

The 1896-97 Southern Rhodesian War Reconsidered.

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The debate about the Shona war of resistance in 1896-7 against colonial rule continues to gather momentum. There are three dimensions, possibly four to it. First at the level of organisation, Terence Ranger argues that the co-ordination of the war was achieved through a 'millenarian religious leadership',¹ but David Beach claims that major Shona spirit mediums had much less extensive areas of influence than Ranger ascribed to them;² Julian Cobbing has denied that the Mwari cult played any significant role in the risings at all or that it exercised any influence over the Ndebele.³ The third dimension of the debate is ideological. Madziwanyika Tsomondo contends that 'Ranger blunders by exclusively associating Shona resistance with the collective liberation war of 1896-7'.⁴ He cogently argues that the Shona had never accepted colonial rule and that the war should not be characterized as a 'revolt' or re-bellion' because to do so 'implies that the Shona had submitted to alien rule...'⁵ In other words, the Shona resisted the introduction of colonial rule from the beginning. This takes us to the fourth aspect of the debate, namely the role played by individual paramountcies.

In this war as in similar resistance movements, notably the Maji-Maji in Tanzania, and Bambata in Zululand,⁶ some African rulers either remained neutral or collaborated with the aliens. In each case both contemporary and later historians have been curious to establish motives as to why this was so. In the 1896-7 war of resistance in Mashonaland, Tendai Mutasa, ruler of

the Manyika kingdom did not participate. Basically two explanations have been advanced, first that Mutasa stayed out of the war because his old rival and neighbour, Makoni, ruler of the Maungwe kingdom in the west had joined the war,⁷ secondly that the arrest of a Portuguese party in 1890 at Mutasa's court inspired fear in him.⁸ Both views miss the point. What has not been appreciated by historians is that some African potentates, notably Mtoko of Budya and Mutasa of Manyika had already experienced 'an extreme degree of social, political, military and economic dislocation'.⁹ They had been actively resisting colonial rule since 1890 and by 1896 were not in a position, morally or materially to prosecute a larger war'. In the case of the Manyika the scramble for mineral concessions between the Mozambique and British South Africa Companies created dissension in the king's council and in the process undermined his authority and prestige. After the elimination of the Mozambique Company by the British South Africa Company (BSA Co.), the scramble for land and mineral concessions assumed a new intensity between the African Portuguese Syndicate and the BSA Co. from 1890 to 1894. It is in this context - a mini-scramble for mineral concessions and land in Manyika - that Tendai Mutasa's non-participation in the war becomes intelligible.

The history of the mini-scramble for Manyika dates back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Portuguese had had trading contacts with the east, north east and west of Zimbabwe since the sixteenth century. They were trying to re-establish themselves after their expulsion from these regions at the turn of the seventeenth century.

Two men in particular, colonel Joaquim Carlos Paiva de Andrada and Manuel Antonio de Souza were closely associated with the Portuguese government in its attempt to resuscitate Portuguese commercial influence in, as well as introducing Portuguese political control over the region.¹⁰ Andrada was a businessman to whom the Portuguese government gave wide ranging mineral concessions in Manyika without consulting the ruler of the kingdom. De Souza was a wealthy Goanese who had several estates and thousands of Africans under him as soldiers. He came to Mozambique from Goa in 1853. De Souza used his soldiers as mercenaries and intervened in several wars of succession in the neighbouring

African states.¹¹ As a result, he was in a position to grab land, give bogus protection treaties and sometimes marry into African royal families in order to claim the right to succeed the ruling king. Because of these activities, the Portuguese government decided to exploit his influence and multiple contacts with African rulers in the region, especially in the kingdom of Manyika, which he claimed as his because he had helped the ruling king to accede to the throne. In return for his services, the Portuguese government undertook to educate his sons in Lisbon and gave him an honorific title and a sinecural position. The 1880s and early 1890s are replete with the predatory exploits of Andrada and de Souza, backed, of course, by the Portuguese government.¹² As a result, that government put up claims to large parts of Zimbabwe.

These claims were contested by the British government which was also interested in colonizing the area. The British government sought to realize its ambitions by supporting an adventurer, Cecil John Rhodes, who formed the BSA Co., for the purpose. The scramble for Manyika between the British government and the BSA Co on the one hand and the Mozambique Company of Andrada, and de Souza and the Portuguese government on the other, resulted in the partition of the kingdom of Manyika in 1890. Andrada obtained a concession to form a company in 1878.¹³ The following year he brought out a company in Paris called *La Société des Fondateurs de la Campagne Générale du Zambéze*. The company was liquidated in 1883 and Andrade formed two companies, the East African Company, which was never floated, and the *Compania Africana*, which never prospered and soon went into liquidation. He was more successful the following year when he brought out the Ophir Company with a nominal capital of 90 000 milreis (£20 000) of which not more than 30 000 milreis (£6 600) was actually subscribed. This company met with extraordinary difficulties because of wars which a half caste family known as da Cruz, had been waging against the Portuguese in the Zambezi since 1856. The concession expired and Andrade who was in Portugal was unable to obtain an extension of the time allowed or fresh capital. After considerable negotiations, he started another company called the Mozambique Company, with a capital of £40 000. This was legally constituted by a decree of

20th December, 1888. The generous terms of this concession enabled the company to establish its agents in the goldiferous regions of the kingdom, notably the Mutari, Rebvwe and Baizi Valleys.

The company had stores spread all over the country and carried on a system of trading within the hydrographic basin of the rivers Buzi and Aruangwa and the country above the Save river.¹⁴ It is also said that it had stores at Mutasa's court. The headquarters of the company was in Lisbon and was purely Portuguese although a considerable amount of French money was involved. It was represented at Masekesa in Manyika by Baron de Rezende. As far as one can ascertain no treaty existed between the African rulers in the area and the company, and it would seem that the local population treated it with indifference. The company employed a number of Africans from the east coast who were armed, and evidently acted as soldiers and bodyguards.¹⁵ It would seem, however, that the company did not itself prospect for gold on any significant scale apart from the Rebvwe Valley which it had reserved for itself because it believed that there was plenty of good quality gold there. It employed a French prospector, M. d'Elambly, to carry out surveys in this valley.¹⁶ However, the company issued mining licences to any one "who applies and complies with certain rules".¹⁷ The miners had to pay ten shillings per annum and most of them, a twenty percent royalty. The concessions varied in extent but it would appear that the conditions were all alike.

There were several parties of miners at work on alluvial deposits in the valleys of the Chua, Chimezi, and Nyahombwe rivers. One of these parties working in the Chimezi valley found a particularly rich spot yielding several large nuggets. While settling on preliminary works which would enable them to start sluicing on a large scale, the diggers spent part of their time gravel washing and 'although washing in a primitive way each digger gets a daily yield of from twenty five to thirty shillings per day for about four hours'.¹⁸ The auriferous gravel was found at a depth varying from thirty five to fifty feet. The water was a great impediment to the progress of their works and they were obliged to use pumps. On the whole the gold diggers were reported 'satisfied with their profits'. They sold their gold to the mining office at Masekesa where there were several merchants who

helped property owners notably in the most talked of Braganza and Richmond properties in the Chimezi Valley. Such was the excitement about the Eldorado in Manyika that 'news-to-hand from Paris shows that the attention of the financiers is directed towards the gold miners of Macequece, until now regarded rather indifferently in Europe'.¹⁹ Already the gold properties registered in Manyika had exceeded 6 000 claims, 656 being alluvial and 5 344 reef, and 'many prospectors are exploring the country in spite of the high grass making their work uneasy...'.²⁰

However, gold was not the only item that enticed monopoly capitalists to Manyika. There were large forests of India rubber in the territory occupied by the Mozambique Company. The forests extended from the coast to 700 metres altitude. These rubber trees had been cultivated for a long time in the past by Africans who traded the produce with the Indian merchants for salt and limbo.²¹

These gold prospecting activities had serious political implications for the king of Manyika. The Mozambique Company held its authority to prospect for gold not from the king of Manyika, Mutasa, but from the Portuguese government. The Mozambique Company and other companies ignored Mutasa. Complaining about the activities of the companies and their encroachment upon his authority, Mutasa was reported by officials of the British South Africa Company to have said 'They are there and I don't interfere. I don't know the number. I have never given anyone a concession. I am getting nothing. I am sitting watching'.²² It would seem that the king had also lost authority over certain portions of his kingdom. If the reports of the BSA Co., officials can be relied upon, there were then new territories 'under men formerly indunas of Manica who have rebelled, according to Mutasa, with the covert support and encouragement of the Portuguese'.²³ Regarding his borders Mutasa was reported to have said, 'I have been pressed on all sides by the assegai'.²⁴ His neighbours, Ganda of Uteve, Chirara of Zimunya and Makoni of Maungwe were apparently on good terms with the Portuguese who encouraged them to be hostile to Mutasa. The Portuguese thought that if Mutasa were isolated from his neighbours and estranged from his subjects, he would concede more mineral rights to them without much resistance.

Strongly backed by the Portuguese government, the Mozambique Company based its claims to these auriferous parts of Manyika on what it called the 'ancient rights' of the Portuguese. It should be noted that the Portuguese government was also making claims at this time to large parts of the Shona country on the same basis. The Portuguese based their claims on the grounds that their traders and adventurers had penetrated this region during the early sixteenth century and introduced trading posts known as feiras in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁵

The prospecting activities of the Mozambique Company were not the only ones which threatened to destroy the independence and territorial integrity of the Manyika kingdom. A monopolist company known as the African Portuguese Syndicate (APS) was also making a bid to obtain mineral concessions from King Mutasa of Manyika. The origins and validity of the APS are confused to say the least.²⁶ It would seem that the APS claimed to be a concession company as a result of a verbal agreement between Mutasa and four men, George Wise, Edward Ross, Hebert Perry and Thomas Madden, who had come from Johannesburg to negotiate a concession. These men had heard rumours from a Manyika and a Ndau, probably migrant labourers on the Rand, that there was abundant gold in Manyika. The story is that both the Manyika and the Ndau guided George Wise and his team as far as the king's royal court.

With the aid of a Zulu interpreter, George Wise conducted negotiations for a mineral concession in 1888. Much of what is known about the history of these negotiations and the concession itself comes from the recollections of George Wise, recorded six years after the event. It emerges from the account that Wise and his colleagues were sent by Grice and Lawley, for whom Wise was working in Johannesburg, to secure a mineral concession from the ruler of Manyika. Grice and Lawley fitted the team of negotiators with a waggon and oxen for their transport. They lost some of their cattle when they passed through a tsetse-fly infested area and were forced to stop at a spot about eight days away from Mutasa's royal court. From there they picked up a Zulu interpreter with whom Wise proceeded to Mutasa's stronghold, leaving the rest of the party with the waggon. After a few days at Mutasa's stronghold, Wise returned to the waggon accompanied by some of Mutasa's men to carry the presents of blankets and sundry articles which Wise and his team had brought from Cape Town.

Wise reported to his friends that he had seen Mutasa who confirmed that there was much gold in his kingdom and that Mutasa had given three or four small parcels of gold which weighed an ounce altogether. He also reported that Mutasa was willing to grant them a mineral concession. The team decided that George Wise and Thomas Madden should go to Mutasa to secure a written concession to mineral rights that Mutasa had promised Wise. The two men together with the king's carriers proceeded to Mutasa's court.

On their arrival Wise and Madden interviewed the king who, it is alleged, professed his liking for the English and hatred of the Portuguese. The king then sent his men down to the Rebvuwé valley to show Wise and Madden where gold was plentiful. After a thorough survey of the Rebvuwé Valley, they chose the ground they wanted and went back to Mutasa's court to finalise the deal. With the help of the Zulu interpreter, Wise wrote out the terms of the mineral concession which Mutasa and his heir apparent, Chimbadzwa, subsequently approved and signed.

When this had been done, both Wise and Madden returned to where they had left the waggon, only to find their companion Ross, dead, mauled by a lion, the driver of the waggon suffering from fever and the cattle all dead. They immediately decided to return to Johannesburg and leave the waggon where it was. As soon as they arrived in Johannesburg, Wise looked for the concession so that he could hand it over to Lawley. He could not find it. He made a verbal report of the concession and Lawley asked him to write it out of memory.

In May 1889, Wise and Madden went to Natal where they met Lloyd and Benningfield. The latter was connected by marriage to Grice who had interests in the African Portuguese Syndicate. After a discussion of their experiences in Manyika, it was decided that Wise, Madden and Benningfield should go to see Mutasa and renegotiate the concession. They left for Manyika and, on reaching Inyambane in southern Mozambique, hired eighty five men to carry the luggage they had brought from Durban. On the third of November, 1889 they arrived at Mutasa's stronghold and interviewed him for the second time. Unfortunately for Wise and his colleagues, they found that the ground they had previously chosen for their concession had been taken over by the Portuguese gold pros-

pectors. An attempt to get the Portuguese out failed. Mutasa then decided to give them an alternative site, four miles wide on each side of the river Mutari, from its source down to its confluence with the Odzi river. In all the concession covered 240 square miles. As in the previous case Mutasa and his son, including a number of prominent councillors and Wise, Madden and Benningfield signed it. In exchange for this, the concessionaires agreed to pay Mutasa an annuity of 200 blankets.

The gold prospecting activities of the syndicate amounted to no more than mounting signs and driving pegs here and there.²⁷ Indeed this might have been the reason why there did not seem to have been any friction between the APS and the Mozambique Company. Nor did the prospecting activities of the APS, for what they were worth, worry Mutasa.

This situation did not last long, however, before the relations between the APS and Mutasa were complicated by the arrival of the BSA Co., in Mashonaland in 1890. In that year, the BSA Co. first fought and militarily defeated the Mozambique Company and then turned to the APS and fought a long legal battle in which it emerged victorious only in 1894.

The commercial interests of the Mozambique Company and those of the BSA Co., were 'so mixed up that sooner or later a collision was inevitable'.²⁸ If the BSA Co., were to exploit the mineral resources of the Shona country to the full, it was essential that it should gain control of the only outlet to the sea, the port of Beira, then controlled by the Mozambique Company. Also, as long as the Pungwe River route, which was the main water way to and from Beira remained under the control of the Mozambique Company, there could be no prospect of a rapid exploitation of the mineral wealth of Mashonaland by the BSA Co. The alternative route northwards from Cape Town would have entailed great expense and delay.²⁹

Such considerations compelled the BSA Co., to impose a treaty on Mutasa on the 14th September, 1890.³⁰ The treaty provided that no one could possess land in Manyika except with the consent of the BSA Co.; Mutasa was intimidated into ceding complete mineral rights, as well as giving permission for the construction and establishment of public works. On its part, the company undertook to pay Mutasa and his councillors an annuity of a hundred pounds or its equivalent in trading goods at his or its option.

These developments goaded the Mozambique Company into taking steps that were designed to put pressure on Mutasa to repudiate the treaty imposed on him by the BSA Co. In a typical 'gun boat diplomacy' the Mozambique Company sent a military expedition to Mutasa's court on 8th November, 1890 under the pretext that Mutasa had ceded his entire kingdom to a Portuguese *prazero*, Gouveia. As soon as the BSA Co., heard about this they also sent a party of armed men to Mutasa's court. They took the Portuguese party by surprise, dispersed it and arrested its leaders including Gouveia, the Baron Rezende who was the managing director of the Mozambique Company and Paiva de Andrada, the concessionaire. The property of the Mozambique Company was confiscated without compensation.³¹ This incident marked the end of the Mozambique Company in what later became the BSA Co. section of the Manyika kingdom in 1890. The Mozambique Company administered vast territories of what was called Manica and Sofala south of the Zambezi river. The BSA Company was left to fight its second opponent, the African Portuguese Syndicate.

The APS contended that the BSA Co. was trespassing on its concession not only without King Mutasa's permission but against his wishes and in spite of his protests; that the BSA Co. was acting in a high-handed and oppressive manner towards Mutasa and his subjects, who desired that the BSA Co. might be ordered to retire from the land. The APS also wanted the BSA Co. and the British government to recognise the concession treaty they had bought from Benningfield in 1889.³²

On the other hand, the British government and the BSA Co. argued that the concession treaty which the APS sought to establish was undated as was the transfer endorsed upon it from Benningfield to the APS; that the correspondence between the APS and the British government in December 1890 did not bear the signature of an interpreter. It was also pointed out that until the Mutasa petition of 1893, the APS had made no attempt to assign a date to the concession and that the APS was attempting to remedy the deficiency by a declaration extorted from Mutasa in 1893. In the absence of any corroborative evidence, the British government refused to give any credence to what Mutasa was supposed to have asserted in 1893. Furthermore, the British government doubted how much Mutasa understood the phraseology of

the original English document before it was ultimately translated into Mutasa's dialect, Chimanyika.³³ Such were the basic positions of the APS on the one hand and the BSA Co., and the British government on the other.

The competition between these two companies had serious implications for Manyika internal politics and, in the long term on Manyika ability to participate in an uprising by the Shona in 1896-7 against the regime of the BSA Co. Confronted with the superior military force of the BSA Co., Mutasa gave conflicting answers in 1890 about the concession treaty with Benningfield. He admitted having given Benningfield and his team of negotiators a verbal agreement to prospect and dig for gold. In the same breath he asserted that the concession treaty had lapsed because Benningfield had not fulfilled the conditions of the contract.³⁴ In all fairness, Mutasa like his contemporaries elsewhere in Southern Africa, could not be expected to comprehend the notions of concessions relating to mineral rights, granting of a trade monopoly, of privileges of banking, leasehold, freehold and private ownership of land. These were alien and incomprehensible notions altogether. Mutasa in all probability viewed the whole question of concessions in much the same way as he viewed grants of land for use by his subjects, land which would revert to the king when the occupant vacated it. Since Benningfield left Manyika in 1889 Mutasa must have concluded that he was through with the alleged treaty and land concession. One can only speculate on the conflicting statements that Mutasa made to the BSA Co.

Until 1893, Mutasa was inclined to support the BSA Co., but the behaviour of the latter gradually led him to support the claims of the APS. According to the agreement of September 14th, 1890, between Mutasa and the BSA Co., Mutasa was, as already mentioned, entitled to receive 200 rifles, but by 1893 he had only received 'old uniforms, indifferent limbo and a few caps'.³⁵

This probably explains Mutasa's refusal to give an audience to Caldecott, a legal advisor to the BSA Co., and G. Seymor Fort, the acting Resident Magistrate of Umtali, when both went to Mutasa's court to pay the £100 rental for the concession.³⁶ According to their story the two men alleged that Mutasa refused to see them because the Taylor brothers, APS representatives, had constituted themselves advisers to Mutasa. Neither Caldecott nor Fort were able to see the king personally. Instead they were

advised to go through a Manyika domestic servant who was working for the Taylor brothers.

The strained nature of relations between Mutasa and the BSA Co., and the gradual insinuation by the APS into Mutasa's favour was clearly demonstrated in 1893 when Mutasa's son and heir apparent, Chimbadzwa, visited Cape Town and Natal at the invitation of the APS. The visit, according to the BSA Co. sources, was opposed by Mutasa. The same sources suggest that Chimbadzwa was only able to leave for this trip when the king was in a state of inebriation. This line of reasoning is not convincing. If the king was opposed to the whole idea then he would not have accepted the presents which Chimbadzwa brought back from Natal. Neither would the king have found it necessary to demonstrate his dissatisfaction with the BSA Co. officials by refusing to see them in 1893.

The conclusion one can draw from this is that Chimbadzwa's proposed visit to Natal and Cape Town aroused considerable debate in the king's council between those who favoured the BSA Co., apparently led by one councillor, Matika, and those who supported the APS.³⁸ Whatever contrary views or reservations the king had, or might have expressed during the discussion, it would seem that he finally sanctioned the trip in his full senses. Apparently, the trip was crowned with success. Chimbadzwa brought back many presents for himself and the king, rifles, beads and liquor. Mutasa promised the APS that he would not accept any more presents from the BSA Co. He was so happy with the APS that he offered to keep the Taylor brothers well informed about the activities of the BSA Co.

The king's reaction to mounting pressure from both the BSA Co., and the APS was to lean to whichever side interfered least in the internal affairs of his kingdom. His refusal to see Caldecott and Fort in 1893 and Chimbadzwa's visit to Cape Town and Natal must be seen in this light, and also as a triumph for the pro-APS faction led by Chimbadzwa within the king's council.³⁹

From this time until February, 1894 when the Taylor brothers were arrested and tried by the BSA Co., the influence of the APS was at its height. The Taylor brothers publicised themselves as the rightful owners of the land concession which was in dispute. They told the Manyika that the BSA Co., were trespassers

in Manyika and that they would cheat the Manyika out of their land. It was not difficult for an ordinary Manyika to see logic in this argument, especially since he had seen or heard about the Taylor brothers having brought presents to the king. It was common knowledge among the Manyika that George Taylor, was Mutasa's mate and had received a wife from the king, the most signal mark of honour the king could bestow. The BSA Co's loss of prestige can be seen in the language in which the acting resident of Umtali, Fort, described Mutasa. Mutasa, he asserted, was:

greedy, venal and double dealing
because he knowingly granted the
same concession to two parties;
he received presents from each
and always leaned to the side
which piled him with presents
and soft speeches.⁴⁰

Fort also observed that since the Taylor brothers had been residing with Mutasa the Manyika had become:

Exceedingly independent and even
insolent, saying that the English
had no business there and that the
BSA Co. had no right to govern them.⁴¹

The deteriorating nature of relations between the BSA Co. and Mutasa and the growing influence of the APS upon him can also be seen in the petition which the king sent in 1893 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London.⁴² Mutasa there asserted his paramountcy as ruler of the Manyika and proceeded to deny that Lobengula, king of the Ndebele, whose impis generally raided the Shona country, had any jurisdiction over him. He expressed his grievances against the maltreatment of his subjects by the BSA Co. police and the threats which they had made to burn down and destroy his royal court. There can be no doubt that most of Mutasa's grievances were genuine, especially those relating to the behaviour of the police. This was one of the main causes of the 1896-7 Shona uprising.

It was also clear that the presentation of the petition and the reference to Lobengula with whom Mutasa had had no direct quarrel before 1893, suggests an active role by the APS in the drafting of the petition. The APS had reason to dislike Lobengula

because he had signed a concession in 1889 with the BSA Co. It was also acknowledged that Lobengula's vague claims of sovereignty over the entire Shona country, Manyika included, would be used by the BSA Co. to expel the APS from Manyika.

The unpopularity of the BSA Co. in Manyika was further demonstrated by what was called the 'Chikanga Affair' of January 1894.⁴³ The 'Chikanga Affair' deserves to be treated in detail because it brings out clearly the manner in which the monopoly companies brought pressure to bear on Mutasa or his ward rulers, and eventually seriously undermined the king's authority and image before his subjects. Chikanga was one of Mutasa's daughters in charge of a ward. She was married to a man called Fambesa. She refused to comply with the demands of the acting resident magistrate in Umtali on 9th January, 1894, that she should supply labour for the mines. It is not unlikely that she was encouraged to refuse by the APS agents, the Taylor brothers.

The 'Chikanga Affair' rose out of a system of quasi-compulsory labour. It had been a custom whenever African labour was required either by the BSA Co. or private individuals, for the magistrate to send a message to one of the neighbouring rulers demanding the number of labourers required who would be paid at the usual rate. The BSA Co., sought to justify this system of labour on the grounds that they effectively occupied the country and afforded protection to Mutasa and other African rulers from the Gaza-Nguni raids; it seemed, they argued, a fair bargain that the Africans should assist in the development of the country and recognize their obligation to send in labour when required.

On his return to Umtali in January 1894, the magistrate, G. Seymour Fort immediately sent a message to Chikanga giving her forty eight hours in which to send labourers he had asked for. He also warned her that if the labourers were not sent by that time, the BSA Co., would be at war with her. There had been a great many complaints,

made lately about the scarcity of labour in this district, more so this year than any other year previously. I have put it down to natives being interfered with by other people telling them not to do this and not to do that for the magistrate.⁴⁴

This was a clear reference to the Taylor brothers who had a great deal of influence with Mutasa and his councillors.

Chikanga refused to comply with the magistrate's orders. Thereupon the latter arranged privately with a leading settler to enlist a burgher force and at the same time issued a warrant for the arrest of the representative of the APS, W. M. Taylor. The magistrate later justified his action on the grounds that it was necessary to be absolutely firm with Chikanga. He had to insist upon his orders being obeyed because not to have done so would have been known to many hundreds of Manyika. This would have been construed by them as a sign of weakness and fear. In the long run, this would have endangered the lives and property of the small community of some one hundred white settlers in the district.

The magistrate, accompanied by his burgher police men armed with revolvers, proceeded to the royal residence for the purpose of compelling Chikanga to supply the required labour. The party was met at the entrance to the royal residence by Fambesa, her husband, who was also Mutasa's induna. When he demanded their business, the magistrate immediately ordered his arrest. Fambesa managed to struggle away and much alarmed, fled to the royal residence. Meanwhile, a considerable number of goats and sheep belonging to the local people had been seized by order of the magistrate. As a result of this action as well as the attempted arrest of Fambesa, considerable excitement prevailed among the Manyika, and one of the police men attempting to stop Fambesa after his escape had his revolver taken from him. Fambesa shortly after re-appeared armed with a Martin-Henry rifle and ammunition in a bandolier; he refused to allow the police to approach his wife because he did not want to 'take into my house to see my wife a lot of fierce-looking armed men'.

He also refused to supply the labour demanded. According to the evidence the magistrate took a revolver from one of the police and endeavoured to enter the royal residence. What immediately happened is not quite clear. Sergeant Palmer, one of the escort, said that Fambesa fired at the magistrate. Another witness, also a policeman swore that no shot was fired by the Manyika until the police were in full retreat and some distance off the royal residence. He also stated that as soon as Seymour Fort approached them with his revolver, Fambesa ran away. Whether Fambesa fired a shot in defence of his wife and home is not clear from the evi-

dence. One thing is certain. Immediately after Fort went forward with a revolver in his hand, a volley was fired by the police and Fambesa fell mortally wounded, dying almost immediately. The BSA Co., with its labour demands and intervention in Manyika politics alienated the rulers and pushed them into the hands of the APS. The incident of Fambesa, deplorable in itself, indicated in a special degree the evils caused by concession seeking, a system by which the lives and property of the indigenes were sacrificed to the pecuniary greed of monopolist companies. Commenting on the 'Chikanga Affair', W. G. Cameron, general administrator and high commission, pointed out that:-

if Her Majesty's government is to continue the policy of recognizing rival concession seekers, then we must continue to look forward to a repetition of similar proceedings until there are no more concessions to be obtained...⁴⁵

The 'Chikanga Affair' was intricately linked with the case of the Taylor brothers. Fambesa openly told the magistrate that the only aliens he recognized as having permission to be in Manyika were the Taylor brothers. As a result of this both brothers were arrested in February 1894 on three indictments; on two of which they were acquitted but convicted on the third to the effect that:-

both Taylors at divers times and with various acts and words endeavoured to bring and did bring the government of the territory of Mashonaland into hatred and contempt and did excite and did raise discontent among Her Majesty's subjects within the said territory; and did promote ill-will and hostility between different classes of such subjects whereby the peace of the territory was endangered...⁴⁶

They were ordered to find sureties for £100 each and to guarantee that they would not approach Mutasa's court or hold any communication with him or his indunas for one year. The net result of this injunction was that the agents of the APS were denied access to Mutasa's court, thus practically preventing the syndicate from paying its annual tribute to the king.

The arrest of the Taylor brothers was a turning point in the syndicate's relations with Mutasa. The magistrate in Umtali advanced four reasons for Mutasa's sudden reversal of policy towards the BSA Co., from hostility to cordiality. The arrest of the Taylors, according to him removed the doubt in the minds of the Manyika as to their own powers. They also realized, it was contended, the 'hollowness of the African Portuguese Syndicate's pretensions and recognized the undisputed power of the BSA Co.' Secondly the glamour of presents which the Syndicate had sent in 1893 had by this time been forgotten; Mutasa's 'passion for presents was reviving and he turned to the BSA Co. again to see if anything was to be had from them'.

This interpretation of Mutasa's action misses the point. It only shows that the magistrate never understood Mutasa throughout his dealings with him. It was not the gifts that made Mutasa side with the APS or the BSA Co. It was the need to preserve the territorial integrity of his kingdom intact which guided his course of action. He turned to the BSA Co., not because he wanted presents but because after the shooting of Fambesa, he knew that the end had come and he might as well make his peace as quickly as possible. He realized that not only was the power of the syndicate broken, but its representative, William Taylor, had already left the country while Herbert Taylor had resigned his appointment under the syndicate and was shortly about to leave the country too.

The attitude of Mutasa when he met the magistrate at the end of May 1894, forms such an integral part of the history of his relationship to the BSA Co., and the APS that it seems pertinent to relate it as it emerges from the acting magistrate's account. With great reluctance and only at the urgent persuasion of Taylor, did the king consent to cross the Odzi river in the west to where Fort and others were waiting for him. Almost his first words were to the effect that he was a friend of the BSA Co., and that they could dig in his kingdom for gold. He then expressed his willingness to pay hut-tax and addressing his followers, enjoined them to do this. After frequently being asked if he had any complaints to make, he briefly referred to the burning of some huts. The magistrate's account of Mutasa's behaviour must not be construed to mean that Mutasa had a choice to make. It would seem, as is often the case today between the chiefs and the white settler

regime, Mutasa was presented with a set of conditions and statements to endorse. Nothing so far had happened to change into friendship the sullen opposition he exhibited to the officials of the BSA Co. in 1893.

Mutasa's final surrender to the BSA Co. had serious repercussions for the subsequent development of Manyika politics. It constituted a parting of the ways between Mutasa and his son, Chimbadzwa. Chimbadzwa's support of the APS was matched by his hatred for the BSA Co. By getting Mutasa to support its cause, the BSA Co. had put a wedge between father and son. The dissension within the royal family which resulted from this episode offered the BSA Co. an excellent opportunity to drive father and son even further apart. The BSA Co. did not want Chimbadzwa to succeed his father to the throne 'because when Chimbadzwa comes into power he will endeavour to cause trouble and mischief and is evidently endeavouring to concentrate his views through his father'.⁴⁷

The BSA Co. made sure Mutasa followed their line. He obviously had no alternative. It is not clear how the BSA Co., achieved its goal but what is clear is that from then onwards, Mutasa began to groom another son, Chiobvu, for the throne. Chiobvu was a staunch supporter of the BSA Co.'s pretensions. It is likely that this difference explains more than anything else, Chimbadzwa's and Chiobvu's 1895 disputes over the right to succeed their father to the throne.⁴⁸ As far as Manyika customary law of succession was concerned, Chimbadzwa was the heir apparent. It would seem that until Mutasa surrendered to the BSA Co., he was quite happy with Chimbadzwa, as events leading to Chimbadzwa's visit to Cape Town and Natal in 1893 indicated. According to the BSA Co. sources, however, 'a large portion' of the king's subjects favoured Chiobvu because Chimbadzwa was born after Mutasa had become king. It was argued that all the children born before Mutasa became king were ineligible to Manyika kingship.

In a quarrel that ensued between the two, Chimbadzwa captured a large number of cattle belonging to Chiobvu. The event came to the notice of the native commissioner who ordered the trial of Chimbadzwa. He was found guilty and ordered to return all the cattle he had forcibly taken from Chiobvu. He was also called upon to surrender all the firearms in his possession, in the number of fifty. He was imprisoned and his father was so

angry with him that he refused to intercede on behalf of his son in spite of the pleading of Chimbadzwa's mother.

After having served his sentence Chimbadzwa picked yet another quarrel with his father. This incident which also involved his sisters, Muredzwa, the Manyika spirit medium, and Chikanga, coincided with the outbreak of the 1896-7 Shona war of resistance. The quarrel originated from the fact that Mutasa's chief wife, Chikahanwa, mother to Chimbadzwa had recently died. Chimbadzwa and his two sisters accused one of Mutasa's wives, mother to Chiobvu, of having bewitched and caused the death of their mother. They demanded that Mutasa should either banish or execute her. The king refused to do either, with the result that in December, 1896, Chimbadzwa and his two sisters, including 500 people left Manyika for the neighbouring kingdom of Barwe in the north. They only returned a year later.

It can thus be seen that the rivalry between the BSA Co. and the APS indirectly influenced Mutasa's non-participation in the 1896-7 uprising. There is some validity in Terence Ranger's assertion that Mutasa quarrelled with his son, Chimbadzwa, over the issue of participation in the war, but this is not the whole truth. The issues involved were far more complicated than that: they went deeper and further back into the rivalry of the two rival monopolist companies. There was a possibility that Mutasa might have joined the other Shona rulers had Chimbadzwa not lost his influence with the king and had the Manyika not been divided and feuding among themselves at this crucial time.

From the early days of the rivalry between BSA Co. and the APS Chimbadzwa seems to have seen the future more clearly than the king. It is true that, both father and son wanted their national independence first and foremost. The rise of the second son as a contestant for the throne suggests that since the heir and the father had begun to diverge on policy, the old king himself may have fostered the ambitions of the second son. The fact that he did not protest the imprisonment of the heir apparent points directly in this direction. The decline of the heir apparent in policy-making must have contributed to the failure to join the war.

In addition to these political wrangles which beleaguered the kingdom and undermined the prestige of its ruler, a

natural disaster in the form of raging famine exacerbated the situation. It was reckoned that after the famine in 1896 the entire kingdom had less than 200 head of cattle and that the number of sheep and goats had been greatly reduced, many having been killed or traded away for grain on account of the famine. Commenting on why Mutasa did not join the others in the resistance movement the native commissioner had this to say:

Mutasa has been blamed for lukewarmness in recent troubles we have had with these Mashonas. I am of the opinion that if he had sufficient food and people he would have been able and willing to put a strong force in the field against his old enemy Makoni and that he foresaw that he would be cutting himself off from all supplies if he came to open warfare with Makoni.⁴⁹

The important point to note in the native commissioner's observation is that Mutasa lacked manpower at this time. As to which side he would join, there is no doubt he would have fought the BSA Co. against which he had many grievances, humiliating him before his people, grabbing his land and forcibly demanding labour from his subjects. There is nothing to suggest that Mutasa would fight Makoni in 1896 or as Terence Ranger suggests, that he stayed out of the fight because his old rival Makoni had gone into the war. As for trade even the BSA Co. would not have permitted it had it been conducted as between one sovereign ruler and another. Inter-regional trade in food stuffs and livestock was little affected by conventional wars. African pre-colonial boundaries and movements of people were always in a state of flux and it would not have made any difference whether Mutasa went to war with Makoni or not. To portray Mutasa as a calculating speculator, ready to manipulate trade with his neighbour is to distort history. Mutasa had little if any option. Many people had left his kingdom as already stated and settled elsewhere. In the capital as many as 124 huts were uninhabited, seventy four of which belonged to Chimbadzwa's people. The king was very much aware of his weak position and made representations to the BSA Co. regarding its actions. His views were aptly summarised in a report of March, 1901, to the effect that:-

The paramount chief Mutasa called on us on the 29th inst. to complain that his natives were gradually leaving his kraal and settling all over the district. The chief reason for this complaint is no doubt that he considers he is losing power over his people and consequently his dignity, but he states it leaves him with no men to carry his messages and till his lands and, therefore, asked me to order these to return.⁵⁰

It can thus be seen that the weakened economic state of his kingdom, consequent upon famines, as well as the dissension among his subjects resulting from the rivalry between the BSA Co. and the APS made it impossible for Mutasa to raise an army and join his fellow-men in the war of liberation. This study demonstrates how important it is to approach the question of collaboration and non-collaboration in resistance to the imposition of colonial rule from the point of view of the internal politics of the state concerned. It was not in every case that African rulers failed to participate in wars of resistance because they were, to use a word out of our contemporary lexicon, stooges.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Ranger, T. O., Revolt in Southern Rhodesia (London, Heinemann, Paperback edition, 1979) x-xii
- ² Beach, D. N., "Chimurenga" The Shona Rising of 1896-97, Journal of African History (JAH), 20, 3 (1979) 395-420
- ³ Cobbing, Julian "The Abrent Priesthood: Another Look at the Risings of 1896-1897" JAH, XVIII, I(1977) 64-84
- ⁴ Tsomondo, Madziwanyika, "Shona Reaction and Resistance to the European Colonization of Zimbabwe", Journal of Southern African Affairs, II, (1977) 15
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Maji-maji Research Project: Collected Papers. Dar es Saalam, University College, Department of History, (1968) 8. For the so-called Bambata rebellion see Marks, Shula, Reluctant Rebellion: The 1901-1908 Disturbances in Natal (Oxford, OUP, 1970)
- ⁷ Ranger, T. O., Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 197
- ⁸ Hole, High Marshall, The Making of Rhodesia (London, Frank Cass, 1967) 171
- ⁹ Tsomondo, M., "Shona Reaction and Resistance", 21-22
- ¹⁰ de Andrada, Joaquim Carlos Paiva, "Relatorio do Coronel Joaquim Carlos Paiva de Andrade Enviado ao Consul de Portugal no Cabo da boa Esperanca em 30 de Dezembro de 1890" in Documentos Relativos aos Acontecimentos de Manica. (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional, 1891) 47-67. Further in order to prove their early presence in the Shona country the Portuguese Government collected and compiled letters, travellers' and traders' accounts which spanned the period from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries. see Memoria e Documentos acerca dos Direitos de Portugal aos Territorios de Machona e Nyassa (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional, 1890) Warhurst, P. R., Anglo-Portuguese Relations in South-Central Africa 1890-1900 (London, Longman, 1962) Chap. I. Axelson, Eric, Portugal and the Scramble for Africa 1875-1891 (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1967) Chaps. 7-8
- ¹¹ Maugham, R. F., Zambezia: A General Description of the Valley of the Zambezi River from its Delta to the River Aruangua, with its History, Agricultura, Flora, Fauna and Ethnography, (London, John Murray, 1910) 138-43

- 12 Andrada, "Relatorio" passim; (Arquivo Historico Ultramarino - AHU - Lisbon) 1 Reparticao, pasta 2: Instructions for the new governor of Manica op. cit.; "Consul O'Neill to Marquis of Salisbury, Mozambique 20, viii 1888" in Confidential Print 5904. Africa South No. 2: Correspondence Respecting the Action of Portugal in Mashonaland and in the Districts of the Shire in Lake Nysa (1890) 76-7
- 13 "Petrie to the Marquis of Salisbury, 1. viii 1889". in Confidential Print 5904 Africa South, No. 2, op cit.
- 14 National Archives of Rhodesia (NAR) CT/1/5 Mozambique Company's Affairs: A.R. Colguhoum to Secretary BSA Company 30 xii 1890
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 NAR DT8/5/3 Administrator, BSA Co., to Denis Doyle, 17 xi 1890. Enclosure 2
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 The Manica Mining Journal (May 1900) [4]
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid. [1]
- 21 Ibid. [4]
- 22 NAR DT8/5/3 Administrator BSA Co., Mashonaland, to Denis Doyle,
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Memoria e Documentos... passim
- 26 NAR DT8/5/3 Administrator to Doyle, 17, XI, 1890 encl. 1;
NAR CT1/2/1 Frank A. Stokes, Secretary, African Portuguese
Syndicate to Rutherford Harris, Secretary, BSA Co., Kimberley,
10, X, 1890.
NAR DT1/2/1 Graham, Vigne, Mallet to Rutherford 10, i, 1891;
NAR CT1/2/3 Graham Bower, Imperial Secretary to the Secretary,
BSA Co., 21, iii, 1894;
NAR 1/2/3 Graham, Vigne, Mallet, Kimberley to H. E. The High
Commissioner, Cape Town. 30, VII, 1894; Also see evidence of
Thomas Madden sworn on 15.VI.1894

- ²⁷ NAR CT1/2/3 G. Seymour Fort, The African Portuguese Syndicate's claim in Manica: Memorandum to High Commissioner, 30.vi.1894
- ²⁸ NAR CT/1/12/1 G. F. Thomas to Rhodes. 22.vi.1891
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ NAR CT1/12/8 Colquhoun to Cecil John Rhodes 19.IX.1890;
NAR CT1/12/1 Hugh Marshall Hole, Acting Secretary, BSA Co., to Secretary, Cape Town. 23.VII.1892;
NAR DT8/5/3 Administrator to D. Doyle, 17.XI.1890. In addition to the specified items, Mutasa received rifles, powder caps, white calico, coloured calico and what was called "European clothing" (coats, trousers, hats, shirts) and rugs
- ³¹ NAR CT1/11/1/7-8 Currie, Foreign Office, (FO) to BSA Co., London, 20.VI.1891
NAR CT1/11/1/7-8 J. H. Sanderson, FO to BSA Co., London 28.viii.1891
- ³² NAR CT1/2/3 The Petition of Mutasa, King of Manica, South East Africa to the Rt. Honourable Secretary of State for Colonies 3.i.1894;
NAR CT1/2/3 Graham Vigne, Mallet (solicitors for APS) to H.E. Sir Loch, Cape Town. 3.xi.1894
- ³³ NAR CT1/2/3 FO, Edward Fairfield to African Portuguese Syndicate 28.iii.1894
- ³⁴ NAR CT1/2/1 G. F. Thomas to Cecil J. Rhodes, Managing Director of the BSA Co. 24.vi.1891
- ³⁵ Bennerhassett, Rose and Sheeman, Lucy, Adventures in Mashonaland (New York, Macmillan, 1893) 180
- ³⁶ NAR CT1/2/2 Caldecott to Administrator 9.xii.1893
NAR CT1/2/3 Protest of the agent of the African Portuguese Syndicate, Herbert J. Taylor, to Civil Commissioner, BSA Co., 20.xi.1893;
NAR CT1/2/3 Evidence of G. Seymour Fort, Acting Magistrate, Umtali, 9.xii.1893;
NAR CT1/2/3 Evidence of Carrick, Acting Mining Commissioner to the Public Prosecutor 20.xi.1893;
NAR CT1/2/3 Evidence of Jim Thomas, a Fingo, to Resident Magistrate 23.xi.1893
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ CT 1/12/8 Colquhoun to Rhodes, 19.xi.1890
CT 1/2/3 G. Seymour Fort to Captain Scott Turner 23.viii.1894
CT 1/2/3 G. Seymour Fort to High Commissioner, Cape Town 30.vi.1894
- ³⁹ G. Seymour Fort, "Memorandum", op.cit.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²CT 1/2/3 The Petition of Mutasa, King of Manica, South East Africa, to the Rt. Honourable Secretary of State for Colonies 3.i.1894

⁴³CT 1/2/3 Fort. "Memorandum" op. cit.

CT 1/2/3 Caldecott to Fort 14.i.1894

Also see Evidence of Jim Thomas, The Fingo interpreter who delivered the message in his evidence at the trial of the Taylors on 28 February, 1894.

CT 1/2/3 Fort to A. H. Duncan IX.1894

CT 1/2/2 Herbert Taylor to Civil Commissioner 9.i.1894. For a detailed account of the "Affair" see CT 1/2/3 Fort to Duncan 9.i.1894 (5 ff.)

⁴⁴G. S. Fort's "memorandum"

⁴⁵Public Record Office; Confidential Print 879/42 Cameron to Marquis of Ripon. 9.xxii 1894

⁴⁶Fort's "Memorandum" op. cit.

⁴⁷NUA 1/1/1 Native Commissioner (NC) to chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Salisbury. 1 iii. 1901

⁴⁸NUA 2/1/1 NC to CNC 21.xii 1896

N 1/1/11 NC to CNC 19.ix.1897

Historical Manuscripts Collection (Hist. MSS Collect.) MA 14/1/1. J. Machiwenyika "The History and Customs of the Manyika people" Lesson 108

⁴⁹NUA 2/1/1 NC to CNC 21.xii.1896

⁵⁰NUA 1/1/1 NC Umtali to CNC Salisbury 1.iii.1901