Forging the Frontiers: Travellers and Documents on the South Africa–Mozambique Border, 1890s–1940s

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It is well known that the Union of South Africa started to build an onerous border regime at the turn of the twentieth century in order to secure a White Man's Country in southern Africa. Newly formed, ambitious Immigration Departments consequently targeted 'Asiatics', poor whites and finally 'surplus' Africans from the 1920s onwards. An infrastructure of exclusion (detention and deportation compounds, police patrols, fingerprint offices and so on) soon emerged at the region's maritime gateways as the colonial states sought to undermine decentralised indigenous societies characterised by long-term mobility. This article shows that the Union remained vulnerable on its eastern frontier with Mozambique and Swaziland, where 'undesirables' continued to arrive in numbers. Long-distance movement had a long precedent in these borderlands, and it proved difficult for colonial states to forge effective border controls until deep into the twentieth century. Based on extensive and critical engagement with multiple border control archives, the article traces the gradual 'paperisation' of the border, and follows a thriving market in identity permits in southern Mozambique and Swaziland, which became important backdoor entry points to the Union. The main people to exploit corrupt local officials and entrepreneurial headmen on either side of the border were those associated with the merchant houses of coastal west India, syndicates from the Portuguese Atlantic island of Madeira, and long-distance, so-called 'tropical', African migrants. Together they forged sophisticated networks that moved permits, people and money across the region and gave south-east Africa's border builders hard and often thankless paperwork.

We begin with a startling sight: a border guard on the banks of the Komati River in 1884, standing naked. For this description we must thank Edward Mathers, a 33-year-old Scottish-born investment booster – his peers later praised him for being 'intensely imperialistic' – who was at the beginning of a luminous career in journalism.[1] Commissioned by the *Natal Mercury*, he had sailed from Natal to Delagoa Bay with a 'motley crowd' of about 50 men scoured from various European homelands: 'diggers of long standing, soldiers and sailors, boatmen and quay hands, bricklayers and carpenters, engineers, loafers and loungers, all herding together.'[2] The party's goal was the newly opened goldfields of the eastern Transvaal, and they had elected to take

1 Misc., '*The Story of* South Africa *Newspaper, and Its Founder, as Told by Others*' (London: *South Africa*, 1903), 56. Available at https://archive.org/details/storyofsouthafri00londuoft.
2 E. P. Mathers, *Golden South Africa, or the Goldfields Revisited* (London: W. B. Wittingham, 1888), 35–50.

the shorter 300-kilometre route from Delagoa Bay, notorious for its risks of fever, wild animals and deceptively difficult terrain, rather than the longer but more cautious one through the Cape or Natal. Mathers was not the first to chance the Delagoa route to the goldfields, but he was one of the earliest to write at length about the experience.

After a cursory examination of his passport – a sign of things to come – by a group of apparently unhappy harbour officials at Delagoa Bay ('emaciated figures, ashy pallor, sunken cheeks, glassy stares'), Mathers and party took the north-westerly path for the Transvaal border, around four or five days' riding. Despite rhapsodising about the 'weird grandeur of wild and deadly solitudes' on the journey, Mathers' own notes alert us to a well-trodden path of meeting numerous Africans who offered their skills as carriers, guides and servants and who, being in the midst of a depression, drove a hard bargain. Their villages sold food (fowl, fruit and corn) and drink (raw gin, palm wine) at exorbitant prices. For a consideration, villagers gave advice on shortcuts and on how to keep the ubiquitous swamp angels (mosquitoes) at bay, or relayed messages from other travellers. At least one village acted as a kind of currency exchange. Mathers also stopped at shops owned by 'sleepy Orientals' – South Asian Muslims and Parsees – and African thatch-and-reed stalls, selling mostly 'massive demijohns of liquor' but also 'bad soap, old boxes of sardines, some coolie cloth, a jack knife or two, odds and ends' to unimpressed travelling parties. Traces of the Portuguese colonial state were rare, and held no special terrors for the intending diggers: when the group encountered a gruesome scene near Pessane – the rotting remains of a white man who had shot himself – Mathers' group raised the alarm with Portuguese officers, and at gunpoint forced the reluctant, disgusted authorities to bury the flyblown corpse.

Finally reaching the Transvaal border near the Komati River, Mathers saw a small iron building and presumed it was another trader's store. On enquiry he was told by a 'native girl' inside the empty structure that this was in fact the Customs House formally marking the Transvaal frontier, set up two years previously by the new liberated Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek to tax the cross-border liquor trade. 'I asked her where the soldiers were,' Mathers wrote, 'and she pointed to a dark South African gentleman leaning against the door post *in puris naturalibus*' with only the man's rifle giving away his occupation. Not lingering to hear further explanations, and more concerned about the crocodiles and lions thereabouts, the party entered the Transvaal with no more encounters with border officers, clothed or otherwise, and had no need to produce further documentation.

Mathers was writing at a historical cusp. As demonstrated in Patrick Harries' now classic history of the region, routes linking the coastal plains around Delagoa Bay with the Highveld and northern KwaZulu grasslands were already old in the 1880s.[3] They had been pioneered by groups of hunters, trodden by head-loading porters and trading caravans carrying metals, salt, beads and cloths to and from the Indian Ocean

3 P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c 1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994), 13–18, 28–35.

world. Regimental entourages, slaves and healers would have known the paths. In Mathers' own lifetime, itinerant *sertanejos* (backwoods traders) of Lusophone background and so-called *banyans* and their local *compradors* had used the routes. In the 1860s and '70s, parties of amaTonga men – Harries suggests about 15,000 – had set off for the cane fields of Natal and the Cape diamond diggings; recruiters, labour touts and middlemen followed in their footsteps. Whatever the myriad purposes of these journeys, travellers had rarely needed paper documents. In the integrated, oral world of south-east Africa, navigation relied on specialists possessing detailed mental maps of the region, or on relay escorts between friendly headmen.[4] Permission to traverse chiefly land rested on offering tribute or forming fictive kinship links. Travellers relayed their bona fides through dress, the possession of amulets or tools, the singing of praises, or body scarification. These signals began to give way to a paper regime in the late nineteenth century.

Already discernible in Mathers' reports, colonial states of rather different temperaments had begun to impose quite similar rules over how people could move through south-east Africa. As the Portuguese, British and Boers each sought to protect their fledgling domains, provide land for settlers and stake claims on potentially valuable natural resources, parties of surveyors began to map and demarcate formal boundaries, moving through the Lowveld in large convoys and raising stone beacons in the landscape. The first beacons appeared in 1866 along the Swazi–Transvaal frontier; four years later sections of the Transvaal–Mozambique border were agreed. Thereafter border commissions would meet regularly to revise – and also reinforce – the border regime designed to benefit settler states. Forests were hacked, in strips along the border and in circles round the beacons, to proclaim the new colonial territories.[5]

All three states sought, in the first instance, to rationalise and profit from the amaTonga migrants, whom they might tax and reduce to a cheap labour class and repatriate at the end of a contract.[6] The Portuguese began to issue revenue-raising 'passports' to departing migrants from a newly constructed reception hut at Delagoa Bay in the 1870s. For the same reasons, to the south, the Natal government established border stations, frontier police and immigration agents along the Tugela River to intercept migrants, and began providing them with a slew of documents – 'work passes', 'discharge certificates' and 'travelling passes', among others. Without these, migrants were criminals. On the Transvaal's frontiers lingered a kind of contained anarchy of charismatic strongmen, local disputes and personalised, undocumented rule; but that republic caught up within a decade.[7] Mention has been made of the Komati Customs House of 1882. The building of the Delagoa Bay railway began

4 See S. J. Rockel, '"A Nation of Porters": The Nyamwezi and the Labour Market in Nineteenth-Century Tanzania', *Journal of African History*, 41, 2, 2000, 173–95.

5 See relevant entries in I. Brownlie and I. R. Burns (eds), *African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia* (London: C. Hurst, 1979). For new research directions, see A. C. Roque, 'Sources for the History of the Southern Border of Mozambique: Preliminary Results of a Project on the Archives of the Portuguese Commission of Cartography', *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 25, 2, 2010, 77–93.

6 Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity*, 19–47.

7 K. Breckenridge, 'Power without Knowledge: Three Nineteenth Century Colonialisms in South Africa', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 26, 2008, 3–30.

in 1886, turned the Komati River crossing on the border into a camp, and then into the small town of Komatipoort with a *veldkornet* and small police force. By the mid-1890s the Transvaal was also insisting that migrants equip themselves with a clutch of documents at the border – a 'work-seekers pass', a 'two-shilling pass', a 'district pass' for Africans, trade licences for Indians, and passports for European 'Aliens'. The Native Labour Department, supported by the mines, erected compounds at Komatipoort/Ressano Garcia and at numerous points on migration routes across southern Mozambique, where they registered migrants and issued more documents. Game wardens at Pongola and Sabi were authorised to police the borders for those trespassing without documentation.

Much of this early border making was chimerical. The effective, systematic partition of south-east Africa was a fantasy, little more than 'show business' in David Coplan's phrase.[8] Border demarcations were subject to repeated challenges and appeals as political uncertainty and armed conflicts simmered across the region.[9] Surveyors made rudimentary errors and encountered conceptual difficulties in trying to represent decentralised local polities whose very names were transient, itinerant; floods destroyed and dense vegetation swallowed the beacons.[10] Ground realities were a tangled mess of disputes, misalignments and repeated encroachments by local power brokers contemptuous of the new borders. As for the pass controls, thousands of men avoided the paper regime, if only to fall into the clutches of 'blackbirders', the unscrupulous labour recruiters, bogus police officers and bandit-farmers of the Union's borderlands.[11] Those ensnared in the new rules deserted as soon as practical: the documents contained little to identify their owners, and many sold or destroyed their papers. It took the crucible of war in 1900 for Boer, English and Portuguese authorities to appreciate the strategic significance of the Komati gateway; all three reinforced patrols and defences along the boundary that year.[12]

The forging of a South African–Mozambique border would be the work of a new century, part of an unprecedented effort of state building in general.[13] This article traces the effective 'paperisation' (to use Craig Robertson's neologism) of the experiences of migrants crossing the borders that separated South Africa, Mozambique and, to a lesser degree, Swaziland.[14] It focuses attention on the efflorescence of certain travel documents – for convenience we can gloss the many kinds as 'temporary permits' – and the ways in which migrants of multiple ethnic backgrounds appropriated, subverted and sometimes tried to escape the documentary regime the permits represented. The discussion proceeds in three parts. Part 1 describes the establishment

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8 For the 'rule of theatricality' that surrounds most international borders, see D. Coplan, 'Border Show Business and Performing States' in T. M. Wilson and H. Donnan (eds), *A Companion to Border Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 507–21.

9 P. Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983); P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers, and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Transvaal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

10 A. R. Roque, 'Rethinking Borders in South Mozambique', paper presented at the ABORNE (African Borderlands Research Network) conference 'How Is Africa Transforming Border Studies?', Johannesburg, 10–14 September 2009.

11 Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity*, 115.

12 H. W. Jones, 'The Delagoa Bay Railway and the Origin of Steinecker's Horse', *South African Military History Journal*, 10, 3, 1996, available at http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol103jo.html.

13 S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African State', *History Workshop*, 8, 1979, 50–81.

14 C. Robertson, *The Passport in America: The History of a Document* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13.

of a surveillance state at Durban and Cape Town from about 1900 to 1915. Part 2 follows how Asians and poor Europeans, their paths blocked at the ports, detoured to southern Mozambique and Swaziland as a backdoor route to the Union. There, they joined durable African migrant networks in developing sophisticated markets in false permits and smuggling routes. Part 3 shows that, in response to the numerous border-crossing schemes, immense administrative energy was brought to bear on the eastern Lowveld, mostly in the inter-war decades, but the Immigration Department struggled to defeat the new syndicates conclusively thereafter.

Historians only patchily understand the history of border controls on this frontier. Cartographic historians have offered subtle studies of the cult of map making, diplomacy and the Cartesian logic that came to underpin a new way of apprehending and governing south-east Africa in the late nineteenth century, with particularly rich attention given to environmental politics.[15] Building on this work, we follow the afterlives of these demarcations, and the degree to which border crossers resisted, subverted or internalised them. We see how the border was actively transformed, with great and prolonged difficulty, from map sketches and diplomatic agreements into tangible, material form through a regime of paper documents that defined which, when, and where migrants could move.

Meanwhile, a growing historiography on immigration restriction has (with a handful of exceptions, some represented in this volume), confined its interests to anti-immigrant agitation in the maritime gateways of Durban and Cape Town, and the passage of legislation in the colonial capitals and then Pretoria.[16] These studies provide much background to the story that follows, but the emphasis on legislation has meant that little attention has been given to the banal, quotidian work of identity documentation. Our enquiry builds on a body of literature on varied contexts in the North Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Pacific worlds to show how paperwork was a critical ingredient in making state power manifest, but in barely predictable ways.[17] Like many of those studies, this article describes the ambiguity and unintended consequences of documentation, which became a kind commodity in the region. We consider their manipulation by counterfeiters, and how a traffic in permits in the region pushed the South African government into reinforcing eastern border controls

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15 J. Carruthers, *The Kruger Park: A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995) and 'Friedrich Jeppe: Mapping the Transvaal, 1850–99', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 4, 2003, 955–75; N. Etherington, 'A False Emptiness: How Historians May Have Been Misled by Early Nineteenth Century Maps of South Eastern Africa', *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, 56, 1, 2004, 67–86; L. F. Braun, 'Spatial Institutionalization and the Settler State: Survey and Mapping in the Eastern Transvaal, 1852–1905', *South African Historical Journal*, 53, 1, 2005, 146–78; P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South East Africa* (London: James Curry, 2007).

16 R. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Coloured Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830–1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976); E. Bradlow, 'Immigration into the Union 1910–1948: Policies and Attitudes' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978); J. Martens, 'A Transnational History of Immigration Restriction: Natal and New South Wales, 1896–7', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 34, 3, 2006, 323–44; S. Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa's Immigration Policies 1910–2008* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008).

17 J. Caplan and J. Torpey (eds), *Documenting Individual Identity: State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); A. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Kamal Sadiq, *Paper Citizens: How Illegal Immigrants Acquire Citizenship in Developing Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter (eds), *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); B. Kafka, *The Demon of Writing: Powers and Failures of Paperwork* (Cambridge, Mass: Zone, 2012).

in ever more creative, expansive ways. This approach adds new significance to the eastern border with its official centre of operations at Komatipoort for historians of South African immigration policy, who have been inclined to overlook it.

Social historians of African labour migration have been more attentive to the work of pass controls in this region, but the emphasis has generally been on structural aspects of racial capitalism, or on the organisation of political resistance, rather than on the creation of an international border.[18] They tend to conclude the story with the triumph of rationalised systems of labour recruitment control, mostly under the auspices of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Bureau and the Native Affairs Department, in the 1910s and '20s. We continue the story by several decades, and argue that attention needs also to be given to Asian and poor European migrants in this frontier region, and the role of the Immigration Department, in order to fully understand the historical dynamics of the South Africa–Mozambique border.

Watching the Ports

At the turn of the twentieth century, certain qualitative and quantitative changes in the nature of immigration to and across southern Africa were obvious to any observer. As the southern African mineral economy gathered pace in the last third of the nineteenth century, there was also a spectacular leap in emigration from Eurasia for overlapping technological, cultural, economic and political reasons. Inexpensive, efficient steam transportation systems, a general worldwide liberalisation of internal controls on migration, and the expansion of interconnected global economic markets all accounted for some three million oceanic journeys annually around 1900.[19] Sitting on the cusp of both the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds, industrial southern Africa began to attract a greater number of migrants, from a greater variety of regions, than ever before. The population of every major southern African town at least doubled (and in many cases tripled or even quadrupled) between about 1880 and 1910.[20] Numbers of immigrants – European, Asian and African – all increased by orders of magnitude, adding perhaps one and a half million people to South Africa's sparsely populated colonies within half a generation.[21] They arrived for innumerable reasons, and travelled under many fine gradations of choice or compulsion.

As is well known, established communities in southern Africa, with much to lose, began to lobby their colonial governments to put a stop to what they felt was a flood of competitive immigration. Ideas of race science, colonial nationalism, and militant

18 A. Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy: The Struggle for the Gold Mines Labour Supply, 1890–1920* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985); H. Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924–30* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1987); M. Murray, '"Blackbirding" at "Crooks' Corner": Illicit Labour Recruiting in the North-Eastern Transvaal, 1910–1940,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 3, 1995, 373–97.

19 A. McKeown, 'Global Migration, 1846–1940', *Journal of World History*, 15, 2, 2004, 155–90.

20 J. Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 381–2. For colonial Maputo, whose population increased sixteen-fold, see V. Zamparoni, 'Entre Narros & Mulungos: Colonialismo e Paisagem Social em Lourenço Marques, c. 1890–1940' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sao Paulo, 1998).

21 For a breakdown, see my 'Colonial Trespassers in the Making of South Africa's International Borders, c.1900–1950' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2012), 23–4.

white working-class socialism were powerful and widely circulated.[22] White 'nativist' associations and labour organisations were the loudest voices in the anti-immigrant movement, but even elite Asians and Africans did not often reject the idea of border controls completely, and in some cases initially supported restrictions of some kind.[23] Anti-alienists accused immigrants of subversive practices: transmitting disease, undercutting wages, hoarding capital, fermenting crime waves, trafficking in illicit goods, spreading politically dangerous ideas and introducing deviant sexual mores. After 1900, successive governments targeted first Asians and 'coloured persons', then poor Europeans (mostly from Eastern Europe). By the late 1920s, so-called 'tropical' Africans, whose homes were north of the 22nd parallel and who found themselves surplus to mining requirements, also came to the urgent attention of restrictionists.

The anti-alien impulse led to the region's first dedicated legal and enforcement infrastructure for immigration control. In the debates leading up to the new legislation, the targets were principally Indians and Chinese, although the officials extended it to undesirables whatever their provenance: sailors, political agitators, enemy subjects and so on.[24] The Natal Immigration Act of 1897 infamously sidestepped an Empire-wide ban on explicitly racial legislation by insisting that the key to admission was literacy in a European language, something most Indians could not demonstrate.[25] Besides the literacy test, the law also excluded those migrants likely to be a public charge, 'idiots,' criminals, pimps and prostitutes and, finally, sufferers of leprosy, syphilis, smallpox and plague. The law also set out detention and deportation procedures, placed financial penalties on shipowners for transporting illegal immigrants, and stipulated criminal penalties for aiders and abettors. The Natal mechanisms were taken up by the Cape (in 1902) and Transvaal (in 1908). After Union, the 1913 Immigrants Regulation Act strengthened measures further still. The most important interventions were, first, a system of delegated authority that placed great discretion in the hands of a small number of principal immigration officers in each of the provinces. Second, a 'deeming clause' allowed the minister in Pretoria to make final decisions on immigration cases, with no judicial oversight.

During the period from 1897 to about 1917, a professional and permanent civil staff dedicated to immigration restriction came into being in the region, for the first time. Regional headquarters in Durban and Cape Town each employed a permanent staff of about 15 but helped by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), customs officials, magistrates and local police. The key figures were Harry Smith, born in Portsmouth and until then a harbour and fisheries official at Durban harbour.[26] In 1903, a Cape Town branch opened – initially as a sub-office of the Port Health

22 Seminal are M. Swanson, '"The Asiatic Menace": Creating Segregation in Durban, 1870–1900', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 16, 3, 1983, 401–21; S. Dubow, *Illicit Union: Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1995).

23 H. Hughes, '"The Coolies will elbow us out of the Country!": African Reactions to Indian Immigration in the Colony of Natal, South Africa', *Labour History Review*, 72, 2, 2007, 155–68; K. Breckenridge, 'Gandhi's Progressive Disillusionment: Thumbs, Fingers, and the Rejection of Scientific Modernism in Hind Swaraj', *Public Culture*, 23, 2, 2011, 331–48.

24 In general, see Perbedy, *Selecting Immigrants*, chapters 1–3. For Durban, see J. Hyslop's text at www.academia.edu/3893457/Eugene_ONeill_and_other_undesirables_of_Durban_Harbour_Policing_the_Global_Maritime_Labour_Force_in_Natal_c.1890-1930.

25 For full context, see Martens, 'A Transnational History of Immigration Restriction'.

26 K. Donaldson (ed.), *South African Who's Who 1910* (Self-published, 1910), 438.

Office but which became a dedicated and influential branch of the colonial civil service, following the 1905 appointment of Clarence Wilfred Cousins, a Madagascan-born prison clerk who had read history at Oxford.[27] Through trial and error, together Smith, Cousins, and their assistants made numerous incremental improvements in port control efficiency, and persuaded or cajoled ship captains and booking agencies to act as the first line of defence by denying undesirables at the point of embarkation.

In the maritime ports, they set up examinations, interrogation and screening desks on arriving ships, which were isolated in harbours before the gangplanks lowered.[28] They obliged immigrants to make legally binding declarations as to their identity and motivations, and used these to cross-examine claims during the portside interview. During this interview, uncertain cases were required to produce supporting documentation, which might include anything from bank drafts and marriage and birth certificates to testimonials and affidavits. A medical officer stood nearby, examining immigrants both for signs of 'loathsome diseases' and for family resemblances in order to check attempts to smuggle fictitious kin. Some arrivals might later be subject to x-rays and intimate examinations to establish accurate ages.[29]

The departmental offices invested in registers, developed statistical record sets, and made pioneering use of new fingerprint and photographic technologies to record arrivals and detect impostors. Clerks judged cases and arranged deportations. The Immigration Departments ultimately took a leading role in the effort to strip undesirables already in South Africa of their citizenship, and to organise repatriation schemes. They organised detention rooms – in Durban it was a worm-ridden hulk, in Cape Town a fenced-in harbourside hut – for prohibited immigrants. They requisitioned *jujitsu*-trained water police to patrol the wharf and guard ships against stowaways and deserting sailors, placing financial and legal liability on shipmasters to ensure compliance (shipmasters unhappy with the new arrangements faced the expensive indignity of forfeiting permission to sail onward).[30]

I have written elsewhere of the difficulties the Immigration Departments faced in their early years.[31] Patchy fiscal support, ill-qualified and rent-seeking junior clerks, and amateurish filing systems culminated in several corruption scandals in 1915. After an extensive but prudently unpublished commission of enquiry that year, a series of overhauls of the system made the South African immigration regime formidable in the maritime gateways. Rigorous reforms improved record keeping.[32] Agents and touts found themselves banned from offices. Staff salaries were improved

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27 See J. O'Flaherty, 'Descendants of William George Cousins' at http://freepages.family.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~stanier/documents/Descendants%20WG%20Cousins.pdf, accessed 19 May 2014. Dhupelia-Mesthrie is currently working on a biography of Cousins as immigration officer.

28 These developments may be followed in the annual reports of the Immigration Restriction Department in Natal and the Cape, 1897–1917.

29 See Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie's article in this issue.

30 On the water police, see P. Holt, *The Mounted Police of Natal* (London: John Murray, 1913), 342–5.

31 A. MacDonald, 'The Identity Thieves of the Indian Ocean: Fraud, Forgery and the Origins of South African Immigration Control, 1890s–1920s' in Breckenridge and Szreter (eds), *Registration and Recognition*, 253–76.

32 Beyond the annual reports noted above, key internal discussions can be found in SAB, CIA 40/M149, Acting Secretary of the Interior (SI) to Principal Immigration Officer (PIO), 5 July 1915; SAB, BNS 1/2/5 A145, PIO to SI, 19 August 1915; SAB, Union Agent, Portuguese East Africa (BAL) 27/A4403, Report of the Conference of Immigration Officials, 1917; SAB, BNS 1/1/320 27/74, Public Services Commission Report on Union Immigration Offices, 31 March 1919.

and better training in fingerprinting and detection inaugurated. Rules governing all aspects of port control were standardised across the departments. Administrators secured record sets and circulated information across all departmental offices. In theory, every arriving Asian migrant was henceforth connected to a single name, a number, a set of finger impressions and a biographical file.[33] Officials hoped to 'smell out' ineligible intruders by detecting inconsistencies between these various documents. Less sophisticated and less integrated filing systems also sought to monitor the arrival of European and African migrants: the thousands of biographical files housed in the archives of the Department of the Interior serves as a kind of monument to the paper mania surrounding South Africa's points of entry in the early twentieth century. The reform of the Immigration Departments made it increasingly difficult for the Union's undesirables to land at the ports after 1917.

Lowveld Pathways

Deterred from arriving at Cape Town or Durban, determined migrants detoured to Lourenço Marques (and, to a lesser extent, Beira), which became a staging ground for overland routes to the Union. Here, a traffic in permits developed as schemes evolved to help migrants avoid the paper regime entirely. The attractions of the East Coast option were clear. Most steamship companies calling at South African ports had also began to stop at the Mozambican ports, whose carrying capacity had rapidly increased following a post-South African War investment boom.[34] The Portuguese administration had some basic immigration controls: they relied primarily on a system of financial deposits that were little match for well-organised migrant networks able to transfer funds (and these fees were indeed a useful money spinner for the cash-strapped administration). Lourenço Marques consequently hosted a number of migrant communities. Although the Portuguese colony was not free of racial and segregationist policies like those being developed in the Anglo-Dutch colonies, immigrants in Lourenço Marques were marginally more secure than their South African counterparts, and provided a range of 'services' to newcomers.

For travellers hoping to reach the Highveld from the coastal plains of southern Mozambique, there were ways and means. The building of regional rail links in the 1890s and the beginnings of a serviceable road network in the early twentieth century had further integrated the two regions. Neighbouring colonial administrations worked to further encourage – in some cases compel – regional mobility through a series of treaties and agreements designed to ease labour shortages and improve railway profitability.[35] By the 1920s, an embryonic leisure industry successfully lobbied authorities to allow mostly white tourists to travel between the two regions with

33 For the development of this archive of mobility, and its relative success in the Cape compared with Natal and Transvaal, see U. Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'The Form, the Permit and the Photograph: An Archive of Mobility Between South Africa and India', *Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 46, 6, 2011, 650–62.

34 J. Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques 1877–1962* (London: Heinemann, 1995), esp chapters 1 and 2.

35 S. E. Katzenellenbogen, *South Africa and Southern Mozambique: Labour, Railways, and Trade in the Making of a Relationship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 78–100.

minimal red tape.[36] None of these initiatives undermined the supreme authority of the Immigrants Regulation Act, but they did serve to introduce an element of uncertainty and fragmentation, and certainly delayed the establishment of rigorous surveillance systems as they had evolved in the ports.

With the South Africa–Mozambique border to some degree porous, traffic in false permits developed in Lourenço Marques and southern Mozambique. One of the unintended consequences of the closure of the ports to Asian migration had been a proliferation of identity documents to the small numbers of admissible Asians.[37] Harry Smith, as early as 1898, inaugurated an ad hoc 'leave to remain' system for refugees and Indians already resident in Natal, issuing 'domicile certificates' (later called 'registration certificates' and simply 'certificates of identity' after Cousins' interventions) for migrants with some claim to residence before the Immigration Acts had come into effect. Smith also began to issue 'visiting passes' and 'transit passes' to migrants claiming to be en route elsewhere.[38] The Immigration Department grudgingly issued permits to Indians. The numbers were not large compared to the number of applicants who were simply turned away, but the permits were sufficiently common to lead to a proliferation of documents and give them a certain currency among migrants. By far the most valuable were the domicile and registration certificates because, unlike temporary permits whose validity might last only a year, they offered much longer, sometimes indefinite, stays.

Over the next two decades, categories of Asian exemptions extended to servants, demobilised soldiers, pilgrims, 'educated entrants', condonees[39] and Japanese and Chinese merchants and students under various gentlemen's agreements.[40] These later categories received temporary permits, as did the many appellants – migrants who had formally appealed a prohibition order and were allowed to stay in the Union while their cases were debated by lawyers, usually for months and sometimes years. As we shall see below, temporary permits were ultimately extended to migrants of all backgrounds, and they became a prominent feature of the South Africa–Mozambique borderlands.

Temporary permits were deliberately ambiguous. For the colonial states, they proved a flexible solution to a range of intractable contingencies. They also helped to raise revenue because there was often a financial deposit required (though it was not always enforced). The department was also satisfied that a temporary permit conferred no permanent rights of citizenship; in effect, it injected a flexibility, even a kind

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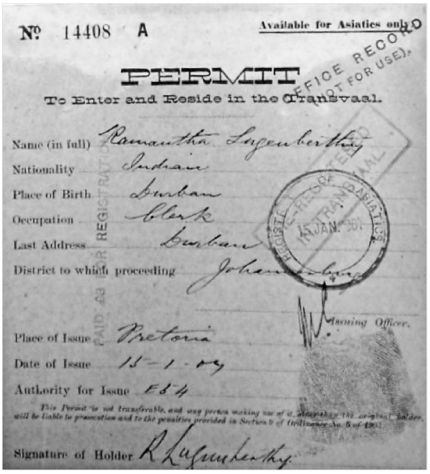
36 See the periodic proclamations governing settler movement between the two colonies in SAB, Department of Justice 610 1/571/21, Permits to visit Portuguese East Africa, 1917.

37 SAB, BNS 1/2/5, A145, Enquiry into Administration of Immigration Depot, Cape Town, 86–98.

38 The very first evidence is NAB, IRD 1/1A/1897, Interview between the Attorney-General, Treasurer, Immigration Officer and Mr. Gandhi, 9 November 1898. A clear departmental summary of the evolution of policy on Indian exemptions thereafter can be found in SAB, BNS 1/1/338, 60/74, vol 3, 'Indiersake: Toegewings wat sedert 1913 gemaak is ten opsigte van die Indiergemeentskap in die Unie', 1–7 and 'Indiersake: Toewings wat voor 1934 gemaak is ten opsigte van die Indiergemeenskap in die Unie'.

39 Condonees were generally (but not always) migrants who 'confessed' to illegal entry, proved their respectability, and were later granted leave to remain. The Immigration Department often valued their testimony for the intelligence it provided on people-smuggling schemes. The department also offered periodic condonation schemes after negotiations with deputations from migrant associations.

40 SAB, CIAA 40/M139, Foreign Office to Prime Minister, 20 August 1910, and subsequent memoranda.



№ 14408 A

Available for Asiatics only.

PERMIT

To Enter and Reside in the Transvaal.

Name (in full) Ramanthan Loganberthy

Nationality Indian

Place of Birth Durban

Occupation Clerk

Last Address Durban

District to which proceeding Johannesburg

Issuing Officer.

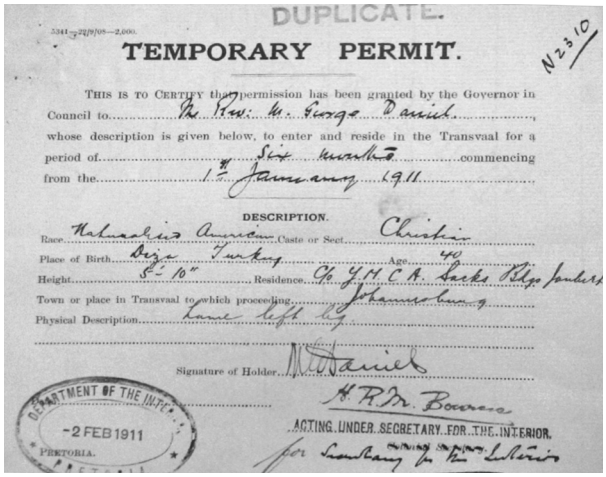
Place of Issue Pretoria

Date of Issue 15-1-09

Authority for Issue F 84

This Permit is not transferable, and any person making use of it, otherwise than the original holder will be liable to prosecution and to the penalties provided in Section 9 of Ordinance No. 46 of 1907.

Signature of Holder R Loganberthy



DUPLICATE.

TEMPORARY PERMIT.

N2310

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that permission has been granted by the Governor in Council to The Rev. M. George Daniels, whose description is given below, to enter and reside in the Transvaal for a period of Six months commencing from the 1st January 1911.

DESCRIPTION.

Race Abyssinian Caste or Sect Christian

Place of Birth Beja Tanka Age 40

Height 5ft 10" Residence Ch. Y.M.C.A. Sacks Bldgs. Jeppe

Town or place in Transvaal to which proceeding Johannesburg

Physical Description Lame left leg

Signature of Holder M. Daniels

H. R. M. Bourne

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE INTERIOR.

for Secretary for the Interior

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR -2 FEB 1911 PRETORIA.

Figure 1: (Above Left) Forged Asiatic temporary permit, 1906. SAB, IND 114/E, 54

Figure 2: (Above Right) Forged general temporary permit. TAB, CIO 33/N2310, Naturalisation, M. G. Daniels, 1910–11

of radical uncertainty, that allowed officials to seduce, defuse and eventually disable overt resistance.

The permits were inconsistent in their precise formatting; the often confusing proliferation of documents meant that even state departments could not easily keep track of the variety: the plethora of these permits included registration certificates, travelling passes, certificates of relationship, visitors' permits and so on. But the differences were largely superficial: each permit sought to abstract the identity of the individual traveller from the Indian Ocean social world that appeared so opaque to South African colonial officials. The permits insisted on a single name in roman script ('in full', and sometimes 'name known by'). The permits required that the holder be embedded with some larger, identifiable collective, identified as an occupation, family, nationality, tribe, headman, caste, sect or race, among others, that were sometimes difficult to translate into migrants' own languages and which lead to further uncertainties. Significant too was that the place of departure and arrival were clearly stated, as if this might simplify a linear journey out of the bewildering number of circulations, returns, transits and stopovers which migrants' lives invariably involved. The permits were also fixated (but also frustrated) by some means of linking the document to the flesh-and-blood being to whom they applied: sometimes the permit required a physical description, a thumb-impression or a photograph. But rarely was there an efficient, fail-safe way to ensure the holder was authentic: descriptions were vague and subjective, thumb impressions required novel skills to decipher, photographs came loose or migrants changed appearance. In short, the permits, for all their apparent banality, were dynamic, ambiguous and unpredictable (see Figures 1, 2 and 3).

For migrants, the temporary permit allowed some limited opportunities for entry. Because Indian travellers were the earliest group of migrants targeted by the new border regime, Konkani and Gujarati merchant houses took a leading role in the East

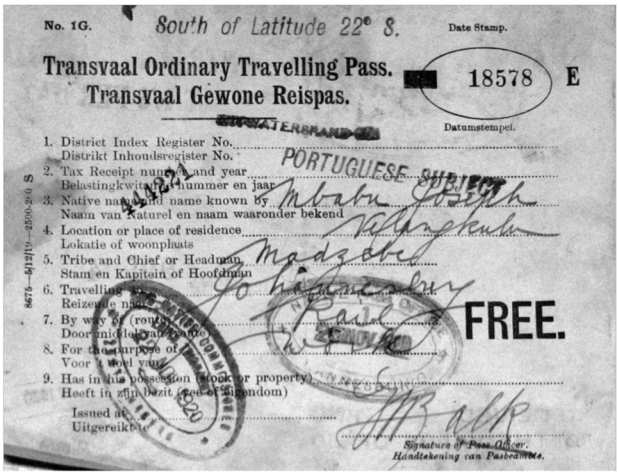


Figure 3: (Above) Forged travelling pass, 1920. TAB, GNLB 265, 5561/16/D240

Coast permit trade. The first documented case of a traffic in permits at Komatipoort occurred in 1906, when a scheme was uncovered to bribe Komatipoort constables to overlook fictional documents at £2 a head.[41] Thereafter, episodes of irregular entry were frequent. Syndicates based in Lourenço Marques created systems for fictitious applications, or bought up used permits, modified them with chemicals, and resold them.[42] The syndicates also employed touts to tour likely villages in India, and ships' crews in Bombay to assist in migrants' departures. In Lourenço Marques, Portuguese harbour officials were bribed to allow impostors to land, while ticket examiners on trains (sometimes so-called kaffir trains) were persuaded to assist in the onward journey. The forged documents would not often be able to withstand a rigorous examination, but the only place where this was very likely to happen was at the border post, and Komatipoort officials, as we shall see below, faced some bizarre logistical challenges (once in the Transvaal, Indians would need to produce their documents to authorities from time to time, but because the checking of thumb impressions required a certain amount of time and expertise, the check was often superficial).[43] Some schemes also avoided the Komatipoort examination entirely: parties detoured on foot around the border post, and reunited in the Transvaal. Cases reveal

41 'Permit Frauds', *Indian Opinion*, 1 December 1906.

42 For good examples, see SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 3, Sergeant (Pilgrim's Rest) to District Commandant (Lydenburg), 28 August 1915; vol 4, E. Fothergill, 'Report on Asiatics entering Transvaal via Pessene and Nomahasha', 26 February 1916; vol 6, A. T. Long to PIO, 8 April 1915; SAB, BNS 1/1/344, 71/74, PIO to SI, 23 April 1917; Trigger to PIO, 27 September 1919; PIO to SI, 7 December 1920.

43 Officially, licence registrars in the Transvaal were required to communicate with the Immigration Department by forwarding applications and identity slips of applicants before granting licences. However, in 1917 the incoming head of the Transvaal Immigration Department complained of the disorderly records. He wrote that it is 'most disappointing to find that the forms had not been placed in the files of persons concerned ... forms had, in fact, not been examined in some instances, and were destroyed without [even] being looked at in many instances'. See SAB, BNS 1/1/595, 1/129, vol 4, Report of the [Transvaal] Immigration and Asiatic Departments, 1917.

how 'native guides', game wardens and borderland merchants (both European and Indian) were in the employ of syndicates offering to help migrants cross the border in this way.[44]

In 1915, Wilfred Cousins, facing difficulties in his own Cape Town office, undertook an investigative tour of the Transvaal–Mozambique border after police intercepted telegrams suggesting up a group of 150 Indians were waiting in hotel rooms in Lourenço Marques' Asiatic Quarter and preparing a border dodge.[45] With around a hundred or more Asians arriving on each incoming monthly ship at the Portuguese port, Cousins was deeply concerned about the vulnerable eastern border. He wrote that

> hundreds of Asiatics annually and systematically enter the Union by illicit means [from Lourenço Marques], as do a regular stream of other classes. [There] is great profit and little or no risk on the part of Indian and other agents – established and well known – who in foreign territory promote, organise and grow rich on the illicit traffic.[46]

Indian community leaders estimated one to two thousand had already succeeded. Cousins called for a 'vigorous effort on every side' to suppress syndicates in southern Mozambique, but the latter proved remarkably resilient. Five years later a follow-up report on southern Mozambique found 'illicit immigration is by no means on the decrease.'[47]

Indian networks, using a mixture of trains, African guides, chains of safe houses and ultimately motor cars, grew sophisticated; a 1921 investigation suggested 10 to 12 people per ship of the British India Company Line travelled irregularly through Komatipoort via Lourenço Marques.[48] By now, reports also mentioned 'clever and enterprising Greeks',[49] 'Cape Boys,'[50] Eurasians and Whites[51] who had all became involved in the 'systematic sale to both Chinese and Indians' of 'excellent imitations of genuine certificates.'[52] With a certificate came some rudimentary coaching in what to expect from Komatipoort officials, the kind of questions one might encounter, and some basic topographical and social knowledge of the Union. The small station at Komatipoort (see below) had few of the resources available to immigration police at the large seaports, and migrants took full advantage. Travellers simply impersonated the registered holder since there was little on the document itself to prove the identity of its owner conclusively. Periodic cases emerged throughout the 1930s and into the

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44 SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 7, Statement by Ahmed Abraham Adam, 4 December 1920.
45 *Ibid*, vol 3, W. Cousins, 'Report on visit to Komatipoort and Lourenço Marques', 25 November 1915.
46 *Ibid*.
47 SAB, BNS 1/1/353, 109/74, SI to Secretary for Finance, 28 February 1920.
48 SAB, BNS 1/1/323, 27/74, vol 8, 'Illicit Traffic of Indians from Bombay', 7 September 1921.
49 'Git! Our Campaign Against Indians', *Sunday Times*, 23 March 1920.
50 SAB, BNS 1/1/323, 27/74, vol 7, Dobson to SI, 13 July 1920.
51 'Prohibited Immigrants: Aided and Abetted', *Pretoria News*, 22 September 1920.
52 SAB, BNS 1/1/323, 27/74, vol 7, Acting PIO to Union Agent (UA), 6 December 1919 and SI to Commissioner of Police (COP), 24 December 1919.

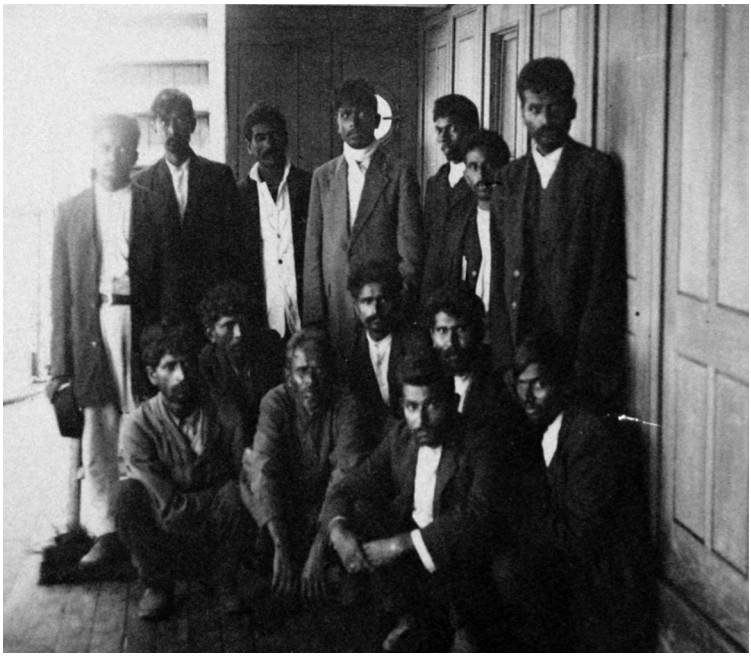

Figure 4: Captured illegal migrants near Kompatipoort. SAB, BNS 1/1/323, vol 5

1940s where schemes detailed above remained largely unchanged on the Bombay–Mozambique–Transvaal route.[53] (See Figure 4.)

The south-east African permit market was hardly a monopoly of South Asians; a similar set of schemes developed among African migrants. Most migrants were so-called Tropicals, or *machona*[54] as they were known in Nyasaland, heading southwards to work on Transvaal and Natal farms and mines and in towns. The majority were from Mozambique, Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, with a small percentage from Tanganyika, Kenya, Congo, Madagascar' and north-westerly routes, not dealt with here, brought migrants from Bechuanaland, South West Africa and Angola.[55] South African administrators had little general enthusiasm for African immigration but accepted it as unavoidable, given labour shortages and the often insatiable demands of employers in mining, agriculture and manufacturing. Most African migrants were technically prohibited immigrants under the Immigration Regulations Act, but a system had evolved to capture 'wandering natives', channel them into onerous contracts with settler employers, and ultimately repatriate them at the end of a contract.[56] The large recruiting organisations – the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

53 SAB, BNS 1/1/353, 109/74, vol 5, Verklaring van Mohamed Bawa, 13 July 1948; vol 12, Chief Inspector to Deputy Commissioner, South African Police, 17 December 1948.

54 Literally, 'the lost ones'.

55 The census figures over the first half of the century are collated in *Interdepartmental Committee of Inquiry into Foreign Bantu* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1962), 9.

56 Best explained by J. Klaaren, 'Migrating to Citizenship: Mobility, Law, and Nationality in South Africa, 1897–1937' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 2004), 173–92.

(WNLA) and the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) – administered this system in cooperation with the Native Affairs Department.[57] The problem with this system of channelling labour through the WNLA and NRC was one of persistent 'leakage', as officials often referred to it. Despite the rationalisation that the formal recruitment systems had brought to the borderlands by 1920, in later decades desertion and 'clandestine' travelling remained a major issue at all stages of the journey and at all places of employment in the Union.[58]

With this in mind, the Immigration Department *also* developed instructions through the 1920s for border officers who confronted African migrants irregularly travelling through the borderlands.[59] The instructions to officers were a little odd. Consider a 1926 sheet of instructions.[60] While it noted that African immigrants were forbidden to enter South Africa and ought to be deported or handed over to the WNLA, they could indeed be allowed to proceed if they travelled with some documentary proof. If a traveller had documents proving he (or rarely she) had employment, was on a visit, had 'definite business to transact', had special authority from any government official, or was a servant, the instructions counselled leniency. Rhodesians and Swazis, as 'Protectorate Natives', should 'suffer no drastic action'; Mozambicans with *intendicia* (curator's passes) should not be interfered with; those without any documentation at all were allowed to stay in the Union with a stern warning that they register with the Portuguese curator in Johannesburg as soon as possible and obtain an appropriate permit. To these were added allowances for migrants found crossing the border 'on foot', those 'in small groups' and those 'travelling for educational purposes'. The immigration department awarded all such interlopers a variety of temporary travelling permits.

In the borderlands of Mozambique, the Transvaal and Swaziland, local police, villagers, headmen, and game wardens bought and sold permits, much like the Asian syndicates.[61] Farmers and recruiters sometimes gave certificates as a form of payment to temporary workers.[62] Wagon drivers, puntsmen and lorry drivers also added their own services for fee.[63] Routes were numerous; where Asian migrants had kept close to Komatipoort, *machona* routes incorporated the entire length of the Union's borders with Mozambique, Swaziland and indeed Southern Rhodesia.

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57 For an overview, see J. Crush, A. Jeeves and D. Yudelman, *South Africa's Labour Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines* (Boulder: Westview, 1992).

58 For episodic complaints, see Employment Bureau of Africa Archives (TEBA)/(WNLA) 123/3, Manager (Eloff Street) to Gemmill, 23 May 1919 and Manager (Witbank Depot) to Gemmill, 23 April 1920; TEBA/WNLA 132a, Manager to District Manager (Lourenço Marques), 29 June 1923; TEBA/WNLA 132/3. Manager (Ressano Garcia) to Gemmill, 23 May 1929; for later overviews, see *Report of the Native Farm Labour Committee 1937–39* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1939), 72.

59 The point is developed in most detail by Klaaren, 'Migrating to Citizenship', 173–92.

60 SAB, CIAA 37/M130, vol 4, PIO to SI, 23 November 1926.

61 For diverse geographical examples, see TEBA/WNLA 135/15, Manager (Lourenço Marques) to Head Office, 9 April 1920; Transvaal Archive Bureau (TAB)/Government Native Labour Bureau (GNLB) 23/1950/13/240, Basela Rawindi, 28 August 1925; SAB, Native Affairs Department (NTS) 2211/379/280, District Commandant (Eshowe) to Deputy Commissioner, 16 June 1926; Magistrate (Ingwavuma) to District Officer (Nongoma), 2 June 1926; Sub-Inspector (Nongoma) to District Commandant (Eshowe), 2 July 1926; TEBA/WNLA 8/1, Manager (Lourenço Marques) to General Manager, 14 February 1929; SAB, CIAA 44/M182, vol 5, Immigration Officer to Commissioner of Immigration (COI), 19 December 1935.

62 For example, TAB/GNLB 123/1950/13/240, Chief Native Commissioner (Salisbury), Memo re: Emigration of Natives from Rhodesia to Transvaal, 27 January 1926.

63 For example, TAB/GNLB 3260/11/53, Zafaniah Samala, 14 May 1924; SAB, CIAA 37/M130, vol 4, Acting Chief Native Commissioner to Chief Commissioner (Salisbury), 10 May 1926; Charge office (Louis Trichardt) to PIO, 19 February 1926; vol 5, Chief Immigration Officer (Southern Rhodesia) to PIO, 25 January 1927.

The scale of these movements grew during the 1920s. In 1920, the police post at Bushbuckridge irregularly issued Union passes to about 200 African immigrants a month; a year later, NAD officials at Louis Trichardt noted a trend where many travelling passes had been made out in pencil, erased and modified.[64] In 1922, the Johannesburg chief pass officer found it 'somewhat astonishing' that so many 'Nyasas, Rhodesians and East Coast immigrants' were arriving in the town with irregular documentation from the eastern frontier.[65] During the winter of 1924, officials at Louis Trichardt were aware of some 2,350 African immigrants who had travelled in three months across the eastern border. That year, police in northern Natal wrote of a 'regular system' involving storekeepers, headmen and farmers that allowed prohibited Africans with false papers to enter the Union through Swaziland and Maputaland. After interviewing inhabitants of the Pafuri triangle, another 1926 investigation estimated that 95 per cent of Africans passing through Pafuri into the Transvaal did so on fictitious papers.[66] Around this time, Komatipoort also saw the theft of large batches of travelling passbooks (totalling several hundred documents) and official stamps.[67] In Johannesburg, meanwhile, police reported that there were 'a large number of natives of the educated type, employed as compound clerks, who are selling passes obtained in numerous ways'[68] (although it is impossible to tell how many of these ended up in the hands of *machona*).

At the end of 1926, the principal immigration officer of the Transvaal surveyed the scene in an important letter he circulated through the Union's bureaucracy.[69] In it, he estimated that 600 immigrant Africans from 'all over' were arriving in Johannesburg every week, a number that he thought was 'if anything, an underestimate'. He wrote that control over the northern and eastern border 'is as bad as it can possibly be' and that, whatever attempts the Immigration Department, NAD, the SAP, and WNLA/NRC had previously made to regulate it through the permit system, they were now 'a dead letter'. He admitted that the kid gloves and laissez-faire system of exemptions followed in previous years had been a 'fatal' mistake. As he set off on a tour of the Lowveld borderlands, he left his colleagues to mull over the fact that 'only one in ten [African immigrants] is dealt with and the remaining nine report to their relatives that they have safely reached the Union and are earning, for them, big wages.'

Despite attempts to bring by some order to the borderlands (discussed below) through the 1930s, north-eastern Transvaal police noted how difficult it remained to identify African migrants' nationalities with any certainty; border control was still 'very largely in a state of chaos' a decade on from the 1926 tour.[70] The inspector wrote of 'hundreds of Portuguese Natives' arriving with Rhodesian papers, many in family

64 TAB/GNLB 2526/12/72, Secretary for Native Affairs to Native Commissioner, 6 November 1920.
65 TAB/GNLB 135/22/110, Chief Permit Officer to Director of Native Labour (DNL), 25 January 1923.
66 TAB/GNLB 412/85/5, Sub-Native commissioner (Louis Trichardt) to Director of Native Labour, 20 December 1926.
67 TAB/GNLB 2526/12/72, Secretary for Native Affairs to all Native Commissioners and Transvaal Clerks, 5April and 14 October, 1925; DNL to Deputy COP, 5 April 1927.
68 TAB/GNLB 2526/12/72, Detective Head Constable to CID (Witwatersrand), 22 October 1924.
69 SAB, CIAA 37/M130, vol 4, PIO to SI, 23 November 1926.
70 SAB, SAP 18/15/26, Sub-Inspector (Pietersburg) to Deputy Commissioner, 25 September 1937.

groups. He reported the widespread destruction of documents and mass desertion, up to rates of 99 per cent. The inspector also pointed the finger at white recruiters with elaborate cross-border networks linking Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique and Swaziland with the Transvaal. These recruiters were now even recruiting lorry loads of females. Three years later, WNLA found that 'considerable numbers' of migrants were leaving Sabi, Magude and Matuganhana to skirt the southern border of the Kruger National Park, where 'hundreds were passing through monthly' for eastern Transvaal towns.[71] Meanwhile, the southerly routes from Manhoca and Salamanga into northern Zululand 'continued as before'.[72] Local administrators on the Mozambican side ordered police patrols of well-known routes and organised *banjas* with border *indunas*, and gave them strict orders to prevent and capture passing travellers. In 1947, WNLA and the Portuguese police made a 'circumscription' of all areas of Mozambique bordering the Transvaal, Swaziland and Zululand. The WNLA agent on the trip reported that he had 'seen no result [and] the problem continues without solution despite this type of emigration being made on an ever-increasing scale.'[73]

Prohibited Europeans – the poor and illiterate – were also part of the Union–Mozambique borderland underworld. We focus on Madeirans, who played an unusually significant role in it. Madeirans shared linguistic and ethnic connections with the small Portuguese colonial society in Mozambique. In 1891, 400 Madeiran emigrants had landed at Delagoa Bay and 'volunteered' for military service in Manicaland. Many subsequently settled in Lourenço Marques and surrounds, others looked to move to the Transvaal. After the turn of the century, Madeirans were not especially welcome in the Transvaal: Protestant administrators were suspicious of their Catholicism, uncertain bloodlines and high levels of illiteracy. The Union declared Madeirans prohibited except for a small number of farmers, predictably brought in under a special permit scheme.[74] It is appropriate to note here that the Immigration Department was also building up a system of temporary permits for otherwise forbidden Europeans.[75]

As early as 1906, the same year that Indian migrants were found bribing Komatipoort constables, authorities in Lourenço Marques discovered a syndicate for the daily transport of batches of about 20 Madeiran men to Johannesburg by train. A network of *aliciadores* (enticers) – some in Madeira and some in Lourenço Marques – charged £3 per head to get emigrants work on the Highveld, with the help of an insider at the Portuguese consular building in the Transvaal who sold batches of blank temporary permits.[76] According to a report by Transvaal border police in 1915,

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71 TEBA/WNLA 46, Monthly Report, August 1940.

72 SAB, NTS 2211/379/280, Chief Native Commissioner (Natal) to Zululand Native Commissioners, 2 March 1938; TEBA/WNLA 46, Monthly Report, October 1940. The quote is from the latter.

73 TEBA/WNLA 46, Divisional Agent's Report, Xinavane, 1948.

74 SAB, BNS 1/1/341, 66/74, vol 1, Cousins to SI, 29 November 1913; SAB, CIAA 32/M42, 'Report on Visit to Lourenço Marques', 24 November 1915; SAB, BNS 1/1/341, 66/74, vol 1, UA Memoranda, 11 January 1916.

75 Businesses set up by earlier migrants were eager to employ 'kith and kin' and lobbied the department to issue temporary permits to contract workers; meanwhile 'hardship cases', some refugees and 'appellants', were offered temporary permits in a spirit of compromise or necessity. Religious bodies, municipalities and philanthropists also demanded that immigration officials perform merciful 'Christian actions' and admit otherwise forbidden immigrants.

76 SAB, CIAA 32/M42, British Consul-General (Lourenço Marques) to H. Fowle, 27 March 1906.

Madeirans were 'streaming into Lourenço Marques [and] crossing into the Union by the hundreds.'[77]

Like Asian networks, in the 1920s and '30s, Madeiran *alicaidores* developed networks of safe houses and employed sub-agents: particularly train staff, but also xiRonga- and xiTsonga-speaking guides.[78] Together they organised permission to cross chiefly land, offer accommodation and food, and conveyed messages and money between points in the route networks, which were similar – and were probably often the same – as those detailed above. Some nursed migrants who had fallen sick. Often, *aliciadores* merely helped their clients avoid the permit regime altogether, but they sometimes provided faked contracts. Once in the Transvaal, it appears they sometimes arranged registration for their clients with complicit clerks in the 1940s.'[79] There was always a steady trickle of illiterate Madeirans over the Lebombo Mountains until at the least the 1950s, when stories of illegal entry form a significant part of the oral narratives collected in recent work by historian Clive Glaser.[80] The nature of clandestine border crossing means it is difficult to be precise about numbers. The most reliable estimate comes from the *Associaçião da Colónia Portuguésa,* which reckoned that some 4000 Madeirans entered the Union illicitly in the late 1920s.[81] There appears to have been another burst in the late 1930s (and again in the early 1950s) when several rings were bust and over 100 men were arrested in each case.

If some of the schemes were ethnically circumscribed, others overlapped in heterogeneous alliances. Chinese and Indian migrants hired several Asian–Portuguese syndicates on the trains and roads to the Union in the 1910s.[82] As the traffic grew, syndicates became increasingly heterodox in the 1920s and '30s. We have already seen examples of these polyglot enterprises. One might cite numerous additional examples: a 'Cape Coloured' mechanic, Liebrandt, had an operation to smuggle Indians involving Mohan Singh and Fataai, a Lourenço Marques taxi driver living 'at the house of a Turk'.[83] 'Coloured Porters' on the Transvaal trains touted at Indian and Chinese canteens in Lourenço Marques.[84] In the late 1920s, a 'Chinaman' in Lourenço Marques named Percy White ran an operation conveying 'Portuguese and Asiatics, opium and alcohol' to Johannesburg.[85] Another ring smuggling 'mostly Indians' was

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77 SAB, CIAA 32/M42, 'Report on Visit to Lourenço Marques', 24 November 1915.

78 No single document describes the Madeiran system in its entirety but, by piecing together a variety of reports over time, the various facets become apparent enough. Especially revealing are: SAB, BNS 1/1/341, 66/74, Detective to Suspect Branch, 1 March 1924; Immigration Officer to UA, 22 December 1926; E. H. Louw to Secretary for External Affairs, 18 January 1936; SAB, CIAA 52/M279, CID (Transvaal) to PIO, 30 August 1926; COI to SI, 2 May 1930; SAB, CIAA 65/M716, vols 1–3, Affidavits recorded on 22 July and 2 August 1939 and 30 March 1940.

79 SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 12, Chief Inspector to SI, 12 October 1950.

80 C. Glaser, 'White but Illegal: Undocumented Madeiran immigration to South Africa 1920s–1970s' in *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, 31, 1, 2013, 74–98.

81 SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 15, Confidential Memorandum re: Illegal Immigration from Madeira, 22 June 1929.

82 BNS 1/1/354, 111/74, A. T. Long to PIO, 7 November 1913; SAB, BNS 1/1/310, 13/74, vol 3, Affidavits re: Chinese illegal migrants 1910–19 (collected March 1924 – April 1925); BNS 1/1/344, 71/74, A. T. Long to PIO, 14 September 1916; SAB, CIAA 53/M281, M. Hinds and Zonditshe Zulu, 15 August 1921; SAB, SAP 167/1/2/28, Assistant Commissioner (Ubombo) to Assistant Commissioner (Stegi), 4 September 1928 and Inspector (Ermelo) to Deputy Commissioner, 25 September 1928; SAB, BNS 1/1/353, 109/74, vol 4, Acting COI to SI, 28 March 1928 and Auditor-General to Secretary for Finance,16 April 1929; SAB, BNS 1/1/353, 109/74, vol 5, 'Smuggling of Indians into the Union', 28 April 1933. A handful of the many Madeiran affidavits cited above mention travelling with Indians or Chinese.

83 'Running the Blockade', *Lourenço Marques Guardian*, 14 February 1925.

84 SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 11, J. Mendes to Union Consul-General (Lourenço Marques), 20 June 1930.

85 SAB, SAP 167/1/2/28, 'Alleged Contravention of Immigration Laws and Smuggling of Contraband', 7 April 1928.

smashed in 1931, which involved a Lourenço Marques chemist Leo Felix Khan, a taxi driver named Fernando Costa, Das Neva's stores near Malelane and Mbuzini, and a white Mbabane hotelier.[86] By the 1940s a 'Portuguese' collaborated with two Indian traders in Johannesburg to smuggle immigrants in banana crates; up to 12 immigrants a day were thought to pass Komatipoort in this way.[87] Madeiran railways staff admitted helping Chinese enter South Africa via refrigerated carriages, using their Lourenço Marques homes as safe houses.[88] By then, Lourenço Marques police were on the trail of 17 chauffeurs of Madeiran, Pakistani, Greek and Egyptian origin, as well as a number of Afrikaans-named Transvaal mechanics.[89]

Pickets, Fences and Informers

Hindsight, and twenty-first-century opportunities to piece together sources once fragmented across time and space, allows us to understand the border syndicates in ways that were only dimly discernible to South African border police at the time. During the period under discussion – from the early 1900s to the 1940s – the Immigration Department became incrementally aware of the numerous border-crossing schemes in southern Mozambique. With the relatively successful closure of the maritime gateways to undesirables, administrative energy shifted in stages toward the overland routes in the eastern Lowveld in an attempt to trap travellers within paper walls.

As we saw earlier, the eastern Lowveld had become a region of strategic interest for British and Portuguese military planners; the latter placed numerous border posts along the eastern Zuid Afrikaanische Republiek/Mozambique border as the threat of conflict loomed in the 1890s.[90] Responsibility for the first British-organised colonial border patrols on the Lowveld fell to the merry men of Lebombo Intelligence Scouts and Steinecker's Horse, a regiment established by a German mercenary on behalf of the British to guard the Swazi frontier, suppress guerrilla communications and, at the war's end, prevent smuggling.[91] Based at the village of Komatipoort, they relied in part on vaTsonga pickets and intelligence messengers. New administrators, however, tasked with rebuilding and modernising the Transvaal, had little faith that the men of Steinecker's Horse could protect the new British colony from undesirable migrants; indeed the regiment's own reputation included a marked penchant for drink, looting, gun running and general 'immorality'.[92]

Already aware in the first decade of the twentieth century that migrants were diverting from the ports to make the overland journey from Lourenço Marques, Transvaal authorities began to focus their attention on the railway station at

86 SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 11, Acting COP to SI, 27 October 1930.
87 SAB, CIAA 65/M716, COI to PIO, 18 September 1945.
88 SAB, CIAA 65/M716, vol 10, Civil Police of Mozambique to Consul-General, 6 October 1948.
89 SAB, CIAA 65/M716, Chefe de Repartição de Gabinete (Lourenço Marques), 2 December 1949.
90 C. R. Machado, *Reconhecimento Militar da Fronteira Portugueza entre os Districtos de Lourenço Marques, Gaza, Transval e a Suazilândia: Estabelecimento e Abastecimento de Postos de Polícia no Tempo da Guerra Anglo-Bóer* (Lisbon: Typographia do Commercio, 1906).
91 P. Warwick, *Black People and the South African War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 107–8.
92 *Ibid*.

Figure 5: Komatipoort/Resano Garcia station, 1901. Unknown provenance, 'A Estação de Caminho de Ferro De Ressano Garcia, Junto a Komatipoort, 1901', available on https://delagoabayworld.wordpress.com/category/lugares/ressano-garcia/. Accessed 5 April 2014

Komatipoort and the area immediately north and south.[93] At first, 'native pickets' – usually charged with keeping an eye on smugglers – intercepted immigrants. When this had little effect, the Transvaal administration authorised South African constables as 'special officers' with the legal right to demand papers from travellers, and trained them in fingerprint examination skills. 'Travelling Inspectors' boarded trains to examine paperwork and establish some general administrative oversight of mobile people near the town. Watchposts at some strategic locations (typically bridges and ferry points) and the installation of telephone lines along the border were considered a priority, although the extent to which this was acted upon seems to have been uneven. Border headmen heard warnings from the department against collaborating in the schemes. (See Figure 5.)

These initial efforts to prevent unauthorised migration proved inadequate. At the small Komatipoort office, the constantly changing corps of frontier police were ill-trained in the arts of immigration control. Notoriously hot and unhealthy, Komatipoort was an exceptionally hard place to recruit willing men to. Officials circulated between offices to try to overcome the problem, but the experience through the 1910s had become 'a continual record of sickness, dissatisfaction and grievance'.[94] Komatipoort officers were limited to examining immigrants on the train; they

93 The incremental developments of these initiatives may be followed in the yearly correspondence concerning 'Immigration Work at Komatipoort' in SAB, BNS 1/1/354, 111/74.

94 SAB, BAL 31/A7974, UA to G. Owen-Smith, 27 March 1922.

complained that examination was impossible when the scheduled stop was a mere nine minutes, and of the lack of light to properly scrutinise residence permits, and even of the ubiquitous sweat which smudged documents. Periodic suggestions to close Komatipoort to Asian migrants came under discussion at high levels, although without follow-through (and it is hard to see what benefit such a course would have brought). The Immigration Department effectively ignored the question of African immigrants in the region, hoping – in the end forlornly – that WNLA's network of detention centres would prove an adequate means of bringing order to the borderlands. Such were the difficulties at Komatipoort that the incoming head of Transvaal immigration control admitted in 1917 that 'little or nothing is being done in connection with the regulation or restriction of undesirable whites at the border.'[95]

After the end of World War I, immigration officials, concerned that the number of migrants crossing southern Mozambique was 'not in scores but hundreds', agreed that 'severe and drastic steps' were needed.[96] Pretoria set about a more sustained effort to smother the syndicates.[97] This involved publicising information and cajoling stationmasters, conductors, district police, game wardens and customs pickets to keep a sharp lookout for, and confront, suspicious immigrants in the borderlands. The department employed additional pickets in the areas immediately south of Komatipoort and invested in donkeys, daily rations and regular inspections. The causeway over the Komati River was gradually modernised and supplied with electricity, telephones, full-time guards and barbed wire. A handful of specialised immigration officers were appointed in the north-eastern Transvaal although, being stationed at Pietersburg, Louis Trichardt and Sibasa, they were still some way from the border itself, large stretches of which fell under the purview of Kruger National Park officials and were lined with some basic agricultural fences.[98]

The Immigration Department also turned to Swaziland, through which many routes traversed. A system of paid informers, rewards and incentives was developed.[99] In addition to paying pickets bonuses for bringing in illegal migrants, it also involved spreading the word around border villages and local headmen. Municipal officers in Lowveld towns received briefing to pay attention to newcomers whose documents might be less than authentic. The department was not above experimenting with techniques of concealment of its own, employing plain-clothes detectives and a secret agent (Kaldoo Baldajee, a Zanzibari of Arab descent living in Lourenço Marques) in 1919. The following year all European travellers' documents were to be properly scrutinised; and by the end of the 1920s much effort was spent on trying to deport African migrants found 'on foot'. To reinforce the new drive, Treasury approved a £500

95 SAB, BNS 1/1/595, 1/129, vol 4, Report of the Transvaal Immigration and Asiatic Departments for 1917.
96 Annual Report of the Natal Immigration Restriction Department, 1917, 14.
97 Key documents are SAB, BNS 1/1/324, 27/74, vol 3, 'Report on a visit to Komatipoort and Lourenço Marques', 25 November 1915, 8–10; SAB, BNS 1/1/344, 71/74, vol 1, UA to PIO, 24 November 1921; SAB, BNS 1/1/328, 41/74, 'Report on the collection of migration statistics at Komatipoort', 9 November 1923; SAB, CIAA 2/M279, vol 3, 'Report on a visit to Komatipoort by Immigration and Customs Officers', 4 November 1929.
98 SAB, CIAA 36, M130, vol 1, PIO to Under-SI, 16 January 1914.
99 SAB, BNS 1/1/353, 109/74, vol 1, UA (Lourenço Marques) to SI, 9 January 1918; SI to Secretary of Finance, 28 February, 1920; vol 5, 'Payments of awards to informers in cases of illicit immigration', c 1922.

annual budget for a racially graded system of rewards, offering from £1 to £5 for information leading to the arrest of illegal immigrants caught traversing the Lebombo with false documents. Immigration detectives also established regular informers in South African cities.

Despite all this administrative energy, the problems of establishing surveillance on the eastern borders proved persistent. The department fared best in getting a grip on Komatipoort station and the area immediately around it. But senior officials still complained about 'young and irresponsible' constables more interested in 'native crime and cattle theft' than immigrants.[100] The borders remained vast and hard to patrol. Officials described the border to the north as 'three hundred miles of barren inhospitable waste' with no police posts, and admitted that the Mozambique–Transvaal boundary was 'a physical impossibility to guard'.[101] The informer system brought some useful information, but migrants were willing to pay four or five times the reward money for villagers' silence or expertise. Reporting to the nearest police post might require a long walk for villagers, and rumours spread – by whom we can only guess – that the department had discontinued the reward system.[102] Finally, for migrants unlucky enough to be ensnared in the dragnet, few faced long detention. Effective deportation was impossible; deportees returned to the nearest border simply walked back into the Union the next day. The official conclusion was that the Immigration Department was fighting a losing battle against 'extremely profitable' syndicates of 'well-to-do locals' in southern Mozambique and Swaziland.[103]

In the 1920s and '30s, a strategy of (what has been called elsewhere) 'remote control' was pursued.[104] This meant, essentially, a policy of stopping migrants before they had reached the eastern borderlands. An important figure in this new approach was the Canadian-born Arthur T. Long, who became Union agent in Lourenço Marques in 1910.[105] At the Union agent office at Lourenço Marques docks, in a building shared with the English Club, Long made it compulsory for Union-bound immigrants to report to him first for an examination and written permission before being allowed to continue to the Transvaal. Without such permission, migrants could not board a westward train. Long pressed, successfully, for the Portuguese administration to establish migration regulations similar to those in South Africa (Mozambican regulations were drafted in 1907, 1922 and most stringently in 1932).[106] In 1930, one of the important aspects of the Union's new Immigration Quota Act was a visa requirement, which migrants could only obtain in consulates abroad, preferably in a migrant's home

100 SAB, BNS 1/1/354, 111/74, J. R. Hartshorne, 27 August 1928.

101 TAB, GNLB 123/1950/13/240, Notes on Conference at Pietersburg, 10 September 1918, and Statement of Stubbs, 8; SAB, CIAA 43/M182, vol 2, SI to Curator of Portuguese Natives, 27 September 1929.

102 SAB, BNS 1/1/354, 111/74, J. R. Hartshorne, 27 August 1928, 5.

103 SAB, BNS 1/1/353, 109/74, vol 1, Secret correspondence from UA (Lourenço Marques) to SI, 2 January 1918.

104 A. Zolberg, 'The Archaeology of Remote Control' in A. Fahrmeir and P. Weil (eds), *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period* (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 195–222.

105 Born in 1872, Long had already exhausted his luck on the Saskatchewan plains when opportunity came knocking in 1899 to join a squadron of Canadian Mounted Rifles en route to the Transvaal to fight the Republican guerillas. Having seen some action and been praised for his intelligence and 'sanguine temperament', on discharge Long sold his Canadian land and sought a career in Milner's Transvaal. He rapidly made his way through the railways and customs departments before moving to Lourenço Marques.

106 Copies of Mozambique regulations may be found in SAB, CIAA 43/M182, vol 3 and 60/M551.

country, *before* departure. Failure to do so resulted in heavy fines, and it became difficult to buy a ship ticket to southern Africa without such pre-departure authorisation.

During his time in office, Long stationed some his own staff at the Lourenço Marques wharf to monitor arriving passengers, and sent Union police on fact-finding circuit tours of Swaziland with a view to enlisting the help of local residents.[107] Long, using his personal connections, also worked hard to get administrative counterparts in Mozambique and Swaziland to cooperate in immigration control measures, invest more funds in establishing guard points at strategic bridges and road junctions, install modern communications and exchange useful intelligence between all the southern African colonies.[108] Authorities in adjacent colonies struck agreements to streamline deportation procedures.

As we have seen, migrant networks still found ways to overcome the department's multi-pronged strategy on the Lowveld borders. Union officials often bemoaned how difficult it was to get evidence and prosecutions of syndicates, which required cooperation across at least three, and sometimes four, different legal jurisdictions. In practice, Long found it difficult to compel individuals to report to his office in Lourenço Marques and complained that he 'had no standing on the docks'.[109] It was also difficult to see what benefit Portuguese port officials might find in taking on South African responsibilities, and the wider diplomatic relationships were often already sour, beneath the veneer of so many inter-colonial treaties and agreements.[110] The Swazi administration offered moral support to Long but frankly admitted that their coffers were empty and that a modern border control infrastructure of the sort the Union desired would be impossible to create to quite the degree required by Pretoria.[111] In a 1926 report to his superiors, Long admitted that the day-to-day realities of border policing complicated, and even invalidated, border control fantasies in Pretoria. He declared he could not make

> Komatipoort immigration examinations on the same lines as have caused New York to become a byword throughout the world in these respects. At present, the examination of passengers is conducted in such a way as to safeguard the revenue sufficiently, to cause the least possible inconvenience to reputable persons travelling, the smallest possible delay to trains, and the least expense to the Government consistent with efficiency.[112]

This set of constraints allowed the syndicates to thrive.

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107 SAB, BNS 1/1/321, 24/74, vol 2, Reports on Swaziland tour, 15–23 March 1923.
108 SAB, BNS 1/1/344, 71/74, vol 1, UA to PIO, 24 November 1921.
109 See SAB, CIAA 52/M279, UA to PIO, 14 March 1922; UA to COI, 22 October 1930.
110 For 'non-collaboration' between officials on both sides of the border, see SAB, BNS 1/1/354, 111/74. Portuguese Curator to DNL (Pretoria), 20 January 1927 and Confidential Memorandum on Interference with Railway passengers at Komatipoort by Portuguese officials, 23 March 1927.
111 SAB, BNS 1/1/344, 71/74, vol 2, UA to SI, 30 January 1924; Under-SI to SI, 15 February 1924; UA to Assistant Commissioner (Stegi), 17 April 1924.
112 SAB, BNS 1/1/354, 111/74, A. T. Long, 'Observations', 16 November 1926, 13.

What may now seem an obvious solution for the state – the fencing of the international border – was among the last of the solutions deployed. Some local fences, initially designed as a barrier to stray cattle, channelled migrants to certain crossings in the early twentieth century. However, their combined expense and unreliability across long distances meant the Immigration Department had not seriously pursued the idea until the late 1930s. In 1937, with the help of the Veterinary Department, the first fences appeared along the Lebombo ridge, although they were not continuous and covered a relatively small area.[113] After 1945, there was renewed investment in fencing. The Agricultural Department, Customs and Excise, and Immigration agreed to split the approximately £6,500 annual cost to build a fence from Komatipoort south to Golela. Full-time border patrol police patrolled its length by the mid-1950s, although a review in 1961 found the material used in building the fence had not been of requisite strength against wild animals.[114] The new Republic would try to complete the job, eventually helped by the militarisation of the region in the 1970s and '80s. By then, more than half a century of attempts to forge the eastern border had naturalised it in the minds of administrators, even if south-east Africa's travellers – its refugees, traders, pilgrims, shoppers, traders, and poachers – remained undisciplined since.[115]

State efforts to bring order to the South Africa–Mozambique border in the second half of the twentieth century and indeed the early years of the twenty-first falls beyond the scope of this article, which has sought to historicise border control in the region. It is well known that the Union of South Africa started to build an onerous border regime in the first years of the twentieth century, in order to secure a White Man's Country in southern Africa. Newly formed, ambitious Immigration Departments consequently targeted 'Asiatics', poor whites and finally 'surplus' Africans (from the 1920s onwards). An infrastructure of exclusion (detention and deportation compounds, police patrols, fingerprint offices and so on) soon emerged at the region's maritime gateways as the colonial states sought to undermine long-standing, indigenous cultures of decentralised mobility. This article has shown however, that the Union remained vulnerable on its eastern frontier with Mozambique and Swaziland, where 'undesirables' continued to arrive in numbers. The article followed a thriving market in identity permits in Southern Mozambique and Swaziland, which became important backdoor entry points to the Union. The most important groups to exploit corrupt local officials and entrepreneurial headmen on either side of the border were men associated with the merchant houses of coastal west India, syndicates from the Portuguese Atlantic island of Madeira, and long-distance, so-called 'tropical', African migrants. Together they forged sophisticated networks which moved permits, people and money across the region, and gave south-east Africa's border builders hard and often thankless paperwork.

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113 See the review of inter-war fencing plans in SAB, SAP 18/15/26, Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner, 20 April 1951.
114 *Interdepartmental Committee of Enquiry into Foreign Bantu* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1962), 13.
115 See R. J. Kloppers, 'Border Crossings: Life in the Mozambique/South Africa Borderland since 1975' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005), esp chapters 4–7.