultural produce, with which to meet administrative requirements on this impost.<sup>84</sup>

This situation did not, in any way, change materially by mid-1902, when a completely tangled state of affairs was observed by the territory's Administration. An interesting development, at this stage, which certainly frustrated the attempts of the government of North-Eastern Rhodesia to collect labour and hut-tax, was the presence of an indigenous economy in form of rubber. This economy significantly influenced the Bemba, Unga and Bisa communities of the Awemba district; the Lamba, the Seba and the Lima of the Kafue district and the Ngumbo and other ethnic groups of the Fort Rosebery division of the Luapula district.

By resorting to this rubber economy, these African communities, named above, could only assert their economic independence, much to the mortification of the North-Eastern Rhodesian Administration, which stressed and ex-

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<sup>84</sup> C. O. 417/363: Report of the Acting Administrator (C. P. Chesnaye), N/E/Rhodesia on the operations of the Hut Tax for the Half-Year Ending, September 30, 1901.

pected the payment of its hut tax impost both in kind and in form of labour, at the time. For this reason, administrative officials could not avoid, in their frustration, to deride those peoples residing in these rubber-producing districts as 'troublesome', 'indolent', or 'timid to go on long journeys -(as carriers)'.<sup>85</sup> Those African communities, inhabiting the Sakontwi or Upper Luapula division of the Luapula district, like the Ushi of Chief Mweri-Mweri, for instance, who fled to the marshes along the Luapula river, in order to avoid the Administration's labour and hut tax demands, may have also evoked the anger of their respective officials through such reactions.

At this stage of the hut tax impost, the Administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia could hardly boast of any positive evidence on the role of fiscal pressure as an effective weapon for inducing labour migration to the South. Indeed, only the Zumbo district, may be said to have played this role of supplying labour to the South more prominently than others, by 1902, as the Luano and the Soli of the Feira division and also the Lala of the Mkushi division of the same district were reported to be doing, in gravitating towards the labour markets of the South in increasing numbers.

The other potential North-Eastern Rhodesian source of migrant labour for Southern employers, the East Luangwa district, was in 1902 extensively used simply to meet the local labour requirements. For this reason, the Chewa and the Bisa of the Nawalila (later Lundazi) division were heavily relied upon as carriers in both the private and official sectors, whilst their kinsmen in the Petauke division, of the same district, were the main source of labour for the Sasare gold mines, operated by the North Charterland Exploration Company in that part of the territory.<sup>86</sup> These mines were, obviously, benefitting from the 'push-factor', arising out of the imposition of the hut tax and may have won official approval in this respect, unlike the Bwana Mkubwa and the Broken Hill properties of the Rhodesia Copper Company in the 'Hook of Kafue', which antagonized Codrington in October 1903, because of their reliance on private agents to recruit labour from the Bemba country.<sup>87</sup> In short, labour mobilization, for the benefit of Southern Rhodesia,

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<sup>85</sup> C. O. 417/365: Digest of the Reports of N/Cs in N/E/Rhodesia for two years Ending March 31, 1902: Enclosed in Codrington to Sharpe: July 21, 1902.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> C. O. 417/401: Report on the Employment of North Eastern Rhodesian Natives by the Rhodesia Copper Company and Conditions of Engagement.

had not yet taken any tangible form in North-Eastern Rhodesia by 1903. The means for exerting fiscal pressure, as a medium for labour extraction, had not yet taken root and in those areas, where positive response was observed, the incipient labour migration to the South was offset by the minimal internal requirements of the period.

In North-Western Rhodesia, labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was less complicated than it was in North-Eastern Rhodesia, right from the start. The direct control of the High Commissioner for South Africa over this territory and the orientation of its administrative philosophy towards the South, greatly simplified matters for the co-operation of officials, on both sides of the Zambesi, to meet the wishes of colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia even before the RNLB appeared on the scene in 1903. From the beginning, North-Western Rhodesia was viewed as an important theatre for the operations of labour recruiters from the South, whether by private connoisseurs or through the agency of early amorphous labour organisations, as we have already observed.<sup>88</sup> The Administration of this territory had even openly committed some of its officials, like the District Commissioner of the Batoka district, bordering on the Zambesi river, to assist the colonist employers of Matabeleland with labour recruitment in the Mashukulumwe (Ila) and Tonga country, lying between the Zambesi and the Mazabuka plateau, as early as 1900.<sup>89</sup>

What appeared actually deficient in the whole process of labour recruitment in North-Western Rhodesia, before the arrival of the RNLB on the scene, was the machinery by means of which the excesses of private agents could be governed. Such a machinery, of course, involved the imposition of essential restrictions on the activities of these agents and their African touts, much in the same way the amendment to Native Regulations of Southern Rhodesia, in April 1901, threatened dire consequences to unscrupulous labour touts in that territory.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, the activities of a group of labour touts, led by a 'Cape Boy', named John Zulu, and belonging to the firm of Messrs Acutt and Crewe, among the Gwembe Tonga, in June 1900, in the Baroka district,<sup>91</sup> are here a

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by Richard Goode, Administrator's Secretary, N/E/Rhodesia: August 1, 1904.

<sup>88</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.419-21

<sup>89</sup> C. O. 417/310: Major Coryndon's Proposals for the System of Administration of N/W/Rhodesia: July 12, 1900.

<sup>90</sup> Vide: C. O. 417/319: Draft Native Regulations Amendment Ordinance: Encl-

clear demonstration of the ease with which the North-Western Rhodesian government had allowed the agents of Southern Rhodesian colonist employers to operate in the pre-RNLB era. Under these circumstances, even the imposition of hut tax among the Tonga, Ila and other communities outside Barotse-land proper by 1901,<sup>92</sup> was a mere formality, which bore little impact on the process of labour migration before 1903.

But it is particularly in connection with the conscious and deliberate efforts of the two administrations of North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia to promote labour recruiting activities in and after 1903 that the argument on the favourable climate, in which the RNLB operated, becomes clear. By 1904, the lethargy, which had characterized the attitude of the North-Western Rhodesian government towards labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia, for example, was being speedily replaced by a tighter system of control in favour of the RNLB agents rather than anyone else.

In October 1903, barely a month after the formation of the Bureau, the Administration of North-Western Rhodesian government issued instructions for all agents of the Bureau in the territory, whose accreditation had the backing of the Bureau Manager, Val Gielgud, to report to the District Commissioners in the respective districts where they were stationed. The move was designed not only to facilitate co-operation between the Native Department officials and these agents, but also to exclude any form of competition with the Bureau, in the matter of labour recruitment in the territory. In this instance, the North-Western Rhodesian Administration was particularly concerned about the activities of 'undesirable' and 'irresponsible' touts, working for the Wankie railway sub-constructors and operating in the Falls (Kalomo) and the Batoka districts. These agents, who were said to be mostly of low-class Greek origin,<sup>93</sup> were, apparently, using those techniques peculiar to the profession of commercial-minded labour recruiters, going about their business with 'natives masquerading as police'; actions, which, the officials feared, were likely to undermine stability in these districts and, consequently, required that Bureau agents be 'properly introduced to the natives.'<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> used in Clarke to Milner: January 14, 1901.  
Vide: C. O. 417/319: Statements of Trooper George Skinner; Siandumbi and Jim before John Carden, JP at Sebungwe: June 26, 1900.

<sup>92</sup> Colson: Social Organisation of the Gover Gwembe Tonga: pp. 29-30.

<sup>93</sup> C. O. 417/400: Report on the Administration of N/W Rhodesia for the Year Ending March 31st, 1904 (by H. M. Hole, Ag. Administrator).

It was after what was regarded, in official circles, as 'proper introduction', that the Bureau agents were thus guaranteed by the Administration 'to receive every assistance possible' from the District Commissioners.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, as an immediate result of this co-operation between the Administration and the Bureau, the agents of this new body were allowed to proceed with their recruiting activities, in spite of the inconveniences these activities frequently caused. In the Mapanza sub-division of the Batoka district for example, in spite of the fact that the Company had not yet succeeded in establishing full control over the area, not to mention the local demand for labour by the Copper mines nearby, Nielsen, the Bureau agent in the region, was, however, allowed to proceed with his recruiting activities for the sake of forwarding this labour to Southern Rhodesia.<sup>96</sup>

In fact, the co-operation of the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia with the Bureau did not merely consist of vague and deceptive assurances to the potential labourers that 'they ~~(will)~~ be safe in engaging themselves to work for the Bureau, and... ~~(will)~~ be regularly paid and fairly treated.'<sup>97</sup> This co-operation was more fundamental and multi-dimensional in its character. The extension of taxation, between 1904 and 1905 to include such areas as Barotseland proper, was one subtle calculation to widen the spheres of labour recruitment to the advantage of the Bureau. The same could also be said of the Company's pressure on Lewanika, to abolish 'domestic slavery' in his domain, which consequently rendered available, an increased reservoir of manpower to largely benefit Bureau agents.<sup>98</sup> Thus the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia was quick to comment, triumphantly, on the combined effect, both taxation and the liberalisation of Lewanika's domestic policies had produced in relation to labour migration from the Barotse Valley in distinctly optimistic terms. According to F. C. Macaulay, the District Commissioner at Mongu, labour migration from the Barotse Valley had won total response by 1904

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<sup>94</sup> C. O. 417/387: S. M. L. O'Keefe, Secretary, Department of Administrator, Livingstone to Private Secretary, Administrator's Office, Salisbury: October 9, 1903.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid: O'Keefe to Gielgud, Bulawayo: October 9, 1903.

<sup>96</sup> C. O. 417/398: Report on District matters by F. V. Worthington, D.C.. Batoka District for January, 1904.

<sup>97</sup> C. O. 417/400: Report on the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia for the Year Ending March 31, 1904.

<sup>98</sup> BSACO. Director's Report and Accounts for the Year Ended March 31, 1907: p. 8.

and, consequently, villages were reported as being 'very empty -(since)- many boys -(were)- going to seek labour in the South. . .'.<sup>99</sup>

Of particular interest amongst the officials of the territory, was the fact that even members of the Lozi aristocracy, generally regarded as rather contemptuous of minework preferring, as they did, only such posts as clerks, compound police or other positions of responsibility tending 'to foster their sense of tribal distinction',<sup>100</sup> were here recorded as ignoring Lewanika's opinion on the matter and joining the cue to migrate to the Southern labour markets. Indeed, even at this early stage, Macaulay recorded the death of the son of Ngambela Mokamba, a top figure in Lozi political circles, at the Wankie Colliery, for which the father consequently received, in the process, some remuneration.<sup>101</sup> For the RNLB, these proceedings in North-Western Rhodesia portended a promising future.

North-Eastern Rhodesia, the other chief source of labour across the Zambezi, also geared its machinery accordingly, to meet the demands of the Bureau on labour recruitment. But here the main problem facing the Administration, by 1903, was the increasing tempo of development in the western districts of the territory, namely the Zumbo, Kafue and Western Luangwe districts. In the Kafue district alone, at the Broken Hill and Bwana Mkubwa mining properties, a force of about 850 labourers was engaged at what seemed, by North-Eastern Rhodesian standards, a relatively high rate of wages of 10/- per month.<sup>102</sup> With increased prospecting and development of claims in these western districts, the Administration in question even feared that labour demand would rise and thus leave the territory in a difficult position.

For one reason, North-Eastern Rhodesia's transportation problems were more complex than those of its counterpart, North-Western Rhodesia. For instance, while the latter could anticipate, with relief, the completion of the railway line to Livingstone by 1904, North-Eastern Rhodesia still faced in-

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<sup>99</sup> C. O. 417/399: Report on District Matters by the Acting District Commissioner (F. C. Macaulay), Barotse District, for Feb., 1904.

<sup>100</sup> Armour: 'Migrant Labour in the Kalabo District of Barotseland (Northern Rhodesia)': Bulletin of the Inter-African Labour Institute: 1962: p. 27.

<sup>101</sup> C. O. 417/399: Report on District matters by Acting District Commissioner (F. C. Macaulay).

<sup>102</sup> C. O. 417/401: Report on the Employment of North Eastern Rhodesian Natives by the Rhodesia Copper Company and Conditions of Engagement (by Richard Goode): August 1, 1904.



surmountable problems with regard to transportation. With most of the wagon roads from the South closed in 1903, due to the outbreak of lung sickness, North-Eastern Rhodesia was forced to fall back on its manpower for tenga-tenga (carriers); a situation which, nonetheless, looked hardly promising, due to the scanty population of the territory.

As the North-Eastern Rhodesian Administration aptly pointed out in April 1903, in the Kafue and Zumbo districts, which covered an area of about 40,000 square miles, the population was estimated at about only 35,000 inhabitants including men, women and children. The number of able-bodied men was merely 5,250.<sup>103</sup> Taking into account that the Zumbo and the Kafue districts were, in addition, the most promising areas in terms of mineral production and, at the same time, also served as corridors through which routes, for supplies from the South, entered the territory, some officials of the Administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia could, understandably, not help feeling uneasy about an impending competition for labour between the mining industry and tenga-tenga within the territory, with the result that local supply would probably fail to meet this demand. Indeed, local interests were already calling for measures to nip the whole process of labour migration to the South in the bud, even at that early stage, to avoid any harm being done to their sources of labour supply.<sup>104</sup>

But the commitment of the North-Eastern Rhodesian government to labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was, however, not at all affected by any of these forebodings, so volubly articulated by vested interests in the territory. Thus in June 1903, Codrington squarely met the protests of the Northern Copper Company, on labour recruitment for interests South of the Zambesi, by indicating that the whole process had its origins in voluntary labour migration and that all what his government was only doing was to encourage both this movement and labour recruitment for work South of the Zambesi, so as to minimise the incidence of 'unrestricted' recruitment of labour in the territory.<sup>105</sup> Even under extreme disappointment with the Admin-

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<sup>103</sup> C. O. 417/385: Memorandum on Recruiting of Native Labour for the South African Mines by P. H. Selby, Civil Commissioner and Magistrate, Kafue and Zumbo Districts to Codrington, April 2, 1903.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid: H. U. Moffat, Manager, The Bechuanaland Exploration Co. Ltd., and The Northern Copper (BSA) Co. Ltd., Bulawayo, to Codrington, Fort Jameson, April 3, 1903.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid: Codrington to Moffat: June 17, 1903.

istration of Southern Rhodesia over the latter's unco-operative attitude in connection with the repatriation of recruits, as occurred also in 1903 during the Hayes affair,<sup>106</sup> Codrington remained heavily committed to the arrangement, whereby North-Eastern Rhodesia was to play the role of a reservoir of labour for the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia. Indeed, most of the southern districts of North-Eastern Rhodesia, especially those bordering on the Zambesi, were, by 1903, quite inextricably enmeshed in this web of labour migration to the South, with the result that little could be done to reverse the process. The Fort Jameson Administration itself was, in the first place, actually responsible for such a situation, which it had initially regarded as a means through which the people of the Southern districts could earn their hut tax by working on the mines in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>107</sup>

Thus whilst North-Eastern Rhodesia could not easily break off its intricate relationship with Southern Rhodesia on labour supply, by the time the Bureau was formed, it sought an alternative method whereby it could systematize the whole process of labour migration, in order to meet both the internal labour demand and its external commitments. The graduated tax of early 1904 was expected to produce the required magical results. Under this new system of taxation, those people living in the northern districts on the Tanganyika plateau and the Bemba country were expected to pay a 3/- hut tax per annum, as they had 'some difficulty in finding employment.' In the relatively more advanced district of the East Luangwa, the taxation rate was fixed at 6/- per hut, whilst in the Zumbo and Kafue districts in the South, it was 12/- per hut. The Southern districts were heavily charged in this manner, because of what the Administration considered to be 'the increasing facilities for earning money at ~~(the)~~ mines both North and South of the Zambesi. . . .'<sup>108</sup> Implicit in this graduated tax system was, of course, the expectation that labourers from the 3/- tax belt would make their way to work in the Fort Jameson region, whilst the Fort Jameson people, and, subsequently, those of the Zumbo and Kafue districts also, would all in turn be released for labour supply to the markets South of the Zambesi. As a matter of fact, the Native Commissioner

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<sup>106</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.

<sup>107</sup> C. O. 417/363: Report of the Acting Administrator (C. P. Chesnaye), N/E/Rhodesia on the Operations of the Hut Tax for the Half-Year Ending: September 30, 1901.

<sup>108</sup> C. O. 417/398: Codrington to Sharpe: February 4, 1904.

of the Mirongo division of the North Luangwa district, Mr. Young, had actually brought a party of 887 labourers from his area to work in the Fort Jameson division of the East Luangwa district, as early as May 1903, with this very idea in mind.<sup>109</sup>

But whether this plan of the North-Eastern Rhodesian Administration, to distribute labour supply equitably to the satisfaction of both internal and external requirements, ever worked, is another matter. For the purpose of this study, it is argued, that the plan appears to have envisaged a situation, whereby the mobility of labour had to be effected as easily as possible, without the usual inconvenience imposed by long distance travel. The whole idea appears to be vindicated here by the willingness of Codrington, in conjunction with the Portuguese authorities, to construct a direct labour route, running between Fort Jameson and Salisbury via Cachumba on the Zambesi, rather than Feira, further to the West and thus reducing the distance between the two points by half.<sup>110</sup> From the point of view of the new Bureau, it was essentially this willingness and consequent readiness to co-operate, on the matter of labour recruitment and migration, which the Administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia so amply demonstrated by 1903, which counted in the final analysis. Like its counterpart in North-Western Rhodesia, the Administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia, therefore, played a significant part in creating a positive environment in which the new labour body could effectively fulfill its functions, in relation to the recruitment and distribution of trans-Zambesian labour.

From the foregoing argument, it is clear that by dicta and well calculated labour-inducing activities, the governments of the two northern territories played a positive role in guaranteeing the success of the RNLB in its initial stages. What the Bureau also required, to reinforce these positive factors in its favour, was sound psychological and moral backing to justify the ethos on which its ideals were founded. The whole scheme of recruiting cheap immigrant labour had to have some form of ethical justification and this too was not lacking, especially by 1903. The colonists of Southern Rhodesia, true to their sense of professionalism on labour matters, were, at this time, agitating for increased fiscal pressure to maximise the supply of cheap and involuntary labour. The objectives of the 1903 agitation for an increased rate of

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<sup>109</sup> C. O. 417/385: Codrington to BSACo.: May 13, 1903.

<sup>110</sup> C. O. 417/386: Milton to BSACo.: September 14, 1903.

taxation for the Africans of Southern Rhodesia were, therefore, quite apparent and certainly coincided with the ideals for which the Bureau was formed, in the first place. Of course, for public consumption, the Administration of Southern Rhodesia referred, in euphemistic terms, to the raising of poll tax from 10/- to £2 per annum, with an extra 10/- for every extra wife for polygamous husbands, as a morally justified contribution to the territory's revenue by a people obviously grateful to the benefits of Pax Britannica, whilst the impost on extra wives, was in turn, equated to income tax on 'luxury goods'.<sup>111</sup> But other parties in the bargain were not so devious.

The High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, who was, at that time, also pursuing a scheme, whereby Indian labour could be imported into South Africa for railway work and other aspects of the post-war reconstruction programme,<sup>112</sup> was actually encouraged by this movement to increase the rate of taxation for Africans in Southern Rhodesia. In this measure, he saw a ray of hope in mobilising labour, not only for the benefit of Southern Rhodesia, but also for the territories below the Limpopo, whether 'surplus' labour would be consequently exported.<sup>113</sup> For this reason, Milner, inevitably, differed openly with his junior in Salisbury, the Resident Commissioner, Sir Marshall Clarke, who was altogether opposed to the £2 tax. The High Commissioner thus went on to justify his position on the matter, in the following terms:

My own view is that, while I deprecate absolutely tax intended to force natives to labour, I think that there should be reasonable taxation and that they -(natives)- cannot complain if incidentally its imposition compels them to work.<sup>114</sup>

With such backing from highly placed Imperial officials, the intentions of the Administration and colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, to derive maximum benefit from fiscal pressure as a form of administrative coercion to procure unfree labour, need no further clarification.

Other diverse interests in the country were also quite aware of the sinister intentions of the 1903 movement to raise the rate of African taxation. But their reactions to this movement were largely conditioned by the degree to which the proposed increase was bound to affect their own particular sect-

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<sup>111</sup>C. O. 417/373: Milton to Milner: May 27, 1903.

<sup>112</sup>Vide: Supra: pp.291-4

<sup>113</sup>C. O. 417/373: Milner to Milton: Telegram: June 16, 1903.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid: Milner to Clarke: Telegram: June 25, 1903.

ional interests. Thus those missionaries, who were heavily engaged in farming at their own institutions, would not be soothed at all by the Administration's promises that they would be exempted from the new rate of taxation, because of their efforts 'to teach natives the value of labour' through engaging the latter in agricultural pursuits. The Chishawasha mission, run by the Jesuits and with a resident African tax-paying population of 400 males on its huge latifundias by 1903, easily became the spokesman of these farmer-missionaries, whose interests were thus being threatened by the new impost in a number of ways.<sup>115</sup>

In the first place, it was suspected that the new rate of taxation threatened to raise the African wage tariff in the farming industry as a whole, where the general rate had hitherto been estimated at an average of 10/- per month, with the result that only few farmers would be in a position to pay their labourers anything beyond 15/- per month. Secondly, missionary-farmers deplored the assumption, underlying the proposed tax legislation, that the African labourer had no sense of discrimination in relation to the nature and conditions of work he engaged in and that, consequently, the element of compulsion, which the proposed tax implied, would make little difference in labour turn-out insofar as the needs of both the mining and the farming industries were concerned.

As Father Richartz of Chishawasha viewed the situation, the new tax legislation certainly required the African labourer to work for longer periods with the result that the labourer would be even more discriminating in his choice of work than before, preferring, in the event, to work only in those more remunerative jobs. In this case, the mining industry would naturally gain the upper hand to the disadvantage of the farmers, who obviously could not afford to pay comparable wages. From Father Richartz's point of view, therefore, such a situation was totally indefensible, not only in terms of the inequitable distribution of labour which it implied, but also because it was against the ethics of labour utilization and, consequently, detrimental to the African labourer. The Jesuit cleric thus concluded:

It demoralizes the native if he gets abnormal wages before he is worth it and he will never be ready to be taught to work

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<sup>115</sup> For the role of the Chishawasha Mission as a land-holder and its dealings with its African tenants, Vide: L. Vambe: From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: Heinemann: London: 1976: pp. 4-5, 36-8.

and learn trades etc. <sup>116</sup>-(sic)- if he knows he can earn money without ~~-(training)-~~.

Moreover, this farmer-missionary also envisaged a situation whereby the new tax requirements could only stimulate African agricultural production and consequently put the mission farms out of business, as they would obviously be required to compete with the African peasant farmer who produced his grain more cheaply.

All these views of Father Richartz were supported by farmers living on the fringes of the territory of Southern Rhodesia, like those constituting the Gazaland Farmers' Association of the Melssetter district. According to the standpoint of the Melssetter farmers, the new tax measure was deliberately designed to promote the interests of the mining industry, whilst, on the other hand, it could only be regarded as 'detrimental to the farming industry at large and ruinous to the district of Melssetter.'<sup>117</sup> For this particular district, where the average wage rate paid by a predominantly Boer farming population was only 5/- per month and where the population was mostly 'Shangaan', then regarded as excellent mine labour and naturally in great demand outside the district, the future did not look at all promising. Besides, the white colonists of the area were in a state of paranoia due to the 25 mile stretch of boundary the district shared with the Portuguese territory, which, it was felt, was a disadvantage in the event of an African rising breaking out once more.

Yet whilst these arguments, on the advantages and disadvantages of increased taxation and its bearing on African labour supply, were quite impressive in their own way, for the relevance of the RNLB, then in its formative stage at the time, it is essentially the psychological and other non-economic issues related to labour mobilisation, in a racially composite colonial society, which matter here. Such issues played their part in contributing to the whole make-up of an evidently commodious environment, in which the new Bureau could take up root, with guarantees of reasonable moral support. In this particular case, the operations of the politics and economics of group dominance in a colonial setting are quite evident in the irrationality and contradictions which characterized, particularly, the demand for labour.

Thus in 1903, when the Administration of Southern Rhodesia was arguing

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<sup>116</sup> C. O. 417/373: Father F. J. Richartz, S. J. Chishawasha to Clarke, Salisbury: July 6, 1903.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid: Massy-Swynnerton to Clarke: August 4, 1903.

in favour of increased taxation for the Africans in that territory as a means 'for obtaining mining labour to meet requirements',<sup>118</sup> it was reported, not without some embarrassment, that labour supply was so plentiful in the country that it had to be exported to the Rand. Indeed, in some districts, like that of Hartley in Mashonaland, the Native Commissioner indicated that there had been a labour surplus since 1902 and, by 1903, it had even worsened to such a degree that some alien labourers from Nyasaland, then entering the country, could not find employment.<sup>119</sup> The situation actually deteriorated, between March and May 1903, when local labour was also driven onto the market, due to drought and the subsequent poor harvest of that season. The outcome in this respect was, therefore, a general reduction in wages and the turning down, by colonist employers, of those local and alien labourers from Nyasaland whom they classified as 'raw natives' or 'surface labour.'<sup>120</sup> Yet it was against this background that fiscal pressure, in form of increased taxation, was to be applied.

In view of the obvious contradictions underlying these events of 1903, one is, of course, bound to look to the peculiarities of racially composite colonial societies, to provide a satisfactory explanation to a somewhat unrealistic situation of this nature. In this particular case, it is apparent that the operational theories resorted to here had their origins in those fossilized frontier and race attitudes, born of the earlier phase of actual physical conflict between the 'colonizers' and the 'colonized'. In this regard, the extraction of labour from the subject colonial groups, by legitimized administrative coercion, was less significant as an economic measure than it was as an exercise in the politics and psychology of group dominance within the colonial setting. Thus in recommending the new rate of taxation to the High Commissioner and pointing out that the levy on extra wives should be treated as equivalent to a charge on 'luxury goods' to polygamous husbands, Milton went on to reveal also a characteristic disrespect for African traditional society, by adding that these extra wives were 'really only concubines, not having been married according to native custom' and were, therefore, merely living with their

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid: Milton to Milner: May 27, 1903.

<sup>119</sup> C. O. 417/372: Report of W. E. Scott, N/C, Hartley for July 1903: Quoted in Clarke to Milton: September 30, 1903.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Rhodesia Herald, July 11, 1903: Enclosed in Clarke to Milner: July 13, 1903.

'reputed husbands' to preserve a superficial 'state of decency.'<sup>121</sup>

Such utter contempt for African traditional societies, of course, had little to do with the question of labour supply, but had its basis in the general belief amongst whites, at the beginning of the twentieth century, that African traditional societies were too undeveloped, inchoate and fragmentary to be regarded as serious obstacles to colonial enterprise and social change. These assumptions, which had their origins in what early whites regarded as the untenability of the doctrine of cultural relativism within the African setting, are best described by Cairns who indicates that:

The presumed ephemerality of tribal customs justified an absence of concern -(amongst the whites)- as to their basis and interrelationships. That tribal cultures were integrated, that they possessed--- emotional value for their adherents, and that as a consequence the problem of social change was highly complex and deeply disruptive of an existing network of social relations - these aspects of the contact situation were simply ignored.<sup>122</sup>

Some contemporaries of Milton were actually quite cognisant of the psychological and racial implications which the new taxation rate was also required to satisfy within the colonist society of labour in Southern Rhodesia. Thus Father Richartz, the head of the Chishawash Mission near Salisbury, could not disguise his disappointment with the racial animosity evinced by some of his colleagues in the Executive of the Mashonaland Farmers' Association. As he observed, after attending a meeting to ratify the new rate of taxation for Africans in mid-July 1903, the grounds on which those members of the Farmers' Association, 'who -(were)- notorious for not being able to get boys on account of their rough ways of dealing with them, ' supported the new measure were, simply, the promises this measure proffered on forced labour as well as the chance it allowed them to express 'a bitter racial hatred against the natives and their protectors -(the humanitarians)-.' For these reasons, this missionary-farmer, who was also very disillusioned by the whole question of Southern Rhodesia's management of 'native affairs', subject to these colonist influences, thus commented on the Mashonaland farmers' proceedings as follows:

I was so disgusted at the outburst of the rude hatred against the natives, that I am considering whether it is becoming for me to have anything to do with man, who are not ashamed to speak as

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<sup>121</sup> C. O. 417/373: Milton to Milner: May 27, 1903

<sup>122</sup> Cairns: op. cit. p. 166



some members did, or applaud at such utterings.<sup>123</sup>

In Father Richartz's own words, the new legislation and its concomitant demands on the African subject societies were actually designed to deal with the latter 'as if they were less than slaves.'<sup>124</sup>

In this connection, the non-economic determinants of the measure on increased African taxation and its purported labour supply functions were apparent. Indeed, to argue solely on the merits of the proposed measure to augment labour supply, as the Administration of Southern Rhodesia did, when in Mashonaland, in particular, literally 'hundreds' of potential labourers were, in 1903, being turned away and could not get work 'either because they were unsuitable or because there was no work for them,'<sup>125</sup> can only be regarded as ridiculous. From the preceding analysis and for the purpose of this study, it is, therefore, argued that the main objective of the 1903 movement to increase the rate of taxation, for the Africans in Southern Rhodesia, was not so much intended to increase the labour turnout as it was designed to reinforce the psychological and other non-economic features of a colonial environment which made the exploitation of unfree labour from the subject peoples by the dominant group easier and morally justifiable. It was in the midst of this movement that the RNLB was born and, as a sign of the times, the preoccupation of this body, in its first years of existence, centred, more or less, on exporting surplus labour rather augmenting the supply for the local market.

During the period 1903-6, when the administrative structures across the Zambesi had been finally updated and the technology of labour recruitment was definitely improved on both sides of the river, as proven by the creation of the RNLB, the ironies and contradictions underlying the processes of labour mobilisation in a politically and economically restrictive setting, like that of a racially stratified colonial society, became quite evident. The new labour organisation, which was formed between July and August 1903 with the BSACo's financial backing to enable it to establish a sound infrastructure on both sides of the Zambesi, in form of rest houses and compounds and to purchase horses and mules for its agents, appeared to be well set for a good beginning. Indeed, with the support of both the mining and farming industries, to work for

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<sup>123</sup> C. O. 417/373: Father Richartz to Clarke: July 15, 1903.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.: Rev. John White, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in S. Rhodesia, to Clarke: July 23, 1903.

the exclusion of labour recruitment by independent or private labour agents, which in this case was vouchsafed by the assurances of the Administration of Southern Rhodesia to regulate and restrict the issue of recruiting licences,<sup>126</sup> the RNLB was certainly destined to dominate the field of labour recruitment on both sides of the Zambesi, from the start, and to consolidate its monopoly over the years.

But as has been indicated already, the RNLB was born at a propitious time. In fact, it might be said that the times were so favourable for the cause of labour mobilisation that the new labour organisation was nearly put out of function, as independent labour flooded the market from both internal and external sources in 1903.<sup>127</sup> With the unsolicited efforts of the Native Department to encourage the Native Commissioners in the famine-stricken areas, like the Lomagundi, Inyanga and Mrewa districts, to forward labour recruits to the nearest mining properties in return for grain, in order to avoid the free issue of food by the government to those African communities so affected and thus, allegedly, encouraging a credence among these people that 'they need never work 'for in the time of scarcity the Government will feed -~~(us)~~ for nothing"', as the officials imagined,<sup>128</sup> the labour market in Southern Rhodesia was literally saturated.

Those Southern Rhodesian colonist employers who complained of shortage in 1903 were, more or less, actuated by eclectic proclivities rather than genuine grievances based on the realities of the situation. Thus the Gwanda mine authorities of Southern Matabeleland, who complained of shortage at this time, were, in reality, simply trying to draw the attention of the Administration in Salisbury on what they viewed as the arbitrary measures of the Transvaal government in prohibiting the movement of labour from that territory into Southern Rhodesia. Labour supply from other sources was, actually, quite plentiful, but the Gwanda mines felt that the 'Blantyre Boys' from Nyasaland, then offering their services, were generally 'unsatisfactory as mine labourers', being more vulnerable to pulmonary epidemics and other diseases than other labourers.<sup>129</sup> The Boer farming community around Enkeldoorn,

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<sup>126</sup> C. O. 417/386: Milton to BSACo. : September 14, 1903.

<sup>127</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.437-8

<sup>128</sup> C. O. 417/373: W. S. Taberer, Acting C/N/C, Salisbury to Milton: September 3, 1903.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: August 14, 1903

in the Charter district, could also not procure an adequate supply of labour from local sources, even under famine conditions, because their conception of farm labour was too feudal to induce sufficient respondents.<sup>130</sup>

A situation like that of 1903/4, in which the glut of labour supply threatened the Bureau with redundancy, could only compel the new organisation to diversify its activities in other directions and the subsequent role of the RNLB, as a satellite of the Rand mining industry between 1903 and 1906, was, therefore, a natural development from these bizarre circumstances. The flood-gates against labour recruitment in the Rhodesias for the Rand and other South African interests had actually been shaken, in January 1903, by the Chamberlain visit to the African sub-continent and the subsequent Bloemfontein Conference held in March of that year. To avoid the politically and socially embarrassing consequences which Asiatic labour importation entailed, as the colonist employers in this part of African sub-continent currently demanded, the advice given to these employers by the Imperial authorities was to exhaust nearby African sources first, starting with those possible sources of labour supply in British Africa in particular.<sup>131</sup> It was, therefore, in accordance with these recommendations that the Rand mining industry, through its labour organisation, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), lodged its application for labour supply from the Rhodesias in early 1903, proposing, at the same time, a new agreement with the mining industry of Southern Rhodesia for the equitable distribution of this commodity between the two sets of employers.<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, if the Rand employers had, at this stage, any doubts on the results of their application, these were, at the time, dispelled by the confident assurances of highly placed officials either to the effect that Southern Rhodesia was in no position to prevent WNLA from recruiting labour in its territories because, under Section 20 of the Royal Charter, the BSACo. was forbidden to create any monopolies in economic affairs in these territories,<sup>133</sup> or because it was simply felt that such a course of action was too 'illiberal'

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<sup>130</sup> C. O. 417/399: Report by G. M. Odium on Agriculture in the Enkeldoorn Portion of Charter District: March, 1904.

<sup>131</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.277-8

<sup>132</sup> C. O. 417/383: A. N. Goldring, Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, to Lagden: February 3, 1903.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid: Sir G. Y. Lagden, Secretary for Native Affairs, Transvaal, to Milner: February 11, 1903.

for the Rhodesian authorities to resort to.<sup>134</sup> This streak of confidence, on the potentiality of the Rhodesias as eligible sources of labour supply, affected not only the Rand mining industry, but also the South African railways, when they later entered into the bargain in their turn. With the two principal agents of the Central South African Railways already accredited and stationed at their headquarters at Syringa Siding, South of Bulawayo, in Southern Rhodesia by mid-1903, this group of employers was quite certain to procure a regular labour supply of at least 'five hundred boys a month' from Southern Rhodesia, especially as this type of supply was considered merely 'surface labour' over which the Southern Rhodesian mining industry would have no qualms.<sup>135</sup>

This confidence on the part of the South African employers in relation to labour supply from the Rhodesias, which appears to have been inspired, largely, by Lord Milner, the High Commissioner for South Africa, at the time, did not, however, sufficiently take into consideration the sensitivity of local interests and officials on both sides of the Zambesi. The line of argument initially pursued by the BSACo. and its officials was that priority should be given to local interests, in general, over the issue of labour supply.<sup>136</sup> In North-Western Rhodesia, for instance, where a similar application had been made at the time by Robert Williams to Lewanika for 1,000 labourers to work on the Benguela Railway, the authorities felt that, with their own railway line from the South then in construction and the prospective demand by the copper mines in the 'Hook of the Kafue', the territory was in no position to meet external requirements such as those of the Rand and Robert Williams.<sup>137</sup> In North-Eastern Rhodesia too, the intentions of the South African employers were evidently frustrated by the dog-in-the-manger attitude of those mining concerns operating there and also, to some extent, by the frigid attitude of the authorities in the territory towards labour exportation to South Africa. The leading opponent to these overtures by South African interests was, apparently, the Bulawayo-based Northern Copper Company, owning some mining properties in the Kafue region and which was also headed by H. U. Moffat, of Bechuana-

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid: Milner to Lagden: February 19, 1903.

<sup>135</sup> C. O. 417/386: Milner to Milton: Telegram: July 31, 1903.

<sup>136</sup> C. O. 417/371: Milton to Milner: March 5, 1903; and BSACo. Directors' Report and Accounts, March 31st 1904: p. 14.

<sup>137</sup> C. O. 417/372: Col. Harding to Imperial Secretary, Johannesburg, May 16, 1903.

land Exploration Company fame.

In Moffat's view, any permission to allow the Rand labour organisation to recruit labour in that territory on the very doorsteps of his company's properties was not simply absurd, but also threatened these local interests with ruination, arising out of unfair competition with external economic interests against which they should normally seek official protection. He summarized the plight of mining concerns in North-Eastern Rhodesia in this manner:

If the Rand are allowed to recruit labour, not only will the rates of wages be raised to the Rand scale, but we shall also probably lose a large amount of labour and therefore be very short; ~~(and)~~ in addition to the high wages per hour there are other inducements for the native labourers to go to Johannesburg.<sup>138</sup>

Moffat's anxieties were vindicated by the pessimism of P. H. Selby, the Civil Commissioner and Magistrate of the combined districts of the Kafue and Zumbo ..., where most of the activities on mineral prospecting and production were then going on. Selby, who felt that the scanty population of these districts could, in no way, meet the local labour demand, perceptibly poured cold water onto any prospects of labour exportation to the Rand when he asserted in April 1903 that:

We ~~(North-Eastern Rhodesia)~~ have, our own labour problem already and in place of being treated as a possible recruiting ground for work in the South we are qualified, by the rich discoveries in our Western districts, by the projected extension of the railway ~~(line)~~ to these mines, and, unhappily, by our sparse population, to rank *pari passu* with other territories, whose material progress depends entirely on the exploitation of mineral wealth.<sup>139</sup>

Fortunately for the Rand employers, Selby's superiors did not seem to share his drastic views on this question of labour exportation to the South. But whilst they could not take any overtly obstructive measures to the disadvantage of the Rand and other employers in the South, they did not, however, offer any concrete promises on the regular supply of labour from this source, preferring, as they did, to hide behind pious but empty phrases to the effect that:

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<sup>138</sup> C. O. 417/385: H. U. Moffat, Manager, The Northern Copper (BSA) Company Ltd., Bulawayo, to Codrington, Fort Jameson: April 3, 1903.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid: Memorandum on Recruiting of Native Labour for the South African Mines by P. H. Selby... to Codrington: April 2, 1903.

... every encouragement short of actual interference or direction  
-(would)- be given by the local Administration to enable the  
natives of North-Eastern Rhodesia to seek employment wherever  
they may think fit. <sup>140</sup>

Yet in spite of everything, the attitude of the colonist employers and officials of the trans-Zambesian territories, with regard to the Rand's application for labour, was, to say the least, quite diplomatic. Their counterparts in Southern Rhodesia, as represented by the mining industry of Matabeleland, were, at first, all out for a tit-for-tat policy. They initially saw in the application of the Rand an opportunity to make the latter taste a portion of their own medicine. In this particular case, the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines wanted to revenge for the ban, then recently imposed by the Transvaal authorities, on labour supply from the northern Transvaal on which the mines of Southern Matabeleland had relied during the Anglo-Boer war and after. <sup>141</sup>

With the appearance of the RNLB on the scene, the colonist employers and officials of Southern Rhodesia, in particular, quickly began to change their attitudes towards the Rand and WNLA over this issue of labour supply. The management of the Bureau was, in this case, the primary force in this sudden volte-face amongst these employers and officials in their relations with their opposite numbers below the Limpopo. Of course, after the futile wartime arrangement between the Rand and the Southern Rhodesian mining industry for mutual exchange of labour supply, which had only been terminated in December 1902, <sup>142</sup> it required some convincing, just a few months later, to persuade these people on the advantages of another arrangement. Yet this was essentially what the management of the Bureau did and ultimately succeeded in arranging for a marriage of convenience between the RNLB itself and WNLA, in order to cope more effectively with the supply and demand of labour within the regional economic system of the sub-continent as a whole.

In the first place, the Bureau had been established at a time when labour surplus, rather than shortage, was the main problem. Indeed, faced with a situation, whereby some of the districts like Hartley were suffering from an inundation of labour supply whilst in the Wankie district the competition bet-

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Annual Report on the Administration of N/E Rhodesia for the Year Ending March 31, 1903.

<sup>141</sup> C. O. 417/386: Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, Bulawayo, to Chief Secretary, Salisbury: Telegram: September 17, 1903.

<sup>142</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 183-5

ween the Colliery and the construction work then being undertaken by the Beira and Mashonaland Railway Company had reduced the supply to the barest minimum, it was naturally assumed that the Bureau's functions would also involve the equitable distribution of labour and, in this way, facilitate its internal mobility from those areas where none was required to the ones where the demand was more apparent.<sup>143</sup> Besides, there was also the financial factor in the bargain. In fact, even those BSACo. officials, who had initially opposed the overtures of the Rand on labour recruitment in the Rhodesias, had indicated, at the same time, that they were quite partial to a scheme whereby WNLA would bear half the costs involved in recruiting labour for both the Rand and the Southern Rhodesian mining industry. In 1903, these costs were estimated at £20,000.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, the financial factor, in the relationship between the Bureau and WNLA, was so potent that, by 1906, the former was actually deriving a substantial part of its revenue from this source and, for this reason, wanted the relationship to be retained accordingly.<sup>145</sup> The very fact that WNLA was prepared to spend as much as £10 per labourer, in recruiting expenses, compared to the Bureau's 30/- per head, was significant in the arrangement.

Other factors of non-economic variety may have also influenced both the origin and course of the RNLB/WNLA partnership. From the deductions of Gielgud, the Manager of the RNLB, after he had worked with this body for an eight-month period, stretching from September 1903 to April 1904, it is clear that the new body was disconcerted not only by the increasing labour surplus from both local and trans-Zambesian sources, but also by what it viewed as the poor quality of this labour; a factor which, it was alleged, might have displeased the local colonist employers, in consequence. The fact that the 1903 glut, precipitated by short-time famine labour turnout, was actually being worsened in 1904, by the current closure of some of the mining properties, due to a general economic recession and also because of an inexorable reduction in the labour force as mines, like the Wankie Colliery, resorted to

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<sup>143</sup>C. O. 417/373: Clarke to Milton: September 30, 1903.

<sup>144</sup>C. O. 417/371: Milton to Milner: March 5, 1903.

<sup>145</sup>Vide: C. O. 417/392: Val Gielgud, General Manager, RNLB, to Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, Bulawayo: April 26, 1904.

machinisation,<sup>146</sup> was of no bearing to the Bureau management. All that had gone amiss and was, therefore, responsible for the mess, the management of the Bureau concluded, was a process which had its origins in the nature and habits of the class of recruits the Bureau had hitherto specialized in. Here the recruits from South-Western Matabeleland, Southern Mashonaland (the Victoria Circle) and those from North-Eastern Rhodesia across the Zambesi were singled out as scapegoats, for either real or imaginary defects as labourers, in one form or another.

For the recruits from the Bulilima district in South-Western Matabeleland, their crime, in this instance, was the job preference they exhibited, notably their preference to work only in Bulawayo and nowhere else. To the Bureau, which had recruited them in the first place, this disinclination by recruits to work outside certain districts tended to undermine its efforts to distribute labour to properties throughout the country and, in this way, frustrated this organisation's objectives. As for the 'Victoria boys' from Southern Mashonaland, where labour supply was then considered to be quite plentiful, their main problem was that they were generally regarded as 'unsatisfactory' by employers, who evidently turned them down on account of 'their unreliability and difficulty to manage'. Moreover, the mine managers in Matabeleland were reported to be generally opposed to the engagement of 'Victoria boys' because of the concomitant requirements this entailed, in form of employing more compound managers or interpreters conversant with the Shona language in order to deal with them.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, the trans-Zambesian recruits from North-Eastern Rhodesia were, by 1904, also increasingly falling out of favour with the Bureau, because of a characteristic breakdown in relationship between these charges and their mentors, the Bureau agents, once these recruits had crossed the Zambesi. In trying to establish the cause for their desertion and why these foreign recruits could not be controlled by Bureau agents and messengers en route to their respective centres of employment, Gielgud concluded:

These natives (from North-Eastern Rhodesia), are very suspicious and appear to have no confidence in anyone when out of their own country.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup>C. O. 417/392: Clarke to Milner: May 3, 1904.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid: Gielgud, Manager, RNLB to Rhodesia Chamber of Mines: Bulawayo: April 26, 1904.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid.



In essence, what Gielgud was doing here was the traditional colonist technique of applying far-fetched misconceptions to explain a general breakdown in master-servant relationships with the result that African labour recruits were seen, through their disobedience, as challenging the authority of their white mentors and thus frustrating the main objectives of the institution of unfree labour. Of course, under any other circumstances, the cooperation of these African recruits would have been successfully effected through the liberal application of coercion in one form or another. But during this period 1903-6, the appropriate remedy, at least as far as the Bureau management was concerned, was to forward these 'miscreants' and the like to labour markets below the Limpopo, where the 'raw' ones would be 'trained' and subsequently return to their home market the richer in experience and skills, whilst the Bureau itself would inadvertently gain in revenue, in form of capitation fees.<sup>149</sup> This line of argument was quite powerful and appealing to the colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia and, once Gielgud succeeded in convincing them, it carried away the day and thus ended up reducing the RNLB to a mere surrogate of WNLA up to 1906.

What actually rendered the RNLB/WNLA arrangement of 1903-6 so unbalanced and patently in favour of the Rand organisation were the differentials in power and strength between the two bodies. The RNLB was acting from a weak position; impecunious as it was and flooded with cheap labour which it was obviously prepared to dispose to the highest bidder. WNLA, on the other hand, was negotiating from a position of strength, backed, as it was, by adequate financial resources and lavish political support. Because of these factors, even in a situation where WNLA was asking for favours to recruit labour, this had, apparently, to be carried out on its own terms.

Three main aspects of this WNLA/RNLB accord demonstrate very clearly the respective positions of these two bodies. Firstly, WNLA would not accept the pre-condition in the agreement that North-Eastern and North-Western Rhodesia were to have first claim over labour supply across the Zambesi. From WNLA's point of view, this stipulation was destined to offset the volume of labour supply from these trans-Zambesian territories, given the fact that there were, in the first place, no sufficient guarantees on regular labour supply from the region and that, even if such supply were

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<sup>149</sup> Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Annual Report 1905: p. 65.

available, the employers of Southern Rhodesia would be in a more advantageous position over this supply of labour than their counterparts at the Rand. Secondly, the Rand labour body was, from the start, patently half-hearted over the demand by Southern Rhodesian colonist employers that it should use its influence with the Portuguese authorities to render available to Southern Rhodesia, labour supply from Portuguese East Africa, especially in the region adjacent to Southern Rhodesia's Melssetter district. As WNLA itself confessed, this Southern Rhodesian demand was almost impossible to carry out, as it was, more or less, a matter of mutual negotiations and reciprocal concessions between the Administration of Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese authorities.<sup>150</sup> The third and final factor dealt with the issue of repatriation of northern labour recruits, once they had completed their stint at the Rand.

Here the essential features and objectives of labour exploitation, within the constraints of a colonial setting, are very clearly demonstrated too. The refusal by a semi-official labour organisation to bear the responsibility on the repatriation of recruits, even those cases involving the indigent, the sick and misfits, was not only a demonstration of the desire, by the employers in question to squeeze the maximum out of their labourers at the most irreducible minimum in capital outlay, but that such a stance should have won the support of the Imperial officials, both in London and Southern Africa, is irrefutable evidence on how the mining industry in this part of the world had succeeded in holding everybody captive, within a particular system under its dominant influence. The fact that everyone of consequence, ranging from the colonist employer to the financier, politician and labour recruiter, seemed to be in league over one of the fundamental requirements in successful and permanent labour recruitment by a professional body,<sup>151</sup> is a classical demonstration that the mining industry in early Southern Africa had reached a stage, where it could have been easily mistaken for a monoculture, in very much the same manner as the sugar industry was treated in the West Indies, at the time. Against this background, the influence of the Rand was, undoubtedly, inestimable.

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<sup>150</sup> C. O. 417/385: J. Cowie, Acting Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, to Lagden: May 8, 1903.

<sup>151</sup> Orde Browne discusses, in detail, the advantages of sponsored repatriation in labour recruitment. Vide: Orde Browne: op. cit. pp. 60-1.

As a matter of fact, in this particular case, where the repatriation of Rhodesian labour recruits, from both sides of the Zambesi, was concerned, once WNLA had been exempted from the requirements of Southern Rhodesia's Native Employment Ordinance No. 9 of 1899 and once this labour body's agent, Captain Goodyear, then based in Mafeking, had visited the country to carry out arrangements for the reception of the Rand-bound recruits at specified WNLA bases in Umtali and Bulawayo,<sup>152</sup> its obligations, with regard to the welfare of these alien labourers, were henceforth minimal. The initial plea of the Resident Commissioner in Salisbury, on the question of the repatriation of labourers from the Rand so as to facilitate the task of tracing missing ones and also to encourage further recruitment,<sup>153</sup> totally failed to impress WNLA. All the concessions this body could make, in relation to the repatriation of these foreign recruits, were promises to put at their disposal, its rest-houses between Krugersdorp and Mafeking, for those recruits who were prepared to walk this distance to the railhead, as well as a probable reduction in the 30/- train fare, for recruits travelling in batches of no less than 20 individuals at a time, between Mafeking and Bulawayo.<sup>154</sup>

From the Colonial Officials' point of view, the Resident Commissioner's insistence on WNLA bearing the expenses and responsibility on repatriation was besides the point. All that mattered was that:

... a responsible white man should take his {labourer's} ticket {train} from him and generally speaking, 'forward' him wh ther he wants to go.<sup>155</sup>

In a nutshell, WNLA won the day, in an arrangement highly regarded by the RNLB as eliminating unfavourable competition between the two bodies for labour supply and, at the same time, affording no chance to the private labour agent to perpetrate his nefarious trade either in Southern Rhodesia or in the trans-Zambesian territories.

For the cause of trans-Zambesian labour migration into Southern Rhodesia, the period between the birth of the RNLB and the termination of the WNLA/RNLB accord in 1906, may rightly be treated as a stage, when the

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<sup>152</sup> C. O. 417/392: Gielgud to Taylor, C/N/C, Bulawayo: May 5, 1904.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid: Clarke to Milner: August 16, 1904.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid: E. J. M. Macfarlane, General Manager, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, to Lagden: May 28, 1904.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid: Minute by Grindle: July 1, 1904.

movement virtually reached its nadir. Whilst the new labour organisation, the RNLB, was born amidst a flurry of fanfare and optimism, its achievements were, essentially, either negative or irrelevant, at this particular stage of its history. The trans-Zambesian governments were, as usual, prepared to meet the requirements of this new body through their fervid cooperation in the field of labour recruitment for the sake of the Southern Rhodesian labour market. In Southern Rhodesia itself, the Administration, employers of labour and the white colonist population in general, had succeeded, by 1903, in creating a suitable atmosphere in which the new labour organisation could operate with a wholesome amount of moral and ethical justification before it; a situation naturally made possible by the contemporary movement to raise the rate of African taxation and, consequently, mount intensified fiscal pressure to facilitate cheap labour mobilisation within the framework of a colonial setting.

Yet at the same time, the cumulative effect of these diverse factors, it must be admitted, was to create a large surplus of labour supply on the Southern Rhodesian labour market, giving rise to a number of negative consequences. The WNLA/RNLB arrangement, discussed above, whereby both the trans-Zambesian territories and Southern Rhodesia were temporarily reduced to labour reserves of the Rand, whilst their labour organisation justified the inequitable arrangement on the grounds of its own indigence, was only one feature of these consequences. It was not till 1906, therefore, that the situation was reversed, partly because of the growing dissatisfaction amongst the white colonists in Southern Rhodesia and also because of the changing economic conditions of the subsequent period 1907 to 1914. These changes materially affected the process of trans-Zambesian labour migration into Southern Rhodesia during the course of this subsequent phase.

A number of variables of economic nature, may be said to have influenced the relationship between Southern Rhodesia and its trans-Zambesian sister states and, consequently, the course of trans-Zambesian labour migration between 1907 and 1914. To understand the history of trans-Zambesian labour migration during this period, it is also necessary to identify these contemporary factors, which operated in such a profound manner as to shape the volume of trans-Zambesian labour migration as well as the tempo of economic development on both sides of the Zambesi. Firstly, van Onselen has argued

that in the period after 1907, the BSACo. succeeded in controlling the speculative element in Southern Rhodesia and, by so doing, managed to attract the attention of larger but cautious capitalists of South Africa, thus encouraging them to invest some of their capital in the mining industry across the Limpopo.<sup>156</sup> This was obviously an important step in the development of the mining industry of Southern Rhodesia.

But the significance of this post-1907 move must be measured in relation to the second factor, which was also of no mean dimension in the context of the BSACo.'s economic activities. The factor we have here in mind is the liberalisation of the Company's fiscal policy in relation to its royalty claims over mining and mineral production, thereby opening up the sluice-gates for the rise of the largely impoverished solo prospectors and small-workers, who came to occupy a conspicuous place in the country's history in the subsequent years. In statistical terms, the BSACo. introduced a new system, in 1907, on which its royalty claims were to be made. Instead of the usual 'five per cent' flat rate, then fixed as the basis of these claims, a graduated system was introduced, ranging from exemptions for those properties producing a gross value of below £1,000 in monthly output to about 7½ per cent of the gross value of output for the exceptionally rich ones.<sup>157</sup>

Of course, the move towards the liberalisation of the Company's fiscal policy was not carried out for any altruistic motives. It was, in fact, part and parcel of a chain of reactions which together contributed to the general shift in the tone and trend of the BSACo.'s economic philosophy. Perhaps, it could be argued here, that once the speculative era had come to an end in 1903 in Southern Rhodesia and the subsequent recession, covering the years 1903-6, had exposed the weakness of the mining industry, as the sole economic base the Company could hitherto boast of, it was natural that the BSACo. should, therefore, look for alternative economic avenues and canalize its developmental efforts in a new direction. Such a line of argument, as we have posed here, of course, aptly justifies the role of the third portent factor which shaped the economic scene in Southern Rhodesia and also, to some extent, in

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<sup>156</sup> Van Onselen: Chibaro: pp. 26-8.

<sup>157</sup> 'Declaration of Policy by the Visiting Commission made in Bulawayo on 19th October, 1907': in BSACo. Directors' Report and Accounts: March 31, 1907: loc. cit.

the trans-Zambesian territories during this period. This is, in short, the birth of capitalist agriculture.

The establishment of a separate administrative department, the so-called Lands or Estates Department under the direction of C. D. Wise in 1905, to take charge of the Company's commercial agricultural schemes and matters pertaining to general land settlement,<sup>158</sup> certainly heralded the birth of what Arrighi describes as a white rural bourgeoisie whose influence and competition with the mining industry, over labour supply, was apparently beginning to tell, especially between 1907 and 1912.<sup>159</sup>

Across the Zambesi too, new developments were also beginning to appear in the period after 1907. Here, for instance, the completion of the railway line to Broken Hill in 1906 and its extension to the Katanga border in 1909, were both significant feats, which drastically affected the basic economic structure of this region. On the agricultural front, the railway line facilitated a general influx of colonist farmers who settled, especially on the Batoka plateau (later Mazabuka district) and in the Mashukulumbwe country along the railway line; areas recommended by the BSACo. officials for their respective suitability for agricultural and pastoral farming potential.<sup>160</sup> On the other hand, the development of the mining industry, which the arrival of the railway line in the trans-Zambesian territories engendered, appears to have been the cause for concern, on the part of the BSACo. Whilst local demand for labour, by the burgeoning copper-mining properties in the Kafue region, could be met with minimum inconvenience to labour exportation to Southern Rhodesia, the case was quite different in relation to the Katanga mines.

In fact, as far back as 1901, the people of the Luapula Valley and, to some extent, those living on the Tanganyika plateau, in North-Eastern Rhodesia, had been used to proceeding to work at the Kambove and the Star of the Congo mines in the Katanga. This phenomenon was as much a result of the ethnic affinities existing between the various national groups on both sides

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<sup>158</sup> The BSACo. Report on Land Settlement in Southern Rhodesia by C. D. Wise: 1906: p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> Arrighi: The Political Economy of Rhodesia: p. 19.

<sup>160</sup> Extracts from the Report of the Acting Administrator of N/W Rhodesia (Lt. John Carden) for the years 1906-1907; in BSACo. Directors' Report and Accounts: March 31st, 1907 pp. 62-3.

of the Luapula river as it was also a side-effect of the increasing economic interaction between those people on the British side of the river and their counterparts in the Belgian Congo.<sup>161</sup> The popularity of material goods from the Belgian Congo, particularly the brand known in African terms as mokambo,<sup>162</sup> must have also contributed to the progressive gravitation by the people from the Luapula Valley of North-Eastern Rhodesia, in general, in this direction.

For the sake of the BSACo. after 1906, when the extended railway system facilitated access and travel between North-Eastern Rhodesia and the Katanga, the problem was not a minor one. Indeed, since Robert Williams and Company took over the Union Miniere du Haut Katanga and its properties, like the Star of the Congo in 1906, they became increasingly dependent on North-Eastern Rhodesian labour supply from that time onwards.<sup>163</sup> In fact, between 1907 and 1914 when the World War I broke out, the challenge posed by the Katanga mines had become so ominous that the BSACo. officials on the Rhodesian side of the border had to resort to deliberately disruptive tactics by either re-routing the direction of labour emigration from the Luapula Valley and elsewhere or by openly destroying all the canoes which crossed the Luapula river into the Belgian side without any due authority.<sup>164</sup> In another respect, the belated attempt by Union Miniere to import its own Chinese labour force, in June 1913, via Beira, Bulawayo and Broken Hill,<sup>165</sup> when other colonist employers of labour in the sub-continent had, by that time, written off this type of labour, is a clear demonstration of the enormity of Katanga's labour problem and, by the same token, the intensity of the rivalry for labour supply between Katangan colonist employers and their Rhodesian counterparts. It was, therefore, within the framework of this peculiar setting that the RNLB was to operate and also react to the manifold challenges arising therefrom, especially during the period 1907 to 1914.

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<sup>161</sup> Cunnison: op. cit., pp. 25-9.

<sup>162</sup> Dr. Kaunda, the President of Zambia, makes some interesting references to his escapades into the Belgian Congo to procure Mokambo goods in the 1940's. Vide: K. Kaunda: Zambia Shall Be Free: An Autobiography: Heinemann Books: London: 1974 (Reprint): pp. 30-9.

<sup>163</sup> Meebelo: op. cit. p. 84.

<sup>164</sup> Sholto Cross: The Watch Tower Movement in South Central Africa 1908-1945: D. Phil. thesis (unpublished): Oxford: October, 1973: pp. 287-8.

<sup>165</sup> C. O. 417/534: Buxton, Johannesburg, to Corner, Bulawayo: June 25, 1913.

On the credit side, it may be argued here that after its dubious rapprochement with WNLA, the RNLB emerged on the trans-Zambesian scene with a new zest and vigour; assets which were quite essential to this organisation, at this juncture, in order to recoup the confidence of its constituents, the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, and thus ascertain the base of its financial backing. Official support, too, was not, by any means, lacking. In North-Eastern Rhodesia labour recruiting activities by agents of WNLA, for the benefit of the Rand, were suspended towards the close of 1906, due to the incidence of an unusually high mortality rate, amongst recruits from this territory, at the Rand mines. With this exit of WNLA agents, every encouragement was, thereafter, made to enable RNLB agents to fill the gap.<sup>166</sup> Once the Bureau had, therefore, found its feet again, it became increasingly difficult for WNLA agents, operating from the neighbouring Portuguese territory and Nyasaland, to challenge its monopoly over North-Eastern Rhodesian labour supply and, for its role in staving off competition from WNLA, the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, in particular, were beginning to appreciate the value of their labour organisation and its part in the country's economic development.<sup>167</sup>

In North-Western Rhodesia, the measures introduced, in 1907 and after, by the Administration, greatly contributed to the newly found confidence of the Bureau and, in the process, paved the way for the gradual consolidation of this organisation's monopoly in the field of labour recruitment. Perhaps, a streak of luck, on the part of the Bureau, may be discerned here in the departure of Coryndon to Swaziland, in April 1907, as Resident Commissioner. This official's exit, of course, meant the end of a less formalized system of administration and, in like manner, the end of the era of the private labour recruiter, whom Coryndon had tended to favour, in spite of the unsavoury reputation of this class of people.<sup>168</sup> Coryndon's successor in North-Western Rhodesia, Codrington, was a stickler to bureaucratic systems and regulations. Thus once he had moved from Fort Jameson to Livingstone, his tastes and handwork soon became apparent. In this respect, the restrictions and require-

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<sup>166</sup> General Report on North-Eastern Rhodesia for the Two Years Ending March 31, 1907: in BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts: pp. 71-2.

<sup>167</sup> Report of the Management and Finance Committee to the Annual General Meeting of the RNLB: August 27, 1908: p. 26.

<sup>168</sup> C. O. 417/435: Minute by Grindle: May 24, 1907.



ments imposed on labour agents by the Native Labour Proclamation No. 18 of 1907,<sup>169</sup> were certainly indicative of the changing administrative mood in North-Western Rhodesia.

For private labour recruiters, like those of Major Heany's East Gwanda mines who, because of this mining boss' special relationship with Coryndon, had hitherto had things their own way, these changes may not have been so favourable. But as far as the Bureau was concerned, the 1907 administrative measures were quite a boon; particularly so that they not only aimed at weeding out those labour agents of 'an undesirable character',<sup>170</sup> but also because they guaranteed this body's expenses by providing punitive measures against those recruits, who broke their contracts with the agents, through desertion and in other ways.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, the registration fees, ranging from 2/-6d to 5/- on labourers recruited for service in either North-Western or Southern Rhodesia, imposed on the labour agents might have appeared ridiculously little to the Colonial Office,<sup>172</sup> but not to the Bureau. Indeed, the Bureau could only appreciate such low charges as they were actually designed to minimize this body's expenses in labour recruitment.

In line with these supreme efforts, by the respective administrations of the BSACo. territories, to promote the general cause of trans-Zambesian labour recruitment in order to benefit southern labour markets, the RNLB sustained a number of reforms in its organisation and infrastructure during this period and, by the same token, its activities were significantly revamped, particularly between 1907 and 1910. The 1911-1914 period was, of course, more significant in the history of the RNLB and trans-Zambesian labour migration and, for this reason, deserves a more detailed analysis within its proper context.<sup>173</sup> In the years 1907 to 1910, the Bureau grew in stature and its activities were significantly intensified. By 1910, the recruiting operations of this body spread over a very wide geographical expanse, ranging from

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid: 'Conditions Under Which the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau Shall Recruit Labour in North-Western Rhodesia': Enclosed in Selborne to Elgin: April 8, 1907.

<sup>170</sup> C. O. 417/437: H. M. Hole, Acting Administrator, to Lord Selborne, May 17, 1907.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Ibid: Minute by Grindle: September 4, 1907.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid: Minute by R. H. Griffin to Risley: September 3, 1907.

<sup>173</sup> Vide: Makambe: 'Colonialism and Racism. . . .'

Lake Mweru, in North-Eastern Rhodesia, to Beira in the South-east, in the Portuguese territory, and from Lake Tanganyika in the north, on the borders of North-Eastern Rhodesia with the then German territory of Tanganyika, to Bechuanaland Protectorate in the South-West. In short, the whole sphere of Bureau operations actually covered an estimated total area of about 900 miles in length and another 900 in breadth, as the Bureau management, boastfully, claimed.<sup>174</sup>

In like manner, this labour organisation had, by this date, managed to cover about 900 miles on the ten or so major and minor routes, which its agents used for forwarding recruits into and in Southern Rhodesia, with rest houses and food depots. These rest houses and food depots were meant, specifically, to facilitate the movement of recruits along the various Bureau labour routes, differing as much in distance and strategic importance as the 950-mile one between Lake Tanganyika in the north and Beira in the South, on the one hand, and the shorter internal route between Fort Victoria and Selukwe, which covered only 60 miles, on the other.

The Bureau's recruiting and forwarding agents were posted and located, literally, in every nook and corner of this whole geographical continuum, which served as the theatre of its activities. Thus when the Bureau machinery had reached its maximum growth in 1910, its officials and workers were spread all over Zambesia. On the Tanganyika plateau and the northern part of North-Eastern Rhodesia in general, after a visit by T. N. Micklem, the Bureau Inspector from the organisation's headquarters in Bulawayo, the existing team of Bureau officials was considerably strengthened. Hitherto, Bureau activities in this region had been under the charge of four men, namely, Douglas Hawksley, the Inspector of Recruiting, based at Fort Jameson, and two assistants, of whom J. E. Hughes was the Recruiting Agent in the Mweru and neighbouring districts, whilst D. Ross served in the Awemba district. Completing the pre-1910 list of Bureau officials in the region was a certain Mr. Foord, who was the Forwarding Agent at Kasama.<sup>175</sup>

By 1910, however, another set of officials was introduced to reinforce

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<sup>174</sup> Report on the Proceedings at the Annual and Quarterly General Meeting of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee held at Bulawayo on Thursday, May 26th, 1910: p. 97.

<sup>175</sup> A3/18/30/26: Memorandum on Recruiting in N. E. Rhodesia by D. Hawksley, Inspector of Recruiting: July 28, 1909.

the old hands and to make the work of the Bureau more systematized and effective. Of these new officials, R. A. Osborne was appointed an additional Inspector of Recruiting and, in this capacity, was to assist Hawksley, who also held this post at Fort Jameson. W. B. Chamberlain was stationed as the Recruiting Agent in the Luapula district; R. N. Smith in the Tanganyika district whilst J. H. Norton was posted to the Awemba district, to work side by side with Ross, who was already operating in the same area. In fact, Norton's duties appear to have confined him mainly to the Chinsali and Fife sections of the Bemba country, the remainder being left to his predecessor.<sup>176</sup>

The enlargement of the Bureau machinery in the field, in North-Eastern Rhodesia in 1910, can be interpreted in a number of ways. From one point of view, it might be argued that the move was a response to Hawksley's hue and cry, in mid-1909, that the increasing demands made on him and his few assistants were becoming unbearable. Indeed, up to 1909, Hawksley himself, whose office combined both administrative work at Fort Jameson and recruiting activities in the three divisions of the East Luangwa district, amongst the Chewa, Ngoni, Nsenga and Tumbuka peoples of the region, found himself in such a tight corner, as he confessed, that he had actually given up the work of touring the districts, for recruiting labourers, to his African touts and messengers, preferring to concentrate his efforts, as he did, on superintending and forwarding these recruits to Feira.

Similar problems appear to have been faced by Hawksley's assistant officials in their respective regions, especially the two recruiting agents, Hughes and Ross, whose activities were hampered by the fact that the recruiting season was rather short, lasting for only five or six months and being essentially governed by the rain season, as it was.<sup>177</sup> Though the Bureau management in Bulawayo, at first, tried to alleviate the problems of Hawksley and his team in North-Eastern Rhodesia, by allowing the Inspector for Recruiting himself to purchase a second-hand motor cycle, in order to increase his mobility, and to employ 'a responsible native clerk at a salary not to exceed

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<sup>176</sup> Report of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee and Audited Accounts for Six Months Ended: June 30th, 1910: p. 11.

<sup>177</sup> A 13/18/30/26: Memorandum on Recruiting in N. E. Rhodesia by Hawksley: July 28, 1909.

£50 a year' for office work at Fort Jameson,<sup>178</sup> these measures do not seem to have brought any immediate improvement in the Bureau operations in 1909. The Hawksley view that the work of the recruiting agents in the field might have been stimulated by paying them on commission basis, at the rate of 7/-6d per recruit, rather than paying them partly in salary and partly on commission, as was the case in 1909, should be treated here as a candid acceptance that things were not going on too well with the Bureau operations in that part of the world.

Yet from another angle, it is also proper to regard the steps taken by this labour organisation in North-Eastern Rhodesia, in 1910, as generally in keeping with this body's developments in other parts of the geographical sphere in which it carried out its work. As a matter of fact, the Bureau had pursued such a vigorously expansionist line of action, in its post-1907 activities, that it had established recruiting depots in such diverse places as Kimberley in the Cape colony by 1908,<sup>179</sup> whilst the Gaberones and Palapye stations in Bechuanaland Protectorate, under a Recruiting Agent named B. Perfect, were established simultaneously with those of the Kafue region across the Zambesi, under J. Spencer Warren, in 1909.<sup>180</sup>

Indeed, by 1910 the Bureau machinery had become so well organised that it looked quite impressive. All in all, it consisted of 22 officials at the headquarters in Bulawayo and the sub-office in Salisbury, as well as 32 forwarding and recruiting agents, in the field, in Southern Rhodesia and those surrounding states where the Bureau had permission to recruit labour. At the headquarters in Bulawayo, this labour organisation was headed by Philip L. Jenkins, the General Manager, assisted by Micklem, the Inspector, and a number of executive officers. Throughout Southern Rhodesia, the more important sub-offices were those established at Fort Victoria under Walter Goddard, the Superintendent of the Victoria Circle, with a number of agents throughout Southern Mashonaland in his charge; the Salisbury office under J. S. Loosley as its General Agent; Sinoia under the former Native Commissioner of Mtoko, F. R. Byron,<sup>181</sup> but, by 1910, a Bureau Superintendent, and, finally, the

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid: Philip Wrey, Charman, RNLB, Zomba, to Hawksley, Fort Jameson: July 29, 1909.

<sup>179</sup> Report of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee for Twelve Months Ended December 31st, 1908: p. 5.

<sup>180</sup> Report on the Quarterly Meeting of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee Held on May 27th, 1909: p. 29.

Hartley depot which was entrusted to the Acting Agent, B. A. Cope.

The same structural organisation, described above, was replicated in North-Western Rhodesia. In this case, however, there were about seven Bureau officials posted in various parts of the territory and headed by P. E. Webb, the Compound Manager and Recruiting Agent of the Kalomo, Sesheke and Senanga districts, with Livingstone as his base of operations.<sup>182</sup> In this lot, W. Frykberg, the Special Recruiting Agent for the Kasempa district, appears to have been the latest addition to the team, as this district had just been opened to recruiting activities in early 1910, with the first batch of recruits arriving in Bulawayo only in June of that year.<sup>183</sup>

As far as North-Western Rhodesia was concerned, the re-organisation of the Bureau machinery in that territory may also have been prompted by the growing concern in Bulawayo, over the decline in the volume of recruits from this region, particularly noticeable in 1909. Though railway construction work in the territory may have been largely responsible for this decline in labour migrants to the South, this unwelcome trend in the affairs of the Bureau, actually necessitated a visit to Barotseland by Micklem, in June 1909, to try and increase the supply from that region. Indeed, the situation was, in every sense of the word, quite ominous for the Bureau, given the fact that Nyasaland had not fully agreed, at that stage, to allow massive labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia, whilst in North-Eastern Rhodesia, the only other major source of labour, sleeping sickness had just broken out.<sup>184</sup> In fact, both the reorganisation of the Bureau in North-Western Rhodesia, in 1910, and the Micklem visit, the year before, should be seen in the light of this desperation to ascertain a continuous flow of labour from external sources; a phenomenon which the Bureau tried to reinforce, during the same period, by making an unsuccessful application to procure more labour supply from German South-West Africa.

In a nutshell, the reorganisation of the RNLB machinery and the disper-

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<sup>181</sup> Vide: Makambe: 'Colonialism and Racism, . . . '

<sup>182</sup> Report on the Proceedings at the Half-Yearly and Quarterly General Meeting of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee Held on December 8th, 1910: p. 11.

<sup>183</sup> Report of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee and Audited Accounts for Six Months Ended June 30, 1910: loc. cit.

<sup>184</sup> RNLB Report and Accounts for Six Months Ended June 30th, 1909: pp. 38-9.

sal of Bureau officials and workers over a wide area, by 1910, were indicative of not only the general spirit of renaissance which had gripped this body since its unfortunate marriage of convenience with WNLA, but were also symptoms of a new determination by both officials and employers of labour to refurbish this labour organisation with those credentials which contributed, in a general manner, to the overall success of most semi-official labour organisations. From this point of view, officials on both sides of the Zambesi hoped that the RNLB would bear the image of a well-managed organisation; manned by responsible officers and workers and liable to control by the respective governments in terms of its recruiting activities, arrangements for the care of the labourers it recruited and the management of its finances. The employers on their part viewed the Bureau as the appropriate instrument through which unnecessary competition for labour amongst individuals could be eliminated, whilst, at the same time, guaranteeing the necessary supply of labour at cheap wage rates. But, most important of all, both the officials and employers saw, in the Bureau, a veritable panacea against the general malfeasance, which the private labour agent and his unscrupulous ways, frequently, left behind in the wake of his activities. For this reason, Worthington, the Secretary for Native Affairs in North-Western Rhodesia, was, understandably, overwhelmed with confidence and optimism, when he assessed the position of the Bureau in March 1908, in the following terms:

... -(that)- many changes have been effected in the methods of recruiting by the Agents of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau.

Each change has been in the right direction, and I do not hesitate to say that a keen desire has been exhibited by Mr McDonald -(Bureau Chairman)-, his committee and the staff, to place the Bureau's operations on a sound and equitable footing.

The welfare of the native appears to be kept well in sight, and it would seem that the old abuses connected with independent recruiting are a matter of history.<sup>185</sup>

Worthington's confidence would have been redeemed, in one way or another, but for the manner in which the Bureau infrastructure across the Zambesi failed to cope with the increasing volume of labour migration and

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<sup>185</sup>A 3/18/30/17: F. V. Worthington, Secretary for Native Affairs to Administrator, Livingstone: March 9, 1908.



recruitment for Southern Rhodesia. Because of both inadequate infrastructure and the inefficient manner in which labour recruits were handled, the effects of the journey to the South did not look quite glamorous, to say the least. Of course, the enormity of the problems faced by trans-Zambesian labour migrants between 1907 and 1910 may not have equalled the dimensions of those of the pre-1906 era, when the journey to South was a virtual 'middle passage' for the trans-Zambesians. But, all the same, even in this railway age, in which the Bureau was now operating under changed circumstances, its activities were often marred by dubious arrangements, which, consequently, had adverse effects on the welfare of the trans-Zambesian labour recruits.

During the period under discussion, trans-Zambesian recruits collected from the Tanganyika plateau and the Bemba country, for instance, were generally delivered to the Forwarding Agent, Mr. Foord, at Kasama, where they were forwarded to Feira via Fort Jameson; being joined there by battalions, similarly recruited in the East Luangwa district and across the border in Nyasaland.<sup>186</sup> Alternatively, these recruits from the northern part of North-Eastern Rhodesia would be banded together with their compatriots from the West Luangwa, the Zumbo and Kafue districts and were then forwarded to the rail head at Broken Hill.<sup>187</sup> Here the Bureau had established a reception compound of a semi-permanent character, consisting of a number of reed and grass huts, located some seven miles from the railway station and capable of accommodating as many as 500 recruits at a time.<sup>188</sup> But the accommodation, thus provided at Broken Hill by the Bureau, was, unfortunately, condemned by government officials for various inadequacies and alternative arrangements were, therefore, made through H. U. Moffat, to allow the latter's copper mining company at Broken Hill to place its more suitable compound at the disposal of the Bureau for this purpose, as long as the Bureau Recruiting and Forwarding Agent, T. J. Christison, for Broken Hill, Ndola, Mwomboshi and surrounding districts took charge of the maintenance of the buildings.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> A 3/18/30/26: Memorandum on Recruiting in N. E. Rhodesia by Hawksley: July 28, 1909.

<sup>187</sup> Vide: Appendix X: RNLB Labour Routes, Rest Houses and Food Depots as in 1912 (Map).

<sup>188</sup> A 3/18/30/17: Philip L. Jenkins, Secretary, RNLB to Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo; March 14, 1908.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C Bulawayo to Private Secretary, Dept of Administrator, Salisbury; March 30, 1908.



With regard to the rationing of recruits, the measures taken by the Bureau itself, allowed, as usual, for minimal expenditure on this particular item. The normal measure of rations for recruits, from districts outside Broken Hill, was either in form of salt or calico, at the rate of two yards per week, valued at about 3d. With these articles, the recruits then bartered them for grain or other staple food items that constituted their posho (rations).<sup>190</sup> The main reason behind this system of rationing, derived from the practice of the labour agents, themselves paid on the basis of both commission and salary as they were, was, of course, to minimize their costs on those recruits they had engaged. Alternatively, this rationing system might have been simply connected with the physical constraints imposed on both the agents and recruits by the lack of an adequate communications infrastructure. Indeed, as Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland, discovered, during an official investigation in the activities of the Bureau across the Zambesi in March 1905, the question of conveying grain from the Luangwa river to Broken Hill or from the Mkushi division of the Zumbo district, distances of about 210 and 90 miles respectively, was considered 'prohibitive and impractical.'

In fact, the whole business of supplying rations to labour recruits in these areas, where grain was frequently scarce, was complicated by the fact that it would have raised the rationing costs to about 4d per diem per recruit, which the agents would not, naturally, have welcomed with eagerness. Indeed, even at the Broken Hill Compound, where the Bureau was obliged to provide its recruits with rations at the cost of 2½d per recruit per diem, the food was not of the best kind. Taylor accordingly commented on this kind of food, indicating that:

It -(the meal and grain)- was of a very bad quality and full of weavils, and would certainly be condemned if supplied to natives working on the mines -(in Southern Rhodesia)-.<sup>191</sup>

For these and similar reasons, official pressure was, therefore, brought to bear on the RNLB to introduce changes also, in connection with the feeding of recruits bound for the South. Thus arrangements were subsequently made,

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<sup>190</sup> Gelfand: op. cit. pp. 110-1.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C Bulawayo to Secretary, Department of Administrator: March 30, 1908.

on Taylor's initiative, for the Bureau to procure regular supplies of better quality grain from the African Lakes Company and also from a farmer, named Johnson, living some 15 miles away from Broken Hill. Codrington too stipulated that the Bureau should provide meat rations to its recruits, to the amount of one beast for every gang of 300 labourers.

The actual process of transporting these Bureau recruits, from Broken Hill to Livingstone and thenceforth to Bulawayo, raised other issues during the 1907-1910 phase of this labour body's operations. The length of the period of detention, the recruits underwent at Broken Hill, was determined mainly by the nature of the arrangements the Bureau agents had with the railway officials, for conveying the labour recruits to Livingstone. But even when Livingstone was reached, there was also the uncertainty as to whether these recruits were to be sent through to Bulawayo without any delays on the way or not.

For the recruits' feeding arrangements en route, provision was made by the Bureau to allow the gangs of travellers to get supplies at two points along the three-day train journey between Broken Hill and Livingstone. These two points, where the train had a night's stop at each of them, were Kafue and Choma. Here agreements had been reached with local traders, Mr. Adams at Kafue and a Mr. McPhail at Choma, to provide fresh food supplies to Bureau agents and recruits on their way to the South. At Livingstone too, when the gangs of recruits did not pass directly to Bulawayo, compound accommodation and rations were also provided, whilst thorough medical examination was carried out, to screen and detain those of their number, whose health had succumbed to the rigours of the journey.

An interesting aspect of the Livingstone part of the journey is the fact that, whilst the recruits waited for the final arrangements to enter Southern Rhodesia, they were essentially responsible for the preparation of their own food. Indeed, in 1908, before the Bureau depot at Livingstone had a grinding mill like its Broken Hill counterpart in the north, the main pre-occupation of the recruits, as they waited here, was the stamping of grain, for food, in wooden blocks made for the purpose; a process then highly regarded by the Bureau Medical Officer at this point, Dr. G. A. Ellacombe, on the grounds that such food retained most of its nutrient value.<sup>192</sup> It was actually at these

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid: Jenkins to Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo: March 14, 1908.

main points and depots, like Broken Hill and Livingstone, too that the Bureau recruits, except those from North-Western Rhodesia where the government had discouraged the practice, were also issued with blankets, jerseys and knickerbockers.<sup>193</sup> The expenses on these items, which the government of North-Western Rhodesia turned down as too exorbitant, were later deducted from the trans-Zambesian labourers' meagre wages; an eventuality that frequently caused some misunderstanding between the employers and the labourers, as the case of the Angoni labourers at the Bonsor mine, in 1900, demonstrates.<sup>194</sup>

The preceding arrangements by the Bureau, to maximise the effectiveness of its machinery beyond the Zambesi, were apparently supported by the BSACo. officials on both sides of the river. The Bureau was, by 1910, at least in the eyes of the government officials, approaching a stage, whereby it qualified to be treated as the ideal organisation that they required, to shield administrative personnel from any form of political embarrassment, which labour abuse, especially in the overseas press, entailed, when government officials were involved. But perhaps one defect, which appears to have marred the mirror-image perspective the officials had of the Bureau during the period under discussion, concerned the journeys of the recruits between Livingstone and Bulawayo. In this case, even the most ardent supporter of this organisation, Worthington, the Secretary for Native Affairs at Livingstone, whose praise-singing on this body we have already demonstrated, was evidently discouraged by the nature of the train journeys the Bureau recruits were compelled to undertake. Thus he observed, accordingly, in early 1908 that:

An improvement could most certainly be made in the direction of Railway accommodation between Bulawayo and Broken Hill. I have drawn the attention of the Bureau to this one unsatisfactory feature in their organisation, but received the assurance that the Railway Company has refused to furnish a more sanitary type of carriage. I have on several occasions met the train in -(at Livingstone)- from the South and have seen natives white with lime emerge from the insanitary and overcrowded cattle trucks in which they are repatriated. I have also noticed that the atmosphere they have had to breathe was heavily impregnated with free lime and desiccated cattle dung.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Report on the Proceedings at the RNLB Quarterly General Meeting Held at Bulawayo on December 8th, 1910: p. 43.

<sup>194</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 87-8

<sup>195</sup> A 3/18/30/17: Worthington to Administrator, Livingstone: March 9, 1908.

Such conditions as these, recorded by Worthington, obviously required to be eliminated if the Bureau had to improve its image amongst the government officials and the African societies from whom it procured its quarry. Taylor too made similar comments in relation to the train journeys of the Bureau recruits, pointing out, particularly, the shortage of accommodation in the trucks provided for these recruits and the absence of amenities, which in this case included drinking water.<sup>196</sup>

Because of the fact that this criticism, on the train journeys and the general conditions of the Bureau recruits to and from the South, was partly directed towards the management of the railways division, the Bureau too managed to emphasize the shortcomings of the railway management as the cause of its undoing. Thus it complained bitterly against the railway authorities, in this case the Beira and Mashonaland Railways, for the limited rolling stock they often placed at the disposal of the Bureau to transport its recruits. The Bureau, apparently, could not see any justification in the practice of the railway management whereby the latter provided only six trucks, each carrying about 50 recruits, at peak periods, when large numbers of trans-Zambesian recruits were forwarded to the South. It was quite obvious, from the Bureau's point of view, that the attitude of the railway authorities was, in many ways, responsible for situations whereby Bureau recruits were 'entrained on long journeys in cattle trucks, which ~~(were)~~ often over-crowded, with the result that the natives frequently arrive~~(d)~~ at their destination in a condition unfit for work.'<sup>197</sup> To avoid the recurrence of these unfortunate situations, the Bureau, therefore, requested for an increased number of trucks for its recruits.

On the importance of adequate accommodation, as a necessary factor on the fitness of the trans-Zambesian recruits on their arrival in Southern Rhodesia, the labour body was also backed by well informed opinion, to wit the Pneumonia and Scurvy Committee, which emphasized a similar line of argument in its report in 1910. This Committee even went further in this direction by calling for some form of legislation to prevent the practice of over-crowding recruits aboard trains, on their way to the Southern labour

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<sup>196</sup> Vide: Supra: p.463

<sup>197</sup> Monthly Report of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee:  
August 18th, 1910: p. 2

centres.<sup>198</sup> In fact, the Bureau felt quite aggrieved, in the final analysis, by what it interpreted as evident lack of co-operation on the part of the railway officials over issues of great moment to their major customer, this labour organisation. The expenses the Bureau incurred, in connection with railway transport, were actually increasing yearly, rising, for instance, from £5,911 for the last half of 1908 to £6,920 for the first half-year of 1910. Moreover, the manner in which the railway system operated up to 1909, for example, seemed quite loaded against the Bureau, which could only result in increased expenses. Here the Bureau's Management and Finance Committee laboriously drew the attention of its constituents to the effects of the railway system, particularly in relation to the detention depots between Livingstone and Broken Hill, where the delays in forwarding the recruits had inevitably led to an increase in Bureau expenses. It stated its case as follows:

... up to quite recently there has been only one train a week from Broken Hill to Livingstone, necessitating a detention of natives at the various rail heads for some-<sup>199</sup>times fully a week before they can be forwarded.

Under these circumstances, the Bureau, naturally, felt quite justified in deploring the negative role played by the railway authorities in the process of trans-Zambesian labour recruitment. The railway factor was thus seen as undermining the effort of the Bureau in promoting the cause of trans-Zambesian labour mobilisation for the benefit of the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia. Yet to be fair to the railway authorities on both sides of the Zambesi, the railway system, in the region, had never been laid down, in the first place, as a means for facilitating the mobility of the African traveller per se. It was more or less a speculative venture designed to benefit those centres of white settlement where industrial development looked promising and, for this reason, African areas of settlement had been deliberately bypassed by this transportation system.<sup>200</sup> In short, the Bureau whose existence and survival actually depended on the several African societies from which it obtained its commodity, the labour recruit, was here, unwittingly, a victim of factors beyond its control.

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<sup>198</sup> Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Prevalence and Prevention of Scurvy and Pneumonia Amongst Native Mine Labourers, 1910: (Salisbury:) pp. 9-10.

<sup>199</sup> Report of the Quarterly Meeting of the RNLB Management and Finance Committee Held on May 27th, 1909: p. 29.

<sup>200</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.410-1

But fortunately for the RNLB, the railway factor, either during the 1907-1910 period or after, did not materially affect the progress this labour organisation was destined to attain at the time. Indeed, the railway factor served only as a minor drawback to Bureau activities, especially in the field of trans-Zambesian labour mobilisation, but other positive factors of the period far outweighed the negative ones. With the backing of respective governments and BSACo. officials, on both sides of the Zambesi and abroad, the RNLB established an unassailable hold in the field of labour recruitment and, with the support of official instruments, such as Southern Rhodesia's Labour Fees Ordinance of 1906 and later the Labour Tax Ordinance of 1911 which guaranteed the financial side of Bureau affairs, this body turned into a virtual semi-governmental organ, whose monopoly in matters of labour supply, especially in the BSACo. territories, was beyond anyone's challenge. Such an image of this labour organisation is here vindicated by the intensity of the Bureau's activities between 1907 and 1914, and how these affected the African communities in the trans-Zambesian region, in particular, where this body operated more vigorously.

An interesting combination of factors emerges at this stage of trans-Zambesian labour mobilisation. The officials and employers had, by 1907, significantly perfected the technology of labour recruitment, as the RNLB symbolized, and yet, on the other hand, the tempo of economic development, during the period 1907-1914, had risen to such a degree that increasing demands were being made on the Bureau to supply some of the essential material to meet the needs of those variables, mostly of economic kind, which exercised much influence on the contemporary scene in South Central Africa. Indeed, in some cases the Bureau was forced to resort to desperate measures, either to keep in harmony with the tempo of these developments or, as in the case of the contemporaneous activities of Union Miniere in the trans-Zambesian territories, to stave off, by crude means, any possible challenge of injurious nature.<sup>201</sup> Throughout this whole drama, the activities of the Bureau, either on its own or in competition with other interests, had telling effects on the African societies, particularly in the trans-Zambesian territories, the focus of our interest here as the source areas of labour migration to the labour centres of Southern Rhodesia.

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<sup>201</sup> Vide: Supra: pp.453-4

As we have indicated before, one of the most effective weapons applied by the trans-Zambesian governments for the benefit of the Southern Rhodesian colonist employers was taxation. By this form of administrative coercion, government officials across the Zambesi came to form an essential ingredient in the process of labour emigration to the South.<sup>202</sup> By 1907, the application of fiscal pressure had become a more universal phenomenon in these territories, particularly so at a time when the RNLB had just revived its activities to meet the growing demand for labour in Southern Rhodesia. As far as the African communities of these territories were concerned, there were few alternatives to labour migration, by means of which they could effectively meet the challenges of taxation.

In North-Western Rhodesia, where Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner for South Africa, had paid a visit in October 1907, to confer with Lewanika and other members of the Lozi aristocracy, the only other economic alternatives which would have enabled the African societies of the area to meet the government's economic demands were agriculture, collection of rubber and the sale of cattle. But even these alternatives had their own limitations. The sale of stock, for example, could not prove viable due to the absence of markets for the purpose and for those cattle-owners, who were prepared to part with their herds, the prices paid by the so-called 'kaffir truck' traders, for these animals, were ridiculously low; paying, as the latter did, about 30/- per beast in Barotseland, only to sell the same stock in Bulawayo for a market value of £6 each. For fear of losing their stock in this manner, few African societies of North-Western Rhodesia were, therefore, willing to sell their stock to meet the government's tax demands. For this reason, Lord Selborne could thus comment, with obvious disappointment but little understanding, on what he interpreted as the ultra-conservative attitude of the Africans towards their cattle, that:

Nothing could be more apathetic to progress than the way in which a South African native normally treats his cattle. He neither sells them, nor eats them, nor uses them<sup>203</sup> - (but) - simply looks at them as a miser does at his treasure.

If, according to Lord Selborne's view, this African conservative attitude towards stock had prevented cattle-owners to sell their animals, even in

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<sup>202</sup>Vide: Supra: pp.425-8

<sup>203</sup>C. O. 417/437: Lord Selborne to Lord Elgin: November 11, 1907.

moderation, to meet tax demands, it had also, as a result, contributed positively towards labour migration. In 1907, in particular, when the Broken Hill and the Bwana Mkubwa mines were closed down, labour migration to Southern Rhodesia was said to be on the increase, as people from the trans-Zambesian region went down to earn money for taxes. The High Commissioner himself, who regarded this development as 'a good thing', urged both officials and employers in Southern Rhodesia to provide sufficient inducements in terms of sound working conditions and a reasonable minimum wage, to make labour migration a viable movement.<sup>204</sup>

In some parts of North-Western Rhodesia like the Kafue district, for example, the rate of labour migration, especially among the Mashukulumbwe had begun to worry the people. Indeed, the Mashukulumbwe elders were becoming so concerned about their young men, who left for Southern Rhodesia and never returned, that they nearly rose up in revolt in September 1907. The dilemma of either losing their cattle in stock sales to meet the tax demands or sending their sons onto an uncertain journey to Southern Rhodesia was rather too much for these Ila (Mashukulumbwe) and, for that reason, the irate parents burnt down the mission station of the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society in the area, driving its resident missionary, the Rev. William Chapman and his wife, helter-skelter into Broken Hill.<sup>205</sup>

The reaction of the Mashukulumbwe to the forces of fiscal pressure and labour migration were only a minutae to the variety of events, which affected several African communities in the post-1907 era of Bureau recruiting activities and official commitment to labour migration to the South. In fact, one feature of official policy towards African taxation, in the trans-Zambesian territories, was that tax defaulters and anybody in potential need of tax money were very often press-ganged into the drag-net of the Bureau and, accordingly, forwarded to Southern Rhodesia. In October 1907, while Codrington was on holiday in Madeira, for example, Colonel John Carden of the Barotse Native Police, who acted as the Administrator of North-Western Rhodesia, was put in an awkward situation, whereby he was forced to defend government policy with regard to the practice of forwarding tax-defaulters

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> C. O. 417/437: Extract from the Report the District Commissioner, Mashukulumbwe, for September, 1907.



to the Bureau for exportation to the South.<sup>206</sup> Apparently, an indiscreet private individual in the territory had let the cat out of the bag and informed the High Commissioner that:

... it is a practice in this country (North-Western Rhodesia) to collect natives who have not paid their tax within the prescribed time, and send them under escort, to work off their obligations at the Southern Rhodesia Mines; in other words, to impose a period of forced labour in the mines as a penalty for non-payment of the tax.<sup>207</sup>

What Carden actually protested against here was the strong emphasis the anonymous informant in question had placed on the role of the government of North-Western Rhodesia in procuring 'forced labour' for the Bureau. To this official, the policy was milder than that, as all what his government did was that it 'encouraged' the tax-defaulters 'to get into touch with recruiting agents from the South, and engage themselves for a period of mine work.'

In the final analysis, the difference in the opinions of the government official and a private source, on this matter, was merely one of semantics rather than anything substantial. What actually emerges, in the process, is the degree of mutual co-operation between a semi-official labour organisation and administrative officials in promoting trans-Zambesi labour migration to the South. Employers and officials, on both sides of the Zambesi, were evidently in league over the issue, but they wanted to play the game with the cards close to their chests. Yet as the heat generated by the activities of the Bureau became more intense, it became increasingly difficult to control the course and nature of those events, whereby the identity of interests between the Bureau officials and their government counterparts was inextricably blurred. In the main, it was the African who suffered in consequence, either as a potential labour recruit or as a member of a particular administrative unit. The proceedings in the Gwembe division of the Batoka district of North-Western Rhodesia, between 1907 and 1910, are an interesting study in the methods adopted by an alliance of Bureau and administrative officials in the process of labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia and the adverse effects which ensued, as an aftermath.

The imposition of hut tax in the Buni-Kariba or Gwembe sub-division of

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<sup>206</sup> C. O. 417/438: Carden to Codrington: October 21, 1907.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid: Quoted in Carden to Codrington: October 25, 1907.

the Batoka district in 1904 was apparently followed by a chain of events which did not portray any positive picture of BSA Co. rule among the Gwembe Tonga people. The Collector of this district, J. C. Macnamara, had, evidently, indulged in a number of activities, between 1904 and 1907, during the course of which the Gwembe Tonga were said to have been treated 'with utmost brutality', whilst the same activities were condoned in official circles as 'only to be expected in a district inhabited by a particularly raw and uncivilised type of native...'<sup>208</sup> But with the arrival of the Bureau agent, G. A. Cooke, in the area in early 1907, Macnamara's activities were greatly intensified as he tried to meet this agent's demands for labour; hence the origins of the so-called 'minor uprising' among the Gwembe Valley people of this area in that year.<sup>209</sup>

A number of causes may have been particularly responsible for this spurt of activities, which coincided with Cooke's arrival in this part of the Batoka district over which he was to take charge, in addition to the Mashukulumbwe country, as the RNLB's Recruiting Agent. One white colonist by the name of Charles N. B. Venables, also nicknamed 'Mandala' by the Africans of the Gwembe sub-district, made an interesting introspection on the alliance between Macnamara and Cooke. Venables himself had been living on his farm, called 'Venablesdale', straddling the two Gwembe Tonga chiefdoms of Sigongo and Simamba, since 1905, and thus had observed the progress of Macnamara's reign in the area, without allying himself to it, from the beginning. The motives behind Macnamara's zeal to aid the Bureau agent in his area apparently derived from both personal designs and administrative requirements and the increased activities, which this official of the Gwembe district consequently mounted between 1907 and 1910, were, essentially, a reflection of a situation best described by Venables as one whereby 'too many interests (were) involved.'<sup>210</sup> In simple terms, the situation which brought about the woes of the Gwembe Tonga when a Bureau agent was posted thither during the reign of Macnamara was caused by a number of factors linked together, in a dialectical pattern, best expressed by Venables, in the following manner:

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<sup>208</sup> C. O. 417/466: C. N. B. Venables to Richard Goode, Administrator's Secretary: Livingstone: January 16, 1909.

<sup>209</sup> Colson: Social Organisation of the Gwembe Tonga: pp. 29-30.

<sup>210</sup> Mss. Brit. Emp. S. 22/File G. 184: Venables, Kafue, to Travers Buxton, Secretary, APS: December 23, 1910: APS Papers: Rhodes House, Oxford.

... all over Rhodesia (North and South)... labour is forced for Govt (sic) purposes and for the mines whose working up high pressure demands a large supply of native labourers, and as the British South Africa Company depends largely for its commercial revenue (as distinct from administrative revenue) on the royalties paid it by the mines the largest returns of natives of their Districts employed through the RNLB gains official credit: and not only so, but one continually hears it alleged of officials of the Native Department that they are receiving a share of their commission from their recruiting agents, and presents from mine managers and others for supplying them with native labourers.<sup>211</sup>

In this Macnamara affair, the various parties in the deal on Tonga labour, therefore, were Macnamara himself and Cooke, the Bureau agent, who operated in the field in the Gwembe district; the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia, which received the registration fee on labour recruits; the BSACo, which benefitted on its royalties, whilst the Bureau as a body got the £1:10/-:0d capitation fee on recruits delivered to the mines under its charge and not as independent labourers.<sup>212</sup> For the Bureau, however, its dependence on coercive official methods of recruiting labour was a far greater advantage than anything else other parties in the game could ever gain. Of course, towards the close of 1910, when this labour organisation was nearly floated as a joint stock company, with a large proportion of its capital being subscribed by 'the BSACo, or persons connected with that Company', to use Venables's phrase, the reliance of this body on official effort to procure labour became even more overt and axiomatic. To individuals who managed to stand on the sidelines and take stock of the effectiveness of this alliance of interests, as Venables did in the Gwembe district, the outcome was easily predictable; hence this colonist's despair:

I cannot see that the reconstructed Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau will be able to attain its avowed object of greatly increasing the labour supply for the mines of Southern Rhodesia without the active co-operation of the officials of the Native Affairs Department (North-Western Rhodesia) which would mean the continuation of forced labour.<sup>213</sup>

Of course, the co-operation between the Bureau and government officials, which was so prevalent in the Gwembe sub-district between 1907 and 1910, was by no means a new phenomenon. It was, practically, the fruition of the dom-

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid: Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid: Venables to Buxton: December 23, 1910.

inance in South Central Africa of a politico-cum-economic power, which BSACo. rule symbolized, and the effects of this alliance were patent all over the region, both beyond and below the Zambesi, especially in the field of labour mobilisation.<sup>214</sup> What actually arouses the interest of an analyst of the proceedings in the Gwembe area, at this particular period, are the methods used by an administrative official there to appease the interests of the Bureau and those associated with this body. These methods reflect not only the extent of the brutality which Macnamara deployed, but also the attempt which this and associated officials made to resort to those tactics that tended to reinforce the degree of psychological dominance and control by one segment over others in a racially stratified colonial society.

Thus in the name of labour mobilisation, the Gwembe Tonga, especially tax-defaulters and general malcontents, were 'tied up to their necks in sacks and set in the sun'; they had 'their arms tied up above their heads' only to be released 'after some time when the blood ~~-(had)-~~ receded from their arms...'; were flogged with the 'sibaba' (sjambok) with atrocious results or had their corn-stores burnt down, whilst the owners were shot, allegedly, for insurrection, when they ran away into the bush to escape Macnamara's high-handed methods, as occurred in June 1907, a month after the arrival of the Bureau agent in the district.<sup>215</sup> The flogging meted onto these Gwembe Tonga was so thorough that not a few individuals, who had fallen victim to the practice, were reported to have either died or committed suicide as a result, especially among Chief Sigongo's people.

Of special relevance for this study, is the manner in which Macnamara raised recruits for the Bureau to despatch them to Southern Rhodesia. Apparently, the method initially adopted by this official was to tour the district, together with the Bureau agent, collecting such recruits as they came across in the process. However, because of the administrative tactics, which Macnamara generally applied in dealing with his charges, this method apparently failed to work, as the Gwembe Tonga came to regard their official 'in such dread' that on hearing that he had camped near their villages, on patrol, and intended to send his messengers, 'to call them in', they consequently 'stam-

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Vide: Makambe: 'Colonialism and Racism....'

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

peded into the bush and did not return until Mr Macnamara's departure....<sup>216</sup>

The second method also adopted by Macnamara, when his personal effort had thus been frustrated, was to send his messengers with instructions to, in euphemistic terms, 'bring in' the people 'to see (him)'.<sup>217</sup> This method was quite effective, though the techniques employed in the process were, to say the least, often bizarre, whilst the results were obviously distressing. On their errand, these messengers, whose primary duty was to collect recruits for the Bureau, were not selective at all. They took anybody they encountered, including those labourers already engaged to local colonist farmers and traders and were either on leave or about to start their terms of service with their respective local employers. It was, essentially, for this reason that Venables started his opposition to Macnamara's activities, as the former's labourers were amongst those recruits, collected for the benefit of the Bureau in April 1908.<sup>218</sup>

An interesting dimension of the recruiting activities of the Native Department messengers in the Gwembe district, between 1907 and 1910, is the manner in which little regard was placed on the agricultural pursuits of the local peasant communities. The Gwembe Tonga were recruited at the peak of the agricultural season, when their crops required to be gathered in and when it was important for the able-bodied men to build grain stores for

the impending harvest. The results were obvious and Venables who lived amongst them protested that:

The District (Gwembe) is overrun with baboons and wild pig and in addition birds descend in storms on the fields of ripening Kaffir corn and millet; now that all the men are being called away, a greater proportion of these crops are bound to be lost, the women and children being quite incapable, by themselves, of protecting the fields from the ravages of these pests, and later on in the season, famine is bound to result, ...<sup>219</sup>

Here was a typical case, where the economic emasculation of peasant agriculture was being encouraged, by enforcing the process of proletarianisation onto the African peasantry and thereby encouraging the development of

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<sup>216</sup> C. O. 417/466: Venables to Acting Administrator: Livingstone: December 12, 1908.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid: J. C. Macnamara to Venables: April 21, 1908.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid: Venables to Macnamara: April 20, 1908.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid: Venables to Lord Selborne: March 6 and 7, 1909.

an imbalanced economy, through a phenomenon whereby labour migration placed cheap labour at the disposal of capital in particular areas, where such labour was required. Such practices were a common feature in the BSACo. territories, especially in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>220</sup> Yet the BSACo. officials, on both sides of the Zambesi, often insisted that labourers, even though procured by means which meant their direct impoverishment and other forms of economic deprivation, were quite contented with their lot. In the Gwembe district, where messengers press-ganged Tonga recruits for the Bureau and matched them down 'with ropes around their necks', as if they were 'criminals', because it was feared these recruits 'might run away',<sup>221</sup> official opinion was conclusive that such labourers offered themselves willingly to the Bureau. In any case, these recruits were, euphemistically, 'persuaded' to look contented with their engagement with the RNLB. Venables here explained the procedure taken to effect the desired results, by the officials, in one particular district:

... it was the custom when labourers were required for any purpose to send out Government messengers (native) through the District. These messengers would return with gangs of natives tied in single file with ropes round their necks. When they approached the settlement the ropes would be taken off and the messengers would order them to sing, and those who did not do so they -(messengers)- would 'encourage' with sjambok, and that, ... was why natives used to appear as delighted at the prospect of doing the particular work they were brought in for.<sup>222</sup>

The activities of Macnamara in the Gwembe district, whether to promote the cause of labour recruitment or for other purposes, were, therefore, not at all out of the ordinary. They appear to have tallied with the general pattern of events in this part of the trans-Zambesian territory, at the time. The officials themselves also appear to have constituted a class of men, who were already set in their beliefs, on particular patterns of behaviour and on the distribution of power and privileges in a racially composite colonial society in which they carried out their day-to-day activities. In resorting to coercive methods of extracting labour, these officials were not merely carrying out an exercise of economic character, but were also fulfilling some of

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<sup>220</sup> Vide: *Infra*: pp. 94 5 - 6

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*: Venables to Goode: January 16, 1909.

<sup>222</sup> *Mss. Brit. Emp. S. 22/File G, 184*: Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

those functions which their status and patronage over the subject peoples, in a colonial situation, entailed and the use of coercive means, either to procure labour or enhance their privileges, was, naturally, in keeping with the pre-conceptions of these administrative officials either in the trans-Zambesian territories or in colonial societies elsewhere.

Thus in North-Western Rhodesia, during the period of intensified Bureau activities between 1907 and 1914, the rigours which the African societies suffered, at the hands of both administrative officials and Bureau agents, had their ethical justification in the sense that the general administrative philosophy, in these BSACo. territories, was geared in such a manner that those officials, who were caught by the law with their pants down, were often exonerated in one way or another. In fact, as the drama of the Gwembe district unfolded between 1907 and 1910, it began to emerge that the activities of the officials, in this and other districts in the territory, had the official backing of Worthington, the Secretary of Native Affairs himself. This supremo had apparently assured his juniors that 'sub rosa, they ~~(could)~~ inflict floggings and imprisonment' on the subject peoples, over whom they were in charge, and that 'if any complains were made that he ~~(Mr Worthington)~~ would see that they did not get into trouble over it.'<sup>223</sup>

This deal, between Worthington and his junior officials, was adhered to so faithfully by the Native Department personnel in North-Western Rhodesia that up to 1913, when Worthington left BSACo. service, they had no problem in applying pressure to procure labour in form of carriers, even though the conditions of service in the portage industry, especially under government employ, were patently deplorable.<sup>224</sup> During the Macnamara reign, in the Gwembe district, he and his contemporaries were not found wanting, once this sanction had been provided by their superior. Thus they instituted a system, paradoxically, styled 'District Discipline', whereby African malcontents and defaulters were imprisoned arbitrarily and subsequently classified as 'District Visitors', liable to be drafted for forced labour, either for building government sub-stations or any other work for traders and other private individuals, who paid the administrative official concerned, for such

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> C. O. 417/539: R. I. Hughes, Assistant Magistrate, Kalomo, to Goode: Livingstone: February 14, 1914.

It might also be remarked here, for observation, that whilst the attitude of the head of the Native Department in North-Western Rhodesia encouraged a general resort to coercion as a way of raising labour supply, it was not simply the abundance of labour that individual officials in that part of the territory enjoyed most. What these administrative officers seemed to have revelled in, with utmost delight, was the exercise of personal authority and the psychological satisfaction which this implied, in terms of their status as a class amongst the subject peoples. Thus their behaviour was aptly portrayed, in 1910, as follows:

The main body of officials may be said not to be systematically ill-treating the natives but rather to domineer over them and to be apt occasionally to break out into violent measures, more particularly if they -(officials)- imagine that they have not been treated with sufficient deference. They are, as a rule, most rigid in their exaction of homage from the natives, who must all fall to the ground and clap their hands or thighs at the sight of an official, even a clerk, in the outside districts. Some appear to think it increases their authority to order a chief's ears to be boxed at a general meeting or if a Headman does not at once concur with what he is told they consider the application of a sjambok as the most convincing argument. <sup>226</sup>

This type of behaviour, amongst the administrative officers of North-Western Rhodesia, was, of course, influenced by various aspects of early black/white contact in this part of the world. Early Britons to the trans-Zambesian region had been greatly impressed by the customs of the Lozi and the respectful manner in which these people were treated by the subject ethnic groups. Thus at Sesheke, in March 1899, the Gibbons party of white adventurers recorded a show of 'extreme courtesy', staged by the subject Toka and Subia towards the Lozi, indicating that:

Every time an inferior speaks to a superior he claps his hands and also when he has finished what he has to say. When his superior speaks to him he claps his hands and says 'shangwe' (a word denoting respect)... When the Mokwai or Letia are about, you hear the hands clapping in unison like valley firing, only in better unison. <sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Mss. Brit. Emp. S, 22/File G. 184: Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

<sup>226</sup> C. O. 417/494: Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910: Enclosed in Buxton to Col. J. E. B. Seely: October 21, 1910.

<sup>227</sup> Entry for March 23, 1899: in Wallis (ed.): op. cit. p. 102.



These whites, whether travellers or officials, were, however, disappointed to discover that the subject peoples in Barotseland did not 'clap hands to a white man' and were particularly annoyed with this evident denial, by these peoples, of the white man's superior status. The Tonga, for instance, incurred such a large measure of disfavour amongst the early whites that the latter regarded them as 'a set of idle insubordinate thieves' and even wished 'the Matabele had exterminated them while they were about it.'<sup>228</sup>

In a nutshell, the demand for respect, by the Native Department officials in North-Western Rhodesia, which they mixed together with labour extraction activities in the 1910's, was certainly a carry-over from attitudes of long historical standing. What may have been a new factor, especially in the case of the Gwembe district, is the manner in which the Administration, as a whole, lent its support to the activities of its officials, even when such activities were evidently out of tune with the general trend of administrative ethics. Of course, Worthington's attitude was quite clear on the matter and his views on racial matters were even less palatable.<sup>229</sup> Yet it was Worthington's superiors who openly took up cudgels, on the Gwembe proceedings, to defend, especially, the alliance between administrative officials and the Bureau on labour recruitment.

Before the Imperial authorities in Pretoria and London, the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia, at first, attempted to dismiss the Macnamara activities by discrediting Venables, who had successfully disclosed the affair, as a renegade and a man of ignoble character, whose views were not worth paying attention to, as he had been in the habit of keeping African 'concubines'. This line of defence, however, misfired, when Venables not only admitted his part in these moral accusations, but also revealed that the practice of keeping African 'concubines' was so commonplace, before the large-scale immigration of white colonists in the region, that even Codrington, the late Administrator, was also involved in the game. In fact, this persistent critic of the activities of BSACo. officials in the trans-Zambesian region only managed to invalidate this line of defence, pursued by the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia, when he threatened to expose some of the highly placed officials in South-Central Africa, who, literally, kept, for themselves,

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<sup>228</sup>Entry for March 19, 1899: in Wallis (ed.) op. cit. p. 101.

<sup>229</sup>Vide: Supra: p.477

'harems' of African women.<sup>230</sup> The second line of approach, adopted by this Administration, was, perhaps, less evasive and, in essence, vindicated the affinity of interests between the various governments of the region and RNLB.

Although it was clearly demonstrated, at the time, that the people of the Gwembe division of North-Western Rhodesia, like their neighbours in the Feira district, were quite capable of proceeding, on their own without being channelled through the Bureau, to the labour centres of Southern Rhodesia, arriving at places like the Ayrshire in the Lomagundi district after 'a journey of from eight days to a fortnight and ~~(carrying)~~ an abundance of food from their own homes for the journey...'<sup>231</sup> the authorities of this territory would, however, not agree to this. In any case, they were quite aware that any approval, by them, of such developments would, of course, justify the phenomenon of independent labour migration to the South and, consequently, frustrate the functions and objectives of the Bureau, which they supported so much.

Thus in the Macnamara case and that of his immediate successor, R. I. Hughes, whereby administrative pressure was employed to supply recruits to the Bureau in the Gwembe district, the official line of argument was that tax-defaulters and those people in need of money were, simply, 'advised that it ~~(was)~~ their duty to earn money..., and if work ~~(could not)~~ be offered to them locally they ~~(were)~~ shewn that there ~~(was)~~ a means in the Bureau of earning ~~(money)~~ easily....'<sup>232</sup> To add a sanctimonious note to the whole affair, the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia tried also to convince the Imperial authorities, with regard to the Gwembe proceedings, that its officials were helping the Bureau to recruit labour, because this was to the advantage of the labourers themselves. With this in mind, Lawrence A. Wallace, the Acting Administrator in Livingstone informed the High Commissioner that:

Knowing the evils that resulted before from the independent stream of labour going South I cannot agree that it is to their ~~(labourers')~~ advantage that passes should be indiscriminately given to them or that recruiting should be allowed to anybody

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<sup>230</sup> C. O. 417/493: Venables to Lord Gladstone, May 11, 1910.

<sup>231</sup> C. O. 417/483: Venables to Imperial Secretary, Johannesburg: July 18, 1910.

<sup>232</sup> C. O. 417/484: L. A. Wallace, Acting Administrator, Livingstone, to Lord Gladstone: September 9, 1910.

except to the Labour Bureau which has the guarantee of the Southern Rhodesian Administration (of fair treatment and medical examination)-.<sup>233</sup>

The rank and file colonists in North-Western Rhodesia who witnessed the proceedings in the Gwembe district either remained indifferent or expressed outright support for the stance taken by the Administration as opposed to that of Venables. A school of thought, within the colonist circles, represented by Leopold F. Moore,<sup>234</sup> based at Livingstone since 1904, and his paper, the Livingstone Mail, was quite candid on this issue. They viewed forced labour in terms of those nebulous theories on the white man's noblisse oblige and the attendant black man's burden, popularly held by the supporters of the cause of imperialism and colonial control at the turn of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, the Livingstone Mail justified forced labour, on which the Bureau depended in this territory, on the following lines:

The allegation that they (natives) are forced is another matter. To Europeans the idea is repugnant, but as a South African of seventeen years' standing we (colonists) are not so sympathetic. To leave the native in the veld, under the circumstances created by the Company's (BSACo. 's) suppression of internecine warfare, is to leave him to degenerate into a prolific nuisance.

To force him to work is only to assimilate his condition to that of the white man. None of us would work if we were not forced to, and if we remained content with what satisfied him, we should be even as he. On the question of Tax, again, . . . There may be objections to it, but the law is that he (should) pay, and somehow or another he has to be made to pay. There will be injustice and oppression, - we (Englishmen) have experienced these things ourselves, - and virtue is notoriously triumphant in theatrical performances only.<sup>235</sup>

Of course, the reactions of the white colonists to cases of abuse in relation to labour recruitment, as the Gwembe district affair demonstrates, were governed by a number of practical considerations. The colonist farmers, for instance, had complained in 1909 about their problem of labour shortage, which they attributed to the fact that 'all the available natives were (being) regularly drafted to work on the Southern Rhodesia mines through the RNLB.'<sup>236</sup> But the BSACo. officials in North-Western Rhodesia successfully

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> For Moore's activities in the anti-Asiatic campaign in Southern Rhodesia:

Vide: Chapter 3: pp.265-75

<sup>235</sup> C. O. 417/494: Extract from The Livingstone Mail February 5, 1910.  
Enclosed in Buxton to Col. Seely: April 25, 1910.

quietened these colonist farmers by instituting an arrangement, whereby the RNLB supplied them with all those recruits, rejected by the Bureau's Medical Officer at Livingstone or Broken Hill, as unfit for minework in Southern Rhodesia and for which the farmers were in turn required to pay a capitation fee of 5/- per labourer to the Bureau as well as guarantee a wage rate ranging from 5/- to 7/-6d per month.<sup>237</sup>

Such an arrangement may have worked well for the farmers, but for the recruits, who had been engaged on the promises of high wages in Southern Rhodesia, where, in accordance with the contemporary official parlance, they could earn 'easily in one month far more than they -(had)- to pay -(in taxes)- in a year...',<sup>238</sup> their shock and indignation, at finding themselves packed off to a neighbouring farm and engaged at a rate they could have as well received from the local employer in their own home districts, must have been inestimable. In short, the arrangement was a very convenient one to the Bureau, which used the farmers of North-Western Rhodesia as a clearing house. Venables summarized this arrangement quite aptly:

It is a poor satisfaction for the farmers. The British South Africa Company Administration -(North-Western Rhodesia)- having enserfed practically all the able-bodied natives through the RNLB the latter handed over to the farmers all the weaklings whom they could not dispose of to the mines (who pay royalties to the BSA Company) for £1-10-0d per head, and who otherwise would have been left on their -(Bureau's)- hands and whom they would have had to send back to their homes at their own expense. The unfortunate farmers had either to relieve the RNLB of its liability or go without labourers at all.<sup>239</sup>

In a nutshell, the white colonist, in general, was presented with what looked, virtually, like the proverbial Hobson's choice over this issue of collaboration between administrative officials and the Bureau to recruit labour. The colonist farmers were largely dependent on the Administration for their labour supply and, therefore, they feared that any disapproval of administrative activities, on their part, could consequently lead to retalia-

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<sup>236</sup> Mss. Brit. Emp. S. 22/File G. 184: Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid: Extract from The Livingstone Mail: February 7, 1910: Enclosed in Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

<sup>238</sup> C. O. 417/484: Wallace to Lord Gladstone: September 9, 1910.

<sup>239</sup> Mss. Brit. Emp. S. 22/File G. 184: Venables to Buxton: June 23, 1910.

tion, usually in form of an organised effort 'to boycott the complainer'. The traders too were equally at the mercy of the Administration, which 'could refuse to re-issue a trader's licence without giving any reason for the refusal.<sup>240</sup> Indeed, when Venables attacked the nature of proceedings in the Gwembe district, he was, for instance, not only branded 'an extremist', but was also warned that should he press on his charges against administrative officials, 'things would be made unpleasant for -(him)-'.<sup>241</sup>

Thus through this use of intimidation against the white colonists and, at the same time, conscious of the demand for forced labour by the only newspaper in the territory as well as the mortal dread of the African peoples, to complain against the high-handed methods of administrative officials to promote the cause of labour migration through the Bureau, the Administration of North-Western Rhodesia could, smugly, continue to advocate the need for liaison between BSACo. officials and the Bureau over the issue of labour supply to markets below the Zambesi. Even if this liaison was not in the best interests of the subject peoples of the respective districts, where Bureau operations were carried out, the Administration could, at least, rest contented with its capability to contain any leakages to the outside world, as Venables indicated in June, 1910:

When therefore the Administration -(of North-Western Rhodesia)- states that ill-treatment of natives by officials and forced labour is not common they do so with a fair degree of confidence that those who know the true state of affairs will not dare to contradict them.<sup>242</sup>

The Gwembe district proceedings of 1907 to 1910 present an interesting aspect of trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia, under the aegis of a semi-official organisation and with the blessings of the BSACo. officials in South Central Africa. At this particular period, a combination of various factors may have been responsible for the inordinate pressure that was brought to bear, in this manner, on the African societies in the trans-Zambesian territories where the Bureau operated with such vigour. Indeed, it might not be out of place to collate here proceedings, like those in the Gwembe district, with the outbreak of sleeping sickness in the northern portion of North-Eastern Rhodesia, which restricted the scope of Bureau

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

activities for three years between 1907 and 1910 in particular. Perhaps the incidence of this epidemic may have influenced the Bureau to shift its pressure from the North-Eastern Rhodesian portion to the North-Western Rhodesian section of the trans-Zambesian region, with the inexorable consequences, which we have discussed above, as constituting a feature of trans-Zambesian labour migration to the South.

But in its own right, the Sleeping Sickness epidemic appears to have presented other interesting aspects in the genesis of trans-Zambesian labour migration to the South. BSACo. officials, who had always felt disconcerted about the position and monopoly of the RNLB over trans-Zambesian labour supply, actually used this epidemic to vitiate those strands of competition still posed by WNLA of the Rand and the Union Minière of Katanga. In the case of WNLA, the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia had never forgiven this body for the role it had played before 1907, in using its economic power and influence to reduce the RNLB to the status of a mere satellite of the Rand interests and, at the same time, neglecting the issue of labour supply from the Portuguese territory where WNLA wielded a lot of influence, whilst Southern Rhodesian colonist employers themselves needed such labour so much. Moreover, the activities of WNLA agents, who were deeply involved in labour poaching from Southern Mashonaland, were a constant sore point amongst the white colonists of Southern Rhodesia.

Thus when Sleeping Sickness broke out, a number of colonist associations, representing all shades of opinion, met in Salisbury in December 1907, demanding total prohibition of WNLA recruits from the North, using Southern Rhodesia for transit purposes. Actually, the Administration of Southern Rhodesia, mindful of the opposition of its citizenry, had stipulated that WNLA could make use of Umtali only as its entreport into the country.<sup>243</sup> But this suggestion did not satisfy the employers of labour at the Rand who felt that since their recruits were raised in that part of Portuguese Zambesia between Tete and Zumbo, the natural route for them to take was that running between Fort Jameson via Feira and Mazoe and then onto Salisbury, where they were to be entrained for the Rand. WNLA could not trust the use of Umtali, which, it felt, was too near the territories of the Mozambique Company,

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<sup>243</sup>C. O. 417/451: Milton to Chester-Master (?), 1908: Quoted in Chester-Master to Lord Selborne: Telegram: January 3, 1909.

that had openly prohibited labour recruitment for the Rand.<sup>244</sup> For these reasons, WNLA had gone ahead with its plan to use the Fort Jameson-Feira-Salisbury route and, in fact, Eustace, the former Manager of Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, had been appointed to take charge of WNLA matters in Salisbury.

WNLA's arrangements were, however, put to a severe test, once sleeping sickness was detected in some parts of North-Eastern Rhodesia. Perhaps by coincidence rather than design, it came to light, at the beginning of 1908, that two of the gangs raised by WNLA, which appeared in Salisbury as having come from W.R. Burne, an agent of this body, based at Fort Jameson, had actually come from the Songea district of the German territory of Tanganyika; an area adjacent to the Tanganyika, Mweru and Luapula districts of North-Eastern Rhodesia.<sup>245</sup> When medical evidence in Salisbury showed some positive symptoms of sleeping sickness amongst these recruits from German East Africa, BSACo. officials in Salisbury regarded this as a god-send opportunity, to strike a humiliating blow against their old rivals at the Rand.

Indeed, Milton, the head of the Salisbury Administration, made no effort to disguise these intentions, when he informed the High Commissioner about the ire of the mining industry of Southern Rhodesia on the 'inadvisability of allowing these gangs to find their way through this Territory (Southern Rhodesia)', as two years before, they had 'caused a mutiny in the Compound of a large mine... by exaggerated stories of the conditions under which they were engaged to work (at the Rand).'<sup>246</sup> In a note to London Wall, Milton was even more forthright on the vengeful intentions of his Administration on the matter, when he stated that 'the influence which would be exercised on our natives by the passage of well fed gangs engaged at high wages' was naturally harmful.<sup>247</sup>

It is probable that even more drastic measures would have been taken against WNLA's trans-Zambesian recruiting activities had General Louis Botha's government, in Pretoria, not put pressure on the High Commissioner,

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid: Lord Selborne to Lord Elgin: February 10, 1908.

<sup>245</sup> C. O. 417/461: A. M. Fleming, Medical Director, to Milton: January 15, 1908.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid: Milton to Lord Selborne: January 15, 1908.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid: Milton to BSACo. January 17, 1908.

threatening to demand compensation for any losses sustained by the Rand mines, consequent to the actions of Southern Rhodesia.<sup>248</sup> The High Commissioner too warned the Salisbury Administration against taking measures which could compel WNLA to switch off the use of the Umtali route for forwarding trans-Zambesian recruits to the Rand, in favour of the sea route via Chinde and Delagoa Bay; a move which, the Imperial official concluded, could also mean an economic loss to Southern Rhodesia's railways and store-keepers, who had largely benefitted from the existing arrangements.<sup>249</sup>

The efforts of the BSACo. officials of the Salisbury Administration to consolidate the RNLB monopoly over trans-Zambesian labour supply by emasculating parallel activities in the same region by WNLA were, therefore, here foiled by the preponderant economic and political influence the Randlords and their sympathisers wielded. Thus the deployment of this influence, by the Rand employers, to mitigate those geographical disadvantages, which WNLA was subjected to within the regional economic structure of the sub-continent, successfully saved this labour body from any adverse consequences arising from the vindictive actions of the Salisbury Administration. For this reason, it is easier to appreciate the bitterness of the Salisbury officials against the staying measures of the High Commissioner to save WNLA, which were readily denounced in Salisbury, as out-rightly 'dictatorial'.<sup>250</sup>

On the other hand, the Union Minere was not as lucky as WNLA was, on this question of competition for trans-Zambesian labour supply with the RNLB. Once the presence of sleeping sickness in Northern Eastern Rhodesia was reported in 1907, the consequences of the restrictive measures imposed by the BSACo. officials of the trans-Zambesian territories caught the Katangan employers in the face at full blast. The restrictive regulations, imposed on labour recruitment from the Mweru, Tanganyika and Luapula districts, then classified as 'infected areas', and the North and West Luangwa districts, also regarded as areas 'under observation', and altogether located in the northern portion of North-Eastern Rhodesia,<sup>251</sup> were a crippling blow to the Katanga mines.

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<sup>248</sup>C. O. 415/451: Prime Minister's Office, Pretoria, to Lord Selborne, January 16, 1908.

<sup>249</sup>Ibid: Lord Selborne to Lord Elgin: February 10, 1908.

<sup>250</sup>C. O. 417/461: Milton to BSACo.: January 17, 1908.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid: Wallace to BSACo.: December 5, 1907.



Moreover, these restrictions were devised in such a way that few points of exit, from these affected districts, were designated, thus, in this manner, severely curtailing voluntary labour emigration. Besides, such points as those officially recognised by BSACo. authorities for exit purposes, like Abercorn, on the Tanganyika border, and Madona and a few others, on the Congo frontier, were even considered too many by the authorities on the Rhodesian side of the Luapula river, who had no illusions about what they regarded as the extremely lax supervision, on the part of the Belgian authorities, over migrant labour from those areas of North-Eastern Rhodesia affected by sleeping sickness, between 1907 and 1910.<sup>252</sup>

For the Katangan colonist employers, the implications of these restrictive measures introduced in North-Eastern Rhodesia were wide-ranging in terms of their economic repercussions. It was not necessarily the new requirements, which forbade voluntary labour migration to the Congo and had, in turn, necessitated a situation whereby carriers engaged to convey supplies for the mining companies on the Belgian side of the border simply dumped them at Madona or any other border post, that worried these employers. The compulsory resettlement of the African communities of the Luapula Valley, the Mweru district and the Tanganyika plateau away from the river valleys and lakes to new areas, free from sleeping sickness and varying from 17 to 77 miles in distance from their former homes, evidently had profound implications for the course of labour migration to the Congo, from these employers' standpoint.

The Katangan employers had, apparently, banked on clandestine migration to sustain the existing movement of labour between the two territories, on account of not only the ethnic ties between the contiguous African societies on both sides of the Luapula frontier, but also because it was felt that the peoples of the Luapula Valley had developed some 'allegiance to men in the Katanga whom they -(had)- known well for years and -(had)- learnt to like and trust.'<sup>253</sup> With the introduction of resettlement villages in which even RNLB agents were scarcely allowed to operate, except under tight supervision, due

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<sup>252</sup> C. O. 417/492: A. May, Principal Medical Officer, to Goode: Livingstone: April 21, 1910.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid*: Dr. Arthur Pearson, Late Senior Medical Officer, Union Miniere du Haut Katanga, to Wallace: Livingstone, April 4, 1910.

to fear, on the part of the administrative officials, that labour recruiting might undermine the stability of these new villages,<sup>254</sup> Katangan colonist employers could not help expressing their disappointment over the possible loss of labour supply, especially from the Luapula Valley, which they considered 'one of the best districts' for the purpose, as far as the Belgian Congo was concerned.<sup>255</sup>

Indeed, even Bureau agents, stationed in this part of North-Eastern Rhodesia, like Hughes, the Recruiting Agent for the Mweru district, appeared to agree with this view of the Katangan colonist employers. As a matter of fact, Hughes himself had also expressed his concern over the resettlement scheme involving the Lunda of Kazembe, which was, to him, bound to hinder the recruiting activities of the Bureau amongst these people. Thus he informed the Bureau management in Bulawayo, in September 1910:

I shall not be allowed to recruit Kasembe's Alunda (sic) - the people who are being moved - before next dry season. The Alunda are the best natives in the District (Mweru) and have been in the habit of going to the Congo mines. A thousand are supposed to be there now. The officials fear scarcity of food among the Natives who have just been moved.<sup>256</sup>

In the final analysis, the Lunda and associated ethnic groups were moved to new areas, only to be returned in the 1920's.<sup>257</sup> For the Katangan colonist employers, the resettlement measures presented, at least, a temporary setback in the pattern of labour emigration from this region to the Congo, which had very deep roots.

What further worried the Katangan colonist employers, with regard to the incidence of sleeping sickness in North-Eastern Rhodesia, was the way in which BSACo. officials in the trans-Zambesian territories manipulated the situation to obstruct labour migration to the Katanga, in the name of sanitary measures, and, by so doing, brought into play their vindictive policies to justify long-established prejudices towards these employers of the Belgian territory. Yet in spite of the Katangan employers' prophecies on the doom and

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<sup>254</sup> N 3/22/11/1: Assistant Magistrate, Mbereshi, Mweru District to Hughes: September 8, 1910.

<sup>255</sup> C. O. 417/492: Pearson to Wallace: April 4, 1910.

<sup>256</sup> N3/22/11/1: J. E. Hughes, Bureau Agent, Mweru District, to Jenkins, Bulawayo, September 30, 1910.

<sup>257</sup> Cunnison: op. cit., p. 24.

disaster that restrictive measures on the Rhodesian side were likely to cause, in form of labour migrants from the affected areas either residing permanently in the Congo or proceeding by stealth, especially since it was not practicable to patrol 'three hundred miles of river -(Luapula)- along the bank with native soldiers... ',<sup>258</sup> BSACo. officials, on both sides of the Zambesi, would not lose sight of the manifold advantages which the incidence of sleeping sickness, apparently, portended. They might have been frustrated in their intentions to deal with WNLA, accordingly, on the issue of trans-Zambesian labour, but it was a different story altogether with the Katangan colonist employers in particular and voluntary labour emigration from these Company territories in general.

Having prescribed sanitary standards of their own in their own territories, the BSACo. authorities set out, in a rather cold-blooded manner, to benefit the RNLB, with regard to its functions as a purveyor of trans-Zambesian labour supply to the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia. In official language, rather than allow clandestine labour migration to the Congo, where, it was alleged, 'the precautions against sleeping sickness -(were)- known to be lax,' BSACo. authorities, in the trans-Zambesian territories, felt that 'this tendency -(could)- best be counteracted by diverting the labour to S. Rhodesia (sic),'<sup>259</sup> which these authorities regarded as 'a legitimate source of employment.'<sup>260</sup> After all, the medical authorities in Northern Rhodesia (for North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia were about to amalgamate by 1910)<sup>261</sup> were quite confident that Southern Rhodesia was better able, in their own opinion, to deal with complications, arising from any outbreak and spread of sleeping sickness which labour recruitment from suspected areas entailed. Indeed, Dr. A. May, the Principal Medical Officer of the two northern territories, was here prepared to vouchsafe the 'strictest precautions', having been guaranteed these, in turn, by his counterpart, Dr. A. M. Fleming, the Medical Director of Southern Rhodesia.<sup>262</sup>

For its part, the RNLB was taken into the confidence of the BSACo., by a number of promises and measures, to canalize labour migration solely through

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<sup>258</sup> C. O. 417/492: Pearson to Wallace: April 4, 1910.

<sup>259</sup> C. O. 417/491: Hole to BSACo. : January 10, 1910.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid: Dr. May to Dr. Fleming: December 28, 1909.

<sup>261</sup> Vide: C. O. 417/476: BSACo. to C. O. : June 9, 1909.

this labour body. In the first place, instructions were issued to administrative officials, in several districts to across the Zambesi, to forego the practice of giving out passes to potential labour migrants to the South, but to, alternatively, direct these intending labourers to the Bureau.<sup>263</sup> After an inter-governmental committee, which also included a representative of the Bureau, had made a survey of the areas affected by sleeping sickness in May 1910, the position of the Bureau over labour recruitment in the districts in question and in the trans-Zambesian territories in general was greatly strengthened. The message of this Committee, composed of Dr. May, Dr. Fleming and Wrey, the Bureau Chairman, though obviously one-sided, was quite clear:

No recruiting for Southern Rhodesia shall be allowed within the closed area except through the agency of the Bureau. . . and no voluntary labour shall be allowed to leave the closed area either for Southern Rhodesia or for Belgian Territory.

Moreover, the government of North-Eastern Rhodesia was required to guarantee that:

... as long as Southern Rhodesia is drawing labour from this source -(North-Eastern Rhodesia)- no recruiting of labour for Belgian Territory will be allowed in the closed area without the mutual consent<sup>264</sup> of the Southern Rhodesia Administration and the Bureau.

From the preceding evidence, it is incontrovertible that the BSACo. officials on both sides of the Zambesi were determined to achieve what the Bureau had hitherto failed to do; that is, to outplay both labour emigration to the Congo and independent exodus from the trans-Zambesian territories to Southern Rhodesia by simply providing credible inducements to the potential labour migrants. In entrenching the monopoly of the Bureau, as the BSACo. officials sought to do between 1907 and 1910 in specified areas of the trans-Zambesian territories, it became clear that labour recruitment, merely as economic function without direct political backing, was but an empty shell; and this was what they intended to rectify.

Thus through a well devised master plan, the BSACo. officials were able

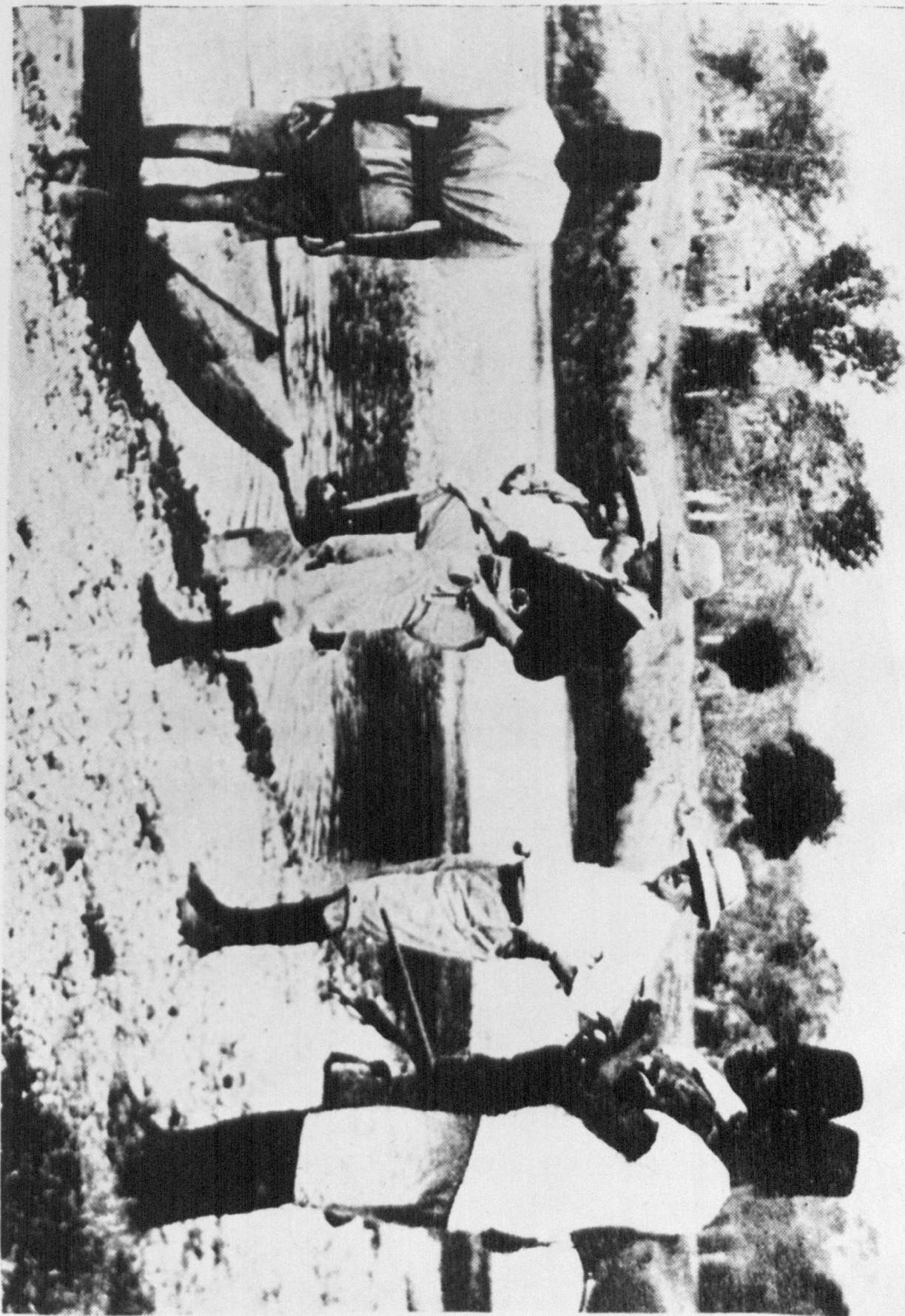
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<sup>262</sup> C. O. 417/492: Dr. May to Goode: April 21, 1910.

<sup>263</sup> C. O. 417/484: Wallace to Lord Gladstone: September 9, 1910.

<sup>264</sup> C. O. 417/492: Memorandum on Recruiting in Closed Areas in the Luapula and Kalungusi Districts: May 14, 1910.

Extract from M. Gelfand: Northern Rhodesia in the Days of the Charter:  
A Medical and Social Study, 1898-1924: (Basil Blackwell: Oxford: 1961).



to streamline both independent labour emigration and competitive labour recruitment by other parties in North-Eastern Rhodesia, not only by strengthening the hand of the RNLB, the BSACo. 's offspring, but also by laying down specified routes, especially from the northern portion of this territory, with medical centres at places like Kawambwa in the Mweru district; Fort Rosebery in the Luapula district; Mporokoso or Abercorn in the Tanganyika district; Ndola in the Kafue district and at Bulawayo in Matabeleland.<sup>265</sup> Finally, a special camp was established at Fundu, on the fringes of the affected area, at the cost of £2,000 a year in maintenance expenses, to monitor movements of people into and outside this region.<sup>266</sup> In one sense, the sleeping sickness affair produced a number of advantages for the Bureau in more ways than one. In this respect, it might be pointed out here that it was these extraordinary conditions, ensuing from the outbreak of this epidemic, which also provided the Bureau and employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia with a rare chance to procure a stable labour force, as officials across the Zambesi, anxious to restrict the constant movement of labourers to and fro and thus minimize the spread of sleeping sickness, were quite prepared to allow the Bureau to extend the recruits' normal twelve months service to between eighteen months and two years. Moreover, these long-term service recruits were also allowed to take along their families to Southern Rhodesia, so long as the Bureau was prepared to meet the transportation expenses.<sup>267</sup>

The benefits of a combination of the twin factors, to wit, administrative fiat and a fortuitous malady, were quite noticeable in the BSACo. territories, at least, as far as Company and Bureau officials were concerned, between 1909 and 1914. As may be obvious from the preceding discussion on the genesis of Bureau monopoly over trans-Zambesian labour supply, these advantages, ensuing from the 1907-1910 events, were mainly for this labour organisation and its administrative sycophants. But such advantages, somehow, generally tended to operate against the interests of most of the rank and file colonists as well as the African subject peoples in the Company territories.

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Vide: Plate XIII: On the Luangwa River near Fundu during Sleeping Sickness Investigations (1911).

<sup>267</sup> C. O. 417/491: Hole to BSACo. : January 10, 1910.

As early as 1909, the Company and Bureau officials began, openly, to exploit the situation in North-Eastern Rhodesia to their own advantage, much to the resentment of those colonist sectors, which did not benefit from these official proceedings, but were rather grievously handicapped instead. One such occurrence, that amazed the North-Eastern Rhodesian colonists, was the manner in which the BSACo. officials, successfully, raised labour supply from the region, adjacent to the so-called 'sleeping sickness guard area', for Messrs George Pauling and Company's railway construction work in 1909. This region, between the Johnston Falls on the Luapula river in the South and its Munushi tributary in the north, on the eastern bank, where the Lunda, the Tabwa, Chishinga and other associated ethnic groups were resettled, was officially closed to labour recruitment. Yet in this instance, these railway constructors, who were part of the Beira and Mashonaland Railway Company in which the BSACo. held shares, were assisted by administrative officials to utilize labour from the 'affected area' and thus effect the railway extension from Broken Hill to the Congo border.<sup>268</sup>

This administrative assistance to interest groups, associated with the BSACo. in one way or another, may not have surprised white colonists, as it was commonplace in the Company territories anyway. What actually aroused colonist anxiety during the sleeping sickness prohibitions was the manner in which, over the years, bona fide small-scale employers of labour were systematically deprived of their labour recruits, allegedly for detention at the Fundu quarantine camp, only to encounter the same recruits, later, on their way to Southern Rhodesia, under the auspices of the Bureau. It was against these devious methods of procuring trans-Zambesian labour that individual colonists like George Graham, formerly a farmer in the Mkushi division of the Zumbo district in Northern Rhodesia but settled in Salisbury by 1912, vehemently protested against to the local officials of the BSACo. and, subsequently, solicited the aid of the Aborigines Protection Society on the matter in August 1912. As Graham viewed the situation, the BSACo. officials in South Central Africa were merely using sleeping sickness 'as a cover for aiding the RNLB',<sup>269</sup> whilst the latter was, in turn, 'enslaving the natives of

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<sup>268</sup> Mss. Brit. Emp. S. 22/File G. 184: Extract of a letter by George Graham to Editor, Rhodesian Opinion: August 8, 1912.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid: Graham to Sir Henry Birchenough, Resident Director, BSACo. (Commercial Branch) Salisbury: August 13, 1912.

Northern Rhodesia by forcing those who ~~wished~~ to work in the South to do so through the Labour Bureau.<sup>270</sup>

This resentment amongst the white colonists over the course of trans-Zambesian labour migration and recruitment for the South, under the auspices of the Bureau and the BSACo., was gradually gathering momentum in Northern Rhodesia, in the last few years before the outbreak of World War I. White colonists of the region were also becoming disillusioned by what they regarded as a one-sided partnership between Northern and Southern Rhodesia, which tended to favour the latter. It might also be pointed out here, that since the amalgamation of North-Eastern and North-Western Rhodesia into one territory of Northern Rhodesia in 1911, a number of physical and economic changes were already taking place in this trans-Zambesian domain of the BSACo.

Sir Henry Birchenough, the Resident Director of the commercial branch of the BSACo. who was then based in Salisbury, was amazed by these changes when he visited Northern Rhodesia in 1912. The contrast in conditions since his last visit to the region in 1907, when there were only 'a few... farmers, chiefly Dutchmen' settled in the Kalomo district, with the 1912 situation, whereby the potentialities of these trans-Zambesian territories for cattle farming and cotton growing and the proximity of a huge cattle market in the Katanga had attracted a large colonist population, was, to this knight, unbelievable.<sup>271</sup> Besides, this colonist population of Northern Rhodesia was still growing, with the years 1913 and 1914, for instance, recording a net increase of forty per cent of population growth and thus bringing the number of white inhabitants to a total of 2,250, as opposed to an estimated 875,000 Africans.<sup>272</sup>

Yet in spite of these very encouraging symptoms for the BSACo.'s colonization schemes and the prospects for amalgamating Northern and Southern Rhodesia being mooted during this pre-World War I period,<sup>273</sup> the settlers of Northern Rhodesia felt themselves systematically antagonized by the Com-

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid: Graham to Buxton: August 14, 1912.

<sup>271</sup> Extracts from Report on Rhodesia by Sir Henry Birchenough: Bulawayo, December 1912: in BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts, March 31, 1913: pp. 108-9.

<sup>272</sup> BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts: March 31, 1914: p. 15.

<sup>273</sup> 'Report of a Speech made by Mr Rochfort Maguire at Salisbury, Rhodesia: March 22, 1913': Annexure III in BSACo, Directors' Report and Accounts: March 31, 1914: p. 53.



pany's policies over labour migration to Southern Rhodesia. Colonel A. H. St. Gibbons, a former military officer with the East Yorkshire Regiment, who had organised an expedition of military men from Natal to Barotseland between 1898 and 1899<sup>274</sup> and had later on settled down to farm near Lusaka in the trans-Zambesian part of the Company territories, may have aptly articulated the mood of these disillusioned colonists over the unbalanced relationship, between the two Rhodesias, on the labour issue.

In August 1912, Colonel Gibbons complained directly to the Colonial Office over the manner in which the BSACo. officials were totally ignoring the interests of the local colonist farmers of Northern Rhodesia and thus 'seriously hampering progress here -(in Northern Rhodesia)- for the benefit of mines in the South in which its -(BSACo. 's) management -(was)- collectively and individually interested.'<sup>275</sup> In Gibbons' view, the matter had become so serious that the colonists of Northern Rhodesia had decided on some form of confrontation with their local administration to demand 'fair play' rather than let things drift into a situation whereby the territory would, virtually, 'come to be looked on as a mere commercial agent for Southern Rhodesia...,' whilst the settlers themselves felt that they were in a predicament where 'Peter -(was)- systematically robbed to pay Paul -(Southern Rhodesia)- who in turn -(would)- hand over -(to the BSACo.)- a percentage of the pillage in dividend form.'<sup>276</sup>

Gibbons' anxieties over labour emigration from Northern Rhodesia to the South did not appear at all pretentious and were shared by a large proportion of the country's farming communities. The North-Eastern Rhodesia Agricultural and Commercial Association, which incidentally included in its membership not only farmers but also traders and missionaries as well, was quite critical of the process of labour emigration from the then defunct territory which it represented. To the farmers of this region, labour migration to Southern Rhodesia was, clearly, the cause of the region's economic ills in form of the rising rate of wages and the difficulties of establishing a viable cotton growing industry. Moreover, with sleeping sickness not yet overcome,

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<sup>274</sup> Vide: Wallis (ed.): op. cit. pp. xxi-xxiii.

<sup>275</sup> C. O. 417/521: Col. A. St. H. Gibbons, Ingwere Estate, Lusakas, to Col. Seeley: August 1, 1912.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

it was also felt that the decision of the local Administration, in throwing open a large number of districts to labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia, was detrimental to the interests of the territory. More infuriating to these colonists still, was the fact that though labour recruitment for the mines of Southern Rhodesia was allowed, that for tenga-tenga labour to Blantyre and Tete was still impeded by a maze of sleeping sickness regulations.

Whilst the colonists of the former North-Eastern Rhodesia would have liked to see labour migration to the South prohibited as a phenomenon, they, however, also concluded that the problems of this particular region could best be solved by amalgamating with Nyasaland rather than the rest of the Rhodesias.<sup>277</sup> This fear of possible amalgamation between Northern and Southern Rhodesia was not merely influenced by the geographical location and historical links of the former North-Eastern Rhodesia with Nyasaland, but was also a product of these economic factors, which tended to undermine the development of a meaningful symbiotic and equitable relationship between the Rhodesias. Indeed, even the farmers of the Kafue region in former North-Western Rhodesia, who were by no means influenced by sentimental ties with Nyasaland, felt that the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias, without any reforms in the BSACo.'s economic policies, could only lead to a situation whereby the RNLB, primarily designed to serve Southern Rhodesian interests, would spread its influence all over Northern Rhodesia 'with the object of depleting it of its labour supply....'<sup>278</sup>

The protests and general resentment of the colonists farmers, traders and missionaries of Northern Rhodesia over the role of their territory, as a labour reserve for Southern Rhodesia, were patently futile. If anything, the genesis of trans-Zambesian labour migration and recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was not simply a means by which the local administration of Northern Rhodesia could acquire revenue.<sup>279</sup> It was more fundamental than that. Trans-Zambesian labour migration into Southern Rhodesia was essentially

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<sup>277</sup> C. O. 417/521: J. L. Bruce, Secretary, North-Eastern Rhodesia Agricultural and Farmers' Association to J. C. Marshall: Fort Jameson: October 11, 1911.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid: Col. Gibbons to Col. Seeley: August 1, 1912.

<sup>279</sup> For this view on trans-Zambesian labour migration and revenue: Vide: Mackenzie's articles: 'African Labour in the Chartered Company Period: p. 50 and 'Colonial Labour Policy and Rhodesia': p. 8.

in keeping with the strategy of the BSACo. to develop an export-import orientated economy below the Zambesi and was in this respect, more or less, a political decision rather than anything else. For the white colonists of Northern Rhodesia to protest against a politico-economic arrangement of long-standing, as they did just prior to the advent of World War I, it was simply a child's play, tantamount to scratching the body of an elephant with a hair-pin. The paramountcy of Southern Rhodesia's economic development, at this time, was still a very important priority in the eyes of London Wall and, naturally, no protests from the colonists could alter the existing arrangements.

As a matter of fact, for the three-year period before the outbreak of World War I, labour recruitment in Northern Rhodesia for its Southern counterpart was immensely intensified. The influence of the RNLB in the trans-Zambesian colony had become simply pervasive. With the growing labour demand and the increasing competition between the mining and farming industries of Southern Rhodesia over the supply of this commodity between 1911 and 1914, the Bureau had apparently to be reorganised to meet these new challenges.

On the financial side of the affairs of this labour organisation, the BSACo. renewed its financial commitment to the Bureau, with an annual subsidy of £12,000, also supplemented by an offer of £3,000 from the railways.<sup>280</sup> Together these sums of money were supposed to make up for the losses sustained by this body, in form of a prospective contribution from the finance houses in London with mining interests in Southern Rhodesia, which had agreed to raise a sum of £25,000 to enable it to function and expand its field of operations, on condition that it would be transformed into a Limited Liability Company, without any government control whatsoever.<sup>281</sup> But this condition was, unfortunately, unacceptable to the colonists of Southern Rhodesia, who feared that a labour body, run on the basis of a private company, would be subjected to the whims of its shareholders and, consequently, corner the labour market to the disadvantage of non-members, with dire results for rank and file colonist em-

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<sup>280</sup> C. O. 417/512: Proceedings of the first General Meeting of the RNLB (new): Extract from The Bulawayo Chronicle: June 24th, 1912.

<sup>281</sup> C. O. 417/497: Burns-Begg to Lord Gladstone: June 1, 1911.

employers.<sup>282</sup> For fear of creating a monopoly over labour supply in the BSACo territories for the benefit of a few chosen employers, the new RNLB would there not accept the offer of the London financiers and, naturally, lost this capital. Secondly, the Bureau's financial prospects were also seriously undermined by the 1911-1912 revolt of the farmers over the Labour Tax Ordinance of 1911, by means of which the Bureau would have been guaranteed an annual income of about £22,000.<sup>283</sup>

In spite of these financial drawbacks and debts, amounting to over £21,000, inherited by the reorganised Bureau from its predecessor, the renewed organisation went ahead with its programme of action on labour recruitment. An interesting aspect of this body's plans was the restructuring of its machinery in order to invigorate its activities in the field. Like its predecessor in 1907, the new Bureau initiated changes in its management and field staff in Northern Rhodesia and Mashonaland, which were its main areas of operation by 1912. These areas of operation were divided into circles; two for Mashonaland, to wit, Northern Mashonaland Circle, centred around Salisbury and covering the northern and eastern districts of this province, as well as the Victoria Circle, consisting of the whole of Southern Mashonaland.

But the Mashonaland Circles, headed by E. M. C. Stokes, the province's Bureau manager with his branch office in Salisbury, were abandoned by mid-1912, for a number of reasons. Actually, the Bureau had become so unpopular with the local African societies that even before the reconstruction of this new body in 1911, moves were being made to abandon local recruiting activities inside Southern Rhodesia. In the main region of Bureau activities, the Victoria Circle, it was observed that the local people, especially in the Ndanga and the Chibi districts, were becoming more interested in proceeding to the Rand than working inside Southern Rhodesia; hence the avowed assertion by the Shona chiefs of the region, to the authorities, that:

If you send us to the Transvaal we will go, but we do not wish our people to go ~~-(to work)-~~ through the Bureau in Rhodesia.<sup>284</sup>

This negative attitude towards the Bureau was faithfully reflected in the

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid.: Speech by Sir Charles Coghlan, M. L. C. : Quoted in Rhodesia Herald: May 20, 1911.

<sup>283</sup> C. O. 417/512: Proceedings of the first General Meeting of the RNLB (new): June 24th, 1912.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

trend of this body's recruiting activities in the Victoria Circle, towards the close of 1911 and the beginning of 1912, when Bureau officials hoped to take advantage of the season's exceptional drought and food shortage to raise a sizeable labour supply from this source. When only 47 labour recruits offered their services through the Bureau, the management, consequently, decided to withdraw, not only from the Victoria Circle where Bureau buildings and a plant in Fort Victoria were sold off in March 1912, but also in the Northern Mashonaland Circle as well, where the Bureau's reception depots for aliens at Mtoko and Mrewa were temporarily shut up.

In one respect, the suspension of Bureau operations, inside Southern Rhodesia in 1912, gave way to increased efforts in Northern Rhodesia. Here the territory was divided into six circles and headed by an acknowledged Bureau Inspector. These divisions were the Barotse Circle, headed by C. C. Bisset, with his headquarters at Senanga; the Batoka Circle under G. A. Cooke, with headquarters at Kalomo; the Luangwa Circle under T. J. Christison, based at Broken Hill; the Luapula Circle, headed by R. A. Osborne, with his headquarters at Fort Rosebery; the Awemba Circle under A. Stephenson, based at Kasama and, finally, the Angoni Circle, headed by Bureau Inspector, D. Hawksley, with his base at Fort Jameson. These respective circles of Northern Rhodesia, in turn, consisted of a number of surrounding districts, amounting to three or four in each case, in which the Bureau Inspector was assisted by two or three white officials, termed Bureau agents, making up a total of 16 altogether, and backed by a whole retinue of 'native runners', to the number of twenty under each Bureau agent. In charge of the whole territory of Northern Rhodesia, as a field of Bureau recruiting activities, was T. N. Micklem, the territory's Bureau Manager, who was answerable to the Bureau headquarters in Bulawayo, under the control of H. W. Kempster, the Managing Director; P. L. Jenkins, the General Manager and George Upton, the Bureau's Secretary. <sup>285</sup>

In essence, the restructuring of the Bureau machinery in Northern Rhodesia, in 1912, was designed to achieve two main objectives; to reduce the body's standing charges whilst, at the same time, increasing its efficiency by effecting 'closer recruiting ~~-(activities)-~~ and getting into touch with the native

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<sup>285</sup> A 3/18/30/18: Managing Director's Circular No. 1 to the Staff of the Bureau Generally: n. d. Enclosed in H. W. Kempster to BSACo, Treasurer: Salisbury 13, 1912.

in such a way that he -(would)- have the idea of work in Southern Rhodesia constantly before him, even in his own village.<sup>286</sup>

For attaining its ambitious, but conflicting objectives, the Bureau, therefore, laid less emphasis on the role of its more expensive white manpower, but, instead, relied more heavily on the less expensive African touts. For this reason, the 'twenty native runners', under each Bureau agent, engaged and endowed with power of recruiting, but without uniforms except Bureau badges only, were the key to the success of the Bureau plans. Thus the role of the Bureau's African touts was envisaged as one of faithful disciples 'who -(would)- live in the villages and -(would)- constantly move about amongst the natives' in order 'to keep the existence of the Bureau and the opportunity for going to work -(in Southern Rhodesia)- constantly before the native and in this way to attract the increased numbers -(of recruits)- which -(would)- render the commission remunerative -(to)- those engaged in recruiting -(the Bureau agents)-'.<sup>287</sup> The whole scheme was apparently an ingenious device to decentralize the activities of the Bureau in such a manner that inducements were allotted to the people who bore the least burdens of recruiting, to sustain morale in the field of operations and thus sustain the body's efficiency in labour recruiting.

Moreover, attempts were also made to try and improve other features of the Bureau's operations in this trans-Zambesian territory. Thus whilst the new Bureau, in its drive to reduce expenditure, did away with the horse and cart transport, which its predecessor had provided to its agents at the cost of over £500 per annum in maintenance fees, it could not, however, cut down on the eighteen forwarding and distributing compounds which the old Bureau had established, on the grounds of those specific geographical and other physical factors governing the recruitment of trans-Zambesian labour.<sup>288</sup> Mindful of the importance of the physical condition of the labour recruits on their arrival at employment centres in Southern Rhodesia, the new Bureau decided to consolidate rather than reduce the existing facilities in the field of operations, with the proper care and health of the recruits on their way to the South, as its main concern.

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid: Managing Director's (Kempster's) Circular No. 2: On Reorganisation of Recruiting in N. Rhodesia: January 1, 1912: In Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> C. O. 417/512: Proceedings of the first General Meeting of the RNLB (new): June 24, 1912.

Three main routes were, by 1912, ear-marked for the purpose of conveying recruits from the extreme northern districts of the former North-Eastern Rhodesia territory. These were the Fort Rosebery - Ndola - Livingstone route to Bulawayo, via the Nkankami ferry, provided by the Bureau on the Luapula river, for recruits from the Luapula, Mweru and Tanganyika districts; the Kasama - Mpika - Serenje route, via Broken Hill and Livingstone, to Bulawayo, for labourers from the Bamba country and finally, the Fort Jameson - Feira - Kanyemba route to Sinoia, for those recruits from the East Luangwa district bound for Salisbury.<sup>289</sup>

Efforts were also made too to standardise the rations of recruits on their way to the South. Those recruits, using the Fort Rosebery - Ndola - Livingstone route from the Luapula Valley and beyond, were, apparently, better off in terms of food supply, as the districts through which they passed usually provided the necessary supplies, as long as the recruits had their calico poshos, the popular currency used for exchange purposes with the local peoples in return for food. The other two easterly routes were, it would appear, frequently plagued by food shortage, especially along those laps between Kasama and Serenje in Northern Rhodesia and also between Kanyemba and Sinoia on the Southern Rhodesian side. Such deficits were thus made up by the provision of food depots at regular ten-mile intervals, along these routes, where grain stores and stock were kept by the Bureau. At the Wankie compound of the Bureau, for instance, cooking utensils were also provided to the recruits as they waited to proceed to Bulawayo.

But a more significant improvement, in the Bureau recruits' travel arrangements, was noticeable in their mode of transport between Broken Hill, Livingstone, Bulawayo and Salisbury. Under the new Bureau, the system of crowding the recruits in insanitary cattle trucks, these labourers had often experienced during the old dispensation, was done away with. Instead, the new Bureau had an increased number of trucks (18 by 1912) provided by the railways and fitted with sanitary conveniences as well as water tanks. A Bureau official, called the Travelling Inspector, usually supervised the entrainment of the recruits in Northern Rhodesia and was also required to check whether the

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<sup>289</sup> C. O. 417/574: George W. Murray, Managing Director, RNLB, to Secretary, Administrator's Dept., Salisbury: May 29, 1913.

railway trucks were disinfected or not. It was also this official's duty to guard against overcrowding of recruits in these trucks, which were, for instance, restricted to carry a maximum number of 45 recruits each. But perhaps the sole and most notable shortcoming of the new Bureau's arrangements on the transportation of recruits, after 1912, was the tendency to convey these trans-Zambesian recruits to and in Southern Rhodesia by goods trains.<sup>290</sup>

The attempts mounted by the Bureau to reform the conditions, under which trans-Zambesian recruits were raised and forwarded to the South, alongside this labour organisation's efforts to intensify its activities to meet the growing demands on the Southern Rhodesia labour market, must be viewed here, necessarily, as self-conscious moves by a labour body under pressure from a variety of current factors. Between 1911 and 1914, the Colonial Office, London Wall and a number of BSACo. officials on the local scene in South Central Africa were becoming more concerned about the rising mortality rate amongst trans-Zambesian labourers engaged on Southern Rhodesian mines. Indeed, an embargo on labour supply was even placed on a number of these mining properties by the Northern Rhodesian government, as a lever by means of which the improvement of labour conditions on the properties in question could be effected.<sup>291</sup>

Another influential factor operative, at this time, was the growing lukewarm attitude amongst BSACo. officials in Northern Rhodesia as well as within the Colonial Office towards Katangan colonist employers, especially Robert Williams and Company. This company had, as a matter of fact, applied to the Northern Rhodesian authorities, in early 1913, to recruit labour from the Mweru and Luapula districts and also the Luena division of the Awemba district, in former North-Eastern Rhodesia, to the tune of between 2,000, and 4,000 recruits per annum. As matters turned out, the reactions of the Administration of Northern Rhodesia were not as hostile as of old, to such uninvited foreign interference in matters of economic importance like labour in the Company possessions.

In fact, in the application of Robert Williams and Company for labour to

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<sup>290</sup> C. O. 417/514: H. W. Kempster: to Secretary, Administrator's Dept. ; August 14, 1912.

<sup>291</sup> Vide: *Infra*: pp.672-4



meet the requirements of their properties at The Star of the Congo mine and the Lubumbashi Smelting plant, Northern Rhodesian officials foresaw a number of advantages. For the colonist farmers of Northern Rhodesia, the proposed extension of the existing properties of Union Miniere and the subsequent development whereby such mines as Kambove, Chitaru and a host of others would be brought to a producing stage, could only mean a vastly increased labour force and, together with it, increased consumption of grain and meat. In this way, the 10,000 bags of grain and the 1,440 head of cattle the Northern Rhodesian farmers sold annually to the Katanga by 1913 would naturally rise in numbers.

The railways were equally expected to benefit by these increased mining operations in the Katanga, bringing the amount of railage, via Beira, to an estimated total of about 30,000 tons of bar copper per annum, whilst the railway revenue derived, in the process, was expected to amount to about £115,000 a year. Even the Wankie Colliery, too, was expected to benefit from this arrangement whereby Northern Rhodesian labour, instead of Chinese one, would be supplied to the Katanga for increased mining operations. The 2,000 tons of coke, then being supplied to Katanga monthly in 1913, were expected to rise to about 10,000 once the expansion scheme, then proposed, was under way.<sup>292</sup>

From an economic point of view, therefore, the advantages of allowing Robert Williams and Company to recruit labour in Northern Rhodesia in 1913 were quite potent, if not obvious. The Magistrate of Ndola, John Moffat Thomson, who was sent to examine the labour conditions at the Katanga mines, on behalf of the Northern Rhodesia government, in June 1913, was, for example, totally in favour of labour recruitment for these mines.<sup>293</sup> Mindful of their special relationship with Southern Rhodesia over this issue of labour supply, the Administration of this territory, which had, by July 1913, already received a payment of £1,200 from Robert Williams and Company to meet medical and other recruitment expenses, justified their move to allow labour

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<sup>292</sup> C. O. 417/535: F. V. Worthinton, Acting Secretary, Administrator's Office, Livingstone, to BSACo. : June 14, 1913.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid: Report on Northern Rhodesian Natives at the Star of the Congo Mine and Lubumbashi Smelting Works by J. Moffat Thomson, Magistrate, Ndola: June 22, 1913.

recruitment for the Katanga mines, in a number of ways.

Firstly, it was rationalized that such recruitment would not be harmful to Southern Rhodesia's interests, since it would take place in those areas of former North-Eastern Rhodesia where labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia had been prohibited since January of that year. The move had been taken on account of the high mortality rate of Northern Rhodesian labourers on the Southern Rhodesian mines. From the point of view of the African labourer, the new arrangements were justified in terms of the geographical proximity of the districts in the Luapula Valley and on the Tanganyika plateau to the Katanga as well as the cultural links of the migrant labourers of the region to their kinsmen on the Belgian side of the border, which would, consequently, ease characteristic linguistic problems for these labour migrants.<sup>294</sup>

But perhaps the most interesting line of argument, pursued by the government of Northern Rhodesia to justify this apparent diversification of its relations with its sister state, in the South, is the manner in which Wallace, the Administrator, used the purported adverse socio-economic effects of labour migration to Southern Rhodesia as a cause for his government's concern, especially with regard to the long distances and terms of service which labour migration to Southern Rhodesia involved. This view had, in fact, long been advocated by missionaries, traders and farmers of the trans-Zambesian territories, in their bid to stop labour emigration to the South, but the various administrators had over and again summarily dismissed it.<sup>295</sup> In 1913, however, the government of Northern Rhodesia, in a fascinating volte-face, resorted to this age-old and threadbare conception of the inexorable consequences, on the African societies, of labour migration to distant centres of employment.

This quasi-moralistic conception on labour migration had, of course, never been taken seriously by its various proponents, who were, obviously, more interested in attacking the trend of BSACo. economic policies and the preservation of the low wage tariffs in the trans-Zambesian territories than in the African communities per se. In like manner, the government of Northern Rhodesia adopted these theories, on the detrimental consequences of labour

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<sup>294</sup> Ibid: Wallace, Livingstone, to BSACo.: August 16, 1913.

<sup>295</sup> Vide: C. O. 417/401: Sharpe to Codrington: June 7, 1904.

migration to Southern Rhodesia, only for the sake of its alternative arrangement to the Katanga. It was, therefore, in this respect, a defensive mechanism, which was as devious as it was supercilious and yet one which Wallace stuck to, when, in August 1913, he justified the grounds on which he had allowed Robert Williams and Company to recruit labour in the following manner:

During my journey through the Northern districts it has been pointed out to me everywhere that the long absence in Southern Rhodesia of a large number of able-bodied men is having the effect of reducing considerably the amount of native cultivation, and the scarcity of food last year in many places is to be accounted for almost entirely by this fact. There was no shortage of rain in North-Eastern Rhodesia but the price of corn went up three-fold, and in some places was unprocurable... It has also been impressed upon me that, owing to the abolition of reserved pay in Southern Rhodesia, natives come back after their long absence as poor as they went down, except for an amount of shoddy European clothing, and that they are no better able than before to pay their taxes.... For this Administration (Northern Rhodesia) therefore it would... be better that natives living North of the Railway should find work nearer than Southern Rhodesia.<sup>296</sup>

The overall significance of this shift in policy on trans-Zambesian labour migration, which the government of Northern Rhodesia hurriedly effected without even prior approval from the Imperial authorities,<sup>297</sup> was neither, necessarily, the beginning of divergent policies between the two Company territories nor a result of Robert Williams' threat on dire consequences to the Rhodesia railways in the event of labour recruitment being denied his company.<sup>298</sup> It was the manner in which the BSA Co. officials in Northern Rhodesia punctured the monopoly of the RNLB over labour recruitment in that territory, by allowing a rival group of colonist employers to operate in the same region.

It cannot be denied, however, that Robert Williams and Company had always proved a thorn in the flesh to the Bureau, as far as its activities were concerned in Northern Rhodesia. But up to 1913, the activities of these Katangan colonist employers were either clandestine or minimal, whereas, by this date, these employers became a cognisable alternative labour agency, in the eyes of potential African labour migrants. For both the Bureau and the

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<sup>296</sup>C.O. 417/535: Wallace to BSA Co.: August 16, 1913.

<sup>297</sup>Ibid: Minute by R. V. Vernon to Lambert: September 29, 1913.

<sup>298</sup>Ibid: R. Williams to Sir Edward Grey: October 24, 1913.

African labourer, the official entry of Robert Williams and Company in the labour recruiting field was destined to have a profound impact and adverse results. To the Bureau, the granting of permission to Robert Williams and Company to recruit labour in Northern Rhodesia by the authorities there seriously undermined its confidence and may have, certainly, portended the beginning of its subsequent decline. The potential African labour migrants, who were thus exposed to competitive recruitment, deeply felt the pinches of intensified activities, with the result that recruiting agents and their touts tended thereafter to overreach themselves.

In view of the preceding arguments, it could thus be said that trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia, prior to the advent of World War I, was, therefore, marked by competitive and intensive strands, which bore heavily on those African communities across the Zambesia involved in these activities. One feature of these competitive and intensive activities was, of course, the manner in which the local portage industry was thwarted, in every way, by the more conducive employment conditions proffered to prospective labour migrants by the recruiting organisations operating in Northern Rhodesia. Between 1913 and 1914, administrative officials had to resort to coercion to procure adequate numbers of carriers to meet their demands. In the Kalomo division of the Batoka district, for instance, a three-cornered competition for labour supply had emerged, by 1913, in form of the Bureau; the local colonist farmers, whose numbers had risen from only 11 in 1908 to 38 in 1913 due to the rate of economic development induced by railway construction; and the Administration, which required carriers for public service, to make up for the deficiencies of the transportation system.

Because of the relatively favourable conditions of employment in Southern Rhodesia, in terms of wages, rations and accommodation, the Bureau, which was actively involved in recruiting labour for the Southern Rhodesia labour market in the Batoka district, was said to be collecting 'many hundreds of the most physically fit natives of the District ~~(who)~~ ~~(were)~~ sent away to work ~~(on Southern Rhodesian mines)~~ every year.' For the administrative officials and their demand for carriers, without the labour conditions which could compare favourably with those promised by the Bureau, their task was, therefore, a difficult one. R. I. Hughes, the Assistant Magistrate of the Kalomo division

of the Batoka district confessed in February, 1914:

Natives who have been working in S. Rhodesia no doubt object to what they consider the low rate of pay and in consequence the natives who are available for this kind of work -(as carriers)- are generally middle aged men who are past work. (sic.)<sup>299</sup>

To rectify this state of affairs mentioned above and procure the carriers required for both government and private interests, district officials, unable to withstand Bureau competition, naturally, resorted to forced labour to achieve their designs. Hughes once more confessed on the provenance of forced labour in the Batoka district, by the time of Worthington's resignation as Secretary for Native affairs, towards the end of 1913:

I venture to say that of all the many hundreds of carriers collected each year in the Batoka district not one is a genuine volunteer. To send out Messengers -(by)- themselves to collect carriers as was done by the late SNA -(Secretary for Native Affairs)-..., or to send them -(messengers)- as done by me, with a message to an Induna or Headman to obtain them -(carriers)- and when brought in to call them volunteers, is a mere travesty of the truth,...<sup>300</sup>

In the Kalomo division of the Batoka district, it might, therefore, be said that the operations of the RNLB, by 1913/1914, were of such a nature that they forced the administrative officials against the wall, with the result that these functionaries could only resort to administrative coercion, to procure recruits for tenga-tenga, which, it was freely admitted, had 'always been hateful to the Batoka natives....' In the other districts of Northern Rhodesia, the Bureau was not so successful and, therefore, resorted, in turn, to those desperate measures, which its vanquished counterparts, the district officials, had come to rely on to get carriers. The cases of Bureau agents in the Kasempa and Bivolale districts in 1914 are here very good illustrations on some of these desperate measures, deployed by this organisation.

When, in November 1909, the rate of taxation was raised from 5/- to 10/- per head in the Kasempa district, in order to effect, by means of fiscal pressure, the desired labour turn-out among the Kaonde people of the region and, in this way, meet the short-fall in labour recruitment sustained by the

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<sup>299</sup> C. O. 417/539: R. I. Hughes, Assistant Magistrate, Kalomo, to Goode: Livingstone: Confidential; February 14, 1914.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

Bureau due to the outbreak of sleeping sickness in other parts of the trans-Zambesian territory, the move was welcomed with enthusiasm in official circles. But these tax requirements appear to have failed to take into consideration the economic and geographical disadvantages of the Kaonde, living, as they did, in an area about 200 miles west of the railway line, in what Imperial officials concluded was 'the remotest and most uncivilised district' in the territory.<sup>301</sup> Indeed, when the Administration in Livingstone raised the tax for the Kasempa district it, in fact, grossly underplayed the drawbacks of the area, arguing that the Kaonde were in a better position to pay an increased tax than the Lozi; hence the permission granted to the Bureau to commence recruiting activities there.<sup>302</sup>

By 1911, when the Bureau agent, Mr. Ohlund of Swedish extraction, was killed by the Kaonde in this district, these economic and geographical factors of the district as well as the high-handed methods of this particular agent were once more played down. Instead, the causes of the Kasempa upheavals were, at the time, attributed by the BSACo. Administration of the territory to vengeful designs, on the part of the Kaonde, for the deaths of their relatives on the mines of Southern Rhodesia, whither they had been sent through the agency of the Bureau. The similarity of the Kasempa district proceedings in 1911 with those in the Mashukulumbwe country in the Batoka district in 1907, where the same causes were, initially, ascribed as responsible for the upheaval, till the actual state of affairs was revealed by an independent source,<sup>303</sup> is here quite striking.

Yet the Administration of Northern Rhodesia itself could hardly accept this analysis on these events in Kasemba district, even when the Imperial authorities had ordered the suspension of Bureau activities in the Kasempa district, on the grounds that the cause of the Kaonde discontent with the methods of this body was that they were 'less ripe for exploitation by the Labour Bureau.'<sup>304</sup> Wallace could only agree to the suspension of labour recruiting activities in this district because of the complications created by the fact that the Kaonde and the Lunda were the only African national groups that were

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<sup>301</sup> C. O. 417/500: Burns-Begg to Wallace: September 21, 1911.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid: Wallace to Burns-Begg: November 25, 1911.

<sup>303</sup> Vide: Supra: p.470

<sup>304</sup> Ibid: Burns-Begg to Wallace: September 21, 1911.

still armed in South Central Africa. <sup>305</sup>

Between 1913 and 1914, when recruiting activities in the Kasempa district were still suspended and yet the Bureau and an assorted group of competing interests were coming under increasing pressure for more labour supply, Labour Agents adopted a new set of techniques to recruit in this forbidden region. One method, popularly employed by these agents, was that whereby the agents themselves sent their African touts into the field for recruiting purposes, whilst they, on their part, adopted an attitude of "mastery inactivity" at the villages. Describing this method of employing capitaos for recruiting purposes, which he regarded as a very dangerous one, W. Hazell, the District Commissioner of Kasempa stated, in February 1914, that:

... these natives -(the capitaos)- generally wear hats and European clothing, and are above the average in intelligent rascality. Being vested with a little of the Whiteman's authority, they recruit principally by means of fictitious promises of high wages, threats etc, the most effective threat being that non-compliance will meet with the displeasure of the Government Authorities on the grounds that their master -(had)- paid £100 to the Government for the privilege of recruiting:...

Other devices employed by these labour agents, who flouted the restrictions in the Kasempa district and recruited labour without due authority, included 'the practice of leaving a piece of calico at the hut of an absent native', sending touts later for engaging the victims concerned. For those recruits who appeared reluctant to engage for work, their names were taken down by the agent threatening dire consequences in return, which apparently effected the desired end. For all this, the Northern Rhodesian Administration, however, blamed the 'low class Europeans... known as "Dagos"' and, at the same time, confessed its inability to deal with this seamy side of labour recruitment, noticed in the Kasempa district in 1913 and 1914. Thus Hazell admitted that in terms of labour recruitment, Northern Rhodesia had reached:

... the stage which every young native country has to pass through where there are mines and other forms of European industry requiring labour and where the demand exceeds the supply and where the low class whiteman is prepared to exploit the native for all he is worth. <sup>307</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> C. O. 417/519: Wallace to Lord Gladstone: March 30, 1912.

<sup>306</sup> C. O. 417/539: W. Hazell, D/C, Kasempa, to Secretary for Native Affairs: Livingstone: February 23, 1914.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

These devious tactics, employed by various labour agents to poach labour supply from the restricted Kasempa district between 1913 and 1914, may be excusable, because of the impecunious agents of small-scale mining properties like the Kansanshi Copper mine, in the neighbouring Kafue district. Yet similar techniques were also adopted by Bureau agents in the Balovale district to raise labour for Southern Rhodesia. Here an interesting alliance developed, for instance, between the Bureau officials and the Lozi aristocracy over the exploitation of labour from the Luvale: the Lunda and other Mawiko ethnic groups of the district. The Lozi aristocrats may have, in this instance, seen their activities in promoting labour recruitment for the Southern Rhodesia market, purely, in terms of a residual exercise of their age-old traditional dominance over the Mawiko peoples, whilst Bureau agents were only too glad to make the most out of this alliance. In any case, the proceedings in the Balovale district between 1912 and 1914 can best be regarded as indicative of the effects of those pressures, for labour supply, the Bureau faced at the time as well as the last flings of a doomed labour body.

In the events which took place in the Barotse district between 1912 and 1914, in connection with the labour recruiting activities of the Bureau, one feature is evident. The Bureau, whose avowed function, in the first place, was to squeeze out the unscrupulous labour agents, had apparently not succeeded in attaining this objective. What it had actually done was that it had itself incorporated some of these dubious characters, who then masqueraded as Bureau agents and, under the umbrella of this body, perpetrated those aspects of labour recruitment which one would have expected to find in the pre-1903 era of the private labour agent.

In the Balovale case, the Bureau agent, P. E. Webb, known as Mutenguna by the African peoples amongst whom he worked, revived a situation which simulated, in every respect, those characteristics of labour recruitment previously ascribed to the private labour agent. But for this success in creating a veritably chaotic situation, two important pre-conditions were necessary in the Balovale district; namely the attitude of the district officials and the co-operation of the Lozi aristocracy, both of which were not by any means lacking. D. E. C. Stirke, the Native Commissioner of the Balovale sub-district during the period of Webb's recruiting ventures, was quite forthright, in his views on how to deal with the Lunda and Nkonya ethnic groups of the area, where such

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Bureau operations were carried out and whom Stirke regarded as, essentially, 'wild and nervous' and, therefore, meriting, in every way, 'harsh measures' in dealing with them.<sup>308</sup>

Such views on the Lunda and Nkonya peoples, probably, may have been shared by the Lozi aristocracy, as it was indicated that this country between the Lukulu and Kabompo rivers, was the place 'where all malcontents -(in Barotseland)- for years past -(had)- been placed by the Khotla -(Lewanika's court)-' and that, when the Lozi ruler was intimated on the proceedings in the area in 1912 and 1913, 'he only laughed and said he would quite believe it...'<sup>309</sup>

Moreover, the actions of Stirke, the administrative officer of the district, in promoting the Bureau agent's recruiting efforts in the area were, apparently, justified on the grounds of an ambiguous policy document, issued in May 1912 by Worthington, the Secretary for Native Affairs, adjoining, as it did, the district officers that 'all -(tax)- defaulters be permitted to proceed to S. Rhodesia (sic)' and, also, that any taxes that were due 'may be accepted on the return of the natives from S. Rhodesia (sic).'<sup>310</sup> In short, the Worthington circular was, virtually, a carte blanche authorisation, to the district officials, for systematic regimentation of tax-paying males into the ranks of Bureau recruits and, from this point of view, provided an ethical justification to activities of individual officers like Storke, who backed the Bureau's activities to the hilt.

Once the actual recruiting for the Bureau was under way in the Lunda and Nkonya area of the Balovale district, the methods employed by this triumvirate of interests, involving as it did Bureau agents, administrative officials and Lozi traditional leadership, were, essentially, those which most districts in the BSACo. territories feared; that is, the use of messengers, police and Bureau touts, as couriers of recruits from the distant parts of the Balovale sub-district. The activities of Webb's touts are well portrayed in the evidence of their victims, given during the course of an official enquiry, undertaken towards the end of 1913. One Lunda headman, for instance, recalled:

I remember last year -(1912)- the Bureau runners Siampoko, Kakeke and Sepatela coming to my village. They said -(to witness)- 'Get up and go with us. If you forbid your young people to go Mut-enguna (Mr Webb) will put you in chains.' They had already

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid: D. E. C. Stirke, N/C, Nalolo sub-division, Barotse District, to Acting

gathered the young men together when I arrived saying they were going to take them. They said they were taking them to the Sipalo -(Bureau)-. They told them they would be paid very much money. They took three young men from my village. They are still away -(in Southern Rhodesia)-. They did not wish to go but went because the runners said I should be put in gaol if they did not go.<sup>311</sup>

The Lunda and Nkonya recruits, who were recruited in this manner for Southern Rhodesia, were convinced that Webb, the Bureau agent, was, of course, a member of their government. Because of the fear of these people, regarding the dreadful power and arbitrary force which the BSACo. government implied, these Nkonya and Lunda recruits from the Balovale district concluded that they were in no position to question the authority of Webb and his touts. Already these Bureau touts were provided with what the Bureau management itself called 'a semi-uniform'<sup>312</sup> and were going about demanding for treatment with deference, as they were "'Maswalala" i. e. Messengers the same name by which we -(the Lunda)- know Government Messengers and Police.'<sup>313</sup> With this high regard and fear in their dealings with the Bureau touts, the views of the Nkonya and the Lunda are, therefore, quite understandable on why they treated the Bureau boss, himself in the Balovale district with awe and respect. For these reasons, these people had concluded:

We thought he -(Siampoko, the chief of touts)- was a Government native because he came from Mr Webb. We thought Mr Webb was a Government official. He -(Siampoko)- did not say so but we always understood so. We all thought he had been sent by the Government to collect the people to take them to Bulawayo. Siampoko told us we should get £1 a month for ploughing -(farm<sup>314</sup> work)-. I had previously been to Bulawayo on my own account.

The extent to which these people in the Balovale district had resigned themselves to the dicta of BSACo. officials, that Webb very evidently ex-

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Resident Magistrate, Mongu: January 3, 1914.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid: C. Mckinnon, Acting Administrator, Livingstone, to Lord Gladstone: February 24, 1914.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid: Circular to all Magistrates: Re: 'Defaulters': by F. V. Worthington, Secretary for Native Affairs: May 12, 1912.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid: Statement of Headman Kambiya, before R. H. Palmer. J. P., N/C Balovale District: November 11, 1913.

<sup>312</sup> C. O. 417/540: T. N. Mickle, RNLB Manager for N. Rhodesia to Managing Director, Bulawayo: July, 30, 1913.

<sup>313</sup> C. O. 417/539: Statement of Headman Kawang, before Palmer, JP, N/C Balovale District: November 8, 1913.

ploited to his advantage, is also shown by the fact that even those migrant labourers, who had gone independently to Southern Rhodesia before and had no cause to go back through the Bureau, were here press-ganged into its ranks because of fear, as one witness indicated:

When we came to Mr Webb we did not tell him we did not wish to go because we were afraid. We had gone to work in Bula-wayo other years of our accord. We did not wish to go last year (1912). When we went before we went alone and did not go to the Bureau.<sup>315</sup>

For these Lunda and Nkonya people, who had been subject to Lozi control and were, even under the BSA Co. Administration, ruled through the medium of a hierarchy of Lozi aristocrats, whose duty it was, as messengers and Indunas, to facilitate the implementation of government edicts and instructions,<sup>316</sup> the situation in their country was complicated by what they regarded as a Lozi conspiracy in allowing the Bureau to exploit Lunda and Nkonya labour, in the manner it did, in 1912 and 1913. Of course, the Lozi aristocracy was often consulted in matters of labour recruitment among the Lozi, Mawiko and the allied and subject ethnic groups of Barotseland. In the Nalolo division of the Barotse district, for instance, the Bureau agent in the area, J. Soane Cambell, was reported to be carrying out his recruiting campaign, in mid-1913, with the blessings of Lewanika's sister, Mokwae Nakatoka, the political supremo of the district.<sup>317</sup> By virtue of its privileged status, the Lozi aristocracy, therefore, developed vested interests in labour recruitment for the labour markets in the South; a movement from which this superordinate social stratum came to derive so much pecuniary benefits that, even in more recent times, it resisted attempts to abolish the arrangement.<sup>318</sup> Moreover, the very fact that labour recruitment for mine and farmwork was, until quite lately, regarded as socially degrading to the proper Lozi and was, therefore, a preserve of the non-Lozi populace of Barotse-land,<sup>319</sup> may have encouraged this ruling class to adopt a nonchalant attitude

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid: Statement of Liala before Palmer, JP: November 18, 1913.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid: Statement of Sikelata before Palmer, JP: November 18, 1913.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid: Stirke, N/C Nalolo Sub-District, to Acting Resident Magistrate, Mongu: January 3, 1914.

<sup>317</sup> C. O. 417/540: Micklem, Libonda (Nalolo) to Murray: Byo: August 14, 1913.

<sup>318</sup> On how the Lozi aristocracy conflicted with the new government of Zambia over the abolition of labour migration to South Africa between 1964 and 1966, Vide: Caplan: op. cit. pp. 206-7, 214.

towards the sufferings of the Nkonya and the Lunda under the Bureau and BSACo. officials in the Balovale district between 1912 and 1914. This, at least, was the point of view, from which some of the Bureau victims, inevitably, interpreted their plight.

Thus a Lozi government messenger, who had witnessed the harassment of the Lunda residents in his home area of the Balovale district, paints the following picture:

I was in the veldt another day and .. was called from a distance by two of Mr Webb's runners.... They shouted 'Come here you. Come here at once.' I went and asked what they meant by calling me thus. They said 'Don't you know we are police come to take the people?' I replied 'Those you can take you may take but don't try to take me. I know you are no police.' They replied 'You say thus because you are a Murose -(Lozi)-. It is the Malunda we -(the Bureau)- have been given and if you had been Malunda we would have taken you'. Another day many Malunda including women ran to our -(Lozi)- village for refuge saying they were being persecuted by Mr Webb's runners. These people all belong to the Malunda chief Shima. They said they -(would)- stay with us -(Lozi)- as the runners left us alone. They said Lewanika -(had)- given -(them)- up to be chased -(about)- by these people -(Bureau runners)-. We -(Lozi)- replied: 'It is not Lewanika it is the white people'. I had heard that Mr Webb's runners were catching the Malunda and leaving all the other tribes.... -(It)- was common talk in all the villages.<sup>320</sup>

For any Nkonya and Lunda recruits, who may have doubted the complicity of the Lozi ruling class in the unfortunate proceedings thus unleashed against them by the Bureau, the frequent assertions, by Webb's runners, that they had the support of Lewanika because 'Lewanika is a person of the Government... and we -(the Bureau)- are of the Government... too,<sup>321</sup> may have confirmed their worst fears. In addition, the Lunda and Nkonya people may also have been evidently discouraged by what they may have rightly or wrongly detected as the indifference of the Lozi aristocracy to their plight, in the sense that when their chiefs and headmen reported the Bureau touts to Lewanika's Ngambella (chief Councillor), they were only told to 'better leave the matter alone for the present.'<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Vide: Armor: 'Migrant Labour in the Kalabo District of Barotseland': loc. cit.  
<sup>320</sup> C. O. 417/539: Statement of Muhongo before Palmer, JP: November 11, 1913.  
<sup>321</sup> Ibid: Statement of Headman Kawang.  
<sup>322</sup> Ibid: Statement of Induna Liatitima before H. G. Willis, JP to Assistant Resident Magistrate: Balovale District: November 28, 1913.

The culminating point in the Balovale district events of 1912-1914 was, however, the manner in which the then Native Commissioner of this particular division, where the Nkonya and the Lunda lived, *Stärke*, placed his police and messengers at the disposal of Webb and thus aided the latter's designs in recruiting labour for Southern Rhodesia. The danger in utilising the African police and messengers for labour recruitment lay, not so much in the inordinate authority these functionaries wielded within the African subject societies, but in the fact that they were mostly alien in the region, consisting, as they did, of Bemba, Angoni and Chikunda recruits from North-Eastern Rhodesia.<sup>323</sup> These aliens were brought into the police service in Barotseland, primarily, because of the cardinal assumption in colonial administrative circles that, on account of the social and cultural distance between these functionaries and local peoples, the degree of fraternization, across the frontiers, would consequently be minimal and, therefore, the risk of the African police force throwing its lot with these peoples, in the event of an uprising, was also expected to be less.

Of course, this policy of relying on functionaries from distant ethnic groupings, which the BSACo. officials had thus adopted in North-Western Rhodesia, with regard to the security of both white colonists and officials, had also been applied in Southern Rhodesia, when similar ethnic groups as well as Zulus and Sothos were sought for to serve in the police force and the Native Department.<sup>324</sup> In the Balovale district of Barotseland in 1912/13, it is obvious that the Nkonya and Lunda societies were falling victims to the general defence strategy of the BSACo., although no military conditions existed which then warranted the implementation of the particular strategy. The situation was merely one where labour mobilisation was the major concern amongst the officials.

The involvement of the African police and messengers, on *Stärke's* instructions, in the labour recruitment activities of the Bureau in the Balovale district, must, of course, be seen in the light of the general proclivities of these functionaries to overreach themselves in their dealings with the African

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<sup>323</sup> Report of the Administrator of North-Western Rhodesia (Corumdon) for the year ended December 1906: in BSACo. Director's Report and Accounts: March 31st, 1907: p. 53.

<sup>324</sup> Vide Supra: pp. 91-6; 109-15.

societies. In other parts of the world like India, where minor functionaries, like the Arkatia and the Kangani, were used in the field for the recruitment of 'coolie' labourers for exportation to the far away sugar plantations of the West Indies, Natal, Mauritius and Fiji, both in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the tactics used by these functionaries were more subtle and their objectives largely pecuniary. They applied deception, cajolery, subtle forms of coercion, like money advances and psychological dominance as well as diplomacy and a few kidnappings, when other means failed. All this was done by the Indian labour tout with the aim of either enhancing his economic gains or in a bid to seek promotion to the rank of a recruiter.<sup>325</sup>

On the African scene, as depicted by the case of the Balovale district in 1912/13, the main preoccupations of the touts and the functionaries of the Native Department, once set free to recruit in the field, as Native Commissioner Stirke did here to help Webb, centred on sensual satisfaction. Thus whilst these police, messengers and touts were often given food, meal and fowls,<sup>326</sup> or even gifts of animal skins,<sup>327</sup> by virtue of their positions as 'Government people', they, however, did not forget to satisfy their sexual desires, by expropriating the wives of those able-bodied men whom they forcibly enlisted either as carriers for their Native Commissioner or recruits for Webb's Bureau requirements. A recruit, whose pregnant wife had fallen victim to these functionaries' unsolicited amorous escapades, accordingly, informed the enquiry in the Balovale district, in November 1913, that:

Last year when the Bureau people came, Mr Stirke -(the Native Commissioner)- sent messengers and police to seize people. They came to my village and wanted to arrest me. I showed them my (fish) tax receipt (1911). There were three messengers and four police.... I went with these... police and... messengers... I left my wife in her hut. When I returned my wife complained that those policemen had come to her hut and had had connection with her.... I did not think it was any good to complain to Mr Stirke as we should not have known the people -(concerned)- as it all happened at night. My wife was with child -(pregnant)- when this happened and she was ill at the time.... Three days later I went to work for the Bureau. I went to Livingstone.... I was away when my child

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<sup>325</sup> Tinker: *op. cit.*, pp. 122-30, 133-4.

<sup>326</sup> C. O. 417/539: Statements of Nyengunga and Kafoya (women) before Palmer, JP: November 8, 1913.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid: Statement of Headman Mbimbi, The BSACo. used pictorial symbols for tax receipts in Barotseland, namely 'a hand' for 1910; 'fish' (1911) and 'a bird' (1912): Vide: C. M. N. White: A Preliminary Survey of Luvale Rural Economy: Manchester University Press: Manchester: 1959: p 5.

was born (dying shortly on account of the mother's illness).<sup>328</sup>

Other prominent malpractices committed by these messengers and touts, among the Nkonya and the Lunda of the Balovale district, were, equally, profound, in the light of their repercussions on the African societies concerned. The standard practice of the messengers and touts attached to the Native Department everywhere, victimising those African peoples they dealt with,<sup>329</sup> was unleashed in the Balovale district, where women were not only captured as hostages, but were also flogged for, allegedly, hiding away their husbands and sons,<sup>330</sup> whilst those able-bodied men who happened to be caught up in these touts' drag-net were forwarded to the Native Commissioner's office, tied up with ropes around their necks and subsequently chained for fear of their escaping.<sup>331</sup>

Moreover, the myth that traditional leaders got a better deal, from these labour mobilisation activities, by co-operating with the authorities for fringe benefits, during the early period of colonial rule in South Central Africa,<sup>332</sup> does not look tenable in this particular case. Indeed, most of the chiefs and headmen were not only chained or threatened with punitive measures of one form or another, but those, who were considered capable of working, were also forwarded to the Southern labour markets through the Bureau.<sup>333</sup> No regard of any kind was reserved even for those who had met their tax obligations, as they too were sent down by the Bureau.<sup>334</sup>

The global nature of Stirke and Webb's recruiting activities in the Balovale district in 1912/13 had serious results. In the eyes of their superiors, activities of this character seriously harmed the preconditions of stable administration and were, therefore, counter-productive in terms of the maintenance of order amongst the subject communities of a colonial setting. Indeed, the hostility and suspicious attitude, wrought by the Bureau's labour recruiting activities amongst the local societies, were effectually demonstrated in mid-1913, when Bureau officials, Micklem, the Manager for Northern

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<sup>328</sup> C. O. 417/539: Statement of Kafulo before Willis, JP, Asst. Resident Magistrate: Balovale District: November 30, 1913.

<sup>329</sup> Vide: Supra: Chapter 2

<sup>330</sup> Ibid: Statements of Nyangunga and Kafoya.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid: Statements of Chilongo and Seliwa before Willis: November 29, 1913.

<sup>332</sup> Vide: Van Onselen: 'The Role of Collaborators in the Rhodesian Mining Industry 1900-1935': loc. cit.

<sup>333</sup> C. O. 417/539: Statements of Headman Kalenga and Headman Seliwa before Willis: November 29, 1913.

Rhodesia, and Bisset, the Inspector for Recruiting in Barotseland, called at the Native Commissioner's camp in the Balovale district. The consequences of this visit were quite striking as:

The Malunda and Malovale near the camp without exception... ran away together with other (ethnic groups) further north as the news reached them of the arrival of the Bureau representative.<sup>335</sup>

The general unrest consequently instigated by the Bureau operations in the Balovale district was of such dimensions that, by October 1913, the district was closed to labour recruiting and the Bureau agent, D. Salmon, who had succeeded Webb, was thus forced to leave the area for Livingstone.<sup>336</sup>

Although the Bureau, in this case, attempted to clear the air by declaring its innocence, in connection with the 1913 unrest in the Balovale district, and, at the same time too, tried to reorganise its machinery across the Zambesi, particularly in Barotseland, by bringing in fresh hands to take over from Webb and Micklem, who had left its service, and Bissett, the Inspector, who was, conveniently, allowed to take some leave,<sup>337</sup> the harm to the cause of trans-Zambesian labour migration had already been done. In fact, as the pre-war phase of trans-Zambesian labour migration into Southern Rhodesia came to an end, most district officials had become quite chary on the issue of Bureau operations in their respective areas.

The proceedings in the Balovale district, between 1912 and 1914, inadvertently affected the proverbial co-operation between the administrative authorities and the Bureau officials in the trans-Zambesian region over labour matters. The adamant attitude and unctuous innocence of the Bureau officials, with regard to the unrest in the Balovale district towards the end of 1913, were quite galling to the Northern Rhodesian Administration; more so that some of the Bureau officials, directly involved in the matter: like Bissett, the Inspector of Recruiting for Barotseland, refused even to be present at the official enquiry on this body's proceedings, in this particular district.<sup>338</sup> The rupture

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid: Statements of Headman Seliwa and Mwanuamo.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid: Palmer, N/C Balovale to Resident Magistrate, Mongu: January 3, 1914.

<sup>336</sup> C. O. 417/540: Extract from Barotse Circle Report for October 1913 by Bissett, Recruiting Inspector, Barotseland.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid: Murray, Managing Director, RNLB Bulawayo to Secretary for Native Affairs: Livingstone: April 22, 1914.

<sup>338</sup> C. O. 417/539: McKinnon to Burns-Begg, March 10, 1914.



in the relationship between the Bureau and the Administration of Northern Rhodesia occasioned by the Balovale district events was also in no way helped by the attitude of the Imperial authorities, who decided to sit on the fence, whilst the two former allies engaged in a mud-slinging exercise.<sup>339</sup>

Under these circumstances, it could be said that, by the beginning of 1914, the fate of the Bureau, as the agency for trans-Zambesian labour recruitment, was in the balance. A cleavage was becoming discernible within the administrative circles of Northern Rhodesia, in relation to official attitudes towards the Bureau and its activities. In the old territory of North-Western Rhodesia, where most cases of labour abuse and other malpractices by the Bureau had occurred between 1907 and 1914, the district officials were beginning to adopt a noticeably frigid attitude towards this body.

In the various divisions of the Batoka district, for instance, the officials were no longer enthusiastic over the phenomenon of labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia under the aegis of the Bureau, at the beginning of 1914, for a variety of reasons. In the Magoye division, in particular, the cause for concern and, therefore, one, which, incidentally, influenced some change in official policy, was, mainly, the system of employing runners by the Bureau to raise labour supply, which was here considered quite objectionable 'as runners -(could)- exceed their instructions and forcibly recruit labour since their remuneration entirely -(depended)- upon the results of their recruiting,' so it was argued.<sup>340</sup>

The authorities in the Gwembe and Kalomo sub-districts were, on the other hand, not encouraged by what they viewed as the reckless disregard, by the Bureau, of the welfare of the recruits, which made the task of tracing deceased individuals on the Southern Rhodesian mines a difficult one.<sup>341</sup> In the Kalomo division, in particular, this problem was even further complicated by the fact that the Toka recruits from that area were often classified by the Bureau as Tonga; hence the confusion with residents of the Magoye and Gwembe divisions.

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid: Burns-Begg to Lord Gladstone: March 17, 1914.

<sup>340</sup> C. O. 417/558: Extract from the Annual Report for Magoye Sub-District of Batoka District for the Year Ended March 31st, 1914 (by Mr M. Goslin, Native Commissioner).

<sup>341</sup> Ibid: Extracts from the Annual Report for the Kalomo Sub-District of Batoka for the Year Ended March 31st, 1914 (by Mr H. S. Thornicroft, Asst. Magistrate) and The Annual Report for the Guimbi Sub-District of

In the final analysis, the general consensus within the official circles, in the Batoka district, was that greater emphasis should be placed on independent labour migration rather than anything else. Whether this decision was more influenced by the general malpractices of the Bureau in recruiting labour throughout former North-Western Rhodesia than it was by the geographical position and proximity of this particular district to the Southern Rhodesian labour markets, is another story. All in all, such a decision greatly undermined the credibility of the Bureau, as a medium for trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia after 1914.

However, in the former territory of North-Eastern Rhodesia, not much damage appears to have been further inflicted on trans-Zambesian labour migration by early 1914, since the decision by the Administration to allow recognised competition against the Bureau in the field of labour recruitment the previous year. As a matter of fact, in areas like the East Luangwa district, where labour migration to Southern Rhodesia amongst the Angoni, Chewa, Nsenga and allied ethnic groups had a long-standing tradition, the movement was scarcely affected by the beginning of 1914 and the Bureau too held its sway.<sup>342</sup>

In the northern portion of this province, the position of the Bureau was not, at first, significantly improved by the course of events in that region. The rivalry of Robert Williams and Company over labour supply was still producing adverse consequences for the Bureau, notably in those districts adjacent to the Congo border. In the Luwingu division of the Mweru district, for instance, it was reported that:

The numbers ~~-(of recruits)-~~ engaged ~~-(for the Lubumbashi mine)-~~ show how popular it has been ~~-(since 1913)-~~. It has the advantage over Southern Rhodesia of being nearer and the shorter term (six months) and the deferred pay conditions are appreciated by the Native. All repatriates questioned report well on the work, food, treatment and pay.<sup>343</sup>

Yet in spite of what officials in the Bemba country, the Tanganyika plateau and the Luapula Valley regarded as the increasingly positive impres-

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<sup>342</sup> Batoka District for the Year Ended March 31st, 1914 (by Mr A. W. Griffin, Native Commissioner).

<sup>343</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Annual Report for the Fort Jameson Sub-District of the East Luangwa District for the Year Ended March 31st, 1914 (by Mr C. Marshall, Magistrate and D/C).

<sup>343</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Annual Report for Luwingu Sub-District of the Mweru District for the Year Ended March 31st, 1914 (by Mr E. B. Goodall: Native Commissioner).

sions and, therefore, the popularity, which the Katanga mines were gaining, much to the disadvantage of their rivals in Southern Rhodesia, labour migration to the markets below the Zambesi was still very much in progress and the Bureau had not yet become a spent-force by early 1914. Indeed, the viability of the Bureau, as an active labour recruiting agency in this northern portion of the former territory of Northern-Eastern Rhodesia, was, fortunately, revived by the trend of events in this part of Northern Rhodesia on the eve of World War I.

The increasing demand for carriers by the Anglo-Belgian Boundary Commission, which had been operating since 1911 but had only reached the Mweru and Tanganyika portions of the border in 1913, was evidently a blessing in disguise to the Bureau and the labour migration movement to Southern Rhodesia. The BSACo. officials of the area concerned, who were required to provide this Commission with carriers, could not help but observe the unpopularity associated with working for this Commission, hence these officials' difficulties in procuring the required numbers of carriers. In his analysis of the causes of this unpopularity, E. B. Goodall, the Native Commissioner of the Luwingu division of the Mweru district, for example, commented with melancholy:

... it is much to be regretted that the contract with the men sent -(to the Anglo-Belgian Commission)- does not seem to have been adhered to, nor were arrangements made for supplying them with food on their journey home adequate. This is the more unfortunate -(since)- it was represented to the men that they were being engaged for Administration work, to work under Government Officials.<sup>344</sup>

In the circumstances, the main beneficiaries here were not simply the Katanga mines, for which labour migrants from these districts were beginning to manifest overt preference, but the Bureau also reaped numerous advantages for the cause of trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia. Because of the desire by the people of these districts, bordering on the Anglo-Belgian boundary 'to escape the continual calls made on them locally', as it were, labour recruitment by the Bureau for Southern Rhodesia by early 1914 was said to have increased by 'more than four times the number that went South in -(the)- previous year -(1913)-', especially in the Mpika division of the Awemba district. In fact, the Native Commissioner of this particular sub-

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

district, Mr. G. Stokes, was so alarmed by this exodus to Southern Rhodesia, that he began to call for restrictive measures on the Bureau's activities, indicating that:

... the Bureau should be limited to recruit only a certain percentage of able-bodied males, from any one village, in any one year. We have need for the men ourselves, and the chiefs themselves grumble about it (labour migration). Apart from these reasons it must affect the food supply and the birth rate.<sup>345</sup>

Stoke's call for restrictions on labour migration was understandable, especially in that part of the country, where the system of agriculture, chitememe, required the presence of able-bodied men, during the dry season, to lop off branches of trees with axes for stacking and burning before the onset of the rainy season.<sup>346</sup> Actually the Bemba traditional rulers were also getting worried by this mounting rate of labour migration. For instance, one Chief 'Kepa', who had lost about 104 out of 354 of his men in the early months of 1914, was especially concerned about this movement. Already the people of this particular Bemba ruler were said to be showing a striking degree of indifference towards agriculture and food production in general, having, allegedly, got into 'a don't care state awaiting the return of mine men with money', as they did<sup>347</sup>

In summarizing the preceding events, covering the whole period between 1903 and 1914, it could confidently be said that the process of trans-Zambesian labour migration was a success and the involvement of the successive versions of the RNLB enabled the BSACo. officials across the Zambesi to effectively control and direct this movement to their own satisfaction as well as that of the Bureau officials and the major colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia. The Bureau per se, symbolized, in many respects, the co-operation between the political authorities and the private colonist employers, in the territories concerned, to promote a movement cleverly designed to place cheap labour at the disposal of capital where it required this commodity.

The growing tensions in the relationship between the BSACo. Administration and the Bureau officials in the trans-Zambesian region, particularly in

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Annual Report for Mpika Sub-District of the Awemba District for the Year Ended March 31st, 1914: (by Mr. G. Stokes: Native Commissioner).

<sup>346</sup> Vide: Kaunda: Zambia Shall be Free: p. 8.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Annual Report of the Mpika Sub-District,...

the closing stages of this phase, were mere pin-pricks brought into play by the errors of judgement on the part of individual Bureau officials, on one hand, as well as by the Northern Rhodesian government's desire to diversify its economic priorities, in order to make the most out of the regional economic system in which it operated, on the other. In the event, both these pin-pricks and the tentative efforts at economic diversification, in this case in order to meet the demands of the Katangan labour market, had minimal effects on the process of trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia, by the beginning of 1914. Instead, it took events of more fundamental character and international magnitude, like the World War I, to drastically affect the future of the Bureau, whose role in trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia had hitherto been taken for granted since 1903. The nature of those changes wrought by the World War I factor and the manner in which these affected trans-Zambesian labour migration to the South, constitute a very significant aspect of the history of African immigration into Southern Rhodesia between 1914 and 1923.

ii: Trans-Zambesian labour immigration during the World War I and after, 1914-1923: The peak and subsequent decline of a phenomenon.

The outbreak of the World War I introduced new elements in the history of African labour in the trans-Zambesian territories. The sudden demand for African manpower to reinforce British war effort against the Germans in Tanganyika could hardly by-pass Northern Rhodesia, located, as it was, on the borders of this German territory. The cumulative effects of these new requirements inexorably affected the course of labour migration, either independently or through the Bureau, to Southern Rhodesia. Of course, right from the outbreak of this war in mid-1914 to the end of 1915, the recruiting activities of the Bureau were, by no means, adversely affected by events beyond the Zambesi. If anything, the problem of this body was, more or less, one of a glut of trans-Zambesian labour supply rather than that of shortage. In fact, the incidence of surplus labour was so serious that the Bureau management in Southern Rhodesia was worried by the developments. George Upton, the new Managing Director of this labour organisation who had succeeded his former superior, George Wolfe Murray, then called abroad for military service, viewed this situation, by June 1915, as one likely to ruin the Bureau. With about 600 recruits in its Bulawayo compound, whom no colonist employer needed, the

the Bureau was faced with a new problem of maintaining these men at a great expense.<sup>348</sup>

As if these difficulties were not by themselves enough, the Bureau management found itself also compelled to plead, often unsuccessfully, with colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia, who were taking advantage of this labour surplus to either ill-treat Bureau labourers or systematically reduce their wages and, by these actions, consequently prejudicing the position of this body, in the eyes of trans-Zambesian labour migrants. These colonist employers on their part, faced with this unprecedented turn of events, reacted in various ways. Some of those, who were accused of brutalizing these apparently 'unwanted' labourers, argued, with evident indifference, as C.S. Marks of the Hartley district did, that the assaults on the labourers in question were only minimal and that the only offensive instruments used by his capitaos were merely "'sjamboks' of an extraordinarily useful kind", which these capitaos 'certainly applied... to the legs of certain natives to clear the road ...' but without any malevolent designs.<sup>349</sup> Those colonist employers, who had been prevailed upon, against their intentions, to absorb some of this excess labour, like the management of the Falcon mine in the Chilimanzi district, actually later reneged, alleging that these new additions to their labour force were likely to raise the mortality rate on their property, with the result that 'our (Falcon Mine) death rate (would be) criticized adversely, with the possibility of (our) being deprived of a large number of our working boys at short notice, ...',<sup>350</sup>

The excessive influx of trans-Zambesian labour into Southern Rhodesia, during the first two years after the outbreak of World War I, may not have been unconnected with the general African reactions to proceedings on the borders of both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In Nyasaland, for instance, the level of awareness amongst the African peoples was certainly high enough to enable them to move abreast with the trend of events, either inside their own

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<sup>348</sup> A 3/18/30/30: G. Upton, Managing Director, RNLB, to Secretary, Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, Bulawayo: June 14, 1915.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid: C. S. Marks, Hartley, to Taylor, C/N/C, Salisbury, December 23, 1915.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid: J. G. McDonal, Managing Director, The Gold Fields Rhodesian Development Co. Ltd., Bulawayo, to Upton: Salisbury, January 26, 1916.

territory or across the frontier in Tanganyika. Indeed, when, in September 1914, the government of that territory initiated a plan to recruit African askaris, John Chilembwe and other members of the contemporary African sub-elite had simultaneously launched a surreptitious movement to resist what they regarded as an unwarranted attempt to involve Africans in a purely 'white men's war'; hence the rising of 1915.<sup>351</sup> Moreover, even the Nyasaland labour recruits in the Bureau depot at Letombo, near Salisbury, were reported, in August 1916, to be following closely the movement of General Jan Smuts' army in the campaign.<sup>352</sup>

With this degree of awareness, it might be possible, therefore, that the reasons given by the Bureau management, for the abnormal influx of Nyasaland labour during the years 1914 and 1915, that these people were running away from their countries with the purpose of 'evading their obligations to their own Government during the war',<sup>353</sup> may well have been based on correct assumptions. In any case, the government of Nyasaland was sufficiently persuaded by the force of the Bureau management's conclusions and, accordingly, acted to arrest the situation. In the opinion of Sir George Smith, the governor of Nyasaland, this massive labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia had to be stopped, because:

... it ~~(was)~~ very essential for the successful prosecution of the campaign ~~(against German East Africa)~~ that the requisite labour should be forthcoming and that every endeavour be made to rectify any misconceptions which may have arisen in the native mind.<sup>354</sup>

The anxieties manifested by the government of Nyasaland over labour emigration as hindering official attempts to recruit manpower to meet various military requirements were also shared by authorities in Livingstone. Here, as early as February 1916, it was becoming apparent to the officials, that extensive mobilisation of African labour was necessary to meet the demands, prompted by the war situation on the Tanganyika/Northern Rhodesia frontier. According to the estimates of the territory's Secretary for Native Affairs,

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<sup>351</sup> Vide: Shepperson and Price: Independent African: Chapters V & VI.

<sup>352</sup> A 3/18/30/30: Upton to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator, Salisbury: August 4, 1916.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid: Report of the Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the RNLB, Salisbury, Extract from Rhodesia Herald: April 28, 1916.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid: Sir George Smith, Governor, Zomba, Sir Drummond Chaplin: Salisbury: June 7, 1916.

about 'one thousand labourers' were, for instance, wanted for the construction of the Broken Hill-Abercorn road, to facilitate communication with the war front, whilst, at the same time:

Many thousands of natives ~~(were)~~ required to carry supplies to the Forces operating on the Northern Border. As many natives again ~~(were)~~ necessary to transport food for the carriers.<sup>355</sup>

To effect all these needs, it was becoming increasingly necessary for the government of Northern Rhodesia, therefore, to restrain the activities of the Bureau, which had hitherto managed to maintain the tempo of its labour recruiting activities, by the beginning of 1916. The clash of interests between this labour organisation and the government of Northern Rhodesia was becoming quite obvious. In the Barotse district, for instance, by January and February 1916, the Acting Resident Magistrate at Mongu, who had received instructions to supply from his area 'between 1500 and 2000 carriers immediately', was at pains to avoid direct competition with the Bureau agent of the district over this issue. At Fort Jameson too, where several loads were said to be arriving in large numbers through the Feira and Tete overland routes for urgent transportation to Kasama, the Magistrate there was equally anxious over the outcome of Bureau labour recruiting operations on the prospects of raising the required quota of carriers for the purpose. In a nutshell, a situation had arisen in Northern Rhodesia, by the beginning of 1916, whose consequences were best described by the Managing Director of the Bureau, in the following language:

It seems to be feared that the pressure now being brought to bear by the Government ~~(of Northern Rhodesia)~~ may cause natives to enlist at Bureau agencies in order to escape unpopular employment as carriers, and thereby rendering doubly difficult the very important work of transporting supplies to the Northern Border. If this apprehension proves correct there is likelihood of the Bureau being asked to suspend recruiting operations until Government requirements are satisfied.<sup>356</sup>

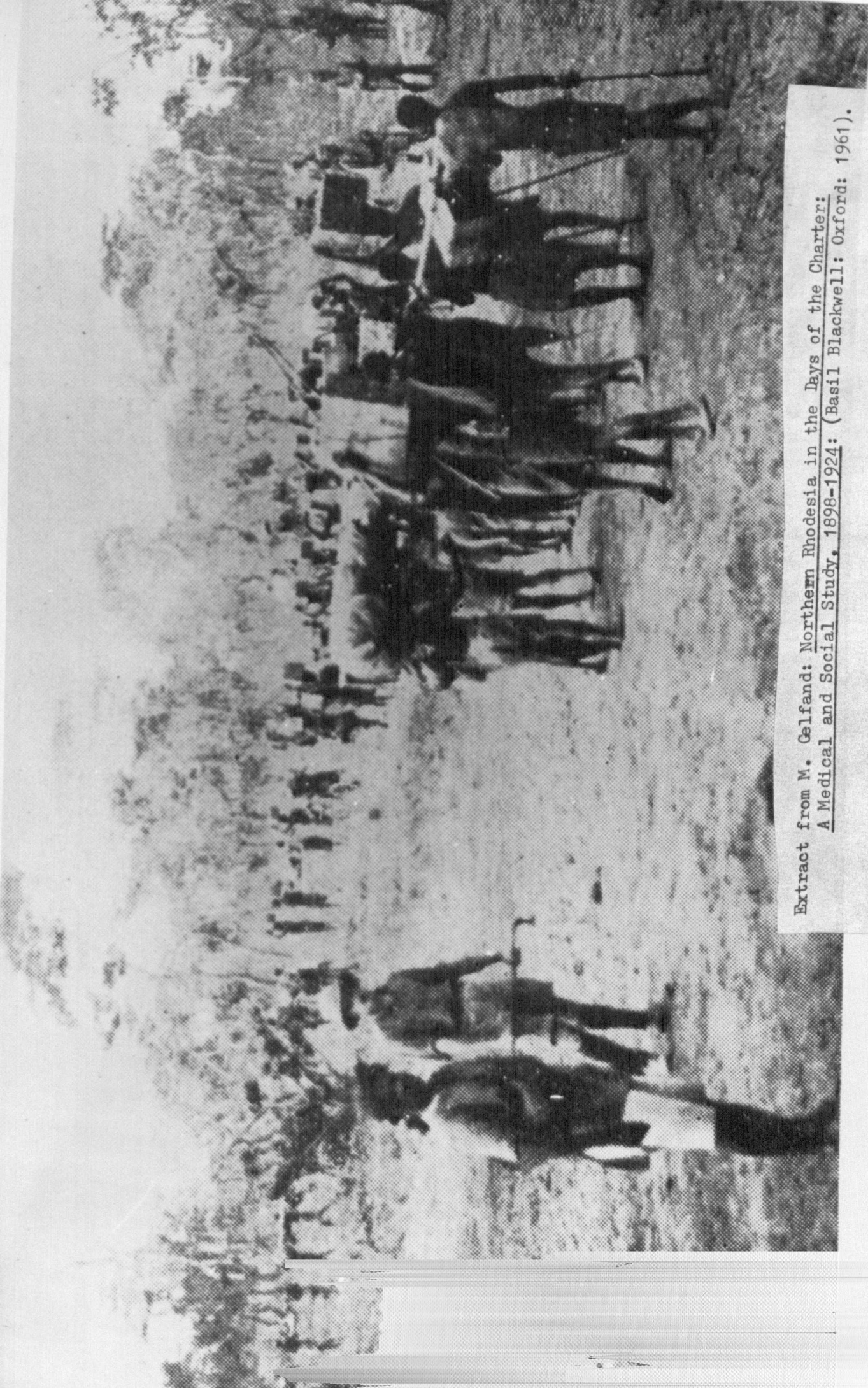
The fears of the Bureau management over the course of trans-Zambesian labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia, by 1916, were vindicated sooner or later. The colossal demand for manpower for services of one kind or another on the war front, between April 1916 and March 1917, was beginning to bear

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<sup>355</sup> N 3/22/11/1: Confidential Circular to Members of the Board of RNLB Management by Upton: Salisbury: February 11, 1916.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.





Extract from M. Gelfand: Northern Rhodesia in the Days of the Charter:  
A Medical and Social Study, 1898-1924: (Basil Blackwell: Oxford: 1961).

THE CARRIERS OR 'TENGA-TENGA BOYS' WITH THEIR LOADS EN ROUTE.

fruits. During this short period, for instance, about 162,982 men were engaged from all over Northern Rhodesia for services on the war front.<sup>357</sup>

The military offensive by the German general, Von Lettow Vorbeck, against the northern portion of Northern Rhodesia in 1916 was the primary cause of these vigorous activities on the part of the officials of that territory.

In those districts closer to the war zone, like the Abercorn division of the Tanganyika district where the officials were more desperate over the labour question, over 7,000 women were also mobilised for services in casual transport and for grinding grain to feed the askaris and the carriers.<sup>358</sup> Under these circumstances, labour migration to Southern Rhodesia was, of course, severely curtailed. Once priority was established over labour supply in Northern Rhodesia for General Edward Northey's East Africa campaign in March and April 1916,<sup>359</sup> the subsequent embargo on labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was inevitable.

For the Bureau, the most painful aspects of these new developments were the uncertainty and expense which they involved. Already by February 1917, this body had been called upon to make various readjustments in its infrastructure, notably in Barotseland, where the changed situation necessitated the removal of Bureau headquarters from Senanga to Mongu and the effecting of related modifications in the food and depot routes at a cost of between £400 and £500. Moreover, the prohibition on labour recruitment by the Bureau in the East Luangwa district, the traditional backbone of trans-Zambesian labour supply to Southern Rhodesia, which, together with independent migrant labour from Nyasaland, contributed to 'between 60% and 80%' of Bureau recruits for mine and farm work, patently crippled the cause of trans-Zambesian labour migration to the South, particularly so because the authorities of Northern Rhodesia did not then know for how long the embargo would last, not to mention also the obvious fact that 'the East Luangwa District and the Nyasa Border produced our -(the Bureau's)- cheapest and best recruits', as compared to more costly labour material from Barotseland.<sup>360</sup> Certainly, the prospects

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<sup>357</sup> Cross: The Watch Tower Movement in South Central Africa: pp. 192-3: (Vide: Plate XIV: 'The Carriers or "Tenga-Tenga" Boys With their Loads (1914)').

<sup>358</sup> Meehelo: Reaction to Colonialism: pp. 135-6.

<sup>359</sup> C. O. 417/586: H. J. Stanley, Res/Com., Salisbury to Wallace, Livingstone March 3, 1917.

<sup>360</sup> A 3/18/30/31: Managing Director's -(RNLB)- Weekly Report No. 127 for Period Ending: February 24, 1917.

for sound labour recruitment, as of old, did not seem encouraging, at all, to the Bureau at this juncture. Given, in this case too, the Nyasaland authorities' avowed intention to 'police their border to prevent natives crossing to Northern Rhodesia,'<sup>361</sup> consequent to the Chlembwe rising and the pressure imposed against the African communities there to procure carriers, the situation was, from the Bureau's point of view, quite bleak.

From all appearances, the situation created by the embargo on labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was not changing for the better at all, by the end of 1917. Although minimal concessions were granted to the Bureau for labour recruitment, by November of that year, in the Batoka district and the Petauke division of the East Luangwa district, these were too meagre to raise the optimism of this labour body. Bureau officials were not contended, in the least, with the areas of recruitment so allowed; the Batoka district, for instance, having been, so it was alleged, totally stripped of its able-bodied men, since 'very large numbers of war carriers' had been drawn from this region between 1916 and 1917. In the East Luangwa district, the Petauke division was, by no means, the favourite hound of the Bureau agents preferring, as they did, the Fort Jameson and Lundazi divisions, then popularly known as the Bureau's 'most prolific sources of ~~(labour)~~ supply and from whence the best and cheapest labourers ~~(were)~~ usually drawn'.<sup>362</sup>

Because of these defects, indicated above, in those particular areas where the authorities of Northern Rhodesia had agreed to lift the embargo against the Bureau, it would appear that the advantages proffered by this official measure were somehow cancelled by the drawbacks involved. As the Bureau management also lamented, the fact that permission to recruit labour had been granted in September 1917, towards the beginning of the rain season, could only mean that no recruiting activities could be undertaken till February of the following year, when this wet season drew to an end and the rivers subsided.

But perhaps the prospects for the Bureau, in resuming its operations in Northern Rhodesia, might not have looked so gloomy, had this body and the

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<sup>361</sup> N 3/22/11/1: Confidential Circular to Members of the Board of Management by Upton: February 11, 1916.

<sup>362</sup> A 3/18/30/31: Managing Director's ~~(RNLB)~~ Weekly Report No. 160 for the period Ending November 10, 1917.

colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia had, at their disposal, alternative means of supply to make up for the loss which the embargo across the Zambesi thus entailed. These alternative schemes were, in the least, encouraging at this particular time, when they were so badly needed for relief purposes. Independent trans-Zambesian labour immigration into Southern Rhodesia, between 1914 and 1915, was, as we have seen, at its peak, but colonist employers of labour squandered their chances by exploiting the situation to lower the wages of their employees and, by so doing, allowed both labour relations and conditions to degenerate on the assumption that this labour was easier to replace at any time. By 1916, the situation had, however, materially changed and no voluntary labour was forthcoming in such large numbers, as it had done before.

In fact, by the end of 1915, voluntary labour migration from Barotseland was reported to have been quite effectively offset, by rumours on an alleged war, in progress, amongst the white colonists in Livingstone and Bulawayo or that Africans in these urban centres 'were being "pressed" for war service' and, consequently, 'sent to act as a "shield" for the whiteman' at the war front.<sup>363</sup> Of course, with the recruitment of an African contingent in Bulawayo. In February 1916, consisting of 500 Ndebele volunteers, followed by that of a Bemba force averaging between 200 and 300 men, most of whom were enlisted into the second battalion of the King's African Rifles. In June of the same year,<sup>364</sup> those African potential labour migrants to the South, who were aware of these distorted rumours, were, obviously, forced to think twice before they undertook the journey. The damaging effects, these developments had on independent labour migration to Southern Rhodesia, are evident in the fact that, henceforth, trans-Zambesian labour migration, even from Barotseland, to Katanga began to exceed the corresponding exodus to the Southern labour markets.

Other alternative external sources of labour supply, the Bureau attempted to rely on after 1916, in order to keep the colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia well supplied with this commodity and thus thwart the em-

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<sup>363</sup> C. O. 417/574: Extract from the N/C's Report, Makonya Sub-District of Barotsé District, (A. G. Helm) for 1914-1915: Enclosed in Lord Buxton to A. Bonar Law: March 4, 1916.

<sup>364</sup> C. O. 417/575: Lord Buxton to Bonar Law: June 20, 1916.

bargo of the trans-Zambesian governments, were the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Portuguese territory of Mozambique. But even these two alternatives were not as promising as the Bureau had expected, during the World War I. As far as the Bechuanaland Protectorate was concerned, for instance, colonist employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia had never seriously regarded it as a credible source of labour though spasmodic, but very little supply had frequently entered the country, independently, from the Bokalaka districts of the Protectorate, adjacent to the borders of Southern Rhodesia.<sup>365</sup>

By 1917, however, arrangements were made by the Bureau with the Protectorate's Resident Commissioner, Major Panzera, in Mafeking and the Tati Company to procure labour from the Tati concession area; a bid which could not yield any fruitful results at all. All that the Bureau managed to secure from this source was, apparently, only a total of 143 recruits,<sup>366</sup> since most of the able-bodied men of the Bokalaka area were reported to be abiding their time and 'hanging out with the hope of being accepted for the Transvaal', where better opportunities obtained.<sup>367</sup> With regard to the rest of the Protectorate and its potential as a source of labour supply to Southern Rhodesia, the prospects were even bleaker due to the omnipresence of WNLA in the territory and, hence, the pervasion of the Rand influence in that country. In short, Upton correctly summed up the situation, in quite a gloomy tone, stating that:

... it would be a waste of time and money to attempt to recruit -(labour)- outside of the Tati Concession. The Protectorate -(Bechuanaland)- swarms with Witwatersrand recruiting agents, who, in view of the labour shortage on the Rand mines, receive large capitation fees, and are able to offer natives far superior pay and conditions, to those obtainable in -(Southern)- Rhodesia.<sup>368</sup>

With regard to the Mozambique alternative, it was not so much the competition of WNLA as the troublous conditions then existing in that territory which completely frustrated Bureau efforts to procure labour from this source for Southern Rhodesia. Indeed, when the Bureau was, initially, allowed to recruit labour from the Tete district of Mozambique in 1913, under

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<sup>365</sup> Schapera: op. cit. p. 47.

<sup>366</sup> C. O. 417/601: RNLB Report for June 26, 1918: Enclosed in Douglas-Jones to Lord Buxton: December 16, 1918.

<sup>367</sup> A 3/18/30/31: Managing Director's -(RNLB)- Weekly Report No. 172 for the Period Ending February 23, 1918.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid: Managing Director's Weekly Report No. 139 for the period Ending June 9, 1917.

what came to be popularly known as the Tete Agreement,<sup>369</sup> the Randlords and the South African authorities in general, had raised no objections to the arrangements, which apparently did not seem to interfere with South African interests on labour matters in any way, especially that the Tete district was situated north of latitude 22 degrees South, beyond which labour recruitment for the Rand had been prohibited.<sup>370</sup>

Whilst the Tete agreement had functioned quite smoothly for the first four years of its existence, by 1917, the Makombe rising in the Portuguese territory significantly affected the ebb and flow of labour between Portuguese Zambesia and Southern Rhodesia. The Bureau management clearly acknowledged the obstructive effects this conflict had produced on both the recruitment of labour from the Tete district in particular and on trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia in general. In June 1917, for instance, three gangs of Bureau recruits despatched from Tete to Mount Darwin in Southern Rhodesia were never heard of again; having either been dispersed or captured by the insurgents in the Portuguese territory, then in full control of the area through which the labour route from Fort Jameson via Tete and Mount Darwin to Salisbury passed. Indeed, the frequency of these interruptions on labour migration to Southern Rhodesia was such that it compelled the Bureau to transfer most of its recruits, on this route, at Tete to the new road, connecting Feira and Salisbury via Sipollo.<sup>371</sup>

Even more ominous for the Bureau, on this issue of labour recruitment from the Tete district, was the manner in which the Portuguese authorities prosecuted their campaign against the insurgents, which, literally, reduced the whole of Portuguese Zambesia to chaos. Everyone in the area seemed to be at odds with everybody. The relations between the prazo holders, the so-called muzungos, and the Portuguese officials could hardly be said to have been amicable, especially as the latter felt that it was, particularly, the high-handed methods of these landowners in dealing with their African tenant communities, which had contributed to the rising.

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<sup>369</sup> For the Tete Agreement, Vide: C. O. 417/530: Crewe at F. O. to C. O. : January 28, 1913; Sir Arthur Harding, Lisbon, to Sir Edward Grey at F. O. ; January 21, 1913; and also: P. R. Warhurst: 'The Tete Agreement': Rhodesian History: Vol. I: 1970: pp. 31-41.

<sup>370</sup> C. O. 417/525: General Louis Botha, Prime Minister, Pretoria, to Lord Gladstone: August 14, 1913.

<sup>371</sup> A 3/18/30/31: Managing Director's (RNLB) Weekly Report No. 139 for Period Ending June 9, 1917.

Indeed, as early as 1913, V. F. Crouch, the Acting Native Commissioner of the Mount Darwin district of Southern Rhodesia, had pleaded with his superiors in Salisbury, with a view of settling some of the refugee families from the neighbouring Portuguese territory in the area between the Mamvuradonha mountains and the Mukumbura river of his district. Apparently, these African communities could no longer return to their homelands in the Portuguese territory, where they were generally being ill-treated by the prazo holders, whilst the wives, in particular, were also compelled to work as carriers alongside their menfolk.<sup>372</sup>

But it was, especially, with regard to the manner in which these Portuguese authorities raised African auxiliaries and the veritable techniques of divide and rule, which they pursued, that created such a completely chaotic situation that the Bureau management felt convinced that their labour organisation's infrastructure, through the territory, was being threatened. Upton aptly described the situation in the Tete district, in November 1917:

The condition of affairs here (Tete district) can only be described as chaotic. The Portuguese system of settling native disturbances by setting one tribe against another, whilst perhaps possessing the merit of cheapness, cannot but indefinitely delay the proper restoration of order. Everything is disorganised; families and tribes are scattered over the country; and in some instances having ceased to rebel against Portuguese rule, the natives have launched out into internecine strife.<sup>373</sup>

Perhaps Bureau losses in the Tete district may have been well compensated had the African refugees from the Portuguese territory, in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, offered themselves for employment in Southern Rhodesia through this labour organisation. On the contrary, this was just not the case. In Southern Rhodesia, where the Barwe followers of Chief Makosi Makombe had been settled in the Mtoko and Inyanga districts after initiating negotiations for asylum with the BSACo. officials through their leading Shona kinsmen, like Chiefs Tangwena and Chioko, on the Rhodesian side of the border,<sup>374</sup> it was hoped that these 4,000 refugees would provide useful material

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<sup>372</sup> C. O. 417/526: V. F. Crouch, Acting N/C Mt. Darwin to C/N/C Salisbury: May 9, 1913.

<sup>373</sup> A 3/18/30/31: Managing Director's (RNLB) Weekly Report No. 160 for the period Ending November 10, 1917.

<sup>374</sup> C. O. 417/590: Taylor, C/N/C to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: August 6, 1917.

for labour purposes in that country.<sup>375</sup> This, of course, was not the case and the whole issue was, as a matter of fact, clouded by diplomatic wrangles connected with the efficacy of the Tete agreement on this score.<sup>376</sup>

As regards those refugees, who settled along the banks of the Zambesi and the Luangwa rivers in Northern Rhodesia, their attitude could not be said to have been, at all, encouraging. Upton once more reported on the Bureau's futile attempts to recruit labour from these people, towards the end of 1917, in the following manner:

... despite persuasion they -(refugees)- are disinclined to proceed to work, firstly because they wish to remain with their families to watch events on the spot; and secondly, they have just passed through a very trying and disturbing time and are thoroughly unsettled. Every legitimate influence has been brought to bear on the men by both Government and Bureau officials including an offer to supply food regularly to their dependents during their -(men's)- absence in Southern Rhodesia but for the reasons given they prefer to remain near their old homes awaiting eventualities.<sup>377</sup>

Thus up to 1918, the Tete district, as an alternative source of labour to the traditional trans-Zambesian supply to which the Southern Rhodesian labour market had become so accustomed, could not be counted upon.

The embargo imposed by the northern governments on labour recruitment during the course of the war; the inability of Southern Rhodesian colonist employers to offer comparable labour terms and conditions, in order to compete on the same plane with the Rand over labour from the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the chaotic situation in the Tete district, ensuing from the Makombe rising, were, altogether, factors beyond the control of the Bureau as a labour organisation, primarily, to serve the interests of the colonist employers in Southern Rhodesia. The Bureau management had no levers with which to influence the designs and other various factors, which characterized the origins and courses of those particular proceedings, which so abnoxiously affected the process of external labour immigration into the country, during this period. For this reason, the Bureau and its customers could not be held responsible for the evil days which befell the movement of foreign labour into

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid: Chaplin to Stanley: Secret: August 28, 1917.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid: Lord Buxton to Stanley: Secret: September 16, 1917: Vide also: Warhurst: 'The Tete Agreement': pp. 39-41.

<sup>377</sup> A 3/18/30/31: Managing Director's (RNLB) Weekly Report No. 172 for period Ending February 23, 1918.



the country, especially from those domains across the Zambesi.

Yet the same pretexts, given above, could not be resorted to, in order to explain the manner in which some sections of the colonist employers in Southern Rhodesia contributed, either directly or indirectly, to the decline of the Bureau, by withdrawing their support from this body and, in this way, unwittingly, biting the hand, which had, hitherto, fed them. The colonist farmers of Southern Rhodesia represented that section of employers, which, in one way or another, played an important role in mapping out the gradual demise of the Bureau especially noticeable in the post-war period.

Between 1916 and 1917, when all the above-mentioned drawbacks had so seriously undermined the very existence of the Bureau, that the number of its annual labour recruits fell drastically from 11, 316 in 1915 to only 6, 693 in 1916, the lowest figure since the Bureau was reconstituted in 1906,<sup>378</sup> the farmers had begun, once more, to question the credibility of the Bureau as a channel for labour supply to the colonist employers in Southern Rhodesia as a body. Of course, it may be pointed out here that these colonist farmers had been influenced by the glut of labour supply on the Southern Rhodesia labour market, precipitated by the massive influx of trans-Zambesians at the vital stage of the war years. Their feelings, like those of other colonist employers in Southern Rhodesia during that time, may have approximated the attitude of the Falcon Mine management, who had become, more or less, convinced that the Bureau was losing its importance as a purveyor of labour and should, therefore, apply its energies to selective processes of labour recruiting in the trans-Zambesia territories, in order to lessen the mortality rates on Southern Rhodesian mines which had caused so much furore in Imperial official circles, prior to the outbreak of World War I. In this particular case, it was recommended, in January 1916, that the Bureau should see to it that 'boys should only be recruited for Southern Rhodesia from the higher altitudes of Northern Rhodesia (and) Central Africa (Nyasaland), ' whilst medical examination of the recruits 'should be stricter (so) that any boys showing signs of weak lungs should be promptly rejected.'<sup>379</sup>

However, the farmers' attitudes, in 1916/1917, appear to have gone further in demonstrating these colonist employers' waning support for the

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<sup>378</sup> C. O. 417/589: Stanley to Lord Buxton: July 19, 1917.

<sup>379</sup> A 3/18/30/31: McDonald to Upton: January 26, 1916.

Bureau's activities in labour recruitment than mere peripheral criticisms on the physical condition of recruits, this body brought forward from across the Zambesi and elsewhere. Relying on their inordinate proportion on the Bureau membership lists (1,082 farmers and 264 mineowners out of a total membership of 1,346 subscribers in 1916), the farming community launched a vicious attack on the bona fides of this body to cater for the interests of all employers, when the farming community was, actually, under-represented on the management level within the Bureau administrative machinery. The system whereby, according to Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau Ordinance No. 8 of 1911, the Bureau's seven-member Board of Management had only one man standing for the interests of the farmers, whilst the rest represented the BSA Co. and other mining consortia, could no longer satisfy these colonist farmers.

Led by Gilchrist of the Hartley district and Dunlop of the Mazoe area, in June 1917, the colonist farmers of Southern Rhodesia, as members of the Bureau, would not be persuaded to accept that the financial problems of this labour organisation were a logical sequel to the suspensions and embargoes imposed by the northern governments, thus reducing the Bureau's wherewithal for revenue and income. Neither would this class of colonist employers accept the argument on the adverse effects of the reduction of the £3,000 annual subsidy to the Bureau from the Railways to £1,400, which obviously knocked some holes into the Bureau's purse, consequently, affecting its efficiency in the field of labour recruitment.

To these colonist farmers, who were mostly subscribers to R. A. Fletcher's proto-populist anti-Charter movement, the main causes of the Bureau's financial problems were, simply, the dominance of the mining industry and the Bureau's dependence on the BSA Co., on the grounds of the £20,000 debt this labour body owed the Company. Thus to avoid the risk of taxation being imposed on the rank and file colonists, in order to raise adequate funds to maintain a one-sided labour organisation, the farmers, by mid-1917, began to call for the abolition of the Bureau and the restoration of forced labour, through recognised government channels, as the only solution to equitable labour supply and distribution.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> C. O. 417/589: Stanley to Lord Buxton: July 19, 1917.

The attack by the farming community against the Bureau, of which most of them were members, may have been, primarily, directed against the BSACo. by a group of colonists who, as we have said, were becoming increasingly disenchanted by Company rule. The Bureau, therefore, may have become a mere Cinderella, caught up in the mêlée of the beginnings of a long struggle between two hostile sides. But, nonetheless, the damage, this labour organisation sustained from these accidental blows, was no less significant, especially at a time, when all its members should have rallied behind it. Farmers everywhere in the BSACo. territories, of course, had developed a particular passion for attacking the Bureau; those of Northern Rhodesia being no exceptions.

In former North-Western Rhodesia, the farmers, ironically led by Bissett, a former Bureau official, felt that they were not getting the suitable labourers they required from the Bureau, in spite of the 30/- capitation fees they paid,<sup>381</sup> whilst their counterparts in former North-Eastern Rhodesia called, as usual, for the total exclusion of this labour organisation from their territory, where it was alleged to be depleting labour supply.<sup>382</sup> Yet during the war years, the flings, by these farmers, at the Bureau, could only cause long-term injuries rather than gashing wounds. There were other factors, however, which proved more effective in immediately crippling the Bureau and, along with it, the phenomenon of trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia. The Spanish Influenza epidemic at the close of 1918 was, for example, one such enemy, which both the Bureau and trans-Zambesian labour migration found more formidable than the periodic flings from the irate colonist farmers.

Spanish Influenza was an importation into the African sub-continent from Europe, where it had broken out in June 1918, managing to reach South Africa in September and then spreading along the railway line, in the African sub-continent, till it reached Bulawayo, by the beginning of October 1918, and, subsequently, engulfing most of the major urban settlements and mining cen-

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Livingstone Mail, September 8, 1916: Enclosed in Stanley to Lord Buxton: July 10, 1917.

<sup>382</sup> C. O. 417/617: Minutes of the Deputation of the North-Eastern Rhodesia Farmers and Commercial Association with His Honour the Administrator (Wallace) at Fort Jameson: On August 4, 1917.

tres in Southern Rhodesia by the close of 1918.<sup>383</sup> The most interesting features of this epidemic, with regard to the deployment of African labour, in general, and the immigration of external supply into Southern Rhodesia, in particular, were, not merely its specular impudence in killing off the top-level officials of the Bureau, like Upton, the Managing Director himself,<sup>384</sup> but also its pervasiveness and rather indiscriminate character, once it reached South-Central Africa. The heavy toll of deaths this epidemic imposed on towns, mine centres or mining districts in a wider sense, like the Gwelo, Salisbury, Umtali, Bulawayo, Hartley and Victoria districts, was quite staggering. In statistical terms, as Table V, below, indicates, these mining districts sustained the following casualties, in descending order, amongst their African labourers:<sup>385</sup>

Table V: Statistical Returns on Spanish Influenza Victims 1918:

<u>Mining District</u>	<u>No. of Deaths</u>	<u>% Death Rate</u>
Gwelo	896	15.2
Victoria	126	11.4
Bulawayo	999	10.6
Salisbury	389	7.9
Harley	349	7.1
Umtali	92	6.5

In the rural areas adjoining these mining districts in Southern Rhodesia, the effects of what the Africans called in Shona Vera or ingubane in Ndebele, were just as devastating as they were in the urban and mining centres. In Mashonaland, for instance, the massive exodus of African mine and urban labourers from places like Gatooma, Hartley and other areas of peri-urban settlement, greatly helped to spread the epidemic to the Ganga, Mhondoro and Gabaza reserves of the Hartley district with serious consequences.<sup>386</sup> The same applied to the Madangombe area of the Chibi district, virtually enclosed in a triangle formed by the Mashaba, Shabani and Selukwe mines<sup>387</sup> as well as the Umtali district, where a large African labour force was engaged on the Penhalonga and Rezende mines and on railway and bridge construction across the Odzi river.<sup>388</sup> In all these cases, the desertion of African labour-

<sup>383</sup> C. O. 417/619: Report on the Outbreak of the Epidemic Influenza in Southern Rhodesia in 1918 by Dr A. M. Fleming, Medical Director: May 1st, 1919.

<sup>384</sup> C. O. 417/601: Douglas-Jones to Lord Buxton: December 16, 1918.

<sup>385</sup> C. O. 417/619: Report on the Outbreak of the Epidemic Influenza... by Fleming: May 1st, 1919.

<sup>386</sup> C. O. 417/617: Extract from the Report of the Hartley District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918, (By L. C. Meredith, N/C): Enclosed in

ers, whether local or alien, from their centres of employment and their flight into the adjoining African reserves were the cause of the undoing of those African areas in question.

In Matabeleland too, where intensive mining activities were going on, the local African communities of particular districts, where African labourers were amassed, were, inexorably, affected by the presence of deserters from the nearby centres of employment. In the Bulawayo district<sup>389</sup> and the neighbouring Bubi area,<sup>390</sup> for instance, where the Spanish Influenza had made its earliest appearance in the country, the congestion of people in the urban and mining centres was, obviously, complicated by the lack of preparedness amongst the officials, who were caught on one foot by this epidemic; whilst in the Gwanda district, another heavy mining area, some of the mineowners and absentee landlords were not as co-operative as the Native Department would have liked, with regard to the welfare of those African charges on their properties.<sup>391</sup>

The net results of the Spanish Influenza epidemic were its wide-ranging repercussions on Southern Rhodesia's position, both in terms of its local labour turn-out and its role as a destination area for foreign immigrant labour. With regard to immigrant labour, either on voluntary basis or through the Bureau, it was not only the high morbidity rate occasioned by this epidemic, as demonstrated in Table VI below:<sup>392</sup>

Table VI: Statistical Returns on the Mortality of African Immigrants: Spanish Influenza, 1918:

Southern Rhodesia (labourers)-	802	(deaths)-
Portuguese East Africa -do-	408	
Northern Rhodesia "	671	
Nyasaland "	917	
Other Sources "	53	

which frightened away potential labour immigrants. Official attempts to contain

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387 Douglas-Jones to Lord Buxton: March 10, 1919.

Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Chibi District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (By W. A. Loades, Acting N/C.)

388 Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Umtali District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (By T. B. Hulley, S/O/N.)

389 Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Bulawayo District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (By H. M. Jackson, S/O/N.)

390 Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Bubi District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (By D. W. Green, N/C.)

391 Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Gwanda District for the month Ended November 30, 1918 (by H. A. Hemans, N/C.)

the disease, by encouraging the African population to live in the open, as much as possible, were, of course, a sequel to the heavy mortality rates so noticeable in the urban and mining centres. But these measures very frequently had their drawbacks too.

The closure of schools, churches and pass offices in the Mrewa district,<sup>393</sup> for example, as well as the prohibition of any form of interaction between local communities and strangers in the Lomagundi district,<sup>394</sup> obviously, exposed the gravity of the epidemic incidence in Southern Rhodesia to the incoming foreign labourers, at the close of 1918. In frontier districts, like the Mrewa and Lomagundi in Mashonaland, for instance, the result was that these measures also acted as a deterrent to prospective labour immigrants. At the Mrewa and Mtoko depots of the Bureau, where aliens were often received, large numbers of migrant labourers were detained on account of the closure of the pass offices,<sup>395</sup> whilst it was also observed that a large proportion of these immigrants, apparently due to shortage of food on their arrival, easily succumbed to Influenza at these depots.<sup>396</sup>

For the rank and file labour immigrants, who did not use the Misale-Mtoko route which entailed this detention, the consequences of the epidemic were just as discouraging to the Bureau. The Bureau recruits from Barotse-land proper and the Batoka and Kafue districts, who had hitherto plied the Livingstone and Lomagundi routes to Matabeleland and Mashonaland respectively, were said to have panicked and stampeded to their homes, once reports reached them that Influenza had appeared in Livingstone, in November 1918. In fact, as the news of this disease spread throughout Barotse-land, the Administration of Northern Rhodesia had once more to prohibit labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia.

As for North-Eastern Rhodesian and Nyasaland immigrant labourers, who

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<sup>392</sup> C. O. 417/618: Fleming, Medical Director, to Secretary, Department of Administrator: March 11, 1919.

<sup>393</sup> C. O. 417/617: Extract from the Report for the Mrewa District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (by W. Edwards).

<sup>394</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Report for the Lomagundi District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (By H. S. Keigwin, N/C.)

<sup>395</sup> N 3/22/1/2: Taylor C/N/C to Secretary, Dept of Administrators: November 8, 1918.

<sup>396</sup> N 3/22/11/2: D. Hawksley, Salisbury District (RNLB) to C/N/C Salisbury: November 19, 1918.

used the Feira-Sipolilo route to Salisbury, the situation looked better for the Bureau in the sense that, with the exception of reported cases of bubonic plague in the Lundazi division of the East Luangwa district, the Influenza epidemic had not yet appeared in the former North-Eastern Rhodesia by November 1918. But these bright prospects were, however, cancelled out by the fact that once recruits were on the road, between Feira on the Northern bank of the Zambesi and Sipolilo in Southern Rhodesia, they speedily turned back to Feira, as they heard of the epidemic below the Zambesi. The Portuguese authorities, who had recently allowed the Bureau to resume recruitment since the Makombe rising in 1917, once more reimposed their ban, as a response to Spanish Influenza.<sup>397</sup> In all respects, the prospects for the Bureau over trans-Zambesian labour recruitment, by December 1918, were quite dim, as more and more recruits turned back to their homes, in their thousands and in panic, before they reached the centres of employment in Southern Rhodesia, thus involving this labour body in great expenses.<sup>398</sup>

The gloomy prospects of the Bureau, ensuing from the Spanish Influenza crisis in South Central Africa, were well reflected in the serious constraints imposed on the labour market in Southern Rhodesia, at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919. On one hand, trans-Zambesian labourers were no longer coming down in great numbers, either on account of their own fear of the epidemic or because those who had been recently in the employ of the military authorities as carriers had 'their pockets full of money' and were, therefore, more concerned with their gardens, which had 'suffered from their absence' at the war front than in looking for work in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>399</sup> The local African labour supply in Southern Rhodesia itself was, in turn, just as equally discouraging.

The suspicions and hostility raised by the Influenza crisis, within the African communities, were not conducive to either positive labour response or sound race relations. In spite of the attempts of some mining companies to undertake the task of collecting all the labourers, who had fled from the min-

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<sup>397</sup> A 3/18/30/32: Managing Director's (RNLB) Weekly Report No. 203 for the period Ending November 23, 1918.

<sup>398</sup> C. O. 417/601: Douglas-Jones to Lord Buxton: December 16, 1918.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

ing and urban centres, and gathering them at specified depots to explain the state of affairs before re-engaging them,<sup>400</sup> the suspicions of the African population as to the malevolent intentions of the white colonists, whom they charged with the introduction of the killer disease, could not be easily dispelled. Accordingly, Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner, warned the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia on this score:

The natives have an idea that the Europeans are responsible for the introduction of the disease -(Influenza)-, and any reference to labour matters at the present time might have the effect of defeating our present object, which is to calm the natives.<sup>401</sup>

Such suspicions, on the part of the African population, were, certainly, abetted by what officials regarded as 'wild rumours', circulating within the African areas, particularly in the Umtali district, that 'a plague of the liver -(would)- follow the influenza epidemic, which -(would)- be more deadly than the latter'; an obvious allusion to the pneumonia, which followed the recovery of the influenza victims once they resumed hard work prematurely.<sup>402</sup>

Of course, African reactions to the Influenza epidemic and associated rumours in Southern Rhodesia were manifested in various ways. In the Belingwe district, for example, where suspicious Shona communities of Reserve No. 2 rejected the medicament issued by the white officials, in December 1918, in their preference for African herbal remedies, the Rev. Skold of the Church of Sweden, based in that district, concluded in characteristic colonist attitude towards the Shona peoples:

After the experiences I got from my journey, I have formed the opinion that it is of very little use to distribute quinine or similar medicine amongst the so called low class natives, as they seem not to appreciate it, but believe that medicines supplied by Europeans do more harm than good. As far as I can see, there is no possibility to prevent the influenza among this nation -(the Shona)-.<sup>403</sup>

This uncompromising attitude of the Shona communities of Belingwe, which,

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<sup>400</sup> N 3/22/1/2: McDonal to Montagu, Salisbury: Telegram: November 4, 1918.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: November 5, 1918.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid: Taylor, C/N/C to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: November 8, 1918.

<sup>403</sup> C. O. 417/606: Notes on the Influenza Epidemic: December 1-10, 1918: by C/N/C Taylor: Enclosed in Chaplin to Douglas-Jones: December 12, 1918.



in this respect, chimed in with that of their kinsmen in the Gutu district,<sup>404</sup> was, of course, based on the tangible fact that African herbal treatment was then commonly known to have occasionally effected the intended desire. In the Chibi district, for example, the nhokwe grass and pumpkin seeds were widely used as preventatives,<sup>405</sup> whilst in the Bulawayo district of Matabeleland, the infusion of the bark of the megulu or mbanazankezo tree was said to have produced results 'at least as good as -(were)- obtained from the use of European drugs.'<sup>406</sup> Backed by such psychologically potent factors as the neo-self-sufficiency of African medicament, it is no wonder, therefore, that local Africans in Southern Rhodesia could hardly be persuaded to accept overtures from what they regarded as the enemy camp, the white colonists, during the Spanish Influenza crisis.

But it was, essentially, the local Africans' reactions in 1918, in relation to the dwindling labour supply, that their attitude produced the most telling results. Employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia had, of course, never forgiven the African labourers for their global desertion from the centres of employment, even during the Spanish Influenza epidemic, when official opinion was prepared to overlook this development. Mineowners and mining companies, in particular, demanded that steps should be taken to bring back their former labourers, even if this meant resorting to coercive measures. The mining interests in those districts which constituted the Salisbury Circle of northern and central Mashonaland were quite voluble on this matter,<sup>407</sup> whilst the Globe and Phoenix mine and other properties of the Que Que mining district, actually, despatched special messengers into the neighbouring districts for both rounding up and reassuring their former African labourers that the epidemic had been checked.<sup>408</sup> Yet no African labour was forthcoming, in the post-epidemic phase.

The situation here was further complicated by an outburst of traditional religious fervour, within the local African circles, as people became involved

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<sup>404</sup> C. O. 417/617: Extract from the Report of the Gutu District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (by E. T. Kenny, N/C).

<sup>405</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Chibi District,

<sup>406</sup> Ibid: Extract from the Report of the Bulawayo District,

<sup>407</sup> C. O. 417/606: Notes on the Influenza Epidemic by C/N/C Taylor: November 11-20: 1918: Enclosed in Chaplin to Douglas-Jones: November 27, 1918,

<sup>408</sup> N 3/22/1/2: Taylor, C/N/C to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: November 8, 1918.

in widespread thanksgiving festivities, once the deadly disease had passed. The fact that the outbreak of the disease, at the close of 1918, had coincided with the shortage of rain and, therefore, famine, naturally, added a cosmic dimension to the whole crisis. For this reason, in Southern Mashonaland, it was reported, during the middle of the epidemic, that people were 'killing black goats to propitiate the "Mwari"....'<sup>409</sup> Indeed, when the Felixburg Farmers' Association, near Fort Victoria, demanded for assistance from the authorities by resorting to forced labour to solve their problems in this field in November 1919, the Native Department replied:

Enquiries have recently elicited the fact the excessive drinking of beer is the cause of many natives staying in their kraals instead of going to work.

This excessive drinking is the result, in the first place, of a successful harvest and in the second, ~~(of)~~ the belief that it is the wish of the Mlimo that the people should show their gratitude for their delivery from the Influenza scourge by<sup>410</sup> indulging in wild orgies of beer-bibbing and thanksgiving.

It was particularly this kind of reaction from the local African societies coupled with the noticeable decline in trans-Zambesian labour immigration, which singled out the Spanish Influenza episode as one of the most decisive factors in the history of the Bureau and its involvement in the processes of labour mobilisation. The drastic effects of this factor both during and immediately after the epidemic were, to say the least, particularly telling on the Southern Rhodesia labour market. In those mining districts like Selukwe, where, in spite of official warning to the Africans of the area 'to leave their huts and reside in the bush', no dispersal was undertaken, the death toll from the epidemic was quite heavy, amounting to a total loss of about '2½ to 3% amongst the kraal natives and from 12% and 15% amongst the Mine natives.'<sup>411</sup> The overall result for the Selukwe mining district was, therefore, that there was complete cessation of production as all the mines closed down, temporarily, by November 1918. Throughout the country, only those mines, which

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<sup>409</sup> C. O. 417/617: Extract from the Report of the Chibi District,

<sup>410</sup> N 3/22/1/2: Taylor, C/N/C to Secretary, Department of Administrator: Salisbury: December 10, 1919.

<sup>411</sup> C. O. 417/617: Extract from the Report for the Selukwe District for the Month Ended November 30, 1918 (by E. G. Howman, N/C).

successfully introduced quarantine measures or were located in sparsely populated districts, like the Wankie Colliery, were saved from the excessive loss of their employees.<sup>412</sup> In short, the impact of the Influenza epidemic on the mining industry, in terms of severe financial losses, estimated at about £400,000, and disruption of African labour supply, both alien and local, was profound. Besides, the ill-effects of the crisis were still felt long after 1918.<sup>413</sup>

In assessing the effects of the World War I, the Spanish Influenza and related events, covering the period 1914-1918, and their bearing on the Bureau and its role in the process of trans-Zambesian labour immigration into Southern Rhodesia, numerous factors emerge, which by themselves too, help us to understand the subsequent 1919-1923 period better. As has already been observed, the primary objectives in founding the Bureau in the pre-war era were, in the first instance, manifold and quite sound, from the point of view of the colonist employers of labour especially in Southern Rhodesia. It was the hope of the BSACo. officials and colonist employers in the pre-war period that the Bureau, in all its various forms since 1903, would try to meet the labour supply requirements, especially those of the expanding mining industry of Southern Rhodesia, whilst, at the same, cushioning the employers against the adverse effects of a general reduction in the African labourers' wages without which this industry would not have been sufficiently viable and attractive to capital.

With the parallel growth of capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, particularly after 1907, the role of the Bureau, in providing maximum labour supply at minimum wage overhead expenses, was quite necessary. It was also felt that the Bureau was essential as a means of enabling the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia to secure an equitable share of African labour, given the relentless competition of rival interests, like the Rand and the Katanga mining industries, also operating within the same regional economic system of South Central Africa. Finally, and by no means least significant, this semi-official labour organisation was regarded as a paramount factor in

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<sup>412</sup>N 3/22/1/2: Taylor, C/N/C to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: Salisbury: November 8, 1918.

<sup>413</sup>I. R. Phimister: 'The "Spanish" Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and its Impact on the Southern Rhodesian Mining Industry': The Central African Journal of Medicine: No. 7: Vol. 19: July 1973: p. 148.

canalizing African labour to those colonist employers in Southern Rhodesia, especially, who, by virtue of their unpopularity, would not have procured adequate supply on the open market.<sup>414</sup>

Whilst the Bureau had, of course, tried to meet these objectives in the pre-1914 period, in the post-war era, however, it ran the risk of becoming irrelevant and moribund, due to the changed labour market conditions. The rise in prices and the general cost of living, which characterized the post-war years had severe effects on the African peoples of the sub-continent, more so that, as in the case of Southern Rhodesia, the rise in African wages in the mining industry, for instance, was merely nominal, whilst the colonist farmers, actually, reduced the real cash wages of their employees to below the pre-war level, in most cases.<sup>415</sup> In South Africa, for example, the African workmen responded to these post-war economic problems by organizing themselves into trade unions, hence the birth of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa in the Cape, in January 1919.<sup>416</sup> In Southern Rhodesia where this post-war economic crisis was, equally, biting and, actually, drove a number of white workers, like the miners and railwaymen, to stage strikes,<sup>417</sup> the Africans who were inexorably caught in the vortex of this crisis chose several ways of resisting this new onslaught, where they managed to do so. The colonist employers of labour and, indirectly, the Bureau were the victims in the process.

As Sir Herbert Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner of Southern Rhodesia, observed in 1919, in spite of the tremendous rise in prices, estimated at about 50 per cent, since the armistice in 1918, and about 300 per cent, since the beginning of the war in 1914 and which, in consequence, severely undermined African purchasing power, the local African labourers had become quite selective in their response to employment opportunities. Rather

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<sup>414</sup> An interesting discussion of these objectives, functions and methods of the Bureau before and after W. W. I is found in: van Onselen: Chibaro: pp. 103-14.

<sup>415</sup> C. O. 417/638: RNLB Chairman's (Hawksley's) Address to Annual General Meeting: in Extract from the Rhodesia Herald: May 18, 1920.

<sup>416</sup> Vide: C. Kadalie: My Life And The I. C. U. : The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. : London: 1970: pp. 40-3.

<sup>417</sup> BSA Co. Director's Report and Accounts: March 31st, 1920: p. 27.

than work on the farms and on the railways for wages ranging from 15/- to 18/- per month, they preferred minework to anything else.<sup>419</sup> Alternatively, the sale of stock and agricultural produce was also resorted to, in order to thwart these post-war economic pressures. Thus in 1920, it was indicated that African peasant farmers had accounted for a total of 198,000 bags of grain, bought by European traders at an average price of 10/- per bag. In fact, in areas like the Charter district of Mashonaland, for instance, African agricultural production had reached such a high level that the Native Commissioner of the district concluded that some of these African agriculturalists:

... may be styled successful farmers... and as long as there is a demand for their products they will not work for Europeans, where long hours, low wages and routine work prevail.<sup>420</sup>

Moreover, in those lean years of low agricultural output and a general slump in cattle prices on the local stock market, local Africans proceeded to the Rand and, in this way, exacerbated the labour problem on the local scene. This was even more so in 1921, when a general reduction in wages and the size of the labour force was effected in the Southern Rhodesian mining industry, due to the closure of some mining properties in the Belingwe and Gwanda districts and also the restrictions on the production of base metals like asbestos from the Shabani and Mashaba mines as well as chrome mined at Selukwe.<sup>421</sup> These moves, said to have been necessitated by the fall in the gold premium and the excess supply of base metals on the London market between 1921 and 1922,<sup>422</sup> served to demonstrate in Southern Rhodesia the loathing, which the local African harboured for lowly paid railway and farm-work.

The post-war economic ills, symbolized by the spiralling prices, low wages and labour shortage were, to say the least, strange antonyms. Both Bureau and administrative officials in Southern Rhodesia were aroused from their slumber by the hue and cry of the farming community, in particular, over the shortage of labour. But, at the same time, these officials were also

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<sup>419</sup> Report of the Chief Native Commissioner -(hereafter C/N/C, -) for the Year 1919: pp. 9, 14.

<sup>420</sup> Report of the C/N/C.<sup>1</sup> for the Year 1920: pp. 2-3.

<sup>421</sup> Report of the C/N/C for the Year 1921: pp. 5-6.

<sup>422</sup> BSACo. Directors' Reports and Accounts for the Years Ended March 31st, 1922: p. 11.

aware of a number of contingent factors, which, adversely, influenced the volume of labour supply in these immediate years after the war. The recurrence of the Influenza epidemic in the Inyanga district of Mashonaland, in August 1919, apparently belching from the Portuguese territory of Mozambique to which this area adjoined, may have exercised a negative effect on the issue of labour supply. Indeed, in Northern Rhodesia, where the Bureau was attempting to pick up the bits and pieces of its recruiting infrastructure at this period, all its efforts, to resume labour recruiting, were seriously hampered by some of the epidemic restrictions governing the movement of people, which had not yet been rescinded.<sup>423</sup>

But even when the Influenza epidemic had receded, other factors were still at play and their influence was not necessarily an advantage to the colonist farmers of Southern Rhodesia. These factors were, of course, linked with the low wages paid by the farmers, the ill-treatment of Bureau recruits and the eclectic attitudes of some of these farmer-employers who preferred particular ethnic groups in their employ. Mashonaland colonist farmers, in particular, manifested all these traits, which, consequently, complicated the labour situation. In the Hartley district of that province, for example, the Native Department observed, between 1919 and 1920, conditions which were considered to be only capable of repelling rather than attracting labour to the farms. In one section of the Hartley district, south of the Umfuli river bordering on the Mhondoro reserve and occupied mostly by 'Dutch farmers', for instance, ill-treatment of Bureau-supplied labourers was regarded as:

... the cause of Dutch farmers getting a bad name as employers, hence the natives would not offer their services.<sup>424</sup>

In other parts of the Hartley district, low wages were the farmer's biggest enemy on this question of labour supply. After observing, in October 1919, that most labourers, who 'were still being paid on the pre-war standards (of wages)' in the district, were becoming increasingly reluctant to purchase anything from the nearby stores at Makwiro, preferring, as they did, 'to travel to a store some thirty or forty miles distant, to procure their wants, rather than pay a little more at the stores nearby...', H. M. Meade, the

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<sup>423</sup> Report of the C/N/C for the Year 1919: p. 3.

<sup>424</sup> N 3/33/12: Report of L. C. Meredith, N/C Hartley: Quoted in Taylor C/N/C to Managing Director; RNLB: Salisbury; December 28, 1920.

Acting Assistant Native Commissioner of this district, was quite conclusive on the importance, for the colonist farmers, to raise the wages of the employees, in order to rectify the situation. For this reason, Meade stated:

If ~~(it is)~~ the very widespread belief among the farmers that thousands of young, able-bodied male Natives are spending their lives in complete and wasteful leisure at their kraals, the reluctance of the Natives to be exploited can hardly be severely condemned in the circumstances. They are doubtless developing an increasing appreciation that they now receive only about half the pre-war value in return for their service especially as they have had by this date ample time to realise that the farmer-employer receives a considerably enhanced price for his produce - the fruits of their labour.

These actions of the colonist farmers in Mashonaland were, certainly, not, by any means, out of tune with the attitudes of the rank and file white colonists in connection with both their preconceptions on the functions of a composite colonial society and their economic survival as a class, especially given in this case, the farmers' inability to compete with more viable economic interests in the country, like the mining industry. For the other colonist employers of labour, the primary objectives of the Bureau, in the whole process of labour mobilisation in Southern Rhodesia, may have petered out with the outbreak of World War I. But to the colonist farmers, the case was different. Like those unpopular mines and properties frequently avoided by independent African labourers, the farmers still regarded the Bureau as a major factor in labour supply even after the war, since it was the sole body capable of channelling labour to them on long-term basis and, in this manner, guaranteed the viability of commercial agriculture in the country.

Thus by February 1921, when the mining industry, then enjoying the advantage of surplus labour supply through independent trans-Zambesian immigration, suggested that 'the ~~(prevailing)~~ cost of labour imported by the Bureau was unfairly distributed' and that 'the time had arrived when an attempt should be made to distribute this cost more equitably', the farmers, who had sensed and heeded the call for the abolition of the Bureau as an organisation whose services were no longer necessary, readily agreed to pay 'a Capitation Fee 10/- in excess of that paid by the miners.' On this score, the farmers were supported by the Railway employers, who also agreed to pay to the

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid: H. M. Meade, Acting Asst. N/C., Hartley to Meredith, N/C Hartley; October 16, 1919.

Bureau the usual charge, but at a rate '15/- higher' than the mines, in place of their fixed £1,400 subsidy.<sup>426</sup>

In view of the farmers' historic opposition to increased financial backing of the Bureau by the employers, which had led to the 1911 revolt and was further asserted in 1917 when the farming community refused to acknowledge the Bureau's £20,000 debt to the BSA Co.,<sup>427</sup> the change of heart by this section of colonist employers, by 1921, can only be described as remarkable. Yet from all appearances, the farmers were not fools. The labour problem for the farming and the railway industries, which could not pay the same, comparatively, high rate of wages as the mining industry in the post-war years, was quite acute, as we have already observed. Indeed, in the farming industry, the problem had actually reached a crisis situation by 1920 and, for this reason, the Native Commissioner of the Hartley district commented, in December of the same year, that:

The dearth of native labour in this area (occupied by Dutch farmers) is deplorable, some farmers have to have their cattle herded by their children.<sup>428</sup>

Yet notwithstanding this dire situation, Southern Rhodesia's colonist farming community still hoped that the Bureau would somehow meet its labour requirements, especially by providing adequate trans-Zambesian farm labour to meet these needs. Perhaps in keeping with this optimism on the part of the farmers, in their anticipation over trans-Zambesian labour supply, was the manner in which they came to regard local labour. In the Hartley district once more, where the colonist farmers were so pressed for this commodity, their attitudes towards the surrounding Shona communities were both bitter and scathing. Meade again observed, in this connection, that:

The attitude of some of the farmers towards the indigenous natives renders the problem (of labour shortage) more difficult, for some of them declare they will not have 'Swina' (Shona) on their farms.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> C. O. 417/659: Extract from the Rhodesia Herald February 25, 1921: Enclosed in Douglas-Jones to Prince Arthur of Connaught: April 14, 1921.

<sup>427</sup> C. O. 417/589: Stanley to Lord Buxton: July 19, 1917.

<sup>428</sup> N 3/33/12: Report of N/C Hartley: Quoted in Taylor to Hawksley: December 28, 1920.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid: Meade, Asst. N/C to Meredith, N/C Hartley: October 16, 1919.



The reasons for this reluctance amongst the colonist farmers of the Hartley district to utilise Shona labour, if they could get any, were many. It was alleged, for instance, that because of 'the incorrigible indolence of the Swina', their 'natural thieving proclivities', 'general unreliability' and 'the brief periods' they usually remained in employment, the local Shona labourers were unwelcome. As had become customary within the Southern Rhodesian colonist circles, this tendency to reject any possible offers of African labour from local sources was very often accompanied by calls for immigrant labour as a substitute. In this particular case, Mashonaland colonist farmers required the Bureau to provide them with recruits from Barotseland, since they considered the 'Barotse boy... a good milker', who was, therefore, quite unlike those recruits raised by the Bureau outside Barotseland, in former North-Western Rhodesia, whom they equally despised because they were 'not milkers, and .. -(did)- not know anything about cattle.'<sup>430</sup>

This overt preference for labour, from particular African ethnic groups, was not a new phenomenon in the colonial history of Southern Rhodesia. In a number of instances, such eclectic tactics were resorted to by colonist employers either as a way of expressing their frustrations with the objective situations created by and associated with the peculiarities of racially composite colonial societies or purely as a means of getting access to foreign labour, more vulnerable to control as well as to economic and social exploitation.<sup>431</sup> In the post-war era in Southern Rhodesia, it was certainly not only the colonist farmers of Mashonaland who fell victims to these socio-economic dynamics of a racially hierarchical colonial society, characterized by both overt and subtle conflict between various colonial groups, a number of other colonist employers, too, were equally motivated by these pressures, with the result that they had all come to the conclusion that alien labour, rather than realistic reforms in the employment conditions throughout the country, was the panacea to their ills.

In the case of the colonist farmers of Mashonaland, their predilection for Lozi labour may have been perhaps superficial, having been cultivated rather

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<sup>430</sup> C. O. 417/638: The RNLB Chairman's Address to the Annual General Meeting: May 17, 1920: in Extract from the Rhodesia Herald: May 18, 1920.

<sup>431</sup> Vide: Supra: pp. 395-404

too late for that matter. Indeed, the Bureau management, on being confronted by this demand in 1919 and 1920, was quick to point out its unrealistic aspects. After all, Lozi labour had only been made available to Mashonaland farmers during the war, because, the Bureau argued, it was the only farm labour supply available and had, therefore, to be distributed to all the farmers throughout the country, including those of Mashonaland, who had hitherto relied on Angoni and related labour recruits from the East Luangwa district, where the heavy demand for carriers on the war front had put a total stoppage on labour migration to Southern Rhodesia. Once the war conditions had dissipated, labour from Barotseland was, naturally, available only for Matabeleland, its usual hound, where the recruiting and transportation expenses between Livingstone and Bulawayo amounted to only £3 per head, as compared to £6 for the distribution of the same labourers in Salisbury.<sup>432</sup>

A similar request by the Wankie Colliery in April 1918 had produced no results. The Colliery management, unlike the Mashonaland farmers, were altogether averse to the engagement of Lozi labour 'as they (Lozi) seldom agree(d) to underground labour.' Instead, what these coal miners required, as labourers amongst the trans-Zambesian ethnic groups, were 'mainly Angoni and Mashukulumbwe natives, with natives of the Zambesi Valley a good second.'<sup>433</sup> But like other colonist employers throughout Southern Rhodesia, the Wankie Colliery management shared a common dislike and distrust of labourers recruited from the country's local sources and, in this particular case, those raised from Kimberley and Bechuanaland as well, where this particular mining concern had previously tried to recruit labour, without any noticeable success at all. With these views in mind, A.R. Thomson, the General Manager of the Wankie Colliery, had accordingly dismissed labour supply from Southern Rhodesia and the South as follows:

The natives recruited from these sources are usually more susceptible to sickness than Northern natives and as they do not take kindly to the place (Wankie) they are often troublesome.<sup>434</sup>

In fact what Thomson failed to acknowledge here was the unfavourable geographical location of the Wankie Colliery, with regard to both the climatic

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid: The RNLB Chairman's Address... May 17, 1920.

<sup>433</sup> A 3/18/30/20: A.R. Thomson, General Manager, Wankie Colliery Co. Ltd. to Chaplin: April 22, 1918.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

zones of Southern Rhodesia and the regional economic system of Southern Africa as a whole. Situated in the midst of the extremely hot Zambesi Valley and associated with low wages and a poor health record, the Wankie Colliery had acquired a peculiarly bad reputation in the eyes of the country's African population.<sup>435</sup> The repercussions arising from these factors were thus quite apparent, even in the eyes of the BSACo. Administration in Southern Rhodesia. Thus the Native Department in Salisbury commented in 1918, in relation to Thomson's complaints over his difficulties with local African labour supply, that the local Africans on 'failing to obtain work in the Districts south of Wankie prefer to seek work further south rather than go north.'<sup>436</sup> This assertion was particularly true at this time, when, in spite of the massive redundancies induced by the closure of some mining concerns in the Gwanda and Belingwe districts of Matabeleland, no local labour offered at Wankie where it was so badly needed. For the various reasons indicated above, the Wankie Colliery came to inevitably rely, to a greater degree than most mining properties in Southern Rhodesia, on trans-Zambesian labour supply. The labour returns of this particular mine, since it started full-scale operations in 1904 up to about 1920, for instance, demonstrate, beyond doubt, the dominance of the trans-Zambesian labourers, especially those from Northern Rhodesia next to which it was so strategically placed, who consistently formed over three-quarters of the Colliery's labour force as Table VII below indicates:

Table VII:

Wankie African Labour Returns: A Territorial Analysis: 1904 and 1920:<sup>437</sup>

Year	Total labour force	From S. Rhodesia	From N. Rhodesia	From PEA	From Nyasaland	From other sources
1904	243	44	195	26	-	23
1920	2,911	451	2,146	73	73	53

Notwithstanding their different emphasis and specifications, the demands

<sup>435</sup> Van Onselen: 'The 1912 Wankie Colliery Strike' p. 276.

<sup>436</sup> A 3/18/30/20: Taylor C/N/C to Administrator's Private Secretary: Salisbury: May 8, 1918.

<sup>437</sup> These statistics have been culled from files C. O. 417/399: Labour Returns: Wankie District by Andrew Dale, Asst. N/C, March 7, 1904; and C. O. 417/640: Mortality Returns for the Quarter Ended March 31, 1920, by Fleming, Medical Director: Enclosed in Fleming to Chaplin: June 17, 1920.

of the colonist farmers of Mashonaland and the Wankie Colliery once more spurred the Bureau into its old saddle, as the purveyor of trans-Zambesian labour for the benefit of Southern Rhodesian colonist employers. In the period stretching between mid-1919 to the end of 1920, the recruiting activities of this labour organisation, together with a spontaneous stream of independent labour migration from the trans-Zambesian territories to Southern Rhodesia, reached such a high peak that the authorities and colonist employers in Northern Rhodesia were, evidently, becoming worried by the economic, social and political implications of these developments. In fact, the dimensions and extent of this post-war trans-Zambesian labour immigration into Southern Rhodesia and their effects on the labour market there were very well demonstrated by the hostile reactions of the colonist farmers in Southern Rhodesia to the congratulatory attitude of one of the former BSACo. officials, Sir F. J. Newton, with regard to the permission granted by the Colonial Office to colonists in Kenya to utilise forced labour in March 1920.<sup>438</sup>

Although Sir Newton, who was, by 1920, farming in the Mazoe district, had merely sought to justify his personal role in also sanctioning forced labour in 1911 and although his proposal was sympathetically viewed in some circles of the Colonial Office where Henry Lambert, for instance, asserted:

I have no particular sympathy with the view that the native has an inherent right to be lazy.<sup>439</sup>

the farming community in Southern Rhodesia, backed by the missionaries, though for different motives, of course, would not approve of compulsory labour, at this particular stage. Instead, they seized the chance to attack the BSACo., with which Sir Newton was associated, for what they regarded as the bankruptcy of its labour policies and its proclivity to rob the Bureau, 'with Shylock-avidity', through instalments from 'an already over-burdened (mining) industry that (could) ill-afford such a drain on its resources.'<sup>440</sup> It would, obviously, appear that the colonist farmers in Southern Rhodesia were, in 1920, more concerned with their anti-Charter campaign than with the labour supply problem, which, only a year before, had been a cause of so much

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<sup>438</sup> C. O. 417/636: Letter to the Editor of the Rhodesia Herald by Sir F. J. Newton: March 11, 1920.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid: Minute by Lambert to Sir G. V. Fiddes: April 22, 1920.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid: Letter by 'J. M. B.' of Gatooma to the Editor of the Rhodesia Herald: March 16, 1920.

concern within the farming community.

It was, however, in Northern Rhodesia that evidence on the global character of labour migration to the South was more apparent by 1920. In the former North-Western Rhodesia portion of this territory, Barotseland and the Kafue districts were quite drastically affected by this massive labour migration to Southern Rhodesia, with the result that even the Lozi aristocracy itself, in the Barotse districts, was becoming increasingly disconcerted. Thus in March 1920, the Lozi ruler, Letia, who had assumed the title Yeta III since the death of his father Lewanika in 1916, and his brother, Chief Imwiko, the induna of Sesheka, were said to be discontented by the growing number of their able-bodied men leaving the country 'in the first instance to seek work and finding the surroundings -(in the destination areas)- more congenial... -(had)- remained away...', thus joining the class of the so-called machona (the lost ones).<sup>441</sup>

In the Lealui division of the Barotse district, for example, where over 1,200 young men had left during the period between 1908 and 1915 never returning to Barotseland, the situation was said to be worsening as a result of the current renewed recruiting activities of the Bureau for farm work in Southern Rhodesia. In 1919 and 1920, the Bureau was, actually, said to have collected about 2,139 recruits for this type of work in the South. The same situation was also observed in the Mumbwa division of the Kafue district, where a greater proportion of young men from the Lumbu, Ila -(Mashukulumbwe)- and allied ethnic groups were taking to labour migration to Southern Rhodesia in 1920, on an unprecedented scale. In this area, the authorities blamed the war experiences, whereby these people had been extensively recruited as war carriers, with the result that this precedence 'opened up new fields of labour for the local natives which their pre-war choice of confinement to a self-prescribed area -(had)- denied to them, and -(therefore were now)- becoming less dependent on local employment.'<sup>442</sup>

In the former North-Eastern Rhodesian territory, a similar pattern of

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<sup>441</sup> C. O. 417/658: Extracts from Annual Report of the Barotse District for the Year Ended March 31, 1920 by Mr. G. P. Lyons, Resident Magistrate.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid: Extracts from Annual Report of the Mumbwa Sub-District of the Kafue District for the Year Ended March 31, 1920 by Mr. L. A. Russell, N/C.

developments was taking place with regard to labour migration to Southern Rhodesia between 1919 and 1920, whether under the aegis of the Bureau or independently. But, unlike those conditions obtaining in former North-Western Rhodesia, the consequences of this phenomenon in North-Eastern Rhodesia, particularly in the three divisions of the East Luangwa district, the most favourable source of labour supply to Southern Rhodesia, were more fundamental in their social, economic and political implications. In the Fort Jameson division of this East Luangwa district, the Native Commissioner, H. F. C. Robinson, was evidently worried by the social implications of this increased volume of labour migration to Southern Rhodesia amongst his Ngoni wards, whether the migrants so involved returned with money or not. Thus he stated:

There is no guarantee that these natives once they leave the Territory -(Northern Rhodesia)- will receive food or be looked after adequately. They lose touch with their relatives. Frequently they are weaklings, whose only medical examination has been for sleeping sickness. So many relatives are outside the district that immorality and domestic disputes will inevitably<sup>443</sup> increase unless their wives know when to expect them home.

In the Petauke division of the same East Luangwa district, where the Nsenga and other ethnic groups of the area had been so hard hit by the post-war rise in prices that they had abjured not 'to buy clothes or calico until the prices -(had)- come down' once more and, instead, had resorted to 'the old bark cloth and skin clothing' as an alternative, the Assistant Magistrate, E. Sharpe, whilst expressing concern at the increased volume of emigration to Southern Rhodesia was, however, not too displeased by the corresponding increase in cash revenue accruing from the process. For this reason, Sharpe was quick to point out that the African migrant labourers, working on the mines of Southern Rhodesia, had contributed about £364:17s:0d in revenue for the financial year 1920/1921 in comparison to £74:3s0d for 1919/1920, when labour recruiting was slightly restricted.<sup>444</sup> But it was in the third and last section of the East Luangwa district, the Lundazi division, where labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia had the most severe impact on the socio-

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<sup>443</sup> C. O. 417/676: Extracts from the Annual Report of the Fort Jameson Sub-District, East Luangwa, for the Year Ended March 31, 1921 by H. F. C. Robinson, N. C.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid: Extracts from the Annual Report of the Petauka Sub-District, East Luangwa, for the Year Ended March 31, 1921 by E. Sharpe, Asst. Magistrate.

political structures of the Senga, Chewa, Tumbuka and other ethnic groups of this region by 1920.

Of course, a number of reasons may have accounted for the intensity of labour recruitment by the Bureau and the extensive nature of independent migration in this area by 1920. The Lundazi and the Fort Jameson divisions of the East Luangwa districts had been closed to recruitment during the war, whereas the Petauke division was not totally sealed off. Moreover, in the Lundazi division in particular, a new rate of taxation had been imposed in 1920, raising this impost from 5/- per head in 1919 to 10/- in 1920. For these reasons, Bureau recruiting agents and other purveyors of labour supply to the Southern labour markets may have seized the opportunity to make up for their lost chances, but, of course, with adverse consequences for the local socio-political infrastructure. The extent of labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia, from the African societies of the Lundazi division, reached such a scale in 1920 that even administrative officials were alarmed by the increasing tendency amongst the traditional rulers and messengers of the Native Department to join the bandwagon, thus forsaking their positions and responsibilities on the local scene. Evincing this streak of official concern, T. S. Sandford, the Native Commissioner of the Lundazi division, accordingly, state in March 1921:

So far this -(tendency to emigrate)- has not spread beyond village headmen though one unofficial chief messenger has this year thrown up his post to proceed to Southern Rhodesia. In this connection it has to be noted that chiefs in this district -(Lundazi)- do not own livestock and their conditions are not to be compared with the wages of most houseboys and yet their work is of great importance to the government. Threats of punishment for non-feassance may produce some result but not the best and merely lead to dissatisfaction. Their position can be summed up as many penalties, little pay -(and)- no privileges.<sup>445</sup>

In this respect, the Administration of Northern Rhodesia was certainly being hoist with its own petard.

From one point of view, it might be argued that the success of the Bureau, in its involvement with trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia between 1919 and 1920, was too good to be true. Indeed, in this success lay the seeds of the beginning of this labour organisation's demise. Panic-stricken administrative officials and colonist employers in Northern Rhodesia

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<sup>445</sup> ibid: Extracts from the Annual Report for the Lundazi Division, East Luangwa District, for the Year Ended March 31, 1921 by T. S. Sandford, N/C.

were, actually, becoming worried by what they viewed as the progressive denudation of their sources of labour supply and the consequent economic retardation which this movement of labour to the South implied. In Southern Rhodesia too, the increased rate of trans-Zambesian labour immigration, both under the aegis of the Bureau and independently, and the increasing pace of the process of local African integration into the colonist economic system, since the end of the war, as symbolized by the growing size of local African female labour forthcoming onto the labour market,<sup>446</sup> naturally led to the conclusion, especially after 1920, that the Bureau had become irrelevant and redundant as an instrument for mobilising African labour supply.

In Northern Rhodesia, the officials had already observed that the growing volume of labour migration to Southern Rhodesia was, in one way or another, linked with the deepening labour shortage problem amongst the colonist farmers of the territory. Accordingly, it was, therefore, tempting, for both administrative officials and colonist farmers there, to attribute the labour crisis in Northern Rhodesia to either the labour recruiting activities of the Bureau or independent labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia. Thus G. G. P. Lyons, the Resident Magistrate for the Barotse district, pursuing this cause-and-effect line of argument on labour emigration from Barotse and its consequences on the local labour market, stated, in March 1920, that:

An attempt was made to induce recruits offering for farm work in Southern Rhodesia to sign on instead for farm work in Northern Rhodesia towards the end of 1919 when labour was wanted so badly in Northern Rhodesia, but very few responded. The natives plead lower pay, worse treatment and perhaps a desire to go further afield, if they are going out for work at all, may have something to do with their disinclination to go to this class of work (locally). I think lack of familiarity with (the conditions of) work and of the employers may have something to do with it also. If the pay was made the same as (that) for Southern Rhodesia and the same rations and good treatment assured I see no reason why Northern (Rhodesian) farms should not become popular as a working field for the Barotse. . . .<sup>447</sup>

The colonist farmers of Northern Rhodesia too had themselves started to agitate against labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia, on the grounds that

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<sup>446</sup> For the growing number of African women offering for domestic service in post-war Southern Rhodesia for instance, Vide: Report of the C/N/C for the Year 1919: pp. 10-2.

<sup>447</sup> C. O. 417/658: Extracts from the Annual Report of the Barotse District, . . .



this contributed, both directly and indirectly, to their economic ruination. In former North-Western Rhodesia, we have already seen how the farmers of that province voiced their discontent, towards the end of 1916, over the question of Bureau operations and what they considered the inequitable distribution of farm labour by this labour organisation, of which they were members.<sup>448</sup> With the post-war shortage in 1919 and 1920, this discontent even took a more tangible form. Those farmers in former North-Eastern Rhodesia, who had never sought membership to the Bureau and had their own association and separate identity well represented by the North-Eastern Rhodesia Agricultural and Commercial Association, based in Fort Jameson but with strong sentimental attachment to Zomba, were clearly more articulate in their opposition to both Bureau labour recruiting activities and independent labour emigration to Southern Rhodesia.

In the pre-war years, the colonist farmers of former North-Eastern Rhodesia had tended to emphasise the risks of migrant labourers spreading the dreaded sleeping sickness and the concomitant rise in wages which the process of emigration entailed. But in the post-war period this tune changed as these farmers faced a more serious labour crisis. Whilst in the pre-war period these farmers had unsuccessfully tried to grow cotton as a commercial crop for North-Eastern Rhodesia, in the post-war era they changed to the production of Virginia tobacco for the purpose of which they had persuaded a Cape Town firm, the United Tobacco Company (South) Limited, to establish a tobacco factory for purchasing and processing the leaf. For the success of this new cash crop, for which it was alleged that there was 'a very great demand in England and South Africa... and ~~(that)~~ there ~~(was)~~ practically no limit to the amount that can be produced provided we ~~(the farmers)~~ have the sympathetic assistance of the Administration... ~~(over labour and transport)~~ difficulties...',<sup>449</sup> abundant labour supply at very cheap rates was required.

Under these circumstances, permission for the Bureau to resume recruiting activities in Northern Rhodesia after the war must have been wrung from the authorities of that territory with utmost difficulty. Perhaps the only

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<sup>448</sup> Vide: Supra: p. 535

<sup>449</sup> C. O. 417/617: G. R. Christie, Secretary, The North-Eastern Rhodesia Agricultural and Commercial Association, Fort Jameson to the Resident Commissioner, Salisbury: November 29, 1918.

justification these authorities may have given for such a paradoxical decision may have been similar to the one previously given to the same colonist farmers' association, in August 1917, that Southern Rhodesia was in greater need for labour, because 'the mines ~~(were)~~ mostly working for the Imperial Government ~~(and that their)~~ output ~~(was)~~ an Imperial necessity.'<sup>450</sup> But, to some extent, the Administration of Northern Rhodesia had also tried to meet the post-war demands of these colonist farmers, especially those of former North-Eastern Rhodesia where there was a more genuine case of shortage, by instituting clandestine measures to procure African labour, in that part of the country, by force.

Thus in May 1919, one colonist farmer, W.A. Sayer, who had found cause to quarrel with the local administration in the Fort Jameson division of the East Luangwa district, informed the Anti-Slavery Society in London, on conditions then imposed on the African communities of that area 'which, if not actual and complete slavery, ~~(were)~~ not distantly removed from such.' Sayer went on to reveal how the BSACo. local officials used African police and messengers to supply him and other farmers of the area with labourers:

Districts were raided by native police and uniformed emissaries styled messengers.... Wholesale arrests of natives of all ages were effected. These were herded together and, under the compulsion of in some instances armed police, and in others the uniformed power of the 'messengers', conveyed to the Administration offices in Fort Jameson.... At the Administration offices the natives were divided into gangs and... sent off under escort to labour for a period of six months on tobacco producing estates. A gang numbering seventeen of these unwilling and coerced natives, in varying degrees of malnutrition, was brought to me by two police ~~(men)~~ in October ~~(1918)~~. They were youths, their ages ranging from twelve years to sixteen years or so.... Other planters were similarly issued with gangs, and numbers of these forced labourers had just returned to their homes for a rest from more or less arduous spells elsewhere, when they were arrested by force and despatched to various places for a further term of naturally undesirable work. It is slavery and will bear no other interpretation.<sup>451</sup>

Once such a process of systematic coercion, to procure labour to meet

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<sup>450</sup> C. O. 417/620: W. A. Sawyer, Fort Jameson to Sir T. Fowell Buxton, President, APS: May 24, 1919.

<sup>451</sup> ibid: Minutes of Deputation of the North-Eastern Rhodesian Farmers and Commercial Association with His Honour the Administrator ~~(Wallace)~~ at Fort Jameson on August 4, 1917.

the pressing needs of the colonist farmers in one particular region of Northern Rhodesia, was revealed, it naturally became untenable for administrative officials either to pursue it further or apply it to the other regions of the territory. Obviously, these coercive designs may have been deployed in an attempt to avoid any form of restrictive measures on labour recruitment and emigration in general, which might have embarrassed the Bureau and those colonist employers it served south of the Zambesi. But as the war years receded into memory and the so-called 'Imperial necessity' behind mineral production in Southern Rhodesia became less significant, even the more enthusiastic supporters of the Bureau within the Northern Rhodesian official circles could no longer support its role in the process of trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia. By the end of 1920, the Administration of Northern Rhodesia had apparently reached the end of its tethers and, consequently, the axe fell onto the Bureau's labour recruiting activities in that territory.

Thus it was essentially these changed circumstances of the early 1920's, which, certainly, contributed, in various ways, to the progressive decline of the Bureau and its role in trans-Zambesian labour migration. By the second half of 1920, for instance, wide-ranging restrictions were imposed on labour recruitment by the Bureau for Southern Rhodesia, in order to avoid crippling any prospects the colonist farmers of the railway belt of Northern Rhodesia might have had on their local labour supply. These measures were, apparently, a culmination of a prolonged wrangle and a number of broken promises between the Bureau and the government of Northern Rhodesia, on how best to deal with the labour problems of the farming community of former North-Western Rhodesia. For its part, the Bureau had undertaken to re-direct the efforts of its two labour agents in Barotseland, Wheatcroft and Campbell, on this matter, whilst two more hands, Morrell and Eyre, were also sent up to Barotseland in September 1919, ostensibly to assist and 'to make special efforts to obtain recruits necessary to satisfy the requirements of your (Northern Rhodesian) farmers', in order to minimize any possible conflict between this group of colonist employers and the Bureau.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> A 3/18/30/20: Hawksley, Managing Director, RNLB, Salisbury to Secretary for Native Affairs, Livingstone: September 23, 1919.

Yet at the same time, this labour agency was quite aware of the problems involved in meeting those labour requirements of the Northern Rhodesian colonist farmers, especially given, in this case, the comparatively unfavourable working conditions then obtaining on the farms in former North-Western Rhodesia; conditions which had consequently led to a situation whereby the colonist farmers in question were faced with the paradox of labour shortage, whilst, at the same time, they 'lived in the midst of a very considerable native population', from which the Southern Rhodesian and the Katangan labour markets were systematically making heavy and successful withdrawals. For this reason, the Bureau management in Salisbury and Bulawayo could only give its pledge to bail the colonist farmers of Northern Rhodesia's railway belt out of their labour shortage crisis in 1919, either under duress or along with heavily circumscribed conditions. Thus Douglas Hawksley, the Bureau's Managing Director, informed the Secretary for Native Affairs in Livingstone, in September 1919, that:

Our agents can only use persuasion and influence they have in order to get recruits to undertake any particular form of work, and if these fail, I know of no way of doing it. We cannot direct<sup>453</sup> or force recruits to undertake work they decline to engage for.

Because of what the Bureau regarded as its genuine but unsuccessful attempts to meet the needs of the Northern Rhodesian colonist farmers, which seemed to be then largely undermined by numerous market factors the Northern Rhodesian colonist employers themselves were better placed to deal with, the management of this labour body eventually concluded that the Northern Rhodesian government was, somehow, asking their agency to redeem a situation over which they had no means of control to influence the outcome of events. Accordingly, the Bureau management were thus prepared to accept the worst of any ensuing consequences, in case prohibition on labour recruitment were re-imposed. Hawksley, undoubtedly, demonstrated this attitude, when he further stated:

I would respectfully submit that it would be a very great hardship, both on the natives of Barotseland and on ourselves -(the Bureau)-, if you -(Northern Rhodesia government)- were to stop our operations until the labour requirements of the Northern -(Rhodesian)- farmers are satisfied.

We have done and are still doing our best to supply this labour -(to Northern Rhodesian farmers)-.

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

In the final analysis, it was on the basis of comparable working conditions on the farms of both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, as opposed to the labour recruit's right to choose his employer within the constraints of a congruent pattern of overall political control by the BSACo., that the future of the Bureau's labour recruiting activities and, indeed, trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia, in general, had to be decided. By October 1919, when J. C. C. Coxhead, the Secretary for Native Affairs himself, had apparently gone into the Bureau compound at Livingstone and tried to persuade the recruits bound for Southern Rhodesia and 'managed to induce -(only)- 39 natives to go to Northern Rhodesia farmers' and of whom 'the majority of them were however unwilling to do so',<sup>454</sup> it became evident that the movement to Southern Rhodesia, which various BSACo. officials across the Zambesi had hitherto encouraged, was far more complicated than it appeared to the eye. A temporary ban on labour recruiting for Southern Rhodesia in Barotseland, initially for two months, was imposed consequently.<sup>455</sup> During the course of the ban, Bureau agents were to recruit farm labour for Northern Rhodesia till a specified quota had been reached. On its part, the government of Northern Rhodesia undertook 'to explain to the Natives in Barotseland that no more recruits would be enlisted for Southern Rhodesia until a sufficient number had enlisted for work on Northern -(Rhodesian)- farms'. At the same time, the labour shortage was also to be 'explained to the chiefs -(of Barotseland)- with a view to their using their influence to induce people to engaged for this class of work,'<sup>456</sup>

But even these, obviously, drastic measures failed to meet the expectations of the colonist farmers of Northern Rhodesia and the prohibition was once more introduced, towards the end of 1920, with more serious intent than before. This new round of restrictions on labour recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was, evidently, precipitated by the failure of the railway belt farmers of Northern Rhodesia to procure some 600 labourers, whom they required since March 1920. As a matter of fact, the two actual issues of controversy,

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid: J. C. C. Coxhead, Secretary for Native Affairs, Livingstone, to Managing Director, RNLB, Salisbury: October 6, 1919.

<sup>455</sup> Coxhead to Hawksley: October 9, 1919.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid: Hawksley to Coxhead: October 21, 1919.

for both the Bureau and the Administration of Northern Rhodesia, were, firstly, the need to divert labour recruits from the Luapula and Awemba districts as well as other parts of former North-Eastern Rhodesia, where such labour was still proceeding to Southern Rhodesia in large numbers, to Northern Rhodesia's railway belt farmers. Secondly, there was the low wage tariff on the Northern Rhodesian farms which the Bureau wanted reformed, thus ultimately enabling these colonist employers to attract sufficient labour.

In view of the contentions pointed out above, T.V. Bird, the Acting Managing Director of the Bureau, accordingly, conveyed the considerations of his agency to the Administration of Northern Rhodesia in Livingstone, in September 1920, stating that:

The question of whether natives will engage for employment in the North or in the South is decided entirely by themselves but I think that there is little doubt that the other conditions being equal, the determining factor is the higher wage offered in the South to adult labourers which is 18/- per month as against 15/- in the North. I would therefore strongly urge that Northern employers ~~(should)~~ increase the wage offered to adults to 18/-.<sup>457</sup>

Bird's proposal was unacceptable to the authorities of Northern Rhodesia who were, at this juncture, more inclined to deploy political rather than economic remedies to solve the labour problem of their own farmers. Thus E. N. Carlton, who had succeeded Coxhead as the Secretary for Native Affairs, indicated in his reply to the Bureau:

It would appear unreasonable to expect Northern Rhodesian farmers to pay Southern Rhodesian wages to natives working in their own country and would ~~not~~<sup>458</sup> ~~(in any case)~~ have any great effect on the labour supply.

Perhaps things would have looked different for the Bureau if, as in the first decade of the twentieth century when it was founded, it had had all spheres of colonist public opinion in Southern Rhodesia behind it. But by 1920, the unstinted support, which this labour agency had hitherto enjoyed from the colonist public in Southern Rhodesia, was visibly dwindling. With the exception of the colonist farmers, then lately converted to the cause of the Bureau, most colonist employers and officials in Southern Rhodesia, by

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid: T. V. Bird, Managing Director, RNLB, Salisbury to Secretary for Native Affairs: Livingstone: September 10, 1920.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid: E. N. Carlton, Secretary for Native Affairs, Livingstone to Bird: Salisbury: September 22, 1920.

the early 1920's, were becoming increasingly convinced that this labour organisation was losing its significance in the face of massive independent trans-Zambesian labour immigration into the country and the gradual integration of the local Africans into the white colonist economy.

Indeed, at a meeting of Superintendents of Natives and Native Commissioners held in Salisbury in October 1920, whilst these officials of Southern Rhodesia's Native Department had praised the Bureau for its great job in '(paving)- the way for the introduction of labour from the North', they also concluded, however, that the value of this labour agency had been greatly 'diminished -(as)- in order to recruit labour the Bureau -(had)- to go further afield which -(added)- to the expense of recruiting....'<sup>459</sup> This development was conceded as much by the Bureau itself, when Hawksley informed the body's Annual General Meeting, in June 1921, that amongst the organisation's current difficulties was the fact that it was 'only able to recruit natives in numbers from those parts of Northern Rhodesia which -(entailed)- a long and expensive journey to and from Southern Rhodesia', like the Luapula, Awemba and North Luangwa districts, where the recruits had to be brought by train either from Broken Hill or Ndola, distances of about 368 and 489 miles respectively from Livingstone and at great expense in feeding and transport costs.<sup>460</sup>

However, by the end of 1920, changes were taking place which even officials themselves could not afford to ignore. In relation to trans-Zambesian labour migration, the Native Department officials, at their Salisbury conference, observed:

These Northern natives -(now)- make their own arrangements as to places of rest and food on their journey, and some of them are two months on the road... -(They)- arrive in good physical condition and many of them work their way down by carrying out agricultural work for a few days at a time at the different kraals they stop at, for which they receive food. When they arrive here -(in Southern Rhodesia)- they choose their own masters and are entirely free agents.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> C. O. 417/655: E. W. S. Montague, Acting Administrator to Secretary, BSACo. : October 29, 1920.

<sup>460</sup> C. O. 417/676: Report of the Annual Meeting of the RNLB for June, 1921: Quote in Rhodesia Herald June 8, 1921.

<sup>461</sup> C. O. 417/655: Montague to BSACo. : October 29, 1920.

In the circumstances, the problem for the officials in Southern Rhodesia, with regard to trans-Zambesian labour by 1920, was not so much its shortage as compared to the question of the proper care of these immigrants, once they arrived in the country.

A proposal was, therefore, put forward at this period, albeit unsuccessfully, by the Native Department, to abolish the Bureau altogether and substitute it with a government department, charged with the task of looking after foreign African labourers entering the country, especially from the trans-Zambesian region, in large numbers. Although this suggestion had to wait for 1941, when this branch of African administration, termed the Department of Native Immigration, was established, with A. L. Holland as its first supervisor,<sup>462</sup> it is quite clear that the days of the Bureau, by the early 1920's, were already numbered. This view was strongly endorsed by the Native Labour Committee of Enquiry appointed in April 1921 to look into the state of labour supply and consisting of four members, namely, E. W. S. Montague, the Secretary for Mines and Works in Southern Rhodesia; George Mitchell and Theodore Haddon, representing the Southern Rhodesian mining industry, and finally, Hugh C. Marshall, the Magistrate of Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>463</sup> The conclusion of this Committee of Enquiry that the Bureau had outlived its functions and was, therefore, redundant, though strongly attacked by the colonist farmers, represented, in this respect, by the Umvukwe Ranchers and Farmers' Association of the Lomagundi district,<sup>464</sup> was, from the Bureau's point of view, one of the final straws, which ultimately broke the camel's back.

Of course, the end may not have been as abrupt for the Bureau as the cut and dried decision of the Native Labour Committee of Enquiry pre-supposes. But all the indications, between 1920 and 1922, did not, certainly augur well for this labour organisation's future in the process of trans-Zambesian labour migration to Southern Rhodesia. As the Bureau management themselves conceded, in the end, trans-Zambesians were no longer interested in either

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<sup>462</sup> Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs (the C/N/C) for the Year 1942:  
p. 10.

<sup>463</sup> C. O. 417/659: Douglas-Jones to Prince Arthur of Connaught: April 14, 1921.

<sup>464</sup> A 3/18/30/33: S. P. Light, Hon. Secretary, Umvukwe Ranchers and Farmers' Association to Secretary, Dept. of Administrator: July 28, 1921.



coming down through the medium of this agency or in utilising its facilities for the purpose. The 'twelve-months' contract, hitherto prescribed by the Bureau and very much adored by colonist employers like the farmers, as well as the arbitrary allocation of recruits to 'strange employers', which the system of assisted labour migration implied, had become quite unpopular amongst potential trans-Zambesian labour migrants, who preferred to proceed to the labour markets of the South on their own.<sup>465</sup>

In one sense, this dwindling importance of the role of the Bureau as a medium of foreign labour supply was starkly revealed by the fact that out of the 43,205 African labourers who entered Southern Rhodesia in 1924, only about 4,589 were supplied by this Bureau. Besides, all the amount of labour which this agency could supply to the mining industry of Southern Rhodesia merely constituted about 10.45 per cent of the total labour force engaged in that particular industry.<sup>466</sup> This state of affairs was, perhaps, a logical development from the conditions, envisaged with regret by the Bureau itself at the beginning of 1922, when a surplus of over 800 labour recruits led to instructions being sent to the body's recruiting agents 'to suspend operations and only forward such natives as ~~-(were)-~~ already definitely engaged' and to anticipate 'any considerable betterment in the outlook of the farming industry or any other increase in mining activities ~~-(which might)-~~ at once alter the position and create a large demand for native labour.'<sup>467</sup>

In essence, this diminishing role of the Bureau in foreign and trans-Zambesian labour immigration into Southern Rhodesia did not only imply the end of active official co-operation in the process of labour migration as of old, but it also spelt the end of Bureau monopoly over trans-Zambesian labour supply and the withdrawal of official financial backing which this labour agency had enjoyed since 1903. Thus the move in February 1922 by the Administration in Salisbury, to accept the claims by the mining industry for a refund from the Bureau for the support rendered to this body by the miners since 1911, under the Labour Tax Ordinance, and the subsequent reduction of the

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<sup>465</sup> C. O. 417/676: Report of the Annual Meeting of the RNLB for June, 1921.

<sup>466</sup> L. Burrell: The Native Problem in Africa: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.: London: (Second Edition): 1965: pp. 226-7.

<sup>467</sup> A 3/18/30/33: Managing Director's (RNLB) Weekly Report No. 369 for the period Ending: January 28, 1922.

government subsidy to this body from £12,000 to £2,000 in 1926, with also a warning on possible withdrawal of the subsidy altogether by 1927,<sup>468</sup> obviously inflicted a severe blow on the Bureau's financial base.

Moreover, the end of BSACo. rule, in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, in 1923 appears to have removed that most effective monolithic factor, which had, by both direct and indirect means, influenced a discernible linear pattern of political and economic development to which the two Company territories were inextricably committed. The intensive development of the copper mining industry in Northern Rhodesia after 1924,<sup>469</sup> was also a significant indication that this territory was no longer to remain attached to the coat-tails of its sister state in the South. Its role as a labour reserve for development capital in the South henceforth ceased, as the local copper mining industry began to consume more and more of its labour supply locally. Indeed, with the formation of the Native Labour Association in 1929 in Northern Rhodesia to mobilise labour supply to the best advantage of that country's copper mining industry,<sup>470</sup> the rupture between Northern and Southern Rhodesia, in terms of labour supply, had become irreversibly.

The end of company rule on both sides of the Zambesi, may have put an end to effective official co-operation on trans-Zambesian labour migration, but did not, however, terminate the phenomenon altogether. Independent labour migration from across the Zambesi remained as strong as ever. In fact, though colonist employers of labour may have either abandoned or minimised the frequency with which they had hitherto resorted to the Bureau for adequate labour supply, the ethical justification for the persistence of foreign labour immigration, nonetheless, remained strongly entrenched in the minds of the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia, in their bid to utilise the cheapest form of labour they could lay hands on. After all, in 1921 the Administration of Southern Rhodesia had rejected the recommendations of two International Labour Conferences held in Washington and Genoa, including even such aspects as the limitation of the labourers' working hours 'to eight in the day and forty-eight in the week', as inapplicable to the territory 'either in

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<sup>468</sup> Burrell: The Native Problem in Africa: loc. cit.

<sup>469</sup> E. L. Berger: Labour, Race and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence: Oxford University Press: London: 1974: pp. 10-1.

<sup>470</sup> Heisler: op. cit., pp. 42-3.

their... form or with such modifications as might be suggested by local conditions.<sup>471</sup> Cheap labour was the paramount factor not only in Southern Rhodesia, but in the African sub-continent, as a whole, and the best way to achieve it was through foreign African labour immigration. With this view in mind, Dr. C. T. Loram of the Native Affairs Commission, based in Cape Town, had thus contacted his counterpart, the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury, in June 1922, indicating, in a tone of despair, that:

The indenture of cheap native labour is a thorn in our side here (in South Africa). We get boys from (Southern Rhodesia). You get them from Nyasaland and so on and all to keep down the price of labour. How long can this go on? Already our natives are asking for representations on the Council of the League of Nations<sup>472</sup> as far as labour movements are concerned.

Thus for the sake of sustaining the faith of the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia on the importance of foreign African labour as an essential ingredient in the utilisation of cheap labour, the functions of the Bureau after 1923, when trans-Zambesians were increasingly coming into the country without this body's assistance, dealt, in the main, with the maintenance of ferries on such points as the Zambesi, Luangwa and Hunyani rivers to facilitate the crossing of the trans-Zambesian migrants, especially during the rain season; and provision of free food and permanent water supplies, particularly, along those labour routes passing through and near the Portuguese borders, where complaints on shortages had been frequently raised.<sup>473</sup> It was essentially in this capacity, as a means of facilitating the mobility of independent labour migrants, that the Bureau, therefore, managed to survive in the period after 1923. Although the demand for cheap labour was as prominent as ever, with the result that the colonist farmers in Southern Rhodesia were in 1927 even resorting to local female and child labour for tobacco and cotton picking,<sup>474</sup> the Bureau had become outrightly irrelevant to the colonist employers' general scheme on labour supply and utilisation. For this reason, when the economic depression of the early 1930's set in, this body, which had faithfully served the colonist employers of Southern Rhodesia for three full decades, had

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<sup>471</sup> C. O. 417/668: Chaplin to Prince Arthur of Connaught: October 15, 1921.

<sup>472</sup> N 3/33/12: C. T. Loram, Cape Town to C/N/C Taylor, Salisbury: June 6, 1922.

<sup>473</sup> D. O. 63/1: Sir John Chancellor, Governor to LCMS Amery, MP, Secret: January 6, 1926

<sup>474</sup> D. O. 63/3: Chancellor to Amery: Secret: July 7, 1927.

to be abolished in 1933, ironically, as an unnecessary luxury, incapable of playing any further useful part in African labour matters, either in terms of local African labour supply or with regard to trans-Zambesian labour migrants.<sup>475</sup> Moreover, in relation to one form of trans-Zambesian labour supply, that is, Nyasaland labour migration to the South, the role of the Bureau was, from the start, simply peripheral and hence its influence proportionately minimal, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

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<sup>475</sup>Van Onselen: Chibaro: pp. 118-9.