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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
HISTORY WORKSHOP



STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

6 - 10 February 1990

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TITLE: 'Nterata'/'The Wire' : Fences, Boundaries and Cultural Resistance in the Potgietersrust District.

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'Nterata'/'The Wire': Fences, Boundaries and Cultural Resistance in the Potgietersrust District.

In August 1950, Mr. A. Gilbertson, a major farmer in the Potgietersrust district, wrote one of many letters of complaint to the local native commissioner. In a tone of thin-lipped restraint, Gilbertson reported that sections of the fence between his farm and Valtyn's location had yet again been stolen. To make matters worse, the boundary between his property, Blinkwater, and the location coincided with the Mogalakwena (Nyl) river which periodically came down in flood, taking sections of the fence with it. In Gilbertson's view of things, he had, for nearly two decades, been fighting a "single-handed" and "losing battle against native depredation and flood water."[1]

Despite claims that he fought single-handedly, Gilbertson was not alone. For the last five decades, many of his white farmer neighbours as well as state officials, had been waging a war to keep boundaries between black and white areas unequivocally fenced. By the 1920s already, boundary disputes, "fence destruction" and "theft" had become a common feature of north-western Transvaal life and in 1929 a weary native commissioner, on being presented with yet another boundary dispute, remarked, "I am getting quite tired of the matter."[2]

While the pace of progressive farming and the fencing that it brought quickened in the 1920s, the 1930s was truly the decade of the fence. During this period various rehabilitation and betterment schemes got underway and as they did, miles and miles of new fencing ribboned its way through the countryside - or, so at least, officials liked to think. The popular response to this spread of 'the wire' was fairly unambiguous and by the 1940s, northern Transvaal officials were complaining of a "veritable epidemic of fence cutting" that in the view of some, "had reached a critical stage."[3]

Indeed, so critical had the situation become that many north-western Transvaal farmers, whose property bordered on black areas, could not keep even a few miles of boundary fence intact, let alone build fencing anew. Some people capitulated entirely. The Town Clerk of Potgietersrust, for example, thought fencing Valtyn's location a waste of time "*want daar sal tog geen draad in orde bly*" (as not a strand would remain in place).[4]

The reasons behind this epidemic of fence cutting are not hard to imagine. Penned into absurdly small areas of land, people in locations and black-owned farms consistently broke through fencing to assert their right to the means

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1 Transvaal Archives (TA), Transvaal Archives Depot (TAD), KPT 14, 2/54/3/21, A. Gilbertson to Native Commissioner, Potgietersrust (NC, PPR), 27/2/46 and 15/8/50.

2 TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, NC, PPR to Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA), 7/12/26 and KPT 35, 2/10/3/18, NC, PPR to E Schroder, 2/12/29.

3 TA, CAD, NTS 1631, 32/238, SNA to Deputy Chairman, Native Affairs Commission, 14/5/47 and Conservator of Forests to Director of Forestry, 18/9/47.

4 TA, CAD, NTS 10211, 6/423/2, Town Clerk to S.W. Naude (the M.P. for the area), 10/3/37.

of livelihood like grazing, game, wood and water that had been denied them. Such actions, taken individually, may seem small. Yet together, they precipitated responses that ranged from massive exasperation to not inconsiderable changes in Native Affairs department policy. In the vastly unequal struggles of the countryside between ruler and ruled, landed and landless, how was it, then, that on the issue of fencing, the weak acquitted themselves relatively well?

Part of the answer obviously lies in factors like remoteness and underpolicing, which often enabled people blithely to disregard such fencing as there was. Furthermore many people, particularly in locations, were admirably poised to mount the kinds of individual, quotidian resistance involved in fence destruction. Living in what white farmers saw as large, anonymous and threatening blocks, many people could keep up the relentless, repetitive pressure that can, in the end, make "an utter shambles of the policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors in the capital."[5]

Faced with the Sisyphean task of fencing repair, bureaucrats and farmers had often, in the end, to reach some kind of accommodation with the desires and way of life of rural communities. However, in attempting to understand such processes of resistance and accommodation, a consideration of certain cultural factors, as Scott has so elegantly shown, is crucial.

> The struggle between rich and poor...is not merely a struggle over work, property rights, grain and cash. It is also a struggle over the appropriation of symbols, a struggle over how the past and present shall be understood and labeled, a struggle to identify causes and assess blame, a contentious effort to give partisan meaning to local history.[6]

It is primarily with such cultural questions that this study of resistance and accommodation will be concerned, something, in turn, made possible by the nature of the sources. Hardly surprisingly, the documents on fencing and boundary disputes are relatively rich, largely because these issues proved so troublesome to white authorities and hence attracted much official attention.[7] As these documents all record the conflicts that fences and boundaries between black and white areas occasioned, they frequently take the form of a public dialogue or negotiation. From these exchanges across the mini-frontier of the fence, one can often gain a sense of the commonsensical understandings on behalf of which the various participants either built or destroyed 'the wire'. Frequently and not surprisingly, these understandings clustered around notions of justice, blameworthiness and the nature of proof and evidence. Understandings of these notions are all culturally shaped and, in a predominantly oral society, for example, things like proof, evidence and contract often take a different form from those in literate societies. Part of resisting or propagating fencing involved people

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[5] J. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1985), p. xvii.

[6] Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. xvii.

[7] The major source here is the native commissioner's archive for Potgietersrust (KPT), supplemented with the more limited magistrate's archive for the same area (LPT) as well as appropriate material from NTS. The archive for the chief native commissioner for the Northern Areas (HKN), also contains rich documentation. The muncipal archive for Potgietersrust (MPT) mainly falls into the closed period. There are, however, some open files.

drawing on these cultural conventions and resources that had been forged in particular milieux. Hence in making certain limited concessions to rural resistance, local state power was simultaneously making certain cultural concessions and was, often unwittingly, having to accommodate itself to various rural and popular forms of wisdom, understanding and insight.

This pattern of cultural and other forms of accommodation is, of course, common, particularly in the countryside. In dealing with such accommodation, officials often ended up recutting their policies more properly to suit the *de facto* cloth of rural life. When during the 1950s, apartheid ideologues wanted to realise their heightened segregationist vision in the countryside, they, too, had to contend with similar circumstances. And while this paper does not consider the apartheid period in the countryside in any detail, it would contribute this idea to the theme of the conference. Like any other official ideology, apartheid thinking, particularly in the countryside, evolved by having to make a virtue of necessity.

The story of fencing that follows will mainly be centred on Valtyn's location, situated close to Potgietersrust (see Fig. 1), although evidence from neighbouring locations and black-owned and occupied farms will be used. The first section of the paper examines the initial establishment of boundaries around the location. Thereafter I discuss why and how various groups attempted to fence, and so fix, these boundaries. After describing how these fences affected location life, the paper discusses the types of cultural, commonsensical understandings that motivated people's behaviour around fencing. The paper concludes with a detailed discussion of the tactics and strategies used in erecting or resisting fencing. It is these details, so the paper argues, that best illuminate the types of cultural accommodation that occurred between the location and the surrounding white world.

Drawing the Boundaries

Effective white occupation and one of its concomitants, effective fencing, came only tardily to the Potgietersrust district. The white village, initially named Pietpotgietersrust had been established by emigrant Boers in the 1850s in close proximity to two major Ndebele/Sotho chiefdoms. Under fierce pressure from these two societies as well as a severe fever epidemic, the town was abandoned in the 1870s. Some time later, Boers again reoccupied the town but it was only in the 1890s that they could claim anything like a vestige of military superiority over the area. It was also at the beginning of that decade that the Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek Location Commission attempted to turn the two chiefdoms into rural locations. The location that concerns us here fell under Chief Lekgobo Valtyn Mokopane (Makapan) and came to be known as Valtyn. Its border began only a few kilometres from the town centre. Situated in a wide fertile valley, it streched about ten miles to the north-west of the Boer settlement. Immediately adjoining this location was another that fell under the chief, Mapela. This location was subsequently divided into two. One bit retained the name Mapela, the other received the European version of its chief's name - Bakenberg. By the first decade of this century, these three locations - Valtyn, Mapela and Bakenberg - lay in a narrow, solid block, thirty miles long and three miles wide that housed some 30 000 people. (See Fig. 1)[8]

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[8] As with all locations, the names vary enormously. At times officials used the name of the incumbent chief. So, for example, Mapela, for a long time was known as Hans Masibi's location. Valtyn was also sometimes

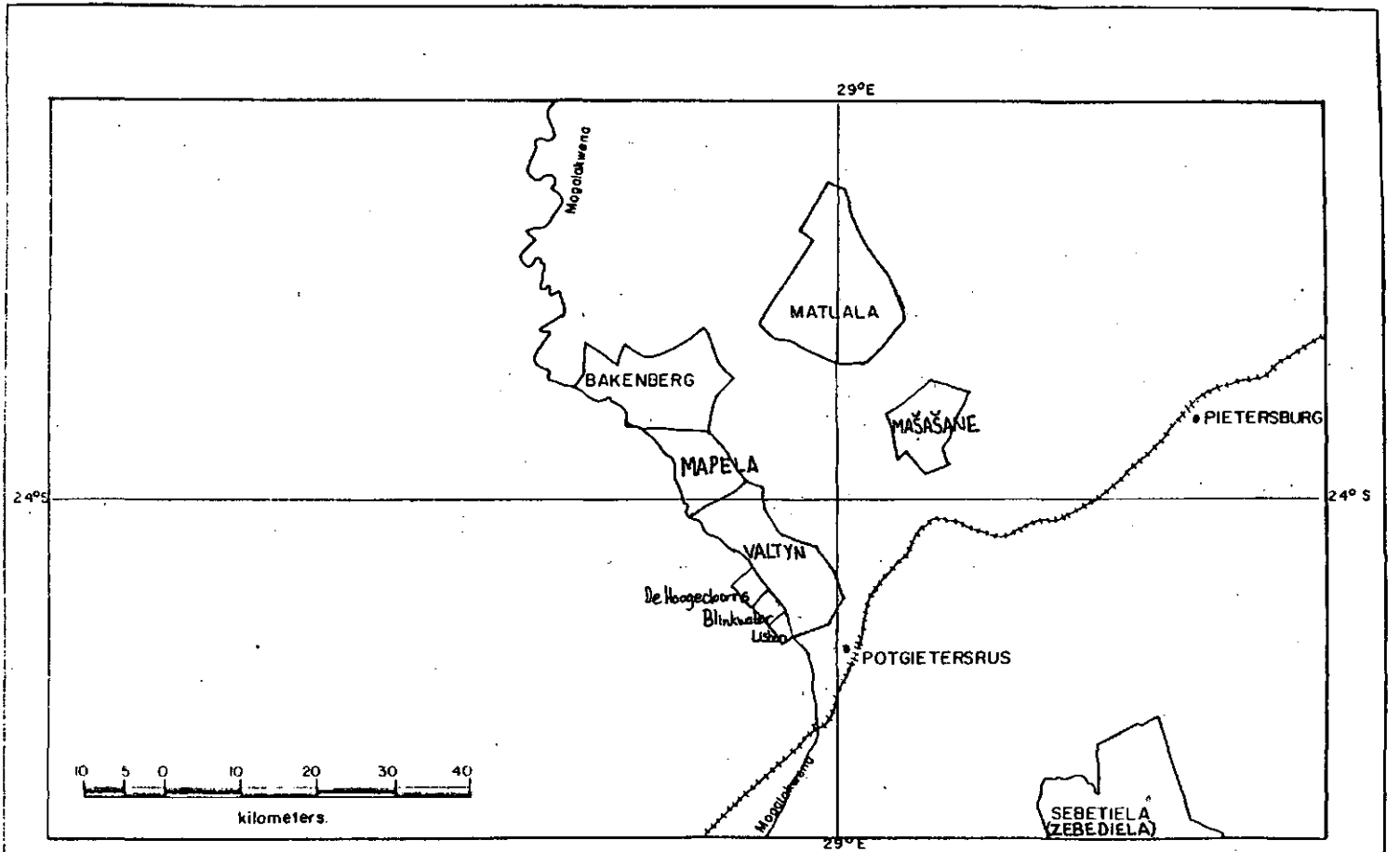


FIG 1: MAP SHOWING BOUNDARIES OF LOCATIONS IN POTGIETERSRUST DISTRICT - 1940. (ADAPTED FROM A.O. JACKSON, THE NDEBELE OF LANGA AND TA, TAD, KPT 49, 5/2/3.)

Like all location boundaries, those declared in 1890 penned people into woefully small areas. When the Location Commission left the area, Valtyn's location officially measured 14 858 morgen from which about 10 000 people had to subsist. In making its deliberations, the Commission had mostly looked at where people lived and declared this the location. Much grazing and arable land was consequently lost. In Valtyn's location this loss was particularly sharply felt on its new western boundary which after 1890 became the Mogalakwena river. This river had always been a major source of water and most of the chiefdom's lands were situated on its banks - most particularly the eastern one but to a lesser extent on the western one. Behind this narrow band of fields on the 'west bank', a range of hills rose sharply and it was here that cattle were grazed and once a year young boys were sent to be circumcised.

To Europeans in the district, this 'border' area was known by the names of the farms that covered it - Lisbon, Blinkwater and De Hoogedoorns (see. Fig. 1). Perhaps more optimistically named than places like Hardtimes, Moonlight and Disappointment that characterised the marginal agricultural land further north in the district, these three farms were to become one of the major and earliest sites of the silent fence war between farm owners and location residents. Struggles around fencing were by no means restricted to these three farms and as fencing slowly made its way up the seventy odd miles of boundary that surrounded the three locations, persistent reports of fence disputes trickled into the native commissioner's office. While this struggle around fencing often seemed quiet and invisible, the tactical and ideological battle on both sides could become fierce and was often fought quite literally over feet and inches. For the desperately overcrowded location residents, every scrap of land was crucial. As one old man said, "The Europeans are fond of shifting beacons", so fond, in fact, that when the location was surveyed in 1936 its surface area turned out to have shrunk from its official size as determined in 1913 of 16 977 to 14 277 morgen.[9] Most white farmers, on the other hand, considered nothing as too much. Indeed, in later years the rabid cry of many farmers in regard to black land was to become "not an inch more."[10]

This cry, however, was only to emerge forcefully in the 1920s and 30s. Back in the 1890s, things did not appear so urgent largely because the rather vague boundary lines that the Location Commission had ordained remained entirely unfenced and completely hypothetical. Surrounded by company-owned land or unoccupied private farm land, the location residents paid little heed to location boundaries and carried on with their lives as before. In some areas this attitude was able to persist until well into the

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called Makapan's location. I have used the name Valtyn as this is the one in current use. Its spelling can vary widely and includes Vaaltyn, Vaaltein, Faltyn, and Faltein. Bakenberg can also appear as Bakeberg or Backeberg.
Figures extrapolated from TA, TAD, KPT 12, 1/15/6, Report on Native Affairs for the year 1938; KPT 31 2/8/2, *Verslag: Naturelle Sake: Potgietersrust*, n.d.; TAD, SN 2, Report on Natives Tribes within the Transvaal, 24/11/79; and CAD, NTS 7748 6/35, Extracts from the Minutes of the Late Location Commission, 26/5/90.

9 TA, TAD, KPT 13, 2/28/7/4, Minutes of Tribal Meeting at Mapela Location, 30/8/39. Figures from KPT 41, 2/11/6, Undated document headed 'Valtyn's Location: Potgietersrust, Location Reclamation Survey.'

10 Union of South Africa, *Report of the Native Affairs Department for the Years 1945-1947*, UG14-1948, 1.

1930s when parts of the northern Transvaal were seen as no-man's land or "Tom Tiddler's ground" as one exasperated native commissioner described it.[11] In 1936 a perplexed owner of a farm just north of the three locations wrote

> Originally the area was kaffir country...As far as I can make out the farms were surveyed in 1905. Prior to the division, natives moved about from farm to farm without restriction and although division has taken place very little fencing exists and natives still wander in the area.[12]

Unfortunately for the residents of Valtyn, however, they did not live on the marginal land north of the district. Instead they resided on the extremely arable soil that characterised the south of the area. To this region, fencing came much sooner.

Fencing the Boundaries

According to both oral and written sources, 'the wire' first came to the Potgietersrust district shortly after the Anglo-Boer war.[13] For those living within Valtyn's location, their first experience of fencing probably came in 1903, when the Berlin Mission station that straddled town and location land, began fencing. Some location residents attempted to challenge the fence on grounds that it blocked off major path ways and that the missionary, in their view, was using it as a pretext to steal land. The native commissioner attempted to rebut the chief's complaints via a principle of precedent: "The native commissioner advised the chief to have a look at any native kraal and he would find hedges and fences of bush and reed but the material of the white people was wire." As the fence mainly affected converts and those who worked in town, the chief was reluctant to push the issue on behalf of these people whom he, in any event, regarded as "impure" and "trees without fruit."[14]

This limited impact of fencing soon began to broaden as improving farmers began to seep into the fertile south of the district, attracted by company land which came on to the market at this time in significant amounts. It was from this point that the first concerted attempts to "pull the wire" and "fence the line" emerged.[15] As Valtyn's location lies in the extreme south of the district, it was one of the first areas to witness systematic fencing and in 1904 an East Coast fever fence began to make its way along the location's western boundary. The memory of how fencing started was one that many residents retained and some fifty years after the East Coast Fever fence, one old man summarised the sequence of events crisply: "Fences were years ago erected

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[11] TA, TAD, KPT 31, 2/8/2, Magistrate and NC, PPR to SNA, 14/10/31.

[12] TA, TAD, HKN 77, F/15/67, L. Allan Lever to SNA, 2/7/36.

[13] Interview with Hosea Bowale by Peter Lekgoathi, Tamaties, Zebediela district, 5/5/89 and TA, TAD, KPT 51, 8/18/31/1, Minutes of meeting held at Zebediela location, 9/6/31, statement by Induna Charlie Kekana.

[14] This account of mission fencing drawn from TA, TAD, KPT 15, 2/3/2, J. Neitz to Resident Magistrate (RM), PPR, 21/6/28.

[15] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/17, Chief Makapan to NC, PPR, 15/9/38 and 2/54/3/12, Frans Seaneko to NC, PPR, 23/7/49.

to prevent stock disease. Later European houses sprang up and we were told 'This is my farm.' We are now kraaled. We want more land!"[16]

However, in erecting the fence, it was by no means self-evident where it should go. The old ZAR Commission had left ambiguous records and surveys of the boundaries while the Mogalakwena river which putatively formed the boundary has a wide, reedy and often marshy bed, not to mention a winding course. Eventually a give-and-take policy was followed whereby the fence, like a sosatie stick, skewered the bends of the river. But, as location residents were to discover again and again, these give-and-take fences always took more reeds and water than they gave. Furthermore, as one of the ablest historians of the location, Frans Nuku, was to remember some two decades after the event, the East Coast fence was intended to be temporary.[17] However, by 1912 the native commissioner's office as well as white farmers had come to consider it as an official dividing fence according to the provisions of the Fencing Act of that year. As matters turned out, however, Frans Nuku was in one sense vindicated in so far as the East Coast Fence did indeed prove to be temporary. It had constantly to be repaired and replaced and by 1909 few traces of it remained, removed as it had been by gradual theft, 'fence destruction' and flood water. However temporary it may have been, the East Coast fever fence had nonetheless made the principle of fencing a reality and subsequent farmers along the 'west bank' could both build on it remnants and refer to its original placing as an important precedent in subsequent disputes.

As the location and its two neighbours, Mapela and Bakenberg, lay on arable soil similar to the clay and loam of the Springbok flats, some farmers soon came to regard them with avaricious eyes.[18] Other farmers who lived north-east of the location felt themselves to be trapped in a corridor between two black 'blocks' made up of the three locations 'below' them and two others - Matlatla and Mašašane (Machichaan) - 'above' them (see Fig. 1). If both groups of farmers could have had their way, all five locations would have been swept further north into marginal bushveld area. The recommendation of one land commission of 1918 under Stubbs along similar lines strengthened the farmers' hand, as did General Hertzog who paid a personal visit to the area in 1925. Platinum had been discovered near Bakenberg, Mapela and Valtyn and Hertzog called for their removal.[19]

His was a point of view shared by the Potgietersrust Town Council and the growing number of poor whites who congregated in the village in the 1920s and 30s, many originating from farms bought by the Trust. Most residents of this town resented living cheek by jowl with a densely settled location. On every available opportunity, they called for its removal in a language

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[16] TA, TAD, KPT 12, 1/15/4, Minutes of meeting of chiefs and headmen at PPR, 20/12/50, statement by Hansie Makapan.

[17] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, Sub-Native Commissioner, (SNC), PPR to NC, Waterberg, 7/6/22.

[18] J.S. Marais, "*Die Landbou-Potensiaal van Potgietersrust*" in *Eeufees Potgietersrust*, comp. A.J. Combrink, (Potgietersrust, Die Bosveld Ko-operatiewe, n.d.), 157.

[19] TA, CAD, NTS 3544, 498/30, SNA to P.J.D. Pieterse, n.d.

whose shrill racism increased sharply as Afrikaner nationalist campaigning got underway.[20]

These calls for removal all made the farcical assumption that an extremely local weak state could forcibly move some 80 000 people and hardly surprisingly the removals were never implemented. These calls for ejection did, however, succeed in sustaining a perpetual climate of insecurity and anxiety amongst location dwellers who often believed removal to be imminent.

Having failed to move people out, farmers had to settle for the next option - fencing in. And from the 1920s, farmers began calling for compulsory fencing, largely through their associations that started to appear during that decade.[21] Some of the first farms to be sold to private owners lay on the location's 'west bank' and it was from here that a renewed offensive was launched to rebuild the East Coast Fever Fence. This call for fencing aimed to keep people and livestock in the location and away from farm land on which farmers wanted to implement new notions of stock-breeding, fertilizing and ploughing. By the 1930s, fencing, or attempts to fence, had made their way up much of the three locations boundaries. In addition to these private schemes, the Native Affairs department, from the mid-30s launched various anti-erosion and rehabilitation schemes that often, for the first time, brought fencing inside the location. By the 1940s, the impact of this fencing, both internal and external, had become far-reaching and we turn now to examine some of its consequences in greater detail.

The Effects of Fencing in the Location

For a number of reasons the effects of fencing are difficult to assess. Fencing was but one in a bundle of measures directed at land dispossession, and its consequences are accordingly difficult to isolate. Furthermore, while fencing itself may, initially, have been easy to combat, the other forces which it symbolised, like the white farmer, were not. In destroying 'the wire', one removed the consequences, rather than the causes of land alienation. Nonetheless, as a type of epiphenomenon, fencing had the effect of securing a number of changes wrought by other agencies. So, for example, land loss through military conquest and colonial decree only becomes generally guaranteed with effective white occupation. Its specific implementation depends heavily on fencing and while much fencing was short-lived, its increase, although gradual, was inevitable as were certain of the changes that accompanied its spread.

The first and most immediate of these changes had to do with overcrowding in terms of land and stock. By 1906 already, location dwellers complained of a shortage of land as well as water which the town of Potgietersrust siphoned off in increasing volume. Exacerbating this shortage were a number of people outside the location who still retained fields. These groups included those living in the town location and those who undertook seasonal work on

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[20] For health reports on the town in the 1930s see TA, TAD, MPT 131, 44/19 and 137, 44/30.

[21] TA, TAD, LPT 1, 4/7/49, J. Mcintosh to RM, PPR, 21/9/25; 4/7/45, L.A. de Jongh to RM, PPR, 19/5/25; and 4/7/4/1, C. Stewart Coppen to RM, PPR, 23/4/26.

surrounding farms.[22] This pressure on land soon began to tell in terms of migrancy and by 1918, 70% of men from the Potgietersrust area were said to be working down the mines.[23] By the 1920s the shortage of land was so great that a mission station request for one morgen of land sparked a crisis of sufficient proportions to reach the Secretary for Native Affair's desk.[24] By the 1930s overcrowding had become chronic and the location was likened to the Sahara desert and singled out by betterment planners as "one of the worst in the Transvaal."[25] For this reason, Valtyn became one of the first locations in the Transvaal to experience anti-soil erosion measures, veld reclamation schemes and other such projects that clustered under the betterment banner.[26]

In addition to pressure on arable land, internal fencing aggravated the critical shortage of pasture. As far as the Native Affairs Department was concerned, the answer was to cull. However, resistance to such schemes proved so implacable that, for a long time, other options had to be pursued. One of these involved fencing for "controlled grazing" which heightened pressure on existing pasture. It was, ironically, a pressure that affected small herdowners more than large ones since those with a lot of cattle generally had the wherewithall to hire grazing from the white farmers in the area who rented out pasture. Further relief for these large herdowners came in 1936 when a block of Trust farms was purchased to add to the locations. Whereas the initial recommendation had been that these farms be next to the location, the white farming lobby thwarted these plans and the additional farms ended up being some sixteen miles away. However, not everybody could make use of this pasture since most people kept their cows close at hand for milk supplies. It was only the large herdowners who could send their cows to graze sixteen miles away and keep some back for milk use.[27]

By the 1930s, most Transvaal locations manifested fairly sharp stratification and in Zebediela, for example, which lay close by, one man had 200 morgen which he ploughed with eight span of oxen while others worked between a

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[22] TA, TAD, GOV 1085, PS 50/8/1907/9, Document headed "Native Location Commission", 2/11/06, evidence of Frans Nuku.

[23] Union of South Africa, UG 32-'18, Minutes of Evidence of the Eastern Transvaal Native Land Commission, evidence of Lester Goldsworthy, (native commissioner for Potgietersrust), 198.

[24] TA, TAD, KPT 15, 2/3/2, NC, PPR to SNA, 6/9/28.

[25] TA, CAD, NTS 3626, 1149/308, RM, PPR to T.G.W. Reinecke, 10/10/35; and NTS 10211, 6/423/2, Director of Native Agriculture to Controller of Native Settlements, 5/2/36. The population and stock figures for the whole district were as follows: 35 people per square mile, and 7.1 morgen per cattle unit. (HKN 28, 35/0/17, undated table headed "Statistics".) By the 1950s the population figure had risen to 64.4 people per square mile. (HKN 28, 35/0/17, Annual Agricultural Report for Year Ending 30th June 1952.)

[26] The main file in this connection is TA, CAD, NTS 10211, 6/423/2.

[27] TA, CAD, NTS 10211, 6/423/2, Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) to SNA, 16/2/39.

half and five morgen with borrowed cattle.[28] Valtyn's location was in all probability much the same and like other surrounding locations possessed a wafer-thin stratum of 'progressive' farmers. It was often this new elite who, together with the old chiefly elite became the beneficiaries of internal fencing and had privileged access to the land which these fences set aside.[29] In terms of land, cattle holdings and social division, fencing played no small part in reinforcing old divisions and creating new forms of stratification.

Apart from land and cattle holdings, fencing also interfered in everyday life, particularly as far as women were concerned. As was the case with the western boundary give-and-take line, fences often cut off access to water. Apart from often necessitating longer journeys to fetch household water, such fences could also deprive washerwomen who did town laundry of their livelihood.[30]

However, one of the biggest bones of contention remained reeds which often ended up on the wrong side of the fence. A standard item in house building and domestic fencing, reeds also had a wide range of other uses and apart from being used to construct musical instruments, they also featured prominently in folklore and mythology. Many Nguni traditions, for example, associate reeds with creation and in the Transvaal, local Ndebele historians identify Mhlanga (a name derived from reed), as the first Ndebele chief in the Transvaal. Not surprisingly, given the importance of reeds in everyday life, the act of their cutting, in some Transvaal societies, symbolizes one of the founding acts of human civilisation.[31]

Rivers in general are seen to hold mythological power and in the Transvaal as elsewhere they inspire any number of *dinonwane* (folktales). In addition, the Mogalakwena featured in the annual initiation ceremonies in which boys were said to cross over (*go wela*) from boyhood to adulthood. In going to and from the circumcision lodge, it was the Mogalakwena that the young boys crossed.[32] In losing access to river frontage, both material and cultural wealth evaporated from people's lives.

There were as well other kinds of cultural changes that fencing precipitated. One concerned changes to the power of the chief who traditionally held the right to declare the seasonal start to reed cutting. With the tremendous demand on shrinking reed resources, this was probably one of the first

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[28] TA, TAD, HKN 33, 42/0, Evidence to the Witwatersrand Mine Native Wages Commission.

[29] TA, CAD, NTS 9531, 138/400(69), Assistant Erosion Officer to NC, PPR, n.d.

[30] Point extrapolated from interview with Job Kekana, Westdene, Johannesburg, 5/3/89 in which he discusses the presense of washerwomen.

[31] Republic of South Africa, Department of Co-operation and Development, Ethnological Publication No. 54, A.O. Jackson, *The Ndebele of Langa* (Pretoria, Government Printers, n.d.), 237; Union of South Africa, Department of Native Affairs, Ethnological Publication No. 1, N.J. van Warmelo, *Transvaal Ndebele Texts* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1930), 17, fn. 1; R. T. K. Scully, *Phalaborwa Traditions*, Ph. D. thesis, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1978, 145.

[32] Interview with Job Kekana, Westdene, Johannesburg, 5/3/89.

prohibitionary powers of the chief to fall into abeyance.[33] Another cultural change concerned oral history and memory. In addition to the standard items of genealogy and battle history that skilled remembrancers recalled, a memory for beacons, meetings with native commissioners, farmers and agricultural officers now became crucial.

In trying to assess the intangible cultural changes that fencing occasioned, it is important to stress that location residents did not see fencing as a discrete issue. Instead they probably understood it as part of a more general white invasion whose object was to possess the land in as many ways as possible. One aspect of this possession involved marking the land in every conceivable manner be it with fences, ploughs, bulldozers, graders, pegs, theodolites, boreholes, roads, farmhouses, plantations, contour banks, grass strips and what have you. The slightest sign of white activity on the land was seen as presaging imminent land loss.

This perception was exacerbated by the often inadvertent tendency of the Native Affairs department to rule by rumour. Important policy information passed from native commissioner to chief. Not infrequently, these policies would hold fairly devastating consequences for the location residents and from the royal family, rumours of changes would seep into the rest of the community. Very often, the recommendations were never implemented or were dropped entirely and as suddenly picked up again. All of these circumstances simply added to the endemic climate of insecurity that reigned in locations accompanied by a persistent culture of rumour which mostly foretold imminent land loss. The presence of even one surveyor could ignite a feeling of popular militancy so strong that it could bring a chief within a whisker of being unseated.[34]

Fencing, then, in the popular imagination, formed part of a wider net of white control. Small wonder, then, that today, at least one old man remembers fencing and literacy as intimately tied.

> The issue of fences was brought about by literacy (*go bala*)...it was found out that when the Boers claimed land for themselves they did not know how to measure it. The English brought theodolites (*dilandmeter*) with them...The Boers never had fences. Even today no-one can say he saw them putting up a fence. They had no skills in putting up a fence. They did not know how to do the corners. (The Boers) did not measure the land. They just used their heads, now they just said, 'This area, from here to that tree...it is my land.'[35]

Given that many planners often encouraged fencing as it would make herd boys redundant and so force them to school, the old man's perceptions contain

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[33] H.O. Monnig, *The Pedi* (Pretoria, van Schaik, 1978), 69; and C.L. Harries, *The Law and Custom of the Bapedi and Cognate Tribes* (Johannesburg, Hortors, 1929), 110.

[34] For one instance of this in Valtyn see TA, CAD, NTS 314, 12/55, Informal Memo by N.J. van Warmelo, 1/12/49.

[35] Interview with Hosea Bowale by Peter Lekgoathi, Tamaties, Zebediela district, 5/5/89.

much wisdom.[36] His words also illustrate the extent to which views of fencing and boundaries are embedded in certain cultural forms of understanding and it is to this topic that we now turn.

Boundaries and Cultural Understanding

As any number of studies of colonial culture have shown, settlers almost invariably saw the countryside as a blank page on which they could write their authority. Not surprisingly, many saw boundaries as akin to the written word. Once inscribed on a surveyed diagram, a line, like the printed word, came to represent a supposedly fixed and permanent reality. However, to make a boundary meaningful, one requires a fence that both fixes the line and represents it spatially as a thin, sheer wall. This verticalness of the fence is important since it also embodies another aspect of European understandings of boundaries which are generally seen to sink below the earth's surface and rise above it.

This idea of height and depth was extremely important to colonial understandings of land possession. African agriculture, for example, was considered derisory largely because it was seen as 'shallow'. Colonial farmers, on the other hand, ploughed deeply and so apparently possessed - and earned a right to - the land in a way quite distinctive from African farmers. In the perception of the Native Affairs department, Africans did not "love the soil" which under their "scratching" became "thin" and "bodiless". Europeans, on the other hand, practiced "good husbandry" and made the soil "thick" by adding manure and fertilizer.[37] Alongside this folkloric language, the more scientific vocabularies of geology and surveying, also embody this fiction of possession. Both of these disciplines generate the illusion of a saturated knowledge of the earth that stretches both horizontally and vertically.

Boundaries were one way of marking such deep possession and apart from their obvious economic functions to improving landlords, they also played a seminal cultural role in marking and maintaining identity. So, for example, one man wanted to fence not only because location cattle trampled his land, drank his water and inseminated his prize cows, but also because he wanted symbolically to fence off the savage darkness around - and, no doubt, within - him. Or, as he explained it; "Ik is alleen en hulle is 'n duisternis" (I am alone and they are a dark multitude).[38]

These fantasies of possession and demarcation played a powerful role in shaping colonial ideologies. Once on the earth, however, they became much less clearcut. Unlike the printed page, the countryside is seldom smooth or flat and once one has to transfer the boundary line of the diagram into the reality of the veld, there are, of course, any number of rivers, hills, trees and bumps to confound the best laid plans. While boundaries remain unfenced, such issues do not surface. However, once fencing starts going up, the problems of determining the supposedly fixed boundary become

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[36] TA, TAD, HKN 33, 42/0, undated document headed "Discussion on Land Regulations of Trust Land Acquired since 1936."

[37] Quotations from Union of South Africa, *Report of the Department of Native Affairs* for the Years 1944-1945, UG44-1946, 9, 12, 68.

[38] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/28/7(38), P.J. du Preez to NC, PPR, 18/18/45.

apparent. And as any number of hapless native commissioners were to learn, any attempt to solve such problem had to involve at least some discussion and negotiation between both parties, negotiations that furthermore had to be held in the heat of the day, on the spot and orally. These *in loco* inspections or pointing-out ceremonies, as they came to be known, had by the 1930s become a standard feature of rural life.

To the location dwellers who lived in a society where property rights were transmitted, conferred and negotiated by oral testimony and contract, such ceremonies must probably have seemed like simple good manners.[39] However, if the form of the ceremony was familiar, then the idea of a pencil-thin boundary was not. As with most oral societies, the residents of Valtyn did not see boundaries as sharp lines riven into the earth by fencing. Rather from linguistic evidence, it would seem that indigenous understandings stress the boundary as something that lies lightly on the earth. So, for example, in Sotho, one puts down a boundary (*go bea mollwane*). As matters finally turned out, this perception had much ironic wisdom. Colonial officials and farmers frequently moved, redirected and simply gerrymandered boundaries. A boundary, then, was indeed something put on the earth that could, like a ribbon, be moved somewhere else.

This loose pre-colonial sense of boundary does not, of course, mean that notions of territory and demarcation were unknown. What was, of course, unfamiliar was the notion that boundaries could be marked in such precise terms. In the past, where boundaries did exist, such as between fields or homes, these were marked with broad bush fences alongside which the fence cut an exceedingly stark contrast. It is still this idea of thin harshness that the word *nterata*, from the Afrikaans *draad*, commemorates. The official and 'polite' Afrikaans word for fence is *heining* but by popular choice it was the thinness of the wire rather than the fence as a whole that seemed most striking and it is this idea that popular parlance has preserved.

On both sides of the fence, it was generally these unstated ideas that were to guide how people approached the whole issue of boundary disputes. And as the struggles around fencing got underway, it was largely these cultural conventions that people mobilized in their resistance. It is to the details of this process that we now turn.

The Tactics of the Battle

In the war of the fences, there were a number of crucial steps and the first of these concerned where the fence would go. Most frequently this procedure began when a farmer whose property bordered on the location gave notice of his intention to fence. After he had lodged the official papers, the technicalities of where the fence would go and how it would be built had to be arranged. This could happen in a number of ways but generally it involved a meeting of the farmer, native commissioner and the chief, accompanied by a retinue of up to fifty followers. Together, they would all congregate at the beginning of the boundary and decide on the exact placing of the fence. Such ceremonies could last for several hours and on at least

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[39] I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (London, Frank Cass, 1970), 200-201 and J.L. Comaroff and S. Roberts, *Rules and Processes: The Cultural Logic of Dispute* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981).

one occasion an elderly chief "sagged out" from exhaustion.[40] In the negotiations, both farmer and chief would indicate where they felt the fence should go, and in most instances the native commissioner would made the final decision.[41]

From the vantage of the Native Affairs department head office in Pretoria, the issue of new fencing should have been quite straightforward. Not surprisingly for a literate bureaucracy, the department was deeply attached to the notion of a true and fixed boundary and in the case of any fencing dispute, they would refer authoritatively to the neat lines on surveyors' diagrams which assumed the status of holy texts.[42]

However, as any weary native commissioner could tell you, the situation on the ground was sheer heresy. To begin with, much nineteenth century and early twentieth century surveying could be charmingly vague and the possibility of determining boundaries with any exactness only came with the countrywide network of beacons known as primary triangulation. However, as primary triangulation only made its way to the north-western Transvaal between 1933 and 1953, the possibility of determining boundaries with any degree of preciseness was remote.[43] To confound matters further, beacons took a perplexingly wide range of forms that included cement structures, cairns, wooden pegs in the ground and features of the landscape like trees. These objects were variously shifted, pinched, destroyed, ploughed over, stolen for mining pegs and used for target practice and many officials spent many fruitless hours trying to find them.[44] Those that remained were often of an indeterminate status since the untutored eye had little way of distinguishing a boundary from a subdivision beacon. To add to this unholy confusion, the landscape itself often changed over time and in a wide river bed, for example, the channel of the river could shift by several hundred metres.[45]

Against this background, the idea of a true and fixed boundary could only be a fiction, and it was one that those in the location often exposed. "The boundary," said one chief, "is unknown. Who knows the boundary and that is it correct?...We do not trust the Europeans." He continued, "The Europeans informed me some months ago that they had had the line surveyed because they themselves did not know the line." If, as was apparent, the line was indeed unknown, then it became crucial to find it, preferably in a favourable place. Or, as one chief's advisor put it, "...first of all let us

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[40] TA, TAD, KPT 78, Minute Book, Minutes of Special (44th) Meeting of the Bakenberg Local Council, 2/9/35.

[41] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, correspondence from 24/11/1921 to 20/9/22; and TAD, KPT 31, 2/8/2, NC, PPR to SNA, 14/10/31.

[42] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, SNA to SNC, PPR, 29/10/20 and 14/2/22 and SNC, PPR to SNA, 2/9/20.

[43] Union of South Africa, *Report of the Geodetic Work of the Trigonometrical Survey, 1933-1938* and *Report of the Geodetic Work of the Trigonometrical Survey, 1939-1953*, maps.

[44] See file on beacon destruction, TA, CAD, LDE 609, 7946 and LDE 273, 3023, A. Wayland to District Commissioner for Lands, 27/1/03.

[45] TA, TAD, KPT 13, 2/28/7 Additional Native Commissioner, (ANC), PPR to CNC, 22/11/38.

decide the line."[46] Towards this end both sides mobilized all available resources to swing the decision in their favour.

The first such resource that people called on was oral memory. In any event, much of the negotiation on the spot had perforce to be orally conducted, but as the records room of the native commissioner's office in Potgietersrust had burned down in 1926, the role of oral memory became crucial. Most often, this memory took the form of competing versions of local history that involved genealogies of previous native commissioners and the decisions and determinations that they had made. So, for example, in 1920, one native commissioner reported that despite the 'west bank' line having been settled in 1909, a delegation from the chief "persistently st(u)ck to their story that they were told by the late Mr. W.A. King (a former native commissioner) that they were entitled to graze their cattle west of the Mogalakwena river and that in a dispute with the owner, King had ruled they were entitled to the ground."[47] Farmers, similarly, developed their own oral traditions which they passed on by word of mouth to new farmers often, according to one native commissioner, having " 'forgotten' or 'inadvertently' pointed out an incorrect line." This quotation, in turn, came from the letter of a previous incumbent of the native commissioner's office in Potgietersrust who had been asked to recall - from oral memory - his understanding of the boundary position.[48]

In this business of oral memory, the location representatives were, of course, exceptionally skilled and in certain instances, people would remember details with extraordinary clarity for three or more decades. However, coming as these versions did from the powerless, they carried little weight. Furthermore, these oral nestors now found themselves confronted with a literate bureaucracy whose record keeping undermined the flexibility that much oral memory presupposes. So, for example, in one instance in Valtyn, the *kgoro* (ward court) ruled that a German missionary had the prerogatives of *mong wa motse* (founder of the homestead/kraal) and hence had the right to evict a person who, as matters turned out, was a great enemy of the chief. When the missionary some years later wanted to evict a friend of the chief, the *kgoro* ruled him out of order. However, the native commissioner had records of the previous decision and he "spoke to the representatives of the chief's kraal and collected back into their memory the judgement the *kgoro* had given."[49]

Even if the location residents received an unfavourable decision, they never gave up entirely on the idea of negotiation and would at every available opportunity reopen proceedings. Such opportunities arose whenever a new native commissioner or magistrate took over. One of the first deputations these new officials received invariably concerned the western boundary of Valtyn's location.[50] People also actively created pretexts for reopening the boundary determination most often by losing or burning the official diagram

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[46] All quotations in this paragraph from TA, TAD, KPT 13, 2/28/7/4, Minutes of meeting held at Mapela's Location, 30/8/39.

[47] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35 SNC, PPR to SNA, 21/9/20.

[48] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, SNC, Graskop to SNA, 1/7/22.

[49] TA, TAD, KPT 15, 2/3/2, J. Neitz to RM, 21/7/28.

[50] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, correspondence from 24/11/21 to 20/9/22.

sent from head office. In requesting a new copy, one could simultaneously broach the issue anew.[51]

Another way to keep negotiation open was to hire one's own surveyor. When a boundary was particularly unclear either the farmers or often the Native Affairs Department would get in a private or government surveyor. On such occasion the chief would respond by employing his own surveyor, much as one hired one's own lawyer.[52] Wedded as most white farmers were to the notion of a true and fixed boundary, they viewed this action of the chief with great mirth. Any surveyor, the farmers argued would reach the same decision. The chief, however, knew that there was more than one way to know a line. The shambolic history of surveying in the north-western Transvaal made every boundary worth checking and surveyors, often working off different maps, could, indeed, reach different decisions.[53] Also, given the solidarity of white officials and "conscienceless"[54] farmers, any boundary was worth double checking. Even if the two surveyors' decisions concurred, calling them in usefully stalled the erection of the fence for a while. Finally, people could also resort to more forceful, popular forms of negotiation and at one pointing-out ceremony, "three to four malcontents made matters difficult."[55]

Whatever these *de jure* findings, both sides knew this was simply the beginning of the story. What really counted in the long run was the *de facto* positioning of the fence.

In this part of the battle, the chief and his followers came into their own. Using tactics of determined procrastination, they could often effectively delay or redirect fencing with a tenacity that drove farmers to exasperation. The one major weapon they wielded in this struggle was control of labour. The cost of the fence was, in theory, to be shared jointly, although according to the Fencing Act of 1912, farmers could loan the money from the Land Bank. The chief, on the other hand, had by the same law to pay, in some instances from tribal funds and in others, from levies. The one small tactic the chief had was to offer free labour to meet the location's side of the bill.[56]

In most cases this labour would simply not arrive. If challenged by the farmer who would have had to make his way to the location across extremely indifferent roads, the chief, in immaculately polite and deferent tones, would provide any number of excuses. He was very keen to start the fencing, but a message from the native commissioner had instructed him to wait.[57] His people were still unhappy about the position of the fence and he would have

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[51] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, NC, PPR to SNA, 7/12/26 and SNA to NC, PPR, 13/12/26.

[52] TA, TAD, KPT 13, 2/28/7, ANC, PPR to CNC, 22/11/38; and KPT 14, 2/54/3/12, Frans Seaneko to NC, PPR, 23/7/49.

[53] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, NC, PPR to SNA, 28/11/28.

[54] TA, CAD, NTS 7748, 6/35, SNC, Graskop to SNA, 1/7/22.

[55] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/9, Handwritten note form Agricultural Officer, 2/6/50.

[56] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/9, Meeting at NC's office, PPR, 20/9/49.

[57] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/21, ANC, PPR to A. Gilbertson, 4/4/46.

to call another *pitso* (general meeting) to discuss the issue. The matter, he would say, requires some thought as he did not wish "to hurry by mistake."[58] In some cases the chief literally had no control over the workers who, when confronted with little or no pay, simply went on strike.[59] In other instances, the chief could, sometimes for months on end, be unavailable.[60]

However, should the farmer so much as turn his back, the chief could mobilize a work team with admirable speed. With great precision and efficiency, they would erect the fence in what they understood to be the "right place." In other instances, labourers would constantly make "mistakes" and so require endless close supervision.[61]

Farmers, of course, could reply in like terms and on a number of occasions, the work team arrived to find cement poles planted along what the farmer understood to be the "right line." All that then remained was for the workers to pull the "barbert" wire through the fencing poles.[62]

With regard to fencing projects within the location, the forms of resistance were even more pronounced. Surveying equipment on more than one occasion mysteriously suffered damage.[63] In other instances, internal opposition to the chief manifested itself in resistance to betterment schemes and in Bakenberg, such opposition centred on one particular ward under a headman, Lerita Mabusela. He and his followers said that "they (had) never drunk water from a well and (could) do without it." As a result, expensive borehole machinery frequently seized up because of a few intelligently placed stones.[64]

Wherever possible, location residents simply made a mockery of state ventures either ignoring them entirely or wherever possible turning them to their own benefit. If nothing else, government projects could provide amusement. So, for example, when one agricultural demonstrator arrived in Bakenberg, his lectures and talks were mostly ignored. On one occasion, however, he ran a demonstration of bull castrating. Sensing the chance for drama, carnival and popular entertainment, hundreds of residents arrived. At the next demonstration probably on a topic like how to fence vegetable gardens, the audience size had reverted to its customary five or six.[65] In addition, the

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[58] TA, TAD, KPT KPT 14, 2/54/3/17, Chief Piet Makapan to NC, PPR, 15/9/39.

[59] TA, CAD, NTS 9531, 138/400(69), CNC to SNA, 5/11/37.

[60] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/28/7/38, P.J. du Preez to NC, PPR, 18/10/45 and 23/4/48.

[61] TA, TAD, KPT 2/54/3/9, NC, PPR to Chief Piet Makapan, 25/7/50 and KPT 13, 2/28/7/2, J. Henkel to ANC, PPR, ?/3/40.

[62] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/17, Tribal Meeting at Valtyn's Location, n.d.

[63] TA, TAD, KPT 41, 2/11/6, Assistant Soil Erosion Officer to Agricultural Superintendent, 17/2/38.

[64] TA, TAD KPT 78, Minute Book, Minutes of meeting of Bakenberg Local Council, 2/10/32, 3/7/31, 4/1/35, 5/7/35.

[65] TA, TAD, KPT 31, 2/8/2, Agricultural Demonstrator, Annual Report of Demonstration, 19/1/33.

antics of white officials must have provided at least a passing smile for some. Anybody observing workers carrying out the following surveying instructions, provided, of course, that the unfortunate foreman could understand them, must have had a wry laugh.

> At least two helpers must be used, one holdings the back end of a fifty foot line on the peg last put in while the other helper, with the staff and with the forward end of the line held stiffly all the while, is moved up or down until the reading on the staff coincides with the relative calculated reading...The back helper stands straddled over the peg last put in, facing along the line of the terrace. The forward helper moves himself up or down until he sees the peg before the last between the legs of the back helper.[66]

While people in Transvaal locations possessed very little, they did own their own bodies and these they consistently refused to bend to the will of government officials who endlessly complained of tardiness, sloth and, on one occasion, sleep, when, in the words of one native commissioner, his explanation of a new levy system, at a meeting, exercised "a soporific effect over the whole tribe."[67]

Once fencing was in place, people responded to it in a number of diverse and creative ways. Mostly and wherever possible, people simply ignored it. Often fencing crossed customary footpaths and pedestrians then either pushed the fence over or wound its strand together so that people could pass underneath. In one instance at least, the Native Affairs department capitulated to this pressure by erecting styles and gates.[68] In other instances people not only broke down the fence but stole sections as well. Undertaken with the assistance of sharpened stones, this activity was generally aimed to remove offending bits of wire to "facilitate the theft of grazing" as well as game, wood, water and pasture. In other instances, people stole wire for domestic use and snares.[69]

The initial state responses to this fence destruction was more in word than in deed. Officials fulminated, farmers cursed but in practice very little happened. The Fencing Act of 1912 threatened a £ 75 fine or six months imprisonment to anyone who "wilfully injures or removes any fence, gate or other appliance or contrivance forming part or serving the purpose thereof", but as police were few and far between and people would seldom give evidence against each other, fence destruction often went unpunished. This situation began to change when farmers took policing into their own hands and most old men from the location have memories of farmers 'arresting' people who crossed their fences. In other instances the farmer leaned on the chief who in turn located the culprits who received thrashings that are still recalled to this day.[70] This system of coerced internal policing was systematized in

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[66] TA, TAD KPT 41, 2/11/6, undated document headed "Instructions for Setting out Terraces."

[67] TA, TAD, KPT 35, 2/10/3/28, SNC, PPR to SNA, 5/4/22.

[68] TA, CAD, NTS 7475, 556/327, Additional Native Commissioner, PPR to CNC, 14/8/39.

[69] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/21, A. Gilbertson to NC, PPR, 23/3/46; and CAD, NTS 32/238, Munnik Farmers' Association to SNA, 29/10/38.

[70] Leka Thinta Mokhonoane and Motsoamadite Kekana, interviewed with Jane

the 1950s when an extremely hard-nosed native commissioner, P.J. de Beer, who was subsequently to rise very rapidly in the Nationalist Native Affairs department, took over. One of his first decisions was to make those closest to the fence responsible for any damage.[71]

If there was anything that slowed the rate of fence destruction, then it was undoubtedly such internal policing. As both progressive farmers and the chiefly elite began increasingly to benefit from internal fencing, chiefly retaliation against fence destruction accelerated.[72] Furthermore, given the frequency with which straying cattle were impounded, some cattle owners probably came to see fencing as a mixed blessing. However, in the end, there was, and presumably still is, no solution to fence destruction. A symbol and consequence of the nature of social and labour relations in the countryside, fence cutting could only disappear if these relations did too.

Conclusion

In so far as fencing formed part of an official Native Affairs Department policy, it can only be said to have failed catastrophically. The paper has attempted to document the details of this failure but they can perhaps best be summarized by an episode in 1929 when the chief of Bakenberg location reported to the native commissioner that some 28 miles of boundary fencing had vanished.[73] One might have thought that this report would have given officials occasion to pause, yet not a few years later, the Native Affairs department was planning to erect 68.4 miles of fencing in Valtyn's location at an estimated cost of £2 000.[74] A year later, none of this fencing had gone up "due to the suspicions of the natives" and, indeed, very little of the reclamation scheme of which this fencing formed part was implemented.[75] In fact, while the betterment provisions of dividing the location into arable, grazing and residential areas were drafted in 1936, it was only some three decades later that these provisions were finally implemented.[76]

As Beinart has shown, policies of conservation have always been guided by a particular cultural universe of ideas, and in this instance, the tenacity with which Potgietersrust officials continued to cling to fencing highlights the deep cultural understandings that motivated and sustained fencing policies

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Letsebe-Matlou, Mošate, Valtyn; 10/11/89; the Rev. Asaph Tsebe, interviewed with Jane Letsebe-Matlou, Mahwelereng, 10/11/89; interview with Job Kekana, Westdene, Johannesburg, 5/3/89.

[71] TA, TAD, KPT 14, 2/54/3/19, Meeting at Mapela Location, 19/4/50.

[72] See, for example, the retaliation meted out against the rebellious Mabusela ward in Bakenberg. Accounts in TA, CAD, NTS 3757, 2268/308 and NTS 7727, 201/333.

[73] TA, KPT 78, Minute Book, Minutes of Meeting held at Bakeberg Local Council, 1/11/29.

[74] TA, CAD, NTS 10211, 6/423/2, Director of Native Agriculture to Controller of Native Settlements, 5/12/36.

[75] Union of South Africa, *Report of the Native Affairs Department for the Years 1935-36*, UG41-1937, 58.

[76] For discussion of resistance to betterment see TA, CAD, NTS 314, 12/55, Informal Memo by N.J. van Warmelo, 1/12/49.

and the betterment vision to which they belonged.[77] Yet try as hard as they might, officials and farmers could never keep fencing up. Quite simply location residents did not want 'the wire' and ultimately it was their desires that the tardy implementation of so many betterment schemes had ironically to acknowledge.

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[77] W. Beinart, "Introduction: The Politics of Colonial Conservation", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2, 1989, 143-62.