

**THE MOBILE WORKSHOP: MOBILITY, TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN-  
ANIMAL INTERACTION IN GONAREZHOU (NATIONAL PARK), 1850-  
PRESENT**

by

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For Mother, Ray, Denny, Lynn, and Carol  
For Whom This Would Have Been A Celebration, But Came Too Late

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## List of Abbreviations

BSA	British South Africa (Company/Police)
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CDC	Civil Defense Committee
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CVS	Chief Veterinary Surgeon
DAL	Department of Agriculture and Lands
DC	District Commissioner
DDF	District Development Fund
DDT	Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane
DM	District Messenger, later District Assistant (DA)
DNPWLM	Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
HDM	Head District Messenger
ICA	Intensive Conservation Area
JOC	Joint Operations Command
LOMA	Law and Order Maintenance Act
MAPU	Mobile Anti-Poaching Unit, formerly APU
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NADA	Native Affairs Department Annual
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NPA	Native (later African) Purchase Area
PACU	Problem Animal Control Unit
PV	Protected Village
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
R\$	Rhodesian Dollar, later Zimbabwe Dollar (Z\$)
SNC	Special Native Constable
TTL	Tribal Trust Lands, formerly Native Reserve
VCU	Vermilion Control Unit
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labor Association
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union, later Zanu (PF)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

## ABSTRACT

### **THE MOBILE WORKSHOP: MOBILITY, TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION IN GONAREZHOU (NATIONAL PARK), 1850-PRESENT**

by

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The dissertation investigates the role of mobility in the interactions of people, technology, and nature in Gonarezhou National Park in southeastern Zimbabwe for the last 150 years. It concentrates on the movement of three specific actors. First, it examines the movement of *people* such as state administrators, hunters or poachers, human traffickers, insurgents ('bandits' and nationalist guerrillas), and illegal immigrants to South Africa. Second, it explores *technologies* like indigenous hunting technologies, western-made guns, veterinary disease control, and indigenous and western conservation. Thirdly, it looks at the movement of *nature*, specifically wild animals, plants, water, minerals, and the weather.

By paying close attention to the role of mobility, the dissertation attempts to bring together people, nature, and technology in one narrative. Scholars who write about mobility have often normalized or naturalized it in such a way that we do not see how movement itself works to produce history or 'social' behavior. Mobility is taken as more of a premise but is rarely problematized. This dissertation argues that mobility itself disrupts and (re)assembles various kinds of boundaries in important ways. I use the

notion of the *mobile workshop* to talk about the artifacts, skills and socio-technical relations that surround these border-crossing people, nature, and technology as they move through time and space. These artifacts, skills and socio-technical relations are the very same ones scholars have used to define a workshop (be it an engineering plant or laboratory). Mobility renders the workshop portable and capable of operating on the move or being shifted from place to place.

This dissertation tells how villagers around Gonarezhou forest have formed alliances with these itinerant outsiders, animals, insects and technologies to transgress state monopoly over wildlife. At no point in the 150 years examined here did the human element (much less the state, whether “precolonial,” “colonial” or “postcolonial”) completely control the stage where technology and nature interacted. In principle, various incarnations of the state defined “right” and “wrong” forms of mobility; in practice, the “wrong” mobilities of human and nonhuman subjects ruled these various forms of the state, which in turn resorted to treating human subjects in the same ways as they did animal pests. Governance became pest control work.

## **Introduction**

This dissertation investigates the role of mobility in the interactions of people, technology, and nature. It examines these interfaces in the history of Gonarezhou National Park, a game reserve situated in southeastern Zimbabwe bordering Mozambique, over the past 150 years. This 5,053 km<sup>2</sup> piece of land is the second largest national park in Zimbabwe after Hwange and is famous for its “pristine” wilderness teeming with big elephant tuskers. A railway dissects the reserve into two, the northeastern side being the Chipinda Pools sub-region, the southern part Mabalauta. A game fence demarcates the park’s common boundary with the surrounding villages of Shilothlela, Malipati, Chikombedzi, and Mahenye.

It was the location of this fence between the villagers and the park that first drew my attention to Gonarezhou in 2000. I had followed press reports that the game reserve was about to become part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. The fence separating the park from adjacent parts of Kruger National Park in South Africa (with Shilothlela’s people in between) and the other separating Zimbabwe from Mozambique were going to be torn down so that animals could move freely between the three sanctuaries. Overseas tourists would flock in, and local people’s lives would be significantly improved. It would be a win-win project, the conservationists were touting.

Upon arrival, questions began to churn in my mind as I stood at the fence separating the villages from the animals. Who put it there? Was it there to keep things out or in? Bad or good things? What did bad or good mean, to whom, in what circumstances? Gazing east into the park, further questions emerged. How did these animals end up on *their* side of the fence? What did they do to deserve a fence putting them where they were now? At that point, a third set of questions. Was the fence established to keep the animals away from the lives of the villagers? Or, perhaps, to keep the people out of the park?

These questions lie at the heart of the conservation and meaning of ‘African wildlife’. Generally known in conservation circles as the “fences and fines” or “fortress” approach, this separation of nature and culture derives from a colonial philosophy whereby villagers were seen as the arch-destroyers of nature and the fence as a first line of defense against them.

There is perhaps now as much literature blaming European colonists for endangering wildlife through excessive hunting as there is scholarship on African destructiveness before the European ‘rescue’ arrived. While the epistemological fence between the two approaches is slowly being torn down, its resilience cannot be underestimated.<sup>1</sup> The debate has overwhelmingly privileged the social: it is still a discussion of the tug-of-war between outsiders (colonial settlers and conservationists) and local communities. Nature comes into the analysis as “ecology” or the acted-upon; it has no agency. Technology also comes in as an extension of human intentionality, its

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<sup>1</sup> William Beinart and JoAnn McGregor, “Introduction,” in Beinart and McGregor (eds.), *Social History and African Environments* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003); Jane Carruthers, “Africa: Histories, Ecologies and Societies,” *Environment and History* 10, 4 (2004); Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology, Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Currey, 1977); Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire – Environmental History of Settler Societies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997)

material presence and effect assumed, but not seriously considered. While the tide is shifting towards a deeper engagement of human-nature interactions,<sup>2</sup> the approaches still compartmentalize temporality into “pre-colonial,” “colonial,” and “postcolonial” categories that are biased towards key political and social events. Most of the environmental history of Africa focuses on the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By focusing too much on the colonial period, African environmental historians reinforce the notion of the European arrival as the “big bang” and high drama that fast-tracked Africans from nature into human beings before they were ready.<sup>3</sup> The usual “environmental history” of Africa is a story of how the colonial state grouped chiefdoms and kingdoms into one large political entity, and introduced conservation methods derived from western science. What often passes off as African environmental history is how this was done. As Alfred Crosby says, Africa seemed to have participated in tandem with other continents in the “Old World Iron Age.”<sup>4</sup> However, as Jared Diamond would say, the continent seemed to lose the plot afterwards and was “isolated” as technology spread from Europe to Asia.<sup>5</sup> Diamond’s formulation prepares the ground for Europe’s belated alarm clock to Africa: colonialism.

The “pre-colonial” is either a brief prelude to the discussion on the “colonial,” or merely one way to compare western versus indigenous knowledge. “Pre-colonial” societies are weighed on a scale and designated “small-scale societies.” They are cast as

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<sup>2</sup> An example of this shift is the conference entitled “Science, Disease and Livestock Economies,” held at St. Antony’s College, Oxford in June 2005, five of which papers have been published in a special issue of the *South African Historical Journal* 58 (2007).

<sup>3</sup> This was the typical Native Commissioner’s depiction of his African subjects in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Rhodesia, see R.C. Haw, “Impact of Civilization on the African,” *Native Affairs Department Annual* (hereafter *NADA*) 26 (1949): 31-3.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: Norton, 1997).

being on their way to evolving into “large-scale” or “modern states,” a process that then happens abruptly *thanks* to the ‘civilizing power’ of colonization. At which point the question is posed: ‘Were small-scale societies capable of (deliberate) conservation?’ No, say the conservation experts, many of them with no background or interest in history. ‘Conservation is a by-product; *voluntary conservation is rare.*’<sup>6</sup> In these accounts, what constitutes ‘conservation’—purpose, design, deliverables—is measured using the sliding scale of western science. No wonder some scholars have cautioned that unless we democratize the store of environmental knowledge, we risk “misreading the African landscape” and indeed those before European colonization globally.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond environmental history, there has been a much more sustained Africanist critique of the tendency to see Africa in isolation from the world. Using the continent’s 20<sup>th</sup> century economic dependency on the North as an example, Jean François Bayart has noted that Africa has always been in conversation with the world, for better or worse.<sup>8</sup> Focusing on the movement of people, tastes, and the changing face of Johannesburg and Accra respectively, Achille Mbembe and Ato Quayson have argued that it is possible to see in the street traces of Africa’s place in the world and the world’s place in Africa. They conclude: Africa is *on the move.*<sup>9</sup> Retreating to the village in the West African

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<sup>6</sup> Eric A. Smith and Mark Wishnie, “Conservation and Subsistence in Small-Scale Societies,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29 (2000): 493-524.

<sup>7</sup> For a robust critique, see James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); see also Terence Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture, and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> Jean François Bayart, “Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion,” *African Affairs* 99, 395 (2000): 217-67.

<sup>9</sup> Achille Mbembe, “At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality and Sovereignty in Africa,” *Public Culture* 12, 1 (2000); Ato Quayson, “Obverse Denominations: Africa?” *Public Culture* 14, 3 (2002)..

countryside, Charles Piot found a “place in motion.”<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Mamadou Diouf followed the Murid diaspora in the world in order to demonstrate how Africans stretched their locally generated repertoires to position themselves prosperously in the world.<sup>11</sup>

I add to this exciting conversation a focus on technology and an examination of what the mobility itself is doing. I am interested in reading the body-in-motion across places as a body-at-work, mapping or drawing lines of traversal between departure and destination.<sup>12</sup> I would like to operationalize Jessica Dubow’s framing of the *map*, which she called “a place found by *way* of the body.”<sup>13</sup> I feel that this useful framing need not be limited to the maps only human bodies draw, but also traces technology leaves as the body moves through place.

I would like to include a host of nonhuman things critical to the mutual shaping of historical events. There are significant risks I take in doing this, not least because other scholars have already traveled this route.<sup>14</sup> Like Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, I may be accused of giving nature and technology intentionality. Indeed, the two scholars have been heavily criticized for implying that humans and nonhumans have agency. In

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Piot, *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Mamadou Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism,” *Public Culture* 12 (Oct 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Veronica Strang, *Uncommon Ground—Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Values* (New York, Berg): 217; B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” in Trevor Barnes and James S. Duncan (eds.), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London: Routledge, 1992): 232-3.

<sup>13</sup> Jessica Dubow, “‘From a View on the World to a Point of View in it’: Rethinking Sight, Space and the Colonial Subject,” *Interventions* 2, 1 (2000): 89,90, 92.

<sup>14</sup> Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Michel Callon, “Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay,” in John Law (ed.), *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986): 196-233.

particular, “agency” has been slated as too strong a word to use to describe the behavior of things upon which humans impose their own language and classificatory devices.<sup>15</sup>

The discussion on human and nonhuman agency has been bogged down over whether agency means intention. Rather than Latour and Callon’s rather abstract framing of nature, I find Timothy Mitchell’s chapter, “Can the Mosquito Speak?,” to resonate more with my reference to tsetse fly and wildlife in general. My framing is concerned with Mitchell’s argument that “human agency appears less as a calculating intelligence directing social outcomes and more as the product of a series of alliances in which the human element is never wholly in control.”<sup>16</sup> While I agree that the human element is never in full control, I argue for a far more radical exploration of intentionality than Mitchell is prepared to concede.

Mitchell’s framing is opaque and insufficient because it lumps ‘nonhuman’ things together that do not share material values—technology, disease, hydraulics, war, nature, chemistry and so forth. It is impossible to define the agency of technology in the same way as we define that of nature. Within nature itself, it does not make sense to define the agency of vegetative matter the same as that of animals that move about with real intent. Hence, a tree cannot get out of the path of a fire, yet a fly and an elephant can. Unlike trees, animals have brainpower; their actions represent a brain—not just nerves—in action. What is that if it cannot be called intention (to live)? As such, if we go that far (which I cannot do yet), what are the modalities of a serious reading of animal intentions? This is not the same as phototropism in plants, which one might equate to a steel road

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<sup>15</sup> Harry M. Collins and Steven Yearley, “Epistemological Chicken,” in Andrew Pickering (ed.), *Science as Practice and Culture* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 10.

bending depending on which side is exposed to extreme heat. Technology is an outcome of intentionality, the product or instrument of a brain-in-motion.

As I see it, Mitchell's mosquito could speak even louder, its agency leaning more towards intentions. Its deliberate action to fill its stomach and get to swampy areas where it can get its food is merely reduced to "affecting" and "coinciding" with human intention. Yet it is a hunter of blood. What one reads is how human technology "enabled the mosquito to jump barriers"; it "benefits" from human intention, threatening people themselves.<sup>17</sup> The mosquito triggers global health discourses and the formation of institutions. If this is how the mosquito 'speaks', then the tsetse fly in this dissertation is screaming.

The questions Mitchell raises—the basis of my own—offer new nonwestern insights into a story about co-production (mutual shaping) that has often been confined to scientific practice in the western (built laboratory) and engineering plant.<sup>18</sup> My contribution is from a nonwestern but westernized research area and does not sit easily with the conventional categories of 'science' and 'technology'. I am pursuing three stories simultaneously. First is how *technology* equips people to interact with nature; second, how *nature* determines the technology people use to relate with it, and third, how *people* determine both purposes for nature and instruments with which to relate to it.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*: 23-4.

<sup>18</sup> The defining science and technology studies on this topic are Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch (eds.), *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users. and Technology*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005); Donald Mackenzie and Judy Wajcman (eds.), *The Social Shaping of Technology* (London: Open University Press, 1985); Gabrielle Hecht, *The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998); Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). For Asia, see Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb* (London: Zed Books, 1998) and Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1999). For Africa, see Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For the South American littoral, see Peter Redfield, *Space in the Tropics: From Convicts to Rockets in French Guiana* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

Nowhere is this triumvirate of factors clearer than in one specific scholarly work—Edmund Russell’s *War and Nature*—which goes well beyond the usual environmental history narrative of conservation and wilderness. Russell contests that scholars have often treated warfare and human control over nature separately and as if unrelated. In arguing for a co-evolution of the two, Russell says that “the control of nature expanded the scale of war, and war expanded the scale on which people controlled nature”<sup>19</sup>

Russell raises the intellectual stakes of considering even further what happens when the weapons meant for controlling problem animals and noxious plants are deployed against ‘problem people’ and ‘weeds’. In the colonial context in 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa, the punishment of people in a manner and with instruments befitting animals, of making other people things, is what Aime Césaire called *thingification*. By it he meant the absolute removal of the self-esteem of the African, what he calls the *présence Africaine*.<sup>20</sup>

There are three problems with Césaire’s formulation. The first is to particularize thingification as a behavior of the colonial state or something the postcolonial inherits from it. For some scholars, the problem is precisely that even the most radical critiques of colonialism are doing so from where they “ought not to be standing” to begin with,<sup>21</sup> namely the colonial moment (instead of before it) and its libraries.<sup>22</sup> I suggest that the genealogy is too shallow and unconvincing.

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<sup>19</sup> Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001: 2.

<sup>20</sup> Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000): 42.

<sup>21</sup> See Ato Quayson, “Obverse Denominations: Africa?” *Public Culture* 14, 3 (2002): 586-8.

<sup>22</sup> Valentin Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988)

The second problem is Césaire's readiness to damn the colonizer in a manner that bludgeons the colonized into a non-agent. While it accomplishes Césaire's thesis of showing how colonizers turned Africans into things, it overlooks myriad other agencies that suggest the persistence of self-esteem because and in spite of being things.

Which brings us to the third problem with Césaire—he grossly underestimated the agency of things. As one of the founding fathers of African scholarship, especially on nationalism, Césaire set the tone for histories that contradicted their project of exposing the colonial subject as a thing designed by the state. He overlooked materiality of the nonhuman thing in a bid to expose the discursive view of it. Where was technology in this story, considering that the state's rationale for making Africans things stemmed from the need to “civilize the native”, who, as Hegel had declared in 1837, had no history<sup>23</sup>?

Then there is the question of things as nature. If the state treated people as animals, how exactly did it treat the animals themselves? This is an important question to ponder given that thingification is predicated on understanding the materiality of the thing and the state's prevailing and emergent treatment of it. What did the thing itself *do* to deserve such treatment? We must know this because chemical methods of controlling nature were located within a constellation of other technologies of controlling the mobility of deadly things—fences, laws, patrols, defined pathways and ports, guns, etc.—to save (certain) human lives.

Russell's study of chemical warfare encourages more ambition towards bringing together in one narrative the materiality of things (nature), the (in)human(e) treatment of nature, and the thingification of people. While his account falls short on the role of nature

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<sup>23</sup> Georg Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956): 91, 99.

and technology themselves, as opposed to people's design and use of both, we should maximize the opportunities he offers us to see the forest and the elephant in the context of the village and the village in the forest. This is precisely why the biggest weakness of Russell's account is that it underestimates the role of mobility in not only making good things bad, but also turning humans into deadly things. To be a state (sovereignty), therefore, is to be lord of all mobilities, to decide what may move when, where, and how.

Framed in Russell's materialistic terms, Césaire's notion of thingification shares three elements of Mitchell's argument: people, nature, and technology. All these are bodies or systems, be they respiratory, digestive, neurological, cardiovascular, social systems, ecosystems, and sociotechnical systems. They are also entities in space, a space in motion. Never mind where the force is coming from, technology, nature and people are not immune to the temporal and spatial motions of their time. Each is at work, the action self-driven or caused by other entities.

I call such a space or mode of power and agency where nature, technology, and bodies come together and form alliances, a *mobile workshop*. Bodies (of people, animals, inanimate things, and places) become members of a community, and as such, interact, break through, and affect members of another through the means. Mobile workshops are means through which humans extend (or try to extend) their agency (through technology, or technological work, or by making alliances with animals, insects, other humans, and so on). In that space, intentionalities get configured and reconfigured. The mobile workshop is a way of referencing the mobilities of bodies across (against) conventional boundaries.

## **Outline of the Dissertation**

## **Chapter 1 The Mobile Workshop**

In calling the village a mobile workshop, I am referring to the homestead's role as a nerve-center from which the body traversed to multiple spaces of work, not least of which was the forest. I elaborate on Piot's concept of 'place-in-motion', and seeing such movement as only possible through the material application of technology. First, I trace the migration of Shona, Hlengwe, and Shangane people into and around Gonarezhou forest between 1500 and 1840, on the basis of which they now claim 'indigeneity'. I start there to show how technology enabled these people to be mobile and to settle down to make villages and designate the forest as a usable resource. Once they had settled down, technology enabled them to render the forest a useful part of village life.

Next I discuss the emerging philosophy of co-existence in which people saw themselves and forest resources, both living and non-living, as parts of the same social body—the society of nature. When I talk about conservation before the European colonial partition and continuing African senses of it during the colonial period, I am referring to this holistic approach in contrast to the narrow 'scientific' approach of state officials. In this highly spiritualized space, nature was not only a source of and a medium through which critical lessons of life could be taught. Nature was a spiritual space, with God at the top, the spirits of departed ancestors somewhere in the middle, and the people at the very bottom. Wild animals, trees, pools, and mountains were bodies through which the ancestors or God communicated with mortals. In some instances, the boundaries between animal and human, between nature and culture, collapsed. In others, nature and culture drifted even further apart, especially when wild animals endangered human life.

I then show how the forest became an arena of human and technological action as much as an actor in its own right. Appreciating the sight of its teeming herds of game, villagers were forced into innovating spears, bows and arrows, pitfalls and other devices that enabled them to kill and eat venison. By its materiality, this technology became a role-player determining who could hunt in the forest: only those who had the skill and endurance to use the instruments effectively could hunt. Such human access to the forest also depended on societal rules and regulations over who could get in.

The forest became an extension of the village, each individual homestead a gendered space from which other social spaces were mapped: fields, hunting grounds, pastures, cemeteries, religious shrines—the list is endless. The chapter pays attention to the technologies that demarcated and defined ‘the homestead’, the practices that one could call ‘indicators’ of everyday life, and those defining ‘real men’, ‘real women’, and ‘well-cultured children’. It draws up an activity profile, and then follows people’s mobilities from the homesteads to sites beyond it, where credentials of real womanhood, manhood, and cultured childhood were earned through work. Paying attention to movement, I see people, animals, and technology as network-builders.

Because of work, the forest was consumed in the village. It became a second granary, the first being located in the homestead and containing the harvest from the fields. The forest was not just a granary; it was a sacred space that gave food to those who respected *its* taboos and refused to give those who did not keep *its body* clean. The taboos were human-made, but those who had crafted such rules to standardize practice within it were the long-departed ancestors, who were now spiritual custodians of the forests.

I then discuss the classification of the forest according to its consumptive value in the village. It was a source of firewood, timber, and raw materials for multiple technologies. It was primarily a hunting ground where game animals were to be found in specific habitats. By its material possessions, the forest en-gendered practices within it: men chased and trapped big game, women and girls fished and picked mushrooms, vegetables, fruits, grains, and firewood, while boys trapped smaller game.

As a source of meat, it was a sacred butchery. Gonarezhou was first and foremost a tsetse-fly infested place. The pest killed livestock, so game stepped into the vacuum, supplying meat, skins and other products, for direct use in the villages, and trade between local people and overseas clients. In this sense, the forest put local people in touch with overseas individuals, technologies, and places. This is the focus of Chapter 2.

## **Chapter 2 The Technological Junction**

This chapter focuses on how nature and technology mediated the encounter between the village and incoming European hunters in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. It follows the itineraries of six big game hunters along two key corridors leading into Gonarezhou and its locale. The purpose of the itinerants (to access nature and extract products from it) shaped how they imagined their destination as a hunting ground. By contrast, locals saw these itinerants within their own template: as people they could trade with. On the one hand, the journeys are the mediums through which western technology, people, and nature come together to produce history. Hunters had the guns, but they had no knowledge of

how to use them efficaciously against intended prey; they deferred to “the genius of the place”<sup>24</sup>—local inhabitants.

Next I turn to the routes. I show that nature was not a mute observer of this human encounter. ‘Good nature’ afforded prey and a chance to kill or paint, while ‘bad nature’ like tsetse fly and mosquitoes killed transport animals and itinerants themselves, thereby determining human-technological interactions. Hence European travelers used routes and transport systems that tsetse had forced local inhabitants to follow. There were only two choices after disembarking ship. One route started from the Indian Ocean seaboard of Lourenco Marques and Inhambane to the Gaza domains of Gonarezhou, the other from the southwestern littoral of the Cape along the Kalahari desert’s eastern fringes to the Tswana, Ngwato, and Ndebele kingdoms. Tsetse fly ensured only foot transport could be used on the former, while its absence on the latter allowed the use of ox- and horse-wagon transport. Africans tapped into these employment opportunities as porters and ox-wagon drivers.

The pathway was the junction between the local and global; the encounter took place in the village. Here I deploy Dubow’s notion of “a place found by way of the body” to examine the encounter between itinerant and villager. The routes led through the villages of African inhabitants, especially the headman, chief, or king’s homesteads. The approaching wagon or caravan of porters signaled the beginning of trade. The European was always at a disadvantage among people who were at home, employing every delaying mechanism to make sure they got the choicest deals on guns, gunpowder, clothing, beads, and other commodities he brought.

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<sup>24</sup> Rene Dubos, “The Genius of the Place,” <http://forestry.berkeley.edu/lectures> February 26, 1970.

Then came the penultimate encounter with nature. After all is said and done, the European was on an expedition to acquire ivory and other trophies from the chase. He might exchange his wares to purchase grain , labor, or information, but all these services went towards the objective of hunting. The foremost reason why African rulers entertained and promoted their stay was to trade. For a fee these hunters were allocated specific quotas of off-take in the forests and were to respect the laws that also bound African hunters. While they were not expected to observe every spiritual taboo, they were supposed to abide by the non-spiritual ones at the very least. I evaluate the place of nature and technology in conjuring the mobilities associated with the hunt and the joint work that Europeans and Africans put into the production of a carcass. I close the chapter with a discussion of the itineraries of a carcass in its multiple afterlives—as meat, horns, hides, blood, fat, art, science, political power, and so on. It is important to remember that the six narratives became maps with which European chartered companies and governments opened up the transLimpopo into colonies. How did this happen?

### **Chapter 3 Weapons Of Mass Acquisition**

The work of Roger Wagner has demonstrated that 1848-67 was the high point of ivory trade, beyond which an active hunt for minerals gathered momentum, culminating in the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand ('the Rand') in 1886.<sup>25</sup> Three things contributed to this twist of events. First, the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley near the Cape in 1866, which turned attention to mineral possibilities in the interior. Second, a revolt among the Venda people along the Limpopo, who blocked the access not only of the

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<sup>25</sup> Roger Wagner, "Zoutpansberg: The Dynamics of a Hunting Frontier, 1848-67," in *Society and Economy in Pre-industrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980).

Boers but all white men to the Gonarezhou except from an eastern approach. And thirdly, the vicissitudes of the western-driven market, as the Industrial Revolution in Europe increasingly demanded raw materials to feed its industries.

This chapter is a classic case of the mutual shaping of politics, nature, and commerce in the 1880s-90s, the story of how concessionary companies competed with European states to acquire colonies. Technically, the concession (*mvumo*, or permission to) was a piece of paper bearing an African ruler's signature basically agreeing to let the European concession-seeker extract whatever natural resources he wanted for a limited time. In practice, it became a deceptive weapon of mass acquisition which, unbeknown to its granter, authorized the concessionaire to use force if the agreement was arbitrarily rescinded. It was a double-edged weapon capable of being used as much against Africans as against Europeans themselves. While lesser chiefs were busy granting bogus concessions without the authority or knowledge of their superiors, European individuals were going around conning African rulers who had no reading knowledge to tell if the written version was a true copy of their verbal agreement.

The chapter puts these events in the wider context of the Berlin colonial conference of 1884-5, when European statesmen agreed that any power wishing to claim spheres of influence in Africa had to show written proof of consent by the people so-colonized. At the very least, it had to show enough evidence of effective occupation of any such lands. While rival European claimants had the privilege to settle in court, Africans did not.

Despite the violence that followed in the early 1890s, concession-seeking itself was a gentle process of courtship quite consistent with prevailing reciprocal interactions.

Guns became commodities in buying concessions from African rulers. At the same time, Africans used concessions to purchase guns—among other western commodities—for self-defense against increasingly imperialistic European neighbors along the coastline. This picture of African initiative belies a suicidal failure of these same kings—principally Lobengula and Ngungunyane—to realize fundamental changes in Euro-African interactions. The European was no longer a visitor of short duration prepared to submit to local authority but was here to stay—to replace Africans as the new rulers.

It happened fairly quickly. In 1889, the British South Africa (BSA) Company obtained a rather fraudulent concession from Lobengula, secured a charter from Buckingham Palace to occupy, and marched into the lands of the Shona. Three years later they defeated the Ndebele, killing Lobengula. Then in 1895 the Portuguese conquered the Gaza, captured Ngungunyane, and shipped him into exile. The post-pacification resistance was spirited but futile: the indigenous weaponry, antiquated muskets, and trickles of breech-loading rifles did not measure up to the machine-gun power of the Maxim and the Gatling. In the aftermath, the Portuguese Government and the BSA Company divided Gonarezhou between themselves, drawing a straight line border right through the villages, interfering in the local people's relationship with the forest. Ngungunyane's erstwhile subjects became commodities of exchange between Portuguese proprietors and the South African gold mining industry.

#### **Chapter 4 Transgressing Temporal And Spatial Boundaries**

So what happened to the mobile workshops and technological junctions in the age of colonial borders? For me the central issue is the tug-of-war between the “pre-colonial”

and the “colonial,” between those insisting on the boundaries and those convinced they were a surmountable nuisance. The discussion focuses on “poachers” of men who recruited and abducted African men and sold them to the gold mines of South Africa’s Witwatersrand.

The first part of the chapter traces the origins of black ivory back to Boer slave raiding in the transLimpopo basin since the 1850s, the captives being mainly young boys and girls for domestic and farm labor in the Transvaal. It then discusses the way mining concessions, first at Kimberley (diamonds) in 1866, and then the Rand (gold) in 1886, shifted labor traffic and trafficking. The decisive major transformation was the colonial partition of the transLimpopo into Portuguese, British, and BSA Company (Rhodesian) territory in the 1890s. The point of this discussion is to show that the colonial border did not stop the voluntary and forced mobility north to south for purposes of paid labor. This is one of the niches that attracted many people of Bvekenya’s ilk to the border region in 1910; the other was elephant hunting.

The second part of the chapter is a discussion of how the three colonial states sought to regulate these resilient mobilities through licensed recruiting and game hunting. The Rhodesian and Portuguese authorities insisted that all Europeans wishing to recruit and hunt must be licensed so that they could pay tax and follow state laws. In essence the license was a new form of concession which entitled the ‘hunter’ to take a certain quota of human and animal bodies. The recruits and game products would be registered and tax deducted from their income and selling price respectively were sold for taxed. Men like Cecil *Bvekenya* Barnard did not do this. Instead they opened up opportunities for local African villagers to avoid paying tax on accrued income, while the game products they

sold were not subject to tax. These recruiters became *bandits* in the eyes of the Rhodesian state.

The third aspect returns to the theme of a technological junction and questions the state label of “bandits.” The account suggests that his boundary-crossing was, with adaptations, a continuation of the sort of technological junctions discussed in Chapter 2. This tendency of rogue elements like Bvekenya to usurp state power and turn subjects on the frontier into instruments for advancing their own causes dovetailed into villagers’ readiness to align themselves with these ‘pests-unto-the-state’ to settle their own scores with the state. In so-doing, Bvekenya set the tone for Gonarezhou’s 20<sup>th</sup> century history as one of boundary-crossing. As a marker of “colonial” time and space, the international border elicited no respect from local inhabitants precisely because the state was too far away to be seen or felt. Only when the three states made their presence felt and seen could the boundaries become legible.

## **Chapter 5 Poachers Of Game**

In stripping the state to its bare bones, I am not necessarily interested in what the various departments and individual officials were doing, but why they acted the way they did. The finger points squarely at nature itself. The existing scholarship does not account for the role pests like tsetse fly, mosquitoes, and veterinary disease pathogens such as rinderpest, foot and mouth disease, and African Coast Fever have played in the “protection” of wild animals. This is perhaps because of the “cultural landscape”<sup>26</sup> and “social and political” perspective scholars have generally taken, which has limited the

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<sup>26</sup> William Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions: Conservation and Development in Zimbabwe’s South-East Lowveld* (London: James Currey, 2007).

circle of ‘actors’ investigated. Technology and nature have been left out despite being the central targets of social actors and the instruments for realizing the “human footprint” on the environment. Nature divided the departments of state because it had the propensity to be both an asset and a danger to different constituencies.

To cut through the various disagreements over land usage, I will examine the state-in-motion so that we can see the different departments haggling over jurisdiction. It is important to read the arguments as reflections not just of people doing their public service, but also as outcome of nature’s push.

Hence while the department of commerce and tourism was determined to get Gonarezhou declared a game reserve and satisfy the hoteliers and travel agencies, the encouragement came from the existence of sufficient numbers of game to sustain such an enterprise. The department of agriculture and the cattle ranching interests protested vehemently; declaring Gonarezhou a game reserve was tantamount to creating a reservoir of veterinary disease pathogens on their doorstep.

They were watching closely developments on the Rhodesia-Portuguese border, where tsetse was advancing steadily and then rapidly into Chipinda sub-region. The government of South Africa and the warden of Kruger hoped to annex Gonarezhou and the *coutadas* as an extension of the already vast national park, but the ranching interest stopped them dead in their tracks. More than once Gonarezhou was proclaimed a game reserve, only to be de-proclaimed again.

These debates raged on until 1958 when a hyper-conservationist District Commissioner (DC)—who claims all credit for the establishment of Gonarezhou as a game reserve—arrived to take charge of Nuanetsi District. Allan Wright knew from the

onset that he had to enforce separate spheres between the people he administered and the animals in parts of Gonarezhou that fell within his district. To do so he needed to go beyond erratic patrols and statutory instruments if such boundaries were to be effective and conservation accomplished. Wright therefore established an administrative structure with which to impose state authority upon nature and Africans.<sup>27</sup> This structure was a “technopolitical regime”<sup>28</sup> in every sense—it was both a political structure that did technical work and a technical structure that did political work. It was a regime because it was the eyes, ears, mouth, and hands of the District Commissioner, supervising a network of village-based informers. To ensure mobility of information and rapid response to the administration of both people and game, Wright assembled an elaborate infrastructure comprising sub-offices, roads, automobiles, bicycles, and shortwave radios. Add this technology to his Chevrolet van *Genevieve* and Wright’s vision of mobile administration was complete. In reading the records of the Department of National parks and Wild Life Management, however, one finds that Allan Wright was not as influential in the establishment of Gonarezhou as he claims he was.

After examining the historical processes that led to Gonarezhou’s establishment as a game reserve, I then examine the spatial relationship between the park and surrounding villages, demonstrating that local poachers did not respect or recognize the arbitrary boundary fence as the limit of their forays. In this discussion, I also examine the paraphernalia of weapons these poachers used. I do this to demonstrate the continuing use of “pre-colonial” weaponry and developing patterns of change.

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<sup>27</sup> I think what Valentin Mudimbe called “the colonializing structure” (*The Invention of Africa*: 4) should have a wider brief that is technological and brought to bear not merely on people but nature as well.

<sup>28</sup> Hecht, *The Radiance of France*: Chapter 1

From 1976 to 1980, Gonarezhou was a war zone as Robert Mugabe's ZANLA guerrillas infiltrated via the national park to reach the villages beyond the park fence. At that point normal park management was virtually suspended. I defer a discussion of this war to Chapter 7, confining the narrative on that period to one ivory poacher named Shadreck, a 'Portuguese African' whom the Rhodesian Security Forces allowed in and out of the park in return for spying on ZANLA rear base positions in Mozambique. The *quid pro quo* was a resounding failure because unbeknown to the Rhodesians, Shadreck was also spying on them and reporting to ZANLA. I argue that Shadreck epitomizes the tradition of boundary-crossing infrastructures we saw in the case of Bvekenya: through a delicate balancing act, he ended up being able to move back and forth across the border. I follow Shadreck to his death in 1982—two years after Zimbabwe gained political independence from Britain. He had just done time in jail for poaching.

Shadreck represents a temporal bridge-crossing infrastructure for the interpretation of local history: through him, I am able to argue that the change of government did nothing to alter the stranglehold of the state in Gonarezhou. The boundaries the Rhodesian state had established, the new African nationalist government maintained. The rest of the chapter deals with three things: first, the grievances underlying the poaching; second, the *modus operandi* of the poachers; and third, the difficulty in the state attempts to police the boundaries between the villages and nature. I demonstrate, and argue, that the poaching arises from the failure of the state to differentiate itself from the colonial state in the eyes of the people. This carrot of philanthropic difference was the bait ZANLA guerrillas dangled to entice local people to support and facilitate their passage through their lands. But today the people of

Gonarezhou and Zimbabwe at large are asking: ‘*Masiyana papi?*’ (Where are you different from the Rhodesians?)

## **Chapter 6 Tsetse Allies**

Somewhere in the background, the voice of the tsetse fly was growing louder and louder. At no time is this voice more shrill and insistent than 1945-60. Chapter 6 is devoted to the extraordinary ways in which the insect’s actions mobilized people and technology and redefined terms of engagement between human and nonhumans in this period. The concern here is the insect mobilities that make people or experts classify nature as good or bad, to the point of creating separate spheres between wildlife and humans.

In its belly, this insect carried the trypanosome, harmless to game but deadly to livestock. I will first discuss the nature of this small beast in order to understand how it caused problems to the state and forced specific behavior. Tsetse fed on game blood and traveled on an animal’s back, or just about anything bigger than it, including Wright’s favored patrol technology, the automobile. Until the use of poison chemicals like Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT) in 1959, there was no weapon potent enough to destroy the tsetse directly *en masse*. The prevailing strategy was to shoot the game animals in order to starve the tsetse as well as creating a corridor between infected and uninfected space. The first game fence in Gonarezhou was in essence an anti-tsetse fly measure which from the onset was designed to create barriers between infested and clean areas.

Next I place tsetse between the state and the village and analyze how it created situations of tension between them and the possibility of subtle, metaphoric ‘alliances’

between people and insects. I examine specifically how tsetse forced the Rhodesian state—short on European manpower—to employ local African men as hunters to kill the pest’s game vectors and blood food-source and as fly-catchers to apprehend and take the insect to the laboratory for scientific experiment. In turn these men took this *opportunity* to receive state pay for hunting meat for their villages and poach in their spare time outside the designated game-free corridors.

## **Chapter 7 Pest Unto The State**

This chapter retraces 118 years of the state’s war on nature and citizens. I do this in order to show how the methods that Rhodesia had for eighty years developed and deployed piecemeal against animals and insect pests were unleashed on the nationalist guerrillas of Robert Mugabe. When he came to power, he adopted this machinery first to deal with veterinary pests, then against political opposition, and now against citizens who do not “vote properly” (for him). To oppose the state in Zimbabwe today is to legislate oneself into a pest, with all the pesticides it invites. The penultimate argument I make is that state power—the fence or boundary being a metaphor of it—has throughout Zimbabwean history been maintained through pest control. The rationale is that once the state succeeds in freezing mobility across its arbitrary boundaries, total power is achieved. This desire to control, what Michel Foucault likened to the all-seeing “panopticon” in *Discipline and Punish*,<sup>29</sup> has proven to be an expensive undertaking. Its success has always ended in jarring failure because it turns the entire country into a prison. Pests have always fought back: against Cecil John Rhodes, founder of Rhodesia, and now Robert Mugabe, founder of Zimbabwe.

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<sup>29</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977).

I want to synthesize this closing argument about the desire for total control by focusing specifically on the use of pesticides to, in the first instance *control*, and in the second *eradicate* pests. Looking specifically at substances or methods that multiplied the force exerted on the pest (force multipliers), such as poison where guns were inadequate, I show that ultimately, and in a bid to retain power, the Rhodesian state was prepared to reduce Africans—especially nationalist insurgents—to pests. But the pest (Mugabe’s nationalist insurgents from Mozambique) was not only resilient but triumphant primarily because it had struck a technological junction with local villagers. In it the villagers saw the only opportunity not only to challenge the Rhodesian state’s control of Gonarezhou, but also to reclaim it completely for themselves.

### **Conclusion: The State As A Pest In People’s Lives**

Once black political independence was attained, however, the nationalists got drunk with power and forgot to own up to their promises. These promises have remained unresolved. Having run out of excuses, Mugabe has turned on his citizens. They have become pests unto him; he has become a pest to them. Therefore, when all the state can do is establish and police boundaries, and citizens do not see its positive legibility in their lives, the state tends to delete itself from the fond memories of citizens. At the very least it becomes irrelevant and is by-passed as people cross the borders to find opportunities outside which the state has failed to provide so that they can work for themselves. Indeed, as Uyilawa Usuanlele and Victor Edo have recently noted, the state’s subjects exercise their democratic options by “migrating out of reach.”<sup>30</sup> Otherwise they confront it.

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<sup>30</sup> U. Usuanlele and V. Edo, “Migrating Out of Reach: Fugitive Benin Communities in Colonial Nigeria, 1897-1934,” in Femi J. Kolapo and Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry (eds.), *Latitudes of Negotiation and*

## Sources

This dissertation is written primarily from published primary documents, with strategic use of fieldwork notes and interviews. I have been conducting the primary source research since 2000 at the National Archives of Zimbabwe in Harare, Mabalauta Field Station in Gonarezhou, Kruger National Park in South Africa, as well as the Wits University Cullen Library in Johannesburg. Between 2000 and 2003, I conducted extensive fieldwork in the Chibwedziva, Chikombedzi, Malipati, and Samu areas surrounding Gonarezhou, talking to villagers, visiting key historical sites referred to, and recording interviews and conversations. The then acting warden of Mabalauta Field Station, Senior Ranger Chikwanha, was generous enough to open the doors to official files at the station library. He also granted me interviews with his staff and permitted me to accompany them on anti-poaching patrols in 2001.

In the last five years, my fieldwork and archival research has concentrated on the South African side of the transLimpopo basin. In this time I have been able to use video cameras to film key historical sites in order to play-back and visualize them more carefully during the write-up. The Stevenson-Hamilton Library staff at Skukuza offered me generous help with their collection of published 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogues. The archaeologists at Tulamela Ruins along the Limpopo valley conducted me on a highly informative tour of the pre-colonial archaeological site. Finally the Wits Cullen Library

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*Containment: African Agency and European Colonialism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007): 71-82.

was a gold mine of sources like early colonial journals, newspapers, and other paraphernalia.

The result was a multiplex archive for every chapter, arranged in a relay, each body of sources handing over the baton to the next so as to cover the 150-year period under consideration. Chapter 1 defers to a number of ethnographies recorded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from people who were experiencing or had lived through events described in the narrative. Most of these are published in the *Native Affairs Department Annual* and include compilations of Native Commissioners in direct contact with African elders on a daily basis. Others are unpublished state reports, correspondences, and interview transcripts from the National Archives of Zimbabwe. Some accounts were written by Africans themselves without the literary mediation of European ethnologists; yet others were standard narratives that could not be distorted even if second or third party compilers tried. The latter include folklore and a variety of idioms, and relics of sculpture in photographic and artifact form. For purposes of verification, I used my own fieldwork notes, interviews and video recordings.

These texts lay the groundwork for a discussion of the journeys of 19<sup>th</sup> century hunters through local villages (Chapter 2). For this chapter, I have selected six memoirs and diaries of the travelers themselves. I am not interested in these accounts as sources of historical evidence per se, but more importantly as outcomes of human mobility that took place in the village and because of nature. While such accounts have received ‘bad press’ from scholars in search of an undiluted subaltern voice, a closer reading shows important instances of candid admissions about the mutual shaping of the encounter. I focus mainly on those instances.

From 1890 onwards the dissertation is spoiled for primary documents. I have built Chapter 3-4 around early colonial state reports, letters, telegrams, and media reports. Chapter 5 makes use of an exclusive archive acquired from Gonarezhou National Park and which is not yet in the National Archives of Zimbabwe. This database contains reports on mobile anti-poaching operations in the 1960s-90s. Chapter 6 is based on a rich state archive that helps me create a long chronology on how the tsetse mediated the relationship between the state, local villagers, wildlife, and technology. Most insightful are the patrol reports of the tsetse fly rangers and entomologists, as well as the role of African hunters and fly-catchers in ‘fly work’. The last chapter has a more varied base of evidence. The first part draws from the National Archives of Zimbabwe to discuss the engineering of wild animals into pests as the state sought to carve existing human-animal habitats into livable European space. The annual reports of the Director of National Parks allow me to reconstruct the 1958-75 period, setting the stage for the arrival of the nationalist insurgents in 1976. The last four years of colonial rule in Rhodesia, and the use of pesticides to combat the guerrillas, draws on the account of a former Rhodesian soldier to discuss the use of these chemical and biological weapons against the guerrillas; interviews and ethnographic fieldwork to discuss the experiences of villages; and newspaper reports to examine the encounters between the state and guerrillas.

Together, these various fragments have helped me to transgress three temporal divisions in the region’s history, in the same way as the mobilities I trace help my historical actors breach the epistemological divide between places, people, technology, and nature. Today as I write villagers have disregarded the state, crossed the boundary fence and occupied their “ancestral lands” in Gonarezhou. There is a feeling among the

villagers that the state has betrayed them, that it is behaving like the colonial state. The lens through which the locals view the state is one of return to a time when the forest was a second granary and a sacred butchery. Postcoloniality is in question.

## **Chapter 1 The Mobile Workshop**

For an area with so much rich history, it is mystifying that the forest of Gonarezhou—the land and its people—has no historical study devoted to it. The little written about it does not account fully for the role of nature in human actions. Of technology there is deafening silence. Until William Wolmer’s *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions* in 2007, the only published history of the area was J.H. Bannerman’s article on the Hlengwe people in 1981. Both scholars are not historians but developmentalists.

Of the two, it is Bannerman’s work that raises important questions for this chapter. The first is temporal: he deals in some depth on “the pre-colonial,” whereas Wolmer is more concerned with the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of a much larger area. The second is Bannerman’s privileging of the Hlengwe at the expense of the Shangane and Shona, which distorts the history of an otherwise mixed population area. In essence, Bannerman narrows “the social” even further beyond just people to ethnicities within them, whereas I am arguing for the inclusion of nature and technology. Bannerman was at the time a fervent follower of the ongoing Marxist debate on the modes of production,

which tended to compartmentalize and draw fictitious boundaries between people and environment where I am looking for boundary-crossing.

Bannerman's genre belonged to the antiquarian tradition of the *Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA)*, the journal where white state officials shared their understanding of 'natives' since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> This tradition derived from the "pursuit of ethnographic knowledge," with the state particularly curious to know Africans in order to govern them more 'effectively'.<sup>2</sup> Bannerman got acquainted with historians at the then University College of Rhodesia (University of Zimbabwe) who encouraged him to collect oral traditions about the Hlengwe and 'give these people a written history'. His seminal piece, entitled "Hlengweni," was essentially a product of the contemporary ecology of its writer. In areas contiguous to Gonarezhou, the land officer had the dual role of encouraging small scale farming and cattle ranching while also discouraging unlicensed hunting, snaring and trespassing in game reserves (poaching). "Hlengweni" makes it clear that agriculture was the mainstay of Hlengwe livelihoods, which is strange for such an arid environment where the most sensible thing to do would have been to hunt game and trade for grain.<sup>3</sup> Bannerman's division of the Hlengwe economy into "branches of production" disrupts the close connections between homestead, field, forest, and trade routes through the mobility of the human inhabitants.

Historical actors did not pay that much attention to these analytical boundaries. Because they did not, it becomes important to examine how actor networks 'crisscrossed'

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<sup>1</sup> D.N. Beach, "NADA and *Mafohla*: Antiquarianism in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe with Specific Reference to the work of F.W.T. Posselt," *History in Africa*, 13, 1986: 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Worby, "Maps, Names, and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in North-western Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 3 (1994): 380-2.

<sup>3</sup> J.H. Bannerman, "Hlengweni: The History of the Hlengwe of the Lower Save and Runde Rivers, from the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Twentieth Century," *Zimbabwean History*, 12 (1981): 16.

these assumed categories. First, I will examine how all these people got to Gonarezhou, paying attention to the circumstances of departure as important factors in how they moved and settled in. Next, I discuss the ways in which the village was a nerve center of a mobile workshop—a mosaic of interconnected realms of production and socialization possible only through the movement of bodies back and forth. This is the context of relevance I draw between homestead and forest, from material worlds to spiritualities that are the very fiber of such connections. I frame the forest in two ways: as a second granary and a sacred butchery. I then narrow down the discussion to hunting, examining the instruments and work needed to produce wildlife products for the village.

The notion of the *mobile workshop* helps me to emphasize that none of these sites could contribute anything to the village without some sort of movement. At the same time, movement depended on the availability of objects or places that had potential to yield value. This dialogue between movement and resource availability is useful to describing the conversation between nature, mobility, and human claims to place .

### **Mobility, Nature, and Gonarezhou Before the Colonial Partition**

Using lengthy genealogies and mentioning the most spectacular moments on the journey to becoming the tree stumps of a place, the elders—the custodians of the community’s historical “facts” and “artifacts”—duly declared: “*Nzvimbo ino ine vene. Tisu*” (This place has owners. Us.) *Zvidza* (single *chidza*) did not just mean a ‘tree-stump’ (also called *chigutswa*) but also the ruins of a house, especially one reduced to the bare foundations. Late-comers could not claim to be *zvidza*, even if they could claim to be *vene* (owners).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Fireside Conversations With Tovadini Kemusi TDK60 Tape 5, Malipati Secondary School Staff Houses, July 10 2000.

Both *vene* generally and *zvidza* specifically were bodies, minds, and cultures at work, manufacturing spaces of domicile and production. As immigrants, *vene* carried their portable knowledge traditions wherever they went, they applied them to navigate their pathways as well as to deal with contingencies of arrival. The most conspicuous way of illustrating how villages were engineered into being through mobility of ideas and people is the *dzimbahwe* (stone “palaces of kings”<sup>5</sup>)-type architecture of the Shona, the Tsonga-type rondavels with an all-round veranda, and the basket-like, dome-shaped huts of the Shangane. Through careful studies of the stone architecture, archaeologists have examined the ways families, emigrants and rebels branched out to found their own villages, diasporas and states.

Migration—mobility—was the work that went into making kinship a network builder. The work of mobility included crossing rivers, plains, and forests, passing wild animals, trees, and people. It involved mobility across time, from founding ancestor to one’s father—for only patriarchs counted in the histories of the clan—and then the incumbent. As the settlements dispersed from one village to different locations they stretched the kinship networks across space, creating a vast linguistic, commercial, religious, and political space. Those the newcomers found in this place, who did not belong on the basis of genealogy, were either annihilated, assimilated, or expelled. The newcomers became *vene venzvimbo* (owners of the place).

I pick up my discussion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a brief expose of the major Shona groups in the research area, north to south. Of the several Shona groups, the most important were the various Ndaу chieftaincies of the Chipinge

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<sup>5</sup> This is a much deeper meaning than “houses of stone,” which does not take into account the technopolitics of constructions, i.e. architecture that embodies power. See Elaine M. Lloyd, “Mbava,” *NADA* 3 (1925): 62.

highlands, and just south in the Gonarezhou/Gonakudzingwa area were the Musikavanhu, Gudo, Garahwa and Makoni dynasties, all of Rozvi descent.<sup>6</sup> These dynasties had broken away from the Rozvi in the seventeenth century,<sup>7</sup> as had the Duma to the west.<sup>8</sup> Between the Runde and Bubi rivers were many small Pfumbi and Rembetu chieftaincies, and sprinklings of Venda, the bulk having been pushed south of the Limpopo and west towards Beitbridge. South of the Limpopo was the Singo state, another offshoot of the Rozvi-Changamire state near modern Bulawayo.<sup>9</sup> I will elaborate more on the settlement patterns of these Shona groups in the context of their interaction with the Tsonga in the next paragraphs.

In the 1750s and early 1800s, elements of the Tsonga, another Bantu people resident along the coast between Sofala and Nyaka (later Maputo), settled around what 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers called the ‘Thirstland’. The Tsonga groups found the land’s aridity, tsetse fly, and fever unbearable and called it *hlengwe* (an unbearable place). In turn, people of other lands referred to these specific Tsonga as ‘the people of that unbearable place’ (*Hlengwe*). In time, what the Karanga had called *gona rezhou*, the Hlengwe called *hlengweni* (land of the Hlengwe people).<sup>10</sup>

The aridity of Gonarezhou, particularly in the winter months, explains why practically all human settlements were located along the perennial rivers—the Limpopo, Mwenezi, Bubi, Luvuvhu, Runde, and Save. Where mountains or hills could be found,

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<sup>6</sup> J.K. Rennie, “From Zimbabwe to a Colonial Chieftaincy: Four Transformations of the Musikavanhu Territorial Cult in Rhodesia,” J.M. Schoffeleers (ed.), *Guardians of the Land: Essays on Central African Territorial Cults* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999): 257-285.

<sup>7</sup> J.K. Rennie, “Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism amongst the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935” (Chicago: University of Chicago, unpublished Ph.D thesis, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> R.G. Mtetwa, “The ‘Political’ and Economic History of the Duma People of South-Eastern Rhodesia from the Early Eighteenth Century to 1945” (Salisbury: University of Rhodesia, unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*: 32-3; T.V. Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail* (Cape Town: T.V. Bulpin, 1954): 109.

most of the settlements were sited there for defensive purposes. The hydrological factor explains why none of the groups permanently settled inside Gonarezhou itself.<sup>11</sup> Even

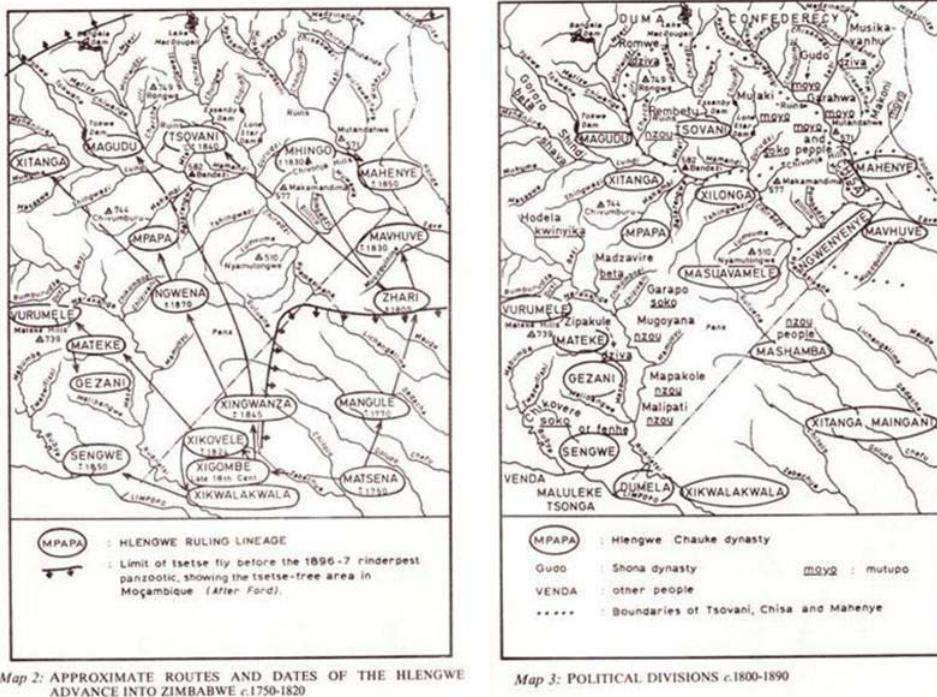


Fig. 1: Mobility, Portable Identities, and the Claiming of Space, 1500-1889

Source: Bannerman, "Hlengweni": 4-5.

those groups settling on hilly country did so in order to tap into the higher relief rainfall.<sup>12</sup>

It is also because the Hlengwe "did not cultivate much land but lived mainly by hunting and fishing."<sup>13</sup>

Starting out as a family of one man, Tsanza Chawani, the Tsonga-speaking people who became Hlengwe would in less than 200 years become the most dominant population in and around Gonarezhou. Most genealogies of the Hlengwe nevertheless start with his descendant Chinyori Chahumba, whose son Matsena had settled in a place the Hlengwe called *svikundo* (the place of small shrubs) between the Galupo and Chitolo

<sup>11</sup> John G. Millais, *A Breath from the Veld* (Alberton: Galago, 1986/1895): 143-7.

<sup>12</sup> Bannerman, "Hlengweni": 9.

<sup>13</sup> National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ) S2929 Delineation File: Nuanetsi: H.E. Sumner, Provincial Commissioner, Victoria, to D.C. Nuanetsi, 15 May 1973.

rivers in about 1750. Matsena's two sons expanded their settlements in two directions. The first, Mangule, crossed the Galupo (about 1770) to settle between the Chepfu and Dadache Rivers. Mangule's son Zhari would cross the Dadache and Lichangalime and settle along the source of the Mauge in about 1830. Around the same time, one of Zhari's sons, Mavhuwe, settled just south of the Save-Runde junction, straddling the Marumbini area of Gonarezhou. The other son, Mhingo, crossed the Runde at its junction with the Pombadzi and settled on the Chivonja and Makamandima hills in about 1830. Mhingo's sons Chitsa and Banga (Mahenye) would subsequently found their own dynasties between and east of the Save-Runde junction respectively in 1850-70. A third of Zhari's offspring, Tsovani, would cross the Gonarezhou and settle at the Runde-Chiredzi junction in about 1840.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, as Mangule and his offspring expanded northwards, Shigombe was settling in the west of the Zebechua-Chitolo confluence. From their father's late-18<sup>th</sup> century settlement between the Mwenezi and Zebechua, Shigombe's sons Shikovale and Shingwanza moved their homesteads just slightly northwest in about 1824 and 1845 respectively. One of Shikovale's two sons, Chikwarakwara, settled on the south of his grandfather Shigombe's domains, straddling the Mwenezi; it is from there that his own son Sengwe moved west along the Limpopo to set up his own village between the Bubi and Mwenezi in about 1850.<sup>15</sup>

The second of Shikovale's sons was Hokwanye, whose son Mateke would cross the Mwenezi and settle on the hills at the source of the Babumba and Marakanga streams

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<sup>14</sup> Bannerman, "Hlengweni": maps pp. 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> NAZ S2929 Delineation Reports Nuanetsi, Ministry of Internal Affairs: Berend P. Kaschula, "Report of the Gezani Headmanship and community, Chief Sengwe, Sengwe Tribal Trust Lands," August 1967.

in the Mateke hills. His two sons, Vurumele and Gezani, would move west and south to the Bubi and Malibangwe hills respectively to found their own villages.

Shikovele's brother, Shingwanza had two sons whose descendants would move furthest to the north. The first, Ngwena, crossed 'the great Thirstland' and settled at the watershed from which the Chikombedzi, Chizivani, Muchingwidzi, and Guluene Rivers drain. Ngwena had two sons. The first, Mpapa, settled just south of the Chivumburu hills, on the source of the Makambi and Batarengwe rivers. The second, Ndalega, had a son Chitanga, who went further beyond Chivumburu to settle at the Mukume-Runde junction. Shingwanza's second son, Magudu, also crossed 'the great Thirstland', to settle just east of Chitanga, on the eastern bank of the Runde, at its confluence with the Tokwe.

All these mobilities must be seen as encounters, as the traction of mobile bodies upon existing territorialities. The most intriguing aspect of the encounter is its disruption of existing totem-based settlements and its consequences for totem-based human-animal interactions. The *soko* of Chikovere co-existed with Sengwe and Gezani's people between the Bubi, Limpopo and Mwenezi. Zvipakure's *dziva* shared the same locale with Vurumele and Mateke around Mateke hills. Three *nzou* (*zhou*)-totem groups, Malipati, Mapokole and Mugoyana, lived on the eastern fringe of Gonarezhou between the Chizivani River and the sources of the Zebechua and Guluene. Far north, when Mhingo's son Mahenye settled at the Save-Honde junction in Chipinga after moving across the Runde from the Marumbini area, he claims to have conquered the Garahwa and Makoni of the *moyo* totem. But these people told Bannerman they actually gave Mahenye a piece

of land to settle on.<sup>16</sup> The *moyo*, *soko*, and *dziva* between the Honde and Chiredzi rivers, and the Duma of the upper Runde and Save in all likelihood did the same thing.<sup>17</sup> This is why there was so much elephant along the Mwenezi (where the *nzou* people lived). The Shona and Hlengwe did not eat lion because it was associated with ancestral spirits, but for the *moyo* people specifically, the lion was the clan taboo. The same with monkeys and baboons, which the *soko* (or *bveni*) tabooed but which the entire population generally did not eat.

The ‘ruling class’ was the Chauke clan of *nzilo* (fire) or *humba* (snail) totem, all Tsonga-speaking. The second-class were the Hlungwana or Sono of the *tihlanga/tsanga* (reeds) totem, also Tsonga-speakers through their conquest and assimilation under the Chauke. The *Banyai* (Shona and Pfumbi) and *Baloyi* who tabooed *shoko* (monkey/baboon) were third class despite speaking Tsonga in addition to their Shona language. Both subaltern classes paid tribute in beer, animal skins, iron, and so on; the Chauke could take *Banyai* or *Baloyi* girls as wives without paying *roora* (bride wealth).<sup>18</sup>

While Bannerman’s Hlengwe informants led him to say that their ancestors ‘conquered’ resident groups, the very short distances most of these groups migrated before settling makes this very doubtful. Ethnographic evidence suggests that when a father had many sons, to diffuse the pressure on his own homestead, he allocated them land in areas beyond his fields. Only the youngest son remained on the homestead when the patriarch died, and inherited his father’s domains. If the patriarch had many sons and

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<sup>16</sup> NAZ Per/5 Ministry of Internal Affairs: Interviews with Tsovani, Chitsa, Tsomele and Mahenye: Tsovani Questionnaire on Bantu Chieftaincies: Chief Towani, University of Zimbabwe History Department Texts 6a-h).

<sup>17</sup> Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*: 23.

the land was limited, he negotiated peacefully with his neighbors for more, with force being exercised as a last resort.<sup>19</sup>

According to Shangane oral traditions, Manukusa Soshangane, the founder of the Gaza state and Shangane nation (following) was “one of Shaka’s greatest generals” (*izinduna*). In the 1820s, tired of the Zulu king’s dictatorship, he decided to ‘migrate out of reach’ and settled at Biyeni among the vaChopi people on the lower Limpopo, far away from Shaka’s harm.<sup>20</sup> At Biyeni Manukusa fathered two sons, Mzila and Mawewe. Fifteen years later he was on the move again, heading north so that he could sit on the veins and hunting grounds of ivory in Gonarezhou. In 1836 Manukusa settled in the Chipinga-Chipungumbira (The Spinney of Rock-Rabbits) highlands on the Busi River, north of Gonarezhou.<sup>21</sup> He renamed it Mandlakazi (powers of women) to signify his capitulation to his wife Yoziyiyo, who had insisted on settling at this picturesque site.<sup>22</sup> Two years later he returned to Biyeni, thanks to the ravages of the anopheles mosquitoes, which made every summer a malaria nightmare.<sup>23</sup>

Only in 1862 would Mzila return to his father’s old home to settle in Chibavava. Mzila easily subdued the local Ndau of Chief Mzunye, owner of many cattle, and husband to many wives. One of the reasons why Mzila ordered Mzunye’s execution was that he was loyal to Mawewe, to whom he paid tribute in ivory from Gonarezhou.

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<sup>19</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Personal Fieldwork Observations of Succession Ceremony at Gezani Headmanship, Chief Sengwe’s Area, Zimbabwe, 11 August 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Guy A. Taylor, “The Matabele Head Ring (Isidhlodhlo) and Some Fragments of History,” *NADA* 14 (1938): 50; reprinted from *NADA* (1925).

<sup>21</sup> “Native Nomenclature Series No. 3,” *NADA* 25 (1948): 77.

<sup>22</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Mediel Hove, in Conversation with Mupositori (Farmer) TDK D60 Tape 1, Chibwedziva, 21 December 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 11; Gerhard Liesegang, “Nguni Migrations between Delagoa Bay and the Zambezi, 1821-1839,” *Journal of African Historical Studies* iii (1970): 317-27; TH10/1/1 Historical Manuscripts Collection, J. Blake Thompson Correspondence: General, 10 August 1931-15 January 1962: Correspondence with Roger Summers, 1955-7.

Mzunye tried to switch allegiance, sending many tusks to mollify Mzila. He was put to death and his son Muzwembiri installed as chief in his place. The sojourn at Chibavava did not last: it is said Mzila “began to dislike the place,” and so he moved with his people—his shield and instruments of expansion—to ‘Ngungunyana Farm’. There he established two villages. One was known as Mandlakazi, the other Tshametshame, both named after Soshangane’s original homes in Natal.<sup>24</sup>

Mzila’s arrival *produced* new territorialities. Ndau men were now reorganized into regiments, each according to their ages, and were “taught how to fight [in the Nguni way] and to use [Nguni] weapons. The trainer was Magigwana, the leader of all Mzila’s armies.”<sup>25</sup> Ngwaqazi was one of those who served in Mzila’s *amangonde* regiment. A member of the Ndau chief Mapungwana’s family, Ngwaqazi was born on what later became “Ngungunyana Farm” when Mudirwa was the reigning Ndau chief, well before the arrival of Mzila in 1862. When Mudirwa died, his son Muzunye took over; it was in his reign that Mzila arrived. Ngwaqazi remembered very well the time when Mzila had Mzunye killed and replaced by Muzwembiri.

The Shangane’s return installed a cattle-keeping regime in place of hunting, seriously transforming pre-existing forms of self-sustenance. First, Mzila decreed that strict boundaries were to be maintained between villages and cattle on one side, wildlife and thick forest on the other. He ordered his Shangane subjects and all those directly under him to *sondela enkosini* (draw near to the king).” An “immense compulsory movement of the population took place [that] the bush simply disappeared and the country became bare, except for the numberless native villages and a continuity of native

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<sup>24</sup> Wilson Mhlanga, “The Story of Ngwaqazi,” *NADA* 25 (1948): 71.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson Mhlanga, “The History of the Amatshangana,” *NADA* 25 (1948): 72.

gardens.”<sup>26</sup> This left certain areas unsettled as game reserves, in particular a rectangular area between the Sitatonga hills and the Busi River. The king allowed hunting to take place anywhere but this area. The measure was effective until his son Ngungunyane decided to retire to the lower Biyeni in 1889. Whereupon “the wooding was let loose and soon reestablished itself throughout the previously settled country.”<sup>27</sup>

The second measure has much more to do with how Mzila enforced this segregation and how his Ndau subjects received his order. He decreed all the pitfalls the hunters had used for trapping game to be closed because his cattle were now falling into them. Henceforth only bows and arrows, spears and guns could be used; otherwise people were free to continue the method of following predators like lions and leopards so that when these predators killed, they chased them away and took the meat.<sup>28</sup> After losing some cattle to these traps, Mzila decreed that those who did not comply with this order be put to death. Some Ndau hunters fled for their lives; others were not so lucky and were either killed or surrendered their children to be divided up among “great men” as slaves, mostly the king’s *indunas* (chiefs) or royal family. One slave of Magigwana, Mzila’s top commander, says he “suffered untold hardships for the misdeeds of other people.... My record of happy boyhood was very brief.” Upon becoming adults, other children—mostly captured during raids into Shona territory—were brought in to replace them, and they were then freed. By then so much time would have passed that they could not even

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<sup>26</sup> C.F.M. Swynnerton, “An Examination of the Tsetse Problem in North Mossurise, Portuguese East Africa,” *Bulletin of Entomological Research*, 11 (1921): 315.

<sup>27</sup> Ford, *The Role of Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology*: 335.

<sup>28</sup> Mhlanga, “The Story of Ngwaqazi”: 70.

recognize their own parents, who were now too old. The returnees were then drafted into the Gaza regiments to raid for slaves, cattle, women, and natural resources.<sup>29</sup>

“After a time,” however, Mzila was on the move again, this time to a place called Buchanibude (Tall Grass), some 14 miles south of Mount Chirinda (sentry) forest. Chirinda referred to “the hill to the north-western edge of the forest [which] had a precipitous approach and wide views over the surrounding country. There the inhabitants used ‘to wait for’ (*ku-rinda*) the advance of the hordes of Mzila, Ngungunyana and the like.”<sup>30</sup> The Shangane would call it Silinda (same meaning), but by substituting one letter and calling it Selinda, the British completely distorted the name into a meaningless word.

Mzila’s move to Buchanibude was a purely agro-technological decision: “He believed that kaffir-corn would do well in that part of the country.” But Buchanibude turned out to be strategic for another reason besides the agricultural one: “From this place armies were sent out to kill and to plunder the neighbouring tribes—the Mashonas.” They went as far and wide as Chief Mutoko, Svosve, and Munyarari’s domains in the far north.<sup>31</sup>

Buchanibude did not live up to expectations, and the king was on the move again, this time settling at Moyamuhle (Pleasant Breeze), just a few miles east of what later became Zamchiya School. It would be Mzila’s last resettlement: he died there in 1882.

Ngungunyane succeeded his father at Moyamuhle under heavy 24-hour security. Here was a king inheriting a large army of 15 regiments. Like his father, the new king was constantly on the move, fashioning new settlements and expanding territory. After living at Moyamuhle for only a year, he moved to Chinguno or Musapa, not far from

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Mhlanga, “The History of the Amatshangana,” *NADA* 25 (1948): 72.

Buchanibude, the place of his growing-up. From there he sent out his regiments in different directions, in patrols that were often experienced as raids of plunder and bloodletting.<sup>32</sup> The encounter between the Shangane and *vene venzvimbo* was an exercise in adjustment from both sides.

For those Ndau inhabitants of lands where the Shangane directly settled, the loss of sovereignty over resources was total. Those who resisted were killed; the remainder were turned into virtual slaves, distributed for service among Shangane households.<sup>33</sup> Many of Mahenye and Chitsa's people removed their crops and villages away from the main rivers to keep a safe distance from the Shangane. Those Tsonga near the lower Limpopo, especially the Bila, were incorporated into Soshangane's state and became *mabundela* (scouts), who deployed their tracking skills to guide their new 'masters' in their military expeditions to maintain or expand territoriality.

The Shangane use of local resources—or living off the land—in migrating and settling in Gonarezhou went beyond just deploying Tsonga scouts to manipulating local terrain to accomplish political, military, and economic dominance. The most marked but often ignored asset was the local environment itself, specifically elevated terrain like mountains. The Shangane chose to settle on higher ground north of the Limpopo because the management of altitude could be the difference between security and vulnerability, between wealth and poverty. The mountains were critical vantage points not just for defensive settlement and shrines but also resource control. In the mid-1950s, the antiquarian labor-recruiter James Blake-Thompson's house at Marumbini was within

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> NAZ N3/33/8 CNC – Correspondence: Miscellaneous: History of Mashona Tribes, 3 December 1903-21 June 1904, L.C. Meredith, in the Melsetter District, published as "Melsetter District History of Native Tribes and Chiefs....," *NADA* 10, iii (1976): 338-44.

sight of Musapa, the home of Mzila. ‘*Masapa*’ or *masvingo* (ruins, also called *marumbini*) also referred to other stone-walled sites in Chipungumbira, Chimanimani, and Masekesa. These sites had been “tax-collecting places [for] ivory, skins and slaves” for the local Shona trading with the Swahili between A.D. 900 and 1500. The Portuguese took over and improved upon these fortifications from 1498 to the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Rozvi defeated them. The positions were also located in such a way as to provide vantage sentry positions, looking outward to the east—the direction the Swahili and Portuguese might come from. The *musapa* at Honde gorge, at the point where the Rupembi stream breaks through the hills and turns south to join the Save River, was “a main route down the north side of the Save to the sea and so to Sofala.” The Chimanimani masapa (south ruins) were located in the lands of the Mhlanga, a Ndau group, just north of Chipungumbira and the headwaters of the Busi River, on the south bank. This was the old Sofala trade route passing through Chibavava.<sup>34</sup>

While the builders of the ruins were without doubt the Ndau of the *moyo* totem whom the Shangane colonized and assimilated, those south of the Save-Runde junction were built during the Shangane migration. The major ones were found in Nyamutongwe Hills, at the headwaters of the Nyamasikana River as it careens away towards the Runde just below Chipinda Pools. Nyamutongwe was strategically located on the route from Great Zimbabwe to Cheluana; its trade purposes are obvious. Nyamutongwe is clearly a Shona name meaning “the one who must be judged/ruled,” possibly in reference to its purpose as a sight of execution or the name of a person who lived on it. The hill has “a

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<sup>34</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1 Thompson to Summers (nd); NAZ TH10/1/1 J.B. Thompson to Summers, 20 February 1956.

precipitous side overhanging a perennial pool which is filled by the up-welling of the underground waters (artesian spring) which the elephants use and is never dry.”<sup>35</sup>

The importance of Nyamutongwe to resource control comes clearly in the clash between two groups fleeing from Shaka Zulu in the 1830s in what historians have called the *mfecane* (wars of the dispersal). Traditions say the quarrel between Manukusa and the Ngoni leader Zwang-indaba started over a dog, which chiefs considered “as bodyguards often regarding them as more trustworthy than their personal bodyguards.” Conquered people were also called “dogs” (*inja*), a reflection of the canine loyalty demanded of them. Whether it is a real dog (in which case we know dogs were used for hunting) or defeated people (and their control over wildlife),<sup>36</sup> the battle confirmed the importance of high altitude to ivory trade control.

Yet even with the most vantage hills, the Shangane king relied ultimately on the *ibutho* (army) which sent out regular *manga* (patrols), which used portable, highly mobile fighting equipment and methods carried from the southern African seaboard during the flight from Shaka. The short stabbing spear revolutionized warfare, in that one did not have to throw (away) his spear at the enemy and render oneself unarmed, but would retain it and engage in hand-to-hand combat. Here the shield was key; with the right hand the warrior thrust and twisted, and with the shield he parried away the adversary.

The Nguni warrior wore light cow or game hide sandals in battle, promoting slick movement while guarding his feet from thorns, stones, and other elements—a distinct advantage compared to the barefooted local fighting. Finally, the Nguni groups used an order-of-battle called the cow-horn formation, with two outflanking units to cause

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<sup>35</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1 J. Blake-Thompson to Summers, 14 July 1955; Thompson to Summers, 19 July 1955.

<sup>36</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1 Thompson to Roger Summers, 25 August 1955: “Re. Nyanomutongwe Ruins etc”; NAZ TH10/1/1 Summers to Thompson ‘Muduwa’, 19 October 1955

deception, and cutting off enemy avenues of escape, allowing the main frontage to engage in close combat.<sup>37</sup>

The Shangane *manga* also deployed a sizeable quantity of rifles.

Overwhelmingly, the army fought with assegais, but by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Mzila was investing in gunpowder. In 1872, one European traveler passing through Gaza observed 50 out of 2,000 troops to have guns, the rest being armed with assegais. Each of the musketeers was “issued with six rounds [each], and Umzila told them not to *waste their ammunition* on game.”<sup>38</sup> The army was there not just for security but was also a hunting machine at the king’s orders. It was a tax-collecting machine, invested with equipment to transform itself into suppressing revolt or destroying those that refused to or delayed in paying tribute.<sup>39</sup>

The Gaza pre-dated the British and Portuguese as a colonial state among the local Ndaу, Karanga, and Hlengwe villagers whom it forcefully ruled, who experienced “the state” through its pestilence in their everyday lives. Like the Ndebele, Gaza became known as the *madzviti* (raiders).<sup>40</sup> Their hegemony over the Hlengwe enabled them to decide who entered the Gonarezhou, especially with respect to the merchants based at the Cheluana, Inhambane, Lourenço Marques, and Delagoa Bay outlets. This notoriety marked a critical moment in the contests between local inhabitants and the state over Gonarezhou or Hlengwe. The Gaza decided what was good mobility across space and what was transgressive.

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<sup>37</sup> J.R.D. Cobbing, “The Ndebele Under the Khumalos, -1896’ (PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1976); for the Gaza Nguni, see Gerhard Liesegang, “Aspects of Gaza Nguni History,” *Rhodesian History* 6 (1975): 1-14.

<sup>38</sup> St. Vincent Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila, in South Eastern Africa,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* xix (1875): 128.

<sup>39</sup> Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 13.

<sup>40</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Mediels Hove, in Conversation with Titus Mukungulushi, Ward Councilor, TDK D60 Tape 2, 21 December 2002.

The wealth from ivory and meat from hunting supported a vast kingdom in two ways. First, the Shangane subjected the whole of southern Mozambique between Lourenço Marques and the Zambezi, “later even extracting some kind of tribute from two of the smaller Portuguese settlements neighbouring their territory, Sofala and Sena.”<sup>41</sup> The coastal white settlements lived at the mercy of the Shangane for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, far too weak in numbers or fighting ability to offer the feeblest of challenges despite having guns.

Second, ivory wealth enabled the Shangane to perpetuate a hierarchy of patronage that solidified their hold on subject populations. One major reason for this was intermarriage and the payment of *ilobolo/roora* (bride wealth) between the Shangane and various subject families. Through intermarriage or the need to escape the status of being ‘minorities’, these peoples ended up Shangane.<sup>42</sup> Rather than being coerced to adopt Shangane custom through threats of death, the Hlengwe appear to have done so very willingly for two reasons.<sup>43</sup>

First, totems (animals tabooed) were enclosures of kinship; to marry within the same totem was incest. Insiders could only marry outsiders belonging to a different totem or linguistic group.

Second, there was an incentive in being a Shangane or having marriage ties with one. It came with protection from raids, movement from the status of servitude, and even a share in the wealth of the state.

Distance from the Gaza court was also a factor, but it is important to note that the tsetse fly and mosquito dissuaded the Shangane even more. Foot patrols were permissible

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<sup>41</sup> Liesegang, “Aspects of Gaza Nguni History”: 3.

<sup>42</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1/132-219 Blake Thompson Papers, Thompson to Roger Summers, 19 March 1955

<sup>43</sup> Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 13.

in winter when the grass was dry and the foliage less dense, tedious in the summer rains—the malaria season. Expeditions on horseback were completely out of the question; as the *manga* descended the Chipinga highlands heading south, it was in the domain of tsetse species deadly to any livestock.

Now that I have laid out the process from departure, migration, and settlement, I will now discuss the relationship between the villagers and spaces around them. I will start at the homestead.

### **The Homestead as Nerve Center of Production Arenas Linked through Mobility**

It is important to re-emphasize that, whether it was a Shona, Tsonga, or Shangane village, the village was a mobile workshop and it functioned in similar ways. In Shona, the homestead was called *musha*, which is also the name for village. The kitchen was the center of the homestead as a social space. It was where the family brought in resources from different arenas of production to provide energy for their bodies.<sup>44</sup> Crops from the fields, meat, fruits, herbs, and firewood from the forests, water from the valley wells—all these elements went into food preparation by women, which is why the kitchen was the woman's property. If she died, was divorced, or the husband became polygamous, he would have to build the new wife a new kitchen because the spirits of the women were not related and potentially antagonistic.

*Mukadzi* (woman) was the food manager, not men. Besides the kitchen, usually at the back, was *chirariro* (bedroom), which served as a space for reproduction, lovemaking, and the secrets of the household. There were no cushion beds, so the couple

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<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the village's position within the larger body politic (the chiefdom), see W.H. Stead, "Concepts and Controls in Native Life: Elements of Sociological Analysis," *NADA* 13 (1935): 6-13.

slept on *bonde* (reed-mat), resting their heads on *mutsago* (wooden headrests). The ‘decent’ name for copulation became *pabonde* (to be on the reed-mat). Boys slept in *gota* (bachelor’s quarters), while girls were accommodated in *nhanga* (spinster’s quarters). Depending on the gender, the boys or girls vacated their quarters and slept in the kitchen as a sign of respect to the male or female visitor. The guest could also be accommodated in the goats’ *nhanga* (pen), which like the human shelters had a roof and either bare or mud-covered pole walls. Alternatively the boys slept in the *hozi* (granary), the family’s grain silo. *Dura* (grain bin) was where grain was stored. The conventional granary was a compartment in the *hozi* (barn), one of the most important buildings in the homestead. *Hozi* belonged to the woman. Whereas it was conventional among the Shona to built a granary in a standing building, the Tsonga usually stored their grain in *matura* (pl. grain bins) under the cattle pen. Food management was the essence of “housewifery.”<sup>45</sup>

All these houses were built inside *ruvanze* (yard), which the girls and woman of the house woke up to sweep with *tsvairo* (outdoor brooms) at the crack of dawn as the owls departed back to the forests after their nocturnal witching and rat-hunting missions. On the edges of the *ruvanze* was *bakwa* (wood-stack), where the women and girls of the homestead head-ported firewood from the forest. It was deemed a failure of wifehood to allow *bakwa* to run out; the mother’s status came at the expense of many trips to and from the forests.<sup>46</sup>

*Musha* (homestead, village) was the center of coordination for the forest, field, yard, and indoor forms of production and consumption. In Shona, Tsonga, and Shangane culture, “hospitality [was] never refused to a traveler, no matter who he may be.” The

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<sup>45</sup> A detailed discussion of women’s food management role is R. Howman, “The Native Labourer and His Food (A Study of the Institution of Eating under One Phase of Culture Contact),” *NADA* (1942): 9-10.

<sup>46</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Mediel Hove, in Conversation with Titus Mukungulushi 2002.

traveler appeared before the headman to explain where he was coming from and going, he was fed, and given a sleeping hut and a karosse (blanket). At night the hosts entertained him by the bonfire around the *musha*, “questioning, yarning, and comparing experiences with goodwill and cheeriness.”<sup>47</sup> St. Vincent Erskine was Mzila’s guest in 1872 and describes vividly his experience of Shangane hospitality. Every guest presented himself to the king’s vassals—usually Hlengwe or other Tsonga chiefs—at the gates of the king’s headquarters. With permission granted, the visitor approached the royal palisade and “halted within 500 yards of the King’s kraal.” After stating one’s purpose, he was then welcomed into the royal presence.<sup>48</sup>

The Shona coined the proverb *musha mukadzi* (the homestead or village is a woman) to summarize the important and indispensable role of a woman in building and keeping together these two institutions. To talk about the African homestead is to draw the map of woman. The house itself was a gendered enclosure of production and consumption. Women and girls were the housekeepers, deploying a panoply of technologies. *Inter alia*, the floor maintenance technology called *kopola*—the smearing of floors with a mixture of cow-dung and/or clay. This mixture dissolved the dust and vermin as it dried into a fine greenish coat lasting over a week. Upon its expiry, a fresh coat was smeared. Women were not just family cooks but also food processors. They stamped grain in mortars with pestles and ground it with stone, singing songs to allay tiredness, and afterward prepared the meals.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Hugh A. Stayt, *The BaVenda* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931): 55; South Africa Fieldwork: Notes on Field Experiences in Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, South Africa, 11 July 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila”: 124.

<sup>49</sup> Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South Africa Tribe* (London: Longman, 1910/1927): 334.

The woman's body was a mobile workshop connecting hearth and forest. She fetched firewood from the forests for energy—to cook, to warm the bodies in the house, to give a semblance of life in the home. In time, the loose tufts of grass hanging down from the underside of the kitchen's thatch roof became coated with *chin'ai* (soot)—a sign of *hupenyu* (life), proof that a marriage that began in jittery circumstances had become a success. Here was testimony to the role of the forest as a reservoir of renewable energy, the women its connectors to the kitchen hearth, the site of energy consumption.<sup>50</sup> The hearth was the combustion engine of the homestead, but it could only retain that role through the combustion engine of the woman's body—the mother of the house. Through her mobility on her two feet, with axe in hand, the woman went into the forests to fetch deadwood, and on her head she balanced the *svinga* (bundle) of wood and carried it back to the village. Woman was the network-builder connecting forest and hearth.

The map of woman also connected river and hearth. Fishing was a unisexual activity of all ages differentiated only according to types of fish, the technology used, and the pools fished in. The main fishing methods were the *saila*, a mobile barrier of reeds across a river, into which the fish were driven; the *muvasa* or *sole* (fish traps) and *chiranga* in the case of women; the *njungwa* (fish spear), the *nkumbi* (dugout canoes), and nets. Fish could also be captured in the shallows simply by driving them to the edges and scooping them out with hands or tree branches. Finally, the fish could also be killed with poison “from indigenous bushes of which the names of *bombge*, *mukonde*, *cheretese*

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

and *jero* come to mind.”<sup>51</sup> All fishers had to obey one cardinal rule: “If anyone caught a tiger fish he had to present it to the *hosi* (ruler).”<sup>52</sup>

It was the woman’s body that connected hearth and field through mobile work. She, not the husband, managed and worked to make the fields and wetland gardens productive. She rose at sunrise, prepared *svusvuro* (breakfast), and after eating led out the children to the fields, hoe on shoulder, *tswanda* (conical baskets) on head, baby on her back.<sup>53</sup>

The villagers were expected to work communally the chief’s large fields to build up *zunde ramambo* (the chief’s granary), which not only served as his personal reserve, but also the community’s grain silo.<sup>54</sup> Ordinary families had much smaller fields, the bigger portion of which belonged to the father/husband. It was the family’s strategic silo. Women were expected to work it (with the children) in addition to their smaller plots of specialized crops (e.g. groundnuts, pumpkins, etc.).<sup>55</sup>

No meal was complete without the staple *sadza* (thick corn meal porridge), but in *usavi* (relish) was to be found “the highest art of the housewife.” *Usavi* was all about variety; it came from the environment. *Usavi* was as important as the mealie-meal itself, as one colonial official noted in *NADA* in 1942: “If our grain bins were full and we had no *usavi* we would be hungry.”<sup>56</sup> Hence the Shona adage *kutsi kwesadza kune usavi* (behind every good starch dish is relish). The ‘deep’ Shona word for meat (*nyama*) is

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<sup>51</sup> A.P. Jackson, “Ample Food without Ploughing,” *NADA* 31 (1954): 63.

<sup>52</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1 Blake Thompson to P.I.R. McLaren, Fisheries Officer, Lusaka, 22 December 1955; Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 17.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*: 334.

<sup>54</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Mediel Hove in Conversation with Titus Mukungulushi 2002.

<sup>55</sup> Stayt, *The BaVenda*: 35, 59.

<sup>56</sup> Howman, “The Native Labourer and His Food”: 10.

*usavi* or *muriwo*. Nyama was special not just for the pieces of meat (*nhindi*) themselves but *muto* (gravy). Together, *nhindi* and *muto* were signifiers of patriarchal hierarchy.<sup>57</sup>

Cooking sadza well was one of many markers of a ‘real woman’. It was considered a sign of laziness to serve a husband *sadza* cooked with gritty meal (*upfu hwakamwazhika*) or an undercooked meal (*mbodza*), that is, one cooked below the standard of thickness required. Good wives—and women generally—whitened the meal by first pounding with *mutswi* (pestle) in the *duri* (mortar) to remove the skin off the grain before grinding the meal thoroughly on the *guyo* (grinding stone) with *huyo* (smaller stone grinder).

To share food generally, and *sadza* and *usavi* specifically, was “no occasion for gratitude” or hospitality but “the natural thing to do.” The sign of a complete home was a square meal; and the only evidence of a square meal was a full stomach. Later, under colonial rule, Africans would explain: “Why the white man keeps so much food and eats so often is because he eats so little—we would need all his food at one meal.” The reason why men in particular ate so much at one go was simple: they ate “foods which keep in the stomach” which were “favoured for long journeys or special hard work.”<sup>58</sup>

Generally speaking, locals—particularly men—preferred meat to vegetables on account of their proximity to wildlife. For the Shangane of the lower Runde who lived in perpetually arid environments, starchy foods like potatoes ensured security against famine. Their method of growing this food-crop was to plant cuttings in the sandy river bed and leave them for the entire winter (June-September) so that they threw down roots to the water table below. Come October the roots would have “swelled out to form

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*: 12.

<sup>58</sup> Howman, “The Native Labourer and His Food”: 12, 13.

finger-like potatoes.” In summer they shifted the crop to their wetland gardens as the rivers flooded again.<sup>59</sup> Such starch mattered; it filled the stomach. That is, energy could only be felt if there was physical evidence that the stomach was full.

Overall, the food security of the homestead was synchronized according to the seasons. When the flamingoes flew westward locals that the dry season was ending, the rains were coming. After all, who knew the seasons of the year more than the flamingo, a bird that could detect rainfall 500 miles away, if only for its insatiable taste for algae and animal life in newly flooded mini-lakes? If the birds flew off and returned, then the distant rains would have been insufficient. If they did not, the rains were good.<sup>60</sup>

Flamingos were to seasons what specific crops, wild animals, and fruits were to the calculation of months. Each time of year had its own food prospects. *Hoho* (the time of ‘laughter and festivity’/January) was the month when the *marula* fruit ripened. *Mhlanga* (the time of the ‘young grain’/February) was when the young crops shone like reeds – “tall and green and waving in the winds.” *Jubamsoko* (the time of the ‘cutting down’/March) was when/if rains came and turned the forests green and dense, the path overgrown with grass that needed to be “cut down” to enable passage. *Mkwekwezi* (the time to ‘eat of the crops’/April) was when green crops started ripening. *Sandwela* (the time of ‘reaping’/May) was harvest time. *Sheremela* (the time of ‘hoeing’/June) marked the starting of a new season of “backbreaking chores of the women.” *Konyane* (the time of the ‘ripe and dry’ corn/July) was when all the maize was harvested. It seems that this month came with the Portuguese introduction of maize into the transLimpopo after 1500. *Komkulu* (the time of the winds/August) was when the first magical signs of spring broke

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*: 18.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*: 129.

through. *Sekanwane* (September) marked the onset of the flowering of the marula trees. *Kanamkulu* (October) was the period when these fruits were big enough for the villagers to judge how much beer they would produce. *Mpala* (antelope/November) was the month when the antelopes “drop their young, and the bush seems alive with the perky little fawns and their anxious mothers.” And come *Nkokoni* (blue wildebeest/December), the blue wildebeest followed suit. When that happened, the Shangane knew that a whole year had passed and a new one was nigh. One more moon and *Hoho* would be upon them again.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Forest as a Spiritual Extension of the Village**

Having established the place of the homestead as a nerve-center of production, I will now limit this discussion to the village’s relationship with the forest. For purposes of organization, this section examines the role of the forest in the spiritual life of villagers. First, it was the burial place of vengeful spirits of dead enemies whose blood new occupiers had spilled to establish their own settlements. Everybody who went in was expected to respect—even fear—burial sites and ruins of former inhabitants of the land. All local inhabitants believed that the spirits of the dead stayed on the land and must be placated to prevent misfortune overtaking later occupiers. Burial and other places previously occupied or revered were looked upon as taboo, and could only be used for burial in the event that the incoming ‘foreigners’ married into these families. But in general the taboo still applied; desecration of such spots “was believed to be followed by a curse on the desecrator by the local spirit.” The ruins were so tabooed to the point where locals could not dare mention them by name, lest they awaken the dead spirits,

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*: 129-30.

who would be itching for revenge against the new settlers on *their* land. In place of real names, the places could only be referred to using antonyms, other languages, or reversing the original word. This coded language of reverence was called *hlonipa* (contrition).<sup>62</sup>

Secondly, it was the domain of God and the ancestral spirits, the protectors of the village and its inhabitants. The Tsonga, Shona and Shangane locals believed that *Shikwembu* (God) lived on the hilltop and “will send a whirlwind to take up good people (Elijah-style) or cast them down if they are bad and kill them or send them back without memory and insane.”<sup>63</sup> Spirits were also believed to reside in deep, sacred pools, where witches or the bodies of enemies were thrown. Caves were the burial places of royal families, although it was normal during wartime to bury loved ones in the crevices of rocks because of lack of time for a proper burial. Spirits of deceased adult relatives (*midzimu*) were purified (*kuchenurwa*) so that they could anchor in mortals (spirit mediums or *svikiro*) and protect their living relatives. The individual through whom a spirit was trying to come out (*kusvikira*) was then purified in a beer ceremony, and the *mudzimu* invited to speak and reveal itself. The *svikiro* was not a *n’anga*, and he did not necessarily perform the sort of healing we saw earlier; only if the dead person was a healer could his/her spirit medium become a *n’anga*.<sup>64</sup>

The ‘upward’ mobility of the body from a mortal to a spiritual state elevated ordinary places where the body was buried into sacred spaces, thereby automatically demanding their deliberate conservation. Ordinary villagers were banned from entering,

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<sup>62</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1 Thompson to Roger Summers, 25 August 1955: “Re. Nyanomutongwe Ruins etc.” For a discussion of *hlonipa* as “shame,” “contrition,” and “respect,” see H.F. Child, “Etiquette and Relationship Terms,” NADA 25 (1948): 18-20.

<sup>63</sup> NAZ TH10/1/1 J.B. Thompson to Summers, 20 February 1956.

<sup>64</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Mediel Hove, in Conversation with Titus Mukungulushi 2002; Interviews: Fireside Conversations with Tovadini Kemusi. This is contrary to prevailing interpretations of *ukutwasa* by Lynnette A. Jackson. *Surfacing Up: Psychiatry and Social Order in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1908-1968* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

gathering fuel, cutting trees, or letting in bush fires into the *ntimu* (cemeteries) of clans, particularly royal ones. Only the *mutameli wa ntimu* (guardian of the cemetery) could enter these ‘sacred woods’ to consult with the departed. People stayed away from such places not just because they were sacred; they were too scared to go into them because so many “mysterious happenings” were rumored to happen there. Few wanted to actually find out.<sup>65</sup>

It was through these spirits that people communicated with God, usually at elevated places, such as mountains, prominent rocks and big trees. Only the elders went up the hill to communicate with the ancestors. If one went up such hills, it is said they would never return. Few people ever tried to find out.<sup>66</sup> There were many trees designated for this purpose in the forest, but the *muhacha* or *muchakata* tree was the most widely-used spirit tree (*muti wevadzimu*). Around it, villagers erected *rushanga* (enclosure or shrine) where they made offerings to the ancestral spirits of meat, beer, and meal. There the *svikiro* (spirit medium) “call[ed] down blessings on the seed before distributing it to the people. This grain [was] then taken home and mixed with the seed they [we]re about to plant, thus ensuring bountiful crops.”<sup>67</sup>

*Rushanga* was also a rainmaking site where people went to consult the *gombwe* (rainmaker) before the rains or if the rains came late and drought loomed. Rainmaking—what the ethnographer, Rev. Burbridge called *weathercraft*—was the province of *gombwe*, not the *n’anga* or *midzimu*. This is what one *n’anga* told Burbridge: “My

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<sup>65</sup> Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*: 377.

<sup>66</sup> South Africa Fieldwork: Video-Photographic Expedition to Pafuri and Crooks’ Corner, South Africa, 23 August 2006 and South Africa Fieldwork: Video-Photographic Cultural Tour of Namagkale Shrine and Village, Phalaborwa, 24 August 2006.

<sup>67</sup> J.E.S.T., “Spirit Trees,” *NADA* 14 (1936-7): 33-5.

divining stones (sic) cannot see what is going on behind the clouds.... Rain is no concern of the ancestral spirits.... It is not possible to compel the heavens by magic.”<sup>68</sup>

Wildlife mediated this intricate connection between the skies above and the fertility of the land and its people. At the *rushanga* the rainmaker burnt the droppings of the crested hornbill (*magoto*), which acted as a form of fumigant to purify the grain before planting. With cowry (*nyengeredzi*) shells and pangolin (*haka*) scales, the rainmaker conjured medicine for mothers to use in birthing and infant health. The shells and scales were also mixed with the claws of the great ant-eater (*gwiba*) to cure seed grain so as to “awaken the dormant forces of fertilization.”<sup>69</sup> The scales were also burnt and pounded as medicine to stop nose-bleeding.<sup>70</sup> It meant that trees like the *muhacha* and game species like the pangolin were also sacred; the penalty for destroying them was severe.<sup>71</sup>

Each tree had its purpose. Among the Shangane, only spiritual healers could use the *ntjopha* (wild custard apple) tree for firewood. It was considered “highly dangerous for the common man to do so.”<sup>72</sup> Among the Karanga and Ndau, the *musosawafa*, meaning a thorny shrub with white leaves and rough bark, was reserved for covering the deceased’s fresh grave. It could not be firewood under any circumstance.<sup>73</sup> The *mkono* tree could not be firewood lest one invites lightning. The reasoning stemmed from its tendency to emit showers of sparks when burning, akin to lightning. Other trees were believed to cause hail and drought bad for crops. Yet other trees were reserved for

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<sup>68</sup> A. Burbridge, “The Witch Doctor’s Power: A Study of Its Source and Scope,” *NADA* 17 (1940): 11.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Edith Bosman, “The pangolin Looks Pre-historic,” *African Wild Life* 3, 3 (1949): 231.

<sup>71</sup> F.H. Ferreira, “Bantu Customs and Legends Protect Trees,” *African Wild Life* 3, 2 (1949): 59.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> As I grew up, this was fact. We could pick any other piece of wood, but not *musosawafa* (also known as *chizhuzhu*).

sorcery. Any “ordinary people using these trees for any purpose would become suspect”—what else would they be using such highly toxic trees like the *umdlebe* tree for if not to harm others?<sup>74</sup>

The Tsonga shared believed that the world of animals and humans was one. When the hunter (indeed any human being) went into the bush, he became “a thing of the bush.” They believed that animals communicate to people and each other through signs. Enchanted animals could even speak, hyenas, owls, and snakes were messengers of witches, while a bird or an antelope could “stop travelers” and warn them of danger. The highly-deceptive honey-guide might lead the hunter to a beehive bursting with honey or a black mamba seething with venom.<sup>75</sup> Humans had to know how to strategically create alliances with certain animals, birds, and insects.

The animals of the forest were therefore not strangers or things of the forest but actors in the village. The hunter’s attitude to them derived from their everyday meaning and work in people’s everyday village lives. Take owl and hyena for example, the witch’s sentry and horse respectively. At night the owl’s hoot and a hyena’s laugh induced dread among the sleeping but awake bodies inside the house. In the afternoon, when the hunter went into the forest, the nocturnal creatures rested. Inevitably, no hunter would kill an owl or hyena lest he incur the wrath of the witch.<sup>76</sup>

The second level related to folklore—education and ecological knowledge that masqueraded as fictitious entertainment. There were four main types of tales: mythological tales, animal tales, tales about human beings, and tales about superhuman

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Junod, *The Life of a South Africa Tribe*: 79, 345-7.

<sup>76</sup> Traditional Knowledge of African Villagers Project: Fieldwork Visit from New Makuleke to Old Makuleke Guided by Chief Makuleke (Joas Pahlela), South Africa, 16 June 2008.

or supernatural beings. Mythological tales dealt with creation and death, and the origins of the behavior of species. Animal tales took the form of animals that had spiritual attributes transcending their animal status and becoming humans. Other animals were just normal characters with no supernatural powers. In this dramaturgic encounter, such were the blurred boundaries between human and nonhuman that the avians spoke their own language ‘just like us’. Animals too had moral codes, culture, and, indeed, technology.<sup>77</sup>

Animals of the forest were not depicted as ‘wildlife’ outside the human domain. Human and animal lived in one world; they spoke the same languages and socialized the same spaces. This human-animal—and spirit—world was located on the land surface (*nyika*), underwater (*pasi pemvura*), or in underground worlds (*ninga*). Animals were not at the mercy of human hunters; rather, the humans were as much victims as they were friends and relatives. The ‘wild’ became ‘domesticates’. Love affairs could develop between a girl and a zebra; upon discovering it the villagers killed the zebra, and when the young paramour comes calling, her partner did not answer. She became sullen, but society had extracted its lesson: there were limits to the conflation of human-animal boundaries.

Interestingly, in most of the stories, the categories of ‘human’ or ‘animal’ are not even fixed: animals turn into people, people into animals or even trees and stones, for purposes of deliberate camouflage or as a result of a curse. The categories of ‘forest’ and ‘village’ close as well, especially as humans (mostly men) turn into lions once in the forest and hunt for their families in the village. Soon after making a kill, they return to human form, and go back home with fat carcasses. This power to move back and forth

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<sup>77</sup> For detailed examination of Sotho folklore, see S.M. Mofokeng, “A Study of Folk Tales in Sotho” (MA Dissertation, Wits University, 1951). For Tsonga folklore, see Thomas F. Johnson, “Folklore Emphasis among Immigrant Tsonga: A Unifying Mechanism?,” *Western Folklore* 34, 2 (April 1975): 137-143.

depends upon the keeping of specific taboos, usually as the healers or ancestral spirits stipulate. It might be words to be or not to be said, a hidden potion which must not be seen by anybody other than the hunter himself, or a song to be or never to be sung during his absence. A code of secrecy that was usually out of bounds for women, through sexual intercourse, or proximity to one having a monthly period.<sup>78</sup>

If the taboos were broken, usually by family members in his absence, the hunter lost the power to move back and forth between human and superhuman/nonhuman boundaries. The hunter either failed to become a lion (in which case he failed to acquire the power of mobility, the carnivorous instinct, and therefore lethality to produce meat for his family and even village). Or he failed to shed his feline form and become human again, whereupon the family lost its breadwinner.

As I see it, the friction derived from a belief in the power of the forest to act upon humans and turn them into animals. So, did forest have agency, therefore? ‘Yes’, according to Shona and Shangane elders. Here the best evidence comes from a third source: idioms. *Sango rinoyera* (the forest is sacred), they say. Sacredness is an agency that people do not just give to a forest, but which controls them. The forest is generous, especially for those who persevere in the hunt, hence the Shona proverb: *Sango rinopa waneta* (the forest rewards the one who is tired). However, if taboos are not kept, *sango rinotsama* (the forest gets angry). If its laws are violated the forest exacts instant justice for itself on the offender: it takes away his sense of direction, engulfing him with mist

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<sup>78</sup> For Shona folklore of this nature, see George Fortune, *Ngano* Vol. 1 & 2 (Salisbury: Mercury, 1980).

and fog “from nowhere.” Old semi-human figures (*madzimudzangara*) appear “from nowhere.” The offender becomes insane and may never come home.<sup>79</sup>

## A Second Granary

The forest was also important in material ways; here, again for purposes of organization, I discuss local people’s perceptions of the forest as a second granary. In an arid climate, fields alone were not enough to fill the stomach. The important thing about the forest was not only that it was a place that gave, but that also refused to give, hence the adage *nhasi masango matema* (today the forests are black/dark). The forest was also a deadly, hideous thicket where walking alone was not advisable, hence the adage *sango rakada vaviri navana* (the forest required two or four companions). Hence it was appropriately called *jiri* (wilderness). A place like that, deliberately conserved as such, usually had wild animals that people came to hunt for food, horns, and ivory. They called it *rimuka* (wilderness infested with dangerous wild animals).<sup>80</sup> These mappings of the forest according to its relationship to the human body illustrate the capacity of villagers to design not just the uses of nature, but also technologies of using it. That is how nature became culture: trees were not just plants; they were social institutions.

Of all the inhabitants of Gonarezhou, the Tsonga were most outstanding for categorizing each part of the forest according to the dominant vegetation species and the terrain it grew in. Each of the tree species was linked to a specific activity or infrastructure in the homestead around doors, roofs, fences, pens, silos, and so on. There

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<sup>79</sup> For a thorough description of *madzimudzangara* and such other forest phenomena, see Rev. A. Burbridge, “In Spirit-Bound Rhodesia,” *NADA* 14 (1938): 32.

<sup>80</sup> This dynamic is captured well in Oliver Mtukudzi’s song *Nhava* (2005) and Thomas Mapfumo’s *Marimuka* (remastered 2001).

was the *umtonto*, a deciduous thornless tree 20 ft. high which grew tall in hilly terrain and was mere shrub in dry lowlands. The *umtonto* was a leguminous tree, its bark used for constructing grain silos and canoes. The hilly *umtonto* also provided timber for house construction.<sup>81</sup>

The *etsengi* was a dense, thorny scrub with grass that grew on the moist vleis which made excellent thatch grass. The *musimbiti* grew upon the *etsengi*'s red soils as woods and forests, but never in mountains. It is one of the hardest woods in Africa, which is why Europeans called it the ironwood. Not only was it known to provide good firewood for charcoal, poles for construction, and strong hoe handles; its wood was so hard that it was used for making ploughs, hoes, and other digging instruments. In addition, its juices made the most potent of poisons for hunting, pest control, and bewitching enemies. The honey that bees made from its juices was toxic—which meant it could be used as a deceptive poison.<sup>82</sup>

The open grass country, with its hard soils, limestone outcrops and waterholes, was known as *monjo* and it was “much frequented by game, especially in the early morning.” Some of the trees found in it, like the *mutomboti*, *muganu*, and *murula* trees, provided many edible fruits. It is possible to draw maps connecting *monjo* to hunting, given its abundant game; to wine and beer making, considering the prevalence of edible fruits; and relish and nutrition from mushrooms and fruits.<sup>83</sup> As a result, it attracted men, women, and children alike, each transforming fruit and mushroom-picking and hunting into a time for socialization. The women took this time to counsel adolescent girls in the

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<sup>81</sup> St Vincent Erskine, “Third and Fourth Journeys in Gaza, or Southern Mozambique, 1873 to 1874, and 1874 to 1875,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 48 (1878): 42-3.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

etiquette of womanhood, while the men counseled the boys on impending manhood, husbandry, and patriarchy. Away from the village, *mtonto* was a safe place to engage in rumor, gossip, and prayer to the ancestors.

The *mugwasha* was a dense, thornless scrub-bush interlaced with lianas and climbers that grew on the dry red soils of the higher plains. It had many anthills that swarmed with ants, especially near the foothills of mountains. The *maruka* was also ant-hill country, the anthills “often as large as summer-houses,” the clay providing islands of bush around themselves.<sup>84</sup> At the onset of the summer rains, from around 9 am on a sunny day after the previous day or night’s rains, *tusvosve* (tiny ants) yellow in color and about 1 mm long burrowed holes about 1 cm wide all around the top of the sodden anthill. Like bridesmaids they mingled around in their millions along the carven and on the surface. In no time, around 10 am, *tsambarafuta* (black flying ants with thick, oil-filled abdomens) emerged from the holes, shaking off the ants and then flying off. These edible ants made delicious relish when roasted and salted.

Around sunset the anthill became a crawling mass of *majuru* (termites), burrowing their own muddy and well-manicured holes to the surface. With their rhapsodic, vice-grip like jaws, they cleared the way for *ishwa* (white ants), the protein-rich and fatty insect named more for its white wings than its brown, elongated abdomen and head. *Kubata ishwa* (catching white ants) was a popular activity as the planting season began, because it diversified an otherwise monotonous relish of vegetables. Like *tsambarafuta*, *ishwa* was roasted in salt and dried, and could be stored for over six months in that state and traded for other products.

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*: 42-3.

The *imbaleni* was open country full of grass and water-pools almost synonymous with *mapani* (pool-country). In tsetse-free country, this forest land was perfect for cattle production (grazing). In places where tsetse was dominant, *imbaleni* was a popular hunting spot for antelopes like the bushbuck and reedbuck, *zvikwari* (francolins), and *tsuro* (hares).

The *umsagari* was white sandy country of low bush whose most dominant trees were the *makwakwa* (strychnine) and *matamba* (African orange)-like fruits. *Makwakwa* was particularly important as poison and was used for pest control, not only to kill problem animals but also to bewitch human rivals through poisoning. I discuss it more fully below. *Matamba* came in two types: *man'ono*, with harder and thicker shell which yellowed and then browned as the fruit ripened and fermented inside, the contents producing a sugary taste, and the *mazhumwi*, softer and thinner shell and becoming yellower and brighter as they ripened, and producing a creamier, chocolate-like taste. Only the ‘meat’ around the coin-like seeds as well as the juice were edible, the seed being too big and difficult to pass out as stool. In addition to *matamba*, bees made honey from the flowers and fruits of these trees; people harvested it to feed themselves.<sup>85</sup>

In the vicinity of the pans was a cherry-like fruit called *ximwebi* (Tsonga) or *imbongwa* (Shangane). This delicious fruit grows on a creeper, with a light-brown, rough, lumpy bark, the stem “as thick as a man’s arm,” with leaves only at the very end of the branches. It is orange-sized, and when ripe its skin turns yellow, the shell being easy to break with one’s thumbnail, exposing numerous flattish seeds “imbedded in a small quantity of acid pulp, saturated with sweet juice.” When squeezed out, watered, and put

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<sup>85</sup> Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila”: 120-1.

in the sun to mature, the seeds are fermented into a very inebriating brew.<sup>86</sup> *Ximwebi* attracts elephants and people. As one travel-writer observed in 1878, locals “look upon the trees *in the light of a granary* during a couple of months or so, when they are golden with the crop.” That was in mid-January, when the fruit was crushed, fermented and brewed into “a very pleasant wine, decidedly the best drink prepared by the natives.”<sup>87</sup>

The *makwakwa* or *umfooma* was “a very highly-prized Tsonga food-luxury... prepared from the large calabash-like fruit of a deciduous shrub” of the strychnine family. People loved it, and so too did the elephants. The fruit—covered with a thick, glutinous coat when ripe—was filled with bright orange-colored seeds the size of coins. These seeds were dried on a wickerwork frame over a fire to acquire a smoke flavor and dark-brown color. When roasted, the seed-coat was stripped off the seed and pounded up in wooden mortars to an “oat-cake”-like texture and pressed into drums made out of the *umtonto* bark. The seed might be pounded dry with honey to significantly reduce “its pervading bitter taste.” Alternatively the seeds were prepared green (*shukutsu*) by soaking them in a succession of quantities of water “to extract their bitter flavour” before stamping them. *Shukutsu* was the equivalent of olive oil. After stamping the residue was placed into drums and suspended in the air, a dark-coloured oil dripping out of the mature pulp. So precious and rare was the product in the 1870s that it was “not to be bought.”<sup>88</sup>

Local women were also experts at brewing *nkanyi* or *marula* beer and *mlala* palm wine.<sup>89</sup> The *marula* fruit ripened in January/February into a tantalizing orange color, and the locals gathered it in baskets, cooked and sieved the residue into huge pots and left it

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Erskine, “Third and Fourth Journeys”: 43.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*: 44. See also A.P. Jackson, “Ample Food without Ploughing,” *NADA* 31 (1954): 63.

<sup>89</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 22.

to ferment into sweet wine. They also drained the sap of *mahanga* (*ilala* palm) to manufacture *njemani* or *chemwa*, another highly intoxicating wine.<sup>90</sup> The *nkuwa* (fig trees) offered a delicious fruit.

The *shimuwu* (baobab) tree “lifted its bloated trunk and tentacle branches to the heavens, like a grim old god of an ancient world summoning his vegetable followers to worship.”<sup>91</sup> It was the “mighty monarch of the forest.”<sup>92</sup> From the branches fell fruits delicious to elephants, monkeys and people alike.<sup>93</sup> In the lean seasons, the dry fruit—the size of a big mango with a hard crust—was split to reveal seed coated with creamy, powdery substances, which, when collected in large quantities, were pounded into mealie-meal. By tapping the base of the baobab’s stem, locals acquired pure water in large quantities. The hollow trunk made a nice sleeping quarters, provided a gaboon viper, python, or cobra—the major snakes in the area—did not greet the human occupant first. Only the evergreen *mthoma* (ebony) tree could shelter a passer-by or hunter in the forest from sun and rain with such completeness.<sup>94</sup> No wonder that when militarily-minded European travelers passed through, they called the baobab the *quartermaster tree*. It was one of those “trees that attract animals.”<sup>95</sup>

No wonder plant extracts were used as instruments for harvesting animals from the forest. For instance, the *umtsuli*, a seed of the plant of the strophanthus family produced a strychnine-type poison for anointing arrows and assegais lethal enough to kill a human within three hours and small buck instantly. The plant, a runner, produced

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<sup>90</sup> Bannerman, “Hlengweni”: 15.

<sup>91</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 17.

<sup>92</sup> I.C. Verdoorn, “The Baobab or Krematartboom,” *African Wild Life* ii, 3 (September 1957): 95.

<sup>93</sup> See W. Robertson-Bullock (Senior Ranger), “Elephants Eat Baobab Trees in Northern Rhodesia,” *African Wild Life* 14, 2 (June 1960): 143-5.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*: 16.

<sup>95</sup> G.F. Court, “Trees that Attract Animals,” *African Wild Life* 14, 4 (December 1960): 344.

yellow flowers with curiously-tailed petals, and a seed the shape of a huge military frog-button, with 9-inch lobes. To rescue a person or animal shot with an *umtsuli*-poisoned arrow, one would have to carefully cut the flesh to get the arrow out and wash the wound with water and treat it with herbs.<sup>96</sup>

Trees were also sources of construction timber and food. The *mupani* was without doubt the finest and most commonly available and used timber. The tree has distinct butter-fly shaped leaves that open and close like a book, its stems usually growing to 40 ft. tall and 2 ft. wide.<sup>97</sup> Most locals in Gonarezhou harvested the *mupani* for constructing hut walls, roofing, making livestock pens, and various woodworking purposes like making cooking sticks. In summer, the tree branches and leaves were the breeding place of the *mupani* worm (*madora/amaximbi*), a local delicacy.

Ultimately, all food required salt (*munyu*)—another product of the forest. Gonarezhou and its locale was home to many salt pans that supplied the inhabitants with iodine. Locals had long noticed animals licking the edges of these pans. Upon tasting it, one of them discovered it contained mineral salt. From that time—“long, long ago”—people started collecting the earth and dissolving it in water. From that stage, the methods of purification were similar to those used to extract salt from organic sources, most notably the *mushangidze*, a fairly common small shrub. Its twigs were burnt and the ashes collected and boiled in water which was then evaporated. The remaining water concentrate was poured into a small pot (called *surudzo* or sieve) with two or three small

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<sup>96</sup> Erskine, “Third and Fourth Journeys”: 44.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*: 44.

holes at the bottom. The residue remained in the top pot, the liquid salt (*munyu*) percolating at the collection point below and used in that state.<sup>98</sup>

### A Sacred Butchery

**Hunting Etiquette.** For all its importance as a source of plant resources, the Gonarezhou was primarily a hunting ground. Upon studying the regulation of forest off-take, it is possible to stretch back and complicate the notion of conservation, which has often been predicated on colonial practices. As I see it, the question is not even whether these African inhabitants of the transLimpopo deliberately conserved forests, but what drove such conservation. To limit the objectives and conduct of conservation to deliberate actions targeted at mere serving or sustainable use of species is to trivialize the objectives of a much broader mosaic. It is also to place western-derived philanthropic, aesthetic and eco-feministic version of conservation to a pedestal it does not deserve and which has no pride of place in most African and other nonwestern societies. Conservation was not, should not be, seen as a benign saving (and serving) of nature for its own sake; there is always a ‘So What?’ question.

Take the concept of “royal game” that colonial governments introduced to conserve species like elephant and buffalo for example, which turns out to have been there in local society. However, whereas the colonial version was more to do with an aesthetic vision, the African version arose more from a desire of African rulers “to obtain personal gain from the efforts of their subjects—the hunters—and to impress upon them that [they] were their rulers.”<sup>99</sup> What follows is a discussion of some of these

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<sup>98</sup> C.S. Davies, “Odds and Ends: Things Observed and Things Heard Round the Fire,” *NADA* 17 (1940): 27.

<sup>99</sup> A.P. Jackson (Native Commissioner, Chibi), “Native Hunting Customs,” *NADA* 27 (1950): 39.

conventions, the effect of which was to standardize off-take. I will only sample specific animals with the objective of illustrating the mutual shaping of politics, technology, and nature.

Take for example the pangolin (*hambakubvu* or *haka*), the uniformly grey-brown colored, armor-plated ant-eater.<sup>100</sup> If the hunter found it, he was to surrender it alive to the chief, who rewarded the bringer with a goat. The pangolin was placed in an enclosure where anybody wishing to see it had to pay a kind of “entrance fee.” The chief would then sing to it the song ‘*Hambakubvu, tamba!*’ (‘Pangolin, play!’), whereupon the captive animal walked around on two legs, “as it would in any case do.” It would roll itself up in its scaly skin, often dozing off in that position, amusing the paying audience. When the animal’s entertainment value dwindled, the chief slew it for *usavi*. The meat was reserved only for himself and his senior wife (*vahosi*), its scales being taken to the *n’anga* to make medicines “to ensure bumper crops.” They were also used to make a concoction for bathing the small, soft, throbbing spot on an infant’s head to make it strong.<sup>101</sup>

The porcupine (*nungu* or *jenje*) enjoyed similar royal privileges, albeit posthumously. Whenever anybody killed this animal, they were to take it whole to the chief. Only in his presence could the quills be removed and the body degutted; the entire carcass was then surrendered to him. The hunter’s reward was a fowl or “something of more or less like value, depending on the generosity of the particular chief.” If however the hunter regularly bagged porcupine, there were exemptions to the requirement of bringing it complete with quills and innards.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> U. Rahm, “The pangolins of West and Central Africa,” *African Wild Life* 14, 4 (1960): 271-5.

<sup>101</sup> Jackson, “Native Hunting Customs”: 39.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*: 39.

Leopards (*mbada* or *ingwe*) and lions (*shumba* or *mhondoro*) were not regularly killed but on the occasions that they were, the hunter “must hurry and fetch his ruler so that the animal may be viewed where it has died.” The chief then removed the *chiombo* ball—the part of the lion’s throat where the hairs of its countless victims accumulated. Locals believed this part enabled the lion to roar (*kuomba*). Chiefs wanted to possess this part—along with the head and skin—to give them a roar (power) over their subjects; when they passed judgment at court, their sentence was often described as “heavy like the lion’s roar.” The hunter who presented a lion or leopard before the ruler had much beer brewed in his honor, was given one head of cattle, to kill at the party or take home. It is not clear what equivalent he received supposing that he or the chief lived in the fly belt, but he drank as much as his stomach allowed, then gave the rest to the *women* (the men who had yet to kill a lion or leopard).<sup>103</sup>

In the event that the hunter killed an eland (*mhofu*), “in no circumstance may... [he] skin it in the absence of the chief.” Should the distance to the chief’s be prohibitive, and the ruler could not walk to the carcass site, he sent his ambassador. In all cases, he got the heart and the surrounding fat, as well as “the shoulder and ribs on the side lying on his *nyika* (territory).” He also surrendered to the ruler the skin in the eland’s forehead, which was an important ingredient in the making of the medicines of chieftainship (*miti youshe*). The logic was that just as the eland was a big buck, the chief would become big in the eyes of his people.

When the hunter killed an elephant, he was to surrender to the ruler of the land the tusk (*nyanga*) and trunk that hit the ground first as the elephant fell to its death. It was a simple law of property rights: the king owned the land. He was to also take the elephant’s

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

feet because they had trodden his soil (*vhu rashe*). In either case the hunter's reward was a head of cattle.<sup>104</sup>

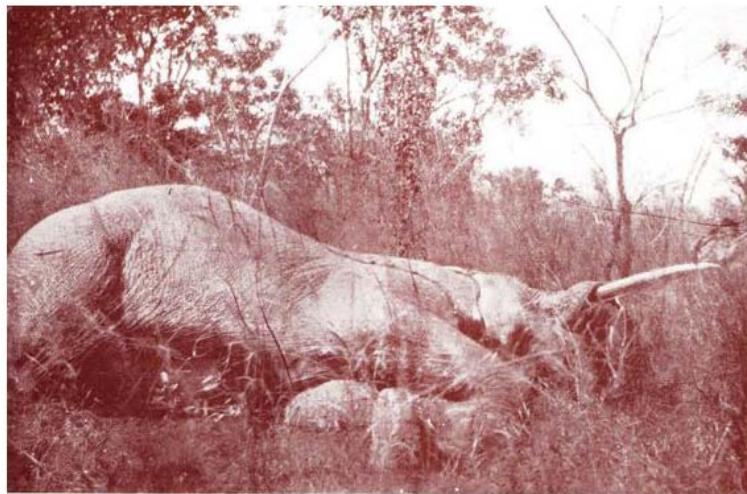


Fig. 2: The Chief's Right to the Ground Tusk

Source: Lyell, *The African Hunter*. 65.

Specific parts of the ostrich (*mhou*), hippopotamus (*ngwindi* or *mvuu*), and genet cat (*tsimba* or *nyongo*) were also reserved for the chief. If one killed the hippopotamus, again they were to alert the chief. Its teeth and feet were the ruler's property, although it is not clear what he used them for. In the case of an ostrich, he was to let the chief know. In all cases the meat could be taken “but the feathers and any eggs found are not the hunter's property—even if the egg has not yet been laid.” The hunter would be rewarded with a goat. The skin of a genet cat, “the beautiful spotted cat more often and erroneously referred to as the civet cat,” went to the local headman, who took it as tribute to the highest authority in the land. In all cases, the hunter's reward was a fowl.<sup>105</sup> The skins

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*: 40.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*: 40.

were used mostly for the kilts (*mutsha* or *nhembe*) and head-dress of military regiments, with the tails being tied to the sporran of the kilt.<sup>106</sup>

The crocodile (*ngwena*, *garwe*, or *gambinga*) had much more complex spiritual meaning and material uses. Hunters generally stirred clear of killing it lest they provoke the anger of the witch who owned it. In the event that one had to be killed, however, it was not skinned until the chief's arrival for two reasons. First, its bile was a deadly poison. It was roasted, powdered, and mixed with beer or other drink, especially at the village beer party. "Death follows in a few hours, with pain and abdominal distension."<sup>107</sup> Second, in some societies if killed, the crocodile had to be thrown back into the pool otherwise the rain would not fall. Third, there was believed to be a stone in its stomach near the *nduru* (gall bladder), which was a revered charm (*ndarama*). If one swallowed it, long life was assured. The chief therefore made sure he was the one to swallow it; when he had lived so long and was about to die, every attempt was made to make him vomit it so that his successor might swallow it and have a long life also. In succession disputes, the swallower of the stone was proclaimed into office.<sup>108</sup>

**Spiritual Weaponry.** Because of the presence of tsetse fly, there was "a more or less total absence of cattle" in the immediate periphery of Gonarezhou until the rinderpest epizootic of 1896-7. Tsovani's people say the first cattle they ever owned as a clan were those they seized forcefully from Makoni's Ndau-speaking people to the north of Mahenye. The Hlengwe had no cattle—only goats—when they arrived. Even the goats

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<sup>106</sup> E. Bunting, "The Genet, Enemy of Snakes," *African Wild Life* 2, 3 (1949): 29.

<sup>107</sup> Neil MacVicar, "Kafir Poisoning," *South African Medical Record* xv, 1 (January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1917): 3.

<sup>108</sup> Jackson, "Native Hunting Customs": 40.

quickly succumbed to tsetse fly.<sup>109</sup> While John Ford put a definite boundary on the location of the tsetse-free belt between the Save and Mwenezi extending along the Chefu, the evidence supports Bannerman's position that the precolonial fly belt was not static. The problem was not so much the presence of fly but how to manage and co-exist with it.

Because the tsetse prevented villagers from keeping livestock, wild animals became the villager's livestock, especially as sources of meat and skins. In Shona culture, hunters were called *vavhimi* or *vadzimba*; in Tsonga, they fell into two types. There were those who established guilds, hiring themselves out to the *banyan* (coastal-based European merchants); they were the *maphisa* (professional hunters). Then there were ordinary or occasional hunters in search of the odd carcass; they were the *bahloti* (small-time hunters). The most conspicuous *maphisa* were Tsonga men based at Lourenço Marques and Delagoa Bay who undertook expeditions to Gonarezhou where elephant was still abundant. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *maphisa* contracted themselves to Portuguese merchants, who supplied them with guns, powder, and lead.<sup>110</sup>

Hunting required a number of weapons, prime among which was spiritual armament or *muti* (medicine). The hunter strongly believed that in and of themselves, spears, bows and arrows, snares or guns were useless. Lethality could only come from the ancestral spirits. Consequently, the hunters did not just grab their weapons and head straight to the forest. The forest was a sacred space; to approach it one had to first appear before a *n'anga/gagao* (healer) to be purified. The *n'anga* used a panoply of *hakata* (bones or astragali, sing. astragalus) to forecast the prospects of the hunter in the forest. The *n'anga* was an important person in society, capable of hurting or saving people from

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*: 17. John Ford, *The Role of Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971): 303-36.

<sup>110</sup> Junod, *The Life of a South Africa Tribe*: 54.

harm. Indeed, in 1875 Erskine observed after staying for months in the Shangane domains that Mzila's influence among his African vassals and enemies was "mainly dependent upon a reputation he possesses of having some powerful wizards in his service, who fight with disease and the elements [lightning], instead of with arms."<sup>111</sup> The hold of the spirits in standardizing the conduct of human relations in the Shangane kingdom could not go higher than that.

In the hands of the spiritual healers, animal bones became texts encoding the hidden signs of the ancestral spirits to their mortal 'children'. The most common astragali were that of goats. The he-goat denoted the father or the family or village head, the she-goat the mother. The astragalus of a goat that has given birth once represented a young mother, while bones from the male and female kids denoted boys and girls. The astragali of sheep denoted the royal family since sheep were more valuable and less common than goats.<sup>112</sup>

First, the bones needed more treatment to enhance their 'seeing powers' (*masimba ekuona*). The *n'anga* chewed up a mixture of dried twigs known as *gomarara* and spit it on to the bones (*kufurira hakata*). *Gomarara* is a parasitic plant which birds deposit on certain trees and which then grows to dominate the branch structure, often eventually killing the tree itself over time. In addition, the pieces were "smeared with a preparation known as *matoto*, the excreta of *hungwe* (lark or Zimbabwe bird) usually dropped on stones in the midst of rivers. The droppings were then ground into powder, stored in the leg bone of a *gora* (vulture) or *bonga* (wild cat) to attract clients "because of the animal's keen sense of sight and smell." After being smeared with *matoto* and undergone *kufurira*,

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*: 33.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*: 81.

the bones were then placed on the pathway to the ash-pit (*durunuru*) after sunset but before dark and left overnight (*kuradzira hakata*). The ancestral spirits would put seeing power into the bones in the night; come morning they would be ready for use, subject to another dose of *kufurira*. The belief was that “the colour white attracts, while black repels,” so the white of the new moon would combine with the white-smeared bones and the ash-heap to lure clients. Like women coming to throw ashes on the ash-heap, so too would the steady stream of clients.<sup>113</sup>

So on the eve before his departure for the forests, the hunter appeared before the *n’anga* and his *hakata* for purification. These variously coded pieces ‘revealed’ whether he would see anything, kill, and bring home something, or whether he was going to experience *masango matema* (dark forests), that is, return empty-handed. The revelations of the bones had the status of truth; the *n’anga* could not be questioned. To enhance luck, the hunter was purified in several ways. He could be given a bracelet of charms on his wrist or bathed with concoctions of herbs to remove the bad luck. Or some substance might be placed on top of embers smoldering in a potshard, and the hunter would be told to stoop over it. The *n’anga* then covered him with a blanket and ordered him to inhale the smoke to chase away his ill luck or bad spirits blocking his way.<sup>114</sup>

Every hunter worth his salt regarded purification as a potent spiritual *antibiotic*, but which worked so long as he respected the prescriptions the *n’anga* give him. Yet even if the hunter took the full course of the doses given, the *muti* (medicine) could only be effective if he respected the *miko* (spiritual taboos) of the forest. All else being equal, the elephants were ‘made more vulnerable’: the medicine led them into killing grounds to

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<sup>113</sup> Noel A. Hunt, “Some Notes on Witchdoctor’s Bones,” *NADA* 27 (1950): 41.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*: 20-1; also Noel A. Hunt, “Some Notes on Witchdoctor’s Bones,” *NADA* 27 (1950): 43; Rev. A. Burbridge, “The Witch Doctor’s Power: A Study of Its Source and Scope,” *NADA* 3 (1925): 22.

meet their fate. Every “exceptionally successful hunter” was believed to possess some sort of *muti* “which draws the elephants into their toils, and makes them powerless against the bullets,” arrows, or snares. Incense from India was seen as the most potent “elephant medicine,” while in some parts of the Gaza kingdom pieces of coal were deemed “as by no means inefficient substitutes.”<sup>115</sup>

The reverence of hunters towards *muti* gave Gaza rulers the easiest of institutions to control hunting activities and ensure sustainable yields. In the 1860s-70s, the *Pahla Umhamba* (purification) was “carried out under Umzila’s authorization” before any hunter, African or European, could proceed to Gonarezhou. A subordinate chief called Sibomo was in charge of the procedure, and he only attended to the first batch of hunters to arrive at his homestead on the day of purification, the latecomers being turned away amidst much disquiet. Together, these pre-expedition ceremonies, along with the litany of taboos that came with them, were designed to protect the hunters from the ‘spirits of the forest’, but they also worked to conserve forests.

**Physical Weaponry.** For all their power, neither purification nor ancestral spirits functioned outside the material properties of the hunter’s weapons. The job of arming the hunter with physical weapons fell to the metallurgist (*maisiri* or *mhizha*). I would like to examine the “rational and natural”<sup>116</sup> processes involved, specifically the relationship between the design, use, and intended user of the technology. While the *n’anga* provided spiritual antibiotics for the hunter, such medicine only did not kill prey. While the hunter might make some weapons himself, he relied on the metallurgist for most of them

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<sup>115</sup> Erskine, “Third and Fourth Journeys”: 40.

<sup>116</sup> P.J. Odendaal, “The Bow and Arrow in Southern Rhodesia,” *NADA* 18 (1941): 23.

The assegai (*pfumo*, pl. *mapfumo*) was the hunter's hand-held *killing* instrument of choice. Technically, it came in two types. There was the *baru* or *manga*, the largest size deployed primarily for big game. It was heavy, the blade (*banga*, *manda* or *chese*) measuring about 18 inches long. The haft was "comparatively short for the length of the blade." Then there was the *pfumo*, a medium-sized assegai which most men preferred and took whenever away from home "for protection, as wild animals may be encountered, and many a Native has saved his own life with his assegai." In place of the *nyenza* (metal binding), the metallurgist used a piece of antelope skin bound round the haft while still fresh and wet, then sewed it up with sinew (*runda*) to protect the end of the haft. The metallurgist designed the small blunt metal blade (*rwiriko* or *nzope*) fitted into the spear's rear in such a way that the user may drive it into the ground, blade up, and rest. In that position, he could pluck it out and through in quick time in case of emergency.<sup>117</sup>

The second important killing instrument was a set of bow (*uta*) and arrows (*miseve*).<sup>118</sup> As Patrick Malone has demonstrated in his study of the development of native American weaponry, so too with the transLimpopo: bow and arrow emerged out of a desire to throw missiles accurately at considerable distance.<sup>119</sup> Such a technological trajectory stemmed as much from security concerns as hunting. Bows came in two sizes ranging between 3 and 5 ft., namely the *dati* or small bow and the *uta* (large bow) respectively. The size of the prey *determined* the size of the bow. Both were made from the wood of the *mutarara*, *mutswati*, *mutesa*, *chiruwari*, and *mutohwe* trees because of their appropriate tension and elasticity. The bow tapered at either end, "this being called

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Odendaal, "The Bow and Arrow": 23.

<sup>119</sup> Patrick Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1991).

*sholi*,” to promote elasticity and arrow speed, while the thicker middle stabilized the trajectory of the missile.

The string (*musungo/mukosi*) was derived from the hunt. Here the act of using the end product of design became also a way of reproducing material for the construction of the weapon. The string was made from the skin of a kudu, hartebeest, or bushbuck. To prepare it, the skin was cut into strips then tied to a heavy stone. The other end of the strips were then tied to the branch of a tree. A pole was then driven in horizontally between the strips, then wound round and round and let go, pulling the rope tight, loose, then tight again, oil being applied all the time. After it had shed its toughness (*kubva hutong’o*) and become thoroughly moist and soft, the rope was then stretched out to dry. It was then cut into string as appropriate.<sup>120</sup>

By its materiality, the arrow brought together three different domains of nature and expertise: the arrow head or *museve* (metal, mining and metallurgy), the shaft/hand or *rwikiro* (reeds, basketry), and the talons that tied it (skin, hunting). The arrow shaft varied in length (12 inches-2 ft.), the tail being fitted with feathers (*manhenga*) of an eagle or other large bird to “balance the arrow and incline it to fly true.” The head was eased into the shaft using a process called *kupisira*, which involved heating the hollowed arrow head stem (*runje*) into the reed and then binding it with sinew. To finish, the binding on the arrow head and tail was enameled with using reddish gum from the roots of an unspecified tree. Together, the bow and its arrows were called *utati*. A quiver for

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<sup>120</sup> Snowden, “Some Technological Notes”: 62; P.J. Odendaal, “The Bow and Arrow in Southern Rhodesia,” *NADA* 18 (1941): 23.

putting arrows was called *homwe yemiseve* or *mukutu*; when filled with arrows, *homwe* became *goba* or *nhava* (sling bag).<sup>121</sup>

That left only one other detail: poisoning. The arrow head was made with back-flung barbs (*mandyangowe*), its body being anointed with poison made from the seeds of the *strophantus kombe* or *utsulu* tree, which grew liberally in the northern parts of Gonarezhou. The hunter made his own poison by simply stamping and steeping the pulp in water. In order to protect the poisoned arrows until required for use, the heads were wrapped in leaves, or latterly in cloth. The rationale for using deadly organic poison to kill for meat was simple. The priority was to achieve a fatal shot almost instantaneously and certainly. According to this logic, only meat at the missile's entry point was poisoned beyond consumption and therefore thrown away. The shot was aimed at the spot where lethality was rapid, giving the blood no time to travel around through *tsinga* (veins) to infect the rest of the body. Later, western physicians would insist that if the wound was poisoned and the animal died from it, so too the rest of its body. Locals rejected the premise: 'How come they had eaten the meat and survived?'<sup>122</sup> It is plausible to argue, pending clinical examination of the poison, that position struck the nervous system, paralyzing and killing the animal, and triggering blood clotting long before the blood system absorbed the poison. That is why the hunter would move in swiftly to cut the poisoned part and throw it to burn in the fire to protect his dogs, then proceed at a more leisurely pace to skin the rest of the carcass.

For skinning the carcass, the metallurgist—and the hunter himself, often one and the same person—had two kinds of knives. There was the large sheath knife (*bakatwa*),

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*: 62-5; Odendaal, "The Bow and Arrow": 24.

<sup>122</sup> Odendaal, "The Bow and Arrow": 24.

carried on the person, “secured with a piece of cloth, string or reim (rope).” Its blade (*banga*) was hand-beaten while the sheath (*hara*) was generally carved using a pocket knife. The sheath was in the form of two pieces of leather, each slightly gouged in such a way that when placed together, they left room for the blade in between. The knife had a twin-edged, sword-like blade. Then there was the *bakatwa* (small sheath knife), an 8-inch single edge blade usually secured on the person with a string or reim.<sup>123</sup>

The third set of hunting technologies were what one might call *remote weapons*, that is, methods that did not require the hunter’s presence. I defer that discussion to the actual hunt. For now, since I have laid out the instruments at the hunter’s disposal, let us see the hunter getting into the forest.

**Hunting.** The forest was therefore a highly regulated workplace with specific instruments and targets. Value (meat, ivory, skins) was produced because of movement, whether of the hunter towards a stationery or moving quarry, or the prey itself towards a snare. This section closes the discussion with a few examples.

First, the hunt was mobile work involving tracking the spoor (*kuronda gwara*). Tracking was a skill, the apprenticeship starting in early boyhood. By age 10 every boy would have gone beyond being able to identify every villager by their footprints. By the time they became adolescents they could read game footprints like the palm of their own hand. Starting off early in the morning, they relied on the spoor to lead them to game, hence the importance of starting off before the dew had dried. If the animal’s footprint was dark in color with dew on it, the hunter knew the animal had passed in the night. If the edges were sharply cut, the animal had passed in the morning. If the edges were

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<sup>123</sup> Snowden, “Some Technological Notes on Weapons”: 67.

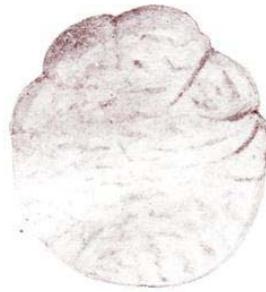


Fig. 3: An Elephant's Footprint  
Source: Lyell, *The African Hunter*. 41.

irregular or crumbled down, then the animal had passed at noon when sand was dry and loose.<sup>124</sup>

Earlier I discussed the instruments at the hunter's disposal and omitted the pitfall. I will now discuss it here as an illustration of the mobile work that went into producing not only the device but the resultant carcasses. The pitfall was the ultimate hunting weapon of mass production. An alternative reading of this might be to say the pitfall was a hunting weapon of mass destruction through production, depending on whether the focus is on the animals or the work involved. My focus is more on the mobile work involved and guides the description.

It took a lot of work to dig the pitfall (*hunza* or *marindji*, a large pit at the bottom of which they drove sharp stakes made from *ntjenga* (hardwood) tree, a sort of mimosa shrub. These stakes were then laced with *utsulu* or *umtsuli* poison. The *hunza* was well camouflaged with grass or branches and a fence was constructed for about 500 meters in a Y-shape leading to it. Along the fence at open intervals, more *marindji* were constructed to decongest the large pit. At each opening the *maphisa* smeared a powder made from a human placenta, which usually came from the hunter's own wife, who was

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<sup>124</sup> Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*: 54.

usually fined heavily if she did not dry and preserve her placenta after giving birth. It is critical to consider here the connections between the reproduction of the body linking through the placenta to the reproductive body of the *hunza* as a uterus that would bear a lot of ‘offspring’ (carcasses). The fence was the womb, pregnant with stampeding animals. The hunters were the source of convulsions, through their chase driving the ‘fetuses’ (animals) out towards the vaginal openings—the *marindji*.

To return to the *hunza*—the process of preparing the fence was like an act of sexual intercourse, the hunters being the man, the fence itself being the woman. It was a secretive affair where women themselves were forbidden, lest they give the hunters *munyama* (bad luck). Once the enclosure was complete, in the afternoon the *maphisa* assembled and prepared torches which they lit in the evening to demarcate the boundary of the fence. Then at night they chased game through the fence into the pits, following and finishing them off with spears and knobkerries.<sup>125</sup> Only after the kill could the women be called to help in taking away the meat skinned and cut into pieces. Labor for digging the pits was communal, but for men only. It often took “from three to six months to dig it.... 200 to 300 animals would fall into the pit.”<sup>126</sup>

The pitfall belonged in the category of remote technologies of killing. These contrivances were set and left in one place and depended on the mobility of the prey which triggered them into action upon contact. Common to all such weapons was deception and camouflage. In the case of the pitfall, the animal moved along its tracks without suspicion. While this mechanism relied on the weigh of the falling animal for maximum velocity at the contact point with poisoned stacks, another instrument, the gin-

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*: 57-62.

<sup>126</sup> Elaine M. Lloyd, “Mbava,” *NADA* 3 (1925): 62.

trap (*dhibhura*), yanked its victim into their, suffocating it to death. It was made out of a sturdy sapling bent over and attached to a snare, which was pinned flat on the ground by means of wooden sticks. A bait was then placed enticingly at a point of strike. When the animal came for dinner, it was yanked by the leg or neck a few feet above the ground.<sup>127</sup> People were not exempt.<sup>128</sup>

As we saw with the pit-fall, however, missile, hand, and remote instruments worked in combination. Tsonga hunters killed elephants “by making holes the size of their feet, with a stake loosely fixed at the bottom, which runs into the wretched animal’s foot and remains there, preventing his moving, until they shoot him with poisoned arrows.”<sup>129</sup> Among Chief Mapungwana’s Ndau people, “it was a custom... to dig holes as snares for elephants, buffalo and other animals.”<sup>130</sup> The Venda killed elephant by hamstringing. The hunters crept up unnoticed to the animal, then sprang and hacked its Achilles tendons with sharp axes and spears, instantly immobilizing it.<sup>131</sup> Elephant and other game could also be killed by “hanging up heavy spikes of poisoned wood which fall on them. An elephant goes about 10, a giraffe 5, an eland 3 miles after being struck” before falling to its death.<sup>132</sup> Dogs complemented these contrivances by driving prey to the traps or out of its lair, while arrows were poisoned with herbs and snake toxins for big game hunting.<sup>133</sup>

Missile weapons could be set as remote devices. Rifles were turned temporarily into ‘trap guns’ kill to lions, the trigger being tied to a rope set in the path of the intended

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<sup>127</sup> G.A.W. Partridge, “Traps a Menace to Wild Life,” *African Wild Life* 12, 3 (September 1958): 117.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*: 117.

<sup>129</sup> Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila”: 122.

<sup>130</sup> Wilson Mhlanga, “The History of the Amatshangana”: 70.

<sup>131</sup> Stayt, *The BaVenda*: 77-9.

<sup>132</sup> Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila”: 129.

<sup>133</sup> Stayt, *The BaVenda*: 77-9.

prey, on which was trained the gun barrel. So long as the animal tripped the rope, it was

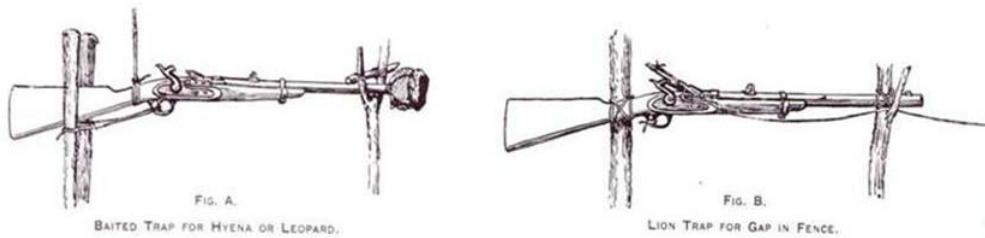


Fig. 4: A Trap-Gun

Source: Neumann, *Elephant Hunting in East Equatorial Africa*: 405-6

inviting a bullet right through its heart. It shot itself.

### Conclusion: Villagers Connecting via the Forest

The products of the forest fed into commerce. Scholars of trade in precolonial Africa tend to focus on the routes while failing to spend more time on the work done by way of mobility.<sup>134</sup> But as Diouf noted recently, these mobilities or processes of diaspora (movements back and forth) act as entry points into the global.<sup>135</sup> Take hawking—the way traders move from village to village, homestead to homestead and region to region, along footpaths, across mountains and forests, deserts and rivers, selling their wares. Expeditions involving exertion and exhaustion carrying baggage, pausing here and unloading to sell there, and tying up the bundles again and hoisting them on the head or shoulders to the next village until all the merchandise was sold. These were the mechanics of making exchange value, a process of network-building through the shuffling of the feet for tens and hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles. This is a narrative of network-building through the materiality of forest, mine, river, and field

<sup>134</sup> Jan Vansina, “Long Distance Trade Routes in Central Africa” *Journal of African History* iii, 3 (1962); Gerald Hartwig, *The Art of Survival in East Africa: The Kerebe and Long Distance Trade, 1800-1895* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1976); and others.

<sup>135</sup> Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora.”

products, with the same village actors as well as regional and overseas traders whom we shall meet shortly in the next chapter.

Practically every facet of village life extended to the forest. The products of the forest included items for direct culinary consumption, such as meat, skins for making clothing, horns for carving artifacts, and whole carcasses for sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. The carcass also yielded ivory for sale to incoming overseas merchants. The forest was also the source of a toolkit enabling the n'anga to do complex *work* that has often been reduced to therapy in the authoritative literature in African history.<sup>136</sup> Finally, the forest also yielded certain grains, roots, berries, and leaves that alleviated hunger in times of grain scarcity. Building on the village's relationship with the forest, I want to show the agency of mobility and technology in linking local environments and actors with global ones.

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<sup>136</sup> By among others Steven Feierman and John Janzen (eds.), *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa*; Janzen, *Ngoma: Discourses of Healing in Central and Southern Africa*; Janzen, *A Drum of Affliction*; and Janzen, *The Quest for Therapy*.

## **Chapter 2 The Technological Junction**

In the preceding chapter, I mapped the pre-colonial village as the coordinating center of interconnected realms of production that sustained rural lives. These realms included agricultural fields for crop production; rivers and valleys, where people drew water, bathed, and fished; forests, the source of wood, venison, clothing, medicines, and minerals; and markets on the Indian Ocean coastline and from village to village. The production extended to grave sites, where the dead were interred and their souls elevated to ancestral spirits believed to return and prosper the living. Through the death of an (adult) person, an ancestral spirit was produced.

I have singled out the forests and traced how successive generations of villagers have reproduced, renovated, and deployed specific knowledges of hunting to negotiate technological challenges from outside actors for over a century. Together, the village and its multiple sites of production formed what I called the ‘mobile workshop’—a mosaic of purposes, organization, work, and instruments that enable communities of practice to produce usable value through moving about. The space, time, and place where one mobile workshop meets another is what I call a ‘technological junction’.

The notion of a technological junction helps me to cast the spotlight on the question of agency. What exactly does ‘discovery’, ‘exploration’, and ‘bagging a trophy’ mean where the men who wrote about and claimed such feats were shown around places and prey by African guides, trackers, interpreters, porters, wagon drivers, and outriders? Just as we have examined European technology in African cultural landscapes, we should symmetrically examine the role of African technology in the European’s mobile workshop. Here, I will examine the role of the men the Europeans employed as productive factors in the mobile workshop. I argue that the stopover in the village enabled the European to rejuvenate his mobile workshop’s momentum through recruiting fresh manpower, purchasing cereal, and getting directions.

The travelogue’s value to the reader of African history is paradoxical. On one hand, it is full of racial innuendo: the African carriers, guides, hunters and villagers are negatively portrayed as gluttonous ‘turn-tails’, ‘lazybones’, and knowledge-less ‘primitives’. The standard of measure is decidedly Eurocentric. On the other hand, even amidst such bigotry the European travel-writers make surprising admissions that without African knowledge, European exploration and big game hunting were doomed. The ambition of this chapter is not necessarily to look for ‘the subaltern voice’ in a genre which appears to silence it.<sup>1</sup> That is much easier to do.

Rather, it is suggest that the notion of ‘subaltern’ is in negation of the clear role of Africans, technological instruments, and nature in co-constructing the itinerary of the European. There is one point that African Studies and STS could agree to collectively differ with Subaltern Studies: that the subaltern condition is not *a priori* and static but

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<sup>1</sup> This is the classical question Gayatri Spivak posed in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Cathy Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988): 277.

open to renegotiation, reconfiguration, and escape.<sup>2</sup> It is not just a question of the dominant inventing (or *thingifying*) the subaltern (for which Ranger's original thesis was heavily criticized)<sup>3</sup> but more importantly the possibility of the dominated to escape its condition through its own initiatives. Hence the salience of mobility: to escape death, dictatorship, famine, low social status, and so on, people could migrate beyond the range of the menacingly outstretched arms of the state.

Well beyond the 'subaltern' of the Asian-inspired Subaltern Studies, the chapter explores the limits of this category, focusing not just on 'human subalterns', but also 'nonhuman' ones. Africanists have long doubted the relevance of the 'subaltern' concept to African Studies, preferring instead, and then rigorously critiquing the one that Terence Ranger proposed: "the invention of tradition."<sup>4</sup> However, STS scholars of co-construction can effectively assist Africanists to further strength their case by expanding the field of "invention" beyond just people to nonhuman actors like technology and nature. I still think, however, that only by paying attention to the way movement makes invention or co-production possible through enabling actors to meet in a specific space and time is it possible to render inadequate the analytical efficacy of 'subaltern'. Otherwise, there is no compelling reason to underestimate and take for granted the subalternity of the subaltern.

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<sup>2</sup> See Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997). [Chap. 6 "Some African Case Studies"]; Vukile Khumalo, "The Class of 1856 and the Politics of cultural Production(s) in the Emergence of Eukukhanyeni, 1855-1910," J. A. Draper (ed), *The Eye of the Storm. Bishop Colenso and the Crisis of Biblical Inspiration* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2003): 207-41; Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana. 'How to Play the Game of Life'*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Stephanie Newell, "Paracolonial Networks: some Speculations on Local Readership in Colonial West Africa," *Interventions* 3, 3 (2001): 336-54; Philip Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlotte: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> For a synthesis of and response to these criticisms, see Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited," in Preben Kaarsholm and Jan Hultin (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Roskilde: International Development Studies, Roskilde University/Occasional Paper, no. 11. 1994),

<sup>4</sup> Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in E. J. Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

To make this argument, the chapter initiates a theme that will carry through to the end of the thesis: the ways in which Africans deployed and adjusted these elastic traditions to intercept Europeans coming into the transLimpopo basin to hunt, explore, and trade. Their objective was to acquire Western technology and meat when these European hunters killed big game. Just like the village, I treat European big game hunting as a mobile workshop because it is purposive and productive movement. Where the two meet, a technological junction is formed as follows:

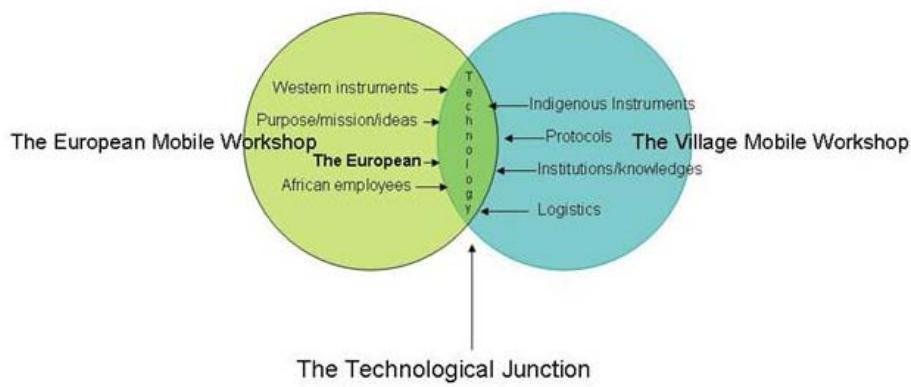


Fig. 5: The Technological Junction

Source: Author

While Europeans had been in southern Africa since 1500, I will pick on six late-19<sup>th</sup> century expeditions to frame history as a journey full of technological junctions. Together these narratives reveal the European expedition as a series of technological junctions with villages where fleeting sites and moments of production, exchange, and consumption are created and exploited.

The first expedition was that of Fernandes das Neves, a Portuguese ivory merchant (*banyan*) based at the Indian Ocean port city of Lourenco Marques in the 1850s-60s. With a troop of 253 armed African (Tsonga-speaking) professional hunters

(known as *maphisa*) and carriers (*mpfhumba*), Neves left the coastal settlement on 3 September 1860 primarily in search of ivory in Gonarezhou, the forest we discussed in

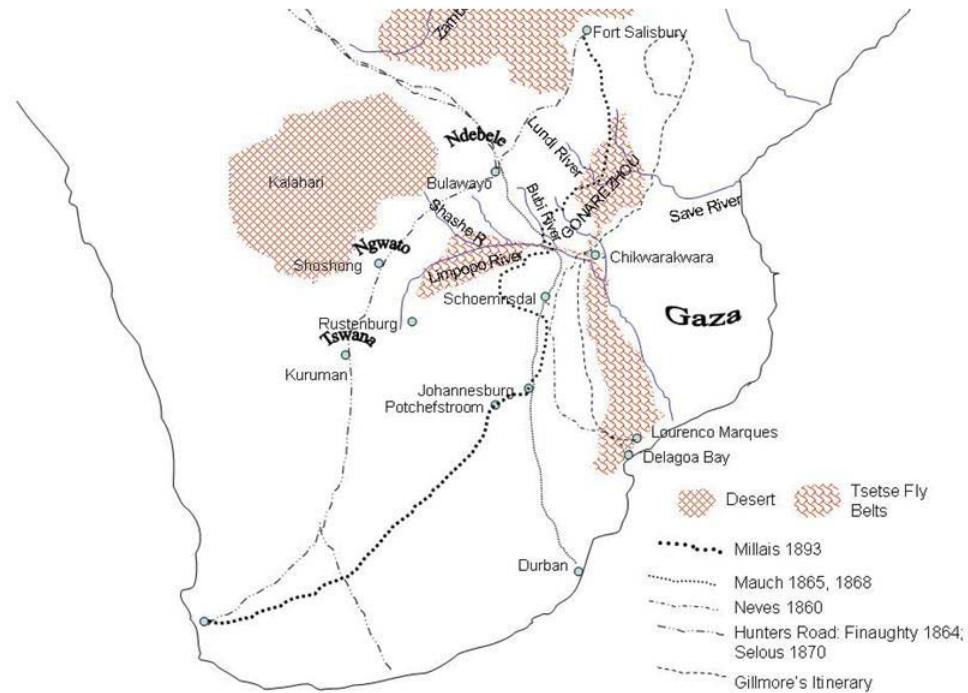


Fig. 6 Pathways to the TransLimpopo Hunting Grounds

Source: Author

the last chapter as falling under the Tsonga chief Chikwarakwara, a vassal of Mawewe, King of the Gaza. The *banyan* was supposed to return in time before his customers sailed for India in September 1861.<sup>5</sup> Second is the German explorer Karl Mauch's journeys in 1865-73 from Natal to the Bubi-Limpopo area and its northern hinterland. Mauch's narrative shows careful attention to geographic data and experience detail such as altitude, latitude and longitude, geological formations, vegetation and people.<sup>6</sup>

The third account is that of William Finaughty, who is reputed to have shot more elephant than any other British hunter of his generation. Born at Grahamstown, South Africa, Finaughty trekked to the Ngwato Kingdom in 1864 and hunted in the Shashe-

<sup>5</sup> D. Fernandes das Neves, *A Hunting Expedition to the Transvaal*. Translated by M. Monteiro (London: George Bell and Sons, 1879); Wagner, "Zoutpansberg."

<sup>6</sup> Karl Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch, 1869-72* (translated by F.O. Bernhard and edited by E.E. Burke, Salisbury, 1969): 2.

Limpopo river junction until he ‘retired’ to set up a trading store at the Ngwato capital Shoshong in 1870.<sup>7</sup>

Finaughty’s career ended at just the time when that of Frederick Courtney Selous—the fourth account—was beginning. The 19-year-old Englishman had sailed from Britain via the Atlantic to Port Elizabeth, before setting off—on 4 September 1871—for ‘the hunting grounds’.<sup>8</sup> For the next two decades, he hunted in the Ngwato, Tswana, Ndebele and Shona kingdoms on the fringes of the Kalahari Desert, acquiring geographic knowledge that positioned him to guide the British in colonizing the Shona area in 1890.

This is the time Parker Gillmore sailed from the Natal port of Durban to Lourenco Marques, from where he proceeded to hunt along the southeastern fringes of Gonarezhou. After a few months, he struck out towards the Zambezi in search of gold.<sup>9</sup>

The last journey occurred as Selous led the British to colonize the Ndebele kingdom to the west, while the Portuguese prepared to attack the Gaza to the east, with Gonarezhou in the middle. In 1893, the Englishman John Guille Millais sailed from Britain via the Atlantic Ocean to Cape Town, before taking the newly-established train service to the burgeoning city of Johannesburg. There he contracted an experienced 48 year-old Boer hunter, Roelef van Staden, to take him to Gonarezhou to see and paint the rhinoceros.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> William Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter 1864-1875* (Bulawayo: Books of Zimbabwe 1980): 133.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick Courtney Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1895): 1-12.

<sup>9</sup> Parker Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land, and the Scene of the Portuguese Aggression: The Journey of a Hunter in Search of Gold and Ivory* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1890): 20.

<sup>10</sup> John Guille Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt* (Alberton: Galago, 1986/1895): 53. The Boers were the descendants of Dutch émigrés and settlers who arrive at the Cape in the 1760s. They are also known as Afrikaners, a term of reference they prefer to the often derogatory ‘Boer’.

In Finaughty's account, African rulers are treating European big game hunting as mobile foreign investment and hosting the hunters and traders lavishly as a strategy to entice them into trading their services and imports. Using the indigenous traditions of kinship and kingship, local rulers and their peoples manage to "domesticate"<sup>11</sup> and "provincialize"<sup>12</sup> the European's mobile workshop. The European travelers are simultaneously doing the same to Africans. Gillmore's journey enables a tracing of the game spoor as one example of a fleeting site of production. Through their labor, African trackers deploy their hunting traditions to enable the white man to kill game with guns, so that they 'reap' venison. In Mauch's narrative, they deploy their traditions to enable the explorer to produce maps. Finally in Millais's account, the Boers tap into these African hunting traditions to found a safari tour-guiding tradition that survives to the present.

The story of technological junctions will be told in four steps: 1) by setting up a theoretical framework for discussing technology and the (southern) African region where the technological junctions were located 2) mapping the pathways on which European mobile workshops traveled, thereby encountering village mobile workshops 3) framing the politics, cultures, and societies that inhere in the pathways, and 4) the role of village in the European itinerary.

### **When Western Technology Travels to Non-Western Spaces**

These European travelers set off for the interior of southern Africa filled with confidence in the power of their instruments—as engineers had designed them—to surmount any

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<sup>11</sup> Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsh, *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe—Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

problem their mobile workshops encountered. We need to understand these pre-conceived ideas before we can start examining how they mediated the encounter between the travelers and the pathways they traversed.

Early on, Karl Mauch thought he had made the perfect preparation for exploration before leaving Europe: extensive geological and medical studies in Germany, Austria and England, a panoply of navigational, physical fitness, and acclimatization exercises, and buying all-leather wear for the thorny savannah. This excerpt also underlines Mauch's early belief that his guns would be the center of his exploratory universe:

The demands on a gun are manifest; I must be able to kill an elephant as well as a rabbit, to shoot an ostrich as well as a partridge. [The gun's] barrels must not suffer extensively if necessity compels me to load glass beads or quartz grains instead of the soft lead bullet or chopped lead. The locks have to combine the utmost accuracy and durability with great simplicity, so that damage is not likely to occur or so that I would at least be able to repair such again.<sup>13</sup>

Having more than one firearm increased the range of options if one misfired, developed "hung fire," or 'refused' to fire.<sup>14</sup> Gillmore's 'battery' included British-designed muzzle-loaders and 12-bore shotgun with a 50-yard range but too light for heavy charges. He also had a two-grooved rifle, accurate with a light powder charge of 10 lb. (3-4½ drachms), but less accurate and ineffective against elephant with anything less.<sup>15</sup>

Yet even with the best of weapons, the European hunter in Africa soon experienced another contingent technical problem that had not been originally designed into the manufacture of the gun itself. How would one fire a weapon designed for killing human targets to take out a charging buffalo or elephant, for example? In order to fire the musket, the gunmen had to first push a ramrod down the gun barrel to make sure the

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<sup>13</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 191.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 63.

<sup>15</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 9-10; 18-19.

bullets were ‘home’, the nipples had to have fresh caps, and the powder had to be dry. When firing, the distance, the aim, and target’s behavior must be synchronized into the trigger pull, and during the firing, the gun bearer would be reloading, passing on the replenished firearm to the shooter. The ‘bandied bullets’ might “obstinately resist being rammed home” as the hunter stared in horror into a charging elephant bull. Not surprisingly, most European travelers were fond of drawing a buffalo, elephant, rhino or

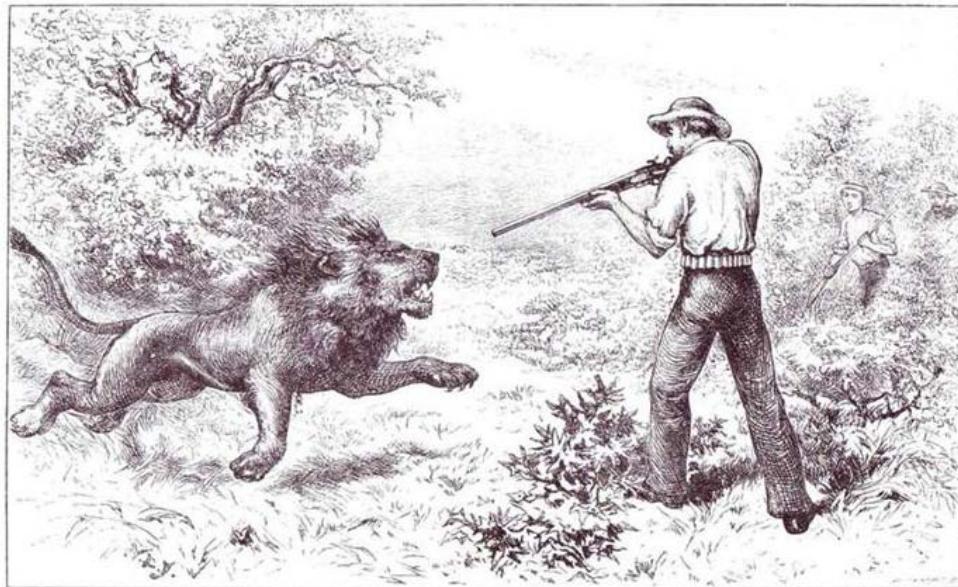


Fig. 7: Interactions of Humans, technology, Prey, and Space

Source: Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings*: 244b.

lion in a chronic state of charge as in Selous’s self depiction here. The thicker skin of the animal absorbed most of the bullet’s force, so that “larger bored guns and much heavier charges of power” were required. Gillmore trusted the 8-bore to be “the most desirable weapon for shooting the mammoths of creation,” despite its violent recoil.<sup>16</sup>

British hunters soon abandoned their state-of-the-art guns for older but locally tried, tested, and resilient ones. The best example is that of the large-bore elephant gun called the *roer*, the universal gun of “the professional Dutch and native elephant-

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*: 41, 43, 100.

hunters.” Selous “eventually bought two of these very unprepossessing-looking weapons—smooth-bore duck guns taking four ounces, the guns themselves weighing only 12 ½ lbs.” Originally manufactured by Isaac Hollis of Birmingham, the guns had traveled a circuitous journey from one user to the next before they landed in Selous’s hands. The man who sold them to him—a Mr. Williams—had carted them on an ox-wagon from Cape Town over 600 miles along the Hunters Road for £6 apiece. These two guns killed 77 elephants in three hunting seasons on foot. They fired “common trade powder” that European hawkers normally sold to Africans in 5 lb. bags. Later Selous would go on to shoot with “very expensive large-bore breech-loaders and Curtis and Harvey’s best powder,” but he “never used or [had] seen used a rifle which drove better than these common-made old muzzle-loaders.” The *roer*’s only problem was the recoil: light and hand-loaded “from a leather bag of powder slung at my side,... they kicked most frightfully.” This kick-back affected Selous’s nerves “to such an extent as to have materially influenced my shooting ever since.”<sup>17</sup> The *roers* had thrived on inferior quality powder, and when high quality powder manufactured by Curtis & Harvey and Pigou & Wilks arrived in the 1880s, most of them blew up due to overcharge.<sup>18</sup> The reason was that users failed to adjust the charge according to the quality of the new explosives.

From 1870 onwards, the British increasingly tightened laws banning the transfer of guns, ammunition and lead to Africans in the interior. The move was disastrous for European traders, as Selous lamented in 1880:

Owing to the enforcement of this act, trade, the great medium of civilization, is rapidly coming to a standstill in the interior; the Cape Colony has lost a large source of revenue both in import and export dues; English enterprise in South Central Africa has been entirely put a stop to;

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<sup>17</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 10.

<sup>18</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 101-2.

and soon the Portuguese slave-traders, who labour under no disadvantage from laws forbidding the import of ammunition, will once more reign supreme upon the fields from which they were whilom driven by British enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

Without powder even for his own shooting, Selous's "dreams of extended exploration" east towards Portuguese territory "were rudely ended."<sup>20</sup>

For the explorer, the gun was an ancillary instrument to the core toolkit of his mobile workshop: astronomical and meteorological equipment. (And by contrast, the astronomical and meteorological instrument was ancillary to the gun in a mobile workshop primarily intended for hunting). Mauch carried prismatic and pocket compasses for minor observations; the pocket watch to measure time; an aneroid-barometer and a thermometer to measure the elements; and a magnifying glass for geological exploration. In his backpack he carried reference books—an almanac, logarithms, botanic and geological science books—and blank books and an inkpot for drawing and painting specimens, maps and landscapes. And in a tin toolbox, some holding files, a sewing kit, whetstone, awl, and pincers for repairs, and another—always locked—medicine tin box. With each device Mauch wore many hats: "now astronomer, then washerwoman; now botanist, then tailor; now geologist; then cobbler; now doctor, then cook, etc."<sup>21</sup>

Modes of transport, technologies of killing or measuring, and even where and when such instruments could be used depended on the wildlife itself. We need to distinguish between 'bad nature' (pests) and 'good nature' (prey). The first refers to those animals of the forest that caused harm to the mobile workshop, principally tsetse fly,

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<sup>19</sup> Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa*: 248.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 192-3.

mosquitoes, and predators. The second refers to animals that facilitated and yielded a good experience.

Tsetse fly was ‘bad nature’. The bite from the Southern African varieties of this small fly (which looks like a house fly in all but color) was lethal in livestock, but not human beings or game animals.<sup>22</sup> Many travelers between 1870 and 1890 located tsetse fly on the Chobe-Zambezi River confluence, stretching south to the fringes of the Kalahari Desert. Further south, Finaughty learnt from Africans that tsetse had bred readily in and emerged from buffalo dung.<sup>23</sup>

The locals protected their dogs and other animals by making them eat some of those flies so that when these insects bit them next time, they would have immunity. They also fed them with dead snakes, even though it is unclear if this did not result in more deaths than saved lives. Finaughty does not elaborate, fascinated more with the idea than the outcomes of the practice which he clearly dismissed as fantasy.<sup>24</sup> These practices survived so long as the fly was around. In 1875-7, a sustained Boer hunting trek wiped out the herds—and the tsetse with it as most game retreated further and further into places where few Europeans dared to hunt: in the tsetse fly belts of Gonarezhou and the Zambezi valley.<sup>25</sup>

For a very long time until the extermination of buffalo between the Lebombo mountain range and the sea, tsetse had restricted European hunters to traveling from Lourenco Marques to the Transvaal on foot. Only by employing African (Tsonga) professional carriers (*mpfhumba*) and elephant hunters (*maphisa*) could they access the

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*: 233; Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 130-2.

<sup>23</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 154.

<sup>24</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 177; For a similar practice among the Bemba of Zambia, see Vernon Brexford, “Natives Have Their Story Book,” *African Wild Life* 3, 1 (1949): 66-7.

<sup>25</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 175-6.

far-away hunting grounds of Vhezha (Venda) and Gonarezhou.<sup>26</sup> The boundaries of tsetse fly in the lower Limpopo are illustrated on the map.

‘Good nature’ presented the mobile workshop with arenas for production. Hunters went and guns killed where fauna was, and human activities followed the habits and habitats of animals. Some bird species like the khoorhan always preferred to be near water, presenting easy prey since the hunters seldom camped away from rivers. Antelope enjoyed open grasslands, attracting the hunter on horseback. Kudu’s habitat was normally in ‘wait-a-bit’ (hooked-thorn bush) country. When the ‘cruel’ shrub lacerated into a galloping horse, the hunter was forced to look for prey elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> With no disturbance, kudu watered “regularly at the same spot about the same time in the evening, i.e. about an hour before sundown,” making it very predictable prey for the hunter.<sup>28</sup>

And one reason for the near extinction of rhinoceroses in the 1870s-80s was that “they were easy to shoot” and fetched big money. In 1874, Selous had seen “plenty rhino” on the Chobe; in 1877, he could see only spoor; in 1879, even the spoor was gone. In 1872-3 he had “encountered almost daily one or more prehensile-lipped (black) rhinoceros” west of Gwai and in Shona country. In 1878 and 1880, he witnessed only a “fair number” in Shona country between the Munyati and Hunyani rivers.<sup>29</sup> This journey through time exposes the co-production of environmental change through the interaction of technology and nature.

Yet ‘good nature’ did not succumb meekly to the gun. Elephants migrated, and with them the “hunting-grounds,” thereby shifting sites of ‘hunting work’. In areas of

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<sup>26</sup> Frederick Courteney Selous, *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1908) 152; Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*: 16-7; 36-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*: 102, 144-5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*: 190-203.

constant hunting, the springbuck exercised its “extraordinary powers of scent and observation” and escaped even before the hunter could think of a shot, yet “where not constantly persecuted,” the animal was “comparatively tame.” Only when migrating as a herd, in the comfort of numbers, did the springbuck manifest “anything like indifference to danger.” At which point the Boers rode up to the front of the herd and shot “as many as they required.”<sup>30</sup> Wounded animals always left the herd, often carrying the hunter’s bullets, the pain making them bad tempered and ready to charge on unsuspecting hunters. To avoid being the prey, hunters knew they must place their shot carefully or fire several bullets to effect a kill and avoid wounding and bringing danger upon themselves.<sup>31</sup>

One game species often determined the presence and fate of another, enabling shooting opportunities for the rifle. The lion’s call was a good sign for the hunter: it meant game was available in numbers to support the feline’s appetite for meat. The hunter too would get his share. The rhinoceros birds were so-named because they fed on ticks engorged in the animal’s skin, but did not necessarily die with the near extinction of their benefactor, since they also fed on buffalo, sable, and warthog. When the traveler outspanned these birds descended on his oxen to ‘help out’ with the ticks; they became ox-peckers.<sup>32</sup>

Where, when, if, how, and why technology was used might ultimately depend not even on the user or the instrument but its intended task. Most game animals had an early warning system, thereby stifling the well-contrived ‘evil’ intentions of the hunter and sending the shot horribly wide. The ostrich used its height to warn unsuspecting springbuck of an approaching hunter, the buck passing on the message to other animals

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: 14-5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*: 196.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*: 65-7, 147.

with their snorts and dartings-about. But baboons and quay birds always posted sentries, whether atop a hill, anthill, or tree, and as Millais records, “the naturalist would seldom have an opportunity of seeing them without being detected himself.” Quay birds were first arrivals at the morning pool alongside mouse birds, bush doves, francolins, and glossy starlings. Dutch hunters unanimously declared this “objectionable” bird as “a most inveterate disturber of game.” Millais agreed that this bird “will commence to utter its tiresome call whenever it detects the presence of man.” Other animals interpreted the bird’s call as a signal to run for their lives.<sup>33</sup>

Ultimately, social and cultural re-/production was critical, for, living for millennia, one generation upon another, Africans gathered a massive archive on nature’s defensive stratagems. Even the animals had grown accustomed to human offensive and defense strategies. This is why some European travelers were often surprised that certain animals were oblivious to guns yet deliberately avoided pit traps, snares, and getting too close to people. When the Europeans passed through the African landscapes, they engaged men who could decode nature’s signs. We must first locate the European hunter with his guns in space, moving through places full of such knowledges and such ‘good’ and ‘bad nature’.

### African Territorialities, Technological Pathways

**Maps.** Upon following the European traveler’s mobile workshop, we encounter another mobile workshop that is the rural African village. Where they meet I find a technological junction, the one Western, the other indigenous. Jessica Dubow’s definition of a map as

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<sup>33</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 24, 81.

“a place found by way of the body”<sup>34</sup> is useful for describing how the junction occurs, not merely as physical location but a meeting of people and nature full of agency. That way, we can say that the European itinerant found and acted upon—and was himself acted upon by people going through its own “dialectics of everyday life.”<sup>35</sup> My concern here is how as the traveler passed through, he encountered and consulted what René Dubos called “the genius of the place.”<sup>36</sup>

Dubow’s characterization of *the map* as an intersection of body and place begs an important question regarding the mobile workshop. Namely, why did the itineraries of these men follow the specific pathways they did? Did the travelers follow such routes because of a premeditated endeavor to meet local actors and to be in a specific place where their instruments—and their specific technical attributes—took them or could be used? Or was this itinerary a predetermined outcome of the political, social, and cultural realities in these places? I argue that the imperatives of the European’s journey across space and the journeys of locals through everyday life co-produced the itineraries of the European. In this way I seek to complicate the extent to which the European’s instruments not only encountered limits, but also how in the face of local village mobile workshops they also acquired uses neither the European designers nor the hunters had bargained for.

Whereas we have seen how the European mobile workshop prioritized the materiality of guns to produce through mobility—thereby tapping into local biological re-/production (‘good nature’)—this section examines how the workshop encountered and

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<sup>34</sup> Dubow, “‘From a View on the World to a Point of View in It’: 89-90.

<sup>35</sup> Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* vol. 2 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> R. Dubos, “The Genius of the Place,” *American Forests* 76, 9 (1970): 16-19, 61-62.

responded to local political re-/productions. Here I examine how the European encountered elastic traditions into which African rulers and their people were adopting guns to constitute a multiple repertoire for exercising “alter-/native modernities.” The term refers to modernities *alternative* to the assumed western one; they are *native* to their local environments. Mamadou Diouf calls it “vernacular cosmopolitanism,” by which he refers to “the process of globalization and the multiplicity of individual temporalities and local rationalities that are inserted into it.” Diouf identifies localism as “the only point of intervention against the hegemonic, universalising thrust of globalisation.” He shows that Africans have historically shown a capacity to galvanize their constantly remodelled traditions and to conjure their own economic scenario to “anticipate a future saturated with projects of an indisputable modernity.”<sup>37</sup>

While Diouf traced the Senegalese Murid diaspora’s journeys out of Africa where they used their localism to make sense of new European and American environments, I am tracing the way Europeans came into the transLimpopo and the multiple local elements of nature, culture, and technology that shaped the experiences of these visitors. This enables me to examine the ways in which residents inserted themselves into the itineraries of these Europeans and vice versa. The locals identified the pathways as the arteries through which guns, gunpowder, lead, cloth, beads, and other products from Europe and Asia came through from the coast into the hinterland and strategized accordingly. Here we shall focus on two main corridors of this traffic and the political pathways they passed through to set up the space of interaction for locals and itinerants.

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<sup>37</sup> Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora”: 680-1, 683.

**Corridors: Lower Limpopo.** Nowhere is the agency of tsetse fly more apparent than on this route to the hunting grounds: because of it, European itinerants were forced to travel on foot, thereby becoming vulnerable to manipulation by local actors.

The long-distance transport technology of the day—ships—explains why the ports of arrival in southern Africa were on the Cape, Port Elizabeth, Natal and Lourenco Marques (LM) littorals. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was only one mode of long-distance transport. All these port cities grew out of the sea route linking the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.<sup>38</sup> The interior-bound traveler from Delagoa Bay or LM often met the fly as he crossed the Lebombo mountain range. Ox-wagon transport to Johannesburg in the 1880s was discontinued after “very heavy losses in cattle.” Donkeys were thought to be more resistant to the pest, but they too succumbed. However, as hunters exterminated buffalo herds between the Lebombo mountain range and the sea, tsetse gradually diminished in numbers.<sup>39</sup>

Four of the six travelers I trace converged on the towns of the Boer republic of Transvaal for logistical and marketing reasons. In their heyday Schoemansdal (1848-67), Potchefstroom (1868-86), and Johannesburg (from 1886) were the leading commodity markets of Southern Africa. Each winter these towns welcomed European traders coming from the Cape, Natal, Inhambane and Lourenco Marques to buy ivory from the Boers and Africans of the transLimpopo. Schoemansdal was a cosmopolitan place where Englishmen, Scots, Irishmen, Dutchmen, Belgians, Germans, Portuguese, and Africans from all over southern Africa converged to eke out different livelihoods and social

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<sup>38</sup> J. Galbraith, *Mackinnon and East Africa, 1878-1895: A Study in the 'New' Imperialism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972): 32; J. Forbes Munro, “Shipping Subsidies and Railway Guarantees: William Mackinnon, East Africa and the Indian Ocean, 1860-93,” *Journal of African History* 28 (1987).

<sup>39</sup> Selous, *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences*: 152; Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 6.

statuses. Among other vocations, they contracted themselves as wagon-drivers, carriers, guides and trackers to European itinerants going into the hinterland.

From 1867 onwards, this description applied more to Potchefstroom than Schoemansdal, whose star was waning because of the Venda's revolt against the Boers, which resulted in them barring all white hunters from any access to the hunting grounds in the north. When Mauch was forced to abort the Schoemansdal route and go via Potchefstroom in 1868, he found "a vibrant auction in firewood, corn, flour, oranges, brandy, vegetables, oats, [leather] soles, tanned or raw hides, ostrich feathers, wool, tobacco and rarely ivory" in progress.<sup>40</sup> An average 1.000 whites (Boer, English, German and French) and blacks (Sotho, Zulu, Nama, and Griquas) frequented the auction each day.<sup>41</sup>

The major wagon trails and footpaths dedicated to trade on the lower Limpopo and from Natal converged on Potchefstroom until 1886, when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand. From that moment on, most European pathways to the interior shifted accordingly, attracted by the city lights, tramways, music halls, fine hotels, and nightlife. The City of Gold (hence the Zulu name *eGoli*) became the primary logistic base for trekkers going into the interior.<sup>42</sup> The traveler's imagination of Johannesburg as a 'stop-over' on the journey to the interior offering the comforts of home (Europe) in 'Dark Africa'.

From Schoemansdal, Potchefstroom, or Johannesburg, the pathway to the hunting grounds might take several directions and diversions. At that point, the logistic

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<sup>40</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 172.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*: 12-13, 25, 173.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*: 34-5.

imperatives assumed a different character: the white settler regimes gave way to African territorialities.

So how did the European traveler exercise sovereignty over his objectives, staff, and itinerary when he had to submit to the sovereignties of African rulers and their people over the place traveled through and hunted in? How did Europeans react to African political sovereignty over places through which they sought to make pathways? Here it should not be assumed that these men pioneered all the paths they traversed: in fact for much of the time they followed footpaths furrowed by Africans, thereby setting themselves up to pass through the places the creators of such roads intended. Moreover, none of these European journeys followed the beaten track from start to finish; circumstances forced them to divert from the established pathways and furrow their own paths even through forests, paths nobody else might use, and which left no mark on the ground.

Here, the encounter between the European's mobile workshop (as a production unit) and local protocols governing the pathway is an important site for considering how technology and politics co-constructed one another (what Hecht calls technopolitics).<sup>43</sup> However, I would argue the necessity to keep technology and politics without ruling out their mutual shaping, as opposed to a conflation into technopolitics.<sup>44</sup> In other words, I am interested in instances where technology and politics interact without becoming technopolitics, for example, when already-made technology passes through a political space.

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<sup>43</sup> For the original proposition of the notion of “technopolitics,” see Hecht, *The Radiance of France*: 15.

<sup>44</sup> For a variation of “techno-politics,” see Tim Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*.

In that case, politics affects the use of already-designed technologies. Reading Neves's diary, one finds that the process of 'furrowing the path' could in some cases involve using Western technology (guns) to effect 'regime change' in order to install African rulers sympathetic to one's safer passage in future. This is the case with Neves's itinerary from Schoemansdal to Mzila's kraal in 1860, when the *banyan* used his hunting expedition to the Gonarezhou chief Chikwarakwara as a cover for a more sinister plot: to assure Mzila of the guns, manpower, and financial support to wrest the Gaza throne from his brother, Mawewe. Once Mzila was in power, he would reward the Portuguese merchants at Lourenco Marques with unlimited ivory hunting concessions in the Gaza domains, including Gonarezhou. Chikwarakwara was a vassal of Mawewe, and upon discovering the plot to eliminate his superior, deliberately delayed the trade transaction with Neves while alerting Mawewe to send forces to capture or assassinate the *banyan*. Neves escaped through the skin of his teeth.<sup>45</sup>

Karl Mauch's itinerary in 1871 in a sense illustrates the conflation of technology, politics, and culture,<sup>46</sup> how ways of doing geographic exploration that were native to Europe—or the North—were carried into, encountered and either gelled with, displaced or collapsed in the face of local technologies, cultures, politics, and physical environments. To explore places, Mauch often had to move away from the established pathways. In the transLimpopo, however, local protocol dictated that "every person with good intentions walked on the well-beaten pathway, not '*so maar durn veld*' (across

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<sup>45</sup> Neves, *A Hunting Expedition to the Transvaal*: 117-20

<sup>46</sup> For the technocultural conflations one could envisage here, see E. Ann Kaplan and Susan Merrill Squier, *Playing Dolly: Technocultural Formations, Fantasies, and Fictions of Assisted Reproduction* (New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, 1999).

country)" as Mauch did.<sup>47</sup> His luck ran out as he crossed the Limpopo into the Ndebele kingdom, which controlled the western fringes of Gonarezhou. He approached from "a direction from which no European had ever approached it before," carrying 'things' (meteorological instruments) that looked 'funny' to local inhabitants. Add that to his guns and the locals concluded Mauch ought to be a Boer spy! The German also assumed that "no hunting laws existed here, everyone who wants to can get his supply of meat where and when he wishes." These assumptions were dangerous in a time of internecine war following the death of the Ndebele king, Mzilikazi. A Ndebele patrol promptly arrested him for espionage and led him as a captive to Mzilikazi's successor, Lobengula. After much interrogation Mauch was deported from the kingdom.<sup>48</sup>

Millais found in 1893 that it was up to the local rulers to allow or deny travelers access to the hunting grounds. To site one example, since 1867, Ramabulana and other Venda chiefs had sealed off the hunting grounds north of the Zoutpansberg to any 'white-man' using rifles and muskets they had acquired in exchange for backbreaking labor on the Boer farms in the Transvaal and British farms and mines in Natal (the hinterland of Durban) and Kimberley respectively. Whereas on those white settlements they had been 'subalterns' in order to acquire these hunting instruments, now the tables had turned and they were using the guns to assert political control over trade routes and hunting grounds. Any northbound white traveler had to satisfy the Venda's "main request... for powder and lead for heavy guns, from which they fire iron or lead balls of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. weight."<sup>49</sup> From 1883 to the time Millais passed through in 1893, Ramabulana's successor Makado was maintaining a 2,000-strong guard that literally 'sat on the crossing points' and turned

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: 153.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*: 164.

<sup>49</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 56.

back every white traveler who did not play by his demands. He had even created a game reserve where he only permitted selected white hunters and which his armed guard patrolled as a precaution.<sup>50</sup>

The traveler's pathway did not just pass through places of centralized and powerful government but also contested sovereignty where marauding highwaymen lurked, using both guns acquired from previous European mobile workshops and self-designed artifacts like spears, bows and arrows, poisons, or snares. Mauch attributes Baroka banditry to the survival imperative of different ethnic groups displaced by war and hemmed-in between the borders of four powerful neighbors—the Boers, the Gaza, the Shona, and the Ndebele. Unlike later colonial boundaries, the pre-colonial borders were actually larger strips of ‘no man’s lands’.

Mauch encountered this ‘no man’s land’ on the Limpopo thickets somewhere between its confluences with the Bubi and Mwenezi. The Baroka lived in scattered individual huts, feeding on “fishes, tortoises and game taken from lions’ kills, berries and other wild fruit, although they also cultivate[d] small quantities of millet and pumpkins.” They were forced to “either roam in the bush without any shelter or to seek a living place in thick bush, following the vultures or sustaining themselves with roots or wild fruit.”<sup>51</sup> To them, travelers of any sort were a kind of prey, the drifts across the Limpopo no more than convenient ambush points especially in months when the tide was high and fords limited. The Baroka illustrate the dangers Europeans encountered on pathways through places of weak sovereignty.

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<sup>50</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 70, 71, 78.

<sup>51</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*, 55-6, 60, 229-30.

All told, it was better to pass through strong but orderly states than weak and anarchic ones. Nowhere is the indispensable role of strong African rulers to the regulated passage of the itinerant clearer than Mauch's encounter with Gaza hunting protocols in Gonarezhou under the reign of Mzila:

Occasional elephant hunters, whether white or black in colour, receive the permission to hunt some of these animals only by considerable presence of guns, and of the trophies of the slain animals the tusk which touches the ground always belongs to the chief, whilst the other might be bought at a price set by the chief. When the hunt ended, he was to receive another present. Usually he forgets to ask immediately for this or that object which has attracted his eye, therefore he sends a numerous horde after the departed hunter to get hold of the forgotten object either by kindness or by force. He shows a particular crave for the garments which one wears at the time, even should these be the only ones in one's possession.<sup>52</sup>

Here we are beginning to see a different sense of technopolitics: the political insistence by Mzila that all hunters must prove they had the technology to execute the kill and, in the case of whites, to surrender a security deposit before extracting resources. In essence, Mzila was not only using his political power to authorize or reject the use of Western technology in his domains. He was also putting a value and naming the price for his natural resource wealth. Cumulatively, Mzila was using the presence of the hunters as a mechanism to help himself to their prized Western possessions. In the next chapter, we will see that the progressive deterioration of this power under Mzila's son Ngungunyane was the major reason for the colonial partition of Gaza.

**Corridors: Hunters' Road.** Whereas the presence of tsetse in the transLimpopo kept out draught animals and restricted Europeans to foot travel, the Hunters Road was closer to the fringes of the Kalahari Desert. Because game was sparse to almost extinct along much of the way, the tsetse could not get a sustainable diet, and was therefore almost

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*: 227-8.

non-existent. Consequently, hunters were able to use ox-wagons and to ride horses. The material presented here would permit one to argue that the local-outsider interactions were not merely results of human motives and instruments. Rather, nature and technology enabled the encounter of Africans and Europeans and the production of what Diouf calls vernacular cosmopolitanism.

Let me set the stage for that discussion. Finaughty and Selous took the Hunters Road because they wanted to hunt on the upper Limpopo and the upper Zambezi river basins. This route had two tracks starting at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, which merged at Kimberley Diamond Fields. From there it wound through the Tswana, Ngwato, and Ndebele kingdoms on its way to the Zambezi. Originally Africans and later 19<sup>th</sup> century British hunters had chosen this route because it was generally free from the tsetse fly. By 1864 when Finaughty undertook his own trek, the route was called the Hunters Road, having proven popular with Europeans going into the interior on horseback and ox-wagon. In addition the route became popular with traders who purchased guns at Cape Town to sell to the peoples of the interior.<sup>53</sup> As William Storey has shown, by the beginning of the century colonial settlers at the Cape had hinterland under European control, ending the livelihood importance of the hunt. Many settlers turned to cereal agriculture, wineries and livestock production. Others—most notably the Boers and Africans—could not stand second-class citizenship and trekked into the ‘interior’ to exchange firearms, gunpowder, and clothes for cattle, ivory, and minerals.<sup>54</sup> African rulers intercepted this spillover of Cape society and bought new guns that enabled them

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<sup>53</sup> Inez Sutton, “Trade, Firearms and the Rise of the Griqua States c.1800-1840” (Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam unpublished Seminar Paper, 1970).

<sup>54</sup> Storey, “Guns, Race, and Skill”: 690; Richard Elphick, *Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985).

to strengthen their control on the stretches of the Hunters Road passing through their domains.

This then is the pathway Finaughty and Selous passed through countless times to hunt in the upper transLimpopo and sell or buy supplies at the coast. The Tswana, Ngwato and Ndebele went a step further in enhancing their benefits from these routes: they provided infrastructure to encourage white settlement in their domains, not as colonists, but as foreign investors subject to the laws of the land. The Tswana had even allowed the London Missionary Society to build a mission at Kuruman in 1816, which became a node for tapping into travelers to acquire instruments for producing and expressing new social and political status.

The rewards of this investment policy were obvious in 1871 when Selous passed through the house of the incumbent Tswana king, Sechele, who had become “a celebrity amongst the... chiefs of the interior.” Sechele certainly lived the part: in a large well-built, four-dimensional *English* house, complete with a spacious dining room. Above the mantelpiece was hung “a handsome good-sized mirror,” above the doorway a large clock, and in his bedroom “a fine iron bedstead.” When he invited Selous for tea, Sechele was “surprisingly served in a silver tea-pot and a handsome set of china tea-things.” The Englishman found the monarch quite “a diligent student of the Old Testament” in its Setswana translation, indeed “a good and sound Christian.” In fact, Sechele was “anxious about Queen Victoria’s health, and seemed much concerned to hear of the recent illness of the Prince of Wales.” Selous concluded: “Altogether, judging only from outward

visible signs, old Secheli appeared to me to be the most completely civilized Kafir that I had yet seen.”<sup>55</sup>

However, why would Sechele be so well informed about global affairs? Here the key lies in the very detailed description by the Belgian Superior of the Zambezi Mission, the Jesuit priest Father Henry Depelchin on 28 February 1880. Once every fortnight the *Union Castle Mail Ship* docked at Cape Town. A troop of African mail carriers then took the mail—including the latest newspapers—from Cape Town to Bulawayo via Shoshong.<sup>56</sup> No wonder Sechele was so well read!

While Sechele obviously consumed Western clothing, household utensils, news, and religion, Selous and Finaughty encountered further along the way a kingdom that deployed guns to assert its credentials as a ‘civilized’ state. After 1867, the Ngwato capital Shoshong replaced Schoemansdal as the foremost ivory (and cattle) market and “the best armed town in the interior.”<sup>57</sup> Khama was the king when both Finaughty and Selous passed through and sojourned frequently at the capital where, in contrast to Schoemansdal, the African ruler was in total political control and received countless European hunters at his own pleasure. Like Sechele he encouraged investment especially among traders with a view to exchanging ivory and cattle for guns to consolidate his stranglehold on the kingdom and its wealth.

From Shoshong the wagons hurtled towards the borders of the Ndebele kingdom and thence to its capital Bulawayo. From Kwesinyana border post, the road wound to Mangwe Pass. Here, on this plateau, lived one of the characters of the frontier, an

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<sup>55</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 12.

<sup>56</sup> M. Lloyd, “Diaries of the Jesuit Missionaries at Bulawayo 1879-1881,” *Rhodesiana* 4 (1959): 40.

<sup>57</sup> F. Coillard, *On the Threshold of Central Africa* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1897): 48-9.

Englishman named Lee, who had earned his riches raising sheep on his “fine farm.”

Lee’s role as a network-builder is captured well in Depelchin’s diary of the 30<sup>th</sup>:

Travelers usually pitch their tents in front of Lee’s Castle [as the explorer Thomas Baines called it] and stop for the day. Mr. Lee resembles the Boers of the Transvaal. While still a young man, he came into this country in the train of Mosilikatsi [Mzilikazi].

He became a close friend of the conqueror and obtained the land which he cultivates on the banks of the Mangwe. He speaks Zulu fluently, knowing so much about the ways and customs of the country....<sup>58</sup>

Depelchin only arrived at Lobengula’s headquarters at about 3 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of

September and pitched his party’s tent at Ishoshani or Amatje Amthlopi (White Rocks).

19<sup>th</sup> century travelers widely regarded the Ndebele king, Mzilikazi, as a shrewd businessperson and political leader who kept tight control over ivory sales, immigration and hunting laws through levying tolls on all European and African hunters and traders. Like Sechele at Kuruman he had allowed the construction of a LMS church station at Inyati, where Europeans could now rendezvous—and barter with him their Western technologies in return for ivory and other local products. Unlike Sechele, however, the wily old king maintained a friendship and trust with Moffat while steadfastly refusing the ‘nuisance’ of spiritual conversion of himself or his subjects.<sup>59</sup> The strategic location of both Bulawayo and Inyati along the Hunters Road enabled the king to tweeze out the sort of Western technologies he wanted, not through brute force, but providing a market for local products. The Europeans wanted ivory, cattle, and passage north to the Zambezi valley; they had guns, gunpowder, medicines, and other products Mzilikazi did not have. There was a junction of interests there.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*: 13.

<sup>59</sup> Wallis: 324-5.

Finaughty's description of Mzilikazi's wildlife policy suggests that the monarchy had in place an anti-poaching mechanism or an economic intelligence unit, at the very least:

Mzilikazi would not permit any prospecting in the country. He knew just enough to know that there was in the ground that which, if discovered, would cause an influx of white men. He did not mind a few traders or hunters, for they brought him things from civilization which were desirable, but beyond that he did not mean to go, and to ensure this the artful old man put a guide at every white man's disposal from the moment he entered the country till the time he left. He was a guide it was true, but he was also a spy, and one's every action was faithfully reported to the chief. And knowing what Mzilikazi was, very few ventured to defy his explicit instructions with regard to looking for forbidden things.<sup>60</sup>

The spies also ensured that hunters did not poach 'sacred' species like crocodiles, predators, rare and endangered species like pangolins, or exceed their quota.<sup>61</sup>

The Ndebele king's control over the Hunters Road was firm but fair. As Finaughty found on the road to Bulawayo, no hunters could proceed to the hunting grounds without state permission which was obtained at the border post at Kwesinyana. Selous says the permission was obtained at Marka (Mangwe) Pass,<sup>62</sup> but this is not so.

The itinerants were supposed to stay on the road—a very deliberate lineated system to canalize the hunters and ensure scrutiny of their every action. Yet Mzilikazi and Lobengula also exercised an amazing degree of public relations designed to lure foreign investors in the cattle wealth that was two Ndebele kings' window to technologies unavailable locally. The former would often send the hunters and traders "beer and meat almost every day," if only as a cover to spy on any violations of the terms of their verbally agreed permits. It was a guarded friendship, always tampered by a suspicion that those who professed to be English or German might well be Boer spies.

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<sup>60</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 21.

<sup>61</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 8.

<sup>62</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 52-3, 73.

This suspicion had been there since Mzilikazi had been forced to flee the Rustenburg area to establish his capital at Bulawayo in December 1837. Finaughty observed that “despite our denials, … [Mzilikazi] would frequently bring the conversation round to the point, and ingeniously ask us if after all we were sure we were not Boers?”<sup>63</sup> After having suffered politically from the power of Boer guns, Mzilikazi never quite brought himself to trust white men who were armed, since there was no telling if the lone hunter was what he said he was and not some spy.

There is enough to suggest that Lobengula had his father’s touch. For when Selous arrived in Bulawayo in 1871, three years after Mzilikazi’s death, he found the young and affable king continuing his father’s policies.<sup>64</sup> Like in Sechele’s case at Kuruman, the role of Western clothing in Ndebele kingly practices of alter-/native modernity spoke for itself: Lobengula was wearing “a greasy shirt and dirty pair of trousers.” Yet expressions and symbols of modernity were not cast in stone and European observers could in fact misread them unless they took off their rigid lenses. No wonder that in the 1880s-90s when Lobengula “discarded European clothing” and moved to his ‘native’ attire, Selous dismissed him as “a *savage*”: “Now [he] always appears in his own native dress, in which he looks what he is—the chief of a savage and barbarous people.”<sup>65</sup> The hunter missed the point: faced with increasing British, Portuguese and Boer imperialist expansion, Lobengula put on the garb of resistance, invoking indigenous traditions to assert his right and ancestral authority to rule his people and his lands.

There is a second thread to Selous’s first encounter with Lobengula that is seldom captured in these European travelogues: the relationship of age to the ease or difficulty

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*: 21-2.

<sup>64</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 44.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*: 51.

with which European travelers negotiated the pathway. Selous's 19-year old boyish face was not lost to Lobengula, who duly enquired: "What brings you here?" "Elephants," Selous had answered confidently. Whereupon the African monarch burst out laughing: "Was it not steinbucks that you came to hunt? Why, you're only a boy." The king retired without granting Selous permission the hunt befitting an adult. The youth tried again the next day. This time Lobengula advised: "Oh! They will soon drive you out of the country, but you may go and see what you can do." Whereupon the king gave him *carte blanche* to hunt anywhere he pleased. After all, he was just a boy. When the elephants did not chase him away, the king said: "Why, you're a man; when are going to take a wife?" When Selous answered in the affirmative and asked for one, the king chuckled: "Oh! You must *combeesa* (court one) yourself; there are lots of them."<sup>66</sup> Selous stayed in the kingdom until the next winter when the hunting season opened. This time, when he asked the king's permission to hunt in mid-April, he was advised to wait until the hunting season opened—in mid-June. "Even then, he would not let us go to the Mashuna [Shona] country, but told us we must hunt to the westward of the river Gwai."<sup>67</sup> The *carte blanche* was over; adults obeyed rules.

In the evening, the English trader James Fairbairn—a Bulawayo resident in good standing with Lobengula—stopped by to welcome or entertain European guests. Again Depelchin's account is insightful. At 10 am Fairbairn took the missionaries over to meet the king and offer him "gifts," comprising "a fine Martini rifle, which we had bought in London, a music-box, two fine blankets and some trinkets." These they placed in front of the royal hut, and were thrilled at "seeing Lo Bengula looking with satisfaction at all

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

these brilliant objects spread out in front of him.” “This famous king, of muscular build,” did not even speak to them until September 5<sup>th</sup> when Fairbairn once again took them to him to explain “the letters of introduction which we had received from Sir Bartle Frere, High-Commissioner for Her Britannic Majesty, and from Mr. Bailie, Surveyor-general at Kimberley, a close acquaintance of the king.”<sup>68</sup>

The meetings with such visitors normally took place in the *kotla* (chief’s hut or royal palace), a round cabin 20 ft. in diameter, the roof “supported by a tall pole placed in the middle.” It had no windows and only received light “through the cracks in the walls and through the low entrance... about 80 centimetres high and 80 centimetres across.” To enter, one had to crawl on all fours. Visitors sat near the entrance, facing the King on the far side. *According to custom*, “the king [would be] seated nonchalantly on the ground in front of him, and was obviously highly pleased with this fine gift [a brand new Martini Henry rifle]. He handled it as lightly as though it were a pen. It is said that he is an excellent shot.”<sup>69</sup>

Depelchin presented Sir Bartle Frere’s letter; Fairbairn translated while the king “listened with close attention.” The Jesuits wanted to live as missionaries and to establish a mission at Bulawayo and another at Tati. Like Khama of the Bamangwato, Lobengula said he had had enough *abafundisi* (teachers and missionaries), that for more than twenty years the Protestant missionaries had worked in his country without success: “They have attained nothing,” he said. “Absolutely nothing: the children don’t want to learn and the grown-ups are quite happy to be as they are.” Says Depelchin: “Lo Bengula continually reproached us with drinking so little, whilst, faithfully adhering to the etiquette of the

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*: 14.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*: 15.

court, we made valiant efforts to empty the great urn of *tyawala* which was passed from mouth to mouth.” Depelchin and his party’s arrival coincided with celebrations accompanying Lobengula’s marriage to Gaza king Mzila’s daughter.<sup>70</sup>

From the royal family down to the commonest of commoners, the Ndebele were renowned to pester the traveler: “*Tousa! Tousa!*... A small gift, please, a small gift!” First, the king’s brother. Next the queens came to Depelchin’s campsite, “asking for a handkerchief, some coffee, trinkets, calico, etc. All day long we are besieged by beggars; you could not guess how they try our patience.... After each small purchase: *Tousa, tousa! a present!*... You meet a man or a woman: they greet you... *Tousa, tousa! Limbo* (cotton, linen) is the favourite gift; but anything is received with eagerness.”<sup>71</sup>

It was Fairbairn’s role to woo the European visitors to stay so that they became nodes of western technology transfer and diffusion into Lobengula’s kingdom. His plea to the king on Depelchin’s behalf to let the missionaries stay shows this: “Would it not be pleasant.... when your rifle is out of order, when your waggon has broken down, to find among your own people men who would be able to fix them? Well! the new missionaries will teach these trades to your Matabele.”<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, Lobengula was not slow in receiving his reward—a “royal chariot” (wagon) in 1879—and duly paraded it “before the public.” One of Depelchin’s own staff, Brother Hedley, had made the canvas tent, while Father Croonenberghs had painted and decorated it complete with the king’s “coat-of-arms on the front of the waggon—an assegai and a Kerrie, crossed, and surmounted by a magnificent sable crown.” Depelchin

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*: 17

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

and his team had just innovated their way to ‘strong friendship’ status in the king’s eyes.

They were not done yet:

Lately, Brother Nigg also had a great success with Lo Bengula. Learning that the Brother had a sewing machine, the king asked him to come to the palace to show the court how one uses this ingenious mechanism. Brother Nigg set off, carrying his machine: he was taken into the royal drawing room, and placed his machine in the middle of the apartment. The king was seated majestically in an armchair; around him were several indunas and some Europeans; the new queen Kwalila [eldest daughter of Mzila] was also there. Brother Nigg was to sew, in a few minutes, three large satchels of leather for holding [gun]powder. Our skilful worker did his best. Lo Bengula watched him attentively, following and imitating all the movements of his hands and feet. When the task was finished, the Brother presented him with three satchels beautifully made: the king, full of admiration, cried out in Zulu: ‘Ah! these English, these English!’—that is the name which he gives to all white people—‘how clever and intelligent they are, and yet they must die just like other people!’<sup>73</sup>

Such goodwill from European investors lasted only so long as the returns were good.

It is clear from Depelchin’s diary of 16 November 1879 that hunting investment was on the wane in the Ndebele kingdom. Large-scale commerce had “greatly lessened for some time now.” In 1875, the Ndebele kingdom had yielded over 80,000 pounds of elephant tusks, valued here at 6 or 7 shillings a pound. A large quantity of ostrich feathers was also exported. However, in 1879 Depelchin confessed the environmental effects of increased hunting investments:

At the present time it is doubtful if the hunters succeed in collecting 20,000 lbs. of ivory. The elephants are moving further away; the ostriches too; besides the breeding of these birds on farms in the Cape gives heavy competition to the hunters. Fearing, and not without reason, that both elephants and ostriches may disappear entirely, Lo Bengula is thinking of restricting hunting permits: a project which would show quite good administrative powers and which would find its place in the realm of political economy.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*: 29.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*: 25.

There is no doubt that increasingly, more and more of these local—albeit temporary—residents saw their future in another natural resource: gold. This is why so many of them became agents in the intensified search for mineral concessions in the 1880s.

European men that African kings had trusted as friends and investors turned into “point-men” to secure concessions for European firms and governments, leading armies of conquest on the pathways they had traveled in search of ivory. Later, in the 1890s, Selous would place two decades of hunting and exploratory knowledge and experience of the Ndebele and Shona domains and terrain to lead the reconnaissance patrols of the British colonizing force, the Pioneer Column. Millais undertook his journey at a time when Frederick Courtney Selous had just betrayed the king who had tolerated and mentored him into an adult. This episode—the early 1890s—leaves us at the threshold of the next chapter when hunting instruments and prey changed, so that Europeans who had sought ivory with guns now sought prey of a different sort with a new set of instruments.<sup>75</sup>

### **Western Technology in African Cultural Spaces**

***Inscribing.*** The story of European mobile workshops cannot (however one pays meticulous attention to detail) be fully accounted for as a story of foreigners and their encounter with rulers. This is one of the major problems of compartmentalized Marxist historiographies of pre-colonial Africa: it is as if when one takes away the state there is no history. The fixation with the state reduces the Marxist historiography of the 1970s-80s, the most important secondary literature on ‘pre-colonial’ Africa, to narratives of

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<sup>75</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 104, 110.

powerful people. If ordinary people do not matter much in such accounts, what more the materiality of technology and nature!

Because it passed through both places inhabited by the powerful and powerless, the villages and the forests, the pathway forces us to come to terms the presence of not only kings and commoners, but also animals and vegetation. The intermediate spaces between capitals were full of ordinary villagers without whose presence the European journeys were doomed. The traveler's pathway was a journey of Western technology through diverse African cultures which inscribed not only their own subjectivities on the traveler. Because the existence of a footpath or wagon track did not guarantee the traveler a safe journey, what people thought of the itinerant's presence, purpose, and possessions determined their interaction with him. Hence to get to their destinations, the hunters had to tap into the material benefits of such inscriptions. Yet such inscriptions were anything but one-sided.

A co-inscription was taking place. Suddenly the guns in the European traveler's hand could no longer be hermetically sealed in his intentions, let alone the Western cultures that had produced both the weapon and its handler. Even as the rifle or musket was in the white man's hand, it was now open to interpretation, those along the pathway taking it upon them to assign tasks to it.

Never mind what he imagined his presence and significance to be, the European stranger with wagons or porters laden with goods suddenly became an entity at large—subject to inscriptions. Throughout a region exposed for over a millennium to trade with fellow Africans and in recent centuries Arabs, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and now the

British newcomers,<sup>76</sup> all white men were presumed traders until they proved themselves to be Boers. They were provided hospitality in order to soften their demeanor in impending transactions and to politely but emphatically detain them in order to monopolize the products they brought.

So what were the inscriptions? This question matters because the European could in fact be stopped, as local residents plucked from it technologies that advanced their specific social and cultural purposes. The relevance of the traveler depended on the cultural maps locals inscribed upon the technological objects he brought. Without such goods the traveler was just a wanderer few Africans had any interest in hosting.

An examination of the literature shows that villagers in fact put in place hospitality structures to tap into the mobile workshop. A classic example is Fernandes das Neves's arrival with his 253-strong retinue of *maphisa* (professional Tsonga hunters) and *mpfhumba* (professional porters) at the home of Mawewe's powerful 85-year old vassal, Chief Shiluvani, who lived on the Letaba River, not far from Schoemansdal. The Chief's wives and daughters wasted no time assigning huts for the chief's guests. Once settled, he sent Neves and his men a young goat and enough meal to prepare their own food for the night, given their large number. As a trader who knew 'the custom' of reciprocal gift exchange, Neves sent the chief eight pieces of blue cloth, six *capelanas* (a piece of fabric), six bunches of *missanga* (beads), and fifteen strings of blue beads, to the tune of 17.500 reis (£4).<sup>77</sup> These objects were priceless as the Chief's regalia of office, as tribute to the Gaza paramount, and as bride-wealth should the chief and men of the village wish

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<sup>76</sup> See Vansina, "Long-Distance Trade-Routes." For early Chinese contacts with south-east Africa, see Li Anshan, *The History of Chinese Overseas in Africa* (Beijing: Chinese Overseas Publishing House, 2000).

<sup>77</sup> Neves, *A Hunting Expedition to the Transvaal*: 87-8.

to take a wife. In time, these clothing items became the ‘decent dress’ of women of the chiefdom.

Shiluvani knew the character of a trader well. The amount of ‘gifts’ Neves sent him was a signal for more where these few came from and an invitation to more serious exchange. Therefore, the patriarch sent “a female elephant’s tooth” (tusk). As a seasoned trader Neves also knew that the omens were good. In the morning, the two men met at the chief’s house. Neves loosened the tongue with a bottle of brandy (compliments of some of the best wine-makers in Portugal), which Shiluvani handed back to Neves’s second-in-command Manova (a Tsonga like himself) to dispense with “the usual custom” of “*chumbotou*” (tasting the liquor first) to ‘remove witchcraft’.<sup>78</sup>

The bottle of brandy was more than just an intoxicating liquid; rather, it was a signal to the possibility of ‘doing business’, an ice-breaker. Perhaps Neves hoped to make the chief tipsy and gain a negotiating advantage. It did not work. Shiluvani presented a 60 lb. tusk for exchange, but the hard bargaining lasted two hours. As Neves remarked, “the blacks [had] a custom of asking six or eight times the value of ivory,” and negotiating on terms favorable to themselves. On this occasion the merchant shed thirty pieces of blue cloth, five pieces of *carlagani* (Indian cloth), ten *capelanas*, thirty bunches of *missanga*, and fifteen rows of blue beads. The total price of the tusk was 66.000 reis (£15); it would fetch him 86.700 reis (£19)—a gross profit of £4, good return but not as much as he had intended. Meanwhile, information had spread through kinship networks that a white trader was at the chief’s court buying ivory.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*: 90-1.

Through kinship networks, word about the white man and his wares traveled miles, one village of kin linked to the next, and the next. The hunting season (winter from June to October) coincided with a time when locals were performing rituals to cleanse and deliver the spirits of the dead to the afterlife so that they would in their immortality return as ancestral spirits to look after the living. A full month of *ngoma* (drum) dancing and singing involving the youth preceded the actual ceremony.<sup>80</sup>

Africans increasingly began to deploy multiple repertoires of enticement like *ngoma* dance as part of the instruments of providing hospitality for the tourist to loosen the talons on the parcels of trade goods. Neves was treated to a dance at Shiluvani's which his own men joined in. But the most intricate description of this function of the drum, dance, and song is that of Millais in 1893 at the kraal of the Shangane chief, Ndali, along the Lundi River. A group of about forty young men and boys arranged themselves in three long lines, the smallest boys in front. To each foot of the dancers was suspended gourd-shakers with seed inside, which rattled pleasantly as the feet stamped.

And what a dance it was! No hurry about it, no attempt on anybody's part to outshine a fellow-dancer, no music whatever except the voices of the dancers, singing as they went along a monotonous but not unpleasant chant, the burden of which was *Wa-sing-in-da*, the Shangaan word for 'dance', I am told.... For over an hour did these men and boys keep on advancing and retiring, with whirls and twirls innumerable, in the full blaze of the African sun. It was quite a relief when at last they ceased for refreshment, and took it in the shape of snuff, carried by the majority in an empty Martini cartridge case in the left ear, and *da-ha*, the African substitute for opium.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Malipati Fieldwork Notes, Gonarezhou June-August 2001. This sense of *ngoma* is very different from the over-spiritualized version of the drum as a healing instrument and performance that Janzen describes in his highly influential trilogy. For a similar template, see Pamela Reynolds, *Traditional Healers and Childhood in Zimbabwe* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996)

<sup>81</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 162.



Fig. 8 The Use of Drums to Entertain Tourists

Source: Author, Photo of Shangane dancers in Phalaborwa, South Africa, 2006.

Such dances functioned as delaying mechanisms to detain the stranger in the village and bargain with him.

Travelers who stayed around in summer saw a countryside full of “industrious” people with “many acres of ground under cultivation.” While seeing the wearing of European clothing as “the outward signs of civilization,” Selous found Africans on the upper Limpopo to have “large herds of cows and goats.” He observed too that while “they will not give a stranger a drop of milk until he pays for it,” they still expected him “to give them coffee, tobacco, and, indeed, everything in his wagon, *gratis*.<sup>82</sup> Those who lived in game-rich areas could not allow a white man to ‘harvest in their granary’ (that is, to shoot game in the forests) until he exchanged something for it. Agriculturalists did the same with crops: they made sure the European hunter traded venison, elephant lard, sugar, salt, beads, cloth, guns, gunpowder, lead, and so on for their sweet potatoes, cereal, or meal.

<sup>82</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 8.

The literature suggests that the shrewdness of transLimpopo villagers at bargaining was particularly marked among women, the workers and producers of cereals and other products most critical to the European's mobile workshop. This is so because they bore the brunt of the labor of sowing, weeding and harvesting. Men usually did not go beyond clearing fields. Millais remarked about the African woman's bargaining prowess: "If a native woman goes away swearing at you and your injustice, you may be sure you have made a fair and honest deal with her, but if she leaves quickly without resorting to strong language, you may be equally sure she has done you."<sup>83</sup>

### **Human Compasses**

African technology was itself not immune to inscription by European travelers. As he traversed through the lands of the Shona in 1866, Karl Mauch "passed several pits dug into quartz" and "suspected that the former inhabitants of the country had dug for metal there." Upon going to the place, he "*discovered gold!*"<sup>84</sup> The news "caused a big sensation" in Natal, the Transvaal, and Cape Colony. Whites of all nationalities scurried for picks, shovels and wagons, and "rushed" to stake mineral concessions.

One of the most conspicuous moments of African powerlessness and subalternities—chores they did when the party encamped for the night—also turns out to be performances of agency. Indeed, Mauch was not alone in calling his African staff "servants," and then expressing frustrations at his powerlessness over their unauthorized actions when their presence and labor mattered to him, but not to them. While they served him lunch, supper and tea on trek, and "scour[ed] the used vessels and...

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<sup>83</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 158-60; Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 150.

<sup>84</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 22.

replace[d] them in their proper place in the wagon,”<sup>85</sup> but only in so far as they were honoring their unwritten contract in exchange for pay.

Apart from tapping into the European’s mobile workshop through their political sovereignty over the land and the pathways, Africans also deployed their elastic wildlife-related knowledges and instruments to prosper from the itinerant’s guns. Africans had long been exposed to paid labor. By the eighteenth century, the Tsonga had already become reliable carriers and commercial hunters in their own right. After the Gaza had displaced them from southern Mozambique, the Tsonga began contracting themselves as *maphisa* and *mpfhumba* to Portuguese *banyan*.<sup>86</sup> In order to perform the hunt Neves had contracted them to do, the *maphisa* first and foremost went before a *gagao* (spiritual healer) to seek ancestral spiritual therapy, protection, and guidance on the pathways. After throwing his bones, he anointed the hunters so as to purify and cure them of any illnesses or misfortunes (*bafo*), meanwhile intoning the men’s ancestors to protect them in their wanderings. The *gagao* then handed down a set of taboos they were to follow, otherwise their gun-barrels would be ‘closed’.<sup>87</sup> We can see how these men performed Neves’s assignment through their own cultural ethics, even as they took commands from their employer. To these hunters, European technology *per se* was virtually useless unless it had spiritual blessings from the dead—the custodians of the forests and the users of technology.

As a phenomenon, however, the *maphisa-mpfhumba* tradition of entrepreneurship was not generic to Lourenco Marques. Griqua slaves did the same on the Hunters Road when the English displaced them from the Cape littoral in the 1820s-30s. When their

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 145.

<sup>86</sup> Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*.

<sup>87</sup> Neves, *A Hunting Expedition to the Transvaal*: 11-18.

European masters sent them to raid African neighbors, some rode off to freedom on horseback with ‘their’ guns. Once on the upper Limpopo they harassed Mzilikazi at will.<sup>88</sup> The Venda *swart skuts* (black shots) went further: they rode off from their Boer slavers and once with their people, shut the Boers off from the elephant hunting grounds north of the Limpopo.<sup>89</sup>

In hunting terms, Selous was a ‘nobody’ when he arrived in the Ndebele kingdom, and owed his mentorship in elephant hunting to a Nama-speaking hunter named ‘Cigar’.<sup>90</sup> This man was an independent hunter employing his own 2-man African staff, who “carried their own guns and a supply of ammunition.” ‘Cigar’—who could well have received that name from Europeans remarking on his smoking befitting a ‘modern’ African—armed himself with a heavy old six-bore muzzle-loader. Selous’s respect of ‘Cigar’ as a professional is total: “For foot hunting in the ‘fly’ country, one could not wish for a more skilful or a kinder preceptor.... I have never since seen his equal as a foot hunter.”<sup>91</sup>

Parker Gillmore’s mobile workshop owed its success to skilful Zulu and Pedi hunters who were “such acute observers of animal life that they do not hesitate to pronounce what state of mind a beast may be in.”<sup>92</sup> This is not an exaggeration. Writing in *NADA* in 1948, D.C.H. Parkhurst chronicled the Shona beliefs about elephants as follows:

There are two kinds of bull elephant, the tusker (*goronga*) and the tuskless (*muvi*), but the tusker comes off second best in an argument with the tuskless one which is stronger, speedier, with a quick temper and plenty of

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<sup>88</sup> Atmore, Chirenje, and Mudenge, “Firearms in South Central Africa”: 545.

<sup>89</sup> Wagner, “Zoutpansberg”: 324.

<sup>90</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 111, 120.

<sup>91</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 38, 41, 51.

<sup>92</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 7, 21.

courage. He is a cantankerous fellow and will belabour the tusker with his trunk (*chitamba, murowo*), or with sapling or log. He leads the herd and sires the cows although the tusker will try to lure a cow from the herd during mating time.

No one doubts the intuitive powers of the elephant for, instead of having wisdom teeth, it possesses four wisdom sticks (*mingano*), each about half the size of a matchstick, which are located in pairs on either side of the temple under the skin. The youngsters have a single stick in either temple. These wisdom sticks enable them to perceive by intuition the time of their death. The sticks are coveted by hunters who upon killing an elephant must butt its temple with the gun otherwise the sticks have a knack of disappearing. Power to forecast the results of future elephant hunts lies in these sticks. They should be ground to powder, boiled with certain herbs and lion fat and swallowed. This induces dreams of elephant. If the hunter dreams that he has killed an elephant he will set out in a day or two confident of success.

Why does it so often happen that the large tusker is found alone? Because it has been driven from the herd knowing full well that its fatal day draws near; but for this it would remain with the main herd with some degree of safety, concealing its head in the intense vegetation lest its coveted tusks be seen by the hunter. If a bull is to be shot in the main herd the herd knows who the victim will be for they realize intuitively that they are being followed and they will kick up the earth to divine which of them must lose its life.

If on the spoor of a wounded elephant the hunter comes to a hole having a log across it, he will wisely stop tracking, for this is the elephant's warning.

A hunter who sets out on a hunt with grief in his heart will wound but not kill. If he meets an elephant with trunk curled about its head he will know that some tragedy has befallen his family since he left home. Should he see an elephant flinging earth over its back he will know that his wife is bathing which she is not supposed to do during her husband's absence on a hunt for elephant.

The tuskless elephant and the cows with calves will charge and kill those guilty of adultery unless they immediately confess their guilt to the elephant. No hunter will allow companions to accompany him without first ascertaining whether any has been guilty of adulterous behaviour. The hunter alone must announce to the elephant the guilty person's presence and name before he fires.<sup>93</sup>

What the European hunter saw, therefore, was the observance of these beliefs and practices in action; he became a beneficiary of such knowledge.

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<sup>93</sup> D.C.H. Parkhurst, "Beliefs about the Elephant (as Told to and Contributed)," *NADA* 25 (1948): 49.

Nowhere in these accounts is the African sovereignty over the knowledge of the spoor acknowledged in such minute detail as Gillmore offers: the tracker found the animal's tracks, kept them alive, and produced targets for his white employer to shoot at. One experienced Pedi hunter Gillmore engaged "led the way, and at such a pace that it seemed a marvel how he could so rapidly get over the ground and yet correctly follow the trail" without breaking speed. When Gillmore "order[ed] a halt" to get some air and drink water, the tracker was "busy searching for spoor." When the animals went through dense, thorny bush, the tracker followed through it or close enough near the point of entry, lest he lost the spoor. When pricked by thorns the tracker would "take it as a matter of course. Is this not stoicism worthy of a Spartan?" Gillmore wondered, more out of admiration of the skills than the obedience to his commands.<sup>94</sup>

In acknowledging the role of African hunting traditions in his own mobile workshop to collect samples in the heart of Gonarezhou in 1893, Millais rejected the then popular notion of "*the noble art of spooring.*" He called it "*a science*" better left to the "black companion" who possessed the "practical knowledge."<sup>95</sup> Gillmore's characterization points in a similar direction. He refused to agree that the "true measure" of African hunting skills was 'shooting straight' as Selous had suggested, but producing the shooting opportunity to begin with. Selous had been astounded at "what bad shooting [African hunters] made; their bullets kept continually striking up the ground all round the elephants, sometimes in front of their trunks."<sup>96</sup> Yet Gillmore observed that most black hunters "never fired at a beast at a distance of over ten or twelve yards, and accordingly made sure of [their] shot every time." Hlengwe hunters told Millais as much in 1893:

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<sup>94</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 25, 35, 37.

<sup>95</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 117.

<sup>96</sup> Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa*: 86.

hunting on their own, they used their bravery, endurance, and stealthy encroachment skills to creep close enough to make every shot count. But now the white employer always ordered them to shoot from afar. They missed. It was his fault, not theirs.<sup>97</sup>

The sovereignty over the spoor that Africans exhibit in Gillmore's account, and the lack thereof during the actual shooting in Selous's, says something about the chase as a space where gun use was (re)designed. Why so? The answer lies in the long exposure of African societies to guns before and during the encounters we are following. Men in societies riparian to the Limpopo from its source to its mouth had in the 1840s-60s trekked south to the Natal sugar plantations and Kimberley diamond fields respectively to work in exchange for payment in muskets. Patriarchal imperatives of village life drove men to these temporary chores. Guns increasingly substituted for the *tsvimbō* (knobkerrie) a deceased father left for his eldest son to take over the duties of heading the family. They were also an alternative to cattle as bride-wealth.<sup>98</sup>

In the course of trying to enhance a technology's efficacy, and as some guns broke or ran out of scarce spares and ammunition, some *re-innovation* and *renovation* of the technological artifacts themselves occurred.<sup>99</sup> In her article in 1981, Candice Goucher argued that the influx of firearms in West Africa and problems associated with them was an occasion for ironsmiths to expand their indigenous repertoire to gun-repairing and bullet-making.<sup>100</sup> In the Zambezi valley, T.I. Matthews showed how Shona and Tonga ironsmiths mixed the niter they mined locally with the ash of a sulfurous tree to make

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<sup>97</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 118-9.

<sup>98</sup> Atmore, Chirenje, and Mudenge, "Firearms": 553.

<sup>99</sup> I owe my refinement of this argument to conversations with Bryan Pfaffenberger at the Society for the History of Technology Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Minneapolis, 5 November 2005.

<sup>100</sup> Candice L. Goucher, "Iron is Iron 'Til it is Rust: Trade and Ecology in the Decline of West African Iron-Smelting," *Journal of African History* 22, 2 (1981): 179-189.

*unga* (gunpowder). They also produced flints and reworked hoe and axe blades into *nyere* (iron bullets) which were re-usable. In going beyond repairing to actually attempting to manufacture *pfuti* (guns) with “varying degrees of success,”<sup>101</sup> one could argue that indigenous metallurgists turned the corner from ironsmiths to gunsmiths.<sup>102</sup>

Gunpowder-making was a rather widespread practice among Shona ironsmiths that had started as a result of exposure to European firearms. According to oral traditions that C.S. Davies collected and recorded in *NADA*, the formula for gunpowder-making was as follows:

Collect earth from the rocky caves where the rock-rabbits [dassies] live. The earth must be taken from the sites where the rain does not penetrate. The white substance deposited on the rocks where the rock-rabbits urinate can also be scrapped off. This earth is now dissolved in water and the water boiled until most of it has evaporated. The remaining liquid is now strained as in the making of salt and the residue of earth is left in the upper pot. The lower receptacles are set aside until the water evaporates and leaves white crystals. Charcoal is now made by burning the wood of the *mindura* tree, and is ground up fine. The saltpetre is now mixed with this and water into a stiff paste and the resulting mixture is gunpowder.

As much as can be held in the palm of the hand is sufficient charge for a muzzle loader. The usual charge is ‘four fingers’, which is the additional length which the ramrod now protrudes. The bullet is tramped down with chewed bark or rags.

Another source of saltpetre is to dig the earth from the bare patches in the veld where no grass grows. These places are called *gokora*. The earth is dissolved in water and treated as in the method described.<sup>103</sup> The important question is: how do we explain the African logic of making gunpowder from dassie droppings? M.G. Nearn, former chief geologist to the Ookiep Copper Co. Ltd in Namaqualand, noted in 1949:

Dassie colonies... are apparently in the habit of selecting a particular spot to which all or most of the members repair for the purpose of urinating.

<sup>101</sup> T. I. Matthews, “Portuguese, Chikunda, and Peoples of the Gwembe Valley: The Impact of the ‘Lower Zambezi Complex’ on Southern Zambia,” *The Journal of African History* 22, 1 (1981): 23-41.

<sup>102</sup> David N. Beach, “The Rising in South-West Mashonaland, 1896-7” (University of London: PhD Thesis, 1971); H. Stayt, *The Ba Venda*: 74.

<sup>103</sup> C. Davies, “Odds and Ends: Things Observed and Things Heard Round the Fire,” *NADA* 17 (1940): 27.

The dassie, especially in this very arid area, appears to be able survive with very little moisture, and has adapted itself to discharge only a minimum amount of highly concentrated urine. The result is the formation at the selected spots of deposits of a dark-brown, gluey substance.... It is, by reason of its content of herbal extracts, supposed to be of some medicinal value....<sup>104</sup>

These gunpowder stories illustrate not only the indigenous capacities to make explosives, but also how the influx of western products stimulated the innovative capacities of local inhabitants.

This interlocking of gun technology brought together one innovative system (local ironsmiths) with the products of the distant other (overseas foundries). At the point where the European stopped over in the village or hunted with villagers, his workshop—its instruments—became vulnerable to inscription by local designer environments. Simultaneously, the European also inscribed meanings and uses into locally-designed technologies to augment his toolkit. Selous's lively description of a particularly novel way of killing an elephant among the Shona is very clear on this:

A cool and skilful man, armed with a very broad-bladed axe, made for the purpose, with a sharp rough edge, creeps up behind a sleeping elephant and delivers a blow with all his force on the back of the hind foot, about a foot above the ground, endeavoring to sever the tendon Achilles. If this is accomplished the poor animal remains where he stands, almost incapable of movement, *a touching illustration of the triumph of mind over matter.*<sup>105</sup> (my emphasis)

Alternatively, they stabbed the elephant from trees using purpose-designed heavy spears with blades 2 ½ ft. long by 2 ½ ft. broad, which had short but heavy 2-3 inch thick shafts. Instead of drawing blood with spears and ‘hand-power’, they also delegated the killing to 10 ft. deep pits dug along riverbanks, with spikes at the bottom laced with herbal or snake poisons. When Africans revealed this technology to Selous, he adopted it into his hunting toolkit. With it, he could kill simultaneously and remotely by delegating killing power to

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<sup>104</sup> M.G. Nearn, “Dassie Medicine,” *African Wild Life* 1, 3 (1949): 83.

<sup>105</sup> Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*: 48.

locally available and renewable resources, allowing him to continue on a spoor somewhere else with a rifle.<sup>106</sup> He could now kill—and as a hunter ‘be’—in multiple places at once because of the materiality of the technology itself.

In an *African Wild Life* article in 1970, A.D. Thomas and F.F. Kolbe went so far as to call the trap or snare “the first automatic device.” It was “a well-planned, diligently applied contrivance” to kill, disable or catch an animal “by automatic action when there is nobody around.”<sup>107</sup> While the gun delegated killing power to the bullet through the trigger-pull, the firer would still have to be present to set the chain reaction with his finger. By contrast, the African hunter delegated killing instructions to the snare and once he set it in a killing position, he could move on to hunt other prey. We saw in Chapter 1 the transformation of guns into snares that could kill by remote control.

Africans exercised sovereignty not only over killing devices but the hunting techniques appropriate to the landscape. We have already outlined the general routes into the interior and showed how tsetse fly determined where Europeans could go and the modes of transport they could use. The European traveler had no choice but to adopt and adapt indigenous transport technology to even start off for the interior and back. The European became the user of technologies and services Africans designed, even if he then employed these same Africans in subaltern roles on the mobile workshop. In short, while the European exercised sovereignty over the journey, Africans exercised sovereignty over knowledge critical to rendering this journey mobile or immobile, productive or barren. Between 1870 and 1895, trains from Cape Town or Natal went only up to Johannesburg. From there, the traveler to the hunting grounds of the far interior walked, rode a horse, or

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<sup>106</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 117, 113, 126, 211.

<sup>107</sup> A. Thomas and F. Kolbe, “African Hunting and Trapping Methods,” *African Wild Life* 24, 1 (1970): 49.

hitched a wagon. On the Hunters Road, a hunter normally used a tent-wagon for sleeping and storage, and a buck wagon for carting carcasses, ivory, and heavy loads of 6.000 lb. plus. A dozen oxen pulled each tent wagon, but the buck wagon needed sixteen, all moving at a speed of 3 miles an hour or less.<sup>108</sup> In the sweltering heat, no European could travel from Cape Town to Bulawayo shouting himself hoarse and crackling the whip at the trudging draught oxen. Here, African men dug their fingers into their indigenous animal-handling skills and their endurance at walking long distances and emerged with new paid work for themselves as wagon-drivers, outriders, and carriers.

Nature was kind to African initiative. A good, well-trained horse was indispensable for the sportsman, but useless in the tsetse- or horse-sickness prone areas unless ‘salted’—that is, exposed to the bug to gain natural immunity. For tsetse country, donkeys were the only draught animals with any chance of survival. But as Millais noticed, when towing a wagon they were a real nightmare for drivers:

In a team a bad moke is worse than useless, for he gives all the work to some good beast that would pull itself to death rather than be beaten, and in a bad country where you are always getting hung up, even a good donkey fastened to a wagon is almost as great a nuisance; for when your fore-wheel catches the stem of a tree the good donkey, instead of stopping, as a lazy one would, begins to pull like mad, to the imminent danger of your wagon, and this entails no end of work on your part to avoid a smash, for, unlike oxen and horses, donkeys are not readily trained to stop at a word of command.<sup>109</sup>

No matter how good a horse or ox wagons one had, it required a good driver to ‘work them’.

If Africans were not driving the oxen or guiding them to carry ‘the white man’s burden’, they were ‘the beasts of burden’ themselves. Yet as Mauch found out, Africans exercised their prerogative to be ‘paid beasts of burden’ or to refuse to be so, and if the

<sup>108</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 140-1.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*: 28, 151-2.

remuneration was not to their liking, they used all sorts of resistance until they got their way:

The one [carrier] had not yet prepared his snuff, another had first to consult his prophetic woods, bones, shells, and roots .... The third had to hand over for the duration of his absence the care of his wealth, which consisted of one solitary goat, to his half-brother who lived nearby; a fourth one had begun a love-affair and wanted to present some beads to his beautiful one, as a farewell gift for which, naturally, he had to take recourse to me; my interpreter had promised a lump of lead of a certain size to his friend but had forgotten it at home; furthermore, all of them had not yet eaten or drunk. In these circumstances one has to exert one's patience so as not to assume on one's face the wrong expression and to hold one's hand fully open so as to hand out presents. The people know that I have need of them, that they are indispensable to me.<sup>110</sup>

At long last, with the wage paid in cloth, beads, or gunpowder and left deposited with a wife, a headman, or chief, the carriers left on the caravan. The European walked in the rear "to keep a watchful eye on anyone who, perhaps, would like to escape." Desertions due to tiredness or ill-treatment by the employer were common. African men usually smoked *igwayi* (tobacco and marijuana) to give them energy and *bute* (snuff) for ancestral protection. Along the way, they made the point of stopping among relatives "to smoke and to snuff," drink *ubutywala* (fermented beer), or eat *mangai* (boiled maize grain), *mutakura* (beans) or *sadza* (thick porridge). Through these kinship socializations, African carriers opened up opportunities for their employer to trade.<sup>111</sup>

For Parker Gillmore, Africans of giant stature became chastening rods for 'disciplining troublesome natives' as well as a personal bodyguard. The Englishman employed three Zulu men, 'Sunday', 'Jim' and 'Umpiqua' as bouncers in addition to their tracking duties. He did this because "in fighting and hunting [the Zulu could] not be equaled by any race on the African continent." At exactly the time that Napoleon was

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<sup>110</sup> Mauch, *The Journals of Karl Mauch*: 195.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

conquering Europe to create a giant French empire using guns, Shaka was carving out the Zulu empire and subduing weaker states around him to create it. Hence many Eurocentric observers called him a “Black Napoleon” (to which African commentators reply that Napoleon was a European Shaka).<sup>112</sup> The late-19<sup>th</sup> century Zulu ruler Cetshwayo had maintained this imperial tradition when routing the British on 22 January 1879 at the Battle of Isandlwana. Through these Zulu traditions of themselves and European remembrance of them as ‘the martial race’, ‘Sunday’, ‘Jim’ and ‘Umpqua’ created a curriculum vitae for remunerated service to Gillmore. The English hunter also admired something else. In the wake of their final defeat and assimilation into the British colonial culture at Natal, however, the Zulu had shown their willingness to ‘convert to the civilized way of life’, unlike the Native American:

Zulus can be and are elevated by association with the better classes of Anglo-Saxons.... The Zulu when properly treated will become a faithful, reliable, and happy servant, the red man [Native American] never. The one willingly accepts the superiority of the European, the Indian never does so.<sup>113</sup>

We must adjourn Gillmore’s narrative to the last section since it constitutes an important discussion on the ultimate goal of the mobile workshop: to produce a carcass with all its multiple ‘trophies’.

### **Conclusion: Upon Skinning the Carcass.... Many Trophies**

In the end, the success or failure of the hunt was measured according whether it produced a carcass or not. Earlier we saw the ways in which nature itself determined whether a gun was fired and struck its target or not. We mapped two hunting routes into the interior and saw how Africans became important factors in giving the European expedition is

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<sup>112</sup> These are the lyrics of the South African music legend Miriam Makeba’s song *UShaka*.

<sup>113</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 92-3.

momentum, on the one hand, and how African villagers stopped the European in order to harvest from him commodities useful to them, on the other. We further saw African hunters deploying their indigenous repertoires to facilitate the production of the carcass through tracking. All these were prenuptials to a *coup de grace*: the falling carcass. This is where this Chapter must end. Here there are two sites to focus on.

First, *camps* could be made where and when the carcass fell. The camp in the forests was not just the ultimate fulfillment of the hunt but also a fuel station providing energy for the journey ahead. Upon refueling, white travelers expected their ‘human machine’ (African carriers, wagon-drivers, and hunters) to perform their tasks with renewed energy.<sup>114</sup> On the Hunters Road, the campers usually comprised the hunter, his drivers, and outriders. In the tsetse-infested Limpopo corridor, it was often the *banyan*, the *maphisa*, and/or the *mpfhumba*.

The Boer camp was different: a man hunted with his wife and entire family. Children were born, grew up, engaged in courtship, and even died and were buried on the trek: the Boer trek was a mobile homestead. In Millais’s depictions of the camp we see Roelef’s infant son trying to make sense of the forest through the toys he played with. Young Cornelius van Staden was “a charming illustration of the funny little ways of Dutch child life on trek, and of the development even at this early age of his father’s passion for sport”:

One of his favourite amusements was to collect the dead khoorhans and partridges together in the shade beneath the wagon and play with them by the hour together, harnessing them with strings in the form of a span of oxen, and himself sitting on a big stone in place of a wagon, he would drive with his hippopotamus whip. His language on such occasions was rather in advance of his age, for, in imitation of the [Nama] and Zulu boys, he swore vigorously at his oxen, calling each of them by name, and

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<sup>114</sup> For example, Neves, *A Hunting Expedition to the Transvaal*: 237-8.

belabouring mercilessly the hindmost one because it was called, of course, ‘Englishman’. This entertainment he varied at times by a pantomimic performance of his father’s escape from the buffalo bull, with its surrounding incidents.... Little Cornelius still makes the point of paying me a visit at the mid-day outspan, generally bringing with him some dead creature, more or less decomposed, which he hugs affectionately under his arm.<sup>115</sup>

The narrative brings to life the performance of fatherhood, motherhood, husband-hood and wife-hood on the march. When the men returned from the hunt, ‘Tante’ (‘Aunty’, as Millais called Roelef’s wife) “got some of her delicious coffee ready,” and prepared supper and bedding for the men. Trekking during the Anglo-Ndebele war, Roelef and Millais would leave Tante at a ‘stand place’ (base camp), and Millais remarks that she was typical of Boer women “who on thousands of occasions have bravely followed the fortunes of their husbands.” As Millais admitted, “among these people particularly the women, there has always been that indomitable spirit of self-reliance which... calls for the admiration of the world.”<sup>116</sup>

The second site is the carcass, the measure of a mobile workshop’s failure or success. Normally when an animal was felled, an overnight camp was established in the vicinity, attracting local inhabitants, and engorging the forest and village mobile workshops into each other. The villagers used the passing ‘killing machine’ (armed passers-by) as mechanisms for harvesting forest resources more easily and quicker. The traveler’s guns were swifter extractive tools for acquiring meat than arrows; villagers knew where game was. Exchange was possible.<sup>117</sup>

Even when hunting alone out in the dark forests, the gunshot betrayed the hunter’s whereabouts to all sorts of uninvited guests. By the time the shooter arrived at the

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<sup>115</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 70.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*: 112.

<sup>117</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 155, 233.

carcass, he found the villagers busy skinning, cutting, and claiming ownership over the meat.<sup>118</sup> At the site of the carcass, two more uninvited guests rarely failed to turn up. One was the vulture. Writing in *Allan Quatermain*, H. Rider Haggard marveled at the extraordinary speed with which these “great and repulsive birds” beat the hunter to his own kill. They spent hours in space, each responsible for and monitoring its own space, and upon locating ‘suspicious movement’, each flew down to take a closer look, the others—observing the descending sentry—following suit. “In this way the vultures for twenty miles round can be summoned to the feast in a few minutes.”<sup>119</sup> Another of the gatecrashers was the hyena, the undertaker who often came rather late to the party and had the onus of ‘cleaning the dishes’, wiping the bones of all flesh before breaking some.

Meat was just one product of the carcass; often it was just a by-product in the extraction of ivory and hides. Boer trekkers made a variety of leather products like shoes, washers for wagon axles, and thongs (*tambo*) for spanning oxen. Hide-making kept wagon-work alive. The hide was cut into strips and hung onto a strong tree branch with a heavy weight tied to the bottom. Using a stick, the strips were twisted round and round tightly. Then the stick was pulled out suddenly, and the strips unwound with great speed. As the strips were almost stopping the stick was twisted in again, and wound up. The process went on for three days, grease being applied until “a strip of hide as strong as wire rope and as soft and supple as a piece of velvet” was produced.<sup>120</sup> This knowledge, locals claim, was initially imparted to Boer hunters by African hunters and villagers during late-19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century encounters. Many such hunters had been mentored by

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<sup>118</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 76.

<sup>119</sup> Cited by Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 84.

<sup>120</sup> Gillmore, *Through Gasa Land*: 102.

Africans—men like Roelef van Staden. This is how Afrikaners acquired the mastery over nature they exhibit to the present at the exclusion of African villagers.<sup>121</sup>

In some societies, the villagers used blood for spiritual cleansing and thanksgiving to ancestors, especially if the carcass was the first big kill of the season. Bathing in blood was also believed to give warriors and hunters—men generally—bravery, just as rubbing one’s body with python lard was believed to draw fear from those one interacted with.<sup>122</sup> The role of women “in cleaning and sewing the skins” was well known in many African societies.<sup>123</sup> They secured large quantities of lard, particularly from elephant (which was more or less white, ever-soft, and manageable like that of sheep-tail) for ‘cooking oil’, ‘butter’, and lotion.<sup>124</sup>

Just as *the trophy* might be a (product of a) carcass, it was also what was painted, drawn, or written of the carcass, the live animals, and the wildlife habitat (landscape). Usually, after the hunt or on an off-day at the campsite, the hunter would sketch, skin, and preserve an animal’s head. Millais found taking a trophy with pencil and paper “a far less agreeable task” different from sitting in the studio with pencil or brush in hand. Drawing the scene of a lion mauling a wildebeest or an elephant charging was not just about “making a nice picture at the expense of truth.” It was for him much more than the “theatrical,” “sensational,” and “conventional” pictures of “lions, buffaloes, and elephants in a chronic state of charge.”<sup>125</sup> The drawing had to encapsulate the knowledge produced at the interstices of co-production, a knowledge that was usable beyond himself.

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<sup>121</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Malipati Fieldwork Notes, Malipati Business Center, 11 July 2001.

<sup>122</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 106.

<sup>123</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 14.

<sup>124</sup> Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter*: 112.

<sup>125</sup> Millais, *A Breath from the Veldt*: 96, 119-21.

As the next chapter illustrates, it was the knowledge acquired through the camp and the carcass that would form the basis for the colonization, first of nature (as Boers did during mobile workshops and at technological junctions), and then of political sovereignty itself. Mauch's maps would form the basis of concessions European states and chartered companies came to negotiate in the 1880s in order to monopolize the exploitation of the new ivory: gold. Fernandes das Neves's journey would achieve its purpose of installing Mzila as Gaza king, paving the way for an ascendancy of *banyan* power that would result in the Portuguese conquest of Gaza domains. Using the wealth of information and knowledge Selous had gathered in his wanderings, and led by him, the British would spring an invasion from the west in 1890 and converge with the Portuguese on the hunting grounds of Gonarezhou. One could say that the colonization of the transLimpopo region was a direct, if unintended consequence of the European mobile workshops. It was like skinning a carcass and finding many trophies.

## **Chapter 3 Weapons of Mass Acquisition**

In the last chapter, I examined the role of mobility and technology in enabling the interactions between European hunters and villagers in the transLimpopo environment in the 1850s-80s. As we saw, the success of the itinerant's workshop depended on his ability to negotiate with the mobile workshop of the village—inclusive of forests, fields, pastures, and so on. In turn, villagers intercepted, tapped into, and facilitated these journeys to address their own needs. This is not to say there were no outright winners and losers, but to point to the negotiation of two kinds of power. One was African sovereignty over the land in which the wildlife resources that the European hunters and traders sought were located. The other was the European mobile workshop's possession of guns which imbued their users with the power to decide what may live and what should die.<sup>1</sup> I refer to such technologies of killing or sparing life as *necrotechnology* as a way of calling attention to the material properties of the killing instruments themselves, not just people who use them.

Sovereignty was not just political. In Chapter 1 we saw the sovereignty of the ancestral spirits over the forest, safeguarded through *miko* or taboos (specifically things

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<sup>1</sup> Achille Mbembe, "Necropower," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.

that could not be done or that must be done)<sup>2</sup>; in Chapter 2 we saw how these taboos policed the latitudes within which African trackers in the European mobile workshop could enable or undermine production-on-the-move. Sovereignty also meant the self-confidence to innovate, including the ability to tap into the European mobile workshops for new repertoires and superlatives of modernity.

So what happened when these forms of sovereignty were lost? When a technological junction did not take place in ways that benefited both European hunters and African villagers as we saw in Chapter 2, when situations of disjunction rather than conjunction occurred? When the European mobile workshop came not to exchange but to take over the sovereignty of Africans over their land? What happened when instead of hunting on the land, they came to hunt the land and the people who owned the land? When partners became pests and people the ivory itself?

This chapter considers this transformation of the hunt from looking for “white ivory” (elephant tusks) to “black ivory” (black slaves and later cheap, often forced labor). The story does not end merely with being transformed into commodities and forced labor but also how enslaved or sold bodies extended the knowledge traditions they had used to hunt in the forest not merely to survive the harsh treatment of slavery (physical and psychological assault) but also to make the best of, and even move out of, or invert their subaltern status into self-emancipation. This in no way trivializes the excruciating pain of being a slave, but I insist that we should not underestimate the sense of initiative either.

At the same time, the European hunters that we saw traveling along and away from the pathways of the southern African savannah, with its protocols borne of nature

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<sup>2</sup> I insist on ‘taboo’ as defined in the Shona vernacular because it captures well the ‘dos-and-don’ts’ governing entry into and practices within the forest.

and human discipline are apprehended in this chapter in the act of overturning such African power. How this happened becomes my starting point, the main attention being on the Anglo-Portuguese assault on Ngungunyane's domains. Gold being rather minuscule, the evidence suggests that the Portuguese in particular were more interested in parcelling out his lands to mine another profitable commodity: black ivory. The king, his family, his people, and lands became the new prey, a commodity to satisfy the appetite of the Rand gold mines.

The new hunt demanded new weapons. The ground rules for the new hunt, the new sportsmanship, had been agreed when the major hunters of colonies had met at the Berlin Colonial Conference in 1884-5. Thereafter any power that wished to colonize a piece of land in Africa, never mind how little, would have to present evidence of 'the natives' agreeing to the European presence. There was only one admissible form of evidence: the treaty or concession with signatures of the African rulers concerned. If 'the natives' later dishonored their word and signature, they deserved to be removed through force of arms.<sup>3</sup>

The concession became an important weapon for hunting and securing "the land itself." 1886 was a defining moment. White prospectors discovered gold in Gauteng (the Boers called it Witwatersrand), triggering a ferocious gold rush from all over the world. Just standing on the reef, and retracing to that year, the historian is able to draw a map of the world, watching the prospectors arriving on ox-wagons from the ports of Delagoa Bay, Durban, and Cape Town, having disembarked from ships coming from lands afar. The concession acquired a golden touch; it was the weapon with which European powers

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<sup>3</sup> Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Edward Robinson, *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

imagined a French, Portuguese, German, and Belgian ‘Rand’ as within the realms of possibility. Like any other portable weapon (such as firearms) it could be traded as a commodity. While guns secured the carcass through spilling blood, the concession killed African sovereignty through carefully chosen and legalistic words. It was an unorthodox weapon that meant different things to its European and African signatories; it killed African sovereignty through subterfuge.

That is precisely why kings signed the concessions without any clue of the intent of those asking for them. Thinking that they were still in the days of Mzilikazi and Old Sechele when the European came as an occasional visitor and an investor of immediate return, African kings put an “X” to paper that took away their power. Oblivious to the rising caprices of Europeans after 1886, the African kings deployed the concession as they had always done with verbal permits to European hunters: to let the temporary investor exploit land resources for a period and then leave. That meant the same hunting grounds could be leased to many successive hunters, not just one permanent concessionaire.

Erstwhile guests, who came as partners and operating under African sovereignties, now subjected these same rulers to subalternity—if they even spared their lives at all. This chapter will get us on the threshold of the question: What happened to their former ‘subjects’, human and nonhuman?

### **The Hunt for Concessions**

While African men were journeying southward towards the coast in search of work, Europeans were fanning out from the coast into the countryside to hunt for white ivory,

black ivory, gold, and then concessions from African rulers. These reverse hunting grounds represent a complex interaction between the mine and the village. In the last chapter we followed European individuals going into the interior in search of ivory, converts, and geographic knowledge. These explorations alerted Europeans to the possibilities of the interior as new sites of production. Unlike the Boers who hunted black and white ivory in equal measure, the British and Portuguese busied themselves with securing land for gold and labor to work it.

By 1870, British exploration of the potentialities of the Limpopo as a navigable international trade highway was well advanced more through the work of individual Britons acting in their own capacity or that of companies than the state. In 1868-9, St. Vincent Erskine had undertaken a personal journey of exploration along the Limpopo from its middle basin to the Indian Ocean. He found its mouth “difficult of entry,” its navigable stretch being just 60 miles. A tug-steamer could sail back and forth, taking the wool and mineral ore from the Transvaal to Lourenco Marques. The British navy had all the while patrolled the Mozambique coastline but showed no interest in the Limpopo.<sup>4</sup>

The survey of navigable rivers involved arduous traversal on foot to produce maps useful for future river commerce and gunboat patrols to stamp colonial sovereignty. In August 1870, the British military officer Captain Frederick Elton followed the Limpopo from source to mouth and found it “quite practicable to use … as a way of water communication, [the] cargoes being towed in flats by steamers with a light draught of water.” Elton followed the banks and bed of the river “for almost the entire distance, and did not observe any obstacles, neither [was] the main channel interrupted by shallows.” The only problem was that the river had a tendency to veer occasionally from

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<sup>4</sup> Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila”: 119.

one bank to the next, the bends and headlands diverting the main body of water in a new direction at each turn. The south bank of the Limpopo presented possibilities for cutting a road leading from a future agricultural and mining enterprise north of the river. Between the Pafuri and Lephalale, wild cotton grew “luxuriantly,” large timber bordered the river, and village crops “yielded abundantly” from the rich alluvium.<sup>5</sup>

Elton was seeing the terrain like a future colonial state,<sup>6</sup> which was exactly his mission as an army officer. The transLimpopo basin would, “if colonized by Europeans, rapidly become a fertile and important centre, monopolizing a considerable trade with the interior.” Elton concluded that such a step would enable the British to monopolize the ivory traffic with Mzila. Furthermore, the Transvaal would be linked to the sea and Gaza territory via two routes—one through Pafuri and Zoutpansberg, another via the Lephalale.”<sup>7</sup>

The land was good, but ‘bad nature’ was in the way. Elton remarked that the fertile and potentially mineral-rich areas of the transLimpopo were not in “healthy land” where Europeans might live permanently unless they controlled or eradicated the pests. Mosquito- and tsetse fly-infested spaces were deemed not worthy of white occupation. Fever (malaria) discouraged any sustained settlement or expedition within the Lowveld in summer when it attacked a person as frequently as every fifteen days. Antidotes like Calomel, Dover’s powder, emetics and quinine did nothing to persuade many Europeans to take the risk.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Frederick Elton, “Journal of an Exploration of the Limpopo River,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 42 (1872): 24-5.

<sup>6</sup> James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998)

<sup>7</sup> Elton, “Journal of an Exploration of the Limpopo River”: 24-5.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: 17; Erskine, “A Journey to Umzila”: 119.

Just like the Limpopo, European explorers saw the Save valley as a land primed for commerce. It was a fertile country full of potential for growing sugar and coffee for export via the port of Cheluana. Entertained by Mzila as a guest, investor and ally in 1872-5, Erskine was busy conjuring pyramid schemes for conquering the land, pegging away in his mind's eye huge land grants for his fellow Europeans. Crossing the Save, the land was "a dead level," no more than 300 ft. above sea level, bushy in places, and "magnificent forests of timber" for large tracts ahead. From a village called Mazimbe on the headwaters of the Chepfu all the way to the Limpopo, forest gave way to "enormous crops" which "testified to the richness of the soil." So long as the rains were good, hunger was not an issue; in a poor season no country could be more barren. The ocean, the ports, the rivers, the footpaths—all would offer different modes of transport to turn occupation into finance capital.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1880s, two more Englishmen concluded exploratory activities along the Save and Limpopo. In 1881, Captain T.L. Phipson-Wybrants, surveyed the Save using a steamer, but found the river to be too shallow, sandy, and unnavigable even with a light craft.<sup>10</sup> He did not see what Erskine had imagined. Three years later, Captain George Albert Chaddock traversed the length of the Limpopo and concluded that the river was navigable and capable of supporting a vibrant commercial enterprise. In 1890 he handed this information to the BSA Company in the hope that it might prefer sailing rather than marching to conquer the Shona and render him a useful paid agent. Chaddock suggested that the BSA Company and the Transvaal Republic establish a joint shipping venture on the Limpopo. Rhodes seemed keen, but the Transvaal was not interested. The Company

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<sup>9</sup> Erskine, "A Journey to Umzila": 124, 127-8.

<sup>10</sup> "The Delta and Lower Course of the Sabi River, According to the Survey of the Late Captain T.L. Phipson-Wybrants," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* V (May 1883): 271-4.

took up the matter “actively and determinedly,” dispatching his envoy, Dr. Aurel Schulz (MD) to “establish relations of some kind with Ngungunyane, since this was Gaza territory.”<sup>11</sup>

The whole matter crumbled because of the Limpopo’s navigability problems. Schulz was representing not just the Company but the British Government. He returned with an appetizing offer for the Gaza king: guns and money. On 4 October 1890, he secured a verbal concession (treaty of friendship) “to be ratified only after the delivery of 1,000 rifles, 20,000 cartridges and an annual subsidy” of £500.<sup>12</sup> The BSA Company had already conducted a similar initiative in Lobengula’s Ndebele kingdom, resulting in the concession to Charles Rudd on 13 October 1888.<sup>13</sup>

### **Concession as Weaponry**

In a dangerous era, Ngungunyane *hunted around for guns*. The king needed the British and their guns as his weapons against the Portuguese, who commanded unlimited access to the coast (and guns) and cut him off from maritime markets. This Portuguese power was segmented however. Lisbon concentrated its presence at Lourenco Marques, while three chartered companies—Companhia da Niassa, Companhia da Zambesia and the Companhia da Moçambique—gunned for the north. In 1881 Mzila had declined the Companhia da Moçambique’s envoy Captain Paiva de Andrada a concession in Manica and Sofala. In 1884, the Portuguese crown went ahead anyway to create its own colonial maps including Manica in its sphere of influence.

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<sup>11</sup> “In the Courts: The Navigation of the Limpopo,” *The African Review*, February 27, 1897: 398; NAZ CT1/7/4 Gazaland – Doyle D 1891-2: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas Wheeler, “Ngungunyane the Negotiator: A Study in African Diplomacy,” *Journal of African History* 9, 4 (1968): 591.

<sup>13</sup> Julian R. Cobbing, “The Unknown. Fate of the Rudd Concession Rifles,” *Rhodesian History* 4 (1973).

Meanwhile, Wybrants and Chaddock were very busy surveying the Save and Limpopo respectively for British occupation. A year later the Portuguese monarch dispatched an envoy named José Casaleiro d'Alegria Rodrigues—a former soldier-cum-trader—to persuade Ngungunyane to send two embassies to Portugal to sign an Act of Vassalage. This at a time when political leaders of Europe were busy at table in Berlin cobbling together ground rules for fairplay in the ‘game’ of slitting a continent apart.

Ngungunyane only understood much later that the treaty of vassalage obligated him to obey the Governor-General of Mozambique’s laws and orders, to fly the Portuguese flag at his headquarters, to grant concessions to Portuguese citizens only, and to let in Jesuit missionaries. In return Lisbon made him an honorary colonel. In 1886, Ngungunyane’s new ‘superiors’ in Lisbon duly posted José d’Almeida as *residente* to Mandlakazi; he became the point man in the Portuguese hunt for their own “Second Rand” in the Gaza kingdom. What better place to start that project than the gold mines of Ngungunyane’s Manyika vassals located at Masekesa.

The Portuguese celebrated too soon. When the *residente* impressed upon Ngungunyane his obligations of vassalage, the king laughed: “*The paper [treaty] is good only for fishing for lands.*”<sup>14</sup> On the ground, however, there was nothing to laugh about. His preoccupation with the Portuguese distracted him from his southern domains just as the vultures were circling in. In 1887, his Tsonga and Chopi vassals rose in rebellion, the latter with massive arms from Joao Laforte, a French merchant doing business at Cheluana.

This Portuguese-backed rebellion forced Ngungunyane to migrate from Mandlakazi to the lower Limpopo. First, the king dispatched his regiments “to help drive

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<sup>14</sup> Wheeler, Gungunyane the Negotiator”: 587.

all people to Biyeni, for there were some among the vandau people who did not want to go with him.”<sup>15</sup> So serious was the insurrection in the south that the king marshaled 40,000-100,000 subjects to march to the lower Limpopo, the reconnaissance parties leaving in April, and the king himself on 15 June 1889. Says one oral source: “This was a great event. Men, and even women with babies on their backs, trekked to the South without the slightest knowledge of how long it would take them to reach the destination of their journey.”<sup>16</sup>

Ngungunyane was worried about being encircled by his enemies—apart from the rebellion in the south, Portuguese power in Manica was growing under Andrada’s second-in-command Manuel Antonio de Sousa (Gouveia). In the southwest, the British were making preparations to march on the lands of the Shona to the north. So the King marched through the Chopi lands to establish his new headquarters at Mandlakazi anticipating little resistance. He was dead wrong—the rebels proved to be stubborn, even routing the King’s men on Baul Island in January 1890. Ngungunyane had hoped to kill or capture the rebel chief Spelanyana (Chiperenyana) and decapitate the resistance. Wrong again. The rebel chief escaped north into Inhambane under Portuguese protection. There he would gang up with Laforte in 1895 in the Portuguese conquest of Ngungunyane, hoping to gain independence from Gaza rule, yet succeeding only in exchanging one master for another. But, we are getting far ahead of our story.

### **Weapons of Subterfuge/Subterfuge as Weaponry**

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<sup>15</sup> Mhlanga, “The History of the Amatshangana”: 72.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Increasingly, companies used the weapon of money to elbow out those individuals who had hunted with rifles for decades. For most European governments, chartered companies were the cheapest indirect means of securing colonies. These corporations employed commercial and legal experts to represent them against African kings. Language became a potent weapon: the concession document was drafted in legalistic language that bestowed ownership of land upon Europeans in watertight terms. Africans thought these were mere treaties of friendship without any obligation to cede their lands to anyone.

Even then, the concession could be a weapon of subterfuge for both sides. Some European individuals resuscitated old concessions concluded with Ngungunyane's ageing father, Mzila. The so-called Agnew Concession is a case in point. In May 1874, Mzila had allegedly granted an individual named John Agnew "a concession to explore and open up for mining purposes certain territories in Gazaland." The new proprietor of the claim, Albert Brodrick, claimed later that *Ngungunyane himself* had endorsed the claim on 19 May 1889. Then, on 10 December 1891 the claimant hired solicitors, Robbins, Billing & Co., who argued in London courts that their client had subsequently acquired rights to the concession from Agnew himself.<sup>17</sup> The BSA Company, in whose sphere of influence the concession fell, rejected the claim out of hand. The alleged concession was bigger than the Gaza kingdom itself and extended into areas where Ngungunyane's authority was unheard of. The King would say afterwards that "no such concession ... had ever been granted" either by himself or his father and grandfather.<sup>18</sup> It only turned

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<sup>17</sup> NAZ CT1/11/4 Concessions Gazaland, 1890-1: Robbins, Billing & Co. (Solicitors) to Colonial Office, 10 December 1891.

<sup>18</sup> NAZ CT1/11/4 Concessions Gazaland, 1890-1: Colonial Office to Messrs Robbins, Billing & Co., 18 December 1891; Messrs Robbins, Billing & Co. to Colonial Office, 22 January 1892.

out later that some of Ngungunyane's vassals were agreeing concessions without his authority or permission and conning the concession-seekers while at it.<sup>19</sup>

A second case of 'fraudulent claims' was the Addendorf Concession allegedly signed on 6 August 1890. A group of Zoutpansberg Boer farmers led by Louis Addendorf claimed to have signed with two *Shona chiefs*, 'Sebasha' and 'Ulozoba' a "Deed of Cessation" to "certain territory situated between the Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers." As the group presented its case, it would appear as though the 'chiefs' were inviting the Boers to come and colonize them and overthrow the Gaza. However, the document itself revealed that the 'chiefs' were merely seeking allies to stave off Ngungunyane's occupation of their lands. An extract of the 'concession' read:

And here we appeal anew and very earnestly for the help counsel of the Government and burghers of the South African Republic, reiterating our desire that the burghers of the South African Republic shall come and reside in our land and territory and to form a bulwark between our people and the rapacious great tribes of Ummixela [Mzila] and the Matabele [Ndebele] who nearly half a century ago came from Eastern Zululand to this neighbourhood and have even made raids on the inland people here, but have no right of conquest over land or our people.... Therefore, it is that we hereby ... commit the continued existence of our independent people, directly and indirectly, to the burghers of the South African Republic ... to make it known to Her Majesty the Queen of the mighty and free English nation and in order to obtain the necessary help and assistance to lay it if need be before the Powers and States of Europe asking their intervention of our good right.<sup>20</sup>

The burghers did not come to the 'chiefs'" timely aid and the BSA Company duly occupied their lands. Much later, in June 1891, the Addendorfs organized a commando of settlers to occupy the 'concession' not in the interests of the 'chiefs' but themselves. The Company dispatched a force to intercept the party on the Limpopo. Fearing a bloodbath,

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<sup>19</sup> NAZ CT1/11/4 Concessions Gazaland, 1890-1: Weatherley to Foreign Office, 26 Feb 1891.

<sup>20</sup> NAZ CT1/11/4 Concessions Gazaland, 1890-1: "Banyailand."

the Boers capitulated and subsequently sought court arbitration, with each party to the dispute nominating its own judge.<sup>21</sup>

The Addendorfs lost the case on three grounds. First, under Article 10 of the Swaziland Convention (1890), the Transvaal—let alone its individual citizenry—was forbidden from acquiring territory or entering into treaties with Africans north and northwest of its boundaries. Secondly, Article VII of the Anglo-Portuguese Convention (1891) did not allow a third party—in this case the Boers—to acquire territory between the Limpopo and Zambezi. And thirdly, under the provisions of Berlin, allowing the group to occupy such land amounted to an inability by a major European power to maintain its ‘sphere of influence’.<sup>22</sup>

The judges found the document to confer no “legal rights in the nature of a grant of land which could be recognized or enforced by any Court of Justice in a civilized state.” Not a single word in the so-called *concession* suggested, however remotely, that the ‘chiefs’ intended it “as an alienation of their land.” This was merely “an appeal for help—armed intervention if necessary—against an anticipated absorption of the country and threatened loss of independence.” All that the Boers were being asked to do was to mobilize the conscience of Europe to protect the powerless. At the very least, the Boers were to act as messengers, not conquerors, at most to be military allies against someone the powerless regarded as an aggressor and a tyrant, rather than asking for his replacement by the Boers. Hence the invitation to the burghers to “come and reside in our land and territory to form a bulwark … between our people and the rapacious great tribes

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<sup>21</sup> NAZ CT1/5/1 Boer Trek to Banyaland: High Commissioner 1891: Johns. Van Soelen, J.A. Stofberg, F.P.J. Senekal, Lady Brand, Protest to His Excellency Sir Henry B. Loch, KGCM, KCB, Her majesty’s High Commissioner, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1891; Johns. Van Soelen, Bloemfontein, Chairman Trekkers Committee, to the Hon. C.J. Rhodes, Managing Director, BSA Company Cape Town, 21<sup>st</sup> September 1891.

<sup>22</sup> NAZ CT1/5/1 Boer Trek to Banyaland: High Commissioner 1891: H. Juta, Chambers, 29-10-91.

etc.” referred to a specific number, not all of the Transvaal. The quantity of land each burgher would receive was unspecified, neither was the number, so that:

The very object of the appeal is the preservation and retention of the country but unlimited alienation to an unlimited number of people of land which belongs according to the usual custom to the whole tribe in common is inconsistent with the idea of continued independence and retention of the land. The document is quite capable of the interpretation that the burghers should merely be quartered as it were among the people they were to assist for temporary purposes only.<sup>23</sup>

As such, the document was declared not to be a concession at all.<sup>24</sup> The process of exposing the Addendorf ‘concession’ as an attempted fraud was also the BSA Company’s ‘hands-off’ statement to any competitors.

I have already pointed out that the Portuguese coastal settlements lived on Gaza sufferance and actually paid tribute. Yet in 1891, they claimed quite the opposite. The Norwegian physician Oscar Sommershield, a resident at Delagoa Bay since 1887, exposed these Portuguese lies in a long letter dated 2 April 1891:

Gungunhana’s country which includes nearly everything claimed by the Portuguese South of the Zambesi, with the exception of some land round Inhambane, has never been occupied by the Portuguese; nothing has been done by them to develop it, nor have they ever, until just lately at the King’s Kraal, even been represented in the country. The Limpopo, and all the coast around the mouth of it, and its banks don’t belong to the Portuguese but, to the King Gungunhana, who distinctly repudiates their pretensions.... The Portuguese have no more claim to Customs duties to impose fines, to take possession of the ‘Countess’, to haul down or order the British flag to be hauled down, than I have to do such things and take such unwarranted liberties.... They have been for years keeping their weak hold on certain places on the coast by the force of lying; they have told the [Africans] everywhere what great and powerful people they are; how they assisted the English in Zululand and everywhere else; how the English would have been defeated, but for them, and their powerful

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<sup>23</sup> NAZ CT1/5/1 Boer Trek to Banyaland: High Commissioner 1891: Henry H. Juta, W.M. Searle, “In Reference to Banyaland Concession: Opinion.”

<sup>24</sup> NAZ CT1/5/1 Boer Trek to Banyaland: High Commissioner 1891: C.J. Rhodes, to Malan, Cape Argus, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1891; NAZ S1428/1 Addendorf Trekkers Protest 1891 August-December: D.J. Malan, Concessionaire, to the Hon. C.J. Rhodes, Managing Director of the BSA Company, *Cape Argus*, 15 October 1891..

support, that the English cannot fight but must always come to the Portuguese for help and get them to do the fighting. The Kaffirs, who have no means to judging believe these and other stories and even Gungunhana believes them and is, to a certain extent, afraid of the Portuguese.<sup>25</sup>

Under the provisions of Berlin, every European colonial power had to prove its right to a sphere of influence on paper, with the signatures of the African chiefs acknowledging defeat, vassalage, or acceptance of protection. The Portuguese had no such evidence. This is quite reminiscent of the local practice of the chief's right to the ground tusk or the hunter laying firm claim to a carcass by cutting its tail. By contrast, those Europeans who had verbal or written concessions and were trusted as allies used guns, gunboats and ammunition as gifts to curry favor with African rulers. This is what the BSA Company did towards Ngungunyane, Lobengula, and Khama in 1888-9. As the last chapter has shown, before we credit it to imperial diplomacy, it is important to recall that this practice had a much longer local genealogy.

By the end of 1890, the Company was indeed cashing years of individual exploration into actual voyages. It used the tug steamer, the *Countess of Carnarvon*, as transport from Durban to Ngungunyane's residence for purposes of re-negotiating the verbal concession granted to Schulz to pave way for occupation. In January of that year, the *Countess* delivered the 1,000 rifles, 20,000 rounds of ammunition, and money agreed to under the Schulz agreement to Ngungunyane as a sweetener. As the steamer attempted yet another landing on 8 March 1891—ostensibly to pick up its officials at the king's court—the Portuguese seized and escorted it to Delagoa Bay, triggering a diplomatic

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<sup>25</sup> NAZ CT1/7/4 Gazaland—Doyle D 1891-2: F. Rutherford Harris, Secretary, to The Imperial Secretary, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891.

furor.<sup>26</sup> The incident sent a wrong message to the Gaza, who were banking on British military aid against the Portuguese.

The aura of British invincibility was already in question after the Zulu routed them at Isandhlwana in 1878. Now it was in even more serious jeopardy. Who would fear the British now? There would be no better comeback than to dispatch and station a garrison at Ngungunyane's capital immediately and—according to Somershield—"to give him the necessary strength and to preserve what you have gained"! With "a force at his back," the Gaza king would "*order the Portuguese to clear from his country*" and the Portuguese would flee. As the good doctor diagnosed, the Portuguese "had no stomach for fighting." He pleaded: "You must have a strong man at Gungunhana and you must not leave him to himself. It is possible perhaps to reclaim him from liquor. I shall only add Limpopo was first found by Englishmen, first navigated by them."<sup>27</sup>

### **Concession Diplomacy**

Somershield was urging the British to take Ngungunyane's domains by false pretenses. His caricature of the king as a feeble, incomplete minor abusing European liquor was a clarion call for "a strong British hand," both to discipline and protect him. In real terms, what the British required, and Somershield was suggesting, was a piece of paper where Ngungunyane would append a signature authorizing the British as his 'protectors'. The

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<sup>26</sup> NAZ CT1/11/1/4 Concessions – Gazaland, 1890-1; Weatherley to Foreign Office, 13 March 1891; Weatherley to Herbert, Permanent Undersecretary Colonial Office, 18 March 1891; Weatherly to Foreign Office, 20 March 1891; Robert G.W. Herbert, Secretary, BSA Company to Colonial Office, 17 March 1891;

<sup>27</sup> NAZ CT1/7/4 Gazaland – Doyle D 1891-2: F. Rutherford Harris, Secretary, to The Imperial Secretary, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891.

BSA Company secretary, Rutherford Harris, agreed with Somershield's assessments.<sup>28</sup>

Yet as Douglas Wheeler has shown, Ngungunyane was no one's baby.<sup>29</sup>

I showed in Chapter 2 how African rulers had long used ivory diplomacy. They granted European actors licenses to hunt elephant and extract ivory for sale for a stipulated period, after which they had to get out. In the aftermath of Berlin and the Rand gold rush, as European excursions into the hinterland increased and assumed the nature of incursions, Ngungunyane used ivory as a token of friendship to facilitate diplomacy, especially with European rulers. This way, he hoped he could persuade the governments to force their subjects to stick to the rules. Again, we have already seen this use of ivory to soften the tongue in transactions between Chief Shiluvani and Fernandes das Neves.

Ngungunyane entered regional resource politics as a player rather than a victim. He ended up a victim rather than a player. As the BSA Company and the Portuguese jostled for concessions, the king sent his emissaries, Nkulunkulu and Chengetshwa, to England—laden with a tusk of ivory as a token of friendship—to lobby Queen Victoria's support against the Portuguese. They sailed to London aboard the *Narlech Castle* on 15 August 1891 and returned in November. Indeed, whereas European political leaders exchanged flags and embassies, it seemed only appropriate that the king should use an elephant tusk as a symbol of the kingdom.

This diplomatic exchange presented a dilemma for the British Foreign Office. To prevent the King's ambassadors from meeting the Queen in person would make Ngungunyane "feel disappointed and insulted" and turn against the BSA Company. What could then prevent him from revoking the verbal concession to Schulz? If the Queen

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Wheeler, "Gungunyane the Negotiator": 590-3.

received the king's messengers, the Portuguese would conclude that London had refused to acknowledge Lisbon's authority over its 'vassal', Ngungunyane.<sup>30</sup>

To the king himself, ivory diplomacy was part of a strategy to acquire leverage over the Portuguese and to enrich him. Ngungunyane was not just a king; at a personal level he was a young man in his 20s (or at most 30s) and a compulsive drinker of overseas beverages. As his relations with the Portuguese deteriorated, the BSA Company appeared to offer the King reliable political partners and investors. The Company would, moreover, speak well of him to the Queen if his emissaries and the piece of ivory were not enough. Ngungunyane resorted to divide and rule. First, in 1891 he granted a verbal 'concession' to the Companhia de Moçambique over Manica and Sofala to the total exclusion of the Portuguese Government. But Lisbon was wary that nothing had been signed, and Ngungunyane might yet change his mind. He had to be completely defeated.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, in November 1891, upon receiving a favorable reply from the Queen, Ngungunyane granted the BSA Company a concession in his northern domains abutting Manica and Sofala.

On Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> that year, the king summoned all his vassal chiefs, the Portuguese of Inhambane and Lourenco Marques, and other Europeans resident in his domains. He wanted them to hear for themselves the reply his emissaries, Nkulunkulu and Chengetshwa, had brought back from Her Majesty the Queen Victoria of England, regarding his complaint to her on the conduct of the Portuguese. In attendance were Denis Doyle, W.M. Longden, and W.V. Harrison, representing the BSA Company, which

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<sup>30</sup> NAZ CT1/11/1/4 Concessions – Gazaland, 1890-1: Robert G.W. Herbert, Colonial Office to Foreign Office, May 15, 1891; Governor Maritzburg to High Commissioner, Cape Town, 2 September 1891.

<sup>31</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhana, 1890-5: H.G. MacDonell, Downing Street, to the Earl of Kimberley, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1894.

Queen Victoria had granted a royal charter to occupy the lands of the Shona. Also in attendance, by order of the Gaza King, was Dr. Manuel Joaquim Martiens, Intendente Geral de Gaza (District Administrator of Gaza); Ignacio de Paiva Rapozo, Intendente de Biyeni; Captain Jose Pingoto do Amaral, representing the Governor of Lourenco Marques; Captain Vicente Guithermo Garibaldi do Miranda, representing the Governor of Inhambane; Lieutenant Sanches de Miranda, the Military Commandant of Limpopo; and Lieutenant Moreira Guadros, the Intendente Geral's *aide-de-camp*. Finally, there were two white resident friends of the royal family, identified only as Mr. and Mrs. Fels who acted in a similar position to Fairbairn's at Bulawayo.<sup>32</sup> When everyone was gathered, at length, *The Lion of Gaza*<sup>33</sup> delivered a very commanding speech:

White men. You have heard what my Indunas have said, - it is true what they have said – I did send them to the Queen. It is quite true that an alliance was entered into, that a friendship did exist between my Grandfather, my Father, and the Portuguese but did they treat them as they are endeavouring to treat me? What have I done that my people should be turned against me, my lands taken away from me and my people robbed of their women? Time after time I have explained to you how my subject tribes were killing my people, time after time you said “wait.” Day by day my people were being killed until one day I could stand it no longer. I turned out my armies and completely destroyed the people who had been harassing me so long. Again you Portuguese complained that some of my tributary tribes were annoying you. I sent an *impi* for the purpose of punishing them and what did you do? You warned them of the approach of my *impi* and when my army reached there they had fled.

I have frequently demanded the return of tracts of my country now occupied by you. Moon after moon has passed, promises after promises have been made, you always say that we will give it back, Oh King, but you never do so, am I a woman that I shall be treated thus? And now today what have you done, you are building a Fort in my territory. I will not have that Fort there. Pull it down and fill in the hole that you have made. If you do not, I will send an army to fill in the hole that you have made and I

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<sup>32</sup> NAZ CT1/7/4 Gazaland Doyle D, 1891-2: Denis Doyle, Manhlagazi, to The Secretary BSA Company, Cape Town, 10 November 1891: 1-3.

<sup>33</sup> This is the praise name the king was known and called by his people. They also called him ‘The Elephant of Gaza’. It was a sign of great disrespect to refer to him directly by his name.

will see who will fire the first shot. It is not true that your King tells you to do what you are doing here, it is not true that he knows what you do.

Why do you Portuguese object to my making friends with the English? You did not object to Umzila doing so, you did not object to my Grandfather doing so. Oh Portuguese there must be a day of reckoning. If I were to haul down that flag that stands as a token of friendship between my people and your people and hoist the English flag, who will prevent me? When I wish to hand over my people to the English I will do so in the daylight with the sun shining. Are not my people the people of Gaza, of whom are they afraid?.... Now I say pull down the fort and let my people and my Father's lands be returned and give back the boats that you stole the other day on the Limpopo. The women of the Gaza are the wives of the Gaza nation. It may be that you Portuguese think it proper to take other men's wives, but the people of the Gaza say that every man's wife belongs to himself.<sup>34</sup>

Ngungunyane's speech helps us to set up three immediate conversations. First, to alert the reader to a tone of victimhood in the king vis-à-vis his relations with the Portuguese while also flagging an alternative view of him as a colonizer or 'occupation force' over other Africans. Second, to alert us to the countervailing sense of initiative in the youthful king. Thirdly, a head of state trading the lands upon which the common people lived without consulting them for a few pieces of sovereigns per year and some gin. These three points form the basis for a reassessment of the *fin-de-siècle* generation of African leaders as not merely heroic resisters of colonialism let down by backward weaponry. At issue is whether late-19<sup>th</sup> century African rulers knowingly and arbitrarily sold Africa to European colonizers without their people's knowledge or approval, or whether in fact they were victims of subterfuge.

It seems that the youthful king failed to realize that the hunt had changed, its weapons, quarry, and hunting grounds having mutated from faunal to human targets and their landed wealth. The period 1865 to 1915 experienced multiple shifts from hunting ivory to hunting minerals, from concessions to colonies. What had been an "empty and

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<sup>34</sup> NAZ CT1/7/4 Gazaland Doyle D, 1891-2: Doyle to Secretary BSA Company: 5-7.

“unoccupied” African landscape in European travelers’ eyes now became a landscape beckoning for European occupation. Rather than temporary itinerant workspaces through it, a new vision took over of permanent settlement for purposes of exploiting the natural and human resources. The itinerant workspace of the hunt that had derived its momentum from working in alliance with powerful African rulers and ordinary villagers now gave way to a regime of thinking that saw powerful African kings as obstacles to the project of colonization. They had to be eliminated by any means necessary.<sup>35</sup>

Far from being just driven from the capitals of Europe and the imperatives of capital (i.e. the Industrial Revolution), the urge to colonize was in its materiality a direct outcome of the hunt. After all, was it not in the course of hunting ivory in the seemingly unoccupied hunting grounds of the Ndebele kingdom that Karl Mauch ‘discovered’ gold in the 1860s-70s? From that moment onwards, the hunting grounds north of the Limpopo also became known as “the Matabele goldfields” thereby redefining European ways of looking at the forests. From the late-1870s, attention increasingly shifted from hunting ivory to hunting concessions and labor. The hunters shifted from individuals to companies, the most prominent hunters being employed as military guides on conquest expeditions. The colonization of Rhodesia and Mozambique was no grand plan of Empire; on the ground we see very little of the British Government and much more of the local European actors, busy rupturing the networks (villages, forests) into concessions that were then turned into colonies.

Let us return to Ngungunyane’s speech. After such an inspired display of bravado against his Portuguese nemeses, there was only one piece of sensible business left for

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<sup>35</sup> “The ‘Rinderpest’: What it is with Symptoms and Causes: An Interview with Dr. Hutcheon, M.R.C.V.S.” (By our Special Commissioner, writing from Mafeking on April 21<sup>st</sup>), *The African Review*, May 23, 1896: 1027.

Ngungunyane to cement his friendship with the BSA Company. Doyle handed him the “proposed agreement” ceding to the Company “the absolute right and control *over all waste and unoccupied lands in his territory*” (my emphasis). The Company would pay to Ngungunyane “certain sums of money” annually as compensation. Doyle coaxed the King into agreeing that in the event of “gold development,” a large influx of Europeans would result that would require the cultivation of the land and the building of houses. Towns would spring up that could only prosper under the efficient administration of the BSA Company. Therefore, Doyle argued, it was urgent that the control of that specific land to be in Company hands. Ngungunyane capitulated and thrashed out the details of a payment plan—£500 per annum. In the wake of his impressive speech, the King unwittingly signed away his kingdom to the British for a few pieces of sovereigns.<sup>36</sup>

On 18 February 1892, the Portuguese Consul, Eduardo Ade Carvacho, protested the Doyle Concession for giving the Company “complete control over Gazaland, without any attention being paid to the rights that Portugal has over that country.” Specifically, he cited Article 8 of the Anglo-Portuguese Convention of 1890, which stipulated that:

The two Powers engage that neither will interfere with any sphere of influence assigned to the other by Article I to VI. One power will not, in the sphere of the other, make acquisitions, conclude treaties, or accept sovereign rights or protectorates. It is understood that no companies or individuals subject to one power can exercise sovereign rights in a sphere assigned to the other, except with the assent of the other.<sup>37</sup>

The only problem was that the Portuguese had neglected to have the African rulers whom they claimed vassalage over to sign on the dotted line.

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<sup>36</sup> CT1/7/4 Gazaland Doyle D, 1891-2: Denis Doyle, Manhlagazi, to The Secretary BSA Company, Cape Town, 10 November 1891: 1-3.

<sup>37</sup> CT1/7/4 Gazaland Doyle D, 1891-2: Eduardo Ade Carvacho, Portuguese Consulate, Cape Town, to Imperial Secretary, 18 February 1892; Imperial Secretary, Cape Town, to H. Currey, BSA Company, 23 February 1892.

Carvacho gave a spirited argument that Ngungunyane's cession of "the sole and absolute power and control over all waste and unoccupied lands of Gazaland" to the Company was "a gross violation" tantamount to "an encouragement to Native Chiefs to revolt against the Sovereignty of Portugal."<sup>38</sup> Yet the archival evidence suggests that in an age when the only recognized technology for claiming a sphere of influence was a concession, the Portuguese had none. The subsequent capitulation of the British Government, and the pressure on the BSA Company to back off, was at best a charitable gesture to the Anglo-Portuguese Convention. If London had persisted and taken the matter to Berlin, the Portuguese would have had no case to contest.

At some point, the Portuguese woke up to the realization that unless Ngungunyane was militarily broken, there was no legal basis upon which they could claim Gazaland if the matter came to arbitration. Ngungunyane had to be defeated through the barrel of the gun.

Not that the Gaza king had no grounds to be on the offensive himself! Nothing in the archival record suggests the Portuguese backed down from constructing the fort at Cusine. So in June 1892 and in keeping with his word, Ngungunyane dispatched his envoys to the British Consul at Lourenco Marques, E.W. Smith Delacour, to inform him of an impending war he would declare on the Portuguese in August. The king insisted that unless the Portuguese immediately renounced violence and released his sons, brothers and uncles post-haste, they would receive blows intended for the gods. The king was breathing fire. The Portuguese were also stealing "*his* women and *his* cattle," and were also "build[ing] fortresses and prevent[ing] the English from developing his country." Ngungunyane was only waiting for his order of "one thousand horses for his

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

regiments of cavalry” to arrive from King Moshoeshoe of the Basotho as well as assurance from Delacour that “the British would help the Portuguese against him.” To which the envoy replied: “The British are your friends.”<sup>39</sup>

The Lion of Gaza rubbed his hands in readiness for a full and final assault on the Portuguese. But when it came to the crunch, the BSA Company backed down from the Doyle Concession under British government pressure.<sup>40</sup> Instead, the Company formed a joint Boundary Delimitation Commission with the Portuguese to slice the frontier between the two parties, which completed its work in December 1892. On 25 January 1893, London acceded to Company sovereignty on the part of the Doyle Concession lying west of this border.<sup>41</sup> The British Government advised Ngungunyane “not to expose himself and his people to the risks and horrors of war,” offered to mediate in the dispute, and left him hanging out to dry.<sup>42</sup> If any war broke out east of the border between the Portuguese and Ngungunyane, it would be a domestic issue over which the Company was bound by the terms of the royal charter to remain neutral.<sup>43</sup>

Ngungunyane continued to exercise jurisdiction on the Doyle Concession in the British sphere under a technicality wholly to do with Berlin rather than the Anglo-Portuguese Convention. The Portuguese had long suspected the Company to be “instigating the recent native troubles at Lourenco Marques.” The Company refuted the

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<sup>39</sup> NAZ S1428/33/10 Portuguese East Africa: Gungunhana’s Messengers 1891-6: E.W. Smith, Delacour, Her Majesty’s Consul, Lourenco Marques, to Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, June 4<sup>th</sup> 1892; Smith to Foreign Office, Telegram, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1892.

<sup>40</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhana, 1890-5: Proof 24107 Foreign Office to Colonial Office, Foreign Office, 15 December 1892.

<sup>41</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhana, 1890-5: Downing Street, 25 January 1893.

<sup>42</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhana, 1890-5: Knutsford, Downing Street, to the High Commissioner Sir H.B. Loch, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1892.

<sup>43</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhana, 1890-5: Secretary, Cape Town, to The Imperial Secretary, Cape Town, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1892; Proof 20882, Edward Fairfield, Colonial Office to The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 15 December 1892; E. Fairfield, Downing Street, to Secretary BSA Company, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1893.

charge: it was merely sending “small expeditions” to Ngungunyane to honor the annual subsidy due to the King as the Doyle Concession required. The British Government washed its hands over ‘this private company matter’ since the concession had not been made to it. London in fact expected the Company to pay the subsidy “as a basis upon which to exercise our rights over the territory contained in the British sphere.” The Portuguese did not agree: Ngungunyane’s residence was within the Portuguese sphere, and so he was their subject.

Ngungunyane did not agree: since when had he been vassal to the Portuguese who had by and large lived because he spared their settlements in return for tribute? No, the Portuguese were as much his subjects as the Tsonga, Chopi or Manyika.

Rhodes offered to withdraw the subsidy from Ngungunyane and pay it to the Portuguese for onward transmission to the Gaza king. What he objected to, however, was for the Portuguese to pay the whole subsidy to Ngungunyane because the Company would then be in no position to claim title over the Doyle Concession in the British sphere. In any case, the Company could not overreach on bilateral government matters<sup>44</sup>; that was Bismarck’s job.

Yet another British betrayal was not long in coming. The BSA Company decided to compromise, since it stood to lose more than ‘far away London’, as a company that owned land on the neighborhood of territory over which the Portuguese and Gaza were in dispute. Rhodes pledged to pay the full subsidy of £500 per annum that Ngungunyane had stipulated in the concession “through the Portuguese Government, thus avoiding

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<sup>44</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhana, 1890-5: Enclosure in No. 2: C.J. Rhodes, Burlington Hotel, London, to Senhor de Soveral, December 1894.

direct intercourse with the chief.”<sup>45</sup> With that, the rest of the material benefits to Ngungunyane ended: technically the Company was now extracting value from Gazaland illegally.

At that point, one would expect that Ngungunyane would see the folly of appealing to European legal codes of conduct to get redress. But that is exactly what he did: he engaged a lawyer to make his case in London, very likely at the advice of the Fels! On 12 August 1895 he sent Nkulunkulu and Chengetshwa (again with an elephant tusk in hand) to see the Governor of Pietermaritzburg to get permission to proceed to London and deliver a letter to Queen Victoria.

At Durban, the messengers consulted with a solicitor, J.W. Livingston—who appeared to be representing the king’s interest—to facilitate the issuing of traveling passes from the magistrate. Subsequently, writing the Governor, the Magistrate cautioned: “They say they wish to return home by sea, but I suspect that they intend to go to England.”<sup>46</sup> The Governor refused to accept a tusk from Ngungunyane as a token of diplomatic conversation or its passage to England, but the king’s messenger insisted that such refusal was out of character with the conduct of the Queen.<sup>47</sup>

### **As If A Trophy**

For a man who had thundered so confidently on that afternoon on 15 November exactly four years earlier, Ngungunyane’s demise happened far too quickly. The Portuguese

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<sup>45</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhama, 1890-5: Proof 20975 T.H. Sanderson, Foreign Office, to Sir H. MacDonell, Colonial Office, November 29, 1894: “Enclosure No 1: ‘Africa No. 120a’”: Sir H. Kimberley, Foreign Office, Nov. 21 1894.

<sup>46</sup> NAZ S1428/17/5 Concessions Granted by Ngungunhama, 1890-5: Governor Petemaritzburg to High Commissioner Cape Town, 24<sup>th</sup> August 1895. Besides being a solicitor in Durban, Livingston was also secretary of Dundee Coal Company.

<sup>47</sup> NAZ S1428/33/10 Portuguese East Africa: Gungunhama’s Messengers 1891-6: High Commissioner to Governor, 22 July 1895.

disposed of The Lion of Gaza in just three months. In August 1895, the Governor of Lourenco Marques mastered his forces towards the tough-talking King's headquarters. By November the capital had fallen and the crestfallen king was in flight. What happened thereafter was well-captured by the British weekly, *The African Review*, on the occasion of the African king's departure into exile aboard *The Africa* on 29 January:

Gungunhana was captured towards the end of December by Captain Albuquerque, who has been made Governor of Gazaland for his courage and bravery. The ex-King is accompanied by his son Godidi, his uncle, Chief Matijanna, seven wives, and a number of other prisoners of note. Gungunhana, as will be seen by his portrait by Mr. Max Sterling, of Delagoa Bay, is not much over thirty years of age. He is a round, stout, sturdy man of medium height. He has a bulky physique, and reminds one of old Lobengula; his colour is far from black, being light copper in shade. When he left Cape Town he had little in the way of clothing save a rough necklace of bones, some charms, and a blanket. Doubtless he will feel the need of warmer raiment as he nears Europe. He seemed to regret not having brought a larger number of wives with him, and told our correspondent at Cape Town (who conversed with the chief through a coloured interpreter) that he had a large number of wives in Gazaland. The ladies of Gungunhana's household on board *The Africa* wear large brass rings and massive coiffures, and adorn their forms with clothing made of brightly coloured material.... The white towel around the chief's head is to hide the broken crown, which came to grief during his attempt to escape. The chief looks upon this breakage as the greatest misfortune that could have befallen him.... Gungunhana is now being conveyed to Lisbon in a troopship, accompanied by his wives. It is understood that he will be confined in a Portuguese fortress. Several other prisoners of war, amongst whom are the chief Chichaxa and his wives, are to be kept at the Cape Verde Islands.<sup>48</sup>

This picture of a once-powerful king leaving in a cowered state does not articulate with the Shangane's official version of their king's departure.

Here is Mgwaqazi's account, which does not start with the king being shipped off but his heroic skirmishes with the Portuguese and his errant subjects:

At Biyeni Ngungunyana fought and defeated Chiperenyana. He then settled there and ruled over the country. Matibwana, a Muchopi chief, fought with the Portuguese. Matibwana's resistance became so weak that

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<sup>48</sup> "Gungunhana, Late King of Gazaland," *The African Review*, February 22, 1896: 366.

he and his army surrendered to Ngungunyana. He thought he would be safe under the protection of Ngungunyana's powerful army. Prior to this the Portuguese had fought with Ngungunyana and were defeated. When Ngungunyana received Matibwana, the once defeated Portuguese became so angry that they arranged another battle against Ngungunyana. The Portuguese, with the assistance of a few Englishmen to whom they appealed for help, were successful in capturing Ngungunyana's sons, Buyisonto, Petu and Godide. This was a great discouragement and as a result Ngungunyana gave up fighting and was captured and taken to the estuary of Miti (Limpopo River). They put him into a ship ready to sail for an unknown destination. It is said that in spite of strenuous efforts to make the ship go, it stood motionless. When the Portuguese were about to give up in despair, Ngungunyana sang his song, which was sung on special occasions when performing ceremonial rites....

*Wam'bona ukhowanyana azuya pezuyu* [sic, *pezulu*

*Ka Makainge wanyamayaya* [sic, *wanyamalala*

*Uthe kwa M'fanyana wasumbuyuka* [sic, *wasumbuluka*

*Ubuthongo obuhle ngowezihlahla*,/And ate up, even men,

*Ozwezindhlu kubangeya amayukuyuku* [sic, *kubangela amalukuluku*] /Sound sleep can be had in the bush, To sleep in a hut only means sleeplessness night.

The boat then moved, and moved on into the heart of the sea until it was out of sight. Ngungunyana was then sent into exile on an island. It is not known whether he is still alive or dead.<sup>49</sup>

This spiritualized departure served as a point of inspiration, rallying subjects to arms to resist the Portuguese. In May 1897 the *Daily Mail* reported that the Portuguese were in "an extremely perilous position. The natives," it said, "in a number of small engagements have worsted the Portuguese troops, who are now unable to check their victorious advance." The situation was so bad that the Governor of Delagoa Bay requested Lisbon to dispatch detachments of infantry and cavalry, which were expected to arrive in July.<sup>50</sup>

These particular pests (the Shangane word is *abatakati*, meaning witches) were a result of failed control. Magigwane Khosa, a vassal of the deposed king whom traditions

<sup>49</sup> Mhlanga, "The History of the Amatshangana": 72.

<sup>50</sup> "The Portuguese in Gazaland," *The African Review* (May 29, 1897: 403).

say was “a warlike person and more ferocious than Ngungunyana himself,”<sup>51</sup> marshaled a rebel force to “*bring back the king.*” The resistance’s slogan was *Mbuyiseni!* (Bring Him Back!) or *Hosi u Mmbuyise!* (May The King Be Brought Back!).<sup>52</sup> Members of the Gaza aristocracy did not join in because of uncertainty on the motives of the rebellion. However, Liesegang is positive it was a loyalist (as opposed to royalist) rising. The very lax if not total absence of Portuguese control—barring a few itinerant tax collectors and threadbare garrisons—emboldened the resistance.

Details of this new hunt, in which the Portuguese tortured anyone remotely connected to the royal family, are contained in a *Gold Fields News* article in July 1897:

From a perfectly reliable source we have received details regarding the origin of the native rising in Gazaland, and other interesting particulars. It appears that after Gungunhana’s capture, when the Portuguese soldiery practically held the country, every effort was made, but without avail, to locate the whereabouts of the King’s cache of gold, ivory, and diamonds. No native knew of – that is, none could be made to tell – the whereabouts of the treasure, which is estimated to be worth at least £40 000; and, notwithstanding the use of tortures, in which the Portuguese are adept, nobody could be made to speak.... The favourite form of torture practiced by the Portuguese is, after making the suspects fast, to beat the open palms of the hands with a piece of flat wood, the result being that, when the hand is continually bastinadoed for some time, it swells, circulation is stopped, the blood spurts out, and the unfortunate suspect undergoes great agony. If the secret which the suspect is supposed to hold is not given up by the time one hand is dealt with, the other undergoes the same operation. This cruel torture was, it is said, practiced on many of Gungunhana’s people who might be presumed to know the whereabouts of the exiled Chief’s treasure, but all to no purpose.<sup>53</sup>

When the Portuguese failed to get Ngungunyane’s wealth from his subjects, they turned on Mr. and Mrs. Fels, promising to release them from jail if they revealed where the treasure was. The woman stepped forward and averred that she knew where the gold was. Under guard, she and her husband led the Portuguese on the treasure-hunting trip.

<sup>51</sup> Mhlanga, “The History of the Amatshangana”: 73.

<sup>52</sup> Liesegang, “Aspects of Gaza Nguni History”: 12, citing Gaza informants.

<sup>53</sup> “Gungunhana, Late King of Gazaland,” *The African Review* (22 February 1896): 366.

However, sources close to the affair told the *Gold Fields News* “the woman knew nothing.” When no gold was found, the couple was thrown back into detention, where Mrs. Fels died soon afterwards, just like *Mbuyiseni*.

The rebellion began in earnest towards the end of March 1897 with a frontal assault on the Portuguese fort of Balule. A month later the rebels captured Chaimite, the burial place of Manukusa. The insurgents were within sniffing distance of the district capital Chibuto when on 21 July 1897 they engaged the Portuguese in the plain close to Macontene, between Chibuto and Chaimite. They were routed. Three days later, their leader Magigwane was killed. Oral sources go further: “When the Portuguese defeated him, he was captured and beheaded. In order to convince the Portuguese Commandant that Magigwana was really dead, his head was carried to the Commandant at Chimhutsu, by Machimbira, Magigwana’s mother.”<sup>54</sup> The resistance collapsed.

### **The Portuguese State and Its Commodities**

With Ngungunyane out of the way and Gaza state power broken, the Portuguese turned his former subjects into commodities of exchange. I must make clear that by the late 1870s, the Portuguese were already selling their African subjects along the seaboard to the Boers of the Transvaal for labor purposes. Following the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, two principal routes were cut through Tsonga lands around Lourenco Marques. One route led from the lowest drift on the Tembe River via Swaziland into the Transvaal. In 1878-9, Portuguese engineers selected this route as a likely corridor for the projected railway line to Pretoria. Another route led from Delagoa Bay through the Lebombo mountain range at the Matala pass (Matalapoort), down into the Nkomati valley, where it

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<sup>54</sup> Mhlanga, “The History of the Amatshangana”: 73.

followed that river course to within a day's journey of Barberton. In 1886, railroad construction to cater for labor imports to and gold exports from the Rand began in earnest.<sup>55</sup>

As the mining industry grew, recruitment became more standardized. In September 1889, the Portuguese Government issued a decree that only agents of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines would receive recruiting licenses in its territory. The decision was a blow to the Chamber. The recruits from across the Limpopo were priceless because, "unlike Cape Colony natives, [they] were more willing to work underground."<sup>56</sup> Barely a year after Ngungunyane's ouster, the authorities invited "authorized recruiters" to the Province of Mozambique (under the Companhia de Moçambique) to get labor for the Transvaal industries. The recruiter would get a yearly license at the cost of 450,000 reis in gold, valid for a specific district of Mozambique Province only. The license was not transferable to a second party or district, but was renewable upon expiry subject to a surety deposit of 450,000 reis.<sup>57</sup>

Recruiting agents, routes, and depots became conveyor belts for the movement of bodies across colonial district boundaries. This was in a time when concessionaire companies and the state had parceled out what had once been the Gaza state into plantations, cattle ranches, and state land. Africans had been forcibly removed from their chosen lands and restricted to 'native reserves', where they were banned from leaving except in possession of a pass and only for purposes of working for Europeans.

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<sup>55</sup> H.E. O'Neill, "Journey in the District of Delagoa Bay, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* (Dec. 1886-Jan. 1887): 497.

<sup>56</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Fifth Annual Report* (1894): 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Eighth Annual Report* (1897): 123.

Long before Ngungunyane was deposed, the Portuguese had already zoned his lands abutting the Pafuri-Lephalale stretch of the Limpopo for labor export. In the *Diario do Governo* of 26 December 1893, the King of Portugal decreed the area's "administration and exploitation" for labor recruitment, but without providing the instruments to do so.<sup>58</sup> Looking forward to a future when Ngungunyane was out of the way, in 1894 the Transvaal Government established stations along the main route from the populous Zoutpansberg and Waterberg districts to Johannesburg.<sup>59</sup> Even at that stage, Ngungunyane's subjects were already enlisting for mine work with or without their far away king's consent.

The war between Ngungunyane and the Portuguese ground labor recruitment to "a complete halt" for two reasons. First, the Portuguese authorities in Gaza were now refusing to issue passes to enter the Transvaal. Second, Shangane men were fighting for or against the Portuguese, or protecting their families. In May 1895 when the Portuguese started making military gains against Ngungunyane, Shangane men on the mine downed their tools and rushed home to defend their king and kindred. The Chamber acknowledged that "the consequent disturbance of the country was the direct cause of the departure of so large a number of men to the east." This was a death-blow to the mining industry because "this class of labour... consisting of Shangaans, Nyambaans, and Matshopis, constitute[d] the best available labour for underground purposes."<sup>60</sup> The Transvaal Chamber would not have worried if the Shangane were not "*the most acceptable and best class of natives for underground work*" (author's emphasis). This

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<sup>58</sup> NAZ CT1/11/3/18 Mozambique Company, 1891-5: Diario do Governo, 26 December 1893: "Royal Decree"; Extract from the Diario do Governo No. 293 of December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1888, Marine and Colonial Office, Colonial Department: "Royal Decree."

<sup>59</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Fifth Annual Report* (1894): 26.

<sup>60</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Sixth Annual Report* (1894): 35, 37, 42.

would happen again during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 when the Portuguese reversed the earlier arrangement “on account of the abuses which had been found to spring up under it.”<sup>61</sup>

The scarcity of labor prompted the Chamber to widen its recruitment networks beyond southern Africa. In December 1900, management disclosed details of a plan to recruit labor from Southern Rhodesia, especially in North and East Mashonaland, to be delivered at Melsetter (formerly Chipinga).<sup>62</sup> Hugh Marshall Hole, the BSA Company administrator of Southern Rhodesia, proposed a Witwatersrand Native Labor Association (WENELA) recruiting monopoly in the Province of Mozambique north of the Save for both the Rand and Rhodesia. The recruits would be collected “at a convenient spot near the border on the Portuguese side” for counting, vaccination, and visas. Hole also suggested recruiting in the Spelonken District of the Northern Transvaal and delivering the recruits at the Rhodesian border. The Transvaal Chamber ratified the agreement on 10 February 1902.<sup>63</sup>

Supply and demand was a potent network-builder. Four months passed with not a single recruit delivered. Africans preferred to go south, not north; there the wage was smaller.<sup>64</sup> The signatories had hoped the Companhia de Moçambique would allow

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*: 103. *Transvaal Chamber of Mines Annual Report* 1906: 12: J.N. de Jongh, President, Transvaal Chamber of the Mines, to High Commissioner, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1906: “Correspondence on the Subject of Recruiting of Native Labour in Portuguese East Africa”: 12.

<sup>62</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1902*: 119. W. Smith, Chairman, B. Carson, Secretary, The Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, to C.T. Holland, President Rhodesian Chamber of Mines and Chairman Rhodesia Labour Board (Bulawayo section), 12<sup>th</sup> December 1900, and other correspondences.

<sup>63</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1902*: 30. H. Marshall Hole, for the Government of Rhodesia, to The Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1902: 29; also on p. 32: G. Rouliot, President, A.R. Goldring, Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, to H. Marshall Hole, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1902.

<sup>64</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1902*: 40-1. T.C.M. Nourse, Joint General Manager, Witwatersrand Native labour Association, Ltd., Johannesburg, to the Board of Management, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1902.

WENELA to recruit east of Melsetter. It flatly refused. WENELA had hoped to enlist Laforte—now Portuguese Commandant—as a recruiter since he had great influence on Africans. Only to discover that Laforte had “lost all his influence owing to his action in having recruited 300 natives for the Masekese gold mines on the pretext that he was taking them to Johannesburg. Local Africans resisted being taken north and they turned against him. Both parties had anticipated a glut of migrant labor owing to the massive crop failures in the countryside. It never happened. Rhodesia now refocused its recruitment through its own Labour Bureau, now recapitalized with £20,000.<sup>65</sup>

Next the Transvaal Chamber turned to the entire southern African region, by then already parceled out into business estate. Three chartered Companies—Companhia da Niassa, Companhia da Zambesia and Companhia da Moçambique—owned vast swathes of territory between the Limpopo and Zambezi. In September and October 1903, WENELA opened talks with the Companhia da Zambesia and Companhia da Niassa respectively to recruit in their territories. But the Companhia da Moçambique stoutly refused. The Chamber noted the disadvantage of the ‘Niassa and Zambesia natives’: they were “as yet unaccustomed to labour” and therefore a huge gamble and cost. Following successful negotiations with the *Companhia da Niassa* and *Companhia da Zambesia*, WENELA entered British Central Africa. Early in 1903, it recruited 931 out of a quota of 1,000 laborers in Nyasaland.<sup>66</sup> They were a drop in the ocean of its total requirements.

WENELA’s audacious attempt to redraw the map of Africa as a feeder of labor to the Rand met with little success. The Chamber went as far as Angola, Nigeria, and

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<sup>65</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1902*: 39-40. Lourenco Marques, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1902; A.R. Goldring, Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, to The Administrator Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1902: Annexure No. 1, “Agreement with Rhodesia,” 6<sup>th</sup> May 1902: 38.

<sup>66</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines Annual Report for the Year Ended 1903*: xxiv-xxiii.

Liberia but was turned away. Recruitment from German West Africa (Namibia) yielded just under 1,000 men a year, who were not very good at the hard underground work the Shangane, Tsonga, and Shona could do.<sup>67</sup>

In the end, the state controlled administrative districts of Lourenco Marques, Gaza, and Inhambane turned out to be the Chamber's most fertile recruitment areas. Over half of the 50,000 square mile area was uninhabited, its barren and waterless stretch between latitude 25° 50' and 22° hardly able to support a scanty population and "perfectly useless" for WENELA's recruitment purposes. By contrast, only 25,000 square miles of the district was inhabited, and the population was thick—100,000 in Lourenco Marques, 180,000 in Gaza, and 360,000 in Inhambane, or 640,000 in all.<sup>68</sup> In total, the recruiting agency had divided its 'hunting grounds' into four districts. In its demarcations, WENELA transformed the countryside into an apparatus of human trafficking to the mines.

Here is a vivid description of the composition of individual recruiting districts and the human resources involved:

In the first district there are three permanent European camps, 21 receiving camps or rest houses, 7 permanent European employees, and 225 native employees. In the second district, there are two permanent European camps, 5 receiving camps or rest houses, 5 permanent European employees, and 276 native employees. In the third district, there are two permanent European camps, 8 receiving or rest houses, 4 permanent European employees, and 296 native employees. In the fourth district, there are five permanent European camps, 37 receiving camps or rest houses, 8 permanent European employees, and 653 native employees.... This makes a total in the four districts of 12 European camps and 71 receiving camps or rest houses, or 83 stations in all; 24 permanent European employees, and 1,450 native employees. There are, of course,

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* xxiv-xxv.

<sup>68</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines Annual Report for the Year Ended 1903: "A Short Account of the Recruiting Work of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, Ltd., in Portuguese East Africa, South of Latitude 22 Degs."*: 4.

changes in the staff from time to time, but the above figures are correct for the middle of the present year. Besides these, there are three or four extra European employees who have no permanent stations, but are employed to relieve others, or in any district where extra temporary assistance is required.<sup>69</sup>

The 83 stations catered for 25,000 sq. miles or one for every 300 sq. miles, each "placed in the most convenient spots, having regard to the thickness of the population and the usual routes of travel." WENELA's permanent staff consisted entirely of European men prepared to live continuously on the East Coast, usually only those too desperate for a living or adventure, the country outside Lourenco Marques being fever-infested. The stations also enlisted "native employees" from their locality as camp and rest house cleaners, guides, and runners all under license from the Portuguese district authorities.<sup>70</sup>

In 1906, WENELA's total recruits from the districts of Gazaland, Inhambane, and Lourenco Marques—where it enjoyed a monopoly—totaled 36,401, some 20,309 of them "old mine boys." In that year, 34,409 had been repatriated through Ressano Garcia. In the 12-months to June 1906 alone, the Portuguese issued 239 recruiting licenses, 66 to WENELA's recruiters alone, and the balance to its competitors. WENELA's recruitment arc therefore extended from the Natal border to Latitude 22, to the north of which was Companhia da Moçambique territory, out of bounds under the Anglo-Portuguese *modus vivendi* of 1890.<sup>71</sup> On 31 December 1906, some 53,135 Africans from these districts were employed on mines and public works, compared to 56,161 at the same time in 1905. At that point, WENELA's monopoly on recruiting in Lourenco Marques was under siege from agents of the newly licensed J.B. Robinson group. In April, another group, the

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

Transvaal Mines Labour Company, also claimed to have obtained Portuguese permission to recruit. Competition was heating up.<sup>72</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Ultimate Test of the Hunt**

What I have just described is an example of the effects of the concessionaire partition of the subcontinent at the turn of the century. This power to ‘mass acquire’, backed up by the firepower of the machinegun, lends itself to a trajectory in weapons of mass acquisition from bows and arrows, to muskets, to rifles like the Martini Henry, to the Maxim. It also points to a transformation in the commodity map from ivory to gold to humans. It is this last element that I tried to imply when talking about Ngungunyane’s capture and exile “as if a trophy.” In the next chapter I would like to bring human trafficking into the discussion not so much as a predecessor or successor to ivory and gold, but as something sharing the same temporality with them—and a hunt in its own right.

In ending this chapter by seeing concessions as *African initiative gone horribly and irreversibly wrong* (that is, resulting in colonialism), it is worth recalling Jean-François Bayart’s controversial argument about the role of Africans in their own problems. Bayart begins by saying that Africans have not been insulated from the worlds beyond the boundaries of their communities. As such, he says, “Africans... have been active agents in the *mise en dépendance* of their own societies,” contrary to a view of such dependence as an unpopular imposition. Bayart concludes, therefore, that “strategies

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<sup>72</sup> Transvaal Chamber of Mines Annual Report for the Year Ended 1907: “Report of Executive Committee and Proceedings of the Annual General Meeting”: xx.

of extraversion form a constant thread throughout the history of the world ... that subjection can constitute a form of action”<sup>73</sup>.

He is right. This is exactly what happened to Ngungunyane. He had sought to play his European enemies against each other through awarding conflicting concessions over the same lands. He lost. In his situation there is an empirical possibility of writing a genre of African history that is self-reflexive, to move beyond worshipping black initiative and acknowledging its nadir. A story like that calls for a widening of repertoires, a search for new tropes that can unify discourses that the fetish of *genre* has artificially separated. Only then can we understand how a king used to granting hunting concessions ended up being a trophy himself, his lands hunting grounds, and his people the game.

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<sup>73</sup> Bayart, “Africa in the World”: 219.

## **Chapter 4 Transgressing Temporal and Spatial Boundaries**

In the last two chapters I discussed ways in which transLimpopo inhabitants used their elastic hunting traditions to intercept European big game hunters, concessionaires, and mining capitalism. I had begun to examine how the mobile workshop of the village and the mobile workshops of ‘incoming European forces’ created different technological junctions.

A pattern is emerging in the relationship between networks and boundaries, portables and mobiles, between villagers and incoming (European) actors. These junctions were all mediated by portable technologies: junctions between hunters and villagers through guns, between European imperialistic interests and African rulers through the concession, and between mine and village through money. It is clear from the last chapter that the changing weaponry and trophy were in response to emerging commodity supply and demand maps—from ivory to gold, to labor needed to produce the gold.

This chapter addresses the question: What happened to the villages and European big game hunters in the colonial period? What did colonial partition change and what changed the colonial partition? I suggest that the colonial border was merely a nuisance

that did not stop the ‘precolonial’ movements of nature, technology and people. Like all categories, borders are only effective so far as those that draw them can police them. This is my point of connection between human trafficking and poaching: both were boundary-crossings, with the same individuals poaching game also *poaching* labor, such that they killed game in order to recruit, and recruited in order to kill game. In the rest of the chapter I discuss the tug-of-war between the state and these “border bandits,” who had become as much a scourge to the state as game animals.

### **Human Trafficking**

*Black ivory* was a code the Boers used to camouflage the trafficking of African children as slaves abducted from the transLimpopo basin to the Transvaal (South African) Republic prior to 1881. Later the term would be extended to the trafficking of adult men in general. As soon as the black ivory reached the Transvaal, it was further camouflaged as *apprenticeship*. When the Venda chief Makado blocked the path to the elephant hunting grounds (Chapter 2), he forced the Boer farmers to find an alternative commodity: slaves. The farmers were also pushed to desperation following the discovery of diamonds in 1866, when thousands of African men trekked to Cape Colony where they were paid in guns.<sup>1</sup>

While the extent to which the whole of the Transvaal was involved in or benefited from black ivory is not easy to ascertain, there is sufficient evidence to argue that those Boers living in the extreme northern fringes of the Zoutpansberg were involved in the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Delius, “Migrant Labour and the Pedi, 1840-80,” in *Economy and Society*: 293-312.

actual raiding. They passed on ‘black ivory’ to the Transvaal’s Highveld farmers, who turned them into slaves.<sup>2</sup>

Following the escalation of British efforts to ban the slave trade in the Transvaal after the Sand River Convention of 1852, the Boers camouflaged slavery as a kind of apprenticeship. They portrayed themselves as master artisans or families employing children in return for training in multiple skills, such as hunting, farming, domestic work, and so forth. Like all modes of apprenticeship, the Boers insisted that theirs was paid traineeship. In reality, however, the apprentice was a slave in all but name. When the British annexed the Transvaal in 1877, the Boers vociferously insisted they had apprentices but definitely no slaves. Meanwhile philanthropic organizations like the Aborigines Protection Society and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society insisted that “hundreds, if not thousands” of Africans—kidnapped in their youth—worked on the Transvaal farms in conditions of slavery.<sup>3</sup>

The Boers other hunted black ivory themselves and made use of African proxies. They would usually seize control of all the fountains, “so that the natives lived in the country only on sufferance.” All that the Boers needed to do was to manage African movement and the labor would literally come running on their own two legs. In return for the “privilege” of drawing water, the African chiefs were forced to provide “as much free labour as [the Boers] required—a true system of slavery.” Boers also harvested the bulk of the black ivory. Usually they compelled Africans to join them into battle and “placed [them] in the forefront” as human shields, so that if the enemy was too powerful the Africans died first. The Boers—safe in the rear and armed to the teeth with guns—then

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<sup>2</sup> Elton, “Journal of an Exploration of the Limpopo River”: 21, citing *The Natal Mercury*, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> “Another Address to Lord Kimberley,” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (February 1881): 18.

finished off the enemy and made off with children, cattle, goats, and any other *stock*.<sup>4</sup> In other times the Boers also struck alliances with African chiefs whom they armed to do the hunting for them.<sup>5</sup>

When David Livingstone publicized this Boer slavery, a philanthropic outrage torched Europe. Missionaries seeking “*to raise the down-trodden natives from the darkness of Paganism into the light of the Gospel of Christ*” saw this as a slap in the face of civilization. By contrast the Boers saw missionaries like Livingstone as obstacles to wealth. How else were they to compensate for the demise of ‘elephant ivory’ if they were now also being asked to abandon raids to acquire ‘black ivory’? The Boers presented Europe with a moral dilemma. If white men who were supposed to be civilized and Christian were the slavers, what more the ‘native heathens’ who knew not ‘the Book’?<sup>6</sup>

These missionaries grossly underestimated the agency of Africans in the face of Boer slave-raiding. In 1971, the historian David Norman Beach pinned the influx of guns to an “incurably defense-minded” mentality throughout the transLimpopo sub-region. Much later, Gerald Mazarire went even further: in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, he says, defense consciousness became a way of life.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to existing scholarship, this way of life was not so much a “refuge tradition”—as both coin it—but much more about making nature a weapon. To talk of such settlements as “refuge” implies that these people lived like refugees. The evidence does not suggest so.

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<sup>4</sup> “Review of William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone* (London: John Murray, 1880),” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (Feb 1881): 28.

<sup>5</sup> Elton, “Journey of an Exploration of the Limpopo River”: 20-1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> David N. Beach, “The Rising in South-Western Mashonaland, 1896-7” (University of London: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1971); 144; Gerald Mazarire, “Defence Consciousness as a Way of Life: The Refuge Period and Karanga Defence Strategies in the 19th Century,” *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies* (24 Nov 1999).

How did nature become a weapon? In the majority of cases, Africans in the transLimpopo frontier with the Boers resorted to building their houses—and villages—on hilltops, high ground, or thorn-surrounded areas as extra insurance against surprise attack. The Venda and other Shona groups along the Limpopo realized that they could not beat the Boers at their own (gun) game, and had to therefore come up with a cheap but lethal defense system. So they settled and built their homesteads on hilltops, transforming these precipices into weapons. Commoners armed with spears, bows and poisoned arrows, clubs and shields guarded their settlements on the leeward side and created an impregnable bulwark against attack. The enemy was forced to climb up the precipice, whereupon the villagers hurled rocks downhill, crushing the intruders to death.<sup>8</sup> Many such hills in the transLimpopo between Shashe and Pafuri had caves, where women, children, the old, and livestock were sent away and guarded, the able-bodied warriors engaging the enemy through a sophisticated system of surprise, ambush, and speed.<sup>9</sup>

Those boys who were captured and apprenticed in the Zoutpansberg were often trained in the use of guns and became slave soldiers who distinguished themselves as *swart skut* (black shots). In time they became indispensable to the Boer master, and in so doing acquired influence. Sent into the hunting grounds to hunt both black and white ivory, some *swart skuts* deserted and rejoined their societies, bringing with them guns that stiffened local resistance against raiders. This could be said of many Venda hunters and warriors, who after training and working as a *swart skut* turned their guns not only on their rivals in succession disputes, but the Boers themselves.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> South Africa Fieldwork: Fieldwork Notes on the Expedition from Phalaborwa to Tulamela and Pafuri, 25 August 2006. Conversation with archaeologist reconstructing the site at Tulamela, 23 August 2006.

<sup>9</sup> M. Motenda, "History of the Western Venda and of the Lemba," in *The Copper Miners of Musina*: 57-8.

<sup>10</sup> Wagner, "Zoutpansberg": 324-5.

By the time gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand (the Rand) in 1886, labor mobilization had already shifted from apprenticeship to a kind of forced wage labor on Boer farms. In 1881, the Anglo-Transvaal Convention had disavowed ‘black ivory’ in very robust language, but perpetuated it in subtle, legalistic ways. While giving ‘the natives’ the right to acquire land with one hand, the Convention took it away with the other by giving land title to the newly created Native Location Commission, a body that now held land “in trust for such natives.” The measure guaranteed Africans freedom of movement while simultaneously nullifying that right through a draconian law that said every ‘native’ could only leave his/her location if in possession of a government pass. These passes could only be given “for the purpose of seeking employment.”<sup>11</sup> The slavery of apprenticeship gave way to the servitude of the passbook.

Such British assault on Boer property (apprenticeship) rights brought back memories of the Great Trek when the Boers had resisted British encroachment at the Cape by migrating out of reach in the 1830s. Boer independence was, after all, based on their insistence on the right to practice their own culture—language, politics, and economics—including the right to own the black body and do whatever they pleased with it. Besides the Convention, the British gun control regulations were an affront to the Boer right to trek and shoot. The switch from ivory and agricultural commodities to gold also created a new momentum towards paid labor. Finally, the British insistence against slavery created a leeway for ‘the new commodity’ (wage labor) to speak for itself.

As a “trade”—that is, both as exchange and profession—illegal labor recruitment or *illicit recruiting* began with the Kimberley diamond rush of 1866 as a function of labor supply and demand. It fed on the ivory hunt and into it: men of the village rushing to the

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<sup>11</sup> “The Transvaal Convention and the Native Races,” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (Aug 1881): 136.

mine not to acquire diamonds but to offer their services in return for muskets with which to come back and hunt, *to be men among others*. Here is a description of Kimberley and the transition to the Rand according to Mahatche, a Shangane man born about 1850:

When I first left home to go to work at Kimberley, Mzila was the chief of our tribe. In those days Kimberley was just starting up [1866], and when I went there first, all the diamonds were obtained by hand. For a long time there was no machinery, and later horse and mule power were introduced. I used to travel backwards and forwards constantly between my home and Kimberley. When the Rand was discovered [1886], I went there instead, as it was very much near my home. Just before the Rand was discovered, I married a wife, Muzhlopa [Mhlope].<sup>12</sup>

The discovery of gold on the Rand took the demand for labor in new directions. The capitation fee the mines offered was as sweet to licensed recruiters as illicit ones: £7 per head for adults, £4 for youths, and £1 for boys. It was the wage the recruits themselves earned through hard labor on the mines. Nobody asked questions about where the recruits came from, and nobody volunteered that sort of information.<sup>13</sup>

The acute supply and high demand could only mean one thing: intense competition for the few sources available, by hook or crook. The “molestation of natives” accelerated throughout the recruiting routes, the touts “extorting money from natives,” some masquerading as police officers to rob, assault, and abduct the migrants. The state was completely powerless to act against these poachers of men. Those returning from the mines were abducted on the pathways.<sup>14</sup>

While railway development went a long way towards containing the molestation, trains serviced a tiny fraction of the major catchment areas. For example, in April 1899,

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<sup>12</sup> Guy A. Taylor, “The Matabele Head Ring (Isidhlodhlo) and Some Fragments of History,” *NADA* 14 (1938): 50; reprinted from *NADA* (1925).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*: 178.

<sup>14</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1895*: 15; also *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1896*: 175-6; R.G. Ockerse, Assistant Mining Commissioner to The Secretary, Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 1<sup>st</sup> Dec, 1896; B. Birkley to The Secretary Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 7 Nov 1896.

the Chamber was making arrangements with the Pretoria-Pietersburg Railway Company to transport African laborers from Pietersburg and Potgietersrus to the Rand. Such measures succeeded in containing molestation inside the Transvaal, but outside it, the *highwayman* was in business. Railway development had a short-term negative effect of tapping into construction labor from the same sources WENELA was recruiting, thereby escalating highway (pathway) robberies. The Chamber was in a fix: while it needed both the railroad and the recruits, it was not prepared to let railroad work force it to import from beyond Africa. Rather it proposed that government imports railway labor from outside the continent. The Chamber was only prepared to allow “10,000 natives of South Africa only” to be recruited for construction work from outside the Transvaal and Portuguese territory.<sup>15</sup>

Such was the competition between recruiters that African men going to or returning from the gold mines fell victim to touts and other highwaymen, who “sometimes molested and robbed” them. The Transvaal Government had instructed its *Field-Cornets* (district officials) and their assistants “to guard against a repetition of such offences” in 1892, but the highwaymen had simply brushed such presence aside. The “harrying and robbing” of migrants on the pathways continued, and many stayed home rather than “attempting a journey attended with so much danger and difficulty.” The Transvaal Chamber had continuously received complaints of “natives stopped on the way and told they must work on the farms, who, rather than do this, returned to their homes.”

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<sup>15</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1899*: 119. Alex L. Secretan, for General Manager, Pretoria-Pietersburg railway Company Ltd, to The Secretary, Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1899. Aso *Transvaal Chamber of Mines 1903*: 79: R.C. 03/351/17, E.P.C. Girouard, Lieu.-Col., Commissioner of Railways to The Secretary Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 22 April 1903 and 03/351/23 W.S. Nathan, Major, for Commissioner of Railways to The Secretary, Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1903.

Gangs of ‘boys’ coming in to Johannesburg of their own accord were being abducted by ‘touts’ “who disposed of them at a premium of so much per head.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1893, the Chairman of the Chamber of Mines put out an advertisement aimed at “liberating the natives coming to these Fields from the interference of touts.” It read:

Whereas many complaints have been received by me about some so-called Kafir Agents or ‘Touts’, that they unlawfully catch or detain Kafirs along the public roads, and deliver them to mining companies at so much a head, and also sometimes unlawfully induce Kafirs to leave their master’s service. So, therefore, as a caution, the following extracts from articles of the Masters’ and Servants’ Law are published. Offenders will be severely dealt with according to law.<sup>17</sup>

Ultimately, illicit recruiters could transform illicit labor into licit labor, and steal licit recruits and resell them elsewhere.

### **Crooks Corner: The Capital of Poachers of Men and Game**

Following Ngungunyane’s defeat in 1895, the locus of power shifted dramatically, ending existing centers of power and creating new ones. The new colonial boundaries the BSA Company hammered out with the Transvaal (1890-1) and the Portuguese (1892) further exacerbated the remoteness of the transLimpopo from the major seats of politico-military power. Remoteness became relative not just to the state but also places of concentrated European settlement. To the local African residents, it was business as usual.

The tsetse fly and mosquito inhibited the state and white settlers from establishing a presence. The former forced the Native Commissioners and police to patrol on foot; donkeys, horses and oxen usually perished as soon as they set foot into the forest. Later in

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<sup>16</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1893*: 52.

<sup>17</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1893*: 55, “Caution,” N. Van Den Berg, Assistant Landdrost, G.B. van Leggello, Public Prosecutor, 27<sup>th</sup> October 1893.

the 1920s-40s, automobiles offered potential to solve the transport problem, but the state never invested any significant resources in road construction. The mosquito discouraged such improvements: which white man, short of insanity, would permanently settle in this backwater of empire? Those temporarily resident in the area were compelled by duty or work: policemen, labor recruiters, cattle ranchers, and outlaws fleeing justice. They stuck religiously to their bottles of quinine to keep off malaria, to the point of constant overdose.

Then the rinderpest came. In 1888-97, the rinderpest epizootic had swept down the continent from Somalia to the Cape, killing livestock and game bovines in its wake. It



SLAUGHTERED CATTLE: SCENE ON THE BANKS OF THE MOLOPO RIVER.  
*From Photograph taken specially for THE AFRICAN REVIEW by the Cape Government.*

Fig. 9 The Devastation of the Rinderpest in 1896-7

Source: *The African Review* (Feb 13, 1897): 273.

devastated Gonarezhou, and the few wild animals that remained retreated into the coastal seaboard of Portuguese East Africa. Without its more reliable food source and vector, the tsetse fly became virtually extinct south of the Save River right into its former habitats in Kruger. On a positive note for the state, this development opened up possibilities for

European ranches to be established in areas west and north of Gonarezhou. On the negative side, the end of the fly was a boon for those white men who resented the strictures of colonial life, who yearned for an unrestricted freedom to hunt both people and game for profit. They could always rely on quinine to combat the mosquito.

These illegal poachers of men left a mark on local history and defined the state. At the point where the Luvuvhu pours into the Limpopo, where the boundaries of Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa, and the Union of South Africa met, was an island. By 1910 this island was called Crooks' Corner because it was to its inhabitants "a sanctuary from civilization, whose solitary state was paradise to all whose deeds or inclinations made imperative a retreat to some last stronghold of the lawless."<sup>18</sup> Very "odd characters" had come down the trail to the store, all of them hunters with different instruments for different prey.<sup>19</sup>

The illicit recruiters capitalized on the confusion of the three colonial states as to the exact boundaries of their jurisdiction. As the incumbent Chief Makuleke (Joas Phahlela) explained in a recent tour to Pafuri, the recruiters would dash for the island whenever chased by any one of the colonial state patrols. The Rhodesians would think the fugitive had crossed the Limpopo to Makuleke, the Portuguese pursuing him from the east would think he was in Sengwe, while the South Africans would be convinced he was in Rhodesia or Portuguese territory. Meanwhile, he would be watching events from the thick bushes of the small island, emerging when the patrols had gone.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*: 13.

<sup>19</sup> See Arthur A. Ketchen, "Notes on a Case of Blackwater Fever or Quinine Haemoglobinuria," *South African Medical Record* iv, 12 (1906): 183.

<sup>20</sup> Knowledge of African Villagers Project: Fieldwork Visit from New Makuleke to Old Makuleke.

Who were these men? Jack Ford—an Australian and former Rhodesian policeman—was one of the very first of the illicit recruiters, coming just after the Anglo-Boer War in 1899-1902. He arrived and purchased the store at Makuleke. The German Jacob Martin Diegel (whom the Shangane affectionately called *Chari*) came soon afterwards. Then John Dart, a Welshman; Wieder, a Hungarian; Colesen, a Swede; and many other ‘strange’ characters. They spanned the whole gamut of professions: from magistrates to army officers to even game rangers.<sup>21</sup> But the most well-known of them all was Cecil Stephanus Rutgers Barnard, an Afrikaner who arrived in 1910 after quitting the South African police to pursue a career of recruiting and ivory hunting.



Fig. 10: Bvekenya Barnard and his biographer

Source: *RhodieChat*.

While Crooks Corner was a refuge in times of trouble, the poachers spent most of their time at the ‘Makuleke Store’, named after the local chief. The store was a service center that by virtue of its goods attracted customers across race and state boundaries.

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<sup>21</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 179.

Bulpin describes it as “a diminutive, nondescript little store” named after the local Tsonga chief. In Barnard’s time the store was “a bustling place” with over a hundred Africans and over twenty European adventurers entering its doors every single day, exchanging ivory and the forest’s many products for food, clothes, strong liquor, and ammunition.<sup>22</sup>

Alec Thompson and William Pye had built it in early 1910—“just a tiny, corrugated-iron shack, falling down almost from the time it was built, its veranda leaning over drunkenly, its guttering broken.” Three rondavels were attached to the store, wherein at night Thompson lit oil lamps to plot his confined bearings. As storekeeper, he had the monopoly to yarn to a hostage audience wishing to be served gin and other necessities from behind the counter.<sup>23</sup>

Makuleke was no mere place of domicile or shopping, but a place-in-motion—a place full of comings and goings, the inhabitants persistently engaged in work in places invisible. Barnard found them—and became a part of—“a curious crowd” whose whereabouts could not be easily ascertained. The store was also a re-supply base and a market. The route just outlined brought products of western and city manufacture to an otherwise ‘remote’ and disconnected place. Here Barnard re-stocked on salt, sugar, coffee, and ammunition. It was also the market where illicit ivory and recruits turned into licit commodities.<sup>24</sup>

The South African authorities found these poachers of men and game to be “irritating subjects.” In August 1913, the Sub-Native Commissioner for Sibasa District, L. Harris, noted that these characters had operated from Makuleke “for many years” and

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*: 14.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*: 14, 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*: 48, 74.

that “the facts thereof have repeatedly been reported upon.” No tangible action had been taken to arrest them. Of the more than sixteen European recruiters operating around Makuleke, only four had licenses. The licit recruiters provided the illicit recruiter with “the means of disposing of the Natives he has recruited or otherwise obtained possession of, in Rhodesia and also in Portuguese Territory.” This is how it happened:

The illegal recruiter returns with his gang of boys and sells them to the licenced holder, who passes them on as the result of his own labours. This is a pernicious practice and one giving rise to the baneful conditions that obtain at the present time, for the illegal man, who has now come to regard himself as being quite beyond the pale of any law, has no scruples as to the manner in which he gets his gangs together. Therefore, he stops short of nothing in the attainment of his object. I think these illegal men would be effectively checkmated if stringent measures were adopted to prevent the licensed man from buying from them.<sup>25</sup>

While he was at Makuleke, Harries had met a Native Labor Contractor based at Pietersburg and protested about the practice of turning illicit into licit traffic.

The contractor had replied: “It is [the practice] that obtains from Makuleka to Pietersburg, therefore how are you going to stop it?” Harries had suggested cancelling the purchaser’s license, but the contractor was pessimistic that any proof of the illegal status of the ‘natives’ could be found. Harries conceded the difficulties from a prosecutor’s point of view, but insisted that “if reasonable grounds for strong suspicion exist, the Director should feel quite justified in cancelling the licence of the one so suspected.” He characterized the mode of recruitment across the borders as “*little short of highway robbery*”:

A runner with a gang of boys is waylaid and the boys taken from him whether they are willing to go or not. Of course, the latter do not care who gets the capitation fee for them as long as they can get down to work. Many of the illegal men depend for their existence almost entirely upon

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<sup>25</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Extract from Report Submitted to the Native Commissioner Pietersburg on the 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1913, No. 56/13/405: L. Harries, “Labour Agents and Recruitment of Natives at Makuleka’s.”

what they are able to seize in this manner. Like master, like servant, the runners are also unscrupulous, and the bad influence of these men upon the natives in general at Makuleka's was noticeable to me during my tour through that part. The Rhodesian and Portuguese police officials, provoked to a state of exasperation, have recently been exercising constant vigilance over the movements of these men, but until concerted and simultaneous action by the police authorities of the three territories, i.e. the two mentioned and the Transvaal, is taken, nothing of much effect can result; for as soon as they are harassed on one side these men flee to the other.<sup>26</sup>

The people of Makuleke generally saw these illicit recruiters as "bandits," but Harries did not regard their banditry as "too severe a one."<sup>27</sup>

He pictured a once "respectable member of society" arriving at Makuleke trading store "clad in a bit of cloth which was wound about his waist, bare-footed and wearing a cheap Kaffir shirt which hung loosely from his shoulders." There he "purchased a pair of boots (the first he had seen for over six months) and putting them on with some admiration, he casually remarked, 'Ah the bush life is a fine life after all'." These bandits were "all at loggerheads one with the other, and, but for their cowardly attributes which undoubtedly have become accentuated by the lives they lead, violent disruptions would most assuredly occur."<sup>28</sup>

Writing to the Secretary for Native Affairs (Pretoria) on 9 September 1913, the Director of Native Labor (Pretoria) deplored "the unsavoury conditions which prevail North of Makuleka's" (around the store), which had "long been known to this Office" but which fell outside its jurisdiction. The Director threw his hands up in the air: "Under present powers we cannot eradicate the evil, even if we can mitigate results." The Director was considering suggestions to make the issuing of Zoutpansberg and

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

Pietersburg licenses conditional upon the holder not recruiting “Natives who reside outside the Union”—as had been done for Barberton.<sup>29</sup>

The authorities could not control immigration into their country because they had no control or knowledge of the complex tapestry of pathways in Mozambique and Rhodesia that fed into Makuleke. To the north and east, a whole tapestry of paths led out from Makuleke across the Limpopo into Rhodesia and Mozambique. The paths of people and those of game interwove through the forests, the latter disjointed and erratic, stretching from the pastures to water-holes and saltpans. These man-made highways led north then northeast across the Limpopo in twists and turns towards the Indian Ocean port settlement of Sofala. The desperados at Crooks Corner used these pre-colonial paths to escape police in South Africa and Rhodesia, often having stolen golden fortunes, and sailing off to far-off lands to begin new lives.<sup>30</sup> The way such paths connected this ‘remote’ place to the rest of the world fits well within Piot’s notion of “remotely global”<sup>31</sup> places, as well as Diouf’s suggestion on the local being an entry-point into the global.<sup>32</sup>

This is not to say that colonial state boundaries had no influence on human mobilities. The main path African men used to go to the Rand followed the borderline on the Portuguese side, where a police garrison served as an immigration post at Massangena on the south bank of Save River. They gave rand-bound ‘Portuguese Africans’ visas to proceed to the Rand, many of them actual ‘Rhodesian Africans’ the

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<sup>29</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: DNL 1950/13/D.240 Acting Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, to The Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1913: “Illicit Recruiting in Southern Rhodesia.”

<sup>30</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 211-2.

<sup>31</sup> Piot, *Remotely Global*.

<sup>32</sup> Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora.”

illicit recruiters like Bvekenya brought through, along with a bribe. The policemen also took bribes from Europeans seeking licenses, even though Bvekenya was rather unfortunate.<sup>33</sup>

In Chapter 2 I mentioned the Baroka and Hlengwe highwaymen who lived along the Limpopo. This phenomenon continued beyond the partition, with these criminals pouncing on African men returning from the mines. These highwaymen were also touts in the employ of illicit white recruiters discussed earlier. The state called these recruiters “bandits” because it considered them to be terrorizing local people into submission. In 1915, a police patrol proposed a 3-man force to be stationed at the Save-Runde junction “or thereabouts” during the winter “with good native Police and to patrol the path leading to the Crocodile [Limpopo].” Because there was only one path, these men would have to send “their boys” by that route. Sending one man patrols was unsafe.<sup>34</sup> What the police would soon discover was that the poachers cut a parallel route.

The poachers of men and game operated from camps inside the densely wooded landscape which offered good cover for ‘the hunted’, such that it was “practically impossible to run these recruiters to earth.” *Good cover* was not just vegetational but also human. In total, these ‘bandits’ were about eighteen illicit recruiters operating between the Transvaal Border, Runde and Save Rivers, Portuguese Territory and Southern Rhodesia. The “worst characters” on the state’s list were Barnard, Diegel and Roux, who stood accused of “terrorizing all the natives in the District by flogging them and threatening to shoot them.” The people were “afraid to stay in their villages,” and police

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<sup>33</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 212.

<sup>34</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Herbert J. Taylor, Chief Native Commissioner Rhodesia to The Under-Secretary for Native affairs, Pretoria, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1915: “Illicit Recruiting of Southern Rhodesia Natives.”

patrols saw “quite a number of villages... deserted and the natives were living in the bush.” The three men worked in partnership, each of the armed with a rifle and revolvers, promising “to shoot the first policeman they happen to run into.” In 1912, Barnard had a warrant of arrest on his head for shooting a ‘Portuguese African’ because he had sold the trio to Portuguese Police. In that incident, the Portuguese surrounded the ‘bandits’ and captured a lot of “stuff” from them.<sup>35</sup>

Writing to his opposite number in Pretoria on 28 April 1915, Southern Rhodesia’s Chief Native Commissioner Herbert J. Taylor disclosed that one of the agents that “the natives” had identified as ‘Maspitelli’ was in fact a certain Phillipson, who worked for a Mr. Erskine. Phillipson resided on the Transvaal side of Mlala Drift. The CNC was more concerned however with “the repatriation to this Territory of these natives” and would ensure that the recruiter (Erskine) “should bear the cost of repatriation.”<sup>36</sup> Taylor attached a letter he had recently received from a European resident in the Melsetter District of Rhodesia, adding that if the facts were as alleged:

The recruitment of these natives is in contravention of Act 22 of 1913 of the Union inasmuch as the field of operations lies to the North of Latitude 22 degrees south, and you may deem it advisable to take steps with a view to putting a stop to these proceedings. As far as possible, this Government is endeavouring to detect and punish illegal recruiters for the Rand Mines.<sup>37</sup>

Here we meet Buchanan (one of the recruiters) on 25 May 1915, as recipient of a letter from Harries, regretting that the 37-strong gang of ‘Natives’ he had forwarded for transmission to the mines had been rejected “on their own admission that they come from

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Herbert J. Taylor, Chief Native Commissioner Rhodesia to The Under-Secretary for Native affairs, Pretoria, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1915: “Illicit Recruiting of Southern Rhodesia Natives.”

<sup>37</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Herbert J. Taylor, Chief Native Commissioner Rhodesia to The Under-Secretary for Native affairs, Pretoria, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1915: “Illicit Recruiting of Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia.”

the Sabi. They state that they were prompted by one Longone [Long One] who is in your employ to give false particulars to me of [their] domicile." The NC wanted to know what sort of "runner's permit this Native Longone holds," and forewarned him that "rigid steps will be taken to stop the recruitment of Natives from North of Latitude 22° South."<sup>38</sup>

Buchanan replied as follows:

I have warned the runners in my employ against prompting the boys, as requested by you. If you find that any one of them has been doing this, I shall be glad if you will cancel his permit at once, and let me know. Re. Native Longone; this boy is not employed as a Runner by me. His work is in connection with the store and he has never recruited a native nor had charge of natives, bar those employed by me in connection with the store. The Runner M. Pagati will be able to tell you that I have warned him, and also all my runners. I do not believe the natives' statement as to Longone. If these boys were prompted to give false particulars it must have been before they came here. Trusting that no further trouble in particular will occur."<sup>39</sup>

In another letter dated 14 June 1915, Harries complained that the lawlessness of "the gang of illicit recruiters operating beyond the borders of this province has for some time past engaged our careful attention," but any efforts to combat it had failed because his police officers had no jurisdiction over that area north or east of the beacon. Harries diagnosed the problem of illicit recruiting to his superior the Director as follows:

When the provisions of section 5 of Act 22 of 1913 together with those of section 9 of Special Regulations Transvaal under Act 15 of 1911 became rigidly enforced with a view to preventing the recruitment of prohibited immigrants, hopes were entertained that the field of operation of the illicit man having thus been restricted he would find that it would not be worth his while to continue his nefarious occupation. But instead of the restrictions having this effect they have been favourable to the illicit man who made it evident to the tropical labourer *that but through him he could not get to the Rand to work.* Thus it was that our efforts to stop the recruitment of tropical Natives were neutralized through the prompting by the illicit man and his runners with the connivance of the licenced man to

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<sup>38</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Sub-Native Commissioner, Sibasa, to D.T. Buchanan, Esq., Makuleka, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1915.

<sup>39</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: D.T. Buchanan, Makuleka, to The Sub-Native Commissioner, Sibasa, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915.

whom the tropical gangs are sold of all natives coming from beyond above mentioned parallel.<sup>40</sup>

For months the practice continued, until Harries decided that all gangs of “Natives” be brought before him “for attestation.” He subjected them “to a rigid examination.” He obtained “information from Natives with a thorough knowledge of the localities from which the [‘recruits’] alleged they came,” and used it to perform a sort of ‘lie detector test’ which many gangs failed and were returned to their villages north of the Limpopo. In the first week of June alone, Harries had rejected two gangs totaling 39 men “who swore they came from areas south of Latitude 22° south but finally confessed that they had been told to say so whereas in truth some came from near Sofala Bay and others from Melsetter in Rhodesia.” While he had been doing all he could “to prevent tropical Natives being ‘smuggled’ through in this manner,” Harries had found it “not always possible to disprove the false particulars they give as to the domicile.” Many “Rhodesian natives” trafficked via Makuleke had been primed to disclose their place of residence give their place of residence as being some place south of latitude 22° in Portuguese Territory. Harries concluded the only solution was “to prohibit the recruitment of Natives from outside the Union in the area north of a direct line running from the Messina Copper Mine to the northern beacon of Tongwe’s Location, and from thence to the northern beacon of Mhinga’s Location.” That way, the licensed men would retire from Makuleke and set up new depots southwards close to the local police post, “a considerable distance from the illicit men who operate beyond this province.” This would not hamper the recruitment of legitimate labor. Harries felt it essential to show labor agents at Makuleke

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<sup>40</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 131/15/351 L. Harris, Sub-Native Commissioner, Sibasa, to the Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1915: “Illicit Recruiting of Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia.”

that “it is not worth while to risk departing in any way from the regulations under which licences are granted to them.”<sup>41</sup>

Buchanan rejected the claims that Longone had been “prompting tropical Natives to give false particulars to this office,” but Harries found it “strange that two separate gangs should have made this statement.” There could only be one explanation: “It seems as if, in order that we should not be able to get at the runners, tropical Natives are brought to Buchanan’s store where they receive the necessary prompting from Longone a private servant.”<sup>42</sup> Harries had extracted two affidavits to prove this. One had the names of six natives: Manyatshe alias Xmas, Tshimbute alias Chisell, Maheleni alias Sukuzonke, Lambeni alias Viet, Manyaka alias Matibele, and Tokolilepi alias Tom. Each swore they had come from Chief Musikavanhu’s area in Melsetter in Rhodesia:

We were recruited and taken to Kennene (Mr. Buchanan) of Makuleka. When we arrived at Makuleka Native Longone told us that we must give our correct residences if we wished to go to Johannesburg as the Government did not allow it. He told us to say we come from Chief Maboyi and Rangani and that we must say Gidjani because it is not far from the Transvaal border – said that if we said Melsetter we would be sent back as it is very far away.<sup>43</sup>

The second affidavit was signed by Native Nkozieta alias Comenutja, who lived at Manyiso, in Chief Mosikabantu in Melsetter, Rhodesia:

I was recruited and taken to Mr. Buchanan’s store at Makuleka. Native Longone who works for Mr. Buchanan told me in the presence of seven other natives who also came from Melsetter, that we must give our residence as Chief Maboyi and that we pay our tax at Gidjani and not Melsetter, as we would be returned home if we give our correct residence. We were then taken and sent by Mr. Buchanan to the Sub Native Commissioner, Sibasa, for passes.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 131/15/351 L. Harris, Sub-Native Commissioner, Sibasa, to the Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1915: “Illicit Recruiting of Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia.”

<sup>42</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 387/14/352 C.L. Harries, Sub-Native Commissioner Sibasa, to the Director of Native Labour Johannesburg, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1915.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

The third affidavit was signed by “Native Tshimeni alias Fifteen,” also of Chief Musikavanhu:

I was recruited with others by Native runner Phillip and taken to Kennene (Mr. Buchanan) at Makuleka. On our arrival there Native Longone told us that we must not say that we come from Melsetter as we would be sent back but we must say we come from Chief Rangani and pay taxes at Gidjani. Longone told us as we come from far we would not be allowed to pass through and we must therefore quote a residence close to the Transvaal border.<sup>45</sup>

After “carefully studying” a report the Native Department Officials of the Union had submitted to the Director of Native Labour on 13 September 1915, the Rhodesian Commissioner of Police and the CNC were convinced that the Union was “anxious to assist... in putting a stop to illicit recruiting of natives” in Rhodesia. The Rhodesians referred to Harries’s suggestion of “prohibiting the recruitment of natives from outside the Union” north of the 22°. The CNC could tell from Union correspondences that licensed agents received gangs of illicit recruiters at Makuleke’s location, “the geographical position of which renders it somewhat easy for the illicit recruiter to evade the police.” Therefore, if the licensed recruiters were removed from that locality, “the illicit Recruiter would have no market for his natives.”<sup>46</sup>

The Native Commissioner at Pietersburg had recommended that licenses be withdrawn from those agents who received labor from illicit recruiters. The CNC and Police Commissioner urged the South Africans not to issue any licenses to recruiters in the locality of Makuleke “as there would appear to be no real necessity for them.” There were enough recruits in the Transvaal “and many of the natives obtained by recruiters in

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, to the Administrator, Salisbury, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1915: “Illicit Recruiting of Native Labour Rhodesia-Transvaal-Portuguese Territory.”

the North are without doubt residents of Rhodesia North of Latitude 22° South and consequently prohibited immigrants in Union Territory.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Putting Colonial Sovereignty in Local Villagers’ Hands**

Let us now turn to Rhodesia and examine the attempts of the state to establish law and order in the borderlands. I discuss how the state responded to these highly *mobile* illegal recruiters by means of patrols (mobility) as opposed to a permanent police station. I will do two things. *First*, I show that the state had no immovable (built) infrastructure to permanently station a force in the borderlands. *Second*, I will examine how the state deployed mobility as a technology of enforcing borders.

By borders I mean two barriers to movement. The first is Rhodesia’s separate boundaries with Portuguese East Africa and the Union of South Africa, through which game products and ‘black ivory’ slipped into the latter colony. The second is the state’s boundaries between Gonarezhou Crown Land (the Rhodesian part of Gonarezhou) and Native Reserves (to which Africans forcibly removed from Gonarezhou were resettled). I argue that the fragility of one affected the other. Whether internal or international, the border was a ball to be kicked around for lack of policing.

The “unalienated land” became a safe haven for poachers of game and men. In the absence of a police station within the unalienated land, the state resorted to patrols. I call them mobile administration for two reasons. First, because they were seasonal: all the rivers—Limpopo, Mwenezi, Runde and Save—were usually in flood, while malaria was devastating in the summer months. This meant that patrols could only take place in the

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

winter months (June–October). The second reason is to see the mobility of the patrolmen as work in the process—because—of movement.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Gonarezhou had been a periphery of the Gaza, Transvaal and Ndebele states before the BSA Company and Portuguese slit it into a frontier area. In other words, it continued as a periphery after and because of the partition. For this reason, local villagers played a crucial role in keeping the frontier under surveillance, and reporting to the authorities on the security situation. Locals were well suited to possess expert knowledge on the subject because of their movements to and from the mines and to visit kin across the Portuguese and Limpopo borders.<sup>48</sup>

Hence villagers along either side of the border had played a crucial role in providing intelligence to the belligerents in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. They were not anybody’s stooges: sometimes they refused to be intelligence cells or to be used by one colonial force against another unless they could leverage such assistance to their own cause. On 1 November 1899, a party of “natives” crossed from the Transvaal via Malaba Drift and reported to Peter Forrestall that a 300-strong, all-white Boer commando was encamped near the drift, “are patrolling down the Limpopo for some distance.” The force had tried to get mobilize “Mashowie’s people” to act against the British. They refused on the grounds that the British annexation of the Transvaal had improved their lot. Whereupon the Boer shot dead six Africans. Another attempt by British shopkeepers or traders living along the Pafuri to get Makuleke’s people to rise against the Dutch had

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<sup>48</sup> NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: Magistrate, Victoria, to CNC, 7 November 1899.

failed: the people refused because the traders were charging too high prices on their goods.<sup>49</sup>

The Native Commissioners usually undertook patrols on the basis of what these local informants told them. For example, acting on the basis of the above information, Forrestall traveled to Gezani a week later, from where he reported on 17 November 1899 that the Boers, who had in fact been at Makuleke just adjacent to Sengwe Reserve had left for their main camp further south near Masetene Mountain.<sup>50</sup> They left only 30 men watching the drift at Sengwe's, just in case the British in Rhodesia entertained ideas of attacking them from that direction. Forrestall determined that the Boers had no intention of crossing into Rhodesia, given their position of weakness: “Natives returning from Johannesburg say that all the Boers have fled to Pretoria, having been driven back from Natal Border.”<sup>51</sup>

It seems proper to suggest, therefore, that villagers were the medium through which the state administered frontier areas. Without them there was no state. On 23 November, Forrestall sent yet another “wire” (telegraph) to the CNC, in which he cited “native reports” that a force from Tuli had crossed the Crocodile (Limpopo) River on the eve of the 13<sup>th</sup> “and that heavy gunfire was heard towards Masetene on the 14<sup>th</sup>. ” The natives also reported that three weeks earlier, “two white men dressed like BSA Police passed Marunguse (Matibi)” and crossed the same river via Sengwe's. The men were

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*; NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: N.S. Taberer, Chief Secretary to CNC, 15 November 1899.

<sup>50</sup> NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: Peter Forrestall , Gezane's, to CNC, 17 Nov. 1899.

<sup>51</sup> NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: Peter Forrestall , Gezane's, to CNC, 20 Nov. 1899.

“mounted and had two mules. They told natives they were going to Portuguese territory.”<sup>52</sup>

Acting upon these reports, Forrestall dispatched his “native messengers” to the river via Marunguse, who reported back that the Boers were still at Hanamva as late as 2 December. By the end of November, the messengers could report to Forrestall that Chief Makuleke [the documents call the chief Sewaas] had captured four Boer women prisoners in revenge for “all his stock commandeered by Boers.” The messenger went on to meet I. Whitfield James, the owner of a local store who had just returned from Spelonken who on the way had engaged eight of Chief Matibi’s subjects at £1 each and sent them to watch the drift east of Tuli. At that time both the Runde and the Tokwe were flooded and impassable, and the Mlala Drift was the only possible crossing point for any potential Boer attack.<sup>53</sup> Forrestall would get word from the villagers stationed there once they detected any suspicious white movement.

On 18 January 1900, the Native Commissioner dispatched yet another native messenger, this time to the Save-Runde junction. The envoy reported no Boer presence either at or near the confluence. However, locals told the messenger that ten Boers had crossed the Limpopo to Chikwarakwara, where they were “met by the Portuguese, who asked them why they had left their women folks behind.” Whereupon five of them returned to the Transvaal to fetch ‘their women’. That was towards the end of December 1899. The messengers sent to the Limpopo to perform the duties of a *de facto* border guard could not verify the presence of Boers in Spelonken, but confirmed the report on

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<sup>52</sup> NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: Chief Secretary, CNC’s Office: “Boers on Rhodesian Border,” 1<sup>st</sup> December 1899.

<sup>53</sup> NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: Peter Forrestall , Marka Pass, to CNC, 19 December 1899.

Boers going to Portuguese territory. Meanwhile, James had confided in Forrestall that several of the Zoutpansberg Boers “had said that” in case of defeat they were going to settle at the Dzinalwini Mountains on the Portuguese-Transvaal border about 20 miles south of the junction of the Pafuri and Crocodile Rivers.<sup>54</sup>

The main justification for relying on village intelligence is summarized in Howman’s annual report in 1906: “The district is large and the number of Native correspondingly small. A native policeman is only able to visit their kraal perhaps once in six months.”<sup>55</sup> In Howman’s opinion, Ndanga’s Africans were an under-policed population without adding the extra burden of being border guards; one day this overreliance on ‘natives’ would backfire.

Howman’s prophesy became a reality in 1918. A Rhodesian patrol under Colonel Capell arrived at the Runde River on 12 August 1918, just two days after Barnard’s release. From the Runde it headed to the Nuanetsi Ranch homestead. Peter Forrestall dispatched ‘native messengers’ to the Limpopo, expecting them back at the Nuanetsi Ranch homestead on 15 September. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, he had a conversation with the Headman Gezani’s son who lived about 60 miles north of the Limpopo. He told the NC he had not heard of any Europeans being murdered, “but that there is a rumour that a native stole a shotgun at the Makuleke store, was tied up and escaped.” Otherwise everything was quiet. Gezani was a headman under Chief Vurumela and lived about two days’ journey from the Limpopo.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> NAZ N3/14/2-4 Internal Security: Intelligence: Peter Forrestall , Tshilonga, to Chief of Security, Commandant of Police, BSA Police, 29 January 1900.

<sup>55</sup> NAZ N9/1/9 Annual Reports of Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) and all Native Commissioners in Mashonaland for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1906: Ndanga District: Report for Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1906 (E.G. Howman, Assistant Native Commissioner, Ndanga).

<sup>56</sup> NAZ N3/14/6 Internal Security: Intelligence: NC. P. Forrestall ( Homestead, Nuanetsi River) to the Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 14 Sept 1918.

The Shangane ‘native’ who had spread the rumor of a Shangane uprising against Rhodesia was named other than Klass. In a sworn statement signed before Peter Forrestall, Klass said that in June he was employed by a party of six Europeans hailing from Pretoria. These men were going to the Northern Transvaal’s Splonken district “to recruit natives for work.” The party proceeded to the part of the Northern Transvaal at the Limpopo-Mwenezi river junction and encamped on the banks of the Luvuvhu. For three weeks they stayed in this camp, during which time Klass was dispatched into the country to “recruit boys for labour in Johannesburg.” He managed to enlist “about 29, who were sent away to Johannesburg.”<sup>57</sup>

Two weeks had passed when, one day, “a great number” of Shangane men arrived at the camp. Nobody had recruited them: “There were very many of them (number unknown). They came & said they would work. They were told by the whitemen that they would be fixed up.” So “the whitemen went to sleep.” In the dead of night the Shanganes raided the camp, “caught the whitemen, tied their hands together with string and cut their throats.” Klass said he was fast asleep together with other natives, including a wagon driver named Joseph, a Musutu (Sotho) who lives at Proporosi near Pietersburg. The Shangane “caught all the natives in this camp of ours and killed them whilst they slept, but I and Joseph were tied up.”<sup>58</sup>

Klass had managed to “loosen the reims [talons] around my ankles” and upon going to the whitemen’s camp he saw that they “were being tied up, and I saw with my own eyes the Shangaans tying up the whitemen, and I saw the Shangaans cut their throats & also disembowel them.” After bearing witness to this murder most fowl, Klass ran for

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<sup>57</sup> NAZ N3/14/6 Internal Security: Intelligence: 11 September 1918, CNC to Dept of Admin: “Alleged Shangaan unrest Copy of Statement made by Native Klass.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

his life to Mapaya, a Portuguese police camp, and got there at sunset. He knocked the door and told the Portuguese policemen that a Shangaan *impi* was heading in their direction and “and they would be killed.” They dismissed his story and told him “to go & sleep.”<sup>59</sup>

The next morning Klass and “one Portuguese Native police boy” retraced to about one mile from the scene of the Shangane atrocities. They encountered the Shangaan *impi* and ran away. Klass saw the *impi* “go to the camp & tie up 3 white Portuguese police. The native Portuguese police joined with the Shangaan *impi*.” Klass saw the police take the rifles, too late as the *impi* “surrounded the camp, burst open the doors of the house & caught and tied up the white police.” The *impi* demanded money from the White Police, too the keys from one of the European police and opened the safe. Klass “did not see them take money from the safe, but I heard later that they had.” Thereafter the *impi* took the white Portuguese outside the house, cut their throats and “disemboweled them to get the fat from them.” Klass “saw with my own eyes (here the informer swears the oath) the whitemen murdered.”<sup>60</sup>

Klass ran away from the scene of the latest murder following the Mwenezi River until he reached the Nuanetsi Ranch and revealed what he had seen to “the whitemen.” He then headed towards the Ranch’s Runde section en route to Chibi. Along the way he “heard” that two Europeans had been killed at Makuleke. He was also “told” that all ‘the natives’ under Chiefs Chikundu, Chibasa, Maplani, Makoloko (the latter only a small chief) had risen. So too had “the natives in Portuguese country.” Klass was also “told” that a large Shangane *impi* was heading towards Musina. Indeed, it was “common talk”

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

among the ‘Northern Transvaal Shanganes’ that “several natives” had come down from German East Africa and were saying that the Germans were very strong. The English were “running away, & now was the opportunity for the Shangaans to rebel.” However, the Shangane did not wish “to side with either party, but wishes to become strong & independent as they were all along.” As Klass had heard, it was “common talk” in the Northern Transvaal that the Masutu (the Sotho) were “going to rebel at Christmas time this year.” “The Dutchmen” were going about among the Masutu “inciting them to rebel,” and to time their rising for Christmas time. But now the Shangane atrocities had thrust the cat among the pigeons!<sup>61</sup>

Klass disclosed that there seemed to be a “campaign apparently by some native society who are sending letters & messengers” to Northern Transvaal chiefs Maplani, Chibasa and Chikunda to coordinate this rebellion. The organizers had approached the Ndebele, but it was not known who exactly the messengers were. Klass had obtained this information from “Shangane natives in Nn Transvaal,” but along the Mwenezi he had seen enough signs of preparations for war. He saw “no food in the kraals”:

Since the threshing this year all food has been taken & hidden in the hills, & also big grain pits have been dug in the bush, & the grain hidden there.

At or near, or just below the junction of Nuanetsi and Limpopo Rivers there is an island, and a great quantity of food is being collected here.<sup>62</sup>

In a telegram on the 7<sup>th</sup> September, Forrestall advised his superiors at Victoria: “Natives here not heard anything except rumour spread by Blantyre native. Natives passed en route busy in gardens. Leaving for homestead section BSA Co. ranches at once.”<sup>63</sup> But on the 9<sup>th</sup>, the CNC sent a telegram to the NC Chipinga warning: “Urgent: Reported Shangaan

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> NAZ N3/14/6 Internal Security: Intelligence: Telegram from the Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, to CNC, Received 9 September 1918.

rising Nu Transvaal. Reported Europeans murdered at Makulekas near Crocodile 6 labour recruiters. Please make inquiry & cable confidentially. Possibly chief Mapungwana could give information of a reliable nature if sent for.”<sup>64</sup>

Forrestall was not taking Klass’s report lightly, however. In liaison with the police, he resolved that Klass guide a patrol “and show them spot where Europeans were killed.” He told the District Superintendent of Police that from what he knew of the Shangane, it was “quite probable that the report of a rising is correct & something should be done at once.” The district police chief suggested that an “armed mounted force of European police & native police be sent down at once to patrol the district.” The force could headquartered at Nuanetsi Ranch—owned by the BSA Company—which could be accessed “by motor patrol” and the rest on horseback. The bush was rather thick, but the water supply good. A show of force would demonstrate once and for all to the Shangane that the state world brook no nonsense. It was easy for patrols to leave from Gwanda to the Nuanetsi Ranch. There was only one question that puzzled the regional police chief: “Do not the Transvaal or Portuguese authorities know nothing of the alleged rising? This is quite possible as they are a distance from alleged scene of murders.”<sup>65</sup>

### **State Patrols against Border Banditry**

Let us follow through this discussion to see how local footpads like Klass sent the state into panic, triggering all sorts of mobilities. Acting on the Administrator’s instructions, Taylor telegraphed the Union’s Director of Native Labour in Johannesburg to discuss

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<sup>64</sup> NAZ N3/14/6 Internal Security: Intelligence: Translation of Code Telegram from CNC to NC, Chippinga 9 Sept 1918.

<sup>65</sup> NAZ N3/14/6 Internal Security: Intelligence: Copies of Telegrams Received from Chibi Police, 5 Sept 1918: “Alleged Shangaan Rising.”

further the latter's letter of 13 September 1915. He wanted to know whether the Director had followed through his promise to secure cooperation from employers of labor agents operating in North-eastern Transvaal. The Director replied that:

Arrangements had been secured between recruiting interests concerned to limit agents who will work on a salary basis. The organization would pool capitation fees by agreement; labour agents would be debarred capitation fees in respect of natives from outside Transvaal. It was hoped these measures would obviate inducements of Sub-Agents to recruit properly.<sup>66</sup> Taylor acknowledged the good faith the Union Government was showing towards meeting Rhodesia's requests, therefore it would be better to wait for the results before approaching the High Commissioner. In the meantime, Portuguese cooperation might be sought.<sup>67</sup>

After consultations with the Commissioner of Police, Taylor advised that the approach be made to the Portuguese High Commissioner to secure cooperation for joint operations that would also involve the Union. The first step involved lots of information exchanges: Taylor suggested that "a dispatch be sent to the High Commissioner giving full and complete data from the records in our possession." Files were exchanged that disclosed how each administrative, policing, and labor system function on the three sides of the borders "in connection with the traffic in natives." In a memo dated 23 February 1915, the Union's Director of Native Labour had told his counterpart Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria, that "there was no law or regulation under which individual recruiters could be brought to book for engaging tropical natives already within the borders of the Union." Two months earlier, J.W. de Jager, the Inspector for Native Laborers in Dundee

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<sup>66</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Herbert Taylor, Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, to The Secretary, Department of Administrator, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1916: "Illicit Recruiting of Native Labour: Rhodesia, Transvaal, Portuguese Territory."

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

(Natal) had asked the Director to find out how certain Southern Rhodesian natives were being recruited for the Hlobane Coal Mines in Natal. His letter read in part:

The following batches were received on the Mine between the dates above given (23<sup>rd</sup> April-14<sup>th</sup> May, 1914): April 23<sup>rd</sup> 41; the 27<sup>th</sup> 31; May 2<sup>nd</sup> 38; the 9<sup>th</sup> 106; and on the 14<sup>th</sup> 41. I then called all the tropical natives together and had a general conversation with them; when it transpired that although they were all happy and satisfied with the treatment accorded them by the Mine authorities, some of them were much aggrieved at the manner in which their agreements to proceed to this mine had been obtained.<sup>68</sup>

De Jager found the various complaints to come from a 19<sup>th</sup> batch of 106 recruits, and he took a statement from “their Induna, and from one of their number.”<sup>69</sup>

Writing to the Administrator of Rhodesia on 12 November 1915, the Governor of the Mozambique Territory chronicled the extent of the illicit recruitment problem in his domains. He noted that in early July, a ‘native’ named Ruchimba, who lived in the Spelonken area of the Transvaal, had paid a visit to the lands of Chief Mahenye (Mossurise District) to see his brother, Chinzini. While there he was murdered, and the Magistrate’s Court in the District was waiting to try three men arrested for committing this crime. In addition to the murder, these men had also allegedly set fire upon Chinzini’s ‘kraal’ and robbed him of £5 and one head of cattle. The three co-accused were Charles Diegel, a German national known among the ‘natives’ as ‘Charlie’; Cecil Barnard, an Afrikander whom locals called Bvekenya; and Roux, a mixed race Transvaalian whom natives knew as ‘Ruzh’. All three were well known in the entire frontier from Melsetter to Limpopo “as adventurers and illicit native recruiters, having certainly police record in the Territory.” It was said they had fled Makuleke (Transvaal)

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<sup>68</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Herbert Taylor, Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, to The Secretary, Department of Administrator, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1916: “Illicit Recruiting of Native Labour: Rhodesia, Transvaal, Portuguese Territory.”

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

“to unknown destinations,” possibly into Rhodesia. The Governor was requesting the Administrator “give your instructions to have them arrested, if they are found there, and sent to this Government, which will pay all the expenses incurred with their conveyance.”<sup>70</sup>

In sweeping the trouble spots, a patrol would head from Chibi Station first to replenish supplies before heading to a rendezvous with a second police detachment from Ndanga. The white officer(s) rode on mules, while the African police and porter details trundled on foot, driving pack donkeys laden with patrol supplies comprising folding beds (for white officers only) and mosquito nets, and quinine. They would rendezvous at T.W. James’s Chitanga Native Store to buy fresh vegetables before proceeding to the designated rendezvous.<sup>71</sup> From the concentration point the patrol would head for the homestead of a village informer to gather basic intelligence on the whereabouts of the ‘bandits’.<sup>72</sup>

Patrols were over-reliant on villagers for intelligence. Before the expected day of arrival in a locality, the patrol would dispatch local informers into the village to hear what people were saying about the whereabouts of the bandits.<sup>73</sup> Besides the deliberate misinformation from people working with or afraid of the consequences of antagonizing the bandits, the patrol was often led on a wild goose chase. The patrol often left to

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<sup>70</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 538/2687: Governo do Territorio da Companhia de Moçambique, Beira, to the Administrator, Southern Rhodesia, 12 November 1915.

<sup>71</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Cpl. G. Pierce, BSA Police, Chibi, to The District Superintendent, BSA Police, Victoria, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1916.

<sup>72</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 1916 Tpr. J.M. Scallan, Chippinga, to The A.D.S.P. Melsetter, 18.8.15.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

investigate a murder, assault or ivory poaching case, only to discover on arrival that either nothing had happened, or it happened in Portuguese territory.<sup>74</sup>

Village intelligence determined the objective and itinerary of the patrol. It was usually after village reports that the patrols were undertaken. Once in the area, locals were less likely to raise suspicion that the patrol, so they were sent to scout ahead. The information they brought determined where the patrol headed next. The state acted on what the people told it. Sometimes the police were sent on a wild goose chase into the Bendama area in Ndanga when Bvekenya was heading south across the Guluene to Makuleke. In which case the patrol would break camp, double their speed to catch up with the culprits, oblivious that it was actually increasing it. Only when the patrol reached other villages was it told the ‘thugs’ were heading the other way.<sup>75</sup>

It became clear that patrols alone were not enough. At the very least, a temporary post was necessary close to these men’s camps. The recruiters were active “only during the dry season,” so that “the post could be withdrawn when the rains commenced.” Patrols of short duration were ineffective, the Portuguese border police “impotent.” Once a Rhodesian police post was in place, joint surveillance either side of the border would leave ‘bandits’ fleeing from one territory with no refuge in the other.<sup>76</sup> It would require “stirring up... the Portuguese to render effective aid.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Lieutenant H.J. Simpson, Asst. Dist. Supt., Police Melsetter Sub-District to the Dist. Supt, BSA Police Umtali, (nd. But between 8-27.8.15): “Re. Illicit Recruiting.”

<sup>75</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Tpr. J.M. Scallan, Chippinga, to The A.D.S.P. Melsetter, 18.8.15.

<sup>76</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Lieutenant H.J. Simpson, Asst. Dist. Supt., Police Melsetter Sub-District to the Dist. Supt, BSA Police Umtali, (nd. But between 8-27.8.15): “Re. Illicit Recruiting.”

<sup>77</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Capt. R.H. Lidderdale, District Supt., Pile, Umtali District, to the Staff Officer, Salisbury, 27.8.15.

The state seized on the disturbances of the recruiters to assert its own paternalism vis-à-vis the position of Africans, taking them as victims of border banditry. In a letter to the South African High Commissioner on 16 February 1916, the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia cited Scallan and Pierce's findings when pinpointing bandits' theater of operations in the border areas of Ndanga, Chibi, and Melsetter. He also suggested that the desperadoes were "bribing chiefs to supply labour, forcing natives to supply grain, and compelling or inducing natives who reside in villages, or who may be en route to the Transvaal, to accompany them." Sounding a paternalistic tone, the Administrator emphasized the "necessary for the protection of the natives, who are gradually becoming terrorized owing to the lawless acts of these individuals."<sup>78</sup> He noted that the "unlicensed recruiter" used one method of abduction, intercepting Africans either side of the Limpopo and "sell[ing] them to the licensed recruiters in the Transvaal, who pass[ed] them on as the result of their own labour." To avoid identification, the recruits were identified as coming from south of the latitude 22° South. They lied under oath to get into the Union.<sup>79</sup> To cut out the unscrupulous middle figures, all three states agreed "to limit the number of agents to those who will recruit on a salary basis, [the Transvaal Chamber] pooling capitation fees in respect of natives from outside the Transvaal."<sup>80</sup>

Although Rhodesia saw the measures as "no doubt a step in the right direction," it was erring on the side of caution because as long as the market for labor remained, the "evil" would continue. Only a "combined and coordinated police action" in April to

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<sup>78</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: The Administrator's Office, Salisbury, to His Excellency the High Commissioner for South Africa, the Right Honourable Viscount Buxton, 16 February 1916.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

coincide with the commencement of the recruiting season could ensure that “these *bandits*” would be put out of circulation.<sup>81</sup>

At that time, Rhodesia was discussing measures to allow ‘hot pursuit’ operations into neighboring territory and assigning a mobile magistrate attached to the patrols so that he could try on the spot and convict while evidence was at hand (the recruits in his possession being live exhibits). From there the police would take the culprit straight to jail instead of escorting him 300 miles away to the nearest magistrate. The three governments had to move swiftly towards “concerted and simultaneous action by the Police authorities of the territories concerned in hunting down these outlaws.” The Commandant-General of Police advised the Administrator that every time police patrols tried to arrest the illicit recruiters, “they immediately took refuge in Portuguese Territory, where we have ample evidence that they follow certain tracks and have supply depots and camps along such tracks.” The Governor of Mozambique meanwhile confirmed that “when chased by Portuguese Police, the persons referred to take refuge in Rhodesia.”<sup>82</sup>

The simplest way of driving these “bandits” out of business once and for all was to cooperate in joint border patrols “during the coming cold weather.” To do so, the first step was to come up with a mutual bilateral agreement with two major provisions: (a) That this Administration is prepared to provide a strong Police patrol composed of both European and Native police, and that it is suggested in order to render its action effective, it should be permitted by the Portuguese Government to enter the Territory of the Mozambique Company when in pursuit of these illicit recruiters. (b) That in order to avoid complications and ensure complete cooperation, including the power to arrest in

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

Portuguese Territory, it is suggested that a Portuguese Officer or official and a qualified interpreter should be attached to and accompany this patrol throughout its operations.

The Commandant proposed that under this agreement, Rhodesia would allow Portuguese patrols to enter its territory “in pursuit of the Bandits.” Portuguese and Rhodesian police would be mandated to cooperate within the framework of “a reciprocal arrangement.” A Rhodesian official and interpreter could then be attached to the Portuguese force, and vice-versa if a Rhodesian police force was getting into Portuguese territory.<sup>83</sup>

Although it was not until August that the Governor of Mozambique gave his official go-ahead, the exchange of intelligence between the two authorities on the whereabouts of Barnard, Diegel, and Roux was already increasing. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioner of the BSA Police supplied information “to locate and arrest the men, Diegel, Barnard and Roux.” On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the Administrator’s secretary sent his opposite number in Beira “a copy of an anonymous letter received by the Commissioner of Police regarding testimony of the crime of murder by the three men named Diegel, Barnard and Roux in Portuguese Territory.”<sup>84</sup> On 9 May 1916, the Governor of the Mozambique Company Territory informed his counterpart in Salisbury that he was “awaiting some details from our Commandant at Mossurise (Mandlakazi) which will facilitate completion of the study that is being proceeded with of the suggestion made by His Honour the

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<sup>83</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Brig-General/Commandant-General’s Office to the Administrator, Salisbury, 13<sup>th</sup> March 1916: “Illegal Recruiting.”

<sup>84</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Commissioner’s Office, BSA Police, Salisbury, to The Secretary, Dept. of Administrator, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1916; NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Secretary, Department of Administrator, to The Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, Beira, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1916.

Administrator” regarding intelligence on the three ‘bandits’.<sup>85</sup> The governor acceded to the Rhodesian plan on 7<sup>th</sup> August.

The archives are silent until a dispatch from Peter Forrestall on 13 January 1917, forwarding to the Superintendent of Natives (Victoria) a copy of an affidavit by “native Gaba” of Mupfichani’s village regarding Diegel’s cross-border raid on his cattle and small stock. Forrestall noted that Diegel “and a man named Barnard” had been labor-recruiting on the border for several years, and came into Gonarezhou to poach elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus and other “royal game.” Forrestall complained that Barnard had recently flogged two natives in his district “because he... gave information against him.” Barnard had sternly warned some villagers that “if he catches certain of [Forrestall’s] Native Messengers on the border he will shoot them.” While BSA Police had patrolled the area every year, Barnard and Diegel would be in Portuguese territory and out of reach. Forrestall acknowledged the disciplinary power of Barnard’s violence and asked that the state match it with its own, starting with joint patrols.<sup>86</sup>

The net also seemed to be closing in on Barnard after the police received intelligence on the 6<sup>th</sup> March that he was relaxing at Makuleke. Rhodesia quickly relayed this information to the Assistant NC at Sibasa.<sup>87</sup> On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the Administrator advised the Law Department: “Perhaps it might be possible to take action direct. The accompanying

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<sup>85</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Secretary-General, Governo do Territorio da Companhia de Moçambique, Beira, to the Secretary to His Honour the Administrator, Salisbury, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1916.

<sup>86</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Peter Forrestall, Native Commissioner Chibi, to The Superintendent of Natives, Fort Victoria, 13<sup>th</sup> January 1917.

<sup>87</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Staff Officer (Lieutenant), Commissioner’s Office, BSA Police, to The Secretary, Department of Administrator, Salisbury, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1917: “Re. Cecil Barnard alias Vecanha.”

papers show that Barnard is one of a gang of outlaws.”<sup>88</sup> The Law Department recommended that South Africa be also involved in the pursuit, arrest and prosecution of Barnard.<sup>89</sup> After all, had not the Administrator himself given Barnard’s address as Makuleke in Sibasa, a part of the Transvaal?

While preparations were underway to move on Diegel and Barnard during the winter months commencing in May, nature intervened in favor of the three state authorities. On 7 April, BSA Police received information from their village intelligence sources that Diegel had been “severely gored by a buffalo, and [was] lying at his camp in Portuguese territory, being nursed by Barnard.” The camp was situated on the east bank of the Dhabgazi River, a small tributary of the Chepfu River, about 15 miles from the Anglo-Portuguese Boundary. Close by was the village of Headman Chibala, which in Bvekenya’s biography is “Shubela.”<sup>90</sup> The Administrator promptly alerted the Governor.<sup>91</sup>

The archive is very patchy for the intervening period, but on 22 June, BSA Police reported to the Administrator the arrest of Charles Diegel in Portuguese Territory. The Governor would be informed also that Diegel was facing a charge of stock theft in Rhodesia. In the event of Diegel’s conviction for offenses in Portuguese Territory, the

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<sup>88</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 2629: Secretary Department of Administrator. to The Secretary Law Dept, 14 March 1917 “Urgent.”

<sup>89</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Secretary Law Department, to The Secretary Department of Administrator, Salisbury, 15 March 1917.

<sup>90</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Staff Officer, Commissioner’s Office BSA Police, Salisbury, to The Secretary, Department of the Administrator, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1917: “Re. Digel alias Charles. Barnard alias Vechana.”

<sup>91</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Administrator to Governor Beira, 10/4/17.

Governor would be asked to inform Rhodesia of the sentence, “in order that the matter of asking for Diegel’s surrender may be considered.”<sup>92</sup>

Again the record is thin until August when we learn of Barnard’s arrest. On the 7<sup>th</sup> a staff officer broke the news that Barnard was now in custody at Victoria charged with stock theft and assault. However, the staff officer at BSA police Headquarters doubted if the case against Barnard would stick “owing to the lapse of time since these offences were committed.” Moreover, he went on, “there would appear to be no extradition treaty with Portuguese East Africa, if this is so, the Commissioner is aware of no procedure which will admit of Barnard being handed over to the Portuguese authorities.”<sup>93</sup> He might have to be set free, the law officer warned.

The prediction became a prophecy. A copy of a telegram dated 10 August 1918 advised without much ceremony: “Barnard fined £5 or 14 days contravening game laws. Charge of assault with intent discharged. He leaves Victoria for his old haunts today. Please wire if any further instructions.”<sup>94</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> the Law Department also confirmed the absence of any extradition treaty with Portuguese East Africa. As such, the Attorney General had directed that “proceedings shall be taken as regards the offences committed in this Territory,” which did not amount to much based on the available fresh evidence. “In the meanwhile,” the government’s chief law officer concluded, “the question of any possible action in the way of handing Barnard over will receive full consideration. Such

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<sup>92</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Staff Officer, Commissioner’s Office BSA Police Salisbury, to The Secretary, Dept. of Administrator, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1917: “Re. Arrest, Charles Diegel.”

<sup>93</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Staff Officer, Commissioner’s Office, BSA Police, Salisbury, to The Secretary Dept. of Administrator, Salisbury, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1918.

<sup>94</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Copy of Telegram from Police, Victoria, to Adjutant, Salisbury, BSA Police, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1918

action seems very desirable if it can be legally carried out.”<sup>95</sup> Barnard was walking free again.

The state concentrated on putting Barnard and his cohorts out of the recruiting business, but was much less interested in clamping down on game poaching. The reason is simple: apart from designating the Gonarezhou area “unalienated land” (land not yet assigned as European private property or ‘Native Reserves’), the state had no plans for wildlife conservation. Here the mosquito ruled: fever discouraged a permanent garrison and regular patrols. The insect virtually opened up the borders that the three governments had ‘closed’ to illicit movements. I will turn to these movements with a view to showing that what the state called “banditry” ignores the agency of villagers designated as victims and their understandings of Barnard as an ally against the state. The state’s nemesis was a friend.

### **Why Borders Failed: Barriers in People’s Pathway to the Hunting Grounds**

In this section I discuss the ways in which Africans shaped and reacted to the state’s partition of their land into colonial states and in them European farms, mining concessions, and state land. I focus on the role of mobility in the search for new hunting grounds as well as resistance against the state-imposed boundaries denying them access to, among others, the Gonarezhou forest. First I show how the mine became the new forest, the mine-shaft laborer the new hunter, and the wage the new carcass. Both mine and farm can each be interpreted within a continuing African tradition of ‘going out’ to look for instruments with which to deal with domestic challenges. As we saw in Chapter

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<sup>95</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Secretary Law Department to Secretary Department of Administrator, 12 August 1918.

1, Africans had long resorted to a second granary whenever food security was threatened. Chapter 2 demonstrated that local men were in the habit of going on temporary journeys to earn a wage in cash or king and returning home to their families.

Pushed off the forests where they had hunted for to live, many men left to work in the mines of the Rand, with a few others to Rhodesia. In the eyes of the state, a good African was one who not only worked for the European enterprise, but who also paid taxes. One of the biggest problems the NC Ndanga, W.N. Moodie, identified in his 1901 annual report was how “to establish how many natives go to work as owing to these being no pass system, no check can be kept.” In the first three months of 1901, he had issued four passes for individuals to go to work, but several thousand more of his African subjects went to the Rand unaccounted for.<sup>96</sup>

Because colonial rule—and a company colony for that matter—depended on taxing the ‘native population’ to finance administration, the Rhodesian state had to be a “biometric state.”<sup>97</sup> Taxation was all about the state’s ability to count and control the movement of its biological subjects. Therefore, much emphasis was put on statistics, especially measuring the population sizes of each district since only male adults could pay taxes. Ndanga’s was estimated at “52,000 divided among 641 kraals and living in 13,768 huts.” Moodie boasted about his ‘native subjects’: “It is marvelous the good-humoured docility with which 52,000 natives allow themselves to be ruled by a native commissioner and 10 messengers.”<sup>98</sup> By 1908 the population had risen to an estimated

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<sup>96</sup> NAZ N9/1/7-8 Annual reports Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1901: Annual report Ndanga (W.N. Moodie, NC).

<sup>97</sup> Keith Breckenridge, “Verwoerd’s Bureau of Proof: Total Information in the Making of Apartheid,” *History Workshop Journal* 59 (Spring 2005): 83-108.

<sup>98</sup> NAZ N9/1/7-8 Annual Reports Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1901: Annual report Ndanga (W.N. Moodie, NC).

68,000.<sup>99</sup> In a subsequent report, Moodie commended the law-abiding character of the district's people.<sup>100</sup> In 1906, Forrestall estimated the population of Chibi District at 30,900—an increase of 2,120 on the estimate of 1905 from 1904.<sup>101</sup>

Statistics like these were necessary to project the amount of revenue to be collected. In 1906, £7,891 had been collected, and when added to the tax arrears worth £607 and to fees and fines totaling £14, the total rose to £8,512. In addition, there was still “£473 tax outstanding, owned principally by natives living in the lower part of the district, who have been unable to pay owing to the flooded state of the rivers; the rest is owed by natives who are still away at work.” Forrestall’s opposite number Howman noted that the revenue for that year had “exceeded my expectations” except the most easterly portion of Ndanga comprising Jiri, Budzi, and Ziki’s “countries.” These chiefs were “at such a distance from this station that it is very difficult to get at them.”<sup>102</sup>

The number of Africans proceeding to work in the Transvaal was, to Howman’s own admission, much higher than those going to Rhodesian mines, farms, and towns. On top of the 2,360 he had issued with licenses, Howman noted that “quite 1,500 others, and this I think is a very low estimate, went down without passes.” However, the Assistant NC was rubbing his hands at the rewards of their undocumented emigration:

The benefits to be acquired—both to the government and the natives—by this exodus to the Rand were impossible to be overestimated. Firstly they are able to pay their tax without any trouble and secondly the broadening process which their minds must undergo, by intercourse with the better class natives in the South will greatly help to make them more amenable to discipline in the future.... The natives who go South have to enter a six-

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<sup>99</sup> NAZ N9/1/11 Annual Reports of CNC and all NCs in Mashonaland for Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1908: Ndanga Report for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1908.

<sup>100</sup> NAZ N9/1/7-8 Annual Reports Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1903: Ndanga Annual Report (W.N. Moodie, NC)

<sup>101</sup> NAZ N9/1/9 Annual Reports of Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) and all Native Commissioners in Mashonaland for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1906: Chibi: Report for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1906.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

month contract; after that time expires, the contract is monthly. Large numbers of them work for a year before returning home. Discouraged from going north by poor pay and poor treatment.<sup>103</sup>

For the 1907 figures, some 450 others went through the Labour Bureau Agent in Victoria, making a grand total of 3,192. Because the rains were good and the season started early, fewer African men left for the Transvaal.<sup>104</sup>

By the 1920s, the word *maricho* (temporary chore in exchange for remuneration) was already being used to describe this work of short duration and included such ‘jobs’ as porterage, wagon-driving, or spooring. The sojourn at the mine was a journey that could only be seen to have succeeded if it brought back dividends to the village. The workplace far away from the village was called ‘the forest’ (*sango*); to be away in the mine was to be in the forest (*musango*). To work (*kushanda*) was to hunt (*kuvhima* or *kushava*). When the worker returned from mine or town laden with products of work, these were welcomed like a carcass, the hunter being praised with much poetry (*nhetembo*).

With one pair of feet after another trudging on the same places leading out of the villages to the mines of the Rand, the local men established pathways. As a rule, Africans in the transLimpopo always marched in single file while also crossing their feet, so that the path was “excessively narrow.” One route span from the Sofala on the Indian Ocean coastline, following the Save to Pafuri and thence to the Rand. The other joined the Sofala footpath at the Save’s junction with the Runde.<sup>105</sup> Once in the Transvaal, the

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> NAZ N9/1/10 Annual Reports of CNC and all NCs in Mashonaland for Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1907: Ndanga Yearly Report for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1907.

<sup>105</sup> Major J.J. Leverson, “Geographical Results of the Anglo-Portuguese Delimitation Commission in South-East Africa, 1892,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 6, II (1893): 516; Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Personal Ethnographic Notes on Compiled at Swiimuwi Rest Camp, Inside the Gonarezhou National Park, Not Far from the Great Thirstland towards the Guluene-Chepfu Escarpment, 11 August 2001.

itinerant walked through the thickets of Kruger to Johannesburg; later, after 1910 the route would go via Louis Trichardt as I outline in a separate section on Bvekenya.

Let us follow the migrant to the mine and watch him arriving at Johannesburg (Park) Station aboard the train or on foot, to be greeted by “an imposing Zulu boss-boy in a uniform.” We have already seen how in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century the Zulus were being used as marshal instruments to bring discipline among the natives in the last chapter. The “towering figure” led the sheepish recruits out of the station through “the clamor, light and movement of Eloff Street,” past many streets to the mine.<sup>106</sup> The arrival had to deal with the harsh of *being* (presence, self, and moving) in a new place.

What could *being at the mine* mean? Like all hunts it was an absence from the village that those left there—the family—imagined as a journey, a continuous *kufamba* (mobility) that would only end with the appearance of the person in the village. By this I mean a worthy experience in anticipation of arrival, and staying or living in a place in anticipation of the arrival of a day of departure. It was a transitory state from a recruit or captive to a wage laborer, from quarry to hunter, and the mine from a strange capitalist monster to a familiar hunting ground. Journeying was earning wages, arrival was saving enough money to take back home, to the village. To those in the village, the absence from the village or awayness at the mine was a journey—that of work—whose only *arrival* was a fruitful return. Non-return was a state of lostness (*kuchona*), the non-arrival of the journey itself.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 184; Allan Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy: the Struggle for the Gold Mine's Labour Supply 1890-1920* (Toronto: McGill University Press, 1985): 243-55 offers a wide-ranging discussion of these boss boys, who normally hijacked recruits meant for rival mines. However, there is no basis for the separation of this narrative of this poaching of *men* from that of the poaching of game because the hunters were the same.

<sup>107</sup> According to the elders of Malipati, ‘long long ago’, in times of famine the husband who left to *sunza* was presumed to have gone on a journey; whatever actions he partook in absence from the village was part

These are the imperatives that drove mining: capitalist production was worked by men fired by the opium of the return, who saw their labors not necessarily as factors in production, but a kind of short-term, livelihood-driven, and patriarchal chore (*maricho*) performed as part of *kusunza*. This chore dovetailed with a capitalist contract that stifled permanent employment and domicile on the mine and a restrictive dormitory-style accommodation system. A short contract of 9-15 months made existence at the mine a temporary sojourn or a journey, to gather as much as possible to take to the village.<sup>108</sup>

The presence of the mine in the village was felt through the absence of the patriarch at the mine. The ‘absent self’ was experienced in the village in ways it had no control over. And not only the self as body, but as family, property, and even personal attributes, became identified with a sense of presence at the mine. This mapping of the self in absentia had consequences on how the person in body was experienced on the return. Unbeknown to the worker, his wages were already being allocated a value—perhaps even purposes, for example the family borrowing on the promise to pay back *kana baba vaya* (when father comes back).<sup>109</sup>

A traveler to the Hlengwe countryside in 1906 found that “in no single kraal did he find more than one or two men of working age who had never been to work at Johannesburg, and in many kraals there was no man at all who had not been on the mines.”<sup>110</sup> At that point, while the Transvaal Chamber might congratulate itself for

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of the journey. The awayness was a harvest, comporting ‘grain’ to bring back to the family. The mine sojourn had a dollar sign that fulfilled the call of patriarchy in the rural homestead. (Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Informal Conversations with Elders at Malipati Business Centre, Sengwe Communal Lands, Gonarezhou, 8 Aug 2001).

<sup>108</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 181-2.

<sup>109</sup> I got this insight when talking to Kemusi. As regular town-goers, they usually sold goods to supplement their income on credit on the promise that the *majoni-joni* (men of Johannesburg) would be back by Christmas. The practice, they said, dated at least a century back.

<sup>110</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1903*: “A Short Account”: 7.

attracting these men, it rings even truer that the sojourn at the mine was based upon mundane threats to African manhood (*hurume*) and even adulthood and seniority (*hukuru*) in the villages. What would being a man (*kuva murume*) be if the patriarch could not hunt for his family?

By default, the mine management enabled the hunter's chase to bear a carcass. The company withheld the laborer's wages until he had seen out his contract; if he deserted or terminated it, he forfeited his earnings. I am not too preoccupied with whether or not the system was (un)fair but, rather, how this early 'banking' system enabled the arrival of the journey (work) by imposing institutional discipline on the laborer to save money that might be put to other purposes if paid out regularly, turning the journey into non-arrival.<sup>111</sup> The wage of between £1.6 and £3 was a pittance. However these shaft boys, blacksmiths' boys (strikers), police, and office and store boys, drill packers, engine cleaners, timber boys, and tram boys, measured the value of money in terms of purpose in the village, not just the size of the paycheck.<sup>112</sup>

The *magayisa* (rich one) arrived in the village with much ceremony and fanfare (*mutsindo*). An arrival that reverberated throughout the village was something to expect from a *magayisa* trundling home along the path from Soekmakaar towards Pafuri, laden with goodies, including clothing, stylish hats, blankets, and cash to pay tax and purchases at the 'native store'. He was not short of stories—and status.

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<sup>111</sup> Nonetheless I am aware that the mine authorities justified the low and manipulative wages on the basis that African needs were very few and cheap compared to Europeans' many expensive needs and wants. See "The Native Workers on the Gold Mines of the Witwatersrand: Mine Laborers' Earnings," *Mining Survey* 1, 5 (1947): 14-16.

<sup>112</sup> Contrary to the narrative of victimized or at the very least agency-less Africans in Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro. African Mine Labor in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1903* (London: Longman, 1976) and *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1880-1914* (London: Longman, 1982), I read the migrant worker from the imperatives of the village. That is where the value of the wage was deposited or lost.

Among many other urban and western artifacts the *magayisa* brought back, those associated with hunting game animals are the most fundamental to this chapter. Writing in a confidential report on 9 October 1914, the Native Commissioner in charge of the Hlengwe districts, Peter Forrestall, noted the massive numbers of firearms locals around Gonarezhou owned. Chief Mpapa and his people were the main culprits. Scarcity led these longtime users of muzzleloaders to innovate gunpowder from charcoal and solidified rock rabbit urine dug from the caves. They made bullets by running lead around pieces of iron manufactured by the local iron smiths. Some fitted into the muzzles, some did not. The Native Commissioner for Ndanga—under which the northern part of Gonarezhou fell—noted the art of making gunpowder out of a salty substance harvested from caves and mixed with ground charcoal of a sulfurous river plant called *mungwakuku*. They made gun caps by “welting pieces of hide and drying them into the shape of the nipples of the guns and when dry the head of safety matches were put into them.” The biggest problem with the caps was dampness.<sup>113</sup>

It did not take long for locals to adopt technologies used in the mines to address the problem of ammunition at home. As the men used explosive charges to blast in the shafts and witnessed one dynamite-related accident after the next, African mine laborers learnt that dynamite could be useful gunpowder for their village muskets.<sup>114</sup> Cases of dynamite (blasting gelatin) were sealed by Government officials in cartridge form and stored at 140-150°F.<sup>115</sup> Yet incidents of explosive thefts were so high that on 8 October

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<sup>113</sup> NAZ N3/14/3 NC Chibi, Confidential Report to the CNC 9/10/14; NAZ N3/14/3 NC Ndanga, Report to CNC 30/9/14; NAZ N3/14/3 NC Chibi, Confidential Report to the CNC 9/10/14; also Taderera Herbert Chisi, “Land Dispossession: Its Impact on African Economic Activities and the African Response: A Case Study of the Chiredzi District, 1890-1965” (Harare: Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1990): 14.

<sup>114</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1897*: 3.

<sup>115</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 181-2.

1910, the Transvaal Chamber issued instructions that all ‘natives’ returning home be thoroughly searched before leaving the mine premises.<sup>116</sup> However, it was in the darkly-lit mine-shaft that much of the fleecing took place.

A vivid description of how the Hlengwe in particular *mined* dynamite from the cartridge cases and transported it home comes from the biography of *Bvekenya*:

They went to the length of making crude guns of their own out of unrifled pipes, which fired pebbles, hard marula pips, and a variety of other objects: lethal if they hit the target, more lethal if they exploded in the hunter’s face.

Ammunition was always scarce. Every returning migrant worker would try to smuggle home a supply of powder, filched from the mines by means of furtively unraveling fuses somewhere in the dark, thousands of feet down a shaft.

They would secrete this powder about their persons: in the hair, concealed in their clothing, or hidden in hollowed-out cakes of soap. One man managed to fill up a whole calabash with gunpowder. It was a treasure, enough to buy him several wives. He had a second calabash full of water to sustain him on the journey.

As he tramped along the Rhodesian border he encountered a police patrol, searching the mine labourers for gunpowder. They stopped him, along with his companions. He sat down miserably, waiting to be searched, while his companions were each forced to give up their small secretions of powder.

The policemen were perspiring in the heat.

‘Have some water, masters?’ asked the man, with a touch of genius.

The policemen accepted readily. He gave them his calabash of water. They drained it. with his heart in his mouth, he offered the second calabash.

‘No’, said one of the policemen kindly. ‘Keep that for yourself, you’ll need it on this path’.

They searched him and found nothing on his person. He picked up his precious calabash and went on along the path. It was a thirsty journey home, but he sang all the way.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1914*: 10: S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour, Department of Native Transvaal Affairs, Johannesburg, to The Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1914: “Possession of Explosives and Cyanide by Native Mine Labourers”; *Transvaal Chamber of Mines: Annual Report for the Year Ended 1912*: J. Cowie, Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, the Secretary, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1912: “Possession of Explosives and Cyanide of potassium by Native Mine Labourers.”

<sup>117</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 126-8.

Whether this story is true or not is a debate that will go on. What we do know is that by 1906, the theft of scrap metal, wire, brass and copper fittings from mines and public institutions had reached epidemic proportions. The Chamber, together with the Central South African Railways, the General Post Office, the Municipality and the Commercial Chambers appealed to the government for legal and police protection.

This is an example of the journey enabled the movement of technology from the mines to the villages. In a sense, this deception encapsulates the hidden ways through which contraband travels from one place to another, even under the watchful gaze of the state. This secrecy represents the changing nature of not only securing instruments necessary to continue the hunt of wild animals in Gonarezhou, but also a different type of hunt in itself. Technology that could not be overtly transferred through the firewall of state policing still covertly found its way out through the elastic traditions of Africans.

How could this happen?

### **Epilogue: The Agency of Mobility**

Through their illicit movements, villagers and poachers ‘called in’ the state to perform its duty to administer the colony. The argument is simply: if the state wished its presence to be felt, it had to be present in physical form. It had to commit bodies on the ground to move about and discipline its subjects. To commit bodies, it had to build permanent administrative structures—Native Commissioner’s offices, police stations, and roads. The state would be able to curtail the ‘illicit’ movements of recruiters and villagers to and from the mines only if it maximized its visibility through its own ‘licit’ movements. In

order to fully understand the steps the state took to do this, I will limit the narrative to a blow-by-blow account of Rhodesian developments.

In 4 September 1919, W.A. Loades became the Assistant Native Commissioner and a Special Justice of the Peace for the Chibi District in charge of the proposed Native Department Station at Nuanetsi. The site for the post could not be selected before the onset of the rains, and nothing was erected, but survey work was begun. To that effect, the CNC requested the Administrator to authorize the NC Chibi to spend £200 in constructing an office and the ANC's quarters at the site. He wanted them completed before the onset of the rains.<sup>118</sup> But no funds were immediately available and the CNC's advised the Administrator's office to approach the BSA Company to request them to erect the office and rent them out to the state with the option to purchase as and when the budget allowed in the next fiscal year.<sup>119</sup>

The station was established in 1921 by as late as May 1922, but the quarters and offices were still being "contemplated." ANC Hulley resumed duties on 6 May 1922. In his first memo to his superior the NC Chibi, Hulley considered it his "first obligation to make some comment relating to the site chosen for this station." From the onset he had serious reservations about the site where a Police Camp "already neared its completion." Hulley felt the site had "not been chosen with a view of general utility [and] future requirements." It was "500 acres in flat depressing mopani veld, ... invariably too dry or too wet and where nothing can be grown. Besides this we are hemmed in by trees." No amount of clearing could even help because the stock routes passed through the eastern

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<sup>118</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: CNC to The Secretary Department of Administrator, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1920: "Native Department Station at Nuanetsi."

<sup>119</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: For Chief Native Commissioner, to The Secretary, Dept of Administrator, 24<sup>th</sup> September 1920: "Nuanetsi Sub-Station."

leeward section of “our reservoir, and when in use in the dry months will smother the place in dust.”<sup>120</sup>

In addition, some of the ‘native staff’ relied solely on some of the land to grow food and supplemented their diet with “any meat the ration allowances they draw in lieu of rations.” While these rations could be purchased “when living in the vicinity of natives,” that was near difficult to do given the location of the station some 20 miles from the villages. Realistically, very little quantity of ration food could ever be grown in the entire flat mupani veld. For proper health, Europeans “and even prisoners” needed to have fresh vegetables. “Where are these to be grown?”<sup>121</sup>

Hulley declared: “The camp will never be a permanency.” He proposed it to be re-sited either southwest on the watershed “where the railway lines will more likely run”:

Or it has to be south east to get proper control of the lower portion of the district and an eye kept on the Portuguese boundary. It is a deterrent to permanent improvement to establish a station, the surroundings of which are uninteresting and where the camp is to be continually moved. The late Mr. Forrestall, I believe, recommended a site some 18 miles northwest of this, in the vicinity of Maplank’s kraal. With his knowledge of the district such a locality cannot be easily condemned. Another site can be found on the uplands of the Mateke Range some 35 miles southeast of this.<sup>122</sup>

Hulley objected to attempts by the big ranches to influences the location of the station in their vicinity “to the exclusion of the requirements of the native inhabitants.” The ANC concluded: “I do not wish to pass as an authority after such a short residence but to bring to your notice matters which are fairly serious.”<sup>123</sup>

Outlining the functions of the ANC, the CNC reiterated that the NC was “the office responsible for the administration of the whole district.” A detached ANC was

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<sup>120</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: Hulley, ANC Nuanetsi, to The Native Commissioner Chibi, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1922: “Camp Site Pendukas.”

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

responsible for administering a portion of the district as the CNC and NC decided upon, and the extent to which he exercised his own discretion and initiation would “depend upon local conditions.” There were no general rules.<sup>124</sup> His office could be seasonal, closing during January-April, and opening only during winter. The magistrate’s court would close accordingly.<sup>125</sup>

By the beginning of 1923, a man named Bibra had replaced Hulley as assistant NC of Nuanetsi. On 15<sup>th</sup> January 1923, the CNC advised the Supt of Natives Victoria to appoint Bibra as both Assistant Magistrate and ANC with carte blanche to go down to the Nuanetsi station “when required and weather and rivers permitting.” This would be preferable to holding a periodical court on a fixed date.<sup>126</sup>

The CNC complained about the viability of Nuanetsi station on 21 February 1923, citing “the Medical Director’s condemnation of the station itself” as unhealthy—the very reason why for many years the district had been administered from Chibi. As he saw it, the only object of opening the sub-station was “to facilitate administration in the dry season,” because in the wet season it was quite clear that patrols and courts impossible to conduct. The foliage was thick, rivers impassable, while there was no accommodation for convicted persons: “If convicted natives have to be taken to Chibi to undergo sentence, it appears to me that the unhealthiness of the journey would be very much the same as if the natives were under arrest on their way to be tried.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: CNC to The Supt of Natives, Victoria, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1922: “Functions of detached Assistant Native Commissioners.”

<sup>125</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: J. Robertson, Department of Administrator, to The Chief native Commissioner, Salisbury, 21<sup>st</sup> December 1922.

<sup>126</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: Chief native Commissioner, to The Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1923.

<sup>127</sup> NAZ N3/8/8 District Boundaries and Boundaries: P. 488/305/23 CNC, to Secretary Dept of the Administrator, 21 February 1923.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 1923, police headquarters consented with the Native Commissioner Nuanetsi's opinion to "make the best of what may be considered an unsatisfactory situation... to use discretion in taking up cases, holding them over, or taking them to Chibi." The question of withdrawing the station in summer was to be reviewed in September.<sup>128</sup>

By September 1923 the *latest* ANC Nuanetsi, B. Palmer, confirmed the completion of the quarters at Nuanetsi. They consisted of a 3-roomed building in "green brick" with thatched roof and verandah on three sides. The ANC occupied two rooms which he used as a dining- and bedroom respectively. The third room served as an office and courtroom. The first room could not lock securely, the doors were mosquito-proof, but not the windows. The second was similar but its window was entirely missing, while the third had two insecure doors that were mosquito-proof, but not the windows. The lighting was inadequate, making them popular with mosquitoes and ants, which were "well settled in the floor and walls of the building." The roof was of "native timber tied with bark for the most part." The rooms being so big, the spans required in "native timber not being properly secured has resulted in parts of the roof being made of whifting." Palmer doubted if the roof would survive the coming rains, and would not be surprised if it collapsed and caused damage to contents and possibly inmates. Already the "gaol" that had been built in similar fashion at the same time as the quarters had collapsed.<sup>129</sup>

Two years since its establishment on the justification that "the lower portion of the district could not be administered satisfactorily from Chibi which is about a hundred

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<sup>128</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Staff Office BSA Police to District Superintendent BSA Police Victoria, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1923: "Nuanetsi Police Post."

<sup>129</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: B. Palmer, ANC Nuanetsi, to The Native Commissioner, Chibi, "Quarters and Office, Nuanetsi," 4/9/23.

miles away,” the CNC Herbert Taylor was convinced that Nuanetsi had “office has since fully justified its establishment.” However, he agreed that the station’s removal “to a more healthy and a more central position should receive attention as soon as more favourable conditions for viewing the district obtain.” He wanted more suitable living and office accommodation to be provided, and suggested that provision be made for the next fiscal year. Meanwhile, it was crucial to consult the police themselves and find out where exactly they felt the new station would be most suitably located.<sup>130</sup>

On 6 July 1924, the Assistant Police Commissioner BSA Police Victoria, Lt.-Col. J.W. Foulinsons, reported to police general headquarters of his trip on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with the Acting DSP Victoria District and the Supt of Natives Victoria Circle to the headquarters of Nuanetsi Ranch. There Foulinsons called the ranch manager M.P. Gilpin and together the party reconnoitered “certain sites along the Nuanetsi River with the object of selecting one which would do for the Government official’s camp on which suitable permanent buildings could be erected.” Every member of the party was agreed that the best site was one about 2 ½ miles down the river south east of the ranch headquarters (where the river drift is). The site had a hilly spur running approximately at right angles to and approximately 500 yards from the river. A road ran parallel with the river from the Ranch Headquarters making the site accessible with good space for putting up two department buildings on the rising ground. The site would match the current one’s strategic location in terms of undertaking police duties, beyond which the new site had no advantage. In all, the distance between the two camps would be ten miles. The BSA Company was anxious to pin the government to make a decision on a permanent site

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<sup>130</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Herbert J. Taylor, CNC, to The secretary, Minister of Native Affairs, 29 November 1923.

close to them to the extent of offering to build the new camp “at cost price if this would assist.” The technical permutations were also discussed:

The cost of this is approximately £365, a suitable stable (36` x 12`), brick with gig. peak roof was quoted at £ and an EC at £5. thus according to quotations the cost of the buildings for the Police would be about £550, this amount including a building for stores.<sup>131</sup>

In August, the Chief Native Commissioner sent the Medical Director a report from the Assistant Commissioner, BSA Police, for comments, reminding him that the local medical officer at Victoria was in favor of this move in the interests of the health of the Camp.<sup>132</sup> The Medical Director, Andrew Fleming, had said: “I have no knowledge of this, re. why it is proposed to remove the present camp at Nuanetsi. It would be difficult to find a really desirable site in this district, which was at the same time conveniently situated for Government purposes.<sup>133</sup>

Upon receiving a report from the Supt of Natives, the CNC expressed support for the establishment of the camp and urged steps be taken to ensure the buildings being put in hand at as early a date as possible, in view of the administrative staff of the district. It will be seen that the building staff on the BSA Company’s Ranch can undertake the work that, if approved, will considerably expedite the completion of the buildings, and will probably result in considerable saving to the Government.<sup>134</sup> Two tarpaulins each 15` x 30` have been forwarded to you for putting over the defective thatched roof, one six light 10`` x 12`` casement and frame is also being forwarded. Please let me know the size of

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<sup>131</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Lt-Col. J.W. Foulinsons, Asst. Commissioner, BSA Police Fort Victoria, to The Staff Officer, Police, Salisbury, 6<sup>th</sup> July 1924: “Nuanetsi: New Government Camp.”

<sup>132</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, to the Medical Director, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1924: “Nuanetsi Camp.”

<sup>133</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Andrew Fleming, Medical Director, to the CNC, 7/8/24.

<sup>134</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: CNC to The Secretary to the Premier, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1924: “Nuanetsi Camp.”

calico required for ceiling in the office and one living room.<sup>135</sup> In further communication, the Under-Secretary for Mines and Works reminded the CNC “it was agreed that the question of building new Asst Native Commissioner’s quarters at Nuanetsi should be held over until the permanent site of the camp is fixed. There is a possibility that the present site may be changed.”<sup>136</sup>

By mid-1925, plans for the construction of the new station were in full gear and modalities for tendering the actual construction was attracting candidates from near and far within Rhodesia. None more-so than I. Whitfield James, the store owner at Chitanga. On 15 June, he wrote the *latest ANC* at Nuanetsi, H. Comberbach, having heard that “the Police are pulling down and erecting new quarters at Nuanetsi this year.” He therefore “took the liberty to write and ask” if such rumor was true, and the Native Department would be following suit in moving camp, Comberbach would be “prepared to recommend me for such work, either on contract or otherwise”:

I am fully competent to undertake all such work, and would guarantee to get the work done certainly at cheaper rate than if special men had to be sent down. All the buildings here at Chitanga were personally built by myself and have been erected mostly for about 25 years. Anyway, if you should be able to put any such work into my hands, I should be very much obliged to you. The temporary job I am employed upon, as you are aware there is very little emolument attached to it.<sup>137</sup>

There is nothing in the archives about what became of this ‘tender’.

However, it turned out that Comberbach had settled on another candidate. The plans for construction had to be changed because the builder the BSA Company had chosen had pulled out. A local Dutchman named van Groenen had already experienced a

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<sup>135</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: for Director of Works, Salisbury, to The Asst Native Commissoner Nuanetsi, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1924: “Buildings Nuanetsi.”

<sup>136</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Under-Secretary for Mines and Works to CNC, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1924..

<sup>137</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: I Whitfield James, Chitanga, to H. Comberbach Esq., ANC Nuanetsi, June 15<sup>th</sup> 1925.

willingness “to undertake the whole work, including the making of the bricks. He is a fair workman, but would require frequent expert supervision.”<sup>138</sup> Ranch manager Purcell Gilpin suggested that “the building be put up by contract.” The bricks could be made “anywhere near the camp,” while the poles would come from the mupani forests.<sup>139</sup>

On 2 February 1927 Director of Public Works B.R. Barley formally requested the sum of £1,900 from treasury for materials and labor costs to cover the ANC’s quarters and a similar figure for the police camp.<sup>140</sup> The revised profile of buildings was as follows: NC Quarters and outbuildings, clerk’s quarters and outbuildings, police camp barracks, mess and kitchen, office, stable and store, EC’s, and 2 cell prison (12 detention cells).<sup>141</sup> The work did not begin until August 1928.<sup>142</sup>

It is not wonder that the poaching of men took so long to stop. As the next chapter shows, this is also precisely why the poaching of game also escalated.

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<sup>138</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Supt of Natives, to CNC, Salisbury, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1925.

<sup>139</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: P. Purcell Gilpin, BSA Company Nuanetsi Ranch, Great Zimbabwe, to The General Manager BSA Company, Salisbury, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1925.

<sup>140</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: A.E. Powell, for Director of Public Works, to The Secretary for Mines and Works: “Nuanetsi Government Buildings,” not dated.

<sup>141</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Director of Public Works to The Secretary Mines and Works, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1927: “Nuanetsi Government Buildings.”

<sup>142</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner 1923-8: Director Public works, to Secretary Mines and Works, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1928: :Nuanetsi Offices.”

## **Chapter 5 Poachers Of Game**

While in conservation, tourism, and state circles the poacher (*pocha*) is publicly seen as a criminal, in the villages of Gonarezhou the poacher is a hero. There is only one other person that rivals the poacher in the popularity stakes: the *majoni-joni* (those who work in *Joni*, as South Africa is called in Shona). How do we explain the popularity of people who break state laws governing boundaries?

This chapter is not just about reasons why poaching took place but how the poachers went about doing it, and how the state went through the motions of anti-poaching. It challenges Rosaleen Duffy's attempt to separate "subsistence" poaching (village-based and using non-western devices) from "commercial" poaching (international or involving state officials and armed with guns), arguing that the two categories are inseparable. I make the case for a much more intricate picture of poaching beyond the political ecology-centric dimension she took.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, 'subsistence' and 'commercial' are restrictive, often bifurcated categorizations of poaching that automatically exclude other technological, cultural, and environmental causes, processes

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<sup>1</sup> R. Duffy, *Killing for Conservation: Wildlife Policy in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

and outcomes. There is more to be gained from an inclusive approach that explores the co-construction of people, technology, and nature through the mobilities of the animals, the poachers, and anti-poaching apparatuses. In addition, I suggest that the trends she attributes to postcolonial Zimbabwe have a much longer genealogy.

To do this I will first sketch how poaching led to the protracted establishment of Gonarezhou National Park. Then I will use state anti-poaching records to examine village-based poachers' transgressions of the game reserve's fence. In the final section, I show how the failure to address local grievances against the state over Gonarezhou led to escalating poaching after independence. The section closes with an examination of the actual conduct of post-independence poaching and anti-poaching operations, emphasizing the interplay between hunting technology and mobility.

### **African Villagers and White Poachers**

As we saw in the previous chapter, the state's view of Barnard as a bandit is oversimplistic. The state was not fabricating 'banditry' as such, but deliberately created an impression that every villager was a victim. The point of this section is to show that locals co-produced this banditry that was directed against the state and its local informers. Positioned between the state and its nemesis (the poacher), villagers exercised a latitude to be loyal state subjects or to ally themselves with its nemeses. How did they do this?

The village at large was a vital intelligence infrastructure for gathering, managing, disseminating, and withholding information. Village *rumor* was an important source of this information, not only for locating elephant but also to alert Bvekenya of approaching police patrols. Either the villagers brought the *information* to his campsite or his hunters

might pick up word in the village during their off-days and carry it to him. He often dispatched one or two of his hunters to verify the *facts* he was given, which were correct most of the time. Only a vigilant village intelligence prevented Bvekenya from being arrested on many occasions. They tipped him off well ahead of a police patrol and when police arrived, headed them off in the order direction.<sup>2</sup>

The circumstances within which Cecil Barnard became *Bvekenya* illustrate how crucial it was for the poacher to establish alliance with local villagers quickly. That locals entered such partnerships to start with is an indication of their self-interests. Barnard told Bulpin that he got his name after a thorough beating from local highwaymen in the Save valley. As he trudged to Makuleke, the blisters on his feet were so painful that he was limping. Along the pathway he encountered a group of Shangane men returning from the Rand gold mines, who upon observing his unusual walking behavior called him *Bvekenya* (The-one-who-walks-with-a-swagger).<sup>3</sup>

Not according to Chief Makuleke. The Shona of Gonarezhou gave him this *notorious* name. Barnard had acquired a bad reputation for having sexual liaison with local women not just in Gonarezhou, but also in Makuleke and the adjacent parts of Mozambique. Bvekenya does not mention this in his biography because it would invite shame on him from his white readership in a period when such interracial liaisons were frowned upon. As a fan of the poacher, Allan Wright exposes these liaisons with local women, but puts the positive spin that Bvekenya paid *lobola* (bride-wealth) for them according to local custom. To cement his relationship with local villagers, the poachers married local women under customary law. In Rhodesia, Bvekenya fathered children

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<sup>2</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: 1916 Tpr. J.M. Scallan, Chippinga, to The A.D.S.P. Melsetter, 18.8.15. *The Ivory Trail*: 205.

<sup>3</sup> *The Ivory Trail*: 205-6.

with at least two known women. The senior one was Kami who lived in Chief Sengwe's area very close to the Limpopo, in a village along the Dumela to Pafuri road; (a son named Samuel Pieter and a daughter named Maggie). His second was Chinengise of Chief Masuvamele's area, with whom he had a son named John Piet.<sup>4</sup> On recent fieldwork to Makuleke (South Africa), I was told Bvekenya had at least one child with a woman who lives in the chief's area.<sup>5</sup>

Bvekenya's sidekick, Diegel, lived with a local woman in Mupfichani area until his cook ran away with her.<sup>6</sup> Practically every white man consorted with a local woman. There was nothing unusual about this: Forrestall himself had several African wives.<sup>7</sup> While the state actively discouraged these relationships, on the frontier those racial boundaries were fragile. In fact, they anchored the white man in the village.

There was a distinct advantage in providing sexual and other services to men like Bvekenya: game meat was assured at a time when Africans were now banned from hunting legally. To carve out his own loyalties he mimicked the state's use of violence (to colonize) and paternalism (to protect), and added a third dimension. This is what the state has already confirmed in the last previous chapter, without giving the villagers one ounce of agency!

State archives also agree with Bvekenya's location of his camps along Rhodesia's border inside Portuguese territory (because state security was virtually non-existent).

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<sup>4</sup> Allan Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods: A Personal record of Ten Years Served as District Commissioner in Rhodesia's Largest Administrative Area, Nuannetsi, in the South-Eastern Lowveld* (Cape Town: T.V. Bulpin, 1972): 60.

<sup>5</sup> Traditional Knowledge of African Villagers Project: Fieldwork Visit from New Makuleke to Old Makuleke Guided by Chief Makuleke.

<sup>6</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Chief Native Commissioner's Office, Salisbury, to The Secretary of Administrator, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1917: "Cattle Theft by German (Diegal) Living in Portuguese Territory": Copy of Affidavit signed by Gaba before P. Forrestall, NC Chibi, 21 December 1916

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 25.

There he processed game products like leather and ivory; the camps also acted as collection points for labor recruits. One was at Mazimbe on the Guluene Chefu confluence; the other at Zambaredza some five miles from the Save River. The group had “permanent camp, huts, lands and also a few cattle several horses, mules and donkeys” there.<sup>8</sup>

The meat from game hunting became a potent labor recruitment tool, not only for sell to the mine agents but also for his own hunting staff. The men whom he employed as trackers and porters also assisted him with building his own silos at semi-permanent camps along the Rhodesia-Portuguese border. A police patrol in August 1915 discovered near one village in Chitsa “a quantity of grain and pumpkins and wire belonging to Barnard” buried in an underground grain bin. The trooper in charge, J.M. Scallan, offered the grain to the villagers , but they refused, “saying that Barnard and company would return and flog them as they had shown us where the stuff was.” Bvekenya had apparently “traded the grain from the natives under compulsion, the object being to resell it to the natives later on when grain would be scarce thereby making a large profit.” He would be in a position to withhold food as he saw fit and to oil his village alliances.<sup>9</sup>

While Bvekenya confirms the state’s portrayal of him as a violent man, he says such violence was necessary to set disciplinary standards that, once met, were good for the hunt. Moreover, violent means were either provoked or disciplinary means of last resort, otherwise his was an excellent relationship with locals to the extent that they opened up their spiritual world to benefit his hunting exploits. He was skeptical and downright contemptuous initially, but agreed to the services of a *n’anga* after a long

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<sup>8</sup> NAZ A3/18/20/30/22 Recruiting Illicit 1915-18: Chief Native Commissioner’s Office, Salisbury, to The Secretary of Administrator, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1917.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

barren spell. He underwent the same purification rites as we saw in Chapter 1, and confesses the return of his luck just hours later. He became a convert: from then on he traveled for two years with a n’anga named Mgwazi to ensure that the enemies he had made through his violence would not bewitch (“lock”) his guns.<sup>10</sup>

The police characterization of Bvekenya and his fellow outlaws as “bandits” belies the evidence of partnership between the poacher and village poachers. At Matombo’s village near Machindu Pool—one of Bvekenya’s favorite killing grounds—one patrol in late 1915 saw what amounted to a permanent poaching camp. The culprits had constructed pole and mud huts, around which were scattered bones of giraffe, eland, roan antelope, zebra etc. These men hunted with muzzle-loaders and tracked for Bvekenya.<sup>11</sup> They were his mobile reference books on just about every part of wildlife in Gonarezhou. How do we explain this ‘free-for-all’?

### **The Birth of a Game Reserve**

The first point is the uncertainty regarding which government department and state was responsible for Gonarezhou and Crooks Corner respectively. No wonder the area became a virtual no-man’s land until the return of the tsetse fly in the 1930s. Only in 1921 was an assistant Native Commissioner (NC) stationed at Nuanetsi (Mwenezi) Sub-Office and Police Post (about 40 miles away from Malipati sub-office). Up until then, Native Commissioner Peter Forrestall was the chief authority in the area. His office was located at Chibi Station a hundred miles north to the north. The BSA Company was both the state

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<sup>10</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 151.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

and a private landholder until its concessionary powers expired in 1923 as agreed to in the royal charter.

The ‘responsible government’ that took over created different government departments to administer the border area. The BSA Police was responsible for policing the international border; it fell under the NC, who was also in charge of the Native Reserves. The Agriculture and Lands Department (DAL) was in charge of land-use in the Crown Land in a number of ways. Its Department had responsibility over all wild animals. The Entomology Department monitored the tsetse fly. The Lands Department was in charge of land tenure and use. Finally, DAL also had a Veterinary Department, in charge of enforcing strict boundaries between game and livestock. The convergence of these departments reflects the way elements of nature within Gonarezhou determined state administration.

While the state officials were answerable to European settlers with interests in and around Gonarezhou because they could vote them out of office, Africans had no voting rights and therefore no such influence. The new but temporary police post at Nuanetsi operated only in winter, beating an early retreat before summer floods and malaria closed in. In 1924, the BSA Company Ranch at Nuanetsi offered the Native Department land and personnel to build new offices along the Mwenezi River to replace its ramshackle sub-office, built only after four years of fighting red tape.<sup>12</sup> It was around this time that the Department of Commerce started considering the establishment of a game reserve in

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<sup>12</sup> NAZ S917/A312/481/A Public Works Nuanetsi, Assistant Native Commissioner, 1923-8: Staff Officer, BSA Police, to Superintendent Victoria 28/2/1923; NAZ S917/13/481 Herbert Taylor, CNC, to Secretary Native Affairs, 29/11/23; Lt-Col. J.W. Foulinsons, Assistant Commissioner BSA Police to Staff Officer Salisbury 6/7/24.

the area. The BSA Company acceded because increased administrative presence would secure its cattle ranches.

In 1925, the state established a commission under Morris Carter to formalize the veterinary-oriented divisions of land taking place in the area. The Native Reserves were designed in such a way that they formed a buffer between game (vermin)-infested ‘Crown Lands’ and the European Land. Matibi I Reserve had 286,000 acres and Matibi II 478,000; both came under Forrestall’s Chibi District. In particular, the area between the Runde, Portuguese border, the Limpopo and Bubi Rivers, Nuanetsi Ranch, and Matibi II, totaling 1,783,000 acres, became “Crown (State) Land” or “unalienated land.”<sup>13</sup> Any land that was in the hands of government and that which was unalienated was always open to re-designation as the state saw fit.

The declaration of Kruger National Park in 1926 had a knock-on effect on the three neighboring states’ border enforcement. With the introduction of game laws in the south back, Gonarezhou became the nearest place for white South African men craving ‘a shot’. In Southern Rhodesia, Kruger had inspired the Wildlife Protection Society chapter and the Commerce Department into exploring the modalities of establishing a game reserve with the picturesque Chipinda Pools along the Runde as a nucleus. Backed by individual hoteliers and safari operators, the Department of Commerce, was specifically interested in Chipinda Pools along the Runde River as the centre of a game reserve. In June 1928, the Chief Entomologist recommended an even bigger sanctuary on condition that contiguous land “not good for anything else” was found.<sup>14</sup> In the meantime, on the

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<sup>13</sup> Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 325.

<sup>14</sup> This Gonarezhou Game Reserve would be bounded north by a line from Machindu Pool to the Portuguese border, on the south by the Pafuri-Limpopo and Bubi-Limpopo junctions coterminous with

Portuguese side a regime of game protection for safari hunting had taken shape along the common borders, cashing in on game wandering out of Kruger and Gonarezhou. Meanwhile, increasing incidents of foot and mouth disease made it imperative for Rhodesia and South Africa to clamp down on unregulated human and cattle traffic that might transmit the strain to cattle ranches. All this left little scope for people like Bvekenya. In 1929 he retired to the western Transvaal to commence life as a farmer. Early calls for the establishment of a game reserve in Gonarezhou resulted overwhelming from growing concerns about poaching. In 1934, some 7,000 Africans were living in Gonarezhou. Chief Chitsa's people at the Save-Runde junction were "experts with the bow and arrow and the setting of traps"; they were killing "large quantities" of game. To the south of the Runde was a compound "where natives collect for transportation by motor lorries to the Limpopo and Parfurie"; these people, in particular Ngwenyenye's, hunted "entirely uncontrolled" and showed "no respect for a white man."<sup>15</sup> Another culprit was Matombo and his people on the Mwenezi, who killed "at least three big buck per week" with snares, traps, dogs, and guns.<sup>16</sup>

While both DAL and Commerce were calling for these villagers to be removed, the Native Department insisted on the allocation of alternative land to settle them. It would not promote overcrowding, soil erosion and overgrazing in the Native Reserves just to save wildlife. DAL and Commerce argued that the envisaged 50-100 mile fencing would keep away lions, hyenas, wild dogs, and leopards from these people's 3,000 head of cattle. Native Department disagreed: the fence would render untenable the existence of

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Kruger National Park (provided the Union government moved Makuleke and his people out of the park), and Nuanetsi Ranch and Matibi II Native Reserve (west) and the Portuguese border (east).

<sup>15</sup> Bulpin, *The Ivory Trail*: 151.

<sup>16</sup> NAZ S914/12 CNC to Minister Commerce; Assistant NC Bawden to Supt. of Natives, Fort Victoria.

1,500 Africans within Crown Land now proclaimed to the game reserve. The department would be more than happy if these people were removed because it would not worry about policing these remote, unreachable localities. However, it made no sense unless DAL supplied the land first.<sup>17</sup>

The proponents of the scheme needed a more powerful argument than just conserving nature for its own sake. Two developments took place from 1929 that changed the situation in favor of transforming Gonarezhou from ‘unalienated land’ to ‘game reserve’. First, the Great Depression struck the world markets, severely reducing the demand on agricultural products like tobacco and beef. The government scampered for alternatives. Secondly, in 1930, Rhodesia introduced the Land Apportionment Act, which re-designated the Gonarezhou from “unalienated” land to “unassigned area”, ... neither African, European Area nor Forest Area.” The move left Gonarezhou open for alternative land uses like conservation and tourism.<sup>18</sup> Still, tourism in Gonarezhou would generate a fraction of the amount needed to combat the losses to agriculture.

Things changed with plans to link the project to a bigger transfrontier conservancy in 1934. The project was essentially a South African attempt to extend Kruger into neighboring areas to absorb the overstocked game in the park. DAL hoped to cash in on this goodwill by offering the 2 million acre land between Save and Limpopo, between the border and the western fringes of the Mwenezi. The Gonarezhou game reserve was now composed of the triangle of land between the Limpopo and Pafuri

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<sup>17</sup> NAZ S1194/1645/3/1: Bullock, CNC to Secretary to Premier, 7 Nov 1932: “Suggested Proclamation of Game Reserve: Chipinda Pools Area”; S914/12/1B: D. Townley to Gilchrist, 5 Oct 1934; S. Rogers Divisional Road Engineer to Chief Road Engineer, 12 June 1934.

<sup>18</sup> “Rearrangement of Portfolios,” *African World*, Oct 14, 1933: 432; S1194/1645/3/1 Kelly Edwards to Acting Secretary Agriculture, 8 Apr 1933: ‘Game Reserves’.

Rivers touching the Kruger.<sup>1920</sup> The objective was to create a continuous transfrontier game corridor from Kruger right up to the east coast of Tanganyika.<sup>21</sup> Gonarezhou would be developed for tourism.

Kenya's success had already shown that game reserves and safari areas were about tourists paying to watch or hunt, to sleep, eat, and enjoy their holiday. Hoteliers and tour operators spotlighted Chipinda Pools as the core of their business interventions in the Gonarezhou idea.<sup>22</sup> A Zimbabwe chevron-style “country hotel … with mosquito-proofed accommodation” and a store would be established there.<sup>23</sup> Proposals were put in place to station a warden with police experience at Chipinda given “the often lawless nature of this border area.”<sup>24</sup> “Reliable natives” would look after visitors, giving them confidence to camp and explore the reserve.<sup>25</sup> There was one problem: DAL could not agree to subsidize the incentives the Commerce Department was asking for. It was the view of veterinarians that the game reserve would become a reservoir of predators and veterinary diseases (principally foot and mouth disease and potential trypanosomiasis).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> NAZ S914/12/1B Acting Secretary Commerce and Transport to Col. Deneys Reitz, Minister of Lands, Pretoria, 28 Sept 1934: “Gonarezhou Game Reserve” and “National Park and Game Reserve Scheme, Government Proclamation Gazetted,” *African World*, June 9, 1934: 299.

<sup>20</sup> NAZ S914/12/1B Ministrie van Lande, Pretoria, 5 and 15 Oct 1934.

<sup>21</sup> “Publicity Collaboration in Southern Africa Urged at National Conference in Salisbury – ‘Obstacles to Rhodesian Extension of Kruger Park,’ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 13 Aug 1937.

<sup>22</sup> NAZ S914/12/1B: Supt. Southern Rhodesia Publicity Bureau, Bulawayo to Secretary Agriculture, 9 May, 1934; Secretary Commerce to Minister Agriculture, 29.3.34.

<sup>23</sup> NAZ S914/12/1D Chipinda Pools – Proposed Reserve 1933-4, F. Hackney, Midlands Hotel, Gwelo, to The Secretary Commerce 19 Feb 1934.

<sup>24</sup> NAZ S914/12/1D Secretary Commerce to Hackney, 20 Feb 1934; Secretary Commerce to Chief Clerk Lands; The Minister 9/4/34; Undersecretary Lands to Hackney, 1 May 1934; also S914/12/1B: Secretary Agriculture to Secretary Commerce, 13 Apr 1934: “Controlled Shooting.”

<sup>25</sup> NAZ S1194/1645/3/1 Proposed Game Reserves – Chipinda Pools and Gwanda 1932-5: C. Ashley-Belbin to Minister Agriculture, 7 May 1935.

<sup>26</sup> NAZ S1194/1645/3/1 Proposed Game Reserves – Chipinda Pools and Gwanda 1932-5: C. Ashley-Belbin to Minister Agriculture, 7 May 1935; NAZ H.G. Mundy, Secretary Agriculture and Lands to Ashley-Belbin, 29 May 1935; CNC to Secretary to Prime Minister, 25 Nov 1933; Chief Forest Officer to Secretary Agriculture, 16 May 1935.

This is exactly what happened. By 1937, the game reserve proposal had been completely abandoned because of veterinary disease implosion despite the persuasive arguments of the Department of Commerce and the Southern Rhodesian Wildlife Protection Society.<sup>27</sup> Nuanetsi Ranch, the country's premier beef producer, had declared losses of 600 head of cattle per annum to carnivores and tick-borne diseases spread from wild animals. It had struggled to cope with foot and mouth disease attacks since 1929; the 1932 strain also had infected 800,000 head. After a respite in 1933, the disease broke out again in 1934.<sup>28</sup>

Tsetse fly sealed the fate of the project. In 1935, the Department of Tsetse Control commenced operations to clear forest in the Melsetter District to check tsetse fly incursion from Espungabera (formerly Chipungumbira). Trypanosomiasis was claiming "many cattle" each year, and the Chief Entomologist warned of "a menace not only to Rhodesia but possibly to the Union as well." He did not wish to create a highway for tsetse into South Africa.<sup>29</sup> The proposal was dead in the water. For the next two decades the Rhodesian government battled tsetse fly, any game reserve being completely out of the question.

A kind of free-for-all set in. It became customary for white visitors or government officials to 'live off the land' whenever they were in Gonarezhou. A team of researchers called the Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society (RSES) visiting Gonarezhou in 1954

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<sup>27</sup> Sheila B. Kinnell, "Stalking the Hunters by Car," *African Wild Life* 12, 3 (September 1958): 155-7; "The New Zambezi Bridge Completed," *African World* (3 Nov 1934): 103.

<sup>28</sup> NAZ S1194/3/1: Manager Nuanetsi Ranch to Magistrate Gwanda, 31 Oct 1932; Secretary Agriculture to CNC, 3 Nov 1932; "Stock Restrictions Withdrawn," *African World* (22 Apr 1933): 22; NAZ S914/12 Game Reserves in Southern Rhodesia 1933-5: The Assistant NC Nuanetsi, J. Bawden, to Supt. of Natives, Fort Victoria.

<sup>29</sup> "Development of Game Reserves in the Colony: Official Statement to Publicity Conference: 'Tsetse Fly Obstacle to Extension of the Kruger National Park,'" *The Rhodesia Herald*, Aug 13 1937.

feasted on meals of impala and other steak.<sup>30</sup> In fact, one local African “passed with some elephant biltong from elephants which the Native Commissioner had shot some days back.”<sup>31</sup> The 1958 expedition to the Bubi River had an arrangement with the Native Commissioner M. Haglethorn to secure “the right to shoot for the pot if absolutely necessary.”<sup>32</sup> Scientific expeditions like the RSES also had the liberty to shoot for laboratory specimens.<sup>33</sup> So did local white ranchers, some of which kept displays of lion skins and elephant tusks in their houses.<sup>34</sup>

Upon his appointment to Nuanetsi in 1958, District Commissioner Allan Wright put a stop to this “nonsense” of shooting for the pot in 1961. By then poaching had got completely out of hand. The state’s policy at the time was that the country had too many game reserves, and Wright knew any initiative would have to be personal. There were two basic types of poachers confronting him. First, the local villagers, with snare-lines lining every nook and cranny of the forest.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, whites crossing from South Africa into the ‘hunting grounds’ because no one enforced the laws.

The first thing Wright had to do was to establish authority. He did this by establishing permanent administrative infrastructure and enhancing communication between his office and the outliers. In this way, Wright was learning from his

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<sup>30</sup> National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe [Hereafter NMMZ] “Extracts from Boys Diaries: Stephen Driver—Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Lundi Expedition, September 1954: 15.

<sup>31</sup> NMMZ “Extract from Boys Diaries: Neil Humphreys—Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 1954,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Lundi Expedition, September 1954: 17.

<sup>32</sup> NMMZ H.A.B. Simons, Esq., “Senior Leader’s Report,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 2.

<sup>33</sup> NMMZ Chronicler P. Strover, “In and Around Camp—General,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 32.

<sup>34</sup> NMMZ “Extracts from Boys Diaries: Eric George Cary—Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Lundi Expedition, September 1954:

<sup>35</sup> NMMZ D. Simpson and S. Boysens, “Animal and Plant Ecology Report,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 58.

predecessors like Haglethorn, who did not know his way around places like Mateke Hills.<sup>36</sup> *First*, he cut roads and built bridges that cost a lot of money and technology to upgrade and maintain. In many places, anybody traveling to Gonarezhou had to contend with getting out of his vehicle time and again to clear shrubs, trees, and stones from the footpaths, and to improvised drifts on the rivers for crossing.<sup>37</sup> *Second*, he built sub-offices all over the district, thereby ending the practice whereby Africans journeyed for days and tens of to see him, queued even more days, and sleeping over just to be served, often when the answer to their request was ‘No’. *Third*, he created an intelligence network, comprising his own staff of District Messengers (DMs, formerly Native Messengers) and villagers, as his eyes and ears.<sup>38</sup>

Using roads, radios, road transport, and bicycles, he connected the various isolated sub-offices into one administrative circuit, with his station at Nuanetsi as a command center. Previously Wright had had to send a district messenger by bicycle to communicate directives to Chiefs and headmen. Now he gave the driver of the commuter omnibus servicing the tribal roads “a locked dispatch case” to drop off at the sub-office. Locally, the DM delivered the DC’s instructions to chiefs and headmen on bicycle. Wright wanted even faster communication. Telephones were too expensive and vulnerable to falling trees in summer storms; locals poached the cables to make snarers. The DC opted for radio—a technology not widely used then except in the police and

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<sup>36</sup> NMMZ A. Boughey, “Extracts from Personal Diaries,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 32.

<sup>37</sup> NMMZ Chronicler D.C. Barbanell, “Official Diary,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 24.

<sup>38</sup> Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 7-8.

army. He purchased six World War II surplus ‘No. 19’ VHF/HF from Cape Town, each with a 400-mile reception range.<sup>39</sup>

The technologies of communication also enabled him to collect tax more efficiently. Another member of the RSES, D. Swire-Griffiths, noted on 5 May 1958 that “all villages we approached appeared to be deserted; either the inhabitants fled at our approach or were working in the fields.”<sup>40</sup> Another expeditioner, D. Sanderson, explained: “We came upon some kraals, but the inhabitants were not at home, obviously thinking we were government officials, probably collecting taxes.”<sup>41</sup>

Whereas previous Native Commissioners had physically patrolled in order to increase the visibility of the state, Wright now had the remote tools to be in many places at once. Every DC had a Head District Messenger (HDM) and a team of District Messengers who acted as his eyes, ears, and mouthpieces. This was just the core of an intelligence infrastructure that kept informed Wright of what villagers were thinking. They included teachers, dip tank attendants, storekeepers, government agricultural employees, headmen, and so on.

Unlike his predecessors, Wright was a more mobile DC. Every DC was allocated an official vehicle—a Jeep, Ford, Chrysler, Chevrolet, or Anglia van or 4 x 4—to enable him to cover the whole of his district. The downside was that some would simply “zip

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*: 210.

<sup>40</sup> NMMZ D. Swire-Griffiths, “Southern Margin,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 43.

<sup>41</sup> NMMZ D. Sanderson, “Southern Margin,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Mateke Expedition May 1958: 43.

along in their cars from point A to point B with no stops in between.”<sup>42</sup> In the course of administering people, Wright discovered the need to protect nature.

He personally put up the signpost at Makokwani Pool turn-off prohibiting shooting, hunting, or camping in the entire area bounded by these farms, the Mwenezi River, the railway and the Portuguese border.<sup>43</sup> It read: “NUANETSI GORGE AREA. *This is a wild life sanctuary and hunting, camping and shooting are strictly prohibited.* By order, District Commissioner, Nuanetsi.”<sup>44</sup> He then proceeded to moved further downstream to a pan on the western side of the Mwenezi called Manjinji.

These signposts and instructions generally worked. When the RSES expedition arrived in Gonarezhou in 1962, things had changed. In the past the most attractive job on these expeditions was that of quartermaster; not anymore. By Wright’s personal proclamation the camping site was now in game reserve and “there could be no shooting for the pot.”<sup>45</sup> Wright gave the expedition a lot of help and advice, but the days of shooting for the pot were gone.

Visitors confirmed that game numbers had dramatically increased. As the RSES expedition made its way by Land Rover from Nuanetsi Station down the Mwenezi river to set up its fieldwork camp at Malipati Sub-Office, Wright warned its leaders about elephant on “a certain stretch of the road between Chikombedsi and Malapati (sic), where certain sanguinary minded pachyderms were likely to behave in an unfriendly manner.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 21. This mode of patrol, and precisely why it had to take this form, was the standard practice. See By Bundu, “Patrol,” *NADA* (1942): 86-94.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*: 65.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> NMMZ H.A.B. Simons, “Senior Leader’s Report,” Gona re Zhou Expedition, 1962: 50.

<sup>46</sup> NMMZ H.A.B. Simons, “Senior Leader’s Report,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society: Buffalo Bend Expedition, April 1961: 5-6.

In the riverine forests of the Mwenezi and Runde, the RSES recorded in 1962 “a sparsity of resident game,” but there were countless game paths, many types of spoor of game coming down “only to drink at the river, then return to returned to the more open country.” Only the hippo, vervet monkey, bushbuck and smaller carnivores were resident in the riverine forest. In the flat, tall-tree mupani woodland from the edge of the riverine forest to the foothills of the escarpment, the expedition saw eland, kudu, impala, zebra and warthog. The spoor of elephant, buffalo, duiker, stembuck and lion was clearly visible. The researchers also saw in the “mixed lowveld community” numerous resident species like kudu, nyala, bushbuck, klipspringer, bush pig and baboon. The spoor of leopard, hyena, cheetah, giraffe, ostrich, and smaller carnivores like jackals was also in evidence.<sup>47</sup>

By 1963, Gonarezhou was already “popular as an area for viewing game and for fishing.” The Runde River, especially the area around Chipinda and Chitove pools, was excellent for angling tiger fish. In the reed-beds, however, the elephant herds had shrunk from the hundreds they used to be in previous years to an average of five animals due to “the erection of game fences and hunting operations to protect them.” Along the Portuguese border, the protection of game and FMD fences between the Save-Runde junction and Pafuri was taking up most of the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) staff’s time. Then there was the protection of the cattle fence along the Matibi II TTL and the Lone Star Ranch, which had resulted into the destruction of 12 buffalo, 2 eland, 5 kudu, 8 impala, 5 hippo, and 38 elephant.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> NMMZ D. Simpson and S. Booyens, “Animal and Plant Ecology Report,” Gona re Zhou Expedition, 1962: 55.

<sup>48</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1963: Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1963: 20.

The more the animals increased, the more they became a danger to people's lives. In 1965, the DNPWLM dropped a bombshell on Wright: the drought conditions in Gonarezhou and the hunting pressure in the tsetse areas had caused "heavy concentrations" of game in Buffalo Bend. The riverine vegetation of the Mwenezi was in jeopardy: to correct the situation, the department deemed it "necessary to reduce the numbers of elephant and buffalo in this area."<sup>49</sup> This exponential refugee population of wild animals added to the natural increase of zebra, roan and lion. Nyala calves were also in evidence in December. That was not all: an elephant bull branded "12" on its near side rump and ear had also sauntered quietly into Buffalo Bend from Kruger National Park.<sup>50</sup> All these game concentrations were taking place at Wright's unimaginable pleasure, but at local villagers' expense.

To make an 'objective' analysis of the game population density, in 1967 the DNPWLM conducted an aerial survey in the 500-square mile Buffalo Bend area. The 1,248 elephant confirmed the department's suspicions: the sanctuary was overpopulated, the vegetation disproportion, and the game population in urgent need of reduction. The continued destruction of elephant and buffalo in the tsetse corridors was forcing "heavy, unnatural concentrations of wild life... along the Nuanetsi River."<sup>51</sup>

Despite the slaughter of 600 elephant in 1971, the habitat deterioration continued. The ecological experts attributed the problem to "imbalances precipitated by such factors

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<sup>49</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1965: 26.

<sup>50</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1965: 26.

<sup>51</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1967 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1967: 21.

as past hunting, past settlement and the misuse of fire.” They also cited the presence of numerous other species that tended to neutralize whatever gains made from culling elephant. A high proportion of trees had also succumbed to bush fires or been pushed over by elephants.<sup>52</sup>

The animals became a serious threat to villagers. In the Chishinya area, elephants and buffalo began harassing Africans in the villages, destroying their crops. Lions were killing cattle and goats. Wright remained unsympathetic, accusing local people of provoking the animals so that they could get meat when DNPWLM shot them.<sup>53</sup>

Wright’s personalization of the “problem animal” issue does not articulate with the position of the DNPWLM. Throughout the 1960s, the department responded to distress calls from villagers losing cattle to predators and crops to elephants and buffalo. The primary responsibility of these scouts was supposed to be anti-poaching, but they ended up getting preoccupied with problem animals straying and causing mayhem in the villages.<sup>54</sup> In 1969, one research officer had to be airlifted by helicopter to hospital after an elephant first gored then “attempted to kneel on him, fracturing his pelvis.”<sup>55</sup> Also in the same year, staff at Mabalauta was preoccupied with calls from villagers and ranchers to drive off or destroy elephant damaging fences and irrigation installations.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Ministry of Lands Rhodesia: Report of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1971: 19.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*: 74.

<sup>54</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1964: Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1964: 24.

<sup>55</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1968 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1968: 23.

<sup>56</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1969 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1969: 11.

## Making a Game Reserve a Tourism Space

While kicking everybody else out, there were some Africans that Wright tried to keep inside Gonarezhou. He imagined them as part of a wildlife tourism package called “wild Africans.” Wright was not referring to local Africans’ knowledge about wildlife and places but African villagers *as wildlife*. To him, Ngwenyenye and his people were still as “primitive, ultra-conservative, unspoiled Shanganes living as they had [been] a hundred years ago” and were “part and parcel of any national park scheme of the future.” The overseas tourists, who had a surfeit of dams, towns, buildings or mountains at home, would seize the opportunity “to study wild animals and ‘wild’ Africans.” If Ngwenyenye stayed, Gonarezhou would have “a wonderful opportunity to combine the two great attractions in a unique and beautiful setting.” Moreover, these people were just another species of predator, whose poaching was part of the ecosystem’s checks and balances. DNWPLM saw some sense there: their poaching activities would save the department “the trouble of having to cull later when the area becomes over-stocked.”<sup>57</sup>

Wright’s proposal on “wild Africans” was more an article of faith than reality. Writing on Ngwenyenye’s relatives in Chitsa just across the Save River, an anthropologist, J. Philpot, had observed in 1954 that while the local inhabitants had generally retained “much that is picturesque and primitive,” they were “rapidly being ‘civilized.’” Their ‘tribal society’ was “in an advanced state of disintegration.” Philpot also noted that “observations should be recorded for posterity before their way of life is

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<sup>57</sup> Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 65.

completely swamped with the new set of values which they must absorb from mine, farm and native store.”<sup>58</sup>

As pointed out in Chapter 2, this adoption of western repertoires of modernity was not an abandonment of indigenous innovations in preference to western modernity as such, but a sign that tradition was itself elastic and adaptive. Sometimes the ideology remained, but the material instruments for practicing it was changing; other times the ideology itself was changing in tandem with the materiality of instruments required to practice it; yet other times ideology changed but the instruments did not. The point is that if Wright’s “wild African” was predicated on unchanging traditions (“the primitive”), such a species no longer existed.

The DNPWLM did not allow Wright’s fantasies to distract it from developing Gonarezhou for its dual purpose: tourism and conservation. In 1967, “numerous” South Africans tourists and “a large number” of local residents visited Chipinda Pools and Buffalo Bend for game-viewing and fishing. DNPWLM also started encouraging hunting safari tourism, the first of which was conducted in 1967. Most of the tourists were coming in via Chipinda Pools, an indication that the area had “considerable potential.” To further encourage this traffic, the warden had overseen the construction of an ablution block along the Runde River and earmarked two others for a couple other designated camping sites at Chilojo Cliffs and Chinguli.<sup>59</sup> The department was doing something about raising staff morale. In 1965, two staff houses—one a three-bedroom, the other two-bedroomed—were completed at Mabalauta, on the east bank of the Mwenezi,

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<sup>58</sup> NMMZ J. Philpot, “Anthropology,” Rhodesian Schools Exploration Society Report: Lundi Expedition, September 1954: 47.

<sup>59</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1969 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1969: 11.

another a two-bedroomed pre-fabricated cottage at Chipinda Pools.<sup>60</sup> In 1970 two new houses were constructed at Chipinda Pools for European staff, while the warden's house underwent major renovations while the African housing area was relocated further from the riverbank.<sup>61</sup>

That same year in April, the Swimiwini Tourist Camp was opened to the public. It was hoped that the "unspoiled atmosphere at this station obviously appealed to a number of visitors who had grown tired of more sophisticated areas." The warden also supervised a number of touch-ups on the new administrative office block, especially the reception area and the gardens. Meanwhile, work on the road from Mabalauta to Nyala was proceeding well, while the access road from Mabalauta to Chikomedzi had been widened to eight meters for about ten miles. The four mile "tourist drive" inside the Buffalo Bend created with Wright's permission had become an instant hit with tourists.<sup>62</sup> Further improvements took place at Swimiwini in 1971, while the Lions Club of Chiredzi had generously equipped the game-viewing platform at Makwokwani Pool.<sup>63</sup>

### **Making Villagers Poachers**

Wright could have succeeded with the co-existence of game and villagers if the land Ngwenyenye occupied was a Tribal Trust Land. This was not the case: DNPWLM was

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<sup>60</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Dictor of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1965: 26.

<sup>61</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1970 Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1970: 15.

<sup>62</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1970 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1970: 18.

<sup>63</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1971 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1971: 23.

firmly in charge and its opinion was that Ngwenyenye's cattle posed a veterinary threat. The headman and his people dug in: their "great grandfathers had been born there, lived there and were buried there." Their roots were deep in this ground; to uproot them was to take the life out of them.<sup>64</sup> However, the DNPWLM had already concluded that Ngwenyenye and his people were snaring game, that "game and people cannot live satisfactorily side-by-side."<sup>65</sup>

In the eyes of the DNPWLM, any African resident in areas reserved for wild animals was a "squatter," regardless of whether that person's ancestors had owned or lived on such lands. Here are two insightful quotations from the Director himself. The first was in 1968, the year that the Buffalo Bend area of Gonarezhou was declared a game reserve: "It is pleasing to record that the squatters in the Fitchani's area have been moved out. Squatters still remain in the area between the confluence of the Sabi and Lundi rivers."<sup>66</sup> In the second, he was saying that the forced movement of Ngwenyenye and his people out of the park freed up space for the unfettered mobilities of wild animals. Hence at Marumbini "where elephant herds were previously unknown, large herds were occupying the area only eight days after the squatters had moved out."<sup>67</sup>

The escalation of poaching was a reflection of resistance against the forced removals from the area designated Gonarezhou Game Reserve in 1968. The following year, 63 Africans were arrested in the game reserve and adjacent areas for contravening

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<sup>64</sup> NAZ S2929/8/4 Delineation Report Nuanetsi District: The Ngwenyenye or Marumbini Headmanship and Community, Chief Chitanga, Gonarezhou National land, B.P. Kaschula, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Salisbury, June-August 1967.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1967 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1967: 21.

<sup>67</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1968 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1968: 23.

the Wild Life Conservation, Fish Conservation and Forestry Acts. However, the main headline was a serious case of assault on a game scout who was trying to a re-arrest one man for poaching: “he suffered five axe wounds in the head, had his clothes removed and was left for dead.” Regional Warden Douglas Newmarch noted in 1970 that “snaring and poaching” in Buffalo Bend was out of control because the Ngwenyenye people resettled there were “an embittered lot; why, I don’t know.”<sup>68</sup>

Ngwenyenye’s people were an ‘embittered’ lot with material reasons to poach. Just like the mines and burgeoning colonial towns, the forest was looked upon as a source of income, poaching a lucrative business. The village was the production line, the village the market. African butchers sold beef at between 18 and 25 cents per lb. On economic grounds alone, people preferred venison at 10 cents per lb. The skins had a ready market, with a zebra one attracting R\$15. The penalty for a crime of poaching was too light, thereby encouraging repeat offenders. 80% of the offenders were not arrested.<sup>69</sup>

The predominant weapon of poaching was the snare, were made either from cable or from high tensile wire. The numbers each poacher could set is staggering. On snarer was caught in 1966 in possession of 18 set snares and 33 ready for setting. He had already killed one eland, one buffalo, one nyala, one kudu, one zebra, one warthog, two waterbuck, one elephant and one crested guinea fowl.<sup>70</sup>

Bows and poisoned arrows were still very much part of the arsenal. For example, in 1968, a hunter named Matsilele Yingwani Hlengani of Pahlela village, who operated in the Sengwe area near ‘No. 4 Cattle Dipping Tank’ used bows and arrows together with a muzzle loader and snares. Dogs were used in tandem with bows and arrows as well as

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<sup>68</sup> Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 23.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/P5 Poaching Records, 1968-72: 1.

guns, but they could not be used with traps. The reason is simple: they would be caught in the wire snare or trip the gin trap. It was common to chase anything from hares to antelopes with dogs, but not buffalo, both for the dog's safety and the size of the prey.<sup>71</sup>

Most poachers worth their salt used snares in combination with guns. The data for the 1960s shows that different generations of unlicensed firearms were in use. The most surprising are the 18-19<sup>th</sup> century muzzle-loaders, with which locals normally shot buffalo and antelope. A man named Musengi of Musimeki village was suspected of owning either a muzzle-loader or Martini-Henry rifle. Some .410 breech-loading rifles were also in use. Another named Posheleni of Sengwe used a .303 rifle, which he normally kept in his house. Because of anti-poaching patrols in the Manjinji and Dumisa areas, he hid it in the forest.<sup>72</sup> Posheleni was one of 21 poachers arrested in 1967 in a DNPWLM Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) operation which led to the recovery of one .303 (his) and one .22 rifle.<sup>73</sup> On 26 May 1971, the APU caught a poacher named Mahlava in the act of using his 9.3 Mauser rifle. In addition, he was also in possession of 57 wire and cable snares, and had sent his second gun, a muzzle-loader, for repairs. The record also shows the use of double-barreled 12-bore shotgun used to kill kudu and buffalo.<sup>74</sup>

The data suggests that poachers had a very efficient weapon maintenance and production system in place. Some poachers were not just users of instruments but designer-users rolled in one. There is evidence that metallurgists (including poachers) were not only repairing guns, but also making home-made versions. In the Mafuku area,

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*: 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*: 3-6.

<sup>73</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1967 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1967: 21.

<sup>74</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/P5 Poaching Records, 1968-72: 3.

in 1964 the APU arrested a man named Jasi in possession of a “home-made gun, slugs and detonators.”<sup>75</sup> Men like Jasi were highly adaptive experts in practically all indigenous hunting technology, who adopted new raw materials to their design. Another was Toyola Pahlela of Sengwe, who is referred to in the APU reports as “a master trap mechanic.” Among instruments recovered from his person his homestead were muzzle-loader and cable snares, bits and pieces of 2-3 gin traps, four hammers and two chisels, and some bellows. In addition to repairing his own equipment, Toyola was the expert to whom other poachers deferred to purchase new or repair old instruments like gin-traps, bows, arrows, and (repairing) muzzle-loaders.<sup>76</sup>

Just as we saw with Bvekenya, these poachers ran their own intelligence responsible for monitoring the whereabouts of park patrols as well as the animals. Because the scouts were locals, it was easy for uncles who were scouts to advise their nephews in the village when best to come in. In the absence of any kinship links between scouts and poachers, poaching was all about time management, which is why the fence and patrol were ineffective as a barrier. As an example, Frank Musisinyani of Mahinga village had been successful as a poacher was because he usually operated in the Malipati locality “at month-ends when game scouts [we]re in for pay.”<sup>77</sup>

The poaching gangs were organized along village or kinship lines. It was rare to find a hunter who hunted alone, the idea being to pool resources, especially dog packs. Whereas in some cases the poachers were just ordinary villagers of no rank, in villages

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

like Gezani/Pahlela south of Manjinji, the Headman Pahlela Mavindhlu himself was the chief culprit. It was a father and son combination.<sup>78</sup>

The fences that the state meant as boundaries between villages and the game reserve became the hidden highways of poachers. For example in the Gonakudzingwa African Purchase Area in 1972, the APU discovered that some individuals were using Farm # 17 as a hidden butchery. They would enter the park, make a kill and carry the full carcass back onto the farm to avoid detection.<sup>79</sup> One of the men—Chitayi—was the property owner. The other man was Elias Suzwani, who owned a large caliber muzzle-loader kept on Chitayi's farm. He admitted to arranging transport to remove carcasses from Gonarezhou, confessing that “numerous game animals were butchered on his property and that meat was given to him.” It was presumed that Suzwani received meat in payment for the rifle and transport.<sup>80</sup>

There also kinship-related poaching connections across the border between ‘Rhodesian Shanganes’ and ‘Mozambican Shanganes’. Take the case of Mambawu, a Portuguese African who lived in Tsvuku village in Malvernia, who in the 1960s used to cross into Gonarezhou with dogs and snares. Then there was Casimitu, arrested on 21 March 1968 for possessing a rifle and hunting deep inside the park. Casimitu confessed his reliance on Shangane kin in Rhodesia for informants and a ready market for venison. In October 1968, a man named Dumazi who lived in Hayisa village on the Rhodesian side, was arrested for possessing three set snares and admitted to killing two nyala. In

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

court, Dumazi admitted to operating with Thomas, a ‘Portuguese African’ who lived in the adjacent Portuguese village called Gavumente (Government).<sup>81</sup>

The case of Mahenye is well documented because a latter-day Bvekenya operated from the villages into northern Gonarezhou. It would be hard to find anyone in Mahenye who does not know Shadreck, arguably the most famous *mupocha* around Gonarezhou. The Portuguese African lived near the border in Mozambique, from where he made his forays into the park. Barring a period of two years spent on the South African mines, he had been poaching elephant since 1960. Puzi also revealed that Shadreck had operated with a muzzle-loader in Gonarezhou for fourteen years until the beginning of 1974 when he became more sophisticated. He got arms and ammunition from the same people he sold ivory to:

As he was wounding so many elephant, two European Portuguese, who live[d] at the sawmills on the Save River, about six miles into Mozambique, gave Shadreck a .375 Parker Hale Magnum rifle. These two Europeans are the ones who buy his ivory. The name and number of this .375 rifle had been filed off.<sup>82</sup>

An informer confessed to the APU that he had “lost count” of the number of elephant Shadreck had shot, but it was “a tremendous number and that now that he had a .375 rifle, he had collected enough money this year to buy himself a store.”<sup>83</sup>

In July 1976 Shadreck made another dramatic transition. Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) guerrillas had started their incursions through Gonarezhou from Mozambique. Running short of options, the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) turned to clandestine measures. One of them was to use Shadreck, who was “ideally placed to be an informer as he crossed and re-crossed the

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

international border, mixed freely and was accepted as a friend by both ZANLA guerrillas and Frelimo soldiers.” The Selous Scouts, a dirty tricks unit within the RSF, had found just the perfect cover for *Operation Hunter*, in which Shadi (as locals affectionately called him) would get *carte blanche* to poach elephant in the park “in exchange for information on guerrilla... movements.”<sup>84</sup>

Shadreck proved to be less reliable despite the amnesty the state gave him. The Selous Scouts attempt to turn Shadi into their spook was a distinct failure precisely because Shadi was a peripatetic, transboundary figure whose ‘Rule # 1’ was to disrespect boundaries whenever anyone might insist on them. His market and source of portable weaponry (guns and ammunition) was Mozambique, the rear base of ZANLA. His hunting grounds were in Rhodesia, deep inside areas the RSF controlled and those that were no-man’s land. Unbeknown to the Selous Scouts, Shadreck was also passing the more valuable intelligence about the RSF operations to ZANLA and Frelimo.<sup>85</sup>

After Independence Day, on 18 April 1980 and the triumph of ZANLA’s parent party ZANU in the elections, the hunting grounds were clear again. Robert Gabriel Mugabe became the new prime minister. Villagers waited with confidence for the new head of government to signal their entry into their ancestral lands. Poachers readied their guns in anticipation of the bountiful meat. However, the same government Shadreck helped put in power through his back-and-forth across the border now saw him as a pest to game conservation. The new Zimbabwe Republic Police arrested him barely months

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<sup>84</sup> Jim Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer* (Alberton: Galago Publishing, 2006): 68.

<sup>85</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Solomon Bvekenya and Vhumbululu Ndhlovu, Former ZANLA Guerrilla, Malipati Business Center, Gonarezhou, 11 July, 2001.

into independence. He was only saved from serving more time at Buffalo Range through a presidential amnesty in 1981. He died soon afterwards.

### **The Fragility of Boundaries**

Shadreck's biography is not just an individual's story but a narrow path through a wider historical moment. In his movements we see how not just locals but even the state forged alliances with its own lesser nemeses in order to fight bigger ones. The state became complicit in breaking its own wildlife laws! I argue that transgression arises not just from the work of poachers but also the tensions within the state apparatus and *modus operandi* itself. This is not something peculiar to the 'colonial' period, but a thread that ties together the colonial and postcolonial into a continuum.

Situating this discussion in the 1980s-90s, I examine this fragility of boundaries at two levels. First, there is the paradox that the same institutions that were supposed to keep the law ended up being the very crevice through which poachers crept into the park. Second, I wish to emphasize that such boundary-crossing was so intensive during this period because the national park was a theater of war pitting the new Zimbabwe National Army and the Mozambican rebel movement, Renamo.

I use Mobile Anti-Poaching Unit (MAPU, formerly APU) reports from Mabalauta Field Station to illustrate this point. MAPU was composed of the DNPWLM, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP, formerly BSA Police) police, and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA, successor to the RSF). Gonarezhou was also a war theater under the jurisdiction of the Joint Operations Command (JOC). The army chaired this structure. In effect,

Gonarezhou was under the jurisdiction of two separate structures, which created problems over powers of arrest.

***The Law as Asset and Liability.*** There were two major problems between the prosecution and the magistrates. One was the changing nature of poaching which the justice system was not equipped to deal with poachers. In 1983, Warden Mabalauta, R.L. Murray, reported that cases of poaching involving juveniles within Mabalauta sub-region of the Gonarezhou and Malipati Safari Area were “increasing at an alarming rate.” Villagers realized that the police took no action against juveniles “and accordingly encourage[d] their children to enter the Parks and Wildlife estate” to poach. On 28 August when Game Scouts apprehended six African children from nearby Pahlela area who had spent the entire day hunting inside the park with a pack of dogs. By the end of their adventure they had made an impressive harvest: two adult nyala cows worth Z\$400, 1 adult warthog (Z\$25), one clipspringer (Z\$75), totaling Z\$500 worth of wildlife.<sup>86</sup>

Rangers Mackie and Evans arrested all six juveniles the same day at Nyamasikana Pool inside Gonarezhou, and took them to Mabalauta for questioning. Warden Murray however released four of the juveniles “to be dealt with by their kraal heads.” The other two—the oldest in the group—were detained for prosecution on charges of ‘Hunt[ing] in National Park’ Section 15 (1) (B) Parks and Wildlife General Regulations and killing game valued at Z\$500. The two lads were taken to Mpakati for prosecution, but the case does not seem to have gone far.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/8/83 R.L. Murray, Warden Mabalauta to Chief Warden: “Juveniles: poaching – Gonarezhou National Park.”

<sup>87</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/ Palmer to ZRP Mpakati – Mabalauta Field Station, Gonarezhou National Park, 29 February 1984.

The question confronting MAPU was how to deal with under-age poachers who could not be given deterrent-enough sentences? Who would DNWPLM charge—the messenger or those who sent them? At the JOC meeting at Chiredzi on 24 February 1986, acting warden Mabalauta, Senior Ranger P.G.E. Westrop, expressed his disappointment that, six years since independence, the ZRP officer at Malipati “had not tried to resolve the matter of juveniles released by Police Mwenezi on a local level.” The Officer Commanding ZRP Chiredzi, Supt. Chingosho, took umbrage at Westrop’s allegations.<sup>88</sup>

The substance of Westrop’s complaint derived from a report of his subordinate, Ranger Chimanga, which detailed how adults of the village had adopted a different strategy to avoid arrest and prosecution. Instead of going in themselves to poach, they were now sending their children in the full knowledge that juveniles were unpunishable under the law. Poaching was endemic during the school holidays, “with juvenile poachers who are causing just as much damage to wildlife as adults.” However Chimanga said unlike adults, these juveniles were “seemingly above the law and gets (sic) off scot-free.” Parents knew that even if their children were arrested, they would be “released without charge by either the Police or the Court... with a meaningless caution.” Chimanga recommended that the offenders should instead be “caned or given cuts as a deterrent, as several of them had been caught more than once” to dissuade others.<sup>89</sup>

Chimanga made it clear he was not necessarily attacking the police but the law as a statutory instrument for fighting poaching: it was simply blunt. He wanted an acknowledgment from ZRP that juvenile poaching in the area surrounding Gonarezhou/Malipati Safari Area was a problem. He wanted them to provide

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<sup>88</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/3/86 Westrop to OC ZRP Chiredzi, att. Supt. Chingosho, 6 March 1986: “Release of Juvenile Poachers – Police Mwenezi.”

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

documentary evidence of cases “where juveniles have gone unpunished by the law.” Westrop was sympathetic to his ranger: “I don’t believe that the motive was to criticize the Police Force, but rather to bring attention to the fact that juveniles go unpunished and that certain people are taking advantage of this situation.”<sup>90</sup>

Chimanga’s report listed one specific case involving eight persons his scouts had arrested in August 1985, six of them juveniles of school-going age. Four had apparently been sent to Mpakati Police Post on 25 August 1985. Of these, three were members of “a juvenile gang of five” hunting with dogs in the Malipati Safari Area. Their names were James Mbiza, Dhlawayi Mapongo, and Chuma Dube. Only Mbiza—aged 18—had been arraigned at Beitbridge court on 27 August 1985. The magistrate simply cautioned and discharged him. The other two claimed to be under 16, and police at Mwenezi (formerly Nuanetsi) “released [them] unconditionally.” They never went to court.<sup>91</sup>

Based on this evidence, Westrop challenged as “not strictly correct” Chingosho’s statement at the Chiredzi meeting “that ALL the persons released had been released by the Magistrate.” He rejected the claim that the second juvenile Chimanga had forwarded to Mpakati the same day, Matambo Hlengani, charged with setting wire snares in Malipati Safari Area, had also appeared before the Magistrate at Beitbridge. While police claimed he was cautioned and released without sentence, the lad had in fact been “released by police without consulting National Parks.” When asked about it on 6 March 1986, these juveniles admitted “that they had hunted in the Safari Area with dogs prior to

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

their arrest in August.” The police at Mwenezi had decided to release them because of their “tender age”—villagers’ potent weapon against the law!<sup>92</sup>

Therefore, Westrop felt his ranger was justified in saying that releasing juveniles without even “canning” (whipping) them or awarding them a similar punishment made “no example… to other potential juvenile poachers, nor their parents.” As far as the warden was concerned, not only was deterrence removed; there was “now an incentive to break the laws of the country by sending in under-age persons to commit the crime.”<sup>93</sup> The juvenile was not only a proxy; as part of a collective of poachers (*mapocha*), they were a mobile workshop, trained and equipped by veteran poachers to hunt on their behalf. The juvenile poacher became a battle ground between state departments.

The second legal problem concerned scouts and rangers’ *powers of arrest*, which the existing wildlife and police laws did not specify. The Director DNPWLM summarized the key dilemma between anti-poaching operations and prosecution: “On the one hand the magistrates are under pressure to award fines rather than the imposition of prison sentences and, on the other, we know that fines are not having the desired effect.”<sup>94</sup> Under Section 6 (1) Parks and Wildlife General Regulations and Section 28 (1) Parks and Wildlife General Regulations 1981, the courts were only empowered to impose Z\$10-Z\$40 fines for ‘removing meat of animals killed in a National Park.’<sup>95</sup>

The major question for Palmer was how to protect wildlife if his staff was not allowed to shoot to kill, if the law did not give them such power, and yet the poacher did not obey such laws. The police said: “Don’t shoot until they fire first.” Palmer found this

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/A845/1/LEG G.M. Nott, for Director to All Stations: ‘Evidence in Aggravation – Poaching Cases’, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1983.

<sup>95</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/0262 and 0262 – Parks and Wildlife Act – Particulars of Accused.

ridiculous: “How do you physically put handcuffs on a man with an AK?” Palmer fumed, demanding from his superiors “a directive to shoot, which he expected must come from the ministry ‘to protect myself and my staff’.” The procedure was “to only fire over poachers’ heads.” They simply ran across the border into Mozambique.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Palmer explained the confusion surrounding the real identity of these ‘*mapocha*’:

We are dealing with unknown armed persons often in camouflage kit. Are they FRELIMO? Mozambique militia? Zimbabwean dissidents?

Alternatively, even Mozambican MRM dissidents?<sup>97</sup>

The warden gave the example of an incident of an armed Mozambican militia caught hunting in the park after being wounded by a stray round from MAPU warning shots.<sup>98</sup>

The DNPWLM Directorate advised Palmer that it had made submissions to the Attorney-General way back in 1976 asking him “to define and clarify the powers of arrest and the manner in which arrests may be made.” The result was “Opinion No. 23 of 1976 AG’s Ref AG/18/11 (m)” and “Departmental Ref A/15 of 5<sup>th</sup> May 1976.” Another legal opinion was requested on 24 February 1983 to deal with poaching and obtained on 3 May 1983. It had “little to add” to the previous opinion. The two opinions could not explain how rangers and scouts could use firearms to protect wildlife and themselves if they risked prosecution for wounding or killing a person they saw poaching. What force was considered “acceptable” if it was also “impossible to lay down hard and fast rules on the use of firearms”? This lack of clarity explains Palmer’s agitation for “a clear and unambiguous directive from Ministry on how to handle armed poachers.” Until it arrived,

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<sup>96</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305 Warden to Director DPWLM, 11 December 1984.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

the Directorate instructed Palmer to tell his staff to be “most circumspect” in their actions and abide by the requirements of Opinion No. 23 of 1976.<sup>99</sup>

Technically, under Statutory Instrument 256 of 1984 and the Parks and Wildlife Act 1975, game rangers and scouts were “Peace Officers” “endowed with capacity to maintain the Park’s territorial integrity and to preserve the park’s natural resources.” Rangers and scouts were armed largely for personal protection, and if they injured or killed any trespassers into parks, their liabilities were determined under Section 101 (c) of the Parks and Wildlife Act No. 14 of 1975. The police would “not effect instant arrest and detention of the authority responsible for the injury or death,” but would open a docket and investigate the matter fully.<sup>100</sup>

However, how would a Parks officer avoid arrest if they injured or killed a poacher in the process of trying to institute an arrest? The bits-and-pieces of statutory instruments and opinions only prevented the officer from being instantly arrested if he injured or killed a poacher or intruder. It also ensured “there would certainly be an immediate arrest and detention where firearms were used wantonly and indiscriminately” (my emphasis). However, who really determined ‘wantonness’ if there was no witness to a contact with a poacher whom the scout *had* to kill?<sup>101</sup>

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was clearly losing patience with poachers, and warned that government might have “to account for them in other ways.” But knowing the ambiguities of the law and the possibility of personal liability for

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<sup>99</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305: Prosecutions Poaching etc. D/136/89 A.W.J. Wood, for Director, to Warden Mabalauta, 10 January 1985: “Armed Poaching in the Gonarezhou.”

<sup>100</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305: W.T. Takura, Chief Supt., Staff Officer (Legal Services) to the Commissioner of Police, to Secretary for Home Affairs. Attention: Mr. Tsomondo; The Director of Parks and Wildlife, 11 March 1985: “Powers of Arrest: Parks and Wildlife Authorities.”

<sup>101</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/A/977 C.A. M’pamhanga for Acting Director, to All Staff, All Stations, 17 April 1985: “Powers of Arrest/Use of Firearms – Parks and Wildlife Personnel.”

murder, acting Director DNPWLM, M.R. Drury, sent out an immediate order to all stations, cautioning that the PM's incendiary statement was "not a license to operate in any other way other than that required by law."<sup>102</sup> The constitution was supreme over the political willpower of the Prime Minister.

### **The Police: Promoting and Defeating Justice**

As the chief law enforcement institution, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, now composed of and named after ZANLA's police force in the Mozambican rear bases, was a huge obstacle to the DNPWLM wardens all of whom were initially Europeans (whites) before being gradually replaced. Contrary to the wardens' view of the ZRP as inept, the more fundamental point is the tug-of-war between historical/social justice (which they had promised as *guerrillas*) and legal justice (which they were now sworn to uphold as *state police officers*). They were expected to implement the very same laws they had fought the war to end!

At the same time, there was generally uncertainty and downright lack of knowledge on the ZRP officers' part that conflicted with the more seasoned view of experienced wardens and rangers (too) passionate about conservation. Some of the DNPWLM officials were retired BSA Police officers who knew the arrest and prosecution inside-out, and expressed their frustrations to the ZRP as if they were "lecturing" to "subordinates." These sermons were not taken lying down.

The major accusation was that the ZRP's local officers were illiterate and did not understand the law, hence they got less than deterrent sentences. These tensions played

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<sup>102</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/A/934 M.R. Drury for Director to All Stations, 8 November 1985 (See "PM Mugabe's Warning to Poachers," *The Herald*, Nov 5 1985).

out in a flurry of correspondences discussed in this section. An undated copy of a minute from Mabalauta Field Station complained of “more and more reports” where the ZRP were actually blocking cases from being successfully prosecuted. If “this sad state of affairs” was allowed to continue, the warden warned that “the complete eradication of vast areas of Zimbabwe’s wildlife will be assured in the not-too-distant future. This statement is not conjecture, it is fact.”<sup>103</sup>

While Parks was convinced that heavy sentences would make a statement on just how serious the state was about anti-poaching, the ZRP was prosecuting cases for ridiculously low sentences. In *The State vs. John Mbedzani, John Phinias Chauke and Francisco Mutula*, for example, Westrop expected a serious charge of “attempted murder and possession of arms of war.” After all, at exactly 0800 hrs on 2 February 1985, the accuseds had fired two shots at a duiker. It is unclear where the “attempted murder” charge stemmed from, but Westrop was quite adamant on at least the alternative charge “c/s 15 (1) (d) of the Parks and Wildlife Act: ‘Convey weapon into Gonarezhou National Park’” being preferred against Mbedzani. Chauke and Mutula should have been charged of “possession of arms of war” while the other accomplices Samuel Karurushi and George Kandembe—who had shot and killed animals—must have been prosecuted for “bringing weapons into a national park.”<sup>104</sup> The weapons in question were four SKS, one FN, and two AK-47 rifles.

The outcome of this case would put a marker on what to expect should Parks apprehend Raphael Manjoma and Ngichi Sumbani, who had entered Gonarezhou from

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<sup>103</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/A/934: “Ref: Parks and Wildlife Offences: Prosecution: Juveniles.”

<sup>104</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/10/85 P.G.E. Westrop, Senior Ranger to OiC ZRP Chiredzi: Att. Inspector Ndhlovu, 31 October 1985: “Armed Poaching Cases – Gonarezhou National Park.”

Mozambique on two occasions to poach while in possession of arms of war. In another case, *The State vs. Adam Chauke*, Parks had recovered “one head of a bullet from an elephant carcass, poached in the park” which would hopefully “tie in (ballistically) with the SKS no. 1717103 captured in this case.” Westrop reiterated hope that these charges would attract heavy sentences “so that our Mozambican neighbors understand that we mean business.”<sup>105</sup>

Not so for ZRP Mwenezi and Mpakati. They were simply poor communicators. For example, on 9 December 1984, an armed Mozambican poacher named Arimando Mkhuu Samu was captured in a MAPU operation after being shot and wounded in the knee in the Nyala area of Mabalauta. An SKS rifle (number 1780) and 20 rounds of ammunition were recovered. According to Westrop, the poacher should have been charged of illegal hunting in a national park and illegal possession of weapons of war, or alternatively conveying a weapon into a national park, but no feedback came from ZRP for months until Westrop made a complaint. Westrop says that this was not the exception: numerous cases had died at Mpakati.<sup>106</sup>

To add insult to injury, after Parks had done impeccable and painstaking work to chase and apprehend poachers, the courts freed them for lack of sufficient evidence or simply because charges were poorly framed. The police did not bother to explain why sometimes culprits were released without charge. It enraged Westrop:

If further evidence was required, why were National Parks not called? Many public prosecutors, usually police officers at district stations, are too eager to finalize a case no matter the result, which conflicts with our interest to achieve a deterrent sentence. If a case appears to be lacking

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/10/85 P.G.E. Westrop, Snr Ranger to 2iC ZRP Mwenezi, 31 October 1985.

evidence, a prosecutor should ask for a remand and call further state witnesses.<sup>107</sup>

It was now custom that whenever cases passed to Mpakati, Parks staff were told “the case is cut and dried and there would be no need for our witnesses to appear in court.” An accused often pleaded guilty at Mpakati then changed his story in court. Instead of asking for a remand and calling Park scouts as witnesses, the police proceeded with the case. Westrop was livid: “The case is then lost and I blame the Police for this: *there is too much emphasis on getting a case finalized*, instead of achieving a satisfactory result and sentence.”<sup>108</sup> (My emphasis)

The problem also resulted from the ignorance of certain Police Stations about changes in Parks and Wildlife legislation; many still used “outdated copies.” He therefore advised Superintendent Chingosho to “ensure that stations have sufficient copies of the updated act, and that policemen preparing cases are made aware that changes have been made over the years.”<sup>109</sup>

Westrop conceded that the failure of “clear liaison” between ZRP and Parks over cases was also a problem of logistics. He hoped that DNPWLM would allocate more mileage to stations facing serious poaching “and whose local police station is distant.” The prevailing situation of mileage allocations and vehicle hire votes was “pathetic, and a major cause of the current lack of liaison and communication with police.” Ultimately, however, liaison was a two-sided matter, and Westrop invited police “to visit Parks stations within [their] areas of responsibility, on a more regular basis.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/3/86 Westrop to OC ZRP Chiredzi, att. Supt. Chingosho, 6 March 1986: “Release of Juvenile Poachers – Police Mwenezi.”

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, he recommended “more regular attendance by National Parks witnesses of court cases.” He blamed police for being “sometimes at fault for not requesting attendance by our details, since they foresee no complications.” Such attendance was also a budgetary matter requiring attention “from those who hold the purse strings for higher allocations.” While Westrop was optimistic that the opening of a new police post at Chikombedzi “and more particularly, the holding of court cases there,” would ease the problem significantly, he expressed concern that the station would not be opened “for some considerable time.”<sup>111</sup>

### **The Army: Game Scouts and Poachers**

On 13 November 1984, Warden Palmer wrote an explosive letter to Major Kanganga, deputy commander of the Engineers Squadron, in which he accused some members of the army of poaching. Palmer’s case was that on Sunday, 11 November 1984, around 8.30 am, the attendant of Swimuwini Rest Camp, Mark, had reported to him at Mabalauta field station that the previous evening around 7.40 pm, he had “heard a burst of automatic gunfire in the direction of the Nyala Siding road in the Park.” Around 7.45 pm Mark heard another two single shots, this time closer to the Rest Camp where Nyala Road joined the main road to Malipati. Minutes later he saw tail and head lights of a truck proceeding towards Malipati, without reporting first to the Nyala Army Camp.<sup>112</sup>

Mark and Game Scout Sergeant Mafira and Scout II Standreck then proceeded down Nyala Road to check the scene of the shots. At around grid UL489723, they found

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/11/84 P. Palmer (Warden Mabalauta to Major Kanganga, 2IC 6 Eng. Sqn, Pomona Brks, Harare, 13 November 1984: “Shooting at Night in the Mwenezi Sub-region of the Gonarezhou.”

“25 empty AK cases and a live AK round lying scattered next to the road.” The “spoor” showed that the truck had stopped there and one person—based on the “one set of plain boot tracks”—got out. The sleuths also saw “a number of ground strike marks angling off into the *mopani* scrub and a quantity of impala spoor in the vicinity,” suggesting that the person had attempted to shoot the impala “at close quarters to the road possibly from the back of the truck.” Mark did not find any blood spoor or carcasses.<sup>113</sup>

That Sunday morning after Mark’s report, Palmer proceeded to Nyala Army Base, the camp of 42 Battalion’s border patrol sub-unit under the command of a Captain Mabika. The unit’s truck tire was different from the truck spoor, but Mabika admitted seeing an Engineer Squadron tipper truck and bowser leave Boli Shopping Center at about 7 pm. One of Mabika’s warrant officers also reported “hearing a truck approach from Twiza and turn into the Nyala road at approximately 7.30 pm.”<sup>114</sup>

From Nyala Siding Palmer and Mabika drove to the Engineers Squadron base at Samu village. Two warrant officers, Churu and Dekoko, informed them that tipper truck registration number 07HN83 had arrived at the base around 10 pm. Along the way, the driver had left the diesel bowser (registration number T318) at Malipati District Development Fund (DDF) station due to problems with a cracked chassis. There were three men on the truck, two of whom had returned to Malipati that Sunday morning to repair the bowser. They had not yet returned. The third member was Sapper Ndoita and upon being questioned, it was found that he had recently cleaned his rifle and had three full magazines. Dekoko was convinced that Ndoita was supposed to have four magazines

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

as per orders issued before leaving Engineers headquarters in Pomona, north of Harare.

The sapper admitted they had used Nyala Road but denied any shooting had occurred.<sup>115</sup>

From Samu, Palmer and Mabika proceeded to Malipati DDF in one vehicle while Dekoko followed in another. At Malipati they questioned Ndoita's companions on the night truck, Corporal Majinjiwa and Sapper Joseph, and inspected their weapons and magazines. They were dirty from firing, and when asked, they pleaded: "We [had] to shoot at ploughshear (sic) mines." Instead of the four magazines as per orders in Harare, each man had "just one [magazine] full bar a couple of rounds." Majinjiwa and Joseph strenuously denied having any magazines left at Samu and claimed they had been issued only one in Harare. While Ndoita had admitted to using the Nyala Road, the two men contradicted him: they said they had used the Twiza-Mabalauta Road to Malipati! Like Ndoita they denied any shooting. Further, the tire pattern on the rear wheels of their truck (07HN83) matched the spoor.<sup>116</sup> As far as Warrant Officer Dekoko was concerned, this was a closed and shut case if it an inspection at Samu camp unearthed the magazines and ammunition. Palmer was having none of it because he had no mileage to waste on a "meaningless" check—"the accused might swap magazines with friends or be in possession of additional rounds."

At which point two non-commissioned officers (NCOs), Staff Sergeant Hove of 4 Engineers Squadron and a Regimental Police detail, "proved to be a hinderance (sic) and clearly supported the three accused." The two men tried to prevent Palmer from taking "two test cases from each of the two weapons at Malipati for ballistic testing (weapon ZA10772 and ZA10742)." They tried unsuccessfully to convince Mabika to withhold the

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

weapon numbers “on security grounds.” Dekoko in particular was obstructing the ends of justice. When Palmer asked him to follow in his vehicle to check the truck spoor on Nyala Road, he gave the excuse that he was “short of diesel” and could only accompany him as a passenger and provided Palmer would return him to Samu. The warden refused “on mileage shortage grounds.”<sup>117</sup> Then Dekoko and Hove tried an alibi: “It could have been Mozambicans doing the shooting!” In the end, Palmer decided that matters might get out of hand as the tensions built up, so he returned with Mabika in separate vehicles to Swimuwini turn-off before heading to Mabalauta.<sup>118</sup>

As far as Palmer and Mabika could tell, “the three accused were blatantly lying.” Mabika’s appreciation of the situation was that “Nyala Road was used so that blame could be directed at his unit should an investigation have been made into the shooting.” But the truck and bowser’s tire spoor patterns, empty cartridges, timings, and direction of truck movement all pointed squarely to the three engineers. It did not make the case any less severe that no animals had been killed: this was “*the third known incident in the park involving army personnel* in the last three months” (my emphasis).<sup>119</sup> As far as Palmer was concerned, this was an open and shut case: the army was poaching.

After establishing his facts, Palmer made arrangements “for [Provincial Warden Ngwarai] himself to personally come down with 4 Brigade staff to take the issue further. This however did not materialize.” Nonetheless, the second-in-command at Samu, Lieutenant Sibanda, arrived that same day; Palmer gave him a full briefing “and he was completely cooperative.” Sibanda also questioned Scout Sergeant Mafira to get a first-hand account of what exactly had happened at Nyala on the night in question. Sibanda

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

told Palmer that the three soldiers had “clearly disobeyed instructions on the route to be used when returning from Triangle with diesel.” He promised to return with Ndoita and his weapon to Palmer for further questioning on Monday 12<sup>th</sup>. He never showed up.<sup>120</sup>

The next day Captain Dzingai of 4 Engineers Squadron and Captain Erikias of 4 Brigade Masvingo arrived at Mabalauta on their way to Samu “on other business.” Palmer briefed them on the suspected poaching incident. The two officers “promised an investigation and the necessary disciplinary action” and convinced Palmer to let the ZNA handle the matter through court-martial instead of the courts. The warden agreed because his “present financial and mileage shortage” did not permit long trips to police stations and court appearances.<sup>121</sup> On the 26<sup>th</sup> the army arraigned the suspects but found “no real evidence,” so an alternative charge of “firing weapons for no reason” in a national park was preferred. Corporal Machinjiwa was fined Z\$100 and demoted to Lance Corporal while Sapper Joseph escaped with a Z\$100 fine for “shooting at night” in a park.<sup>122</sup>

Despite attempts to portray the poaching as an isolated case of wayward ‘other ranks’ from Engineers Squadron acting on their own initiative, more evidence emerged involving a junior officer of 4 Brigade in Chipinda Pools. The memo from the Provincial Warden to Warden Chipinda makes this clear:

Following my meetings with the Deputy Commander 4 Brigade, I got a letter from him which I quote:

1. We inform you that disciplinary action will be taken against the member, i.e. Lieutenant Masandu.
2. For 42 Infantry Battalion, member 782051 Lt. J. Masandu should be charged for poaching while on operations.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/1/85 P. Palmer, Warden Mabalauta to Maj. Kanganga, 6 Eng. Sqn, 1 January 1985: “Rifle Firing Incident – Gonarezhou, 11 November 1984.”

<sup>123</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/12/85 Provincial Warden to Warden Chipinda, 2 December 1985: “Poaching in Gonarezhou”

The archives do not allow me to trace whether these foot-soldiers were simply “using their initiative” or as agents of much bigger sharks ‘getting rich quick’. Duffy has made the latter case.

### **Local People: Refugees and Poachers**

In 1975, as the Portuguese retreated in disarray, the forces of Samora Machel’s Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) declared independence. Alarmed that a Soviet-aligned communist state was about to be established on their borders, Rhodesia and South Africa bankrolled teamed up with disaffected elements in Mozambique to form the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO). The leaders of the movement were Ndau, which is no surprise that its strongest support was from Chippinga, the northern fringe of Gonarezhou. After a slow start, from 1982 the movement was making significant inroads into the FRELIMO heartlands, retiring across the border to raid for food in newly independent Zimbabwe. Effectively, all the villages along the Save and the Zimbabwe border became frontline positions.

As the war escalated in Mozambique, it pushed many villagers into refuge through and in Gonarezhou where they survived on poaching. The Mozambican government had embarked on a massive arming of villagers capable of fighting RENAMO from their own homes. As the insurgent movement intensified its attacks, some of the militia fled their villages with their AK-47 rifles and joined other unarmed civilians in settling inside or near Gonarezhou. Once inside the country they exchanged their Mozambican (*Metical*) currency for Zimbabweans dollars (Z\$) to purchase clothes

and mealie-meal. However, “nobody (was) checking their movements,”<sup>124</sup> because they could always claim to be visiting relatives. These Mozambican villagers used all manner of transport—pedestrians, bicycles, cattle, ox and donkey-drawn carts and sledges.

On 11 April 1984, the new Warden Mabalauta, P. Palmer, “directly linked refugee movement with the present armed poaching of elephant and many buffalo, kudu, giraffe and impala.” Most were “hunting on their return trips or loading up with previously cached meat, skins and ivory.”<sup>125</sup> The previous District Administrator of Chiredzi had allowed Mozambican nationals and that country’s army “to use a borehole about 1 km inside Zimbabwe in the Park” in the Chepfu area. Meanwhile, Mozambican cattle were now grazing “well into the Park past the old 3 km fence.” As countless stock was lost to the predators, the cattle owners resorted to poisoning the ‘vermin’ deep inside the park, and living off the harvests from “kilometres of brush/snare lines.” Patrols were crippled because of “the shortage of transport, money and even numbers of scouts available.”<sup>126</sup>

Whereas the police and the army had been advised to apprehend these “illegal entrants,” neither the game warden nor his staff had any such arresting powers. Palmer was deeply exercised: “As a Parks Officer, can I destroy Mozambican cattle and donkeys and burn scotch carts etc. which I encounter in *the middle of the park*. Such action could even provoke an international incident. Will I have Home Office/Ministry support?” He answered himself: “It is totally impractical to expect me to impound livestock remembering the drought, shortage of staff and the tremendous distances involved.”

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<sup>124</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/7/83 Senior Ranger Z. Muketiwa, MAPU National Parks to Provincial Warden (Matabeleland South, 24/1082: “MAPU Monthly Progress Report, September 1982, MAPU Law Enforcement Patrols: Summary of Coverage.”

<sup>125</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/4/84 P. Palmer, Warden Mabalauta to Provincial Warden, 11 April 1984: “Gonarezhou National Park: Mwenezi Sub-region: Illegal Activities by Mozambique Nationals – National Parks Policy.”

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

Already, his officers had shot seven donkeys “belonging to positively identified Mozambican poachers—but what of the rest of the traffic which could well be carting for poachers though they might deny it?” In a tone showing no respect at all to his boss, the Provincial Warden Masvingo, Palmer said: “*I need answers and directives now*, if we are to maintain any worthwhile wildlife populations in the park.”<sup>127</sup>

Palmer decided to try another tack that would grab government’s attention: the potential of the breakdown of cattle-game separation to cause veterinary *pestilences* like foot and mouth disease (FMD) and anthrax, which would threaten the country’s strategic beef industry. At that time an FMD control fence was under construction, funded by the European Economic Community (EEC) as part of Zimbabwe’s beef export deal with them. “Is the government going to stand by and allow disease ridden cattle from Mozambique to cross that fence and jeopardize the country’s export of beef?” Here was his puzzle: Zimbabweans were arrested for breaking FMD regulations. So “why must Mozambicans be allowed to escape prosecution for similar offences?... Or are Mozambicans immune?”<sup>128</sup>

Had the Mozambicans ended with just herding their cattle, then the state would say this was a purely veterinary matter. But they had on three occasions traded gunfire with MAPU and Army patrols. “Does this not worry Head Office?” Palmer wondered. He was convinced the moment was long overdue “for some very strong action and positive directives.” Otherwise “the park boundaries, status and whole reason for being in existence” was in double jeopardy. Palmer noted that Gonarezhou was simply “a *by the*

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

*way issue* for Mozambicans and simply a hunting the ground for them.”<sup>129</sup> Report reached him daily of poaching activities along the 15-20 km stretch of the park from the international boundary to Malipati. So daring were the poachers that they opened fire on patrolling scouts, who had to return fire and on one occasion shot and seriously injured one poacher, who was flown to Harare Hospital for treatment. One can sense the frustration in Palmer that the state could afford VIP treatment to the very same pests that were causing harm to wildlife, at a time when anti-poaching operations were logically crippled and heavily under-staffed.<sup>130</sup>

Palmer’s remit was supposed to be wildlife management. But what happened when people now virtually lived inside the park? Apparently, Palmer had discussed the issue with the JOC when it met every Thursday at 4 Brigade Headquarters in Masvingo. The senior CIO officer advised Palmer that the arrangement to allow these Mozambicans to cross the park to purchase food in Zimbabwe was no more than “a privilege,” and ways could be found to ensure that it was not abused. But not abolished: Mozambicans had died for Zimbabwe’s independence—and for ZANU (PF) to get into power. The JOC resolved that “all people from Mozambique have to use border post” at Sango, and from there pass through the ZNA post at Nyala and present “the papers from the border.” Still, Palmer was not convinced: the plan simply took care of people seeking food, but not cattle seeking pasture. The Wildlife Act and FMD regulations were very clear: any domestic animals introduced into the park must be shot on sight. “What can be done to

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

these cattle?” Palmer asked, since that step appeared too drastic and the government was rather hesitant to sanction its enforcement.<sup>131</sup>

Provincial Warden R.J. Ngwarai added a further dimension: the losses to “commercial” poaching turned the park from a refuge for animals to one for Mozambicans. Since September 1983 alone, “up to 60 elephants and up to 12 black rhino” were killed in the park. Each elephant was valued at Z\$2,000, and the total loss was Z\$120 000.00. One rhinoceros was worth Z\$5,000, the total loss Z\$60,000. One 10-day MAPU patrol cost Z\$3,000 in mileage alone.<sup>132</sup> Mozambicans were killing for meat as much as they were for ivory, blurring the analytical boundaries between “subsistence” and “commerce” poaching some scholars have often insisted on.<sup>133</sup> As Palmer noted in explanatory notes to the table, “Numbers 1 and 2 can be attributed to Mozambicans but numbers 3 and 4 could be by Zimbabweans from Matibi Communal Lands, more likely Mozambican ‘refugees’ living in Zimbabwe.”<sup>134</sup>

Refuge, therefore, was anything besides victimhood. On the border, among Shangane/Tsonga kin, to be in refuge was for Mozambicans an opportunity to poach. Short of ‘thorough’ interrogation (torture), it was not easy to tell the difference between poachers, rebels, refugees, and relatives visiting their kin west of Gonarezhou.<sup>135</sup> As the next section shows, the escalation of poaching in the 1980s owes to the confusion about mobility of social and spatial boundaries. Mobility and technology were central elements

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/4/84 R.J. Ngwarai, Provincial Warden (Victoria) to Director, 25 April 1984: “Poaching in Gonarezhou.”

<sup>133</sup> Duffy, *Killing for Conservation*.

<sup>134</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/6/85 Palmer – 15 June 1985.

<sup>135</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/1/86 Snr Ranger Westrop to OiC Mwenezi, 6 January 1986.

of confusion-making; confusion was productive because only through it could poachers kill.

### **Ivory Smuggling: What Was Local And What Was International?**

R.L. Murray was Warden Mabalauta in 1981 at a time of surging armed rhino horn and ivory poaching in Gonarezhou. The networks of poaching were far-flung, the quarry elusive; the only effective way at the time was to deploy park scouts and rangers as bait to trap the culprits.

Early that year, one such park ranger was in a beer garden when a man named Jack approached him and said: “I know that you work for National Parks and I should think you are earning very little and should think you want money for nothing.” The black ranger appeared ‘interested’: “How can I get the money for no work I have done for it (sic)?” “Get means and get some elephant tusks and give them to me and I will give you Z\$200-00 for one pair of tusks.” The ranger asked what purpose Jack wanted the tusks for. Whereupon the prospective buyer disclosed that there was “one white man who could buy from him.” This ‘white man’ was the manager of Caribbea Bay Hotel in Kariba. Was this the first time he was giving or trying to give tusks to this man? The ranger asked Jack. No, he “did the deal with the white man several times.” The ranger told Jack to wait until the next day and left for Nyanyana Camping Site in Charara Game Reserve (Kariba).

From there he placed a call to his superior in Mabalauta, Senior Ranger Derek Wesley, who reminded him how hard it was these days “to trap a man by so giving you the tusks to give him.” However, he asked his junior to “keep watching [Jack] until

further investigation” were done. Soon afterwards, the investigating ranger again met a different man—who gave him “a name” of a man who worked as a barman at Caribbea Bay. This man approached him and “requested the same things as Jack did.” The ranger concluded in his briefing: “I gave myself a hard time and I discovered that this same, Jack, had send (sic) this man to try me if he could get the tusks from me.”<sup>136</sup>

On 2 February 1982, DNPWLM investigating officer G.M. Nott disclosed another case—“the discovery of a 9 kg ivory tusk which was found on a Salisbury trophy dealer’s premises.” This dealer had been under surveillance and was confirmed to be “accepting illegal ivory.” Initially the man refused to open the door, but a later search of the premises “located the illegal tusk which was in the process of being cut up.” The dealer tried to explain away the tusk against old Certificate of Ownership cards. It was a futile attempt: he was found guilty and his dealer’s license cancelled pending an appeal.<sup>137</sup>

It was not long before National Parks realized the best way to defeat organized poaching was “to hit at the receiver,” the last chance before the products fed into the legal market. The most recent swoop on a large tannery that yielded a prosecutable case involving illegal receipt of 770 wildlife skins. Nott was upbeat on the chances of a conviction, because the DNPWLM had proof that “a good proportion of the skins came from poachers, some of whom were operating on National Parks land.” There was only one serious problem: poor sentences as the law allowed.<sup>138</sup>

Ivory smuggling was a transnational business. On 9 July 1983, the national daily, *The Herald*, published a report quoting the Minister of Natural Resources as saying:

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<sup>136</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/9/81 R.L. Murray, Warden Mabalauta to the Member-in-charge ZRP Chiredzi: “Statement from Game Scout Shadreck.”

<sup>137</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/A/845/1/G G.M. Nott, Investigations Officer DNPWLM to all Stations, 19 February 1982: “Investigations: Periodic Report on Activity”

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

“Ivory poaching was a serious problem particularly in the Gonarezhou area, where poaching was done by people flying in and out of the country illegally.” It was the fifth report on the issue, and the fifth time Chief Warden of DNPWLM, F.A. Scammell, had rejected such claims. In a memo to Director DNPWLM, Scammell said: “I certainly know of no aircraft flying illegal ivory out of the park and would very much like to know where this information came from so I can follow it up.” He challenged the minister to make the facts available to support these allegations, otherwise he was in grave danger of misinforming the public. Scammell did not see any reason why the minister should add fuel to accusations leveled against the DNPWLM as “the biggest poachers in the country” by the senior civil servant in the area.<sup>139</sup>

But why was ivory poaching and smuggling so severe in Zimbabwe and Gonarezhou in particular? Nott’s observation was that the illegal ivory and rhino horn trade had escalated in the past six years “to a point where there is no longer any doubt that every elephant and rhino on the African continent is a poacher’s target.” The countries north of the Zambezi had “failed to take firm measures against poachers,” so that animal populations there no longer constituted sufficient numbers to sustain any meaningful conservation program. This was “the sole reason why Zimbabwe [was] being subjected to intense poaching pressure”:

The same dealers in other parts of the world who are responsible for the poaching escalating in other parts of Africa are prepared to finance poaching gangs to the point where not one elephant or rhino remains. Having exterminated populations elsewhere these dealers are now concentrating their total efforts on the one country still having viable populations (Zimbabwe).<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/7/83 F.A. Scammell (Warden) to Director, 13 July 1983: “Ivory Poaching – Gonarezhou National Park.”

<sup>140</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/A/845/1/F G.H. Nott, Investigations Branch, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, 28 April 1986: “Evidence in Aggravation.”

In recent months, the media had reported the DNPWLM's efforts to combat these rhino and elephant poachers in the field and to smash their smuggling rings. In addition to figures for Gonarezhou, 12 rhino poachers had been arrested in the Zambezi Valley over the same period while a further 10 had been shot dead—four in 1985, six in 1986.<sup>141</sup>

It was a matter of public and DNPWLM record that out of an estimated national population of 2,500, Zimbabwe had lost 96 black rhinos to poaching in the Zambezi valley since 1984, in addition to those killed in Gonarezhou. Yet this figure was based on “optimistic surveys”; some “scientific authorities” put the population at well below 2,000. Africa had 14-15,000 black rhinos when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. By 1984 only 8-9,000 remained. The country contributed a quarter of the 1984 figure.<sup>142</sup>

While Nott acknowledged the role of illegal dealers located “in other parts of the world”, he insisted they could not survive “if it were not for the existence of illegal dealers in Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries.” The dealers equipped and financed poaching gangs, and as long as these local actors existed, poaching flourished. As long as someone somewhere was prepared to pay for the trophies of the animals, poachers could always be recruited. Besides, Nott said, “the proceeds from just one poached rhino can keep a gang operational for months.” Here was the problem:

Efforts to halt the receipt of illegal horn and ivory are paramount on the list of priorities of all government and private conservation agencies throughout the world; however, as there are highly placed officials in certain countries of the world, particularly in the Middle East, who have their own ulterior motives for not wishing to enforce prohibitions on importation, these efforts have met with little success in broad terms. It follows that any country wishing to protect its rhino and elephant populations must do so at source and only rely on the assistance of other states as a final back-up to the internal effort.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

A good example was Mozambique, which had suffered heavy poaching activity because of the war. In 1978, the country had 250 rhinos; by 1984 they had been halved to 130. Since 1984, as a result of this depletion, poachers had begun crossing into Zimbabwe on an increasing scale using the help of their poacher-relatives on the Zimbabwean side.<sup>144</sup>

To be effective, therefore, the anti-poaching effort had to target not only the poacher on the ground but also the middle figure “who gave incentive for the poor rural people to go poaching.” This would only leave the final consumer who was “obviously outside the country” and beyond the capabilities of the state. Ngwarai expressed gratitude for “the cooperation of the Zimbabwe National Army and ZR Police in this province for their help in the curbing of poaching in the Gonarezhou National Park.”<sup>145</sup> Yet there is also evidence that individual soldiers were also poaching.

### **Conclusion: *Ndoiwanepi Nyanga Yenzou***

Throughout the 1980s, so prevalent was rhino and elephant poaching as a source of instant wealth among top government officials that in 1988, one of the country’s top musicians, Oliver Mtukudzi, composed a bestselling song entitled *Nyanga Yenzou* (Horn of an Elephant). In it the music icon lamented the vagaries of a poor young bachelor who has found his sweetheart and wants to marry her. Upon asking for her hand in marriage, the father demands an exorbitant bride-price: either the young paramour presents a rhino horn or an elephant tusk. But unlike the precolonial days, where he might have taken a spear and repaired to the forest, now only top politicians can get rhino horn and ivory. So

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Mabalauta Field Station Archives 305/12/86 R.J. Ngwarai, Provincial Warden (Masvingo) to Chairman, Masvingo Provincial JOC, 12 December 1986.

the young man asks: “*Ndoiwanepi nyanga yenzou?*” (Where do I get an elephant’s horn?)<sup>146</sup>

An artist who retired to complicated and multiply interpretable depths of satire to protest against the political excesses of the day, Oliver Mtukudzi is the ultimate guitar guerrilla who fights with satire and sound. On this occasion, he was using marriage to get at poaching-gone-wild, with state officials heavily involved—or at least suspected. In 1989, an army captain who tried to ‘spill the beans’ on his superiors, whom he claimed were shoulder-deep in the ivory poaching and smuggling business’, disappeared and his body was later found decomposed.<sup>147</sup>

Captain Edwin Nleya had temporarily returned home from active duty in Mozambique when he was brutally assassinated outside his 12 Infantry Battalion barracks in Hwange. He has discovered that a syndicate of senior army officers were poaching and smuggling the horn of the endangered black rhinoceros and ivory. Nleya told his wife that “suspicious people” were trailing him and that his life was in danger. A few days later he went missing, and his decomposing body was found just outside his barracks. The army instituted a Board of Inquiry (BOI), which concluded that the captain had basically committed suicide by hanging. A subsequent inquest was however unambiguous that Nleya had been murdered. The case has never been reopened.<sup>148</sup>

Nleya was murdered for a rhinoceros’s horn; through it we see how an elite that had blazed through Gonarezhou promising to unleash wildlife to the mercy of villagers now shut out the villagers and monopolized the poaching of big game. A ‘get rich quick’ culture had set in on the nationalist project and the elephant and rhinoceros’s body was

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<sup>146</sup> Oliver Mtukudzi, *Nyanga Yenzou* (Harare: Grammar Records, 1988).

<sup>147</sup> Duffy, *Killing for Conservation*: 64.

<sup>148</sup> “Who Killed Edwin Nleya?” <http://zimsecurityforces.com/node/53> 3/27/2007.

just one other terrain where it was fought. In 1989, award-winning journalist Geoff Nyarota broke the story of cabinet ministers plundering a fund under which state officials bought Toyota Cressida sedans at hugely subsidized prices at the part state-owned Willowvale Motor Industries. Given a scheme for acquiring technology enabling them to perform their duty to the public, state officials not only used the Cressida to express their power and social status, but also as a commodity for resale at inflated prices. In that instance, the body of an automobile became a ‘get rich quick’ site and an arena of contestation between a rapidly decaying African nationalism and the public. It prompted the late reggae musician Solomon Skuza to compose the song *Love and Scandals*, which chronicle the story of a man loses his girlfriend to a rival whose power derives from owning a Toyota Cressida.

Together, the Toyota Cressida and the elephant tusk point to two hunting grounds for VVIP wealth. One is the urban environment, a place of fast deals and ‘quick buck’. There, the urban woman is hunting for men who can take care of her in life. The Cressida is the status marker of that nirvana, modernity on four wheels. Love alone becomes insufficient; the young man hunting a fiancé—or a relationship—must be rich. Meanwhile, out in the rural areas, news of poaching and smuggling of ivory has created a mystique about the elephant tusk and rhino horn. Mtukudzi’s song captures this very well: ‘if the young man really loves my daughter so much, he must prove himself by going to treacherous lengths to get the precious tusk’ the father-in-law says. Yet Mtukudzi’s narrative is also about what is causing the poaching. The “marriage” story is a code for the increasing difficulties of getting a living in a post-independence era, a time that the guerrillas had said would be one of milk and honey. It is those who are powerful,

who have high offices in town, who compel the powerless to engage in crime in order to make a living, crimes that also involve poaching. They are arrested, but because those who send them also control the law enforcement and legal system, the cases go nowhere.

Read from the guitar, what we have seen as tension between departments, as the lethargy of the law, is in fact a reflection of the power of state officials to subvert the state and the power of villagers to exploit those crevices. The guitar is the microphone of society. When the state becomes a poacher, what then of villagers living on the park borders every day?

## **Chapter 6 Tsetse Allies**

In the last chapter I traced the role of poachers in the history of Gonarezhou from the 1930s to the 1990s. It is important to emphasize that it took an individual state official—Allan Wright—for Gonarezhou to be declared a game reserve because conservation was not a priority of the central government at all. The state had seen Bvekenya as a bandit not because he killed game illegally, but because he ‘hunted’ scarce labor without a license. How do we explain the specific timing of the declaration of Gonarezhou as a game reserve, therefore?

The answer lies in examining the key player in this interaction between the state, villagers, and wild animals: tsetse fly. After all, it was because of its decimation because of the rinderpest in 1896-7 that poachers like Bvekenya were able to use donkeys to hunt ivory inside Gonarezhou. In the 1930s, when tsetse started returning to its old habitat inside Gonarezhou, all plans to establish a game reserve and annex it to Kruger National Park were shelved. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that Gonarezhou became a national park in 1975 at exactly the time when vets and entomologists declared that tsetse fly had been exterminated in Gonarezhou. One year later, ZANLA opened a war front through

the park! It is only fair that tsetse fly deserves its own free-standing chapter in this dissertation.

Tsetse was a tricky customer: a fly that carried portable pathogens in its tiny body and was itself portable enough and adept to catching a ride on any moving object, especially wild animals. How would the state deal with a tiny pest like that? In this chapter I present two arguments. First, how in the absence of any scientific (chemical or biological) methods of eradicating the pest, the state deployed the firearm as a pesticide to destroy big game animals upon whose blood and backs the tsetse fed and stole a ride respectively. But where would the massive work force required come from? This is my second argument: that tsetse opened up opportunities for local African hunters to not only use their skills—acquired both before and during colonial rule—to earn a monetary wage and acquire instruments to poach for their village kin and market. Those villagers who could not be hunters of big game became hunters of the tsetse fly itself and contributing

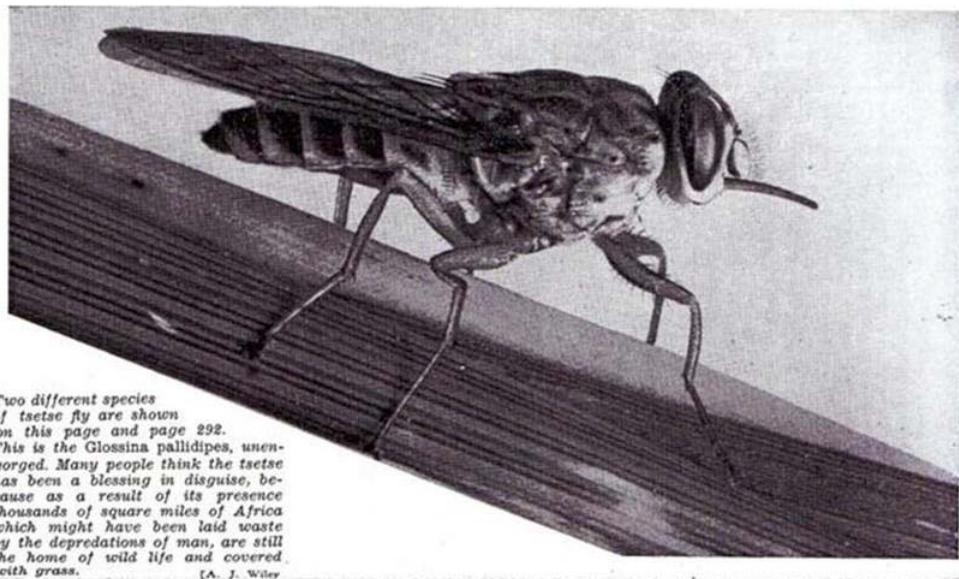


Fig. 11 A Tsetse Fly

Source: Wiley, "Animals Should Have Benefit of Doubt": 290.

to the production of entomology. So what part did these men play, and how exactly did

they hunt tsetse fly? This is the third, penultimate aspect of this chapter: a focus on several patrols involving a tsetse fly ranger (and later the entomologist) and his African tsetse fly catchers.

Overall these three narratives led me to two key generalizations. First, of tsetse fly as a portable, highly mobile transgressor of boundaries capable of forcing different actors to turn against or towards each other and interact. Secondly, of tsetse as not only something that people could actually designate a pest, but also an actor that determined the ways in which people defined ‘good’ and ‘bad’ nature and how to behave towards it. In the course of understanding fatalities in cattle, colonial veterinary experts found that they were caused by a pathogen called trypanosome. Tsetse fly became a pest because it carried this deadly protozoan. In turn, tsetse itself rode on anything bigger than it that moved, so its vector became a pest by virtue of carrying insects that transmitted deadly trypanosomes. As it turned out, the vectors were not just big game but also people, so the state ended up introducing strict curbs on human and animal movement. The success of such controls is what led to Gonarezhou being declared fit to become a game reserve in 1968 and then for upgrading to a national park in 1975. The only way for us to pay homage to the tsetse fly’s agency in Gonarezhou’s history is to give it its own chapter.

### **A Finger on the Trigger**

*The Martini Henry Rifle as an Antidote for Tsetse Fly.* Guns enabled some Africans to escape the label of pesthood and to become the vanguards of pest control. This is the case not only with the way African men transitioned from anti-colonial resistance in 1896-7 to colonial policemen, but also in fighting against non-human pests like tsetse fly. Some

pests, while too small to shoot at, were too numerous and too elusive to be effectively destroyed by poisoning. As a result, the only possible solution was to focus on destroying their food hosts, habitats, and carriers. Meanwhile, research would continue towards finding ways to destroy the pest itself. In this section I will discuss the tsetse fly and the multiple toolkit of trial-and-error the state used to contain and study it. The focus is primarily on the shooting of game animals that carried the tsetse from place to place, and that were also the fly's source of food—blood. While the problem of 'vermin' persisted in other areas, tsetse fly was clearly the most serious and deadliest veterinary problem facing Gonarezhou between 1937 and 1975.

The practice of arming experienced 'native hunters'—as the state called them—with state guns to destroy tsetse fly might have been introduced to the Gonarezhou in the 1950s, but it was already in session elsewhere in Rhodesia as the century began. As early as 1905, the Chief Native Commissioner suggested a policy to give white landholders permits "to arm six or eight experienced native hunters with Martini Henry rifles and send them with a reliable messenger to hunt the hills for 3 or 4 months and kill or drive off as many buffalo as possible."<sup>1</sup> The shooting operations would not spare any animal species suspected of harboring tsetse,<sup>2</sup> even if the game-tsetse connection was still scientifically tenuous.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NAZ G1/3/2/1 Tsetsefly 1905-22: Acting CNC, N.S. Taberer to Commissioner of natives, 21 July 1905: "Native Commissioner Reports for June 1905: Forwarding."

<sup>2</sup> NAZ G1/3/2/11 Game Elimination, 1922: Director of Agriculture, " Animals Destroyed in Game Elimination Experiment, 1919-1921," Agricultural Laboratory, Salisbury, 9 March 1922.

<sup>3</sup> NAZ G1/3/2/1 Tsetsefly 1905-22: Secretary for Agriculture to Treasurer, 5 November 1907: Destruction of Big Game- Hartley and Lomagundi Districts"; NAZ G1/3/2/15 Tsetse Fly 1905-22: Rupert W. Jack, Agricultural Entomologist to director of Agriculture, 26 February 1919: " Native Cattle on Gwaai River Reported Fly- Struck"; NAZ G1/3/2/15 Tsetse Fly 1905-22: Jack to Director of Agriculture, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1919, "Tsetse fly: Mr. F. G. Going's letter"; also J.C. Purvis, "Diseases Caused by Trypanosomiasis," *South African Medical Record* iii, 4 (April 15, 1905): 69-72; Dr. Theiler (Government Laboratory, Pretoria), "Diseases Caused by Trypanosomes," *South African Medical Record* iii, 5 (May 15, 1905): 89-

Originally, game elimination had a triple purpose: 1) to test the relationship between tsetse and big game 2) to determine the practicability and cost of driving the game from a given area by organized hunting, and 3) to check the advance of the pest.<sup>4</sup> The experiment aimed “to render an area at present infested with tsetse as completely as possible free of all known hosts with a view to the extermination of the fly.”<sup>5</sup> First, an entomologist inspected the area prior to the operations to investigate tsetse distribution and density. Second, white men and Africans were engaged, and provisions for them arranged: transportation of stores, supply of arms and ammunition, and payment. Third, elimination would start. Fourth, the borders of the cleared areas were thoroughly patrolled for a prolonged period after the conclusion of active operations to keep them free of tsetse hosts. Fifth, maintaining the area clear of game in the wet and dry season by means of a small cordon of ‘native police’. And finally, periodical inspection to ascertain presence and numbers of buck and fly.<sup>6</sup>

The Tsetse Officer in the Department of Agriculture and Lands (DAL) was in charge of the tsetse fly operations and wildlife in general. In the inner or controlled area, the Tsetse Officer directed all hunting operations, prevented unauthorized hunting, disposed of hides, meat, bones, tusks, and so on.<sup>7</sup> Under him were three European ex-policemen, 20-30 African hunters armed with Martini-Henry and .303 rifles, and “such

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92; “Conference on Sleeping Sickness,” *South African Medical Record* xviii, 18 (September 25, 1920): 348-53f.

<sup>4</sup> NAZ G1/3/2/15 Tsetse Fly 1905-22: Jack to Director of Agriculture, 18 March 1919, “Tsetse fly: Question of Operations in 1919.”

<sup>5</sup> NAZ G/3/2/14 Commencement of (Tsetse Control) Experiment, Wankie 1919-21: Captain Brereton, District Superintendent Hartley, BSA Company, to Nobbs, Tsetse Experiments – Wankie, 25 April 1919.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

beaters and carriers as he can secure locally.”<sup>8</sup> They would maintain a small cordon of ‘native police’ to regularly patrol the borders of the inner or controlled area during the wet season to prevent the re-entry of game. A Tsetse Officer or European policeman periodically visited the area to check on the hunters. Two troopers of the BSA Police were seconded to assist in the operations.<sup>9</sup>

In Gonarezhou, despite the early scare in 1915-20, tsetse fly remained subdued until 1923, when the Chief Veterinary Surgeon reported mortalities in cattle in Ndanga East Reserve and immediately suspected it to be trypanosomiasis (tryps). A Dutchman had apparently seen the fly on the Save River in 1922 “but said nothing about it at the time as he thought no one would believe him.”<sup>10</sup> Things were quiet until 1928, when the Chief Entomologist referred to fly presence on the Save River near Massangena.

In 1932, the entomologist warned that the proposed Gonarezhou game reserve was too near the border for “protection from the advance of fly” and would be “seriously jeopardized” once invaded. A permanent game reserve would be “a very short-sighted policy” because thousands of ranch cattle that grazed annually on the ‘Buffalo Grass’ north of Chipinda Pools along the Chiredzi River were far more important than game.<sup>11</sup>

In 1933, the Rhodesian government began issuing rifles to individual farmers for use in game slaughter in tsetse-infected areas to forestall a tsetse build-up in the

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<sup>8</sup> NAZ G/3/2/14 Commencement of (Tsetse Control) Experiment, Wankie 1919-21: Tsetse Fly Experiment. Wankie, Draft Plan of Operations, 17 April 1919.

<sup>9</sup> NAZ G/3/2/14 Commencement of (Tsetse Control) Experiment, Wankie 1919-21: Captain Brereton, District Superintendent Hartley, BSA Company, to Nobbs, Tsetse Experiments – Wankie, 25 April 1919; NAZ T2/1/10 Damage Caused by Elephants, 1910-1913: A.H. Holland, Acting Secretary, Department of the Administrator, to D. Souter Robertson Esq., 5<sup>th</sup> January 1911.

<sup>10</sup> NAZ V1/10/7 Trypanosomiasis Ndanga East Reserve 1923: Chief Veterinary Surgeon to Secretary Treasury, 23 Aug 1923: Mortality – Ndanga East Reserve; Chief Veterinary Officer to Chief Entomologist, 5 Oct 1923.

<sup>11</sup> NAZ S1194/1645/3/1: Chief Entomologist to Senior Forest Officer, 28 Oct 1932; Secretary Department of Agriculture and Lands to the Minister, 1645/155.

Chipungumbira (Espungabera) area inside Portuguese territory.<sup>12</sup> A register was kept of all rifles issued to farmers and others in the infected district.<sup>13</sup> In the specific case of ‘native hunters’, however, keeping a register was a security measure against guns disappearing and turning up in anti-state rebellion or poaching.<sup>14</sup>

On 24 October 1934, the Chief Entomologist J.K. Chorley recalled all the Martini Henry rifles to the Ordnance Stores (Salisbury) and the unused ammunition to the district Rangers-in-Charge Tsetse Fly Operations.<sup>15</sup> Chorley explained the first problem: “There are no spare ejectors to be obtained from the ordnance stores.”<sup>16</sup>

***The Constraints of Ammunition.*** The second problem was ammunition scarcity: efforts to replenish ammunition stocks from overseas were tardy. DAL was now trying to identify “*a suitable rifle for native use which could supplant the present Martini Henry rifle*”<sup>17</sup> (my emphasis) since its ammunition was no longer being manufactured.<sup>18</sup> On 30

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<sup>12</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.K. Chorley, Chief Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, to the Mining Commissioner, Gatooma, 24<sup>th</sup> December 1933: “MH Rifle Issued to Mr. A.E. Crickmore.”

<sup>13</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: Malone (Magistrate), Magistrate’s Office, Gatooma, to the Chief Entomologist, Salisbury, 4 January 1934: “Tsetse Fly Operations: HM Rifles on Issue to Farmers and Others.”

<sup>14</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.M. Coghill Gomer, Acting Assistant Native Commissioner, Shangani Reserve, to the Chief Entomologist, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, (ND): “Tsetse Fly Operations: MH Rifles.”

<sup>15</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.K. Chorley, Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, to The Staff Officer, BSA Police, Salisbury, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1934: “Return of MH Rifle Held at Police Station, Gatooma.”

<sup>16</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.K.C., Acting Chief Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, Salisbury, W.A. Aitken, Esq., Ranger i/c Tsetse Fly Operations, Gatooma, 21<sup>st</sup> December 1938: “Supply of Ejectors.”

<sup>17</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: E.E. Burt, For Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, Salisbury, The Controller of Defence Forces, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1937.

<sup>18</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: Chief Entomologist to Mr. C. Bailie-Barry, Assistant Tsetse Fly Ranger, c/o J.W.J. Struthers, Esq., Tsetse Fly Operations Gatooma, 9 July 1936: “Martini-Henry Rifle.”

October 1937, the army confirmed that inquiries were being made to replenish MH ammunition stocks and to replace the rifle itself.<sup>19</sup>

The military maintained, however, that Agriculture had “sufficient MH rifles available to meet requirements for some years, and I have no reason to think that spares for these rifles will not be obtainable.”<sup>20</sup> On 14 March 1938, Chorley confirmed that:

The new supply of MH ammunition has been ordered, and unless a European war breaks out, delivery is expected within six months. The supply of ammunition to the native hunters can be increased, but for the time being should not exceed 10 per boy per month, except in the Wankie District where the total amount of ammunition expended per month should not exceed 1,000 rounds. It has been noticed that the average numbers of rounds per buck has improved and every endeavour should be made to maintain this average.<sup>21</sup>

European hunters licensed to own rifles passed them on to Africans to hunt on their behalf without state approval or knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

By October 1937, however, only a year’s supply of MH rounds was left.<sup>23</sup> The government obtained quotations of ammunition from firms like Messrs Greenwood and Bartley Ltd. of £13 per 1,000 rounds. Old stock dating back to 1880 cost £10 per 1,000. Half a million rounds was worth nine years supply for use by DAL, the Native

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<sup>19</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: Major Warnock Fielden, Controller Defence Force, Salisbury, The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, 30<sup>th</sup> October 1937: “Rifles – Tsetse Fly Operations.”

<sup>20</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: H.P. Tice, Controller, Defence Force, The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, Salisbury, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1938: “Martini-Henry Rifles and Ammunition: Tsetse Fly Operations.”

<sup>21</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.K. Chorley, Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, to J. du Plessis, Gatooma, J.H. Bath, Sinoia, C. Beattie, Darwin, J. Hall, Miami, J.W.J. Struthers, Bulawayo, V.H. Collins, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1938: “MH Ammunition.”

<sup>22</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles Tsetse Fly Operations, Mount Darwin: NCO in Charge, BSA Police, Hartley, to The Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, 22 January 1934; Chief Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, to the NCO in Charge, BSAP Hartley, 27 January 1934: “Re: Martini-Henry Rifles.”

<sup>23</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.K. Chorley, Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, to W.A. Aitken, Gatooma, C. Beattie, Darwin, H. Bond, Sinoia, J. Hall, Miami, J.B.M. Powell, Sinoia, J.W.J. Struthers, Bulawayo, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1937: “Conservation of Martini-Henry Ammunition.”

Department and the BSA Police. No further supplies of MH ammunition were available in South Africa. Few firms in Britain were supplying.<sup>24</sup>

There were only two ammo serving options: “reducing the number of native hunters, or restricting the number of rounds issued each month.” Chorley chose the latter option and cut monthly allocation by 25%.<sup>25</sup> He favored the Winchester rifle of .35 or larger bore now already used by the Prisons Department. No stocks were available in the country. Under “normal condition” it took nine months to get stocks out from America. Technically, the rifle broke easily at the stock, the magazine was easily dented, making loading impossible. In any case the rifle required constant oiling and attention.<sup>26</sup>

Whatever decision Chorley made, the African and wild life were the central factors. On 18 October he noted: “I do not consider it wise to issue our native hunters with a magazine rifle with only moderate hitting power, the consumption of ammunition may be doubled or trebled without any increase in the number of game destroyed.” He suggested further enquiries be made in England “to ascertain whether an order of Martini-Henry ammunition could be manufactured within a reasonable time” and to approach the British War Office for surplus of old single loading .303 rifles.<sup>27</sup>

***How Tsetse Forced the State to Arm African Hunters.*** Through its *mobility*, tsetse forced the hand of the state in two ways. First, to pay attention to a place that it had neglected for a long time. Second, to arm Africans whom it had in fact earlier disarmed

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40: J.K. Chorley, Entomologist, to The Chief Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory, Salisbury, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1937: “Replacement of Martini-Henry Rifles: ‘Tsetse Fly Operations’.”

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

because they were poaching. To prevent the spread of *g. morsitans* into Chibi (Chivi) and Ndanga, government extended game elimination operations into Gonarezhou Game Reserve and the areas north of Nyamasikana River. Initially, ten selected African hunters were posted along the Runde and Save “to get the game away from the rivers.”<sup>28</sup>

Each hunter was permitted to go to his Native Commissioner to secure a gun and “permits to shoot all classes of game” at the Save-Runde junction south of the Mount Makosa. Unpaid European hunters kept the ivory, but Africans surrendered whatever tusks they obtained to the state. Both reported to the Tsetse Fly Ranger-in-Charge at Save Camp adjacent to Hippo Mine.<sup>29</sup>

The general position of *morsitans* in Portuguese territory had been known for years, but in 1942 the fly began making “incursions” into Mahenye from near the Save-Runde junction, killing over 500 head of cattle. At Honde Dip, five flies had been caught and some 387 cattle killed in 1942-5. At Muumbe Dip, two cases had been identified in 1945 and ten head of cattle had died from tryps. The position was less severe than at Honde and Mahenye, even though about 1,000 head of cattle dipped at this tank. At Mwangazi Dip, heavy losses of stock were experienced in 1942 but the picture improved after a year. Then in 1944, nine cases of tryps and 34 deaths were reported among the 1,320 head dipping at the tank. At Gwenzi Dip, located on a native purchase area near Jersey farm, 25 cases were recorded between 1942 and 1945. Any fly presence on the Portuguese side of the border spilled over into tryps cases at the dip tanks.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> NAZ S2391/3625 [CNC] Tsetse Fly Operations: M.C. Mossop to CNC, 18 January 1944: “Extension of Tsetse Fly Operations.”

<sup>29</sup> NAZ S2391/3625 [CNC] Tsetse Fly Operations: M.C. Mossop to CNC, 18 January 1944: “Extension of Tsetse Fly Operations.”

<sup>30</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1944-6: Acting Chief Entomologist, Division of Entomology, Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 387 Salisbury, to The Asst Chief Native Commissioner, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1945: “Tsetse Fly: Chipinga District.”

**African Villagers as Pests and Pesticides.** Because of transport problems, the state was forced to make use of local manpower resources, not only to operate or use technologies against tsetse, but also to be the very instruments against the pests. The reasons for this mutation of roles was not just the transgressive movement of tsetse, but also of local villagers and their livestock crossing back and forth across the border, carrying tsetse fly or trypanosomiasis.

For example, ‘native messengers’ and ‘native dip attendants’ gathered all the data on cattle numbers that became the state’s ‘official census’. The bad state of the roads in ‘Native Areas’ made it impossible for European staff to undertake the job except in the dry winter when the roads were passable.<sup>31</sup> On 8 August 1945, Chorley asked that the cattle at Mahenye and Honde be moved to Chisumbanje on the Save River. The Native Commissioner for Chippinga, B. du Plessis, expressed worry that these cattle would bring the trypanosome strain into Chisumbanje. He proposed that an area be created where the cattle would be “kraaled and herded collectively … by Special Native Constables” (SNC). The Ndebele had long practiced this system of livestock management:

These natives are not accustomed to communal herding and the Matabele *lagisa* system is unknown to them, therefore, it is for the Government to make the initial arrangements. The cost of paying and feeding the Specials will be an infinitesimal share of what is being spent on fly control.<sup>32</sup> Part of the constabulary’s brief would be to ensure that the Mahenye and Honde lot would not be dipped with the Chisumbanje herds and act as a source of contagion.

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<sup>31</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1944-6: B. Du Plessis, Native Commissioner Chippinga, to The Provincial Native Commissioner Umtali, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1945: “Tsetse Fly: Chippinga District.”

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* This was not the first time that cattle had been moved for veterinary purposes. In 1934-40, Mahenye’s cattle had been removed and the border fenced to contain African Coast Fever and FMD incursions from neighboring Mozambique.

Moreover, through movement to and from the dip tank, they were certain to carry fly on their bodies and deposit it into new areas. As for moving cattle from Muumbe to Chibuwe (Hot Springs), du Plessis dismissed the move outright. Over half of the 1,800 cattle dipping at Rupisi watered at Chibuwe, and the trampling back and forth was already causing serious erosion. Large stretches of the Save Valley were “unoccupied” for want of water. If boreholes were drilled, however, Chiefs Garahwa and Mapungwana’s people, who dipped their cattle at Honde, would be sustainably settled east of the Save and west of the Msaswe. The same applied to Africans around Muumbe and Mwangazi dip tanks.<sup>33</sup>

Assistant Chief Native Commissioner E.T. Palmer disagreed with most of du Plessis’s suggestions. He viewed the danger of mechanical infection as negligible and saw no need for a ‘native constabulary’ given that Mahenye and his people were a small population that could easily “accompany” their own livestock. It was unlikely that the Veterinary Department would support any proposal of a dipping exemption.<sup>34</sup> In advising Palmer, Chorley suggested that if “the native people” were moved, he would have to employ paid African hunters at stations throughout the area they had vacated. Contrary to Palmer who had ruled out mechanical transmission of tryps, Chorley listed “certain peculiar circumstances” where transmission might in fact occur, namely if considerable numbers of animals carried the trypanosome; if biting flies were abundant, and; if the cattle were “herded, kraaled or worked together.” The danger, however, was small so long as the herds did not mix. He described the ‘constabulary’ idea as “a dangerous one

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<sup>33</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1944-6: B. Du Plessis, Native Commissioner Chippinga, to The Provincial Native Commissioner Umtali, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1945: “Tsetse Fly: Chippinga District.”

<sup>34</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1944-6: E.T. Palmer, Assistant Chief Native Commissioner, to The Chief Entomologist, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1945: “Tsetse Fly: Chippinga District.”

to adopt” because the removal was likely to be permanent unless the Portuguese took steps to eradicate the fly in their territory—the source of the problem. Public funding for it would also be permanent. Dipping was a veterinary matter and the water supplies for it enough; if difficulties arose, more dip tanks would have to be built and charged to the Tsetse Fly Operations account.<sup>35</sup> That was unacceptable.

These interdepartmental responsibilities over entomology and veterinary matters interfered with anti-vermin operations. In June 1945, the Chief Entomologist agreed to a request from the Chief Veterinary Surgeon (CVS) to temporarily withdraw African hunters from Ndanga District at the grave risk of the tsetse fly and animal trypanosomiasis (nagana) spreading into the district from Portuguese territory and Chipinga across the Save where Mahenye’s cattle had suffered severely. The CVS wanted to prevent “disturbed game” from interfering with FMD control work further north.<sup>36</sup> Two years later, the Chief Entomologist underscored the need to continue shooting in the area to stem the increasing cases of nagana at Chitsa’s village in the very area where operations had been halted. The CVS and Chief Entomologist then agreed on an area to be cleared. The latter had asked the Native Commissioner of Zaka to issue gun permits to “our native hunters” for game destruction, but the CVS told him not to issue them “on account of the discovery of the spread of foot and mouth disease.” The shooting had proved to work in preventing the spread of *morsitans*.<sup>37</sup>

### **Feeling the Pulse of the Fly**

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<sup>35</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1944-6: Chief Entomologist, to The Assistant Chief Native Commissioner, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1945: “Tsetse Fly: Chipinga District.”

<sup>36</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/7 Sabi Valley 1947-8: Acting Chief Entomologist, to the Secretary DAL, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1947: “Tsetse Fly Operations: Sabi Valley.”

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

In the south-east of Rhodesia, the border with Mozambique was an important factor in the interpretation of the occurrence of the fly; tsetse was thought ‘to advance’ from Mozambique into Rhodesia. This was especially the case in the area of the Save-Runde junction, an area selected as the site of a game reserve, which is now Gonarezhou National Park. The creation of the game reserve faced fierce opposition from the Rhodesian Department of Native Affairs. In 1934 about 7,000 people were living in the Native Reserves in the area, and the Department’s representatives considered the reserve a threat to them and the approximately 3,000 head of cattle they possessed. Declaring the border area a game reserve would increase the risk of an ‘advance of the fly’ from Mozambique into Rhodesia, which would then easily move on to the commercial cattle ranches further east.

The fly was allegedly re-establishing itself in Rhodesian territory following the rinderpest epizootic. In 1918, the respected tsetse fly researcher M.F.C. Swynnerton had found the southernmost limit of the fly belt to be  $20^{\circ} 20'$  ( $33^{\circ} 25'$  W), on the Busi river area of Mozambique to the west of the Sitatonga Hills. In 1921 he warned of the “disquieting fact that the tsetse *glossina morsitans* is slowly spreading west through the lowveld towards our border.” There was now a distinct threat that the fly “may at some future date invade the Sabi valley.”<sup>38</sup> The Rhodesian authorities had a fragmentary record of this advance, but by 1936 they viewed it as a ‘serious threat’ to Save valley. As Swynnerton also found, *glossina pallidipes* occurred along the border north of Espungabera (Chipungumbira) while *g. morsitans* pushed southwest along the Busi. By 1942 the latter species could be caught on the Rhodesian border and had ‘invaded’ the Honde River valley. In the next three years it ‘advanced’ rapidly: in 1943, two flies were

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<sup>38</sup> “Annual Report of the Chief Entomologist 1921,” *Bulletin of Entomological Research* II (1921): 315.

caught at Mahenye on the Lower Rupembe, and by 1945, Chief Mahenye's herd had been decimated from 600 to just 94. In 1944, a single fly was caught west of the Save; Chief Chitsa reported four cases of *nagana* among his cattle the same year. From 1944 until 1951/2, the situation "remained fairly static"; then a severe outbreak of *nagana* occurred among Chief Chitsa's cattle that confirmed the authorities' worst fears – the fly was now well established west of Save River, its pre-rinderpest precincts.<sup>39</sup>

The fly's presence and the threat it posed triggered government actions. Numbers of flies caught became the measure of risk. In 1949, the Entomologist H.E. Hornby undertook a survey of adjoining Portuguese territory east of the Save-Runde junction while two Tsetse Field Officers made "cursory examinations" of the Rhodesian side.<sup>40</sup> In July 1950, Game Ranger Hooper caught 15 g. *morsitans* "somewhere west of the border"; exactly a year later g. *morsitans* were reported at the Shabani Mine recruiting station at Marumbini. In April 1954, the Director of Tsetse Fly Operations<sup>41</sup> gave instructions to Entomologist K.E.W. Boyd to carry out a tsetse and ecological survey of the Save's west bank between the Mkwashine and Runde river junctions.<sup>42</sup> In 1955, another survey was carried out, again on the Rhodesian side. The 'advance' of the tsetse fly towards Chitsa necessitated further studies in 1956 to determine the *nagana* limit south of the Runde River.

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<sup>39</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5: K.E.W. Boyd (Entomologist), "Tsetse Fly Survey of the Lower Sabi/Lundi Area," 1954.

<sup>40</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Director Tsetse Fly Operations to K.E.W. Boyd, Entomologist, 20 April 1954.

<sup>41</sup> Anti-tsetse fly operations had been conducted in the northern districts of Rhodesia since 1905, precisely because it was feared that the path of the rinderpest would act as an incubator for re-infestation. The Office of the Director of Tsetse Fly Operations had hence been established in Causeway, Salisbury (Harare) to spearhead the campaign against tsetse fly, which took the form of shooting operations, fly-catching, surveys, and so on.

<sup>42</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Director Tsetse Fly Operations to K.E.W. Boyd, Entomologist, 20 April 1954.

The tsetse became an ominous presence especially because of the losses of African livestock on the Rhodesian side of the border. These sustained and extensive outbreaks of *nagana* prompted an increase in anti-tsetse fly operations to save the herds on the east bank of the Runde River where considerable losses had occurred already. Losses on the west bank were initially low, but were rising steadily. Interestingly enough, infections on each bank were treated as separate problems despite emanating from the same fly belt.<sup>43</sup> Only three positive cases were confirmed to have occurred on the east bank at Muumbe Cattle Dip in January and February 1956. This was considered “a great improvement” given the much higher incidences of previous months.<sup>44</sup> On the west bank cases were recorded at all cattle dips during April-August 1956. *Nagana* was “present but rare” in Sangwe Native Reserve while at the commercial cattle ranch Humani in Bikita District, only one case of *nagana* was recorded in May. The entomologist Mowbray ruled that there was “little possibility” of east-to-west bank infection, contrary to earlier fears.<sup>45</sup>

***Sending in the Experts.*** Fear of a “tsetse invasion” from Mozambique resulted in two surveys the Rhodesian Government’s Department of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control and Reclamation conducted on either side of the border with Mozambique. In the first, entomologist K.E.W. Boyd concentrated on areas west of Save between the Mkwasine and Runde Rivers before moving to the Save’s eastern bank. Then in April and July 1955, the Department deployed another entomologist, Robert M. Mowbray, to examine the Lower Save Valley and determine the extent and density of the tsetse populations.

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<sup>43</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Robert M. Mowbray, Lower Sabi Valley Report for the Year Ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1956, Department of Tsetse & Trypanosomiasis Control & Reclamation, Umtali, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1956.

<sup>44</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Robert M. Mowbray, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1956.

<sup>45</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, Lower Sabi Valley Report.

After the survey, fieldwork was extended to other localities. In order to solve a continual lack of reliable quantitative data, Boyd proposed that “a fly round on the Rupembe River, done monthly, … would be *a useful finger on the pulse of the fly population* as well as going some way towards filling this gap in future years.”<sup>46</sup> Through the surveys the entomologists tried to identify possible tsetse habitats, focusing on types of vegetation that were attractive to the fly. This included paying attention to human influences on vegetation and hence tsetse habitats.

The Boyd survey used aerial photographs as a baseline for constructing a vegetation map. Boyd classified eight major plant communities; ‘big tree’ alluvium, *mupani* on alluvium, *mupani* on stony ground, *Brachystegia tamarindoides* woodland, dense thicket, open vlei, *Terminalia combretum* woodland, and cultivation. He deemed tsetse unlikely to reside in the ‘big tree’ and *mupani* alluvia. He also noticed the effects of cultivation tsetse distribution: the pest was completely absent along the vleis where Africans cultivated in this generally poor rainfall area.<sup>47</sup>

Mowbray located the *g. morsitans*-infested area where the Save and Runde Rivers and their tributaries drained, mostly among the *mupani* and *guibourtia*.<sup>48</sup> The most important element of his botanic survey was information on thicket formation and its suitability to tsetse habitation. Tsetse flies were discovered to favor shady patches in the undergrowth. To the more arid south of the Runde, thicket was limited, with only occasional patches of good shade from isolated clumps of evergreen shrubs and scramblers. The *Androstachys johnsonii* with its ‘leathery’ leaves effectively excluded sunlight, thereby developing a canopy and enabling trees to grow “with almost

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<sup>46</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: 3.

<sup>48</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, 30<sup>th</sup> September 1956, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1956: 3.

plantation-like regularity only occasionally disturbed by elephant damage.” The resultant absence of undergrowth suggested to Mowbray that “*Androstachys* would seem to be poor fly habitat, the very uniformity being a drawback.” He argued that this aspect should be investigated further since it might offer possibilities for intervention.<sup>49</sup>

Mowbray discovered that some types of *mupani* forests hosted tsetse flies, whereas others not only were unattractive to tsetse flies, but could also form a barrier. The ‘inhabitable’ characteristic of some forests resulted partly from past human avoidance, partly from the presence or absence of water. Near permanent pools “the shade and game numbers are adequate for tsetse.”<sup>50</sup> Mowbray concluded that the 5 mile stretch to the west of Marumbini was, however, “suitable tsetse habitat on account of human-induced damage to the *mupani* [that] had stunted tree growth, turning the area to scrubland.” Africans burning wild fires in both Mozambique and Rhodesia had made it ‘impossible’ to make out a concrete picture of the area’s tsetse possibilities.<sup>51</sup>

Further human distortions were noticeable to the west, where scrubby *mupani* filled nearly all the central plateau, growing on coarse sand amid sparse, spiky grass. Some relatively well developed trees and numerous large stumps cut or burnt flush with the ground punctuated the vegetation. These human distortions, according to Mowbray, complicated any theory of the tsetse habit. Was the tsetse advance a climatic or a human-induced phenomenon? Bush fires were raging from Mozambique into Rhodesia as Mowbray conducted his survey, disturbing the “normal behaviour” of game and tsetse populations and driving them westward into Rhodesia. As Mowbray noted, the colonial authorities had been negotiating to solve the transboundary fire problem since 1950. At a

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<sup>49</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: 5-6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

conference in the border town of Umtali (now Mutare), the Rhodesians proposed the establishment of direct lines of radio or telephone communication with border posts on the Mozambican side as an early warning and prevention system. The Portuguese rejected this costly measure on the grounds that “the population was sparse, being inhabited by natives only and for this reason it would be extremely difficult for our Government to introduce any elaborate protection measure.”<sup>52</sup> Mowbray, however, argued that the fires and stunting, if controlled, could produce an effective fly barrier.<sup>53</sup> He proposed that government should make the stunting of *mupani* “a controllable factor.” The resultant barrier would further reinforce the dry ‘storm drain’ watercourses flowing in a northerly direction, which supported thickets of *Androstachys* “uninhabitable to tsetse.” This area could be “kept from developing into *mupani* woodland capable of supporting tsetse.”<sup>54</sup>

One of the things Mowbray failed to explain was the occurrence of peculiarly isolated pockets of *Brachystegia* woodlands in circular groves on the entire plateau.<sup>55</sup> Yet from the accounts of Swynnerton (1921) and John Ford (1971), it is clear that the Gaza had brought captured livestock into the Espungabera Mountains and made several efforts to introduce them to the low-lying areas.

As part of a strategy to protect livestock from disease, including *nagana*, their ruler Mzila—who ruled the Gaza between 1861 and 1884—had “sent an order to *sondela enkosini* (draw near to the king). Thereupon an immense compulsory movement of the population took place.” On account of the concentration, “the bush simply disappeared

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<sup>52</sup> AHM, Governo Geral, cota 383, pasta A/13, Conferencia sobre ‘Queimadas’ [veldt burnings], a realizar em Umtali, 1950-1953.

<sup>53</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 6.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: 7.

and the country became bare, except for the numberless native villages and a continuity of native gardens.”<sup>56</sup>

Ford further describes how certain areas in the Gaza kingdom were left unsettled as game reserves, specifically an oblong area between the Sitatonga hills and the Busi river. Hunting took place anywhere outside this area. Such control was no longer guaranteed in the periods when the Gaza—under the new ruler Ngungunyana—retreated to Bilene in Southern Mozambique in 1889.<sup>57</sup> “The wooding was let loose and soon re-established itself throughout the previously settled country.”<sup>58</sup> The isolated *Brachystegia* woodlands that Mowbray called “natural habitats” of tsetse were therefore not natural but human-modified.

Water was, according to Mowbray, also important for determining tsetse habitat. He related it to the local African agricultural practices of seasonally planting crops along river valleys, retreating to the uplands during flooding and clearing strips of bush to plant crops that depended on rainfall. He found water scarcity to account for the sparse African settlement – “a line of kraals … along the Lundi from its junction with the Sabi as far west as the Nyamasikana and an isolated group of kraals under the headman, Captain,” in the southern tip of his “operational area.” Mowbray found that the drainage line vegetation was scarce because the rainfall was too low for any “seepage bogs” to form at the source of streams, leaving no shady patches for tsetse to breed. Larger river channels were irregular and dry 10 months a year; the low water-retention capacity of the sandy

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<sup>56</sup> Ford, *The Role of the Trypanosomiasis*: 334, citing C.F.M. Swynnerton, “An Examination of the Tsetse Problem in North Mossurise, Portuguese East Africa,” *Bulletin of Entomological Research* 11 (1921): 315.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*: 315.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*: 335.

soil caused rivers and streams to rise rapidly. This accounted for the absence of riverine fringing vegetation in those areas.<sup>59</sup>

***Tsetse Fly Catching Rides on People and Game.*** Water was also important because its availability and scarcity seasonally affected the movement of game. Boyd had found a very heavy concentration of impala, numerous zebra, eland, buffalo, and kudu, lion, leopard, and elephant, and a fair number of warthog and sable on the upper Mkwashine. On the Chionja plateau up to the alluvium of the Save and Runde, he spotted only kudu and elephant. The animals remained ‘common’ despite the shooting operations that were in progress. South of the Runde game was abundant; here scattered herds of nyala shared common space with bushbuck and duiker among the river thickets and cultivated areas. Finally, he found that “every large pool in the Sabi and Lundi ha(d) its quota of hippo and crocodiles.”<sup>60</sup> These species Boyd considered critical for the blood diet of the tsetse fly. Mowbray then drew connections between the water supplies and the patterns of game dispersals and concentrations, suggesting that practically the entire area was “highly suitable” for game in wet season when food and water was abundant. When the waterholes dried up, two major movements of game occurred in the arid central area. One was eastward towards the pans in Mozambique and the Rio Save; the other was westwards from the hinterland to the Runde and the semi-thickets of the Nyamasikana. Mowbray, however, concluded that the presence of vegetational barriers would render such movements “highly unlikely to cause fly encroachments.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 9.

<sup>60</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 4.

<sup>61</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 11.

Mowbray's report connects fire and water to the tsetse fly in interesting ways. Because of the fires raging in the border area between Mozambique and Rhodesia, most elephants east of the Runde escarpment had retreated "well into Portuguese territory." Their destructive feeding habits had broken *mupani* trees, leaving "extensive low scrub belts" on their trails to and from waterholes, which were suitable to tsetse. Overall, the western area was "a well-used dry season concentration area ... most favoured by game" owing to its permanent water and food supplies (many vegetations converged there); more importantly, game was "largely undisturbed by humans as there [were] no settlements west of Chilojo (Mupfichani)."<sup>62</sup> As a spur to game movement, fire and water presented two possibilities: tsetse could spread on the trail to the watering holes or when animals fled forest fires from Mozambique into Rhodesia. This meant that the vegetational barriers and burning/stumping would be inadequate because tsetse could still catch a ride on moving game. Nevertheless, in closing his report, Mowbray was still hopeful that the "vegetational barriers" would put paid to any "natural encroachments" westward. He did, however, suggest additional "modes of transport" for the fly, arguing that tsetse could only move southward if it was carried there from Marumbini "on the Portuguese timber companies" lorries running to Malvernia or extensive human traffic across the Runde.<sup>63</sup>

The Boyd survey had revealed a pattern of infection resembling the progressive journey of the trypanosome from Mozambique into Chiefs Chitsa and Mahenye's areas. Boyd noticed at Chitsa the considerable movement of transboundary labor migrants from Mozambique across and along the Save up the Runde through Nuanetsi (Mwenezi) to

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: 12.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*: 13.

South Africa. On their way back home to Mozambique, these African labor migrants reported having encountered “heavy fly” soon after crossing the Rhodesian border. Boyd was convinced that tsetse rode on these men’s bodies and was deposited further and further along the route, inside Rhodesia. After all, this was also happening in Rhodesia’s northern districts with labor migrants coming from or returning home to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. At the Commandant’s border camp, Boyd had caught two *g. morsitans* “on the person of some westbound migrants”; six miles further down the road, in Portuguese territory, he took 24 more flies on another group. On his own car, he caught 42 over an 11-mile stretch to the border. Finally, on the Honde River he bagged 39 more in the first 11 miles of the road along the Rupembe to the Hippo Mine.<sup>64</sup>

The connections between human mobility, transport systems and tsetse movement were also clear with respect to *g. pallidipes*. Boyd had caught four on his car along the Portuguese road as he drove north to the Honde River. His fears of a heavy concentration of the species inside a five-mile proximity of the Rhodesia border deepened when he caught two more on the Save’s bank inside Rhodesia. This was the furthest southern point the insect had been recorded inside the country. With respect to *g. morsitans* the barrier of thickets to the west of the Rupembe had prevented any significant transmission across the Save. Curiously *g. pallidipes* was now well established in this thicket.<sup>65</sup> A few months prior to Boyd’s survey “the advancing *morsitans* belt” had reached the mountain road just south of Mount Makosa.<sup>66</sup> Mowbray’s hypothesis was that tsetse fly “must be

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<sup>64</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 6.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

able to move large distances on vehicles as many of the (*nagana*) cases mentioned occurred up to 60 miles away from the nearest known ‘fly’.”<sup>67</sup>

As a result of this pattern of encroachment, the Rhodesian government had in November 1955 started controlling all northbound foot, scotch cart, and motor traffic from the tsetse belt on either bank of the Save. The pattern of *nagana* infected villages on the west bank and the paths leading from them to “native stores and other places of gathering” presented clear evidence of “human vectors” of the tsetse “advance.” Mowbray observed African mobility in a rural landscape and the networks between dwellings and other places of interest—stores, veterinary dip tanks against tick-borne diseases, boreholes, schools, and churches.<sup>68</sup> Between each of these, a tapestry of paths emerged that became the highways on which the tsetse caught a ride on travelers within Rhodesia or across into/from Mozambique. Since the delimitation of the Anglo-Portuguese border in 1892, authorities had experienced great difficulties in controlling the movement of Africans across the border, a problem that bothers authorities till this day. In the mid-1950s, at the time the surveys were conducted, Rhodesia still welcomed labor migrants from Mozambique, even if they were illegal, much to the chagrin of the Portuguese authorities who regretted losing labor critical to the concession companies. To address the problem of *carried fly*, Boyd proposed that migrant laborers would have to be compulsorily “de-flied” before reaching the Rupembe.<sup>69</sup>

***Africans Making Alliances With Tsetse Fly.*** African hunters used the tsetse menace as an entry point into paid state employment; through it they also put their fingers on state

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<sup>67</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 2.

<sup>68</sup> NAZ Th10/10/1/1/132-219 Blake-Thompson Papers, Thompson to Roger Summers, 19 March 1955.

<sup>69</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 7.

guns and used them for poaching. Although the Chief Entomologist had no idea who the culprits were, he strongly suspected the African hunters employed on tsetse operations because of slack and intermittent European supervision. He suggested to the Ranger-in-Charge of Mt. Selinda, R.B. Hooper, to “give your natives a pep-talk and, apart from new recruits,” so that they would in future not exceed the 3-5 rounds of ammunition for every head quota.<sup>70</sup>

The African hunters were in the habit of aiming well and killing more and staying within their quota, therefore creating a surplus of ammunition to poach with. In January 1952, the new Ranger-in-Charge, W.R. Vaughanscott, alerted his superiors to the possibility that African hunters may have been hunting outside the designated Tsetse Corridor to tally the tails they submitted and cover up poaching. He wondered “how our hunters here are to destroy so much game every month, if they shoot strictly in Southern Rhodesian territory.”<sup>71</sup> On 1 May 1953, his successor J.H. Mackeown wrote Chorley reporting alleged poaching of elephant and game in the Gonarezhou Game Reserve. The information he had heard gives us an idea of the possibility of .303s given for tsetse shooting being used for poaching:

The only information I have been able to obtain is that at odd intervals a hunter comes through the Mkwashine and into the fly area, the man apparently shoots anything he finds, and according to one of the hunters he may be a native with a .303, he also shoots all he finds.<sup>72</sup>

There is no doubt that African hunters’ transformation of tsetse operations into poaching was due to lack of state capacity to police Africans. Until 1950, no vehicles had

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<sup>70</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1949-52: For Chief Entomologist, to R.B. Hooper, Mt. Silinda, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1950: “Nyala Shooting.”

<sup>71</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/7 Sabi Valley 1952-3: Ranger-in-Charge, Sabi Valley Camp c/o Hippo Mines Umtali, Chief Entomologist Causeway, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1952: “Tsetse Fly Operations – Sabi Valley: Monthly Report, January 1952.”

<sup>72</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5: J.H. Mackeown, Sabi Valley Camp, Tsetse Fly Operations, to Director Tsetse Fly Operations, 1/5/1953: “Poaching.”

been allocated for the ranger-in-charge since most of the terrain was “unsuitable for motor transport and the Sabi River cannot usually be crossed.” Rangers were told very clearly before taking the job that the principal part of their job consisted of foot patrols.”<sup>73</sup> How could they monitor transgressive mobility when they were immobile?

‘The natives’ had run amok! On 6 September 1954, for example, Provincial Native Commissioner D.G. Lewis complained that “natives, by virtue of a permit issued by the Secretary for Mines, Lands and Surveys… are permitted to destroy game (with a few exceptions)” in the tsetse area between the Nyamasikana-Runde junction and Portuguese border. In addition, he had been told that “a large number of Europeans” were shooting “in the described area (Native Purchase Area and ‘Game Reserve’) and no control of direction is exercised by anybody in authority.” Lewis had written his subordinate the NC for Nuanetsi indicating his concern “as to the omission in permits of any instruction as to the direction in which shooting operations should take place. Hunters should be made to shoot in the direction of the international boundary” to drive animals out into Mozambique not in towards the farms, he said.<sup>74</sup>

Pest control had become pest dispersal, the African hunter the pest, not pesticide. Lewis was saying that contrary to the hunters preventing tsetse movement, they were actually scattering it: “If the Chief Entomologist and other experts consider that game spreads the tsetse fly (and they say foot-and-mouth), does he not realize that the game and fly are being driven northwards by all the hunters he employs?” Lewis opinion was

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<sup>73</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/6 Sabi Valley 1949-52: for Chief Entomologist, Entomology Branch, to J.J. Hendriks, esq., Tsetse Fly Ranger in Charge, P.O. Craigmore via Chipinga, 9 March 1951: “Patrols.”

<sup>74</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5: D.G. Lewis, Provincial Native Commissioner, Fort Victoria, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Causeway, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1954: “Tsetse Fly Operations: Lowveld Mashonaland South.”

based on the views of an African informant, Ndari, an ‘expert’ on the fly by virtue of living in the infected area:

Native Ndari who lives on the southern boundary of the Ndanga East reserve is of the opinion that elephant etc. being harassed on both sides of the Sabi River are traveling up this river to spread the fly in his area, whereas the driving of animals should be towards the international border, where the Portuguese, I presume, are destroying their game.... Elephant, despite their size, are extremely nervous and will stampede for miles on being disturbed. I am not sure that the reason for the increase in the number of elephants so far north as the Lone Star Ranch and the eastern boundary of the Matibi Reserve cannot be attributed to the disorderly shooting. Elephant chased from the junction of the Runde and Sabi Rivers might easily, with their fly, join up with these animals further. I have the authority to say that the Veterinary Department is equally uneasy in regard to the methods of shooting. I do not think that it would be asking too much if the Native Commissioners of the districts concerned were given the names of the persons entering their areas armed with permits. I am sure you will agree this is very necessary if the interest of the officials in their districts is sustained. This policy of destruction is distasteful to us all but we are told it is the only way to get rid of the fly. *Thousands of lbs. of elephant must go to eradicate ounces of fly. Fantastically put in this way is it not?*<sup>75</sup> (my own emphasis)

As such, Lewis warned that if hunters were permitted to operate in the area “in the present haphazard way, then the elephants are going to carry the fly up the Runde River and into Matibi II Reserve and up the Chiredzi River to the Ranches.” All livestock and possibly humans would have to be evacuated from the southern areas of the province.<sup>76</sup>

**Catching Fly, Making ‘Colonial’ Entomological Facts.** Like these white rangers, therefore, entomologists Boyd and Mowbray could not personally beat the bushes and cast nets to actually catch the flies. Nor could the rangers spend months on end in malaria infested country, without horses or any hoofed transport (thanks to tsetse fly), chasing after and shooting at wild animals. Tsetse limited the European “expert” to the field camp

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

at Save Valley, from where he made occasional monthly patrols. The day to day job of “keeping a finger on the pulse of the fly” therefore fell to Africans recruited in the villages.

The Rhodesian manpower problem was at two levels. It was not a problem to recruit Africans for hunting with government-issued Martini Henry rifles<sup>77</sup> at a time when only whites were allowed to own or use guns, let alone enter wildlife areas. Nor were European entomologists in short supply. The problem Boyd and Mowbray faced was in recruiting sufficient and sufficiently trained African personnel to catch flies:<sup>78</sup> there was no extra incentive to catch flies compared to hunting game to destroy the tsetse’s diet.

Fly catching was an arduous job whites could not—or would not—do when there were colonial subjects who could be mobilized to do it. An interesting question here is: what kind of expertise did Africans bring to the production of tsetse science? How could one talk about their contribution to entomology when their voices are not included verbatim<sup>79</sup> in the written reports? Does it mean that when the voice is muted the actions cannot be unearthed?

The reports I use were written in English, while the people who caught flies spoke, according to Boyd “a very attractive dialect of Zulu.”<sup>80</sup> I read the entomological report as an English compilation of knowledge produced out of different bodies of knowledge. The hunters and flycatchers brought to this knowledge production their own knowledge of the local terrain, of tracking and guiding. One could therefore argue that

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<sup>77</sup> NAZ S3099/15 Martini-Henry Rifles for Tsetse Fly Operations 1933-40.

<sup>78</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 5.

<sup>79</sup> Luise White has raised similar questions, albeit from the point of view of social constructivism rather than co-construction. See “**Tsetse** Visions: Narratives of Blood and Bugs in Colonial Northern Rhodesia, 1931-9,” *Journal of African History* 36, 2 (1995): 219-245.

<sup>80</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 5.

Africans retreated to this indigenous *library* to read for clues to enable them to act upon their subalternity, and through their actions “wrote” an important part of colonial science. It is not that they did not write colonial science; it is rather that those who compiled the records used exclusionary technologies—pen and paper—Africans were not competent in it.<sup>81</sup>

Where the flycatchers and hunters do appear in the reports their contribution received mixed appreciation. Boyd described them as an “unbearable mixture” of Ndau and Shangane, and found the Ndau and Shangane to be “in general uncommunicative and unreliable” barring a few exceptions. However, he also agreed that “without the aid of one of these, Mkwadze by name, a retired housebreaker with a criminal record a yard long, it would have been almost impossible to visit the upper Lundi area.”<sup>82</sup> Mowbray recounted how preliminary work for the survey was delayed because “labour was in extremely short supply, good fly boys could not be obtained and surveys had to be done with local natives, who no sooner learnt to catch than they left.”<sup>83</sup> For a region exposed to labour migration to the South African mines and considering that Shabanie Mine operated a recruiting depot at Marumbini run by a man called Blake Thompson, fly work was in competition with much more lucrative forms of wage labor.<sup>84</sup> Mowbray stressed the “great difficulty … experienced in recruiting *the right type of native*.”<sup>85</sup> Only through the incentive of paying a wage and the bounty of game meat could African men be enticed to join fly work. Mowbray conceded that paid hunters were “the more useful,”

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”: 277.

<sup>82</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 5.

<sup>83</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 1.

<sup>84</sup> NAZ TH10/10/1/1/132-219 Blake-Thompson Papers, Thompson to Roger Summers, 19 March 1955.

<sup>85</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 1.

especially if “given fly nets and encourage(d) … to search for ‘fly’ and retain any caught for further inspection.”

While Boyd and Mowbray approached tsetse operations as (based on) science, Africans used the game slaughters as a moment to reclaim their access to wildlife. Those who could use guns availed their skills and knowledge to the anti-tsetse operation as hunters. Five hunters were operating in the triangular area 6-7 miles from the Save-Runde confluence, while a sixth one operated a few miles further up the Runde. These African men were unpaid “as are the rest of the hunters in this area.” Primarily because of the difficulties of crossing the Save River, very little control was exercised on them such that, Boyd said, “it is extremely doubtful if their activities are of any value.”<sup>86</sup> Boyd evaluated such independence as a weakness, fearing these African men would not do a thorough job and would leave residual game capable of supporting a large fly population, “as [the hunting operations] are at present carried out, [they] will have little effect on the encroachment of the fly.”<sup>87</sup> Mowbray, however, understood how critical the role of African hunters was in controlling the fly. He agreed that because of the few hunters involved on the west bank, “the situation was not found to promise good results.” Once the white rangers-in-charge paid the one salaried African hunter his wage in January, the latter would go to the villages and the hunting operations would have to be temporarily suspended. The unpaid hunters on the east bank were continuing their work, but while they had “considerably reduced the game density,” they were not capable of tackling the remaining populations without reorganization and additional expenses:

The mode of change was to give the redundant unpaid hunters the opportunity of remaining but on a paid, monthly basis. The Makossa block

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<sup>86</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/8 Sabi Valley 1953-5 Boyd, “Tsetse Fly Survey”: 6.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

was then divided into limited areas and the new paid hunters were then camped at a density of one to every 10 sq. miles. Reorganization will be completed when the west bank operations begin next year [1957].<sup>88</sup> When I talk about how the subaltern speaks, therefore, I am referring to these moments when the scientific experiment could not go on if African hunters were unavailable. What brought the entire exercise within the orbit of western science was the white ranger or entomologist at whose orders game elimination proceeded.

***Buttressing Borders Against Tsetse Mobility.*** Following the completion of the surveys, Mowbray decided that “the non-isolated mixed populations of tsetse” in the Save Valley could be combated through a combination of “bush clearing, game elimination and, after that process, through the resettling of Africans squeezed out of other areas of the Rhodesian hinterland.” The idea was to establish a barrier against reinvasion. The strategy also involved rigorous traffic control mechanisms to prevent further encroachment of fly, an undertaking that called for a reorganization and boost in staff, transport and equipment.<sup>89</sup> I argue that especially the latter method of keeping the fly under surveillance at the same time contributed to attempts to mark the territorial jurisdiction of the state and control over the African population.

The tsetse fly spoke through the mobility of Africans, the Africans spoke through the mobility of the tsetse fly, and both movements were/caused pestilences to the state. Writing in 1956, Mowbray noted that the most important aspect of tsetse control work in that year had been “the instigation of traffic control on both banks of the Sabi River.” He was referring to the establishment of tsetse control gates (in November) on both banks involving “a more flexible system of traffic control,” where traffic was checked on fly

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<sup>88</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 8.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*: 6.

carriage. The initial gates had been intended to supplement survey work, but now that more was known about the fly, there was merit in relocating the gates “at strategic positions where further removal was unnecessary.”<sup>90</sup> Already five gates and fences on the east bank had proved particularly successful, significantly reducing cases of *nagana*; they would act as a fortress against invasion. That Mowbray and his African team had caught no fly around and beyond the east bank gates meant that no fly had been carried inland, “at least on road traffic” (i.e. foot, carts, occasionally cars, etc.). At the same time the Makoho gate had allowed in “alarming numbers” of *g. morsitans* and *g. pallidipes*, presumably from the Ndanga River heading south. The fly had negotiated this human technology (the gate) by “outflanking [it] only to be returned on southbound traffic.” To address this problem, Mowbray moved the Mareya gate a few miles north of Makoho gate on the same road.<sup>91</sup>

A crucial question became how to control human movement and enforce human-designated borders, as well as to curtail tsetse and game movement. Mowbray sought to make traffic control more successful by calling on the state to erect a border fence between Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique to close the area between trigonometrical beacons 103 and 106. The reasoning was that as soon as the fence was complete, a system of daily maintenance patrols by local Africans would be put in place to prevent “indiscriminate international movements” and the resulting problem of “carried fly.” Mowbray argued that the “Makaru gate” had “prevented the ingress of over 400 “fly” in one month” and that “far larger numbers must be carried over the border on pedestrians

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*: 7.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

coming to the Rhodesian [grocery] stores.” He was advocating strict control of human movement as one of the strategies for controlling tsetse proliferation, warning:

All movement in and out of the tsetse area must be strictly controlled. Besides the border movement other haphazard wanderings of pedestrians and livestock take place. In enforcing traffic control it will be possible, without defeating the object of the scheme, to exclude those areas to and from which large movements of cattle take place. It is strongly recommended that this absolute traffic control be enforced during the coming year.<sup>92</sup>

Hence, the movement of human beings needed to be controlled in order to stem the movement of tsetse fly. The issue at stake, however, was also that Africans, like tsetse fly, were violating an international border designated by treaty. Since the late 1930s the state and Mahenye’s people had been fighting a low intensity ‘war’ over restrictions preventing the chief’s herd from grazing in Mozambique, and the gates and fences were solutions likely to be resented.

Fences and gates functioned differently in different locations. On the west bank they acted as an “adjunct to survey” whereas on the east bank they were a primary method to quarantine already known tsetse habitats. Depending on where such gates were situated, they presented problems in some areas and solutions in others. One example is the hostile attitude of Chief Chitsa and his people to the control of “carried fly,” which had started when the first attempt to erect a border fence against FMD and East Coast Fever began in the late 1930s. The veterinary department had quarantined the entire village herd pending the completion of a border fence and other veterinary facilities such as the dip tanks.<sup>93</sup> The “science” Mowbray said was “working” led to restrictions that Chief Chitsa and his people bitterly resented. Mwawa gate (opened June 1956) was meant to “prove the extensions of *G. morsitans*” and to record *pallidipes* populations on

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*: 7-8.

the river, yet the fact that tsetse movement had stalled was simultaneously a sign of the restriction placed on the movement of its vectors, the people. While “numbers” of *morsitans* had been taken off westbound traffic, “one, taken off an eastbound cyclist, may have been carried to a point west of the gate”; those numbers also reported the movement of “the natives” to the state. The Machindu gate was set up in August “on the suspicion” of fly in southern Ndanga East Reserve, and although none had been caught since, the gate would be maintained. Mowbray’s thinking was simple: the more fences the more rigid the traffic control in future. Everything, however, depended on suitable African staff being recruited.<sup>94</sup>

Indirectly, the presence of tsetse fly held government to ransom: now it had to commit attention, equipment, and manpower to make its presence felt in a border area long neglected or risk a tsetse fly invasion of cattle ranches close by to the west, principally Nuanetsi Ranch. The tsetse fly was calling attention to the periphery, making it the centre in the scientific sense – that of a laboratory *in situ*. As control measures, gates and, more particularly, fences compartmentalized the landscape. They helped to classify space into “wild” and “domesticated” as a prerequisite for isolating tsetse flies. In order to combat the fly and further domesticate the landscape a strategy of game elimination was deployed.

The gun and fence combined in the *cordons sanitaire*. As African hunters – using the age-old hunting traditions of their ancestors—cleared game, the fencers erected a barrier to make such clearings permanent. Sometimes the fence came first and the shooting later, so as to canalize game into easier killing grounds and then having hunters patrol the cleared areas. This was especially so on the east bank of the Runde River.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

Hunting was scheduled to resume on the west bank in early 1957 with “a planned and ruthless campaign” whose baseline would be the new fence already under construction from Chilojo escarpment to Save just south of Masapos Ranch. Mowbray alerts us to two “points of interest” regarding the fence:

Firstly its construction with high tensile, plain steel wire and secondly the numerous difficulties encountered in trying to obtain a sound erection job from the contractor. It is fortunate that a new field officer has arrived in the area, as his presence will perhaps prevent re-erection of the fence through bad workmanship, and shorten what promises to be a long and tedious task.<sup>95</sup>

Erecting fences was by no means an easy task, requiring its own skills and the development of “appropriate” technology. In other words, the fence also mobilized different fields of expertise beyond just the entomologist and his African staff so that, as Latour has urged, when we look at science, the networks of heterogeneous actors that produce it go well beyond the laboratory.<sup>96</sup>

Such non-laboratory labour or knowledge mobilization also calls attention to the role of African bush-clearers in creating *cordons sanitaires*. Even though Mowbray completed vegetational mapping and submitted bush-clearing schemes for the Rupembe watershed in March 1956, Africans were the critical mass. The scheme aimed at destroying concentration sites of both *morsitans* and *pallidipes* in a locality in which the woodland surrounding the drainage lines cannot support either tsetse. Mowbray noted that “success or failure of this initial scheme will be largely judged on the “fly” figures of the local traffic gate, as tsetse carried in an easterly direction arise in the clearing area. Random catches have also been made in the locality.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*: 8.

<sup>96</sup> Latour, *Science in Action*: 158.

<sup>97</sup> NAZ S3106/11/1/9 Sabi Valley 1955-6 Mowbray, “Lower Sabi Valley Report”: 8.

Here it is also crucial to stress the technological adjustments envisaged at the time to cut menial labor: “a new feature... recently ... introduced into bush clearing operations,” the two-man Dolman power saw, was expected to undergo “extensive field trials ... in the near future.” Preliminary small-scale trials were showing the saw to be “roughly eight times quicker than an axe team of five natives.” It had posted encouraging figures in terms of output but presented the new problem of “selecting and training African operators.” This saw would, however, do little to solve the immediate problem of “the rawness of labour gangs” (i.e. inexperience) under charge of the field officer, a Mr. Janke, who was also new on the job.<sup>98</sup> Africans remained indispensable.

Another dimension to the bush-clearance strategy was the option of not employing African labor directly, but to offer Africans the infected land for resettlement and insist that they clear it. This option had not been considered in the Save valley where the *nagana* had first struck, but rumor was rife that large numbers of people who had been removed from Matibi II and Sengwe Native Reserves when parts of what is now Gonarezhou were declared Crown Land would be resettled in tsetse infected areas. They were to be joined by Africans from elsewhere who could afford to buy land in the newly declared “native purchase areas” in Gonakudzingwa. The Department of Agriculture had discussed the matter with the Native Commissioner for Chippinga, who favored the idea of creating a human shield against tsetse. Mowbray urged that the settlement should follow “as rapidly as planning allows.” If “judiciously carried out the measure could preclude extension of the Chippinga border clearing and the high costs this work would entail.” The funds so-saved could be reassigned for tsetse operations further south.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*: 9

## **Epilogue: The End of the Tsetse Fly in Gonarezhou**

Even amidst the euphoria of DDT and dieldrin, the state had by 1963 resolved to introduce selective game elimination to “check... the advance of the tsetse fly for the protection of the cattle industry.” Consequently, from August 1964 shooting operations were yet again authorized in designated “tsetse fly controlled hunting areas.” In the Sabi/Lundi Controlled Hunting Area, “total elimination” was ordered “in order to establish a cattle-free game-free area.” Everywhere else (in the northern parts of the country), the elimination was limited to elephant, buffalo, kudu, bushbuck, bushpig and warthog, the favored host species of the tsetse fly.<sup>100</sup>

There was one important change arising from the Boyd and Mowbray reports: the level of supervision and coordination between the vets and “the tsetse fly people” had improved dramatically. The newly reconstituted Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control Unit now fell under the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS), and it was tasked with “the elimination of the specified species of game, other than elephant and buffalo,” which were the responsibility of DNPWLM. For ease of executing its duties, DNPWLM created eleven new posts to accommodate the increased pace of elephant and buffalo destruction.<sup>101</sup>

In 1965, the DNPWLM was generally upbeat about the progress of tsetse fly control operations. In the northern districts from Binga in the west to Mt. Darwin in the east, its role was primarily to remove elephant and buffalo and to supervise the hunting activities of DVS staff, which focused only on kudu, bushbuck, bushpig, and warthog.

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<sup>100</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1964: Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1964: 21.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

The new approach was called the “six species” formula. At the end of that year, DNPWLM declared that the operations “had progressed beyond all expectations.” Major concentrations of elephant and buffalo had been cleared from everywhere in the northern districts except little pockets. Since the commencement of operations in October 1964, DNPWLM had killed 1,534 elephant and 253 buffalo. In the southern region, the department had thus far destroyed 297 elephant and 127 buffalo in the Sabi/Lundi Controlled Hunting Area. Only “very small numbers” of the species remained in the intended game-free cattle-free corridors.<sup>102</sup>

In 1966, the DNPWLM and DVS anti-tsetse operations were concentrated mostly in the northern areas, with Gonarezhou receiving a rather token mention in the Director’s report. He described the tsetse control position in the Sabi/Lundi Controlled Hunting Areas “satisfactory.” However, he cautioned that “due to the tsetse threat to the south-eastern Lowveld ranches from heavy fly concentrations located in the [Chivonja] Hills, the game-fences [had to be] realigned.” The southern game fence was also being moved and repositioned to the south of the hills to “enable controlled hunting of the selected species to take place.” That same year, tsetse teams embarked on an “extensive spraying” of the entire area with residual sprays during winter.<sup>103</sup>

The momentum of the tsetse operations changed dramatically in 1967. In previous years there had been pressure on the removal of elephant and buffalo “in the shortest possible time”; there was more emphasis on “driving elephant and buffalo out of the

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<sup>102</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1965: 23.

<sup>103</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1966 Rhodesia Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management: Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1966: 13.

controlled hunting areas rather than shoot them. The elephant and buffalo counts in the northern districts along the Zambezi was showing a decrease that was ecologically unsustainable in the long term. In any case, the elimination of the two species was “well in advance of the operation to remove kudu, bushbuck, warthog and wildpig by Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control Branch.”<sup>104</sup> In the Save-Runde area, most activity centered around “driving elephant out” of the Chivonja Hills, which were deemed to be “the main breeding ground for tsetse fly.” The exercise went hand in hand with ground-spraying operations during the winter. The “elaborate” road network for this purpose proved “extremely useful” to the DNPWLM’s overall supervision of the anti-tsetse operations.<sup>105</sup>

More radical changes in the tsetse control effort took place in 1968: “the situation was so well in hand that it could be said that the primary object... was virtually complete.” The majority of the nine key tsetse control areas were now “clear of elephant and buffalo.” In the northern region, the number of animals destroyed for that year was the lowest since the start of operations in 1964. The Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) supplied the DNPWLM with redundant Army Land-Rovers, as well as ground-to-air radio sets “which gave good communications between the Land-Rovers and the department’s aircraft. This equipment was used “to spot the elephant and guide the Land-Rovers on to the scene”:

It continued to control the Land Rovers’ movements towards the game fence. On approaching the fence, which was cut at the last moment, the elephant almost invariably tried to break back through the Land-Rovers. At this stage, the elephant had to be stampeded and, more often than not, this could only be done by reckless driving, flying, the firing of shots,

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<sup>104</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1967 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1967: 17.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

thunderflashes and the sounding of the sirens with which the vehicles were equipped.<sup>106</sup>

This latest technological innovation came a shade too late to be of any use in the Save-Runde area. By the end of 1968, the tsetse corridors had “virtually been completed.”<sup>22</sup> An elephant had been shot in the last throes of the clearance operation and no buffalo was in sight. The Director the DNPWLM could declare: “Staff have now, therefore, been withdrawn from active participation in this exercise.”<sup>107</sup>

I have often wondered why most areas of Mashonaland (except border areas) have no elephant and buffalo, or any wildlife for that matter barring that restocked on private ranches. The explanation is that they were all slaughtered during the tsetse control operations. In 1969, the whole of Mashonaland was “virtually clear of elephant and buffalo.”<sup>108</sup> In Matabeleland, “only a limited amount of control work” was still going on in the Sebungwe area. In Victoria, the DNPWLM had effectively withdrawn from any active participation by the end of 1968; its staff assisted the DVS on elephant control “on only a limited number of occasions.”<sup>109</sup>

With the game reserve now established and tsetse vanquished, the major focus shifted to questions of “scientific management” and research. In 1969, DNPWLM wasted little in establishing Chipinda Pools Research Station. The main purpose of the institution was to conduct general surveys of fauna and vegetation.<sup>110</sup> Data collection on all major trees, shrubs, grasses and herbs was undertaken through out 1970. The behavior of

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<sup>106</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1968 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1968: 20.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*: 21.

<sup>108</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1969 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1969: 13.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*: 23.

elephant was studied in detail with a view to understand “vegetation degradation.” Veld fires too were put under severe scrutiny as ecologists searched for elusive records of past burning. It was while the teams were studying this history of fire that the “extensive fires” swept through the Gonarezhou that year. The ecologists recorded them “as closely as possible.” Aerial and ground photography was extensively used to locate water holes, faunal concentrations and vegetational cover. Research teams gathered records of distribution, movement, feeding and population numbers and densities of elephant. They collected plant specimens for the Salisbury and Chipinda Pools herbariums. There was something even more significant: “a darter and a barbell from the Lundi River were collected and analyzed for insecticides, and the results obtained showed a high degree of a breakdown product of DDT.”<sup>111</sup>

In February 1970, the new Land Tenure Act added some 129 square kilometers to the Gonarezhou Game Reserve comprising the Gonakudzingwa division between Tswiza and the APA. This land teemed with buffalo and elephant during winter. With the enlargement of the sanctuary, another problem emerged: veld fires. In 1970 alone, several outbreaks destroyed half of the reserve, severely stretching the limits of the staff. The Rhodesia Railways chipped in with a fireguard from Vila Salazar to Chikomedzi siding, while the DC commandeered his own staff to grade a fireguard along the tsetse corridor.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1970 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1970: 25-6.

<sup>112</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1973 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1973.

Tsetse fly was now virtually a thing of the past not just in Gonarezhou but countrywide. In 1971, the Director of National Parks noted that “minimal effort was required with respect to hunting of elephant and buffalo in relation to tsetse fly control.”<sup>113</sup> “Research and management of terrestrial ecosystems” became a catch phrase. It is not surprising that a number of wildlife research institutes sprang up at this time, including the Hostes Nicolle Institute of Wildlife Research the northern districts<sup>114</sup>

The emphasis was shifting to conservation and serious “scientific management” of game reserve space. The boldest step was without doubt the department’s translocation of two black rhinoceros cows from a place called Chipangayi (also called Chipangali) on the lower Save and its translocation to Gonarezhou. The giant animals were released at a place appropriately called Chipembere (Rhino) Pan in the Chivonja escarpment.<sup>115</sup> In 1970, 41 “hook-lipped” rhinoceros were translocated from the north of Rhodesia 650 miles away and released into Gonarezhou.<sup>116</sup> These animals were now facing threats from poaching and escalating guerrilla war in the Zambezi valley. The translocation continued in 1971.<sup>117</sup> With the end of the tsetse fly, the state was so confident that in 1975 it designated Gonarezhou a national park. A year later, a new pest arrived.

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<sup>113</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1971 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1971: 24.

<sup>114</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1972 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1972:

<sup>115</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1969 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Appendix D—Ministry of Mines and Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1969: 11.

<sup>116</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1970 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1970: 15.

<sup>117</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report 1971 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia: Ministry of Lands: Reports of the National Parks Advisory Board and Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management for 1971: 5.

## **Chapter 7 Pests Unto The State**

In a poignant illustration of the blurred linguistic boundaries between animal and human pests, a *Rhodesian Commentary* of November 1975 noted:

While terrorists are dealing out death to innocent tribesmen in the north-east border area, Government health teams are trying to protect people from killer diseases—rabies and measles.

While a Government medical team was immunizing black children against measles recently, veterinary officers were busy inoculating dogs against rabies in the same area.<sup>1</sup>

By that year, the nationalist guerrilla war that had started in the northern districts had at last arrived in the area, with the insurgents asking locals for logistic, intelligence, and other support. Since 1966, Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) had fought an initially lukewarm and then bitter war against two African nationalist guerrilla armies. The Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), operated from rear bases in Mozambique, while the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) was invading from their Zambia. These two guerrilla forces were receiving guns and training support from China and the Soviet Union respectively.

From 1974, as the Rhodesian state realized it was losing the war, it resorted to ‘force multipliers’—biological and chemical weapons designed to attenuate the numerical inferiority of the army against the ‘terrorists’. Directed indiscriminately against

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<sup>1</sup> *Rhodesian Commentary*, Nov. 1975: 2.

both guerrillas and villagers, force multipliers involved firebombing with napalm, nerve gas, crop defoliants, as well as anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease, and polio.

Jim Parker, a former officer in the notorious ‘dirty war’ unit in charge of the Rhodesian operations, has recently published a book—*Assignment Selous Scouts*—on Rhodesia’s own version of chemical and biological weapons. In it he says these new tactics were borrowed from the Portuguese and Americans in Vietnam and Africa respectively. It is easy to assume that this was an entirely new phenomenon generic to the 1974-9 period. This chapter is an historical archaeology of the long tradition of “pest control,” with the 1970s guerrilla only the latest of pest control work that began with colonization itself. It is a moment for theorizing colonialism over the last one and half century, before the Rhodesian era and since. Such an archaeology of state power need not focus purely on human dissent but nature’s as well, lest we miss the connections between environmental and political governance.

Let us recapture the discussion so far. In Chapter 1, I discussed the various ways in which the homestead and village related to each other through the mobility of the body. I also discussed the role of mobility in “migrating out of reach” of enemies human and nonhuman and the production of “rightful ownership” of the land. The process of becoming *vene* (owners) was a pest control process, of using technology to tame places into livable spaces. Chapters 3-5 elaborated on how the state became a pest unto local villagers through the alienation of forest hunting ground and land from “its rightful owners.” Mobility became a central weapon and means of resisting and asserting ownership and use of natural resources. Chapter 6 has been devoted to the attempts of the state to tame nonhuman pests. Taking *hugandanga* (human behavior resembling wild

animals or terrorism) as an example of pestilence, this chapter ends with an intriguing transformation: of *magandanga* (people behaving like wild animals or terrorists) who through violence depose and become the state, which must now also deal with *magandanga*.

### **Engineering Pests**

**Human Pests.** Several notable transitions took place with the British and Portuguese partition of Gonarezhou. For the very reason that the Ndebele were pests to the newly established BSA Company administration in Mashonaland—including Gonarezhou and its environments north of the Limpopo to a line agreed with the Portuguese—it became desirable to remove their military threat and control them through force of arms. In 1893 the Company marched into the Ndebele kingdom and, with the power of the Martini Henry rifle and the Maxim Gun, drove King Lobengula out. Matabeleland (formerly the Ndebele kingdom) became a province of the colony of Rhodesia.

Three years later the Shona and Ndebele torched the fires of rebellion, as the full force of colonialism hit them. 1896 was the year the rinderpest—the deadly cattle plague—reached Rhodesia, as it swept along the wagon routes from East Africa to South Africa, where a combination of *cordons sanitaire* and inoculation prevented it from reaching the Cape coast. In its wake, the pest swept to death just about every beast Africans had; the state shot the rest. This incensed the Shona and Ndebele.

There are two versions of why the rinderpest triggered the rebellion of 1896-7. The standard version is that the spirit mediums told the Shona and Ndebele that the ancestors had sent the pest—and locust swarms—to punish them for allowing *vanhu*

*vasina mabvi* (people without knees) to invade their ancestral lands. They had to chase the white man away to cure the pestilence.<sup>2</sup>

The second version is that the ancestors' ire was directed at the deceit of 'people without knees'. Had not the spirits, kings, and people of the land welcomed them in peace, friendship, and with such help, and pointed them to the treasures of the land? The 'men without knees' had turned around and betrayed the trust; they became *vapambipfumi* (stealers of wealth). Among the Shona, long used to the destructive raids of the Ndebele, whom they called *madzviti* (people who terrorize others through armed violence), the men without knees had defeated *madzviti*. One would say that the hilltop houses we saw in Chapter 1 were strategies of weaponizing nature to counter *hudzviti* (the use of violence to terrorize others). In the belief that the British would protect them against Ndebele and Gaza *madzviti*, some chiefs had granted the Europeans concessions. Instead, they become the new *mudzviti* (singular). The new *madzviti* had also brought with them the pest that was now destroying their cattle. The cure was also obvious.<sup>3</sup>

So the Shona and Ndebele rose up in arms. They fought a spirited fight, with a large arsenal of Martini Henry rifles and other firearms, many smuggled in from the Boers of the Transvaal. Those with no guns fought with their spears, knobkerries and bows and poisoned arrows. They maximized on the rocky outcrops, withdrawing to cover, ambushing their enemy. Only the Maxim machinegun—with its massive direct fire output—saved the BSA Company.

**Animals Pests.** The Shona-Ndebele and rinderpest plagues defeated, attention shifted to mammal, avian, and micro-pests that still plagued the process of settling. Rinderpest was

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<sup>2</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Mediel Hove, in Conversation with Titus Mulungushi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

a blessing in two respects. First, it impoverished the erstwhile pests (Africans) and turned them into cheap labor. Cattle supplied not just milk or meat, but also draught power and social capital. The rinderpest—and the state fumigators wielding Martini-Henrys—had made a clean sweep of the kraals.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the rinderpest killed not only livestock but wild animals, the vectors and dietary sources of tsetse fly. In Gonarezhou, those animals that survived migrated east beyond the epicenter of the strain: the Hunters Road ox-wagon route.

With African and tsetse no longer a threat, the European settlers cut crop farms, cattle ranches, and mineral concessions so arbitrarily in areas these pests once occupied. To remove the African from being a pest on the new premises, the colonial state dispossessed villagers to generally crowded, infertile, and arid “native reserves.” These pests now out of the way, the European settler brought in livestock, planted crops. The nocturnal and diurnal predators, carnivores and insects of the forest helped themselves to breakfast, lunch and dinner, each according to their sizes. Elephants, baboons and monkeys, warthogs, springhares and rodents vegetarian diet tender, while lions, hyenas, and wild dogs settled on beef, mutton, and lamb. When they were finished, they left pathogens like FMD, trypanosomes, and rabies, handing the bill to the farmer.<sup>5</sup> The avian pests came in all sizes, shapes, and numbers—from pied crows that savaged germinating seed or ripening grain, to hawks and eagles swooping down on chicks, to crowds of quelea birds and red locusts decimating entire fields of corn, wheat, and rice in its grain or green form respectively. The tsetse deadly to all livestock, and even more-so cattle ranching, the primary economic pursuits of settlers in the lowveld. Finally, there were

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<sup>4</sup> *African Review* (1896-7).

<sup>5</sup> F. Zumpt, “A Trip to a game Paradise 3. The Warthog and its Parasites,” *African Wild Life* 14, 1 (March 1960): 29-33.

pests whose physical shape the naked eye could not see, but which made themselves visible through their deadly movement within the bodies of other animals, transforming them into pests. Micro-pests like the trypanosome, FMD virus, and rinderpest turned the tsetse fly, wild animals and livestock into vectors of disease. To destroy them, the state had to kill the carriers first.

### Conjuring Pesticides

**Guns.** In subduing Africans with the Martini Henry and Maxim Gun in 1890-7, the British colonizer's challenges to "settling" had just begun. In fact, the status of 'colonizer or settler was not *a priori*; it was emergent from the technological mediations involved in taming nature. We can only understand what colonizing and settling meant if we examine the movements it entailed.

How was the newcomer going to step into the role of controlling wild life now that the African who had played that role could no longer do so? How was settling down to be conducted, homesteads built, new crops planted, livestock reared, and life lived in a place teeming with animals big and small that also found these human assets edible to them? What was to be the pesticide? Ants, flies, rodents, predators, herbivores, and reptiles became pests or vermin overnight.

Elephants were among the very first.<sup>6</sup> Farmers persistently complained of elephant damage to crops and timber plantations, as well as danger to people; an elephant not in its "proper place" behind a game fence was a "dangerous pest."<sup>7</sup> Shooting with

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<sup>6</sup> NAZ T2/1/10 Damage Caused by Elephants, 1910-1913: A.H. Holland, Acting Secretary Department of the Administrator, to D. Souter Robertson, Gwelo, 17<sup>th</sup> August 1910.

<sup>7</sup> NAZ T2/1/10 Damage Caused by Elephants, 1910-1913 M.L.P. Secretary, Midlands Farmers and Stockowners Association, Gwelo, to The Secretary to the Administrator, Salisbury, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1911; NAZ

guns (Martini Henry rifles) was deemed the first line of defense against them. After a



Fig. 12 A Variation of Martin Henry Rifle

Source: *The African Review* (Sept 18, 1897): 563.

report was made, the police inspected the damages to crops with a view to paying

compensation and to sanction the shooting.<sup>8</sup> The government usually declined liability for the damage even if it was the one preserving the animals; all it could do was to send the police to “chase away” the elephants “without destruction.”<sup>9</sup>

Some animals could not be simply driven away; they had to be killed. The government’s policy towards such vermin in 1927 was that farmers would identify the animals traumatizing them and justify why they wanted them dead. Upon receipt of this information, it then advised on the type of method to be used.<sup>10</sup>

T2/1/10 D. Souter Robertson, Strathfillan Farm, Gwelo, to the Chairman, Chartered Co. Board of Directors, London, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1910: “Elephants, Stratfillam Farm.”

<sup>8</sup> NAZ T2/1/10 Acting Magistrate, to W. Souter Robertson Esq., Strathfillan Farm, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1911: “Re. Destruction of Crops by Wild Elephants.”

<sup>9</sup> NAZ T2/1/10 For Director of Agriculture, to The Acting Civil Commissioner, 6<sup>th</sup> July 1911: “Destruction of Crops by Elephants”; NAZ T2/1/10 Damage Caused by Elephants, 1910-1913: Secretary, Law Department, to The Superintendent of Police, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1911: “Elephants Gwelo.”

<sup>10</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Destruction of Wild Animals and Vermin, 1927 February to December 1929: Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to H. Whitby, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1927: “Destruction of Vermin.”

The state issued free “ammunition for the destruction of baboons, monkeys and pigs.” All unused ammunition was to be returned. Farmers requested ammunition quantities based on the size of the troops of baboons, monkeys, and pigs.<sup>11</sup> The Defense Department then debited the charges to DAL’s ‘Destruction of Vermin’ account.<sup>12</sup> It cost the Government 15 rounds of ammunition to destroy four baboons, and the maximum supervision was needed to ensure that “the number of rounds indicated as having been expended, have actually been utilized for the purpose supplied.”<sup>13</sup>

On 14 June 1933, the Assistant Native Commissioner for Melsetter suggested a reward of 10 rounds of ammunition for every two baboon tails surrendered. Agriculture refused: the move would lead participants in a hunt to “create a surplus of ammunition from Government supplies.” The best way was for Government to pay a reward for every tail surrendered, “the farmers themselves providing the necessary ammunition.”<sup>14</sup>

After suffering heavy stock losses from wild dogs, some farmers in the Nyamandhlovu district of Matabeleland suggested that Government employ “a few Cape boys under the police [because] it was useless to employ the ordinary native for this purpose as he had never known a native to kill a wild dog.” This was in spite of having issued “large numbers of rifles [to them] for this purpose from time to time.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1932, one wild dog skin fetched a reward of 50 cents when presented to DAL as proof of vermin. However, “the application for the reward had to be made within three

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<sup>11</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 Wild Animals and Vermin, Destruction of, 1933-34: J.G. Barkhuizen, Sinoia, to The Magistrate, Sinoia, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

<sup>12</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 Acting Secretary DAL, to the Asst Magistrate Sinoia, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

<sup>13</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 Acting Secretary DAL, to the Acting Native Commissioner Melsetter, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1933: “Destruction of Baboons.”

<sup>14</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 H.G. Mundy, Acting Secretary DAL, to The Asst Native Commissioner Melsetter, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1933: “Baboon Hunt: Welgelegen, Tilbury Estates.”

<sup>15</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 L.T. Dechow, Dechow and Tweedale Produce & Native Timber Merchants, Bulawayo, to The Minister of Agriculture, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1933.

months of the date on which the animals were killed.”<sup>16</sup> If not then the reward would expire.<sup>17</sup> As predators damage to livestock increased, the government now worried it would incur a huge bill on rewards. The Secretary for Agriculture wrote his opposite number at Treasury to say that “the reward be paid as a special case and not to create a precedent.”<sup>18</sup> The figures below show that Agriculture exceeded its budget for rewards and free ammunition in all but one year between 1929 and 1934:

Year	Financial Provision	Expenditure
1929/30	£100	£189.1.9
1930/1	£150	£228.17.10
1931/2	£150	£275.0.5
1932/3	£200	£192.1.10
1933/4	£200	£206.5.9

Fig. 13 Budget for Rewards to Farmers who Slaughtered ‘Vermin’ 1929-34

Source: NAZ S1215/1089/1 Wild Animals and Vermin, Destruction of, 1933-34

Yet the program was achieving sterling results. One farmer, B.B. Steyn, achieved a kill rate of 44 baboons for 100 rounds expended over two hunts.<sup>19</sup> The hunt was not officially supervised.<sup>20</sup> In another hunt, a farmer received 150 rounds of .303 ammunition and expended 120 of them. His team compromised 7 Europeans and 14 Africans, who destroyed 20 baboons.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 A.J. Shaw, Acting Civil Commissioner, to the Secretary DAL, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1933: “Destruction of Wild Dogs: G.J. de Lange.”

<sup>17</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 Acting Secretary DAL, to the Civil Commissioner Gatooma, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1933: “Destruction of Wild Dogs: G.J. de Lange.”

<sup>18</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 E.E. Burt, Secretary DAL to The Secretary to the Treasury, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1933.

<sup>19</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, to The Assistant Native Commissioner, Melsetter, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1933: “Baboon Hunts: Reports.”

<sup>20</sup> NAZ S1215/1089/1 Assistant Native Commissioner, to The Acting Secretary, Department Agriculture and Lands, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

<sup>21</sup> NAZ S1089/25: The Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, to Melsetter District, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1933: “Destruction of Baboons.”

**Poisons.** Some animals were too small to aim a gun at. Some were too agile, so that even before the hunters could think of taking aim, they would have ‘gapped’. Others were too many, the demands on ammunition and scarce manpower too much, and the energy required to shoot them far too much. Something was needed to attenuate the problems of size, movement, and numbers: poison.

Initially, individual landholders resorted to arsenic and strychnine. In the 1920s, the government departments issued individual white farmers poisons “at a greatly reduced price for the purposes of exterminating vermin.” The retail price of strychnine hydrochloride at the time was about 65 pence per oz., so poisoning was deemed very inexpensive.<sup>22</sup> The manufacturers Mr. Roberts and Messrs Lennon Ltd. laid out the procedure for poisoning problem animals with strychnine as follows:

Handle the carcass for skinning, etc., solely with an old paper pair of gloves. Aim to place this poison in about ten place in the case of an ox, inserting two grains in each wound. As the poison is very bitter care must be taken to avoid getting any on the outside of the flesh. Plunge a sheath knife about two inches into the flesh and give it a half turn. This will open the wound. Without withdrawing the knife slip the right amount of poison from a piece of paper into the wound, turn back the knife and withdraw it.

Avoid using two much poison.<sup>23</sup>

There were 437 grains in an ounce, and twenty grains were enough for an entire carcass and even less was needed for smaller ones.<sup>24</sup>

Strychnine was also extended to problem birds. Crows caused “considerable damage” especially to the maize and groundnut crop.<sup>25</sup> In a memo to his Chief Chemist, the Secretary for Agriculture asked: “Would you give the inquirer a formula for

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<sup>22</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 H. Whitby, Pendennis Farm, Urungwe P.O. Miami, to The Secretary, Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, Salisbury, 11.2.27; NAZ S1193/W2/1 D. McDonald, Secretary DAL, to The Chief Entomologist, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1927: “Destruction of Vermin.”

<sup>23</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Acting Secretary Agriculture, to Mr. H. Whitby, Pendennis Farm, Urungwe, P.O. Miami, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1927: “Destruction of Vermin.”

<sup>24</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Acting Secretary Agriculture, to Mr. H. Whitby, Pendennis Farm, Urungwe, P.O. Miami, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1927: “Destruction of Vermin.”

<sup>25</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 A. Innes, Fairview, P.O. Headlands, to Director Agriculture, Salisbury, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1927.

poisoning of maize or maize meal as a treat for crow?”<sup>26</sup> Another farmer pleaded: “Will you kindly tell me how to treat maize for poisoning crows or otherwise destroy them.

They have done so much damage that I have to replant.”<sup>27</sup> The chemist replied:

Twelve pounds of maize is thoroughly damped with fresh milk so that the whole grain is wet, but not dripping with moisture. One ounce of powdered strychnine is then slowly distributed over the grains, the whole being kept constantly stirred. When all the poison is mixed in, the grain should be immediately scattered thinly over the ground.... Strychnine being intensely poisonous, great care should be taken in handling it. One grain (1/437 of an ounce) is regarded as a lethal dose for an adult human.

*The poisoned birds should be carefully buried.*

Avian pests were less suspicious; not so with baboons and monkeys.<sup>29</sup> They were “highly suspicious in nature [and] detect[ed] anything strange in the taste or smell of them.”<sup>30</sup> Only firearms could do. Hear the Chief Entomologist: “The only weapons I know of, at all effective against baboons on any considerable scale are firearms, a fact which practically excludes the kraal native as a wholesale baboon destroyer.”<sup>31</sup>

In November 1927, the Secretary for Agriculture announced his department was examining hydrocyanic acid capsules for efficacy against lion and other vermin.<sup>32</sup> The chief chemist cautioned that hydrocyanic gas was “far too dangerous a substance to be handled by anybody other people fully acquainted with its properties and poisonous effects.” He suggested that sodium or potassium cyanide which were “violent poisons” but not as lethal as hydrocyanic acid could be put in ordinary gelatin capsules obtainable

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<sup>26</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 H.G. Mundy, Acting Secretary DAL, to Chief Chemist.

<sup>27</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 J.H. Finch, Marandellas, to Chief Agriculturalist Salisbury, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1929.

<sup>28</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 A.D.H. Chief Chemist, Agricultural Laboratory, to A.F. Innes, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1927: “Destruction of Crows.”

<sup>29</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Acting Secretary Department of Agriculture to Chief Entomologist, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1927.

<sup>30</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Chief Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory Salisbury, to A. Dunstan, Esq., Buckstone Farm Banquet, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1927: “Poisoning of Baboons”; NAZ S1193/W2/1 Secretary for Agriculture, to Chief Native Commissioner, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1928: “Destruction of Baboons and Wild Pigs.”

<sup>31</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Chief Entomologist, Agricultural Laboratory Salisbury, to The Secretary Department of Agriculture, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1928: “Rewards for Destruction of Wild Pigs and Baboons.”

<sup>32</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Secretary DAL, to B. Cumming esq., P.O. Matetsi S. Rhodesia, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1927.

from any drugstore. The capsule had to be dipped in paraffin wax to give it a fine coating before insertion into the flesh just like strychnine.<sup>33</sup>

Springhares raided crops and left a trail of destruction. Wire netting was too expensive. Night shooting could only be effective if done continuously, but as one farmer admitted: "To work all day and shoot one's lands at night is too big a strain on one."<sup>34</sup> It was of very little use once a few had been shot: they became "too wary." Pumping down arsenic fumes was useless; they closely sealed their burrows.<sup>35</sup> The wariness of springhares to night shooting forced farmers to ask around—among friends and acquaintances with similar experiences—and were told to gas the burrows with Capex Mole and Vermin Fumigators. One hill had an entire colony of over eighty burrows, but the poison wiped them out. The manufacturers said that the cartridges also killed white ants, snakes, jackals and so on.<sup>36</sup> They were designed specifically for eradicating "burrowing pests" like jackals, moles, rabbits, rats, snakes, and ants. The cartridges were ignited with a match or safety fuse and as they burned furiously they emitted poisonous fumes. They achieved the best results when hurled in this incandescent state into the hole housing the pest, and closing them up with clay or earth for maximum effect.<sup>37</sup>

In 1933, the Chief Chemist suggested that the best method for eradicating springhares was to use calcium cyanide (flakes or dust) which gave off hydrocyanic acid gas when acted upon by the moisture in the air or soil. All that one needed to do was to gas the burrows and seal the potential exits; the animal would succumb to suffocation

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<sup>33</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 A.D. Husband, Chief Chemist Agricultural Salisbury, to The Secretary, Department of Agriculture, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 17: "Poisoning of Lions and Jackals."

<sup>34</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 W.H. Lane, Shurborne Farm, West Nicholson, to The Department of Agriculture Salisbury, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1928.

<sup>35</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 J.H. Finch, to The Chief Agriculturalist, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1929.

<sup>36</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 W. Foulham, Lonsdale Halt Matopos, to Major H.G. Mundy, 30.3.28; NAZ S1193/W2/1 J.H. Finch, to The Chief Agriculturalist, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1929.

<sup>37</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Advert: "Capex Mole and Vermin Fumigators."

before it could get out. The calcium cyanide was very poisonous, but its residue is harmless. The Chief Chemist caution users to at all times avoid inhalation and poison themselves, and insisted that “*the work should not be left entirely to natives.*”<sup>38</sup> (my own emphasis) Poison gas worked well if the springhares were in colonies; all it took was to fumigate the burrows. Outside the burrows, however, results were poor.<sup>39</sup>

**Fences Make Good Neighbors?** Mwenezi Ranch was the largest surveyed ranch in the world. In 1929 FMD broke out on the ranch and subsequently in the 1930s. Materially, the pathogen is highly portable and highly mobile from body to body through the medium of fluid secretions like saliva, semen, urine, vesicular fluid, and milk. Although it is not a threat to human health, people in contact with the strain can readily spread it to animals through clothing, footwear, and breathing. Wild animals are its primary reservoir.<sup>40</sup>

The July 1934 outbreak at Mwenezi Ranch was especially virulent. Chief Veterinary Surgeon G.C. Hooper Sharpe immediately threw a cordon around “a rough triangle” along the Runde and Mwenezi Rivers and the Victoria-Beitbridge road.” By then 150 oxen and 50 cows moved from Mwenezi Ranch had infected a herd of 700 seven miles east of the Selous Road-Msano River junction south-east of West Nicholson. Sharpe ordered them to be slaughtered immediately. Since the ranch was close to South African and Portuguese territory, the two governments were promptly informed.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> NAZ 1089/24 Control of Spring Hares: Fragment of a Letter Written to R.J. Cloete, esq. P.O. Gresystone Shangani, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1934.

<sup>39</sup> NAZ S1193/W2/1 Chief Agriculturalist to J.H. Finch, esq., Igudu, Marandellas, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1929; NAZ S1193/W2/1 Chief Agriculturalist, Salisbury, to T.S. Scarlett, The Dovenby Estates Bulawayo, 21<sup>st</sup> December 1928: “Spring Hares.”

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/fmd/what.htm>

<sup>41</sup> “Outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease: Standstill Order Issues,” *African World* (21 July 1934): 22; “Outbreak of Cattle Disease: Union Quarantine Restriction,” *African World* (11 Aug 1934): 147;

Pretoria imposed quarantine restrictions on the whole of Southern Rhodesia, and deployed a “Police Reserve recruited for the purpose” to patrol the border cordon.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, Rhodesia created a patrolable cattle-free zone to prevent Chitsa, Mahenye and Ngwenyenye from removing their cattle into Massangena (Mozambique) to avoid compulsory dipping taxes. To detect such “illegal” movements, the Portuguese Police usually drove herds away from the border to Massangena, keeping the area clear. However the Portuguese had started to allow these cattle to graze in winter on the Save’s western banks again. The veterinary risk when Mozambican and Rhodesian herds got mixed up was obvious.<sup>43</sup>

If Agriculture did not quarantine cattle in Mahenye’s Native Reserve, it was feared the beasts would bring new FMD strains, spreading them into ranches and African reserves south of the Runde River. In April 1934, Mahenye’s 944 head of cattle were forcibly driven to a point on the Save River opposite Ndanga East Reserve. By September, the Save-Runde and parts of Matibi II were carved into a cattle-free belt, all beasts having been moved south of the Mwenezi River. However, after keeping Mahenye’s herd under surveillance for six months, in December 147 were discovered missing. Police confirmed Mahenye’s people had illegally moved them over the border into Mozambique. Agriculture banished the absentees from returning as they had possibly mixed up with Portuguese cattle on the border and contracted disease. As it turned out, on

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<sup>42</sup> “Combating Foot and Mouth Disease: Drastic Slaughter Policy Adopted,” *African World* (18 Aug 1934): 181.

<sup>42</sup> “Foot and Mouth Position,” *African World* (27 Oct 1934): 60; “Outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease: Standstill Order Issues,” *African World* (21 July 1934): 22; “Outbreak of Cattle Disease: Union Quarantine Restriction,” *African World* (11 Aug 1934): 147; “Combating Foot and Mouth Disease: Drastic Slaughter Policy Adopted,” *African World* (18 Aug 1934): 181.

<sup>43</sup> NAZ S1193/D4/21 Foot and Mouth Disease: Weekly and Monthly Reports on Outbreak from the Chief Veterinary Surgeon—Outbreak at Mwenezi Ranch 1931-2; S1193/D4/24 Foot and Mouth Disease—Alleged Outbreak in Northern Transvaal 1932; S1194/SC42/181/35 Foot and Mouth Disease—Prohibition on Hunting Game: Limpopo Border 1931-5.

14 December 1934, FMD was diagnosed in Ndanga Reserve and Ndanga East, right on the Save River. The Portuguese denied their territory was the source; Rhodesia's top vet insisted the strain had crossed the border from there.<sup>44</sup>

In January 1935, nine months after the outbreak, no efficient patrols to monitor cattle movement were yet in place. Only in March did the Chief Veterinary Surgeon propose a veterinary border fence stretching from Beacon 100 to Chivirira Falls on the Save and dry-season patrols and "native posts" at Mahenye to check wet-season cross-border cattle movement. As and when Mahenye's cattle returned they would be branded. Any cattle found unbranded were to be shot. The Portuguese would be asked to remove their cattle from the border as they had done in 1925. Until all this was done, Mahenye's cattle would remain in quarantine.<sup>45</sup> The government's expectations that Chiefs Mahenye and Mapunga would monitor this fence proved to be misplaced. As the Vets lamented in December 1936, the fence was "now run down due to flooding and ... useless in its present position." Three miles of the fence needed to be moved to higher ground, costing more money. After repairs, patrols reported many derelict stretches, fresh repairs having to wait for winter. In any case, the wire made good game snares.<sup>46</sup>

The FMD outbreak and cattle movement cast the African as a huge impediment to veterinary disease control. The veterinary department was convinced that fences and patrols were the way to go, only if Africans were first relocated or pacified. Only then could the fence become a physical barrier to a continuous game corridor with

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<sup>44</sup> NAZ S2376/S58779/49 African Coast Fever: Fencing of Portuguese Border on Save River 1935-42: Chief Veterinary Officer to Secretary Agriculture, 7 Oct 1935.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> NAZ S2376/S58779/49 Chief Veterinary Surgeon to Accountant Agriculture, 4 Dec 1936; W.J. Nixon, Acting District Veterinary Surgeon to Chief Veterinary Surgeon, 30 Jan 1937; Accountant Agriculture to Chief Engineer Roads, 30 Jan 1936.

Mozambique. The government's 300-mile fence, started in 1937, was complete by March 1939. It stretched 150 miles from the Mozambique border to Fort Victoria, turning south to the Limpopo River; 140 African constables patrolled it to ensure no cattle broke through, while the beasts in prohibited areas were examined every fortnight.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1940s-50s, no less than a dozen FMD outbreaks hit areas contiguous to Gonarezhou. Five of them happened during Allan Wright's tenure as District Commissioner and he cooperated fully with the Veterinary Department to enforce quarantine orders were respected. However, there remained a tension with respect to the sources of infection. The vets said game; Wright defended the game and pointed to cattle as the source of transmission. He felt that the vets were too quick to "blame the game."<sup>48</sup>

The Malipati FMD outbreaks emanated from the introduction of infected cattle from Mozambique, not game movement. The arbitrary international boundary "cut the Shangane tribe in two... and the people affected certainly recognize(d) it only as an impediment to normal marriage and other transactions." Animal health inspectors did not issue permits for *lobolo* (bride-wealth) cattle being brought into Rhodesia, so they were illegally driven across at night. The new owners had little difficulty registering them on Rhodesian stock cards: "a small bribe and any dipping tank attendant would agree to enter them as 'births' and normally nobody bothered to check the ages of stock when bodies were all that counted."<sup>49</sup> The 'Portuguese Africans' crossed the border to sell their cattle because the government buyers there exploited them. The "good, fat ox" that might fetch R\$100 could earn just R\$20 just meters across the border! So owners "slipped a few

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<sup>47</sup> "A 300-Mile Cattle Cordon: Control of Foot and Mouth Disease," *African World* (8 Apr 1939): 19.

<sup>48</sup> Allan Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*: 252.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*: 256.

head across the boundary line on sale days.” These cattle were never dipped or kept under any veterinary control, even if some came from FMD country.<sup>50</sup>

To combat FMD-causing “migrations,” the Vet Department contracted a Beitbridge farmer to construct a 10-strand, 7 ft. high steel wired game fence along the whole 130-mile border from Pafuri to the Runde, and deployed patrols for good measure. Very well, said the villagers. They simply drove them along the game fence to the last pole at Pafuri, then turned into Sengwe. The department extended the fence right across the dry riverbed. Whenever floods came in summer, the poles were swept away, but meanwhile the South African authorities committed themselves to make sure that no cattle were driven across via their territory into Rhodesia. The ‘Portuguese Africans’ simply *lifted the bottom strands of the border* where they crossed a stream and got their stock in just in time for the cattle sale at Sengwe. The fence worked as long as the guards were constantly on patrol; at any rate they were relatives.<sup>51</sup>

### **Formalizing Pesticide R & D**

***Research Branch and Aerial Technologies.*** In 1963, a new Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (hereafter DNPWLM or Parks) was created under the Agriculture Ministry. The Government now decided to establish a separate Research Branch, “a professional body to advise on the proper application of scientific findings in the field of wild life conservation and utilizations.” Its functions were, among others, to provide special knowledge and data required for the conservation and utilization of wild

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid:* 256-7.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid:* 258.

life in Rhodesia.<sup>52</sup> Barely a year on, the Branch's biological and extension services unit—with an all-white establishment of 11 'professional officers' and 6 'technical officers'—had become such an essential national service that it was expanded to many field stations. Because its importance was far bigger than its utterly insufficient white manpower, it engaged African staff "in collecting basic field data and scientific samples." At that point it had four field stations: Kyle Dam Fish Research Station; Sengwa Research Station; Bulawayo Research Station; and Manyoli Eland Research Station.<sup>53</sup>

There were two main extension services that the researchers developed that are critical to our discussion: aerial surveys and poison(ing). From 1964, demand for wild life surveys increased exponentially "with the move from pure conservative preservation to active wild life management and to commercial utilization of the wild life resource."<sup>54</sup> The wild life survey also had "to establish, on a scientific basis, carrying capacities, population productivity and ecological trends under given local conditions," to measure "biological changes over long periods."<sup>54</sup>

Whereas in the 1950s such survey work had involved ground traversal, from the mid-1960s it went airborne. Aerial photographic surveys became the best way to determine the location and density of hippopotamus populations, particularly along the five big rivers of the lowveld—the Save, Runde, Mwenezi, Mkwashine, and Mutirikwi—in 1967. A "biological reconnaissance" followed in the Buffalo Bend area and part of the Gonarezhou targeting elephant and buffalo populations.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1964: Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Board for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1964: 26-7.

<sup>53</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1965: 30.

<sup>54</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1964: 28.

<sup>55</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Report 1967: 33.

In November 1969, Chipinda Pools Research Station was established with the specific mission of conducting “general surveys and a vegetation study,” especially the major vegetation types in border regions.<sup>56</sup> In 1970, researchers at the station spent the year collecting data on the major tree, shrub, grass and herb species. They drew a map of the broad vegetation types of the area, and made a transparent slide for printing purposes. The research concentrated on areas of vegetation “in the process of degradation by elephant.” A 50-meter square “exclosure”—fencing with emphasis on shutting out the pest (elephant destroying trees) rather than keeping them in—was constructed at Mupfichani, “primarily to protect the vegetation within from elephant damage.” And yet:

A good series of fixed photo points was established, covering artificial water points and most of the representative vegetation types, some in the Gonarezhou Game Reserve and some in the Mabalauta area. Comparisons between recent photos and photos taken three to four years ago showed considerable degradation in alluvial woodland at Buffalo Bend. Records of distribution, movement, feeding and population numbers and densities of elephant were made.<sup>57</sup>

The project also collected a total of 412 plant specimens for identification as well as records of feeding, distribution, habits, and mobilities.

In 1970, an “aerial photo stereo-interpretation course” was held at Wankie Game Reserve. All available wildlife research officers attended and “gained much useful training on vegetation and trend assessment.” Increasingly, aerial photos took over from foot or drive-about surveys in determining vegetation patterns. This new technology was especially valuable in areas such as Wankie “which suffered over-utilization by wildlife and damage by fire.”<sup>58</sup> The following year, the DNPWLM undertook aerial counts of elephants designed “to provide a minimal population size and an index to changing trends

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<sup>56</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1969: 23.

<sup>57</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1970: 25.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*: 24.

in numbers.” The Police Reserve Air Wing supplied spotter aircraft, pilots, and information liaison for this exercise.<sup>59</sup> It was also in this year that a technique for radio-tagging animals in order to follow their movements was developed that would be “applicable with other species” in Rhodesia.<sup>60</sup>

Coming at a time when Rhodesia was fighting African nationalist insurgents, Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith’s official opening of the new laboratory complex at Sengwa in the Chirisa Game Reserve becomes curious. The Director of National Parks did not mask the importance of security in this scientific project:

This is a joint project with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and is to be known as the ‘Hostes Nicolle Institute of Wildlife Research’, in recognition of all that Mr. Nicolle did while Secretary of that Ministry, for Wildlife in general and this project, with its 3 885 km<sup>2</sup> exclusive research area, in particular.<sup>61</sup>

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, formerly the Native Affairs Department, was in charge of African administration in the “Tribal Trust Lands” (TTLs, formerly native reserves).

As we have seen in Chapter 4, from the beginning of Rhodesia, Native Commissioners (now District Commissioners) were first and foremost security officers. More so in the 1960s when a “ground coverage intelligence gathering taskforce” was set up in every district of the country in response to the rising African nationalist-led militancy. The intelligence gained was then filtered via the BSAP to central government. To ease the chain of command, Civil Defense Committees (CDCs)—comprising local farmers union branches—were established. As the guerrillas infiltrated into these areas, these CDCs assumed the role of coordinating “protective works” around isolated white farms. So we can see the intermediate role of Internal Affairs and Department of National Parks and

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<sup>59</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1971: 18-9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*: 25.

<sup>61</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1972: 9.

Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) in human-animal pest control R&D developed at the research stations and tested for efficacy on wild animals. With the police, the two bodies established the “Agric-Alert” radio security scheme in the farmer-organized Intensive Conservation Areas (ICAs) near game reserves.<sup>62</sup>

The institute had completed research into radio-tagging and was going into the development phase of radio-tracking equipment was “successful” for warthog and kudu, and partially for elephant. Each of the animals was fitted with radio transmitters, and yielded “valuable data when tracked.”<sup>63</sup> By 1972, the remit of aerial survey had extended to darting animals for laboratory experiment or ‘capture-and-release’. It worked this way: One team went airborne in helicopters, from where it pursued the herds on the ground as well as directed a vehicle-borne team. The airborne team would locate a spot accessible by road, with a good strip for landing and take-off, before swooping low and darting the selected target. A front-end loader had to be used to scoop up the drugged animals from amongst the herd and before they drowned under the influence of the immobilizing drugs.<sup>64</sup> We will see shortly Rhodesia’s military application of these tactics against ZANLA guerrillas.

***The Vermin Control Unit and Poisons.*** Meanwhile, developments in the area of poisons were also yielding important multi-purpose applications. In 1964, DNPWLM established a “Vermin Control Unit” (VCU) to carry out experiments on captured baboons treated in cages with two poisons: sodium-mono-fluoroacetate (compound 1080) and thallium sulfate. It was decided that thallium sulfate was the most suitable poison to use.

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<sup>62</sup> “The Ministry of Internal Affairs,” <http://www.rhodesianforces.org/InternalAffairs.htm>

<sup>63</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1972: 9.

<sup>64</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1973: 13.

Immediately after its establishment, the VCU—which had one DNPWLM and one Internal Affairs unit—sent some members to South Africa’s Predator Control Research Farm for specialized training in the use of thallium sulfate and cyanide pellets ('coyote-getters') for hyena and jackal control.<sup>65</sup>

Thallium warfare against baboons initially targeted the Native Purchase Areas (NPA), beginning with the Zviyambe Division of Wedza, where the primates ‘patrolled’ in droves. The poison did not take effect immediately and the baboons died 3-5 days after taking poison, such that it was difficult to find carcasses. However, of the 1,968 baits laid, an estimated 1,000 baboons died, constituting a ‘kill rate’ of 50%. The demand for the service led to the increase of the VCUs from 3 to 5, two of them for Internal Affairs.<sup>66</sup>

The toxicity of compound 1080 and thallium sulfate for baboon was tested on captive specimens and in a field trial at Victoria Falls. Compound 1080 was found to be much less toxic to baboons than rodents. The primates were willing to take thallium sulfate in bulk (when “as little as 10 mg/kg bodyweight was sufficient to kill”) because it was completely odorless and tasteless in nature. Its extreme insolubility meant that 2-3 days elapsed before animals fell sick. By then, the primates would have repeatedly ingested non-toxic doses that, as they accumulated in the organism, rose “above lethal level. Death occurs after three to five days.”<sup>67</sup>

In 1965, the five vermin units were deployed in Zviyambe, Makoni, Nyazvidzi and Wiltshire African Purchase Areas (formerly NPAs), surrounding TTLs, and European Areas along the Salisbury-Umtali road. Large numbers of baboons were destroyed and there was a marked reduction in certain areas. But they were not cleared.

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<sup>65</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1964: 27.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*: 27.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*: 28.

The baboons were *reluctant to take baits, as they were able to associate the bait with the poison*. Bait was a problem in the dry months between June and November when only pumpkins were available, but in the summer months of December-May greens, including maize (corn) were plenty. In the course of destroying baboons, the thallium baits also proved useful against monkeys, springhares, hyena, hippo, crocodiles, and predators.<sup>68</sup>

By 1966, VCUs were operating in Wedza, Zviyambe, Svosve, Wiltshire, Marandellas, Bromley, Inyazura, Macheke, Shangure, Mtoko, Mushawasha, right up to Melsetter. While the VCUs were busy waging chemical warfare against baboons, rabies outbreaks hit Macheke and Marandellas. District Commissioners, farmers, and police joined the VCUs to fight the terror—the DCs and police to get Africans to take their dogs, kicking and screaming, for vaccination, the farmers enlisting farm-workers to hunt down and set thallium sulfate baits against the rabies vectors. Over 530 jackals were destroyed.<sup>69</sup>

The units never deviated from their major preoccupation: baboon control in the NPAs. One unit was detached for surveying and aerial spraying quelea birds in May-October, to save small grain crops under irrigation. It was in 1969 that all units were equipped and trained in the use of ground-spraying apparatuses. Selected white farmers in intensive conservation areas were trained under the “Self-Help” scheme established in conjunction with the Natural Resources Board.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1965: 10.

<sup>69</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1966: 13-5.

<sup>70</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1969: 15; for similar aerial DDT and dieldrin spraying operations in Zululand, South Africa, see Bernard Smit (Entomologist), “Effects of Aerial Spraying on Insect Populations in Zululand,” *African Wild Life* 13, 3 (September 1959): 229-34.

Meanwhile, the VCU deployed their newly acquired spraying expertise in combat against quelea birds devastating winter wheat crops. Farmers anticipated heavy losses of small grains. The VCU launched a scheme to demonstrate the use of ground spraying equipment in intensive conservation areas and groups of farmers were encouraged to

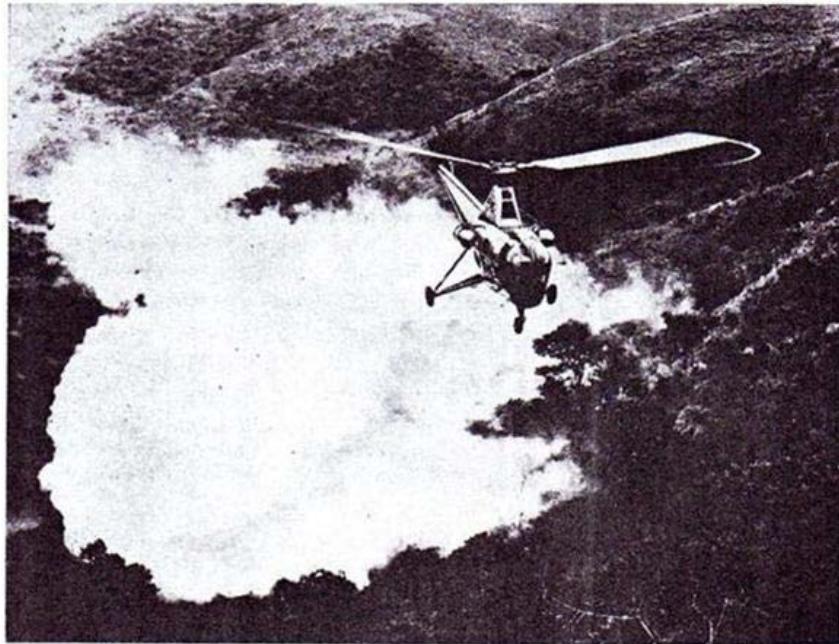


Fig. 14 Spraying Pests

Source: Zumpt, "Will Game Slaughter Start Again in Southern Rhodesia?": 126.

purchase the equipment for killing quelea on their farms.<sup>71</sup> Financial assistance was given towards the cost of a poison called queleatox. Also known as Fenthion, queleatox was not just highly toxic to birds but nearly every other living organism. It killed through skin absorption, causing severe respiratory damage and then death.<sup>72</sup> Aerial queleatox spraying commenced in July and lasted until October 1969 when early rains dispersed the quelea concentrations. In total, 13 sites were sprayed covering an area of 169 acres. Estimates showed a kill rate of 60-95%, or 93 million birds destroyed in total. The VCU kept close contact with the Quelea Subcommittee of the Southern African Regional

<sup>71</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1969: 15.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Commission for the Conservation and Utilization of the Soil (SARCCUS) and regular reports were submitted to its headquarters in Pretoria, South Africa.<sup>73</sup>

The aerial R&D we saw earlier being deployed to dart and count elephant worked well for spraying queleas. Here is how they did it. The pilot waited until darkness set in, when the queleas were brooding, then set out ordinary paraffin storm lanterns at specific intervals demarcating the airfield runway. These pickets enabled the pilot to take-off and land safely. Prior to take-off the ground team reconnoitered the quelea brooding site and “attached two lanterns to long poles which, in turn, would have been tied to the top branches of trees at each end of the doomed colony.” The pilot took off, his tanks packed with queleatox. He then lined up the plane’s nose on the two lanterns before homing in at tree top level and releasing a fine spray of poison “at just the right moment to ensure that the tiny particles of moisture enveloped the whole nesting area.” If required, the ground team supervisor would give the pilot instructions on a small radio for two or more runs to effect “a maximum kill.” The birds absorbed the “contact poison” through the skin into their bodies and died “almost completely painlessly.” Provided the spray was on target, several million queleas would be found dead the next morning, “their bodies carpeting the ground under the trees to a depth of several inches.”<sup>74</sup>

In 1970, both VCU units operating in Mashonaland instructed the Intensive Conservation Area “self-help units” on the use of telodrex, a substance which worked just like queleatox. By the end of the year a total of 34 self-help units had been formed.<sup>75</sup> One

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*: 16.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*: 306-7.

<sup>75</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1970: 18.

of the VCUs was summoned down to the southeastern lowveld early in 1970 after reports of quelea concentrations gathering on the fringes of irrigated wheat.<sup>76</sup>

In 1973, the DNPWLM's VCU (now renamed Problem Animal Control Units, or PACU) teams continued to “operate effectively” in African Purchase Areas (APAs, formerly Native Purchase Areas) while also training “self-help units” for ICAs. In the south of Matabeleland PACU destroyed an estimated 1,400 jackals to thwart “a serious rabies outbreak.” But the Department was unhappy with “both the desirability and effectiveness of this type of exercise, especially as it [was] difficult to avoid poisoning a number of other small predators like civets and genets.”<sup>77</sup> As the Director put it, “There would appear to be a need for further careful investigation of the epidemiology of this most unpleasant disease and the possible ecological factors influencing outbreaks.”<sup>78</sup>

What the Director *perhaps* did not know was that methods of poisoning and poisons like Thallium and cyanide pellets would, from 1974, become lethal weapons against the pest deadliest to Rhodesian state power—the African nationalist guerrilla.

### **Magandanga: A New Pest**

What made the African nationalist guerrilla a pest in the eyes of the state was not just the behavior of these insurgents but also the instruments the state used to control or eradicate them. As I showed in the opening citation to this chapter, there was slippage in public discourse between the terror of insects and animals ‘armed’ with deadly germs, on one hand, and that of human enemies of the state armed with AK-47 rifles, on the other. Both had one thing in common: they were purveyors of death. This conflation of human and

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<sup>76</sup> NAZ *Ibid.*: 19.

<sup>77</sup> NAZ SRG/3 Report of the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management Rhodesia 1973: 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

nonhuman terrorists automatically re-defined the “soldiers” required to defend the state and reconfigured who could be called a combatant and a Rhodesian patriot. In other words, medical doctors immunized children against measles, the vets inoculated, while the Rhodesian army was busy vaccinating the countryside against communist terrorism.<sup>79</sup>

How did the state exactly *vaccinate* the countryside against terrorism? Here I will start from an example that effectively connects state policy towards ‘problem animals’ of both the human and nonhuman varieties. Writing in his memoir, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, Joshua Nkomo—former leader of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), noted in 1984.

I am told that the idea of hiding prisoners away in the game reserves came from Sir Godfrey Huggins, the long-serving prime minister of Southern Rhodesia who later became Lord Malvern.... He once met Dr. Salazar, the old Portuguese dictator, and began to explain his country’s native policy. Salazar was not much interested. Portugal, he said, did not have a native policy; the natives were just there, part of the African fauna like the elephants. Portugal did not have an elephant policy, so he did not see why it should have a native policy. Huggins answered that the British colonies did have an elephant policy, where they were herded into reserves for their own safety, and its policy for natives was much the same.... So here the four of us were, the first natives to be hidden away in the elephant reserve.<sup>80</sup>

On 16 April 1964, along with three colleagues, Nkomo had been arrested in a pre-dawn raid and flown to Gonakudzingwa following a crackdown on the nationalist movement under the draconian Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA). Gonakudzingwa was one of several “restriction camps” out in the jungle to which African nationalists were removed, including Sengwe, Marandellas, Nkai, Conemmara, Wha Wha, Chikurubi, and Gokwe to “cool off.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Rhodesian Commentary, Nov. 1975: 2.

<sup>80</sup> Joshua Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984): 121.

<sup>81</sup> Zimbabwe African People’s Union, *Zimbabwe: History of a Struggle* Second Edition, (Cairo: The Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, March 1972).

What was supposed to be a place of restriction became one of subversion. Restriction was not detention or imprisonment, where the inmate was locked up or in leg chains or handcuffs. Nkomo and his peers were restricted to the whole of Sengwe TTL and other adjacent parts of Nuanetsi and Ndanga Districts. They had the right to hold political rallies not only within the TTL but also in the actual restriction camp at Gonakudzingwa. However, after the tensions escalated to the point of insurrection in 1965, all these rights were withdrawn and the restriction camp became a full-time prison. That is how it stayed until late 1975—as a prison deep inside a game sanctuary—when the state *translocated* the inmates to prisons in the Rhodesian hinterland.

Earlier in the year, a coup had taken place in Lisbon which had forced the Portuguese to withdraw haphazardly from Mozambique in the face of an onslaught from FRELIMO, the ally of ZANLA. The new communist regime of Samora Machel immediately declared the intentions of an independent Mozambique: “It is a fact that we have borders with South Africa. As for Rhodesia, we will be engaged in the combat.”<sup>82</sup> Six months later he opened up the entire border with Rhodesia for ZANLA operations, enabling ZANLA to establish ‘rear operational bases’ just across the border from the Zambezi to Limpopo.<sup>83</sup>

Just as in the case of tsetse fly, the fact that the arbitrary Rhodesia-Mozambique border had been inserted in ways cutting against the grain of human, animal and plant ecologies automatically rendered inevitable insurgencies against it. It also facilitated such human and nonhuman insurgencies. The straight-line border cut through thick vegetation,

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<sup>82</sup> *Facts and Reports* 5<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 13/14, July 14, 1975: 1403. “Machel’s Rhodesia Pledge,” Times of Zambia, June 21, ‘75.

<sup>83</sup> *Facts and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 23, Nov 17, 1976: 2126. “Mozambique Reports on the Fighting,” Radio Reports, Maputo in Portuguese, 0800 GMT, 3 Nov, ‘76.

thereby automatically providing cover for the insurgents crossing it. It cut across Shangane kinship ties, such that all ZANLA needed to do was subvert relatives on the Mozambican side, who in turn communicated its good intentions to their folks on the other side. In any case, many ‘Rhodesian African’ had escaped the curfews, torture, and other forms of repression to live with their ‘Portuguese African’ relatives. In addition, the border sliced across centuries-old trade routes to the Indian Ocean leading straight into the villages of Sengwe, Chikombedzi, Chitsa and Mahenye. There could be no better infiltration routes than that.<sup>84</sup>

When ZANLA guerrillas arrived, they found Chitsa’s people still bitter about their removal from Gonarezhou. They promised to return it to them when the country was free, if the villagers could back them. But the commanders realized quickly that the matter was more complex. If Gonarezhou was returned, who exactly would receive it given that the Shona had been here before Chitsa’s Hlengwe people even thought about migrating to settle there? The issue became divisive and threatened to torpedo guerrilla-villager relations: the guerrillas banned any further discussion. When the local inhabitants protested, the insurgent who had come as a ‘freedom fighter’ turned violent.<sup>85</sup>

To try and press the case was tantamount to attracting a suicidal label: *mutengesi* (sellout). At the top of the list of ‘sellout’ (*mutengesi*) were the chiefs, who in the guerrilla’s communist understanding of social hierarchy were *feudal lords* oppressing the *peasants* with the full backing of the *imperialist state*. It led some chiefs to characterize the insurgency as “a grass fire [which] everyone should rally round to extinguish.”<sup>86</sup> In

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<sup>84</sup> David Moore, *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place, and Power in Zimbabwe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*: 51.

<sup>86</sup> *Rhodesian Commentary*, Nov. 1975: 2

the eyes of the state, *hugandanga* (terrorism) ran contrary to the spirit of racial “partnership” the chiefs endorsed as “the representatives of the true views of the African people.” The guerrillas dismissed these ‘puppet chiefs’ as sellouts; the will of the African people could only be expressed through the barrel of the gun.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, ZANLA tended to bypass the chiefs when making first contact with villagers.

The first guerrillas arrived in Gonarezhou in January 1976 armed with the AK-47. The state called them *magandanga* (terrorists); everybody who saw these men was required to immediately report to the police because they were a danger not only to the state but citizens both black and white. So when villagers saw these strange-looking young men, they concluded they had to be *magandanga*. They appeared friendly but serious: their ‘request’ for every villager to attend the night *pungwe* (all-night meeting) was more an order than a request. That was the story of *magandanga* everywhere. Locals here had also gone to Gonakudzingwa to get party cards from Nkomo, so they also knew what the AK-47 rifles were for—who they were against! Hence the state pronounced their intended consequences with finality: *hugandanga*.

The *gandanga* (singular) was a merchant of death: to hammer this message home, the state adroitly deployed statistics of black civilian casualties.<sup>88</sup> A terrorist was not a guerrilla. The latter was “a soldier, one of a small band, a sort of advance party, who seek out to attack supplies and disrupt lines of communication while avoiding direct confrontation with the main forces.” By contrast, a terrorist used “subjugation as his main weapon, to strike fear into the minds of innocent people and (if intimidation fails) by

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<sup>87</sup> *Focus on Rhodesia*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 1976. For an interpretation that influenced my interpretation of such contestations, see John Lonsdale, “Some Origins of Nationalism in East Africa,” *Journal of African History* 9, 1 (1968).

<sup>88</sup> *Facts and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 23, Nov 17, 1976: 2125. “Rhodesians Fight in Mozambique,” *The Times* (Br), Nov 2, '76.

burning his crops, killing his livestock, raping, torturing, looting and, finally, killing.” As depicted in state propaganda, ZIPRA and ZANLA were no more than “organized gangs of foreign-trained thugs, masterminded by leaders of sparring factions fighting for control.”<sup>89</sup>

*Hugandanga* was a paradox: in the eyes of ZANLA, liberation could only come through striking terror in the state and white minority who enjoyed unfair race-based privileges. According to the state, liberation was a cover for terrorism. This observation from Catholic missionary in 1978 suggests that guerrillas were not monolithic:

First, the true guerrillas, numbering about 5,000, who maintain lines of communication back to their bases; second, groups of three or four guerrillas who, though still combatant, are under stress, having lost contact with their network. The third category are the “wild” guerrillas, even deserters, whose nerve has gone after spending too long alone in the bush.

Finally there are the bandit guerrillas, who live like highwaymen.<sup>90</sup>

The state’s designation of “terrorism” drew its salience from the targets of the guerrilla attacks. Besides attacking the spaces of the state, the guerrillas targeted “white farms,” whom the state saw as “innocent women and children” when, in fact, the farm had long become a self-contained, family garrison.<sup>91</sup> Of course, it would have been understandable if the terrorists killed whites; but they were also *murdering* even their own people using dastardly methods too.<sup>92</sup> The state, missionaries, and journalists said the atrocities were terrorist acts; ZANLA and ZIPRA blamed the Selous Scouts.

These are the sort of *magandanga* that arrived to open a new front through Gonarezhou in early 1976. Their strategy was clearly to stretch the RSF’s military

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<sup>89</sup> “A Terrorist is not a Guerilla,” a Letter from R. Tregenza, of Sheffield, in the *Morning Telegraph*, England, *Rhodesian Commentary*, Dec 1975: 8.

<sup>90</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 4, February 22, 1978: 269. “Secret Malta Papers Sent to Rhodesia,” *Sunday Times* (Br), Feb 5, ‘78.

<sup>91</sup> Alexandra Fuller, *Scribbling the Cat: Travels with an African Soldier* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

<sup>92</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 10, May 19, 1978. 916. *New York Times* (US), April 26, ‘78.

resources through extending the frontage and fighting from within the deep summer vegetational cover.<sup>93</sup> They were to move stealthily through the national park to reach the villages, whereupon there was absolutely no way the RSF could tell who was civilian and who was *gandanga*, since the guerrilla wore civilian clothes. So besides the question “Who was a combatant?” *magandanga*’s strategy also raised another: ‘What was a camouflage?’<sup>94</sup>

As I see it, the fact that *magandanga* were ‘invading’ Rhodesia from Mozambique resembles the actions of one other pest that the state had just tamed: the tsetse fly. Like this insect, the *gandanga* was a returning resident and both were coming from across the border. Some of the guerrillas were locals like Vhumbululu who had crossed through Gonarezhou into Mozambique and were now simply coming back to reclaim their ancestral lands. Like trypanosomiasis (*nagana*), *hugandanga* was an outcome of the state’s intrusion in local people’s relationship to the land. Both were merely chickens coming home to roost: the straight-line border that the BSA Company and the Portuguese had drawn in the 1890s as a mark of their sovereignty was now in serious contention. Just as with the tsetse fly, locals found it beneficial to ally with *magandanga* as a way to challenge the state.<sup>95</sup>

Upon reaching the villages, *magandanga* moved quickly to establish village networks of militias for gathering and disseminating information and organizing local

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<sup>93</sup> *Fact and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 9, May 5, 1976: 973. (Fragment), *The Guardian* (Br), Apr 12, '76.

<sup>94</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 1, Jan 12, 1977: 26. Michael Knipe, Salisbury, Dec 15, “Black Clergyman and His Wife ‘Shot Dead by Troops’ in Rhodesia,” *The Times* (Br), Dec 19, '76.

<sup>95</sup> *Facts and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 23, Nov 17, 1976: 2125. “Rhodesians Fight in Mozambique,” *The Times* (Br), Nov 2, '76.

support and logistics. A *mujibha* (as the village-based militia were called) might also be trained to use a rifle or be simply handed one to fire.<sup>96</sup>

In the end *magandanga*'s mission was to liberate the country from Rhodesian white minority rule through *combat*. Besides the more obvious battle with the AK-47 and other support instruments, combat was primarily a clash of two systems, with one trying to undermine and replace the other. In the areas around Gonarezhou, this broader combat assumed the form of disrupting the African education system through abducting teachers and schoolchildren, forcing schools to close, burning schools down, and holding all-night rallies.<sup>97</sup> It also involved disrupting tourism not just in Gonarezhou, but throughout the country to cripple the economy.<sup>98</sup> While the tactics were to hit key economic infrastructure, the broader strategy was partly to dampen Rhodesia morale, thereby triggering mass emigration instead of immigration. The public panic forced the army to caution in July 1977 that "the most important battle the terrorists could win would be if they broke Rhodesia's will to resist or attack."<sup>99</sup>

By Christmas 1976, the guerrillas "had virtually disrupted civil administration." ZANLA targeted rural district councils, land extension services, schools, and health installations; they had destroyed the dipping of cattle in order to spread veterinary disease and destroy white commercial beef and dairy farming. Because locals were fully in support of the guerrilla incursions, the RSF conceded: "we were reacting to incidents rather than initiating our own action." Next the guerrillas moved onto the white-owned

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> "Terrorists Bent on wrecking African Education," *Focus on Rhodesia*, Vol. 2, No. 9, November 1977: 4-5.

<sup>98</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 15/6, August 10, 1977: 1469. "Guerrillas Hit Casino Hotel in Rhodesia," *International Herald Tribune*, July 2/3, '77.

<sup>99</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 15/6, August 10, 1977: 14470. "4559 Men Quit Rhodesia," *The Star Weekly* (SA), July 2, '77.

tea estates in the northern end of the valley, completely disrupting operations. “They began to establish their own administration, operating ‘clinics’ in the bush and opening Marxist indoctrination centres which they called ‘schools’.”<sup>100</sup>

Once the fish began to swim in water, they contaminated the countryside. Road that had been safe to drive on during night and day were mined. Even convoys came under attack. The highly “irregular” mobility of the guerrilla confused the RSF and the European public. *Magandanga* forbade villagers from paying fees, taxes, and other forms of acknowledgment of state authority over them.<sup>101</sup> They struck clinics for medical supplies, ‘visited’ African stores for supplies, and schools for recruits. By July 1977, 300 primary and 9 secondary schools had closed countrywide, putting 1,200 teachers “out of work.”<sup>102</sup>

In a sense, seven decades of divide and rule had created two landscapes that framed the tactics of the *magandanga*. The native reserves—overcrowded, arid, and often infertile—had lost forest cover through overgrazing, deforestation, the clearing on new fields, and village creation. By contrast, the game reserves, farms, and gum-tree plantations had become ‘clothed with leaf’. It was no surprise that by mid-1978 these latter became the favored staging bases and armory sites for guerrillas.<sup>103</sup> The guerrilla was a pest that could move in and out of the African villages, European farms, and game reserves, indeed between Rhodesia and Mozambique at will, transgressing the veterinary

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<sup>100</sup> Harnish Peters (Outgoing District Commissioner for Honde Valley), “Terrorists on the Run in Honde Valley,” *Focus on Rhodesia* 2, 11 (November 1977): 8-9.

<sup>101</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 15, July 26, 1978. 1389. James Wilkie, “Rhodesian Internal Settlement in Parlous Condition: Vast Areas are Under Control of Guerrillas who Decide which Transport May Move,” *The Times* (Br), July 24, '78.

<sup>102</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 17/18, September 7, 1977: 1579, “Smith Regime Closes 309 Schools,” *Daily News* (Tanz), July 30, '77.

<sup>103</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 11, June 2, 1978. 1174. “Viability of Farming,” *Radio Reports*, Salisbury in English 1600 gmt 24 May '78.

boundaries the state insisted on. Stock and wire thefts increased in tandem; FMD, anthrax, and tick-borne diseases shot up.<sup>104</sup> *Magandanga* threatened to collapse the entire agriculture industry and, since most of Rhodesia's manufacturing industry was agro-based, the whole economy.<sup>105</sup>

As pestilence, *hugandanga* is not merely the use of terror to achieve freedom or the use of freedom as a mask for terrorist actions. It is also specific to the way this battle was fought at one specific site: the white-owned commercial farmstead. Pests of any kind, unless brought under control or eradicated, have an extraordinary power to overwhelm the landowner even to the extent of chasing him from the farm. At the very least they threaten the profitability of staying. At most they threaten not just the livelihood but the life of the landowner as well. *Magandanga* did both. Guerrillas thrived on water: the rains lashed the landscape into thick green cover around October-November. As the white farmers set about planting crops, the guerrillas struck, forcing many into flight. Over 200 farms had fallen vacant by September 1978. The overstretched army was urging the owners of the remaining 6,400 farms in 'hot' districts like Melsetter to "consolidate themselves into more easily defendable points." Of late the pest had changed tack: "no longer blasting the well-protected white farmsteads with bazookas and rifle fire in nighttime hit-and-run raids," but actually "driving off the farm labor"—and cattle. Without them there was no "farm"—just a piece of land.<sup>106</sup> Farm compounds became cesspools of subversion; the fish had found water even on the white farmland.

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<sup>104</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 13, June 30, 1978. 1214. "Increase in Cattle Disease," *Radio Reports*, Salisbury in English 1600 gmt 7 June '78.

<sup>105</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 14, July 14, 1978. 1333. *The Sunday Times* (Br), July 2, '78.

<sup>106</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 20, October 13, 1978. 1997. David Ottaway, "Planting threatened: White Rhodesia Farmers Face New Rebel Offensive," *International Herald Tribune*, Sept 29, '78.

Ultimately, the attacks on white farms were means to an end. The objective of *hugandanga* was not so much the destruction of material infrastructures like roads, shops, and schools themselves, but rather to send the message that nowhere and no-one was safe. Such attacks triggered the state into throwing *cordons sanitaires*, mounting roadblocks, searching vehicles, traveling in convoys, and guarding places and people. The more the white population panicked, the more it fled the countryside and concentrated in the towns. As the farms, schools and hospitals lay abandoned, *magandanga* took control, transforming the ‘capitalist’ structures into collectivized and communist-oriented centers designed to decolonize the mindset. As the productive sectors of the economy fell into enemy hands, the state became economically weaker and weaker. The battle of the gun became the battle of the economy. Waging war was an investment of money—to buy weapons, pay troops, repair damaged or destroyed infrastructure and invest in destroying it.<sup>107</sup>

## Pest Control

**Force Multiplication.** In 1974, the generals in the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) told Prime Minister Ian Smith what he was not prepared to hear: the war could not be won “by purely military means” and he must settle politically. The army was overstretched, the ‘terrorists’ literally ‘swarming’ everywhere across the northern borders. The villagers were supporting them; the RSF had lost the hearts and minds war. It was time to settle.

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<sup>107</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 17/18, September 7, 1977: 1588. “Bomb Breaks Windows in Rhodesian Capital,” *New York Times* (US), Aug 14, ‘77; *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 19, September 21, 1977: 1665. *Sunday Times of Zambia* Aug 21, ‘77; *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 20, October 5, 1977: 1774. “Health Services at Risk,” *Focus* (Br), Sept, ‘77; *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 22, Nov 2, 1977: 1963. *Zambia Daily Mail*, Oct 14, ‘77.

The prime minister was not taking that advice. His strategy was to fight the new pest as all others had been in Rhodesia's history: by whatever means. He turned to *force multipliers*—an assemblage of unorthodox instruments designed to counter ZANLA's irregular tactics. We have seen in preceding chapters the use of “reserves” to separate the “good nature” from “bad nature.” Africans were consigned to “native reserves,” wild animals in “game reserves,” nationalists to restriction camps. Then, as I have started showing in this chapter, remote wild spaces were deemed the most ideal to dump “wild Africans” trying to incite “peace-loving natives” to rebel against their “caring” government. These wild Africans literally became game animals.<sup>108</sup>

Smith was not content with prisons which stopped at *control*; *eradication* was a much better word. *First*, in 1974 he created a pseudo-guerrilla unit called the Selous Scouts, which masqueraded as real guerrillas, imitating the usual ZANLA code of operations, and committing the worst atrocities of the war.<sup>109</sup> Next, he authorized this unit to deploy any and all tactics and weapons that had been tried, tested, and proven effective against *vermin*. This included spraying ‘terrorist’ hideouts with deadly poisons and biological agents, contaminating water sources, and using regular food products as baits to poison ‘terrorists’ and their civilian hosts. The Portuguese had already used these methods in Angola since 1972.<sup>110</sup>

In order to make such tactics more effective, Smith instituted the ‘capture-and-release’ of villagers into a new kind of reserve: the protected villages. This facility was

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<sup>108</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

<sup>109</sup> For a glowing version of the unit, see the account of its commander, Ron Reid-Daly (as told to Peter Stiff), *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton: Galago, 1982).

<sup>110</sup> *Facts and Reports*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol., No. 10, May 1972

fenced and patrolled; at specific periods of the day, the areas outside it became—just as in the case of tsetse corridors—killing grounds for anything that moved.

The aerial photography, cartography, and darting operations that had worked so well during the wildlife research and extension of the 1960s differed little from the new concept of ‘Fire Force’—a helicopter-borne operation to locate, pursue, and strafe ‘terrorist’ hideouts and attempted escapes from the air while coordinating mobile ground troops to cut them off. ‘Terrorists’ were not humans; they were not even good animals and had to be hunted as such.<sup>111</sup>

***Shutting Out The Fish.*** Like the border game fence in the 1960s, the minefield was meant to curtail the influx of ‘pests’. In Chapter 6 we saw how the Vet Department had decided to construct the game fence along the border to curtail both FMD- and tsetse-carrying cattle and wild animals from crossing in from Mozambique. We saw how locals breached this obstacle by lifting the strands where the fence crossed streams, or alternatively drove their herds south to the last pole at Pafuri.

Dealing with guerrillas was no different. Like the tsetse, whose colony was anchored just east of the border, guerrilla staging bases were just across the border. Just as the state feared that tsetse-carrying animals would lead to the spread of trypanosomiasis, so too was the fear that guerrillas carrying communist ideology and guns would carry germs of anti-state rebellion to the ‘innocent’ villagers. The distance between the bases and the villagers was “only a few hours.” By laying minefields across

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<sup>111</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. B, January 19, 1979. B5. “Rhodesian Guerrillas Blast Railway as Young Blacks Dodge Call-up: Majority Ignore Black Draft to Rhodesian War,” *Sunday News* (Tanzania), December 24 1978.

these crossing points, the RSF forced magandanga to use the more arid areas, where ambushes were waiting.<sup>112</sup>

The guerrillas always found innovative ways of breaching the minefield. The first method was to use shovels to delicately lift the mines and create safe passages. The process was led by the point man, the *seguranza* (security). After clearing, everyone else was expected to step exactly where he had stepped. Sometimes some areas had no mines, in others there were too many of them, but the *seguranza* could not take any chances. A mine rejects being stepped on but gladly accepts being lifted. If you step on it and it produces a ‘click’ sound, you better not lift your foot from it. You had better start telling your colleagues how you want your will to be shared. The second was to simply roll a tractor tire across and follow it. Finally, the guerrillas simply stamped game animals or cattle through.<sup>113</sup> The guerrillas did more than just create passages through these minefields: they actually dug up the mines and planted them to kill RSF troops!<sup>114</sup>

***Emptying Out the Water.*** As a *cordons sanitaire*, the Chikwarakwara-Sango minefield was a resounding failure. Next the state sought to empty out the pools (villages) of water: with wire and fire the RSF force-marched villagers into PVs. Instead of incendiaries, the RSF now fought war through population control.

It started in Honde Valley, scene of similar rearguard action against tsetse fly discussed in Chapter 6. Its dense vegetation and scattered population were the perfect conditions for classical guerrilla warfare.<sup>115</sup> In 1976, PVs or ‘Keeps’ (Africans called

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<sup>112</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Solomon Bvekenya and Vhumbululu Ndhlovu.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Martin R. Rupiah, “A Historical Study of Land-Mines in Zimbabwe, 1963-1995,” *Zambezia* xxii, I (1995): 67.

<sup>115</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 20, October 5, 1977: 1775. “Security Achievements in Honde Valley,” *Radio Reports, Excerpts from ‘Newsreel’ item, Salisbury in English* 1610 gmt 19 Sep ’77.

them *makipi*, singular *kipi*) were rapidly established and the landscape virtually emptied of villagers. Next the state embarked on a propaganda bonanza, establishing schools, clinics, drilling boreholes inside *makipi*, and allotting small agricultural plots within a 3 mile radius of *kipi*. *Madhomeni* (land development officers, or LDOs) to teach the incarcerated villagers to grow tea, coffee, cotton and ground nuts. It set up *mastoro* (grocery stores) nearly, cleared commuter bus routes and vigorous ‘advertised’ (compelled) black bus owners to ply them. In the state and aligned publications, the PV provided villagers with such “stability and security” that they became demanded to have them. When the state did not construct them in time, many locals had fled to towns or sought refuge among their kin across the border in Mozambique. The biting hunger and draught, disease, and lack of schools in Mozambique were now driving them back to the food, clinics, schools and 24-hour security of the PVs.<sup>116</sup> How blurred the boundaries between prison and humanitarian sanctuary!

PVs were nothing new or generic to Rhodesia or Gonarezhou. The US Army used the “strategic-hamlet” for similar purposes against the Vietcong. The Portuguese had used *aldeamentos* (fortified villages) in both Angola and Mozambique to forcibly group-settle villagers and cut them off as a logistic resource to the guerrillas.<sup>117</sup> It was a weapon “to prevent subversion and for protection,” an *armed space*. In both countries the *aldeamentos* failed: the guerrillas attacked the camps on a nightly basis, freeing the

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<sup>116</sup> “Terrorists on the Run in Honde Valley,” according to Mr. Hamish Peters, outgoing District Commissioner for the Honde Valley, *Focus on Rhodesia*, Vol. 2, No. 11, November 1977: 8-9.

<sup>117</sup> *Facts and Reports*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol., No. 25, Dec 9, 1972; *Facts and Reports*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vol., No. 14, July 7, 1973.

hundreds of thousands of quarantined villagers. At independence in 1975, the FRELIMO government of Samora Machel turned the *aldeamentos* into “peasant communes.”<sup>118</sup>

In 1972, after a stubborn ZANLA onslaught in the northeastern district of Mount Darwin, Smith also began to quarantine villagers. There is little argument that the Portuguese and Vietnamese applications then underway influenced Smith. However, Rhodesia was not short of experience in quarantining its own pests. Game reserves, native reserves, foot and mouth control fences, tsetse control fences, restriction camps—pest control were written all over the Rhodesian landscapes. The white farmsteads and games reserves testified to eight decades of successful battles against multiple pests.

By 1976 when the war at last reached Gonarezhou, the cordons sanitaire was well past its 80<sup>th</sup> Rhodesian birthday. Just as in Mt. Darwin, the ‘terrorist’ had forced the state to mount “a major development operation” in borders abandoned since 1890. As armored cars engaged the guerrillas, bulldozers ploughed through thick forest, leaving in their wake excellent gravel and sometimes tarred roads.<sup>119</sup>

A Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace report in 1977 estimated that about 580,000 Africans (double the official figure) were being held in 203 PVs, most of them in the northeastern and southeastern parts of Rhodesia, where RSF operations were hottest. Where villagers refused to move into *makipi*, the RSF burned down their homes and crops. No compensation was paid for livestock, homesteads, crops lost.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *Facts and Reports*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol., No. 25, Dec 9, 1972; *Facts and Reports*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vol., No. 14, July 7, 1973; “FRELIMO in War for Heartland,” *Daily Telegraph*, 11/2/74, Bruce Loudon (in Lourenco Marques); *Facts and Reports*, 4<sup>th</sup> Vol., No. 23, Nov. 9, 1974.

<sup>119</sup> *Facts and Reports*, 4<sup>th</sup> Vol., No. 6, March 16 1974.

<sup>120</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 19, September 21, 1977: 1666. “Rhodesian Tortures are Exposed: Police Arrest Priests,” *The Observer* (Br), Sept 4, '77.

Materially, socially, culturally and psychologically the *kipli*—which most international media called “concentration camp”—was “one of the most dehumanizing aspects of the war in Rhodesia.” The *makipi*, including the one at Malipati, were overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Generally, a 15 yard square patch was provided for each family “to build a shelter, dig a pit latrine, and accommodate chicken and small livestock. The toilets soon overflowed, unleashing widespread typhoid and diarrhea.<sup>121</sup> People’s bodies were being eaten by pests as they walked. Hospitals were few.

People lived like pests—dusk-to-dawn curfews, armed guards conducting gate checks on inmates going and returning, “searching their bundles for evidence of assistance to the guerrillas in the bush.” Along the fences, more armed guards on patrol, others on towers, peering into every nook and cranny with binoculars, and yet others escorting inmates to and from their fields. Security lights (the notorious ‘search lights’) and trip flares turned night into broad daylight, while loudspeakers thundered orders and music to inmates. The “White Keep Commander and Administrator, the Guard Force, the District Assistants (DAs, formerly DMs), the Police Support Unit, the CID special branch and intelligence, and the psychological war unit of the armed forces” ran the PV. It was a structure designed to rule the inmates not with just physical but also “social, psychic violence [and] pervasive, calculated insecurity.”<sup>122</sup>

Still, just like in Mozambique, the guerrillas moved in and out of *makipi*. Between January and June 1977, the guerrillas killed 114 guards, abducted 25, and wounded 243.

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<sup>121</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 20, October 5, 1977: 1774. “Health Services at Risk,” *Focus* (Br), Sept, '77.

<sup>122</sup> *Facts and Reports* 9<sup>th</sup> vol, no. A, January 5, 1979. 22. “The Hellish Life,” *The Voice* (SA), Nov 25, '78.

In the first five months of 1977 alone, they attacked the *makipi* seventy times.<sup>123</sup> By 1978 most of the PVs were abandoned, many of the inmates having returned to their ruined homes to start afresh in the now “liberated zones.”

### Pest Eradication

**Poisoning.** On 3 May 1978, ZANLA’s official radio station, the *Voice of Zimbabwe* (*VOZ*), reported that the RSF was poisoning rivers, streams, dams, wells, and boreholes in the areas around Gonarezhou (Chiredzi district). One source told the station that the RSF had forced 115 African civilians to drink poisoned water in retaliation for 19 troops gunned down by ZANLA guerrillas. All of them died and were buried in a mass grave.<sup>124</sup> Jim Parker was one of the Selous Scouts operatives in the district when this campaign began in 1976. He admits there could be no better conditions to use poisons to kill the ‘terrorists’ than Chiredzi. Especially in 1976! The scorching drought severely limited water-holes for guerrillas leaving Mozambican rear bases with neither water nor food packs. The Selous Scouts had destroyed road and rail tracks on all Mozambican areas abutting Rhodesia’s border. These roads led directly from ZANLA’s main base at Mapai and the state garrisons at Madulo Pan and Pafuri.<sup>125</sup> In good years, the many small pans in the national park would contain water. Not in 1976. Many infiltrators died of thirst. Often it came down to drinking one’s own urine for survival; until that too could

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<sup>123</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 19, September 21, 1977: 1666. “Rhodesian Tortures are Exposed: Police Arrest Priests,” *The Observer* (Br), Sept 4, ‘77.

<sup>124</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 10, May 19, 1978: 929. “Alleged Massacres of Civilians,” *Radio Reports, Maputo in English for Rhodesia 1800 gmt 3 May, ’78.*

<sup>125</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 13, June 29, 1977: 1267. “Rhodesian Raids Have ‘Killed 1,000’,” *The Observer* (Br), Jun 5, ‘77.

not come out of the dehydrated body. At that point, the guerrillas took their chances and ploughed through the enemy's killing grounds.<sup>126</sup>

RSF sappers poisoned seasonal pans on guerrilla infiltration routes with Supermix DFF (an organophosphate) cattle dip. The water became unfit for human and animal consumption—in fact it was toxic enough to kill man or beast. Long before the war, in the time of Hostes Nicolle and Allan Wright, a network of boreholes had been drilled throughout Matibi II and equipped with diesel pumps and motors. The shortage of ground water and the distance people there had traveled to access the running waters of the Runde and Mwenezi was gone. Hydro-dependency on the boreholes became total. That is precisely the weapon the Selous Scouts were looking for: they sabotaged the boreholes to force magandanga to use the few poisoned waterholes.<sup>127</sup> However, as the VCU and later PACU had found, such anti-vermin measures worked only seasonally, becoming practically useless in the rainy season. During summer the guerrillas simply picked and chose where to cross.

**Baiting.** On 11 January 1978, the pro-nationalist Tanzanian paper, *The Daily News*, carried three news items suggesting that Rhodesia's poison warfare had switched into new gear. Four months earlier, 12 school children had died in the Shabani area of south-central Rhodesia after eating poisoned wild fruits called *matohwe* which the RSF had laced with poison for guerrillas. In the same month, four school children died in Selukwe after eating poisoned tinned foods “which they had picked by the roadside on the way home from school.” On 29 December 1977, the *Voice of Zimbabwe* reported that 57 African civilians—“most of them children”—died and 17 others were admitted in

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<sup>126</sup> Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*: 89. Confirmed by a former guerrilla, Vhumbululu Ndlovu: Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Solomon Bvekenya and Vhumbululu Ndhlovu.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*: 89, 155.

hospital after eating poisoned tinned food set as bait for guerrillas just outside the northern town of Shamva.<sup>128</sup>

When the rains finally fell in November-December 1976, they washed away the poison downstream, again exposing the 600-mile border to the “Red Terror” invading from Mozambique. Defense Minister P.K. van der Byl contacted University of Rhodesia scientist, Bob Symington. The professor had a well-equipped private laboratory at the rear of his Borrowdale home, and he compiled five pages of poisons, toxins and venoms commercially available and purchasable without difficulty from “organizations.” Among the list were barium salts, sodium salts, fluorophosphates and monofluoracitic acids.<sup>129</sup>

Van der Byl and Central Intelligence Organization Director Ken Flower liked what they were told and authorized the project. It started as a Police “Special Branch” operation under the command of Chief Superintendent Mark J.P. McGuiness, who appointed a civilian lab technician codenamed ‘Vic’ to take daily charge. Originally designated for Inkomo Barracks, the project ended up starting as a one-roomed manufacturing unit in Bindura. It initially involved impregnating bait (clothing) with organophosphates, but was soon expanded into doctoring assorted tinned foods, packaged foods, medicines in liquid and tablet form, tobacco, cigarettes and bottled cold drinks. The chemicals and toxins were collected from 7-Medical Battalion, South African Special Forces, in Pretoria, and couriered to Bindura. Sigma of London, Munich, and St. Louis Montana, USA, were listed as other suppliers for monofluoroacetic acid, Diisopropyl Fluorophosphate, and Alloxan. An organophosphate, parathion, was used for impregnating clothing. The liquid was poured onto tin sheets and left in the sun to

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<sup>128</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 1, January 11, 1978: 63. Marcelino Komba, Maputo, *Daily News* (Tanz), Dec 30, '77.

<sup>129</sup> Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*: 157.

crystallize, the crystal being ground into a powder brushed into clothing in the crotch and armpit areas. The clothing was purchased from a store in Bindura and passed on to the army fabrication unit in Darwendale for impregnation. Underwear, T-shirts and denim jeans—the favored attire of ZANLA guerrillas—made the best baits. The unsuspecting guerrilla recipient put on the attire and immediately fell ill, as we saw quelea birds do with Queleatox. Upon contact with the skin, the guerrilla started scratching, fell ill, and had nowhere to go for treatment. Comrades left him to die a painful and lonely death out in the bush.<sup>130</sup>

Having worked so lethally in the VCU's efforts, thallium's pedigree was proven. The Selous Scouts now used it to lace canned beef, cold drinks, beer, sweets, medical supplies, mealie meal, biscuits, tinned jam, tinned peas, bottles of brandy and toothpaste. Thallium was injected into sealed tins, through bottle tops and into packets with a micro needle. One died simply by licking one's fingers after handling it. The victim started vomiting violently and defecating uncontrollably, followed by complete paralysis and death within four or five days. Nationalist guerrillas and villagers died mysterious deaths after bleeding from their noses and mouths and developing very high temperatures. They complained of "suspected malaria," and violent short illness. Of the five copies of original documents marked 'Top Secret' that Parker publishes, one in particular from McGuiness to Flower dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1977 catches the reader's attention. In it McGuiness listed items distributed for this dirty operation and the casualty list.<sup>131</sup>

The operation involved local white farmers who gained guerrilla trust, through whom the SB and Selous Scout worked to poison the guerrillas. The guerrillas had

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*: 161, 166.

approached one such farmer Parker calls ‘B’ in 1977 upon being told by locals about their good relations with him. They asked if he could supply them with clothing and food. ‘B’ reported the matter to Police Special Branch Chiredzi—that is, to Parker and his colleagues, who advised him to continue his relations with the guerrillas as if nothing was happening. Exactly the same time—a Friday the next week—the guerrillas made contact again, gave ‘B’ a list of their requirements—denims, transistor radios, biscuits, Cokes, and tinned meat. Says Parker: “We gave him money to buy the stuff. We also reminded him that the men were dangerous killers, but he should continue his assistance because they trusted him....”<sup>132</sup> The guerrillas became friendly and relaxed. The Selous Scouts then supplied ‘B’ with poisoned clothing and thallium-laced food. Because the poison took several days to take effect, the guerrillas would never trace them to ‘B’. Again, we have seen how this delayed action worked well against suspicious baboons. The thallium-laced food worked faster than impregnated jeans but still took several days. The deployment of poisoned food continued right into 1979 on a need-to rather than across-the-board basis. While some of the handlers are known to have died of cancer, research on the effects on guerrillas and civilians has barely begun.

On a visit to Durham, NC, USA, on 25 June 1978, ZANU’s Secretary for Health, Dr. Herbert Ushewokunze—a medical doctor by training—disclosed the effects of pesticides on ZANLA and its civilian sympathizers:

The most important department in our situation is the department of war medicine to treat gunshot wounds, punctures, shrapnel in wrists, napalm burns, and poisoning. Imagine the poisoning. In the classical clinical case we have the patient goes into epileptic fits and dies within thirty minutes. There is also a sub-department of germ warfare—the enemy pollutes the wells and water supplies with cholera and typhoid. He then rushes back to vaccinate the whites in case the thing boomerangs. Fourteen days ago

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*: 168.

typhoid fever came from such a poisoning and claimed seven lives. At that time I didn't even have a single capsule of the drug for treatment of typhoid. Finally there is the department of disaster medicine. This is episodic in nature. The first such disaster occurred in August 1976, what is popularly called the Nyazonia massacre, when over 700 comrades died in their refugee camp, following a murderous attack by the Ian Smith forces. To this day we live with men, women, children with all four limbs gone, two gone, one gone. Some people are just vegetating. I am looking for prosthesis, artificial limbs. As if that were not enough, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1977, there was a second massacre—the Chimoio massacre. Women were caught unawares in their fields.... One of our biggest schools is in Chimoio. Many children were there with their exercise books and pencils. They died. One of our biggest medical centers was at Chimoio, a hundred bed hospital. In it 25 were incinerated, including 15 nurses who were trying to evacuate patients. Our whole health transport system was disrupted, the self-reliance trucks and cars sent to us by support committees, the only mobile clinic we had. Our operating theater on wheels which was on its way to a nearby town and carrying big red crosses on it, with eight patients inside, was bombed by the enemy. The eight patients died plus three nurses who were accompanying them. All our libraries, both medical and educational were completely destroyed.<sup>133</sup>

Nyadzonia and Chimoio were ZANLA's biggest bases, and were located in the Manica

province to the northeast of Gonarezhou. The Chimoio attack was one of hundreds of sorties undertaken with fragmentation bombs and napalm.<sup>134</sup>

Ushewokunze showed pictures of effects of chemicals and 'napalm porridge' and of a truck of poisoned beans with the following commentary:

This is wood covered by napalm porridge! Imagine somebody dipping his arm in a jar of sulfuric acid—the pain, the agony, the disintegration of tissue, the death. If that porridge lands on you and you try to wipe it away, you're in trouble—your hand falls off, gets eaten away. This van is carrying a load of beans, one of the most important kinds of relish in our camps. This van was attacked by the enemy. They only destroyed the engine section. This load of beans had been poisoned. How did I discover that? Life around was dying, the pigeons, the ducks. The monkey population in the area is quite big so I grabbed one little monkey and

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<sup>133</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 14, July 14, 1978. 1339. "The Grim Reality of War," *Africa News* (US), June 26, '78.

<sup>134</sup> Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*: 144.

threw it on to the back of the van. It nibbled a few of the bean seeds.

Within ten minutes it developed a fit and died.<sup>135</sup>

Clearly, when the death that is often reserved for pests is deployed to kill human beings, even people become pests.

### Making Pests Weaponry

***Human Pests Turned Pesticides.*** To counter guerrilla activities in Rhodesia's rural countryside, the RSF created various pseudo-guerrilla groups to infiltrate and destroy *magandanga*. The most potent of these units was the Selous Scouts and it was established in 1975. It was named after the nineteenth century British big game hunter and tracker, Frederick Courtney Selous for a purpose: its task was to hunt wild human beings or terrorists (*magandanga*).<sup>136</sup> The Scouts were composed of black and white members who lived "in the wild bush, tracking down terrorists, working in terrible conditions, living off the land." The unit had few problems killing the terrorists – if they found them, something which the unit hoped to do with "speed, stealth and efficiency."<sup>137</sup> This was a strategy to transform *magandanga* into weapons against *magandanga*. A *New York Times* reporter described the new *modus operandi* as follows: first, groups of scouts comprising black and white leaders moved through the bush collecting information on guerrilla movements from villagers using threats and intimidation. After locating *magandanga*, they radioed the sighting to a 'regional joint operation command', which then sent in helicopters and winged aircraft to drop 'fire teams' to try and kill the guerrillas. The

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<sup>135</sup> *Facts and Reports* 8<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 14, July 14, 1978. 1339. "The Grim Reality of War," *Africa News* (US), June 26, '78.

<sup>136</sup> "The Men who Hunt Down Terrorists," *Focus on Rhodesia*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1977: 2.

<sup>137</sup> *Focus on Rhodesia*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1977

aircraft was equipped with bombs containing napalm of the ‘fantan’ variety. It was used to burn guerrillas out of the cover of high elephant grass.<sup>138</sup>

The Selous Scouts also went into the operational zone disguised as freedom fighters to kill villagers and leave evidence incriminating magandanga. They deployed *chigandanga* (the ways of the *gandanga*) to fight *magandanga*<sup>139</sup>: mimicry became a potent weapon.<sup>140</sup> Who could doubt that the man in denims and ‘Super-Pro’ snickers totting an AK-47 was not a genuine *gandanga*? Even white soldiers disguised themselves as blacks,<sup>141</sup> what Luise White calls the “masquerade.” Upon uncovering this masquerade, White finds guns, bombs, and other instruments that embody the “political imaginary” of violence. Through strategic ‘veilings’ and ‘unveilings’, the body moves through different social categories and identities—*gandanga* here, RSF there, black civilian here, white civilian there, a man here, a woman there.<sup>142</sup> After killing civilians (especially white missionaries, and black women and children) they radioed the pro-government media houses, who arrived to report the gruesome murder of black civilians by the terrorists. In this way the Selous Scouts played a key role in fashioning a negative public perception of *hugandanga* as cowardly terror antithetical to liberation.<sup>143</sup>

Just as *magandanga* used rural Rhodesian villagers to gather intelligence on the whereabouts of the RSF, the latter also deployed Mozambican villagers living close to

<sup>138</sup> *Facts and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 21, Oct 20, 1976: 1930. “Rhodesian Army is Displaying Strains,” *New York Times* (US), Oct 3, ‘76; also *Facts and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 22, Nov 3, 1976: 2051. *New York Times* (US), Oct 3, ‘76.

<sup>139</sup> *Facts and Reports* 6<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 25, Dec 15: 2350. “Statement by Deserter from Rhodesian Forces,” *Radio Reports*, Maputo in English for Rhodesia 1800 GMT, 24 Nov ‘76.

<sup>140</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 7, April 6, 1977: 628. David Martin in Lusaka, “Did Smith Men Kill the Priests?,” *The Observer* (Br), March 13, ‘77.

<sup>141</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 15/6, August 10, 1977: 1474. Baden Hickman, Churches Correspondent, “Churches Blame Selous Scouts,” *The Guardian* (Br), July 16, ‘77.

<sup>142</sup> Luise White, “Precarious Conditions: A Note on Counter-insurgency in Africa after 1945,” *Gender and History* 16, 3 (2004): 603-25.

<sup>143</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 15/6, August 10, 1977: 1474. Baden Hickman, Churches Correspondent, “Churches Blame Selous Scouts,” *The Guardian* (Br), July 16, ‘77.

ZANLA's rear bases to spy on and sabotage the guerrilla movement. Dressed in civilian clothes and using Mozambican money, the spy would wander about the roads and railways alone, getting close enough to Mozambican and ZANLA military camps to ascertain troop strength and the types of weapons used. He roamed on trains and buses between towns to ascertain the positions of bridges and villages, all the while taking notes on his notebook.<sup>144</sup> After a successful reconnaissance, this spy would guide the RSF attack formations into Mozambique.

A variant of these pseudo-guerrilla gangs was one comprising local Rhodesian Africans spying on their fellow villagers inside the country. It is not surprising that Jim Parker, the man who founded the Shangane Army in 1976, was himself a Selous Scout operative. In essence this village militia was a militarily-trained intelligence unit to spy both on what their next door neighbors were up do and the movements of the guerrillas. The Shangane Army was one of the most serious threats to ZANLA because "they used to arrive just like comrades with the aim of looking for bases." To avoid easy recognition by villagers, the operatives were deployed far away from their homes. However this unfamiliarity with locals and terrain gave them away. Unaware of the whereabouts of the guerrillas, the Shangane Army operatives would arrive in a village and enquire about the whereabouts of *mapuruvheya* (as the RSF was derogatorily called). "But your colleagues were here asking the same questions a few hours ago!" the villagers would say. At that stage they would be totally exposed as masquerades.<sup>145</sup> The danger—the *weaponry*—of the Shangane Army lay in its being both a network crossing the boundaries between friendly force and foe and the difficulty of knowing that. That is why it made its

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<sup>144</sup> *Facts and Reports* 7<sup>th</sup> vol., no. 23, Nov 16, 1977: 2005. "Rowland Backs Nkomo to Insure the Future," *Sunday Times* (Br), Oct 9, '77.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

notorious name around Gonarezhou: it created confusion and uncertainty, and betrayed people's political affiliation to the wrong audience.

### ***Matsanga: Postcolonial Insurgency in Gonarezhou***

For all its sophistry, the Rhodesian apparatus of counterinsurgency failed to prevent the ascendancy of magandanga into power. By 1978, the protected villages had virtually been abandoned and the area around Gonarezhou was a liberated zone. In 1979, the mounting guerrilla pressure forced the Rhodesian government to the negotiating table. By the end of the year, a timetable for the holding of elections had been hammered out. On 18 April 1980, Robert Mugabe was sworn in as Prime Minister after winning the elections. By then an insurgency was already underway along the Mozambican border.

*Matsanga* is shortcut for *Matsangaidze*, the surname of the founder of the Mozambican rebel movement RENAMO. *Matsangaidze* means “the disruptive one” or “the pest.” Whereas elsewhere *Matsanga* has received more favorable treatment from revisionist scholarship,<sup>146</sup> in and around Gonarezhou people summarize the rebels, in one word: a menace. *Matsangaidze* was the new *madzviti*.

There are so many reasons for this. For a start, the cause for which *Matsanga* was fighting was germane to Mozambique. Zimbabwe came into the rebel plan for logistic and tactical reasons: as a hunting ground for food and to hit Zimbabwe “at the rear” and force Mugabe to withdraw from Mozambique. RENAMO’s training and funding was largely South African, just as another rebel movement, Super-ZAPU, trained at Phalaborwa and infiltrated via Matabeleland. Both RENAMO and Super-ZAPU were

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<sup>146</sup> Jessica Schafer, “Guerrillas and Violence in the War in Mozambique: De-socialization or Re-socialization?” *African Affairs* 100 (2001): 215-237.

intended to hit Mozambique and Zimbabwe “at the rear” and force them to expel and disown the *Umkontho weSizwe*. Gonarezhou was strategic to RENAMO because of ivory: the elephant could actually fund the war against Frelimo.<sup>147</sup>

The use of Gonarezhou as a hunting ground for ivory and local villages as arbitrary granaries commenced soon after the war. When the Rhodesian war ended in 1980, ZANLA closed its bases and its troops quartered into UN-supervised ‘assembly points’. By 1981, most of the former combatants had been integrated into the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) together with the RSF and ZIPRA. Their bases were now far away; a military vacuum commenced. RENAMO filled the void. In 1983 the rebel movement started “coming in” to ask for food, disguised as refugees proceeding to look for work as cattle herders and farmhands.<sup>148</sup>

Primarily, if conceived of as a “hunt,” the *Matsanga* carcass was the shops and village, the ivory food, porters-cum-soldiers, and concubines for their ‘chefs’. It was when the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), composed of an overwhelming number of ex-ZANLA troops, intervened in Mozambique in 1987 that *Matsanga* became violent. Mugabe gave two reasons for going into Mozambique: first, to aid the people of Mozambique who had fought alongside Zimbabweans to deal with what he perceived to be a counterrevolutionary South African sponsored “bandit” movement. Second, to protect Zimbabwe’s import-export lifeline, the Beira Corridor, the country’s only route to the sea. In 1987, *Matsanga* raided the villages of Chibwedziva, capturing men women and children and taking them into Mozambique.<sup>149</sup> Subsequently, started killing villagers.

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<sup>147</sup> R.T. Naylor, *Economic Warfare: Sanctions, Embargo Busting And Their Human Cost* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999): 178.

<sup>148</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Solomon Bvekenya and Vhumbululu Ndhlovu.

<sup>149</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Fireside Conversations With Tovadini Kemusi.

The following month *Matsanga* returned. “This time they meant business,” Bvekenya said.

Amidst these scenes of victimization, heroes always emerged from within, spurred by the desire to live. The state could not be counted on to come to anybody’s assistance and often arrived when *Matsanga* had already hit and ran into Mozambique. The most illustrative case is that of Sergeant Pahlela, a DNPWLM ranger based at Mabalauta whom I interviewed in 2000. Following the *Matsanga*’s capture of his mother, Pahlela resolved to combine forces with the army and made a follow up. When the army patrol got tired and decided to rendezvous, Pahlela continued tracking. The captors decided to rest for the night in the *musimbiti* woodland in the red-earth upland area of Mabalauta. Luckily his mother spotted him first before *Matsanga* did, and he signaled his mother to lie down. Sergeant Pahlela opened fire with his AK-47 automatic. *Matsanga* fled, dragging a few of their captives. It is not clear how many casualties *Matsanga* sustained, but Pahlela had managed to rescue his mother.<sup>150</sup>

Why were the soldiers only ‘told’ of these incidents and why did they always come so late, when *Matsanga* would have already left? Here, age-old problems of communication and terrain plagued the possibilities of follow-up. *Matsanga*’s ability to cause mayhem rested on an efficient manipulation of the effects of time on security force operations. They came at night knowing that Air Force of Zimbabwe aircraft, especially choppers, had no night visibility capabilities. Since follow-up relied on visibility to track the spoor of the rebels, even if villagers made reports the very same night, the soldiers always advised that they would attend to the scene in the morning. In addition, the

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<sup>150</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Sergeant Pahlela, Mabalauta Field Station, 27 July 2000. First brought to my attention by Solomon Bvekenya, Pahlela was generous enough to take me to the scene of the now legendary rescue of a mother by her own son.

soldiers advised locals that they could not launch a night follow-up patrol because they were guarding the township.<sup>151</sup>

Just as in Rwanda in the 1994 genocide, Matsanga's weapon of mass butchery was the machete, not the AK-47. This was because the machete killed silently and cheaply. After the kill, the rebels destroyed the homes of those they had killed. Only when Matsanga came into contact with the ZNA did they use their rifles. They did it to save ammunition and to catch their victims by surprise. No doubt the most obvious reason for Matsanga's brutality was that these were, in the main, child soldiers. While abduction (force) was certainly a new way of recruiting labor, the use of locals as guides was, as we have seen, an old practice. In the out-journey to Mozambique, captured locals were used as porters to carry goods looted in local villages and shops. In Matsanga's infiltrations, these same locals were used as guides—and duress—to take Matsanga back to the local villages to loot, kill, rape and abduct. Bvekenya referred me to talk to quite a number of people who had either escaped, had lost relatives to abductions, or had their homes torched.<sup>152</sup>

The biggest problem villagers faced with Matsanga was how to separate a rebel from a genuine refugee or Mozambican village militia. The bulk of those fleeing Mozambique were the village-based militias the Frelimo government had trained for 'collective security' since the 1970s to combat Rhodesia's 'hot pursuit' operations. Matsanga pursued them into Zimbabwe. They hid their AK-47 rifles in caves and melted into the villages; after all many were Shangane relatives.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Solomon Bvekenya and Vhumbululu Ndhlovu.

<sup>152</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Interview with Thomas Chauke, Former ZANLA Guerrilla, Malipati Secondary School Staff Houses, 7 August 2001.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Conclusion: Margins of Difference**

In Chapters 2-3 we saw the way locals cashed in on the influx of Europeans in search of ivory, concessions and labor. In Chapters 6 we saw them becoming fly-catchers and poachers. This chapter shows how villagers joined guerrillas in becoming pests unto the state and harnessing the portable lethal power of the AK-47 to contest state power over Gonarezhou and themselves. Yet Matsanga was different, its violence both a cause and a sign of disjunction. Instead of challenging the Zimbabwean state in a way beneficial to locals, it punished locals in ways that served to bring state and villagers together against it.

This wide margin of difference between *Matsanga* and *magandanga* is not just analytical; it explains why the ZANLA guerrilla is generally seen in a *national* light of political liberation (but certainly not the *local* one of liberating Gonarezhou) and *Matsanga* as destructiveness personified. This consciousness of the benefits of the passer-by stems primarily from the fact of the villagers being itinerants themselves, who know the etiquette of traveling through other people's lands. This sense of journeys as producing usable value explains why only the border-jumper (illegal immigrants seeking work in South Africa) rivals the poacher as the most popular figure in village circles. The poacher's popularity stems from his bringing back game meat from his illegal mobility within the parks armed with his portable weaponry. The border-jumper, known locally as *Majonijoni* or those who are from Johannesburg (Jonny), defies international laws by crossing illegally without passport or visa into and out of South Africa, bringing back

money and goodies to support families in the village.<sup>154</sup> *Mapocha* and *Majonijoni* deliver where *Magandanga* failed.

The ways in which villagers have from time to time manipulated the movement of bodies—of people carrying technologies, or animals carrying either meat, ivory, or even pathogens takes us to the threshold of concluding this dissertation. With an eye on the current crisis in Zimbabwe, the only question worth asking is: why care about pests, after all? Why even worry to historically treat human and nonhuman pests together in the same narrative? I will conclude with that question.

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<sup>154</sup> Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Notes on a Bumpy, Dusty Journey on Board Zupco Bus from Chiredzi to Malipati with Mr. and Mrs. Kemusi 3 May 2002; Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Fireside Conservations with Kemusi; and Zimbabwe Fieldwork: Notes on Fish Hawkers Who Arrived in the Morning Trading Fish Caught in the Limpopo River, Kemusi's House, 6 May 2002.

## **Conclusion: The State As A Pest In People's Lives**

### **Witnessing a Landscape of Broken Promises**

One sunny June afternoon in 2001 as I wound out of the town of Chiredzi on a Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (Zupco) bus to Malipati, 250 winding miles away, I embarked on a journey to see for myself how far the politicians who had sent their ZANLA units through Gonarezhou wielding AK-47 rifles in the 1970s had kept their word once in office. I carried with me a checklist of all the promises—land, roads, schools, clinics, boreholes, dams, electricity, telephones, and roads. These were only the major ones. People had been promised also that once the ‘white man’ had been chased from his farmhouse, they would be resettled in it. The hunting grounds of Gonarezhou would be open again.

By the time I got to my destination at 0.35 am, eight hours since I had started my journey, I was not just caked with dusk. I was the dust itself, the result of a bumpy dirt track recognizable only by the tire-tracks the bus and other vehicles made through it. The road the guerrillas, and later the new Zimbabwean government, had promised had clearly not materialized. Having promised to return Gonarezhou “to its rightful owners”—a

mired term as we have seen in Chapter 1—the government reneged on the promise. It kept the national park intact and continued the policies of the colonial state. The promise that had been made in the heat of a populist moment now encountered the realities of a conservancy whose existence as a pest control structure, a money-spinning tourist resort, and a conservancy whose existence the government had guaranteed under international law. Gonarezhou could not be touched; during the peace agreement with the Rhodesians and the British Government at Lancaster House, England, the nationalist leadership had pledged to honor the integrity of just such real estate. But the “rightful owners” were not consulted.

In any case, the willpower to satisfy the promises to and needs of the rural masses that had, through persuasion or coercion, assisted the guerrillas to win the war was distracted. No sooner had the Zimbabwean flag been hoisted and the Union Jack lowered on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1980 than the new government have to deal with two insurgencies on its eastern and western borders. In the East was RENAMO, whose crossborder forays and atrocities against villagers inside eastern Zimbabwe would force the government to send the ZNA into Mozambique in 1987. Initially the mission was to secure the Beira to Mutare oil pipeline. Soon it became a hot pursuit operation against RENAMO as the ZANLA-dominated army came to the aid of its wartime ally Frelimo (now the new Mozambican army). In the west, a new situation developed which is still mired in controversy. In 1981, South African-trained insurgent elements calling themselves Super-ZAPU and purporting to be backing Joshua Nkomo, whose party ZAPU had lost the independence election to Robert Mugabe, began committing atrocities mostly against Shona villagers in Matabeleland and the Midlands. In what Mugabe has brushed off as “a

moment of madness,” the president sent in the dreaded North Korean-trained Five Brigade to “wipe out” Nkomo’s supporters. According to ethnographic investigations commissioned by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), about 20,000 Ndebele people were slaughtered in an operation that resembled the pest eradication tactics of the Rhodesian government. Nkomo could not bear it; in 1987 he agreed to a Unity Accord with Mugabe. ZANU (PF) swallowed up ZAPU. The hostilities ended. Subsequently, Mugabe set up two commissions, but suppressed their findings, which have not been published to-date.

The RENAMO menace to Gonarezhou only ended in 1992 with the signing of the Rome Accord. Two years later, South Africa became an independent republic. In 1998, conservationists and tourism entrepreneurs renewed the transfrontier conservancy ideas abandoned in the 1930s. Two years later, the environment ministers of South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe signed a provisional memorandum to establish the sanctuary. The presidents then signed the conservancy into being on 9 December 2002.

While Mugabe could say he was distracted by these events, in 1999, as power began to slip from him to the newly formed MDC, he made land a weapon. Mugabe inserted a clause to possess white-owned land and redistribute it to blacks into a constitutional draft he knew that people would reject in a referendum based on its flawed and self-serving provisions. When Zimbabweans rejected it, he blamed the white farmers for “inciting” the population and unleashed his former guerrillas. Mugabe strategically deployed land as a force multiplier in his endeavor to silence the opposition: with it he could reassert his nationalist, pan-African, and humanist credentials, turn all his opponents into enemies of land redistribution to blacks, and reward his supporters.

But first he had to find the weapons to get the land from white farmers. Three years earlier, Mugabe had regained the support of his ZANLA veterans when he awarded them Z\$50,000 gratuities for their role in the independence struggle. At his command, the veterans “invaded” and “occupied” white farms. When former colonial power Britain raised alarm at the treatment of the white farmers, Mugabe gave the veterans and rural party faithful *carte blanche* to invade conservancies.

On every farm, cattle ranch, and game reserve, the telltale signs of invasions and occupation were clear. Right on the sugar plantations at Triangle and Mkwashine, in the middle of the fields, pole and rough-thatch huts screamed through the window for attention. In Mabalauta, the Acting Warden later informed me that these people had come from Chief Chitanga’s to “reclaim their ancestral lands,” but the lions and leopards had eaten many of their livestock. After all, was this not also their ancestral land? The human invaders beat a hasty retreat back to their villages to save their stock, which cannot claim indigeneity to the park because the ancestors of tsetse fly had prevented it. The warden also told me that Chitsa’s people had invaded Gonarezhou’s eastern part to reclaim their ancestral lands. After all, had the guerrillas not promised?

Today the occupations continue. These “land invaders” have refused to leave and have promised to defend their sovereignty over their ancestral lands. In 2007, 150 villagers from Sengwe joined 700 families from Chitsa and Chitanga already resident in Gonarezhou since 2000. Keen to retain a crumbling “rural stronghold” of support from the groundswell of popular support for the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (formed after the constitutional referendum in 2000), the ZANU (PF) government first encouraged and then tolerated these occupations. Chitsa’s people have vowed they are

not leaving “the land that had belonged to them since time immemorial.”<sup>1</sup> As we saw, they arrived there in the early 1800s. In the latest invasions in October 2007, Sengwe villagers also insisted that their ancestors had lived in southern Gonarezhou before the Rhodesian government unjustly removed them when establishing the national park. Said one of the settlers, Moses Murawu: “We are just emulating the Chitsa people who stood their ground and we also feel we have the right to get our land back.” Latest estimates put the total figure of people who have claimed their “ancestral lands” at 3,000.<sup>2</sup>

Gonarezhou has become a war zone in ZANU (PF)’s battle against the opposition, with the ruling party dangling land as a weapon to secure the hearts and minds of local villagers. Just like in both the 1970s and 1980s-90s war, whenever Gonarezhou has become a war theater, the wild animals have paid the price. In November 2007, poachers strongly suspected to be senior government officials and serving members of the army used the political turf war as a smokescreen to shoot dead two black rhinos. This came at a time when the state had started to slaughter wild animals for party celebrations during national holidays, amidst a critical shortage of beef as a result of the farm disruptions.<sup>3</sup>

In this particular case, the poachers were clearly after the horns, which they gave up and fled after an exchange of gunfire with game scouts. Two firearms—a .303 and an AK-47 assault rifle suspected to have come from the national army’s armory—were recovered. Said one police source: “We are investigating how the rifles, believed to be from the ZNA, were used in the shootout.... We strongly believe that either the guns were stolen from the ZNA armoury by the thieves or that some senior army officers were

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<sup>1</sup> Owen Chikari, “More Villagers Invade Gonarezhou Game Park,” *The Zimbabwe Times* [www.thezimbabwetimes.com](http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com) October 27, 2007

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Basildon Peta, “Mugabe Orders Elephant Slaughter to Feed Villagers,” *The Independent* (UK), 28 April 2005.

involved.”<sup>4</sup> This poaching incident is only the latest of many incidents independent researchers say involved “senior government officials and army officers” in Gonarezhou National Park. Police have continually claimed they are investigating, but the level of corruption suggests that, just as in the 1980s-90s, they are also likely complicit. Any members who try to raise alarm will be victimized as “MDC supporter,” a sellout who, just as in the 1970s guerrilla war, must be severely punished.<sup>5</sup>

### **Making People Pests**

The historical trajectory of Zimbabwe leads one to pose the same overarching question Edmund Russell posed for US environmental and war history. Namely, why do governments transition from containment (control) to *total war* (eradication)? Where I differ with Russell is his emphasis on the high tech chemical industry and the military. In the transLimpopo, and indeed much of Africa, the subtleties of design and laboratory practice has very little effect on the way the designed artifact is used. The people who use Mitsubishi 4 x 4s, AK-47 rifles and Paraquat might take a cursory glance at the manufacturer’s label, ingredients, and location of the factory, but only in so far as they are looking for user instructions. These user instructions depend on whether the commander of the violent operations allows them, or whether he has a formula that hurts more, kills more slowly, and so on. Here, the designer who is more important is the user who might himself be taking orders “from above,” and who turns a herbicide into an instrument to kill human *weeds*. What seems more important, therefore, is to follow the

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<sup>4</sup> Chikari, “Poachers Kill Two Black Rhinos.”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

marauding gangs so that one does not miss the subtle transformations and interactions between the user, the weapon, the victim and the environment.

Like most western scholars of science and technology, Russell's focus is firmly located within the designer or practitioner world of industrial experts, military forces, and other policy institutions in charge of "Total War." These are the institutions that popularized the use of two specific chemical toxins discussed in Chapters 6 and 7: DDT and dieldrin. This dissertation confirms Russell's finding that pesticides were extended to the control and eradication of human enemies. But it is also on this point that we substantially differ.

Unlike Russell, I retain an active interest in the response of the pest to the ecological violence of the state. It seems that, just like Césaire when talking of thingification, Russell privileges (elite) human actors and institutions at the expense of their human and animal enemies (the dignified entities). Even as the state's use of violence has become more overpowering, the opposition in Zimbabwe is getting stronger and fearless, upping the ante as the violence increases. When people have suffered from state terror, they have retreated to a sophisticated repertoire of resistance that has made the state even more desperate. Professionals have migrated out of the country, thereby denying an unappreciative government their skills. The economy has suffered. In the face of state patronage—free food, free tractors, and free fertilizers—the rural population has seen through the state's masquerade to buy their votes. They have taken the food and gone to the polls on full stomachs—to vote ZANU (PF) out! In the rage of rejection, ZANU (PF) has turned to violence, forcing people to attend its rallies. Mugabe is followed the itinerary of the Rhodesian state in its final hours in power.

This dissertation is not interested in the effects of chemical weapons on the environment itself—a critique that has often been extended to Russell’s work—because that was never the purpose of this project. Rather, its ambition had more to do with the continuing tendency of the state—whether precolonial, colonial or postcolonial—to extent weapons intended for animals to humans as well. I needed to go there because scholars like Césaire have claimed that the exceptionalism of colonialism lies in its pathological and dehumanizing violence.

I have located this discussion in Africa not merely because I must give the STS audience long used to western case studies a ‘me-too’ nonwestern version of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon. Rather, it is because of my position as an African scholar of science and technology and an STS scholar of Africa concerned with the tendency to make colonial violence and exception while readily excusing postcolonial pathologies of violence.<sup>6</sup> This dissertation could have been different were it not for the persistence of this tendency of the ‘postcolonial’ state to render citizens not just *things* but also pathogenic and deserving of urgent destruction. The problem with Césaire was that he did not widen the scope of “things” to include actual things and to investigate actual links between the colonial state’s treatment of nonhuman things and humans as nonhuman things. Ed Russell seems to fall into the same trap that Africanists have fallen into: a failure to consider seriously the role of nature and technology in the behavior of humans. Instead, technology and nature have remain subaltern to humans, when in fact they are what makes humans people.

Back to Africa, the situation in Zimbabwe today challenges and dismisses claims to the exceptionalism of colonial violence, not so much because colonialism was better,

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<sup>6</sup> Achille Mbembe, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” *Public Culture* 14 (winter 2002): 239- 73.

but merely that African nationalism as used in Zimbabwe as a tool to oppress has disgraced itself. In fact, it is not a question of successional but cumulative pathologies of violence towards nature and people before and after colonialism.

Here is Zimbabwe today. In the eyes of the state, citizens who offer an opinion different from the ZANU (PF) party line are no longer just pests of the human or animal variety but “weeds” as well. The notion of *weeding out traitors* has always been a hallmark of Mugabe’s political life since the 1970s when he ascended to the ZANU presidency through execution, incarceration and torture of his opponents in Mozambican guerrilla camps. In the 1980s, Mugabe first caricatured his political rival Joshua Nkomo as a “traitor” conspiring with first the Soviet Union and then South Africa “to organize dissident groups for the purpose of destabilizing the country and finally to overthrow [me].”

To add credibility to these stories, the state ‘discovered’ large arms caches on farms owned by NITRAM, a business consortium that former ZIPRA guerrillas had formed to help themselves reintegrate into society. It was the speed with which the state-run press got to the sites of discovery that shocked the country. While addressing a rally in the eastern city of Marondera in February 1982, Mugabe declared: “ZAPU and its leader, Dr. Joshua Nkomo, are like a cobra in a house. The only way to deal effectively with a snake is to strike and destroy its head.”<sup>7</sup> 20,000 ZAPU supporters were massacred, and Nkomo wrote the letter cited here from exile in London because he had been declared *persona non grata* in the country he had fought for as a nationalist. The government used the same Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) and Unlawful

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<sup>7</sup> “Joshua Nkomo’s Letter,” Zimbabwe Metro www.[zimbabwemetro.com](http://zimbabwemetro.com) November 22, 2007; Dr Joshua Nkomo to Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, 7th June, 1983: “Informative Letter to Prime Minister Mugabe.”

Organizations Act the Rhodesians had passed to deal with nationalism to now hunt down the snake and confiscate the Nitram farms.

Mobs of ZANU (PF) youths prowl the rural countryside and streets, “chanting war songs, dragging people out of their homes and beating them up with sticks, iron rods and axes.” In May 2005 Mugabe authorized *Operation Murambatsvina*. *Murambatsvina* is “someone who refuses dirt”: Mugabe himself. The operation was meant to clean out the dirt (slum dwellings, ‘tuck-shops’, and backyard shacks) that carried pathogens (the MDC) that were now making Mugabe unpopular. The dirt was not so much in the materiality of the dwelling structures but that which dwelleth in them: urbanites, the bedrock of MDC support and organization. This operation was sold as an urban clean-up campaign to—as Mugabe put it—create “salubrious” spaces and bring the city back to what it used to be in the colonial period. Hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers watched helplessly as their houses were torn down by bulldozers. Those rendered homeless were bundled into trucks and dumped at remote farms with no shelter as the winter cold closed in. These farms were typical of the Protected Villages that we saw the Rhodesians using in Chapter 7. But there was another communist-inspired dimension: many others were displaced to the rural areas, which at the time ZANU (PF) claimed to be its strongholds. There they would be “re-educated” and rehabilitated back to the nationalist project. At that stage, ZANU (PF) was still at the level of pest control.

*Murambatsvina* was a mild case of internal displacement in contrast to *Operation Makavhotera Papi* (Where Did You Put Your Vote?), in reference to the electoral majority the people delivered to the MDC in the March 29 2008 plebiscite. After ‘cooking up’ the presidential election figures to ensure that Tsvangirai did not get a clear

majority and therefore necessitate a run-off, the state launched a Gukurahundi-style campaign to destroy the MDC before the next election set for June 27. The ZNA and ZANU (PF) militia went on the rampage. The choice was clear: “Your choice is your bullet.”<sup>8</sup>

Then as now, the party gangs act like real hunters and their prey (people whose only crime was to exercise their right to choose who must govern them) experience their menacing mobilities as such. Said one woman about his assailants: “They hunt the opposition. They said they ate human liver and drank urine during the war and so they were prepared for war again.”<sup>9</sup> True—the guerrillas had endured the latter experience when the RSF poisoned all waterholes in the 1970s. At the time, however, the guerrillas were saying they were fighting to free the people from the oppression of the ‘whites’. Now the ‘liberators’ are using the RSF methods to deny people the freedom they promised. They now behave as RENAMO had done in the 1980s—from just beatings, the army and militias are waging a full-blown military campaign of abductions, killings, rape, arson, and thefts. What becomes the status of being human when, for example, women have “wooden poles thrust into their vaginas”? What is the difference between the death of a person and that of an animal when the killers murder their targets, put the body on the back of the Mitsubishi 4 x 4 trucks and drive around the townships shouting: “We have killed the dog”?<sup>10</sup>

The instruments they use to hunt down their prey span generations and geographies. They expose the nature of the pest as something to be destroyed but that

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<sup>8</sup> Chris McGreal, “Choose Mugabe or Face a Bullet,” *The Zimbabwe Times* [www.thezimbabwetimes.com](http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com) June 18, 2008: 1 of 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

may not be edible; the tools for the job should be seen as pesticides. What are these? First there are the less obvious ones that analytically fit the overall purpose of *going after the pest*. The gangs move in sleek Mitsubishi 4 x 4 trucks, carrying sticks, spears and knives, tear gas canisters from Israel imported via South Africa by sea, Chinese AK-47 rifles, RPG-7 and mortar bombs. They go door to door, beating and killing anybody associated with the opposition. These are the instruments for the mobile workshop of violence. The vehicles take the assailants to their victims and enables the use of the killing instruments.<sup>11</sup>

The trucks are instruments of abduction in areas where there are roads or drivable tracks. Otherwise the feet are the main mode of ‘the chase’: gangs arrive in numbers at the home of the suspected MDC supporter or official, seize them, their wives and their children and take them to their camp. The *modus operandi* resembles the hunt as described throughout the chapters: the outsiders used such local human resources to create village intelligence and other networks. ZANU (PF) anchors in the local village through local collaborators—the chief, councilors, headmen, and youth. These locals become the nucleus of village intelligence cells which prepare ‘hit lists’. While the party uses the local people and hit lists as instruments to control and eradicate its opponents, some locals are using this affiliation to ZANU (PF) to settle their own family or local scores and loot wealth for themselves.

At the bush camps the hunters mete out punishment that transforms the human body to a mere carcass—a piece of flesh without the dignity of humanity. Like hunters skinning a carcass, four men—and women—hold down the victim’s two legs and two arms apart. A fifth grabs the head and shuts the victim’s mouth with either palms or a

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

cloth tied to the back of the neck so that the victim cannot scream. Then one or more other assailants armed with heavy wooden poles take turns to thrash the victim on the buttocks for hours. When they are through, they leave a mess of raw flesh, the buttocks virtually gone. Husbands, wives, children, mothers, fathers—the whole village—are made to watch as the victim is beaten, kicked, burnt, and sliced to death. Slowly. The assailants chant songs against and spit insults at the MDC, a way of pacing their rhythm as they work on the prostrate body. The victims are told they are getting treatment befitting animals because they belong to or voted for “a party of animals.” Afterwards the victims are thrown own out into the hot sun without food or water: “If we asked for water, they said: ‘Get your water from Tsvangirai’.”<sup>12</sup>

When ZANU (PF) leaves its victims alive, it is a deliberate move to *control* by traumatizing them—and every one of their kin—into fleeing their homes and constituencies. Because one can only vote in the constituency where they are registered, the strategy is to prevent them from casting their vote at all. However, the militias have now switched into *eradication* mode, from village to village. People now dread the night and early morning, the best time for the hunter to pounce on his sleeping prey. Some on the hit list are designated targets of fatal torture: boiling plastic mixed with paraffin is poured on their backs and private parts. The goal is to extract the identities of MDC members and their hideouts.<sup>13</sup>

Some MDC victims crack under torture and are then *turned*, Selous Scouts-style. It becomes difficult to trust anybody because nobody knows who the next person really

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Osborne, “How One Woman’s Extraordinary Bravery is a Haunting Rebuke to a World that is Ignoring Mugabe’s Genocide,” Mail on Sunday <http://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/news/article-566517/How-womans-extraordinary-bravery-haunting-rebuke-world-ignoring-Mugabes-genocide.html> 15 May 2008.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

is. Like animals pursued with gunfire, so too do people live in a state of permanent fear and suspicion. The phones are wire-tapped, they are being watched, and, as the late reggae singer Bob Marley once said, “Your best friend might be your worst enemy.”<sup>14</sup> Like in the 1970s, the knock on the door strikes fear among those inside the house.

Some of the methods have gone beyond the sadistic. There are cases where beaten victims are forced to climb a tree with a rope round their neck and being told to jump so that they “commit suicide.” It closely resembles the ‘trap gun’ we saw in Chapter 1, where an animal trips the bait and ‘shoots itself’. The sadistic part is that local villagers are being compelled to feed their tormenters who will kill them at a time of their choosing. The tormenters live off the land and ‘kill for the pot’. Every family is required to contribute food to the militias because they are protecting villagers from MDC violence! Those who do not will have revealed their true colors: they are sellouts, and just like in the 1970s, the penalty is death.<sup>15</sup>

The villagers each have a ration card for receiving food from non-governmental organizations. ZANU (PF) has long used food as a weapon to bribe rural people to vote for it; not anymore. It is now depriving people of food to starve them to death; that way, the enemy is eliminated. The NGOs have been banned; all food is distributed by ZANU (PF) officials, using a checklist of names, and rewarding or punishing based on political loyalties.<sup>16</sup>

The rhetorics fueling the violence are reminiscent of other regions of the world. In Rwanda, the Hutu leadership and militia were inciting their followers to kill “Tutsi

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<sup>14</sup> Bob Marley, Who the Cap Fit <http://www.seeklyrics.com/lyrics/Bob-Marley/Who-The-Cap-Fit.html>

<sup>15</sup> Osborne, “One Woman’s Extraordinary Bravery.”

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Cockroaches.”<sup>17</sup> The philosophy of violence was first to reduce the humanity of the enemy to the level of a pest that must be squashed. Besides the language of “cobras” and “weeds,” the rhetorics of ‘wild Africans’, who just cannot be thankful that the state is sparing their lives when they must surely die, is strong. The government has gone further to render the pathology of opposition to it more grotesque. Says the police chief, Augustine Chihuri: “We must clean the country of the crawling maggots bent on destroying the economy.”<sup>18</sup>

In his latest threats, which are very reminiscent of his ‘tough-guy’ rhetoric of the 1970s which passed for heroic and dogged resistance against ‘colonialism’, Robert Mugabe has gone a step even further than Ian Smith was prepared to. The election “campaign” in Zimbabwe has turned out to be a military campaign. A few days prior to

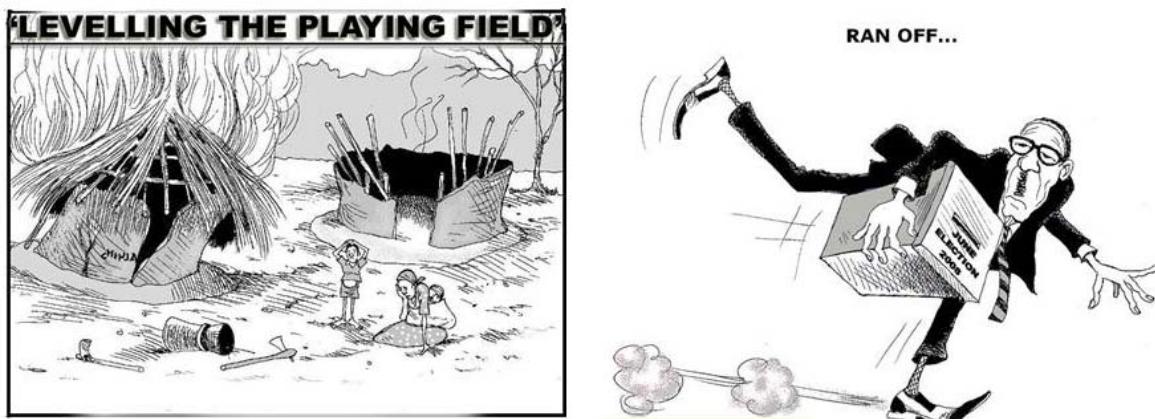


Fig. 15 A Cartoonist's Depiction of the 'Election Campaign' (left) and the Meaning of a 'Run Off Election' in Mugabe's Zimbabwe

Source: New Zimbabwe. Com [www.newzimbabwe.com](http://www.newzimbabwe.com) June 26 and 28 June 2008

the run-off before MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai, Mugabe declared he would lead his war veterans back to the bush to fight another war if people voted his rival into power: “We fought for this country, and a lot of blood was shed. We are not going to give

<sup>17</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Osborne, “One Woman’s Extraordinary Bravery.”

up our country because of a mere X. How can a ballpoint fight with a gun? We are ready to go to war.” In reality, Mugabe has always been at war, even when he seems to be practising peace. These are the exact words Mugabe has uttered consistently since his ascendancy to ZANU (PF) leadership in 1976:

- “Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any votes we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer—its guarantor” (1976).
- “Our party must continue to strike fear in the heart of the white man, our real enemy!” (December 2000).
- “We are no longer going to ask for the land but we are going to take it without negotiating” (2000).
- “We have degrees in violence” (2000).
- “When they criticize the Government … we take the position that they can go hang” (2007).
- “Let the people’s voice thunder across the whole country on 29 March, rejecting and damning once and for all the bootlicking British stooges, the traitors and sellouts, the political witches and political prostitutes, political charlatans and the two-headed political creatures” (2008).<sup>19</sup>

As pests, people no longer deserve the dignity of size: through violence and rhetoric, they are reduced to smaller nonhuman entities. In such small social sizes (importance), the pathogens can be squashed to death in their numbers without arousing the conscience of Africa and the world. The cultural weight that normally clothes the body into something whose life and death is meaningful and important is removed; the pathogens can now be eradicated without trace, without care for the feelings of their loved ones. Maggots have no relatives. The relatives and friends must watch, so that they realize that if they genuinely love their kin that much, the power is in them to keep them alive and not have the same fate befall them. They can “vote properly next time.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Jan Raath in Harare and Catherine Philp, “Robert Mugabe warns Zimbabwe’s voters: ‘How can a pen fight a gun?’” *The Times* (UK), June 17, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Osborne, “How One Woman’s Extraordinary Bravery.”

Then there are the traditional pesticides or herbicides. On 18 June 2008, Zimbabwe's respected online newspaper, *The Zimbabwe Times*, carried a report confirming that Mugabe's militias had unleashed chemical warfare on supporters of the MDC. The assailants were allegedly applying highly toxic herbicides to the injuries of their victims, particularly those on buttocks, "to exacerbate pain as well as increase the chances of fatality." At that point, the use of the chemicals had not yet come to light because doctors "have only been content with treating the injuries instead of investigating the causes of their extent, particularly the peeling of the outer skin, blistering, ulceration and cell death in skin tissues."<sup>21</sup>

The gangs were using Paraquat—a highly toxic herbicide which is fatal if it enters the bloodstream or when swallowed by accident even in small measures. It is a quick-acting, non-selective herbicide, which destroys green plant tissue on contact, which is why farmers use it widely to kill any green weeds in the fields. Said a government source sympathetic to the MDC:

When they beat up perceived MDC supporters they then proceed to pour cold water laced with Paraquat on the injuries. Apart from increasing the pain, this inflames the injuries and prolongs the healing process.... If you carefully look at the injuries sustained by some of the opposition victims, especially those sustained in the buttocks through beating, you can see that they are unusual and not consistent with beating. Bones in buttocks are left exposed and grisly. The herbicide eats through the tissues, hence the horrific sight of the injuries.

Paraquat is a widely used herbicide first produced for commercial purposes in 1961 and is banned in thirteen countries for its acute oral toxicity and ill-health associated with its operations particularly on the farms and plantations.

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<sup>21</sup> "Chemical Warfare Waged on Civilians," *The Zimbabwe Times* [www.thezimbabwetimes.com](http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com) June 18, 2008; 1 of 3.

The word ‘Black Smith’ has become common parlance in Zimbabwean public discourse as a way of saying that the ‘postcolonial’ regime has failed to differentiate itself from the ‘colonial’ (Ian Smith). The strong pretence Mugabe makes towards Pan-Africanism (black solidarity) and African nationalism has revealed itself to be no more than a convenient shield to camouflage state terror. In the streets and villages of Zimbabwe people are now drawing comparisons between the colonial and postcolonial oppressors. ‘What if Mugabe was white and Smith was a black man; would Africa have confronted Smith the way it did, and would it have treated Mugabe so leniently while he terrorizes his own people?’ people ask.

I do not think so. In 1980, people were promised that the era when they were treated like animals was gone. The ‘liberation war’ had been waged to guarantee ‘one man, one vote’ (a very chauvinistic framing!). The barrel of the gun had been used so that every adult would have the right to exercise their will through the barrel of the pen. Yet, twenty eight years later, pesticides are being used again to ‘add salt to injury’ and render the wounds of the ‘sellouts’ fatal. Their only crime is to exercise the right for which the gun was fired and spilled blood: voting. The very same president who declared that the gun barrel would empower the majority in Zimbabwe to vote for the leaders they like now says the bullet is mightier than the ballot.

At 84 years old, Robert Mugabe has become a self-appointed King of Zimbabwe. He yearns for and invokes the absolute powers precolonial monarchs enjoyed, deploys Rhodesian methods of controlling rebellious *movements* (mass action, grassroots mobilization, rallies, and so on), while wearing the postcolonial camouflage that every dictator uses to stifle opposition: anti-colonialism. The raging debate on Zimbabwe

among scholars of Africa seems to suggest that Pan-Africanism (with Mugabe as one of its major icons) has reduced itself to a scandal, a veritable cloak with which privileged political elites cover their bulging stomachs, even as ‘their people’ are starving to death, dying of AIDS, and wallowing in poverty. Pan-Africanism has become just another nice cover for a heinous treatment of the ordinary man, woman and child as if they were pests.

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