

## **Historical Appendix to the Report of the Oriel College Commission on the Rhodes Statue and Diversity within the College, March 2021**

William Beinart, emeritus professor, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

Note to WISER readers for webinar on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021. I wrote this Historical Appendix at the request of the Oriel College Commission and it forms part of the report, available on the Oriel College website. It is a resource for the commission, not an article, although it does also record my personal views about the statue and makes the argument for moving it. A majority, but not all, of the nine commissioners shared these views. While all could find broad agreement on initiatives to promote diversity, which take up most of the full report, the statue proved divisive to the end.

This appendix represents some of the material available to the commissioners in making their recommendations to the College, and also that available to the College in making its decisions about the statue and diversity. It is very long (19,000 words) but you can get the gist of it quickly by reading the Introduction, Summary and Concluding Points.

It has not been peer reviewed and I welcome comments and corrections in the hope that it can be modified and published in some form. The bulk of the appendix deals with Rhodes and segregation in the Cape, and – at greater length - with the scale and nature of violence in the conquest of Zimbabwe.

Though the College governing body decided to keep the statue in place in 2016, following the Rhodes Must Fall protests, they changed their minds in July 2020, after mass protests associated with Black Lives Matter. They then publicly indicated an intention to move the statue and appointed a commission to advise on the arguments and processes involved. However, despite majority support in the commission for this 2020 decision, they partly changed their minds again in May 2021. They have now decided that it will be too expensive to start the process of applying for planning permission to follow through on their earlier decision. The Rhodes Building (now called the High Street Building) is a grade 2\* listed building which requires a complex process and government consent for any changes. The government has indicated that it will not accede to such planning requests and prefers instead to 'retain and explain'. The College has accepted that it should do the latter, with contextualisation both on the web and on site. I have not addressed these outcomes in this appendix but can try to do so in discussion.

## **Appendix A: Historical Appendix to the Report of the Oriel College Commission on the Rhodes Statue and Diversity within the College**

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### **Introduction**

History has been central in the debates about the Rhodes statue and other legacies of his donation to Oriel College, University of Oxford. The protests by Rhodes Must Fall in 2015/6, renewed in 2020, helped to trigger challenging questions about the relationship between the past and the present and what action should be supported in the present. This appendix briefly explores some evidence about Rhodes as a historical figure.

Rhodes's legacy should be debated. Aside from his very public role in his life time, he quite deliberately set out to memorialise himself and his views, and this project was further pursued by his admirers and protagonists (Maylam, 2005). The Commission appointed by Oriel College requested that I examine evidence about aspects of Rhodes's political impact. This is attached as an appendix under my own name. It is intended neither as a biography, nor as a summary of various constructive and destructive aspects of the career and personality of the 'flawed colossus' (Roberts, 1987). There is a huge volume of biographical work available, as well as an extensive literature on late nineteenth-century southern Africa. References used in this research are given at the end of this appendix.

Rhodes Must Fall, Black Lives Matter, as well as other critics of the statue, and proponents of diversity in the University, made a number of historical claims about Rhodes. These were at the heart of their campaign, which would not have mobilised against the statue if they did not believe them to be valid. This appendix attempts to test and explore just two of the key critiques raised: did Rhodes contribute to, and support, racial segregation in the Cape Colony; and what was the nature of violence deployed by Rhodes and the British South Africa Company in the conquest of Zimbabwe in the 1890s? These issues were central in debates about the statue and are explored in order to provide background evidence in connection with Oriel College's provisional decision to move the statue. This appendix does not try to analyse many other aspects of Rhodes's career that have been the subject of extensive historical writing: his financial dealings; his involvement in diamond and gold-mining; the Jameson Raid; his role in the Tswana-speaking territories; his political relationship with Afrikaners and why he abandoned it; the Cape to Cairo railway; his donations, political gifts and many other issues.

The College must finally decide, in the light of historical material and other criteria, whether it still wishes to have a celebratory, and very public, statue of Rhodes facing the High Street in Oxford. The statue has become a primary symbol through which Oriel faces the world. To clarify: neither Oriel College, nor this appendix recommends that the statue be destroyed or hidden. The Commission discusses methods of contextualising the statue and other Rhodes memorials. My recommendation, based on the evidence presented in this appendix, is that the College should apply for planning permission to move the statue to a place, ideally a museum or a similar site, where it can become part of a critical exhibition on Rhodes and aspects of southern African and imperial history. This would both remove it from a celebratory position and serve to sustain historical debate and research.

The College also asked the Commission to address issues of diversity. Recommendations are made in the Commission report but the historical material presented here may have relevance to this issue. It locates Rhodes in his southern African context. The College should recognise the origins of the money that funded its donation. Oriel should consider aspects of Rhodes's southern African record in responding to its close identification with him. The Commission recommends that this should take shape in initiatives with respect to posts, student intake, scholarships and academic coverage.

Those defending the statue often argue that historical figures should not be judged by present day standards. Quite clearly, the protests and the appointment of the Oriel Commission are a result of twenty-first century

concerns. However, this analysis aims also to include some discussion of Rhodes's options at the time.

## Summary

Rhodes did an extraordinary amount in his short life (1853-1902). Hugely ambitious and driven, he made an impact in many different spheres. Born in England, he arrived in South Africa in 1870, gained a little experience with his older brother on a farm in Natal, but soon migrated to the Kimberley diamond fields in 1871. There he flourished. By 1881 he had bought up sufficient claims to be one of the largest diamond producers. In that year he won election to the Cape Legislative Assembly and also completed a degree at Oriel College, following irregular visits to Oxford over an eight year period.

Rhodes became an increasingly influential member of the Cape parliament and served as Prime Minister from 1890 to 1896. He was the second longest-serving Prime Minister of the Colony and would have been in office longer if he had not staged the Jameson Raid (1895-6, see below). At this time, Rhodes, in his late 30s and early 40s, was at the peak of his power. He was simultaneously: chairman of De Beers diamond company, which monopolised production after 1888; joint managing director of Goldfields of South Africa; one of the richest men in South Africa; and managing director of the British South Africa Company, which colonised Zimbabwe and areas to the north from 1890. It is extraordinary that he was allowed to hold all these positions while Prime Minister but also some indication of the range of activities in which he was engaged, his influence, and his ability as politician, mining magnate, businessman and empire-builder.

With respect to the key areas of focus in this appendix, the evidence shows that Rhodes made a number of important decisions, or supported developments, that intensified racial segregation at the Cape in the late nineteenth century. He had some power to influence an alternative political direction in the Colony but advocated a racially restrictive franchise, punitive racially-based Masters and Servants legislation, a labour (poll) tax for African people only, a segregated local government system and segregation in the South African cricket team. He was involved in the beginning of coercive compounds for black workers and other racially restrictive practices as an employer. To a limited degree a pragmatist in Cape politics, prepared to work with a range of people who would be useful to his interests, Rhodes was a deeply committed British imperialist, intent on white, specifically British, authority and committed to the idea that 'the natives' should be a 'subject race' (Samkange, 1982, 15; Vindex, 1900, 159).

In respect of Zimbabwe, 1890-97, Rhodes and his Company were responsible for extreme violence against African people: unbridled use was made of the Maxim gun; cattle were looted by his Company and its agents on a large scale; in the 1896-7 war, grain stores, crops and gardens were appropriated or destroyed over a sustained period as a deliberate strategy; many Ndebele soldiers were shot in flight; supposed rebels were sentenced and hung or shot without due process of law. Over a period of nine months in 1896-7, African men (including armed men), women and children sheltering in caves were blown up with dynamite, when it was clear that many were being killed. Rhodes was well aware of these practices, at times present while they were taking place and involved in strategic discussion about the wars.

Wars were fought in Zimbabwe in 1893 and 1896-7. Some people in the small settler population and in the colonial forces were also killed especially at the beginning of the conflicts in Matabeleland and Mashonaland in 1896. The casualties overall were in the proportion of roughly 1 white to 40 African in 1893 and 1 to 20-30 in 1896-7. The appendix does not attempt to analyse in detail the causes of these wars, nor the rich historiography that has built up around the colonisation of Zimbabwe. The discussion below suggests strongly that conflict arose as a result of British South Africa Company policies.

### **Rhodes and Segregation in the Cape**

Robert Rotberg (1988, 455), Rhodes's most thorough biographer, who worked hard to understand his complexities, wrote: 'It is not wholly unfair to suggest that Rhodes's legislative victories ... proved essential precursors to apartheid'. Rhodes contributed to restricting the vote for black people in the Cape: this has been an important theme in the historiography of late nineteenth-century South Africa – a central element of the shift from Cape liberalism to segregationism. The Cape Colony, finally taken by Britain from the Dutch in 1806, was the largest and most significant of the four settler states in South Africa in the nineteenth century. It was granted representative self-government in 1853 with a non-racial qualified franchise; this was taken forward into responsible government (1872), after which Cape parliamentarians, then all white, could form their own executive.

Rhodes supported two major limitations on the black franchise. The first, in 1887, when Sprigg was Prime Minister, excluded land held in communal or customary tenure from the property qualifications for the franchise. Very few whites held their land in this way but most Africans in the Colony did so. The second Act in 1892, when Rhodes was in office, raised the property qualifications and introduced an educational qualification. This applied to all

voters (men only) but had the effect of excluding a higher proportion of black people.

Much of the pressure for this legislation came from the Afrikaner Bond with whom Rhodes made an alliance in order to take office in 1890. Afrikaners (Boers) were the largely white descendants of earlier Dutch colonists and a majority of the white population. But Rhodes clearly shared the view that the black franchise should be curtailed and this was the explicit intention of both Acts. He said in his speech in 1887: ‘Treat the natives as a subject people as long as they continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure; be the lords over them, and let them be a subject race, and keep the liquor from them’ (Vindex, 1900, 159). In 1892, he indicated that he would have preferred the much more restrictive Natal franchise (Tamarkin, 1996, 175).

The precise effects of this legislation are difficult to quantify because race was not recorded in voter registration till 1903. The latest analysis by Nyika and Fourie (2020) argues that earlier estimates of the reduction were exaggerated. However, they find that the 1887 Act reduced black voters by 40 per cent in the districts that they have carefully researched. The Act was called *tung’ umlomo* (sewing up the mouth) in isiXhosa. Although this spurred voter registration, and the numbers were partly restored by 1891, the 1892 Act again reduced them by over 20 per cent. By 1895 they were down 30 per cent in comparison with 1886. By 1910 roughly 15 per cent of Cape voters were black, the majority of them ‘Coloured’ rather than African people (Trapido, 1970). They comprised over 75 per cent of the population.

No black representatives were elected to parliament, but they did influence the election of white liberals in some Eastern Cape and Cape Town constituencies. Black voters were not initially organised into a party but found a focus in John Tengo Jabavu’s newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu*. In this way, the franchise provided some protection and influence in the Colony – for example in respect of defending the franchise, funding for education, opposing pass laws, protecting the right to own land in private property outside of the customary tenure districts and protecting African customary landholdings. The African common roll franchise was further diluted in 1910, when the Union of South Africa was formed; Cape white liberals insisted that the remnant black vote be retained but it was not extended to the rest of South Africa. Africans lost any franchise on a common voters’ roll in 1936, at the height of the segregationist era, and people classified as Coloured finally lost such a vote in 1956, during the early years of apartheid.

Rhodes was not opposed to a small measure of representation in the central colonial legislature for black people. He accepted to some degree that African

people could become educated and share in the progress (then a central idea) of the Colony. But at a time when the number of black voters had started to increase significantly, he was in favour of strongly restricting such expansion. He excluded the great majority of Africans from the category of civilised. This included Christians with some education and many of those who participated in colonial economy as innovative, small-scale agriculturalists and ox-wagon drivers (Bundy, 1979). In the Transkeian Territories, for example, there had been mission stations since the 1830s and a growing number of Africans with basic literacy. But in the great majority of Transkei districts, land was held in customary tenure so that it was difficult to qualify for the vote.

There were other options at the time. Key white liberals, then still in Rhodes's government, as well as African leaders such as Jabavu, defended the vote although most compromised over the 1892 Act because they saw the alternatives as being even more restrictive. (They left government over a corruption case in 1893.) Cape politics were fluid and not yet tightly divided into parties. In 1898 the Afrikaner Bond went into alliance with white liberals, under Prime Minister W. P. Schreiner, because they shared a common antipathy to the pro-imperial views of the Progressive Party, so closely associated with Rhodes, that seemed to favour war with the Boer-controlled Transvaal.

Much is made of Rhodes's slogan, in various versions, of equal rights for every civilised man south of the Zambezi. It seems that this was first coined in 1896-1897, including the word white, and was promised to white working class men in Cape Town – not all of whom were voters (Bickford-Smith, 1995, 166, 199). In the closely fought election of 1898, Rhodes used a similar slogan about civilised white men in speeches to Afrikaners, whose support he wanted to win back after the Jameson Raid (1895-6). Rotberg (1988, 610-11) affirms it was not initially intended to include African or Coloured people. But when pressed by Coloured voters in Kimberley in 1898, Rhodes responded by generalising the statement and specifying that equal rights should be based on conditions similar to the existing franchise requirements. The slogan was thus deployed after the restrictions on the franchise with no implication that they would be removed for black people.

Rhodes's political pragmatism was also evident in his dealings with African chiefs and politicians. In 1896, he met Ndebele (but not Shona) chiefs in Zimbabwe in a series of indabas in order to resolve the war with them (see below). As Biggar and others have noted, in their defence of the statue, Rhodes briefly funded the Cape newspaper *Izwi laBantu* aimed at an African readership. This arose initially out of a split within African politics, when Rhodes was approached by opponents of Jabavu to assist in financing a rival paper (Odendaal, 2012, 146-7). Rhodes did not support the views of the paper,

launched in November 1897, but sought black votes in the March 1898 election. He and the Progressive party had fallen out with Jabavu, who worked with Schreiner and the Cape liberals. The Progressives did win a majority of the votes, but lost the constituency-based election. *Izwi laBantu* was later edited by A. K. Soga, who was educated partly in Scotland and a radical in the spectrum of African opinion at the time. Jabavu opposed the British decision to go to war with the Boer republics while Soga, as well as some other African proto-nationalists, defended it.

Rhodes supported a Masters and Servants Amendment (Strop) Bill (1890), proposed by the Afrikaner Bond, that would allow flogging of black servants found guilty of breaking contracts. He was one of the few English-speakers who voted for it, but it was defeated because even some Afrikaner representatives voted against it (Tamarkin, 1996, 140). He also supported racially segregated locations for Africans in Cape Town. At least the pavements remained open in Cape Town, although Africans were barred in 1894 from using them in the new colonial town of Bulawayo, recently founded by Rhodes and Jameson (Ranger, 2010, 24).

The Glen Grey Act (1894) is often mentioned in discussions of the origins of segregation and apartheid. This complex piece of legislation cannot be analysed in full here, but one central feature was the priority to mobilise African workers, following widespread colonial concerns about labour shortages on the farms and in the mining industry. A primary mechanism was the labour tax on every adult African man – in effect a poll tax that would be levied in addition to the existing hut tax on all African household heads. In Rhodes's words, he wished to teach Africans 'the dignity of labour'. The labour tax was little implemented, because Rhodes soon lost his position and officials, as well as his political successors, thought it too draconian and unnecessary. This is another example where Rhodes had a choice in connection with a racially based, discriminatory tax, which was opposed not only by white liberals but Cape officials. A poll tax on African men was introduced by the Afrikaner nationalist Union government in 1925.

The Glen Grey Act also introduced councils, paid for by an additional tax on Africans, which created a segregated system of local government in districts where African people were in the great majority. Rhodes and others saw it at the time as increasing local government responsibility for African people. It did include a restricted element of election and foresaw the political emergence of an educated African elite, rather than placing authority, as in the later British system of indirect rule, in the hands of chiefs. In this latter sense it differed from the apartheid Bantu Authorities Act (1951), which privileged traditional leaders. But councils were underpinned by an evolving Cape policy to set up segregated



African reserves. These areas became the geographic base for two of the apartheid Bantustans.

There are also important examples where Rhodes intervened informally to support racial segregation. In the 1880s, some inter-racial cricket was possible (Odendaal et al, 2016) and in 1892, the English touring side played against a team described as Malay in Cape Town. Fast bowler H. 'Krom' Hendricks impressed the English captain, who was quoted in the *Cape Times* as saying 'if you send a team [to England], send Hendricks; he will be a drawcard'. A South African wide cricket association was formed in 1894 and organised a tour of England in that year; Hendricks was enthusiastically proposed by key white cricketers. But the chairman of selectors William Milton, Rhodes's private secretary and future Administrator of Rhodesia, refused to include him. Rhodes later said 'They wanted me to send a black fellow called Hendricks to England ... but I would not have it' (Winch, 2014; Bundy, 'More than a Game'). This was a fateful decision, helping to confirm racial segregation in sport when other possibilities were still open and could have been facilitated by a decision to include Hendricks. Later in 1894, Milton intervened to stop the selection of Hendricks for a 'Colonial Born' side to play against 'Mother Country' in Cape Town. Organised sport became a particularly important cultural expression, especially for whites, in South Africa.

Rhodes was deeply immersed in diamond mining at Kimberley for much of his adult life: his role in buying claims, developing technology, marketing gems as well as financing and amalgamating diamond companies has been extensively analysed. Together with others, his company De Beers introduced closed compounds for African migrant workers in the mid-1880s (Turrell, 1987; Worger, 1987). Compounds were initially in part a means of suppressing 'Illicit Diamond Buying', but increasingly they became a means of reducing costs, mobility, wages and African bargaining power. Black workers were rigorously searched before and after work and their movements restricted during their contracts. Compounds were not imposed on white workers who could live in town – as could the small African elite (Willan, 2018).

In a less restrictive form, compounds were transposed to the Witwatersrand gold fields and became a central feature of the exploitative migrant labour system in South Africa (Wilson, 1972). Successive governments imposed rigorous controls on African freedom of movement by pass laws. Recent participants in debates about Rhodes have called these practices in Kimberley and Johannesburg a form of slavery. Africans were contracted workers, not slaves, and the distinction is important. But their rights as workers were increasingly curtailed and job colour bars formalised; compounds have been seen as coercive

institutions at the heart of South African segregation (1910-1948) and apartheid (1948-1994).

With respect to land and conquest, South Africa should be distinguished from Zimbabwe. Rhodes had barely arrived from England when the Cape Colony forcibly annexed the diamond fields in 1871. He was certainly an expansionist, but the great majority of what became South Africa was already annexed by the time he had significant political power. Rhodes did, however, have some role in the colonisation of Tswana-speaking people, not discussed here, and oversaw the annexation of Mpondoland in 1894 - the last independent African kingdom that came under the Cape.

By this time, Rhodes was directly involved in violent conquest in Zimbabwe, where his British South Africa Company's military methods included an early deployment of the Maxim machine gun in warfare (see below). A number of texts report that when he visited Mpondoland in 1894, Rhodes ordered a field of maize to be flattened by machine gun fire in order to demonstrate what would happen to the Mpondo if they tried to fight annexation; this persuaded them to sign the agreement. The story is mentioned, perhaps for the first time, in J.G. McDonald's sympathetic biography *Rhodes: a Life* (1927). McDonald, who claimed that Rhodes was his source of information, is incorrect on some points in that he suggests that the episode preceded the act of submission. In fact Walter Stanford and Henry Elliott, the two key local officials, had already negotiated chief Sigcau's agreement without significant conflict before Rhodes arrived. Stanford (1962), who gives details of Rhodes's visit, does not mention this incident. However the story was picked up in later books, including Monica Hunter's widely circulated anthropology of Mpondoland, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964, 412). It is likely that either Rhodes or McDonald was misremembering, but the latter's account says something about metaphors of power.

James Rose Innes, liberal Cape parliamentarian, and later Chief Justice of South Africa, embellished the story of machine guns and mealies in his autobiography. He added that 'the lane of shattered stalks spoke more eloquently than words ... [Rhodes] had killed Lobengula and would kill Sigcau too if he did not mend his ways. He spoke to a cowed and submissive potentate who promptly came to heel' (Rose Innes, 1949, 102, 108). This was written with such conviction, by a man famed for his respect for evidence, that it may seem to lend credence to the incident. Rose Innes worked with Rhodes in the 1890s before distancing himself and may have had first-hand information. But his autobiography was written after he retired as Chief Justice in 1927 and after the publication by McDonald.

While it is possible that clear evidence for the slaughter of mealies may emerge, Rose Innes was probably relaying the story at second hand, and he also exaggerated in saying that Sigcau was cowed. Not only did Rhodes regard the chief as insufficiently submissive at the time (Stanford , 1962), but Sigcau tried to defend his remaining authority in court. It is nevertheless interesting that Rose Innes (1949, 106) saw this period as one in which Rhodes turned to violence and the machine gun, which ‘woke in the minds of the possessors of the new weapon - an overweening sense of its importance’. Rhodes ‘publicly displayed that dictatorial and impatient vein with which, in the near future, we were to become familiar’ and he moved ‘from the constitutionalism of the statesman to the lawlessness of the revolutionary’. Rhodes and Jameson had already become violent adventurers in Zimbabwe and observers increasingly noted his intemperance. Rose Innes, looking back, was also referring to the ‘lawlessness’ of the Jameson Raid.

At the end of 1895, Rhodes and Jameson tried to orchestrate a simultaneous invasion and internal rebellion by ‘Uitlanders’ (largely British) in the Transvaal. It failed but it was illegal, highly aggressive and careless. Jameson took Maxim guns but could not use them. Most of the deaths – probably less than 100 – were among the small invading force, which was based on the British South Africa Company police and volunteers. Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies in Salisbury’s administration, was party to the raid and encouraged it. It could have precipitated a civil war, when alternatives were again possible. Rhodes had to resign as Cape Prime Minister because he lost the support of the Afrikaner Bond. Having spent much of his political career working with Afrikaners, he helped to polarise white society, intensified Afrikaner suspicion of British imperialism and probably made the South African War (1899-1902) more likely. He did not, however, stay out of politics and he supported the British move to war against the Transvaal. Representatives of Rhodes Must Fall associated Rhodes with the concentration camps used in that conflict. This connection is not justified; they were the responsibility of the British army.

Rhodes continued to attract widespread support amongst English-speakers in the Cape. In the 1891 Cape census, 25 per cent of population was recorded as white, of which English-speakers were probably a minority, so that they may not have been much more than 10 per cent of the whole. Yet they were socially and culturally dominant in the cities, in politics, in the professions, in the military and especially in business. Despite this, Rhodes was widely criticised in his time by English-speakers, as well as by Africans - and by Afrikaners especially after the Jameson raid.

Among liberals, John X. Merriman, who was once a friend, and served in the Rhodes cabinet 1890-93, wrote in 1897: ‘Rhodes is a curious product of his

time. People who compare him with Clive or Warren Hastings are those who take their history from the *Daily Telegraph* or *Tit Bits*. He is a pure product of the age, a capitalist politician ... and has neither moral courage nor convictions, but he has the sort of curious power that Napoleon had of intrigue and of using men – the worse they are the better for his purpose which is self-aggrandisement under one high-sounding name or another’ (Lewsen, 1963, 254-5). Contrary to Merriman, the comparison with Clive is appropriate: the latter was also committed to conquest for a colonising company and intent on enriching himself while also expanding British interests.

The author Olive Schreiner was initially attracted to Rhodes’s modernising ambitions, but turned against his policies, particularly when he backed the Strop Bill of 1890. Her novel, *Trooper Peter Halket* (1897), focussing on the conquest of Zimbabwe, was a sustained attack. She wrote to Merriman in that year: ‘we fight Rhodes because he means so much of oppression, injustice, and moral degradation in South Africa’ (Lewsen, 1963, 265). John Charles Molteno, son of the first Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, who represented the Thembuland constituency, which had a significant African vote, was an outspoken critic of Rhodes both in relation to the franchise and his imperial ambitions.

Rotberg is justified in pointing to Rhodes’s increasing pursuit of segregationist measures at a critical moment when policies in the Cape, at least, could have taken a different route. He advocated restrictions on the black franchise, a punitive tax for African people only, locations for African people in Cape Town, a segregated local government system, segregation in cricket, coercive compounds for black workers only and other racially restrictive practices as an employer.

### **Conquest and Extreme Violence in Zimbabwe: Background**

The arguments in Oxford characterising Rhodes as violent, criminal and even responsible for genocide focused particularly on the colonisation of Zimbabwe by his privately owned British South Africa Company in 1890-97. Rhodes’s actions in Zimbabwe certainly involved force and violence, when he was at the height of his political power. It seems that as power and wealth concentrated in his hands, Rhodes’s sense of urgency, and perhaps his hubris, increased.

Lobengula, the Ndebele king, signed the Rudd concession voluntarily in 1888 although his indunas and chiefs were split and he soon tried to retract. He sent a delegation to England, but the British government decided to enforce the concession. It was an important step in winning support for the British South

Africa Company charter in 1889. The Rudd concession covered minerals and not land rights over areas that Lobengula controlled. The pioneer column of 1890, guided by hunter and author F.C. Selous, was an armed invasion and the British South Africa Company went further than this concession in laying claim to land (Ranger, 1967, 31). Jameson, administrator from 1891, was particularly generous in handing out farms. At a time that the Cape government was peacefully annexing Mpondoland and reserving its land for Africans, Rhodes and Jameson were responsible for an aggressive settler colonialism in Zimbabwe that precipitated rebellions.

I will focus largely on two issues. Firstly, the pattern of violence by the British South Africa Company is examined. In view of the debates in Oxford and elsewhere about the character of colonialism in Zimbabwe, this must be a central issue. Secondly, evidence of systematic appropriation or destruction of livestock and grain is illustrated, both of fundamental importance to agrarian societies that had few other means of securing food.

Colonial commentators sometimes gave rough figures for the deaths inflicted on African people in armed clashes and these are included. Estimates are generally fuller for the more dramatic incidents and for battles with the Ndebele, rather than for deaths in Mashonaland where conflict was more diffuse. Some are in government documents, some are from reminiscences by participants such as Selous and Baden-Powell and others are reported in secondary sources from archival records. In the short time available, it has not been possible to consult all sources nor to visit archives.

Assessment of mortality in these conflicts must also take into account losses from conflict-related famine. After the war of 1893, the British South Africa Company organised and facilitated the looting of cattle, central to African diets, on a large scale. The term loot was widely used by the Company; it constituted and staffed a Loot Committee and set up loot kraals in Bulawayo and elsewhere. In 1896-7 Company forces, and the imperial detachments that joined them, pursued a scorched earth strategy. There are many records of the appropriation of grain and livestock, burning of huts and grain stores, as well as destruction of crops and gardens. Colonial contingents blew up caves where Shona communities had retreated; some of these were also shelters for grain supplies.

Nineteenth-century wars often resulted in a higher number of deaths from disease and famine than from military casualties. This was the case on both sides in the South Africa War of 1899-1902 even though food supplies and medical care were more widely available than in Zimbabwe in the 1890s. The Boers lost about 27-28,000 from disease, largely women and children in the concentration camps, and perhaps 6-7,000 in conflict. Nearly two thirds of

British deaths, roughly 14,000 out of 22,000, were also from disease, particularly typhoid. It is estimated that 20,000 Africans died, mostly in (segregated) camps. Deliberate scorched earth tactics by the British destroyed food supplies of both Boer and African people. Although the figures are elusive, it is also possible that more people died from war-related famine and disease in Zimbabwe than from military conflict. Numbers are significant in assessing the character and scale of colonial violence.

### Matabeleland 1893

Ndebele people, whose ancestors originated from the peripheries of what became the Zulu kingdom, over 1,000 km to the south, migrated to Zimbabwe in the late 1830s. They established a militarised state, initially by conquest, with a relatively small heartland that was mostly within 80 km radius around Bulawayo. Lobengula succeeded as King in 1868. The Ndebele elite (*abezantsi* –people above) to some degree absorbed subject communities (*amahole*) and they collected tribute from, and raided, smaller chieftaincies on their peripheries.

For 1893, Beach suggests 2,000 Ndebele deaths in conflict, Selous 3,000 and the figure of 3-4,000 is sometimes mentioned. Looking at the figures from the three main encounters, and taking account of smaller incidents, the latter figure seems likely. When they could, Ndebele forces took their injured away with them from the battlefield, and these men, some of whom may have died later, were probably not included in colonial estimates. Additional deaths from famine were reported.

In July 1893, a sizeable Ndebele army moved eastward in order to assert authority over Shona communities who were living on or near settler farms around Salisbury. The Ndebele did not threaten white settlers, but they did disrupt labour supplies and captured a limited amount of cattle. Jameson warned them to leave, which they did. On foot, they were construed to be moving too slowly and a mounted Company patrol fired on them, killing about 10. Jameson thought this incident a legitimate reason for attacking Lobengula, because he believed that the remaining authority of the king potentially undermined Company power. A few months of planning and mobilisation were required; the precise motives of the Company and Rhodes's role have been extensively discussed (Keppel-Jones, 1983). Whatever his initial view, Rhodes backed the decision, agreeing that 'Lobengula has forced this question on us' (Ranger, 1967, 94). He gave Jameson £50,000 for war expenses and one rationale offered publicly was to save the Shona from the Ndebele. Lobengula

did not want war, nor was he prepared for it. Whites in the Ndebele heartland were not threatened. Rhodes, who travelled from Cape Town to Zimbabwe in September 1893 (Rotberg, 1988, 440), could at this stage have negotiated, as Lobengula was requesting.

Instead sizeable contingents of white mounted men were mobilised in Salisbury, Victoria, and Tati in the Bechuanaland protectorate. Recruited from the settlers and from South Africa, they were promised land and loot. Colonial forces were supported by African auxiliaries including armed Shona men. In October the Company sent a formidable force, equipped with Maxim guns, from Salisbury towards Bulawayo – then still Lobengula’s home and main military encampment. The Ndebele did have a substantial number of rifles, but - as in the case of the Zulu in 1878-9 - they had not succeeded in adapting their military strategies. ‘Instead of breaking up their army into small, mobile units, trained to make full use of cover, relying on surprise and speed, and ready to wear down the white man in the bush, they continued to use the old “chest-and-horn” ...formation’ (Gann, 1965, 116).

On 25 October 1893 the advancing Company army, moving into the Ndebele heartland, set up camp at the Shangani River, about 80 km from Bulawayo, where they were attacked by Ndebele forces generally estimated at 5-6,000 men. In a battle that lasted about four hours, the Ndebele made very little impact and were mown down by the Maxim guns. Most sources, drawing on reports from contemporaries, as well as Hole, a key official under Jameson (1926, 308; Keppel-Jones, 1983, 271), give between 500 and 600 Ndebele casualties; one white man was injured and six wounded; a number of African auxiliaries were killed.

Advancing further, Company forces were attacked again on 1 November 1893 at Bembezi, about 30 km from Bulawayo. Hole (1926, 309) recorded 7,000 Ndebele men involved and very heavy casualties. He mentions that the Imbezu (Imbizo) regiment alone was estimated to have lost 500 out of 900. Subsequent sources often estimate Ndebele deaths at 800. If it is correct that one regiment suffered so badly then it may have been more. While the Imbizo were at the forefront to the attack, other regiments were involved. Again the Maxim guns were, together with rifle fire, the overwhelming factor in the battle; colonial forces lost four killed and seven wounded. ‘The carnage lasted not much more than an hour, and it decided the fate of Lobengula’s kingdom’ (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 274). These two battles were among the first where Maxim guns were used – but only by one side.

Lobengula and the inhabitants of Bulawayo retreated northwards and torched their settlement. On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1893, F. R. Burnham, an American fighting

with the Company forces, saw hundreds of 'beautifully woven Matabele huts' go up in flames (Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, 2010, 14). The ammunition store blew up and the material culture of the capital was largely destroyed. There were probably no deaths in the occupation of Bulawayo, but a column was sent northwards on 16<sup>th</sup> November to capture the king. It moved slowly and a section under Allan Wilson went ahead, without a machine gun, to encounter the Ndebele army at Pupu near Lupani, about 150 km north of Bulawayo on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

With the king probably close at hand, the Ndebele attacked Wilson's patrol of 34 men. They were able to defend themselves effectively with rifles and pistols for much of a day until all were killed. Welsh missionary Bowen Rees, at Inyathi, recorded that 'a great number of the Matabele perished in the same battle'. Mjaan (Mtshane Khumalo), a leading Ndebele general, told Rhodes about the encounter a few years later at a Matopos indaba. Perhaps 300 to 400 Ndebele were killed (O'Reilly, 1970, 100) and this was confirmed in other later interviews. Lobengula himself died, probably early in 1894.

It seems likely that at least 2,000 Ndebele men were killed in these major battles. If other smaller incidents and later deaths are included, it is possible considerably more died. Moreover, thousands suddenly migrated northwards with some cattle, but with inadequate food supplies. Selous (1896, 46) wrote: 'Short of food, and living like wild beasts in the rocks and forests, with all the bitter discomfort which such a life entails even on savages during the rainy season in a sub-tropical country, .. [they] saw their women and children sicken and die day by day'. Ndebele soldiers in turn tried to appropriate food from people who lived on these northern fringes of the former kingdom, creating further insecurity (Alexander et al, 2000).

No peace agreement was made. The new Company town of Bulawayo was quickly laid out very close to the old. Though it was not an ideal site, because of lack of water, Rhodes and Jameson wished to underscore the conquest. Rhodes encouraged Jameson to behave 'as the conqueror he was' and 'parcel out Ndebele lands and cattle without waiting for permission from London' (Rotberg, 1988, 448). More than 1,000 large farms were pegged around Bulawayo, an area around the size of Wales, and although most were not immediately occupied, many Ndebele returning to their homes after the war were informed that they were trespassing on European farms (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 391). Rotberg (1998, 448) wrote that 'comparatively quickly the defeated Ndebele were shunted onto outlying, badly watered, unsuitable lands and condemned to the kind of penury which would make revolt imperative. Whites occupied the whole of the rich terrain around Bulawayo... Africans suddenly found themselves dispossessed, subject to white landlords (because few moved



readily into the reserves) and reduced in every imaginable status, income, and attribute'. By no means all were displaced and most of the new landholders did not immediately begin to use their land, but control of resources in the old heartland had changed rapidly.

### Cattle and Famine in Matabeleland: 1893-5

The core of the Ndebele kingdom around Bulawayo was good cattle country, free of tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis, and cattle were at the heart of the economy. Estimates vary of their livestock holdings before the war of 1893 and it is not always clear which specific area and people are included. David Carnegie of the London Missionary Society, based at Hope Fountain, close to Bulawayo, estimated that they held about 280,000 cattle (Ranger, 1967, 37-8, 106). He was sufficiently well informed to write a book (*Among the Matabele*, 1894) and was not particularly sympathetic to Ndebele independence, so unlikely to exaggerate. Frank Sykes, who worked as an ox-wagon driver in the area, later fought in, and wrote a book about, the 1896-7 campaign, suggested about 250,000. Keppel-Jones (1983, 398), perhaps the most thorough historian of this period, notes that early in 1894, Rhodes gave a "rough estimate" of 200,000 in the country'. It is probable that there were at least 200,000 cattle in the Ndebele heartland. With perhaps 100-120,000 people, this is not an unlikely figure compared to similar African societies.

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (*Ndebele Nation* 2009) shows that the looting of the cattle began with the invasion of the Ndebele state in October 1893 and was systematised after their defeat in November. Lobengula and the remaining core of his army could take only limited livestock as they retreated northwards and they lost control of their heartland. There were direct seizures by the British South Africa Company and by the volunteers who fought for the Company in the war. 'Loot kraals' were established in Bulawayo and elsewhere. At the same time livestock were taken by the former *amahole*, some descended from pre-Ndebele societies, as also by Shona people beyond the peripheries of Ndebele state. 'Unscrupulous traders' took cattle as far as Botswana and South Africa where they were sold (Keppel-Jones, 1983).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009, 148-9) has used Zimbabwean archives to detail the role of specific individuals: Schultz took over 2,000 head of cattle from Baleni's area near Shiloh; Dawson, nearly five hundred; Goold-Adams of the Bechuanaland Border Police used patrols to loot about 2,000 in the western and northern parts of Matabeleland in February 1894. *The Matabeleland Times* reported in May that a detachment of about 25 British South African Police with a Maxim gun left 'to suppress those refractory natives who refuse to give up

their cattle and arms'. Over five thousand Ndebele cattle were auctioned by Napier, Weir and Slater in June 1894 and the British South Africa Company supplied Combrinck and Company, the largest butchers in Cape Town, at cheap prices in July.

The Company used the fiction that all cattle had belonged to Lobengula and that therefore all the remaining cattle belonged to the company by right of conquest. In July 1894, a Commission headed by Joseph Vintcent, newly-arrived judge from the Cape, was appointed to demarcate reserves for the Ndebele and to arrange the distribution of remaining cattle among them. In 1895, the Vintcent Commission reported that they had counted about 74,000: 55 per cent or about 41,000 were earmarked for Ndebele private owners and 33,000 (45 per cent) were to be retained by the Company potentially for distribution or loot. They were registered and branded.

Carnegie thought that the Ndebele had lost 200,000 cattle and Keppel-Jones (1983, 398) accepted that this was near to the mark. Other more conservative estimates suggest that it was something over 100,000. Some homesteads who previously had little control over cattle, only 'milking rights', probably benefitted but on the whole numbers were drastically reduced especially for those who held political power beforehand. The 33,000 retained for company use, temporarily in the possession of African people, were not secure. Each Native Commissioner was expected to send 50 head from his district monthly for the use of the Company, and this number was considerably increased at times. 'Thus the natives speedily understood that their cattle — the food of their children — were fast disappearing, and as far as they knew would soon all be gone' (C. 8547, 31-2, Carnegie to Martin).

Taxes had to be paid and in the early years these were sometimes in a kind of tribute of maize and livestock (Gann, 1965, 124). Younger men, including some from the *amahole* or those who served with the colonial forces, were appointed as 'Native Police' and they provoked particular bitterness. Sykes (1897, 223) quoted chief Sikhombo as complaining: 'the young men...left their kraals, enlisted, and came back the masters of their fathers, and their indunas outraged the women, stole the cattle, and lashed their betters, without rhyme or reason. These men were the chief cause of the mutiny'. Thousands more cattle were purloined by traders.

In February 1896, the devastating African rinderpest panzootic hit Zimbabwe. A strategy then believed to halt its progress was to slaughter infected herds before it spread from them. Hole (1926, 348-9) recorded that the 'Veterinary Officers of the Government advocated the destruction of all teams and herds of cattle in which the infection showed itself, and unfortunately this advice was

followed. Thousands of healthy cattle were shot, including many of those which had been allotted to the natives under the recommendations of Mr Vintcent's Commission'. Sykes (1897, 8) explained that the shooting of cattle to contain the outbreak, 'impressed upon the indigenous peoples that the white man had returned their cattle only to kill them "as an act of spite".'

Blake (1977, 123), a conservative historian, wrote : 'By 1897 there were less than 14,000 head of cattle in African possession in the whole of Rhodesia. Four years earlier there had been over 200,000 in Matabeleland alone. This is a measure of the catastrophe'. He probably exaggerated the losses, because those further from white settlements and transport routes were able to isolate their livestock from looters and rinderpest. But for at least four years, a society in which cattle had been central experienced a shattering loss. This had a major impact on their most important source of protein, in the shape of soured milk, and on meat supplies, at a time when diets were fragile due to war and the disruption of the agricultural cycle.

Socially and politically this also fragmented the society. Gatsheni (2009, 148) contests views that the impact on the Ndebele was limited: 'Cattle played a fundamental role in sustaining Ndebele life. Cattle sustained the institution of *amabutho*, they enhanced the legitimacy of the kingship through the king's powers to distribute cattle to his subjects, they enhanced the client-patron relationships in the state, and they played a fundamental role in the Ndebele religious system. Added to this, cattle were a source of national wealth and determined status of individuals in the Ndebele state. Some tributary communities were loyal to the Ndebele State because they were given cattle. The looting of the cattle was therefore a blow to everything in the Ndebele way of life.'

After 1893, the Ndebele were deprived of their king, his capital and significant parts of their homeland. Some were initially able to stay on appropriated land and or to move back to the large farms carved out for settlers as only a limited number were used by colonists for agriculture. To compound the loss of cattle, those on farms had to provide labour and pay tax.

The war of 1893 cast a long shadow in loss of land and cattle as well as the disruption of agriculture. The arrival of rinderpest and poor harvests in some areas created a new crisis of subsistence in the early months of 1896 when famine was again reported. Depending on the specific timescale and area involved, it is likely that there were 4-5,000 deaths from war and war-related famine amongst the core Ndebele nation, estimated at about 100-120,000 people, from 1893 to early 1896. It is possible, as suggested by Selous, that more women and children died – and there may be archives that can inform a

fuller assessment (Iliffe, 1990). Those who lived further from the heartland, including the former subjects and clients of the Ndebele, probably did not suffer so severely. Rhodes had alternative options at the time both to negotiate with the Ndebele in 1893 and to curtail the looting of livestock.

### The War of 1896-7: Background

In 1896-7, the military encounters continued for about 15 months, and involved many African societies in the areas called Matabeleland and Mashonaland by the new colonial state. We should be cautious about the names Ndebele and Shona. Both of these areas included diverse political and ethnic communities. There was not a single co-ordinated strategy by Ndebele-speaking people and this applied even more so to the many small chieftaincies in the eastern part of the colony called Mashonaland, where political authority was devolved. My discussion does not address the complexities of African political authority, nor the extensive historical writing about which African groups fought, why they fought, and the significance of African religious movements in the war. It focusses very largely on the nature, scale and cost of colonial violence.

Beach (1990b, 55) suggests 5-10,000 deaths in these protracted military conflicts and Gann (1965, 140) gives 8,000. Both were thorough historians, immersed in the sources, although neither goes in detail about fatalities. Assessment of overall deaths must again take into account losses from starvation and famine. The Company's forces, and the imperial detachments that joined them in 1896, deliberately pursued a scorched earth strategy. There are many records of the burning of huts and the destruction of crops and grain stores. Wikipedia gives total losses as 50,000. I will return to these figures and the deaths from famine.

In addition to undermining African capacity to resist, the capture of grain was valuable for Company and British troops, who sometimes had to feed themselves and also had to provision their horses, critical to their campaign (Baden-Powell, 1896, 24). It was difficult to bring grain to Bulawayo, because the railway still reached only to Mafikeng, about 10 days journey by mule coach and more by ox-wagon. Rinderpest had reduced access to oxen. Some supplies were brought to Salisbury via Beira.

After 1893 the remaining Ndebele chiefs and military leaders had some command over fighting men, and despite the colonial view that ordinary people were keen to throw off their yoke, they found surprisingly widespread, though by no means universal, African support. In March 1896, they attacked African police and also settlers around Bulawayo of whom about 150 were killed in

March/April. Most of the rest of the white population, together with some African allies, particularly immigrants from South Africa, withdrew into laagers in Bulawayo, Gwelo, Belingwe and Mangwe.

In the Company and settler writing about this war, there was great emphasis on ‘murder’ by Africans, especially of white women and children. This term is not used when Africans were killed, even in relation to the far greater number of African women and children who succumbed. In Selous’s lists (1896), he records 23 women and children out of 155 Europeans killed before the main military engagements with the Ndebele and 4 in the additional list of 56 who were missing - about 27 out of 211. Hole (1926, 357), reported that official records showed that ‘few’ women and children were killed in March/April 1896 – 16 out of 143. (Both figures exclude combatants.) This evidence suggests that some constraint was shown.

During the first indaba in the Matopos, in August 1896, Rhodes responded to Somab hulana’s forceful statement of Ndebele history, and criticism of colonialism, by asking ‘why had they murdered women and children?’ (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 500). Somab hulana countered by asking ‘who commenced the killing of women’ and gave the example of four African women shot by tax collectors. Colenbrander, translating, told Rhodes that this was true and that he should drop the topic if he wanted to secure a peaceful outcome. Rhodes did so.

Nevertheless, Selous (1897, 30-1) reflected broader white sentiments in claiming that the Ndebele attacks ‘excited a desire for vengeance, which could only be satisfied by a personal and active participation in the killing of the murderers. I don’t defend such feelings, nor deny that they are vile and brutal when viewed from a high moral standpoint ... passions which can only be understood by those Europeans who have lived through a native rising, in which women and children of their race have been barbarously murdered by savages; by beings whom, in their hearts, they despise; as rightly or wrongly they consider that they belong to a lower type of the human family than themselves.

I offer no opinion upon this sentiment, but I say that it undoubtedly exists, and must always aggravate the savagery of a conflict between the two races; ... the murder of white women and children, by natives, seems to the colonist not merely a crime, but a sacrilege, and calls forth all the latent ferocity of the more civilised race’.

In his view, this produced a ‘war of retaliation, ... waged with ... merciless ferocity’.

## The War against the Ndebele in 1896

On this occasion the Ndebele armies did modify their tactics. They camped at some distance from Bulawayo, using rifles to snipe at colonial forces when they left the laager, and avoided direct confrontation. In this context, Maxim guns were valuable in ensuring that the laagers were well-defended but less decisive in the many 'skirmishes' that resulted as Company patrols sought out Ndebele contingents. Maxim guns and artillery were used but this war was largely won by white mounted men with rifles, together with valuable African allies – particularly trained and paid black South African soldiers. Unlike some South African chiefdoms in the nineteenth century, the Ndebele do not seem to have incorporated horses.

There were many more dispersed encounters than in 1893 and mounted platoons were regularly sent out from Bulawayo. As Selous (1896, 64) wrote in his revealing but deeply disturbing record 'I have stated plainly that we fired on these [Africans] at sight, and that although they offered no resistance, but ran away as hard as they could, we chased them and kept on firing at them as long as we could see them, and this action may possibly be cited as an example of the brutality and inhumanity of the Englishmen in Rhodesia'.

In early April 1896, one Company contingent lost 7 men, 20 wounded and 33 horses in 6 hours of fighting (Selous, 1896, 122-3). But helped by a Maxim they estimated that they killed and wounded between two and three hundred. Another patrol, starting on 4th April, was attacked by about 2-300 Ndebele soldiers: 'Colonel Gifford then opened on them with the Maxim at about 600 yards, and this quite quenched their military ardour'. During their retreat, they were attacked, losing twenty or thirty. On Easter Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April, Gifford's platoon fired on another group of Ndebele and Selous was told that 'the patrol killed at lowest 200 of the enemy, and many more must have been wounded'. By collecting information on each episode of this kind, it is possible to build up some picture of military losses. From 30<sup>th</sup> March to 9<sup>th</sup> April, for example, it seems that about 600 Ndebele were killed in sorties made from Bulawayo.

On 10th April, three African men accused of being rebels were arrested, quickly condemned to death, and hanged, their bodies left dangling from the branches of a tree in Bulawayo, as a warning. At least 6 more were hanged soon afterwards 'tried in a somewhat rough-and-ready fashion'. A photograph of the three bodies, with a row of white onlookers behind them, was used in the first edition of Olive Schreiner's *Trooper Peter Halket* (February 1897). Davidson (1984, 214-5) reproduced it in his biography of Rhodes and suggested that it left 'a profound impression' on readers. Massie (2016) quotes the *Guardian* of that

time: it 'is very horrible ...but we cannot blame the author or publisher for giving it here. It is only through such shocks that English people can be roused to a sense of the degradation which England is suffering in South Africa'.

Rhodes arrived direct from England, landing at Beira to avoid an enquiry into the Jameson raid in Cape Town. He travelled via Salisbury, joining a relief force to Gwelo laager in early April. There he took on the informal role of 'colonel', to provide leadership for the disparate military groupings, and engaged in operations (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 456). Addressing settlers and soldiers in Gwelo, he was reported to say 'it was intended that no time should be lost in thoroughly thrashing the natives and giving them an everlasting lesson' (*Evening Express*, Wales, 8.5.1896).

On 21 May 1896 a strong mounted patrol routed a Ndebele *impi* at Tabas Induna twelve miles from Bulawayo and met up with Rhodes. Selous (1896, 192) again participated, helped drive many into the bush and 'when it was at last abandoned a long line of corpses marked the track where the whirlwind of the white man's vengeance had swept along. *Vae victis!*—"woe to the conquered!"—woe indeed; for amongst the men who took part ... were [those] determined to use their opportunity to the utmost to inflict a heavy punishment'. This single incident probably resulted in the death of 300-500 Ndebele and it is likely that losses were more than 1,000 in May.

The pattern continued in June with a focus on Ndebele contingents near the Umguza river, close to Bulawayo. Kraals were burnt and a good deal of grain destroyed. On 6<sup>th</sup> June about one thousand armed Ndebele were forced to retreat and, running into the bush, they were shot by men on horseback. Selous (1896, 224) records 'in the chase which followed, a large number of them were shot down ... I am of opinion myself that the Matabele lost more heavily on this occasion than at any other fight during the campaign, for the very reason that it was not a fight but only a pursuit in which the natives were killed as fast as they were overtaken'. Baden-Powell (1901, 60) estimated that 'at least fifteen indunas and two hundred men' died. But if Selous is right, then many more would have died. Baden-Powell photographed a dead man whom he said had nearly shot him, and kept his knobkerrie.

On July 5 1896, colonial forces attacked Intaba zikaMambo a rocky area about 80 km north east of Bulawayo, which served as a refuge and where some of the remaining Ndebele army had retreated. Plumer was in command of 750 white and 200 black troops with Maxims and seven-pounder guns. Rhodes accompanied the column. 'Everywhere it was a bloody fight, often at close quarters' (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 459). Plumer lost about eighteen men killed and

fourteen wounded and estimated Ndebele losses at about a hundred. Another account of Intaba zikaMambo (Sykes, 1897, 147-8) describes fires being lit at the mouths of caves into which people had retreated and vegetation dropped into flames in order to smoke people out. Six hundred women and children were persuaded to give themselves up. Subsequently 'as the suffocating smoke penetrated into the recesses, there was a general rush of concealed rebels to escape, and no sooner did they appear, amidst the flames and smoke, than they were shot down'. These appear to be deaths additional to those in the fighting. Sykes reports that Plumer's force took as loot about 1,000 cattle and 2,200 goats and sheep.

Vere Stent, the *Cape Times* correspondent who was present, thought that the battle at Intaba zikaMambo shocked Rhodes (Blake, 1976, 135; Rotberg, 566), not least because he saw the costs to colonial troops when the Ndebele had well-entrenched defensive positions. Imperial authorities tried to offer a qualified form of amnesty but it was clearly not trusted (or known). Instead colonial forces mounted a similar attack on the last significant Ndebele stronghold in the Matopos, south west of Bulawayo, with over a thousand troops. They joined battle on 20<sup>th</sup> July and, according to a prisoner, the Ndebele losses were heavy: a 'large number of their best men killed, including five chiefs and Nuntwani, their general, severely wounded in the leg' (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 461). A further assault was made on the main Ndebele stronghold on 5<sup>th</sup> August, which was less successful.

These battles in June and July, with at least four major incidents, probably resulted in another thousand deaths or more, as well as much looting and destruction of food. At this time, Carrington, head of the imperial troops, reported that a patrol to Nyamandlovu, the district to the west of Inyathi, captured all the grain they could take - 72,000 lbs (360 bags, which were usually measured at 200lb, or about 12 wagon loads) (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 519, note 30). Nyamandlovu and Bulawayo were part of the same district in the Ndebele heartland and both subject to intense conflict. Iliffe (1990, 24-5) argues that 'famine became the core of the Company's strategy'. Famine was taking its toll. In August 1896, a captive taken in the Matopos said 'many women and children had already died for want of food'.

Bulawayo was not the only centre of operations. Tyrie Laing (1897) wrote about his sorties from the Belingwe laager, about 150km to the east. He records (133-4) destroying the kraals of a chief whom he called *amahole*, probably Karanga-speaking, and another expedition against Selemba where the 'enemy's loss was not estimated; it would have taken too long to find out in the thick bush, but it was pretty severe'. Elsewhere an old woman was recorded as saying that they shot the leaders, 'scattered everybody and destroyed all our



kraals' (Laing, 1897, 224-5). After another encounter, 40 were seen dead. His column discovered a 'large quantity of grain, hidden away in the thickest part of the bush... stored in grass bags, each of which contained about two ordinary sacks full of grain... This was a most welcome and valuable discovery in more ways than one, because it not only enabled us to replenish our stock of food for the horses and mules, but it reduced the rebels' store to a very considerable extent' (Laing, 1897, 248-9). In July 1896 he went to assist in the Matopos and was attacked at Inugu. Although his position was defended with machine guns, artillery and rifles, his contingent lost 4 whites, 6 severely wounded and 27 Africans allies killed or missing (Laing, 1897, 296). He did not estimate Ndebele losses in his book but a report in a British newspaper recorded 90 (*Evening Express*, Wales, 24.7.1896, from High Commissioner, Cape Town).

Adding Laing's operations in these four months, April to July 1896, to those already noted (roughly 600 in April, 1,000 in May and probably more in June/July), perhaps over 3,000 were killed in conflict. There were other patrols that have not been included.

It was after these battles that Rhodes decided to negotiate. He was well aware that some Shona chiefs had, surprisingly to the Company, rebelled. Moreover, Rhodes was counting the costs of the campaign against the Ndebele both in money and men. It would be costly to lay siege to so large an area as the Matopos and starve the remaining African contingents out. Ndebele leaders, who represented disparate groups were receptive. They were stalked by famine and Rhodes emphasised this in the Indabas starting on 21<sup>st</sup> August. Hole (1926, 375-6) recorded that for some months the Matabele suffered severely from famine, but after the four indabas were completed, the administration distributed grain and seed, as the new sowing season approached. With access to the press, Rhodes was able to shape the narrative of the war, his central role in peace-making and his generosity in supplying grain. This narrative still has some purchase.

The war in Matabeleland did not cease during the negotiations. In September 1896, Baden-Powell (1901, 287ff) went on patrol north of Bulawayo to an area under a minor chief Uwini. There had been an encounter before he arrived and Baden-Powell thought (probably wrongly) that Uwini, wounded and captured, was a key religious leader whose death might encourage a more general surrender. British and Company forces believed that such leaders had strong influence in sustaining resistance. The American scout Burnham had recently assassinated a man, believed to be a religious leader, in the Matopos, with the same intent. (Burnham is also reputed to have enthused Baden-Powell about the ideas and practices of scouting.)

Baden-Powell (1901, 297-9) subjected Uwini to a quick trial and then had him executed near his former stronghold in front of ‘all the natives in camp, both friendlies, refugees, and prisoners’ for the ‘moral effect’. On this occasion, there were repercussions. The High Commissioner in Cape Town, concerned about the conduct of the war, especially after the recent execution of Shona chief Makoni, had instructed Carrington, head of imperial troops, that African prisoners should not be subject to such summary punishment. Baden Powell (1901, 290), suggests that he did not know this, but Carrington was ordered to initiate a court martial. Sykes wrote at the time that ‘the ferocity exhibited on several occasions by the captors towards their victims was anything but an edifying spectacle’ and he described an incident where a trooper put a noose around a captive’s neck and made him run behind his horse, ‘with no other motive than sheer brutality’ till he died. Keppel-Jones (1983, 463) records other acts of summary justice, including the shooting of a woman accused of spying.

Some of Uwini’s men tried to hold out and Baden-Powell ordered guards to prevent their access to water. Two, perhaps more, were shot, when they tried to quench their thirst and this strategy persuaded some to surrender. ‘Large stores of grain’ were captured and on this occasion prisoners were taken (Baden Powell, 1901, 301). There was acute food shortage in the area and Baden-Powell also captured women and children in order to prevent them acting as carriers of grain to African fighters. For the rest of September, this patrol moved along the Umvungwe and Shangani rivers, and into the Somabula forest where they believed that Ndebele soldiers had taken refuge. There were few encounters: a village was burnt, 20 Africans were killed in one incident and they blew up a cave shelter. Baden-Powell’s court martial took place in Gwelo in late October 1896; the British military court exonerated him.

### The War in Mashonaland, 1896-7

The region called Mashonaland was divided into a number of relatively small independent chieftaincies, which in Company thinking were not seen as a military threat. Detailed historical research explains why many rebelled, beginning on 18 June 1896 in the Hartley area of Western Mashonaland (Ranger, 1967; Beach, 1971, 1979; Cobbing, 1977). About 120 whites, including several women and children, were killed in the first few days and the road from Salisbury to Bulawayo temporarily blocked.

A laager was formed in Salisbury and a similar pattern evolved, with colonial forces patrolling out to attack different African chieftaincies and communities. There were few offensive actions by Africans, the rebellion did not involve all of the chieftaincies in the area, nor did they act simultaneously (Beach, 1979). Rhodes did not think it was necessary to make peace with them and ‘they were

forced into capitulation by the harshest punitive measures' (Davidson, 1984, 309). Such measures preceded the uprising: J.S. Brabant, chief Native Commissioner for Mashonaland, employed strong arm tactics in collecting taxes in 1895, including flogging, burning down villages and the confiscation of livestock (Rotberg, 1988, 553).

From the sources currently consulted, it is more difficult to describe the military encounters systematically, or to provide estimates of deaths. Caves and shelters among the boulders that characterised Zimbabwean hills and mountains were well-known to communities and been used previously as refuges. When there were faced with military threats, they often retreated to these areas. The written records suggest that both villages and these rock and cave shelters were systematically attacked.

In July 1896 patrols were sent out from Salisbury to Enkeldoorn (Chivhu) where they were joined by Afrikaner settlers (Beach 1971, 396-7). De Moleyns, commanding a new force in Mashonaland, led them against chief Chesumba, about 12 miles from Salisbury, who had retreated to a koppie with boulders and some stone barricades. De Moleyns called out for the chief to surrender but instead was fired at, with the loss of two police. He then used dynamite, a strategy transferred from South Africa – and a material that was available from mining operations: 111 men and 500 women and children gave themselves up.

In August 1896, other villages and fortified shelters were destroyed. A patrol from Salisbury attacked Makoni, one of the leading Shona chiefs, and killed about 60. Most of his people retreated into caves; their homes and livestock kraals were burnt (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 490). Makoni offered to surrender in return for amnesty, but he was not granted it. A further expedition was sent in early September that advanced the use of dynamite by dropping lighted sticks from above into the caves where the community had taken refuge. These were seldom completely blocked off at the top and 'it was usually possible to find some crevice' (Ranger, 1967, 276-7). The effect produced after a few days of dynamiting was 'terrible ... and the stench from the dead bodies was overpowering'. Makoni was captured, court-martialled and shot in public. (This, as noted, preceded the shooting of Uwini on Baden-Powell's orders.) Intended as a warning to the other chiefs, it seems to have had the opposite effect because the message they took was that there was no point in surrender, which would likely lead to death.

Manyepera and his people, threatened by a patrol in October 1896, took refuge in caves in Marandellas (Ranger, 1967, 276-7, now Marondera). Company troops saw smoke coming out of a narrow crack in the roof and by removing

stones could see the light of fires. They tried throwing down artillery shells and then smoking people out by pulling down nearby huts and using them in fires near the entrance. Receiving a consignment of dynamite they dropped lighted sticks down the cracks. Sixty women and children came out. The contents of several cases of dynamite were then inserted and the explosion ‘rent the cave from end to end’; only 2 people survived. ‘This terrible encounter’, Ranger notes, ‘became the pattern for many attacks on Shona strongholds, despite humanitarian outcry in England’.

I have not yet been able to compile a record of all similar incidents that continued for over nine months until July 1897 and the sources less often mention estimates of casualties. But other examples can be cited. In October a chief who was not part of the rising was attacked in error, and when he tried to escape, was shot along with ten of his men (Beach, 1971, 301). Attacks in Mazoe destroyed cave shelters. Chief Mashiangombi (Mashayamombe), whose village became the site of the Kaguvi religious medium, was first attacked in July 1896. Twenty people were killed and 500 head of cattle taken (Ranger, 1967, 283). A further expedition in August burnt parts of the village and the people retreated to cave shelters. In a further assault in October, all the caves that could be located were blown up. Mashayamombe escaped and, seen to have successfully survived three attacks, became a focus for resistance. His remaining gardens and crops were destroyed in February 1897 (the middle of the growing season) but it was not until July that he was finally shot.

In the first week of October 1897, Baden-Powell (1901, 364, before his court martial) moved eastwards from Matabeleland and attacked communities near Wedza mountain about 120 km south of Salisbury. When people retreated to shelters on the mountain, Baden-Powell chose to interpret the response as an act of war. Having burnt some vacated homes as an ‘object lesson’ he proceeded to ‘freely help ourselves’ to the grain and livestock of others. ‘We began to hammer away with the 7–pounder, the Maxims, and Nordenfeldt, taking each koppie and its kraal in turn. Through the glass I could see the natives move from the kraals into the caves, and when we shelled these, we could see them stealing away through the rocks and bush, evidently anxious to make their escape’; when people tried to escape, they were shot down (Baden Powell, 1896, 380, 387).

The settlements on Wedza mountain were cleared and burned. Baden Powell (1901, 389-95) then blew up a stronghold with dynamite and celebrated ‘the complete destruction of the enemy’s villages and the clearing of their grain stores ... the blazing evidences of it gleaming out their message to all the rebels for miles round’. Heading east, his patrol then looted and burnt the abandoned defensive village of Monti (Mondi) - this located on a ‘bold, upstanding,

solitary peak, a regular acropolis'. He continued with a series of attacks described in his narrative: 'We helped ourselves to all the corn that we could carry, as well as to some little bits of loot, such as a Kaffir piano and some tambourines—the piano being a small flat board on which is fixed a row of iron tongues, and these when struck give each a different note of soft, metallic sound... Then we set the village in a blaze'.

'In Monogula's', he wrote, 'we placed thirty-four cases of dynamite, and at one grand burst blew up the whole koppie, so that where there had been hill there remained but a crater. Previous to demolishing the caves, we had of course removed, for our own use, the stores of grain which had been stowed away for the rebel garrison.' (Baden-Powell, 1901, 409-11, 428). Most had been able to escape but they found nine dead. More kraals were burnt and 26 killed en route to Enkeldoorn (Chivhu).

Rhodes, who moved from Bulawayo to Salisbury in late October, was very much involved. He wrote enthusiastically of a sortie: 'we went out and destroyed his [chief Sango's] kraal, killing a good many natives' (Ranger, 1967, 285; Beach 1971, 348). Baden-Powell (1901, 447) met Rhodes in Salisbury on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and talked to him about 'ways and means or plans of campaign ... [Rhodes] full of restlessness and energy'. They both joined a hunt (for wild animals) and as they passed under a telegraph line Rhodes 'at once went into particulars of that'. Rhodes, who was clearly immersed in military planning in Matabeleland (Rotberg, 1988, 553), was equally engaged at the time when villages were being burnt, caves blown up and grain stores destroyed in Mashonaland. In December, Baden-Powell travelled back with Rhodes by ship from Beira to Cape Town and then to England. At Port Elizabeth they were greeted by crowds and treated to a banquet for 500, as well as dinner at the club.

By the time he left, Rhodes and his military leaders mistakenly believed that the rebellion was almost at an end. But Shona chiefs were remarkably persistent despite the devastation that they saw around them. In January 1897, de Moleyns destroyed kraals at Sosve (Svosve); in February he captured 60-70 wagon loads of grain and in April a patrol of volunteers with African allies took a stronghold at Shangwe after cutting off food and water supplies and killing perhaps 90 (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 514; Davidson, 1984, 311). In May 1897 a contingent attacked Chief Mashanganyika who, with his people, retired into caves. Over a week, all the caves were destroyed 'with great loss to the occupants'.

In June a colonial force captured Kunzwi's stronghold in a fortified koppie after two days of hard fighting. Major Gosling thought 'from the amount of grain stored away, and the quantity of pigs, goats, etc., in the stronghold...that Kunzi

was confident of repulsing the whites, and had made ample preparations for a long stay; this opinion was confirmed by the determined resistance offered, the engagement being the most severe the police have as yet taken part in'. Ranger (1967, 305) suggests that this was the fiercest action of 1897, but provides no record of casualties. Kunzwi escaped, but surrendered in August.

In the final attack on Mashayamombe in July 1897, 130 men with a Maxim maintained a cordon, shooting anyone who attempted to escape. The chief was killed, trying to move between shelters, and the next day the caves were destroyed. The losses were 'heavy' and 100 men and 320 women and children were captured (Keppel-Jones, 1983, 516). The mediums Kaguvi and Nehanda were apparently in Mazoe district, where they were attacked on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and their supporters took to caves, which were blown up with many killed. In August, remaining huts at Kaguvi's settlement were burnt (Ranger, 1967, 300) and he surrendered. Nehanda, who had escaped, was captured in December. They were hung in Salisbury, as also 25 men identified as rebels.

I have described briefly about 14 incidents of highly destructive behaviour by the Company and imperial police and troops, including bombarding settlements with artillery, burning villages, shooting those who tried to escape, and dynamiting caves – with the probability of many deaths, perhaps hundreds in some incidents. Patrols against other chiefs and settlements are mentioned in the sources consulted. The names are recorded in various forms: Umtigezam, Simbasotas, Chena, Zimban, Gatzi, Chiquaqua (Chikwakwa?), Gondo, Bonda, Seki and Makombi. Further research would be needed to identify them and their fate and to draw up a complete list. There may have been well over 20 incidents involving the blowing up of shelters. It is likely that losses in conflict in Mashonaland were higher than those in Matabeleland (estimated above at over 3,000). Food was destroyed on a large scale. The new growing season started with the rains, generally around October, with grain only maturing some months after that, so that those whose food supplies were captured or burnt from July to February were in a perilous position over a long period. Growing crops were also destroyed.

#### Deaths from Conflict and Famine, 1896-7

We cannot be certain of the losses in this protracted conflict, lasting in various phases for over 18 months from March 1896. Sources consulted for this appendix had limited reference to famine and disease and the material seen so far is fuller for the six month war against the Ndebele than the full year of campaigning in Mashonaland. The estimates made here are provisional and should be the subject of more extended research. In addition to material in the

Zimbabwean and British archives, and writing by participants, the British forces did report on their campaigns. Some of this material found its way into the public sphere via military routes, the High Commissioner's office in Cape Town and the Colonial Office in London. According to Ken Wilson, who is researching this period, there is a surprising amount of coverage in the British press, including reports from military sources, from soldiers' letters and by journalists. Henry Labouchere published commentaries in *Truth*. It would be possible to construct a far more detailed history of the campaigns and assessment of losses than offered here.

As noted above, Beach and Gann estimated deaths from conflict in 1896-7 at about 5-10,000 and 8,000 respectively. In a meeting in early 2016 after the Oxford Union debate, a representative of Rhodes Must Fall mentioned a figure of 60,000 deaths all told in the Zimbabwe wars of the 1890s. At the time I was not able to locate a reference but subsequently found that the relevant Wikipedia articles mention 10,000 for the deaths in 1893 and 50,000 for 1896-7, so this was probably the source. These figures are probably taken from Kenneth J. Panton, *Historical Dictionary of the British Empire* (2015), but he does not give a footnote for his sources. These numbers may be inflated, in comparison to the records I have found, but a firm conclusion would require further research and better information on war-related famine and disease.

Numbers are important because they serve to raise questions about the scale and character of violence during these wars. Iliffe, a leading British historian of Africa, is one of the few who has looked at the Zimbabwe archives with famine specifically in mind and he paints a bleak picture. He insists that the famine of this period was not primarily caused by natural disasters such as drought, rinderpest and locusts, but 'created by the violence of the rebellion and its suppression' (1990, 23).

Hugh Marshall Hole (1926, 375-6), graduate of Balliol, and a key administrator under Jameson, praised the Company's generosity, but noted that 'for some months the Matabele suffered severely from famine' and 'there were many deaths from starvation' in 1896. This period from July to October was one of intense conflict, when grain supplies were being looted or destroyed and when Ndebele fighting men retreated away from their homesteads to strongholds in Intaba zikaMambo and the Matopos. Those surrendering in October were 'in a horrible state of starvation' (Iliffe, 1990, 26).

Native Commissioner Gielgud wrote of deaths in Inyathi in October 1896, and of a 'very terrible' famine in which 'whole families' were dying in January 1897. He estimated in April 1897 that a quarter of the people in Inyathi died of famine (Iliffe, 1990, 28). In his detailed demographic work, Beach (1990a, 50)

gave a figure of about 6,000 in Bubi district, of which Inyathi was part, in 1898. The precise reference point of these observations is not clear and the archives are not presently accessible. If a quarter had died, there may have been 8,000 people before the famine with as many as 2,000 deaths. Inyathi was relatively close to Bulawayo, which had become a settler military centre, and in easy reach for colonial forces, so that it may have suffered disproportionately. But such losses only need to have been replicated in a couple of other Matabeleland districts, some of which had larger populations, for the number of deaths in this war to move towards 15,000 – without including Mashonaland deaths from famine.

Proponents of Rhodes's generosity emphasise the Company's distribution of £50,000 of grain to the Ndebele after the Indabas in October 1896 (see below). Some of this was captured grain and most of it was for those in the Matopos. The deaths described by Gielgud in the Ndebele heartland came after this distribution so that it was clearly inadequate. It is worth noting that the Company paid out £250,000 in compensation to the settlers in Matabeleland and £100,000 in Mashonaland. Blake (1976, 147) notes that 'the settlers were very generously treated'.

As noted above, estimates of deaths in a number of different incidents suggest that the Ndebele lost at least 3,000 men in conflict in 1896 and it is likely – if 2,000 died of famine in one district - that the losses from famine were at least twice that number. This would make perhaps 8-9,000 in all. Conflict in Mashonaland lasted longer and the scorched earth tactics by the Company and British forces seem to have been even more destructive. Iliffe does not think that the Shona suffered so badly from famine as the Ndebele, but his treatment of this area is brief and he does not record the scale of destruction of food supplies noted here.

This incomplete survey suggests that deaths in conflict in 1896-7 were at the upper end of the 5-10,000 suggested by Beach – perhaps around Gann's estimated 8,000. Neither go into a detailed analysis of losses. Deaths from famine and disease are likely to have been at least as much, so that 15-20,000 African deaths in 1896-7 may not be unrealistic. To this should be added around 4-5,000 in 1893-5.

If the core Ndebele population is considered separately at around 100-120,000, then the losses of 4-5,000 in 1893, and perhaps 8-9,000 in 1896-7, may amount to two successive blows of about 4 per cent and 8 per cent of the population. Who knows the cost in malnutrition resulting from the loss of so many of their cattle? To those in the UK who may say: if there had been no rebellions there would have been fewer deaths, we must surely emphasise that the 1893 war was



an invasion by Rhodes and Jameson, not a rebellion. And in relation to 1896, what they would have expected British people to do if invaded and partly dispossessed? Is the analogy that it would have been better to accept a German conquest in the Second World War? To those who might argue that these numbers were not so great, it is worth recalling that the UK (including Ireland) lost about 800,000, under 2 per cent of the population, in the First World War (1914-18), and little of the fighting was on British land. Yet it was a searing experience for the society.

With respect to the Zimbabwean population as a whole, variously estimated at between 500,000 and 700,000 in the late nineteenth century, the percentage lost in these wars was perhaps closer to 3-4 overall. Conflict was concentrated in specific parts of the country, especially around the Ndebele heartland and Salisbury (Harare). As in some other parts of Africa, conquest could be deeply disruptive and was marked in places by demographic stasis, but over the longer term, the colonial period was more generally characterised by demographic growth, especially after the Second World War. The latter was also the case in Zimbabwe.

It is also worth remembering that Rhodes, his settlers and soldiers – though by no means of one view - generally held strongly racialized ideas about those whom they were conquering. Selous (1896, 66-7), who guided the original pioneer column in 1890 and fought in both the wars, articulated an extreme version of Social Darwinism: if African people are not ‘reduced to a state of submission’, he wrote, then they must be ‘displaced’, must ‘go’ or ‘die’. He wrote:

‘the whole question of the colonisation by Europeans of countries previously inhabited by savage tribes must be looked upon from a broad point of view, and be judged by its final results as compared with the primitive conditions it has superseded ...

Just as in the establishment of the white man's supremacy in the Cape Colony, the aboriginal black races have either been displaced or reduced to a state of submission to the white man's rule at the cost of much blood and injustice to the black man, so also will it be in Matabeleland, and so must it ever be in any country where the European comes into contact with native races, and where at the same time the climate is such that the more highly organised and intelligent race can live and thrive, as it can do in Matabeleland; whilst the presence of valuable minerals or anything else that excites the greed of the stronger race will naturally hasten the process. Therefore Matabeleland is doomed by what seems a law of nature to be ruled by the white man, and the black man must go, or conform to the white man's laws, or die in resisting them. It seems a hard and cruel fate for the black man, but it is a destiny which the broadest philanthropy

cannot avert, whilst the British colonist is but the irresponsible atom employed in carrying out a preordained law—the law which has ruled upon this planet ever since, in the far-off misty depths of time, organic life was first evolved upon the earth—the inexorable law which Darwin has aptly termed the "Survival of the Fittest".'

This view seems to legitimate as many deaths as were needed for white minority rule.

A military intelligence report from February 1897, when caves were being blown up and gardens destroyed justified these strategies: 'It seems to me that the only way of doing anything at all with these natives is to starve them, destroy their lands and kill all that can be killed' (Ranger, 1967, 295).

### Discussion of Submissions

The Commission received over 800 submissions. This section discusses briefly a limited number that focussed more explicitly on history: largely those by Robert Calderisi, Duncan Clarke and Donal Lowry in favour of retaining the statue and Simukai Chigudu, Shula Marks and Paul Maylam who argued for moving it. This is not of course a representative sample but some key arguments can be addressed. Those submitting were encouraged to keep contributions short and clearly these contributors, who have all written on Rhodes or the history of the region, could have greatly expanded their treatment.

Opinions about the statue have been highly polarised and they have generally been closely related to views of Rhodes. Was he, as proponents of leaving the statue tend to argue, a 'flawed colossus' - a man of his time, who was not particularly racist, helped to lay the foundations of the southern African mining industry, established a progressive central African colony, and left most of his fortune for the public good both in Britain and Southern Africa? In submissions to the Commission, a good deal was made of Rhodes's generosity. So too, they emphasised his peace-making with the Ndebele in 1896.

For some, retaining the statue is less directly related to assessments of Rhodes and more to arguments that the past cannot be changed and statues should be retained as part of heritage. 'It seems to be an invidious exercise', Lowry writes, 'to attempt to weigh Rhodes's moral failings at the distance of more than a century against any beneficial contributions he may have made to Oriel College, Oxford University and – through the Rhodes Scholarships – the

world'. Moreover, Lowry suggests, the statue provides a prism through which to analyse history and arouse interest in further research.

For advocates of removal Rhodes is a deeply problematic figure, directly responsible for racial segregation, violence, conquest and land appropriation as well as exploitative relationships in the mining companies that he controlled. He was certainly a man of his time, who became an emblem of a particularly jingoist phase of late nineteenth-century British imperialism. Whatever the value of his donation to Oriel, he should not have been, nor should he now be, honoured with a prominent, celebratory statue on Oxford's High Street – one that has become, whether the College likes it or not – Oriel's face onto the world.

Rhodes did not require a statue to be built, they suggest, and now is the opportunity to recognise that it should be moved. Donors can be, and usually are, recognised more discreetly. Maylam argues against the view that moving statues amounts to erasing history. On the contrary, statues of the kind that Oriel erected in 1911 say little about history: they 'function as crude symbols. They reduce history to celebrity'. The statue only became the site of debate about history when Rhodes Must Fall called for its removal and explained why they thought this was a priority. Moving the statue, Maylam believes, in direct contradistinction to Lowry, would stimulate further critical research and debate. An interesting way of advancing this debate would be to explore the recent transformation of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Brussels, including the moving of King Leopold's bust, which has prompted extensive research and an extended national conversation, although by no means a consensus, about the country's colonial past.

Rhodes clearly had an intense interest in new technology and an understanding of its potential in mining. Marks, who was on the whole critical of Rhodes's legacy, noted that he was also an agricultural innovator and 'established the first Ministry of Agriculture' in the Cape. In fact, there was already a budding bureaucracy in the shape of a government veterinary surgeon, an *Agricultural Journal*, an official to deal with the scourge of phylloxera in vineyards, and an agricultural demonstrator. Measures that he supported had their existing champions, including compulsory eradication of scab disease in sheep that diminished the yield of wool – alongside diamonds, the most valuable Cape export. Nevertheless, through his alliance with the Afrikaner Bond, Rhodes was able to get a Scab Act passed in 1894 against widespread opposition (Tamarkin, 1996). He also contributed to the improvement of fruit production and export.

Yet his technical alertness, Maylam argues, went hand in hand with general lack of concern for his black employees; a Kimberley inspector noted his 'reckless

disregard for human life'. Marks refers to an episode during the siege of Kimberley (1899-1900), in the early phases of the South African War (1899-1902) when the diamond mines had to close. Rhodes was present and initially deployed African workers on various public works. He tried to persuade them to leave town, so that they would not be a financial burden to De Beers, but the Boers drove many back. Kekewich, commanding the British forces in Kimberley, learned that there was an increasing rate of scurvy and death amongst black workers and it transpired that they were neither being paid nor given adequate food. Marks notes, quoting Rotberg (1988, 630), that when Kekewich raised the matter with Rhodes, the latter told him 'not to meddle in his affairs', adding that if the Africans 'would not leave the town, they must be forced to, and giving them only bread and salt had this effect'. Yet during the siege whites – in part as a result of Rhodes's largesse – were 'never short of provisions'. This was a couple of years before Rhodes's bequest to Oriel that included support of high table.

Amongst the submissions received, the fullest defence of Rhodes and the British South Africa Company in the 1890s was offered by Clarke, who focussed not so much on what happened during the conquest, but what the Company replaced and what came afterwards. In this view colonialism halted half a century of predation on the older established, largely Shona-speaking, communities by the Ndebele. Precolonial chiefdoms on the eastern side of present-day Zimbabwe had also been vulnerable to *prazeros* based in Mozambique, who, like the Ndebele, took captives, livestock and grain. Clarke lays emphasis on the brutality of the Ndebele kingdom, and of the kings Mzilikazi and Lobengula.

The British South Africa Company justified its actions at the time in the same way – it was saving the Shona from the Ndebele. The question then arises as to why many chiefs in Mashonaland also rebelled against Company rule in 1896-7 (see above) and why some sustained a dispersed resistance, at enormous cost in lives and resources, for over a year. As noted, there is a large historical literature explaining and debating this (Ranger, 1967). Perhaps H.C. Thomson (1898, 148-9), a correspondent for *The Times*, captured the issue most succinctly at the time he heard that those resisting 'preferred the Matibili rule to ours, because under them they were troubled but once a year, whereas now their troubles come with each day's rising sun'. Though not unsympathetic with colonialism and the settlers, Thomson (1898, 10) believed that 'Mr Rhodes' record in Rhodesia has been written in blood, and cannot be obliterated by the assertion, however emphatic, of his adherents and himself that his motives have been disinterested and patriotic'. Ndebele raids did not cover the whole of modern-day Zimbabwe, and some of the devolved chieftaincies reached accommodation with them. Cobbing, Ndlovu-Gatsheni and others argue that Ndebele political authority, though it continued to involve raids and demands

for tribute, became more incorporative and stable in the later decades of the nineteenth century.

The conquest of Zimbabwe was justified, Clarke argues further, because Rhodes and the Company established 'a modern state in the heart of central Africa', which became the 'jewel of Africa' facilitating rising population, better infrastructure and real income growth for all. This was bequeathed to an African government in 1980. It helped to secure this area for the British Empire, in competition with German, Portuguese and Boer interests. This view is supplemented by discussion by Clarke, Calderisi and others of Rhodes as peacemaker in the 1896 indabas and his generosity in spending £50,000 to distribute food and 'save the Ndebele from famine'. As a result, some Ndebele, erstwhile enemies of the Company, saluted Rhodes's funeral cortege when it passed to his grave site in the Matopos in 1902.

Rhodesia did achieve considerable economic growth but debates about its history are also polarised. Chigudu notes that many African people experienced this colonial state as highly unequal, characterised by racial discrimination and with nearly half the land appropriated by a small minority of white settlers. Their reluctance to relinquish, or even share, power in the era of decolonisation led to a lengthy armed conflict (1964-1979) that was devastating for many who were involved. This appendix cannot debate Zimbabwean history after the 1890s. The key point for this Commission, and for this appendix in particular, is that neither Lobengula's nor Ian Smith's nor Robert Mugabe's statue is at issue. The statue is of Rhodes and it is his record that must be examined.

The question of peace-making has been discussed; there were earlier opportunities and the indabas started when Rhodes was counting the cost of the war; he failed to seek peace with the chiefs of Mashonaland. The distribution of grain to the Ndebele in October 1896 certainly saved some from starvation but, as noted above, it did not stop famine nor did it result in a cessation of scorched earth strategies in Mashonaland. The cost of grain was relatively insignificant compared to the sums distributed to a far smaller number of settlers.

Ranger (1999) analyses in detail the relationship that developed between Rhodes and some Ndebele chiefs after their kingdom had been devastated. Rhodes met them when visiting his newly acquired estates around the Matopos. He allowed some, deprived of their land, to settle on his and arranged for a feast to be held. A relationship was formed and, when Rhodes died, the Ndebele were concerned that their access to land on his estate and elsewhere may be curtailed. Faced with increasing settler demands they invoked what they understood to be promises by Rhodes that they should retain their new settlements.

With regard to the statue itself, Lowry offers an innovative interpretation of the ensemble above which Rhodes stands. Of the seven statues facing High Street, two are of kings and one of Cardinal William Allen, a leader of exiled English Catholics during the Elizabethan persecution. Of the four facing the interior quadrangle, one is of Cardinal (now Saint) John Henry Newman – a key figure in nineteenth century religious disputes in Oxford, who controversially switched from the Anglican to the Catholic Church. The ensemble, Lowry suggests, was an attempt at religious and political inclusion at a time when Catholics – though allowed to hold posts at Oxford after 1871 - were still the subject of suspicion. Lowry raises the possibility that Oriel was finding a way to honour another controversial son in the shape of Rhodes.

Although I have not seen an archive of Provost Shadwell's intentions, it seems clear that he intended to place Rhodes at the apex of the ensemble, above royalty, in a full-throated celebration of empire. When one of the Fellows challenged Shadwell about locating Rhodes above the two kings, his objections were dismissed. The irony is that the statue may well have been omitted if the building, completed in 1911, had been delayed for a few years. After the First World War (1914-18), the character of public memorials changed in Britain. Far fewer statues were erected of imperial icons; far more generic images were erected to soldiers who died in the war. Henry Alfred Pegram, sculptor of the Rhodes statue, contributed the Welsh National War Memorial in Cardiff and the Edith Cavell memorial in Norwich.

Although Rhodes neither requested nor required the statue in his will, Maylam argues that his behaviour, 'especially towards the end of his life, was shaped by a deep-seated egotism. He craved immortality, once telling Jameson that he expected to be remembered for centuries: "I give myself four thousand years"'. His name has indeed endured and the College could consider 'whether the commemoration of Rhodes at Oxford is overblown'.

For Lowry the ensemble is an act of reconciliation from which we should learn. If it was indeed that, and not simply an assemblage of Oriel's famous alumni, giving their blessing, along with Edward VII and George V, to Rhodes and Empire, Chigudu would ask: who is included in reconciliation? As he notes: 'A former imperial training ground, Oxford is strewn with tributes to the great men of the British empire ... In contrast, the histories of conquest, famine and dispossession that these men left in their wake are routinely forgotten. ... Rhodes' statue, then, is no mere physical artefact. It is imbued with a noxious history. Its presence at Oriel College reframes Rhodes' conquest as munificence to the university and fails to recognise the exploitation of African labour from which his estate was built. It belongs in a museum, where it can be properly historicised'.

## Concluding Points: Debating History, Moving the Statue and Supporting New Initiatives

The forces of the British South Africa Company and the British government used extreme violence in Zimbabwe. These were brutal suppressions of people on their own land following an invasion. They were of no threat to Britain, to its empire, to South Africa or even to British interests in neighbouring territories of southern Africa such as the Bechuanaland protectorate. Lobengula had, up to 1893, very largely protected whites in his area of authority. African chiefdoms in Zimbabwe were perceived by Rhodes to be a barrier to his unencumbered control of the Company's ambitious territorial claims and to a settler colony. A more careful, less aggressive and less hubristic policy by Rhodes and Jameson may well have averted war.

Rhodes showed that it was possible to negotiate in August 1896 when he was concerned about the costs of a protracted war with the Ndebele and uncertain about the scale of the Mashonaland rising. He could have negotiated earlier and reached an accommodation with the Ndebele; equally he could have ended the war against the Shona far earlier by giving amnesties. He seemed to have no scruples about the violence used in this campaign: unbridled use was made of the Maxim gun: cattle and grain stores were looted on a large scale; fleeing Ndebele soldiers were shot; supposed rebels were sentenced and hung without due process of law; men, women and children sheltering in caves were blown up.

The violence of the British South Africa Company was publicised in the press and Rhodes was criticised in Britain as well as the Cape at the time (see above). Liberal politician Henry Labouchere, who published the weekly *Truth*, was a persistent detractor of 'Mr Rhodes and his pernicious company, a wretched, rotten, bankrupt set of marauders and murderers'; his fellow liberal MP A.C. Morton, asked in parliament if the government approved 'of this murder to 3,000, or even 500 men, for the purpose of plundering and stealing their land' (Davidson, 1984, 236). Labouchere was a controversial figure, critical of homosexuality, Jewish people, and women's rights as well as the excesses of imperialism. Every detail published by Labouchere in *Truth* may not have been correct. But there was a systematic attempt to counter what influence that he and other critics carried.

In 1892, an honorary doctorate was conferred on Rhodes by the University of Oxford; this preceded the most controversial episodes of his career. When he planned a visit in 1899 to receive it, there was considerable discomfort, led by

the Master of Balliol, with the support of about 90 academics including the university proctors. But Kitchener, who was to receive a similar award, threatened to withdraw if Rhodes was not honoured. The Provost of Oriel, the Vice-Chancellor and the majority of staff and students came out in favour; Rhodes received ‘an uproarious welcome’ (Massie, 2016).

Rhodes must be accorded responsibility for the deaths in Zimbabwe and for the character of extreme violence. He and his company chose to colonise Zimbabwe and other parts of central Africa by force. Leaving aside the legitimacy of the Rudd concession, they could have annexed Zimbabwe on this basis, appropriated less cattle and land, and exercised authority with more care. Even Milner, the High Commissioner from 1897, and Milton – both sympathetic to Rhodes - were alarmed by the practices of the British South Africa Company in the early years. There were alternative models at hand in the Bechuanaland protectorate. A different approach may not have averted conflict entirely but it may have minimised the risk of warfare. Proponents of Rhodes, and/or his legacy, have ignored or glossed this direct responsibility for violence.

Britain, and especially Lord Salisbury’s administration, also has to be assigned responsibility. The use of companies in Central and Eastern Africa was a means for the British government to expand colonisation on the cheap. Salisbury secured an area of British control in competition with the Transvaal, Portugal and Germany. Even though the High Commissioner in Cape Town nominally exercised some oversight, this was not effectively used to constrain the excesses of the British South Africa Company. Salisbury certainly associated himself with the enterprise and Rhodesia’s first white settlement, and future capital, was named after him.

This appendix focusses on specific issues which should be central to the relationship between Oriel College and the Rhodes legacy. Rhodes did not ask for the statue nor was it a requirement of his legacy to the College. The current Fellows have the opportunity to rethink the decision of their predecessors. Does the College wish to represent itself to the world with a celebratory, public statue, facing Oxford’s High street, of a man who, whatever he may have achieved and donated, was capable of this level of inhumanity on the land of those he attacked. Does the College wish to retain so central a symbol of racial segregation at a time when society, and institutions such as the University of Oxford, are working hard to deal decisively with this legacy? The Fellows have, in the past, made decisions about change that were of great importance - for example the admission of women students to Oriel in 1984, after about 650 years of serving men only. This decision is surely within their powers. As Appendix B shows, it would not be unusual – in global terms - for a statue to be moved at a time of political and social change.



Rhodes has been profusely thanked by the College over about 110 years – including a statue, a named building with inscription, a portrait, a plaque, and an annual dinner that included a toast. With new information, and in the context of changing attitudes to racial segregation and the imperial past, it is surely appropriate for the College to remove the statue to a place where this history can be debated and explored. Moving it would be an important symbolic act that would help Oxford as a whole to celebrate a commitment to global inclusivity, as befits a university that has been ranked amongst the top institutions in the world. Ten other statues would be left in place on the building. The inscription under the statue has not been the specific subject of protest and could be left as a more discreet acknowledgement. The College would have the opportunity to contextualise such changes with inventive historical material. Rhodes will not lack for memorialisation in Oxford and elsewhere.

A number of interesting suggestions were made to the Commission for the empty plinth, including an annual commission for temporary artwork that would address issues raised by the statue. A proposal was made for a Zimbabwean sculpture nearby, perhaps in the grounds of the university church that has an historical link with Oriel. In this or similar ways, gains could be made, both visually and in respect of the historical debate.

If Oriel decides to pursue its decision, then moving the statue will require listed building consent, planning permission and further extensive investigation. Whatever the outcome, the process itself will contribute to inventive thinking about these legacies and about listed buildings. It will advance an understanding of Britain's imperial legacy as well as its impact on, and links with, colonised societies. This would be a bold approach that would help to place Oriel and Oxford at the forefront of academic work in respect of an important national debate. Fair-minded people outside the university, involved in such processes, including those in government who may ultimately make the decision, should surely encourage further research into the disturbing evidence outlined here, as well as the broader issues.

The College also has an opportunity to respond with initiatives in respect of posts, scholarships, student intake and academic coverage. These are outlined in the Commission report and should focus especially on the relationship between Britain and Africa, and grow out of such connections, because they are at the heart of the debate about the Rhodes statue and legacy.

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