

THE ADENDORFF TREK IN SHONA HISTORYD. N. BEACH

On 24 June 1891 a body of Afrikaners attempted to cross the Limpopo river, but were prevented from doing so by a force of the British South Africa Company's Police. Although the repercussions continued for some months, this incident was the climax of a movement known as the 'Adendorff' or 'Banyailand' Trek and has been commented upon by several writers, but not in the context of Shona history. Some authors have seen the 'Banyailand' Trek movement as an episode in Anglo-Afrikaner relations, in which the Chartered Company prevented the expansion of Afrikanerdom into the land north of the Limpopo.¹ Others, writing from the British point of view, saw it as a threat to the position of the Company in the Limpopo-Zambezi region, because the Rudd Concession of 1888, by which Lobengula's Ndebele kingdom supposedly granted the Company the right to occupy the Shona country, did not admit of an independent 'Banyailand'. If such an independent area existed, then the Rudd Concession was largely invalid.² Yet in fact the Afrikaners who gathered on the Limpopo in 1891 were, unknowingly, symbols of a new trend in Shona history, and it is in this light that the Adendorff Trek movement will be discussed in this article.

The word 'Banyai' is a corruption of the Shona word vanyai, the plural form of the word munyai. Nyai implies a messenger or a servant, and it has occasionally been applied to sub-groups of the Shona. For example, in the early fourteenth century it was applied to a part of the peoples who now compose the Shona nation,³ but by the late nineteenth century it had a more limited meaning. In the 1880s vanyai was used by the people of the Transvaal to describe the southernmost members of the Shona who lived on the northern edges of the Sabi-Limpopo lowveld, without much regard for their origins. The vanyai of the 1880s were in no way distinct from the remainder of the Karanga-dialect speakers of the Shona, but at the time of the Adendorff Trek and afterwards many European writers incorrectly assumed that they were different from the Shona as a whole.⁴

In the late nineteenth century the Shona beyond the limits of control of the Ndebele and Gaza kingdoms presented

a picture of great disunity, for they were divided into many independent chiefdoms of varying sizes with no central body of authority. There had been such a central authority up to the Nguni invasions of c.1830-50, the Rozvi empires of the Togwa and Changamire dynasties. But even the greatest of these, the Changamire dynasty which flourished from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, does not appear to have provided a great deal of centralised rule. In addition, these empires did not base their power upon the southern Shona country. Recent archaeological writings suggest that a serious decline in the political importance of Great Zimbabwe, capital of the Togwa Rozvi rulers of Guruuswa had set in by the end of the fifteenth century,⁵ although Mr. D.P. Abraham shows that Great Zimbabwe retained a certain importance as a religious centre until the late eighteenth century.⁶ Moreover, the Changamire Rozvi dynasty, which was paramount in the Limpopo-Zambezi region after the campaigns of Changamire Dombo in 1693-5, based its power upon the centre of modern Matabeleland and ruled from its centres of Khami, Dhlo Dhlo, Naletale and Manyanga or Taba zika Mambo.⁷ The southern Shona area under discussion was essentially provincial under the Rozvi. Also, in the eighteenth century there was a slow movement of Shona people from the old borderlands between the Mwene Mutapa and Changamire Empires into the region in which peoples such as the Duma, Vaera-Shiri, Rufura, Mhari and Gevera settled among or submerged older Shona chiefdoms. This process was still in motion at the time of the Nguni invasions, where in the modern Selukwe, Shabani and Belingwe districts the Mhari and Ngowa were moving slowly west.⁸ These peoples all came under the Rozvi Empire, but there are suggestions that they were stronger in relation to the Rozvi than the older chiefdoms they replaced. In the Selukwe, Chibi and Gutu districts the Rozvi permitted the newcomers to supplant longer-established vassal dynasties, which suggests that the Mambo lacked the power or the inclination to support his subordinates.⁹ Indeed, according to one tradition probably collected in Belingwe in 1897-1902, a Rozvi Mambo actually died in battle against Chivi's Mhari.¹⁰ Whether this is true or not, it certainly implies that Rozvi over-rule did not mean national unity. In any case, when the various Nguni migrations invaded the Empire in the early nineteenth century the Rozvi seem to have received little or no help from their southern Shona vassals, and were forced to fight their battles with only the forces of the Imperial 'household' under leaders such as Tumbare, the Imperial hereditary general. Sometimes the

weakness of the Rozvi was even more marked: when the Chirume section of the Imperial Rozvi was moving eastwards away from the Ndebele invaders, they were greeted with hostility by Chivi's Mhari, and a battle ensued.¹¹ In short, it does not seem likely that the southern Shona of the 1880s looked to the Imperial Rozvi, then in exile in the Sabi valley, for aid against foreign intruders, or that they felt a sense of unity as a result of their former subjection to Rozvi overlordship.

The Shona were divided into totem clans, tribes and chiefdoms, but only the latter were normally effective in politics. The clan-totems, such as moyo (heart), shumba (lion) or gumbo (leg) were important as symbols of the origins of the major dynasties and as factors in the inter-family relations that played such a part in Shona politics, but it would be difficult if not impossible to prove that they ever corresponded to political units in the nineteenth century. Thus the Mhari and the Gove both had the shumba totem and lived in the central part of the Karanga-dialect area, but they do not seem to have regarded themselves as allies on that account. The tribal grouping, dzinza, did sometimes equate with an effective political unit. For example the Ngowa tribe appear to have been united in their hostility to the Mhari from the 1840s onwards - but with the exception of Musipambi's house, which submitted to Chivi. Similarly the Puma who moved into the Great Zimbabwe area in the early part of the century presented a generally hostile front towards Nemanwa's Manwa and Charumbira's Nini, but the Mugabe, Murinye and Shumba Chekai chiefdoms of the Puma fought among themselves up to 1892.¹²

The chiefdom was the most effective Shona political unit, but even so it was remarkably decentralised. The succession to the chiefly title varied from chiefdom to chiefdom, but in general the system was subject to two conflicting tendencies. On the one hand there was the well-established custom that the title should pass from son to son of the ancestor who founded the dynasty, while on the other hand each son's house, imba, sought to keep the title for its own members. Sometimes this led to a state of equilibrium in which the title rotated between the dynastic houses, but very often inter-house fighting took place, after which the winning house-head would keep the title for himself and his sons, and so the whole process would start again. The defeated houses sometimes received special hereditary titles and functions or special grants of land in compensation for their lost

rights to the succession, or they would move off to found new chiefdoms elsewhere, or they would simply sink into obscurity within the polity. When one remembers that the income from the goods traditionally due to a chief was limited and that consequently, lacking the wealth to pay for an army, he tended to follow the opinion of the majority of his house-heads who were themselves subject to popular opinion, while at the same time remembering the great latitude allowed to a dissident house-head, one can understand something of the background to the situation that confronted the Afrikaners and the British in Chivi's chiefdom in August, 1890.

This necessarily brief portrait of Shona political systems has pointed out their limitations, but it should be made clear that within these limitations the Shona achieved a great deal. Some chiefdoms reached a great size: the 1904 estimate of 27,970 people under Gutu's rule is probably too low, while his territory approached 1,700 square miles.¹³ The average size of a chiefdom in the southern Shona country was perhaps half this. The complexity of Shona polities led to a general skill at diplomacy, and Shona diplomats accomplished a great deal in the period of the 'scramble'. Skilled agriculturalists, the Shona were masters of many crafts, and readily adopted new techniques such as that of the gunsmith. Their relatively democratic social and political system was backed by a resilient although rather decentralised monotheistic religion. One essential point to be noted in this study is the differences in political geography between the Shona chiefdoms of the undulating, badly-watered lowveld and those polities of the high plateau and the broken country where the rivers cut from the highveld to the lowlands. In the lowveld chiefdoms boundaries were rather vague and enclosed large areas in which the people often moved long distances in order to find water, grazing or game. In the mountains or on the plateau, chiefdoms tended to be smaller, and demarcated by definite borders along streams or ridges. In both cases the people usually lived on or near rocky hills that constituted natural fortresses, and if the frequency with which such strongholds are mentioned in early traditions is a clue, then the Shona preference for such places predated the Nguni invasions.

A sample history, which also has a great deal to do with subsequent Shona-Afrikaner relations, will illustrate the kaleidoscopic character of Shona polities. In the late eighteenth century a people who had assumed the shumba totem

occupied the upper Mushandike valley. Their chiefly title was Chivi, which means 'sin', and by the early nineteenth century they were known by the tribal name of Mhari, which has several interpretations.¹⁴ One of the members of the chiefly dynasty, one Tavengerweyi, crossed the Tokwe river into the territory of the dziva-totem Ngowa people, under Kuvirimara Zengeya. Tavengerweyi and his people entered into a torwa (stranger) relationship with the Ngowa, by which they became Kuvirimara's subordinates. The Ngowa then occupied an area from the Tokwe westwards across the Lundi into an area that was at that time being occupied by migrating houses of the Ngowa dynasty.¹⁵ Gradually, Tavengerweyi's Mhari grew in numbers, until in the end the Imperial Rozvi, to whom Kuvirimara paid tribute, connived at a coup d'état. Tavengerweyi was allowed to replace the Ngowa chief as the local ruler. At about the same time, by a process that has so far received little attention from historians, Tavengerweyi succeeded to the Chivi title, excluding his brothers and uncles from the succession. These relatives spread out to the north and west to found the Mapanzure, Nhema, Banka, Munikwa, Madamombe, Rera and Bere chiefdoms. The ancestral spirits, mhondoro, of the Chivi dynasty, Chikanga and Murarapavi, retained a certain amount of theoretical politico-religious influence over the scattered Mhari chiefdoms, but in practice the residual Chivi chiefdom had no such influence.¹⁶ Thus in later years the Nhema, Banka, Munikwa and Mapanzure chiefdoms submitted to Mzilikazi and co-operated with the Ndebele until 1896, while the eastern Mhari such as Chivi and Bere tended to resist.

Meanwhile Chivi's chiefdom consolidated its position. Matsweru succeeded Tavengerweyi as Chivi, and the Ngowa were driven out. After a well-known massacre, probably in the 1840s, only Musipambi's house of the Ngowa remained under Chivi's rule, which did not extend west of the Lundi. There, the Ngowa chiefdoms of Mazvihwa, Mataruse and Mazvivofo remained actively hostile to Chivi until 1896. The Chivi chiefdom, confined largely between the Tokwe and the Lundi, expanded to the north-west and the south-east. To the north-west, the small Mhari chiefdoms of Madamombe and Rera and the Shiku chiefdom paid tribute to the Chivi chiefs, whose main centre of power was around Nyaningwe hill. To the south-east, the Mhari advanced steadily into the territories of Nemavuzhe's Govera and Chinaka's Pako. As each house of the dynasty began to overcrowd its hill-stronghold and the surrounding fields, new parties would set out to seize more

land. Thus Rungai hill fell to Makamure's house, while Masunda's house captured Chirogwe hill from the Pako and drove them into exile beyond the Tokwe and Lundi. This process of expansion was still going on in the 1880s. Nyenyera of Masunda's house and Chivasa of Matsweru's house seized Guhudza and Chisinge hills from Nemavuzhe's people in a move that marked the limits of Mhari expansion in this direction. It can thus be seen that Shona chiefdoms, in spite of their limitations, showed a great deal of vitality in inter-tribal politics. Therefore it was not surprising that they also reacted, in the course of time, to the far greater problems posed by the establishment of the Gaza and Ndebele kingdoms.

In the years after the Nguni invasions of the 1820s and 1830s the southern Shona country was subjected to raids from the east, south and west, carried out by several different peoples. The Nguni of Ngwana 'Masesenyane' and 'Mpanka' passed through the Great Zimbabwe region, and had time to incorporate a number of Shona into their groups before they continued towards the north.¹⁷ Shortly after this the Gaza Nguni under Manakuza Sotshangane established themselves in the mountains east of the Sabi river, and until they moved towards the coast in 1889 they exercised their power for a great distance to the west. Most of the Duma people paid tribute to the Gaza, and according to tradition the Mtilikwe river became the agreed boundary between the Gaza and Ndebele raiding parties.¹⁸ South of the Mtilikwe, in the lowveld, Gaza power reached to the Nuanetsi and Buhye rivers, and most if not all of the Tsonga came under their sway, so that they became known as 'Shangaans'. The Tsonga themselves were liable to move westward, and Matibi's Pfumbi on one occasion called in the Ndebele in order to repel Vuruwela's section of the Tsonga.¹⁹ From the south, the Venda crossed the lowveld, sometimes trading for cattle with people such as Ziki's Duma,²⁰ sometimes acting as mercenaries in Shona chieftainship disputes, as in Chivi and Nemavuzhe,²¹ and sometimes raiding. The effects of these Venda raids were still noticeable in 1892.²²

The Ndebele kingdom also influenced the southern Shona country, but there are good grounds for believing that this influence was neither as strong nor as well-established as European observers later believed. It is true that in 1890 the Ndebele placed markers on the Limpopo in order to indicate the limits of their power,²³ and that they raided the lowveld and the Fort Victoria district until 1893,²⁴ but there is also a

great deal of evidence that suggests that their power was limited. There were two basic groupings of Shona chiefdoms with regard to their relations with the Ndebele state: those who entered into a regular political relationship with the Ndebele and paid tribute of some kind, and those who did not. In this latter category, some chiefdoms were beyond the reach of raiders, some successfully resisted them and some occasionally paid tribute in order to escape raids, but did not do so regularly. The regular tributaries of the Ndebele included Chirumanzu on the Shashe river and the peoples of the modern Selukwe and Shabani districts. However, south and east of Shabani Ndebele power was limited, and seems to have been extended to these limits relatively late in Lobengula's reign. These limitations of Ndebele power are aptly illustrated by the histories of three Shona chiefdoms, those of Matibi, Nyajena and Chivi.

The Pfumbi chiefdom of Matibi covered a great deal of the southern part of the Shona country between the Bubyane and Nuanetsi rivers, and extended across the lowveld to the mountain of Marungudzi near the Limpopo. We have seen above that Matibi called in the Ndebele in order to drive back Vuruwela's Tsonga, and he is known to have paid tribute after this.²⁵ Yet he did not remain entirely under Lobengula's control. In 1887, tired of the exactions of the Ndebele, he moved out across the badly-watered lowveld to Marungudzi. This was against Lobengula's wishes, and it was not the king's power but severe droughts that forced his people to return in 1889.²⁶ From then until 1893 Matibi's people were raided by the Ndebele, and it appears that the regular political relationship had broken down.

The history of Nyajena's Jena people in the nineteenth century is closely linked with that of the Dumbuseya. These latter were originally moyo-totem Jena and zhou-totem Lemba from Nyajena's country who were defeated and assimilated by an Nguni force under Ngwana 'Masesenyane'. Taken with the Nguni to the north, they were defeated by Zwangendaba near Mount Wedza. They then fled to the modern Shabani district, where from the hills now called Mpopoti and Wedza they extended their rule as far south as Dumbghe and Chamakuwa hills in the Lemba and Ngowa parts of Belingwe.²⁷ Von Sicard has described how the Dumbuseya, under their chiefs Wedza and Mazeteze, employed the tactics they had learnt from the Nguni in order to create a miniature mfecane-style raiding state in the territory west of the Lundi.²⁸ It is in fact possible that

this Dumbuseya polity delayed the expansion of Ndebele power into the south-east, for Ngowa tradition asserts that Ndebele raids did not become felt until the reign of Mazviwofa Mazorodze, after the battle of Dumbghe.²⁹ Moreover, when the Ndebele removed the French missionary Coillard's party from Chivi in 1877, they took care to skirt the Dumbuseya territory to the north.³⁰ At all events, the Ngowa and Lemba eventually combined in order to seek Ndebele help, and the battles of Dumbghe and Chemakuwa led to the defeat of the Dumbuseya, who fled eastwards towards the country from which they had originally come, the land of Nyajena.³¹

In the nineteenth century Nyajena's people began to exercise a certain amount of power among the small, quarrelling polities of the Tokwe-Lundi confluence area. Thus Nyajena aided Madzivire in a war with Gororo, and it was presumably with Nyajena's backing that Madzivire was later able to defeat an Ndebele force at Chirongwe hill on at least two occasions. Gororo himself became tributary to Nyajena. When the Dumbuseya were defeated by the Ndebele, Lemba and Ngowa at Dumbghe and Chemakuwa, they moved east and reached the Nevanje district on the Tokwe river, next to Gororo's land. They forced Nyajena, Gororo and Madzivire to pay tribute, and for a while seemed likely to settle permanently. However, Nyajena defeated them in battle, and they were forced to move back up the Lundi, where they submitted to the Ndebele.³² They settled once more around Wedza and Mpopoti, and by 1892 they were raiding eastwards as far as the Tokwe in company with the Ndebele.³³ To Nyajena, who reasserted his influence over the Tokwe-Lundi confluence area, the Dumbuseya and their Ndebele overlords remained a menace.

The history of Chivi also demonstrates the limits of Ndebele power. After a period of raiding, Chivi Matsweru paid a tribute of hoes and skins, but if the Mhari ever became regular tributaries, it was not for long.³⁴ In fact the circumstances of Matsweru's death in c.1865 suggest that the Ndebele tried to conquer Chivi by indirect means.³⁵ According to tradition, Matsweru's son Makonese travelled to Mzilikazi and obtained Ndebele aid in order to overthrow his father. In the course of the raid Matsweru died. Despite his Ndebele backing, Makonese did not rule for long, for all the houses of Matsweru's brothers united to defeat him. Although Mazorodze was due to succeed, it was Masunda who led the resistance, and it was his Venda mercenaries who killed Makonese. Masunda, who had not intended this, apparently

killed himself in remorse. This family tragedy deprived Masunda's house of the right to succeed to the Chivi title until all Tavengerweyi's sons were dead, that is, until 1927. It is not surprising that the powerful Masunda house, which controlled the south-eastern approaches to the chiefdom and yet could not hold the supreme title, sometimes acted in an aggressive manner, from sheer frustration.³⁶

One account states that Matsweru's successor Mazorodze was supported by the Ndebele,³⁷ but in any case, by 1877 he had begun to resist them. He was accused of building up an army, backed by the wealth of great herds of cattle, and in the winter of that year the Ndebele attacked him. A large force under Lotshe besieged the Shona in Nyanningwe and the nearby hills, and met with a serious defeat. The Shona now had large numbers of guns, and from the cover of the hills they 'very nearly completely killed all the Imbizo regiment', as M.E. Weale put it in 1895.³⁸ In 1890 Major Maxwell at Bulawayo noted that 'they were three months in front of this chief's [Chivi's] stronghold but could make no impression; [they] lost a large number of the Imbiso, brought back no cattle. Loojie and Manyow were in command. This chief is occupying a portion of Matabeleland [!], he has never paid tribute to Loben[gula].'³⁹ The Ndebele scored only one success: Chivi Mazorodze was captured while visiting an outlying village,⁴⁰ and was taken to Bulawayo where he was skinned alive by the Mfengu war-doctor William Zizi in 1878 or 1879.⁴¹

The death of Mazorodze did not alter the basic situation, however. The Ndebele could not take the Shona strongholds while the latter had guns, although the Shona could not stop the Ndebele from ranging over the flat country. Thus when François Coillard escorted some African evangelists into Chivi's territory in late 1877 in order to resume their work of 1874-5, and called upon the Ndebele for help after he had suffered thefts, the Mhari made no attempt to prevent his departure, because they could not face the Ndebele in the open.⁴² Madhlangove summed up the position when he spoke to F.C. Selous in 1891 on Nyanningwe, while Ndebele forces raided the plain below: 'although I should be strong enough to repulse and rout the six hundred [Ndebele], I would be very stupid if I did it, because Lobengula would lead two thousand or three thousand men against me and would put me to death.'⁴³ According to Posselt the Mhari became divided into those who stayed on the plains and occasionally paid tribute, and those who fought from the hills.⁴⁴ Yet the Mhari still resisted the Ndebele. In 1888 chief Nyamondo

told the German missionaries Schwellnus and Knothe that there was war in Chivi, where the Ngowa and the Ndebele were attacking the Mhari,⁴⁵ and in 1892 Chivi's people inflicted casualties on a raiding force of Ndebele.⁴⁶ It is not hard to see why the Mhari should have continued to resist: not only had the Ndebele raided them and caused losses of life and property, but they had even weakened Chivi's power in the north-west by helping Shiku to break away from Mhari overlordship.⁴⁷

It can be seen from the accounts given above that the belief of nineteenth-century European observers that the Shona were helpless victims of Ndebele and Gaza aggression was wide of the mark. The Shona lacked the organization of the Nguni kingdoms, but they were perfectly able to formulate and follow independent policies. Moreover, the availability of guns in quantity from the 1860s onwards did much to counteract Nguni military strength. Venda gunmen fought in the Chivi civil war of the late 1860s; Venda gunsellers eventually penetrated as far as Chirumanzu, forty miles north of Fort Victoria, and Shona people from nearby Serima travelled to the Transvaal to buy guns from the Venda.⁴⁸ By 1887 the people of Chirumanzu could choose between Portuguese guns from Sena and British guns obtained - illegally - through the traders in the Ndebele country.⁴⁹ The Shona swiftly mastered the techniques of repairing guns, making powder and percussion-caps, and casting ammunition. Equally swiftly, they learned to fight from behind cover and even to adapt their traditional stone wall-building techniques to the new weapon, building sconces of stone overnight to meet specific tactical requirements.⁵⁰ The defeats of the Ndebele by Chivi in 1877 and of the Gaza by Gutu in c.1880 were indications of the growing military strength of the Shona.⁵¹ As the evangelist Gabriel Ruys remarked in 1883, 'the Banyai are this year totally different from my earlier experience of them.'⁵²

Yet although the advance of the 'gun frontier' helped to strengthen the Shona against the Ndebele, it could not solve the problem. Muzzle-loading guns, however formidable in the hills, could not defeat the Ndebele impis in the open. Only the introduction of breech-loading rifles, the formation of a major inter-tribal coalition or the availability of new allies or mercenaries could really keep out the Ndebele. Only one chiefdom, that of Matibi, is known to have acquired many rifles by 1896. No major anti-Ndebele coalition manifested itself among the southern Shona until 1893, and even then it was in conjunction with the British attack on the Ndebele. Until

1893, then, the need for allies was paramount. But the available choice was limited. The Gaza had been allies of the Ndebele since 1879, and in 1889 they moved down to the coast, away from the southern Shona.⁵³ The Venda were not really strong enough to tackle the Ndebele, and in any case they had their own troubles with the Afrikaners. The Paris, Berlin and Dutch Reformed Church evangelists and missionaries were generally welcomed because, as the evangelist Petrus Buys accurately observed in 1883, they were valued for their shooting skill and their potential value vis-à-vis local rivals.⁵⁴ But even when a chief such as Matibi was willing to risk Lobengula's displeasure in order to keep 'his' missionaries, the missionaries themselves had neither the strength nor the inclination to fight the Ndebele.⁵⁵ Until 1890 the British were far away in the Tswana country, and thus for the southern Shona the only possible allies in the 1880s were the Afrikaners.

The Afrikaners, or vabunu as they were known to the Shona,⁵⁶ had been a factor in the Shona country since the 1830s, when Hendrik Potgieter and Caspius Regardt had investigated the hinterland of Sofala.⁵⁷ However, although the 'Great Thirstland' trek to Angola had taken place as early as 1879, it does not seem that the Afrikaners seriously considered settlement in the Shona country before 1890. Their hunting parties entered the lowveld every winter, and their trails were well established by the 1870s.⁵⁸ The relations between these hunting parties and the Shona varied. On one occasion field-cornet Frederik Grobler of Waterberg led an attack upon the village of Zimuto, north of Fort Victoria, after he had suffered from thefts. It was in this fight that the evangelist Gabriel Buys was killed.⁵⁸ But not all Afrikaner-Shona relations were so hostile. J. du Preez, field-cornet of Zoutpansberg, hearing of Grobler's action, advised Zimuto to send witnesses to the Transvaal authorities, so that Grobler could be prosecuted.⁵⁹ However, it appears that President Kruger decided that the matter was beyond his jurisdiction.⁶⁰ As far back as Mzilikazi's reign, relations between the Afrikaners and the Shona had been regarded with suspicion by the Ndebele. Rightly or wrongly, Mzilikazi decided that Mtubayedzi, a Rozvi chief of the Mpateni section of Belingwe, had been intriguing to get Afrikaner help against him, and these Rozvi were 'almost wiped out' as a result.⁶¹ According to Rademeyer, a treaty of some kind had been made between Chivi and Potgieter, but no details have appeared.⁶² In late

1890 J.L.H. du Preez and B.J. Vorster stated that from 1874 onwards the Shona requested the Afrikaners 'to come and live with them to protect them from the murder raids etc. committed on them by the nation of Mosallekaats alias (the Matabeles)', that in 1880 a Shona deputation arrived in the Zoutpansberg to repeat the request, and that in 1884 the Afrikaners 'had a mutual understanding and had procured cession of certain parts of Brijaailand from the Baijaai.'⁶³ However, du Preez and Vorster were promoters of the 'Adendorff Concession' which they had secured in August 1890, and so their evidence on this point must be regarded with some caution.

The story now comes to the year 1890, to the clash of interests between the Transvaal Afrikaners and the British South Africa Company, and to the ludicrous situation in August 1890 in which each party had secured statements to their own advantage from two men who each claimed to be Chivi. On 30 October 1888 the subordinates of C.J. Rhodes had secured from Lobengula, King of the Ndebele, the right to extract minerals within his territory. This Rudd Concession was the only local agreement upon which Rhodes' British South Africa Company based its right to enter and occupy the Shona country in 1890. Thus the Chartered Company's position depended upon the extent and effectiveness of Ndebele rule, and they assumed that it extended as far as the Sabi river in the east and even further to the north.⁶⁴ When the Company's Pioneer Column, led by Lieut.-Colonel Pennefather, A.R. Colquhoun and L.S. Jameson, and guided by Selous, began to skirt the Ndebele kingdom proper on its way, they generally assumed that they were in Ndebele-controlled territory. However, on 3 August, the day after the Column reached the Lundi river, Colquhoun wrote to the Company secretary at Kimberley: 'The question of Chibi's independence has been raised by Selous, and Pennefather intends to execute a treaty with him. Both Jameson and I thought it wise not to take the step, but to assume Lo Ben[gula]'s authority. Pennefather will, however, keep the matter private and I have asked him to cut out from his Progress Report a passage referring to the question, and instead to write confidentially to Mr. Rhodes, which he is doing. It was not politic that such a passage should appear in a Report.'⁶⁵ Jameson commented, 'The Colonel seems to have a weakness for the flag and treaty trick à la Mozambique Johnson [sic], within the limits which Loben[gula] claims, using Limpopo on south and Sabi on east. This w[oul]d surely be rather dangerous, as it w[oul]d give a handle to opponents saying

that making a treaty with one, we ought to make it with all. This the Colonel saw the force of as regards Matipi [Matibi] and Setoutsi [Chitawudze] who themselves acknowledge that they are tributary to Loben[gula]; but Tschibi it seems denies having anything to do with the Matabele, having beaten them off when attacked. Considering that the old Tschibi was skinned alive at Bulawayo four years ago I should think Loben[gula] might fairly claim their conzaing... Selous' mania as to the limit of Loben[gula]'s authority, and his impolitic way of blurring it out, no doubt influenced the Colonel in this matter...⁶⁶ Rutherford Harris' reaction confirmed the danger in which the Company lay: 'Don't let Pennefather repeat that treaty business, although done with the best motives still you and Jameson are right and it is most impolitic: we stand on one pillar only west of 33° East'⁶⁷ and 'It is impossible to commence an independent Mashonaland with an infinite number of ragged miserable Chiefs'.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, on 3 August Pennefather had ordered Selous and R.C. Nicholson to discover Chivi's true status.⁶⁹

In Nicholson's words, they set out 'with a present of a M[artini] H[enry] Rifle, 100 rounds of ammunition and 2 blankets, with instructions to find out whether he was an independent chief or not. We arrived there on the evening of the 3rd. August and interviewed the chief... his reply was, to use his own words, which are very significant, "Today I am still Cheba because I 'konzaed' to the Matabele and want to live. If I had not 'konzaed' I could no longer be Cheba and you would not have seen me here".' No Europeans had been near for three years, the chief added, and on the 5th Selous and Nicholson, returning from the highveld, slept at his village, escorting him on the 6th to the British camp, where he was interviewed and photographed.⁷⁰

The interview at the camp was most satisfactory to the Company. Jameson wrote that 'Chibi, who lives 15 miles from here, came in yesterday with several of his people - a very satisfactory interview. In the first few minutes [he] acknowledged that he paid rent to Loben[gula]... This practically takes us up to Selous' own line, the Sabi, and does away with any necessity for what seemed to me a very dangerous policy - trying separate agreements with what Loben[gula], at all events, considers his tributaries. Colquhoun's swagger parchments will be kept for their legitimate purpose outside Loben[gula]'s lines, Manica etc...'⁷¹ The information was communicated to the press, and all seemed well.⁷²

But, in the meantime, a group of the Transvaal Afrikaners had been active. As early as February 1850, Selous had warned Rhodes that J. du Preez had told him in the Zoutpansberg 'that for some years past the Boers in the Zoutpansberg district have been preparing for a trek into Manyala land.'⁷³ A consortium planned to rendezvous on the Limpopo in early July, but the Dutch Reformed Church missionary S.P. Helm, who hoped to accompany them to the Shona country, noted that by 7 July only one member had turned up, and so he went on with his evangelists.⁷⁴ British pressure on the Transvaal had delayed the consortium,⁷⁵ but they eventually set out to secure their concession. On 3 August Jameson noted that: 'Four days ago four traders of doubtful reputation appeared with two wagons and have continued behind the column since. They profess to wish to trade at Tschibi's...'⁷⁶ Pennefather noted that these traders came from the Zoutpansberg and had raised a false alarm about Ndebele following the Column,⁷⁷ and according to Nicholson, J. du Preez later confirmed that this was the 'Adendorff' consortium's party of himself, C.J.F. Brummer, H.L. Brummer and C.G. Nel.⁷⁸ But the Afrikaners did not stay with the British column. On the afternoon of 4 August, Helm and his evangelists, who had just crossed the Tokwe on their way back from Great Zimbabwe and the chiefdoms of Mugabe Chipfumo and Nyajena Musovi where they had been consolidating the work of the African evangelists there the previous year, met one of the Brummers, who had come looking for them. It seemed that the Afrikaner concession-seekers had come in such haste that they had no interpreter of Shona. Accordingly, Helm's evangelist Micha Makhatho was recruited.⁷⁹ Helm's party continued past Madzivire's and across the Lundi, and on the morning of 7 August du Preez' party caught them up. They proceeded together to the Bubyé, and went their separate ways home.⁸⁰ Du Preez had, on 5 and 6 August, secured a concession from 'Sebasha (alias Schibe)' and [Nyajena] 'Mozobe' [Musovi] respectively. Its content completely contradicted the statements obtained by the British from their 'Chivi', and declared these rulers' independence of Lobengula and their willingness to grant extensive rights to the Afrikaners in return for protection and cattle or blankets.⁸¹

How can this paradox be resolved? The answer is, quite simply, that the Afrikaners and the British had interviewed two different men, neither of whom was Chivi. D. K. Parkinson has shown that, far from interviewing Chivi Madhlangove on his hill-top stronghold of Nyaningwe some fifteen

miles from the Pioneer Column's route, the British had reached Chirogwe hill, and had met Chirambamuriwo, a son of Masunda I, whose house had seized the hill from the Pako earlier in the century.⁸² As for 'Sebasha', he was in fact Chivasa, of Matsweru house, who had seized Chisinge hill in Nemavuzhe's country in the early 1880s. In retrospect, it seems likely that on both the Afrikaner and the British sides, individuals suspected their 'Chivi's' bona fides, but kept quiet. In December 1891, Selous told the press that on his return through Masunda's area 'I had an interview with him. He then represented himself to be the eldest son of the Tschibi, who was put to death by the Matabele, but as I had been told that Tschibi's real successor lived further to the north, I had strong doubts as to the truth of his statement, the more especially as upon August 2nd, the first day of our visit, a small boy of about ten years of age had been put forward as the present representative of the name. However, as it was not my business to go off my line to discover Tschibi, I gave Masunda a present, receiving from him a cow in return. He then went with me to the camp on the Lundi, where he was interviewed...'⁸³ Selous' testimony, in view of his orders of 3 August 1890, hardly accords with his public image as an impartial witness. It seems probable that du Preez also suspected 'his' Chivi's status. Chivasa's position as son of Chivi Matsweru had been immediately apparent to the German missionaries Knothe and Schwellnus who approached his territory in 1888,⁸⁴ and to the Posselt brothers, who arrived in 1889.⁸⁵ Chivasa's status and the true locality of Chivi Madhlangove should have been known to du Preez, who claimed to 'have known the land of the Baijaai now for the past twenty-eight years...'.⁸⁶ On the other hand 'Mozobe' was indeed Nyajena Musovi, a major chief of the Jena people east of the Tokwe.⁸⁷

In situations such as this it was all too easy for interested Europeans to put leading questions to African rulers, or even to fabricate statements. Thus when Chirambamuriwo was interviewed on 6 August 1890 or when Chivi Madhlangove himself was interviewed by Selous in the presence of Rhodes and Jameson on 4 November 1891, and they declared their subservience to Lobengula, or when Chivasa declared his independence to du Preez on 5 August 1890, these statements by themselves cannot be relied upon. It is much safer for the investigator to examine the whole history of Chivi's relations with the Ndebele up to 1893, as has been done above. Never-

theless, unless one is to dismiss the statements of the two false Chivis as examples of Afrikaner and British chicanery, they must be examined in order to see how they related to Shona politics and policies at the time. To begin with, from the Shona point of view, Chirambamuriwo and Chivasa were telling the truth when they called themselves Chivi. The distinction between a Shona personal name and a title is sometimes a fine one, and whereas a title is usually passed from a deceased chief to his younger brother, his personal name is inheritable by his son. Thus Chirambamuriwo, of the powerful and politically frustrated house of Masunda, might claim to be Chivi because his father Masunda I would have been Chivi if he had not committed suicide, while Chivasa was similarly a son of Chivi Matsweru.

In the statements of these two men, one can also see elements of Shona policy. Chirambamuriwo's statement to Nicholson and Selous that 'I am still Chiba because I "konzaed" to the Matabele and want to live' tends to confirm Chivi Madhlangove's comment to Selous in 1891 that although he could defeat small Ndebele forces, he did not care to face another major attack. In other words, although hill-strongholds such as Nyaningwe were impregnable to the Ndebele when defended by Shona gunmen as they had been in 1877 and as they were to be defended in 1892, the military stalemate between the Shona and the Ndebele persisted. But in the 'Adendorff Concession', Shona policy also appears. If Chivasa was not Chivi, he was at least an important member of the dynasty, while Nyajena Musovi was the ruler of a powerful people who had driven out the Bumbuse^{ya} less than seven years before. In the wording of the document the chiefs 'signed', one can see an answer to the needs of the southern Shona.

'...Sebasha (alias Schebe) and Mazobe, paramount chiefs of Banjailand with counsel and advice from our most important councillors and other sub-chiefs cede, surrender and transfer to [du Preez, Adendorff, de Myer, Brummer and Vorster] for continued use and everlasting occupation and inheritance ... under their own presently existing or yet to be declared laws, stipulations and regulations entirely independent of our people's rights or existence [this writer's italics] under such form of state government as would hereafter be found suitable to constitute over the land or territory now legally surrendered to them by us... [the area concerned is then described] ... for and under the following considerations: 1. that you will protect us against the continuous

raids by other powerful tribes, 2. that for tenure and occupation of the land you will pay a sum of 50 head of cattle or two (2) blankets in place of each beast.' They then add that the 'cession and surrender of territory' has been interpreted and re-read and agreed to, and add their marks as 'Sebasha', dated at 'Chobase' on 5 August 1890 and as 'Mozobe', dated at 'Jena' on 6 August 1890.⁸⁸ The wording of this document is somewhat ambiguous, for it was not framed by professional lawyers, but the words 'entirely independent of our people's rights or existence' appear to make it entirely amenable to Shona custom in general and to the needs of Nyajena and Chivasa in particular. In effect, the two rulers were granting settlement-rights to a band of torwa (strangers) who would in return act as mercenaries against the Ndebele and would pay tribute. It was not unusual for such vatorwa to remain under their own headmen for purposes of administration and justice even when they were scattered among the villages of the ruling dynasty. It had been on similar terms that Chivi Tavengerweyi's people had settled in the land of the Ngowa chief Kuvirimara Zeng'ya early in the century. The use of foreign gunmen as mercenaries had a precedent too, in the use of Venda in the Chivi civil war between Makonese and his uncles' houses. Finally, Chivasa and the rest of Chivi's Mhari had suffered in the past from the raids of the Ndebele, while Nyajena's most formidable enemies, the Dumbusenya, were even then living under Ndebele rule at Wedza and Mpopoti, and remained a menace. In short, from the Shona point of view the 'Adendorff Concession' was a perfectly reasonable document, and one that answered their needs very well. Had Chivi Madhlangove himself been presented with it, the Mhari as a whole might well have endorsed it.

But of course du Preez, Adendorff and Vorster did not see the treaty from the Shona point of view. There are good reasons, in fact, for believing that they had only obtained the concession in order to sell it to Rhodes, as several people claimed at the time.⁸⁹ The area they claimed under the concession, comprising the entire area between the Gaza and Ndebele kingdoms, the Limpopo and the Zambezi, bore no relation to the territories of Nyajena and Chivi, let alone of Chivasa. However, they disposed of it to others, who made a serious attempt to put it into effect in the following year.⁹⁰ Had a 'Republic of Banyailand' come into existence it would have run into serious difficulties almost immediately. It applied to two separate areas of rocky mountains and heavily wooded

valleys that were hardly large enough for the numbers of trekkers envisaged or at all attractive to European farmers: most of these areas have been left in African hands up to the present. The 'Republic of Banyailand' would have depended for its land policy upon Roman Dutch law, which with its concept of farms held in absolute tenure conflicted with the Shona law of the bulk of the area's inhabitants. Moreover, the apparatus of a trekker Republic, with its President, Volksraad, Landdrosts and Field Cornets, as well as the usual trekker methods of recruiting labour, would have clashed with the rule of the Shona chiefs. Some sort of violent reaction would have been certain, and in that difficult country the scattered trekkers would probably have fared badly against the Shona gunmen in the hills.

In the event, the 'Republic of Banyailand' never came about, and therefore we will not follow the progress of the Banyailand trek movement in South African history. In the Shona country the arrival of the British changed the face of southern Shona politics. The British column passed on, but a large garrison was left at Fort Victoria, and post-stations were erected on the road at the Tokwe and Lundi. A party of Europeans came to Nyanningwe, discovered that Madhlangove was the real Chivi, went to Chirambamuriwo, flogged him and removed the gun and blankets they had given him and presented them to the true chief.⁹¹ In 1891, when the Banyailand Trek crisis was at its height, British South Africa Company Police fortified the Naka Pass against the Afrikaners,⁹² and J.S. Brabant, son of the important Member of the Legislative Assembly for East London, was discharged from the Police and sent to Nyanningwe as Civil Representative to watch out for Afrikaner emissaries.⁹³ By the time Rhodes, Jameson, Selous and de Waal joined Brabant at Nyanningwe in November 1891 the British were obviously strongly established, a factor that may well have influenced their interview with Chivi.⁹⁴

In Shona history the Afrikaners who gathered on the Limpopo in June 1891 are symbols of the developing resistance of the Shona to the Ndebele. From individual defences of strongholds earlier in the century the Shona had progressed to the concept of making use of mercenaries or allies against the Ndebele, and by 1893 they took this process to its logical conclusion when the forces of Chirumanzu, Gutu, Zimuto, Chivi and Matibi united with the British to attack the Ndebele. This union itself had far-reaching consequences in southern Shona politics, but the Afrikaners were no longer concerned. The

arrival of the British in August 1890 and the defeat of the Banyailand Trek movement in June 1891 meant that the vabunu were no longer a factor in Shona history.

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 27. See note 17 above. The Dumbuseya evidently took part in the first battle between Ngwana and Zwangendaba (Liesegang, p.320), but missed the second battle in 1835 in which Nxaba and Ngwana combined to defeat Zwangendaba. Mount Wedza, south of Marandellas, should not be confused with Wedza hill or mountain, near Shabani.
 28. Von Sicard, pp.25-8.
 29. Hove, p.44.
 30. NAR Hist. MSS. CO 5/4/1/1 Log, 28 November and 1 December 1877.
 31. Von Sicard, pp.32-5, and C.W.Collett, 'Wedza', in the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Delineation Report for Shabani, 1965.
 32. NAR N 3/33/8, Chibi history, 1904.
 33. NAR A 1/9/1, H. Paulet to L.S.Jameson, Victoria, 28 July 1892.
 34. Franklin, p.83.
 35. Matsweru's death in c.1865 is a median dating. According to a raid-list collected in 1898, Matsweru died after Hwata submitted to the Ndebele in 1863 and before Mzilikazi's death in 1868. (NAR NB 6/1/1, NC Selukwe to CNC Bulawayo, 31 March 1898). Masunda I had at least 29 sons, (Zwakavapano, p.59) and died shortly after Matsweru, yet Carl Mauch in 1871 described Masunda as a young man (E.E.Burke, ed., The Journals of Carl Mauch, 1869-1872, Salisbury, 1969, p.159). This must have been Masunda II, Manyumbu.
 36. See note 14 above. Interview with Chief Chivi Marire Makotose, Chibi, 26 November 1968.
 37. Franklin, p.84. But this is not likely, under the circumstances quoted: Mazarire, who was not blind, was ineligible for the title, because he was a medium (svikiro) while according to more recent studies, Musuvigwa and Makanxwewe were younger than Mazorodze. H. Franklin, 'Manyusa (Amanxusa)', NADA No.10, 1932, p.82, Duncan and 'Kandamakumbo', op.cit.
 38. NAR N 9/1/1, NC Chibi, Annual Report, 1895.
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41. The Cape Times, 12 December 1891 [in NAR LO 5/2/15]. This newspaper interview with F.C. Selous confirms that Madhlangove succeeded Mazorodze. The 'death' of Chivi in 1892 in fact never took place. Madhlangove died in 1907. The earliest published account of this incident appears to be that in D.C. de Waal, With Rhodes in Mashonaland, Cape Town, 1896, p.306. The 1878-9 dating of Mazorodze's execution is supported in C.C.Thomas, Thomas Morgan Thomas, Pioneer Missionary 1828-1884, hand-duplicated for the Thomas family, 1950, pp.72-3.
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The Chivi dynasty and associated
dynasties.
(period up to 1890)



