

TOPIC : COLONISATION OF ZIMBABWE
SUBTOPIC : ANGLO-NDEBELE WAR 1893-1894

OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ Outline the causes of the Anglo- Ndebele war (war of dispossession).
- ✓ Describe the events of the Anglo - Ndebele war.
- ✓ Examine the results of the Anglo Ndebele war.

Background

- When Rhodes and his company reached Salisbury they established and took control in Mashonaland, they deliberately avoided Matabeleland so as to avoid war against Lobengula’s army.



Pioneers pushing into Mashonaland

- As per promise, each member of the pioneer column began to peg out their land on horseback.
- They occupied as much land as they could such that they left the local Africans with no land forcing them to surrender and offer labour to the whites.
- When the whites discovered that the gold that they were so much interested in was scarce in Mashonaland, they decided to turn to Matabeleland and this meant war with the Ndebele people.

Anglo-Ndebele war 1893

- The Anglo-Ndebele war is also known as the 'War of Dispossession' and it was a war between the Ndebele and the British.
- The Anglo-Ndebele war marked the occupation of Matabeleland.
- Rhodes and the white settlers wanted to colonise Matabeleland so as to complete the occupation of Zimbabwe and this provoked the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893.

Causes of the Anglo Ndebele war 1893-94

(a) Secure second rand

- The failure by the British to find a second rand (Eldorado) in Mashonaland was a cause of concern and raised suspicion that gold was in Matabeleland.
- The gold that the British expected to find was disappointingly scarce in Mashonaland hence the British thought it was now in Matabeleland and not Mashonaland.

(b) Livestock and pastures

- They coveted the good grazing land and great herds of Ndebele cattle.

- African's source of wealth lied in the land and livestock which the whites envied.
- They hoped to defeat Lobengula and own up the African wealth.

(c) Site of the Ndebele state



Location of the Ndebele State

- Ndebele state was in the way of a proposed railway to link Mafeking and Salisbury and between communications.
- Rhodes wanted this route in order to minimise the transport costs to South Africa.
- Rhodes was unable establish this railway with the existence of the Ndebele state.

(d) The boundary question

- Prior to the coming of the white settlers the whole of Mashonaland was Lobengula's sphere of influence.
- The Shona people paid tribute to the Ndebele king as a sign of loyalty.

- The BSAC was eager to control Mashonaland without the interference of Lobengula but he refused to observe that there was a boundary between Mashonaland and Matabeleland.
- This raised a question as to who should control the Shona people.

(e) Ndebele raids

- Mashonaland was a raiding ground for the Ndebele people and these raids disturbed labour on settler's mines and farms.
- Due to the existence of the whites, Shona chiefs thought that the Ndebele raids had ended.
- Some Shona chiefs refused to pay tribute to Lobengula and he severely punished them and this resulted in the death of Lomagundi, Chivi and Gomara.
- These acts were not tolerated by the officials of BSAC.

(f) Military strength of the Ndebele

- The Ndebele were also war-like and a military threat to the B.S.A.C and the settlers saw it wise to kill the enemy before it killed them.
- The powerful independent Ndebele state prevented settlers from obtaining enough labour for their mines and farms.
- Rhodes wanted to fight and remove the Ndebele people who stood in his plan of constructing a railway line from Cape-Cairo.

(g) Gomara Incident

- The Gomara incident was an immediate cause which sparked the war between the British and the Ndebele people.
- This final pretext came with the Ndebele raid on the Bere people under chief Gomara in May 1893.
- The Gomara people had destroyed and stole 500 yards of telegraphic wire belonging to the BSAC, Chief Gomara paid the BSAC using Lobengula's cattle which had been entrusted to him.

- Lobengula decided to punish chief Gomara but his army attacked both the Gomara people and the Shona people on the settlers' farms.
- Lobengula protested to the BSAC of what Gomara and his people had done and that he had to punish the culprits.

(h) The Fort Victoria incident

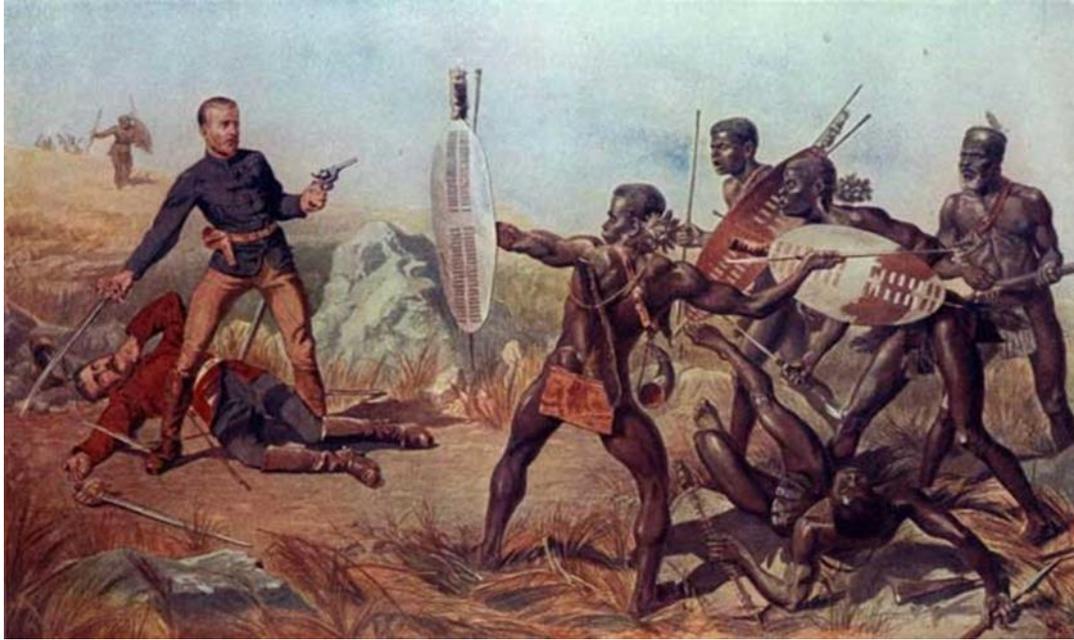
- In the same year of 1893, Lobengula's cattle which were under the care of a certain Shona chief were stolen by chief Bere in Fort Victoria in 1893.
- Lobengula sent an impi led by Manyao and Mgandani to punish the chief and bring back the cattle.
- Manyao ordered all the Shona people to be handed to the king hence all Shona people sought refuge to the Europeans and this attacked disturbed activities in European farms and mines.
- Dr Starr Jameson heard about the harassment in Fort Victoria he sent a letter that the Ndebele army should not cross the border and if they did not comply they would be killed.



Dr Starr Jameson

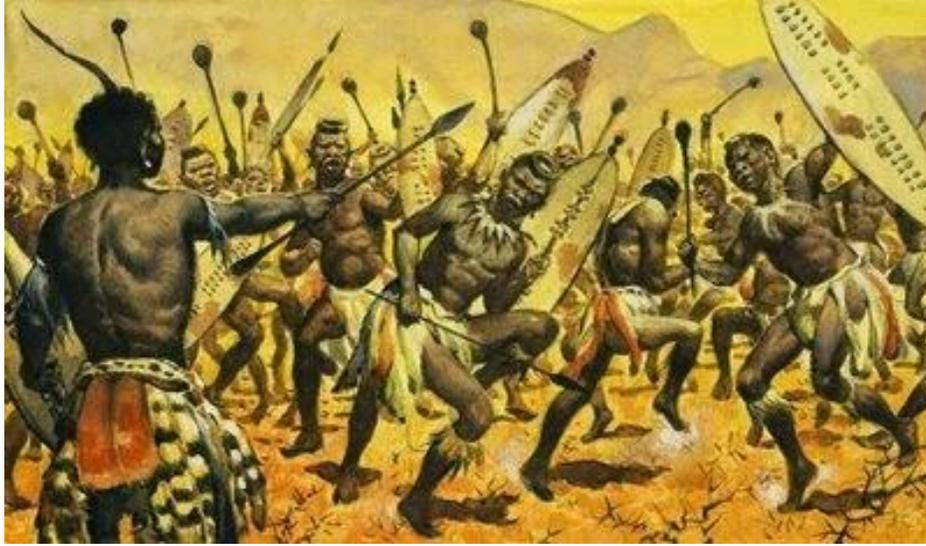
- Lobengula the king of Ndebele sent his indunas to see Jameson but he ordered them to leave the boundary within an hour and return to Bulawayo.
- Jameson then sent Captain Ledy and his army on horsebacks to follow on the indunas to see if they had vacated as ordered.
- Since the Ndebeles were walking on foot, Captain Ledy and his army found them within the borders and thought they were stubborn.
- Captain Ledy and army opened fired and killed more than 30 Ndebele warriors in Fort Victoria and this made Lobengula to prepare for war.

Course of the war of the Anglo Ndebele War



War between the Ndebele and whites

- The fort Victoria incident made the war between the Ndebele and the British inevitable and the war broke out in October 1893.
- The British South African Police (BSAP) force totalised about 700 men commanded by Major Forbes and equipped with five maxim guns were promised land, gold mines and cattle if they volunteered to fight against the Ndebele.
- Forbes combined forces to invade and take over Matabele king's capital in Bulawayo.
- An additional force of 700 Bechuanas (Botswana) marched to Bulawayo from the south under Khama.
- The Matabele king mobilized his army of 6 000 impi to prevent Forbes from marching in the city.



Ndebele impi

- On 24 October 1893 the battle raged near the Shangani River and more than 5 000 Ndebele warriors were defeated.
- The Ndebele warriors were not match for the crushing firepower of the maxim guns: about 2 500 were killed in another serious battle at Mbembezi.
- As soon as Lobengula heard the news of defeat he escaped and fled Bulawayo going northwards.
- On 4 November 1894 Starr Jameson and the company troops entered Bulawayo but they found the town burnt.



British South African Police

- On reaching the outskirts of Bulawayo on 3 November 1893 the pioneer set the royal town ablaze and the next morning they nailed the Union Jack.
- The Settlers wanted the body of king Lobengula, they sent an expedition led by Major Allan in pursuit of Lobengula.
- They caught up with Lobengula at Shangani but Allan Wilson and his men were ambushed and slaughtered during the night.
- King Lobengula was never captured but it is suspected that he died of small pox or malaria and was buried in a secret grave by some of his subjects.
- Settlers flocked from Mashonaland and South Africa, farms were pegged out everywhere and gold claims registered.
- Bulawayo was soon transformed into a thriving European township with a white population of 2 000.
- The defeated Ndebele were subjected to the Company rule.

Reasons for the defeat of the Ndebele

- The (BSAC) used superior weapons as compared to those of the Ndebele state.
- They were better prepared for war than the Ndebele.
- The BSAC were also aided by the Tswana, Shona and cape friends.
- The whites were supplied from South Africa through the Mafeking rail line.



British laager

- The British used laagers which were difficult to penetrate.
- A laager is an encampment formed by a circle of wagons that was used as shields by whites.
- The company forces had better organisation and strategy as compared to the Ndebele.
- The BSAC had better transport such as wagons and horses.
- Lobengula's flight and mysterious death demoralised the Ndebele warriors and this made them to surrender.

- Not all the Ndebele took part in the war and this reduced the numbers of Ndebele warriors.
- Lack of cooperation on the part of Ndebele and Shona to fight a common enemy.

Results of the Anglo Ndebele War

- The Ndebele lost their land and were driven into 2 small reserves, Gwaai and Shangani, where ecological conditions were quite adverse for crop cultivation.
- There were sandy soils and the area was infected with tsetse flies and baboons and it was unsuitable for humans.
- Most Ndebele remained on traditional lands as squatters on white owned farms.
- The powers of the chiefs were reduced to the role of subordinates, responsible for the good conduct of their tribes and for notifying crimes, deaths and epidemic outbreaks to the Native Commissioner.
- They were also expected to assist in the collection of taxes and the apprehension of criminals.
- Ndebele were defeated and the Ndebele state was destroyed.
- The Ndebele lost their independence and they were forced to work in mines and farms.
- Lost their cattle – more than 80 000 cattle were looted.
- The Ndebele people were made to pay taxes such as hut tax of ten shillings and other forms of rent.
- Dr Starr Jameson became the Administrator in place of the king and this marked the complete colonisation of Zimbabwe.
- All this cruelty made the local Africans to organise the First Chimurenga/Umvukela.