

THE *PRICKLY PEAR* WAS FIRST INTRODUCED TO SOUTH EAST MADAGASCAR IN 1769 BY FRENCH COLONIALISTS *ATTEMPTING* TO ESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN THE OLD PIRATE PORT OF *FORT DAUPHIN*.

WITHIN *TWO YEARS*, HIGH RATES OF DISEASE, INTERNAL POLITICAL CONFLICT, AND RESISTANCE FROM LOCAL *MALAGASY* PEOPLE LED THE FRENCH TO ABANDON THE SETTLEMENT.

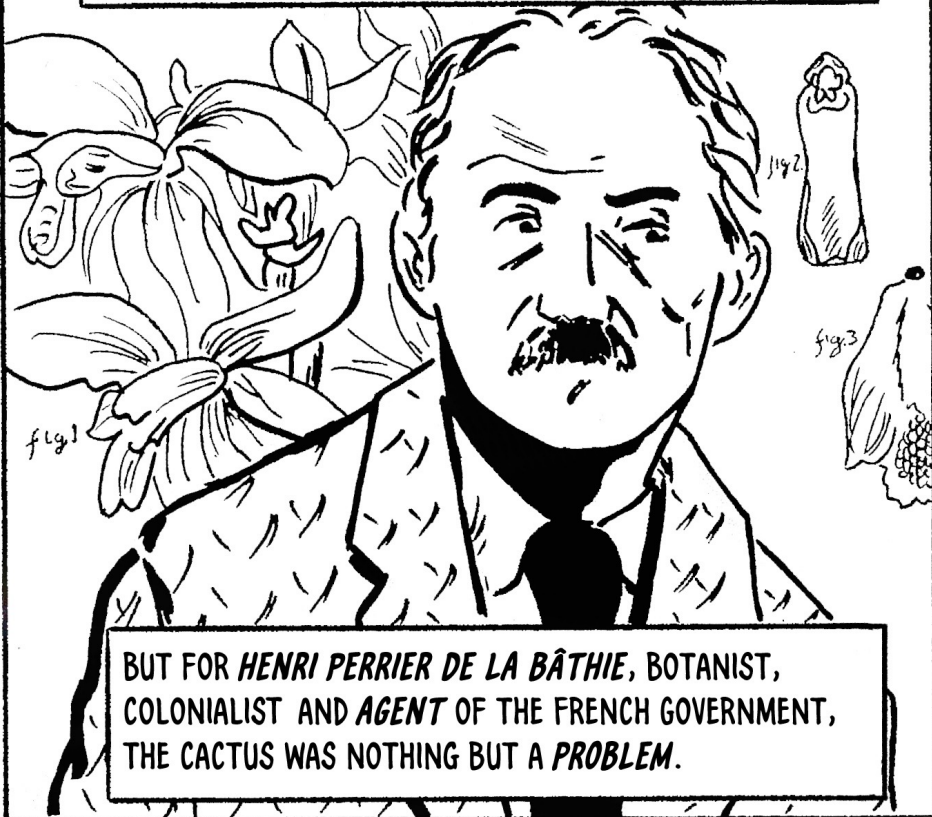
WHEN *FRENCH TROOPS* RETURNED OVER A HUNDRED YEARS LATER THEY FOUND THE PRICKLY PEAR HAD MADE THE REGION NEAR *IMPOSSIBLE* TO PENETRATE.

LOCAL *MALAGASY PASTORALISTS* FOUND A GREAT DEAL MORE USE FOR THE PRICKLY PEAR, *RAKETA*, AS IT WAS KNOWN, THAN THEY *FOUND* FOR THEIR WOULD BE COLONIAL CONQUERORS, AND WITH *CULTIVATION* THE CACTUS SPREAD ALL ACROSS THE SOUTH.

IT SOON BECAME AN *ESSENTIAL* SUBSISTENCE RESOURCE TO THE TANDROY, KAREMBOLA AND MAHAFALE PEOPLES. *PROVIDING* FOOD AND WATER TO *BOTH* FARMERS AND THEIR CATTLE.

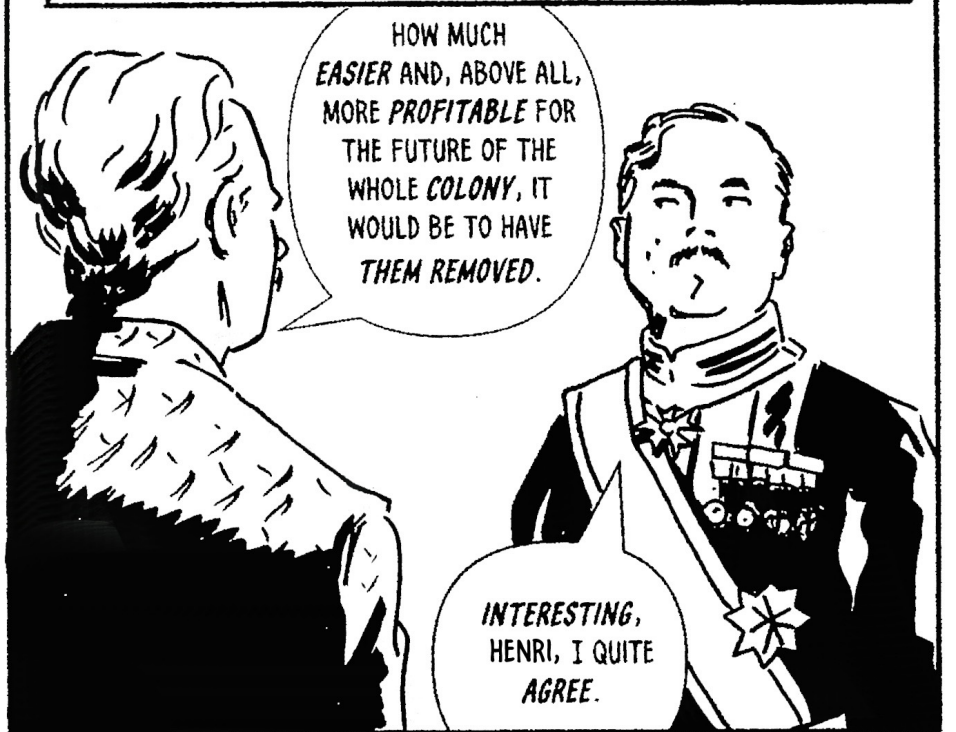
PASTORALISTS OFTEN *SHAPED* THE CACTUS PLANTS INTO NATURAL FENCES, ENCLOSING CATTLE AND AIDING THE *PROTECTION* AND MANAGEMENT OF HERDS.

BY THE 20TH CENTURY THE PRICKLY PEAR HAD BECOME AN ESTABLISHED AND *ESSENTIAL* PART OF LIFE IN THE REGION.



BUT FOR *HENRI PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE*, BOTANIST, COLONIALIST AND *AGENT* OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, THE CACTUS WAS NOTHING BUT A *PROBLEM*.

PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE AND *MARCEL OLIVIER*, MADAGASCARS' BRUTAL GOVERNOR GENERAL, SAW THE SOUTHERN *PASTORALISTS* AS AN *IMPEDIMENT* TO FURTHER FRENCH PROJECTS IN THE SOUTH AND SOUGHT *DRASTIC SOLUTIONS*.

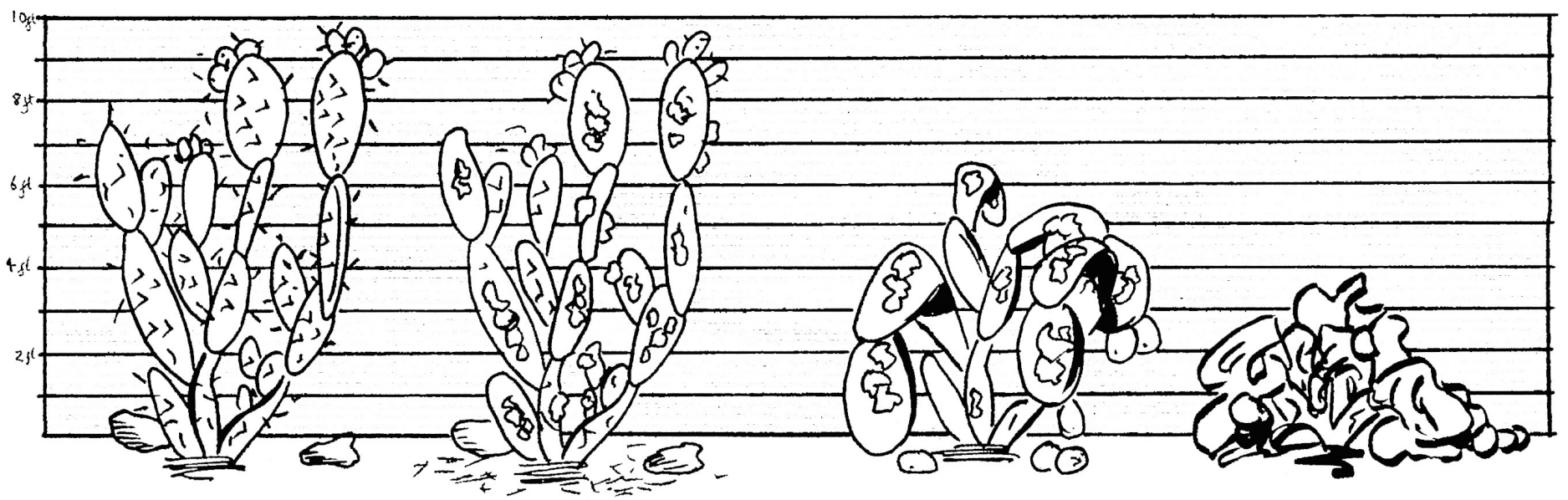


PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE, EVER THE BOTANIST, KNEW THE *IMPORTANCE* OF THE *PRICKLY PEAR* TO THE REGION AND UNDERSTOOD THAT ITS *ERADICATION* LIKELY MEANT THE *HUMAN* POPULATION WOULD SWIFTLY *FOLLOW*.



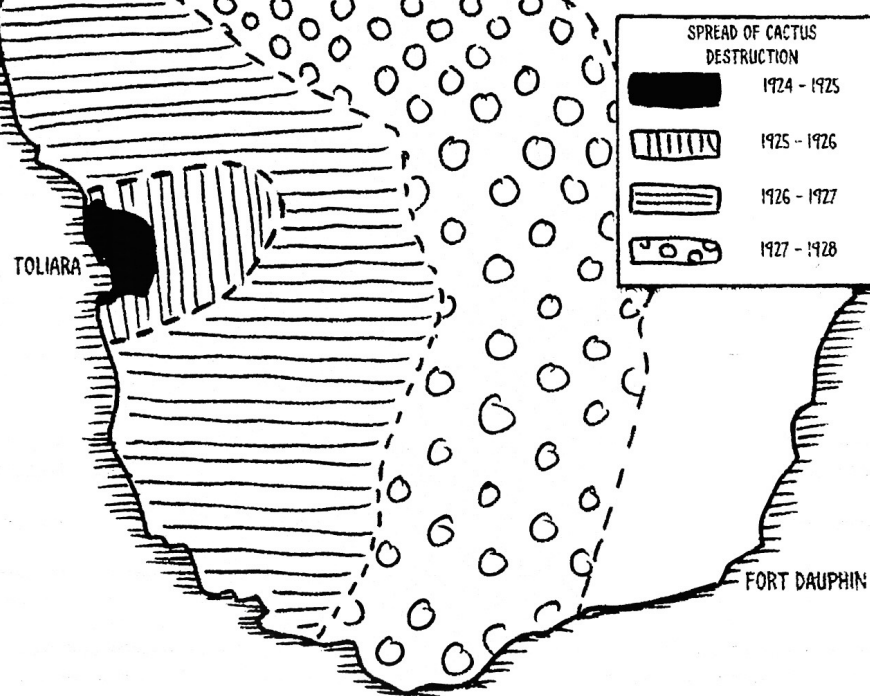
TO ACHIEVE THIS END HE EMPLOYED THE USE OF A POWERFUL *BIOLOGICAL WEAPON*, THE TINY INSECT, *COCHINEAL*.

THE USE OF COCHINEAL HAD BEEN PILOTED IN *AUSTRALIA* AS A MEANS OF *CONTROLLING* CACTUS PROPAGATION, WITH EXTREME EFFECT. THE RESULTS IN *MADAGASCAR* WERE NO LESS DEVASTATING.

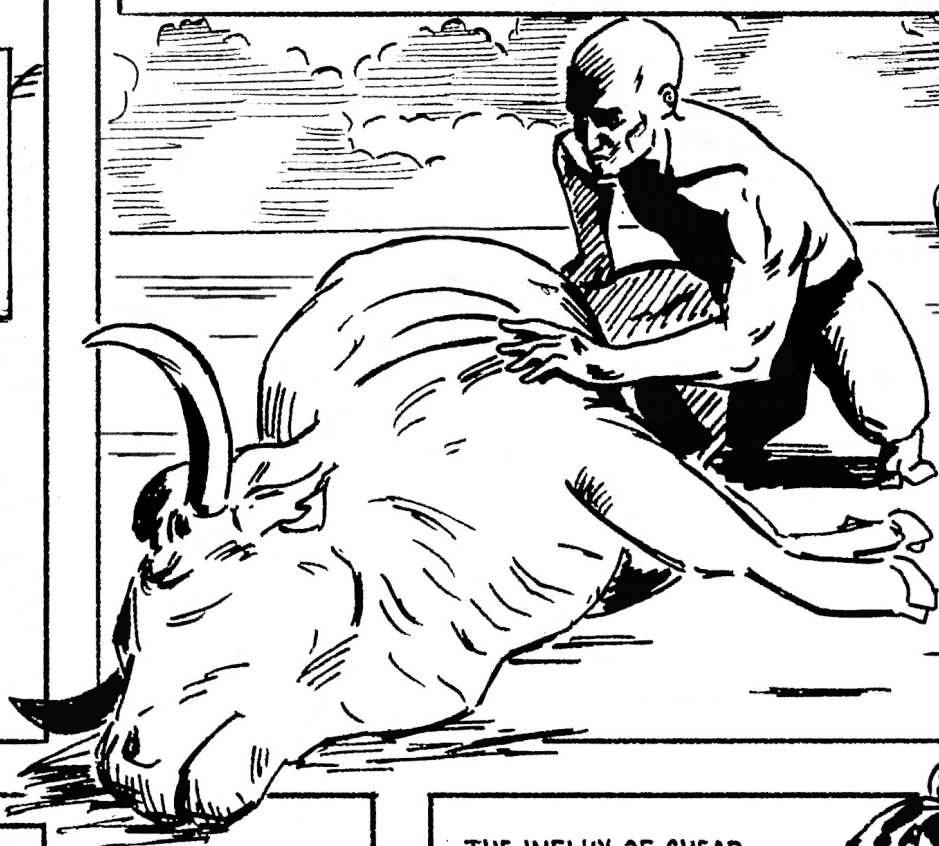


IN *NOVEMBER* OF 1924 A CONSIGNMENT OF *CULTIVATED* COCHINEAL REACHED TOLIARA, SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR, CARE OF BÂTHIE, AND WERE *RELEASED* INTO THE WILD.

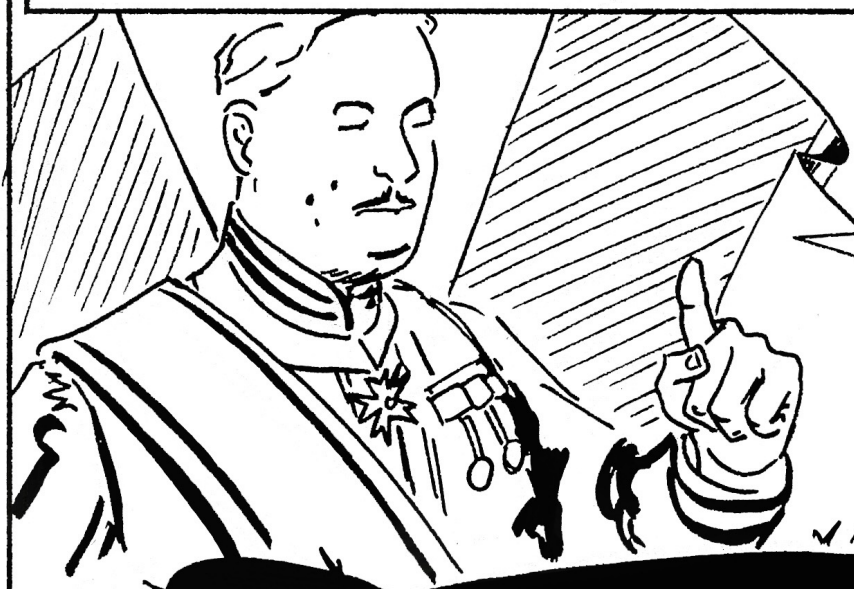
IN A MATTER OF *JUST* FOUR YEARS THE COCHINEAL HAD *SPREAD* ACROSS THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN REGION, LAYING WASTE TO THE *PRICKLY PEAR*, AND CAUSING UNTOLD *DISRUPTION* TO THE PASTORAL WAY OF LIFE.



ONCE LIVABLY LAND HAD NOW BECOME A DRY, DUSTY, *BONE YARD*. WITH STARVING CATTLE DYING IN *UNIMAGINABLE* NUMBERS, AND WITH THE CATTLE, SOON FOLLOWED THE *PEOPLE*. A KILLING FAMINE SWEEPED MADAGASCARS' DEEP SOUTH.



THOSE SPARED STARVATION, WERE *FORCED* TO FLEE THE DEVASTATED LAND TO LOOK FOR NEW MEANS OF SUPPORT. THE *DESTRUCTION* OF PASTORAL LIFE AND *MASS MIGRATION* HAD ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE AND OLIVIER'S *OBJECTIVES*.



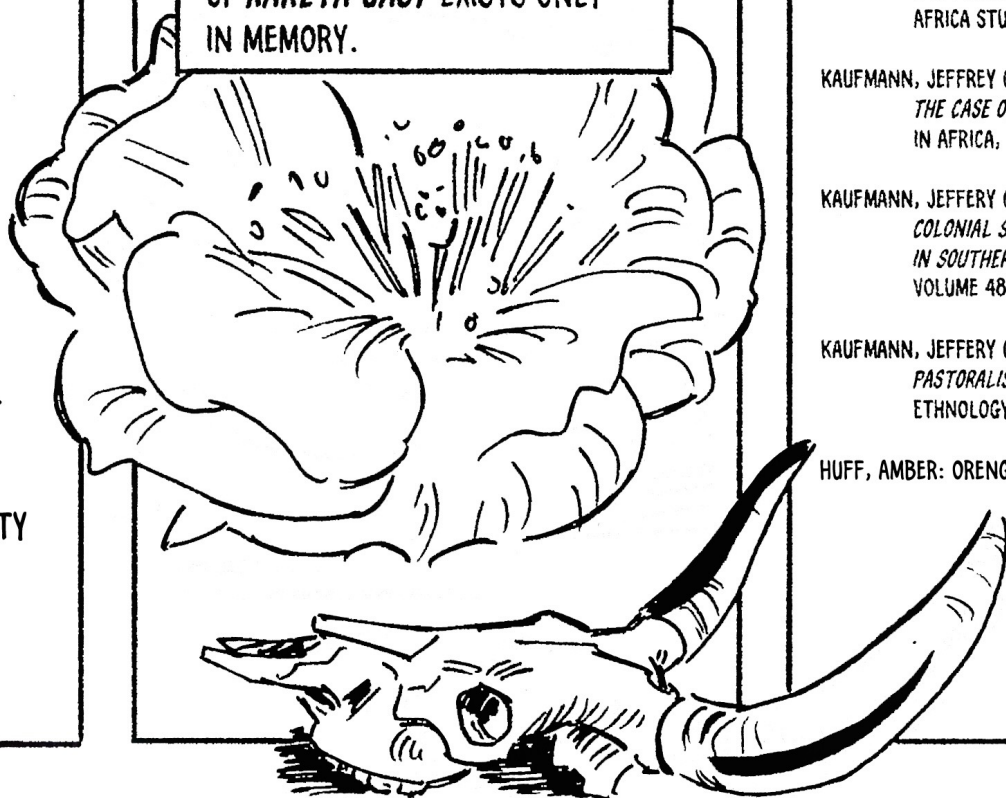
FOR THE NATIVE TO *WORK*, HE HAS TO HAVE *NEEDS*; BUT FOR HIM TO HAVE NEEDS, HE HAS TO *WORK*. ONLY *HUNGER* WILL GET THE BETTER OF THEIR *APATHY*.

THE INFLUX OF CHEAP, DESPERATE *LABOUR* TO CENTRAL MADAGASCAR, AIDED FRENCH COLONIAL PLANS.



PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE'S *RACIALIZED* CRITIQUE OF PASTORALISM, HIS *PSEUDO SCIENTIFIC* APPROACH AND *PATERNALISTIC* LANGUAGE WAS PART OF A WIDER TREND IN COLONIAL THINKING WHICH CAME TO FORM THE BEDROCK OF A *WHITE-SUPREMACIST* RHETORIC OF *CONSERVATION* AND THE 'DEGRADATION MYTHS' THAT STILL PERMEATES NEO-COLONIALIST *DISCOURSE* IN SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR. 'RECEIVED WISDOMS' AND SEDIMENTED KNOWLEDGE TRAVEL THROUGH TIME, IN THIS CASE TO SHAPE THE COLONIALITY OF VIOLENT CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE EVEN TODAY.

AS FOR THE *PRICKLY PEAR*, SOME COCHINEAL RESISTANT STRAINS PERSIST, BUT THE GOLDEN AGE OF *RAKETA GASY* EXISTS ONLY IN MEMORY.



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