

A collage of various African people, including men, women, and children, with different hairstyles and traditional clothing. A white speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing the text "CONTEXT NOT AVAILABLE".

**CONTEXT  
NOT  
AVAILABLE**

**CONTEXT NOT AVAILABLE:** *ON THE POWER OF IMAGES* WAS CREATED AS PART OF THE EXHIBITION HISTORIES OF TANZANIA AT THE HUMBOLDT FORUM IN NOVEMBER 2024

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ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS:

STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, ETHNOLOGISCHES  
MUSEUM, BILDARCHIV DER DEUTSCHEN  
KOLONIALGESELLSCHAFT,  
UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK FRANKFURT AM MAIN

# THE WAKE

DEARLY BEREAVED,

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO  
OBSERVE THE WOUNDS OF THE  
COLONIAL GAZE, A DEATH BY A  
THOUSAND CUTS.

EACH CUT AN IMAGE THAT DISTORTED  
OUR HISTORY AND OUR PRESENT.

EACH IMAGE CHANGING HOW THE WORLD  
LOOKS AT US AND TREATS US, HOW WE LOOK  
AT OURSELVES AND TREAT OURSELVES.

PAIN WANTS SPACE TO SPEAK, TO TELL ITS STORY.

WATCH THE FIRE AND LISTEN TO HISTORY.



# REMEMBRANCE

RAW MATERIAL



COTTON MAKES THE BODY OF A  
KANGA, TRANSMITS HISTORIES IN IM-  
AGE AND WISDOM IN WORDS.

SISAL CAME SMUGGLED IN THE BODY  
OF A STUFFED CROCODILE,  
GERMANY'S CASH CROP,  
THEY CALLED IT GREEN GOLD.



WHERE THE GERMANS  
SEE COMMODITIES  
AND CAPITAL GAIN  
THE TANZANIANS SEE WHAT MAKES  
THEIR TRIBES THE SAME.



KINJIKITILE MAKES A HOLY WATER  
WITH CASTOR OIL AND MILLET  
TO PROTECT THE RESISTANCE FROM  
BULLETS

THEY UNITE UNDER THE CLOVE TO  
RECLAIM THEIR FREEDOM, LAND  
AND GRAINS.

# BOULDERS ARE FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER'

BOULDERS FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER ON  
THE PLAIN

THE GERMANS AND THE ENGLISH  
THEY RUN ABOUT TAKEN TO FLIGHT  
BECAUSE OF CATTLE (2×)

IT IS KNOWN ONLY [BY]  
KUBE, GOD, BABA KATAVI (2×)

THAT WHICH IS KNOCKING THE PEOPLE  
DIG DEEP, NG'WANA MAKOMA

TABORA BELONGS TO OTHERS  
THE BELGIANS, EATERS-OF-MEN! (2×)  
BOULDERS FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER ON  
THE PLAIN

THE GERMANS AND THE ENGLISH  
THEY RUN ABOUT TAKEN TO FLIGHT  
BECAUSE OF CATTLE



# INTERMENT

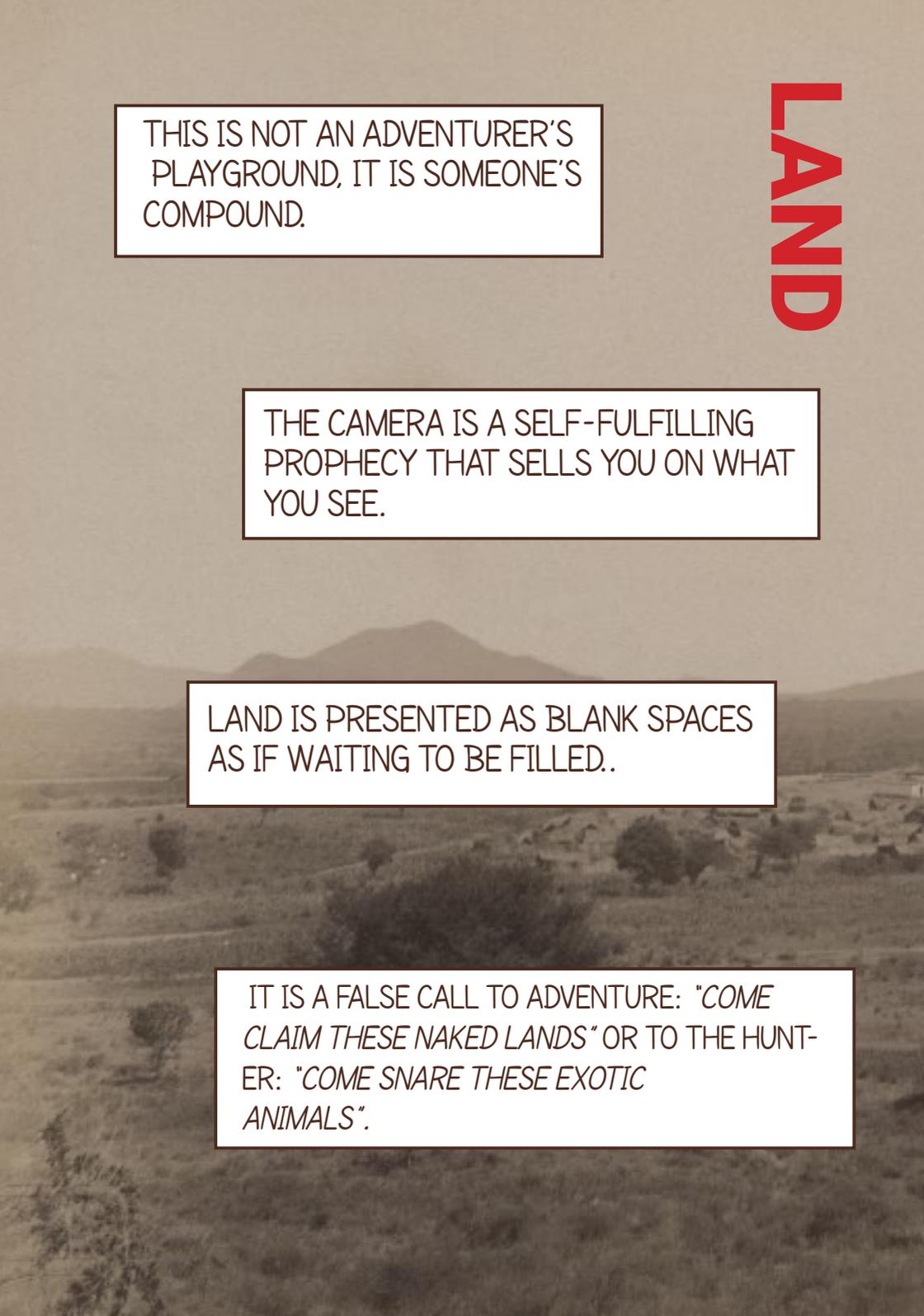
COLONIAL IMAGES FEED US A WARPED  
IDEA OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE AND  
LANDSCAPES AND LEAVE OUT CONTEXT  
AND UNDERSTANDING.

THIS IS THE IMAGISTIC TRAP AND IT  
REPLICATES ITSELF OVER TIME.

IF OUR IMAGINATION OF AFRICA IS  
BUILT ON A FALSE FOUNDATION,  
THEN CHANGING OUR MINDS REQUIRES  
REMOVING OR DESTROYING THAT  
FOUNDATION AND STARTING AFRESH.

YOU BURY WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU  
KNEW. YOU DISREGARD A HISTORY  
WRITTEN BY THE COLONIZERS AND  
OPEN UP TO AFRICANS' TELLING OF  
THEIR OWN HISTORY.

THAT IS HOW YOU ESCAPE THE  
IMAGISTIC TRAP.



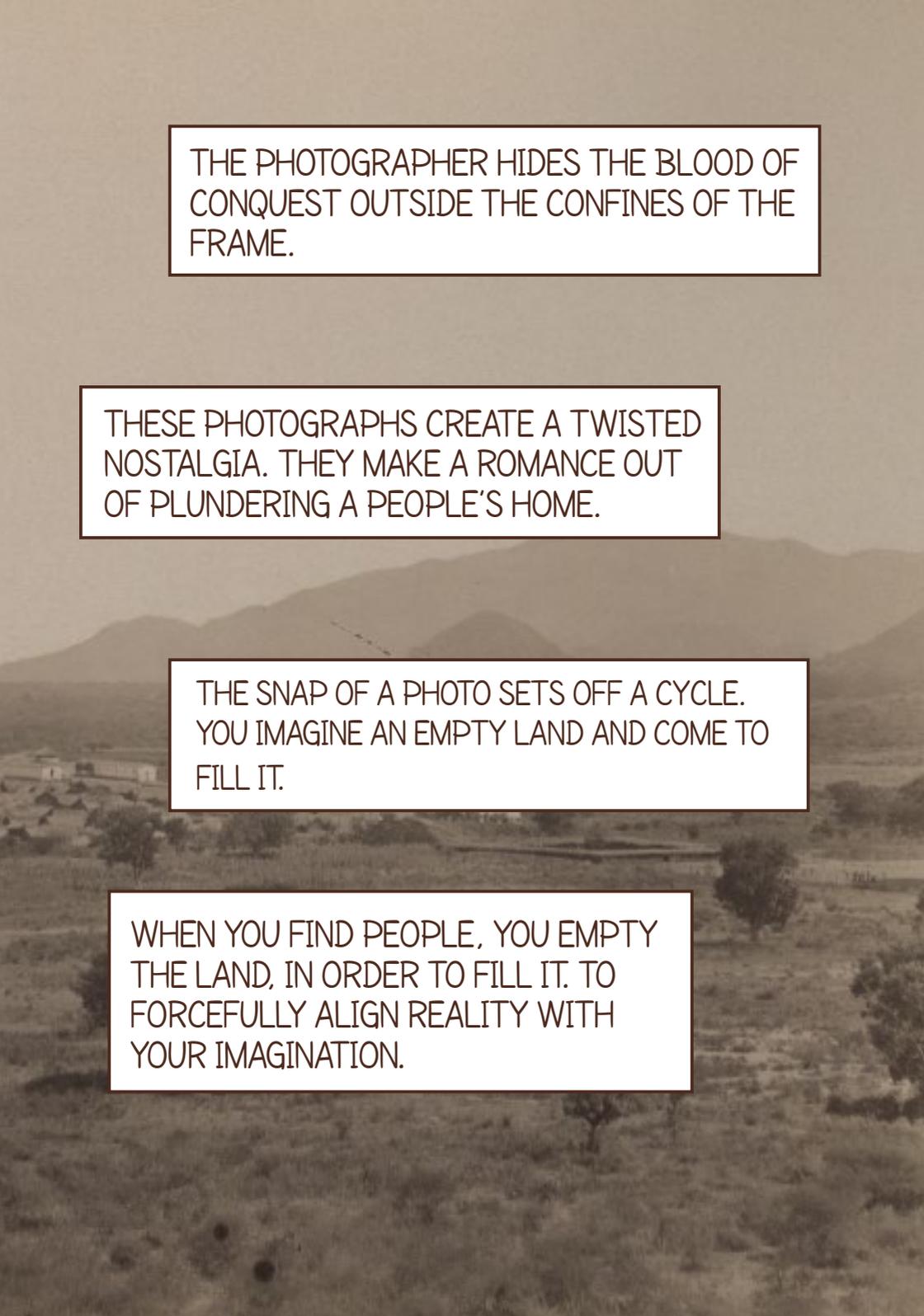
THIS IS NOT AN ADVENTURER'S  
PLAYGROUND, IT IS SOMEONE'S  
COMPOUND.

LAND

THE CAMERA IS A SELF-FULFILLING  
PROPHECY THAT SELLS YOU ON WHAT  
YOU SEE.

LAND IS PRESENTED AS BLANK SPACES  
AS IF WAITING TO BE FILLED..

IT IS A FALSE CALL TO ADVENTURE: "*COME  
CLAIM THESE NAKED LANDS*" OR TO THE HUNT-  
ER: "*COME SNARE THESE EXOTIC  
ANIMALS*".



THE PHOTOGRAPHER HIDES THE BLOOD OF CONQUEST OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE FRAME.

THESE PHOTOGRAPHS CREATE A TWISTED NOSTALGIA. THEY MAKE A ROMANCE OUT OF PLUNDERING A PEOPLE'S HOME.

THE SNAP OF A PHOTO SETS OFF A CYCLE. YOU IMAGINE AN EMPTY LAND AND COME TO FILL IT.

WHEN YOU FIND PEOPLE, YOU EMPTY THE LAND, IN ORDER TO FILL IT. TO FORCEFULLY ALIGN REALITY WITH YOUR IMAGINATION.

# BODY

BETWEEN MOMENTS OF EXPOSURE,  
SUBJECTS ARE TOLD TO DROP THEIR  
GARMENTS.

SOME LOOK AWAY TO HOLD IN THE  
HUMILIATION, OTHERS CHANNEL IT  
THROUGH A DEFIANT GAZE.



SOME LOOK AWAY TO HOLD IN THE  
HUMILIATION, OTHERS CHANNEL IT  
THROUGH  
A DEFIANT GAZE.



PHOTOS ARE TAKEN HEAD-ON AND SIDE-ON,  
LIKE MUGSHOTS, LIKE HOW SCIENTISTS  
CATEGORIZE SPECIES.



A SUBJECT'S LIKENESS IS CAPTURED AND SENT,  
WITHOUT A NAME, WITHOUT A STORY.

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE ARE THE BLOWS FROM THE  
HIPPO-HIDE WHIP.

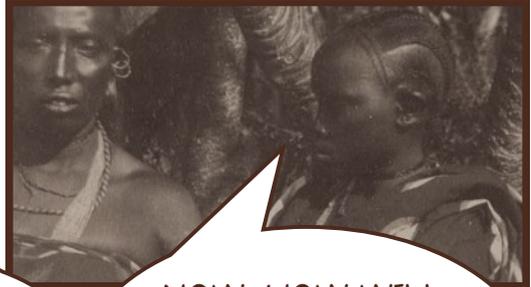
BUT YOU CAN FEEL IT, THE MOMENT OF IMPACT,

IN THE RESISTANCE, IN THE STANCE OF THE  
DEFIANT GAZE.



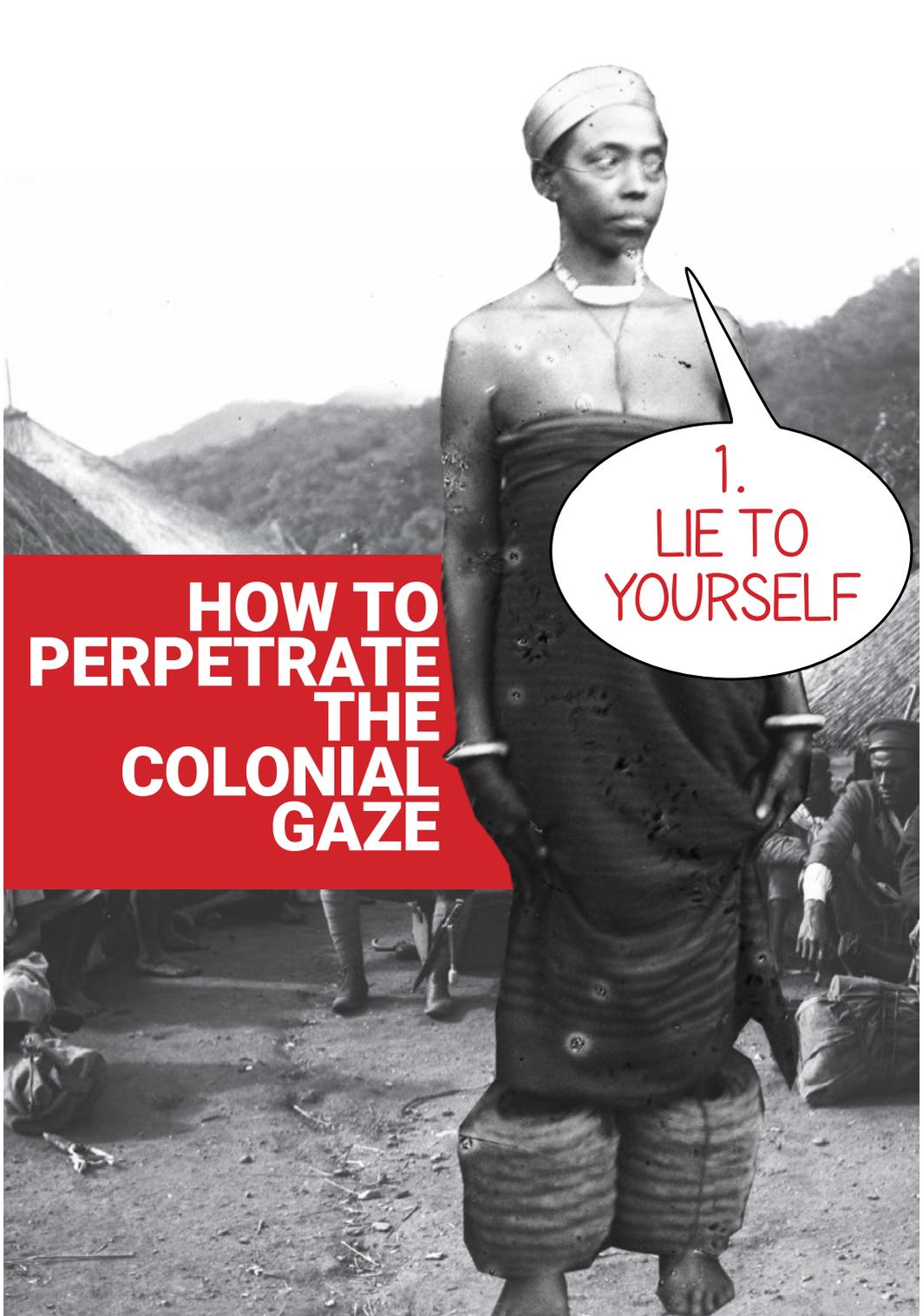
WE DID NOT  
CONSENT TO  
YOUR GAZE

TO RECORD OUR  
BODIES IN  
PERMANENCE.



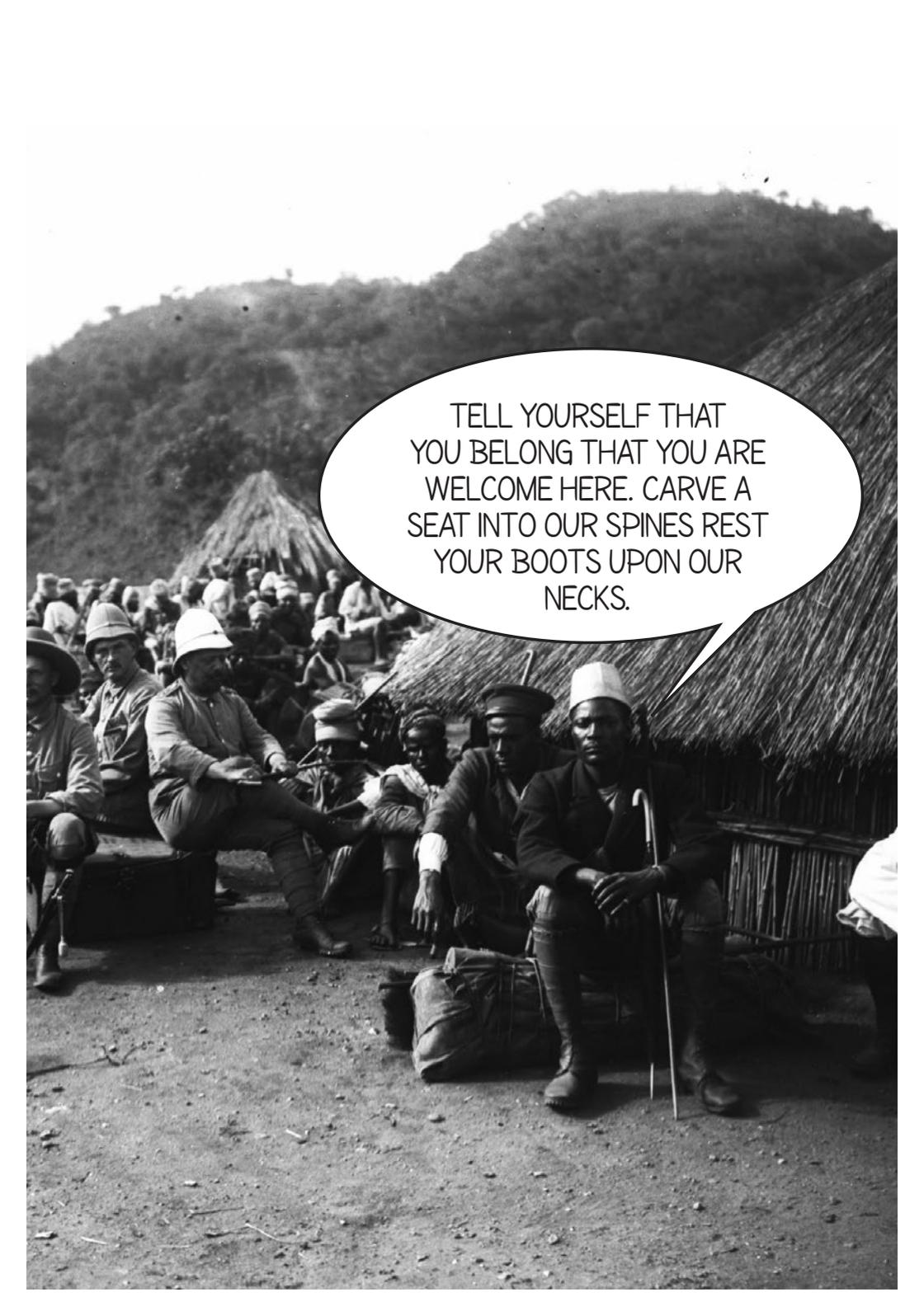
WE RECLAIM  
OUR RESPECT AND  
DIGNITY.

NOW, HOW WILL  
YOU TELL THIS STORY?  
WITHOUT RE-OPENING  
WOUNDS?

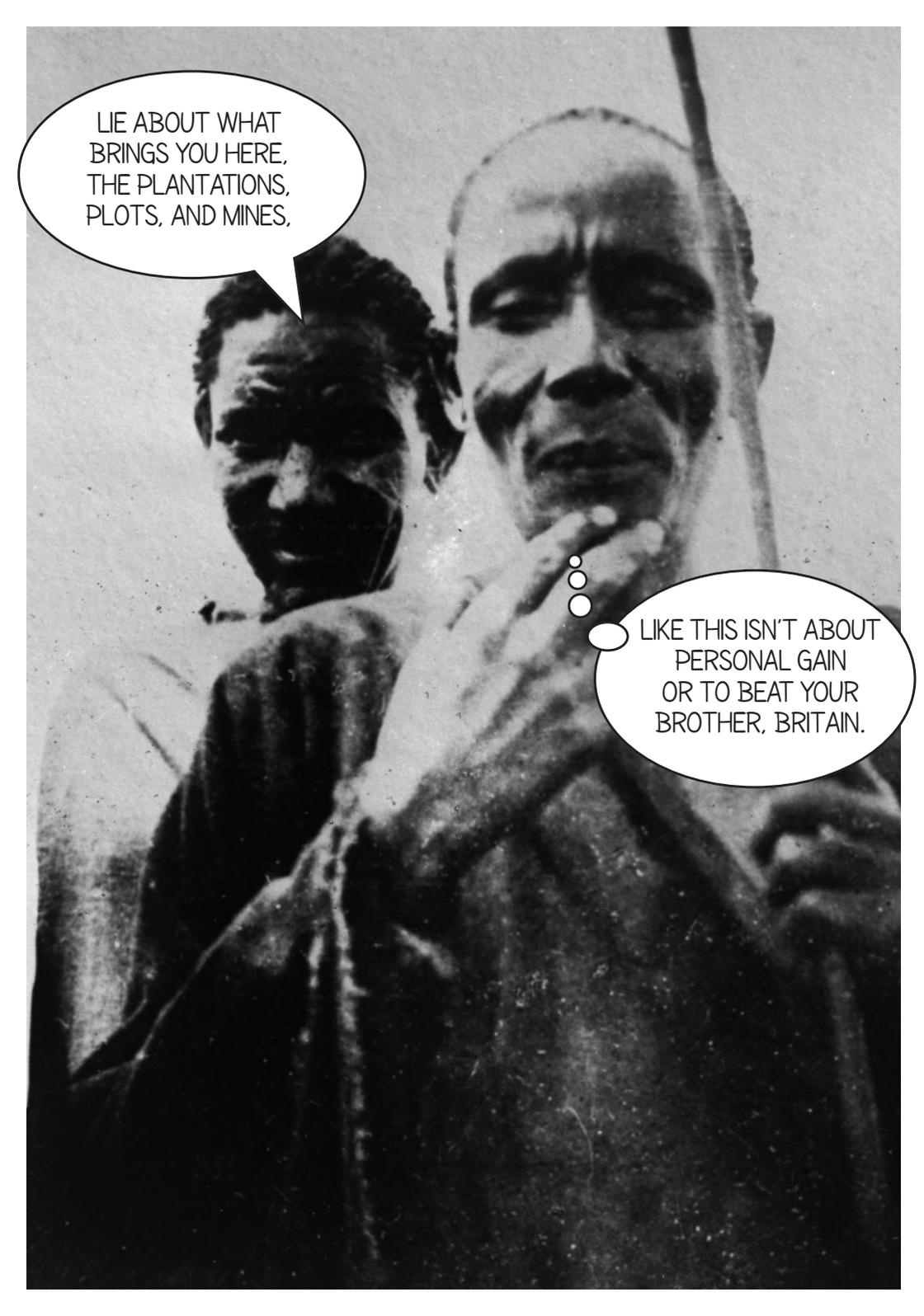


**HOW TO  
PERPETRATE  
THE  
COLONIAL  
GAZE**

1.  
LIE TO  
YOURSELF

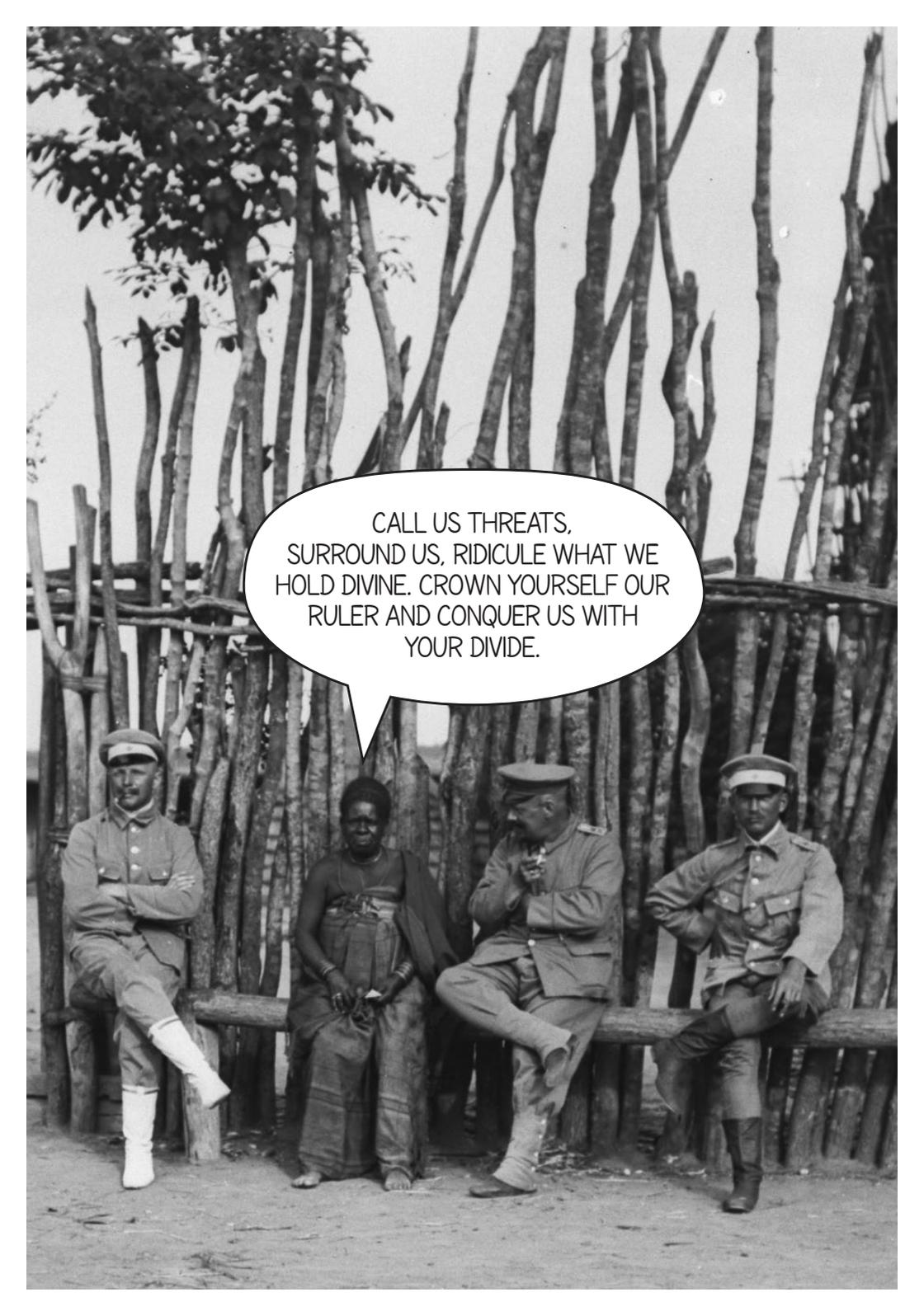


TELL YOURSELF THAT  
YOU BELONG THAT YOU ARE  
WELCOME HERE. CARVE A  
SEAT INTO OUR SPINES REST  
YOUR BOOTS UPON OUR  
NECKS.



LIE ABOUT WHAT  
BRINGS YOU HERE,  
THE PLANTATIONS,  
PLOTS, AND MINES,

LIKE THIS ISN'T ABOUT  
PERSONAL GAIN  
OR TO BEAT YOUR  
BROTHER, BRITAIN.



CALL US THREATS,  
SURROUND US, RIDICULE WHAT WE  
HOLD DIVINE. CROWN YOURSELF OUR  
RULER AND CONQUER US WITH  
YOUR DIVIDE.

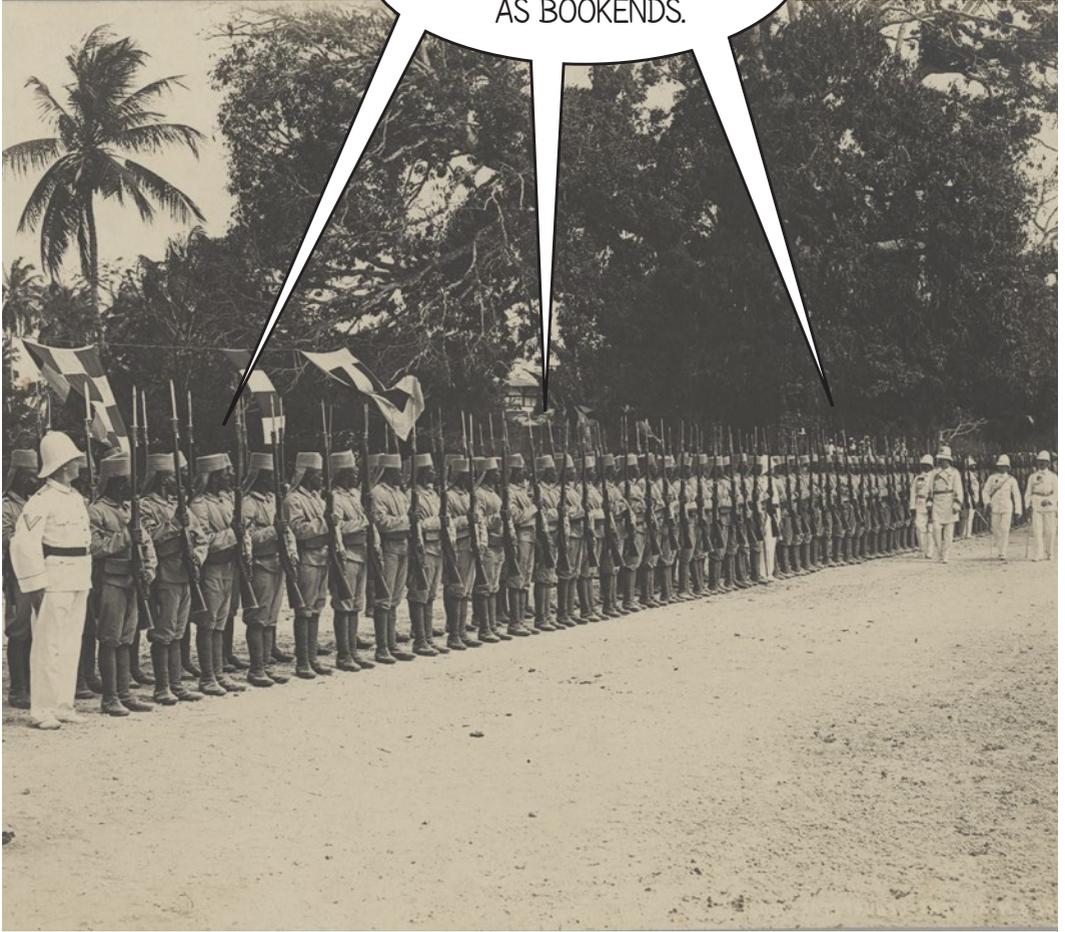




DISMANTLE OUR CIRCLES  
OF GATHERING AND HAMMER  
THEM INTO STRICT LINES.



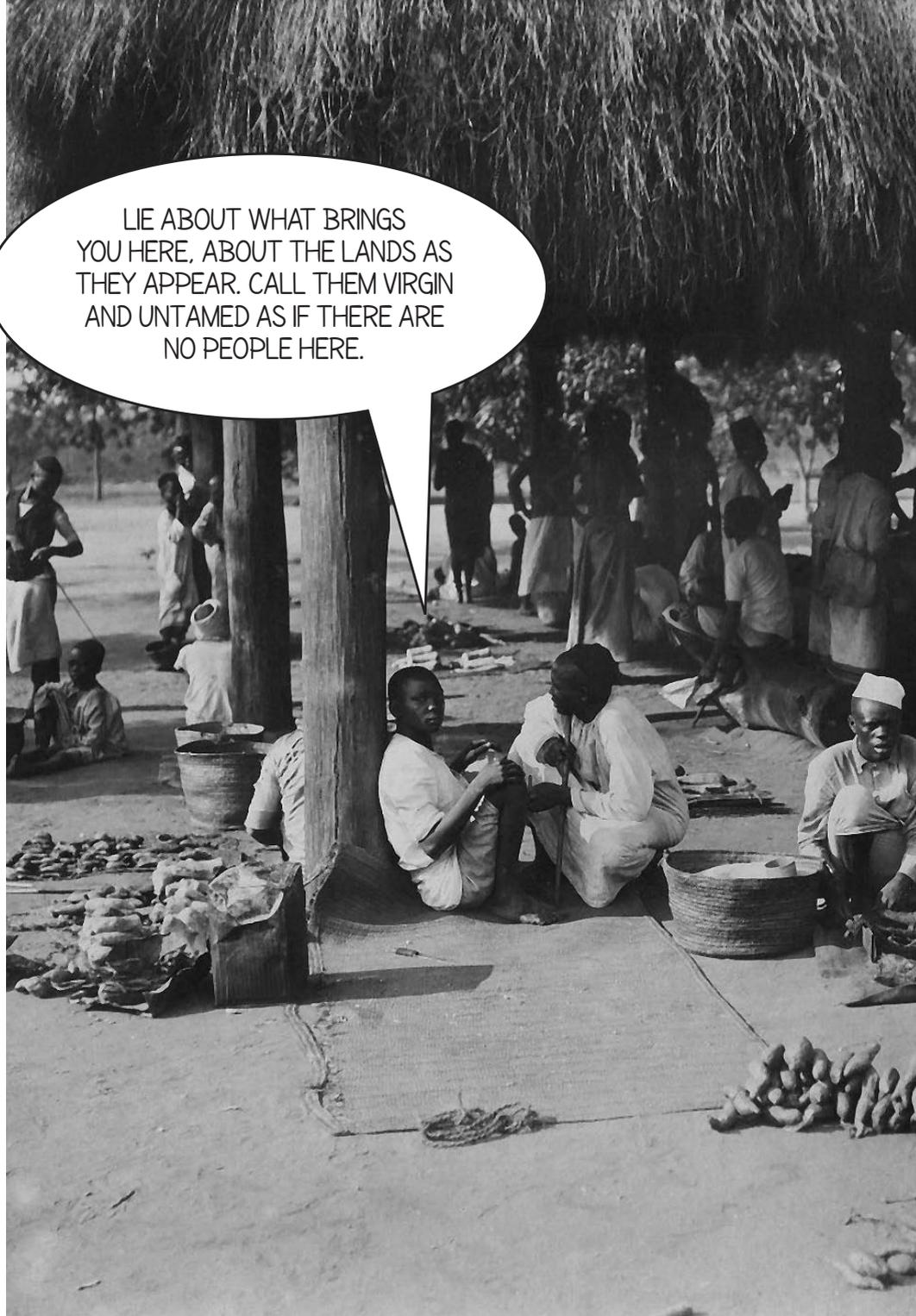
FRAME AND FREEZE  
US IN PLACE  
USING YOUR WHITENESS  
AS BOOKENDS.





2.  
LIE TO  
OTHERS

LIE ABOUT WHAT BRINGS  
YOU HERE, ABOUT THE LANDS AS  
THEY APPEAR. CALL THEM VIRGIN  
AND UNTAMED AS IF THERE ARE  
NO PEOPLE HERE.

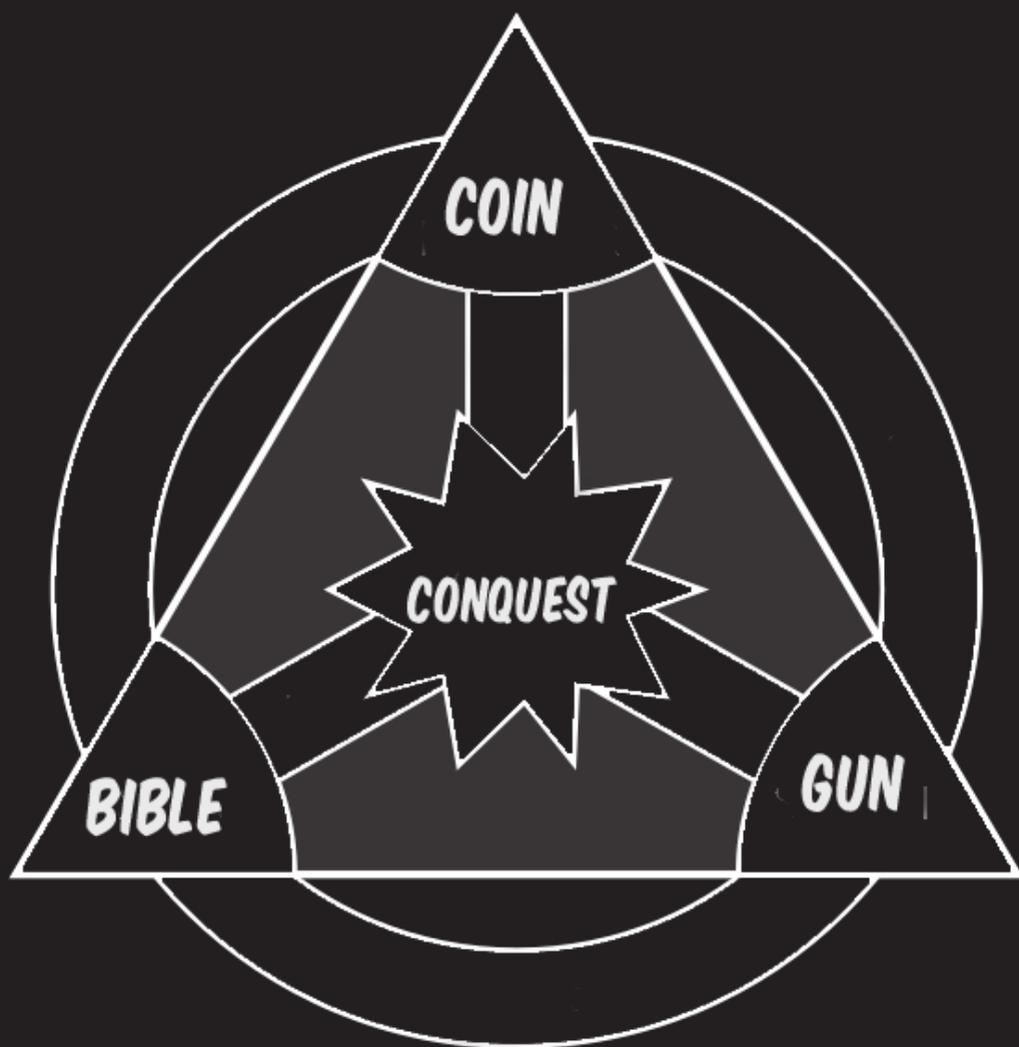




SAY YOU'VE COME TO  
CIVILIZE WITH BIBLE,  
COIN AND GUN,

WHEN YOU REALLY  
MEAN TO BRUTALIZE  
WITH BIBLE, COIN AND  
GUN.

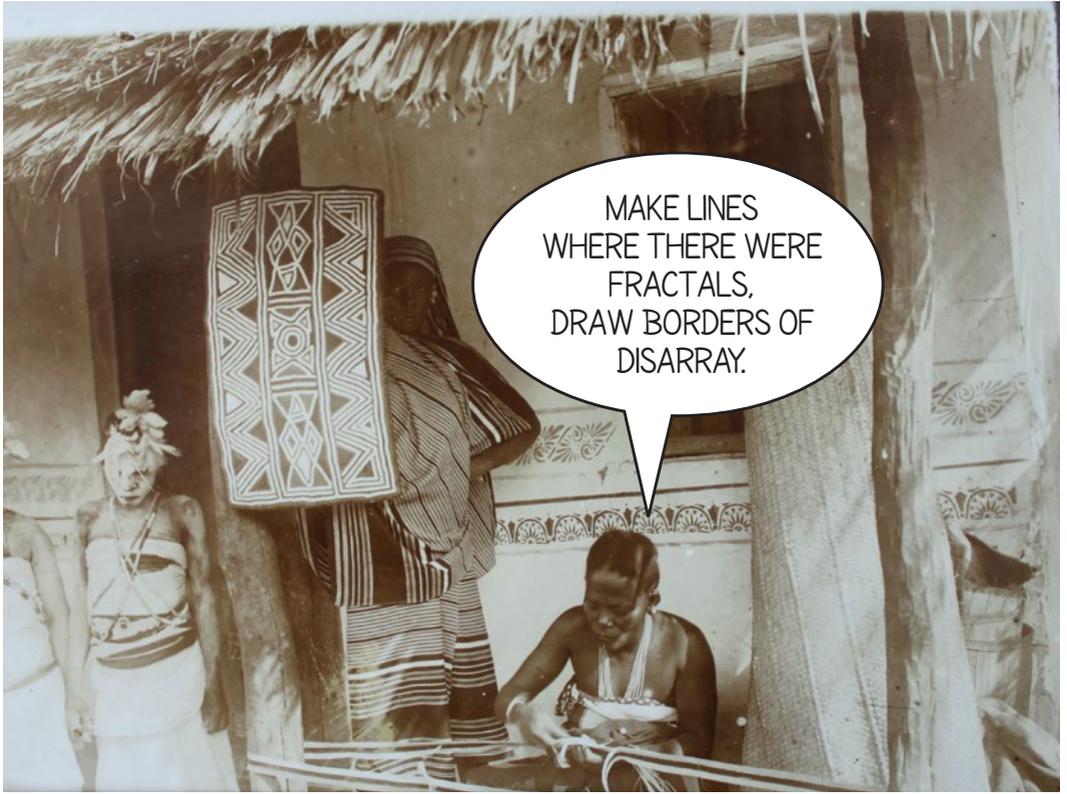
THE  
HOLY  
TRINITY





CHOOSE WHAT YOU  
ADVERTISE IN YOUR  
LETTERS HOME, TELL LIES.  
CUT COLONIES FROM  
KINGDOMS TAKE OUR  
HOMES

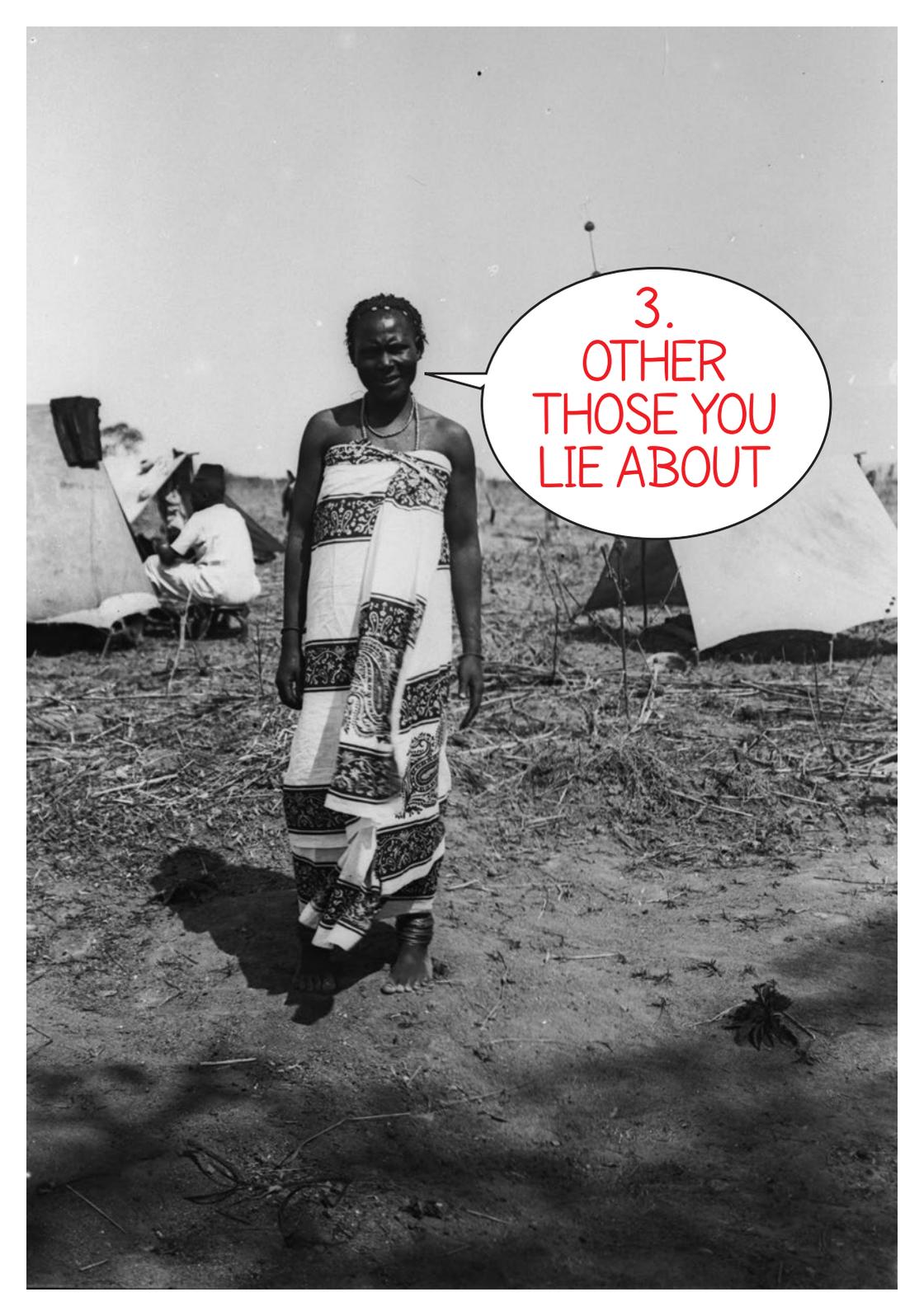




MAKE LINES  
WHERE THERE WERE  
FRACTALS,  
DRAW BORDERS OF  
DISARRAY.



TAKE PHOTOS  
BUT LEAVE OUT MEANING,  
CARRY US OUT OF OUR  
CONTEXT.



3.  
OTHER  
THOSE YOU  
LIE ABOUT



BRING THE VIOLENCE  
OF A VOYEUR  
INTRUDE ON OUR PRIVATE  
MOMENTS.

MAKE US STRIP FOR  
YOUR CAMERA CRIMINALIZE  
US WITH MUGSHOTS.

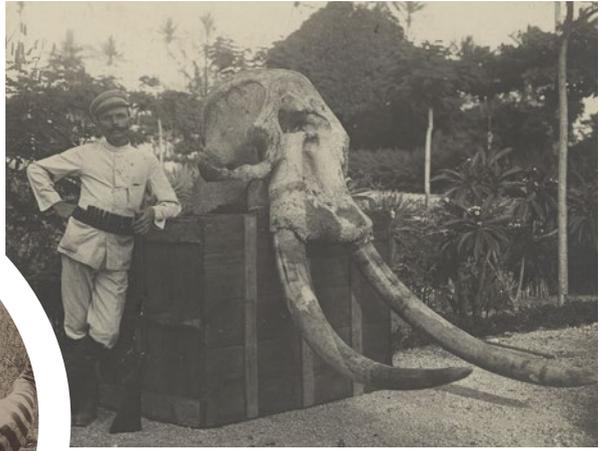
CROSS EACH ONE  
OF OUR BOUNDARIES  
AND NEVER LET US  
TELL OUR STORY.



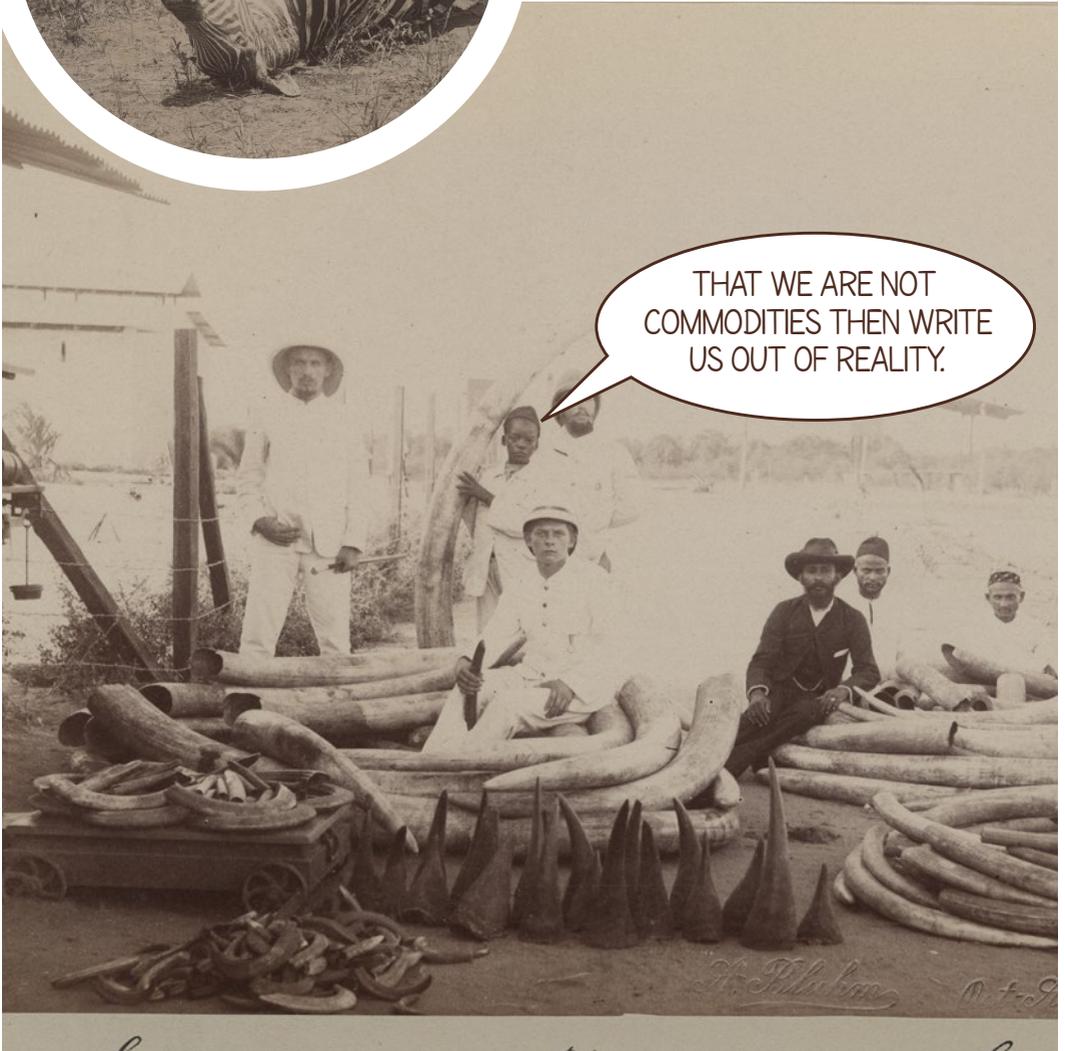


SEIZE US, OUR LAND,  
OUR CROPS AND TURN US  
INTO PROPS.

KILL, EXTRACT  
AND SELL, REPEAT UNTIL  
YOU CAN'T TELL



THAT WE ARE NOT  
COMMODITIES THEN WRITE  
US OUT OF REALITY.





PRAISE ONE TRIBE  
AND LOWER ANOTHER.  
TURN US AGAINST EACH OTHER.  
BE THE ONE TO WRITE THE  
NARRATIVE AND CENTER  
YOUR PERSPECTIVE.



WE ARE THE ELEPHANT  
AND AN ELEPHANT NEVER  
FORGETS, BUT THOSE WHO  
IGNORE ITS MEMORY WILL BE  
TRAMPLED TWICE, AT BEST.





FULL PHOTO CREDITS

WORKS CITED AND  
FURTHER READING