

How will I secure this stolen land permanently for my kith and kin? The question plagued Mason. He harboured a deep suspicion that his colonial forces had failed to pacify the resistance of the proud indigenous people of Mashonaland and Matabeleland. The thought that one day the indigenous people would rise and reclaim their land troubled him.

As usurpers and ruthless invaders, Mason and the British South Africa Company knew that they were living on borrowed time and on borrowed land. The settlers had a short window of opportunity to enrich themselves before the indigenous people reclaimed their noble heritage.

Indeed, he thought grimly, it would be ironic if this newly acquired territory were to be in the vanguard of the future economic liberation of the indigenous African. The battle for economic freedom will be the most bitter of all and its denouement will see the triumph of the true owners of the land, he thought uncomfortably as a clear disturbing vision of the future came to him for a brief moment.

The germ of an idea sprouted in his mind. What if the Empire concocted a plan to keep Rhodesia in the hands of the settlers forevermore? He recalled that his imperialist colleagues in the dark underworld of London's secret societies spoke in hushed tones of a plot to undermine Chinese sovereignty and to perpetuate British rule over the Far Eastern territory of Hong Kong. The aim of the strategy was to extend the colonial status of the valuable Far Eastern territory under the terms of a ninety-nine year lease.

I need to examine that option more closely because it might be the key that will perpetuate British rule in this territory, resolved Mason as he pondered on the possible success of replicating this strategy to keep this new colony of Rhodesia under permanent British sovereignty. He felt a gentle cool breeze from the banks of the river below as he remounted his horse.

An enthusiastic journalist had suggested the idea of naming the colony after Cecil Rhodes during several of the public meetings at the Market Hall in Fort Salisbury. On seeing the title "The Rhodesia Herald" on a newspaper in the hotel dining room, Mason realised that this singular honour was an opportunity to preserve his master's legacy.

Now, with unparalleled narcissism, Mason arrogantly acknowledged the decision to mark the strength of the ties between an

overseas territory and the Empire. This colony shall be the African jewel in the Crown's Empire and, on behalf of the British South Africa Company, I accept its name with pride. Rhodesia.

But as Mason sat on horseback watching the picturesque African sunset, he felt a chill as a recurring vision haunted him. It was the fearless young freedom fighter, telling him confidently that he was a settler forever and that the land would return to its rightful indigenous owners.