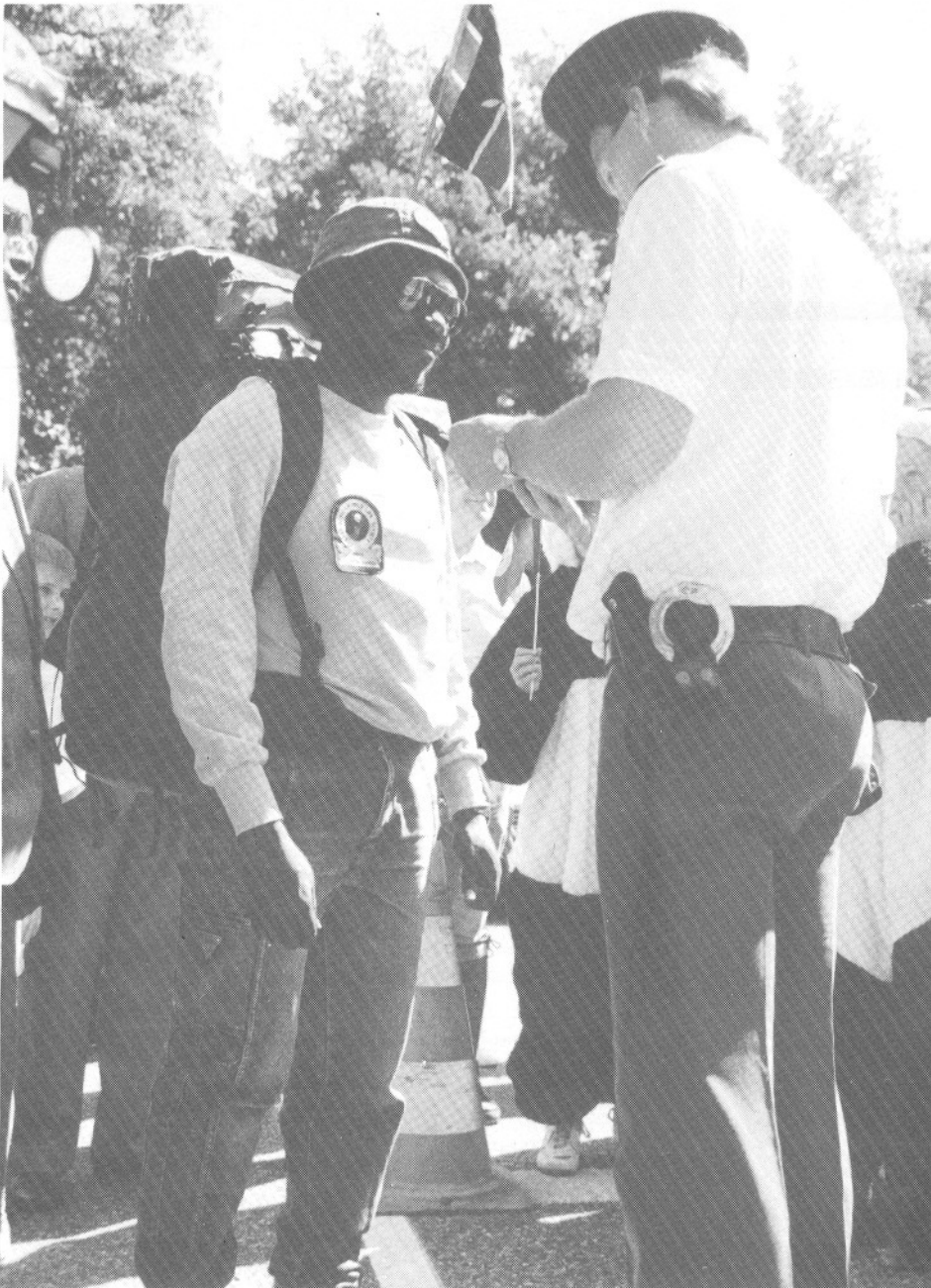


Rhino Man

Michael Werikhe's walk through Europe, raising money to save East Africa's black rhinos, continued to attract enthusiastic support in Switzerland and West Germany. At a major press conference in Zurich, Kenya's Consul General spoke about what his government has done so far to try and rescue Kenya's rhinos.



Michael Werikhe going through passport control on the German-Netherlands border on 28 July.

A joyous surprise awaited Michael Werikhe when he walked down from the high peaks of the Alps: his wife Helen! Helen Werikhe flew to Switzerland to visit her husband in the middle of his trans-Europe trek in aid of the black rhino. Her air ticket was a generous gift from Werikhe's employers, Associated Vehicle Assemblers (AVA), and from Let's Go Travel.

Helen walked with her husband for a while, then visited some of the scenic lakes and mountains. 'Thank you all,' she said as she returned to Mombasa to wait for the birth of their child in September. 'I was so happy to be with Mike, and I was encouraged to see that many people in Europe are supporting our efforts to defend our environment.'

Kenya's Consul General in Zurich, Mr Sylvester Aluku, was the Werikhes' host in Zurich, and also gave invaluable support to Michael during discussions with various conservation organisations. At a major press conference in Zurich, Consul General Aluku outlined the Kenyan government's policy in rhino conservation:

'Many times we have been asked the question: Are the people of Africa doing enough to protect their endangered wildlife? Today I would like to tell you what the government of Kenya is doing:

'Since independence, the numbers of national parks and game reserves in Kenya has increased from 11 to 52. Some 7.5 per cent of Kenya's land area is now protected for the future, as compared with 3 per cent in the United States.

'Hunting of wild animals and trade in wildlife products have been banned, and large mammals such as zebras and wildebeest have made spectacular increases. It is illegal to buy ivory in Kenya — whereas it is still legal in many Western industrialised countries today.

'To protect the black rhinoceros, the Kenyan government has established special sanctuaries in the rhinos' own natural habitat. These sanctuaries are like small national parks, but well fenced and heavily guarded. Many of the sanctuaries are

within the parks themselves. Others have been established on private ranches.

'Rhinos in areas where they are at risk, or rhinos in overcrowded areas, are translocated to the sanctuaries. There they have the space to establish breeding territories, and to breed naturally. In time, if the trade in rhino products eases, these protected populations can be moved back into the larger parks.

'I would like to emphasise here that Kenya's rhino sanctuaries are natural areas where rhinos now occur in the wild, or have occurred very recently. The sanctuaries range in size from 6,500 hectares to 18,800 hectares – definitely not "glorified zoos" as has been stated in some quarters!

'The whole of **Nakuru National Park** is a rhino sanctuary, and already 19 rhinos have been translocated there. All 188 square kilometres are completely fenced, making it the largest sanctuary in Kenya. The fence is approximately two metres in height and 74 kilometres around. It is electrified, powered by solar energy. This sanctuary is virtually complete. Two dams under construction will be finished soon, and three more boreholes need to be drilled.

'All of **Nairobi National Park** is a rhino sanctuary, and the park is being rehabilitated to provide greater security. A new electrified fence is being put up, dams are being cleaned and repaired, and vehicles put into service. This popular park, within the Nairobi city limits, is home to 33 rhinos.

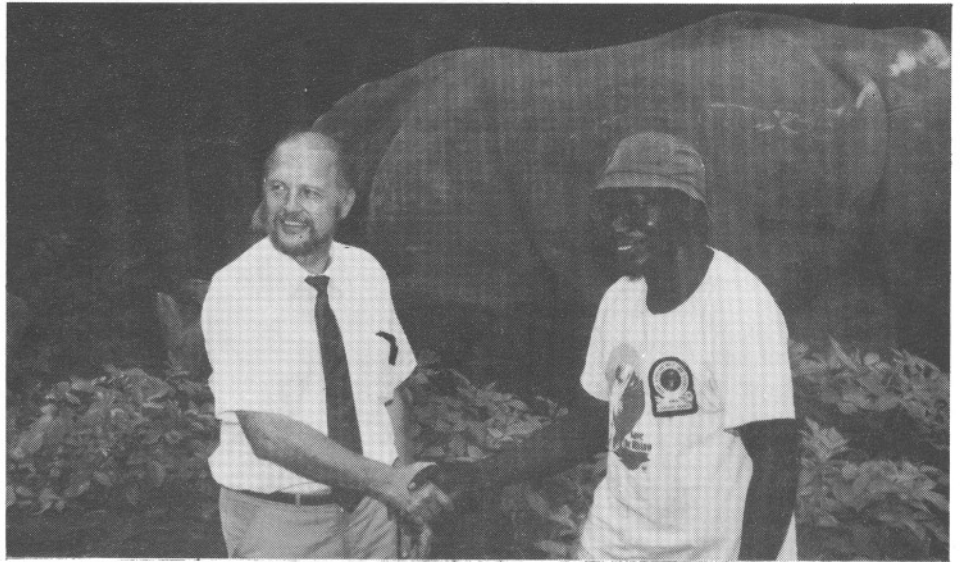
'The **Meru** rhino sanctuary is a ring-fenced portion of **Meru National Park** approximately 40 square kilometres in size. It has just been completed, and translocation of rhinos into the sanctuary has begun.

'There are now eight rhinos in the 20 square kilometres of **Ngulia** sanctuary in **Tsavo West National Park**, and 100 to 150 rhinos in the park as a whole. The sanctuary area needs to be expanded, and more boreholes drilled in this dry countryside.

'The **Salient** area in the **Aberdare National Park** will be ring-fenced as a sanctuary. Ten kilometres out of 42 have already been cleared for fencing. Fencing posts and fencing wires are being donated by various conservation organisations. A lorry has been reconditioned to transport the necessary construction equipment and will later be used to translocate rhinos. Guard posts and surveillance paths through thick mountain forest must be built, and radio equipment is needed.

'In the central area of the **Masai Mara National Reserve**, there are 19 rhinos which are under surveillance. There has been a lot of discussion as to how best to protect them. At present, all that is feasible is surveillance; a fence would be quickly destroyed by the numerous nomadic elephant groups.

'The black rhinoceros occurs in many parts of Kenya, protected and unprotected, from arid scrubland to high forest. All the rhinos come under direct control of the Kenyan government's Wildlife Conservation and Management Department. Research is helping us learn more about the rhino's ecology and needs, and before a sanctuary is established, a study is carried



Michael Werikhe shakes the hand of the Director of the Cologne Zoo, Professor Dr G. Nogge, in front of the zoo's black rhino.



Michael arrives at the German-Netherlands border on 28 July. On his right is Mr B. K. Mbaya, First Secretary of the Kenyan Embassy in The Hague. A full report on Michael's walk through the Netherlands will appear in the next issue of Swara.

out to determine whether the vegetation, water and other environmental factors are adequate. If there is a deficiency, boreholes are dug and supplements provided.

'Rhino sanctuaries require more capital, however, than other protected areas. They need fencing, guarding, and often, additional sources of permanent water. Conservation organisations have rallied to the cause and done a magnificent job of aiding the Kenyan government. They have provided fencing, pumps, vehicles, aircraft and other equipment; they have funded surveys and ecological studies, and kept the public informed.'

'Don't buy ivory, rhino horn, corals or other souvenirs made from wild animals!' Michael Werikhe added as he walked north into West Germany.

From the famous Frankfurt Zoo, Werikhe addressed some seven million West German television viewers. Appalled at the destruction caused by industrial pollution in Germany, he urged viewers to take an active part in the conservation of their own environment. The Chairman of the Frankfurt Zoological Society,

Dr Richard Faust, the head of the World Wide Fund for Nature in West Germany, Mr M. Nietisch, and the Press Attache at the Kenyan Embassy in Bonn, Mr Richard Sanga, joined Werikhe for the press conference at the zoo.

In five weeks, Werikhe covered some 900 kilometres through West Germany, walking up to 50 kilometres a day, then giving lectures and interviews in the evenings.

He discussed the dangers facing the natural environment at the Pfalz museum für Naturkunde in Bad Dürkheim, and with the Deputy Mayor of Bonn, Mrs Christiane Waltraud, and the director of the Cologne Zoo, Professor G. Nogge. With the assistance of the Kenyan Embassy in Bonn and of the East African Wild Life Society representatives Mr Horst Dintelmann and Dr V. Canaris, Werikhe addressed several press conferences in Bonn and Cologne, and spoke out on conservation issues.

'When a man dies, another is born,' Werikhe reminded the media. 'But when a species is extinct, it is for ever.'

compiled by Fleur Ng'weno