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Refugees on Routes Congo/Zaire and the War in Northern Angola (1961-1974)

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Introduction

The year 1961 forms a watershed in Angolan history. One of the reasons why 1961 forms a watershed in Angolan history, is the uprising in North-Angola that started in March 1961. Within a few weeks, thousands of people had died, both at the hands of the insurgents, mainly operating in the name of UPA, and by Portuguese vigilant groups. Reinforcements of the Portuguese army entered the area in May and counter-insurgency started. Hundreds of thousands fled to the bush, mostly heading for the newly independent Congo. By late 1961 the Portuguese army had regained control over the most crucial parts of Northern Angola, but guerrilla actions continued. Only after the Portuguese army staged a coup in Lisbon in 1974 a cease-fire was signed and in 1975 Angola became an independent country.

In 1961 Angola, especially in the Northern parts of Angola, entered war. When discussing war, the aspect of mobility is often overlooked. The aim of this article is to show that the relations between warfare and movement merit more attention than hitherto allotted. The second aim is to extend the discussion on mobility by referring to the history of ideas: by studying routes not only as realities, but also as ideas, we may arrive at a fuller interpretation of mobility and transport.

In classical European military history, the history of ideas has been ignored for a very long time and it is only with the work of people like Hannah Arendt, Paul Fussell and others, that philosophy, cultural aspects and literature have started to enter the debates.² Works on African military history are so scant that hardly any debate going on.³ The ways in which intellectual and cultural history relate to warfare in Africa have only cursorily been discussed. There are some works in which issues of postcolonial violence, culture and religion are addressed,⁴ but in these works the aspect of mobility is not included. In this article the focus is on various realms in which war and mobility may interact.

Changes in the realm of mobility do not only have practical consequences. They also impinge on the perceptions of and the ideas surrounding mobility and landscape. War alters the way in which routes and landscape are interpreted. A classical military

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² For example, Arendt 1976, Fussell 2000.

³ Thornton 1999: 2.

⁴ Ellis 1999, Behrend 1999, Ferme 2001.

approach will thus not suffice to understand this theme in full. An important contribution in this respect is an article by Kurt Lewin, written shortly after the First World War. Lewin explains that a peace landscape is endless, round, it knows no front. In wartime, however, direction comes into play: Lewin calls this: “die gerichtete Landschaft” (the orientated landscape). The landscape becomes divided into an area that is “ours”, and an area that is “theirs”, that is conceived of as a “nothing”. These two areas are focussed towards one another: this area that separated “ours” and “theirs” is called “the front”, where the fighting takes place. This orientated landscape is also evoked by young men who fought during World War I. Thus Siegfried Sassoon wrote: “The landscape was in front of us; similar in character to the one behind us, but mysterious with its unknown quality of being ‘behind the Boche line.’”⁵

Apart from these changes in landscape, things also attain a new meaning. The villages, the houses, walls, and streets, the woods, hills and fields do not remain the same during a war; they become militarised. During the war, they are evaluated in terms of cover, strategy, and conquest. Thus they cease to be “peace things”. Their function – to live in, to provide food for a family, etc – cedes to be important and they become “fighting things”.⁶

In his article Kurt Lewin referred to a conventional warfare, namely the First World War. While in a conventional war, the front is a relatively fixed line, in a guerrilla war, the front is everywhere; it remains unfixed. Yet also during a guerrilla war, the meaning of landscape elements changes, the phenomenological nature of things is altered during the war. In order to fully appreciate the role of routes in wartime it is fruitful to take this more philosophical, interpretative aspect of mobility into account, whether it concerns a conventional war between two states or an anti-colonial guerrilla war.

Roads and the colonial army

Militarily speaking, routes are crucial in times of war. Victory, or loss, often depends on the possibilities of transport. This renders the limited attention for transport in military history all the more surprising. State armies try to achieve a maximum of transport capacity by expanding the road network, constructing airstrips, renewing bridges, etc. This is as much true in a conventional war as in an anti-colonial guerrilla war. As soon as the war started in 1961, the Portuguese took to building roads, landing strips for aircraft, bridges, railways and other transport elements.⁷ While in a conventional war usually both fighting sides engage in this process, in an anti-colonial guerrilla war, only the state army is involved in this sort of transport construction.

In any war, such constructions have an immediate military importance, in that they facilitate the rapid movement of troops, and the army supplies of war material, food, medicines, and other items necessary to sustain the troops. Yet, apart from the direct military importance, there are also indirect advantages in improving transport facilities.

In the case of Angola it concerns a vast country with only a limited amount of places from which export can be organised. In such a context, transport facilities form a relatively important factor in trade and commerce. In such a context, building roads and other means of transport forms an incentive to trade, thus reducing the effects of war and providing the state with finances that can be spent on the war. Furthermore, the Portuguese started an intensive heart-and-minds campaign during the war. Their aim was to win over the Angolan civilian population by providing services in the realm of

⁵ Fussell 2000: 105. (Boche being a French derogatory term for “German”.)

⁶ Lewin 1917: 440-447. With thanks to Heike Behrend for the reference.

⁷ Pélissier 1979: 88-89; *Facts and Reports*, 8 (15 April 1972) nr. 444, p. 17: “Road programme” (from *Provincia* (5 March 1972); Hanu 1965: 64, 78.

education and health. Such initiatives necessarily involved providing the means to get to these services. Together with the building of schools and hospitals, roads thus formed an integral part of the Portuguese hearts and mind campaign.

These roads not only functioned as means for transport. In themselves, they opposed the guerrillas; the mere existence of roads hampered guerrilla warfare. “Revolution starts where the road ends”, a Portuguese official said.⁸ The Portuguese knew the opposite to be equally true: revolution is difficult where the road starts. The roads formed an impediment for the guerrillas and for the fleeing population; they became greatly feared by civilians and guerrillas alike. People crossed only with the “greatest caution”, always choosing a stony part so as not to leave traces.⁹ Sometimes enormous detours were made to avoid the Portuguese roads.¹⁰ So not only did the roads serve as transport for the colonial troops, they also hindered transport and activities of the enemy. Colonial roads in the context of the war surpassed their function in terms of transport and became a weapon in themselves. Building a road meant victory over bandit and bush. The roads had become “fighting things”. They, more than ever, had become a sign of Progress and Civilisation.

Yet, the bush kept on creeping back in. In order to keep the bush out, the roads had to be maintained. This was sometimes done through forced labour. Despite the laws that forbade forced labour, in many areas it continued for lack of a labour force and the financial means to compensate them. Especially in areas where much of the population had fled, this could lead to appalling situations. Women and the elderly may be forced to work, sometimes having to walk as far as 20 km to their work place, sometimes not even being provided with food.¹¹ This flip side of the hearts and minds campaign is not often mentioned; somebody has to build and maintain the hospitals, schools and roads.

Stopping the Army

In a guerrilla war, much of the guerrilla activities is aimed exactly at hindering transport of the military. Mining roads and blowing up bridges are classic examples of guerrilla action. In Northern Angola, the blocking of roads was a central aim of the rebels. The insurgents took to felling trees, digging trenches, and throwing nails on the road surface, so as to impede all means of transport. The Baptist missionary David Grenfell stated that between Bungu and 31 Janeiro, a stretch of some 30 km, 800 trees were lying on the road and 200 trenches had been dug.¹² It is no coincidence that initially crushing the revolt was largely done by air – by bombing – transport by road was in the first months after 15 March 1961 next to impossible. The railway, as such a strategic target, could, however, not become a “fighting thing”. For fear of endangering the relations with landlocked Zambia, that had high economic interests in the railway transport through Angola, the railway could not be sabotaged by the guerrilla movements.

Even without direct guerrilla actions, the guerrilla presence in itself formed a hindrance to transport. Large areas remained outside Portuguese control for a considerable length of time, despite statements in the Portuguese propaganda machine

⁸ Reuver-Cohen and Jerman 1974.

⁹ ANTT, SCCIA, 248, “UPA – actividades geral”, pp. 192-198: Cabinda, 18 December 1967, summary of statements made by Pedro Augusto.

¹⁰ Rossi 1969: 157 and *passim*.

¹¹ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.48.E/1, “Autoridades administrativas do distrito do Zaire”, pp. 114: Bessa Monteiro, 10 March 1963; *Ibidem*, 122-123: São António do Zaire, 26 November and 10 December 1962.

¹² BMS archives (Oxford), XI Africa, Shelf Set VIII, Shelf 6, Box A 79, “Angola crisis – correspondence with missionaries A-G”, W.D. Grenfell to Clifford Parsons, Maquela do Zombo, 29 May 61.

to the contrary. The UPA, by now renamed FNLA, had after 1962 no extensive “liberated zones” and its organisation was entirely located in neighbouring Congo/Zaire.¹³ All the same, “the bush” was feared by the Portuguese and especially in the first year of the revolt, they hardly dared enter it. The notion of a dangerous, disease-ridden bush, full of wild animals had also been part of the colonial discourse before the war started. In the colonial discourse the bush functioned as the opposite of “civilisation”, as a central metaphor for primitiveness.¹⁴ During the war, the bush also came to be association with violence. In the “impenetrable bush” an “invisible enemy” was dwelling.¹⁵ The dangers of the bush thus became more extensive. This sort of enemy-thinking always plays a role in war, as Fussell writes: “We are visible; he in invisible. We are normal; he is grotesque.”¹⁶ In a guerrilla war, however, the invisibility and grotesque character of the enemy may be more readily invoked by the standing army than in a war between two standing armies.

“The bush” constantly threatened “the road”. Between March and May 1961 the guerrillas attacked settlements as well, but later they concentrated on isolated *fazendas* and cars on the road.¹⁷ Human and natural “wildness” both threatened Portuguese “civilisation”. Soldiers were terrified with the slightest movement at the roadside and longed for the life in town: “the World of the ‘balls at the club on carnival’s night’, the World of neon-lights, of cars that are not turned green, of large buildings, of asphalted roads, the World outside the green of grass and of the bush.”¹⁸ The bush was “hostile and treacherous”.¹⁹ Not only violent action posed a threat: the roads also had to kept clean, otherwise the “bush” would creep back in. Significantly, a landing strip on which grass grew, was referred to with inverted commas: “*pista*”, to indicate that it was not a “real” way of transport.²⁰ One is reminded here of an article by Albert Wirz, in which he discusses the colonial fear of and fascination with the bush. Wirz’s article related to the beginning of colonialism discovery travels, but also during the war for independence in Angola the notions of impenetrability, monotony, disease, and danger were important.²¹

The impenetrability of an area did not depend on whether there were paths or not. The criterion was whether or not cars could pass.²² The footpaths through the bush posed, for the Portuguese troops, a threat rather than a means to transport people and goods. When Portuguese troops were sent out to locate people that were known to live hidden in the bush, they were forced to return without having accomplished anything, “due to the extension of the area, with closed bush that forms genuine labyrinths, in a swampy terrain.”²³

The “bush” fell outside Portuguese control. A report on the Zaire district of 1973 related the division of the landscape to the issue of security: “Only in the *concelho* (part of a district) of São António de Zaire life runs with relative normality. In the rest of the district, the people live quartered in ‘islands’ under military protection, with their economic activities practically limited to farming the lands in the immediate

¹³ Marcum 1978: 44.

¹⁴ For example, Felgas 1958: 195.

¹⁵ Cardoso 2000: 126, 161, 212.

¹⁶ Fussell 2000: 75.

¹⁷ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, “UPA”, p. 92: translation of letter Ferreira Muanga, entitled: “Important recommendations to all brothers”, 9 August 1961.

¹⁸ For example, Cobanco 1970: 14-15, 63 (quote), 118.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 86.

²⁰ Cardoso 2000: 216.

²¹ Wirz 1994: 15-36.

²² For example, ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.B, “UPA”, p. 336: Luanda, 21 April 1961; *ibid.*, P.Inf. 13.16.A/1, “Missão Evangélica de São Salvador”, p. 92: PIDE note to letter from Miguel Difwene Lusidika to teacher BMS, Lukala, 30 September 1959.

²³ *Ibid.*: 308: Luanda, 25 April 1961.

surroundings, within a range of two or three kilometre; the dislocation of people is only possible by way of air or under escort, that is always delayed and not always available.”²⁴

This situation had far-reaching consequences for colonial society. It impeded military movement: especially during the rainy season, the Portuguese troops were often confined to their barracks and dared not move out on the roads.²⁵ It also had consequences in terms of trade, in the social sphere (family visits), and religion. Thus in its year report of 1965, the Roman Catholic church of Ambrizete complained that evangelisation had become very difficult since 1961. The region had been cut into four parts, the first of which, Ambrizete, was surrounded with barbed wire and had five check points. The second part, Tomboco, was the area of the mission, where the population lived in concentrated settlements and the missionaries were only allowed to travel under military escort. The third, Quinzau, was difficult to reach and “infested with terrorists”. To the final part, Nóqui, there was no direct road; it could only be reached through São António de Zaire.²⁶

Secret Routes

The colonial army focused on limiting the dangers emanating from the bush. Their method to achieve this was to use armoured transport (tanks and heavy weaponry). The guerrillas tried to use the bush, seeking to find ways of transport without being detected. Their method was secrecy. Based in Congo/Zaire, they depended on cross-border routes unknown to their enemy: to enter and leave the war zone, to smuggle in arms, ammunition, medicines and other supplies into the guerrilla bases in the war zone.

The method of secrecy goes back a long time. In the 1930s colonial measures forcibly moved people in Northern Angola to the roadside.²⁷ This was meant to integrate the population into the colonial system, to force them into the colonial grid. Yet, many people retained a second home in their old fields, where they often grew coffee. Many of these homes were connected through footpaths that ran parallel to the colonial road network. People would only occasionally stay over night near these fields. Even before war broke out in March 1961, many people sought refuge in these second homes in order to avoid the Portuguese police, which became more active as of the end of the 1950s. When the war started, the number of people retreating to these former homes increased: especially during the earlier stages of the war, the Portuguese did not yet know these areas.²⁸

For the Portuguese troops, these forests appeared an impenetrable bush, in which an invisible enemy was hiding. For the population of the North the forests constituted a possibility to flee and to contact people, even over international boundaries. Initially there was great confidence in the tradition of strategies of secrecy and evasion. Álvaro

²⁴ Estado Português de Angola, 1973: 14.

²⁵ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, SC-CI (2) 2126/SR 59, UI 2943, “UPA”, vol. 2, p. 480: Press conference by Pierre-Pascal Rossi in Kinshasa, 3 September 1968.

²⁶ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 13.10.B/5: “Missão Católica de Ambrizete”, pp. 4-5: “Relatório da Missão Católica do Ambrizete, Tomboco, 1965”; In the thesis of Frederick James Grenfell on the history of the Baptist Church in the North, one chapter is called: “Roads: cars: evangelisation”: Frederick James Grenfell, “History of the Baptist Church in Angola, 1879-1975”, (BMS archives, Th 87A 1998), pp. 16-21.

²⁷ Grenfell, “History”, p. 15.

²⁸ Interview with Mr. Francisco Tunga Alberto, Luanda, 9 August 2002; see also ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, p. 232: translation of letter by Emmanuel Lufuakatinua to his father Nicolau Mazito, Moerbeck, 14 May 1961.

Sengui Minutos wrote to Manuel Dinis: “You know the way to use and I advise you not to have fear because as yet not one Portuguese soldier has come to know this way.”²⁹

The Portuguese view of “the bush” (*mato*) was unspecified. It was seen as an undifferentiated whole. For the people who stayed in these forests, this was not so. Within the bush, types of paths were differentiated: there were paths for people and animal tracks. The latter were not suitable for mankind: on such paths people would lose their sense of direction and get bitten by insects.³⁰ There are hints that the paths used by incoming guerrillas were not the same as the paths used by the fleeing refugees: “No army likes a lot of refugees on its lines of communication.”³¹ So the bush is subdivided in parts through which people went and parts in which only animals dwelt, paths used by guerrillas and paths used by refugees, paths used by people who lived in a particular stretch of forest and paths that led over the border.

The clearing and maintenance of these routes through the forest was a labour intensive affair. Not only the Portuguese used forced labour for road works. There is evidence of UPA using similar methods. Thus Domingos Manuel da Silva – born in Southern Angola, but resident in the North – was captured by a group of UPA guerrillas. He was led before a council of elders and after finding out that he had no UPA membership card, he was tied up and beaten. After some days, they took him to weed the path between Quibengue and Banza Pango, under guard.³²

Stopping the guerrilla

Just as guerrilla actions may be aimed at sabotaging the army’s transport, counter-insurgency is often aimed at cutting the routes of supply used by the guerrillas. This strategy was also used during the war for independence in Northern Angola. The Portuguese army took to bombing guerrillas on the paths they were using,³³ mining the paths³⁴ and, as of 1966, creating settlements along the guerrilla supply routes.³⁵ This shows the logistical importance of routes and transport. Each fighting party tries to maximise its own possibilities for transport and to limit as much as possible the enemy’s transport capacity. In the earlier stages of the war, the Portuguese did not enter the forests and restricted their action to bombing. Soon however, they started to cut off areas from each other and encircling the areas where people were still hiding. Pedro Quiala wrote that he escaped death by retreating to “nearly inaccessible” old villages. Fleeing from place to place, he knew the Portuguese were trying to locate them.³⁶ Pedro Lopes wrote: “We are here encircled by whites and we do not know how we can escape

²⁹ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, “Documentos apreendidos pelas autoridades militares”, p. 48: 11 January 1964; see also: *ibid.*, 11.12.C, p. 222-223: translation of letter from João Barros to Domingos Diviluka, Cidade (Luvaca), 2 May 1961.

³⁰ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, “Congo-ex-Belga”, pp. 302-322: Ambrizete, 14 December 1963, summary of statement made by Manuel Sungo and Pedro Uncuto.

³¹ BMS, XI Africa, Shelf Set VIII, Shelf 6, Box A 79, “Angola – miscellaneous”, David Grenfell, letter April 1964.

³² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, PC12/62: “José Manuel Peterson”, pp. 30v, 31: Summary of statement by Domingos Manuel da Silva, São Salvador, 13 January 1962.

³³ Cardoso 2000: 290-291.

³⁴ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 558-560: Maquela do Zombo, 25 August 1961.

³⁵ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.26.F “Contra-subversão – Zaire e S. Salvador”, p. 89: Minutes of meeting 17 February 1972.

³⁶ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, “Documentos apreendidos pelas autoridades militares”, pp. 366-367: translation of letter from Pedro Quiala da Costa to Álvaro Moniz, s.d., s.l.

from their wrath. They must know that we are here in the forest, but at the same time they do not as yet dare to enter it".³⁷

By the end of 1961, many routes had been discovered by the Portuguese troops. Of course, new paths were constantly in the making, but it became very risky to travel through the forest. People feared crossing from Angola into Congo and travelling within Angola. Many deemed it outright impossible.³⁸ The travel routes were known to be "infested with whites"³⁹ and to be full with mines.⁴⁰

As with the guerrilla threat to the road, the colonial threat to the bush had far-reaching consequences. Thus the trader André Zinga complained to his brother that his commerce had come to a stand-still because he could not move.⁴¹ People were dying in the forest, because emissaries to Congo could not return with the necessary medicines as the Portuguese controlled the paths that were used.⁴² In case of a Portuguese ambush, the UPA guerrillas would never use this path again and a new path would have to be opened.⁴³ Some people got trapped: they felt being hunted down like animals.⁴⁴ João da Silva wrote to his "dear and beloved son in Christ": "I am here like a bird in a cage, but I am sure that the Good Lord will have mercy on us."⁴⁵

The Portuguese military actions into the bush were a shock to the people of the North. The Portuguese could be expected in town or on the road: these belonged to the colonial grid. In the moral geography of the area, the Portuguese were expected to avoid the bush, and to detest it, while the local people, although aware of the dangers of the forests, regarded it as part of their sphere of influence. When the Portuguese entered the bush, the hierarchical divisions of the land were altered: "These Portuguese who persecute us until in our unassailable forests, forests that were left to us by our forebears."⁴⁶ The guerrillas tried to re-appropriate the routes they used and to reverse the hunter-prey relation that had evolved. Thus when in 1971 FNLA guerrillas wounded three men, captured two others and killed the militia Manuel Tungo, they said: "It is you who usually follow the track of where we pass, but now it is our turn."⁴⁷

Because of the Portuguese military actions, time and movement became intimately related. Thus UPA guerrillas only went at night, without using any light. If by necessity they had to go during day-time, they would move during quiet hours: between 5.00-7.00 hours, or at lunch time (12.00-14.00 hours), when the soldiers were not undertaking action.⁴⁸ Economic activities, normally carried out during day-time, now

³⁷ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 76: translation of letter to his son, Garcia Lopes, sl, 18 March 1964.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155: translation of letter from Maria Vanga to brother Kiala Kianzoavaika, Sanza, 20 April 1963.

³⁹ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, p. 181: translation of letter from "dirigentes de Quingingi" to Paulo Quindoqui, 26 March 1962; see also *ibid.*, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 360: translation of "Guia de transit" from Domingos Monteiro to Miguel Vicente, Baixa de Bongui, 16 August 1962.

⁴⁰ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B p. 363: translation of letter from Ferreira to his cousin, David, Quimbumba, 17 September 1962.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 287: translation of letter to António, Coma, 1 June 1963.

⁴² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 302-322.

⁴³ ANTT, SCCIA, 248, "UPA – actividades geral", pp. 192-198.

⁴⁴ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 229: translation of letter from João Alfredo Monteiro to his uncle Afonso Mpatu, Quizele, 1 September 1963.

⁴⁵ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, pp. 323-324: translation of letter, Ngundo, 18 September 1961.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213: translation of letter from Tussamba kwa Nzambi Garcia, "Aviso", 7 September 1961.

⁴⁷ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. no code, UI 9083, "Base de Kinshasa", p. 178: Carmona, 2 December 1971; *ibid.*, 11.12.C p. 206: translation of letter from Monteiro Diamba and Fernandes Pereira to "Senhores Consoleiro do povo Tange", Quibinga 10 June 1961.

⁴⁸ ANTT, SCCIA, 248, "UPA – actividades geral", 192-198.

were done during the night.⁴⁹ Coming from and going to Congo/Zaire was restricted to the wet season: it was widely known that during the dry season the Portuguese controls increased. Thus Maria Tola wrote to her mother: “If you come, you must come during the rainy season, I repeat, because in the dry season the enemies go about with ease and can easily see you pass, whether you are alone or in caravan”.⁵⁰

An oddity it is that while at many times people could not move between Angola and Congo/Zaire, letters could still be delivered by messengers. People sometimes informed each other in this manner about possible escape routes.⁵¹ Messengers and guides were indispensable during the war.

Intelligence, Knowledge and Guides

Because of their military importance, routes are also crucial in terms of intelligence in wartime. Each party tries to assemble as much information as possible about the enemy’s means of transport. The war in Northern Angola forms no exception. Spies were sent out to try to find out the routes used by the enemy. During interrogations prisoners were often pressed to give the details of the routes used. On the basis of this information maps were drawn. Sometimes prisoners were used as guides to lead the troops to the guerrilla bases.⁵²

Routes are always a local aspect of knowledge. A stranger has to ask the way and the local person will be able to give the directions. There has been much discussion about guerrilla movements and their relationship with the local populace, in which the emphasis was put on ideological support and food supply. But I argue here, that in this relationship knowledge is at least as crucial. Eno Belinga and Jane Guyer in an article pointed to the importance of expertise as a form of wealth. According to them, the gathering of dependants as a way toward prosperity has all too often been confined to discussing the labour aspect. They stress that knowledge as a form of wealth deserves more attention.⁵³ Belinga and Guyer state that with colonialism this notion of wealth in knowledge has largely disappeared, but I would argue that to some extent this principle was operative during Africa’s wars for independence. It was operative in the South East of Angola, where the MPLA entered as of 1966 and it seems that also in Kenya’s Mau Mau labour and ideology were not the only criteria for support.⁵⁴ The control over people with local geographical knowledge was very important for both the UPA guerrillas and for the Portuguese army. Knowledge of the terrain was essential for the operations of the Portuguese army. The Portuguese army depended on local guides and they were very keen on turning prisoners into this service. Because of their superior knowledge of the region, local militias were more feared by the UPA guerrillas than the army: the militias knew all the footpaths in the area.⁵⁵

Many of the guerrilla leaders neither knew how to live in the bush nor how to find their way. Especially people from the elite had ideas about the bush that were similar to the Portuguese stereotypes. Manuel Peterson, later to become head of Internal Security,

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 403: Luanda, 11 January 1973.

⁵⁰ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, pp. 44-45: translation of letter to Maria Quengue, Ntima Kuzola, s.d.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 290; translation of letter by Álvaro Raúl Domingos to Isabel Ernestina Pinto, Vamba, 30-5-1963.

⁵² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 302-322; *ibid.*, PC 12/62, pp. 130-131: Luanda, 12 March 1964; Davezies 1965: 140-141.

⁵³ Guyer and Belinga 1995: 91-120.

⁵⁴ Inge Brinkman, “A war for people”, unpublished ms; Lonsdale 1991: 335 and *passim*.

⁵⁵ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 31, pasta 1, “GRAE”, pp. 198-199: Information from Quiala Selele, Maquela do Zombo, 26 June 1971.

lamented in a letter how he had to flee on foot through “the plain bush”.⁵⁶ Yet, also those who did not belong to the UPA leadership certainly did not idealise the forest. Fleeing to Congo/Zaire was difficult: apart from the risk of being hunted down by Portuguese patrols, attacks by wild animals posed a real danger,⁵⁷ and quite a number of refugees drowned while attempting to cross a river.⁵⁸ Staying in Angola in the forest was also becoming ever more dangerous: “You do not have pity on us who are staying in this crazy Angola in improper places.”⁵⁹

In order to survive in “this crazy Angola”, the guerrillas needed people with knowledge of the routes through the bush and of the ways to survive in the bush. They also needed people to carry goods. The UPA leaders depended on local chiefs to furnish them with porters and guides. This dependence reinforced local patterns of leadership, as the UPA could not pass by the chiefs when asking for assistance. Yet, the dependency on guides also brought changes. For example, the expertise of hunters, who knew their way in the forests, acquired a new status during the war.

It was not easy to find reliable porters and guides: sometimes goods and people did not move because no trustworthy porters and guides were available.⁶⁰ This problem not only faced civilians, for example those who wanted to communicate between Congo and Angola, but also posed problems for the UPA in Angola. Attempts were made to force people into carrying letters and other goods for the UPA soldiers.⁶¹ As good guides were not easy to get, and local knowledge was indispensable to the guerrillas, people with knowledge of the local geography had a certain leverage and at least to some extent they could count on protection. The leaders of Calumbo asked Laurindo Socoloca to release a man taken prison, as “he was in the past a good element, knowing all the local ways (*caminhos gentílicos*) and above all an active person.”⁶²

Diversifying Flight

The above sections have dealt with aspects of mobility that are predominantly military: logistics, strategies, and intelligence. However, also where it concerns the non-fighting population, war and mobility are intimately related. People may have to flee when war comes: either abroad or to more peaceful areas within their own country. Sometimes the fighting parties take to moving people. In terms of civilian mobility, the war for independence in Angola may be an extreme case in point. In the areas where the war was fought, namely the North of Angola and the South-East, virtually everybody moved or was moved. A large amount of people left their villages and fled over the international border. In the South-East they went mostly to Zambia, in the North into the newly independent Congo (later Zaire); some of the border areas became near to depopulated.⁶³ Some people moved from their villages into the bush. In the South-East,

⁵⁶ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, PR 12/369, “José Manuel Peterson”, pp. 341, 344-345: transcription and translation of letter to Manuel da Silva and Norberto Vasco, Léopoldville, 28 December 1960.

⁵⁷ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 176: translation of letter from Manuel to his uncle Monteiro, 14 May 1963.

⁵⁸ Interview with Mrs. Madalena Mana Tete, Luanda, 8 August 2002.

⁵⁹ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 96: translation of letter from João Talazuakulula to Maleca Malubonzo, Quinzala (Damba), 18 June 1963.

⁶⁰ For example, *ibid.*, p. 222: translation of letter João Alfredo Monteiro to João Macumbi, Quizele, 1 September 1963.

⁶¹ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.B, p. 42-43: UPA, Serviço do Comité Popular, Inga (Nova Caipemba), 3 July 1961.

⁶² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, p. 105: translation of letter from Vitor Binga e.a. to Laurindo Socoloca, Calumbo, s.d. (1961).

⁶³ Pélissier 1979: 45-46.

they mostly went to live with the MPLA, in the North people moved to stay with the UPA guerrillas. Of those people who remained under Portuguese control, the vast majority was moved from their villages to newly created settlements. So, hardly anybody, except in some of the larger settlements, stayed where s/he was before the war.

Just how many people fled to Congo/Zaire during the war is unclear. It is not so easy to estimate, as for example, the Portuguese brought in people from Southern Angola to live in the newly created settlements. Also, before the war there were already many Angolans in Belgian Congo. By June 1961 there were at least 100.000 Angolan refugees in Congo, by 1972 their number was over half a million.⁶⁴

As so often the case in the case of refugees, the movement to Congo-Zaire is presented as one event, as anonymous, massive and unspecified.⁶⁵ Whereas of course, the experience of going through the bush to live in Congo/Zaire were extremely varied. As already indicated, by some *assimilados* this journey was seen as an enormous odyssey. There is the example of an anonymous man from Luanda, who travelled in a caravan of seven in February 1961, at night with a car through Ambriz, Toto, Bembe, Lucunga. From there they had to enter the bush on foot, every now and then, seeing “huge men armed to the teeth”. In a village, the *soba* at first classified them as *mindele* (Europeans), because some of the party were *mestiço*, but after having been offered some money, he assigned them two guides. They continued their journey still greatly alarmed, because of the stories about cannibalism in this region.⁶⁶ Other people, especially those living close to the border, knew the way. Pedro Vida Garcia, a BMS catechist, fled to Congo, but crossed back into Angola several times to deliver Bibles and schoolbooks to people living in the bush near Nova Caipemba.⁶⁷

For one of the laundresses of Kibokolo mission, the journey to Congo was different again. She knew nothing about the plans for attack and had never heard of UPA, when they learnt that “suffering had entered the country”. They fled on foot through the night, as they feared Portuguese patrols and “only because of God’s help” the group did not suffer casualties when crossing the rivers or from wild animals.⁶⁸ Maria and her family took one month to reach Congo. In her account she stresses the loss of property, the lack of food, salt and drinking water, the dangerous route through the forest, over thin rope bridges.⁶⁹ These people clearly saw their flight in different ways. Their knowledge and their perception of the terrain and the risks they were taking were distinct. Such variation renders it impossible to essentialise “flight”, as if it were one sort of experience.

The tendency, in refugee studies and studies on migration, to portray the movement of one country to another as singular is countered by many examples. In many cases, there were multiple moves. Thus Pedro Augusto stated to the Portuguese secret police that, after becoming an UPA member in March 1961, he was ordered to move to Congo, where he received training in Léopoldville. After this, he was a guerrilla in the Serra da Canda until the end of 1962, when, for failure of ammunition, the group moved back to Léopoldville. In August 1963 he went to Damba, by the end of 1963 he went to the FNLA training base in Kinkuzu. In August 1964 he went to Caxito, between March and June 1965 he was in Kinkuzu again. Then he was in Songololo to recruit UPA soldiers

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 54; Wheeler and Pélissier 1971: 187.

⁶⁵ Cf. Malkki 1995.

⁶⁶ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 138-146: “Relatório”, Luanda, 31 January 1964.

⁶⁷ Stanley 1992: 458; Jim Grenfell, ‘Notes. 3/70’, (Lukala, 11 March 1970), consulted in NIZA (Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa), Box 1, “Angola Comité: Historisch Archief Angola, 1961-1976”.

⁶⁸ Interview with Mrs. Madalena Mana Tete, Luanda, 8 August 2002.

⁶⁹ Davezies 1965: 13-14.

among Angolan refugees. In September 1965 he went to the FNLA base in Kamuna. In January 1967 he was in Kinkuzu again. This example concerns a guerrilla, but many civilians also moved from one place to the other.⁷⁰

Exile, Nostalgia and Integration

Contact between Northern Angola and Congo/Zaire had been intensive all along. Men sought to avoid forced labour and were attracted by the higher wages in the Congo. For the people in Northern Angola, Leopoldville, not Luanda, was the nearest urban centre. There were lively trade relations, people living close to the border often had relatives on the other side. Despite the Portuguese language laws, the BMS schools in the Belgian Congo continued to attract Angolan pupils. Events such as the Buta affair of 1913-1914 and the land appropriation by Portuguese *fazenda*-holders in the 1950s led to an increased emigration.⁷¹ While Bailundo people from the South were brought in to work on the coffee plantations in Northern Angola, many Northerners worked in the sugar companies in Lower and Central-Congo.

In a number of ways these earlier migrations differed from the flight during the war. The differences manifest themselves in various areas. Firstly, of course, the enforced character of the move during the war rendered it a different experience. People had to flee in secrecy, only travelling during the night, moving through the bush instead of taking the roads. Before the war, many Angolans working in the Congo had sent money to their relatives in Angola. Before the war money and people moved in opposite direction. The nationalist movement, however, reversed the flow of money. By the end of the 1950s, money was sent from Angola to ABAKO and UPA in the Congo. One official referred “without exaggeration” to it as “migratory current of money”.⁷²

Some Angolans, who went to work in Belgian Congo, stayed there. Most people, however, returned after having finished their contract. Many of the refugees who came in 1961, however, lived in Congo/Zaire from 1961 to 1975. Within these fourteen years, many people, and their children, became at least partly, Zairian. They spoke Lingala rather than Kikongo, and French rather than Portuguese.⁷³ Also in political sense, “Zairianisation” undoubtedly took place. While before the war, the border had been so porous as to non-existent in the eyes of many, during the war it became increasingly difficult to cross from one country into the other.

The Angolan refugees were divided by many lines. There were religious differences, mainly between Baptists and Catholics. There were political differences: many refugees were not member of the UPA or, later, the FNLA. Within the FNLA there were ethnic differences, mainly between Southerners and Northerners, and there were conflicts between two Kongo subgroups, the Zombo and the Sansala. Despite these internal differences and despite the integration into Zairian society, the Angolan refugees as a group remained socially and politically separate from the Congolese. Among the refugees, a strong wish to return to an independent Angola remained alive. Especially as the refugees were often looked down upon by the host population, Angola came to be caught in the metaphor of the Promised Land. The refugees thus tended to oscillate between integration and nostalgia.

⁷⁰ ANTT, SCCIA, 248, “UPA – actividades geral”, pp. 192-198.

⁷¹ Sabakinu Kivilu 1976: 201-218; Kouale-Yaboro 1974: 32-33; Grenfell, “History”, pp. 13, 43, 60.

⁷² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 17.04.O/1, “Administração do concelho do Pombo – Sanza Pombo”, pp. 42-43; Sanza Pombo, 17 May 1960; Grenfell, “History”, p. 20.

⁷³ Cf. Birmingham 1995: 91-95, Schubert 1997: 90.

Controlling Movement

Even if people had wanted to, they were not allowed to return to Angola. The Congolese authorities, in co-operation with the FNLA/GRAE, would not let them. Furthermore, at a certain stage, the Portuguese authorities closed the border. Of course, people still moved between Angola and Congo/Zaire, but these crossings were illegal and far less in numbers than before.

While forced mobility and flight often receive much attention in refugee studies, such aspects of forced immobility are often ignored. Warfare often involves measures to confine and control people; to limit their movements. In the case of Angola, the Portuguese used pass laws, barbed wire, watchtowers and check-points to see to it that movement only occurred as they deemed fit, while the guerrillas used threats, pass-words, and written permissions (*guias*) to achieve the same.

Initially quite some UPA members felt that leaving for the Congo amounted to desertion. Thus João Barros wrote to Domingos Diviluka that those who want to withdraw to Congo would be sorry and that there were enough hiding places within Angola itself. He ordered no passes were to be given to people who said they wanted to go to the market, as this was only a pretext for creating an opportunity for fleeing to the Congo.⁷⁴ In a similar vein, Milandu, the guard of the Dange River, stated that Lumumba had given him orders not to let any people cross the river, only out of pity he allowed people to cross “in the name of God”.⁷⁵

Soon, however, people were encouraged to take flight into the Congo and join the UPA in exile. If all stayed in the bush, women, children and the elderly had to be assisted in case of an attack, and brought into safety by the guerrillas. Furthermore, civilians were more likely to give themselves in to the Portuguese authorities. For these reasons, it was soon decided that civilians had better leave for Congo and stay there. People who did try to present themselves to the Portuguese, could be followed by the guerrillas and put to death. Thus even in 1972, in *mata* (bush) Cassuanga, two women were killed, while their children hid between the bushes.⁷⁶ People were only allowed to travel when in possession of the proper pass, signed by an UPA leader.

Writing, as has long been noted, is often aimed to control people.⁷⁷ In the colonial context, documents, passes, stamps, and records were crucial tools to subject and rule the colonial subject, but also in postcolonial states, record and enumeration were used to control people.⁷⁸ During the war in Angola, the possession of passes, documents and papers became a matter of life and death. Thus in Congo/Zaire, only those with a GRAE pass one could count on refugee assistance. It was not always easy for people to have the forms required for the documents filled out properly. They were entitled to only one, fixed name (whereas most used people used several names), out of sheer nervousness, people might give the wrong answers to questions asked during the application.⁷⁹ Travelling without any document was dangerous: “If you want to travel out of Angola, carry your document well. Once indocumented, you will be arrested and mercilessly thrown onto a truck where after you will be driven to death.”⁸⁰ It was not for nothing that circulars had to go around, in which it was explained that people without a pass

⁷⁴ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, pp. 222-223.

⁷⁵ Davezies 1965: 59.

⁷⁶ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.12.A/1, pp. 512-514: Salazar, 6 May 1972.

⁷⁷ Cf. Marshall 1993: 3.

⁷⁸ Ferme 1998: 555-580.

⁷⁹ BMS, XI Africa, Shelf Set VIII, Shelf 6, Box A 79, “Angola – miscellaneous”, Notes for the record, Vera Harrison (Moerbeke, March 1964).

⁸⁰ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, p. 264: translation of letter by Mama Viano, Leopoldville, s.d.

ought to be arrested by UPA and not to be beaten or killed.⁸¹ UPA circulars clearly stated that travel was only allowed with a letter signed by the leadership, and women were not allowed to pass at all.⁸²

The UPA not only controlled movement through passes, it was also used as a form of punishment. People found not to be in line with UPA rules, were often tied or imprisoned. There were prisons in Leopoldville, Kinkuzu and also in most of the UPA centres in the bush. Because orders came not to kill people, tying prisoners became an important aspect of the war: from the bush, requests for cord were sent to Kinshasa.⁸³

The Portuguese police also took to detaining people and carried through this method much more stringently than the guerrillas. Even before the war started in 1961, anybody with some education or anybody showing leadership qualities in the religious or cultural sphere without being authorised by the colonial government (of course, no one would be so foolish so as to display leadership qualities in the political sphere in Angola) ran the risk of being arrested and confined for an unknown period. Many of those taken prisoner never returned, some only returned under severe restrictions and yet others were only released after the war. This politics of confinement had severe consequences for the nationalist movements. They were forced to rely on organisation in exile and contact between the exile leadership and the internal bases was often difficult.

As we saw, people might be shot at by the guerrillas when trying to flee. The number of people killed for this reason, was however, probably much lower than the amount of people killed by the Portuguese when trying to flee to Congo/Zaire.⁸⁴ The Portuguese tried to combine methods of violence and terror, with a hearts and minds campaign to persuade people to hand themselves over to the authorities. They spread pamphlets over the forest, promising welfare and peace. One pamphlet shows the picture of a bicycle: an item that due to the colonial measures of confinement could hardly be used!⁸⁵

Initially, the Portuguese tried to win back as many people as they could and in their propaganda stressed how successful they were in this respect. Prominent Kongo leaders, such as the Queen Regent Isabel, but also Simão Toko, heading a religious movement, called on people to return to Angola.⁸⁶ Yet, in the 1970s, although traditional authorities were still trying to make people come back, there was a secret guide line not to encourage return, but merely to receive people well if they presented themselves.⁸⁷ This may be explained by the conscious Portuguese policy to create a rift between the Angolans living in Zaire and those continuing to stay in Angola.⁸⁸

In the Portuguese settlements, movement was strictly limited. Only in the 1970s, there were hesitant steps toward a somewhat less restrictive policy and even then, these measures confined people to the colonial grid of town and road. Thus people from Banza Puto were allowed to go twelve km from the settlement on the road to Madimba, five km on each side of the road, and this only for purposes of hunting and fishing.⁸⁹

⁸¹ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.B. 146-147: "Instruções do conselheiro geral da área", Domingos Francisco da Silva Cauanga, 4 June 1961.

⁸² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, p. 201: translation (Luanda, 3 Oct 1961) of UPA pamphlet.

⁸³ For example, Batista, Banza Kumuana, 1 July 1961.

⁸⁴ There is no way in which anyone can ever establish the exact number of those killed by the Portuguese during the war: estimates range from 8.000 to 80.000. All serious studies into the matter cite numbers well over 20.000: Pélissier 1979: 148; *Facts and Reports*, 3, 18 (1973) n° 1148 (*The Tribune*, 27 August 1973): Statement by former army Major José Ervedosa; Marcum, 1969: 144; For example: ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 465: Adelino Eduardo to uncle Pedro Miala, s.l., s.d.

⁸⁵ Odink 1974: 64.

⁸⁶ Marcum 1969: 279, 342.

⁸⁷ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.26.F, p. 219: Minutes of meeting 30 March 1971.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.89.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 79: Minutes of meeting 19 April 1972.

During the same meeting proposals were launched to remove the barbed wire surrounding São Salvador, as it “had never been efficient”, “created a psychological state of enclosure in many people that could only serve the enemy’s propaganda” and gave a false idea of security to others.⁹⁰ Military policy and the hearts and minds campaign of the Portuguese were often at variance. Development and progress, the way forward, was in both colonisers and colonised minds associated with movement, roads, cars, transport and not with confinement. The Zaire District Council for Contra-Subversion stated in 1969 that “the population badly understood the limits imposed on their liberty.”⁹¹

The confinement imposed on people at times led to bitter cases, such as that of Pedro Calandula, who was first forced to stay with the guerrillas and after he had come out of the bush, was not allowed to return to the South of Angola, where he came from. Against his wish, he was forced to live in the North, as there was a shortage of workers in the North.⁹²

Route Vocabulary

In this article it was shown that the relationship between transport and the colonial army, routes and the guerrillas, flight and the control of movement all have fairly material aspects as well as more philosophical sides to them. Yet, Lewin’s discussion of the philosophy of landscape and the interpretative aspects of mobility in relation with war can be extended into the realm of words. A discussion of mobility and warfare may also include far less tangible aspects. In all wars, propaganda plays an important role. In nationalist wars, where the aim is to change an entire political system, this is especially so. All the same, few studies have hitherto dealt with the role of propaganda in African nationalist wars.

The abundance of references to mobility in nationalist propaganda is striking. Wordings are used such as: “on the road to freedom”, leaders are often portrayed as guides, these are nationalist “movements”. The UPA and FNLA propaganda is certainly no exception to this. In the pamphlets and speeches there is constant reference to concepts related to mobility. Also in this case, leaders are compared to guides, and the war is presented as a necessary step on the road to freedom: “independence is not a cake delivered on a platter, but a tortuous road, on which we are venturing”.⁹³ Furthermore people are advised not to let themselves be led astray, they are admonished not to follow the middle course,⁹⁴ but to follow the right road,⁹⁵ people criticising the FNLA are compared with dogs barking at a passing caravan, (but pass it will).⁹⁶

The biblical overtones of many of the references are no coincidence. Often, the Angolan people are likened to the people of Israel, wandering through the desert after

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 571: Minutes of meeting 20 August 1969.

⁹² ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, pp. 195-199: Carmona 19 Sept 1961, summary of statements made by Paulino Calandula.

⁹³ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, PR 12/369, pp. 306-309: Léopoldville, 23 July 1962, Report John Eduardo Pinnock, “O ministro do Interior, o secretário e o seus imediatos visitaram os refugiados do Congo”; *ibid.*, P. Inf. 14.15.A, p. 41: translation of UPA pamphlet: “Aviso Único”, s.d., s.l., found near Lambo, 29 June 1962.

⁹⁴ ANTT, PIDE, SC, PR 1641/60, pp. 183-185: translation of pamphlet, Kinshasa, 16 May 1967, entitled: “Em que posição te encontras situado na guerra pela libertação da tua terra?”.

⁹⁵ ANTT, PIDE, P. Inf. 11.12.A, “UPA”, p. 386: João Eduardo Pinnock to “meu muito querido amigo”, s.l. (Matadi), s.d. (probably May 1960).

⁹⁶ ANTT, PIDE, P. Inf. 11.23.A, “GRAE”, p. 817: Press conference Emmanuel Kunzika, Léopoldville, 12 April 1962.

the persecution by the Egyptian pharaohs, now on their way to the promised land.⁹⁷ A PDA pamphlet of 1962 put it thus: “Our prayer must be one and one only: Lord God Creator, defend us and help us to reach the promised land, because presently we are wandering lost in the deserts and forests, night and day. Even if all of us do not manage to enter the promised land, make, Lord, that at least our children enter it safe and sound.”⁹⁸

Final Remarks

This article sought to draw attention to the various ways in which war and mobility interrelate. Identifying these areas opens up the possibility of studying this theme on a comparative level. While the focus of this article is on a specific area and a particular period of time, namely the war for independence in Northern Angola as of 1961, the aim of the article was to offer some directions for future research into this theme.

A first conclusion must be that the patterns of movement described have a long history, they were not invented out of the blue in 1961 and for example the contacts between the Congo/Zaire and Northern Angola are very old. Yet history implies change. The conditions of the war of 1961 changed the manners of moving, and altered the patterns of interaction, now between refugees and host population. While related to older patterns of movement, the new context made mobility different from what it was like before. This seems an obvious statement, but it has implications. For example in the Zimbabwean case, Norma Kriger has proposed to view the nationalist war in the light of already existing local power struggles. Against this interpretation, JoAnn McGregor pointed out that the war context altered relations to such an extent that the conflicts ought to be seen as specific to the war, as new, and not as merely a continuation of already existing tensions.⁹⁹ This critique reveals the dilemma of the importance of the historical dimensions of mobility, while at the same time focusing on change due to new contexts and altered relationships.

Apart from change, this article also stressed diversity. Often transport is stated as a given, it is the result of transport that counts. The process by which goods and people reach their destiny is in many works disregarded. The examples showed that routes must be diversified. The variety of terms by which routes are denoted already testifies to this. Routes are not just routes: they stand in hierarchical relationship to each other. This article argues that routes and places not only relate to each other in spatial terms, but also in terms of power. Colonial notions of a monotonous, monolithic bush starkly contrast with the ways in which the local populace attempted to create secret routes through the bush to evade the colonial system.

The issue of mobility in wartime is intimately related to the coercion and consent. During the war many people were forced to move, or they were forced to stay put. This is another indication of the importance of power relations when studying movement. Not only are routes standing to each other in hierarchical relations, also the possibility or impossibility to use these routes also depends on power relations.

For Northern Angola, the paradox was that what for one party constituted a possibility and an asset, formed a hindrance to the opposing party. Thus the Portuguese roads served the colonial army, but they were a hindrance, an obstacle for civilians and

⁹⁷ For example, ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, pp. 212-213; *ibid.*, P. Inf. 11.12.C, pp. 96-99: UPA pamphlet, February 1961; Interview with Mr. Augusto José Farias (FNLA), Luanda, 12 August 2002.

⁹⁸ ANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.17.B, “ALIAZO (Aliança dos Originários do Zombo)”, pp. 242-244: Translation of PDA pamphlet, Léopoldville, 12 Nov 1962.

⁹⁹ Kriger 1992, McGregor 1999: 131-159.

guerrillas. For the Portuguese, the bush implied danger, violence, while local people sought to use the forests; the footpaths through it provided a means to escape from the war for many civilians, while for the guerrillas, supplies and messages could pass on these tracks.

Finally this article tried to underline the importance of a history of ideas when studying routes, transport, and mobility. I gave examples of colonial images of impenetrability of the bush and roads as sign of progress and civilisation, the immensely strong imagery of flight and return in refugee discourse, and of the crucial role that mobility vocabulary played in nationalist discourse and propaganda. The importance of a history of ideas also showed in the different meanings that bush, roads and routes were given in the war context. Just like the young soldier, T.E Hulme, writing home from a trench in Flanders in 1915: “It is curious how the mere fact that in a certain direction there are German lines, seems to alter the feeling of a landscape.”¹⁰⁰

Abbreviations

ANTT – Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo
 BMS – Baptist Missionary Society
 Del. A – Delegação de Angola
 DGS – Direcção Geral de Segurança
 ELNA – Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola
 FNLA – Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola,
 GRAE – Governo Revolucionário de Angola no Exílio
 LGTA – Liga Geral dos Trabalhadores de Angola.
 MENA – Missão Evangélica do Norte de Angola
 MPLA – Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola.
 PDA – Partido Democrático de Angola
 PIDE – (in the notes stands for PIDE/DGS) Polícia Internacional e Defesa do Estado
 SC – Serviços Centrais
 UPA – União das Populações de Angola

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¹⁰⁰ Fussell 2000: 76.

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