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# **‘Mabhurandaya’: The Malawian Diaspora in Zimbabwe: 1895 to 2008**

By

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## DECLARATION

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I declare that the thesis hereby submitted by me for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university or institution for any degree, diploma, or other qualification. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

Signed: 

**Anusa Daimon**

Bloemfontein

## DEDICATIONS

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*To my wife Zenah 'ZetBee' for her undying support in my academic career; to my daughter Alice 'Lilo' for her sacrifices and son Alvin 'Vinboy' for the funny thesis typing and gaming moments together; to the memory of my grandparents N'ona, Nadzonzi and Anusa, as well as all my departed Malawian diasporic interviewees. It is bittersweet, indeed, that they did not live to see their voices in print.*

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis historicizes the connections between identity, marginality and agency amongst an African diasporic community in Zimbabwe. It uses the case of people of Malawian ancestry or *Mabhurandaya* as a window into examining how their experiences in Zimbabwe, from the 1890s until the inception of the Government of National Unity in 2008, were shaped by various dynamics. More specifically, it situates and historicizes the place of identity in the marginalization of the Malawian diaspora in Zimbabwe and their counter-initiatives in managing and adapting to challenges. Having come into Zimbabwe initially as migrants under the colonial labour migration (*Chibaro/Mthandizi*) system before gradually settling down permanently as part of a diasporic minority, some Malawian descendants carved a niche for themselves in what became their permanent 'home'. Malawian identities emerged and were constructed, imagined, as well as contested in various spaces across Zimbabwe. Fluid and multiple identities were fashioned or negotiated based on foreign ancestry, migration experiences, ethnicity, gender, class, education and unique socio-cultural motifs. Officially dubbed 'native aliens' by the Rhodesian state and later simply as 'aliens' by the post-colonial state, or more commonly as *Mabhurandaya* by the Zimbabwean indigenes, Malawian communities became an integral component of Zimbabwean social, economic and political history. Nonetheless, the colonial and post-colonial state historically marginalised migrant descendants with diasporas living as minorities in states of unbelonging. At the same time, the Malawian diaspora exerted individual and collective agency to cope and adapt to the several challenges and anxieties they faced in Zimbabwe. They made their own history, and found ways to assert and express themselves. Their experiences were not homogenous but were multi-layered, varying according to gender, age, education, occupation and settlement. They were also multi-dimensional and often cyclical in nature, manifesting themselves in intricate life cycles of marginality and agency over time. The thesis provides a critical and historical analysis of the above dynamics, which is empirically grounded in specific case studies across Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Mabhurandaya, Migration, Diaspora, Labour, Identity, Marginality, Agency, Malawi, Zimbabwe

## OPSOMMING

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Hierdie tesis problematiseer en historiseer die verbande tussen identiteit, marginaliteit en bemiddeling in 'n diasporiese Afrika-gemeenskap in Zimbabwe. Dit fokus op mense van Malawiese afkoms, of *Mabhurandaya*, en stel ondersoek in na die wyse waarop hulle ervarings in Zimbabwe, van die 1890's tot die instelling van die Regering van Nasionale Eenheid in 2008, vorm gegee is deur verskillende dinamikas. Meer spesifiek situeer en historiseer dit die plek van identiteit in die marginalisering van die Malawiese diasporiese gemeenskap in Zimbabwe en hulle teen-inisiatiewe om uitdagings te bestuur en daarby aan te pas. Nadat hierdie mense Zimbabwe oorspronklik binnegekom het as migrante onder die koloniale arbeidsmigrasiebedeling (*Chibaro/Mthandizi*-stelsel), het hulle geleidelik permanent gevestig geraak as deel van 'n diasporiese minderheid. Sommige Malawiese afstammelingen het mettertyd 'n nis gevind in wat hulle permanente tuiste sou word. Malawiese identiteite het te voorskyn gekom en is gekonstrueer, verbeeld en betwis in verskeie ruimtes en plekke regoor Zimbabwe. Vloeibare en veelvuldige identiteite is gevorm of beding op grond van buitelandse afkoms, migrasie-ervarings, etnisiteit, geslag, klas, onderwyspeil en unieke sosiokulturele motiewe. Malawiërs is amptelik as 'inheemse vreemdelinge' deur die Rhodesiese staat geïdentifiseer en later bloot as 'vreemdelinge' deur die postkoloniale staat. Onder inheemse Zimbabweërs was hulle bekend as *Mabhurandaya*. Hierdie gemeenskappe het 'n integrale komponent van die Zimbabweese sosiale, ekonomiese en politieke geskiedenis geword. Nieteenstaande die bogenoemde het die koloniale en postkoloniale staat migrante-afstammelingen, wat as geïsoleerde minderhede bestaan het, histories gemarginaliseer. Terselfdertyd het die Malawiese diasporiese gemeenskap individuele en kollektiewe bemiddeling aangewend om die veelvuldige uitdagings waarmee hulle in Zimbabwe gekonfronteer is, te bowe te kom. Hulle het hul eie geskiedenis gemaak en maniere gevind om hul menslikheid te handhaaf en uitdrukking daaraan te gee. Hulle ervarings was nie eenvormig van aard nie maar veelvlakkig, en is beïnvloed deur geslag, ouderdom, onderwyspeil, beroep en nedersetting. Dit was ook multidimensioneel en dikwels siklies van aard, en het gemanifesteer in ingewikkelde lewensiklusse van marginaliteit en bemiddeling oor tyd heen. Die tesis bied 'n kritiese en historiese ontleding van die bogenoemde dinamika en is empiries gefundeer in spesifieke gevallestudies regoor Zimbabwe.

Sleutelwoorde: *Mabhurandaya*, Migrasie, Diaspora, Arbeid, Identiteit, Marginaliteit, Bemiddeling, Malawi, Zimbabwe.



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
APA	African Purchase Area
AUT	Association of University Teachers
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South Africa Police
CAF	Central African Federation
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CYL	City Youth League
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EHPL	Eastern Highlands Plantation Limited
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FMWA	Foreign Migratory Workers Act
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GAPWUZ	General Agricultural Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
JAG	Justice for Agriculture
KAR	Kings African Rifles
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MNA	Malawi National Archives
NA	National Archives United Kingdom
NAC	Nyasaland African Congress
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NC	Native Commissioner
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly

NDP	National Democratic Party
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
NRZ	National Railways of Zimbabwe
PEA	Portuguese East Africa
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PV	Protected Villages
RAR	Rhodesian African Rifles
RhAF	Rhodesian Air Force
RICU	Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
RNFU	Rhodesian National Farmers' Union
RNLB	Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau
RNLSC	Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
RUCL	Rhodes University Cory Library
SADC	Southern African Development Commission
SWANLA	South West Africa Native Labour Association
TPA	Tripartite Migrant Labour Agreements
TTL	Tribal Trust Lands
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK	United Kingdom
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Student Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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<i>Askaris</i>	African soldiers who served in World War One and Two
<i>Azungu</i>	White persons or Europeans
<i>Beni</i>	Mimicked military dance performed by the Yao people
<i>Beria</i>	Burial society
<i>Boma</i>	District Administration Officer in colonial Malawi
<i>Chambo</i>	A bream type of fish found in Lake Malawi and subsidiary rivers
<i>Chibaro</i>	Contract and forced labour or slavery
<i>Chibeula</i>	Medical examination of migrant labourers
<i>Chigumura</i>	Retrenchment
<i>Chigwirizano</i>	Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland
<i>Chimurenga</i>	Liberation war or revolutionary struggle
<i>Chinamwali</i>	Yao male and female circumcision rites
<i>Chitikinyani</i>	Juvenile identity certificate
<i>Chitupa</i>	Adult identity card
<i>Dambwe</i>	Gule Wamkulu shrine
<i>Dimba</i>	Small subsistence farming field in Malawi
<i>Gukurahundi</i>	First rains that wash away chaff - euphemism for the 1982-87 Matabeleland massacres
<i>Gule Wamkulu</i>	The big or great dance performed by the <i>Nyau</i> society
<i>Hondo yeMinda</i>	Land reform or Agrarian revolution
<i>Jambanja</i>	Violence
<i>Jando</i>	Sacred Yao male initiation bush camps
<i>Katundu</i>	Load or baggage carried by labour migrants to and from the south
<i>Kukiya-kiya</i>	Multiple forms of making do or making ends meet
<i>Kumudzi</i>	Home (Malawi)
<i>Kwacha</i>	Malawian currency
<i>Laundi</i>	Thrift society or credit union
<i>Lobola</i>	Bride wealth or bride price
<i>Mabhurandaya</i>	Those from Blantyre or generally from Malawi
<i>Mabwidi</i>	Urbanized Africans without a rural home

<i>Machona</i>	The lost ones - migrant labourers who left Malawi and never returned.
<i>Madobadoba</i>	Recruitment agents and touts
<i>Makarushi</i>	Africans from Mozambique
<i>Makwere-kwere</i>	African foreigners in South Africa
<i>Mamosikeni</i>	Africans from Mozambique
<i>Manyasarande</i>	Those from Nyasaland
<i>Mangoromera</i>	Fighting charm
<i>Mapoto</i>	Informal conjugal alliances or temporary marriages
<i>Maricho</i>	Piece jobs
<i>Mthandizi</i>	Term for RNLB. Also loosely used to refer to <i>Chibaro</i>
<i>Mugwazo</i>	Field ploughing task
<i>Mutengesi</i>	Sell-out
<i>Mwadiya</i>	Small river boat or canoe
<i>Mzungu</i>	White employer or white man
<i>Njinga</i>	Bicycle
<i>Nkondo</i>	Chewa word for war or conflict
<i>Ny asas</i>	Africans from Nyasaland
<i>Piccanin</i>	Juvenile labourer
<i>Runde</i>	Gule Wamkulu shrine
<i>Serefu</i>	Voluntary or self-migration
<i>Siyara</i>	Yao annual Islamic celebration
<i>Sungura</i>	Zimbabwean secular music
<i>Ulendo</i>	Chewa word for 'journey' but was also used to refer to 'a party of travellers' or groups of migrant workers travelling south from Nyasaland
<i>Ulere</i>	Southern Rhodesian free transport service and welfare facilities for labour migrants
<i>Vabvakure</i>	Those from afar in Nyasaland
<i>Vana vevhu</i>	Sons and daughters of the soil
<i>Vatevera Njanji</i>	Those who followed the railway line to Southern Rhodesia
<i>Zida</i>	Weapons or firearms
<i>Zilombo</i>	Gule Wamkulu masked dancers



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## CHAPTER ONE

# DOCUMENTING MALAWIAN DIASPORA IN ZIMBABWE: SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

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### Introduction

The thesis focuses on the social history of an African diasporic community, examining the interface between identity, marginality and agency among such communities in Zimbabwe. Using the case of people of Malawian origin, commonly known as *Mabhurandaya*,<sup>1</sup> it investigates how their experiences in Zimbabwe from about 1895 until the inception of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2008, were shaped by various dynamics. More specifically, it situates and historicizes the place of identity in the marginalization of Malawian descendants in Zimbabwe and their counter-initiatives as they asserted and expressed themselves in a foreign space that over time became their permanent home. *Mabhurandaya* first appeared on the Zimbabwean plateau as the Maravi in the pre-colonial era interacting with the Mutapa State and its people at various levels in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup> These early Maravi migrants set the foundation for future Malawian contacts and infiltrations into Southern Rhodesia and its subsequent post-colonial Zimbabwean state.<sup>3</sup> With the coming of

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<sup>1</sup> *Mabhurandaya* is a colloquial term commonly used to refer to people of Malawian descent in Zimbabwe. It literally translates to 'those from Blantyre or Blantynes' in reference to the Malawian city of Blantyre from which Malawian migrants came from. The label is a bastardization of the name Blantyre, which at one point was the capital of colonial Malawi. Blantyre was the main source or hub from which labour migrants from southern and central Malawi would converge and depart to colonial Zimbabwe. It has both positive and negative connotations depending on the circumstances and context but is generally used derogatorily. The term is quite popular among ordinary indigenous Zimbabweans and is interchangeably used with other labels such as *Manyasarande*, *Vatevera Njanji*, *Mabwidi* and *Vabvakure*. In Malawi, these diaspora migrants who have never returned home are known as *Machona* or the 'lost ones'.

<sup>2</sup> See variously, S. Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*, Harare: ZPH, 1988; I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambezi States*, New York: Altamina Press, 2001, p. 251, and G. Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, c.850-880s', in B. Raftopoulos and A. Mlambo, (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> The derivation of the names Malawi and Nyasaland (colonial) is not clear. When explorer David Livingstone first reached Lake Malawi, he called it Lake Nyassa - a term derived from the word Nyanja, which means 'lake' in the indigenous Chewa language. Early Portuguese explorers who reached the area in the 16<sup>th</sup> century recorded a powerful kingdom called Maravi, which seems to have covered much of southern Malawi, as well as parts of Mozambique and Zambia. They also referred to the lake and the local people as Maravi, but it is not clear if the name of the people was derived from the lake, or vice-versa. At independence a commission was established to find a new name for the country. Malawi was chosen, officially inspired by the word *malavi/maravi*, which means reflected light, haze, flames or rays in Chichewa. This new name was seen as a reference to the sun rising over the lake, bringing fresh light to the country. It may also be connected to the Maravi people, although no people

colonialism, the broad Maravi label assumed many identities. Colonial settlers categorized Malawian migrant labourers as *native aliens*, *native foreigners*, Nyasas, Nyasaland Africans, Blantynes, northerners, or simply as aliens.<sup>4</sup>

In Malawi, those who permanently joined labour migration and never returned came to be known as the *Machona* (the lost ones).<sup>5</sup> The Nyasaland colonial government also adopted and extensively used this nomenclature in reference to the 'wayward' African labour exports who trekked south and never returned.<sup>6</sup> Indigenous Zimbabweans also gave the Malawian diaspora colloquial names. Before Malawian independence in 1964, local people commonly labelled the migrants as Nyasas in reference to Nyasaland or colonial Malawi. After 1964, the name Malawians was added to their nomenclature. Even though many settled down permanently and gradually transformed from migrants to fully-fledged members of the Zimbabwean society, much of the taxonomy and prejudices followed them into the post-colonial period. The post-independent Zimbabwean state inherited the derogatory colonial construct and categorization by officially labelling non-indigenous Zimbabweans as 'Aliens'

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of this name inhabit Malawi today. For further details see J. McCracken, *A History of Malawi: 1859-1966*, Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012, pp. 19-25; D. Else, *Malawi: Much More Than Just a Lake*, Victoria: Lonely Planet, 2001, p. 14; J.M. Schoffeleers, 'The Meaning and Use of the Name Malawi in Oral Traditions and Pre-colonial Documents', in B. Pachai, (ed.), *The Early History of Malawi*, Evanston: North-Eastern University Press, 1972, p. 91; T. Price, 'More about the Maravi', *Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA)*, 11, 1952, p. 75; M.G. Marwick, 'History and Tradition in East Central Africa through the Eyes of the Northern Rhodesian Chewa', *Journal of African History*, 4, 3, 1963, p. 378; I. and J. Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland: 1889-1939*, London: Heinemann, 1974, and J.G. Pike, *Malawi: A Political and Economic History*, London: Pall Mall, 1968, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> N[ational] A[rchives] of Z[imbabwe], F128/1MM24, Federal Archives, Immigration Department, Aliens versus Native Aliens, Immigration Annual Reports 1955-1957; N[ational] A[rchives, Kew, UK] CO525/167/1, and Native Labour: Report by J.C. Abraham on Nyasaland Natives in the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, 1937.

<sup>5</sup> Informal interaction with Gift Kayira, Head of History Department and George Jawali, Lecturer, University of Malawi Chancellor College, Zomba, Malawi, 02 March 2015. See also McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 184. The term '*Machona*' has a long etymology; it is derived from the Nguni/Zulu word '*ukuchona*' meaning disappearing. This was used by the Ndebele in reference to the local Shona people who vanished into hills during raids and was infused into the other Central African languages through the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Mfecane* migrations under which the Ngoni who settled in Malawi spread it into the local Chewa and other Malawian languages. Therefore, migrant labourers who did not return home to Malawi were and are still seen to have vanished or disappeared (*kuchona*) or lost. Even those who managed to come back after a long time, (for example, those who were retrenched in the 1990s at Dalny Mine in Chakari or at Triangle Sugar Estates due to the 1992 drought); were not seen as true Malawians but as *Machona* who finally came back. Even their offspring were and are identified as foreign and as children of the *Machona* by local Malawian communities. This terminology is not common in Zimbabwe where Malawian descendants are the *Mabhurandayas* (the *Blantynes*). See also McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 184.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter two discusses the problem that the Nyasaland government had in tracking these *Machona* at the behest of their concerned relatives at home and for the purposes of revenue (family remittances and deferred pay).

for purposes of governance, resources/rights access and electoral manipulation. Ordinary Zimbabweans continued to label Malawian diasporic communities as *Mabhurandaya* (Blantynes); *Manyasarande* (those from Nyasaland); *Vatevera Njanji* (those who followed the railway line on foot); *Vabvakure* (those who came from afar); *Mabwidi* (those without rural homes); or simply as the 'totem-less ones'. Most of these identities are social constructions within a broader theatre that has always existed before and after colonialism. These people form the basis of this study.

Malawians migrated in waves; initially during the pre-colonial Mutapa empire period in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and later from 1895 until the early 1970s as part of migrant labour pools under the infamous colonial labour migration (*Chibaro/Mthandizi*) system when Nyasaland acted as a labour reservoir for Zimbabwean and South African colonial capitalist economies.<sup>7</sup> Southern Rhodesians embarked on an extensive quest for cheap African migrant labour supply in the region from the 1890s to work on farms, mines and industries. This saw an influx of labourers from Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) such that by 1936 there were 97,525 migrant labourers working or living in the colony, rising to 246,772 by 1951.<sup>8</sup> Nyasa labourers increased from 3,000 in 1903<sup>9</sup> to 75,000 in 1937<sup>10</sup> and about 80,500 by 1947.<sup>11</sup> This was about two-thirds of all Nyasaland migrants (120,000) in Southern Africa.<sup>12</sup> With the further opening of the national boundaries after the establishment of the Central African Federation (CAF) in 1953, the figures grew steadily as many migrants involuntarily and 'voluntarily' flocked to Southern Rhodesia. At the

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<sup>7</sup> C. van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia: 1900-1933*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1976, p. 99, B. Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1995, and I. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe: 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, London: Longman, 1988, pp. 85-6.

<sup>8</sup> NA CO 525/201/1, Report of the Central African Council, 1947, and NAZ S2960, Department of Native Labour, Male Non-Indigenous Natives in Employment, 1951

<sup>9</sup> M. Gelfand, 'Migration of African Labourers in Rhodesia and Nyasaland: 1890-1914', *Central African Journal of Medicine*, 7, 8, 1961, p. 293.

<sup>10</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 16, and M. Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa and Its Effects on Tribal Life', *International Labour Review*, 45, 6, 1942, p. 607. See also NAZ S1561/3/1, CNC Migrant Labour; Nyasaland Matters from Feb 23 1935 to Sep 5 1940; Correspondence from Secretary for Native Affairs to the Prime Minister on Migrant labour agreement (*Machona*), 5 January 1938.

<sup>11</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1947, and Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, p. 217.

<sup>12</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 181. See also NA CO 525/201/1, Report of the Central African Council, 1947; Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 607.

peak of the labour migration system in 1956, there were close to 300,000 migrant workers from the region working on Southern Rhodesian farms, mines and secondary industries, with approximately 130,000 being from Nyasaland.<sup>13</sup> By 1973, they were approximately 250,000 men, women and children of Malawian descent living in the colony.<sup>14</sup>

Malawian diasporic communities became an integral component of Zimbabwean labour history. Many, however, found themselves on the periphery of the Zimbabwean society. Most found employment and lived on commercial farms, mines, and sugar and tea plantations across Zimbabwe. Some worked in urban areas and lived under the colonial hostel system in black townships. Others, as shall be shown later, used their mission education to become part of the economic and political elite. Malawian cultures and identities emerged and were constructed, imagined, as well as contested in the above spaces or localities, as the migrants carved their space in foreign terrain. Multiple Malawian identities were fashioned or negotiated on the basis of their foreign ancestry, migration experiences, ethnicity, gender, class, education and unique cultural traits that embodied such popular practices as male and female circumcision rites, *Beni* dances, *Gule Wamkulu* and mutual aid societies. The colonial state manipulated such traits in order to manage and categorize Malawian migrants as 'native aliens' and stereotyped their labour for the benefit of the Rhodesian economy. However, as noted by Parry, in most cases African migrants also manipulated ethnic stereotyping for specific socio-economic reasons, as well as to duplicate and extend colonial 'invented' hegemonic control in a foreign space.<sup>15</sup>

Despite their contributions to Southern Rhodesia's economic development, African worker consciousness and early nationalism on mines and urban areas, colonial categorizations of Malawian descendants and other regional diasporic minorities continued into independent Zimbabwe. The alien identity tag persisted after 1980 with masked implications for their lives. Being alien and of Malawian descent, especially in the post-2000 period, was often arduous

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<sup>13</sup> NA CO1015/2537, Inter-territorial Migrant Labour Association: Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1960-2.

<sup>14</sup> R.B. Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad; The History of Labour Emigration from Malawi to its Neighbours, 1890 to the present', DPhil Thesis, Michigan State University, USA, 1974, p. 239.

<sup>15</sup> R. Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class: The African Experience in Salisbury: 1892-1935', in Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni, (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*, Harare: Weaver Press, 1999, pp. 66-77.

in an environment where identity was politicized and redefined along the contours of ancestry, citizenship, belonging and the nation-state. This reduced many Malawian diaspora, including the second- and third-generation descendants who had never been to Malawi and could not easily claim Malawian citizenship, to non-citizens or strangers. Between 2000 and 2008, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF)-led government dramatically altered and narrowed boundaries of national citizenship in the face of serious political challenges from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the process, migrant descendants were disenfranchised as the state manipulated citizenship for political aggrandizement. With the emergence of the MDC as a formidable oppositional force with a support base comprising town dwellers and commercial farm and mineworkers, their foreign ancestry became an exclusionary curse for migrant descendants. This was apparent during the post-2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and Operation (Restore Order) *Murambatsvina*, as well as during numerous political elections (2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008) where non-indigenous Africans had little say but were still 'othered' and victimized. Existing literature on these processes has generally noted the victimization of foreign migrant minorities, without explicitly examining Malawian descendants and the place of identity and agency in such processes.

This study hypothesizes that many migrants, particularly those of Malawian descent, were not the passive victims often portrayed by current historiography. Instead, much of their history in Zimbabwe was seemingly characterized by a plethora of subaltern initiatives through which they responded to various challenges in foreign spaces. Such agency is historical and has evolved over time. For example, the Maravi in pre-colonial Zimbabwe influenced the political affairs of the Mutapa State. These early pioneers expanded their spheres of influence, assuming a Maravi/North Zambezi identity and laying the basis for subsequent Malawian migrations into colonial Zimbabwe. With the advent of colonial labour migration, Malawians ventured across Southern Africa. Migrant Malawians, some of them mission-educated, were active in labour movements and early political activities that gripped Southern Rhodesia from the 1920s onwards. During the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1979, the Malawian diaspora like local Africans, entered into complex, contradictory and ambiguous relationships with the warring parties in order to survive an extremely fraught period. After Zimbabwean independence, some Malawian descendants consolidated their

place through property acquisition and became influential in political, economic and social circles in their respective settlements. Later on, others managed to survive the challenges emanating from the post-2000 political and economic Zimbabwean crisis. Though many operated on the margins and were victimized because of their ancestry, they navigated obstacles emerging from the land reform, urban clean-up exercises and political disenfranchisement.

The period covered by this dissertation commences around 1895 when Southern Rhodesian mines officially recruited the first Nyasa migrant labourers. This marked the beginning of the migration of increasingly large numbers of Malawians until mid-1970s when post-independent Malawian president Hastings Kamuzu Banda officially ended *Mthandizi*. However, commencing in the 1890s does not overlook the preceding pre-colonial years, which were arguably important in setting the basis from which Malawian diasporic identities and agency can be contextualized and understood. The pre-colonial period provides background information about Malawian interactions on the Zimbabwean plateau through pre-colonial experiences and contacts. The study ends in 2008 at the height of the so-called 'Zimbabwe Crisis' where it captures Malawian diasporic experiences during the volatile environment leading up to the disputed 2008 presidential elections and the inception of the GNU.

### **Migrants or Diasporas? Malawians and the Broader Theoretical Context**

From the 1940s onwards, Malawian labour migrants and their families slowly underwent a process of unbecoming Malawians and becoming Zimbabweans (Rhodesians). Second- and third-generation Malawians born in Southern Rhodesia, as well as *Machona* (lost ones) began to emerge. Though some remained transnational migrants until the late 1960s and early 1970s, many others gradually settled down in colonial Zimbabwe as permanent residents or denizens forming Malawian diasporic communities across the country.<sup>16</sup> Their 'sojourner's

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<sup>16</sup> Denizens are people or migrants who are foreigners in a country but with a legal and permanent resident status emanating from their long stay are also entitled to various socio-economic rights, such as right to work, social benefits, education and health services. See S. Castles and A. Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, p. 94.

mentality gradually gave way to a sense of permanence', marking the transition from migrants to settlers and/or diaspora.<sup>17</sup> Over time, Malawi became an imaginary homeland as the migrants' transnational links with their original/ancestral home faded. They became de facto members of the host Zimbabwean society, but largely remained on its margins. As a result, the word migrant has become an inaccurate umbrella term for this complex story. This thesis conceptualises processes of 'unbecoming and becoming' through the notions of 'diaspora and transnational communities', which Thomas Faist describes as 'awkward dance partners'.<sup>18</sup> While diaspora and transnationalism have been increasingly taken together within international migration scholarship and are sometimes used interchangeably, the two terms reflect different intellectual genealogies. Both of them can usefully be applied to the experiences of people of Malawian ancestry in Zimbabwe. Both notions are useful for the study of central questions of socio-political change and transformation.

Diaspora was initially used to characterize specific (and usually victimized) populations living outside of an (imagined) homeland. The extent to which the experiences of people of Malawian descent in Zimbabwe are typical of diasporic communities, living permanently outside their original homelands, is fundamental to this study. Within the larger framework of transnationalism studies, the term 'transnational communities' evokes continuous ties across states' physical borders. It is often used both more narrowly to refer to migrants' durable ties across countries, and more widely, to capture not only communities, but also a myriad of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organisations.<sup>19</sup> Transnational settings and dynamics affect the negotiation and reproduction of migrant identities, assimilation and integration into a foreign society.<sup>20</sup> This thesis argues that despite the lack of frequent physical connections to their ancestral homeland, many Malawian descendants maintained intimate transnational ties and networks. Such connections defined and shaped their lives and identities as they interacted with their

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<sup>17</sup> A.P. Davidson and K.E. Kuah-Pearce, 'Diasporic Memories and Identities', in K.E. Kuah-Pearce and A.P. Davidson, (eds), *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora: Memories, Identities and Belongings*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> T. Faist, 'Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners?', in R. Bauböck and T. Faist, (eds), *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> S. Vertovec, 'Transnationalism and Identity', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27, 4, 2001, pp. 573-82.



homeland through kinship networks, remittances, the idea of home, and the transfer and re-transfer of cultural customs and practices.

Numerous Southern African regional studies have engaged and enriched transnational migrant labour histories. Despite close connections, the diaspora concept has not been well represented in such literature. Scholars have discussed the economic and socio-cultural synergies that emerged between migrants' places of origin (homelands) and their diasporic places of employment. In his discussion of Mozambican migrant labourers in South Africa, Patrick Harries documented the hybrid identities and cultural traits that the migrants created in South African mining compounds and frequently took back to Mozambique over the course of their contractual labour obligations.<sup>21</sup> Dunbar Moodie similarly showed how culture and broader identities of Mozambican migrants' on South African gold mines were central for surviving ethnic and work related challenges far from home.<sup>22</sup> In her study of the construction of the Kariba Dam, Julia Tischler detailed how Nyasas, Zambian Gwembe Tonga, Mozambicans and Tanzanian migrant labourers, from across Eastern and Central-Southern Africa, formed bonds of friendship and solidarity, defying 'tribal' divisions established through the compound routines, and maintained transnational ties with their homelands through letters and reports often bemoaning the hard working conditions at the dam.<sup>23</sup> These workers developed cross-cultural connections, involving home culture, dances, music, religion and sports.

This study argues that as migrant labourers increasingly settled down and as successive generations of descendants emerged, transnational linkages became less conspicuous over time. Transnational communities faded and diasporic societies emerged. As a result, this thesis engages with the diaspora concept more than with transnationalism, as most of the people under study literally ceased to be migrants. However, both notions inform Malawian

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<sup>21</sup> P. Harries, 'Slavery, Indenture and Migrant Labour: Maritime Immigration from Mozambique to the Cape, c.1780-1880', in F. Rankin-Smith, L. Phillips, P. Delius, (eds), *A Long Way Home, Migrant Worker Worlds 1800 - 2014*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014, pp. 36-48; Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c1860-1910*, London: James Currey, 1994, and Harries, 'Symbols and sexuality: Culture and Identity on the early Witwatersrand Gold Mines', *Gender and History*, 2, 3, 1990, pp. 318-36.

<sup>22</sup> D. Moodie, 'Ethnic Violence on South African Gold Mines', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 3, 1992, pp. 584-613.

<sup>23</sup> J. Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation: The Kariba Dam Scheme in the Central African Federation*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 153-222.

experiences throughout the thesis. Before 1980 a number of such people permanently settled in urban areas, as well as on farms and mines, culminating in the emergence of many second- third- and fourth-generation descendants who unofficially became naturalized Zimbabweans by birth. All these constitute the diaspora whom the colonial and post-colonial state has historically categorized and marginalized as aliens. While the term diaspora is not commonly associated with Malawian descendants, for contextual and theoretical purposes, this study uses the concept to inform Malawian experiences in foreign spaces. Critics object to the ways diaspora may suggest homogeneity and a historically fixed identity, as well as values and practices within a dispersed population.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, this thesis will argue that Malawian diasporic communities epitomize diversity and multiplicity in identity, culture and experiences over time.

The study's historicization of Malawian diasporic experiences and identities resonates with Roger Brubaker and Fredrick Cooper's analysis of the complex ambiguities of identity. Brubaker and Cooper view identity as a problematic analytical concept that makes intuitive sense to many but which can be slippery to grasp and disaggregate, and has numerous, mutually exclusive functions. Insisting on its fluidity, they assert that 'identity is everywhere and is nowhere. It tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity.)'<sup>25</sup> Its meaning can be situational, plural, contextual, relational or temporal.<sup>26</sup> To circumvent this confusing usage, Brubaker and Cooper propose less-congested alternative terms, arguing that 'the conceptual and theoretical work 'identity' is supposed to do might be done better by other terms, less ambiguous, and unencumbered (unburdened) by the reifying (real) connotations of 'identity'.<sup>27</sup> They suggest terms such as identification, self-understanding, categorization, connectedness, commonality and groupness as alternatives representing a specific aspect of identity. However, this thesis does not dispense the term identity, rather

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<sup>24</sup> Vertovec, 'The Importance of Diasporas', Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper No. 13, University of Oxford, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> R. Brubaker and F. Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', *Theory and Society*, 29, 2001, p. 1, and Cooper and Brubaker, 'Identity' in Cooper, (ed.), *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, pp. 59-91.

<sup>26</sup> F.L. Erni, *Tired of Being a Refugee: Social Identification among Young Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, Geneva: Graduate Institute Publications, 2013, pp. 1-6.

<sup>27</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', p. 1.

using it to represent selected alternatives or variants, in particular identification, categorization and commonality/groupness, in its analysis of Malawian diasporic communities in Zimbabwe.

This study employs identity as a process of identification and categorization of oneself and/or by other people, as well as by 'powerful, authoritative institutions', for example, a nation-state.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, identity is mainly concerned with the act of naming and self-ascription of certain facts to an individual.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, identity can refer to 'self-identification and social location' entailing 'one's sense of who one is, of one's social location, and of how such a person is prepared to act in relation to such social connections as religion and culture'.<sup>30</sup> Thirdly, identity evokes collectiveness, the interaction between an individual and others involving terms such as commonality (having common attributes), connectedness (relational ties that link people) and groupness (having a sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group).<sup>31</sup> Brubaker and Cooper's alternatives to identity are extremely useful for this study and make it easier to focus on specific aspects, chiefly identification and categorization of Malawian diasporic communities in Zimbabwe from within and without them, as well as by the state. The emphasis on collectiveness can explain why migrant descendants belong to a specific group and how they react to challenges and stigmatization within the Zimbabwean political economy. Though for Brubaker and Cooper, identity is almost unusable, the alternatives enable this thesis to use identity in its contested complexity without being forced to add lengthy qualifications to the term.

Various scholars of migration have gone beyond identity and employed other analytical terms. For example, Peter Geschiere has adopted belonging particularly autochthonous belonging, as an analytical concept to problematize citizenship crises that migrants grapple with in foreign countries where their belonging is constantly redefined. He argues that autochthonous belonging is a dormant but re-emerging concept that focuses on the return of

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15; S. Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities in Michael Ondaatje's Fiction', in F. Reitemeier, (ed.), *Strangers, Migrants and Exiles: Negotiating Identity in Literature*, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2012, p. 290.

<sup>29</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 290.

<sup>30</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 291.

the indigenous person or son of the soil in a globalizing world.<sup>32</sup> The interface of autochthony with belonging has created complex but fertile grounds for inclusion and exclusion within a nation-state between the so-called autochthons and allogenes or what Francis Nyamnjoh terms 'insiders and outsiders' or Igor Kopytoff's 'first comers versus late comers'.<sup>33</sup> Along with this global conjecture of belonging, other variables play a crucial role as markers or symbols of belonging, such as religion, culture, race, language and ethnicity. Joseph Mujere has also engaged belonging in his examination of Basotho history in the Dewure Purchase Area in Gutu, Zimbabwe, showing broadly how belonging as a form of identity was instrumental in delimiting and defining exclusivity and power dynamics within communities.<sup>34</sup> The above observations reverberate with diasporic experiences in numerous other settings who encounter such forms of identification perpetrated by the politics of belonging where in the process of nation-building, identity is politicized by powerful state agents. This creates autochthons and/or Sarah Rich-Dorman's 'strangers' or as observed by Neocosmos transforms 'foreign natives to native foreigners' within a nation-state.<sup>35</sup> Malawians and other descendants from within the Southern African Development Commission (SADC) region have been caught in this vortex of identity politics under which the hegemonic state and the autochthons have historically instrumentalized belonging to wilfully include and exclude diasporic communities.

Amartya Sen has discussed the exclusive and explosive nature of identity in his conceptualisation of identity and violence within the politics of global confrontation. He observes that, 'a sense of identity can be a source of pride and joy, strength and confidence; and yet identity can kill - kill with abandon.'<sup>36</sup> A strong and exclusive sense of belonging to one group creates the illusion of a unique identity, which can in many cases carry with it the

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<sup>32</sup> P. Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009, pp. 3-10.

<sup>33</sup> F. Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa*, Dakar: Zed Books, 2006, and I. Kopytoff, *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987, pp. 3-84.

<sup>34</sup> J. Mujere, 'Autochthons, Strangers, Modernising Educationists, and Progressive Farmers: Basotho Struggles for Belonging in Zimbabwe 1930s-2008', PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> S. Rich-Dorman, D. Hammett and P. Nugent, (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*, Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2007, and M. Neocosmos, *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners': Explaining Xenophobia in Post-apartheid South Africa: Citizenship and Nationalism, Identity and Politics*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> A. Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, London: Penguin Books, 2006, p. 1.

perception of distance and divergence from other groups. In other words, within-group solidarity can help to feed between-group discord.<sup>37</sup> With suitable instigation, a fostered sense of identity with one group of people can become a powerful weapon to brutalize another. Violence is therefore, fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities, or what Sen calls 'bellicose identities', on people, championed by proficient artisans of terror. Many contemporary political and social conflicts are as a corollary of identity based divisions or revolve around conflicting claims of disparate identities.<sup>38</sup> Sen points to the infinite sectarian hatreds associated with identity conflicts in Kosovo, Bosnia, Timor, Israel and Palestine, as well as the marshalling of an aggressive Islamic identity along with exploitation of racial divisions in Sudan, Iraq and among Al Qaeda militants.

Such trends are notable in Africa where migrants have been excluded or 'othered' by hegemonic structures. A large corpus of literature exists concerning the 'othering' discourse under which Malawian diasporic communities can be conceptualised.<sup>39</sup> Studies have revealed that the politicised nexus between autochthony and belonging has created complex but fertile grounds for 'othering' within nation-states. African countries have become theatres of conflict between self-acclaimed indigenous citizens and outsiders. Examples from Francophone Africa include the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda where so-called foreign ethnic groups have been brutalized by the so-called autochthons. This identity dilemma has not eluded Anglophone Africa as similar conflicts have been rapidly spreading in the region with disastrous consequences. Memories of the 2008 and 2015 xenophobic attacks in South Africa against the *Makwerekwere* (African foreigners) from across the Limpopo River are still fresh. There were also political election tensions and hostilities in Kenya, Somalia, Zambia, Swaziland and Malawi fuelled by the politics of citizenship and belonging, where migrant minorities - or even political contestants - have been victimised.<sup>40</sup> Such 'othering' patterns largely echo the experiences of

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. xii.

<sup>39</sup> Neocosmos, *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners'*, p. 16; M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996; Rich-Dorman, Hammett and Nugent, (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers*, and L.B. Landau and T. Monson, 'Displacement, Estrangement and Sovereignty: Reconfiguring State Power in Urban South Africa', *Government and Opposition*, 43, 2, 2010, pp. 315-36.

<sup>40</sup> Reference can be made to Kenneth Kaunda, who after thirty years as president was considered to be a foreigner of Malawian origin. There was also debate in the USA claiming Barack Obama was a non-US citizen.

descendants from Malawi and other minorities in Zimbabwe whose identity has been manipulated through recourse to claims of nationhood and citizenship.

This study seeks to illuminate Malawian diasporic agency against the myriad challenges encountered in Zimbabwe since the colonial period. Agency is used herein to refer to the ability to act or take action; an actor's or group's ability to make purposeful choices. Sen defines agency as what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values migrants regard as important.<sup>41</sup> In his view, it constitutes a process freedom.<sup>42</sup> Much of the Malawian diaspora's cultural agency was articulated through cultural practices such as circumcision, mutual aid associations, *Beni* and *Gule Wamkulu* dances. According to Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, diasporic communities conscientiously seek to retrieve and reproduce social practices and cultural icons, which provide liminal communities with a sense of continuity, so necessary for the restabilization of their identity - their sense of social self - in a foreign land.<sup>43</sup> Such reproduction can be analysed through the lenses of domination and resistance, particularly how actions of marginalized groups may challenge old forms of social domination in complex societies.<sup>44</sup> James Scott probed the public display of power and the hidden discourses of the marginalized, emphasizing how covert non-violent forms of resistance entail a cultural struggle or artful form of resistance against power structures. He observes that 'when the culture of the weak is left unconquered or un-colonized, the marginalized tend to clothe their resistance in 'ritualisms' of subordination, which serve to disguise their purpose and help them remain ambiguous enough for retreat.'<sup>45</sup>

Scott's idea about the un-colonized culture of the weak is applicable to the Malawian diaspora, because they have maintained and reproduced their socio-cultural practices to adapt and cope with their marginalization in Zimbabwe.<sup>46</sup> Diasporic subalterns, unable to resist power of the state, invent their own traditional response mainly in the form of ethnic cultural associations to counter state hegemony. Cultural practices become an indirect

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<sup>41</sup> Sen, 'Well-being, Agency and Freedom', *Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXII, 1985, p. 203.

<sup>42</sup> Sen, *Development as Freedom*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, pp. 2-11.

<sup>43</sup> Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, 'Diasporic Memories and Identities', p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> A. Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities, Identity Construction and Social Mobilisation against HIV/AIDS through Circumcision Schools in Zimbabwe', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 47, 2, 2013, p. 295.

<sup>45</sup> J.C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, London: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 96.

<sup>46</sup> Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities', p. 295.

cultural form of resistance or what Scott terms 'hidden transcripts', which provide the means to express their emotions and make them collective.<sup>47</sup> These traditions do not legitimize powerful or dominant local groups but instead empower the migrants in their struggles to belong and survive. Such cultural identities, as argued by Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, 'confront the dictates of the nation state and dominant social groups'.<sup>48</sup>

Observations made in this study are based in part on other regional and global studies on diaspora, transnational migration, labour, identity and other pertinent themes such as agency, citizenship and belonging. Over the past decades, rich literature has emerged particularly on the experiences of labour migrants within the colonial and post-colonial society. Studies from West Africa, including Aderanti Adepoju's work, have emphasized on labour migratory flows towards European Union States via the Maghreb.<sup>49</sup> In East Africa, Yurendra Basnett has articulated internal migration within the region, as well as external mobility of migrants in less-privileged or unstable countries such as Somalia and Eritrea to Europe and South Africa.<sup>50</sup> Southern Africa has a large literature on migration in general, but with little on the experiences of Malawian labour migrants and their descendants over time. Peter Delius, Laura Phillips and Fiona Rankin-Smith's edited book has analysed the life of labour migrants mainly in South Africa between 1800 and 2014.<sup>51</sup> Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera explored the relationship between Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis and migration as a survival strategy.<sup>52</sup> Some studies have uniquely expanded their scope and subject by focusing on non-African labour migrants. Karen Harris looked at the experiences of indentured Chinese migrants or 'overseas Chinese' in South Africa showing their struggles to belong in a racially hierarchical society where they are seen as not black or white enough.<sup>53</sup>

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

<sup>48</sup> Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, 'Diasporic Memories and Identities', p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> A. Adepoju, 'Migration in West Africa', *Development*, 46, 3, 2003, pp. 37-41.

<sup>50</sup> Y. Basnett, 'Labour Mobility in East Africa: An Analysis of the East African Community's Common Market and the Free Movement of Workers', *Development Policy Review*, 31, 2, 2013, pp. 131-48.

<sup>51</sup> Delius, Phillips and Rankin-Smith, (eds), *A Long Way Home*.

<sup>52</sup> J. Crush and D.S. Tevera, (eds), *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival*, Cape Town: Southern African Migration Programme, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> K.L. Harris, 'The South African Chinese: A Community Record of a Neglected Minority', *South African Historical Journal*, 36, 1997, pp. 316-25; Harris, 'A History of the Chinese in South Africa to 1912', PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1998a; Harris, 'The Chinese 'South Africans': An Interstitial Community', in L. Wang and G. Wang, (eds), *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays, Vol ii*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, pp. 275-300; Harris, 'Whiteness,' 'Blackness,' 'Neitherness': The South African Chinese: A Study in Identity Politics',

By documenting the voices and experiences of Malawian descendants in Zimbabwe, this study seeks to contribute new insights into the histories of non-indigenous communities by showing how processes of individual and collective identification and categorization shape their lives in foreign territories.

### **Malawian Diasporic Communities in Zimbabwean Historiography: Strengths and Silences**

Scholarship on the Malawian diaspora in Zimbabwe has marked limitations. Much of the literature has tended to deal with Malawian descendants within the general rubric of migrant labour and minorities in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, respectively. Nonetheless, scholarship on people of Malawian ancestry does cover the pre-colonial period where studies by Stanley Mudenge, David Beach, Innocent Pikirayi and Gerald Mazarire make brief references to the Maravi people on the Zimbabwean plateau.<sup>54</sup> Generally, most of these works discuss the influence of the Maravi people in the Mutapa Empire politics and conflict with the Portuguese as they fought for influence in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Beach attributed the breakdown of the Mutapa State (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>C) to, among other factors, the 1597 Maravi invasions from the north of the Zambezi.<sup>55</sup> With the benefit of Portuguese archival sources, Mudenge documented Maravi pre-colonial activities in his work on the political history of the Munhumutapa kingdom. He revealed that the Maravi had a long interaction with the territory south of the Zambezi and were influential in the geo-politics of the Mutapa Empire.<sup>56</sup> Mazarire reinforced Beach and Mudenge's observations on the role of the Maravi in the decline of the Mutapa State.<sup>57</sup> The lower Zambezi was a scene of interaction and confrontation between Mutapa and the Maravi states south and north of the river. Pikirayi established that Maravi states existed between the Zambezi, Luangwa, and Rovuma rivers and the Indian Ocean.<sup>58</sup>

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*Historia*, 47, 1, 2002, pp. 105-24, and D. Accone and Harris, 'A Century of Not Belonging: The Chinese in South Africa', in Kuah-Pearce and Davidson, (eds), *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora*, pp. 187-205.

<sup>54</sup> D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1980; Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*; I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambezi States*, and Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe'.

<sup>55</sup> Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850*, p. 190.

<sup>56</sup> Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*, p. 134.

<sup>57</sup> Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe', p. 16.

<sup>58</sup> Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambezi States*, p. 254.



Other important regional studies on pre-colonial Maravi communities include Samuel Ntara's work on Maravi oral traditions, which highlighted the origins and genealogy of their clan and ethnic history. He states that the Maravi are originally Bantu and settled as various 'tribes' including the Yao, Ngoni, Chewa, Nyanja, Lomwe, Tumbuka, Tonga, amongst others.<sup>59</sup> Such breakdown reveals multiple Malawian ethnic identities, which Zimbabwean migrant labour and minority studies have overlooked. Marilyn Newitt, in his broad study of the history of Mozambique, discussed Maravi activities in the greater Zambezi territory. He noted the military reputation or prowess of the 'well-organized Maravi invaders when they destroyed the ineffective Karanga (Mutapa) armies in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century'.<sup>60</sup> This pre-colonial historiography is valuable when situating Malawian identities against general stereotypes that have treated the Malawian diaspora as a homogenous entity, indeed one which is predominantly Chewa. This thesis therefore, accounts for the other sub-ethnicities showing that not all migrant Malawians were Chewa.

Studies of colonial Zimbabwe have also not dealt with Malawian diasporic communities. Much of the historiography has focused on labour history producing general narratives on Malawian migrant labourers. One of the first writings on the early years of labour migration into colonial Zimbabwe and South Africa was Michael Gelfand's 1961 article on migration of African labourers in Rhodesia and Nyasaland between 1890 and 1914.<sup>61</sup> He detailed the nature of African labour migration, showing that Nyasas, mainly men, migrated to advance themselves and fulfil the colonial tax obligations introduced by Nyasaland Administrator

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<sup>59</sup> S.J. Ntara, *The History of the Chewa (Mbiri Ya Achewa)*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> M.D.D. Newitt, 'The Portuguese on the Zambezi: An Historical Interpretation of the Prazo System', *Journal of African History*, 10, 1, 1969, pp. 67-85; Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, London: Hurst, 1995, p. 47, and Newitt, 'The Early History of Malawi', *Journal of African History*, 23, 2, 1982, pp. 145-62. See also other relevant regional works on the Maravi such as J. Bruwer, 'Note on Maravi Origin and Migration', *African Studies*, 9, 1, pp. 32-4; K.M. Phiri, 'Cultural and Political Change in the Pre-Colonial History of Malaŵi', *Society of Malawi Journal*, 30, 2, July, 1977, pp. 6-10. Marwick, 'History and Tradition in East Central Africa', pp. 375-90; Schoffeleers, 'The Zimba, The Lundu on the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century', *Journal of African History*, 28, 1987, pp. 337-55; Pike, 'A Pre-Colonial History of Malawi', *Nyasaland Journal*, 18, 1, 1965, pp. 22-54; Schoffeleers, 'The Meaning and Use of the Name Malawi', pp. 91-122; N. Northrup, 'The Migrations of Yao and Kololo into Southern Malawi: Aspects of Migrations in Nineteenth Century Africa', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 19, 1, 1986, pp. 59-75; W.H.J. Rangeley, 'The Ayao', *Nyasaland Journal*, 16, 1, 1963, pp. 7-27; Rangeley, 'The Earliest Inhabitants of Nyasaland', *Nyasaland Journal*, 16, 2, 1963, pp. 35-42; E.A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*, London: Heinemann, 1975; Alpers, 'The Mutapa and Malawi Political Systems', in T.O. Ranger, (ed.), *Aspects of Central African History*, London: Heinemann, 1968, pp. 1-28, and H. Langworthy, 'A History of Undi's Kingdom to 1890: Aspects of Chewa History in East Central Africa', PhD Thesis, Boston University, 1969.

<sup>61</sup> Gelfand, 'Migration of African Labourers in Rhodesia and Nyasaland', pp. 293-300.

Harry Johnston. The thesis' starting date is influenced by Gelfand's observation that the first concerted efforts for labour were made by Southern Rhodesia mines in 1895.<sup>62</sup>

Charles van Onselen and Ian Phimister were pioneers of colonial Zimbabwean labour history, providing crucial foundations for appreciating and understanding the place of African workers, especially migrant labourers, in the colonial economy. Van Onselen acknowledged the contributions of migrant labourers to the Southern Rhodesian economy. His *Chibaro*, analysed the Rhodesian mining industry, detailing how the industry sourced cheap African migrant labour, exposing its poor working and living conditions and showing how African workers resisted exploitation, the mission-educated Malawians playing a prominent role.<sup>63</sup> Van Onselen provided valuable insights into the early experiences of Malawian migrant workers; how they adapted to the new terrain and revealed various forms of agency through cultural practices and their demonstration of early worker consciousness.

Similar sentiments are conspicuous in the works of Phimister who discussed Nyasa *chibaro* workers and their role in alleviating chronic labour shortages in colonial Zimbabwean mines. Writing about the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau's (RNLB) role in expanding the supply of black labour after the 1903 share market fall, he noted that its recruiting net extended to Northern Rhodesia, parts of Nyasaland and Mozambique supplying a steady stream of lowly paid *chibaro* boys.<sup>64</sup> After 1913, a large proportion of indigenous farm labourers were replaced by these workers from 'north of the Zambezi', most of whom were Nyasas, who were described as 'thin, athletic-looking 'northern' boys, clad in a sack with holes for his arms and head'.<sup>65</sup> Elements of marginality, which are of primary concern to this study, were notable during these early years as Phimister observed that:

Because many of these were *chibaro* boys, they were doubly vulnerable to the controls and sanctions enforced by capital. Not only were they migrants in a foreign country, isolated from fellow workers by barriers of language and custom, but they were also contracted at a stretch at below-average wages to specific employers.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 293.

<sup>63</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 120-3.

<sup>64</sup> Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 85.

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

Phimister also pointed to religious agency revealed through the Watchtower movement carried south by Nyasas, where it found responsive audiences in Southern Rhodesian mine compounds.<sup>67</sup> He, however, noted that the movement was largely confined to the compound's labour aristocracy, most of whom were mission-educated Nyasas. Phimister's analysis of African labour movements and the influence of Malawian migrant workers in the 1920s further attests Nyasa agency. He indicated that they were many unheralded migrant Malawian protagonists who influenced and directed early labour movements, especially the 1927 Shamva Mine strike.<sup>68</sup> The thesis argues that such activities earned Nyasas a 'nuisance' identity, because of which the Rhodesian state increasingly perceived them as ringleaders and troublemakers.

Various studies have discussed Malawians within the rubric of African urban experiences in Salisbury, making important additions to the urban social history of Zimbabwe. Tsuneo Yoshikuni's 1989 doctoral thesis and subsequent 2006 book specifically dealt with the life of labour migrants in colonial Harare from 1890 to 1925.<sup>69</sup> He looked at the world that migrants made for themselves in a new urban space tracing their role in the early origins of the African nationalism in Salisbury. He postulated that some of the strongest roots were found in long-settled households and neighbourhoods composed of migrants from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia.<sup>70</sup> Richard Parry buttressed this trajectory on Malawian urban history in his discussion on African experiences in Salisbury between 1892 and 1935. Most notably, he asserted that these migrants were indispensable for the economy of the town in its early years and formed the basis of the skilled working class.<sup>71</sup> Timothy Scarnecchia identified prominent Malawians in his analysis of the development of a democratic political tradition in African townships (Mbare and Highfield) in the 1940s and 1950s. This however, fell victim to early radical nationalist politics and political violence in the 1960s, pioneered by the activities of Clements Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers (ICU) in Bulawayo and other tough talking Nyasa politicians. He notes that politically minded township residents would have

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

<sup>68</sup> Phimister, 'The Shamva Mine Strike of 1922: An Emerging Proletariat', *Rhodesian History*, 2, 1971, pp. 65-80.

<sup>69</sup> Yoshikuni, 'Black migrants in a white city: A Social History of African Harare, 1890-1925, DPhil, 1989, and Yoshikuni, *African Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Social History of Harare before 1925*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2006.

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

<sup>71</sup> Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class', pp. 66-77.

heard of Kadalie and perhaps have heard him speak as they travelled along the main railway lines and roads from the north and to the south.<sup>72</sup> These studies also state that Malawians brought more than skills, carrying with them a complex array of cultural baggage to Salisbury. This cultural agency saw migrant workers utilising transnational ethnic and cultural ties to acclimatize to urban life. Yoshikuni, Parry and Scarnecchia's incisive observations laid the foundations of understanding migrant Malawian urban history and agency, as well as shed more light on the constructions and contestations over their identities during colonialism.

Malawian diasporic identities can further be conceptualised within the wider discourses on ethnicity and the invention of tradition/tribalism popularised by Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm.<sup>73</sup> In the Zimbabwean context, the debate sought to account for ethnic animosities after independence, with Ranger proclaiming that the Ndebele and Shona identities were colonial creations. In the same vein, the colonial state invented categories such as 'native aliens' to stereotype the nature of African migrant labour, projecting Nyasas as good gardeners, night-soil removers, mine and farm labourers. Ranger reinforced these observations in *Bulawayo Burning*, where he discussed the stereotyping of migrant identities and occupations for the benefit of the colonial state.<sup>74</sup> However, this formulation denies Africans agency in the production of their own identities or rejection of colonial inventions.<sup>75</sup> This applies to the Malawian diaspora who were active in the construction, negotiation and imagination of their own identities in various settlements across Zimbabwe.

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<sup>72</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield: 1940-64*, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2008, pp. 14-6.

<sup>73</sup> Ranger, *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985; E. Hobsbawm and Ranger, (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, and Ranger, 'Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika', in L. Vail and L. White, (eds), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, London: James Currey, 1989.

<sup>74</sup> Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of a Southern African City 1893-1960*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2010, p. 88.

<sup>75</sup> See E. Msindo, *Remaking Ndebele and the Kalanga: Language and Ethnicity in Matabeleland, 1860-1960s*, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Wolfson College: University of Cambridge, 2002; B. Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991, and Mujere, 'Autochthons, Strangers, Modernising Educationists, and Progressive Farmers', p. 31. Msindo shows that Ndebele ethnicity was not a colonial invention but predates to the pre-colonial Ndebele kingdom. Such critique compelled Ranger to use Benedict Anderson concept of imagined communities and apply social construction and imagination as opposed to invention of tradition.

This thesis also benefited from two regional studies; Robert Boeder's 1974 work on Malawians abroad and John McCracken's recent book, *A History of Malawi, 1859-1966*. Boeder examined the historical, economic, social and cultural effects of labour emigration from Malawi between 1890 and the 1970s, arguing that labour migration was the major reason for the change in Malawi's economic orientation from facing the east coast during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to its 20<sup>th</sup> century southward trend.<sup>76</sup> McCracken briefly discussed labour migration, revealing some of the reasons behind the mass exodus of male labourers and its devastating impact on rural village life.<sup>77</sup> Both scholars provided valuable insights for this study, particularly coming up with critical migration statistics, its impact on the Malawian economy, politics, as well as the role of missionary education and culture in shaping early Nyasa identities. Such observations offered the requisite Malawian background that is important in a study of this nature.

There have been two doctoral studies on Malawian migrants in colonial Zimbabwe, both completed in 2011, by Zoe Groves<sup>78</sup> and by Irene Mudeka,<sup>79</sup> which, like my study, significantly contribute to a fledgling scholarship of the Malawian diaspora. The former focused on transnational Malawian experiences in Salisbury from 1920 to 1960, while the latter examined migrant Malawian women, again in Salisbury, between 1940 and 1980. Groves relied on data drawn from both Malawi and Zimbabwe exploring the Central African transnational history of migration, and chronicling Nyasa labour dynamics, as well as the migrants' socio-political activities in Salisbury. She showed that migrant life was not only confined to the workplace but was characterised by socio-cultural initiatives, particularly religious and associational life.<sup>80</sup> She pointed out that Nyasas remained important, as they contributed to the formation of new urban identities, over and above ethnicity, and enriched popular culture in colonial Salisbury. Mudeka recorded the voices of Malawian women in Salisbury, revealing the trials and tribulations or what she dubs *Mabvuto* (troubles), faced by female trans-migrants. She examined how Malawian women defied colonial policies against

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<sup>76</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', pp. i-iii.

<sup>77</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, pp. 178-88.

<sup>78</sup> Z. Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury: A Social History of Labour Migration in Central Africa, c.1920s-1960s', PhD Thesis, Keele University, 2011.

<sup>79</sup> I. Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto': A Gendered Socio-economic History of Malawian Women's Migration and Survival in Harare, 1940 to 1980', PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota, 2011.

<sup>80</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', pp. 104-43.

female mobility to migrate from their natal homes and settle in an androcentric colonial wage system between 1940 and 1980. She argued that Malawian women faced serious hardships en-route to and in Salisbury due to brutal police inspections, arrests and repatriations.<sup>81</sup> They also had limited employment opportunities and had to establish economic ventures such as urban farming, beer brewing and usury to supplement men's meagre wages and survive as families. Many united, forming welfare and burial unions that transcended ethnic divisions from the 1960s onwards.<sup>82</sup>

Groves and Mudeka's works were all useful for this study, especially where they provide insights into colonial urban migrants' agency. Groves' appraisal of transnational experiences provided an important background to the state of migrants before their transformation into diasporic communities. Similarly, this thesis builds on Mudeka's observations in order to historicize the mobility of Malawian women from as early as the 1920s, as well as post-colonial gender transformations. This study seeks to capture women's trans-national experiences in migration and settlement, not least their own collective (as wives and widows) and individual (as independent single women) agency against gendered stereotypes. But it must be observed that both studies are limited to the colonial period and Salisbury. Groves and Mudeka began their accounts in 1920 and 1960, respectively. My thesis, however, begins in 1895 and ends in 2008, looking at migration dynamics and the connections between identity, marginality and agency, not only in Salisbury but also across the whole country.

Post-colonial literature has reflected general changes in the Zimbabwean socio-political landscape, resulting in an explosion of multi-disciplinary studies, commonly dubbed as 'crisis historiography'.<sup>83</sup> This has generally focussed on the plight of minority groups in the face of the politics of inclusion and exclusion, land reform and urban clean-up exercises, voting and political violence, identity and citizenship. Writing in 2001, anthropologist Blair Rutherford's work on commercial farming in Hurungwe district, let farm workers speak about their experiences on 'the margins' of Zimbabwean society. He discussed farm workers through the

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<sup>81</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 106.

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

<sup>83</sup> T. Nyamunda, 'Insights into Independent Zimbabwe: Some Historiographical Reflections', *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 36, 1, 2014, pp. 72-89. See also Chapter Six.

Foucauldian lens of governmentality, developing the concept of domestic government to analyse the ways in which the post-colonial state has marginalised those constructed as farm workers.<sup>84</sup> Constituting one-fifth of the national population (nearly two million men, women, and children), working and living on the predominantly white-owned 4,500 commercial farms in Zimbabwe, farm workers sustained the commercial farming sector as the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy. Rutherford's work unpacked both the discursive means and the politico-economic processes by which farm workers were imagined in official discourses and how this affected both their material conditions and their daily activities and struggles. In subsequent articles, he discussed farm workers and the promises and perils of citizenship and belonging.<sup>85</sup>

The above sentiments were also prominent in Andrew Hartnack, Dede Amanor-Wilks and Lloyd Sachikonye's further discussions of farm workers after the year 2000. Amanor-Wilks revealed the dilemma faced by the workers as the state projected them as proxies of white commercial farmers.<sup>86</sup> Hartnack explored how through local responses to displacement, farm workers transcended or countered the discourses of the powerful by subverting global, national and local representations, using local agency to create their own practical discourse of displacement.<sup>87</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye examined the farm workers' situation in the aftermath of the 2001 land reform exercise. He explored their vulnerability in relation to violence, food scarcity, access to land and basic social services, showing how farm workers became pawns in a prolonged and complicated battle premised upon nationalism, belonging and the nation-state.<sup>88</sup> He demonstrated that alien farm workers were used as figurative vehicles for bigger

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<sup>84</sup> B. Rutherford, *Working on the Margins: Black Workers, White Farmers in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2001; Rutherford, 'Shifting Grounds in Zimbabwe: Citizenship and Farm Workers in the New Politics of Land', in Dorman, Hammett and Nugent, (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers*, and Rutherford, 'Commercial Farm Workers and the Politics of (Dis)placement in Zimbabwe: Colonialism, Liberation and Democracy', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1, 4, 2001, pp. 626-51.

<sup>85</sup> Rutherford, 'Conditional Belonging: Farm workers and the Cultural Politics of Recognition in Zimbabwe', *Development and Change*, 39, 1, 2008, pp. 73-99, and Rutherford, 'On the Promise and Perils of Citizenship: Heuristic Concepts, Zimbabwean Example', *Citizenship Studies*, 15, 3-4, 2011, pp. 499-512.

<sup>86</sup> D. Amanor-Wilks, 'Zimbabwe's Farm Workers and the New Constitution, 2000', available at <http://www.africaaction.org/rtable/ded0002.htm> [accessed 12 May 2015], and D. Amanor-Wilks, *In Search of Hope for Zimbabwe's Farm workers*, Harare: Dateline Southern Africa and Panos Institute, 1995.

<sup>87</sup> A. Hartnack, 'Transcending Global and National (Mis)representations through Local Responses to Displacement: The Case of Zimbabwean (ex) Farm Workers', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22, 3, 2009, pp. 351-77.

<sup>88</sup> L.M. Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, A Report Prepared for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, 2003, and Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land: From

rhetorical and political battles.<sup>89</sup> All these studies illuminated the ostracization of farm workers and provided intriguing glimpses of the politics of 'othering' and alternative livelihoods that farm workers adopted, but without focusing explicitly on the experiences of the Malawian diaspora.

Moving away from farm workers, the Malawian diaspora were also evident in the discourses on belonging and citizenship that became topical in post-2000 Zimbabwe. James Muzondidya tackled these issues, drawing our attention to the dilemma of what he terms 'invisible subject minorities'.<sup>90</sup> Muzondidya discussed how the state used race and ethnicity to marginalize the so-called aliens, arguing that in the definitions of citizenship that were proposed after independence, subject minorities were not viewed as part of the post-colonial state.<sup>91</sup> Deborah Potts underlined such 'othering' in her discussion of circular migration and urban livelihoods in sub-Saharan African cities. Using the case of Harare, she discussed migrant descendants within the exclusionary politics of urban clean-up exercises such as the 2005 Operation *Murambatsvina*.<sup>92</sup> Despite the fact that the voices of affected migrant descendants were not fully projected, Muzondidya and Potts' analysis feed into this thesis' problematization of citizenship, identity and 'othering' that the Malawian diaspora grappled with in post-independent Zimbabwe. These studies reinforce this thesis' marginality theme and to a smaller extent augments how Malawians subverted urban stereotypes by acquiring rural homes/*musha* in Zimbabwe through inter-marriages, purchase and local social networks.

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Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja', in Raftopoulos and T. Savage, (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005, pp. 1-18.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> J. Muzondidya, 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans': Invisible subject minorities and the quest for justice and reconciliation in post-colonial Zimbabwe', in Raftopoulos and Savage, (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, pp. 213-35.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> D. Potts, *Circular Migration in Zimbabwe and Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: James Currey, 2010.



## Tracking Diasporic Subjects: Research Methodology and Sources

Welcome as it is that recent historical studies are increasingly focussing on migrant Malawian communities in Zimbabwe, the historiography's concentration on the colonial period and Salisbury as a case study gives a false impression that portrays the history of Malawian descendants simply as colonial and urban or Salisbury-based. By contrast, this thesis tries to capture the range of experience of Malawian migrants and their descendants across the country, but my interview material of necessity is limited to four representative case studies, namely farms, mines, estates/plantations and smaller towns. In other words, the overall study is not limited to the case studies, but the oral evidence that I draw on largely comes from the four case studies that broadly represent Malawian diaspora settlement areas across Zimbabwe. This study goes against the grain and engages peripheral and undocumented case study areas or alternative spaces of settlement where a significant subaltern Malawian diasporic population has thrived since the colonial times.

Consequently, the thesis is a qualitative study based on oral material, as well as on national, regional and international archival records. Oral research gathered the life histories of Malawian migrants and their descendants. These life histories, as memory acts about the past located in the present, enabled me to obtain detailed biographical narratives about Malawian migration, settlement and experiences in Zimbabwe from the 1890s to 2008. This interactive approach helps researchers understand the range of meanings of subaltern lives. Life histories usually cover people's entire lives and they help researchers gain a holistic perspective of the people under study. Use of life histories also enabled me to disaggregate between the experiences of ethnic, class, gender and generational groups, acknowledging their varying impacts and everyday livelihoods in Zimbabwe. Moreover, life histories complement silences found in the archives. The thesis contends that Malawian voices have largely been muffled and confined to the realms of imperial and colonial labour history. By projecting the voices and experiences of *Mabhurandaya*, the study attempts to bring 'the social margins into the centre of historical analysis, an aspect lacking in the archive.'<sup>93</sup> Life-history approaches have been used to supplement and weave together fragments from the archives in order to explore

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<sup>93</sup> C. Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 187.

issues of diasporic identities, marginality and agency among hitherto invisible subject minorities in Zimbabwe.

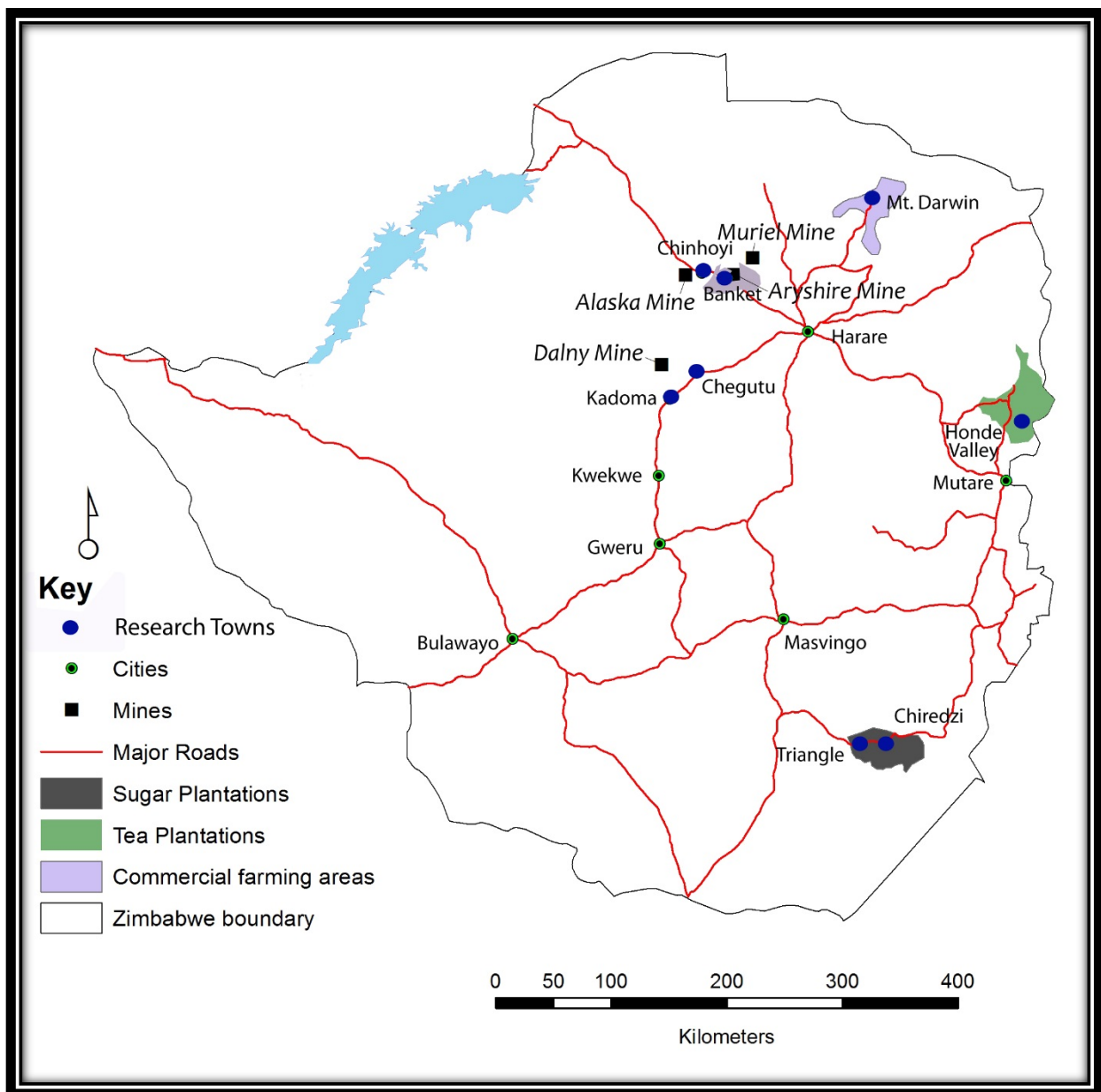
#### **a) Some Reflections on Oral and Archival Research**

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in a range of areas and settings (see map on next page). Informants were interviewed in small towns such as Kadoma, Banket, Mt. Darwin and Chinhoyi, as well as peri-urban settlements such as Epworth near Harare. Some interviewees were found on mines such as Dalny, Muriel, Alaska, Ayrshire mines while others lived on commercial farms such as Maryland, New Grade, Riverside, Ayrshire, Stratford farms near Banket. More oral data was collected among informants at the Hippo Valley and Triangle Sugar estates in Chiredzi. Preliminary interviews were conducted from November 2013 to January 2014 on commercial farms around Banket in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West. In the aftermath of the land reform programme and the general post-2000 economic decay, a number of potential farm worker informants were displaced from their farm compounds and proved difficult to track. Many became moving or roaming targets within and outside Zimbabwe that are very difficult to sample and document. A few went back to Malawi, while many others sought alternative livelihoods across Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, this saw numerous interactions with the remaining informants who narrated their life histories sometimes with nostalgic enthusiasm, hope or sorrow. I also visited Ayrshire and Muriel Mines during this period, interacting with employed and retired migrant descendants. The interviews cut across gender, class and generational differences and engaged first- second- and third-generation male and female Malawian descendants.

Additional interviews were conducted between April and mid-June 2014 in the targeted case study areas. The principal agenda of this sojourn was to conduct oral interviews with Malawian informants in various enclaves of Zimbabwe. The first ten days were spent in the Southern Zimbabwe's lowveld areas, in Chiredzi and Triangle interviewing informants who were still working or had worked on the sugar plantations. With the help of a colleague who grew up in the area, I managed to obtain relevant data from the informants that I met there. However, I was informed that a number of migrants and their descendants had gone back to Malawi after retrenchment during the severe 1992 drought. Many had opted to receive

retrenchment packages and the sugar companies assisted them to carry their properties/goods back to Malawi. Only some decided to stay. One of the informants had been given a company house on retirement; another was staying with his children one of which was employed at Tongaat-Hulett in Triangle. I used the snowball technique to find more informants and travelled around tracking them in such places as Buffalo Range and the surrounding resettlement areas where some Malawian diaspora had found rural homes to stay and practice subsistence farming.

**Fig. 1.1: General Map of Zimbabwe Showing Case Study Areas**



I then travelled to Kadoma in May 2014 to look for more interviewees who worked on mines around the town. I was stationed at Dalny Mine in Chakari where I conducted most of my interviews from first- and second-generation migrants residing on the defunct mine. I also had the opportunity to talk to few more interviewees from Kadoma town and the surrounding farms such as Gomo, Kapundu and Sekerere. More urban interviews followed in June 2014 in Banket and Chinhoyi, as well as in Alaska, a former mining town at the outskirts of Chinhoyi. I also went to Kwekwe in mid-June and managed to secure informal interviews from various individuals. There are also other informants in Epworth that I tracked after my interaction with previous interviewees on the farms near Banket and managed to hold fruitful discussions with them. Much of this oral material was supplemented by oral histories informally obtained in August 2012 during the Zimbabwe national population census where I participated as an enumerator on the outskirts of Harare. I also obtained some data as early as 2007 when I visited Zomba, Malawi for a Nordic Africa Institute conference, as well as between January and February 2015 during my visit to the Malawi National Archives.

Overall, the interview process proved smoother than anticipated except for a few obstacles. The current polarized Zimbabwean environment threatened in some instances to derail the fieldwork exercise, as some informants were paranoid to narrate their life stories fearing political reprisals. A majority of them, especially farm workers, were traumatized during the land reform and post-2000 elections with the ZANU (PF) government victimizing them for their alleged support of opposition parties. There were instances that many were reluctant to cooperate and were very suspicious of discussing their private lives and sensitive topics with a stranger. One such incidence occurred in Triangle when one potential informant refused to talk citing lack of knowledge about his own life history. As shall be conspicuous in chapter four and six, informants were not particularly forthcoming when it came to discussing their liberation war experiences and post-2000 political elections. Chapter four in particular is necessarily based on a limited number of oral interviews. Only a few were willing to talk about the war. Issues such as the liberation war, which were once easy to talk about, have become contentious and fraught, especially for the diaspora whose political identity and belonging have been questioned by the state. Nonetheless, some interviewees were enthusiastic to have their histories documented notwithstanding their high hopes that they would receive something in return. This demanded serious explanations and convincing that the sole

purpose of the research was in pursuit of a doctoral qualification. In the end, this whole exercise managed to produce in excess of forty detailed interviews.

Oral testimony was augmented by archival material from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) in Harare, Zimbabwe; the Malawian National Archives (MNA) in Zomba, Malawi; the Rhodes University Cory Library (RUCL), Grahamstown, South Africa; the UK National Archives (NA) in Kew, London; and the Rhodes House Library in Oxford. Starting in July 2013, I visited the UK National Archives where I fruitfully engaged with archival material from the Colonial Office. There were correspondences and reports on Nyasaland 'native labour' mainly covering the period from 1936 to about 1960. While the majority of the data focused on the tensions between Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa (Witwatersrand) over labour supply, I managed to collect information on Malawian migration routes, transportation, working conditions and their agency in subverting the labour recruiting agencies (*Chibaro*) along the way. This data was supplemented with material from the NAZ, which I initially visited from December 2013 to January 2014 and later between April and June 2014. I also visited the MNA between January and February 2015, as well as the Rhodes House Library in May 2015. All these archival excursions provided crucial colonial documentation on African affairs through various correspondences between colonial Malawi (Nyasaland) and Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), as well as reports by Native Commissioners (NCs) and Superintendents of Natives and other colonial officials. Periodicals, private papers, radio transcripts, sound archives, films and documentaries on labour migration in the region proved useful sources as well. There were also relevant newspapers, such as the *Rhodesia Herald*, the *African Daily News*, the *Nyasaland Times* and the *African Weekly* that provided African voices and general sentiments concerning Nyasa experiences in Southern Rhodesia.

Looking back on my archival visits, a number of issues emerged that made the exercise both intriguing and sometimes depressing. For a start, there were glaring disparities between the archives in the metropole and the former colonies. As expected the UK archives were extremely efficient, both in terms of infrastructure and service delivery. There is little human interaction in the metropole archives. Researchers only interact with the computers through which they order and check for their files. The reading stations are equipped with camera holding ports for easier and quick photographing of archival files. On the contrary, the colonial

archive symbolises the struggles that former colonial institutions are facing in the absence of adequate funding. In order to continue running, the costs are cascaded down to the researcher who pays for every service rendered. At NAZ and to some extent at MNA payment is needed for virtually everything from entrance, photocopying and photographing. Some of the fees are exorbitant which in many instances discourages potential researchers and jeopardises research.

When I ventured into the archives, I had clear objectives in terms of what I wanted to gather. However, typical of a colonial archive, much of its data projected the voice of the coloniser with very little voice from the colonised. Correspondences and reports are from colonial officials, particularly NCs, Superintendents of Natives and other officials discussing the welfare of the 'natives'. Such history based solely upon written documents, especially colonial records, is removed from the lives of African people. Colonial reports for example, can be limited to expressing the viewpoint of outsiders, failing to give us an indication of how events and situations unfolded and were actually perceived and experienced by African subjects. The subaltern voice is muffled or frequently non-existent in colonial archival records. In this sense, the everyday social aspects about their identities, marginality and agency of people of Malawian origin is largely absent from official records and written sources. The oral interviews I conducted complemented the deficiencies found in the archival record.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

The arguments reflected above are systematically addressed over five substantive chapters, excluding this introductory section and the concluding chapter. The study's thematic concerns are discussed chronologically from 1895 to 2008, but with occasional flashbacks in some chapters and sections to emphasize and reinforce particular themes or points. For instance, the chronological pace slows in chapters three and five, especially where labour/nationalist hegemony and cultural expression(s) are analysed, respectively. This introductory section, chapter one, introduces the study and contextualizes it in relation to concepts, methodology, and the present state of literature. It situates the thesis within existing studies of Malawians in Zimbabwean labour history and broader scholarship by providing a detailed literature review. It also discusses how data for the thesis was gathered and details the dilemmas

encountered in documenting Malawian descendants in Zimbabwe. Finally, the chapter ends by outlining the structure of the thesis.

The second chapter, titled '*Ulendo*': *Malawian (Nyasa) migration into Zimbabwe c. 1895 to the Federation*, quantifies and qualifies the exodus of Malawian labour migrants to colonial Zimbabwe from the 1890s to the eve of the Central African Federation. It examines early Maravi pre-colonial connections with Zimbabwe before dwelling on the broader politics of the colonial labour migration system, discussing the reasons for migration, the statistics and forms transport involved, settlement and employment patterns, as well as the diverse experiences and identities that emerged during this period. The chapter looks at this migration and subsequent settlement as agency done in pursuit of survival within the colonial wage economy. It underscores that migration and settlement narratives are critical in providing the basis for understanding the processes of identification and categorization that begin to emerge and evolve both within and without Malawian diasporic communities. The chapter argues that colonialism comes with new contexts and dynamics of ethnic stereotyping that reconfigure and re-imagine Malawi-ness for labour purposes. Emphasis is also placed on the migrants' agency in the production of their individual or collective identities and their reactions to changes imposed from the outside by either the colonial state or indigenous Zimbabweans prior to the Federation.

Chapter three analyses the experiences of Nyasa migrants during the Federation into the early UDI years. Titled *Chigwirizano: Social Tensions and Nuisance Identities during the Federal and Early UDI Years*, the chapter examines the Federation's impact on migrants' lives and relations with the state and local people emphasizing on tensions over indigenous African unemployment, gender/intermarriage dynamics and the identities that constructed within Rhodesian labour and nationalist movements. It starts by analysing the establishment and collapse of the Federation before moving on to understanding the implications of this episode on Nyasa diasporic livelihoods in Southern Rhodesia. The chapter argues that though the Federation was a failed political experiment and faced stiff African resistance, it provided numerous socio-economic opportunities for Nyasas. In the process numerous identities, induced by federal experiences, marriage dynamics, labour and political processes, were constructed and contested from 1953 onwards. In the same vein, the chapter probes

problematic relationship between labour and nationalism, analysing the activities of Nyasa workers in Rhodesian politics. Building on the 1920s to 1940s millenarian movements and worker consciousness, the chapter contends that Nyasa dominance gained them a notorious identity among white Rhodesians and locals of being ringleaders and troublemakers. This dominance led to suspicions and tensions with local African trade unionists and nationalists. Their 'nuisance' reputation greatly affected their livelihoods and status with serious efforts being made by the state to alienate or deport them. Some ordinary locals attacked Nyasas whilst the African elite castigated and gradually marginalised them from the nationalist movement. Such tensions further complicated the position and experiences of the Malawian diaspora during the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, which is the main concern of the next section.

Titled *Walking a Tightrope: Malawian Encounters with the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle: 1966 to 1979*, chapter four analyses the place and experiences of Malawian diasporic communities during the Second *Chimurenga*. Unlike other chapters, this chapter relies on a limited number of interview material and contextual inferences because of the subject matter itself. As indicated earlier, due to the polarized Zimbabwean political climate, ordinary people are less inclined to talk about their war encounters now than they were immediately after the war. So, the situation made it difficult to follow up on liberation war narratives which have become very sensitive topics to research on. Nevertheless, the chapter shows that Malawian descendants had diverse encounters with the *Chimurenga*, many of which were determined by geographical location and time. The war put many Malawian diaspora at crossroads, since it pitted their white Rhodesian employers and fellow African kinsmen. The chapter argues that Malawian descendants walked a tightrope with some becoming directly involved while others remained neutral, indifferent and passive towards the fighting. This culminated in conflict-induced identities, which were constructed or imagined based on the migrants' relationships with the warring parties.

Chapter five takes the discussion into the post-colonial period, focusing on experiences of Malawian diasporic communities during the first two decades of Zimbabwean independence. Titled, *Post-Independence Anxieties, Syncretic Cultural Expression and Prominence: 1980 to 1999*, the chapter historicizes the communities' anxieties over the *Gukurahundi* massacres,



Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the 1992 drought. It also illuminates the place of Malawian cultural practices in coping with socio-economic concerns of this period. Drawing changes and continuities from the colonial period, the chapter argues that Malawian descendants found comfort in their diverse culture to articulate their identity, resist continued alienation, seek belonging/integration and cope against emerging post-colonial political and economic challenges. Therefore, the role of their myriad socio-cultural forms, such as *Gule Wamkulu/Nyau*, *Beni*, mutual aid societies, as well as male and female circumcision rites, is analysed in confronting and/or accommodating the dictates of the nation-state and dominant social groups. The chapter further illuminates such diasporic agency by ultimately celebrating the descendants' excellence in various fields, suggesting that the 1980-99 period was a golden age for Malawian diasporic communities with many permeating the Zimbabwean fabric, improving and consolidating themselves and sometimes attaining cult hero status. This helped in naturalizing their broader diasporic identities and foreign ancestry across the country prior to the dominance of the exclusionary discourse after the year 2000.

Chapter six, titled *The Zimbabwean Crisis through the Eyes of Malawian Diaspora: c.2000 to 2008*, focuses on the post-2000 marginality discourse, chronicling the experiences of Malawian diasporic communities during the Zimbabwean crisis from 2000 to 2008. It problematizes their victimization and agency and lends support to the existing scholarly arguments on the exclusion and subjectification of migrant minorities. It argues that between 2000 and 2008, the ZANU (PF) regime spearheaded narrow and exclusionary nationalism which discriminated people of migrant descent in its fight to consolidate and hold on to power in the face of rising civil and political opposition. Other than being displaced through land reform and urban clean-up exercises, the state also complicated citizenship rights through which Malawian denizens and other minorities were denied the right to suffrage. Despite this, the chapter also focuses on Malawian agency analysing how these people tried to mediate the crisis through various forms of adaptation and resistance. Chapter seven constitutes the conclusion, providing a synopsis of the whole thesis showing the main arguments and identifies future research possibilities.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ***ULENDO: MALAWIAN (NYASA) MIGRATION INTO ZIMBABWE C. 1895 TO 1952***

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#### **Introduction**

Malawians have undertaken migratory journeys, known as *ulendo* since the pre-colonial period, traversing Southern African boundaries seeking alternative livelihoods and opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Using mainly oral narratives and archival data, this chapter traces Malawian migration into Zimbabwe from about 1895 to the eve of the Central African Federation (CAF) in 1952. It examines how they migrated and where they settled, as well as the diverse experiences and identities that emerged during this period. The existing historiography has generally acknowledged the place of Nyasas as cheap labour within the broader labour discourses, without exploring in detail the nature of their migration, the push and pull factors, individual and collective experiences, as well as the intricate processes of identification before Federation. In essence, Malawian migration to Zimbabwe is traceable to three historical processes. Maravi people, as they were known then, first appeared in pre-colonial Zimbabwe between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. They interacted and influenced broader geo-politics of state formation, and permeated the socio-political fabric of numerous African kingdoms culminating in permanent residence. This early phase of migration only brought a marginal Malawian population into Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup> Significant inflows were principally experienced during colonialism from 1895 reaching a crescendo during the Federation and declining in the early 1970s under the colonial labour migration system, commonly known as *Chibaro/Mthandizi*, when Malawi, Nyasaland by then, acted as a labour pool for the Southern Rhodesian and

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<sup>1</sup> *Ulendo* is a Chewa word that literally means 'journey' but was also used to refer to 'a party of travellers' or groups of migrant workers travelling south from Nyasaland. See E.P. Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwaymen', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration', *African Affairs*, 79, 1980, p. 548; Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 53, and NA CO417/588, Correspondence between J.G. Roberts, Mt. Darwin and W. Edwards, NC Mrewa on Nyasaland migrants, May and June 1917.

<sup>2</sup> Statistical evidence accounting for the actual population of Maravi people in pre-colonial Zimbabwe is difficult to ascertain or is non-existent. Until such records are available, one can only infer that they were either a few hundreds or even thousands of Maravi people in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

South African economies. Colonial capital turned Africans from Nyasaland, hereafter Nyasas, into transnational migrants whose labour was in great demand across the region. McCracken notes that a labour market existed in the Katanga copper mines during the 1920s boom with many Nyasas employed in jobs where skills of language and literacy were at a premium, particularly low-level supervision, and clerical, store-keeping and minor hospital posts.<sup>3</sup> More opportunities for semi-skilled Nyasas emerged with the development of the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt from 1928 while on the Tanganyika Lupa goldfields, a sudden surge in demand for labour in 1935 resulted in employment, on short-term contracts, of as many as 15,000 Nyasas.<sup>4</sup> Thousands more moved to Southern Rhodesia and found employment on farms, plantations/estates, mines and in the urban areas, becoming an integral part of Zimbabwe's labour history. Others followed a 'stop-and-go' process working their way down to comparatively better paid jobs in the Union of South Africa.

The chapter starts with a background history of Malawian migration during the pre-colonial period tracing their early connections with Zimbabwe. Subsequently, the broader politics of the colonial labour migration system, the forms of transport involved, statistics, settlement and employment patterns, inter-territorial labour agreements, and the impact of the Second World War on labour migration, among others, are discussed. Drawing oral evidence from case studies (farms, mines, towns and estates) where many Nyasas gravitated in search for employment, the chapter showcases that many were highly mobile, changing workplaces across the country and region in pursuit of survival within the colonial wage economy. The chapter underscores that these migration narratives are critical in providing the foundation for understanding the processes of migrant identity construction/imagination in a foreign space. It shows the various set of diasporic experiences and identities that were in place or were being constructed before the Federation and how they evolved over time.

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<sup>3</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 182, and C. Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa: Industrial Strategies and the Evolution of an African Proletariat in the Copperbelt 1911-41*, London: Heinemann, 1979, pp. 157-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* A large number of Nyasas from northern Malawi, particularly those from the north Nyasa district of Karonga, went into the Lupa goldfields of Tanganyika and the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt. For details see M[alawi] N[ational] A[rchives] NNK1/8/1-9, Nyasaland District Administration Files, District Commissioner Karonga District Labour Reports 1925-1951; MNA NNK2/1/3-9, Nyasaland District Administration Files, District Commissioner Karonga District Annual Reports, 1925-1951, and Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 606.

## Maravi Communities in Pre-colonial Zimbabwe

The Maravi initially migrated to the Zimbabwean plateau during the 1597 Maravi invasions. Mudenge, Beach, Newitt, Pikirayi and Mazarire have discussed this pre-colonial migration, noting the influence of the Maravi people in the Mutapa Empire's politics, as well as their conflict with the Portuguese for influence on the plateau.<sup>5</sup> Pikirayi explains that Maravi states were situated between the Zambezi, Luangwa, and Rovuma rivers, and the Indian Ocean; an area dominated by Bantu-speaking Chewa, Manganja, Nsenga, Yao, Makua and Lomwe.<sup>6</sup> Following Great Zimbabwe's decline in the 16th century and the subsequent rise of the Mutapa kingdom, the Maravi invaded the lower Zambezi area.<sup>7</sup> In time, they gradually expanded their domain and exported institutions of kingship into the region. Such agency turned the lower Zambezi into a scene of interaction and confrontation between the Mutapa and Maravi states south and north of the river.

Beach analysed the role of the Maravi in the decline of the Mutapa state, particularly the centrality of Maravi invasions. He attributed Mutapa's breakdown to three factors: Portuguese influence, protracted civil wars within the Mutapa dynasty and the 1597 Maravi invasions from the north of the Zambezi.<sup>8</sup> Maravi people were involved in Mutapa politics to the extent of offering one of its rulers, Mutapa Kapararidze, exile during civil war with Mutapa Mavura in 1631.<sup>9</sup> This led Mudenge to observe that there were a number of rivals in the lower Zambezi, namely Maravi, Portuguese prazo-holders and the kingdom of Uteve and Guruuswa, all of which were partly to blame for the collapse of the state.<sup>10</sup> Newitt pointed to the military reputation of 'well-organized Maravi invaders in the greater Zambezi territory who destroyed ineffective Karanga (Mutapa) armies in 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.'<sup>11</sup> Mutapa Gatsi Rusere, who succeeded to the throne in 1586, suffered many setbacks, among them the Maravi invasions

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<sup>5</sup> Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850*; Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*; Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambezi States*, and Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe', pp. 1-38.

<sup>6</sup> Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambezi States*, p. 254.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850*, pp. 150-60.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*, p. 134.

<sup>11</sup> Newitt, 'The Portuguese on the Zambezi: An Historical Interpretation of the Prazo System', pp. 67-85; Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, p. 47, and Newitt, 'The Early History of Malawi', pp. 145-62.

led by Kapambo and Chikanda.<sup>12</sup> They fuelled divisions in the Mutapa army and subsequently led to the Matuzianhe revolt, which marked a turning point in Mutapa-Portuguese relations. The invasions not only deposed Gatsi Rusere but also forced him to enlist support of the Portuguese.<sup>13</sup> Maravi mercenaries were regularly recruited for the Karanga wars and the Portuguese in turn aided Muzura in establishing his hegemony.<sup>14</sup> Such agency contributed to construction of broader Maravi identities in pre-colonial Zimbabwe where indigenous communities and contemporary historians described these migrants as militarily astute, aggressive and brave. These identities were also based on other socially interactive activities within the Mutapa state. Mudenge noted that some Maravi people permeated the Mutapa fabric becoming influential, acting as guides, translators, carriers, bodyguards and soldiers.<sup>15</sup> This early integration and settlement in foreign spaces was testimony to the pioneering initiatives of Maravi communities.

These migrants were broadly identified as the Maravi and had diverse ethnic identities, namely Chewa/Nyanja, Manganja, Lomwe, Tumbuka, Ngoni, Tonga, Nguru, Ngonde, and Yao.<sup>16</sup> Maravi oral traditions reveal complex pre-colonial processes behind the emergence of such ethnic and clan genealogies, as well as the eventual peopling of present-day Malawi. Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, waves of Bantu-speaking people known as the Tumbuka and Phoka migrated into northern Malawi, from the Congo region via Tanzania. More Bantu newcomers joined them: the Lambya, Ngonde and Tonga in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, the Chewa or Nyanja established a large and powerful Maravi kingdom spreading across southern Malawi and parts of present-day Mozambique and Zambia.<sup>18</sup> The early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the advent of two more influential groups. The Yao from western Mozambique invaded

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<sup>12</sup> Mazarire, 'Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, p. 16.

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

<sup>14</sup> Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, p. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> Malawian pre-colonial historians have used oral traditions to document these ethnic genealogies in detail. See Ntara, *The History of the Chewa (Mbiri Ya Achewa)*, p. 1; Price, 'Anguru: The Name', *Society of Malawi Journal*, 5, 1, 1952, pp. 23-5; Price, 'The Meaning of the Manganja', *Nyasa Journal*, 16, 1, 1963, pp. 74-7; McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, pp. 19-25; Rangeley, 'The Ayao', pp. 7-27; Rangeley, 'The Angoni', *Society of Malawi Journal*, XIX, 2, 1966, pp. 62-80; E. Mwale, *Za a Cewa*, London: Pall Mall, 1952; R.S. Rattray, *Some Folklore and Songs in Chinyanja*, London: James Currey, 1917, p. 176, and C.A. Baker, 'A Note on Nguru Immigration to Nyasaland', *Nyasaland Journal*, XIV, 1, 1962, pp. 41-2.

<sup>17</sup> Else, *Malawi: Much More Than Just a Lake*, p. 14.

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

the highlands of southern Malawi, settling throughout the Shire Highlands and the southern lakeshore region, capturing Chewa people for sale into slavery using firearms supplied by Arab traders from the African east coast.<sup>19</sup> Simultaneously, groups of Nguni people were migrating northwards as part of the great population movement called the *Mfecane* or *Difaqane*, translating as the scattering or crushing of tribes, initiated around 1820 allegedly by Shaka Zulu in Zululand.<sup>20</sup> This process populated a large part of Southern Africa with Nguni speaking communities. Various fragments fled and settled beyond the Limpopo River as the Ndebele under Mzilikazi Khumalo, the Kololo under Sebetwane, the Shangaans under Soshangane, the Swazi under Queen Nyamazana, and the Ngoni under Zwangendaba who settled in central and northern Malawi around 1840.<sup>21</sup> The Ngoni tended to absorb local Chewa captives, rather than selling them into slavery as was the habit of the Yao. All these Malawian ethnic clusters later found themselves at the centre of labour migration after the advent of colonial rule in the Southern Africa region around the 1890s.

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<sup>19</sup> The Yao have been covered by several scholars including J. Clyde Mitchell, *The Yao Village: A Study in the Social Structure of a Nyasaland Tribe*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956; H.S. Stannus, 'The Wayao of Nyasaland', *Harvard Africa Studies*, III, 1922, pp. 229-72; Y.B. Abdallah, *The Yaos: Chikala Cha Wayao of Nyasaland*, London: Frank Cass, 1973; Alpers, 'Trade, State and Society among the Yao in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, X3, 1969; B. Sundkler and C. Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 514; D.S. Bone, 'Islam in Malawi', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 13, 2, 1982, p. 128; Price, 'Yao Origins', *Society of Malawi Journal*, XVII, 2, 1964, pp. 11-6; A. Thorold, 'The Yao Muslims: Religion and Social Change in Southern Malawi', PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1995, and C. Mitchell, 'The Yao of Southern Nyasaland', in E. Colson and M. Gluckman, (eds), *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 292-353.

<sup>20</sup> The *Mfecane*, its causes and impact, is a well-trodden ground of debate/controversy. For details see J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*, London: Longman, 1966; C. Hamilton, (ed.), *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*, Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg: Witwatersrand University Press and University of Natal Press, 1995; Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998; J. Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo', *Journal of African History*, 29, 3, 1988, pp. 487-519; Cobbing, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 23, 2, 1989, pp. 272-91; E. Eldredge, 'Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa, c. 1800-30: The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered', *Journal of African History*, 33, 1, 1992, pp. 1-35, and J. Wright, 'Mfecane Debates', *SARoB* (Double Issue), 1995, pp. 39-40.

<sup>21</sup> S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Ndebele Nation: Reflection on Hegemony, Memory and Historiography*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2009, p. iii; Rangeley, 'The Angoni', pp. 62-80.

## ***Mthandizi: Nyasas and the Colonial Labour Migration System***

Colonial encroachment and the capitalist wage economy brought drastic changes to African livelihoods in Southern Africa. In Southern Rhodesia, white settlers hoped to find a Second Rand and initiated an extensive quest for cheap African migrant labour.<sup>22</sup> This triggered wholesale mobility of Africans from Nyasaland to the colony's mines and farms. With Nyasaland unable to offer employment opportunities because of its lack of mineral resources, Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa became the prime destinations for Nyasas. Colonial tax obligations added an impetus for Nyasas to migrate south.<sup>23</sup> As early as 1892, the introduction of African labour from Nyasaland was mooted. Starting from 1895, Nyasas were recruited for railway construction and mines in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>24</sup> This heralded the beginning of the forced/contract labour system commonly known as *Mthandizi* or *Chibaro* among Nyasas and other migrant workers from the northern territories.<sup>25</sup>

The Southern Rhodesian government sanctioned the inception of a national labour organization known as the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) to coerce and harness migrant labour initially for mines and later for farms. Originally established by the big mines in 1903, RNLB supplied cheap covenanted migrant labour to mining and agricultural industries.<sup>26</sup> By that year, about 4,000 Nyasas had found their way to the colony.<sup>27</sup> According to Van Onselen, the RNLB sought to secure for the Rhodesian mining industry its share of African labour with the regional economic system.<sup>28</sup> It had to try to ensure that labour from the northern territories made its way to the Rhodesian mines rather than to other labour

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<sup>22</sup> Phimister, 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1, 1974, pp. 79-90.

<sup>23</sup> Initial moves towards Malawian colonisation began when the Shire Highlands area was proclaimed a British protectorate administered by Cecil John Rhodes' BSAC. This was extended in 1891 to include much of the land along the west side of Lake Malawi with Sir Harry Johnston, formerly British Consul in Mozambique being appointed its first commissioner. In 1907 the British Central Africa Protectorate became the colony of Nyasaland, with all responsibility transferred to the British Colonial Office. On the other hand Southern Rhodesia was colonised in September 1890 by the BSAC which administered the colony until 1923.

<sup>24</sup> Gelfand, 'Migration of African Labourers in Rhodesia and Nyasaland', pp. 293-300, and P. Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', *Geographical Review*, 44, 1, 1954, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* See also Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 99, and W.C. Chirwa, 'The Malawian Government and South African Labour Recruiters, 1974-92', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34, 4, 1996, pp. 623-42.

<sup>26</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 103; D. Johnson, 'Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1936-46', *Journal of African History*, 33, 1, 1992, p. 115, and Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', pp. 44-7.

<sup>27</sup> Gelfand, 'Migration of African Labourers in Rhodesia and Nyasaland', p. 293, and Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 606.

<sup>28</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 104.

markets, and that Africans did not proceed to the Witwatersrand after a short period of work.<sup>29</sup> Manganga observes that RNLB and the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) were part of the supranational 'native' labour recruitment agencies in Southern Africa, fashioned after the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) commonly known as *Wenela*, which was active throughout the region.<sup>30</sup> In 1910, RNLB recruiting agencies were opened at Southern Rhodesia's main entry points at Mtoko, Mrewa, Mt. Darwin, Umtali, Shamva, Sipolilo and Marandellas to cater for Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian migrants.<sup>31</sup>

There were two primary labour migration routes from the north that passed through tobacco and maize growing regions of Lomagundi and Mazoe. Rubert and Van Onselen explain that the first, which funnelled labour migrants through Lomagundi, ran from northern and western Nyasaland to Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia, then south toward Salisbury while the second originated in southern Nyasaland, then went south through the hazardous Tete pedicle, then southwest to Mtoko and on to Salisbury.<sup>32</sup> These routes covered about 4,026 kilometres in total, spreading from Southern Rhodesia's borders through Portuguese East Africa (PEA) and deep into Nyasaland to reach Karonga district at the north end of Lake Malawi, to the border of Northern Rhodesia, and 800 kilometres up the Zambezi to the northern limits of Barotseland (see map on next page).<sup>33</sup> The Fort-Jameson route presented

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

<sup>30</sup> K. Manganga, 'A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe and its Contemporary Transitions: The Case of African Harare, c. 1890-1980', PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2014, p. 72, and Chirwa, 'The Malawian Government and South African Labour Recruiters, 1974-92', p. 623. See also P. Bonner, J. Hyslop and L. Van der Walt, 'Rethinking Worlds of Labour: Southern African labour History in International Context', *African Affairs*, 66, 2-3, 2007, p. 151.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* See also G.N. Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, Emigrant Labour Report, Salisbury, 1938, p. 1; This report is also found in NA CO525/173/11, Native Labour, Report by Captain Burden on *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, 1938, and MNA S1/221A/37, Reports from the Nyasaland Labour Office, Salisbury, 1939.

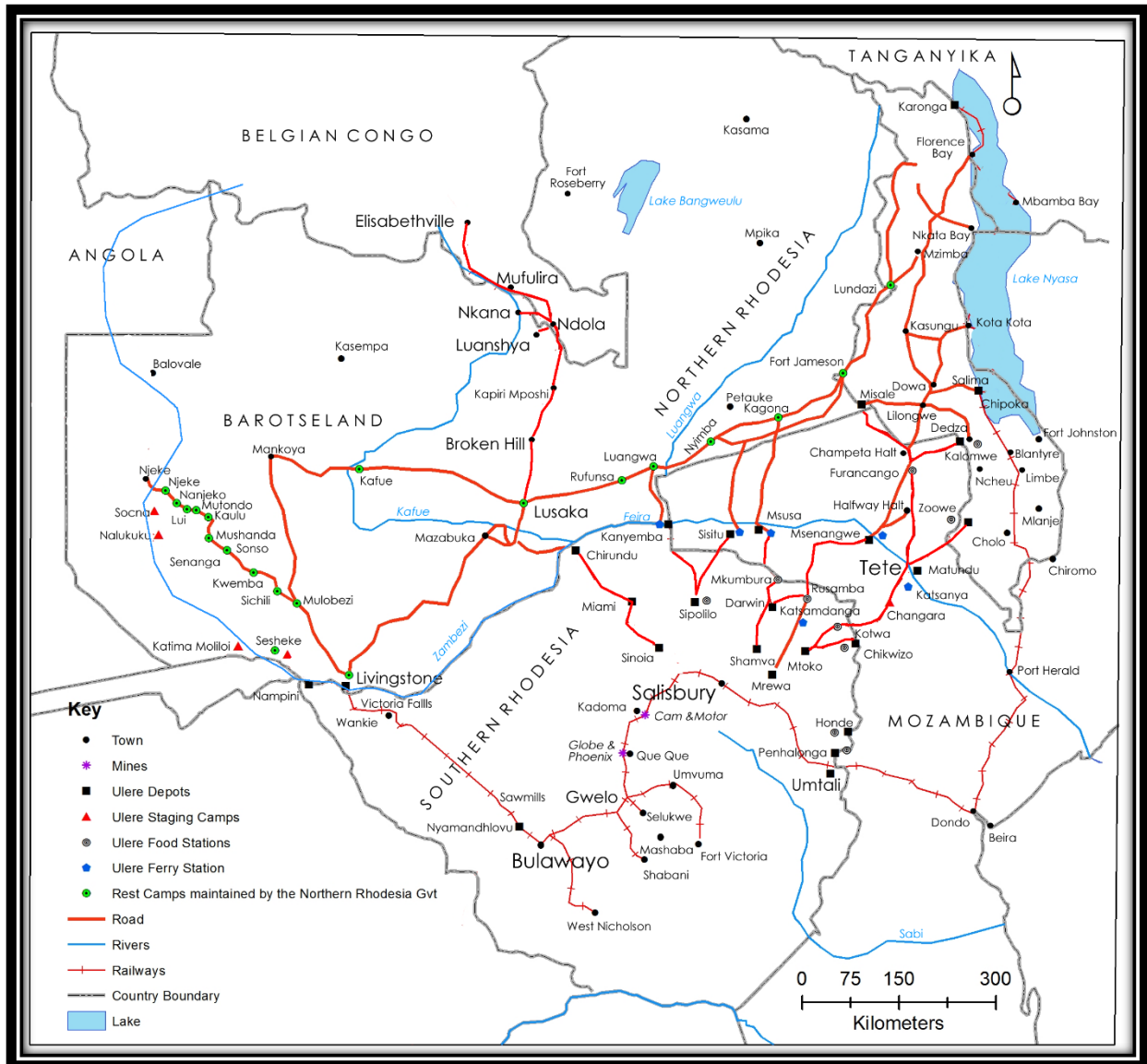
<sup>32</sup> S.C. Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1945*, Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1998, pp. 18-9; Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 121. For a detailed breakdown of the labour routes see NAZ S235/408, Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Files: Immigration of Northern Natives: Provision of Shelters/Restriction of labour to Southern Rhodesia; Correspondence from the Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary to the Secretary to the Premier on Facilities for the passage of Northern natives, 13 September 1927, and NA DO35/1162, Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs: Report of the Secretary of Native Affairs and CNC, 1942-43. See also Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', p. 550.

<sup>33</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1948.



the worker with the need for cash in order to protect his 'independent' status and reduce his exposure to danger and hardship.<sup>34</sup> As shall be detailed below, by the 1930s the Southern Rhodesia Free Migrant Labour Transport Service, (*Ulere*), consisting of buses, trains, lorries, food depots and river barges/ferries on the Zambezi, Ruya and Mazoe rivers, was running along these routes so as maximize labour recruitment.<sup>35</sup>

**Fig.1.2: Labour Routes and the Transport System (*Ulere*) into Southern Rhodesia, 1951<sup>36</sup>**



<sup>34</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 121.

<sup>35</sup> NA CO525/173/6, Nyasaland, Native Labour: Transport of Nyasaland Labour to and from Southern Rhodesia, Proposed Road Transport Service, 1938.

<sup>36</sup> Adapted from Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 35.

*Mthandizi's* indentured labour was unpopular among northern migrants. Rafael Wilson lamented that, '*anthu amalowa Mthandizi osati ndikufuna kwawo iyayi, koma anali kuwagwira kuti lowa*' meaning people were captured and forced into contract labour.<sup>37</sup> The RNLB used both official and independent/illegitimate labour recruiters and touts known as *madobadoba*, who waylaid migrants along *ulendo* routes and on Nyasaland's borders with Northern Rhodesia and PEA. A number of these *Chibaro* agents and recruiters were white Rhodesians. Square Kazembe explained that '*Mthandizi/Chibaro* had labour touts, whom we called the *madobadoba* meaning those who picked you up, who ambushed and picked up unsuspecting migrants for indentured work.'<sup>38</sup> Another interviewee, Gerald Umali Msusa, added that 'the *madobadoba* intercepted us at entry points and along labour routes luring us with good food and other promises and took us to farms and mines where we were obliged into dubious contracts with little or no pay.'<sup>39</sup> Some Rhodesian officials also disliked *Mthandizi*. Ron Morkel from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands took strong exception to RNLB's labour recruitment arguing that:

Thousands of voluntary alien natives travelled hundreds of miles on their own initiative, at their own expense, often suffering hunger and risking robbery. The RNLB tends to scare away the supply of labour with its recruiters and employers being very unpopular men so much that no voluntary local natives care to work for them as they dread being bound even for 3 months to an unknown bad employer.<sup>40</sup>

Nyاسas made use of numerous networks as agency to warn fellow migrants of dangers lurking along the way to Rhodesia. Some posted notices along *ulendo* routes. In 1925, the NC for Mt. Darwin, L. Powley, reported to the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) about a note that was scribbled on a working pass attached to a tree along the route to Mt. Darwin, of which he believed other notes of almost identical wording had been found elsewhere. The letter said:

Dear brothers, I have gone, but I want to tell you one word: that you must not agree of any 'Chibalo' (white man or labour agent, or Bureau) or anybody calls you to his hut to eat food. You had better refuse - or take meat, do not receive it. I tell you, who wants to hear he can hear, and if you do not heed you will see. I am Jabez (22.4.25).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson, Maryland Farm, Trelawney, 16 October 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe, Maryland Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Gerald Umali Msusa, Gomo Farm, Chakari, 8 May 2014. For more on labour touts see Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', pp. 47-9.

<sup>40</sup> NAZ S235/400, Migrant Labour: Employment of Nyasaland Labour; Correspondence from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to the Secretary to the Premier, Salisbury, 25 January 1925.

<sup>41</sup> NAZ S138/22, Native Movements: 1923-1933, Correspondence between Native Commissioner, Mt. Darwin and the CNC, Salisbury, on Natives Immigration, 13 May 1925.

One such infamous agent was Shabani Mine's compound manager, A. Campbell, who usually visited Mt. Darwin, Rhodesia's busiest entry point, to recruit alien labour for his mine. He complained about the tendency of Nyasas returning home of tipping those who were coming south through Mt Darwin to avoid him because he was *Chibaro* responsible for sending boys off to the mines under 12 months ticket contracts.<sup>42</sup> L. Powley explained that:

People were trying to block his recruiting by giving out that he, Campbell was '*Chibaro*' ...four migrants returning home had been told by a native named Moses that a white man was recruiting boys at Darwin saying they were for Shabani Mine, but the white man was '*Chibaro*'. I then sought the exact meaning of *Chibaro*, and many aliens told me that *Chibaro* nearly always means the RNLB, but they now use the term to describe any man, or condition which compels their fulfilling a certain period before they can leave the employer with whom they contract.<sup>43</sup>

Indentured Nyasa labourers sent complaints to their traditional authorities in Nyasaland, as well. Nyasa chiefs in turn, travelled to Southern Rhodesia to check on their subjects on the mines and farms. These chiefs were a 'nuisance' to colonial authorities and were often accused of spreading discontent and mass desertions among migrants. In August 1920, an alleged Chief Mwase from Nyasaland surreptitiously visited farms and mines in Mazoe district on pretext of seeing some of his people and collecting money.<sup>44</sup> He did not report to the Rhodesian officials and numerous Nyasa desertions were reported from farms and mines he visited.<sup>45</sup> One contractor reported on 26 August 1920 that 11 Nyasas, namely Adam, Manyika, Yotam, Mise, Elijah, Bottle, Right, Zumani, Soni, John and Makina, had deserted his Ranch Farm near Bindura. He lamented that 'there is a Nyasaland native chief with followers travelling about the district visiting compounds, and it looks as if he has been influencing the boys to desert.'<sup>46</sup> Nyasas also used kinship connections, especially ethnic ties and welfare societies (to be discussed in chapter three and five) to obtain better uncovenanted jobs and settle at their work places.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> NAZ S235/401-403, Recruitment of Labour in Southern Rhodesia, Letter from Compound Manager, Shabani Mine to the Manager, Shabani Mine, 'Report on recruiting journey to Darwin', 2 October 1924.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, Correspondence between Native Commissioner, Mt. Darwin and CNC, Salisbury, 'Labour Recruiting', 17 October 1925.

<sup>44</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 22 January 1910-16 December 1922; Correspondence from the CNC, Salisbury to the Secretary, Department of Administrator, Nyasaland, 3 September, 1920.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Correspondence from the CNC, Salisbury to the Secretary, Department of Administrator, Nyasaland, 27 August 1920.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, Letter from Contractor, Ranch Farm, Bindura to the Clerk in Charge, Native Department, Bindura, 26 August 1920.

<sup>47</sup> Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 130.

McCracken and Van Onselen, indicate that by the 1930s RNLB's indentured labour had become synonymous throughout Rhodesia and Nyasaland with forced labour or slavery resulting in many migrants rejecting the greater ease of travel that labour touts could offer in order to preserve their freedom of action.<sup>48</sup> The Bureau was universally feared and hated by black workers throughout most of central Africa and to secure *chibaro*-labour was neither pleasant nor a simple task for some members of the Bureau.<sup>49</sup> The RNLB became redundant in 1933 having earned a reputation amongst Africans for *Chibaro* (slave-like) labour.<sup>50</sup> It was only reinstated after the post-Second World War labour crisis as a new labour recruiting organization: the Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission (RNLSC) in 1946, which supplied migrant labour to Rhodesia until the 1970s.<sup>51</sup>

The RNLB's *Chibaro/Mthandizi* system was complemented by 'voluntary' or independent African migration to Southern Rhodesia. Nyasas called this *serefu*, implying self-migration, which was independent of RNLB *Chibaro*'s indentured conscription.<sup>52</sup> This was primarily responsible for the huge influx of migrant labour into Southern Rhodesia. Though it was uncovenanted labour, such migration was not voluntary since it was stimulated by need to pay colonial taxes and find better paying opportunities outside Nyasaland. Nonetheless, 'voluntary' labour sustained Southern Rhodesian mining and agricultural industries for decades. The Minister of Agriculture corroborated in 1925 that of the 142,000 Africans employed in Rhodesia, 92,000 were from Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and PEA.<sup>53</sup> 30,300 of these migrants were engaged on mines and 62,000 in other sectors.<sup>54</sup> Only 5% (4,864) came through the RNLB; the rest independently made the long journey down south.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 183; Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 119-23.

<sup>49</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 104.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103; Johnson, 'Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 116.

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, 'Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 128, and Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, *Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia*, 4, 1952, p. 218.

<sup>52</sup> Personal communication from Sofia Dzonzi Mbewe, (late), Ayrshire Mine, 14 April 2006; Evelyn Maseko, Zomba, Malawi, 28 November 2007, and Lucius Sakala, Zomba, Malawi 02 December, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> NAZ S235/400, *Migrant Labour: Employment of Nyasaland Labour*; Correspondence from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to the Secretary to the Premier, Salisbury, 4 Feb 1925.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*.

Nyasas engaged in Rhodesian mines steadily increased from an average of 12,500 between 1920 and 1926 to 30,700 in 1935, about 33% of the total workforce.<sup>56</sup> Some 25,000 Nyasas worked on farms and 20,000 in towns, including at least 10,000 in Salisbury, on one estimate, nearly half of the city's African population.<sup>57</sup> By 1937, Rhodesia was employing about 75,000 Nyasas in various sectors.<sup>58</sup> This was at least two-thirds of all Nyasaland migrants (120,000) in Southern Africa.<sup>59</sup> The 1945 Nyasaland census estimated that 133,306 persons were abroad including 9,446 were women.<sup>60</sup> By 1947, Rhodesia had 202,500 African male migrant workers in total, of which 80,500 were Nyasas, many of whom had come as free (*serefu*) labourers.<sup>61</sup> Raftopoulos states that of the 36,873 Africans employed in Salisbury by 1947, 41% were Southern Rhodesians, while 59% were non-indigenous.<sup>62</sup> In this period, the RNLSC only brought about 517 Nyasas in 1948; 1,984 in 1949; 7,628 in 1950 and 4,322 in 1951.<sup>63</sup> Scott summarised that at inception of the Federation, Southern Rhodesia employed about half a million Africans, of whom half were indigenous and half were migrants from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to the extent of one-quarter and one-sixth respectively.<sup>64</sup> Less than one-tenth of this migrant labour was *Chibaro/Mthandizi* and the dominance of voluntary migration continued into the Federation period with *serefu* labour actually quadrupling

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<sup>56</sup> See R. Gray, *Two Nations*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 92, cited in McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 181; Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 4. See also NA CO525/166/5, Native Labour: Salisbury Agreement as to Recruitment including Native Identification Passport System, 1937, and Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 606.

<sup>57</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 4, and McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 182. For tabulated statistics of the African population in Salisbury between 1911 and 1969 see Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 160.

<sup>58</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 16. See also NAZ S1561/3/1, CNC Migrant Labour; Nyasaland Matters from Feb 23 1935 to Sep 5 1940; Correspondence from Secretary for Native Affairs to the Prime Minister on Migrant labour agreement (*Machona*), 5 January 1938, and Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 607.

<sup>59</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 181. See also NA CO 525/201/1, Report of the Central African Council, 1947; Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 607.

<sup>60</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 55.

<sup>61</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1947, and Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, p. 217.

<sup>62</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, 1995, p. 82, and Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe: 1945-1965', in Raftopoulos and Phimister, (eds), *Keep on Knocking: A History of Labour Movement in Zimbabwe; 1900-1997*, Harare: Baobab, 1997, p. 58.

<sup>63</sup> Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, p. 218, and NA, CO525/214/6, Central Africa, Nyasaland: Economic General Department, General Economic Background, Memorandum on the Economy of Nyasaland, 31 October 1949.

<sup>64</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 29.

contract labour in migration.<sup>65</sup> Migrant labour (see table below) duly became the mainstay of the colonial economy.

**Table 2.1: African Labour Migrants in Southern Rhodesia, 1911-1951<sup>66</sup>**

Year	Southern Rhodesia (Locals)	Nyasaland	Northern Rhodesia	Mozambique	Other Territories (SA and Bechuanaland)	Total
1911	35,933	12,281	17,012	13,588	5,341	84,155
1921	52,691	44,702	31,201	17,198	1,524	147,316
1926	78,233	43,020	35,431	13,068	2,218	171,970
1931	76,184	49,487	35,542	14,896	2,983	179,092
1936	107,581	70,362	46,884	25,215	2,440	252,482
1941	131,404	71,505	48,163	45,970	2,468	299,510
1946	160,932	80,480	45,413	72,120	4,399	363,344
1951	241,683	86,287	48,514	101,618	10,353	488,455

Nyasaland's inability to offer sufficient employment and its inherent poverty were the principal reasons behind the continuous migration of her African population to regional labour markets. According to Else, Nyasaland's greatest export was manual labour because there was insufficient employment to cater for the population.<sup>67</sup> The protectorate was not blessed with viable natural resources except in a few southern and central Nyasaland districts.<sup>68</sup> The so-called 'dead north', that is, the undeveloped, uneconomic and sparsely populated northern Nyasaland districts, were mostly affected by labour exodus to the south.<sup>69</sup> Burden noted that the vast majority of migrants came from more than eleven out of twenty districts while the other southern districts had economically viable cotton, tobacco, tea, rice and fish industries.<sup>70</sup> Yet, due to Nyasaland's chronic poverty, some migrants came

<sup>65</sup> See table 3.1 in Chapter 3 on Nyasa emigration into Southern Rhodesia between 1950 and 1967, p. 93.

<sup>66</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 31. The high immigration figures of Africans from Mozambique in 1951 included seasonal workers who temporarily provided labour to plantations of eastern Southern Rhodesia. See NA CO525/167/1, Native Labour: Report by J.C. Abraham on Nyasaland Natives in the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, 1937.

<sup>67</sup> Else, *Malawi: Much More Than Just a Lake*, p. 42.

<sup>68</sup> See variously, NA CO525/158/8, Nyasaland: Recruitment of Native Labour, 'Extract from 'East Africa'', 30 May 1935, and NA CO525/214/6, Central Africa, Nyasaland: General Economic Background, Memorandum on the Economy of Nyasaland, Economic General Department, 31 October 1949.

<sup>69</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 16, and Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 32.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, and McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 178. See also NAZ S1561/3/1, CNC Migrant Labour: Nyasaland Matters from 23 February 1935 to 5 September 1940: Correspondence from Secretary for Native Affairs to the Prime Minister on Migrant labour agreement (Machona), 5 January 1938.

from the densely populated south. In a 1937 population survey of Nyasas in Southern Rhodesia, Eric Smith reported that:

Of the Protectorate emigrants (about 67,747), a much higher percentage (69%) from the north go to South Africa than is the case with emigrants (18%) from the Southern Province; whereas about 77% (of 22,350) from the Southern Province are in Southern Rhodesia and only 8% in South Africa.<sup>71</sup>

Perennial droughts and famine exacerbated Nyasaland's poverty and migration. In 1926, the Kasungu District Resident identified the famine of 1924-25 as the cause for 'excessive emigration last year' from northern Nyasaland.<sup>72</sup> Murray noted that the RNLSC recruited an appreciable number of labour from Nyasaland following the 1948-49 famine, a trend that was subsequently re-enacted in the 1950s with close to 10,000 labourers recruited by the organisation.<sup>73</sup> Financial burdens arising from colonial tax demands, bride price, school fees and obstacles to African cash crop cultivation, also forced many Nyasas into the labour migration system.<sup>74</sup> Migrant labour became the major means of satisfying economic demand. By 1930, about 80% of hut tax revenue in the Mzimba District directly or indirectly came from migrants and the District Commissioner noted that it was 'now unusual to find any young men in the villages'.<sup>75</sup> As shall be noted in chapter three, the impetus for migration remained almost the same with some variations over time.

### ***Machona, Nyasa Juveniles and Women***

Most Nyasa labour migrants became *Machona* or 'lost ones': people who had cut ties with their homeland and were unlikely to return.<sup>76</sup> 'No one knew where they were, and were written off as 'lost' to the village.'<sup>77</sup> Nyasas found themselves entrapped by the diaspora and failed to return home. Creech Jones of the Central African Council explained in 1947 that

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<sup>71</sup> NA CO525/173/4, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia: Native Affairs, Survey of Population of Nyasaland Protectorate with a View to Discover Taxable Capacity of Each District and Number of Able-Bodied Men who Can Seek Work Abroad Without Detriment to Village Life, 1938.

<sup>72</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 178, and MNA S1/920/26, Northern Province Annual Report, 1926.

<sup>73</sup> D.J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 337.

<sup>74</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 179.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Gift Kayira, Head of History Department and George Jawali, Lecturer, University of Malawi Chancellor College, Zomba, Malawi, 02 March 2015.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Gift Kayira and George Jawali. See also Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 611

many 'are reluctant to return home without something to show for it, while the expense of the journey is a formidable charge on their savings; so their general tendency is to stay away for long periods, a proportion being permanently lost to Nyasaland.'<sup>78</sup> Some left relatives behind; others left wives and children, starting new families with local women or fellow Nyasa females who had independently migrated to Rhodesia.<sup>79</sup> *Machona* had a saying, 'there is a hoe to bury me wherever I may go.'<sup>80</sup> Many migrants stayed away all their lives and eventually died in the diaspora. Colonial authorities used the *Machona* label for demographic assessment and to track migrant labourers. The 1934 Lacey Committee and the 1935 Burden reports noted that between 90,000 to 120,000 Nyasas were absent from the protectorate, one-third of whom were *Machona*.<sup>81</sup> The Northern Province had a higher percentage of 'lost ones' (28%) than the Southern Province (13%) because the north was poorer and had emigrants who proceeded further afield than those from the south.<sup>82</sup> By 1940, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa had about 40,000 and 22,000 *Machona*, respectively, who had been resident for more than ten years.<sup>83</sup> In order to control the problem of *Machona* the colonial authorities devised various mechanisms some of which were codified in the tripartite labour agreements between Nyasaland, Southern and Northern Rhodesia. These will be discussed further below.

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<sup>78</sup> NA CO525/193/5, Nyasaland Native Labour: Recruitment for the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, Mr. Creech Jones personal minutes on Recruitment of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Labour, 1947.

<sup>79</sup> Reasons for not returning home are detailed in Chapter Six. See also Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, pp. 17-8.

<sup>80</sup> 'Machona: Come Back Home', *Mutende*, 21, November 1937.

<sup>81</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 16. See also NAZ S1561/3/1 CNC Migrant Labour; Nyasaland Matters from Feb 23 1935 to Sep 5 1940; Correspondence from Secretary for Native Affairs to the Prime Minister on Migrant labour agreement (*Machona*), 5 January 1938; McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 183 who states that a total of 120,000 Malawians were working abroad in 1934, an estimate which the labour census downgraded to 90,000 in 1937. This revised figure was conservative and it is more than likely, as the Government acknowledged, that by the mid-1930s at least 110,000 Malawian workers were absent from their homeland. See Gray, *Two Nations*, p. 121.

<sup>82</sup> NA CO525/173/4, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia: Native Affairs, Survey of Population of Nyasaland Protectorate with a View to Discover taxable capacity of each District and Number of Able-Bodied Men who can Seek Work Abroad without detriment to Village Life, 1938, and Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>83</sup> NA CO1015/2537, Nyasaland Protectorate Annual Reports of the Labour Department, 1959-1960, and NAZ S1561/3/1, CNC Migrant Labour, Nyasaland Matters, 23 February 1935 to 5 September 1940. In his letter to the Prime Minister on the migrant labour agreement, CNC, C. Bullock, reported that there were about 120,000 absentees from Nyasaland, of which one-third of this number were said to be *Machona* or lost ones. See also 'Emigrant Labour', *Nyasaland Times*, 17 September 1951.



A number of Nyasa male migrants were juveniles below the age of 16. Rhodesian employers famously called them 'picannin boys'.<sup>84</sup> According to Van Onselen, the use of child labour in certain sections of the Rhodesian industry had its roots deep in the years of reconstruction.<sup>85</sup> Nyasaland Special Commissioner for Native Labour Affairs, Eric Smith, noted that Nyasa juvenile migration was on the increase with entry points such as Mtoko recording about 966 boys accompanying their relatives or on their own in 1936.<sup>86</sup> Overall 3,906 Nyasa youths entered Southern Rhodesia in 1936.<sup>87</sup> According to McCracken, 'each year, as many as 5,000 youths accompanied older relations abroad, particularly to the Lupa Goldfields where child labour was actively encouraged and to Southern Rhodesia'<sup>88</sup> Juveniles who passed through Mtoko in 1937 include 12 year old Remeki; Besitara and Rafiyoni aged 13; 14 year olds Pemba, Erenewo, Joseph, Manwere, Labison and Watison and numerous 15 and 16 year olds.<sup>89</sup> In 1949, 15,679 juveniles had sought for employment in Rhodesia.<sup>90</sup>

Juveniles were often taken in by white employers to work as gardeners. Denisani Iliyasa, for example, migrated from Zomba aged 13 and started his first job as a gardener in Salisbury earning a pound monthly (\$US2).<sup>91</sup> However, many juveniles worked on farms and plantations for meagre wages. According to Rubert, 'tobacco growers in particular, employed children, from Shona reserves, northern territories and farm worker offspring, as casual labourers throughout 1890-1945 reasoning that juveniles were extremely cheap, earning three pence a day to five shillings a month; were better workers because it was easier for them to learn, and retain the habit of work.'<sup>92</sup> Mines were also notorious for using juvenile labour. Ayrshire Mine

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with Williard Banda, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 8 May 2014. For more on juvenile labour in Southern Rhodesia see B.C. Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labour and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006, and Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, pp. 161-5.

<sup>85</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 124.

<sup>86</sup> MNA S1/221A/37, Reports from the Nyasaland Labour Office, Salisbury: Report from Special Commissioner for Native Labour Affairs, Blantyre, Nyasaland, 3 November 1937, and MNA S1/198/39, Nyasaland: Recruitment of Boys for Southern Rhodesia, 1939.

<sup>87</sup> NA CO525/166/5, Native Labour: Salisbury Agreement as to Recruitment including Native Identification Passport System, 1937, and MNA S1/1446/27, Nyasaland, Examination of Natives at Forrester's Estate, Mtoko, 20 August 1937.

<sup>88</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 184.

<sup>89</sup> MNA S1/1446/27, Nyasaland: Examination of Natives at Forrester's Estate, Mtoko, 20 August 1937.

<sup>90</sup> NA CO 936/62/3, International Relations: Affairs in Southern Rhodesia, Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC, and Director of Native Development, 1949.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Denisani Iliyasa, New Grade Farm, Trelawney, 17 October 2013.

<sup>92</sup> Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, pp. 161-5.

near Banket (see images below) was one of numerous mines that employed juveniles from as early as the 1890s. Many were bound by contract and did minor tasks of cleaning, sweeping or cooking in the compounds. Others were employed in less physical mine tasks in the base mineral industry such as mica and asbestos mines, which relied on their quickness of eye and agility of hand.<sup>93</sup>

#### **Migrant Juvenile Labour at Ayrshire Mine in 1901<sup>94</sup>**



**Miner House with a Juvenile 1901**



**Juveniles and Adults at Mine Railway Station 1901**

<sup>93</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>94</sup> Pictures adapted from the Ayrshire Mine Administration Notice Board, Banket.

While women migration was not common prior to the 1950s, by the 1920s Southern Rhodesian authorities were 'commenting on the significant number of women from Nyasaland entering the territory, sometimes with their husbands and sometimes alone.'<sup>95</sup> Mudeka notes the colonially instituted male-centred migrant system exposed peasant Nyasa women to extreme suffering and vulnerability within their own natal homelands and ironically constituted the conditions impelling them to plunge into the migrant stream.<sup>96</sup> However, female migration encountered infinite obstacles. The Nyasaland government allied itself with African traditional authorities and patriarchy to curtail female migration to the south, although by the late 1950s, these measures had been relaxed. Consequently, women often fled by night or at dawn along with singles, widows and divorcees.<sup>97</sup> They clandestinely trudged with male friends, relatives or husbands through dense and dangerous forests, braving wild animals and the elements.<sup>98</sup> NC for Shamva reported in 1921 that 'these women come down with gangs of men from the north, but avoid NC stations in order to escape observation.'<sup>99</sup> Nyasa women embarked on *ulendos* in total disregard of traditional patriarchy and colonial instruments that controlled female mobility and fertility. African women faced a double-pronged attack that sought to confine them to the private (rural) space as reproductive and productive tools for the colonial labour system.<sup>100</sup>

Accordingly, various laws were implemented to simultaneously regulate male migration and curb female influx into the public sphere (the workplace). This was achieved through the

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<sup>95</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 184. See also Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto' - she mentions of a Conference on the Formation of a Native Labour Recruitment Organization, held in Salisbury on 22nd February, 1944, where the Nyasaland Labour Officer, Major J. Stephens, clearly stated that Nyasaland did not allow female migration unless 'the husband's employer tells us that accommodation is available'. The Prime Minister of Rhodesia stressed that, Rhodesia did not allow it unless employers provided housing on private property and not in reserves or state land.

<sup>96</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p. 65.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>99</sup> NAZ, N3/22/6, Southern Rhodesia: Influx of Foreign Native Women, Correspondence from the NC, Shamva to the NC Mazoe, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1921.

<sup>100</sup> See variously, T. Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard: Gender, Urbanization and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999; T. Barnes, 'The Fight for Control of African Women's Mobility in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920-39', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 17, 3, 1992; T. Barnes and E. Win, *To Live a Better Life: An Oral History of Women in the City of Harare, 1930-70*, Harare: Baobab Books, 1992; B. Bozzoli and M. Nkotsoe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-83*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991; A. Cheater, 'The Role and Position of Women in Pre-colonial and Colonial Zimbabwe', *Zambezia*, 13, 2, 1986, and E. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870 -1939*, Harare: Baobab Books, 1992, p. 94.

introduction of an elaborate pass system, first in Nyasaland under the Native Labour Ordinance in 1894 followed two years later in Southern Rhodesia. According to Barnes, 'pass laws required the carrying of identity and registration certificates on which would be endorsed important employment details and in later years, the date of last examination for venereal disease.'<sup>101</sup> In Southern Rhodesia, women were never under the provisions of Ordinance 16 of 1901, and were not required to register for identification certificates.<sup>102</sup> They were exempted from the pass system and many Nyasa women exploited this to clandestinely trek to the colony. NC for Shamva reported that 'as they are exempt from the provisions of the Pass Laws, it follows that Native Department officials have no opportunity of interrogating them or of observing the extent of the influx.'<sup>103</sup> Despite these exemptions and in the twisted logic of the pass system, a married woman needed a pass to show that she did not need a pass; she was technically required to have either a marriage document or a certificate stating that she was the 'approved wife' of an employed man.<sup>104</sup> In later years, some of the provisions of the Natives Registration Act of 1936 required women to possess a town pass (a pass to seek work) and a visitors pass into town locations. Likewise, Southern Rhodesia deliberately used the male hostel system among other restrictive mechanisms to discourage females from joining their spouses in urban areas and mines. Nonetheless, the presence of women 'created new economic and social practices and added vivid strands to the tapestry of diasporic life.'<sup>105</sup>

### ***Ulendo wakuRhudhisha: The Journey to Southern Rhodesia***

*Ulendo* experiences to Southern Rhodesia varied from individual to individual. Some were determined by mode of transport or routes, others by gender, age and season. Prior to the establishment of the *Ulere* government transport system in the 1930s, Nyasas migrated on foot. Even after inception of *Ulere*, thousands made the long and dangerous journey south on

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<sup>101</sup> Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*, pp. 11-2; MNA S1/943<sup>II</sup>/29, Nyasaland Native Census: Report on Emigrant Labour: Circular No. 88 from Office of CNC, Southern Rhodesia on Registration of Natives, 1936, and NA CO525/201/1, Report of the Central African Council, 1947.

<sup>102</sup> Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*, pp. 11-2.

<sup>103</sup> NAZ, N3/22/6, Southern Rhodesia: Influx of Foreign Native Women, Correspondence from the NC, Shamva to the NC Mazoe, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1921.

<sup>104</sup> Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*, pp. 11-2.

<sup>105</sup> Delius and Phillips, 'Introduction: Highlighting Migrant Humanity', in Delius, Phillips and Rankin-Smith, (eds), *A Long Way Home*, p. 2.

foot rather than by rail/road.<sup>106</sup> Burden estimated that 'in 1937 90% of Nyasa migrants were arriving on foot, the remaining 10% either had the means to pay their bus or train fares or their fares had been paid by their employers.'<sup>107</sup> Very few Nyasas took trains because of the high transport costs and walking remained the most popular and commonplace mode of travel even up to the 1950s.<sup>108</sup> The arduous journey on foot took close to a month depending on the routes taken and season. Many gradually migrated practising the 'stop-go process', stopping to work for food and money until they reached their final destination. NC for Mazoe observed that an 'influx of alien natives either purchased food from the local natives, or more generally worked in the locals' fields, receiving food in exchange.'<sup>109</sup> Others went to the extent of raiding for food. Two Nyasa headmen, Chinkodia and Supa accused a gang of Nyasa migrants led by Capitao Mtimbilila of Masotangenje of raiding Nyasaland villages taking away four goats. CNC, Zomba, A.S. Tabern wanted his Rhodesian counterparts to prosecute the culprits by paying thrice the value of the property stolen, a goat being valued at three shillings.<sup>110</sup>

Migrants often travelled in groups or as families for security reasons. According to Burden, they regularly travelled in small parties and preferred to obtain employment together.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Free river ferries were initially established around 1925 at such crossing points as Kariba Gorge, Dandawa, Feira, Sisitu, Nsusa, Chikoa, Msenangwe, Chemba on the Zambesi River; Mshikoramwendo and Chipadzi on the Ruya River in Darwin District and at Katsamdanga on the Mazoe River along the Mrewa route. For details see NA CO936/62/3, International Relations: Affairs in Southern Rhodesia, Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC, and Director of Native Development, 1949; NA CO1015/2537, Central African and Aden Department, Nyasaland Protectorate Annual Reports of the Labour Department for 1959 and 1960; NAZ S2239, Migratory Labour Carried by Southern Rhodesia Government Migrant Labour Transport (*Ulere*) 1947-1960, and NAZ S235/408, CNC Files: Immigration of Northern Natives: Provision of Shelters/Restriction of labour to Southern Rhodesia; Correspondence from Colin E. Duff, the Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary to the Secretary to the Premier on Facilities for the passage of Northern natives, 13 September 1927. See also 'For Labour: Transport to be Provided', *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 20 January 1938; C.H. Thompson and H.W. Woodruff, *Economic Development in Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1953, p. 66; Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, pp. 217-8, and 'Native Immigration into Southern Rhodesia Improving: Labour Department Opening Up New Routes from North', *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 July 1940.

<sup>107</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>108</sup> Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', p. 551. See also D. Niddrie, 'The Road to Work: A survey of the Influence of Transport on Migrant Labour in Central Africa', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 15, 1954, pp. 36-7.

<sup>109</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 22 January 1910-16 December 1922; Correspondence from the NC, Mazoe to the Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury, 1 December 1922.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, Correspondence from A.S. Tabern the CNC, Zomba to the CNC, Salisbury on Native Raiders Nyasaland, 26 June 1910.

<sup>111</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 3.

Juma Jula from Machinga district, Malawi, stated that, '*ambili amapita kuDzimbabwe wanyendo m'magulu chifukwa chazoopsa*' meaning 'many went to Zimbabwe on foot in groups in fear of danger and marauders.'<sup>112</sup> Makambe explains that 'Nyasas learnt that travelling in sizeable gangs, varying in numbers from about ten to thirty, was a sound security plan particularly on those occasions when they were required to protect themselves from marauding local communities.'<sup>113</sup> Such parties often included those who had worked in Southern Rhodesia before and they usually influenced others as to their destination. *Ulendos* were often delayed by hunger, lack of funds or sickness such that migrants invariably arrived in poor health.<sup>114</sup>

The journey took much preparation, networking and bravery. Kapungareka Sakala's trip saw his father negotiating with a neighbour, who frequently travelled Southern Rhodesia, to take Kapungareka to a relative employed at Kadziko farm near Mtorashanga.<sup>115</sup> His mother packed a goatskin bag with mealie-meal, roasted chicken and other foodstuffs, and fifty cents for contingents. He left home in Mlanje, southern Malawi, at 2pm for the neighbour's homestead and began walking to Mt. Darwin at 4am the next day.<sup>116</sup> They walked for almost three weeks, sleeping in trees in fear of wild animals and sometimes in Chikunda villages in PEA, before reaching the Zambezi River. They met other migrants waiting at the riverbank and boarded a small boat (*mwadiya*). He relayed that 'our boat started to leak and we frantically scooped water out. The boat owner ordered us to throw overboard whatever charms we had; three people obliged, throwing their stuff into Zambezi and we had no other life threatening incident thereafter.'<sup>117</sup> Indeed, most Nyasas usually carried charms to protect themselves during *ulendo*.<sup>118</sup> James Asidi added that migrants carried lucky charms (*vhitumwa*) for protection, employment, women and fighting (*mangoromera*).<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Juma Jula, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 8 May 2014.

<sup>113</sup> Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', p. 551.

<sup>114</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Kapungareka Sakala, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 183.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with James Asidi, Stratford Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

John Karonda, a Ngoni from Thyolo district and his young brother, joined a group and walked for three weeks to Dwenya River near Mozambique and then boarded the *Ulere* to Mtoko. He narrates that 'we normally walked from 4am to 9pm in a file or line, with the old in front and the young at the back for safety. We were carrying mealie-meal called *Mchewere*, beans and dried *kapenta* and lit big camp fires to scare away wild animals.'<sup>120</sup> They used to dig small wells to quench their thirst. John's first job was at Vicklery farm as a tree cutter in Mtoko. He then became a horse rider (jockey) at the Borrowdale races course in Harare for 33 years until his retirement in 2009. Another interviewee, Wyson Chipiko, migrated with some friends, first traveling to Mt. Darwin on foot for close to a month, avoiding '*madobadoba*' labour recruiters, before taking a lorry through Mutare and settling at Mhangura Mine, working as a gardener and later a tractor driver on white commercial farms.<sup>121</sup>

Transient Nyasas often passed through PEA during migration. PEA was renowned for tribulations encountered at the hands of Portuguese authorities and African insurgents. Complaints about labour traps, obstruction, molestation, detention, robbery and forced enlistment into the Portuguese army, as well as attacks by marauding local communities, characterised narratives of migrants who proceeded through PEA.<sup>122</sup> This problem was connected to the complex diplomatic and historical tussles associated with Luso-Anglo relations.<sup>123</sup> Nyasa migrants were victims of the conflict between the British and the Portuguese over territorial claims. These emanated from chequered diplomatic relations between Rhodes, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and Portuguese pioneer and company promoter, Carlos Paiva de Andrada, supported by the Goanese adventurer, Manuel Antonio de Sousa (popularly known as Gouveia) over the Manyika territory, as well as the struggle over Portuguese Zambesia and the Shire Highlands of Southern Nyasaland.<sup>124</sup>

As a result, Nyasa migrants faced various hazards in PEA. During the First World War, Nyasas became prime targets for forced Portuguese war enlistment. In July 1917, the Superintendent

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<sup>120</sup> Census Interview with John Karonda, Hatcliffe Extension, Harare, 23 August 2012.

<sup>121</sup> Census Interview with Wyson Chipiko, Hatcliffe Extension, Harare, 18 August 2012.

<sup>122</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 122.

<sup>123</sup> Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', p. 548.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p. 549. See also P.R. Warhust, *Anglo-Portuguese Relations in South-Central Africa, 1900-80*, London: Longman, 1962, pp. 26-31.

of Native Affairs in Zomba reported that 'a number of natives of this Protectorate returning home from South Africa and Rhodesia are being detained by the Portuguese authorities and enlisted for military service against their will.'<sup>125</sup> One such victim was K. Homma Mackankhue, who was imprisoned at Delagoa Bay in February 1917. He wrote a letter to his relative, Sachuruka, in Nyasaland on 26 June 1917 four months after his incarceration remonstrating that:

I am in prison here...the *Azungu* (Europeans) of this place do not allow we Blantyre boys to pass through this place...our goods (*katundu*) have been taken away and the *Azungu* (Europeans) here want us to go with them to war. I am just telling you that you may understand and report at home. Save the money, which I sent you, perhaps we shall be allowed to go.<sup>126</sup>

Portuguese authorities similarly sought the services of Nyasas in their fight against African insurgents/rebels, particularly the Barwe kingdom of Makombe, initially from 1900 to 1902 and later from 1917 to 1920. The Portuguese detained and forced Nyasas to fight for them against the Barwe. This saw Nyasas paying a heavy price at the hands of the Barwe during their migration to Southern Rhodesia, losing their lives or goods, invariably abandoned as the owners fled.<sup>127</sup> NC for Mt. Darwin, L. Powley, commented that on hearing that some Nyasas were passing through their territory, local Africans in PEA always came out of their kraals with their guns, waylaid these people in the thick bush and murdered them.<sup>128</sup> Casualties were high amongst small and vulnerable migrant groups, including women and juveniles.<sup>129</sup> Captive women became 'concubines of the Barwe insurgent army.'<sup>130</sup>

Portuguese police officers and messengers also harassed Nyasas. A police commandant and his 'native' police constables in Chikoa near Tete obstructed Chiputula, a Yao employed at Giant Mine in Rhodesia's Hartley district.<sup>131</sup> He was with his wife and 13 other Yao colleagues

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<sup>125</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 22 January 1910-16 December 1922: Correspondence from the E.C. White, Acting Superintendent of Native Affairs, Zomba to the CNC, Salisbury, 19 July 1917.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from K. Homma Mackankhue, Delagoa Bay to Sachuruka, Nyasaland, (Translated from Nyanja), 26 June 1917.

<sup>127</sup> Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', pp. 560-1.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 560.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, p. 561.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>131</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 22 January 1910-16 December 1922; Report from the Administrator, Salisbury to the Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba, 29 August, 1912.



plus four Portuguese African guides, Gayiwa, Antonio, Feremu and Chisaru who were safely guiding them across the territory for a fee of 30 shillings.<sup>132</sup> He narrated that:

After travelling for seven days three native police stopped us...They pointed their cocked guns at us, threatening to take us to their head camp at Nyanzi. We showed our passes and asked why we were arrested, but to no avail. My wife and I, and 12 others fled into the bush and travelled at night until we got into Mt. Darwin district. I know of other migrants who have been arrested in Portuguese territory.<sup>133</sup>

Apparently, Portuguese authorities were on the lookout for Nyasas to abuse their cheap labour for various state projects. Reporting to the Governor of Nyasaland, the administrator responsible for Nyasa affairs in Salisbury, W.H. Milton, attested that 'Nyasa natives proceeding voluntarily to Southern Rhodesia are kidnapped, their passes taken away and destroyed, and the natives are sent down river to work.'<sup>134</sup> A Portuguese African guide relayed that on arrest most Blantynes were sent to Tete under escort of the *native* police to break stones for three months.<sup>135</sup> Portuguese authorities usually resorted to female and juvenile labour in the construction of the Tete-Massekesse road and overseers sexually abused many girls.<sup>136</sup> James Asidi corroborated that 'we faced serious problems in PEA; we were detained for two days at their border at Zobwe with the Portuguese officials taking away our clothes and goods during their routine searches.'<sup>137</sup>

Gangs also robbed and murdered migrants. The Superintendent of facilities for passage of northern labourers, A.L. Holland, reported that, 'while during 1926 no Nyasas had been attacked, those returning home ran a considerable risk of being murdered for their load in an under-policed Portuguese territory.'<sup>138</sup> The Agricultural Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury, H.J. Nanson, echoed that 'several robberies and murders took place in Portuguese territory which had grave effect on the numbers of natives passing through that country.'<sup>139</sup> Migrants were equally vulnerable within Nyasaland when they were

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, Correspondence between the NC, Hartley, the CNC, the Administrator, Salisbury and the Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba, 24 and 31 October 1912.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', p. 552.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>138</sup> NAZ S235/429-431, Provisions of Food Stations for the Aid of Northern Natives; The Superintendent of Facilities for Passage of Northern Natives Annual Report, December 1926.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, Letter from Agricultural Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury to the Secretary of the Ayrshire-Sipolilo Farmer's Association, Eldorado, 10 February 1927.

laden with possessions (*katundu*). In the mid-1930s, Blantyre Station was a favourite haunt of sneak thieves on the lookout for luggage to steal.<sup>140</sup>

Mechanisms were ultimately instituted to improve the welfare of Nyasa migrants passing through PEA. For instance, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesian authorities ended up advising Nyasas to avoid travelling through PEA and use alternative routes. The longer but safer Fort Jameson-Fundu-Feira-Sipolilo route was insisted upon which took migrants through Northern Rhodesia.<sup>141</sup> The Medical Office in Salisbury also repatriated all 'disabled or infirm Nyasas by rail to Beira and by boat to Chinde under escort and were provided with Southern Rhodesia passports.<sup>142</sup> Passports were part of an elaborate system introduced for all Nyasa migrant labourers under which it was henceforth clearly indicated to the Portuguese officials that 'such natives belonged to a country under British protection.'<sup>143</sup> Some Nyasas negotiated the dangers of PEA by engaging guides from local communities to lead them away from marauders, labour touts and Portuguese authorities. Others paid bribes to Portuguese officials for passage rights. Those who passed through Chipoto were required to pay an ivory bracelet, valued at one pound and two shillings each to authorities there or would suffer indefinite detention.<sup>144</sup> A lasting solution was only found with the aforementioned appointment of the supervisor of facilities for the passage of northern labourers, A.L. Holland, with his headquarters at Chikoa, on the Zambezi River in Tete district.<sup>145</sup> Other than supervising food and shelter depots, Holland oversaw the protection of transient Nyasas from attacks and abuse in PEA thereby ensuring a safe passage to Southern Rhodesia.

Walking to Rhodesia resulted in the construction of another Nyasa identity by local communities. Because many trekked on foot along railway lines from Blantyre to Salisbury, they were caricatured as *Vatevera Njanji* meaning poor and foreign rail line foot

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<sup>140</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 183.

<sup>141</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 22 January 1910-16 December 1922; Correspondence from Taylor, CNC, Salisbury to the Superintendent of Native Affairs, Zomba, 6 August 1917.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, Correspondence from Medical Director's Office, Salisbury to the CNC, Salisbury, 12<sup>th</sup> November 1915.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, Correspondence from the E.C. White, Acting Superintendent of Native Affairs, Zomba to the CNC, Salisbury, 19 July 1917.

<sup>144</sup> Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia', p. 563.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, p. 565.

trekkers/followers.<sup>146</sup> Such nomenclature together with, *Mabhurandaya*, Blantynes and *Manyasarande* or Nyasas, embodied nuanced but rich narratives about Malawian migration and identities. Blantynes or *Mabhurandaya* was and is still the most common tag used by local Zimbabweans to identify Malawian descendants. Blantyre was the main port of departure for Nyasas from across Nyasaland, travelling either on foot, by road, rail or air (Chileka Airport in Blantyre) to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. These identities consequently, became sites of discourse illuminating their migration history, social relationships and transnational experiences. While such informal labels evolved to become tools of exclusion in post-colonial Zimbabwe, Nyasas cherished the mnemonic symbolism of such identities thereby contributing to the identification processes through acceptance and consummation of such nomenclature. One interviewee, Posta Chitimbe reflected that ‘though the labels were largely derogatory, they reignited nostalgic feelings about where we came from (*kuBlantyre*) and how we migrated during our *ulendo wakuRhudisha* (the journey to Rhodesia).’<sup>147</sup>

With the inception of alternative modes of transport in the 1930s, particularly the *Ulere* transport service in 1936, some Nyasas began to travel by road and rail to the south. *Ulere* means ‘free’ in Chewa. There was no charge for the southbound rides, but a fee of ten shillings was charged to homebound workers.<sup>148</sup> The Commissioner of Native Labour in the Colonial Office, A.J. Huxtable, pointed out that the cost of *Ulere* was incredibly low when compared to the number of extra labour days the colony gained.<sup>149</sup> It saved thousands who previously travelled entirely on foot without adequate food and would as a result arrive in an emaciated condition unfit for immediate work.<sup>150</sup> A white Nyasaland tobacco farmer, R.S. Harper, moaned in 1940 that free motor and train trips to Southern Rhodesia aided hordes of Nyasas

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<sup>146</sup> This is another popular label used by local people to informally identify Malawians in Zimbabwe. Even written and oral literature has engaged such nomenclature to allude to Malawian descendants. This is true of G.T. Runyowa’s 1981 novel where his main character, *Zikomo*, is referred to as the ‘*mutevera njanji and mubvakure*’ (one from afar who followed the rail) tags by other characters throughout the novel. For more details see G.T. Runyowa, *Akada Wokure*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1981.

<sup>147</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe, Maryland Farm, Trelawney, 17 October 2013.

<sup>148</sup> Boeder, ‘Malawians Abroad’, p. 151.

<sup>149</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1948. See also ‘For Labour: Transport to be Provided’, *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 20 January 1938, and NA CO525/173/6, Nyasaland, Native Labour: Transport of Nyasaland Labour to and from Southern Rhodesia, Proposed Road Transport Service, 1938.

<sup>150</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1948.

and jeopardised Nyasaland agriculture.<sup>151</sup> McCracken notes that some migrants had already begun to travel by lorry at rates of between 15 shillings and 1 pound from Blantyre to Salisbury prior to *Ulere*.<sup>152</sup> *Ulere* began carrying passengers in May 1938.<sup>153</sup> Compound inspector for Salisbury, Sergeant D.C.H Parkhurst noted in 1940 that, 'alien natives from Nyasaland often came by train to Umtali before traveling into inner Rhodesian mines and farms.'<sup>154</sup>

Bus services normally operated weekly from Msusa to Mt. Darwin, twice weekly from Chirundu to Sinoia, and daily from Misale to Mtoko. However, demand was seasonal. It increased steadily through the first seven months of the year, reaching a maximum between August and October, and then falling sharply with the beginning of the planting season in Nyasaland.<sup>155</sup> Trains departed from Salima through Umtali to Salisbury (see map on page 40). The journey by train took between three and five days costing about 1 pound and 3 shillings or about US\$3 for the return trip.<sup>156</sup> Henry Banda Matekenya used the train from Blantyre arriving at King George railway station in Salisbury after three days.<sup>157</sup> Square Kazembe travelled by bus from Mangochi through Zomba, Blantyre, PEA, Umtali to Salisbury.<sup>158</sup> Migrants would find *Ulere* buses, lorries and/or trains waiting for them in Umtali to take them to Salisbury. Those under indentured labour were taken to Msasa in Salisbury where employers from mines, factories and farms would be waiting to recruit them.

Others boarded planes for the first time in their lives flying from Chileka Airport in Blantyre to Johannesburg under *Wenela*. From the 1950s, WNLA began flying some Nyasa migrant labourers to the Union. However, Malawi's post-independence president, Kamuzu Banda, eventually banned such flights following the death of 74 Malawian labourers returning from

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<sup>151</sup> R.S. Harper, 'Nyasaland Labour', *Nyasaland Times*, 11 April 1940.

<sup>152</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 183, and Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>153</sup> Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 37. See also 'Immigration of Natives: Services for their Transportation: Four Routes to be Operated', *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 11 June 1938.

<sup>154</sup> NAZ S1610, Compound Inspections: Monthly Reports, Lomagundi Area, 1940 - 1944, Report of the Compound Inspector, Salisbury District, 5-23 April 1940.

<sup>155</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 36.

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Denisani Iliyasa.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe.

work in South Africa in a plane crash in Francistown, Botswana in April 1974.<sup>159</sup> *Wenela* flights briefly made labour recruitment more attractive and prestigious. Jackson Chibwana first flew to South Africa in 1966 working as a locomotive operator in mines around Johannesburg.<sup>160</sup> Another WNLA recruit, Mbwana Batani flew to Johannesburg in 1972 and then boarded a bus to Bloemfontein to work at a gold mine in the Free State.<sup>161</sup> He was given a two-year contract working as a Locomotive operator in 1973 and then a foreman in 1974. In November 1974, his contract ended and he waited for two weeks for the return flight to Malawi.<sup>162</sup>

Though travel by foot continued way into the Federation until the early 1970s, *Ulere* progressively became popular among male migrants. Nyasa women also increasingly exploited the service. These women had started trekking south from the early 1920s. Under *Ulere*, wives and children accompanying husbands and parents were carried free of charge and were accorded all service facilities (food and shelter). In 1948 and 1949, 74,788 people used *Ulere* service at a cost of fourteen shillings per head.<sup>163</sup> The next year, 1949, *Ulere* assisted 80,221 migrants (including 6,850 women) at a cost of eighteen shillings per head.<sup>164</sup> In 1950 over 50,000 migrants (including 8,000 women and children) were brought to Rhodesia and 30,000 (including 9,000 women and children) were taken back home.<sup>165</sup> By the 1950s, *Ulere* transported about 70% of northern migrants entering or leaving the colony.<sup>166</sup> However, these figures were an under-estimate based on passes issued to migrants and ignored other *free/serefu* migrants. In 1949, Sofia Dzonzi Mbewe travelled independently from Muyima village in Balaka by bus and took a train from Blantyre to Dondo in PEA, following her husband who had migrated in 1945.<sup>167</sup> She then boarded another train at Dondo to Umtali. The whole journey took about four days costing Sofia about 1 pound and 10 shillings. She eventually found her husband working at Bheri's Farm near Trelawney, Banket and they never returned

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<sup>159</sup> Chirwa, 'The Malawian Government and South African Labour Recruiters, 1974-92', p. 623.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 9 May 2014.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Mbwana Batani (late), Alaska Mine, Chinhoyi, 28 December 2011.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1949.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1950.

<sup>165</sup> Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, pp. 217-8.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Personal communication from Sofia Dzonzi Mbewe.

to Malawi dying in Zimbabwe in 2007 and 2001, respectively.<sup>168</sup> *Ulere*, nonetheless, improved the flow and efficiency of labour migration to Rhodesia. The table below shows numbers carried over ten years by the service.

**Table 2.2: Migrant Labour Transport Service - *Ulere***<sup>169</sup>

Year	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
To Southern Rhodesia	20,426	23,542	24,347	39,396	33,396	34,842	40,804	38,190	32,692	35,941	48,744
From Southern Rhodesia	5,970	11,290	16,896	16,185	19,351	17,572	19,103	21,660	24,890	25,646	26,044

The Rhodesian government sought to encourage voluntary migrant labour by strategically placing food and shelter depots along major labour routes (see map on page 40). Food stations were, according to Colin Duff from the Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury, ‘for issuing meal rations free of charge to natives to assist them when travelling to the colony in search of work.’<sup>170</sup> Burden explains that ‘those travelling on foot received a free issue of food at various points on the routes...these services affording considerable help to migrants.’<sup>171</sup> Rest houses provided sanctuary to sleep in and protected migrants from cold, rain and wind.<sup>172</sup> Depots also provided free medicine.<sup>173</sup> A.L. Holland assumed duty as supervisor of these facilities in 1925.<sup>174</sup> He oversaw the establishment of depots at places such as Sisisitu, Nsusa, Chikoa, Msenangwe, Chemba in Tete; Feira, Dandawa and Kariba Gorge between Southern and Northern Rhodesia; Mshikoramwendo, Rusambo, Mt. Darwin, Katsamdanga in Mt. Darwin, as well as on routes passing through Urungwe, Sipolilo, Sinoia,

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1947. See also Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 38.

<sup>170</sup> NAZ S235/408, CNC Files: Immigration of Northern Natives: Provision of Shelters/Restriction of labour to Southern Rhodesia; Correspondence from the Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury to the Secretary, Salisbury to the Premier on Facilities for the passage of Northern natives, 13 September 1927.

<sup>171</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 2.

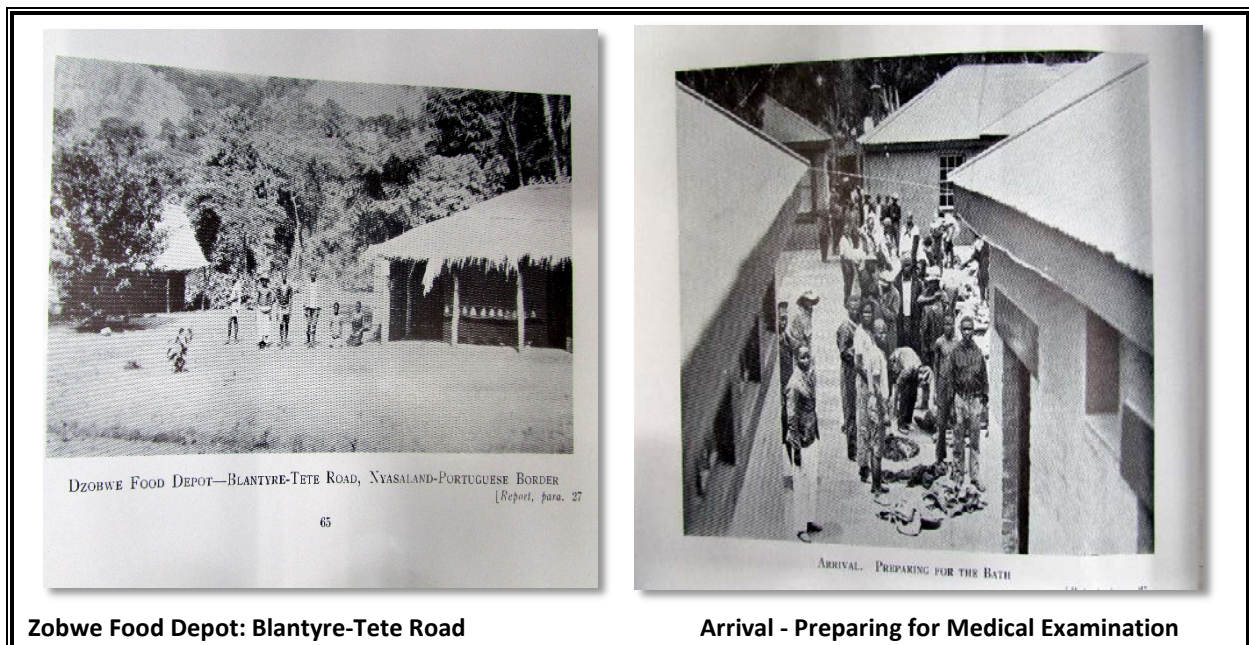
<sup>172</sup> NAZ S235/420, Shelters for non-indigenous natives: Sipolilo Correspondence from the Superintendent of Facilities for Passage of Northern Natives, Chikoa, Tete District, PEA to the Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary, 23 June 1930.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Immigration of Natives: Services for their Transportation: Four Routes to be Operated’, *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 11 June 1938.

<sup>174</sup> NAZ S235/408, CNC Files: Immigration of Northern Natives: Provision of Shelters/Restriction of labour to Southern Rhodesia; Correspondence from the Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary to the Secretary to the Premier on Facilities for the passage of Northern natives, 13 September 1927.

Mtoko, Mrewa, Inyanga and Gokwe.<sup>175</sup> Wells were established at Kaponda in Tete and Mshikoramwendo, Rusambo in Mt. Darwin to supply water to migrants.<sup>176</sup> By 1949, depots had extended to Kalomwe in PEA, Dedza, Salima, Misale and Zobwe in Nyasaland.<sup>177</sup> At first depots were treated with suspicion as migrants were under the impression that the facilities belonged to the RNLB. The depot at Kariba was unpopular with only three migrants using it during its first two and half months; the rest avoided it, crossing at Marumbe in Gokwe district.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, by 1927, this and other facilities were quite popular resulting 'in a considerable increase in the number of natives entering Rhodesia, with many Nyasas being frequently heard speaking enthusiastically of the free ferries and depots.'<sup>179</sup>

### Migration Depot and Medical Examination<sup>180</sup>



<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

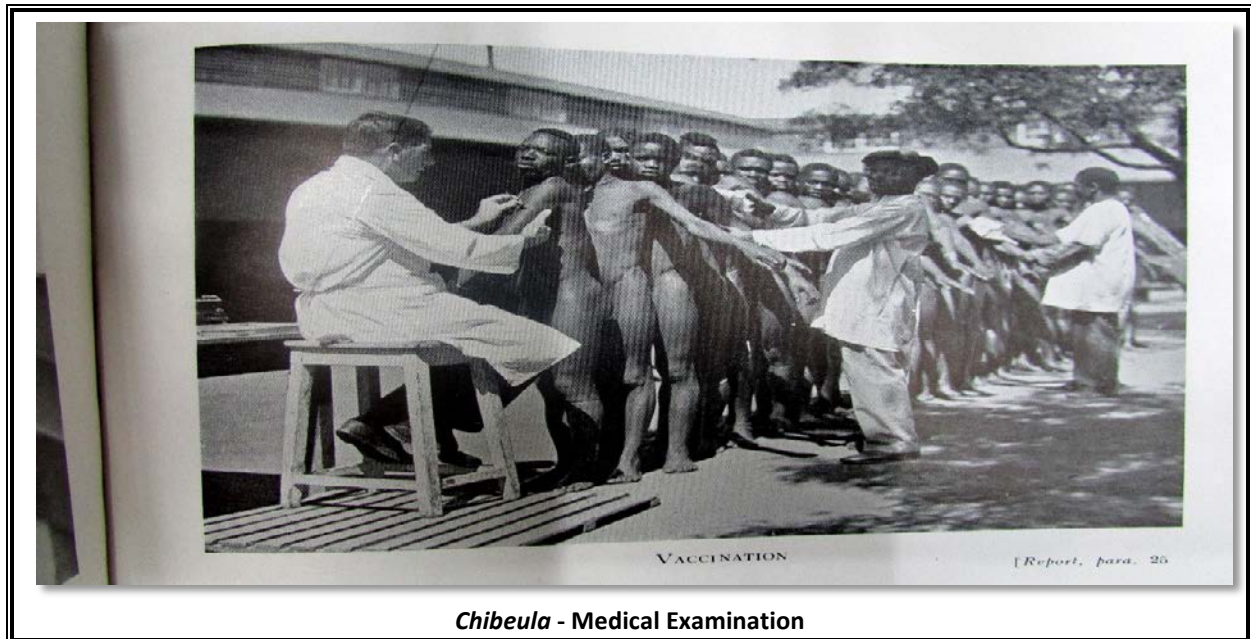
<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1950.

<sup>178</sup> NAZ S235/429-431, Provisions of Food Stations for the Aid of Northern Natives; Correspondence from the Secretary in the Department of the Colonial Secretary to the Superintendent of Facilities for Passage of Northern Natives, Chikoa, Tete District, PEA, 28 November 1927.

<sup>179</sup> NAZ S235/429-431, Provisions of Food Stations for the Aid of Northern Natives; The Superintendent of Facilities for Passage of Northern Natives Annual Report, December 1926.

<sup>180</sup> Photos adapted from NA CO525/167/1: Native Labour: Report by J.C. Abraham on Nyasaland Natives in the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, 1937.



**ChibeuLa - Medical Examination**

Male migrants underwent rigorous medical examinations at some of these depots and at principal Rhodesian entry points such as Mtoko, Mt. Darwin and Umtali. 87 year old, Godfrey Phiri, a Tonga from Nkota-kota, Malawi, stated that ‘we called the examinations *chibeula*, because we would be shamefully and publicly stripped naked (*kutivula maliseche*), ordered to queue and they would open our mouths, armpits, legs and everything; it was demeaning but we had no option, we wanted jobs.’<sup>181</sup> Due to the belief that migrants were pathogens of diseases, colonial medical examiners vaccinated and checked on the labourers’ fitness looking for chronic diseases and disability. They also checked for contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, silicosis, sleeping sickness, small pox and scabies; venereal illnesses like syphilis, gonorrhoea, as well as heart problems and other disabilities that made one unfit for work.<sup>182</sup> Others with malnourishment and minor health problems were cured or vaccinated and allowed to proceed. Migrants were blamed for malaria outbreaks. The 1964 malaria outbreak in the Triangle and Hippo Valley areas was, for instance, blamed on ‘the importation of large numbers of labourers from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, 30% of whom were allegedly found on arrival to be gametocyte carriers.’<sup>183</sup> Medical examinations were routinely done on

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Godfrey Phiri, Triangle, 10 April 2014.

<sup>182</sup> See variously MNA S1/1446/27, Nyasaland, Examination of Natives at Forrester’s Estate, Mtoko, 1937; NAZ S138/29, Mines and Labour Conditions, 1923-29; NAZ S1007/8, Office of the CNC: Repatriation of Native aliens, 1947-50; NAZ S138/41, CNC Correspondence and other papers: Native Complaints and Problems, 1926-31, and NAZ S1561/32 CNC: Migrant Labour: Repatriation of Natives 1941.

<sup>183</sup> Southern Rhodesia Report on Public Health, 1965, pp. 17-8.



employees and anyone who failed the inspection, because of serious injuries or illness, were usually repatriated to Nyasaland at the state's expense. For example, Sickacheza was repatriated in 1925 because of tuberculosis and was issued with rations for seven days.<sup>184</sup>

Labour migrants were issued with Rhodesian identification papers at entry points, complementing their passes and identity certificates issued on departure from Nyasaland. In 1910, at the request of the RNLB, the Secretary in the Department of the Administrator, Hugh Marshall Hole, instructed pass officers stationed at the ports of entry into Southern Rhodesia that:

When registering Nyasaland natives, make special efforts that the necessary details shall be stated clearly and unmistakably on their Registration Certificates...It would help matters considerably if Nyasaland were written on the Registration Certificates, and not simply the name of the district with no indication as to the territory where it is situated.'<sup>185</sup>

This heralded the official labelling of Nyasa migrant labourers, because from 1910 onwards Nyasa Registration Certificates began to be stamped with a large letter 'N' in red, indicating that they were from Nyasaland.<sup>186</sup> This idea would evolve over time, with the letter 'N' being replaced by 'A' for 'Alien' on national identity cards (IDs) to encompass all foreigners in the colony.

Under subsequent labour agreements (discussed in the next section), Nyasa migrants were required by the 1930s to produce passports or identity papers issued in Nyasaland.<sup>187</sup> All Nyasa males got passes from village headmen before collecting an identity certificate from their District Office at the nearest *Boma* (district administration centre).<sup>188</sup> The documents offered the men a facilitated migratory option since they could either travel independently, or access transport, medical care, clothing, food and shelter in transit camps.<sup>189</sup> Nyasa women could not possess such documents. A female informant, Faresi Nsingano added that 'women

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<sup>184</sup> NAZ S138/22, Native Movements: 1923-1933, Correspondence between Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury and Office of the Native Affairs, Zomba, 15 February 1925.

<sup>185</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 22 January 1910-16 December 1922.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> 'Nyasaland Labourers Pose as PEA Natives: Southern Rhodesia Entered Illegally', *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 March 1952.

<sup>188</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 50. See also MNA S1/943<sup>II</sup>/29, Nyasaland Native Census: Report on Emigrant Labour: Appointment of Special Commissioner to Enquire into Incidence of Native Taxation and Supervise Collection of Statistics in regard to Labour, 1936.

<sup>189</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 5.

were never a part of this, until marriage when some and not all had marriage certificates.’<sup>190</sup> To leave Malawi, they needed husbands’ letters of invitation, men’s registration numbers, as well as their employers’ letters indicating approval of wives’ arrival and availability of adequate accommodation.<sup>191</sup>

Migrants without identity documents to leave Nyasaland were often turned back at the Rhodesian border.<sup>192</sup> John Karonda narrates that ‘our blue Nyasaland registration certificates or identity cards (IDs) were a pre-requisite to migration but on arrival in Rhodesia we were re-registered and given more IDs.’<sup>193</sup> Rhodesian IDs were issued in two parts: the waiting pass or *chitikinyani* for juveniles and registration certificates or *chitupa* for adult men (defined as males over the age of 16).<sup>194</sup> These had your name, age and district of origin.<sup>195</sup> IDs were critical for Nyasas’ job hunt and welfare in Rhodesia. Gerald Msusa said that ‘without a *chitikinyani* or *chitupa*, better jobs were difficult to get and one could be arrested or exploited by bad employers.’<sup>196</sup> People lied about their age in order to acquire an ID. Thampson Mthobeni, a 113-year-old Malawian, allegedly born on 6 June 1902 in Mzimba, northern Malawi, had to lie about his age when he migrated to Rhodesia in 1943. ‘I was now older and what was important for me was to obtain a Rhodesian ID and get a job, so I settled for 1902, which was about 10 or 15 years less than my actual age.’<sup>197</sup> James Asidi confessed that ‘I doctored my years deducting four years from my age so that I would appear younger (juvenile), get a *chitikinyani* and avoid military conscription.’<sup>198</sup> Below are examples of the identity and registration certificates issued to Nyasa labour migrants.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>191</sup> Mudeka, ‘We faced Mabvuto’, p. 5.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Native Labour Immigrants’, *Sunday Mail*, 15 May 1938.

<sup>193</sup> Census interview with John Karonda.

<sup>194</sup> MNA S1/943<sup>II</sup>/29, Nyasaland Native Census: Report on Emigrant Labour: Circular No. 88 from Office of CNC, Southern Rhodesia on Registration of Natives, 1936, and NA CO525/201/1, Report of the Central African Council, 1947.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

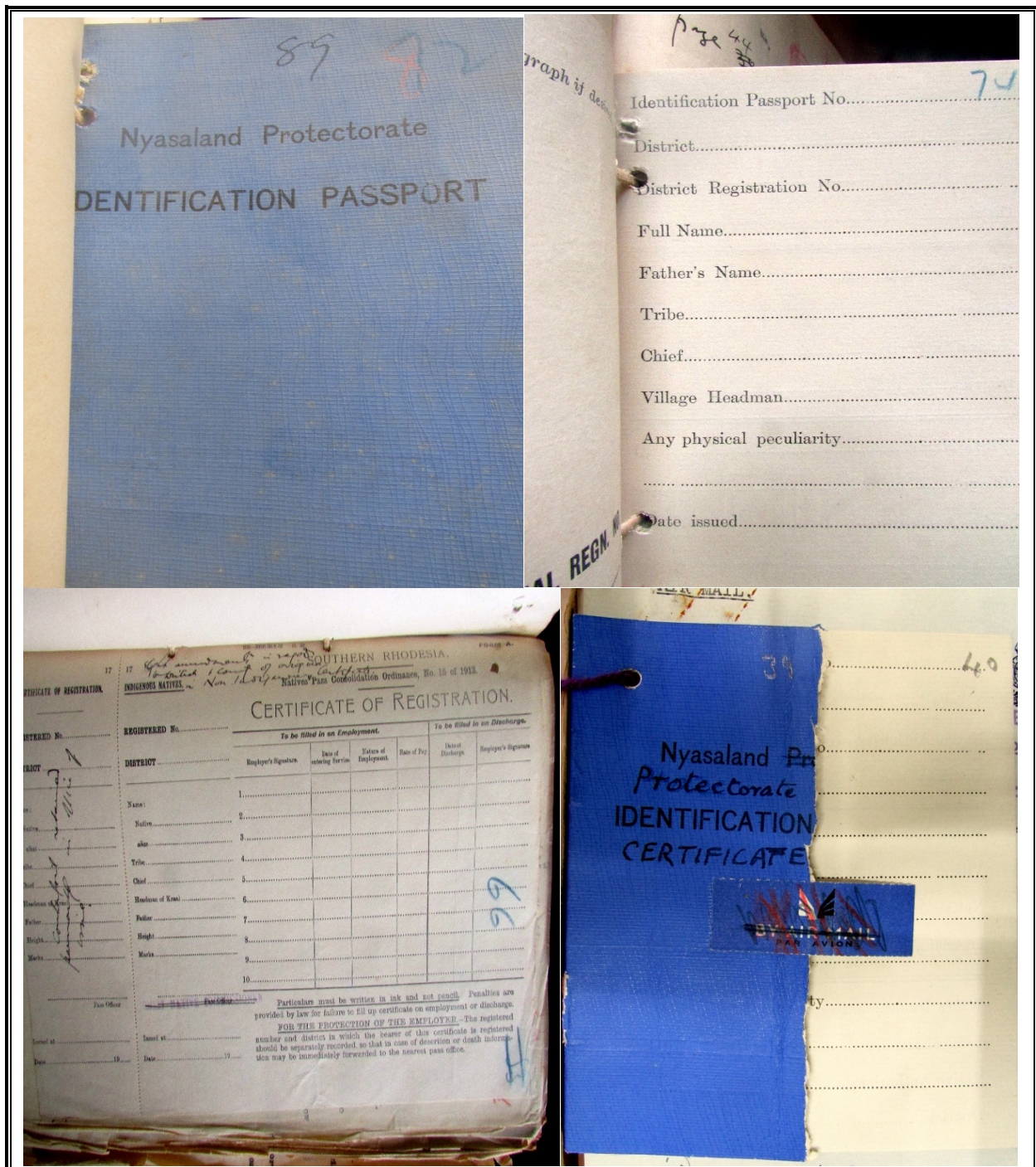
<sup>196</sup> Interview with Gerald Msusa.

<sup>197</sup> F. Mupanedemo, ‘I Want to Die, Says Man, 113’, *Chronicle*, 19 May 2015.

<sup>198</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>199</sup> MNA S1/943<sup>II</sup>/29, Nyasaland Native Census: Report on Emigrant Labour: Appointment of Special Commissioner to Enquire into Incidence of Native Taxation and Supervise Collection of Statistics in regard to Labour, 1936; NA CO525/166/4, Nyasaland Protectorate: Native labour, 1937.

## Nyasa Identity and Registration Certificates



Photos taken by author during archival research in Harare, Zomba, London and Oxford

Identity and registration certificates officialised classification of citizens and subjects in Southern Rhodesia and laid the basis for othering and citizenship problems encountered by African migrant descendants in post-independent Zimbabwe. The colonial state identified migrant labourers as 'native aliens' or simply as 'non-indigenous natives' in line with the bifurcated politics of indirect rule that categorised individuals along race, nationality and

citizenship binaries. Mamdani unpacked such fragmentation and re-invention of identities through the construction of ethnic citizenship in Africa. Going by Mamdani's citizen and subject dichotomy, Alois Mlambo states that, under colonial rule, Rhodesia consisted of citizens (white Rhodesians, politically and economically powerful and enjoying full citizenship rights) and subjects (those derogatorily known as the 'natives' - the African majority, who were regarded merely as wards under the paternalistic care of whites).<sup>200</sup> Africans were further categorised into 'aboriginal natives' (the Shona and Ndebele) and 'foreign natives/native aliens/non-indigenous natives' (the Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian migrants). Ndlovu-Gatsheni points out that ethnic citizenship was enforced through the ID system that coded and classified Africans to an assigned village and district of ancestral origin; detailing one's chief (or *Boma* in the case of Malawian labourers).<sup>201</sup> The colonial administration's use of identity documentation to classify migrant labourers simply served to stereotype their labour as cheap for easy identification and exploitation by the white Rhodesian employers and for the overall benefit of the colonial state.

For some Nyasas, Southern Rhodesia was not their final destination. They were guest workers, using the colony as a springboard en-route to the more lucrative Union of South Africa. In essence they 'settled in motion', entering Rhodesia up north and gradually working their way down south. They eventually reached the shores of the Limpopo River and clandestinely crossed into the Union to seek work on farms and mines in Messina, Transvaal, Johannesburg and reach as far as Durban and Cape Town. The British South Africa Police (BSAP) Provincial Criminal Investigation Officer, Mashonaland, observed that 'because Rhodesia lies astride their route to the Union, they only go through the motions of registering and working here...as soon as they can (in some cases they only stay a matter of weeks) they move to the Union by various devious routes.'<sup>202</sup> McCracken substantiates that 'for many Malawians, including the two most famous, Clements Kadalie and Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Rhodesia was a staging post

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<sup>200</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, and Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwe or Becoming Zimbabwean: Identity, Nationalism and State-building', *Africa Spectrum*, 48, 1, 2013, p. 57.

<sup>201</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Post-colonial State*, Bern and Oxford: Peter Lang Ag International Academic Publishers, 2009, pp. 99-100.

<sup>202</sup> NAZ S1226, British South Africa Police Files: Correspondence and other Papers: Illegal Recruiting of Native Labour, 1925-1951, Correspondence from the Provincial Criminal Investigation Officer in the BSAP Mashonaland to the Criminal Investigation Department, Salisbury, 5 October 1950.

to South Africa's higher wage economy.'<sup>203</sup> Banda worked for 18 months at Hartley hospital before moving to Maronjeri colliery in South Africa in 1917. Kadalie worked as a clerk for the Rhodesian Railways and two gold mines before heading south to Kimberley almost exactly a year later.'<sup>204</sup>

As early as 1920, Nyasa exodus had become a major subject for authorities in Rhodesia, South Africa and Bechuanaland. By the 1940s, the practice had become uncontrollable as transient Nyasas increasingly proceeded to the Union. Approximately 95% of unofficial migrants proceeding to the Union were northern aliens, especially Nyasas. Beitbridge police patrols revealed in 1937 that about 300 Africans crossed the border monthly.<sup>205</sup> Between August 1938 and January 1939, the Rhodesia Railways Road Motor Service carried 4006 indigenous and northern migrants from West Nicholson to Beitbridge.<sup>206</sup> Pass Office records at West Nicholson from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939, revealed that 3,805 'passes to seek work' were issued to 'aliens' of which 3,650 were to Beitbridge, indicating an exodus of alien labourers at a rate of about 7,000 a year.<sup>207</sup> Reporting in June 1939, Bulawayo North Compound Inspector, J.E. Beasley relayed that 'non-indigenous natives, principally Nyasas, are migrating south via the Kezi-Antelope/Legion Mines route with the Legion Mine storekeeper approximating about 25 natives passing through weekly, with the traffic mainly occurring on Sundays.'<sup>208</sup> Two Indians and an African transport contractor owning seven lorries, were engaged in conveying approximately 100 passengers, of whom 90% were aliens, between Bulawayo and the Antelope/Legion mines each week.<sup>209</sup> By the 1940s, Nyasas were entering the Union at a rate of approximately 14,000 a year, but were permitted to remain after purchasing five shillings Temporary Immigration Permits renewable half yearly.<sup>210</sup> Due to serious labour shortages, 75% of these northern migrants immediately got employment, mainly in the

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<sup>203</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 182. See also Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 121

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> NAZ S1226, British South Africa Police Files: Correspondence and other Papers: Illegal Recruiting of Native Labour, 1925-1951, Letter from the Chief Superintendent, BSAP, Bulawayo to the Staff Officer, BSAP on Emigration of Natives via Beitbridge, 11 October 1937.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from the Chief Superintendent, CID, BSAP, to the Staff Officer, BSAP, Salisbury, 15 June 1939.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from Bulawayo North Compound Inspector to the Superintendent of Natives, Bulawayo, 2 May 1939.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from the Chief Superintendent, CID, BSAP, to the Staff Officer, BSAP, Salisbury, 15 June 1939.

<sup>210</sup> NA CO525/220, Nyasaland: Migration of Labour, Native Laws Commission of Enquiry Notes Relating to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia Natives Employed in the Union of South Africa, 1949.

Transvaal and Free State on farms, mines, roads, railways and as domestic servants.<sup>211</sup> At any given moment in the 1940s, some 36,000 Nyasas were resident in the Union.<sup>212</sup> About 64,000 Nyasas were residing in South Africa by 1951.<sup>213</sup>

Many Nyasas exploited the *Ulere* service to quicken their *ulendo* across Rhodesia, reducing the trip to less than a week from the northern border to the south. At Salisbury, the head of a large labour organisation expressed the opinion that:

Prior to the introduction of free Government transport, the majority of alien natives arriving at the northern borders of this colony worked their way slowly south, whereas today, such natives proceed direct to Salisbury where they continue west and south ultimately reaching the Union borders within a very few months or days of their first arrival in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>214</sup>

Johnson stated that prior to *Ulere*, intending illegal migrants, having walked through the Zambezi valley, arrived in the colony 'so tired and debilitated' that they had to 'work for two or three months in Southern Rhodesia to get in condition for proceeding to the Union, and possibly to find money to travel otherwise than on foot to the border.'<sup>215</sup> With the rise in illicit migration to the Union, this free transport system ended up defeating its own objectives. The local labour recruiter for the Shabani and Mashaba mines, Mr Price stated that:

Since the advent of Government rail and motor transport, the labour situation had become worse because by travelling free as far as Southern Rhodesia, natives are enabled to save what money they may have, and to use it for the purpose of proceeding further South in the direction of the Rand mines. If on foot, they are given a good start in that direction.<sup>216</sup>

Indeed, movement was relatively swift and it now took at most four or less days to travel from Mtoko or Umtali in the north to the southern border as was the case with four Nyasas, (Starford, Sonosi, Lestar and Chabudeni), who were arrested with forged passes. They had

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Annual Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development, 1947, and NA CO525/193/5, Nyasaland Native Labour: Recruitment for the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, 1947.

<sup>213</sup> J. Crush, V. Williams and S. Peberdy, 'Migration in Southern Africa', Regional Report on Migration in Southern Africa prepared for the Policy and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>214</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Letter from the Chief Superintendent, CID, BSAP, to the Staff Officer, BSAP, Salisbury, 15 June 1939.

<sup>215</sup> Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe: 1939-48*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2000, pp. 125-6.

<sup>216</sup> NA DO35/3710, Native Affairs: Correspondence from 3D/Sergeant W.B. Parr, CID Salisbury to the Assistant Superintendent CID, Salisbury, 10 May 1939.

entered the colony on 24 March 1944 through Mtoko and were arrested exactly four days later on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1944 at Plumtree.<sup>217</sup> Such transnationalism was characterised by agency, authority circumvention, trickery and desertions all in pursuit of economic advancement within an exploitative colonial wage economy. In the end, illegal migration and other regional developments created serious challenges to migrant labour supply in Southern Rhodesia and such shortages became more severe during and after the Second World War.

### **Industrial Ethnicity: Nyasa Spatial and Occupational Inclinations in Southern Rhodesia**

Nyasa were central to the discourse of colonial industrial ethnicity under which African labour was ethnicised in relation to occupation. Colonialism set in motion the politicisation of African ethnicity by reconstructing and compartmentalising people's identities in cultural and geographical terms.<sup>218</sup> The colonial state and the white public often imagined and constructed some kind of ethnic taxonomy that ranked African ethnicities. In the process industrial ethnicity, which refers to the existence and salience of ethnic enclaves in the labour market, at workplaces and in industries, emerged.<sup>219</sup> This saw certain occupations in Southern Rhodesia being perceived as if reserved for particular ethnic groups and remuneration was equally hierarchically based on assumptions about ethnic virtues of African groups. On their part, the Tonga and the 'Zambezi Boys' or Nyasas were thought to have a 'natural liking' of 'night soil work', and made good mine and farm labourers, gardeners, house cleaners, and shoemakers.<sup>220</sup> Such categorization was applied to indigenous labour with the Manyika advertising themselves and being projected as cooks/chefs and waiters; the Shangaan were considered a good source for mine labour and the Ndebele as lazy and militant.<sup>221</sup> Industrial

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid, Correspondence from Detective Sergeant Leaver, CID, Bulawayo, to Detective Inspector CID, Bulawayo, 29 March 1944.

<sup>218</sup> Manganga, 'A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe', p. 3.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>220</sup> Ranger, 'Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe', in Vail and White, (eds), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*; Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 88. See also Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe: Voices from Malawian Descendants', *Africa Insight*, 44, 1, 2014, p. 138, and Manganga, 'A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe', p. 4.

<sup>221</sup> See variously Ranger, 'European Attitudes and African Realities', *Journal of African History*, 20, 1, 1979, pp. 63-82; Ranger, 'Race and Tribe in Southern Africa: European Ideas and African Acceptance', in R. Ross, (ed.), *Racism and Colonialism*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982; Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', in Ranger and E. Hobsbawm, (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; Ranger, *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe*; Ranger, 'Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The

ethnicity was also evident among the white community. The BSAP was, until the 1920s, mainly composed of whites born in the United Kingdom (UK); the Native Department and the civil service were almost exclusively British settlers; while Asians, Jews and Hellenics were excluded from the public service's established posts.<sup>222</sup>

Nonetheless, industrial ethnicity failed to situate and give meaning to the broader African ethnicities and identities in Zimbabwe. In fact, it obscured African agency in the politics of identity construction and imagination. For instance, Zimbabwean ethnicities *inter alia*, the Manyika, Ndau, Zezuru, Korekore, Venda, Karanga, Kalanga, Ndebele and Shangaan/Tsonga; were clustered under broad ethnic categories; Shona and Ndebele. Similarly, Malawian migrants were bunched as Nyasas, *native* aliens or Rhodesian aliens and were simply projected as 'faceless' labourers regardless of their cosmopolitan ethnic identities.<sup>223</sup> This colonial identification process was oblivious to the fact that 'African ethnicity was a complex and fluid product of internal and external definitions involving a variety of forces, including pre-colonial precedents, the Rhodesian state, white Rhodesians and African migrant communities themselves which continuously re-defined and re-articulated the emerging identities.'<sup>224</sup> Local African Rhodesians had their own independent understandings of Nyasas emanating from everyday interactions with the migrants. 75 year old Taru Mahuni, who worked with Nyasas in Lalapanzi and Harare from the 1940s and speaks *Chewa* quite fluently, described them as 'the most lovely, jovial, helpful, hardworking people he had ever interacted with.'<sup>225</sup> As shall be shown in the next chapters, other locals saw Nyasas as a nuisance, cunning and evil people who took away jobs and indigenous women. Nyasas had their own

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Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe', in Vail and White, (eds), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, and Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*.

<sup>222</sup> Manganga, 'A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe', p. 66; B.A. Kosmin, 'Ethnic and Commercial Relations in Southern Rhodesia: A Socio-Historical Study of the Asian, Hellene and Jewish Populations, 1898-1943', PhD Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1974, pp. 91-3, and Kosmin, 'On the Imperial Frontier: the Pioneer Population of Salisbury in November 1897', *Rhodesian History*, 2, 1971, p. 32.

<sup>223</sup> R[hodes] U[niversity] C[ory] L[ibrary], Smith papers (Unprocessed), Cabinet Memorandum: Solution to the Rhodesian Alien Question: Report by the Working Party on Foreign Labour and Unemployment, 25 July 1968. See also Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 141.

<sup>224</sup> Manganga, 'A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe', p. 4. See also Muzondidya, *Walking the Tight Rope: Towards a Social History of the Coloured People of Zimbabwe*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005, and Muzondidya, 'Race and the Politics of Positioning: The Making of Coloured Identity in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1980', in M. Adhikari, (ed.), *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa*, Cape Town: Juta, 2009.

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Taru Mahuni, Manjokonjo Village, Maungwa, Gutu, 1 September 2012.



identification processes most of which were cultural, class, gender and capitalist-induced. The Ngoni believed they were more loyal and usually assumed supervisory jobs; the Chewa, Yao and other smaller ethnic groups often gravitated towards mines, farms and urban areas with some becoming factory workers, messengers, gardeners, cooks and maids.

Nyasas had spatial and occupational inclinations in Rhodesia, influenced by area of origin, ethnicity and mission-education. They generally preferred regular and prolonged employment and were concentrated in the main European centres in northern and central Southern Rhodesia. Northern Rhodesian migrants preferred southern and south-western districts and Mozambican Africans favoured small areas in the east. James Asidi explained that 'we usually followed our kinsmen who were working and some of us came on the invitation of relatives or friends who were concentrated on farms and mines in central Rhodesia.'<sup>226</sup> Burden detailed that the Chewa from Fort Manning, Kasungu, Dowa and Lilongwe districts often sought work in agricultural areas of Mazoe, Lomagundi and Salisbury.<sup>227</sup> The Chewa from Nkota-Kota and Dowa lake shore areas and the Tonga preferred mining and were found on such large mines as Eiffel Flats, Kwekwe, Selukwe and Shabani.<sup>228</sup> The Ngoni from Mzimba, Dedza, Dowa, Lilongwe, Fort Manning and Ntcheu formed the majority of unskilled Nyasa migrant labourers found in all Southern Rhodesian industrial areas working on farms and mines.<sup>229</sup> Yaos from south Nyasaland, Liwonde, Zomba, Chiradzulu and Blantyre habitually attained semi-skilled positions as carpenters, builders, tailors, shopkeepers, machine operators, domestic servants, and tobacco graders.<sup>230</sup> The Manganja and the Nguru from Zomba, Blantyre, Mlanje, Cholo, Chikwawa and Lower Shire preferred agriculture and formed the bulk of unskilled African workers employed on tobacco farms.<sup>231</sup>

Not all Nyasas were unskilled. Some, particularly Tonga communities in Salisbury and Bulawayo, consisted almost entirely of educated and skilled migrants receiving better wages.

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<sup>226</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>227</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 3.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* See also MNA NNK 1/8/1-9, Nyasaland District Administration Files, District Commissioner Karonga District Labour Reports 1925-1951, and MNA NNK2/1/3-9, Nyasaland District Administration Files, District Commissioner Karonga District Annual Reports, 1925-1951.

<sup>229</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 3.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

In fact, 'their intelligence and degree of education induced them to avoid unskilled labour at home in favour of independent search for better work.'<sup>232</sup> Nyasas in general were 'more intelligent, better educated and more ambitious than other migrants and locals, so that two-thirds were attracted by the higher wages offered by secondary industry and the mines or by the more congenial conditions of domestic and office employment.'<sup>233</sup> Such educated Nyasa elite were beneficiaries of an extensive missionary education in Nyasaland, which equipped many with formal and vocational training that made them very influential in the region. Early missionaries included the Scottish Presbyterians who established mission stations on the Nyasa lakeshore around mid-1870s and early 1880s.<sup>234</sup> Livingstonia Mission, known as the Overtoun Institute at Livingstonia under Robert Laws, was founded at Khondowe in 1894 in the north and was renowned for its outstanding educational standards.<sup>235</sup> The 1890s and 1900s saw intense missionary expansion throughout the Protectorate. The White Fathers, London Missionary Society and Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) carved out spheres of influence and gradually African Christian elite emerged, centred around Blantyre, Livingstonia and Zomba.<sup>236</sup> These African elite actively participated in the administration of new mission stations and schools, as well as spreading their influence within and without Nyasaland.<sup>237</sup> By 1940, Nyasaland missionary education had grown in quality and quantity with intense competition between the DRC, Monforts, French White Fathers, Livingstonia, UMCA, Catholics and Adventists.

All these missionaries produced an educated Africa elite and even equipped the marginalised with valuable skills to go in search of wage labour across Nyasaland and to the white settler economies of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, where they were in great demand, commanded better wages and, as shall be highlighted in chapter three, gained a 'nuisance'

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<sup>232</sup> NA CO525/193/5, Nyasaland Native Labour: Recruitment for the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, Mr. Creech Jones personal minutes on Recruitment of Rhodesia and Nyasaland labour, 1947.

<sup>233</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 44.

<sup>234</sup> McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000, and McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 109.

<sup>235</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 112; T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi: Donald Fraser's Missionary Methods and Ngoni Culture*, Leiden: Brill, 1995; A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996, and S. MacJessie-Mbewe, 'Rural Communities-Education Relationship in Developing Countries: The Case of Malawi', *International Education Journal*, 5, 3, 2004, p. 309.

<sup>236</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', pp. 27-9.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

reputation/identity. According to Parry, the central values of Christianity imported via the mission schools of Nyasaland, with their roots in the doctrine of individual self-improvement were characteristic features of black culture in Salisbury.<sup>238</sup> Van Onselen explains that with an advantage of mission education, many Nyasa workers got better paid semi-skilled jobs, shunning underground work and were more prominent in roles like compound police (especially the Yao and Gomani Ngoni), clerks, hospital orderlies and stores assistants.<sup>239</sup> Ranger adds that some became waiters, cooks/chefs, messengers and teachers.<sup>240</sup> According to Parry, the Gomani Ngoni, who came to Salisbury in 1899, dominated the town and location's black police forces who used and abused power, acting as the cutting edge of colonial authority to subdue the Chewa or Chipeta.<sup>241</sup> Overall, Nyasas were found in all principal mining and urban areas with a marked concentration in Salisbury and a widespread distribution through the Rhodesian high veld. By 1950, at least a third were employed on farms especially those in the Lomagundi to Mazoe maize and tobacco belt, while the rest were in mines and such secondary industries as manufacturing, construction, transport and commerce.<sup>242</sup>

### **Tripartite Labour Agreements and the Politics of Remittances**

*Mthandizi* created the problem of absent fathers and husbands in Nyasaland as multitudes of able-bodied Nyasa men migrated south. Male exodus triggered an unprecedented rise in rural insecurities marked by irregular and absent remittances; the breakdown of marriages and betrothals as men completely abandoned their women and children or stayed away longer.<sup>243</sup> Districts were seriously affected, leaving villages full of women and old men.<sup>244</sup> Villages were largely characterised by female-headed households caring for children and the elderly. On inquiring with the women they said '*ife amuna athu anatsiya kale kalowa Mthandizi, ndiyethu mpaka lero nakalata salemba konse*' meaning 'our husbands left us well back for

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<sup>238</sup> Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class', pp. 66-77.

<sup>239</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 122.

<sup>240</sup> Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 88.

<sup>241</sup> Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class', pp. 66-77.

<sup>242</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 4. See also Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, pp. 10-8.

<sup>243</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 5.

<sup>244</sup> 'Mthandizi watenga malo ku Balaka', *The African Weekly*, 31 October 1956.

*Mthandizi* and even up to now they do not write us letters.’<sup>245</sup> *‘Anyamata onse atera kuMthandizi’* (all men have been swallowed by *Mthandizi*), lamented M.L. Kaswa of the Survey Office in Zomba.<sup>246</sup> Some men tried to limit the damage done to their village economies by postponing their departure until at least April or May after ploughing, planting and weeding had occurred.<sup>247</sup> Nyasaland administrators attempted to cushion *Mthandizi’s* impact by compelling Southern and Northern Rhodesian governments into a series of inter-territorial labour agreements that harnessed revenue through remittances and deferred pay from migrant labourers. Nyasaland sought to protect and maximise benefit from its labour resource, through taxes, remittances and deferred pay for the benefit of the state and the families of the migrants. Commonly known as the Tripartite Migrant Labour Agreements (TPA), the first, ‘Salisbury Agreement’ was signed in 1936, revised in 1941 and 1947 culminating in the 1948 Migrant Workers Act.<sup>248</sup> The Act was re-amended in 1952 and its regulations remained in effect until 30 June 1960 when the three Federal territories were forced to cancel it, in the wake of rising African nationalism and imminent independence in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia.<sup>249</sup>

Southern Rhodesia aimed at ensuring and monopolising a steady inflow of northern labour and thwart stiff competition from the highly attractive South African industries. Johnson explains that as Southern Rhodesian employers began to recover from the Great Depression and increased their demand for labour in the mid-1930s, they faced intense rivalry from regional mining capitalists in the Rand and the Copperbelt, as well as Nyasaland cotton, tobacco and tea growers, over access to Nyasaland labour reserves.<sup>250</sup> Increased labour demand interacted with a growing concern at the Colonial Office with its adverse effects on ‘tribal life’ to impose new limits on labour migration from Nyasaland to Rhodesia.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 183.

<sup>248</sup> NA CO936/62/3, Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs: Report of the Commissioner Native Labour, 1949; ‘Rhodesia-Nyasaland Migrant labour Agreement’, *Financial News*, 20 June 1942.

<sup>249</sup> NA CO859/1527, Nyasaland Labour Department Periodical Reports, Monthly Report of the Provincial Labour Officer, Southern Province, 1960-1962.

<sup>250</sup> Johnson, ‘Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia’, p. 112. See also NA CO1015/520 Central African Federation and Aden Department: The Recruitment of Migrant Labour in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; Letter to the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* by R.A. Sturgeon, Salisbury, titled ‘Migrant Natives in Central Africa’, 07 November 1952.

<sup>251</sup> Johnson, ‘Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia’, p. 113.

Nyasaland Governor, Sir Edmund Charles Smith Richards, stated that 'the provision of compulsory family remittances would relieve thousands of women, children and old people from hunger and want during the absence of their menfolk, and the hardships and anxieties of the labourers themselves would very largely disappear by the enforcement of such provisions.'<sup>252</sup> The Colonial Office Assistant Labour Adviser, Miss SA Ogilvie insisted that 'the transfer of money either in the form of savings or family remittances assured the socio-economic importance of seeing that families are maintained while a worker is absent.'<sup>253</sup> Whilst providing specifically for the control of movement and identification of the individual and the collection of tax, the governments contented themselves with conditional promises to foster, as far as practicable, repatriation, the remission of deferred pay and family remittances, transport, and adequate inspection of conditions of work and accommodation.<sup>254</sup> Southern Rhodesian Commissioner of Native Labour, A.J. Huxtable, summed the provisions of TPA as follows:

Provision is made for compulsory deductions of deferred pay and family remittances and compulsory repatriation at the end of two years' stay in the colony. Migrants accompanied by their families may, however, remain indefinitely if they desire to do so. Those in employment, and returning to such employment, are required to visit their homes and may return after a short absence if in possession of a leave pass up to 90 days endorsed by a Pass Officer. Migrants not in employment or not returning to their employers are compelled to remain in their country of origin for a minimum period of six months.<sup>255</sup>

Accordingly, migrant labourers were only allowed to stay in Southern Rhodesia for two years, during which time they were compelled to send a portion of their wages to their home Government, half of which was retained for their own use on their return, and the other half paid over to their families.<sup>256</sup> Employers were mandated to deduct five shillings per month. Deductions were expended by the employer in the purchase of stamps for affixation in the employee's workbook and were cashable partly as remittance for the support of the worker's

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<sup>252</sup> NA CO 525/201, Nyasaland Migration of Labour: Report of the Central African Council, Salisbury: Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Co., 1947.

<sup>253</sup> NA CO 1015/2537, Central African Federation and Aden Department: The Colonial Office Assistant Labour Adviser, Miss S.A. Ogilvie's Report on State of Emigration of Northern Rhodesian Africans to Southern Rhodesia, 25 July 1960.

<sup>254</sup> NA CO525/201, Report of the Central African Council, 1947.

<sup>255</sup> NA CO936/62/3, Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs: Report of the Commissioner Native Labour, 1949.

<sup>256</sup> NAZ F137/186, Migrant Labour Report, 1952. See also The Migrant Native Labour Agreement, *The Daily Telegraph*, London, 10 Sep 1952, and Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, p. 217.

family in Nyasaland, and partly as deferred pay.<sup>257</sup> Workbooks were issued to migrants, whether under contract or not, on application for identity certificates at their *Boma* and were signed by their District Commissioner or other important authority authorized by the Provincial Commissioner. Before obtaining these documents, a migrant worker was required under the provisions of the 1951 Native Authority Rules to satisfy his chief that he had made adequate arrangements for the welfare of his family and had no unresolved claims against him.<sup>258</sup> Workbooks, according to Henry Banda Matekenya, 'were for tax purposes and were your gateway to realising your dream of going to Rhodesia.'<sup>259</sup>

Initially, the remittance system was characterised by glitches. Nyasas complained of delays, losses and huge costs. The first method, instituted between 1936 and 1938, involved forwarding remittances by one's respective NC to his *Boma* through banks in Nyasaland.<sup>260</sup> However, this was costly and cumbersome. After August 1938, remittances were forwarded through the office of respective labour officers, in Salisbury. CNC, C. Bullock notified all native department stations in Southern Rhodesia that:

To avoid exchange on cheques of native remittances to Nyasaland, all remittances will now be forwarded by Temporary Deposit Account cheque and the usual native remittance forms to the Nyasaland Labour Officer, Salisbury, who will arrange for transfer of the amounts to their destination.<sup>261</sup>

Employees were to provide adequate information on the remittance form including: the remitter's name, Registration Certificate number, district and present address; name by which remitter is known in Nyasaland; purpose for which remittance is sent, i.e. family remittance, discharge of debt etc., and lastly the name of payee and address, i.e. Village (kraal), Native authority (Chief), District Officer.<sup>262</sup> Over time, the Labour Officer in Salisbury was overburdened by the new system leading to serious delays. W.S. Willings from the office of the Chief Secretary to the Nyasaland Government noted in October 1940 that 'delays

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<sup>257</sup> NA CO525/201 Nyasaland Native Labour Recruitment for the Union of South Africa; The African Migrant Workers Ordinance, 1947.

<sup>258</sup> NA CO1015/2537, Central African Federation and Aden Department: Annual Report of the Labour Department for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1960, Zomba; Government Printer, 1961

<sup>259</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>260</sup> NAZ S1561/3/1 CNC Migrant Labour: Nyasaland Matters, 23 February 1935 to 5 September 1940, Correspondence between the Secretary for Native Affairs, Salisbury and the Secretary to the Prime Minister, Native Affairs, 8 November 1940.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, CNC Circular No. 151 to all Native Department Stations in Southern Rhodesia, 26 August 1938.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

occurred, principally through clerical errors in the transfer of names and addresses of payee between documents, and a stream of correspondence placed extra work on the officers of our respective territories in clearing up discrepancies.<sup>263</sup> A third alternative encouraged Nyasas and their employers to utilise the Post Office system. Nyasaland and Rhodesian governments agreed that the facilities established for remittances through the offices of the NCs and Labour Officers were supplementary to the existing Postal Services.<sup>264</sup> From then on, the Labour Department began to issue a pamphlet (written in vernacular Chewa and translated into English) to migrants applying for certificates of identity, so as to popularize the postal channel for remittances.

Nyasa male migrants, particularly single Nyasa men, resented the compulsory remittance and deferred pay system, as well as contractual limitations of TPA. 'I was being forced to defer part of my salary back home, which left me with insufficient funds to enjoy myself', bemoaned Posta Chitimbe.<sup>265</sup> Rafael Wilson saw no point in remitting because 'not everyone was married or had a family in Nyasaland, because some of us had married in Rhodesia.'<sup>266</sup> Because, many ended up being *Machona*, they lost out their deferred savings to the Nyasaland state. Gerald Msusa noted that 'some of us who never returned donated our deferred pay to *Boma*.'<sup>267</sup> He added that:

I had no family in Nyasaland but was obliged to surrender a portion of my wages to a person nominated by the Nyasaland Government, a person to whom I owed no debt or responsibility and another portion of my pay was seized as deferred pay. I was now permitted to remain in Southern Rhodesia for two years only even though I had married a local Rhodesian woman and had three children.<sup>268</sup>

Yet, remittances were very popular with women back in Nyasaland as it provided additional support for abandoned wives and children. *Machona* disliked TPA's two year contractual limits. Henry Banda Matekenya disclosed that 'we were given a one to two-year contracts to

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid, Letter from W.S. Willings for Chief Secretary to the Nyasaland Government to Secretary for Native Affairs, Salisbury, 25 October 1940.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, Correspondence between the Secretary for Native Affairs, Salisbury and the Chief Secretary to the Government, Zomba, Nyasaland, 22 November 1940.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson.

<sup>267</sup> Interview with Gerald Msusa.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

come and work in Southern Rhodesia and one would be arrested and deported if he exceeded the time limit.<sup>269</sup>

Rhodesian employers also complained about remittances and contracts. R.A. Sturgeon remonstrated in the *Manchester Guardian* against the imposition of a system emanating from a misunderstanding in Britain of what was customary among Africans and the discrimination against Africans, which was not only resented by them but by the employers as well. He argued that 'the vast majority of these migrant natives are single men who are trying to earn sufficient money to buy wives and begin a family life, either in their home country or elsewhere.'<sup>270</sup> Sturgeon added that 'married migrant men regularly contribute to their families and pay periodic visits without being forced since a wife and family represent part of an African's capital.'<sup>271</sup> T.J. Needham questioned what he termed 'the unwisdom of allowing the Colonial Office to legislate for conditions they do not understand.'<sup>272</sup> He complained that 'I am compelled to make deductions by a law that was forced upon the Southern Rhodesian Government by the Colonial Office.'<sup>273</sup>

Nyasas exploited a clause in the TPA to circumvent contractual limits by migrating with their families to Rhodesia. The agreement stipulated that 'no man, unless he has his family with him, will be allowed to stay in Southern Rhodesia for longer than 24 months from the date he enters the country, and that he must return for 6 months to his village when his contract ends.'<sup>274</sup> The 1952 Southern Rhodesian yearbook noted that 'of recent years there has been a tendency for native workers to immigrate into Southern Rhodesia complete with wives and children, in which case they are under no obligation to return home.'<sup>275</sup> Phiri points out that many Nyasas contravened Migrant Workers' Act requirements, inter-alia avoiding family

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<sup>269</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>270</sup> NA CO1015/520 Central African Federation and Aden Department: The Recruitment of Migrant Labour in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; Letter to the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* by R.A. Sturgeon, Salisbury, titled 'Migrant Natives in Central Africa', 07 November 1952.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> NA CO1015/520 Central African Federation and Aden Department: The Recruitment of Migrant Labour in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; Letter to the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* by T.J. Needham, Marandellas, Southern Rhodesia titled 'Migrant Natives', 18 December 1952.

<sup>274</sup> NAZ F137/186, Federal Archives, Migrant Labour Report 1952.

<sup>275</sup> Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Official Year Book of Southern Rhodesia, 4, 1952, p. 217.



remittance deductions by having a local wife in Southern Rhodesia, whilst yet others brought their families with them.<sup>276</sup> Even prior to TPA, some Nyasas had become entrepreneurial in exploiting the remittance system for their own benefit. The Superintendent of Natives reported in 1914 about the activities of a Nyasa 'native', Abdula Mkwanda, working at or near Shamva under the name of Abakatasepu Mkwanda, who was remitting unusually large sums of money.<sup>277</sup> Suspicion emerged because:

Two months ago, he remitted a sum of 12 pounds and has now sent a sum of 53 pounds. It may be that he has acquired these sums quite honestly but on the other hand, it appears that the second sum remitted, being so much larger than the first remittance of only two months earlier, cannot have been earned by him in the shape of wages.<sup>278</sup>

On making inquiries NC for Shamva reported that 'Mkwanda had married 11 women and was making a lot of money out of prostitution...he is however, in Bindura Gaol awaiting his deportation under the Immigration Act...the women who called themselves his wives have been advised to go their own way.'<sup>279</sup>

Other Nyasas illicitly migrated to Rhodesia or deceitfully negotiated with employers to stamp their workbooks without necessarily going back to Nyasaland. Director of Municipal Native Administration, G. Hartley, reported in 1952 that Nyasas 'were entering Rhodesia illegally, pretending to be of Mozambican origin, because they object to the terms of the Migrant Workers Act.'<sup>280</sup> Mozambicans were not part of the TPA and were not bound by the two-year contracts. 'There was little that could be done to control such clandestine entry; natives simply walked across the borders, or if they applied for registration certificates at Rhodesian points of entry, gave Portuguese kraal particulars', Hartley said.<sup>281</sup> The labour agreements led to unintended consequences, with 'statistics showing a decrease in normal/formal labour

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<sup>276</sup> G. Phiri, 'The 1948 Act and Labour Migration from Nyasaland', MA Thesis, Economic History Department, University of Zimbabwe, 1992, and Phiri, 'Migrant labour as a by-product of colonial driven civil discord: 'Of Labour Crossings and Obstructions: The 1948 Migrant Workers' Act: A Solution to Southern Rhodesia's Labour Problems or a Self-Defeating Exercise?', Seminar Paper, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe, (undated), p. 3.

<sup>277</sup> NAZ N3/22/5, Native Labour: From Nyasaland, 1910 January 22-1922 December 16, Correspondence between Office of the Superintendent of Native Affairs, Zomba, Nyasaland and Office of the Superintendent of Natives Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1914.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter dated 06 April 1914 from NC Shamva to Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury.

<sup>280</sup> 'Nyasaland Labourers Pose as PEA Natives: Southern Rhodesia Entered Illegally', *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 March 1952.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

migration and an apparent increase in Nyasa employment.<sup>282</sup> For Rhodesian authorities, such deceit added substance to their construction of Nyasas as troublesome Africans, an aspect that is detailed in subsequent chapters.

### **The Second World War and Migrant Labour Constraints**

Despite efforts to monopolise migrant labour under TPA, Southern Rhodesia faced labour shortages prior to 1953. Hance noted that Rhodesia encountered serious shortage of unskilled and semi-skilled African labour since the 1930s.<sup>283</sup> This labour crisis, of varying intensity, which persisted in Rhodesian mining and agricultural industries between 1936 and 1953, was due to various reasons.<sup>284</sup> It was caused by competition from WNLA and the Copperbelt, black worker consciousness and incessant Nyasaland droughts, which occasionally compelled authorities to reduce or stop labour migration for the welfare of its African village communities. According to Phimister, 'between 1942 and 1952, labour supply from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland fell by almost 20,000 due to the fact that there is more employment now offering in their own countries, and at better rates than were previously paid.'<sup>285</sup> In 1952, wages on the Copperbelt were almost double those on the gold mines in the south.<sup>286</sup> Labour migration was equally derailed by the exigencies of the Second World War, which saw Nyasas serving in the King's African Rifles (KAR). Britain perceived Nyasaland's value to the war effort almost entirely as a supplier of manpower, although opinion was divided as to whether military recruits for KAR or labourers for southern African mines were of greater strategic importance.<sup>287</sup> Nyasaland administration suspended labour emigration on more than one occasion between 1939 and 1943 in order to recruit 'volunteers' for KAR.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> W.A. Hance, 'Economic Potentialities of the Central African Federation', *Political Science Quarterly*, 69, 1, 1954, p. 40.

<sup>284</sup> Phimister, 'African Worker Consciousness: Origins and Aspects to 1953', in Phimister and Van Onselen, (eds), *Studies in the History of African Mine Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1978, p. 34.

<sup>285</sup> Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, p. 220.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 238.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* See also Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 179; Johnson, 'Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 114. At the start of the war Acting Governor Hall banned all labour recruitment to the south in the belief that the needs of the military would be paramount. Boeder clarifies that on 4 September 1939, all recruiting permits in Nyasaland were suspended and district officials were told to stop issuing identity

Not many Nyasas were willing to join the war and the government encountered serious African resistance over enlistment and desertions. High colonial taxes also complicated conscription. As early as September 1939, village headmen in Zomba protested against their Chief Mtumanji after the district administrator dispatched him to relay that, 'in 1940 everyone will be required to pay eight shillings hut tax and your children are also wanted as soldiers to help in the war with Germany.'<sup>289</sup> The headmen lamented that:

Europeans think we are fools because we are black. We have no (*Zida*) weapons. They look upon us as women because we have no wise chief. They started with a tax of maize, changed it to three shillings, then four shillings and then six shillings, and now we are told we shall pay eight shillings. Does this country belong to them? They are giving us a lot of problems. They now wish us to give our children to be soldiers to help them in their war. We do not want our children to die. If they want a war, they should go themselves.<sup>290</sup>

Despite such complaints, Nyasaland managed to contribute numerous African soldiers, commonly known as *Askaris* (Swahili word for guard), to KAR. Thousands of Nyasas men fought in the East African campaign.<sup>291</sup> The initial figure of 2,000 Nyasa *Askaris* had, by April 1944, grown to around 27,000 comprising of 12 battalions and other Nyasa soldiers serving as Engineers, Service and Medical Corps, and in Artillery.<sup>292</sup> 7,000 more Nyasas were enlisted in South African, Southern Rhodesian, Northern Rhodesian and Tanganyika units.<sup>293</sup> In Southern Rhodesia Nyasas worked at the Rhodesian Air Force (RhAF) military aerodromes in Norton, Gwelo and Fort Victoria.<sup>294</sup> Others did menial tasks such as thatching, grass cutting, off-loading railway trucks, digging pit-sand and river sand, and felling gum trees.<sup>295</sup>

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certificates. A month later, however, the British Government reversed this measure under pressure from Southern Rhodesia and the South African Chamber of Mines. Andrew Cohen, of the colonial office termed the suspension 'unfortunately precipitant and a complete interruption of the supply of labour from Nyasaland for mines and farms which might gravely upset Southern Rhodesia's economy.' From then on labour recruitment to the south continued to take place, although, with the entry of Italy into the war in 1940, priority was given to the enlistment of as many men as possible in the KAR. For instance, WNLA and RNLSC recruitment was suspended between September 1942 and July 1943 as military requirements increased.

<sup>289</sup> NA CO525/178 Colonial Office Nyasaland Protectorate: Native Taxation, 1939.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', p. 630.

<sup>292</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 187; McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 239.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> NAZ S235/400, Migrant Labour: Employment of Nyasaland Labour, 1942.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

The war disturbed regional labour recruitment until the federal years. 1937 had seen the peak of Nyasa male migration recording about 113,000 migrants, falling to about 98,500 by 1945.<sup>296</sup> NC for Lomagundi reflected such decline by showing a drop in influx of new migrant labourers in his area from 14,794 in 1935 to 4,319 in 1940.<sup>297</sup> The labour situation did not immediately improve after war. In 1946 Southern Rhodesia received 25,650 Nyasas followed by 23,991 in 1947; 22,362 in 1948; 21,984 in 1949 and 20,279 in 1950.<sup>298</sup> The labour crunch coincided with increased demand in Rhodesia triggered by rapid expansion of her industries during and after the war. According to Raftopoulos, Rhodesian industries grew driven by decline in external competition, rise in internal demand and state intervention through financial assistance, protection and fiscal incentives.<sup>299</sup> For example, manufacturing establishments grew from 299 in 1939, to 325 in 1945, increasing to 435 by 1946 and to 724 by 1952.<sup>300</sup> Such industrialization craved for more migrant labour, which continued to deteriorate until the establishment of the Federation in 1953.

## Conclusion

On the eve of the Central African Federation, non-indigenous Africans from Nyasaland had either settled permanently or temporarily on Southern Rhodesian farms, mines or in towns. Using various archival and ethnographic sources, this chapter has quantified and qualified the migration of these Nyasas prior 1953. While much of the migration was triggered by the colonial capitalist economy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been revealed that the Nyasas interaction with Southern Rhodesia was historical. The chapter has underscored that Nyasa migration was predated to the pre-colonial period when Maravi communities interacted with the Zimbabwean plateau at various socio-political levels. This set the basis for Nyasa agency after colonialism when Malawians migrated en-masse to Southern Rhodesian mines, farms and towns as part of the *Chibaro/Mthandizi* labour migration system. It has been shown that Nyasa labour migration gradually increased from the 1890s with the Southern Rhodesian

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<sup>296</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 256.

<sup>297</sup> Johnson, 'Settler farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 118.

<sup>298</sup> The Malawi Ministry of Labour Annual Report, 1963-67, Zomba: Government Printer, 1968.

<sup>299</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 81.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, and Phimister and Raftopoulos, 'Kana Sora Ratswa Ngaritswe: African Nationalists and Black Workers - The 1948 General Strike in Colonial Zimbabwe', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 13, 3, 2000, p. 294.

government supervising or incentivising the process through the RNLB and other services such as free transport, food and shelter. Despite this, the journey or *ulendo* to Rhodesia was arduous and dangerous. Many Nyasa migrants, including women and juveniles, walked on foot avoiding *Chibaro/Mthandizi* labour recruiters, *madobadobas* and marauding activities of Portuguese authorities, African insurgents and robbers. Males had to obtain the requisite identity and remittance documents in Nyasaland and upon arrival in Rhodesia; they received IDs and underwent rigorous medical examination in order to qualify for employment. Migration also fluctuated during war and droughts. Rhodesia also faced stiff competition from *Wenela* with many Nyasas using the colony as a stepping-stone to clandestinely migrate to the lucrative labour markets of the Union of South Africa. In spite of inter-territorial efforts to monopolise migrant through a series of labour treaties, Southern Rhodesia was, by the 1950s, facing serious labour challenges and it became imperative to find ways of addressing this and other problems. The solution came through the British Colonial Office's push towards the Central African Federation, which was realised in 1953.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **CHIGWIRIZANO: SOCIAL TENSIONS AND NUISANCE IDENTITIES DURING THE FEDERAL AND EARLY UDI YEARS**

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#### **Introduction**

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, commonly known as the Central African Federation, came into life on 1 September 1953, lasting just over ten complex years until midnight on 31 December 1963. Nyasas, who were the most critical of the Federation, simply called it '*Chigwirizano*' implying a pact between Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Scholars have described it as an unholy wedlock; a horse and rider relationship; a fragile union or a failed experiment.<sup>1</sup> For Hyam and Henshaw, it was the most controversial large-scale imperial exercise in constructive state building ever undertaken by a British government.<sup>2</sup> According to Cohen, it was a bold experiment in political power during the late stage of British colonialism and constituted one of the most intricate episodes in her retreat from empire.<sup>3</sup> Whitehall's gamble of granting more control to white settlers while expecting that they would develop the territory and gradually increase African opportunities for economic and political participation, turned out to be 'an extra-ordinary mistake; an aberration of history and a deviation from the inevitable historical trend of decolonisation; it became an error so large and portentous; so interesting and surprising.'<sup>4</sup> Startling as it was,

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description of the Central African Federation see B. Sherer, *A Failed Experiment in Imperial Governance: The Central African Federation 1953-1963*, Las Vegas: University of Nevada, 2007; H. Franklin, *Unholy Wedlock: The Failure of the Central African Federation*, London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1963; E. Clegg, *Race and Politics: Partnership in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960; P. Keatley, *The Politics of Partnership: The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, London: Penguin, 1963; P. Mason, *Year of Decision: Rhodesia and Nyasaland 1960*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960; J.R.T. Wood, *The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, Durban: Graham Publishing, 1983; R. Welensky, *Welensky's 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, London: Collins, 1964, and B. Fetter, *Colonial Rule and Regional Imbalance in Central Africa*, Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1983. More recently see A. Cohen, 'Settler Power, African Nationalism and British Interests in the Central African Federation: 1957-1963', PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> R. Hyam and P. Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 198. See also Hyam, 'The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1948-1953', *The Historical Journal*, 30, 1, 1987, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, 'Settler Power, African Nationalism and British Interests in the Central African Federation', p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 198, and Hyam, 'The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation', p. 145.

the Federation had significant implications for African socio-economic dynamics in the region. More specifically, it reconfigured the experiences of labour migrants opening various migration avenues and created new opportunities and challenges for Nyasas and other regional African migrants who increasingly flocked to Southern Rhodesia after 1953.

The connections between the Federation and increased Nyasa migration, as well as the souring of relations with the indigenous communities and the state have been under-emphasized in existing accounts. This chapter analyses the experiences of Nyasa migrants during the Federation and beyond, into the early years of Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) reign. It examines the period's impact on migrants' lives and relations with the state and local people, paying particular attention to social tensions over unemployment, intermarriages and involvement in labour and political consciousness. The chapter begins by briefly exploring the politics behind the establishment and collapse of the Federation before moving on to an examination of the Federal implications on Nyasa migration to Southern Rhodesia. It examines both Nyasa resistance to the Federation and the increased migration it made possible. It then looks at how the influx of Nyasa male labourers affected social relations with indigenous communities. The chapter adds to literature on the problematic relationship between labour and nationalism, analysing the activities of migrant workers in Rhodesian politics. It argues that the Federation period witnessed Nyasas consolidating their historical dominance in leadership of labour and political consciousness, which had begun prior to 1953. Building on the 1920s to 1940s millenarian movements and worker consciousness, the chapter contends that Nyasa dominance gained them a notorious identity among white Rhodesians and locals of being ringleaders and troublemakers. This dominance led to suspicions and tensions with local African trade unionists and nationalists. Their 'nuisance' reputation greatly affected their livelihoods and status, with the state making serious efforts to alienate or deport them. Some ordinary locals attacked Nyasas whilst the African elite castigated and gradually marginalised them from the nationalist movement. Given the contemporary alienation of migrant descendants by the Zimbabwean state, unpacking these colonial tensions over Nyasa labour and nationalist consciousness has acquired additional resonance.

## The Central African Federation: A Brief Review

The idea of an amalgamation was mooted before the Second World War and was largely based on the 'self-interest of the colonial power and white settlers.'<sup>5</sup> By the 1930s, the question had become one of how this could be achieved. However, there were serious differences in terms of approach. London wanted the bankrupt Nyasaland to be included. Northern Rhodesian settlers wanted a union with Southern Rhodesia, while some elements in Southern Rhodesia favoured a union with South Africa. The 1939 Bledisloe Commission recommended an amalgamation of all three territories, ultimately leading to political unification. The Second World War derailed this agenda but momentum picked up after 1951 when the Conservative Party assumed power in Britain. London's interest in the Federation was informed by her propensity to look to the 'federal panacea' as a solution for the perennial imperial problem of governing big intractable areas, of establishing more viable units, to whom power could be safely transferred.<sup>6</sup> The Federation made economic sense to the Colonial Office as the three amalgamated states would attract capital for economic growth more easily than they would do individually. According to Hance, 'the Federation offered excellent potentialities for economic expansion based on agriculture, mineral reserves and electrical power and its unified state would make it more attractive to foreign investors.'<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the Federation did well economically in its early years as it attracted investment and more European migrants. The rise in the copper price and demand saw the rapid construction of infrastructure, created more jobs and improved the living standards, especially for white settlers.<sup>8</sup> Hyam saw the Federation as Whitehall's grand plan of containment of regional Afrikaner nationalist ambitions. It was 'counterpoise to the expansion of Afrikaner nationalism north of the Limpopo, as well as to keep the Rhodesians out of the Union and try to build up Southern Rhodesia as the nucleus of a pro-British buffer-state (a British-bloc) between South Africa and the colonial office's African territories.'<sup>9</sup> The Federation became

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of amalgamation had been mooted by Cecil John Rhodes in the early 1900s before being later revisited by the Northern and Southern Rhodesian white settlers in 1915, the 1920s and 1930s through the 1927 Hilton Young Commission, The 1930 Passfield Memorandum and the 1939 Bledisloe Commission Report. For details see Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 197, and Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe: 1945-1965', p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Hyam, 'The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation', p. 145.

<sup>7</sup> Hance, 'Economic Potentialities of the Central African Federation', p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> A. Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, New York: Africana Publishing Co, 1976, p. 211.

<sup>9</sup> Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 209.



an imperative 'geopolitical construct designed to place the first line of defence against South African expansion on the Limpopo and not on the Zambezi, and to prevent an anticipated settlers' revolt linking itself up with the Union.'<sup>10</sup>

White settlers aimed at re-uniting the former BSAC domains for varying reasons. For Northern Rhodesian and Nyasaland whites, joining the Federation was a way of countering African nationalism. They wanted the protection afforded by a union with Southern Rhodesia against rising African aspirations.<sup>11</sup> According to Roberts, the north saw the Federation as a step towards complete settler control.<sup>12</sup> By contrast, the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, eyed the economic returns the Federation was bound to bring to his country. Northern Rhodesian copper and Nyasaland's cheap labour resources were seen as vital for Southern Rhodesia's accelerated economic growth. The copper boom which reached its peak in 1956, transformed Northern Rhodesia into what Fetter termed the 'Federation's milk cow', that promoted Southern Rhodesia's industrial development.<sup>13</sup> The powerful Southern Rhodesian settler society politically and economically marginalised the small Northern Rhodesian white community. Northern Rhodesians bemoaned the imbalance, which saw much of their copper profits capitalising Southern Rhodesia's infrastructure, particularly the Salisbury International Airport, the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the Kariba Dam after rejection of their Lower Kafue Dam project.<sup>14</sup> Salisbury became the Federal administrative and business capital with Huggins being the first Federal Prime Minister.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 224.

<sup>11</sup> L. Vail, 'The Political Economy of East-Central Africa', in D. Birmingham and P.M. Martin, (eds), *A History of Central Africa, Volume 2*, London: Longman, 1983, p. 249.

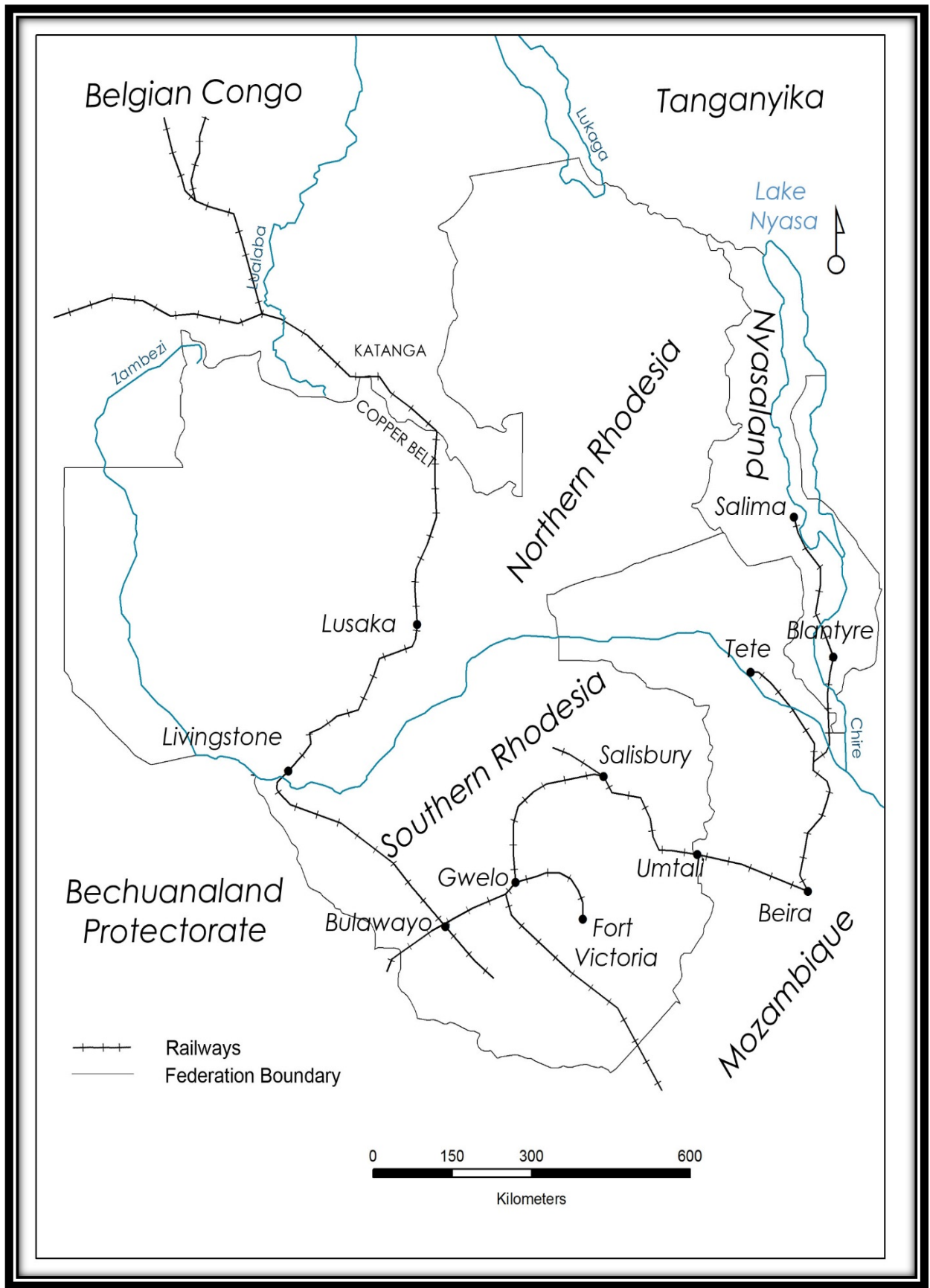
<sup>12</sup> Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, p. 211.

<sup>13</sup> Fetter, *Colonial Rule and Regional Imbalance in Central Africa*, p. 53

<sup>14</sup> Fetter, *Colonial Rule and Regional Imbalance in Central Africa*, and R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, p. 213.

Fig. 3.1: The Central African Federation



The Federation proved to be a failure and only survived for a decade. From the onset, it was a mistake, an experiment incognisant of the political currents on the continent and extremist white Rhodesian ambitions. Hyam alleges that British support was equally informed by 'a steady Colonial Office tradition of trying to provide protection for African interests against the demands of white settlers.'<sup>16</sup> Though Britain sought to protect African interests, the very same Africans ironically threatened the Federation's existence, eventually culminating in the Federation's collapse in 1963. West confirms that most African activists especially in Nyasaland, remained unreconstructed, denounced the Federation as a power grab by Southern Rhodesian settlers at every turn, and bitterly opposed the new polity during its entire ten-year existence.<sup>17</sup> Murray summed African resistance noting that:

Grievances of urban residents, the antipathy of peasants against land laws, the anger of the educated Africans over illusory promised benefits of federation, the antipathy of immigrant Africans from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to the federal government arising from the political conditions home, and Nkrumah's example and of mass political movements in all colonies to the north, encouraged Africans to act and demand concessions for themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Consequently, it disintegrated in December 1963 under intense opposition from African nationalists in the region, who felt that it was an attempt to increase the powers of whites in their countries and the opposition of radical white politicians in Southern Rhodesia who feared black rule and were interested in retaining white political supremacy. According to Blake, in Northern Rhodesia Harry Nkumbula agitated vigorously against any form of closer association; in Nyasaland, too, it was equally clear that Hastings Kamuzu Banda and colleagues feared the extension of Southern Rhodesian native policy to the north.<sup>19</sup> As noted by Simpson, African opposition was largely based on the fear that under Federation the white settler population would occupy a dominant role, and would develop a South African oriented apartheid system.<sup>20</sup> The decolonisation process caught up with the fragile union and its short-life span bears testimony to the rapid changes after 1945, as Northern Rhodesia and

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<sup>16</sup> R[hodes] H[ouse] L[ibrary] Mss. Brit. Emp.S.365 Box 110, Central African Federation: Articles from Venture, Journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1951-58. See also Hyam, 'The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation', p. 146.

<sup>17</sup> M.O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 186-90.

<sup>18</sup> D.J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 363.

<sup>19</sup> Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, p. 261.

<sup>20</sup> B. Simpson, 'The Devlin Commission (1959): Colonialism, Emergencies, and the Tule of Law', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 22, 1, 2002, p. 19.

Nyasaland achieved independence and majority rule in 1964, while the Rhodesian Front assumed power in Southern Rhodesia in 1962 and unilaterally declared independence in 1965.<sup>21</sup> However, little is known about the Federation's impact on migrant labour processes and dynamics, and Nyasa diasporic experiences and voices about *Chigwirizano* are not well analysed, a concern that is addressed below.

### **For the Love of the *Njinga* (Bicycle): Federal Stimuli and Ramifications on Nyasa Migration**

Although the Federation succumbed to its own political problems and relentless African resistance, it proved to be a blessing in disguise for aspiring African migrants, chiefly those from Nyasaland, who were pursuing alternative economic livelihoods outside the boundaries of their impoverished nation. While a number of Nyasas opposed it and continued to do so until its demise, the Federation triggered an unprecedented increase in migration of Nyasa male labourers, juveniles, married and single women. Ironically, class differences explain such a contradiction. African resistance was elitist and had little bearing to increased migration of ordinary Nyasas. Blake believed that there was no evidence to show how far the illiterate or semi-literate northern African masses accepted a handful of educated Africans as their spokespersons on migration matters.<sup>22</sup> For many it was a matter of survival through which they exploited the new less-strict transnational avenues offered by the Federation by increasingly migrating to Southern Rhodesia.

Kettlewell discussed the link between the Federation and increased migration in his analysis of the agrarian problems faced by rural Nyasas. He asserted that reduction of pressure on land was achieved through the creation of a landless class of workers and the mass migration by family units to Southern Rhodesia, a state of affairs made all the more possible through the creation of the Federation.<sup>23</sup> The CNC noted that 'unlike those proceeding to South Africa, migrant workers can move freely between the territories of the Federation, and can make

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<sup>21</sup> Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, p. 261.

<sup>23</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 320; R.W. Kettlewell, *An Outline of Agrarian Problems and Policy in Nyasaland*, Zomba: Government Printer, 1955.

their own choices as to how their journeys can be undertaken.'<sup>24</sup> Explaining why elite Southern Rhodesian labour organizations and black leaders strongly opposed Federation, Murray observed that 'for the great majority of Southern Rhodesian Africans, Federation meant an increased flow of Nyasa labourers who would further depressed wages and took their jobs.'<sup>25</sup> Therefore, migration swelled, partly due to developments within the Nyasaland rural economy and partly due to the Federation's impact. The mid to late 1950s saw an upsurge in Nyasa migrants, which coincided with the peak of the Federation, as well as numerous socio-economic challenges faced by Africans in Nyasaland. An important stimulus to this migration was the scrapping of the *thangata* system, as well as restrictions on tobacco growing, imposed in southern and central Nyasaland from the 1950s.<sup>26</sup> Austin Nyirenda, who migrated in 1958, explained that the discontinuation of the labour rents at white estates left him and many other Nyasas jobless, forcing them to trek to Southern Rhodesia.<sup>27</sup> Chapter two discussed the spatial and occupational inclinations of Nyasas, and at the peak of the Federation in 1956, Southern Rhodesia employed approximately 130,000 Nyasa men and women in various sectors. More than 60,000 Nyasas were in commercial agriculture (57,000 males and 4,000 females); 16,000 were in mining (15,900 males and 100 females); 15,000 worked in manufacturing (14,600 males and 400 females; 10,400 men and about 12 women were in construction; about 19,500 males and 300 females were employed in domestic work, while the rest were engaged in transport, commerce and other services across the colony.<sup>28</sup>

From the onset, the Federal Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, had intended to use Nyasaland's incorporation into the Federation as a means of diverting labour from South Africa to Southern Rhodesia. He wanted to stifle regional competition by monopolising and controlling migrant labour through the Federation. According to McCracken, Huggins did not really achieve his aim of thwarting South African competition for Nyasa labour through

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<sup>24</sup> NA CO1015/2537 Central African Federation and Aden Department: Inter-Territorial Migrant Labour Association; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland 1960 - 1962; Nyasaland Protectorate Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1960.

<sup>25</sup> Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 340.

<sup>26</sup> The *thangata* system was a form of labour rent or tax under which Africans took up residence and practised farming on unutilised land on European-owned estates in return for working on the estate for a stipulated period of time. In Nyasaland these tenants were required to work for one to three months each year. See McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, pp. 128-31 and p. 257.

<sup>27</sup> Census Interview with Austin Nyirenda, Hatcliffe Extension, Harare, 20 August 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Crush, Williams and Peberdy, 'Migration in Southern Africa', p. 4.

Federal monopoly.<sup>29</sup> However, the Federation did realise some marginal success in increasing the number of Nyasa labourers into his territory. In fact, statistical evidence from the Federation years reveals that Southern Rhodesia managed to achieve higher labour migration rates than South Africa. Between 1953 and 1960, Southern Rhodesia received 353,420 contracted and non-contracted Nyasa labour while South Africa obtained 136,130 workers from Nyasaland.<sup>30</sup> Nyasas continued to migrate to Southern Rhodesia even towards the twilight of the Federation and after Malawian independence in 1964, but at a lower rate than the preceding years. The table below shows the estimated annual exodus of contracted and uncovenanted Nyasa male labour into Southern Rhodesia from 1952 through the Federation until 1967.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 3.1: Nyasa Emigration into Southern Rhodesia, 1952-1967<sup>32</sup>**

Year	Contracted Labour	Non-Contracted/Free Migration	Average Yearly Total
1952	5 453	24 782	30 235
1953	8 046	31 928	40 024
1954	7 005	38 792	45 797
1955	8 096	37 976	46 072
1956	11 059	39 701	50 760
1957	7 751	41 497	49 248
1958	9 455	35 408	44 863
1959	7 800	32 452	40 252
1960	6 762	29 662	36 424
1961	5 473	23 514	28 987
1962	2 633	23 296	25 929
1963	5 194	20 825	26 019
1964	4 919	19 488	24 407
1965	4 179	17 659	21 838
1966	3 619	9 807	13 426
1967	3 284	8 734	12 018

<sup>29</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 257.

<sup>30</sup> Totals calculated from the Malawi Ministry of Labour Annual Report, 1963-67, Zomba: Government Printer, 1968.

<sup>31</sup> NA CO1015/2537, Nyasaland Protectorate Annual Reports of the Labour Department, 1959-1960. See also NAZ S1561/3/1, Chief Native Commissioner Migrant Labour, Nyasaland Matters, 23 February 1935 to 5 September 1940. In his letter to the Prime Minister on the migrant labour agreement, C. Bullock, CNC Salisbury, reported that there were about 120,000 absentees from Nyasaland, of which one-third of this number were said to be *Machona* or lost ones who had been away for more than ten years.

<sup>32</sup> Constructed from information found in NA CO 1015/2537, Central African Federation and Aden Department: Inter-Territorial Migrant Labour Association; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland 1960-1962; Nyasaland Protectorate Annual Reports of the Labour Department, 1959-1960, and NA CO1015/2020, Central African Federation and Aden Department: Emigration of Nyasaland African, Statistics from the Governor of Nyasaland to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1957-59. See also the Report of the Malawi Ministry of Labour, 1963-67, Zomba: Government Printer, 1968; Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 291, and McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 257.

The Federation's positive impact on migration was not limited to Nyasas. Northern Rhodesians exploited federal opportunities to increasingly migrate to Southern Rhodesia, as well. Reporting on the state of emigration of Northern Rhodesian Africans, the Colonial Office Assistant Labour Adviser, Miss S.A. Ogilvie, revealed in 1960 that 9,753 Africans had migrated to Southern Rhodesia in 1950 with the figure peaking at 15,574 at the inception of the Federation in 1953 and then coming down back to 9,493 by 1959.<sup>33</sup> In total Southern Rhodesia employed about 34,000 Northern Rhodesian Africans by 1959, working on plantations, farms and on construction sites with about 3,500 at the Wankie Colliery and 1,200 entering attested contracts to work at Kariba Dam.<sup>34</sup>

Various push and pull factors account for Nyasa migration to Rhodesia. Other than the transnationalization of federal borders, post-1953 Nyasas migrated for virtually similar reasons that had stimulated pioneering migrants in the 1890s to the 1940s (see chapter two pp. 45-6). Unlike its neighbours, Nyasaland offered very few opportunities for remunerative work for its African population. Responding to A.G.B. Chisumbi's letter in the *African Weekly* titled '*kodi bwanji Mthandizi ulipobe muNyasaland paino ntawi yaChigwirizano*' (why is labour migration still continuing during Federation?), T.N.W. Malinga, a Nyasa residing in Salisbury, aptly noted in November 1956 that '*kuNyasaland kulibe ndalama zambiri, ndiponso zincito zakuti anthu agwile kulibe*' (there are no jobs and wages are very low in Nyasaland).<sup>35</sup> Be that as it may, most Nyasas who migrated before and after 1953 were driven by the desire to accrue material possessions. Topping their wish list was buying a bicycle (*njinga*).<sup>36</sup> Square Kazembe recalled that 'I came here in 1957 to buy a bicycle and a gramophone but just like other Nyasas, I forgot everything else after getting engrossed with local women and started a family.'<sup>37</sup> Rueben Samalani from Chikwava District, Mwanza, Malawi, came to Southern

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<sup>33</sup> NA CO1015/2537, Central African Federation and Aden Department: The Colonial Office Assistant Labour Adviser, Miss S.A. Ogilvie's Report on State of Emigration of Northern Rhodesian Africans to Southern Rhodesia, 25 July 1960.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> 'Mthandizi Suzatha muNyasaland', *The African Weekly*, 21 November 1956.

<sup>36</sup> The bicycle continues to have a special place in the heart of Malawians in present day Malawi where it is used for income generation through the Kabaza commuter transport system. This is a government registered transport association of bicycle owners who use their bicycles to ferry people in urban areas to and from their homesteads to town CBDs, termini, banks, hospitals, schools, bars, etc. A trip usually costs an average of 200 Kwacha (US\$0.50). Such is not the case in Zimbabwe but the enthusiasm for bicycles among Malawian migrants continues especially on farms and mines.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe.

Rhodesia in 1959 because he wanted to buy a cheaper bicycle costing about 10 pounds as compared to 12 pounds in Nyasaland.<sup>38</sup> Henry Banda Matekenya, a Chewa from Kasungu, Malawi, came in October 1963 as a 19 year old, aiming to buy and replace his stolen old bicycle. He reflected that:

I had just bought a bicycle from savings I had made out of numerous piece jobs in Kasungu. Unfortunately, it was stolen after a few months. I later learnt that it had been hidden at our local cemetery by which time I was already on my way to Southern Rhodesia to find a job and replace it.<sup>39</sup>

Oddly, Matekenya never returned home. He only managed to get his first bicycle as a service award after working for 25 years at Jumbo Mine.

Even as late as the 1970s, Malawians continued migrating to Rhodesia for property accumulation. Williard Banda, a Tonga from Nkata Bay, reached Rhodesia on 27 September 1970 because 'poverty and the desire for properties, especially a *njinga*, sent me here'.<sup>40</sup> Another informant, Langwell Mhone came at the height of the Zimbabwean armed struggle in 1975 aged 26. He had been employed in Blantyre at a food depot saving money for two years before eventually migrating to Rhodesia by train.<sup>41</sup> He arrived at Shackleton Mine near Chinhoyi on 15 August 1975 and immediately got employed as a lasher. He eventually fulfilled his wish of owning a bicycle after combining his remaining savings with his first two salaries.<sup>42</sup> Another informant from New Grade farm in Trelawney, Denisani Iliyasa noted that 'having a bicycle was prestigious; it was as a symbol of great advancement and wealth.'<sup>43</sup> Rafael Wilson pointed out that 'those returning home used to show off their material accumulations (trunks full of new clothes, shoes, hats and bicycles), which were an envy for those of us who had never been to Southern Rhodesia or South Africa.'<sup>44</sup> Bicycles were an important mode of transport during migration too. In January 1957, two Nyasas, Samson Nyamuluka and Phillip Kamanga, travelled back to Nyasaland from Bulawayo through Northern Rhodesia on new bicycles laden with provisions to see their wives and relatives after being absent for several years.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, the pursuit of material possessions indirectly assisted colonial labour

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Rueben Samalani, Epworth, Harare, 25 May 2014.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Williard Banda.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Denisani Iliyasa.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson.

<sup>45</sup> 'To Nyasaland on Bicycles', *The African Daily News*, 25 January 1957.



recruitment. As noted by McDonald, bicycles were a cherished possession that stimulated many Nyasas to join the trek south with little or no manipulation from the *Mthandizi* labour recruiters.<sup>46</sup>

### Kabaza Bicycles: An Important Commuter Transport System in Malawi



Photos taken by author during fieldwork in Malawi in February and March 2015

Not all Nyasas were lured by bicycles. Austin Nyirenda went to Southern Rhodesia in 1958 to work and raise funds for carpentry tools and return home.<sup>47</sup> He however, failed to realise his ambition working on various jobs, initially as a farm worker at Isaac Billjon's farm in Darwendale before moving on in 1959 to become a golf caddie at Ruwa Country Club. Some simply followed their relatives in the diaspora or were pushed by poverty. For example, James

<sup>46</sup> L.J. McDonald, 'Bicycles in British Central Africa', *Society of Malawi Journal*, 15, 2, 1962, pp.33-4.

<sup>47</sup> Census Interview with Austin Nyirenda.

Asidi left his Kalembo village, Nyasaland in 1954, after receiving a telegram from his elder brother who was working as a maize miller in Banket, to come because he had found him a job as a chef at a newly established hotel in Karoi.<sup>48</sup> Asidi then moved to Kariba in 1957 to another hotel, working for five years before returning to Nyasaland at independence in 1964.<sup>49</sup> The impoverished life at home was disillusioning so much that he returned to Rhodesia in 1966. Many young men returned south after finding village life, 'intolerably dull and stagnant, the houses dirty, the women slovenly, and the food inadequate and badly cooked.'<sup>50</sup> Selemani Chipwanya substantiates that 'we ran away from poverty in Nyasaland; we did not have money to even pay for *lobola* (bride price); could not afford clothes and there was too much farming in our *dimbas* (local farming fields).'<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Malunda Mbweswo departed from Mangochi district, Nyasaland in 1959, fleeing from poverty and found employment at Dalny Mine, Chakari as a shopkeeper.<sup>52</sup>

John Karonda, a Ngoni from Thyolo district, Nyasaland, was born in 1948 and had found his way to Southern Rhodesia by early 1963 together with his young brother. Poverty and misfortune forced them to come and work as juvenile labourers on commercial farms. His mother had died in 1962 and faced with a bleak future he trekked south.<sup>53</sup> Some migrants could not even wait for Malawian independence in 1964 rushing for the better living standards in Southern Rhodesia. Posta Chitimbe emigrated in 1962 towards the end of the Federation after getting frustrated with life and work in Nkota-Kota, Nyasaland.<sup>54</sup> For some like Saidi Selemani, coming to Southern Rhodesia was a rite of passage; what Read and Scott termed 'an essential introduction to manhood.'<sup>55</sup> Selemani said that 'going to Southern Rhodesia was equated to the Chewa and Yao initiation ritual; a transformation into adulthood because we were venturing into the unknown and becoming independent through migration

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Selemani Chipwanya, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 9 May 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Malunda Mbweswo, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 9 May 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Census Interview with John Karonda.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>55</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 30; Read, 'Migrant Labour in Africa', pp. 605-31.

and working in foreign lands.<sup>56</sup> He reached Salisbury on 13 October 1959 by train; worked as cook in the city and moved to Melsetter before finally settling at Triangle in 1964.<sup>57</sup>

Nyasa women exploited transnational opportunities availed by the Federation to flee from Nyasaland poverty en-masse to Southern Rhodesia. More importantly, in line with TPA conditions, Federation authorities encouraged married migrants to take their families to workplaces in order to avoid repatriation.<sup>58</sup> A gradual rise in official and free flow gendered migration, thus, characterised the federal years. In 1956, about 5,058 Nyasa women were working in Southern Rhodesia, with 90% employed in commercial agriculture and the rest in domestic work, manufacturing, construction, commerce, mining and transport industries.<sup>59</sup> *Ulere* records alone show that between 1957 and 1959, an average of 6,000 women was being issued with travelling permits or accompanying their spouses to Southern Rhodesia.<sup>60</sup> The RNLSC also assisted Nyasa women. In 1958, 889 recruits were accompanied by their wives, 564 in 1959 and 262 in 1960.<sup>61</sup> 199 wives travelled separately to join their husbands in 1960 as compared with 99 in 1959 and 137 in 1958.<sup>62</sup> These women also fled from rural poverty or in pursuit alternative and independent economic opportunities within a male chauvinistic colonial wage system. Laina Naida, born in 1938, migrated together with her three children from Mangochi in 1957 to join her husband who was a farm worker at Karuru farm in Karoi.<sup>63</sup> Ntonga Zvapiya, born in 1931, came on foot in 1954 accompanying her husband and his young brother, leaving behind a daughter with her parents.<sup>64</sup> Margaret Nadzonzi migrated in 1964 from Kalembo with her mother to join her father employed at a chrome mine in Kwekwe.<sup>65</sup> Others travelled as juveniles. Esther Tambwari Iiyasa came on her mother's back as a two-year-old baby in 1957 and grew up on commercial farms near Banket.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Saidi Selemani, Zororo Section, Triangle, 14 April 2014.

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

<sup>58</sup> Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', p. 48.

<sup>59</sup> Crush, Williams and Peberdy, 'Migration in Southern Africa', p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> NA CO1015/2537, Central African and Aden Department, Nyasaland Protectorate Annual Reports of the Labour Department for 1959.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, and NAZ S2239, Migratory Labour Carried by Southern Rhodesia Government Migrant Labour Transport (*Ulere*) 1947-1960.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Laina Naida, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Ntonga Zvapiya, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Margaret Nadzonzi, Epworth, Harare, 25 May 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Esther Tambwari Iiyasa, New Grade Farm, Trelawney, 17 October 2013.

## ***Kufa kwaMbwidi Mombe Zalowa: Inter-Marriage Dynamics and Social Tensions***

Many single and married Nyasa males, particularly *Machona* (lost ones), became entangled in the economic and social comforts of Southern Rhodesia. They entered into relationships with indigenous Shona and Ndebele women, who offered the 'comforts of home' to migrant labourers.<sup>67</sup> Nyasaland Labour Officer, Burden, had reported as early as 1935 that that 'labourers who have been in Rhodesia for more than five years have contracted alliances with local women and thousands of children of these alliances are growing up in the mines and towns without ever experiencing village and 'tribal' life.'<sup>68</sup> Because some had left spouses in Nyasaland, a number of Nyasa men preferred informal conjugal alliances or temporary marriages commonly known as '*mapoto*'. This was 'widely recognized and practised but was roundly condemned by practically every segment of Southern Rhodesian society.'<sup>69</sup> Under *mapoto*, no *lobola* and family consultations were made. The union eluded the authority of clan, lineage, family and the colonial state. A *mapoto* woman would become a de-facto wife, who cooked, cleaned and washed clothes for her male counterpart without outright payment. Instead, it was tacitly acknowledged that when she left the relationship she was entitled to take away with her some even all of the household goods and children born during the relationship.<sup>70</sup> State policy and traditional patriarchy maintained an uneasy relationship with *mapoto*, sometimes denigrating female partners as 'concubines'. However, just as Luise White's observations on prostitution in colonial Nairobi, Kenya, the Rhodesian state tolerated *mapoto* marriages because *mapoto* women sustained migrant labour morale, taking care of their temporary husbands without the regulation and bureaucracy of the formal marriage systems.<sup>71</sup>

Inter-marriages produced diverse experiences that found expression and meaning in a popular Chewa adage, '*kufa kwaMbwidi mombe zalowa*', meaning 'the death of Nyasa husband symbolizes wealth accumulation and full child custodianship for the local wife and

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<sup>67</sup> 'Comforts of home' is used here to imply food, sex and general upkeep and not necessarily prostitution as implied by L. White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990.

<sup>68</sup> Burden, *Nyasaland Native Labour in Southern Rhodesia*.

<sup>69</sup> Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*, p. 26.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 42-3, and White, *The Comforts of Home*.

her relatives.<sup>72</sup> One informant, Rafael Wilson, affirmed that ‘the moment you died, all your work and efforts would be lost; your in-laws would rejoice and celebrate your death eyeing the material benefits to be accrued.’<sup>73</sup> Williard Banda voiced that many *Machona* had the misfortune of losing out on their life investments so much that, ‘if one died all his properties were taken by his spouse relatives.’<sup>74</sup> Langwell Mhone mentioned that:

When a Nyasa married or cohabitated with a local woman, he would invest most, if not all, of his income at his in-laws partly because of his lack of a rural home and partly due to the distant nature of Malawi. In most cases the indigenous wife would influence their Nyasa spouse to build a home at his in-laws’ rural homestead, as well as buy livestock before chasing you away or initiating divorce or killing you.<sup>75</sup>

Langwell recounted challenges he encountered after the death of his young brother, Saidi Mhone. Saidi had bought cattle and constructed a beautiful house at his Shona in-laws’ rural homestead in Sanyati. On asking about his young brother’s investments, Langwell was demonised as an outsider interfering with internal family issues.<sup>76</sup> Narrating about his ordeal after marrying a Zezuru wife from Chihota District in the 1970s, Posta Chitimbe believed that:

It was a grave mistake for Nyasas to enter into local conjugal alliances because ‘*ukatenga mukazi wamuZimbabwe, wadumpa marire, wadumpa muganhu nimakoro ako, wazipalila*’ (you would have enslaved yourself to her and your in-laws for the rest of your life and cut ties with your ancestors and relatives).<sup>77</sup>

When local women preferred northerners it was partly because these migrants lacked relatives in Rhodesia and partly due to their inability to frequently go back home to Nyasaland. Selemani Chipwanya, whose first wife ‘*MaSibanda*’ was a Kalanga from Bulawayo, recounted that ‘many Ndebeles were married by ‘*voenda*’ (Nyasa migrants) because Ndebele women thought we were smart and loving.’<sup>78</sup> Referring to her 75-year-old Nyasa husband, Mary Peaches of Buffalo Range farm, in Chiredzi concurred that Nyasas made good husbands and fathers who unlike indigenous males, were loving, understanding and supportive.<sup>79</sup> Virginia Makanza mentioned of her Ndebele grandmother who was married to ‘a good-hearted Nyasa’ in Matebeleland province and people referred to her home as

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone and Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Williard Banda.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Selemani Chipwanya.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Mary Peaches, Buffalo Range Farm, 14 April 2014.

'*kwaMubhurandaya*' (the place where the man from Nyasaland stays).<sup>80</sup> Indeed, Nyasas were viewed as morally upright and not as thrifty or parsimonious as indigenous men were. Schmidt observed that 'migrant labourers from other territories, who by forces of Southern Rhodesian law had left their own wives at home and having entered wage employment earlier and earning much higher wages than their local counterparts, were particularly attractive to local women.'<sup>81</sup> Colonial officials equally acknowledged the extravagance of migrant men towards indigenous women. NC for Chirumhanzu reported that 'they are always in possession of ready cash, which counts greatly to their favour with local women, who are fond of presents and clothes.'<sup>82</sup>

A number of Nyasas utilised inter-marriages to seek sanctuary, integration and domicile in Southern Rhodesia. This was common among Chewa and Yao men from central and southern Nyasaland. They took advantage of a provision in the 1948 Migrant Workers Act to become bona fide residents of the colony.<sup>83</sup> Nyasaland Labour Commissioner, M.C. Hoole, stated that in cases where a migrant worker has been employed in Southern Rhodesia for a few years or more and is married to an indigenous woman of Southern Rhodesia, he may apply for domicile under clause 24(2) of the Agreement.<sup>84</sup> Accordingly, after ten years of uninterrupted residence, immigrant workers would be permitted, together with their families, to remain in the country.<sup>85</sup> Inter-marriages became a form of social agency, manipulated by Nyasas to ensure longer stay or residency in their respective settlements. According to Malunda Mbweswo, 'it was well known among Nyasas that you could extend your residence in the colony through marrying local women and many of us, *Machona*, took advantage of this to regularize our stay in Southern Rhodesia.'<sup>86</sup>

Inter-marriages were not unique to Nyasas in Southern Rhodesia. Those in the Union of South Africa, particularly on the Rand and Transvaal mines, and in the Cape area, were renowned

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<sup>80</sup> Personal communication from Virginia Makanza, Midlands State University, Gweru, 16 May 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, p. 94.

<sup>82</sup> NAZ N3/17/2, NC Chilimanzi to Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 8 May 1914, cited in Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, p. 94.

<sup>83</sup> Phiri, 'Migrant labour as a by-product of colonial driven civil discord', p. 22.

<sup>84</sup> NAZ F137/186, Federal Archives, Migrant Labour Report 1952.

<sup>85</sup> NAZ S482/22/47, The Migrant Workers' Bill, 1947.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Malunda Mbweswo.

for marrying indigenous South African women. Correspondences between C.W.F. Footman of the Chief Secretary's Office in Zomba, Nyasaland; J.C. Morgan of the Colonial Office in London and the High Commissioner in Cape Town, reported that many Nyasaland Africans in the Cape area had local wives, in almost all cases being Cape Coloureds. The High Commissioner reported in June 1959 that:

Many Africans, specifically Nyasaland Africans, have lived in the Union for periods of up to 20 years and have made permanent homes in the Union. They have married or lived with Union African and Coloured women. Many have large families and it might be reasonably to count an average of three children to each family.<sup>87</sup>

Marrying South African women was, however, not necessarily out of want because the Union government was totally against the migration of foreign women. A Nyasa worker was 'forbidden to bring his wife and family along with him to Johannesburg.'<sup>88</sup> Therefore, very few Nyasa women found their way into South Africa because of its strict gendered migration policies. Such a stance was extant even after Malawi attained its independence and had improved its labour ties with apartheid South Africa.

Migration and inter-marriages offered a platform for Nyasa males to challenge and outwit traditional matrilineal obligations back home. Chewa and Yao male migrants in particular, exploited opportunities availed by labour migration and inter-marriages to flee from matrilineal control and exercise patrilineality in the diaspora. Phiri confirms that 'among both the Chewa and their south-eastern neighbours, the Yao, uxorilocality (the husband living with his wife's relations) and the avunculate (the exercise of domestic authority by the wife's brother) were more firmly entrenched than among other peoples of the matrilineal belt of central Africa.'<sup>89</sup> It is thus apparent that Chewa and Yao males saw the possibility of using foreign patrilineal institutional arrangements to ameliorate or escape the consequences of traditional matrilocality. 65-year-old Yao, Edward Inga, from Machinga District asserted that 'I would have married in Malawi but could not because I would have been compelled to marry into my wife's family; I preferred locals because I would exercise control over my wife and would get my children.'<sup>90</sup> This arrangement best suited most migrant men as it guaranteed

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<sup>87</sup> NA CO1015/1480, Central Africa and Aden Department: Repatriation from South Africa of Indigenous Africans of Federation territories, 1957-1959.

<sup>88</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 238.

<sup>89</sup> K.M. Phiri, 'Some Changes in the Matrilineal Family System among the Chewa of Malawi since the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, 24, 1983, p. 257.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Edward Inga, Epworth, Harare, 25 May 2014.

control and child custodianship, which under matrilineal circumstances were a preserve of the female lineage.

However, not all Nyasas married Zimbabwean women. Some were endogamous. As indicated earlier, numerous Nyasa women accompanied or joined their spouses in Rhodesia regardless of restrictions on female migration. After working for a few years in Southern Rhodesia Rueben Mbewe returned to Balaka in 1959 to marry his wife, Sofia Dzonzi, before coming back together to settle on commercial farms in Mashonaland West.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Williard Banda travelled to Malawi in 1974 to marry his Tonga spouse after working for four years at Dalny Mine in Chakari and saving enough bride wealth. He asserted that '*Ninaona kuti siningakwatile akazi amuno; nimavhuto kupela; angofuna ndalama zako basi.*' (I realised that I could not marry local women because they are trouble, they cause many problems and are only after your money).<sup>92</sup> Jackson Chibwana came together with his Yao wife from Mangochi in 1977.<sup>93</sup> Others simply sourced for Southern Rhodesia-born Nyasa women. Henry Banda Matekenya paid an axe as bride wealth for his wife Faresi Nsingano who had been born in Mt. Darwin in 1952 of migrant Nyasa parents.<sup>94</sup> His wife recounted that:

My father was from Msanje near Balaka and married a local wife, my mother, from Mt Darwin. We then relocated back to Nyasaland in 1968 and father died in 1970, which forced us to come back in 1973. That is when I met my husband Henry and we married in 1974.<sup>95</sup>

Mbwana Batani who was once married in Nyasaland before migrating to Southern Rhodesia in 1975, re-married Violet Selo born in 1960 but had migrated earlier with her parents and siblings to Kwekwe.<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, labour migration enabled Nyasas coming from matrilineal communities to gradually transform their marriages into patrilineal ones. Since Nyasa women were following their husbands to distant centres of wage employment, small nuclear families emerged in which the husband assumed full control over the wife and children and enjoyed both 'uxorilocal and genetical rights' in a foreign land.<sup>97</sup> In addition, endogamy ensured

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Aides Mbewe, (daughter to the late Rueben and the late Sophia Mbewe), Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 10 June 2014.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Williard Banda.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya and Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Mbwana Batani.

<sup>97</sup> Phiri, 'Some Changes in the Matrilineal Family System', p. 272.



preservation of Nyasa identity. Williard Banda notes that some people married endogamously; Chewa-to-Chewa; Yao-to-Yao and Tonga-to-Tonga to maintain the group's identity, as well as to ensure that the group would grow and not die away.<sup>98</sup> The fear was that exogamy led to the dilution of one's commonness or shared identity as espoused by Brubaker and Cooper,<sup>99</sup> due to the mixing of different ethnicities and ideologies. Jackson Chibwana confirmed that '*tinapunziswa kuti tiziloola wakwatu, kuitila kuti mtundu watu usamwalile*' (we were told and taught that we should marry from within our 'tribe' so that it does not die or become extinct).<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, inter-marriages complicated ethnic relations between migrant Nyasas and indigenous Rhodesian communities, leading to serious xenophobic tensions. Local men felt that the non-frugal Nyasas and other migrants were a 'nuisance'. Tensions arose as local women left their spouses for migrant workers. Numerous letters in the *African Daily News* highlighted of jealous indigenous men complaining against Nyasas. On 14 October 1957, Carl Chilunga of Highfield, Salisbury, moaned that 'Nyasas use their wages to lure local women...they give these ladies all their wages and only remain with their IDs in their wallets.'<sup>101</sup> He advised women to think twice before courting Nyasas because migrants have bad spirits and are difficult to control when angry.<sup>102</sup> Marital disputes between local men and women were common. NC dockets of civil cases reported of women escaping unhappy marriages and poverty aiming 'at lives of sloth and luxury under the protection of foreign natives at the mines or elsewhere.'<sup>103</sup> Local men sarcastically viewed Nyasa males as unwise. Chilunga alleged that during divorce Nyasas clamour for household furniture, particularly chairs and clothes, instead of seeking custody of their children. '*Unongonzwa vongorwira fenicha nenhumbi dzemumba chete. Zevana zvinonzi mukadzi ndezvako*' (they fight for furniture and clothes at the expense of their children).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Williard Banda.

<sup>99</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', p. 17.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana.

<sup>101</sup> C. Chilunga, *Vechi-Nyasarande Vanoda Zvigarro Kukunda Vana*, *African Daily News*, 14 October 1957.

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

<sup>103</sup> NAZ N3/17/2, CNC Salisbury to Secretary, Department of the Administrator, 2 February 1915, cited in Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, p. 94.

<sup>104</sup> Chilunga, 'VechiNyasarande vanoda Zvigarro kukunda Vana', *African Daily News*, 26 October 1957.

In some cases, locals stigmatised and forsake migrant children in fear of witchcraft or avenging spirits. Posta Chitimbe recalled that after the death of his Zezuru wife, his in-laws dumped his three children from the marriage to him arguing that '*sitingakale nivana vaMbwidi*' (we cannot stay and look after children of a foreigner).<sup>105</sup> Rafael Wilson looked after his two orphaned grandsons, Benson and Forster, dumped to him by the in-laws as a social stigma that they were progeny of an outsider, a Nyasa foreigner who could cast avenging spirits in retaliation. He narrated that 'they said we are not related to these children and we do not want *ngozi* (avenging spirits) and they gave me back my grand-children.'<sup>106</sup>

Indigenous women sometimes prevented married Nyasa men from returning to Nyasaland to collect their official wives. They hid men's passbooks or workbooks. Others reported their Nyasa spouses to the Rhodesian authorities, accusing them of various misdemeanours, particularly of overstaying. Posta Chitimbe's father, a *Machona*, who came to Southern Rhodesia in 1931, had married a local Korekore woman and failed to return to Nyasaland until Posta followed and found him in 1962 working at Mazire farm in Raffingora.<sup>107</sup> On hearing that Posta wanted to take his father back to Nyasaland to assume chieftainship duties, the wife refused. She instead woke up the next morning and eloped with her children leaving her husband with little but no choice to stay in Southern Rhodesia until his death in 1982.<sup>108</sup> Other indigenous women accompanied their Nyasa spouses back to Nyasaland out of love. Problems arose in the process. A Shona woman encountered trouble in Limbe, Nyasaland, after getting married and moving with her migrant husband to Nyasaland. She was dumped on arrival leaving her destitute until the state assisted her with repatriation to Southern Rhodesia.<sup>109</sup>

Nyasa women who followed their spouses in Rhodesia conflicted with *mapoto* women. Many ended up at the Nyasaland Government Representatives office in Salisbury, 'penniless and destitute', asking for help.<sup>110</sup> The *African Weekly* reported of a Nyasa wife who demanded her husband's assistance to migrate to Salisbury in 1957. The man was living with a Shona woman

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<sup>105</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> 'Mukadzi wechiShona watambudzika Nyasarande', *African Daily News*, 8 April 1957.

<sup>110</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 67.

who argued in Chewa, '*Ngati upiteko ukamutenge, inenso sitisiyana*', that is, 'if you go there to get your wife, I will go too because I will not be abandoned.'<sup>111</sup> Some men wishing to keep their local alliances secret did not notify their Nyasa spouses of their situation and place of abode. In a circular to all native department stations, CNC, C. Bullock noted that:

The Nyasaland Labour Officer reports that wives who have come down to join their husbands at work have sometimes found difficulty in ascertaining their whereabouts' because these husbands do not give full particulars of their place of employment when remitting money on their behalf to bring down their wives.<sup>112</sup>

Nyasa husbands often collected their marriage certificates from Nyasaland under the pretext that they were going to 'show this to *mzungu* (white employer) so we can have *nyumba yaukwati* (marriage accommodation) and I'll come and get you.'<sup>113</sup>

Nyasa women's fears grew with the discontinuation of TPA from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1960. The provincial labour officer of the southern province of Nyasaland reported that:

Male migrants are happy...they say that this will remove their fear in leasing employment because they can now stay in Southern Rhodesia for an indefinite period. The women folk are not happy about the new regulations as they fear their husbands will desert them...they say they will neither see nor hear from them again.'<sup>114</sup>

Nonetheless, this did not entail cancellation of the remittance system. Instead, the workbook system was transformed to a 'savings book', and new arrangements permitted migrant workers to send home remittances on voluntary basis. Even after the attainment of Malawian independence in 1964, migrant Malawians directly and indirectly supported their families and relatives back home. Some continued sending money through formal post-office channels. Others resorted to using fellow migrants and friends returning home. However, these informal couriers were not very reliable and sometimes ended up embezzling the remittances.

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<sup>111</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 44. See also *The African Weekly*, May 1957.

<sup>112</sup> NAZ S1561/3/1, CNC Migrant Labour: Nyasaland Matters, 23 February 1935 to 5 September 1940, CNC Circular No. 151 to all Native Department Stations in Southern Rhodesia, 19 July 1940.

<sup>113</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 84.

<sup>114</sup> NA CO859/1527, Nyasaland Labour Department Periodical Reports, Monthly Report of the Provincial Labour Officer, Southern Province, 1960-1962.

## **Ringleaders and Troublemakers: Nyasa Involvement in Unionism and Politics**

Nyasa involvement in civil and labour unrest across Southern Rhodesia gained them a reputation/identity of being ringleaders and troublemakers. Colonial authorities accused Nyasas, many of whom were better educated, of spreading discontent among the passive locals through labour unrests, millenarianism and factional fights. The antecedents of African political organization in post-conquest Southern Rhodesia were elitist proto-nationalist movements, which took the form of mutual-aid, self-help and ethnic-cultural organizations. Through the proto-nationalist activities ethnic organizations and the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC), Nyasas became a thorn in the flesh of colonial and imperial authorities. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, whose 'implacable opposition to what he repeatedly described as "this stupid Federation"' turned him from a potential ally of Britain into one of her more troublesome foes, whom J.C Morgan of the Colonial Office described as "a nasty little man".<sup>115</sup> Southern Rhodesian authorities described him as a 'danger to peace' after having spoken violently against the Federation on his visit to Salisbury in 1958.<sup>116</sup> Both educated and semi-literate Nyasas operated in Southern Rhodesia and were arrested or deported for fuelling African animosity against colonial rule. However, most of these processes were re-enacted in an urban theatre, with Salisbury and Bulawayo being the hubs. Nyasas were also active on mines, farms and plantations in spearheading agitation against their white employers for better working and living conditions.

Nyasa 'nuisance' reputation is traceable to the late 1910s and early 1920s, and was initially spearheaded by missionary educated elite. Dubbed 'proto-intellectuals' by Shepperson and Price, Nyasas permeated the socio-economic and political fabric of numerous Southern African colonies enlightening and inciting fellow Africans against white dominance and colonial rule.<sup>117</sup> Some, including trade union leader Clements Kadalie and evangelist, Elliot Kamwana, obtained employment and spread their 'northern influence' in such administrative and commercial centres as Bulawayo, Salisbury and Cape Town.<sup>118</sup> Elliot Kenan Kamwana

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<sup>115</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, pp. 345-9.

<sup>116</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 219.

<sup>117</sup> G. Shepperson and Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958.

<sup>118</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 112.

founded the Watchtower movement before World War One, an African independent church premised on the teachings of the American Watch Tower and Bible Tract Society. It spread from Nyasaland into South Africa, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia in the 1920s, evangelically inspiring followers, known as Kenanites, in mining compounds and urban areas. Van Onselen points out that the movement was largely a vanguard of the Tonga.<sup>119</sup>

Phimister emphasized this millenarian agency noting that the Watchtower movement was carried south by Nyasa labour migrants and found its responsive audiences on Southern Rhodesian mines and farms among the compounds' 'labour aristocracy' and posed threats to capital and the state.<sup>120</sup> It was popular at Shamva, Wankie, the Globe and Phoenix and the Cam and Motor mines, as well as on the lucrative tobacco growing areas of Lomagundi and Urungwe, with members castigating pass laws and taxes. Millenarians became a serious torment to capital and labour even in the countryside, leading to numerous arrests and deportation of Nyasas. The Native Department rounded up and deported about 15 Nyasa Watchtower leaders to Nyasaland in 1926.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, prior to its decline in the early 1930s, the settler state perceived the Watchtower organization, whether rightly or wrongly, as a major harbinger of unrest. It was subversive and was either banned or placed under heavy surveillance throughout central and southern Africa.<sup>122</sup>

Millenarian annoyance was compounded by Nyasa-led labour consciousness emerging from the activities of Clements Kadalie and his Industrial Commercial Union (ICU). A Nyasaland Tonga who worked his way south, was initially employed at the Shamva and Falcon mines before entering South Africa in 1918 where he formed the ICU.<sup>123</sup> It became a central voice for African economic and political protest in the 1920s. A sister ICU branch was established in

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<sup>119</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 204.

<sup>120</sup> Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 155-6.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, p. 158.

<sup>122</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', gives a breakdown of works that discuss the Watch Tower movement in detail for example: K. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985; S. Cross, 'The Watch Tower Movement in South Central Africa, 1908-1945', DPhil Thesis, Oxford, 1973; Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*, London: Heinemann, 1970; J.R. Hooker, 'Witnesses and Watchtower in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland', *Journal of African History*, 6, 1, 1965, pp. 91-106; Shepperson and Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000, and C.F. Hallencretuz, *Religion and Politics in Harare 1890-1980*, Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1998, pp. 63-7.

<sup>123</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 209. See also West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 135.

1927 in Southern Rhodesia after Kadalie delegated a fellow Nyasa, Robert Sambo, to organise it. Operating from his base in Bulawayo, Sambo with the assistance of another Nyasa, John Mphamba, managed to aggravate the government for five months leading to Sambo's deportation to Nyasaland.<sup>124</sup>

Other than the popular Bulawayo 'Knobkerrie Warfare', Nyasas or 'Zambesi Boys' were also at the heart of ethnic animosity and factional fights in mine compounds across Southern Rhodesia.<sup>125</sup> 250 Ndebele attacked a 'Zambesi' boy near Bulawayo on Christmas Day in 1900, apparently as revenge for the murder of a Xhosa and a Ndebele by the northerners.<sup>126</sup> Other examples include, the fight between Shangaan and 'Zambesi' workers on the Tebekwe Mine in 1901; the violence between Kalanga workers and Nyasas at Gaths Mine in 1919 with the former clamouring for the deposition of all Nyasas, culminating in the dismissal of eight Nyasas.<sup>127</sup> Another serious brawl occurred at Wankie Colliery on Boxing Day 1926 between the Ila and 'Zambesi boys' over a stabbing incident leading to the death of two African workers.<sup>128</sup> Nyasas en-route to South Africa were accused of inciting Rhodesian workers to agitate for better wages similar to WNLA recruits. Rhodesian mine-owners and the Native Labour Enquiry Committee felt that northerners lured locals with stories of better work conditions in South Africa, which was detrimental to Rhodesian industries and caused restlessness among local Africans.<sup>129</sup>

The 1927 Shamva Mine strike became an epitome of early Nyasa coordination that threatened the mining industry and jeopardized production. According to Phimister, numerous unheralded Nyasa protagonists influenced and directed early labour movements, especially the 12 to 17 September 1927 Shamva Mine strike.<sup>130</sup> About 3,500 African mine

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p. 210. See also Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, p. 158.

<sup>125</sup> Phimister and Van Onselen, 'The Political Economy of Tribal Animosity; A Case Study of the 1929 Bulawayo Location 'Faction Fight'', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 6, 1, 1979, p. 3, and Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 154-5.

<sup>126</sup> Phimister and Van Onselen, 'The Political Economy of Tribal Animosity', p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> Van Onselen, 'Worker Consciousness in Black Miners: Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1920', in Phimister and Van Onselen, (eds), *Studies in the History of African Mine Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1978, p. 18. Such accusations were, for instance, also laid against the Lozi from Northern Rhodesia during the 31 December 1912 Wankie Colliery strike.

<sup>130</sup> Phimister, 'The Shamva Mine Strike of 1927', pp. 65-88.

workers, mostly long-service migrants from Nyasaland, struck for higher wages carrying sticks, knobkerries, registration certificates, placards and tickets on the end of sticks.<sup>131</sup> In the end, 28 suspected Nyasa ringleaders were arrested, tried and deported.<sup>132</sup> In retrospect, the strike was testimony to the extra-ordinary initiatives taken by Nyasas who established themselves in key positions in the mining industry across the country. Van Onselen accounts for such Nyasa prominence as due to the extent of their proletarianisation, which proved significant to their action at the time.<sup>133</sup> Most workers were migrants and the leadership certainly was migrant, and settlers knew exactly who to arrest and deport. Such early Nyasa agency inspired and laid strong foundations for locals such as Masotsha Ndlovu (who revived ICU in 1928), Benjamin Burombo, Reuben Siwela, Josiah Maluluke, Charles Mzingeli, Rueben Jamela and Jasper Savanhu to form their own labour unions between the 1930s and 1950s.<sup>134</sup>

As trade unionism escalated in the 1940s and 1950s, Nyasas were conspicuous in some of Southern Rhodesian's most historical labour unrests, notably the 1945 and 1948 general strikes. These represented 'big landmarks in the history of the Zimbabwean labour movement.'<sup>135</sup> The 1945 strike started on 20 October 1945 after the refusal by the General Manager of the Rhodesian Railways in Bulawayo to entertain workers' grievances over low wages, poor food rations, substandard housing, and lack of sympathy from railway administrators. By 22 October, 3,000 railway workers were out on strike and three days later the strike had spread throughout the colony with about 1,200 half of them Nyasas, following suit in Salisbury.<sup>136</sup> The Rhodesian Railways African Employees' Association had emerged

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<sup>131</sup> Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, p. 160.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, p. 161.

<sup>133</sup> Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 122-3.

<sup>134</sup> Nyasa labour consciousness was not only confined to Southern Rhodesia. In South Africa, for example, sick Nyasa lepers protested against repatriation delays at West Fort Institute in Pretoria. Another riot occurred involving both northerners and black South Africans at the Wenela acclimatization depot. 116 newly-arrived Nyasas balked at going to Randfontein Estate Mine after getting wind of its bad working conditions. Nyasas at Consolidated Main Reef Mine struck following the stabbing of their colleague culminating in the appointment of a Nyasa underground 'boss-boy' and the management promising to stop underground assaults by whites and other local Africans. In 1944, Nyasas at Rooiberg Tin Mine struck over inadequate cost of living allowances which were increased and the men returned to work. For details see Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', pp. 191-2, and Annual Report of the Nyasaland Department of Labour, Zomba, 1944.

<sup>135</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe: 1945-1965', p. 55, and Phimister and Raftopoulos, 'Kana Sora Ratswa Ngaritswe', pp. 289-324.

<sup>136</sup> The strike also spilled over to include railway workers at Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia. It had attracted about 10,000 workers by 29 October when the strike ended after the CNC promised setting up a commission of enquiry into their grievances. For details see Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 193; Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe: 1945-1965', p. 59; Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965', in

from the 1920s Bantu Benefit Society and was a formidable movement in Southern Rhodesia dominated by northerners. 54% of members were migrant labourers, infamously dubbed *Vatevera Njanji* (those who followed the railway line) because most of these foreigners worked on the railways.<sup>137</sup> Sporadic disturbances involving Nyasas continued to occur throughout the 1950s. In February 1954, another strike for better wages occurred at Wankie Colliery with about 60 Nyasas being accused of collaborating with the employers to the exasperation of their fellow African workmates.<sup>138</sup>

Another epic example of Nyasa notoriety was the 1959 Kariba Dam strike where the RNLSC Chairman reiterated the Rhodesian view that Nyasalanders were 'troublemakers'.<sup>139</sup> At the request of the Federal Prime Minister, Lord Malvern and through the RNLSC, the Federal Power Board had obtained a special permit from the Nyasaland Government in 1956 to recruit 8,500 African labourers for the Kariba project.<sup>140</sup> 2,355 Nyasas signed up for work on the promise of a 3-pound salary, easy work, good quarters, good treatment and full pay when sick.<sup>141</sup> Over the next three years, African *chibaro* workers, including Nyasas, Tanzanians and the Gwembe Tonga from Northern Rhodesia, were met with empty promises and severe work-related hardships and discrimination, including work overload, long shifts, inadequate food rations, bad accommodation and poor wages. Many Nyasa recruits wrote letters bemoaning the working conditions at Kariba, which they and other African nationalist sympathisers equated to slavery.<sup>142</sup> Wellington Manoah Chirwa, a member of NAC who was extremely opposed to the Federation and represented Nyasa workers at Kariba, criticised the

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Raftopoulos and Mlambo, (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, pp. 96-7, and Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 312.

<sup>137</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe: 1945-1965', p. 59. Nyasas also participated in various capacities in the 1948 General Strike over low wages as it spread throughout the country from Bulawayo to Salisbury and other towns like Umtali, Gwelo, Gatooma and Selukwe. While very little is said about their actions as opposed to previous strikes, Nyasas and other migrants who were the majority employees in most of these towns formed the basis of the general strike.

<sup>138</sup> Phimister, '*Wangi Kolia*': *Coal, Capital and labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1894-1954*, Harare: Baobab Books, 1994, p. 138.

<sup>139</sup> Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 200.

<sup>140</sup> NA CO1015/958 Central African and Aden Department: Labour Aspects of the Kariba Hydro-electric Scheme, 1954-1956; Extract from Federal Newsletter No.4/56, 6 February 1956.

<sup>141</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence': Malawian labour and the Kariba Dam', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 15, 2, 1977, p. 310.

<sup>142</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 310, and Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, pp. 189-190.



recruitment and construction process as nothing but a legacy of slavery.<sup>143</sup> He argued in the Federal Parliament in March 1956, that the construction process was a ploy by the Federal state to depopulate Nyasaland Africans by forcing men to work under slave conditions in mosquito and malaria infested swamps of the Zambezi River and in damp buildings.<sup>144</sup> The Nyasaland Government sent a delegation to inspect the conditions at the construction site comprising of chiefs and members of the Legislative Council from Blantyre, Dedza, Lilongwe, and Mzimba together with B. Jones-Walters, the Government Information Officer, and Major G.N. Burden, the Nyasaland Labour Representative in Salisbury. While taking note of the dam's adverse working conditions, Chief Kachere of Dedza was of the opinion that conditions at Kariba were good.<sup>145</sup> Nonetheless, the poor working conditions adversely affected Nyasa labour recruitment compelling the RNLSC to resort to alternatives after August 1956.<sup>146</sup> On September 28 1956, the RNLSC said that 'African labour for Kariba is now being recruited outside the Federation's borders, in Bechuanaland and PEA because unfounded rumours about conditions on the dam site are slowing up the supply of workers from Nyasaland, the main recruiting centre.'<sup>147</sup> However, Nyasas continued to work at Kariba on a voluntary basis, and within three years forced a halt to dam construction during the 1959 strike.<sup>148</sup>

Tensions erupted on 20 February 1959 following one of the worst accidents in the history of the Kariba project. 17 men, comprising of 14 Africans and 3 Europeans, fell 200 feet to their deaths after a scaffold collapsed and were immediately buried in quick-drying cement that came down with them, hindering the retrieval of their bodies.<sup>149</sup> Over 900 underground workers soon went on strike on 24 February demanding wage increases and were quickly joined by the entire 6,000 strong labour force. 1,300 were from Nyasaland.<sup>150</sup> The strikers

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<sup>143</sup> Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 190, and 'Labour Conditions at Kariba', *Nyasaland Times*, 3 October 1956.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> NA CO1015/958 Central African and Aden Department: Labour Aspects of the Kariba Hydro-electric Scheme, 1954-1956; 'Labour Conditions at Kariba', *Nyasaland Times*, 3 October 1956, and 'Kariba Conditions are Good', *Rhodesia Herald*, 3 October 1956.

<sup>146</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 313.

<sup>147</sup> NA CO1015/958, Central African and Aden Department: Labour Aspects of the Kariba Hydro-electric Scheme, 1954-1956; Extract from Federal Newsletter, 'African labour Recruitment for Kariba', No.40/56, 13 October 1956.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 313, and Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 199.

<sup>150</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 313.

slogan was 'we will not die for 4d (four pence)' and 'we want a shilling an hour'.<sup>151</sup> Officials from Impresit, the main Italian construction firm, identified a shadow committee of nine Nyasa labourers as ringleaders behind the walkout. An increased offer of two pence an hour for underground workers was rejected leading to an ultimatum of dismissals. This was aptly captured by the *Rhodesia Herald* of 26 February 1959 in a caption titled '*Kariba Strikers Told: Go Back or be Sacked. Order Aimed at Nyasas.*'<sup>152</sup> Workers welcomed both options and about 1,674 men used the opportunity to break free from indentured labour and gathered in the beer-hall the next morning to hand in their helmets and boots, collected their wages and took the company's bus to the RNLSC depot in Salisbury.<sup>153</sup> Among these quitters were 520 Nyasas, 58 'Portuguese Nyasas', 548 'Tetes', 288 Bechuanas, 207 Shangaans, and 3 Rhodesians.<sup>154</sup> Some Nyasa rioters were incarcerated. Lewis Kalembu, Sylvester and James Kalembu were sentenced and imprisoned for four years with hard labour and six cuts.<sup>155</sup>

Tischler feels that the striking workers at Kariba did not see 'themselves as part of the anti-Federation' campaigns.<sup>156</sup> Even federal officials attempted to belittle the importance and implications of the strike to the broader anti-Federation politics. For instance, the Federal Minister of Labour, A.E. Abrahamson, insisted that there was no connection between the Kariba walkout and African disturbances in the Federation.<sup>157</sup> However, it is likely that African protests against the perils of Federation, especially in Nyasaland, influenced them to strike and eventually quit Kariba's indentured labour. Even officials in the Ministry of Power had picked these nuanced connections during the strike arguing that the strike 'had been caused by Nyasas and had a political background.'<sup>158</sup> Surely, since 1953 Nyasas had been vocal Federation critics. Moreover, as noted earlier, they had resisted coercive European rule in the region either religiously as Watchtower/Jehovah's witnesses or through unionism as did Clements Kadalie and Robert Sambo and their ICU.

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, and Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 199.

<sup>152</sup> 'Kariba Strikers Told: Go Back or be Sacked. Order Aimed at Nyasas', *Rhodesia Herald*, 26 February 1959.

<sup>153</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 314, and Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 199.

<sup>154</sup> Annual Report of the Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission for 1959, Salisbury, 1960, and Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 314.

<sup>155</sup> 'Kariba Rioters Gaoled', *African Weekly*, 02 March 1959.

<sup>156</sup> Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 201.

<sup>157</sup> *Nyasaland Times*, 7 February 1959. See also Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', pp. 314-5.

<sup>158</sup> Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation*, p. 200.

Nyasa leadership of the 1927 Shamva Mine and 1959 Kariba strikes show that they objected actively when working conditions became intolerable or when it was politically expedient to do so. Interestingly, four days before the Kariba strike, anti-Federation protests and violence had broken out in Nyasaland after the arrest of NAC members at Nkota Kota and more disturbances spread at the height of the Kariba strike in Blantyre, Limbe, Dowa, Karonga, Nkata Bay and Fort Hill.<sup>159</sup> The political connection was also evident on the tea plantations in eastern Southern Rhodesia. Schmidt noted that the management of tea estates in Honde Valley relied on migrant labour with the majority of workers coming from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.<sup>160</sup> He adds that Malawian workers had the reputation of being more politicised than others, which resulted in strikes, as in 1960, 1961, 1974, and 1975.<sup>161</sup>

Nyasa protests intricately resonated with the broader decolonisation trajectories occurring across the continent and within the Federation itself. Of interest were the transnational activities of NAC, which had been founded in 1944 and had spread its branches into Southern and Northern Rhodesia in 1946 and 1948, respectively, as well as into South Africa.<sup>162</sup> External branches coordinated with local Rhodesian movements to resist the Federation. Much of NAC's activities in Southern Rhodesia were concentrated in urban Salisbury and Bulawayo. This is where prominent Nyasa elite leaders together with middle-class migrant workers radicalised the moderate Rhodesian nationalist movement in the 1950s. One example was Dunduzu Chisiza who in 1955-6 gained employment as a clerk interpreter and translator in the Indian High Commissioner's office in Salisbury.<sup>163</sup> Simultaneously, he joined NAC's Mashonaland branch and became instrumental in the formation of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress Youth League. Together with George Nyandoro, James Chikerema,

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<sup>159</sup> Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 314.

<sup>160</sup> H.I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering*, Suffolk: James Currey, 2013, p. 167.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.* See also NAZ S2827/2/2/8, Points Arising from the Labour Unrest at Aberfoyle 3-10 August 1974 and Labour Unrest: Aberfoyle 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1975, 18 April 1975.

<sup>162</sup> For more details about the activities of NAC see Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', pp. 203-28; Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-1964*, London: James Currey, 1995; R. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: the Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, and J. Power, *Political Culture and Nationalism in Malawi: Building Kwacha*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010.

<sup>163</sup> Power, 'Remembering Du: An Episode in the Development of Malawian Political Culture', *African Affairs*, 97, 1998, p. 373. Chisiza had obtained a Cambridge Overseas School Certificate from Aggrey and had a stint in the Belgian Congo in 1952-3 and another period in Uganda before coming to Southern Rhodesia.

Paul Mushonga and Edson Sithole, he helped form the City Youth League (CYL), whose first major accomplishment was the 1956 Salisbury Bus Boycott. In August 1956, presumably because this was regarded as a seditious organization, Chisiza was declared a prohibited immigrant and deported to Nyasaland.<sup>164</sup> He actively continued with politics opposing the Federation and rising within NAC under Kamuzu Banda until his death by car accident in 1962.<sup>165</sup> Other notable NAC elite in Salisbury included J.C. Malifa whom the Federal Intelligence and Security Board described as:

A militant African nationalist whose activities as an executive of the African National Congress in Southern Rhodesia have been noted by the security branch for the last five years...and is regarded as the driving force behind the Mashonaland Branch of NAC which is the most active branch in Southern Rhodesia and gives considerable financial support to the central body in Nyasaland. Malifa is regarded as the leader of the Nyasas in this colony and the danger of his continued residence here lies in his ability to incite Africans resident in this colony to follow the course of subversion dictated by NAC.<sup>166</sup>

Though urban-oriented, NAC immensely benefited from funds raised from Nyasas employed on Rhodesian farms and mines. Congress leaders were aware that higher membership fees and donations could be made by migrant workers in the south whose wages were considerably better than members employed in the Protectorate.<sup>167</sup> They were able to enlist members in Southern Rhodesia through the already established ethnic associations, such as the burial and mutual aid societies.<sup>168</sup> Gerald Chiocha together with fellow colleagues used to mobilise NAC funds at Dalny, Golden Valley and Patchway mines in Kadoma during the 1950s and 1960s. 'We made use of our welfare societies to contribute monthly fees which we took to leaders in Salisbury', he said.<sup>169</sup> Chiocha adds that 'we continued to support and fund NAC back home because we wanted Kamuzu Banda to lead our independence struggle'.<sup>170</sup> As a result, the movement survived on donations and subscriptions made by Nyasas abroad and in the process projected itself as a representative of Nyasas in the diaspora.

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<sup>164</sup> Power, 'Remembering Du', p. 373.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> RHL FISB Affairs Box 239/8 'Memorandum concerning Joshua Chirwa Wellington MALIFA' 1st August 1956, cited in Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 219.

<sup>167</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 204.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.* Groves, 'Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 3, 2012, pp. 491-511.

<sup>169</sup> Interview with Gerald Chiocha, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

Nyasas' 'troublemaker' identity was also showcased in political disturbances that led to state of emergencies in both Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1959. The declarations were meant to pre-empt any violent African protest and justify strong action against the more militant and dangerous activists in Nyasaland.<sup>171</sup> Southern Rhodesia's state of emergency was proclaimed a day after the Kariba strike, on 26 February 1959 leading to the banning of four nationalist organisations, including NAC, and the arrest or deportation of their leaders. About 495 activists were arrested of which 370 were Southern Rhodesian Congress members; 105 belonged to NAC and 83 were Northern Rhodesian Congress comrades.<sup>172</sup> On 3 March Nyasaland Governor, Sir Robert Armitage, declared a similar state of emergency following NAC violence across the Central, Southern and Northern Provinces during February 1959.<sup>173</sup> Over 1,300 Nyasas were arrested under Operation Sunrise with many 'hard-line' nationalists being flown to Federal prisons in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>174</sup> Some were gaoled at Khami prison in Bulawayo whilst the 'hard-core' Congress leaders, Banda, Chipembere and Dunduzu plus Yatuta Chisiza, were separately sent to Gwelo Prison.<sup>175</sup> Exiling and confining these leaders to inaccessible areas was meant to detach them from the masses so as to crush the Congress and end its leaders' influence.<sup>176</sup> 12 days of rioting ensued and order was restored not without casualties; the total number of deaths was under 50.<sup>177</sup>

### **State, Labour, Nationalism and the Discrimination of 'Alien Natives': Late 1950s and 1960s**

After the emergencies, Nyasas were gradually sidelined from the Rhodesian nationalist movement. This was also true of the Zimbabwean nationalist historiography. Scholars simply concentrated on the rise of nationalist politics. Mlambo points out that after 1959 focus shifted to the rise of proper nationalist parties in the form of the National Democratic Party

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<sup>171</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 223.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* See also the Devlin Commission Report, 1959.

<sup>173</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, pp. 352-3.

<sup>174</sup> Power, 'Remembering Du', p. 375-76; Boeder, 'We won't Die for Fourpence', p. 315; McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, pp. 352-3, and C. Baker, *State of Emergency: Crisis in Central Africa, Nyasaland 1959-60*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1997.

<sup>175</sup> C. Baker, 'Dr. Banda's arrest and release from detention, 1959-1960', *Society of Malawi Journal*, 49, 3, 1996, pp. 1-14, and The Devlin Commission Report, 1959.

<sup>176</sup> McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, p. 352. See also Power, 'Remembering Du', pp. 375-6.

<sup>177</sup> Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, p. 325.

(NDP) in 1960, Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1961 and ZANU in 1963.<sup>178</sup> Such ostracism had its roots in the fissures between labour and nationalism in Southern Rhodesia. Activities of NAC and other migrant ethnic self-betterment associations led to tensions between so-called 'alien natives' and Rhodesian trade unionists and nationalists. Labour migrants fostered their ethnic identities through ethnically exclusive self-help groups. These included burial societies, homeboy associations and stokvels, among others. Mozambican Sena and Chikunda migrants introduced the welfare movement to Southern Rhodesia in the 1920s, before spreading to other migrants from the north, particularly the Yao, Ngoni and Tonga.<sup>179</sup> However, these societies were initially kinship- and ethnicity-centred. They were organised along tribal, regional and ethnic lines and the motivation for joining stemmed from the need of the members to maintain traditional and cultural ties with their areas of origin.

Studies by Van Onselen, Phimister, Yoshikuni, Parry and Groves have focused on the activities of the ethnic societies in colonial urban spaces. They reveal that mutual aid associations loosely termed 'burial societies' even though their functions were not limited to funerals, mushroomed in urban Rhodesia as migrants became more self-assertive. Apart from Angoni and Atonga societies, Nyasa self-betterment groups manifested themselves through cultural and religious institutions: *Nyau* society for the Chewa and Chipeta, *Beni* dance society for the Yao, as well as Christian and Islamic based thrift or pooling societies. Nyasas commonly referred to these associations as *Beria* (burial) and *Laundi* (thrift). Yoshikuni notes that associations emerged wherever workers met and shared the same experiences, while at the core of the migrants' associational life were close-knit kinship and ethnic ties.<sup>180</sup> It was a world

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<sup>178</sup> See Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI', pp. 104-9, and Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe: 1945-1965', pp. 72-9.

<sup>179</sup> Archival records reveal that as early as 1919, burial societies had already been formed: namely the Sena Burial Society and the Gazaland Burial Society which based their membership on migrant labourers from Mozambique. The Sena Burial Society split into two factions around 1923 following in-fighting over financial mismanagement and this led to the formation of the Sena Burial Society of the North (the Port Herald Burial Society) and one of the South (the Chinde Society Company, Senna Mission). Mozambicans also had the Gazaland Burial Society, the Tete Burial Society and the Chikunda Club while Zambians had the Northern Rhodesia Burial Society. Malawian migrants had such bodies as the Atonga Society, the Angoni Burial Society and the Chinyao (*Nyau*) society. By 1973 there were about 246 burial societies in Bulawayo and Harare had about 134 of diverse ethnic backgrounds. For details see NAZ N3/21/2 Burial Societies, 1923; N.P. Hall, 'Self-Reliance in Practice: A Study of Burial Societies in Harare, Zimbabwe', *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 1987, 2, 1, pp. 49-71; Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class'; Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', pp. 71-7, and Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 122.

<sup>180</sup> Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 132.

grounded in linguistic and cultural affinity, where migrants exchanged job information, assisted those in trouble and could find a sense of loyalty to their own communities. Such organizations 'gave black workers some limited purchase on the problems of urban life by providing burial assistance, social support and recreational outlets.'<sup>181</sup> They offered socio-economic assistance to members in the event of illness, death and financial constraints, and became an established feature of Zimbabwean social life. Chapter five shall assess the nature and function of these mutual aid societies after independence noting changes and continuities.

Nonetheless, such societies 'posed a problem for labour and political organisations trying to mobilise at a national level, and even those with the more modest aim of uniting urban residents during colonialism.'<sup>182</sup> Indigenous African elite felt that migrant societies were highly exclusionary than syncretic. Speaking of NAC, the President of the Bantu National Congress lamented the fact 'the Nyasaland Africans in this colony wish to divide themselves from the rest by forming their own Congress...The reason is difficult to understand, save to guess that it is the old enemy of the African, 'Tribalism'.<sup>183</sup> Charles Mzingeli of the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (RICU) was more aggressive. He grumbled about 'Africans (children playing with mud) who are called kings, but do not do anything about the low African wages...such societies did not represent African workers, but were only there to play.'<sup>184</sup> According to Murray, Mzingeli and other elite Southern Rhodesian labour organizations and black leaders such as Samkange and Nkomo were strongly opposed to Federation partly because the influx of foreign workers, particularly from Nyasaland, depressed wages and increased local African unemployment.<sup>185</sup> These leaders treated foreign workers with suspicion as they regarded them as a threat to their interests. Instead of trying to protect them, locals urged the government to repatriate them, so that indigenous workers could replace them.<sup>186</sup> The 1958 Urban Areas Commission report also captured 'complaints

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Phimister and Raftopoulos, 'Kana Sora Ratswa Ngaritswe', p. 295.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 340.

<sup>186</sup> A. Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A revolution that lost its way?* London: Zed Press, 1983, p. 22.

over the unrestricted entry of these foreigners...have the effect of depressing wages and slowing up the advancement of the indigenous African.'<sup>187</sup>

Indeed, continuous migrant urban dominance and mounting indigenous African unemployment increased animosity towards diasporic communities. 1953 to 1957 were economic boom years for the Federation. Southern Rhodesia's manufacturing industries expanded from 7,000 in 1953 to 1,300 in 1957.<sup>188</sup> Industrial growth enhanced migrant influx and extended their dominance of Southern Rhodesia's urban African population. In 1956 60% of workers were migrant foreign Africans from Nyasaland, PEA and Northern Rhodesia; in 1975, they still formed 34% of the workforce.<sup>189</sup> This was partly because many locals still had access to land and were not willing to become full-time workers.<sup>190</sup> The turnover of labour migrants was extremely high - an analysis of 348,000 Africans employed in Salisbury between 1953 and 1957, revealed that 70% of the migrants worked an average of 5.3 months for one employer before leaving the city.<sup>191</sup> By 1958, the Federation's economic bubble had burst following the drastic fall in copper prices in 1956 leading to scaling down of corporate companies and rising African unemployment in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>192</sup> Rhodesian discriminatory land policies, particularly the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA) and the 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA), were also indirectly responsible for urban African unemployment. NLHA sought to centralise settlement, destocking, grazing and conservation patterns, as well as curb rural-urban migration. However, it inadvertently 'increased the flow of indigenous Africans into cities like Salisbury, although the extent of migration from rural areas differed, according to varying effects of land legislation in each area.'<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *Report of the Urban African Affairs Commission, 1958*, Salisbury, 1958, cited in Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 187.

<sup>188</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 85.

<sup>189</sup> D.G. Clarke, *The Unemployment Crisis: From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, London: CIIR, 1978, p. 22.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Phimister and Raftopoulos, 'Kana Sora Ratswa Ngaritswe', p. 295, and Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 82.

<sup>192</sup> Birmingham and Ranger, 'Settlers and Liberators in the South, 1953-1980', Birmingham and Martin, (eds), *History of Central Africa*, pp. 336-82.

<sup>193</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 83. See also Phimister, 'Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's land Husbandry Act Reviewed', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 2, 1993, pp. 225-39.



Migrant dominance created a structural imbalance between migrants and the growing local African population leading to xenophobic attacks against non-indigenous Africans in the 1950s and 1960s. Tensions were not only fuelled by the corporate job cuts of the late 1950s, but by severe economic downturn in the post-Federation period. Consequently, local urban dwellers increasingly clamoured for Nyasas in particular, to go back home. For example, on 23 March 1964, local Africans turned on migrants from Nyasaland and Tanganyika intimidating, stoning and kicking them on the streets of Salisbury. One Nyasa victim reported that he had been walking past a group of locals when he was attacked. He claimed the only reason for the attack was that he was a foreigner looking for work in Rhodesia.<sup>194</sup> Posta Chitimbe was also attacked in 1967 in the Southerton industrial area in Salisbury. He reported that:

One day I was beaten in a bus by three local men whilst going for work. I told the bus driver to help but to no avail. I just held on to the bus rails as they kicked me. The driver was brave enough to drive to the police station and the three people were arrested and jailed for seven years. Locals would look for us *Mabhurandaya* singing '*tsuro tsurowe uyo wapera basa*' (Hey you foreigner your time is up). They accused us of taking over their country and usurping their jobs and women.<sup>195</sup>

In order to change African urban demography and re-direct migrant labour to mines and farms, the settler state passed legislation designed to 'keep alien Africans out of the towns so that industrial jobs would be open to local Africans only.'<sup>196</sup> In 1958, the Foreign Migratory Workers Act (FMWA) was introduced to force foreign migrant workers out of urban spaces and reserve access of urban employment to indigenous Africans. It was effected in Salisbury in 1960, 1962 in Umtali and 1963 in Bulawayo, remaining effective until 1979. In a 1961 labour survey, the Rhodesian National Farmers' Union (RNFU), reported that farm employment of Nyasaland Africans had increased to about 22.9% with a preponderance of alien Africans going towards the eastern side of the colony and in the Karoi, Sinoia, Lomagundi, Umvukwes areas.<sup>197</sup> Brownell indicates that this move to re-organise African labour had long been called for by right-wing politicians. Initially it was as a way to slow the African growth rate by limiting what are in the United States pejoratively referred to as 'anchor babies', the offspring of alien

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<sup>194</sup> 'Africans turn on aliens in city clash', *Rhodesia Herald*, 24 March 1964.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>196</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 238.

<sup>197</sup> NAZ F119/IMM/5/1/7 Immigration: Immigration and Control of Alien Africans into the Federation 1954-61; RNFU Labour Survey Results: Farm Employment, Salisbury, 28 June 1961.

males and indigenous females, and second, as a strategy to lower indigenous African unemployment in urban areas by forcing alien Africans to take up jobs in the countryside.<sup>198</sup>

After UDI, there was a renewed interest in reconstituting the African population, including manipulation of African migratory labour patterns and citizenship rights. In December 1965, Ian Smith stated that he intended to replace alien African labour in Rhodesia with indigenous African labour and repatriate alien Africans.<sup>199</sup> Rhodesian employers however, felt that alien labour was virtually irreplaceable and that only a significant wage increase would attract local labour. A compromise was reached through the enactment of the Closed Labour Areas Order of 1966, which prohibited new arrivals from seeking work in Salisbury, Bulawayo and other areas. It allowed alien labour to stay in their current urban employment but new alien labour could not be introduced and would be channelled into labour-short districts.<sup>200</sup> In 1967, the Rhodesian government further instituted an 'administrative action' to rid itself of alien African officials with less than ten years of service 'as soon as practicable'.<sup>201</sup> Still resistance continued and alien Africans continued to trickle, though at a very lower rate, into cities. The 1966 order was finally repealed in 1968 for a number of districts as the Rhodesian business community persistently preferred Nyasas to local African workers.

The state however, exploited existing citizenship regulations to 'other' so-called aliens. Citizenship was determined by race and nationality such that British Europeans were automatically regarded as citizens, while indigenous Africans were known as 'natives' and migrants were 'native aliens' or foreign 'natives'.<sup>202</sup> Notwithstanding migrant generational transformations and internalization of belonging and citizenship by birth, the Rhodesian state treated second-generation migrant descendants born in the colony as 'alien natives' as well. African migrants could not naturalize Rhodesian citizenship by birth. Under the 1968 Africans Registration and Identification Act (Chapter 109), an alien meant an African who either had migrated to or been born in Rhodesia of a foreign African father and had neither 'tribal' nor

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<sup>198</sup> J. Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia: Population Demographics and the Politics of Race*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2011, p. 33.

<sup>199</sup> Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia*, p. 32.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>201</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', pp. 238-9.

<sup>202</sup> NAZ F128/1MM24, Federal Archives: Immigration Department, Aliens vs Native aliens: Immigration Annual Reports, 1955-1957.

citizenship rights in Rhodesia.<sup>203</sup> Diasporic communities thus faced double segregation as Africans and as aliens who were not part of the franchise.

The impact of such categorization had been evident as early as the 1950s. Guided by the stipulations of TPA, second-generation Nyasas, born and raised in Southern Rhodesia, encountered numerous identity/citizenship complications. The two-year contract affected them on assumption of work in the colony. R.A. Sturgeon, a white Rhodesian employer, empathised with the dilemma that most migrant siblings encountered, in his letter to the *Daily Telegraph*:

A son of a northern African and a Southern Rhodesian woman has just reached working age, but finds that if he accepts any job, he is regarded as a northerner and after two years will have to leave his family and friends, and while still very young, will be exiled to his father's country for life. While the Colonial Office pays lip service to the principle of no discrimination against the African, it adopts a form of discrimination more injurious to the individual African. The father of the boy has been employed by my brother for 22 years, and since last April, my brother, with the help of the local NCs, has been trying to get the authorities to make an exception in this case, without success.<sup>204</sup>

Migrant descendants could also not participate in local government politics. During debates to establish township management boards in Rhodesian urban areas from 1959 to the 1970s, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was totally against involvement of non-indigenous Africans. Local government had proposed the creation of African township boards with executive powers to administer themselves for the benefit of respective African residents. All African property owners and rent payers would be eligible to vote within such boards. Such criteria greatly advantaged African migrants, who were the majority house owners and tenants but traditionally did not have voting rights in Rhodesia. The Ministry of Internal Affairs argued that township boards would give voice or enfranchise migrants and threaten internal security.<sup>205</sup> The ministry reasoned that unlike locals who fell under the traditional authority

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<sup>203</sup> RUCL, Smith papers (Unprocessed), Cabinet Memorandum: Solution to the Rhodesian Alien Question: Report by the Working Party on Foreign Labour and Unemployment, 25 July 1968.

<sup>204</sup> NAZ F137/186, Federal Archives: Migrant Labour Report 1952. See also *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 1952.

<sup>205</sup> 'Government and Urban Africans: Crisis Spurs Action', *Property and Finance*, June 1973; NAZ S3700/106/17, African Local Government in Township, Draft by the Secretary for Internal Affairs on African Local Government in Townships, 8 July 1971, and NAZ S3700/106/17, African Local Government in Township, Memorandum African Townships in European Areas: Town Boards from R.C. Woolcott, Provincial Commissioner Community Development to N.A. Hunt, 27 June 1971.

system, which the state could control and manipulate, migrants involved in township boards would be difficult to control and monitor. The first board to be eventually established was the St. Mary's Board, Chitungwiza, in 1964.<sup>206</sup> In order to circumvent state control, migrants came to meetings with assumed names so as to contribute to decision making.<sup>207</sup> Such complications over citizenship and suffrage continued after independence, an issue that chapter six extensively dwells on.

Nyasa migration declined towards the end of the Federation and early UDI period as new dynamics and political processes began to take shape. As discussed above, it slowed down due to the federation's economic downturn, new Rhodesian migration policies and the rise of African nationalism. The Federation's demise on 31 December 1963 and the subsequent end of colonial rule in Nyasaland in July 1964, also affected Nyasa migration to Rhodesia. This 'marked one of the most significant ruptures in the system of trans-colonial cooperation.'<sup>208</sup> For a start, Malawian president, Kamuzu Banda, adopted a 'neutral foreign policy' towards her settler neighbours primarily for diplomatic and economic benefits.<sup>209</sup> Labour migration remained central in his foreign policy. However, Banda increasingly began to lean towards South Africa culminating in various agreements in 1965 and 1967 with WNLA. This led to the removal of recruitment quotas and regularization of illegal Malawi workers in South Africa. The Malawian government began to actively participate in the recruitment and delivery of labourers to WNLA depots throughout Malawi and in their trans-shipment to Johannesburg.<sup>210</sup> These agreements saw a significant increase in labour migration to South Africa at the expense of Rhodesia. By 1972, a total of 179,932 Malawians resided in South Africa. About 31.2% or 129,207 Malawian miners were affiliated with WNLA.<sup>211</sup> Overall, there were more than 250,000 Malawian men, women and children in Rhodesia by the time the Zimbabwean liberation struggle started in earnest in late 1972.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Personal communication from Kudakwashe Chitofiri, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 18 June 2015.

<sup>208</sup> Mudeka, 'We faced Mabvuto', p. 31.

<sup>209</sup> For a detailed discussion of Malawian foreign policy see R.T. Libby, *The Politics of Economic Power in Southern Africa*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 182.

<sup>210</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 236.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.* See also the Malawi Ministry of Labour Annual Report, 1963-67, Zomba: Government Printer, 1968.

<sup>212</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 239.

## Conclusion

The chapter has suggested that though the Federation was a failed political experiment and faced stiff African resistance, it provided numerous socio-economic opportunities for Nyasas. The period opened transnational boundaries culminating in an influx of Nyasas, fleeing from poverty and in pursuit of wealth and property accumulation. Guided by the stipulations of inter-territorial labour agreements, the Federation also reinforced and complicated migrant gender relations. In the process numerous identities, induced by federal experiences, marriage dynamics, labour and political processes, were constructed and contested from 1953 onwards. However, because of the tensions mentioned above, the struggles of labour migrants, as well as women and youth, 'that made important contributions to anti-colonial protests, were subordinated to a nationalist hegemony.'<sup>213</sup> The chapter has contributed empirical knowledge to the literature and debates on the problematic relationship between labour and nationalism, analysing the activities of the Malawian diaspora in Rhodesian trade unionism and nationalist politics. It has revealed that Nyasa dominance in labour and political consciousness prior to and during the federal period gained them a notorious identity of being ringleaders and troublemakers by white Rhodesians. Nyasa dominance of labour arenas and inter-marriages also led to social tensions with local people. Tensions were exacerbated by increasing indigenous African unemployment triggered by corporate downturn after the fall of in copper price and collapse of the Federation, coupled with an influx of northern migrants, as well as indigenous rural peasants to urban areas. Nyasa hegemony created serious suspicion so much that when the liberation struggle started many were sidelined from that episode. However, as shall be seen in the next chapter, such alienation meant nothing since the armed struggle affected virtually everyone irrespective of origin or ancestry.

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<sup>213</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 92.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### WALKING A TIGHTROPE: MALAWIAN ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ZIMBABWEAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE: 1966 TO 1979

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#### Introduction

From the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, Southern Rhodesia was locked in civil war. An armed struggle pitted the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) against the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) guerrilla movements. The war started with the April 1966 Chinhoyi Battle and the 1967-68 Wankie/Sipolilo campaigns, gaining sustained momentum after 1972 and culminating in a negotiated settlement at Lancaster House in 1979. Dubbed a 'bush or terrorist war' by Ian Smith's Rhodesian regime or the Second *Chimurenga/Umvukela* (liberation or revolutionary struggle) by ZANLA and ZIPRA forces, the conflict brought much suffering to the ordinary masses.<sup>1</sup> Thousands of civilians were killed, injured, displaced and livelihoods were significantly altered. While a lot has been written about the war, Zimbabwean historiography has generally been silent on the experiences and contributions of extra-territorial African migrants during this period. Even where existing studies have been a blend of elitist-bottom up approaches that document and detail aspects of the struggle, they have nonetheless failed to account for the experiences of non-indigenous Africans during the war. Kriger, Ranger, Manungo, Lan and many others grappled with the place of peasants, guerrilla insurgency and religion in the war.<sup>2</sup> Ellert, Cilliers, Flower, Cauter, Stiff, Godwin and Hancock analysed the Rhodesian *modus operandi* and counter-insurgency.<sup>3</sup> Lyons and Nhongo-Simbanegavi

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<sup>1</sup> *Chimurenga/Umvukela* are Shona and Ndebele words that roughly mean revolutionary struggle and were allegedly used by the ZANLA and ZIPRA forces to signify the continuation of the anti-colonial nationalist revolution traceable from the failed First *Chimurenga* of the 1890s.

<sup>2</sup> N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, London: James Currey, 1985; D. Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985; K.D. Manungo, 'The Role the Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation, with Special Emphasis on Chiweshe District', DPhil Thesis, Ohio University, 1991; D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, London: Ravan Press, 1981, and P. Moorcroft and P. McLaughlin, *Chimurenga: The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980*, Johannesburg: Sygma Books, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> H. Ellert, *Rhodesian Front War: Counter-insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962-1980*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1989; J. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia*, London: Croom Helm, 1985; D. Cauter, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia*, London: Allen Lane, 1983; K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record*,

illuminated the fallacy of gender equality within ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrilla movements; Frederikse was interested in the connections between the war and the media.<sup>4</sup> Sithole, White, Tekere and Mhanda focused on the nationalist elite, untangling the internal rifts or 'struggles within a struggle' during the *Chimurenga*.<sup>5</sup> Other works looked at youth, as well as at the regional and international dimensions to the struggle, but with little or no recourse to the place of African migrants and their descendants, in this war.<sup>6</sup> Very little is known of their trials and tribulations, as well as the resultant conflict-induced identities they assumed during the crisis. It is this gap that this chapter seeks to redress.

This chapter examines the place and experiences of the Malawian diaspora during the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. It points out that migrants and their descendants had diverse encounters with the war. Using Robin's observation, the chapter argues that just like local peasants, the Malawian diaspora had to be cautious and many entered into complex, contradictory and ambiguous relationships with the warring parties in order to survive a potentially dangerous period.<sup>7</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, labour migrants had been variously proletarianized as farm workers, miners and urban dwellers. These spaces played little role in the armed struggle compared to rural areas which became the main theatre of the war. Miners and farm workers for instance, were subject to stiffer control and

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*Rhodesia into Zimbabwe: 1964-1981*, London: John Murray, 1987; P. Godwin and I. Hancock, *'Rhodesians Never Die': The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia c. 1970-1980*, Harare: Baobab Books, 1995; R. Reid-Daly, *Pamwe Chete: The Legend of the Selous Scouts*, Weltevreden Park: Covos-Books, 1999, and P. Stiff, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War*, Alberton: Galago, 1982.

<sup>4</sup> J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2000; T. Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle*, Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2004, and J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves: Masses Vs Media in the Making of Zimbabwe*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press 1983.

<sup>5</sup> M. Sithole, *Zimbabwe; Struggles within the Struggle*, Harare: Rujeko Publishers, 1999; L. White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003; E. Tekere, *A Lifetime of Struggle*, Harare: Sapes Books, 2006, and W. Mhanda, *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> For a more nuanced historiography of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Chimurenga* see also Phimister, 'The combined and contradictory inheritance of the struggle against colonialism' in C. Stoneman, (ed.) *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa*, London: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 8-27; Phimister, 'Narratives of Progress: Zimbabwean Historiography and the End of History', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 1, 2012, pp. 27-34; Phimister, 'Comrades Compromised: The Zimbabwean and South African Liberation Struggles Compared and Contrasted', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 8, 1, 1995, pp. 79-93; N. Bhebe and Ranger, (eds), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995; Bhebe and Ranger, (eds), *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996, and Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution that Lost its Way?*

<sup>7</sup> S. Robins, 'Heroes, Heretics and Historians of the Zimbabwean Revolution: A Review Article of Norma Kriger's *Peasant Voices, 1992*', *Zambezia*, 23, 1, 1996, p. 74.

monitoring by their white employers. Since most lived people in compounds it was difficult for them to engage with the nationalists out of sight of the white and state authorities. Even though the Rhodesian state had seen Nyasas as harbingers of labour unionism and nationalism prior to the liberation struggle, some became conservative during the *Chimurenga* primarily because the labour movement in which they were dominant was sidelined from the nationalist struggle. Despite this, the conflict generally placed migrant descendants in a dilemma, making them vulnerable and susceptible to abuse and exploitation by the fighting parties. In essence, this technically was not their war; their motherland Malawi was already independent. However, for many, it pitted their white master (the Rhodesian employers) against fellow oppressed black Zimbabwean kinsmen. This saw the Malawian diaspora walking a tightrope with some becoming directly involved while others remained neutral, indifferent and passive towards the fighting. They became 'men in the middle' who had to grapple with the daily risks of the conflict.<sup>8</sup> *Chimurenga* demanded agency to navigate and survive so much that some allegedly turned into sell-outs collaborating with the Rhodesian forces while others actively aligned themselves with the guerrillas with serious repercussions for their livelihoods. Thus, the chapter examines the resultant conflict-induced identities that were constructed or imagined due to such migrants' relationships with the RSF, ZANLA, ZIPRA and local communities.

The chapter is necessarily based on a limited number of oral interviews and contextual inferences. Only a few were willing to talk about the war. As indicated in chapter one (pp. 27-8), the increased political polarization in post-2000 Zimbabwe complicated field work research by making topics such as the liberation war very sensitive and contentious for both the researcher and the researched. Issues such as the liberation war, which were once easy to talk about, have become contentious and fraught, especially for the diaspora whose political identity and belonging have been questioned by the state. There are areas in north-eastern Zimbabwe with significant Malawian diasporic communities, where war was intense, but which were difficult to access due to political volatility. These areas had numerous entry

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<sup>8</sup> This term is adapted in part from the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), *The Man in the Middle: Torture, Resettlement and Eviction*, London: CIIR, 1975. By implication the 'man in the middle' were unarmed ordinary civilians, the masses who had to contend with demands of the Rhodesian authorities, on the one hand, and the guerrillas, on the other. These so-called 'man in the middle' were not as neutral as the term seems to imply since civilians either sided or sympathised with the regime or the guerrillas.



points used by Malawian labour migrants and many white commercial farms that had employed them. Much of the information from such inaccessible areas was inferred from informal interactions with informants familiar with the territories and by engaging secondary literature on the episode.

### **Migrant Malawian Encounters with *Chimurenga***

Malawian descendants experienced war differently as dictated by period and geography. For those who migrated after 1972, their encounters with *Chimurenga* started during their travel through Mozambique into Rhodesia. As the war intensified, Malawian migration to Rhodesia was seriously affected. Fighting made transit camps and old routes running through Mozambique too dangerous. Mozambique offered the shortest and most popular routes, but the war made it a risky terrain to traverse, driving thousands to take alternative but longer routes through Zambia and Botswana.<sup>9</sup> Posta Chitimbe recalls that ‘travelling through Mozambique at the height of the war was risky and we had to resort to the longer Zambian or Botswana route and for those who had money they could afford to fly to and from Malawi.’<sup>10</sup> Such was the case of Wyson Chipiko who still nostalgically keeps old Air Malawi tickets from the occasional return flights he took to Malawi between 1964 and 1990.<sup>11</sup> Langwell Mhone came in August 1975 by train through Zambia and remembered that ‘by the time I came to Rhodesia, war was escalating and the Mozambican route had become more dangerous even for those migrants who were returning home during that period.’<sup>12</sup> Some were brave. After returning from South Africa, Mbwana Batani migrated to Rhodesia in 1975 on foot through Mozambique looking for piece jobs along the way reaching Umtali unscathed, after almost two months.<sup>13</sup>

War experiences and its intensity also varied with geographical setting. With the radical shift of nationalist agitation from urban to rural and cross-border spaces, some areas became theatres of intense warfare. Everyone, including numerous Malawian descendants residing

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<sup>9</sup> Mudeka, ‘We faced Mabvuto’, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>11</sup> Census interview with Wyson Chipiko.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Mbwana Batani.

close to the Mozambican border, especially in Mashonaland East, Central and Manicaland provinces in north-eastern Zimbabwe, were particularly affected by the conflict. These areas were hotbeds of the struggle, the principal war front and a highway for ZANLA fighters who infiltrated from Mozambican training camps. As explained in chapter two, thousands of Malawian labour migrants had used routes through the north-east and many had settled either permanently or temporarily on the provinces' white farms and tea plantations. The provinces boasted good soils and had a high concentration of commercial farms, especially in the Matepatepa farming area between Chiweshe and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). By 1970, thousands of Malawian farm workers lived in the Mt. Darwin, Karanda, Mukumbura, Rushinga, Muzarabani, Mtoko, Mazowe and Shamva districts. The area was characterised by a significant migrant population and it was not surprising to find people with such Malawian surnames as Phiri, Banda and Sakala in these districts.<sup>14</sup> Many more Malawians and their descendants were found on tea estates in Manicaland province. In Honde Valley, the four major estates: Eastern Highlands Plantation Limited (EHPL), Aberfoyle, Rumbizi and Katiyo Tea Estates were sustained by cheap migrant labour.<sup>15</sup> According to Schmidt, 'until villagisation (establishment of protected villages) few local men from Honde Valley worked on the estates and management relied on migrant labour from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.'<sup>16</sup> All of these areas continued to provide major infiltration routes for fighters, even when the RSF made intense effort to implement counter-insurgency measures. ZANLA used some of these farms to cache arms with the help of farm workers. In order to monitor guerrilla activity, the Rhodesian Light Infantry established a large military base camp at Rusambo, known as Kaguve Base camp, in the Chimanda TTLs near Rushinga, about 200km north-east of the capital Salisbury and less than 20km from the border with Mozambique.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Personal communication from Kudakwashe Chitofiri.

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication from Noel Ndumeya, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 18 June 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 167.

<sup>17</sup> A. Binda, *The Saints: The Rhodesian Light Infantry*, Johannesburg: South Publishers, 2007, p. 122.

Fig. 4.1: The War Hotbed: North-Eastern Zimbabwe



As conflict intensified, this caused major internal and external displacement of the civilian population in these areas. People were left with few options: to stay and take sides in the conflict, to join the liberation struggle, or to move towards the centre of the settler state, away from the border, to relative safety.<sup>18</sup> Some Malawians contemplated trekking back home to Malawi. One informant, Chris Chirambo, a former farm worker in Mt. Darwin, said that 'we were caught between two wars and in dilemma...going home was the only viable option left for many Malawian farm workers in the north-east of the country.'<sup>19</sup> Options of returning home through the landmine infested and war-ravaged Mozambican border were, however, limited. Alternatively, the return trip demanded a long journey through Zambia circumventing the treacherous Mozambican border and many could not afford doing so. People like 86-year-old Gerald Msusa decided to go further inland joining relatives in relatively safe areas such as urban centres and mines. He points out that 'war in the Centenary area was extreme and I had to relocate to Kadoma following relatives who had settled on mines there.'<sup>20</sup> Chris Chirambo asserted that as farm workers in Shamva, Centenary, Mazowe

<sup>18</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 137.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Chris Chirambo, Muriel Mine, Banket, 4 June 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Gerald Msusa.

and Mt. Darwin, 'we were always at the mercy of RSF and ZANLA forces who frequently visited our farms haranguing us over the whereabouts of the enemy.'<sup>21</sup>

Some Malawian farm workers together with local peasants fled to refugee camps in north-eastern Zimbabwe. Kudakwashe Chitofiri pointed out that Nyamatikiti near Rushinga was one of the largest refugee camps in the area, which offered sanctuary to displaced victims.<sup>22</sup> Farm workers who could not return to Malawi or who did not have relatives in less exposed Zimbabwean urban and mining towns, found themselves languishing in such camps until the end of the war. One of these was Julius Akibu, a former farm employee in Mt. Darwin, who on witnessing atrocities caused by the war, fled to the Nyamatikiti refugee camp in June 1978. He explained that 'both Rhodesian and ZANLA forces increasingly committed atrocities against civilians on farms and the countryside so much that it became risky to continue residing in our homes and we sought sanctuary in transit camps.'<sup>23</sup> During his stay at Nyamatikiti camp, Julius Akibu's efforts to return home or join kinsmen elsewhere were futile because of the raging war and lack of funds to finance a longer trip through Zambia or Botswana. He only moved out of the camp at the end of *Chimurenga* in 1979 and immediately joined his kinsmen at Riverside Farm near Banket; fearing getting stuck again in the event of another war.<sup>24</sup>

Southern Zimbabwe, particularly the lowveld area, was also a site of intense fighting between the RSF and ZANLA. According to Wolmer, the liberation war was fought particularly bitterly in this corner of Zimbabwe, which came to be known as the 'Repulse operational area'.<sup>25</sup> Guerrillas operated out of transit camps just inside Mozambique and the RSF, including the notorious counter-insurgency Selous Scouts, patrolled the lowveld 'infiltration points', engaging in numerous bloody 'contacts' with each other on both sides of the border.<sup>26</sup> Much of the war was fought in the communal areas of the lowveld with very little incidences on the

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Chris Chirambo.

<sup>22</sup> Personal communication from Kudakwashe Chitofiri

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Julius Akibu, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions: Conservation and Development in Zimbabwe's South East Lowveld*, Oxford: James Currey, 2007, p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

urban zones and sugar estates.<sup>27</sup> The lowveld communal landscape was scattered with sites of violence and atrocities - minefields, ambushes, bombing raids, train derailments, and poisoned water holes.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, Ranger, McGregor and Alexander concluded that 'the lowveld was and remains scarred by memories of this violence.'<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, migrant workers and their families working and residing at white-owned sugar estates Hippo Valley, Triangle and Mkwesine sugar plantations in Chiredzi were affected by the fighting. White employers accused some of conniving with the guerrillas. Saidi Selemani who was a cook for Allan Richard Wosely at Triangle Sugar Estates in the 1970s remembered that:

One day my boss came home fuming because his car had been riddled by bullet holes after surviving a guerrilla ambush in the Ngundu area. He was very irate and went on a rampage accusing us for conspiring with the attackers to kill him. He believed that we wanted him killed because of the low wages he gave us, but that was not the case. We did not know and had never met any guerrillas prior the incident. We had to be very cautious that day.<sup>30</sup>

RSF counter-insurgency also affected civilians. Tactics such as the villagisation programme forced people into Protected Villages (PVs), or what locals popularly referred to as 'keeps'. The PVs concept had a precedent in 1950s Malaya under Lt-Gen. Sir Harold Briggs; in Vietnam's 'strategic hamlets' in 1960s and appeared as Portuguese protected hamlets known as 'Aldeamentos' in Mozambique and Angola.<sup>31</sup> Rhodesians viewed PVs as part of their broader psychological warfare; a strategic African population resettlement meant to win the blacks' hearts and minds.<sup>32</sup> The state believed that PVs would allow a clear distinction between civilian and combatant and undercut guerrilla support structures, separating the fish from the water, as postulated by Mao Tse Tung.<sup>33</sup> PVs allegedly offered safe havens or sanctuary from harassment by terrorists; an extension of civilian protection that the terrorists, in theory, could not touch. In reality, however, they were punishment enclosures or what Nyakudya equated to 'concentration camps' meant to monitor civilian mobility and

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<sup>27</sup> See M. Hove, 'War legacy: A Reflection on the Effects of the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) in South Eastern Zimbabwe during Zimbabwe's War of Liberation 1976-1980', *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 4, 8, 2012, pp. 193-206.

<sup>28</sup> Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 37; Hove, 'War legacy', p. 196.

<sup>29</sup> J. Alexander, J. McGregor and Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland*, Oxford: James Currey, 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Saidi Selemani.

<sup>31</sup> A.K.H. Weinrich, 'Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2, 1977, p. 207; Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 145.

<sup>32</sup> Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia*, p. 137; Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, pp. 145-6.

<sup>33</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 177.

interaction with guerrillas.<sup>34</sup> According to Weinrich, PVs signified the Rhodesian regime's desperation and awareness of the gravity of guerrilla incursions; a realization that came late, by which time the guerrillas had established bases as close as 60 kilometres from the capital.<sup>35</sup> Albert Banda, who once lived in Chiweshe PV, lamented that 'they enclosed us in keeps to protect us but they only wanted to stop us from supporting the freedom fighters who were gaining a lot of ground across the country.'<sup>36</sup> The first PVs were erected in Mukumbura in the Zambezi Valley and in Mt. Darwin district on the plateau in north-east Rhodesia in 1973.<sup>37</sup> More followed in various TTLs such as Chiweshe, Honde Valley, Chironga, Chipinda, Chibwedziva, Dotito. South-eastern Zimbabwe's also had PVs erected among the predominantly Hlengwe-Shangaan peasants scattered across the lowveld (see map on next page). In total about 228 PVs were established during the war with Mashonaland Central having 101, Mashonaland East 57, Manicaland 41, Masvingo Province 22 and Matabeleland South 7.<sup>38</sup> By the end of 1976, almost a quarter of a million Africans in Rhodesia had been displaced into PVs.<sup>39</sup>

While PVs targeted peasants, numerous migrant Malawian families from commercial farms were also coerced into these camps during the war. Masauso William, who once worked on white farms near Chiweshe, reported that 'many farm workers were also forced into PVs by state authorities as punishment for harbouring ZANLA fighters.'<sup>40</sup> Indeed, from July 1974 the entire population of Chiweshe, about 44,000, were driven into twenty-one PVs.<sup>41</sup> Masauso added that as war escalated schools, shops, mills, clinics and beer-halls in Chiweshe were shutdown with the authorities threatening 'us to tell them about the whereabouts of guerrillas or else these facilities would remain closed.'<sup>42</sup> Lowveld peasants driven into PVs

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<sup>34</sup> Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse*, p. 25; M. Nyakudya, 'Protected Villages and the Environment: Effects on Socio-economic Relations in Chiweshe: 1974 to 2002', Masters Dissertation, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> A.K.H. Weinrich, 'Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia', p. 207.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Albert Banda, Epworth, Harare, 25 May 2014.

<sup>37</sup> A.K.H. Weinrich, 'Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia', p. 210.

<sup>38</sup> Rhodesia's Ministry of Internal Affairs (Intaf), *Keeps and Protected Villages*, <http://www.freewebs.com/dudleywall/keepsandpvs.htm>, 2007 [accessed 07 July 2015]; Nyakudya, 'Protected Villages and the Environment'.

<sup>39</sup> A.K.H. Weinrich, 'Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia', p. 207.

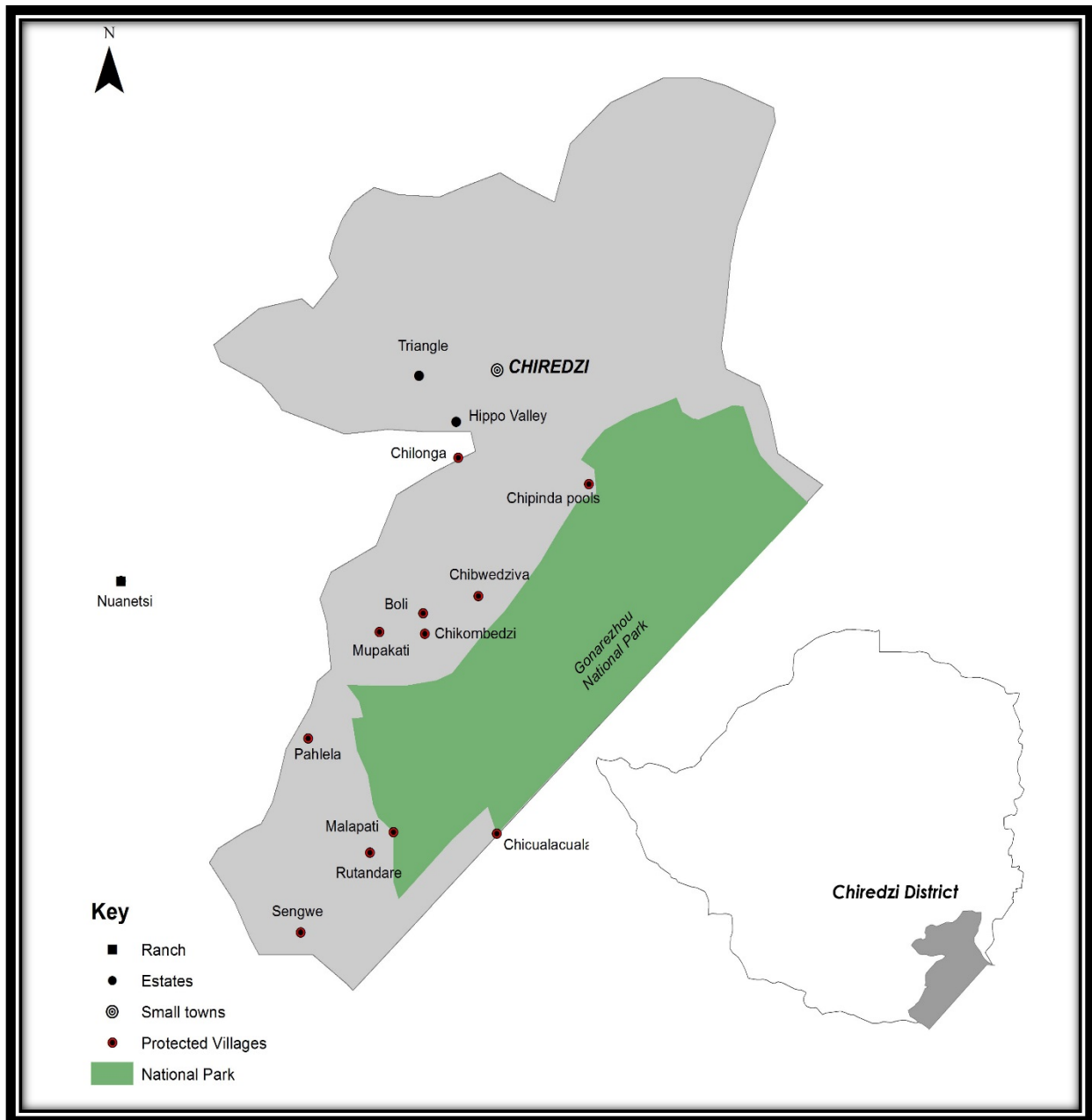
<sup>40</sup> Interview with Masauso William, Stratford Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Nyakudya, 'Protected Villages and the Environment'.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Masauso William.

were 'permitted only 5 bags of grain, clothes and no livestock or farm machinery was allowed into the PVs'.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 4.2: Protected Villages in South-Eastern Zimbabwe<sup>44</sup>**



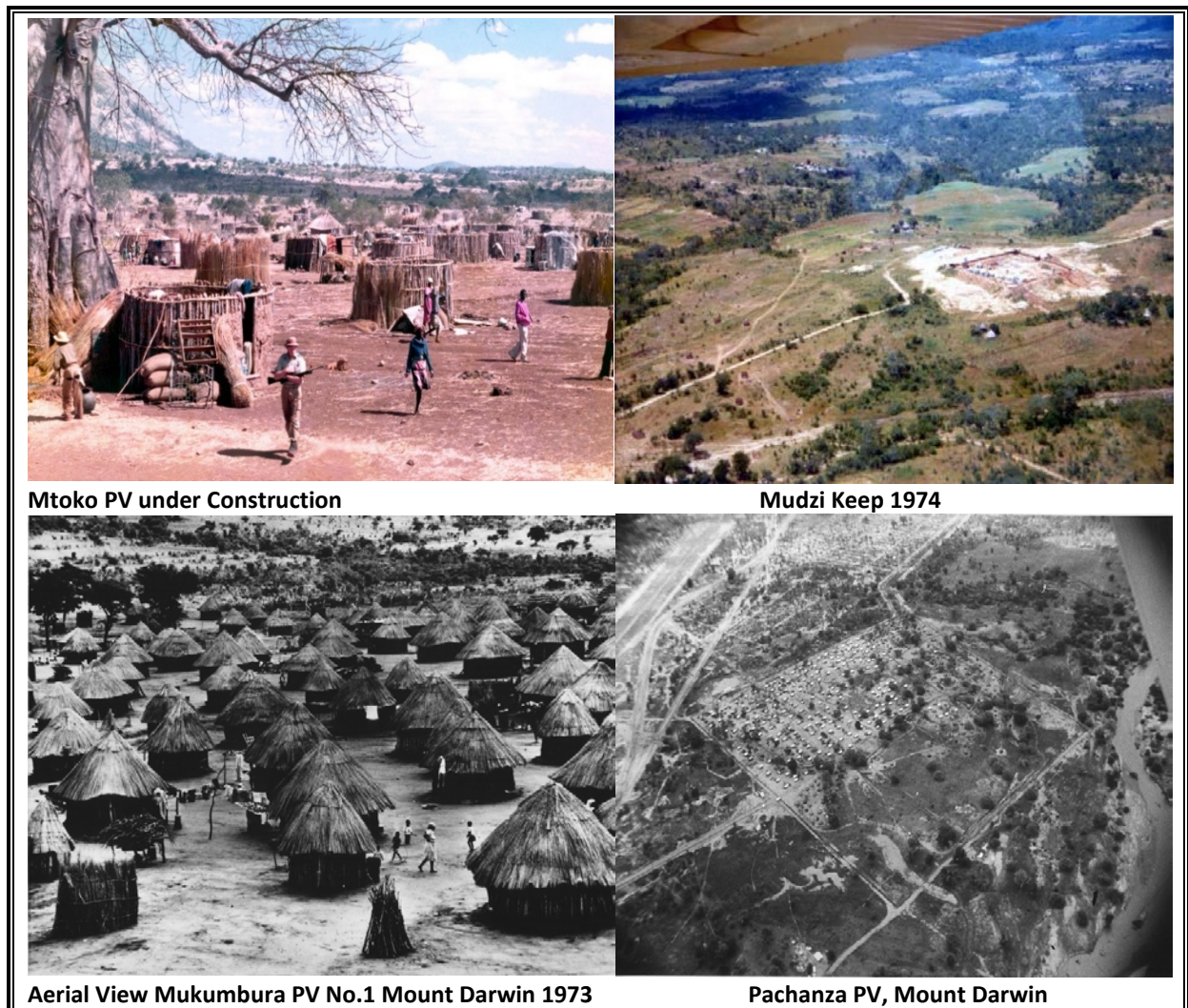
Under a resettlement exercise, code-named Operation Rivet in Honde Valley, about two-thirds of the entire 60,000-valley population was also resettled into 15 PVs established in the area namely: Sagambe, Sachisuko, Zindi, Rumbizi, Pimayi, Katiyo, Mandeya, Ruda, Hauna,

<sup>43</sup> Hove, 'War legacy', p. 198.

<sup>44</sup> Adapted from Hove, 'War legacy', p. 197.

Gatsi, Sahumani, Mpotedzi, Muponda, Samaringa and Moyoweshumba.<sup>45</sup> People's movement into the PVs was a military exercise co-ordinated by RAR Commander Fawcett and the operation lasted from March 1977 to early 1978 leaving an average of 1,500 to 3,000 inhabitants in each PVs.<sup>46</sup> The camps were strategically placed near or around the four major tea estates in Honde Valley for easy access to local labour. The aim was to reduce the estates over-dependence on migrant labour by militarily harnessing indigenous labour supply within the PVs. As a result, about a third of the valley's population fled across the border to Mozambique or moved to urban areas.<sup>47</sup>

### Protected Villages in North-East Zimbabwe<sup>48</sup>



<sup>45</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, pp. 176-7; Personal communication from Noel Ndumeya.

<sup>46</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 181.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182.

<sup>48</sup> Images adapted from Rhodesia's Ministry of Internal Affairs (Intaf), *Keeps and Protected Villages*, <http://www.freewebs.com/dudleywall/keepsandpvs.htm>, 2007 [accessed 07 July 2015].



Life was also difficult for civilians who were not confined to the PVs, especially migrant communities in mine compounds. This was true of diasporic families in Mashonaland Central province working on mines such as Madziwa Nickel, Shamva, Trojan Nickel, Mazowe, Freda Rebecca, Eureka and Jumbo. There were also mines in north-western Zimbabwe or Matebeleland North province, particularly Wankie Colliery, Gwaai River Mine and Kamativi tin mine, where workers frequently interacted with ZIPRA combatants. As noted in chapter three, these mines also employed hundreds of the so-called Nyasa 'ringleaders and trouble makers'.

As in PVs, Rhodesian authorities also instituted food rations and curfews in the mine and farm compounds so as to curb guerrilla-civilian interactions. Food rationing began on 28 January 1977 when the government introduced an amendment to the Emergency Powers Maintenance of Law and Order Regulations No. 8 of 1977 so as to institute control of food supplies in war zones. This order initiated a food control exercise dubbed 'Operation Turkey', initially instituted in Mashonaland Central, particularly in the Matepatepa farming area and subsequently extended to Mashonaland East and West and the rest of the country.<sup>49</sup> Intelligence reports had revealed in 1976 that ZANLA forces were increasingly obtaining food from labour compounds on white commercial farms and mines.<sup>50</sup> According to Cilliers, the operation controlled food delivery, maize growing, sale and supply of food and milling of grain.<sup>51</sup> It directed that security devices be fitted to places where food was stored and made provision for the closure of beerhalls at certain hours.<sup>52</sup> At Jumbo Mine in Mazoe, Faresi Nsingano, pointed out that workers were compelled to buy groceries and store them at the mine offices from which they would get daily rations of mealie-meal and other food necessities to feed their respective families.<sup>53</sup> She explained that:

We were given the rations every Monday and Friday and we always improvised to avoid starvation. We would prepare breakfast at 11am and then cook dinner at 2pm for the evening meal and clean all the utensils or plates prior to the RSF nightly raids in search of dirty plates, which they would use as evidence to implicate us of feeding the guerrillas and selling-out.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia*, p. 158.

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

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

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Families were also issued with ration cards for use in obtaining limited amounts of food from farm or mine stores. Ambuya Bhonasi explained in an interview that 'our employer, John Evans at Stratford Farm usually gave us cards, indicating the amount and type of foodstuffs each family was permitted to buy at our local farm shop and we were not allowed to stock an extra food at home.'<sup>55</sup> Police or any other authorised persons were empowered to confiscate or destroy any food found.

Curfew laws reinforced such monitoring and control of civilian life. The declaration of a curfew was sanctioned under the Emergency Regulation Powers (Law and Order Maintenance Act 1960). Curfews started in January 1974 aimed at TTLs and African Purchase Areas (APAs) in the north-east and was extended in 1975 to the entire length of Zimbabwe's borders.<sup>56</sup> The law created 'no-go areas' along the border and around various settlements. Trespassers were likely to be taken for guerrillas and shot on sight, regardless of the time of day or night. In PVs, curfews were declared in most areas and gates were locked at sundown. Patrols were mounted throughout the village and the gates were unlocked at sunrise. By 1977, movement of all vehicles in Chipinga and Melsetter between sunset and sunrise was prohibited.<sup>57</sup> In January 1978, fliers were sent out to people of Marange and Mukuni APA ordering them to observe a curfew running from 6 p.m. to 12 o'clock the next day (see poster on next page).

In Centenary, Mrewa, Mtoko, Mt Darwin, Mudzi and Rushinga areas, the curfew operated from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m.<sup>58</sup> By the end of 1978, the dusk-to-dawn curfew, which covered large parts of the countryside, was further extended to include urban areas. The Smith regime announced that a 70 km belt of white farmland along the northern and eastern edges of Salisbury's (Harare) outer suburbs, separating the city from the TTLs of Chinhamora, Musana and Chikwaka, were liable to the curfew.<sup>59</sup> At much the same time, curfew was also in force in some African townships of Bulawayo and by 1979, the country was under martial law. Faresi Nsingano recalled that 'curfews were a nightmare for us because we were restricted to

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Ambuya Bhonasi, Stratford Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

<sup>56</sup> CCJP, *The Man in the Middle*, pp. 1-18.

<sup>57</sup> M. Mushonga, 'Curfew and the 'Man in the Middle' in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation with Special Reference to the Eastern Areas of Zimbabwe, 1977-1980' in C. Hendricks and L. Lushaba, (eds), *From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005, p. 173.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

<sup>59</sup> NAZ MS590/10, Rhodesia Security, 1973-1978.

the vicinity of homes with little or no freedom to roam far from home beyond the stipulated times.’<sup>60</sup> Her husband, Henry Banda Matekenya, added that RSF soldiers always harassed civilians searching our homes for guerrillas in villages, farm and mine compounds and curfew breakers were shot on sight.’<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the RSF philosophy seemed to be ‘shoot first and ask questions later’. Gordon Wood, an ex-Grenadier Guardsman and deserter from the Rhodesian Army confessed that:

One soldier called me a murderer for shooting two men who turned out not to have weapons. But they were out during curfew, and you cannot say ‘Excuse me, have you got a grenade or a gun?’ You shoot first and ask questions after if you want to continue living.<sup>62</sup>

### **Curfew Poster Disseminated by District Commissioner, February 1978<sup>63</sup>**

#### **TO THE PEOPLE OF MARANKE TTL AND MUKUNI APA**

For a long time you have continued to feed, shelter and assist the communist terrorists to carry out their evil deeds.

You have disregarded previous government warnings of the bitter times that will fall upon our land if you allow these communist terrorists to carry on deceiving you.

The security forces do not want to allow you to be deceived by these people any longer.

You are now warned that as from dawn on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1978 the following restrictions will be imposed upon all of you and your TTL and Purchase land

1. Human curfew from last light to 12 O'clock daily.
2. Cattle, yoked oxen, goats and sheep curfew from last light to 12 O'clock daily.
3. No vehicles including bicycles and buses to run either the TTL or the APL
4. No person will either go on or near any high ground or they will be shot.
5. All dogs to be tied up 24 hours each day or they will be shot.
6. Cattle, sheep and goats, after 12 O'clock, are only to be herded by adults.
7. No juveniles (to the age of 16 years) will be allowed out of the kraal area at any time/either day or night, or they will be shot.
8. All stores and grinding mills will be closed.

If you can co-operate and assist the security forces in eliminating the communist terrorists will any consideration be given to lifting some or all of the above restrictions. The security forces have already told the communist terrorists that they are free to give themselves up and their life will not be endangered.

You too can assist

The communist terrorists can then return to their ancestral lands and you have peace.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>62</sup> NAZ, MS 590/10, Curfew Breakers Shot, May 1977. See also Mushonga, ‘Curfew and the ‘Man in the Middle’ in Zimbabwe’s War of Liberation’, p. 181.

<sup>63</sup> Adapted from Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 88; Various anti-guerrilla notices, posters, leaflets, pamphlets and press statements were frequently distributed in these TTLs and PVs to discourage support for guerrillas.

Curfews accounted for a number of civilian deaths during the war. However, it is not known how many of these curfew victims were from Malawi. Between March 1975 and February 1976, 12 Africans were officially reported shot dead while breaking curfew and by the end of the conflict curfew casualties had risen to hundreds.<sup>64</sup> As argued by Mushonga, Rhodesian security forces wantonly abused curfew laws by turning them into a kind of licence to kill ordinary and unarmed civilians with impunity and to mete out any kind of punishment they deemed necessary.<sup>65</sup> Curfews did not effectively deal with the guerrilla threat nor protect ordinary people. Instead, the security forces took advantage of the unwritten part of the law and sentenced people to death as they had orders to shoot curfew breakers on sight if they did not respond to an order to stop.<sup>66</sup> Within compounds, these controls were put to maximum use by farm owners and mine officials. Employers used roll calls to check and account for the movement and number of families within the compounds. Esther Tambwari Iliyasa said:

We were given cards with family details and during raids the soldiers would always ask for the cards to account for the people present. Visitors would have to be registered at the office and they were supposed to have solid and satisfactory reasons for visiting.<sup>67</sup>

Figures of migrant Malawian war casualties are difficult to ascertain. However, there are specific documented incidences during the conflict where migrant workers were killed. One of these was the massacre at Aberfoyle tea estate in Honde Valley on 19 December 1976. The atrocity was one of the most deadly attacks against civilians inside the country, which saw guerrillas killing 27 African workers in front of their wives and children for not heeding their warnings against working for the estate. ZANLA guerrillas had been frequenting the labour compounds at Aberfoyle and EHPL since early 1976 encouraging workers to desert employment in defiance of their employers.<sup>68</sup> Hundreds of workers had obeyed the order, with some migrants returning home to Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia or moving to urban centres across Zimbabwe. Fighters, numbering between 20 and 30, entered a compound at

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<sup>64</sup> Mushonga, 'Curfew and the 'Man in the Middle' in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation', p. 176.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

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

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Esther Tambwari Iliyasa.

<sup>68</sup> CCJP, 'The Aberfoyle Massacre: Events Preceding the Massacre', in CCJP, *Civil War in Rhodesia: Abduction, Torture and Death in the Counter-Insurgency Campaign*, London: CCJP, 1976.

8.38 p.m. and rounded up 40 male workers with their wives and children.<sup>69</sup> They stripped them of all their personal possessions, including clothing and radios, and marched them for more than a kilometre through two other labour compounds to the Nyawamba Bridge, where two men jumped into the river and escaped.<sup>70</sup> The remaining captives were taken to the Wamba factory building on the major estate road. There the guerrillas herded the 35 women and children into a separate group and ordered them to put their heads between their knees. The 38 men were forced to lie on the ground. For three or four minutes, the terrorists fired at the helpless men leaving ten Zimbabweans, nine Mozambican and eight Malawian nationals dead.<sup>71</sup> Eleven other men were injured, some of them Zambians.<sup>72</sup> A widow of one of the Malawian victims, a father of five children, narrated that:

The guerrillas had been here before telling us not to work for the white man. When they came last night, they told us we had disobeyed their instructions. They told us they were taking us away. They told us our salaries were so low we would be better off dead, so they were going to shoot us.<sup>73</sup>

The massacre triggered a national and international outcry, but guerrilla forces attempted to deny responsibility. ZANLA claimed that the Selous Scouts, a notorious elite unit of the RSF that used pseudo-guerrilla tactics, were responsible.<sup>74</sup> Mugabe's comments on the Aberfoyle massacre combined such accusations with sentimental protestations of innocence. In an interview with the BBC on February 8, 1977, he stated that:

We are not capable of such inhumanity. After all, we are fighting a progressive war, which is aimed at mobilising all the democratic forces capable of lending support to the Revolution. It is a tragedy to be looked at against the background of the whole situation and the people of the Smith regime who are causing the continuation of the war. Selous Scouts do this sort of thing to make the guerrilla movement unpopular.<sup>75</sup> ZANLA and ZIPRA forces were further blamed for other atrocities on civilians such as the 1978 Elim Mission attack in Vumba, the 1978 and 1979 shooting down of Air Rhodesia Viscount passenger planes. In the aftermath of the Aberfoyle massacre, the plantation was shut down

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<sup>69</sup> See variously C. Reynolds, 'Terrorists Massacre Workers: Wives, Children Watch 27 Die', *Rhodesia Herald*, 20 December 1976; 'Terrorists Massacre Workers: Mozambican Nationals among the Victims', *Rhodesia Herald*, 21 December 1976, and Cate, *Under the Skin*, pp. 78-9.

<sup>70</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 168.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, and Reynolds, 'Terrorists Massacre Workers: Wives, Children Watch 27 Die', *Rhodesia Herald*, 20 December 1976.

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

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

<sup>74</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 168.

<sup>75</sup> C. Vermaak, 'Rhodesia's Selous Scouts', 1977, <http://www.rhodesia.nl/sscouts.htm> [accessed 18 June 2015].

for a month. Most migrants workers also refused to return and attempts were made to recruit a new labour force.<sup>76</sup>

For civilians in urban areas, farms and mines in inland/central Zimbabwe *Chimurenga* did not impact greatly, if at all, on their lives. According to Groves, Malawian migrants in Salisbury, along with other urban dwellers, were marginalised from the Zimbabwean nationalist struggle after 1965.<sup>77</sup> However, this does not entail a disconnection between the era of labour consciousness and nationalism, and total absence of war experiences. Juma Jula, who worked at Dalny Mine in Chakari recalled that, 'we were always hearing that *nkondo* (war) was being fought across the country but the only time it came close to us was in 1977 when ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas engaged in a skirmish at the D-section housing compound.'<sup>78</sup> War around Chakari was intermittent because of the nearby presence of an RSF military barrack: the Chakari Air Defence Regiment commonly known as Suri-Suri. Fighting was also less-common on commercial farms near Banket, Trelawney and Darwendale in Mashonaland West province because of the proximity of RSF military barracks. Two main barracks at Inkomo and Darwendale housed an armoured brigade, a parachute regiment and the Selous Scouts.<sup>79</sup> However, fierce clashes were common in the adjacent Zvimba and Chirau communal areas, across the Hunyani River. At Riverside farm just across the river, Tenje Majikuta recalled that 'we regularly heard guns blazing in Zvimba; even though the fighting never came close, we would habitually gather our children and rush into nearby bushes to hide.'<sup>80</sup> Ntonga Zvapiya echoed this saying '*pfuti taingoidzinzwira mhiri kunaGaroi, vanhu vachitiza kuuuya kuno kumapurazi*' (we always heard guns cracking across the river in Garoi with peasants frequently fleeing for sanctuary to us on commercial farms).<sup>81</sup>

Most urban areas experienced the *Chimurenga* late towards the end of the war. As the collapse of Rhodesia became more conspicuous and inevitable in 1978-79, guerrillas began to

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<sup>76</sup> An advertisement was posted in the *Sunday Mail*, 'Tea Pickers Aberfoyle Plantation', 23 January 1977. See also Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 203.

<sup>77</sup> Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury', p. 234.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Juma Jula.

<sup>79</sup> For further details on the operations of the Selous Scouts see variously Reid-Daly, *Pamwe Chete: The Legend of the Selous Scouts*; Stiff, *Selous Scouts*, and J. Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer*, Alberton: Galago, 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Tenje Majikuta, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Ntonga Zvapiya.

infiltrate urban settings such as Rugare and Mbare in Harare. Reuben Samalani remembered that 'we had only heard about the war on radio and newspapers as it was fought in the countryside and it finally came close to us with the daring attack of the BP Shell fuel depot in Salisbury's Southerton industrial area on 11 December 1978 by a ZANLA sabotage unit.'<sup>82</sup> These oil storage tanks comprised Rhodesia's largest fuel depot, and the sabotage heralded the belated coming of the war to the colonial capital, bringing the liberation struggle to the doorstep of the Rhodesian government. The bombing occurred at 9pm and was carried out by eight ZANLA guerrillas namely Mushangwe, Member, Mukumbizi, States America Mudzvanyiriri, Brian, Norest, Poison and Damage Bombs.<sup>83</sup> One of the witnesses, 73-year-old Cecilia Joram remembered that 'we heard explosions, saw the billowing smoke and watched the fuel tanks burn sending huge flames into the night.'<sup>84</sup> 'The flames were so large they could be seen as far as 50 kilometres,' she added.<sup>85</sup> Rueben Samalani said 'I was indoors at the time drinking a few beers as it was weekend when I heard a loud explosion...I think I sobered up as the flames lit the sky and people were running in all directions fearing that the fire would spread to their houses.'<sup>86</sup> Another witness, Dominic Phiri, commented that:

We knew something was amiss because the whole day there was increased security presence and police asking to see IDs...we did not know what was coming but there was tension in the air and as the tanks exploded I thought it was the Olivine factory that had caught fire before later finding out that Shell fuel tanks had been bombed. The war that was being fought in the bush had finally come to town and we were not as safe as we had thought.<sup>87</sup>

The Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith visited the premises to see the damage.<sup>88</sup> The fire was massive, it lasted for a week, and it took helicopters, some coming from South Africa to put out the flames using water and sand. It drained millions of gallons of fuel from Rhodesia's already scarce resources and further strained the country's depleted foreign currency reserves. The attack together with the shooting down of Rhodesian civilian aircraft in 1978 and 1979 by ZIPRA guerrillas 'proved that white civilians spaces which had always been

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with Rueben Samalani. See also G. Burns, 'Rhodesia: Millions of gallons of Fuel Destroyed as Guerrilla Blast Country's Largest Fuel Depot', BBC/Reuters, 12 December, 1978.

<sup>83</sup> 'Bombing their way to freedom', *Herald*, 02 April 2015.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Rueben Samalani.

<sup>87</sup> 'Bombing their way to freedom', *Herald*, 02 April 2015.

<sup>88</sup> Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 145.

considered inviolate were actually within reach of the guerrilla forces and this marked the beginning of the end of white Rhodesia.<sup>89</sup>

### **Collaborators and Sell-outs: Malawian Diaspora and *Chimurenga*-induced Identities**

War situations produce various conflict-induced identities some of which are determined by political affiliation, belonging and relationship with the warring parties. Migrant communities have often enough borne the brunt and been treated with suspicion in times of turmoil. They are usually caught in the middle, with the different factions perceiving such communities as selling-out or collaborating with the enemy. The Rhodesian authorities and the RSF often accused descendants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia of collaborating with the 'terrorists'. On the other hand, nationalists and guerrillas frequently perceived migrants as sell-outs by virtue of their association with settler enterprises. Ironically, Malawian diasporic communities, who prior to the war were seen by the Rhodesian regime as 'ringleaders and troublemakers' suddenly turned into friends of the state against guerrillas. From being nuisances to the colonial regime, Nyasas abruptly became state collaborators or traitors who allegedly sold-out the nationalist struggle between 1966 and 1979. Such labels were socially constructed identities that were both real and imagined. The fact that diasporic communities were closely linked with settler power and capital or were black Africans, who sympathised with the nationalist cause, did not imply that they were sell-outs or collaborators. These were people who were caught between two fighting forces, in a foreign space, and had to tread a tightrope navigating volatile situations and relations in order to survive.

The term sell-out, or *mutenges* (singular) or *vatenges* (plural) in Shona dialects, is ambiguous. Marowa states that defining a sell-out is rather cumbersome because it has everything to do with the ideology of the definer and above all, it is simply a matter of 'othering' others.<sup>90</sup> A sell-out tag was not one of self-realisation but a categorisation bestowed upon an individual by others. In essence, a sell-out is that person who betrays a cause, another person or a group

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<sup>89</sup> J. Mtisi, M. Nyakudya and T. Barnes, 'War in Rhodesia: 1965-1980', in Raftopoulos and Mlambo, (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 164.

<sup>90</sup> I. Marowa, 'Construction of the Sell-out Identity during Zimbabwe's War of liberation: A Case Study of the Dandawa Community of Hurungwe District, c.1975-1980', *Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asian Dialogue*, 10, 1, 2009. pp. 121-31.



who trusted them, for personal advancement, gains or safety. Scarnecchia and Alexander chronicled how the term was adopted by the Zimbabwean nationalist movement, particularly ZANU (PF), to describe people perceived as betraying the nationalist struggle and guerrillas fighters to the RSF.<sup>91</sup> Selling-out thus involved disclosing plans, strategies or ideas not necessarily to the enemy but to an opposite camp. According to Schmidt, sell-outs were also called 'bad-people' or traitors because they were seen as dangerous to their neighbours and to the struggle and were thus in danger of being punished by the fighters.<sup>92</sup> The RSF commonly used the term collaborator to refer to Africans who cooperated traitorously with the guerrillas. Such Africans were deemed unpatriotic and ungrateful to the civilising Rhodesian cause.

The association of Malawian descendants with the sell-out and collaborator labels can be accounted for in numerous ways. Diasporic communities became prime sell-out suspects to guerrilla fighters due to their long and tense historical relationship with the Zimbabwean trade union and nationalist elite. As noted in the previous chapter, the dominance of Nyasas in the early labour and nationalist consciousness in Rhodesia had unintended consequences for their relations with local trade unionists and nationalists. While white Rhodesians regarded Nyasas as ringleaders and troublemakers, the local African elite resented this dominance. Raftopoulos indicated that local African elite disliked continued Nyasa hegemony which over time created tensions and animosity towards the migrants.<sup>93</sup> Indigenous trade unionists, such as Charles Mzingeli, had caricatured Nyasas as 'children playing with mud', while others such as Samkange and Nkomo voiced their concerns over the impact of incessant Nyasa labour inflow on African wages and employment.<sup>94</sup> Migrant workers dominated urban politics until at least the mid-1950s following the increased influx of indigenous Africans and subsequent rise of the intelligentsia or intellectual elite who forged linkages between rural struggles and urban politics.<sup>95</sup> As a result, when war came, nationalists and guerrillas had

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<sup>91</sup> Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, pp. 94-133, and Alexander, 'Zimbabwe since 1997: Land and the Legacies of War', in A. Mustapha and L. Whitfield, (eds), *Turning Points in African Democracy*, New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2009, p. 187.

<sup>92</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 161.

<sup>93</sup> Personal Communication from Brian Raftopoulos, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 11 November, 2013.

<sup>94</sup> Phimister and Raftopoulos, 'Kana Sora Ratswa Ngaritswe', p. 295, and Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 340.

<sup>95</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 92.

become highly suspicious of migrant subjects, Malawians in particular, and many were thus sidelined or marginalised from the liberation struggle.

Hastings Kamuzu Banda's foreign policy in Southern Africa also aggravated feelings that Malawian diasporic communities were sell-outs. Kamuzu isolated independent Malawi by dragging the country to fraternise more with the detested Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia, apartheid South Africa, and the Portuguese in Mozambique.<sup>96</sup> His double standards promoted white supremacy at the expense of ideals of pan-Africanism and liberation of the Southern African region. Unlike Kaunda in Zambia, Kamuzu's Malawi literally turned its back against the liberation movements in Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. He even shunned the Organization of African Union (OAU) meetings but almost every year patronised Commonwealth meetings convened by Britain. Kamuzu's antithetical actions epitomised the sell-out identity condemned by ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. As a result Malawi and by association its citizens and diaspora became pariah in the eyes of Zimbabwean nationalists and guerrillas who were fighting white-rule in Rhodesia.

This animosity became more conspicuous after the 1972 Pearce Commission when some Malawians supported its terms. The 1972 Pearce Commission had been set up to measure the acceptability of the 1971 Anglo-Rhodesian Agreement, which buttressed the continuation of white rule with gradual concessions to the concept of majority rule.<sup>97</sup> As explained by Boeder, Malawians believed that 'if majority rule comes to Rhodesia many of them would be forced to leave the country and for this reason some in 1972 supported the Pearce Commission settlement terms.'<sup>98</sup> Gerald Chiocha, a former fundraiser for NAC in Chakari stated that 'due to repatriation anxieties a number of us migrants from the north voted in favour of the Pearce Commission and this further antagonised our relationship with the nationalists and locals who accused us of selling-out.'<sup>99</sup> Posta Chitimbe noted that 'Malawian

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<sup>96</sup> J.L. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi: A Study in Promise, Power, and Paralysis*, Glasgow: Dudu Nsomba Publications, 1993, and Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', pp. 236-7.

<sup>97</sup> Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes, 'War in Rhodesia: 1965-1980', p. 141.

<sup>98</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', p. 243.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Gerald Chiocha.

migrants who supported the commission were trying to secure their stay in the country bearing in mind that insecurities over their residence had increased after 1965.<sup>100</sup>

As stated in chapter three, non-indigenous Africans were concerned about their security of tenure under UDI and its intended population control policies. Smith papers and Brownell reveal that in a bid to slow African growth rate and lower indigenous African unemployment, Smith threatened to deport African foreign labour.<sup>101</sup> As indicated previously, such intention was shown through the 1966 Closed Labour Areas Order, and the 1967 Rhodesian government's 'administrative action' against alien African officials with less than ten years of service.<sup>102</sup> All Malawians in Rhodesia were also required to be in possession of Malawian passports. This was followed by the amendment of the Africans Registration and Identification Act in 1972 making it possible for the administration to refuse to register or re-register any foreign African.<sup>103</sup> No reasons were to be given for the refusal and the alien had no recourse but to pack up and go home.<sup>104</sup> Although the Pearce Commission was rejected, Malawians' support exacerbated an already tumultuous relationship with the nationalist elite and guerrillas.

This uneasiness was also informed by previously mentioned xenophobic incidences encountered by Nyasas in Rhodesia in the 1950s and 1960s. Such attacks even continued during the war. As early as 1972, indigenous farm workers took advantage of one of the first guerrilla attacks on white commercial farms to reveal their dislike of diasporic communities. On 23 December 1972, ZANLA insurgents shelled Whistlefield Farm in Mt. Darwin with mortar fire. According to Raeburn, local farm workers used the opportunity to torch six huts and a mosque of their Malawian and Mozambican counterparts in the farm compound.<sup>105</sup> Whilst working at Chikore farm in Mashonaland West province, Rafael Wilson recalled that 'we were forced to cut wood on allegation that we want to take over the country.'<sup>106</sup> The increased

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>101</sup> RUCL, Smith papers (Unprocessed), Cabinet Memorandum: Control of African Foreign Labour in Rhodesia, 20 October 1972. See also Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia*, p. 33.

<sup>102</sup> Boeder, 'Malawians Abroad', pp. 238-9.

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

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

<sup>105</sup> See M. Raeburn, *Black Fire: Accounts of the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Mambo Press, 1986, p. 166.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson.

xenophobic violence saw Malawian descendants changing or assuming alternative identities during the war. Many assumed the Mozambican identity since Mozambican migrants were less affected. Posta Chitimbe explained that 'many of us changed our IDs becoming Mozambicans taking advantage of the amicable relationship that Zimbabweans had with Samora Machel who was helping them with the war.'<sup>107</sup>

Suspicion was also fuelled by the alleged association of non-indigenous Africans with whites on the mines, farms and in urban industries and their perceived lack of support or sympathy to *Chimurenga*. Government workers, chiefs, headmen and village heads, all of whom were government paid employees receiving allowances, as well as migrant workers and anyone who defied guerrilla instructions were labelled as sell-outs. Kriger argues that in a colonial society where the state is very important as an employer of the Africans and as a provider of services and infrastructure but becomes an enemy, those Africans associated with the state become symbols of state collaboration.<sup>108</sup> Such delineation and structure of the colonial economy created a seemingly unlimited potential for sell-outs. Speaking of this complex association between migrant descendants and white settlers, informant James Asidi from Stratford farm pointed out that 'it was a curse, a tragedy on our part because guerrillas were very suspicious of us and often victimized us.'<sup>109</sup> Henry Banda Matekenya noted that 'because we were working for the *mzungu* (white man), many locals and guerrillas treated us with suspicion and frequently accused us of selling-out the struggle to our employers and the Rhodesian forces.'<sup>110</sup> Whilst living with her husband on the commercial farms of Karoi, Ntonga Zvapiya remembered that ZIPRA cadres who were operating in the Hurungwe area occasionally sniffed out alleged sell-outs among migrant farm workers leading to injuries and sometimes deaths.<sup>111</sup> The situation was even more fraught in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland East and Central provinces, where ZANLA forces were notorious for being strict with Rhodesian collaborators. In her reminiscence of the sell-out issue in the farming areas of Mt. Darwin, Esther Tambwari Iliyasa recalled that Malawian farm workers were often accused of conspiring with their white employers against guerrillas with serious consequences for the

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>108</sup> Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, p. 153.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Ntonga Zvapiya.

accused workers.<sup>112</sup> By virtue of association, migrant workers were seen as proxies of the Rhodesian war effort.

As the war intensified in the late 1970s, migrant workers in position of authority and close to their white employers such as foremen, 'boss boys', gardeners and maids, faced counter-accusations from both guerrillas and Rhodesian authorities. They could not appease all parties and were often accused of being double agents. Many were sympathetic to both parties, that is, to white Rhodesians as their employer and to the guerrillas as fellow brothers who were trying to liberate them from colonial bondage. The late Rueben N'ona Mbewe was once attacked by his white employer, nicknamed Kambanje, and his two RSF cousins at Pio Farm, near Banket, for sympathising with freedom fighters. Rueben's daughter Aides narrated that:

Father, who was a tobacco foreman, was attacked one night whilst at work curing tobacco at the barns in July 1979 by Kambanje and his cousins. He had been overheard by fellow colleagues at the farm beer hall praising the gains that the 'comrades' had made and the inevitable/imminent defeat of Smith. He was in one of the barns when the three men came and started to question him about his loyalties before attacking him. However, father had *mangoromera* (a fighting charm) given to him by his father in Malawi and after a gruesome battle he managed to defeat his three. He came home with bloodied and torn clothes. Fearing for our lives, we fled the farm that night and found sanctuary with relatives on another distant farm.<sup>113</sup>

Rhodesian farmers were primary targets for guerrilla fighters.<sup>114</sup> Farm workers, many of whom were of migrant descent, often bore the brunt of guerrilla attacks during the war on farms. For instance, ZIPRA attacked various state institutions, council beerhalls, offices, as well as white farmers to whom the regime gave financial inducement to use their farms to establish area defence systems.<sup>115</sup> Sibanda emphasizes that for guerrillas, white farmers and their properties were legitimate targets.<sup>116</sup> Guerrillas often targeted shops or stores as sources of food, cigarettes and clothes. Malunda Mbweswo, who worked as a shopkeeper on various farms around Kadoma, narrated his ordeal with guerrillas:

I was working at Kapundu Farm near Chakari in 1977 and one night the comrades came to my house, which was behind the shop and ordered me to open the shop at gunpoint

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Esther Tambwari Iliyasa.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Aides Mbewe.

<sup>114</sup> Godwin and Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die*, p. 86.

<sup>115</sup> E. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-1987: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005, p. 170.

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

accusing me of being a sell-out working for a white man. They were six of them. I obliged and opened up and they took away many goods, food and disappeared into the night.<sup>117</sup>

Some of these encounters were fatal for Malawian workers. Faresi Nsingano described what she witnessed whilst residing at Jumbo Mine in the Mazoe area. She remembered that 'one day in August 1978, guerrillas came to the mine compound and attacked the local bar patronised by Rhodesian soldiers and white mine employees, including the mine manager Peter Hover, who was very cruel to Africans. A battle ensued with guerrillas throwing grenades into the bar complex leading to the death of seven people, including the mine manager and a Malawian bartender.'<sup>118</sup>

Diasporic rural entrepreneurs also became targets because their exposed economic position made them vulnerable to accusations of collaboration. Yet at the same time, they were potential suppliers of guerrilla needs for food and clothing. In 1977, at a business centre in Mutasa North TTL, a group of guerrillas threatened to kill one of the local businessmen, a migrant labourer from Malawi who had worked from the 1950s and established a store in Honde Valley.<sup>119</sup> He was accused by the guerrillas of being a *mutenges* (sell-out) because of his alleged contacts with Europeans. He was almost killed for owning a fuel filling station and a store, which were believed to be part of the Europeans' property.<sup>120</sup> Guerrillas looted and destroyed the store. Out of fear, he left the area in 1978 and lived in Mutare for the rest of the war.

The sell-out identity was further applied to those Malawian descendants who enlisted in the Rhodesian security forces. One of the myths about the Rhodesian bush war was that it was a white man's war. Ideologically it was, but the RSF enlisted thousands of Africans to fight as Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) soldiers against ZANLA and ZIPRA combatants.<sup>121</sup> Writing in his memoirs in 1978, RSF soldier, Nick Downie pointed out that:

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<sup>117</sup> Interview with Malunda Mbweswo.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Esther Tambwari Iliyasa.

<sup>119</sup> Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. 161.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> For a detailed ethnic composition of the RSF see Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia; Astrow, Zimbabwe: A revolution that lost its way?*; Ellert, *Rhodesian Front War*, and T. Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1923-80*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011.

In fact, 80% of the police and regular army is composed of black volunteers; of the 25,000 men on the ground at any one time, about half are Africans, excluding about 10,000 African auxiliary forces or voluntary trainees who owe their allegiance to one or other of the internal black leaders and are deployed in TTLs.<sup>122</sup>

Of the 35,000 Africans actively engaged in military operations inside Rhodesia, two thirds were fighting for and were loyal to the Rhodesian government. The RSF demography was typical of white forces in the region. In her discussion of the Boer commando system during the South African War, Swart noted that:

The commando system was conceived as a white force, but in reality, from earliest times people of other races could be commandeered into the war. The commandos were racially mixed, partly because of sheer lack of white numbers and partly because of white reluctance to respond to call ups...<sup>123</sup>

The majority of the African soldiers hailed from southern Zimbabwe, especially from Masvingo-Gutu region.<sup>124</sup> Stapleton connects this trend not only to a lack of historic African resistance to colonialism in the area but also to the fact that 'as one of the least productive agricultural zones of the country, Gutu held few opportunities for young men other than enlisting in the colonial police or army.'<sup>125</sup> Many locals were usually reluctant to join the RSF. For instance, in late 1978 the Smith regime failed in its attempt to enforce black conscription and its subsequent black national service in early 1979 only enrolled 300 out of over 1,500 blacks called up to fight.<sup>126</sup> This attempt at conscripting African Rhodesians was largely confined to university students and not surprisingly, a few turned up.<sup>127</sup> For many locals, call-ups were contradictory to their beliefs as an oppressed population and such demands were an impetus to cross the border into Mozambique. Others refused to register or simply never reported for duty. This conscription apathy was not only limited to Africans. The Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism had reported in 1975 that despite the institution of a compulsory national service for young white Rhodesians, many were fleeing Rhodesia at a

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<sup>122</sup> N. Downie, 'Rhodesia: A Study in Military Incompetence', *Defence*, 10/5, 1979, pp. 342-5.

<sup>123</sup> S.S. Swart, "'You were Men in War time': The Manipulation of Gender Identity in War and Peace', *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 28, 2, 1988, p. 188.

<sup>124</sup> Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe*, pp. 40-3.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>126</sup> Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 235.

<sup>127</sup> Mlambo, 'Student Protest and State Reaction in Colonial Rhodesia: The 1973 *Chimukwembe* Student Demonstration at the University of Rhodesia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 3, 1995, pp. 473-490; C. M. Chidemo, 'Student Activism at the University of Rhodesia 1974-1973: A Study of the University Students as Agents of African Nationalism', B.A. Honours Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 1985, and J.L. Cefkin, 'Rhodesian University Students in National Politics', in W.J. Hanna and J.L. Hanna, (eds), *University Students and African Politics*, New York: Africana, 1975, pp. 141-58.

rate of about 700 per month.<sup>128</sup> Various attempts were made to intercept at the country's borders anybody aged between 18 and 25 without sufficient approval to leave or an exemption letter from national service.<sup>129</sup> African servicemen in the RSF were initially accorded little responsibility or trust by their white officers. They were not equals and 'it was matter of white control and direction, with black muscle back-up.'<sup>130</sup> However, such disparities gradually disappeared with the intensification of the war in the late 1970s, with more African soldiers assuming important roles and ranks within the RSF.

### Black Soldiers in the Rhodesian Army<sup>131</sup>



Migrants, who in the words of Edward Inga, a Malawian migrant and former RSF soldier, 'were predominantly Malawians and the Tsenga from Zambia, a few Mozambicans and some indigenous Zimbabweans', also enlisted into the RSF.<sup>132</sup> Migrant Malawian association with the Rhodesian security sector is backdated to the BSAP era, when for instance, in 1938 at least 150 'alien natives', mainly Angonis from Nyasaland, made up the police force.<sup>133</sup> After the demobilisation of the *Askaris* at the end of the Second World War, migrants from Nyasaland,

<sup>128</sup> RUCL, Smith papers (Unprocessed), Cabinet Memorandum: Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism, J.J.L. Decock, Departure from Rhodesia (Control Act) Amendment, 1 August 1975.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 233.

<sup>131</sup> Images adapted from The Rhodesians Worldwide Facebook page, 19 May 2015.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Edward Inga.

<sup>133</sup> Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 22.



Northern Rhodesia and PEA constituted about 60-70% of the Rhodesian police and army in the 1940s, dropping to about 25% by the 1960s.<sup>134</sup> It was common for colonial police and army forces in Africa to enlist migrant African men, as it was believed that lack of kinship and cultural ties would make them more willing to enforce colonial laws and payment of tax.<sup>135</sup> Labour migrants joined because they were proletariats often already engaged in the colonial economy. When the 'bush war' came in the 1970s, Malawian and other migrant descendants easily continued with tradition and enlisted in the RSF. Due to the lack of RSF records, actual figures of Malawians in the RSF are however, difficult to ascertain and obtain.

The Malawian diaspora in the RSF fought for varying reasons. However, due to the sensitivity of their role in the war, many of these have not always been willing to share their war experiences. Edward Inga enrolled as a soldier for the RSF in 1974 after migrating to Rhodesia from Mangochi, Malawi in 1960 as a youngster and worked as a farm cook for years. He trained at Bindura and was initially deployed to the Mhangura area. He then operated in the Kariba and Bumi areas for the whole of 1978 before going back to Mhangura until the end of the war.<sup>136</sup> Like most of his migrant colleagues, he justified his choice and role in the war as a deed done in pursuit of economic survival:

I went to join the Rhodesian forces to get more money since during the war... the army was paying much more...I am not ashamed of the choice because I came to Zimbabwe to look for money and the army at that moment provided what I was looking for. We were given many incentives including food rations to feed our families that would last for a month. Even though the task was dangerous, the Rhodesian army experience made life easier for many of us aliens including indigenous African soldiers in the force.<sup>137</sup>

Indeed, the main incentive for enlistment into RAR was the reasonable pay and the benefits: free accommodation, education, medical treatment and other benefits for the soldier and his family.<sup>138</sup> Having migrated to Rhodesia in 1957 and working as a shopkeeper in Shamva, then as a messenger in Mvurwi and miner in Mtorashanga and Penhalonga mines, Square Kazembe was attracted by the RSF incentives, enlisting in 1975 until end of war. 'We were looking for money and survival; the RSF paid better than the mines; so I went to Chinhoyi in June 1975

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Edward Inga.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*.

and joined the army; I was given a house in Chinhoyi as pension after demobilisation', he said.<sup>139</sup> So, for Edward, Square and many other Malawians, enrolling into the RSF was informed by financial necessity, which was the principal agenda that had set most of these migrants in motion and compelled them to leave the comforts of their homes in Malawi. Such material incentives led nationalists and guerrilla forces to label and accuse black RSF soldiers as 'mercenaries'.<sup>140</sup>

While material reasons were consistently important, they were hardly ever the only factor. According to Stapleton, for young people, the distinctive appearance of uniformed African police and soldiers seemed to hold out the promise of a bright future, full of excitement, prestige, adventure, and purpose.<sup>141</sup> Family traditions of service, associations of masculinity and patriotic ideals of wartime encouraged many to volunteer.<sup>142</sup> Others joined out of fear of black rule. As was the case with the 'yes' vote during the Pearce Commission, people like Mkango (pseudonym), served in the RAR platoon because 'our stay and safety as migrants was not guaranteed under black rule considering the uncordial relationship many of us had with the nationalists.'<sup>143</sup> Mkango enlisted in 1977 and operated in the Guruve and Raffingora area, in Mashonaland West province until ceasefire. Another RSF ex-serviceman Bottoman (pseudonym) was worried about 'what a black government would do to their existence as foreigners considering all the investments (houses and families) we had made as *'machona'* (lost ones) in Zimbabwe.'<sup>144</sup> Mponda (pseudonym) who enlisted in 1978 believed that 'the black government would take over the farms, mines and industries and we would lose our jobs and livelihoods.'<sup>145</sup> It was for the same reason that Tembo (pseudonym) served as a D-Troop Sergeant in the BSAP Support Unit during the war.<sup>146</sup>

In the end, the nationalists and guerrillas viewed these black Rhodesian security personnel as rogue elements, traitors or mercenaries. This fuelled animosity towards diasporic

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<sup>139</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe.

<sup>140</sup> Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 31.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, p. 44.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Mkango, Chimwara Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Bottoman, New Grade Farm, Trelawney, 17 October 2013.

<sup>145</sup> Interview with Mponda, Epworth, Harare, 25 May 2014.

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Tembo, Zororo Section, Triangle, 14 April 2014.

communities and buttressed the sell-out identity. ZANU in particular sent out leaflets appealing to all 'her prodigal sons, the stray brothers or enemy puppet troops who were serving the white minority regime and were victims of malicious state propaganda to join the People's war.'<sup>147</sup> *Chimurenga* songs warned those serving in the army, police and other state functionaries 'to watch out because they were enemy collaborator, sell-outs, traitors or mercenaries.'<sup>148</sup> Mkango pointed out that 'I was proud to serve in the RSF but because we were Africans in RSF camouflage, guerrillas always labelled us as 'enemies of the people' such that after independence most of us black RSF were ashamed and anxious to come out in the open about our status and role during the war.'<sup>149</sup>

Not all Malawian diaspora joined the Rhodesian army and its auxiliary forces. Some also joined the guerrillas to fight against the Rhodesian regime. There are some cases where members of the same family joined opposing armies and fought against each other. While this was not confined to diasporic communities alone, indigenous Zimbabweans also had families torn apart as siblings and relatives became combatants either in the Rhodesian army or in the ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. The Mbarure family is a case in point, where two of their sons, Jack and John, born in Southern Rhodesia in 1954, found themselves on opposing sides during the liberation struggle. Jack became a ZANLA cadre in 1976 and later enrolled into the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) after independence in 1980. He then fought in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) campaign before retiring in 2000. The other brother, John, was enlisted in the Rhodesian army as a soldier in late 1975 and fought for the Smith regime, but did not encounter his brother at the front since he was deployed in a different area.<sup>150</sup> Despite their diverse ordeal, these brothers remained very close. James Saidi became a ZIPRA cadre after being rescued from a police prison in Chinhoyi by ZIPRA fighters in 1975. He recounts that:

We were a group of 73 people, including 37 Malawians and we broke out of jail at night with the assistance of four ZIPRA guerrillas. We walked for four days to Matopos in Bulawayo. Some were sent to Zambia for training but I became a reconnoitre officer who offered intelligence about the movements of RSF forces for five years until independence.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> For details of the leaflets see Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 236.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, and Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 31.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Mkango.

<sup>150</sup> Interview with Jack and John Mbarure, Epworth, Harare, 25 May 2014.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

Sell-outs were severely punished during the war. Guerrilla forces in particular showed little mercy. Lan and Kriger have argued that guerrilla and Rhodesian army violence and punishment against sell-outs was an extremely controversial technique used to gain civilian support.<sup>152</sup> It was a tool employed to coerce civilians into supporting the war effort. Punishing sell-outs also enhanced guerrilla legitimacy. Out of fear, many people treaded a tightrope and found themselves supporting or pretending to support either the RSF or the guerrillas. Many innocent people were implicated and killed as sell-outs without proper investigations. The war was thus characterised by rampant superficial investigations most of which were abused by locals to settle various scores with outsiders. ZANLA and ZIPRA punishment ranged from receiving warnings, threats or getting heavily beaten with huge sticks, gun butts or any available equipment to actual execution or killing in front of masses at night vigils (*pungwes*) for dramatic and coercive effects. Guerrillas would ask for sell-outs to stand up and if no one complied, the freedom fighters would draw out their notebooks with names given to them by youth *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, and start calling out the victims.<sup>153</sup>

Rhodesian forces also punished civilians for supplying information, food and other paraphernalia to guerrillas, sending children to join the struggle, as well as misinforming the Rhodesian forces on the whereabouts of the 'terrorists'. Military abuses by the RSF were common throughout the war. Hoping to bully civilians onto their side, it engaged in random shootings, burning down of whole villages, killing and confiscation of cattle as punishment for supporting guerrillas, indiscriminate arrest and torture of civilians. Kriger testifies that it is impossible to know how many sell-outs were killed, but official figures show that regime forces killed more African civilians than the guerrillas through coercion.<sup>154</sup> According to official figures, between 1977 and 1980 the guerrillas allegedly killed 2,751 black civilians, the Rhodesian forces reportedly killed 3,360 black civilians, including those killed in attacks on camps in Mozambique.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Lan, *Guns and Rain*, 1985, p. 133. See also Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, p. 93.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Malunda Mbweswo.

<sup>154</sup> Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, p. 156.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* See also Caute, *Under the Skin*, p. 386; Moorcroft and McLaughlin, *Chimurenga: The War in Rhodesia*, p. 222.

## Conclusion

The *Chimurenga* war was a defining moment in the history of Zimbabwe; defining not only in the sense that it led to independence in 1980, but also in that it altered various livelihoods for everyone across the country and exposed civilians to serious war realities and atrocities. For Malawian diasporic communities, the situation was ironic because many were experiencing war in a foreign space while their homeland, Malawi, was relatively peaceful and already independent. Even though the Zimbabwean historiography has been silent over the migrant encounters with the conflict, this chapter has demonstrated that Malawian migrants and their families had diverse experiences and many were equally affected by the episode as local Zimbabweans. While some, especially in urban spaces, did not experience much of the fighting, others came into direct contact with it. The Malawian diaspora walked a tightrope and had to engage various levels of agency to navigate and survive the crisis. Many died, some were injured, displaced and livelihoods were transformed. Others used the opportunity to pursue other financially and emotionally fulfilling livelihoods such as enlisting into the RSF and the guerrilla movement, respectively. In the end, the ensuing relationships between the diaspora and the warring parties culminated in various conflict-induced identities. The sell-out identity, in particular, became a dominant discourse that was associated with the Malawian diaspora even beyond the liberation war. As shall be shown in chapter six, this identity found further resonance after independence, especially with the convergence of belonging/citizenship politics and elections in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### POST-INDEPENDENCE ANXIETIES, SYNCRETIC CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND PROMINENCE: 1980 TO 1999

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#### Introduction

The advent of Zimbabwean independence in 1980 triggered widespread celebrations and hope for better life and opportunities among Africans in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the first two decades of independence saw great strides being made by the state in generally improving the social lives and welfare of its citizens. Amidst all this euphoria, African immigrant descendants, many of whom had been resident in the country since the early 1900s, continued to live on farms, mines, plantations and urban areas across Zimbabwe. This chapter analyses the nuanced experiences of the Malawian diaspora during the first two decades of independence, exploring the changes and continuities in their livelihoods and the role of culture in the politics of identity articulation and coping mechanisms in a post-colonial space. Diasporic communities between 1980 and 1999 have largely been invisible in the Zimbabwean historiography. Scholars of this period were caught up in the euphoria of independence, documenting more on the prospects and challenges faced by the newly independent state, thereby relegating migrant histories and other relevant themes to the margins. For this reason, topical issues dominating post-1980 discourses had little to do with Malawian descendants, but issues such as the Matabeleland *Gukurahundi* disturbances, South Africa's sub-imperialism and regional destabilisation, droughts, Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), corruption and the civil/labour turmoil of the late 1990s.

Using information gleaned mainly from oral interviews and the media, the chapter begins by revisiting some of the dominant discourses of the 1980-90 period, particularly, *Gukurahundi*, ESAP and the 1992 drought, noting the anxieties of and impact on migrant Malawian families in agricultural, mining and urban landscapes. Secondly, it examines the place of their post-colonial cultural practices in coping with socio-economic concerns of this period. The chapter suggests that Malawian descendants found comfort in their diverse culture to articulate their identity, resist continued alienation, seek belonging/integration and cope against emerging

post-1980 political and economic challenges. Cultural motifs such as *Gule Wamkulu/Nyau*, *Beni*, mutual aid societies, as well as male and female circumcision rites, were the basis for migrant Malawian identities' articulation. They simultaneously became increasingly syncretic and inclusive to the extent of incorporating other diasporic Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican sub-ethnicities, and locals in post-independent Zimbabwe. Culture acted as a platform for integration and sometimes resistance, a 'weapon of the weak' between migrant descendants and the autochthonous Zimbabwean communities.<sup>1</sup> It also offered a platform for social networking, as well as coping with fears and problems induced by political disturbances, ESAP, droughts and continued state alienation. The chapter argues that in spite of the uncertainties of the 1980s and 1990s, the period proved to be a golden era for people of Malawian origin. Many permeated the Zimbabwean fabric, improving and consolidating themselves and sometimes attaining cult hero status. The chapter celebrates the descendants' excellence in various fields: sports, politics, education, property ownership and social entertainment. By looking at the biographies of prominent Malawians descendants, the chapter showcases how some of the aliens exploited the numerous post-independent platforms to achieve micro and macro success, as well as shape and naturalize the broader migrant Malawian identities across the country prior to the dominance of the exclusionary discourse of the post-2000 period.

### **Migrant Anxieties over Belonging, *Gukurahundi*, Drought and ESAP**

For Malawian descendants, the first decade of Zimbabwean independence was generally characterised by normality and continuity in livelihoods in their respective communities. Many worked as miners, farm workers, and urban dwellers. Reflecting about the transition into independence in the 1980s, a former farm worker, Samson Medi Mbewe, recalled that 'life was generally the same for some of us of Malawian origin as we continued to work for the same white farmer with the only notable changes being provision of better housing by the employer, as well as free social amenities like education and health in the 1980s.'<sup>2</sup> Another informant, Rafael Wilson, remembered that 'after independence, I continued to

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<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, London: Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 28-47.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Samson Medi Mbewe, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 14 January 2015.

follow white commercial farms in the Banket area working as a general hand in the tobacco fields...so I did not really notice any real transformations except the fact that Mugabe was now in power.’<sup>3</sup> Things were much the same in the mining industry. Langwell Mhone, a ventilation officer at Dalny Mine, pointed out that ‘life remained the same after independence at our workplace except for the fact that the currency had now changed from Rhodesian dollars to Zimbabwean dollars.’<sup>4</sup>

Yet, migrant experiences were also shaped by the prevailing political economy of the 1980s. More specifically, the political crisis manifested by the 1982-87 Matabeleland *Gukurahundi* massacres created tension and anxiety among migrant minorities. Broadly located within the post-independent ZANU-ZAPU conflict, *Gukurahundi* (the rain that washes away the chaff before summer rains) saw Mugabe deploying his North Korean trained Fifth Brigade from January 1983 to late 1986 on the pretext of quashing dissident elements in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces.<sup>5</sup> According to Mazarire, this conflict turned on the fact that:

Firstly, the nation was facing a security risk from apartheid South Africa through its several sabotage attempts on Zimbabwe and sponsoring Super ZAPU dissidents and Renamo rebels in Mozambique. Secondly, dissidents were interpreted as Nkomo’s former ZIPRA cadre followers who deserted the new army en-masse fearing persecution after his loss of elections and as such became the primary targets of the 5 Brigade in the rural areas. Yet the most distinguishing feature of 5 Brigade campaign was its tribal discourse and it’s largely Shona speaking composition. Retribution was based on historic claims by the Shona members of the Brigade that they were taking revenge on 19<sup>th</sup> century Ndebele raids against their Shona ancestors, ‘saying your forefathers ate our cattle where are they?’<sup>6</sup>

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the civil war magnified the danger associated with a nation and state in terms of one ethnic group in the midst of a multi-ethnic society.<sup>7</sup> Phimister adds that dissident activity was a convenient justification for ethnicised violence because the Fifth

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Rafael Wilson.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone.

<sup>5</sup> Phimister, ‘The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland’, *Development Dialogues*, 50, 2008, pp. 197-214; Phimister, ‘Zimbabwe is Mine’: Mugabe, Murder, and Matabeleland’, *Safundi: Journal of South African and American Studies*, 10, 4, 2009, pp. 471-78, and Daimon, ‘The Matabeleland Massacres/Gukurahundi were a Moment of Madness: Forgetful Memory and Contestations over Historical Truth and Justice in Zimbabwe’s 1<sup>st</sup> Post-Colonial Genocide’, Paper presented at the Transitional Justice in Africa International Seminar, Rabat, Morocco, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Mazarire, ‘A State of Madness: Reconsidering the Post-Matabeleland Conflict in the Context of the Zimbabwean Crisis’, Unpublished Paper, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Ndebele Nation*, p. 20.



Brigade's energies were devoted entirely to the rural population, leaving an estimated 20,000 Ndebele-speaking people dead.<sup>8</sup> Using torture tactics largely from the liberation war, soldiers forced relatives to beat and kill each other, eat raw meat and dig their own graves with fingers.<sup>9</sup> Hundreds of thousands were tortured, assaulted or raped or had their property destroyed. Of the people who died, some were shot; some were 'dismembered', then executed and buried or thrown down disused mine shafts; others were taken to torture camps where some died under torture or were later executed.<sup>10</sup>

Studies by Phimister, Scannerchia, Sibanda, Hanlon and others have analysed this episode from various perspectives. However, the anxiety that this violence created especially among those who did not fully belong to the state, Malawians included, was overlooked.<sup>11</sup> Langwell Mhone of Dalny Mine in Chakari reflected in an interview that 'many of us feared that the ethnic cleansing that was happening in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces would spread to some of us of foreign descent.'<sup>12</sup> The ZANU-ZAPU conflict saw residents of Dalny Mine exposed to violent clashes between cadres in 1983 during which one ZAPU member was shot dead.<sup>13</sup> Posta Chitimbe from Maryland Farm, near Banket, noted that during *Gukurahundi* 'we feared that the massacres would also be directed towards us...if this was

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<sup>8</sup> Phimister, 'The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland', pp. 197-8, and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), *Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace: Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1989*, Harare: CCJPZ and LRF, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence*, and Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, *Violence and Memory*.

<sup>10</sup> Phimister, 'The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland', p. 198.

<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the *Gukurahundi*, see variously, CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence*; Phimister, 'The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland'; Phimister, 'Zimbabwe is Mine': Mugabe, Murder, and Matabeleland'; Scarnecchia, 'Rationalizing *Gukurahundi*: Cold War and South African Foreign Relations with Zimbabwe, 1981-1983', *Kronos*, 37, 1, 2011, pp. 87-103.; Ranger, 'Matabeleland since the Amnesty', *African Affairs*, 88, 351, 1989, pp. 161-73; Alexander, 'Dissident Perspectives of Zimbabwe's Post-Independence War', *Africa*, 68, 2, 1998, pp. 151-82; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'The Post-colonial state and Matabeleland: Regional Perceptions of Civil-Military Relations, 1980 - 2002', in R. Williams, G. Cawthra, and D. Abrahams, (eds), *Ourselves to Know: Civil-Military Relations and Defence Transformation in Southern Africa*, Pretoria: ISS, 2003; Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Echoing Silences': Ethnicity in Post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007', *African Journal on conflict Resolution: Special Issue on Identity and Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution in Africa*, 7, 2, 2007, pp. 257-97; Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union*; J. Hanlon, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*, London: Hurst and Company, 2007; S. Eppel, 'Gukurahundi: The Need for Truth and Reparation', in Raftopoulos and Savage, (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005, and R. Yap, 'Uprooting the Weeds: Power, Ethnicity and Violence in the Matabeleland Conflict, 1980-1987', PhD Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone.

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

happening to Ndebele citizens, what guarantee did we have that this would not happen to us *Mabhurandaya*.'<sup>14</sup> Such paranoia echoed Ndlovu-Gatsheni's rhetorical concern that 'if one ethnic group ascends to state power, as was the case with the Shona in 1980, do the other ethnic groups inevitably have to suffer exclusion and marginalisation?'<sup>15</sup>

Such anxiety was informed by the continued alienation of and discrimination against minority groups after independence. So-called coloureds and descendants of migrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia were marginalised by 'a post-colonial state which envisioned the new nation in black and white racial binaries and essentialised categories of indigeneity.'<sup>16</sup> The post-independence state retained the colonial policies that identified Africans of foreign ancestry as aliens for governance purposes. Even though extensive migration had ended in the 1960s and second-generation Zimbabweans of Malawian origin had begun to emerge by the UDI years; the new state, like the Rhodesian regime before it, continued to treat them as foreigners, whose citizenship could not be determined by birth. For that reason, 'all subject minorities continued to be excluded from the power and governance structures available to indigenous Zimbabweans as the post-colonial state displayed either continued ambivalence or outright hostility to these groups.'<sup>17</sup>

The second decade of independence was also characterised by various challenges threatening the socio-economic gains made in the 1980s. These affected the livelihoods of every Zimbabwean, including diasporic minorities. Severe droughts caused agricultural productivity to decline. Exports began to fall following the adoption of the IMF/World Bank ESAP in 1991. Average economic growth decline from 4% to 0.9%.<sup>18</sup> ESAP prescribed cuts in government subsidies to welfare, health, education, consumer goods, public spending, price controls and wages.<sup>19</sup> These prescriptions brought unprecedented suffering to the Zimbabwean populace.

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

<sup>15</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Ndebele Nation*, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997', in Raftopoulos and Mlambo, (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 188.

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

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 188.

<sup>19</sup> For an in-depth analysis of ESAP and its effects please see variously Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1990-1995*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1997; International Labour Organization, *Structural Change and Adjustment in Zimbabwe*, Geneva: ILO, 1993; G. Mhone, *The Impact of Structural Adjustment on the Urban Informal Sector in Zimbabwe*, Discussion Paper 2, Geneva: ILO, 1995, and Sachikonye, 'Industrial Restructuring and Labour Relations under ESAP in Zimbabwe', in

Unemployment rose from 32.2% in 1990, to 44% in 1993, to about 50% in 1999.<sup>20</sup> Thousands of workers were retrenched in factories, farms and mines. By May 1993, about 25,000 public and private sector workers had been retrenched with the textile industry losing 4,500 jobs and commercial agriculture over 4,000.<sup>21</sup> The mining sector alone lost 5,000 workers with major retrenchments at Kamativi in 1991 (650 workers), Hwange Colliery (269), and ZIMASCO (3,000 workers).<sup>22</sup>

On Dalny Mine in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West province, about 200 mainly underground workers were retrenched between 1993 and 1996. At least three-quarters were of Malawian descent.<sup>23</sup> This forced many first-generation Malawian migrant workers and their families to return to Malawi or seek alternative livelihoods. Dubbing the retrenchment as '*chigumura*' (to bring down or break down), hundreds of the Malawian diaspora trekked back home during this period. The mine authorities assisted the affected families by providing their bus and hiring furniture removal companies to carry belongings to Malawi. Amongst these was the late James Amidu, a Yao from Mangochi in Southern Malawi who returned home in July 1996 after spending 31 years working as a miner in Zimbabwe.<sup>24</sup> He took with him five of his younger children leaving behind five older ones; a married daughter Alice and four working boys; Jafari, Abas, Amidi and Saidi. On arrival in Mangochi he built a communal home among his relatives and engaged in bicycle repairing, a profession which he supplemented with subsistence agriculture. His wife undertook vending and became renowned for brewing sweet beer (*maheu*) with a Zimbabwean flavour.<sup>25</sup> Another retrenched migrant, Chris Adaki left Dalny Mine in 1994 and eventually came back in 2004 after finding life unbearable in Malawi.<sup>26</sup>

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P. Gibbon, (ed.), *Structural Adjustment and the Working Poor in Zimbabwe*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995, pp. 37-131.

<sup>20</sup> Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme*, p. 91; Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis', p. 189.

<sup>21</sup> Sachikonye, 'Industrial Restructuring and Labour Relations under ESAP in Zimbabwe', p. 110.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Juma Jula.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Alice Amidu, daughter of James Amidu, Harare, 16 February 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Aresi Amidu, widow of James Amidu, Blantyre, Malawi, 01 March 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Chris Adaki, Kadoma, 11 May 2014.

Some decided to squat on surrounding commercial farms such as Gomo, Kapundu, Sekerere, sliding into destitution. The late Alice Wada retreated to Gomo farm after her husband's retrenchment where she lived until her death in 1999.<sup>27</sup> Others decided to buy rural homes in Zimbabwe. Such was the case of the late Wali Kalonje, a Yao, who after retrenchment in 1995 took his wife and younger children to Makonde communal area near the town of Murombedzi.<sup>28</sup> He obtained a rural home under Chief Mushayakarara near Chipfuwamiti growth point. Kalonje also recommended other non-indigenous families from Chakari to the chief. Two Yao families eventually joined him: Alumbitwe and Mwadiya in 1996; living close together as neighbours in an area dominated by the indigenous Shona of the Zezuru ethnic clan.<sup>29</sup> Over time and because of their migrant identity, their community came to be commonly referred to as *kwaMuchawa* or *kwaYao*, implying the place/area where the Yaos live.

The ESAP-induced employment deregulation challenges encountered by diasporic communities and other Zimbabweans were aggravated by the 1992 drought. Nowhere was the severity of the 1992 drought felt more by migrant descendants than on the sugar plantations of Chiredzi in southern Zimbabwe. According to Sachikonye, the drought contributed to lay-offs, which had commenced in 1991 with the inception of ESAP.<sup>30</sup> At Tongaat-Hulett sugar estate in Triangle, nearly 4,000 workers were sacked following a strike over the terms of short-time working because of the devastating impact of the drought on sugar cane production.<sup>31</sup> Only 133mm of rainfall was recorded in the 1991-92 season; the lowest total ever. By November 1992, 21,500 hectares of Triangle's cane had died due to lack of water and the intense unremitting heat. Only 1,700 hectares of 'barely alive' cane survived.<sup>32</sup> A paltry 2,895 tonnes of sugar were produced that year as opposed to over 200,000 tonnes in preceding years.<sup>33</sup> Mlambo and Pangeti recorded that the cane to sugar ratio deteriorated to 8,090 tonnes cane per tonne of sugar in 1992 because of the low sucrose

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Robert Wada, son of Alice Wada, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 8 May 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Emma Kalonje, wife of Wali Kalonje, Zvimba Communal Lands, Murombedzi, 24 December 2013.

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

<sup>30</sup> Sachikonye, 'Industrial Restructuring and Labour Relations ESAP in Zimbabwe', p. 109.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> R. Booth, 'Triangle: An Epic of Land, Water and Man', *Heritage of Zimbabwe*, 19, 2000, p. 146.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

content of the drought-stressed cane.<sup>34</sup> Lack of rains led to the closure of the mill and ethanol plant, culminating in loss of millions of revenue for Triangle. It was estimated that both Triangle and Hippo Valley Estates would need Z\$295 million to replant drought-stricken cane.<sup>35</sup>

The drought drastically reduced the amount of work available at the Triangle Estate. The management decided to cut wages and working hours, offering its manual workers a 'dole' of ZWD30 per month in return for five days of work per month plus a basic food ration consisting of mealie-meal and a protein supplement, plus the free use of house and garden, and provision of basic medical services to the employee and his registered dependants.<sup>36</sup> It also proposed voluntary severance coupled with two months' salary, the normal notice pay, pension benefits and use of a house for three months.<sup>37</sup> Miscommunication and dissatisfaction over these proposals triggered a strike, mainly by 6,500 manual workers out of a total work force of 8,000. The labour protest was a blessing in disguise for the management. The strike led to the retrenchment of workers en-masse, leaving a drastically trimmed work force composed of a core of skilled workers and a reduced number of semi-skilled ones.<sup>38</sup>

In the end, 4,000 workers were sacked, with nearly 1,000 Malawian migrant workers returning to Malawi.<sup>39</sup> Others opted to receive retrenchment packages and were assisted by the sugar companies in transferring goods home. However, not everyone could return home. Many retrenched migrant descendants became destitute squatting on neighbouring commercial farms and communal areas. 69 year old Brian Sonkole went to reside at Buffalo Range Farm, initially working as a butcher and later as a security guard.<sup>40</sup> Andrew Phiri went to look for work at Renco Mine near Masvingo before coming back after 2000 to settle on newly acquired commercial farms around Chiredzi.<sup>41</sup> There were a few of course who on retrenchment or retirement decided to stay for various reasons. Triangle authorities

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<sup>34</sup> Mlambo and E.S. Pangeti, *The Political Economy of the Sugar Industry in Zimbabwe*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996, p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Sachikonye, 'Industrial Restructuring and Labour Relations ESAP in Zimbabwe', p. 91.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Christopher Phiri, Community Development Officer, Triangle, 10 April 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Brian Sonkole, Buffalo Range Farm, 12 April 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Andrew Phiri, Triangle, 12 April 2014.

traditionally allocated houses in Zororo residential section to retired and old workers.<sup>42</sup> 78-year-old Saidi Selemani remained in Zororo residential area, where he eked out a living as a cobbler.<sup>43</sup> One of the informants had been given a company house on retirement; another Simon Phiri was staying with his children, one of whom Christopher, was employed at Tongaat-Hulett in Triangle.<sup>44</sup>

### **Cultural Motifs and Syncretic Expression: Rites, Dances and Kindred Societies**

Amidst the socio-economic challenges of the 1980s and 1990s, culture assumed an important dimension in the lives of Malawian descendants. It became a crucial platform for coping against ESAP effects, droughts and anxieties over belonging. The Malawian diaspora increasingly used culture to express and assert their identity, as well as to seek integration. Culture integrates or aggregates people and processes; the sum total of our everyday practices and 'texts'; the ways we live everyday life; our behaviour, beliefs and social interactions. Malawian cultural practices such as the *Gule Wamkulu/Nyau* dances, *Beni* dances, self-help societies, as well as male and female circumcision rites, became crucial tools of cultural agency after independence. As noted in chapter three, self-help groups or mutual aid activities first emerged among Mozambican migrants in the 1920s before spreading to other communities.<sup>45</sup> The Chewa were renowned for the *Gule Wamkulu* dance.<sup>46</sup> The Yao were experts in male and female circumcision ceremonies (*chinamwali*), as well as the more popular *Beni* dances, a performance that satirised the First and Second World War military marches and parades as experienced by African *Askari* soldiers.<sup>47</sup> Much as in colonial times, culture was central to migrant descendants in accommodating the unexpected realities of

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Christopher Phiri, and Personal communication from Kundai Manamere, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 8 June 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Saidi Selemani.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Simon Phiri, Mufakose, Triangle, 10 April 2014.

<sup>45</sup> NAZ N3/21/2, Beni Dances and Societies, 27 July 1921.

<sup>46</sup> See variously L. Birch de Aguilar, 'Inscribing the Mask: Interpretation of *Nyau* Masks and Ritual Performance among the Chewa of Central Malawi', *Studia Instituti Anthropos*, 47, 1996, pp. 10-12; Birch de Aguilar, '*Nyau* Masks of the Chewa: An Oral Historical Introduction', *Society of Malawi Journal*, 47, 2, 1994, pp. 3-14; D. Bell, *Mask Makers and Their Craft: An Illustrated Worldwide Study*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2010; A. Gough, 'The Chewa', <http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/hosted/chewa>, 2004 [accessed 14 April 2013], and E. Chabwera, 'Instruction, Entertainment and Sexist Taboos: Culture and Development within Gule Wamkulu Secret Society in Malawi', in E.M. Chiwome and Z. Gambahaya, (eds), *Culture and Development: Perspectives from the South*, Harare: Mond Press, 1998, p. 143

<sup>47</sup> NAZ N3/21/2, Beni Dances and Societies, 27 July 1921.

post-colonial Zimbabwe. Culture was vital for the construction, imagination and consolidation of individual and collective migrant Malawian identities.

Alberto Melucci has discussed the complex fusion of culture and identities, reasoning that at the core of collective identity creation are cultural processes through which people seek to make sense or meaning of a situation.<sup>48</sup> Collective identity entails a network of active relationships between actors who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate and make decisions concerning the symbolic orientations and meanings of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints for mobilization.<sup>49</sup> Cohen also sees culture as identity involving an attempt to represent the person or group in terms of reified and/or emblemized culture.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, culture became an emblem of the marginalised in the diaspora or a weapon of the weak.<sup>51</sup> Scott observes that when the culture of the weak is left unconquered or un-colonized, the marginalized tend to clothe their resistance in 'ritualisms' of subordination, which serve to disguise their purpose and help them remain ambiguous enough for 'retreat'.<sup>52</sup> Probing the public display of power and the hidden discourses of the marginalized, he emphasizes how the covert non-violent forms of resistance entail a cultural struggle or artful form of resistance against power structures. This idea about the uncolonized culture of the weak is applicable to diasporic communities because they have maintained their cultural practices to confront the dictates of the Zimbabwean nation-state and its hegemonic social groups.<sup>53</sup> Diasporic communities conscientiously seek to retrieve and reproduce social practices and cultural icons, which provides liminal communities with a sense of continuity, so necessary for the restabilization of their identity - their sense of social self - in a foreign land.<sup>54</sup> Cultural familiarity is also imperative for members to reterritorialize themselves as Malawian descendants.

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<sup>48</sup> A. Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.70.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> A. Cohen, 'Culture as Identity: An Anthropologist's View', *New Literary History*, 24, 1, 1993, pp. 195-209.

<sup>51</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. 28-47.

<sup>52</sup> Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 96.

<sup>53</sup> Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities, Identity Construction and Social Mobilisation against HIV/AIDS', p. 295.

<sup>54</sup> Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, 'Diasporic Memories and Identities', p. 3.

These cultural traits can be viewed as an indirect cultural form of resistance, or what Scott terms 'hidden transcripts', which provide the means to express emotions and make them collective.<sup>55</sup> Migrant communities expressed their identity and views to counter incidences of exclusion, domination and popular images of 'foreignness'. Gruenbaum explains that cultural practices serve a positive function in maintaining kin cohesion and ethnic identity, both of which are closely guarded and not easily changed.<sup>56</sup> Linden specifically points out that cultural practices such as 'the *Gule Wamkulu* are an institution of remarkable resilience and vitality, which serve to unite the people in times of social stress and act as powerful curbs on the influence of foreign or dominant identities.'<sup>57</sup> As shall be shown below, these traditions do not legitimize the powerful or dominant local groups but instead empower the diaspora in their struggles to belong and survive in Zimbabwe. Works by Van Onselen, Phimister, Parry, Yoshikuni, Scarnecchia, and Groves have discussed the symbolism and function of these motifs during the colonial times; post-colonial variants have not been analysed yet.<sup>58</sup> Before 1980, migrant cultural cosmologies were more exclusionary and resilient towards state authority. After 1980, these practices continued to be coping tools, with some becoming more syncretic.

#### **a) Nyau Secret Societies and *Gule Wamkulu* Dances**

The *Gule Wamkulu* dance or *Nyau/Gule/Zvigure* (as it is known in Zimbabwe) has been the most notable cultural trait associated with Malawian descendants. The dance was indigenous to the Chewa, but other smaller Malawian groups such as the Manganja and Chipeta also enjoyed it.<sup>59</sup> Chabwera explains, 'the owners of *Gule Wamkulu* are the Chewa found in central

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<sup>55</sup> Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 96.

<sup>56</sup> E. Gruenbaum, 'The Cultural Debate over Female Circumcision: The Sudanese are Arguing this One Out for Themselves', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 10, 4, 1996, pp. 455-75.

<sup>57</sup> Linden, 'Chewa Initiation Rites and Nyau Societies: The Use of Religious Institutions in Local Politics at Mua', in Ranger and J. Weller, (eds), *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa*, London: Heinemann, 1975, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> See variously Van Onselen, *Chibaro*; Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*; Yoshikuni, *African Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*; Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class: The African experience in Salisbury'; Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, and Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury'.

<sup>59</sup> Daimon, 'Migrant Chewa identities and their construction through *Gule Wamkulu* dances in Zimbabwe', in B. Zwede, (ed.), *Society, State and Identity in African History*, Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2008, p. 299; Else, *Malawi: Much More Than Just a Lake*, p. 42, and NAZ S715/1, Chinyao Dance, CID Salisbury, Chinyao Dance at Shamva Mine, 20 September 1926.



Malawi and eastern Zambia.<sup>60</sup> The practice originated in Malawi from where it spread to such countries as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa through labour migration and regional ethno-linguistic commonalities. *Gule Wamkulu* literally means 'the big or great dance'.<sup>61</sup> It involves dancers wearing masks representing the dead or human beings or animals, intricate footwork and high tempo drum rhythms. The dance reflects religious beliefs in spirits and is connected to the activities of secret societies in which dancers (termed *zilombo* or wild animals) are dressed in ragged costumes of cloth and animal skins, wearing a mask, and occasionally performing on stilts. Schoffeleers argues that *Gule Wamkulu* is a name for the masked dance performed by *Nyau* secret societies for purposes of initiating members into adulthood and for entertainment.<sup>62</sup> These treat *Nyau* as their tradition or *mwambo*, the totalizing ritual system, which defines contours and categories of the Chewa community, a spiritual institution that forms an important part of their cosmology and religious beliefs. Gough adds that *Gule Wamkulu* consists of formally organized initiation rituals and dances of masked individuals in a spiritual state.<sup>63</sup> Though Chewa in nature, the dance has been an important platform for expressing a broader migrant Malawian identity and fostering mutual relations between different ethnicities in Zimbabwe.<sup>64</sup>

In spite of its entertainment value, *Gule Wamkulu* was initially used as a platform of resistance against civil law in colonial Malawi and Zimbabwe. According to Kaspin, colonial governments were concerned about *Nyau's* potential threat.<sup>65</sup> The BSAP's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) unit and NCs across Southern Rhodesia produced numerous reports concerning the dance's mystery and the possible threat it posed.<sup>66</sup> In Malawi *Nyau* emerged

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<sup>60</sup> Chabwera, 'Instruction, Entertainment and Sexist Taboos', p. 143.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Isaac Chaponda, Leader of Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* Club, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Schoffeleers, 'The *Nyau* Societies: Our Present Understanding,' *Society of Malawi Journal*, 29, 1, 1976, p. 59. See also Schoffeleers, 'The Meaning and Use of the Name Malawi in Oral Traditions', p. 91.

<sup>63</sup> A. Gough, 'The Chewa'.

<sup>64</sup> *Gule Wamkulu* dance was declared a world heritage under the UNESCO cultural tradition list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on 25 November 2005. The dance was put on the Representative List under the 2003 Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions under which Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique are signatories. The UNESCO listing was important for all the regional *Gule Wamkulu* custodians and practitioners who have stuck to the tradition for generations.

<sup>65</sup> D. Kaspin, 'Chewa Visions and Revisions of Power: Transformations of the *Nyau* Dance in Central Malawi', Jean and John Comaroff, (eds), *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993, p. 38.

<sup>66</sup> Numerous police investigations were conducted following various crimes linked to *Nyau* members such as poisoning of a Tonga at Shamva Mine in 1917; assault of individuals in Salisbury in 1926 and 1927; malicious injury to animals in the Gatooma area in 1926; as well as the higher degrees of excitement that the dances

as a vehicle of political opposition to the British colonial administration and the power of missionary churches. Kaspin asserts that *Nyau* members exercised their licence as 'wild animals' to attack the uninitiated; a behaviour justified by members as part of the dancers' mystique as beasts and spirits, creatures ungovernable by the laws of humans.<sup>67</sup> However, *Nyau* 'animalism' was not a ritual entitlement but an act of defiance against civil law.<sup>68</sup> Curran adds that Christian missionaries and colonial administrators viewed *Nyau* as an exhibition of obscenity, sensuality and cruelty and a national evil. Authorities remained suspicious of the dance throughout the colonial era. Parry claims that the *Gule Wamkulu* culture threatened the 'colonial peace' in Rhodesia and was banned in the mid-1920s.<sup>69</sup> Its continued underground operation subsequently enhanced its reputation for being a law unto itself.<sup>70</sup> Despite concerted efforts to outlaw *Nyau* culture, it retained its hold on the spiritual imagination of the Chewa in Malawi, as well as their migrant counterparts in Zimbabwe.<sup>71</sup>

Mystery and terror associated with *Nyau* culture created an ambiguous relationship between its members and indigenous Zimbabwean communities before and after 1980. On one hand, it triggered awe and interest, dread and xenophobic prejudices on the other. Remembering how he grew up in Harare in the mid-1980s, Munhamu Pekeshe said:

In my first encounter with *Zvigure*, I was fascinated by their dances and masks, but kept away from close view by terrifying stories about *Zvigure's* propensity for physical violence. Later we heard stories of kidnappings, sexual orgies, murders and monetary extortions. Naturally, I grew intense dislike for this community's alleged malevolent disregard for the law.<sup>72</sup>

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generated amongst locals across the country. In the 1930s, the NC for Lomagundi, E.G. Howman, reported that the mysterious dances were performed by so-called *alien natives*, from Nyasaland. These remarks were echoed by CNC, Sergeant H.M.G Jackson, who stated that 'the Minister of Internal Affairs was informed that volatile *Gule Wamkulu* dances are practiced on farms and mines and have been introduced from outside the colony by *native aliens*, from Nyasaland. For details see NAZ S715/1, Chinyao Dance; MNA S2/23/22, Native Customs: Vinyao 1922-39; *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Sworn to Secrecy: Further Details of Mystery Dance: Member of Zinyao gives Evidence, 29 August 1923; NAZ S308, Native Commissioner Lomagundi at Sinoia: Miscellaneous, 01 August 1916 - June 25 1935, and NAZ S235/392-393, Native Dances and Immorality, Chief Native Commissioner, Circular Letter No. C551/4150/N/M, 02 September 1930.

<sup>67</sup> Kaspin, 'Chewa Visions and Revisions of Power', p. 38.

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

<sup>69</sup> Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class', pp. 66-77.

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

<sup>71</sup> D. Curran, 'The Elephant Has Four Hearts: *Nyau* Masks and Ritual', 1999, <http://www.dougcurranphotos.com/pdfs/exhibition.pdf> [accessed 27 May 2015].

<sup>72</sup> M. Pekeshe, 'Leave Gule Wamkulu alone Mr Prophet', <http://www.thepatriot.co.zw/columns/leave-gule-wamkulu-alone-mr-prophet>, 21 May, 2015 [accessed 27 May 2015].

The fact that *Nyau* was shrouded in mystery and secrecy created infinite myths and curiosity among outsiders. For years, people of Malawian origin in Zimbabwe have generally associated with sorcery, witchcraft and sinister magic. Linden notes that Malawian mythology is full of sorcery narratives involving hyenas, owls, snakes and flying saucers and brooms.<sup>73</sup> Such prejudices are entrenched in oral traditions and have been bolstered by oral histories about the escapades of Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's founding president. Though he was a qualified medical doctor, many classified him as a Sangoma (traditional witchdoctor) president; a practitioner of traditional medicine who always carried around a flywhisk, the Sangoma's ultimate prop.<sup>74</sup> One of the popular myths that followed the Banda cult, claimed that he left his jacket hanging in mid-air in a Gweru prison cell in Zimbabwe when he was incarcerated for political activities from March 1959 to April 1960. Such mythology fed into local imaginations and constructions of Malawian diasporic identities as a whole.

*Nyau* myths lost nothing in the telling. It was alleged that initiated members spent nights at cemeteries, ate raw chicken and drank its blood. If anyone fell down when chased by a *Nyau* dancer and was injured, the wound would not heal. *Nyau* members always denied such myths. One *Nyau* member, Aaron Wemba insisted that 'we are not witches and do not socialise with the dead; ours is just like other cultures that serve social and spiritual purposes.'<sup>75</sup> The fact that *Gule* dancers emerged from sacred ritual wildernesses, known as the *Runde* or *Dambwe*, and then performed wearing masks to hide their identities greatly contributed to preserving the mystery of *Nyau*.<sup>76</sup> Examples of *Runde/Dambwe* sacrosanct ritual shrines included cemeteries/graveyards and protected bush camps/shrines where *Nyau* members converged to initiate, train and keep their paraphernalia.<sup>77</sup> Graveyards mystified the practice by linking it to the dead. The late Brazil Chiromo, a senior member of the Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* Club, claimed that *Gule Wamkulu* operated from graveyards because of an environment that scared off intruders and provided an ideal location for secret rituals.<sup>78</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> P. Zvomuya, 'Of Power, Presidents and Medicine Men', *Mail and Guardian*, 20 April 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Aaron Wemba, Member of Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* Club, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.

<sup>76</sup> The sacred wilderness concept has been analysed by I. Mukonyora, 'Marginality and Protest in the Sacred Wilderness: The Role of Women in Shaping Masowe Thought Pattern', *Southern African Feminist Review*, 4, 2, 2000/01, pp. 1-10; Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, pp. 12-5.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Edward Malunga, Deputy Leader of Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* Club, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Brazil Chiromo, *Nyau* Senior Member, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.

precincts of bush camps, often near village or urban settlements, were marked and protected by red cloths planted on visibly strategic locales. This transformed the area into a sacred space of power and control for its custodians.

*Gule Wamkulu* was sanctified by various types of masked dancers (*Zilombo*) who emerged out of the *Runde* to perform. Each of the *Zilombo* plays a particular character representing forms of misbehaviour in order to teach moral and social values to the audience. These figures perform dances and artistic movements with extraordinary energy, partly entertaining and partly frightening the audience.<sup>79</sup> The masks come in different forms and include traditional representations of ancestral spirits, ghostly creatures, flora and animals such as lions, elephants, hyenas, snakes and giraffes. Research on the meaning of masks and the *Nyau* was conducted by the renowned anthropologist, Laurel Birch de Aguilar, in Malawi from 1984 into late the 1990s. Masks are metaphoric social phenomena or texts projecting various interpretative meaning over life and death.<sup>80</sup> They are rich in narratives about social roles and community, historical experience, ritual and religious beliefs, leadership, warfare, resistance to foreigners, colonisation, labour migration and modernity. Aguilar emphasizes that '*Nyau* masks are invested with a sense of dread, such that the very word '*Nyau*' makes some people catch their breath and step back.'<sup>81</sup> The secrecy of masquerading in masks is an important subtext and a crucial means by which *Gule Wamkulu* mystifies *Nyau* society and earns respect through fear. Contemporary *Gule Wamkulu* masks, attire and dances are a site of discourse on history, social relationships and experiences of Africans in the diaspora.

In the face of continued discrimination and anxieties over *Gukurahundi* and belonging in the 1980s, *Nyau* became increasingly useful for coping with these challenges. *Nyau* communities turned into bastions of cohesion amongst the Malawian diaspora. Over time and space, *Nyau* communities in Zimbabwe defined and negotiated territorial autonomy and space by exploiting elements of secrecy, sacred environments and masked dances to create a collective identity and forge cohesion amongst members. Malawian descendants used *Gule Wamkulu* as means to distinguish themselves from outsiders, particularly hegemonic Zimbabwean

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<sup>79</sup> Bell, *Mask Makers and Their Craft: An Illustrated Worldwide Study*.

<sup>80</sup> Birch de Aguilar, 'Inscribing the Mask'; L. Birch de Aguilar, '*Nyau* Masks of the Chewa'.

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

groups. This ‘othering’ created a relational dimension that saw the diaspora perceive and define their group identity from within while non-Malawians do so from the outside. This was achieved by the symbolic ritualization of the *Gule* initiation rites where members have to drink chicken blood and undergo required training.<sup>82</sup> Brazil Chiromo argued that *Nyau* creates a strong social bond and collective identity among migrants in Zimbabwe.<sup>83</sup> This shared initiation experience, emotion, symbolism and masked dances, the female singing and ululation creates a collective bond within the *Nyau* community.

### ***Gule Wamkulu* in Zimbabwe**



Photos taken by author during fieldwork in the Banket commercial farming area in Zimbabwe in 2014

*Nyau* relations with the state and local communities gradually improved in the late 1980s following the Zimbabwe government’s accommodation of the dance as part of local culture through invitations to perform at national and local functions. This mimicked the promotion of Chewa culture by Kamuzu Banda in independent Malawi. Curran has argued that Banda used *Nyau* to maintain political power at national level.<sup>84</sup> It graced national functions becoming the face of Kamuzu’s presidential rallies. *Nyau* in Zimbabwe re-adapted itself to forces shaping its migrant Malawian practitioners. *Gule Wamkulu* received a new lease of life as the newly elected ZANU (PF) government sought to exploit the dances’ popularity on

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Brazil Chiromo.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Curran, ‘The Elephant Has Four Hearts’.

migrant dominated farms and mines. As a result, the dances were performed weekly or sometimes daily on farms, plantations, mines and towns. They ordinarily took place on Friday and Saturday nights, followed by a Sunday afternoon performance, though they could be performed on any day of the week.<sup>85</sup> *Gule Wamkulu* became a common feature at Zimbabwean public holidays, anniversaries, national events such as the Independence, Workers and Heroes celebrations, cultural festivals, at special functions or at community gatherings such as funerals, weddings and the initiation of members.<sup>86</sup> The dance is also dominant and popular during traditional dance competitions sponsored by *Jibilika* or Delta Beverages Breweries through the popular *Chibuku Neshamwari* cultural dance competitions. At Ayrshire Mine, the local *Gule Wamkulu* club receives sponsorship for its uniforms, transport and subsistence from the Mine and normally performs for entertainment during weekends. The group sometimes travels to neighbouring mining communities such as Muriel, Arcturus, Mhangura and Alaska for performances.<sup>87</sup>

The secrecy and mystery associated with *Nyau* and its Chewa exclusivity was gradually eroded in the course of 1980s and 1990s. The practice became less exclusive and increasingly syncretic, continually adapting itself to the shifting forces, incorporating the new and the foreign into its fabric. Although it remained the epitome of Malawian diasporic identity in the various spaces where it was performed, the tradition also became a tool of syncretism at three levels: amongst the Malawian diaspora itself, other regional migrant communities and with autochthonous communities. For a start, the post-independent *Nyau* brought together diverse Malawian sub-ethnic groups, which collectively solidified their ancestral commonalities through culture. Migrant Chewa, Manganja, Yao, Tumbuka and Ngoni who generally liaised through a creole Chewa language also forged a common identity through *Gule Wamkulu* rites and dances. As noted above, not all Malawian diaspora were Chewa nor were all Chewa speakers Malawians. But while various groups were distinct, they generally spoke *ChiChewa/Nyanja* language, and over the years joined the popular *Nyau* in a bid to identify with their ancestral home. The majority of such initiates were second- and third-generation Malawian descendants born in Zimbabwe; had never been to Malawi, but always

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with Edward Malunga.

<sup>86</sup> Personal observations from Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West province.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Brazil Chiromo.

associated themselves with the country of their forefathers. One such person was Brighton Banda born to Yao parents in 1989 in the Banket farming area. He reasoned that he joined *Nyau* because it was the closest he could come to the land of his ancestry, his motherland, Malawi.<sup>88</sup> By incorporating Malawian descendants, *Nyau* societies enhanced their social significance in the post-independence setting.

Syncretism was also exhibited by regional migrant *Nyau* societies. In essence, post-independent Zimbabwean *Nyau* mutated into a fusion of traditional Malawian and contemporary Zambian *Gule Wamkulu* dances. Explaining the nuances and eventual fusion between Zambian and Malawian dance forms, Wemba pointed out that Malawian *Gule Wamkulu* is more traditional, reclusive, strict and intimidating than Zambian *Nyau*.<sup>89</sup> Malawian dancers ruggedly wear feather masks; make use of five to seven drums during performances and do not use whistles.<sup>90</sup> Zambian dancers have stylish attires; habitually wear commercial rubber masks imported from South Africa and matching uniforms; have four drums, whistles and rattles.<sup>91</sup> Both employ a minimum of three women, known as *Man'ombe*, as backing vocals to sing traditional songs.<sup>92</sup> Zambian and Malawian *Nyau* secret societies have over the years bonded. Such synthesis was exemplified by the Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* Club whose members include: Isaac and Lameck Chaponda, and Edward Malunga from Zambia; Brazil and Alfred Chiromo, the two Chikundas from Mozambique; Aaron Wemba, Brighton Banda and Papura Pongolani from Malawi.<sup>93</sup> This weave of cultures or what Homi Bhabha terms 'hybridity' consolidated syncretic relations among Malawian and Zambian *Nyau* cultures.<sup>94</sup>

Many *Nyau* dance clubs emerged after independence that by the late 1990s, about 450 dance groups existed with membership in excess of over 20,000 members.<sup>95</sup> Almost every major Zimbabwean mine, as well as migrant-dominated urban and farm localities had a *Nyau* club.

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Brighton Banda, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Aaron Wemba.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Isaac Chaponda.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> H.K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge, 1990.

<sup>95</sup> A. Moyo, 'Nyau Gun for Prophet Magaya', *Sunday Mail*, 17 May 2015.

The dance groups had their own names, songs and dance routines. These include the Chegutu *Nyau* club, the Chitungwiza-based Amanyawa under the leadership of Albert Luke Suwane, Zikuvave Zambia from Kwekwe, Zikuvave Gure Malawi from Zvishavane, Tagwilizana in Mbare, Mufakose Gule in Mufakose, Dalny Gule in Chakari, DZ *Nyau* in Dzivarasekwa Harare, Kitsiyatota in Alaska and Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* club in Banket, amongst hundreds others. The Zimbabwe National Dance Organisation of Gure, under the presidency of Kennedy Kachuruka, administered the community of *Nyau* dancers. The organisation represents traditional dancers and has a mandate to preserve their culture. By the late 1990s *Nyau* was deemed part of the Zimbabwean local culture and had entrenched itself on the annual national and cultural calendars of the country.

Local Zimbabwean communities came to accept the practice for its entertainment value. A *Gule Wamkulu* performance brought people together in times of celebration and mourning. The practice became part of the everyday cosmology, which the migrant diaspora shared with local communities. It became what David Chaney termed 'part of daily activities that are so widely shared so much that they have become unremarkable.'<sup>96</sup> *Nyau* clubs gradually began to incorporate indigenous Zimbabweans through enrolment by initiation, especially in the 1990s. Tagwilizana in Mbare and other groups such as Mufakose *Gule* in Harare recruited Zimbabweans.<sup>97</sup> The Ayrshire Mine *Nyau* club also acted as a platform for societal integration between migrant descendants and locals. It enrolled local people such as Anderson Moyo, William Goworo, Evans Chisi and Simon Mangwiro into their group.<sup>98</sup> Many locals accepted *Nyau* as part of the community. According to Lovemore Marambire, the group 'constitutes part of our leisure and occasionally amuses and entertains us through its unique performances.'<sup>99</sup> The syncretism reduced suspicions about the nature of the *Nyau* culture and its members. It also testified that just as identity, diasporic culture is malleable, fluid, dynamic and endlessly hybridized, as migrants become permanent settlers or diaspora.

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<sup>96</sup> D. Chaney, *Cultural Change and Everyday Life*, London: Palgrave, 2002, p. 34.

<sup>97</sup> A. Rushesha, *Nyau Dancers Gain Popularity*, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/entertainment/music/61867/Nyau-dancers-gain-popularity.html>, 30, October, 2012 [accessed 15 May 2015].

<sup>98</sup> Interview with William Goworo, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Lovemore Marambire, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 02 January 2013.



## b) Military Mimicry and *Beni* Dances

Cultural integration in the post-colony was also realised through *Beni* dance. It emerged during the colonial period and like *Gule Wamkulu*, came to be identified as a migrant Malawian motif in Zimbabwe. *Beni* was a product of the First World War when African ex-servicemen, mainly Yao who had served as *Askaris* in the KAR regiment in East Africa. *Beni* is a corruption of the term 'band'; the dance originally satirised the European military obsession with marching and parades, before developing into a more specific form of its own. Reporting to the Nyasaland Chief Commissioner of Police and Chief Inspector of Prisons in 1921, the Southern Rhodesian Chief Commissioner of Police, Major F. Stephens, stated that:

*Beni* was first introduced into this protectorate during the war by *Askari* who had seen it in German East Africa...the natives taking part in the dance were obliged to be well dressed, and either used parts of uniforms or European clothing.<sup>100</sup>

Drills took place on Saturdays and Sundays in railway and mining compounds, dummy guns and sticks being used in place of firearms. The participants were mainly 'Blantyre natives', instructed by ex-soldiers who served in one or other of the African regiments during the Great War.<sup>101</sup> *Beni's* organogram was closely modelled upon European military conceptions, with dancing 'officers' ranked from Field-Marshal, General, Gross Admiral, Admiral, Hauptmann, down to Sergeant and Corporal.<sup>102</sup> Such mimicry of the imperial presence through appropriation of the European military theatre by the *Beni* dancers was a form of cultural resistance to colonial order. In the opinion of Bhabha, mimicry emerges as a representation of a difference that is itself a disavowal; a sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualises power and poses an imminent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, due to the military nature of the dances, colonial authorities were initially worried about *Beni's* possible ulterior political and labour motives. Reports produced by NCs describing the nature of the dances concluded, however that they posed no threat.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> NAZ N3/23/2, *Beni* Dances and Societies, 27 July 1921.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, Natives: Organised in Compounds, 1 September 1922.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, Notes on the *Beni* and Kindred Societies in Tanganyika Territory, 27 July 1921.

<sup>103</sup> For details see Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*, 28, 1984, p. 126. See also Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 2004.

<sup>104</sup> MNA S2/1/21, Native Customs: Beni Dance, 1921-28; MNA S2/11/21, Activities and Significance of the Beni Dance (notes by Captain Sydney Fairbairn), 1921; NAZ N3/23/2, *Beni* Dances and Societies, 27 July 1921, and NAZ N3/23/2, *Beni* Dances and Societies: Natives: Organised in Compounds, 1 September 1922.

## *Beni* Dances in Malawi and Zimbabwe



Images adapted from <https://www.google.co.za/search?q=beni+dances> [accessed 15 May 2015].

Unlike other cultural forms, *Beni* became integrative during the colonial period. Former leader of the Dalny Mine *Beni* Club during the 1990s, India Danda, explained that ex-Askari Yao increasingly accepted anyone interested in *Beni*, because it was not secretive and was a popular pastime in the compounds.<sup>105</sup> These syncretic characteristics carried over into the post-colonial period, especially with other non-Yao Malawian migrants, Zambians, Mozambicans and local Shona communities joining the dance groups. One of the latter was Simbarashe Mlambo, a Zimbabwean from Zhombe communal lands, who became part of the Dalny Mine *Beni* Club in 1993. He explained that he was attracted to *Beni* the very first time he saw the group performing during the April 1992 independence celebrations at Dalny Mine stadium and he made it his goal to become a member.<sup>106</sup> India Danda pointed out that while their club had been originally composed of Yao dancers, they successively enrolled local people into the group.<sup>107</sup> They also had female vocalists and dancers, with one renowned female dancer being Dorcas Musaliwa, who was often showered with gifts for her dancing dexterity.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Interview with India Danda, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 9 May 2014.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Simbarashe Mlambo, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 9 May 2014.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with India Danda.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

*Beni* performances raised funds for members. Danda explained that 'our group used to travel to surrounding mines and farms, as well as perform locally for a fee and this money was routinely invested in buying various paraphernalia: uniforms, military caps, drums and whistles, for the group.'<sup>109</sup> Some of the money was saved by their treasurer, Bula, for use by members in times of hardship.<sup>110</sup> This financial function had roots in the colonial era. The Southern Rhodesian Chief Commissioner of Police, Major F. Stephens reported that ex-*Askari* dancers made a living by visiting different localities to organize dances and collecting fees.<sup>111</sup> Prior to the year 2000 *Beni* continued to be part of the social life in Zimbabwean mines and urban areas with performances during public events, festivals, local and national holidays. It gradually fizzled out due to closure of mines and economic meltdown of the new millennium.

### c) Post-1980 Mutual Aid Societies

Post-colonial integration between migrant communities and local people was reinforced through mutual aid, self-help or kindred societies, which have been historicized in chapter three (pp. 116-19). While such organisations had led to tensions between migrants and local African labour and nationalist elite during the colonial period, they became important platforms of syncretism and self-reliance as the post-1980 environment turned increasingly hostile. They played an important role in holding people together in times of crisis such as funerals, illness and other misfortunes. Cormack explains that these societies were a product of urban living and appear to have evolved to aid migrants who found themselves facing problems in a strange and hostile environment.<sup>112</sup> According to Hall, 'these societies provided mutual help and were examples of self-reliance in practice that generally offered a measure of financial security in the event of bereavement and also catered for some of the other social needs of their members.'<sup>113</sup> The societies functioned as self-supporting social networks through which migrant descendants improve their welfare in the diaspora.<sup>114</sup> Networks became crucial self-support platforms that advised members when a death occurred; met the cost of funerals (burial, coffin, providing food and transport for mourners); visit sick members;

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> NAZ N3/23/2, *Beni Dances and Societies*, 27 July 1921.

<sup>112</sup> I. Cormack, *Towards Self-Reliance: Urban Social Development in Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1983, p. 15.

<sup>113</sup> Hall, 'Self-Reliance in Practice', p. 49.

<sup>114</sup> I. Cormack, *Towards Self-Reliance*, p. 15.

pay hospital fees; give loans to members and organise social gatherings. The networks also met their latent needs like easing the trauma experienced by the migrant to new settings by enabling him to enjoy a 'psychological sense of security'.<sup>115</sup>

Focusing specifically on Yaos in the mining areas of Kadoma in Mashonaland West province, kindred societies became institutions of coping and adapting to the anxieties of the post-1980 period, as well as integration with indigenous communities. Kadoma was and is still surrounded by various mines that were once vibrant prior to the economic meltdown of the new millennium. These included Dalny Mine (Chakari), Deresia, Golden Valley, Patchway, Empress Mine and Eiffel Flats. A number of migrant Yaos worked in these mines before the ESAP-induced retrenchments of the 1990s. At each of these mines, the Yao were known for popularising chief-based welfare organizations amongst themselves. Chiefly structures from southern Malawi were imported to their work places in Zimbabwe. At Dalny Mine, for instance, three chiefs governed the Yao community: Katuli, Mponda and Kawinga; these existed in rural Malawi as well. The chiefs were customarily older first-generation migrant males still employed at the mine. For example, in 1996 Chief Kawinga was 55-year-old Juma Jula.<sup>116</sup> Mbwana Batani also reigned as Chief Mponda between 1991 and 1996.<sup>117</sup> Each chief was elected for two five-year terms and had his own subjects or followers who contributed a monthly fee to their welfare coffers.<sup>118</sup> Ndubiwa noted that membership of societies generally ranged from 10 to 50 and in some cases exceeded 100.<sup>119</sup> Money was used in times of hardship, members borrowing funds whenever in need. Each chief was responsible for settling domestic disputes, harnessing resources for funerals, rituals and annual religious festivities. For funerals, all Yao chiefs contributed part of their members' welfare fund towards the occasion. The whole community contributed food stuffs especially mealie-meal, utensils and firewood. No thrift function was of more importance than organising a funeral; death in a foreign land was a nightmare of the migrant thus, it was socialised.<sup>120</sup> In many cases, funeral assistance was extended to non-members within the mining community

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<sup>115</sup> Hall, 'Self-Reliance in Practice', p. 52.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Juma Jula.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Mbwana Batani.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Juma Jula.

<sup>119</sup> M. Ndubiwa, 'Bulawayo Municipal African Township, City of Bulawayo, Housing and Amenities Department', Occasional Paper No 2, 1974.

<sup>120</sup> Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 134.

including indigenous families. Jula explained that ‘funeral assistance was irrespective of membership...our mutual aid societies treated every mineworkers’ family as part of the community regardless of ancestry and we assisted by any means necessary.’<sup>121</sup>

The societies’ thrift function proved useful against hardships faced by the diaspora during droughts and ESAP. Useni Daudi from Golden Valley Mine, near Kadoma remembered relying on his local welfare society after his retrenchment in 1995. ‘I could not go back to *kumudzi* (Malawi) because I was a *Machona*, surviving on my small retrenchment package and borrowing from *laundi* society in times of need.’<sup>122</sup> 84 year old Gerald Msusa, a Yao traditional healer from Gomo Farm, Chakari stated that ‘I occasionally borrowed money from our Yao society for subsistence during the drought and ESAP years and always repaid it after raising funds from my healing profession.’<sup>123</sup> *Laundi* was important even for those employed. Kenias Saidi recalled that his father sometimes borrowed money for his school fees in the 1990s from the welfare society because of low wages at Dalny Mine.<sup>124</sup> Non-member indigenous people and migrant Mozambicans and Zambians, as well as non-Yaos were allowed to borrow from Yao *laundi* credit unions with an interest fee. By forging formalised associations, migrant descendants pooled their financial resources for the common weal and strove to consolidate a moral order within their communities.<sup>125</sup> Moller concluded that the societies’ economic and self-help aspect fulfilled a social function that enabled communities to mutually bond in times of celebrations and hardships.<sup>126</sup>

In addition to giving loans to members in time of difficulty, the organizations enjoyed regular drinking sessions and major annual social gatherings.<sup>127</sup> At the end of each year, all three Yao chiefs and their members congregated at the local Dalny Mine mosque for a week long annual religious festival known as *Siyara*. Each chief and his followers contributed to the festival. *Siyara* festival was also a time to meet Yaos from across the country. Bus and truckloads of

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<sup>121</sup> Interview with Juma Jula.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Useni Daudi, Golden Valley Mine, 10 May 2014.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Gerald Msusa.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Kenias Saidi, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>125</sup> Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*, p. 136.

<sup>126</sup> V. Moller, *Comparative Mobility and Urban Commitment in 3 Salisbury African Townships: Harare (Hostels), Mufakose and Kambuzuma*, Report No 8, Department of Sociology, University of Zimbabwe, 1975.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

Yaos came from as far as Renco Mine near Masvingo, Hwange Colliery, Mazoe Mine, Shamva, Bindura Nickel and Gwanda.<sup>128</sup> The celebrations involved feasts, songs and dances and, like the *Gule Wamkulu* dances, offered the chance for integration with local audiences who marvelled and enjoyed the event. Reminiscing about *Siyara* festivals, Charles Makeke, a local mine worker from Gokwe, said that '*Siyara* was always an interesting event of the 1980s and 1990s in Chakari because we would relax and enjoy ourselves as the *Achawa* (Yao) celebrated their culture.'<sup>129</sup> The mine authorities also acknowledged *Siyara* and often assisted with donations to the celebrations. Overall, such cultural occasions enabled further engagement, bonding and networking amongst migrant descendants and with local communities.

#### **d) *Chinamwali*: Male and Female Circumcision Rites**

A cultural practice that had kindred functions was the Yao male and female circumcision rite, popularly known as *chinamwali*.<sup>130</sup> This communal event attracted Yaos from neighbouring mines and farms coming to celebrate youth initiation. Every August during school holidays, Yao communities conducted *chinamwali* on mines and farms. As noted in chapter two, the Yao were originally Muslim traders who originated from the East African coast (Tanzania in particular) settling in southern Malawi and central Mozambique.<sup>131</sup> Their cultural and religious cosmology consequently rotated around their Islamic beliefs. Circumcision ceremonies were an important ritual meant to take Yao youth and other interested locals to an exalted status of adulthood. It combined a surgical act with cultural teachings.<sup>132</sup> *Chinamwali* was important in symbolizing and exclusively marking the Yao identity. It had remained closed to outsiders lasting until the late 1990s and early 2000s when male circumcision was linked to HIV/AIDS prevention.

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<sup>128</sup> Interview with Juma Julia.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Charles Makeke, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014.

<sup>130</sup> For a more detailed description of *chinamwali* see Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities, Identity Construction and Social Mobilisation against HIV/AIDS', pp. 293-307, and Daimon, 'Our Religious Culture; Your Female Genital Mutilation': The Yao Community and Controversies over Female Circumcision in Zimbabwe', Paper presented at the AISA Young Graduates and Scholars 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Thohondoau, South Africa, 2012.

<sup>131</sup> A. Thorold, 'The Yao Muslims: Religion and Social Change in Southern Malawi'.

<sup>132</sup> G.M. Sanderson, 'Relationships among the Wayao', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 50, 1920, pp. 369-76; Sanderson, 'Inyago: The Picture-models of the Yao Initiation Ceremonies', *Nyasaland Journal*, 8, 2, 1955, pp. 36-57, and G. Kubik, 'Boys Circumcision School of the Yao - A Cinematographic Documentation at Chief Makanjila's Village in Malawi, 1967', *Review of Ethnology*, 6, 1978, pp. 1-7.

Like *Gule Wamkulu*, Yao circumcision was contentious. It acted as a local social movement characterised by covert cultural forms of resistance firstly against colonial and missionary condemnation. From the 1910s onwards, reports by colonial NCs and missionaries castigated the practice because of its alleged primitiveness and deaths of initiates.<sup>133</sup> Despite NCs and missionaries' attempts to stop male circumcision the Yao conducted it behind closed doors in sacred bush camps known as *Jando*. In post-colonial Zimbabwe, they continued to use their rite to resist domination and assert their humanity. The Yao found solace in persisting with the practice around which they constructed and negotiated their collective identity and mobilized against challenges in Zimbabwe.

*Chinamwali* became less common because of economic constraints and HIV/AIDS-related clinical circumcision. However, the resultant global donor interest in male circumcision made the Yao principal actors in the context of the epidemic in Zimbabwe. It changed from an ethnically defined formation into a social movement precisely through the political and medical repositioning of male circumcision in the broader context of HIV prevention and development discourses surrounding it.<sup>134</sup> It became a platform for social mobilization against HIV and AIDS, a contentious process, involving various levels of negotiation, reconstruction and reconfiguration of the practice (the surgical act and teachings) and their identity, from within and without. Previously many Yao people were not aware that their ancient cultural practice had health benefits. Musa Chetambara noted that 'we just conducted circumcision as per cultural custom and did not know its health benefits against the pandemic until now.'<sup>135</sup> Even though surgical circumcision was now conducted in clinics and hospitals, *chinamwali* was generally framed as a form of African social activism that mobilized individuals to act in response to both their marginalized position in society and, more recently, the fear of AIDS.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> From the 1910s deaths caused by wrong circumcision methods or mistakes like cutting/slitting of the *glans* penis together with the foreskin or failure of wounds to heal leading to a medical complication known as *sepsis* were reported. For example, in 1913, three circumcision related deaths were reported by the Native Commissioner of the Hartley district, E.G. Howman. Another death caused by *septic nephritis*, which is often associated with circumcision was also reported in 1914 by Native Commissioner, L.C. Meredith in Hartley. See NAZ S2184, Native Commissioner Hartley, Annual Report for year ended December 1913, and NAZ S2184, Native Commissioner Gatooma and Hartley, L.C. Meredith, Annual Report for year ended December 1914.

<sup>134</sup> Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities, Identity Construction and Social Mobilisation against HIV/AIDS', p. 294.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Musa Chetambara, Circumcision Doctor, Inchefu Farm, Raffingora, 13 May 2010.

<sup>136</sup> The government has been providing medical doctors to facilitate clinical circumcision of Yao youths/initiates in public hospitals, before the Yao elders are taken to the initiates to the circumcision schools for the duration of the initiation rite. In January 2010, the NSC in conjunction with Harare Central Hospital circumcised about

Interest in circumcision as a way of preventing HIV infection led to positive perceptions, promotion and better reception of Yaos and other migrant communities that practice circumcision by the Zimbabwean state, citizens and donors. Many organisations began promoting and assisting Yao mobilization efforts through public health campaigns, advertisements and even through persuasion. State and donor sponsored calendars, T-shirts and caps were produced and distributed across the whole country, publicising the benefits of male circumcision in fighting HIV.<sup>137</sup> The country's major roads and towns were dotted with billboards promoting male circumcision. Members of the Yao community, especially traditional circumcisers, were incorporated by the state health and donor agencies into professional training programmes. Yao youths/initiates underwent clinical circumcision in public hospitals, before being taken by elders to *Jando* circumcision schools/camps for the duration of the initiation rite.<sup>138</sup> With the AIDS links and benefits, attitudes towards Yao circumcision have changed. Ishmael Mwanyalu observes that 'circumcision has become an intrinsic part of the real modern man and now most Yao are keen and free to talk about their status and experiences in public.'<sup>139</sup>

### **Golden Age: Prominent *Mabhurandaya* in Independent Zimbabwe**

While culture was illuminating Malawian identities across Zimbabwe, other platforms for expression and prominence also emerged after 1980. Despite the above-mentioned anxieties, the 1980s and 1990s were a golden period for some Malawian descendants. Second- and third-generation Malawians excelled in numerous fields and occupations, entrenching themselves within post-colonial Zimbabwe's socio-economic fabric and gained prominence and popularity in the process. Some established dominant enclaves in sports, social entertainment (music and theatre to be precise) and to some extent in politics. A number of

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fifty Yao initiates during the school holidays. The state and donors have intensified their clinical circumcision of the Yao and other interested Zimbabweans such that about 70,000 men have been circumcised since the launch of the campaign in 2009. The state have collaborated with the Yao to facilitate the training of their circumcision doctors so as to professionalize their occupation. Members of the Yao community, especially the traditional circumcisers, are also being approached by the state health and donor agencies for professional training. For details see Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities, Identity Construction and Social Mobilisation against HIV/AIDS', pp. 293-307.

<sup>137</sup> Daimon, 'Yao Migrant Communities, Identity Construction and Social Mobilisation against HIV/AIDS', p. 300.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Ishmael Mwanyalu, Yao Graduate, Inchefu Farm, Raffingora, May 13, 2010.



Zimbabweans of Malawian origin made in-roads into local and national politics. The country's first president, Canaan Banana, for instance, was said to have been born of a Malawian father and a Ndebele mother.<sup>140</sup> It was also believed that post-independent Zimbabwe's first finance minister, Bernard Chidzero, was a second-generation Malawian. The same was said of Tendai Biti, the former MDC-T secretary general who was later given the task of guiding Zimbabwe's economy out of crisis during the post-2008 GNU period as finance minister. Local and national government had and still have scores of Malawian descendants in top civic posts running rural and urban administration. The most notable of these was Francis Phiri, who until his death in mid-September 2000 was mayor of Masvingo in southern Zimbabwe. He was a very popular administrator who brought much development to the small town.<sup>141</sup>

For a long time, Robert Mugabe, was thought by many to be of Malawian origin himself, primarily because of the secrecy surrounding the identity of his father. The media occasionally alleged that Mugabe's father was a Malawian immigrant, claiming that Mugabe never forgave him for abandoning his mother, Bona, for another woman in Bulawayo.<sup>142</sup> It is claimed that Mugabe's father was born Masuzyo Matibili. Masuzyo, when translated into the local Shona language, means Nhamo (tribulations) and Nhamo was Mugabe's late son name who died in Ghana in the 1960s. Matibili's father was Chatunga and Chatunga is Mugabe's youngest son. It is also a common name among the Tumbukas in Malawi. On several occasions, Mugabe has described Zimbabweans of foreign descent as totem-less (see next chapter). Ironically, the private media sees Mugabe as topping the list of totem-less Zimbabweans, followed by his nephews and niece Leo Mugabe, Patrick and Sarudzai Zhuwao, sired by late his sister, Sabina. The perceived dominance of Malawi in supplying statesmen to the region was also evident in Zambia where its first and second post-independent presidents, Kenneth Kaunda and Frederick Chiluba, were allegedly both of Malawian ancestry.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> J. Chikowero, 'I Too Sing Zimbabwe: The Conflict of Ethnicity in Popular Zimbabwean Music', *African Journal of New Poetry*, 5, 2006, p. 121.

<sup>141</sup> 'Stakes High in Masvingo Mayoral Polls', *Zimbabwe Standard*, 18 March 2001.

<sup>142</sup> D. Molokele, 'Is Mugabe Zimbabwean', *New Zimbabwe*, 11 December 2009, and Staff Reporter, 'Mugabe's father was from Malawi', *Nyasa Times*, 11 April 2007.

<sup>143</sup> Daimon, 'Politics of Othering and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 140.

A number of popular Zimbabwean musicians have been of Malawian ancestry. These include Alick Macheso, Nicholas Zacharia, Simon Chimbetu, Daiton and Josphat Somanje, and Fred Manjalima. The most popular Macheso revolutionised Zimbabwean secular (*sungura*) music with a trademark bass guitar that has influenced many other artistes over the years. Dubbed the 'King of Sungura', Macheso was born on 10 June 1968 in Bindura. He rose from working as a juvenile farm labourer in Shamva to stardom. His mother, Emilia Macheso, was Mozambican, whilst his father Hudson Chisale, a drifter, who broke up with Emilia and left Alick in his infancy to be looked after his uncles, was Malawian.<sup>144</sup> His mixed parentage inspired him to speak and sing in five languages - Shona, Chichewa, Sena, Venda and Lingala. 'My father would always play music in the compounds after work, entertaining in pubs and at drinking parties thus, people said he was directionless, but I inherited the gift of music from him,' he recalled.<sup>145</sup> Alick was able to nurture his talent with the help of his maternal uncles, Silver, Julius and Rogers Macheso. The farm environment did not provide many opportunities. He was forced to drop out of Mashambanyama Secondary School at Form two for lack of funds. In 1982, at the youthful age of 15 Macheso arrived in Harare in search of fame and fortune. He went on a music-inspired journey, joining several bands (Seaside Band, Vuka Boys) mostly *sungura*-playing outfits.<sup>146</sup>

In 1988 Macheso joined hands with Nicholas Zacharia forming the popular Khiama Boys band. Khiama is a Chewa/Yao word meaning music and their five-member band was an ensemble reflective of their Malawian ancestry, consisting of three second-generation Malawians: Nicholas and his young brother Zacharia and Alick. After a successful ten-year stint with the Khiama Boys, Macheso went solo in 1998, forming the Orchestra Mberikwazvo.<sup>147</sup> His turning point came with his third album, *Simbaradzo*, in 1999. With 350,000 copies sold, the album became Zimbabwe's best-ever selling album, a record which has yet to be broken.<sup>148</sup> His discography continued with more than half a dozen successful albums; making him a

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<sup>144</sup> 'Malawian claims to be father of Zimbabwean music ace Alick Macheso: Demands DNA test', *Nyasa Times*, 3 February 2013, <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2013/02/03/malawian-claims-to-be-father-of-zimbabwean-music-ace-alick-macheso-demands-dna-test/> [accessed 12 May 2015].

<sup>145</sup> R. Mukondiwa, 'Life Stories: Alick Macheso', <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/showbiz-7819-Life+Stories+Alick+Macheso/showbiz.aspx> [accessed 12 May 2015].

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> S. Chinyani, 'The Truth about Alick Macheso', *New Zimbabwe*, 26 April 2012.

<sup>148</sup> 'Alick Macheso Biography', <http://www.alickmacheso.blogspot.com/2009/11/alick-macheso-biography.html> [accessed 12 May 2015].

household name with hundreds of thousands of albums sold and numerous international tours. In recent years Macheso has risen to become an advertising face for many corporations with his recent achievement being the Red Cross brand ambassador in Zimbabwe.

**Alick Macheso: Zimbabwe's Most Popular Musician**



Images adapted from <https://www.google.co.za/search?q=alick+macheso&biw> [accessed 12 May 2015].

Macheso and Zacharia's articulation of Malawian identities was consolidated by other fellow musician descendants. Born in Zimbabwe in 1960, popular musician, Simon Chimbetu, traced his roots to Malawi and continued to stick by his Yao traditions until his death in 2004. The Somanje brothers, Josphat and the late Daiton, born and bred in Marondera were also of Yao origin. They formed Pengaudzoke band and produced numerous hits influenced by their Yao roots. Fred Manjalima, a third-generation Malawian born in 1978 started out as a comedian, turning to music in post-2000. A trademark of these musicians was the transnational ties maintained with their ancestry through their music. Virtually, all of them have a tradition of including songs and phrases in their *native* Malawian languages, Chewa and Yao in particular, to signify their foreign roots. Zacharia, Macheso and Chimbetu have numerous Chewa songs on their respective albums. Macheso's song titled *Mundikumbuke* (Remember Me) produced on his best-selling album *Simbaradzo* was so popular that it topped local charts; the same applied to Chimbetu's 1998 song *Chauta* (God). The artistes' popularity led to their appropriation as Zimbabweans regardless of their foreign ancestry. Chikowero suggests that Zimbabweans regard these music icons as 'heroes' as evident from the cult following some of these personalities of foreign origin have achieved by making Zimbabweans in general proud.<sup>149</sup> Their music has helped in the general appreciation and integration of migrant descendants in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwean journalism also benefited from the expertise of the Malawian diaspora. Bill Saidi, a renowned Southern African journalist, worked for both the public and private media in a career spanning almost 60 years. He was born on 8 May 1937 in Mbare, Harare. His father, Agonelepi Saidi, a tailor by profession was Malawian whilst his mother was Shona.<sup>150</sup> Saidi became a journalist in 1957, joining the only daily newspaper that covered African news, the *African Daily News* a year after its establishment in 1956.<sup>151</sup> He also edited *Parade* magazine

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<sup>149</sup> Chikowero, 'I Too Sing Zimbabwe', p. 121.

<sup>150</sup> B. Saidi, *The African Journalist 'Not Endangered' Anymore*, <http://www.billsaidimemoirs.blogspot.com>, 17 June 2010 [accessed 12 May 2015].

<sup>151</sup> Before The African daily News came on scene in 1956, there was hardly any coverage of the 'African story' in Southern Rhodesia. There were only two weekly newspapers, *The Bantu Mirror* in Bulawayo and the *African Weekly* in Salisbury, aimed specifically at an urban African readership. For details see S. Dombo, 'Daily Struggles: Private Media, the State, and Democratic Governance in Zimbabwe in the Case of the *Africa Daily News* (1956-1964) and the *Daily News* (1999-2003)', PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2014, and Saidi, *Combating Racism and That Other Thing*, <http://www.billsaidimemoirs.blogspot.com>, 23 July 2010 [accessed 12 May 2015].

and *Bwalo la Nyasaland*, a weekly newspaper aimed at Africans in Nyasaland.<sup>152</sup> Working as a young reporter under editor Nathan Shamuyarira, he learned his trade before the newspaper was shut down by the Rhodesian regime in 1963. According to Lawrence Vambe, 'the African Newspaper organisation was the only forum for the black point of view and consequently was looked upon generally as a subversive element by the Rhodesian government and the majority of the whites.'<sup>153</sup> Saidi then moved to Zambia in 1963 to become production editor of the *Central African Mail*; renamed the *Zambian Times* after Zambia's independence. He spent 17 years in that country and returned to independent Zimbabwe in 1980 to join the government owned Zimpapers as assistant editor of the *Herald*.<sup>154</sup> After nine increasingly frustrating years at Zimpapers, Saidi joined the private media, starting with the *Standard* newspaper in 1988; followed by brief stint at the *Daily Gazette* and then the popular and critical, *Daily News*, from 1999 to 2003.

Throughout his career Saidi, encountered numerous African nationalists and leaders, many of whom he annoyed because of his critical journalism. At the *African Daily News*, he was sought by Rhodesian police on treason charges for inciting Africans against the government.<sup>155</sup> Forced into exile in 1963 in Zambia, he had a face-to-face encounter with President Kenneth Kaunda in 1971 who quizzed him: 'Are you a spy for Ian Smith.'<sup>156</sup> He was eventually fired from the *Zambian Times* on orders from President Kaunda in 1975 for his anti-establishment reports. A year before, Saidi had been barred from entering the country of his forefathers, Malawi, by Hastings Kamuzu Banda's regime for meddling in Malawian politics. He recalled that:

I was shocked when, on arrival at Chileka Airport in Blantyre, I was very politely asked to stand aside...after a few tense moments - for me - I was handed a form to sign written in large print - PROHIBITED IMMIGRANT.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Saidi, *How a Column can Change your Life*, <http://www.billsaidimemoirs.blogspot.com>, 2 August 2010 [accessed 12 May 2015].

<sup>153</sup> NAZ Oral 233, Interview with Lawrence Vambe by I.J. Johnstone, Willovale, Harare, 1 June 1983.

<sup>154</sup> Saidi, *Zimpapers: Ten Years of Turbulence*, <http://www.billsaidimemoirs.blogspot.com>, 25 July 2010 [accessed 12 May 2015].

<sup>155</sup> A. Milazi, 'Zimbabwe: Bill Saidi's Penchant for Annoying Leaders', *Financial Mail (SA)*, 14 November 2003.

<sup>156</sup> Saidi, *How a Column can Change your Life*

<sup>157</sup> Saidi, *Prohibited from Capacity to Expose*, <http://www.billsaidimemoirs.blogspot.com>, 16 July 2010 [accessed 12 May 2015].

Such notoriety and clashes with the authorities characterised his career. As editor of the *Daily Gazette*, Saidi broke the story of Mugabe's affair with his secretary, now wife, Grace Mugabe in 1994, leading to stern warnings from the country's vice-president, Joshua Nkomo.<sup>158</sup> He was fired as a result and the newspaper eventually folded in December 1994.<sup>159</sup> Saidi incurred incessant government wrath during his stint at the *Daily News*, the first private daily paper in independent Zimbabwe.<sup>160</sup> The bitter irony was that he was crucified by his first editor and mentor, Nathan Shamuyarira, later Zimbabwe's information minister prior to his replacement by Jonathan Moyo in the new millennium. Often accused of supporting opposition politics, the *Daily News* was repeatedly harassed by the government through arrests, death threats and bomb attacks.<sup>161</sup> After the *Daily News* was banned in 2003, Saidi re-joined the *Standard* where he received a bullet in an envelope, with the warning 'Watch Your Step' after publishing a cartoon of baboons laughing their heads off after reading the payslip of a soldier in the Zimbabwean army.<sup>162</sup> After nearly half a century in journalism, Saidi retired in 2008 but returned to assist the struggling *Herald*, later moving back to the *Daily News*.<sup>163</sup>

Malawian golden age in post-independent Zimbabwe was replicated in sports, particularly by footballers. Moses Chunga, Benjani Mwaruwari; both at one time Zimbabwe national soccer team captains, Kembo Chunga, Friday Phiri and many others were celebrated footballers. The legendary player and coach Moses Chunga, nicknamed 'The Razorman' because of his dribbling skills, was born on October 17, 1965 to parents of Malawian origin.<sup>164</sup> Chunga was popular in local footballing circles and in Belgium where he played for Eendracht Aalst. Together with his elder brother Kembo, Moses played for the popular Dynamos Football Club. Widely regarded as one of the greatest football players to ever emerge from Zimbabwe, he was ranked with other Zimbabwean football greats such as Peter Ndlovu and George Shaya. 20 years after leaving Eendracht Aalst, he received a hero's welcome and a standing ovation

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<sup>158</sup> Saidi, *A Call from Joshua Nkomo*, <http://www.billsaidimemoirs.blogspot.com>, 21 June 2010 [accessed 12 May 2015].

<sup>159</sup> D. Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, p. 126.

<sup>160</sup> G. Nyarota, *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsmen*, Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006, pp. 241-2.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, p. 303.

<sup>162</sup> Saidi, *The African Journalist 'Not Endangered' Anymore*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>164</sup> 'Moses Chunga Razorman: 100 Greatest Zimbabweans', [http://www.pindula.co.zw/Moses\\_Chunga](http://www.pindula.co.zw/Moses_Chunga), 17 July 2014 [accessed 12 May 2015].

from the clubs fans and management.<sup>165</sup> Chunga had the option of playing for the Malawi national team but just as Benjani Mwaruwari, he chose the Zimbabwean team. His achievements include being the only midfielder in Zimbabwe to score 45 goals in one season and the only Zimbabwean signatory of the Golden Book of the city of Aalst alongside others like Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.<sup>166</sup> Over the years, Chunga enjoyed success as a coach in the Zimbabwean Premier Soccer League with Gunners Football Club, a team he helped establish in early 2000.<sup>167</sup>

Another soccer great, who flew the Zimbabwean flag high on the international stage, Benjani Mwaruwari, was born on August 13, 1978 to Malawian parents. His father, Amon Mwaruwari, was born in Karonga village in northern Malawi on May 4, 1945.<sup>168</sup> Amos came to Zimbabwe in the early 1960s where he settled in the Headlands area before moving to Bulawayo in 1975, where he worked for Datlabs until retirement in 1986. Benjani began his football career at Young Blood, joining Highlanders Football Club juniors before moving to Lulu Rovers Football Club, Zimba Africa Rivers, University of Zimbabwe teams in Zimbabwe's Division one and eventually Air Zimbabwe Jets. His big break came when he joined Jomo Cosmos of South Africa, soon moving to Grasshoppers Zurich in Switzerland.<sup>169</sup> From then on Mwaruwari played for other clubs around Europe, including Auxerre, Portsmouth, Manchester City and Blackburn Rovers.<sup>170</sup> He was the first Zimbabwean to score in the UEFA Champions League and won the PSL Player of the Season and PSL Players' Player of the Season in South Africa.<sup>171</sup> He enjoyed a very impressive international career with the Zimbabwe national team, scoring goals and captaining the team until October 2010.

Some Malawian progenies established themselves as landlords (house owners) in Zimbabwe's major towns and cities. Most of these landlords are found in the high to medium density suburbs such as Mbare, Kambuzuma, Dzivarasekwa, Mufakose, Rugare and Highfield in Harare. During the colonial period and first decade of independence, about 70% of house

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<sup>165</sup> R. Sharuko, 'The Day Moses Chunga cried in Belgium', *Nehanda Radio*, 16 December, 2014.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Moses Chunga Rejoins Gunners, *Bulawayo News24*, 31 August 2012.

<sup>168</sup> 'Mwaruwari's Father Dies', *The Chronicle*, 30 March 2015, and 'Benjani Mwaruwari, Family and Football', *Bulawayo24News*, 6 April 2013.

<sup>169</sup> 'The Truth About: Benjani Mwaruwari', *New Zimbabwe*, 29 July 2009.

<sup>170</sup> M. Madyira, 'Benjani Revisits England Days', *Standard*, 31 August 2014.

<sup>171</sup> E. Muchinjo, 'Which Zimbos have played in the Uefa Champions League?', *Daily News*, 7 May 2014.

owners in these suburbs were migrants from the north. George Sedi acquired his house in Kambuzuma in 1965.<sup>172</sup> Many more are scattered in such post-colonially established suburbs like Glen View, Glen Norah, Budiriro, Hatcliffe, Chitungwiza. These include Kampira in Glen View 3, Saukani in Mbare, Wyson Chipiko, John Karonda and Austin Nyirenda in Hatcliffe, amongst thousands of migrant landlords in Harare.<sup>173</sup> Mozambicans also owned houses in Harare namely: Arumando Maritezeh in Chitungwiza, Fransisco Fakira in Mufakose, Pedro Gulamu in Glen Norah and Laisi Mundamawo in Kambuzuma.<sup>174</sup> Others are found in towns like Kadoma, Kwekwe, Gweru, Chiredzi, Norton and Chegutu near mining and agricultural areas or railway industries.

Urban property hegemony by non-indigenous Africans can be explained historically. Migrant labourers exploited municipality and company housing schemes within urban areas during the colonial and early post-independent periods to acquire and own urban accommodation at the expense of indigenous Zimbabweans. Although various workers were housed in the Matapi hostels in present-day Mbare, less-crowded suburbs such as Lonchivar, Rugare, Kambuzuma and Dzivarasekwa emerged in the 1950s to 1970s. Government or city councils offered African workers houses on a rent-to-buy basis, especially during the colonial period. In 1957, for example, the Rhodesian government offered two-roomed houses in Highfield Township, Salisbury at £90 by cash or through monthly instalments, three-roomed houses at about £150 and four-roomed houses at £250.<sup>175</sup> Companies such as the Rhodesia Railways had rent-to-buy housing schemes for their workers, a number of whom were Malawi and Mozambican migrants.<sup>176</sup> Migrant tenants and house owners turned these African townships into melting pots for various nationalities from Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, as well as local Ndebele and Shona speakers.<sup>177</sup> Migrant identities prevailed then and now. Kambuzuma suburb, for example, established in 1964, was christened by that name by Malawian and

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<sup>172</sup> Personal communication from Abraham Seda, Kambuzuma, Harare, 27 July 2015.

<sup>173</sup> Personal observations during fieldwork and informal encounters with migrant descendants during the August 2012 census.

<sup>174</sup> Personal communication from Abraham Seda.

<sup>175</sup> 'Tenants to Discuss Rents', *African Daily News*, 9 March 1957.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with B. Chihambakwe, NRZ Estates Officer, NRZ Head Office, by Abraham Seda, Harare, 17 May 2013.

<sup>177</sup> A.T. Seda, 'A Social History of Mozambican Labour Migrants in Rugare Township from 1965-2010', BA Honours in History Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 2013, pp. 18-9.



Mozambican migrant workers to mean truth telling.<sup>178</sup> Cultural practices like *Gule Wamkulu* and *Chinamwali* characterised these migrant dominated urban spaces, especially Rugare, Epworth, Mbare and Dzivarasekwa in Harare.

The dominance of migrant landlords was cemented after independence. According to Seda, 'after 1980, the government/municipalities and companies initiated a program allowing urban tenants, the migrants included, to purchase houses they were living in.'<sup>179</sup> Prior to this, retiring workers for companies such as the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) were obliged to move out of company houses and in some instances forced to return to Malawi or Mozambique or look for alternative accommodation elsewhere.<sup>180</sup> On the other hand, many locals detested investing and owning urban housing properties until the late 1980s. Instead, they preferred devoting their income to developing their rural properties; which was for many the ideal idea of home. Locals often relinquished such accommodation whenever they returned to the 'reserves', because owning urban housing was regarded as a 'loss of their African *ubuntu*'.<sup>181</sup> Raftopoulos clarifies that many indigenous workers straddled their rural and urban lives, using wages earned in Harare to strengthen their rural basis and to fight off permanent dependence on wage labour.<sup>182</sup> As a result, northern migrants, whose rural homes were far away across the Zambezi River, wittingly or unwittingly took advantage and began occupying and acquiring urban housing properties. Because of this, Seda, who inherited his grandfathers', George Sedi, house in Kambuzuma noted that 'almost all my relatives from my grandfathers' side own a house in Harare.'<sup>183</sup>

Becoming landlords became a form of identity assumed by migrant descendants. It was an identity that over time commanded respect, but also generated 'xenophobic' animosity towards those of foreign origin. The general domination of the Malawian diaspora in African suburbs earned them an urban dweller identity, commonly caricatured as *mabwidi* by Zimbabweans. Wiseman Chirwa noted that Malawian domination of urban housing in

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<sup>178</sup> Personal communication from Vincent Chenzi, Kambuzuma, 17 May, 2014, and Victor Gwande, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 10 May 2015

<sup>179</sup> Seda, 'A Social History of Mozambican Labour Migrants', p. 26.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Wisdom Murwira, Glen View 3, Harare, 26 May 2014.

<sup>182</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', p. 82.

<sup>183</sup> Personal communication from Abraham Seda.

Zimbabwe was a source of tension and conflict.<sup>184</sup> Diasporic communities were sarcastically stereotyped as people lacking rural homes who had assumed or adopted an urban identity. Since virtually no migrant descendants had a rural homestead in Zimbabwe, they were viewed as societal failures who had lost their rural inheritance in favour of a European mode of life. Mbiba and Chiwanga explained that Malawians are sometimes called *mabwidi*, meaning foreigners from Malawi who have completely adopted an urban identity because of lack of an ancestral home in Zimbabwe and are thus deemed failures in society.<sup>185</sup> Nonetheless, being landlords cultivated a sense of belonging among diasporic communities as they could now point to a place they could call their own home. 'Regardless of what locals said, owning a house in town ensured that I now had a home in Zimbabwe and that I belonged here', said Abraham Kampira of Glen View in Harare.<sup>186</sup> Locals also envied and respected these landlords. Wisdom Murirwa pointed out that, 'Malawians were clever enough to acquire houses in towns, becoming our bosses; our landlords and we cannot take that away from them, they own us tenants and belong here.'<sup>187</sup>

After independence, migrant Malawian semi-skilled and skilled expertise excelled in specific industries such as mining, agriculture and railways. The Malawian diaspora commanded supervisory jobs on white commercial farms. In Chinhoyi and Banket farming areas, for instance, managers and foremen at most of the tobacco and maize farms were of Malawian origin. Shame Mzekezeke, a second-generation Malawian, started as a tractor driver at Stratford Farm in 1991, became a foreman in 1994 and eventually the overall farm manager in 1996 until the land reform programme.<sup>188</sup> At the same farm was Rueben N'ona Mbewe, a first-generation Ngoni from Balaka, Malawi. After working on various farms since his arrival in Zimbabwe in the 1950s, Rueben became an expert in tobacco nursing and curing. His expertise was in great demand at farms such as Bheri, Chitara, Harper and Stratford until his retirement in 1999.<sup>189</sup> James Asidi, a first-generation Yao migrant from Kalembo, Malawi,

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<sup>184</sup> Personal communication from Wiseman Chirwa, University of Malawi Chancellor College, Zomba, Malawi, 05 March 2015.

<sup>185</sup> B. Mbiba and P. Chiwanga, 'Death and The City in the context of HIV/AIDS: The Case of Harare', in Mbiba, (ed.), *Death and The City in East and Southern Africa*, Working Papers 10-13, The Urban and Peri-Urban Research Network (PERI-NET), 2006, pp. 19-32.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Abraham Kampira, Glen View 3, Harare, 26 May 2014.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Wisdom Murwira.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Shame Mzekezeke, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>189</sup> Interview with Samson Medi Mbewe.

started working as a chef in hotels before becoming a ZAPU cadre during the liberation war. After demobilisation, he sought work on white commercial farms around Banket, initially as a chef/cook, then as a tractor driver and ultimately as a renowned farm mechanic.<sup>190</sup> At Riverside farm, a second-generation Malawian descendant, Mamudu Manangwa was born on the farm in 1955 to a Malawian chef father, Ali Manangwa, and Zimbabwean mother, Eresi Manangwa. He started working there as a juvenile in tobacco fields in the late 1960s and early 1970s during which time he became interested in tractors. Eventually he became a tractor driver in 1975, then a farm mechanic in 1984.<sup>191</sup> By the 1990s, he had become one of the farm's three managers. Manangwa was also responsible for caring for large herds of livestock.

The mining industry continued to rely on the manpower of African diaspora after independence, with Malawian descendants forming the majority of the labour force. Indigenous Zimbabweans had traditionally shunned 'dirty and dangerous' underground mining jobs. This stereotype was illustrated by a popular local expression, '*Handishande mumugodhi nokuti handisi mbeva*' (I do not want to work underground like a mouse).<sup>192</sup> This trend continued until the late 1990s when the Zimbabwean crisis characterised by high levels of unemployment compelled desperate individuals to take previously 'dirty' jobs. Nonetheless, Malawian descendants continued to be prominent mine workers. A number of them were expert underground locomotive drivers, machine operators, bellmen, hoist drivers and gang leaders. Henry Banda Matekenya, for example, started working as a fuel attendant in Banket, moved on to Mhangura Mine in 1965 to work as an Assistant Shaft Bellman.<sup>193</sup> This heralded a new career in mining, spanning 42 years during which time he evolved from a bellman to a hoist driver, working on various mines such as Mazoe in 1970, Jumbo in 1980, Dalny in 1995, Frebles and Tompson in 1997, and Ayrshire mine in 1998 until his retirement in 2007.<sup>194</sup> Another Malawian migrant, Jackson Chibwana, first worked as a locomotive operator in mines around Johannesburg in 1966 before coming to Zimbabwe in 1975 to work at Dalny Mine as a hoist driver until 1997.<sup>195</sup> Mbwana Batani also started his work life in South

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Mamudu Manangwa, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>192</sup> Informal interaction with Godfrey Fox, Ayrshire Farm, 3 June 2014.

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana.

Africa under a *Wenela* contract, working as a locomotive driver at a gold mine in the Orange Free State.<sup>196</sup> At the end of his two year contract he went back to Malawi before coming to Zimbabwe in 1975 to work at Dalny Mine first as a locomotive operator for five years; a gang leader for ten years and finally as an Overseer Miner. He resigned from Dalny Mine after 22 years in 1997 and joined the Ayrshire Mine in Banket where his expertise as a supervisor of locomotive drivers was needed. He was promoted to be the Senior Overseer Miner until his retirement at the age of 60 in 2006.<sup>197</sup> The Dalny and Ayrshire mines benefited from the services of News Phiri, a prominent second-generation Malawian who rose from a mere lasher in 1987 to mine captain by 1995 at Dalny. He then moved to Ayrshire in 1996, becoming an underground manager, and eventually the mine manager in 2001. Phiri was not well educated; having dropped out of school at primary level due to poverty, but his eagerness to learn and hard work saw him achieve success in the mining industry.<sup>198</sup>

Contrary to discourses of industrial ethnicity stereotyping migrants in relation to particular jobs, the period after independence saw some Malawian diaspora escape from these stereotypes and prejudices. A number became renowned educationists at tertiary institutions. One of these was Government Christopher Phiri, a second-generation Malawian, born in 1959 in Mufakose, Harare, where he did his primary and secondary education.<sup>199</sup> At the age of 18, he went to Malawi for further education at University Chancellor College of Malawi. Involved as a student activist against the Kamuzu Banda regime, he was expelled in the 1980s.<sup>200</sup> Phiri came back to Zimbabwe and enrolled in the University of Zimbabwe's (UZ) Economic History Department for his first degree in 1985. He then graduated with a Masters in 1991 and taught in Harare secondary schools before re-joining the UZ's Economic History Department as a tutor in 1995, eventually becoming a lecturer in the same department. Vocal in labour matters, he became the voice of UZ lecturers, first as Secretary General and secondly as president of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) from 2004 onwards.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Interview with Mbwana Batani.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Personal communication from News Phiri, Eldorado Mine, Chinhoyi, 20 January 2015.

<sup>199</sup> Personal communication from Munyaradzi Nyakudya, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, 11 May 2015.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

Other ingenious Malawians also excelled after 1980. In the semi-arid area of rural Zvishavane, there is an award winning smallholder farmer, Zephaniah Phiri Maseko, renowned for conserving water for productive farming. He is a first-generation Malawian migrant who has practiced sustainable agriculture using innovative indigenous knowledge techniques. He said that 'I marry water and soil so that they won't elope and run-off but raise a family on my plot.'<sup>202</sup> His resourceful practices, which offer hope for dryland farmers, involve harvesting water as it cascades down the hill next to his homestead. He constructed structures such as sand traps and a pond at the foot of the hill that overlooks his home where he 'welcomes' water. He calls it the 'immigration centre'.<sup>203</sup> The water moves through the soil to his fields where it goes into canals for irrigation. This has transformed his plot into what he calls a 'water plantation.'<sup>204</sup> For years, Maseko's neighbours have benefited from his water harvesting as they fetch drinking water from one of his wells. Such ingenuity has made Maseko famous. He has been awarded numerous accolades such as the Ashoka Fellowship in 1997 and the National Geographic Society Award for Leadership in African Conservation in 2006. In 2010, the University of Zimbabwe's Centre for Applied Social Sciences conferred on him a Lifetime Achievement Award. He is also earmarked to be awarded an honorary degree at one of the state universities in Zimbabwe.<sup>205</sup> All these biographical examples are testimony to the ingenuity and agency of people of Malawian ancestry, which reveal their efforts to naturalize their identity and belong to Zimbabwe during the 1980s and 1990s.

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<sup>202</sup> C.M. Mabeza, 'Marrying Water and Soil: Adaptation to Climate by a Smallholder Farmer in Zvishavane, Rural Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2014, and M. Mawere, B.F. Madziwa, Mabeza, 'Climate Change and Adaptation In Third World Africa: A Quest for Increased Food Security In Semi-Arid Zimbabwe', *The International Journal Of Humanities and Social Studies*, 1, 2, 2013, pp. 14-22.

<sup>203</sup> Mabeza, 'A Story about a Farmer in Rural Zimbabwe', <http://amanziforfood.co.za>, 24 April 2015 [accessed 11 May 2015].

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, and Mabeza, 'Marrying Water and Soil'.

## Mr and Mrs Phiri Maseko posing with the National Geographic Society Award in 2006



Adapted from Mabeza, 'A Story about a Farmer in Rural Zimbabwe', <http://amanziforfood.co.za>, 24 April 2015.

### Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has articulated the diverse experiences of Malawian migrant descendants in the first two decades of Zimbabwean independence. It has shown that though these people were optimistic, the period was characterised by general anxieties over their socio-economic well-being. The lack of tangible government commitment towards regularising their belonging and their continued labouring in Zimbabwe's mines and farms with little or no improvement to their welfare, created a lot of concerns among Malawian diasporic communities. The chapter has shown that with this prevalence in colonial continuities, Zimbabweans of Malawian ancestry remained outsiders. Independence brought unexpected fears and challenges through the *Gukurahundi* crisis and unprecedented loss of economic livelihoods during droughts and ESAP. Amidst all this, culture became vital in offering platforms to cope, assert and express themselves, as well as seek integration. As in

the colonial times, cultural motifs such as *Gule Wamkulu/Nyau*, *Beni* dances, mutual aid societies, and *Chinamwali* showcased their collective identities and established points of syncretism with other regional migrants, local communities and the Zimbabwean state. Culture also offered a platform and social networks to comfort and cope with fears and problems induced by political disturbances, ESAP, droughts and continued state alienation. A number of Malawian descendants took the initiative to carve a niche for themselves in various fields: sports, politics, education, property ownership and social entertainment. This golden age saw many become cult heroes as footballers, politicians, educationists, musicians and landlords, which in the process naturalized their identity in Zimbabwe. By exploring all these dynamics, the chapter has attempted to add empirical knowledge to a period and historiography that has generally been silent on migrant experiences; revealing in the process the consolidations, dilemmas and agency that characterised the lives of those of Malawian descent prior to the post-2000 political and economic instabilities.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ZIMBABWEAN CRISIS THROUGH THE EYES OF MALAWIAN DIASPORA: C.2000 TO 2008

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#### Introduction: Problematizing the Zimbabwean Crisis

Beginning in early 1998, Zimbabwe entered a period that has come to be generally known as the 'Crisis in Zimbabwe'.<sup>1</sup> This chaotic phase witnessed 'a once vibrant and dynamic society and economy virtually collapsing as political instability, lawlessness, misgovernance and a relentless economic meltdown transformed this erstwhile leading southern African nation into an international pariah and the proverbial basket case.'<sup>2</sup> It was characterised by a mosaic of trajectories or 'crises within a crisis' that adversely transformed people's livelihoods and altered the country's socio-economic and political landscape. For Mlambo and Raftopoulos, what was occurring in the country since the turn of the new millennium was a complex and inter-related multi-layered and pervasive catastrophe that could, perhaps, best be described as a series of 'Zimbabwean crises', for no aspect of Zimbabwean existence escaped the deleterious effects of this phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> The crisis exhibited itself varyingly. It involved:

Confrontations over land and property rights; contestations over nationalism and citizenship; the emergence of critical civil society groups campaigning around trade unionism, human rights and constitutionalism; state authoritarianism; the broader pan-African and anti-imperialist meanings of the struggles in Zimbabwe; the cultural representations of the crisis in Zimbabwean literature; and the central role of Robert Mugabe.<sup>4</sup>

These multiple crises were related but had heterogeneous effects that varied according to gender, identity, class, age, geographical and spatial variables. The multi-faceted nature of the crisis has generated a lot of debate, with a surfeit of studies, known as crisis literature or historiography, grappling to make sense of the cataclysm of the post-2000 period.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe: 1998-2008', in Raftopoulos and Mlambo, (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 'The Regional Dimensions of Zimbabwe's multi-layered crisis: An Analysis', Paper presented at the Election Processes, Liberation Movements and Democratic Change in Africa, Maputo, Mozambique, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe: 1998-2008', p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> Crisis historiography or literature is extensive and it includes: Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe: 1998-2008'; Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 'The Regional Dimensions of Zimbabwe's multi-layered crisis'; Phimister, 'Rambai



The crisis had its roots in the general economic decay caused by the long-term effects of state policies and failure of ESAP. However, ZANU (PF)'s 1997 populist move towards the Z\$50,000 (US\$4,500) war veterans' gratuities (a concession that marked a new partnership between the government and the war veterans, and one which was to cement itself after 2000 as part of ZANU (PF)'s dogged and violent campaign to retain power)<sup>6</sup> and its subsequent ad-hoc involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998, triggered an unprecedented rapid economic and political meltdown.<sup>7</sup> Bond and Manyanya uphold that the immediate spark to Zimbabwe's plunge was instigated by the financial meltdown of 14 November 1997 when 'Black Friday' decimated the currency's value by 74% in four hours.<sup>8</sup> Civil unrest in the form of the January 1998 food riots and incessant mass job actions organised by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, (ZCTU), characterised this period. These urban protests converged with student, worker and women struggles reeling from ESAP-induced poverty resulting from privatization, wage freezes, retrenchments, price increases and unemployment. Out of these upheavals and common synergies emerged the MDC whose unprecedented formidability as

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Makashinga (Continue to Endure): Zimbabwe's Unending Crisis', *South African Historical Journal*, 54, 1, 2005, pp. 112-26; Raftopoulos and Phimister, 'Zimbabwe Now: The Political Economy of Crisis and Coercion', *Historical Materialism*, 12, 4, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*; P. Bond and M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2003; A. Hammar, Raftopoulos, and S. Jensen, (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare: Weaver, 2003; McGregor and R. Primorac, (eds), *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival*, Oxford: Berghahn, 2010; R. Primorac and S. Chan, (eds), *Zimbabwe in Crisis: The International Response and the Space of Silence*, London: Routledge, 2007; Raftopoulos and Savage, (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005; S. Chiumbu and M. Musemwa, (eds), *Crisis! What Crisis? The Multiple Dimensions of the Zimbabwean Crisis*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and F. Ndhlovu, (eds), *Nationalism and National Projects in Southern Africa: New Critical Reflections*, Pretoria: AISA, 2013; D. Moore, 'Zimbabwe's Democracy in the Wake of the 2013 Election: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives', *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 36, 1, 2014, pp. 47-71; R. Pillosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2012; Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 2, 2004, pp. 215-34; Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*; Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*, Oxford: James Currey, 2006; H. Holland, *Dinner with Mugabe: The Untold Story of a Freedom Fighter who Became a Tyrant*, South Africa: Penguin, 2008; M. Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*, New York: Public Affairs, 2002; I. Scoones, N. Marongwe, B. Mavedzenge, J. Mahenehene, F. Murimbarimba, and C. Sukume, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, Oxford: James Currey, 2010; Rutherford, *Working on the Margins*, and Rutherford, 'Shifting Grounds in Zimbabwe: Citizenship and Farm Workers in the New Politics of Land'.

<sup>6</sup> Pillosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> For more details on the gratuities see Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis', p. 198, and Z.W. Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging Neo-colonialism and Settler and International Capital*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Bond and Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge*. See also Bond, 'The Struggle for Democracy in Zimbabwe: Confronting the Long Economic Crisis', Paper Presented to the University of California-Berkeley Centre for African Studies, USA, 2007.

a powerful opposition movement seriously threatened ZANU (PF)'s political hegemony. The MDC was formed in September 1999 materializing from the ZCTU; the Women's Coalition; National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) together with the Zimbabwe National Student Union (ZINASU) student movement. The rise of the MDC immensely transformed the Zimbabwean crisis and tremendously changed the country's political landscape. MDC formation was followed by ZANU (PF)'s first major and dramatic political defeat in the February 2000 constitutional referendum, whose domino effect triggered an aberrant political and economic meltdown. Among the key contentious issues were proposals to absolve government from having to pay compensation for any expropriated land if Britain did not make funds available; increase executive powers with respect to military intervention within or outside Zimbabwe; introduce compulsory national service; and to allow for an unlimited presidential term of office for the incumbent.<sup>9</sup>

The rebuff transformed ZANU (PF)'s approach to democratic processes and in the process worsened experiences of migrant descendants. For Pilosof, the defeat marked a fundamental shift in Zimbabwean politics that had been building since the mid-1990s; and in response to these new political currents ZANU (PF) changed the rules of engagement and the start of the new millennium witnessed a new era of political, social and economic violence (authoritarian nationalism) that accelerated Zimbabwe's slide into crisis.<sup>10</sup> Southall substantiates that the post-referendum period was characterised by ZANU (PF)'s negation of electoral democracy with the party ascribing the rejection of the proposed constitution to a conspiracy between the black urban middle class, white farmers and their workers, and the government's external enemies, and saw an opportunity to fight the subsequent elections as if they were a re-run of the war for liberation.<sup>11</sup>

This became a motivating factor in its launch of the massive and co-ordinated land occupations, popularly known as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). The invasions were meant to drum up support and displace/disenfranchise white farmers and

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<sup>9</sup> Hammar, 'Disrupting Democracy? Altering Landscapes of Local Government in Post-2000 Zimbabwe', *Crisis States Working Papers*, Series No.2 (Print Edition), 9, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> R. Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power: Party and State in Southern Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2013, p. 113.

thousands of farm workers who were deemed supporters of the opposition. ZANU (PF) and Mugabe were not prepared to chance another electoral setback, and so began a campaign of violence and terror to ensure victory.<sup>12</sup> Hammar and Raftopoulos note that in the aftermath of the referendum, ZANU (PF) mobilized the land question, which had remained a persistent reminder of Zimbabwe's unfinished business, as a political resource.<sup>13</sup> According to Raftopoulos:

The need to contain, coerce and demobilise the structures and support of the opposition played a central role in the post-2000 politics. A key characteristic of this process was the restructuring of the state itself, through dramatic re-organisation and militarisation of state structures (judiciary and civil service); passing of repressive laws such as Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2002; widespread violence, murder, torture, rape, disappearances perpetrated by ZANU (PF) youth militia and war veterans against the opposition; and the recasting of the party's nationalist ideology in more authoritarian, selective and racialized notions of citizenship and belonging, constituted around the centrality of the land question and the contribution of ZANU (PF) to the liberation struggle.<sup>14</sup>

For Phimister, the post-2000 period was generally characterised by increasing autocracy, ruthless repression and widespread human rights abuses, forcing many into exile and impacted with disastrous effects on the lives of workers and peasants.<sup>15</sup> The crisis reached a crescendo in 2008, with Zimbabwe experiencing a world record inflation for countries not at war; total political and governmental dysfunction; epic food shortages and starvation, and an unprecedented cholera epidemic that killed more than 4,000 and infected more than 100,000 people.<sup>16</sup> There is a considerable body of literature, led by Sachikonye and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, that historicizes Zimbabwean institutionalized violence in its subjective, symbolic or systemic form, and a clear shift in patterns is discernible.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> Hammar and Raftopoulos, 'Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation', in Hammar, Raftopoulos, and Jensen, (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, pp. 1-47.

<sup>14</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', p. 213. For example, the draconian POSA and AIPPA were an anathema to human rights, democracy and freedom of expression that prohibited unsanctioned human gatherings and oversaw the operations of the print and electronic media.

<sup>15</sup> Phimister, 'Rambai Makashinga (Continue to Endure)', p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> O. Nyambi, 'Nation in Crisis: Alternative Literary Representations of Zimbabwe Post-2000', PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2013, p. 4. For details about the cholera outbreak see P.R. Mason, 'Emerging Problems in Infectious Diseases: Zimbabwe Experiences the Worst Epidemic of Cholera in Africa', *Journal of Infection in Developing Countries*, 3, 2, 2009, pp. 148-151.

<sup>17</sup> Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens: Institutionalized Violence and Political Culture*, Johannesburg: Jacana, 2011, pp. 1-85, and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2013, p. 127.

While the crisis wholesomely affected the general Zimbabwean populace, there are particularities of this predicament that adversely threatened and affected the livelihoods of African migrant descendants, including those with Malawian ancestry. Of note was the general othering of invisible subject minorities through the FTLRP, struggles for citizenship and belonging, as well as their systematic disenfranchisement in post-2000 elections. For the Malawian diaspora and other migrants from Zambia and Mozambique, the post-2000 period saw an increased reconfiguration of their identity and belonging in the context of the Zimbabwean nation identity and nation-state. Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes that 'national identities and nations are unstable products of human imagination or socially and politically constructed artefacts inherently prone to contestations, fragilities, acceptance, rejections, and reconstructions.'<sup>18</sup> The protracted and multi-staged Zimbabwean economic and political crisis was accompanied by politically charged, narrowed-down definitions of national identity and citizenship.<sup>19</sup> This was dictated by the rampant politics of exclusion through the citizenship laws, FTLRP displacement and disenfranchisement. With the emergence of the MDC as a formidable oppositional force with a support base comprising urbanites and commercial farm and mineworkers, alien ancestry/identity became an exclusionary curse. Such marginalization was apparent during the FTLRP exercise, the infamous *Operation Murambatsvina* and the numerous political elections (2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008) where aliens had little say but were still 'othered' and victimized. Current historiography on these discourses has generally noted such victimization of foreign migrant minorities, without being explicit about migrant Malawians and with little or no recourse to the place of identity and agency in such processes.

Focusing on the above issues and events, this chapter chronicles the experiences of Malawian descendants during the crisis from 2000 to 2008. It examines the place of identity politics in the ostracization of the non-indigenous Zimbabweans and lends support to the overarching arguments of Neocosmos, Geschiere, Mamdani, Raftopoulos, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Muzondidya,

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<sup>18</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> W. Mano and W. Willems, 'Debating 'Zimbabweanness' in Diasporic Internet Forums: Technologies of Freedom?' in McGregor and R. Primorac, (eds), *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival*, Oxford: Berghahn, 2010, p. 183.

Rich-Dorman and Nugent on the exclusion and subjectification of migrant minorities.<sup>20</sup> The chapter thus, illuminates the centrality of the state as a powerful and hegemonic agent or 'identity-maker' that reconfigures nations by othering or excluding foreigners, aliens or strangers.<sup>21</sup> It argues that between 2000 and 2008, the ZANU (PF) regime spearheaded narrow and exclusionary nationalism which discriminated people of migrant descent in its fight to consolidate and hold on to power in the face of rising civil and political opposition. Ndlovu-Gatsheni explains that:

African nationalism is a quintessentially differentiating, and classifying discourse that has always tried to sort out issues of who belongs to the nation, and defining criteria for citizenship through complex practices of rendering visible those non-conforming elements for purposes of assimilation, as well as eliminating those found to be too inflexible to be accommodated within particular nationalist imaginaries.<sup>22</sup>

This was evident in the systematic labelling and stereotyping of these people as aliens on their identity documents and persistent displacement during the FTLRP or the 'Third *Chimurenga*'.<sup>23</sup> Despite this, the chapter also focuses on diasporic agency analysing how Malawian descendants tried to mediate the crisis, or what Jeremy Jones loosely terms '*kukiya-kiya*',<sup>24</sup> through various forms of adaptation and resistance against the numerous challenges they have faced in a territory that many regard as their home. It is on this concept of home that the chapter ultimately ends probing the various dilemmas and nuances that successive generations of Malawian descendants have grappled with in their quest to belong to either Zimbabwe or Malawi.

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<sup>20</sup> Neocosmos, *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners'*, Rich-Dorman, Hammett, and Nugent, (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers*; Muzondidya, 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans'; Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*; Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008'; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, and Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

<sup>21</sup> Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 148.

<sup>22</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, p. 96.

<sup>23</sup> The 'Third *Chimurenga*' concept is explained in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> J.L. Jones, 'Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe': The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy 2000-2008', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36, 2, 2012, pp. 285-99.

## In the Shadows of the Third *Chimurenga*: The FTLRP and Malawian Livelihoods on Farms

In the wake of the rejection of the 2000 referendum, angry war veterans and landless ordinary Zimbabweans began, with the blessing of the state, to invade farms and seize white owned land.<sup>25</sup> The rebuff was seen by the ex-combatants and some leading members of the ruling party as a rejection of the opportunity to seek political redress on the land question.<sup>26</sup> This triggered a retaliatory and spontaneous wave of farm invasions as Mugabe castigated the white commercial farmers and their farm workers for supporting the opposition. A racially charged political battle ensued between the ruling party and the white commercial farmers. Unfortunately, farm workers, many of whom descended from Malawi, became entangled in this mêlée by being regarded as surrogates who colluded with their white employers against the government. Hartnack explains that:

In nationalistic discourses, farm workers were viewed as foreigners who did not deserve the same rights and entitlements as other citizens of Zimbabwe. They were portrayed as supporting the interests of their white bosses and the opposition party in opposing the land invasions, have thus often been the main targets of violence and have largely been ignored as recipients of land.<sup>27</sup>

Rutherford attested that alien farm workers were used as figurative vehicles for the rhetorical and political battles and for long, their less visible history was exploited for political and economic purposes.<sup>28</sup> Farm workers became pawns in Mugabe's battle against the white farmers whose 'imperialistic hangover had influenced their subjects and the opposition to reject the 2000 referendum.'<sup>29</sup> This gave Mugabe and his cronies an excuse to quicken the land redistribution process as 'a populist tool to further buy the support of the landless peasantry'<sup>30</sup> and discipline both the white man and his surrogates by forcing them off the commercial farms.

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<sup>25</sup> Pilossof observes that the land occupiers constituted about 15-20% ex-combatants who were supported by numerous other populations, such as peasants, urban landless, other ZANU (PF) supporters and various opportunists; see Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 44. See also N. Marongwe, 'Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe', in Hammar, Raftopoulos, and Jensen, (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, pp. 179-82, and Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 185.

<sup>26</sup> S. Moyo, Rutherford, Amanor-Wilks, 'Land Reform and Changing Social Relations for Farm Workers in Zimbabwe', *Review of African Political Economy*, 27, 84, 2000, p. 183.

<sup>27</sup> A. Hartnack, 'Transcending Global and National (Mis)representations through Local Responses to Displacement', pp. 351-77.

<sup>28</sup> Rutherford, *Working on the Margins*. See also Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 145.

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

<sup>30</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, p. 32.

Raftopoulos reveals that until 1997, Zimbabwe's land policy was based on a cautious, market-based approach to reform through the willing-buyer/willing-seller procedures.<sup>31</sup> In fact, in spite of it being so high on the political agenda at the Lancaster House Conference, a curious silence had fallen over the land reform for much of the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>32</sup> It was only with the enactment of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act that compulsory acquisition measures were instituted. According to Wolmer, the controversial 1992 Act theoretically enabled compulsory land acquisition at controlled prices and the abandonment of the willing-seller/willing-buyer principle.<sup>33</sup> However, very little happened in practice until 'Mugabe's land grab'<sup>34</sup> of 1997 when he listed 1,447 farms for compulsory acquisition. Subsequent white farmer appeals and court challenges triggered pioneering farm invasions by Chief Svosve and his people of Daskorp Farm in Mashonaland East Province in 1998. However, tentative compromises from the September 1998 land donor conference were jeopardised by the post-2000 political problems. With the spurning of the 2000 referendum, the compromise policy was discontinued as chaos broke on the farms in February 2000 starting with widespread and violent farm occupations followed by a fast-track resettlement process.<sup>35</sup>

By early 2003, about 11 million hectares of white commercial farms had been acquired and thousands of farm workers had been displaced and left jobless, homeless and impoverished.<sup>36</sup> The 4,500 large-scale commercial farmers owning 28% of Zimbabwe's land area at the time the FTLRP was instituted; were reduced to about 500 possessing approximately 1% of the land by 2004.<sup>37</sup> Pilosof believes that at the start of 2004 the actual figure was between 1,000 and

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<sup>31</sup> Raftopoulos, 'Unreconciled differences: The limits of reconciliation politics in Zimbabwe', in Raftopoulos and Savage, (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, pp. viii-xxii.

<sup>32</sup> R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990', *African Affairs*, 89, 355, 1990, pp. 163-81.

<sup>33</sup> Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*, p. 188.

<sup>34</sup> Palmer, 'Mugabe's "Land Grab" in Regional Perspective', in T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and C. Stoneman, (eds), *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000b, pp. 15-23.

<sup>35</sup> The FTLRP was premised on two resettlement models: A1 and A2. A1 aimed at decongesting communal lands and was either villagised or self-contained and its beneficiaries were selected by the District Lands Committee. A2 was meant to establish black commercial farmers and beneficiaries were selected from applications sent to the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.

<sup>36</sup> Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja'; Moyo and W. Chambati, *Impacts of Land Reform on Farm Workers and Farm Labour Processes*, Harare: African Institute of Agrarian Studies, 2004, and Moyo and P. Yeros, 'Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution', in Moyo and Yeros, (eds), *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Cape Town: David Phillip, 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Human Rights Watch, 'Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe', 14, 1(A), 2002, p. 2, and B. Derman, 'After Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform: Preliminary Observations on the Near Future of Zimbabwe's Efforts to Resist Globalization', 2006, available at <http://www.mpl.ird.fr>, [accessed 11 November 2014].

500 white farmers still in operation.<sup>38</sup> The former figure was a Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) over-estimate meant to retain some confidence in the sector and the latter was a Justice for Agriculture (JAG) approximation under which many operational farmers did all they could to remain anonymous.<sup>39</sup> This disorganised and pernicious process which was officially code-named the FTLRP, after its official launch on 15 July 2000, came to be generally known by the white farmers and farm workers as the land invasions, land grab or '*jambanja*' period implying an era of direct violence and confrontation over land.<sup>40</sup> Its perpetrators either called it 'an agrarian revolution' or the Third *Chimurenga* or *Hondo ye Minda*.<sup>41</sup> The land question was thus projected as the 'unresolved crisis of the First and Second *Chimurengas*' which was 'steeped in the nationalist discourse of the Liberation War.'<sup>42</sup> It was the concluding chapter of a long and arduous anti-colonial nationalist revolution traceable from the 19th century First *Chimurenga* to the 1970s Second *Chimurenga* culminating in Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, it was the final stage of nationalist revolution that would culminate in finally reclaiming Zimbabwe's 'lost lands', combating recolonization and completing 'the war against imperialism', wresting economic control from minority white settlers and placing it in the hands of indigenous black Zimbabweans.<sup>44</sup>

The land reform was traumatic for farm workers specifically those of foreign ancestry who remained in the shadows of and were largely invisible in the politics of land appropriation. The occupations completely transformed the lives of about 300,000 farm workers and their close to two million dependents, most of whom had paternal links to the former

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<sup>38</sup> Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 60.

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

<sup>40</sup> For a detailed descriptive understanding of the FTLRP terminology please see J. Chaumba, I. Scoones and Wolmer, 'From Jambanja to Planning: The Reassertion of Technocracy in Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe?' Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa Research Paper 2, Institute for Development Studies, Brighton, 2003; Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja'; Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 44, and Muzondidya, 'Jambanja: Ideological Ambiguities in the Politics of Land and Resource Ownership in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 2, 2007, pp. 325-41

<sup>41</sup> Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, p. 25, and C.M. Utete, Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme 2000-2002 [The Utete Report], Harare: Government of Zimbabwe, 2003.

<sup>42</sup> Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 47-8.

<sup>43</sup> Hammar and Raftopoulos, 'Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business', p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Hammar, 'Disrupting Democracy?', p. 3.



Central African Federation.<sup>45</sup> Scholars such as Sachikonye, Moyo and Pilosof observe that prior to land reform, about 4,500 white commercial farmers employed an estimated 300,000 to 350,000 farm workers who together with their families made up about two million people or nearly 20% of the country's population, of which 11% were those of Malawian descent, 12% Mozambican origin and 5% being of Zambian descent.<sup>46</sup> These commercial farm workers were the largest proportion of Zimbabwe's proletariat, and formed one of its poor segments that had no access to land and housing rights.<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, about 500,000 to 900,000 people were displaced and the livelihoods of approximately two million people were severely disrupted leaving many without jobs, homes, schools, water and hospitals.<sup>48</sup> For many Malawian descendants, the land reform destroyed the only home and source of livelihood they had ever known in Zimbabwe since the colonial era. The reform also exposed them to its horrendous displacement characteristics leaving many marooned and impoverished on farms while others were forcibly displaced towards the urban areas and squatter camps. Numerous studies that focus on the plight of farm workers in the aftermath of the FTLRP do exist.<sup>49</sup> However, these are not particular on people of Malawian descent but tend to cluster them with other migrants from Mozambique and Zambia, despite the fact that each group has its unique experiences and plights. Similarly, due to its emphasis on the plight of the minorities, the current literature also propagates the victimhood stance, which in the process denies farm workers' agency during the FTLRP.

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<sup>45</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye observes that prior to land reform, an estimated 300,000 to 350,000 farm workers were employed on commercial farms owned by about 4,500 white farmers. Their dependants numbered between 1.8 and 2 million. See Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>46</sup> Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, p. 6; Moyo and Chambati, *Impacts of Land Reform on Farm Workers and Farm Labour Processes*, and Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 49. See also Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 145, and Justice for Agriculture (JAG) Report on Land, Retribution and Elections: Post Election Violence on Zimbabwe's remaining Farms, Harare: Justice for Agriculture, 2008; The General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), 2010.

<sup>47</sup> G. Magaramombe, 'Rural Poverty: Commercial Farm Workers and Land Reform in Zimbabwe', Paper Presented at the SARP Conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in Southern Africa, Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, Pretoria, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Zimbabwe: Not Eligible: The Politicization of Food in Zimbabwe*, 15, 17(A), 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Examples of such general studies that are not explicit on the experiences of Malawian farm workers include Blair Rutherford's 2001 anthropological study on commercial farming in Hurungwe district that details farm workers' experiences on 'the margins' of the Zimbabwean society, Dede Amanor-Wilks' discussion on Zimbabwe's farm workers' pursuit for hope after 2000, and Lloyd Sachikonye's 2003 examination of farm workers' situation during the land reform exercise. For a detailed breakdown of these works see Chapter One, pp. 21-3.

As shall be detailed below, the ZANU (PF) elite engaged authoritarian nationalism and used citizenship politics to prevent aliens from securing land rights during the land redistribution process. This was simply a continuation of the colonial situation of farm workers in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Indeed, during the colonial era, 'farm workers were not considered as a relevant category in discussions of the racial land division in Southern Rhodesia.'<sup>50</sup> Moyo, Rutherford and Amanor-Wilks go on to say that instead the concern was balancing the needs of European farmers with those of indigenous Zimbabweans in the process ignoring farm workers, most of whom were foreign descended and were viewed as completely tied to the white farmers.<sup>51</sup> After independence farm workers continued to be segregated from the initial resettlement programme, even though they fell into the broader category of 'poor and landless' who were the main target of that exercise.<sup>52</sup> The state characterised them as 'foreigners, as unproductive, and as *persona non-grata* on resettlement farms.'<sup>53</sup>

Alienation ensured that migrants and their descendants were excluded from the first land redistribution exercise that resettled about 71,000 families or perhaps 500,000 people, on 3.5 million hectares of former white owned land acquired by the government on the willing-buyer, willing-seller principle effected after the expiration of the Lancaster House Constitution in 1990.<sup>54</sup> According to Magaramombe, 'alien status was used by politicians since independence to disqualify farm workers from securing land rights in resettlement schemes or even communal areas.'<sup>55</sup> Many of those living on the farms and mines did not have the right to reside in communal land or to vote in local government elections because they were regarded either as not indigenous or not the right kind of indigenous.<sup>56</sup> But they did belong to the new state and remained aliens in a foreign frontier. Using the Foucauldian lens of governmentality, Rutherford traced the hegemonic mode of belonging identified as 'domestic government', put in place on European farms in Zimbabwe's colonial period, and showed how

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<sup>50</sup> Moyo, Rutherford, Amanor-Wilks, 'Land Reform and Changing Social Relations for Farm Workers in Zimbabwe', p. 181.

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

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* See also B. Kinsey, 'Emerging Issues in Zimbabwe's Land Resettlement Programmes', *Development Policy Review*, 1, 2, 1983, pp. 163-96.

<sup>53</sup> Moyo, Rutherford, Amanor-Wilks, 'Land Reform and Changing Social Relations for Farm Workers in Zimbabwe', p. 181.

<sup>54</sup> Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990', pp. 163-81, and Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>55</sup> Magaramombe, 'Rural Poverty: Commercial Farm Workers and Land Reform in Zimbabwe', p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis', p. 187.

it was shaped by particular political and economic conjunctures in the first 20 years of Independence after 1980.<sup>57</sup> Domestic government provided a conditional belonging for farm workers in terms of claims to limited resources on commercial farms while positioning them in a way that made them marginal citizens in the nation at large.<sup>58</sup> This was the context for the behaviour of land-giving authorities, which actively discriminated against farm workers during the politicized and violent FTLRP land redistribution processes.

The negative FTLRP official policy was 'discursively monopolised and over-simplified by ZANU (PF) as a disciplinary and exclusionary device and as a means of marginalising oppositional groups, as well as demarcating those with a 'legitimate' claim to land according to race, ancestral origin and political authenticity.'<sup>59</sup> Land access was defined along Mamdani's citizenship and indigeneity dichotomies. Land rights were now a sole preserve of the original/authentic Zimbabwean citizens or 'the real autochthons' - the so-called *vana vevhu* (sons and daughters of the soil) who became the 'revered nationalist appellation' of the post-2000 era.<sup>60</sup> National identity became little more than a narrow ZANU (PF) chauvinistic particularism inspired by rising xenophobic tendencies.<sup>61</sup> This automatically excluded the Malawian diaspora who, as non-citizens, had no entitlement to the 'agrarian revolution' orchestrated by the 'legitimate' heirs and liberators of the land. This complicated the livelihoods of Malawian descendants, denying them a vital resource that could ensure economic autonomy.

Likewise, it was also easy to mobilise such groups as war veterans, collaborators and youth militia in the farm seizures, because there were no consequences for displacing both the white farmers and their workers since all were regarded as expendable and politically obsolete foreigners. They thus persisted in marginalizing migrant progenies by allocating

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<sup>57</sup> Rutherford, 'Conditional Belonging', pp. 73-99, and Rutherford, 'On the Promise and Perils of Citizenship', pp. 499-512.

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

<sup>59</sup> Hammar and Raftopoulos, 'Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business', pp. 1-47.

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

<sup>61</sup> Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwe', p. 57, and Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwean: Nation and State-Building in the Context of Southern Africa', in Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ndhlovu, (eds), *Nationalism and National Projects in Southern Africa*, p. 241.

fertile pieces of land to themselves at the expense of the alien farm workers. Square Kazembe bemoaned, in an interview at Maryland Farm near Darwendale, that:

When it comes to benefiting from the land, we have been excluded because we are aliens, we are strangers, and we do not belong and cannot vote. I was not given any piece of land. I only practice my own subsistence agriculture in my old small field on the outskirts of the farm. Not many of us aliens benefited from the land reform.<sup>62</sup> In cases where some non-indigenous Zimbabweans benefited due to shifting of their allegiance to ZANU (PF), they were given pieces of land at the peripheries of the farms where their fields acted as buffers against wild animals like baboons and wild pigs.<sup>63</sup> Examples from interviews conducted with former farm workers in Mashonaland West also reveal massive unemployment among migrant descendants, with many of their children no longer attending school and subsequently opting for matrimony at an earlier age due to poverty.<sup>64</sup> There was also rampant abuse of child labour by the newly resettled black farmers. The new 'black settlers' thus re-enacted the colonial land seizure drama by displacing former beneficiaries and their dependant workers.<sup>65</sup>

In spite of such challenges, some former migrant farm workers showed agency exploiting the few avenues offered by the land reform to productively use and expand their allocated pieces of land on the farms. This lends support to the overarching observations made by Scoones and others concerning the general positive impact of the FTLRP in southern Zimbabwe.<sup>66</sup> Whilst the FTLRP ruined commercial agriculture, these scholars bemoan the little acknowledgement of the extension of land to some beneficiaries who were landless and to those ordinary people from towns and communal areas to whom the extension of access to land was a benefit to livelihoods that were at peril from unemployment.<sup>67</sup> Their study of livelihoods after the land reform in Masvingo showed that 60% of beneficiaries in this district were black farmers or poor rural people, not in any way politically connected, in need of land

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Andrew Mpepho, Maryland Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013. See also Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 146.

<sup>64</sup> Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 146.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 146.

<sup>66</sup> Scoones *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*. See also S. Mandizadza, 'The Fast Track Land Reform Programme and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Households at Athlone Farm in Murehwa District', Masters in Sociology Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 2009, pp. 28-9.

and that production in A1 smallholder plots reflected productivity potential even in the absence of inputs and support.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, numerous examples of Malawian beneficiaries emerged on former commercial farms in Mashonaland West. One case involved events at Riverside Farm near Banket, which was occupied by about 40 war veterans in mid-2002. These occupiers split and shared the lands with senior farm workers and spared some portions of the farm for the former white farmer. Realising that they could benefit from the expertise and resources offered by white farmers, the occupiers have been cordially operating alongside the former owner to their benefit. They occasionally get inputs such as tractors, chemicals and irrigation equipment during tobacco farming seasons. In the midst of all this are a few senior migrant Malawian farm workers who have benefited from this arrangement. These include Shame Mzekezeke who was a foreman prior the FTLRP and Mamudu Manangwa a former farm mechanic and livestock veterinarian. These were allocated pieces of land during the farm occupation from which they have economically advanced their livelihoods.

Some of these senior workers became employers in their own right. Mamudu Manangwa was a mechanic at the farm for 30 years and after the reform he received about 6 acres of land, on which he has been profitably growing tobacco. He has employed about ten of his former farm workmates with expertise in tobacco farming and has managed to extend his farmhouse and invest in various properties on the farm.<sup>69</sup> His 38 year old son Ali Manangwa also acquired a small piece of land and every tobacco selling season they both sell at least 20 bales of tobacco in Harare.<sup>70</sup> The former foreman, Shame Mzekezeke, also became a small-scale tobacco grower, managed to buy two cars, a truck, and employs many workers at the farm. 'We are now independent small-scale tobacco producers in our own right and we share the old farm equipment and resources with the new settlers and produce a few bales of tobacco for sale at the end of the season', he said.<sup>71</sup> Similar experiences also emerged at Stratford Farm near Trelawney. James Asidi who was also a former mechanic at the farm

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<sup>68</sup> Mandizadza, 'The Fast Track Land Reform Programme and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe', p. 29.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Mamudu Manangwa.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, and Interview with Ali Manangwa, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Shame Mzekezeke.

celebrated his new livelihood after the FTLRP. He narrated that in the aftermath of the land reform life was totally transformed because our white employer left for South Africa in 2004 and realising that the land reform was irreversible some of us who had been of long service managed to broker better land deals with the occupiers.<sup>72</sup> He was allocated 8 acres of land whilst his eldest son Sidi got 4 acres in 2005 on which they grow tobacco employing with the help of seasonal workers.<sup>73</sup>

In many instances, a modern-day *thangata* land-labour rent system emerged on the farms with the new black settlers leasing land for farming to former farm workers in return for a quota of their seasonal labour. 43-year-old Stewart Mustaffa who was born at Riverside Farm to Malawian parents stated that because of desperation and lack of rural homes many Malawian descendants at the farm resorted to lending their labour during the farming seasons as tenure for their stay and use of occupied land on the farms.<sup>74</sup> At New Grade Farm, 69 year old Elliot Iliyasa relayed that the new settlers demanded whole families, including children to work on the fields as rent. 'My wife is not strong enough to work and in order to fulfil the new settlers' labour rent we usually send our young children and grand-children to work *mugwazo* (field ploughing task) on her behalf and this is common among farm workers.'<sup>75</sup> Posta Chitimbe also noted that most of the alien farm workers at Maryland Farm and other surrounding areas stayed on the farms providing cheap labour to the black settlers. 'Many of us are old and have little option but to stay and at least have the sanctuary of the farm accommodation and land for subsistence in return for labour to the new owners,' he explained.<sup>76</sup>

The presence of numerous potential employers also increased the bargaining power of these seasonal workers as they entered into various contracts with the various employers on a single farm. 76-year-old Jelasi Banda provided his tobacco nursery expertise to the new settlers at Chimwala Farm and the Malawian land beneficiaries since 2005. He mentioned that 'ever since I migrated to Zimbabwe in 1964 I have worked on white farms on tobacco

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with James Asidi.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Sidi Asidi, Stratford Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Stewart Mustaffa, Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Elliot Iliyasa, New Grade Farm, Trelawney, 17 October 2013.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Posta Chitimbe.

nurseries and I continue do so for the new black settlers on this and other surrounding farms.’<sup>77</sup> Such was also the case of Rafael Wilson at Maryland Farm who has survived through contractual engagements with the new black settlers at the farm. Some of the former farm workers also diversified into other secondary industries, especially brick making, to cater for the new settlers who build houses and tobacco barns on the farms. Sidi stated that he has been making brisk business through brick production for the new residents on Stratford farm and surrounding areas who buy his bricks to extend their homes and construct tobacco processing/curing infrastructure.<sup>78</sup>

Not all Malawian descendants managed to acquire pieces of land during the FTLRP. Many of these have been marginalised and encountered numerous hardships.<sup>79</sup> Over the years, the migrant progenies ingeniously employed various forms of subaltern agency (*kukiya-kiya*) to mobilise themselves in their respective areas against the rampant politics of exclusion on the farms. Though many have operated on the margins and have been victimised because of their ancestry and belonging, they have remained active in navigating obstacles emerging from the land reform. Some have stayed on the farms in the hope that the situation will improve, while others sought the sanctuary of their relatives in mines and towns. On the farms, sexual division of labour was shelved as men and women continuously sought alternative livelihoods, engaging in insecure and poorly paid casual or piecework jobs, commonly known as *maricho*, on other functional farms. Some got into informal occupations like gold panning, fishing, hunting and gathering, poultry, shoe repairing and vending.<sup>80</sup> In order to benefit from government food aid, many perfected the art of ‘shifting political identities’ by conveniently associating with ZANU (PF) through acquisition of its party cards. Isaac Mwanza of New Grade Farm stated that ‘many of us alien farm workers sought allegiance to ZANU (PF) during the invasions and political elections, buying its cards to survive the violence and threats of

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with Jelasi Banda, Chimwala Farm, Trelawney, 15 October 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Sidi Asidi.

<sup>79</sup> Vast literature by scholars such as Sachikonye, Moyo, Chambati, Yeros, Amanor-Wilks and Rutherford has generally documented the plight of migrant farm workers after the land reform. For more detailed discussions please see Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*; Sachikonye, ‘The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja’; Moyo and Chambati, *Impacts of Land Reform on Farm Workers and Farm Labour Processes*, Moyo and Yeros, ‘Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’; Moyo, Rutherford, Amanor-Wilks, ‘Land Reform and Changing Social Relations for Farm Workers in Zimbabwe’, and Rutherford, *Working on the Margins*

<sup>80</sup> Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*. See also Daimon, ‘Politics of ‘Othering’ and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe’, p. 146.

deportation.’<sup>81</sup> Rutherford observed that most former farm workers sought other forms of dependencies, typically more precarious and generating fewer resources and services than they had accessed on commercial farms, with their own particular cultural politics of recognition, often tied to demonstrating support to the ruling political party.<sup>82</sup>

Others sought distinct livelihoods in the mining industry by exploiting kinship links at various mines. Such was the case with Samson Medi Mbewe, a 44-year-old second-generation Malawian descendant, who worked as a mechanic at Stratford Farm near Trelawney. He was evicted in 2004, sought work at Ayrshire Mine near Banket as an underground machine operator, and was later promoted to a salvage technician in January 2014 due to welding qualifications he had previously acquired at Stratford Farm.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Andrew Chavhonga came from Mukuyu Farm near Banket in 2006 to work at Ayrshire Mine rising through the ranks from a ‘Lasher Boy’ to a ‘Gangleader/Boss Boy’.<sup>84</sup> In addition, a lot of the young second-third- and fourth-generation descendants assumed mobile livelihoods as cross-border traders, acting as conduits that link their Zimbabwean families with relatives in Malawi through letters, foodstuffs, clothes and money. Two third-generation descendant brothers from Dalkeith Farm, Rueben and Nelson Mbewe are such young entrepreneurs who became cross-border traders, sourcing for goods from Botswana to trade at their farm and surrounding areas.<sup>85</sup>

### **Citizenship and Suffrage Politics in the New Millennium<sup>86</sup>**

The experiences of former migrant farm workers illuminate the general struggles over citizenship and belonging that the Malawian diaspora and other African descendants from the region have faced in post independent Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean citizenship has largely been dictated by the politics of power and patronage. The state has systematically used the

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Isaac Mwanza, New Grade Farm, Trelawney, 17 October 2013.

<sup>82</sup> Rutherford, ‘Conditional Belonging’, pp. 73-99.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Samson Medi Mbewe.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Andrew Chavhonga, Ayrshire Mine, Banket, 15 April 2008 and 3 June 2014.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Rueben and Nelson Mbewe, Dalkeith Farm, Banket, 2 June 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Various parts/versions of this section have appeared in Daimon, ‘Politics of ‘Othering’ and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe’, pp. 137-50. They are also forthcoming in Daimon, ‘ZANU (PF)’s Manipulation of the Alien Vote in Zimbabwean Elections: 1980-2013’, *South African Historical Journal*, (forthcoming) 2016.



idea of national identity and autochthonous citizenship to manipulate non-indigenous Zimbabweans' rights to suffrage and access to resources. Hegemonic socio-political orders have exploited the fluid and flexible nature of diasporic identities to marginalise people declared as foreigners through the redefinition or rigidification and politicisation of citizenship rights along the contours of autochthony, belonging, ethnicity and political affiliation. This othering has been evident through the systematic labelling and stereotyping of people as aliens on their identity documents; displacement; and victimisation during political elections, where residents with roots in Malawi, together with other minorities, have been denied the right to vote.

Chapters two and three have briefly historicized the colonial state's role in creating citizens and subjects through systematic 'othering' or classification of individuals along race, nationality and citizenship binaries. Manipulating inherited bifurcated colonial laws, the post-colonial state has instrumentalised the notion of citizenship to consolidate power and marginalise or disenfranchise the so-called aliens or denizens.<sup>87</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni views this as subjectification of citizens by the state using inherited colonial matrices of power and authoritarian security apparatus.<sup>88</sup> The post-colonial Zimbabwean government simply adopted much of the colonial institutional structures, so that citizenship largely assumed xenophobic, exclusionary and political implications. The state officially inherited the colonial stereotypes and categorisations, and continued affirming these by labelling or stamping the identity documents of migrant descendants with a large 'A' for 'Alien', while those of autochthonous Zimbabweans have a 'C' for Citizen. Such categories ensured that they remained non-citizens in both Zimbabwe and their mother countries.

Migrant exclusion is a political process in which the state implicitly or explicitly plays a central role, and only the weak and marginalised groups are excluded, although they may participate in state politics to various degrees. Citizenship has assumed nuanced socio-economic and political meanings, which accommodate a chosen few and relegate many others within a nation-state. State nationalism excluded certain groups of Zimbabweans seen as inauthentic,

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<sup>87</sup> Daimon, 'Politics of 'Othering' and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe', p. 138.

<sup>88</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, p. 96. See also Nyamunda, 'Insights into Independent Zimbabwe', pp. 78-81.

unpatriotic, and not considered to rightfully belong to the 'nation'.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, for many Malawian descendants, their migrant identity has become a socio-economic burden in the dominant politics of exclusion in post-independent Zimbabwe. Many of these are second- third- and fourth-generation Zimbabweans of Malawian ancestry, who do not know where Malawi is or what it is like and can claim neither any links to, nor any direct citizenship rights in, Malawi.<sup>90</sup> These are naturalized Zimbabweans by birth but have inherited the alien identity through descent and at the instigation of the colonial and post-colonial state. They remain non-citizens, or rather denizens, in both Zimbabwe and Malawi. Sidi Asidi remonstrated that:

My parents are from Malawi, but I have never set foot there, I was born and bred here, did my education here, only to be labelled an alien; it is unfair. As it is, I do not have a passport, even a Malawian one, because even there I am an alien. In other words, I am stateless.<sup>91</sup>

According to Muzondidya, citizenship has been used to marginalise the so-called non-indigenous people, or what he terms 'invisible subject minorities', from the benefits offered by the state.<sup>92</sup> In the few definitions of nationalism and constructions of citizenship that were proposed in the post-independence period, it has been increasingly obvious that subject minorities are not viewed as part of the post-colonial state. Thus, in the cultural and political imagination of most Zimbabweans, and in the post-colonial ideologies of majoritarianism and nativism, which dominated discourse in the post-independent order, subject minorities continue to be seen as outsiders.<sup>93</sup>

The alienation of Malawian descendants has found meaning and relevance outside the corridors of state power and has been largely embraced by indigenous Zimbabweans, fuelled by colonial stereotypes, ethnicity and political polarisation. Unlike in South Africa, such othering has not overtly manifested itself through xenophobic violence. However, autochthonous Zimbabweans have increasingly resorted to using popular stereotypical labels in their everyday discourse to caricature and exclude non-indigenous Africans from the 'Zimbabwe nation'. As indicated in chapter one, Malawian descendants are termed

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<sup>89</sup> Mano and Willems, 'Debating 'Zimbabweanness' in Diasporic Internet Forums', p. 184.

<sup>90</sup> Muzondidya, 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans', pp. 218-24.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Sidi Asidi.

<sup>92</sup> Muzondidya, 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans', p. 213.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

*Manyasarande* or *Nyasas*, implying those from Nyasaland, the colonial name of Malawi; or *Mabhurandaya*, which is colloquial for the city of Blantyre in Malawi. Some also call them *Vatevera Njanji*, in reference to those who trekked the railway line on foot during their migration to Zimbabwe.<sup>94</sup> Square Kazembe narrated in an interview that for years local Zimbabweans have officially identified us with our Malawian motherland labelling us as *Mabhurandaya* or *Manyasarande* to exclude us from enjoying the resources such as land and from voting.<sup>95</sup> Jackson Chibwana corroborated this that such names have been largely derogatory to our aspirations of wanting to belong to the Zimbabwean nation.<sup>96</sup> Even former Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress leader, Rueben Jamela remonstrated in 1980 that ‘to refer to people with derogatory terms such as *Mabhurandaya* (for people from Malawi) or *MaWhitori* (for local Karangas) among other caricatures, was bad and wrong.’<sup>97</sup> Henry Banda Matekenya also pointed out that ‘locals have always belittled or mocked us as foreigners such that we cannot even assume local political leadership positions.’ He mentioned of a case of Mrs. Mulambilila, a councillor in Chakari who was always castigated as alien with locals saying ‘*hatingatungamirirwe neMubwidi*’ (we cannot be led by a foreigner).<sup>98</sup>

Such discrimination also impacted upon siblings of the Malawian diaspora. A third-generation Malawian descendant, Naso Jula remonstrated that being identified as an offspring of a *Mubhurandaya* has been detrimental to us since we lack social security and even be accommodated into state youth programmes.<sup>99</sup> Zambians are also similarly stigmatised, while Mozambicans are occasionally labelled *Mamosikeni* or *Makarushi* in reference to the cashew tree that produces the cashew nut and the cashew apple, which was mainly grown in Portuguese-owned Prazos in Mozambique. Others generally refer to non-indigenous Zimbabweans as *Mabwidi*, meaning societal failures or foolish people who have adopted an

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<sup>94</sup> A. Kamete, ‘Of Jinxes and Blessings: The Opposition in Zimbabwe’s Urban Local Governance’, in H. Melber (ed.), *Political Opposition in African Countries: The Cases of Kenya, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007, pp. 39-60.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana.

<sup>97</sup> NAZ AOH/56, Interview with Rueben Jamela by Dawson Munjeri, 11 January 1980.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Naso Jula, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 7 May 2014..

urban or farm identity because of their lack of rural homes in Zimbabwe.<sup>100</sup> These labels found increasing resonance in post-2000 as ordinary ZANU (PF) supporters ingested the party's anti-imperialistic rhetoric against foreigners in its fight against the opposition MDC. Such labels fed into the state's efforts to reduce and catalogue migrant descendants as non-citizens, non-indigenous and foreign.

Citizenship problems are not unique to Zimbabwe. They have globally continued to fuel exclusion of migrants over access to socio-economic and political space. In the African context, vast literature has been produced revealing how citizenship has become politically explosive and has been instrumentally manipulated by the state.<sup>101</sup> It is continuously being redefined, using ethnicity and politics under which questions of belonging and autochthony are taking centre stage. This drives the unending political and civil conflicts bedeviling the continent, where the politicised nexus between autochthony and belonging is creating complex but fertile grounds for othering between the so-called autochthons (sons of the soil) versus the allogenes or allochtons;<sup>102</sup> the indigenous versus the aliens or strangers; the first-comers versus the newcomers or latecomers. Halisi, Kaiser and Ndegwa state that in Africa, as elsewhere, citizenship is a crucial variable in political contests involving freedom and social justice.<sup>103</sup> The explosive nature of such African citizenship politics has produced a plethora of hot spots all over the continent. Various African countries have become theatres of violent conflict between self-acclaimed autochthons and strangers. Examples from Francophone Africa include the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, where non-citizens have been brutally 'othered' by the autochthons. Anglophone Africa has not been spared from this citizenship dilemma as similar conflicts have been rapidly spreading in the region with disastrous consequences. Memories are still fresh

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<sup>100</sup> Mbiba and Chiwanga, 'Death and The City in the context of HIV/AIDS', pp. 19-32, and Muzondidya, 'Jambanja', pp. 334-5.

<sup>101</sup> M. Bratton, (ed.), *Voting and Democratic Citizenship in Africa*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013; F. Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa*, Dakar: Zed Books, 2006; Rich-Dorman, Hammett and Nugent, (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers*; Neocosmos, *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners'*; Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; M. Ndakaripa, 'The State and Contested Citizenship in Zimbabwe, 1980 -2011', in Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ndhlovu, (eds), *Nationalism and National Projects in Southern Africa*, pp. 294-320, and Muzondidya, 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans', pp. 213-35.

<sup>102</sup> Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*, pp. 3-10.

<sup>103</sup> C.R.D. Halisi, P.J. Kaiser and S.N. Ndegwa, 'The Multiple Meanings of Citizenship Rights, Identity and Social Justice in Africa', *Africa Today*, 45, 3-4, 1998, p. 337.

with regard to the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa against the *Makwere-kwere* from across the Limpopo River. There were/are also political election tensions and hostilities in Kenya, Somalia, Zambia, Swaziland and Malawi that have been dictated by the addictive politics of citizenship and belonging, where migrant minorities - or even political contestants - have been victimised.<sup>104</sup> According to Whitaker, many African leaders have adopted the rhetoric of democracy and simultaneously manipulated citizenship to limit and discredit political competition thereby legitimizing exclusionary nation-building strategies.<sup>105</sup> Such patterns largely echo the experiences of descendants from Malawi and other migrants in Zimbabwe whose identity has been explicitly manipulated through recourse to claims of nationhood and citizenship.

However, struggles over citizenship were not topical for Malawian descendants until the start of the new millennium, when ZANU (PF)'s hegemony began to be threatened by the MDC. During the first two decades of independence, ZANU (PF) immensely benefited from alien votes to consolidate its grip on power. In fact, many aliens exercised their right to vote in the country's parliamentary and presidential elections prior to 2000 without much complication. At independence the competing parties, particularly ZANU (PF) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) realised the importance of harnessing all the potential votes to achieve victory in the 1980 general elections. Many migrant descendants, including those possessing dual-citizenship in the form of passports from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Europe, participated as voters. This enfranchisement was predated to the 1979 constitution, which granted suffrage to all Rhodesia Africans above the age of 18 who had lived in Rhodesia for more than two years, including, aliens. For the first time the Malawian diaspora and other regional migrants voted in the free-for-all April 1979 elections for the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Internal Settlement.<sup>106</sup> After 1980, dual citizenship created difficulties. Ndakaripa narrates that 'dual-citizenship conflicted with the 1979 Electoral Act which disqualified dual-citizens from electing or being elected into office during the country's general elections, and for the

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<sup>104</sup> Reference can be made to Kenneth Kaunda, who after thirty years as president was considered to be a foreigner of Malawian origin. There is also debate in the USA challenging Barack Obama as a non-US-citizen.

<sup>105</sup> B.E. Whitaker, 'Citizens and Foreigners: Democratization and the Politics of Exclusion in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 48, 1, 2005, pp. 109-10.

<sup>106</sup> White, *Unpopular Sovereignty: Rhodesian Independence and African Decolonization*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015, pp. 241-5.

purpose of the 1980 general elections, a compromise was made and thousands of foreigners, including African migrants who were ordinarily resident in the country were allowed to register as voters.<sup>107</sup> Certainly, these first democratic elections were important for the competing parties and it was imperative for the electoral parties to control all votes, including the migrant electorate who constituted a significant proportion of the Zimbabwean population.<sup>108</sup>

ZAPU and ZANU (PF) were at the forefront in clamouring for the aliens to vote. The parties had realised the potential and importance of the non-indigenous Zimbabweans' vote as early as 1980 and thus continued to patronise and encourage them to vote for the party during its subsequent 1985, 1990, 1995 and 1996 electoral campaigns in mines, farms and plantations where the majority of the diasporic descendants resided. While the actual statistics are difficult to ascertain, many non-indigenous Zimbabweans voted in 1980 and significantly contributed to ZANU (PF)'s victory against Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU, the Rhodesian Front (RF) and Abel Muzorewa. Faresi Nsingano, a Sena woman hailing from Msanje, Malawi, testified that 'voting for us aliens in the elections from 1980 to 1996 was not problematic at all since our vote was needed by the parties, especially ZANU (PF), to ensure dominance in the political arena.'<sup>109</sup> She added that 'our vote was important then and we were given 'green cards' to use for voting and ZANU (PF) encouraged us to go and vote during its electoral campaigns.'<sup>110</sup> Langwell Mhone echoed this stating that the Nyasa vote boosted Mugabe's electoral victories from 1980 to 1996.<sup>111</sup> No particular discretion was used to discredit voters and the right to

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<sup>107</sup> Ndakaripa, 'The State and Contested Citizenship in Zimbabwe, 1980-2011', p. 298.

<sup>108</sup> At the peak of the colonial labour migration era in 1956, the official population of African migrant labourers was in excess of 300,000. This figure continued to increase as it encompassed their descendants (wives, children and successive generations) who continued to be categorised as aliens after independence. According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency Census 2012 National Report, citizens of Zimbabwe constituted nearly the whole population and far less than 1% were citizens of other countries with citizens of Mozambique and Malawi constituting 35 and 34% respectively of the non-Zimbabweans. These figures, however, ignore the many second-third- and fourth-generation Malawians, Zambians and Mozambicans who were born in Zimbabwe (naturalized Zimbabweans). These constitute a significant proportion about 5 to 10% of the whole population. There are close to two million black Zimbabweans, many of them poor farm workers, who have paternal links to the former Central African Federation and because they are aliens their right to vote has been manipulated since independence.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone.

suffrage was simply awarded to all those who were over eighteen and who were citizens or permanent residents without stigmatization over autochthony and belonging.

Amidst all this, the ZANU (PF)-led government had grappled with the citizenship aspect at parliamentary level as legislators debated the merit of upholding dual-citizenship laws, which it had inherited from the colonial state.<sup>112</sup> The guarantee of dual-citizenship was removed in 1984 after the enactment of the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act, on the pretext that dual-citizens, or ‘half-hearted’ citizens,<sup>113</sup> were a threat to the country’s sovereignty and national security. The abolition was done with the 1985 and 1990 elections in mind and was aimed at the white minority who persistently voted for the former Rhodesian Front, now Republican Front, regardless of Mugabe’s reconciliation. However, this also had serious unintended consequences on thousands of migrant descendants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. These were also dual-citizens even if they had been born in Zimbabwe, and like whites, they were obliged to renounce their foreign citizenship. So the government was faced with the dilemma of having disenfranchised many of its alien supporters.<sup>114</sup> This led to a hasty constitutional amendment before the 1990 general election, which re-enfranchised the people who were not citizens but permanent residents since the beginning of 1986.<sup>115</sup> Jackson Chibwana from Dedza district in Malawi, said that ‘before the year 2000, we were not bothered by issues of citizenship; we knew we were officially designated as aliens on our national identity cards, but we simply lived our normal life and voted in national elections just like other indigenous Zimbabwe citizens.’<sup>116</sup>

All this drastically changed after 2000 as ZANU (PF)’s hegemony began to loosen. As stated earlier, the rejection of the 2000 Constitutional Referendum prompted serious re-strategizing by the party as it lost its stranglehold on numerous urban and rural constituencies. Mlambo asserts that by the new millennium, the idealism of the liberation struggle, with its promise

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<sup>112</sup> Dual citizenship was the main contentious issue that the newly elected Zimbabwean government grappled with as it sought to abolish it in order to ensure loyal and patriotic citizens. While attempts were made in 1984 to abolish it debate continued to rage on into post-2000 with the civil society and opposition parliamentarians arguing that renouncing foreign citizenship was not beneficial to the state and it complicated livelihoods of naturalised citizens who have been forced to renounce a foreign citizenship that they do not possess.

<sup>113</sup> Ndakaripa, ‘The State and Contested Citizenship in Zimbabwe’, p. 294.

<sup>114</sup> [http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/elec/zesn-who\\_can\\_vote\\_070710.doc](http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/elec/zesn-who_can_vote_070710.doc), [accessed 18 July 2014].

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana.

of justice and fair play, had been replaced by a harsh, paranoid, autocratic, self-serving, and arrogant political culture that now routinely violently suppressed any political dissent, muzzled the press and systematically undermined the judiciary.<sup>117</sup> After 2000, ZANU (PF) relied upon violence and coercion rather than consent to secure re-election. However, ZANU (PF)'s coercive tactics were not a new phenomenon. Violence had been systemic and entrenched within the party since the liberation war. It was used to coerce peasants into supporting the guerrillas,<sup>118</sup> in persecuting enemies and rebels such as the Nhari rebellion and the Vashandi movement<sup>119</sup> as well as in solving succession or leadership quagmires. The party also resorted to subtle forms of violence and intimidation to win elections after 1980. For example, it was always difficult for other parties to campaign in former ZANLA areas during 1980. Mugabe had threatened to resume the war if ZANU (PF) failed to win the election.

This instrumental attitude towards elections was to become a feature of the party's approach to democracy henceforward.<sup>120</sup> Mugabe won the 1985 elections and further consolidated his authority by cracking down on ZAPU in Matabeleland using state security institutions during the Gukurahundi massacres and the subsequent crushing and absorption of ZAPU into ZANU (PF) under the 1987 Unity Accord.<sup>121</sup> Coercion was further used to subordinate other political opponents such as Edgar Tekere,<sup>122</sup> Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole in the ensuing 1990 and 1995 elections. Such intimidation became the norm and was adopted to coax and threaten alien voters and other indigenous opposition supporters in the new millennium when ZANU (PF)'s rhetoric on anti-imperialism and pan-Africanism became topical.

Alexander and McGregor analysis of Zimbabwe's politics, patronage and violence reveal the inner workings of ZANU (PF) in relation to the centralisation and militarisation of state institutions to hold on to power.<sup>123</sup> ZANU (PF) also turned to citizenship to coerce or swing African migrant descendants and the white community into supporting the party or

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<sup>117</sup> Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwean', p. 235.

<sup>118</sup> Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*.

<sup>119</sup> For more details on this see White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*; Mhanda, *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter*, and Sithole, *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*.

<sup>120</sup> Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power*, p. 107.

<sup>121</sup> Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union*; CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence*.

<sup>122</sup> Tekere, *A Lifetime of Struggle*.

<sup>123</sup> Alexander and McGregor, 'Introduction: Politics, Patronage and Violence in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 4, 2013, pp. 749-763.



disenfranchise them on the pretext of belonging. According to Castles and Davidson, 'citizenship is at the very core of both democracy and national identity and it implies not only inclusion but also exclusion: the citizenship of certain types of person implies the non-citizenship of others.'<sup>124</sup> In the process, Malawian descendants encountered adverse citizenship obstacles perpetrated by the government's conviction that most non-indigenous Zimbabweans were aligned to the opposition. Henry Banda Matekenya explained that 'in the new millennium we, as aliens including our children, were no longer allowed to vote because we were perceived as part of the opposition.'<sup>125</sup> This became more conspicuous during the 2000 parliamentary election campaigns when ZANU (PF) officials, castigated migrant descendants for their suspected links to the MDC. During the countdown to the 2000 general election President Robert Mugabe, (notwithstanding the alleged rumour that Mugabe himself is of alien ancestry),<sup>126</sup> told a rally in Bindura that people from Mbare were 'undisciplined, totem-less elements of alien origin' and mocked them for supporting the opposition MDC.<sup>127</sup> Mbare was established during the colonial period as a dormitory township and housed a significant number of migrant workers from the broader Southern African region.<sup>128</sup> Potts described the mock as 'the Mugabe insult' that further 'othered' the Malawian diasporic community in Zimbabwe.<sup>129</sup>

ZANU (PF)'s authoritarian vision of citizenship became radically partisan and partial with Zimbabweans now being divided into patriots, sell-outs, traitors or puppets of the West. Zimbabwean-ness was now determined by political affiliation and allegiance to a particular political standpoint.<sup>130</sup> The state used citizenship as a 'stick and carrot', promising full

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<sup>124</sup> Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*, p. 10.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>126</sup> See chapter five, p. 191.

<sup>127</sup> Mugabe lamented that aliens do not have a sense of identity and belonging to Zimbabwe unlike the locals who have totems that attach them to the Zimbabwean soil. For details see C. Chimakure and L. Makamure, 'Mugabe scorns Mbare again', *The Standard*, 27 March 2008, and Daimon, 'Kukulamba: Trials and Tribulations of Aged Former Malawian Migrant Workers in Squalid Residential Zones: The Case of Epworth Suburb in Harare', The Nordic Africa Institute Conference on Ageing in African Cities: Revisiting the Issues, Responses and Outcomes Malawi, Zomba, 2007.

<sup>128</sup> Mano and Willems, 'Debating 'Zimbabweanness' in Diasporic Internet Forums', p. 185. For a detailed history of the migrant demographics of Mbare and other African townships in Harare see Yoshikuni, *African Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe*; Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class: The African experience in Salisbury'; Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, and Groves, 'Malawians in Colonial Salisbury'.

<sup>129</sup> Potts, *Circular Migration in Zimbabwe*, p. 213.

<sup>130</sup> Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwe or Becoming Zimbabwean', p. 61, and Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwean', pp. 245-46.

citizenship rights to foreigners if they supported the party or threatening them with deportation if they did not.<sup>131</sup> The party was now appealing to binaries in its reconfiguration of citizenship. In order to qualify as an authentic and patriotic Zimbabwean, one was expected to be black; have ancestors born in Zimbabwe; live in rural areas or at least be entitled to land in the rural areas; with liberation struggle credentials and vote ZANU (PF).<sup>132</sup> The category of Zimbabwean indigene remained restricted to include only ancestral Zimbabwean groups that were on Zimbabwean soil before the imposition of colonial rule. These were the authentic patriots ideal for the 'patriotic history'<sup>133</sup> that ZANU (PF) was inculcating into its youth and the Zimbabwean education curricula. Ndlovu-Gatsheni clarifies that the party sought to create what it termed a 'patriotic' citizenry through triumphalist nationalist and guerrilla praise texts that project themselves as the only 'patriots' and all others as 'sell-outs'.<sup>134</sup> The praise texts were enthusiastically embraced and incorporated into a mythology of nation-building that privileged the role of ZANU in the anti-colonial struggle thereby contributing to the emergence of hegemonic nationalist historiography and the concomitant monologic account of the past that currently buttresses the ZANU (PF) claim to the alpha and omega rulers of Zimbabwe.<sup>135</sup>

Invisible subject minorities were thus, left in an anomalous position where they were, depending on the context, regarded as either not indigenous at all or not the right kind of indigenous.<sup>136</sup> This saw migrant farm workers being violently displaced by the FTLRP on the pretext that they 'belonged to the white farmer and under the domestic government of commercial farmers, or foreigners in the politics of the nation.'<sup>137</sup> The party realised that among other numerous reasons, they had lost the alien vote to the MDC with many migrant farm workers, miners and urbanites, as well as whites forming the base of the opposition's support. It became imperative to displace, the 300,000 full-time farm workers and their

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<sup>131</sup> Rutherford, 'Commercial Farm Workers and the Politics of (Dis)placement in Zimbabwe', pp. 626-51.

<sup>132</sup> Mano and Willems, 'Debating 'Zimbabweanness' in Diasporic Internet Forums', pp. 184-9.

<sup>133</sup> For a complete understanding of patriotic history see Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic history and the History of the Nation', pp. 215-34, and M. Nyakudya, 'Interactive teaching Methods in National and Strategic Studies in teacher training Colleges: Defeating the Myopia of Patriotic history and Political expediency', *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*, 23, 1, 2011, p. 29.

<sup>134</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis', p. 187.

<sup>137</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe', pp. 216-17.

dependents through the land reform and bully them into supporting ZANU (PF) because they represented a critical swing vote between the traditional MDC urban strongholds and ZANU (PF) strongholds in rural areas.<sup>138</sup> As Pilosof observes 'this meant that of the 4.5 million eligible voters in the country, fully a fifth resided on commercial farms and ZANU (PF) feared that these voters, because of their affiliation to white farmers, would be disposed to vote for the MDC and could have acted as a decisive swing vote between the rural strongholds of ZANU (PF), and the urban centres which were predominantly MDC.'<sup>139</sup> They were thus categorised as enemies of the state along with white farmers and the MDC, and these workers were subjected to some of the worst election violence in post 2000. Secretary-General of the General Agricultural and Plantations Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), Gertrude Hwambira said farm workers were largely being blamed for voting for the opposition MDC and bore the brunt of ZANU (PF)'s retribution.<sup>140</sup>

Such insults and re-constructions over identity and citizenship found meaning through the doctoring of citizenship legislation after ZANU (PF) stranglehold on power had been seriously threatened by the MDC, which garnered 57 seats against ZANU (PF)'s 62 during the 2000 parliamentary elections. In-order to consolidate its narrow victory and regain its seats the ZANU (PF)-dominated Parliament passed the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act in 2001, which obliged all persons wishing to retain Zimbabwean citizenship to renounce their foreign citizenship. The modification was meant to prohibit dual-citizenship stating that all citizens with foreign passports who did not formally renounce their foreign citizenship would be classified as aliens or foreigners.<sup>141</sup> The renunciation period was deliberately reduced from one year to six months, with 6 February 2002 set as the deadline. The amendment was a direct response by ZANU (PF) to the challenge posed by the MDC, whose financial support was considered white-based. The government was hoping to disenfranchise the estimated 30,000 white Zimbabweans by making those with actual or potential foreign citizenship

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<sup>138</sup> For more details about the swing vote see Justice for Agriculture (JAG) Report on Land, Retribution and Elections: Post Election Violence on Zimbabwe's remaining Farms, Harare: Justice for Agriculture, 2008; The General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), 2010; Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farmers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, and Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 49.

<sup>139</sup> Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, p. 49.

<sup>140</sup> T. Ndlovu, 'Thousands of farm Workers Displaced', *The Zimbabwean*, May 2008.

<sup>141</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Zimbabwe: Not Eligible: The Politicization of Food in Zimbabwe*, 15, 17A, 2003.

actively choose to be Zimbabwean.<sup>142</sup> In practice, this mainly affected the close to two million black Zimbabweans, many of them poor farm workers who had paternal links to the former Central African Federation and elsewhere.<sup>143</sup>

Under the new regime, people whose fathers were born outside the country, or who themselves were born outside the country, or who had ‘funny-looking’ surnames, had to regularise their identities. Certainly, many migrant descendants from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique carry unique clan surnames such as Banda, Phiri, Sakala and Mbewe, which clearly indicate their foreign ancestry.<sup>144</sup> These were required to go to the Registrar General’s office at Makombe building in Harare. Until recently, this was one of the busiest places in Harare where thousands of desperate people queued daily to obtain travel documents; permits; and marriage, birth and death certificates. One of the most popular rooms, after the passport section at the Registrar’s offices, is Room 100, where citizenship, so central to identity and belonging or to a people’s connection with their country, came to die.<sup>145</sup> Room 100 was quite familiar, with its dirty label on the door, the wooden bench set against the wall, the shelves crammed with yellowed paper and the cracked fake leather stools on which gloomy officials sat behind a high counter listening to pleas which almost always began with, ‘But I was born in this country...’<sup>146</sup> It was where many diaspora, including Malawian descendants, had to renounce and confirm their citizenship. If not, they were rendered aliens who could not vote, get a Zimbabwean passport or obtain access to rights and resources like land and property.

The 2001 amendment and tight deadline was intended to ensure that white and African migrant voters would remain non-citizens and be ineligible to vote in the 2002 Presidential elections. As a result, most of them automatically forfeited their Zimbabwean citizenship on 6 February 2002, when the deadline for renunciation expired. The Zimbabwe Election Support

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> In the patriarchal society of Zimbabwe, only a father could pass on citizenship through blood. The mother’s citizenship mattered only if she was unmarried.

<sup>144</sup> These are the most common surnames used by Malawian descendants in Zimbabwe, many of whom frequently visit the Registrar General’s offices to regularize their citizenship. See also Daimon, ‘Politics of ‘Othering’ and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe’, pp. 142-3.

<sup>145</sup> Daimon, ‘Politics of ‘Othering’ and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe’, p. 137.

<sup>146</sup> P. Gappah, ‘Where Citizenship Went to Die’, *New York Times*, 22 March 2013. See also Daimon, ‘Politics of ‘Othering’ and the Struggle for Citizenship in Independent Zimbabwe’, p. 138.

Network (ZESN) adds that this was typical of ZANU (PF)'s manipulation of the aliens and the irony of it emanated from the fact that when renunciation was first enacted in 1984 after the abolishment of dual-citizenship, the renunciation had no effect in foreign law, but it satisfied the government until 2001.<sup>147</sup> In addition, the renunciation process was also cumbersome, expensive and demanded extreme commitment (see next section). For many, the bureaucratic route to such renunciation effectively resulted in disenfranchisement.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, many potential alien voters failed to renounce and were automatically disqualified from voting. Civil society and the MDC attempted to seek an order through the High Court appealing for the re-instatement of the migrant descendants' suffrage but all was in vain. Even subsequent attempts at such failed since the judiciary was patronised by Mugabe's handpicked judges. Mugabe thus pulled all strings and managed to win another term as president of the country in 2002.

In the aftermath of the 2002 elections and after a serious outcry from civil organisations over the exclusion of migrants, as well as due to pressure from SADC, the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act was further amended in 2003 stating that descendants of migrant workers (namely persons from SADC countries who entered Zimbabwe to work on farms or mines or in domestic service or as labourers or persons of SADC parentage who may be citizens of those countries) could renounce their foreign citizenship by completing a prescribed form, thereby confirming their Zimbabwean citizenship. However, by the time the amendment was promulgated on 5 March 2004, most aliens had already lost their Zimbabwean citizenship because they had failed to renounce their foreign citizenship. So those people could not avail themselves to the amendment requirements because, having already lost their Zimbabwean citizenship, there was nothing left for them to confirm and many were now 'stateless'. The Act not only affected Malawians descendants but also impacted on Zimbabwe's white, coloured and Indian community and other minorities who did not fall within the category of SADC parentage.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), *2002 Presidential and Local Authority Elections Report*, April 2002.

<sup>148</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe', 216-7.

<sup>149</sup> Mano and Willems, 'Debating 'Zimbabweanness' in Diasporic Internet Forums', pp. 184-9.

ZANU (PF) continued with its drive of coercing the alien vote in the mid-2000s. In early 2004, the regime, through the Registrar-General's office, issued a statement inviting all those who had lost their Zimbabwean citizenship under the 2001 amendment to regularise their status by completing the special renunciation forms. This was done with the March 2005 parliamentary elections in mind with ZANU (PF) cunningly baiting the alien vote for its benefit. The process allowed people, who were born in Zimbabwe, but with migrant parents from a SADC country, regularise and confirm their Zimbabwean citizenship by signing a special form renouncing their foreign citizenship. The Registrar-General's office embarked on an outreach programme under which it started issuing forms for special renunciation through its provincial and district offices.<sup>150</sup> Faresi Nsingano took advantage of this opportunity to change the alien status of her five daughters during this period. She recited that 'all my girls had been aliens, but became citizens during the mobile outreach registration exercise under which ZANU (PF) wanted everyone including us aliens to vote against the MDC.'<sup>151</sup> However, the whole process was complex and insincere since it required long birth certificates (unlike the short ones, these contained all the necessary and relevant biographical data) and proof of residence which many migrant urbanites, miners and farm workers did not possess. On the contrary, in the ZANU (PF) rural stronghold, voters were simply required to have their village head or farm employer vouch for them and become citizens and be eligible to vote.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, many were unable to confirm their Zimbabwean citizenship because they did not have the correct papers or sufficient resources to travel to registration centres and thus continued to be treated as aliens and were disenfranchised. Such manipulation together with other broader coercive electoral tactics ensured that ZANU (PF) won a majority in the 2005 elections garnering 78 seats against the MDC's 41.

However, the party was not impressed by the urbanites who continued to vote for the MDC in all the major towns and cities of Zimbabwe. As shown in chapter two and three, a significant number of these urbanites especially in Harare and other mining towns were of migrant descent who together with other indigenous urban Zimbabweans, were considered unpatriotic. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the post-2005 elections was a good opportunity to

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<sup>150</sup> F. Nhambura, 'Zimbabwe: RG's Office Starts Issuing Citizenship Renunciation Forms', Herald, 5 May 2004.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>152</sup> Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power*, p. 123.

punish urbanites for their demonstration of non-interpellation by ZANU (PF) and the urbanites became dismissed as 'totem-less' and as 'human dirt' that needed a cleansing.<sup>153</sup> In order to regain its leverage in urban areas and dilute the MDC-urbanite vote, ZANU (PF), under the guise of bringing sanity, embarked on a countrywide urban clean-up exercise infamously dubbed as *Operation Murambatsvina*, which began on 19 May 2005.<sup>154</sup> According to Rich-Dorman, the operation started in October 2004, but became more severe in May and June 2005 when thousands of Zimbabweans were dislodged from urban areas.<sup>155</sup> This was a massive, highly systematic programme of demolitions of all informal housing and clampdown on the informal trading in urban and peri-urban areas across Zimbabwe culminating in the loss of housing and livelihoods for millions of residents.

The International Crisis Group reported that the exercise was executed with the combined force of the police, the army and youth militias, starting in the capital, Harare, but quickly extending to practically all urban centres; and like a Tsunami, viciously swept away informal businesses and shanty homes of the poor and squatters, leaving an incomprehensible trail of destruction.<sup>156</sup> Raftopoulos regarded *Operation Murambatsvina* as a militarised urban clean up exercise that was officially justified by the state as an adherence to a technocratic, bureaucratic and modernist urban planning policy, but unofficially it was pursued as punishment of the urban areas for their consistent support of the MDC after 2000.<sup>157</sup> It was a vindictive ploy by the ruling party to weaken the opposition MDC by punishing a non-compliant urban electorate for post-2000 elections rejections. It was also a state repression mechanism by a ruler who had

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<sup>153</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*, p. 33.

<sup>154</sup> For detailed analysis of the exercise and its impact please see A. Tibaijuka, *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues in Zimbabwe*, United Nations, 2005; Potts, 'Restoring Order? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32, 2, 2006, pp. 273-91; Solidarity Peace Trust, *A Fractured Nation; Operation Murambatsvina: Five Years on*, Johannesburg, 30 July 2010; Kamete, 'The Return of the Jettisoned: Zanu's Crack at 'Re-urbanising' in Harare', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32, 2, 2006, pp. 255-71; International Crisis Group, 'Zimbabwe's Operation Murambatsvina: The Tipping Point', *Africa Report*, 97, 2005; M. Bratton and E. Masunungure, 'Popular Reactions to State Repression: Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe', *Afrobarometer Working Papers*, 59, 2006; Rich-Dorman, 'Running from the land': Urban development and the Zimbabwean state in historical perspective', Unpublished paper presented at the British Zimbabwe Society, 2007, and M. Vambe, (ed.), *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2008.

<sup>155</sup> Rich-Dorman, 'Running from the land'.

<sup>156</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Zimbabwe's Operation Murambatsvina'.

<sup>157</sup> Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe', p. 220.

run out of options in the face of an increasing political and economic crisis.<sup>158</sup> After its shelving in June 2005, approximately 700,000 urban people had been directly displaced while about 2.4 million others were indirectly affected.<sup>159</sup> Among these were urban aliens, many of whom were landlords, garden boys, house cleaners and pensioners.

Mugabe assumed that those pushed out of urban areas could return to their rural homes, but half of them were urban born and did not have rural homes to return to including thousands of migrant descendants. Potts emphasised that Malawian descendants were persecuted as non-indigenous people without a rural home and they tended to have fewer alternatives than Zimbabweans did, and were over-represented in the informal and peri-urban settlements, which suffered greatly under the operation.<sup>160</sup> In Epworth, some Malawian descendants lost their properties to the exercise. Margaret Nadzonzi who had invested her late husband's farm pension in a semi-structured house in Epworth, recalls that the police and bulldozers came and pulled down her house and others in the neighbourhood leaving her stranded in the open with her three young grandchildren and one mentally ill son, Mustaffa.<sup>161</sup> Abraham Kampira, a landlord from Glen View 3 high-density suburbs in Harare, lost his backyard cottage from which he earned extra income from rentals.<sup>162</sup> ZANU (PF) further exploited the outcry created by the clean-up programme to carry out a partisan counter-operation of dishing-out residential stands to the displaced homeless victims in return for votes under its subsequent *Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle* started soon after the end of *Operation Murambatsvina* in June 2005.<sup>163</sup> The *Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle* simply became a huge farce; a scandal of Mugabe patronage and dismal delivery which was riddled with glaring irregularities, never benefitted those whose houses were bulldozed, instead going to those close to power and was used lure urban votes so as to assure ZANU (PF)'s hold on power.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Bratton and Masunungure, 'Popular Reactions to State Repression'; Rich-Dorman, 'Running from the land'.

<sup>159</sup> Tibaijuka, *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe*, p.7.

<sup>160</sup> Potts, *Circular Migration in Zimbabwe*, pp. 214-5, and Potts, 'Restoring Order?', pp. 273-91.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Margaret Nadzonzi. She eventually managed to rebuild her home after three years using funds from well-wishers, church members and her working children.

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Abraham Kampira.

<sup>163</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, *Meltdown: Murambatsvina: One Year on*, Johannesburg, 30 August 2006.

<sup>164</sup> Mukaro, 'Operation Garikai a Failure: Amnesty International', *The Standard*, 22 July 2005, and J. Saunyama, 'Garikai/HlalaniKuhle a Huge Farce', *The Zimbabwe Mail*, 15 April 2014.



The luring of the alien vote was also evident towards the 2008 harmonized elections when the Registrar-General Tobaiwa Mudede was criticized by his ZANU (PF) counterparts for being too strict on aliens. For instance, on 01 May 2007 Mudede was summoned by ZANU (PF) Members of Parliament and quizzed about his department's strict citizenship laws, as the ruling party sought to salvage votes from groups it had marginalised in previous elections. The legislators told Mudede that they risked losing the support of millions of potential voters, mainly farm workers, who had been affected by laws requiring them to renounce foreign citizenship if their parents were not Zimbabwean.<sup>165</sup> The government then embarked on an extensive voter's registration exercise under which the ZANU (PF) electoral machine lured marginalised voters in preparation for the 2008 harmonised elections. The Minister of Local Government was reported saying in his constituency that aliens born in Zimbabwe should register to vote, adding that plans to issue them with identity documents were at an advanced stage.<sup>166</sup> He assured aliens in his constituency that they would be able to vote after he had finished ironing out grey areas with the register-general's office.<sup>167</sup> The Registrar-General in turn also issued out a statement stating that all persons aged 18 and above would be able to register as voters in the voter registration exercise where his officers would be 'issuing birth certificates, identity documents and voter registration, inspection of the voters' roll, citizenship registration and restoration for those who lost it by default.'<sup>168</sup> He went on to say that 'those who were made stateless by the 2001 amendment after they failed to regularise their citizenship status and wishing to restore it, are required to bring their original birth certificates, original identity cards or a passport and, if married, their original marriage certificates.'<sup>169</sup> If they produced these documents, these 'stateless' persons would be registered as citizens and voters. However, just like in 2001 very few aliens renounced their foreign citizenship - indeed, very few were in a position to do so.

Sakina Selo, a 40 year old second-generation female Malawian descendant, is one of the few who exploited the opportunity to normalize her Zimbabwean citizenship, however, not for the purposes of voting but to acquire the necessary travel documents (passport) for her cross-

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<sup>165</sup> C. Manyukwe, 'Zimbabwe: Mudede Quizzed on Alien's Votes', *The Financial Gazette*, 2 May 2007.

<sup>166</sup> Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network Report, *Electoral Laws Manipulated For ZANU (PF)*, 10 July 2007.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

border trips to South Africa and Malawi at the height of the Zimbabwean crisis.<sup>170</sup> Bureaucratic obstacles continued to dog the migrants' quest to register and be eligible voters. Irene Petras, the Director of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights whose organisation was representing affected alien farm workers, submitted evidence on the issue to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence and Home Affairs in 2007. She asserted that despite court rulings against disenfranchising all those who could claim Zimbabwean citizenship by birth and descent, the Registrar-General still continued to demand aliens' children to renounce their alleged foreign citizenship and the process was not smooth as some did not have the required long birth certificates due to migration and death of parents and guardians.<sup>171</sup> For ZANU (PF) citizenship became instrumental in denying alien votes to the opposition and simultaneously reclaiming the same votes from these marginalised groups. Such actions echo the assertion about post-colonial African regimes that thrive on making nations by creating strangers through systematic re-definition of citizenship and nationhood so as to tighten their grip onto power against other democratic forces.<sup>172</sup>

The March 2008 harmonised elections which were held under the SADC electoral guidelines, were characterised by violence, harassment and intimidation of the opposition supporters. Subtle forms of violation replaced overt violence, particularly towards interference with basic freedoms, inclusive of unlawful arrest and detention. The release of the results was delayed, the counting process lacked transparency, which fuelled widespread rumours of vote rigging and military intervention. The MDC won a majority in parliament with its leader Morgan Tsvangirai edging the veteran leader in the presidential election but did not garner enough votes to avoid a run-off. The ensuing campaign towards the 27 June 2008 run-off witnessed one of the most violent episodes in the country's electoral history as it was marred by a massive ZANU (PF) campaign full of violence, war rhetoric and hate speech against the opposition. Many people were killed, injured and displaced that Tsvangirai, who was arrested several times during the campaign, eventually opted to pull out, claiming that a free and fair

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<sup>170</sup> Interview with Sakina Selo, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 9 May 2014.

<sup>171</sup> O. Manwere, Citizenship Law to Prejudice of Many Voters, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 2 November 2007.

<sup>172</sup> Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*; Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders*; Neocosmos, *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners'*; Muzondidya, 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans'; Rich-Dorman, Hammett and Nugent, (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers*, and Ndakaripa, 'The State and Contested Citizenship in Zimbabwe', p. 294.

election was impossible in a climate of state-sponsored violence.<sup>173</sup> Aliens were not spared as ZANU (PF) youth militia and war veterans coerced the electorate to vote for the party blaming former commercial farm workers, miners, and urbanites for the party's defeat. Reminiscing about the 2008 run-off election violence, Achunga (pseudonym) of Maryland Farm in Darwendale recounted that 'many of us, farm workers, had to flee to the bush to escape reprisal attacks by militia who were given army uniforms and were forcing us to vote for Mugabe.'<sup>174</sup> Laina (pseudonym) of Riverside Farm in Banket added that 'we had no option but to participate in the run-off because the militia beat us and threatened to deport us, aliens, if Mugabe lost again.'<sup>175</sup> In the end, Mugabe won a farce of an election garnering over 90% of the vote. This saw SADC interfering and eventually forcing a coalition government between ZANU (PF) and the MDCs. Among the major highlights of Zimbabwe's inclusive government was the passing of a new constitution that purportedly extended voting rights to the aliens.

#### **a) The Quest for Belonging: Agency in Renouncing a Citizenship One Never Had**

Many migrant descendants actively tried to regularise their citizenship. While the options were limited during the height of the crisis, many Malawian descendants attempted to obtain either Malawian or Zimbabwean citizenship. Some tried to circumvent the Zimbabwean renunciation process by bribing officials at a heavy cost, while others assumed new citizenship status altogether (Mozambican citizenship was easier to obtain in the last decade and many Malawian progenies did become Mozambicans) in a quest to obtain travel documents, especially passports, so as to survive the Zimbabwe crisis. Arthur Ntandika from the Malawian Embassy in Harare explained that a Malawian descendant could only naturalise his or her Malawian citizenship if they were under the age of 18 and were accompanied by their Malawian parents or are in possession of records that clearly showed the parents' place of birth and district in Malawi.<sup>176</sup> The Malawian Embassy in Harare also tried to assist the qualifying Malawian descendants by facilitating their emigration to Malawi and normalising

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<sup>173</sup> Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power*, p. 116.

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Achunga (Pseudonym), Maryland Farm, Trelawney, 16 October 2013.

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Laina (Pseudonym), Riverside Farm, Banket, 8 June 2014.

<sup>176</sup> The statement was expressed in C.I. Zengeya, *Much to the Land of Promises*, Film Documentary, Harare: Krea8tive Media, 2012.

their Malawian citizenship status. There are many second- and third-generation Malawians who went to Malawi for the first time in their lives and met with varying degrees of success in claiming direct citizenship in Malawi. Eneris Batani, a 28-year-old third-generation Malawian woman who currently lives in Johannesburg, is one such an example. Born in Zimbabwe to Malawian parents, Eneris went to Malawi in 2005 with her father, who assisted her to naturalise her Malawian citizenship and obtain a Malawian passport.<sup>177</sup>

Being Malawian by origin turned into social capital, with Malawian citizenship and passports being on high demand by indigenous Zimbabweans undergoing a massive exodus from the crisis-hit Zimbabwe into neighbouring countries (South Africa, Botswana), as well as overseas (Europe, Australia and the USA).<sup>178</sup> The crisis transformed Zimbabwe into the Nyasaland of the region. It turned what was once a source of ridicule to a source of envy as desperate Zimbabweans sought alternative livelihoods elsewhere. The Malawian passport was sought after by everyone, including other African migrants, especially Nigerians, because its holder did not require a visa to enter the afore-mentioned countries. Eneris Batani narrated that 'I could have acquired Zimbabwean citizenship but the crisis rendered it useless and the South African visa was highly expensive, costing around R2,000 in 2008, and was totally unaffordable for many ordinary people.'<sup>179</sup> With the inflationary free-fall of the Zimbabwean currency, visa fees were out of reach, triggering massive clandestine migration into South Africa and Botswana, while those with Malawian passports migrated freely.

However, not many Malawian diaspora managed to acquire Malawian citizenship because many second- and third-generation descendants surpassed the age restrictions or their parents had long died or never acquired Malawian passports during their stay in Zimbabwe. For them, the only option left was to undergo the rigorous renunciation process demanded by the Zimbabwean government, which many found difficult and costly. Until recently, many bureaucratic dilemmas complicated the process of renouncing a Malawian citizenship that many descendants never had. Standing in the queues at the Registrar's office in Harare, you

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<sup>177</sup> Interview with Eneris Batani, Johannesburg, South Africa, 3 March 2014.

<sup>178</sup> Crush and Tevera have analysed Zimbabwe's migration crisis in detail, but with little focus on the transformations and importance that was assumed by possessing the Malawian passport during this period. For details see Crush and Tevera, (eds), *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival*.

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Eneris Batani.

could hear many narratives about the ordeals of becoming Zimbabwean. There were scenarios where families with both parents of Malawian descent had a mixture of children registered as either 'Alien or Citizen' on their national IDs. Sandie Ndenda, a 34-year-old third-generation Malawian descendant, was one such example. He was born into a family of five and was the only one with naturalised citizenship status and a Zimbabwean passport, while his siblings were categorised as aliens. He narrated that,

I obtained my ID in 1995 in Kadoma during an extensive government outreach to register people across the country. I do not know what happened but my ID was stamped with a 'C' symbol for citizen. My other siblings except for my sister are aliens. Due to the need to escape the economic crisis of 2008, she underwent the gruelling process of renouncing her presumed Malawian citizenship and managed to obtain the Zimbabwean passport after a long time.<sup>180</sup>

There were also those born of a Zimbabwean mother and a father of Malawian descent whose citizenship was prejudiced by patriarchy and could not directly claim their mother's citizenship. Such was the case of Immanuel Phiri, a 25-year-old born in Zimbabwe of a Malawian father and a Zimbabwean mother, who could not get a Zimbabwean passport unless he renounced his presumed Malawian citizenship.<sup>181</sup>

Until recently, the renunciation process demanded serious commitment and faith, and enough funds to pay and sometimes bribe the officials. To initiate the process, one had to go to Room 100 at the Registrar General's offices and pay US\$10, provided he/she wanted to wait for the six-month verification process, or slightly shorter if you were applying for emergency citizenship status.<sup>182</sup> Because of lack of funds, many preferred the US\$10 process. They filled in a form of renunciation, and after some time were sent a letter noting the acceptance of their application, which they had to take back to the Room 100, where they were given a formal letter to renounce their Malawian citizenship. All Malawian descendants took the letter to the Malawian embassy where they would formally renounce their alleged Malawian citizenship. After this process, an appointment was made with the Registrar's office, where on the prescribed date they took an oath of allegiance to Zimbabwe and were given a citizenship certificate. With this certificate one could now change his/her alien ID to a

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<sup>180</sup> Interview with Sandie Ndenda, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 11 April 2012.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Immanuel Phiri, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 11 April 2012.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Sakina Selu.

citizen one stamped with the letter 'C' at a further cost of US\$50.<sup>183</sup> Such redefinition of citizenship thus continued to complicate the livelihoods of many Malawian descendants in Zimbabwe, with the prohibitive costs and time compelling many to endure their stateless situation.

### **'Everywhere is a Heroes Acre; Anywhere I will die is Home': Malawians and the Idea of Home**

The Zimbabwe crisis re-ignited transnational interests among the Malawian diaspora with their ancestral home, which for many had become an imaginary homeland. The concept of home is problematic, complex or ambiguous and even the ideas of return are either actualised or remain imaginary as well.<sup>184</sup> It is either socially constructed or imagined depending on one's circumstances and transnational connectivity. Fox says that it is not an easy concept to pin down; it is essentially a chimerical and subjective phenomenon.<sup>185</sup> Wiles adds that home itself is a slippery, multi-layered and on-going process.<sup>186</sup> For Hollander, the meaning of home 'all depends'; because home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.<sup>187</sup> To some home is 'where you come back to die after having lived your life elsewhere.'<sup>188</sup> Others like Parker and Lendon view it as where the heart lies.<sup>189</sup> It is the domain of the 'traditional' and the 'authentic', a space where the affections centre.<sup>190</sup> The nuances of home are thus diverse and vary according to people, societies, cultures and spatial variables.

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid. The situation changed for better after 2014 because the Registrar General's offices decentralized the document registration process and the system has become so efficient that renunciation of citizenship which used to take an eternity between 2000 and 2013 is now quicker and cheaper. One now has to pay US\$10 and the process can take as quick as a day. Then you have to pay a further \$40 to change your alien ID and acquire one designated 'C' for citizen.

<sup>184</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

<sup>185</sup> L. Fox, 'The Meaning of Home: A Chimerical Concept or a Legal Challenge?', *Journal of Law and Society*, 29, 4, 2002, p. 580.

<sup>186</sup> J. Wiles, 'Sense of Home in a Transnational Social Space: New Zealanders in London', *Global Network*, 8, 1, 2008, p. 116.

<sup>187</sup> J. Hollander, 'It all Depends', *Social Research*, 58, 1, 1991, p. 31.

<sup>188</sup> C. Mungoshi, *Waiting for the Rain*, London: Heinemann, 1975, p. 162. See also Mujere, 'Autochthons, Strangers, Modernising Educationists, and Progressive Farmers'.

<sup>189</sup> K. Parker, 'Home is Where the Heart... Lies', *Transition*, 59, 1993, pp. 65-77, and H. Lendon, 'Home is Where the Heart Lies: Nostalgia in the Works of Contemporary Diaspora Caribbean Women Poets', Summer Scholarship Report, Institute for Social Change and Critical Inquiry (ISCCI), University of Wollongong, 2005.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

The dilemma of conceptualising what one calls home is common among migrant communities. For first-generation Malawian migrants, Malawi is home because that is where they came from or in the words of Margaret Nadzonzi, 'it is where she was born and where her umbilical cord is buried.'<sup>191</sup> Malawi as a home is the only place where nobody calls them a stranger and alien or where they are never invisible and where their souls and minds lie. Thus, Malawi stands as the root where they emerged from and belong without which they are considered dead, rootless or identity-less. A popular adage commonly used by these diaspora in reference to Malawi is *kumudzi*. They also nostalgically reminisce about places such as Zomba, Balaka, Nkota-kota, Blantyre, Mangochi and Lilongwe and the mighty Lake Malawi and its '*chambo*' fish breams. However, the intensity of transnational yearnings was generational. The fast disappearing first-generation migrants were more inclined to re-connect and even return home to Malawi. Successive generations, born in Zimbabwe who are distant to, never been to Malawi and could not claim any direct links and citizenship in Malawi, were not very interested.

Many have been in a dilemma as they have perceived both Zimbabwe and Malawi as their home. Terkenli explains that the sense of home varies in space and the strongest sense of home commonly coincides geographically with a dwelling and it attenuates as one moves away from that point.<sup>192</sup> As a result, the world of migrants and their descendants is bifurcated into two or more spaces. According to Lehmann, 'migrants live between two worlds or what Paul White calls "several worlds"; they are perpetually stuck in-between these two while not belonging to either one.'<sup>193</sup> Their sense of belonging to a place is either disturbed or lost altogether and they are not sure of their identity anymore. McLeod corroborates that migrants and their descendants (children) live in a perilous intermediate position and are 'unable to indulge in sentiments of belonging to either place.'<sup>194</sup> They thus, thrive to belong to both but cannot simultaneously live in both spaces. As a result Rushdie refers to migrants as exiles or emigrants or expatriates, who are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to

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<sup>191</sup> Interview with Margaret Nadzonzi.

<sup>192</sup> T.S. Terkenli, 'Home as a Region', *Geographical Review*, 85, 3, 1995, p. 324.

<sup>193</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 283.

<sup>194</sup> J. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, Manchester: MUP, 2000, p. 214, cited in Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

reclaim, to look back, which leads to 'physical alienation and profound uncertainties.'<sup>195</sup> They 'live as minorities, in states of unbelonging.'<sup>196</sup>

In a way, these Malawian diaspora suffer from a crisis of identity because they are connected to and identify with both Zimbabwe and Malawi as their home. Such an interrelationship of 'place' and 'self' has led to the argument by Barry and Lehmann that migrant identities are generally seen as 'doubled, or hybrid, or unstable.'<sup>197</sup> Lehmann adds that the migrant relies on his imagination to achieve a sense of belonging, but this turns to be 'notoriously unreliable and capricious' and as a consequence a 'plenitudinous sense of home' is moved out of reach.'<sup>198</sup> His sense of belonging to a place is either disturbed or lost altogether and he is not sure of his identity anymore. Many Malawian *Machona* have lost their sense of belonging and no longer have binding transnational connections or roots to Malawi. Chambers claims that 'the migrant sense of being rootless, of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated past is perhaps the most fitting metaphor of the migrant condition.'<sup>199</sup> In the end, the original home becomes an imaginary homeland that nostalgically exists in the migrants mind. Migrants are in the end alienated from the country left behind which turns into an 'imaginary homeland' that has little to do with the reality anymore.<sup>200</sup> Consequently, ideas of return are either actualised or remain imaginary as well.<sup>201</sup>

Over the years, first-generation migrants have failed to return home because of numerous obstacles and commitments in their adopted homeland.<sup>202</sup> As a result, some have given up hope of ever returning to Malawi leaving them to await their fate or death in Zimbabwe. Such hopelessness, for instance, saw Henry Banda Matekenya asserting that he has no option but

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<sup>195</sup> S. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*, New York: Penguin Books, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>196</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>199</sup> I. Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture and Identity*, London: Routledge, 1994, cited in Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283, and Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 10.

<sup>201</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

<sup>202</sup> Most of the reasons for not returning to Malawi are almost similar to the ones that were outlined in the 1930s concerning *Machona* by Burden, *Nyasaland Native labour in Southern Rhodesia*, pp. 17-8. Burden noted that chief amongst the loss of Nyasas was the attractions of the south, luxuries such as beer and women, the credit system and the cost of the journey home. He adds that others were invariably ashamed to go home because they had accumulated neither money nor goods to take with them.



die in Zimbabwe and not in Malawi because 'everywhere is a heroes acre; anywhere I will die is home.'<sup>203</sup> This meant that it would be of little difference for him to be buried in Zimbabwe because it was now his home and the country's graveyards are the same as in Malawi. Despite the aspirations to go back home, many saw such a quest as futile because they had families and had worked their entire lives in Zimbabwe. Matekenya explained that 'I cannot go back because I have a wife and huge family (seven grown up children) here and if I go back, I will be a stranger there because I have been in Zimbabwe for far too long.'<sup>204</sup> His wife added that 'we have invested a lot here; we now have a communal home at KwaGwinha in Chegutu 6 resettlement areas and we have five head of cattle there.'<sup>205</sup> For Langwell Mhone returning home or even getting a rural home was not an option because his children were against such; instead, they insisted on looking after him at his home in Chakari.<sup>206</sup> Some returned to stay in Malawi only to come back after a few years. Selemani Chipwanya did so in 1992 and stayed with his mother in Mangochi farming barley tobacco for six years, returning in 1998 and with the death of his mother in 2006, Selemani lost the only relative that he had in Malawi and for that reason, he said he could no longer go back there anymore.<sup>207</sup> Chris Adaki went back in the mid-1990s after retrenchment at Dalny Mine but came back in 2004 arguing that life was hard and unbearable in Malawi and his children eventually bought him a house in Kadoma.<sup>208</sup>

Family was important for the Malawian diaspora and many could not contemplate leaving their children behind because such a deed created problems in Malawi. Williard Banda still wanted to return to Malawi and die there because his 94-year-old mother is still alive in Nkhata Bay. However, he would have to convince his children to take them back to his roots because 'kids are important in Malawi as they assist you in times of need since relatives will neglect and question you why you left your children in Zimbabwe.'<sup>209</sup> Hampson observed as early as 1982 that some Malawian descendants were in a dilemma because they had assets in 'exile' in the form of families and property such that, for instance, a 74-year-old woman said 'as long as my children are here I should remain here in Zimbabwe. But if my children

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<sup>203</sup> Interview with Henry Banda Matekenya.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Interview with Faresi Nsingano.

<sup>206</sup> Interview with Langwell Mhone.

<sup>207</sup> Interview with Selemani Chipwanya.

<sup>208</sup> Interview with Chris Adaki.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Williard Banda.

decide to go back to Malawi then we shall go back together.'<sup>210</sup> Even for those who had the money or had people willing to assist them to return to Malawi, family remained an impediment to going back home. When Rueben Samalani's white employer, William Cobra, was relocating to South Africa from Zimbabwe in 1982, he had proposed to fund Rueben's trip back to Malawi as part of his 25-year pension service. However, Rueben refused citing family obligations, particularly the fact that he wanted to enjoy the bride wealth from his eight daughters.<sup>211</sup> As a result, Cobra in turn bought Rueben a housing stand in Epworth, on the outskirts of Harare, leaving his devoted cook with much of his household furniture. Rueben then sold most of the furniture so as to send his children to school. Rueben's quest for *lobola* did not come to fruition because some of the daughters are either not married or married but he has not received any bride price. He complained that his married daughters protect their husbands as breadwinners and they argued that 'if you demand *lobola*, our husbands will divorce us and you cannot look after us.'<sup>212</sup>

Even for others who have not invested in huge families and properties in Zimbabwe they could not go back to Malawi, where their heart lies' due to poverty and old age. Such was case of 91-year-old Tenje Majikuta who migrated from Mangochi in 1963 on a futile quest to buy a bicycle. He had sired 14 children but nine of them were in Malawi; four were in Zimbabwe and one had died.<sup>213</sup> He was living on the outskirts of Riverside Farm with his second wife Evelyn Malunga, from Petauke Kalindawalo, Malawi, a renowned traditional healer in the area, who due to old age was now blind. After working for years across Zimbabwe Tenje and his wife had now retired to the outskirts of the farm because of lack of a proper rural home. They were living in misery, alone, in a bushy area two kilometres from the farm compound and could not return to Malawi due to lack of money. Tenje acutely added that '*tife manyowa amuno*' which literally translated to 'we are now manure of this country.'<sup>214</sup> By implication, Tenje and his wife, just like other elderly Malawian diaspora had surrendered their fate to dying in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>210</sup> J. Hampson, *Old Age: A Study of Aging in Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1982, p. 47.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Rueben Samalani.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Interview with Tenje Majikuta.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

Former ex-Rhodesian soldier, Edward Inga, had to resort to acquiring some rural home in Guruve, in northern Zimbabwe because of lack of money. 'If I could get enough cash I can go back to Malawi and stay with my relatives (his father's young brother),' he said.<sup>215</sup> Similarly, the late Sophia Mbewe, who left behind her twin sister when she migrated to Zimbabwe as a young girl in 1952, failed to return due to family obligations and financial constraints.<sup>216</sup> The migrants' indecision of belonging also saw people like Jackson Chibwana investing in retirement homes in both Zimbabwe and Malawi. Chibwana had been frequently going back to his home in Dedza, Malawi and had opened a bank account there which by 2005 had about K12,000 (kwacha).<sup>217</sup> He bought a small plot of land in Lilongwe during the reign of Bakili Muluzi. He did not stay on the plot and after five years, the Malawian government, as per state policy, usurped it. He lost hope and looked for an alternative rural home in Zimbabwe. He got one in Zvimba communal lands where he stays under Chief Muchere.

Relatives in Malawi also influenced one's decision not to return. Gerald Msusa noted that though he still had a sister and brother he could not go back now because of old age and fear of discrimination by his relatives. 'Relatives will welcome you during the first days and spend all your goodies/money and after that marginalise you.'<sup>218</sup> Other than this, Square Kazembe stated that many *Mabhurandaya* cannot return home because they are embarrassed and are ashamed of facing the ridicule of relatives. He explained that:

I cannot go back there because of shame. I have nothing to show for all my work here. No properties and people back home have a tendency of sarcastically laughing at us if we come back impoverished. They will ask me '*nanga amalume chimene muli kukalira kuZimbabwe nichani*' (why are you staying there, yet you are so poor?). Maybe if I could have acquired a car, I would unashamedly go back home with something to show off.<sup>219</sup>

Some of these relatives are harsh and aggressive. The late Akuka Phiri from Dalny Mine, Chakari had an eldest son who was doing well in Chisanje, Malawi. However, he remonstrated that he could not go back because 'relatives in Malawi are bad, specifically his son who

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<sup>215</sup> Interview with Edward Inga.

<sup>216</sup> Interview with Aides Mbewe, daughter of Sophia Mbewe.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Jackson Chibwana.

<sup>218</sup> Interview with Gerald Msusa.

<sup>219</sup> Interview with Square Kazembe.

accused him of spending his pension alone in Zimbabwe and did not want to see him anymore.<sup>220</sup> Sadly, Akuka did indeed fail to return home and died in October 2014.

In some cases, misfortune had derailed the idea of return. Laina Naida from Riverside Farm pointed out that while she was willing to return home but could not do so because of the poor health of her husband, Naida Ndeleko, who had been bed-ridden for close to five years due to stroke.<sup>221</sup> Many Malawians had also lost loved ones in Zimbabwe and they did not want to leave behind the graves of their departed relatives who lay in various cemeteries across the country. Margaret Nadzonzi's husband died at Riverside farm in 1998 leaving her with five children and she cited looking after her husband's grave as one of the reasons she could not return to Malawi.<sup>222</sup> Mamudu Manangwa lost his wife of 30 years in 2008 and argued she is the main reason he could not leave Zimbabwe for Malawi.<sup>223</sup> Emma Kalonje lost two husbands, one in 1968 at Venda Farm near Murombedzi who left her with four sons and the second one in 2001 in Makonde communal areas with whom she had six more children. She also lost one of his sons and numerous grandchildren and these siblings and the graves of the departed convinced her to stay.<sup>224</sup> Others were not even interested in returning because they had lost contact with relatives while some could not return because they had forgotten about home due to problems of amnesia in ageing. As a result, most Malawian descendants long concluded that Zimbabwe was now their permanent home where they see off their final days.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has tried to provide a bird's eye view of the Zimbabwean crisis between 2000 and 2008 as experienced by people of Malawian descent on commercial farms, towns and mines. The crisis impacted varyingly upon every citizen or resident in and out of the country in the face of unprecedented political and economic meltdown. In the midst of this were non-indigenous Zimbabweans, particularly those of Malawian origin who because of their alien identity were 'othered' and targeted by the state for their unbelonging and wrong political

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<sup>220</sup> Interview with the late Akuka Phiri, Dalny Mine, Chakari, 10 May 2014.

<sup>221</sup> Interview with Laina Naida.

<sup>222</sup> Interview with Margaret Nadzonzi.

<sup>223</sup> Interview with Mamudu Manangwa.

<sup>224</sup> Interview with Emma Kalonje.

affiliation. The chapter has shown that crisis historiography has grappled with the chaos of the new millennium, but with little recourse to the experiences of Malawian descendants who, because of their identity and association with whites and the MDC, were adversely affected by the crisis. It has chronicled how Malawian descendants, as invisible subject minorities, has been marginalised through the FTLRP or the 'Third Chimurenga; *Operation Murambatsvina*; struggles for citizenship and belonging, as well as through systematic disenfranchisement and violence in post-2000 elections.

Focusing on the FTLRP, the chapter has acknowledged the general observations made by land reform historiographers such as Rutherford, Sachikonye, Hartnack, Moyo Chambati, Yeros, Amanor-Wilks and Pillosof on plight of migrant farmworkers. However, it has simultaneously shown that a number of these workers adapted and exploited various opportunities availed by the FTLRP to eke new livelihoods on and out of the farms. Concerning the politics of citizenship, the chapter has confirmed the assertions of Neocosmos, Geschiere, Mamdani, Raftopoulos, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Muzondidya, Rich-Dorman and Nugent on the exclusion and subjectification of migrant minorities through which the state has been central in creating strangers within nation-states. It has thus been observed that in the last decade, the ZANU (PF) regime spearheaded narrow and exclusionary nationalism which discriminated people of migrant descent in its fight to consolidate and hold on to power in the face of rising civil and political opposition. In spite of this, most Malawian descendants have not been passive victims of the crisis. Many assumed numerous forms of subaltern agency and alternative livelihoods (*kukiya-kiya*) in the farms, towns and mines to survive amongst which was the idea/predicament of returning home.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

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When the first Malawian labour migrants set foot for Southern Rhodesia in the 1890s, they could not have foreseen the impact such a migration would have on their lives and on regional dynamics and history. Their decision to trek south set a trend culminating in the emergence of a Malawian diasporic community, not only in Zimbabwe but across the Southern African region as whole. Initially the labour migrants were highly transnational, but from the 1940s onwards they gradually settled down and integrated into host societies, especially Zimbabwe, through intermarriages, culture and naturalization by birth. Their foreign identity became central in determining their individual and collective experiences over time. Amidst all these processes of transformation and identification some became luminaries as millenarians and labour leaders, as well as part of the African nationalist elite who defined and dominated socio-political processes prior to the emergence of modern mass nationalist movements in the 1950s and 1960s. With the coming of the liberation struggle in the 1970s, people of Malawian descent were, like indigenous Zimbabweans, equally affected. They continued to consolidate themselves and their gains after Zimbabwean independence in 1980. The golden age of the 1980s and 1990s was disturbed by the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis where alienation of diasporic communities became intense and overt, leading to an increased yearning for their ancestral home, as well as numerous forms of adaptation and resistance.

Until now, this social history had not been comprehensively analysed. The experiences of Malawian descendants have largely been absent from Zimbabwean historiography. Where they have been written about, they have essentially been projected through the lens of the colonial archive and limited to the colonial period. Subject voices have largely been muffled and confined to the realms of imperial and colonial labour history. Colonial narratives tend to deliver perspectives which are largely shaped by the colonial government's prejudices, assumptions and policies. While the colonial archive provides a crucial official dimension, alternative sources, especially oral interviews, are vital for capturing subaltern narratives. Consequently, this thesis has employed the life-history approach to complement and weave together fragments from the archives in order to explore issues of diasporic identities,

marginality and agency among hitherto invisible subject minorities in Zimbabwe. It has moved along and through archives and their institutional boundaries, turning our attention towards people who have been absent from history, and opened new ways of thinking about subject minorities, not as docile victims but as active agents, asserting and expressing their humanity, and carving a niche for themselves in spaces that have evolved as permanent homes.

This thesis set out to examine connections between the three themes of identity, marginality and agency which have been systematically woven into a nuanced and chronological narrative of Malawian migrants and their descendants from 1895 to 2008. In the end, it argued that the Malawian diaspora's complex identities, in their variant forms, were central to their dynamic experiences, particularly their marginalization in Zimbabwe. The Malawian diaspora also used the same identities to collectively cope, adapt and resist challenges in Zimbabwe between 1895 and 2008. By projecting the voices and experiences of *Mabhurandaya*, the study has 'brought the social margins into the centre of historical analysis, an aspect lacking in the archive.'<sup>1</sup> The thesis has demonstrated that these migrant descendants evolved from being migrants to become part of a vibrant diasporic community that has historically and immensely contributed to the country's socio-economic, political and cultural landscape.

Observations made herein buttress Brubaker and Cooper's assertion that identities are fluid and multiple<sup>2</sup> or what Lehmann generally see as 'doubled, hybrid or unstable.'<sup>3</sup> The thesis has shown that both the individual and collective identities of Malawian descendants have been fluid and dynamic, and have been constructed or imagined from within and without their communities. It has underscored that Malawian diaspora assumed multiple identities that have been located or influenced by varying cultural, social and historical situations. With the gradual hybridization and syncretism of migrant cultures together with the continuous process of becoming and unbecoming migrants, Malawian diasporic identities did not remain absolute or unitary. So the thesis challenges essentialist notions of Malawiness highlighting the mosaic nature of their ethnic diversity and identities, as well as their generational complexities and differences. This evolution and malleability of identity was more evident

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, *Subaltern Lives*, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

through the identification and categorization of Malawian diasporic communities by indigenous Zimbabweans through labels such as *Mabhurandaya*, *Nyasa*, *Mabwidj*, *Vatevera Njanji* and *Machona*. The colonial and post-colonial state also followed suit categorizing Malawian labourers and their progenies as 'native aliens' and aliens, respectively, for governance and exploitative purposes. Much of this identification was irrespective of generational schisms among Malawian diasporic communities. Second- third- and fourth-generation descendants who no longer identified with their ancestral roots but were Zimbabweans by birth, were categorized and alienated uniformly.

The multiplicity and fluidity of identity tells a story about societal change or transformation over time. Chapter three and four, for example, have shown this periodic identity evolution. Malawian diasporic communities, who prior to the war were seen as nuisances or 'ringleaders and troublemakers' to the colonial regime abruptly became state collaborators who allegedly sold-out the nationalist struggle between 1966 and 1979. Nationalists and guerrillas largely regarded migrant descendants as sell-outs or traitors because of their association with settler power and capital. The study has argued that such labels were socially constructed identities that were both real and imagined. However, the resultant dilemma saw the Malawian diaspora being caught between two fighting forces, in a foreign space, and had to walk a tightrope navigating volatile situations and relations in order to survive. As indicated in chapter six, the sell-out identity continued to haunt migrant descendants in post-independent Zimbabwe, especially during the post-2000 crisis period, when ZANU (PF) spearheaded partisan and exclusionary nationalism and rhetoric against 'imperial puppets' and supporters. Overall, Malawian diasporic identities became sites of transit and were generally capitalist-, cultural-, religious-, political- and conflict-induced.

The study has been more than just a narrative of the theme of fluid identities. Diasporic experiences, particularly with regards to the other theme of marginality within the nation-state, puts the state at the fore of analysis. Though a nation-state is supposed to act as a unifier, the thesis has shown that some nation-states prey upon people's identities to complicate their belonging and ultimately use and 'other' them from benefiting from the state. Since the colonial times, migrant descendants were alienated and manipulated by the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean state. The Malawian diaspora experienced double segregation



as Africans and as aliens under the colonial state. As indicated in chapter two, the colonial stereotyping of Malawian labourers and other descendants from Zambia and Mozambique sought to channel and maximize use of their cheap migrant labour on Rhodesian farms and mines. Chapter six revealed that after independence, the post-colonial state continued with the colonial structures of alienation or what Ndlovu-Gatsheni calls 'the colonial matrices of power', mainly for political aggrandizement. The chapter also illuminated the role the state plays in shaping diaspora's feelings of home. It pointed out that the incessant subjectification of aliens increasingly re-ignited the transnational interests and quest among diasporic communities, including successive generations who have never been to Malawi, to go back to their ancestral home, which has over time turned into an imaginary homeland.

The thesis therefore, lends support to the overarching scholarly arguments by Mamdani, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Neocosmos, Geschiere, Muzondidya, Nyamnjoh, Rich-Dorman and others, who view exclusion of marginalised groups as a political process in which the state is central. It has demonstrated that there are particularities in the Zimbabwean case where national identity and autochthonous citizenship became a powerful weapon to indiscriminately exclude second- third- and fourth-generation migrant descendants who are Zimbabweans by birth. Basing much on oral accounts, the study has asserted that citizenship and belonging have been topical in Zimbabwean politics and have proved to be a burden for many of those who cannot claim direct citizenship rights within the nation-state. Powerful socio-political orders have exploited the fluid nature of migrant identities to exclude non-citizens for political expediency. Chapter six (pp. 215-37) has examined how this exclusion or 'othering', through various stereotypes and the amendment of citizenship laws, placed diasporic communities at the peripheries of the Zimbabwean society. The emergence of the MDC in the post-2000 exacerbated the situation with Malawian descendants being seen as proxies of the opposition movement. This 'othering' was evident through the systematic labelling and stereotyping of these people as aliens on their IDs; persistent displacement during the land reform and urban clean up exercises and victimisation during political elections where the Malawian diaspora and other minorities were denied their right to suffrage. The state appealed to partisan binaries in its reconfiguration of citizenship and belonging, which broadly sits well with Mamdani's citizen and subject formulations. Just as apartheid South Africa's constructions of

'citizens and natives', non-indigenous communities in Zimbabwe were projected as inauthentic, unpatriotic and not right the kind of indigenous.

The theme of agency has been threaded throughout the thesis showcasing how Malawian diasporic communities carved a niche for themselves in Zimbabwe and made their own history. The entire history of Malawian descendants was characterized by a myriad of initiatives starting from the decision to be a migrant labourer, to migrate, to look for work, accommodation, socially integrate (inter-marriage), participate and lead labour unionism, experience the war, acquire property and be prominent. Chapter two asserted that though much of the migration was triggered by the colonial capitalist economy, Nyasa interaction with Zimbabwe was historical. Nyasa migration was predated to the pre-colonial period when Maravi communities interacted with the Zimbabwean plateau at various socio-political levels (pp. 35-7). This set the basis for Nyasa agency after colonialism when Nyasas migrated en-masse to Southern Rhodesian mines, farms and towns as part of the infamous *Chibaro/Mthandizi* labour migration system. It has been shown that in response to the pressures of the colonial taxation system, Nyasas increasingly migrated south from the 1890s with the Southern Rhodesian government supervising or incentivizing the process through the RNLB and other services such as free *Ulere* transport, food and shelter. Despite this, the journey or *ulendo* to Rhodesia was arduous and dangerous. Many Nyasa migrants, including women and juveniles, walked on foot avoiding *Chibaro/Mthandizi* labour recruiters/touts (*madobadobas*) and marauding activities of Portuguese authorities, African insurgents and robbers. Males had to obtain the requisite identity and remittance documents in Nyasaland and upon arrival in Rhodesia they got IDs and underwent rigorous medical examination (*Chibeula*) in order to qualify for employment.

While colonial labour thrived on obscuring the migrants' ethnic diversities through industrial ethnicity, Nyasas had independent identification processes, as well as spatial and occupation inclinations which were induced by ethnicity, gender, education, class, culture and relations with local African communities (pp. 70-4). Ordinary Malawian labourers settled, adapted and found ways to assert and express themselves. They engraved themselves in foreign frontiers through culture, education, inter-marriages and sheer hard work. They conjured forms of masculinity that enabled them to conceive of their lives as the heroic struggles of warriors in

a peculiar form of purgatory. Nyasa women and juveniles increasingly trekked south and 'created new socio-economic practices and added vivid strands to the tapestry of diasporic life.'<sup>4</sup> Malawian labour migrants also exploited the competition for labour between Rhodesia and South Africa (*Wenela*), with many Nyasas using the colony as a stepping-stone to clandestinely migrate to the lucrative labour markets of the Union of South Africa (pp. 67-70).

Equipped with missionary education, a number of Malawian migrant elite transformed and dominated numerous spaces such as early colonial millenarian, labour and nationalist movements. Chapter three (pp. 107-23) has argued that the resultant hegemony culminated in tensions with local people and the Rhodesian state. Nyasa involvement in civil and labour unrest across Southern Rhodesia gained them a reputation/identity of being ringleaders and troublemakers. Colonial authorities accused Nyasas, many of whom were better educated, of spreading discontent among the passive locals through labour unrests, millenarianism and factional fights. Through the activities of NAC and ethnic-cultural organizations, Nyasas became a thorn in the flesh of colonial and imperial authorities. Incidences and institutions such as the Watchtower movement, the 1927 Shamva Mine strike, the 1945 and 1948 general strikes, the 1959 Kariba dam strike, as well as mutual aid organizations immensely contributed to the blossoming of the 'troublemaking' identity. The thesis has further asserted that much of these activities were not divorced from the broader decolonisation trajectories occurring across the continent and within Southern Africa itself after the 1950s. Nonetheless, Nyasa dominance of labour arenas and employment tensions with local people, created serious suspicion, which spilled over into the liberation, struggle and further complicated their livelihoods in Zimbabwe.

Malawian diasporic agency continued into the post-independence period. Chapter five (pp. 183-196) has argued that despite numerous challenges and anxieties of the 1980s and 1990s (*Gukurahundi* crisis, and unprecedented loss of economic livelihoods through droughts and ESAP), the first two decades of Zimbabwean independence were a golden age for Malawian progenies. A number of them consolidated their status within the Zimbabwean social, political and economic fabric becoming prominent property owners (landlords), sport persons,

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<sup>4</sup> Delius and Phillips, 'Introduction: Highlighting Migrant Humanity', p. 2.

politicians, educationists, agriculturalists, journalists and musicians. Some attained a cult hero status, which contributed to the naturalization of their migrant ancestry and appropriation of their belonging/identity by indigenous communities. Such prominence testifies to the ingenuity and agency of the Malawian diaspora in exploiting numerous post-independent platforms to achieve micro- and macro-success, as well as shape and naturalize the broader migrant Malawian identities across the country prior to the dominance of the exclusionary discourse of the post-2000 period. This agency and dominance consolidates the fact that though many Malawian descendants lived on the margins of the Zimbabwean society, not all were marginalized. They made their own history in a frontier where they have eternally lived as 'minorities, in states of unbelonging'.<sup>5</sup>

The study has shown that culture was a crucial component of Malawian diasporic agency and identity articulation in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. It became a crucial platform for comforting, coping and expressing identity, as well as for seeking integration and naturalization. Culture served as a 'social cushion for non-indigenous Zimbabweans to anchor themselves and as they started settling down, sinking roots in the diasporic community, culture aided them in their relationship with the wider host society and their inter-ethnic relationship with other groups.'<sup>6</sup> Malawian cultural expression through practices such as *Gule Wamkulu/Nyau*, *Beni* dances, mutual aid societies, as well as *Chinamwali* circumcision rites, found meaning in showcasing their collective identities and establish syncretic points of assimilation with other regional migrants, autochthonous Zimbabwean communities and the state. The Malawian diaspora crafted rich forms of art, dance, music and song, as well as created a myriad of social forms, from burial societies to mine marriages, to sustain them in desolate and often dangerous environments.<sup>7</sup> Culture also offered a platform and social networks to cope with fears and problems induced by post-independent political turmoil, ESAP, droughts and continued state alienation. Using Scott's assertion of 'weapons of the weak', the thesis suggested that Malawian cultural motifs became an emblem of the marginalised in the diaspora.<sup>8</sup> Musical artistes such as Macheso and Zacharia, for example,

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<sup>5</sup> Lehmann, 'Transnational Identities', p. 284.

<sup>6</sup> Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, 'Diasporic Memories and Identities', p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Delius and Phillips, 'Introduction: Highlighting Migrant Humanity', p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. 28-47.

are testimony to this agency as they have occasionally expressed their concerns or contested societal injustices by questioning, through songs, prevalent official and popular images foreign exclusion, nepotism and discrimination in the public sphere.

Cultural functionalities also changed over time. Before 1980, migrant cultural cosmologies were more exclusionary and resilient towards state authority. After independence, these practices continued to be coping tools, with some becoming more syncretic and inclusionary (pp. 165-183). For example, *Gule Wamkulu* and *Beni* survived longer, and outlived efforts of Christian missionaries to ban these practices in Malawian communities; managed to survive under British colonial rule by adopting some aspects of Christianity; and spilling over Malawian borders through migration. Malawian migrant labourers used these cultural traditions together with ethnic mutual aid societies to cope and adapt to the new realities in foreign frontiers. *Mabhurandaya* employed their diverse cultural ingenuity to define and negotiate their territorial autonomy and space, exploiting elements of secrecy, sacred environments and dances to create a collective identity and forge cohesion amongst members. Culture also had cohesive or syncretic functionalities among the Malawian diaspora and within regional migrant communities. Cultural occasions enabled further engagement, bonding and networking amongst migrant descendants and with local communities. Cultural dances became increasingly inclusive to the extent of incorporating other diasporic Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican sub-ethnicities, as well as locals in post-independent Zimbabwe. With the incorporation of other regional cultural traits, practices such as *Gule Wamkulu* and self-betterment organizations became hybrids that reconciled Zambian, Mozambican and Malawian diasporic influences/experiences in Zimbabwe. *Chinamwali* or male circumcision rites and associated identities were further enhanced by contemporary connections between male circumcision and the AIDS pandemic, with circumcision being marketed as the ideal imagery of real modern men. Even with the increased volatilities and overt discrimination of the post-2000 period, Malawian descendants found comfort in their diverse culture to articulate their identity, resist continued state alienation, seek belonging/integration and cope against the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis.

Some diaspora opted to return home. However, transnational interests were periodic and generational. The fast disappearing first-generation migrants were more inclined to re-

connect and even return home. Successive generations, born in Zimbabwe who have never been to Malawi, and cannot claim any direct links and citizenship in Malawi, were not very interested. Likewise, prior to settling down permanently after the 1940s, most Malawian labour migrants maintained physical ties with Malawi. The thesis has argued that diasporic communities tended to revive their long lost transnational interests in times of turmoil, identifying more with their homeland than the crisis-stricken Zimbabwe. Transnational connections were re-ignited during the liberation war in the 1970s, the *Gukurahundi* period and the post-2000 economic and political meltdown. As has been indicated in chapter six (pp. 237-43), the process of reclaiming belonging in Malawi itself, even for first-generation Malawians, is complicated. Malawi as a country has turned into a distant imaginary homeland. Many remain outsiders in their ancestral homeland and communities. They remain the 'lost ones' (*Machona*) and this includes their offspring, who in the eyes of ordinary Malawians, are simply seen as descendants of *Machona* and are not authentic Malawian indigenes.<sup>9</sup> In the process, for many Malawian migrant descendants, Malawi has become some kind of imagined past or imagined identity that does not really connect to the present realities.

The thesis has overall established that diasporic experiences of marginality and agency were not homogenous but were multi-layered, varying according to gender, age, education, occupation and settlement. They were often cyclical in nature; manifesting themselves in intricate life cycles of marginalization and agency over time. Agency was also multi-dimensional and was exercised in different spheres, domains and levels. Similarly, the Malawian diaspora either individually or collectively perceived themselves as belonging to a variety of groups as dictated by circumstances and contexts. Many valued numerous identities involving class, culture, language, professions, education, employment, settlement, transnational connections and other socio-political interests.<sup>10</sup> Each of these variables, to all of which these migrant descendants simultaneously belonged, gave them particular plural identities that determined their marginalization or lack thereof, and their agency in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Gift Kayira and George Jawali.

<sup>10</sup> Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, p. xii.

Issues raised herein make significant contributions to numerous historiographies. The study's analysis of the Malawian diaspora's incessant resistance to colonial domination through millenarian and labour movements in chapter three, has added empirical nuances to colonial and imperial history in general and decolonization literature in particular. Similarly, its articulation of Nyasa hegemony in labour unionism and politics has further illuminated the problematic relationship between labour and nationalism. As stated earlier Nyasa dominance of Rhodesian labour and political spaces generated tensions and suspicions among the local trade unionists and nationalists. The study has demonstrated that the dominance of Nyasas in socialization (inter-marriages), better-paying jobs, trade unions and the resultant indigenous African unemployment in the 1950s and 1960s sometimes led to xenophobic attacks and anxieties over security of tenure (pp. 99-123). This historical friction critically informs contemporary tensions and suspicions held by the Zimbabwean state over *Mabhurandaya* and the resultant post-colonial hurdles over their citizenship and belonging.

An analysis of the Malawian diaspora's role and experiences during the Second *Chimurenga*, as well as their contribution to the economic development of Zimbabwe, is critical to the overall Zimbabwean historiography. Although they were principally portrayed as sell-outs, the thesis concludes that Malawian diasporic war experiences challenge and address various silences and assumptions dominant in the orthodox Zimbabwean nationalist and liberation war historiography. It shows that the liberation war was not a straight-jacket that was only fought or experienced by ZANU and ZAPU cadres, and indigenous Zimbabweans, but had numerous nuances pointing to the complex nature of the war episode. Migrant descendants made sacrifices to a war that technically was never theirs. However, because many now regarded Zimbabwe as their permanent home, they directly and indirectly encountered and participated on both the Rhodesian and guerrilla sides. In the process they were equally affected by the episode as indigenous Zimbabweans, suffering serious war realities and atrocities. In the end, the ensuing relationships between the migrant descendants and the warring parties culminated in various conflict-induced identities (pp. 143-55) some of which continued and found new meaning in post-independent Zimbabwe where the politics of citizenship and belonging became topical. The sell-out identity, in particular, became a dominant stereotype that was associated with the Malawian diaspora even beyond the liberation war. The study underscores how Malawian diasporic contributions to war

narratives also illuminate hitherto ignored roles and experiences of subject minorities, as well as shedding light on the origins and prevalence of popular identities associated with migrant descendants. Their experiences also help to subvert the prevalent post-colonial hegemonic discourses on war participation and credentials, processes of belonging, and access to economic and political rights. In fact their roles in the Second *Chimurenga* legitimizes and naturalizes the belonging of diasporic communities and erodes or challenges their alien tag.

This thesis has accentuated that much of the post-colonial Zimbabwean historiography has lumped ex-Malawians along with other subject minorities. The tendency has been to treat them together with other African migrant minorities, especially those from Zambia and Mozambique, despite the fact that each group has its own experiences and plights. People of Malawian descent have found themselves to be part of this minority marginality discourse as farm workers, urban dwellers and mine labourers. Due to its emphasis on the plight of minorities, the current literature largely propagates a victimhood stance, denying agency to the diaspora. In addition, there is a major scholarly gap concerning migrant experiences in the first two decades of Zimbabwean independence. Chapters five and six have comprehensively tackled such shortcomings, showing how migrant Malawian livelihoods and identities were intricately shaped through socio-economic and political conditions between 1980 and 2008. Other than adding new dimensions to the *Gukurahundi* and ESAP narratives in chapter five, chapter six also made substantial input to Zimbabwe's 'crisis historiography', giving a detailed and specific assessment of the Zimbabwean crisis as experienced by disenfranchised and invisible diasporic subalterns. This study has made hitherto undocumented connections between colonial and post-colonial discrimination of African migrant descendants, showing how the post-independent state inherited and rigidified colonial alienation structures against migrant communities.

The Malawian diaspora's transformations in belonging and identity over time, from migrants to permanent residents or denizens, nuances modern debates on processes of becoming and unbecoming or what Mlambo terms 'processes of identity-making and state-building in a multi-ethnic and multiracial society'.<sup>11</sup> The changes also give credence to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's

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<sup>11</sup> Mlambo, 'Becoming Zimbabwe or Becoming Zimbabwean', p. 49.



provocative question, 'do Zimbabweans exist?'<sup>12</sup> Diasporic struggles over citizenship and access to economic resources point to the parochial and darker aspects of nationalism where in pursuit of a political end, the powerful elite 'fail to create the nation-as-people, and to install democracy and a culture of human rights.'<sup>13</sup> The study's interrogation of the whole notions of citizenship and belonging, sits well with Mamdani and Geschiere who view such concepts as social constructions within a nation-state. The thesis has demonstrated that not only is citizenship a colonial construct, the concept is also a political tool often deployed to exclude, especially civic involvement against a political system. An important question to ask is what criteria is needed to belong to Zimbabwe? Is it naturalization by birth, pre-colonial connections, war credentials or participation, and renouncing one's dual citizenship? The thesis has shown that the Malawian diaspora virtually meet all such criteria, but in the period under study they remained non-citizens. The state has maintained its categorization of aliens. Even beyond the state's classification, there is a social reality within the communities where people of Malawian descent continued to be alienated and stereotyped. Therefore, even in situations where some Malawian descendants gained Zimbabwean citizenship, their identity as Malawian progenies did not die. Officially they became Zimbabweans but within the communities on farms, mines and plantations, they largely remained *Mabhurandaya* (Blantyre) or *Manyasarande* in the eyes of indigenous Zimbabweans.

The situation of the Malawian diaspora resonates with broader global conceptual trajectories that emerged after the Second World War. This saw substantial movement of migrant populations such as the Jews and the Irish, as well as migrant workers, commonly known as 'guest workers', across the globe. For example, Mexican/Hispanic migrants in the USA, the Turkish migrants in Europe and the Middle East, and the current global importation of Chinese indentured migrant workers. In Europe, for example, the continent was faced with a massive rebuilding exercise of its infrastructure after the Second World War, but lacked the necessary manpower since the war had obliterated a large part of its potential labour force. Guest workers generally came from other European countries, especially Turkey; from former colonies in the cases of France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; or from within the country in the cases of Germany and Sweden. In the United States, there have been efforts

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<sup>12</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-37.

at guest worker programs for many years. These include the Bracero Program, enacted during World War II, attempts by the George W. Bush administration, and the current H-2 visa programs, which brought West Indian workers to Florida and later replaced African American workers with Mexican and other Latino workers.<sup>14</sup> What is interesting to note here is the difficult situations most guest workers encounter, which echoes with experiences of *Mabhurandaya* in Zimbabwe. For instance, the United States has a history of negative reactions to the foreign-born, even as they form the core of the country's workforce.<sup>15</sup> Much of the legislation enacted to address immigration in the United States has come during times when the numbers of foreign-born in the country seemed to rise or economic conditions turned downward. Americans looked for a scapegoat for their difficulties in acquiring jobs or making ends meet and these and other concerns about foreigners have often spread xenophobia in the United States.<sup>16</sup> There are also tensions over provision of welfare benefits to migrants in Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, which find meaning in the general sentiments and marginalization against the Malawian diaspora in Zimbabwe.

Therefore, this thesis adds significantly to the growing historical understandings of the complexities involved in global migration, and in so doing expands on broader discourses on migrant labourers and diaspora histories. Any assessment of their decisions and actions may be useful to other researchers studying similar tropes, moments and transitions in other settings. The thesis compels one to think in the context of multiple movements of different people in different spheres against the politics of the terrain. In exploring how those affected have reacted, and the manner in which they have narrated these experiences, this study offers insights and understandings that are useful to research in other areas and disciplines.

Various regional parallels can be drawn, especially between Zimbabwe and South Africa over the experiences of the Malawian diaspora in Zimbabwe and migrants in South Africa. Harris,

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<sup>14</sup> D. Griffith, *American Guest workers: Jamaicans and Mexicans in the U.S. Labour Market*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006; H. Romo, 'Immigrants, Guest Workers and Policy Issues: Perspectives on Mexican Transnationalism', *Latin American Politics and Society*, 51, 1, 2009, pp. 149-63; D. Kanstroom and S.M. Garfield, 'Guest Workers: Anti-Immigration in the United States', in K.R. Arnold (ed.), *A Historical Encyclopaedia*, Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011, pp. 234-37, and M. Lichenstein, 'An Examination of Guest Worker Immigration Reform Policies in the United States', *Cardozo Public Law, Policy, and Ethics Journal*, 689, 2006, pp. 689-728.

<sup>15</sup> Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Romo, 'Immigrants, Guest Workers', p. 149.

for example, has detailed the historical and perennial dilemmas encountered by what she calls 'overseas Chinese'.<sup>17</sup> Just as the Malawian diaspora, the small Chinese community in South Africa contributed immensely to the country's political and economic life. Yet, they encountered numerous obstacles over integration, belonging and culture, driven by social stratification and the vicissitudes of race relations in South Africa. In addition, with the massive exodus of Zimbabweans from their crisis-hit country into neighbouring states (South Africa, Botswana) and overseas, Zimbabwe has become the 'Nyasaland' of the Southern African region. The crisis has turned what was once a source of envy to a source of ridicule as desperate Zimbabweans seek alternative livelihoods elsewhere. Just as Nyasas in colonial Malawi, the Zimbabwean crisis has transformed impoverished indigenous Zimbabweans into social capital most of whom sell their cheap labour in South Africa. The region and international countries are benefitting from the massive brain-drain of Zimbabwean intellectuals, just as Zimbabwe benefited from Nyasa mission-educated elite. Furthermore, given the ongoing problems of exclusion, xenophobic violence against the *Makwere-kwere* (African foreigners) in South Africa and the legacies of Apartheid's constructions of 'natives' and citizens, this thesis will find resonance in the current regional context.

Experiences of people of Malawian descent in Zimbabwe provide an alternative glimpse into what happens to diasporic minorities living in undemocratic nation-states. The diaspora in developed democracies have increasingly become significant players in the international political and economic arena. Many countries, such as Israel and Armenia, regard their diaspora as strategically vital political assets, while others, such as India, the Philippines and other migrant sending-countries, have been recognizing the massive contributions their diaspora make through remittances.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary and because of the pressures and challenges encountered in their adopted country, the Malawian diaspora in Zimbabwe have over time not massively contributed economically to the development of their mother country, Malawi. The Malawian diaspora has lost its economic clout mainly due to the post-independence anxieties and challenges caused by ESAP and the Zimbabwean crisis. For

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<sup>17</sup> Harris, 'A History of the Chinese in South Africa to 1912', pp. 316-25; Harris, 'The South African Chinese: A Community Record of a Neglected Minority'; Harris, 'The Chinese 'South Africans': An Interstitial Community', pp. 275-300; Harris, 'Whiteness,' 'Blackness,' 'Neitherness', pp. 105-24, and Accone and Harris, 'A Century of Not Belonging', pp. 187-205.

<sup>18</sup> Vertovec, 'The Importance of Diasporas', p. 1.

Malawi, the diasporic population in Zimbabwe, large as it is, has been lost. It has largely lived to its billing as the *Machona* or the 'lost ones'.

Overall, the experiences of people of Malawian descent in Zimbabwe have to a large extent confirmed the general characteristics and nature of diaspora as a concept of analysis, particularly the fact that diaspora was used to characterize specific (and usually victimized) populations living outside of an (imagined) homeland. This was typical of the Malawian diaspora in Zimbabwe who, as has been demonstrated in the thesis, have largely been stifled and marginalised. However, the thesis' emphasis on diasporic agency demonstrates what has become the norm of most diasporic communities across the globe who, in the face of victimization, have asserted themselves and survived various socio-economic obstacles.

By exploring all these dynamics, this thesis has attempted to add empirical and thematic knowledge to a historiography that has been generally silent on Malawian experiences, revealing in the process the consolidations, dilemmas and agency that characterised the lives of *Mabhurandaya* in Zimbabwe between 1895 and 2008. However, there are still more thematic concerns and issues to unpack about Malawian diasporic communities in Zimbabwe. The gender dimension and issues of youth and child labour constitute independent studies. Though Mudeka has looked at Malawian women in Salisbury, more research is pending on their life histories in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Similarly, the study has made a perfunctory acknowledgement of Malawian youths (pp. 46-51). Their experiences as juveniles initially in a different world and adaptation to the colonial labour and wage system, as well as their exploitation and abuse by their white employers and adult African male labourers are aspects that warrant further research. The liberation war narrative still has a lot to tell about experiences especially a detailed role and statistics of Malawian descendants within the RSF, ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. More information will be availed to researchers when the polarized political tide subsides with people becoming more willing or open to reflect on their war experiences. Nonetheless, the little information and war narrative revealed in this thesis (chapter four) significantly challenges the orthodox views about the *Chimurenga*. More developments have also occurred in the period after 2008 to the present. For instance, in May 2013 a new Zimbabwean Constitution was enacted. It tried to address the anomalous statelessness position of the so-called aliens by theoretically redefining and granting

citizenship and suffrage to African migrant descendants, as well as naturalized the belonging of successive second- third- and fourth-generation descendants by birth. It states clearly that citizenship by birth and descent cannot be taken away; it is automatically conferred. Section 43(2) of the new constitution has conferred citizenship by birth on people who were born in Zimbabwe and descended from SADC citizens, so long as they were ordinarily resident in Zimbabwe on 22 May 2013. How such constitutional developments have raised diasporic expectations towards full representation and being heard within the nation-state, is a subject that needs further analysis.

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