

**“A NAUGHTY CHILD WITH A PEN”:
GAHADZIKWA ALBERT CHAZA AS AN
AFRICAN POLICEMAN AND AUTHOR IN COLONIAL
SOUTHERN RHODESIA (ZIMBABWE) 1936–1963**

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Those who have visited book stores in Zimbabwe in recent years, even the small one in Harare international airport, will have seen a thin volume authored by G.A. Chaza and entitled *Bhurakuwacha: The Story of a Black Policeman in Colonial Southern Rhodesia*.¹ *Bhurakuwacha* is the longest and most detailed first hand account by an African member of the British South Africa Police (BSAP), Southern Rhodesia's paramilitary law enforcement organization, and as such constitutes an important source for studying the experience of black security force members in a white settler state.

Chaza was typical of the moderate and loyalist black middle class of the 1940s and 1950s that wanted equality with whites as part of a civilized imperial citizenry but became less significant during the anti-colonial and revolutionary violence of the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, the book only hints at Chaza's early interest in writing which began when he was a young constable in the late 1930s and continued through his post-retirement involvement in politics in the early 1960s.

The aim of this paper is to examine the first three decades of Chaza's publications within the context of African police service in

¹Gahadzikwa A. Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha: The Story of a Black Policeman in Rhodesia* (Harare, 1998).

the colonial era. *Bhurakuwacha* was written after African nationalists had come to power in independent Zimbabwe and promoted a version of history that lionized those who had resisted colonial rule and vilified those, such as African policemen, who had worked for the colonial state. Therefore, it is tempting to see Chaza's book as an effort to rehabilitate his image by portraying African colonial police as victims of racism against which some, like the author, struggled. Looking at his now forgotten earlier writings will illustrate how Chaza's views changed over the years and reveal whether or not *Bhurakuwacha* represents an accurate account of African colonial police service.

I

"Bhurakuwacha" is an Africanization of the term "Blackwatch" which was a colonial nickname for African police and reflected a double meaning of dark skin color and a famous Scottish regiment. Chaza was born in 1916 in Wedza in the province of Mashonaland East. As the son of a teacher-evangelist, he attended the well known Waddilove and Domboshava schools in the early 1930s, finished with Standard V and worked briefly as a teacher before enlisting in the BSAP.² *Bhurakuwacha* seems to have been written in the early 1990s when the author was in his late seventies and was published a year after his death in 1997.³

The book is a sometimes humorous and sometimes angry autobiographical account of Chaza's career in the BSAP from 1936 to 1957. Beginning with a firm indictment of British colonialism in Zimbabwe, Chaza wrote: "Whilst giving comfort and security to the white settlers, the native police force was a symbol of oppressive authority and of tyranny to the indigenous people."⁴ Borrowing a phrase from

²National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ), S3454/23, "K.D. Leaver to Prime Minister's Office, 9 March 1963," and "Application of Chaza, Gahadzikwa Albert."

³There is no direct indication of when the book was written but at one point Chaza mentions that he has been married for 54 years. Since he was married around 1939, it appears the time of writing was around 1993. Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha*, 68. The back of the book indicates that Chaza passed away in 1997. For Chaza's age also see birthday congratulations in *Rhodesia Herald*, 22 November 1996.

⁴*Ibid.*, 5.

pioneering black Zimbabwean journalist Lawrence Vambe's early 1970s book, Chaza maintained that African people had "their possessions, especially cattle, confiscated and their freedom curtailed by these 'dogs of the white settlers.'"⁵ *Bhurakuwacha* contains numerous accounts of how the author cleverly overcame the ignorance of the older uneducated black police and the racism of white police authorities who both looked at him as a troublemaking "bloody mission boy!"⁶ Uneducated African sergeants resented him for speaking directly in English to European superiors and European police frustrated his desire for improved conditions such as wearing boots, learning new skills like typing and living in a comfortable house.

Not everyone is criticized as Chaza clearly admired the other western educated and modernizing African police and he worked well with several Europeans who treated him with humanity and respect. During his career all African police were male and their wives and children often lived in BSAP camps. While looking down upon the apparently lazy and dirty wives of the older uneducated African police, he praised the industriousness of his own wife, Ida. The book ends with Chaza's retirement from the force because of bitterness over what he perceived as a token promotion and attendance at an African nationalist rally where people were singing freedom songs and listening to a nationalist leader mock the racially distinctive uniforms of African police. He concluded that "Because there was some truth in what the nationalists were agitating for, I decided there and then to resign."⁷

II

Black police played an ambiguous role in colonial Southern Rhodesia. As in the rest of Africa, they became central to the coercive power of the colonial state yet were members of a subject and exploited community. They represent an example of how colonialism

⁵Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha*, 5. For Vambe's use of the term "dogs of the white man" see Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill-fated People: Zimbabwe Before and After Rhodes* (Pittsburg, 1972), 107, 125.

⁶Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha*, 43.

⁷Ibid, 125.

could not have functioned without African involvement.⁸ Unlike many other parts of colonial Africa, Southern Rhodesia was dominated by a small white settler population that gained internal political control through the granting of responsible government from Britain in 1923. In that situation, the practical need to employ ever greater numbers of African police represented a constant reminder of the inherent weakness of the settler minority which was so small it could not constitute the coercive arm of the state. Small numbers of African police were employed during the conquest period in the 1890s and despite anxiety caused by the mutiny of some during the 1896-1897 Ndebele and Shona rebellions, their numbers were constantly increased. They were paid less than Europeans and were more effective at controlling the African majority. In 1904, just a year after the formal establishment of the BSAP, there were 550 European and 500 African police.

⁸For the role of Africans in colonialism see Ronald E. Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in: Roger Owen, and Bob Sutcliffe (ed.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972), 117-42; Timothy Parsons, "African Participation in the British Empire," in: Philip D. Morgan, and Sean Hawkins (ed.), *Black Experience and Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 257-85. For the literature on policing in colonial Africa see Charles van Onselen, "The Role of Collaborators in the Rhodesian Mining Industry, 1900-1935," *African Affairs* 289 (1973), 401-18; James B. Wolf, "Asian and African Recruitment in the Kenya Police, 1920-1950," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6 (1973), 401-12; John McCracken, "Coercion and Control in Nyasaland Aspects of the History of a Colonial Police Force," *Journal of African History* 27 (1986), 127-47; David Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa," *African Affairs* 340 (1986), 411-37; Anthony Clayton, and David Killingray, *Khaki and Blue: Military and Police in British Colonial Africa* (Athens OH, 1989); David Anderson, and David Killingray (ed.), *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940* (Manchester, 1991); David Anderson and David Killingray (ed.), *Policing and Decolonization: Nationalism, Politics and the Police, 1917-1965* (Manchester, 1992). Most of the existing literature deals with parts of West and East Africa, and does not focus on the experience of African policemen themselves. Aside from van Onselen's 1973 article on mine police, almost nothing has been written on African police in colonial Zimbabwe. For institutional histories of the BSAP that emphasize the role of Europeans see Peter Gibbs, Hugh Phillips, and Nick Russell, *Blue and Old Gold: The History of the British South Africa Police, 1889-1980* (Johannesburg, 2009); David Craven, *Mapolisa* (Rooiport, 1998).

In 1908 the importance of African police was signified by the founding of a Native Police Training School (NPTS) in Salisbury that would standardize recruiting and training. By the First World War African members of the force were in the majority. BSAP annual reports show that in 1921 there were 494 Europeans and 806 Africans, in 1937 there were 547 Europeans and 1067 Africans, and in 1945 there were 401 Europeans and 1572 Africans. The number of European police declined during the Second World War because of military manpower demands, while at the same time more African police were needed to supervise a rapidly growing and urbanizing African population. In the 1950s, the era of African nationalist protest and decolonization, the BSAP was dramatically expanded. With respect to full-time members, in 1953 there were 1049 Europeans and 2323 Africans and in 1960 there were 1290 Europeans and 3088 Africans. The creation a European Police Reserve in the late 1940s and its dramatic expansion in the 1950s meant that in terms of total membership Europeans would outnumber Africans from that point on, but the latter would continue to dominate the regular force. By the mid to late 1970s, the height of Zimbabwe's War of Independence, there were approximately 2000 white and 6000 black full-time police.

Reflecting broader colonial society, the BSAP was a racially hierarchical and segregated organization in which the most junior and inexperienced European was superior to the highest ranking and most experienced African. Black police received lower salaries than whites, wore a distinctly inferior uniform and lived in their own police camps. Furthermore, African police were not supposed to arrest European criminals except in cases of immediate danger to the public yet European police could arrest Africans.⁹

⁹NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, "Report of the British South Africa Police," (1904), 2; "Report," (1914), 1; "Report," (1921), 15; "Report," (1937), 1; "Report" (1945), 149; "Report," (1953), 2-3; "Report," (1960), 4; Gibbs and Phillips, *British South Africa Police*, 233, 243; "A Short History of the African Police," *Mapolisa* 23-5 (1960), 2-3. For police numbers in the 1970s see Paul Moorcroft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Barnsley, 2008), 50. For African police powers of arrest see *Mapolisa* 6-5 (1943), 11.

Reading and writing became important to an increasingly educated core of African policemen. With social and economic change in the colony and limited police resources, the role of African police was evolving from acting as servants, grooms and interpreters for European mounted police on long rural patrols to performing independent administrative and investigative functions that required literacy. Police authorities had long been aware of the potential value of educated African police but it was not until the late 1930s that improved pay and conditions of service were introduced to attract recruits with a relatively higher level of schooling.¹⁰ This was the context in which Chaza and other school graduates and teachers, members of an emerging African middle class, joined the BSAP.¹¹ This process continued and in the 1950s minimum and relatively demanding education standards were established for African police enlistment.¹²

For the BSAP to effectively utilize African police literacy, it had to provide them with writing materials and publications. In 1924 the force published its first instructional book for African police that was printed in the local languages Shona and Sindebele. Police Commissioner A.E. Capell reported that “its eager acceptance by the Native Police leads one to view that the instruction and dissemination of information amongst natives through the medium of vernacular literature presents almost unlimited possibilities.”¹³ Beginning in 1937, with the increasing educational level of African police, an English version of the instruction book was released and updated editions would be produced into the 1970s.¹⁴

In 1927 the educational standard of African police, particularly in the BSAP’s urban branch, had increased to the point where police

¹⁰NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, “Report of the British South Africa Police,” (1938), 7.

¹¹For more on the African middle class see Michael West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe 1898-1965* (Bloomington, 2002).

¹²NAZ, S3454/22/6, Secretary for Justice and Internal Affairs to Secretary Public Services Board, 27 September 1956; (NAZ) RG3/BR1 41, “BSAP Report,” (1958), 15; *Rhodesia Herald*, 4 March 1954, 9.

¹³NAZ, S482/248/39/1, “BSAP Report, 31 December,” (1924), 18.

¹⁴NAZ, S482/248/39/1, “BSAP Report,” (1937), 11; See “African Police Instruction Book,” Police General Headquarters, Salisbury, 1969. I am indebted to former African policeman Goodbye Benjamin Muhwati for providing me with this book.

notebooks were issued to large numbers for the first time. These became important investigation and legal instruments as they allowed African police to make detailed records of their inquiries which could be referred to later. Authorities observed that literate African policemen at that time wrote mostly in African languages.¹⁵

In 1937, the year after Chaza enlisted in the BSAP, the force launched a new publication called *Mapolisa*. This monthly magazine was meant to promote regimental spirit and western education among African police.¹⁶ Another unpublicized reason for launching *Mapolisa* was that the long established European police magazine *Outpost* was in financial trouble and advertising revenue from the new sister publication was meant to save it.¹⁷ *Mapolisa* emerged in the context of the growth of broader African journalism, particularly the white owned but black edited *Bantu Mirror* which was a Bulawayo based weekly newspaper that appealed to an emerging African middle class readership across the region.¹⁸ Based at an office in NPTS in Salisbury, *Mapolisa* was produced by a European policeman working as editor and several African policemen working as assistant editors. Contributions in English, Shona and Sindebele on issues related to police work or camp life—including news of births, deaths, marriages, transfers, retirements and social events—were solicited from European and African police. In the inaugural issue, Police Commissioner J.S. Morris wrote that with the expansion of government and missionary educational institutions, an increasing number of literate Africans were joining the BSAP and bringing with them useful skills that would be further developed by the new publication. In the same issue, Constable Gideon Siwela stated that *Mapolisa* would allow African policemen to continue the reading they had learned in school, and that reading refreshed the mind and relieved stress.¹⁹ Several months later *Mapolisa* published a piece by Constable Yacobe of Salisbury on how African policemen should

¹⁵NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, “BSAP Report,” (1921), 4 and “BSAP Report,” (1927), 6.

¹⁶*Mapolisa* 1-1 (1937), 5, 8.

¹⁷Letter from E.A. Cordell, *Outpost*, May 1963, 4. Cordell had been the first editor of *Mapolisa*.

¹⁸West, *African Middle Class*, 31.

¹⁹*Mapolisa* 1-1 (1937), 8, 17.

write an article for the magazine. Emphasizing the “progress of education”, he stated that writing a letter to *Mapolisa* was like standing up to address a large crowd, and that it had to be written in legible form with appropriate grammar and spelling.²⁰ At the end of *Mapolisa*’s first year, the European editor wrote that “The people must feel proud that our Native Police can produce a magazine in which most of the articles and stories are written by the Native Police themselves.”²¹

The original policy of the magazine was to publish articles and letters in the language in which they were submitted. Some African policemen complained that they could not understand the large number of pieces in English because they could only read African languages. The editor disagreed and responded that some African police wanted to demonstrate their education by publishing in English.²² *Mapolisa* struggled to find a readership in its early years because some considered the production quality sub-standard compared to other African publications like the *Bantu Mirror*, there were almost no submissions in Sindebele and very few photographs.²³

Eventually, the magazine gained popularity among increasingly literate African police and members of the wider public in part because essay competitions were held with cash prizes; sports reporting became central and a few articles by African police gained prestigious international attention. In 1938 Constable Tapera’s essay “The Lions of Miami” was published in the magazine of the South Australia Police.²⁴ A 1957 article entitled “A Case of Attempted Murder by Arson”, written by Sergeant Maka was selected by Interpol for inclusion in its permanent reference library in Paris, France.²⁵ In 1945, in order that all literate African police could read *Mapolisa*, the language policy of the magazine was changed and everything was translated into four languages, English, Shona, Sindebele and Chinyanja. Although the Chinyanja section was meant for the many

²⁰*Mapolisa* 1-3 (1937), 9.

²¹*Mapolisa* 1-12 (1937), 2.

²²*Mapolisa* 1-14 (1938), 1.

²³*Mapolisa* 1-15 (1938), 2; *Mapolisa* 1-16 (1938), 3.

²⁴*Mapolisa* 1-17 (1938), 4.

²⁵*Mapolisa* 20-10 (1957), 1.

African policemen originally from Nyasaland (Malawi), it was dropped after a year because of expense and lack of popularity. In the early days of the BSAP there had been many recruits from among Nyasaland's migrant workers, but their number constantly declined in favor of locals and by the 1950s they could usually not meet minimum education standards for enlistment.²⁶

By 1956 the editor could boast that *Mapolisa* was "one of the leading African publications in Southern Rhodesia."²⁷ The magazine maintained a strict policy of avoiding politics and when some African police challenged the editor on this in the late 1940s, a time of rising African nationalist agitation, he replied that the involvement of police in politics would cause "trouble."²⁸ In the 1950s *Mapolisa* began to regularly publish basic lessons in writing English called the "self-educator."²⁹

By the early 1960s the magazine had drastically reduced the number of articles in African languages because of increased English literacy among African police. Overall, *Mapolisa* became a forum for aspirant middle class African police like Chaza to advocate for modernization, progress, professionalism, education, and law and order, and was not much different than mid-twentieth century civilian African publications like the *Bantu Mirror*. With reforms aimed at reducing racial segregation in the BSAP during the decolonization era and a relatively high level of education among African police which meant that its educational mission had been achieved, *Mapolisa* was absorbed into *Outpost* in 1963.³⁰

III

One of the challenges in tracing Chaza's previous writings is that he was enlisted in the BSAP as Native Constable Gadzikwa, the result of a spelling error and the regulation that African police were offi-

²⁶*Mapolisa* 8-3 (1945), 3; *Mapolisa* 8-4 (1945), 3; *Mapolisa* 17-3 (1954), 3.

²⁷*Mapolisa* 19-10 (1956), 1.

²⁸*Mapolisa* 10-7 (1947), 3.

²⁹*Mapolisa* 20-2 (1957), 39-43.

³⁰*Mapolisa* 27-4 (1963), 3.

cially known by a single name.³¹ During the late 1930s and 1940s his publications appeared under the name Gadzikwa, once promoted to sergeant in 1951 he showed more confidence by correcting the mistake and writing as Gahadzikwa, and on at least one occasion he used the pen name “Bhurakuwacha.”

Like many African police of the 1940s and 1950s, upon retirement Chaza officially reclaimed his full name of Gahadzikwa Albert Chaza or G.A. Chaza. His first published piece appeared in a 1938 issue of *Mapolisa* under “Station Notes” and reported on the situation in Shamva where African police were pleased that the arrival of African telephone attendants meant they did not have to stand by the phone at night and a newly constructed football field—organized sports being very important to the new generation of educated African police—was being used for games between police and local teams.³²

Chaza’s writing in *Mapolisa* made an early and lasting impact. In 1941 he was the first to publicly suggest an annual “Native Police Conference” to discuss issues affecting Africans in the BSAP. He wrote a prize-winning article in Shona—he would later usually write in English—which was published in *Mapolisa* and proposed that each police section (centered on the major towns of Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali, Gwelo, Fort Victoria and Gatooma) send three representatives, one from each of the three police divisions (District, Town and Criminal Investigation Division or CID) to what would become a regular event. Chaza pointed out that African clergy, teachers and farmers held similar professional gatherings to inspire each other, exchange ideas and “uplift the country.” He believed the time had come for African policemen to make a similar contribution since there were now many “who graduated from school who are able to understand and speak English, such as the black ministers of religion.”

Chaza pointed out that Europeans had taught Africans that “unity is strength” and that, like climbing a tree, it was important to ascend gradually moving from step to step when ready. Anticipating an offi-

³¹Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha*, 22.

³²*Mapolisa* 1-20 (1938), 10.

cial BSAP response that each African policeman should bring concerns to his immediate superior, he stated that “what is wanted by one person is not what the rest of the people could be thinking about.”

Chaza also reassured police authorities, who he knew might feel threatened by the suggestion, that a European officer would chair the conference so that “whatever they are discussing should also be acceptable to the white people leading this meeting.”³³ Subsequently, several other African policemen wrote supportive letters in English to the editor of *Mapolisa*. Constable Matarirano, a CID detective in Salisbury, compared the proposed meeting to the “immortal” Atlantic Conference held by Allied wartime leaders Churchill and Roosevelt in August 1941 that had been widely reported in the civilian press. He argued that “Our Force can perform no magnificent and communal effort if we cannot have a meeting. Native Constables are regarded as essentially inferior by the general majority of the people merely because we have no special day of general expressions for the development of our beloved Force.”³⁴ Constable Tawonanazi of Gwelo emphasized that the future usefulness of African police would be enhanced by an annual conference. He wrote that “African police should be able to meet together and discuss things that are of interest to them in their profession [...] We Africans still lack ideas because we do not often meet to speak and debate.”³⁵ Spurred on by Chaza, these letters indicate that some African police were beginning to see themselves as members of a profession which, as the police was a national institution, was central in the progress of the country and that they should have a venue for professional communication and development.

Police authorities summoned Chaza, still not a very senior African member of the BSAP, to Salisbury for initial discussions and in late 1942 they adopted the exact model he had proposed. Knowing that

³³N/L/Cpl Gadzikwa, Darwendale, “Suggested Native Police Annual Conference,” *Mapolisa* 4-9 (1941), 26.

³⁴NC Matarirano, Salisbury, “Suggested African Police Conference,” *Mapolisa* 5-12 (1941), 8.

³⁵NC Tawonanazi, “Suggested African Police Conference,” *Mapolisa* 5-3 (1942), 8.

he had requested something likely to undermine unquestioned European supremacy in the police, Chaza humorously described himself as a “naughty child with a pen.”³⁶ Responding to the announcement of the inaugural event, Corporal Mafi of Gwelo wrote that “we are all very pleased to hear this, as we will be able to express our feelings at this conference.”³⁷ The first Native Police Conference was held in Salisbury in May 1943.³⁸ Representatives at the meeting, mostly experienced African sergeants, presented “a number of well thought out resolutions” for improving the effectiveness and conditions of service of African police.³⁹

Immediate results included the introduction of the new African rank of first class sergeant with a correspondingly higher salary, and the payment of a monthly allowance as compensation to urban based African constables using their own bicycles for police business. Not wanting black police to become overly confident, the white editor of *Mapolisa* stressed that both concessions had already been under consideration by authorities before the conference, and that African police should appreciate the efforts taken to address their concerns.⁴⁰ Perhaps the editor realized that what Chaza had started was not that much different than other emergent African professional gatherings that had begun to moderately request more equitable treatment and were evolving into more demanding political movements.

Another achievement of the Native Police Conference occurred in late 1947. The *Mapolisa* editor wrote: “The African Police of the Colony feel that their delegates to the Police Conference have really achieved something in getting the authorities to agree to changing the name ‘Native Police’ to ‘African Police.’”⁴¹ Among the broader community of westernized African elites from which African police were now being recruited, the term “native” was beginning to be seen as “out of date and undesirable.”⁴² Rank titles were changed as

³⁶*Mapolisa* 5-10 (1942), 10.

³⁷*Mapolisa* 5-11 (1942), 12.

³⁸Native Detective Sergeant Tshaka, “An Appreciation,” *Mapolisa* 6-6 (1943), 18.

³⁹NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, “Report of the British South Africa Police,” (1943), 105.

⁴⁰*Mapolisa* 7-3 (1944), 3.

⁴¹*Mapolisa* 11-1 (1948), 3.

⁴²*Bantu Mirror*, 13 December 1947, 1.

Native Constables and Sergeants became African Constables and Sergeants, NPTS became the African Police Training School (APTS) and the Native Police Conference became the African Police Conference.

However, the paternalistic *Mapolisa* editor warned African police not to expect “impossible things” and that these privileges had been granted only when African police were deemed ready. He also revealed that though some African police had wanted younger and better educated colleagues as their delegates, this had been rejected as authorities wanted “men of experience” and that “education did not always imply common sense.”⁴³ The change from “Native” to “African” was implemented within the context of the 1946 Mundy Commission, the recommendations of which shifted the BSAP away from its paramilitary role to a law enforcement organization with improved conditions of service for all members. Chaza had been invited to give evidence before this commission and later, in his book, claimed that from among his list of suggestions, which included the introduction of allowances discussed below, changing the term “Native” to “African” was done quickly because it involved no cost.⁴⁴ From the early 1940s the new generation of educated African police had written about their objections to the term “native.” According to Constable Mhereka, “native” was being used “in a derogatory sense, as a term of disparagement, as a sign of degradation. Our country is Africa and we have a right to be called Africans [...] we shall be happy in the knowledge that we have not been deprived of our nationality.”⁴⁵

Some Europeans, particularly given the Second World War context of national self-determination, sympathized with this view. In his 1941 Christmas radio broadcast, Police Commissioner Morris referred to “Members of the British South Africa Native Police—or Africans as I prefer to call you” and then proceeded to use the term “African Police” throughout the address.⁴⁶ In 1943 Constable Chiho-

⁴³*Mapolisa* 11-1 (1948), 3.

⁴⁴For the change from Native to Africa and the Mundy Commission see Gibbs, and Phillips, Vol. 3, 242, 246; Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha*, 95-6.

⁴⁵NC Mhereka, “Have We a Right to the Name Native,” *Mapolisa* 4-6 (1941), 28.

⁴⁶*Mapolisa* 4-12 (1941), 9.

ta of Salisbury, in an essay entitled "Pride of Birth and Country" wrote that "we are favourably impressed by the more frequent use of the word 'African' [...] In the use of such a term, all our pride in race, colour and origin is fully and truthfully satisfied."⁴⁷ Many whites did not like the adoption of "African" as some thought it insulting to the colony's "Afrikaners", and the more extreme racists preferred terms like "nigger" and "glorified baboon."⁴⁸ The BSAP was ahead of other state institutions in officially switching from "Native" to "African" as the Salisbury Municipality did so in 1960.⁴⁹ Although historians usually do not relate African police with the rise of African nationalism, it is clear that Chaza and his educated colleagues of the 1940s proudly saw themselves as members of an emerging African nation.

African police came to associate the African Police Conference with improved conditions as in January 1949 Sergeant Aaron of Bulawayo reported that the annual event had recently been held and "we eagerly await the fruits of it."⁵⁰ He was not disappointed as shortly after it was announced that African police would benefit from a series of new financial allowances. Although African Police, including Chaza, had been asking for a ration allowance in lieu of issued rations for several years, this had been rejected by paternalistic authorities who believed that blacks would mismanage the extra money and their families would go hungry.⁵¹ In early 1949 the African Police ration issue was replaced with a monthly ration allowance which would also be paid during leave periods, extra maize meal for wives and children was replaced by monthly marriage and family allowances, and the cost of living allowance was extended from the Town Branch to all members.⁵²

The African Police Conference was not simply interested in improving material conditions of service such as salaries and bene-

⁴⁷NC Chikavanga Chihota, "Pride of Birth and Country," *Mapolisa* 6-4 (1943), 22.

⁴⁸*Rhodesia Herald*, 24 September 1949, 7 December, and 14 December 1949, 4.

⁴⁹"For 'Native' Now Read 'African,'" *Rhodesia Herald*, 25 March 1960, 17.

⁵⁰*Mapolisa* 12-1 (1949), 9.

⁵¹*Mapolisa* 10-4 (1947), 3.

⁵²*Mapolisa* 12-1 (1949), 3.

fits. Many of the new generation of educated African police wanted to become equal professional members of the BSAP and fully develop their law enforcement skills. In 1953 the conference was successful in getting uniformed African police to take short courses on investigation with the plain cloths detectives of the CID. Called a “most beneficial innovation,” this was in line with the desire by senior police authorities for more technically competent African police.⁵³ Within two years it became regular practice to attach uniformed European and African police to the CID for a month to gain investigative experience.⁵⁴ Summarizing the “outstanding” developments for 1953 which included the rise of the Central African Federation, a royal visit and the Rhodes centenary celebrations, Chaza—writing under the name “Bhurakuwacha”—claimed that with improved promotions and pay African police felt “a secure and important unit in the force.”⁵⁵ The conference continued to meet annually until 1958 when it was disbanded because African policemen became members of their own branch of the new BSAP Association which was supposed to bring issues related to the welfare of both white and black police to the attention of the police commissioner.

The editor of *Mapolisa* eulogized the African Police Conference by recognizing that it had been useful to represent the opinion of African police on supposedly trivial issues like changes to the uniform. However, he remained resentful of its memory by claiming that it had become “a rather helpless, tongue-tied and impotent organization. Few will regret its winding up.”⁵⁶ Considering the obvious success of the conference in getting African police pay increases, a new rank, a new allowance scheme, a new identity as Africans and better training, this churlish statement reveals that the annual event had been seen by some Europeans as challenging their supremacy within the BSAP.

Chaza’s 1998 book briefly mentions his 1941 *Mapolisa* letter that initiated the African Police Conference but does not get into its even-

⁵³NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, “Report of the British South Africa Police,” (1953), 26.

⁵⁴NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, “Report of the British South Africa Police,” (1955), 26.

⁵⁵Burakuwacha, “The Year 1953,” *Mapolisa* 16-12 (1953), 39.

⁵⁶*Mapolisa* 22-9 (1959), 1.

tual achievements. Indeed, *Bhurakuwacha* claims that this letter also suggested better African police recreation facilities, promotions based on merit and written examination rather than favoritism, and the provision of boots to barefoot rural African police. While pieces on all these topics appeared in *Mapolisa* and were eventually acted upon by BSAP superiors, it seems the elderly Chaza erroneously remembered them as part of a single article written by him. Since Chaza's book also stated that he had to submit his 1941 piece through his immediate white superior and it was vetted for inclusion in *Mapolisa*, there is a chance that parts were removed prior to publication.⁵⁷

IV

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Chaza made fairly regular contributions to *Mapolisa* that usually emphasized education, hard work, progress and professional development. In 1940 he celebrated modernization at his Darwendale station in that new "hygienic" accommodation with ventilation and cement floors had been constructed, African police regularly read newspapers such as the *Bantu Mirror* and *Rhodesia Herald*, and the European commander gave lectures on aspects of police duty every Saturday.⁵⁸ Characteristic of his mission background, Chaza strongly advocated African police and their families maintaining vegetable gardens for self-sufficiency and wrote that those who did not have them "hate to bend their backs" which meant they were lazy.⁵⁹ With what was becoming characteristic humor combined with a touch of male chauvinism, he exposed more than anyone about gender relations and domestic life in African police camps. He wrote that "our wives have good exercise of the body by doing all the watering and weeding in the garden; by doing this work they reduce much fat from their bodies, which could not be done just by the washing of pots." Reporting the construction of new African police kitchens, Chaza wrote that "here it is that we have our little

⁵⁷Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha*, 81.

⁵⁸*Mapolisa* 3-10 (1940), 15.

⁵⁹*Mapolisa* 4-9 (1941), 16.

arguments with the wife, chastising her if necessary when she becomes too talkative, taking care, of course, not to be too severe, as women are apt to bide their time and then get their own back. Take care, my brothers, that she will not use the vegetable pot, cooking on the fire, to knock your head off.”⁶⁰ Revealing the fear that rural people had for police, Chaza stated that African communities around Mount Darwin in 1947, plagued by famine and unable to feed police visitors, would use drums to signal each other about the movements of BSAP patrols which would arrive at “empty kraals.”⁶¹

While stationed at Mrewa in the early 1950s, Chaza praised the replacement of old style round huts with square three room cottages for Africa police accommodation. He wrote that these were “modern houses Europeans would envy” and that some Africans stayed away because they thought it was a European area.⁶² Around this time the now experienced Chaza wrote several instructive articles for African police. He advised his colleagues on how to give evidence in court and stressed not losing one’s temper when cross-examined by defense council. Another, which won a *Mapolisa* award, explained that there was a close relationship between what he considered primitive witchcraft beliefs and murder among Africans in Southern Rhodesia and modernizing African police had to take the lead in stamping this out.⁶³ Competition encouraged authorship as Douglas Chingoka, an African member of the BSAP from 1946 to 1974 who was the first African to command a police station in 1960 and returned to police work after independence, remembers Chaza as his main rival in writing stories for *Mapolisa*.⁶⁴

In the early 1950s Chaza wrote a short reminiscence of his days as a junior policeman in the late 1930s. Most of his colleagues had been

⁶⁰*Mapolisa* 5-10 (1942), 10.

⁶¹*Mapolisa* 11-1 (1948), 10.

⁶²*Mapolisa* 13-11 (1950), 28.

⁶³African Corporal Gadzikwa, “How to Give Evidence in Court,” *Mapolisa* 13-8 (1950), 6; African Sergeant Gahadzikwa, “Witchcraft and Murder in Southern Rhodesia,” *Mapolisa* 14-6 (1951), 37.

⁶⁴Interview with Douglas Chingoka, Harare, 24 July 2009. For an example of Chingoka’s writing see A/1/Sgt Douglas, “The British South African Police as a Career,” *Mapolisa* 17-12 (1954), 11.

uneducated and the nightly talk in the barracks revolved around “sex and witchcraft.” He had discouraged the other African police from teasing him about not having a wife by fashioning a faux “witch’s horn” and threatening them with punishment from the *nyanga* (traditional doctor). Perhaps eager to reinforce his sexual reputation, Chaza also related that in those days he was having an affair with a woman who lived near a mine compound and one night when her boyfriend returned unexpectedly, he had to flee leaving his shoes behind.⁶⁵ In early 1953, at Concession, Chaza reported that he had formed a football team with the help of some white commercial farmers who held a dance to raise funds. The educated African police of the 1940s and 1950s were eager to establish organized sports, which had been popularized in mission schools, such as football and tennis not only among their ranks but as a civilized and healthy leisure activity for the wider African community.⁶⁶ Police authorities had officially encouraged this from the 1930s as sport “is doing much to improve Native Police in esprit-de-corps and in their general outlook.”⁶⁷

In early 1957, Chaza, now the senior clerk and interpreter at APTS, wrote an essay stressing the importance of education in the “usefulness and efficiency” of African police. With the formalized advancement structure that had been developed in the 1950s and the more intellectual requirements of African police duties, he maintained that education had become central for recruits to complete basic training and for serving police to pass written promotion examinations. He advised his colleagues to pursue private study through correspondence and listen to radio news and lessons during their spare time. According to Chaza, only an educated man could take statements, draw crime scene diagrams and answer technical questions in court.⁶⁸ This was one of many *Mapolisa* articles that lauded

⁶⁵A/2/Sgt Gahadzikwa, “The Young Policeman,” *Mapolisa* 14-9 (1951), 28.

⁶⁶*Mapolisa* 16-2 (1953), 33-34. For more on sport in colonial Zimbabwe see Terence O. Ranger, “Pugilism and Pathology: Africa Boxing and the Black Urban Experience in Southern Rhodesia,” in: William A. Baker, and James A. Mangan (ed.), *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (London, 1987), 196-213.

⁶⁷NAZ, RG3/BR1 41, “Report of the British South Africa Police,” (1937), 9.

⁶⁸African Station Sergeant Gadzikwa, “How Can African Police Improve Their Usefulness and Efficiency,” *Mapolisa* 20-2 (1957), 9.

the uplifting potential of education such as a 1943 piece that said “Education makes a man. It paves the way to culture; it makes a person appreciative and respectful; it makes him look upon a European as a brother and so look him in the face.”⁶⁹ This was written by Constable Josiah, a BSAP school teacher, whose full name was Josiah Chinamano and would later become a prominent nationalist leader.

Upon his retirement in late 1957, Chaza wrote a piece which represented his most open criticism of the BSAP up to that time and *Mapolisa* published his picture with a caption indicating that Station Sergeant “Gadzikwa”—note the continuing spelling error—was now “Mr. Chaza.” Tempering his remarks, the piece began by evoking the BSAP motto “For Regiment, For Law and For Country” and concluded with “God Save the Queen.” He once again emphasized the importance of education by stating that while in police service he had learned useful skills such as accounting, typing, farming and photography. Chaza advised African police to be courteous and honest as “I have seen irresponsible young men behave unfairly to the members of the public.” Furthermore, he hinted at racial tensions in the force by stating that some things were “best forgotten” and that “I learned to tolerate unfortunate situations, and at the same time to regard disappointments as blessings.”⁷⁰

Chaza continued to follow police developments and in late 1961, as he was attempting to launch a political career, wrote a letter to *Mapolisa* praising reforms aimed at reducing racial discrimination such as the new rank of African Sub-Inspector which would allow Africans to command police stations in African townships and the proposed introduction of a single non-racial uniform which was ultimately delayed until the 1970s.⁷¹

V

In 1958 the 42 year old newly retired Chaza became the first black bank teller in Southern Rhodesia working at a branch of National and

⁶⁹NC Josiah, “Advantages Enjoyed by Children of the British South African Police,” *Mapolisa* 6-12 (1943), 32.

⁷⁰African Station Sergeant Gadzikwa, “Fare Tee Well,” *Mapolisa* 20-9 (1957), 5.

⁷¹*Mapolisa* 24-7 (1961), 38.

Grindley's Bank in the African township of Highfield in Salisbury which is also where he bought a house. At that time there was rising African nationalist protest to Southern Rhodesia's participation in the supposedly multi-racial Central African Federation—which brought together Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 1953 to 1963—as it was dominated by the tiny white population and to the territory's own racially hierarchical society. The state responded with brutal force, detained nationalist leaders and banned a succession of renamed and increasingly radical organizations such as the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (SRANC), the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).

In this milieu, Chaza's actions alienated him from many in his community. In 1958 he was the first volunteer for the new African Police Reserve formed to provide additional manpower for state repression of nationalist protest. Numbering 7500 members by 1962, this reserve was portrayed in the European press as a stronghold of law abiding Africans who bravely confronted nationalist intimidation on a regular basis. Within this context, he testified for the prosecution at a trial of African nationalists in the late 1950s. He was also a well known supporter of the white dominated United Federal Party (UFP) which formed both the federal and territorial governments at the time and was courting the support of politically moderate middle class blacks like Chaza. African people began to shout "sell out" when he walked past.⁷² The popularity of this term in Zimbabwe's African politics of the late 1950s and early 1960s, as Timothy Scarnecchia has pointed out, represented a shift away from local demands for citizenship and towards participation in a global anti-colonial struggle. Labeling someone as a "sell out," meaning a black person who had selfishly gained something by siding with the white minority, became a way for "leaders to assert their radical credentials and deal with potential rivals."⁷³

⁷²"Children Faced Petrol Bomb Terror," *Rhodesia Herald*, 17 December 1960, 3.

⁷³Timothy Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe, Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964* (Rochester, 2008), 8.

In October 1960, in what Michael West has called “a political and psychological turning point,” police confronted African protestors in Salisbury, Bulawayo and Gwelo and shot a dozen people dead.⁷⁴ In turn, African nationalists attempted to impose “a more disciplined loyalty” on the African population and in the very early morning hours of 16 December simultaneous petrol bomb attacks occurred on the homes of four prominent African supporters of different European parties.⁷⁵ Chaza was one of these. Although two petrol bombs were thrown through the windows of his Highfield house, a speedy exit by himself, his wife Ida and six children and the fact that one of the petrol bottles failed to break meant that no one was injured. After the attack people shouted at Chaza that “We have not finished with you yet.”⁷⁶ This incident foreshadowed the epidemic of violence against African police and reservists and their families that would begin within a few months and continue throughout the liberation war period of the late 1960s and 1970s.

From around 1959 Chaza had been working as a part-time volunteer for the Southern Rhodesia Information Service where he assisted Chief Information Officer K.D. Leaver, a white BSAP veteran and regular *Mapolisa* contributor. As a spokesman for moderate African opinion, Chaza was interviewed by print and television journalists from Canada, the United States and Britain and appeared on local television. He put forth the view that rapid change “is too much for most of the Africans” and “Southern Rhodesia is a contemporaneous country for all races.” Leaver maintained that “Chaza, has, on a number of occasions, assisted the Southern Rhodesia Government by making himself available and, in the cause of the country, been prepared to make statements to overseas journalists and broadcasters to combat the nationalist line.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴West, *African Middle Class*, 223.

⁷⁵Scarnecchia, *Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, 99.

⁷⁶“Children Faced Petrol Bomb Terror,” *Rhodesia Herald*, 17 December 1960, 3; “Witnesses Describe Night of Terror: Three Sent for Trial,” *Rhodesia Herald*, 21 January 1961, 10; “NDP Member Jailed for Total of Five Years,” *Rhodesia Herald*, 16 March 1961, 7.

⁷⁷NAZ, S3454/23, “K.D. Leaver to Prime Minister’s Office, 9 March 1963,” and “Application of Chaza, Gahadzikwa Albert.”

During 1961 and 1962 Chaza worked for the “Build-A-Nation” campaign which was a UFP government attempt to register qualified African voters that historian West called “a new and well-funded ideological assault on African nationalism.”⁷⁸ In 1962 Chaza contributed an anonymous story entitled “I Was Petrol Bombed Because I am not a Racialist” to the state propaganda booklet “Our Fight against Hooliganism and Thuggery.” The purpose of this publication was to highlight nationalist intimidation in the townships. Chaza’s piece also built on themes from his earlier *Mapolisa* writing such as the importance of civilization and responsible progress toward racial equality. After describing the petrol bomb attack, he explained that “The very house that I bought and am living in is hell-on-earth to the family [...] The children suffer more intimidation every day from other children at school who call them ‘sell out,’ ‘Tshombe,’ and other names of ridicule. The result is that my children’s work at school is deteriorating.”⁷⁹ Chaza continued to criticize “leaders and thugs of a certain racialist political party” who had become “addicted to the use of violent methods to gain supporters” which had created “perpetual fear” in the townships.

For Chaza, even the modernizing policeman, the cultural African nationalism of the period seemed like a step backwards. He wrote that nationalist leaders had forced people to walk barefoot which made them vulnerable to disease, stopped people from going to church on Sunday and forced them to attend political meetings where they said “irresponsible things” to “create chaos.” The essay warned that the “parrot cry ‘One-man, One vote’” had been disastrous for other parts of Africa where it had resulted in “One Leader and No Vote.” Nationalist leaders were described as “self-seekers” who “live peacefully and in comfort of their protected homes away from the

⁷⁸West, *African Middle Class*, 227. For a different view see J.R.T. Wood, *So Far and No Further: Rhodesia’s Bid for Independence During the Retreat from Empire, 1959-1965* (Victoria, 2005), 93.

⁷⁹NAZ, S3454/23 “Our Fight Against Hooliganism and Thuggery,” no date, contains pictures of newspaper headlines from August and September 1962. “Tshombe” refers to Moise Tshombe who at the time was a separatist leader in Congo’s Katanga province backed by Belgian and Rhodesian mining interests.

troubled areas. When the troubles they start are moving they are never to be found.” In conclusion, Chaza maintained that:

It is a well known fact that the Government is improving the standard of living for all people regardless of race [...] The Government has expressed its views of trying to build a new Nation of Rhodesians where the colour of a person does not count and it is doing this. Our Government advocates freedom from poverty, superstition and other inherent beliefs of primitive peoples [...] I welcome any person able to stop intimidation in the African suburbs. It is monstrous. And may God help us as I know he will.⁸⁰

The petrol bombing only served to propel Chaza into active politics as secretary of the Highfield branch of the UFP. Addressing 170 African farmers at the Dowa Native Purchase area in May 1961, Chaza said that he would not be intimidated and quoting the nationalist leader in Nyasaland (Malawi) declared that “Dr. Banda has said the National Democratic Party is spineless. I say it is headless as well and they only use their feet to run away from facts.”⁸¹ In July 1961 Chaza wrote a letter to the *Rhodesia Herald*, the main European newspaper, advancing a theory about why African nationalists opposed the introduction of fifteen new seats in the Southern Rhodesian parliament to be elected by Africans who would constitute a “B Roll” of voters. Chaza claimed that nationalists secretly believed that if the mostly white electorate rejected the proposal in an upcoming referendum it would alienate the black majority pushing them toward the nationalist camp. According to Chaza, “The African nationalist extremists know very well that the majority of people do not sympathize with them.” Furthermore, he stated that “the 15 seats are a necessity in a multi-racial society like ours to avoid such wild demands of ‘One man, one vote.’”⁸² Given all this, it is likely that

⁸⁰NAZ, S3454/23 “Our Fight Against Hooliganism and Thuggery,” no date, contains pictures of newspaper headlines from August and September 1962.

⁸¹“NDP is Headless Says African Member of UFP,” *Rhodesia Herald*, 23 May 1961, 3.

⁸²G.A. Chaza, “Extremism Cannot Be Appeased,” *Rhodesia Herald*, 25 July 1961, 13.

Chaza's 1957 nationalist epiphany described in *Bhurakuwacha* was slightly exaggerated though not completely invented.

Once the fifteen African seats were established, Chaza resigned from the bank to run as a UFP candidate in Highfield during the Southern Rhodesian elections of late 1962. The European press considered that he had "a good chance of emerging as the winner."⁸³ It was probably not completely coincidental that in July of that year Chaza sent his two oldest daughters, who he wanted to become professionals and lead a "modern life," to nursing school in Scotland.⁸⁴ Given the small voter turn out because of nationalist boycott, Chaza narrowly lost to white independent candidate Dr. A. Palley who was a well known European critic of the government. Overall, Chaza's "multi-racial" UFP fell from office and was replaced by the new extreme right-wing Rhodesian Front which was committed to preserving white supremacy in the territory and would shortly clash with Britain following the collapse of the Central African Federation.⁸⁵ A few months after the election, Leaver, trying to convince the new Rhodesian Front prime minister to appoint Chaza as a full-time employee of the Information Bureau, declared: "We can be sure of his absolute loyalty which is more than can be said for a number of our younger, more recent appointees."⁸⁶ However, Chaza had been deeply disappointed by the shift in white politics. He was pushed over the edge by the obvious racial polarization of a May 1963 by-election in Matobo where it was obvious that most whites had voted for the successful Rhodesian Front candidate and the small number of "B Roll" black voters had thrown their support behind the losing UFP. In June 1963 Chaza held a press conference to announce his resignation as chairman of the Highfield branch of the Rhodesian National Party (the new name of the UFP) because "my continued support as a moderate of a multi-racial party, although it is of very

⁸³"UFP Candidates," *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 November 1962, 2; for the Chaza's chances see "SR Political Parties Step Up Campaigns to Woo B Roll Voters," *Rhodesia Herald*, 11 December 1962, 5.

⁸⁴For the daughters see "An Old Comrade's Success," *Mapolisa* 25- 8 (1962), 9.

⁸⁵For the election results see *Rhodesia Herald*, 15 December 1962, 1; see also West, *African Middle Class*, 229.

⁸⁶NAZ, S3454/23, "K.D. Leaver to Prime Minister's Office," 9 March 1963.

good intentions, will be inconsistent with the wishes of my people as I know them now.” Adopting nationalist rhetoric, Chaza concluded that since “blood is thicker than water... it is right and proper that I should join the four million voices of Zimbabwe.”⁸⁷ This seems consistent with West’s stand that the African middle class of the early 1960s reluctantly abandoned moderate “multi-racial” parties and moved towards the nationalist movement.⁸⁸

Withdrawing from public life, Chaza left for Liverpool in 1968 to study social welfare and returned in 1971 to become an auditor with the Internal Affairs Department during the war period of the 1970s. His youngest daughter and son also studied in the United Kingdom at this time. In addition, one of his older daughters who had been sent to Scotland in the early 1960s, Kubi Chaza, embarked on a modeling and acting career—which she initially kept from her father as she thought he would not approve—including a small role in the 1973 James Bond film ‘Live and Let Die’. She moved back home in the late 1970s where she eventually opened a cosmetics company.⁸⁹

It appears that G.A. Chaza returned to serious writing after retiring from his second career and in the 1980s he published an article in *Outpost*, by now the Zimbabwe Republic Police magazine, on the geography and history of his home area of Wedza.⁹⁰ At the time of his death in the late 1990s he had begun working on a sequel to *Bhurakuwacha* that would probably have dealt with his foray into early 1960s politics but it was never finished.⁹¹

VI

It is interesting to briefly compare Chaza with early black journalist Lawrence Vambe. They were around the same age and shared a mis-

⁸⁷“Chaza Quits RNP,” *Rhodesia Herald*, 4 June 1963, 1.

⁸⁸West, *African Middle Class*, 203.

⁸⁹“Kubi (and all the Chaza Family) Fulfills Her Father’s Hopes,” *Outpost*, December 1977, 26.

⁹⁰Gahadzikwa Chaza, “The Soil—Our Soil,” *Outpost*, November/December 1987, 26–27.

⁹¹Personnel communication with G.A. Chaza’s son Tororiro Isaac Chaza, 6 October 2009.

sion education background. Their writings of the early 1950s, Chaza in *Mapolisa* and Vambe in the *Bantu Mirror*, are very similar in topic and tone. As other middle class African authors, both promoted education, hard work, law and order, loyalty, civilization, multi-racialism and pride in the African nation.⁹² Like Chaza, Vambe was eventually accused of betraying the African nationalist cause in the late 1950s by taking an appointment as a London based information officer for the white dominated Central African Federation.⁹³

Vambe is now widely considered an important figure in the history of African journalism and literature, and few would doubt the veracity of the pointed anti-colonial statements made in the books he wrote during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle of the late 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁴ Chaza, albeit never published outside Zimbabwe, experienced a comparable transition yet because of his police background, the anti-colonial statements in *Bhurakuwacha* are more likely to be questioned and some would still consider him a "sell out."

With publications that span seven decades—1930s to 1990s—Chaza wrote in a number of different historical and personal contexts. His contributions to *Mapolisa* from the late 1930s to early 1960s reflect the many contradictions inherent in the colonial African police experience and like other pieces in that magazine form an important source for studying this topic. Like the nationalist leaders who would later brand him a "Tshombe," Chaza came from an early twentieth century mission school background that held out the promise of western education, civilization and Christianity and provided Africans with new tools—organizational methods and literacy—with which to seek redress of grievances within the colonial

⁹²For example see L. Vambe's little known series of articles "The Story of the Rhodesian African Rifles" *Bantu Mirror*, 14 April 1951, 2; 21 April 1951, 6; 28 April 1951, 2; 5 May 1951, 2; 12 May 1951, 219 May 1951, 2; 26 May 1951, 2; 2 June 1951, 2; 9 June 1951, 2; 16 June 1951, 2.

⁹³"'You Are a Quiling:' Chiume Tells Vambe Before Crowd," *Rhodesia Herald*, 29 June 1959, 11.

⁹⁴For example see Tony E. Afejuku, "Autobiography or History? Lawrence Vambe's 'An Ill-fated People,'" *Research in African Literatures* 19 (1988), 508-19. In addition to his famous *An Ill-fated People*, Vambe also wrote *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe* (London, 1976).

racial system. His writings in the 1940s and 1950s reflected these themes and contributed to a growing culture of professional communication and advancement among increasingly educated black police.

Chaza and his police colleagues were part of an emerging and broader African middle class and the related growth of African journalism, literature and publishing. As a leader of the new generation of better educated and upwardly mobile African police, Chaza used literacy, mastery of English and the *Mapolisa* venue to lobby BSAP superiors for improved conditions of service, greater respect and more opportunities. Like civilian westernized elites, Chaza and other modernizing black police were limited in what they could write by white control of publications, an entrenched colonial system and their own loyalist beliefs. Although African police also had to face a strict quasi-military disciplinary system, it is surprising that they managed to achieve what they did. This was similar to what African elites of the period were doing in other fields such as education and politics yet because African police upheld the colonial system and were eventually labeled as traitors to the nationalist cause; their role in this process has been almost forgotten.

In recruiting literate men like Chaza, white BSAP authorities acquired more effective African police who they became dependent upon to control the African majority. In turn, challenges to the force's racial hierarchy brought forth by this new middle class African constabulary could not be ignored. Over a twenty one year career Chaza observed that while reforms were often resisted and delayed by white superiors, they almost always ultimately happened. This would influence his brief foray into politics. His immediate post-BSAP activities and writings took place during the turmoil of the late 1950s and early 1960s. At the time Chaza was an African moderate caught between the radical Black Nationalism in his own community that demanded immediate change and the rise of intransigent white supremacy in government. His police contacts and loyalties meant that he remained closely associated with the colonial state—both to make a living and in terms of his own identity—which further alienated him from his African community. Chaza held rapidly obsolete views that African political representation should expand

gradually concurrent with increasing education and westernization and take place within the existing system which he had maintained as a policeman. He was typical of the moderate and loyalist black middle class of the 1940s and 1950s that wanted equality with whites as part of a civilized imperial citizenry but became less significant during the anti-colonial and revolutionary violence of the 1960s and 1970s.

It is clear from his *Mapolisa* publications of the 1940s and 1950s that Chaza did not approve of the racial inequality within the BSAP and sought to change it in a way that, given the context of the times, was restrained but occasionally pushed the envelop of what was acceptable. Compared to Chaza's earlier writing, *Bhurakuwacha* appears to be a generally accurate account of day-to-day colonial African police life. His typical African elite views on education and progress seem not to have changed much. Chaza's retrospective outrage at racial discrimination and oppression in the BSAP resembles other hitherto "moderate" Africans, like Vambe, who wrote in a later and more radically anti-colonial atmosphere.

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