The Creation of Protected Villages in Southern Rhodesia: Colonial Mythologies and the Official Mind (1972-1980)

Mazambani I and T.M. Mashingaidze

Department of History and International Studies
Midlands State University
Gweru, Zimbabwe

Abstract

The history of the establishment of Protected Villages (PVs) in Rhodesia was largely influenced by political motives and agendas of the colonial regime. The official position by the Rhodesian government was characterized with propaganda and myths. This was meant to justify and legitimize the uprooting and displacement of thousands of Africans and frog marching them into the "keeps." The propaganda was meant to deceive the international community into believing that these were humanitarian centers meant to protect vulnerable African people from marauding communist insurgents. The history of Protected Villages in Southern Rhodesia was deliberately distorted by colonial historians and colonial administrators. The reasons for the establishment of protected villages were manufactured to suit the colonial mentality which regarded colonialism as a "Whiteman's Burden". The government advanced an argument that Protected Villages were established with the sole humanitarian and benevolent aim of protecting African people. Colonial historians further argued that Africans fighting the colonial system were agenda less terrorists, communists, insurgents and destabilizing forces. Therefore, they argued that the government had a moral obligation to protect its people from terrorists. It will be demonstrated in this paper that Protected Villages were established as a military strategy to isolate the guerrillas and that the strategy has a long history. The history of PVs was largely captured from a military, nationalistic, gender dimension and the focus was not on exposing colonial shenanigans in the creation of these keeps. The paper largely depends on archival source and official publications.

Key Words: Protected Villages, Keeps, Military, Counter-insurgents, Consolidated Villages, Terrorists, Guerrillas, Propaganda, Mythologies.

Introduction

The establishment of protected villages is closely linked to the concept of total revolution which involves the concentration and resettlement of the local

population into defendable villages. The establishment of Protected Villages has generated a lot of historical interest. For one to fully understand the concept of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia there is need to ask various important questions such as the following. What were the reasons behind the establishment of protected villages? Were protected villages beneficial to the people in Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) in Southern Rhodesia? Were conditions in the protected villages better than outside? What were the effects of herding people behind the barbed wire and uprooting their traditional lifestyle? What were the effects of propaganda campaigns waged by the government to capture the hearts and minds of the people of Southern Rhodesia? Who was protected in protected villagers? These questions will be answered in the paper but at times they create more questions than answers. The adoption of protected villages as a counter-insurgency operation was borrowed from various countries. Protected villages were used as counter insurgency military strategies in Malaya by the British, in Vietnam by the French, in Angola by the Portuguese, in Algeria by the French and in Mozambique by the Portuguese. In all these circumstances and cases these were adopted for military reasons. It should be pointed out that in all cases humanitarian reasons were advanced to mask the military strategy in order to carry favour with the international community. In all these circumstances the implementers manufactured propaganda to justify their adoption of these quasi-detention camps. The misinformation involved the demonization of guerrillas as adversaries in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the unarmed civilians. Thus, the establishment of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia was part of a strategy with a long military history.

The British used the technique against the Malayan Community Party (MCP) in 1948. They forcibly resettled people into military planned villages administered by military authorities. The MCP was becoming popular and successful as it was supported by displaced Chinese in Malayan rural areas who gave them military supplies, food, money, information and moral support.(ZANU PF Archives) The Chinese people who were displaced and labelled as "squatters" supported the MCP. Therefore, this military tactic was a methodology designed to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese squatters. It was "a struggle to determine which side should govern and dominate the Chinese squatters" (ZANU PF Archives). The British government decided to resettle the squatters into new villages to isolate MCP. This

programme was implemented from 1949 to 1960 and 530 000 people were resettled into new villages. This programme involved forced removals, transportation of the so called squatters and construction of new settlements. This method enabled the British to defeat the communists and create unification and independence of Malaya. Malaya achieved independence on 31 August 1957 but the communists remained undefeated until July 1960.(ZANU PF Archives)

It needs to be highlighted that the forced resettlement programme was also used by the French and the Americans in Vietnam. The French in 1952 begun to construct protected villages called *agrovilles* to attract peasants from hardships. This policy was called "pacification by prosperity" (Beilbrunn 1962; 30) was presented to be offering social and economic advantages to the peasants. The French believed that the new villages would provide better defence against the Viet Cong, provide schools, medical, social services, and electricity to entice the peasants (Beilbrunn 1962; 34). However, this military strategy was not successful in Vietnam, it was badly planned, implemented and also badly co-ordinated. The United States which mainly funded the project also did not provide adequate funding (Beilbrunn 1962; 34). Therefore ,in terms of providing historical lessons for future implementation the Malayan experience provided more lessons that the experiment in Vietnam. It is also important to highlight that some Rhodesian forces such as Ron Reid-Daly served in the Malayan expedition and as such borrowed valuable lessons from the experience. The Malayan anti-insurgency campaign was regarded as the "the first guerrilla war to be won by counter-insurgency forces" (Cillers 1985; 79). It is also important to note that the Rhodesian army had also recruited some Americans veterans into the Rhodesian army and as such it is more likely than note that the colonial government in Southern Rhodesia borrowed a leaf from Malaya and Vietnam in adopting the use of protected villages as a military counter-insurgency operation. The strategy was a resounding success in Malaya and a qualified failure in South Vietnam.

In Africa, protected villages were adopted to destroy the spreading of the winds of change across the African continent. The French adopted protected villages in 1955. Brigadier Gaston Parlange was given the powers and mandate to re-organise the area into twelve pacification zones with military protection and administrative centre. Parlange attempted to market protected villages

by offering practical education schemes aiming to improve the living conditions and offer employment opportunities to the locals. He also recruited local Algerians and sponsored them to fight against the revolutionary forces (Cillers 1985; 79). However, the project was an unsuccessful adventure. The Portuguese also utilized the same strategy of mass population removals in Mozambique. *Aldeamentos* were established to isolate FRELIMO freedom fighters. The architecture of the programme Colonel Basilo Seguro believed that organised communities could easily refuse to help FRELIMO, whereas isolated Africans were vulnerable and could easily be coerced to support FRELIMO. The Portuguese adopted a "Scotched Earth Policy" clearing the border between Mozambique and Tanzania. (Junclannian 1974; 2)The Portuguese strategy had devastating consequences as vegetation and crops on the Mozambican borders with Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia were destroyed creating a humanitarian crisis. The Portuguese attempted to market the *Aldeamento*s by promising fertile lands, clean water, communication lines and defensive conditions to the Mozambicans (Junclannian 1974;25) All the promises in the end proved to be a fallacy and the strategy proved to be a failure militarily. The adoption of protected villages as a counter-insurgency operation was designed to defeat Mao's military doctrine where, "the people are the water and the guerrillas are the fish" that swims in the water." (Junclannian 1974; 25).

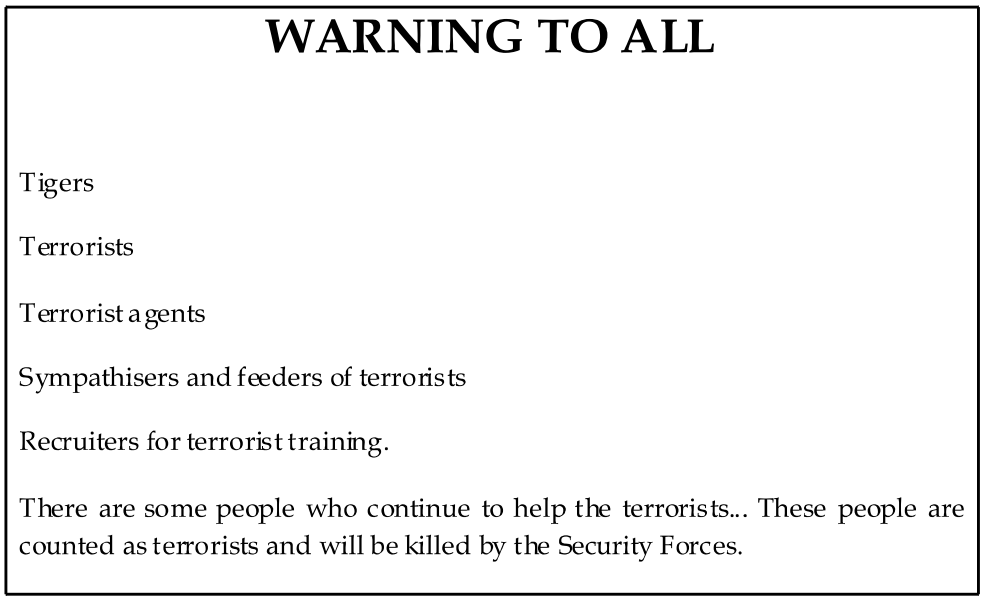
Protected villages were designed and intended to eliminate the guerrillas and their supporters. It was also meant to win the support of the people and destroy their support for the guerrillas. Protected Villages were not successful, attractive and beneficial to the local people both militarily in terms of security and developmental offering benefits. Conditions in protected villages were terrible without running water, electricity, schools ,clinics and fertile land. However, the Rhodesian keeps were horrible in terms of living conditions as it was implemented haphazardly and ruthlessly.

The Use of Propaganda and the Creation of Protected Villages

The Rhodesian government designed a well calculated offensive propaganda campaign to persuade the African people to accept protected villages and isolate the guerrillas. To psychologically prepare the inmates of protected villages and make them acceptable as "safe havens", the Rhodesian

government poured out propaganda designed to create fear and uncertainty within these communities so that the government would appear to be good Samaritans who wanted to save the people from marauding terrorists. The Rhodesian government also wanted to show the vulnerability of guerrillas and the folly of supporting them. They wanted to demonise the guerrillas so that the people in TTLs would cease to support them. Propaganda was also designed to deliberately and intentionally distort facts about the war situation in Southern Rhodesia. The propaganda campaign was also meant to demonstrate that it was the African people who requested PVs in fear of terrorists. Propaganda was also manufactured to hide the fact that conditions in these keeps were horrible and inhuman.

At first the Rhodesian government warned the people in TTLs against supporting the freedom fighters and threatened them with stiff penalties if they disobeyed. Typed fliers were distributed in areas where protected villages were to be established so as to eradicate support for the guerrillas. For example fliers like the one below became a common feature:



WARNING TO ALL

Tigers

Terrorists

Terrorist agents

Sympathisers and feeders of terrorists

Recruiters for terrorist training.

There are some people who continue to help the terrorists... These people are counted as terrorists and will be killed by the Security Forces.

Source: NAZ. Rhodesia. The Propaganda War

The Rhodesians also distributed leaflets labelling the guerrillas as, "terrorists", "pet dogs" , "cowards" , " murderers of innocent people", "robbers" , "communists", "murdering mad dogs", "mad-dog communists", "kidnappers of children", "murderers" and accused them of starving and beating recruits , infecting women with Sexual Transmitted Diseases, shooting old men, young girls and engaging in every kind of brutality (CCJP 1976;7). These leaflets were distributed in protected villages to turn the people against the guerrillas and make protected villages a success.

The third attempt was designed to demonstrate that the people in TTLs had realised that the guerrillas were fake and not genuine nationalists. The propaganda depicted them as the enemies of the people bent destroying the people with sickness and death so that, "their evil communists masters... may come ... and steal the country from the people" (Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1976; 7). The guerrillas were depicted as, "cowards", "robbers of innocent people", "Marxists", "enemies of the people", "extremists" ,and "agencies of foreign governments"(Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1975; 10). The Rhodesian government tried to use propaganda as a weapon to destroy African nationalism and legitimize government efforts to create protected villages. The government argued that protected villages were established to protect the innocent people from evil guerrillas. They used both leaflets and radios connected to loud speakers to pour propaganda to inmates of protected villages.

Various other methods were also used in the psychological warfare against people in TTLs. The Rhodesian government even used photographs of mutilated bodies of alleged guerrillas. The Psychological Services Department even went to the extent of displaying bodies of Africans killed by security forces on public display (Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1976; 7). This was designed to demonstrate that joining the guerrillas was dangerous as the Rhodesian forces were killing the guerrillas like rats. These displays were also meant to show the mighty and power of the security forces. Government officials even at times used leaflets with photographs of atrocities alleged to have been committed by terrorists (Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1976; 10-15). All these methods put together were meant to frighten inmates of "keeps" so that they would stop supporting the guerrillas.

The other attempt was designed to demonstrate that the terrorists were not supported by Africans in most TTLs but used various methods to coerce the people to support them. It was argued that the guerrillas were intoxicating and politicising innocent people in TTLs using intimidatory tactics. For example John Lovatt had photographs from Chiweshe which showed a village headman with hands tied at the back shot dead by the terrorists (Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1976;10-15). Another picture showed women who was forced to cook and eat her husband's lips and ear (Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1976;10-15). It was argued that the terrorists employed all these brutal methodologies to force the inmates of protected villages to comply and offer them material and more support.

The Rhodesian government also did everything in its powers to make guerrillas appear dangerous. In 1974 the Minister of Internal Affairs Mr Jack Musset claimed that guerrillas were killing for fun. He noted that protected villages were constructed "As part of the Defence Plan" to "provide protection to the African civilian population from the terrorist's onslaught (Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission 1976; 10-15)". Colonial officials even claimed that, "Terrorists who infiltrated the Korekore people in 1973 took the wives and daughters of tribesmen. They took men and boys as recruits". (NAZ Protected Villages) This was meant to depict that the guerrillas were heartless and to force the people to turn their backs on them and provide support to the Rhodesian forces. The Rhodesian government went on a crusade to produce leaflets to convince people that the guerrillas were the devil. Leaflets and captions like the following were dished out:

- **Terror and death is the way of communists camp instructors in Mozambique**
- **Do not let the communist terrorist spokesmen deceive you with more lies and smooth talk.**
- **The communists' terrorists bring nothing but sickness and death to the people.**

(NAZ Protected Villages)

The Manufacturing of Draconian Pieces of Legislation and the Creation of Protected Villages.

The establishment of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia was associated with violence, intimidation, and brutality and naked used of force. The propaganda and the lies failed to entice the African people to move into protected villages voluntarily as proclaimed by colonial officials. What makes the whole situation more callous is the fact that the regime legalised and legitimised violence. Violence was "legitimised" and the state was empowered to commit acts of violence on the defenceless civilians. The Emergency Powers Act of 1960 was manufactured specifically and deliberately to arrest and kill African nationalism. The Emergence Powers Regulations were coined to supplement and strengthen existing laws. (International Defence and Aid Fund 1977; 37). This provided powers for forcible removal of populations and the setting-up of protected villages. It also legalised the destruction of property, clearance of vegetation and designation of curfew areas and free-fire zones, forced labour and confiscation of crops and livestock. The government was also empowered to create "no go" areas , close schools ,missions, community centres , hospitals, businesses , destroy and confiscate crops ,livestock and property in the name of suppressing terrorism (International Defence and Aid Fund 1977; 37). As if that was not enough, collective fines were also introduced upon villages suspected of assisting guerrillas. In a nutshell, the Rhodesian government legalised the use of the scorched earth policy to eradicate terrorist activities and support for terrorism. In 1965 Indemnity and Compensation Act was passed which exonerated security forces in advance for any misconduct committed while on duty. (International Defence and Aid Fund 1977; 37) This piece of legislation was meant to empower the security forces to operate above the law and to be a law unto themselves.

Protected villages were manufactured and designed to politically castrate the Zimbabwean guerrillas and deny them moral and material support. The Rhodesian had realised the inadequacy and failure of propaganda, persuasion, rewarding system and other colonial measure, which had been formulated to isolate guerrillas. Therefore, all pieces of legislation passed were designed to save and extend the life span of the Rhodesian government and not protect the vulnerable African people.

The Rhodesian Psychology and Philosophy of Protected Villages

Protected villages were coined as a military tactic mainly designed to eliminate the root causes of anti-government sentiments and restore confidence, isolate the insurgence from the people, resources and to eliminate the guerrilla organisation. All this was systematically designed to gain support of the people and it was a confidence boosting exercise so that the Africans regain lost faith in the Rhodesia government. The introduction of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia was associated with the concept of psychological warfare. This involved the use of radios, loudspeakers and printed material to destabilise the enemy and gain support. Various strategies were formulated to control and deny access to the population and their resources. The Rhodesian government introduced curfews, food control strategies and created a no go areas as a way of destabilising the guerrillas and winning the hearts and minds of the African people.

The philosophy behind the establishment of protected villages was based on the need to concentrate and resettle the Africans into defendable villages. The physical control of the Africans people was designed to destroy the contact between the guerrillas and Africans in communal areas to deny the guerrillas' food, intelligence, recruits and access to the people. Sir Robert Thompson a colonial official believed that;

> The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas... Unless communist subversion political organisation in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the units will not be defected. If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population ...then their eventual destruction becomes automatic.
>
> (Cillers 1985; 81)

Protected villages were first launched by the Deputy Minister of Law and Order Wicaus de Kock in 1973 as military counter-insurgence military strategy. It was officially launched on 17 May 1973 on the Rhodesian border with Mozambique in Centenary and Mount Darwin districts. (Ellert 1989; 48-55) It involved a number of processes. Firstly it involved counting the number of people, herding them behind the barbed wire, evacuating and screening and resettling them. Secondly, the confiscation and destruction of any property

in these areas that could possibly be used guerrillas. Thirdly, the creation of no go areas where security forces were empowered to shoot on sight real or imagined guerrillas or guerrilla supporters. Lastly, bulldozing strips of clear ground to track movement into and out of no go areas. (Cillers 1985; 81)

The launch of protected villages was organised under Operation Overland 1 and 2. The operations gave powers to Rhodesia policeman to carry out a population census in the Dande and Muzarabani communal areas. After that thousands of villagers were forcibly driven into Msengezi Mission, Gusta, Hoya and Mukumbura protected villages.(Ellert 1989;49) The Rhodesian government went on to manufacture draconian laws to force people into protected villages. District Commissioners (DCs) were empowered to impose collective fines on villagers suspected of assisting guerrillas. It needs to be noted that villagers were punished on mere suspicion and not facts. As if that was not enough DCs were empowered to destroy huts and exile entire communities. H Ellert points out that, "The dispossessed communities were often resettled under conditions tantamount to banishment in their own land". (Ellert 1989; 55)

Operation Overland 2 was launched in Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands under the military justification that the guerrilla threat was approaching Salisbury. PVs were established in Chiweshe mainly because ZANU guerrillas were heavily supported by the villagers who provided food and information to the guerrillas. By 1974 Chiweshe was a security threat and this was captured by Lieutenant Colonel Reid Daly, who noted that, ''the apparent support for the ZANLA cause in Chiweshe..., was disturbing in a broader sense.'' (Cillers 1985; 81) The establishment of protected villages in Chiweshe involved the movement of 49 960 people into 21 protected villages. (Cillers 1985; 88)

Colonial officials clearly explained that the operation was a military operation intended to "... deprive terrorist of their vital contact with the civilian population, particularly at night, when they force tribesmen to accommodate and feed them as they move through the area."(Cillers 1985; 88) To clearly demonstrate that this was a military operation through and through the Rhodesian government deployed 17 companies of troops to seal off and saturate Chiweshe with security forces to eliminate guerrilla forces. (Ellert 1989; 129)

Colonial Mythologies and Protected Villages

The Rhodesian government used various methodologies to justify the creation of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia. A psychological warfare was created to manufacture propaganda literature to justify the establishment of protected villages. The media was the favourite platform used to unleash the body of propaganda literature to create a false impression on the reasons behind their establishment. Accordingly, the government wanted to create an impression that protected villages were established for humanitarian reasons and for the good and betterment of the African people. Colonial officials went on a crusade to manufacture reasons and literature to justify the establishment of protected villages. The colonial government used various colonial methodologies to appear to be a caring and companionate government.

It needs to be highlighted that the government wanted to create a version to perpetuate colonial mythologies and stereotypes about the African people and the African continent. These myths mainly emanated from the colonial mentality that colonialism was a "Western Civilising Mission" (S Ndlovu 2000:53-60). Colonial mythologies emphasised the notion that whites brought peace and stability to a war torn African continent which was ravaged by chaos and brutal wars. It was argued that in Africa there was a "war of all against all." (S Ndlovu 2000:53-60) All this was based on social Darwinism doctrine which provided persuasive rationalisation for colonialism. Colonialists believed that Africans were barbarians and uncivilised. This was well postulated by Cecil Rhodes who argued that, "I contend that we are the first race in the world....." (Mangubane 1988; 55-60) Such sentiments characterised the reasons propagated by colonial officials to justify the establishment of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia. This is summed-up by Benard Magubane who noted that, "Feelings of racial superiority infected almost all whites no matter what their class of origin" (Mangubane 1988; 55-60)

The Rhodesian government employed various non military methods to get rid of the guerrilla infiltration. One of the methodologies was the use of

psycho- politics to win the battle of the mind. This involved the use of persuasion, propaganda to brain wash the populace. Literature was manufactured to legitimise and justify the establishment of protected villages in Southern Rhodesia. The Rhodesian government attempted to deny the fact that protected villages were fortifications for military purposes but argued that there were established for humanitarian reasons. The media was used to manufacture propaganda material to deceive both the people in Rhodesia and the international community. It was argued that protected villages were beneficial to the African people politically, socially and economically. The Rhodesian Herald, the Sunday Mail and the radio commentaries were most commonly used to induce fear and manipulate the public on the reasons behind the establishment of protected villages. The government claimed that protected villages were established in order to protect the people. Mr W. B Chimpaka Chirambasukwa, a member of parliament for the Zimbabwe Rhodesia government argued that:

> ...These protected villages, widely referred as concentration camps were established in order to protect the innocent tribesmen from murders, brutalities and influence, or from being recruited forcibly over the border for guerrilla training or to protect the tribesmen from diseases carried by insurgents such as cholera,...
>
> (NAZ Ms 308/52)

Several colonial officials were engaged in a crusade to convince the international community that protected villages were established for humanitarian reasons. A Rhodesia government spokesman argues that, "the prime aim is to protect the people from terrorists." (Rhodesian Herald 8/12/ 73) In 1974 District Commissioner Mr Jim Latham argued that, "the Korekore people have for months been pestering the authorities to be put behind the wire." (NAZ, Ms 308/52) He went on to claim that, "they are sick to death of the terrorist." (NAZ, MS 308/52) In 1973, the Deputy Minister of Justice and of Law and Order, Mr Wickns de Kock said that, "the people were moving voluntarily to the protected villages as individual tribesmen were unable to protect themselves against terrorists." (Rhodesian Herald 09/11/77)

Colonial Officials also highlighted that the demand was heavy for the places in the protected village. They argued that, "Tribesmen thinly scattered in the wild bush of Rhodesia were easy, soft targets for raiding terrorists. They could put up little resistance against the brutalities committed against them and were focused to feed and otherwise help their unwanted guests." (The Focus on Rhodesia 1978). Protected villages were seen as safe havens for the Africans as the Rhodesian government argued that, "...those who have been victims of terrorism know that the temporary inconveniences were better than these alternatives-deaths, rape, beating and torture." (The Rhodesian Herald 10/ 10/77)

Colonial officials from Prime Minister, Mr Ian Smith tried very hard to give protected villages a human face. In 1977, he noted that, "...all Rhodesians must demonstrate their resolve to stand firm against the forces of anarchy." (BBC 5/10/77) Combined operations Deputy Commander, Air Marshal McLaren said the terrorist had showed complete disregard for family life by the abduction of young boys and girls for training.) He went on to claim that keeps were;

> So manifestly misrepresented to the outside world in a maliciously engineered campaigns to discredit and undermine the efforts of the authorities in the country to protect the lives of the innocent black civilians from the inhuman and brutal activities of the terrorists (NAZ Newspaper Cuttings).

He went on to point out that protected villages, "have proved to be one of the most successful tactics in countering the terrorist threat in tribal areas." (NAZ Newspaper Cuttings)

Air Marshal M J McLaren went on to argue that terrorist "activities have been extended to disrupt all the benefits that have accrued to the tribes people from the very active, humane, and compassionate administration. The destruction of council offices, beer halls, clinics, dip tanks and stock records are specific goals."(The Rhodesian Herald 1/10/77)

Another colonial official engaged in a psychological campaign for the establishment of protected villages argued that, "many people are very bitter…Their daughters are forced to become the terrorists' mistresses and they have babies which cannot be accepted by the tribes." (NAZ Ms 308/53) He went on to claim that protected villages were set up to, "establish a feeling of security among the people" (NAZ Ms 308/53)

The Rhodesian government officials even manufactured stories to justify the establishment of protected villages. Chiredzi District Commissioner, George Barlow pointed out that:

> Tribesmen and tribal elders in the Sangwe TTL have told me they feel happier and more secure in the protected villages. ... There certainly appears to be a growing awareness among the tribe's people of the advantages of the protected villages. Not surprisingly the safety and security provided by the guarded villages ranks high. Many people have had family and relatives killed by terrorists. Many more have been subjected to beatings and threats.
>
> NAZ Ms 308/52)

Thus, the Rhodesian government wanted to create an impression that the security of the people was its major preoccupation and priority. Therefore the gospel of wanting to save the lives of the local people was preached again and again. In 1975 Phillippa Berying a Rhodesian apologist wrote an article on protected villages in the Sunday mail to affirm the benefits of protection in the protected villages. She argued that:

> Thousands of Rhodesia's people are in the process of making such as move at the moment and making it, for the most part, cheerfully. One of the expressed aims of terrorist warfare is to deploy their activities over such a wide area that it becomes difficult to contain them. There is only one answer to it- to consolidate the population into smaller areas where they can afford proper protection. Otherwise they are left to suffer at the hands of terrorists.
>
> (The Fact Paper 10/11/75)

Such arguments were associated with a lot of deliberate distortions and exaggerations. The African people were frog marched into protected villages screaming and kicking. So there was no element of cheerfulness as claimed. Protected villages were also not established to offer any form of protection to the people but it was a military strategy to protect the Rhodesian regime from imminent collapse.

All government Ministries within the Rhodesian colonial system of administration were willingly participating in manufacturing propaganda material to deceive the international community on the setting up of protected villages. According to a Rhodesian official in 1977, "The government is all set to intensify its protected village campaign."(The Rhodesian Financial Gazette 14/10/77)" The Minister of internal Affairs, Mr Roll Hayman argued that protected villages were "safe havens." He claimed that, "...the District Commissioner and his staff, who together with other ministries, are there to administer and to take care of him in every sphere, "from the womb to the tomb." (NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) He went on to claim that the Rhodesian government was a compassionate one with the plight of the African people at heart who were terrorised by terrorists who had instilled fear in the hearts of the tribes people. (NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) Therefore, protected villages were regarded as a methodology designed to eradicate all forms of intimidation from the marauding terrorists.

The colonial officials rubbished guerrillas to justify their counter insurgence efforts. The Deputy Commander of Combined Operations Air Marshall M J McLaren pointed out that, "the terrorists could not be regarded as a liberator of people and was in fact, no better than a polecat." (The Rhodesian Herald 1/10/77) He went on to say that, "he is a coward, who will not stand and fight, but will resort to lies to try and convince people as to how invincible he is."(The Rhodesian Herald 1/10/77) The government also wanted to create an impression that the terrorists were responsible for the establishment of the protected villages. On 4 March 1977, a colonial official pointed out that, "These people are just a few of the 4 000 who were forced by terrorist activities in the Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land to uproot themselves and resettle within the protective walls of the keep 13.(The Rhodesian Herald 4/3/77)

However, as much as colonial official attempted to launch a sustained campaign for the establishment of protected villages, the campaign was characterised with contradictions by some colonial officials. Mr Godfrey Hensen, Provincial Commissioner for Internal Affairs Head Office unsuspectingly said that, "if all the tribes people in affected areas were put into protected villages, it would put us in a better position to win the war." (The Rhodesian Herald 30/5/77) He went on to explain that protected villages were part and parcel of a military strategy to isolate the guerrillas. He noted:

> It is a fact that the local population is vital to the survival terrorists. They depend upon the people for food, shelter and information. In areas where the people have been put into protected villages the terrorist have to attack the protected villages in order to get these basic necessities.
>
> (The Rhodesian Herald 30/5/77)

The Smith regime made tremendous efforts in manufacturing propaganda material to demonise liberation forces and discredit them. The Rhodesian government published booklets showing photographic evidence of the terrorists' methods of ZANLA and ZIPRA. The pictures depicted cases of murder, rape, abduction, torture, beatings, robberies and cattle maiming. The Rhodesian Ministry of Information argued that, "Today many thousands have taken grateful refugee in protected villages or live in communities protected by the Security Forces and para-military wing of the Ministry of Internal Affairs." (NAZ, The Rhodesian Ministry of Information) The Ministry also postulated that the terrorists were terrorising and massacring innocent people. It claimed that, "tragically the villagers are dying in a war they do not want, waged to further a political creed they do not understand or care about." (NAZ Rhodesian Ministry of Information)

Colonial officials wished to demonstrate that protected villages were good for the African people in various ways. In 1978, a security force officer based at Beit Bridge noted that, "They have really been hit hard by the terrorists. Time after time there have been brutal atrocities carried out on them, and they are now so terrified..." (The Rhodesian Herald 6'3/78)

The colonial government even attempted to be economical with the truth and the fact that protected villages were initiated by the government and claimed that it was the terrified local tribesmen who requested for protected villages. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Roll Heyman said, kraal heads and the Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland Rt Rev Paul Burough had requested that a protected village be built near St Albets Mission but funds were not available. (NAZ, Rhodesian Ministry of Information) The government even went further to select informants to justify the claim that they cared for the African people. Senator Chief J S Chirau and Vice President of the Council of Chiefs, Chief Kayisa Ndiweni was quoted saying that the chiefs and headmen overwhelmingly supported the government in the fight against terrorism.(The Rhodesian Herald 13/10/78)

Furthermore the Rhodesian government argue that protected villages were established in good faith and for the good of the African people. Protected villages were regarded by the government as a panacea to Rhodesian underdevelopment problems. Mr G Barlow a District Commissioner in the Lowveld argued that, "He wanted to protect the people and lead them along the road to development." He argued that the introduced management boards were going to facilitate community development and these included providing clean water supplies, provision of medical facilities, and provision of agricultural extension services and development of irrigation schemes.(The Rhodesian Herald 24/11/77) All these existed only the minds of colonial officials and not in Chiredzi. Protected villages were regarded by colonial officials as an answer to all African problems. D C George Barlow also concluded that protected villages were meant to provide, "all the things they used to talk about before the war began.''(The Rhodesian Herald 24/11/77) It needs to be highlighted that protected villages did not and did not even wish to bring development to the door steps of the African people.

Protected villages were also viewed as an answer to agricultural related problems and food shortages. The DC for Mt Darwin, Jim Lathan argued that protected villages improved contact between the people and civil administration bringing benefits to agriculture, health and education.(The Rhodesian Herald 20/11/77) He argued that, "In pre-protected village's days

maize yields in Mkumbura area were a meagre half bag per acre. Today because of closer contact with government agriculturalists figures were up to 10 and 15 bags an acre." (The Rhodesian Herald 20/11/77) All these claims remained paper tigers.

The concept of protected villages was romanticised by colonial officials to give them a human face. In 1977, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Rollo Heyman, argued that protected villages were designed to facilitate primary development and community development. (The Rhodesian Herald 14/10/77) He argued that, "...now that the inhabitants of the protected villages live in dense communities, all facilities such as shopping, social amenities, schools, churches and the like are literally on their door steps." He also noted that, "another great advantage to the people is that various services provided by government such as agricultural extension, community development, health services and education can be readily provided within the protected villages..." (The Rhodesian Herald 14/10/77)

The Rhodesian government further wanted to misinform the world by providing false information on protected villages. The Chiredzi District Commissioner, George Barlow argued that, "The protected villages have also raised living standards. The inhabitants have water tap, toilet and medical facilities."(NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) He also unashamedly also claimed that,"...villages provide a compact centre on which development can take place, virtually impossible in the scattered community which existed earlier"(NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) However, it is crucial to note that all these remained what they were, mere claims meant to deceive, mislead, misinform and create a false impression about the motives behind the establishment of protected villages and the horrors associated with protected villages.

The facilities which colonial officials claim existed in protected villages only existed in their minds and were non- existent in protected villages. Rhodesian officials peddled malicious claims about protected villages and development. The Deputy Minister of Law and Order, Mr Wickins de Kock said that, "It is the government's policy to provide health, education and community development facilities..."(NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) He also says that he

was convinced that government's policy was the answer and that there was going to be tremendous development in the north-eastern area. The brave Deputy Minister also believed that protected villages were built as a result of plans to develop growth-points to promote, "tremendous development"(NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) It will be time wasting analysing these development claims as the lack of evidence of development is evidence to prove that protected villages were not designed to promote African development.

The government even wanted to create a false impression that Africans were happy to be in protected villages. In 1972, a security forces spokesman argued that protected villages, "..... Mean a changed environment for the rural African. They suddenly find themselves leading a more urban type of life."(NAZ Protected Villages) Another colonial official also claimed that, "accommodation in the protected villages was far superior to that provided by the people for themselves." (NAZ Protected Villages)

The colonialists even argued that PVs were established to improve . They argued that protehe health of the African people. They argued taht protected villages were established to protect Africans from diseases carried by terrorists such as cholera. A government spokesman in 1973, argued that protected villages were meant to improve the health of the African people. He said, "Those moved through Gutsa have been issued with protein-augmented food by the government and in addition continuous on-the- spot medical attention has been available."(NAZ Newspaper Cuttings) All these deliberate myths were crafted to justify and legitimise the state sponsored and sanctioned forced removals and violence.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that keeps were established for military reasons. Protected villages as demonstrated had a long history. It was first used by the British in Malaya, the French in Vietnam, the French in Algeria and the Portuguese in Mozambique. In all these circumstances there were adopted

for strategic reasons and military purposes. Therefore there is no reason to suggest that there were established elsewhere or in Southern Rhodesia for any other reason. The Rhodesian government waged an ideological warfare to legitimize the uprooting of the African people and frog marching them into keeps. This was associated with the creation of colonial mythologies to justify the dehumanisation of the people of Southern Rhodesia. Colonial officials and historians created a version of history to justify the unjustifiable. Therefore, Josephine Nhongo- Simbanegavi was justified in concluding that, "Protected Villages were not established as a benevolent gesture but were punishment enclosures." (Nhongo- Simbanegavi 2000; 25)

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