

'No matter how much or how little they've got, they can't
settle down': A social history of Europeans on the
Zambian Copperbelt, 1926-1974

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Short abstract

This thesis traces the social history of the European community on the Zambian Copperbelt from the onset of copper mining in 1926 to the mid-1970s when a dramatic slump in the price of copper generated severe economic difficulties. There has been almost no academic work on the Copperbelt's European community and, in this respect, this thesis fills an important gap. However, a focus on the European community has a wider significance than filling this gap.

Although the Copperbelt has generally been understood in a national or regional context, this thesis argues that developments there are better understood by exploring how the Copperbelt was linked to other mining regions around the world; in Britain, South Africa, the US and Australia. The European community was largely composed of highly mobile, transient individuals, and the constant movement of people made and sustained transnational connections.

Mobility and transience are crucial to two of the main themes of this thesis: class consciousness and the importance of race. Class was a strong marker of identity for Europeans and a variant of 'white labourism' dominated life on the Copperbelt. Industrial unrest was a regular occurrence in the life of the European community as strikes and other disputes underpinned extraordinary levels of affluence. The frequency of industrial unrest diminishes the relevance of South Africa as a viable comparison, as does the relative lack of importance of race. This thesis argues that the predominant attitude of Europeans toward the African majority around them was one of indifference and that the importance of 'African advancement' has been overstated.

Archival collections in Zambia and Britain constitute the main sources for this thesis. These sources are supplemented with material from archives in South Africa and Netherlands, contemporary publications including newspapers, and interviews with former European residents of the Copperbelt.

Long abstract

This thesis follows the social history of the European community on the Zambian Copperbelt – a cluster of copper mines and towns that grew up around them stretched out along the border of what are now Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It traces this history from the onset of copper mining in 1926 to the mid-1970s when a dramatic slump in the price of copper generated severe economic difficulties. The primary argument is that although the Copperbelt has generally been understood in a national or regional context, this thesis argues that developments there are better understood by exploring how the Copperbelt was linked to other mining regions around the world; in Britain, South Africa, the US and Australia. A focus on the Copperbelt's European community is an effective way to trace these links as it was a community largely comprised of highly-mobile transient individuals.

There is a rich academic literature about the Copperbelt. Seemingly dramatic economic and social transformations in the region have attracted the attentions of anthropologists, political scientists, and historians since the 1940s. Yet, a consideration of Europeans on the Copperbelt is absent from this large body of work. There has been almost no academic work conducted on the Copperbelt's European community, with the exception of one journal article by Ian Phimister. This thesis addresses this gap and also shows how a study of the European community is relevant to wider histories. The Copperbelt's European community were important because of the wider histories a study of this group contributes to. The European community had an ambiguous identity and status. They were half-way between expatriates and prospective locals, in some ways a working-class community but with some of the tastes and recreational pastimes of social elites elsewhere and a masculine community with, by the 1950s, almost equal numbers of men and women.

This thesis does not treat each section of the European community equally. Its primary focus is the white mineworkers who formed the core of the European community. The tens of thousands of white mineworkers who were recruited to the Copperbelt mines from the late 1920s onwards were part of a primarily English-speaking labour diaspora with a global reach that linked mining centres around the world. They brought with them a seemingly contradictory ideology of industrial militancy and racial exclusivity which came to dominate life on the Copperbelt. The creation, rise and disappearance of this class, and the world its members inhabited, forms a central part of this thesis. The migration of these mineworkers was a key way in which ideas, practices, institutions, and culture were transmitted to the Copperbelt from around the world. Transnational links were made and sustained by the constant movement of people.

In this respect, this thesis seeks to build on the work of Jonathan Hyslop and his concept of 'white labourism', a concept that has been commended but rarely explored or utilized. Hyslop argues that there existed an international white working class not composed of discrete national entities and dominated by an ideology of white labourism. This ideology was one where political radicalism and industrial militancy were closely entangled with white domination and racial segregation. However, Hyslop locates the high-point of this ideology in the years prior to the First World War. This thesis argues that these ideas, and the migration patterns which underpinned them, had a much longer influence and were commonplace on the Copperbelt into the 1960s. There were also necessary differences in how white labourism could operate on the Copperbelt. Among the European community a strong conviction developed that the mining industry and the towns should be run primarily for the benefit of white mineworkers. Yet, importantly, claims about higher

wages and better conditions were not made on the basis of 'whiteness' but on the basis of what other white workers elsewhere in the English-speaking world were receiving.

The transnational connections and origins of the Copperbelt's European population helps provide the answer for a curious historiographical puzzle: how were a consistent set of social and political attitudes reproduced in such a transient population? Or, to phrase it another way, how do we think about the social history of a group who barely hang around long enough to be socialised? It is because everyday life on the Copperbelt for the European community had many of the same features of mining and working class communities across the English-speaking world. Focusing on the social history of the European community reveals this in the pubs, clubs, sports teams and the myriad other institutions formed in the mining towns. In this way, the Copperbelt functions as a window into a larger world of European labour.

Yet, influences from around the world combined to create what became a highly distinctive community. This thesis argues that the main distinction was the extraordinary affluence of this community, based on rising copper prices from the 1940s and the determination of European mineworkers to obtain the maximum share of these riches. During the 1950s, European mineworkers on the Copperbelt were among the highest paid workers on the planet. Each mining town appeared as a 'paradise for the proletariat' with free or subsidised housing, hospitals, education, electricity, water, sporting facilities, cinemas, bars, yacht clubs, flying clubs, swimming pools and ballrooms for the tens of thousands of residents. These riches enabled white mineworkers to achieve a standard of living virtually unthinkable in their societies of origin.

Copper riches did not flow equally into the European community. Wealth accrued predominately to male mineworkers and this gave them the resources to shape the European community. The Copperbelt became a 'masculine' world where the prized features of life were all traditionally masculine activities: manual labour, contact sports and heavy drinking. There were large numbers of European women on the Copperbelt and gender ratios were not particularly imbalanced after the 1930s. However, women were excluded from lucrative economic opportunities. Most European men were married and had children as high wages ensured they were able to recreate the nuclear family. This explains the lack of prostitution, something common to many other mining regions.

This thesis argues that affluence for Europeans on the Copperbelt was underpinned by frequent industrial unrest. Strikes and other disputes were a regular part of life for the European community from the late 1930s to the late 1960s. Social structures within the European community were similar to those in mining centres elsewhere in the world and class was a strong marker of identity until the reorganisation of the mines' workforce in the mid-1960s. Class consciousness endured, despite the transient population, because it paid (literally) for Europeans to articulate a class identity. The whites-only Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union and the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association played an outsized role in the life of the Copperbelt.

The frequency and results of white industrial unrest distinguishes the Copperbelt from other parts of southern Africa in this period. This thesis argues that the struggles by white mineworkers have usually been misunderstood in the existing secondary literature because it has been assumed that these struggles were about race and racist working practices. This is related to a wider argument that events on

the Copperbelt have been interpreted through a lens more suited to South Africa. The post-war period, for instance, has generally been conceived of as the clash of white and black labour in a war of attrition. White mineworkers and the European community more generally primarily appear in the literature as the primary opponents of African mineworkers in the protracted 'African advancement' negotiations (the negotiations over the removal of the industrial colour bar).

However, the racial clash frequently proclaimed by colonial officials and contemporary observers did not actually occur. This thesis argues that existing accounts of the Copperbelt have overstated the importance of race and have overlooked the fact that virtually all the struggles of European and African mineworkers are directed against the mining companies. These struggles are primarily over the control and organisation of the workplace – of which the imposition of racially exclusive working practices were only one part – and about the dignity of labour. This thesis carefully periodises relations between the European community and the African majority around them and argues that, although racism was a consistent feature of this relationship, the predominant attitude was one of indifference. For instance, for most of the 1930s, Europeans directed more animosity toward non-British whites and colonial officials. Hostility towards non-British whites faded during the 1940s. Race acted as a homogenizing force to create a wider 'European' identity rather than a 'British' one. Europeans were concerned with who was like them, not defining themselves negatively against those who were not like them.

Most Europeans did not intend to stay permanently on the Copperbelt and had come to the region with the specific purpose of making money and then leaving. The privileged economic and social position of Europeans depended on access to the

wealth of the copper mines, not on the colonial political order. Indifference towards Africans explains the lack of concerted opposition towards the emergence of African nationalist movements and decolonization. In the early 1960s, the Copperbelt seemingly contains all the ingredients for a bloody struggle during decolonisation: an armed, racist minority in a privileged social and economic position, located on the geographical cusp of newly independent African nations and that was close witness to chaotic decolonisation in neighbouring Congo. Such a struggle did not occur because of the transience and mobility of the European population. The 1950s and 1960s are replete with examples of the kinds of things the European community were willing to seriously struggle over, and these did not include white minority rule.

It was, ironically, the post-independence period when race became more salient on the Copperbelt. The mining companies reintroduced pay differentials based on race and formally categorised all employees according to perceived racial group in 1964. All Europeans, even if they had been born in Zambia, became 'expatriates' and all Africans, even if migrant workers from Malawi or Tanzania, became 'local'. Wages and conditions of service were radically different for these categories and there was no way to cross from one to the other, except during a brief period. This process involved the phasing out of a remarkable category of people: the small group of African workers who were employed on European rates of pay. The increasing importance of race in the 1960s relates to another argument of this thesis: that the importance of formal independence in 1964 as a watershed in Zambian history has been overstated. Life for the European community carried on after independence much as before. It was the slump in the price of copper in the mid-1970s and the consequent severe economic difficulties in Zambia which brought the life of this community to an end.

This thesis is based primarily on archival research in Zambia and Britain, along with supplementary material from archives in South Africa, the Netherlands and Australia. The nature of a transnational, transient community means that relevant material is scattered across the globe. However, the National Archives of Zambia in Lusaka and the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines archive in Ndola both contained a wealth of material on the European community. The other primary printed sources are newspapers from Britain and southern Africa and monthly magazines published by the mining companies. The latter, directly aimed at the European community in the Copperbelt towns, contain detailed information on everyday life in these towns in the 1950s and 1960s. There are notable limitations to the written sources utilized, however. None of the records of either the European mineworkers' union or the staff association have survived and it appears they were destroyed in the early 1970s.

This thesis has also utilized oral history as a way of recovering the social history of this community. I have interviewed 47 people, either in person or via Skype. Their recollections have helped to construct a picture of everyday life in the 1950s and 1960s. Tracing family history through these interviews has also added to the picture of the global circuits of white migrants. As far as possible, details from these interviews have been cross-checked with the available documentary record. In several instances, conducting interviews opened up access to private collections of papers.

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Contents

Short abstract	ii
Long abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	xi
Figures	3
Abbreviations	7
Chapter One: Introduction	11
Chapter Two: Wild West in Central Africa, 1926-39	48
Frank Maybank	106
Chapter Three: A Good War, 1940-47	111
Hugh Handford	166
Chapter Four: Boom Years, 1948-56	171
Jack Purvis	231
Chapter Five: Trouble in Paradise, 1957-62	236
Lawrence Katilungu	294
Chapter Six: Abrupt ending, 1963-74	299
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	358

Appendix I: European population	366
Appendix II: Mine employees	367
Appendix III: Copper prices and production	370
Bibliography	375

Figures

Figure 1.1: Contemporary Zambia and the wider region	10
Figure 1.2: Mines and towns of the Zambian Copperbelt	30
Figure 2.1: Underground officials at Roan Antelope Mine, 1932	63
Figure 2.2: Roan Antelope coal pulverising plant under construction, 1930	66
Figure 2.3: Nchanga European single quarters, circa 1929	69
Figure 2.4: Surface plants and main shaft at Roan Antelope, circa 1930	72
Figure 2.5: NRMWU Constitution, 1936	85
Figure 2.6: NRMWU racist cartoon, February 1939	96
Figure 3.1: Frank Maybank circa 1946	106
Figure 3.2: Jack and Rica Hodgson, circa 1943	146
Figure 4.1: Hugh Handford, 1952	166
Figure 4.2: Social at the Rhokana Club following the Rhodesian women's hockey tournament, 1953	199

Figure 4.3: Map showing the wide variety of sports facilities in Nchanga Mine Township,	
September 1953	202
Figure 4.4: Crowd at the opening of new Rhokana Club bar, 1952	205
Figure 4.5: Rhokana Sailing & Boating Club, 1953	207
Figure 4.6: Mufulira Pipe Band at the 1956 Chingola Highland Games.	211
Figure 4.7: Crowd gathers to watch baseball game in Nkana Park.	212
Figure 4.8: Ben Petersen, 1957	219
Figure 5.1: Jack Purvis in 1957	231
Figure 5.2: Essential service workers at Nkana going underground during the rockbreakers dispute, 1957	247
Figure 5.3: Colour bar cartoon, 1955	261
Figure 5.4: Roan Antelope mineworkers vote to strike	

by show of hands, September 1958	270
Figure 5.5: Fred Holtmann, 1959	279
Figure 5.6: Belgian refugees in Mufulira Mine Club,	
12 July 1962	282
Figure 5.7: Soldiers from the Royal Rhodesia	
Regiment on training exercises in	
Wusakili	290
Figure 6.1: Lawrence Katilungu, circa 1959	294
Figure 6.2: Emrys Williams, 1957	306
Figure 6.3: Mufulira NRMWU branch committee, early	
1960s	309
Figure 6.4: Operators training course, Mufulira Mine, 1962	324
Figure 6.5: Mufulira Flying Club, 1969	350
Figure 6.6: Aerial view of sinkhole above Mufulira Mine,	
1970	352
Figure 8.1: Estimated European population of the	
Copperbelt, selected years	366

Figure 8.2: Total number of African and European mineworkers employed on the Copperbelt mines, European proportion of the workforce, European labour turnover, numbers of daily-paid and staff, 1930-1976	367
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Figure 8.3: London Metal Exchange price of Electrolytic Copper Wirebars (£ per long ton) nominal prices and in constant 2015 pound sterling and Copperbelt copper production, 1926-1975	370
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Figure 8.4: Price of Electrolytic Copper Wirebars, 1926-75 (£)	374
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Abbreviations

AGUFI	Association des Agents de l'Union Minière et Filiales
AMC	American Metal Company
ANC	African National Congress
NAB	National Archives of Britain
CISB	Copper Industry Service Bureau
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HPA	Historical Papers Archive
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IWW	Industrial Workers' of the World
MFGB	Miners' Federation of Great Britain
MIF	Miners' International Federation
MOSSA	Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association
MUZ	Mineworkers' Union of Zambia
MWS	Mine Workers' Society
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NASA	National Archives of South Africa

NAZ	Zambian National Archive
NRLP	Northern Rhodesia Labour Party
NRMWU	Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
PP	Prain Papers
RAA	Rhodesian Anglo American
RCBC	Rhodesia Congo Border Concession Company
RRWU	Rhodesian Railway Workers' Union
RST	Rhodesian Selection Trust (after 1964, Roan Selection Trust)
SATLC	South African Trades and Labour Council
SAMWU	South African Mine Workers' Union
SATUC	South African Trade Union Council
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UFP	United Federal Party
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UMHK	Union Minière du Haut Katanga
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WP	Welensky Papers

ZAA	Zambian Anglo American
ZCCM	Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines
ZEMA	Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers' Association
ZMU	Zambia Mineworkers' Union



Figure 1.1: Contemporary Zambia and the wider region. [<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps>]

Chapter One

Introduction

No matter how much or how little they've got, they keep moaning and they can't settle down.

White miner, Broken Hill, 1960.¹

Overview

In April 1926, an American mining engineer, three white miners and some 200 African workers were to be found scratching the surface some 30 miles from the railway running across the border from Northern Rhodesia to the vast open copper mines of Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK) in Belgian Congo.² This camp was much like any number of prospecting camps dotted around the region, with one important exception: its inhabitants were sitting above one of the richest copper deposits in the world.³ Within five years, more than 1,000 Europeans and almost 5,000 Africans were at work across the burgeoning industrial complex of what had

¹ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part I: A Social Psychological Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), p. 19.

² Selection Trust Archives, London School of Economics, London [hereafter ST], G/29, Report on W. Selkirk's visit to Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Feb-June 1926.

³ The average copper mineralisation in ore on the Copperbelt was 3.5%, compared to a world average of 1.5% in other copper regions. Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971), p. xv.

become Roan Antelope Mine, one of five mines in development across the Copperbelt.⁴

Very broadly, this thesis traces the history of the Copperbelt from the onset of industrial mining in the mid-1920s until the collapse in copper prices in the mid-1970s. There is no pretence at a general history in this study and the particular focus of this thesis will follow the fortunes of the Europeans who flocked to the region in their thousands from the 1920s onwards. The justification for such a study and the main arguments contained within it will be provided in this chapter. This will take the form of a critical assessment of the existing historiography and explaining how a focus on the Copperbelt's European community can contribute to several wider secondary literatures. Subsequent shorter sections will provide basic details on the Copperbelt, describe the various sources utilised, outline the structure of this thesis and briefly discuss the names used.

Literature review

In the introduction to his book on the Copperbelt, Miles Larmer observed that “few aspects of African economy and society have been as fully studied as the copper mines of Zambia and their workers,” and so any reader is entitled to ask what new information a fresh study can bring.⁵ For this thesis, the answer to this is straightforward: there has been almost no academic work undertaken on the Copperbelt's European community, and the mineworkers which formed its centre. The extensive existing secondary literature primarily focuses on African

⁴ ST G/51, Progress report for three months ended March 31st 1931, May 1931.

⁵ Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa* (London, 2007), p. 2.

mineworkers, African nationalists, the colonial state or the mining companies and contains only scattered references to the smaller European community.⁶

In one of the few academic articles written on the subject, Ian Phimister noted that “academic investigations of the Northern Rhodesian copper mining industry have hardly looked at white miners at all” and his article mainly focuses on the industrial colour bar, corporate policies and the profitability of the industry.⁷ This point about neglect was reiterated by Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola who argue that white mineworkers have been “largely ignored by professional academics” and ‘caricatured’ when not ignored, part of a wider “unmistakeably ideological driven scholarly neglect” of non-African minorities in the country.⁸ Similarly, Joanna Lewis noted that, compared to Zimbabwe and Kenya, the literature

⁶ A rich body of academic work has examined Copperbelt history from a variety of different perspectives. These include technical histories: J. Austen Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia: A chronicle of mineral exploration and mining development* (London, 1961), Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971).

Corporate and financial histories: Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York, 1981), Andrew Roberts, ‘Notes towards a Financial History of Copper Mining in Northern Rhodesia’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 16, 2 (1982), pp. 347-359.

Labour history: Michael Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization* (Manchester, 1972), Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), Charles Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa: Industrial strategies and the evolution of an African proletariat in the Copperbelt 1911-41* (London, 1979), Jane Parpart, *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia, 1983).

African women’s experiences: George Chauncey, Jr, ‘The Locus of Reproduction: Women’s Labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 2 (1981), pp. 135-64, Jane Parpart, ‘The Household and the Mine Shaft: Gender and Class Struggles on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1926-64’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13, 1 (1986), pp. 36-56.

Political developments: Robert Bates, *Unions, parties, and political development: a study of mineworkers in Zambia* (New Haven, 1971), Peter Harries-Jones, *Freedom and Labour: Mobilization and Political Control on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Oxford, 1975), Larry Butler, *Copper Empire: Mining and the Colonial State in Northern Rhodesia, c.1930–64* (Basingstoke, 2007).

Economic development: Robert Baldwin, *Economic Development and Export Growth: A study of Northern Rhodesia, 1920-1960* (Cambridge, 1966), Richard Sklar, *Corporate power in an African state: The political impact of multinational mining companies in Zambia* (Berkley, 1975), Philip Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality: Mining labour and the Copperbelt in Zambian development* (Cambridge, 1979), Guy Mhone, *The political economy of a dual labor market in Africa: The copper industry and dependency in Zambia, 1929-1969* (Rutherford, 1982).

⁷ Ian Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland? White Miners and the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1946-1962’, *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 2 (2011), p. 191.

⁸ Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola (eds.), *Living at the End of Empire: politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 10-11.

“on Northern Rhodesia’s smaller white communities seems patchy.”⁹ Since then, Pamela Shurmer-Smith has produced a book on the territory’s white population comprising numerous interviews with former white residents, but much of this is about their lives after they left Northern Rhodesia.¹⁰

This neglect can be traced back to the initial outpouring of academic interest in the Copperbelt, and Northern Rhodesia more generally. Much of this work was produced by anthropologists associated with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI), and subsequently grouped loosely around what became known as the ‘Manchester School’.¹¹ It is notable then that the considerable output of the RLI did not include a study of the white population in Northern Rhodesia, something its former director J. Clyde Mitchell subsequently regretted.¹² The omission may not have reflected a lack of interest or intent. Lyn Schumaker claimed the Institute considered hiring the American anthropologist Francis Ianni to undertake such a study, while Doris Lessing stated that two unnamed anthropologists attempted to conduct research on the white population, but were instructed to confine their research to Africans (by whom it is not clear).¹³ Other assessments were less charitable. James Hooker argued that the RLI anthropologists “often did not understand, often refused to

⁹ Joanna Lewis, ‘Rivers of White: David Livingstone and the 1955 Commemorations in the Lost ‘Henley-upon-Thames of Central Africa’, in Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, *End of Empire*, p. 166. Lewis’ chapter attempts to address this imbalance with a study of white settlers in Livingstone.

¹⁰ Pamela Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire: Memory and Northern Rhodesia’s White Diaspora* (Lusaka, 2014).

¹¹ Richard Werbner, ‘The Manchester School in South-Central Africa’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 13 (1984), pp. 157-85.

¹² Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, *End of Empire*, p. 6.

Lewis Gann was commissioned by the RLI to produce a political history of Northern Rhodesia and he placed white settlers at the centre of his narrative, see Lewis Gann, *A history of Northern Rhodesia: Early days to 1953* (London, 1964).

¹³ Lynette Louise Schumaker, ‘The Lion in the Path: Fieldwork and culture in the history of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute 1937-1964’ (Pennsylvania Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1994), pp. 94-5. Doris Lessing, *Going home* (London, 1968), pp. 267-68.

Notable works about the Copperbelt from RLI-affiliated anthropologists include J. Clyde Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of social relationships among urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, 1956), Arnold Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Manchester, 1958) and Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa. The human situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt* (New York, 1962).

understand” white communities in the region and made “extravagant generalisations” about whites.¹⁴

One of the aims of this thesis is to fill this gap in the Zambian historiography. Yet, it is not only the absence of work on the Copperbelt’s European community which justifies the present study. This point will be elaborated below, but first some parameters of this thesis must be explained. The geographical and chronological framework of this thesis is determined by the subject matter, and is related to its wish to emphasise the continuities in the life of the European community. Rapid industrial development on the Copperbelt from 1926 makes this an obvious starting point. An end point of 1974 requires more explanation as many other studies conclude at the end of colonial rule in 1964.¹⁵ This thesis follows Larmer’s argument that “the primary cleavage in Zambian history was not national Independence, but rather the sudden and sustained collapse in the international copper price in 1974-5.”¹⁶ This was particularly the case for the European community and, it will be argued, Zambian independence made little difference to how this community lived. It was the slump in copper prices that brought the European community to an end.

The Copperbelt was defined as a place distinguished from other areas of Zambia by the industry which gave it its name. The region comprises a cluster of copper mines and towns that grew up around them stretched out along the border of what are now

¹⁴ James Hooker, ‘The Anthropologists’ Frontier: The Last Phase of African Exploitation’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1 (1963), p. 457.

One RLI-affiliated anthropologist subsequently produced a study of whites in Northern Rhodesia. Johan Holleman, along with Simon Biescheuvel, produced a report on white mineworkers for the Chamber of Mines. See Chapter Five for more details on this.

¹⁵ These include Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule* and Butler, *Copper Empire*. Mhone’s study identifies nationalisation in 1969 as a suitable end point, Mhone, *Dual Labor Market*, p. 44.

¹⁶ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, p. 42. Appendix III.

More generally, Frederick Cooper has argued that the meaningful turning point in modern Africa history was not political independence but “a decade later, in the mid-1970s” with the oil shock and shifting trends in the world economy. Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 85.

Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The close proximity of these mines and towns make for a cohesive unit of study. The nearest other sizable towns were, and are, more than 100 miles away. Moreover, many European residents of the Copperbelt rarely went anywhere else in Northern Rhodesia.¹⁷ Arguably, the mining town of Kabwe (formerly Broken Hill) could merit inclusion in this study. Yet the European population there lived differently from those on the Copperbelt, and the lead and zinc deposits never generated the same riches. The quotation at the beginning of the chapter reflects the distance and distaste many Europeans in Broken Hill felt towards their counterparts on the Copperbelt.

Despite the lack of substantial prior work, this thesis is the product of a number of historiographical contexts. There are several general trends in the historiography and loose strands in the existing literature that this study seeks to pull together and develop. The first and most obvious is the upsurge of interest in global and transnational history.¹⁸ This thesis will stress “the importance of the interaction and circulation of ideas, peoples, institutions or technologies across state or national boundaries” to examine the Copperbelt in a wider, transnational perspective, rather than as part of the national story of Zambia.¹⁹ It will be argued that many developments on the Copperbelt simply do not make sense unless we understand this international context and trace how the region was connected to mining and industrial centres around the world. There has been some work in this vein. Bruce Fetter called for the history of the Copperbelt to be re-examined from a broader

¹⁷ For instance Norma Smith could not recall ever visiting another part of Northern Rhodesia during her 22 years on the Copperbelt, and that this was not unusual. Interview with Norma Smith, 17 June 2013.

¹⁸ Simon Potter and Jonathan Saha have charted the growth of interest in global history among historians of empire in ‘Global History, Imperial History and Connected Histories of Empire’, *Journalism of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 16, 1 (2015). Accessed 1 February 2016. <http://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2015.0009> [Article in ejournal].

¹⁹ Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris & Jacques Reve, ‘Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History’, *The International History Review*, 33, 4 (2011), p. 574.

perspective in 1999 and, more recently, Andrew Cohen has argued that the international ownership of the region's mining companies "proved crucial in driving their actions on the Copperbelt."²⁰

A focus on the European community draws attention to the importance of international links and developments as this was a community largely comprised of transient and highly mobile individuals.²¹ This is related to the second historiographical development which this thesis draws on: the 'British World'. This literature sought to re-integrate the histories of Britain and the former white settler Dominions into a single analytical framework and explore commonalities and connections between communities of British settlers around the world.²² Historians using the concept were partly motivated by the same impulse behind the wider turn toward global history, a desire to "escape the confines of national history."²³ Transnational connections were underpinned by mass migration from Britain and this population movement "was central to the British World agenda."²⁴ The white settler societies that attracted the largest numbers of British migrants have attracted the greatest share of the historiographical attention. Robert Bickers criticised this

²⁰ Bruce Fetter, 'If I Had Known That 35 Years Ago: Contextualizing the Copper Mines of Central Africa', *History in Africa*, 26 (1999), p. 452. Andrew Cohen, 'Business and Decolonisation in Central Africa Reconsidered', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36, 4 (2008), p. 641.

²¹ This builds on the insights in the recent literature that transience was "recurring feature" of smaller white communities inside and outside the British Empire, Robert Bickers, 'Introduction: Britains and Britons over the Seas', in Robert Bickers (ed.), *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons over the Seas* (Oxford, 2010), p. 9. Josiah Brownell has convincingly argued that transience was one of the primary features of Southern Rhodesia's white population. Josiah Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia: Population demographics and the politics of race* (London, 2011).

The transience of Northern Rhodesia's white population has commented on the existing literature but not fully explored. Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro commented that the remarkable feature of the white population "throughout the colonial period was its rapid rate of turnover" in *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London, 1999), p. 160.

²² For an early exposition of this argument see Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, 'Mapping the British World', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31, 2 (2003), pp. 1-15. John Darwin provides a useful bibliography of works on the 'British World' in *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 793-4.

²³ Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre (eds.), *Britishness Abroad. Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, (Melbourne, 2007), p. 1.

²⁴ Tamson Pietsch, 'Rethinking the British World', *Journal of British Studies*, 52, 3 (2013), p. 443.

tendency for excluding the histories of smaller communities of Britons overseas, some of which “had an impact on their adopted or adapted home out of all proportion to the gross numbers.”²⁵ Europeans on the Copperbelt, as will be seen, certainly did.

Commonalities and connections between the Copperbelt and other mining and industrial centres around the English-speaking world form an important part of this thesis. However, it will not be argued that the Copperbelt’s European community formed a component of a ‘British World’. For one, there were significant American influences on the Copperbelt.²⁶ More importantly, despite an abundance of Britons on the Copperbelt any cohesive sense of ‘Britishness’ failed to take root.²⁷ This thesis follows the literature of the British World in arguing that flows of migrants forged connections between seemingly disparate and distant places. Yet, these connections did not create a sense of identity with Britain – as attested to by the repeated disruption of copper production by white mineworkers during the Second World War. As such, rather than a shared ‘Britishness’, the divisions of the Copperbelt’s European community more closely resembled those of other mining communities around the world.

This thesis does not treat each section of the European community equally. Its primary focus is the white mineworkers who formed the core of the European community and were part of a primarily English-speaking labour diaspora with a global reach. The creation, rise and disappearance of this class, and the world its members inhabited, on the Copperbelt forms the central narrative of this thesis. In

²⁵ Bickers, ‘Britons over the Seas’, p. 2. Bickers edited collection contains accounts of nine communities of British settlers around the world, but only passing references to Northern Rhodesia.

²⁶ James Belich has used the term ‘Anglo-world’ rather than ‘British World’ to include the United States as a central part of the narrative in *Replenishing the Earth: The settler revolution and the rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford, 2009).

²⁷ Pietsch has argued that there was no singular British World and that there are problems with the definition and spatial boundaries of the concept, Pietsch, ‘Rethinking the British World’, pp. 442-47.

this respect, this thesis engages with Jonathan Hyslop's concept of 'white labourism'.²⁸ This concept has often been commended but rarely been explored and has only occasionally intersected with the 'British World' literature.²⁹ Hyslop identified an international white working class not composed of discrete national entities tied together by flows of white migrants between settler colonies and dominated by an ideology of white labourism, where a critique of exploitation was intricately linked to racism. However, Hyslop located the highpoint of this ideology in the years prior to the First World War, and elsewhere argued that across the world "the 1920s arguably marked the onset of a period in which working-class people and movements were increasingly nationalised."³⁰ This thesis argues that these ideas, and the migration patterns which underpinned them, had a much longer influence and were commonplace on the Copperbelt into the 1960s.

A focus on transnational connections and origins helps explain something puzzling about the Copperbelt's European community: how were a consistent set of attitudes and behaviour reproduced in such a transient population? High levels of immigration and emigration meant that every ten years or so the population was predominately a new one. The answer lies in the fact that everyday life on the Copperbelt for the European community had many of the same features of mining and working class communities across the English-speaking world. This is revealed through a focus on the clubs, societies, trade unions and the myriad other institutions formed in the mining towns. Copperbelt towns were what James Belich called "prefabricated

²⁸ Jonathan Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa Before the First World War', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 12, 4 (1999), pp. 398-421.

²⁹ See Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson (eds.), *Empire, migration and identity in the British world* (Manchester, 2013), p. 14 and Jonathan Hyslop, 'The British and Australian Leaders of the South African Labour Movement, 1902-1914: A Group Biography', in Darian-Smith, Grimshaw, and Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad*, pp. 90-108.

³⁰ Philip Bonner, Jonathan Hyslop and Lucien Van Der Walt, 'Rethinking Worlds of Labour: Southern African Labour History in International Context', *African Studies*, 66, 2-3 (2007), p. 154.

communities” where “the place and people are different, but they duplicate your previous experience” so new arrivals could readily slot into familiar roles.³¹ This transnational similarity also explains how class consciousness and class identity emerged as strong markers in the life of the European community and how this consciousness was sustained, when the transience of the community created seemingly formidable obstacles to this.³² Yet, this is only part of the explanation and this thesis will also examine the material conditions which facilitated a certain kind of class consciousness. Without resorting to some simple material explanation, throughout most of the period covered by this thesis it paid for Europeans to articulate class consciousness.

Investing in and articulating racial identity generated less profitable returns. Certainly, most Europeans on the Copperbelt were racist towards the African majority around them. Residential segregation in the towns and a colour bar at work were the norm, as they were in many other mining regions. However, as Ann Stoler has argued, regarding racism as a “virtually built in and natural product” of the colonial encounter “accords poorly with the fact that the *quality* and *intensity* of racism vary enormously in different colonial contexts and at different historical moments.”³³ The virulent, violent racism evident in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, or the mining regions of Australia, Canada and the United States, was largely absent from the Copperbelt. Racial clashes frequently forecast by colonial officials and other contemporary observers did not occur. This highlights important differences about how the ideas of white labourism operated on the Copperbelt.

³¹ James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland, 1996), p. 428.

³² There has been some work explicitly dealing with class consciousness on the Copperbelt, see Jane Parpart, ‘Class Consciousness among the Zambian Copper Miners, 1950-1968’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 21, 1 (1987), pp. 54-77.

³³ Ann Stoler, ‘Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule’, in Nicholas Dirks (ed.), *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor, 1992), p. 322. Emphasis in original.

Hyslop argued that the white labour movement in South Africa and Australia made its claims on the basis of 'whiteness'; that is made claims that they should be accorded better pay and preferential treatment because they were 'white'.³⁴ This dynamic was absent on the Copperbelt. Regular industrial unrest among white mineworkers was motivated by an awareness of the pay and conditions in other mining regions and the need to avoid 'falling behind' these regions, as well as the profits of the mining companies. This was 'white' labourism because the only relevant comparison for the Copperbelt's white mineworkers was white workers elsewhere in the world.

This thesis therefore aims to explain why the quality and intensity of racism varied between the Copperbelt and other colonial settings and why this has not been acknowledged in the existing literature. Attitudes among the European community towards Africans are carefully periodised in this thesis but during much of this period the predominant attitude was one of a lack of interest in the lives and experiences of Africans rather than active hostility.³⁵ Indifferent attitudes were rooted in the mobility of the European population. Most Europeans came to the Copperbelt for relatively brief periods to make money and did not intend to stay permanently. They had little stake in the future of the territory. Moreover, their affluent status depended on access to the riches of the copper industry and not on the colonial political order. This explains the seemingly surprising lack of resistance to African nationalism and decolonisation.³⁶ The relative lack of violent racism was also related to the structure

³⁴ Hyslop, 'Imperial working class', p. 402. Hyslop, 'South African Labour Movement', p. 93.

³⁵ This argument is distinct from the existing debate on white labourism which has focused on how much opposition to racist ideas there was from within the white labour movement, see William Kenefick, 'Confronting White Labourism: Socialism, Syndicalism, and the Role of the Scottish Radical Left in South Africa before 1914', *International Review of Social History*, 22 (2010), pp. 29-62 and Jonathan Hyslop, 'Scottish Labour, Race, and Southern African Empire c.1880-1922: A Reply to Kenefick', *International Review of Social History*, 22 (2010), pp. 63-81.

³⁶ This point is made at length in Chapter Six.

of the mines' workforce. In South Africa, endemic violence on the mines was encouraged by the fact that the wages of white miners were determined by the productivity of African workers whom they supervised.³⁷ In contrast, on the Copperbelt, almost all white mineworkers were paid a fixed rate per shift. Ironically, it was after Zambian independence that race became more salient as the mining companies, the civil service and other employers created the category of 'expatriate' on a racial basis.

The assumptions in the existing literature that race was centrally important to the European community and that the struggles of white mineworkers were primarily about race have arisen because events on the Copperbelt have been interpreted through a South African lens. This trend is evident in some of the earliest works in which scholars, often deeply familiar with the South African context, argued that developments on the Copperbelt followed established patterns on the Rand.³⁸ Arguments along these lines tend to emphasise the numbers of South Africans on the Copperbelt as a way of explaining this apparent confluence.³⁹ This explanation represents what Dane Kennedy termed a "disposition to look to pre-existing circumstances to explain colonists' behaviour" in the literature on white settlers in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁰ This thesis argues that while there are clear South

³⁷ Dan O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner nationalism, 1934-1948* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 91.

³⁸ Julius Lewin, *The Colour Bar in the Copper Belt* (Johannesburg, 1941), p. 6-7.

³⁹ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 50-1.

⁴⁰ Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler society and culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, N.C., 1987), pp. 100-1.

The literature on the Copperbelt is replete with generalizations about the European population. Larry Butler's remark on the "tough-minded" managerial staff of American or South African origin" in *Copper Empire*, p. 18 references Partha Sarathi Gupta, who says precisely the same thing in *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement 1914-1964* (London, 1975), p. 249. Gupta, in turn, references an article by Ian Henderson where he noted "The mines management was dominated by rough-hewn Americans and South Africans" without providing a source. Ian Henderson, 'The Origins of Nationalism in East and Central Africa: The Zambian Case', *The Journal of African History*, 11, 4 (1970), p. 596.

African influences on the Copperbelt, the comparison with South Africa has been exaggerated and it often obscures our understanding of Copperbelt history.⁴¹

The obscuring influence of the South African lens can be seen in the way white industrial unrest on the Copperbelt has been understood. As this thesis will demonstrate, strikes and other disputes involving white mineworkers characterised life for the European community but “the experiences and struggles of these miners have often been ignored where they have not been misrepresented.”⁴² White mineworkers usually appear in the literature only within the context of the colour bar.⁴³ This thesis will argue that industrial unrest was only rarely motivated by the colour bar and efforts to remove it (which were termed ‘African advancement’ and, later, ‘Zambianization’).⁴⁴ Instead, most disputes were about control over the workplace, the organisation of work, and the relationship between conditions on the Copperbelt and to general trends in pay and conditions in other mining regions. The imposition and maintenance of racist working practices was only a part of these wider concerns and this helps explain the relative lack of resistance to the removal of the colour bar by white mineworkers, who would readily strike over many other grievances.

The validity of comparisons with South Africa is also diminished by the fact that white industrial unrest was not a regional dynamic. The wave of industrial unrest by white

⁴¹ Jane Parpart cautioned “against uncritically extending the South African model of racially structured capitalism to other parts of Southern Africa.” Parpart, *Labor and Capital*, p. 163.

⁴² Ian Phimister, ‘Proletarians in Paradise: The Historiography and Historical Sociology of White Miners on the Copperbelt’, in Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, *Living at the End of Empire*, p. 142.

⁴³ This tendency is longstanding. William Friedland’s *Unions, Labor and Industrial Relations in Africa: An Annotated Bibliography* (Ithaca, 1965) includes dozens of works on the Copperbelt but none on white labour except its relationship to the colour bar. See Chapters Four and Five for more detail.

⁴⁴ In this, this thesis seeks to build on recent critiques about the conventional understanding of the motivation and interpretation of African advancement in the secondary literature. Ian Phimister, ‘Corporate Profit and Race in Central African Copper Mining, 1946–1958’, *Business History Review*, 85 (2011), pp. 749–774.

workers across Southern Africa which began in the late 1910s had dissipated by 1925 and never resumed.⁴⁵ Militancy in this period has usually been attributed to shortages of skilled white labour, whereas confrontational industrial relations on the Copperbelt occurred mostly during a labour glut.⁴⁶ From the mid-1920s, white workers elsewhere in the region were mollified by racist, protective legislation and their organisations were incorporated into the state.⁴⁷ Similarly, white mineworkers in Southern Rhodesia “were successfully disciplined and controlled by the mining companies.”⁴⁸ In contrast, regular episodes of industrial unrest among the Copperbelt white workforce continued until the late 1960s. In this respect, the Copperbelt bears closer resemblance to copper mining regions in the United States, where industrial relations were “hostile and chaotic” from the 1920s to 1960s, than elsewhere in Southern Africa.⁴⁹ This explains why, far from being “closely linked to its sister organisation on the Copperbelt” the white mineworkers’ union in South Africa was not like the white mineworkers union on the Copperbelt and links between the two were intermittent.⁵⁰

There is one other notable and distinctive feature of the Copperbelt’s European community. Industrial struggles, the economics of copper and transnational influences combined to create a community marked by extraordinary affluence. Rising copper prices from the 1940s and the fierce determination of white

⁴⁵ Lucien van der Walt, ‘The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism in Southern Africa: White Labourism, the IWW, and the ICU, 1904–1934’, *African Studies*, 66, 2-3 (2007), pp. 229-31.

⁴⁶ Jon Lunn, *Capital and Labour on the Rhodesian Railway System 1888-1947* (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 95. Jeremy Krikler, *White Rising: The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa* (Manchester, 2005), p. 40.

⁴⁷ David Yudelman, *The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, capital, and the incorporation of organized labour on the South African gold fields, 1902-1939* (Cape Town, 1984), p. 235.

⁴⁸ Ian Phimister, ‘White miners in historical perspective: Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1953’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2 (1977), p. 206.

⁴⁹ Charles Hyde, *Copper for America: The United States Copper Industry from Colonial Times to the 1990s* (Tucson, 1998), p. 185. This is a dynamic which merits further investigation.

⁵⁰ Larry Butler, ‘Business and British Decolonisation: Sir Ronald Prain, the Mining Industry and the Central African Federation’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 35, 3 (2007), p. 473.

mineworkers to obtain a maximum share of these riches created a “paradise for the proletariat.”⁵¹ Housing, healthcare, electricity, water, sporting facilities, cinemas, bars, yacht clubs, flying clubs, swimming pools and ballrooms were all subsidised by the mining companies for European residents. These riches enabled white mineworkers to achieve a standard of living unthinkable in their societies of origin. Their disposable income –usually quickly disposed of in displays of conspicuous consumption – and the copper boom more generally opened up manifold opportunities for Europeans outside the mines. The Copperbelt became a kind of social laboratory for what happens when people are given large amounts of money.

This lavish lifestyle has been richly detailed by Ian Phimister and it is not the intention of this thesis to repeat this.⁵² Instead, this thesis will examine the consequences of this influx of wealth. First, it enabled European residents on the Copperbelt to create a colonial experience similar to working-class life elsewhere in the English-speaking world, and one familiar to those who arrived on the Copperbelt from mining and industrial centres in this world.⁵³ Yet, it also enabled Europeans to create a fantasy of affluent middle class life, involving yachts, planes and horses for polo. Second, these riches did not accrue equally. Wealth flowed mainly into the hands of male mineworkers and there were no comparably lucrative opportunities for women. A gender bar was maintained much more rigorously than a colour bar,

⁵¹ Cyril Dunn, *Central African Witness* (London, 1959), p. 136.

⁵² Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, pp. 183-91, 195-201.

⁵³ It has been argued that affluence makes a comparison between Europeans on the Copperbelt and elsewhere in the English-speaking world invalid. Hortense Powdermaker briefly considered the notion that “the majority of [white] miners... resembled in some ways immigrant settlers all over the world” but dismissed any comparison with “immigrants to the North American continent, Australia, and other pioneer countries” because these migrants “suffered hardships and worked hard” whereas on the Copperbelt “European miners lived comfortably.” In fact, affluence enabled Europeans to make life on the Copperbelt more familiar and more directly comparable. Moreover, most British migrants who moved to North America or Australia in the 1950s would have suffered little serious hardship. Powdermaker, *Copper Town*, p. 80.

though this has been hardly commented on.⁵⁴ This ensured that the European community on the Copperbelt was created as a 'masculine world' where the prized features of life were all traditionally masculine activities: manual labour, contact sports and heavy drinking. This is why much of this thesis is about men even though there was not a pronounced gender imbalance after the 1930s. Finally, the influx of wealth made the character of the European community ambiguous, even conflicted. A self-consciously working-class community eagerly embraced the status symbols of social elites. Europeans arrived on the Copperbelt with families or got married and raised their children there – all hallmarks of settler societies – yet they did not intend to stay.⁵⁵

The Copperbelt's European community was a curious hybrid between society of settlers and a society of sojourners. Europeans on the Copperbelt were not settlers because they did not settle. Only a small minority of Europeans intended to live out their lives on the Copperbelt and only a small minority did. The size and stability of the European population was more closely correlated with developments in the mining industry than political changes. Yet, Europeans on the Copperbelt did not usually intend to go back 'home' either, to Britain, South Africa or elsewhere. While on the Copperbelt, Europeans actively and successfully sought to create a society similar to those of mining and industrial centres all around the English-speaking world; to make the Copperbelt in the image of the world they knew. In this way, the Copperbelt functions as a window into this wider world.

⁵⁴ This is an area which deserves further research,

⁵⁵ See John Darwin, 'Orphans of Empire' in Bickers, *Settlers and Expatriates*, pp. 322-23 for a discussion on the definition of settlers. Darwin also notes, pertinently for this thesis, that the categories of settler and expatriate were "extremely fluid" and often not easily distinguishable.

This thesis will argue that developments on the Copperbelt can be better understood in a transnational context rather than a national or regional one. This transnational context is primarily one formed by the links between the Copperbelt and mining regions around the world. Focusing on the European community illuminates these links as they were sustained by the movement of people. Transnational links and the global work experience of many Europeans who came to the Copperbelt were the sources of industrial militancy and racial exclusivity that characterised life on the Copperbelt. The combination of these two ideas secured unprecedented affluence for the European community once the post-war copper boom began. This, in turn, enabled Europeans to sustain international social, sporting and cultural links until the 1970s. The mobility and transience of the European community are crucial to understanding two of the main themes of this thesis: class consciousness and the importance of race. The creation of a unified European society to maintain a colonial political and social order and to defeat African challenges to this order was not regarded as particularly important by most Europeans as they did not intend to stay. Where they came from and where they were going to was more important than where they were.

Copperbelt

The term Copperbelt in this thesis refers to the Copperbelt in what became Zambia but the term could justifiably be applied to a wider region encompassing Katanga in Congo.⁵⁶ Copper had been mined in the region for centuries and the marking of the border between the two colonies effectively divided it into two on arbitrary grounds.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Charles Perrings considers the Copperbelt in colonial Congo and Zambia in the same frame of analysis in *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa*.

⁵⁷ John Donaldson, 'Pillars and perspective: demarcation of the Belgian Congo–Northern Rhodesia boundary', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 34, 3 (2008), pp. 487-88.

Links between the Copperbelt and Katanga will be explored in Chapters Two and Three. However, this thesis focuses on the Zambian Copperbelt because, although there was a substantial European population in Katanga, the life and development of this European community was very different.⁵⁸ UMHK employed substantially fewer Europeans, there were very few strikes by these workers and Katanga's European population did not enjoy the same level of affluence as did their counterparts across the border. The remainder of this section will provide some background details about the Zambian Copperbelt and its European community.

The boundaries of the Zambian Copperbelt were created by the development of the mining industry. The region rapidly came under the control of two international mining companies in the 1920s: the Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST), which was owned by the American Metal Company (AMC) for the majority of this period, and Rhodesian Anglo America (RAA), a subsidiary of the South African mining conglomerate Anglo American. Both companies were initially based in London, but relocated to Lusaka in the early 1950s, then Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia and back to Lusaka at Zambian independence.⁵⁹ In 1969, the industry was nationalised when the Zambian Government took a 51% stake in both mining companies. This made little difference on the Copperbelt before 1974 as the companies continued to be responsible for management and sales until then.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ There European population of Katanga was 31,887 in early 1960. Jules Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession* (London, 1966), p. 3.

⁵⁹ There are references in the footnotes of Chapters Five and Six to 'Anmercosa' and 'Roselite'. These were the telegram addresses of the headquarters of RAA and RST respectively in Salisbury and then Lusaka.

⁶⁰ Cunningham, *Copper Industry*, pp. 274-75.

This thesis mostly refers to the companies plural rather than distinguishing between two.⁶¹ There is an implicit argument in this. For the Europeans who worked for them and lived in the towns that grew up around the mines, there was little appreciable difference between RAA and RST. After 1941, both companies paid the same wages for jobs done by Europeans, provided the same benefits, the same copper bonus, housed them in similar accommodation, subsidised the same array of sports and social clubs, and collaborated closely over labour through their joint organisation, the Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines. The companies were not equals. RAA controlled the larger and more profitable mines and its parent company Anglo American was much larger than the AMC.⁶² This had little impact in the everyday life of the European community. RST's more marginal profitability could have incentivised them to take a harder line in industrial disputes than RAA, but there is little evidence to suggest this happened in practice.⁶³

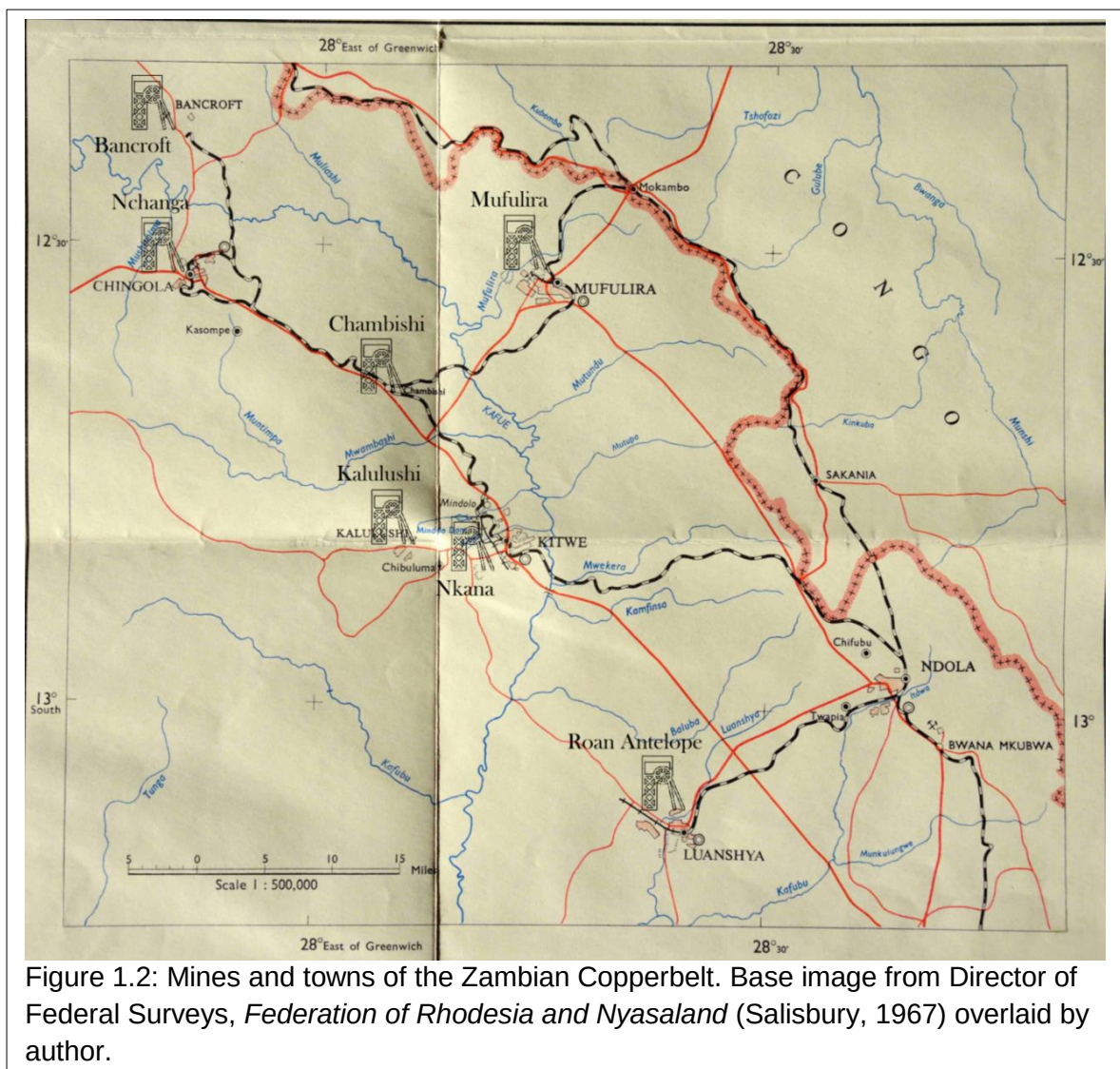
Four major mines were developed from the late 1920s. Mufulira and Roan Antelope were operated by RST (though RAA held a substantial minority stake in Mufulira). Nchanga and Nkana were operated by RAA. Smaller-scale development work at Chambishi by RST was halted in 1931 and Bwana Mkubwa open-cast mine near Ndola closed in 1931 and did not reopen during the period covered by this thesis. Around these four major mines grew four towns: Chingola next to Nchanga, Luanshya around Roan Antelope, Kitwe around Nkana, while the mine and town at Mufulira shared the same name. Nkana Mine subsequently became known as

⁶¹ Larry Butler drew a distinction between RST and RAA over their "liberal" versus "hesitant and conservative" stances on political change and African advancement in the 1950s and 1960s. Butler, 'Business and Decolonisation', p. 472. This thesis, however, argues that African advancement was less important than has been conventionally understood, so the importance of this distinction is accordingly diminished.

⁶² Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland?', pp. 206-7.

⁶³ It has been argued that more marginal profitability encouraged RST to take a harder line over African advancement in the mid-1950s. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Rhokana after new shafts were sunk at Mindola and South Ore Body but the mine township retained the name Nkana. Much of the narrative of this thesis is situated in these four mines and towns, with occasional forays to Ndola. Smaller mines subsequently opened which feature less prominently in the narrative. RAA began work on Bancroft Mine in 1953 while RST began development work at Chibuluma in 1951 and resumed work at Chambishi in 1963. The towns built alongside these newer mines were Bancroft, Kalulushi and Chambishi.⁶⁴



⁶⁴ Roan Consolidated Mines, *Zambia's Mining Industry: the First 50 Years* (Ndola, 1978), pp. 45-58.

These towns were divided into four unequal parts. Racial segregation divided all the towns into European and African townships and these were themselves divided into a mine township and government township. The mine townships were company towns that bore the names of the mines and were the private property of the mining companies, though the companies began to sell-off parts of the mine townships from the late 1950s. Utilities such as water and electricity were also provided by the mines to the municipal townships. The mining townships were considerably larger than the municipal townships, except in Kitwe which was developed as the commercial and administrative centre for the Copperbelt. Any division between the European inhabitants of the mining and municipal township was smoothed by the fact that many European men in the municipal townships had previously worked on the mines. Men who established businesses or bought farms often went back to mining if these enterprises failed.

Three different political periods in Zambia are covered by this thesis. In 1926, the territory was a British colony, with a colonial administration based first in Livingstone and, from 1935, in Lusaka which was appointed by and ultimately responsible to the British Government. A Legislative Council provided representation for Europeans and was granted steadily more power.⁶⁵ The Colonial Office took control of Northern Rhodesia in 1924, prior to this it had been administered as the private property of the British South Africa Company under a Royal Charter of 1889. Northern Rhodesia remained under direct British control until 1953 when it was combined with Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland to form the Central African Federation. A complex, unfinished constitution divided governmental responsibility between the colonial administrations and the new Federal Government and local white politicians gained a

⁶⁵ See James Wightman Davidson, *The Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council* (London, 1948) for the early development of the Legislative Council.

substantial degree of autonomy. The Federation was dissolved in 1963 amidst mounting pressure from African nationalists, who had opposed it from inception, as a precursor to the end of colonial rule. Northern Rhodesia became the independent nation of Zambia in 1964. The creation of a one-party state in 1972 could be seen as another political change but it was one that had little impact on the European community, which was largely disengaged from politics.⁶⁶ In any case, for Europeans on the Copperbelt, the political situation was less important for everyday life than the decisions of the mining companies.

It is difficult to determine the precise size of the European community. The 1931 census and other population statistics produced by the colonial administration in the 1930s were often little more than guesswork. With this caveat, an estimate for the European population for 1931 has been calculated by combining the total European populations in the mining districts on the Copperbelt, including Bwana Mkubwa and Chambishi. The Northern Rhodesia Government carried out censuses in 1946 and 1951 and the Federal Government carried out censuses of the non-African populations in 1956 and 1961.⁶⁷ These colonial censuses provide figures for the European population of Western Province, which included the Copperbelt but also included Ndola and large rural districts with European inhabitants. Estimates for the Copperbelt's European population in these years have therefore been made by combining the European population totals of Chingola, Kitwe, Luanshya and Mufulira districts and, after 1956, Bancroft and Kalulushi. Colonial censuses also provide figures on the age structure, marital status, country of birth and religious affiliation of the European population but the data is not disaggregated at district or provincial

⁶⁶ The most useful political history of Zambia remains Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976).

⁶⁷ The 1961 census results were published by the Government of Zambia after the break-up of Federation.

level. The Zambian Government conducted censuses in 1969 and 1980 but district-level data is not provided.⁶⁸ In the absence of district-level data, population figures for Copperbelt Province (as Western Province was renamed) are used as a proxy for the number of Europeans on the Copperbelt. European population estimates and the sources used to make these estimates are provided in Appendix I.

It is much easier to quantify the size of the European workforce on the mines and this is often used as a proxy for the size of the European population. Figures on the size and composition of the Copperbelt's mining workforce and the sources for these figures are provided in Appendix II. However, the transience of the European workforce masks the total number of Europeans who worked on the Copperbelt mines. For instance, 17,000 Europeans underwent the compulsory mines silicosis examination between 1949 and 1960, though the actual size of European workforce varied between 4,293 and 7,528 in those years.⁶⁹

There were two components to the white workforce: a daily-paid section and a monthly-paid staff section, a division common on mines in North America and South Africa at this time. Staff positions included clerical workers, professionals such as geologists and chemists, low-level managers and supervisors of white labour: shift bosses, mine captains and plant foremen. Women who worked on the mines as clerks and nurses in the mine hospitals were also graded as staff. The daily-paid section encompassed almost all skilled and many semi-skilled jobs on the mines. Daily-paid men were mostly either graded as artisans or semi-skilled operators – such as pipefitters, riggers, cage tenders and banksmen – and included jobs

⁶⁸ There is no provincial or district-level data for gender ratios of the European population in the reports on the 1961 or 1969 census reports

⁶⁹ R. Paul, 'Silicosis in Northern Rhodesia Copper Miners', *Archives of Environmental Health*, 2, 2 (1961), pp. 96-97.

necessary for the basic functioning of the mine such as winding engine drivers and rock-breakers. Most daily-paid men had a supervisory role for a 'gang' of African workers who did much of the manual work. A rockbreakers' 'gang', for instance, usually consisted of twelve African miners overseen by a daily-paid rockbreaker.⁷⁰ Until the early-1960s, the daily-paid section of the white workforce was substantially larger. This division was abolished in 1964 and all Europeans were graded as 'expatriates' with staff status.

Sources

The kind of study I have attempted here would have been considerably more difficult a decade or more ago. Linda Colley has noted that the dramatic expansion of online archival documents, library catalogues, and genealogical websites has made it "far easier than it used to be to track down a life... which repeatedly crossed over different geographical and political boundaries."⁷¹ Almost all the individuals mentioned in this thesis lived such lives and online resources such as passenger lists have made it far easier to trace their movements when references to them cease in nationally-bound archives.⁷²

That said, the sources at the core of this study are drawn from the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) in Lusaka and the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive (ZCCM) in Ndola (which had no online catalogues or digitized records) along with the British National Archives (NAB) in London. The close, even obsessive, interest in the Copperbelt's European population by the mining companies, the Northern Rhodesia Government and, in certain periods, the British Government has produced a wealth

⁷⁰ Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality*, p. 99.

⁷¹ Linda Colley, *The ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: a woman in world history* (London, 2007), p. xxviii.

⁷² European women who married on the Copperbelt proved much more difficult to trace due to their changed surname.

of documents. The holdings of the ZCCM archive were particularly rich as they provide an insight into everyday workings of the mines and the lives of those who worked there. This is because ZCCM inherited the private papers of RAA and RST when the mining industry was nationalised and ZCCM was formed as a holding company. Nationalisation effectively captured a large number of documents – such as internal reports and correspondence – which would otherwise not have found their way into public archives. The volume of documents from and about Anglo American is probably unrivalled in any other repository.

The nature of a transnational, transient community means that relevant material is scattered across a variety of different collections. Therefore, the main body of archival sources are supplemented by material from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, the Historical Papers Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand and the Welensky Papers in Oxford, along with a smattering of sources from the National Archives of South Africa and Australia, the Selection Trust Archives and the personal papers of Ronald Prain and Arthur Creech Jones. Many of these archives contain correspondence, minutes, and reports produced by white mineworkers' organisations and circulated internationally. The wide range of archives consulted has allowed me to cross-check material held in one archive against material in others.

Many of these archival sources are connected to the official publications and reports utilised in this thesis. Unrest and grievances emanating from the European community generated a regular supply of official enquiries, such as those on African advancement, industrial unrest, closed townships or the 40-hour week. Transcripts from these enquiries, statements submitted to them and the correspondence generated by them form an important source base. Statistical data has been drawn

from reports by the Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, and similar organisations elsewhere.

The loss or destruction of several relevant archival collections is a significant but unavoidable limitation for this study. The loss of files used by earlier researchers is a particular problem at the ZCCM archive.⁷³ This problem is not restricted to the post-colonial era. Many records relating to the 1920s were lost as the files of smaller companies which had prospected and mined on the Copperbelt appear to have been pulped during the Second World War when the British Government required waste paper.⁷⁴ However, the most significant limitation is that the files of the white mineworkers' union have been missing for decades and have almost certainly been destroyed. Elena Berger managed to access some of these files shortly after Zambian independence as the union was still functioning.⁷⁵ However, by the time that Ian Henderson came to write his thesis just a few years later, these files had vanished.⁷⁶ Similarly, I have been unable to uncover even a single complete copy of the union's publication *Union News*. All that has survived are clippings in various archival collections.

Other undoubtedly useful sources remain inaccessible. For several decades, researchers have been unable to extract anything from Anglo American's vast

⁷³ I concur with the assessment of Tomas Frederiksen that "numerous sources used by earlier scholars [at ZCCM]... no longer exist or have been lost." Tomas Frederiksen, 'Unearthing Rule: Mining, power and the political ecology of extraction in colonial Zambia' (Manchester Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2010), p. 52.

⁷⁴ Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, p. 48.

⁷⁵ Elena Berger, 'Labour Policies on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1924-64' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1969).

⁷⁶ Ian Henderson, 'Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia, 1900-53: a study in the limits of colonial power' (Edinburgh Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1972), p. 6.

In 1969, the solicitors firm responsible for winding up the white mineworkers' union reported that they had been left with three large boxes containing files from the union. It is likely that they were destroyed when handed over to the acting registrar for trade unions. National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] MLSS1/21/78, Letter from Copper Brothers & Co to Ministry of Labour and Social Services, 5 November 1969, Letter from L. Silishebo to Trade Union Officer Kitwe, 14 November 1969.

archive due to what Larry Butler called “the obsessively secretive world of South African mining.”⁷⁷ Any requests to consult material held by Anglo American other than documents already in the public domain were met with polite but firm refusal. However, Anglo American did provide access to one valuable source: publications produced for their European workforce.

A variety of publications catered for the European community and several of these are important sources for this thesis. The most valuable of these is undoubtedly the *Rhokana Review* which was produced monthly for the European workforce at Rhokana Mine from 1951 to 1962 and whose origins are discussed in Chapter Four. The *Rhokana Review* offers a window into the everyday life of the European community in these years as it documented arrivals and departures among Kitwe’s European residents, sports fixtures, all kinds of social events, workplace gossip, births, marriages and deaths. *Horizon* magazine provided a similar function for mines operated by RST from 1959 to 1970, but this was much less detailed than the *Rhokana Review* and contains little about the European community after 1965. The magazines produced by Mufulira, Nchanga and Roan Antelope in the 1950s would have been equally rich sources, but only a small number of issues of these have survived.

Newspapers constitute the other form of contemporary publications that have been utilised. Digitised collections and the extensive holdings at the British Library and the National Library of South Africa allowed me to draw on newspapers from around the world. However, most of the newspapers utilised were published within Zambia. Before 1944, the main newspaper in the colony was the *Bulawayo Chronicle* as the

⁷⁷ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 205.

Livingstone Mail had a limited circulation and a print run of only 2,000 in 1940.⁷⁸ After 1944, this was displaced by *Northern News* as the primary newspaper for the European community. This is a particularly useful source as it was published daily from January 1953 and was widely-read, with a print run of 10,000 from April 1954. The paper provides day-to-day accounts of events on the Copperbelt and regularly printed verbatim statements and appeals from sections of the European community. Lonrho bought *Northern News* in 1964 and renamed it the *Times of Zambia* in August 1965. Tiny Rowland, Lonrho's maverick chairman, appointed a new editor who replaced "colonially minded" white reporters with African reporters and ensured that all the sub-editors had "progressive views." The paper consequently became very different.⁷⁹

The *Times of Zambia* was actually the third incarnation of this newspaper as *Northern News* was a rebranding of an existing newspaper: *The Copperbelt Times*. This was established in March 1932 by two miners in Chingola as a way of "communicating gossip and social news of White miners around the mine camp." It would have been an invaluable source for this study but Francis Kasoma found no copies in either the National Archives in Lusaka or in the archives of the *Times of Zambia* in the mid-1980s and my search was similarly unsuccessful. Neither has a single copy of *The Northern Rhodesia Advertiser* – founded in Ndola in February 1935 – survived to the best of my knowledge.⁸⁰

Archival and print sources have been supplemented with interviews conducted with former white residents of the Copperbelt. These were either conducted in person in

⁷⁸ Francis Kasoma, *The Press in Zambia: the Development, Role and Control of National Newspapers in Zambia, 1906-1983* (Lusaka, 1986), pp. 24, 27.

⁷⁹ William Gale, *The History of the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company Ltd* (Salisbury, 1962), p. 83-5, 192.

⁸⁰ Kasoma, *Press in Zambia*, pp. 27-28.

various parts of Britain, Ireland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe or via Skype to speak to informants in Canada and Australia. Interviewees mainly spoke either about their own lives or about the lives of their parents and what everyday life was like for them. This was useful for understanding where Europeans had lived and worked the world, and where they considered living, which is not captured in archival documents or statistics about national origins of Europeans on the Copperbelt. Interviews also illustrate the mobility of the European population who did not work on the mines in the absence of statistics on this. Interviews are mostly used in this thesis to convey an understanding of how Europeans thought and felt about the Copperbelt, rather than to establish facts about events there. A full list of the interviews is provided in the bibliography. 44 people were interviewed for this study and a further four people answered questions via email, though only 24 of these interviews are directly quoted from. All interviews were conducted in English and most informants were interviewed individually.⁸¹

Only a tiny handful of Europeans who lived on the Copperbelt remain in Zambia and most have dispersed across the globe. Identifying and contacting informants was therefore a challenge and the snowball method was used to recruit potential interviewees. The snowball method relies on “obtaining a strategically important contact” who can then introduce the researcher to other informants.⁸² Two initial contacts enabled me to recruit interviewees. The first was a chance encounter with Gavin Williams in May 2013 who mentioned that his uncle had worked on Roan Antelope Mine and subsequently put me in touch with his cousins. Both of them

⁸¹ During some interviews, the partner of the interviewee would be in the background and, if they themselves had lived on the Copperbelt, would make occasional comments. I conducted one joint interview as Neville Searle arrived at our interview with a friend he had bumped into who had also lived on the Copperbelt, Interview with Neville Searle and Robin Cumming, 24 September 2013.

⁸² Matt Henn, Mark Weinstein and Nick Foard, *A Critical Introduction to Social Research* (London, 2009), p. 183.

agreed to be interviewed and passed on the contact details of other informants. Second, many Europeans on the Copperbelt were educated at private schools in Zimbabwe and South Africa. I contacted these schools to ask if they would circulate an appeal to their alumni associations for interviewees who had lived on the Copperbelt. I am grateful that St George's School in Harare circulated their appeal via email and I was rapidly inundated with responses, as recipients of the email forwarded it to others.

There is an implicit bias in the informants who contacted me. The use of the snowball method relies on existing social connections between informants and favours those with happier memories of Copperbelt life or who have been successful. Those who have struggled or whose lives have gone badly are less likely to attend reunions or keep in touch with old friends and acquaintances, so are more difficult to track down.⁸³ Zambia's precipitous economic decline – which occurred after most Europeans I interviewed had left – has also coloured memories of what life was like in the 1950s and 1960s and likely reinforced nostalgia.

Interviews provided me with access to additional printed sources, either private papers of the individuals I interviewed or clippings from newspapers the contents of which I would not have thought to check. Sadly, several interviewees also alerted me to the fact that some private collections had gone missing. For instance, Frank Maybank accumulated substantial personal papers during his time on the Copperbelt, but only a sliver of these have been retained by the family. I obtained a copy of these and, according to Maybank's daughter and a short note in the surviving papers, the bulk of the papers were donated to an unspecified museum in

⁸³ Pamela Shurmer-Smith makes this point when she recalled how she came across a man living in a garden shed in New Zealand who had never found work again after leaving the Copperbelt. Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire*, p. 193.

Zambia and were posted to Max Gluckman in the early 1970s to facilitate this. Gluckman died in 1975 but Maybank's papers are not among his collection of papers at the University of Manchester, nor are they located in any repository I searched in Zambia.⁸⁴

The sources mentioned above are not utilised evenly throughout this thesis. Unsurprisingly, oral history features seldom in the earlier chapters as there are few people surviving with memories of Copperbelt life in the 1930s or 1940s. Colonial Office papers are an important basis for Chapters Two and Three – especially as the British Government took a close interest in the Copperbelt during the Second World War – but diminish in importance in subsequent chapters as Northern Rhodesia gained a degree of autonomy under the Federation. The colonial administration was also more closely involved in the mines during the war, generating more relevant documents in the NAZ collection. From Chapter Three onwards, newspapers and mines' publications appear more frequently, primarily because the record of newspapers at the British Library and the NAZ before the early 1950s is sporadic and the mines only begin producing their own publications in 1951. Material from the ZCCM archives is utilised more or less throughout, though less material survived from the 1930s. Oral history is used most fully in the final chapter. This is useful as archival sources for this period are thinner. There are predictably far fewer files pertaining to the Copperbelt in the NAB following Zambian independence and the availability of documents in the NAZ also declines in the post-colonial era, especially after 1971.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Maybank's personal papers, author's possession. Interview with Cheryl Mathers, 22 March 2014.

⁸⁵ Miles Larmer, "If We Are Still Here Next Year": Zambian Historical Research in the Context of Decline, 2002-2003', *History in Africa*, 31 (2004), p. 218.

Structure

The chapters of this thesis proceed in chronological order following this introduction. A chronological rather than thematic approach is used as different themes come to the fore in different periods and there are a number of turning points in the life of the European community that render a chronological approach appropriate.

Chapter Two (1926-39) begins with the onset of industrial mining and examines the experiences of Europeans on the Copperbelt in the first mining camps, the Great Depression and during subsequent recovery. White unrest over amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia, immigration and the formation of trade unions forms the main focus of the chapter, though it is argued that hostility was mainly directed against non-British whites and the colonial administration. The main argument will be that the transnational links forged by the development of the mining industry made the Copperbelt part of a familiar world of mining camps and that these links explain many developments in this period. The Second World War dramatically altered conditions, so forms a natural end point.

Chapter Three (1940-47) covers wartime developments on the Copperbelt and is mainly concerned with the wave of industrial unrest that erupted in 1940 and did not subside until 1946. Primarily motivated by knowledge of what pay and conditions were like at other mining centres, these strikes won significant improvements in the living standards of white mineworkers and formed a working-class that saw itself as white. This chapter will also cover several developments that accompanied this strike wave: the creation of a closed shop, the imposition of an effective colour bar and, counter-intuitively, the flourishing of political radicalism. The new copper bonus for

European employees instituted in 1947 and the beginning of a copper boom marks the end of this period.

Chapter Four (1948-56) focuses on the boom years as soaring copper prices generated enormous benefits for the Copperbelt. The copper bonus ensured a significant chunk of copper revenues were handed over to European employees who spent the money hand over fist and generated a rich associational life marked by conspicuous consumption. How this translated into everyday life will be the key focus of this chapter. Attitudes of Europeans towards the colour bar and African trade unions will also be considered. The main argument will be that new-found wealth represented self-actualization for the European community and made the character of this community more ambiguous. Many more Europeans were attracted to the Copperbelt as opportunities for contractors, businessmen and in the service sector opened up. The sharp fall in copper prices in 1956 brings this period and chapter to an end.

Chapter Five (1957-62) encompasses the bitter strikes provoked by the drop in the price of copper and subsequent largely successful attempts by the companies to restructure the workforce and cut costs. This chapter will explore what the dominant concerns of Europeans on the Copperbelt were and argue that these disputes revolved around notions of the dignity of labour and the organisation of work on the mines. Alongside this, Chapter Five will assess what Europeans did not struggle against: African nationalism and the removal of the colour bar. Opposition to African nationalism was sporadic and fleeting. The disinclination by Europeans to oppose decolonisation actively, despite several clear opportunities to do so, forestalled efforts to preserve the colonial political order and this represents a useful point to finish the chapter.

Chapter Six (1963-74) covers the final years of the European community but argues that the disappearance of this community was not preordained by Zambian independence in 1964. This chapter will include continued white industrial unrest in 1963 and 1966, reactions to independence, restructuring on the mines, associational life and the slump in copper prices. Despite the chronological split, it will be argued that little changed for the European community, their privileged position was actually bolstered and associational life continued as before. The European community became more homogenous due to accelerated social mobility and the hardening of racial divisions through the creation of the 'expatriate' category. The crash in copper prices in 1974-75 brought this community to an end.

Chapter Seven will be a relatively brief conclusion drawing together the key themes of this thesis and restating the central arguments.

Between the main chapters of this thesis are four brief biographies of individuals who played an important role on the Copperbelt and link the chapters together. These biographies are all of unusual men who had extraordinary lives, but they illustrate how individual lives were entangled in wider forces.⁸⁶ Together, they give an indication of the global currents which washed up on the Copperbelt, particularly because, for a brief moment in 1940 and intermittently between 1950 and 1953, all four men were there at the same time. In 1940, the simultaneous presence of Hugh Handford, a Cornish mining official who had spent several years in South Africa, Frank Maybank, a British mineworker radicalised in New Zealand and Australia, Jack Purvis, a young mine apprentice raised by Australian parents in Luanshya, and

⁸⁶ This approach follows the work of Charlotte Erickson who argued that life histories can shed light on how migrants "decided where to go and the networks in which they moved and settled." Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England: Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, 1994), p. 25.

Lawrence Katilungu, a miner from Northern Province involved in nascent efforts to organise Africans on the mines, provide a vivid illustration of the international character of the region.

Names and terminology

Some of the names and terms used during the period covered by this thesis require explanation. The first is the use of the terms 'European' and 'white'. These terms are used interchangeably in this thesis. This equation may be problematic, particularly as some 'Europeans' on the Copperbelt had, in fact, never even been to Europe. However, this follows the way these terms are used in the primary sources and the way whites on the Copperbelt thought of themselves and referred to themselves. Membership of the white mineworkers' union, for instance, was specifically "confined to white persons employed in or about the mines" but successive recognition agreements signed with the mining companies referred to the union "as representing the daily paid European employees."⁸⁷ Similarly, membership of the white staff association was restricted to "monthly paid European employees of the mines" but members would also refer to themselves as 'whites'.⁸⁸

The trade unions on the mines had confusingly similar names. Most confusing are the European and African mineworkers' unions: one was the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union (NRMWU) and the other was the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers Trade Union (NRAMTU). These names were so alike that the unions occasionally received each other's post and telegrams.⁸⁹ To avoid similar confusion,

⁸⁷ NAZ SEC1/1376, Constitution of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union, 1936. MM 1/10/2, Agreement between the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union and the Rhokana Corporation Limited, 30 April 1946.

⁸⁸ NAZ MLSS1/21/13, The Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association Constitution, 1952.

⁸⁹ NAZ MLSS1/26/68, Application for registration of trade union, NRMWU, 1950.

this thesis will use NRMWU to refer to the European mineworkers' union as this acronym appears in many sources quoted from and the African Mineworkers' Union (AMU) will refer to its African counterpart. The European and African staff associations also had similar names – the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA) and the Mines African Staff Association (MASA) – but the possibility for confusion is diminished because these acronyms appear much less frequently in thesis.

All these organisations changed their names around Zambian independence. The NRMWU became the Mine Workers' Society (MWS) and then, after merging with MOSSA in 1966, became the Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers Association (ZEMA). The AMU renamed itself the Zambia Mineworkers Union (ZMU) at independence and then the Mineworkers Union of Zambia (MUZ) after merging with the Mines Local Staff Association in 1967.

Helpfully, for the narrative of this thesis, relatively few other names were changed after Zambian independence. Northern Rhodesia, of course, became Zambia. On the Copperbelt, the only major name change was Bancroft Mine and the associated town, both of which were renamed Chililabombwe in 1968. Both mining companies changed their names slightly to reflect the new political circumstances. The Rhodesian Selection Trust became the Roan Selection Trust and retained the same acronym. Rhodesian Anglo American became Zambian Anglo American (ZAA). The Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines was renamed the Copper Industry Service Bureau.

Independence was accompanied by gradual currency changes. The Southern Rhodesia pound was used in Northern Rhodesia until 1955, when it was replaced by

the Rhodesia and Nyasaland pound. Both were pegged to pound sterling at par. After independence, Zambia adopted the Zambian pound, which was pegged to pound sterling until November 1967, when pound sterling was devalued.⁹⁰ Any figures from 1926 to 1967 can therefore be easily adjusted for inflation and are referenced in the footnotes in 2015 figures.⁹¹ The Kwacha replaced the Zambian pound in January 1968.

Copper was priced in pound sterling throughout this period, despite the introduction of the Kwacha. Copper prices in nominal and real terms along with production figures are provided in Appendix III. All copper prices quoted in this thesis are London Metal Exchange prices.

⁹⁰ Cunningham, *Copper Industry*, p. 189.

⁹¹ Figures adjusted for inflation have been calculated using the Bank of England's online inflation calculator. Accessed 14 February 2015 at <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/index1.aspx>

Chapter Two

Wild West in Central Africa, 1926-39

... the sort of place you'd expect to see one of those cowboys ride up, tie up his horse and stump bow-legged through the swing doors of the nearest bar.

Margaret Kirkcaldy, 1959.⁹²

Overview

Margaret Kirkcaldy knew exactly what the mining camps reminded her of when she arrived in 1935. Although born in Scotland, she had spent several years in Canada and the United States before moving to the Copperbelt when her husband got a job on Mufulira Mine. This recognition was not uncommon. The mining camps were immediately recognisable and familiar to many who arrived there. Clustered around the rapidly expanding complex of shafts, stopes and smelters, these camps were rough, ramshackle, often violent, disease-ridden and located hundreds of miles away from what their white inhabitants would have regarded as civilisation. Yet, this did not dissuade the thousands of white mineworkers and others who flocked there from the late 1920s.

This chapter will explore the experiences of the Europeans who arrived on the Copperbelt and the world they inhabited. The first section will be on prospecting and

⁹² 'Guesthouse Triumvirate', *Horizon*, March 1959.

company formation. It will examine the speed with which the Copperbelt was plugged into the global networks of the mining industry. This will be followed by sections on the transient early workforce, who they were, where they came from and what the implications of this were, and the camps they inhabited. This booming, temporary world of the camps was brought to an abrupt halt by the Great Depression and its devastating impact will be the focus of the next section. The sections continue chronologically through this period and each considers what the predominant interests and preoccupations of the European community were. These will examine the formation of the white mineworkers union, colonial fears about the prospect of a revolt by Europeans on the Copperbelt, immigration of non-British whites and, finally, the furore produced by the sacking of miner Tommy Graves from Roan Antelope Mine in 1939.

The primary arguments of this chapter are that the international links created by the onset of large-scale industrial mining explain many developments on the Copperbelt in this period and shed light on a wider world of mining camps. People, practices and ideas are flowed to the Copperbelt from sources around the globe. The international dimension of the Copperbelt seems obvious or even trivial, especially as all copper produced was for export. Yet, although it has often been remarked on in passing, the implications have never been explored in the secondary literature. Jane Parpart, for instance, stated that “men came from all over the world” to the mines in the 1930s, Larry Butler noted that American companies and capital “played a vital role in the development of the Copperbelt,” while Patience Mususa observed that the Copperbelt had “from its early years attracted a migrant population composed of

various African groups and transient Europeans.”⁹³ Having noted this, the authors then swiftly move on to other matters. The secondary literature primarily covers the European community in two ways: either highlighting the perceived technical and/or financial acumen of a small number of mining engineers or focusing on the hostility and racism of the European community toward the African majority on the mines and in the towns.⁹⁴

The latter category appears most frequently in the literature. For instance, virtually the only mention of the white mineworkers’ union, the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union (NRMWU), is the attribution of its formation to white fears about competition from Africans in response to “the growing strength and efficiency of African labour” and that its primary task was to establish an industrial colour bar.⁹⁵ This is at best only partly true and it makes more sense to understand that a union was formed largely because many white mineworkers had considerable experience in the labour movement elsewhere in the world, so establishing a trade union was an obvious step for them. The argument here is not only that the transient European population on the Copperbelt was transnational but that much of this population had a global work experience.

The mining regions these people moved between had striking similarities and this will be one of the main themes of this chapter. The mining camps were in James

⁹³ Jane Parpart, *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 30. Larry Butler, *Copper Empire: mining and the colonial state in Northern Rhodesia, c. 1930-64* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 15. Patience Mususa, ‘Mining, welfare and urbanisation: the wavering urban character of Zambia’s Copperbelt’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 4 (2012), p. 572.

⁹⁴ For the former see: J. Austen Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia: A chronicle of mineral exploration and mining development* (London, 1961), Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971) and Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York, 1981), pp. 33-102.

⁹⁵ Quote is from Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976), p. 206. The view is common in the literature: Guy Mhone, *The political economy of a dual labor market in Africa: The copper industry and dependency in Zambia, 1929-1969* (Rutherford, 1982), p. 120 and Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 56.

Belich's phrase "*prefabricated* communities into which new members could easily slot."⁹⁶ The camps were rough, but no rougher and more basic than other mining camps around the world. Nor were they particularly different and this was evident to contemporary observers. This familiarity helped people to move to the Copperbelt from elsewhere in the world. A sense of difference was eroded by the efforts of the European community to make this already familiar world even more familiar through the social clubs and institutions they created, including trade unions.

Many of the attitudes and beliefs of the European community which may appear to be the result of a colonial situation were actually more widely-held and were transnational rather than local in origin. This was a transient community but one which moved between similar communities in Southern Africa and the wider English-speaking world. Many aspects of transient Copperbelt society – such as heavy drinking – endured because they were common to these geographically diverse places. This was a conflicted community though as from the mid-1930s many Europeans began to refer to themselves as settlers, though most only spent a relatively brief period on the Copperbelt. This involved articulating a strong British, rather than a merely 'white', identity and expressing hostility towards other whites, either non-British whites or the colonial administration. There was a firm conviction among the European community that the region and its economic opportunities should be reserved for people like them: English-speaking, working-class migrants.

Much of this chapter is about men. The European community on the Copperbelt was a 'masculine' one from the outset and the kind of activities at the centre of the community, and were prized, were traditionally masculine. This is only partly a result

⁹⁶ James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland, 1996), p. 428. Emphasis in original.

of demographics. European women were not excluded or even discouraged from coming to the Copperbelt and there were an estimated 1,703 European women there in 1931, alongside 4,172 men.⁹⁷ However, the most lucrative economic opportunities on the Copperbelt accrued to European men and European women were largely excluded from the places which formed the centre of life for the European community: the mines, bars and sports teams.

Prospecting and Company Formation

European awareness of the mineral riches of the region dates back to the 1890s. Under a vague charter from the British Government and a dubious treaty signed with Lewanika, Litunga of the Lozi people, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) had claimed sovereignty and mineral rights over the region in 1890. Prospectors began to enter the territory which became Northern Rhodesia and a series of small-scale discoveries along the Congo border led to the region being named the 'Copperbelt', a term first used in 1905.⁹⁸ Prospecting was linked to two wider trends: the push northwards of prospectors searching something approximating to a 'Second Rand' and the dramatically increased demand for copper which "became essential in most industrialized and prosperous countries," spurring a 24-fold growth in global production between 1870 and 1938.⁹⁹

African societies had mined and smelted copper in the region for centuries – possibly as early as the sixth century – but this was in abeyance by 1900 as ore supplies which could be extracted without deep-level mining had been exhausted.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Appendix I.

⁹⁸ Francis Ricarde-Seaver, 'The Great Northern Copper Belts of Rhodesia', *The African World Annual*, No. 2 (1905), pp. 207-8.

⁹⁹ Steven Topik and Allen Wells, 'Commodity chains in a global economy' in Emily Rosenberg (ed.), *A World Connecting, 1870-1945* (London, 2012), p. 672.

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976), pp. 34-6, 104-5.

European prospecting and mining built, quite literally, on this heritage as mines were established on older African workings. It is difficult to disentangle exactly who 'discovered' what and when. Many of the accounts produced by the prospectors, or those close to them, are conflicting or appear to be fabricated and it is not the intention of this thesis to adjudicate. For some Copperbelt mines, "the persistent scholar can find many versions of the discovery."¹⁰¹

Most copper deposits were marked by existing, abandoned workings and "brought to [prospectors] attention by the local inhabitants" according to Austen Bancroft, who oversaw geological surveys across the Copperbelt in the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, William Collier and J.J. Donohoe found what became Bwana Mkubwa Mine when they were led there by local Africans in December 1902. Abandoned workings at Bwana Mkubwa were substantial, consisting of two trenches, one 2,250 feet long and the other 600 feet, up to 30 feet deep.¹⁰² Bancroft himself, who had prospected in Alaska, Canada and Guyana, concluded that the difficulties encountered by European prospectors were 'exaggerated' and compared to prospecting elsewhere "the forests of the Rhodesias... are more like a park."¹⁰³

Early prospecting efforts were quickly overshadowed by the discovery of major copper deposits in Katanga and were then hampered by the assumption that the geology was the same on both sides of the border.¹⁰⁴ There were only negligible surface deposits in Northern Rhodesia and it was assumed that, as in Katanga, "ore grades tailed off sharply at depth" and that the only copper ores were oxide ores.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Lyn Schumaker, 'Slimes and Death-Dealing Dambos: Water, Industry and the Garden City on Zambia's Copperbelt', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34, 4 (2008), p. 829.

¹⁰² Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰³ Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 63.

¹⁰⁴ There is an account of early prospecting in Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, pp. 6-26.

¹⁰⁵ Tomas Frederiksen, 'Unearthing Rule: Mining, power and the political ecology of extraction in colonial Zambia' (Manchester Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2010), p. 139.

There were some mines established on the Copperbelt in this period, but these bore little relation to the mines subsequently established and they were dwarfed by Union Minière du Haut Katanga's (UMHK) huge operations in Katanga, which began in 1907.

Bwana Mkubwa was the most promising prospect, and it wasn't very promising. The mine spent 30 years repeatedly closing and reopening. Work was suspended not long after it first began in 1903 to wait for the railway to arrive, which it did in 1909. At this time, the mine employed only 17 Europeans and 400 Africans and survived long enough to produce the first copper concentrate in the territory, before promptly closing again.¹⁰⁶ Increased demand during World War I meant production resumed between 1916 and 1918 and a group of American mining engineers briefly reopened the mine in 1919 to test new ore treatment techniques. After this, the mine did not reopen until April 1926, by which time other parts of the Copperbelt had attracted greater interest.¹⁰⁷

The success of Katanga's copper mines stimulated investment in the Copperbelt by drawing American mining engineers with extensive experience in mining around the world to the region. Working in Central and Southern Africa had been an established career path for American mining engineers since the 1880s.¹⁰⁸ Virtually all UMHK's top technical and management positions were filled by Americans in the 1910s, something which would be repeated on the Copperbelt.¹⁰⁹ Travelling through the region in 1920, the American journalist Isaac Marcossou encountered lots of

¹⁰⁶ Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, pp. 19-22.

¹⁰⁷ Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Tuffnell, 'Engineering Inter-Imperialism: American miners and the transformation of global mining, 1871-1910', *Journal of Global History*, 10, 1 (2015), pp. 53-76.

¹⁰⁹ Charles Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa: Industrial strategies and the evolution of an African proletariat in the Copperbelt 1911-41* (London, 1979), p. 50.

“Yankee exports” at UMHK.¹¹⁰ These existing links with Katanga acted as a conduit for early interest in the Copperbelt. Indeed, some of the men Marcossion met were later closely involved in developments across the border, including Preston Horner, general manager at UMHK, and Raymond Brooks, a mine manager for UMHK and later in charge of prospecting camps in Nkana and Nchanga.¹¹¹

Most significant, however, was Alfred Chester Beatty, a highly successful American mining engineer who first became involved in the region while working for the Guggenheim Exploration Company. On their behalf, Beatty secured 12m acres of mining concessions in Belgian Congo in 1906 and became technical director of the company established to exploit these concessions.¹¹² Two decades later, he became one of the key figures in the financing and development of the Copperbelt. Beatty took advantage of a policy change by BSAC to grant new prospecting licences offering exclusive access to vast areas of the territory. He secured the 52,000 square mile Rhodesia Congo Border Concession in 1923.¹¹³ Beatty, along with Horner and the British engineer Walter Broadbridge, formed the Rhodesia Congo Border Concession Company (RCBC) to develop the concession, initiating a relatively short but extremely successful period of prospecting when sulphide ores, which could be processed more cheaply than oxide ores, were discovered at moderate depths.¹¹⁴

These opportunities not only caught the eye of RCBC. In October 1923, a high-level delegation from Anglo American, including the American consulting engineer Carl

¹¹⁰ Isaac Marcossion, *An African Adventure* (New York, 1921), p. 149.

¹¹¹ Raymond Brooks, ‘How the Rhodesian Coppers were Found, Part I’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, 1, 1 (1950), p. 44. Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 82.

¹¹² John Phillips, ‘Alfred Chester Beatty: Mining Engineer, Financier, and Entrepreneur, 1898-1950’, in Raymond Dumett (ed.), *Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire, 1870-1945: Entrepreneurship, High Finance, Politics and Territorial Expansion* (Farnham, 2009), p. 221. For an overview of Beatty’s life see his obituary in *The Times*, 22 January 1968.

¹¹³ Frederiksen, ‘Unearthing Rule’, p. 137.

¹¹⁴ Robert Baldwin, *Economic Development and Export Growth: A study of Northern Rhodesia, 1920-1960* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 31.

Davis and Ernst Oppenheimer's brother-in-law Leslie Pollak, visited the region.¹¹⁵ Anglo American came to be interested in the Copperbelt partly as a result of negotiations with Beatty over his interests in West African diamond mines. During these negotiations, Beatty asked Anglo American to help finance RCBC at the same time as Davis and Pollak produced a positive report on the Copperbelt's potential.¹¹⁶

Claims and prospecting rights were held by a complex patchwork of companies, a picture which was rapidly transformed as they were snapped up, merged, consolidated and reorganized.¹¹⁷ By 1930, two mining companies, Rhodesian Anglo American (RAA) and Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST), had divided up the Copperbelt between them. The consolidation of these holdings under the control of companies with deep pockets was part of a wider trend in the global copper industry as new mines were increasingly situated in remote areas, with higher costs of labour, power and materials.¹¹⁸

The development of the Copperbelt "was chiefly financed from the USA and South Africa" and these financial connections helped the new companies staff their ranks and plugged them into the networks of the global mining industry. Both RST and RAA were formed in 1928 and attracted considerable American financing. Anglo American was the largest shareholder in RAA, but US mining giants Kennecott Copper and the Newmont Mining Company, itself a major Anglo American shareholder, also provided capital. The American Metal Company (AMC) became the largest shareholder in RST in 1930 when Chester Beatty sold 50.6% of the

¹¹⁵ Cunningham, *Copper Industry*, p. 86.

¹¹⁶ Theodore Gregory, *Ernest Oppenheimer and Economic Development in Southern Africa* (Oxford, 1962), p. 385.

¹¹⁷ Cunningham, *Copper Industry*, pp. 62-85 provides an account of the formation and financial arrangements of these companies.

¹¹⁸ Christopher Schmitz, 'The Rise of Big Business in the World Copper Industry 1870-1930', *Economic History Review*, 39, 3 (1986), p. 403.

company to AMC in exchange for AMC shares, though he remained RST chairman until 1953. This move encouraged American copper firm Phelps Dodge to buy AMC shares.¹¹⁹

Beatty utilised these connections to import a management structure for RST practically wholesale from the United States. RST managing director Arthur Storke came from Climax Mine in Colorado while Roan Antelope's general manager David Irwin was recruited from Phelps Dodge's Copper Queen Mine in Arizona.¹²⁰ Irwin's counterpart at Mufulira Mine, E.E. Parker, was recruited from the Utah Copper Company the following year, bringing experience of copper mining in Nevada, Chile and Peru.¹²¹ Mufulira's general superintendent, Californian mining engineer Jack Tallant, had a virtually identical profile when he joined the mine from AMC's Mexican subsidiary, and replaced Parker as mine manager in 1933.¹²² One of the few non-Americans was British mining engineer William Selkirk – who directed initial mining development at Roan Antelope – but he had extensive experience of mining in North America and elsewhere.¹²³

American involvement in RAA was less obvious and has been overlooked, perhaps because Oppenheimer stressed the need to keep the Copperbelt, or part of it, within 'British hands' and the job of managing director was held jointly by British-born Stanley Taylor and Leslie Pollak.¹²⁴ Retaining 'British' control became more pressing

¹¹⁹ Andrew Roberts, 'Notes towards a Financial History of Copper Mining in Northern Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 16, 2 (1982), pp. 348-49.

¹²⁰ Stephen Voynick, *Climax: The History of Colorado's Climax Molybdenum Mine* (Missoula, Mont., 1996), p. 93. ST, G/51, Letter from D.C. D'Eath to all shareholders, 10 September 1928.

¹²¹ 'Rhodesian Selection Trust', *The Economist*, 21 December 1929.

¹²² Tallant had also worked in Nevada, Bolivia and Chile. *Year Book & Guide of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, 1938-39 Edition* (Salisbury, 1939), p. 631.

¹²³ Prior to 1925, Selkirk had worked as a mining engineer in around 30 countries, 'Death of Mr W. Selkirk', *The Mid-Sussex Times*, 22 February 1961.

¹²⁴ Ackson Kanduza argued that RAA carefully assigned British personnel to key positions in Northern Rhodesia, see 'Copper refining in Northern Rhodesia, 1929-1935', *African Social Research*, 35 (1983), p. 436.

in 1928 when the American Smelting and Refining Company, which held substantial shares in RST, attempted a complex financial manoeuvre to take over Nchanga. Oppenheimer explicitly framed this struggle as the defence of British interests – which conveniently coincided with his own interests – and co-ordinated a counter offer by nine British companies and merged Nchanga into a new formation: the Rhokana Corporation.¹²⁵

Oppenheimer's stress on British interests masked considerable American involvement in RAA. Oppenheimer admitted to a friend in 1936 that Anglo American had little experience in copper mining and were convinced that "Americans possessed all the knowledge" in this field. Moreover, even if they had not been so convinced, "we were induced to follow the American advice because a large part of the funds required were to be supplied by America."¹²⁶ Anglo American therefore drew on the resources of Newmont, who seconded two of their senior staff to RAA: Harold Munroe, who became Anglo American's consulting engineer on the Copperbelt, and Alexander McNab, a Canadian metallurgist tasked with constructing surface plants.¹²⁷ Newmont's connections may also have facilitated the recruitment of Arno Winther from Anna Beaver Mine, Oklahoma to become manager of Bwana Mkubwa in 1929, and subsequently Nkana Mine.¹²⁸ Newmont had financial interests

¹²⁵ Bernard Alford and Charles Harvey, 'The Formation of the Rhokana Corporation, 1930-32', *The Business History Review*, 54, 3 (1980), pp. 336-37.

¹²⁶ Gregory, *Ernest Oppenheimer*, p. 390.

¹²⁷ Jack Morris, *Going for Gold: The history of Newmont Mining Corporation* (Tuscaloosa, 2010), p. 47. Munroe was recruited to Newmont from the AMC.

¹²⁸ Winther had 20 years' experience in copper mining in Utah and Peru, S.A. Lewisohn, 'Obituary – Arno S. Winther', *Proceedings of the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America*, XLI-XLII (1948/49), p. 64.

in both RAA and RST and Newmont vice-president, Fred Searls Jr, sat on the boards of RAA and the AMC, RST's majority shareholder.¹²⁹

On the basis that 'Americans possessed all the knowledge', Louis Reber, previously employed at United Verde Mine in Arizona, became RAA consulting geologist in 1926, until he was replaced in 1927 by a Canadian, Austen Bancroft.¹³⁰ Bancroft's recruitment is a good illustration of the narrow group of individuals who provided the technical and managerial expertise for the Copperbelt and the dense connections between them. Bancroft was recruited by Auckland Geddes, who had become chairman of Rio Tinto in 1925.¹³¹ Oppenheimer had enlisted Rio Tinto in his effort to defend 'British' interests in Nchanga and the company had quickly gained a significant financial interest in Copperbelt.¹³² Geddes had previously been a professor at McGill University in Montreal, where he knew Bancroft as a colleague.¹³³ Bancroft was nominally still on the staff of the university in 1926 but had spent much of the 1920s on administrative leave as an assistant general manager to the Granby Consolidated Mining, Smelting & Power Company in British Columbia.¹³⁴ This means Bancroft would have also been known to another senior RAA employee, Munroe, who had been general manager of Granby Consolidated Mining in the early 1920s.¹³⁵ Bancroft himself consciously kept up his North American ties. When he went on leave in 1930, he spent much of his time visiting

¹²⁹ Prosser Gifford, 'The Framework for a Nation: An economic and social history of Northern Rhodesia from 1914 to 1939' (Yale Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1964), p. 264.

¹³⁰ Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 82.

¹³¹ For an overview of Auckland Geddes' life see his obituary in *The Times*, 9 January 1954.

¹³² Charles Harvey, *The Rio Tinto Company: An economic history of a leading international mining concern, 1873-1954* (Penzance, 1981), pp. 230-31.

¹³³ Gregory, *Ernest Oppenheimer*, pp. 423, 430.

¹³⁴ Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 10.

¹³⁵ *Cornell Alumni News*, 1 March 1949, p. 327.

mines in the United States and Canada.¹³⁶ The international horizons of these men would manifest themselves when the mines required a workforce.

Early workforce

Lucy Cullen, who had arrived at Roan Antelope in 1928 from New York to become the mine's secretary, described the white workforce who 'washed up' at the camp as "human flotsam" who came from all over the world and "usually left for reasons other than the completion of work."¹³⁷ She was right that white mineworkers were prone to abrupt departures. This was a transient community which moved between mining and industrial centres all over the world, transporting ideas and experiences with them along with their industrial skills.

Development proceeded rapidly at Nchanga, Nkana, Mufulira and Roan Antelope as both companies sought to bring their mines rapidly to production. From a scattering of huts around Roan Antelope in 1927, the steel headframe at Beatty Shaft topped out at 189 feet by 1930, higher than the tallest structures on the Rand.¹³⁸ The first copper ore was processed at Nkana in late 1931, less than two years after development work began.¹³⁹ Physical connections with the rest of the world advanced similarly rapidly. The railway reached Roan Antelope in 1929, and snaked out across the rest of the Copperbelt from there, and the mine already had its own telephone exchange by 1930, a rarity elsewhere in the world.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ 'Rhodesian Anglo American', *The Times*, 4 June 1930.

¹³⁷ Lucy Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke that Thunders* (New York, 1940), p. 335.

¹³⁸ Owen Letcher, *South Central Africa* (Johannesburg, 1932), p. 218.

¹³⁹ Roan Consolidated Mines, *Zambia's Mining Industry: the First 50 Years* (Ndola, 1978), p. 57.

¹⁴⁰ Jan-Bart Gewald and Sebastiaan Soeters, 'African Miners and Shape-Shifting Capital Flight: The Case of Luanshya/Baluba' in Alistair Fraser and Miles Larmer (eds.), *Zambia, Mining, and Neoliberalism: boom and bust on the globalized Copperbelt* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 161.

All this required a large skilled and semi-skilled workforce, particularly as both companies intended to minimise the use of unskilled African labour through mechanization.¹⁴¹ To meet these demands, the companies recruited white labour from mining centres around the world. This was partly due to the international orientation of these companies and partly due to necessity. The settler population of Northern Rhodesia was tiny – only 5,581 in 1926 – and few of them had the requisite industrial skills or experience.¹⁴² The mine managements generally took a dim view of the quality of locally available white labour. Roan Antelope Mine dismissed local recruits as “usually wasters,” “careless” and concluded that across the territory “the white labour is uniformly poor.”¹⁴³ Many locally recruited whites found it difficult to adjust to industrial discipline. Winifred Tapson, who sought work with her husband at Nchanga Mine in 1928 after their tobacco farm failed, complained that the intensity and routine of work was strange and that the hierarchy of the mining camp grated.¹⁴⁴

Large numbers of African workers in the region had mining experience – as UMHK had recruited heavily from Northern Rhodesia during the 1920s – but they had experience of open-pit, not underground, mining and the rapid pace of development was thought to preclude training an African workforce.¹⁴⁵ The recruitment priorities of the mines were clear. As Roan Antelope came into production, European employment rose from 269 in January 1929 to 916 in September 1930 (excluding hundreds of men working for contractors), while African employment rose more

¹⁴¹ For a statement on RAA's policy, see Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), p. 12. For RST see 'Roan Antelope Copper Mines', *Financial Times*, 26 November 1929.

¹⁴² Rhodesia-Nyasaland Royal Commission, *Report* (London, 1939), p. 3.

¹⁴³ Selection Trust Archives, London School of Economics, London [hereafter ST], G/7, Letters from J.A. Dunne, 11 September 1926 and 4 November 1926.

¹⁴⁴ Winifred Tapson, *Old Timers* (Cape Town, 1957), p. 156.

¹⁴⁵ John Higginson, *A Working Class in the Making: Belgian Colonial Labor Policy, Private Enterprise, and the African Mineworkers, 1907-1951* (Madison, 1989), p. 43.

slowly, from 3,144 to 4,438.¹⁴⁶ Recruitment, for both African and European labour, was constant due to the very high turnover. It was estimated in February 1931 that around 7% of the total European workforce left every month at Nkana Mine, an average of two men a day.¹⁴⁷

Some of this recruitment was conducted through the personal connections of the mine management. Bancroft did so using his connections in Canada. For instance, he invited Archie Morton, the master mechanic at Anyox Mine, British Columbia to join Nkana as the resident engineer. This was Scottish-born Morton's second stint in Northern Rhodesia; he came to the territory in the early 1910s from New Zealand but only stayed for a short period before moving to British Columbia in 1913.¹⁴⁸ Bancroft also recruited two drill superintendents he had previously worked with in Canada in May 1928, as the only men with the skill to use the new equipment at Nkana.¹⁴⁹

Much of the recruitment of white labour was from South Africa, something that has been emphasised in the literature.¹⁵⁰ What has not been appreciated is that this did not preclude these men from having acquired mining experience elsewhere. After the 1922 Rand Revolt, South African mining companies recruited skilled miners from overseas and the proportion of South African-born white miners on the Rand fell briefly. This policy was short-lived and from 1925 "the foreign-trained artisan miners

¹⁴⁶ ST, G/51, Progress report for three months ended March 31st 1929, Progress report for three months ended September 30th 1930.

¹⁴⁷ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 17.6.8A, Negotiations with the Government in connection with the Bwana/Nchanga retrenchments, 25 February 1931.

¹⁴⁸ 'An old timer retires', *Rhokana Review*, September 1952.

¹⁴⁹ Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 156.

¹⁵⁰ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 44.

began to be squeezed out” of South Africa precisely at the time when the Copperbelt was opening up.¹⁵¹

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Figure 2.1: Underground officials at Roan Antelope Mine, 1932. ‘Old timers’, *Horizon*, November 1959.

Among the white workforce at Nkana in October 1931, 359 were born in South Africa, 313 in Britain, 33 elsewhere in the British Empire, 44 Americans, and 15 Yugoslavs along with a smattering of other Europeans.¹⁵² Those recruited from South Africa were largely English-speaking and there appear to have been few Afrikaner mineworkers on the Copperbelt at this time. No statistics were kept on Afrikaner employment but there are some useful proxies which give an indication. The first school register taken at Nkana noted the religious denomination of 15 of the

¹⁵¹ David Yudelman, *The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, capital, and the incorporation of organized labour on the South African gold fields, 1902-1939* (Cape Town, 1984), p. 192.

¹⁵² National Archives, London [hereafter NAB], CO 795/52/11, Nationality return, 31 October 1931.

18 children enrolled: six labelled Church of England, five Methodist, one 'English Baptist' but only three from the Dutch Reformed Church.¹⁵³

It is difficult to trace those whose stay on the Copperbelt was only brief. Those who remained for longer periods are more likely to appear in archival sources, and company publications highlighted the minority who did stay as evidence that they were good employers. Frank Lane, for instance, left Australia for South Africa in 1929 and was swiftly recruited in Johannesburg by Roan Antelope as an underground electrician. He lasted only 10 months before bouts of malaria and dysentery persuaded him to return, first to Johannesburg and then back to Australia in 1932. It is likely there would have been no record of Lane's time on the Copperbelt, if he had not moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1958 and taken a job with an elevator company which serviced elevators on the Copperbelt, and been interviewed by a mine publication.¹⁵⁴

One of the clearest indications of the international orientation of the mining companies is that wages and working conditions were set with explicit reference to other mining centres. These were the areas the mines competed with for labour and higher wages were offered to attract labour. So, when riveters were required for construction work at Roan Antelope and Nkana in July 1930, they were sought "from Scotch shipyards only" with payment of 25/6 per shift and "all other terms similar to Cumberland miners."¹⁵⁵ The recruitment of these riveters is worth examining for two reasons. First because it was a disaster and, second, it illustrates that attitudes

¹⁵³ 'From 18 pupils to 1,703', *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

¹⁵⁴ 'A Roan pioneer renews friendships', *Horizon*, January 1962.

¹⁵⁵ ZCCM 16.2.4B, Telegram from General Manager, Roan Antelope to Selection Trust, London, 3 July 1930.

thought to be the result of a specific colonial situation were actually more widely held, and were transnational rather than local in origin.

The Glaswegian riveters recruited to the Copperbelt seem like the archetype of James Belich's 'crew culture', as a group who were "mobile, male and prone to binge and hit each other."¹⁵⁶ Belich has argued that crews were associated with persistent individualism and the jobs they undertook did not involve collective struggle.¹⁵⁷ However, these Glaswegian men had very firm ideas about their place in the trade union movement and the importance of collective struggle. Less than a month after arriving at Roan Antelope, the men had formed a committee to demand an immediate pay increase.¹⁵⁸ Anger over perceived economic exploitation was bound up with racism. The riveters demanded to be treated like the rest of the white workforce "composed mostly of Americans and Australians who... were drawing a much higher rate of wages" and avoid indignities such as being served the same food "as that dished out to the coloured labour."¹⁵⁹ In charge of the riveters was construction superintendent George Neville, who had previously overseen smelter construction at Copper Queen Mine in Arizona when Irwin was superintendent at the mine.¹⁶⁰ The immediate instinct of the American mine management was to resist the riveters' demands. Although they had been intending to increase their pay, after the riveters demanded this "we felt that it was best to concede nothing."¹⁶¹ In response,

¹⁵⁶ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A history of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000* (Auckland, 2001), p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 433.

¹⁵⁸ ZCCM 16.2.4B, Telegram from General Manager, Roan Antelope to Selection Trust London, 31 October 1930.

¹⁵⁹ 'Glasgow trade union sensation', *Glasgow Sunday Mail*, 21 December 1930.

¹⁶⁰ 'Mining and metal news', *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 123 (1927), p. 223.

¹⁶¹ ZCCM 16.2.4B, Letter No. 448, 8 November 1930.

the riveters walked off the job and returned to Glasgow, with the exception of one man who had been imprisoned for fighting.¹⁶²

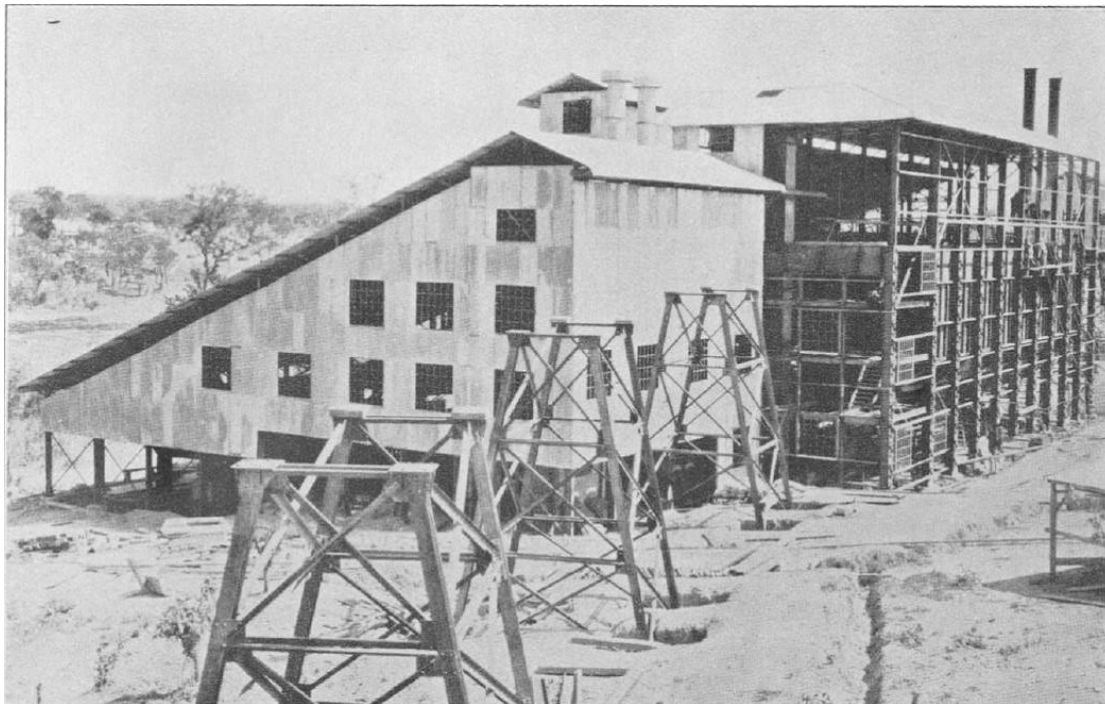


Figure 2.2: Roan Antelope coal pulverising plant under construction, July 1930. Frank Melland, 'Northern Rhodesia: Retrospect and Prospect', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 29, 117 (1930), p. 495.

This month-long stint was considerably longer than the riveters at Nkana managed. After a single day on the mine, the men concluded they had been brought out “with a view to breaking down the wages of the men” and demanded a meeting with the management.¹⁶³ Leading this delegation was Charles Forrester, who had experience fomenting troubles on the international circuits of white labour. Forrester had visited the Soviet Union as a delegate of his shipyard in 1929 and been deported from Canada in 1926.¹⁶⁴ The delegation demanded that only members of their union should be doing skilled work, and this meant that Africans should not be doing any part of ‘their’ work. The riveters claimed that Arno Winther “stated that in all open

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, Letter No. 450, 22 November 1930.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, Report of men from N’kana mine.

¹⁶⁴ ‘Court story of row at meeting’, *Evening Citizen* (Glasgow), 26 January 1932.

work they intended to use Native labour until such time as they learn the machine fully... We then asked if we were expected to teach these natives the machine and was told yes.”¹⁶⁵ The riveters refused to do this and followed their counterparts at Roan Antelope back to Glasgow.¹⁶⁶

This disastrous experience did not dissuade either company from further overseas recruitment. RST sought to write to trade unions in Scotland to counteract the spread of negative information which would prevent them from recruiting in Scotland and northern England in the future.¹⁶⁷ The story of the brief but chaotic trip of the riveters may have even encouraged white labour migration to the Copperbelt by effectively advertising what the prevailing conditions were like. In 1931, a newspaper in the Australian mining town of Broken Hill reported the incident under the headline: ‘£55 a month in Rhodesia’.¹⁶⁸

Like these riveters, many of the men who arrived on the Copperbelt retained trade union membership in other countries or had considerable experience in the labour movement. For instance, at Nchanga Mine was Herbert Walsh, a Yorkshire boilermaker who had spent much of the 1910s and early 1920s unsuccessfully trying to establish a white miners’ union in Southern Rhodesia, and repeatedly being sacked for his efforts.¹⁶⁹ However, there were no concerted efforts by white workers to form trade unions on the Copperbelt itself and the transience of the workforce

¹⁶⁵ ZCCM 16.2.4B, Report of men from N’kana mine.

¹⁶⁶ It is likely that the riveters were influenced by the successful campaign of seafarers to impose a colour bar on Glasgow harbour, see Jacqueline Jenkinson, ‘Black Sailors on Red Clydeside: Rioting, Reactionary Trade Unionism and Conflicting Notions of ‘Britishness’ Following the First World War’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 19, 1 (2008), pp. 29–60.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter from D.C. D’Eath to George A. Berry, 22 December 1930.

¹⁶⁸ ‘£55 a month in Rhodesia’, *Barrier Miner*, 15 June 1931.

¹⁶⁹ NAB CO 795/52/11, Letter from Herbert Walsh to Governor Maxwell, 12 June 1932. Ian Phimister, ‘White miners in historical perspective: Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1953’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2 (1977), pp. 192-3, 196.

militated against this. Those who disliked conditions on the Copperbelt voted with their feet and left.¹⁷⁰

Mining camps

Allan McGregor was among the first of the white workforce to arrive at Bwana Mkubwa in March 1927, having signed on in Johannesburg. He recalled that it was a great place to live as “there was no such thing as Income Tax or licences for motor vehicles, bicycles and firearms.”¹⁷¹ Such a life was not for everyone. One young Italian missionary hated Bwana Mkubwa so much that he threatened to lie down on the railway tracks unless sent home, which he was.¹⁷²

There was much to dislike in the camps which discouraged more permanent residence. Most of the European workforce was housed in single-room buildings with thatched roofs that leaked known as rondavels, in kator huts of corrugated iron which were deafening in the rain or in boarding houses.¹⁷³ Life in the boarding houses was rough. Jean Watson, who had arrived from Aberdeen via a Southern Rhodesian gold mine to run a boarding house, remembered her residents as tough customers, who carried guns with them everywhere and frequently had to be extricated from fights. Watson claimed that she did not want to get off the train when she first arrived, especially after she found out that the large group of men waiting on the platform were not there to greet her, but to ensure the latest whisky consignment had arrived intact. Others had a similar first impression, as Watson recalled:

¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Jane Parpart identified the ability of African mineworkers to leave if they were dissatisfied as an explanation for their lack of collective action, Parpart, *Labor and Capital*, p. 65.

¹⁷¹ '30 years' service', *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

¹⁷² Michael O'Shea, *Missionaries and miners: a history of the beginnings of the Catholic Church in Zambia with particular reference to the Copperbelt* (Ndola, 1986), pp. 166-67.

¹⁷³ Lewis Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1953* (London, 1964), p. 209.

taking one poor lad – he had just come out from England – to the Kator hut he had to share with some of the drillers. We opened the door and there were four men, playing cards by candlelight. Each had a bottle of whisky and a gun on the table. The poor laddie wanted to leave the next day!¹⁷⁴

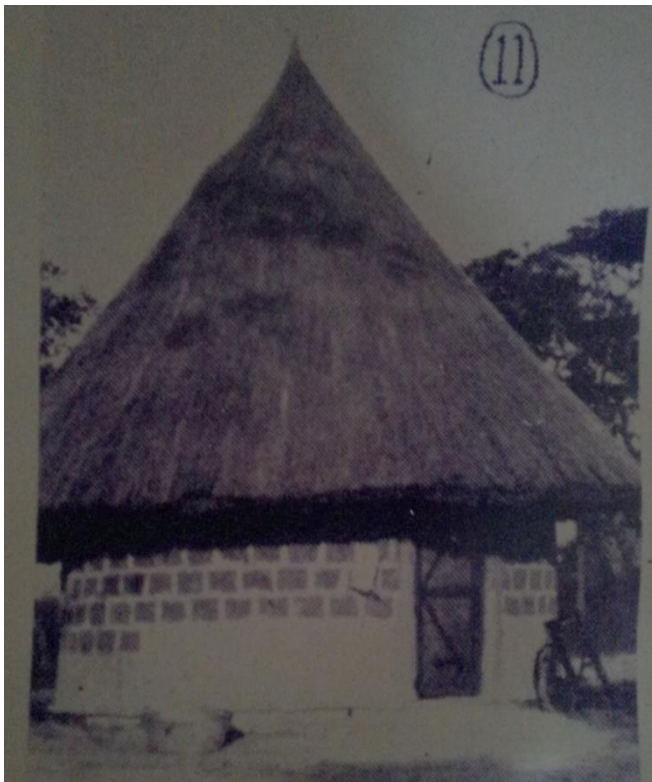


Figure 2.3: Nchanga European single quarters, circa 1929. ZCCM image collection.

The real notoriety of the camps was caused by disease, however. Both Europeans and Africans in the territory avoided Roan Antelope in the late 1920s because there was such a heavy death toll on the mines.¹⁷⁵ David Irwin recalled that, in 1928, it was not unusual to have almost one-third of the European workforce at the mine unable to report for work due to malaria or other tropical diseases, which were so common they were referred to as ‘Roanitis’. Medical services were rudimentary at best and before a hospital was constructed in mid-1930, the camp doctor performed surgery

¹⁷⁴ ‘Guesthouse Triumvirate’, *Horizon*, March 1959.

¹⁷⁵ Schumaker, ‘Garden City on Zambia’s Copperbelt’, pp. 824-25.

on a kitchen table in a corrugated iron hut.¹⁷⁶ Tales about camp conditions spread widely in southern Africa and railway staff in Cape Town delighted in telling those heading to the Copperbelt that it was a waste of money buying a return ticket, they would never make it back alive!¹⁷⁷

Death rates remained high until the early 1930s and Jean Watson's husband, a miner at Roan Antelope, died in 1931.¹⁷⁸ A member of the Ross Institute for Tropical Diseases, Dr Malcolm Watson, visited Roan Antelope between April and June 1930 and calculated that the death rate among the European population was higher than the death rate in England and Wales between 1871 and 1880.¹⁷⁹ Little sentimentality appears to have been attached to death. Funeral services at Roan Antelope were performed by the bartender as he had "a very pleasing voice" and there were no clergy at the camp.¹⁸⁰ Few clergy, it seems, were required and a local magistrate who was a devout Christian complained that, at the time, the Copperbelt was "frankly, with a few exceptions, a purely material, pagan centre. Few of the whites practised Christianity."¹⁸¹

While the risk posed by disease was much higher than other mining camps, there were relatively few serious accidents.¹⁸² The only major accident in this period occurred at Nchanga Mine on 17 September 1931. That morning, a tidal wave of water engulfed the underground workings after a blast on the night-shift cracked open a water-filled fissure. Miners desperately risked their lives trying to close a

¹⁷⁶ David Irwin, 'Early Days on the Copperbelt', *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, VI (1965), p. 113.

¹⁷⁷ Malcom Watson, *African Highway. The Battle for Health in Central Africa* (London, 1953), p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ 'Guesthouse Triumvirate', *Horizon*, March 1959.

¹⁷⁹ Watson, *African Highway*, p. 30.

¹⁸⁰ Irwin, 'Early Days', p. 113.

¹⁸¹ Frank Melland, *African Dilemma* (London, 1937), p. 79.

¹⁸² There was apparently a "comparatively high death rate from explosive accidents" though. Edward Robinson, 'The Economic Problem', in J. Merle Davis (ed.), *Modern industry and the African: An enquiry into the effect of the copper mines of Central Africa upon native society and the work of Christian missions* (London, 1933), p. 168.

water-tight door but it was impossible to shut as silt piled up against it and water rushed into the shafts, carrying men and equipment before it. In the pitch dark, men began to climb the shaft timbers in panic or had to swim to the emergency escape ladders as the water rose by over 400 feet in 35 minutes. Incredibly, from among the 18 Europeans and 127 Africans on shift, only one person was killed, struck by the descending cage as they climbed the shaft, though others were injured. Bitterness towards the mine management endured for years afterwards, even decades. As late as 1965 Guy Spires accused the mine management of deliberately not fitting the minimum number of water-tight doors needed underground to cut costs. After several futile attempts to dewater the mine was abandoned.¹⁸³

Much in the mining camps would have been familiar to white managers and mineworkers. Although geographically distant, the mines and camps were similar to mines all over the world, making moving between them easier. Jack Ragsdale arrived in 1932 with an American crew engaged to start the Nkana smelter and commented the crew “were not as shocked at the conditions here as one might reasonably have expected. In fact, most had experienced ‘pioneering’ in other parts of the world.”¹⁸⁴ The similarity was no accident. Beatty declared in 1929 that the Copperbelt mines “should be equipped and worked along lines closely similar to the great mines of the American Continent.”¹⁸⁵ To this end, he hired Alexander McGregor – who had designed surface plants at mines in Arizona and Montana – to design the surface plants at Roan Antelope and Mufulira.¹⁸⁶ McGregor brought with him a team of Americans who had worked with him for several years, two of whom

¹⁸³ Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, pp. 101-5, 109.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Around Nkana’, *Rhokana Review*, May 1956.

¹⁸⁵ John Philips, ‘Roan Antelope: Big Business in Central Africa 1890-1953’ (Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2000), p. 153.

¹⁸⁶ ST ADD/41, Biographical information on individuals in relation to Selection Trust: A.G. McGregor. Philips, ‘Roan Antelope’, p. 154.

subsequently worked for RAA.¹⁸⁷ Meanwhile, RAA hired Alma Ek as the construction engineer for their mines from the Braden Copper Company in Chile.¹⁸⁸



Figure 2.4: Surface plants and main shaft at Roan Antelope, circa 1930. A.W. Brooks, *A History of the Discovery and Development of Roan Antelope Copper Mine*.

The European townships were also deliberately constructed like mining townships elsewhere. The design and location for housing at Mufulira and Roan Antelope were selected by senior management to create company towns “modelled on those developed in North America.”¹⁸⁹ RAA did the same and retained control of their townships. When the government’s town planner proposed merging the existing mine township with a new government township in 1931, Pollak rejected the idea. This sank the plan – one indication of the balance of power between the companies and the colonial state – and Nkana was officially declared a mine township in 1935. RAA “maintained that streets in the mine townships were private and reserved the

¹⁸⁷ ‘Design engineers are ‘backroom boys’’, *Horizon*, September 1960.

¹⁸⁸ Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 158-9.

¹⁸⁹ Philips, ‘Roan Antelope’, pp. 152-3.

right to close them to the public at any time.”¹⁹⁰ Similarities with American mine townships extended to racial segregation, as African mineworkers were housed in separate compounds. Copper Queen Mine – where Irwin had previously worked – was located in Bisbee, Arizona, the self-proclaimed ‘white man’s camp’ where non-English-speaking whites were pushed into a subordinate economic and social position.¹⁹¹

Life in the mining camps was made more familiar by those who moved there. Before the first ore had been mined, a Copperbelt-wide association had been formed to organise matches between the nascent football and rugby teams.¹⁹² At Roan Antelope, compound manager Horatio Field got a cricket club going and tennis court laid almost as soon as he arrived in 1928.¹⁹³ That same year, the first annual touring circus arrived, featuring a kangaroo that fought boxing matches against other performers.¹⁹⁴ A cinema showing British and American films was established at Nkana in 1931 complete with a manager recruited from Ireland.¹⁹⁵ All of this served to erode feelings among Europeans that they were arriving somewhere new or different.

Bars were the centre of social life in the camps and heavy drinking was the norm. At Nchanga Mine Club, the bar made an astonishing £4,309 within three months of opening in September 1929.¹⁹⁶ At Nkana, the bar – known as the Glue Pot – had to

¹⁹⁰ Emmanuel Mutale, ‘The Urban Development of Nkana-Kitwe, Zambia: Structural Conflict in the Management of Land and Services’ (East London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1994), pp. 117, 125.

¹⁹¹ Phylis Cancilla Martinelli, *Undermining Race: Ethnic Identities in Arizona Copper Camps, 1880-1920* (Tucson, 2009), pp. 6, 102-32.

¹⁹² ‘Thirty years of rugby’, *Horizon*, April 1959.

¹⁹³ Memoirs of Horatio Field, in author’s possession.

¹⁹⁴ Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, p. 160.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Cormick leaves after 33 years’, *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 24 July 1964.

¹⁹⁶ This is £246,920 in 2015 figures. ZCCM 2.5.3I, Memorandum on Mine Recreation Clubs, L.A. Pollak, 21 June 1932.

employ a designated 'chucker out' to get drinkers out at closing time.¹⁹⁷ It was this aspect of Copperbelt life which proved so memorable, accounts of men such as 'Jock of the Bushveld' who would strip naked and climb anthills to deliver 'sermons' when drunk, or the Australian miner who tried to dispel his whisky-induced hallucinations by shooting at them pepper recollections.¹⁹⁸ This culture extended beyond mineworkers. Pat O'Connell, born on the Copperbelt to Canadian parents, recalled stories of mine manager Jack Tallant who "was single and had left heroic tales among the younger single and some slightly married ladies." His capacity for drinking was also remembered. "One evening [he] was asked why was he walking home from the Club as his car was parked in a bay... [he replied] it couldn't be his car as it was not aimed toward home."¹⁹⁹

It is significant that such stories were told in subsequent years. The Copperbelt's European community was a self-consciously masculine one which placed an emphasis on alcohol consumption and traditionally male-dominated sports. These mining camps were not entirely populated by men, even though there was an evident gender imbalance. The 1931 census counted 2,598 single European men aged 17 to 34 in Northern Rhodesia, but only 566 single women. Married men outnumbered single men, but there were 3,540 married men and only 2,653 married women.²⁰⁰ Part of this disparity can be explained by the fact that many married men left their wives elsewhere in the world, for instance in Britain or South Africa. Many others did not though and there were families and single European women on the Copperbelt. The European community was largely masculine because women were excluded

¹⁹⁷ '30 years' service', *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

¹⁹⁸ 'Where are they now?', *Horizon*, June 1964. Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, p. 336.

¹⁹⁹ Personal communication with Pat O'Connell, 6 June 2013.

²⁰⁰ Robert Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire Volume II* (London, 1949), p. 480. The bulk of the European population in Northern Rhodesia lived on the Copperbelt so these figures are indicative of trends there.

from many parts of communal life considered important, namely work and leisure.²⁰¹ There was quite literally no place for women in much of the social life in the 1930s. Nkana Mine Club did not admit women, apart from to the library, and was “chiefly frequented by those male employees who desire to make use of bar facilities.”²⁰²

European women undertook conventionally ‘feminine’ jobs – such as running boarding houses and mine messes – but most domestic work was done by African male domestic servants, who “were everywhere” in Northern Rhodesia.”²⁰³ Cullen recalled that virtually all the white workforce had servants and at 10am and 3pm, African servants would stream out of Roan Antelope camp carrying tea to their white employers working on the mine.²⁰⁴ This is a benefit white mineworkers would not have enjoyed in other mining camps.

Despite this collective reliance on black labour, the European community was not egalitarian. Dorothea Irwin, wife of David Irwin, observed that whites on the Copperbelt “were very long on ritual and precedence, calling, entertainment, etc. in strict order of rank.”²⁰⁵ The creation of a strict hierarchy was a conscious policy evident from the outset. Senior company personnel, visiting Roan Antelope in September 1926, concluded that the underground manager, W.T. Harry, was making good progress and that “his only failing to date has been a tendency to consort with the white miners rather than the staff.” They “were at some pains to impress on Harry that he was of little use to the Company unless he were ‘Mr Harry’ to the men”

²⁰¹ The same was true in copper mining camps in Latin America where “sports and social clubs in the mining camps, like the masculine worlds of work, cards, and moonshine, excluded women.” Thomas Klubock, *Contested communities: Class, gender and politics in Chile’s El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (London, 1998), p. 186.

²⁰² ZCCM 2.5.31, Memorandum on Mine Recreation Clubs, 21 June 1932.

²⁰³ Karen Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servant and Employer in Zambia, 1900–1985* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 5.

²⁰⁴ Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, p. 84.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Hansen, *Distant Companions*, pp. 57-8.

and that he should eat at the staff's mess.²⁰⁶ Status and precedence, on and off the job, were crucially important.

Not everything in the mining camps was dependent on the companies. A small number of mainly Jewish traders were also attracted by the Copperbelt's riches and there were no company stores as in other mining centres. Some had been in the region for years, such as Elie and Harry Susman who had crossed the Zambezi in 1901.²⁰⁷ In 1931, they were joined by Harry and Maurice Gersch, their nephews from South Africa, who established Economy Stores Ltd and went on to become some of the most successful businessmen on the Copperbelt. Others were more recent arrivals. Simon Lakofski, a Jewish trader from Johannesburg, sensed an atmosphere where "fortunes could be made or lost in a day" and began trading at Nkana around 1928. His Nkana Trading Company grew rapidly and within two years had an annual profit of £7,000 and employed 20 Europeans and 70 Africans.²⁰⁸ Such favourable conditions were not to last.

Great Depression

In 1930, Governor James Maxwell offered this advice for those bound for Northern Rhodesia: "in dealing with the settlers, always remember that they are of your race." Yet, he also warned that growing numbers of 'poor whites' was "the greatest danger to the existence of white civilisation in tropical Africa" and that removing this problem would resolve virtually all other difficulties the territory faced.²⁰⁹ It was this latter part of Maxwell's advice which informed government policy in the Great Depression.

²⁰⁶ ST G/7, Letter from J.A. Dunne to Secretary, Selection Trust London, 4 November 1926.

²⁰⁷ Hugh Macmillan, *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901-2005* (London, 2005), p. 18.

²⁰⁸ £412,716 in 2015 figures. Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London, 1999), pp. 87-89.

²⁰⁹ James Maxwell, 'Some Aspects of Native Policy in Northern Rhodesia', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 29, 117 (1930), p. 476-77.

Colonial officials came to regard the Copperbelt's white population with a varying mixture of fear and contempt.

The crash in copper prices struck a devastating blow to the nascent mining industry and to the Copperbelt's European community as it occurred just as copper production was beginning.²¹⁰ The impact of this was first felt forcefully in February 1931 when the struggling Bwana Mkubwa Mine closed, followed by Broken Hill in July, Chambishi in August and Nchanga in September when the mine flooded.²¹¹ The decision by the cartel Copper Exports Inc. to cut world output to support prices led to Mufulira Mine closing in December.²¹² Only Roan Antelope and Nkana remained open, though construction halted at both mines. Roan Antelope only survived because the AMC agreed to pay in advance for the concentrates shipped to their smelters in New Jersey.²¹³

The mine's workforce was decimated and European employment on Northern Rhodesian mines fell from 3,456 in January 1931 to a low of 995 in October 1932.²¹⁴ This, and the manner in which they were sacked, helps explain subsequent anger towards the mining companies. One of the foremen at Bwana Mkubwa later recalled that notices were given out to men on shift at 11am and all mining operations ceased within four hours.²¹⁵ At Nchanga, Tapson claimed that a foreman went around sacking people when he caught sight of them.²¹⁶ Even the remaining mines drastically reduced their expensive European workforce. Employment at Roan Antelope fell from a monthly average of 1,042 across 1931 to 562 in 1932.

²¹⁰ Appendix III.

²¹¹ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 20.

²¹² Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 19.

²¹³ Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, p. 50.

²¹⁴ Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey*, p. 422. The overwhelming majority of these people would have worked on the Copperbelt.

²¹⁵ '30 years' service', *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

²¹⁶ Tapson, *Old Timers*, p. 165.

Significantly, the African workforce was only reduced from 4,765 to 3,805.²¹⁷ As this was a transient population, it was easy for the mining industry “to throw the burden of supporting the white unemployed[sic] on to other countries” as most laid-off white workers left the territory.²¹⁸ There was a similar situation across the border in Katanga where around 2,000 redundant European workers were mostly sent back to Europe.²¹⁹

Not all who left went far. Relatively few people appear to have tried their luck in Southern Rhodesia. Immigration statistics record that only 54 people listing their occupation as ‘miner’ arrived in the colony (from all sources) in both 1931 and 1932.²²⁰ More headed north to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika. Stewart Gore-Browne recalled lorries bound for the goldfields passing his home at Shiwa Ngandu “packed with people who had been earning £70 or £80 a month on the Copperbelt, but who were now glad to get mealie meal to eat.”²²¹ Jimmy Revill was among them, along with three other men laid off from Nkana Mine. On arrival at Lupa Market on Christmas Eve 1932 Revill was surprised to find several people he knew from Luanshya and Ndola, and that the general store there was run by an ex-employee of Nkana Mine Mess.²²² However, there was little more than “bare subsistence” to be had at Lupa according to a local colonial official, who witnessed hundreds of whites arriving “by bicycle, on foot, riding on donkeys, or anything on four wheels that could be induced to move.”²²³ Mannie Meyer, originally from Lichtenburg, claimed that he

²¹⁷ Philips, ‘Roan Antelope’, p. 368.

²¹⁸ Gann, *Northern Rhodesia*, p.255.

²¹⁹ Bogumil Jewsiewicki, ‘Great Depression and the Making of the Colonial Economic System in the Belgian Congo’, *African Economic History*, 4 (1977), p. 158.

²²⁰ Kennedy, *Islands of White*, pp. 204-5.

²²¹ R.H. Hobson, ‘Fourteen Months: Sir Ronald Storrs in Northern Rhodesia December 1st, 1932-February 17th, 1934, Part I’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, VI, 2, (1965), p. 140.

²²² ‘The Christmas I’ll never forget’, *Rhokana Review*, December 1951.

²²³ Andrew Roberts, ‘The Gold Boom of the 1930s in Eastern Africa’, *African Affairs*, 85, 341 (1986), p. 556.

and his wife Johanna sat out the depression in a grass hut beside a river on the goldfields after he was laid off at Nkana. They maintained a subsistence existence panning for gold and returned in 1933.²²⁴

Some saw no better options elsewhere and were determined to wait out the depression on the Copperbelt. A collection of huts grew into a squatter camp to the south of Nkana and the local medical officer warned that the 30 European children who attended school from this camp were all malnourished and dirty.²²⁵ Similarly, following the closure of Nchanga, Guy and Winifred Tapson spent a year living in a pole-and-grass hut on the outskirts of Ndola. The District Commissioner denounced them as squatters, which Winifred admitted they were.²²⁶ This phenomenon dissipated as the depression eased, although there were still a few dozen Europeans living as vagrants along the banks of the Kafue River near Mufulira in 1936.²²⁷

By December 1932, around 10% of the colony's European population were registered as unemployed, some 1,064 people.²²⁸ For the colonial administration, the real problem was how to get rid of these people. Many of them were legally domiciled in Northern Rhodesia so could not be repatriated to Britain, South Africa, or elsewhere, as other unemployed persons could be.²²⁹ In March 1932, the Attorney-General proposed to stop supplying rations to "the great majority" of those refusing deportation and then using the Vagrancy Ordinance to deport them.²³⁰ The Colonial Office refused to endorse this policy, so instead Maxwell tightened up the

²²⁴ 'Old Timers', *Rhokana Review*, July 1955.

²²⁵ '25 years of education at Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

²²⁶ Tapson, *Old Timers*, p. 168.

²²⁷ NAB CO 795/82/7, Statement from Assistant Inspector Arthur Gouslett.

²²⁸ Gann, *Northern Rhodesia*, p. 255.

²²⁹ See NAB CO 795/52/9, Letter from T. Hamilton, Chief Immigration Officer to Chief Secretary, 6 June and 18 June 1932 for brief biographies of 18 redundant mineworkers repatriated to Britain in May and June 1932.

²³⁰ NAB CO 795/52/11, Letter from F. Gordon Smith to Colonial Secretary, 19 March 1932.

Vagrancy Ordinance – originally passed to have “some means of dealing with these incompetent Europeans” – by replacing it with the Repatriation Ordinance 1932.²³¹

This allowed the Governor to deport any person on “economic grounds or on account of standards of habits of life or in the interests of public morals.”²³²

These actions generated extreme bitterness, and helps explain the antipathy toward the colonial state discussed later in this chapter. John Sharp, self-described chair of the Ndola Unemployed Committee, warned that “unless more sympathetic treatment is dealt us” they would be unable to avoid “looting and rioting, and of receding from the British Empire” which “wilder elements in our ranks” advocated.²³³ The Governor had no time for this group. Their spokesmen, he claimed, were an alcoholic fraudster only recently released from prison and a sex offender. Local immigration officials were convinced that many unemployed “have only themselves to thank for their present circumstances.”²³⁴ The conviction that their hardship was self-inflicted was a firm one. In 1934, a government inspector reported that the camp for destitute British subjects in Ndola – built by unemployed white labourers – was mainly populated by people unable to work as they were “suffering from Ailments common to aged persons whose youth had been abused either by alcohol or sexual promiscuity or both.”²³⁵

Those receiving government relief were obliged to sign promises that they would eventually “refund the cost” of this relief, a measure specifically enacted to “deter

²³¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Governor to Colonial Secretary, 30 April 1932

²³² *Ibid.*, Repatriation Ordinance 1932.

²³³ *Ibid.*, Letter from John Sharp to Colonial Secretary, 2 June 1932. Other members of the committee rejected Sharp's claim that he was chairman.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter from Governor to Colonial Secretary, 1 June 1932.

²³⁵ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] RC/1431, Letter from Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary, 12 December 1934.

people from accepting rations except when absolutely necessary.”²³⁶ Recipients of rations faced a miserable existence. Bricklayer George Timmins was unable to find work after being laid off from Nchanga Mine and, by May 1934, he had no money or property, apart from a bag of rusting tools, and lived on a hut on a farm outside Lusaka where the owner provided him with meat and fruit for helping look after the farm. Timmins had left County Durham for South Africa in 1890 and had lost touch with his family as his three brothers had dispersed across the globe, one in the United States, one in Mexico and another in India. Tellingly, however, he acknowledged he lived in real poverty because he “could not afford to employ a native” to go into Lusaka and collect Timmins’ full allowance of rations.²³⁷

Formation of NRMWU

The formation of the NRMWU was one of the most significant events in the European community in this period. As discussed above, this has mainly been interpreted as a reaction to developments in the African workforce and as an extension of South African influence. While the union was initially primarily inspired by the perceived need to exclude Africans from skilled jobs, its interests rapidly broadened towards wages, working conditions and the exclusion of other white workers. Broadening interests reflected the wide experience of those who became involved in the union.

Open agitation to form a union began in September 1934 when Richard Olds, a mineworker originally from Cumberland, resigned from Nkana to begin organising a

²³⁶ NAZ SEC3/56, Letter from Chief Secretary to Commissioner of Unemployment, 27 September 1933.

²³⁷ NAZ RC/1431, Statement of George Timmins, 3 May 1934.

proposed Industrial Workers' Federation.²³⁸ His initial advert identified the Federation's objectives as: collective bargaining, providing assistance to unemployed, sick or injured members and preventing "unskilled persons encroaching on the Trade."²³⁹ Exactly what was meant by this last point was made explicitly clear:

Who have we today who will champion the cause of the white population,
Where are the Men who can think WHITE and will stand out and fight the
cause of the white worker and his children? ...

There is no doubt the Native is slowing [sic] taking our places wherever we
look we see him qualifying to fill positions now held by Whites.²⁴⁰

The mining companies were "watching the situation very carefully" and from the outset shared information and consulted each other on strategy.²⁴¹ Both companies firmly opposed a colour bar limiting skilled work to people of European descent as this policy would raise costs. Frank Ayer, Roan Antelope's new manager, had successfully lobbied the colonial administration to allow Africans to hold blasting certificates.²⁴² Racial segregation on the Copperbelt would have been familiar to Ayer and his family. Ayer had spent eight years as the mine superintendent at Sonora in Mexico where "American families lived in elegant house, had clubs, lavish hotel dining rooms, and tennis and golf courses ... while the Mexican workers lived apart, in shacks."²⁴³ Ayer's experience on American mines – he had been recruited from Morenci Mine in Arizona – also informed his reaction to the union. He quickly recruited men to spy on union meetings and planned to sack any members who

²³⁸ 'To form workers' federation', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 15 September 1934.

²³⁹ ZCCM 10.7.9A, Industrial Workers Federation Circular, September 1934.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Letter from R. Olds, *Copperbelt Times*, 12 October 1934.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Frank Ayer to Harold Munroe, 21 September 1934.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Letter from Frank Ayer to Secretary, RST London, 17 October 1934.

²⁴³ Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford, 2007), p. 44.

'attacked' the companies.²⁴⁴ Such tactics were established practice for American mining companies. Beatty himself had hired spies from the infamous Pinkerton Detective Agency to defeat unions in Colorado.²⁴⁵

It is commonplace in the secondary literature to claim that the NRMWU was formed in response to the strike of African mineworkers in May 1935.²⁴⁶ Yet this strike is a surprising omission from the agitation to form a white mineworkers' union. It seems to have had remarkably little impact on the European community and there are some indications that European mineworkers were sympathetic towards the strike.²⁴⁷ The colonial authorities, however, were convinced that there would be clashes between Africans and Europeans. The police commissioner warned officers they should be prepared for violence "whether provoked or not, on the part of Europeans". This did not occur, although one European man shot an unnamed African man in the shoulder after his car was stoned and groups of strikers entered houses in Luanshya's European township to stop domestic servants from working.²⁴⁸ Violence did erupt during the dispute, but it came from the colonial state and the strike ended after police shot dead six strikers in Luanshya. Among the European community, the predominant attitude towards African mineworkers was one of indifference.

²⁴⁴ ZCCM 10.7.9A, Letter from Frank Ayer to Secretary, RST London, 26 October 1934.

²⁴⁵ Phillips, 'Alfred Chester Beatty', p. 219.

²⁴⁶ Andrew Roberts, 'Northern Rhodesia: The Post-War Background, 1945-53', in Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomina Macola (eds.), *Living at the End of Empire: politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2011), p. 17. Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 108.

The strike is well-documented in the secondary literature: Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 54-74, Henry Meebelo, *African proletarians and colonial capitalism: The origins, growth, and struggles of the Zambian labour movement to 1964* (Lusaka, 1986), pp. 68-83, Charles Perrings, 'Consciousness, Conflict and Proletarianization: an assessment of the 1935 mineworkers' strike on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 4, 1 (1977), pp. 31-51.

²⁴⁷ The District Commissioner at Ndola complained that "a good many of the Europeans on the mines were probably in sympathy with the strike." Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* (London, 1960), p. 104.

²⁴⁸ *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Disturbances in the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia, 1935* (Lusaka, 1935), pp. 20, 31.

The immediate circumstances behind the NRMWU's formation came the following year in connection with the tour of Charlie Harris. Harris was the newly installed general secretary of the South African Mine Workers Union (SAMWU) and was seeking to bolster his position by spreading the union's influence.²⁴⁹ He had been invited to the Copperbelt by Olds, who had been listed as secretary of SAMWU's Rhodesia section since April 1936.²⁵⁰ Others supported this invitation. When hecklers interrupted Harris' speech at Nkana, asking who invited him, half the audience stood up replying "we did."²⁵¹ Olds was well-aware of developments in Katanga and warned white mineworkers' in South Africa that the mining companies were preparing to "oust the white worker on the mines just the same as in Congo Belge."²⁵²

Olds, however, was an ineffective organiser, which may explain why his Industrial Workers' Federation gathered little support. Harris' meeting at Luanshya "was, unfortunately, rather poorly advertised" and also poorly attended due to "being held the day after pay day," while the meeting in Mufulira was held at the same time as a football match.²⁵³ Still, around 70 people at the Luanshya meeting and 100 at Mufulira agreed to form nascent union branches. Further progress was halted by two developments. First, eagle-eyed members of Roan Antelope's Board of Directors spotted that SAMWU's constitution precluded members outside South Africa, and could not be amended before 1939, so refused recognition to the local branch.²⁵⁴ Second, when it transpired that dues collected were being secretly sent to

²⁴⁹ Wessel Visser, *Van MWU tot Solidariteit: Geskiedenis van die Mynwerkersunie, 1902-2002* (Pretoria, 2008), p. 63.

²⁵⁰ *The Mineworker*, April 1936.

²⁵¹ 'Mineworkers' Union at Nkana', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 4 July 1936.

²⁵² Letter from Richard Olds, *The Mineworker*, May 1936.

²⁵³ 'Labour meeting last Saturday', *The Mineworker*, July 1936. This is an extract from the *Northern Rhodesia Advertiser*.

²⁵⁴ NAZ SEC1/1376, Letter from Frank Ayer to Charles Harris, 7 October 1936.

Johannesburg, angry allegations of corruption were made. Such financial impropriety was not inconsistent with how SAMWU was run in the 1930s. One historian summarised Harris as “corrupt, autocratic, and patently in the pocket of the Chamber of Mines.”²⁵⁵

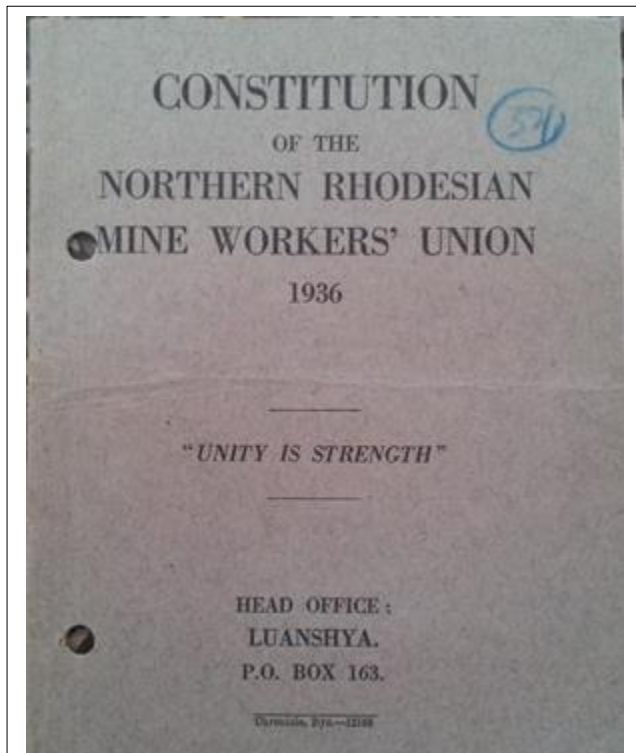


Figure 2.5: NRMWU Constitution, 1936. NAZ SEC1/1376.

This did not diminish the desire to form a union and it was reconstituted as the independent NRMWU in October 1936 in meetings attended by hundreds.²⁵⁶ Reflecting on this, Wilfred MacKenzie, the Canadian mine superintendent at Roan Antelope, noted that in 1936 the desire for a union among European employees was deep-rooted as many of them “had been brought up using a trade union constitution as their family Bible” so “some form of Union activity was a necessary part of their

²⁵⁵ Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: biography of a people* (Cape Town, 2003), p. 427.

²⁵⁶ NAZ SEC1/1376, Letter from Ben Rount to Chief Secretary, 25 October 1936.

lives.”²⁵⁷ Olds attended one of the first NRMWU meetings but when he tried to address the crowd he was told that no-one wanted to hear from him. He slunk off, having virtually no further involvement with the union and disappeared from the list of SAMWU officials in December 1936 without comment.²⁵⁸

Priorities for the new union were decided at often chaotic meetings. A meeting in Luanshya in January 1937 saw one miner, Tommy Graves, demand immediate strike action for a pay increase and denounce a moderate member who opposed him, Charles Green, as “a white-livered rat.” Green responded by punching Graves and throwing him off the stage. Both Graves and Green were drunk, as they had been celebrating their day off. The demand for a strike was then taken up by another miner who “stated that the proper and best method was to strike first and formulate demands on the Company afterwards.”²⁵⁹ Several weeks later, the same demands emerged at Nkana and Mufulira as delegations of surface workers threatened to strike if pay increases were turned down.²⁶⁰

These demands were ignored and the mining companies refused to recognise the NRMWU. Faced with these difficulties, the new union turned towards the labour movement in Britain, rather than South Africa, for help. Telegrams were sent to Labour Party leader Clement Attlee urging him to lobby the Colonial Office to pressure the mining companies over recognition, or else there would be a strike. This manoeuvre proved effective and the Colonial Office requested that the companies recognise the NRMWU once its membership reached 55% of daily-paid

²⁵⁷ ZCCM 15.1.6E, Notes on discussions with the Roan Mine Workers’ Federation, 10 April 1940.

²⁵⁸ ZCCM 10.7.9A, Memorandum from MacKenzie to Peterson, 21 October 1936.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, A meeting of the NRMWU Luanshya branch held in the Mine Mess at Roan Antelope, 25 January 1937.

²⁶⁰ NAZ SEC1/1376, Letter from T.S. Sandford to Major Dutton, 27 March 1937.

mineworkers, a salutary lesson about the utility of appeals to international allies.²⁶¹

Membership rapidly reached the required figure by April 1937 and the companies reluctantly agreed to recognise the NRMWU.²⁶²

Subsequent assistance was sought from the British Labour Party for organising the union and forming a labour party. Stuart Shaw, the new NRMWU general secretary, grandly announced to Attlee that “you can no doubt very materially assist us by arranging to have sent to me the constitution, aims and objects of the most progressive organisation in England.”²⁶³ That it might seem odd for a small group of white men to be presenting themselves as the representatives of the working class in central Africa did not occur to James Middleton, the Labour Party’s long-serving general secretary. He replied to Shaw with a series of documents on political organisation and propaganda. Middleton also forwarded Shaw’s letter to the Miner’s Federation of Great Britain and the British Trade Union Congress, establishing connections which would become important in the years to come.²⁶⁴

A thorough reorganisation of the NRMWU took place in December 1938 when 19 men met in Ndola to form the first General Council. In a move reminiscent of formation of the first white miners’ union on the Rand, each man signed a pledge to keep “all we may learn of the administration and affairs of the union as strictly secret.”²⁶⁵ This was similar to other colonial frontiers where “trust was at a premium

²⁶¹ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 56.

²⁶² NAZ SEC1/1376, Telegram from Roan Antelope London to Roan Antelope Luanshya, 26 April 1937.

²⁶³ Arthur Creech Jones Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter ACJ] Box 22, File 22, Letter from T.W.S. Shaw to Clement Attlee, 8 March 1938.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter from J.S. Middleton to T.W.S. Shaw, 24 March 1938.

²⁶⁵ Matthew Mwendapole, *A History of the Trade Union Movement in Zambia up to 1968* (Lusaka, 1977), p. 6.

The Witwatersrand Mine Employees’ and Mechanics Union bound its members not to reveal information of any kind, Robert Cope, *Comrade Bill: The life and times of W.H. Andrews, workers’ leader* (Cape Town, 1944), p. 44.

amidst incoming streams of new immigrants and itinerant strangers,” so lots of organisations required members to take oaths.²⁶⁶ Given their own personal histories, each of the men would have been acutely aware of the risks involved.

The 19 mineworkers’ whose signatures appended the pledge came from across the English-speaking world and their chequered careers were thoroughly imbued with radicalism. Tom Ross, the acting president, was from Scotland and had been a miner in South Africa, where he participated in the Rand Revolt.²⁶⁷ Australian-born Jim Purvis had been an active member of the Australian Workers’ Union in Queensland, worked in a foundry in northern England, returned to Australia and then left again for South Africa after a stint in prison, before ending up on the Copperbelt in the late 1920s.²⁶⁸ Tommy Graves had also spent time in prison, though in his case he had been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in the United States for his involvement in a strike in around 1922, before being released and deported back to Britain in 1924.²⁶⁹ Even one of the youngest men at the meeting, Jack Hodgson, had migrated to the Copperbelt in 1936 after being blacklisted from the Rand gold mines for union organising.²⁷⁰ In forming the NRMWU, it was these experiences they drew upon.

The NRMWU immediately had to contend with the creation of employees’ committees intended to undercut the union. These were Frank Ayer’s idea and he noted “at the last two properties under my charge I inaugurated programmes of the

²⁶⁶ Charles van Onselen, *Showdown at the Red Lion: The life and times of Jack McLoughlin 1859-1910* (Jeppestown, 2015), p. 13.

²⁶⁷ NAB CO 795/122/13, Brief sketches of some Mine Workers’ Union personalities, December 1942.

²⁶⁸ “Lightning Jimmy’ is in there’, *Northern News*, 29 October 1958. National Archives of Australia, Melbourne, MT1139/1, Record since landing: J.F. Purvis.

²⁶⁹ NAZ SEC1/1381, Letter from G.R. Onions to Provincial Commissioner, February 1938.

²⁷⁰ Rica Hodgson, *Foot Soldier for Freedom: A life in South Africa’s liberation movement* (Johannesburg, 2010), p. 41.

kind and they were exceedingly successful.”²⁷¹ The NRMWU treated this as an existential threat, an attitude informed by their knowledge of developments in American mining regions. The union knew that “Mine Managements operating in Northern Rhodesia are largely influenced by American training and ideology.” Employee’s committees were a threat as “the history of such concerns in the USA” showed that they were “capable of destroying completely the spirit and principles of the NRMWU” by inculcating a “pseudo-capitalistic complex” in the minds of men who sat on them.²⁷²

White revolt and immigration

Steady recovery of the mines began to attract Europeans back to the Copperbelt. Development work resumed at Mufulira in July 1933 and a new shaft was sunk at Nkana but there was to be no revival for Bwana Mkubwa. It was demolished and the bricks used for construction at Nkana, apart from the recreation club which was rented to Catholic missionaries.²⁷³ The mines were increasingly profitable and Roan Antelope and Nkana paid their first dividends to shareholders in 1935, followed by Mufulira in 1937.²⁷⁴ The white workforce on the mines rose to around 2,000 by June 1934 and remained at this level until February 1937, when it began to grow again, reaching 2,853 in December 1938.²⁷⁵

However, it is very difficult to work out the exact size of the European community in this period, beyond identifying a general trend that it was increasing. The Provincial Administration stopped making population estimates in 1935 and the colonial

²⁷¹ ZCCM 10.7.9A, Letter from Frank Ayer to RST London, 1 December 1934.

²⁷² NAZ SEC1/1381, NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939.

²⁷³ O'Shea, *Missionaries and miners*, p. 162.

²⁷⁴ Roberts, 'Financial history', p. 353.

²⁷⁵ Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey*, p. 422.

administration recorded European immigration but not emigration. Different government reports give different population estimates and the 1936 Medical Report admitted that these were “little more than a guess.”²⁷⁶ It is a reasonable assumption that the large majority were associated with the mines though. In April 1937 Mufulira’s adult male European population totalled 424 mine employees and only 116 other residents.²⁷⁷

While the government weren’t sure about the size of the European population, they were sure about its composition, described in one report as “comprising a sort of human Whipsnade including some fine specimens of rogues.”²⁷⁸ One of the specimens the author likely had in mind was Douglas Bissett, whose case sparked an acute bout of anxiety among the colonial authorities. On 1 November 1937, Bissett, a 17-year old apprentice plumber, assaulted Kapungwe Donat, a 17 year-old workman, while they were digging a trench and broke his collar bone. Hauled up before Justice Fleming, Resident Magistrate at Ndola, a few days later, Bissett was rapidly convicted and sentenced to four strokes with a cane. The sentence was carried out immediately by a European constable and, in any case, Bissett had no option to appeal under the penal code then in force.

Bissett was no stranger to the judicial system. The incident occurred shortly after his year-long bind-over expired, a measure also imposed on him by Justice Fleming after Bissett and his brother burgled the cinema in Nkana. Such low-level criminality did not elicit much interest, but the caning ordered by Fleming inflamed Europeans in Nkana. Although Bissett did not even tell his parents he had been to court, word

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 420-1.

²⁷⁷ NAZ SEC1/1569, Letter from the Acting Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 23 June 1937.

²⁷⁸ NAB CO SEC1/1569, Letter from Orde-Browne to Boyd, 28 December 1937. Whipsnade is Britain’s largest zoo and opened in 1931.

spread rapidly. There were protest meetings at the Nkana Club on successive nights that culminated in fighting and general unrest after closing time at the bar on 5 November.²⁷⁹

It was alleged at these meetings that Donat had witnessed Bissett being flogged.²⁸⁰ People were incensed that government failed to treat them with the respect they deserved as white, British subjects. This was a claim about being treated as fully 'white' by colonial officials. One man claimed that colonial officials "divide Europeans into two classes – his own class and the class that can be treated like niggers."²⁸¹ Bissett's case prompted an outpouring of complaints from Europeans that the police and courts had little respect for them and even, in the words of the Mufulira Amalgamation Committee "that there was a colour bar operating against the white man in the administration of justice."²⁸² A committee was established to put pressure on Fleming. Publicly, the colonial administration backed Fleming, but shortly afterwards transferred him to Fort Roseberry.²⁸³

Significantly, the mob at Nkana did not threaten to harm Donat, and none of the complaints about the justice system even mentioned him. Instead, anger was directed against the judiciary and police. The local police superintendent warned that there was "deep and bitter feeling" against Justice Fleming and that he heard frequent suggestions that the policeman who caned Bissett "should have a taste of his own medicine."²⁸⁴ It is also notable that none of the European witnesses mentioned the 1935 African mineworkers' strikes among their many gripes. This

²⁷⁹ *Report of an Enquiry into the causes of a disturbance at Nkana on 4th and 5th November, 1937* (Lusaka, 1937).

²⁸⁰ 'Europeans and Natives in N. Rhodesia', *The Times*, 8 November 1937.

²⁸¹ *Disturbance at Nkana*, p. 37.

²⁸² 'Ndola divided over amalgamation', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 20 July 1938.

²⁸³ Ian Henderson, 'Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia, 1900-53: a study in the limits of colonial power' (Edinburgh Univ. PhD thesis, 1972), p. 115.

²⁸⁴ *Disturbance at Nkana*, p. 18.

could be because they felt that the government response in shooting strikers dead was adequately punitive, or because this incident had little impact.

Another element missing from the racist rhetoric voiced at these meetings was anything like the “fear of [African] rebellion” which, according to Dane Kennedy, “permeated virtually every level of white settler society” in Southern Rhodesia.²⁸⁵ Arguably, what the colonial administration were really concerned about was the possibility of a revolt by Europeans on the Copperbelt. Orde-Browne warned gravely that most European men had experience of military service, access to dynamite and little respect for the law, meaning that “any attempt to overawe such a collection must therefore be impressive, and a weak force is likely merely to provoke aggression.”²⁸⁶ Such worries were shared by the local police, who sought to bolster their capacity to ‘overawe’ local Europeans with “a machine gun... at each of the Copperbelt Stations” because disorderly Europeans would readily “resort to the use of firearms or even explosives.” The local police also concluded clashes between Europeans and Africans were inevitable.²⁸⁷

Hostility towards colonial authorities does not mean the European community was in any way friendly towards Africans and fears that they would administer mob justice were not unfounded. In February 1938, an African man, Mupanta, was beaten unconscious by several Europeans after he had drunkenly assaulted Lulu Purvis, wife of Jim Purvis, near Roan Antelope Mine Club. Mupanta was convicted of assault by the new Resident Magistrate, Robert Jeffreys, who felt distinctly unnerved by the

²⁸⁵ Kennedy, *Islands of White*, p. 136.

²⁸⁶ NAZ SEC/1641, Interim report by Major G. St J. Orde-Browne on Industrial Relations in the Mining Area of Northern Rhodesia, 22 March 1938.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter from Sgd. D.H. Croxford to Provincial Commissioner, 11 March 1938

atmosphere around the case.²⁸⁸ He feared there would be an armed insurrection on the Copperbelt and considered there was about a 40% chance that “people attempting to do their duty would be put against a wall and shot.”²⁸⁹ Vague threats of collective racist violence manifested themselves a few months later when Mawaiya Williams was charged with assaulting a European girl in Mufulira. At the 120-strong protest meeting that predictably followed, one speaker called for a Ku Klux Klan to be formed if the government did not protect Europeans. Observing the meeting, Sergeant Croxford noted that he blamed the parents for what occurred; he regularly saw European children and Africans playing together in the lanes behind the houses.²⁹⁰

The colonial government’s view of Copperbelt life was not one shared by all observers. Natalie Carey, who stayed with an American woman in Luanshya with her husband over Christmas 1938, provided a glowing account of life in the town for residents of Broken Hill, Australia.²⁹¹ More people from across the English-speaking world continued to arrive and, though many did not stay for long, they increasingly regarded themselves as settlers. This was a process aided by the development of government townships. Townships were financed by traders who paid £2,000 for a store site in return for a 20-year monopoly during which no other traders would be allowed to open shops.²⁹² This also gave these traders a longer-term stake in the future of the territory. These townships became known as ‘closed townships’ and were established in Kitwe in 1935, Mufulira in 1937 and at Chingola in 1945. One of the consequences of this was that Indian traders were effectively excluded from

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter from R.S. Jeffreys to H.F.C. Robinson, 11 March 1938

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Letter from H.F.C. Robinson to Chief Secretary, 15 March 1938.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Letter from Sgd. D.H. Croxford to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 14 July 1938.

²⁹¹ ‘Some glimpses of Africa during Christmas season’, *Barrier Miner*, 9 December 1939.

²⁹² £128,301 in 2015 figures.

these towns.²⁹³ In 1939, there were reportedly no Indians in Mufulira, Kitwe or Chingola, and only a small community of Indian traders in Luanshya.²⁹⁴

More traders and others providing a service economy arrived in the late 1930s. Among them were the Zukas family from Lithuania who, like others, were able to move to Northern Rhodesia because there were few restrictions on potential immigrants.²⁹⁵ Under the 1931 Immigration Ordinance, anyone with access to £100 or a job offer in the territory could seek permanent residence and, importantly, regulations were exactly the same for British and non-British subjects.²⁹⁶ Immigration controls were only enforced haphazardly in any case. When Winifred Tapson first arrived in Northern Rhodesia from Beira around 1923 she claimed she had no passport and none was required.²⁹⁷ Even in 1940, when controls were supposedly tightened, a Portuguese doctor expressed astonishment that he had encountered no immigration or customs officials while crossing Northern Rhodesia en-route from Lobito to Beira.²⁹⁸

The Copperbelt European community had a strong British identity and was hostile towards non-British whites, who they feared more than industrial competition from Africans.²⁹⁹ Agitation began for restrictive measures against 'aliens' although there were only 284 on the Copperbelt in 1938.³⁰⁰ As one unemployed miner complained in a letter to British Labour MPs, "Germans, Yugoslavians and Italians will be employed and British born are left out."³⁰¹ Measures to help British whites were

²⁹³ Macmillan, *An African Trading Empire*, p. 301.

²⁹⁴ NAZ WP 1/14/5, Letter from A.F.B. Glennie to Acting Information Officer, 20 November 1939.

²⁹⁵ Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka, 2002), p. 12.

²⁹⁶ £6,144 in 2015 figures. NAZ SEC2/52, Synopsis of immigration laws of Northern Rhodesia.

²⁹⁷ Tapson, *Old Timer*, p. 9.

²⁹⁸ NAZ SEC3/48, Letter from British Consul, Beira to Chief Secretary, 31 May 1940.

²⁹⁹ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 49.

³⁰⁰ NAZ SEC2/52, From Acting Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 11 May 1938.

³⁰¹ ACJ Box 22, File 22, Letter from J. Vingar to Arthur Creech Jones, 29 January 1937.

pushed heavily by Scottish-born Catherine Olds – wife of Richard Olds – who had been elected to the Legislative Council in 1935 to speak for white mineworkers.³⁰² She claimed in 1938 speech “that there is great anxiety in the Copperbelt through the influx of alien labour” and recommended the recruitment of unemployed men from Britain instead. Olds was supporting the bill of Colonel Stephenson, Legislative Council member for Ndola, to introduce quotas for non-British subjects to keep Northern Rhodesia as “essentially a British colony,” though he did not seek to restrict American immigration.³⁰³

Hostility to other whites was manifested by the growth of the Sons of England in the late 1930s. This group was founded in Toronto in 1874 as a mutual insurance organisation and aimed to foster loyalty towards England and educate members in “the true principles of manhood.” Membership was restricted to Protestant men of English or Welsh descent.³⁰⁴ On the Copperbelt, they chafed at the arrival of Afrikaners and when bilingual signs were posted at a shaft at Nkana in mid-1934, members of the group removed them.³⁰⁵ Other than an emphasis on the English language, there is little other evidence of hostility towards Afrikaners. This was perhaps because there were still relatively few on the Copperbelt. Simon Zukas recalled that there were few Afrikaans-speaking children at his school in Luanshya in 1938 and that most Afrikaans men worked for Rhodesia Railways, not the mines.³⁰⁶

³⁰² *Year Book of the Rhodesias, 1938-39*, p. 618.

³⁰³ NAZ SEC2/52, Restrictions of Aliens Entering Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debate, 1 June 1938.

³⁰⁴ Paula Hastings, “Our Glorious Anglo-Saxon Race Shall Ever Fill Earth's Highest Place”: *The Anglo-Saxon and the Construction of Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canada* in Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.), *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration and Identity* (Vancouver, 2006), pp. 103-5.

³⁰⁵ NAZ SEC3/48, Confidential Memorandum on Immigration Policy and the Field of European Employment at the Mines in Northern Rhodesia.

³⁰⁶ Interview with Simon Zukas, 27 August 2013.

Sons of England campaigned strongly for amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia, which had self-government. Most Europeans saw amalgamation as necessary not only for securing Northern Rhodesia as “a White man’s country” with assured European dominance over Africans but halting the immigration of non-British whites.³⁰⁷ As the Luanshya Amalgamation Committee explained to the Bledisloe Commission investigating amalgamation “foreigners [were] a serious menace to the British workmen in this territory in the matter of competitive employment.”³⁰⁸ Sons of England members considered themselves “settlers and have a real stake in the country, and are not ‘birds of passage’” so required amalgamation to prevent their being displaced by white ‘aliens’ “used to a lower standard of living.”³⁰⁹

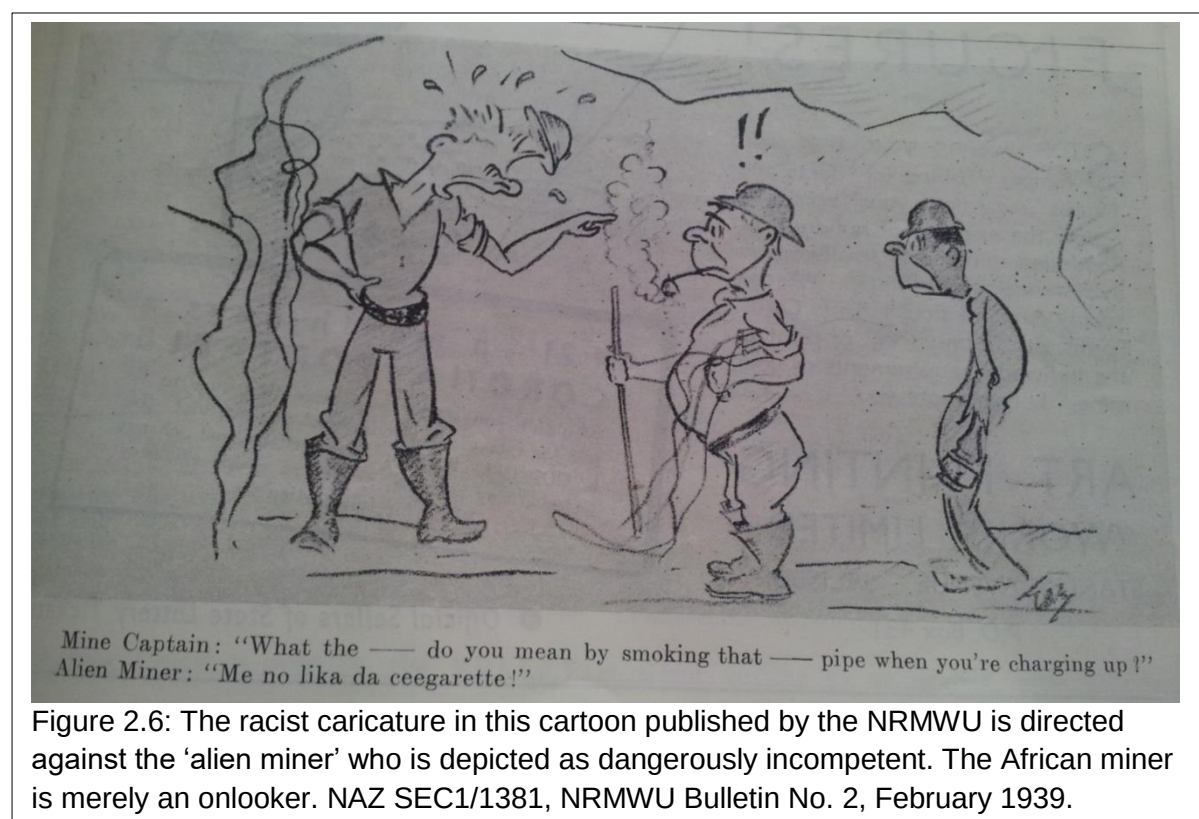


Figure 2.6: The racist caricature in this cartoon published by the NRMWU is directed against the ‘alien miner’ who is depicted as dangerously incompetent. The African miner is merely an onlooker. NAZ SEC1/1381, NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939.

The prevailing feeling that the Colonial Office and Northern Rhodesia Government

³⁰⁷ NAZ SEC/662, Letter from A.H. Evans, Ndola RRWU to Chairman, Royal Commission, 2 June 1938.

³⁰⁸ Elena Berger, ‘Labour policies on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1924-1964’ (Oxford Univ. D.Phil., 1969), p. 82.

³⁰⁹ NAZ SEC2/66, Letter from H.I. Webb, Sons of England to Chairman, Royal Commission, [undated].

were uninterested in protecting Europeans bolstered support for amalgamation. As Sons of England explained, “Our experience during the times of depression does not lead us to believe that the N. Rhodesia Government is imbued with any kindly feelings towards the European settlers.”³¹⁰ Others thought that the government was biased against them. Victor Diamond, NRMWU president, complained that ‘aliens’ were undercutting rates of pay and received “preferential treatment” as they were permitted to enter Northern Rhodesia without fulfilling the perfunctory immigration requirements.³¹¹ Diamond’s suspicions were at least partly correct. Maurice Gersch, a well-connected Jewish businessman in Kitwe, recalled that the Chief Immigration Officer was a great friend of his and smoothed over any difficulties Jewish refugees faced. Gersch was involved in efforts to house and support Jewish refugees from central Europe on the Copperbelt. Similarly, David Messerer, a Jewish refugee who arrived in Mufulira, recalled that immigration checks were light and no-one checked how much money he had.³¹²

Hostility towards ‘alien’ migrants slipped into anti-Semitism as a tiny fraction of the Jews fleeing Nazi persecution trickled into Northern Rhodesia. Stephenson claimed the general feeling on the Copperbelt was that “the Mines will encourage employment of these Refugees at lower rates of pay” and warned that “there will be trouble in the Copperbelt if some action is not taken to stop what may be described as Jewish penetration.”³¹³ Similarly, a public meeting convened by Catherine Olds in July 1938, passed a resolution stating: “We, the people of Nkana, strongly object to any attempt by the Imperial Government to introduce into this territory any Jewish

³¹⁰ NAZ SEC1/1797, Memorandum from the Sons of England to his Excellency the Governor, [undated].

³¹¹ NAZ SEC2/52, Extract from interview with V.S. Diamond, 28 February 1938.

³¹² Frank Shapiro, *Haven in Africa* (Jerusalem, 2002), pp. 93, 123.

³¹³ NAZ SEC2/52, Letter from A.A. Smith to Chief Secretary, 1 May 1939.

refugees.”³¹⁴ The NRMWU expressed similar attitudes although, oddly, Victor Diamond was of Jewish descent. His father, Aaron Diamond, was a Jewish cattle-trader who had come to southern Africa from Ireland in the 1890s and ended up in Lusaka, where Victor had run a garage until it went bust in 1930 and he went to the Copperbelt.³¹⁵ General anti-Semitic sentiment towards Jewish refugees co-existed with acceptance towards Jews who were already there.

Equally strange, for someone who had pushed for restrictions on migration, Diamond resigned from the mines in July 1938 and left Northern Rhodesia.³¹⁶ This is characteristic of the conflicted attitudes in this period. Around the same time the NRMWU called for a total ban on white immigration – except where migrants would be paid the ‘rate for the job’ – the union was publishing advice on how to travel around more easily using tramp steamers.³¹⁷ One union member claimed that British regulations required any vessel carrying over 100 people to carry a surgeon, so most tramp steamers carried just 100 people. Therefore, “if you ever get stuck” anywhere, count the crew, “pick out a likely-looking chap and just show him the sights of the town,” then take his spot in the crew.³¹⁸

The Graves’ Case

One illustration of the transience of the European workforce was the ever-changing cast of characters involved in the NRMWU. By January 1939, the union was onto its fourth general secretary in three years, and was about to lose another prominent member: Tommy Graves. Born in Cumberland in 1894, Graves had accrued years of

³¹⁴ Shapiro, *Haven in Africa*, p. 18.

³¹⁵ Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 61.

³¹⁶ NAZ SEC1/1641, Notes taken at a Public meeting held at Mufulira Mine Club on 11/7/38.

³¹⁷ NAZ SEC3/48, Letter from General Secretary, NRMWU to Chief Secretary, 8 July 1939.

³¹⁸ NAZ SEC1/1381, NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939.

experience as a general miner in Britain and the United States before arriving at Roan Antelope Mine in the early 1930s. His sacking from Roan Antelope and the consequent agitation to get him reinstated is worth examining as it demonstrates the impact of 'white labourism' on the Copperbelt.

Worries that unskilled white workers would be used to undercut wages were common in the late 1930s. So in January 1939, when rumours circulated that a new underground electrician was being employed at Roan Antelope on a lower rate, three men – Graves, Jim Purvis and the NRMWU's new general secretary Victor Welsford – independently investigated the matter. Graves thought he could sort it out with a personal touch and enlisted two other shop stewards to grill the electrician's foreman about pay rates for underground electricians at his house one evening. With this information, they proceeded to the house of the new underground electrician, a young South African named Noels who had no previous experience of mining, and roused him from bed to establish whether he was a qualified artisan. Noels duly produced International Correspondence School papers that confirmed he was a qualified electrician. Many artisans on the Copperbelt held these papers, according to Purvis, as they showed the bearer to be a fully qualified tradesman and "were recognised all over the British Empire."³¹⁹ Graves took this information to the Canadian mine superintendent Alex McNeil and threatened to organise an immediate strike unless he got a meeting with the acting mine manager, Wilfred

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Roan Antelope Copper Mines and Mine Workers Union meeting re T.R. Graves, 10 May 1939.

The International Correspondence School was founded as an offshoot of the Pennsylvania *Colliery Engineer and Metal Miner* journal in 1891 and by 1930 four million people had enrolled in their distance learning courses. James Watkinson, "'Education for Success': The International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pennsylvania", *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 120, 4 (1996), pp. 348-49.

MacKenzie.³²⁰ Graves got his meeting on 25 January, whereupon MacKenzie fired him on the spot.

“We were thunderstruck” at this, claimed Purvis, who was also present. This was surely feigned surprise. MacKenzie explained the litany of reasons Graves had been sacked: he had intimidated other employees, called McNeil a ‘bloody liar’ in public, carried a gun, had been imprisoned in the United States for involvement in a strike, claimed to have been involved in a dozen strikes and, only two weeks previously, had beaten up an African miner in front of the underground foreman.³²¹ Graves, warned MacKenzie, was influenced by the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which he knew to be “the most radical organisation of its kind.” MacKenzie knew about the IWW himself because he had worked in British Columbia.³²²

NRMWU officials at Roan Antelope were forced to concede this was mostly true. Purvis admitted that Graves did occasionally carry a gun, but claimed that Graves only did so because a drunk had shot at him one night while Graves was driving home. Graves was “disconcerted” by this and “imagined someone was after him... [so] borrowed one for a short period.” It is a revealing insight that guns were freely available and could be easily borrowed. NRMWU officials did not accept that Graves had done anything wrong though and could see no reason why he should have been sacked.³²³

³²⁰ NAZ SEC1/1381, Statement of events leading up to the discharge of Mr T.R. Graves, 4 May 1939.

³²¹ NAB CO 795/107/12, Award in the matter of a dispute between the Roan Antelope Copper Mines Ltd and the NRMWU.

³²² NAZ SEC1/1381, Roan Antelope Copper Mines and Mine Workers Union meeting re T.R. Graves, 11 May 1939. The IWW was a revolutionary syndicalist union which was founded in the United States in 1905 and spread across the globe in the early twentieth century.

³²³ *Ibid.*, Roan Antelope Copper Mines Limited and Mine Workers Union meeting re T.R. Graves, 10 May 1939.

These events shed light on the kind of problems which arose on the Copperbelt mines and how white mineworkers went about resolving them. It is also an apt illustration of the transnational world of white labour: an Australian union official defending a British miner who had been sacked by two Canadian mine managers from a mine in Africa partly due to his actions in the United States. The issues concerned resonated beyond the small group of individuals mentioned so far. On 28 January, a mass meeting was held at the Luanshya Hotel to protest against the sacking. It was accepted that Graves was a victimised trade unionist and the fact that Graves had also assaulted an unnamed African miner was not even mentioned.³²⁴

The NRMWU pressed for arbitration over the matter and the dispute rumbled on for months, though Graves himself returned to Cumberland in March. Graves' physical location was less important because white mineworkers saw themselves as part of an international white working class. As Welsford explained five months into the dispute, it was "one which is of importance in the interests of all British labour, to whom my Union have an obvious and reciprocal responsibility."³²⁵ The problem for the NRMWU was that Frank Ayer and other RST managers simply refused to accept arbitration. Local solicitors instructed by RST informed the Northern Rhodesia Government that the dismissal of Graves was "no concern of the Union or of Conciliators" and that the right to dismiss any employee when they saw fit was "a right which it would not and could not in any circumstances relinquish."³²⁶

White mineworkers did not have the ability to enforce their demands. Shop stewards at Roan Antelope threatened repeatedly to strike but were stymied by a lack of

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter from V. Welsford to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 31 May 1939

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter from Harold Williams to Chief Secretary, 23 May 1939.

solidarity among the white workforce and a sense of paranoia. Union representatives required repeated reassurances from the colonial government that troops were not going to be deployed to the Copperbelt to forcibly break strikes.³²⁷ Graves himself had assumed the territory would shortly be placed under military rule and trade unions suppressed.³²⁸ More serious was the disunity among the white workforce. It emerged that Welsford had actually intended to expel Graves from the union.³²⁹ White mineworkers at other mines were not prepared to support a strike at Roan Antelope. After months of negotiations, it was agreed the dispute would be referred to arbitration, but the arbitrator would have no power to reinstate Graves. Even this toothless victory backfired when the arbitrator ruled in June that there “were a dozen excellent reasons why Mr Graves’ contract should be terminated.”³³⁰

Relations between the Roan Antelope NRMWU branch and the rest of the union were seriously frayed. Accusations about a lack of support for Graves merged into a row over internal union finances in August. Five members of the Roan branch were expelled in August by the NRMWU leadership for allegedly trying to ‘wreck the union’. Virtually every other member at Roan Antelope Mine left the NRMWU in protest over this. A trade union was regarded as an absolute necessity though, so in September 1939 – as the rest of the world prepared for war – the second whites-only union was formed on the Copperbelt: the Roan Mine Workers’ Federation. Again, the people who established this Federation were doing exactly what they had done

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter from W.M. Logan, Chief Secretary to General Secretary, NRMWU 19 May 1939.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, Statement of events leading up to the discharge of Mr T.R. Graves, 4 May 1939.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 9 February 1939.

³³⁰ NAB CO 795/107/12, Award in the matter of a dispute between the Roan Antelope Copper Mines Ltd and the NRMWU.

elsewhere in the world. One of the founding members claimed to have been an active trade unionist for almost 40 years.³³¹

The Federation has attracted a mention in passing as a rival, independent organisation to the NRMWU but it was actually a direct split.³³² The politics of white labourism were embodied in this organisation. “The very existence of a Union acts as a deterrent to exploitation” proclaimed the first statement of the Federation and active participation in the union would “maintain the advances made in social and labour conditions by Unionism during the last 100 years.” These advances were not to be extended to all and a new union was urgently needed because of the “imminent danger of a greater proportion of native labour resulting in loss of jobs to white men.”³³³

Conclusion

Looking back on the Copperbelt as it was when he arrived in 1930, Hugh Handford, a Cornish mining official, had to admit his sense of nostalgia was tempered by memories of what life was actually like then. “I can’t think of a single crime in the penal code that was not committed in the first ten years on the Copperbelt” he later recalled.³³⁴ This was not an unfamiliar world for these European migrants though. The jobs on the mines, management practices, built environment of the mining camps, bars, sports clubs and trade unions all had strong similarities with other mining regions around the world. These similarities were generated by the international links forged in this period, particularly by the white workforce on the mines. The life and culture of the European community on the Copperbelt was an

³³¹ NAZ SEC1/1376, Extract from *Northern Rhodesian Advertiser*, 26 August 1939.

³³² Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 49.

³³³ ZCCM 15.1.6E, Notice, Roan Mine Workers Federation, October 1939.

³³⁴ ‘Personally speaking: Hugh Handford’, *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

international one and this was readily recognised by those living there in the 1930s. When Lucy Cullen left Roan Antelope in the mid-1930s, she left a mine “settled down to routine operations and the community surrounding it had a good deal in common with every other small community in the world.”³³⁵ This familiarity eased the arrival of thousands of people from around the English-speaking world.

This transition from rough prospecting camps to large-scale mining with planned townships was not a smooth one. Abrupt mass sackings by the mining companies and the callous attitude of the colonial administration toward the white unemployed during the Great Depression left a legacy of deep bitterness and mistrust. The feeling was mutual. From the outset, the mining companies sought to reduce their reliance on European labour, while colonial officials were haunted by fears of armed insurrection by Europeans on the Copperbelt. The European community was certainly a somewhat lawless one. However, active hostility was largely directed against colonial officials or non-British whites. Hostility towards Africans was less important as a motivation for action than has previously been assumed in the literature.

A strong theme in the European community in this period was that they had to work collectively to successfully tackle problems – whether making demands on the colonial administration or the mines – and the mining towns were thus frequent hosts to mass meetings and short-lived committees. This can be seen most clearly in the formation of whites-only trade unions. The men who created these unions had a global work experience and they were informed by their involvement in the labour movement around the world. In this sense, they saw the Copperbelt mines as the same as any other mine; a trade union was a necessity there. The formation of the

³³⁵ Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, p. 340.

NRMWU was one of the most important developments for the European community in these years but this did not seem to be the case in 1939. The union was bitterly divided, heavily indebted and its survival was in doubt.³³⁶ This was to be dramatically altered by the onset of the Second World War.

³³⁶ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 58.

Frank Maybank

Frank Maybank (1901-1994) was born on the outskirts of London into a family which was plunged into poverty after the unexpected death of his father in 1906. Maybank and his siblings were sent to an orphan school, until his elder brother, an accountant on a Malayan



Figure 3.1: Frank Maybank circa 1946, Maybank's personal papers, in author's possession.

rubber plantation, paid for him to attend Brighton Grammar School. His education there lasted until 1916 when his step-father died and Maybank went out to work, first in a metal factory and then as a clerk at Lloyds of London.³³⁷

Maybank saw few prospects in Britain and took advantage of the post-war demand in New Zealand for British migrants and joined his brother there in 1922.³³⁸ He quickly found work as a miner at Denniston, "a rocky wind-swept plateau perched some 2000 feet above a narrow coastal plain."³³⁹ Life there was tough and Maybank reflected that "I died every shift for the first two months."³⁴⁰ These conditions had provoked a determined response, however, and Maybank had arrived in the midst of industrial unrest. In 1923, the local union president, anticipating a bitter struggle over

³³⁷ 'The Story of the Life of a Man', Personal papers of Frank Maybank, in author's possession.

³³⁸ Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford, 2010), p. 82. Ancestry.com. *UK, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960*: Record of Frank Maybank, 12 January 1922. Accessed 10 September at search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2997.

³³⁹ Len Richardson, 'British colliers and colonial capitalists: The origins of coalmining unionism in New Zealand', in Eric Fry (ed.), *Common Cause: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Labour History* (Wellington, 1986), p. 59.

³⁴⁰ 'The Story of the Life of a Man'.

wage cuts, advised anyone wanting to leave the plateau to do so. Around 60 men did, including Maybank.³⁴¹ He spent the next three years as a typical crew member: harvesting, cattle-droving, sheep-shearing and working on construction alongside gangs of Maoris, all jobs “staffed largely by crews.”³⁴²

This itinerant way of life continued after he left for Australia in 1926. He spent time harvesting in New South Wales and then as a traveling salesman in late 1929 in Western Australia.³⁴³ The Great Depression brought this to an end and Maybank walked out to the Kalgoorlie goldfields to try his luck as a prospector. Maybank would have been near Kalgoorlie when English-speaking miners rioted and struck against Italians in January 1934, sentiments similar to the hostility expressed towards ‘alien’ Europeans on the Copperbelt.³⁴⁴ He subsequently found work on the Sons of Gwalia Mine, where, though he had long been a union member, he first assumed an active role. He became president of the local Australian Workers’ Union branch, until he was removed on a technicality and convicted of assaulting the branch secretary.³⁴⁵

Maybank threw himself single-mindedly into political work and industrial organising. He joined the Communist Party of Australia, heard Ernie Thornton speak in Melbourne, discussed the Australian labour movement with Tom Mann in Moscow and gained an interest “in industrial conditions the world over” during a trip to Europe and the Soviet Union, where he was a guest of General Mineworkers’ Union.³⁴⁶ His experiences in the Australia labour movement left a deep impression. “Ain’t I a

³⁴¹ Len Richardson, *The Denniston Miners’ Union: a Centennial History* (Westport, 1984), p. 50.

³⁴² James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland, 1996), p. 430.

³⁴³ ‘Shipping’, *The Western Australian*, 19 September 1929.

³⁴⁴ Robert Pascoe and Patrick Bertola, ‘Italian miners and the second-generation ‘Britishers’ at Kalgoorlie, Australia’, *Social History*, 10, 1 (1985), pp. 9-35.

³⁴⁵ ‘Leonora’, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 19 March 1934.

³⁴⁶ “A Perth Man’s Impressions of Russia”, *Sunday Times* (Perth), 7 July 1935.

Bastard,” he once declared to Roy Welensky, “well I received my training in Aussie you know.”³⁴⁷

These experiences ensured Maybank was no marginal figure when he arrived on the Copperbelt in August 1939 and found work as an underground timberman at Mufulira.³⁴⁸ He had only been on the mines a few months when he was approached to help re-organise the union and then thrust to the forefront by the wildcat strikes in March 1940. He was installed as NRMWU general secretary shortly after and wielded outsized influence in this position (with a gap from 1943-45 when he was deported to Britain). Maybank has been described as “a ‘communist’ in the South African manner” but had spent only a few weeks in South Africa.³⁴⁹ Most of his contemporaries thought he was from New Zealand, and did not consider it noteworthy that a New Zealander was leading a trade union in central Africa.³⁵⁰

Maybank turned his deportation to his advantage and successfully presented himself as a victimised trade unionist. He won the support of the British Trade Union Congress leadership and the Miners’ Federation of Great Britain, whose general secretary Ebby Edwards reported that Maybank “made an excellent impression on all the District Officers of the Miners’ Union” during his tour of Britain’s coalfields.³⁵¹ To the horror of British officials, Maybank suggested that his friends in South Wales could get him a job on a mine there, although he feared he had gone ‘soft’ and could

³⁴⁷ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter WP] 644/10, Letter from Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 27 January 1957.

³⁴⁸ National Archives, London [hereafter NAB], CO 795/117/2, Evidence of Frank Maybank, 29 May 1940.

³⁴⁹ Ian Henderson, ‘Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia, 1900-53: a study in the limits of colonial power’ (Edinburgh Univ. PhD thesis, 1972), p. 181.

³⁵⁰ The assumption that Maybank was born in New Zealand has endured, see Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London, 1999), p. 244.

³⁵¹ NAB CO 795/122/13, Notes of a meeting held in the Secretary of State’s room, 7 December 1943

no longer do heavy underground work.³⁵² This was refused, so he spent the war working for a naval salvage firm in Southampton.³⁵³

In between fomenting grievances on his return to the Copperbelt, Maybank married a woman 20 years his junior in 1947. Cecil, who was from Kimberley and worked as a bookkeeper, was “the ultimate trophy wife.” Frank accorded her little respect according to his daughter.³⁵⁴ In seemingly all areas of his life, Maybank was uncompromising, authoritarian and tenacious, whether he was threatening captains of industry or establishing patriarchal authority in his house. It was therefore his decision, and his decision alone, to leave the Copperbelt. Maybank resigned as general secretary in September 1953 after clashing with other prominent union members, although others pressed him to stay.³⁵⁵ One of his final actions was to refuse a Coronation Medal from the newly-crowned Queen Elizabeth II because “Australian union and labour representatives do not accept such things.”³⁵⁶

Maybank had come to hate Africa and the way white settlers behaved towards African servants “with a passion” and the family moved to Australia in early 1956.³⁵⁷ This time they were to stay. Maybank successfully applied for Australian citizenship in 1961, noting he had lost whatever passport he was carrying previously.³⁵⁸ Maybank first ran a hotel near Perth and then the Buffalo Club – a familiar institution on the Copperbelt – near Fremantle docks. Though the family lived a comfortable suburban life, he stressed to his children “don’t forget you’re working class” and told

³⁵² NAB CO 795/128/6, Notes on an interview with Frank Stanley Maybank, 16 May 1944.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, Letter from Frederick Leggett to George Gater, 14 September 1944.

³⁵⁴ Interview with Cheryl Mather, 22 March 2014.

³⁵⁵ Letter from Guy Spires, 1 September 1953, Personal papers of Frank Maybank, in author’s possession.

³⁵⁶ ‘The Story of the Life of a Man’.

³⁵⁷ Interview with Cheryl Mather, 22 March 2014.

³⁵⁸ National Archives of Australia, Perth PP256/1, W1961/4144, Application for naturalization: Frank Stanley Maybank.

his daughter she had to marry “someone who worked with their hands,” a microcosm of Copperbelt European masculinity.³⁵⁹

His political activism continued. He opposed the Vietnam War but never included his family in his political life, telling them little about his past. He retained an interest in southern Africa politics, keeping up correspondence with Jack Hodgson, by then an exiled ANC militant, and Solly Sachs, the former leader of the South African Garment Workers’ Union.³⁶⁰ He also developed a firm conviction that white minority rule was not only wrong but futile, pointing out “what hope for [Ian] Smith to hold SR [Southern Rhodesia] if France could not hold Algeria.”³⁶¹

Although he lived the rest of his life in and around Perth, the wanderlust had not quite diminished. In 1973, he left again for the Soviet Union, jumping on a tramp steamer to Vladivostok and smoothed his passage with a letter from the Seaman’s Union of Australia, the author of which noted he had known Maybank personally since 1949.³⁶² His lifelong conviction that a person had to work did not diminish either and, after leaving the Buffalo Club, he drove delivery trucks in a car factory well into his 70s. It was only the onset of Alzheimer’s disease which finally slowed him. He died in 1994 having outlived many of the things – the British Empire, white labour migration and communism – which had shaped his life.

³⁵⁹ Interview with Cheryl Mather, 22 March 2014.

³⁶⁰ Letter from Jack Hodgson to Frank Maybank, 6 July 1967, in author’s possession.

³⁶¹ WP 785/4, Letter from Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 7 October 1964.

³⁶² Statement from E.V. Elliott, Seaman’s Union of Australia, 9 May 1973, in author’s possession.

Chapter Three

A Good War, 1940-47

The eyes of the world are on the Copperbelt tonight.

Jack Hodgson, March 1940.³⁶³

Overview

Located thousands of miles from the front lines of the Second World War, the Copperbelt was wracked by another kind of conflict common to mining regions: industrial unrest. This agitation illustrates how the Copperbelt's European population was part of a primarily English-speaking labour diaspora with a global reach that linked mining centres around the world. The global experience of this workforce generated the seemingly contradictory trends of labour militancy, political radicalism and racial exclusivity, which came to dominate life on the Copperbelt during this period. These experiences were significant as those directly connected to the mines constituted the overwhelming majority of the European community; 6,853 of the 9,164 Europeans who lived on the Copperbelt in 1946 lived in the mine townships.³⁶⁴

This chapter will cover the strike wave which engulfed the Copperbelt during the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath, beginning with the wildcat strikes

³⁶³ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 15.1.6E, Notes on a meeting held at Luanshya Hotel, 22 March 1940.

³⁶⁴ *Report on the Census of Population of Northern Rhodesia held on 15th October, 1946* (Lusaka, 1949), p. 79.

in March 1940 and the events which unfolded thereafter. The next section will detail the creation of the colour shop and colour bar, followed by an evaluation of wartime political developments, unrest in Katanga and deportation of Frank Maybank, the wildcat strikes of 1944 and, finally, those of 1946.

The significance, and even existence, of these disputes have been overlooked in the secondary literature, which has concentrated on the African mineworkers' strike in March 1940. Jane Parpart, for instance, claimed that following this strike "the mines successfully maintained labour peace."³⁶⁵ This was only the case for the African workforce. The white workforce was convulsed by further wildcat strikes and the army occupied the Copperbelt to quash a cross-border general strike by daily-paid mineworkers, "whose influence is out of all proportion to their numbers."³⁶⁶ The disproportionate impact of these strikes was because of the necessity of copper for the British war effort and it has been argued that "it is unlikely that the British could have stayed in the war" without copper supplies from the Copperbelt and South Africa.³⁶⁷ Those accounts which do suggest an explanation for white industrial unrest focus on the perceived "introduction into Northern Rhodesia of the strident militancy of South African trade unions" or the "extension of the South African union organization to the copper mines."³⁶⁸ In addition to disregarding the transnational origin of white mineworkers and their ideas, such explanations are anachronistic in overlooking the fact that elsewhere in the region white workers had been mollified by the late 1920s. In fact, the situation on the wartime Copperbelt bore closer resemblance to copper mining towns in Montana, where wildcat strikes enforced a

³⁶⁵ Jane Parpart, *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 103.

³⁶⁶ 'The Rhodesian Copperbelt', *Financial Times*, 29 October 1946.

³⁶⁷ Raymond Dumett, 'Africa's Strategic Minerals during the Second World War', *Journal of African History*, 26 (1985), p. 393.

³⁶⁸ Charles Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa: Industrial strategies and the evolution of an African proletariat in the Copperbelt 1911-41* (London, 1979), p. 130. Larry Butler, *Copper Empire: mining and the colonial state in Northern Rhodesia, c. 1930-64* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 57.

colour bar on the mines and secured better pay and conditions for white male mineworkers.³⁶⁹

This chapter owes an obvious debt to the work of E.P. Thompson and his idea of class as a historical relationship formed through struggle.³⁷⁰ The struggles on the Copperbelt in this period formed a working class but one which saw itself as white. In order to understand this consciousness, this chapter draws on Jonathan Hyslop's concept of 'white labourism', but argues that ideas of white labourism were never static. One problem with Hyslop's concept is that it compares situations that were very different; colonies with a large settler majority (such as Australia and Canada) and colonies with a substantial but minority settler presence (South Africa). Dagmar Engelken has pointed out that although white labourist ideas from Australia were clearly influential in South Africa, the differences between the two places "meant that Australian-style 'white labourism' had no chance of being implemented... in South Africa."³⁷¹ On the Copperbelt, it was simply not possible to exclude Africans like Asian migrants were excluded from mining regions in Australia and Canada, nor was this end sought. What developed was a kind of 'passive white labourism' where the racial segregation of labour was accepted, but was not advocated with the overt and aggressive racism used by white labour representatives in South Africa.³⁷² Other criticism of Hyslop argument has focused on the conflation of white labour with white labourism, and his failure to take into account that "the politics of the white working

³⁶⁹ Matthew Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front* (Chicago, 2013).

³⁷⁰ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963). For how these ideas have been applied in African labour history see Frederick Cooper, 'Work, class and empire: An African historian's retrospective on E. P. Thompson', *Social History*, 20, 2 (1995), pp. 234-41.

³⁷¹ Dagmar Engelken, 'A White Man's Country? The Chinese Labour Controversy in the Transvaal', in Wulf D. Hund, Jeremy Krikler and David Roediger (eds.), *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital* (Berlin, 2010), p. 190.

³⁷² I am grateful to David Mayer for suggesting the term 'passive white labourism'.

class in southern Africa were not homogenous.”³⁷³ While the white workforce on the Copperbelt was not homogenous in 1940, the struggles of this period and the gains won helped create a racially delineated working class.

European society on the Copperbelt became increasingly affluent in these years – something which will be explored more fully in the next chapter – as white mineworkers came to enjoy some of the highest wages in the world. These have generally been understood as an inducement provided by the companies to attract white mineworkers to the Copperbelt and retain them.³⁷⁴ This chapter offers a different answer to the question of where high wages and lavish conditions came from: they were the outcome of the struggles of this period. As will be seen, the companies did not intend to repeatedly raise wages; in fact they sought the opposite.

Thompson’s concept of class formation was based on opposition: “class happens” when people sharing a common experience articulate their interests against others with different and usually opposed interests.³⁷⁵ The chapter argues that the clashes in this period primarily pitted white mineworkers against their white employers, even when there was an obvious racial dynamic to the disputes. This runs counter to the assumption in the literature that conflict was between black and white mineworkers. Leroy Vail claimed that after 1940 “The lines of opposition were drawn between unionised European workers and increasingly militant African workers, while the government and the mine-owners looked nervously on.”³⁷⁶ This reflects contemporary anticipation of imminent racial clashes and the perspective of the

³⁷³ Lucien van der Walt, ‘The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism in Southern Africa: White Labourism, the IWW, and the ICU, 1904–1934’, *African Studies*, 66, 2-3, (2007), pp. 231-2.

³⁷⁴ Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976), p. 187, Parpart, *Labor and Capital*, p. 30.

³⁷⁵ Thompson, *English Working Class*, p. 9.

³⁷⁶ Leroy Vail, ‘The Political Economy of East-Central Africa’, in David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa: Volume Two* (London, 1983), p. 248.

mining companies, who saw themselves as “arbitrators holding the balance between black and white.”³⁷⁷

1940 strikes

In early 1940, a group of militants among the white workforce decided to utilise the opportunity presented by the war to settle longstanding grievances over wages and working conditions and to permanently improve their bargaining position. The situation was ripe for such a move. Serious discontent and impatience with the mine management was coupled with disaffection with the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union (NRMWU), effectively rendered moribund by infighting and financial mismanagement. Wildcat strikes in March 1940 transformed the situation on the mines and had lasting consequences. The agreement hammered out in negotiations in the strike's aftermath was essentially the same as the one which remained in force for the next two decades. Moreover, the way these benefits were won proved a salutary lesson for white and, to a lesser extent, African mineworkers.

These events, their causes and consequences have been poorly understood in the existing literature.³⁷⁸ Where they have been commented on at all it is in relation to the timing of the subsequent African mineworkers strike.³⁷⁹ Yet there is ample evidence of discontent among the white workforce prior to the strike and Africans rarely feature in them. Letters from mineworkers complained that men were fined

³⁷⁷ National Archives, London [hereafter NAB], CO 795/122/14, Notes of a meeting held in Mr Hall's room, 20 May 1941.

³⁷⁸ Donal Lowry argued that “ideologically bizarre alliance was formed between Nazi-sympathising Afrikaner nationalist workers and the Mine Workers' Union” and that this alliance organized the strikes, see ‘The impact of anti-communism on white Rhodesian political culture, c.1920s-1980’, in Sue Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa: white power, black liberation* (London, 2009), p. 85.. Ian Henderson claimed that during the strike “the main complaint voiced by Europeans was that discipline of natives was not sufficiently severe” in ‘Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia, 1900-53: a study in the limits of colonial power’ (Edinburgh Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1972), p. 114.

³⁷⁹ For the timing argument, see: Henry Meebelo, *African proletarians and colonial capitalism: The origins, growth, and struggles of the Zambian labour movement to 1964* (Lusaka, 1986), pp. 112-13.

indiscriminately by “unskilled, redundant,” and “abusive” mine officials and demanded that union officials “stop running around to commissions and committees, and get down to the root of the matter – which is wages and the cost of living.”³⁸⁰ Only a few weeks before the strike, a statement from mineworkers at Roan Antelope warned that they were not prepared “to make sacrifices in order that impersonal shareholders may enjoy even greater profits.”³⁸¹ The high cost of living coupled with the perception that the copper companies were making vast profits incensed white mineworkers.

The union leadership repeatedly raised such matters with the mine management, who felt confident in rejecting them. Just a month before the strike, Frank Ayer turned down a request to eliminate pay differentials for the same job on different mines because “it is impracticable on any one property or at all properties to standardize all rates,” a demand which would soon be conceded.³⁸² Wartime conditions exacerbated discontent. On 6 September 1939, emergency regulations prohibited all male British subjects working in the mining industry from leaving Northern Rhodesia without a permit.³⁸³ In 1939, the turnover of the white workforce was 35%, now mineworkers unhappy with conditions on the Copperbelt were stuck for the duration of the war.³⁸⁴

Discontent became evident on 15 March when a mass meeting at Mufulira shouted down the local union branch chairman and formed a Committee of Action.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁰ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] SEC1/1381, NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939, Letters from Harry Kelly and ‘Disgusted Old-Timer’.

³⁸¹ ZCCM 15.1.6E, Memorandum to the Governor from Roan Mine Workers’ Federation, 2 February 1940.

³⁸² NAB CO 795/116/1, Letter from General Manager, Roan Antelope to V.S. Welsford, 20 February 1940.

³⁸³ NAB CO 795/118/15, Despatch from Governor’s Deputy to Colonial Secretary, 6 March 1940.

³⁸⁴ L.H. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1953* (London, 1964), p. 333.

³⁸⁵ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Telegram from Frank Ayer to Selection Trust, London, 18 March 1940.

Disavowing the recognition agreement – which stipulated that negotiations and conciliation had to take place before a strike – the meeting agreed to a list of demands and announced they would strike if these demands were not met within 24 hours. The Committee of Action gave a blunt statement to the mine manager, American mining engineer Robert Peterson: they were not prepared to negotiate and instead promised “direct action” as this was “the only action which will bring immediate and certain results”.³⁸⁶ So, on 17 March, European mineworkers gathered around the shaft at Mufulira at 7am and voted by a show of hands not to work.

One of the main instigators at Mufulira was Frank Maybank. He was a communist and though this fact has only been mentioned as a curious anomaly in the secondary literature, the politics and approach of Maybank and those around him became one of the most important currents within the white workforce.³⁸⁷ Maybank was working closely with other militants, and on 19 March a meeting was called at Nkana to discuss the same demands. Around 700 people gathered to hear Brian Goodwin, a South African rockbreaker, claim that management had refused to consider any of their grievances. Following this, he announced:

Under an agreement which was made in our youth we first have to go to conciliation or to arbitration and it may be months and months before we get anywhere. I shall now close the meeting on behalf of the Mine Workers' Union.

Whereupon, another miner leapt onto the table and declared “Are we to take this lying down or are we going to take action?” Pat Murray, an Irish miner, called for the

³⁸⁶ NAZ SEC/1383, Letter from Governor John Maybin to Malcolm MacDonald, 2 April 1940.

³⁸⁷ Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), p. 64-65.

recognition agreement to be torn up as the company “demanded a demonstration of our strength.” The meeting elected a Committee of Action, with Goodwin at its head. Urged on by strikers from Mufulira and Catherine Olds – who declared that miners should not be dissuaded from striking by their wives or children – the meeting voted to deliver an even sharper ultimatum to mine management: agree to the demands within 12 hours or face strike action.³⁸⁸ Two days later, a large number of men from Mufulira joined mineworkers from Nkana and picketed all shafts and workshops on the property, shutting the mine.³⁸⁹

The strike was partly a revolt against the union leadership. It is telling the meeting in Mufulira was held two days after the union president Tom Ross left the Copperbelt on leave and while the general secretary Victor Welsford was out of the territory.³⁹⁰ However, the meetings were in a position to issue such blunt threats as they were not simply gatherings of union members but were effectively a mobilisation of the European community protesting about the rising cost of living. At Nkana, for instance, management informants estimated that around 200 women attended the meeting alongside male mineworkers, and they appear to have voted on the list of demands.

The wide-ranging demands covered a 2s wage increase, overtime, closed shop, better housing, silicosis prevention, an eight-hour day and a new recognition agreement.³⁹¹ Significantly, these demands were formulated with reference to wages and working conditions in other mining and industrial centres in the British Empire and the United States – with particular praise reserved for Broken Hill in Australia –

³⁸⁸ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Notes of meeting of Mine Workers Held in Cinema Hall, Nkana, 19 March, 1940.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Royden Harrison to Manager, Anglo American Johannesburg, 30 March 1940.

³⁹⁰ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Letter from A. Royden Harrison to Manager, Anglo American, Johannesburg, 30 March 1940. ZCCM 15.1.6E, Notes on interview with J. Purvis, March 18 1940. Welsford left the Copperbelt permanently after this strike and moved to a tin mine in Southern Rhodesia.

³⁹¹ NAZ SEC1/1382, Workers' Demands from Mine Management.

along with the perceived gains made in the Soviet Union.³⁹² Conditions in such disparate locations were relevant as mineworkers on the Copperbelt saw themselves and workers in these places as part of the same class. White mineworkers also began to reach out internationally to rally support their demands and a flurry of telegrams to Labour MPs in Britain as well as to British and South African trade unions accompanied the 1940 strikes and subsequent disputes.³⁹³

Demands for a colour bar emerged subsequently. Strikers were more worried about the employment of other white workers on lower pay rates and, without any irony, one union member demanded minimum wage rates “be [laid] down in black and white.”³⁹⁴ Most of the white workforce appear to have been uninterested in African workers and held a firm conviction that their dispute did not concern them. Peterson had urged white mineworkers not to strike because of the effect it would have on Africans, a plea echoed by the local District Commissioner.³⁹⁵ These pleas fell on deaf ears but not because of a lack of racism. One of the members of the Nkana Action Committee had informed the Governor in 1937 that Africans were “his inferiors and always will be.”³⁹⁶

Attitudes among the white workforce were not homogenous, as strikers from Mufulira and Nkana found when they sought to win support from Roan Antelope Mine. Striking mineworkers were invited to address a meeting at the Luanshya Hotel, where around 350 people – including 60 men and 25 women from Mufulira –

³⁹² For comments on Broken Hill see ZCCM 15.1.6E, Notes on a meeting held at Luanshya Hotel, 22 March 1940.

³⁹³ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Notes of meeting of Mine Workers Held in Cinema Hall, Nkana, 19 March, 1940, Telegram from NRMWU, Mufulira to Arthur Storke, 2 September 1940.

³⁹⁴ NAB CO 795/117/2, Testimony of Jack Hodgson, 29 May 1940.

³⁹⁵ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Telegram from Frank Ayer to Selection Trust, London, 18 March 1940. NAB CO 795/117/2, Testimony from Gilbert Howe, 17 May 1940.

³⁹⁶ *Report of an Enquiry into the causes of a disturbance at Nkana on 4th and 5th November, 1937* (Lusaka, 1937), p. 27.

gathered to witness the speakers receive a rough reception. Jack Hodgson, Maybank and Murray were each shouted down and two hecklers, both drunk, further distracted the audience by fighting in front of the stage, causing the police to intervene. Catherine Olds was able to quieten the crowd, until one Roan miner suggested they sing the chorus of a well-known First World War song: “We don’t want to lose you, but we think you ought to go.” The mine’s doctor, A.C. Fischer, then arrived on stage to give the management case and “touched on the question of silicosis and said the whole Medical Department on the Mines were not wrong when they said that there was none in these Mines” and the meeting dissolved into shouting and singing.³⁹⁷

The denial of silicosis is a good example of why such mistrust of the mining companies emerged among the European community. There was silicosis in the mines, as mineworkers had strongly suspected before it was officially identified. Only months before Dr Fischer’s public denial, Ben Rount, a former union general secretary who had spent almost a decade working underground at Roan Antelope, had died of silicosis.³⁹⁸ What was not known was that evidence of silicosis had been covered up. Ayer had previously worked on silicosis-bearing mines in Arizona and so was “aware of the open-ended financial costs involved” in silicosis prevention and compensation. He recommended that the mine should not reveal the disease’s presence. When the Inspector of Mines began testing for silicosis in 1933, Ayer ensured that rock samples sent for analysis were free of silicates.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ ZCCM 15.1.6E, Notes on a meeting held at Luanshya Hotel, 22 March 1940.

³⁹⁸ NAZ SEC1/1381, NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939.

³⁹⁹ John Philips, ‘Roan Antelope: Big Business in Central Africa 1890-1953’ (Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2000), pp. 228-30.

The mining companies initially attempted to play hardball. In London, Rhodesian Anglo American (RAA) and Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST) rapidly resolved to reject virtually all the demands and, on the Copperbelt, mine managers would not even consider meeting representatives of the committees or the union.⁴⁰⁰ This approach was stymied when the power of the Action Committees to make good their threats was made evident. At Mufulira, it appears that not a single member of the daily-paid workforce worked during the strike. The police reported at Nkana only two Europeans went underground to work on the first day of the strike.⁴⁰¹ Meanwhile, a meeting of daily-paid mineworkers at Nchanga Mine declared full support for the strike and pledged they would strike if the demands could not be achieved through conciliation proceedings.⁴⁰² This demonstrated both the strength of feeling on the Copperbelt and the sense of solidarity and understanding of how to win industrial disputes.

Ironically, given that this dispute helped cement racist working practices, the position of white workers was reinforced when their dispute precipitated a larger and more serious strike by African mineworkers. A day after white mineworkers returned to work on 27 March, African mineworkers' came out on strike at Nkana Mine and then at Mufulira. This dispute culminated in a protest at Nkana where soldiers opened fire on the crowd after some strikers pelted them with stones, killing 17 strikers and injuring around 65.⁴⁰³ Mine management were convinced that their white workforce had inspired or even orchestrated this dispute. The strike was confined to the mines

⁴⁰⁰ NAZ SEC1/1382, European Strike: Report on Mediation Attempt by T.S. Sandford, 26 March 1940.

⁴⁰¹ NAZ SEC/1383, Extract from the Commissioner of Police's Diary, 21 March 1940.

⁴⁰² ZCCM 3.8.1A, Letter from W.A. Odgers to Managing Director, Nchanga Hertfordshire, 29 March 1940.

⁴⁰³ For a detailed account of the strike see Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, pp. 110-25.

where white mineworkers had walked out, even though low pay and harsh conditions for African mineworkers existed on all four mines.

There may have been some truth in this fear. Some individual white mineworkers did take the initiative to encourage African mineworkers to strike, and since many white mineworkers supervised groups of African mineworkers they had ample opportunity to do so. At the Forster Commission, established to investigate the 1940 strikes, Changa Mwinangumbo, a miner at Nkana, claimed that white miners returning to work openly questioned why African miners had come to work, and said that they would get more money if they stayed away.⁴⁰⁴ Other African mineworkers pointed to the example of the successful European strike, rather than direct encouragement, as the trigger for the dispute.⁴⁰⁵ Regardless of the precise contribution white mineworkers, it added to the pressure on mine management. Faced with the prospect of continuing chaos, the mine management caved in and agreed to most of the Action Committee's demands.

The end of the 'Phoney War' in May 1940, when Germany invaded Belgium and the Netherlands, prompted a reaction to the European strike by local notables. With the threat to Britain itself now apparent, Captain Arthur Smith, the local Legislative Council member, called for a patriotic public meeting at Rhokana Cinema to discuss how the Copperbelt could contribute more. Smith wanted compulsory military training for all European men, harsher measures against non-British Europeans, "measures be taken to deal with Fifth Column stratagem in our midst," and ensuring people understood that striking "is contrary to the principles of all Servicemen."⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ NAB CO 795/117/2, Testimony from Changa Mwinangumbo, 23 May 1940.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Testimony of Edward Sampa, 23 May 1940.

⁴⁰⁶ NAZ SEC1/1735, Report from DC Kitwe on a meeting held by Captain Smith at Nkana, 24 May 1940.

However, Smith's exhortations that it was the duty of every citizen to report those spreading rumours to the police were met with gales of laughter from the 550-strong audience. Rumours were common currency on the Copperbelt.⁴⁰⁷ When Smith came to the question of fifth columnists, he was loudly interrupted by Marthinus Visagie, an Afrikaner member of the Nkana Action Committee, who demanded that anyone who wanted call him a 'fifth columnist' should say it "to his face there and then." No-one took him up on this offer.⁴⁰⁸ A similar meeting held a few days later in Luanshya, chaired by Protestant minister and local Sons of England leader Rev. Harold Webb, attracted around 500 people.⁴⁰⁹ Colonial officials were convinced that these patriotic societies would "not permit another strike to occur during the continuance of the war."⁴¹⁰ Maybank, however, was prepared to play the long game. War would last several years, he warned the Forster Commission, and while "at the present time there is a rising feeling of extreme patriotism on the Copperbelt but that won't last, we know that hysteria will not last."⁴¹¹

Closed shop and colour bar

Daily-paid mineworkers were caught in an ambiguous position on the mines. Strategically, they appeared to be in a strong position as the skills they had and the jobs they did ensured they occupied a crucial position in the production process. The mines simply could not function if they went on strike. Yet, they also felt highly vulnerable. Daily-paid men received no sick pay when illness prevented them from

⁴⁰⁷ "Societies in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) have been fertile ground on which rumours have flourished" according to Mwelwa Musambachime and rumours tended "to coincide with times of anxiety and insecurity," a description that certainly applies to the Copperbelt in 1940. Mwelwa Musambachime, 'The Impact of Rumor: The Case of the Banyama (Vampire Men) Scare in Northern Rhodesia, 1930-1964', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21, 2 (1988), p. 203.

⁴⁰⁸ NAZ SEC1/1735, Letter from A.T. Williams to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 27 May 1940.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of a Public Meeting of the Residents of Luanshya, 3 June 1940.

⁴¹⁰ NAZ SEC1/1641, Letter from Cartmel-Robinson to Chief Secretary, 16 September 1940.

⁴¹¹ NAB CO 795/117/2, Testimony of Frank Maybank, 29 May 1940

working and could be sacked with 24 hours' notice, at which point they would also lose their house. They feared displacement from below by African workers.⁴¹²

Agitation for a colour bar was not constant; it came to the fore in the specific circumstances of the war. Wartime demand for copper meant that the Copperbelt was expanding and Nchanga Mine was finally brought into production under plans drawn up by Woodred Romig, whose services RAA had secured from Climax Mine, Colorado.⁴¹³ Greater production required a larger workforce but the workforce did not increase equally. Between 1939 and 1941 the white workforce grew by 13%, but the African workforce grew by 30%. Skilled labour was in short supply and this added to pressure to train African workers.⁴¹⁴

An informal but effective colour bar already existed in the mining towns with Europeans doing what might be considered low-status jobs. The cinema at Nchanga, for instance, was largely operated by the mine's apprentice electricians, with one employed to check tickets, one to work the projector and another to pull the curtains from the screen when the film began.⁴¹⁵ It has been contended that the NRMWU and mine management reach a 'gentleman's agreement' in 1937 imposing a formal colour bar for two years and Ian Henderson claimed clause 39 of this agreement "enforced a standstill on the advancement of 'native labour.'"⁴¹⁶ The 1937 agreement, however, only had 22 clauses and did not include a colour bar. The

⁴¹² This draws on analyses of white mineworkers on the Rand which argue these mineworkers were in a precarious structural position due to the presence of a larger African workforce who could be employed on much lower wages. See Jeremy Krikler, *White Rising: The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa*, (Manchester, 2005), pp. 30-2 and Frederick Johnstone, *Class, race and gold: A study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa* (London, 1976), pp. 50-75.

⁴¹³ Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971), pp. 131-2.

⁴¹⁴ Perrings, *Black Mineworkers*, p. 136.

⁴¹⁵ Rob K. Hart, *Autobiography*, (n.d.), pp. 17-18.

⁴¹⁶ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 108. Van Der Walt, 'Transnational Labour Activism in Southern Africa', p. 231. Ian Henderson, 'Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia, 1900-53: a study in the limits of colonial power' (Edinburgh Univ. PhD thesis, 1972), p. 112.

source for the 'gentleman's agreement' is a remark by miner Charles Green to the Bledisloe Commission. Green also reported that all mineworkers felt they were "well paid, and were very contented," so may not be the most reliable informant.⁴¹⁷

The other factor behind the push for a colour bar by white mineworkers was continued hostility toward the mining companies, particularly after the demand for a basic wage of 28s per shift was thwarted at arbitration proceedings. The companies successfully argued that it was "impossible to justify the continuation of the exceedingly high basic wages... still less an increase."⁴¹⁸ Both the companies and the NRMWU both sought assistance from South Africa for arbitration proceedings. The companies enlisted William Gemmill, a former head of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines who had played a "pivotal role in the formation of the structure of South Africa's industrial relations."⁴¹⁹ It is apt that Gemmill should have witnessed the union's representative make a claim that would come to dominate industrial relations on the Copperbelt: wages should be increased because the companies could afford it.⁴²⁰ This case by the NRMWU had been bolstered with evidence provided by South African trade unions.⁴²¹

The companies drew on wide international experience to contest demands made by the NRMWU. Not long after arbitration proceedings, Ayer rejected a claim that smelter conditions at Mufulira were so bad that they required a special allowance by getting men at Mufulira who had worked at smelters in Douglas, Arizona and Butte,

⁴¹⁷ 'Trade unionism and amalgamation', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 21 July 1938.

⁴¹⁸ ZCCM 3.8.2A, Employers' Statements, Copper Mines' Arbitration Board.

⁴¹⁹ David Yudelman, *The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, capital, and the incorporation of organized labour on the South African gold fields, 1902-1939* (Cape Town, 1984), p. 156.

⁴²⁰ ZCCM 3.8.2A, Summary and heads of argument by the employers' representative Mr W. Gemmill.

⁴²¹ Historical Papers Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg [hereafter HPA], AH 646 Dc12.20, Letter from Secretary, SATLC to P.J. Hodgson, Mufulira, 7 May 1940.

Montana to vouch for the allegedly better conditions on the Copperbelt.⁴²² Other managers adopted a similar approach – disputing wage claims with reference to wages and working conditions on the Kent coalfields, for instance –⁴²³ but Ayer found his hard-line attitude had left him isolated after it failed during the strike. In late 1940, RST directors transferred Ayer from Roan Antelope, his removal having become a key demand of the union.⁴²⁴

Fears by white mineworkers that the companies sought to expand the use of skilled, cheaper African labour to replace European labour were not unfounded. The introduction of a pension and bonus scheme for European employees in 1937 increased costs sharply and management sought to reduce these costs by training Africans to do jobs undertaken by Europeans.⁴²⁵ At Mufulira direct European labour costs reached £25,803 a month by January 1940, and mine management specifically noted this included £4,186 for pensions.⁴²⁶ There was a strong element of subterfuge about such plans. During the Forster Commission, the mine management informed their counsel “confidentially” about the intention “to substitute native labour for white” but “desire that their witnesses should not be asked to say that this is so.”⁴²⁷ The companies also successfully pushed for amendments to the Commission’s draft report, removing the information in paragraph 196 that mine management “thought

⁴²² NAZ SEC1/1382, Letter from Frank Ayer to Chief Secretary, 9 September 1940.

⁴²³ ZCCM 3.8.2A, Comparison between wages and conditions of employment in a large coal mine in Kent and the copper mines in Northern Rhodesia, 5 June 1940.

⁴²⁴ NAZ SEC1/1420, Letter from Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 7 September 1940.

⁴²⁵ £1.3m and £211,372 in 2015 figures. Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 58.

⁴²⁶ NAB CO 795/116/1, Mufulira Copper Mines, Direct European Labour Costs, January 1940.

⁴²⁷ Quoted in Perrings, *Black Mineworkers*, pp.136-37.

that in the very near future” European workers could be replaced by two or three Africans on a lower wage rate.⁴²⁸

Suspicion that such a process was underway produced a hostile reaction from white mineworkers. Jack Hodgson thought there had to “be some limit to which the native could rise” and warned “if the white man’s livelihood were threatened to any serious extent the European could close the Mine.”⁴²⁹ Relations between European and African mineworkers on the job were often poor. Several African mineworkers complained to the Forster Commission that, as Mufulira clerk Julias Chatta put it, “the inferior sort of Europeans are hitting the Africans underground. They call us monkeys, donkeys and other names.”⁴³⁰ Such complaints were given short shrift. Hodgson claimed that it was actually Europeans who needed protection from Africans as “we have had several examples where Natives have deliberately caused a white man to strike them, with the object of getting him fired” and it was Africans who had adopted “a spirit of antagonism.”⁴³¹ The complete exclusion of Africans from skilled work could not be accepted during wartime, however. It was eventually agreed in June 1940 that African labour could be used more widely but after the war working arrangements would revert back to the pre-war pattern.⁴³²

Continued dissatisfaction of white mineworkers was manifested in April 1941 in the form of 15 new demands, mostly pay increases and overtime for different groups of

⁴²⁸ For the original paragraph, see: NAB CO 795/117/1, Report of Commission of Inquiry (Draft). For the companies’ objections, see: Telegram from Governor Maybin to Colonial Secretary, 2 November 1940.

⁴²⁹ ZCCM 12.2.10C, ‘Colour Bar’ in agreement between the companies and the NRMWU, 4 January 1950. This file contains an account of the 1940 negotiations over a colour bar.

⁴³⁰ NAB CO 795/117/2, Testimony of Julis Chatta, 24 May 1940.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, Testimony of Jack Hodgson, 29 May 1940.

⁴³² Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 73.

workers but also reiterating the demand for a closed shop.⁴³³ Agitation over the closed shop had continued after it was rejected in 1940. At Nchanga, Guy Spires claimed that “union members were objecting to working with non-Union men.”⁴³⁴ The colour bar went hand-in-hand with the closed shop and this made the demand more acceptable overseas. When George Hall, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and former South Wales Miners’ Federation official, was questioned in Parliament over the colour bar, he replied “The very basis of our trade unionism would be blown sky high unless the rights of trade unions, as they are in our own country, are safeguarded when skilled jobs are done by what may be regarded as unskilled persons.”⁴³⁵

Nkana mine management had concluded in 1939 that Africans could do some jobs as well as Europeans and sought to use African labour more widely.⁴³⁶ It is probably not a coincidence then that the one of the few cases of outright displacement took place at Nkana in March 1941 when three Europeans working in the mill were replaced by three Africans, justified on the grounds that the mill was no longer operating at full production.⁴³⁷ This intensified agitation for a closed shop and in May the companies, after failing to persuade the British Government to help them resist it, conceded the demand.⁴³⁸ Growing demands from their white workforce encouraged the companies to co-ordinate their response and motivated the formation of another

⁴³³ NAB CO 795/117/2, Telegram from R.M. Peterson to Roan Antelope Mines, Guildford, 12 April 1941.

⁴³⁴ NAZ SEC1/1420, Notes on a meeting between the Mine Managements and the N.R. Mine Workers’ Union, 18 September 1940.

⁴³⁵ *Hansard*, 10 April 1941, vol. 370, cc1757.

⁴³⁶ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 108.

⁴³⁷ NAB CO 795/122/14, Telegram from Peterson to Selection Trust London, 25 April 1941.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, Notes of a meeting held in Mr Hall’s room, 20 May 1941.

institution common to mining regions around the world in 1941: the Chamber of Mines.⁴³⁹

The closed shop was a de-facto colour bar. The same clause in the new recognition agreement stipulated that daily-paid employees had to be union members from September 1941 and that union membership was restricted to Europeans.⁴⁴⁰ The latter prescription would not have been regarded as unusual at the time. Two of the men centrally involved in closed shop negotiations – Maybank and Jim Purvis – had been officials in the Australian Workers Union, effectively a whites-only union at this time.⁴⁴¹ The Rand might appear to be a close parallel as a closed shop had operated there for white mineworkers from June 1937. However, the Rand colour bar was legislative and preceded the closed shop by many years. Moreover, the NRMWU were well-aware of the Rand closed shop and “emphasised they would not sign any agreement similar to the Witwatersrand closed shop.” Instead, they wanted, and got, a closed shop agreement modelled on those in force in Britain.⁴⁴²

Growing union strength was just one way managerial discipline was breaking down. Some men who had been refused permission to join the army because they worked in a reserved occupation began agitating for release. Fred Holtmann, a South African diamond driller, simply refused to work and after maintaining this refusal for six weeks in the face of threats of imprisonment he was eventually allowed to join up.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Ronald Prain, *Selected Papers Volume II 1958-1960* (London, 1961), p. 83.

⁴⁴⁰ NAZ MM 1/10/2, Agreement between the NRMWU and the Rhokana Corporation Limited, amended 30 January 1942. The relevant clauses are 2 (a) and (g).

⁴⁴¹ Mark Hearn and Harry Knowles, *One Big Union: A history of the Australian Workers Union* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 142.

⁴⁴² NAB CO 795/122/14, Telegram from Peterson to Roan Antelope Mines, Guildford, 4 August 1941. Clause 17 of the closed shop agreement on the Rand mines committed the unions to prevent any members “causing unrest and undermining discipline.” Such clauses were usually absent from closed shop agreements in Britain at this time and the NRMWU leadership had no intention of enforcing discipline on the mines. ‘Closed Shop Agreement’, *The Mineworker*, April 1937.

⁴⁴³ ‘Profile’, *Horizon*, September 1960.

Europeans on the mines refused to be searched, as Africans miners were, even though there were worries about explosives being removed from the mines.⁴⁴⁴ One reason behind opposition to searching was that European mineworkers routinely stole from the mine. In 1946, one artisan upbraided his colleagues for their ungratefulness:

Has the Mine ever moaned about that wheel barrow you have in the garden, the picks and shovels, the odd spot of iron and timber for a garage or fowl house, those nuts and bolts for your trailer, or the garden hose you have swiped...⁴⁴⁵

The successes achieved in this period helped create a white working class on the Copperbelt. All daily-paid men were paid-up union members and there emerged a firm understanding of what they wanted and how to get it through a combination of political radicalism, industrial militancy and racial exclusivity. In the short term, the gains won brought the Roan Mine Workers' Federation back into the NRMWU in March 1941, although Purvis and other members remained privately bitter over their treatment by other branches in 1939.⁴⁴⁶

Lines of demarcation in the European community became clearer. One demand the mining companies would not concede was the admission of mining officials into the NRMWU. This was possibly due to the influence of Gemmill who thought that officials "in no circumstances should be allowed in the workers' union" and successfully prevented legislation which would have permitted this in South Africa.⁴⁴⁷

It is doubtful that many officials would have wanted to join the union anyway. In early

⁴⁴⁴ NAZ WP 1/14/4, Letter from W. Mackenzie to G.R. Onions, District Commissioner, Luanshya, 11 July 1939.

⁴⁴⁵ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Letter from A.B. Hayward, Luanshya, 17 August 1946.

⁴⁴⁶ ZCCM 15.1.6E, Letter from Jim Purvis to Manager, Roan Antelope, 10 March 1941.

⁴⁴⁷ Yudelman, *Emergence of Modern South Africa*, p. 205.

1941 mining officials were reportedly “talking of a Union to protect themselves against the MW Union.”⁴⁴⁸ The Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA) was consequently formed in July 1941.⁴⁴⁹ Separate associations for mining staff were commonplace in other mining regions. One of MOSSA’s founding members, K.L. MacKenzie, had also been a founding member of the Underground Officials Association on the Rand and before this worked on the Lanarkshire coalfields, where officials had maintained their own organisation since the early 1910s.⁴⁵⁰

It is unsurprising that many officials increasingly “felt that they would have to adopt a more militant attitude for self-preservation” as many of the demands made by daily-paid mineworkers undercut the authority and position of officials.⁴⁵¹ The expansion of the white workforce caused a housing shortage so the immediate granting of a house to a newly-appointed superintendent at Nchanga in August 1942 provoked an angry response. According to a management informant, around 140 people attended a meeting to hear Spires declare “the workman is just as important as the Officials” and without “a threat of a strike you will get nothing.” The meeting resolved to strike or occupy the house of the new superintendent before he could move in unless the right of mine management to allocate housing was altered.⁴⁵²

Another deeper cleavage in the mines workforce was carefully maintained during the war, one that has attracted considerably less attention than the colour bar: the exclusion of women. Colonial officials considered it vital that “any proposals for

⁴⁴⁸ NAZ SEC1/1758, Report on public opinion in Western Province for May 1941.

⁴⁴⁹ NAZ MLSS1/21/13, Application for registration of trade union, [undated].

⁴⁵⁰ ‘Twenty-four old-timers say goodbye’, *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953. Peter Ackers, ‘Colliery Deputies in the British Coal Industry Before Nationalization’, *International Review of Social History*, 39, 3 (1994), p. 400.

⁴⁵¹ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter WP] 1/6, Letter from Roy Welensky to Chief Secretary, 23 May 1942.

⁴⁵² NAZ SEC1/1422, Intelligence Report: Western Province, August 1942.

dilution with white women or other unskilled or semi-skilled white labour” should not be mentioned to any member of the public as it could spark unrest, similar to the secrecy surrounding plans involving African labour.⁴⁵³ Some women did work manufacturing munitions and tank parts in the mine’s surface plants and one woman worked repairing electrical motors at Roan Antelope Mine. The appropriate wages for this one individual provoked considerable discussion and could only be resolved by an investigation into what standard practice in Britain was.⁴⁵⁴ Suspicion of, and opposition to, women working in the mining industry was something else the Copperbelt had in common with other mining regions as wartime male labour shortages ensured it became a salient issue. One of the people who pressed hard for the introduction of women into the copper industry in Montana to alleviate labour shortages, and faced wildcat strikes by white workers for his troubles, was one Frank Ayer, by 1943 Copper Division Chief at the US War Production Board.⁴⁵⁵

Political developments

The creation of a self-consciously white working-class was manifested in the emergence of racially-delineated social democratic and radical politics. The specific kind of political organisations which were created and won support on the Copperbelt both made life more familiar for the European community and facilitated engagement with similar organisations elsewhere in the world. The brief emergence of the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party (NRLP) in 1941 was important in this process. It seemed natural that, after a union, a labour party should be established. This was regarded as an extension of labour parties elsewhere. As one mineworker explained

⁴⁵³ NAZ SEC1/1480, Letter from J.H. Wallace to Provincial Commissioner Ndola, 22 April 1941.

⁴⁵⁴ NAZ SEC1/1387, Minutes of Conciliation Meeting held at Nkana on 29th to 31st December 1941.

⁴⁵⁵ Basso, *Meet Joe Copper*, p. 202.

to Roy Welensky, he had been “a staunch supporter of the Labour party since a lad.”⁴⁵⁶

Resentment towards the colonial administration mingled with disgruntlement over the Copperbelt’s elected representatives after Catherine Olds stood down in 1938. The Roan Mine Workers’ Federation protested that Colonel Arthur Stephenson could not represent them as he was an army officer and subordinate to the Governor. This violated the “democratic principle of no taxation without representation” and, instead, they “wanted one of their own class.”⁴⁵⁷ Such sentiment propelled the NRLP to rapidly but briefly become the dominant political force on the Copperbelt once Welensky, who had represented Broken Hill since 1938, suggested forming the party. All three Copperbelt seats were won by the NRLP in the 1941 territorial elections. Marthinus Visagie defeated Captain Smith in Nkana and Michael McGann, a mineworker at Mufulira, secured the newly-created Luanshya-Mufulira seat.⁴⁵⁸ The party’s dominance did not go uncontested. Frank Roberts, a former railway worker, turfed out Stephenson in Ndola but died shortly afterwards. In the subsequent by-election in 1942, the seat was won by Godfrey Pelletier, an Australian businessman who chaired the local Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁵⁹

Amalgamation was one of the NRLP’s central demands. Leaflets distributed during the 1942 Ndola by-election stressed the party’s “efforts to bring about AMALGAMATION of the two Rhodesias” before covering free education, pensions, minimum wages, housing and milk for schoolchildren. Africans vanished in this perspective as the party announced an “avowed policy is to see that the interests of

⁴⁵⁶ WP 506/4, Letter from S. Beavis to Roy Welensky, 9 September 1943.

⁴⁵⁷ ZCCM 15.1.6E, Memorandum to the Governor of Northern Rhodesia from the Roan Mine Workers’ Federation, 2 February 1940.

⁴⁵⁸ Gann, *Northern Rhodesia*, p. 345.

⁴⁵⁹ James Wightman Davidson, *The Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council* (London, 1948), pp. 111, 143-4.

the majority must at all times outweigh the issues of a minority.” This would be guaranteed by electing a “working man” not a “Merchant Prince.”⁴⁶⁰ Demands for amalgamation added to anxieties among colonial officials. An official brief in 1943 warned the Colonial Secretary that a negative announcement on amalgamation could prompt “sections of the European population... to take the law into their own hands.”⁴⁶¹

The NRLP considered the best way to secure support for amalgamation in Britain was to invite “the British Labour Party to send a Commission to examine conditions first hand in N. Rhodesia” for 12 months. The NRLP’s status as ‘labour party’ also secured them an invitation to the Southern African Labour Conference in July 1943, along with delegates from Belgian Congo, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Delegates from the Copperbelt hoped this would involve “the interchange of ideas and closer knowledge of each other.”⁴⁶² As a result of this conference, the party organised a Northern Rhodesia tour for South African Labour Party MP Duncan Burnside.⁴⁶³ By 1944, the NRLP was established on the map of labour parties in the English-speaking world and letters of support from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation of Canada, the New Zealand Labour Party and South African Labour Party were read out at their annual congress.⁴⁶⁴

Agitation against ‘aliens’ dissipated during the war. The presence of 1,452 predominately Polish refugees, housed in a camp near Ndola, attracted little more

⁴⁶⁰ WP 506/9, Northern Rhodesia Labour Party leaflet.

⁴⁶¹ Philip Murphy, ‘Government by Blackmail’: The Origins of the Central African Federation Reconsidered’ in Martin Lynn (ed.), *The British Empire in the 1950s: Retreat or Revival?* (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 55.

⁴⁶² WP 505/2, Minutes of second meeting of Congress held at NRMWU office, 11 July 1943.

⁴⁶³ J.R.T. Wood, *The Welensky Papers: A history of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (Durban, 1983), p. 82.

⁴⁶⁴ WP 505/2, Minutes of meeting of Congress held on 2 April 1944 at Nkana Mine Club.

than grumbling.⁴⁶⁵ Hostility towards non-English speaking whites did not evaporate entirely. In November 1941, a dispute between Yugoslavian miners at the Nkana Mine Club erupted into a major brawl after several NRMWU members intervened. When police began investigating the matter, the NRMWU branch secretary phoned up the District Commissioner to warn him that “The fellows say that if white-men are prosecuted and convicted for beating up the Yugoslavs, they will clear the whole **** lot up.”⁴⁶⁶ The response from the Roan Antelope NRMWU branch is strong evidence for the explicit creation of a ‘white’ rather than a ‘British’ working class as the next month they printed “A message to our Yugo-Slav members” in English and Yugoslavian calling for working men to unite.⁴⁶⁷

Although popular, the NRLP was a hollow organisation outside of Welensky’s stronghold in Broken Hill. Branches which existed on paper conducted little regular activity. The Copperbelt’s four branches raised and donated a measly £12 to party coffers during the first two years of its existence.⁴⁶⁸ Most daily-paid workers, as Gann argued, were uninterested in party politics and put their faith in strike action to get results.⁴⁶⁹ This can be seen in the controversy over one of the first issues discussed after the 1941 elections: a new Trade Unions and Trades Disputes Bill. Though this was stridently opposed by the NRLP, it was the threat of industrial unrest rather than political opposition that prompted the government to shelve the bill.⁴⁷⁰ Direct political engagement by the European community was also limited because many, perhaps most, Europeans had not been in the territory long enough to fulfil the residency

⁴⁶⁵ Robert Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire Volume II* (London, 1949), p. 420.

⁴⁶⁶ NAZ SEC1/1758, Report on public opinion in Western Province for November 1941.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Roan Mineworkers Review, Christmas 1941.

⁴⁶⁸ £493 in 2015 figures. WP 505/2, Minutes of second meeting of Congress held at NRMWU office, 11 July 1943.

⁴⁶⁹ Gann, *History of Rhodesia*, p. 344.

⁴⁷⁰ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 65-67.

requirement for voting. In 1939, the electoral roll totalled only around 30% of the territory's European population.⁴⁷¹

European Copperbelt society also played host to the politics of the far left and far right in often confusing ways. Both were manifested during the course of one 120-strong public meeting in Mufulira in January 1942, which formed a branch of the People's Common Law Parliament. This was a British far right grouping which campaigned for the release of interned fascists and the meeting had been called by the local 'prophet' of the British Israelites, another far right group. However, at the meeting a motion to amalgamate the new branch with socialist groups in Britain was only narrowly defeated.⁴⁷²

There had been murmurings of a more organised far right presence in the late 1930s as a small fraction of the 255 Germans and 120 Italians on the Copperbelt were politically-active fascists.⁴⁷³ Martin Eichler, a welder at Roan Antelope, and Hugo Bartels, a fitter at Nkana, both held regular but low-key pro-Nazi meetings in their houses during 1938.⁴⁷⁴ However, most Nazi sympathisers, including Eichler, left for Germany prior to the outbreak of war, and suspected sympathisers remaining – including, briefly, Italian Catholic priests – were interned in Ndola before being transferred to South Africa.⁴⁷⁵ A more serious threat was presented by Ossewa Brandwag, a far right Afrikaans paramilitary group, which attempted to form a section

⁴⁷¹ Davidson, *Legislative Council*, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁷² NAZ SEC1/1758, Intelligence report: Western Province, January 1942. Peter Barberis, John McHugh and Mike Tyldesley, *Encyclopaedia of British and Irish political organizations: parties, groups and movements of the twentieth century* (London, 2000), pp. 365, 662.

⁴⁷³ NAZ WP 1/14/4, Letter from Superintendent of Police, Ndola to Commissioner of Police, Lusaka, 17 March 1939.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter from Commissioner of Police, Lusaka to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 18 April 1939.

⁴⁷⁵ National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria [hereafter NASA], BST 9/55/6, Letter from Secretary for the Interior to Secretary for External Affairs, 10 February 1942. Hugo Hinfelaar, *History of the Catholic Church in Zambia*, (Lusaka, 2004), pp. 147-49.

on the Copperbelt headed by Jacobus Theunissen, who organised a clandestine meeting on sabotage in Luanshya in June 1942.⁴⁷⁶

The only Italian missionary who avoided internment was Monsignor Francis Mazziere. Even his freedom was precarious. He had to be officially warned about making derogatory remarks about the Soviet Union after he stated to a public meeting “that Communism was the greatest and most dangerous enemy in the world today.”⁴⁷⁷ These remarks, and their circulation in a Catholic newsletter by an employee of Ndola Hospital, incensed Purvis and other mineworkers in Luanshya, who threatened that “certain people from Luanshya would go in to Ndola and interview him” if publication did not cease.⁴⁷⁸

Purvis’ threat was a pugnacious example of the considerable sympathy for the Soviet Union which had developed. Branches of Friends of the Soviet Union, an international organisation established in 1927 to distribute Soviet propaganda, were formed in all the Copperbelt towns. The Luanshya branch – established by Australian mining official Bob Robertson in March 1942 after the local Catholic priest delivered an anti-communist sermon – held a week-long public exhibition of Soviet posters to raise money for the Soviet war effort.⁴⁷⁹ The same year over £7,000 was raised by the European community for the British Aid For Russia fund.⁴⁸⁰ The NRMWU pressed for the screening of Soviet propaganda films and distributed the

⁴⁷⁶ NAB CO 795/122/13, Letter from R.O. Sinclair to Resident Magistrate, Ndola, 23 October 1942. See Christoph Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel: Radical Afrikaner Nationalism and the History of the 'Ossewabrandwag'* (Berlin, 2009) for a history of the organisation.

⁴⁷⁷ NAZ WP 1/14/5, Extract from ‘The Copper Belt Catholic Chronicle’, April 1942.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter from District Commissioner, Luanshya to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 22 April 1942.

⁴⁷⁹ Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka, 2002), p. 15. WP 507/1, Letter from Bob Robertson to Roy Welensky, 29 December 1942.

⁴⁸⁰ £287,903 in 2015 figures. NAZ SEC1/1620, Report of the Copper Production Committee (Mufulira), 14 August 1942.

Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) newspaper *The Guardian* until at least 1949.⁴⁸¹

The NRMWU grew progressively more ambitious. Post-war problems they foresaw “require settling right now, for if they are allowed to go without settlement for the duration, they can only be settled by revolution,” the kind that had occurred in Russia.⁴⁸² Debates about the post-war future for Britain were conducted outside the boundaries of Britain and the NRMWU circulated articles on the need for great economic co-operation in place of competition.⁴⁸³ The NRLP advocated a welfare state “but wanted something better than offered by the Beveridge Report.”⁴⁸⁴ Others NRLP members went further, and saw a happy future for the Copperbelt under socialism where “colour prejudice... would evaporate like mist before the bright sunshine.”⁴⁸⁵

However, whatever the future was to be, it became abundantly clear that it was not a future which included the NRLP. By 1944, the party was embroiled in internal squabbles and leading figures attacked Welensky in the press.⁴⁸⁶ Resignations depleted the party’s ranks and the Nkana branch, one of the largest, became “more or less defunct” after its main organisers Sarah Zaremba and Alec Stevens resigned.⁴⁸⁷ The result was a dismal showing in the 1944 elections. All the Copperbelt candidates were beaten, including, most embarrassingly, in Nkana-

⁴⁸¹ NAZ SEC1/1758, Letter from Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 22 April 1941. Letter from Director of Information to Administrative Secretary, 4 January 1949.

⁴⁸² NAZ SEC1/1758, Roan Mineworkers Review, Christmas 1941.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, Nkana Mineworkers Review, Christmas 1941 contained an article entitled ‘Planning the New World’.

⁴⁸⁴ WP 505/2, Minutes of second meeting of Congress held at NRMWU office, 11 July 1943.

⁴⁸⁵ WP 507/1, Letter from Bob Robertson to Roy Welensky, 29 December 1943.

⁴⁸⁶ Gann, *Northern Rhodesia*, p. 435.

⁴⁸⁷ WP 506/10, Letter from Leo Gottlieb to Roy Welensky, 29 November 1944.

Chingola where Brian Goodwin won as an independent labour candidate.⁴⁸⁸ Goodwin was less interested in 'political' issues such as amalgamation and presented himself as the representative for mineworkers. He had nailed his colours firmly to the mast in 1940 when he was accused of being a 'fifth columnist' by another miner and "replied publicly that he was a Trade Unionist first and a patriot afterwards."⁴⁸⁹

Defeat prompted further recriminations in the party. Mufulira candidate Pat Murray did not take his defeat well; as his wife explained "Like Pat am thoroughly disgusted and finished with all public activities... We certainly won't be there to see another election in this country. I never liked it nor its mob of selfish people." With that, they left the Copperbelt, destination unknown.⁴⁹⁰ The collapse of the NRLP could be attributed to personal animosities but it appears to have been part of a regional dynamic as white labour parties in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa both suffered damaging splits in 1946 and subsequently slid into irrelevance.⁴⁹¹

Katanga and Maybank's deportation

The impact of connections between the Copperbelt and other mining regions was most vividly demonstrated in the brief but momentous period when Europeans on the Copperbelt became closely entangled in events in Katanga. Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK) operated a very different labour policy to RAA and RST, one which provided a proximate and pertinent "reminder that African labour could, if permitted,

⁴⁸⁸ Wood, *Welensky Papers*, p. 89.

⁴⁸⁹ NAZ SEC1/1420, Letter from Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 25 September, 1940.

⁴⁹⁰ WP 506/11, Letter from Mrs R. Murray to Roy Welensky, 7 December 1944.

⁴⁹¹ M.C. Steele, 'White Working-Class Disunity: The Southern Rhodesia Labour Party', *Rhodesian History*, 1 (1970), p. 59. The NRLP limped along until it was formally disbanded in 1951. This regional dynamic merits further investigation.

undertake skilled work for very low wages.”⁴⁹² African workers at UMHK had been trained to replace European workers during the interwar period and by 1941 UMHK employed only 982 white mineworkers, 5.4% of the total workforce.⁴⁹³ In contrast, 2,052 daily-paid workers and 1,046 staff employed on the Copperbelt in 1941 constituted 10% of the total workforce.⁴⁹⁴ At Prince Leopold Mine, located only 600 yards from the Northern Rhodesia border, there were reportedly only 38 Europeans working underground alongside around 1,100 Africans.⁴⁹⁵

It was not only geographical proximity which ensured that white mineworkers on the Copperbelt were fully aware of prevailing conditions in Katanga, many of them had previously worked there. Simon Zukas recalled that some of his school friends in Luanshya were Belgian whose fathers had worked in Katanga and Bob Robertson had first come to the region to work for UMHK.⁴⁹⁶ Wartime developments brought these mines even closer as after the fall of Belgium in May 1940 the British Government began purchasing Katanga’s entire copper output.⁴⁹⁷ NRMWU representatives explained to trade unions elsewhere in the world the obvious danger to the Copperbelt:

As the British tax-payer was paying for all copper production in both territories it would not be long before somebody would want to know why our wages

⁴⁹² Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 48-9.

⁴⁹³ Perrings, *Black Mineworkers*, p. 252.

⁴⁹⁴ Appendix II.

⁴⁹⁵ NAZ SEC1/1341, Report on Visit to the Congo, 7 October 1941.

⁴⁹⁶ Interview with Simon Zukas, 27 August 2013.

⁴⁹⁷ Bruce Fetter, ‘If I Had Known That 35 Years Ago: Contextualizing the Copper Mines of Central Africa’, *History in Africa*, 26 (1999), pp. 451-2.

were much higher for the same work... Naturally the NRMWU were forced to take a very keen interest in the standards of the Congo.”⁴⁹⁸

This ‘keen interest’ was reciprocated. In August 1941, white miners in Katanga appealed to the NRMWU for assistance in forming a union. UMHK’s predominately Belgian white workforce were contractually forbidden from joining a union, so this was done covertly when several hundred men met in the forest near the border to establish Association des Agents de l’Union Minière et Filiales (AGUFI).⁴⁹⁹ UMHK would not tolerate this development and strikes in June and August 1942 were followed by the arrest and deportation of AGUFI’s leadership, who spent the rest of the war in preventative detention.⁵⁰⁰

The NRMWU were closely involved in these events. Three Copperbelt miners were arrested by Belgian police at a nocturnal meeting in Lubumbashi on the eve of a strike in August – they implausibly claimed they were on holiday – and the union was considering launching sympathy strikes in support of Belgian miners.⁵⁰¹ Leaflets denouncing the Congo administration, written by a Belgian miner at Nchanga who had been deported from Katanga, were distributed across the Copperbelt in preparation.⁵⁰² On 2 August, 20 delegates from the Copperbelt and Katanga met in secret at Tshinsenda and pledged unqualified support for AGUFI. Further strikes in Katanga in September triggered efforts to fulfil this promise. That this would mean disrupting wartime copper production did not faze some. Pat Murray, by then

⁴⁹⁸ HPA AH 646 Dc12.20, Memorandum submitted on behalf of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union (NRMWU) by Mr J. Purvis.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁰ NAB CO 795/123/7, Letter from T.R. Shaw to F.M. Shepherd, 11 August 1942. John Higginson, *A Working Class in the Making: Belgian Colonial Labor Policy, Private Enterprise, and the African Mineworkers, 1907-1951*, (Wisconsin, 1989), pp. 188, 194.

⁵⁰¹ NAB CO 795/123/7, Letter from T.R. Shaw to F.M. Shepherd, 11 August 1942. The three included Guy Spires and had been sent to investigate whether the NRMWU should stage a sympathy strike.

⁵⁰² NAB CO 795/122/13, Letter from Governor Waddington to Oliver Stanley, 11 December 1942.

NRMWU president, acknowledged that copper production was important, but warned Clement Attlee “We say, ‘That international trades’ unionism is of equal importance’.”⁵⁰³

The European community experienced few wartime shortages even as the cost of living rose. An investigation into African workers’ living conditions in Nkana, found that “a substantial quantity of food goes to domestic servants in the form of ‘left overs’” which presumably would not have occurred if food was in short supply.⁵⁰⁴ However, the Katanga strikes occurred at a time when grievances were multiplying on the Copperbelt. Union representatives who did not support a more militant approach were unceremoniously removed. At Mufulira, Alec Stevens, a South African carpenter, took over as branch secretary after the previous secretary was shouted down and had his papers seized from him at a meeting. Stevens immediately began protesting that artisans’ pay was inadequate.⁵⁰⁵ One the mines, relations between daily-paid mineworkers and officials were poor. There was a strong feeling that officials, as Visagie put it, were “not doing proper work.”⁵⁰⁶ Similarly, Maybank reportedly antagonised one mine manager by informing him “he ought to get his collar and tie off and do a bit of work.”⁵⁰⁷ In keeping with the masculine ethos of the Copperbelt, ‘proper work’ was manual work.

Colonial officials and the mining companies were convinced that unrest was generated by a small number of radicals, whose removal would solve the problem as

⁵⁰³ NAB CO 795/123/7, Letter from F.E.J.P. Murray to Clement Attlee, 18 August 1942.

⁵⁰⁴ HPA AD 843/RJ, A.L. Saffrey Papers R3, Report on Some Aspects of African Living Conditions on the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia.

⁵⁰⁵ NAZ SEC1/1758, Intelligence report: Western Province, March 1942.

⁵⁰⁶ NAZ SEC1/1387, Minutes of an interview given by Governor to a Deputation from the Nkana Branch of the NRMWU, 19 January 1942.

⁵⁰⁷ NASA BTS 9/77/6A, Secret report on the Copper Belt, Rhodesia.

“the vast majority of workers are moderate and patriotic.”⁵⁰⁸ To this end, there had been discussions on the possibility of removing Maybank from the Copperbelt as early as 1940.⁵⁰⁹ One other militant, Jack Hodgson, had already been removed, after he was declared a prohibited immigrant while on holiday in South Africa in 1941 and refused re-entry. Instead, he joined the army and the CPSA.⁵¹⁰ Maybank was popular though and easily defeated the other candidate for general secretary in mid-1941, the widely disliked Richard Olds, who subsequently abandoned his ambitions to lead the local labour movement and established a plot to grow and sell pineapples instead.⁵¹¹

One problem inhibiting the removal of troublesome militants was the limited coercive powers of the colonial state. Police were unable to deal with low-level problems such as “the perpetual gambling for high stakes, which often results in brawls,” particularly as people often tried to settle their debts with dud cheques. Gambling games such as crown and anchor were “deeply rooted in the mining community.”⁵¹² This was a dice game popular in the merchant navy, a testament to the fact that many mineworkers had spent considerable time at sea either in the merchant navy or while traveling.

Lack of coercive power became a pressing issue during 1942, especially after Maybank warned Roy Welensky in April that in the next dispute “Somebody is going to get hurt... There is going to be no quarter.”⁵¹³ Events in Katanga in September

⁵⁰⁸ NAZ SEC1/1387, Letter from Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 25 November 1941

⁵⁰⁹ NAB CO 795/122/14, Note on Maybank, Director of Intelligence, May 1941

⁵¹⁰ Rica Hodgson, *Foot Soldier for Freedom: A life in South Africa's liberation movement* (Johannesburg, 2010), p. 41.

⁵¹¹ NAZ SEC1/1387, Letter from Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 25 November 1941.

⁵¹² NAZ SEC1/1758, Intelligence report: Western Province, June 1942.

⁵¹³ WP 1/6, Letter from Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 3 April 1942.

prompted Governor John Waddington to plead for British troops to be deployed as with “extremists on both sides of the border... in close contact” the territory could see an armed uprising like the Rand Revolt.⁵¹⁴ These fears were only inflamed by Maybank’s further warning to the Chief Secretary on 15 September that “a strike on the Copperbelt is not an ordinary strike. The men there are armed” and his subsequent claim that he had 1,500 armed men on the Copperbelt.⁵¹⁵

The seriousness of the threat of white industrial unrest and the importance of the Copperbelt to Britain was demonstrated on 16 September when the subject was discussed at the Chiefs of Staff Committee in London. At the meeting, Winston Churchill ordered the deployment of a battalion of white troops from the Middle East as a matter of urgency.⁵¹⁶ Blithely unaware of this, Maybank, at Purvis’ suggestion, contacted the Rhodesian Railway Workers Union on 24 September to suggest joint action over Katanga, mixing in union grievances with racial fears:

Congo strike in progress black troops used against white population. Evidence of no shooting yet. Feeling rising here request you wire Belgian Government insist on democratic rights of European workers, also indicate if necessary railway employees will refuse to handle Congo passengers and goods.⁵¹⁷

The British Government took this as a clear indication that they would lose the initiative if action was delayed. A battalion from the Middle East would take weeks to

⁵¹⁴ NAB PREM 4/43A/4, Telegram from Governor Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 6 September 1942 and 11 September 1942.

For a detailed account of the Rand Revolt see Krikler, *White Rising*.

⁵¹⁵ NAB CO 795/122/13, Letter from R.O. Sinclair to Resident Magistrate, Ndola, 24 October 1942.

⁵¹⁶ NAB CAB 79/57/32, Reinforcements for Northern Rhodesia, 16 September 1942. NAB PREM 4/43A/4, Note from Viscount Cranbourne, 24 September 1942.

⁵¹⁷ Quoted in NASA ARB 119/5 1193, Meeting between His Excellency the Governor and the General Council of the Mine Workers’ Union.

arrive so the Southern Rhodesian Armoured Car Regiment, then stationed at Moshi in Tanganyika, was deployed. On 5 October, 425 troops from this regiment were moved under conditions of strictest secrecy to all the Copperbelt towns and arrested Maybank early in the morning. Luckily, he had left his pistol in his car the previous night.⁵¹⁸ Soldiers also quickly apprehended Chris Meyer, a prominent union member at Mufulira, and Theunissen, the Ossewa Brandwag activist, and removed them from the Copperbelt by plane.⁵¹⁹ Troops then remained on the Copperbelt for two weeks.⁵²⁰

The NRMWU leadership were furious and immediately began preparing for industrial action while, at the same time, utilising the personal and political connections of their members to rally the labour movement. The strength of these connections and the fact that white mineworkers were seen as a natural component of the international labour movement are both illustrated in the fact that campaigns were soon underway in Britain, South Africa and Australia.

Meyer was rapidly deported to South Africa. He was well-connected in the labour movement there as a former member of the General Council of the South African Mine Workers' Union (SAMWU).⁵²¹ On hand in Johannesburg was Hodgson, who had been invalided out of the 'Desert Rats' and was the newly elected national secretary of the Springbok Legion, a progressive soldier's group.⁵²² He moonlighted

⁵¹⁸ NAB CO 795/122/13, Letter from Governor Waddington to Oliver Stanley, 11 December 1942.

⁵¹⁹ I have uncovered no connection between Theunissen and the other two men. Several hundred Ossewa Brandwag members were detained in South Africa during 1942 and Theunissen's arrest appears to have been part of this. See Patrick Furlong, *Between the Crown and the Swastika: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era* (Hanover, 1991), p. 144.

⁵²⁰ NAB CO 795/122/15, Telegram from General Officer Commanding, East Africa to War Office, 21 October 1942.

⁵²¹ HPA AH 646 Dc12.20, Resume of Events Leading up to and Including the Arrests of the Trade Union Leaders.

⁵²² Neil Roos, *Ordinary Springbooks: White Servicemen and Social Justice in South Africa, 1939-1961* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 75-6.

from this job to act as chairman of the new NRMWU Johannesburg Committee. To assist him, Purvis toured South Africa speaking to white trade unions where, for the second time in three years, he found himself explaining why it was perfectly legitimate for one of his associates to be carrying a gun.⁵²³

The language used by NRMWU is illustrative of the the kind of passive white labourism which developed in this period. It was class-orientated and internationalist and reflects both the radical politics of those writing it and their awareness of what would appeal to audiences elsewhere. Overt racist language was avoided but they did not include expressions of support for African workers. The

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Figure 3.2: Jack and Rica Hodgson in Johannesburg, circa 1943. Rica Hodgson, *Foot Soldier for Freedom: A life in South Africa's liberation movement* (Johannesburg, 2010).

NRMWU General Council's initial statement, which was distributed internationally, grandly announced "the workers of the world, and they include the workers of the Congo and the Copperbelt, know they have everything to lose and nothing to gain under fascist regime."⁵²⁴ Statements issued by the Johannesburg committee were addressed to "the Trades Union and Labour Movements of the Democratic Countries and all Workers of the Allied Nations" but made no mention of Africans.⁵²⁵ What is also remarkable is that these statements were mostly written by women as Sarah Zaremba, a prominent NRLP member, stepped in as acting NRMWU general

⁵²³ The previous associate was Tommy Graves.

⁵²⁴ HPA AH 646 Dc12.20, Memorandum from the General Council, NRMWU to the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, [undated].

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, Resume of Events Leading up to and Including the Arrests of the Trade Union Leaders.

secretary for six months while Peggy Hodgson, Jack Hodgson's wife, played an active role in the Johannesburg committee.

There was a widespread sense of affinity with white mineworkers on the Copperbelt and the committee was able to secure support from a range of white trade unions – including SAMWU – and from the South African Trades and Labour Council (SATLC).⁵²⁶ These organisations sent joint delegations with the NRMWU to lobby the South African Government and, crucially, helped obtain the support of the British Trade Union Congress (TUC).⁵²⁷ Consequently, the TUC sent delegations, including its general secretary Walter Citrine, to the British Government demanding Maybank's release, while local TUC affiliates around the UK discussed the deportations and sent letters of protest.⁵²⁸ The SATLC and the Johannesburg Committee also spread the campaign to Australia, where it was taken up by the Australian Coal and Shale Employee's Federation and the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, who both lobbied the Australian government.⁵²⁹ In Australia, as well as in Britain and South Africa, the trade union movement saw a commonality of interest with the Copperbelt's white mineworkers.

Developments back on the Copperbelt derailed this campaign. On 27 November, Governor Waddington revealed to the NRMWU General Council that it was Purvis himself who had complained to him in mid-1942 that "the position was extremely critical" as Maybank was stirring up trouble. Purvis had added, unsolicited, that Meyer was a leader of Ossewa Brandwag and "the most dangerous man on the

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter from Secretary, SAMWU to Secretariat, NRMWU, 17 December 1942.

⁵²⁷ "S.A. Labour Council to take Action", *The Star* (Johannesburg), 2 December 1942.

⁵²⁸ HPA AH 646 Dc12.20, Telegram from Walter Citrine to William de Vries, 18 December 1942.

⁵²⁹ 'African miners' call to Australia for support', *Maryborough Chronicle*, 24 December 1942, 'Miners seek Federal aid', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 6 January 1943. National Archives of Australia, Canberra, A989, 1943/241/1, Cutting from *The Ironworker* [undated].

Copperbelt.”⁵³⁰ Unsurprisingly, this provoked a huge row and the planned strike on the Copperbelt was cancelled.⁵³¹ This information was rapidly distributed internationally to the NRMWU’s supporters, most of who dropped the campaign, and Maybank was deported to Britain in December 1942.

This campaign also illustrated how the NRMWU had diverged from the politics of mining unions in South Africa. Although Purvis described the NRMWU as a “kindred unions & in fact the child” of SAMWU in correspondence with white trade unions, NRMWU militants reached much more widely for support.⁵³² While SAMWU produced statements such as “there is no communism in the mine workers’ union and that every miner will vouch for this statement,” sections of the international communist movement made common cause with the Copperbelt’s white mineworkers.⁵³³ The CPSA worked closely with the Johannesburg committee, and the NRMWU’s demands were taken up by the Communist Party of Australia and the Communist Party of Great Britain.⁵³⁴

1944 strikes

Any hopes that the removal of Maybank and Meyer would secure industrial peace were short-lived. Two developments from early 1944 produced another round of wildcat strikes which revealed that, far from unrest being orchestrated by union militants, the NRMWU leadership was struggling to keep control of their angry membership. The first was the widespread fear among Europeans on the Copperbelt

⁵³⁰ NASA ARB 119/5 1193, Meeting between His Excellency the Governor and the General Council of the Mine Workers’ Union.

⁵³¹ NAB CO 795/122/16, Telegram from Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 27 November 1942.

⁵³² HPA AH 646 Dc12.20, Letter from Jim Purvis to General Secretary, SATLC, 23 November 1942.

⁵³³ ‘An Unworthy Accusation’, *The Mineworker*, November 1940.

⁵³⁴ ‘Release Maybank & Maeyer: Mine Workers’ Ultimatum’, *The Guardian*, 3 December 1942. ‘South Africa interns a militant’, *Tribune*, 6 January 1943. ‘Fight over copper’, *Daily Worker*, 10 December 1942.

that a depression was imminent. The second was the extended controversy over another recognition agreement between the mining companies and the NRMWU.

In January 1944, the Ministry of Supply formally requested that Northern Rhodesia relax efforts to secure maximum copper production as the threat of shortages diminished, generating immediate concerns in the colonial administration about the anticipated reaction. Europeans on the Copperbelt, the Governor warned, were “semi-educated, uninformed and badly-led” and consequently “very easily swayed.”⁵³⁵ The announcement that copper purchases from Northern Rhodesia would be reduced by 20-25% provoked angry protest meetings but these dissipated when it became clear a cut in production was not imminent.⁵³⁶ Nevertheless, fears about a possible recession loomed large as copper production was declining.⁵³⁷

Such fears coloured on-going negotiations over a new recognition agreement. White mineworkers sensed a window of opportunity to secure better conditions closing, while mine management sought to reduce costs in advance of a slump, something especially important as wartime inflation had steadily reduced the value of copper sold at a fixed price.⁵³⁸ The new managing director of Roan Antelope and Mufulira, Chilean-born Ronald Prain, had already warned that it would be “absolutely necessary for the Companies to have a showdown with their European employees” to bring down wages.⁵³⁹ Prain was generally hostile towards unions and had worked as a bus driver to help break the 1926 general strike in Britain.⁵⁴⁰ RAA similarly planned to change the perceived lavish conditions their European employees

⁵³⁵ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 92.

⁵³⁶ ‘Mineworkers Protest’, *The Times*, 29 January 1944.

⁵³⁷ Appendix III.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁹ NAB CO 795/125/12, Talk with Mr Prain on Roan Antelope, 23 November 1943.

⁵⁴⁰ Ronald Prain, *Reflections on an Era: Fifty years of mining in changing Africa* (Worcester Park, 1981), p. 22.

enjoyed. Ernest Oppenheimer wrote to his son Harry in August 1941 that “The people entrusted with the opening of this enterprise did not create a mining camp, nor even a mining town, but a mining Utopia.” Happily, Oppenheimer had a solution, based on his experiences in Kimberley – where he was mayor – where in “the extravagant period of De Beers, we also built a ‘model’ township for our workmen” which would involve RAA divesting from non-mining activities, though “this will all take time.”⁵⁴¹

Trouble was expected on the Copperbelt and, as usual, it was expected that this trouble would be “a struggle between the races” which “everything is set for” according to the Provincial Commissioner in February 1944.⁵⁴² Roy Welensky warned a meeting on the Copperbelt in 1943 that any European strike “will be followed by the Africans claiming likewise with what result I dread to think.”⁵⁴³ These considerations were absent from the lengthy negotiations which resulted when the previous recognition agreement expired in January 1944. The NRMWU pressed for pay increases for artisans and, when this was refused, balloted for strike action in April. Unexpectedly, a majority voted against strike action, probably because the companies offered increased leave and more generous overtime.⁵⁴⁴ After further conciliation proceedings, a new agreement was reached on 27 June.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴¹ Theodore Gregory, *Ernest Oppenheimer and Economic Development in Southern Africa* (Oxford, 1962), p. 474.

⁵⁴² Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), p. 178.

⁵⁴³ WP 1/6, Speech notes from Welensky, [undated].

⁵⁴⁴ ‘Rhodesian copper strike threat’, *Financial Times*, 5 April 1944. NAZ MM 1/10/2, Letter from H.E. Barrett to Ellis Robins, 18 April 1944

⁵⁴⁵ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Press Announcement, Selection Trust London, 4 July 1944.

Those most affected by this were white artisans, who numbered 1,302 among a white workforce of 3,445 by June 1944.⁵⁴⁶ Artisans were incensed both at their wage levels – this was the third time in four years that demands for an increase had been rebuffed – and at movement restrictions which prevented them from taking advantage of rising wages for skilled workers elsewhere in the world. In a revealing comment, one artisan remarked that he “thought everyone would admit that in coming to Northern Rhodesia they did so with the object of making enough money, and to get out as soon as possible.” Artisans, he continued, “can get a bare living anywhere without having to live and work in a tropical country” so demanded the removal of restrictions on movement.⁵⁴⁷

Artisans tried to wreck the new agreement. A protest meeting was held at Roan Antelope on 30 June, from which union officials were barred, and those present voted to strike in 12 hours’ time. The next day, the morning shift encountered a group of artisans blocking the main road from the European township to the mine. In another demonstration of the solidarity of the white workforce, only four daily-paid men crossed the picket line. On 2 July, artisans walked out at Mufulira, making no provision for the maintenance of essential services, and demanded £52 a month minimum wage.⁵⁴⁸ Nchanga artisans followed suit on 3 July, though at Nkana artisans voted against striking.⁵⁴⁹

The situation on the mines was chaotic. Mufulira, Nchanga and Roan Antelope had all shut down by 4 July and the union leadership were not in control. Marthinus Visagie, the new general secretary, refused to intervene when asked by both the

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Northern Rhodesia Arbitration Tribunal, Evidence of the Copper Mining Companies, 4 October 1944.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Notes on the Conciliation Proceedings held at Ndola on the 26th and 27th June, 1944.

⁵⁴⁸ £2,080 in 2015 figures. *Ibid.*, Notes of Decisions Reached at the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Chamber of Mines Executive Committee, 2 July 1944.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust, London, 5 July 1944.

mine management and Brian Goodwin on the grounds that “the last time he had gone to Roan to prevent a strike, Goodwin had tried to hang him.” Instead, he went on a shooting trip.⁵⁵⁰ Visagie was not a popular general secretary and left the Copperbelt permanently shortly after this to try his luck as a tobacco farmer in Fort Jameson.⁵⁵¹ The remaining NRMWU leadership negotiated a deal with the Chamber of Mines to resume work but this was ignored by strikers at Nchanga and Roan Antelope. The Chamber was forced to re-open discussions on the basic rate for artisans and only then did simultaneous meetings on all Copperbelt mines vote to return to work by show of hands.⁵⁵²

Artisan’s dissatisfaction was rooted in the transnational character of the white workforce. Artisans were aware that wages for skilled workers had risen faster in other parts of the world, as information from trade unions elsewhere in the world was regularly sent to the Copperbelt. Preparation for further arbitration, for instance, involved acquiring information on increases in weekly pay rates across a range of industries in Britain.⁵⁵³ There was also an internal dynamic behind demands for higher wages, as one mineworker put it “for small communities, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to refrain from conforming with what is the accepted standard of life,” a comment with much wider applicability to the Copperbelt’s European community.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Notes of Decisions Reached at the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Chamber of Mines Executive Committee, 2 July 1944.

⁵⁵¹ WP 507/3, Letter from Martinus Visagie to Roy Welensky, 4 September 1944.

⁵⁵² ZCCM 3.8.1A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust, London, 7 July 1944 and 11 July 1944.

⁵⁵³ NAZ SEC1/1391, Letter from H.B. Kemmis, TUC Colonial Advisory Committee to Willoughby, NRMWU, 1 August 1944, Airgraph letter from B. Gardner, Amalgamated Engineering Union to General Secretary, NRMWU, 15 August 1944.

⁵⁵⁴ ZCCM 3.8.1A, Outline of the Artisans’ Case to the Arbitration Tribunal for an Increase of their Wages.

To the consternation of artisans, an arbitration tribunal again rejected their claim in October, although the companies agreed to lobby the British Government to lift the Emergency Powers Regulations.⁵⁵⁵ Two weeks later, on 11 November, the entire daily-paid workforce at Nchanga Mine began a six-week strike to demand major revisions to the recognition agreement and only returned to work after RAA threatened to close the mine.⁵⁵⁶ The strikers, Goodwin explained, were only seeking “things which the Trade Union has throughout the Empire.”⁵⁵⁷

The NRMWU’s international links flourished as the small union was accorded an important place in the global labour movement, and Goodwin was at the forefront of this.⁵⁵⁸ Maybank’s enforced stint in the UK brought the Copperbelt’s white mineworkers significant overseas support. He met the TUC leadership several times, toured Britain’s coalfields under the auspices of the Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) and had Abe Moffat, the communist miners’ leader, argue his case at the 1943 TUC annual congress.⁵⁵⁹ The clearest indication of the depth of support for the Copperbelt’s white mineworkers came when the NRMWU was invited to the inaugural meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in London in February 1945. Goodwin attended and “made contacts with numerous other leading trade unionists” who were also, mostly, leading figures in the international communist movement.⁵⁶⁰ Goodwin’s trip to London had also involved lobbying, alongside the

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust Board, 24 October 1944. Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 101.

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Application to close Nchanga Mine’, *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 29 December 1944.

⁵⁵⁷ NAZ SEC/1421, Extract from Hansard No. 49, 9 January 1945.

⁵⁵⁸ James Hooker claimed that “white miners increasingly were isolated from their fellow workers in Europe” in this period and “not for some time of course had the miners enjoyed British trade union support.” In fact, the opposite was the case. James Hooker, ‘The Role of the Labour Department in the birth of African trade unionism in Northern Rhodesia’, *International Review of Social History*, 10, 1 (1965), p. 12.

⁵⁵⁹ *Report of the Proceedings at the 75th Annual Trades Union Congress* (London, 1943), pp. 287-8.

⁵⁶⁰ NAB CO 795/128/5, Extracts from the NRMWU President’s Report on Trip to England, 12 April 1945.

MFGB and TUC, for the return of Maybank and the British Government reluctantly agreed to allow his return after the end of hostilities in Europe.⁵⁶¹ To the undisguised dismay of the mining companies, Maybank was unanimously reinstated NRMWU general secretary in August 1945.

There was broad agreement over the need for international outreach and Goodwin was also sent to the next WFTU meeting in October, where, astonishingly, he was elected as the representative for Africa on the 22-member WFTU Executive, with Sierra Leonean trade unionist Isaac Wallace Johnson as his alternate.⁵⁶² To the incredulity of the South African delegation, who had been angling for the position themselves, Goodwin was backed by delegates from West Africa, the same delegates who argued that white South Africans could not represent African workers. Links were South Africa were less important now the NRMWU enjoyed wider support. Goodwin was also backed by delegates from France, Italy, Latin America and the Soviet Union.⁵⁶³ The positions of Goodwin and Maybank, who was elected to the WFTU General Council, as representatives for Africa was not regarded as unusual at the time. Representatives for Australia, New Zealand and the United States on the General Council were all British-born, so there was no reason to consider white migrant workers in central Africa an aberration.

Neither were the NRMWU out of step with the politics of their counterparts elsewhere. Roy Welensky had tried to undermine Goodwin at the WFTU by writing to members of the British Labour Party claiming that the NRMWU was opposed to the employment of Poles in the mining industry. This would, he felt, illustrate “the wide

⁵⁶¹ NAB CAB 65/49/36 Conclusions of War Cabinet, 26 March 1945.

⁵⁶² International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], WFTU Box 10, Report of the Committee on Nominations to the General Council, the Executive Committee and the Auditors.

⁵⁶³ HPA AH 646 Dc13.7, Report on World Trade Union Conference: Paris, 25th September to 8th October, 1945.

divergence between socialism as understood by Goodwin” and “the insistence on international co-operation” which characterised the labour movement in Europe.⁵⁶⁴ It is likely that Welensky’s missive, in some cases, fell on unsympathetic ears. This is because, from 1946, sections of the British National Union of Mineworkers resolutely opposed the efforts of the National Coal Board to employ Poles and other displaced Eastern Europeans in British mines and this opposition eventually caused the scheme to be dropped.⁵⁶⁵

1946 strikes

By 1945, the Copperbelt supplied 67.9% of Britain’s copper and this growing importance to the British economy diminished fears of a slump.⁵⁶⁶ Instead, the NRMWU felt “a boom period is setting in” and “the workers of the Copperbelt are determined that they shall have improvements in their conditions of work and standard of living.”⁵⁶⁷ The incipient boom and the Copperbelt’s prosperity were precarious. Production was hampered by shortage of coal supplies from Wankie Colliery and transport problems. All four mines shut down for around a week in January 1946 due to shortages.⁵⁶⁸ In addition, there was the constant threat of labour unrest.

The situation on the mines remained tense and seemingly minor issues could easily blow into serious disputes. For instance, on 28 September 1945, A.J. Fourie, a fitter at Mufulira, was fired, reinstated and then fired again within 24 hours after he refused

⁵⁶⁴ NAZ SEC1/1404, Telegram from Governor Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 29 January 1945

⁵⁶⁵ William Ashworth, *The History of the British Coal Industry Volume 5, 1946-1982: The Nationalized Industry* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 152-53.

⁵⁶⁶ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 54.

⁵⁶⁷ ‘Copperbelt workers’ claims ‘within capacity of companies’, *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 18 December 1945

⁵⁶⁸ ‘Mufulira mines to restart’, *Financial Times*, 16 January 1946.

to do what he considered to be electrician's work.⁵⁶⁹ Things quickly fell into a familiar pattern. The next morning, all daily-paid workers in the surface plants walked out and held an impromptu meeting to demand Fourie's reinstatement. Hastily arranged talks between the NRMWU and mine management collapsed almost immediately after mine managers walked out of the meeting, claiming they had been insulted.⁵⁷⁰ Alfred Royden Harrison, head of the Chamber of Mines, who should have known better, tried to smooth things out informally with Maybank over a drink at the Nkana Hotel, and was threatened again by Maybank. With the new Labour Government in Britain, Maybank claimed his union had "a tremendous amount of power."⁵⁷¹

A profound sense of déjà vu must have pervaded the Copperbelt as, once again, hostile negotiations began over a new recognition agreement. Virtually every clause in the agreement was contested, as the NRMWU demanded that "what is recognised as orthodox Trade Union practice in Great Britain... be accepted in Northern Rhodesia," while opponents condemned the "transference of authority from the Mine Directors and Managers to the Union" using "the methods of the Anarchists of Spain."⁵⁷² Justifications for wage increases because "in the United States of America the workers were getting very considerable increases" sounded like a repeat of 1944, but with one important difference.⁵⁷³ In a departure from the politics of white labourism, the NRMWU now demanded the right to represent African mineworkers and called for Africans to be paid 'European' wages for skilled work.⁵⁷⁴

In 1940, white mineworkers still held to what Keith Breckenridge referred to as "the key rule of white labour disputes" in South Africa in the 1920s: African workers were

⁵⁶⁹ NAB CO 537/1515, Telegram from Governor Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 1 October 1945.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Strike at Mufulira September 28th – October 1st 1945.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Notes on an interview with F.S. Maybank, 30 September 1945

⁵⁷² NAZ MM 1/10/2, NRMWU leaflet, 25 January 1946. 'Editorial', *Livingstone Mail*, 1 February 1946.

⁵⁷³ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Notes on the conciliation proceedings, 18th February-5th March 1946.

⁵⁷⁴ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 100.

to be kept out of clashes between white workers and their employers.⁵⁷⁵ Attitudes began to shift during the war and in August 1943 a meeting in Luanshya passed a resolution stating “the interests of the white worker are directly linked with those of the African worker” and called for the formation of African union branches. The following month, all NRMWU branches passed resolutions recommending the creation of “African trade unions in affiliation with the European Union.”⁵⁷⁶ This was part of a wider trend. From 1942, there were articles and letters in the magazine of the white mineworkers’ union in Southern Rhodesia arguing that it “would be of great advantage if the Mine Workers give consideration to forming new branches of native sections.”⁵⁷⁷

Little action was taken on these resolutions apart from Goodwin and others issuing periodic threats that the establishment of African unions would begin imminently, something which caused no small degree of panic among colonial officials and the Chamber of Mines. One major obstruction to progress was that many Europeans simply would not countenance being members of the same organisation as Africans. Dave Welensky, union vice-president and Roy Welensky’s brother, spoke for many when he stated he would not accept Africans living or working beside him as equals.⁵⁷⁸ The spat this caused played out in the local press, where Goodwin used an everyday example to explain why integration in the union did not necessarily mean social integration:

I might point out that although Dave Welensky and I are in the same Union and further that we are doing the same jobs, and earning the same pay, I do

⁵⁷⁵ Keith Breckenridge, ‘Fighting for a White South Africa: White Working-Class Racism and the 1922 Rand Revolt’, *South African Historical Journal*, 57, 1 (2007), p. 238.

⁵⁷⁶ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 171.

⁵⁷⁷ Extract from *Granite Review*, July 1942 in Ian Phimister, ‘White miners in historical perspective: Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1953’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2 (1977), p. 202.

⁵⁷⁸ Gann, *Northern Rhodesia*, p. 367.

not have to associate with him any more than is absolutely necessary, nor do I have to make a bosom friend of him.⁵⁷⁹

The first real efforts to reach out to African mineworkers only came in the context of the bitter disputes of 1946. Negotiations reached deadlock in March over the longstanding grievance of artisans' pay and demands by the NRMWU to remove the clause restricting union membership to Europeans. Once again, mineworkers voted against striking after the mining companies made concessions – including the long-sought recognition of shop stewards – and a new recognition agreement was signed in April.⁵⁸⁰ This, once again, left white artisans seething. When the mining companies pointed out that wages were much higher than in Southern Rhodesia or South Africa, their preferred comparison, artisans claimed that wages for skilled work had risen by 30-40% in Australia, New Zealand and the United States during the war and by 51% in the UK. More specifically, in response to the comparisons with the Rand, the NRMWU noted that “If comparisons are made, let us compare with... the largest copper mining areas in the USA.”⁵⁸¹ In contrast, the companies' objectives involved: reduction of European contract rates, elimination of the closed shop and “progression of the African.”⁵⁸²

Artisans immediately reopened negotiations with a demand for a 10s a day pay increase and rejected a counter-offer of 3s.⁵⁸³ White artisans were in no sense living in poverty. Anna Arbitson, whose husband was a carpenter, complained to arbitration hearings on the subject that they were considering returning to Australia

⁵⁷⁹ 'Letters', *Northern News*, 10 May 1945.

⁵⁸⁰ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust London, 15 April and 29 April 1946.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Statement presented by the NRMWU to the mining companies of Northern Rhodesia, 13 July 1946.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, Notes on a meeting of the London Committee, 17 April 1946.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust London, 16 July 1946.

because they could not afford private education for their two children or afford uniforms for their two servants.⁵⁸⁴ Instead, artisans were motivated by the fact that wages were rising elsewhere, and they didn't want to be left behind. With this in mind, on 15 July mass meetings on all four mines voted to strike the next morning.

The mines shut down almost immediately and virtually the whole workforce was laid off. One mine manager warned that sacking African mineworkers "would lead to trouble" as "the Africans have a feeling that their livelihood... will have been taken from them by the European." This was interpreted as a direct threat. If European and African mineworkers were dispersed, thundered Goodwin, "the Companies would never re-open the Mines because every Union in the world will prevent labour coming to these Mines."⁵⁸⁵ The NRMWU's response was to attempt to involve African mineworkers in the dispute. From 5 August, white shop stewards and African boss boys distributed leaflets in English, Bemba, Nyanja and Swahili through the compounds at Nkana, Nchanga and Mufulira urging laid-off African mineworkers not to leave the Copperbelt and claiming "The Companies have ample money to feed the African and his family."⁵⁸⁶ At Roan Antelope, an African cyclist scattered leaflets through the compound.⁵⁸⁷ Europeans on the Copperbelt had moved far from advocating a 'British' identity. This also evident in another leaflet distributed about the successful US coal miners' strike earlier in 1946 reading: "Their patience was rewarded. Quoting Shakespeare – 'Alles sal reg kom'. Quoting President Kruger – 'All's well that ends well'."⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁴ NAB CO 537/1515, Evidence of Anna Florence Arbitson, 2 October 1946.

⁵⁸⁵ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Notes on meeting between representatives of the Chamber of Mines and the NRMWU, 31 July 1946.

⁵⁸⁶ ZCCM 16.2.5B, NRMWU Notice, 3 August 1946.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Daily notes in connection with artisans' strike Roan Antelope, 6 August 1946.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Notice: Soft Coal Miners of the USA Gain Wage Increases.

Whether white mineworkers had the stomach for a protracted fight was decided after 12 August when RAA and RST announced that all four mines would be closed indefinitely unless artisans returned to work on 15 August. Strike committees at Nchanga, Nkana and Mufulira responded by declaring a general strike of all white workers and withdrawing support for essential services, though staff employees continued to provide these, generating angry recriminations.⁵⁸⁹ It soon became clear that most mineworkers were not prepared to call the companies' bluff. At Roan Antelope, large numbers of men and women, redundancy letters in hand, showed up at the union office the day they received them, while others made preparations to leave the Copperbelt.⁵⁹⁰ Four days later, the union folded and agreed a return to work on the basis that artisans' wages were increased by the original offer of 3s and the 10s claim, once again, submitted to arbitration.

The white workforce was not unanimous in its desire for bruising encounters with their employers and, following the end of emergency restrictions, dissatisfied mineworkers could vote with their feet. A.B. Hayward, an artisan at Roan Antelope, was one such individual. Fed up with continual industrial unrest, he made plans to leave but, before leaving, hand-delivered a parting shot by distributing a letter to the houses of all daily-paid men on the mine. Hayward's unsolicited advice to his "fellow workers" was that going on strike was "pig-headed and selfish, yes, and half-witted too." Any increases in wages would be followed by increases in prices and the only way to combat this was to form co-operative societies. The mine was a good employer, he continued, so "those who reckon we are not getting a square deal, let them shove off and let those who are prepared to work go back to their jobs." It was

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust London, 14 August 1946.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Daily notes in connection with artisans' strike Roan Antelope, 15 August 1946.

actually Hayward who shoved off, as he left the Copperbelt for New Zealand not long after delivering his letter.⁵⁹¹

In the aftermath of the strike, the Chamber of Mines cancelled the recognition agreement and cut contract rates for rockbreakers with “the aim of stabilising labour” and reducing the numbers who “come to the Copperbelt with the sole object of making as much money as possible in a few years.”⁵⁹² The Chamber also drew on their international networks to contest the artisans’ wage claims, and was well-placed to do so after Percy Truscott took over as head of the Chamber as he had worked on mines in Cornwall, Canada and Spain.⁵⁹³ The Chamber’s evidence convinced the arbitrator Charles Doughty – who had also arbitrated during wartime strikes on Britain’s coalfields⁵⁹⁴ – to reject the artisans’ 10s claim in favour of a 2s increase.⁵⁹⁵ The mining companies, however, had over-reached themselves and were shaken by a wildcat strike at Roan Antelope in December. This was orchestrated by recently arrived mineworkers without the prior knowledge of the union branch and enforced with aggressive picketing.⁵⁹⁶ It was decided that dealing directly with a reliably belligerent union leadership was preferable to dealing with an unpredictable workforce and the fifth recognition agreement in seven years was signed in January 1947 with the closed-shop intact.⁵⁹⁷

1947 marked the end of an era on the Copperbelt in an unintended and unanticipated way as the copper companies sought a way to mollify their

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from A.B. Hayward, 17 August 1946.

⁵⁹² ‘The Rhodesian Copperbelt’, *Financial Times*, 26 October 1946.

⁵⁹³ For example, see ZCCM 16.2.5B, Memorandum on wage scales at mines in Canada, 30 August 1946. NAB CO 537/1515, Evidence of Percy Hugh Truscott.

⁵⁹⁴ Ariane Mak, ‘Spheres of Justice in the 1942 Betteshanger Miners’ Strike: An Essay in Historical Ethnography’, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 26 (2015), p. 35.

⁵⁹⁵ NAZ MM 1/10/2, Arbitration for artisans, Charles Doughty, 7 October 1946.

⁵⁹⁶ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Letter from J. Thomson, Roan Antelope to Secretary, Roan Antelope London, 9 December 1946.

⁵⁹⁷ ‘Copper crisis averted’, *Financial Times*, 17 January 1946.

permanently disgruntled white workforce. At the end of 1946, the mining companies announced that the existing copper bonus scheme would be scrapped and replaced by a new scheme based on the price of copper in 1947.⁵⁹⁸ Ironically, both the NNRMWU and MOSSA initially opposed the scheme, which would soon underpin extraordinary affluence for the Copperbelt's Europeans.⁵⁹⁹

These were changes much of the existing mines management would not witness. Senior management at both RAA and RST changed in 1947 and direct American influence on the Copperbelt waned. Arthur Storke resigned as RST managing director in 1947 to join US mining giant Kennecott Copper. He was due to become company president but the plane he and former RST director Russell Parker were traveling on was blown up by a man trying to kill his estranged wife, who was also on the flight.⁶⁰⁰ The same year also saw the forced retirement of Auckland Geddes from RAA after the onset of total blindness. Instead Geddes became interested in spiritualism and extra-sensory perception.⁶⁰¹ Alfred Chester Beatty played little role in RST after the war as he developed very different interests in religious texts and medical research.⁶⁰²

Although he left the position in October 1946, Nkana manager Alfred Royden Harrison was representative of the new generation of mine management. He was the first mine manager whose mining experience was largely confined to the Copperbelt, having started as a shift boss at Nchanga in 1930.⁶⁰³ Ronald Prain, the new RST

⁵⁹⁸ NAZ SEC1/1405, Pension and Bonus Schemes, 30 December 1946.

⁵⁹⁹ 'Big August pay cheques in NR', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 10 October 1947.

⁶⁰⁰ 'Quebec husband held in air blast', *New York Times*, 25 September 1949.

⁶⁰¹ Keith Grieves, 'Geddes, Auckland Campbell, first Baron Geddes (1879–1954)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed 13 October 2015 at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33359>

⁶⁰² John Phillips, 'Alfred Chester Beatty: Mining Engineer, Financier, and Entrepreneur, 1898-1950', in Raymond Dumett (ed.), *Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire, 1870-1945: Entrepreneurship, High Finance, Politics and Territorial Expansion* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 234-5.

⁶⁰³ Kenneth Donaldson, *Who's Who of Southern Africa 1959* (Johannesburg, 1959), pp. 275-76.

managing director, had also been associated with the Copperbelt mines for virtually his entire working life. His first job after leaving school in 1926 was with the London metal traders Marshall Brothers, which became a subsidiary of the American Metal Company that year. He was responsible for arranging financing for Roan Antelope in the early 1930s and had sat on the boards of RST and Roan Antelope since 1937.⁶⁰⁴

Conclusion

The war was a good war for Europeans on the Copperbelt. A succession of strikes brought appreciable improvements in the income and living standards of white mineworkers. The wider European community also became more affluent as the disposable income of the largest component of the community increased. White mineworkers were able to secure wage increases that kept ahead of wartime inflation not only because demand for copper strengthened their position but also due to a firm sense of solidarity. White mineworkers knew what they wanted and knew how to get it. This solidarity and consciousness developed through struggle with white mine management and a fear of displacement by African mineworkers.

The relevant comparison here is not only South Africa. In fact, the strike wave occurred alongside “a time of unequalled labour upheaval - specifically, strikes - over the length and breadth of colonial Africa.”⁶⁰⁵ There were similarities between the white workforce on the Copperbelt and on the Rand but there were also important differences. Life for whites in the South African mining industry in this period did not involve regular wildcat strikes, mass picketing, unofficial action committees, strident calls for international solidarity or surprise encounters with the army. These things

⁶⁰⁴ Prain, *Reflections on an Era*, pp. 23, 28.

⁶⁰⁵ Kenneth Vickery, ‘The Rhodesia Railways African Strike of 1945, Part I: A Narrative Account’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 3 (1998), p. 545.

had not occurred on the Rand for almost 20 years. Moreover, claims to better pay and conditions were not made on the basis of 'whiteness', as in Hyslop's concept of white labourism, but on the basis of what white workers were getting elsewhere. This was 'passive white labourism'. Racial segregation was accepted as normal and not challenged even by radicals in the European community, but the struggles of this period were not primarily directed against Africans.

Miles Larmer observed that African mineworkers in the post-colonial period "followed the fortunes of their industry on the global commodity markets and shaped their demands accordingly."⁶⁰⁶ This was even truer of white mineworkers during the 1940s. They had individual and collective links to mining regions elsewhere in the world. Information about other mining regions was facilitated by burgeoning links with the international labour movement. The white workforce saw itself as a part of this, and this perception of their place in the labour movement was reciprocated as white mineworkers were able to mobilise support from trade unions in South Africa, Britain, Australia and, eventually, the Soviet-dominated WFTU. Representatives of the NRMWU, in particular, became increasingly adroit at expressing their interests themselves internationally.

This chapter is also an account of the limits of transnational information flows. It goes without saying that the white mineworkers on the Copperbelt were in no way representative of workers across the continent; they were not even representative of the workforce on the Copperbelt. Yet, they successfully presented themselves as such and a white miner from Nkana was, for several years, Africa's representative on the WFTU Executive. This was not considered unusual. "Our perspective is too

⁶⁰⁶ Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa*, (London, 2007), p. 20.

narrow out here” warned Brian Goodwin, they needed to “keep more or less in touch with the Trade Union World which it is so necessary to be in touch with.”⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁷ NAB CO 795/128/5, Extracts from the NRMWU President’s Report on Trip to England, 12 April 1945.

Hugh Handford

Hugh Handford (1900-1965) was born in Newlyn, Cornwall into a family already entangled in imperial connections. His father had been a chaplain in the Indian Army and his elder siblings were born in India.⁶⁰⁸ Handford opted for the more commonplace Cornish occupation of mining, but picked an inauspicious time to begin a lifetime of involvement in

the industry as, in early 1919, it appeared that Cornwall's remaining mining industry was on the verge of total collapse.⁶⁰⁹ This almost certainly encouraged Handford's decision to move, first to coal mines in Cumberland and then to Barnsley, before following the example of tens of thousands of Cornish miners in previous decades and heading overseas.⁶¹⁰

Handford arrived on the Rand in South Africa in 1923 but only spent a year on gold mines before returning to coal mining. Years later, Handford would boast about how tough mining in South Africa was, claiming that miners worked 11 ½ hour shifts for six days a week “and saw the sun on Sundays only” but thought nothing of going out dancing after coming off shift.⁶¹¹ Such boasting about tough, manual work was typical of Copperbelt masculinity. This way of life on the Natal coalfields lasted

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Figure 4.1: Hugh Handford, 1952. 'Greetings for 1952', *Rhokana Review*, January 1952.

⁶⁰⁸ Ancestry.com. *1911 England Census*: Entry for L. Handford. Accessed 5 October 2015 at www.ancestry.co.uk/1911census

⁶⁰⁹ Philip Payton, *Cornwall* (Fowley, 1996), p. 249. In 1919 one of Cornwall's last copper mines, Levant Mine, closed after the 31 men were killed there in Cornwall's worst ever mining disaster.

⁶¹⁰ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 6.10.2A, Telegram from Lendrum to Brownrigg, 29 April 1965. For an overview of patterns of migration established by Cornish mineworkers, see Gill Burke, 'The Cornish Diaspora of the Nineteenth Century', in Shula Marks and Peter Richardson (eds.), *International Labour Migration: Historical Perspectives* (Hounslow, 1984), pp. 61-65.

⁶¹¹ 'Personally speaking: Hugh Handford', *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

around six years, until 20 May 1930 when an underground explosion tore through Burnside Colliery, where he was working.⁶¹² Accidents were common on the Natal coalfields at this time and this was one of the worst. The blast and resulting underground collapse killed 38 miners and, although Handford wasn't on shift at the time, "I remember it took six weeks to get the last body out, and that experience drove me out of the country."⁶¹³

It was at this time that the Copperbelt mines were expanding rapidly and Handford joined the drift of skilled miners heading north, arriving at Roan Antelope in late 1930. He did not arrive as a single migrant though but came with a family, as many others did. He had married in South Africa and had one daughter, and then married again on the Copperbelt sometime around 1937 to Olive.⁶¹⁴ Although Handford signed on as an underground operator, he was rapidly promoted to shift boss and then mine captain, one of the senior positions underground. Equally quickly, he established himself as a central figure in the European community. He joined the Freemasons at Roan Antelope and became president of the Sons of England, on whose behalf he attempted to personally lobby the Colonial Secretary on a return visit to Britain in 1939.⁶¹⁵

Handford was unusual in that he was a determined settler in Northern Rhodesia and sought a promise from the British Government that British settlers would not be deported from the territory again, as they had been during the Great Depression. He himself had no intention of returning to the UK and visited only twice between 1923

⁶¹² Ruth Edgecombe and Bill Guest, 'Labour Conditions on the Natal Collieries: The Case of the Dundee Coal Company 1908-1955' African Studies Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, May 1986, p. 27.

⁶¹³ 'Personally speaking: Hugh Handford', *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

⁶¹⁴ I have been unable to discover the name of Hugh Handford's first wife, or what happened to her.

⁶¹⁵ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] SEC1/503, Letter from E.D. Boyd to Hugh Handford, 14 July 1939.

and 1956.⁶¹⁶ He still considered himself, and other settlers, thoroughly British and assured the Colonial Secretary that “We are under no misapprehension as to the permanence of our own ‘British status’” and sought to create a British society on the Copperbelt with restrictions on ‘alien’ white migrants.⁶¹⁷

In 1941, he was a founding member of the Mines Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA) and joined the first General Council of the association in 1942, a key part of what he later proudly referred to as “40 years’ association with the Trade Union Movement in the Mining Industries in Britain, South Africa and Rhodesia.”⁶¹⁸ Like many other mineworkers, he was briefly seduced by the prospect of easy riches and left the Copperbelt in 1946 to try prospecting for gold in Gwanda, Southern Rhodesia. Like many others, he was swiftly disabused of the idea he would strike lucky, and returned to the Copperbelt and to the helm at MOSSA in 1948. He remained in the position of general secretary for the rest of his life.

Handford dominated MOSSA and used this to cement his position as a pillar of respectability on the Copperbelt. He was precisely the kind of European settler the newly established Central African Federation sought to attract and retain. He became a stalwart of the Federal Party in Kitwe after the party was established.⁶¹⁹ Handford’s affinity, however, was not with the Copperbelt itself as he campaigned for longer holidays specifically so European mineworkers could spend longer away from the place.⁶²⁰ Instead, it was with the European community which he compared

⁶¹⁶ Ancestry.com. *UK, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960*: Record of Hugh Handford, 19 May 1936 and 10 June 1939. Accessed 9 October at search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2997.

⁶¹⁷ NAZ SEC1/1797, Letter from Hugh Handford to Colonial Secretary, 26 July 1939.

⁶¹⁸ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Untitled statement, Hugh Handford, 19 April 1959.

⁶¹⁹ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter WP] 621/10, Letter from Hugh Handford to Roy Welensky, 11 June 1955.

⁶²⁰ *Report of the Board of Inquiry to Consider the Proposed 40-Hour Week in the Copper Mining Industry of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1950), p. 20.

favourably “with other mining fields” due to the unofficial policy of “Abandon rank all ye who enter here.”⁶²¹

Handford himself was frequently away from the Copperbelt and less able to play an active role in European society after March 1954 when his son Philip was struck down with polio. Philip spent the next two years in hospitals in London and Salisbury.⁶²² Philip’s treatment cost more than Hugh’s entire annual salary and the couple were forced to turn to local charities to pay for Philip as a private patient in London. Hugh regarded this with incredulity since “both my wife and I are English born we have to pay through the nose while West Indian niggers can stowaway and go on the dole on arrival!”⁶²³ He did not see any resemblance between imperial subjects moving to Britain and his decision to leave Britain permanently for Northern Rhodesia.

The respectable status of Handford within the Copperbelt’s European community was affirmed in 1958 when he was awarded the MBE for services to the trade union movement in Northern Rhodesia.⁶²⁴ He sat on various government boards, attended the Duke of Edinburgh’s conference on industrial communities in Oxford in 1956, established and chaired a home for European children of widows or divorced couples and was an active member of the Parent Teacher Association in Kitwe.⁶²⁵ He consciously sought maintain the separation of the European community and

⁶²¹ ‘Greetings for 1953’, *Rhokana Review*, January 1953.

⁶²² ‘Courage, fortitude and cheerfulness’, *Rhokana Review*, December 1956.

⁶²³ WP 621/10, Letter from Hugh Handford to Roy Welensky, 11 June 1955.

⁶²⁴ ‘Birthday Honours’, *The Times*, 12 June 1958.

⁶²⁵ WP 621/10, Letter from Hugh Handford to Roy Welensky, 10 May 1956. ‘Albion House’, *Rhokana Review*, July 1955. ‘Parent Teacher Association’, *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

reportedly thought “that a social colour bar is natural” so should be maintained on the job and in the associational life of the Copperbelt.⁶²⁶

Nevertheless his attitudes were not static and Handford offered little resistance to African nationalism, though its emergence briefly resurrected fears from the 1930s that Europeans would be removed by a hostile government.⁶²⁷ Handford supported opening up MOSSA to Africans working in staff jobs and, like other Europeans on the Copperbelt, professed to be sanguine about Zambian independence, noting that “I can’t agree with people who are getting a bit panicky. There will be room for skilled technicians for many years.”⁶²⁸ This proved correct but it was not a prediction he lived to see as he died in early 1965.

⁶²⁶ NAB CO 1015/339, Letter from R.E. Luyt to C.E. Cousins, 14 May 1953.

⁶²⁷ ZCCM 6.10.2A, Letter from Hugh Handford to Governor Evelyn Hone, 21 June 1963. Handford was seeking reassurance, on behalf of MOSSA, that there would be “no discrimination against individuals resulting from their place of birth, or country of origin, or the passports they happen to hold” after the Federation was dissolved.

⁶²⁸ ‘Personally speaking: Hugh Handford’, *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

Chapter Four

Boom Years, 1948-56

[This is] chiefly a working class community.

Sarah Zaremba, 1948.⁶²⁹

Overview

Returning to the Copperbelt in 1946 after an absence of six years, Winifred Tapson was so astounded by the scale of the changes that she and her husband “felt like two Rip van Winkles just awakened from sleep.”⁶³⁰ Yet the Copperbelt was on the cusp of even more dramatic changes as, unexpectedly, the copper industry boomed from the late 1940s. Two external factors triggered this boom. The first occurred in September 1949 when the pound was devalued against the dollar by 44% and, as the price of copper bought by the British Government was based on the dollar price, copper prices soared.⁶³¹ The second was greater demand for copper following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950.⁶³²

This chapter primarily explores the implications of this boom for the Copperbelt’s European community. The industrial struggles of the 1940s placed white male

⁶²⁹ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] SEC1/1521, Evidence submitted by Mrs Zaremba to Closed Townships Commission.

⁶³⁰ Winifred Tapson, *Old Timers* (Cape Town, 1957), p. 175.

⁶³¹ Appendix III.

⁶³² Andrew Roberts, ‘Northern Rhodesia: The Post-War Background, 1945-1953’, in Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola (eds.), *Living at the End of Empire: Politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2011), p. 16.

mineworkers in a strong position to reap the rewards of this boom and gave them the resources to shape European Copperbelt society. This chapter will argue that there was a clear international dimension to this as white mineworkers successfully sought to re-create elements of working-class culture elsewhere in the English-speaking world. Affluence also allowed white working-class people to do what they could not elsewhere and participate “in forms of recreation formerly the prerogative of the rich.”⁶³³ A community which consciously regarded itself as working-class became more ambiguous. This opulence attracted attention from contemporary observers but often their remarks were limited to the incongruity of a situation where towns that “could be Barnsley” featured “British colliers hav[ing] afternoon tea in the garden, waited on by servants.”⁶³⁴

This chapter will argue that this was about self-actualization for the Europeans who arrived on the Copperbelt in their thousands in these years. The size of the European community surged from 9,164 in 1946 to 30,265 by 1956.⁶³⁵ The European proportion of the mines workforce – which had varied between 10.2% and 11.2% between 1937 and 1947 – rose annually and by 1955 the 6,566 European mineworkers constituted 15.7% of the workforce.⁶³⁶ Changes in the European community in these years can be attributed, in part, to the fact it was composed of new people. Few Europeans who were on the Copperbelt in the 1930s were still there in the 1950s. New arrivals not only include mineworkers as transformative opportunities also became available in the expanding towns around the mines. Between 1951 and 1956, the non-mining population of Kitwe rose from 982 to 3,508

⁶³³ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part I: A Social Psychological Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), pp. 31, 35.

⁶³⁴ Colin Morris, *The Hour After Midnight. A Missionary's Experiences of Racial and Political Struggle in Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1961), p. 9.

⁶³⁵ Appendix I.

⁶³⁶ Appendix II.

and from 19% to 36% of the total urban population.⁶³⁷ Prior to this point, the government townships had been “mere hamlets compared with the mining camps.”⁶³⁸ The two main sections in this chapter focus on the boom that attracted and shaped the European community and the social life and associational culture of this community.

This argument about the implications of the copper boom builds on the work of Ian Phimister who provided a detailed overview of the lavish lifestyle and conspicuous consumption of white mineworkers in a 2011 article.⁶³⁹ One of Phimister’s arguments in that article where he casts “doubt on the centrality ascribed in Central African historiography to the September 1955 African advancement agreement” is related to the second main argument of this chapter.⁶⁴⁰ This is that African advancement was not centrally important to the European community and its importance has been overstated in much of the secondary literature. Indeed, opposition to African advancement is often the only context in which white mineworkers are mentioned at all.⁶⁴¹ The sections on the establishment of African trade unions and on African advancement will carefully periodise relations between Africans and Europeans on the Copperbelt and set the negotiations over African advancement into a wider context.

⁶³⁷ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers in Northern Rhodesia 1959-60* (Leiden, 1973), p. 12.

⁶³⁸ Peter Gibbs, *Avalanche in Central Africa* (London, 1961), p. 65.

⁶³⁹ Ian Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland? White Miners and the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1946-1962’, *South African Historical Journal*, 63:2 (2011), pp. 183-233.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁶⁴¹ Michael Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization* (Manchester, 1972), pp. 13-20. Larry Butler, *Copper Empire: mining and the colonial state in Northern Rhodesia, c. 1930-64* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 73-77, 134-40, 222-4-32. Guy Mhone, *The political economy of a dual labor market in Africa: The copper industry and dependency in Zambia, 1929-1969* (Rutherford, 1982), pp. 115, 120, 143. Richard Sklar, *Corporate power in an African state: The political impact of multinational mining companies in Zambia* (Berkley, 1975), pp. 96-111.

Assumptions about the importance of race in Copperbelt history date back to assumptions from colonial officials and the mining companies that racial clashes were usually imminent. Race was significant in a different way: it acted as a homogenizing force in a European community that became more cosmopolitan in this period. There were few of the tensions between different nationalities which had been evident in the 1930s. There was a consensus among Europeans on the Copperbelt about the kind of affluent society they wanted to create. Hortense Powdermaker argued that “fears and anxieties” about Africans and African advancement prevented Europeans “from enjoying their many advantages.”⁶⁴² This is at odds with contemporary accounts of the raucous social life and conspicuous consumption along with the recollections by former residents about how much they enjoyed themselves.

The affluent society on the Copperbelt was both distinctive and similar to other mining regions around the English-speaking world in the 1950s. It was distinguished by its wealth, “the ease and quality of living,” and was a place where even “a mere list of amenities must read like... an advertisement.” Yet it was similar as the social life and culture of the European community reflected the wider English-speaking world and in that sense it was “not Central Africa at all, but Pittsburgh or Wigan or Johannesburg.”⁶⁴³ The desire to emulate this wider world is a theme in all of the sections in this chapter but is a particular focus of two shorter sections on the efforts to establish co-operatives stores and to impose a 40-hour week on the mines. As in the 1930s and 1940s, this desire was underpinned by flows of white migrants. The European community continued to be a transient one.

⁶⁴² Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town: changing Africa; the human situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt* (New York, 1962), p. 80.

⁶⁴³ Kenneth Bradley, *Copper Venture: The Discovery and Development of Roan Antelope and Mufulira* (London, 1952), pp. 21-22.

One new source for this period is worth noting: the *Rhokana Review*, a monthly magazine produced for Rhokana's European employees. This offers a rich insight into the social history of the European community as it catalogues the social calendar, conspicuous consumption, everyday life and gossip in Kitwe and, to a lesser extent, the other Copperbelt towns. Its origins lie in the Copperbelt's transnational connections. In 1950, Oliver Bennett, then assistant manager at Rhokana, was despatched to Canada and the United States to examine mining methods and labour management techniques and as part of this assessed the utility of in-house publications at the mines he visited.⁶⁴⁴ He collected company magazines from copper mines in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia. Bennett's positive impression of these publications undoubtedly contributed to his decision to launch the *Rhokana Review* the following year to "record in permanent form some of the many achievements in sport, social life and technical skill which have taken place at Nkana."⁶⁴⁵ The other mines quickly followed with *Nchanga Magazine* and *The Roan Antelope* first appearing in June 1952, though only a small number of issues have survived.⁶⁴⁶

Co-operative movement

The high cost of living was a continual and vexing problem on the Copperbelt that prompted a range of responses. For the European community, solutions to this problem were to be found in other industrial centres around the world, something that both reflected existing ties to these regions and created new ones. The brief flourishing of the co-operative movement is a good example of this. Co-operatives in

⁶⁴⁴ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 3.8.1C, Report by O.B. Bennett on his visit to Mining Properties in Canada and the United States, 1 May-10 June 1950.

⁶⁴⁵ 'Message from the General Manager', *Rhokana Review*, October 1951.

⁶⁴⁶ 'Editorial', *Rhokana Review*, July 1952.

Britain's African colonies "remain largely unexplored by historians, with no substantive studies published either at the regional, national or local level."⁶⁴⁷ The same is true of the Copperbelt and co-operatives have attracted only a passing mention in the existing literature.⁶⁴⁸

Anger against stores in the 'closed townships' was longstanding. In 1937, 252 Europeans in Mufulira signed a petition complaining that because traders charged "unreasonably high" prices "Co-operative Stores are a keenly felt want in this Community."⁶⁴⁹ This was to be part-funded by the mine and run by the Northern Rhodesia Mineworkers Union (NRMWU), which would offer wholesalers a guaranteed price and fine members for shopping elsewhere. Never one to miss a trick, when the co-operative was publicly mooted, Maurice Gersch, a trader in the closed township, got in touch with the union to offer his services as manager for the venture.⁶⁵⁰ Other traders regarded this as a threat rather than an opportunity and successfully lobbied the colonial government to prohibit the creation of co-operative stores with any outside funding.⁶⁵¹

Wartime price increases made the 'want' for co-operative stores even more 'keenly felt'. In Luanshya, the driving force was Bob Robertson, who had grappled with the question of how to address "the economic instability of the White man's position" due to "the enormous gap between his wage and that of the African" during the war and become convinced that the way forward was a massive expansion of co-

⁶⁴⁷ Linda Shaw, "Casualties Inevitable': Consumer Co-operation in British Africa', *ARAB Working Paper*, 8 (2014), p. 2.

⁶⁴⁸ Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London, 1999), p. 172.

⁶⁴⁹ NAZ SEC1/1569, Petition text, June 1937.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Extract from an interview – H.E. to V.S. Diamond – Mufulira, 5 November 1937.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, General Notice No. 191 of 1938, Establishment of a Public Township at Mufulira.

operatives.⁶⁵² Robertson became a stalwart of the Consumers' Co-operative Society after it was founded in January 1946, in between assisting the nascent African National Congress (ANC).⁶⁵³ Within two years, the Society had 354 members.⁶⁵⁴

The relative ease with which the co-operative was established in Luanshya was not repeated in the other Copperbelt towns. Efforts to collect share capital from August 1947 to form a Copperbelt-wide society were thwarted by the closed-townships ordinances.⁶⁵⁵ NRMWU members were at the forefront of these efforts, particularly Sarah Zaremba, the former general secretary then working as the union's accountant. Zaremba sharply criticised both the quality of "cramped and badly arranged" local shops and the insufficient quantity of shops to serve the growing town, something she became aware of "most forcibly when whiskey was in short supply."⁶⁵⁶ Legislative Council members tried to pass a motion, proposed by Brian Goodwin, to abolish the closed townships in January 1948 but instead a commission was established to investigate the Copperbelt townships.⁶⁵⁷

The Commission attracted considerable interest and 55 witnesses from across the European community gave evidence. Traders argued successfully that opening up the townships would repudiate the promises made by the government when the townships were established and that the existing shops were sufficient.⁶⁵⁸ Chingola traders pointed out that six of them had paid £2,200 each for plots in the new municipal township in 1945 on the understanding that no additional plots would be

⁶⁵² Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter WP] 507/1, Letter from Bob Robertson to Roy Welensky, 12 March 1943.

⁶⁵³ Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka, 2002), p. 41.

⁶⁵⁴ *Year-Book of Agricultural Co-operation, 1948* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 175.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁶⁵⁶ NAZ SEC1/1521, Evidence submitted by Mrs Zaremba to Closed Townships Commission.

⁶⁵⁷ NAZ SEC1/1520, Extract from Hansard 59, 13 January 1948, column 898-916.

⁶⁵⁸ NAZ SEC1/1522, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Closed Townships, 1948.

made available for 10 years.⁶⁵⁹ By 1948 these traders operated, between them, three general dealers, two hairdressers, a butcher, baker, dairy, bicycle shop, electrician, ladies outfitter, garage and hotel. These, they contended, were more than sufficient for the 503 Europeans at Nchanga Mine and their families.⁶⁶⁰ Existing restrictions in the townships were maintained, although the Commission recommended that a co-operative be permitted to open in Kitwe.

This was not the end of the Copperbelt Co-operative Society's difficulties as they found they were unable to obtain building supplies after a building permit was granted in October 1948. They blamed the malign influence of the Supplies Advisory Board, on which a number of traders sat, including Gersch, and, having failed to obtain the desired result locally, the Society lobbied overseas for their cause. In 1949, Zaremba – accompanied by three members of the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA) – travelled to London to lobby the Colonial Secretary and met with Caroline Ganley, a Labour MP and a former president of the London Co-operative Society.⁶⁶¹ A plot and building supplies were finally secured after this and trading began in August 1950 but it's not clear whether this was the result of lobbying in London or whether the boom had assuaged traders' fears of competition.⁶⁶²

Other problems the co-operative societies faced were more intrinsic to Copperbelt European society. These were the transience of the population and the desire for immediate material benefits. After six months of trading, the new secretary of the Copperbelt Co-operative Society complained that members were "not as yet educated in the principles of the Movement, and are only interested generally

⁶⁵⁹ £85,648 in 2015 figures.

⁶⁶⁰ NAZ SEC1/1521, Memorandum presented on behalf of the traders of Chingola.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Case presented by Mrs Zaremba, for and on behalf of the Copperbelt Co-operative Society.

⁶⁶² *Year-Book of Agricultural Co-operation 1950* (Oxford, 1950), p. 270.

speaking, in a return on their investment” in the form of reduced prices and a dividend from trading profits. Members also primarily bought things on credit, leaving the Society unable to buy new stock or repay a £12,000 loan from the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society.⁶⁶³ Nchanga Co-operative Society faced identical problems as “new members join every month, but this is offset by departures” and these departing members withdrew their share capital.⁶⁶⁴

The Nchanga Society thought that the problem of under-capitalisation could be solved by forming a Co-operative Wholesale Society, though bulk-buying for all four Copperbelt societies proved impossible as, exasperatingly, “the Mufulira Society will have nothing to do with the others.”⁶⁶⁵ Instead, the Nchanga Society sought assistance from Britain and pressed Co-operative MP Frank Beswick to question the Colonial Secretary about the lack of government support for a Co-operative Wholesale Society in Northern Rhodesia. Oliver Lyttelton’s reply that “Societies with European membership need no assistance” provoked an indignant letter from the Society’s secretary to *Co-operative News*, which circulated on the Copperbelt.⁶⁶⁶ The co-operative movement pinned their hopes on expanding markets as the mines boomed but there was one market they did not even consider: none of the co-operatives traded with Africans.

African unions

Some sections of the European community did make a concerted effort to engage with Africans through the formation of African trade unions. These efforts did not get

⁶⁶³ £340,000 in 2015 figures. WP 34/4, General Outline of Society’s Position, 29 January 1951.

⁶⁶⁴ WP 34/5, Letter from R.H.J. Fuller to Economic Secretary, Lusaka, 2 March 1952.

⁶⁶⁵ WP 34/4, Letter from Ralph Nicholson, Economic Secretary to Roy Welensky, 20 September 1951.

⁶⁶⁶ *Hansard*, 26 November 1952, vol. 508, cc48-9W. WP 34/5, Letter from R.H.J. Fuller, Nchanga Co-operative Society to Editor, *Co-operative News*, 20 January 1953

off to a promising start. A new colour bar was included in the new recognition agreement negotiated between the mining companies and the NRMWU in 1946. The specific clause was actually drafted by a British Ministry of Labour official, M.A. Bevan, who had been sent to the Copperbelt to help improve industrial relations.⁶⁶⁷ This was clause 42 and stipulated that any work done by an employee covered by the agreement “shall not be given to persons to whom the terms and conditions of this Agreement do not apply.” The first clause limited the union to representing European employees only and the two clauses, in conjunction, formed the colour bar.⁶⁶⁸

It is interesting, then, that this was quickly contested. In September 1947, the NRMWU called for a meeting with the Chamber of Mines to discuss, among other things, “that colour bar references be deleted from the Union Agreement.”⁶⁶⁹ The problem, explained Maybank, was that “Clause one immediately catches the eye of overseas organisations but it is, in fact, quite contrary to the attitude of our trade union.” Nevertheless, clause 42 would be retained because “it is the mining companies’ intention to push out Europeans.”⁶⁷⁰ This typified the dilemma of those white mineworkers who were sensitive to the changing international context. Racial

⁶⁶⁷ Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), p. 100.

⁶⁶⁸ NAZ MM 1/10/2, Agreement between the NRMWU and the Rhokana Corporation Limited, 30 April 1946.

⁶⁶⁹ ZCCM 12.2.10C, Letter from General Secretary, NRMWU to Secretary, Chamber of Mines, 23 September 1947.

⁶⁷⁰ ‘NR European Miners ‘are safeguarded”, *Rhodesia Herald*, 31 October 1947.

Maybank was doubtless aware that the report on his return by the Communist Party of Australia claimed that “he stressed the need for white workers to help native Africans to organise” as soon as he returned. ‘Maybank, exiled 3 years, leads again’, *Tribune*, 5 October 1945.

exclusivity was seen as necessary to protect their interests but was increasingly unacceptable to international allies.⁶⁷¹

The solution was a novel departure from the politics of 'white labourism': Africans would be incorporated into the NRMWU. In November 1947, NRMWU meetings at Nkana, Mufulira and Roan Antelope passed motions calling for the formation of African union branches, though Nchanga voted against.⁶⁷² This has attracted some comment in the secondary literature, notably from Jane Parpart who claimed attempts to create African branches have either been ignored or attributed to "the machinations of self-interested European miners" by scholars.⁶⁷³ Indeed, Henry Meebelo describes the efforts of the NRMWU to organise African workers as "half-hearted and not-so-well-meaning."⁶⁷⁴ There is some truth in this as Goodwin and others were not trying to create "a multi-racial union" with Africans as equal participants, as Parpart suggests.⁶⁷⁵ Goodwin had previously opined that African branches would be "controlled by the Central Executive which should be European."⁶⁷⁶ This does not mean that organising efforts were 'half-hearted'. Branch structures were established and leaflets in poorly translated Bemba were distributed advertising the new formation to African mineworkers and detailing the procedure for joining.⁶⁷⁷ This had some resonance and a group of boss boys and clerks formed short-lived branches at Nkana and Roan Antelope.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷¹ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds detail the post-war shifts in global opinion on white racial exclusivity in *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 335-36.

⁶⁷² 'Africans' trade union in N. Rhodesia', *Rhodesia Herald*, 20 November 1947.

⁶⁷³ Jane Parpart, *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 110.

⁶⁷⁴ Henry Meebelo, *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism* (Lusaka, 1986), p. 217.

⁶⁷⁵ Parpart, *Labor and Capital*, p. 110.

⁶⁷⁶ James Hooker, 'The Role of the Labour Department in the birth of African trade unionism in Northern Rhodesia', *International Review of Social History*, 10, 1 (1965), p. 10.

⁶⁷⁷ NAZ SEC1/1417, Leaflet: To become a member of the trade union, [undated].

⁶⁷⁸ Parpart, *Labor and Capital*, pp. 110-11, 199.

The alarming prospect of the NRMWU organising African mineworkers accelerated plans by the Colonial Office to foster independent African unions.⁶⁷⁹ In March 1947, a Scottish trade union official, William Comrie, was sent to the Copperbelt to establish African unions as non-political bodies that would engage in collective bargaining over wages and conditions.⁶⁸⁰ Comrie found a ready reception among African mineworkers and unions rapidly developed on all four mines, then amalgamated in March 1949.⁶⁸¹ This development was seen as necessary by colonial officials as they thought “the only hope of serious racial trouble being avoided” was if European mineworkers did not strike until the African mineworkers union was firmly established.⁶⁸² It is worth noting that Comrie encountered little ill-will from the European community for his central role in establishing one of the most powerful African organisations in Northern Rhodesia. After leaving the colonial service in 1952, Comrie became a businessman in Kitwe, sat on several government boards and served as the town’s mayor.⁶⁸³

It was not machinations of the colonial government which derailed the development of African branches in the NRMWU but the decisive initiative of African mineworkers themselves.⁶⁸⁴ This was made abundantly clear after Goodwin delivered an incendiary speech to African mineworkers in Kitwe in January 1948. Goodwin denounced Comrie for building a ‘yellow’ union which would “prevent the African from fighting against the Government and the Chamber of Mines.” In contrast, if

⁶⁷⁹ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 90.

⁶⁸⁰ Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa*, (London, 2007), p. 33.

⁶⁸¹ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 92.

⁶⁸² NAZ SEC1/1443, Minute from P.J. Law, 3 June 1948.

⁶⁸³ Meeblo, *African Proletarians*, p. 218. ‘Ex-Mine man is mayor’, *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 19 April 1963.

⁶⁸⁴ Jane Parpart claimed that “government and company officials blocked a multi-racial union.” Jane Parpart, ‘Class Consciousness among the Zambian Copper Miners, 1950-1968’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 21, 1 (1987), p. 58.

organised by the NRMWU “they would always be fighting Government.” Comrie was Goodwin’s “bitter enemy” and he was “deceiving and blinding the Africans,” as were all compound managers, mine captains and shift bosses. Goodwin invited the audience to his home “to see the photographs of himself with the other members of the World Federation of Trade Unions and to hear about trade unions and have tea.”⁶⁸⁵ This final remark is telling. Renewed agitation for organising African unions emerged after Goodwin returned from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) Executive Committee meeting in Prague in June 1947, where he was elected onto a sub-committee to discuss improving workers’ rights and living standards in Africa.⁶⁸⁶

Goodwin’s credentials made little impression on the audience – which included Godwin Lewanika, future president of the ANC and the Mines African Staff Association – who accused Goodwin of lying.⁶⁸⁷ African mineworkers at Nkana instead redoubled their efforts to form a separate organisation.⁶⁸⁸ Events in May 1948 confirmed that events were out of the hands of the NRMWU. A strike by European rockbreakers at Nkana that month over new contract rates shut the mine and provoked an angry response from African mineworkers.⁶⁸⁹ African mineworkers’ representatives “very strongly objected to being deprived of their regular work... just because some European employees chose to go on strike” and demanded the opportunity to work under European mine officials.⁶⁹⁰ News of this meeting reached the ears of Maybank and Goodwin, who were sufficiently alarmed that they reversed

⁶⁸⁵ NAZ SEC1/1417, Report on a meeting of Africans addressed by Mr Goodwin in the Wusakili Welfare Centre, Kitwe, 31 January 1948.

⁶⁸⁶ International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], WFTU Box 67, Session of the Executive Committee in Prague, 6-7 June 1947. Goodwin may also have visited the Soviet Union during this trip.

⁶⁸⁷ NAZ SEC1/1417, Report on a meeting of Africans addressed by Mr Goodwin in the Wusakili Welfare Centre, Kitwe, 31 January 1948.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Trade union monthly report, February 1948.

⁶⁸⁹ ZCCM 14.2.7F, Memorandum to directors from R.L. Prain, 31 May 1948.

⁶⁹⁰ NAZ SEC1/1443, Summary of meeting held at Wusukili, 19 May 1948.

their previous attitude and pressed for Comrie to guide independent African unions.⁶⁹¹

Efforts to form African unions occurred alongside negotiations over the industrial colour bar. This helps explain African mineworkers' mistrust of the NRMWU's overtures as the union leadership appeared to be doing their utmost to derail these negotiations. The first informal conference on African advancement in May 1947, chaired by British trade unionist Andrew Dalglish, foundered almost immediately. The British trade union representative, James Kelly of the Durham Miners' Association, had committed to the NRMWU's 'rate for the job' argument before the conference even met and the other members could not agree on their terms of reference.⁶⁹² The informal conference was consequently elevated to a similarly unsuccessful Commission of Enquiry, also chaired by Dalglish.

The Dalglish Commission was boycotted by the NRMWU both because of their support for racist working practices and for reasons unrelated to the issue at hand. The NRMWU "objected to the personnel of the Commission" and objected to the terms of reference as they did not include a consideration of 'equal pay for equal work'. The first objection was a reference to Dalglish himself as allegedly "in the past [he] was not very sympathetic towards the European worker."⁶⁹³ It is likely that the NRMWU were referencing Dalglish's unsympathetic attitude to one European worker in particular: Maybank. Back in 1942, Dalglish had investigated the circumstances of Maybank's deportation for the Transport and General Workers'

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Minute from R.S.H., 7 June 1948, Minute from Administrative Secretary, 16 June 1948.

⁶⁹² Henderson, 'Labour and Politics', p. 184. Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 103.

⁶⁹³ *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Advancement of Africans in Industry* (Lusaka, 1948) [hereafter Dalglish Report], p. 4

Union and concluded it was necessary.⁶⁹⁴ Dagleish earned himself more enmity when the Commission rejected 'equal pay for equal work' and recommended that 27 categories of jobs should be opened up to Africans on a modified wage structure approximating to one-third of the European wage.⁶⁹⁵

'Equal pay for equal work' was regarded as a disingenuous way to maintain the colour bar, both at the time and by subsequent historians.⁶⁹⁶ The slogan was not out of step with attitudes in the wider trade union movement though. The WFTU meeting Goodwin attended in June 1947 passed a motion in favour of 'equal pay for equal work'.⁶⁹⁷ It is also significant that efforts to maintain the colour bar were deliberately linked to a slogan with international resonance, especially as the slogan was utilised to cover discriminatory working practices elsewhere. In February 1952, former Colonial Secretary Jim Griffiths warned his successor Oliver Lyttleton that plans to send a National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) delegation to the Copperbelt to encourage the NRMWU to soften its attitude to the Dagleish Report should proceed cautiously. "The delegation would have to be educated... particularly around the unrealistic 'equal pay for equal work' slogan," warned Griffiths, because the "NUM were very sensitive about this at present following the recent arguments over Italian miners in Wales."⁶⁹⁸ Many NUM branches in South Wales were refusing to work with

⁶⁹⁴ National Archives, London [hereafter NAB], CAB 195/2, Transcript of War Cabinet, 7 July 1943.

⁶⁹⁵ Dagleish Report, p. 35.

⁶⁹⁶ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 50. Even the Rhodesian Railway Workers' Union thought that the NRMWU's approach was "subterfuge" as equal pay for equal work meant "black men would not be employed." Roy Welensky, 'Africans and Trade Unions in Northern Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, 45, 181 (1946), p. 181.

⁶⁹⁷ Hooker, 'Labour Department', p. 19.

⁶⁹⁸ NAB CO 1015/338, Notes on meeting, J.W. Stacpoole, 21 February 1952.

Italian miners and claimed the Italians were being used as cheap labour to undercut wages.⁶⁹⁹

Sporadic co-operation between African and European mineworkers did continue. Several months after its formation, the leadership of the African Mineworkers Union (AMU) requested a meeting with the NRMWU. This June 1950 meeting proved something of a coup for the NRMWU as it was agreed that African advancement “must take place” but should adhere to “the principle of Equal Pay and all conditions for Equal Work.”⁷⁰⁰ The NRMWU also provided assistance during arbitration hearings for African mineworkers’ pay claims in January 1953.⁷⁰¹ African mineworkers, however, were more than capable of pursuing their aims independently. September 1952 saw the first Copperbelt-wide strike by African mineworkers, shutting all the mines and throwing over 4,000 daily-paid mineworkers out of work for three weeks. This had worrying implications for the whole European community, as the District Commissioner in Luanshya reported:

Notices appeared outside garages stating that repairs to motor-cars could only be effected for cash payment. Shop-keepers looked anxiously at their large stock of Christmas goods ordered in readiness for the seasonal rush which begins with the receipt of the October pay cheques.⁷⁰²

Cautious attempts to create links with African mineworkers were also overwhelmed by the continued development of a general ‘white’ identity on the Copperbelt, as a narrower sense of ‘British’ identity diminished. This white identity developed as the European community changed in composition and became more cosmopolitan.

⁶⁹⁹ William Ashworth, *The History of the British Coal Industry Volume 5, 1946-1982: The Nationalized Industry* (Oxford, 1986), p. 164.

⁷⁰⁰ ZCCM 12.2.10C, Letter from H.R. Finn to Anglo American, Johannesburg, 15 August 1950.

⁷⁰¹ ‘Labour on the Copperbelt’, *The Times*, 11 February 1953.

⁷⁰² F.M.N. Heath, ‘No smoke from the smelter’, *Corona*, April 1953.

Hundreds of Polish refugees displaced by the war decided to remain on the Copperbelt and formed their own organisations, such as the Polish Settlers' Association of the Copperbelt.⁷⁰³ More Jewish migrants arrived with no repeat of the adverse pre-war reaction. Synagogues were opened in Nkana and Mufulira in 1946 and in Luanshya in 1953.⁷⁰⁴ Greek communities developed in Luanshya and Mufulira.⁷⁰⁵

The largest change, however, was the arrival of more Afrikaners amongst the surge in immigration from South Africa. South Africans outnumbered British-born migrants into Northern Rhodesia every year from 1949 to 1952 as between 3,146 and 3,978 South Africans arrived annually, while only between 2,197 and 2,861 people born in Britain did.⁷⁰⁶ Not all these people went to the Copperbelt, though 'mining' was the largest occupational classification for European migrants in 1951 and 1952.⁷⁰⁷ Afrikaners were not identified separately in immigration records but contemporary assessments of immigration claim there was an increase of Afrikaner migrants and Afrikaans names begin to appear more frequently in archival documents.⁷⁰⁸

White working class identity was strengthened by this cosmopolitanism. This can be seen in the efforts of the NRMWU Mufulira branch in 1951 to defend a member who was, as they admitted, not British and somewhat incompetent. Veteran shop steward Cecil Carstens – a South African miner who had spent eight years in Australia – was faced with a difficult case when Mufulira Mine tried to sack a handyman, Lagnado.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰³ NAZ SEC2/52, Entry of Displaced Persons into Northern Rhodesia, 25 January 1949.

⁷⁰⁴ Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, pp. 215, 217.

⁷⁰⁵ Alois Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation* (Harare 2002), pp. 65-66.

⁷⁰⁶ *Economic and Statistical Bulletin of Northern Rhodesia*, VI, 9 (1953), p. 12. Immigration figures after 1952 are for the Federation as a whole.

⁷⁰⁷ *Economic and Statistical Bulletin of Northern Rhodesia*, V, 9 (1952), p. 28.

⁷⁰⁸ NAZ SEC3/50, History of Immigration Question in Northern Rhodesia, 1948.

⁷⁰⁹ 'Obituary', *Horizon*, March 1962.

Mine manager Frank Buch explained that Lagnado had been instructed to dig a trench to find a telephone cable and had consequently cut off the township from the telephone network by accidentally putting 40 holes into the cable. Prior to this, Buch added, Lagnado had dug a trench through a tarmac road, instead of under it. Defending him, the NRMWU claimed Lagnado “tried hard but he was just incompetent... and had a poor grasp of English.” Nevertheless, he had been working there for nine months so deserved to keep his job and the real problem was that he was being victimised by his African gang (who, of course, had actually done the work).⁷¹⁰ It was a demonstration of the NRMWU’s power that Lagnado was rehired as an underground pumpman, a job which did not involve supervising African workers.⁷¹¹

40-hour week

The working week on the mines dictated the rhythm of much of life on the Copperbelt and had changed little in 20 years. The mines ran three eight-hour shifts from Monday-Saturday alongside a single day shift in most surface plants from 7am-4:30pm Monday-Friday plus a half-day Saturday. Sirens sounded at the start of every shift. Most European mineworkers worked a 48-hour week, apart from around 400 men on continuous operations who worked eight-hour shifts seven days a week in return for big overtime payments.⁷¹² White mineworkers on the Copperbelt knew they were working longer than mineworkers elsewhere. Alec Stevens explained in 1949 that “a forty hour week was being introduced throughout the world” and the

⁷¹⁰ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Notes of a meeting held Mufulira NRMWU branch executive, 25 June 1951.

⁷¹¹ ZCCM 12.2.1B, Letter from G.B. Brebner to Secretary, Chamber of Mines, 18 July 1951.

⁷¹² *Report of the Board of Inquiry to Consider the Proposed 40-Hour Week in the Copper Mining Industry of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1950), pp. 12-13.

Copperbelt had to adhere to norms in other mining regions.⁷¹³ Debates this demand generated illustrate the extensive reach of the mines and their European employees and their significance went beyond the length of the working week. As Wallington Pope, the Australian manager of Nchanga, explained “The whole of the Mining Industry is keyed to eight-hour shifts” so changing this touched on questions of how the mines should be organised and by who.⁷¹⁴

The mining industry opposed any move to a 40-hour week. They argued it was without “precedent in the African mining industry” and the Copperbelt should follow “practice on the Rand.”⁷¹⁵ White mineworkers had wider horizons, especially since large numbers had arrived from outside Northern Rhodesia after the war. The white workforce expanded from 2,060 daily-paid and 1,212 staff employees in 1945 to 2,749 daily-paid and 1,499 staff in 1949.⁷¹⁶ The NRMWU bolstered the case for a shorter working week with reference to post-war changes in the mining industries in Britain, the United States and New Zealand along with the 40-hour week imposed for all industries in Australia from 1948. The mining companies preferred to compare the Copperbelt to other parts of Africa.⁷¹⁷ The companies also contended that the 40-hour week should be assessed on “its effect on the population as a whole” as they claimed would lead to idleness among Africans and consequently discontent, whereas white mineworkers only considered what impact it would have on themselves.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹³ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Notes of a meeting held between representatives of the copper companies and the NRMWU, 11 May 1949

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Record of meeting of Executive Council with representatives of the copper mining companies, 31 January 1950.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter from A.W. Goodbody, Mufulira London to Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, 23 June 1949.

⁷¹⁶ Appendix II.

⁷¹⁷ *40-hour Week Board*, p. 16.

⁷¹⁸ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Notes on 40-hour week demand general considerations, 12 October 1949.

White mineworkers were also aware that things were changing in Africa. A pan-African conference of WFTU-affiliated trade unions – which the NRMWU did not attend but sent a message of support hoping that it was “successful in obtaining for all workers on the continent of Africa democratic rights” – in Dakar in April 1947 passed motions calling for a 40-hour week and ‘equal pay for equal work’.⁷¹⁹ Closer to home, the NRMWU held a joint meeting with the AMU in January 1950 where both organisations agreed to co-operate over the 40-hour week after the latter passed a resolution in November 1949 pledging “to support any steps taken by the European Union to achieve this principle.”⁷²⁰

The mining companies were forced to draw on their own networks to contest the claims made by their workforce. Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST) requested information from the American Metal Company (AMC) on how the 40-hour week operated “with regard to daily paid employees” and AMC contacted their shareholder Phelps Dodge to obtain information on Climax and Morenci Mines, two mines where RST had sourced senior staff for the Copperbelt.⁷²¹ Similarly, the connections of the Newmont Mining Company enabled RAA to send a manager to discover that the “40 hour week seemed to be universal in all the camps I visited in the States, and in most of the Canadian ones.”⁷²²

The importance of the Copperbelt to the British economy grew steadily after the Second World War and the proportion of British copper consumption supplied by Northern Rhodesia reached a high of 88.8% in January 1950.⁷²³ This importance

⁷¹⁹ IISH WFTU Box 168, Brief report, Pan-African Trade Union Conference, [undated].

⁷²⁰ NAB CO 537/6506, Notes on the labour situation in Northern Rhodesia, April 1950. ZCCM 16.2.5B, Telegram from Selection Trust London to Chamber of Mines, 10 January 1950.

⁷²¹ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Letter from H.R. Finn to Thomas Moore, American Metal Company, 30 March 1950.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, Letter from O.B Bennett to C.F.S. Taylor, Rhokana Corporation, 24 June 1950.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, The Copper Industry in Relation to the Economy of the United Kingdom, 6 June 1950.

ensured the threat of disruption to production prompted yet another official inquiry, this time a three-person board headed by British academic Daniel Thomson Jack. The other two members were nominated by institutions regarded as the counterparts of the Chamber of Mines and the NRMWU in Britain. Representing the mining companies was once again William Gemmill, nominated by the British Employers' Confederation. Gemmill successfully persuaded Jack that a 40-hour week would increase costs, decrease tax revenue and exacerbate a shortage of African labour, so should be rejected. The union representative, nominated by the British TUC, was an official from the Durham Miners' Association, T. Moore, who wrote a dissenting report supporting the 40-hour week and longer holidays.⁷²⁴

Debates over the working week rumbled on for years and continued to be informed by conditions elsewhere in the world. Max Goldick, concentrator superintendent at Roan Antelope, warned other managers about the "serious change for the worse in industrial-economic conditions" he had noticed when he returned to Australia to visit and attributed this to introduction of the 40-hour week.⁷²⁵ When the issue flared up again in 1955, Goldick was able to gather information on the perceived pernicious effects of a reduction in working hours from his contacts in Australia.⁷²⁶ Others saw Australia as something to be emulated. Shortly after the 40-hour week claim was rejected, Maybank undertook an extensive visit to New Zealand and Australia and spent time in Broken Hill, "where workers and their organisations achieved a

⁷²⁴ *40-hour Week Board*, pp. 26-27, 35. 'Rhod. copper miners' hours', *Financial Times*, 6 December 1950.

⁷²⁵ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Memorandum from M.R. Goldick, 23 February 1953.

⁷²⁶ ZCCM 12.2.1B, Extract from a letter from Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company of Australia to M.R. Goldick.

degree of collective control without parallel in Australian historical experience.”⁷²⁷

Taking over the helm in Maybank’s absence was Dave Welensky, who was eminently qualified to do so. Welensky had come to Northern Rhodesia after being sacked from Wankie Colliery in Southern Rhodesia and blacklisted for trying to organise a union for white miners and then refusing to work with anyone who did not join.⁷²⁸ Welensky had only gone to Southern Rhodesia because he had to leave the Rand after being convicted of smashing the windows of Norman Anstey, then Johannesburg mayor, during the 1913 white mineworkers’ strike.⁷²⁹ Welensky is a good example of how Britain and its trade union movement exerted a powerful influence over white mineworkers’ consciousness and their sense of their place in the world. Even though he visited the UK for the first time in 1951, Welensky –son of an Afrikaner mother and a Lithuanian Jewish father – referred to it as “the old country.” He visited as guest of the British NUM and met several leading Labour Party members, including Clement Atlee.⁷³⁰ This was a reciprocal visit as NUM officials from Barnsley, Cumberland and St Helens had visited the Copperbelt in May 1950 as guests of the NRMWU, and presumably enjoyed their visit as they racked up an £184 bar bill.⁷³¹

These links were underpinned by continued flows of white migrants to and from the Copperbelt. On a visit in 1949, Harold Hochschild, head of the AMC, was struck by

⁷²⁷ ‘Personal’, *Barrier Miner*, 24 November 1951. Bradon Ellem and John Shields, ‘Making a ‘Union Town’: Class, Gender and Consumption in Inter-War Broken Hill’, *Labour History*, 78 (2000), p. 116.

⁷²⁸ Ian Phimister, *Wangi Kolia: Coal, Capital and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe 1894-1954* (Harare, 1994), p. 80.

⁷²⁹ Kenneth Vickery, North Carolina State University, Interview with Roy Welensky, 27 February 1987. I am grateful to Prof. Vickery for sharing this with me.

⁷³⁰ WP 681/1, Letter from Dave Welensky to Roy Welensky, 29 November 1951.

⁷³¹ £5687 in 2015 figures. NAB CO 537/6506, Telegram from Colonial Secretary to Governor Rennie, 12 April 1950. NAZ MLSS1/26/68, NRMWU Balance sheet at 31st December, 1950, 11 April 1951.

the “international character” of the white workforce: “There are English, Scotch, Irish, Canadians, Central Europeans, Australians, Rhodesians, British South Africans, Afrikaners, and even a small remnant of Americans, all working cheek by jowl.”⁷³² Hundreds of Europeans sought to move to the Copperbelt every month. Many heard about opportunities on the Copperbelt from those already working there, even if they did not intend to stay themselves. Peter Hills’ uncle, Bob Hills, who had come to the Copperbelt from London following demobilisation, persuaded Hills’ father to join him, only to move to in 1952 New Zealand shortly after they arrived.⁷³³ Most winding engine drivers at Rhokana were from South Wales as Welsh men already working there had written to others from South Wales telling them to come.⁷³⁴ Evan Morgan worked as a winding engine driver for 30 years in South Wales where “I got nothing nor did I expect anything” before coming to the Copperbelt. His remarks on retirement from Rhokana were brief: “Anyway, what about all that money waiting for us at Central Office.”⁷³⁵

Boom time

There were good reasons why white mineworkers did not press harder for the 40-hour week: the Copperbelt was in the midst of a boom that brought unprecedented affluence to the European community. Wages were rocketing, production hit record highs and there was no shortage of work. For the first time in over a decade the recognition agreement between the NRMWU and the mining companies – which fixed the working week at 48 hours – was renewed with little acrimony. This was helped, no doubt, by the fact it boosted the minimum daily rates for European

⁷³² Prain Papers, University of Wyoming, Laramie [hereafter PP], Box 1, Visit to the Rhodesias, 22 October 1949.

⁷³³ Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014

⁷³⁴ ‘The ‘Dais’ have it at the Mindola hoist room’, *Rhokana Review*, March 1955.

⁷³⁵ ‘They retire this month’, *Rhokana Review*, June 1955.

mineworkers from between 28/6 and 44/6 (depending on the job) in 1949 to between 45/6 and 65/6 in 1951.⁷³⁶

This was important because the copper bonus was calculated as a percentage of basic pay and this percentage increased as copper prices rose, with no upper limit. Average annual wages for European mineworkers soared from £562 in 1948, to £1,068 in 1950 and £1,943 in 1955, following the upward trajectory of copper prices.⁷³⁷ This served as a powerful incentive to attract other Europeans to the Copperbelt. Moreover, while the going was good, the workers were more likely to stay. Annual turnover among the white workforce dropped from around 28% in 1947-48 to 18% in 1952-53, undoubtedly connected to the huge increase in the copper bonus from 29% of basic wages to 74% in the same period.⁷³⁸ Money was spent as rapidly as it was received and conspicuous consumption was one of the most striking aspects of Copperbelt life for contemporary observers. This has been detailed by Ian Phimister so this section will focus on the implications of this affluence for the European community.⁷³⁹

Europeans on the Copperbelt had never had it so good and perhaps no-one else had either. British Labour MP, and former NUM legal adviser, Ronald Williams claimed in 1955 that “it may fairly be said that there are no miners elsewhere in the world, not even in America, who can say their position is better.”⁷⁴⁰ Walter Hood, a British TUC adviser, reached the same conclusion: “the European miner is the best

⁷³⁶ IISH MIF Box 358, Agreement between NRMWU and Rhokana Corporation Limited, 1 September 1951.

⁷³⁷ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 198. Appendix III.

⁷³⁸ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers*, p. 54.

⁷³⁹ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, pp. 183-85, 195-202.

⁷⁴⁰ Ronald Williams, ‘Trade Unions in Africa’, *African Affairs*, 54, 217 (1955), pp. 269-70.

paid in the world.”⁷⁴¹ The benefits weren’t only high wages. The mines provided comfortable housing at nominal rents, supplied with a generous free allowance of electricity and water, subsidised healthcare and leisure facilities.⁷⁴² “The mines did everything for you, they had all the amenities... a cradle to grave system,” recalled John Purvis, who grew up in Luanshya. In return, “all you had to do was pull the stuff out of the ground.”⁷⁴³

One distinctive feature in this period was that Europeans who were near the bottom of the social pile elsewhere in the world arrived on the Copperbelt and found they were on top. Contemporary commentary often dwelt on how this upset the conventional social order of things. One local welfare officer termed the copper bonus “a curse” because it had turned the Copperbelt “into a fertile field for the breeding of juvenile delinquency, with its over-ripe teenage girls who dress and make up like grown women, and the cocky young boys.” A Luanshya farmer complained “these people have never had money before [and] they simply don’t know what to do with it.” Such people, a journalist added, “lived simple, ordinary lives on coal mines in Wales” or the Orange Free State “before they came to the Copperbelt.”⁷⁴⁴ White mineworkers would openly flaunt new-found wealth and these displays were encouraged, such as the Nchanga carpenter described as having “bought himself a brand new car with the money he *didn’t spend* overseas” in 1956, or union stalwart Guy Spires who “outgrew his car not long ago and bought himself

⁷⁴¹ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Trade Union Congress: Report on Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Kenya, 15 July 1954.

⁷⁴² *40-hour Week Board*, p. 11.

⁷⁴³ Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

⁷⁴⁴ ‘Copper bonus sets the pace’, *Cape Argus*, 19 November 1955.

an American model.”⁷⁴⁵ “For many Europeans, the Copperbelt is a fabulous Land of Begin Again” according to the non-conformist minister Colin Morris.⁷⁴⁶

The boom also opened up manifold opportunities for Europeans outside the mines. Andrew Sardanis, a Cypriot migrant who became a businessman, heard about the boom from his brother-in-law and moved out to join him in 1950. Chingola, he found:

was a developer’s dream-come-true. There were roads to be built, shops, offices, houses, schools, warehouses, everything that makes a town. But as there were no developers or contractors everybody tried their hand.⁷⁴⁷

Sardanis’ uncle, stepfather and brother-in-law had been mechanics and went into the transport business, delivering firewood to Nchanga Mine’s power station. The booming Copperbelt towns offered wide-ranging opportunities beyond constructing new buildings. After his first job as a building contractor constructing new premises for *Northern News*, former mine mason Len Catchpole branched out to become a publican, politician, undertaker and arms smuggler.⁷⁴⁸

The mines acted as a safety net for Europeans on the Copperbelt. Many saved up enough money to start a business, buy a hotel or go farming, safe in the knowledge that if things went badly they could probably get a job on the mines again. 14% of the white workforce at Nchanga Mine in January 1960 had resigned at some point in the 1950s and been re-engaged, and 16 people had resigned three times.⁷⁴⁹ Farming seems to have been a particularly challenging occupation for former mineworkers.

⁷⁴⁵ ‘Nchanga mine affairs’, *Nchanga Magazine*, November 1956. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁴⁶ Colin Morris, *The Hour After Midnight. A Missionary’s Experiences of Racial and Political Struggle in Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1961), p. 13. Morris was himself born into a mining family in Lancashire.

⁷⁴⁷ Andrew Sardanis, *Africa: Another Side of the Coin: Northern Rhodesia’s Final Years and Zambia’s Nationhood* (London, 2003), p. 21.

⁷⁴⁸ William Gale, *The History of the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company Ltd* (Salisbury, 1962), p. 190.

⁷⁴⁹ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers*, p. 51.

Contemporary publications are replete with stories like that of Ben Fryer who left Nkana to become a poultry farmer in South Africa, only to sign on again as a miner after all his chickens died of disease.⁷⁵⁰ Many came to appreciate the lesson learnt by Mufulira shaft clerk Percy Bell: “farming in Northern Rhodesia is for optimists and/or millionaires.”⁷⁵¹ Jim Purvis was plagued with problems after he established a farm near Luanshya on his retirement from Roan Antelope in 1954. His pigs kept dying mysteriously and Purvis became convinced someone was poisoning them. Further investigations revealed that two of the pigs had died from a soda overdose as Purvis has been feeding them with sweepings from the mine compound which contained soda. This was followed by a complaint that 600 chickens had been stolen from him but none of his neighbours believed he ever owned this many birds and Purvis would not tell the police when the alleged theft had taken place.⁷⁵²

This influx of wealth had other consequences. High wages and the copper bonus accrued almost entirely to male mineworkers and gave them greater resources to shape European society. Most jobs on the mines were reserved for men only and it is possibly because this ‘bar’ seemed so normal that it has attracted little comment. Ida Delaney spent 13 years as shaft clerk at Nkana’s Central Shaft but had to leave in 1955 “because the office of shaft clerk has been reclassified as a man’s job.”⁷⁵³ Mining was regarded as tough. Skatie Fourie – who worked underground at Nkana – remembered the advice given to his “very, very skinny” friend when he failed his blasting licence exam in the mid-1950s: “you must get some beef on you because you are not strong enough to be a miner.”⁷⁵⁴ High earnings were closely connected

⁷⁵⁰ ‘Around Nkana’, *Rhokana Review*, May 1955.

⁷⁵¹ ‘Mufulira Roundabout’, *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

⁷⁵² WP 658/5, Letter from A.T. Williams to Roy Welensky, 10 November 1954.

⁷⁵³ ‘Around Nkana’, *Rhokana Review*, August 1955.

⁷⁵⁴ Interview with Skatie Fourie, 11 May 2014.

to masculinity and the highest earners' on the mines, rockbreakers, were also those who were regarded as having the toughest, riskiest job. On his retirement from Mufulira, Joe Adams was lionised as the "iron man" who "must have broken a few million tons of ore in his days" as a miner in Cumberland, Arizona, then New Zealand, back in Cumberland and then in Mufulira from 1934.⁷⁵⁵

Wealth enabled men to acquire respectability and upward mobility. Jerry Steyn was a ventilation engineer at Nkana Mine, vice-president of MOSSA and became 'the honourable' after being elected Legislative Council member for Kitwe-Nkana in 1954. Steyn had come far since he arrived in Northern Rhodesia in the late 1930s when he had entered the territory illegally from South Africa, obtained a temporary visitor's permit and then travelled to Nkana to seek work. He subsequently tried the same trick in 1941 to get his brother and a friend jobs. Steyn's own background remains elusive, but his brother admitted he was "a farmer, but had no farm of his own and worked for other people," in other words a bywoner. It is likely Steyn's initial situation was similar.⁷⁵⁶

The European community was a masculine one and centred on traditionally masculine activities: manual work, sport and heavy alcohol consumption. It is notable, however, what is missing from typical male-dominated mining towns: prostitution.⁷⁵⁷ This is explained by the numbers of European women on the

⁷⁵⁵ 'Mufulira Roundabout', *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

⁷⁵⁶ NAZ SEC3/48, Letter from N. Brodie, Chief Immigration Officer to Chief Secretary, 6 February 1942.

⁷⁵⁷ Julia Ann Laite argued that "prostitution's place in mining communities was... pervasive and enduring" in 'Historical Perspectives on Industrial Development, Mining, and Prostitution', *The Historical Journal*, 52, 3 (2009), p. 742.

Karen Hansen claims that some men among the wave of post-war wave of white migrants sought casual sexual relations with African women, see *Distant Companions: Servant and Employer in Zambia, 1900–1985* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 139. However, the lack of concern about prostitution on the Copperbelt in official correspondence is telling.

Copperbelt.⁷⁵⁸ Unlike other colonial settings, European men could to bring their families with them or get married on the Copperbelt. For instance, Rhokana's 1,891-strong European workforce in September 1954 comprised of 1,408 married men, 353 single men, 60 married women and 70 single women.⁷⁵⁹ Re-creating the nuclear family was about self-actualization as Europeans had the resources to pursue the kind of lives they wanted to live.

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Figure 4.2: Social at the Rhokana Club following the Rhodesian women's hockey tournament, 1953. "One of very few occasions" when women had been in the majority there according to the accompanying article. 'The Sporting World', *Rhokana Review*, July 1953.

The Copperbelt's European community was a 'masculine' one because the main workplaces and the public sphere were dominated by men, who had the resources to do so. Many women did work – mainly because they felt it was normal to work – but these jobs were not well-paid. The 1956 Federal census found that across the Federation "the proportion of the female European population which is economically active is amongst the highest in the world" with 28.2% of married European women

⁷⁵⁸ Appendix I.

⁷⁵⁹ 'Around Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

in employment.⁷⁶⁰ On the Copperbelt, one-third of mineworkers' wives surveyed in 1959 worked but only a minority reported they worked for purely financial reasons and almost all who did work stated they would work if they lived elsewhere.⁷⁶¹ Alan Chattaway recalled that his mother, Elizabeth, worked in a butchery and then a bakery in Luanshya, even though his father worked on the mine.⁷⁶² The de-facto colour bar ensured the kind of jobs typically seen as 'women's work' elsewhere in the English-speaking world – nurses, waitresses, shop assistants or secretaries – were open to European women.

Most European women were relieved of the responsibility for domestic work by African servants, so having a job occupied their time. In January 1950, Mufulira's European population of 1,161 men, 914 women and 1,142 children were served by 1,086 African male domestic workers.⁷⁶³ Not all European women had servants. Even though the father of Heather Walker, born in Luanshya in 1946, was an artisan at Roan Antelope, the family could not afford servants as they had nine children and, she noted, it was not unusual for European families to live without servants.⁷⁶⁴ Elizabeth Chattaway had herself been a domestic servant before leaving Britain in 1952 and this made her uncomfortable employing African servants, eventually she resumed cooking and cleaning in her house.⁷⁶⁵

The resources male European mineworkers had to shape Copperbelt society can be seen in sports and recreation clubs. They could, for example, afford to play almost

⁷⁶⁰ Karen Hansen, 'White Women in a Changing World. Employment, voluntary work, and sex, in post-World War II Northern Rhodesia', in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds.), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Indiana, 1992), p. 253.

⁷⁶¹ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part II: An Interview Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), p. viii.

⁷⁶² Interview with Alan Chattaway, 4 November 2013.

⁷⁶³ Malcolm Watson, *African highway: the battle for health in Central Africa* (London, 1953), p. 124.

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with Heather Walker, 13 July 2013.

⁷⁶⁵ Interview with Alan Chattaway, 4 November 2013.

any sport they wanted. 17/6 per month gave any European resident of Chingola the opportunity to play rugby, football, cricket, baseball, tennis, hockey, squash, jukskei or athletics at Nchanga Mine Club.⁷⁶⁶ All this required equipment and, as a sports equipment shop owner commented, “Only the best is good enough for the fellows here, and because they can afford it, only the best is stocked.” More expensive status symbols were eagerly sought in the form of yachts at the various sailing clubs – there were 60 yacht owners at Nkana in 1956 – and horses at gymkhanas.⁷⁶⁷ Most ostentatious, though, were the flying clubs. The Flying Club of Northern Rhodesia had five branches – all on the Copperbelt – with some 450 members in 1952 and was an affiliate of the Royal Aero Club in London.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁶ ZCCM 10.5.7F, Nchanga Mine Recreation Club, [undated]. Jukskei is a traditional South African game where players throw sticks to knock over wooden pegs placed a short distance away.

⁷⁶⁷ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part I*, p. 34.

⁷⁶⁸ NAZ NR 5/4, Flying Club of Northern Rhodesia, Balance Sheet at 31 December 1952.

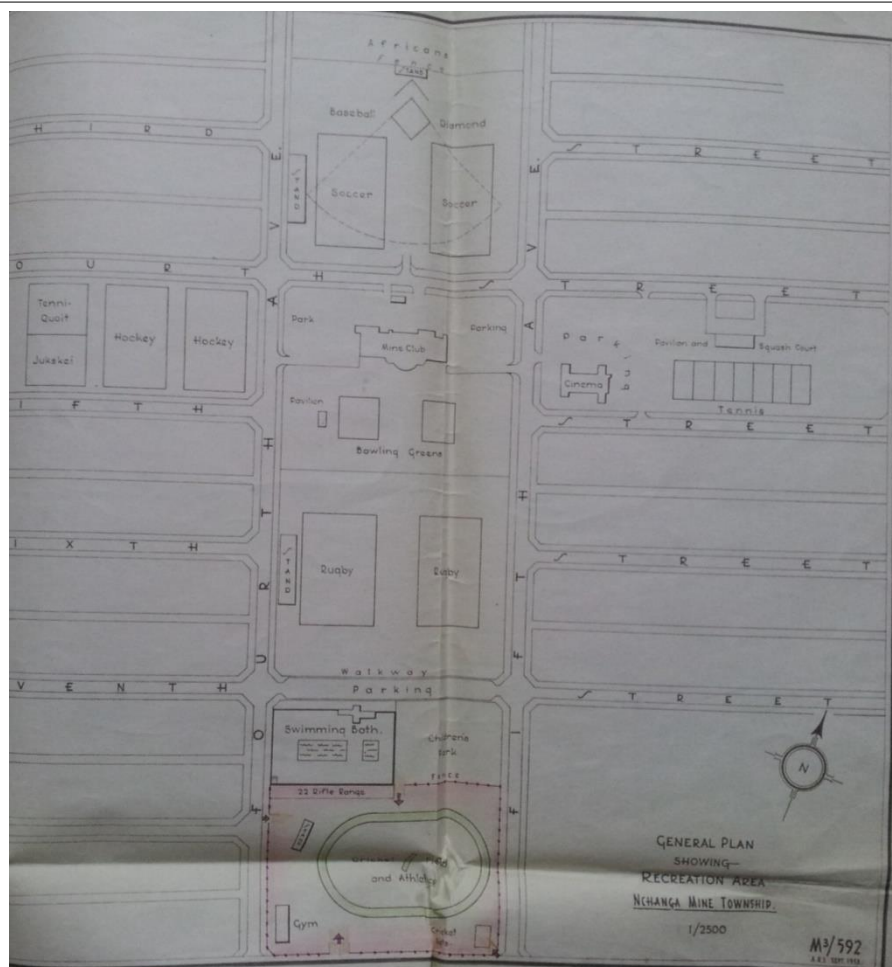


Figure 4.3: Map showing the wide variety of sports facilities in Nchanga Mine Township, 1953. ZCCM T3.8B. General Plan showing Nchanga Mine Township, September 1953.

Male mineworkers also had the leverage to extract generous subsidies for all these activities from the mining companies. When the Mufulira Mine Club committee decided to refurbish the club lounge, furnish the new cinema, build a swimming pool and re-equip various sports teams in 1949, the mine provided an interest free loan of £34,000 and agreed a grant to match employee's club subscriptions.⁷⁶⁹ Another interest free loan of £43,400 and a grant of £33,400 were provided in 1955 when the club built a new bar, billiard rooms, badminton hall, athletics hall and theatre.⁷⁷⁰ The situation for other mine clubs was exactly the same. Such lavish benefits measured

⁷⁶⁹ £1.08m in 2015 figures.

⁷⁷⁰ £1.03m and £790,440 in 2015 figures. ZCCM 10.5.7F, Letter from M. McMonagle, Mufulira Mine Club to all Committee members, 30 March 1960.

“up to the best industrial welfare standards to be found anywhere in European industry” according to Harold Holt, then Australian Minister of Labour, in a speech at the Nkana Hotel.⁷⁷¹

Yet these benefits still did not stabilise the European population. A roundup of events in *Mufulira Magazine* in July 1953 reveals in that month alone five people had resigned from the mine to go to Canada, one to South Africa and another to Southern Rhodesia.⁷⁷² People were able to make decisions about moving because information about opportunities and life elsewhere in the world circulated on the Copperbelt. In June 1952, two Nkana apprentices left to join the Royal Canadian Air Force after they saw an advert in the *Toronto Star*. The article on their experiences was careful to note that “the road to Canada is by no means a one-way affair, however, for we have working with us a large number of Canadians as well as men who spent part of the lives in Canada.”⁷⁷³ Information about life on the Copperbelt circulated abroad as well. In 1954 some of the 3,000 copies of the *Rhokana Review* printed were sent to Australia, Canada, Europe, the United States and Turkey.⁷⁷⁴ It turned up in all sorts of unlikely places and one former miner came across a copy in a farmhouse in County Wexford while traveling across Ireland.⁷⁷⁵

People left the Copperbelt for a multitude of reasons. Among the 245 European mineworkers who left Mufulira in 1949 the most common reason given was ‘domestic’ (47), followed by farming (33), going to South Africa (27), starting a business (22) and going overseas (21).⁷⁷⁶ Many Europeans came to the Copperbelt with a specific objective and left when this objective was fulfilled or when they

⁷⁷¹ ‘A remarkable achievement’, *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

⁷⁷² ‘Mufulira Roundabout’, *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

⁷⁷³ ‘News from Abroad’, *Rhokana Review*, February 1953.

⁷⁷⁴ ‘Editorial’, *Rhokana Review*, October 1954.

⁷⁷⁵ ‘Dublin to Nkana by Bicycle’, *Rhokana Review*, March 1954.

⁷⁷⁶ *40-hour Week Board*, p. 19.

perceived there were better opportunities for them elsewhere. Moreover, for all their attractions, the Copperbelt towns were still mining towns, with all that entailed. Sulphur dioxide produced in smelting operations at Mufulira was vented into the local atmosphere from 1937 onwards and the European township and recreation grounds were next to the surface plants.⁷⁷⁷ In Luanshya, Steve Smith, who moved there as a child from British Columbia in 1953, remembered that fumes from the smelter regularly blew across the European township.⁷⁷⁸ Mine work itself was often tedious. One Rhokana hoist driver explained that “because of the time I spend at my monotonous profession... by the end of July I am almost ready to blow up the hoist,” so went on holiday.⁷⁷⁹

Social life

On Christmas Eve 1952, the Rhokana Club officially opened their new bar which, at 72 feet in length, was claimed to be the longest in the Rhodesias and cost £13,000.⁷⁸⁰ Club patrons certainly intended to get their money’s worth. In the previous year, the bar had sold an average of 1,808 beers, 38 bottles of brandy and 22 bottles of whisky every single day, and it was only one of several bars in Kitwe.⁷⁸¹ Across the Copperbelt, alcohol lubricated a rich associational culture and the bar was “the *pièce de résistance*” of most club interiors.⁷⁸² Drinking culture was epitomized by Len Catchpole, landlord of the Elephant and Castle pub in Ndola and

⁷⁷⁷ J. Ross and D. de Vries, ‘Mufulira Smelter Upgrade Project – Industry Smelting on the Zambian Copperbelt’, Pyrometallurgy 2005 conference, Cape Town, March 2005.

⁷⁷⁸ Interview with Steve Smith, 13 June 2013.

⁷⁷⁹ ‘August madness’, *Rhokana Review*, November 1958.

⁷⁸⁰ £327,407 in 2015 figures.

⁷⁸¹ ‘Club’s new bar is opened’, *Rhokana Review*, February 1953.

⁷⁸² Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part I*, p. 43.

town mayor, who “used annually to add to the prestige of his office” by competing against an elephant in a beer drinking contest.⁷⁸³

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Figure 4.4: Crowd at the opening of new Rhokana Club bar, 1952. ‘New bar is opened’, *Rhokana Review*, February 1953. Note the crowd appears to be exclusively male.

This public drinking culture was largely a male preserve and accepted as normal by most European men on the Copperbelt. None of the 465 men surveyed in 1959 regarded alcohol consumption as a serious problem, whereas 42% of the women did.⁷⁸⁴ Women were expected to drink though. In 1956, *Northern News* offered female non-drinkers tips on how to hide the fact they weren’t drinking because avoiding drinking was less socially acceptable than drinking too much.⁷⁸⁵ That article may have been written by Florence Brooke-Anderson who was the first reporter assigned to Kitwe in 1955 and operated from a hotel bedroom, possibly even the same Kitwe hotel Doris Lessing stayed in 1956 where she encountered a “young woman journalist... who by eleven in the evening has drunk more than a bottle of

⁷⁸³ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 200.

⁷⁸⁴ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part II*, p. 90.

⁷⁸⁵ Deborah Kallmann, ‘Projected Moralities, Engaged Anxieties: Northern Rhodesia's Reading Publics, 1953-1964’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 32, 1 (1999), p. 79.

whiskey, without apparently ill-effects.”⁷⁸⁶ Many women were absorbed into this culture. Elizabeth Chattaway was shocked when she was invited to her first tea morning in Luanshya and arrived to find the other guests drinking liquor, but within a few years she had become an alcoholic herself.⁷⁸⁷ She was not alone. In November 1956, the Kitwe Committee on Alcoholism estimated that there were 400 European alcoholics on the Copperbelt.⁷⁸⁸

This culture produced the inevitable casualties. In 1939, a miner at Roan Antelope had complained presciently that “the Ndola-Luanshya road looks like Flanders in 1918. The corpses will be added later.”⁷⁸⁹ These were duly added. In the first 10 months of 1952, there were an astonishing 257 car accidents in Kitwe alone, killing 22 people and injuring almost 100.⁷⁹⁰ High accident rates remained consistent. In August 1956, there were 157 road accidents across the Copperbelt, killing 12 people and injuring 132.⁷⁹¹ “Northern Rhodesia’s drivers must rank among the world’s worst” exclaimed the *Rhokana Review*.⁷⁹² In retrospect, it is remarkable there were not also more accidents on the mines. One of Pamela Shurmer-Smith’s informants recalled being told “You chaps stink of alcohol – you’re bloody drunk still” by the cage-tender after he turned up for the early shift straight from the bar at the Rhokana Club.⁷⁹³ Mine managements were well aware of this. The standard accident report at

⁷⁸⁶ Gale, *Rhodesian Printing and Publishing*, p. 193. Doris Lessing, *Going Home* (London, 1968), p. 281.

⁷⁸⁷ Interview with Alan Chattaway, 4 November 2013.

⁷⁸⁸ ‘It could be you’, *Rhokana Review*, November 1956.

⁷⁸⁹ NAZ SEC1/1381, NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939

⁷⁹⁰ ‘Road safety’, *Rhokana Review*, December 1952.

⁷⁹¹ ‘Road accidents’, *Nchanga Magazine*, November 1956.

⁷⁹² ‘Editorial’, *Rhokana Review*, May 1954.

⁷⁹³ Pamela Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire: Memory and Northern Rhodesia’s White Diaspora* (Lusaka, 2014), pp. 62-63.

Nchanga contained a section asking if the accident had been caused by the “injured man being under the influence of liquor.”⁷⁹⁴

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Figure 4.5: Rhokana Sailing & Boating Club, 1953. Cover, *Rhokana Review*, November 1953.

This culture was something that the Copperbelt had in common with other mining region and, as one contemporary visitor remarked, “mining communities all the world over have been hard livers.”⁷⁹⁵ Moreover, it has been argued that “a wide array of voluntary clubs and societies, was in fact a distinctive feature of the British World.”⁷⁹⁶ Certainly, flourishing social clubs were was a normal part of mining towns in Britain. The classic study of a Yorkshire mining community, *Coal is our Life*, revealed that in 1953 the town had eight men’s social clubs with a combined membership of 6,844,

⁷⁹⁴ ZCCM 4.4.5G, Accident Report, Nchanga Mines, 28 August 1961.

⁷⁹⁵ Gibbs, *Avalanche in Central Africa*, p. 65.

⁷⁹⁶ Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of people, goods and capital in the British World, c.1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 136.

drawn from an adult male population of less than 5,000.⁷⁹⁷ What was distinctive about the Copperbelt was the kind of leisure and recreation clubs which flourished as the wealth from the mines allowed the predominately working-class population to do what they could not elsewhere. "You could do anything there" Pam van Heerden, who lived in Ndola, Kitwe and Bancroft during the 1950s, fondly recalled. "If I today were given the opportunity to go back to what I left, I wouldn't even take a toothbrush, I would go."⁷⁹⁸ Any opportunities for leisure provided on the mines were taken full advantage of. For instance, vast quantities of water pumped from the mines were used to create lakes for boating and power boats. The completion of a dam at Mindola in 1950 was followed shortly by the creation of the Rhokana Sailing and Boating Club. Similarly, the Makoma Club was established in 1952 on a reservoir built for Roan Antelope Mine.⁷⁹⁹

Copperbelt social life was partly about creating a colonial experience like working-class life elsewhere in the English-speaking world. So, along with football and rugby clubs, there was a Copperbelt Racing Pigeon Federation – "an important component of male working-class culture" in Britain⁸⁰⁰ – boxing clubs in all the towns and a darts league. The darts league at Nkana was formed by a painter from Northumberland while the boxing club was run by a miner originally from Merthyr Tydfil who had arrived on the Copperbelt from the United States with boxing titles from both sides of the Atlantic under his belt.⁸⁰¹ They were re-creating the world they knew. Dane Kennedy has argued that the popularity of British clubs and societies in Southern

⁷⁹⁷ Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life: An analysis of a Yorkshire mining community* (London, 1956), p. 142. This book contains a more direct link to Northern Rhodesia: the authors praise the guidance rendered by Max Gluckman in the acknowledgements.

⁷⁹⁸ Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013.

⁷⁹⁹ 'Copperbelt sailors', *Horizon*, July 1959.

⁸⁰⁰ Martin Johnes, 'Pigeon racing and working-class culture in Britain, c. 1870-1950', *Cultural and Social History*, 4, 3 (2007), p. 361.

⁸⁰¹ 'Sporting world', *Rhokana Review*, April 1952, November 1953. 'They retired in June', *Rhokana Review*, July 1956.

Rhodesia and Kenya “was no simple manifestation of national origin” but were necessary for “indoctrination in the normative values of settler society.” A related argument applied to the Copperbelt’s European community. Such clubs helped Europeans move to the Copperbelt because they made life on the Copperbelt more similar to life elsewhere. It was more about eroding difference than helping new arrivals adjust to a “strange and trying environment.”⁸⁰²

The erosion of difference can also be seen in the development of national societies. Unlike the Sons of England in the 1930s, the societies which flourished in the 1950s focused on social and cultural activities. Their emergence led to additional dates in the social calendar rather than assertive separatism. The formation of the Australian and New Zealand Association in October 1955, with branches in each of the Copperbelt towns, seemed to have little consequence other than organising an annual social for ANZAC Day.⁸⁰³ The development of a white identity was a homogenizing force among Europeans and there was little friction between Europeans of different nationalities in the new affluent society. According to Boet Liebenberg, who moved to the Copperbelt as a child in 1947, there was none of the tension between English and Afrikaans-speaking whites on the Copperbelt that he felt whenever he returned to South Africa.⁸⁰⁴ The Copperbelt towns contained Dutch Reformed Churches and jukskei clubs but none of the separatist Afrikaner cultural organisations prevalent in South Africa in this period. This was very different to the early 1940s when Ossewa Brandwag branches had been formed clandestinely.

⁸⁰² Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler society and culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, NC, 1987), p. 180.

⁸⁰³ ‘Club News’, *Rhokana Review*, June 1956.

⁸⁰⁴ Interview with Boet Liebenberg, 7 July 2014.

John MacKenzie has remarked on “the extraordinary incidence of Caledonian and Burns societies, of sports clubs and Highland games, even in such unlikely places as Djakarta and Tokyo.”⁸⁰⁵ He could well have added Chingola as an ‘unlikely place’, for there was an active Caledonian Society, pipe band, Highland games and Burns’ suppers.⁸⁰⁶ MacKenzie also claimed that these societies functioned as networking opportunities for businessmen and other local social elites and that “trade unionists seldom were [members].”⁸⁰⁷ This was not the case on the Copperbelt, where staunch trade unionist and Rand Revolt veteran Tom Ross was a stalwart of the Caledonian Society. White mineworkers and their families were enthusiastic participants in activities normally reserved for social elites elsewhere. While mine manager Frank Buch was the founder of Kitwe Polo Club, by the late 1950s, one senior mining official commented “With regards to polo, it used to be called the ‘sport of millionaires’, but you may now find the captain of the local team to be a plumber.”⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁵ John MacKenzie, ‘Scots in New Zealand and Elsewhere in the British Empire: An international perspective’, *Immigrations and Migrants*, 29, 2 (2011), p. 168.

⁸⁰⁶ ‘Caledonian Games’ *Rhokana Review*, August 1952.

⁸⁰⁷ MacKenzie, ‘Scots in New Zealand’, p. 168.

⁸⁰⁸ Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 143. Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers*, p. 37.



Figure 4.6: Mufulira Pipe Band at the 1956 Chingola Highland Games.
www.mufulira.co.za/photo.html

The European community on the Copperbelt was in no sense isolated and individuals kept “proudly up-to-date with the latest developments in any of its chosen field of interest.”⁸⁰⁹ The newly formed Baseball Umpires Association in Chingola was kept updated about the latest rules and techniques by an American side which toured the Copperbelt in January 1956.⁸¹⁰ There were clear American influences in the culture of the European community. All the Copperbelt towns had at least one baseball team and many of these were established by Americans working on the mines. The Nkana Braves were established and coached by Ted Ragsdale, the Texan assistant smelter superintendent.⁸¹¹ Charles Ambler has written about the impact of American films and Westerns on Copperbelt African culture on the but

⁸⁰⁹ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part I*, p. 45.

⁸¹⁰ ‘Sporting world’, *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

⁸¹¹ ‘80 years’ service in Nkana’, *Rhokana Review*, January 1953.

cowboys and Indians were also popular among Europeans.⁸¹² When the Women's Institute opened the first public library in the Kitwe the 1,200 books available were divided into fiction, non-fiction, crime and Westerns.⁸¹³

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Figure 4.7: Crowd gathers to watch baseball game in Nkana Park.
Cover, *Rhokana Review*, March 1957.

International social and cultural links were facilitated by the wealth of the community as societies could afford to bring in rugby teams, football coaches, concert pianists and theatre critics, or guarantee them an audience to make it worth their while visiting. This bolstered a sense of familiarity for Europeans on the Copperbelt. In 1952, Newcastle United, then English FA Cup holders, played a Northern Rhodesian side at Nkana in front of a crowd of 6,000.⁸¹⁴ South African rugby sides regularly toured and the towns played host to international matches such as the July 1955

⁸¹² Charles Ambler, 'Popular Films and Colonial Audiences', *The American Historical Review*, 106, 1 (2001), pp. 81-105.

⁸¹³ 'Kitwe public library', *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

⁸¹⁴ 'The Magpies at Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, August 1952.

rugby union match between the British Lions and Rhodesia at Nkana.⁸¹⁵ World-famous individuals visited. The guestbook at the Roan Antelope guesthouse included entries from Shakespearean actress Sybil Thorndike, Welsh dramatist Emyln Williams, Edmund Hillary the famed mountaineer, South African golfer Bobby Locke and two-times US Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson.⁸¹⁶

Although new and previously inaccessible forms of recreation and consumption were available on the Copperbelt for Europeans, this was not an egalitarian society. Powdermaker reported that Europeans mixed socially at the mine club but “the guest list at parties frequently recognised status distinctions.”⁸¹⁷ These status distinctions were the hierarchy of the mines transferred directly into the social sphere. Indian-born Oliver Bennett, Rhokana mine manager from 1951 to 1961, was connected to an astonishing 33 different clubs. Bennett was president or chairman of Rhokana Sailing and Boating club, the golf club, Diggers Rugby Club, Nkana Soccer Club, the swimming club, Commando Cubs Motor Cycle Club, Nkana Flying Club and Nkana Pigeon Racing Club.⁸¹⁸

Still, Bennett and other mine managers deliberately tried to cultivate a sense that Copperbelt society was egalitarian off the job. A report of an inter-departmental cricket match at Rhokana in 1953 enthused “What is better than having your Underground Manager as a cover-point... and above all your cover-point... enjoying every minute of it.”⁸¹⁹ This harkened back to the initial rationale for establishing recreation clubs 20 years earlier when Leslie Pollak, then RAA Managing Director,

⁸¹⁵ ‘Sporting world’, *Rhokana Review*, September 1955.

⁸¹⁶ ‘Guesthouse Triumvirate’, *Horizon*, March 1959.

⁸¹⁷ Powdermaker, *Copper Town*, p. 69.

⁸¹⁸ ‘Mr O.B. Bennett, OBE’, *Rhokana Review*, July 1956. See ‘Sporting World’, *Rhokana Review*, October 1952, March 1952, April 1954, May 1955, July 1955 and May 1956 for Bennett’s various appointments.

⁸¹⁹ ‘The sporting world’, *Rhokana Review*, February 1953. A cover-point is a fielding position in cricket.

wrote that the creation of a club and playing fields “might prove a valuable counterweight to the labour agitator” by “facilitating intercourse between all ranks.”⁸²⁰ Social elites in the European community were prone to downplay class distinctions. Joan Hanford, president of the Federation of Women’s Institutes in Northern Rhodesia, did not believe there were any real class distinctions in the Women’s Institute as all their members were educated or had educated husbands. Hanford’s husband was Roan Antelope’s Director of Medical Services, whereas the median level of education for daily-paid mineworkers was four years of secondary school.⁸²¹

Political developments

Amalgamation between Northern and Southern Rhodesia had been consistently blocked by the British Government. By July 1948 Roy Welensky concluded that this decision would not be altered. Instead, he used his strengthened position in the Legislative Council, where elected white members outnumbered appointed officials for the first time following the 1948 elections, to press for federation rather than amalgamation.⁸²² Welensky’s timing was astute. The National Party’s victory in the May 1948 elections in South Africa made the British Government increasingly concerned about the prospect of political and economic expansion by an Afrikaner-dominated South Africa. The British Government regarded the migration of Afrikaners to the region as alarming and the secondary literature emphasises this as one of the most important motivations behind the creation of the Central African Federation in August 1953. Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were federated, argued Ronald Hyam, “to erect a counterpoise to the expansion of

⁸²⁰ ZCCM 2.5.31, Memorandum on Mine Recreation Clubs, L.A. Pollak, 21 June 1932.

⁸²¹ Hanford was also the niece of aristocratic settler politician Stewart Gore-Browne. Hansen, ‘White Women in a Changing World’, pp. 258-9. Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 195.

⁸²² Thomas Franck, *Race and Nationalism: The Struggle for Power in Rhodesia-Nyasaland* (London, 1960), p. 29.

South Africa.”⁸²³ Its creation represented a “bizarre construct of imperial grand strategy and settler sub-imperialism screwed together.”⁸²⁴

More recent literature has placed a greater emphasis on the role of pressure from European settlers in the creation of Federation.⁸²⁵ Andrew Roberts located intensified settler pressure in the context of increasing post-war white immigration to Northern Rhodesia, as many new arrivals “compared their lot with that of whites in Southern Rhodesia,” which had self-government.⁸²⁶ Demands for Federation emanated from the Copperbelt’s European community but it was less vociferous than demands for amalgamation in the late 1930s. A meeting held in Luanshya in February 1951 expressed grave concerns that British policy was “to encourage the African to take over this territory as soon as possible... in view of what has happened in other of Britain’s overseas possessions.” A self-governing federation with Southern Rhodesia was urgently required to avert racial clashes “knowing as we do, the temper of the European Mineworkers when exposed to the arrogance of petty minds.”⁸²⁷

Ironically, the consolidation of ‘British’ control over the region occurred concurrently with renewed American interest in the Copperbelt. The British Government had ceased bulk-buying the Copperbelt’s output in 1953 and this provided an opening for the US Government to bolster copper stockpiles. RST secured a £5m loan from the

⁸²³ Ronald Hyam, ‘The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1948-1953’, *The Historical Journal*, 30, 1 (1987), p. 169.

⁸²⁴ John Darwin, ‘The central African emergency, 1959’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 21, 3 (1993), p. 219.

⁸²⁵ Philip Murphy, ‘Government by Blackmail’: The Origins of the Central African Federation Reconsidered’ in Martin Lynn (ed.), *The British Empire in the 1950s: Retreat or Revival?* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 53-76.

⁸²⁶ Roberts, ‘Northern Rhodesia, 1945-1953’, p. 20.

⁸²⁷ ZCCM 12.2.1B, Proposal that an executive council meeting be called of all unions and associations, 19 February 1951.

US Government to open Chibuluma Mine.⁸²⁸ In 1955, RST, who followed RAA in moving their domicile to Northern Rhodesia in 1953, listed on the New York Stock Exchange to better acquire funding from American investors.⁸²⁹ Direct American financial interest in RAA dwindled in the same period and both Kennecott Copper and Newmont had sold their shares by 1953.⁸³⁰ RAA could draw on Anglo American's resources to fund expansion and the development of Bancroft Mine was funded through loans from Anglo American. However, both RAA and RST benefited from an £8m loan by the US Government in 1953 to the Rhodesia Congo Border Power Company, which was jointly owned by both companies, to overcome the persistent energy shortages hampering production.⁸³¹

Popular opinion in Copperbelt European society solidly endorsed the creation of Federation. Dougal Malcolm, president of the British South Africa Company, had fretted about the possibility of "a violent turn to the left" in Northern Rhodesia in 1949, but the kind of political radicalism prominent in the 1940s withered away.⁸³² It was still in sufficient evidence in the early 1950s for the local press to make some non-too-subtle digs at communists by reference to "the current invasion of the golf courses at Nchanga, Nkana and Mufulira by hordes of red mites" and their absence in Luanshya, where a "Society of the Friends of the Red Mites" may have been established instead.⁸³³ These remarks came in the aftermath of a strike by daily-paid

⁸²⁸ £141.6m in 2015 figures.

⁸²⁹ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 218. RAA moved their domicile to Lusaka in 1951.

⁸³⁰ Andrew Roberts, 'Notes towards a Financial History of Copper Mining in Northern Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 16, 2 (1982), p. 354.

⁸³¹ £201.48m in 2015 figures. Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York, 1981), pp. 109, 119.

⁸³² Peter Slinn, 'Commercial Concessions and Politics during the Colonial Period: The Role of the British South Africa Company in Northern Rhodesia 1890-1964', *African Affairs*, 70, 281 (1971), p. 377.

⁸³³ 'Red invaders on the Copperbelt', *Northern News*, 22 May 1951.

From 1950, one of the NRMWU's stated objects was "to replace the present competitive system by the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange." Historical Papers

mineworkers on May Day 1951 after mass meetings on the Copperbelt had called for it to be made a paid holiday.⁸³⁴

Donal Lowry has argued that radicalism among the white population declined in the Rhodesias after the Second World War when “politically exotic European refugees” left the region.⁸³⁵ This was only partly the case on the Copperbelt, as Europeans from ‘politically exotic’ backgrounds continued to be attracted there. In 1951, Louis Wilzig, a recently arrived miner, injected a dark tone into what was presumably intended to be a light-hearted feature when asked by the *Rhokana Review* to name a Christmas he would never forget. Christmas 1938, Wilzig responded, which he spent undertaking forced labour as a political prisoner at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.⁸³⁶ The influence of such radicals was rapidly diminishing though. This was indicated when the NRMWU belatedly followed other trade unions in the English-speaking world and left the WFTU in 1951, though the union had a member, Alec Stevens, on the WFTU General Council.⁸³⁷

Political radicals who arrived in the 1950s were not at the centre of the European community, as political radicals had been in the 1940s. This was partly a reflection of wider trends in the English-speaking world as the Cold War intensified and partly because such politics were no longer regarded as necessary to secure affluence for the European community. The latter may explain why those political radicals that

Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, AH 646 Dd17.65, NRMWU, Rules, August 1950.

⁸³⁴ NAB CO 795/168/8, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust London, 7 May 1951.

⁸³⁵ Donal Lowry, ‘The impact of anti-communism on white Rhodesian political culture, c.1920s-1980’, in Sue Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa: white power, black liberation* (London, 2009), p. 87.

⁸³⁶ ‘The Christmas I’ll never forget’, *Rhokana Review*, December 1951. Sachsenhausen was established to imprison communist and socialist opponents of the Nazi regime, see Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (London, 2008), p. 85.

⁸³⁷ NAB CO 1015/338, Extract from Report of the first meeting of the ICFTU Regional Fund Committee, 28-29 February 1952. American, British, Spanish and Dutch unions split from the WFTU in early 1949 claiming it was dominated by the Soviet Union. Goodwin attended the first WFTU Executive Committee meeting in Paris after the split in January 1949.

remained in Northern Rhodesia moderated their politics. Firebrand Brian Goodwin left Nkana Mine in late 1949, stood down from the Legislative Council and retired to a farm near Lusaka. When he briefly tried to return to politics, it was as a Federal Party candidate in the February 1954 territorial elections.⁸³⁸ The Copperbelt continued to elect independent labour candidates but their politics were largely indistinguishable from other white Legislative Council members. NRMWU Roan Antelope branch chair Albert Davies, a South African electrician, was elected as independent member for Luanshya in 1948 and Stevens was elected as an independent in Mufulira in 1953.⁸³⁹ Stevens' first public speech commended the creation of the Federation at the celebrations in Mufulira for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, from whom he accepted a coronation medal.⁸⁴⁰

The departure of Maybank epitomised the changing character of the European community. He quit as NRMWU general secretary and left the Copperbelt in September 1953 after clashes among the union leadership.⁸⁴¹ Relations between Maybank and other leading members had been poor for some time. Maybank was replaced by his ally Guy Spires but only for a short period.⁸⁴² A few months later, Ben Petersen was appointed acting general secretary while the union advertised widely for a permanent replacement. Although 42 applications were received – including many from overseas and reportedly one from recently exiled South African trade unionist Solly Sachs – Petersen was confirmed in the position in a vote by

⁸³⁸ 'Legislative Council election results', *Livingstone Mail*, 23 February 1954. Goodwin was one of only two Federal Party candidates not elected.

⁸³⁹ 'Profile: Albert Davies', *Horizon*, November 1959.

⁸⁴⁰ 'Mufulira rejoices as Elizabeth is crowned', *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

⁸⁴¹ Letter from Guy Spires, 1 September 1953, Personal papers of Frank Maybank, in author's possession.

⁸⁴² 'Mr Guy Spires', *Financial Times*, 6 December 1953.



Figure 4.8: Ben Petersen, 1957. *NRMWU Annual General Council* (Kitwe, 1957), p. 45.

delegates.⁸⁴³ Petersen was an odd choice. He had only worked at Nchanga Mine since around 1953 and prior to that had managed a restaurant in South Africa.⁸⁴⁴

Still, Petersen possessed a keen awareness of the international context. Only a few days into his appointment, Peterson wrote to William Lawther to request financial help to send a representative to the conferences of the Miners' International Federation and British NUM. This was necessary because "we would be lost

without the sympathy, the help, the moral support of the trade union movement in Great Britain; and in particular the support of the miners." A personal appearance was needed to "clear away so many misconceptions among our comrades abroad."⁸⁴⁵

African advancement

African advancement has featured heavily in accounts of the Copperbelt in the 1950s and it is assumed to be a centrally important development in this period.⁸⁴⁶ Some involved in the mining industry anticipated it would be. In 1949, Harold Hochschild argued that "all other problems on the Copperbelt, general and particular, are overshadowed by the inevitable conflict between the European and native labour

⁸⁴³ 'Petersen elected new general secretary', *Northern News*, 14 May 1955.

⁸⁴⁴ 'Petersen quits posts as union's secretary', *Northern News*, 12 December 1957.

⁸⁴⁵ IISH MIF Box 359, Letter from Ben Petersen to William Lawther, 17 May 1955.

⁸⁴⁶ Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland?', pp. 187-88, 192-95 details the secondary literature on African advancement.

unions.”⁸⁴⁷ The narrative of negotiations and commissions of enquiry have been clearly outlined in the secondary literature and a comprehensive study will not be provided here.⁸⁴⁸ This section will place these events into the broader context of what was happening in the European community to argue that there were more pressing issues for European mineworkers than conflict with African mineworkers.

Hostility of Europeans towards Africans has been stressed in the secondary literature. For instance, the only white mineworker Powdermaker described in any detail was an English handyman named ‘Mr T’ who talked “compulsively and unceasingly about the ‘kaffirs’; a deep and desperate hatred of them seemed to pervade his whole being.” His South African wife is depicted in similar terms.⁸⁴⁹ Company policy and social convention limited the prospects for friendly interactions with Africans. At Roan Antelope, ‘undue familiarity’ with Africans was a dismissible offence for European employees – as serious as arriving at work drunk, fighting at work or stealing company property – and “An employee must not have any dealings whatsoever with Non-European women.”⁸⁵⁰ Europeans who attempted to be friendly with Africans were frozen out of the Copperbelt social life. Andrew Sardanis was shunned by other Europeans in Chingola and received anonymous threatening phone calls for his friendship with Valentine Musakanya.⁸⁵¹ New European employees at Nkana were explicitly warned not to trust Africans in a company guide: “An African will lie without hesitation in order to save himself and furthermore he will think nothing of incriminating a perfectly innocent person.”⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁷ PP, Box 1, Visit to the Rhodesias, 22 October 1949.

⁸⁴⁸ See Butler, *Copper Empire*, pp. 137-45, 224-37.

⁸⁴⁹ Powdermaker, *Copper Town*, pp. 77-78.

⁸⁵⁰ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Rules and Penalties, Roan Antelope Copper Mines, 8 May 1951.

⁸⁵¹ Miles Larmer (ed.), *The Musakanya Papers: The autobiographical writings of Valentine Musakanya* (Lusaka, 2010), p. 20.

⁸⁵² ZCCM 13.3.4C, Relationships between the European employees and the African employees.

Many Europeans endorsed this view and believed that Africans lied about assaults on the mines. MOSSA representatives claimed at a meeting in 1950 that African mineworkers were able to 'blackmail' their members by exaggerating assaults and called for the mining regulations to be amended to make fighting underground an offence. NRMWU representatives opposed this. They were uninterested in the perspectives of Africans at the meeting and identified preventing an expansion underground managers' authority as the crucial issue.⁸⁵³ Violence was directed at Africans on and off the mines. Between November 1951 and November 1952, 68 Africans complained to the District Commissioner in Luanshya they were attacked by dogs owned by Europeans, usually while passing through the European township.⁸⁵⁴ Some European men revelled in their capacity for violence. Luanshya resident C.O. Kreft staunchly denied he had assaulted any African since arriving from Britain 10 months previously after he was accused of assault by Zimengo Mwansa and claimed if he had hit Mwansa "he would be in Hospital!"⁸⁵⁵

Boasts about capacity for violence correspond closely with explanations in the secondary literature for violence on the Rand. It is instructive to compare the two. "Violence was ubiquitous underground" on the Rand according to Keith Breckenridge and was "one of the defining features of the relationship between white and black men." This violence was rooted in a masculine ethic and was heightened from the 1930s when white mineworkers "lost even the semblance of control over underground mining."⁸⁵⁶ Other accounts stress that "assault was entrenched in the system of production" because of the wage system for African mineworkers and that

⁸⁵³ NAZ MLSS1/25/24, Notes on a meeting held to examine present procedure for dealing with assault cases in the mining industry, 26 February 1950.

⁸⁵⁴ NAZ WP 1/12/7, Legal and Judicial civil disputes: African vs. European 1951-35.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter from C.O. Kreft to District Commissioner, Luanshya, 11 February 1952.

⁸⁵⁶ Keith Breckenridge, 'The Allure of Violence: Men, Race and Masculinity on the South African Goldmines, 1900-1950', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 4 (1998), pp. 669-70, 673.

this helps explain “endemic” underground violence.⁸⁵⁷ These explanations do not describe the situation on the Copperbelt and this may explain the comparative lack of underground violence. Relations with Africans were not the most pressing issue of the Copperbelt’s European community. They frequently had other concerns.

This can be seen in one underground assault which did briefly galvanise attention. On 12 July 1954, daily-paid mineworkers at Roan Antelope walked out demanding disciplinary action against a mine captain, Slabbert, who had allegedly assaulted an underground timberman, Broadbent.⁸⁵⁸ The local MOSSA branch were infuriated – especially after Broadbent secured an African mineworker as his supporting witness – and posted notices around the mine stating the assault did not take place. Noel Kenny, the mine’s acting general manager, also concluded that the assault had not occurred. Kenny’s assessment, however, did not carry much weight among daily-paid mineworkers as he had recently sacked union branch chairman Jack Purvis in an unrelated incident, only to reinstate him again under pressure. Local colonial officials concluded that Purvis and the Roan branch were inflating this dispute to enhance their position in the union.⁸⁵⁹

This assessment appears was likely correct as the dispute over the assault merged into a dispute between the Roan branch and the rest of the NRMWU. In June 1954, the Roan branch had passed a motion of no confidence in the NRMWU leadership over alleged financial irregularities. Other branches responded by threatening to expel Purvis and another Roan member, Frank Shaw, from the union, at which point

⁸⁵⁷ T. Dunbar Moodie, ‘Maximum Average Violence: Underground Assaults on the South African Gold Mines, 1913–1965’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31, 3 (2005), pp. 547, 550.

⁸⁵⁸ ‘One-day strike by 900 Roan miners’, *Northern News*, 12 July 1954.

⁸⁵⁹ NAZ MLSS1/25/78, Letter from Acting Assistant Labour Commissioner to Commissioner for Labour, 22 July 1954.

both would lose their jobs.⁸⁶⁰ Kenny urged immediate intervention from the government as “there was every likelihood of a close down at Roan Antelope immediately.”⁸⁶¹ The Roan branch, Kenny later revealed, had approached him asking for union subscriptions to be withheld from NRMWU central office as the Roan branch was considering seceding from the union. Since the closed shop agreement stipulated that daily-paid men on all mines had to be NRMWU members this would likely have provoked a crisis and a Copperbelt-wide shut down.⁸⁶² This was something white mineworkers at Roan were evidently willing to countenance. Mass meetings hundreds-strong took place across the Copperbelt to reach a resolution avoiding this outcome.⁸⁶³

Significantly, these ructions and recriminations all happened while the Forster Commission began a fresh investigation into African advancement. Instead of concentrating on defending the colour bar, white mineworkers’ across the Copperbelt were embroiled in infighting. The Forster Commission was initiated after numerous meetings on African advancement involving the mining companies, NRMWU, MOSSA and AMU between February and July 1954 foundered.⁸⁶⁴ RST had pressed for the resumption of African advancement negotiations in April 1953 when the British Government stopped bulk purchases of copper as their mines were less profitable than those operated by RAA and therefore more susceptible to rising costs.⁸⁶⁵ The conclusions of the Foster Commission were broadly supportive of the

⁸⁶⁰ ‘Executive committee ultimatum to Roan branch of union’, *Northern News*, 21 August 1954.

⁸⁶¹ NAZ MLSS1/25/78, Record from DLC, 24 August 1954.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*, Report on the dispute between the Roan branch and Central Executive of the Mineworkers’ Union, 9 November 1954

⁸⁶³ ‘Nkana mine union branch seeks to restore unity’, *Northern News*, 1 September 1954.

⁸⁶⁴ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 124-25.

⁸⁶⁵ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, pp. 215-17.

mining companies' approach and damning of the 'equal pay for equal work' argument because this would "bar the African's advancement for ever."⁸⁶⁶

Publication of these conclusions certainly re-focused the attention of the European community on African advancement. A meeting of 900 white mineworkers in Nkana on 18 October vowed to resist African advancement and established a rank-and-file 'Unity League'. *Roan Branch News* warned in November that a "long drawn-out battle" was necessary and "sacrifices will have to be made... we will have to accept considerable hardship and discomfort."⁸⁶⁷ Support from the colour bar also involved a claim that Europeans were permanent settlers. The NRMWU's submission to the Forster Commission "pointed out that when they spoke of the European community" they also "included the children of settlers" along with current employees.⁸⁶⁸ In response to the rejection of the Forster Report, RST gave the NRMWU six months' notice that the recognition agreement would be terminated. The stage looked set for a bitter struggle.

Yet, nothing happened. Europeans had not moved to the Copperbelt to endure hardship or make sacrifices and the show of resistance was short-lived. There had already been indications of this. The NRMWU and MOSSA had sponsored independent candidates in the February 1954 territorial elections and concentrated their election campaign on African advancement and the colour bar.⁸⁶⁹ All five candidates were defeated and the campaign generally failed to mobilise voters. Only around two-thirds of voters on the Copperbelt turned out, except in Chingola where

⁸⁶⁶ *Report of the Board of Inquiry appointed to inquire into the Advancement of Africans in the copper Mining Industry of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1954) [hereafter Forster Report], p. 28.

⁸⁶⁷ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, pp. 271-73.

⁸⁶⁸ Forster Report, p. 23.

⁸⁶⁹ 'N. Rhodesian voting analysed', *The Times*, 20 February 1954.

an 81% turnout saw MOSSA president George Crane defeated.⁸⁷⁰ Europeans were not willing to jeopardise their chance of making money by making a stand on the colour bar in a place they did not intend to stay. Despite the claim that white mineworkers were safeguarding jobs for their descendants, *The Economist* noted pertinently that the sons of white miners “may not want to be miners, or even Rhodesians.”⁸⁷¹

Unwillingness to engage in a whole-hearted defence of the colour bar did not mean relations between Africans and Europeans were congenial. Arguably, they reached a nadir in the mid-1950s. On 29 December 1954, the AMU held a meeting with the NRMWU where it was agreed that daily-paid mineworkers would not undertake any work normally done by Africans during the imminent African mineworkers’ strike. This decision was immediately challenged by NRMWU branches at Nkana and Nchanga who voted overwhelmingly that they would do any work required of them by management.⁸⁷² They made good on this promise and by the end of February 1955 had raised production to 58% of normal by doing jobs normally done by Africans.⁸⁷³ AMU president Lawrence Katilungu denounced this as a betrayal.⁸⁷⁴ Even Petersen was ashamed, referring to the events as “Black Monday” for the union and thought he wouldn’t be able to face British NUM officials when they next visited the Copperbelt.⁸⁷⁵

Petersen’s members felt no shame. At the Nkana refinery, “There are numerous yarns ‘How hard I worked’ since the African’s strike end... Anyhow lads, all did a

⁸⁷⁰ ‘Legislative Council election results’, *Livingstone Mail*, 23 February 1954. In comparison, turnout was 88% in the 1953 South African general election and 82.6% in the 1951 UK general election.

⁸⁷¹ ‘Odd man out on the Copperbelt’, *The Economist*, 10 September 1955.

⁸⁷² IISH MIF Box 319, Extracts from a letter from James Young to Dennis Edwards, 1 January 1955.

⁸⁷³ NAB CO 1015/1129, Letter from Governor Benson to Alan Lennox-Boyd, 4 August 1955.

⁸⁷⁴ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 290.

⁸⁷⁵ IISH MIF Box 359, Extracts from a letter from James Young to Dennis Edwards, 4 January 1955.

good job of work.” They had worked so hard, in fact, that several men went on holiday to recuperate immediately afterwards, most to South Africa but also to New York and Australia, while another man quit and returned to Australia.⁸⁷⁶ The companies were grateful and both African and European mineworkers who worked during the strike received a bonus of 12.5% of their monthly wage.⁸⁷⁷

It was an unwillingness to forego bonuses which motivated European mineworkers to work during the strike more than hostility towards Africans. This was demonstrated in January 1955 when 60% of daily-paid mineworkers voted to accept opening up some European-held jobs to Africans, a result confirmed by a second vote in March.⁸⁷⁸ This vote and European mineworkers effectively proving their worth to the companies by helping break the African strike persuaded RST to cancel the termination of the recognition agreement. Copper prices were rising and both the companies and their daily-paid employees had ample reason to maximise production.⁸⁷⁹

The NRMWU leadership failed to mobilise the European community to defend the colour bar and so looked for support elsewhere. In January 1955, NRMWU delegates met representatives from South African trade unions, including SAMWU general secretary Daan Ellis, for discussions on African advancement.⁸⁸⁰ Prior to this, the NRMWU had been careful to phrase their case in universalist language. In July 1954, Guy Spires had insisted that “all jobs should be available on an equal basis to all workers, irrespective of race, colour or creed” and that it was

⁸⁷⁶ ‘Around Nkana’, *Rhokana Review*, April 1955.

⁸⁷⁷ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 296.

⁸⁷⁸ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, p. 126.

⁸⁷⁹ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 219. Appendix III.

⁸⁸⁰ NAB CO 1015/936, Letter from D.B. Hall to J.C. Morgan, Colonial Office, 4 June 1955.

discriminatory to establish an inferior wage schedule.⁸⁸¹ This now changed. Prior to the follow-up meeting in April, SAMWU voted to send the NRMWU £5,000 to assist the “struggle to maintain European standards.”⁸⁸² Ellis declared that mining unions in the Rhodesias and South Africa would form a committee to decide the extent of African advancement and this committee would be the forerunner of a federation of European trade unions in southern Africa.⁸⁸³

Securing support from mining unions in South Africa was part of efforts to pressure RAA into signing a separate African advancement agreement.⁸⁸⁴ The proposed intervention from South Africa provoked a backlash in the Federation and was publicly criticised by Roy Welensky.⁸⁸⁵ On the Copperbelt, Hugh Handford, likely smarting over his exclusion from the committee, condemned the intervention of the “fiery-eyed negrophobe” Ellis.⁸⁸⁶ The proposed committee of mining unions did not hold a single meeting and the £5,000 was never sent. The NRMWU were forced to backtrack and disavow reliance on SAMWU.⁸⁸⁷ The separate agreement the NRMWU signed with RAA in July 1955 giving the union a veto over which jobs would be made available to Africans was short-lived as RST refused to accept it. In September 1955, the NRMWU signed a new agreement with both companies, dropping their veto.⁸⁸⁸ Ellis made another offer of support in November and claimed

⁸⁸¹ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 267.

⁸⁸² £118,329 in 2015 figures. ‘£5,000 from SA to NR miners’, *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 15 April 1955.

⁸⁸³ ‘Federal and Copperbelt politics’, *The Economist*, 7 May 1955.

⁸⁸⁴ Berger, *Race, Labour, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 128-29.

⁸⁸⁵ ‘Ellis should mind his own business’, *Northern News*, 22 April 1955.

⁸⁸⁶ ‘Mine official’s sharp comment on Ellis’, *Northern News*, 25 April 1955.

⁸⁸⁷ NAZ MLSS1/26/108, ‘The Truth About the SA Trip’, *Union News*, May 1955.

⁸⁸⁸ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 231.

that white miners on the Copperbelt “were deeply concerned about the situation, and were looking for help and guidance” but received no response.⁸⁸⁹

It has been argued that, far from this advancement agreement representing a defeat, “the NRMWU... secured the essence of their demands.”⁸⁹⁰ This may well have been the case. However, while the European community supported the colour bar, they were not prepared to struggle seriously to retain it and especially not when this meant interrupting the fabulous copper bonus. Looking back on this period Europeans who had lived on the Copperbelt called it “idyllic” and “the happiest days of my life.”⁸⁹¹ Europeans had clear ideas about the kind of lives they want to lead and had the resources to do it. For most, this did not include being locked into a lengthy and bitter struggle with African mineworkers.

Conclusion

The fortunes of the European community closely tracked copper prices and, as prices soared, this group became extraordinarily affluent. Europeans on the Copperbelt took their cues about what to do with this new-found wealth from around the English-speaking world, recreating the clubs, culture and social life they knew. The character of the European community became more ambiguous in this period as white mineworkers eagerly acquired status symbols normally associated with social elites. The resources did not flow into the community equally and were accrued disproportionately to male mineworkers as the economic opportunities available to European women were considerably less lucrative. Male mineworkers then had the

⁸⁸⁹ ‘S.A. Miners Can’t Ignore ‘Explosive Situation’ in N.R. – D.E. Ellis’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1955

⁸⁹⁰ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 222.

⁸⁹¹ Interview with John Clifton, 11 June 2013. Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013. Virtually all my informants expressed similar sentiments.

resources to shape the European community as a masculine world. The activities which were most valued were all stereotypically masculine: drinking, sports and manual labour. It also facilitated social mobility as men could realise goals of buying a farm or a business elsewhere in the world. Political radicalism and nascent efforts to form white-dominated African unions dwindled in the face of burgeoning affluence. The thousands of Europeans who arrived on the Copperbelt between 1948 and 1956 had little interest in such things.

There was also less concern over African advancement and Africans themselves than previously assumed in the literature. The NRMWU leadership failed to successfully mobilise white mineworkers to defend the colour bar and were embroiled in other disputes during crucial phases of the negotiations on African advancement. MOSSA and its members did not regard African advancement as any threat to their jobs so expressed little reservation toward it. Europeans on the Copperbelt were certainly racist towards Africans and endorsed the establishment of the Central African Federation as a way of securing white settler dominance over the region. However, the privileged position of the European community rested on access to the fortunes of the copper industry, and most Europeans only sought this access for a short period before moving elsewhere. White mineworkers identified the threats to this access as emanating from mine management, not African mineworkers themselves. The indifference rather than active hostility towards Africans explains the sanguine reaction among Europeans to the emergence of the AMU at a time when African trade unions were banned elsewhere in southern Africa. While the going was good, Europeans on the Copperbelt were mainly interested in making and spending money. NRMWU leaders and the mining companies were becoming increasingly concerned that this situation couldn't last. Looking ahead in

December 1955, the NRMWU leadership, in an unintentionally revealing remark, forecast that “The future is black indeed for the European employee.”⁸⁹²

⁸⁹² IISH MIF Box 319, *Union News*, December 1955.

Jack Purvis

The life of John ‘Jack’ Purvis (1920-1970) in many ways mirrored the life of his father, James ‘Jim’ Purvis.⁸⁹³ Like Jim, Jack worked as an electrician on Roan Antelope Mine, was a staunch union man and retired to a small farm near Luanshya. Yet, in other ways, their two lives were very different. While Jim lived and worked in at least four different countries, Jack spent virtually his entire life in one town: Luanshya.



Figure 5.1: Jack Purvis in 1957, *NRMWU Annual General Council* (Kitwe, 1957), p. 7.

Jack Purvis was born in Johannesburg and moved to the Copperbelt at a young age when his father secured a job at Roan Antelope Mine. Jim Purvis had little formal education and began his working life aged 10, but – reflecting the privileged position and ambiguous self-image of the European community – he was able to send Jack to the prestigious private school St George’s in Southern Rhodesia. There were no secondary schools for Europeans in Northern Rhodesia in the 1930s in any case. However, following this expensive education, and a brief stint at Witwatersrand Technical College, Jack was apprenticed as an electrician and joined his father on the mine.⁸⁹⁴

War interrupted this career. In September 1942, in the midst of a very tense period on the Copperbelt, Jack successfully applied for an exit permit to leave the mining

⁸⁹³ Like his father, virtually no-one referred to Jack Purvis by his birth-name. Even Jack Purvis’ own son struggled to recall what it was. Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

industry and join the South African Navy, and then the Royal Navy.⁸⁹⁵ He fought for two years and was demobbed in London in early 1945, where he met and married Ada Thompson, twice (they married first in an Anglican church but Jack's outraged mother, a staunch Catholic, forced them to marry again in a Catholic church). He intended to move to Argentina but his new wife persuaded him to return to Northern Rhodesia, where they would have family.⁸⁹⁶

Purvis joined the Roan Mine Workers' Federation as a teenager and threw himself into union organising on his return.⁸⁹⁷ Years of his life were devoted to the white labour movement and he was a union representative at every level from shop steward to general secretary between 1946 and 1959.⁸⁹⁸ His ideas on trade unions were a good fit with the Northern Rhodesia Mineworkers Union (NRMWU). His strategy was that "a Union should strike quickly and embarrass the Companies financially in every way it can" and it did so under his leadership.⁸⁹⁹ A philosophy of 'embarrassing the companies' also filtered into his involvement in social life in Luanshya. As an active member of the Roan Antelope Dramatic and Operatic Society, Purvis once ridiculed the mine's superintendent John Tremain, whom he despised, by recounting a story on stage about Tremain's wife attempting to buy 'mine captain's socks' in a Luanshya shop after Tremain was promoted.⁹⁰⁰

Though he had little personal experience of it, Purvis was enamoured with the British trade union movement and greatly valued the advice he received from leading

⁸⁹⁵ National Archives, London [hereafter NAB], PREM 4/43A/4, Telegram from Governor Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 11 September 1942.

⁸⁹⁶ Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

⁸⁹⁷ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 15.1.6E, List of names and address of member of the Roan Mine Workers' Federation, 2 October 1940.

⁸⁹⁸ 'Jack Purvis confirmed as union secretary', *The Northern News*, 30 September 1958.

⁸⁹⁹ *Report of the Commission appointed to Inquire into the Stoppage in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia in July, 1957, and to make recommendations for the Avoidance and Quick Settlement of Disputes in the Industry* (Lusaka, 1957), p. 24.

⁹⁰⁰ Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

figures in this movement. In the 1950s, this advice was often about improving relations with African mineworkers. This was another important distinction between father and son. Born in South Africa and educated in Southern Rhodesia, Purvis was considerably less racist than most other Europeans on the Copperbelt, especially those who emigrated directly from Britain. His leadership of the NRMWU was marked by efforts to forge an alliance with the African Mineworkers' Union (AMU) as he consistently argued that "the interests of the two unions were identical."⁹⁰¹ He was close to his opposite number, Lawrence Katilungu.

This does not mean that Purvis was in any way supportive of African nationalist movements. He called for the Federal TUC to support the AMU on the grounds the union was "fighting an almost impossible battle with the African National Congress" and "almost daily threats of murder are made against officers of the union."⁹⁰² This echoed emerging colonial rhetoric that compared African nationalists to the American crime syndicate 'Murder Incorporated'.⁹⁰³

Purvis' role did allow him to cultivate a wide range of often highly unlikely contacts in the international trade union movement. For instance, he was friendly with Kanti Mehta, the anti-colonial nationalist and founder of the Indian National Mineworkers Federation.⁹⁰⁴ These contacts served him well when he was deposed as general secretary in July 1959, having held on just long enough to be included among the small numbers of European employees who had worked for 20 years' on Roan

⁹⁰¹ International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], MIF Box 359, Minutes of a meeting held between the NRMWU and the NRAMTU, 24 March 1954.

⁹⁰² 'Towards alliance with African Union, *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 July 1958.

⁹⁰³ Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: the making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 301.

⁹⁰⁴ IISH MIF Box 359, Letter from Jack Purvis to Dennis Edwards, 18 February 1958.

Antelope Mine.⁹⁰⁵ White mineworkers were angry that two years of industrial unrest had brought them little benefit and the campaign to chuck Purvis out was bitter, even involving rumours that he had molested European female staff employed by the union, which Purvis strenuously denied.⁹⁰⁶

Purvis's contacts and reputation secured him appointment as the representative in central Africa for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and tasked with advising the AMU on African advancement proposals.⁹⁰⁷ This was the second time a white mineworker from the Copperbelt had been appointed to represent the region's workforce in the global labour movement and is an illustration of the outsized reputation of the NRMWU. Purvis came to disavow the NRMWU though. In a 1962 article on African advancement, he repeatedly criticised the NRMWU for their approach but at no point did he mention he was ever a member, let alone led the organisation.⁹⁰⁸

White mineworkers did not exactly have fond memories of Purvis either. When he returned to Luanshya as the ICFTU representative a 400-strong meeting gathered where, according to one attendee, people "were talking about lynching him" for leaving after fomenting so much industrial trouble. Purvis, however, was a skilful orator and turned the crowd around so "they carried him shoulder-high out... that was the power of his word!"⁹⁰⁹ Although he travelled extensively with his job, Purvis' family remained in Luanshya. The new job apparently did not pay so well and, unlike

⁹⁰⁵ Europeans with 20-years continuous employment qualified for the Roan Antelope 20-Year Club. Only 155 people were eligible to join this club by 1959, out of thousands who had worked on the mine. 'Round the Group', *Horizon*, August 1959.

⁹⁰⁶ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] MLSS1/26/170, Record from Acting Assistant Labour Commissioner, 22 April 1959.

⁹⁰⁷ IISH MIF Box 72, Report No.6 from W. Hindson, 18 March 1960.

⁹⁰⁸ Jack Purvis, 'African advancement on the Copperbelt', *Free Labour World*, 144 (June 1962), pp. 196-201.

⁹⁰⁹ Interview with Boet Liebenberg, 7 July 2014.

the mine, did not include medical cover for Purvis' wife or children. With Jack away from home regularly, Ada Purvis supported the family by working as a bookkeeper at a scrap metal company. She tried repeatedly to get a job on the mine "but it seems the Roan are not anxious to see the name Purvis again on their books."⁹¹⁰

Purvis left in 1963 when he was deployed by the ICFTU to Ankara to help organise trade unions in Turkey, as his extensive experience on the Copperbelt was regarded as relevant.⁹¹¹ He found this role difficult because, like many other European men on the Copperbelt, Purvis struggled with alcohol addiction. In the early 1960s, he had suffered a bad accident after crashing his car shortly after leaving a bar near the Southern Rhodesia border. His job at the ICFTU came to an end in 1965 and they sent him to a rehabilitation clinic in the UK.⁹¹²

Purvis lived a quieter life on his return to the Copperbelt. He took over his father's farm, though continued to work occasionally as an electrical contractor on the mine. In an eerily prescient article, Purvis had warned that the road between Ndola and Luanshya was "the most lethal stretch of macadam in Africa."⁹¹³ It was on this road that he himself suffered a serious car accident in July 1970 and subsequently died in hospital several months later from the injuries sustained.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹⁰ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford 658/5, Letter from Ada Purvis to Roy Welensky, 14 October 1961.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Jack Purvis to Roy Welensky, 23 December 1963.

⁹¹² Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

⁹¹³ Jack Purvis, 'Road Memories of an Old Traveller'. Accessed 30 September 2015 at http://www.greatnorthroad.org/boma/Road_Memories_of_an_Old_Traveller:_Jack_Purvis

⁹¹⁴ 'Former miners' leader dies in hospital', *Times of Zambia*, 6 October 1970.

Chapter Five

Trouble in Paradise, 1957-62

Our dignity and pride are at stake today, and no employer has the right to flout or belittle that pride.

Jack Purvis, 1958.⁹¹⁵

Overview

1956 had been a year “of great prosperity and achievement” for the Copperbelt with output boosted to record level by new mines coming into production. Burgeoning production, both on the Copperbelt and globally, had been underpinned by the long post-war boom in copper prices. This came to a sudden halt. Copper prices hit the “unprecedented figure of £437 a ton” in March 1956, and then plummeted to £264 in July, an “unprecedented” collapse in the history of the industry “both for magnitude and speed.”⁹¹⁶ Lucrative opportunities on the Copperbelt for Europeans diminished and the size of the European community increased only slightly in this period from around 30,265 in 1956 to 34,830 in 1961.⁹¹⁷

This chapter will cover the wave of industrial unrest triggered by the collapse in copper prices. This periodisation is a useful way of capturing the rhythms of life for

⁹¹⁵ ‘Message to members’, *Northern News*, 11 October 1958.

⁹¹⁶ *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Year Book 1956* (Kitwe, 1957), p. 7. See Appendix III for annual trends.

⁹¹⁷ Appendix I.

the European community as the mines remained at the centre of this community. In 1961, over 55% of all European employees in Bancroft, Chingola, Luanshya and Mufulira worked on the mines, and only 17.7% worked in services (the next most common occupation). The proportion was lower in Kitwe which had developed as a commercial and administrative hub and the numbers of European employees working in services (24%) or in commerce (23.7%) was almost as high as those working in mining (26%).⁹¹⁸ However, the fortunes of many of these businesses were tied to copper prices and the incomes of European mineworkers. This periodisation also reflects how many Europeans viewed life on the Copperbelt. As one Chamber of Mines employee put it when discussing the birth of his son: "We automatically gauge all time and events by industrial disputes up here!"⁹¹⁹

The first section is therefore on the wildcat strikes by white mineworkers which hit the mines during 1957, culminating in a shutdown during the rockbreakers' dispute. These strikes will be used to examine the divisions and cleavages in the European community. Subsequent sections will proceed chronologically. The next section will examine the immediate consequences of these strikes for the European community. This will be followed by a section on one important consequence of the constrained economic situation: a reassessment of relations with African mineworkers and the creation of a Liaison Committee between the two unions. Then there is a lengthy section on the 1958 strike, one of the longest strikes in the history of the Copperbelt and one that ended in near-total defeat for the Northern Rhodesia Mineworkers Union (NRMWU). The final section is on the political changes caused by the growing

⁹¹⁸ George Kay, *A Social Geography of Zambia: A survey of population patterns in a developing country* (London, 1967), p. 140.

⁹¹⁹ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford [hereafter WP] 636/5, Letter from Tony Lawman to Roy Welensky, 9 May 1956.

strength of African nationalist movements and the reaction of the European community on the Copperbelt to this development.

Much of this chapter is an elaboration of the argument made by Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola that “white miners have generally been caricatured as an uncultured, Afrikaans-speaking lot whose dominant concern was the defence of the job colour bar on which their unquestionable affluence and privileges rested.”⁹²⁰ This chapter will explore and identify the ‘dominant concern’ of white mineworkers and the basis for their affluence and privileges. It will be argued in both cases that this was not the colour bar. The imposition and maintenance of racially exclusive working practices was part of a wider struggle over the organisation of work on the mines. In the previous chapter, the unwillingness of white mineworkers to strike in defence of the colour bar was demonstrated. In this chapter, it will be shown that they were willing to strike over a wide variety of other issues. As in previous years, this was a struggle that primarily pitted white mineworkers against their white employers.

The historiography has developed little since the publication of the mining industry’s own official history in 1978 which claimed that “The story of industrial relations on the Copperbelt is largely the story of African advancement.”⁹²¹ The importance of ‘African advancement’ has been overstated and events on the Copperbelt have been interpreted through a racial lens more appropriate, and perhaps derived from, a South African context, which many academics and contemporary observers would have been very familiar with. Gewald has argued that anthropologists unquestioningly transferred their understanding of colonial conquest in South Africa

⁹²⁰ Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola (eds.), *Living at the End of Empire: politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2011), p. 11.

⁹²¹ Roan Consolidated Mines, *Zambia’s Mining Industry: the First 50 Years* (Ndola, 1978), p. 72.

to their research on Northern Rhodesia and ensured that the historiography is “desperately flawed.”⁹²² This chapter extends this argument to African advancement and will carefully periodize relations between Africans and Europeans from hostility, attempts at mutual support to indifference.

Comparisons with South Africa are anachronistic. The tradition of white labour militancy on the Rand was extinct by the 1950s. The 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act effectively incorporated white trade unions into state structures and “marked the end of effective white labour militance.”⁹²³ Similarly, in Southern Rhodesia “white workers – their struggles institutionalised and their unions bureaucratised – gave up the right to strike” with the 1934 Industrial Conciliation Act.⁹²⁴ The wave of industrial unrest by white mineworkers on the Copperbelt was tied to the fortunes of the copper industry and was not a regional dynamic. Contemporary observers made different comparisons. During the 1958 strike, the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) adviser posted to the Copperbelt, Walter Hood, remarked that “we are not dealing with British workers, but they are somewhat similar to Australians.”⁹²⁵ Hood made this remark to British TUC general secretary Vincent Tewson, and the close interest of the TUC in the dispute is another indication of the continued importance of the region’s international links. International links and experience continued to inform the actions of mine management. Ronald Prain thought it was necessary to take a hard line during these strikes because of his “considerable experience of the labour

⁹²² Jan-Bart Gewald, ‘Researching and Writing in the Twilight of an Imagined Conquest: Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia 1930–1960’, *History and Anthropology*, 18, 4 (2007), pp. 459–487.

⁹²³ David Yudelman, *The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, capital, and the incorporation of organized labour on the South African gold fields, 1902–1939* (Cape Town, 1984), p. 235.

⁹²⁴ Ian Phimister and Charles van Onselen, ‘The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1900–1945’ in Brian Raftopoulos and Ian Phimister (eds.), *Keep on Knocking: a history of the labour movement in Zimbabwe, 1900–1997* (Harare, 1997), pp. 44–45.

⁹²⁵ Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), p. 173. Hood had spent time in Australia in the 1940s with the British TUC.

conditions today in some of the main mining countries such as Chile, Mexico, the United States and Canada.”⁹²⁶

Europeans living on the Copperbelt in the late 1950s had no conception of how things would change in the 1960s and imagined and planned for a very different future. These ideas were disrupted by the growing strength of the African nationalist movements. It might be expected that the racist, privileged European minority on the Copperbelt would fight this tenaciously and contemporary observers certainly anticipated this. Doris Lessing claimed in 1956 that “there are thousands of Afrikaners now on the Copper Belt, forming a solid block of white reaction.”⁹²⁷ In contrast, this chapter will argue that relations with Africans were only rarely the dominant concern for the European community and that there were actually relatively few Afrikaners on the Copperbelt. A confidential 1959 report surveyed a representative sample of the white workforce and found that only 9% spoke Afrikaans as a first language, a further 9% were bilingual while 80.5% spoke English.⁹²⁸

This report supplements the sources for this period. It was commissioned by the Chamber of Mines in 1959 to investigate “the stability or instability of the European labour force engaged in the mining industry.” This report consisted of two parts: interviews conducted by a team of psychologists from which quotes in this chapter are drawn and a statistical survey of a sample of 468 white mineworkers and 227

⁹²⁶ National Archives, London [hereafter NAB] CO 1015/2035, Letter from Ronald Prain to Governor Arthur Benson, 10 December 1958. Prain had not only visited many mining centres in these countries but at this time was on the board of the International Nickel Company of Canada, Ronald Prain, *Reflections on an Era: Fifty years of mining in changing Africa* (Worcester Park, 1981), p. 211.

⁹²⁷ Doris Lessing, *Going Home* (London, 1968), p. 109. Contemporary accounts often exaggerated the number of Afrikaners on the Copperbelt, see Ian Phimister, ‘Proletarians in Paradise: The Historiography and Historical Sociology of White Miners on the Copperbelt’, in Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, *Living at the End of Empire*, pp. 146-48.

⁹²⁸ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part I: A Social Psychological Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), p. ii.

wives of employees. These statistics are useful but should be treated with caution as only married male employees and married women were surveyed. However, they can still be used to illustrate general sentiment among the white workforce. The report also contains valuable perspectives from others in colonial Zambian society such as the frustrations of one veteran miner from Broken Hill that on the Copperbelt “it is one damn thing after another: if it isn’t the African Union, it’s the European Union. No matter how much or how little they’ve got, they keep moaning and they can’t settle down.”⁹²⁹

Wildcat strikes

Collapsing copper prices hit a European community which was already unsettled. There were four wildcat strikes by white mineworkers between January and April 1956, foreshadowing the more serious wave of industrial unrest triggered by the slump. Rolling strikes by African mineworkers hit all mines from July to September when a State of Emergency was declared, followed by only two months of respite before the first of nine wildcat strikes by white mineworkers began in December. Six months of disputes culminated in a Copperbelt-wide shut-down during the rockbreakers’ dispute in July 1957.⁹³⁰ This industrial unrest fits uneasily into the narrative of the existing historiography, which identifies the main issues during this period as African advancement and the colour bar, and this may explain why it has largely been overlooked.⁹³¹

⁹²⁹ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part I*, pp. i-iv, 19.

⁹³⁰ *Report of the Commission appointed to Inquire into the Stoppage in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia in July, 1957, and to make recommendations for the Avoidance and Quick Settlement of Disputes in the Industry* (Lusaka, 1957) [hereafter Honeyman Report], pp. 12-16.

⁹³¹ There is only a passing mention in Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 179. Ian Phimister criticises the focus of the existing historiography, but only mentions these strikes only briefly: Ian Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland? White Miners and the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1946-1962’, *South African Historical Journal*, 63:2 (2011), p. 226.

There was, in fact, only one dispute over African advancement during this period. On 7 April 1956, six European pipefitters at Mufulira refused to work after three Africans were employed as pipelayers. This, the pipefitters claimed, was job fragmentation as under the advancement agreement signed in 1955 the job of 'pipefitter' was supposed to be opened up to Africans as a single job and not broken down into several jobs. This interpretation seems to have been widely shared as most other daily-paid mineworkers took wildcat strike action over the next four days. They only returned after the mine management transferred the African pipelayers onto other work until industry-wide discussions could be held. Discussions were inconclusive and the matter was left unresolved.⁹³²

The wide variety of grievances behind the other strikes included: use of contractors, pay, bonuses, sackings, actions of mine officials, demarcation of artisans' work and a demand for a new hospital. Most did not involve the union leadership, who were often caught on the back foot and intervened to urge a settlement through negotiation. It cannot be said, however, that the NRMWU strained itself to maintain industrial peace; two leading figures in the union, Nick van Niekirk and Dan Swart, reportedly regularly made bets at meetings over which branch was most likely to strike next.⁹³³ The way disputes escalated rapidly reflected deep-seated antagonism between daily-paid mineworkers, officials and managers. Indeed, the most common cause of strikes in this period was poor relations with mine officials (which sparked five strikes). This caused the longest and most serious of the wildcat strikes in December 1956 when the underground engineer at Bancroft, W.J. Taute, upbraided

Thomas Franck thought 1957 was characterised by "the extremely explosive racial situation" and that this was partly caused by the fact that 53.5% of white mine employees were Afrikaners. Thomas Franck, *Race and Nationalism: The Struggle for Power in Rhodesia-Nyasaland* (London, 1960), p. 161.

⁹³² Honeyman Report, p. 13.

⁹³³ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] MLSS1/10/10, Submission to Commission of Enquiry, G.K. MacKenzie and G.P. Minnear, 19 August 1957.

a group of fitters for 'not doing a day's work' and thereby accidentally triggered a month-long strike.⁹³⁴ This strike exemplified a number of features of subsequent disputes: antagonistic relations between daily-paid miners and staff, notions of self-respect and the dignity of labour coming to the fore and an almost wilful effort by different groups on the mine to misunderstand each other.

Colonial officials were exasperated because "Europeans are obviously behaving in a way very much like Africans behaved" and the strike had "all the characteristics of recent troubles between two African unions."⁹³⁵ The underground manager, Jack Christie, refused to negotiate with any man on strike, prompting the somewhat irrelevant argument: was someone technically on strike if they were between shifts? NRMWU representatives refused to attend any meeting with the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA), even though Taute was a MOSSA member, so negotiations to end the dispute could not even begin for three weeks.⁹³⁶ This obstinate approach had widespread support. Daily-paid mineworkers elsewhere on the Copperbelt paid £5 each to provide Bancroft strikers with generous strike pay and a public meeting in Bancroft declared full confidence in the union leadership.⁹³⁷ Following the eventual resolution of the December 1956 strike, Bancroft Mine enjoyed less than three months of quiet before the next strike by white mineworkers flared up; this time over a claim that Jack Christie had ordered a man who was not a rockbreaker to do blasting work and sworn obscenely at rockbreakers who protested.⁹³⁸

⁹³⁴ NAB CO 1015/1453, Strike of European Mineworkers Union at Bancroft, Memorandum of Events.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Governor Benson to Colonial Secretary, 19 December 1956.

⁹³⁶ Honeyman Report, pp. 13-14.

⁹³⁷ £112 in 2015 figures. NAB CO 1015/1453, Strike of European Mineworkers Union at Bancroft, Memorandum of Events.

⁹³⁸ Honeyman Report, pp. 14-15.

There had also been trouble at Bancroft over the use of mine contractors, a thorny issue on all the mines.⁹³⁹ Post-war development of secondary industries on the Copperbelt meant that many engineering and construction jobs no longer had to be done in-house. The NRMWU regarded this as an attempt to undercut white mineworkers' wages and tried to force engineering contractors to sign an agreement identical to the mines' recognition agreement.⁹⁴⁰ Contractors unanimously refused to do so, probably because the Chamber of Mines had already warned them "of the extreme danger to their industries... of entering into any agreement with the Mine Workers' Union."⁹⁴¹ Instead, the NRMWU signed a 'Fair Wages and Conditions' agreement with the mining companies to try and ensure contractors' European employers received the same pay and bonuses as mine employees. The appropriate scope of this agreement proved ambiguous enough to generate regular quarrels.⁹⁴²

These disputes were about questions of power and control on the mines. The rockbreakers' dispute in 1957 epitomized this. Rockbreakers performed one of the most crucial jobs on the mines. A rockbreaker marked drill holes for blasting, supervised around 15 African workers drilling holes and carried out blasting to extract ore, open up new levels, or haulages.⁹⁴³ Rockbreakers were mostly on contract work and received some of the highest earnings of any mine employee: an average of £235 a month in 1956-57, compared to an average of £141 for the rest of

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹⁴⁰ 'Mine Union's ultimatum to engineering contractors', *Northern News*, 19 January 1953.

⁹⁴¹ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 13.3.4C, Letter from H.F. Grace to W. Marshall Clark, Anglo American Johannesburg, 7 February 1953.

⁹⁴² ZCCM 11.1.2A, Memorandum on the application of the 'Fair Wages and Conditions Agreement to the Mine Townships', 24 July 1958.

⁹⁴³ Charles Perrings, 'A Moment in the 'Proletarianization' of the New Middle Class: Race, Value and the Division of Labour in the Copperbelt, 1946-1966', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 6, 2 (1980), p. 193.

the daily-paid workforce.⁹⁴⁴ Rockbreakers' importance to the functioning of the mines meant they were specifically excluded from new working arrangements in October 1956 which reduced the working-day on Saturday to six-hours and slightly increased weekday shifts. This agreement expanded leisure time at the weekend but ensured rockbreakers no longer participated fully in the social life of the European community. One of the main justifications offered by the NRMWU for a shorter working week was that "rockbreakers are denied the opportunity of watching or taking as active a part in sport as they would wish."⁹⁴⁵

This quickly generated resentment and a Rockbreakers Central Committee was formed in February 1957 to co-ordinate efforts to cut the working week. These efforts proceeded in a confusing situation with multiple and overlapping strikes hitting different mines between March and June. Several different plans to reduce working hours circulated until a resolution was passed by meetings of rockbreakers on most mines stating that a 46-hour week would be unilaterally implemented if not agreed to by the companies. Only around 100 of the 277 rockbreakers on the Copperbelt attended these meetings and, bizarrely, it subsequently emerged that the resolution from Mufulira rockbreakers had been fabricated by the branch chairman, Swart.⁹⁴⁶ However, it was clear most rockbreakers would not shy away from a major confrontation with the mining companies.

Tensions were clearly escalating. Less than two weeks before the NRMWU declared an official dispute over the working week, white mineworkers at Mufulira had made "strenuous but unsuccessful efforts... to enlist support at other Mines for a

⁹⁴⁴ This is £5,291 in 2015 figures for rockbreakers' wages and £3,174 for the rest of the daily-paid workforce. Honeyman Report, p. 25.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

sympathetic strike” to support their four-day strike over a seemingly minor issue. This was whether certain electrical equipment in the power plant was the responsibility of daily-paid electricians or the responsibility of the shift engineer, a staff position.⁹⁴⁷ The unilateral decision by rockbreakers to shorten their working week was not a minor issue; it was a direct challenge to the authority of mine management. The NRMWU was prepared for confrontation. Around two hours after perfunctory conciliation proceedings hit deadlock on 18 July, the union released a statement “That rockbreakers will, from July 20th work only six hours on Saturdays.” The Chamber of Mines responded the next day with an equally blunt statement: if rockbreakers’ refused to work a full shift they would not be allowed underground and “since the rockbreaking programme is the foundation of the proper working of the Mines immediate steps will be necessary to begin closing down the Mines.”⁹⁴⁸

⁹⁴⁷ ZCCM 10.3.9B, Telegram from Selection Trust, Salisbury to American Metal Company, New York, 16 May 1957.

⁹⁴⁸ Honeyman Report, pp. 19-20.

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Figure 5.2: Essential service workers at Nkana going underground during the rockbreakers dispute.
Meebelo, *African proletarians and colonial capitalism*, p. 277.

Rockbreakers who turned up to work on 20 July were instructed to work the full shift or go home. In another demonstration of the priorities and solidarity of the white workforce, every single one refused.⁹⁴⁹ Neither Rhodesian Anglo American (RAA) nor Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST) would tolerate this insubordination and were not bluffing about closing the mines. Preparations began immediately and within three days most surface plants were ready to be shut down.⁹⁵⁰ This was the second time the mining companies had shut all the mines to defeat a strike by their white

⁹⁴⁹ NAB CO 1015/1455, Telegram from Deputy Governor to Colonial Secretary, 20 July 1957.

⁹⁵⁰ ZCCM 10.3.9B, Telegram from Selection Trust, Salisbury to American Metal Company, New York, 23 July 1957

workforce and, as in 1946, white mineworkers were caught off-guard. The union leadership were shocked and called all daily-paid mineworkers out on indefinite strike on 26 July. The Copperbelt ground to a halt and, within hours, around half of the 46,000-strong workforce had been laid off.⁹⁵¹ White mineworkers were willing to shut every mine on the Copperbelt so 277 people could work two hours less.

The NRMWU, as previously, scrambled round to secure wider sources of support. Alec Stevens flew urgently to Bulawayo to pressure the Rhodesian Railway Workers Union (RRWU) to declare copper 'black', i.e. goods which would not be handled by any union members. RRWU officials showed little enthusiasm and instead decided to take legal advice on whether they could do this, the kind of legal niceties rarely observed on the Copperbelt.⁹⁵² Similarly, the response of the Federal TUC to a direct appeal for sympathy strikes was lukewarm.⁹⁵³ Appeals to Britain gained a greater echo. Ben Petersen cabled British National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) president Ernest Jones pleading for "urgent intervention" to stop an "all out attempt by companies to break trades unionism." Jones agreed and pressed the British Government to intervene and end the 'lock-out' prompted by a "legitimate demand for shorter working Saturdays."⁹⁵⁴

Events moved too rapidly for effective intervention from Britain. By the time Jones sent his letter, white mineworkers' resolve had dissipated. The companies refused to accept arbitration and when the Northern Rhodesia Government offered to establish a board of inquiry the NRMWU folded. All members were instructed to return to work on 1 August. Consequently, as Ronald Prain put it, George Honeyman, a chairman

⁹⁵¹ 'Operations cease on the Copperbelt', *Financial Times*, 27 June 1957.

⁹⁵² NAB CO 1015/1455, Telegram from Governor Benson to Colonial Secretary, 23 July 1957.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Governor Benson to Colonial Secretary, 30 July 1957.

⁹⁵⁴ International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], MIF Box 359, Telegram from Ben Peterson to W.E. Jones, 25 July 1957, Letter from W.E. Jones to Alan Lennox-Boyd, 30 July 1957.

of the British Industrial Court, “joined the every-growing list of distinguished barristers to visit the Copperbelt for the purpose of holding an official inquiry.”⁹⁵⁵ Honeyman was joined by former NUM president William Lawther, Ernest Hyde Clark, secretary of Overseas’ Employers’ Federation, South African Inspector of Mines Albert Vos and H.J. Hoffman, a judge from Southern Rhodesia.⁹⁵⁶

Ruptures

Under the strain of falling copper prices and industrial unrest, the European community began to fracture. This section will focus on these lines of fracture, first by examining the fraught hearings of the Honeyman Commission and then looking at these tensions more widely. One of the most common responses to dissatisfaction was that people simply left. Immigration was a Federal responsibility so there are no records on how many Europeans left Northern Rhodesia in 1957 but annual turnover of the mine’s white workforce rose sharply from a post-war low of 13% in 1956 to 25% in 1957.⁹⁵⁷

Disagreements among daily-paid mineworkers abounded on how to respond to defeat in the rockbreakers’ dispute. Miles Larmer identified the “depressingly common tendency to characterise unionised mineworkers as a single homogenous unit” in his work on African mineworkers and the same is true of European mineworkers.⁹⁵⁸ A month after the rockbreakers dispute, an anonymous ‘revolt group’ emerged and distributed leaflets criticising the NRMWU leadership and singling out Petersen in particular for filling the pages of union publications with

⁹⁵⁵ Prain, *Reflections on an Era*, p. 114.

⁹⁵⁶ ‘Copperbelt Dispute Inquiry’, *The Financial Times*, 26 August 1957.

⁹⁵⁷ Appendix II.

⁹⁵⁸ Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa*, (London, 2007), p. 4.

“hysterical nonsense.”⁹⁵⁹ Petersen became the subject of widespread criticism. General public interest in the Honeyman Commission was initially low with few Europeans attending the hearings, until Petersen gave evidence when the hearing room was full.⁹⁶⁰ Petersen was not the only unpopular figure at the hearings. Gavin MacKenzie, a former NRMWU vice-president, was spat on in the Rhokana Club bar after he publicly called for the closed shop to be made illegal and threatened to form a separate union at Broken Hill Mine.⁹⁶¹ Arguments at the Honeyman Commission had a wider audience than those who attended. The hearings were broadcast live over a public address system in Kitwe and documents produced for the Commission circulated on the Copperbelt; at Nkana managers handed copies of the Chamber of Mines’ case to all European mineworkers coming off shift.⁹⁶²

The real division that emerged at the Honeyman Commission was simmering antipathy between the NRMWU and MOSSA. This reflected the poor relations between mining officials and daily-paid mineworkers that had sparked five strikes earlier in 1957. MOSSA representatives criticised the NRMWU for setting “a very bad example to that section of employees who have as yet little industrial or trade union tradition,” sentiments echoed by the Mines African Staff Association (MASA) who said more explicitly that the rockbreakers’ had set “a bad example to Africans who still look to Europeans for guidance.”⁹⁶³ MOSSA supported the mining companies’ call for the closed shop to be abolished, mandatory secret ballots for all disputes and for wildcat strikes to be made illegal. The case against the closed shop was bolstered by two former mineworkers, then working as mine contractors, who

⁹⁵⁹ ‘European mine union split?’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 August 1957.

⁹⁶⁰ NAZ MLSS1/10/10, Summary of Commission of Inquiry, 7 October 1957 and 9 October 1957.

⁹⁶¹ NAZ MLSS1/26/29, Letter from Labour Officer, Broken Hill to Senior Labour Officer, Lusaka, 17 October 1957.

⁹⁶² NAZ MLSS1/10/10, Record No. 8 from C.E. Cousins, 2 October 1957.

⁹⁶³ Honeyman Report, p. 23.

claimed they had been threatened with physical violence by union members. In contrast, the African Mineworkers Union (AMU) supported the closed shop and denied that any new industrial relations legislation was required. In turn, NRMWU representatives' advocated a more generous bonus system for African mineworkers.⁹⁶⁴

The Honeyman Commission hearings also illustrate the continued salience of other mining regions around the world as a reference point. The claim for a 46-hour week was justified with reference to reduced working hours in the mining industry elsewhere, the NRMWU having obtained recent agreements on working hours on mines in the UK, New Zealand, France and Belgium.⁹⁶⁵ However, as the Commission noted, they studiously avoided mentioning countries where miners worked 48 hours, including South Africa.⁹⁶⁶ The remainder of the NRMWU's arguments were given short shrift by the Commission and their actions were condemned. The Commission only stopped short of recommending the abolition of the closed shop because its members anticipated this would trigger further unrest. Instead, recommendations were made for more restrictive laws regulating the closed shop and for compulsory secret ballots supervised by government officials. Damningly for the NRMWU, all of this was endorsed by former NUM president Lawther as well.⁹⁶⁷

Petersen left for the United States shortly after the Commission's final public hearing to receive an award; a testament to the continued international visibility of the

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

⁹⁶⁵ NAZ MLSS1/10/22, Memorandum to the Commission of Enquiry – N.R. Mineworkers' Union.

⁹⁶⁶ Honeyman Report, p. 28.

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32-4.

NRMWU even if its stock was low on the Copperbelt.⁹⁶⁸ This was an error on his part as he was lambasted in his absence and efforts were begun to remove him. Petersen got a sense of his unpopularity from a distance as he refused to return and face the rest of the union. In December, he sent a telegram from South Africa reading, in its entirety: "Tendering herewith resignation to take effect immediately."⁹⁶⁹ He did try and return to the Federation and contacted Welensky the same day asking for urgent assistance in finding a government job.⁹⁷⁰ This was unsuccessful and instead Petersen opted for a line of work least likely to endear him to his former comrades: he joined Anglo American's personnel department on the Rand.⁹⁷¹

The wide-ranging search to find Petersen's replacement is another revealing example of the orientation and connections of white mineworkers. The first place to look was Australia. Rumours abounded on the Copperbelt that Frank Maybank was going to be asked to return to take charge. Jack Purvis denied this and claimed that he did not even have an address for Maybank. In fact, the NRMWU already had been in touch with Maybank asking him to come back. He declined.⁹⁷² Maybank retained a close interest in the Copperbelt though and followed the Honeyman Commission proceedings from afar, worrying that "if the Union loses their closed shop agreement it will sound the knell for some time of the Union being an effective organisation."⁹⁷³ Purvis himself favoured a new general secretary from Britain. Others in the union were reportedly pressing for Paul Visser to be appointed, a former South African Mineworkers Union (SAMWU) president who had been

⁹⁶⁸ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Quarterly report on industrial relations, 31 December 1957.

⁹⁶⁹ 'Petersen quits', *Northern News*, 12 December 1957.

⁹⁷⁰ WP 255/7, Telegram from Ben Petersen to Roy Welensky, 11 December 1957.

⁹⁷¹ John Oxley, *Down where no lion walked: the story of Western Deep Levels* (Johannesburg, 1989), p. 121.

⁹⁷² WP 644/10, Letter from Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 5 February 1958.

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*, Letter from Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 12 December 1957.

removed from the position after a public and bitter spat with Daan Ellis.⁹⁷⁴ It was an indication of the strength of the connections with the British TUC that Albert Lewis, a former official in the Watermen and Bargemen's Union who had worked in the British TUC Commonwealth Section since 1956, was appointed to the job.⁹⁷⁵ That Lewis had never been to Africa was not seen as an issue.

There was an unexpected problem though: Lewis was refused entry into Northern Rhodesia by the Federal Government. No official reason was given but Fred Tullidge, a shop steward at Nchanga, released a letter sent by the Federal Secretary of Home Affairs alleging that Lewis had "an unsatisfactory political background." The allegation was that Lewis was or had been a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.⁹⁷⁶ This was an unpopular decision. Jim Purvis complained angrily to Roy Welensky that the United Federal Party (UFP) "is ultra Conservative and a Party that has bitterly attacked our Union" and that this was driving away supporters.⁹⁷⁷ The British TUC protested strongly against this decision and denied the allegation. TUC general secretary Vincent Tewson offered to send Lewis to the Copperbelt as an official TUC representative to circumvent immigration restrictions or second him to the NRMWU and promised to take personal responsibility for Lewis' character.⁹⁷⁸ This is a testament to the importance placed on events on the Copperbelt by the TUC.

Back on the Copperbelt, falling copper prices had wider consequences in the mining towns. Charles van Onselen has argued that on the Rand most instances of "public hysteria" around black peril cases "coincided with periods of stress or acute tension

⁹⁷⁴ WP 255/7, Letter from Governor Benson to Roy Welensky, 10 July 1958.

⁹⁷⁵ NAB CO 1015/1971, Note for the Secretary of State's meeting with Mr A. Lewis, 6 June 1958.

⁹⁷⁶ 'Rhodesian union will fight', *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 June 1958. The standard form for potential immigrants contained a question about membership of communist organisations.

⁹⁷⁷ WP 658/5, Letter from Jim Purvis to Roy Welensky, 8 August 1958.

⁹⁷⁸ WP 255/7, Letter from Vincent Tewson to Roy Welensky, 28 July 1958

within the political economy of the Witwatersrand.” Panics occurred while white household incomes were falling and when white women were allegedly attacked whilst sleeping in their beds.⁹⁷⁹ Foster Sakala has pointed out that this argument could be extended to explain why there were so few ‘black peril’ cases in Northern Rhodesia; there were few occasions when the incomes of white households slumped.⁹⁸⁰

It is significant then that in February 1958 – when copper prices and therefore the copper bonus fell to their lowest levels – there were six cases of robbery reported in the Nkana Mine Township during which African men allegedly assaulted European women. No-one was arrested for these alleged robberies and it’s not clear whether they actually happened at all, certainly the police were sceptical.⁹⁸¹ One of the cases was brought by Pauline Tyne, who claimed she had come across an unidentified African man in her kitchen around midnight. This man had tried to grab her with greasy hands, kicked her, tore her dress and threw pepper in her face before she screamed, causing him to run away. The police noted sarcastically that:

Investigations at the scene failed to find any pepper on the floor though there was a little on the back of a chair and the African in his hurry to get away must have placed the pepper pot back on the table as it was there after the struggle. There were no signs of grease on either Miss Tyne’s hands or her clothing.

⁹⁷⁹ Charles van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914 Vol. 2 New Nineveh* (London, 1982), pp. 50-1.

⁹⁸⁰ Foster Sakala, ‘A social history of women in the mine compounds of the Zambian Copperbelt during the colonial period’ (Essex Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2011), p. 49.

Karan Hansen identified only seven cases of alleged or attempted rape and indecent assault by Africans between 1945 and 1960. All except one were dismissed due to lack of evidence. Karen Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servant and Employer in Zambia, 1900–1985* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 177.

⁹⁸¹ Since no-one was arrested or charged, these cases would not have been counted by Hansen.

The same report also notes that Tyne had previously claimed her servant was stealing from her, and had herself been accused of stealing from handbags by her employer, a store in Kitwe.⁹⁸² In most of these six cases, the women were allegedly assaulted while their husbands were on night shift at Nkana Mine. Europeans claimed they were afraid to leave their homes at night and there was talk of creating a vigilante committee to patrol the township at a public meeting in Nkana.⁹⁸³

Industrial unrest and more constrained incomes interrupted the social life of the European community. The 1956 state of emergency brought an end to organised sport across the Copperbelt and disrupted social functions.⁹⁸⁴ “Largely due to the state of emergency” Nchanga Mine Club experienced “one of the quietest months... in a long time” as there were only two major functions: a flower show by the Women’s Institute and a boxing championship.⁹⁸⁵ Some of the more flamboyant aspects of social life were tempered. Activity at Nkana Flying Club diminished as core members had left for Canada and Southern Rhodesia, leaving the maintenance crews “severely depleted.”⁹⁸⁶ Other status symbols the European community were more reluctant to abandon. Looking back on the recession in 1959, a car dealer remarked that cases of repossession were extremely rare even though most cars were bought on hire-purchase agreements: “People would live on bread-rolls and meat pies, but would hang onto their cars at all costs.”⁹⁸⁷ Recession prompted *The Economist’s* local correspondent to conclude there was “a new spirit of realism” on the Copperbelt: “The miners themselves now form a more settled community, with fewer transient visitors intent on getting rich quickly and then getting out.” This meant

⁹⁸² NAZ MHA 1/3/1, Letter from J.B. Attenborough to Assistant Commissioner, CID Ndola, 4 March 1958.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*, Record of Meeting held in the Chief Secretary’s Office, 6 March 1958.

⁹⁸⁴ ‘Sporting world’, *Rhokana Review*, November 1956.

⁹⁸⁵ ‘Around the clubs’, *Nchanga Magazine*, November 1956.

⁹⁸⁶ ‘Around Nkana’, *Rhokana Review*, September 1957.

⁹⁸⁷ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part I*, p. 32.

that “there is a good chance that the stoppage in July... will be the last for some time.”⁹⁸⁸ Neither of these things, it transpired, came to pass.

Liaison Committee

The sense of crisis on the mines pushed some in the European community in a different direction. On 24 May 1958, A.F. Chisunka and G.C. Chindeli proposed that an Afrikaner mineworker, Dan Swart, chair a meeting “to bring about a complete organisation of labour” on the mines by establishing joint representation by the NRMWU and AMU for Europeans and Africans working for mine contractors at Mufulira.⁹⁸⁹ It is obvious to note this was a very different attitude and approach to the one previously exhibited by European mineworkers. The context of bitter industrial disputes explains why the NRMWU finally sought rapprochement with the AMU and this section will focus on this growing co-operation which produced the often overlooked Liaison Committee.⁹⁹⁰

Racist attitudes were a formidable obstacle to the creation and functioning of such a committee. In 1957, Ben Petersen had opined that Africans were “at the bottom of the ladder” not because of the colour bar but because of their “own lack of ability... It is, admittedly, a hard thing to admit to oneself that the defect is in oneself, but I am afraid that that is precisely what the Black worker will have to do.”⁹⁹¹ Racist attitudes like this began to shift. This is evident from mid-1956 as tensions in the African workforce mounted over the recognition of MASA. Many African mineworkers’ viewed this as an existential threat to their union and acted accordingly, causing

⁹⁸⁸ ‘Disputes on the Copperbelt’, *The Economist*, 7 September 1957.

⁹⁸⁹ IISH MIF Box 359, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 24 May 1958.

⁹⁹⁰ Henry Meeblo claimed that “ideological differences between the two unions made the liaison that Purvis had envisaged impossible” and does not mention that the Liaison Committee was actually established. Henry Meeblo, *African proletarians and colonial capitalism: The origins, growth, and struggles of the Zambian labour movement to 1964* (Lusaka, 1986), p. 330.

⁹⁹¹ ‘The problem as I see it’, *Rhokana Review*, May 1957.

huge disruption. Irregular strikes began to hit mines across the Copperbelt.⁹⁹² 7,000 African mineworkers stuck at Nkana for four days from 19 June and European daily-paid mineworkers were laid off.⁹⁹³ Only a week later, 250 African boss boys walked out at Nkana for five days and daily-paid mineworkers were again laid-off without pay.⁹⁹⁴ Constant disruption angered European mineworkers; at least, when it was someone else causing it. There was a short strike by 350 European mineworkers over the perceived overly-conciliatory settlement of the African dispute and the underground manager, Gordon Rethman, briefly resigned.⁹⁹⁵

Unhappy with the way the NRMWU and the mining companies were handling the strikes, white underground employees held impromptu meetings around Nkana. An informal group released a statement demanding “full employment and full wages and salaries, irrespective of any arrangements or settlements arrived at between the Chamber of Mines and the African Mineworkers’ Union.” The group’s anonymous spokesman stressed that they had done this as “European employees” not as union members. Concurrently, a rumour circulated that “if there were an African strike at the Nkana mine they would demand to work one shaft at the mine with entirely European labour.”⁹⁹⁶ This was a neat inversion of the demands made by African mineworkers in earlier disputes that they should be allowed to work a section of the mine without Europeans.⁹⁹⁷

⁹⁹² Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, pp. 149-51.

⁹⁹³ ‘Europeans laid off by strike at Nkana’, *Northern News*, 20 June 1956.

⁹⁹⁴ ‘Copperbelt disputes’, *Financial Times*, 9 July 1956, ‘Mine union leaders see unofficials’, *Central African Post*, 11 July 1956.

⁹⁹⁵ Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, p. 314.

⁹⁹⁶ ‘Europeans discuss Nkana shutdown rumours’, *Northern News*, 12 July 1956.

⁹⁹⁷ Representatives of African strikers at Mufulira in March 1940 demanded the opportunity to work one shaft entirely with African labour. Ian Henderson, ‘Early African Leadership: The Copperbelt Disturbances of 1935 and 1940’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2, 1 (1975), pp. 91-92.

No sooner was this statement released than around 100 African hospital staff went on strike at Rhokana. The local NRMWU branch responded by stating flatly they would “break” the man who suggested working one shaft with European labour during any African strike and moved to extinguish this anonymous grouping. On 12 July, a meeting of 1,000 members of the Rhokana NRMWU branch, presumably including some of the authors of said statement, passed a unanimous resolution which “repudiated in its entirety” the statement “by certain European mine employees.”⁹⁹⁸ When the rolling strikes that engulfed the Copperbelt in August hit Rhokana on 9 August there was no effort made to keep the mine working; a major change from 1955 when European mineworkers had happily kept the mines open.

What had changed? The strikes by European mineworkers during 1957 were mostly failures and supposed allies in other white trade unions in the Federation had not supported them. In defeat, the union searched for allies to bolster their position. International supporters had an important input here. The NRMWU had retained its affiliation to the Miners’ International Federation (MIF) after deciding that the supposed “anti-European and pro-African bias” of the organisation was outweighed by the recognition that “the union cannot isolate itself from the world outside Africa.”⁹⁹⁹ The TUC and MIF had been urging the NRMWU to collaborate with African mineworkers since the early 1950s but the union leadership had previously expressed at best a nominal commitment to the idea.

Meetings that had taken place between the two organisations were stilted and clouded by mutual suspicion. Lawther, then British NUM president, had attempted to establish a formal consultative committee during his visit to the Copperbelt in March

⁹⁹⁸ ‘Union ‘will break man who said Europeans would work shaft’, *Northern News*, 13 July 1956.

⁹⁹⁹ ‘Should White union leave Federation?’, *Northern News*, 4 March 1955.

1954. This succeeded in producing a statement accepting African advancement and 'equal pay for equal work' but met only once after Lawther departed.¹⁰⁰⁰ The two organisations also met at talks on African advancement where NRMWU representatives combined a defence of racist working practices with almost comical efforts to avoid causing offence. This was epitomized in an exchange at a meeting in February 1954 prompted by Guy Spires querying what Lawrence Katilungu meant by Africans 'impinging' on jobs done by Europeans. "Do you think we don't understand the language?" Katilungu shot back. "No, Mr Chairman, we certainly don't mean that" Spires hurriedly replied, followed by "We do not mean in any way to suggest that the African Union does not understand the word impinge."¹⁰⁰¹ Exchanges like this reassured the companies who, even at this unlikely juncture, thought that "every effort should be made to prevent the amalgamation of Unions."¹⁰⁰²

The MIF were again closely involved in efforts to foster co-operation between African and European mineworkers in 1958 but this time the initiative came from the NRMWU. In February, Jack Purvis approached Katilungu with a proposal to establish a Liaison Committee at a meeting also attended by Jack Joyce, a prominent member of the Durham Miners' Association and the MIF.¹⁰⁰³ Joyce was invited to chair the first Liaison Committee meeting in March where he explained the clear parallels between the Copperbelt and history of Britain's coalfields: "we were at one time in a similar position to what you are today."¹⁰⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰⁰ Arnold Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Manchester, 1958), p. 105.

¹⁰⁰¹ IISH MIF Box 358, Notes on a meeting of the sub-committee of representatives of the copper mining companies, the NRMWU, MOSSA and NRAMTU, 23 February 1954.

¹⁰⁰² ZCCM 13.3.4C, Statement on African Trade Unionism in the Northern Rhodesian Mining Industry, 25 April 1954.

¹⁰⁰³ IISH MIF Box 359, Memorandum from the Acting General Secretary to the Executive Council.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 12 March 1958.

Discussion at this meeting focused on the imminent threat of more restrictive labour legislation. A new bill incorporating the recommendations of the Honeyman Commission was announced in February 1958 and this explains the NRMWU's timing in proposing the Liaison Committee.¹⁰⁰⁵ Six men from both unions used the meeting to draft a joint programme of action to derail the bill through agitation locally and international appeals. The fact this plan was quickly acted upon distinguishes the Liaison Committee from the joint meetings which had been held earlier in the 1950s. The proposed bill was discussed by mining unions from around the world at a meeting in Calcutta in March 1958, where it was agreed it was repressive. Following this, the leaderships of the TUC, NUM and MIF sent delegations to the Colonial Office to register their protest.¹⁰⁰⁶ These delegations were bolstered by Purvis and Katilungu in late March who spent around a month in London trying to build opposition to the bill. Back on the Copperbelt, a joint delegation from both unions met the Chamber of Mines to persuade them to withdraw their support for the bill.¹⁰⁰⁷ This approach was largely successful. The Colonial Office requested that the Northern Rhodesia Government, to their embarrassment, redraft the bill and postpone its introduction.¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰⁵ For the development of labour legislation in Northern Rhodesia and the 1958 bill see Benjamin Roberts, *Labour in the Tropical Territories of the Commonwealth* (London, 1964), pp. 260-275, 311-22.

¹⁰⁰⁶ IISH MIF Box 359, Letter from W.E. Jones to Jack Purvis and Lawrence Katilungu, 14 March 1958.

¹⁰⁰⁷ 'Stronger legislation is needed', *Northern News*, 9 May 1958.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Roberts, *Tropical Territories*, p. 235.

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Figure 5.3: It was often assumed that trade unions controlled the colour bar, as shown in this cartoon in *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 August 1955. The Federal TUC operates the colour bar while the government looks on passively.

This successful campaign encouraged Liaison Committee members to broaden their ambitions and formulate a joint approach to African advancement. The Committee pressed for the abolition of racially discriminatory apprenticeship laws to open up access to skilled jobs to Africans and recommended a Labour Party be formed to advocate their preferred legislation.¹⁰⁰⁹ Both unions released a statement on the Honeyman Commission claiming the “only existing bar to African Advancement” was the discriminatory Apprenticeship Ordinance and denying that the closed shop had anything to do with the colour bar, as most contemporary observers claimed (see Figure 5.3). White mineworkers had reaffirmed their commitment to the closed shop in March 1958 when 92.7% voted in favour of retention on a turnout of around 95%. Now, the NRMWU demanded that a closed shop should be established for the AMU. Industrial legislation governing this should be “closely modelled” on British legislation

¹⁰⁰⁹ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Quarterly report on industrial relations, 30 June 1958.

and, significantly, “no attempt should be made to emulate the example set by other countries in Southern Africa.”¹⁰¹⁰ With both unions on the same footing, African advancement would be worked out between them. Katilungu even welcomed the possibility of the NRMWU regaining control of the jobs opened up to African mineworkers by the 1955 African advancement agreement. MASA members had mostly taken these jobs and so the 1955 agreement had, he claimed, “actually been to the detriment of his union.”¹⁰¹¹

The Liaison Committee also endeavoured to tackle everyday issues on the mines. NRMWU Nkana branch chair Alfred Ash tried to arrange for the names of shop stewards from both unions to be exchanged so liaison meetings could be arranged at all levels. Both unions made a joint objection to the “reprehensible act” of Bancroft Mine offering incentive payments in the form of meat for African mineworkers and alcohol for European mineworkers, as any payment except cash was an insult to their dignity.¹⁰¹² At Roan Antelope, there was a dispute over African mineworkers refusing to carry ‘cholas’ (containing tea and sandwiches) for European mineworkers. It was agreed “that this matter could be best dealt with by the two Unions and that neither Union should discuss the matter with the Management.”¹⁰¹³ At Mufulira, both unions opposed the use of contractors to sink two new shafts at the Mufulira West Extension. Identical letters were sent by Katilungu and the NRMWU Mufulira branch secretary to the manager to request a meeting with a delegation from both unions.¹⁰¹⁴ The NRMWU informed the Chamber of Mines that as “this matter was one that affected African miners... any future discussion would have to be with the

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Joint statement of representatives of NRMWU and NRAMTU, 28 April 1958.

¹⁰¹¹ IISH MIF Box 359, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 24 May 1958.

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 28 April 1958.

¹⁰¹³ *Ibid.*, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 24 May 1958.

¹⁰¹⁴ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Letters from Lawrence Katilungu and E.W. Winton to General Manager, Mufulira, 9 May 1958.

two Unions jointly.”¹⁰¹⁵ This represents a novel twist in the long-running efforts of the NRMWU to limit the use of contractors: enlisting unionised African miners to help control the use of non-union white labour.

The changing atmosphere on the Copperbelt meant that even outright racists avoided racist language in public. Blatantly racist measures had to be dressed-up and disguised in different terms, even though this sometimes frustrated their purpose. In December 1957, Mufulira Mine invited three prominent (though unnamed) Africans to attend a drinks reception for the Federal Governor-General. The presence of Africans in the social hub of the European community triggered uproar. At a stormy meeting of 170 club members, a motion crafted by Fred Holtmann was passed calling for any function where “persons [who] may not be acceptable to the members who are present” might attend to be referred to a special general meeting. Some, though, worried about the possible repercussions as the decision “might result in world-famous personalities by-passing Mufulira.”¹⁰¹⁶ They need not have worried. The club committee found that the proposal was unworkable as it was ‘too vague’ and “the main reason for the vagueness of the miners’ proposal to screen visitors is that for some reason they declined to mention the word ‘African’ in it.”¹⁰¹⁷ A revised motion stating explicitly that no members would be able “to bring in African, Asian or Coloured guests” failed to attract enough support.¹⁰¹⁸ In any case, mine clubs operated an effective colour bar as did many other businesses. The

¹⁰¹⁵ IISH MIF Box 359, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 9 May 1958.

¹⁰¹⁶ ‘Mufulira Mine Club demand power to screen guests’, *Northern News*, 20 December 1957.

¹⁰¹⁷ ‘Mufulira Mine Club’s screening plan is unworkable’, *Northern News*, 28 December 1957.

¹⁰¹⁸ ‘Majority of Mufulira miners lose their demand for ‘screen’ visitors’, *Northern News*, 14 January 1958.

owners of the Mufulira Hotel and the Delmonico Café both refused to admit Africans on their premises.¹⁰¹⁹

Incredibly, Holtmann, author of the original racist motion, joined the Liaison Committee five months later! Desperate times called for desperate measures. Expediency rather than deep-seated commitment encouraged European collaboration with African mineworkers. The exception to this was Jack Purvis who seems to have been sincere in his efforts. He was one of the main instigators of a conference between the NRMWU, AMU and the Associated Mineworkers of Rhodesia held in Victoria Falls on May Day 1959 – with obviously intentional symbolism – to discuss African advancement and establish a liaison committee between the unions. The point of the conference, according to Purvis, was “to get away from the racial line and consider men merely as workers.”¹⁰²⁰ This echoed the sentiment of Katilungu who said “the day is coming when we shall sit here as working men together.”¹⁰²¹ Nothing came of the conference.

The kind of future briefly imagined of a Copperbelt with a powerful multiracial trade union, a Labour Party and the considerable privileges of the European community essentially expanded rather than challenged was quickly overwhelmed by events. By May 1961, it was evident this moment had passed. At a conference in Accra, Gabriel Mushikwa, then AMU general secretary, passionately urged the formation of a united mineworkers’ union on the Copperbelt because “never mind, who may be black or white, our destiny is the same; to fight against exploitation... we should ignore colour... because we are all workers.” The NRMWU representative replied

¹⁰¹⁹ NAZ WP 1/1/91, Mufulira Race Relations Advisory and Conciliation Committee, 5 November 1959.

¹⁰²⁰ ‘End colour-bar bid by mine unions’, *Northern News*, 2 May 1959

¹⁰²¹ IISH MIF Box 359, Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 12 March 1958.

that he was “very conservative” about the idea of a united union as “it would be quite unrealistic to expect the highly paid members of my organisation to take collective action to raise the level of African wages.”¹⁰²²

1958 strike

On 12 September 1958, European mineworkers embarked one of the longest ever Copperbelt-wide strikes and cut annual copper production by over 10%.¹⁰²³ These tumultuous events have generally been overlooked in the secondary literature or attracted only a passing mention.¹⁰²⁴ Other histories of colonial Zambia have assumed the strike was about African advancement.¹⁰²⁵ This misunderstanding appears to have arisen from the dearth of work on the strike and reflects the prevailing assumption that the central issue on the Copperbelt was African advancement.

The main issue was actually plans announced by the Chamber of Mines in January 1958 to re-organise work on the mines by altering and blurring the demarcation between skilled white artisans and semi-skilled white operators. Artisans on the Copperbelt, as elsewhere in the world, had jealously guarded the tasks they considered to be ‘their’ work.¹⁰²⁶ The mining companies had long been aggrieved about “the fact that once an artisan touches a job, it thereafter becomes sacred to

¹⁰²² IISH MIF Box 792, Report of Proceedings of African Regional Miners’ Conference.

¹⁰²³ *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Year Book 1958* (Kitwe, 1959), p. 13.

¹⁰²⁴ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 184, Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 226-27. Burawoy noticed that “the final show of force with the European Union” occurred when copper prices hit their lowest level, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization* (Manchester, 1972), p. 89.

¹⁰²⁵ Julia Tischler mentioned in passing in that there was unrest on the Copperbelt in 1958 “where striking European miners protested against the opening of certain job categories for blacks.” Julia Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation: The Kariba Dam Scheme in the Central African Federation* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 111. John Wood claimed the strike was triggered by “the continuing dispute regarding the manner of opening certain categories of employment to Africans.” J.R.T. Wood, *The Welensky Papers: A history of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (Durban 1983), p. 610.

¹⁰²⁶ Burawoy, *Colour of Class*, p. 115.

the artisans” and were very conscious about the precise division of work on the mines.¹⁰²⁷ Artisans considered their work to be skilled work that could only be properly done by those who had completed an apprenticeship. Now, the companies intended to fragment artisans’ jobs and have operators undertake some of their tasks. This overlaid a deeper struggle about authority and notions of dignity of labour: it was about whom decides who does what on the mines. The Chamber, for instance, identified the “use of a cutting torch” by any daily-paid mineworker rather than only artisans as the “vital point of principle.”¹⁰²⁸

Efficiency measures were advanced in the context of a deteriorating economic situation as copper prices bottomed out at £166 a ton in February 1958.¹⁰²⁹ RST and RAA came under increasing pressure as repayments on loans taken out during the boom period were due in 1960 and 1961 and both companies had planned to pay for major expansions already underway using retained profits.¹⁰³⁰ This made it imperative to reduce costs. The African workforce was reduced by 5,000 between 1956 and 1958 and the companies sought to increase the productivity of their expensive European workforce, who now constituted 17% of the total workforce.¹⁰³¹ A report by RAA and RST managers calculated that basic wages for jobs done by European employees on the Copperbelt mines were between 28% and 90% higher than wages for the same jobs done by Europeans on gold mines in the Orange Free State, South Africa.¹⁰³² Technological change in the 1950s increased the need for

¹⁰²⁷ ZCCM 10.5.8D, Memorandum from Personnel Manager to General Manager, Mufulira, 19 August 1955.

¹⁰²⁸ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 1 July 1958.

¹⁰²⁹ *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Year Book 1958* (Kitwe, 1959), p. 12.

¹⁰³⁰ Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 225. Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York, 1981), pp. 104, 106.

¹⁰³¹ Appendix II.

¹⁰³² ZCCM 17.4.4C, The European Wage Structure on the Copperbelt, 26 February 1958.

skilled labour and the size of the expensive European workforce had grown.¹⁰³³ This was only partly due to the colour bar as the same trend was evident in Katanga. UMHK's European workforce grew by 58% between 1942 and 1958 despite their policy of training African mineworkers to undertake skilled work.¹⁰³⁴

Daily-paid mineworkers felt under increasing pressure. The white workforce was reduced from 4,450 daily-paid mineworkers and 2,854 staff in 1957 to 4,082 daily-paid and 2,656 staff in 1958.¹⁰³⁵ Much of these job losses occurred after Bancroft Mine ceased production in March and initially sacked almost 500 Europeans.¹⁰³⁶ Incomes were also falling. Take home pay for European employees dropped by 21-35% in real terms (depending on the job) between January 1956 and January 1958 and the decline was greatest for daily-paid mineworkers.¹⁰³⁷ This was mainly due to the collapse of the copper bonus from 102.5% of basic pay in June 1956 to 17% in June 1958.¹⁰³⁸ Moreover, tax had to be paid on the previous years' high income out of this lower income. All this contributed to a determination to resist the efficiency measures.

Efficiency plans exacerbated divisions in the European community. MOSSA "assured the Companies that they would support the Companies in implementing the measures" after brief negotiations.¹⁰³⁹ After all, the jobs of mining staff would hardly be affected. In contrast, negotiations with the NRMWU were protracted. Seven months of talks reduced the 106 artisan's tasks the companies sought to hand over

¹⁰³³ Robert Baldwin, *Economic Development and Export Growth: A study of Northern Rhodesia, 1920-1960* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 95.

¹⁰³⁴ Jean-Luc Vellut, 'Mining in Belgian Congo', in David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa: Volume Two* (London, 1983), p. 138.

¹⁰³⁵ Appendix II.

¹⁰³⁶ 'Bancroft to retain 160 Europeans', *Northern News*, 13 February 1958.

¹⁰³⁷ ZCCM 17.4.4C, The European Wage Structure on the Copperbelt, 26 February 1958.

¹⁰³⁸ Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, p. 183.

¹⁰³⁹ ZCCM 13.3.4C, Quarterly report on industrial relations, 31 March 1958.

to operators to 22.¹⁰⁴⁰ These, however, represented the most substantial alterations to existing work practices. Talks hit a deadlock in July after NRMWU representatives refused to accept any further changes to artisans' jobs or to allow contractors to undertake more work on the mines. The Chamber of Mines abandoned negotiations and announced that all 22 disputed jobs would be implemented from 1 August.¹⁰⁴¹ On 3 August, around 160 shop stewards met in Kitwe and formulated an unambiguous response: "The Union should resist with every means in its power" the efficiency plans and should demand a 15% wage increase.¹⁰⁴²

On 12 August, union notices were posted at all mines instructing NRMWU members to refuse to do any disputed job and specifically "that no artisan's work shall be done by anyone who is not an artisan." Anyone contravening this order would be expelled from the union.¹⁰⁴³ The first timberman – Cliff West, a young man from Johannesburg who had only arrived 18 months earlier – was fired from Mufulira the very next day. Smoking at the bar of the Mufulira Club in the aftermath, West boasted he wasn't worried about being laid off, "Why should I be? I have got 5,000 unionists behind me."¹⁰⁴⁴

Thus began a steady stream of dismissals and 62 men were sacked over the next 30 days for refusing direct orders from managers.¹⁰⁴⁵ Since the NRMWU had pledged to pay anyone sacked £4 a day this placed an unsustainable financial burden on the

¹⁰⁴⁰ For a list of the jobs see HPA AH 1426, Ea6, Demarcation between artisans and non-artisans: List of unresolved jobs.

¹⁰⁴¹ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Letter from A.C. Annfield, Chamber of Mines to General Secretary, NRMWU, 22 July 1958.

¹⁰⁴² *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 4 August 1958.

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*, NRMWU Notice, Mufulira Branch, 12 August 1958.

¹⁰⁴⁴ 'He may be test case', *Northern News*, 15 August 1958.

¹⁰⁴⁵ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 11 September 1958.

union.¹⁰⁴⁶ The union leadership was also struggling to keep a lid on the growing anger of its membership. On 3 September, a 700-strong meeting at Nchanga resolved to walk out as soon as the next man was sacked, and hundreds of men gathered the next day before the morning shift ready to block the shaft. Jack Purvis, Jack Joyce and British TUC representative Walter Hood rushed to address the crowd and pleaded with them to continue working and trust the union's approach.¹⁰⁴⁷ An unofficial go-slow had already begun at Chibuluma Mine after pictures of tortoises were posted around the mine in response to the sacking of Jimmy Ryan, local branch chairman, on 1 September.¹⁰⁴⁸

Matters were clearly coming to a head and major sections of the mines were shutting down as daily-paid mineworkers refused to work on disputed jobs.¹⁰⁴⁹ Many men saw themselves as skilled workers and were infuriated by the mining companies' insistence on "the extreme and obvious simplicity" of the disputed jobs.¹⁰⁵⁰ The companies' statement reflected the attitude of many others in the European community. "In three minutes today – without a spanner – I did the job" which apparently only artisans should undertake claimed a "Woman Reporter," with the obvious implication that no job a woman could perform was especially skilled.¹⁰⁵¹ One Copperbelt resident called for the NRMWU to be crushed and its members ejected from the mines so the industry could "start afresh, and leave the efficient running of the mines to the owners, who know best."¹⁰⁵²

¹⁰⁴⁶ £84 in 2015 figures. *Ibid.*, General Notice, NRMWU, 28 August 1958.

¹⁰⁴⁷ 'Top union men rush to avert strike', *Northern News*, 5 September 1958.

¹⁰⁴⁸ 'Dispute is declared by union over pay', *Northern News*, 2 September 1958. ZCCM 11.1.2A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 4 September 1958.

¹⁰⁴⁹ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 5 September 1958.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Anmercosa Salisbury, 11 September 1958.

¹⁰⁵¹ 'The job that shuts a mine', *Northern News*, 8 September 1958.

¹⁰⁵² 'Letter from R.K. Lloyd', *Northern News*, 3 September 1958.

Anger was directed at others within the European community. *Northern News* was widely regarded as being pro-company in the run-up to the strike. This assessment was shared by the Chamber of Mines who reviewed the newspapers' editorials from April to September and found they were "universally in support of the companies."¹⁰⁵³ This perception explains the reception Claud Hamilton, a photographer for the newspaper, received when he tried to slip unobtrusively into a union meeting in the Roan Mine ballroom on the eve of the strike. "A near-riot broke out" when he was spotted and a crowd of white miners seized him. As he tried to extricate himself, they beat him up. Union officials found him before he left Luanshya and tried to smooth things over by officially inviting him to the meeting to take pictures, whereupon he was jeered and cat-called by the 600-strong audience.¹⁰⁵⁴



Figure 5.4: Roan Antelope mineworkers vote to strike by show of hands, September 1958. 'Mineworkers' Union to strike tomorrow night', *Northern News*, 10 September 1958.

¹⁰⁵³ ZCCM 11.1.2A, The Jobs Dispute and the Press, 15 November 1958.

¹⁰⁵⁴ '600 camera-shy miners', *Northern News*, 10 September 1958.

The depth of anger was most clearly illustrated on 11 September when over 90% of daily-paid mineworkers on every mine voted to strike.¹⁰⁵⁵ Semi-skilled operators supported artisans because they perceived they would be required to do more work for the same pay. Many in the wider European community also rallied behind the strike, at least initially. “It is the only way” argued C.A van Slaaden, whose husband worked at Chibuluma Mine, “if we don’t stick together now we’ve had our chips.” Similarly, M. Rautenbach declared she was “wholeheartedly behind it and behind the union’s principle,” although her husband had not worked on the mines for several years.¹⁰⁵⁶

White mineworkers were able to secure substantial international support. Walter Hood from the British TUC and Jack Joyce from the MIF were both sent to the Copperbelt to support the NRMWU.¹⁰⁵⁷ Practical support was secured from South Africa after a visit by Nick van Niekirk, a South African rockbreaker and Roan NRMWU branch chair, and Jimmy Ryan to Johannesburg. The South African TUC (SATUC) sent a delegation to lobby Anglo American in South Africa and collected donations for the strikers’ benevolent fund.¹⁰⁵⁸ The strike resonated across South Africa as donations came from a wide range of South African unions, including £10 from the Trawler and Fishermen’s Union.¹⁰⁵⁹ Support came from even more unlikely sources and the NRMWU leadership turned down donations from trade union federations in East Germany and the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶⁰ It is notable that there were

¹⁰⁵⁵ ‘Mineworkers’ Union to strike tomorrow night’, *Northern News*, 12 September 1958.

¹⁰⁵⁶ ‘Copperbelt wives back striking mineworkers’, *Northern News*, 18 September 1958.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Hood and Joyce were both former miners.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Historical Papers Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg [hereafter HPA], AH 1426 Ea6, Telegram from Dulcie Hartwell, TUCSA to NRMWU, 17 October 1958.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Note from A. Manho, Trawler and Fishermen’s Union, 28 November 1958.

¹⁰⁶⁰ ‘Reds offer to aid strikers, says union member’, *Northern News*, 18 October 1958. ‘Strike peace talks delayed one day’, *Northern News*, 21 October 1958.

no donations or support from SAMWU or other South African mining unions who were hostile to the SATUC.¹⁰⁶¹

The NRMWU had again diverged from the politics of South African mining unions since the proposed liaison committee on African advancement in 1955. This was evident in the lack of racist rhetoric during the strike. Some white mineworkers found this frustrating and thought the clash with the mining companies was a struggle against the wrong target. One union member called for an immediate return to work because the “dispute is of such a minor nature” at a time when “we are struggling to defeat repeated threats against white supremacy.”¹⁰⁶² This was a decidedly minority position. While in South Africa, Ryan wrote to the *Rand Daily Mail* angrily contesting an editorial claiming the strike was about African advancement.¹⁰⁶³ “We have never intimated that our present stand is the effect of ‘African advancement’ on ‘the stake of the white man in Rhodesia’” he stated, moreover, “the African Mine Workers’ Union is not unsympathetic to our present struggle.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Liaison with the AMU was maintained throughout the strike and the Liaison Committee suggested that the AMU pursue a potentially devastating legal claim against the companies.¹⁰⁶⁵ This was a claim for a month’s pay for African mineworkers’ laid off without notice by the strike, which would have cost the companies around £572,000.¹⁰⁶⁶ The NRMWU supported this as a way of inflicting major financial damages on the company at little cost to their own members.

¹⁰⁶¹ Jon Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation in South Africa: the rise and fall of the South African Trades and Labour Council*, (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 156-58.

¹⁰⁶² Letter from ‘Corrupt’, *Northern News*, 21 October 1958.

¹⁰⁶³ ‘Strike Aid’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 October 1958.

¹⁰⁶⁴ HPA AH 1426 Ea6, Letter from J.A. Ryan to the Editor, *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 October 1958.

¹⁰⁶⁵ IISH MIF Box 359, Report on visit to Northern Rhodesia, Walter Hood, 3 December 1958.

¹⁰⁶⁶ £12m in 2015 figures. ‘£500,000 threat may face companies’, *Northern News*, 16 September 1958.

The struggle was portrayed in increasingly heated, even existential, terms but the protagonists were restricted to the European community. *Union News* declared that any settlement would have inflicted “humiliation” on men who had already been sacked: “The Chamber wants to rub their noses in the dirt... Now we must stand and fight. There is no other way out.”¹⁰⁶⁷ Such sentiment was not restricted to the union leadership. An anonymous strikers’ group reportedly threatened to drop explosives down the mine shafts to “teach the companies a lesson.”¹⁰⁶⁸ Jim Purvis summed up the situation for many. Re-energised and out of retirement, he declared he was “right in this fight – swinging like I used to down under.” The strike, he warned, “is the final showdown between the men and the mining companies... paupers versus the millionaires, that’s what it is.”¹⁰⁶⁹

The self-image of daily-paid mineworkers as downtrodden or as the underdogs reveals how social class was a powerful and enduring marker, even as it sat uneasily with their actual position in Copperbelt society. A case in point is the hostility towards mine officials. One Nchanga striker suggested efficiency savings were better made by sacking officials since many did no real work rather than targeting the “lower income group on the mines.” Moreover, everyone “knows that far larger mines elsewhere are run quite efficiently and economically run with smaller staffs.” Daily-paid men had “infinitesimal” privileges compared to officials he claimed, as the mines paid for servants for officials whereas “At least the daily-paid man hired his own garden boy to cut his hedge.”¹⁰⁷⁰

¹⁰⁶⁷ Quoted in ZCCM 11.1.2A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercusa Salisbury, 16 September 1958.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Leslie Charlton, *Spark in the Stubble: Colin Morris of Zambia* (London, 1969), p. 41.

¹⁰⁶⁹ “‘Lightning Jimmy’ is in there’, *Northern News*, 29 October 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Letter from ‘Fair Play’, *Northern News*, 16 October 1958.

Real bitterness towards mine officials developed during the strike. Officials assessed essential work – to prevent floods or collapses – in the mine and assigned white miners on essential service duty to do this work, but many shop stewards suspected they were trying to restart production. Shop stewards demanded the right to decide what constituted essential work and began logging details of officials entering the mines, asking them their name, purpose and what equipment they had. These actions were bitterly resented by officials; exactly the desired response. A shop steward at Roan Antelope explained that they realised the consequences of their actions but had made no mistake. The officials had been scabbing so “they were deliberately trying to get their own back by antagonising them as much as possible.” The mine superintendent, Adolf Schumann, was incandescent at this: “We, and not the Union, ran the Mine.”¹⁰⁷¹

MOSSA general secretary Hugh Handford furiously rebutted allegations of scabbing. He had 40 years involvement “with the Trade Union Movement in the Mining Industries in Britain, South Africa and Rhodesia.” It was a matter of record that “on no occasion since the formation of MOSSA in 1941 have our members moved a shovelful of ore or assisted in the production of an ounce of copper during a strike.” No other staff organisation he knew of could say the same. It was the NRMWU who should be ashamed of their illegal actions, interfering with the actions of officials and jeopardising the livelihood of the entire workforce. “Once an official has decided that work is essential,” Handford declared, “no shop steward has the right to over-rule them.”¹⁰⁷² The hierarchy of the mines had to be upheld.

¹⁰⁷¹ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Minutes of a meeting with representatives of the Mine Workers Union, 18 September 1958.

¹⁰⁷² *Ibid.*, Untitled statement, Hugh Handford, 19 April 1959.

Divisions on the mines were reflected in the wider European community. One miner's wife, who claimed her father was jailed after the Rand Revolt, warned:

"The name of scab goes from generation to generation... The old scab taking down the skip, etc., may have a real nice job for future years, but just remember, scab, it is not your life you should think of but your children's to follow."

She had no doubt the strike would be won, but only "thanks to a crowd of good, solid-backboned women."¹⁰⁷³ This feeling was given organisational expression on 1 October when a group of miners' wives formed the Women's Action League, headed by Rachel Mostert. "Wives," Mostert announced, "would be prepared to accept the hardship of continuing the strike, for weeks, if necessary" to win.¹⁰⁷⁴ The League went door-to-door collecting food and cash from European households not on strike and from local businesses, then distributed them to families on strike. By the end of the strike, the League was collecting and distributing 200lb of meat, 100 bread loaves, 144 eggs and five-gallons of milk every week in Nkana.¹⁰⁷⁵ Hardship did not extend to dispensing with servants though. Instead, hardship was passed on to them. Domestic workers in Nkana working for "strike-hit families are prepared to work without pay to cut costs" it was claimed. "My boy is working for his food only," Mostert said, "and committee and league members report the same."¹⁰⁷⁶

European society ground to a halt and the usually lively sports and social pages of the *Rhokana Review* are somewhat spare for these months.¹⁰⁷⁷ It was difficult for the easy-going social life of the community to continue in a context where some people

¹⁰⁷³ 'Letter from 'Can take it', *Northern News*, 27 September 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁴ 'The miners' wives form a Women's' Action League', *Northern News*, 3 October 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁵ 'Strike: merchants praised', *Northern News*, 28 October 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁶ 'Strikers' families tuck in to gift of bananas', *Northern News*, 13 October 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁷ See *Rhokana Review*, November 1958 for example.

were calling for “traitors to the mineworkers’ union” to be shot.¹⁰⁷⁸ The NRMWU Roan Antelope branch tried to fill the gap by establishing an entertainment committee “to overcome ‘Copperbelt Boredom’ – you know. Nowhere to go – nothing to do – nothing to see.” Free dances, music and film screenings were soon arranged.¹⁰⁷⁹ Businesses suffered as paying customers dwindled and they were being pressed to extend credit or make donations to the strike fund. Almost 200 businesses from across the Copperbelt sent telegrams to the Federal Government demanding immediate intervention because the strike was “economically disastrous to us” and several estimated they could only survive another three weeks.¹⁰⁸⁰

Strained negotiations carried on under a government adjudicator amidst a mounting sense of crisis. The number of disputed jobs was reduced to 11 before talks collapsed again.¹⁰⁸¹ The NRMWU now pinned their hopes on government intervention and the adoption of compulsory arbitration, or any new procedure to handle disputes. The companies refused to consider this and were denounced in increasingly lurid terms as having an “attitude of mind prevalent in the Fascist Governments of the last war. We sought to suppress it then, we fight it now.”¹⁰⁸² This rhetoric masked the weak position of white mineworkers who could not strike indefinitely as funds dwindled. With copper prices low, the companies were willing to sit out a strike to restore managerial authority. The NRMWU could not afford strike pay and instead issued vouchers to be exchanged at local stores for essential goods. This was not the kind of life Europeans had travelled to the Copperbelt for.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Letter from T.J. Brown, *Northern News*, 1 October 1958.

¹⁰⁷⁹ ZCM 11.1.2A, Roan Branch News, 19 September 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁰ “Act now’ demand to Govt. by Copperbelt businessmen’, *Northern News*, 22 October 1958.

¹⁰⁸¹ ZCCM 11.1.2A, NRMWU Press Statement, 22 October 1958.

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*, *Union News Special*, 27 October 1958.

Resolve disintegrated by late October. “I, for one, cannot go on indefinitely – heading for ruination as every day passed” exclaimed one Mufulira mineworker.¹⁰⁸³ Mufulira voted to return to work on 29 October but mass meetings at Nchanga, Nkana and Roan Antelope voted heavily against.¹⁰⁸⁴ The refusal of Governor Benson to introduce compulsory arbitration left the NRMWU searching desperately to secure any settlement to the dispute other than total defeat. Government-brokered meetings eventually produced some concessions. The companies agreed to reinstate all men sacked and to review the procedure for handling disputes. There was little other consolation and the NRMWU was forced to concede the final 11 disputed jobs.¹⁰⁸⁵ At mass meetings branch chairmen “pleaded desperately with their members” to accept the deal and, by a show of hands, a large majority did. 2,616 voted to return to work, over 1,000 abstained and only 333 voted to continue striking.¹⁰⁸⁶ After 53 days, the strike was over and the efficiency proposals which had provoked it were largely accepted. “Victory for Copperbelt Mine-owners” declared one British newspaper.¹⁰⁸⁷

Political change

Industrial unrest had a hugely destabilising impact on the European community and thousands left the Copperbelt as a result. A huge proportion of the European population was replaced by new arrivals in the late 1950s. Industrial unrest was more destabilising than the accelerating political changes from the late 1950s. This section will examine political developments in these years and reactions to the forceful emergence of African nationalism. It will be argued that European political

¹⁰⁸³ Letter from ‘Mineworker’, *Northern News*, 31 October 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁴ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 29 October 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa, Salisbury, 3 November 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁶ ‘Decisive vote ends strike’, *Northern News*, 4 November 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁷ ‘Victory for Copperbelt Mine-owners’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 November 1958.

engagement in defence of white minority rule was related to specific dramatic events and proved fleeting. The relaxation of the colour bar and acceptance of further African advancement proposals shortly after the murder of a European woman in Ndola and eruption of violence in Katanga are strong evidence of this. Subsequent opportunities to engage in resistance to African nationalism through a defence of the Katanga secession or derailing proposed constitutional changes in Northern Rhodesia opposed by settler politicians were not taken.

Following the strike, the Chamber of Mines suggested their objectives should be “To chuck out the old guard” and “To rewrite the [recognition] agreement to our entire advantage.”¹⁰⁸⁸ The first objective was quickly achieved by default as turnover of the mine’s white workforce reached 36% in 1958.¹⁰⁸⁹ This mobility is important in two ways. First, lots of Europeans could and did leave the Copperbelt relatively easily, so felt little need to engage in a struggle against African nationalism in a place they did not intend to stay. Second, many of the Europeans who witnessed the growing strength and success of African nationalist movements in the early 1960s had only been on the Copperbelt for a short period. Many who left went to South Africa but others went further afield as the international routes of white labour migration were still open to white mineworkers. Eddie Lauderdale left Mufulira in 1958 and went first to go to Britain, then to California where his sister and her husband, both former Mufulira employees, lived. Lauderdale “presented his papers to the local union for a job” and soon secured one.¹⁰⁹⁰ Similarly, the *Rhokana Review* published a

¹⁰⁸⁸ ZCCM 11.1.2A, Notes on the course of the demarcation dispute, 25 November 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Appendix II.

¹⁰⁹⁰ ‘Round the Group’, *Horizon*, February 1962.

photograph in 1961 showing six recent Nkana employees working at the same dockyard in New Zealand.¹⁰⁹¹

The exodus from the mines included leading figures in the NRMWU. Jack Purvis was unseated as general secretary in July 1959 and Nick van Niekirk left Roan Antelope around the same time.¹⁰⁹² However, like was replaced with like. Fred Holtmann took over as acting NRMWU president. Holtmann was the epitome of Copperbelt masculinity: a six foot-one rugby player and army veteran who had begun work as a

Image removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

Figure 5.5: Fred Holtmann, 1959. 'Round the Group'. *Horizon*, March 1959.

diamond driller at 16 and described as “one of the strong men” of the union.¹⁰⁹³ Born in Johannesburg, Holtmann had spent his life in the mining industry, working as a driller on the Rand, the Copperbelt, British Columbia, Alberta, and then back to Mufulira. He was a shop steward at Mufulira for five years until he left for Canada and elected a branch official on his return.¹⁰⁹⁴ He was clear about the primary purpose of the union: “collective bargaining based ultimately on the right to strike.” Without the strike

weapon “the union might just as well close down, for all the use it would be.”¹⁰⁹⁵

Alongside him as acting general secretary was Emrys Williams, a winding engine driver at Nkana originally from South Wales. The experiences of the British trade union movement were again called upon to strengthen the NRMWU with the recruitment of Fred Ackroyd as organising secretary. Ackroyd had 20 years’

¹⁰⁹¹ ‘Nkana lads in New Zealand’, *Rhokana Review*, October 1961.

¹⁰⁹² ZCCM 11.1.2A, List of European miners at Roan Antelope, July 1959.

¹⁰⁹³ ‘Union official quits’, *Northern News*, 22 July 1961.

¹⁰⁹⁴ ‘Profile’, *Horizon*, September 1960.

¹⁰⁹⁵ ‘A dynamic union with a turbulent career’, *Horizon*, April 1961.

experience as a miner in Yorkshire, was a longstanding Labour Party member and possessed diplomas from the National Council of Labour Colleges in trade union organising.¹⁰⁹⁶

The aftermath of the strike saw a brief revival of political radicalism among the Copperbelt's European community. Demands to nationalise the copper mines emerged as a response to the loss of control of white mineworkers' over their workplace. Endorsing the calls by others for nationalisation, one Chingola resident claimed "it can be done through a Socialist Government" and it was "as simple as that" because "the workers have the power." This is what had been learnt from the strike: "the complete solidarity of all the workers."¹⁰⁹⁷ Emrys Williams hoped that the 1959 general election in Britain would bring to power a Labour Government who would break up the Federation and nationalise the mines.¹⁰⁹⁸ All NRMWU branches voted to back nationalisation in September 1959 on the basis of a plan which union leaders claimed "have been worked over by people they regard as experts on nationalisation in the British trade union world."¹⁰⁹⁹

These demands were overshadowed by political developments of much greater significance: the increasing tempo of the African nationalist struggle and efforts of settler politicians led by Roy Welensky to secure Dominion status for the Federation.¹¹⁰⁰ What is remarkable is the comparative lack of impact of African nationalism on the Copperbelt's European community and the failure of this community to rally behind white minority rule. Many Europeans simply did not

¹⁰⁹⁶ 'Rhodesia post for Yorkshire miner', *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 December 1958.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Letter from 'United We Stand', *Northern News*, 5 November 1958.

¹⁰⁹⁸ NAZ MLSS1/26/170, Record note, Senior Labour Office, 24 August 1959.

¹⁰⁹⁹ 'Demand for state ownership of the copper mines', *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 September 1959.

¹¹⁰⁰ The Federation had been established as "a new 'dominion' in the making" but its "constitutional future had been left unresolved." John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-system, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 619.

engage in politics. There was a huge disparity between the European population of the Copperbelt towns and the electoral register. There were only 6,329 registered voters in the Copperbelt towns in 1957 but the combined European population of these towns was 30,265 in 1956 (though around a third of these were children).¹¹⁰¹ One NRMWU official estimated that only around 40% of the union's membership was registered to vote in the 1958 Federal elections.¹¹⁰²

Most Europeans supported white minority rule but were not prepared to seriously struggle to retain it. Upsurges of political engagement which did occur were closely tied to specific events and quickly dissipated. This was the case during 1960. Anxieties grew in the European community as 16 countries across Africa were due to become independent that year. Moreover, nationalist campaigns by the newly formed United National Independence Party (UNIP) intensified following the release of Kenneth Kaunda from prison in January 1960 and the visit of the Monckton Commission – established to assess the future of the Federation – to the Federation in February. European Rights Associations were formed in Kitwe and Ndola in March 1960 and sent contingents down to a 1,000-strong rally in Lusaka billed as: “Do we fight or Do we surrender?”¹¹⁰³

Urgency was injected into this question on 8 May 1960 when Lilian Burton and her two daughters were attacked by UNIP activists in Ndola, who stoned and burnt her car. Burton died in hospital from her injuries. Her husband pleaded that “no-one use her death for political purposes” and emphasised that Lilian Burton supported African political aspirations. This did little to quell the outpouring of anger. Over 2,000

¹¹⁰¹ NAB CO 1015/2002, Certified Register of Voters, 1957. Appendix I.

¹¹⁰² Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa. The human situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt* (New York, 1962), p. 70.

¹¹⁰³ ‘The Northern Rhodesia Association’, *Northern News*, 1 March 1960. ‘Kitwe ‘white’ association’, *Northern News*, 8 March 1960.

Europeans gathered for a rally in Kitwe where UFP ministers denounced the UNIP activists as rats who should be exterminated. NRMWU branch officials in Luanshya condemned the murder as “primitive savagery” and called for Governor Evelyn Hone to resign. Demands to sever ties with London “reached its crescendo in the aftermath of her killing.”¹¹⁰⁴

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Figure 5.6: Belgian refugees in Mufulira Mine Club, 12 July 1962. ‘The Baluba are not all savage cannibals’, *Horizon*, March 1962.

Burton’s murder was followed in July 1960 by what seemed like a salutary lesson in the dangers of decolonisation: the chaotic end of Belgian rule in Congo and the secession of Katanga. An army mutiny prompted around 6,000 Belgians to flee Katanga for the Copperbelt within a few days.¹¹⁰⁵ Temporary accommodation was provided by the mine clubs or in the homes of European families and this left a lasting impression on many. Gael Whelan’s family housed Belgian refugees in Luanshya and she retained vivid memories of refugees who came from Katanga “with absolutely nothing in their hands... They got in their cars and drove away with

¹¹⁰⁴ Walima T. Kalusa, ‘The Killing of Lilian Margaret Burton and Black and White Nationalisms in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) in the 1960s’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 1 (2011), pp. 68-70.

¹¹⁰⁵ Roy Welensky, *Welensky’s 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (London, 1964), p. 211.

the hope of escaping with their lives, often there were bullet holes in their cars.”¹¹⁰⁶ Neil Glynn remembered lurid stories of atrocities circulated such as African soldiers grabbing “a white baby by its legs and smashing its head against a tree.”¹¹⁰⁷ The prospect of violence gripped the European community and groups of armed men formed themselves into ‘Home Guards’, with the full support of the NRMWU and MOSSA. They demanded, and got, an immediate meeting with Roy Welensky to discuss Federal assistance for the units. They did not trust the colonial government “to act quickly and firmly in dealing with serious trouble” so needed to arm themselves.¹¹⁰⁸

Federal MP Rex L’Ange’s speech that “on the Copperbelt, we are right in the front line of racial conflict” likely resonated with audience members who heard it in Nkana in September 1960. L’Ange’s subsequent claim that “we look upon this part of the world as our home and birthright, which we have no intention of relinquishing” was less applicable.¹¹⁰⁹ Only 16% of the 467 men surveyed in 1959 claimed to have settled on the Copperbelt. Most intended to leave at some point and 60.5% of daily-paid mineworkers and 67.5% of staff employees thought there were as good or better employment opportunities for them outside Northern Rhodesia.¹¹¹⁰ Enthusiasm for the Home Guards dwindled and it’s not clear how seriously participants took it after the initial urgency provoked by events in Katanga diminished. Robin Cumming recalled that his father joined the Mufulira Home Guard and trained once a week but “it was a bit of a Dad’s army.” The only military action his father saw was when someone accidentally shot him in the arm during

¹¹⁰⁶ Interview with Gael Whelan, 10 June 2013.

¹¹⁰⁷ Interview with Neil Glynn, 10 July 2013.

¹¹⁰⁸ WP 255/8, Record of a meeting held in the residence of the Federal Prime Minister, 18 July 1960.

¹¹⁰⁹ WP 635/11, Speech given by L’Ange to UFP meeting, 23 September 1960.

¹¹¹⁰ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part II: An Interview Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), pp. 33, 100.

training.¹¹¹¹ Lilian Burton's murder and Congolese independence hardened attitudes in the European community but only temporarily. Two developments illustrate this: the relaxation of the official colour bar and African advancement.

The unofficial colour bar in the Copperbelt towns came under pressure in mid-1959 when the African National Congress (ANC) embarked on a renewed campaign to compel white-owned premises to serve Africans. Soon, prominent ANC members were being refused service or thrown out of bars, restaurants, cafés and cinemas across the Copperbelt.¹¹¹² The real breakthrough in the campaign came accidentally though. In August 1959, Sir Francis Ibiam, a Nigerian physician, lay elder of the Presbyterian Church and president of the University College of Ibadan, was passing through Chingola when he attempted to stop at a café. The café's proprietor served tea to Ibiam's two white companions then refused him the same service because: "we do not serve Africans." International outcry at this prompted embarrassed apologies from Roy Welensky and the Northern Rhodesia Government.¹¹¹³ More importantly, it provided the impetus the Race Relations Ordinance which became law in September 1960 and ended the colour bar in public facilities.¹¹¹⁴ This law was implemented with little opposition. According to Colin Morris, there were "ugly incidents outside cafes and cinemas on the Copperbelt for a week or so" then few further reactions.¹¹¹⁵

The 1955 African advancement agreement stipulated that a firm of industrial consultants should conduct a job survey on the mines before further negotiations

¹¹¹¹ Interview with Neville Searle and Robin Cumming, 24 September 2013.

¹¹¹² Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), p. 306.

¹¹¹³ 'Rhodesian apologies to Nigeria', *The Times*, 5 September 1959. 'The Ibiam Affair', *Time*, 14 September 1959.

¹¹¹⁴ Alexander Hanna, *The Story of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* (London, 1965), p. 267.

¹¹¹⁵ Colin Morris, *The Hour After Midnight. A Missionary's Experiences of Racial and Political Struggle in Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1961), p. 162.

could continue. This firm was the British management consultancy Production Engineering, whose role in African advancement or in the reorganisation of the mines has not previously been recognised in the literature.¹¹¹⁶ Their weighty four-volume report of all European-held jobs – known as ‘Schedule A’ jobs – was completed in June 1958 but industrial unrest postponed the reopening of African advancement discussions until November 1959.¹¹¹⁷ Negotiations were again protracted and the NRMWU were again suspicious of the companies’ motives, with Williams sarcastically sympathising with Ronald Prain’s “desire to give shareholders an image of himself and his companies as extremely liberal employers.”¹¹¹⁸ White mineworkers were under no illusions about their irreplaceability and in 1957 had foreseen a future with “a thin stratum of highly-skilled Europeans supervising a mass of lowly-paid African workers. We know this can be done. In the mines in the Belgian Congo this is today the reality.”¹¹¹⁹ Added to this gloomy picture were distinct doubts about the durability or existence of white supremacy. One anonymous union leader is worth quoting in full:

It is difficult to think straight about African advancement if you know for certain that some of your pals and their children simply haven’t got what it takes to keep ahead of the black man. But, damn it man, they’re white and they’re decent people, and they can’t just be left behind!¹¹²⁰

¹¹¹⁶ There is actually very little written on the company beyond a slim corporate history: P-E International, *Fifty Years of Professional Enterprise: The Story of P-E* (Egham, 1984). Phimister briefly mentions an unnamed firm of industrial consultants were engaged to undertake a job survey. Phimister, ‘Workers in Wonderland?’, p. 223.

¹¹¹⁷ Morison Commission, pp. 5-6.

¹¹¹⁸ “European trade union criticism of Sir R. Prain’, *Northern News*, 24 November 1959.

¹¹¹⁹ NRMWU, *Annual General Council*, (Kitwe, 1957), p. 28. This challenges Charles Perrings assertion that the “surrender of the union” over the colour bar was because white mineworkers “could not conceive of [their] displacement.” Perrings, ‘Race, Value and the Division of Labour’, p. 203.

¹¹²⁰ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers in Northern Rhodesia 1959-60* (Leiden, 1973), p. 19.

The proposals eventually agreed did not leave these people 'behind'. 38 semi-skilled jobs were fragmented and opened up to African mineworkers but the companies guaranteed that any European displaced would continue to be employed at the same pay and conditions.¹¹²¹ Importantly, these proposals created new training schemes for 'Schedule A' jobs open to Europeans and Africans. This effectively ended the colour bar and, in the NRMWU's unfortunate phrase, provided what they regarded as "a final solution" to African advancement.¹¹²² The racist agitation of mid-1960 evidently did not strengthen resolve to maintain the colour bar as, in a secret ballot, white mineworkers voted 1,870 to 1,288 (with around 1,000 abstentions) to accept the proposals in November.¹¹²³ Significantly, this vote came a month after the release of the Monckton Report which recommended there should be an African majority in the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council.¹¹²⁴

There were few worries about a shortage of work. Production soared in 1960 and Northern Rhodesia overtook Chile as the world's largest copper exporter.¹¹²⁵ The white workforce expanded to 7,474 and average annual earnings rose to £2,160 in 1960.¹¹²⁶ The companies had little difficulty rapidly replacing those who left and continued to recruit the bulk of white workforce from South Africa and mining regions around the English-speaking world. New arrivals at Mufulira in September 1960 included a shift boss from Canada, an underground clerk returning to the Copperbelt after eight years in Australia and underground operators from Ireland, Scotland and

¹¹²¹ Burawoy, *Colour of Class*, pp. 13-20. Larry Butler, *Copper Empire: mining and the colonial state in Northern Rhodesia, c. 1930-64* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 236.

¹¹²² NAB CO 1015/2198, African Advancement Proposals in the sphere of the NRMWU, 4 October 1960.

¹¹²³ NAZ MLSS1/26/170, Record from Acting DLC, 5 November 1960.

¹¹²⁴ Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976), p. 220.

¹¹²⁵ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 233.

¹¹²⁶ *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Year Book 1960* (Kitwe, 1961), p. 31.

Yorkshire.¹¹²⁷ New arrivals had similar attitudes to those they replaced. In August 1961, daily-paid mineworkers voted overwhelmingly to retain the closed shop – 4,059 in favour and 107 against – even though around 45% of the total white workforce had only been on the mines since the end of the strike wave in December 1958.¹¹²⁸ There was one notable change though, the size of the daily-paid workforce shrank and the number of staff grew. By 1961, there were 4,447 daily-paid mineworkers and 3,194 staff.¹¹²⁹

The union leadership changed again in 1961 and were again replaced those with similar attitudes and background. Emrys Williams resigned as general secretary in mid-1961 to become a handyman while Fred Holtmann was promoted to a staff job so could no longer be a union member.¹¹³⁰ The following year, South African hoist driver Gerry Foord, a former union vice-president and one of very few men who had been an active member since the 1930s, left for New Zealand.¹¹³¹ Williams was replaced by Andrew Leslie, the first general secretary appointed from outside the Copperbelt. Leslie, however, slotted into the established mould. Born in Scotland in 1920, he had served his apprenticeship in a Dundee jute factory – an industry where workers had “a material connection to empire” according to Andrew Thompson¹¹³² – and left for South Africa in 1948. He secured a job on South African Railways and became a shop steward, rapidly rising through the union ranks until he became vice-president of the 17,000-strong Artisans’ Staff Association.¹¹³³

¹¹²⁷ ‘Round the Group’, *Horizon*, September 1960.

¹¹²⁸ NAZ MLSS1/26/170, Closed shop ballot results, 18 August 1961. *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Year Book 1961* (Kitwe, 1962), p. 31.

¹¹²⁹ Appendix II.

¹¹³⁰ ‘Union official quits’, *Northern News*, 22 July 1961.

¹¹³¹ ‘Drove hoists for 31 years’, *Rhokana Review*, August 1962.

¹¹³² Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow, 2005), pp. 66.

¹¹³³ ‘Andrew Leslie’, *Horizon* April 1961.

The companies tried to stabilise their European workforce but with little success. A home ownership scheme was announced by RST and RAA in September 1957 and progressively expanded in the following years. RAA sold houses in the Nkana mine township at generous prices and offered any employees who bought their house a £30 monthly housing allowance.¹¹³⁴ Few participated in this scheme and 89% of employees surveyed in 1959 reported they were not interested in home ownership.¹¹³⁵ The white workforce and the European community continued to be transient. It was not, however, primarily political changes which generated this transience. Remarkably, only 18% of men and 23% of women in the 1959 survey claimed they would leave the Copperbelt “if Africans were able to gain political control.” This was not about a lack of racism: 51% of men and 35% of women stated they would leave if there was social integration with Africans. It was that African nationalism simply did not greatly impinge on the everyday life of the European community. Of the women surveyed in 1959, only 14.5% identified ‘racial problems’ as the worst aspect of Copperbelt life, slightly higher than the 13% who identified ‘South Africans’.¹¹³⁶

The early 1960s presented several opportunities for the European community to demonstrate firm opposition to African nationalism and commitment to white minority rule. Three are worth mentioning: Katangese secession, turbulent negotiations over a new constitution for Northern Rhodesia and the possibility of the Federation declaring independence. For the most part, however, Europeans on the Copperbelt were bystanders rather than active participants in these events.

¹¹³⁴ £629 in 2015 figures. ‘Home ownership made easy’, *Rhokana Review*, January 1959.

¹¹³⁵ Holleman and Biesheuvel, *Attitudes of White Mining Employees: Part II*, p. 72.

¹¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 31.

The most significant of these events was Katangese secession. The Federal Government saw Katanga as a bulwark against African nationalism and facilitated clandestine military and economic support to the secessionist government as a way of bolstering white minority rule.¹¹³⁷ White mercenaries fought for the Katangese Government and Ndola emerged as a “forward staging post and safe-haven for the mercenaries.”¹¹³⁸ Pat O’Connell, then a soldier in the Federal Army, claimed that they arrested several Belgian mercenaries in Ndola but did not know what to do with them.¹¹³⁹ Len Catchpole, Ndola’s jack of all trades, had tried his luck as a mercenary and was captured by UN forces at Elisabethville in September 1961.¹¹⁴⁰ Few other Europeans from the Copperbelt joined him. It was not worth the risk when the £200 a month Rhodesians were reportedly paid as mercenaries was only slightly higher than the average monthly income of white mineworkers.¹¹⁴¹ White mineworkers weren’t the only ones to resist temptation. One former commander of a Federal Army platoon deployed to Kipushi – where an airfield used by mercenaries straddled the border – recalled that only one of his soldiers deserted to join the mercenaries.¹¹⁴²

At the same time, stormy negotiations were underway between the British Government, settler politicians and African nationalist politicians over new constitutions for the Federation’s territories.¹¹⁴³ The British Government white paper on the Northern Rhodesian constitution in February 1961 proved particularly controversial and was immediately rejected by the UFP as the franchise proposals could have produced an African majority in the Legislative Council. An NRMWU

¹¹³⁷ Matthew Hughes, ‘Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958-1965’, *The International History Review*, 25, 3 (2003), pp.592-615.

¹¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 605.

¹¹³⁹ Personal communication with Pat O’Connell, 2 July 2013.

¹¹⁴⁰ Hughes, ‘Fighting for White Rule’, p. 606.

¹¹⁴¹ ‘Mercenary recruitment in Federation’, *Northern News*, 25 January 1961.

¹¹⁴² ‘A look to the past’, *The Cheetah*, October 1980.

¹¹⁴³ For an overview of these negotiations see Owen Kalinga, ‘Independence Negotiations in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia’, *International Negotiation*, 10 (2005), pp. 235-62.

delegation travelled to London in January ahead of these talks to lobby Labour MPs and trade unionists and “demonstrate the overwhelming unity amongst Europeans.”¹¹⁴⁴ There was little other sustained opposition to the new constitution other than verbal protests. Threats that there would be a one-day strike in October or a public protest against the British Government came to nothing.¹¹⁴⁵ Later that year, the NRMWU instructed all branches to hold compulsory meetings to discuss the revised constitutional proposals. Attendance at these meetings was low and the Nchanga branch refused to hold a meeting because members were not interested.¹¹⁴⁶

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Figure 5.7: Soldiers from the Royal Rhodesia Regiment on training exercises in Wusakili compound. Such military action in defence of white minority rule remained a fantasy. ‘Attack at Dawn!’, *Rhokana Review*. October 1961.

¹¹⁴⁴ WP 255/8, Letter from E. Clayton to Roy Welensky, 2 January 1961

¹¹⁴⁵ WP 255/8, Letter from D.A. Etheredge, Anglo-American to Roy Welensky, 12 October 1961

¹¹⁴⁶ NAZ MLSS1/26/170, Letter from N.D. Hunt to Under-Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Mines, 12 December 1961.

Elements in the Federal Government did briefly consider armed defiance of the British Government's franchise proposals in February 1961 and declaring independence for the Federation.¹¹⁴⁷ Secret contingency plans were prepared on the possibility of the Federation declaring independence and proceeded on the assumption that "the whole European population will rally behind it." This move would likely provoke general strikes and protests by Africans, so "would require the very firmest handling, including shooting, at the early stages." The plan involved the mobilisation of virtually every adult European male in Northern Rhodesia not already in the police or army to violently suppress anticipated widespread African unrest and engage in direct military confrontation with British forces.¹¹⁴⁸ This was a fantasy. The European community on the Copperbelt opposed decolonisation but were not prepared to resist it through force of arms.

Conclusion

Writing in the aftermath of the 1958 strike, one white mineworker confidently asserted "What we on the Copperbelt are doing today will go down in the pages of history tomorrow."¹¹⁴⁹ This, like many prevailing assumptions of the Copperbelt's European community, was incorrect. Existing historical literature has focused heavily on the lengthy, torturous and ill-tempered negotiations over African advancement. What this has missed is that there were lengthy, torturous and ill-tempered negotiations over virtually everything on the mines in the 1950s: wages, bonuses, working hours, holidays, overtime, use of contractors, demarcation of artisans' work,

¹¹⁴⁷ Wood, *The Welensky Papers*, pp. 881-82, 890-92. Philip Murphy, "An intricate and distasteful subject': British Planning for the Use of Force Against the European Settlers of Central Africa, 1952-65', *English Historical Review*, CXXI, 492 (2006), pp. 755-58.

¹¹⁴⁸ WP 234/8, The factors affecting the military problem, M.B. Benoy, 31 January 1960.

¹¹⁴⁹ 'Letter from United We Stand', *Northern News*, 5 November 1958.

relations with mine officials as well as the colour bar. Despite heated rhetoric over the colour bar and African advancement, the dispute fizzled but did not ignite.

Disputes in this period are replete with examples of the kind of things European mineworkers were willing to engage in protracted struggles over and the kind of things they were not. These were struggles over the dignity of labour, perceptions of skill, and the organisation of work. This was not a history of the clash of white labour versus black labour. African advancement and the colour bar did not feature in the major disputes of this period and, under severe pressure, European mineworkers actually tried to seek rapprochement with African mineworkers. The reduced salience of race in these major disputes helps explain the muted reaction of the European community towards the threat African nationalism posed to white minority rule in Northern Rhodesia. Features of white settler societies elsewhere in southern Africa such as 'black peril' hysterias or strident defences of the colour bar appeared only infrequently on the Copperbelt. The predominant attitude of the European community toward the African majority around them was once again mostly indifference.

There was still a clear international dimension to the life of the European community. The Copperbelt had, in retrospect, what appears to be an astonishing ability to capture international attention. This was epitomised in the offer made by the British TUC leadership to provide and pay for a general secretary for a union of 4,000 Europeans in central Africa. Principles such as the clear demarcation of artisans work and the perceived need to reduce the working week reflected more widely held attitudes in mining and industrial centres around the English-speaking world.

Defeat of the NRMWU in 1958 gave the mining companies considerable latitude to reorganise life and work on the mines. Access to the riches of the copper industry was the basis of the affluence and privilege of the European community, not only for those who worked on the mines but for those businesses dependent on the income of European mineworkers and any European residents who enjoyed the social and cultural institutions subsidised by the mines. Despite this defeat, Europeans were not ready to yield their privileged position on the Copperbelt. The wish of the mining companies “to see the Union shattered and dead” was one Governor Arthur Benson sympathised with but, he warned Ronald Prain, it was “tantamount to wishing that the Kingdom of God would arrive tomorrow.”¹¹⁵⁰

¹¹⁵⁰ NAB CO 1015/2035, Letter from Governor Arthur Benson to Ronald Prain, 11 November 1958.

Lawrence Katilungu

Lawrence Chola Katilungu (1914-61) was born in the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia into the royal clan of the Bemba people so, as his *Times* obituary noted approvingly, was “an aristocrat.”¹¹⁵¹ It was, however, wider imperial connections which were developing in Northern Rhodesia around the time of his birth which became so important in his life. Katilungu was

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Figure 6.1: Lawrence Katilungu, circa 1959. ‘A Union and its Architect’, *Horizon*, February 1962.

among the many who received a Catholic missionary education from the White Fathers, who had arrived in the region in 1891 before the effective establishment of British colonial rule.¹¹⁵² He excelled in this environment and became a teacher and then head teacher by the age of 20. The White Fathers did not retain his services for long though.¹¹⁵³

In August 1935, a plane landed unexpectedly near Katilungu’s village in Luwingu District, where he was during the school holidays, and a runner came to fetch Katilungu, the only English speaker in the vicinity. Katilungu claimed that the downed pilot was the pioneering Indian aviator Manmohan Singh, who, grateful for

¹¹⁵¹ ‘Mr Lawrence Katilungu’, *The Times*, 11 November 1961.

¹¹⁵² Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola, ‘The White Fathers Archive in Zambia’, *History in Africa*, 30 (2003), p. 440.

¹¹⁵³ This section relies on Hugh Macmillan, ‘Katilungu, Lawrence Chola (1914–1961)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed 1 September 2015 at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/94725>

Katilungu's assistance and not seriously injured, gave him a lift to Broken Hill.¹¹⁵⁴ From here, Katilungu made the decision thousands of other Africans in the region had made before, including large numbers from Northern Province, and walked to the Copperbelt.¹¹⁵⁵

Regardless of precisely how he got there, Katilungu arrived on the Copperbelt in December 1935 and got a job as an underground 'spanner boy' at Nkana Mine. Quick progression up the restricted career path for African mineworkers ensued and he became a 'boss boy' overseeing a group of underground African workers.¹¹⁵⁶ He was probably among the leaders of the African mineworkers' strike in March 1940 but left the Copperbelt shortly after. The bloody suppression of this strike may have contributed to his departure as he claimed a close friend was shot dead.¹¹⁵⁷

Again, like many other Africans born in what became Zambia, Katilungu then went to work in Belgian Congo, although not as a miner. From 1940 to 1947, he was a clerk at a firm transporting fish in Katanga, until he returned to become a recruitment clerk at Nkana and then one of the senior interpreters on the mine.¹¹⁵⁸ His time in Katanga would likely have familiarised him with the labour policy on Union Minière du Haut Katanga's mines – where Africans undertook skilled work, but for low wages – and this may have influenced his subsequent views on 'African advancement'.

Katilungu's return to the Copperbelt coincided with the emergence of the African Mineworkers Union (AMU), aided by another imperial connection in the form of

¹¹⁵⁴ The story seems extraordinary but Singh was attempting to fly between South Africa and Britain that year and had well-established habit of providing free 'lifts' to people he encountered. Harbans Singh (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism Volume III* (Patiala, 1997), pp. 44-5.

¹¹⁵⁵ 'A union and its architect', *Horizon*, February 1962, p. 6.

¹¹⁵⁶ Arnold Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Manchester, 1958), p. 92.

¹¹⁵⁷ Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), p. 85

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92. Other accounts claim Katilungu returned in 1944.

William Comrie, a British trade union official sent to Northern Rhodesia to help establish African trade unions.¹¹⁵⁹ Katilungu was an important voice in the decision to organise separately of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union (NRMWU) and came to dominate the independent AMU.¹¹⁶⁰ He was elected the union's first general president in 1949 and then the first president of the newly-established Trade Union Congress (TUC) in 1950.

Although a member of the African National Congress (ANC) from its inception, Katilungu kept his union largely out of politics.¹¹⁶¹ He opposed a strike against the deportation of Simon Zukas, a radical white ANC member, and refused to support a two-day strike against the creation of Federation in April 1953. These actions generated lasting mistrust between the union and the nationalist movement. Nevertheless, the AMU, and Katilungu's position within it, continued to grow. He was also integrated into the international circuits of trade unionism and, in February 1951, he visited the UK for the first time as a guest of the British NUM.¹¹⁶² These links proved highly influential for Katilungu, as he later reflected "the British tradition of trade unionism... [was] the tradition in which, you might say, I was brought up."¹¹⁶³

Katilungu's position in the union was inadvertently strengthened when a state of emergency was declared in September 1956. Much of the AMU leadership was detained and removed to remote regions of the territory, some for the next two

¹¹⁵⁹ Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa*, (London, 2007), p. 33.

¹¹⁶⁰ Jane Parpart, *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 116.

¹¹⁶¹ Katilungu was also briefly a member of the liberal, multiracial Constitution Party in 1957. Bizeck Jube Phiri, 'The Capricorn Africa Society Revisited: The Impact of Liberalism in Zambia's Colonial History, 1949-1963', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 24, 1 (1991), pp. 57-8.

¹¹⁶² Matthew Mwendapole, *A History of the Trade Union Movement in Zambia up to 1968* (Lusaka, 1977), p. 10.

¹¹⁶³ 'A union and its architect', *Horizon*, February 1962, p. 6.

years.¹¹⁶⁴ Handily, Katilungu had been in Bulawayo to represent the African Railway Workers' Union at an inquiry into wage claims and so avoided being detained. In the aftermath, Katilungu merged the roles of general secretary and president, ostensibly to cope with the parlous state of the organisations' finances.

It was from this strengthened position that Katilungu was able to implement his ambitious plan to collaborate with the NRMWU against the mining companies, in a brief movement that offered a very different vision of the future for the Copperbelt and for European society there. This also allowed Katilungu to cement his reputation. He came to be on first-name terms with a range of leading figures in the trade union movement internationally, when he visited the UK in 1958 with Jack Purvis he stayed at the house of British TUC general secretary Vincent Tewson.¹¹⁶⁵ The AMU had eclipsed white mineworkers in international trade union circles. For example, in October 1959 Katilungu and Matthew Mwendapole visited Australia as guests of the Australian Federation of Labour.¹¹⁶⁶

Although he received no sanction for his collaboration with the NRMWU, and was actively supported by other senior AMU members, Katilungu's moves toward political collaboration with white settlers seriously damaged his position and reputation. In 1959, he supported the banning of the breakaway Zambia African National Congress, which soon became the United National Independence Party, and subsequently joined the Monckton Commission established to review the constitution

¹¹⁶⁴ National Archives, London CO 1015/1451, Particulars of restrictions orders made under Emergence (Transitional Provisions) Ordinance.

¹¹⁶⁵ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 255/7, Letter from Vincent Tewson to Roy Welensky, 28 July 1958.

¹¹⁶⁶ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola 6.10.2A, Registrar of Trade Unions: Annual Report for 1959.

of the Federation.¹¹⁶⁷ The latter decision was particularly irritating as the Northern Rhodesia TUC had already pledged to boycott the Commission.¹¹⁶⁸ Katilungu's protest that he joined the Commission in a 'personal capacity' was unconvincing and, while he was in Lagos in December 1960, he was removed as AMU president and subsequently from the TUC.¹¹⁶⁹ The removal was acrimonious and Katilungu threatened to sue his former comrades, a move which would almost certainly have bankrupted the union. Jack Purvis tried to smooth things over by arranging a special loan from trade unions in Europe to cover the costs, but this did little to improve relations between Katilungu and the AMU.¹¹⁷⁰

Katilungu instead turned to politics and became ANC acting president from April 1961 when party leader Harry Nkumbula was imprisoned for dangerous driving after killing an African police officer during a road accident.¹¹⁷¹ His political career was curtailed, however, by a fatal car crash on 9 November 1961 on the Congo Pedicle road.¹¹⁷² The timing was significant. By late 1961, the faint prospect of collaboration between European and African mineworkers was vanishing and his death removed virtually the only major African political figure with whom Europeans on the Copperbelt were on friendly terms. This was demonstrated by the immediate decision of the NRMWU to establish the Katilungu Trust Fund for the care of his wife and education of his six children and to appeal internationally for funds.¹¹⁷³

¹¹⁶⁷ *Hansard HL*, 24 November 1959, vol. 219, cc. 890-901.

¹¹⁶⁸ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, p. 37.

¹¹⁶⁹ 'N. Rhodesia mine leader dismissed', *The Times*, 13 December 1960.

¹¹⁷⁰ International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], MIF Box 72, Minutes of the meeting the Bureau of the Miners' International Federation, 5-6 May 1961.

¹¹⁷¹ Giacomo Macola, *Liberal nationalism in central Africa: A biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 75, 85.

¹¹⁷² 'N. Rhodesia African leader killed', *The Times*, 10 November 1961.

¹¹⁷³ IISH MIF Box 361, Letter from Andrew Leslie to Ernest Jones, 15 November 1961.

Chapter Six

Abrupt ending, 1963-74

Almost the entire expatriate community seems to adopt a very similar attitude over most questions... It was almost at times like interviewing a corporate body, or a highly indoctrinated group.

Jonathan Pincus, 1970.¹¹⁷⁴

Overview

Occupational psychologist Jonathan Pincus was somewhat baffled by the uniformity of responses he received in his survey of European employees at Mufulira Mine and their wives. It might also seem odd that there was still a large group of Europeans working at Mufulira six years after Zambian independence, and whose many complaints were thought worthy of investigation and mollifying by the mine management. Yet, for the European community, life after Zambian independence continued much as it had before and the real rupture was the slump in copper prices in 1974-75. This perspective builds on arguments about post-colonial continuities that have been made about the form of the state and about the relationship between the state and society.¹¹⁷⁵ However, this argument has not been applied to white

¹¹⁷⁴ Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 3.3.1F, A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970.

¹¹⁷⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 4, 14-6.

populations in newly independent African nations. One of the primary arguments in this chapter will be that, until the mid-1970s, there was a strong element of continuity in the life of the European community.

This challenges the assumption that the Copperbelt's European community came to an end with Zambian independence. In one of the first major academic assessments of post-colonial Zambia, William Tordoff argued that "most Europeans left [Northern Rhodesia] precipitately after 1963."¹¹⁷⁶ More generally, John Darwin connected the "self-identification as a distinct British society and its physical reality" to "the preservation of a colonial world order, and Britain's willingness to act as its main guarantor." Without this, the European community in Northern Rhodesia, as elsewhere, 'shrivelled' away.¹¹⁷⁷ Yet, ironically, direct British influence on the Copperbelt's European community actually increased after Zambian independence as there was an influx of migrants from Britain. The large majority of the Europeans who arrived around independence – around 5,700 Europeans in 1964, 5,836 in 1965 and 2,564 in the first half of 1966 – came from Britain.¹¹⁷⁸ Perhaps because of the prevailing assumption that they left, whites who remained in Zambia, and Africa more generally, after the end of colonial rule "have not received much scholarly attention."¹¹⁷⁹

¹¹⁷⁶ William Tordoff (ed.), *Politics in Zambia* (Manchester, 1974), p. 7.

¹¹⁷⁷ John Darwin, 'Orphans of Empire', in Robert Bickers, 'Introduction: Britains and Britons over the Seas', in Robert Bickers (ed.), *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons over the Seas* (Oxford, 2010), p. 343.

¹¹⁷⁸ National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ] CO3/1/29, Migration Statistics, Jan-June 1966, Central Statistical Office. These figures are approximate as migration statistics classified migrants as 'African' or 'non-African'. The latter total included small numbers of Asian migrants.

¹¹⁷⁹ The exception to this is a chapter by Jo Duffy but she focused on "a small number of individuals who remained in Zambia after independence" rather than new migrants. Jo Duffy, 'Staying on or going home? Settlers' decisions upon Zambian independence' in Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson (eds.), *Empire, migration and identity in the British world* (Manchester, 2013), p. 214. The brief flurry of contemporary, journalistic impressions about the Copperbelt's European community produced during the final years of colonial rule ceased at Zambian independence.

This chapter begins with the shutdown at Mufulira in 1963 where European mineworkers engaged in a three-month dispute over an alleged time motion study on the cusp of Zambian independence. This is followed by sections on the reaction of Europeans to accelerating political changes and the creation of expatriate status that accompanied Zambian independence in 1964. Two significant continuities in the life of the European community form the next two sections: the rich social life and confrontational industrial relations. Wildcat strikes in 1966 marked the end of the white labour movement as an effective force. The final two sections will focus on notable changes in this period. The first of these is accelerated social mobility and the consequent erosion of divisions within the European community. The second is the slump in copper prices that brought to this community to an end.

Most Europeans were prepared to stay on the Copperbelt at Zambian independence, and others sought to move there, because paradoxically they did not intend to stay and had little stake in the country's political future. More importantly, independence coincided with the onset of another copper boom.¹¹⁸⁰ By 1969, Zambia was a middle-income nation and its rapidly rising GDP per capita was one of the highest in Africa. For most of the European community, their privileged position did not depend on the colonial political order but on continued access to copper wealth. This wealth evaporated after 1974 and the European community dissipated along with it. The economic slump was long and painful. Per capita income fell by over 50% in real terms between 1974 and 1994 and Zambia became one of the poorest countries in the world. Precipitous economic decline can largely be attributed to the fall in copper prices.¹¹⁸¹ By 1984, copper prices were 60% lower than in 1974 and this was

¹¹⁸⁰ Appendix III.

¹¹⁸¹ James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 6-7.

catastrophic for Zambia's economy since copper constituted around 90% of merchandise exports. Moreover, declining foreign exchange earnings coincided with general worldwide inflation, pushing up import prices.¹¹⁸² Paying for imports to satisfy the lavish consumption habits of the European community became much more difficult.¹¹⁸³ Africans on the Copperbelt suffered terrible hardships, Europeans simply left.

What did change prior to this slump was a major restructuring of the organisation of work on the mines. The ostensibly new policy of 'Zambianization' was actually "a logical extension of the policies referred to by the term 'African Advancement'" and this involved major restructuring of the organisation of work on the mines.¹¹⁸⁴ The coming to power of an African nationalist government coincided with a period when the mining companies had much greater latitude to reorganise the mines as they saw fit. Positions occupied by daily-paid mineworkers were mostly eliminated, while the supervisory hierarchy was expanded and filled with newly promoted Europeans. Prospects for conflict on the job were reduced by eroding the division between white officials and white subordinates and this chapter will argue the European community became more homogenous. All Europeans were graded as 'expatriates' – a designation created on an entirely racial basis – and placed on three-year contracts. This same category of expatriate was applied to other workplaces as well.

The transition to expatriate status was imperceptible. In many ways, these people were already expatriates. Expatriate status and occupational mobility smoothed divisions within the European community and enabled this community to remain

¹¹⁸² *Zambia: Country Economic Memorandum Issues and Options for Economic Diversification* (Washington, 1984), p. vi.

¹¹⁸³ Simon Cunningham, 'Nationalization and the Zambian Copper Mining Industry' (Edinburgh Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1985), p. 283.

¹¹⁸⁴ Charles Perrings, 'Premiss and Inference in Labour Studies: A Zambian Example', *African Affairs*, 81, 322 (1982), p. 91.

distinct. There was no way for Africans in Zambia to achieve the wages, conditions and status of expatriates, except for during a very brief period. Higher wages enabled Europeans to maintain a separate existence from the African majority, even after racial discrimination was outlawed and the colour bar ostensibly removed. The specific role of the mining companies in this process has not been fully understood in the secondary literature.

The European population remained a transient one and the imposition of three-year contracts on the mines' workforce formalised this transience. Enhanced opportunities for training and promotion encouraged mobility as it provided European mineworkers with the skills and experiences to secure jobs in mining and related industries around the world. The new expatriates gelled onto the same routes of white labour migration by which their predecessors had arrived on the Copperbelt. Many of the departures were also precipitated by the same grievances their predecessors had voiced. By the mid-1970s, Europeans continued to leave the Copperbelt after comparatively brief stays, much as they had always done, but Zambia's economic privations ensured were no longer replaced by new arrivals.

Shutdown at Mufulira

The opening of the Mufulira West extension in May 1962 made the mine one of the largest underground copper mines in the world and was hugely expensive.¹¹⁸⁵ Restraining costs was therefore critically important and it was with this in mind that the mine management sought greater control over the organisation of work and their truculent white workforce. Efforts to force daily-paid timberman to complete a new

¹¹⁸⁵ The cost was £14m (£304m in 2015 figures), around of half of which was funded by long-term debt. Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York, 1981), p. 106.

bonus form detailing the time taken and the materials used for each job generated huge resentment and sparked the longest strike in the history of the Copperbelt in February 1963.

This dispute is instructive for three reasons. First, it is indicative of the consciousness and priorities of the white workforce. With the Central African Federation disintegrating around them – the British Government announced the right of constituent territories to secede in March 1963 – white mineworkers embarked on a protracted strike over time management, not political concerns. This consciousness was different to Southern Rhodesia, and elsewhere in the region, as there was no apparent contradiction between being ‘white’ and a ‘worker’ on the Copperbelt.¹¹⁸⁶ Second, it shows that despite the considerable sympathy of the European community in Mufulira, the sense of solidarity among the white workforce and the belief they could win in the face of an intransigent management was diminishing. Third, at a time of heightened political tensions, there was significant continuity in the underlying issues at stake: notions of authority, dignity, and the organisation of work.

Closer knowledge about what the expensive white workforce did at work was important because the white workforce on the Copperbelt mines was proportionately larger than other mines in the region. In 1963, the 7,776 European employees on the Copperbelt mines constituted 17% of the total workforce, whereas the 2,550 Europeans on Southern Rhodesian mines represented only 6.2% of the workforce and the 47,352 Europeans on the Rand and Orange Free State gold mines formed

¹¹⁸⁶ Ian Phimister and Alfred Tembo argued that white mineworkers at Wankie Colliery “saw themselves as whites rather than workers, as a privileged aristocracy of labour” in the 1950s and 1960s. Ian Phimister and Alfred Tembo, ‘A Zambian Town in Colonial Zimbabwe: The 1964 ‘Wangikolia’ Strike’, *International Review of Social History*, 60, Supplement 1 (2015), p. 53.

11% of the total workforce.¹¹⁸⁷ The hours worked by these employees and related bonuses had been contentious for many years. 17 years earlier one disgruntled artisan had rhetorically asked others at Roan Antelope whether:

[the] Mine ever moaned about... the oddhours [sic] of overtime you book but do not work; and when you go on shift with a father of a hangover and the foremen tells you to buzz off home before your head splits wide open, you book a shift just the same.¹¹⁸⁸

Little had changed in this respect. One mine captain at Mufulira complained in 1963 the existing bonus system was being abused as “some men claimed they had done work they hadn’t actually done.”¹¹⁸⁹

From the late 1950s, mine management at Mufulira adopted the scientific management approaches then prevalent in British industry to improve productivity and manage costs by linking pay to performance.¹¹⁹⁰ New bonus schemes were steadily expanded and, from 21 January 1963, daily-paid timbermen were required to provide details on all the jobs undertaken during their shift, how long they had taken, and all materials used to receive their bonus.¹¹⁹¹ This time study would then be linked to a new categorisation system where all daily-paid workers underground would be rated by officials every six months and ranked as above merit, average merit or below merit. Further bonuses and promotions would be based on merit

¹¹⁸⁷ Appendix II, Chamber of Mines of Rhodesia, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report for the Year 1964* (Salisbury, 1965), p. 36. Chamber of Mines of South Africa, *Eight-First Annual Report 1970* (Johannesburg, 1971), p. 72.

¹¹⁸⁸ ZCCM 16.2.5B, Letter from A.B. Hayward, Luanshya, 17 August 1946.

¹¹⁸⁹ NAZ MLSS1/25/3, Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 25 February 1963.

¹¹⁹⁰ NAZ MLSS1/25/3, Improvement of Efficiency, Mufulira Copper Mines, 2 November 1959. Ian Smith and Trevor Boyns, ‘Scientific management and the pursuit of control in Britain to c.1960’, *Accounting Business & Financial History*, 15, 2 (2005), pp. 190-93, 210.

¹¹⁹¹ Timbermen constructed and maintained underground structures of timber, steel and concrete with a group of African workers.

rating and those with below average merit could, regardless of how long they had worked underground, be sent to the underground training school.¹¹⁹²

Timbermen at Mufulira simply refused outright to complete the new forms. Emrys Williams – who had returned as NRMWU president after a stint as a handyman in Kitwe – explained that the men “were concerned they were effectively conducting a Time and Motion Study on themselves.”¹¹⁹³ A hastily-arranged Board of Enquiry found a deep-seated conviction among daily-paid mineworkers that the mine management would use any information supplied in the forms against them.¹¹⁹⁴

There was another objection as well: this was not their job. NRMWU representatives explained that a mining official could note down the time it took to complete a job, but timbermen could not as “a daily-paid Timbermen is not in the same category.”¹¹⁹⁵ Timbermen would only do the job they were employed to do and “they were not employed as clerks.”¹¹⁹⁶ All timbermen were consequently suspended on 4 February until they agreed to fill in the forms. Following this, artisans

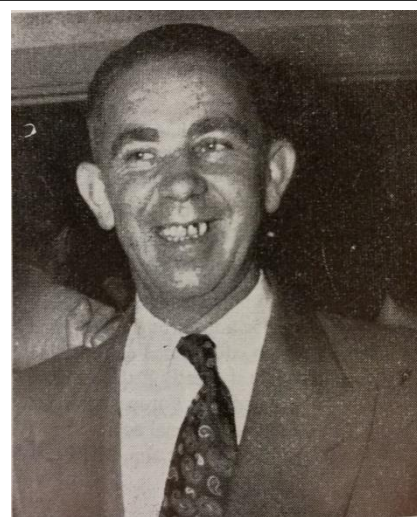


Figure 6.2: Emrys Williams, 1957. NRMWU *Annual General Council* (Kitwe, 1957), p. 40.

¹¹⁹² NAZ MLSS1/25/3, Promotional Policy, Mining Department Mufulira Copper Mines, 21 January 1963. This memo was confidential but was leaked to NRMWU members in February.

¹¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 25 February 1963.

¹¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Report of Board of Inquiry into the cause of the trade dispute between certain section of European employees and Mufulira Copper Mines Limited over bonus system of payment, 4 March 1963.

¹¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 25 February 1963.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 26 February 1963.

across the mine refused to complete their bonus forms. An artisan's delegation explained that they were not unhappy with their own bonus scheme but were supporting the timbermen.¹¹⁹⁷

Noel Kenny, the Southern Rhodesian general manager, was furious at his authority being flouted. On 8 February, Kenny visited the change house at Prain Shaft and offered one of the new bonus vouchers to Schoeman, a shop steward who had just returned from holiday. Schoeman reached for the form but Kenny snatched it back, telling him "it's just as well you were prepared to take that voucher from me, otherwise your feet wouldn't have touched the floor you would have been fired so quickly."¹¹⁹⁸ Unsurprisingly, attitudes hardened after this incident. The following day artisans refused to work and preparations began for an immediate strike. Conciliation efforts collapsed after Kenny commenced a meeting by threatening to shut down the mine immediately and indefinitely unless the union agreed to his terms.¹¹⁹⁹ This provoked a predictable refusal and the mine was shut down on 22 February, with all 800 daily-paid workers laid off.

The dispute was complicated by the fact the bonus for African timber workers supervised by European timbermen was also calculated using the disputed form. At first, the local NRMWU tried to use this connection to their advantage by declaring "we have a common cause with the African employee in this matter" and attempting to enlist the support of the African Mineworkers Union (AMU) at a joint meeting.¹²⁰⁰

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Summary: Main points of disagreement.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Record note, 6 May 1963.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Record of meetings between Mufulira Copper Mines Limited and the NRMWU, 14, 16 and 18 February 1963.

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Notice to all Timbermen, NRMWU Mufulira branch, 2 February 1963.

AMU officials were non-committal, presumably as hundreds of their members had abruptly lost earnings because European mineworkers refused to fill in a form.¹²⁰¹

Support for laid-off European mineworkers was more forthcoming from the wider European community. From 18 March, appeals went out to around 300 businesses for assistance and responses came back with offers of free meals, free petrol and specially reduced prices or extended credit for mineworkers. Telegrams from 27 local businesses – including general stores, garages, car dealers, furnishers, beauty parlours, jewellers, cycle shops, cafes and the Mufulira Chamber of Commerce – arrived at the Ministry of Labour to urge an end to the dispute as business was at a standstill.¹²⁰² Appeals went out internationally and Williams declared that he was prepared to go to London to give the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) a first-hand account of how the company had ‘locked out’ their members.¹²⁰³

Wider support was necessary because the mine management refused to budge and were prepared to wait out the dispute. Canadian mine manager Al O’Connell openly stated it “was correct and quite reasonable” to close the mine because employees refused to complete certain forms: “Management must be allowed to manage.”¹²⁰⁴ Frank Rzechorzek – a Polish miner who had arrived at Mufulira from Britain in 1954 – interpreted this as “a naked, calculated move” to wipe out the union. He singled out anyone who returned to work as “deliberately injuring himself, his community and his Union.” This hinted at schisms in the workforce. What was lacking was the kind of solidarity that had characterised earlier disputes. Efforts were made to call a

¹²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Record note, 6 May 1963.

¹²⁰² *Ibid.*, Letter from J.G. Doubleday to Manager, Naik & Sons, Mufulira, 30 March 1963.

¹²⁰³ ZCCM 10.5.8D, Telex from Mining Employers’ Committee to Anmercosa and Roselite Salisbury, 4 April 1963.

¹²⁰⁴ NAZ MLSS1/25/3, Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 26 February 1963.

Copperbelt-wide strike but there was little interest from other branches other than offers for financial help.¹²⁰⁵ Mufulira's white mineworkers' were on their own.



Figure 6.3: Mufulira NRMWU branch committee, early 1960s. Frank Rzechorzek is seated front row centre. www.mufulira.co.za/photo.html

More worryingly, a trickle of daily-paid men began to return to work. The first went back on 11 April and two weeks later 53 were at work.¹²⁰⁶ The local union branch were placed in an awkward position as they claimed this was a lock-out rather than a strike, but demanded that members stayed away. NRMWU members began picketing the shafts and workshops and some were spotted taking down the numbers of cars so that those who had returned to work could be identified. Mine management claimed that people returning to work had been threatened that their cars and property would be damaged.¹²⁰⁷ Indeed, seven daily-paid men wrote to the

¹²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Record from J.G. Doubleday, 27 March 1963.

¹²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Record from E.W. Dunlop, 11 April and 24 April 1963.

¹²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Record note, 6 May 1963.

Minister of Labour Reuben Kamanga claiming that intimidation had kept them away from work and requesting emergency legislation to make the closed shop illegal.¹²⁰⁸

Daily-paid mineworkers no longer had the leverage or solidarity to enforce their demands. They were less crucial to the production process because, even as the white workforce continued to grow, the proportion of daily-paid mineworkers shrank. By 1963, there around 650 staff at Mufulira, almost as many as the 800 daily-paid workers, and they returned to work when the mine reopened. The position was unsustainable and on 1 May, by which time some mineworkers had been out of work for 87 days, the NRMWU Mufulira branch capitulated and agreed to complete the required forms, in exchange for a slightly higher bonus.¹²⁰⁹ This was a serious defeat in two ways: the NRMWU were forced to concede the principle and had incurred a crippling financial burden as an estimated £45,000 had been paid to members out of work in Mufulira.¹²¹⁰ This left the organisation unable to effectively resist restructuring on the mines. Instead, in November 1963, over 1,000 white mineworkers took wildcat strike action on all mines to try and secure a better deal for themselves in post-independence Zambia outside and against the union leadership.¹²¹¹

Zambian independence

European residents on the Copperbelt had a pronounced tendency to vote with their feet when dissatisfied with life there. Dramatic political changes in the 1960s presented Europeans with the immediate question of whether they would be satisfied to live under an African government in an independent Zambia. The speed with

¹²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Message to Minister of Labour and Mines from Seven reasonable minded Union members, 16 April 1963.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Record from E.W. Dunlop, 1 May 1963.

¹²¹⁰ £850,000 in 2015 figures. *Ibid.*, Note from R. Philpot, 30 April 1963.

¹²¹¹ ZCCM 10.5.8D, Circular to General Managers Mufulira, Nchanga, Rhokana, Roan Antelope, Bancroft, Chibuluma, 25 June 1964. 'Rockbreakers strike at Mufulira', *Northern News*, 29 November 1963.

which the likely political future of Northern Rhodesia altered was remarkable.¹²¹² Even as late as March 1961, Keith Acutt, a senior Anglo American director and close ally of Roy Welensky, compared the formation of the Federation to the creation of Australia, Canada and South Africa, with the assumption that the future of the Central African Federation was as a white-dominated Dominion.¹²¹³ Yet, by late 1962, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) had emerged as the largest party after the October 1962 elections and formed a coalition government with the African National Congress (ANC).

The United Federal Party (UFP) attempted to mobilise the European community on the basis of fear, fear of what life would like if African nationalists gained power. UFP election literature presented the 1962 election as a single issue: “a savage fist is pounding at the door and the question is whether the benefits we now have... should be exchanged for the petrol bomb!” The ‘we’ here evidently refers to the European community and this tactic worked in the short term. An estimated 90% of European voters backed the UFP across Northern Rhodesia and turnout exceeded 90% in all the Copperbelt constituencies except Roan.¹²¹⁴ However, in their defence of white minority rule, Europeans on the Copperbelt were not prepared to go further than marking ‘UFP’ in the voting booth. Two months after the election, the British Government announced that Nyasaland, where the Malawi Congress Party had won the August 1961 elections, could secede from the Federation.¹²¹⁵ The Federation was finished and only formal dissolution remained, and this was duly undertaken in December 1963.

¹²¹² For an account of the rapid constitutional changes in the run-up to Zambian independence, see Bizeck Jube Phiri, *A Political History of Zambia: from colonial rule to the third republic, 1890-2001* (Trenton, 2006), pp. 106-11.

¹²¹³ ‘The Fulcrum of Federation’, *Optima*, March 1961.

¹²¹⁴ David Mulford, *The Northern Rhodesia General Election 1962* (Nairobi, 1964), pp. 32, 122.

¹²¹⁵ For an account of these events see John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1855-1966* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 366-403.

It might be expected that the impending collapse of the colonial political order would prompt an exodus of Europeans from the Copperbelt. This did not occur, but there are no precise statistics on how many Europeans left. Pamela Shurmer-Smith pointed out that the number of Europeans who crossed into Southern Rhodesia, either to stay or passing through, in 1963 is unknown because movement within the Federation was not captured in immigration statistics.¹²¹⁶ One useful proxy is the turnover in the mine's white workforce. This rose dramatically from 15.1% in 1962 to 32.9% in 1963, then falling back to 24.8% in 1964.¹²¹⁷ This suggests that fewer Europeans left during decolonisation than during the wave of industrial unrest in 1957 and 1958. Moreover, the average length of service for the white workforce did not change around independence. It was 5.6 years in 1960, rose to 6.4 years by 1965 then fell back to 5.6 by 1968.¹²¹⁸

Little overt resistance to decolonisation occurred because the large majority of Europeans on the Copperbelt did not intend to stay anyway, regardless of whether colonial rule continued. In 1960, the Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST) and Rhodesian Anglo American (RAA) engaged a team of psychologists to conduct a survey of white teenagers on the Copperbelt "to gauge the stability of the next working generation." All students in Forms III-VI in selected schools in Kitwe and Mufulira answered a questionnaire about the likelihood they would remain on the Copperbelt and whether they would accept the seemingly imminent changes in Northern Rhodesia. This questionnaire is useful because it provides a snapshot of the European community and attitudes within this community. There were very few

¹²¹⁶ Shurmer-Smith's own research gives some indication about the proportion of Europeans who left around independence. From among her 632 informants, only 29 left Northern Rhodesia in 1963 and 66 in 1964. Pamela Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire: Memory and Northern Rhodesia's White Diaspora* (Lusaka, 2014), p. 133.

¹²¹⁷ Appendix II.

¹²¹⁸ *Mining Year Book of Zambia 1969* (Kitwe, 1970), p. 47.

Afrikaners among the 143 male and female teenagers surveyed. Although 45% of those surveyed were born in South Africa, only 8% spoke Afrikaans at home. 86% spoke English and the remaining 6% spoke a variety of European languages. The European community was overwhelmingly English-speaking.

Much like their parents, these white teenagers had little interest on remaining permanently on the Copperbelt. After completing education and training, 72 indicated they would “stay for a while and see what happens,” 50 thought they would leave the Copperbelt while only 21 were inclined to settle permanently. Significantly, students born in Northern or Southern Rhodesia did not intend to stay longer than those born elsewhere. These teenagers had wide horizons about where they intended to move to. In answer to the question “if you were to leave the Copperbelt where would you like to go?” 47 said South Africa, 18 North America, 16 Australia and 14 Southern Rhodesia. Only 15 identified suitable destinations outside the English-speaking world.¹²¹⁹ European teenagers were encouraged to be mobile. At least some of those who completed the questionnaire would have heard the speech by Mufulira’s mine manager Al O’Connell two years later, when he told the mine’s new apprentices that “as qualified artisans... they could go anywhere in the world and hold their own.”¹²²⁰

South Africa loomed large as a potential destination as many Europeans on the Copperbelt had been born there or had happy memories from regular holidays enjoyed there. For instance, Lexie Bray’s family drove down to Cape Town twice a year for six-week trips.¹²²¹ Lots of Europeans on the Copperbelt had experience

¹²¹⁹ Johan Holleman, J.W. Mann and Pierre Van Den Berghe, ‘A Rhodesian White Minority Under Threat’, *Journal of Social Psychology*, 57, 2 (1962), pp. 318, 324-26.

¹²²⁰ ‘Round the Group’, *Horizon*, March 1962.

¹²²¹ Interview with Lexie Bray, 1 July 2013.

working in South Africa even if they were not born there. Among the 19 Europeans profiled in a 1964 article on the diverse origins of Rhokana's white workforce, seven had worked in South Africa.¹²²² However, as in earlier periods, many of those born in South Africa then living on the Copperbelt had wider experiences. Ken Dennis was born in South Africa but had worked as a carpenter on the Rand, in New Zealand, back on the Rand again, Britain and the Copperbelt before the age of 30.¹²²³

The comparison with South Africa is an instructive one as the differences between the Copperbelt and South Africa became starker from the early 1960s. This was a period when the apartheid regime in South Africa tightened its grip on power and dealt serious blows to those who would challenge their rule, developments largely supported by the white electorate.¹²²⁴ In contrast, there was little appetite in the Copperbelt's European community for trying to retain political power. A good example of this is the cautious local government reforms in 1963 which aimed to create parity between European and African townships in the municipalities. Luanshya Municipal Council used this opportunity to attempt "a spectacular piece of ethnic gerrymandering, the result of which would have been to retain numerical dominance of Whites on the Municipal Council." This plan was scuppered by the complete indifference of Luanshya's European residents. A meeting in November 1963 to nominate candidates was abandoned as so few people turned up. Indians in Luanshya took advantage of this apathy and nominated two Indian councillors to represent the European township at the rescheduled meeting.¹²²⁵ If Europeans were not even willing to attend a meeting to plot ways to retain dominance over Luanshya

¹²²² 'Rhokana's people come from everywhere', *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 March 1964.

¹²²³ 'Portrait of a mine carpenter', *Horizon*, June 1963, p. 13.

¹²²⁴ Dan O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party* (Randburg, 1996), pp. 105-113, 173-56.

¹²²⁵ Peter Harries-Jones, *Freedom and Labour: Mobilization and Political Control on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 175-78.

Municipal Council, the prospect of them engaging in resistance to decolonisation was a faint one.

Many Europeans unwilling to live under African majority rule simply packed up and left. Pam van Heerden and her husband left in March 1963 for South Africa because “the writing was on the wall for us” and she saw “there was nothing there for *us*” in an independent Zambia.¹²²⁶ Similarly, Robin Cumming’s family returned to South Africa in late 1963 as his father refused to accept independence.¹²²⁷ Not all of those who left in 1963 did so for political reasons and some moved because they perceived there were better opportunities elsewhere. This was epitomized in a letter Jack Purvis wrote to Roy Welensky in March 1963 to reassure him that “I and my family are Rhodesians and we are here to stay.” Nine months later, he wrote again to inform Welensky that he was moving to Turkey, while his wife and children were heading to England for the foreseeable future.¹²²⁸ Industrial unrest encouraged people to leave and there was a spike in resignations from Mufulira Mine during the protracted strike there.¹²²⁹ Resignations from the mines due to impending Zambian independence had largely ceased by July 1964 according to Ronald Prain and “our European employees have completely accepted the turn of events which makes them expatriates working in a foreign country under an African Government.” Moreover, losses were quickly replaced by new recruits.¹²³⁰

Rapid adjustment to the new political situation was helped by the fact that most Europeans did not engage in politics locally. When the British High Commissioner toured the Copperbelt in November 1964 he was struck by “the frequent lack of

¹²²⁶ Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013.

¹²²⁷ Interview with Neville Searle and Robin Cumming, 24 September 2013.

¹²²⁸ Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford 658/5, Letter from Jack Purvis to Roy Welensky, 1 March 1963 and 23 December 1963.

¹²²⁹ NAZ MLSS1/25/3, Record from E.W. Dunlop, 27 April 1963.

¹²³⁰ Prain Papers, Box 1, File 2, Letter from Ronald Prain to Harold Hochschild, 20 July 1964.

knowledge among the Europeans on the mines” about the policies and personalities of the government, though most had a positive impression of Kenneth Kaunda.¹²³¹ A smattering of Europeans did join UNIP. Len Pinshow, manager of Copperfields Cold Storage, had been chair of Kitwe’s UFP branch in the 1950s but joined UNIP shortly before independence. Pinshow was no marginal figure in the European community; he founded the Amateur Athletics Association, the Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association and the Kitwe Playing Fields Association. He did have past form when it came to political radicalism though. He had been in the Springbok Legion and was involved in the Cairo Forces Parliament during the Second World War.¹²³²

For those Europeans that remained on the Copperbelt, life carried on much as before, as many assumed it would. Veronica Zausmer recalled that that the main comment her mother made at independence was that it was a good thing they had got rid of the gloomy national anthem, and would now have a different one.¹²³³ The privileged position of Europeans on the Copperbelt did not depend on the colonial political order but on access to riches of the mining industry. Heather Walker, who was born in Luanshya in 1946, recalled that “our life didn’t change at all” after independence.¹²³⁴ Exactly the same sentiments were expressed by Fabrizio Casale, who had been on the Copperbelt since 1948 after leaving Italy as a child.¹²³⁵ This view was shared by many senior figures in the mining industry. Ronald Prain

¹²³¹ National Archives, London [hereafter NAB] DO 183/216, Letter from W.B.L. Monson, British High Commissioner to A.G. Bottomley, Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, 4 December 1964.

¹²³² Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London, 1999), pp. 146, 232-33. The Forces Parliament was a radical assembly of British soldiers stationed in Cairo in 1944.

¹²³³ Interview with Veronica Zausmer, 10 January 2014.

¹²³⁴ Interview with Heather Walker, 13 July 2013.

¹²³⁵ Interview with Fabrizio Casale, 30 October 2013.

commented that following independence “life and work carried on very much as before” on the Copperbelt, except that, for once, there were no strikes in 1964.¹²³⁶

The latter part of Prain’s remark was an exaggeration. There were no major strikes but production was regularly interrupted by relatively small disputes by white mineworkers. There were, for instance, 11 wildcat strikes by white mineworkers at Nchanga alone during 1964. Most of these strikes were triggered by the kind of low-level issues that had dogged industrial relations on the Copperbelt for over 30 years, such as when daily-paid miners refused to go underground on 20 February until a ‘rude and abrupt’ shift boss was transferred or when 80 artisans refused to work on 12 April because a boilermaker had been made to do a riggers’ work.¹²³⁷ There were some important differences though. Small numbers of men with a grievance could no longer rely on the rest of the daily-paid white workforce supporting them. Moreover, even if they did, their steadily shrinking share of the white workforce and the overall workforce restricted the ability of daily-paid mineworkers to shut down the mines and, consequently, unambiguously win disputes.

Others who left before 1964 were reassured that little had changed and returned to Zambia. Gael Whelan’s mother had sent her and her two sisters to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in 1964 because she was “absolutely terrified” about what might happen to them. However, after studying nursing in Cape Town, “I thought I would move back to the Copperbelt and I did.” She became a nurse in Luanshya in 1966 and remained there until moving to Canada in the late 1960s.¹²³⁸

¹²³⁶ Ronald Prain, *Reflections on an Era: Fifty years of mining in changing Africa* (Worcester Park, 1981), p. 160.

¹²³⁷ ZCCM 16.3.9A, Telegram from Chamber of Mines to Anmercosa Lusaka and Roselite Salisbury, 24 January, 20 February 1964, 8 March, 8 April, 22 July, 7 August, 8 August, 22 September, 6 October and 23 October, Record of decisions reached at 22nd meeting of Mining Employers’ Committee, April 1964.

¹²³⁸ Interview with Gael Whelan, 10 June 2013.

John Purvis was away from the Copperbelt from 1963-65 at school in the UK, then again from 1968-71 working overseas as a mechanic and noticed very few changes on his return. “The ease of living for a white person,” he recalled, “Even then, it was still a very easy life in Zambia... till about the 1970s, mid-1970s.” He left for the United States in 1979.¹²³⁹

Expatriate status

Grace Keith – who did regard her family as permanent settlers, with some justification as her son Guy Scott briefly became president of Zambia in 2014 – recognised in 1966 that the European population had not disappeared:

On the contrary, white population figures are if anything, on the increase. More Europeans are coming in than going out – but they are Europeans with a difference. They come to do a job for as long as their contracts last. They are not Zambians.¹²⁴⁰

The last part of this was true; the Europeans who arrived were not Zambians. It is more debatable that this represented something different. From 1964, Europeans working in a wide variety of jobs were designated as ‘expatriates’. This designation formalized what was already the de facto status of Europeans in the territory. Formal expatriate status, however, served to maintain the distinctiveness of the European community on the Copperbelt in the post-colonial era because it was created as a racial category.

The re-organisation of work on the mines in 1963 involved an attempt to remove divisions in the white workforce by transferring all daily-paid mineworkers to staff

¹²³⁹ Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

¹²⁴⁰ Grace Keith, *The Fading Colour Bar* (London, 1966), p. 193.

conditions. This seemingly had significant advantages: notice was increased to 30-days, employees were paid a fixed monthly salary regardless of hours worked, increased pay, full sick pay was offered and they could not be laid off without pay if other unions on the mine went on strike.¹²⁴¹ Counter-intuitively, then, most European mineworkers enjoyed increased job security in an independent Zambia, as they could no longer be sacked with 24 hours' notice. The companies sought a more stable white workforce and also proposed removing the copper bonus, which would be consolidated into basic pay as a fixed sum.¹²⁴²

Despite its apparent advantages, the move was staunchly opposed, partly due to the instinctive distrust of daily-paid mineworkers of any proposal emanating from their employers. In June 1963, almost 1,000 daily-paid mineworkers voted to reject any move to staff conditions at meetings in Mufulira and Bancroft.¹²⁴³ The NRMWU was in a shambolic state, something best indicated by the fact the union was still refunding donations sent during the final days of the 1958 strike in September 1963! Along with the refund, Andrew Leslie enclosed a copy of the staff proposals, gloomily noting that they were "designed to destroy the Union once and for all." Any South African trade unionists considering moving to the Copperbelt should "be warned wherever possible of the changes which are taking place which will lead to unsettlement."¹²⁴⁴ However, the attitude of Leslie and other NRMWU leaders towards these proposals veered from ambiguous to duplicitous. The problem, as Leslie and Emrys Williams saw it, was "how to bring this [staff status] about without their being accused by their own members and by the African Union of collusion with

¹²⁴¹ *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry 1966* (Lusaka, 1966) [hereafter, Brown Commission], p. 17.

¹²⁴² *Copperbelt of Zambia Mining Industry Year Book 1964* (Kitwe, 1965), p. 20.

¹²⁴³ 'Monthly pay rejected', *Northern News*, 18 June 1963. 'Workers reject monthly terms', *Northern News*, 22 June 1963.

¹²⁴⁴ Historical Papers Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, AH 1426 Ea6, Letter from A.B. Leslie to General Secretary, SA Trade Union Council, 20 September 1963.

the Companies.” Both men urged the mining companies to terminate the recognition agreement with their own union to bring matters to a head.¹²⁴⁵

Six months’ notice that the agreement was to be cancelled was duly given on 23 August 1963. The solidarity of daily-paid mineworkers cracked in response. Some tried to win support from the AMU to fight the proposals but this was immediately overtaken by an attempt by white artisans’ to form their own union and open separate negotiations with the companies.¹²⁴⁶ Artisans arriving on the Copperbelt mostly came from mining and industrial centres where artisans maintained their own independent craft unions and some sought to replicate this. Defeat in the 1958 strike had eroded the demarcation between artisans’ and non-artisans’ work but it was still a live issue. The 1962 recognition agreement contained a section on demarcation that ran to 35 pages and encompassed a staggering 450 clauses detailing exactly who could do what kind of work.¹²⁴⁷ The attempted breakaway began at Bancroft, where artisans claimed that the NRMWU could not “offer any assurance to artisans that [their] status will be maintained.”¹²⁴⁸ Delegates from Bancroft helped organise an artisans’ group at Mufulira, who then released a statement noting that “our potency lies not in our numbers, but in the specialised nature of our crafts.”¹²⁴⁹

The breakaway movement was quelled by a timely demonstration of the NRMWU’s residual power. First, wildcat strikes were threatened if any of the mine managements met with artisans independently.¹²⁵⁰ This was followed by a resolution

¹²⁴⁵ ZCCM 10.5.8D, Staff Conditions, Mining Joint Industrial Council, 30 July 1963.

¹²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Mining Employers’ Committee to Anmercosa and Roselite Salisbury, 28 August 1963.

¹²⁴⁷ International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], MIF Box 360, Agreement between the NRMWU and Mufulira Copper Mines Ltd, 24 August 1962.

¹²⁴⁸ ‘Join our ‘splinter’ Union – Bancroft artisans’, *Northern News*, 2 September 1963.

¹²⁴⁹ ‘Mufulira artisans protest’, *Northern News*, 12 September 1963.

¹²⁵⁰ ZCCM 10.5.8D, Telegram from Mining Employers’ Committee to Anmercosa and Roselite Salisbury, 30 August 1963.

at a meeting in Mufulira to appeal to “overseas organisations to place an embargo on supplies to the Copperbelt mines and to declare copper ‘black’.”¹²⁵¹ Finally, there was a promise to strike for three days every fortnight if the companies tried to unilaterally impose staff conditions.¹²⁵² Consequently, artisans at Rhokana and Nchanga declared they were not interested in a breakaway movement, while Bancroft Mine deftly appointed the ringleader of the artisans’ group as a time study officer, a staff position not eligible for union membership.¹²⁵³ Frank Rzechorzek spearheaded opposition to the breakaway movement and to staff conditions, which he concluded “means our annihilation.” They would create a barrier between the highest-paid Africans and the lowest-paid Europeans and this “could lead to serious repercussions in the future,” a prescient comment.¹²⁵⁴

This was because the creation of ‘expatriate’ status that accompanied the move to staff conditions effectively re-racialized the division in the workforce. Michael Burawoy, who worked at the Copper Industry Service Bureau (CISB) for 18 months from late 1968, claimed that, with regards to the colour bar, “the mining companies did not, and indeed could not, operate with a plan or a strategy, as the environment was simply too uncertain.”¹²⁵⁵ In fact, the mining companies did have a clear plan about the colour bar. It would be used to constrain African labour costs by severing any link between African and European pay, a notable departure from the claims

¹²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Telegram from Graywacke Mufulira to Chamber of Mines, 18 September.

¹²⁵² ‘Mine strikes are averted as companies climb down’, *Northern News*, 3 October 1963.

¹²⁵³ ‘Bancroft-Mufulira ‘rebels’ don’t want to break away from Union’, *Northern News*, 4 October 1963.

¹²⁵⁴ ZCCM 10.5.8D, Telegram from Graywacke Mufulira to Chamber of Mines, 13 December 1963.

¹²⁵⁵ Michael Burawoy, ‘The Colour of Class Revisited: Four Decades of Postcolonialism in Zambia’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 5 (2014), pp. 966-67.

made by the mining companies in 1962 that their African advancement proposals would eventually result in a single, integrated wage structure.¹²⁵⁶

Rejection of staff conditions by daily-paid mineworkers in August 1963 prompted the Chamber of Mines to consider “a radical departure” from the existing plans for a new organisational and wage structure.¹²⁵⁷ Two entirely separate conditions of service and wages would be introduced and “the previously considered unpalatable word ‘expatriate’ be now brought into forefront by common usage” as “it is the most logical way of explaining the high rates of pay” enjoyed by Europeans. This would have a “practical effect” of assisting “in the removal of jealousies and aspirations arising from two different rates of pay.” It was admitted that this represented “the blatant reintroduction of a dual wage structure.” Conditions were to be modelled on expatriate contracts elsewhere. Anglo American provided details of expatriate contracts in Ghana, Jamaica, Ghana and for European employees of Union Minière du Haut Katanga – whose condition European mineworkers on the Copperbelt had long sought to avoid – while the Chamber of Mines obtained similar contracts from Chile and India. Both companies regarded this as a crucial juncture to act:

This is the time when the industry has an opportunity to set the pattern and get matters the way they would like them. Large scale industry rarely gets this sort of opportunity and it is not likely to be repeated.¹²⁵⁸

¹²⁵⁶ *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1962), p. 17.

¹²⁵⁷ Both companies subsequently claimed their plans were strongly influenced by the Hadow Commission, which recommended a two-tier salary system in the public and education sector. However, their discussions actually began three months before the Hadow Commission was appointed in October 1963. Brown Report, p. 11.

¹²⁵⁸ ZCCM 14.1.3A, Report of a special sub-committee appointed to consider conditions of service, 15 October 1963.

This plan is significant because this is what happened and it had important consequences for Zambia. Staff conditions were finally accepted by daily-paid mineworkers in February 1964, only a few weeks before Northern Rhodesia achieved internal self-government under the new UNIP government.¹²⁵⁹ All European employees were designated as expatriates and the NRMWU was renamed the Mine Workers' Society (MWS).¹²⁶⁰ The Brown Commission noted that this decision "led a number of employees to draw the inference that the distinction between expatriate and local employment was based on colour and amounted to a form of racial discrimination."¹²⁶¹ It is hard to avoid this conclusion. African mineworkers from Malawi or Tanzania were designated as 'local' while European mineworkers who had been born in Northern Rhodesia were 'expatriates'.

The barrier between the groups was a fixed racial one, unless European employees took Zambian citizenship. Permanent residents of Zambia who were not automatically citizens by birth were given until October 1966 to register as citizens. Unsurprisingly, very few Europeans on the Copperbelt did.¹²⁶² For those working on the mines taking Zambian citizenship was extremely expensive as they would have received a precipitous pay-cut. This did not only apply on the mines. Fabrizio Casale took Zambian citizenship and consequently found when working at a hospital that "having a Zambian passport I was paid the local rate, whereas all the other guys who came from all over the world were paid better." This encouraged him to leave for Britain in 1973.¹²⁶³

¹²⁵⁹ UNIP won a commanding majority in the January 1964 elections.

¹²⁶⁰ NAZ MLSS1/26/251, Declaration to accompany application for approval of change of name, 16 February 1964.

¹²⁶¹ Brown Report, pp. 18-19.

¹²⁶² Richard Sklar, 'Zambia's response to the Rhodesian declaration of independence', in Tordoff, *Politics in Zambia*, pp. 255-6.

¹²⁶³ Interview with Fabrizio Casale, 30 October 2013.

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Figure 6.4: Operators training course, Mufulira Mine, 1962. 'Round the Group', *Horizon*, March 1962.

Preservation of the distinctiveness of the European community was not inevitable but the outcome of specific decisions made by RAA and RST in the early-to-mid 1960s. For a brief period, the Copperbelt was the site of an extraordinary phenomenon unparalleled in the colonial world: Africans were employed on the same rates of pay and terms of service as Europeans.¹²⁶⁴ This resulted from the 1960 African advancement agreement whereby training schemes for formerly European-only jobs were opened up for Africans. The first African trainees were selected in April 1961 and the first 80 entered 'Schedule A' jobs in early 1963. Moreover, the NRMWU agreed to accept any Africans in 'Schedule A' jobs as members. Similar developments were evident in Southern Rhodesia from the early 1960s as some unions, including the Associated Mine Workers of Rhodesia, organised sections for

¹²⁶⁴ This has not been commented on apart from a brief mention by Charles Perrings in 'A Moment in the 'Proletarianization' of the New Middle Class: Race, Value and the Division of Labour in the Copperbelt, 1946-1966', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 6, 2 (1980), p. 211.

African workers. However, these Africans performed different jobs than European members for lower rates of pay.¹²⁶⁵

This was not the case on the Copperbelt where a small number of Africans secured positions where the 'rate for the job' represented one of the highest wages on the planet. So, in April 1964, P.M. Chileshe, then aged 25, was engaged as a nursing sister at Mufulira Mine Hospital on a monthly salary of £112.5.¹²⁶⁶ That same month, four African miners were being paid close to the top of the expatriate salary scale, having been promoted to 'Schedule A' jobs in July 1963. As mining supervisors (the new job title for rockbreakers) they received £143.2 a month.¹²⁶⁷ In contrast, African underground workers on the local rate could earn a maximum of £44.2 a month and the top monthly salary for African staff was £70.¹²⁶⁸

For a short period, these Africans workers were, in theory, able to afford many of the privileges long enjoyed by Europeans on the Copperbelt. The access of Africans to European society should not be overstated. In February 1964, four African staff trainees at Nchanga Mine applied for membership of the Nchanga Club and were swiftly turned down. These men were living in housing graded for European single employees that lacked cooking facilities, so attempted to eat in the club restaurant. Nchanga mine management denied responsibility as they had handed over management of the club to a committee, even though the club remained heavily subsidised by the mine. Mine club constitutions across the Copperbelt were urgently amended to prevent a repeat of the incident and accompanying political

¹²⁶⁵ C.M. Brand, 'Political and African Trade Unionism in Rhodesia Since Federation', *Rhodesian History*, 2 (1971), p. 95.

¹²⁶⁶ ZCCM 3.4.2G, African employees in MOSSA fields, Mufulira Copper Mines, 1 December 1964.

¹²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, African employees in MWS fields, Mufulira Copper Mines, 1 December 1964.

¹²⁶⁸ IISH MIF Box 360, Wages and Conditions of Employment at Zambian Mines, ICFTU, September 1964.

embarrassment.¹²⁶⁹ Yet these changes were superficial and the mine clubs retained the same character they had prior to independence. It was reported in mid-1965 that “the clubs remain in all cases predominately European” and membership eligibility was mainly based on applicants salary.¹²⁷⁰ Even in 1969 the Rhokana Club was “in principle desegregated but in practice a place still controlled by whites for whites.”¹²⁷¹

Extension of European pay rates, bonuses and housing to the African workforce had long been a nightmare for the mining companies. The restructuring of the mine’s workforce to sever any tenuous link between the terms and conditions of the African workforce and the European workforce therefore required the removal of Africans from ‘European’ jobs and the re-racialisation of these jobs. This also involved the companies imposing a re-racialisation of the trade unions by removing Africans from the ranks of the MWS and the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA). By mid-1965, there were 63 African MWS members and 73 Africans in MOSSA who the companies sought to remove.¹²⁷² The MWS initially promised “a very violent reaction” to any interference with their right “to negotiate on behalf of their members – all their members.”¹²⁷³ However, reflecting the new balance of power, RST simply informed them this was not a matter for negotiation, and the MWS could not mobilise its members to retain Africans in the union.¹²⁷⁴ The numbers directly affected were modest. An estimated 105 African mineworkers were demoted to ‘local’ conditions of service while a further 12 were given compensation

¹²⁶⁹ Keith, *Fading Colour Bar*, p. 109-11.

¹²⁷⁰ Brown Commission, p. 65.

¹²⁷¹ Burawoy, ‘Colour of Class Revisited’, p. 965.

¹²⁷² ZCCM 16.3.7F, Notes on conciliation proceedings between the representatives and MWS representatives, 17 August 1965

¹²⁷³ ‘Gun Boat Negotiators’, *Times of Zambia*, 20 July 1965.

¹²⁷⁴ ZCCM 16.3.7F, Letter from A.B. Leslie to Minister of Labour, 22 July 1965.

and left the industry.¹²⁷⁵ The point here is that the European and African workforces were successfully disentangled.

Social life

The lavish social life that had so distinguished the European community on the Copperbelt to contemporary observers in the 1950s continued uninterrupted. Changes that did occur such as the diminished importance of the mine clubs or varying recreational interests were relatively minor. Social life did become more egalitarian as divisions within the European community were eroded (as will be discussed below). Lexie Bray, who lived in Luanshya from 1960 until 1964, recalled that in the early 1960s "quite a lot of the social living... was structured by the hierarchy on the mines."¹²⁷⁶ Impressions of this sort are entirely absent from Europeans who arrived on the Copperbelt at the end of the 1960s. Disquiet with newly arrived British migrants (nicknamed 'VC-10ers' after the Vickers' VC10 passenger aircraft) was mild.

It has been noted above that Zambian independence had little impact on the mine clubs. Annual turnover of Mufulira Mine Club was £150,000 in 1965 and it continued to employ Europeans behind the bar, until much of the club was destroyed in a massive fire in January 1966.¹²⁷⁷ The club did not reopen and was quickly reduced to the realm of nostalgic memory.¹²⁷⁸ The destruction of the Mufulira Mine Club epitomized a more general trend: the social life of the European community was moving away from the mine clubs and their associated societies. This was a two-way

¹²⁷⁵ Brown Report, p. 22.

¹²⁷⁶ Interview with Lexie Bray, 1 July 2013.

¹²⁷⁷ £2.62m in 2015 figures. 'Mine Club gutted in massive blaze', *Times of Zambia*, 3 January 1966.

¹²⁷⁸ When asked about the club in 1970, Europeans made comments such as "There was always something on" and "It was the best place to dance." ZCCM 3.3.1F, A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970.

process as the mines sought to disengage from the administration of European social life. Nchanga Mine, for instance, began refusing to collect subscriptions for different societies automatically through the mine's payroll, as had previously been the norm.¹²⁷⁹

Unintentional support for the social life of the European community from the mines continued through petty theft and misappropriation of the mines' equipment. This had been going on for decades. Peter Hills, then working at Rhokana, recalled that club members who worked on the mines would often acquire:

the odd tin of paint which had fallen off the back of the truck, or if you needed some aggregate for the driveway the truck that was going from one part of the plant to another would tip off a few tons... if we had a carpenter we'd send him down the road to do some work in the clubhouse!

The mines were well aware of this practice and many of the tools in the workshops used a different voltage to prevent employees 'borrowing' them.¹²⁸⁰ Borrowing was normal practice. Whenever Robin Cummings, who grew up in Mufulira, broke his bike his father fixed it using parts and tools from the estates department where he worked.¹²⁸¹

Much social life remained the same. John Clifton, who grew up on the Copperbelt in the 1960s, had exactly the same enthusiasm for social life on the Copperbelt that Europeans who had lived there in the 1950s expressed: "It was like Elysium because we had everything we possibly wanted." He readily recalled the 10 or so clubs

¹²⁷⁹ ZCCM 4.2.1J, Letter from B.D. Winhall, Acting Mine Secretary to D. Glen, Chingola Arts Society, 15 May 1965. In 1958, Roan Antelope Mine had automatically collected the membership fees for 25 different clubs and societies. ZCCM 11.1.2A, Circular from Mine Secretary, Roan Antelope, 1 October 1958.

¹²⁸⁰ Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

¹²⁸¹ Interview with Neville Searle and Robin Cumming, 24 September 2013.

different members of his family were involved with, along with receiving cricket coaching from English county players, watching plays and pantomimes at Kitwe's Little Theatre, racing motorbikes all over the Copperbelt and evenings at the Nkana Mine Club where "something was always happening."¹²⁸² Productions at the Little Theatre were the same as they had been in the colonial period. Until the mid-1970s, "the former white playhouses... continued to be almost exclusively white theatres, showing mostly former West End London hits or pantomines" and continued to fly in theatre critics and directors from Britain.¹²⁸³

The culture of heavy-drinking continued. Alf Barry, who grew up in Mufulira and subsequently worked on the mine, recalled that the miners "used to work hard and drink hard."¹²⁸⁴ There is likely to be a certain amount of myth-making around this culture. David Skipping, who arrived at Kalulushi in 1968, thought the social life was great but "I think every town was in actual fact tarred with a far richer paint brush than we deserved."¹²⁸⁵ Gambling also continued apace. A new racecourse was constructed at Kitwe in 1962 with a grandstand to seat 1,000 spectators. The intention, on opening, was to have a venue for high-stakes gambling on horse-racing.¹²⁸⁶ The Copperbelt Turf Club flourished – and secured a manager from an Australian racing association – until 1973 when a dramatic reduction of race horses as their owners left Zambia curtailed the number of races.¹²⁸⁷

¹²⁸² Interview with John Clifton, 4 October 2013.

¹²⁸³ David Kerr with Stephen Chifunyise, 'Southern Africa' in Martin Banham (ed.), *History of Theatre in Africa* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 283, 287.

¹²⁸⁴ Interview with Alf Barry, 20 September 2013. Barry used an electrolarynx during our interview because his voice-box had been damaged due to excessive alcohol consumption. He stated he had no regrets about this.

¹²⁸⁵ Interview with David Skipplings, 10 September 2013.

¹²⁸⁶ 'Horse racing in Northern Rhodesia', *Horizon*, July 1962.

¹²⁸⁷ 'Race steward takes job in Zambia', *Western Herald*, 25 November 1966. *Sixth Annual Report of the Sports Directorate* (Lusaka, 1973), p. 14.

Sport remained at the centre of the life of the European community. The sports officer at Roan Antelope Mine, Bernie Evans, could still assert in January 1963 that “few places in the world can boast such lavishly provided sports facilities at such reasonable cost to sports men.”¹²⁸⁸ New facilities sprang up as well. From 1964, for instance, there were karate schools in Kitwe, Luanshya and Mufulira, two of which sent people to study in Tokyo.¹²⁸⁹ There was no shortage of talented sports players among the European community to utilise the available facilities. Jack Kyle, voted as “the greatest-ever Irish rugby player” by the Irish Rugby Football Union, emigrated to Chingola in 1966 and became a consultant surgeon at Nchanga Hospital.¹²⁹⁰ In 1964, former Manchester United full-back Ian Greaves – a member of the famous side that mostly perished in the 1958 Munich air disaster – arrived in Kitwe as player-coach for the new multi-racial Rhokana United.¹²⁹¹ Similarly, the player-coach of Roan United in the 1960s was António Castela, who had previously played for the Portuguese national side.

The virtual disappearance of football was a notable discontinuity. Declining interest in football among Europeans can be traced the formation of the National Football League in March 1962. Teams joining the new, semi-professional league had to be non-racial and previously separate African and European teams in the mining towns merged. European interest in these new teams quickly diminished as most European supporters were unwilling to attending matches in stadiums located in the African township. Instead, they switched to sports such as cricket and rugby, which were not popular among Africans. Nchanga Sports Football Club initially maintained a mostly white team and was accused of using high membership fees to deter African players.

¹²⁸⁸ ‘The Copperbelt – a centre for sport’, *Horizon*, January 1963.

¹²⁸⁹ ‘Karate – art of the empty hand’, *Horizon*, September 1964.

¹²⁹⁰ ‘Jack Kyle – obituary’, *The Telegraph*, 2 December 2014.

¹²⁹¹ ‘Greaves missed crash by luck’, *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 24 July 1964.

Support for this approach was dented after the multi-racial Roan United thrashed an all-white Nchanga team 4-0 during the inaugural season.¹²⁹² However, even if it was no longer played locally, many Europeans continued to avidly follow football from afar. In 1966, a large group of Europeans from Chingola chartered a flight to London to see England win the World Cup.¹²⁹³

More substantial change occurred with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Rhodesia on 11 November 1965. Previously, European teams from the Copperbelt had regularly travelled to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, while many European men and women living on the Copperbelt had represented Federal sports teams that ceased to exist in 1963. Isolation from this wider social world became less important, however, as the numbers of Rhodesians and South Africans on the Copperbelt diminished. In 1965, 70% of Europeans who joined the mines were recruited in the UK.¹²⁹⁴ This meant that, ironically, direct British influence on the Copperbelt's European community increased after Zambian independence. This was noticeable at the time. Brian Keaveney – whose family had returned to Ireland before Zambian independence, fearing the worst, then come back– recalled “quite a big influx of British mineworkers that came in” in the mid-1960s.¹²⁹⁵ Similarly, Peter Hills noticed in 1966 that “suddenly, where I worked, it was all Yorkshiremen.”¹²⁹⁶ By 1969, there were 26,547 British citizens among Zambia's European population, but only 3,898 South African and 434 Rhodesian citizens.¹²⁹⁷ This was not entirely a British community. Polish society was still in evidence when Halina Ravensdale, who had been born in Poland, came to Ndola from Britain in 1968. There were Polish

¹²⁹² Decius Chipande, ‘Chipolopolo: A political and social history of football (soccer) in Zambia, 1940s-1994’ (Michigan State Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2015), pp. 92-100.

¹²⁹³ ZCCM 2.5.3B, Telegram from Changoppa Chingola to Changoppa London, 11 July 1966.

¹²⁹⁴ Brown Report, p. 78.

¹²⁹⁵ Interview with Brian Keaveney, 28 November 2013

¹²⁹⁶ Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

¹²⁹⁷ *Census of population and housing, 1969* (Lusaka, 1970), p. B23.

shops with imported goods and a Polish bakery, but the Polish cultural organisation had been reduced to an annual meeting at the old refugee camp at Bwana Mkubwa.¹²⁹⁸

UDI did see the emergence of the first shortages on the Copperbelt. Oil sanctions placed on Rhodesia by Britain unintentionally caused oil shortages in Zambia as the country was dependent on oil imports through Rhodesia and petrol was rationed to 10 gallons for private motorists.¹²⁹⁹ British officials anticipated that UDI and the associated shortages would provoke racial clashes. In a letter that a colonial official could have written at any point in the previous 40 years, the British High Commissioner warned there was a “real risk” that rising tension would provoke racial hostility and “‘Copperbelt cowboys’ might form themselves into vigilante gangs and to some extent take the law into their own hands.”¹³⁰⁰ In fact, the reaction among the European community on the Copperbelt was muted. Their political ambitions had rapidly dissolved. The National Progress Party – as the UFP renamed itself – disbanded in late 1966, only four years after securing around 90% of the European vote.¹³⁰¹

Any sympathy for Rhodesia that did exist was more clandestine. In April 1967, four Europeans were detained under emergency regulations, three of whom worked on the Copperbelt: John Arnott, assistant industrial relations officer at Rhokana, ‘Bunny’ Warren, chief pilot for Mines Air Services and John Aleman, a recently discharged

¹²⁹⁸ Interview with Halina Ravensdale, 4 September 2013.

¹²⁹⁹ Andrew Cohen, ‘Britain and the Breakdown of the Colonial Environment: The Struggle over the Tanzam Oil Pipeline in Zambia’, *Business History Review*, 88 (2014), p. 739.

¹³⁰⁰ NAB DO 183/718, Letter from J.A. Molyneux, British High Commission to S.P. Whiteley, Commonwealth Relations Office, 12 October 1965.

¹³⁰¹ Robert Molteno and Ian Scott, ‘The 1968 general election and the political system’, in Tordoff, *Politics in Zambia*, p. 167.

fitter.¹³⁰² This provoked a brief walkout by 100 white mineworkers but outrage was quelled when a tribunal subsequently revealed that all four men had passed information to the Rhodesian intelligence services.¹³⁰³ Later that year, the second anniversary of UDI passed without incident, although several posters bearing the slogans 'If you can't beat Rhodesia, join 'em' or 'Rhodesia won, you know' were posted up around Kitwe.¹³⁰⁴

1966 strikes

In 1955, famed South African author Alan Paton identified the key power wielded by European mineworkers: "*They are able to bring the industry to a standstill in a way the African workers are unable to do.*"¹³⁰⁵ By the 1960s, they were no longer able to do this but it was not because of a lack of trying, as the wave of wildcat strikes in 1966 demonstrated. These events are absent in the existing literature. Guy Mhone argued that, following Zambian independence, "Europeans continued to retain their solidarity" on the mines and "since the Europeans controlled the delegation of authority and the restructuring of industrial relations, they could not be expected to build into the system their self-elimination!"¹³⁰⁶ In fact, successive mine managements had actively sought to reduce the size and structure of the European workforce since the late 1930s. The continuity in the life of the European community was the persistence of chaotic industrial relations, not European solidarity.

This continuity was unexpected. Following the abolition of the closed shop, the companies forecast that employee representation would "naturally" develop into a

¹³⁰² Antony Martin, *Minding Their Own Business: Zambia's Struggle Against Western Control* (London 1972), p. 76.

¹³⁰³ Sklar, 'Rhodesian declaration of independence', pp. 266-67.

¹³⁰⁴ 'All quiet on UDI front', *Zambia News*, 12 December 1967.

¹³⁰⁵ 'African Advancement', *Optima*, December 1955. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁰⁶ Guy Mhone, *The political economy of a dual labor market in Africa: The copper industry and dependency in Zambia, 1929-1969* (Rutherford, 1982), p. 155.

“rather loose and possibly non-militant association of expatriates.”¹³⁰⁷ In 1964, Ronald Prain detected “dramatic changes [in] the attitude of the old European days’ pay Union men.” This was because “men who in some cases were notoriously difficult members of the Union, and committed anti-company men” had now changed “to being a staff man, with all the guarantee and responsibility that that carries.”¹³⁰⁸ In November 1964, the British High Commissioner spotted “a particular gleam of satisfaction in the eye of the General Manager of one mine” when this individual claimed that the NRMWU’s demise meant that European mineworkers could never hold them to ransom again.¹³⁰⁹

More negotiations on the future of the white workforce began in November 1965 amidst an unusually conciliatory atmosphere. Economic problems provoked by UDI prompted both the MWS and MOSSA to agree to maintain the status quo and avoid disruption, while the Zambian Mineworkers’ Union (ZMU) withdrew a request for a strike ballot.¹³¹⁰ Calm lasted until details of proposed expatriate terms and conditions were released on 10 January 1966. The companies offered another pay rise and more travelling expenses, but would not guarantee that savings and pensions would be made available outside Zambia.¹³¹¹ This latter demand was rooted in the transience of white workforce. The MWS explained to trade unions overseas that there were “difficulties for miners if become redundant and unemployed, no other means of employment in Zambia. Would have to go to another country, but could not take savings or pensions.”¹³¹² Both mining companies operated a savings scheme

¹³⁰⁷ ZCCM 14.1.3A, Report of a special sub-committee appointed to consider conditions of service, 15 October 1963.

¹³⁰⁸ Prain Papers, Box 1, File 2, Letter from Ronald Prain to Harold Hochschild, 20 July 1964.

¹³⁰⁹ NAB DO 183/216, Letter from W.B.L. Monson, British High Commissioner to A.G. Bottomley, Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, 4 December 1964.

¹³¹⁰ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, p. 69.

¹³¹¹ ‘Offer angers expatriate workers’, *Times of Zambia*, 12 January 1966.

¹³¹² IISH MIF Box 361, Zambia Mineworkers Society Request, February 1966.

whereby a percentage of each European employees monthly income was retained as savings and then presented to them as a lump sum on resignation or retirement. Restrictions on the removal of savings from Zambia were a hindrance to mobility by the state and the reaction to this limitation shows the importance of mobility to European mineworkers.

The MWS were the first to reject the deal and countered with four assertive demands: a 25% wage increase, a new cost of living allowance, a 50% increase in the educational allowance and a more generous severance bonus.¹³¹³ The same kind of grievances and justifications that had animated the European community in the 1940s were evident, though of course virtually no Europeans on the Copperbelt in 1966 had been there 20 years earlier. The high cost of living was at the forefront of these grievances. One recent arrival proclaimed her astonishment at “the very high cost of living here” which she blamed on “profiteering by shopkeepers and traders.” She suggested forming some sort of consumers association to tackle high prices.¹³¹⁴ There also were echoes on the politics of white labourism. R.B. Greer – a mineworker who had been the Luanshya candidate for the far-right Dominion Party in 1959 – justified higher wages as follows: “Don’t you think there should be a really good return for the millions they have put into Government and private coffers?”¹³¹⁵ European mineworkers were the ones who had done the work, so they should be rewarded.

Talks hit deadlock in late January and European mineworkers themselves decided to break the impasse. Trouble began at Nchanga Mine where, on 7 February, around

¹³¹³ ‘Mine proposals thrown out’, *Times of Zambia*, 12 January 1966.

¹³¹⁴ Letter from Elizabeth Pinter, *Times of Zambia*, 8 February 1966.

¹³¹⁵ Letter from R.B. Greer, *Times of Zambia*, 24 January 1966.

75% of the white workforce refused to work.¹³¹⁶ A celebratory atmosphere accompanied defiance of the companies. Strikers walked off Nchanga Mine and into the Mine Club, where they proceeded to drink the bar dry before continuing to a nearby hotel to carry on drinking through the night. The dispute spread rapidly and, the next day, men at Bancroft, Chambishi, Mufulira, Rhokana and Roan Antelope walked out. European mineworkers at Bancroft threatened that the strikes would escalate and if the MWS and MOSSA leaderships could not win their demands by negotiation “we will take the matter into our own hands.”¹³¹⁷

A kind of revolving door situation developed across the Copperbelt over the next few days: as one group went back to work, another walked out as different sections of European employees took the opportunity to try and settle multiple grievances. Bancroft and Nchanga briefly returned to normal on 9 February, until an argument over job demarcation and complaints about the attitude of seven shift bosses prompted 200 men to walk off the mine during the morning shift. The same day, another job demarcation dispute involving a shift boss and a boilermaker prompted a small-scale walkout at Chambishi. These strikes were against the MWS and MOSSA leaderships as well as the mining companies, as the union leadership urged their members to return to work.¹³¹⁸

Regular walkouts continued to hit the mines after the companies concluded negotiations and made a ‘final offer’.¹³¹⁹ By 22 February, the government’s patience was exhausted. Kenneth Kaunda warned that on-going “industrial chaos” that “imperilled the life-blood of our beloved country” would not be tolerated. Andrew

¹³¹⁶ ‘Labour unrest on Copperbelt’, *Financial Times*, 8 February 1966.

¹³¹⁷ ‘1,000 expatriates miss shifts on copper mines’, *Times of Zambia*, 9 February 1966.

¹³¹⁸ ‘Unions urge return to work’, *Times of Zambia*, 10 February 1966.

¹³¹⁹ ‘New strike fears after ‘final offer’ to miners’, *Times of Zambia*, 21 February 1966.

Leslie pleaded with his members to “take heed” of the “fair and timely warning... that the country’s industrial laws cannot be flouted with impunity.”¹³²⁰ However, the opportunity to embarrass the companies presented by the visit of Prain to Mufulira on 25 February proved too good to miss, and white mineworkers walked off the mine again. The government, however, were not bluffing and their reaction was swift and decisive. Local MWS branch chair Frank Rzechorzek was arrested in Mufulira the very next day and removed to Mporokoso, a town over 300 miles away in Northern Province. He was banned from leaving the town indefinitely, exactly the same punishment that the colonial authorities had inflicted on AMU leaders during the state of emergency in 1956 and the same measure imposed on the 33 ZMU branch officials who were arrested in September 1966.¹³²¹

Similarities with the colonial-era did not end there. Longstanding fears that communists among the white workforce were orchestrating the unrest emerged once again and Irena Rzechorzek, who had arrived from Poland in 1962 and ran a crèche in Mufulira, was forced to publicly deny the rumour that her husband was a communist.¹³²² There is also an uncanny resemblance between the belief of the mining companies and the colonial administration that European mineworkers had orchestrated the March 1940 strike by African mineworkers and the accusation from UNIP ministers that Europeans were secretly being behind walkouts by African mineworkers in 1966.¹³²³ Yet the distance between the European and African unions on the mines was perhaps greater than ever. Peter Chibuye, the Mines Local Staff Association general secretary, issued a statement calling on its members to work

¹³²⁰ ‘Miners are warned’, *Times of Zambia*, 23 February 1966.

¹³²¹ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, p, 74.

¹³²² ‘Before the trouble’, *Times of Zambia*, 2 March 1966.

¹³²³ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, pp. 72, 74. African mineworkers walked out at Nchanga on 25 March over pay, in defiance of the mining companies and the ZMU, and the strike had spread to all Copperbelt mines by 6 April.

harder during the wildcat strikes and use this as an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to do more skilled work. The ZMU noted that the union's General Council had discussed the situation but had nothing to say on the matter.¹³²⁴

The initial reaction to Rzechorzek's arrest was furious, but short-lived. A 700-strong meeting at Mufulira decided to work-to-rule and there was another stoppage at Nchanga. Both the MWS and MOSSA leadership pleaded with their members to stay at work and MOSSA president Len Jackets threatened to resign if there were further strikes.¹³²⁵ The MWS leadership – possibly confused about the political consequences of Zambian independence – appealed to the British National Union of Mineworkers to approach the British Government and request the immediate release and reinstatement of Rzechorzek.¹³²⁶ This appeal was predictably unsuccessful, but so were further walkouts and the work-to-rule.¹³²⁷ Rzechorzek, presumably suitably chastened, despatched a joint letter from Mporokoso appealing for mineworkers to return to work.¹³²⁸

European mineworkers no longer had the leverage to close the mines and inflict serious financial penalties on their employers. Despite strikes by both the European and African workforce, disruption to production was limited.¹³²⁹ Moreover, record high copper prices ensured that RST made its largest ever profits (£13.53m after taxation).¹³³⁰ Any concerns shareholders may have had about the mine management as a result of the regular strikes were likely assuaged by the distribution of a record

¹³²⁴ 'Work-to-rule on verge of collapse', *Times of Zambia*, 4 March 1966.

¹³²⁵ 'Miners defy Kaunda' *Times of Zambia*, 1 March 1966.

¹³²⁶ IISH MIF Box 361, Letter from David Edwards, MIF to Will Paynter, NUM, 7 March 1966.

¹³²⁷ 'Work-to-rule on verge of collapse', *Times of Zambia*, 4 March 1966.

¹³²⁸ "'Obey KK" Rzechorzek', *Times of Zambia*, 4 March 1966.

¹³²⁹ Appendix III.

¹³³⁰ £227.35m in 2015 figures.

£7.66m as net dividends.¹³³¹ This is not to say the strikes achieved nothing. Another 6% pay increase was conceded by the companies and the law was amended to allow expatriates recruited outside Zambia to send up to half of their salaries to any sterling-area country (as Zambia remained part of the sterling-area).¹³³² New conditions were accepted in March 1966 and all expatriates were placed on fixed-term contracts.¹³³³

Unrest rumbled on Nchanga where the European workforce remained committed to resolving issues through collective action. On 23 March, 150 artisans at Nchanga Mine staged a sit-down demonstration to block the divisional engineer's office after a fitter was sacked.¹³³⁴ A few months later, on 24 July, 400 European underground workers walked out, followed the next day by 200 artisans.¹³³⁵ Fractious relations were increasingly smoothed over though, as union officials sought to work more closely with mine management. One underground engineer at Nchanga, who arrived from northern England in 1964, recalled how he sparked a dispute by transferring a European tradesman who was drinking on the job. Paddy Betts, then MWS vice-president and a shop steward, harangued him over this, but afterwards privately discussed how best to manage the situation. From then on, Betts and white artisans would often crowd into his office with grievances, but Betts "would tell me how 'they/he' intended reacting, and that I was to persevere, and he would gradually, very gradually give ground, and eventually drop the grievance." Experience of managing

¹³³¹ £128.71m in 2015 figures. Selection Trust Archives, London School of Economics, London, G/103 [hereafter ST], Confidential Memorandum to Directors, 6 December 1966.

¹³³² The sterling-area was a group of countries predominately associated with the Commonwealth who pegged their currencies to pound sterling.

¹³³³ Brown Report, p. 20.

¹³³⁴ ZCCM 16.3.9A, Telegram from Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 23 March 1966.

¹³³⁵ 'Nchanga mine workers back', *Financial Times*, 27 June 1966.

such encounters subsequently proved to be a valuable skill when he dealt with strikes on mines in Canada.¹³³⁶

Social mobility and homogeneity

The European community became more homogenous during the 1960s as internal divisions softened, a process typified by the formation and dissolution of the Zambian Expatriate Mineworkers' Association (ZEMA). On the mines, Europeans were provided with opportunities for upskilling and other accelerated forms of social mobility commensurate with their new status as expatriate staff. In the Copperbelt towns, the expanding Zambian economy and a shortage of qualified technical, professional and managerial personnel opened up an array of new opportunities. As in previous decades, however, lucrative economic opportunities continued to accrue primarily to men.

Between 1965 and 1968, the white workforce on the mines fell significantly from 7,184 (15.4% of the workforce) to 4,485 (10.1%).¹³³⁷ The drop mirrored the decline in the European population on the Copperbelt to around 23,770 by 1969.¹³³⁸ This change resulted largely from the reorganisation of work on the mines as Zambianization was accompanied by deskilling, job fragmentation and the expansion of a supervisory hierarchy. On a visit to Bancroft in February 1967, one civil servant "was struck by the extent to which the process of Zambianization in the Mining Industry is currently accompanied by a radical re-structuring." 508 posts had been created at the mine through Zambianization, but only 127 Europeans had been

¹³³⁶ Personal communication with Rob Hall, 1 September 2015.

¹³³⁷ Appendix II.

¹³³⁸ Appendix I.

displaced.¹³³⁹ Skilled jobs formerly done by Europeans were abolished rather than opened up to Africans. For instance, the job of fitter – who undertook repair work on equipment across the mines – was eliminated and fragmented into three new jobs.¹³⁴⁰

Expansion of supervisory positions accommodated Europeans displaced by the elimination of their old jobs.¹³⁴¹ Between January 1965 and December 1971 the number of officials rose from 1,100 to 2,598, while the number of senior officials rose from 475 to 1132.¹³⁴² This hierarchy remained largely European and Africans nominally in higher places in the mines hierarchy than some Europeans did not supervise any European.¹³⁴³ Training and education were required for this promotion though. Some older European mineworkers “did not have the opportunity of much education but... have wide experience both in Africa and overseas.”¹³⁴⁴ In 1967, 157 expatriate shift bosses had less than three years of secondary school education.¹³⁴⁵ Miners with wide experience continued to be recruited. Six expatriate shift bosses appointed in August 1967 included a man who had worked on Canadian mines for three years, a South African with 11 years’ mining experience and an Italian who had worked on coal and gold mines in Tanzania.¹³⁴⁶ However, the mines now also sought greater training for their white workforce.

Many European men who arrived on the Copperbelt in these years enjoyed rapid promotion and this facilitated greater mobility as it subsequently enabled them to

¹³³⁹ NAZ CO10/1/4, *Zambianization in the Mining Industry*, report from A.J.F. Simmance, March 1967.

¹³⁴⁰ Brown Report, pp. 13-14.

¹³⁴¹ Perrings, ‘Race, Value and the Division of Labour’, p. 211.

¹³⁴² Philip Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality: Mining labour and the Copperbelt in Zambian development* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 189.

¹³⁴³ Mhone, *Dual Labour Market*, p. 152.

¹³⁴⁴ NAZ CO10/1/4, *Zambianization in the Mining Industry*, report from A.J.F. Simmance, March 1967.

¹³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Comments on Revised Forecast of Zambianization: Mining Operations.

¹³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Seventh Committee on Zambianization in the Mining Industry, 29 August 1967.

secure jobs in the mining industry around the world. Rob Hall had intended to settle in Zambia when he arrived as newly graduated engineer in 1964. However, his promotion to one of the most senior underground positions meant that four years later he secured a job at a nickel mine in Canada, and subsequently worked in the Middle East, the Caribbean, Canada again and Texas.¹³⁴⁷ These opportunities accrued to a young population – 62.5% of Zambia’s European population was under the age of 35 in 1969 – and gave them experience and status which they would not have enjoyed elsewhere.¹³⁴⁸ Barry Coulton left Cumberland in 1969 to join Zambian Anglo American (ZAA), where he quickly gained the experience and contacts necessary to establish his own engineering company and become a contractor for the mines, all by the age of 25.¹³⁴⁹ Such promotion was not the case for everyone. Neil Glynn’s father continued to work as an electrician at Mufulira Mine until he left for Australia in 1972, the same job he had done when he arrived there in 1952.¹³⁵⁰

As direct employment of Europeans on the mines shrank, there were burgeoning opportunities in construction and manufacturing “which experienced very rapid rates of growth” from 1964 to 1968. Europeans entering these industries “were able to demand and receive salaries that, skill for skill, would be difficult to match anywhere in the world.” Average annual earnings for European men in Zambia educated to age 16 was higher in 1965 than the average annual earnings for men with degrees in the UK.¹³⁵¹ This attracted more Europeans and in 1965 manufacturing was the common occupational category for economically active migrants (1,189 or 28.7% of the total) while the numbers of migrants employed in construction increased from 37 to

¹³⁴⁷ Personal communication with Rob Hall, 1 September 2015.

¹³⁴⁸ *Census of population and housing, 1969* (Lusaka, 1970), p. B7.

¹³⁴⁹ Barry Coulton, *A Cumbrian Lad: An Autobiography* (Leicester, 2007), pp. 129-31. Coulton subsequently worked in at least seven different countries.

¹³⁵⁰ Interview with Neil Glynn, 10 July 2013.

¹³⁵¹ Charles Elliot (ed.), *Constraints on the Economic Development of Zambia* (Nairobi, 1971), pp. 7-8, 43.

248.¹³⁵² Europeans who had accumulated capital were also able to buy or start businesses. Boet Liebenberg left Roan Antelope Mine aged 35 and bought a small engineering company supplying mining equipment to his former employer. His business thrived after UDI effectively removed his South African competitors, until the enterprise was nationalized.¹³⁵³

Occupational mobility occurred alongside more general social mobility. From 1964, the companies paid European employees £100 per annum for every child educated outside Zambia and private education became much more common for European children.¹³⁵⁴ Private education had previously been an aspiration rather than a reality for most. The 1959 survey of white mineworkers found only 10% of parents had children under the age of 21 living away from home.¹³⁵⁵ An effective subsidy for private education and the desegregation of schools in Zambia encouraged European parents to send their children to private schools outside Zambia. This was a general trend in the European community. Brian Keaveney, whose father ran a construction company, went to school in Kitwe until 1964, when his parents sent him to boarding school in Rhodesia. He recalled that many children his age did the same.¹³⁵⁶ Rhodesian boarding schools were “particularly favoured by those who aspire to enrol eventually in British universities.”¹³⁵⁷

¹³⁵² NAZ CO3/1/29, Migration Statistics, Jan-June 1966, Central Statistical Office. These figures included Africans and non-Africans, but non-Africans accounted for 94.2% of recorded migrants.

¹³⁵³ Interview with Boet Liebenberg, 7 July 2014.

¹³⁵⁴ ZCCM 6.10.2A, Rules Governing Terms and Conditions of Employment and Service for Present Incumbent Expatriate Employees Eligible for Representation by the Mine Workers' Society, 22 November 1964.

¹³⁵⁵ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part II: An Interview Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), p. 95.

¹³⁵⁶ Interview with Brian Keaveney, 28 November 2013.

¹³⁵⁷ Richard Sklar, *Corporate power in an African state: The political impact of multinational mining companies in Zambia* (Berkley, 1975), p. 140.

The emphasis for the training of the European workforce changed markedly. The annual intake of European apprentices fell from 87 to 18 between 1964 and 1966.¹³⁵⁸ Instead, the mine's provided bursaries for young employees to attend university or college. Several friends of Peter Hills, who grew up on the Copperbelt, received university bursaries and even though he did not obtain one himself, he earned enough working on the mines to pay for a five month trip to the UK to undertake various technical courses.¹³⁵⁹ There were also bursaries provided by the MWS, established in 1960 to raise "the standards of education and skills of the European" and enable them to compete against "the almost fanatical desire of the non-European to outstrip the white worker."¹³⁶⁰ By 1966, this fund paid out £2,900 annually to support students at universities outside Zambia.¹³⁶¹

Occupational and social mobility further eroded divisions within the European community. Throughout the 1960s the ranks of the MWS steadily thinned as members were promoted to more senior positions, rendering them ineligible for membership. At Nchanga, Fred Ackroyd, the Yorkshire miner hired as NRMWU organising secretary, was among the tranche of former daily-paid men promoted to underground officials in 1965.¹³⁶² Such a career progression was by no means unusual and former NRMWU general secretary Guy Spires was also an official at Nchanga by 1965.¹³⁶³ Career progression was new though. Only 8% of the 225 white trainees who passed through Roan Antelope's underground training school

¹³⁵⁸ Brown Report, p. 72.

¹³⁵⁹ Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

¹³⁶⁰ IISH MIF Box 360, Memorandum on proposed union proposed bursary fund, 16 September 1959.

¹³⁶¹ £48,731 in 2015 figures. NAZ MLSS1/21/78, Annual return for a registered trade union, 31 December 1966.

¹³⁶² ZCCM 2.5.3B, Transfers from Acting-Staff to Staff, Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines, 9 April 1965.

¹³⁶³ Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971), p. 102. Although Guy Spires has lived in Chingola for 34 years by 1965, he did not intend to stay indefinitely and sent his daughter to school in Texas. 'Nchanga's Sandra is 'a credit to her country'', *Nchanga Weekly*, 8 February 1963.

from 1950 to 1958 and remained at the mine were promoted to staff.¹³⁶⁴ By 1966, the MWS with 2,227 members was smaller than MOSSA, with 2,767 members.¹³⁶⁵ The diminishing size of the MWS, increasingly similar occupational profile of the membership, and joint action in the 1966 strikes encouraged the formation of a single European union on the mines. This was endorsed in a ballot of members of both organisations in August 1966 and a unified organisation, ZEMA, was formed in October to “represent those employees in the categories set out in the Expatriate Salary Schedule.”¹³⁶⁶

ZEMA was in no position to resist the restructuring of the workforce and membership declined steadily from 4,944 in December 1966, to 4,401 in 1967 and 3,857 in 1968. What is remarkable is that, despite the huge labour turnover, union density among the European workforce was almost unchanged and fell only slightly from 82% in 1966 to 79% in 1968.¹³⁶⁷ However, falling membership income and debts accrued during the strikes in the early 1960s meant that ZEMA's resources were tightly constrained. In an ignominious move in August 1968, ZEMA sold their headquarters Union House to none other than the CISB in order to raise money to continue paying benefits to members.¹³⁶⁸ ZEMA was also cut off from international allies after October 1967 when the government issued a directive that all trade unions disaffiliate from external organisations.¹³⁶⁹

ZEMA's declining membership and effectiveness occurred within an increasingly unfavourable political climate for organised labour in Zambia as UNIP sought greater

¹³⁶⁴ ZCCM 12.7.9B, A Statistical Survey of Underground Trainees, 1950-1958.

¹³⁶⁵ NAZ MLSS1/21/78, Letter from A.C. Jaeckel, ZEMA to Registrar of Trade Unions, 18 July 1967.

¹³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers' Association Constitution, 5 December 1966.

¹³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Annual return for a registered trade union for year ended 31 December 1966, 31 December 1967 and 31 December 1968.

¹³⁶⁸ 'Union House sold in August', *Times of Zambia*, 31 December 1968.

¹³⁶⁹ NAZ MLSS1/21/78, Letter from L.C. Powell to General Secretary, ZEMA, 31 October 1967

control over the labour movement.¹³⁷⁰ From 1968, the Ministry of Labour pressured ZEMA to join the newly created Mineworkers' Union of Zambia (MUZ).¹³⁷¹ The proposed merger failed and, unwilling to countenance the continued existence of an expatriate trade union, the government ordered ZEMA to be dissolved. There was a temporary delay as a majority of ZEMA's membership refused to sign the dissolution document, as required by the ZEMA constitution. Tellingly, the local solicitor tasked with winding up ZEMA revealed that "the opposition was more from the newly recruited expatriates than from the old timers."¹³⁷² Many had been recruited from societies where unions were an established presence in the workplace at all levels, so they expected the same on the Copperbelt. Their opposition was inconsequential, however, and ZEMA was dissolved by government decree in June 1969.¹³⁷³

Efforts to form a new organisation were lacklustre and unsuccessful, though there was a four-day wildcat strike by artisans and shift bosses at Nchanga in July 1969 partly motivated by the dissolution of ZEMA and the demand for a new collective organisation.¹³⁷⁴ Many expatriate employees no longer felt they required a trade union anyway. Their skill and scarcity secured them high salaries, much like the Copperbelt of the early 1930s, and many contracts were negotiated individually. Discontent continued though. Despite the fact that by 1969 over two-thirds of the white workforce on the mines had been recruited since Zambian independence, their grievances were remarkably consistent with those of their predecessors.¹³⁷⁵ European employees interviewed by Burawoy in early 1971 complained about the

¹³⁷⁰ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, p. 62.

¹³⁷¹ NAZ MLSS1/21/78, Letter from S.K. Jain, Ministry of Labour to Permanent Secretary Minister of Finance, 31 May 1968.

¹³⁷² *Ibid.*, Minutes of the meeting between ZEMA and the Acting Permanent Secretary and the Registrar of Trade Unions, 18 June 1969.

¹³⁷³ *Ibid.*, Cancellation of certificate of registration, 20 June 1969.

¹³⁷⁴ 'Is ZEMA trying for a second time?', *Times of Zambia*, 11 July 1969. ZCCM 16.3.9A, Telegram from Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 28 July 1969.

¹³⁷⁵ Mhone, *Dual Labor Market*, p. 164.

high cost of living and the length of the working week but also had newer complaints such as a sense of physical insecurity.¹³⁷⁶ This last complaint had provoked a rare outbreak of 'black peril' in 1968. On 20 February, artisans at Mufulira refused to work because of the "insecurity of their families in the township" after two young European women, who had only been in Zambia for two weeks, were raped in their houses.¹³⁷⁷ A very similar dispute occurred at Nchanga in April.¹³⁷⁸

The consistency of attitudes within the European community is best demonstrated in a report commissioned by Mufulira Mine in 1970 into the high rate of turnover among the white workforce. For the report Jonathan Pincus interviewed 80 Europeans at Mufulira: 15 graduates, 15 supervisory staff, 15 artisans and 35 wives of employees, intended to be a representative sample. Pincus found the "outstanding feature of the study was the unanimity of attitudes." The overwhelming majority had come to the Copperbelt to make money – mostly from northern England – and were highly dissatisfied. "Far and away the most extensive complaint" was the high cost of living, then the 48-hour working week (as white mineworkers had complained of 20 years earlier), while many European women reported they were bored as they could not find work. There was "widespread admiration of President Kaunda" among expatriates but they had "no interest whatsoever in political matters" and most had "no social relationships with Zambians." Most intended to leave and intended to travel to Britain, Canada or Australia, though "a few will try Rhodesia or South

¹³⁷⁶ Michael Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization* (Manchester, 1972), pp. 34-36.

¹³⁷⁷ ZCCM 16.3.9A, Telex from Mufulira, 20 February 1968.

¹³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Telegram from CISB to Anmercosa and Roselite, Lusaka, 20 April 1968

Africa.”¹³⁷⁹ Life for Europeans on the Copperbelt was much as it always had been, for the time being.

Slump and disappearance

The disappearance of the European community on the Copperbelt was not preordained. Why and when this community disappeared is related to the crash in copper prices as the fortunes of the European community had always been closely tied to the mining industry. Copper prices peaked at £1,400 per ton in April 1974 before falling in 1975 to £557 per ton. Prices did not recover fully in real terms until the boom began in the early 2000s.¹³⁸⁰ High production costs ensure the Copperbelt mines were particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in copper prices. In 1967, RST estimated around 65% of world copper production had a lower break-even point than Zambia.¹³⁸¹ Economic problems were compounded by the gradual nationalisation of the mining industry in 1970 and 1974. Nationalisation could not have been timed more poorly. Majority control of the industry by the Zambian Government was followed very shortly by a dramatic decline in copper prices prompted by the oil shock, a more hostile geopolitical environment and increasingly challenging geological conditions.¹³⁸²

From 1968, the Zambian state took a progressively larger role in the economy and this reduced the opportunities for Europeans outside the mines. The ‘Mulungushi reforms’ in 1968 saw the state take a 51% stake in 26 large firms in the construction,

¹³⁷⁹ ZCCM 3.3.1F, A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970.

¹³⁸⁰ Miles Larmer, ‘Historical Perspectives on Zambia’s Mining Booms and Busts’ in Alistair Fraser and Miles Larmer (eds.), *Zambia, Mining, and Neoliberalism: boom and bust on the globalized Copperbelt* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 39.

¹³⁸¹ Selection Trust Archives, London School of Economics, London, G/103, Confidential Memorandum to Directors, 31 January 1967.

¹³⁸² Christopher Adam and Anthony Simpasa, ‘The Economics of the Copper Price Boom in Zambia’ in Fraser and Larmer, *Zambia, Mining, and Neoliberalism*, pp. 62-3.

commerce, transport, brewing and wholesale sectors.¹³⁸³ This was followed in 1971 by the abolition of fee-paying schools and fee-paying sections of hospitals.¹³⁸⁴ Declining commercial opportunities were epitomized by the departure of Maurice Gersch – a businessman who had first established concession stores in the mine townships in 1931 – in 1973 after sold his extensive business holdings to Lonrho.¹³⁸⁵

State control over the mines generated much less change for the European community. Nationalisation occurred in two stages. Following the nationalisation of the copper mining industry in Congo in 1967 and Chile in 1969, Kaunda announced in 1969 that the government would acquire a 51% stake in both ZAA and RST. However, lucrative management and sales contracts were handed back to these companies and this “meant no major organisational change in the mines.”¹³⁸⁶ The second stage occurred in 1974 when the government paid ZAA and RST \$52m and \$34m, respectively, to abrogate their contracts and took over responsibility for management and sales.¹³⁸⁷

It was anticipated in the 1960s that European employment on the mines would steadily dwindle, and that nationalisation would accelerate this. In January 1967, RST publicly forecast that the size of their expatriate workforce would fall to 1,600 by January 1970.¹³⁸⁸ Similarly, the committee established to promote Zambianization predicted in 1968 that number of Europeans employed would fall to 3,774 in December 1970 and 3,168 in December 1972.¹³⁸⁹ In fact, there were still 4,375 Europeans on the mines in 1970 and their numbers had actually increased to 4,600

¹³⁸³ Martin, *Minding Their Own Business*, p. 76.

¹³⁸⁴ William Tordoff (ed.), *Administration in Zambia* (Manchester, 1980), p. 28.

¹³⁸⁵ Hugh Macmillan, *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901-2005* (London, 2005), p. 316.

¹³⁸⁶ Burawoy, ‘Colour of Class Revisited’, p. 967.

¹³⁸⁷ \$250m and \$163m in 2015 figures. Cunningham, *Copper Industry*, p. 275.

¹³⁸⁸ ‘Zambianization on the mines’, *Horizon*, January 1967, p. 6.

¹³⁸⁹ *The progress of Zambianisation in the mining industry, December, 1968* (Lusaka, 1969), p. 9.

by 1972. In both years, Europeans constituted 9% of the total workforce, around the same proportion as on South African gold mines, where a legislative colour bar was in place.¹³⁹⁰

Restructuring on the mines was largely complete by 1968. Only 100 Europeans were displaced by Zambianization during 1969 and this had fallen to seven by 1972. The size of the white workforce did not change greatly between 1969 and 1975 and around the same number of Europeans (1,100) were recruited annually. There were actually shortages of skilled expatriate personnel and this pushed salaries upwards. The expatriate share of the total wage bill crept up from 36% in 1971 to 39% in 1975, even as the expatriate proportion of the workforce declined from 9.6% to 7.8%.¹³⁹¹ Europeans who came to the Copperbelt in these years could still enjoy extraordinarily high standards of living.



Figure 6.5: Mufulira Flying Club, 1969. www.mufulira.co.za/photo.html

¹³⁹⁰ Appendix II. In 1970, 9.2% of the total workforce on the Rand and Orange Free State gold mines was European. Chamber of Mines of South Africa, *Annual Report 1970*, p. 72.

¹³⁹¹ Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality*, pp. 133, 152.

Dave Clarke arrived on the Copperbelt in 1970 from the West Midlands. He and his wife were effusive in their praise for the society they found and could not believe that other Europeans were leaving:

A few of them were saying 'no we're going, we're going. This used to be a fabulous place, they've run it down.' We thought: we've found paradise! The weather was good, the housing was good, the beer was cheap.

Clarke became bar manager of Kitwe Catholic Club, a flying instructor, chairman of the flying club and owned speedboats on Mindola Dam. These were the kind of transformative opportunities unavailable in Britain: "I would never have thought of joining a flying club in England, I would certainly never have thought of water skiing!"¹³⁹² This echoed what Pam van Heerden said about the Copperbelt in the 1950s: "You could do anything there."¹³⁹³ This kind of life was also available to others in the European community. As a contractor at Mufulira, Barry Coulton, was "allowed to use the Mine's facilities... the rugby club, football club, and flying club... in fact, everything. It was as if we were mine employees but with much better salaries."¹³⁹⁴

In 1970, the reality of mining intruded into this world as the worst disaster in the Copperbelt's history struck Mufulira Mine. On 25 September, the night shift at Mufulira was inundated when enormous volumes of mud flowed into the underground workings from a tailings dam located directly above the mine. Desperate attempts were made to enter the mine and rescue trapped men and, over the next three days, rescue teams from across the Copperbelt went underground 50

¹³⁹² Interview with Dave Clarke, 25 September 2013.

¹³⁹³ Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013.

¹³⁹⁴ Coulton, *Cumbrian Lad*, p. 146,

times. “I didn’t go home for four days” after the disaster recalled Alf Barry, then an electrician on the mine.¹³⁹⁵ Only four men were recovered alive. 89 were killed.¹³⁹⁶ Reopening the mine was a fraught operation. The ebullient tone of Barry Coulton’s autobiography is suspended when he recounts working underground at Mufulira after the disaster. “We lived under constant fear of another mud rush. Whenever the lights went out, the first sign of an impending disaster, everyone broke into a cold sweat, and we sat down on the rock floor until the power came on again.”¹³⁹⁷



Figure 6.6: Aerial view of sinkhole above Mufulira Mine, 1970. *Mufulira Mine Disaster Interim Report*, p. 2.

There were other indications that the Copperbelt faced mounting difficulties. In 1973, Rhodesia closed the border with Zambia to all traffic except copper in response to Zambia’s support for Zimbabwean nationalist parties. Kenneth Kaunda, however, ordered a halt to copper exports through Rhodesia and began to send copper

¹³⁹⁵ Interview with Alf Barry, 20 September 2013.

¹³⁹⁶ *Mufulira Mine Disaster Interim Report on the causes and circumstances of the disaster which occurred at Mufulira Mine on the 25th September, 1970* (Lusaka, 1970).

¹³⁹⁷ Coulton, *Cumbrian Lad*, p. 151.

through Dar es Salaam and Lobito instead.¹³⁹⁸ The same year the South African Mine Workers Union warned its members not to take up jobs on the Copperbelt, printing the cautionary tale of a former foreman at Nchanga Mine who had seen the error of his ways and returned to South Africa.¹³⁹⁹ The onset of the Angolan Civil War in 1975 exacerbated export problems as the rail route to Lobito was suddenly cut off and the companies declared *force majeure* on around 40% of their contracted shipments.¹⁴⁰⁰

Life for Europeans only really deteriorated with the collapse of copper prices. This impinged on everyday life in the form of growing shortages. For Peter Hills, who remained on the Copperbelt until 1984, the real problems started in the mid-1970s. “Up until then things were going ok for us, and then the shortages really started to bite.” Even the alcohol which had lubricated social life dried up so “in the 70s we did a lot of home brewing. Some chaps made some real rocket fuel!”¹⁴⁰¹ Basic commodities were in short supply even as more lavish aspects of life continued. When Dave Clarke left in 1977 “although I was still flying, and we were still water-skiing” there were serious shortages of basic foodstuffs such as bread, milk, butter and eggs, so the family moved to Rhodesia.¹⁴⁰² This corresponds with a contemporary World Bank report that expatriates were leaving the Copperbelt in large numbers because of “constant shortages of basic foods like milk, eggs, butter, etc.” and the comparative decline of salaries due to the falling value of the Kwacha.¹⁴⁰³

¹³⁹⁸ Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976), p. 227.

¹³⁹⁹ ‘Fantastiese lone in Zambie is bedrog, se Republiek miner’, *Die Mynwerker*, 1 August 1973.

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Zambia – A Basic Economic Report Annex 1: Mining Sector Review* (Washington, 1977), p. 10.

¹⁴⁰¹ Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

¹⁴⁰² Interview with Dave Clarke, 25 September 2013.

¹⁴⁰³ *Mining Sector Review*, pp. 6, 40.

In 1976, annual turnover of European labour on the mines rose above 30% for the first time since 1963 and recruitment of Europeans fell by a quarter. At the same time as these growing problems, the pools of skilled and technical labour which the Copperbelt had previously relied on began to dry up. Rapid expansion of the global mining industry between 1965 and 1975, particularly in Australia and South America, opened up more and better paid jobs for skilled technical personnel willing to travel.¹⁴⁰⁴ From the mid-1970s “the Brits started to drift away” and the mines began to recruit skilled personnel from the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka instead.¹⁴⁰⁵ By 1980, the Copperbelt’s European population had dwindled to around 6,000 and the number of European mineworkers had fallen to 2,485, 4.5% of the total workforce.¹⁴⁰⁶ Veronica Zausmer, who left for the UK in 1974, termed the “ever reducing resident white population” she encountered on the Copperbelt whenever she returned to visit her parents “a temporary society.”¹⁴⁰⁷ Europeans ceased to be a community and “had no collective memory” according to Richard Devéria, a Scottish metallurgist who arrived in 1972. He recalled discussing something at work that had occurred five years previously, and suddenly realising that none of the other expatriates he was talking with had even been in the country then.¹⁴⁰⁸

It was logistically and psychologically easy for Europeans to move, as it always had been. Those who lived on the Copperbelt in the 1960s and 1970s had the chance to accumulate the resources and skills that enabled them to move across the world with little difficulty. One man interviewed by Pamela Shurmer-Smith, a professor in Canada, described himself as the “offspring of a peripatetic miner culture, I have

¹⁴⁰⁴ Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality*, p. 133-35.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Appendix I. Cunningham, ‘Zambian Copper Mining Industry’, p. 78,

¹⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Veronica Zausmer, 10 January 2014.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Richard Devéria, *A new nation? : Northern Rhodesia/Zambia since 1962* (Dunkeld, 2010), p. 21.

never really settled down anywhere.”¹⁴⁰⁹ The same was true of many other Europeans, whose parents had lived in one place, then another, and whose children would move again. Neil Glynn – who was born on the Copperbelt and worked all over southern Africa until he moved to Australia in 1969 – reflected that the way he and his family had lived meant: “The world tends to have very few borders, so where you earned your living was never really a big issue.”¹⁴¹⁰

Conclusion

Neither independence nor the initial nationalisation of the mining industry were radical breaks with the past in Zambia. This was particularly the case for the life of the European community. Although by the early 1970s the European community was notably smaller than it had been in the early 1960s, its members continued to live in much the same way as their predecessors had in the 1950s. Work, leisure and everyday life was broadly comparable to how it had been before Zambian independence. If anything, Europeans were in an even greater position of privilege.

The definite changes which did occur were largely related to changes within the mining industry. In 1963, there was a clearly articulated sense of difference between daily-paid mineworkers, officials and mine management as different groups with divergent interests. Faced with the imminent prospect of Zambian independence, white mineworkers, at least at Mufulira, were mainly threatening each other. This had entirely altered by the late 1960s. Social mobility for Europeans on the Copperbelt was not new, but it accelerated in the 1960s. The structure of the workforce changed considerably and the possibilities for disputes within the European community

¹⁴⁰⁹ Pamela Shurmer-Smith, ‘Once the dust of Africa is in your blood: tracking Northern Rhodesia’s white diaspora’, *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 10, 1 (2011), p. 89.

¹⁴¹⁰ Interview with Neil Glynn, 10 July 2013.

diminished. This was characterised by the disappearance of the white labour movement by 1969. Greater education, training and promotion opened up a new vista of opportunities for predominately young European men on the Copperbelt and across the world. European teenagers from Kitwe and Mufulira asked in 1960 about where they intended to travel to after leaving the Copperbelt were mostly able to reach these destinations.¹⁴¹¹

Restructuring and social mobility also involved the creation of the racial category of 'expatriate'. Designating all Europeans on the mines as 'expatriates' – a distinction which was subsequently made in other workplaces – was crucial to the maintenance of a colonial racial order in an independent Zambia. From the mid-1960s, the experiences and interests of Africans and Europeans on the Copperbelt became more divergent. Racial lines were actually re-imposed on the mines workforce and trade unions, a process counter to the usual narrative of a 'Zambianization' of the workforce. Increased salaries and generous fringe benefits enabled the European community to maintain a distinctive and privileged existence until the crash in copper prices closed that option.

Expatriate status and fixed-term contracts merely formalised the de-facto situation for Europeans, who did not intend to stay on the Copperbelt even before the end of colonial rule. This continued to be a transient society so by the late 1960s the European community was largely composed of new people. This makes the elements of continuity all the more remarkable and points to an argument made earlier in this thesis: that many of the attitudes and developments in the European community were transnational rather than local in origin. Despite the diminishing connection with South Africa, as new arrivals were overwhelmingly from Britain,

¹⁴¹¹ Holleman, Mann and Van Den Berghe, 'White Minority', p. 326.

indifference toward and disengagement from the African majority around them was the norm. Newcomers to Mufulira from northern England in 1970 had little contact with Africans other than as subordinates at work or in the home. Europeans lived like and associated with people like themselves.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The Copperbelt was more closely connected to the networks of the global mining industry in the 1930s than the 1970s. Changes in the ownership of the industry, the structure of the mines' workforce and, above all, the long slump in copper prices left the Copperbelt more isolated than the region had been in previous decades. This was not necessarily a bad thing. Many of the international influences on the Copperbelt – such as the spread of racist working practices – were entirely negative for the African majority who came to live and work there. Such links were not re-forged until the onset of the copper boom in the early 2000s when international mining companies returned to Zambia following the privatisation of the mining industry. This too did not bring unalloyed joy and benefits for ordinary Zambians.¹⁴¹²

For the period covered by this thesis, however, the Copperbelt was connected with seemingly disparate and distant places around the world. This thesis has identified many of the ways in which the Copperbelt was similar to other mining regions and how it became so similar. Ideas, practices, institutions, and culture were transmitted to the Copperbelt by tens thousands of European mineworkers recruited from across the English-speaking world and through the many thousands of other Europeans who sought the riches of the region. Transnational links were made and sustained by the constant movement of people. New arrivals on the Copperbelt from mining centres elsewhere in the world encountered the same kinds of clubs, institutions, and culture as in the societies they had left, and encountered and reinforced the same kind of hierarchies. The transmission of transnational influences was not an

¹⁴¹² For more on this debate, see Alistair Fraser and Miles Larmer (eds.), *Zambia, Mining, and Neoliberalism: boom and bust on the globalized Copperbelt* (Basingstoke, 2011).

accidental process. Europeans on the Copperbelt consciously looked to other English-speaking whites around the world and took their cues on the kind of clubs and societies to form, sports to play, how many hours they should work, and what they should be paid from them.

Despite an acknowledgement in the secondary literature that “the history of the Copperbelt’s white miners needs to be recovered is obvious enough” this thesis is one of the first works on the subject.¹⁴¹³ This gap is remarkable given that there were considerably more white mineworkers on the Copperbelt at any one time than there were colonial officials in the whole of Britain’s African empire.¹⁴¹⁴ The image of whites in Africa should be the miners’ lamp as much as the pith helmet. This thesis has completed the aim of filling this gap. Yet, it is not a question of numbers that has justified this thesis and the Copperbelt’s European community was usually capable of punching above the weight of their numbers.

First, though, it is important to note what has not been covered by this thesis and how the sources utilised have shaped this work. Much of this thesis has been about male mineworkers and it has been argued that the European community was a masculine one although there were significant numbers of European women present from the 1930s onwards. The place of European women in a masculine Copperbelt community deserves further study as it remains unclear. Perspectives from European women are largely absent in sources derived from state institutions and mining companies, which were preoccupied with the predominately male workforce.

¹⁴¹³ Ian Phimister, ‘Proletarians in Paradise: The Historiography and Historical Sociology of White Miners on the Copperbelt’ in Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomina Macola (eds.), *Living at the End of Empire: politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2011), p. 160.

¹⁴¹⁴ Colonial officials numbered 1,152 in 1939 and 2,362 in 1957, whereas there were 2,609 white mineworkers on the Copperbelt in 1939 and 7,304 in 1957. Anthony Kirk-Greene, ‘The Thin White Line: The size of the British Colonial Service in Africa’, *African Affairs*, 27, 314 (1980), pp. 29, 39. . Appendix II.

Indeed, an article in *Rhokana Review* denied that life for European women was “boring and lonely” with “nothing to do except attend innumerable sundowners or the cinema” but could only identify one specific activity for women: the Women’s Institute.¹⁴¹⁵ Ideas of femininity and understandings of appropriate gender roles changed enormously between the 1930s and 1970s in the societies the Copperbelt was linked to. To what extent was this reflected on the Copperbelt?

Considerations of space have inhibited a fuller consideration of the role of cultural, social, and sporting activities. The energetic social life of the European community and the importance of these activities to this community have been stressed in this thesis. However, there has not been a full appreciation of the level of competitiveness in the European community and an examination of this might have produced a very different thesis. Almost every aspect of social life involved some form of competition. There were even well-attended, keenly contested annual first aid competitions both within the mines and between the Copperbelt towns. The significance of these competitive social activities may have been more than that they reflected the life of other parts of the English-speaking world.

The Copperbelt’s European community were important because of the wider histories a study of this group contributes to. The European community had an ambiguous identity and status. They were half-way between expatriates and prospective locals, in some ways a working-class community but with some of the tastes and recreational pastimes of social elites elsewhere and a masculine community with, by the 1950s, almost equal numbers of men and women. The affluence and transience of the community helps explain how people slid seamlessly between ‘settler’ and ‘sojourner’ as the very aspects of life which made the

¹⁴¹⁵ ‘Women’s world’, *Rhokana Review*, August 1954.

Copperbelt attractive – high wages and conspicuous consumption – also made it difficult to stay there; the high cost of high living could not be paid indefinitely. Moreover, regular industrial unrest needed to retain high wages produced an unsettling effect, such as in 1958 when over a third of the white workforce left. Most Europeans lived in the mining townships and owned little property. Throughout this period, it was easy to leave.¹⁴¹⁶ Similarities between the Copperbelt and other parts of the English-speaking world also made it easy to leave as Europeans could slot into the same clubs and institutions they had left.

Social structures within the Copperbelt's European also bore a remarkable resemblance to those in other mining communities. This thesis has explored how a white working-class was formed, maintained and dissipated between the 1930s and 1970s as the composition and self-understanding of the European community shifted. The formation of a sense of racialized class consciousness was rooted in the industrial disputes of the 1940s, which also won white mineworkers an outsized international reputation. Individuals and institutions in other parts of the English-speaking world recognised white mineworkers on the Copperbelt as being like them. At the World Federation of Trade Unions, Brian Goodwin, representing no more than 2,375 white men, sat down with trade unionists and Soviet officials representing, ostensibly at least, millions of workers. Almost twenty years later, Jack Purvis performed a similar role as an International Confederation of Free Trade Unions representative. A sense of class consciousness dissipated in the 1960s as the structure of the workforce and the organisation of work changed.

¹⁴¹⁶ The obvious exception to this is during the Second World War when Emergency Powers legislation placed restrictions on movement.

The frequency and results of industrial unrest distinguishes the Copperbelt from other white settler societies in the region. There were strikes by white mineworkers almost every year between 1940 and 1969, apart from 1942, 1953 and 1965, and strikes were only prevented in 1942 because the army occupied the Copperbelt. This was a kind of 'white labourism', a conviction that the mining industry and the towns should be run primarily for the benefit of white mineworkers. Yet, importantly, claims about higher wages and better conditions were not made on the basis of 'whiteness' but on the basis of what other white workers elsewhere in the English-speaking world were receiving. For most of this period, it (literally) paid for Europeans on the Copperbelt to articulate class consciousness and there was a remarkable degree of solidarity during strikes and other disputes for such a transient population. Collective struggle won and retained extraordinarily high living standards while the language of class and trade unionism enabled white mineworkers to secure international support for their frequent demands.

These demands were not, as has previously been assumed, about African advancement. This thesis has sought to periodise relations between the European community and the African majority on the Copperbelt. Racism towards Africans was a consistent feature of the European community, but it varied in intensity and came to the fore in specific moments such as the agitation for a colour bar in 1941 or during the height of the copper boom in the 1950s. In other periods, the predominant attitude of Europeans toward Africans was one of indifference. For most of the 1930s, Europeans directed more animosity toward non-British whites and colonial officials. Hostility towards non-British whites faded during the 1940s. Race acted as a homogenizing force to create a wider 'European' identity rather than a 'British' one.

Europeans were concerned with who was like them, not defining themselves negatively against those who were not like them.

A lack of interest in Africans explains the lack of concerted opposition to African nationalism and the willingness of most Europeans to continue living in an independent Zambia. Superficially, the Copperbelt seemingly contained all the ingredients for a bloody struggle during decolonisation: an armed, racist minority in a privileged social and economic position, located on the geographical cusp of newly independent African nations and close witness to chaotic decolonisation in Congo. One did not occur and decolonisation was, compared to other parts of the region, uneventful. The privileged status of Europeans did not depend on the colonial political and social order. Only after Zambian independence did race become more salient as the entire basis for expatriate status – and all the privileges which came with it – was a racial one.

Differences in the intensity and character of racism help explain why the comparison between the Copperbelt and South Africa is less appropriate than it has been assumed in the secondary literature. This thesis has traced the wider influences on the Copperbelt – which include but are not limited to influences from South Africa – and argued that developments make more sense in a transnational not a regional context. Striking similarities between the Copperbelt and other mining regions around the world have been identified in several places in this thesis but for reasons of brevity have not been fully explored. Examining the rise and fall of mining communities in comparative perspective would likely identify the origins and existence of certain similarities more precisely. Existing works on copper mining regions in North America and Latin America in the twentieth century trace the same

kind of hierarchies of class, gender and race that emerged on the Copperbelt.¹⁴¹⁷ The simultaneity of developments is remarkable and requires further explanation. Was it a coincidence that one of the largest copper companies in the United States embarked on a comprehensive reorganisation of their workforce in 1963, exactly the same time as the Copperbelt mining companies did the same?¹⁴¹⁸ Were the similarities primarily due to the continual exchange of people and ideas between these places or is it embedded in the economics of the copper industry?

What happened in the boom and the lean years on the Copperbelt appears to have followed the same pattern as other mining regions around the world. This thesis on the Copperbelt's European community has focused so closely on mineworkers and the mining industry because the main determinant of the size and stability of that community was the fluctuating fortunes of the mining industry. The Copperbelt was, in the words of one wary miner from Broken Hill, "all smiles and rolling in money one day, gloomy and half-bust the next."¹⁴¹⁹ The European community was almost extinguished as soon as it had been established by the impact of the Great Depression. Booming copper prices after 1947 caused the European population to more than treble between 1946 and 1956, then growth slowed considerably after the sudden crash in 1956.¹⁴²⁰ The number of Europeans on the Copperbelt and their fortunes were more closely tied to the mining industry than the political situation in

¹⁴¹⁷ Matthew Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front* (Chicago, 2013), Thomas Klubock, *Contested communities: Class, gender and politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (London, 1998). There has been some work comparing copper mining towns in Montana and Chile and the similarities identified in this work could be extended to the Copperbelt, Janet Finn, *Tracing the Veins: Of Copper, Culture, and Community from Butte to Chuquibambilla* (Berkeley, 1998).

¹⁴¹⁸ The company was Kennecott Copper. Bruce Whitehead and Robert Rampton, 'Bingham Canyon', in Collen Whitley (ed.), *From the Ground Up: The History of Mining in Utah* (Logan, 2006), p. 245.

¹⁴¹⁹ Johan Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part I: A Social Psychological Study* (Johannesburg, 1960), p. 19.

¹⁴²⁰ Appendices I and III. This slowing of population growth occurred at the same time as European immigration to the Federation as a whole actually increased. Alois Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation* (Harare, 2002), p. 5. Appendix I.

the territory. Contrary to some assumptions in the secondary literature, the dramatic drop in the European population only came some ten years after Zambian independence with the global economic recession.

The inhabitants of the mining camps of the early 1930s would not have recognised the extravagant European Copperbelt townships of the 1960s. Yet, they had something in common with their successors: neither of them was there to stay. Whether they were poverty-stricken Glaswegian shipbuilders fighting and drinking their way out of the rough mining camps or Jaguar-driving, polo-playing rockbreakers motoring down to Johannesburg with a fat cheque in their back pocket, Europeans on the Copperbelt would not settle down.

Appendix I: European population

Figure 8.1: Estimated European population of the Copperbelt, selected years.

Year	European males	European females	Total
1931	4,172	1,703	5,875
1946	4,928	4,196	9,164
1951	8,950	7,757	16,707
1956	16,014	14,251	30,265
1961	-	-	34,830
1969	-	-	23,770*
1980	3,787	3,114	6,105*

*Figures for Copperbelt Province.

Sources: *Report of the Director of Census Regarding the Census taken on the 5th May 1931* (London, 1931), pp. 46-7, *Report on the Census of Population of Northern Rhodesia held on 15th October, 1946* (Lusaka, 1949), p. 79, *Report on the census of population, 1951* (Lusaka, 1954), pp. 43-4, *Census of Population 1956* (Salisbury, 1960), pp. 35-36, *Final report of the September 1961 censuses of non-Africans and employees* (Lusaka, 1965), pp. 43-44, *Census of population and housing, 1969* (Lusaka, 1970), p. B11, *1980 Census of Population and Housing Volume I* (Lusaka, 1985), p. 26.

Appendix II: Mine employees

Figure 8.2: Total number of African and European mineworkers employed on the Copperbelt mines, European proportion of the workforce, European labour turnover, numbers of daily-paid and staff, 1930-1976

Year	African mineworkers	European mineworkers	European proportion of total workforce	European turnover	Daily-paid	Staff
1930		2,500*				
1931		2,644				
1932	5,572	893	13.8%			
1933	7,190	1,026	12.5%			
1934	13,808	1,729	11.1%			
1935	13,224	1,758	11.7%			
1936	11,957	1,575	11.6%			
1937	17,926	2,037*	10.2%*			
1938	20,358	2,296*	10.0%*			
1939	20,924	2,609	11.1%	35%		
1940	24,328	2,971	10.9%			
1941	27,720	3,098	10.0%		2,052	1,046
1942	30,425	3,306	9.8%			
1943	32,805	3,566	9.8%		2,339	1,227

1944	30,470	3,445	10.2%			
1945	28,304	3,272	10.4%		2,060	1,212
1946	27,832	3,426	11.0%			
1947	29,166	3,681	11.2%		2,375	1,306
1948	30,932	3,958	11.3%			
1949	33,061	4,293	11.5%		2,749	1,499
1950	34,814	4,604	11.8%		2,977	1,627
1951	35,432	5,184	12.8%		3,353	1,831
1952	36,668	5,504	13.1%	16.5%	3,559	1,970
1953	36,147	5,879	14.0%	17.6%	3,868	2,083
1954	37,193	6,294	14.5%	17.3%	4,075	2,219
1955	35,190	6,566	15.7%	13.8%	4,209	2,361
1956	37,533	7,065	15.7%	13.1%	4,437	2,628
1957	38,763	7,304	15.8%	24.9%	4,450	2,854
1958	32,824	6,739	17.0%	36.0%	4,082	2,656
1959	35,014	7,259	17.1%	16.2%	4,412	2,847
1960	36,806	7,528	17.0%	17.4%	4,454	3,074
1961	39,036	7,641	16.4%	20.6%	4,447	3,194
1962	37,681	7,780	17.1%	15.2%		
1963	36,948	7,676	17.2%	32.9%		
1964	38,097	7,455	16.4%	24.8%	-	-
1965	39,586	7,184	15.4%	18.6%	-	-

1966	41,951	5,981	12.5%	27.8%	-	-
1967	43,513	5,378	11.0%	23.2%	-	-
1968	43,198	4,845	10.1%	28.0%	-	-
1969	43,500	4,727	9.8%	26.0%	-	-
1970	41,951	4,375	9.0%	25.0%	-	-
1971	44,997	4,751	9.6%	23.6%	-	-
1972	46,245	4,600	9.0%	24.8%	-	-
1973	48,287	4,505	8.5%	26.8%	-	-
1974	51,736	4,392	7.8%	23.8%	-	-
1975	52,992	4,495	7.8%	27.9%	-	-
1976	53,082	4,060	7.1%	32.9%	-	-

*Estimate

Sources: Employee numbers taken from Robert Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire Volume II* (London, 1949), p. 422, Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 238-39 and Philip Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality: Mining labour and the Copperbelt in Zambian development* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 72, 107. European labour turnover until 1960 and numbers of daily-paid and staff employees taken from *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Yearbook 1956* (Kitwe, 1957), p. 68, *Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines Yearbook 1961* (Kitwe, 1962), p. 30. European labour turnover 1961-76 taken from Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality*, p. 133

Appendix III: Copper prices and production

Figure 8.3: London Metal Exchange price of Electrolytic Copper Wirebars (£ per long ton) nominal prices and in constant 2015 pound sterling and Copperbelt copper production, 1926-1975.

Year	Nominal price	Price in constant 2015 pound sterling	Copper production (long tons)
1926	66	3,639	-
1927	62	3,513	3,289
1928	69	3,910	5,930
1929	85	4,871	5,465
1930	62	3,655	6,269
1931	42	2,581	8,764
1932	36	2,267	68,000
1933	37	2,389	104,000
1934	34	2,195	138,000
1935	36	2,309	144,000
1936	43	2,741	142,000
1937	60	3,687	148,000
1938	46	2,793	213,000
1939	49	2,889	212,000

1940 ^a	62	3,131	263,000
1941 ^a	62	2,823	228,000
1942 ^a	62	2,635	247,000
1943 ^a	62	2,550	251,000
1944 ^a	62	2,480	221,000
1945 ^a	62	2,414	194,000
1946	77	2,909	183,000
1947	131	4,624	192,000
1948	134	4,395	213,000
1949	133	4,240	259,000
1950	179	5,533	277,000
1951	220	6,233	309,000
1952	259	6,722	313,000
1953 ^b	269	6,775	363,000
1953 ^c	233	5,868	-
1954	249	5,754	378,000
1955	351	5,893	343,000
1956	329	7,903	383,000
1957	219	7,155	417,000
1958	197	4,615	375,000
1959	238	4,995	417,000

1960	246	5,110	559,000
1961	230	4,618	560,000
1962	234	4,503	539,000
1963	234	4,420	568,000
1964	351	6,416	633,000
1965	468	8,174	696,000
1966	555	9,693	623,000
1967	418	6,844	663,000
1968	525	8,213	685,000
1969	621	9,220	720,000
1970	589	8,219	684,000
1971	444	5,661	651,000
1972	428	5,094	717,000
1973	727	7,931	707,000
1974	878	8,254	698,000
1975	557	4,214	677,000

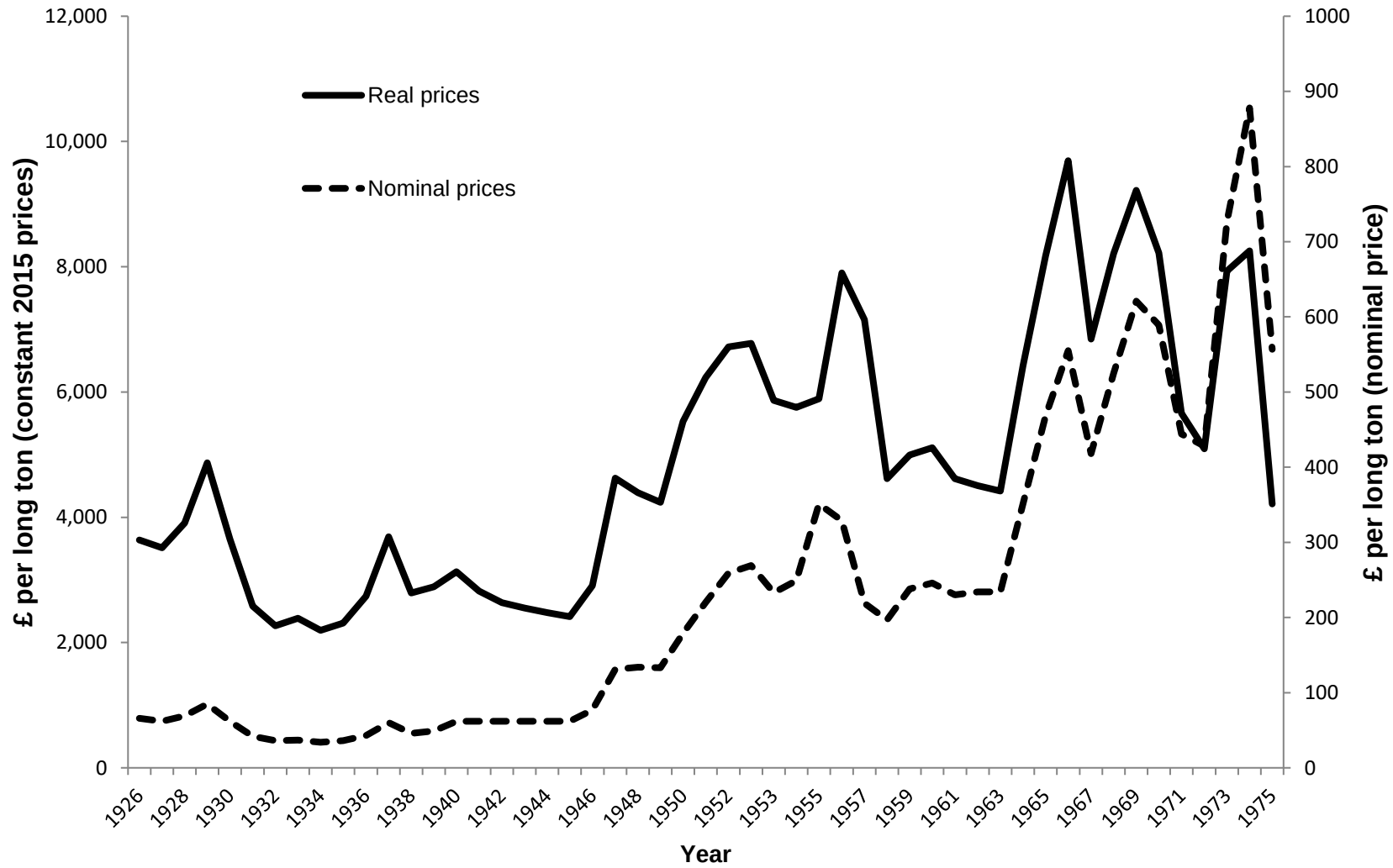
a. The British Ministry of Supply bought the Copperbelt's entire output at a fixed price during the Second World War.

b. Price from January to August.

c. Price from September to December. The London Metal Exchange reopened in August 1953.

Sources: Nominal prices reproduced from Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York, 1981), p. 173. Prices in real terms calculated using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator. Production figures taken from Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971), p. 71, Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 238-39 and Simon Cunningham, 'Nationalization and the Zambian Copper Mining Industry' (Edinburgh Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1985), p. 71.

Figure 8.4: Price of Electrolytic Copper Wirebars, 1926-75 (£)



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